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Coexistence or Competition: A Look at Private Tutoring in English in Relation to Formal Instruction in English in Korean Schools

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This study investigated how private tutoring in English relates to formal instruction in English in schools in Korea. A total of 60 elementary and secondary school students, their parents, and school teachers participated in the study by reporting, through semi-structured interviews, their perceptions and attitudes toward private tutoring in English in relation to formal instruction in English in schools. The findings showed that the relationships between private tutoring in English and formal instruction in English in schools were perceived from three perspectives. First, private tutoring in English was perceived by all participant groups as performing the functions that formal instruction in English in schools failed to perform. Second, the strong parental support of private tutoring in English was viewed by teachers and students as potentially negatively affecting formal instruction in English in schools and students' English learning. Third, private tutoring in English was deemed by teachers at both elementary and secondary schools as having the possibility of disadvantaging the students financially unable to participate in private tutoring in English. Based on the findings, a number of implications are suggested.

[private tutoring in English/EFL]

I. INTRODUCTION

It has been long since the issue of English teaching transcended the boundaries of the classroom in East Asian English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) countries. The issue has been frequently addressed by both stakeholders and non-stakeholders because of their collective belief in the importance of English proficiency for material and career success

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(Choi, 2012; Lamb, 2007; Nunan, 2003; Suh & Jung, 2012). Their interest in English teaching has escalated because of their governments' decisions to begin teaching English at the elementary level (Butler, 2007). In parallel, the decisions have resulted in a considerable increase in the extent of private tutoring in English. East Asian parents have spent substantial amounts of money on private tutoring in English for their children (Bray & Kwok, 2003; Hamid, Sussex, & Khan, 2009).

The prevalence of private tutoring in English has acquired not only disturbing financial dimensions, but has also raised the pedagogically important question of how private tutoring in English could be addressed in relation to formal instruction in English in schools. The degree to which students have disengaged both physically and affectively in learning in schools in favor of private instruction in Korea (Kang, 2010) and other countries could both demoralize and demotivate teachers of many subjects including English. The consequent decline in the quality of English teaching in schools has the potential, for those unable to participate in private tutoring, to limit access to opportunities to prepare for the competition for material resources (Bourdieu, 1991). Surprisingly, very few research efforts have been made to supply answers or suggestions to this unfortunate and critical situation. Given that EFL students' and their parents' preference for private tutoring in English could be attributed to the perceived difference in the quality of English teaching between private tutoring and formal instruction in schools (Khuwaileh & Al-Shoumali, 2001), it seems that researchers should begin to direct their attention toward the relationships between the two main providers of English teaching in East Asia.

While there could exist a number of approaches to investigating these relationships, it appears that examinations of the perceptions and attitudes of the three groups most closely involved in EFL teaching and learning; i.e., students, their parents, and teachers, are required to obtain balanced perspectives on how private tutoring in English affects formal instruction in English in schools. Research attempts have not been made, however, to look integratively at the three groups and determine the similarities or differences among their perceptions and attitudes. The present study seeks to describe and explain how private tutoring in English is perceived in relation to formal instruction in English in schools, as well as to suggest implications for Korean and other EFL contexts. In particular, considering that private tutoring is a globally widespread practice and affects school instruction similarly across countries (Baker & LeTendre, 2005), the present study is expected to deliver findings that could be transferable (Lazaraton, 1995) and relatable to EFL settings the world over.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Views on Private Tutoring in English and Formal Instruction in English in Schools

In contrast to formal instruction in English in schools, English learning through private tutoring has been a long-neglected research area (Hamid et al., 2009). According to Hamid et al., only three studies have focused exclusively on private tutoring in English: those by themselves, by Khuwaileh and Al-Shoumali (2001), and by Mischo and Haag (2002). Mischo and Haag looked at how private tutoring influenced the learning outcomes of German pupils in subjects including English. They found significant score differences between the pretests and posttests taken by the privately tutored and untutored students. Despite this important finding, however, they did not report convincingly that private tutoring was responsible for the differences. Unlike Mischo and Haag, Khuwaileh and Al-Shoumali used university students and parents as subjects in order to examine what contributed to the pervasiveness of private tutoring in English in Jordan. Through the use of questionnaire surveys and interviews, they identified the major causes of the popularity of private tutoring in English in that country: dissatisfaction with school teaching of English, eagerness to earn high grades in university courses, and the perceived importance of English.

Hamid et al.'s study appears to be an improvement on these two studies since it analyzed, in detail, student perceptions and attitudes toward private tutoring in English by using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study, conducted in a rural area of Bangladesh, revealed the overwhelming presence of private tutoring in English in the country and the students' preference for private tutoring over formal instruction in schools regardless of their socioeconomic status. Interestingly, the study emphasized that the Bangladesh students' own perceptions of the benefits of private tutoring in English, i.e., its indispensable role in improving their academic achievements, was what primarily prompted them to participate in it. In addition, peer pressure to receive private tutoring in English was claimed to influence the way the students viewed private tutoring in English.

Although the findings underlined the importance of learner belief as a major factor in participation in private tutoring in English, it seems strange that parental involvement was inadequately discussed in relation to learner belief. Considering that parents willingly bear the financial burden of their children's English learning (Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2006), it would seem necessary to sufficiently address parental perceptions and attitudes toward private tutoring in English in relation to formal instruction in English in schools.

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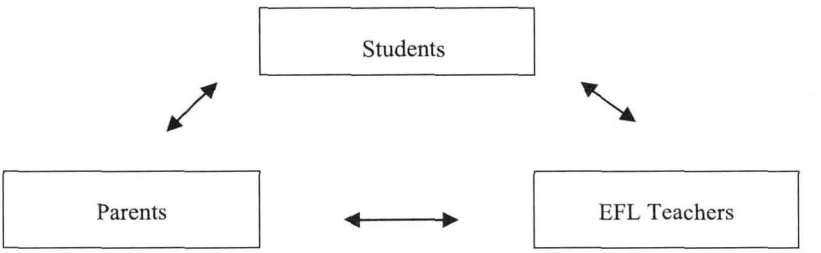
Additionally, how private tutoring in English is perceived by school teachers needs also to be closely investigated. Without taking into account teacher perceptions and attitudes, any attempts to understand the influence of and reasons for private tutoring in English could not yield robust findings or beneficial implications. The case for examining teachers' voices is justified in that teacher beliefs could affect learner beliefs about language learning (Kern, 1995), and EFL teachers, together with the students and their parents, constitute the three main stakeholder groups in private tutoring in English (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

The Three Main Stakeholder Groups of Private Tutoring in English in the EFL Context



The need to look at EFL teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward private tutoring in English could also be underscored by the role that the negative aspects of English teaching at schools play in motivating students to prefer private tutoring. Lamb (2007) asserted that Indonesian junior high school students underwent a decline in their attitudes toward English teaching at their school and viewed their participation in private tutoring as compensating for it. EFL students' preference for private tutoring deserves considerable attention since it could contribute to the gradual decline of English teaching in schools (Hamid et al., 2009) by further discouraging teachers from making earnest pedagogical efforts. The deterioration in the quality of English teaching at schools has the potential of creating a debilitating effect on those lacking the economic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) to receive private tutoring in English. As Lin (1999) suggested, a lower accessibility to relevant learning resources could seriously disadvantage students from economically deprived families and block them from achieving the proficiency levels required to allow them material and career success. In this respect, the strengthening of formal instruction in English in schools has the potential of being an issue which defies the answers given only from the perspective of EFL pedagogy. Whether to be addressed from the perspective of the sociology of education or EFL pedagogy, however, an

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important first step to take for the reinforcement of formal instruction in English in schools would be to investigate the perceptions and attitudes toward private tutoring in English in relation to formal instruction in English in schools on the parts of the students, their parents, and their teachers. Research efforts to study all three stake-holding parties could produce a diagnostic profile of what their perceptions and attitudes are, and how they converge or diverge. Additionally, a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between private tutoring in English and formal instruction in English in schools would be gained since teachers' perceptions and attitudes are examined as well as those of students and their parents.

2. Private Tutoring in English and Formal Instruction in English in Schools in Korea

Korea has long experienced the so-called "English fever" (Jeong, 2004, p. 40). A clear example of how obsessive Koreans are about their children's English learning is the surgery on young children's tongues reported to be popular in rich neighborhoods in Seoul (Demick, 2002). The rationale for the surgery is that it allegedly enables the young children to approximate native-like pronunciation. This over-enthusiasm has led to the presence of large-scale private tutoring in English for which Korean parents have paid substantial portions of their income.

Private tutoring in English in Korea has had separate and well-defined goals according to the participants' school level. For elementary school students, the focus has been placed on increasing their communicative abilities because of the government's strong emphasis on the enhancement of the students' listening and speaking proficiency levels rather than on grammatical knowledge or reading proficiency (Butler, 2004, 2007). With respect to middle and high school students, the goal of private tutoring in English has been to prepare them for the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) (Bray, 1999) which measures mainly the test-takers' reading skills (Choi, 2008) and grammatical knowledge. The difference in goals caused by the dissimilar directions that the educational authorities have taken depending on school level accounts for the complexity of private tutoring in English in Korea. The difference also appears to reflect the context of English education in Korea which varies from those in other East Asian countries. In the case of Japan, for example, the government did not require its elementary schools to teach English to students until 2011 (Butler, 2004; Akita University, 2011). Further, it was decided that English teaching be limited to fifth and sixth graders (Akita University, 2011). The Korean government, however, has designated English as a required subject in elementary schools (Nunan, 2003), and a large number of the students have participated in private tutoring in English (Butler, 2007).

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The heavy reliance of the Korean elementary and middle/high school students on private tutoring in English and its relationship to formal instruction in English in schools appear to be a topic worth studying. As Hamid et al. (2009) observed, private tutoring has recently become a growing global phenomenon with English being one of the most frequently taught subjects. Set in Korea, where over US $18b were spent on private tutoring in 2009 (Korea National Statistical Office, 2010), a study could produce implications having relevance to other EFL contexts by exploring how EFL students at elementary and secondary levels, their parents, and school teachers perceive private tutoring in English in relation to English teaching in schools. According to the Korea National Statistical Office (2008, 2009, cited in Kim, 2011), privately tutored students attained higher levels of academic achievement. Chung (2004, 2005) reported in two of the few studies on the practice of private tutoring in English in Korea that Korean elementary school third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders receiving private tutoring scored significantly higher on English achievement tests than those not receiving private tutoring. In addition to the difference in achievement, private tutoring was found to cause teachers to experience difficulty in their classrooms because of the dissimilarities in English proficiency between the participants and non-participants in private tutoring. In view of these two reported influences of private tutoring, a new study would be expected to account for how similarly or differently private tutoring in English is viewed by Korean students, their parents, and school teachers.

With respect to the use of EFL teachers as participants, it seems that this new Korean study could offer a new, more balanced perspective on private tutoring in English because the few prior studies have paid scant attention to teachers, and focused on students and their parents. Butler (2004) maintained that there was a gap between Korean elementary EFL teachers' self-evaluated proficiency levels and the minimum proficiency levels they perceived as necessary to teach EFL to their students. It was also revealed that Korean elementary and secondary students had the lowest level of confidence in school teaching of subjects including English among students of the OECD (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development) member states (OECD, 2003, cited in Butler, 2007).

While Butler's (2004) finding seems to suggest that EFL school teachers are responsible for student dependence on private tutoring, the finding was obtained only through the use of quantitative instruments. In order to provide richer descriptions and explanations of how teachers cause students to rely on private tutoring, it would be necessary for a Korean study to use qualitative approaches.

In connection with Korean students' lack of confidence in their teachers, it is interesting to note that Lamb (2007) found that Indonesian EFL students also underwent a loss of confidence in their school teachers. This correspondence appears to highlight

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the need to examine the voices of teachers as well as those of students and their parents to describe and explain, in a more balanced way, the issue of the low level of confidence in formal instruction in English in schools.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study, designed to consider the important points including the empirical gaps discussed thus far, investigated the relationships between private tutoring in English and formal instruction in English in schools in Korea by examining the perceptions and attitudes toward private tutoring in English in relation to formal instruction in English in schools on the parts of Korean elementary and secondary students, their parents, and school teachers. The research questions are given below.

1. What perceptions and attitudes do Korean elementary and secondary school students, their parents, and school teachers hold toward private tutoring in English in relation to formal instruction in English in schools?
2. How different and/or similar are the perceptions and attitudes toward private tutoring in English in relation to formal instruction in English in schools provided by Korean elementary and secondary school students, their parents, and school teachers?

IV. METHODOLOGY

1. Participants

The total number of participants in the present study was 60. The participants consisted of 10 elementary school students, 10 of their parents, 10 elementary school EFL teachers, 10 middle and high school students, 10 of their parents, and 10 middle and high school EFL teachers. Middle and high school students were not grouped separately, as their parents and school teachers were not, because the ultimate aim of English teaching for both middle and high school students is to achieve high grades in the English subtest of the CSAT. The elementary, middle, and high schools were located in the same neighborhood in Seoul, the capital city of Korea. The monthly income range of the participating parents was two to three million Korean won, approximately the equivalent of 1,740 to 2,610 US dollars. According to the Korea National Statistical Office (2010), the income range represented the third of a total of eight income ranges in 2009, with the eighth range being the highest income range. The rate of participation in

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private tutoring for the income range was 72.9%, which approximated the rate of participation in private tutoring for the entire Korean population; 75.0%.

As student participants, fourth- and fifth-grade elementary school students and second-grade middle and high school students who were receiving private tutoring in English were recruited. The students were all enrolled in private institutes. Chung (2004, 2005) and the Korea National Statistical Office (2010) reported that private institute instruction is the most popular form of private instruction in Korea and overshadows other forms such as private tutoring and self-study materials. In relation to this, the term private tutoring used in the present study could be construed as a form of private instruction (i.e., private teaching of a single student or a very small group of students). Hamid et al. (2009), however, used the term private tutoring as referring to "after-hour supplementary schooling" (p. 282) which encompasses a variety of relevant forms that were mentioned earlier; i.e., private language institutes, private tutoring directed at a single or a very small group of students, and self-study materials. Bray (1999, 2006) has also used the term in discussing these supplementary learning activities outside the school that correspond to attributes of formal schooling. In these respects, it was decided that the term private tutoring would be used in the present study.

Regarding the parents of these students, initially, most of them were not enthusiastic about their and their children's participation in the present study. After having been persuaded that the findings of the study could contribute positively to EFL teaching in Korea, however, they agreed to participate and allow their children to participate. The school teachers were from 10 elementary schools and 10 middle and high schools in Seoul. While many of them were also originally reluctant to take part in the study, they later decided to participate for the same reason as the parents of the student participants.

2. Data Collection

Before undertaking the study in April, 2012, I contacted several English teacher study groups in Seoul. The study groups provided me with the names of teachers at 15 elementary schools and 12 middle and high schools who might be approached for recruitment for the study. I called each of them and succeeded in eliciting the cooperation of teachers at 20 schools. The teachers helped me to contact the parents of their students for enlistment in the study. I obtained the consent of the principals of the schools.

I conducted semi-structured interviews in Korean with the participants for approximately one hour per person. The sites of the interviews, expected to afford participants power and control as well as flexibility (Nunan, 1992), were classrooms after class for students and teachers, and living rooms at home for parents. I exercised

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much caution to ensure that all the interviews would be done in a non-manipulative way for stronger investigatory validity. In addition, I used note-taking to complement the interview data (Nunan, 1992). The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and translated into English for reporting.

3. Data Analysis

The analysis of the interview data was guided by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Maykut and Morehouse (1994). In particular, I followed the three-step process Miles and Huberman proposed: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verifying. After reading the interview transcripts multiple times, I identified and grouped themes. I then compared and contrasted the themes and incorporated specific categories into overall categories. The categories established through the procedure were checked for their reliability by two EFL teachers with doctoral degrees in TEFL at an elementary and a middle school. When there emerged cases of disagreements, the two teachers settled them through discussion.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Private Tutoring in English as a Necessary Evil to Complement Formal Instruction in English in Schools

The majority of the students, their parents, and teachers interviewed agreed that private tutoring constituted a "necessary evil" (Kang & Hong, 2008, p. 205) in the subject of English. Such a view was attributed to their recognition of private tutoring as compensating for what they found lacking in school tutoring (Popa & Acedo, 2006). Albeit to different degrees, they all considered private tutoring in English an institution which performs various functions that they perceived should have been fulfilled by formal instruction in English in schools. What is interesting is that the participants in the present study appreciated the importance of schooling more than Bangladesh students in Hamid et al.'s (2009) study. Hamid et al. reported that the tenth-grade students perceived attending school as either "a waste of time" (p. 299) or "an unhappy necessity" (p. 299). By contrast, the Korean students as well as their parents and teachers respected the fundamental place that school attendance holds and implied the possible replaceability of private tutoring in English with formal instruction in English in schools depending on the improvement of the quality of school instruction. The following is what a secondary student stated.

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(1) Report (Secondary student #2)
It's a given that you should go to school every weekday. I'm sure it's the most important institution in students' lives. Unfortunately, though, English teaching in school doesn't seem good enough to give me the competitive edge needed to excel in the CSAT. My parents and, to a lesser extent I, believe school teaching should help you get ahead of your competitors. Well, I had to enlist help from private tutoring in English. My parents wouldn't have signed me up for private tutoring, if my school had given me an adequate competitive edge.

From (1), it appears clear that the predominant motive for her reliance on private tutoring was that she and her parents perceived formal instruction in English in secondary schools inadequate to enable her to obtain a higher score on the English subtest of the CSAT than other students. Although the dissatisfaction with the quality of formal instruction in English in schools has been repeatedly argued as the major factor for participation in private tutoring in English (Hamid et al., 2009; Khuwaileh & Al-Shoumali, 2001), parental dissatisfaction has had little focus. In the present study, the parent participants expressed their doubt that secondary EFL teachers alone could help their children perform better on the English subtest of the CSAT. Regarding the parental disapproval, a large portion of teacher interviewees reported that contextual limitations rather than lack of teacher capability were responsible for their failure to meet the student and parental need. In particular, they emphasized that time constraints arising from the need to handle a large administrative workload hindered them from concentrating on making pedagogical efforts (Avalos, 1998). Below is what a secondary EFL teacher stated.

(2) Report (Secondary teacher #4)
I don't buy what the parents thought to be the key reason for their children's participation in private tutoring in English. They don't quite understand the extent of our workload. We are inundated with administrative paperwork every day, and we simply can't concentrate on the goal of better teaching of English. As you know, teaching English is different from teaching other subjects. You need more time to prepare each lesson. The elementary teachers that I have met at EFL teacher meetings made similar complaints.

As is evident from (2), the burden of handling an overwhelming administrative workload was experienced by both elementary and secondary EFL teachers who could have otherwise devoted their time and energy to preparing lessons. Borg (2006) reported that L2 English teachers are viewed in previous research as having more difficulty

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sustaining and building their subject knowledge than teachers of other subjects.

A great number of the elementary school teachers interviewed, though, ascribed student participation in private tutoring in English more to their own inability to direct attention to individual students than to the administrative workload. Kim (2002) similarly asserted, in her study, that teachers' failures to deliver to each student sufficient help with study prompt Korean elementary school fifth graders to seek private tutoring in English. The elementary school teachers in the present study maintained that their large-size, mixed-ability classes, which constitute the perceived constraints in most Asian EFL contexts (Carless, 2004), were most responsible for their failure to show adequate attention to each student. They expressed concern that this might have caused some of them to feel alienated and lose interest in learning English. According to Lee (2006), Korean parents identified interest in English learning as the most important factor for the improvement of elementary students' English proficiency.

In addition to the absence of adequate time spent on individual students on the part of teachers, the parents of elementary students stressed that private tutoring in English presents more opportunities to learn from native-English-speaking (NES) teachers than formal instruction in English in schools. Butler (2007) reported that many Korean elementary students are perceived to take part in private tutoring in English administered by NES teachers. One of the parents in the present study commented as follows.

> (3) Report (Parent of elementary student #7)
> Well, you just can't expect Korean school teachers alone to teach your children English properly and completely. They simply can't match NES teachers in terms of pronunciation and accent or English use in conversations, can they? So you need NES teachers as well as Korean school teachers. At private language institutes, they have many more NES teachers, and each class at the institute consists of fewer students, meaning your children get more of the teacher's attention. For these reasons, I decided to sign my children up for classes at a private institute and they're doing fine.

Interestingly, in (3) the parent appears to acknowledge the contributions nonnative-English-speaking (NNES) elementary school teachers make to her children's English learning while manifesting her preference for NES teachers whom she believed to have superiority in pronunciation and accent. This acceptance of the positive role played by NNES teachers constitutes a contrast to how the Japanese parents view NNES teachers. According to Takada (2000, cited in Butler, 2007), the Japanese parents desired only NES teachers to teach their children. The perceived contributions of NNES schoolteachers compared to those of NES teachers at private language institutes were

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also addressed by elementary student interviewees. The following is what an elementary student commented.

> (4) Report (Elementary student #5)
> I am a sixth grader and believe that NES teachers at the private language institute help me learn correct English pronunciation and accent, and English conversation; however, I think that I also learn a lot from Korean school teachers. They give me more detailed explanations of important points for my future learning of English such as cultural differences between Korea and other countries than NES teachers do because they use Korean. Besides, they teach me grammar - which is difficult to learn - better than NES teachers because they use Korean.

According to the student interviewee in (4), private tutoring in English featuring NES teachers and formal instruction in English in schools featuring NNES teachers each have well-defined areas in which they can help elementary EFL students: pronunciation/accent and communicative abilities, and grammatical knowledge and the knowledge important for student learning of EFL including intercultural knowledge (Graddol, 2006), respectively. In a prior study, Butler (2007) found that Korean elementary students favored a teacher speaking American-accented English (an NES model) over a teacher speaking Korean-accented English (an NNES model). The findings of the present study seem to suggest that pronunciation/accent and communicative skills were the main reasons why Korean elementary students preferred the American-accented teacher. This preference of the students seems to be responsible for their participation in private tutoring in English. In terms of NNES teachers, what has been found in previous studies seems to be corroborated in the present study: the teaching of pedagogically important areas such as the culture of L1 English speaking countries and grammar can be delivered more effectively by NNES teachers (Kang, 2008; Luo, 2007).

2. The Extent of Advocacy of Private Tutoring in English Depending on Stakeholder Group

As discussed in the previous subsection, the three main stakeholder groups in private tutoring all viewed private tutoring in English as complementing formal instruction in English in schools by fulfilling student and parental needs not met by school EFL teachers. Despite their shared view, it was the parents who advocated private tutoring in English the most strongly. The advocacy of the parents of elementary students was found

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to be derived fundamentally from their belief that English proficiency facilitates their children's access to career advancement and material wealth. Below is what a parent stated.

> (5) Report (Parent of elementary student #3)
> I have personally experienced how important it is for one to be proficient in English to get a good job. Certainly, you need other qualifications besides being good at English, and yet English proficiency definitely helps you get ahead of others. Considering we are living in a tightly knit world where English is spoken by people of different nationalities, it is only too natural that fluent English speakers get high-paying jobs. For this core reason, I had my son signed up for programs at a private language institute. You see, that's the place where he could learn from NES teachers.

The parent in (5) believes that English proficiency provides career and material advantages because of its status as a lingua franca (Dewey, 2007). He explains that the indispensable role played by English proficiency in global communication in various areas (Kubota & McKay, 2009) was the fundamental reason behind his child receiving private tutoring in English. Most of the parents of elementary students agreed with him. They were concerned that, without private tutoring in English, their children's English use would be limited only to the classroom. This concern has been argued to be common across varying EFL contexts (e.g., Chen, Warden, & Chang, 2005) where parents believe that the NNES teachers of their children lack adequate communicative abilities. This belief on the part of parents corresponded to Lee's (2002, cited in Butler, 2004) claim that the low proficiency level of Korean elementary school teachers prevented them from teaching communicative skills.

In contrast to the parents of elementary students, those of secondary students were not focused on the approach of communicative language teaching (CLT) which has been enthusiastically espoused in East Asian EFL countries, including Korea (Nunan, 2003). Rather, the parents were found to be interested in EFL teachers' ability to teach the content needed to obtain higher scores on the English subtest of the CSAT. Similarly, Kanno (2007) reported that Japanese parents require high school EFL teachers to concentrate on the areas that university entrance examinations measure. While caution should be exercised when making direct comparisons between countries (Butler, 2004), the similarity in opinion between the Korean and Japanese parents seems to indicate that the need to study for university entrance examinations affects formal instruction in English in schools cross-contextually by the agency of parents.

In addition to the pedagogical content, the parents expected private tutoring to provide

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their children with test-taking strategies as well as test-wiseness strategies (Nitko, 2001). According to the parents, their personal experience as secondary school EFL students had sensitized them to the need to depend on private tutoring to help their children learn test-taking and test-wiseness strategies. They perceived school teachers as unable to satisfactorily help their children learn the strategies needed for the CSAT. The parents stated that their view of a competent secondary teacher was someone who could equip their children with the knowledge and techniques necessary to earn high grades on the English subtest of the CSAT.

With respect to the parents' reliance on private tutoring, though, their children and school teachers raised questions. In particular, elementary students expressed more reservations about the parental dependence on private tutoring than secondary students. This appears to be in interesting conflict with the difference in the ratio of participation in private tutoring in English between elementary and secondary students. According to the Korea National Statistical Office (2010), more elementary students participated in private tutoring in English than secondary students in 2009. Unlike secondary students, most of the elementary students interviewed complained that their parents had constantly pressured them to study English more diligently by being more attentive to NES teachers at the private language institute. They suspected that their parents had been experiencing a certain degree of anxiety about their English learning. An elementary student reported as follows.

> (6) Report (Elementary student #1)
> My parents have too many worries about my English learning. They keep telling me to pay my utmost attention to the American teachers at the private language institute. They constantly tell me that I have to try to learn to speak fluent English with foreigners by actively engaging in classes at the institute. They stress that, as a result, I will have a bright future. I understand clearly what they are talking about. Very often, though, they harp on it to the point where I almost find English learning altogether unattractive. They definitely stress private tutoring more than school tutoring, even though Korean school teachers also deepen my interest in English learning by giving me useful information, including cultural differences between Korea and America or England.

As shown in (6), the repeated pressure from parents for the student to develop communicative abilities in English ran the risk of causing her to develop a disinterest in English learning. With respect to the demotivation of Korean elementary students to learn English, Kim (2011) asserted that their private tutoring experience may have a negative effect on their English learning. Kim analyzed over 6,000 Korean elementary

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students' responses to survey questions and concluded that the students' own understanding of the importance and the meaning which English learning assumes contributes to sustaining/enhancing their motivation to learn English. He contended that the prevalent social discourse on English as a lingua franca and the expenditure on private tutoring are not conducive to increasing English learning motivation. The negative attitude toward private tutoring caused by parental pressure as displayed in (6) seems to corroborate Kim's claim. As he implied, parents would do their children better service by allowing them to judiciously evaluate their own English learning, and thus enable them to relate their learning to their particular life situation and further amplify their motivation toward learning English.

In relation to the student's disapproval of her parents' pressure in (6), it appears that there is an important point to address which has seen little research: the difference between the student's motivational disposition and that of the parents for having their children learn English. The difference in motivational disposition (i.e., instrumental orientation for the student's parents versus a combination of integrative and instrumental orientations for the student) suggests that it should be further examined to determine how certain forms of motivational disposition could help improve elementary students' proficiency during school and private tutoring in English. Additionally, the presence of integrative orientation found together with that of instrumental orientation seems to underline the need to scrutinize the important role that integrative orientation plays, particularly in connection with private tutoring in English and formal instruction in English in schools. This research agenda has been little addressed in East Asia, except for Warden and Lin (2000).

Secondary students were found to have fewer reservations about their parents' considerable emphasis on private tutoring in English. Chung (2004, 2005) found that Korean elementary students' interest in EFL learning, whether in the context of private tutoring or formal instruction in school, decreases as their school years progress. Further, Koizumi and Matsuo (1993, cited in Nakata, 2006) reported that first-year Japanese middle school students' motivation to learn EFL declined following the beginning phase of their learning process. The findings of the two previous studies were in line with that of the present study: secondary students displayed less enthusiasm for EFL learning than elementary students. The secondary students' lack of interest in EFL learning, however, did not lead to a qualified recognition of the value of English learning. This is somewhat in contrast to what Lamb (2007) found. Indonesian junior high school students in Lamb's study underwent relatively stable sustainment of motivation to learn EFL while registering the benefits of English for their future. This difference is attributed to the Korean secondary students' unwitting and ingrained conformity to the collective Korean belief in the importance of EFL, as Kim (2011) underscored. As has been stated in this

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article, the zeal for EFL learning in Korea can be described as overwhelming. Although their interest in EFL learning was low, the Korean secondary students seemed to be in agreement with their parents concerning the impact of EFL learning. Specifically, the pre-eminent place English holds as a global language (Wright, 2010), whose mastery is indispensible for the survival of the export-driven Korean economy, appears to have contributed to the consistently high level of the secondary students' appreciation of the value of EFL learning.

The majority of the secondary students in the present study had the belief that they needed to depend on private tutoring in English because earning high grades on the CSAT was the overriding priority. They supported what their parents perceived to be the goal of EFL learning at the secondary school level, as was argued also to be the case in Japan (White, 1987, cited in Kikuchi & Browne, 2009), although they complained that their parents' pressure to study English diligently while participating in private tutoring in English was sometimes bothersome.

Regarding the strong parental approval of private tutoring in English, elementary teacher interviewees stressed that parents' continued focus on private tutoring had the potential to disrupt their classroom teaching. The concern was found to be predicated upon three aspects, as indicated below.

> (7) Report (Elementary teacher #5)
> I think I'll be affected by parental stress on private tutoring in English if it continues unabated. There are three reasons for my worry. First, I can't teach my students more than what the government-set curriculum dictates, unlike those teaching at private language institutes. Second, the school can't hire as many NES teachers as the language institutes, Third, the size of our classes can't be reduced to the level of those at institutes. Considering the ever-growing parental obsession with private tutoring in English, elementary teachers including me will be strongly and negatively influenced by private tutoring. Students, you know, will compare school tutoring with private tutoring and some will show their disappointment, explicitly or implicitly.

The teacher's worry about the predicted negative effect of private tutoring in English on formal instruction in English in schools in (7) - that is, the disruption of classroom teaching - demonstrates that the unbalanced parental emphasis of private tutoring runs the risk of creating a vicious cycle of decline in the quality of school instruction and an increasing reliance on private tutoring (see Figure 2). In addition, the three reasons the teacher gives in (7) for her worry appear to reflect the constraints encountered in real time by NNES teachers in Korean schools. As for the curricular constraints, a Korean

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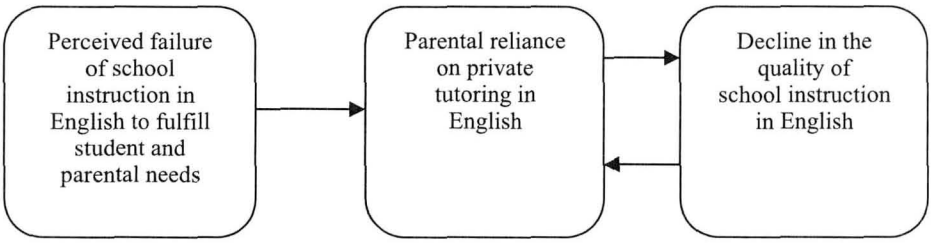
elementary school NNES teacher investigated in a previous study related to the practice of the policy of Teaching English through English was found to comply with the national curriculum (Kang, 2008). In similar compliance with the curriculum, the teacher interviewee in (7) perceived herself obligated to teach her students within the boundaries of the curriculum, although most of the students also went to private after-school language institutes and were taught beyond the limits of the curriculum.

FIGURE 2

Parental Reliance on Private Tutoring in English and the Decline in School Instruction in English



With respect to the gap in the number of hired NES teachers between schools and private language institutes as reported in Butler (2007), the teacher expressed concern that her students would gradually lose interest in her English teaching and become less controllable. Her concern resulted from her proficiency levels in all four skill areas which she perceived as lower than those of NES teachers.

The issue of the difference in class size between schools and private language institutes was, interestingly, viewed by the teacher as the most serious problem facing Korean elementary EFL teachers. The majority of the teachers interviewed argued that the possible alienation of students resulting from their failure to pay sufficient attention to individual students in their large-size EFL classes would pose the greatest threat to the balanced relationship between formal instruction in English in schools and private tutoring in English. Aside from LoCastro (1989) and Al-Jarf (2006), the agenda of class size in EFL contexts has been addressed by few researchers. While they found that large-size classes negatively influence students or teachers' attitudes, their focus was limited to classes at the tertiary and secondary levels. Amid the lack of relevant research, the concerns of the elementary school EFL teachers in the present study seem to indicate that the adjustment of class size to accommodate student and teacher needs should be given serious consideration. Concerning elementary class size reduction, it appears that school teachers, the educational authorities, and researchers in Korea need to pool their efforts. Their efforts should be directed toward identifying the optimal EFL class size in

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the Korean elementary school, and toward proposing micro-level, as well as macro-level, contextualized solutions.

Similar to the elementary teachers, the secondary teachers interviewed conveyed worries that the continued parental reliance on private tutoring in English could potentially jeopardize formal instruction in English in schools. Of the the several damaging factors, they regarded students' challenges to their authority as the most threatening to formal instruction in English in schools. The following is what a secondary teacher commented.

> (8) Report (Secondary teacher #2)
> The sustained parental dependence on - no, obsession with - private tutoring in English will gradually affect formal instruction in English in schools in a very negative way. The most serious threat will be students' reluctance to pay attention to me. Some of them have already shown an absence of eagerness for my teaching. If their parents keep believing that their children have a lot more to learn from private tutoring than from school tutoring, and keep having them actively participate in private tutoring, they won't pay much attention to their school teachers. Isn't it obvious that the teacher will have a difficult time of it when her students are unattentive to her and, as a result, school tutoring will be undermined? I'm not talking about the teacher as an absolute authority figure. I'm talking about the teacher as someone who deserves attention from her students so that she can teach them something. In these respects, the parents should modify their beliefs and call on the authorities to relieve us teachers of our heavy administrative workloads. They must allow us to concentrate on preparing for each class and meeting the students' needs.

In (8), the teacher contends that the parental belief, that of undervaluing formal instruction in English in schools, should be replaced with a request to the educational authorities that the teacher's clerical burden be substantially decreased. This assertive position, articulated with a view to fulfilling parents' needs - and which was shared by most of the other secondary teachers interviewed - was different from the way elementary teachers provided their opinions about the potentially undesirable effect of the parental dependence on private tutoring. The difference between the two groups of teachers is attributed to the difference in the degree of importance elementary and secondary students attached to school tutoring. Secondary students were found to be less expectant of formal instruction in English in schools than elementary students, as suggested by Lamb (2007). The prospect of secondary students' lack of expectation for formal instruction in schools - which leads to their lack of enthusiasm during classes -

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prompted school teachers to view a drastic change in Korean EFL parents' belief as fundamental to rescuing threatened formal instruction in English in schools. If we consider that, recently, Korean parents have strongly influenced educational policies (Seth, 2002), it would be most effective if teachers and parents could cooperate and urge the authorities to address the issue of the negative effect of the burdensome workload on teachers. It is expected that a cooperative partnership between EFL parents and teachers would spill over into other areas, including the strengthening of in-service teacher training programs that would improve teachers' EFL proficiency and deepen their knowledge of teaching content.

3. Private Tutoring in English Predicted to Potentially Worsen the Situation of Unequal Accessibility to Educational Resources

While private tutoring was actively practiced in Korea long before it became increasingly widespread globally, unequal accessibility to it has been considered a serious issue that should be adequately addressed (Kang & Hong, 2008). The report of the Korea National Statistical Office (2010) displays the presence of differences in the rate of participation in private tutoring and the amount of money spent for it depending on household income level.

In particular, the difference in the accessibility to private tutoring in English appears to be a very important issue, considering the place English occupies in socioeconomic terms in Korea (Shin, 2007). The elementary school teachers interviewed were well aware of the seriousness of the issue. Below is what an elementary teacher stated.

> (9) Report (Elementary teacher #6)
> I've had students in my classes who are unable to receive private tutoring in English. Their English-test scores are much lower than those of participants in private tutoring. This is a very worrying issue because English learning at the elementary school level could serve as the foundation of a person's development of English proficiency. As you know, at private language institutes they show each one of the students adequate attention unlike at what happens here in school; and, there, the students are more likely to interest themselves in learning English. I believe that's what has fundamentally made the difference. I'm convinced we should help non-participants in private tutoring in a more organized way. At the core of the activities offered in programs to help them should be our efforts to direct sufficient and earnest attention to them. We, as teachers, should stop letting lack of money deprive students of the opportunities to foster interest in learning English and secure a brighter future.

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As demonstrated in (9), the teacher's concern was predicated upon the importance of EFL learning at the elementary school level in determining the future development of EFL proficiency. The teacher stresses that the difference between participants and non-participants in private tutoring in terms of achievement levels in English could be narrowed by providing each individual student with abundant attention and developing her or his interest in learning EFL. The narrowed gap, she suggests, would encourage the students to strive to advance socioeconomically. Concerning the types of programs to aid non-participants in private tutoring in English, elementary teacher interviewees cited after-school class programs as being the most workable. After-school class programs, which the Korean authorities have operated nationwide to reduce household spending on private tutoring, has elicited little enthusiasm from teachers. Kim (2006) reported that Korean teachers are less than eager for the extra burdens that the programs place on them, despite their acknowledgement of the necessity and effectiveness of such programs. Considering that the programs are, in the main, favorably evaluated by the participating students (Koh, 2006) and English is one of the most frequently taught subjects (Kim, 2009), it seems that various efforts should be made to motivate EFL teachers to participate more eagerly in them. The efforts could include employing extra staff to handle the administrative workload (Kim, 2006), paying teachers larger sums for the extra work, and allowing them more tax deductions.

Compared to elementary teachers, secondary teachers were more critical of the gap in the accessibility to private tutoring in English. They maintained that the difference disadvantages those not receiving private tutoring by causing them to earn lower scores on the English subtest of the CSAT than those receiving private tutoring, thus preventing them from entering prestigious universities. They added that the failure to graduate from prestigious universities constitutes a considerable setback for those seeking high-status, well-paying jobs (Dore, 1976), and severely limits their socioeconomic advancement. The children of those on the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder, they worried, would experience the same lack of academic, social, and material success (Bray, 2006). One of the secondary teachers interviewed observed as follows.

(10) Report (Secondary teacher #1)

> What I'm concerned about the most is that the children of those who can't afford private tutoring in English will find themselves suffering from what their parents experienced: opportunities denied. As you know, in the '70s and '80s, students from poor families could study well and enter top-notch universities without relying on private tutoring. Not anymore! If your parents can't put you in expensive private tutoring in English programs, you have only a remote chance of entering a prestigious university. And you know clearly how you will fare

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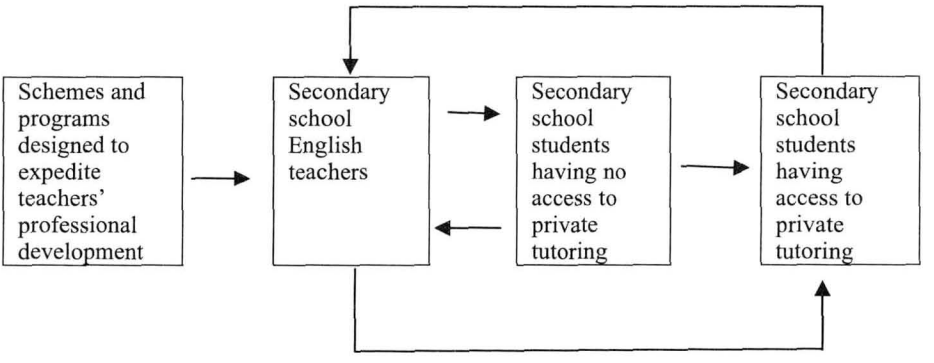
after failing to enter a prestigious university. The reason that I speak strongly on this is that I'm a high school teacher. I have witnessed first-hand how some bright students from poor families had to settle for less because they couldn't receive private tutoring and failed to earn high scores on the English subtest of the CSAT. This rich-remain-rich-and-poor-remain-poor situation should be redressed; the first step would be to help us English teachers concentrate on preparing for each class by ridding us of the extra clerical workload. The authorities would also do well to operate teacher training programs that could help us build our pedagogical knowledge. We want to help those who can't afford private tutoring in English.

The secondary teacher's view in (10) of the inaccessibility to private tutoring as compromising the main function of education in Korea - which is to close socioeconomic gaps (Hwang, 2001) - appears to indicate that the authorities should make strenuous efforts to include as many suggestions from teachers as possible when addressing the issue of the impact of private tutoring in English on formal instruction in English in schools. Given that school English teachers should and could try to enable students to transform rather than reproduce their lot (Lin, 1999), the authorities need to formulate schemes and programs that contribute to the teachers' professional development and allow them to help those having no access to private tutoring in English. Further, the sustained successful operation of the schemes and programs could activate an interactional mechanism for classroom teaching and learning which could ideally function to reinforce formal instruction in English in schools and re-facilitate the social mobility of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3

The Interactional Mechanism for Classroom Teaching and Learning Activated by the Schemes and Programs Promoting Teachers' Professional Development



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The interactional mechanism, which could cyclically involve teachers in improving the English proficiency of students not participating in private tutoring and the students encouraging the teachers to attend more to their professional development with their improved EFL proficiency, could also involve students participating in private tutoring. Participants in private tutoring, motivated by the increasingly narrowing proficiency gap between them and non-participants in private tutoring, could be led to be more attentive to their teachers. The teachers, in turn, could be prompted to build their professional development further and, as a result, could stimulate participants in private tutoring to be more attentive to them and enhance their proficiency. It appears that this cyclicity could gradually reduce the attractiveness of private tutoring in English and restore the efficacy of formal instruction in English in schools.

As suggested above, it seems that the issue of the perceived decline in formal instruction in English in schools should be addressed by first reaffirming the vital role that school English teachers can be motivated to play (Pennycook, 1999). The authorities' efforts to allow the teachers to focus on achieving their professional development and relieve them of administrative burdens could trigger the operation of an interactional mechanism for classroom teaching and learning. "The policy–practice nexus in the English classroom" (Bhattacharya et al., 2007, p. 465) made through such efforts would benefit not only the teachers and their students, but also, in the long run, the parents of these students. Without efforts to develop approaches to meet the needs of each of the three main stakeholder groups of EFL teaching, i.e., students, their parents, and teachers, the pedagogical and socioeconomic impact of private tutoring in English will hardly be addressed adequately. The cooperative relationships among the three groups expected to arise from the fulfillment of their respective needs could, in turn, further promote the successful operation of the interactional mechanism and, ultimately, contribute to the reduction of the negative impact of private tutoring in English.

VI. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Cleghorn and Rollnick (2002) contended that most educational research, being applied research, assumes a form of discourse concerning social reality. The present study was aimed at diagnosing the ramifications of the prevalence of private tutoring in English in Korea, where the world's largest-scale private tutoring is practiced (Baker & LeTendre, 2005). A total of 60 Korean elementary and secondary students, their parents, and school teachers took part in this study and reported, in semi-structured interviews, their perceptions and attitudes toward private tutoring in English in relation to formal instruction in English in schools. While analyzing the research participants' reports, the

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similarities or differences among their perceptions and attitudes were also examined.

The results indicated that the relationships between private tutoring in English and formal instruction in English in schools were perceived from three perspectives that involved institutional, psychological, and social factors. While Hamid et al. (2009) also identified social, psychological, and institutional factors responsible for the widespread practice of private tutoring in English in Bangladesh, these researchers were focused on the agentive role played by students more than that played by students, their parents, and teachers in interaction. First, the three main stakeholder groups of private tutoring in English, i.e., students, their parents, and teachers, all viewed private tutoring in English as performing the functions that should have been performed by formal instruction in English in schools. Concerning the inability of formal instruction in English in schools to fulfill student and parental needs, secondary and elementary teachers cited different aspects of contextual limitations as responsible: time constraints arising from having to process a heavy administrative workload (secondary teachers) and large-size, mixed ability classes that prevent teachers from providing adequate attention to individual students (elementary teachers). What was noteworthy was that the lack of fulfillment of the needs of elementary students and their parents did not affect their acknowledgment of the contributions made by private tutoring in English and formal instruction in English in schools respectively. Second, the extensive parental support of the functions of private tutoring in English was perceived by teachers and students as running the risk of negatively affecting formal instruction in English in schools and student learning in English. In particular, the instrumental orientation of elementary school parents responsible for their intense emphasis on private tutoring in English was found to conflict with the combination of integrative and instrumental orientations of their children. This, consequently, had the potential of lessening the children's interest in English learning which formal instruction in English in schools also helped sustain. In addition, teachers expected the strong parental dependence on private tutoring in English to disrupt their classroom teaching either by leading students to compare the level of attention they received during school and private tutoring in English (elementary teachers), or by encouraging them to concentrate less on classroom teaching (secondary teachers). Third, private tutoring in English was deemed by both elementary and secondary teachers as having the potential of disadvantaging students who can ill afford it and depend on formal instruction in English in schools. Interestingly, secondary teachers voiced stronger concern than elementary teachers over the possible harmful effects private tutoring in English could have on those financially unable to participate in it. The teachers believed that the secondary students' inaccessibility to private tutoring in English could result in a sequence of difficulties for them: gaining low scores on the English subtest of the CSAT, failing to enter prestigious universities and obtain

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prestigious jobs, and having their children experience the same academic and socioeconomic difficulties.

In terms of implications, the present study has two major suggestions. First, efforts to form a consensus on the respective merits of school and private tutoring in English need to be made based on the findings of relevant research. While not altogether an easy task, more emphasis should be placed on making ongoing and constructive efforts to shift the popular perception from the biased support of private tutoring in English to a more balanced appreciation of both private tutoring in English and formal instruction in English in schools. Baker and LeTendre (2005) asserted that inadequate formal instruction in school prompts parents around the world to seek private tutoring. Not only teachers and the educational authorities, but researchers should concern themselves more with highlighting the contributions that private tutoring in English and formal instruction in English in schools each make to developing student progress in English learning. Second, efforts to raise teacher awareness of the need to more actively engage in meeting the needs of EFL students should be made in parallel with the authorities' increased focus on strengthening teacher training programs and lightening teachers' clerical burden. Chung (2004, 2005) called for the implementation of more intensified teacher training programs to enable elementary school EFL teachers to engage in quality English language teaching. Since teachers are essential to fulfilling the needs of learners of English as Roessingh (2006) underscored, providing EFL teachers with opportunities to achieve their professional development is fully justified. Unless teachers try to capitalize on the available resources and compensate for the difficulties, however, any policy interventions could hardly redress the rising preference for private tutoring in English over formal instruction in English in schools. Popa and Acedo (2006) asserted that the practice of private tutoring is on the increase globally. The worldwide prevalence of the practice indicates that the two suggestions could be beneficially acted upon not only in Korean and other Asian EFL settings, but in regions beyond them.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND A SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study, while taking into account its "social utility" (p. 430) because it addressed L2 learning and teaching (Ortega, 2005), is admittedly open to improvement in many respects. One of the limitations of the study was the limited number of participants and participant groups. Regarding this, a suggestion is to be made for relevant future research: the conduct of large-scale surveys involving teachers, parents, and students as well as educational policy makers and instructors at private institutes. These studies are expected to provide more comprehensive pictures of how private

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tutoring in English as an institution interfaces with formal instruction in English in schools as an institution in Korea. Further, the inclusion of educational policy makers and instructors at private institutes would help present those insights required for a more balanced evaluation of the relationship between private tutoring in English and formal instruction in English in schools in Korea, as well as for the more beneficial implications for English teaching in Korean and other EFL contexts in Asia, and beyond.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: Primary and Secondary

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