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Author:

Shin, Seong-Chul

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Korean Language Education in Australian Schools: Success and Failure

Seong-Chul Shin

*School of Languages and Linguistics, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences,
University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2052. s.shin@unsw.edu.au*

1. Introduction

This paper aims to overview the current practices of Korean language education in Australian secondary schools, by looking at policies, curriculum, and a number of issues concerning implementation of the programs. The secondary Korean language programs were implemented at a policy level of the Australian government. The Australian language policy and curriculum documents such as *<National Policy on Languages, 1987>*, *<NSW State Language Policy, 1988>*, and *<Excellence and Equity, 1989>* strongly support the introduction of the Korean language programs in schools for its importance and value for Australia. Subsequently, various curriculum projects such as the National Korean Curriculum Project (1991-94), Korean Using Technology (1993-98) and Korean Pilot Project (1993-95) were undertaken, and different types of delivery methods such as regular classes in schools, Saturday School of Community Languages, distance education through multimedia and Open High School have been explored.

At an initial stage, significant financial and administrative support was given to Korean, and there have been some notable achievements in material developments and quantity of the program. In spite of this significant support and growth, however, there have been a number of justifiable concerns and criticisms that the programs have failed to effectively land into the secondary school systems. This criticism is often supported by the fact that each year, only a small number of candidates sit for the secondary school examination for tertiary entry. A number of factors have been referred to as the reason, and among them, use of wrong or inefficient delivery methods, lack of substantial teacher training program, and lack of long-term plans for promotion based on on-going research are some of the key factors that are frequently pointed out by academics and teachers. Not much study has been undertaken about this subject (previous studies include A. Buzo et al, 1995 and NALSAS Taskforce, 1998). This study, initially planned to attempt to examine various factors and elements in a more comprehensive way, has had to limit the depth and range to an overview of the programs at this stage due to limited time and data gathering difficulties, leaving a comprehensive and systematic examination behind for the next study.

As a groundwork for this goal, the following important points have been investigated at an overview level: 1) rationale for the Korean language program and its goal; 2) curriculum; 3) course books and teaching materials; 4) teacher training and methodology; 5) teaching facilities; 6) number of students; 7) governmental support; 8) attitudes of students; and 9) any problem areas for improvement, with concluding remarks and suggestions.

2. Data Gathering Processes

To investigate the above subject matters, four methods were initially planned to use (first, to review and analyse the policy documents and information materials; second, to conduct a survey by using questionnaires; third, to interview teachers and relevant personnel to complement the survey questionnaire; and finally, to conduct some field work, e.g., class observation and inspection on facilities, etc.) but this time a decision was made to choose mainly two methods due to the difficulties mentioned above. These are: 1) review and analysis of the policy documents and informational materials; 2) informal telephone interviews and electronic correspondence with Korean language coordinators, consultants and teachers in major States. Particular care was taken in reading and interpreting various numbers to ensure their accuracy and to avoid ambiguity. The focus of this report will be on secondary school programs in two major States: New South Wales and Victoria, where the Korean language programs are most actively engaged.

3. Presentation, Discussion and Interpretations

3.1. New Initiatives

There is no doubt that the current language policies and practices in various parts of Australia are largely based on or indebted to the Australian language policy document, entitled [*National Policy on Languages*] written by Joseph Bianco, then approved and published by the Australian Federal Government in 1987. This policy document was an outcome of his extensive study on Australia's language needs over three years. Two of the key emphases in this document are: 1) Maintenance and development of LOTE; 2) Needs for second language learning. This document strongly addresses the needs for opportunities to learn second languages, particularly 'key Asian languages' including Korean, by emphasising its importance for Australia's future. In relation to Korean, a particular emphasis was given to such practical reasons as economic, trade, diplomatic and intellectual needs.

This national language policy has made considerable impact on Australia's language scenes in various parts and levels. One of the first responses came from the ACT (Australian Capital Territory) Government and more vigorously and concretely from the NSW (New South Wales) Government. In its *State Language Policy* (1988), the NSW Ministerial Working Party made a strong recommendation that Korean be designated as one of six priority languages, and be introduced widely into the secondary schools in the State. This priority attention was received due to the fact that there was no school programs in Korean in spite of growing regional, economic and cultural significance of the language for Australia. As a result, initially the ACT Department of Education and subsequently the NSW Board of Studies took an initiative by undertaking a national curriculum project for the development of Korean syllabuses for use in junior and senior secondary schools. This curriculum project was followed by various forms of teaching material developments mainly in big cities, such as Sydney and Melbourne, eg. Korean Using Technology by the NSW Department of Education, where more than A\$1 million was invested; big and small projects by the Australian National Korean Studies Centre; and other various projects by individual teachers and bodies.

3.2. *Rationale and Aims of Korean language courses*

Seven to eight years after the first implementation of the Korean syllabus in the Australian school system, a new generation of syllabuses have been prepared and are being implemented from 2000. For this study, the former will be called Generation 1 (G1) syllabuses, and the latter Generation 2 (G2) syllabuses. Below, a brief summary has been made to highlight their emphasis on the needs for Korean language learning.

3.2.A. Rationale: G1 syllabuses

The six G1 syllabuses were developed or prepared by the NSW Board of Studies in 1991-93 in consultation with the government authorities of ACT and Victoria, but mostly used in NSW mainly due to the different nature of student groups and curriculum system. Below is a list of key rationale from the five Senior (Years 11-12) level course syllabuses.

- One of the priority languages
- Provide vocational opportunities
- Develop inter-cultural understanding
- One of the significant community languages
- Further study opportunities at tertiary level
- Extend existing knowledge and skills
- Prepare socio-political changes on the Korean Peninsula
- Deeper socio-political and cultural understanding
- Deeper understanding of Australia-Korea relations

The most frequently mentioned grounds for a Korean course in order of frequency are vocational, academic and socio-cultural. Throughout the course syllabuses, the expanding business and trade activities between Australian and Korean companies are heavily emphasised and along with this line, employment opportunities are highlighted as their foremost rationale. Educational and academic grounds are also commonly stated by emphasising that students have the opportunities to undertake the tertiary study of Korean language, along with Korea-related area studies. Nearly all of the syllabuses include the importance of understanding about Korean society and culture through the study of its language. The background speakers syllabuses give a particular emphasis on needs for students to maintain and further develop their existing language skills, and the 3 Unit Additional syllabuses promote the importance of a high level of proficiency and a deeper understanding of socio-cultural issues, including Australian and Korean relations. Those three main grounds are similarly stated in the syllabus of the Junior level course (Years 7-10) as well.

3.2.B. Rationale: G2 Syllabuses

In New South Wales, there are three G2 syllabuses/courses, which have been implemented from 2000, and in Victoria two VCE courses have been developed and will be implemented in 2001. Below is a list of summary of the rationale descriptions of the course syllabuses implemented or developed in those two States.

3.2.B-1. Rationale for New South Wales Courses (NSW BOS Syllabuses):

- Help the overall education of students
- Develop an understanding about different attitudes and values
- One of the priority languages
- Provide vocational opportunities
- Develop intercultural understanding
- One of the significant community languages
- Further study opportunities at tertiary level.

3.2.B-2. Rationale for Victorian Courses (Victorian BOS Study Designs):

- Help the overall education of students
- Promote an understanding about different attitudes and values
- Develop students' ability in the language
- Provide vocational opportunities
- Give a direct access to the culture

The rationale of new courses in NSW is pretty much same as that of previous ones, except two statements: one being the contribution of language study to the overall development of students, including communication skills, cross-cultural understanding and cognitive development, and two being the development of understanding about the relationship between attitudes and the value system. It is found that the rationale for the NSW courses are a little more concrete and emphatic, reflecting the local profile and needs, while the Victorian courses see the study of Korean from a relatively broader educational context.

Other States offering Korean seem to have same or similar rationale, while some individual schools have their own specific ground, e.g. to support the exchange program with Korean sister schools, to support the school's strategic focus on Asia and globalization., etc.

3.2.C. Aims of the Korean courses

3.2.C-1. New South Wales Courses (NSW BOS Syllabuses):

- Communication with Korean speakers
- Understanding and appreciation of the culture
- Reflection on their own and other cultures
- Understanding of language as a system
- Opportunities for connections between languages
- Development in cognitive, learning and social skills
- Potential application to work, further study or leisure.

3.2.C-2. Victorian Courses (Victorian BOS Study Designs):

- Development in communication skills
- Development of cultural understanding
- Reflection on their own and other cultures
- Understanding of language as a system

- Opportunities for connections between languages
- Potential application to work, further study or leisure.

The goals of the New South Wales and Victorian courses are quite similar. Not surprisingly, both States place students' ability to understand and use the language (i.e. communication skills) as the most important goal of their courses. This practical goal of language learning is universal and is strongly targeted in the Korean courses for Australian schools as well. Along with this communication goal, keen attention was also given to other universal goals such as an understanding of the target culture, general knowledge about linguistic operations and a development in cognitive and other skills.

3.3. *Current School Curriculum in Korean*

Each State government authority is responsible for its own curriculum planning, implementation, assessment and reporting. Although there have some nationwide collaborative provisions such as the National Assessment Framework for Languages at Senior Secondary Level (NAFLaSSL), where common national syllabuses are to be used and the State Authority which is responsible for a particular language sets and marks the examinations, the current situation is in transitional period where each State has implemented or has prepared for implementation its own new or amended syllabuses.

In New South Wales, there are three senior courses at present: Korean Beginners, Korean Continuers, and Korean Background Speakers. The Korean Beginners Course which has been amended from the previous 2Unit Z/Accelerated Level Course is designed for students who study Korean for the first time at Year 11. The Continuers Course, formerly known as 2/3 Unit Extended Level Course is designed for those who continue their study of Korean as a second language from the Junior course (Years 7-10). And the Korean Background Speakers Course is for students "with a cultural and linguistic background in Korean", where Australian-born and international Korean students are classified, in principle, as one category group. This Korean Background Speakers Course is only available in NSW, where the majority of the Korean population reside and accordingly the demand for Korean is high. Students enrolled in one of the three Senior Courses are expected to study approximately 240 hours over 2 years (Years 11-12) in class. Apart from the Senior Courses, New South Wales has one Junior Course (Years 7-10), where 100 hours of language study is mandatory and additional 100 hours are optional.

In Victoria, there is one Senior Course in Korean at the moment, and from Year 2001 two new syllabuses (or "Study Design") will be implemented. The Senior Course, which is based on the NAFLaSSL Extended Level Syllabus, has been catering for both background and non-background students of Korean until this year. Next year, however, there will be two separate Korean courses: Korean First Language and Korean Second Language. Korean First Language Course is designed for "students who typically, will have spent some time as a resident and/or have had significant experience of studying Korean" in a Korean-speaking country. (i.e. Korean as a mother tongue), and Korean Second Language Course is for "students who do not have a Korean background, that is students who have learnt all the Korean ... in an Australian school or similar environment." (i.e. Korean as a foreign language). The Victorian Senior Course involves at least 200 hours of classroom instructions over the two years (Years 11-12). Victoria has also been offering a Junior

Course in Korean, which has been reported as quite successful. Language study in Victoria is also mandatory, but teaching hours are flexible (approximately 100 hours a year).

Other States such as ACT, Queensland, and South Australia are also offering secondary Korean programs, though the number of enrolments and the curriculum support are minimal, compared to the two 'big' States: New South Wales and Victoria. At present, it is reported that three schools in Queensland, two in South Australia and one in ACT are offering Korean at one or more levels: Beginners, Continuers and/or Advanced.

The content of syllabuses, i.e. what the students are expected to learn, is not the subject matter of this investigation. As mentioned above, each State has its own curriculum framework and educational needs, accordingly the course content and requirements are different from State to State. However, it is common in all States that the syllabus of a particular course sets relevant themes, topics, study areas or texts that are required to study during the course, reflecting the different educational philosophy, local needs and tradition of each State and Territory.

3.4. Course Books and Teaching Resource Materials

It is common that the State and Territory authorities do not set a particular course book or textbook for the course, and reports confirm that there is no set course book for Korean. The choice of course books or teaching materials is up to individual schools and teachers. Nevertheless, it is reported that many schools are using the resource materials developed and produced by the State Authorities and Education Departments. Some schools use books and resource materials developed by individual teachers or a group of specialists in Australia and some others overseas published materials, along with local ones. Books and materials available for secondary Korean language programs, however, are only for those students learning Korean as a foreign or second language, i.e. absolute Beginners and Continuers. The Background Speakers Course, which caters for the vast majority of students who sit for the senior secondary examination for tertiary entry at present, uses in-house materials compiled by teachers and/or adopted from other resources as no books or resource materials have been published for this group as yet.

The Korean language books being used or referred to by teachers at schools include:

For Secondary School Learners:

- *Korean for Secondary Schools* 1-4, NSW Board of Studies, Sydney, 1995
- *Hanguk-mal* 1-4, Deakin University, Burwood, Victoria, 1995
- *Annyong* 1-4, Deakin University, Burwood, Victoria, 1995
- *Sugo Haseyo*, Curriculum Corporation, Melbourne, 1996
- *Nugu-ni?* Kit, NSW Department of School Education, Sydney, 1997
- *Arirang* Kit, NSW Department of Education and Training, Sydney, 1997
- *Choahyo*, NSW Department of School Education, Sydney, 1998

For Reference or Senior Secondary Learners:

- *Functional Korean*, N. Chang and Kim, Y-C, Hollym, 1989.
- *Korean Through English*, Hollym, 1993.

- *Learning Korean: New Directions*, A. Buzo and Shin, G-H., Melbourne, 1994
- *Korean Through Active Listening*, I-J Cho and Cho, Y-A., Hollym, 1994

In addition, various types of audio cassettes, video tapes and CD-Roms, which have been produced both locally and overseas, are being used. Also, culture materials, e.g. traditional costumes, masks, drums, crafts, charts and pictures, etc are used by individual schools and teachers.

3.5. *Teacher Availability and Methodology*

It is found that there are four different groups of teachers in Korean. There may be some individually different cases, but the majority of teachers belong to one of the following groups.

- Group A: Overseas trained Korean native-speaker teachers who have had in-service training in Australia and/or whose qualifications have been approved to teach Korean in Australian schools.
- Group B: Australian English native-speaker teachers who used to teach another language or subject and who have had in-service training in Korean in Australia and/or in Korea
- Group C: Young Korean native-speaker teachers who have been educated and trained in Australia and are fluent in both Korean and English (Bilingual teachers)
- Group D: Young Australian English native-speaker teachers who have had intensive and extensive language training in Korean in Australia and/or in Korea. (Korean language major)

It has been reported that the majority of teachers in Korean at present time consist of the pool from Groups A and B. And young bilingual Korean teachers and Australian teachers of Korean language major are now seen at several schools, though still small in its number. Group A teachers are largely involved in the Background Speakers Course, particularly through the Saturday School of Community Languages (SSCL), which is a government secondary school being operated in Sydney and only on Saturdays. Group B teachers, in the other hand, are largely involved in teaching beginner-level Korean or Korea-related Area studies in the major city and country schools where Asian languages and studies are the strategic focus. Teachers in Groups C and D are also largely involved in non-background Australian students in Asia-focused schools in the city area or regional centres.

In NSW, it is known that the current teacher training practices largely depend on the seasonal, intensive and/or irregular workshop sessions mainly organized by the Education Departments with assistance from relevant institutions. These short-term sessions, mainly targeting Group B teachers, are usually held during school breaks and occasionally includes an in-country intensive language and culture training. Also reports show that Group A Korean teachers participate in seasonal in-service workshop and methodology course organized by the Education Department and a tertiary institution. In Victoria, a professional development program is organized by the DEET Korean consultant and the Association of Korean Teachers of Victoria (AKTV). Often these programs are collaboration between the two organizations.

Despite the considerable efforts made by the government authorities and teachers, a number of informal reports indicate that there are needs for a substantial and/or on-going training for all these four groups. It is seen that Group A teachers will need a continuous English language training, along with on-going in-service training on Australian education environment and practices, particularly by recently arrived Korean teachers. For Group B teachers, it will be necessary to have an on-going extensive training in Korean, along with a seasonal culture training in Australia or Korea. Group C teachers will also need a further training in Korean linguistics and studies area. For Group D teachers, it will be desirable to have an on-going language and culture training to improve their proficiency into a higher level, and to update their understanding about Korea, which is changing relatively fast.

Teaching methodology is not an area for serious concerns, particularly among Australian trained teachers. As Australian school language courses place a high priority on practical goals - communication, and as the educational institutions and teacher trainers enthusiastically encourage the popular 'communicative' teaching methods, it seems that the majority of teachers are well aware of the current practical way of teaching. Skill-based learning and teaching like this are largely embedded in the course requirements particularly in Beginners and Continuers or Intermediate-level courses. This setting can be supported by convincing arguments that communicative methods work better in lower level language courses. Course requirements in Background Speakers or Advanced-level courses also reflect 'communicative' way of learning, but it is still a subject matter of investigation to see if the method is also well compatible with content-based components which make up of large portion of the Background Speakers or Advanced-level Courses. Another particular thing to mention is that there are a number of bilingual/immersion programs in mainstream Victorian schools but Korean is not included. There is a need for a methodology program specifically designed for Korean teachers for a similar immersion program in Korean.

3.6. *Teaching Facilities*

It is revealed that individual items of teaching facilities are different from school to school, but most schools are equipped with quite standard language teaching facilities, such as OHP, audio and video players, computers with internet and CD-Rom access. Most schools use normal classrooms with whiteboard, etc, and very few use language-specialised room, eg. language lab.

Two special features to mention are distance education through a multimedia system and the Saturday School of Community Languages programs, developed and operated by the NSW Department of Education. The former is designed to serve the country schools in the State, while the latter, individual students whose schools in metropolitan Sydney are unable to provide the Background Speakers course. Another feature to mention is about Open High School, which offers Years 9-12 students a correspondence Korean course.

3.7. *Number of Schools and Students*

The primary interest of this investigation is in the secondary school programs, but for the statistics, primary schools teaching Korean are also included in this section. Due to the lack of accumulated data, statistics below are only for the years available at this present time.

[Source: “Australian Schools Teaching Korean Language and/or Studies”, a list compiled by KL Consultants.]

Table 1: Number of Schools: Secondary Korean, 2000

States and Territories	No.
New South Wales: 27	27
Victoria: 6	6
Queensland: 3	3
South Australia: 2	2
Australian Capital Territory: 1	1
Total	39

Table 2: Number of Schools: Primary Korean, 2000

States and Territories	No.
New South Wales	20
Victoria	6
Queensland	1
Total	27

(Note: Some of the Victorian Catholic schools, however, may be closed at the end of this year.)

At this year, Korean is taught at 39 secondary schools and 27 primary schools throughout Australia, of which New South Wales takes the vast majority of the number, followed by Victoria and Queensland. Unfortunately, however, it is regretful to hear that some of the Victorian Primary Catholic schools might be closed at the end of the year.

[Source: Lists of Schools involved in Korean Programs, compiled by KL Consultants]

Table 3: Number of Students: Secondary, 1999

States and Territories	No.
New South Wales	1,885
Victoria	669
Other States	Not Available
Total (two States only)	2,554

Table 4: Number of Students: Primary, 1999

States and Territories	No.
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New South Wales	1,405
Victoria	777
Other States	Not Available
Total (two States only)	2,182

In 1999, 1885 secondary school students studied Korean in New South Wales schools, and 669 students in Victorian secondary schools, which make up a total of 2554 students. In Primary programs, 1405 pupils in New South Wales and 777 in Victoria, making up a total of 2182 primary students. The statistical information is not available for other States at this time.

Table 5: Number of Students: Victoria, 1998-2000

Year	Level: Schooling	No.
1998	Secondary	650
	Primary	747
Total		1,397
1999	Secondary	699
	Primary	777
Total		1,446
2000	Secondary	610
	Primary	820
Total		1,430

The secondary enrolments in Victoria have been steady in the past three years with the average being well over 600, and the number of primary enrolments have grown, with this year having reached over 800. Figures for New South Wales are not available at this moment.

3.8. Number of Students Who Sat for the Matriculation Examination

The following statistical information shows the number of students who sat for the senior secondary course and examination for tertiary entrance last year (1999) in New South Wales and Victoria. In this figure, Korean enrolments are compared with other key Asian languages by course. In New South Wales, the course for preparing the tertiary entrance is called the Higher School Certificate (HSC) course (Years 11-12), and its examination a HSC examination, while in Victoria, it is called VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education) course and a VCE examination. As the curriculum system is different between NSW and Victoria, it is not desirable to look at the figures from the same basis, but for this presentation the figures given below are based on the number of students who sat for the examinations in Year 12 with at least 2 years of senior secondary study.

Table 5-1: Four Asian Languages: Chinese in NSW and VIC, 1999

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State	Language & Course	Male	Female	Total
NSW	Chinese 2Unit Z	3	5	8
	Chinese 2 Unit	25	23	48
	Chinese 3 Unit	14	13	27
	Chinese BS 2 Unit	97	74	171
	Chinese BS 3 Unit	168	200	368
Sub-total		307	315	622
VIC	Chinese Unit 4 (L1)	418	371	789
	Chinese Unit 4 (L2)	190	251	441
Sub-total		608	622	1,230
TOTAL		915	937	1,852

Table 5-2: Four Asian Languages: Indonesian in NSW and VIC, 1999

State	Language & Course	Male	Female	Total
NSW	Indonesian 2Unit Z	16	97	113
	Indonesian 2 Unit	31	101	132
	Indonesian 3 Unit	11	38	49
	Indonesian BS 2 Unit	34	26	60
	Indonesian BS 3 Unit	2	12	14
Sub-total		94	274	368
VIC	Indonesian Unit 4 (L1)	97	154	251
	Indonesian Unit 4 (L2)	179	454	633
Sub-total		276	608	884
TOTAL		370	882	1,252

Table 5-3: Four Asian Languages: Japanese in NSW and VIC, 1999

State	Language & Course	Male	Female	Total
NSW	Japanese 2 Unit Z	127	282	409
	Japanese 2 Unit	213	566	779
	Japanese 3 Unit	113	219	332
	Japanese BS 2 Unit	39	44	83
Sub-total		492	1,111	1,603
VIC	Japanese Unit 4	342	760	1,102

Total		834	1,871	2,705
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Table 5-4: Four Asian Languages: Korean in NSW and VIC, 1999

State	Language & Course	Male	Female	Total
NSW	Korean 2 Unit Z	0	4	4
	Korean 2 Unit	2	4	6
	Korean BS 2 Unit	14	14	28
	Korean BS 3 Unit	99	84	183
Sub-total		115	106	221
VIC	Korean Unit 4	36	56	92
Total		151	162	313

The above tables clearly show that in New South Wales, Korean (96%)) and Chinese languages (87%) heavily rely on background speakers courses while Japanese (95%) and Indonesian (80%) on their non-background Australian students. The problem of Korean is that the demand between non-background and background courses is extremely unbalanced. This extreme unbalance has been continuous from Year One, 1994, when students sat for the HSC examination in Korean for the first time. Only 10 enrolments are incredibly low, compared to 1,520 in Japanese and 294 in Indonesian, and it is also extremely low in the HSC attempt rate when compared to 1,885 enrolments in New South Wales secondary schools (Years 7-12) in 1999. The low 4% in the non-background enrolment, the extreme unbalance between courses in Korean and the difference between Korean and Japanese in demand category have significant implications to explain. On this, one Consultant made comments: "it is clear that language programs which are better resourced are more attractive to students and teachers... Non-background students especially will be attracted to the programs which offer continuity and reliable support."

The tables also show that the profile of Chinese in Victoria is better than in New South Wales in its balance, where 36% of its students are non-background students. 72% of Indonesian enrolments are non-background students, which is a little less than in New South Wales (80%) but still in similar trend in demand category. There is no separate course in Japanese in Victoria and it is believed that nearly all the students of Japanese are non-background groups, as in New South Wales. Korean also has had only one course (but will have separate courses in 2001), and due to this reason it has been informed that the Victorian Korean course accommodates both background and non-background students in the same course. Therefore, the above Victorian figure in Korean should be interpreted not as non-background students only but as a mixture of both groups.

The above statistics also clearly indicates that Korean is incomparably much smaller than any of other key Asian languages in demand. It is not surprising to know that Japanese dominates Australian second language classes and that the majority of learners of Chinese, which is also a language of a large portion of Australian second language population, is Chinese-background students. What is surprising is that the gap between Korean and other Asian languages in demand is too vast, and the balance between background and non-

background is too extreme, particularly in New South Wales, where non-background demand is virtually near zero. Even Indonesian, which is the closest to Korean in numbers, is as four times as larger than Korean, and the vast majority (74%) taking the language are non-background students. It may not be desirable or valid, however, to directly compare Korean with only six or seven years of implementation with the other Asian languages which have been established for relatively much longer (for example, Japanese having about 90 years of education history with current enrolments of more than 20,000 secondary students in NSW alone). Nevertheless, it must be noted that the current profile of Korean does not reflect Australia's significant engagements with Korea, and there is an urgent need to improve the profile when the key position of the Korean language is considered.

3.9. Matriculation Examinations in NSW and Victoria: 1995-99

The following figures show the number of senior secondary students who sat for the matriculation examinations in Korean in New South Wales and Victoria in the past five years (1995-99). Again, this information from other States is unavailable at the moment, and even if they are available, it has been informally advised that the figures are very minor so that the possibility to affect the overall statistics will be very minimal.

Table 6-1. Number of Matriculation Students in NSW and VIC: 1995

Year	State	Course	Male	Female	Total
1995	NSW	Korean 2 Unit Z	2	5	7
		Korean 2 Unit	0	0	0
		Korean 3 Unit	0	0	0
		Korean BS 2Unit	40	37	77
		Korean BS 3Unit	20	43	63
		Sub Total	62	85	147
	VIC	Korean Unit 4	22	18	40
	TOTAL		84	103	187

Table 6-2. Number of Matriculation Students in NSW and VIC: 1996

Year	State	Course	Male	Female	Total
1996	NSW	Korean 2 Unit Z	2	5	7
		Korean 2 Unit	0	0	0
		Korean 3 Unit	0	0	0
		Korean BS 2Unit	41	26	67
		Korean BS 3Unit	48	49	97
		Sub Total	91	74	171
	VIC	Korean Unit 4	22	25	47
	TOTAL		113	99	218

Table 6-3. Number of Matriculation Students in NSW and VIC: 1997

Year	State	Course	Male	Female	Total
1997	NSW	Korean 2 Unit Z	0	0	0
		Korean 2 Unit	0	2	2
		Korean 3 Unit	0	0	0
		Korean BS 2Unit	18	20	38
		Korean BS 3Unit	62	72	134
		Sub Total	91	74	171
	VIC	Korean Unit 4	39	41	80
	TOTAL		130	115	251

Table 6-4. Number of Matriculation Students in NSW and VIC: 1998

Year	State	Course	Male	Female	Total
1998	NSW	Korean 2 Unit Z	0	0	0
		Korean 2 Unit	7	7	14
		Korean 3 Unit	0	0	0
		Korean BS 2Unit	13	15	28
		Korean BS 3Unit	80	69	149
		Sub Total	100	91	191
	VIC	Korean Unit 4	40	37	77
	TOTAL		140	128	268

Table 6-5. Number of Matriculation Students in NSW and VIC: 1999

Year	State	Course	Male	Female	Total
1999	NSW	Korean 2 Unit Z	0	4	4
		Korean 2 Unit	2	4	6
		Korean BS 2Unit	14	14	28
		Korean BS 3Unit	99	84	183
		Sub Total	119	104	215
	VIC	Korean Unit 4	36	56	92
	TOTAL		155	160	315

[Source: HSC and SC Statistics: www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/]

It is encouraging to see that the overall number of the students who have attempted the matriculation examinations in Korean have been increased each year from 187 students in 1995, to 218 in 1996, 251 in 1997, 268 in 1998, and to 315 in 1999, since 1994 when for the first time students could sit for the matriculation examination in Korean (with total 156 students: 88 (52 boys and 36 girls) in 2 Unit Background Speakers, and 68 (41 boys and 27 girls) in 3 Unit Additional BS). It is also pleased to see that the increase has been made in both States. As pointed out above, however, the demand has remained in Korean-background students throughout the years. It is disappointing to see that the demand in non-background courses particularly in New South Wales has been extremely minimal in the whole five years, though there are some pick-ups in the later years. In the period, there have been even two years where none of NSW (i.e Australian) students sat for the Beginners (2Unit Z) and Continuers (2 Unit/ Extended Level) examinations, respectively. And the 3 Unit Additional examination has never been attempted since its course offer, ending up with being omitted from the 1999 statistics (probably due to course closure). It is impossible to interpret the Victorian figures regarding the ratio of background and non-background students at this time, but it has been advised that the enrolments consist of a good number of non-background students, based on their active initiatives which have targeted at non-background students in regular school curriculum.

3.10. Governmental Support

As mentioned at the beginning, the Korean language programs in Australian secondary schools were able to be implemented with financial and administrative support from the Federal and State Governments at their policy level. As a result, early years of 1990s saw a number of big and small projects being undertaken, and later years saw various supporting activities being carried out mainly in New South Wales and Victoria. This report can only show some examples of such support and activities as it is difficult to report at this time the accurate figures and comprehensive range.

Relevant Governmental and Educational Organizations include:

- Federal Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET)
- Commonwealth Asian Studies Council

- NSW Board of Studies
- NSW Department of Education
- Victorian Board of Studies
- Victorian Department of Education
- National Korean Studies Centre
- Australia-Korea Foundation
- Others: Catholic Education Office, Asia Education Foundation, Korean Embassy, Korean Consulate-General, Korea Research Foundation, Asialink, Australia-Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, etc.

Development Projects include:

- National Korean Curriculum Project
- Korean Using Technology Project
- A number of other medium and small projects, including Korean Pilot Project.

Supporting Activities include:

- Syllabus and textbook developments
- Multimedia program development for distance education
- Retraining of language teachers
- Intensive language methodology courses
- Annual Korean intensive language workshop
- In-service teaching workshops
- In-country language training
- Student group tours to Korea
- Student scholarships and prizes
- Student exchange program
- Korean teachers associations
- Publishing newsletters

Most of generic funds were provided by the Australian Government Departments, Authorities and Agencies particularly for curriculum development projects, while government-funded centres provided occasional but practical support. The Korean Government or governmental agencies also made a contribution, though it was really minor in terms of its range and size of the support. Particularly, financial support from the Korean Government for the secondary programs is virtually nil. Big projects in early years of introduction include the National Korean Curriculum Project, where a number of secondary school syllabuses and textbooks were developed, and the Korean Using Technology Project, where over 1 million Australian dollars were invested (or “wasted” according to some observers) to develop and install multimedia distance education facilities for country schools. Subsequently, various type and range of projects have been carried out to support the programs. With more and more schools introducing Korean, a wide range of relevant activities have been organized and conducted by the governmental authorities, agencies or individual schools, though it still needs to see on-going, consistent and substantial nature of activities.

3.11. *Attitudes of Students*

Studies on motivation and attitude have been extensively carried out, particularly in 1970s and 80s (for example, Gardner and Smythe, 1975; Shuman, 1976; Smolicz, 1981b, Taft and Cahill, 1989), and still one of the major subject matters in the second language research. Studies (eg. Shuman, 1976) show that the perceived social status of the target language, such as cultural and economic status, plays an important role in developing a specific type of orientation in language learning. Other studies (eg. Taft and Cahill, 1989) see that the integrative orientation, rather than instrumental one, is more positively related to the priority aims of students who learn their mother tongue as a second language.

The current investigation is not intended to examine the motivation and attitudes of students and parents in detail and in a systematic way, and for this reason there is no valid ground to compare with or support the previous studies. Nevertheless, this report can refer to some informal observations and anecdotal reports. In an earlier report (Shin, 1994), where background speakers were surveyed, the motivation factor was mostly integrative. The most important reasons that the students referred to were 'language of family and relatives', and 'understanding of the Korean culture'. While this integrative orientation still remains as a core factor, particularly among Australian-born or early arrived background students, it is believed from a number of informal reports that the overall motivational orientation has largely moved to the immediate concern of the students i.e, the hope of gaining a better aggregate in the HSC. This belief is supported by informal reports that more than 70% of the students in the Background Speakers course were found to be international Korean students or migrant students who have recently arrived, mostly after post-primary studies. As to the non-background groups, it is believed that the orientation is more related to the instrumental factor as it is reflected in several policy and curriculum documents. At a Junior secondary level, the choice of a second language is much more related to the policy or focus of the particular school, rather than the intention or desire of the student. These non-background students were given the opportunities by the school to study "something different, new and relevant", as one of the Korean Consultants explained. This provision of course reflects the improved economic status of Korea and the growing strategic importance for Australia. Therefore, it is still a matter of investigation to see the motivational orientation of individual students towards Korean in a situation where they are given a range of choice of languages at school.

The attitudes of students are found to be positive. Comments from Korean consultants and teachers include:

- "Most see benefit attending SSCL..."
- "the mixed group socialize well."
- "there is much interest in the cultural components of the course."
- "Apart from the benefits to language learning, [the] exchange programs have enabled students to develop friendship and to learn about each other's culture and way of life."
- "Students are enthusiastic and appreciative of opportunities to participate in cultural activities."

This positive attitude was also confirmed in an earlier report (NALSAS Taskforce, 1998), where students "appeared to enjoy studying Korean." Judging from these and other

comments, it is believed that both background and non-background students feel benefits from the study of Korean at this stage, and are positive about their learning of “something different”, but questions remain as the responses from the students still need to be investigated.

With positive responses, there are also concerns about lack of students’ motivation in Korean. It has been reported that some schools are prepared to offer Korean as an elective course but have been unable to do so due to lack of demand. A number of factors can be put forward, but the key factors that have been frequently mentioned in various reports include lack of generic promotion activities and lack of generic support or plan.

Another but more important concern, which has been expressed for long by the Korean community, is that the enrolments of the ‘real’ second generation Korean students at the HSC level has decreased. This decline is not due to the lack of intrinsic motivation on students’ side, but to the ‘outside’ factors. A number of reports point out that the composition of the class population, as mentioned above, and the course content and examination, which requires native-speaker proficiency, often discourage these Australian born or early arrived migrant students to take Korean as a HSC course. The current eligibility policy also victimises this group of students, directing (or forcing) them to compete with native-speaker international students, many of whom finished a Junior High and some of them even finished a Senior High in Korea. It is believed that the eligibility criteria is too simple and inadequate in that it fails to address this extreme gap, ranging from zero to 12 years or more of formal education, placing virtually all the ‘Korean-looking’ students in the same single course and same examination mode.

4. Concluding Remarks

This investigation limits itself to an overview of the secondary Korean language programs in Australian schools. Although it was unable to fulfil its initial plan to examine various elements and the relationship between them in a systematic and comprehensive way, it was possible to look at the ‘big picture’ and to draw an attention to some key issues facing the Korean language programs in Australian secondary schools. Some of the problems or issues have already been exposed informally and need more attention in the future. Here, those few issue areas will be briefly summarised along with some suggestions for possible solutions.

4.1. Rationale and goals

It seems that the vocational needs as the rationale for Korean language learning has been too much emphasised in the secondary curriculum. One of the key reasons given in the syllabuses is to equip students with practical language skills to deal with growing trade activities between Australia and Korea. Although this is a good, valid and practical reason, one needs to remember that this instrumental reason is much more volatile according to the economic and political situations. The programs will be more sustainable when the grounds for study are integrative ones as pointed out in a number of studies. Also, it seems that it is largely unrealistic to highlight the vocational ground from the Junior secondary level. When socio-cultural and educational needs are emphasised, it is more likely that the

vocational needs of both the individual and the country will be realised. It is believed, therefore, that where applicable and if Australia is going to be serious about Asia, the rationale and goals need to be re-focused on socio-cultural development and the general educational value of language study. Along with this, there is a need to rectify or update descriptions about Korea in school textbooks and upgrade the profile of Korea in the Australian Social Science curriculum. A number of reports point out that many of the descriptions about Korea are based on shockingly outdated data and the range of cover is also relatively much smaller than other key Asian countries.

4.2. *Needs for a strategic plan*

One of the most problematic area is the lack of demand in non-background matriculation courses. The Australian Government Authorities have lots to explain why non-background enrolments in Korean in the HSC course have only been average 6 per year in the last six years since the implementation of the courses. The Departments and Authorities will need to bear in mind that criticisms, which often refer to a failure of a balanced implementation, an ineffective use of funds and a simple classification of eligibility, are not without grounds. There is an urgent need to strategically ‘plant’ and sustain Korean in the regular school curriculum, first in the metropolitan schools, then major regional centres in each State. While maintaining the demand of the background speaker students, every possible effort needs to be made by the Australian and Korean Governments to improve the profile of non-background courses, for example, a strategic plan to ‘plant’, rather than ‘fish’ randomly, generic promotion activities targeting at schools and non-background students, teacher training and supply, suitable resource material development, etc. Particularly, there is an urgent need to conduct generic promotional campaigns to improve the awareness and understanding of Korea and its society among the Australian general public and the students.

4.3. *Teacher training*

There is also an urgent need to develop an on-going and systematic teacher training and/or supply program. The current practice relying on ‘cheap’ supply needs to be improved in a way that teachers with substantial knowledge and skills can be produced and strategically appointed through a systematic teacher supply program. There is a need to set up an on-going strategic teacher training program by category and to upgrade their qualifications in relevant and necessary area. It is believed that the lack of demand in the non-background HSC courses is not irrelevant to the lack of qualified teachers with appropriate skills and knowledge. One of the solutions may be an on-going teacher training program set up at a tertiary institution with support from the Education Departments and the Korean Government. In addition, teacher supply also needs a long-term plan. A systematic effort needs to be made for willing tertiary students to be trained and graduated with appropriate qualifications. One of the schemes would be scholarships and financial assistance for their study in Australia and an in-country training in Korea.

4.4. *Governmental support*

While the question about whether the taxpayers money was wisely used by the Education Departments still needs to be answered, reasonable credit should go to the Australian

Government Departments for their financial commitments and initiatives. What should be improved in this area is the policy and long-term commitment of the Korean Government. The Korean Government Departments and Agencies need to aware: 1) Korean is not just a community language any longer. It is a significant second language learned at primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Australia and globally. The governmental policies which limit its role and responsibilities to the maintenance of the mother tongue in the Korean communities need to be rectified to effectively support Korean as a second language programs; 2) the importance of a strategic long-term plan to promote primary and secondary Korean programs in international contexts. Support for tertiary programs is important, but an on-going commitment and support for primary and secondary programs have an enormous pipeline impact on the nearly every corner of the society. For this, the Korean Government may wish to study the Japanese model, where the Japan Foundation, Japanese Language and Culture Centre and the Ministry of Education are actively involved in the promotion of the Japanese language in Australia. Similar promotion and support activities have been actively conducted by other governments as well, for example, the Greek Government, which has provided over years a large number of teachers and students with funds to visit Greece, has recently invited 100 Australian school principals with its entire funds, to support the teaching of Greek in Australian schools.

Apart from these issues, other areas which need more attention include development of quality textbooks, ancillary materials, prizes and scholarships and cultural activities. Above all, both Australian and Korean Governmental Departments will need to work out a long-term plan to upgrade or uptake the Korean language programs in schools. Particularly, the Korean Government will need to investigate the way that it can provide necessary assistance behind the scenes.

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