

Strategic Direction for the Global Expansion of Korean Language Education

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Abstract

This paper discusses the strategic direction and practical tasks related to the global expansion of the Korean language education, including the number of enrolments, availability of resource materials and provision of teacher availability. The paper recognises that to effectively expand the teaching of Korean, there is an urgent need to establish harmony between policy and strategies. There is also a critical need to maximise the effects of governmental and financial support by exploring a systematic, realistic approach. As a strategic direction, the paper presents five macro points: glocalisation, sustainability, quality-oriented, integrative approach and online accessibility. A discussion of practical tasks necessary to improve both the quantity and quality of Korean language education is also conducted in relation to issues such as common curriculum, teacher supply and training, and resource development. This paper argues that the efforts and support for the development of Korean language education should expand or shift to school programs outside Korea in order to expand the learner base through and from school systems, hence helping consolidate Korean Studies programs at tertiary levels. For this, the effectiveness of projects in various Korean institutions, the rationale for the effort to promote Korean language education and the governmental and institutional roles are also discussed. It is hoped that considerations of Korean language education may be useful in the planning and implementation of policies.

1. Introduction

There is a pressing need to establish harmony between policy and strategies if the Korean language education is to expand globally. For this, it is important to maximise the effects of governmental and financial support by exploring a systematic and realistic approach to the direction and business projects of the Korean language education (Shin, H-S, 2005). Over the past two decades, there has been considerable growth in demand for the Korean language education in various parts of the world (Min, 2005), especially in the Asian region, but compared with key Asian languages (e.g. Chinese and Japanese) that are taught in educational institutions outside Korea, Korean remains a language with a very low profile, in terms of the quantity including the number of schools, enrolments, teachers, courses and resource materials (Seo, 2004). If target groups for Korean language education are classified into five broad groups: tertiary students, the general public (adults), school students, overseas Korean childrens and bicultural families, the weakest group in terms of the number, resources and support is school students in overseas countries (for example, only 0.6% or 4,000 of total enrolments in four key Asian languages in Australian schools are enrolled in Korean, Shin S-C., 2010). The low profile of Korean in schools is partly due to support policies and strategies that have been implemented and practised by different Korean governmental organisations (Shin, H-S, 2005; Min, 2005; Cho H-R, 2007), for instance, the Korea Foundation (under MOFAT) focuses on tertiary Korean Studies; the National Institute for International Education (under MOEST) and the Overseas Koreans Foundation (under MOFAT) focuses on overseas Korean descendents; the National Institute of the Korean Language (under MOCTS) focuses on the general public; and the Academy of Korean Studies (under MOEST) focuses on non-language Korea-related Area Studies. It is school systems that need much more attention and support in order to expand the learner base of Korean language education but regretfully governmental support and projects are limited to sporadic

and individual cases due to the lack of legitimate grounds for support policies, and as a result, there is a failure to bring significant success in the systematic expansion of Korean programs. Such slow or ineffective developments in school Korean programs appear to make a pipeline impact on tertiary Korean language programs and local teacher education programs, making it difficult to stabilize and expand tertiary Korean Studies programs in a number of countries, especially outside the Asian region.

What is more important, along with the task of expanding the quantity, is to improve the quality of Korean language programs (Sohn, 2009: 19-20). In fact, the possible expansion of Korean language programs requires not only an increase in enrolments but more importantly, an improvement in the quality of various elements such as contents, resources materials, delivery methods and well-trained teachers. Academics and educators have (and should have) broader or other reasons in their interests in Korea than governmental officials and business communities. In this respect, if educational institutions and academics overly invest energy and resources in quantity-focused non-academic activities, it might help increase the quantity in the short term but may end up with weak programs that lack academic credentials. As to this kind development, Wells (2002: 122) warns that “[in] the long run and in terms of academic values, the poorest Korean program might be one that has nothing other than numbers.” Therefore, the overall goal of various projects currently underway or which will be conducted in future should be focused on ways of improving the quality of Korean language programs as well as its global expansion to local educational systems.

With such a goal in mind, this paper discusses the strategic direction for Korean language education in five macro perspectives and practical tasks for the implementation of these strategies, including joint curriculum, teacher education and joint resource development. The paper also discusses the effectiveness of projects in various Korean institutions, the rationale of efforts to promote Korean language education and governmental and institutional roles. It is hoped that these considerations of the Korean language education may be useful in the planning and implementation of policies.

2. Strategic Direction for Korean Language Education

Based on observations and analysis of problems and issues raised in the implementation process of Korean language programs over the past 20 years or so, this paper has identified five broad perspectives that need to be addressed in relation to the strategic direction of Korean language education. Compared with other key Asian languages, the profile of glocalization (combined globalization with localization) of Korean programs is relatively lower, and there is a lack of sustainability and continuity in terms of support and programs. Further, there is plenty of room for improvement in terms of the quality of teaching along with the student enrolments and qualified teachers. Other areas that have been problematic include the approach taken in many programs where language teaching is conducted separately from other area studies of Korea, which results in failure to maximise the synergetic relationship between the two. Utilization of the modern, state-of-art technology is minimal in the delivery of Korean language programs, and is still to be effective. It is believed that these five areas are key issues that must be addressed. These issues should influence the strategic direction for various projects which are to be undertaken to advance Korean language programs in future. My discussion below will focus on these five perspectives.

2.1. Glocalization of Korean Language Education

The foremost strategic direction for Korean language education in this global era is to localize the Korean language and studies programs from international perspectives (Min, 2005; Fouser, 2009). As for business and various other fields of society, glocalization is essential for the survival and success of Korean language programs. As the term ‘glocalization’ indicates, glocalization can be summarized in terms of three-points: Think globally, deliver regionally and act locally. Policy (or decision) makers of governmental organisations need to look at

Korean language education from global perspectives, organise and manage projects by geographical, linguistic and cultural distinctions, and enhance the implementation of local programs that are suitable for local needs and situations. If we accept the view that 'globalization is localization', the localization of the support mechanism of Korean language education is significantly unsatisfactory, compared with such key Asian languages as Japanese and Chinese, in areas of, for example, local establishment of governmental support organizations, local Korean language textbooks, availability of local Korean language teachers and training programs for local teaching qualifications, and support for local schools.

2.2. Sustainability of Programs and Projects

The second principle which should be used to measure the success of projects related to Korean language education is to examine whether the proposed programs or projects are sustainable. Any short-term event-type of projects or support may not only make it difficult to warrant the success of Korean language programs but also will endanger or may eventually lead to the extinction of existing programs. It may be practically unrealistic to plan several decades in advance but it should be possible for policy makers and stakeholders to establish plans and operate programs with at least 10 years or more in mind. Any good policy proposals should start from the understanding of the K-16 or K-20 concept (Sohn, 2005), which requires approximately 20 years of time and investment for one 'pro-Korea' scholar or expert who is fluent in Korean to be educated and 'nurtured' from primary and secondary schools through university to postgraduate level, rather than loose and fishy conceptions evolving around only a few years (largely 1-3 years) of programs that mostly cater for university students or the general public. It is desirable and necessary that this principle of sustainability should apply to the scrutiny of all proposed programs and projects from teaching, development or support plans to actual practices after the implementation of such programs.

2.3. Quality-Oriented

Various programs and projects underway or to be undertaken by Korean governmental and educational organisations should consider the improvement of quality rather than the expansion of quantity as their first priority. It is necessary to make efforts and invest resources in heightening the quality of existing support programs and projects as well as newly proposed programs. The increase or decrease in enrolment numbers in Korean language programs are closely related to the quality of teaching and support programs, in addition to broad external factors such as Korea's political and economic status on the international stage (Min, 2005). It is particularly necessary to improve the quality in all areas of Korean language education such as textbooks, delivery modes, teacher qualifications, teacher education and training programs and support programs to be able to meet local needs around the world. Policies and plans should focus on projects that will upgrade or renovate the quality of such essential elements rather than undertaking or repeating similar projects in department store style.

2.4. Integrative approach

Language is culture (Wells, 2002: 122). Language and culture should not be treated as two separate disciplines in curriculum and this is particularly important in the process of globalization and localization of the Korean language. A language is a means of communication, which delivers something important such as knowledge about society, culture and history. From the language learner's perspective, when he/she learns a foreign or second language his/her linguistic competence itself is insufficient for the mastery of the language because a language does not exist completely independent from the social and historical background of the society where the language is used. In this respect, one or more 'culture' courses covering broad aspects of Korea should be additional core courses in Korean language programs and this requires an integrative approach. In other words, it is desirable to

integrate both linguistic and cultural contents in all relevant aspects of Korean language programs, for example, in the development of curriculum, textbooks and teacher training, to ensure that the learner may be able to increase his/her cultural understanding along with linguistic competence. This integration of language and culture is particularly essential in school Korean programs as well as tertiary Korean studies program (Suh C-S, 2002: 149).

2.5. Technological Accessibility

Face-to-face teaching cannot and should not be replaced by online delivery methods that utilize modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in any educational activities including language learning and teaching as human civilization have been possible essentially through human interactions. However, it should also be acknowledged that online and other technology-based delivery methods are effective in language teaching and are necessary to supplement face-to-face teaching. The provision of such computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is necessary not only for individual study but also to supplement established Korean language programs. Distance delivery mode is also essential to continuously maintain and improve the language competence of teachers, especially non-Korean teachers, as well as that of students. We should not overlook the fact that students are generally interested in CALL-based e-learning, which is also an essential and strategic tool for the expansion of demand for Korean. Face-to-face teaching can be enhanced drastically with high quality interactive online programs and as in any other areas the success of language education these days is only possible when ICT is appropriately applied. Therefore the operation of existing Korean language programs and the developments of new programs should be undertaken together with the provision of online programs which are easily accessible.

3. Development of ‘Common’ Curriculum

Despite the idealistic rationale and logical justifications, there are many practical hurdles in possible developments and implementation of the common Korean language curriculum. This is because there are both potential benefits and dangers in jointly developing and sharing the curriculum internationally (i.e. Korea and other countries) and among states or educational jurisdictions within one country.

The potential benefits at tertiary level, for example, will be as follows: Students from ‘A’ university offering Korean language programs but offering no or insufficient Korea-related courses may be able to complement their educational experiences by taking Korean studies courses offered at ‘B’ (or ‘C’ or ‘D’) university. The merits of such cross-institutional arrangements may be that the ‘A’ university can provide students with better educational opportunities and as a result enrolments in Korean language and studies programs of both institutions may increase (Evon, 2002: 130). It is also possible to bring financial benefits to both institutions in the form of cost savings. Academically, it can raise the credentials of the student’s degree in that such cross-institutional curriculum arrangements are made to maximize the strengths of each institution. Apart from this, there may be some administrative or managerial convenience to governmental support organizations since the support mechanism can be simplified.

3.1. Practical difficulties and danger

Despite the potential benefits as mentioned above, there are a number of practical difficulties and elements of danger in the development and implementation of a ‘common’ curriculum. Firstly, in established educational systems (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary education), Korean programs should be designed and operated within the same curriculum framework and requirements as other language programs available in the particular educational institution, educational jurisdiction and state but the framework and requirements are all different not just from nation to nation but also among institutions, educational jurisdictions

and state governments within one country as well, so it is practically impossible to integrate them to make one common curriculum. Secondly, each local language curriculum, as for the curriculum of other courses, reflects the educational philosophy and goals as well as sociocultural values and the methodological approach of the local society, government or institution. Thus, it is virtually impossible to embed various educational characteristics in one curriculum, and even if it is possible, it is not desirable since there is a danger in making educational programs uniform. Such an attempt not just goes against the principle of localization of Korean language programs but also can be regarded as interfering or violating educational sovereignty. Thirdly, it is questionable whether a high quality of education can be maintained when such a common curriculum is implemented and programs are shared. If not managed well, competition among educational institutions for student enrolments is possible, which lead to unprecedented conflict on the 'ownership' of student numbers, which may further lead to a diminished quality of education. Fourthly, while many educational institutions already outsource a considerable proportion of work based on economic rationalism or to reduce 'headaches', course sharing, which can be brought about by the implementation of a common curriculum, may be dangerous in that it can weaken the substance of a Korean language program of a particular institution.

3.2. Realistic possibilities

Well then, with these issues in mind, isn't there a way to establish a common curriculum and share programs? More importantly, is it worth doing? It is possible, and it is worth considering, except that there are some conditions that must be taken into account (Seo, 2005). The provision and operation of such programs, firstly, must maintain the standard and quality of education; secondly, must be beneficial to all relevant institutions and staff; thirdly, must be helpful to the long-term development of Korean language and studies program; and fourthly, must not be a burden to staff. Considering these conditions, along with the practical difficulties mentioned above, the development of a realistic common curriculum can be examined with priority.

The possible development and implementation of a common curriculum can be first considered in relation with Korean community schools (often referred to as *Hangeul Hakkyo*) or Korean schools (*Hankuk Hakkyo*) established and operated in Korean communities around the world. It is firstly because these schools have much more autonomy about the design, revision and implementation of curriculum than formal schools and tertiary systems, and secondly because many of these schools receive financial support from the Korean government via, for example, a Korean Education Center. For these reasons, it is possible to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of a common curriculum and for some schools whose programs are deficient it could be an opportunity to raise the quality of education by adopting a more systematic curriculum. Secondly, it is also realistically possible to examine the development of a common Korean language curriculum for adult learners in non-formal educational systems. In Korea and overseas, there are many different types of Korean language programs targeting adult learners in the community, and it is relatively easy to establish a common curriculum for Korean courses that cater for 'general' purpose, which are not usually required to apply such strict requirements as used in programs for a degree, certificate or proficiency test. In addition, such a common curriculum can also be useful to set the standard of many rampant Korean language programs (and their coursebooks). Another possible adaptation of a common curriculum can be achievable in 'Korean for Specific Purposes' programs such as Korean for Tour Guides, Korean for Business People, Korean for Public Servants and the like (You, S-H, 2005). Although current demand is not so high but the demand and needs for this type of program are gradually on the increase. Since this type of program can be offered as a single independent course, the curriculum for specific purposes can be adaptable or applicable virtually in any country if some specific details in the content are replaced. Such a curriculum will be more effective when it is designed in association with the assessment or achievement criteria in official Korean proficiency tests such as TOPIK. Lastly, although the possibility of implementation of common curriculum at

schools and tertiary levels is near zero or extremely low, it is possible to develop a ‘road map’ of K-12 or K-16 as reference pointers (Sohn, 2004, 2009). Such an attempt should start from investigations of Korean curriculum at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, with a view to draw common denominators, which should be useful for such a reference road map.

The possible development of a common curriculum discussed above requires a number of tasks and field work for data collection. Firstly, it is necessary to conduct an international project to collect basic data on Korean community schools, tertiary Korean courses for ‘general’ use, Korean programs for Specific Purposes and potential demand; it is also necessary to collect data about Korean language programs in formal schools as well as information about tertiary Korean language curriculum to draw a K-12/16 reference road map; and as part of this investigation, it is desirable to collect and analyze curriculum-related documents (e.g. syllabus, assessment papers) and conduct a needs analysis study in order to maximise the possibility of utilizing a common curriculum once it is developed.

4. Development of a Joint Teacher Training Program

There are a number of different types of teacher education and training programs up and running, and they include teacher training programs at Korean universities and private institutions, short programs run by dispatched training experts, training courses organised by local associations and governmental organizations and invitation-based training courses hosted by Korean governmental organizations. In the section, I would like to discuss a few issues in relation to teacher supply and the value of joint training programs.

4.1. Issues in Teacher Supply

Lack of local Korean L2 teachers – For Korean language education to be deeply rooted in the local educational systems and to remain influential at the base of society, there should be a mechanism to produce an adequate number of local teachers of Korean (Fouser, 2009). Besides, these teachers should be encouraged to not only engage in teaching of Korean in schools but to also participate in governmental projects, and be encouraged to engage further in the policy-making process of educational departments. In this aspect, the problematic area in teacher supply is that the number of local Korean L2 teachers is very minimal compared with other key Asian languages in most countries except some Asian countries.

Limited language competence of local Korean L2 teachers – The language competence of many local Korean L2 teachers remains at beginner level by the TOPIK scale in most cases and some at an intermediate level (Plumlee, 2009). Korean L2 teachers with an advanced level of proficiency are very rare. This competence issue has seen cases where opportunities for some schools to expand or be sustained have been limited and opportunities for some students to advance to the next level of study are restricted, while teachers cry out for help as they feel their competence in Korean ‘deteriorates’ as time passes. While there may be cases where individual motivation to raise their proficiency to an advanced level is lacking, a large number of cases are due to lack of systematic training programs, lack of training opportunities and or lack of accessible online programs for self-study.

Lack of local approaches and practices by Korean L1 teachers – Each year, many teachers of Korean are produced with a teacher certificate level 1, 2 or 3 from a number of Korean universities and commercially-run training institutions, however it is questionable whether some of these graduates are actually equipped with adoptable skills and understanding to work as a Korean language teacher locally. The matter is not so about their knowledge of the language but about the lack of locally adoptable competencies in two methodological aspects: competence in local language and approaches to language teaching reflecting local socio-cultural contexts (Yu Y-M., 2009). If L2 teachers of Korean are to be deeply rooted in a

particular country, it is essential for them to achieve a native-like proficiency in the local language.

Lack of mechanisms for Korean L1 teacher supply – It is known that a considerable number of teachers of Korean produced from Korean training institutions are yet to find teaching positions, and this may be partly due to oversupply, but it is more because of a failure to organise a mechanism to supply those waiting teachers to, for example, overseas schools (Choi, Y-K, 2009). It is necessary to provide well-trained teachers with a pathway to advance to various parts of the world systematically, and when considering the fact that chronic youth employment has been a significant social issue, it is even more necessary for the government to take the initiative to pave the way for a supply mechanism by making, for example, a governmental MOU agreement.

4.2. Feasibility of Joint Teacher Training Programs

In relation with the above-mentioned issues, I now would like to discuss the feasibility and effectiveness of joint teacher education and training programs as alternatives. The word ‘joint’ here is an attempt to connect Korea and other countries. Since educational institutions are usually responsible for equipping trainee teachers with teaching qualifications or upgrading their qualifications, such an attempt means in the end that both Korean and overseas educational departments or institutions jointly establish and operate teacher education and training programs, whatever forms they would take. Depending on the target group and expected demands, it is worth examining the feasibility of the following training program models.

Local Practicum Programs – This model aims to facilitate the completion of practicum and second (local) language courses in overseas countries as part of the undergraduate degree and/or teacher education curriculum requirements. This can be done by Korean and overseas institutions by making partnership agreements, where students are required to enrol in practicum courses offered at local universities and conduct practicum components at university or school Korean classes under local supervision. Students may be required to take a local language course as well. Depending on visa agreements and the length of stay, a student or working-holiday visa may satisfy entry conditions.

Intensive Training Programs in Korea – This model aims to provide retraining for qualified teachers (ie/ to change/add Korean as a teaching subject) or opportunities for students majoring in Korean w to participate in intensive language and culture training in Korea. Depending on the number of participants, it is possible to set up a separate customised program (with 15 enrolments or so) or place them into existing programs. Also depending on the needs of participants, it is possible to offer them intensive training which selectively focuses on language skills, cultural understanding, and Korean linguistics. As this is a short-term intensive program requiring a maximum of 4 weeks, it will be possible for the participants, in most cases, to stay and undertake such a training program with a visitor’s visa rather than a student visa.

Joint Degree Programs – Through certain partnership agreements between educational institutions, this model aims to provide Masters students from Korean universities with an opportunity to study for half (1 to 1.5 years) of their Master’s years at an overseas-based partner university. Students complete core courses mainly focused on Korean linguistics at their home university while they complete courses related to teaching methodologies and practicum at their host university. As an entry requirement, students may be required to present documentary evidence of their language ability since they will need to enrol as an international student.

Assistant Teacher Program – This model is an extended version of the ‘Local Practicum Program’ model discussed above. In this model, students in their final year/semester or those who have just graduated from an undergraduate or Masters’ program, preferably majoring in education, volunteer to ‘work’ as an Assistant Teacher at a local university or in school programs. This process requires consultation and supervision arrangements involving universities, state education departments and schools. To ensure that the program is stable and sustainable, the term of such arrangement with the assistant teacher should be at least 6 months to 1 year and it should be rotated at the end of the term. This program may attract some financial assistance from local education departments and/or Korean governmental organizations such as The Korea Foundation to cover the Assistant Teacher’s basic expenses

Seasonal Training Program – Based on the ‘travelling’ training program currently operated by professional organizations such as International Association of Korean Language Education (IAKLE), this model aims to organize it more systematically and upgrade it to a seasonal award program. Through partnership arrangements involving a scholarly body, Korean teachers association, governments and local tertiary institutions, this model targets practising teachers or teacher trainees to complete a (Graduate) Diploma or Master’s program intensively during the summer or winter term. For this, partner universities are selected in major cities where Korean is in demand and experts from both countries deliver lectures. During one term, which lasts 2-3 weeks, a maximum of two courses are taught so the whole program is completed within 2-2.5 years. Ideally the tuition fees can be shared among three parties: students, local government and the Korean government.

I now would like to briefly discuss some prior tasks necessary to undertake before considering options for teacher education and training. Firstly, it is necessary to appoint partner universities (and key personnel) among universities offering Korean in major cities since teacher education and training programs require the involvement of tertiary institutions, whatever form it takes. Once this partner relationship is established, it is necessary to conduct a needs analysis through this partner university and in consultation with government departments, educational institutions and professional associations in relation to what type of joint education and training programs will be workable and effective. This needs analysis is important since each country and institution has different local needs and contexts. As these ideas are based on joint or customized training program, it is necessary for the project team to prepare MOU agreements among governments and/or institutions and a clear and sustainable operational plan including costings.

5. Development of Learning Materials

The localization of course materials must first consider the target group of the the course. It is necessary to localize them by linguistic-cultural group with some modifications reflecting specific details of the country. Below I will briefly discuss resource issues with a particular focus on resource materials for school systems, along with brief suggestions on tertiary, the general public and Korean children.

5.1. Localized learning materials for primary and secondary schools

As indicated earlier, the development of localized resource materials for school systems is the area where the lowest level of attention and the least level of support have been given by the Korean government and governmental organizations, despite the fact that the highest level of governmental efforts and support should have been provided to enable Korean programs at all levels to grow in both quality and quantity (Seo, 2004). Complaints or words of reservation that the Korean government and governmental organizations should not hear from local schools and education departments are that they are unable to offer Korean due to a lack of resource materials. When a local school wants to introduce Korean in their curriculum for strategic or educational reasons despite a harsh school environment (where competition is very

severe among second languages) but is unable to do so, or expand or sustain the program due to a lack of appropriate resource materials, and yet if the Korean government and educational agencies do not take any responsible action, it is no less than a dereliction of their duties.

It is strongly suggested that textbooks and learning materials for local schools be developed with reference to the following matters of urgency.

First of all, textbooks or learning materials should be developed in accordance with the local curriculum and syllabus requirements of a particular country or educational departments (Kim, Y-M, 2005). Resource materials developed without conformity to the local curriculum and syllabus requirements are of little use, regardless of their content and design. For this reason, it is essential to collect and analyze the local curriculum, syllabus and assessment documents. Secondly, it is most desirable to invite and work with local experts who have extensive experience in teaching primary and/or secondary students and in the development of resource materials because of obvious reasons such as the level and range of language, curriculum requirements and methodological approach to language teaching in the local context. Thirdly, it is likely that there are topics and study areas among curriculum requirements of different countries overlap, thus it will be more effective in terms of time and cost when a common framework or chart is designed based on a linguistic group first, and then specific details such as names and socio-cultural elements only are replaced. Next, at a time when a paper-based version of textbooks is complete, it is necessary to develop an online version as well. For this, it might be necessary to build a separate website but it should be done based on the principle of simplicity to raise one's accessibility because levels of ICT vary among nations and in many cases available bandwidth does not correspond with South Korea's high speed internet. Another idea is to develop such online learning modules for schools in association with the King Sejong online program, which is currently being developed. And lastly, we know that teenagers and young people these days are attracted by 'game-like' language materials which they can enjoy even on the move. It is desirable to seriously consider developments of various ICT-based software as a kind of 'takeaway (takeout) deal' learning aids and in the form of, for example, 'Game Korean' or 'Cartoon Korean', which students can enjoy on computers, mobile phones, mp3 players and other types of modern technology (Kim, J-S, 2005).

5.2. Feasibility of localized tertiary textbooks

The issue of tertiary textbooks is not so urgent as for primary and secondary textbooks as discussed above, since various textbooks developed by a number of Korean universities and companies are currently available and reasonably adoptable in foreign countries or many tertiary institutions abroad have a reasonable capacity to develop their own textbooks. The problem, however, is in many cases these textbooks produced offshore do not suit the curriculum of another institution, socio-cultural contexts of another country or the interest areas of local students. Localization of tertiary textbooks should address these issues, and an effective way is again to construct a framework where common topics and curriculum elements are presented, and based on this to 'localize' it by language and with local curriculum needs and context details.

An attempt to standardize or localize textbooks for general public and overseas Korean children is much easier than the two target groups mentioned above. In case of textbooks for general public, it will be more effective when it is developed in association with the criteria of official language assessments such as TOPIK, and by doing so, raising the usability of such textbooks after development. As for textbooks for overseas Korean descendents, a common framework needs to be established with priority on K-6 based on findings of survey on sample curriculum used in Korean community schools around the world. Once specific elements are 'localized' to the general framework by language and nation, it is likely that such textbooks will achieve the highest level of adoptability. Where possible, students in Year 7 or above should be encouraged to learn Korean through public education systems.

6. Roles of the Government, Universities and Relevant Organizations

Reflecting the proposed direction of Korean language education as well as programs and projects mentioned above, I now turn to the roles or tasks of the Korean government, Korean and overseas universities and relevant institutions. I will briefly discuss these issues in point-form. Firstly, the Korean government and governmental organizations need to avoid repetition of programs and projects, and to raise the transparency, efficiency and accessibility of such programs, by integrating or streamlining based on programs for the main target group of various organisations (Min, 2005; Shin, H-S, 2005). Currently, these are excessively complex. Possible reorganization of main programs could mean that entire programs for Korean in formal schools are managed by the Ministry of Education; entire programs for tertiary Korean language and studies by the Korea Foundation; entire programs for Korea-related area studies at postgraduate level or above by the Academy of Korean Studies; entire programs for a 'socio-educational' type of general Korean language and culture by the National Institute of the Korean Language; and entire programs for overseas Korean descendents and Korean community schools by the Overseas Koreans Foundation. Secondly, Korean government policymakers need to review and revise 'the National Language Basic Law' to 'Korean Language Basic Law' by seeing the legal basis from international perspectives, and to make clear the subject matter of policy execution and support by specifying support objects, for example, formal and community schools, tertiary and socio-educational institutions rather than vague wordings such as "overseas distribution". Thirdly it is important and necessary to establish a 'one-stop' center under the Ministry of Education as part of the proposed reorganization or expansion of an existing business unit to deal with all matters related to overseas school-based Korean programs, including textbook development based on socio-linguistic group, teacher training, scholarships and support, promotion and consultation. Lastly but not leastly, there is a lack of comprehensive philosophy or rationale in the 'National Language Basic Law' about why the government intends to 'globalize' and 'distribute' Hangeul and Korean language. It is necessary to establish a high level philosophical rationale in relation to governmental or national projects such as 'globalization' of Hangeul and expansion of Korean language programs overseas.

In terms of the distribution and conduct of practical tasks, it is desirable for the Korean government to play a role to initiate, manage and support such national projects. For the conduct of needs analysis studies, it will be appropriate and effective to utilize three-party collaborations, i.e., Korean universities undertaking such needs analysis studies for subjects in Korea; local partner universities for subjects overseas; and Korean governmental research institutions designing and managing the survey studies. It is also desirable for a Korean experts group to design a common curriculum framework based on common denominators from the needs analysis studies and complete it with feedback from a consultation group consisting of delegations of scholarly and professional bodies as well as educational departments and authorities. In the development of resource materials, the first priority should be given to developments of textbooks for overseas primary and secondary schools. It is critical to develop those resource materials in accordance with the local curriculum and Korean syllabuses by course, and it is desirable to form a team with Korean and local experts of textbook developments and seek consultations and feedback from both Korean governmental organizations and local education departments. It is also desirable to follow the same procedure for the development of curriculum and resource materials for Korean community schools, the general public and Korean for Specific Purposes. A desirable way for joint teacher education and training programs is for Korean and local tertiary institutions to negotiate terms and make agreements, and the Korean government to support the process and implementation of such programs. If necessary it will be possible to pursue three- or four-party agreements involving both governments. As for teacher supply, it is necessary for Korean teacher training institutions to make curriculum provisions which enhance the competence of the trainee teacher's foreign language skills and understanding of local educational practices, and for the teacher qualification certificate agency also to take measures that enhance the quality of these components. At the same time, the Korean government needs to make efforts to reach MOU agreements with local governments and

relevant parties in order to provide a mechanism through which well trained Korean teachers can advance into educational systems abroad.

7. Conclusion

My discussion and suggestions, while based on macro-perspectives, require further investigation in reference to micro-perspectives. Generally, Korean language education still has a long way to go but in any case relevant programs and projects should be undertaken with an aim to expand practical educational services and to improve the quality of programs. Especially the Korean government needs to shift their efforts and support from the current practice focused on overseas Koreans, tertiary and general adults to Korean language programs in school systems, so that Korean programs can expand the learner base in the system, which is essential to ensure stability and sustainability.

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