

# **Interpreting English Language Ideologies in Korea: Dreams vs. Realities**

**Jinhyun Cho**

BA, Sungshin Women's University, 1997

MA, Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation, 2003

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Department of Linguistics  
Macquarie University



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## Abstract

This research explores English language ideologies in Korea in relation to the recent phenomenon of “English fever”, or *yeongeo yeolpung*, which refers to the frenzied pursuit of English as valued language capital among Koreans. The popularity of English in Korea has recently attracted significant scholarly attention in sociolinguistics. Despite a growing body of research on the issue of English in Korean society, the question of how the promises of English translate into lived experiences and life course trajectories remains underexplored. Based on a multi-method qualitative approach, the study draws on three sets of data through which to present a holistic picture of the tensions between dreams and realities in relation to English in Korea: historical textual data, media discourses, and one-on-one interviews with 32 English-Korean translators and interpreters.

Historical textual data are used to trace the genealogy of English in Korea since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century via Japanese colonization, the post-independence period and industrialization, to government-led globalization campaigns. The English language ideologies identified through the historical periodization serve as a baseline for the analyses at macro as well as micro levels. Contemporary English language ideologies are then elucidated through media discourse analyses of news items related to English-medium lectures in higher education in order to examine how dreams about English are sustained and how such dreams contrast with actual classroom experiences.

In order to understand the uptake of these macro-level language ideologies by individuals, interview data from translators and interpreters as the most engaged group of English language learners are then examined. This includes an exploration of the ways in which individual pursuits of linguistic perfectionism reinforce linguistic insecurity in relation to dominant neoliberal discourses of desirable language speakers. Disparities between dreams and realities in English as experienced by the participants are examined from a gender perspective to show that the pursuit of translation and interpreting is a gendered career choice in relation to societal norms for females. Particular attention is paid to the recent media phenomenon of “good-looking interpreters”. The analysis demonstrates how English has been remoulded as an embodied capital in which aesthetic qualities of speakers can enhance the value of English.

The findings of this study highlight the multiplicity and evolutionary nature of English language ideologies. The historical documentation of the development of English suggests English as multiple forms of capital – cultural, economic, political, social and symbolic – with class mobility as a key driver. In addition to the earlier meanings of English, the micro-level investigations illustrate more diverse aspects of English as a gendered tool to achieve desirable female biographies, as an instrument to enhance individual competitiveness, and as adding value to personal aesthetics. While such diverse ideologies attached to English testify to its enormous value and possibly explain why English is so popular in Korea, the examination of media discourses about English-medium lectures reveals the use of English as a tool to sustain existing societal structures that advantage the already powerful conservative media. Combined with the constant mediatization of the benefits of English, neoliberal influences on English, in which achieving linguistic perfectionism is presented as real and feasible, further contribute to masking the sustained gap between dreams and realities in English. As people blame themselves for lacking individual commitment to the mastery of English as celebrated in popular neoliberal personhood, the substantial costs of the pursuit of English remain hidden, which in turn drives more people to pursuing English and further fuels “English fever”.

Overall, the research illuminates historical, mediatized and gendered aspects of English as an ideological construct. The study has implications for future research and stakeholders, particularly related to the need to rethink English as a global language, the diversification of English language ideologies in gender, and the potential of translation and interpreting for interdisciplinary research.

## Declaration

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jin', is positioned above a horizontal line. The signature is stylized, with a large 'J' and a cursive 'in'.

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## Transcription conventions

,	Clause final intonation
.	Sentence final intonation
...	Pause (longer than half a second)
?	Sentence final rising intonation
um	Hesitation marker
mm (음)	Agreement marker
(( ))	Unintelligible speech
@	Laughter (one @ per laughter syllable)
[xxxx]	Researcher's explanation
[...]	Researcher omission
CAPS	Emphatic stress
!	Emphatic speech
In bold (e.g. <b>hello</b> )	Words originally in English
To be written out as complete words from one to twenty. Numbers over twenty shall be written numerically	Numbers

All Korean excerpts have been translated into English by the author. The original passages in Korean always precede the translated passages.

Source attributions follow the translation into English.

The Romanization of Korean is based on the Revised Romanization of Korean established by the National Institute of Korean Language ([http://www.korean.go.kr/front\\_eng/roman/roman\\_01.do](http://www.korean.go.kr/front_eng/roman/roman_01.do)).



## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Becoming an English-Korean Interpreter: Dreams vs. reality

In December 1999, when the whole world was getting ready to celebrate the arrival of the new millennium, I was more euphoric than anyone else because I could finally fulfill my long-held dream: I had just passed the notoriously-difficult entrance exam for the Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation (GSIT) at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, South Korea (henceforth Korea). As an autodidact who had only begun to learn English in earnest at the age of 23, capturing one of the 40 coveted spots in the institute against around 1,000 applicants was by no means a small feat. On the day of the announcement of the outcome, I called my best friend as a proud translator and interpreter in the making and received a surprising reaction: “Wow, that’s fantastic! You have joined the upper class!” she said. Her reaction left me bewildered. While I, too, believed that translators and interpreters were glamorous people, the idea that my English skills had automatically raised my social status seemed somehow misleading and far-fetched. After all, it was not as if I had hit the jackpot and was suddenly a few million won richer. After beginning my translation and interpreting studies, however, I soon realized that a considerable number of students there came from much more elevated socioeconomic backgrounds than mine. Their fathers were diplomats, bank presidents, business tycoons, university professors, or high-ranking government officials. By contrast, my father had just started his own business after being laid off in his late 50s from a job as a senior manager in a small-sized enterprise during the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997/8. Many of my fellow students were brought up overseas during childhood due to their fathers’ job postings and spoke English flawlessly (or that is how it sounded to me), in contrast to my “unnatural” English obtained from dictionaries and English television programs. In fact, there were terms that referred to the different language learning backgrounds of the students: *haewaepa* or overseas learners of English versus *guknaepa* or domestic learners of English. The categorization of the students into two distinctive groups depending on their language learning experiences seemed to suggest that one form of language learning was more valued than the other. Although the teachers all emphasized the importance of individual effort in becoming “perfect” bilinguals, I could not free myself from the idea that our starting points were very different. For example, I knew a lot of terms and idioms belonging to high-level English registers, such as “sabre rattling” or “megaphone diplomacy”, as we practiced interpreting with speeches delivered by officials and experts

on global issues all the time. Having learned English through Korea's grammar-oriented English education tailored to university entrance exams, however, I occasionally experienced embarrassing moments when I did not know ordinary words such as "tadpoles" or "peekaboo" which overseas English learners had been exposed to in naturalistic environments. While I worked very hard to become a glamorous elite bilingual as projected in the media, I constantly desired the English language resources of *haewaepa* classmates and secretly wished that I had been given an opportunity to learn English overseas as a child.

Although I successfully completed the two-year program and passed the graduation exams (which fewer than half the students manage on their first attempt), I continued to suffer from an inferiority complex associated with English due to my own language learning background as well as others' high expectations of my linguistic skills. I could not admit that there were words or expressions that I did not know for fear of being discounted by people who equated me with famous interpreters reported in the media. While trying to live up to their image of me as a "master English speaker" (J. Choi & Lim, 2002: 635), I also encountered situations that made me question the status of translators and interpreters in Korean society. At times, I was undoubtedly proud of my profession, for instance when I appeared on a television show to interpret for a popular foreign singer. At other times, I felt frustrated by some clients who treated me as nothing but a service provider and a mere assistant. In addition, I was becoming increasingly wary of my long-term prospects in the profession as I was becoming conscious of my age. I might be paid much more highly than my friend working as a school teacher for now, but what about ten years down the track? Would I still be working as a "language assistant" for others who might be younger than me by then in Korea's age-conscious society? None of these issues were ever discussed by the teachers at our graduate school or the star interpreters in the media. These doubts lingered until I happened to read a paper on the status of translators and interpreters in Korean society. I was struck in particular by one statement:

Social acceptance [of translators and interpreters] was not on a par with financial recompense. Interpretation was viewed merely as a service provided for a client, and many interpreters found that after a few years, in spite of financial rewards, they were still viewed as professional inferiors. (J. Choi & Lim, 2002: 633)

To me, that was a revelation. I was praised and looked up to as a competent elite bilingual by many, even idolized as someone whose class status had been elevated by her language skills. However, according to the definitions contained in the Korean labour laws, I was just another irregular worker without access to either employment benefits or professional development opportunities. How could I have remained oblivious to this aspect of my professional reality? Indeed, why was there such a gap between the glamorous image professional translation and interpreting enjoys and the reality of the jobs I was undertaking? Why was the employment status of translators and interpreters so low while they are being respected and even idolized for their English skills? Given the employment status of translators and interpreters, why did so many people, including myself, work so hard to be one of them? Why was it that only the glamorous side of the profession is shown in the media? Mulling over these questions provided the initial impetus for this PhD thesis, through which I aim to explore how dreams and realities intersect in the pursuit of English at individual as well as societal levels in Korean context.

## 1.2 The 1997/8 Asian Economic Crisis and “English fever”

In order to situate my inquiry in its historical context, I will begin by briefly setting the initial impetus for studying English in Korea against one of the most tumultuous periods in recent Korean history: the 1997/8 Asian Economic Crisis. Although I had secretly developed dreams about the profession of translation and interpreting since entering university in 1993 as a history major, it was not until the eruption of the Asian Economic Crisis in 1997 that I became serious about English language learning. Shortly after I quit my first office job to look for a career change, the crisis erupted on November 21 in 1997, when the Korean government formally asked the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a bailout package to avoid national bankruptcy. When massive layoffs were witnessed daily across society in line with the reforms mandated by the IMF, getting a new job was simply impossible and I remained unemployed for several months. With no practical options in sight, I made the decision to “have a shot” at my long-held dream of becoming an English-Korean translator/interpreter. Failure seemed likely, but there was nothing else that I could do, or wanted to. I began my journey in early 1998 at one of the most popular coaching schools or *tongdae hakwon* established to train aspiring translators and interpreters for the entrance exams of local translation and interpreting institutes. I isolated myself from the rest of the world and studied English for 16-17 hours every single day for two years. While studying English, I could withdraw from the pressure to find a man to marry before getting

too old or to contribute to the family finances, which were difficult due to the fact that my father had lost his job, too. While being immersed in English learning, I could keep my hopes high that things would turn around if I succeeded in my quest. And, as I said at the beginning, my dream did come true. In retrospect, I wonder where my single-minded devotion to English came from. Would I have dedicated myself to English in the same way if the country had not been affected by the crisis that left me with very few options? With the nation mired in a collective state of destitution and despair, I needed a tool to defy a bleak future and English seemed my only hope.

This is how I embarked on a linguistic journey with yet little realization that I was in effect one of many individuals who were under the influence of “English fever” or *yeongeo yeolpung* that was sparked by the 1997/8 Asian Financial Crisis. The emergence of unprecedented levels of English language learning in the context of Korea’s economic restructuring stemming from the Asian Economic Crisis is by now well-documented, particularly through the work of Joseph Sung-Yul Park (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015). The levels of English language learning are such that many commentators speak of *yeongeo yeolpung*, “English fever” or “English frenzy”. Since “English fever” in Korea is a multi-faceted phenomenon born out of the interweaving of convoluted elements related to economy, history, and society in the local context, I will return to it in detail in both the Literature Review (See Chapter 2) and the Genealogy of English in Korea (See Chapter 4) as a backdrop of the research.

The discovery of the impact of socioeconomic conditions on my motivation for English language learning has broadened the scope of my research from a purely personal inquiry to a sociolinguistic one. I soon noticed a considerable gap between promises and consequences of pursuing English as a global language in various parts of Korean society. As an example, thousands of Korean children go overseas every year for early English language learning or *jogi yuhak* with the hope of obtaining native-like English proficiency in a naturalistic environment. This parental practice, however, has caused tragic events such as family breakups, financial distress, and even suicides of lonely fathers or maladjusted children.

Another event that influenced the direction of my research was a high-profile suicide case, in which four students and a professor at an elite university in Korea took their own lives

in early 2012 due allegedly to stresses related to English-medium lectures (Piller & Cho, 2013). The institute, often referred to as a “leader of globalizing Korea’s higher education sector” (Chosun, 23 July 2010), enforced 100-percent English-medium lectures (along with other measures) as part of their globalization strategies. Every subject, even other foreign languages such as Japanese and Chinese, had to be taught in English only in the name of globalization. Such a relentless pursuit of English without considering academic impacts reportedly caused an enormous amount of stress to students and faculty members (Ji, Jang, & Kim, 2011). All these events immediately posed a question of why English is pursued as *the* key to individual, institutional and national excellence despite its obvious cost. This question eventually led me to investigate the role of the local media in constructing and sustaining English dreams in Korean society. For one thing, I saw a parallel between my own linguistic journey and the aforementioned cases in relation to the media coverage of the benefits of English. While my career decision was heavily influenced by the mediatized glamorized images of translators and interpreters, the less glamorous aspects of the profession were and still are hardly discussed in the media. In a similar vein, the dark side of “English fever” somehow receives only fleeting attention in the media, while success stories and advertisements of English language learning such as the one in Figure 1.1 are constantly and widely publicized in media outlets:



Figure 1.1. English language learning advertisement in a Korean newspaper (Kyunghyang Shinmun, 2014)

Figure 1.1 shows an English education advertisement retrieved from one of Korea's biggest newspapers, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*. It features an English memorization program endorsed by a popular Korean news anchor who claims "no need to go to English language institutes with this magic language program". Placed right below is a brief news item about a 50-something Korean father who took his own life after four years of supporting his sons and wife in the U.S., having lost everything, as he said in his will. The blatant irony which seems to have been lost on the web-designer reinforces the question of why there is such a gap between the way in which dreams and realities of English language learning are translated in the media and why such a gap remains invisible to those in pursuit of English. After reflecting on my own linguistic journeys and "English fever" from various angles, I decided to explore the phenomenon of "English fever" with the focus on how dreams and realities intersect in pursuit of English in Korean society.

### 1.3 Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is organized as follows. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two discusses the literature that helped me to develop the academic context of my research. Relevant bodies of knowledge relate to Bourdieu's theory of capital, field and habitus, ideologies of global English, poststructuralism in language and gender, and the sociology of translation and interpreting. By identifying lacunae in the existing literature, I formulate specific research questions which include tracing historical constructions of English language ideologies and exploring contemporary language ideologies related to "English fever" from both macro-social and micro-individual perspectives.

Chapter Three outlines the overall research design of this study. As this thesis aims to present a holistic picture of "English fever" in Korean society, I adopt a concentric structure starting with a historical analysis followed by media discourse analyses at a macro level and interview data analyses at a micro level within an overall qualitative research paradigm.

Chapter Four traces the development of English in Korea through historical periodization which ranges from the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, Japanese colonization, post-independence Korea

and industrialization to government-led globalization campaigns. The English language ideologies identified through the historical periodization serve as a baseline for the analyses at macro as well as micro levels.

Chapter Five presents media discourse analyses of news items related to English-medium lectures in higher education in order to find out about how dreams about English are sustained and how such dreams contrast with actual classroom experiences.

Chapters Six to Eight provide analyses of interview data with English-Korean translators and interpreters to contextualize the motivations behind individual pursuits of English. I begin in Chapter Six with an exploration of the ways in which individual pursuits of linguistic perfectionism reinforce linguistic insecurity in relation to dominant neoliberal discourses of desirable language speakers.

Chapter Seven highlights disparities between dreams and realities in English as experienced by the participants from a gender perspective. It focuses on the pursuit of translation and interpreting as a gendered career choice in relation to societal norms of females. Questions of gender in the profession continue to be investigated in Chapter Eight, yet from a different angle. Through the examination of the recent media phenomenon of “good-looking interpreters”, the chapter attempts to demonstrate how English has been remoulded as an embodied capital in which aesthetic qualities of speakers can enhance the value of English.

In the concluding chapter, I will present a unified picture of the way in which English operates in Korea and the key findings. These include English as multiple forms of valued capital grounded in history, English as a means to sustain existing power structures, neoliberal influences on pursuits of linguistic perfectionism in English, English as a tool to achieve gendered biographies, and the embodied value of aesthetics in English. The thesis ends with implications for future research and stakeholders such as rethinking English as a global language, diversification of English language ideologies in gender, and the potential of translation and interpreting for interdisciplinary research.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews key theoretical concepts that inform and guide my research. I first situate my investigation of “English fever” within the framework of capital, field and habitus as developed by Bourdieu. I demonstrate how Bourdieu’s notions of capital, field and habitus allows for a more sophisticated contextualization of “English fever” in Korea. I then examine the concept of language ideologies as a primary lens through which to understand how particular beliefs are constructed in English in a global context before moving on to review the existing literature on English language ideologies in Korea. This will be followed by an examination of the interrelationships between gender and languages on the basis of the current literature concerning the language learning motivations of Asian female English learners. Next, I present the sociolinguistic aspect of translators and interpreters with a particular focus on the local translation and interpreting industry. The chapter concludes by identifying the lacunae that my research aims to fill.

### 2.2 “English fever” from a Bourdieusian perspective

In this section, I attempt to locate the phenomenon of “English fever” within the conceptual framework of capital, field and habitus. The discussion of “English fever” in the next section is followed by the introduction of the notions of capital, field and habitus in which English is presented as a valued form of capital fought over the Korean field marked by a heightened level of competition. I argue that a proper understanding of the nature of the ongoing competition over English in Korea can be achieved by examining the linguistic habitus of societal as well as individual actors.

#### 2.2.1. “English fever” in neoliberal Korea

Although English has always been valued in Korea for its practical as well as symbolic use (J. S.-Y. Park, 2009; So Jin Park & Abelman, 2004), unprecedented levels of English language learning or “English fever” emerged in the context of Korea’s economic restructuring in the wake of the 1997/8 Asian Financial Crisis, which marks a neoliberal turn of Korean society (Piller & Cho, 2013). According to Harvey (2005: 2), neoliberalism is defined as a “theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an

institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade.” The influences of neoliberal ideologies on the restructuring measures imposed on Korea can be exemplified by the IMF demands that included the break-up and privatization of large conglomerates or *chaboels*, their sell-off to foreign investors, mass lay-offs, and the privatization of public services.

During the restructuring, many Koreans experienced a heightened level of social suffering. As an example, the unemployment rate tripled and the number of those who self-identified as middle class fell by more than a third from 63.7% in 1996 to 38.4% in 1999 (Klein, 2007, p. 272). A high level of social distress is also expressed in suicide rates which more than doubled since the 1997/8 Asian Financial Crisis. In 1995 it was 11.8 per 100,000 people and by 2005 it had risen to 26.1 per 100,000 (*CIA World Factbook* 1997 and 2007; cited in (Klein, 2007, p. 502). Jung (2012) argues that throughout the processes of economic restructuring, neoliberal ideologies have come to control Koreans by constantly producing and reproducing terror, disillusionment, and altered aspirations. Koreans were left with feelings of heightened anxiety due to uncertainties about the future resulting from the restructuring of society. They became disillusioned with the public sector represented by the government for its incapacity to identify and pre-empt the crisis that devastated the nation. On the other hand, albeit ironically, the same ideologies raised hopes among the public as well. Against this backdrop of the elevation of competitiveness and competition as a core value for both individuals and the state, a key cultural change took place in Korea during the crisis (Piller & Cho, 2013). As the neoliberal ideologies accentuate the market mechanism of fair competition for everyone (Harvey, 2005), it inculcated hopes in Korean people that one can achieve anything as long as one works hard (Soonam Jung, 2012).

The phenomenon of “English fever” was born out of this cycle of terror-disillusionment-hope, in which English became a key expression of this new culture of competition and competitiveness and came to be seen as attainable by ordinary Koreans due to its fair images and apparent promises of real rewards (Piller & Cho, 2013). The phenomenon can be found at all educational levels and takes many forms: parents enrol their children in preschools where only English is used; the huge shadow education market in English catering to all kinds of levels, specialized registers, and test preparation (So Jin Park & Abelman, 2004); there are holiday camps and theme-parks devoted to the practice of English (Gyeonggi English Village, 2006); *jogi yuhak* or “short-term early education abroad” is booming as is long-term study abroad (J. Song, 2010); and English is

increasingly becoming the favoured medium of instruction in higher education (See Section 2.3.3 and Chapter 5). The expense of English teaching accounted for 40% of the public education budget in 2009 (B. Yoo, Kim, & Kim, 2011) and by 2013 the private market for English language learning in Korea was said to be worth KRW 6.5 trillion (H. Song, 2013).

It often goes unnoticed, however, that the same ideology of encouraging people to engage in fierce competition masks structural inequalities embedded in class, and one key area to highlight this issue is the rise of “neoliberal personhood”. As English has become tied to individual aspirations to enhance one’s worth in a competitive society, it has emerged as a determining factor in measuring individual value in neoliberal discourses of desirable personhood. Ethnographic evidence indicates that proficient speakers of English in Korea indeed to construe their proficiency as an expression of their moral worth and the strength of their determination (Abelmann, Park, & Kim, 2009; Jesook Song, 2009). As an example, Park (2010) reports on media descriptions of well-known proficient speakers of English in Korea that depict them as worthy individuals for their superhuman commitment to mastering English. At the same time, however, the privileged individual backgrounds that enabled them to acquire English language competence are simply erased, leaving only the standardized figures of devoted language learners in the media discourses. Such a “naturalization of competence and the neoliberal subject” (J. S.-Y. Park, 2010: 22), in turn, encourages and reinforces linguistic competition, because people are led to believe that they can achieve a linguistic mastery by sheer individual effort. Through this vicious cycle, the consciousness of Koreans has been colonized by English (J.-K. Yoon, 2007) which has been firmly established as a “구조적 욕망 (structural desire)” (J.-K. Yoon, 2007: 20) in Korean society. As Yoon (2007) notes, the fact that little research effort has been made domestically to investigate why Koreans pursue English so feverishly demonstrates the colonized state of Korean consciousness in which pursuing English is a “natural” act that does not need to be questioned. This research thus aims to fill the gap by examining what kind of beliefs and aspirations are attached to English in Korea from multiple perspectives. Bourdieu’s notion of capital, field and habitus serves as a useful conceptual framework through which to put the research into perspective as will be explained below.

### 2.2.2. Capital, field, and habitus

Bourdieu (1986) notes that individuals are motivated by valued resources or *forms of*

*capital*. Bourdieu has identified four different kinds of capital – cultural, economic, social, and symbolic capital – which are unevenly distributed throughout the social structure (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital refers to material assets such as money and property, while social capital refers to networks of influence or support based on group membership or friends. Cultural capital includes forms of knowledge, educational credentials, and skills. Symbolic capital means socially recognized legitimization such as prestige or honour. Arguing that linguistic competence functions as linguistic capital in relationship to a certain market (Bourdieu, 1977), he states that linguistic competence can be a form of symbolic capital, as it is inseparable from the speaker's position in the social structure. This statement is particularly apt in the case of Korean society, in which acquiring English skills is an act of pursuing upward mobility and distinguishing oneself from others (So Jin Park & Abelman, 2004), and English skills are often perceived as a sign of privileged backgrounds as such backgrounds tend to translate into better opportunities for English learning (J. S.-Y. Park, 2010). Nam (2012) goes so far as to say that Korea is virtually a caste society based on English skills, and the “English-haves” will continue to outwit the “English have-nots” in devising strategies to maintain their upper hand in the linguistic market. Given the heavy indexicality of English in many parts of the world, the local practice of employing English as a class marker can throw new light on how inequalities embedded in linguistic hierarchies are produced and sustained on a global scale. While the idea of English as symbolic capital is worth noting, it alone does not sufficiently explain the fundamental question of why English is feverishly pursued in Korea. I will, therefore, attempt to examine if/how English embodies other forms of valued capital in Korea by drawing primarily on Bourdieu's concepts of capital.

Bourdieu's concept of field posits that as a network, structure or set of relationships which may be intellectual, religious, educational, or cultural (Navarro, 2006), fields are sites of struggles over the appropriation of different kinds of capitals. Social actors often experience power differently depending on which field they are in at a given moment (Gaventa, 2003), so the context and environment of social actors is important to understanding the power dynamics involved in competition in the field. The notion of the field is useful in analysing the ongoing structures of competition over English in Korea from both wider global and local perspectives. From a global macro-perspective, the global linguistic field of English can be succinctly mapped through the Three-Circle Model originally proposed by Kachru (1992) and further developed by others (Jenkins, 2003; B.

Kachru, Kachru, & Nelson, 2009). The field is defined by the categorization of countries as Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle countries (See Section 2.3.2 for further discussion). As an Expanding Circle country, Korea has seen an increasing number of people crossing borders to the Inner Circle countries for the sole purpose of learning English. Considering the hierarchical nature of the global linguistic field, such practices can be regarded as a manifestation of individual desire to access the centre of global power through the act of border crossing. This very act, however, leads to yet another type of distinction within the same nationality. As briefly mentioned in Section 1.1, English language learners in Korea are categorized into overseas English learners or *haewaepa* and domestic English learners or *guknaepa*. The existing local linguistic hierarchy can be seen as a miniature version of global linguistic hierarchies which are increasingly recreated in local forms against the backdrop of “English fever”. At the same time, however, conceptualizing the field as a site of struggles for linguistic legitimacy alone might risk oversimplifying the phenomenon at hand. In this regard, I intend to frame the local field of competition over English as a multilayered space in which competition unfolds at multiple levels – societal, group, and individual – presumably for different types of language capitals.

Lastly, *habitus* is one of the central concepts that Bourdieu developed and he defines *habitus* as

systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can only be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them. (Bourdieu, 1990b: 53)

Swartz (2002: 62) interprets *habitus* as “deeply internalized dispositions, schemas, and forms of know-hows and competence” first acquired by the individual through early childhood socialization. For example, a child raised in a musical family is likely to develop an appreciation for music and acquire the ability to interpret and criticize music. Although the dispositions of *habitus* predispose individuals to behave and act in certain ways, they do not (according to Bourdieu) determine human actions since humans have the capacity to reflect critically and rationally on their way of acting. Thus the *habitus* is relatively stable

and durable, but not in the sense of rigid rules or cognitive programming (J. S.-Y. Park & Wee, 2012).

On the basis of this concept, Bourdieu also theorized the existence of what he called “language habitus”, claiming that “the capacity to use the possibilities offered by language and to assess practically the moments to use them, which at a constant level of objective tension – the degree of formality – is defined by a greater or lesser degree of tension” (1977: 663). By taking the constant self-correction and the censorship of language production of the *petit bourgeois* as an example of a mismatch between objective and subjective tensions, he argues that the language habitus is characterized by a particular degree of tension which is a function of the gap “between recognized norms and the capacity to produce” (1977: 658). This notion is particularly relevant to studying the power aspect of “English fever” in Korea, in which recognized acceptability and legitimacy in English remains elusive due to the ever-fiercer competition over English and resultant ever-rising standards of English (J. S.-Y. Park, 2011). As the bar to measure good English continues to rise, competition keeps intensifying, driving people to an ever-greater level of insecurity (Jinhyun Cho, 2015). In relation to this ongoing phenomenon, I shall examine how the aspect of power embedded in English is constantly legitimized and justified through an interplay of agency and structure with a particular focus on underlying mechanisms that maintain and strengthen the existing structures.

## 2.3. Ideologies of global English

This section introduces the concept of language ideologies before presenting an overview of language ideologies associated with English in a global context. It is followed by a discussion of English language ideologies related to neoliberalism in both global and local contexts. It concludes with an examination of English language ideologies specific to the Korean context.

### 2.3.1. Language ideologies

Although interdisciplinary research on language ideologies has been highly productive in recent years (Woolard, 1998), there is no particular unity in this immense body of research with a range of definitions in existence (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Such a diversity in language ideologies can be well exemplified by some of the well-known conceptualizations of language ideologies. Silverstein (1979: 193), whose pioneering

research on language ideologies contributed to turning language ideologies from a marginalized topic to an issue of central concern, defines language ideologies as “any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use.” Whereas the central role of individual speakers had been largely disregarded in traditional linguistic theorizing, his work shifted scholarly attention to a domain in which individuals’ awareness of language and their rationalizations of its structure and use constitute a critical factor in shaping the evolution of a language’s structure.

Heath (1989: 53) emphasizes a more sociocultural function of language ideologies by characterizing language ideologies as the “self-evident ideas and objectives a group holds concerning roles of language in the social experiences of members as they contribute to the expression of the group.” In a similarly broad sociocultural sense, Irvine (1989: 255) describes language ideologies as “the cultural system of ideas about the social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of their moral and political interests.” Irvine (1989) argues that language ideologies are constructed from specific political economic perspectives through which certain linguistic features and language varieties are promoted as natural and normal. A Standard Language Ideology in which particular language varieties are popularly believed to be the “best”, and thus superior compared to other varieties believed to be inferior, is one good example that illustrates “a bias toward abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language, which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions” (Lippi-Green, 1997: 64).

Language ideologies are often critically approached from a power perspective in which language serves as a strategy for maintaining social power (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). The aspect of language ideologies that perform social work is well illustrated by Piller’s (2015) definition of language ideologies as “a bridge between linguistic and social structure as they [language ideologies] rationalize and justify social inequality as an outcome of linguistic difference.” Despite such apparent definitional differences, however, it is important to note that the differences found in the definitions of language ideologies do not necessarily indicate that language ideologies and particular phenomena under study are inherently heterogeneous (Gal, 1992). As a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk, language ideologies bear a family resemblance, so one should start not with strict definition of terms but from the broader premise that many of the phenomena

that have been researched under different labels share a lot of commonality (Gal, 1992; Woolard, 1992). It is based on this understanding that my research aims to address “language ideologies as a cluster concept, consisting of a number of converging dimensions” (Kroskrity, 2004: 501). At the same time, however, the multiple dimensions of language ideologies emphasize a need to identify areas in which language and a phenomenon can be systematically analysed so as to gain a right understanding about a particular society. The next section, therefore, examines a relevant theoretical concept useful for defining the scope of research in relation to the ideologies of global English.

### 2.3.2. English in a global context

The global spread of English has been subject to ideological contestations in the field of linguistics in recent years. On one hand, the development of global English is seen as a natural outcome for English being “in the right place at the right time” (Crystal, 2012: 78). Related to this, English as a global language is seen as natural, neutral, and even beneficial (Crystal, 1988; for a critique see Pennycook, 2014). On the other hand, the ascendance of English is regarded as a product of international competition among countries seeking to maintain or increase global hegemony through linguistic hegemony (Phillipson, 1992, 2009). Popularly known as “linguistic imperialism”, Phillipson (2004) sees English as an instrument in global dominance that has expanded the global gap between the haves and the have-nots. Regardless of such ideological differences that can be found in debates on global English, there is hardly any dissent about the proposition that the development of global English is closely related to globalization (Hüppauf, 2004). Global English indeed can be defined as part of globalization, as part of the cause, the process, and the outcome of globalization (Sonntag, 2003).

In relation to increasing attempts to examine the interrelationships between English and globalization in sociolinguistics, Coupland (2003) cautions that it is necessary to adopt a key theoretical concept due particularly to the vast scale of globalization. Relatedly, Blommaert (2003) identifies the issue of scale and levels of analysis for sociolinguistic research of language and globalization:

The interconnectedness of the various parts of the system creates the issue of scale and levels of analysis: what occurs in a particular sovereign state can and must be explained by reference to state-level dynamics, but needs to be set simultaneously

against the background of substate and superstate dynamics, and the hierarchical relations between various levels are a matter of empirical exploration, not positing. (Blommaert, 2003: 612)

By drawing on World-System Analysis as developed by Wallerstein (1983, 2000, 2001), Blommaert (2003) reformulates the concept of scale in a way that fits sociolinguistics research. According to World-System Analysis, the concept of scale describes the world as a space marked by structural inequalities, according to which countries are organized as “centres” (high levels of capital accumulation and service economy), “semi-peripheries” (some level of high-profit production but with significant degrees of dependence on centres) and “peripheries” (low levels of capital accumulation and production of basic resources). More recent globalization theories have extended the relations of dependence among centres, semi-peripheries, and peripheries to include immaterial goods such as linguistic goods (Blommaert, Collins, & Slembrouck, 2005). A systematically higher value attached to linguistic goods from the centre compared to the (semi-)peripheries can be, for example, expressed by the high prestige attributed to central accents of English (e.g. the U.K. and the U.S.) as opposed to the low prestige attributed to peripheral accents (e.g. Singaporean or Indian English) (Dong & Blommaert, 2009).

The description of the world as a structurally and linguistically unequal space can also be explained by the typology of concentric circles (B. B. Kachru, 1992), in which countries are divided into three distinct groups according to degree of global English usage: the Inner Circle as the traditional basis of English in which English is the native tongue of large segments of the population (e.g. the U.K., the U.S., and Canada); the Outer Circle encompassing countries in which English is a native tongue of only a small percentage of the population but is used as a lingua franca for official purposes such as government and education (e.g. Hong Kong, India, Nigeria, and Singapore); the Expanding Circle including countries in which English does not hold any official status but is highly popular for foreign language learning (e.g. China, Japan, Korean, and Russia). The level of value systematically attached to English depending on where it is spoken can be illustrated by the level of scholarly attention to each circle. While world Englishes scholarship and research has been extremely productive in recent years with regard to the Inner and Outer Circles, less is known about sociolinguistic, economic, and political dimensions of English use in the Expanding Circle (Berns, 2005). Despite criticism against the model for emphasizing

national boundaries and thereby ignoring the complex sociolinguistic dynamics of English (J. S.-Y. Park & Wee, 2009; Saraceni, 2015), there can be no doubt that the Inner and Outer Circles have attracted more scholarly attention compared to “the rest of the world” (Berns, 2005). Given how English is appraised in a global context characterized by structural inequalities, it is important to address the gap that exists in the scholarship with a critical examination of what global English means in countries that are said to exist on the periphery. Ironically, English might not have achieved its current status without those peripheral countries in which English is highly sought after as a global language. Exploring if/how the dominant ideologies of global English are uncritically embraced and/or at times resisted by society and people in a country that is considered less legitimate in terms of rights to the language can contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of how English has become what it is now in local as well as global contexts.

While the macro-level ideology of global English is an important way of understanding the ideological construction of English as a global language, it needs to be complemented by another level of analysis to allow for a more refined examination. Blommaert (2007) emphasizes the duality of language in which language occurs both as an individual phenomenon and simultaneously as a collective phenomenon. That is to say, English can be approached as a macro-level ideology of global English and a micro-level ideology as individually situated practice strongly influenced by the context in which speakers are situated (Blommaert, 2007). Ricento (2000: 208-209) writes, “that micro-level research (the sociolinguistics of language) will need to be integrated with macro-level investigations (the sociolinguistics of society) to provide a more complete explanation for language behavior [. . .] than is currently available.” Emphasis is needed on the relative value of linguistic resources – English – in relation to global as well as local ideologies of language across different social domains (Blommaert, 2003). With the dual approach of macro-micro as a starting point, I shall next investigate the concept of global English in both global and local (Korean) contexts with a particular reference to one ideology that has significantly influenced the development of global English: neoliberalism.

### 2.3.3. Neoliberal globalization and language ideologies

Interchangeably used with “late capitalism” and “new economy”, neoliberalism accentuates market efficiency, corporate profitability, and individual accountability by removing state regulations (Hursh, 2005), leading to a shift in the way that views a social

phenomenon on the terrain of language from political towards economic frames (Fairclough, 2002). In a neoliberal globalization context, language has been increasingly commodified (Heller, 2003, 2010; Heller & Duchêne, 2012), and English in particular has become commodified in the neoliberal discourse of the language as a valued language resource (Urciuoli, 2008). The notion of language as commodity in the globalized new economy can be found in both language-as-skill (notably communicative ones) and language-as-identity (socially located personae) (Heller, 2010), and I will exemplify each case with the concepts of linguistic instrumentalism and neoliberal subjectivity respectively.

Linguistic instrumentalism refers to a more practical view of language that has useful economic value in a globalized economy, in which an ability to cross boundaries is strongly emphasized (Wee, 2003). The view of English as an instrumental tool for development is particularly well observed in the area of language policies related to education (Erling & Seargeant, 2013; Numan, 2003; Price, 2014; Vavrus, 2002), in which English language education has been an integral part of national development initiatives in many parts of the world. One area in which the impact of English on education in globalization discourses is perhaps most palpable is higher education, with English progressively becoming “the language of higher education” (Coleman, 2004). A global neoliberal environment which emphasizes performativity has produced a fundamental shift in the way in which institutions of higher education have justified their institutional existence (Olssen & Peters, 2005). A resultant corporatization of education, or “academic capitalism” (Baltodano, 2012; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) has produced many academic debates on the increasing loss of academic identity and the commodification of knowledge (Blum & Ullman, 2012; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). As a key yardstick by which institutional performance is measured, English has been rapidly adopted by institutions worldwide. The reasons behind adopting English as a medium of instruction are many: the usefulness of English for internationalization, global academic exchanges, student exchanges, graduate employability, and the market in international students (Coleman, 2006).

East Asian universities, too, have expanded the number of English-medium lectures offered as part of their internationalization strategies, and Korea has been at the forefront of this move (Jinhyun Cho, 2012). As of 2011, for example, 93% of all lectures at the elite

Pohang University of Science and Technology (POSTECH) and 100% of lectures at another elite institution, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), were conducted in English, and English lecture rates at the top ten local universities averaged 30% (Manjung Kim, 2011). The expansion of English as an exclusive language for teaching, however, has simultaneously brought with it some notable side effects which can be observed at both global and local levels. As an example, Choi (2010) describes how English as a signifier of academic excellence has led to the demise of institutional as well as national identity grounded in the Chinese language at a university in Hong Kong. Cho (2012) highlights how classes conducted in English have led to linguistic stratification in Korean universities, in which only a few students with strong English proficiency lead the class discussions whereas the majority of students with weaker English are forced to stay silent during classes. Piller and Cho (2013) also examine side effects of English-medium lectures in Korea by demonstrating how English has been unilaterally imposed on Korean university students in relation to high-profile student suicide cases at an elite Korean school. Despite such obvious costs of English, however, it is worth noting that critical examinations of how neoliberal globalization has worked in English to create and impose a particular type of language ideology on institutional actors have made little difference to the continued trend towards adopting English ever more widely. The adoption of English has, in fact, been naturalized in many public discourses as an inevitable global trend strongly associated with globalization (Kruseman, 2003). Given the pervasive impact of globalization discourses about English as a key to institutional internationalization, and the limited effect of critical research on it, it is necessary to continue the effort to critically examine the workings of globalization in English in the context of the corporatization of education with a particular focus on the naturalization of English as a global language.

Another area in which the impact of linguistic instrumentalism is well noted are employment markets and English testing industries. In the New Capitalism, which is often described as “knowledge-” or “information-based” (Fairclough, 2002), communication skills in particular have been viewed as determining one’s economic success (Klein, 2001). In neoliberal job markets which treat workers as bundles of skills (H. Shin, 2015), job seekers have been placed under increasing pressures to continuously enhance the value of individual packages through lifelong learning (Kubota, 2011). English has been demanded by companies as one of the most significant “soft skills” that measure one’s employability, which in turn has led to the development of English testing industries such as the TOEIC

(Test of English for International Communication) (Kubota, 2011; J. S.-Y. Park, 2011). In the case of Korea, the number of TOEIC applicants has continued to increase for it is mandatory to submit TOEIC scores for white-collar jobs (J. S.-Y. Park, 2011). As of 2013, for example, the number of Koreans who sat TOEIC tests exceeded 2.07 million (N. Ryu, 2013). It bears noting that the promise of English as a key to enhanced opportunities, however, does not always materialize, because in all competitive and ranked systems, the number of people who “win” is limited by the nature of the system (Bourdieu, 2003). Park (2011) examines the rise and fall of TOEIC in the Korean job market, in which TOEIC scores are subject to inflationary pressure under strong neoliberal influences. As TOEIC scores are essential for getting a decent job in the local employment market, scores have continued to rise due to the hard work of job seekers. Local companies, in turn, have raised the bar to measure “good English”, which was justified in the neoliberal discourses of English language learning. In order to appeal to the constantly recalibrated market, job applicants have no other choice but to embrace the neoliberal logic of human capital development with ever-greater investment in English language learning, and corporations get precisely what they want: workers with better English language skills without having to acknowledge individual effort (J. S.-Y. Park, 2011). The way in which neoliberal ideologies benefit the giant TOEIC industry and its corporations highlights how neoliberalism restricts people’s choices rather than expanding them, unlike its promises (Bourdieu, 1998).

The state of restricted choices for individuals can be material and symbolic at the same time, and the latter can be exemplified by emergent neoliberal personhood. By definition, neoliberal personhood refers to “the ideal person imagined according to the neoliberal worldview, one who seeks autonomy and independence from traditional structures and surpasses their constraints through a life full of mobility and vitality” (J. S.-Y. Park, 2013: 297). If applied to English language learning, this expression refers to an individual who has the ability to conquer circumstantial challenges in order to reach a high level of English language proficiency and such a personhood is highly popular in Korea (Jinhyun Cho, 2015). Individuals who have become proficient in English supposedly through dedication and hard work are often celebrated by local media as a symbol of personal autonomy and independence, the core ethos of neoliberal subjecthood (Jinhyun Cho, 2015; Jiyeon Kang & Abelman, 2011). In trying to understand the popularity of neoliberal personhood in Korea, it should be noted that the trappings of neoliberal personhood are

particularly appealing in recently democratized countries such as Korea due to its association with personal freedom and self-authorship (Abelmann, Kim, & Park, 2005). Moreover, government-led globalization campaigns in which neoliberal subjectivity became tied to cosmopolitanism further contributed to the ascendance of English (Abelmann et al., 2005). As a powerful sign of the global, English has become a necessity for Koreans, a lifelong project for individual excellence (Abelmann et al., 2009). English, for example, has been at the heart of education projects by ambitious Korean mothers, who are keen to provide their children with the valued linguistic resource deemed essential to become global talents (Jiyeon Kang & Abelmann, 2011; So Jin Park & Abelmann, 2004). English is a project for personal endeavour in the case of Korean university students, who have fully embraced the neoliberal logic of individuals as self-managers in order to appeal to the tight employment market, in which only a particular type of talents armed with language skills and entrepreneurial spirits are welcomed (Abelmann et al., 2009).

It often goes unnoticed, however, that neoliberal ideologies which accentuate sheer individual efforts have created a more radically individuated personhood which obscures class and other structural inequalities (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2000). As the embeddedness of language in social context is erased in neoliberal ideologies, only a standardized figure of dedicated English language learner with laudable commitment remains as a norm (J. S.-Y. Park, 2010, 2015). This process is often manipulated and reinforced by external forces with vested interests such as the local industry specializing in early sojourning abroad (H. Shin, 2015). Specific “indexical images of speaker-actor” (Agha, 2005: 39) are created and reinforced through such a process of enregisterment, which is widely used by media as a way to highlight certain information in order to simplify complicated social matters (Agha, 2005). The currently celebrated neoliberal personhood for English language learning in Korean society provides a rich site to examine how a particular language ideology is constructed, legitimized, and strengthened in relation to global and local processes and how it affects individual actors. Despite a growing body of research on neoliberal subjectivity and English in the Korean context, it is worth noting that less research is based on the language learning experiences of real people compared to studies that use media discourse analyses to examine the interrelationships between English and neoliberalism. There is, therefore, a need to converse more with individuals heavily engaged with English language learning in order to achieve a better understanding of social and cultural grounding of language and ideology in Korea.

#### 2.3.4. English language ideologies in Korea

Having examined the neoliberal aspect of global English at both global and local levels, I now move on to examine the remaining ideologies associated with English that have been identified in the Korean context. The most comprehensive body of work on English language ideologies in Korea is that of Park (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015). Park's (2009) pioneering work explores the ideological construction of English as a hegemonic language in Korea through an analysis of metalinguistic discourse dealing with English, that is, text or talk produced in natural, non-elicited contexts. Park has identified three ideologies of English from his research. First, the ideology of *necessitation* constructs English as a necessity in Korea in the context of globalization. Secondly, the ideology of *externalization* presents English as a language of an Other, highlighting the foreignness of English that is incompatible with what is uniquely Korean as argued by opponents of English as an official language in Korea. The third ideology of English, *self-deprecation*, views Koreans as "bad speakers of English", making strong generalizations about Koreans' incompetence in English, and problematizes this incompetence by highlighting Koreans' repeated failure to master the language. Park used the three ideologies of English as a baseline to illustrate how these ideologies work jointly, rather than independently through discrete discursive sites. By exploring interdiscursivity among the sites, Park points out the centrality of self-deprecation in the construction of English as a hegemonic language in Korea.

While Park has approached English language ideologies in Korea primarily from a macro-perspective, some scholars have focused more on meanings and/or value of English at a micro-individual level. In particular, the connection between English language ideologies and educational migration, also known as *jogi yuhak*, has attracted scholarly attention. On one hand, English holds highly material value as a conduit to a better future for children whose likelihood of getting a decent white collar job is believed to be determined by English language skills (J. S.-Y. Park & Lo, 2012). In comparative analyses of two groups of Korean parents – immigrant mothers and those of early study abroad sojourners in the U.S. – Song (2010), for example, discovers that both groups regard English as economic capital and a ticket to cosmopolitan membership in line with the dominant discourse of English as a global language. It is, however, important to note that it is not any type of English but only a particular variety of "authentic" English that is desired by Koreans. The investigations of English language ideologies held by educational migration families in

Singapore (S. Bae, 2015; Y. Kang, 2012; J. S.-Y. Park & Bae, 2009), for example, reveal ambivalent attitudes held by Korean parents, who were unsure about the value of the local variety of English known as “Singlish” in comparison to Inner Circle English. Their stratified linguistic orientation demonstrates a deeply internalized global hegemonic order of English, which Korean consciousness categorizes into the valued English-speaking West and the rest (J. S.-Y. Park & Bae, 2009). While the parents tried to justify their decisions with the instrumental view of Mandarin, English, and Singlish as a desirable language combination for the future (Y. Kang, 2012), doubts about the unauthentic local variety of English lingered, driving them to feel insecure about their investment in English language education. The studies highlight that the essentialist notion of “authentic” English is deeply rooted in Korean society in which value and prestige is exclusively attached to the Inner Circle English varieties. While the popular practice of sending children to Inner Circle countries for English language learning demonstrates the unequal relationships of power embedded in global English, it is, at the same time, important to note how English has been “misrecognized” (Bourdieu, 1989) among Koreans as *the* key to access power. This aspect of English language ideologies can be best explained by the issue of class associated with English in Korea.

As Bourdieu (1989) well noted, in the complex societies spawned by late capitalism, not one but two species of capital now give access to positions of power, define the structure of social space, and govern the life chances and trajectories of groups and individuals: economic and cultural capital. In the Korean context, English was legitimized as cultural capital due to the continued American hegemony on the peninsula following Korea’s liberation from Japanese colonization and the popularly imagined superiority of the U.S. (H. Shin, 2007). Indeed, the U.S. was regarded as the centre of the universe among Koreans and a display of connections to the U.S. was regarded as one of the most effective ways of achieving distinction among those in power (C.-i. Moon, 2004). English was indeed much more than the language itself on account of its symbolic value in Korean society (So Jin Park & Abelmann, 2004; H. Shin, 2014), and the use of “English as a class marker” (So Jin Park & Abelmann, 2004) is well noted among Koreans not only at home but also abroad. At home, English is regarded as an instrument through which to hand over socioeconomic capital to children among affluent Koreans living in Gangnam, Seoul’s most affluent suburb (M. Lee, 2016). English education abroad associated with respectful class credentials is a tool for distinction among young Korean sojourners, who try to

distinguish themselves as cool cosmopolitans as opposed to permanent Korean immigrant children in Toronto, Canada whom they considered backward (H. Shin, 2012).

As the issue of class tied to English has fuelled competition over English in Korea, it has simultaneously served as a source of individual as well as social conflicts. Song (2012) draws attention to ideological conflicts over English language education between early sojourner and graduate student families in the U.S. with regard to the issue of class identity. While the graduate student families tried to appear nonchalant about English language education as responsible intellectuals and problematized the early sojourner families as excessive and immoral, the graduate student families, at the same time, displayed inner struggles for they, too, well acknowledged the value of English for their children's futures. With regard to a growing societal conflict over English and the rapidly increasing number of young Korean sojourners, Shin (2012) argues that it might create a linguistic hierarchy between the "global" and the "local" elites in Korea, through which the global hegemony of English continues to be reproduced. The review highlights the many ways in which English is valued in Korean society as cultural, economic and/or symbolic capital as noted by Bourdieu (1977, 1986). At the same time, it bears noting that most research focuses on the meanings of English in contemporary Korea, whereas very little research investigates how English has become "misrecognized" in Korean society. Although the link between English and neoliberalism in the context of "English fever" has been increasingly explored (as discussed in Section 2.3.3), attributing the unusual English boom in Korea to neoliberal ideologies alone risks simplifying the complexities of conditions that have influenced the processes by which particular language ideologies associated with English have been shaped and reinforced in relation to local particularities.

To the best of my knowledge, only one research project specifically looks at what drives Koreans to pursue English so intensely. Park (2009) ascribes "English fever" to "education fever" (*kyoyukyeol*), itself referring to the long-standing tradition of parental obsession with education in Korea. He argues that so-called Korean "soccer moms" drive the popularity of English language education by devoting energy and resources to help their children to be successful with English skills. While his study might have explained one symptom of "English fever," it fails, however, to answer a more fundamental question of "why" English is so feverishly pursued across the society to the point of creating a unique phenomenon. As Pennycook (2001: 62) points out, an account of "how English is taken up,

how people use English, why people choose to use English” is highly important to understanding language ideologies as a set of socially-imbued practices (Coupland & Jaworski, 2004). It is, therefore, important to approach English language ideologies from a more fundamental perspective through which to understand how various meanings have been attached to English over time in Korea since its arrival. Historical inquiry has a contemporary relevance to the extent that early representations of sociolinguistic phenomena influenced later representations and even contributed to shaping the sociolinguistic scene as well (Irvine & Gal, 2000). In this regard, it is important to trace the evolution of English language ideologies throughout local history before attempting to interpret the current state of English language ideologies in Korean society.

## 2.4. Gender and global English

This section explores the intersections between language, gender and power with a particular focus on motivations behind English language learning among Asian females. In approaching language ideologies, it is important to explore different social domains in which the language in question is deeply embedded so as to capture the multiplicity of language ideologies (See Section 2.3.1). It is highly relevant to Korea for which a need for studies on how Koreans relate to English in a diverse range of contexts has been well identified (Block, 2012). As “a system of social relations and discursive practices” (Pavlenko & Piller, 2001: 23), gender represents a key conduit through which to understand how particular ideologies attached to language are shaped, strengthened and internalized among social members. I shall begin with the introduction of poststructuralism as a key prism through which to examine the nexus between language and gender in Korean society. I then move on to discuss English language ideologies in global gendered context, before presenting the gendered conditions in Korea as a backdrop for the propose research. I conclude by identifying lacunae that exist in the existing literature on language and gender in Korean context.

### 2.4.1. Language and gender in poststructuralism

Sociolinguistic research on language and gender has undergone significant changes in recent years following a paradigm shift from the concept of binary *difference* to the *diversity* of gendered and sexual identities and practices (Cameron, 2005). According to Pavlenko and Piller (2001), the binary concept of difference can be explained through three dominant essentialist notions of gender and linguistic practice that can be found in earlier

research: deficit, difference, and dominance theories. In the *deficit* framework, women are presented as inferior users of language, speaking a “powerless language” (Lakoff, 1973) that is socially imposed upon them. The *dominance* paradigm, which also originates from Lakoff’s (1973) theory, constructs male dominance and female oppression as norms in linguistic interactions (e.g. men ignoring women in cross-gender conversations) from the perspective of institutionalized patriarchy (Thorne & Henley, 1975). Viewing gender as a binary concept, the *sex difference* approaches focus on linking particular linguistic variables with the sex of the speaker on the basis of research showing that women tend to use more standard and/or prestigious forms of talk (Labov, 1972).

While criticisms against each model appear to vary, they all point to one inherent issue: women’s linguistic behaviour was measured against male behaviour as a norm from the viewpoint of gender binary, thereby failing to recognize diversity in gender which is deeply embedded in social, historical, and political situatedness of power (Cameron, 1992; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Pavlenko & Piller, 2001). Feminist poststructuralist approaches to language and gender are a response to a growing need for a new theory as part of an effort to address such issues. Based on the understanding of gender as an individual attribute rather than as a group, poststructuralism attempts to theorize and investigate the role of language in the production of gender relations and identity with a focus on various social, linguistic, and political contexts (Cameron, 1992, 1997). In a poststructuralist view, gender is not a fixed and stable property but viewed as “a system of social doing” (Pavlenko & Piller, 2001: 22). As a system of social relations, gender has an impact on individuals’ access to language, which is the locus of individual consciousness, power, and social structures (Pavlenko & Piller, 2001). It is worth noting that as discursive practices, gender is essentially predicated on language ideologies and power structures within a particular society (Pavlenko & Piller, 2001). The present research on language and gender is principally informed by poststructuralist approaches with a particular focus on interrelationships between gendered agency and English language learning in the particular context of Korea. Before moving on to examine how English is practised in relation to local gender norms, I will first discuss how English is appropriated by women in a wider global context in two key areas, in which gendered mobility figures prominently in the context of globalization and female mobility: immigration and sojourning.

#### 2.4.2. Gendered desires and mobility in English

One of the consequences of neoliberal globalization is that women, more than ever before, are on the move (Piller & Pavlenko, 2007). The number of migrant women equalled the number of migrant men in the late 1990s for the first time in recorded history (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2002). This phenomenon, which is known as the “feminization of migration” (Labadie-Jackson, 2008), flows mainly from the less developed global South to the more affluent global North (Piller & Pavlenko, 2007). While women’s desire for economic advancement is no doubt at work, it is notable that English plays a key role in the mobility projects of female economic migrants.

A good example is an increasing number of English-speaking Filipina domestic workers. While their subservient and obedient images help to increase their employability, it is their English proficiency that appeals to global clients (England & Stiell, 1997; Lan, 2003). In the global North, Canada, for example, their relatively good English skills are seen as handy in the eyes of English-speaking clients, who need to manage day-to-day communication with foreign domestics. It is interesting to note that English proficiency of Filipina domestic workers is also valued in the global South for a different reason. In Taiwan, having English-speaking Filipina maids is a sign of middle class identity (Lan, 2003). Apart from that, Filipina domestics are valued as live-in English tutors for children, as English skills are emphasized in globalization discourses in Taiwanese society (Lan, 2003). Under such circumstances, the linguistic ability of Filipina females serves as bargaining power in negotiating job terms and working conditions with Taiwanese employers (Lan, 2003). It bears noting that Filipina domestics also use their English skills as a means to distinguish themselves from non-English-speaking Indonesian domestics, for example, to upgrade their status (Lan, 2003).

While English serves as economic and/or symbolic capital for female economic migrants proficient in the language, it is translated differently by women migrants with limited proficiency. The nexus between language and gender is worth noting in the case of female migrants who want to learn English and yet remain bound by culturally gendered identities as shaped in the home countries. In a study of immigrant mothers in Canada, Kouritzin (2000) discovered that although the female participants in general acknowledged the benefits of English language skills, their access to English education was constrained by gendered conditions within a family. For one thing, the participants felt constrained in time

for having to play multiple matrimonial roles as mothers, wives and caregivers.

Motivations for English language learning were also impacted by uncertainties about the future for, in some cases, migration was not their decisions but was led by their husbands who make important decisions in patriarchal familial structures. The study highlights that female migrant access to English is not just an economic issue, as oftentimes believed, but a gendered issue in which female agency is impacted by traditional gender expectations.

It should, however, be noted that female agency is inherently multiple and socially constructed through relations of power. The concept of “investment” as proposed by B. Norton (1995) helps to understand the poststructuralist conception of social identity as multiple and a site of struggle. In her study of female migrants in Canada, Norton stresses the fluid nature of gendered subjectivity which changes for being produced in multiple social sites, all of which are structured by relations of power. The notion of investment explains how and why female migrants, all of whom were keen to learn English, displayed different language ideologies depending on the context in which they were situated. On one hand, the participants’ attitude to English was largely structured by their female identity as mothers, wives and caregivers who should “invest” in English language learning in order to provide a better future for their children. Their hope of having a good return on that investment, on the other hand, made them feel uncomfortable dealing with people in whom they had a particular symbolic or material investment (e.g. bosses, teachers, and Anglophone professionals). The ways in which the participants created, responded to, and sometimes resisted opportunities to speak English illustrate the multiplicity of gendered subjectivity, which influences and is influenced by the linguistic behaviours of social actors. “Choices” in bilingual communities as influenced by gendered agency are well illustrated by the work of Goldstein (1997), for example. In her study of English language learning experiences of female Portuguese immigrants working on assembly lines in Canada, Goldstein found that the participants preferred to communicate in Portuguese with their Portuguese-speaking colleagues not only as a sign of ethnic solidarity but also for work productivity. While a greater mastery of English is generally regarded as enhancing work efficiency, the use of English did not necessarily help them to get ahead in their repetitive manual work which did not essentially require English language skills. Goldstein’s work highlights that, despite a widespread view of English that benefits migrants (Goldstein, 1997), the language is disputed and at times resisted in particular bilingual contexts.

While the multiplicity of English language ideologies can be observed in the context of gender and migration, it seems that English holds more or less similar meanings in the case of female sojourners, particularly those who are from regions defined by traditional gender norms. Recent studies on gendered appropriation of English among Asian women studying abroad focus on the use of English and the West as a tool to resist patriarchal societal systems for the realization of female liberation (Kelsky, 2001; Kobayashi, 2002; McMahon, 1997; Piller & Takahashi, 2006, 2013; Takahashi, 2013; Youna Kim, 2011b). The concept of “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1991) is particularly useful here, for Western societies are often constructed as ultimate liberators in the imagination of Asian women feeling oppressed at home. Those women are motivated to pursue English as a way to acquire membership of a specifically imagined community that offers an enhanced range of possibilities for the future (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). It is interesting to note the emergence of sexuality in the imagination of the West in a gendered context (Cameron & Kulick, 2003). Perhaps best captured in theories of desire as a sociolinguistic concept that is enacted at both macro and micro levels (Cameron & Kulick, 2003; Piller & Takahashi, 2006), sexuality has shifted in meaning from philosophical inner states of desire to actual desires expressed by real people engaged in sociolinguistic activities (Cameron, 2005). As a diverse and multifaceted construction which is influenced by both internal and external language learners (Piller & Takahashi, 2006), the concept of “language desire” (Piller, 2002) helps to understand context-specific ideological construction of a particular language – English – in gendered discourses.

Desires are a key in understanding the growing departure of Japanese women in pursuit of English and transnational mobility, as an example. Focusing on the phenomenon of “internationalism” (Kelsky, 2001: 5), Kelsky (2001) documents a growing sense of disillusionment among internationally-oriented educated Japanese women who feel constrained by rigid gender stratifications and a paucity of professional progression in Japanese society. Japanese women’s eroticization and romanticization of the West or *akogare* is a key factor that influences internationalist women to pursue membership of an idealized West, which has been discursively and historically constructed as a female utopia among Japanese women. In a similar context, Takahashi (2013) draws attention to language desire held by female Japanese English learners in Australia. She focuses on how women’s *akogare* for the West and desires for romantic liaisons with a (white) Western man intersect with transnational mobility and English language learning. English

constitutes an exclusive tool for the materialization of their *akogare* and a new identity. Takahashi's work tellingly exposes a gap between participants' pre-conceived ideas about the West shaped by both romantic Hollywood movies and the reality that contradicts their dreams. By living through reality far from their wonderful images of the imagined West, the participants renegotiated their agencies and eventually developed hybrid identities which, however, presented them a dilemma in terms of finding their future home between Japan and overseas.

A dilemma related to a future destination among Asian female sojourners is also illustrated in the work of Kim (2011b), who explores transnational mobility in relation to global media and the identity of Asian women including Chinese, Japanese, and Korean females. Similar to the abovementioned work, Kim's subjects were also driven out of their home countries having experienced sociocultural constraints and a lack of career opportunities. Enticed by mediatized glamorous images of global cities, the participants decided to pursue promising cosmopolitan lifestyles by sojourning in London. The reality was, however, marked by loneliness, uncertainties, and persistent experience of discrimination and racism. Kim describes her informants as "nowhere women" stuck between their desired and lived-out destinations and their home countries where their newly-acquired hybrid identity is less appreciated. Such no-choice situations facing aspirant cosmopolitans are aptly described by the work of Piller and Takahashi (2013) as well. Their study of Japanese flight attendants working overseas for a low-cost carrier shows how dreams of achieving a multilingual, glamorous identity give way to the realities marked by physical exhaustion, identity conflicts, and linguistic inferiority, with few choices available in their immediate future.

The literature review informs us that the impetus behind English language learning and female mobility in Asian context has so far been investigated and explained through the prism of gender constraints and cultural/language desires. With a focus on the "previously marginalized gender identity" (Cameron, 1999), the studies have contributed to an enhanced understanding of interrelationships between macro-social gender conditions and micro-individual desire for English in a specific local context. However, this understanding leaves something to be desired in terms of diversity in female agency and language ideologies as emphasized by poststructuralism. It bears noting that all studies under review recruited women residing overseas with similar gender attitudes and language desires. As

indicated in the studies, they all felt constrained at home and subsequently decided to go abroad in search of emancipatory lifestyles. Given that women (and men in the same vein) respond differently to gender as a set of constraints (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003), it is necessary to expand the scope of research on gender and language by approaching the issue from multiple perspectives that account for individual differences in relation to local gender norms. The question of why Korean women who embrace traditional gender roles pursue English at home, for example, remains underexplored and unanswered. As Gal (1995) notes, linguistic behaviour in gender studies, which often seems to be limited as an object of the researcher's attention, needs to be related to some more broadly ethnographic description of local contexts and belief systems within which language use is embedded. Having reviewed English language ideologies from a gendered perspective at a global level, I shall next examine gendered conditions in Korean society as a backdrop for the proposed research.

#### 2.4.3. Korea: no woman's land

Although Korea achieved impressive modernization through government-led industrialization efforts within a single generation between the 1960s and 1980s, cultural gender norms deeply grounded in Confucianism have failed to evolve at a similar pace, resulting in a clash between modernity that arrived too soon and long-standing traditional values (Koo, 1999). Often referred to as a country that has maintained a patriarchal system of gender relations for more than two millennia of recorded history (Sung, 2003), Korea has been heavily influenced by Confucian teachings of hierarchical relationships between men and women, in which men are described as "heaven" and women as "earth" (Sung, 2003). The rigid gender roles were further reinforced by the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1897), which used Confucianism as a tool to legitimize the ascendancy of the Yi dynasty after overthrowing the preceding Koryo dynasty (918-1392) through a military coup. With the aim of establishing social order in support of the new government, Confucian teaching in Korea stressed a patriarchal family-centred social system. The King was established as a father figure for the public, which in turn endowed males in the family with significant power and authority (K. W. Cho, 1994). Women's subordination to men was naturalized as a moral law and a strict division between the domestic role of women and the public role of men was dictated (K. W. Cho, 1994).

Through such processes driven by political ideologies, Confucianism in Korea has been Koreanized in a way that makes it distinct from other Asian cultures such as China, where the ideology originated (Oberdorfer, 1997). For example, motherhood and maternal accomplishment were idealized as a way of maintaining gendered social structures and through institutionalized mother power, Korean women were promised greater gender rewards compared to their Asian counterparts as long as they could fulfil their Confucian duties as wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law (H. Cho, 1998). Those who rejected domestic virtues as dictated by marital and institutional obligations to pursue individual biographies, however, were subjected to punishments as seen in the case of the New Women in the 1920s (See Section 4.3.3).

During Japan's colonial rule of Korea (1910-1945) and the subsequent Korean War (1950-1953), Confucianism was seriously undermined (Han Park & Cho, 1995). Moreover, the adoption of Western technology and culture throughout the process of establishing an industrialized urban society resulted in a significant growth in the number of Protestant churches, as has the proportion of people professing affiliation with other religious beliefs such as Buddhism. Despite the diversification of the local religious landscape, the centuries-old social philosophy of Confucianism continues to exist in contemporary Korea as fundamental family values known as familism (Han Park & Cho, 1995). And it re-emerged as a dominant force with the 1997/8 Asian Economic Crisis (Jaesook Song, 2006). The crisis caused an unprecedented level of social suffering across Korean society due to massive layoffs of corporate employees and accompanied anxiety and fears of family breakdown. Following the crisis, the number of people living below the poverty line soared from 2.8% in 1997 to 6.4% and 7.3% in 1998 and 1999, respectively (E. A. Kim, 2007). Amid unprecedented financial woes, the number of divorces almost doubled from 68,300 in 1995 to 116,700 in 1998 and 120,000 in 2000 (E. A. Kim, 2007). Triggered by widespread fears of family dissolution, the role of breadwinning men in the formation of normative families was highlighted by powerful forces such as the government and media, while the female homemaker who maintained domestic cohesion through her responsible motherhood was celebrated yet again (Jaesook Song, 2006).

At the same time, a deepening sense of economic insecurity and hyper-competition encouraged by neoliberalism changed public views on women's economic participation. Whereas economic participation of married women was regarded before the crisis as an

attempt to supplement family incomes or to find self-fulfilment, it has since become a prevailing view that women, particularly highly-educated females, should participate in the workforce in order to strengthen family finances (E. Bae, 2007). In other words, Korean women are facing the double difficulty of having to fulfil domestic as well as financial responsibilities as required by the two dominant ideologies – Confucianism and neoliberalism – operating in contemporary Korea. The level of stress that Korean women have to endure in playing multiple roles is well demonstrated by the fact that, as of 2012, Korea's total fertility rate was the second lowest in the OECD (OECD, 2013). The decline in the fertility rate is mainly ascribable to a growing tendency among women who are more educated, have jobs, and live in cities to put off marriage and having children (OECD, 2013). Given the unique local conditions in which “modernities are gendered” (Kendall, 2002), it is worth exploring how educated young Korean women respond to societal demands for prototypical gender roles as well as economic responsibilities, and if/how English and the West influence their mobility. I shall next review the existing research on gender, English and the West in the local context in order to set a point of departure from which to conduct further research.

#### 2.4.4. Korean women in pursuit of English

Increasing desires for the West and English identified among Asian female English learners seem to hold true in the case of Korean women as well. Korean women now outnumber Korean men in terms of study abroad (Youna Kim, 2011b). The proportion of females among Korean students in Australia, for example, increased from 26.5 percent in 1985 to 51.9 percent in 2012 (Australian Government, 2013). The high level of expressed interest in transnational migration by young Korean women is illustrated by a study that shows nearly 70 percent of surveyed Korean females in their twenties affirmed their wish to immigrate to Western countries such as Canada, the U.S., Australia and New Zealand (E. A. Kim, 2007). Gendered restrictions in Korean society appear to be a push factor behind increasing female desires for global mobility. Although Korean women are among the best-educated in the world, their attainment of higher education does not necessarily enhance their career prospects due to deeply-entrenched male dominance at work (Youna Kim, 2011b). It should be noted that while the West is constructed as a land of freedom and opportunities in the imagination of Korean women feeling repressed at home, transnational lifestyles, however, often fail to result in female emancipation (Youna Kim, 2011a). Kim (2011a) examines how yearnings for cosmopolitan lifestyles give way to

nationalism in the case of female Korean sojourners in the U.K. Through day-to-day experiences far from their expectations (e.g. racism), they develop a binary view of “us” (Koreans) and “them” (Britons) and subsequently affirm deliberate nationalism as essential identity.

It is worth noting that the issue of access to English determines the way in which English is viewed by Korean females. In a comparative study on media and mobility between working-class and middle-class Korean women in their twenties, Kim (2005) discusses how the female participants with different class backgrounds appropriated English and the West as mediated by television. The findings indicate that while both groups believed in freedom imagined to lie overseas as heavily influenced by media, the way in which they consumed the West was determined by their disparate social backgrounds and associated future opportunities. Whereas socially disadvantaged women, none of whom had been overseas, consumed the wonderful televised images of the West to escape from their hopeless realities, affluent women, all of whom had overseas experience through the popular local practice of short-term English language learning abroad, appropriated English and Western lifestyles as a means to achieve female individualization. For the former group, feeling a paucity of social mobility opportunities at home, the West was imagined as a land that offers the “freedom of social mobility” (Y. Kim, 2005: 453) as reinforced by upwardly mobile transformations in popular Western movies (e.g. *Pretty Women* and *Goodwill Hunting*). For the latter group, with respectable class credentials, going overseas was tied to cultural globalization, in which cosmopolitan experience and English were essential parts of new identity formation. It is individual access predetermined by class position that influences the way in which females construct agency and particular ideologies about English and the West.

It is important to note that not all Western values were, however, accepted by those women. They were particularly critical of Western sexual morality, which in their view pursues physical sensation rather than the emotional quality of love. Western sexual freedom was seen as “promiscuous”, “too fast”, and “too free” by both groups who held on to culturally specific meanings of love. Their rejection of Western concepts of love and emphasis on moral agency are in contrast to *akogare* that has been highlighted by various research-work in which erotic imaginings of the West and a white man constitute a key motivator for sojourning abroad among Japanese women. While it is hard to generalize

Korean women's ideologies of the West and English on the basis of a few studies, their findings can serve as a point of departure in exploring how gendered desire for social mobility and independence intersects with English language learning in the case of contemporary Korean women. Given that female freedom and individualization are perceived as problematic and deviant in Korean society in which gendered matrimonial expectations are rigidly defined (Youna Kim, 2011b), it is worth exploring a possible dilemma faced by young Korean women whose individual aspirations clash with societal demands and if/how English plays a role in their mobility projects. As gender and language roots interact in the everyday social practices of a particular local community and both of them are jointly constructed in those practices (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992), it is important to "look locally" (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992) to allow for a close observation of gender and linguistic practices in order to accommodate intra- as well as intergroup differences. Only in doing so, the relation between language and the negotiation of gender identity in everyday social behaviour in the particular community of Korea can be discovered.

## 2.5. Translation and interpreting

Having examined some lacunae that exist in the current research on English language ideologies in Korea, it is important to locate a site in which all of the identified gaps can be addressed in a way that allows for a comprehensive examination of beliefs about English in Korean society. I have identified translation and interpreting as a site of investigation through which to deepen our understanding about how specific meanings of English are constructed in Korean. Translation and interpreting as a research site is highly relevant. First of all, English education in Korea began in late 19<sup>th</sup> century with the purpose of training English-Korean translators and interpreters (Kim-Rivera, 2002). Apart from such historical relevance, the profession of English-Korean translation and interpreting is closely related to all of the research areas discussed throughout the literature review: mobility; neoliberalism; gender; and finally commodification. The genealogy of English through the trajectory of translation and interpreting in Korea, which will offer fresh insights into English language ideologies in the society, is dealt with in a separate chapter because of its sheer magnitude (See Chapter 4). This section focuses on how mobility, neoliberalism, gender and commodification manifest in the field of English-Korean translation and interpreting in Korea. I will begin with the issue of a gap between mobility

desires and realities in English in the case of translation and interpreting, through which to draw a parallel with “English fever”.

#### 2.5.1. Imagined futures in English

The examination of “English fever” in Korean society has raised the inevitable question of how English has been misrecognized as an avenue to power in a country that is situated on the periphery of the global linguistic hierarchy (See Section 2.3.4). While it seems obvious that English alone cannot possibly guarantee power and fame, such hopes have been justified and deeply internalized in the Korean consciousness to the point of creating “English fever”. In trying to understand how and why English skills have been popularly recognized as a path that ensures class mobility, it is apt to look at this issue in an area in which individual aspirations for social mobility through English are most palpable, and yet the gap between dreams and reality in English remains controversial. English-Korean translators and interpreters represent a key site to investigate the intersections between language and mobility due primarily to the uniqueness of the class of persons involved in the profession.

Worldwide, the status of translators and interpreters is viewed as decidedly low among translation and interpreting scholars (Dam & Zethsen, 2008, 2009). Translation and interpreting as a profession is described as “peripheral” (Hermans & Lambert, 1998: 113), “poorly-paid” (Venuti, 1995: 17), “thankless” (Risku, 2004: 185), “powerless” (Snell-Hornby, 2006: 172) and “glorified secretaries” (Ruuskanen, 1994: 299) who have a habitus of “voluntary servitude” (Simeoni, 1998: 23). While certain professional sub-categories such as conference interpreters and those working for supranational organizations (e.g. the EU) are generally considered as prestigious (Dam & Zethsen, 2013), most language professionals are not free from public ignorance and the level of knowledge and preparation involved in becoming professional translators and interpreters is widely underestimated (Dam & Zethsen, 2008). As language skills are not properly recognized as core professional skills but something that is additional, translation and interpreting remains a low-status occupation even among those who are highly remunerated (Hermans & Lambert, 1998; Koskinen, 2000).

Such a scholarly consensus, however, does not seem to hold true in the case of English-Korean translators and interpreters in Korea. According to their working areas and degree

of competence, interpreters working in Korea are divided into four groups: conference (simultaneous) interpreters, escort interpreters, guide interpreters and community interpreters (J. Choi, 2004). Among them, conference interpreters are highly popular as “master English speakers” (J. Choi & Lim, 2002: 635), and they are categorized into two sub-groups: freelance interpreters working at international conferences and in-house or corporate interpreters working for big firms on a contract basis (E. Song, 2015). There is less recognition for translators than interpreters (J. Choi & Lim, 2002). The popularity of the profession is well demonstrated by the level of competition for admission into local translation and interpreting institutes. In order to be accredited as professional translators and/or interpreters in Korea, one should successfully complete a degree from an institute that specializes in translation and interpreting training, often at a postgraduate level. The Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (GSIT) is generally acknowledged as the finest school for aspiring translators and interpreters in Korea (Bahk-Halberg, 2007). Founded in 1979 as a translation and interpreting institute, a first not only in Korea but also in Asia, the GSIT gained even more prestige by becoming Asia’s first member of the Europe-based International Permanent Conference of University Institutes of Translators and Interpreters in 2004 (Bahk-Halberg, 2007). The fact that about 1,000 applicants compete for up to 40 or 50 openings in the new class each year in the case of the English-Korean Department alone testifies to the popularity of the profession (Bahk-Halberg, 2007; Jinhyun Cho, 2015).

Another yardstick to measure the popularity of the profession is the fact that many people elect to learn English intensively for years, often without any foreign exposure, in order to become English-Korean translators and interpreters. Defined as “elective bilinguals”, these individuals decide to learn a second language at a later stage of life in a society in which their first language is still privileged (Valdes & Figueroa, 1994). The opposite concept is “circumstantial bilinguals”, which refers to those who were forced to learn a second language as a result of circumstantial changes (e.g. migration) in a society in which their original language is not useful (Valdes & Figueroa, 1994). While circumstantial bilinguals constitute the vast majority of translators and interpreters in countries built by immigrants (e.g. Australia, Canada, and the United States), many English-Korean translators and interpreters in Korea have, in contrast, chosen to devote themselves to English language learning at home, signifying a high level of prestige accorded to the profession that contrasts the global perceptions of translation and interpreting as a low status occupation.

On the other hand, it is important to note contradictions embedded in the status of the profession in relation to local professional hierarchies. While English-Korean simultaneous interpreters are highly regarded as elite speakers of English, the profession is, at the same time, viewed as “professional inferiors” (J. Choi & Lim, 2002: 633) for being categorized as a service profession due to its nature of serving others. Translation and interpreting is perceived by the general public as something that young people, particularly females, might indulge in at a relatively high level of remuneration for a while, but not as a lifetime profession (J. Choi & Lim, 2002). While this contradictory perception of the profession, in which their fluency in English is envied and yet their professional status remains low, legitimately raises the question of why such contradiction exists in the profession, it is more important to note a parallel between the profession and “English fever” in terms of individual mobility aspirations. That is to say, while enhancing social status through English is no doubt at work in both cases, such mobility desires are often challenged in reality in which English alone does not necessarily help individuals to materialize their class ambitions. Examining the gap between dreams and realities in the profession of English-Korean translation and interpreting will throw new light onto how individual mobility becomes tied to English and how language-driven mobility desires unfold on the ground. By doing so, it can enable a more sophisticated understanding of ideologies attached to English in Korea.

#### 2.5.2. Neoliberal competition for linguistic perfection

Another key aspect of English-Korean translation and interpreting is a high level of competition aimed at linguistic perfection. Traditionally, many translation and interpreting programmes have emphasized the need for perfection through vigorous training in order to prepare their students for all the unexpected situations that they may encounter as professionals (J. Cho & Roger, 2010). With the permeation of neoliberalism into English and the bar to measure “good English” ever rising in Korean society (See Section 2.3.3), however, the pursuit of linguistic perfection has become ever more relentless. This can be best explained by emergent neoliberal personhood in translation and interpreting that masks privileged personal backgrounds by accentuating individual effort in English language learning.

As mentioned previously (See Section 1.1 and Section 2.2.2), Korean society has hierarchical structures in English as defined by *haewaepa* (overseas English learners) and

*guknaepa* (domestic English learners). The original meaning of *haewaepa* is “the international faction” as it referred to those who studied and received a higher degree overseas, while those with a higher degree from Korean universities were called *guknaepa* (“the domestic faction”) (Goodman, 1986). As proficiency in English became a crucial necessity for securing good opportunities in education and employment (J. S.-Y. Park & Bae, 2009), however, those terms have increasingly come to refer to people who have learned *English* overseas at an early age and those who have learned English at home their entire life. The *haewaepa* and *guknaepa* distinction is much more obvious in the field of translation and interpreting, in which members are automatically categorized into *haewaepa* or *guknaepa* depending on their English education background (Bahk-Halberg, 2007). As English proficiency is much more valued than Korean skills in their effort to become “perfect” bilinguals, competition in classrooms is often structured around one’s English acquisition background (Jinhyun Cho, 2015; See also Chapter 6). Such essentialist views on the type of language learning one has experienced implies that one particular way of learning is more valued than others. *Haewaepa* interpreters, for example, have traditionally been viewed as advantaged compared to *guknaepa* due to their high-level of bilinguality as a result of early exposures to a foreign language and relevant cultures (Bahk-Halberg, 2007). It bears noting that the top of the local interpreting market has always been dominated by *haewaepa* interpreters (Bahk-Halberg, 2007). Discussing the apparent advantages accorded to individual backgrounds is, however, regarded as “politically incorrect” (Bahk-Halberg, 2007: 165) among fellow translators and interpreters due primarily to an overemphasis on individual effort in achieving linguistic perfectionism.

While one might naturally question the feasibility of becoming a “perfect” bilingual, pursuits of linguistic perfectionism among trainee translators and interpreters have been validated and sustained in popular neoliberal subjecthood constructed among celebrity interpreters in Korea. Worldwide, it is generally viewed that there are no widely-known stars in the profession of translation and interpreting (Schäffner, 2004), but that is certainly not the case in Korea. Celebrity interpreters constantly receive media attention, in which the cool image of simultaneous interpreters working with high-ranking officials at international conferences speaking flawless English has been established as a mainstream idea among Korean people (Jinhyun Cho, 2015). While such glamorous and cosmopolitan images of simultaneous interpreters constitute the profession’s greatest attraction among

aspiring English language professionals (Kwak, 2012), it is important to note that glamour is not the only element that reinforces positive ideas about simultaneous interpreters.

In neoliberal discourses of English language learning, stories of celebrity interpreters whose pursuits of linguistic perfectionism were rewarded solely by individual determination have been widely mediatized in Korea. In typical “rags-to-riches” fashion, celebrity interpreters experience insurmountable hurdles in their language journeys, yet conquer circumstantial challenges with their superhuman commitment to English and strong moral calibre (Jinhyun Cho, 2015). As individual effort in language learning is heavily emphasized in Korean society under the influence of neoliberal ideologies, simultaneous interpreters speaking apparently “perfect” English have been held up as an excellent embodiment of endless individual commitment to linguistic perfectionism (Jinhyun Cho, 2015). Throughout the discursive processes of constructing English-Korean interpreters as an epitome of the neoliberal logic of human capital development, their often privileged backgrounds that enabled them to learn English in the first place are simply erased (Jinhyun Cho, 2015). The currently popular interpreter personhood is a strong example of the figure of English language learner idealized under neoliberal discourses in Korea. It is, therefore, worth examining the motivations behind pursuits of linguistic perfectionism among translators and interpreters with a focus on popular neoliberal personhood in the field. The findings will help to understand how neoliberalism influences societal competition for English, and how such competition is encouraged and sustained throughout the vicious cycle of “English fever” in Korean society.

### 2.5.3. Translation and interpreting as a woman’s job

Gender is closely related to the profession of translation and interpreting, which is often referred to as “feminized” (Simon, 2003: 1) or “a no-man’s land” (Hermans & Lambert, 1998: 114). While the profession might appear as one of the few areas in which women have more power than men, it bears noting that a gendered structure of authority in the field often works in favour of men. Feminist critiques of translation studies have highlighted negatively gendered associations between translators and women, both of whom have historically been weaker figures in their respective hierarchies (Simon, 2003). As a binary between productive and reproductive work organizes the way in which a culture values work, this paradigm depicts originality in terms of paternity and authority, while describing translation/interpreting and women in secondary terms (Chamberlain,

1998). This forced partnership between translation/interpreting and women finds contemporary resonance in the study of gender and multilingualism as well. In the current multilingual marketplace, the language workforce (e.g. language teachers, call centre staff, and translators and interpreters) is heavily feminized (Piller & Pavlenko, 2007). While these sites might appear as examples of Bourdieu's (1992, c1991) theory that multilingual skills can be transformed into economic and social capitals in market terms, it is important to note the poor working conditions in which most language workers work in casual jobs with relatively lower remuneration and little job security (Massey, 2004). The feminization of the multilingual market is, therefore, not a cause for celebration, but a powerful example of gendered complicity in which the casual nature of language work fits in well with typical female biographies (e.g. reproductive work) (Piller & Pavlenko, 2007).

Such gendered nature of language work is highly relevant to the local field of translation and interpreting as well. Similar to global patterns, there are many fewer men than women in the local field but especially in the top interpreting market, in which women account for an absolute majority (Bahk-Halberg, 2007). It should be noted that the predominance of women in the field is deeply related to the gendered local labour market, which prefers males to females (Seguino, 2007). In heavily male-oriented corporate structures, Korean women inevitably encounter limited career prospects along the way of career building (H.-R. Kang & Rowley, 2005; Youna Kim, 2011b). The patriarchal market structures are indeed regarded as one of the primary reasons for female interpreters to choose the profession (Bahk-Halberg, 2007). For ambitious Korean women doomed to face a glass ceiling, the profession is viewed as an ideal place in which "gender equality is best guaranteed" (Bahk-Halberg, 2007: 191). Perhaps not surprisingly, it is not as desirable for Korea males who are socially expected to climb a career ladder at a respectable company with regular incomes and job security (Bahk-Halberg, 2007). While the apparent gender equality in translation and interpreting attracts many educated young females to the field, it often goes unnoticed that their employers are mostly males (Dam & Zethsen, 2009). In a male-dominant Korean society, the vertical structures of male clients and female language service providers are almost universal, exposing another gap between promises and reality in the profession in terms of gender equity. A study that looks at interrelationships between gender and English – how cultural constraints influence Korean females to pursue English language learning and how the image that is projected in public discourses matches the

experiences on the ground – will help to discover English language ideologies related to gendered local conditions.

#### 2.5.4. The commodification of language and identity

Highly relevant to the study of English language ideologies in Korea and yet a little, if not the least, developed area of research is the commodification of English and language workers. In the new economy defined by globalization and neoliberalism, language begins to acquire value as a straightforward commodity (Heller, 2002, 2003, 2010). The results are contradictions between language as a marker of authenticity and identity, and language as an acquirable technical skill and marketable commodity (Heller, 2002). Heller (2010) notes translation and interpreting as a key site for examining this commodification trend in language. In the contemporary language market, translation and interpreting has increasingly been involved in the symbolic dimensions of added value in addition to its traditional value as the distribution of commodified linguistic resources (Heller, 2010). Precisely how and in what form such value is added to the existing value of language has, however, hardly been dealt with in relevant scholarship.

English-Korean translators and interpreters in Korea represent a rich ground for exploring the ongoing shift in language ideologies from identity to commodity. As noted previously (See Section 2.5.1), English-Korean simultaneous interpreters have traditionally been respected for their English proficiency as “master English speakers” (J. Choi & Lim, 2002: 635). Their professional identity based on language skills has been commercialized among star interpreters, who write books about English language learning (최정화, 2014), run their own English education businesses (이보영, 2016), and/or host television programs on English education (EBS, 2016, n.d.). It is notable that in recent years, additional value other than language has been added to the human resource packages of simultaneous interpreters whose professional identity is experiencing a gradual shift from linguistic mastery towards personal aesthetics. English-Korean simultaneous interpreters appear in television commercials as a symbol of class, elegance, and beauty (Infographic, 2010). Some popular female interpreters feature in cosmetics advertisements in which beauty is highlighted as a key professional feature (Creative, 2010). The discursive shifts from language to beauty among language workers in Korea represent a rich site in which to explore the decoupling of language and authenticity and the emergent coupling of language and aesthetics. The examination of ongoing tensions in the field is expected to answer

some key questions raised in the field so far with regard to language and commodification: who controls what counts as legitimate language (Heller, 2010); and who gets to define linguistic practices and values within the given structures of power (Heller, 2002). The discovery will contribute not only to Korea sociolinguistics but also to the global bilingualism field in relation to the current shift in the ideology and practice of bilingualism.

## 2.6. Summary and research questions

In this chapter, I have reviewed local and global English language ideologies in relation to “English fever” in Korea. It has argued that to address the multiplicity embedded in the phenomenon, it is important to adopt language ideology as a key prism, for it serves as a mediating link between linguistic and social structures. The chapter has also argued that the issue of scale and levels of analysis enable a refined investigation into the complexity of English language ideologies in Korea. Given the duality of language that performs work at both macro and micro levels, I will address the macro-level ideology of global English and micro-level ideology of English as individually situated practices. I have also discussed the interrelationships between gender and English in the context of poststructuralism. The monolithic view of motivations behind English language learning among Asian females highlights a need for a study that investigates the multiple and fluid nature of female agency as structured through the social relations of power. Finally, I propose translation and interpreting as a key research site for examining language ideologies tied to English due to its close association with all of the discussed research areas. The literature review identifies several lacunae that exist in the current literature, and the following research questions have been formulated on that basis.

First of all, despite an increasing volume of studies on English language ideologies in Korea, few attempts have been made to deal with the more fundamental question of why the popularity of English is almost globally unmatched in Korean society to the point of creating a particular sociolinguistic phenomenon, namely “English fever” (See Section 2.3.4). Given such a lacuna, it is important to understand what kinds of meanings have been attached to English from its very inception to the present. It was argued that English-Korean translation and interpreting represents a key analytical category through which to examine the development of English, because training English-Korean translators and interpreters was the central reason behind the introduction of English education in Korea.

Apart from such historical relevance, it is worth noting that the issue of English language ideologies in Korea, which has attracted attention from the sociolinguistics field for its intensity, has never been discussed – to the best of my knowledge – either by translators and interpreters or through historical periodization. Specifically, I will address the following:

What kind of ideologies have been attached to English in Korea through its historical evolution with power as a key analytical concept?

Secondly, the literature review indicates the pervasiveness of globalization discourses about English and language learning despite increasing costs, and necessitates continued critique on the workings of neoliberalism and globalization in English at both macro and micro levels. At a macro-societal level, English-medium lectures in the context of institutional internationalization represent a key site in which to examine how English as a global language has been naturalized through macro-level discourses (See Section 2.3.3). I shall investigate the discursive construction of English as a global language in local higher education in media discourses. Specifically, I intend to address the following:

How are dreams related to the status of English as a global language shaped and reinforced through dominant media discourses, and how do such dreams contrast with the realities in the classroom and why?

At a micro-individual level, I shall examine how neoliberalism has influenced the ways in which individuals experience English language learning. By looking at personal language learning experiences of English-Korean translators and interpreters in relation to neoliberal personhood, I intend to address the following:

How do neoliberal ideologies work to motivate individuals to pursue the profession of translation and interpreting, and how do pre-constructed dreams unfold in personal experiences on the ground?

Thirdly, considering a need to understand how Koreans relate to English in a diverse range of contexts (See Section 2.4.1), I will approach English language ideologies from a gender perspective through which to understand the social, historical, and political situatedness of

power embedded in English. It is important to address if/how English can be differently appropriated by females with presumably varied mobility desires. Specifically, I aim to address the following:

Why do educated Korean females develop desires for English and the profession of translation and interpreting in relation to their gendered goals, and how do their dreams intersect with realities?

Fourthly and relatedly, I aim to further explore the intersections between language, gender, and power in the context of the commodification of language. Reference was made to the lack of research on the commodification of English in Korea and the relevance of translation and interpreting to examine the ongoing commodification trend (See Section 2.5.4). In relation to the current shift from identity to commodity in the local language market, I shall focus on the following question:

How does the traditional focus on language – linguistic proficiency – clash with a new focus on the speaker as a commodity, and how do language workers cope with the gap between traditional and emergent values?

The overarching aim of addressing the aforementioned research questions is to answer the ultimate research problem set out at the beginning of the thesis (See Section 1.2): why is English so feverishly pursued in Korea and why is there such a gap between dreams and realities in English?

## Chapter 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the overall research design of this study and its justification. I adopt a concentric structure starting with historical textual analyses (See Chapter 4), followed by media discourse analyses (See Chapter 5) and content analysis of interview data (See Chapters 6, 7 and 8). Firstly, I situate my research within a qualitative research paradigm and provide a rationale for developing this particular research methodology. Secondly, I move on to describe data collection at both macro and micro levels. After introducing the data collection procedures in detail, I discuss researcher positionality and ethical dilemma presented throughout the research processes. This will be followed by the methods of data analysis and closed with a review of limitations of the study.

### 3.2. A qualitative design

This study aims to examine English language ideologies in Korean society from both macro- and micro-perspectives. In the macro-domain, I examine how English language ideologies have evolved in Korean society from historical perspectives in order to establish a baseline for this research (See Chapter 4). I then investigate how English language ideologies have developed in contemporary Korea in relation to the status of English as a global language by examining ongoing English fever in higher education. For the micro-domain, I explore English language ideologies held by English-Korean translators and interpreters by tracing their English language learning trajectories from multiple perspectives – neoliberalism, gender, and commodification.

In carrying out this research, I have adopted a qualitative approach and will explain in the following outline those four aspects that are particularly relevant to the present work. Firstly, qualitative research takes place in the natural world and is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena from multiple perspectives (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). As this study intends to investigate English language ideologies in Korean society from both micro- and macro-perspectives, it is ideally suited to exploring linguistic beliefs and practices performed by individuals as well as social domains. Given that qualitative methods are useful for better understanding any phenomenon about which little is yet known (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), it will help readers to understand how particular

language ideologies regarding English have been constructed and populated in relation to local particularities.

Secondly, qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive. Traditional social methods of collecting and analysing language-attitudinal data for quantitative breakdown are informative but are limited in revealing how these relate to the construction of the meaning of English in its social context. This can be achieved only through understanding how language ideologies operate in day-to-day individual lives in relation to a specific status that English holds in a particular society. The nature of qualitative research – pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people (Marshall & Rossman, 2006: 2) – enables the researcher to understand people through whom to interpret a particular social phenomenon. Thirdly, qualitative research uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). As a rich site of multiple paradigms, qualitative methods offer a wide range of research strategies and techniques (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003). Such a diversity, in which no single approach is preferred, is ideal for this research which intends to interpret the social phenomenon of “English fever” from multiple perspectives.

Last but not least, the researcher is an instrument in qualitative research. I agree with Richards and Morse (2002) that any study is only as good as the researcher and in a qualitative study in which the researcher is a research tool, this issue is particularly prominent. I believe that my own personal and professional background is well suited to investigating the proposed topic. I am a professional English-Korean translator/interpreter and familiar with Korean society, having lived there for more than three decades in which I personally experienced the development of “English fever”. Apart from that, I am an empathetic and a patient listener. As a professional translator/interpreter, I am, however, aware of the danger of “assumed understanding” (Sprague, 2005) posed by my insider-researcher status. In an effort to avoid this issue, I use probing questions such as “Can you give me an example” (See Appendix 3) rather than relying on any potential assumptions I might hold. By leveraging my skills and background, I aim to co-construct reality, which is yet again an “interpreted” reality (Strine, 1991) with the participants and through them discover the meaning that the reality has for the personal as well as the public domains of a society.

### 3.3. Data collection

This section presents the data collection procedures in detail. The qualitative framework outlined has informed my data collection in that I attempted to arrange a diverse corpus that would incorporate data from both public and private genres. In order to approach the proposed topic from multiple perspectives, both micro-domain (interviews and field notes) and macro-domain (books, newspapers, magazines, and websites) data were collected. Due to the evolving nature of English language ideologies in Korea, the collection of macro-domain data ran through nearly the entire course of the present study. As for the collection of micro-domain data, I used one-on-one interviews as a primary tool to obtain data with field notes as a supplementary source of data. I begin by presenting the collection of macro-domain data before moving on to describe micro-domain data collection procedures.

#### 3.3.1. Macro-domain data

##### ***Historical textual data***

One challenge for this study was how to find *useful* data out of everything that seemed to be potential data. This problem stemmed from the fact that in qualitative research there are no explicit restrictions on what can be considered “data” (Richards, 2005). I thus had to exercise caution not to gather *too much* data but *enough* data to avoid ending up with “messy records” (Dörnyei, 2007: 34). The strategy that I employed for historical data collection to provide an overview of the processes in which English language ideologies have evolved in the Korean context was to approach the issue by following the development of the profession of translation and interpreting. Serendipitously, I discovered at the very beginning of the data collection process that the origin of English language education in Korea was to train English-Korean translators and interpreters, which rationalized my decision to define the scope of historical data collection with the profession as a key theme. I collected journal articles and books regarding the history of English-Korean and translators and interpreters, while gathering data from the web (e.g. newspaper and magazine articles) with “English-Korean translation and interpreting” and “the history of English” as key words.

##### ***Media globalization discourses***

As for the other line of document collection on the topic of media discourses relating to

globalization through English-medium lectures, I focused on collecting data with regard to English-medium lectures at KAIST, an elite local university. As mentioned previously (See Section 1.2), the high-profile suicide cases at KAIST attracted keen media attention locally as well as globally due to the alleged role of English-medium lectures in the suicides. As an in-depth case study focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings (Eisenhardt, 1989), a deeper examination of the KAIST case is expected to illustrate how particular language ideologies relating to English are constructed and reinforced in a specific institutional setting, which is yet strongly tied to the power that operates in a broader societal context. I tried to establish a data collection protocol by identifying the following research areas as informed by literature review and the research questions:

- 1) English-medium lectures at KAIST
- 2) Internationalization of KAIST
- 3) Internationalization of the local higher education sector

I have collected relevant articles from the two largest local newspapers, which are highly influential in terms of shaping public opinion (Sa, 2009): *Chosun Ilbo* and *Joongang Ilbo*. The data collection spanned the years 2006 and 2010, the period during which English-medium lectures began to attract media attention in Korea (Jinhyun Cho, 2012) and became strongly contested following the suicides at KAIST. Documents were mostly obtained from the web in the form of online newspaper articles with the abovementioned data collection protocol as key words. A total of twenty documents were retrieved as a result of data collection.

### 3.3.2. Micro-domain data

#### ***Interview participant recruitment***

In June 2011, ethics approval to recruit English-Korean translators and interpreters for this study was granted by Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee of Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. A decision to recruit English-Korean translators and interpreters was made on the ground that they constitute the most intense and professional English language learners and users in the Korean context and thus would have unique stories to tell. Participants were recruited from among graduates of the Graduate School of Interpretation

and Translation in Korea and among current and past students from the Translation and Interpreting Program at Macquarie University, where I held a teaching position. As the scope of my project included students I was teaching at Macquarie at the time of the research, recruitment efforts did not begin until the final exams were finished so that the students and I were no longer in student- teacher relationships. Initial approaches for recruitment were made by administrative staff out of concern that some students might feel pressured to join the project. In the meantime, I was allowed to contact the GSIT as well as Macquarie graduates through electronic means (See Appendix 1). Selection criteria for participants were:

- English-Korean translators and interpreters (both trainee and professional)
- Those who have received formal training from a relevant program
- The age range from 20 and above

In total, 32 participants were recruited and signed Information and Consent Forms (See Appendix 2). Participations were entirely voluntary and no one left the project in the middle, even though participants were allowed to withdraw in case of any unforeseen circumstantial changes. Among the 32 participants, fourteen were professional translators/interpreters, eight trainees, seven graduates whose jobs were not related to translation and interpreting, and three recent graduates looking for jobs. Their age ranged from early-20s to late-40s and some older participants preferred to give an approximate range (e.g. early 40s) instead of actual numbers. Appendix 4 provides a summary of participant profiles for which I used pseudonyms in order to protect their anonymity.

### ***Interviews***

The data collection began in June, 2011 through one-on-one interviews conducted on the Macquarie campus with participants who were present in Australia at the time that the interviews were conducted. Due to the private nature of personal interviews, interviews were conducted in a quiet place (e.g. empty classrooms). Additionally, I had interviews with participants who were based in Korea through video calls (Skype) or face-to-face meetings on my visits to Korea during the school break. Each interview lasted from at least an hour up to two hours and was electronically recorded. Participants were given the option to choose their preferred language, English or Korean, for their interviews. All of them elected to use Korean with a few switching back and forth between English and

Korean during the interviews. Interview transcripts were afterwards translated into English by the author. As a professional English-Korean translator/interpreter myself, I directly translated interviews conducted in Korean into English at the time of transcribing through force of habit. When the potential weaknesses of this data treatment method were pointed out by my supervisor, I double-checked the translated versions against the original interviews at least three times to ensure data integrity. Throughout such processes, I was able to immerse myself in the data, which in turn helped the process of coding. In the end, I used transcripts of the Korean originals for the analyses.

Patton (1990) writes about three types of qualitative interviewing: 1) informal, conversational interviews; 2) semi-structured interviews; and 3) standardized, open-ended interviews. My interview style falls into the category of semi-structured interviews, in which I provided guidance and direction (hence the “-structured” part), but was also keen to follow up interesting developments and to let the participant elaborate on certain issues (hence the “semi-” part). My interview strategy was informed by responsive interviewing (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and Rubin and Rubin (2005), in which the interviewer begins a project with a topic in mind but recognizes that he/she will modify their questions to match the knowledge and interests of the interviewees. The concept of phenomenological interviewing which explores lived the participants’ experiences and the ways we understand those experiences to develop a worldview was particularly useful in progressing interviews in a fluid yet structured manner. As developed by Seidman (1998), the overall concept of phenomenological interviewing focuses on three phases: firstly, past experience with the phenomenon of interest; secondly, present experience with the phenomenon; and, thirdly, joining these two narratives to describe the individual’s essential experience with the phenomenon. As the purpose of the interviews was to trace the participants’ English language learning trajectories to examine how individual language ideologies are shaped in relation to a broader social phenomenon, I began the interviews by asking how they became interested in English language learning and what led them to the field of translation and interpreting. This was followed by how their pre-conceived ideas about and beliefs in English played out in reality before discussing if the participants experienced any gap between “dreams” about and “realities” of the profession (See Appendix 3 for interview guide). In the end, I collected 32 interviews. The data consisted of narrative responses to semi-structured informal interviews about their

language backgrounds and factors that led to their interest in the field of translation and interpreting.

### ***Field notes***

As soon as possible after each interview, I took time to write field notes in which I recorded demographic information (e.g. age, education, and family), motivations behind participants' English language learning and career decisions, and reflections on the way in which the interview was conducted. These helped me to focus on important points to keep in mind throughout often iterative qualitative research processes. As a memory trigger, the field notes were useful in pre-identifying broad patterns in questions such as language learning and career decisions, which in turn helped me to grow ideas about emergent issues through relevant literature reviews at an initial stage. In doing so, however, I was conscious of Agar (1996)'s warning against trying to rely overly on field notes for data analysis and used them only as an aid in organizing the data and my initial ideas. The notes also served as an excellent source for complementing the data. At times, information differed between the actual interview transcripts and the field notes, forcing me to go back to the transcripts to ensure the thoroughness of the data. The field notes thus contributed to strengthening the interview transcripts as a primary source of data in terms of integrity and reliability.

### ***Emails***

Following the interviews and field note writing, I exchanged emails with participants in order to clarify some questions that emerged later. Later during data analyses, the commodification of the local translation and interpreting market in relation to the media phenomenon of *eoljjang tongyeoksa* or "good-looking interpreters" began to attract my attention. As it was not extensively covered during the interviews, I emailed the participants to seek their opinions specifically on that phenomenon and a total of 27 participants responded. Specifically, I asked the following three questions:

- a) Have you heard of the phenomenon of "good-looking interpreters"?
- b) If you have, what kind of opinions do you have on this phenomenon?
- c) Do you think appearance benefits the profession?

### 3.4. Researcher positionality and ethical considerations

As stated earlier, the participants were recruited from amongst my former students as well as my friends. I therefore had to negotiate my role as a researcher against that of a friend or a teacher before beginning interviews. While it was humanly impossible not to be influenced by my past classroom and social experiences, I searched for ways to look at how to use those experiences in my research to make them assets, rather than problems, and build on them throughout the interviews. In order to achieve that goal, I asked the participants the same kind of questions that I had previously discussed with them in another context (e.g. academic consultations or social occasions) during the interviews. To my surprise, the interviews revealed new aspects about those who I thought I knew reasonably well through previous interactions and these new discoveries helped me to remain open-minded and non-judgmental throughout the entire course of the interviews.

On another level, the pre-relationships that I had built with the participants certainly helped me to enter their lives more easily than I would otherwise have been able to. The participants, who volunteered for the interviews without expecting any form of reward, were eager to talk about issues that had been so central to their lives and yet had hardly been discussed in a focused manner. The level of candour that they showed me throughout the interviews were simply surprising for which I am still deeply grateful. When the degree of candour, however, went “too high”, I found it a little overwhelming and was forced to mull over potential implications that the use of the data in question might bring in the personal domains of the participants. As an example, a female participant described during an interview using an English-speaking foreign boyfriend as a “guinea pig” to experiment with in English. This brutally honest answer left me dumbfounded and I had to grapple with this datum for a while in order to decide what to do with it considering potential impacts on their relationship in case the participant is identified. Frankly speaking, I was momentarily tempted to explore the idea of a “user concept” in which non-native speakers of English try to use native speakers to improve their English proficiency for instrumental purposes. However, I was also worried about potential impacts on participants’ relationships resulting from such a line of inquiry. After a long and agonizing debate, I eventually decided not to pursue that line of inquiry in order to protect the identity of the participant who had raised it. In fact, the issue never arose again in later interviews. As such, anonymity was the first principle that I strictly abided by throughout the research in light of ethical considerations. Together with anonymity, I adopted informed consent

and confidentiality as core strategies to safeguard my participants. When initial contacts were made with potential participants via emails, I highlighted in bold that I would not use any other information that could lead to a participant being recognized (See Appendix 1). I also attached a consent form which clearly states the participants' rights, including a right to refuse audio-recording or withdraw without any consequence (See Appendix 2). At the beginning of the interviews, I confirmed with the participants that their participations were entirely voluntary and that they were fully informed of the aims of the research, the purpose of the recording, and their rights. Confidentiality was continuously sought throughout the data analysis and presentation of the data as well. Any information concerning the participants was accessed only by me and my supervisor in an effort to ensure the confidentiality of the data. I securely stored electronically recorded data (interviews) on a password-protected computer while keeping hard documents in a lockup cabinet in my office at Macquarie University.

### 3.5. Data analysis

As detailed in the data collection section, I collected three types of qualitative data: historical textual data, media globalization discourses, and interview transcripts. The approaches chosen to analysing them are discussed below.

#### *Genealogical approaches to historical textual data*

The analysis of historical textual data was primarily informed by historical studies or genealogical analyses. This type of analysis was well suited to the intention to trace the development of English language ideologies in the local context. Genealogical approaches aim to identify patterns of language and related practices in order to show how these constitute aspects of society and the people within it (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001). By discovering the historical origins of an event which is generally taken for granted, this form of analysis involves the study of power through which to critically explore historical and cultural specificity embedded in a particular taken-for-granted social phenomenon (Wetherell et al., 2001). In conducting historical studies, I will adopt Foucault's definition of genealogy as "a coupling of scholarly erudition and local memory that allows us to constitute historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today" (Foucault, 2003: 8). Language in genealogical approaches is "situated, but within a particular social and cultural context rather than a particular interaction" (Wetherell et al.,

2001: 8). The basic assumption here is that the language available to people enables or constrains not only their expression of certain ideas but also what they do. It is important for a researcher to note that while practices might look unique to a particular historical period, they could probably be relevant to large area of the society in question with potential contemporary resonance (Wetherell et al., 2001). In this regard, I adopt “layered simultaneity” (Blommaert, 2005) as an analytical framework. According to Blommaert (2005), “[discourse] occurs in a real-time synchronic event but it is simultaneously encapsulated in several layers of historicity, some of which is within the grasp of the participants while others remain invisible but are nevertheless present.” As the intended studies focus on language as a resource to identify patterns of ideologies across wider social and cultural contexts rather than studying language *itself*, I focused on categorizing major emerging themes through the content analysis of historical documents as part of procedural analyses. As historical analyses add to the explanatory power of such analyses (Wetherell et al., 2001), this genealogical approach helped me to develop an understanding of the social and cultural roots of the ideological underpinning of the evolution of English in Korea.

### ***Critical discourse analysis for media documents***

In order to perform an analysis of media documents, I adopted critical discourse analysis (CDA) as an analytic tool for the following reasons. Firstly, critical discourse analysis sees language – be it speech or writing – as a social practice and considers the context of language use to be useful (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). As “[d]escribing discourse as social practice implies dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s)” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997: 258), CDA was well suited to exploring English language ideologies in Korean society from a macro-perspective. Together with a focus on the question of power inequality, the traditional orientation of CDA (Van Dijk, 2006), I use a selection of excerpts and investigate how various linguistic and rhetorical features – such as lexical choices, metaphors, agency, attribution, among others – are mobilized to implement particular argumentative strategies in local media. In performing this analysis, however, I was aware that my own critical interpretation is not free from my ethical, social, and political values and, thus, self-scrutiny is important. As Wodak and Mayer (2009) pointed out, CDA researchers should be aware that their own work is driven by social, economic and political motives. Although it is virtually impossible to achieve complete neutrality as an individual operating in her

own subjectivity, I endeavoured to develop critical perspectives from a neutral stance by comparing texts written by groups with different ideological positions. As an example, in exploring a gap between promises and reality of English-medium lectures in the higher education sector, I analysed data obtained from ideologically different sources (e.g. major conservative newspapers vs. student-run university press) attending to ideologies that undergird respective positions and claims inferred from the data.

### ***Interpretive approaches for interviews***

For interview data analysis, I adopted content analysis as a specific analytic method. It consists of three stages of coding, growing ideas, and interpretation (Dörnyei, 2007). In order to conduct coding, I thoroughly transcribed interviews into texts enabling me to immerse myself in the data as a prerequisite to coding. I adopted two stages of coding – initial coding and second-level coding – as proposed by Dörnyei (2007). Through the first “pre-” or “initial” coding process, I tried to identify broad patterns amongst data segments by labelling them with descriptive or low-inference codes. Once emergent patterns formed, I moved on to second-level coding in which the initial labels were gradually replaced or supplemented by higher-order “pattern codes” (Dörnyei 2007: 251) to capture more abstract commonalities. For example, an extract originally coded “enjoyed life overseas” was recoded later as “yearnings for female emancipation”. Once coding was completed, I made notes of all the thoughts and ideas that came to my mind in order to grow ideas for analysis. I inserted analytic memos right next to coding by using the New Comment function in MS Word so that I could constantly compare them with the coding and adjust if necessary. Through this “transformational process” (Wolcott, 1994), I could gradually develop abstract analytical insights into the underlying meanings. These ideas were turned into a coherent thematic story through the final interpretation process. As Patton (2002: 480) notes: “Interpretation means attaching significance to what was found, making sense of the findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings, and otherwise imposing order.” In an effort to determine overarching themes that the write-up will be centred around, I identified segments useful to support the emerging story in illuminating the research questions being explored.

### **3.6. Summary and limitations**

This chapter has detailed how the study was conducted. It provided an overview of the paradigm and philosophical underpinnings of the study and outlined a rationale for a

qualitative study. To address the research questions of the study, a multi-method triangulation approach was undertaken to examine historical documents, media discourses, and individual language learning trajectories. Details of techniques for gathering macro- and micro-domain data have also been presented, as have the methods of data analysis.

Despite my efforts to conduct the research as thoroughly as possible in line with the research paradigm laid out in this chapter, limitations of this study need to be addressed. It should be noted that the sample size of the interview study – 32 participants – is in no way intended to be representative of all English-Korean language professionals holding varied language ideologies associated with English. However, the credibility of this study is, as discussed in this chapter, achieved by the complementary multi-method triangulation approach.

## Chapter 4. The genealogy of English in Korea

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the processes by which the ideologies of English have been constructed in local contexts from historical perspectives. It is important to investigate the genesis of English language ideologies in depth, as most of the literature centres on the causes and products of the current “English fever” in Korea sociolinguistically rather than historically (See Section 2.3.4). Blommaert (1999: 73) argues that if we want to make sense of a language ideology as a set of communally shared beliefs about language, we have to establish its historicity. Just as the 1997/8 Asian Economic Crisis provided a fertile ground for English to be further ideologically constructed in Korea, history illustrates that popular beliefs about English have been shaped by the interplays of multiple factors born out of particular domestic events which in turn were tied to the development of global geopolitics. As there is, to the best of my knowledge, no common periodization of the development of English in Korea in the existing literature, I have defined such events as follows: (1) The arrival of English in Korea (1882-1909); (2) Japanese colonialism (1910-1945); (3) Independence and American control (1945-1960); (4) Modernization of Korea (1961-1992); (5) Korea in the context of globalization (1993-2013). In the following sections, I will explore the shaping of Korean ideologies of English language ideologies in each of these periods.

### 4.2. The arrival of English in Korea (1882-1909)

In this section, I examine how English language ideologies originated in Korea between 1882, when English first arrived in the country, and 1909, the year before Korea became a Japanese colony. At the opening of the ports, the image of the United States was extremely polarized between progressives who were eager to reform the nation and conservatives who supported closed-door policies. While progressives favoured the United States and viewed English as a key to the modernization of Korea, conservatives dismissed it as a barbarian nation and rejected the country and its language in its entirety (C.-i. Moon, 2004). Given the kingdom’s China-centred worldview and isolationist policy, such resistance to the West comes as no surprise. Yet it is the favourable attitudes to the United States held by reformists that are relevant in tracing the evolutionary dynamics of English in Korea. In this vein, I will explore how individuals of the hermit kingdom became

friendly with the United States and English and approach this question from both macro-social and micro-individual perspectives: early English education and first-generation Korean returnees.

#### 4.2.1. English education for translator/interpreter training

Dubbed the “hermit kingdom”, Korea under the Chosun Dynasty (1392–1910) was precariously situated in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as it was under threat from imperial governments in China, Japan and Russia. Inspired by Social Darwinism, defined as an ideology that suggests only the strongest and best-adapted humans should excel in society (Bannister, 1989), Japan in particular rapidly adopted European technologies and thought during the Meiji Period (1868-1912) in order to mimic its Western colonial counterparts. In an attempt to curb Japanese ambitions, China, which had acted as a “big brother” on behalf of the dynasty for many centuries, joined forces with the United States, resulting in the 1882 Korean-American Treaty, the first international treaty in Korea’s history. After the conclusion of the treaty, King Gojong (1863-1907) actively tried to strengthen friendly relations with the United States as part of strategies to protect Chosun sovereignty from its interfering neighbours. The king’s absolute dependence on the United States and the American legation in Korea as a generous benefactor, described as “literally... like a child on his father” (D. Y. Ryu, 2013: 116), stemmed from his own interpretation of a clause relevant to good offices contained in the Korean-American Treaty. The first article of the treaty specifies that in case a third power acted unjustly or oppressively with either country, the United States and Korea promise to exercise their “good offices, on being informed of the case, to bring about an amicable agreement, thus showing their friendly feelings” (Bradley, 2009). Whereas the article meant nothing more than a mere legal phrase for then American President Roosevelt, the Korean leader interpreted the clause as the unflinching commitment of the United States as Korea’s new Elder Brother to protect Korea from nations with predatory designs (Bradley, 2009). Unaware of such interpretive differences, King Gojong brought in American advisers in various areas including defence, diplomacy, and education. As the advisors’ roles and areas of responsibility expanded in the government, so did the need for Korean translators and interpreters (E. Kim, 2008).

In September 1883, Korea’s first public English education institute Dong Mun Hak opened with 40 students taught by two U.S.-educated ethnically Chinese tutors as there were hardly any qualified English teachers in Korea. The government displayed a progressive

approach in English language education by admitting young and talented people regardless of their class backgrounds (E. Kim, 2008), which marked a sharp departure from that of Sayukwon, a state interpreting institute that preceded Dong Mun Hak. Established in 1393, Sayukwon lasted for around 500 years training interpreters in six languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Mongol (but not, of course, English). Although interpreters technically belonged to the middle class or *jungin*, they were often extremely wealthy by leveraging their language skills in international trade and commercial activities (J. Choi & Lim, 2002). In fact, the profession was so coveted that fathers hired live-in tutors to get their sons in to Sayukwon (J. Choi & Lim, 2002). The selection process was onerous, as not only the linguistic competence but also the family lineage of candidates was assessed by fifteen practising interpreters, thirteen of whom had to agree to approve a candidature (D. Lee, 2006). Those who became a royal interpreter after undergoing gruelling training processes often wielded enormous diplomatic power in which their linguistic capital played a pivotal role (Youngcheol Kim, 2011). Considering access to those in power, relatively privileged class identity, and financial success, it can be conjectured that the solely competence-based selection criteria employed by Dong Mun Hak represented a golden opportunity for the underprivileged desiring social mobility.

Dong Mun Hak did not last long, however, and was replaced in 1886 by Yugeong Gongwon (the Public Institute of Education) as part of a national reform drive or *Gabo Gaehyuk*. The reform was inspired by the first-ever visit to the United States by a Korean delegation in 1884. The delegates, most of whom were reformists, were impressed with the modernity of American civilization and strongly appealed to the king about the needs for modern English language education in order to learn from the West. The resultant Yugeong Gongwon represents the first modern state school in Korea's history. King Gojong made a substantial investment in the institute by recruiting three highly-educated native speakers from the United States and restricted admission criteria to the noble class in order to equip elite officials with English skills. Students were handpicked by the government from either junior officials who had just passed state examinations or high-ranking officials' sons including royal family members who were preparing to obtain rank. Despite the impressive start, however, the organization fizzled out because students from privileged backgrounds did not have a strong motivation to learn English. Whereas English was a language of opportunities for the less privileged, those whose career was guaranteed

by birth had little reason to endeavour to learn the foreign tongue. As students became delinquent and the government ran out of resources, the organization shut down in 1894. Even though Dong Mun Hak failed to last long enough to provide the underprivileged with language capital, one avenue remained for the marginalized to seek English education: private English education schools run by missionaries. The first mission schools established in Korea by Methodists were the Baejae Hakdang (1885) and the Ewha Hakdang (1886), and by the Presbyterians the Gyeongsin School (1886) and the Jeongsin School (1890). As English language instruction provided at mission schools was offered to anyone regardless of class and gender, it soon attracted young and ambitious individuals. One of the most famous graduates of the missionary schools is Princeton-educated first Korean President Rhee Syngman, for whom English learning was a central motivation as a boy-student at Baejae Hakdang (Junman Kang, 2007; See also Section 4.4.3). The missionary schools enjoyed a rapid growth in student enrolment, as English translators and interpreters were highly sought-after by Western diplomats based in Korea, who often had to bribe good interpreters due to the shortage of proficient English speakers. The public perception of English as a “language of opportunities” (Youngcheol Kim, 2011: 276) is well demonstrated in the case of Interpreter Lee Ha-young. Lee, who was originally an illiterate street vendor selling rice cakes, had a chance to work as a cook for American missionary Horace Newton Allan in 1884. Allan, trained as a medical doctor in the United States, became a royal medical doctor after saving the life of a royal member through Western medicine, and Lee was hired as his interpreter to help communications with the royal family and subsequently served as an interpreter for King Gojong. Thanks to his English skills, Lee was posted to the embassy of Chosun in the United States and rose to the position of a foreign affairs minister towards the end of his career. Inspired by success stories like this, individuals who were ambitious but with few resources flocked to learn English at missionary schools. The materialist motivation behind English language learning was well documented by American missionary Henry Appenzeller:

The enthusiasm for the study of English has always been great among the Koreans. A little knowledge of the new tongue was and still is a stepping stone to something higher. Ask a Korean ‘why do you wish to study English?’ and his invariable answer will be ‘to get rank.’ As a sort of skirmish battle our mission school was opened June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1886 and continued in session until July 2, during which time six

were enrolled—. We have now, October 6, twenty on the roll, with an actual attendance of eighteen. (quoted in Youngcheol Kim, 2011: 344)

Chosun strictly operated on a caste system, in which commoners or *sangmin* made up ninety percent of the population and constantly suffered from the tyranny of aristocrats. Traveller-writer Isabella Bird who visited Korea three times in the 19<sup>th</sup> century described the noble class or *yangban* as “the licensed vampires of the country” (quoted in S. E. Oh, 1995: 24) for preying upon the common people. Under such circumstances, mobility desires continued to grow and English was one of the very few tools available to commoners to change their future. With an increasing number of English-Korean interpreters achieving both a title and wealth through English alone, English was legitimized and validated as a golden tongue for the general public. The rise of English as a mobility enabler was also influenced by the then geopolitical situation. Having reached its zenith of power and influence, the Qing Dynasty of China began to decline due to external wars and internal conflicts while English was growing in Korea. As America came on the scene as a new Elder Brother for Korea, an image largely shaped by pro-American King Gojong, English became strongly attached to “power” which was badly needed not only by commoners suffering from the abuse of the ruling class but also by the country that had been reduced to an arena of competition among great imperial powers.

#### 4.2.2. English from the perspectives of returnees

This section explores the origin of English language ideologies in Korea at a micro-individual level, which in turn will cast light on how individual beliefs in English were shaped and practised during the introductory phase of English in Korea. To do so, I trace the linguistic trajectories of the three most prominent Korean intellectuals-cum-returnees: Yu Kil-Chun; Yun Chi-Ho; and Seo Jaepil. All three constituted a “first” in the English-related history of Korea: Yu Kil-Chun was the first Korean who studied in the United States; Yun Chi-Ho was the first English-Korean interpreter and also studied in the United States; Seo Jaepil was the first Korean become an American citizen and later returned to Korea to publish Korea’s first English newspaper, *The Independent*. They shared a number of commonalities in that they were progressive elites, had translation and interpreting backgrounds, and viewed English as a tool to modernize Korea as informed by Social

Darwinism. However, the processes in which their English language ideologies played out significantly differed and I will compare each man's linguistic journey to understand how English was appropriated by Korea's first-generation returnees with particular reference to the issue of identity.

To begin with, Yu Kil-Chun studied at Governor Dummer Academy and Boston University in the United States between 1884 and 1885. His crucial encounter with English and the United States occurred in 1884, when Yu was appointed to the first Korean delegation to Washington. The modernity of American civilization was literally a shock to the young diplomat who was frustrated at the powerlessness of his nation and Yu decided to remain in the United States to learn English and study American modernity (H. Park, 2014). Yu first learned English from Edward Sylvester Morse, the director of the Peabody Museum in Massachusetts, whom he had previously met in Japan. His intelligence and linguistic talent shone as evidenced by the fact that he topped the class at Governor Dummer Academy after several months of English learning (K.-r. Lee, 1990: 101). The superb civilization that he experienced in the United States convinced Yu that Western modernization was a solution to his country in crisis and that Korea should mimic the United States as a model of enlightenment. His acceptance of American supremacy is well illustrated in the following letter to Morse:

The people of the United States has a higher percent of natural discernment, public spirit, and independent judgement than the human race of any other nation on the globe, so the boys influenced by this tide, which spread over the northern part of the Western hemisphere under the star spangled banner, so I think not only these boys [at Boston] possessed such an important gift but everyone of United States boys will be just same ... [the U.S.] shall never perish from the surface of our planet with your decendency – An excerpt from a PEM report (2007).

Although Yu strongly espoused American modernity and viewed English as a tool for importing advanced American civilization, he cautioned, at the same time, that Korea should not rely entirely on the United States for its fate. In his book, *Jungliplon* (Neutrality Theory) published in 1885, Yu described the United States as a good trading partner but not “a friend willing to rescue Korea from a crisis” (quoted in N. Park & Huh, 2007: 47). Despite his persistent effort to learn from the United States, Yu continued to preserve his indigenous identity, in which he did not let go of a belief that Korea had a potential to become as

powerful as the West if reformed appropriately (N. Park & Huh, 2007). English constituted an instrument for delivering his nationalistic cause and Yu leveraged his English skills in diplomacy and translation when he returned to Korea.

Just like Yu Kil-Chun, Yun Chi-Ho was inspired to learn English for the cause of national modernization at the age of eighteen. While studying in Japan in 1882, he met fellow-countryman Kim Ok-Kyun, a leader of the failed 1884 coup *Kap Shin Chung Byun*, a reform movement led by young and progressive government officials against the royal family and conservatives. As Kim highly regarded Yun's linguistic talent, he advised Yun to learn English instead of Japanese for the future of Korea. Four months after starting to learn English from a Dutch secretary at the Dutch consulate in Japan, Yun returned to Korea in 1883 as an interpreter to serve for the first American minister to Korea, Lucius Howard Foote. Just like reform-minded Yu Kil-Chun, Yun was also critical of the obsolete and inefficient government of Korea and longed to study abroad in the United States (S. Lee, 2010). His dream finally came true in 1888. He first studied theology at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee and then went on to Emory College in 1891 to pursue his studies in humanities. Yun started writing a diary in English on December 7, 1889, a year after landing on American shores and it provides profound insights into the meaning of English in relation to the issue of identity that Yun grappled with for the rest of his life. Park and Huh (2007) even claim that it is evident from the diary that the level of English vocabulary possessed by Yun is higher than that of the average American as he immersed himself in English learning primarily through highly technical textbooks. His desire for English continued to grow and such language desire is well illustrated in the following diary entry:

나에게 아주 흥미 있는 사실은 천만 아프리카 사람들이 자기들이 통제할 수 없는  
환경에서 세계에서 가장 부유한 이들의 언어, 영어라는 가장 고상한 말을 하는 이들이  
되었다는 것이다. 이 한 가지 값진 선물로도 그들은 노예됨에 대한 충분히 보상을 받은  
셈이다 – February 17, 1893

A really interesting fact for me is that tens of thousands of Africans who were placed  
in environments which were not under their control have been able to speak English,  
the most elegant language, which is also the language of the most affluent people in

the world. This single valuable present means a sufficient reward for the slavery that they have undergone. (C.-H. Yoon, 2014)<sup>1</sup>

This rather shocking statement immediately poses a question why Yun wanted English so much to the point of rationalizing the inhumane reality of African slavery. This question can be answered by the worldview that Yun developed in the United States while being exposed to both Social Darwinism and imperialism. While sojourning in the United States, Yun became an enthusiastic admirer of Social Darwinism that rationalizes competition and the survival of the fittest, which in turn justifies the imperialistic binary position of superior us (the West) and inferior others (the rest). His diary provides a glimpse into how frustrated he was at the powerlessness and subsequently naturalized backwardness of his nation that caused him a great deal of embarrassment:

모든 상황을 고려할 때 차라리 폴란드화가 나을 지도 모른다. 또는 나라 전체가 처해 있는, 아니 차라리 잠들어 있는 지독한 침체보다는 나쁘지 않을 지도 모른다. 이런 말을 하는 나는 얼마나 자포자기적인가! - Dec 14, 1889

Considering all the circumstances, it might be better for Korea to rather become like Poland. It wouldn't be as bad as the terrible backwardness in which the country is situated or rather remains in slumber. How forlorn I am in saying this! (C.-H. Yoon, 1968)

His “colonial mindset” (DeCeuster, 2003: 119) is highlighted in a roadmap that he envisaged for Korean development, which is reminiscent of a missionary working to lead people toward salvation: the Koreans, ill-prepared to accept their place among other enlightened peoples, required guidance from an advanced element to lead them to sovereignty (Wells, 1990). The inferiority complex that he suffered from compared with the superior Western master eventually led him to attempt to forge a new clean identity – that of an American. English represented the most powerful tool to achieve this mission. His choice of writing his most intimate feelings and thoughts in a language which was not his mother tongue bears testimony to his desire to reconstruct an identity that conforms to American values by internalizing them in their language (N. Park & Huh, 2007). In fact, Yun was also infatuated

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<sup>1</sup> Yoon's English diary has been translated into Korean and digitized by the National Institute of Korean History. As the English version of the diary is not available, I have translated the Korean version back into English here.

with Christianity, another signifier of American culture, to transform his spiritual state to that of Americans (N. Park & Huh, 2007). His project to be an indisputable American, however, did not succeed as he experienced relentless racism from American society. Even missionaries working in Korea he counted as friends directly and indirectly looked down upon him for being an “aboriginal” and Yun’s attempt to reforge his identity failed miserably in the face of the insurmountable racial barriers:

나는 지긋지긋한 냄새가 나는 중국이나 인종에 대한 편견 및 차별이 무서운 힘을 가지고 있는 미국 또는 지긋지긋한 정권이 존재하는 한 조선에서도 살고 싶지 않다 - November 1, 1893

I don’t want to live in China which smells terribly nor in the United States in which racial bias and discrimination are so powerful nor in Chosun as long as the terrible government exists. (C.-H. Yoon, 2014)

English was a medium for Yun to connect him to the idealized “imagined community” (P. Norton & Kanno, 2003), away from the helpless and hopeless homeland of which he did not wish to be part. However, haunted by the spectre of racial discrimination after returning to Korea, Yoon became an extreme Anti-American during the Japanese colonial period and re-established Japan as a model of civilization (C.-i. Moon, 2004).

Seo Jaepil, also known as Dr. Philip Jaisohn, realized Yun’s aborted dream by becoming the first Korean to be naturalized in the United States in 1888. He fled Korea for fear of being persecuted after the failure of the 1884 coup, *Kap Shin Chung Byun*, of which he was part. In the United States, Seo laboured to eke out a living and managed to complete a degree at the George Washington University Medical School in 1895, becoming the first Korean to earn a medical degree from an American institute. In the same year, he married Muriel Armstrong, a daughter of famed Colonel George Armstrong, with the intention of settling down in the United States. However, as his colleagues in the 1884 coup returned to power backed by Japan and asked him to join them to pursue the modernization of Korea, he finally returned to Korea in January 1896.

Seo saw a newspaper as the most effective means to educate the masses and ultimately to reform Korea with the support of this newly educated group. In April 7, 1896, he launched Korea’s first English-Korean bilingual newspaper, *The Doklip Shinmun* or *The Independent*. It is interesting to note that he was joined by both Yu Kil-Chun and Yun Chi-Ho in preparing

the newspaper project. *The Independent* rapidly gained popularity as seen in an episode in which one copy of the newspaper was read by 200 people (S. E. Oh, 1995). The paper used a pure Korean language to enable access by commoners and, being its chief editor, Seo wrote most of the English section on his own. Despite many financial and technical difficulties involved in publishing the paper, Seo did not give up on the English part, which was widely read by foreigners in the Far East. It not only made them aware of the situation in Korea but also brought sympathizers to his crusade of enlightening the public in the cause of modernizing Korea (S. E. Oh, 1995). However, the way in which he tried to educate Koreans remains debatable in that he viewed the masses through the prism of imperial dichotomy by situating himself as a superior Westerner.

After returning to Korea, Seo behaved exclusively as an American and lived in a foreign district of the capital (J. Joo, 2009). As an American passport holder, Seo held a high governmental position and received a salary rated at the same level of that of a Korean prime minister. Moreover, he addressed himself as *waeshin* or foreign officer to King Gojong and even smoked a cigarette in front of the king, an act of outright royal impiety (J. Joo, 2009). Throughout his campaign for enlightenment, Seo treated Koreans as “inferior others” who needed solid guidance from the West. In his eyes, Korean politicians were corrupt, factional, and incompetent and the Korean public was ignorant and unenlightened. English played a key role in presenting his redefined identity as an American citizen during his stay in Korea. He used his English name, Dr. Philip Jaisohn, and spoke English most of the time. Yun Chi-Ho, in fact, expressed his dismay in a diary entry at Seo’s loss of Korean language proficiency in both speaking and in writing (W. Kim, 2009). As an English-speaking American, Seo mapped out his reform plan based on American norms and values such as the abolition of the caste system, gender equality, and equal educational opportunities. Naturally, he presented the United States as a model of reforms for Korea, and *The Independent* served as a conduit in propagating his ideas. For example, the United States was described as a civilized country in which democracy and humanism flourished (Y.-s. Oh, 2011). It was idealized as the wealthiest country in the world and yet disinterested in other territories, which particularly appealed to the people of Korea under threat from greedy neighbouring countries (Y.-s. Oh, 2011). Its uncritical attitude towards the United States, which in turn contributed to shaping particularly positive images about the United States, is well reflected in the following description of the country:

이 나라에서는 의리로 주장을 삼고 정치상과 권리상에 모든 일들을 천리와 인정에 합당하게 만든 풍속과 사업이 많은 고로 천복을 받아 지금 이 나라가 부하기로 세계에 제일이요, 화평한 복을 누리기로 세계에 제일이라 – October 16, 1897 from *The Independent*

This country [the United States] believes in loyalty and has made everything in accordance with the law of nature and the spirit of humanism. As such, it is blessed and has become the wealthiest country in the world. It enjoys peace and prosperity and is indeed the best country in the world. (Seo, 1897)

Seo even suggested adopting American lifestyles by arguing that “Koreans should eat beef and bread instead of kimchi and rice” (October 10, 1896 from *The Doklip Shinmun*) as an example. At the same time, Seo glorified Christianity and the benevolence of American missionaries, who he described as “the best friend of Chosun for leaving friends and families behind to bring a large sum of money for the education of Korean people” (Youngcheol Kim, 2011: 143). Despite his over-idealization of the United States, Seo is viewed as having achieved a great deal during his relatively short two-year stay in Korea. First of all, he contributed to educating the public by introducing the modern civilization that he had experienced in the United States. Secondly, he established a debating society, the “Independence Club” or *Doklip Heophwae*, in 1896 to campaign for the sovereignty of Korea, which paved the way for young Koreans to enter politics. However, all of these activities were conducted as those of an English-speaking American, who did not need to be afraid of political revenge for challenging the establishment (J. Joo, 2009). In fact, he lived less than one-third of his life as Seo Jaepil; he preferred to be addressed as Dr. Philip Jaisohn and that was the name engraved in his grave monument.

#### 4.2.3. The beginning of ideological construction of English

In Section 4.2 “The arrival of English in Korea”, I explored how English presented the Korean people with new hope from the very beginning. For commoners suffering from the injustice of the caste system, it was a language of opportunity through which to dream of climbing up the social ladder. For the king of the country, it was a language through which to seek protection from the United States against imperial forces. For the progressive elites, English was a tool to modernize and empower the country. However, the way in which such

language ideologies manifested differed with particular individual circumstances. Depending on the degree of colonial mindset, English was a pragmatic tool to strengthen the nation, a medium to connect an individual to an imagined community, or a symbol of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) deeply embedded in imperialistic discourses. Having examined the initial language ideologies related to English, the next section explores English language ideologies primarily from a gendered perspective.

#### 4.3. Negotiating modern womanhood in English and American modernity (1910-1945)

Korea officially became a colony of Japan through the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty in 1910 and the Japanese language became an official language in colonial Korea. Although state English education became dormant, private schools run by American missionaries managed to produce a small number of Korean youths equipped with English skills (Kim-Rivera, 2002). One of the most notable contributions that missionary schools made to Korea was the education of Korean women who had formerly been excluded from the world of letters due to Confucian gender ideologies that confined women to the domestic arena. These new-generation Korean women attempted to carve out a new space of female modernity through the first local feminist movement entitled the “New Women’s Movement” in the 1920s. This section examines the new terrain of gender traversed by educated Korean women in an attempt to trace how the ideology of ideal modern womanhood was negotiated and contested in the nexus of English and American modernity during the colonial era. In order to contextualize the issue, I shall examine the ideal of modern womanhood from three seemingly distinctive and yet interlinked perspectives: the first from the perspective of American missionaries; the second from the perspective of overseas-educated Korean women; and the third from the perspective of modern Korean male writers, who created the literary genre of “new fiction” or *sin soseol* at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By doing so, I attempt to demonstrate how gender myopia was naturalized at the nexus of English language learning and Western modernity in the Korean context.

##### 4.3.1. Triple-translated American modernity

“Translated modernity” (Liu, 1995) refers to the process of modernization mediated by translation that took place in China between 1900 and 1937. Liu argues that the modernization project in China would have been impossible without the introduction of

Western civilization and ideologies through translation activities. The same holds true for Japan as well as Korea. As the first mover of modernization in Asia, Japan promoted translation as a national project during the Meiji period (1868-1912) in order to import the disciplines of anthropology and ethnology from the West and develop their own branch of “Oriental ethnography” (Kim-Watson, 2007: 176). Likewise, translation played a pivotal role throughout the colonial modernization process of Korea, as Korea imported Western cultures and ideas through translations mostly via Japan. In fact, the process is described as “triple-translated modernity” in which Koreans translated a Japanese translation of what was originally written in English or French (W.-d. Kim, 2010).

During the 1900s and 1910s, Korean translators concentrated on historical works and autobiographies in order to raise a spirit of nationalism against Japanese control. Examples include *Aeguk Booinjeon* or “Patriotic Lady’s Story” that was published in 1907 to introduce the life of French national hero Jeanne d’Arc. However, as Japan began to impose restrictions on cultural activities, translations could no longer carry an overtly anti-Japanese message and the trend shifted to literary works in the 1920s (Hyun, 2004a). During this period, the works of feminist writers who argued for female liberation were introduced to Korea, awakening elite females to the reality of gender inequality in Confucian society. As an example, Swedish feminist Ellen Key’s (1849-1926) writings on maternity and marriage were published not only in books but also in newspapers and magazines, provoking one of the most hotly-debated topics of the time (Hyun, 2004b). Socialist feminist Alexandra Kollontai’s novel *Red Love* was published in a summarized form in 1933 and her idea of female emancipation drew a great deal of attention from Korean intellectuals (Hyun, 2004b). In particular, translated novels in favour of the replacement of a traditional female figure (a wise mother and good wife) with a new womanhood contributed to a galvanizing discourse on needs for a new type of woman in Korea. One of the most influential writers was Norwegian Henrik Ibsen whose life and works were covered in around 60 Korean articles in the 1920s and 1930s. His legendary work, *A Doll’s House*, published in 1879 was translated into Korean three times between 1921 and 1922 and adapted into a play in 1934. The female protagonist Nora greatly influenced Korean women yearning for equal opportunities, inspiring educated young Korean women to become “Korean Noras” (T. J. Yoo, 2005: 304).

English represents a useful prism through which to interpret the emergence of a new womanhood during the colonial era, as New Women or *shin yosong* were usually described as someone who could speak English. While the space of colonial Korea was the space of multiple contesting imperial powers, including that of China and Japan (Schmid, 2002), it is worth noting the significant influence of American modernity (S.-Y. Yoo, 2001). So much so that the term “Americanism” (S.-Y. Yoo, 2001: 423) was used by Korean intellectuals of the time to describe the newly emerging social and cultural phenomena of American modernity such as American movies, books, and imported food products. After losing the country, Koreans blamed their powerlessness on their loss of sovereignty and became fully motivated to sever themselves from what they perceived was inferior tradition in order to regain the country by achieving modernization (S.-Y. Yoo, 2001). American modernity quickly occupied Korean society as “superior” culture, a notion that was strengthened by the imaginary and fantastic dimension of the United States as a wealthy benefactor and the association of English with privilege and prestige as discussed in the previous section. For Koreans who desperately needed a hope, English represented an avenue to advanced civilizations and a vision for a new world (C. Kim, 2005; see also Section 4.3.4). The positive image of America and the royal family’s trust in American missionaries paved the way for the unheard-of success of American missionaries both in the spread of Christianity and modern education in Korea (S.-Y. Yoo, 2001). In particular, the equal educational opportunities offered by missionary schools opened a new chapter in women’s education, contributing positively to the formation of modern womanhood during the colonial period (H. Choi, 2004). At issue is what kind of “modern womanhood” was negotiated through missionary discourse and the role of English in constructing such a womanhood.

#### 4.3.2. Modernity in Victorian minds

The development of Korean higher education was significantly influenced by American missionaries who came to Korea with a specific mission to civilize the populace through education and religion (S. Lee, 1989). Thanks to strong support from King Gojong, American missionaries successfully accomplished their mission at an unprecedented level. For example, the number of Korean church members increased from 311 in 1894 to 50,760 in 1910 (D. Y. Ryu, 2013). During the same period, a total of 796 schools, from elementary to college level, were established and maintained by Western missionaries, figure comprising around 35 percent of the entire number of formal schools (2,250) in

Korea (S. Lee, 1989). As of 1905, women students comprised around 30 percent of the total 18,000 students attending Protestant schools (Kwon, 1998).

At missionary schools, English was used as the main medium of instruction which, to the surprise of missionaries, served to attract students to the schools, especially at the beginning. The very first student at Ewha Hakdang, the first girl's school established by American missionary Mary Fletcher Scranton in 1886, was a concubine of a high-ranking government official and she wanted to learn English to become an interpreter for Queen Min, the wife of King Gojong (C. I. Yoon, 2009). Male students desired English to serve in the newly emerging areas of trade and industry, or to work as interpreters. The rising value of English as a sign of modernity among Korean elites as well as its commercial value among commoners was so widespread that even Korean-run schools for girls enthusiastically included English as part of their core curriculum. For instance, Yoja Pohakwon (1907) offered English along with Chinese, Korean and other subjects (H. Choi, 2009). In the case of Chinmyong Girls' School (1906), all instruction was conducted in English only (H. Choi, 2009). Though students' exclusive desire to learn English began to worry missionaries, Presbyterians in particular, Methodist missionaries stuck to English instruction which they saw as essential to their evangelical as well as civilizing missions. They believed that English served not only to impart Christianity but also to mould students' minds by exposing them to Western democracy and civilization which they thought was best delivered through English (H. Choi, 2009). The positive effect of teaching English was further argued by William Scranton, the son of Mrs. Scranton, the founder of Ewha Hakdang:

Every school should at this time put the greatest stress on the teaching of English, and this study should be fostered and even be forced in order to bring the Korean people the more rapidly out of darkness into light, out from ignorance to keep abreast with the rest of the world, and out from every form of bondage into freedom and equality with the rest of the humanity, where they can stand side by side with all men... I class the English language the best agency for enabling the Korean people into the pursuit of learning, and I covet it for them that they may have it for their possession to enable them to do nobly, to strive bravely, and to succeed in these trying days of new birth and responsibility in the family of Nations. (quoted in H. Choi, 2009: 118)

Scranton's description of Korean people trapped in darkness and Korea as a nation in birth – despite its approximately 5,000 years of history by then – illustrates imperialistic positions held by American missionaries towards Korea. The binary view assumed by Scranton posits that Koreans are inferior Oriental Others who needed to be rescued and civilized by superior Western Us. Such an imaginary dimension of Koreans, particularly Korean girls as poor oriental sisters, is well portrayed in novels written by American missionaries who worked in Korea. *Daybreak in Korea: A Tale of Transformation in the Far East* (1909) written by Presbyterian missionary Annie Baird and *Ewa: A Tale of Korea* (1906) authored by Methodist missionary Arthur Nobel are examples (H. Choi, 2009). For American missionaries, English was a bridge to mediate between the heathen world and the civilized West in achieving their mission of building a “perfect” Korea.

At the same time, however, missionaries were wary of not upsetting conservative Korean males who were highly critical of teaching English to girls who, in their eyes, would only be corrupted by dangerous Western ideologies. Speaking English or, worse yet, being proud of speaking English was equal to a “life of translation” as opposed to a true life based on Koreanness (H. Choi, 2009). In order to maintain a harmonious relationship with Korean males in the male-centred society, discursive construction of a new womanhood for Korean women among missionaries was built on the figure of the modern Victorian woman who embodies modernity within the confines of Christian domesticity and Korean womanly virtues (H. Choi, 2004). Such a womanhood was agreeable from the perspective of conservative male Korean intellectuals who, despite their opposition to English language education, increasingly saw educating females, i.e. half of the population, as an effective strategy to modernize and strengthen the country for the ultimate goal of achieving national independence. The implicitly agreed gender agenda, however, faced challenges, as an increasing number of educated Korean women with radically different ideas attempted to move from the periphery to the centre. Tensions between “true” modern womanhood designed by missionaries and “secular” New Women emerged in the 1920s with the launch of the “New Women’s Movement”.

#### 4.3.3. Longings for liberation in the colonized land

The “New Women’s Movement” emerged in 1920 from the conflict between the cultural domination of Western modernity and Confucian patriarchy (Kwon, 1998). The launch of

*Sin Yo Ja* (New Women) in 1920, a flagship magazine of the New Women's Movement headed by a well-known feminist Kim Il-Yeob (also known as Kim Wonju), is regarded as the genesis of the movement. The movement was a reaction to the dismally low status of Korean women in the early twentieth century. As an example, except for those who were so poor that they had to work in the fields, no woman was allowed to go out according to a custom of seclusion which had more force than a law (S. E. Oh, 1995). Most women were not given a name of their own: they simply adopted their father's surname and were only known as the daughter, the sister, and the wife of some man (J. Park, 1990). Although a woman could not divorce her husband, a man could cast off his wife in accordance with the classical Confucian ethic of *Chil Geo Ji Ak*, or seven grounds to divorce such as jealousy, barrenness, and incurable disease. New Woman or *shin yosong* is broadly defined as a woman who ideologically opposed such patriarchal restrictions and was awakened to individual personality as a modern subject for receiving modern Western education (S. Kim, 2005; Hyun 2004).

Modern education offered by American missionaries paved the way for some academically and linguistically talented women to cross the Pacific Ocean to study in the United States on missionary scholarships. It is estimated that between 1895 and 1940, approximately 148 such female Korean students studied in the United States (H. Choi, 2012b). Females from a wealthy family often headed to Japan for sojourning, as Japan was closer to Korea and Korea was a colony of Japan. The number of Korean female students in Japan in 1910 was 34, but it rapidly grew to 2,947 by 1942 (H. Choi, 2012b). Some Korean women who sojourned in Japan during the Taisho era (1912-1926) were heavily influenced by a powerful upsurge in women's public activism that led to the birth of "Japan's New Woman," which in turn inspired the Korea's own feminist movement. It is interesting to note differences that existed between America-educated New Women and Japan-educated New Women. As almost all women who studied in the United States were sponsored by American missionaries, they were strongly Christian and strived to deliver the missionary version of modern womanhood. On the other hand, Christianity was virtually non-existent in the case of leading female figures educated in Japan, who championed female emancipation through free love, free marriage, and a rejection of female chastity. Despite such ideological differences, however, English and Western modernity played a crucial role in the process of achieving their respective missions. I will compare the most prominent figures in each camp to trace how they leveraged their cultural knowledge and

language skills according to their (non)religious beliefs and gender agenda. Exploring this issue with a particular reference to a desired womanhood promoted by each camp will illustrate how English and Western modernity became tied to gendered images in colonial Korea. I will begin with Kim Hwal-Lan (1899-1970) and Pak In-Deok (1897-1980), who sojourned in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s, through their ties with American missionaries.

*Kim Hwal-Lan (1899-1970)*

Kim Hwal-Lan graduated from Ewha Hakdang in 1913 and went to the United States to study on missionary scholarships. She received a BA in 1924 from Ohio Wesleyan University, an MA in 1925 from Boston University, and a PhD in 1931 from Columbia University. As the first Korean female PhD holder, Kim became the first Korean President of Ewha Women's College, previously led by American missionaries. She was one of the founding members of the Korean YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) and served as the president of the organization intermittently from the mid-1920s to the late-1930s. Her English skills were essential for working with missionaries in English-speaking countries in promoting women's education and female enlightenment in Korea. For example, she managed to attract donations from a Canadian missionary association to open the first-ever home economics department in 1929 at Ewha, which served as a pipeline to nurture domesticated modern Korean women. Her language skills were also indispensable to finding donors among wealthy overseas Christians to finance the construction of new buildings for Ewha (H.-I. Kim, 1999). As a devout Christian, she represented Korea at numerous international Christianity conferences and defended Korea as an independent Christian precinct. For example, at the North America Methodist Conference in 1928, a proposal was raised that Korea should be controlled by the Japanese Methodist headquarters due to being a Japanese colony. Indignant Kim strongly argued against the motion in fluent English, pointing out how forcible the annexation by Japan had been and that God should help out powerless Koreans rather than standing on the side of the powerful. As a result of her intervention, the participants unanimously agreed to keep Korea as a separate territory for Christian missions. As a pioneer in women's education, Kim has proved to be one of the most influential female leaders in 20<sup>th</sup> century Korea.

*Pahk In-Deok (1897-1980)*

Pahk In-Deok also attended Ewha Hakdang and, leaving her husband and daughters at home, went to the United States to study sociology at Wesleyan University and Columbia University (1926-1931). She became known for her ability to deliver powerful speeches in English and was appointed as a travelling secretary for the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions between 1928 and 1929. As the only foreign and Oriental secretary, she gave English speeches at more than 300 universities across the globe. When she returned to Korea after six years of sojourning in the United States, what was waiting for her was an unfaithful husband and ensuing financial stresses, which eventually led her to leave her husband. Her divorce earned her a nickname “Chosun’s Nora” for becoming the first Korean woman obliged to give alimony for divorcing her husband. It was her English skills and connections to the Christian community that revived Pahk who was shunned by the public as well as missionary friends in the aftermath of the divorce. Her exceptional education and linguistic credentials allowed her to take a leadership role in the Christian network by representing Korea at a number of international Christian conferences. From December 1935 to September 1937, for instance, Pahk made 624 English speeches at missionary conferences covering 80,000 miles in order to raise funds for a rural development plan to finance livestock purchases for farmers and train future rural leaders. In 1941, Pahk established Tokhwa Yosuk (the Tokhwa Institute) for girls and focused on grooming a “wise mother and good wife” in accordance with a virtuous Christian womanhood. Through her journey, Pahk remained grateful to the United States and American missionaries, who she described as “saviours” from her dark days in rural Korea in her commercially successful autobiographical English essay, *September Monkey*, which was published in the United States in 1954.

Both Kim and Pahk exemplified the most desired outcomes of Christian education in Korea and English was instrumental to achieving their Christian missions characterized by female education and enlightenment, yet within the confines of womanly virtues. The way their linguistic trajectories compare with those of Japan-educated New Women is discussed next through the cases of La Hye-Seok (1896-1948), Kim Il-Yeob (1896-1971), and Kim Myungsoon (1896-?), a trio who led the “New Women’s Movement” in the 1920s.

*La Hye-Seok (1896-1948)*

As the first Korean woman to study abroad in Japan between 1913 and 1915, La Hye-Seok was a poet, a culture critique, and the first female Western painter in Korea. While sojourning in Japan, La was particularly influenced by *A Doll's House* and published an essay entitled *Isang chok puin* or “Ideal Woman” in Japan in 1914. She used exemplary female figures – both real and literary – from Western and Japanese societies including Ibsen’s Nora to present a new womanhood based on self-awakening and self-realization. In 1927, she became the first Korean woman to travel to Europe and America, spending two years away. She leveraged her English skills to study feminist activities in Britain during her stay in London in 1928. She had personal interviews with Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928) who led the suffrage movement and visited a shelter for single mothers and their children run by the Salvation Army with the intention of creating similar institutions in Korea (Y.-H. Kim, 2002). Back home, she used her writing skills to introduce Korean readers to Pankhurst’s opinion that the suffrage movement was not only related to the issue of women’s voting rights, but also issues of work, chastity and divorce. She also contributed her travelogues to the magazine *Samcholli* under the title *Kumi Yuki* or “Records of travel to Europe and America”. La thus played an intermediary role in introducing the West to the Korean masses as the first Korean woman who had had such experiences and opportunities to discuss them publicly in written forms (Y.-H. Kim, 2002). In 1930 at the peak of her art career, she had a divorce due to her adultery, an act based on her beliefs in sexual freedom. She was ostracized and became depressed, and died homeless in 1948.

#### *Kim Il-Yeob (1896-1971)*

Echoing La’s appeal to reject the dominant Confucian idea of womanhood, Kim Il-Yeob launched *Sin Yo Ja* (New Women), the first magazine tailored to a female readership in Korea in 1920 upon her return from Japan after sojourning at the Tokyo Film Academy in 1919. She coined the word *shin yosong* or New Woman by pronouncing the emergence of a new womanhood in the second issue of the magazine. *Sin Yo Ja* focused on gender equality, female sexuality, and women’s human rights for the purpose of female enlightenment. It is notable that the idea for the first full Korean translation of *A Doll's House* in *Maeil Shinbo* (Daily Newspaper) in 1921 came about at the urging of Kim as the chief editor of the magazine and intended to awaken Korean women to an emergence as a new womanhood (H. Choi, 2012a). Kim also organized the first-ever female debating society called *Chongtophoe* or “Bluestocking Society” where New Women leaders such as

Kim Hwal-Lan, La Hye-Seok, and Pak In-Deok met every week to discuss Western ideologies and literature. It was Ellen Key who significantly influenced her views on love, marriage, and sexuality (J.-Y. Yang, 2013). Through extensive reading of her works, she developed arguments for a new sexual morality that valued individual characteristics as a way to unshackle Korean women from gendered restrictions and to practise free love and sex as a married woman. As Kim, too, was shunned by the public due to her radical sexual behaviours, she became a Buddhist monk in 1928 at the age of 33.

#### *Kim Myungsoon (1896-?)*

Kim Myungsoon graduated from Ewha Hakdang in 1919 and attended the Tokyo Women's College from 1919 to 1920. Kim became Korea's first modern female novelist with her 1917 debut work *Euishimeui sonyeo* or "Suspicious girl". Kim taught herself a range of foreign languages including English, Japanese, German and French, through which to translate Western literature for a local readership (K.-A. Kim, 2011). As a poet herself, she translated a range of poets such as Franz Werfel, Edgar Allen Poe, and Charles Baudelaire. Kim was particularly interested in Greek mythology and Western philosophy, and translated great Western novels such as *Assigination* by Edgar Allen Poe. Her choice of that love story over Poe's other popular works such as *The Black Cat* represents her desire to find an outlet in a patriarchal Confucian society, in which free love was strictly forbidden (J. Park, 2013). At the same time, Kim endeavoured to deliver gender equality through translation. For example, translating Gerhart Hauptmann's drama *Einsame Menschen*, which male translators approached from the perspectives of a male protagonist, Kim tried to translate from the point of view of a female protagonist. In her constant quest for knowledge and languages, Kim represents the first-generation female translator in the then male-centred field of Korean literature. As a practitioner of free love, however, Kim too, was criticized by the public, her male writer colleagues in particular, and died homeless around 1950 after suffering from financial difficulties and medical conditions.

As documented above, despite ideological differences in gender agendas, the way in which English was used by both groups of women was similar in that they utilized their language skills to accomplish their own goals: a tool for female enlightenment for Christian New Women versus an instrument for female liberation for secular New Women. In their respectively imagined womanhood, English, which was widely recognized as a sign of

colonial modernity, was an essential component that comprised New Women. By the mid-1920s, however, English and American modernity became exclusively and problematically associated with secular New Women, as the “New Women Movement” became a social phenomenon that commanded a strong female support base (S. Kim, 2005). For fear of losing social hegemony to the self-awakening women, male intellectuals, many of whom had been sympathetic with female liberation, eventually turned their back on New Women by galvanizing nationalistic discourses along male-centred lines.

#### 4.3.4. From sympathizers to critics: modern male writers

During the colonial era, most elite Korean male writers went to Japan to study Western culture and technology as Japan is closer to Korea than Europe and America. These male writers were heavily influenced by the imported modernity of Western imperialists, which was held up as a model of enlightenment for Japan in its imperialistic ambitions aimed at Southeast Asia (Kim-Watson, 2007). The new fiction or *sin soseol*, which first appeared at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was born out of resistance to the traditional literature and often dealt with the issue of female liberation. In general, the novels extolled Western culture and ideology, those of America in particular, and the protagonists were often depicted as a relatively prosperous and privileged class to which the writers belonged (Kim-Watson, 2007). And a number of popular novels of the time feature Korean characters who speak English (Min, 2013). Attached to a cultural imaginary of the United States, English was indeed a signifier of colonial modernity.

It is notable that in *sin soseol*, going overseas, mostly to America for study, is presented as the only solution for protagonists in crisis (Kim-Watson, 2007). Yi’s work *Mu Jong* or “The Heartless” is a good example through which to examine popular beliefs in the superiority of the United States and English. Published in 1917, Yi opened a battlefield in his struggle to claim modernity and reject tradition by preaching free love (Jager, 1998). As the first long modern Korean novel, *Mu Jong* differentiated itself from traditional literature by featuring an educated woman and allowing her to occupy a central role in the story. In the novel, female protagonist Sun-Hyung is from a wealthy family and plans to go to the United States for higher education. She receives private English tutoring from Hyong-Sik, a male protagonist, who is a middle school English teacher. How “dreams” about America and English were popularized among colonial Korean elites is well illustrated in Sun-Hyung’s imagination of America:

그들은 영어를 처음 배우게 된 것이 자기네가 학식이 매우 높아진 표인 듯하여 일종 유쾌한 자랑을 깨달았다. 선행은 자기가 좋은 양복을 입고 새깃 꽂은 서양 모자를 쓰고 미국에 가서 저와 같은 서양 처녀들과 영어로 자유롭게 이야기하는 모양을 상상하고 혼자 웃었다. 자기가 영어를 잘하게 되면 자기의 자격도 높아지고 남들도 자기를 지금보다 더 사랑하고 존경하리라 하였다.

After learning English for the first time, they [Sun-Hyung and her sister] felt as though English became a sign of their enhanced state of intelligence and felt so proud. Sun-Hyung sometimes smiled secretly, imagining herself wearing a fancy Western outfit and a Western hat with a feather on, and talking freely in English to American girls around her age. She thought that once she became proficient in English, it would enhance her status and people would show even more respect to her than they do now. (An excerpt from Yi (1917: 27))

Sun-Hyung's view of English as a "superior" language is evidenced by her beliefs in English as a yardstick of intelligence and a source of public respect. The superiority of English, which emerged in the colonial binary position that assumed superior West vs. inferior East, was strengthened by its connection to the fantastic dimension of America as the land of opportunity and prosperity, alternative futures beyond the grips of Japanese colonization (M. Kim, 2008). The fact that Yi himself was an avid English learner, and proficient enough to translate popular American novels such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, explains a high-level of fantasy developed about English and America by a particular class. Under the dominant superior-inferior binary concept between the West and the East, English tied to superior images of America came to represent a medium by which to access freedom and power. Such images were produced and reproduced in the literary space created by the male writers frustrated at the powerlessness of the nation.

As New Women became a popular trend, however, male intellectuals including those who had previously supported gender equality came to regard the forces as a threat to traditional societal order and social unity. Although modern writers agreed in principle on the need for national reforms, they were conceived within the formation of an orderly society on the basis of distinct gender roles, rather than through a radical reconfiguration of social systems. Moreover, they believed that they would hamper efforts to gain independence that

required a strong social unity. In turn, they launched attacks on New Women with a particular focus on their consumption of Western modernity and radical sexual practices. In nationalistic discourses, those who spoke English in public, read American romance novels, watched American motion pictures, and/or wore Western-style clothing, drew strong criticism from the public, and the three New Women activists subsequently disappeared from public view and died in tragic circumstances. In part, it was increasingly powerless male subjectivities under Japanese colonization that led to the harsh reactions to challenges to the patriarchal family tradition by the self-awakening women (Wells, 1999). Through the strongly gendered discourse, New Women became associated with a narrow conception of Western followers and thoughtlessness, with docile Christian women as perhaps the only exception.

#### 4.3.5. English: a double-edged sword

The rise and fall of the New Women's Movement illustrates that, as a powerful cultural capital during Japanese colonial rule, English was, in a way, a reward for female docility: a sign of modernity and enlightenment for tradition-bound women and a sign of rebellion and promiscuity for independent women. The reward of docility in the nexus of English is well described in *The Concubine*, an unpublished novel by Ellasue Canter Wagner (1881-1957), a veteran missionary who served in Korea from 1904 to 1940. A godless modern American girl Eva, who falls in love with a Korean man during his sojourning in the United States, decides to go to Korea to be with him and yet finds that he has a fiancée arranged by families a long time ago. His fiancée Bobae is a paragon of Victorian modern womanhood. She is educated, pious, fluent in English, and familiar with Western cooking, which she learned ceaselessly to please her fiancée. Unknown to herself, Eva is reduced to a concubinage and it is Bobae who achieves his love with her cultured naivety. The term "American concubine" is a metaphor of New Women, many of whom became a concubine of a married Korean man with whom they fell in love during sojourning. Through the demise of the "New Women's Movement", English emerged as a double-edged sword for Korean women. That is to say, a degree of docility to gendered norms (or a degree of Westernization) came to determine the side women ended up being associated with, either a "true" virtuous modernity or a "secular" vulgar modernity.

#### 4.4. American fever in post-independence Korea (1945-1960)

Korea was liberated from Japanese rule on August 15, 1945 following the Japanese surrender after the United States dropped atomic bombs on Japan. This not only earned the United States a reputation as a liberator among Korean people but also contributed to consolidating English as a language of power, because English became an official language during the occupation of the United States Army Military Government (1945-1948) (Cummings, 1981). As the only legitimate language, English imposed itself on the nation until the first Korean government backed by the United States was launched on August 15, 1948. In this section, I will examine the sociology of the English language in post-1945 Korea with a focus on how power was attached to English during the occupation of the American Military Government as well as a subsequent Korean government headed by Rhee Syngman, the first president of the Republic of Korea. For that purpose, I will first investigate the context in which English became a highly valued form of symbolic capital among the Korean populace while the United States was probably at the height of its cultural domination in the global context. Secondly, I will explore the conditions in which the language barrier facing the Military Government led to the rise of English-speaking Koreans who served as translators and interpreters for American occupants. Lastly, I will trace the language journey of President Rhee Syngman to examine how his English language ideologies, America-centred worldviews, and favouritism toward Koreans capable of speaking English led to a political domination of English during his administration. But before going on to address those topics, I first situate these questions within the framework of coloniality with particular reference to the cultural dominance of the United States in the Korean context during the Cold War era.

##### 4.4.1. Post-colonial coloniality in the liberated peninsula

The term “coloniality” is broadly defined by Paik (2011: 74) as “power relations most clearly exemplified by, yet not limited to, actual colonialism”. Coloniality in East Asia is very much part of a modern world, its characteristic features including domination and exclusion along lines like racism/ethnicism, authoritarianism, and the Euro-centric structure of knowledge (Paik, 2011). Although post-1945 Korea is technically an era of post-colonialism, I try to limit the use of the term in this section. The word “post-colonialism”, whose basic sense means the period postdating former colonial rule, does not appear to fit a consequent development that unfolded in the liberated peninsula in which power struggles between Russia and the United States hindered the decolonization efforts

of Korean people. On this understanding, I prefer to describe Korea's post-liberation era as "post-colonial coloniality", in which the former Japanese rule was simply replaced by the United States on the pretext of defending the country from communist threats posed by Russia.

In *The Origins of the Korean War*, Cummings (1981) declares that Korea has been denied liberation by arguing that the physical removal of Japanese rule gave way to American domination. The actual landscape of "post-colonial" Korea is a contestatory one, in which Koreans were excluded from the liberation process itself and liberation was naturalized as a gift of the allied forces led by the United States. This process delegitimized Koreans as valid agents of nation-building and rationalized a subsequent military and economic dependence on the Cold War superpowers (C. Choi, 1993). Following the Potsdam Conference held between July and August in 1945, the disheartening prospect of a divided Korea was formalized between Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel was chosen as a dividing line, along which the north and the south were each surrendered to Russia and the United States respectively for supposedly transferring temporary control until the restoration of a new social order. As a result, the American Military Government (henceforth MG) was established on September 9, 1945 as a caretaker government in the southern part of the peninsula. Though an outright failure in a political sense, the MG played a crucial role in consolidating English as a language of power because English reigned as an official language during its three-year tenure. Although the U.S. domination of South Korea appears to be neo-colonial rather than strictly colonial to begin with (Paik, 2011), the initial era of post-colonial colonialism cannot be defined to the area of economics that neo-colonialism often connotes. It was rather a colonization of consciousness which resulted in a broad range of cultural expression, values and behaviours, and the production of knowledge in Korea (C. Choi, 1993). The Americanization of Korean consciousness is most palpable in the cultural arena, in which American mass culture soon towered over Korea's desolate cultural landscape. The education policy of the MG institutionalized such a cultural dependence, because through schooling, Korean children learned that competence in English, the most powerful colonial language, and a knowledge of Western civilization were not only signs of enlightenment but also constituted high-value symbolic capital (C. Choi, 1993). Under such circumstances, proximity to the United States through missionary connections, American education, and/or the mastery of English was the surest way to achieve social

mobility in the post-liberation era, which led to *chinmi* (pro-American) and even *sungmi* (worship of America) from the 1950s to the 1970s (C.-i. Moon, 2004). Similar to colonial elites, post-1945 Korean elites, too, tried to distinguish themselves as members of the privileged class by ceaselessly acquiring Western, that is, American culture and language (C. Choi, 1993). For a few Koreans who were skilled in English, English was a power in itself due to the absolute rarity of the language skills required by the American occupants. Nowhere is this more compelling than in the case of English-Korean translators and interpreters who were indispensable to MG administration.

#### 4.4.2. Translators and interpreters in the American Military Government

The MG in Korea was established by Lieutenant General John Reed Hodge, appointed by President Harry S. Truman as the commander of the U.S. military occupation of South Korea from September 1945 to August 1948. Poorly prepared for the assignment, Hodge was ignorant of Korean culture and history, not to mention the language (Matray, 1995). Indeed, it was not just Hodge; virtually all American officers saw the language barrier as the principal obstacle to the administration of the transitional government, as there were only a few English-speaking Koreans and almost no Korean-speaking Americans (Meade, 1951). Although a few American officers spoke Japanese, and Japanese was available to most as a *lingua franca* across the peninsula, Koreans steeped in anti-colonial discourse refused to speak it (Meade, 1951). Hodge quickly turned for information to those Koreans who spoke English and had ties with American missionaries. English-speaking Koreans were often wealthy and conservative, as learning English was a luxury for most Koreans suffering from financial distress compounded by Japan's economic extortion. Their conservative political view also well suited that of Hodge who preferred orderly changes and was viscerally hostile toward communism (Matray, 1995).

Consequently, the Americans were influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by the conservative ruling group. Most of them had previously collaborated with the Japanese in an effort to maintain their wealth and thus their point of view did not always make for the greatest good for the greatest number (Meade, 1951). William Langdon, a then State Department advisor in Seoul, responded to criticism against unseemly American favouritism toward a particular group of Koreans who held a conservative political point of view:

As for favouring plutocracy in, and excluding popular left wingers from, Military Government, it is quite probable that at the beginning we may have picked out a disproportionate number of rich and conservative persons. But how were we to know who was who among unfamiliar people? For practical purposes we had to hire persons who spoke English, and it so happened that their persons and their friends came largely from moneyed classes because English had been a luxury among Koreans. But Military Government long ago realized the unrepresentative character of its Korean structure and is fast broadening the social base of that structure. (quoted in Cummings, 1981: 151)

The MG's heavy reliance on English-Korean interpreters in managing day-to-day administration stigmatized itself by the name of "Interpreters' Government" or *tongyeok jeongbu* (McCune, 1947: 9), which became one of the most popular words that defined the characteristics of Korean society of the time (C. Joo, 2009). Although interpreters were paid at a meagre rate of 20 won (two U.S. cents) per day, the profession was highly popular among educated Koreans as it enabled them to access an exclusive power circle through which they could exercise huge influence on politics (S. Cho & Lee, 1995). Across the government, anyone who could communicate with American officers held most power and Lee Myo-muk, an interpreter for General Hodge, is a prime example. As an anti-communist, Harvard-educated Lee significantly influenced a decision by the MG to give up the original American plan of building a coalition comprising both leftist and rightist Koreans in favour of a right-wing government in Korea. As their power grew, distorting meanings in their own favour and profiting from corruption and irregularities became commonplace among MG interpreters. In addition, they recommended particular people to positions allotted to Koreans in the government in exchange for bribes. Concerns over such abusive practices of interpreters are evident in a private memorandum written by Sin Ik-Hui, an anti-MG activist:

We will have to discharge all officials appointed by the interpreters of Military Government. After August 1945 all pro-Japanese and national traitors under the Japanese first went into hiding... and later came out to buy off the interpreters so that they would get positions in the provincial governments, the district governments, and the police. We must clean out all these people, and at the same

time stop this spirit of dependence on foreign countries. (quoted in Cummings, 1981: 193)

It is not that MG officers were unaware of irregularities committed by interpreters but the task of finding reliable interpreters was complicated when English was monopolized by a particular class (Meade, 1951). In a way, it was a *déjà vu* of the pre-colonial era during which a few Koreans fluent in English enjoyed power due to a rising demand for linguistic mediators following an open-door policy. Almost half a century later, with Korea effectively under the control of the United States, there was no such commodity as English that was more valued for being the language of the foreign ruler. A capital is valued only by its rarity and English in post-liberation Korea was unquestionably *the* most valued capital attached to wealth and power.

#### 4.4.3. English and the first president

It is almost impossible to discuss the life of Rhee Syngman without English and the United States, in which he studied and campaigned for national independence for approximately 40 years. Rhee was born in 1875 in Hwanghae Province in the north of the peninsula into an impoverished scholarly *yangban* family. As an only son, Rhee grew up with huge parental expectations but failed the civil service examinations several times. He then entered the Pajai Hakdang, the Methodist missionary school, in 1894 at the age of 19 and began to study English. Keenly interested in rapidly-changing geopolitical situations in which China was losing its hegemony in Asia through the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), Rhee was convinced that it would be worthwhile to learn English to usher in a new era in which the United States was hailed as a big brother for Korea. His linguistic ambition is evident in this private memorandum to a Presbyterian minister, James S. Gale, in 1904:

It must be remembered that the great ambition which led me to the mission school was to learn English, and English only. This ambition I quickly achieved, but I soon discovered I was learning something of far greater importance than the English language. I was imbibing ideas of political equality and liberty. Those who know anything about the political oppressions to which the masses of the Korean people were subject can imagine what a revolution took place in the heart of a

young Korean *yangban* when he learned for the first time that people in Christian lands were protected against the tyranny of rulers. (quoted in Oliver, 1954: 61)

As confessed in the letter, it was not just English that Rhee learned at Pajai: his thinking was greatly influenced by the West and he came to think of the West as the power centre of the world (Allen, 1960). In turn, he became suspicious that Korea was hopelessly backward and was falling behind even its Eastern neighbours (Allen, 1960). While working closely with missionaries at Pajai as an English teacher, he came to admire America and wanted to visit the country.

In 1895, he met Seo Jaepil who briefly taught Western history at Pajai while preparing for the publication of *The Independent*. Rhee befriended Seo and joined a debating society, The Independence Club, which was Seo's brainchild. In 1898, after growing distrust from the king in response to anti-government statements from the club, he was arrested and jailed for seven years. It is worth noting that during this incarceration, Rhee entirely devoted himself to English language learning. He tried to memorize a pocket English dictionary that he had smuggled in as well as every single expression from magazines brought by missionaries. As a result, he greatly extended his mastery of English during the prison years and moulded his own style of English (Oliver, 1954). A year after being released in 1905, Rhee left for the United States and enrolled in George Washington University as a sophomore. One of Rhee's means of earning money enough to live on while at George Washington was by making English speeches about Korea (Oliver, 1962). He graduated in 1908 and then went on to achieve an MA at Harvard (1908) and a PhD at Princeton with a thesis entitled *Neutrality As Influenced By the United States* (1910). With this, Rhee became the first Korean to receive a doctorate degree from an American university, which became no small part of his prestige among older Koreans (Cummings, 1981). Apart from his brief return to Korea in 1910, Rhee remained in the United States until Korea was liberated from Japan in 1945. He served as the first president of the Korean Provisional Government in exile between 1919 and 1925 and continued to campaign for the independence of Korea while serving as the principal of a Korean school in Hawaii. He married Francesca Donner, the eldest daughter of a wealthy Australian iron merchant, in 1934.

Needless to say, Rhee's English skills and the network he built in Washington through his political crusade were the greatest assets in fulfilling his ambition to become the first president of a liberated Korea. His Western view, which his opponents blamed on his being "an American puppet, propped up and held in power by American bayonets" (Oliver, 1954: 322), and much more mildly described as "having more of the American point of view than other Korean leaders" (Cummings, 1981: 189) by Goodfellow, an American intelligence official who later served as Principal U.S. Advisor for Rhee in 1949. Rhee's admiration of America is well demonstrated in his 1941 book entitled *Japan Inside Out*, in which he described the United States as a country of unparalleled freedom: "The Stars and Stripes stand for the protection of this land of the noble free" (Rhee, 1941: 102). In a self-serving autobiography, *Syngman Rhee, The Man Behind the Myth*, Rhee did not hesitate to identify himself with the United States: "In the era of the interrelationship of peoples, Syngman Rhee belongs to America and to the entire free world, as well" (Oliver, 1954: 321).

On October 16, 1945, following the independence of Korea, Rhee finally returned to the country. He was ostensibly welcomed by General Hodge, who introduced Rhee to a crowd of more than 50,000 Koreans, as a great independence fighter, a presentation which painted him as "an anointed heir of the American Military Government" (Matray, 1995: 23) by one American political advisor. Hodge saw an effective response to Communist threats required exclusive reliance on conservative Rhee and the extreme right (Matray, 1995). However, their honeymoon period did not last long as Hodge appointed some moderate figures backed by the left wing to the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly in 1946 in an effort to appease the disgruntled leftist political wing. This infuriated Rhee who was not only an extreme anti-communist but also obsessed with becoming the first President of Korea. Rhee flew to Washington to publicize Hodge's appointment of communists to the new assembly by mobilizing his political resources there, winning him adherents to his cause. It should be noted that all of such actions would have been impossible had Rhee not been able to build a network with politicians in Washington through his knowledge of American politics and English and considering that he was the *only* Korean politician allowed to reside in the United States for such a long time.

Although Rhee had at times differences with the United States, especially towards the end of his presidency regarding the issue of North Korea, he remained faithful to the United

States throughout his political career. Rhee was instrumental in giving Korea the form of a democratic republic modelled to a considerable extent on the United States as reflected in the four-year presidential term, a nominal separation of powers among the executive, legislature, and judiciary, and a constitution patterned after the American Bill of Rights. Rhee favoured people who were educated overseas – mostly in the United States – and spoke English well (Joonsik Kang, 2010), and it was through this exclusive circle through which Rhee was able to use the influence of the United States and English to consolidate his power. His cabinet was filled with people with an American degree and fluent English, and it was this particular group of people who dominated politics during his twelve-year grip on power (1948-1960). Below is a table that outlines educational credentials and major positions held by key politicians favoured by Rhee.

Table 4.1. Descriptions of politicians with overseas backgrounds during the Rhee Syngman Administration

Name	Education	Title
Chang Seok-yoon	Vanderbilt University (U.S.)	Internal Minister (1952)
Chang Taeksang	University of Edinburgh (U.K.)	Foreign Minister (1948) Prime Minister (1952)
Chang Myun	Bernard High School (U.S.) Manhattan College (U.S.)	Prime Minister (1950-1952) Vice-President (1956-1960)
Cho Byungok	Wyoming University (U.S.) Columbia University (U.S.)	Special Envoy to the U.S. (1948-1949) Internal Minister (1951/1953)
Cho Jung-hwan	University of Michigan (U.S.)	Deputy-Foreign Minister (1954)
Choi Kyu-nam	Wesleyan University (U.S.) Michigan State University (U.S.)	Education Minister (1956-1957)
Choi Soon-joo	New York University (U.S.)	Finance Minister (1950-1951)
Heo Jeong	Old Royal Naval College (U.K.)	Transportation Minister (1950) Seoul Mayor (1957-1959) Foreign Minister (1960)
Kim Doyeon	Columbia University (U.S.) American University (U.S.)	Finance Minister (1948) Leader of the Democratic Party (from mid- to late 1950s)
Kim Hyuncheol	Lynchburg University (U.S.) Columbia University (U.S.)	Finance Minister (1955/1957) Economic Minister (1956)
Lee Ki-poong	Daver University (U.S.)	Seoul Mayor (1949-1951)

		National Assembly Speaker (1954-1960) Vice-President (1960)
Lee Kyo-sun	New York University (U.S.)	Commerce Minister (1952)
Lim Byung-jik	Ohio University (U.S.)	Foreign Minister (1948-1951)
Lim Young-shin	University of Southern California (U.S.)	Commerce Minister (1948-1949)
Paik Nak-joon	Park University (U.S.) Princeton University (U.S.) Yale University (U.S.)	Education Minister (1950-1952)
Shin Sungmo	Old Royal Naval College (U.K.)	Internal/Defence Minister (1949) Acting Prime Minister (1950) Minister to Japan (1951)
Yoon Chi-young	University of Hawaii (U.S.)	Internal Minister (1948) Minister to France (1950-1951)
Yun Bo-seon	University of Edinburgh (U.K.)	Seoul Mayor (1948-1949) Commerce Minister (1949)

It is notable from the table that Yun Bo-seon, the second president of Korea (1960-1961), also had overseas backgrounds and was a highly fluent English speaker. The strong visibility of English in the power circle led to the perception among young Koreans that English was an avenue to the future and English-Korean dictionaries became the first bestsellers in Korea's history during Rhee's presidency (Junman Kang, 2007). Ever since the Rhee administration, English and a degree from the United States continued to dominate the political arena of Korea. As an example, during the latest Lee Myung-bak administration (2008-2013), nine out of twenty ministers or 45 percent held a degree from an American university as of July 2011 (Nam, 2012). Around 21 percent of lawmakers or 64 out of 299 seats in the National Assembly received a degree from the United States, whereas overseas degrees obtained outside of the United States numbered only seven (Nam, 2012). In actuality, it is not just politics but business and academia as well, in which English and an American degree occupy a central place in contemporary Korea (Nam, 2012). Through the post-colonial coloniality, English expanded itself into various forms of capital that included cultural, economic, political, social and symbolic dimensions in Korean society.

#### 4.4.4. English born out of American fever

The analysis of this section concludes that the material and symbolic domination of English in contemporary Korea did not happen in a vacuum but is a “rational” outcome deeply embedded in history. Whereas English belonged to an elite group as a marker of colonial modernity – a form of cultural capital – during Japanese rule, the post-liberation era of Korea served as a watershed in popularizing English among the general public whose consciousness was unconsciously Americanized. For them, English represented symbolic capital which distinguished an individual from the masses by presenting her or him as a member of a prestigious circle. At the same time, English was consolidated as a key to power as demonstrated in the case of English-Korean translators and interpreters who served the MG. Lastly, it was U.S.-educated President Rhee Syngman who set the tone for what has now become the academic, business, and political domination of English and an American degree in Korean society. Considering the way in which English was elevated in Korea after the liberation, it would not be stretching things to say that one seed for the ongoing phenomenon of “English fever” in Korea was planted through what is now termed as the era of “American fever” (K. Park, 1997).

#### 4.5. Misrecognition of English in modern Korea (1961-1992)

In this section, I will examine how English became “misrecognised” (Bourdieu, 1989) in Korean society as it gained enormous cultural capital during Korea’s rapid modernization between the 1960s and early 1990s. On one level, English continued to serve as economic and social capital that enabled upward mobility in popular consciousness constructed and strengthened through historicity. On another level, English came to be seen as a form of cultural capital by those in search of class hegemony due to its association with the United States, the centre of the universe among Koreans caught up in “American fever”. Sojourning in the United States was the most effective means of achieving class distinction among the upper class and such a practice eventually led to the phenomenon of the “English divide” in Korean society. For those who felt class exclusion in a society in which English served as a class marker, the increasingly popular profession of English-Korean translators and interpreters represented an exclusive avenue through which to acquire English and a particular status symbolized by English. I shall focus on why such a perception of English was a myth and how misrecognition was constructed with translation and interpreting as a key analytical category. Before I address this topic, I shall first

examine how a public perception of English evolved through the period defined in this section with a growing presence of returnees in the era of Korea's newfound prosperity.

#### 4.5.1. Imagined America and the English divide in Korean society

Korea's rapid economic development since the 1960s led by export-oriented industrialization has been hailed as one of the most outstanding success stories in modern times (E.-M. Kim, 1997). Korea, an impoverished agrarian society before the 1960s, transformed itself into an ultramodern urban society within less than a single generation. This phenomenal development was achieved under the military dictatorship of President Park Chung-Hee (1917-1979) who tasked himself with achieving economic development, first and foremost, on the basis of a symbiotic relationship between the state and family-owned large conglomerates or *chaboels*. The relationship between the strong, developmental state and big business and the favourable international economy of the 1960s and 1970s helped produce a successful economic development, which is often referred to as "The Miracle on the Han River".

It is worth noting, however, that Korea could not have accelerated its export-led growth without relatively easy market access to the United States, which served as a primary destination for Korea's exports in the 1960s and 1970s (C.-i. Moon, 2004). The phenomenon of "American fever" – the strong cultural, economic, and political influence of the United States (K. Park, 1997: 12) – continued throughout Korea's modernization process due to the strong political and military influences of the United States on the peninsula as well as its massive economic and humanitarian aid (Moon 2004). The superior manifestations of the United States established an idealized image of the benevolent, abundant, and advanced America in the popular consciousness of Koreans (J. S.-Y. Park, 2012). Such beautified images of the United States, which is translated as a "beautiful country" or *miguk* in the Korean language, in turn, instilled in the Korean populace a desire for the United States (N. Y. Kim, 2008). While to know English was to enter another world, proficiency in English became coveted among Koreans for material and/or increasingly symbolic gains.

It is against this backdrop that English became misrecognized among Koreans, who needed not only economic but also cultural capital for class legitimacy (See Section 2.3.4). As noted in the previous section, most of those belonging to the upper echelon of Korean

society were pro-Japanese during the Japanese colonization in order to maintain or acquire their status. When the Americans drove the Japanese out and came to control Korea under the MG, they became pro-American to stay in power. In an attempt to gain legitimacy in neutralizing their colonial past, they capitalized on the popularly constructed imaginations about the United States and English through the act of sojourning in the United States which can be likened to an “act of pilgrimage to the mecca for blessing” (H. Kim, 2006: 116). Government-imposed restrictions on overseas study worked in favour of their scheme, as it was only “top-people” who could go overseas as sojourners in the 1960s and 1970s when a travel ban was in place (Goodman, 1986). Through such processes, sojourning abroad was established as a powerful means to maintain and reproduce a privileged class background among elite wealthy Koreans.

Returnees, whose imported knowledge was deemed essential by the government in putting the nation back on its feet, enjoyed preferential treatment when they came home. For example, President Park devised a special quota system which allowed returnee children to enter prestigious universities without taking the competitive main entrance exam in 1977 in order to allay fears expressed by diplomats of discrimination against returnee children (Goodman, 1986). While a perception that returnees were privileged elites was growing in Korean society, the ban on overseas study for those aged 18 or over was lifted in 1980 in response to public demand, giving a boost to ambitious Koreans to rush overseas to arm themselves with cultural capital. Whereas a total of 10,412 requested permission to study in the United States between 1953 and 1972, over 13,000 went to the United States for sojourning in 1980 alone (B.-S. L. Yoon, 1992). It is worth noting, however, that despite the liberalization of study abroad, sojourning predominantly to the United States was costly and affordable for only a small segment of society. As noted by Bourdieu (1986), the distinction between inherited properties and acquired properties is defied in the process of pursuing cultural capital, as the prestige of innate property is combined with the merits of acquisition. Applied to the Korean context, the act of apparently “acquiring” an overseas degree and English skills through sojourning was not strictly acquisition *per se*, but rather a combination of inherited properties (family wealth that enabled sojourning) and acquired properties (resultant foreign degrees and language skills), which in turn contributed to sustaining class structures.

As the number of returnees increased following the liberalization of study abroad, the populace was divided into two camps – *haewaepa* versus *guknaepa* – depending on the existence or absence of sojourning abroad. Local degrees were regarded as less privileged compared with those received in the United States and those who sojourned in the United States were highly regarded due to their presumably excellent English skills (H. Kim, 2006). *Haewaepa* thus came to dominate the local intellectual scene, and class-based access to sojourning was exploited as a mechanism for a particular class to dominate particular fields in Korea (See also Section 4.4.3). As an “English divide” rapidly emerged in Korean society, tensions between returnees and non-returnees began to grow. They peaked between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, during which a group of youths called *olaenjijok* or “orange people” became a big social issue in Korea. There is no apparent consensus on where this term originated, but it is generally viewed that their Western attitudes and extravagant lifestyles evoked the images of oranges, an expensive imported food item for most Koreans back then. These rich youngsters emulating Westerners concentrated in Gangnam, the southern part of Seoul, which soared in property value thanks to a government-led property development plan in the 1970s and 1980s. As part of “cultural struggles for distinction” (Joonman Kang, 2006), it became a popular practice among Gangnam’s nouveau riche, who acquired economic capital from the property boom but lacked cultural capital to claim class legitimacy, to send their children to the United States for higher education following the lifting of the ban in the 1980s. When the children came back home during school breaks, they brought in American party cultures characterized by drinking, drugs, and one-night stands. Orange people roaming Rodeo Street in Apgujung – the heart of Gangnam – named after luxurious Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills in the United States were typically defined as follows:

말꼬랑지 머리를 한 남자, 외귀걸이만 한 남자, 일부러 우리말을 서툴게 하는 남자,  
뒤통수머리에 미국 여권을 찢어 넣고 다니는 사람, 영어 반 우리말 반 섞어 쓰는 사람,  
20 대면서 외제 고급 승용차를 타고 다니는 사람.

A man in their 20s who has a ponytail, wears only one earring, speaks clumsy Korean purposely, carries an American passport in a pants pocket, mixes English and Korean in equal proportions, and drives a luxury imported car. (H. Yoo, 2012: no pagination available)

These English-speaking youngsters who spend USD 20,000 a month on drinking and entertaining soon became a target of public criticism for their dissipated and extravagant lifestyles (J. Ahn, 1998). In response, the government promised to crack down on orange people for allegedly corrupting social morals. Although they apparently disappeared from public view around the late 1990s, the phenomenon of orange people is significant in that it shows burgeoning conflicts in the area of English language ideologies in Korean society: a newly-emerging ideology of English as a means of distinction for the upper class versus a time-honoured belief in English as a key to individual success among the populace. Through this high-profile incident, a perception that English had become a class marker in Korean society began to grow among those who were socially aware. For those who felt class marginality, there seemed to be only one conduit through which to acquire the desired language capital: becoming English-Korean translators and interpreters.

#### 4.5.2. The glamour of English-Korean translators and interpreters

This sub-section explores how the profession of English-Korean translators and interpreters earned popularity particularly among young and ambitious Koreans through the high media profile it received between the 1980s and the 1990s. The institutionalization of the profession was achieved with the opening of the Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in 1979. Its stated aim was to meet the increasing demand for professional language mediators capable of handling international exchanges accompanied by the nation's economic development (GSIT, 2014). Not long after its foundation, the school began to enjoy popularity among young and educated Koreans due to the publicization of the profession in the media through two international events: the 1988 Seoul Olympics and the First Gulf War (1990-1991). The 1988 Seoul Olympics was a golden opportunity for Korea to enhance its national image from a war-torn divided country to a modern industrialized economy. Professional language assistance was critical for a successful hosting of the Games and the profession of translators and interpreters was covered by local media on numerous occasions. In particular, conference interpreting received a spotlight as a high-paying career (Bahk-Halberg, 2007), as there was a huge demand for simultaneous interpreters capable of handling international conferences organized in unprecedented numbers in the local context (J. Choi & Lim, 2002). The rate that simultaneous interpreters received was high enough to raise a layperson's eyebrows. Whereas an average monthly salary for a white-collar worker during the 1980s was less than 200,000 won (USD 200), a simultaneous

interpreter received 250,000 won (USD 250) per day for a day's work in the mid-1980s (S. Lee, 2006). In case of working overtime, they were allowed to charge 50-70,000 won (USD 50-70) per hour and some interpreters could earn as much as 800,000 won (USD 800) in a single day, nearly three times higher than monthly median household incomes (Woo, 1991). However, public understanding of the profession remained low, even among journalists who often covered the profession around the Games. As an example, ahead of the Olympics, the organizers of the Games held a mock conference in which a press conference of a gold medallist athlete was simulated. While the simulation was televised as "simultaneous interpreting" on a primetime news program, it was consecutive, not simultaneous, interpreting in which an English speaker spoke first and then the interpreter commenced oral translation when the speaker stopped speaking, as opposed to interpreting simultaneously at the same time as the speaker (E. Hong, 1988).

It was the First Gulf War that further entrenched interest in the profession through televised simultaneous interpreting. When the war erupted in 1990, the two main local broadcasting systems – Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) and Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) – were unable to televize the rapid development of the Gulf War as immediately as overseas broadcasters such as CNN did (J. Choi & Lim, 2002). The networks opted to carry the CNN broadcasts live and to have conference interpreters interpret simultaneously for viewers (J. Choi & Lim, 2002). In other words, there was no reporter but only an interpreter for the war coverage. As this procedure was unprecedented, the initial stage was marked by trial and error. At the beginning, the television networks hired untrained celebrity English educators who turned out to be incapable of interpreting even a few sentences on live TV (H. Shin, 2003). When trained interpreters came in, however, the result was markedly different. Some viewers accustomed to the scripted commentary of television anchors complained that the interpreters lacked presentation skills, but after a few broadcasts, most viewers came to appreciate the skilfulness of the interpreters in delivering the core messages and presentation soon became more refined (J. Choi & Lim, 2002). Not only did the Gulf War make interpreters visible to the entire country but it also served to distinguish them from other English-speaking Koreans as "master English speakers" (J. Choi & Lim, 2002: 635). The public came to admire the "art" (Dam & Zethsen, 2013: 230) of simultaneous interpreting due to the capacity to solve a task that seemed impossible. The profession was recognized as something that only extraordinary people could do – those who have exceptional linguistic talents, a distinct

knowledge base, delivery skills, and special textual skills that could be acquired only through hard training.

The glamorous mediatized images of simultaneous interpreters particularly appealed to educated young Korean women who were marginalized in the gendered local employment market. Widespread employment discrimination against women led to the feminization of only a handful of professions such as nurses, flight attendants and teachers (I.-D. Park, 1987). After the Gulf War, however, the profession of translators and interpreters became known as a profession without a glass ceiling (Kwak, 2012) and began to top the list of most-preferred professions among female university students (GSIT, 2013). In 1991 following the Gulf War, the competition rate for the GSIT peaked at 20:1 for the coveted 40 spots in the English-Korean Department (Woo, 1991). Expectations about the profession were very high among aspiring translators and interpreters as seen in the following excerpt from a motivational essay written by a trainee translator and interpreter:

3 수가 아니라 30 수라도 끝까지 하는 일은 좋다. 전문 직업인이 될 수 있다면 그 만한 희생도 좋다. 그러나 끝까지 못하고 통역대학원 입학 자체를 포기하는 경우를 보면 가슴이 아프다. 앞으로 고생하며 살아갈 길이 너무 안쓰럽기 때문이다. 자본주의는 근본적으로 착취제도다. 자신의 꿈을 포기하는 일은 자본주의 승리자의 종이 된다는 뜻이고 시장과 함께 부침하겠다는 절망이다. 나는 평범한 통대 신입생이 2년을 고생한 후 환골탈태해서 노동계급을 벗어나 자본가가 될 수 있는 전문인으로 비상하는 감동의 드라마를 본다. 그들도 언젠가는 자본가가 되겠지. 이것이 자본주의다.

Trying three times, no, as many as thirty times [to enter a translation and interpreting institute] is worth it. It is a sacrifice worth making in order to be a professional. It is sad to see people giving it up in the middle, as they are destined to experience enormous challenges in their future journeys. Capitalism is fundamentally exploitative. Giving up one's dream means succumbing to capitalism and willingly subjecting oneself to market volatility. I dream of a triumphant moment in which an ordinary translation and interpreting trainee is transformed from a worker to a professional able to become a capitalist after two

years of hard work. They will become capitalists one day. This is how capitalism works. (Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation Sunmoon, n.d.)

While it can be conjectured that the strong conviction expressed by the author in the profession as a magical means of realizing a metamorphosis – from a worker to a capitalist – was shaped (at least in part) by the mediatised glamour of the profession as discussed above, glamour alone fails to explain why one is led to believe that he/she can transcend the deeply-rooted class barriers in a late-capitalist society with mere English skills. In the next section, I will attempt to answer this question through the concept of “misrecognition” (Bourdieu, 1989) in the context of English as a class marker in Korea.

#### 4.5.3. Pursuits of misrecognized English

As Strine (1985) has pointed out human reality is an interpreted reality, and it is never a single construct, but multiple (Greenblat, 1974). Given the multiplicities of what is often mistakenly perceived as a single reality, I take multiple perspectives to approach the issue of English language ideologies held by aspiring English-Korean translators and interpreters. I have identified three aspects that potentially explain what motivates young and ambitious Koreans to pursue the translation and interpreting profession: mediatized glamorous images; English as a key to success as accumulated in historicity; and the institutionalization of English as cultural capital.

Firstly, translators and interpreters, particularly simultaneous interpreters, were portrayed in glamorous terms by the local media in which they were even described as “Cinderella” (Kwak, 2012: 6). The metaphor refers to the magical self-transformation from rags to riches that interpreters supposedly achieve through their profession. Specifically, it was the glamorous cosmopolitan images of simultaneous interpreters working closely with powerful figures at international conferences that appealed to young and ambitious Koreans in general (Kwak, 2012). In addition to the glamour factor, the monetary aspect of the profession was constantly highlighted in the media, which possibly led ambitious people to recognize the profession as a perfect opportunity to achieve both economic and cultural capital. Secondly, the proposed question is also closely related to the processes in which English language ideologies evolved as accumulated history in the Korean context. As discussed in the three preceding sections, English language ideologies in Korea evolved from a mobility enabler to a signifier of colonial modernity, and to power in itself against

the backdrop of “American fever” in post-liberation Korea. The common thread that runs through this trajectory is the issue of class. From the moment that Interpreter Lee Ha-Young was transformed from a street vendor to a foreign minister through his English skills alone in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (See Section 4.2.1), English has been strongly regarded as a language of opportunities by the populace. The story of President Rhee Syngman whose English skills and networks with Washington, built through sojourning in the United States, were indispensable to realizing his ambition of becoming the first president of Korea (See Section 4.4.3), represents the pinnacle of the accumulated ideology of English as a language of opportunity. Given the number of beliefs in English accumulated throughout history, it can be posited that such beliefs were internalized by the upwardly mobile and the profession was thus viewed as an exclusive avenue to achieve a higher social status.

Thirdly, the institutionalization of the profession through the foundation of the GSIT contributed to establishing English as a language of equal opportunities due to competitive recruitment examination. Recruitment processes at the GSIT, which were highly competitive as mentioned above, distinguished the GSIT from other local graduate schools. As an example, there was no initial screening process on the basis of academic qualifications of candidates, which was and still is mandatory among local graduate schools. Anyone with a degree from a four-year university was allowed to sit for an exam at the GSIT. Whereas prestigious local graduate schools require a certain level of GPA (Grade Point Average) and consider an applicant’s major as well as the ranking of the university that an applicant graduated from (Daily University Newspaper, 2002), selection processes at the GSIT were solely based on the language skills of candidates. The two-staged entrance examination which consisted of written and oral tests in both English and Korean was exclusively designed to test the bilingual skills of applicants, yet with a heavier weight placed on English skills (GSIT, n.d.). As Bourdieu (1989) noted in French schools, competitive recruitment examination instituted an essential difference between the officially recognized, guaranteed competence and simple cultural capital which is constantly required to prove itself. Likewise, the imposition of recognition through the institutionalized state of English as cultural capital distinguished accredited English-Korean translators and interpreters from other proficient and yet unrecognized English speakers in Korean society. Through this analysis, a parallel can be drawn between the GSIT, the first modern translation and interpreting institute, and Dong Mun Hak, the first

local English education institute that existed almost a century ago. Just like the GSIT, Dong Mun Hak also used solely competence-based selection criteria, which was viewed by commoners as an opportunity to achieve social mobility (See Section 4.2.1). Combined with accumulated history in the profession as well as mediatized glamour, recognition imposed through institutionalization was presumably seen as an opportunity to distinguish oneself from others through English in a society in which English was serving as a class marker.

It should, however, be noted that the seemingly perfect equality of opportunities and perfect competition, in which success or failure is seen as an outcome of natural aptitude or individual efforts, disregard the fact that ability or talent is itself the product of the investment of time and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). In fact, the “English divide” was much more obvious in the field of translation and interpreting in which members are automatically categorized into either *haewaepa* or *guknaepa* on the basis of their language learning backgrounds (See Section 2.5.2). A perception of *haewaepa* interpreters as advantaged compared with *guknaepa* can be validated by the fact that most of the high-flying interpreters in Korea, who are predominantly *haewaepa*, simply “fell into the profession” (Bahk-Halberg, 2007: 158) by unexpectedly passing the notoriously difficult entrance exam at the GSIT. In sharp contrast, the majority of their *guknaepa* counterparts labour, sometimes for multiple years, at *tongdae hakwon*, a coaching school designed to prepare aspiring translators and interpreters for entrance examinations (Eun, n.d.). After graduation, it seems almost impossible to become a simultaneous interpreter as *guknaepa* due to the existing market structures in which *haewaepa* interpreters dominate (Boshin Hwang, 2004). In fact, the proportion of *haewaepa* students at the GSIT, which was virtually zero when it first opened in 1979 due to the restrictions on overseas study, has overtaken that of *guknaepa* by a significant margin in recent years (Baek, 2008).

At the same time, such naturalized beliefs in the linguistic competence of *haewaepa* interpreters suggest that they might not be recognized in their own right but by what is seen as a “privileged background” in language learning. Therefore, albeit ironically, the existing boundary of English in the field of translation and interpreting appears to be in favour of *guknaepa* interpreters for their unflinching and laudable commitment to achieving what is seen as the highest linguistic standards in the local context. As an idealized figure of domestic learner of English was celebrated, “star interpreters,” who gained popularity after

the Gulf War as “master English speakers” (J. Choi & Lim, 2002: 635), tried to highlight English as an “acquired” property by erasing their “inherited” property. As an example, a celebrity interpreter who technically belongs to the *haewaepa* camp for sojourning overseas for three years as a child attempts to water down her overseas experiences during an interview with a local newspaper. While she claims herself as a “pure” *guknaepa* for having lived abroad *only* for three years (Pierre, 2008), her dedication to perfecting English in which she even dreamt a dream in English is constantly highlighted throughout the interview. Through such border-crossing to the less-privileged side from the otherwise privileged side, the existing border of English in the field of translation and interpreting became invisible. In this way, the individual conditions of domestic transmission that enabled privileged language learning opportunities are more disguised, and English as cultural capital, which functions as multiple forms of capital as well, came to be misrecognized as achievable competence in a society in which English was in fact an item that “an individual added to his inheritance” (Bourdieu, 1986: 100).

#### 4.5.4. Lost in translation?

As discussed throughout this section, English language ideologies in Korean society came to experience conflicts between the old and the new: a mobility enabler versus class distinction. Although the latter was achievable exclusively by a particular class who needed English for symbolic gain, the deeply-entrenched ideology of English as a key to individual success motivated those yearning for social mobility to pursue the increasingly popular glamorous profession of English-Korean translators and interpreters. Such a pursuit of English was justified and rationalized by the institutionalization of English as a site of fair competition through competitive entrance examination at the GSIT. The misrecognition of English thus arose amidst the conflicts that occurred through the rapid evolution of English language ideologies in modern Korea. What happens after misrecognizing English, however, has hardly been discussed in the relevant field. By following the linguistic journeys of trainee and professional translators and interpreters, I aim to answer these questions in this research in the hope that it will throw new light on the sociology of English language ideologies in Korea.

#### 4.6. English as a global language (1993-2013)

I have so far traced the development of English language ideologies in Korea over the past century during which English evolved as multiple forms of capital under American

hegemony. English was thus desired by many in Korea throughout the past century, but it was not until the mid-1990s did English become pursued on a *national* scale with the launch of state-led *seggyehwa* or globalization campaigns. As English was framed as a key to individual/national/global competitiveness in the context of cutthroat global competition, pursuits of English became fiercer than ever before, leading to the phenomenon of “English fever”. I will explore the processes by which “English fever” occurred at the intersection between the new ideology of English as a ticket to national competitiveness embedded in globalization discourses and the existing ideology of English as a socially valued capital.

#### 4.6.1. English in *seggyehwa*

Although globalization was pursued by many nations in East Asia as an irreversible global trend during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, no East Asian country made such high-profile globalization policy pronouncements as Korea during the Kim Young-Sam administration (February 1993 - February 1998) (S. S. Kim, 2000). In trying to understand the elevation of English during this early period of globalization in Korea, it is important to note that a Korean version of globalization was inspired by a Social Darwinian view of the world or “survival of the fittest” in which winners control losers culturally, economically and politically (G.-W. Shin & Choi, 2009). President Kim contextualized that Korea was at risk of becoming a loser in an increasingly competitive global arena due to what he viewed as its parochial attitudes, and thus fully embraced the arguments of globalization protagonists that globalization is a weapon that the nation can wield in its struggle to maintain a competitive edge (G.-W. Shin & Choi, 2009). What can be defined as a “nationalist appropriation of globalization” (G.-W. Shin & Choi, 2009: 257), *seggyehwa*, focused on how Korea should strive to compete more effectively in the global economy in order to become a “first-class” country. Korean people were urged to join this lofty vision by becoming *segye shimin* or global citizens, a vision framed as a national duty in nationalistic discourses (Schattle, 2014). Despite the vagueness of what it means to be “global citizens,” one thing was loud and clear: global citizens should be able to speak English (D. Lee, 2010).

In the context of borderless global competition, those who were willing to give up the comfort of home for opportunities to face the larger world were applauded as model citizens, and becoming a global citizen called for the mastery of English (So Jin Park & Abelman, 2004). The idea of English as an indispensable instrument for enhancing

Korean competitiveness in the global market received a huge boost in 1995, when large Korean companies replaced grammar-oriented English tests for job applicants with TOEIC, which they claimed as crucial for implementing their globalization strategies (Chungdae Shinmoon, 1995). As a high score on TOEIC became essential to get a white collar job, university students and corporate workers rushed to English language institutes specializing in TOEIC in order to improve their employment prospects. In the same year, the Ministry of Education released EPIK (English Program in Korea) as part of education reform tasks under the slogan of “reinforcing globalization education” (Jeon, 2009: 236). The program aimed to hire “native” English speakers to assist native Korean teachers of English at primary and secondary schools with English teaching, and close to 2000 English speakers joined the program between 1995 and 2007 (Jeon, 2009). In particular, the launch of a new elementary English program in 1997 sparked parental interest in English language education on a national scale. As the program made it compulsory for students to learn English from Grade 3 to Grade 6 for two periods (90 minutes in total) per week for the first time in Korea’s education history, parents who worried that their children might underperform in school English classes sent them in droves to private English language institutes (*yeongeo hakwon*), which in turn resulted in the merger of English with “education fever”, the setting of extremely high academic standards by Korean parents (D. Kim, 2008).

Public perceptions of English and globalization as a competitiveness imperative continued to be strengthened throughout successive governments, with varied styles and yet on the same ideological grounds: English as a key to successful globalization and national advancement. For example, President Kim Dae-Jung, who was sworn into office in February 1998 when Korea was still reeling from the aftermath of the 1997/8 Asian Financial Crisis, prioritized English in his grandiose agenda of economic and social transformation informed by neoliberalism (See Section 2.2.1). Mandated by the IMF to carry out neoliberal restructuring in return for the provision of a bailout package to prevent national bankruptcy, Kim realized that globalizing the local economy demanded more professionals who could command English (G.-W. Shin, 2003). Keenly aware of the strategic value of Koreans equipped with English skills, Kim targeted mainly Korean-Americans for their English proficiency in the promulgation of a special law designed to guarantee residence and employment rights at home for overseas ethnic Koreans in 2000, while excluding ethnic Koreans in other parts of the world (G.-W. Shin, 2003). As part of a

social transformation agenda, President Kim envisaged a “creative knowledge-based country” as a future Korea and transformed Korea into the most-wired country in the world by deploying high-speed broadband cables across the nation. Throughout campaigns for digitalization as part of his globalization drives, English was constantly promoted as a global language and a source of global knowledge and information because it accounted for 80 percent of Internet communication at the time (D.-J. Kim, 2000). English was also valued as a core component that defined a new type of model citizen befitting a global age. President Kim’s brainchild “new intellectual” or *shin jishikin* was conceptualized as “a person who actively creates added values by leveraging knowledge and endeavours to enhance/innovate working styles by thinking out of the box” (Chun, 2000). English was viewed as one of the most fundamental skills that a new intellectual should be equipped with in his/her effort to become an ideal cosmopolitan in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Chun, 2000).

In trying to assess how powerful English had become through globalization discourses, it is worth noting that English was even proposed as an official language of Korea. The idea of English as a possible official language of Korea was invoked in July in 1998 by well-known novelist Bok Geo-II’s book entitled *Gukjaeeo sidaeeui minjokeo* or “Ethnic Languages in the Age of a Global Language“. Claiming that Korean is unsuitable for the age of globalization due to its impracticality in accessing global information, Bok (1998) argued for the adoption of English as an official language along with Korean. The idea received further impetus from President Kim’s proposal in the same year to establish Special Economic Zones (SEZ) designed to attract foreign direct investment. English was proposed as an official language of SEZs as absence of communication in English was regarded as the biggest hurdle to attracting foreign investment (J. S.-Y. Park, 2009). After experiencing a hibernation period due to strong opposition from various social sectors, the idea was resurrected with the inauguration of President Roh Moo-Hyun (February 2003 – February 2008). As Korea was performing poorly in terms of economic growth and job creation and becoming less attractive to investors, President Roh implemented economic globalization policies intended to enhance Korea’s role as a global economic player. For example, the administration sought to enhance Korea’s stature as the logistics hub of the Northeast Asian region by investing in transportation infrastructure. It also attempted to transform the capital region into an international finance and business hub, all of which once again raised the issue of English as a global language.

In 2005, when President Roh introduced a decentralization policy, the provincial government of Jeju Island – Korea’s largest island – was quick to draw up a plan that proposed the adoption of English as an official language of the Free International Jeju City (J. J. Song, 2011). The official status of English in Jeju would make it a medium of instruction in schools on the island province. In a related move, the Ministry of Education proposed trying English immersion education in schools in SEZ and the Free International Jeju City in its five-year education plan. Although the proposal was withdrawn in the midst of strong public opposition and was eventually scuttled, a (futile) attempt was made in 2007 to revive the idea of English as an official language in anticipation of the landmark Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA). While public anxiety related to English deepened due to the possibility of English becoming an official language, large conglomerates pitched in. By the mid-2000s, high TOEIC scores became mandatory for corporate employees applying for promotion. In 2007, LG announced a plan to make English the only language for communication at work from 2008 as part of its efforts to go global. Civil servants and even military personnel were not immune to TOEIC-related stress. Since 2000, they too have been required to submit TOEIC scores for promotion in the name of globalization (Joonman Kang, 2014). A “TOEIC boom” swept the field of education as well, as some prestigious universities decided to recruit a certain number of students solely on the basis of TOEIC/TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores from the early 2000s (Joonman Kang, 2014). The enormous importance of English among Koreans can be seen from the fact that among the four million people taking TOEIC worldwide every year, those taking the test in Korea accounted for more than 1.68 million as of 2004 (Boyeon Hwang, 2005).

The growing public anxiety over English peaked during the presidency of Lee Myung-Bak (February 2008 – February 2013), whose proposal for reforming public English education sparked heated reactions with regard to English on a national scale (J. H. Lee, Han, & McKerrow, 2010). On January 23, 2008, nearly a month before his official inauguration, a presidential transition committee unveiled its “English Education Roadmap”, a proposal to drastically improve Koreans’ English proficiency by reforming the current teaching system. The committee’s chairwoman Lee Kyung-Sook proposed English immersion education by which all school subjects at primary and secondary schools would be taught in English starting in 2010 for the ultimate goal of making Korea a more “English-friendly” nation (Lee, Han et al 2010). The committee proposed to start with maths,

science, and other subjects in which language differences had less impact on student comprehension. Within five days of the initial proposal, however, the committee withdrew the plan in the face of massive public anxiety and criticism about its executorial and financial feasibility. Although it ended up as a short-lived political farce, it is worth noting that this drastic idea of using English as an exclusive medium of instruction in a country which is one of the most culturally, ethnically, and linguistically homogenous nations in the world had been proposed by the head of state (J. S.-Y. Park, 2013).

President Lee's stance on English and globalization was not new: English leads to national competitiveness in a fierce global arena. What distinguished the Lee government from its predecessors was, however, the degree to which he was willing to internalize East Asian Social Darwinism that views Americanization as symbolic capital in achieving modernization for survival (J. H. Lee et al., 2010). Such a perception of English and globalization is clearly demonstrated in the following quote by President Lee: "Generally, in the age of globalization, to what degree the nation's people are proficient in English brings difference among the status of countries and individuals" (quoted in J. Lee, 2008: 249). President Lee even claimed that "비(非)영어권 국가 중 국민이 영어를 잘하는 나라가 영어를 잘 쓰지 못하는 나라보다 훨씬 잘산다 (among non-English speaking nations, those who speak English well are much better off than those that do not speak English well)" (C. Kim, 2008). Indeed, the role of the state in the ascent of English in Korea was central and through the massive state-led *seggyehwa* campaigns, English has been naturalized as a global language, a necessity for Koreans living in the age of globalization. It is, however, important to point out that the idea of English as a global language is only one aspect of local multiplicities related to English language ideologies. As demonstrated throughout this chapter, English has continued to evolve in Korean society in different forms, and the diverse meanings ascribed to English through historicity should not be overshadowed by the ongoing powerful ideology of English as a global language. In the next section, I will attempt to "connect the dots" amongst the ideologies identified throughout the historical analyses of this chapter in an effort to understand how "English fever" has developed in Korea.

#### 4.6.2. Global English in layered local simultaneity

As discussed above, globalization and English have been inseparable not just within Korea but beyond, and globalization has been viewed as largely responsible for the ongoing

phenomenon of “English fever” in Korean society (Abelmann et al., 2005; J. S.-Y. Park, 2009; So Jin Park & Abelmann, 2004). Considering the ever-present significance of English in the local context as highlighted throughout this chapter, however, it is critical to re-examine if English is just a language related to globalization as believed by many in Korean society. As proposed in the methodology (See Section 3.5), I adopted the concept of “layered simultaneity” (Blommaert, 2005) as an interpretive framework, and this section briefly captures how English in layered simultaneity is at work in Korean society.

To begin with, it is important to note a striking similarity between the context in which English has been promoted as a global language in contemporary Korea and the time that English arrived on the peninsula in the early days of Social Darwinism during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Just as King Gojong regarded English as a key to securing national survival through blessings from the United States (See Section 4.2.1), contemporary Korean leaders have developed similar worldviews in which the United States is the centre of the universe and Americanization is a competitiveness imperative in the world characterized by the survival of the fittest. Not only that, parallels can be drawn between English language ideologies held by early Korean learners of English and those developed by their descendants. To be specific, ever since Interpreter Lee Ha-Young achieved success through his English skills alone (See Section 4.2.1), English has served as a mobility enabler for Koreans as shown in the case of interpreters for the Military Government and the power of American degrees in academia, business, and politics in modern Korea (See Section 4.4.3). The ideology of English as cultural capital for distinction is also strongly grounded in historicity, as it was originally shaped by Seo Jaepil, the first Korean who obtained American citizenship and tried to distinguish himself from other Koreans based on his binary worldview (See Section 4.2.2). It was subsequently embraced by elite and wealthy Koreans throughout Japanese colonization (See Section 4.3.4) as well as their contemporary counterparts eager to display their connections with the United States as a symbol of power (See Section 4.5.1). The concept of English as a tool for individual/national competitiveness is also not new, given that it was originally embraced by Yu Kil-Chun, who viewed English as a practical tool to import modernization to strengthen Korea’s international position (See Section 4.2.2). Lastly, the tumultuous life of Yun Chi-Ho, the first English-Korean interpreter, in relation to English and the United States bears resemblance to the current state of Korea in which the consciousness of Koreans has been gradually colonized by “American fever” (See Section 4.4.4). Given

how English has always been some form of power – both symbolic and material – operating in layered simultaneity in the local context, it is fair to say that the ongoing phenomenon of “English fever” occurred at the intersection between the new ideology of English as competitiveness embedded in globalization discourses and the existing ideologies of English as valued multiple forms of capital for Koreans. This leads to an important question of how the identified patterns of English language ideologies accumulated in historicity operate in contemporary Korea and if/how new ideologies have been added to the existing ideologies of the English language. It is precisely the aim of this research to shed new light on these competing English language ideologies in Korea.

#### 4.6.3. Rethinking language ideologies

I have so far examined the development of “English fever” in the context of globalization in Korea. Through state-led globalization drives, English has emerged as an indispensable tool for competitiveness and competing on the terrain of English is not a matter of a choice but an individual imperative. One caveat is in order: while one obvious way of understanding the evolution of English as a global language would be to attempt to examine English in the context of globalization, I am aware that focusing on the historical trends of English in globalization would offer only one broad sketch of English in the local context. Given the extent to which the ideology of English as a global language has been universally embraced in the local context, it is necessary to conduct a more detailed examination of English in globalization through one specific case – English as a medium of instruction in local higher education. In the next chapter I attempt to provide a comprehensive picture of how power attached to English has been constructed and reinforced within the framework of English as a global language in Korean society.

#### 4.7. Summary

This chapter has presented the shifting meanings of English language ideologies in Korea from historical perspectives. In Section 4.2, I reviewed the origin of English language education in Korea in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. English represented a political tool for then embattled King Gojong, while it was seen by commoners as an avenue to accomplish social mobility in the strict caste society. I have also examined how initial English language ideologies developed by tracing the language journeys of the three returnees, each of whom exhibited varied language ideologies in relation to the West and modernization: English as a practical tool for modernization; English for distinction; and

English as a key to an imagined community (the United States). Section 4.3 explored the issue of English and modernity from gendered perspectives. By examining ideal modern womanhood in relation to English and Western modernity, I have argued that while English was an important instrument for progressive Korean women to carve out a new space in the patriarchal society, an ability to use English and knowledge of the West became associated with female secularity and even vulgarity in public discourses led by powerful male figures. English thus represented a double-edged sword among Korean women, because a degree of docility towards gendered societal norms determined who was to be seen a virtuous modern woman versus a secular vulgar modern woman.

Section 4.4 traced the beginning of “American fever” in the context of Korea’s post-colonial coloniality following its independence from Japan. I have attempted to demonstrate the processes by which English emerged as a political capital through the cases of interpreters during the occupation of the MG as well as the subsequent Korean government headed by President Rhee Syngman. The continued ascendancy of English in modern Korea was discussed in Section 4.5 with a focus on the ideology of distinction. I examined how English emerged as a powerful cultural capital for distinction among wealthy Koreans and how it was misrecognized by upwardly-mobile Koreans who regarded English proficiency *alone* – as demonstrated in the case of the profession of translation and interpreting – as an avenue to be part of an upper class. Lastly, in Section 4.6, I investigated the elevation of English as a key to national competitiveness in the context of globalization, and how the phenomenon of “English fever” occurred at the intersection between the old and new language ideologies.

The historical periodization of English conducted throughout this chapter illuminates the evolutionary nature of language ideologies within a specific local context, and thus serves as a powerful baseline in investigating contemporary English language ideologies in Korea with greater sophistication. It reveals that it is power that lies at the heart of the issue of English language ideologies in Korean society. As Fairclough (1989) stated, language is a principal means for the operation of power. Be it competitiveness, distinction, or mobility, English has always been equated with the power with which Koreans have pursued their dreams through numerous generations. It is, therefore, my aim to explore in depth in the next chapter how power that has been attached to English throughout history is

strengthened and reinforced in contemporary Korea with local higher education as a key site of examination.

## Chapter 5. English as a medium of instruction in higher education

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents an examination of how the contemporary ideology of English as a key to global competitiveness operates at a societal level in Korea. It specifically examines the processes by which English has been naturalized as a global language in Korea's higher education sector. Since the mid-2000s, East Asian universities have promoted English as a medium of instruction (hereafter MoI) as part of their internationalization strategies, and no country has embraced the move more than Korea (B. J. Lee, 2007). Under dominant discourses about English as an indispensable instrument for institutional internationalization in the local media, English MoI has been naturalized as a tool to achieve global academic excellence. While "dreams" about English MoI have been circulated and propagated through mainstream media, however, the cost of English has been overlooked and subsequently rationalized in the discursive construction of English as a natural and neutral medium of internationalization. By exposing the gap between dreams and realities in English as an imperative for the internationalization of the local higher education sector, I aim to demonstrate that the spread of English is not a natural outcome of globalization, but a systematically orchestrated ideology that serves the interest of the powerful conservative media while disadvantaging students.

### 5.2. The cost of English

Between January and April of 2011, four students and one professor at the elite university Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (hereafter KAIST) took their own lives. These suicides were widely covered in the media in Korea (Heo, 2011; Ji et al., 2011; Minjee Kim, 2011) and even internationally (Y.-E. Lee, 2011; McDonald, 2011). The consensus that emerged in these media reports was that the pressure resulting from university reforms were to blame for these tragedies. The fact that English had been introduced as the only MoI in this Korean institute was particularly singled out for blame. The suicides highlight a contrast between dreams and realities respecting English as a language for global competitiveness in Korea. Since the late-1990s, internationalization has been at the forefront of the agenda of Korea's higher education sector and English MoI has been pursued as a major instrument for delivering internationalization through which to enhance institutional competitiveness in an increasingly competitive global higher education market (Byun, Chu, & Kim, 2011). KAIST was the first Korean university to

implement its 100%-English-MoI policy and all lectures at KAIST have been conducted in English since 2010 (See Section 2.3.3). The benefits of English MoI in local higher education have been well highlighted at institutional as well as government levels. According to Byun (2011), the positive impacts of English MoI as emphasized by recent government documents are: (1) helping students to prepare for future careers so that they can utilize global skills; (2) allowing institutions to employ scholars from overseas and attracting more international students to compensate for a decrease in domestic student numbers; and (3) helping local professors to build language skills and confidence so that they can actively participate in the globalized academic world. Furthermore, the sensationalized representation of English MoI as an imperative for the internationalization of higher education is well observed in the discourses of powerful mainstream media. As Cho (2012) notes, English MoI is legitimized in mainstream media discourses particularly with reference to the need to reverse the dismal performance of Korean universities in international rankings. Local mainstream media constructs the internationalization of higher education as “irreversible” in the era of globalization, with a strong emphasis on English as indispensable to achieving global academic excellence in the form of enhanced institutional rankings (Jinhyun Cho, 2012).

In reality, however, it often goes unnoticed that English MoI leads to numerous issues that affect students who are predominantly monolinguals in Korean. As Cho (2012) has observed in her analysis of student-run newspapers published by Korean universities, teaching in English only has negatively impacted Korean university students. As an example, English MoI has been unilaterally imposed by institutions leaving few opportunities for students to participate in relevant decision-making processes. Inadequate academic support for students struggling with learning in English only has led to increased financial burdens for students, as many have had to resort to private language institutions to enhance English language proficiency. Furthermore, Cho (2012) argues that English MoI is related to the issue of power and inequality that affects the “language rights” (Phillipson, 1998; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998) of learners. Classes conducted in English are usually led by only a few students proficient in English, whereas the majority of students with weaker English are forced to stay silent. Students with lesser English proficiency – or confidence in their proficiency – are disadvantaged due to a lack of interaction with teachers, and subsequent impacts on their studies and grades, effectively stratifying students into the “English haves and have-nots.”

Given the contrast between dreams and realities of English MoI as an indispensable tool for institutional internationalization, it is necessary to examine how and why such a gap exists, particularly in relation to the mediatized representation of English as an imperative for internationalization. In this regard, I will attempt to exemplify how English has been naturalized as a competitiveness mandate that neutralizes its cost with one specific story of internationalization and the expansion of English MoI, namely that of KAIST, where the suicides occurred. Specifically, I seek to answer the following three questions: (a) How has the internationalization of local higher education been justified through mainstream media discourses? (b) How has English MoI been rationalized as a key to global academic excellence through media globalization discourses? (c) What incentives do local mainstream media have to promote English as a global language?

### 5.3. Internationalization and English as a mandate for higher education

I will first provide background information with regard to how internationalization has become a necessity for local institutions. As Byun and Kim (2011) have pointed out, four primary factors have sparked internationalization efforts in the nation's higher education sector. Firstly, when the World Trade Organization (WTO) was established in 1995, higher education services were included in its list of trade negotiations. In response, the Korean government announced in 1996 the "Initial Plan for Opening the Higher Education Market to Foreign Countries" which prioritized importing higher education services in collaboration with overseas partners in order to meet the challenges of internationalization. Secondly, domestic efforts to reform the local education market in line with neoliberal ideologies provided significant driving forces for institutional internationalization. President Kim Young-Sam's so-called "May 31 Education Reform Plan of 1995" emphasized deregulation, competition, and marketization in higher education. As a result of a series of reform measures implemented under the plan, a market mechanism related to global competition was rapidly introduced into the nation's higher education policy. Thirdly, the 1997/8 Asian Financial Crisis further intensified internationalization campaigns in higher education. In order to save the country from financial meltdown, the government focused on minimizing the education deficit, which meant discouraging local students from going abroad for study while encouraging foreign students to come and study in Korea. In order to better accommodate foreign students, foreign universities (e.g. the State University of New York, The University of Utah, Ghent University, etc.) were allowed to set up branch campuses in Korea in direct competition with local universities.

The final driving force behind the internationalization of higher education is the country's falling birth rate, which has resulted in a decrease in the student population. Combined with the relative ease of founding new universities in Korea (D. R. Hong, 2009; M. Kang, 2009), the demographic changes threatened the survival of many universities, particularly those located in provincial areas which rely on tuition fees as their primary source of income. As an example, six provincial universities (among them Gundong University, Myungshin University, and Sunghwa University) closed down after going bankrupt between 2000 and 2012 (Yonhap News, 2012).

The issue of internationalization was further pushed to the forefront of the national higher education policy agenda in a new culture instituted following Korea's neoliberal turn, in which competition and competitiveness emerged as core ethos in Korean society (See Section 2.2.1 and 2.3.3). The "*Brain Korea 21*" (BK21) project is a good example to illustrate how competitiveness has become an imperative for local universities. First adopted in 1999, BK21 is state-managed academic reform aimed at transforming Korea into a knowledge economy through the creation of world-class research universities, the expansion of graduate education, and the promotion of competition to improve quality (M. Moon & Kim, 2001). With an emphasis on achieving greater worldwide visibility for Korean research, particularly through publication in international academic journals, BK21 has encouraged local institutions to pursue global academic excellence as a key agenda. As state funding was tied to institutional performance and only top-performing institutions selected on the basis of the quantitative measurement of academic excellence (e.g. the number of publications in international journals) became eligible for state funding, universities had no other choice but to embrace competition as the exclusive means to ensure survival. It is notable that the proportion of English MoI among all courses offered by a university was linked to governmental evaluations of institutional eligibility for BK21 (Byun & Kim, 2011). Furthermore, the Korean government released in 2004 the "Study Korea Project" to attract more overseas students. As only universities offering English MoI were eligible for financial support provided by the scheme, universities became greatly interested in providing English MoI as part of their internationalization efforts (Byun & Kim, 2011).

While such schemes undoubtedly encouraged local institutions to adopt English MoI as a core internationalization strategy, the degree to which it has been pursued in Korea's

higher education – to the point where some students allegedly took their own lives due to stresses related to English MoI – requires a more fundamental understanding of how certain beliefs in English have been constructed and operated within the specific field of higher education. The unprecedented 100%-English-MoI policy at KAIST, therefore, represents an ideal site to examine how English MoI has been exclusively tied to internationalization and global academic excellence in Korean higher education in a way that conceals its cost. Before moving on to present the findings from media discourse analyses about the 100%-English-MoI policy at KAIST, it is important to understand the underlying dynamics that led to the 100%-English-MoI policy at KAIST.

#### 5.4. KAIST: Competing for global academic excellence

KAIST was established in 1971 during the military dictatorship of Park Chung-Hee. It was the founding mission of KAIST to recruit the nation's brightest, irrespective of their socio-economic background, and to provide them with a free education so that they would serve the development of the nation as scientists and engineers (Choe, 2008). KAIST thus has always had a special place in Korean society and was intended as a cornerstone in the transformation of Korea from an agrarian society into a modern industrialized nation. When it came to academic restructuring for global academic excellence, there was thus no question that KAIST would be one of the institutions singled out for transformation into a "world-class" university (Piller & Cho, 2013). As part of those efforts, the Ministry of Science and Education in 2004 hired Robert Laughlin as president. Laughlin, a Nobel-laureate physicist from Stanford University, became the first foreigner ever to head a Korean university. While Laughlin clearly brought a "big name" to KAIST, he had little administrative experience to recommend him. Neither had he any known connection to or interest in Korea, and the only motivation he ever publicly shared for accepting the position seemed that the salary was "too good to refuse" (Wohn, 2006, p. 33). Predictably, Laughlin made many enemies, proved immensely unpopular, and his contract was not renewed after only three years in the position.

Laughlin's successor was Suh Nam-Pyo, professor emeritus at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), with a distinguished career in mechanical engineering. Born in Korea in 1936, Suh migrated to the U.S. in 1954 following his parents. After completing a PhD at Carnegie Mellon University in 1964, he began his academic career at MIT in 1970 (Suh Nam-Pyo, n.d.). He served as the Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at

MIT between 1991 and 2001 and as Assistant Director for Engineering of the National Science Foundation (NSF) between 1984 and 1988 as President Reagan's appointee (Suh Nam-Pyo, n.d.). At KAIST, with the stated aim of "catching up with MIT within the next ten years" (D.-Y. Oh, 2007), Suh embarked on ambitious reform plans for global academic excellence. Four aspects of the restructuring of KAIST in particular received widespread media attention. Firstly, the founding mission of training the nation's brightest irrespective of their socioeconomic background was abandoned and substituted with a penalty system where fees are tied to grades. As an example, if the grade point fell below 3.0, the student was forced to pay 63 thousand Korean won for each 0.01 point deficit. Secondly, the admission system was changed from the traditional standardized entrance exam as the single selection criterion to include other measures of student potential. Most commonly, candidates were invited to personal interviews, and asked to give presentations and to engage in discussions with the purported aim to identify "future Einsteins and future Bill Gateses" (Normile, 2007).

Thirdly, professors' "iron rice bowl" was broken through stricter tenure reviews, which included the need for endorsements from international experts. Whereas formerly tenure had been almost automatic after a certain length of service, under the new rules 11 out of 33 professors up for tenure in 2007, when the new rules were first applied, failed to gain tenure (Normile, 2007). Finally, a 100%-English-MoI policy was instituted on the ground that KAIST needed to accept non-Korean students in order for the university to "internationalize". The single-mindedness with which the 100%-English-MoI policy has been implemented is best exemplified by the fact that under the policy even foreign languages such as Chinese or Japanese now have to be taught through the medium of English just to conform to KAIST's language policy. When the unreasonableness of teaching one foreign language through the medium of another was pointed out by a group of students to KAIST administration, Suh issued a statement asserting that "top global universities such as MIT are teaching foreign languages in English only, and so should we" (Yongjadeul, 2008).

While the extent to which English MoI has been implemented at KAIST appears to be far-fetched and unilateral, the 100%-English-MoI policy has received widespread praise from the local media. In particular, powerful conservative newspapers such as *Chosun Ilbo* (hereafter *Chosun*) and *Joongang Ilbo* (hereafter *Joongang*) highlighted the benefits of

English MoI for individuals, institutions, and the nation in the context of globalization. Such media discourses have significantly contributed to the naturalization of English MoI as *the* key to global academic excellence. In the next section, I explore in detail the processes by which English has been established as an imperative for institutional internationalization.

### 5.5. The naturalization of English for internationalization through media discourses

As Park (2009) notes, it is easy for the public to regard mediatized constructs as true and real because of broad circulation through mainstream media and because of their embeddedness within authoritative institutional discourses. With a circulation of 1.84 million and 1.31 million as of 2010 respectively (Chosun, 2010), both *Chosun* and *Joongang* are the top two players in the local media industry and form the basis of *bosueonlon*, the conservative media. Both newspapers have been part of Korea's political and economic elite for most of its recent history and collectively espouse anti-socialist, pro-U.S., pro-*chaboel*, and, more recently, neoliberal free market ideologies (Sa, 2009; J. S.-Y. Park, 2010). Though conservatism in Korea is a complicated notion, the conservative press is "conservative" in the sense that it strongly defends the status quo of Korean society and exerts enormous influence on the general populace, functioning as a dominant mobilizer of public opinion (J. S.-Y. Park, 2010). In this regard, it may be expected that discourses related to English MoI in the conservative media reveal how particular interpretations of English MoI that presumably benefit only the vested interest are produced.

A broad overview of the media documents reveals that the data under analysis have been mostly positive about KAIST's academic reforms characterized by English MoI. Headlines collected on the websites of both newspapers include the following: "카이스트 확 바꾸는 서남표 총장 (President Suh dramatically transforms KAIST)"; "서남표의 힘, 카이스트 다시 1 위 (With Suh's power, KAIST is back to the top)"; "서남표 카이스트 개혁은 계속 되야 한다 (Suh's KAIST reforms should continue)"; "서남표 총장 준비된 리더십 결실 (President Suh's visionary leadership bears fruit)." Such a positive construction of KAIST through media discourses is generally structured in three parts. Firstly, local higher education providers other than KAIST are problematized compared to KAIST in the context of globalization. Secondly, institutional internationalization is justified by nationalist media discourses with KAIST as a key site (e.g. KAIST should produce future leaders to help Korea to become an advanced country). Finally, the authors tie English MoI to

internationalization as measured and justified specifically by international university ranking. I shall first elucidate how local universities have been negatively stereotyped through globalization discourses in the conservative newspapers.

#### 5.5.1. Negative framing of local institutions in globalization discourses

The data analysis reveals that Korean universities are negatively stereotyped in the context of globalization, where “globalization” is defined as meeting American academic standards. While KAIST is established as a model for institutional internationalization in media discourses, it is important to note that the internationalization strategies employed by KAIST seem to be inspired by institutional practices implemented by American universities that are highly regarded in Korea (e.g. MIT and Harvard). For instance, as frequently and publicly acknowledged by President Suh during media interviews, the proposed increase of student recruitment by 700 to 1,000 at KAIST is to match the larger scale of student recruitment at top American universities represented by MIT and Harvard (Chosun, 14 October 2007). Furthermore, the academic level of KAIST students is evaluated by American standards as seen in the claim by Suh that “the current level of KAIST students can match that of students attending the top 20 American institutions” (Chosun, 18 September 2006). The U.S.-inspired assessment criteria apply to KAIST professors as well. As part of internationalization efforts, Suh emphasizes a need for recruiting foreign academics yet again on the ground that “half of the professors at top American universities such as MIT and Harvard have foreign backgrounds” (Chosun, 30 September 2007). Relatedly, the new tenure reviews are rated by Suh as “as strict as those of top American schools such as Harvard and Stanford” (Joongang, 29 September 2007).

Considering what might appear to be a rather mindless U.S. imitation tied to global level interest in the context of internationalization, a parallel can be drawn between government-led globalization and institutional internationalization in Korea. As noted in Section 4.6, the Korean version of globalization borders on “Americanization” in which American standards are upheld as global standards and English as the language of the U.S. has been established as an indispensable tool to achieve globalization. Similarly, internationalization efforts at KAIST seem to have been driven by institutional perceptions that view American institutional practices as the finest and thus “global standards”. Positive languages for KAIST’s internationalization efforts can be frequently found in the data, where KAIST’s internationalization efforts are depicted as “혁명 (revolution)” (Chosun, 14 October 2007),

“아이콘 (icon)” (Chosun, 25 June 2010b) and “신성장 동력 (a new driver for national growth)” (Chosun, 23 July 2010). The anticipated outcomes of the KAIST reforms are described in rosy terms such as “바람직한 (desirable)” (Chosun, 03 October 2007) and “긍정적인 영향을 미칠 게 틀림없다 (definitely benefitting)” (Joongang, 06 March 2009). One article even claims that “The publicly-stated goal of KAIST emerging as the world’s best science and technology institution and the best-ever research-oriented university is being materialized” (Chosun, 23 July 2010).

Such a positive framing of KAIST as a trailblazer of the internationalization of local higher education is further reinforced through media discourses that collectively problematize other Korean universities. In the context of globalization, local higher education and institutions are described as “old-fashioned (낡은 틀)” (Joongang, 06 March 2009) and “parochial (우물 안 개구리)” (Chosun, 30 November 2007), and Korean professors are seen to “underperform” (연구가 부족) (Chosun, 30 September 2007). For example, a *Chosun* article published on 14 October 2007 portrays local higher education as a problem, while suggesting that local institutions are incapable of nurturing global talents, describing this as an act of “crime” (범죄). It is worth noting that the criticism levelled against local institutions concerns particularly the monolingual academic environment in higher education. An article published on 4 October 2010 by *Joongang* covered a foreign professor who was leaving Korea, reportedly due to a language barrier. Lack of English was identified as the root cause that led the professor to go:

떠나게 된 이유가 뭐냐는 질문에 그는 잘라 말했다. “영어 때문입니다.” 행정·연구·교육 모든 업무에서 언어가 걸림돌이 됐다고 했다. 학과 행정 직원은 영어에 서툴렀다. 모든 행정 업무를 조교를 통해 처리하느라 이중, 삼중의 시간이 걸렸다. “심지어 도서관에서도 영어가 통하지 않았다”며 데사이 교수는 고개를 흔들었다. 직원들이 영어가 통하지 않아 출입증이 고장 났을 때나 자료를 찾는 방법을 묻고 싶을 때 도움을 청하지 못했다는 것이다. 학사 관리도 마찬가지였다. 서울대 학사 관리 전산 시스템은 한글로 구축돼 있었다. 수업 계획서를 올리는 일, 학생들 성적을 입력하는 일을 모두 조교에게 부탁해야 했다. “학생 성적은 정말 민감한 문제잖아요.” 그는 “심지어 내 급여 내역도 조교에게 읽어달라고 해야 했다”고 말했다. 학과 교수회의에서도 소외됐다. 회의 안건만 영어로 전달됐고, 회의는 한국어로 진행됐다. “조교가 내 옆에 앉아 오가는 얘기를 영어로 통역했지만 논의에 참여할 수가 없었다”고 했다.

When asked why he decided to leave Korea, the professor answered flatly: “Because of English.” He said that English was an obstacle in every aspect of his work that covers administration, research, and teaching. Administrative staff members were not proficient in English. It took double or triple the amount of time, because he needed help from his teaching assistant in doing every single administrative task. Professor Desai shook his head as he said that “I could not use English even in the library.” Because administrative staff members were not fluent in English, he could not get a help when his library card did not work and when he did not know how to find research materials. The same was true of learning management. The electronic learning management system at Seoul National University was in Korean only. His teaching assistant had to help him to do things such as uploading unit guides and entering grades. He added that “you know how sensitive an issue student grades are.” The professor said that “I even had to ask my teaching assistant to read my payment details.” He was isolated at a faculty meeting as well. Only meeting agendas were delivered in English and the rest of the meetings were conducted in Korean. Professor Desai said that “my teaching assistant sat next to me to simultaneously interpret for me, but I could nevertheless not join the discussions”. (Joongang, 04 October 2010)

As seen in the example, the language environment at Seoul National University – the most prestigious university in Korea – is described as problematic in every aspect, simply because the school reportedly failed to meet the linguistic expectation of one foreign professor. The negative portrayal of the university due solely to the alleged uneasiness of using English naturally raises the question of why the entire school was expected to change their language for a *single* professor, when in fact the real problem was not “English” but his limited (or possibly non-existent) Korean language skills. In Europe, for example, the expectation is the other way around. When hiring foreign professors, local universities have traditionally expected them to adapt to local norms and professors are required to enhance their local language skills so as to teach in the language within two to three years of recruitment (N. Park, 2006; Piller, 2013). This reversal of normal expectations – that newcomers should adapt to local societal norms – is a result of the local ideology of English as a superior language versus Korean as inferior in relation to globalization. As demonstrated in Section 4.6, English became strongly tied to globalization through the state-led globalization campaigns. As an essential tool for globalization which presumably

benefits individuals, institutions, and the entire nation, English has attracted increasing prestige while the national language has been viewed as unfit in the era of globalization. As the superior-inferior linguistic binary is continuously reproduced and reinforced in media discourses, such discursive strategies risk the generalization that English is the only way to accomplish internationalization while negatively framing the local education environment as a whole. The same kind of discourse can be found in English MoI as well. Local institutions are once again framed as incompetent and outmoded due predominantly to insufficient numbers and the allegedly low quality of English-medium lectures.

한마디로 자기들 나라보다 한국이 훨씬 선진국이며 개방적이면서도 의외로 '영어 불통'인 현실에 답답하다는 얘기들이다. 실제로 우리보다 경제수준이 낮으며 정치·사회적 통제가 심하다고 우리 국민이 피상적으로 느끼고 있는 유라시아 국가 장학생들뿐만 아니라 재외동포재단 등의 초청으로 한국어를 배우러 온 일반 단기 연수생들도 한결같이 뛰어난 영어를 구사하고 있는 사실에 놀라지 않을 수 없다 [...] 이들이 났고 싶고 배우고 싶어 열망했던 한국에서, 특히 대학에서, 영어 불통이라는 불만이 나오는 것은 정말 아이러니이다. 이는 뭔가 교육정책이나 교육방식이 크게 잘못돼 있다는 사실을 방증하고 있으며 재조명과 개혁이 필요하다.

In a word, international students are frustrated at the reality of Korea in which “English never works”, despite the fact that Korea is much more advanced and open than their countries. It is surprising that students from Central Asia, which Koreans generally consider as economically weaker and socio-politically restricted, speak English very well. Those who come to Korea with temporary visas to learn Korean as organized by organizations such as associations of ethnic Koreans overseas also have a good command of English [...] It is ironic that English does not work in Korea – not to mention at universities – a country that they yearned to learn about and emulate. It shows that something is seriously wrong with education policies and methods and it is necessary to re-examine them for reform. (Chosun, 27 September 2009)

Framing strategies that problematize local higher education in relation to English and internationalization have the consequence of misleading the public to believe that local

higher education in general is complacent and outdated, and internationalization and English are imperatives for local universities to enhance competitiveness. The contrast between KAIST and local institutions is further highlighted through another discursive strategy, in which the internationalization moves at KAIST are tied to national benefits through nationalist discourses, as discussed next.

#### 5.5.2. Justification of internationalization through nationalist discourses

It bears noting that negative discourses used for local institutions are once again employed in framing KAIST students in a particular way. While Suh is praised as some sort of a hero with a patriotic mission, KAIST students, who had hardly any power over the matter of internationalization and had no other choice but to accept resultant swift changes, are portrayed as “노력을 안 하는 (not making the effort)” (Chosun, 18 September 2006). And such argumentative strategies are justified and rationalized through nationalist discourses, in which KAIST is constructed as a cornerstone for the future development of the nation. As an example, an article published by *Joongang* on 29 September 2009 presents Suh as an ideal leader who is capable of managing crises, persuading stakeholders, and taking initiatives. Suh is described as a hero who “has returned to Korea to serve the homeland” (Chosun, 14 October 2007) with his innovative vision and excellent leadership qualities. On the other hand, KAIST students are stereotyped as “the privileged ungrateful” (Chosun, 18 September 2006) for allegedly not appreciating a free education funded by the hard work of Korean people. For example:

공짜로 공부하는 카이스트 학생들은 국민들이 얼마만큼의 희생을 감수하는지 정확히 알아야 한다.

KAIST students who receive a free education should understand exactly how much sacrifice the people of the nation make for them. (Chosun, 18 September 2006)

머리 좋은 사람은 노력을 안 하는 경향이 있다. 거기다 요즘 학생들은 너무 쉽게 공부하고 있다.

Bright students tend not to work hard. Furthermore, students these days are too lax about study. (Chosun, 18 September 2006)

국가가 그간 KAIST 학생들이 학비를 안 내도 되도록 재정 지원을 했던 데엔 국가 경제의 기둥이 돼 달라는 뜻이 있다. 그런 KAIST 학생들이 공부를 제대로 하지 않는다면 세금을 내는 국민의 기대를 저버리는 것이다.

KAIST students have been so far fully funded for study, because they have been regarded as the future leaders of the national economy. If such KAIST students do not work hard, it is an act of betraying the anticipation of the public who have financed their study. (Chosun, 30 November 2007)

Such discursive strategies that frame KAIST students in a negative way are rationalized through the framing of KAIST as a lynchpin for national development. Since the foundation of KAIST with the nationalist mission (See Section 5.4), scientists and engineers have been largely treated as an instrument for economic growth with their personal dreams having to be coincided with the national vision, and no new value has emerged to replace the founding mission (Ha, 2015). In line with the institution's nationalist founding mission, KAIST is once again highlighted as a major driver of national development, which the newspapers argue will be determined by the quality of students that it produces:

2009년 8월, 서전농원 김병호 회장이 평소 이쭈시개까지 아껴 쓰며 모은 300억 원어치의 부동산을 기부했다. 2010년 5월, 강원랜드에서 7억6680만원의 잭팟 행운을 안았던 안승필씨가 당첨금 전액을 기부했다. 6월, 은행감독원 부원장을 지낸 조천식씨 부부가 100억 원 상당의 부동산을 기부키로 했다. 7월, 신원을 밝히지 않은 80대 할머니가 현금 100억원의 기부 의사를 밝혔다. 불과 1년 사이에 일어난 일들이었다. 이들이 거액을 쾌척하기로 결심한 곳은 모두 한 학교, 바로 카이스트(KAIST·한국과학기술원)였다. 그들은 이렇게 말했다. "세계 최고의 과학기술을 선도할 인재를 양성해 주기 바란다. 모든 국민이 잘사는 나라를 만들기 위해선 우수한 과학기술 인재를 길러야 하기 때문이다." 평생의 꿈을 담은 그 돈을 아낌없이 기부한 카이스트에서 그들이 본 것은 '국가의 미래'였다.

In August 2009, President Kim Byung-Ho of Seojeon Flower Garden donated a property worth 30 billion won, which he had saved throughout his entire life by not even wasting toothpicks. In May 2010, Ahn Seung-Pil, who had won a jackpot worth 766.8 million won at Gangwon Land Casino, donated the whole amount. In June 2010, Cho Cheon-Sik, who had served as the deputy director of the Bank Supervisory Service, donated a property worth ten billion won. In July 2010, a lady in her 80s donated ten billion won in cash on the condition of anonymity. All of these happened within just one year. And the huge sum of money went to a single school: KAIST. Each of the donors unanimously said that “I hope that the school will produce talents who can develop the world’s best science and technology. It is important to nurture talents in the field of science and technology if we want to ensure that all people in Korea will be affluent.” They saw “the future of the nation” in KAIST, for which they willingly donated their lifetime savings. (Chosun, 23 July 2010)

As seen in the example, KAIST is inextricably linked to national interests. While large-scale donations to elite schools for the stated purpose of the betterment of humanity are indeed a global trend (Berman, 2015), the degree to which KAIST is tied to the future growth of the nation seems far-fetched as seen in the argument that the quality of life of *all* Koreans is dependent on the school. It is as though the sole *raison d'être* of KAIST students is to serve the patriotic mission of advancing the nation, nothing else. The same line of logic is further extended by explicitly tying KAIST students to the fate of the nation:

지금 카이스트에는 그들의 뒤를 잇고 선배들이 이룩한 업적을 뛰어넘어 '과학 한국'의 이름을 세계에 화인(火印)처럼 남기려는 1만명의 두뇌가 있다. 그들은 깊은 밤에도 연구실과 기숙사마다 대낮처럼 불을 켜 놓은 채 젊은 날의 열정을 학문과 실험에 쏟고 있다. 그 인재들은 시정(市井)에 넘치는 수사(修辭)가 아닌 과학과 행동으로 미래를 바꿔놓을 것이다. 대한민국의 명운(命運)이 바로 그들에게 달렸다고 해도 과언이 아니다.

At KAIST, there are currently 10,000 bright students, who are keen to etch the image of “Korea as a science powerhouse” into global consciousness by striving to

achieve more than their predecessors. Even late at night, labs and dorms are bright as daytime with all lights on, as students devote their young passion to study and experiments. These young talents will change the future course of the nation, not with political rhetoric but with science and actions. It is not too much to say that the fate of the Republic of Korea depends on them. (Chosun, 23 July 2010)

While the example above seems to contradict the other samples in which KAIST students are described as “smart but lazy”, the time gap between the two samples should be noted. Whereas the articles that negatively frame KAIST students were published between 2006 and 2007 at the beginning of the KAIST reforms, the aforementioned articles were written in 2010 at the peak of the reform drives. Considering the time difference and the contrast in the assessment of students between the two samples, it can be argued that the transformed representations of KAIST students from lax and non-autonomous learners to autonomous, hard-working, and future-oriented leaders justify and rationalize internationalization as an imperative for local institutions to enhance competitiveness. The discussions above clearly illustrate that the framing strategies of President Suh as a patriot, KAIST as a key to national development, and KAIST students as future leaders are indeed motivated by nationalist concerns. It is, however, fallacious to try to present the interests of 50 million Korean nationals as co-terminous with the interests of 10,000 KAIST students. And it is through these stereotypical frames that both newspapers offer a particular interpretation of events that seem to deviate from the established discourses. As an example, an article published on 25 October 2010 by *Chosun* covers controversies surrounding Suh’s contract renewal. The author reports the positions of both supporters and opponents. While those who support extending Suh’s appointment do so on the basis of his achievements with the reforms, opponents point out that his dictatorial leadership and ill-informed investment decisions have affected budgets. Although the article appears to be neutral by equally representing both sides of the case, it is important to note the sympathetic tone of the article in which Suh is described as an outsider who has been victimized by an insular Korean society.

서 총장의 대학개혁 업적은 화려하다. 그럼에도 ‘연임 불투명’ 이야기가 나오는 것에 대해 우리 사회가 ‘이방인’의 개혁 리더십을 받아들이 준비가 안돼 있다는 지적도 나온다. 서 총장은 서울사대부고 2학년 때 미국으로 이민 가 매사츄세츠 공대(MIT) 교수로 재직하다 2006년 7월 카이스트 총장에 영입됐다. 국내에는 학맥과 인맥이

거의 없으며, 그에 따라 힘이 부쳤을 것이라는 분석이다. 그의 전임자인 로버트 러플린(노벨물리학상 수상) 카이스트 총장도 개혁을 지휘하다 교수들의 집단 퇴진 압력을 받고 임기 2년을 남기고 중도 사퇴했었다. 서울의 한 사립대 보직교수는 “러플린 전 총장과 비할 때 서 총장의 개혁 비전과 학교발전 전략은 구체적이고 탄탄하다”며 “그럼에도 그가 중도하차한다면 우리 사회가 이방인 리더를 ‘왕따’를 시키는 것은 아닌지 자성해야 한다”고 말했다.

Suh’s achievement from the academic reforms is splendid. However, the possibility of his contract renewal appears low, and some point out that Korean society is not yet ready to embrace the innovative leadership of “an outsider”. Suh immigrated to the United States during his second year at Seoul National University High School. Before Suh was appointed as KAIST president in July 2006, he had served as a professor at MIT. Suh hardly has any academic or personal ties at home, and it is likely that he has experienced trouble finding support. Robert Laughlin, his predecessor who received the Nobel physics prize, attempted to reform KAIST but was forced to step down with two years left under mounting pressures from KAIST professors. A professor at a private university in Seoul is quoted as saying that “Compared to Laughlin, Suh’s reform visions and institutional development strategies are more concrete and substantial.” He went on to say that “In case he steps down, our society should self-examine whether we are “bullying” this outside leader. (Chosun, 25 October 2010)

The discursive strategy of presenting Suh as a victim of alleged societal parochialism reinforces the image of Suh as an innovative and visionary leader, whose patriotic motivations are yet discouraged by a close-minded Korean society. The discussions above illustrate that the conservative newspapers offer a particular interpretation on the issue of internationalization by employing certain framing strategies. By resorting to the “nationalist appropriation of globalization” (G.-W. Shin & Choi, 2009: 257), media discourses have conferred legitimacy on the internationalization moves led by KAIST. At the same time, the conservative media have contributed to constructing certain images about President Suh and KAIST students – within the same nationalist discourses. Having examined the naturalization of institutional internationalization through nationalist media

discourses, I will now move on to explore how English MoI has been exclusively tied to internationalization.

### 5.5.3. English and university rankings as an imperative for institutional internationalization

Two discursive methods to promote English MoI as an imperative for the internationalization of Korean universities can be found in the data: firstly, by emphasizing competitiveness as a mandate for local higher education in the context of fierce global competition; secondly, and more importantly, by constructing university rankings as a legitimate yardstick to measure institutional competitiveness and English MoI as a weapon to achieve internationalization. To begin with, the data under analysis contain various rationales in support of English MoI. On the surface, the rationales provided seem to be concerned with the well-established idea of English as a global language. As an example, English is viewed as *the* most important language in a knowledge-based society on the ground that it is hard to obtain global information without it (Joongang, 15 February 2007).

Beneath the surface, however, it bears noting that a similar idea in government-led globalization campaigns is also at work in institutional internationalization. As discussed in Section 4.6.2, a Korean version of globalization was inspired by a Social Darwinian view of the world in which winners control losers, and Korea was contextualized as being at risk of becoming a loser due to its insular attitudes. In much the same vein, the internationalization of higher education is justified in the context of “academic Darwinism” (M.-y. Lee, 2011), and English is presented as a key tool that can help local higher education in its struggle to maintain competitiveness. These strategies frame global higher education as a field of fierce competition in which Korea is lagging behind due to the lack of English language skills, which in turn affects national competitiveness. In this discursive frame, Korea is described as a “우물안의 개구리 (a frog in a well)” (Chosun, 10 October 2007), which means a country lacking a broader vision required in an era of globalization. Furthermore, domestic professors are blamed for their alleged complacency, which the newspapers argue harms national interests.

해외에 나가 무섭고 치열한 경쟁이 진행되는 세계를 보면 국내 대학교수들이 얼마나 안이한지 알게 된다. 거칠게 표현하자면 나라에 해를 입히고 있다. 모든 대학강의를 영어로 해야한다고 강조할 정도다.

[One professor stressed that] “If you see how harsh and fierce competition in the global arena is, you will understand how complacent Korean professors are. To put it bluntly, they are harming national interests. All university lectures should be conducted in English only.” (Joongang, 15 February 2007)

It should be noted that the extent to which local institutions are internationalized, or ready to meet challenges in the highly competitive global arena to be more specific, is measured and judged almost exclusively by global university rankings. Nine out of the twenty samples specifically present university rankings as a legitimate yardstick to measure the degree to which an institution is internationalized, and English MoI is emphasized in relevant discourses as crucial for institutional internationalization. The fact that almost half of the articles under investigation refer to university rankings in constructing arguments for internationalization and English MoI suggests that it is necessary to explore the interrelationships between English MoI and university rankings in media discourses more in depth. Above all, it is notable that university rankings are used to justify and at times defend the KAIST reforms. The enhanced global rankings of KAIST since the reforms are presented as concrete evidences of the benefits of internationalization.

그러나 국민은 서 총장만큼 대학개혁 성과를 내놔던 총장을 떠올리기 힘들다. 우리 대학가에 선보이기 시작한 교수 정년심사의 개혁 움직임도 '서남표 효과'의 산물이다. 영국 더타임스 세계대학평가에서 2006년 198위였던 KAIST가 2009년엔 69위로 뛰어올랐다.

It is, however, hard to think of any president who has been as productive in university reforms as President Suh. A recent move to reforming tenure reviews in local higher education is the product of “Suh Nam-Pyo effects”. KAIST jumped from 198<sup>th</sup> in 2006 to 69<sup>th</sup> in 2009 in The World University Rankings’ published by The Times Higher Education Supplement (THES). (Chosun, 25 June 2010a)

카이스트의 국제화 성과는 국제 대학평가에서도 드러난다. 조선일보와 영국의 대학평가 기관 QS가 지난 5월 발표한 '2010년 아시아대학평가' 국제화 부문에서

카이스트는 아시아 13위를 기록했다. 전체 교원 중 외국인 교원 비율이 14.2%에 달하고, 외국인 학생 비율도 10%에 가깝다. 전체 학생 1만명 중 외국인 학생은 70개국 600여명이다.

KAIST's achievement in terms of internationalization can be evidenced by global university rankings. According to the "2010 Asian University Rankings" conducted by *Chosun Ilbo* in collaboration with QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) and released in May, KAIST ranked 13<sup>th</sup> among Asian institutions. The percentage of foreign faculty members stands at 14.2 percent and international students account for close to ten percent. Out of 10,000-strong student population, international students who come from 70 different countries number 600. (Chosun, 22 July 2010)

In yet another example, university rankings are used to effectively nullify opposition to the KAIST reforms. An article published on 14 December 2007 by *Chosun* focuses on a protest waged by KAIST students against the reform measures, particularly against the penalty-based tuition system and the 100%-English-MoI policy. While the sample article reports opinions from both supporters and opponents among KAIST students on the issue of English MoI, it is worth noting the way in which university rankings provide the KAIST leadership with legitimacy for reforms on the basis of global rankings.

카이스트는 올해 영국 더 타임스의 세계대학 평가에서 종합순위로는 132 위(작년 198 위), 공과대 순위에서는 48 위(작년 37 위)를 차지했다. '2011 년 세계 10 대 대학 진입'이 목표인 카이스트가 넘어야 할 벽이 만만치 않음을 보여준다.

This year [2007], KAIST ranked 132<sup>nd</sup> (198<sup>th</sup> last year) in 'The World University Rankings' published by The Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) and 48<sup>th</sup> (37<sup>th</sup> last year) among universities specializing in engineering and technology worldwide. It [students' resistance] shows that there are huge obstacles in the path of the university achieving its stated goal of "joining the world's top ten universities by 2011". (Chosun, 14 December 2007)

Here, the article emphasizes a need for enhanced university rankings, citing the gap between KAIST's current global rankings and its stated goal. It presents student opposition

to the university reforms as “obstacles” that must be cleared for KAIST to accomplish global academic excellence, while presenting the enhanced KAIST’s university rankings as a powerful justification for continued internationalization efforts. The same line of logic extends to university rankings in other contexts, namely Asian and national university rankings. As an example, an article published on 5 December 2009 by *Chosun* carries the headline “카이스트에 한수 배운 홍콩과기대(大), 19 년만에 ‘스승’ 추월” (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology which learned from KAIST exceeding its “mentor” in 19 years). *Chosun*, which conducts Asian university rankings in collaboration with QS in addition to its independently-run national university rankings, emphasizes English as one of the major competitiveness enhancers for the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, which ranked first in its Asian university rankings survey. Similarly, an article which published the 2007 national university rankings conducted by *Joongang* highlights the positive impacts of internationalization and English MoI on institutional rankings as well:

한국외대는 적극적으로 외국인 교수를 영입하고 영어강의 비율을 높여 국제화에서 2 위를 차지했다. 한동대도 전체 전공 강의의 30%를 영어로만 진행하며, 지난 10 년간 60 여 개국의 외국인 학생을 유치해 ‘캠퍼스 국제화’에 성공했다는 평가를 받아왔다.

The Hankuk University of Foreign Studies ranks second in internationalization as a result of actively recruiting foreign professors and increasing the portion of English MoI. Handong University conducts 30 percent of its core subjects in English only. It has recruited foreign students from 60 different countries over the past ten years and has been seen successful in “campus internationalization”. (Joongang, 27 September 2007)

The media emphasis on the significance of English MoI for internationalization as measured specifically by university rankings raises an important question: why do the conservative media almost exclusively focus on English and internationalization despite the fact that measuring excellence in university ranking systems involves a range of assessment criteria (Taylor & Braddock, 2007)? In other words, are there incentives for local mainstream media in promoting English and internationalization? The data analysis so far highlights the processes by which English has been established as an essential instrument for internationalization but it has not sufficiently demonstrated the perhaps more important question of “why”. In order to answer this question, it is vital to note that

both *Chosun* and *Joongang* are the only two players in the university ranking business in Korea, and this is where I situate my query about why local media are keen to promote English, internationalization, and university rankings through particular discourse management.

## 5.6. English in university rankings<sup>2</sup>

National university rankings in Korea are published annually by *Joongang* (since 1994) and *Chosun* (since 2009). As noted previously, both newspapers are heavily invested in the promotion of English MoI as a necessity for institutional internationalization. Both the *Joongang* and *Chosun* university rankings were introduced with the stated aim to promote international competitiveness among national universities and provide choices to high school students (Joongang Munhwa, 2009). Both rankings use the same four criteria to rank universities as follows but have them weighted differently as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Ranking criteria of *Joongang* and *Chosun* (Sources: (S. Ahn, Lee, Lee, Choi, & Oh, 2009) and (University Ranking Team, 2010))

	<i>Joongang</i>	<i>Chosun</i>
Research and publication	115 points ( $\approx 32.9\%$ )	60%
Learning environment	95 points ( $\approx 27.1\%$ )	20%
Social reputation of graduates and their career progress	70 points ( $\approx 20\%$ )	10%
Internationalization	70 points ( $\approx 20\%$ )	10%

Except for “learning environment”, each of these criteria covertly serves to promote English in slightly different ways as will be explained in the rest of this section.

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<sup>2</sup> This section has been previously published as part of an article entitled “Neoliberalism as a language policy” (Piller & Cho, 2013) published by *Language in Society*.

“Research and publication” is the most highly ranked criterion in each ranking but is measured differently by each newspaper. *Chosun* simply counts the number of articles per academic indexed in SciVerse Scopus over the previous five years. The *Joongang* measurement is a bit more complex and assigns 55 (out of 115) points to “international” publications and citations in journals indexed in the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (AHCI), the Science Citation Index (SCI) and the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI). Fifteen points (on the research criterion) are allotted for “national” publications published in domestic journals, and the remaining 45 points go to grant income.

Although ostensibly a language-neutral criterion, the research measurement in both cases privileges English over Korean as Kang (2009) explains with a case study of “international” publications by Korean academics in the field of Communications, a discipline indexed in SSCI. In 2007, 1,865 journals were indexed in the SSCI, 1,585 (79.62%) of which originated in the U.S. and U.K. SSCI-indexed “international” journals are thus clearly hugely skewed towards those originating in Anglophone countries. Among Asian countries, 7 SSCI-indexed journals (0.38%) originate in Japan, 5 (0.27%) in China, 4 (0.21%) in India, 3 (0.16%) in Korea, and one each (0.05%) in Singapore and Taiwan. Even those SSCI-indexed journals published outside the Anglophone countries are overwhelmingly English-language publications (as are, incidentally, a fair number of domestic journals). So, adopting publication in SSCI-indexed journals as a measurement of research quality obviously translates into adopting publication in English as a quality measure. The same is true for journals indexed in SciVerse Scopus, AHCI and SCI.

The inclusion of “social reputation of graduates and their career progress” as a criterion is justified, in circular logic, with the argument that “career progress and social reputations of graduates represent the quality of education of a particular university” (S. Ahn et al., 2009). *Joongang* measures this criterion through a survey of domestic companies with seven questions, each of which is weighted ten out of 70. The survey asks purely attitudinal questions (e.g. Which university graduates would you like to hire? Which universities do you see developing in the future? Which universities would you like to donate to?). These serve to simply elicit and perpetuate existing stereotypes and reinforce discourses already in circulation. While there is no clear intersection with English in the *Joongang* measurement, there is in the *Chosun* measurement, which does not survey domestic companies but multinationals with the intent to measure the global reputation of local graduates (H. Oh, 2009). To do so *Chosun* sends out questionnaires to more than 700

human resources managers at multinational corporations outside Korea asking them to select up to 30 Korean universities whose graduates excel in their experience. The survey is thus obviously skewed towards responses from environments in which English is the norm and excludes Koreans working in domestic environments no matter how well-trained and productive they may be.

The measurement of “internationalization”, which accounts for around 20% of the *Joongang* total and 10% of the *Chosun* total, is almost identical in both cases. The degree to which a university is judged to be internationalized is rated on the basis of four indices (W. Jung, 2011):

- The proportion of foreigners among a university’s teaching staff
- The number of international students
- The number of exchange students
- The proportion of English-medium lectures

Improving a university’s position in the rankings on research, learning environment and reputation requires long-term strategies. By contrast, the internationalization indices can be manipulated with almost instant effects on rankings. Additionally, the visibility effects of international student populations may actually also influence reputation quite quickly (W. Jung, 2011). Indeed, as a result of these internationalization efforts the number of overseas students in Korea increased from only 6,000 in 2000 to around 80,000 in 2010 (Morgan, 2010). However, the vast majority of the international students recruited by Korean universities come from China and other Asian countries (Morgan, 2010). Even so, the expansion of English MoI is justified by the “need” to recruit international students for the ultimate goal of realizing internationalization. While competition to do well in university rankings has forced Korean universities to adopt English MoI, universities are driven to compete through university rankings because they have been structured into market entities. Having to compete through university rankings on the basis of criteria imposed by the mass media has resulted in further loss of autonomy and the subjugation of the academic field to the journalistic field (Sapiro, 2010). However, newspapers also use university rankings to compete and as a source of profits, meaning that both, mass media and academia, have become subjected to the tyranny and censorship of money.

Before making a conclusion, it is necessary to elucidate one final relationship, namely the one between university rankings and the competition for profit in the mass media in order to illustrate why the ideology of English as a global language is an “unnatural” ideological outcome in the local context. This relationship is best exemplified with reference to the *Chosun* rankings as these were only introduced in 2009. In 2009, *Chosun*, like all newspapers, had been losing ground because of the ongoing economic crisis and the continued expansion of digital media. Partly reinventing itself as an outlet for university rankings gave *Chosun* a new lease on life. When the first *Chosun* rankings were published in May 2009 the number of university advertisements in the paper had been steadily increasing for months with items placed by the top twenty universities accounting for almost half of the total (E. Lee, 2009). Lee (2009) concludes that “the media are taking universities hostage for selling advertisements, while urging universities to be cooperative to be granted better rankings.” Furthermore, after the initial publication of the university rankings, they kept being recycled as in a June so-called “special report,” which displayed a list of the top universities alongside the advertisements of those same universities (Han et al., 2009). Of course, the Korean case is not an exception in this and the high impact of university rankings on mass media revenue has been observed in other contexts as well (Ehrenberg, 2003). Given the high profit potential of university rankings, it is not surprising that since 2010 yet another newspaper, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, which was primarily critical of internationalization and the role of English MoI, has joined university rankings business (Jang, 2010).

## 5.7. Conclusion

I have so far investigated the expansion of English MoI in Korea’s higher education sector as a means to deliver global academic excellence. Media discourse analyses reveal how and why the internationalization of higher education has been justified and rationalized with English as a key instrument. As seen in the case of mass-mediated university rankings, English MoI is a highly cost-effective way for institutions to improve institutional standing because English is used as a quantifiable index of globalization. As for media outlets struggling from financial straits with a traditional stake in English, English MoI serves their capitalist motivations by offering only particular interpretations of English MoI and internationalization. As academic competition interlocks with media competition in university rankings where one market drives the other, English has been naturalized as an imperative for internationalization in Korea.

The findings from this chapter highlight that, unlike conventional beliefs that the spread of English as a global language is some sort of inevitable side-effect of globalization, it is evident that English MoI is imposed by an interlocking set of socio-economic agendas dissimulating their operation. As power is surreptitiously attached to English MoI and strengthened through particular discursive strategies led by forces that benefit from the status of English as a global language, English MoI operates as a covert language policy that advantages the powerful while continuously disadvantaging others. The way in which the ideological construction of English as a global language is sustained by the material motivations of the powerful conservative media demonstrates how seemingly fair competition over a particular type of resources can be manipulated by particular language ideologies that tie a certain language to competitiveness. As the extraordinary images of global competition that benefit individuals/institutes/nation are created and reinforced through particular discursive strategies, the cost of English is simply and continuously concealed. The Korean case is thus a powerful example of how a particular language ideology can be populated as a socioeconomic agenda of the vested interest and how the mismatch between the theory and practice of English as a global language can continue to remain unseen by the public. Having examined how English has been naturalized at a societal level in globalization discourses, I now move on to explore more nuanced meanings of English at a micro-individual level beginning with the workings of neoliberal ideologies in English.

## Chapter 6. The perpetuation of linguistic insecurities in neoliberal personhood<sup>3</sup>

### 6.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the socially constructed nature of linguistic insecurity with regard to English in Korean society. Specifically, it explores the pursuit of linguistic perfectionism as a form of neoliberal personhood among English-Korean translators and interpreters. Depending on their language learning backgrounds, the participants can be categorized into two groups: *haewaepa* (overseas learners of English) and *guknaepa* (domestic learners of English). By exploring the linguistic rivalry between the two groups, I attempt to demonstrate that both sides are, in fact, not in conflict, but driven in common by neoliberal ideologies that idealize individual effort to pursue a particular type of an elite standard speaker of English in the context of English-fever in Korea.

### 6.2. The rise of neoliberal personhood in English

As discussed in depth in Chapter 4, English has always been closely associated with the issue of class in Korean society. The issue of class embedded in English in Korea is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that there are terms that refer to those who have learned English overseas (*haewaepa*) and those who have learned English at home (*guknaepa*) (See Section 2.5.2 and 4.5). The phenomenon of an “English divide” is much more obvious in the field of translation and interpreting in which members are categorized into either *haewaepa* or *guknaepa* on the basis of their language learning backgrounds, and *haewaepa* interpreters dominate the top interpreting market (See Section 2.5.2 and 4.5.3). In recent years following the neoliberal turn of Korea, however, the distinction in language learning backgrounds has become blurred due to the celebration of neoliberal personhood that emphasizes individual effort in English language learning in media discourses (See Section 2.3.3).

The currently celebrated interpreter figure well illustrates the popularization of a particular type of proficient English speakers as informed by neoliberalism, and it is not an exaggeration that interpreter Choi Jung-Hwa, the best-known celebrity interpreter in

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<sup>3</sup> This chapter is a revised version of the journal article ““Sleepless in Seoul: Neoliberalism, English fever, and linguistic insecurity among Korean interpreters” (Cho, 2015) published by *Multilingua* in 2015.

Korea, has set the tone for a desirable interpreter personhood. Choi became the first professionally accredited simultaneous interpreter through completion of an English-French-Korean program at ESIT (*École supérieure d'interpretes et de traduction*) in Paris in 1981 for the first time not only in Korea but also in Asia. While working as a simultaneous interpreter, she again became the first person in Asia to complete a PhD in the area of interpreting in 1986. Her linguistic journey was well documented by a popular television program entitled *Sunggong sidae* or “Success Era” aired on July 19, 1998. Produced by MBC (Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation), the program documented career journeys of the most successful Koreans in distinct areas and became highly popular as it fitted the ethos of neoliberal ideologies prevalent in Korean society (Soonam Jung, 2012). It particularly highlighted her unswerving dedication to becoming the first simultaneous interpreter in Korea, and how she weathered insurmountable linguistic challenges with an indomitable spirit. The following story, which became widely known to the public through the program, illustrates how her language journey has been strongly tied to the neoliberal logic of super-human endeavours:

정말 힘들었죠. 솔직히 성격이 독해서 열심히 해서 학업 성적은 좋았는데 프랑스 가서 보니까 제판에는 잘한다고 갔는데 첫 시험에서 전교 꼴찌를 했어요. 그래서 이걸 꼭 하고 싶으니까, 제가 건강해서 초등학교 때부터 대학교 때까지 개근을 했는데도 그때는 너무 과로를 하다 보니까 졸도한 적도 있고 깨어봤더니 병실에 누워있었고 그 오랜 시간 의식을 잃고 있다가 의식이 돌아왔는데 제가 던진 첫 번째 질문이 현관에 꽃혀있는 이게 뭐냐, 맥박이 뭐냐, 혈압이 뭐냐, 프랑스어로 다 물어봤고요. 그래서 프랑스 간호사가 설명을 해주니까 그걸 또 영어로 뭐라고 하나. 지금 생각해도 그때 아마 미쳤던 것 같고 어떻게 보면 언어를 잘 하고자 미쳤기 때문에 제가 토종 국내파인데 그 어려운 걸 해낼 수 있지 않았나 생각합니다.

It was so tough. I was a go-getter and had excelled at school before. In France, I thought that I was good but I was at the rock bottom in the first test. But I really wanted to do this. I was very healthy and never skipped class until university. But I worked so hard there and once passed out. When I woke up, I found myself lying in bed at hospital. As soon as my consciousness came back, the first question that I asked was “What is this thing stuck in my vein in French?” “What is pulse, what is blood pressure in French?” While the French nurse was answering my questions, I

was simultaneously interpreting them into English in my head. I think I was crazy back then. I think because I was crazy about languages, I was able to accomplish my dreams as pure *guknaepa* - Excerpts from a radio interview (I. Park, 2008)

It is worth noting that during the interview, Choi stressed her background as *guknaepa* and how she conquered the circumstantial challenge solely through unwavering commitment to linguistic perfectionism. While one might question how she could pose as *guknaepa* despite her study abroad experiences, it should be noted that there is no clear-cut definition on the required timing and length of foreign exposures to be recognized as *haewaepa* in Korea. In a broader societal sense, not only those who spent a childhood abroad but also those who obtained degrees overseas as adults are considered as *haewaepa* regardless of the duration of their sojourning (Sangeun Jung, 2007). In the field of translation and interpreting, however, the standards seem much stricter, and *haewaepa* are typically those who learned English in their early years through globetrotting lifestyles (Bahk-Halberg, 2007). While Choi can technically be *guknaepa* according to the industry standards because she studied abroad as an adult, identifying herself as *tojong* or “pure *guknaepa*”<sup>4</sup> seems a bit far-fetched given her overseas education background at a prestigious institution. It can be argued that the discursive construction of Choi as pure *guknaepa* is attributable to the popularity of the neoliberal ideal, for which a *guknaepa* who achieves linguistic perfectionism fits the ideal much better than *haewaepa* (See Section 4.5.3). Such discursive strategies of posing as a home-grown language learner thus helps to highlight individual striving for mastering English, a laudable commitment in the celebrated neoliberal personhood. The case of Choi, in which one’s language learning background can be reconstructed in line with a societal ideal, is a powerful example of how deeply neoliberal ideologies have permeated the realm of English language learning in Korea, in which only the figure of dedicated English language learner is constructed, circulated, and reinforced through media discourses.

The currently popular interpreter personhood raises the tricky question of how English language learners should present their own language learning backgrounds in relation to neoliberal speakerhood. As for those who consider themselves *guknaepa*, while the images of interpreters as self-made language masters might neutralize the issue of class embedded

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<sup>4</sup> “*Tojoing*” or “pure *guknaepa*” typically refers to people who have never been abroad for either short-term or long-term study.

in English to a certain degree, it should be noted that the dominant neoliberal subjecthood erases the possibility of failure, as success is seen as achievable by any individual who is capable of hard work and dedication (J. S.-Y. Park, 2010). It can, therefore, be assumed that the overemphasis on individual effort might pose a challenge to *guknaepa*, as they might be criticized in case of failure as lacking independent and enterprising spirits. In a similar vein, the celebrated personhood also poses a dilemma to *haewaepa*, as those who successfully managed early English education abroad by overcoming circumstantial and linguistic challenges – supposedly through sheer individual hard work and resourcefulness – have often been held up in the media as worthy individuals for proper discipline celebrated in neoliberal discourses (See Section 2.3.3). The immaculate images of *haewaepa* speaking “perfect” English, therefore, can cause stress to *haewaepa*, who should carefully manage their overseas resources in order to fit the prescribed images of returnees. Such a dilemma created by neoliberal personhood for English language learners represents an ideal site to explore the workings of neoliberalism in individual English language learning. This chapter aims to examine this issue by tracing the language learning trajectories of English-Korean translators and interpreters. It specifically focuses on how they translate their own distinct language learning backgrounds, both as individuals and as a group, in relation to neoliberal personhood. Tracing their language journeys is conducted in three broad stages: English language learning prior to studying translation and interpreting; motivations behind the pursuit of translation and interpreting; and English language learning experiences in classroom as well as professional and personal contexts.

### 6.3. English language learning prior to career decisions

One common theme that emerges from the data analysis of the previous English language learning trajectories of the interview participants is that a majority of them learned English abroad although at different stages of life. To be specific, 18 people have been overseas as an adult for short-term English language learning (sojourning less than one year) prior to undertaking translation and interpreting studies. On the other hand, eight people learned English as a child or an adolescent in English immersion contexts. This section focuses on the initial stages of their language journeys of the eight participants who are socially considered as *haewaepa* and the rest of the 24 participants including the 18 people with later sojourning experiences. I will begin with the analysis of the 24 participants to find out about the initial impetus behind their decisions to learn English.

### 6.3.1. Language learning for domestic learners of English

Eighteen out of the 24 participants who are socially defined as *guknaepa* sojourned abroad for short-term English language learning. Also known as *eo Hak yeonsoo*, short-term English language learning abroad is a popular way of developing oral competence in English among domestic language learners in Korea. Speaking is largely neglected in school English education in Korea, as it focuses on teaching vocabulary and grammar as required by the all-important university entrance exam (B.-E. Cho, 2004). As an ability to speak English is essential at each stage of life (entering prestigious foreign language high schools or getting a white-collar job, for example), many people resort to extracurricular English education programs at their own cost (B.-E. Cho, 2004). The popularity of short-term language sojourning among adults has rapidly increased in recent years particularly among university students keen to enhance employability (H.-m. Kim, 2011). In 2014 for example, a total of 219,543 people went abroad for language learning (Korean Educational Development Institute, 2015). The trend is well identified among the participants as seen in the following table, which contains brief descriptions of their sojourning experiences.

Table 6.1. The summary of the *guknaepa* participants' sojourning experiences

Pseudonyms	Age	Profession before sojourning	Sojourning experiences	Age at departure	Profession before studies
Semi	41-45	Freelance translator	Short-term English learning in the U.S.	26-30	Freelance translator
Jihye	21-25	University student	Short-term English learning in Ireland and Britain	21-25	Television producer
Yumi	36-40	University student	Short-term English learning in Britain	21-25	Translator
Aeri	41-45	University student	Short-term English learning in Britain	21-25	Institutional language teacher
Kyunghee	41-45	Researcher	Short-term	21-25	Institutional

			English learning in the U.S.		language teacher
Soyoung	41-45	Housewife	Short-term English learning in Britain	26-30	Institutional language teacher
Hyomin	26-30	University student	Short-term English learning in Canada	21-25	Institutional language teacher
Eunhye	26-30	N/A	No sojourning experiences	N/A	Freelance translator
Minah	46-50	N/A	No sojourning experiences	N/A	School English teacher
Sangah	26-30	University student	Short-term English learning in Australia & Exchange student in the U.S.	21-25	Unemployed
Hyunjin	26-30	University student	Exchange student in Canada	21-25	Corporate worker
Jiyoung	21-25	University student	Short-term English learning in Australia	21-25	Institutional language teacher
Sunmi	26-30	University student	Short-term English learning & Exchange student in the U.S.	21-25	Corporate worker
Junghyun	26-30	University student	Short-term English learning in the U.S.	21-25	Magazine editor
Sara	21-25	N/A	No sojourning experiences	N/A	University student
Seul	36-40	School French teacher	Short-term English learning	26-30	Foreign company

			in New Zealand		employee
Mirim	26-30	University student	Short-term English learning in Canada	21-25	University student
Gyoungae	31-35	University student	Short-term English learning in Singapore	21-25	Foreign company employee
Junghee	21-25	University student	Short-term English learning & internship in the U.K.	21-25	Unemployed
Soohyun	31-35	University student	Short-term English learning in Canada	21-25	School English teacher
Gyujin	46-50	N/A	No sojourning experiences	N/A	Publishing company employee
Seohye	26-30	University student	Short-term English learning in Canada	21-25	Corporate worker
Dabin	41-45	N/A	No sojourning experiences	N/A	Freelance translator
Jonghoon <sup>5</sup>	46-50	N/A	No sojourning experiences	N/A	Broadcasting employee

It is notable that among the six participants who have never sojourned abroad, four were in their 40s at the time of data collection. Our reflective conversation reveals that although they, too, wanted to go abroad to learn English in a naturalistic environment, short-term sojourning was not a popular practice when they were university students in the 1980s and early 1990s, so they had no other choice but to study English at home through university English speaking clubs and/or private language institutions. At the time of the interviews, the participants still regretted that they had not been given an opportunity to study abroad,

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<sup>5</sup> Jonghoon was motivated to learn English for religious purposes as a former missionary and thus shall be excluded from this analysis.

which many desired throughout their language journeys.

그 때는요, 저희 여권도 못 만들 때 였어요. 88올림픽이 지나면서부터 해외 여행이 자유로웠고 – 예 – 그 전에는 유학 가는게 거의 하늘의 별 따기 같은 – 음 – 그런... 그런 생각도 있었어요.

Back then, it was hard to get even a passport. It was only after the 1988 Seoul Olympics that people started travelling overseas freely – right – and studying overseas was like a once in a blue moon opportunity – mm – so... so... I was interested [in studying abroad] - Minah

As for the other two younger participants – Eunhye and Sara – familial financial situations did not allow them to pursue language learning abroad. The absence of desired overseas experiences made them feel delegitimized as English language learners due particularly to increasing numbers of Koreans who sojourn abroad for English language learning.

제가 영문과를 졸업했는데 – 예 – 제가 그 언어를 쓰는 나라에 가 봐야 겠다는 생각을 항상 하고 있었어요 – 음 – 그런데 여러가지 여건이 안되서 못하다가 – 예 – 그렇게 미루고 미루었어요.

Since I majored in English language literature – right – , I always thought that I should go to a country where the language is spoken – mm – but the conditions didn't allow me to do that – right – and the plan was on hold for a long time - Sara

The mixture of feelings that the participants expressed about sojourning abroad naturally raises a question of how and why “overseas” has been constructed as an ideal place for English language learning among the domestic language learners. Data analysis reveals that it was, above all, the necessity of English language proficiency for employment in Korea that was ascribable to increasing sojourns. As local corporations make it mandatory to submit certified English proficiency test scores (e.g. TOEIC) as proof of language skills for white-collar jobs and speaking has become increasingly important (See Section 2.3.3 and 4.6.1), sojourning abroad is regarded as a must among young people keen to enhance individual competitiveness.

당연히 영어는 항상 하는 것 같고요 – 예 – 아, 또 대학교는 졸업 때 보면 – 예 – 토익이든지 아무튼 영어 점수를 내야되기 때문에 – 예 – 학생들이 일단 그런 영어 시험은

꾸준히 치는 것 같고요... 굉장히 영어는 항상 공부를 하는 것 같아요. 주위에서 보면 다들... 여러가지를 해요.

There's no question about English language learning – right – um, when you graduate from a university – right – you have to submit TOEIC or some other English proficiency test scores – right – so [university] students keep taking English tests... they just study English all the time. Looking around, they... do all sorts of things - Sara

While there is little doubt about the usefulness of English for job-seeking in Korean society, a more individual meaning of English bears noting particularly in relation to Western cultures. As a powerful medium of foreign language learning, culture plays a significant role in igniting individual interest in foreign language learning (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Among those who viewed English as a window on a broader world, English was a tool to express their interest in different cultures, which they long admired due particularly to the proliferation of transnational media (See Section 2.4.4).

저는 영어를 좋아, 어릴 때 부터 되게 좋아했거든요 – 음 – 드라마나, 드라마나 영화나 팝송 되게 좋아하고 – 예 – 그 다음에 펜팔도 많이 하고 영어를 공부라고 생각을 많이 안했어요 – 예 – 즐기면서 그냥 하나의 다른 나라 사람들이랑 연락할 수 있는 수단이고 재미있는거라 생각했어요.

I liked, liked English very much as a little girl – mm – I liked dramas, dramas, movies and pop songs very much – right – and I did lots of pen pals and I didn't really consider English as a study subject – right – I just enjoyed doing it and thought English was a means to communicate with people in other countries and something fun - Sangah

동경이었죠, 처음에는. 외국에 처음 나가보기 전에는 그냥 노랑머리들이랑 친구해보고 싶고. 그게 영어 잘해보고 싶은거 반 – 네 – 새로운 거에 대한 관심 반 이었던 것 같아요.

Admiration at the beginning. Before I actually went overseas, I had wanted to make friends with a foreigner with blonde hair. Half of me wanted to be good at English – right – and half of me was curious about new things - Junghee

While the ideologies of linguistic instrumentalism and cultural curiosity duly contributed to their decisions to sojourn abroad, it is important to note that their sociolinguistic positioning as *guknaepa* was also at work. As noted in Sunmi's case below, some participants were keenly aware of "the system of social differences" (Bourdieu, 1992, c1991: 55) embedded in the local linguistic hierarchy in which *haewaepa* are privileged over *guknaepa*. The symbolic domination of *haewaepa*, whose comfort with English and global experiences made the *guknaepa* participants feel inferior, fuelled a burgeoning desire for English and overseas.

그 때 대학을 처음 들어가서 이제 특례로 입학한 애들을 처음 봤어요. 부산에는 그렇게 외국에 살다오고 그런 애들이, 왜 그런지는 모르지만 없었기 때문에, 아 정말 내가 우물안 개구리 였구나 그런 생각이 들고. 그리고 개네는 뭐 영어 뿐만 아니라 불어도 하고 일어도 하고 중국어도 하고 또 외교에서도 많이 오니까 - 예 - 그래서 공부를 하면서 굉장히 필요성을 느껴서, 아 다들 가는 어학 연수를 나도 가야되겠구나 생각해서요.

When I entered university, I met students who got admitted through a special quota system [that allows returnees to enter universities without taking the competitive main entrance exam] for the first time in my life. I don't know why but I had never met anyone who had lived overseas in Pusan.<sup>6</sup> So I realized that I was like a frog in a well. They spoke not just English but French, Japanese, and Chinese, and quite a few of them were graduates of foreign language high schools – right – So I felt a strong need to go overseas while studying and thought that I should go abroad for English language learning just like everyone else - Sunmi

Sunmi's self-description as a "frog in a well" comes in sharp contrast to her assessment of *haewaepa* as elite multilingual cosmopolitans. Such reduced self-positioning as *guknaepa* highlights that it was not only a question of communicating but of gaining "symbolic recognition" (Bourdieu, 1992) from overseas exposures, which have always been associated with class privilege in Korean society (See Section 2.3.4) Since mastery of the legitimate language may be acquired through familiarization, which means more or less prolonged exposure to the legitimate language (Bourdieu, 1992), overseas became legitimized in their consciousness as an ideal place to learn English.

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<sup>6</sup> Pusan is the second largest city in Korea after Seoul.

저는 항상 영어를 잘하고 싶어했던 것 같아요 – 음 – 그게 제일 효율적으로  
자연스럽게 영어를 배우는 길인 것 같았어요.

I think I always wanted to become a good English speaker – mm – it [sojourning  
abroad] seemed to be the most efficient and natural way of learning English - Jihye

외국에 살다오지 않고서는 배울 수 없는게 너무 많구나 그렇게 생각해서요.

I realized that there are so many things that I couldn't learn without living overseas  
- Yumi

When they finally made a journey abroad, it was a confirmation of their pre-held beliefs about the wonderfulness of the foreign land. Out of the 18 participants with sojourning experiences, only one participant, Jihye, had rather disappointing experiences due to food and poor weather conditions in Ireland. On the other hand, the rest of the 17 participants reported predominantly positive experiences about their sojourning. As it is a local practice that children live with their parents until they marry (Y. Lee, Kim, Lee, & Choi, 2011), the participants unanimously relished the exotic cultural and linguistic experiences in their new-found freedom. For many, the sojourning was akin to a life-altering experience through which they could find individual agency and broaden their perspective on the world. The more the participants enjoyed a new life abroad, the more they became motivated to learn English as a key to expanding their horizons.

모든게 정말 충격적이었던 것 같아요. 그거 이후로, 캐나다를 갔다온 이후로 제 성격이  
정말 많이 변했던 것 같아요.

Everything about it was just eye-opening. Since then, since Canada, I think I have  
changed a lot - Hyomin

저한테 비전을 보여줬고, 친구도 많이 만났고요 – 예 – 처음으로 부모님한테 독립해서  
좋았고요.

It showed me a vision, and I met lots of friends – right – I enjoyed being  
independent from my parents for the first time - Mirim

제가 이 때 까지 일생 중에서 제가 선택해서 한 일 중에 – 네 – 가장 잘 한 일이 이 8개월 동안 어학 연수라고 생각을 해요.

Studying there for eight months is probably the best thing – right – that I’ve ever chosen to do in my life - Soohyun

Throughout the sojourning, the participants consciously made efforts to create an “authentic” English immersion environment by living with local people and/or attending local churches, for example. As their English proficiency improved through individual efforts, they experienced a strong sense of accomplishment, which in turn boosted their confidence.

한국인들 하고 안 어울리고 얘기도 안했어요. 좀 싸이코 같이 이상하게. 한국 사람을 만나면 그 사람들 말을 잘 못하니까 한국말을 하고 싶어하잖아요. 그러면 “I don’t want to speak Korean” 이라고 획 달아나고 @@@ [...] 한국말을 하나도 안하니까 영어가 정말 엄청, 특히 speaking 이 엄청 늘어서 만족감도 얻고, 아, 하면 되는구나 하는 것도 배우고.

I didn’t mingle with any Koreans and didn’t talk to anyone. I was like a psycho and was a bit weird. Whenever I met Koreans, because we couldn’t speak their language [English] well, they wanted to talk to me in Korean. I always said “**I don’t want to speak Korean**” and ran off @@@@ [...] I didn’t speak Korean at all and my English improved dramatically, especially **speaking**. So I experienced a sense of satisfaction and realized that I can do it too - Seohye

Through sojourning abroad, English became associated with positive ideologies such as liberation, independence, self-awakening, and confidence building. The degree to which the participants enjoyed overseas experiences is well illustrated by the fact that four participants – Aeri, Junghee, Sangah, and Sunmi – made another journey abroad later, strongly influenced by their first overseas trips: Aeri extended her visa to stay in the U.K. for another year; Junghee went back to the U.K. through an internship program; and Sangah and Sunmi sojourned in the U.S. through student exchange programs. While Aeri and Junghee reported yet another positive experience from their second trips, a difference occurred in the case of Sangah and Sunmi. Both of them reported that while studying in the

U.S. as exchange students, they experienced feelings of inferiority and exclusion due to what they regarded as inadequate language skills compared to native speakers of English.

수업 시간이 그 커뮤니티 칼리지와는 백프로 다르게 전부 토론이고 발표에다가 준비를 되게 많이 해야되고, 또 제가 아무리 준비를 해도 개네한테는 안되고 [...] 수업에 많이 참여하려고 노력했지만 다른 애들에 비해서 참여를 못해서 좀 힘들었어요.

Classes were composed of discussions and presentations unlike the community college [where I had studied during the first sojourn]. I had to work really hard, but no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't be better than them [...] I tried hard to participate in class activities but I couldn't do as much as other kids so it was a bit hard - Sunmi

In trying to understand the apparent contrast between their first and second sojourns, it is important to note that unlike their first trips, both participants were expected to perform against native speakers of English as exchange students. While they were under no pressure from anyone during the first sojourns, being mere learners of English as a foreign language, they had to adapt to an entirely different setting in which they had to achieve a certain level of grade to fulfil the requirements of the exchange student programs. Both participants reported stress, feelings of inferiority, and loss of confidence at times.

가장 기억에 남고 부담없이 그 때는 그냥 어학 연수가 그렇게 큰 부담은 없잖아요.  
반대로 교환 학생은 학점 신경쓰고 그래야 되니까.

It [the first sojourn] was the most memorable moment and back then, I found short-term English learning hardly stressful. In contrast, I had to worry about my grade as an exchange student - Sangah

The differences felt by Sangah and Sunmi on their second trips are worth noting in that the *haewaepa* participants were, in fact, placed in a similar environment: as a young child, each had to adjust to a completely new environment unable to speak the language and compete against English-speaking peers. It is thus interesting to explore how the sojourning experiences of the *haewaepa* participants, who the *guknaepa* participants overall considered as superior users of English, unfolded and I will trace their early language journeys next.

### 6.3.2. Language learning for overseas learners of English

In this section, I explore the early sojourning experiences of the *haewaepa* participants.

The following table provides an overview of the eight participants in this group.

Table 6.2. Summary of the *haewaepa* participants' sojourning experiences

Pseudonym	Age	Reasons for sojourning	Country and length of residence	Age at departure and return	Profession before studies
Sunhee	26-30	Father's job transfer	2 years in Kuwait 3 years in Malaysia	4-6 15-18	Unemployed
Youngmi	26-30	Father's job transfer & Early study abroad	1 year in the U.S. 3 years in France	6-7 15-18	Foreign company employee
Sunhye	26-30	Father's sabbatical	1 year in the U.S.	16-17	Unemployed
Nayeon	21-25	Father's sabbatical	1 year in Australia	12-13	University student
Miae	26-30	Early study abroad	3 years in Australia	15-18	Corporate worker
Heejeon	26-30	Family migration	3 years in Australia	10-13	Unemployed
Miyeon	31-35	Father's job transfer	Born in Latin America 9 years in Latin America 2 years in the U.S.	0-9 14-16	University student
Yoonjeong	21-25	Father's study abroad & Early study abroad	2 years in Australia 1 year in the U.S. 7 years in Australia	7-9 13-14 15-22	University student

Contrary to the commonly-held remarkable images of sojourning abroad among *guknaepa*

as discussed above, our reflective conversations with the *haewaepa* participants reveal that six out of the eight participants found it extremely stressful to cope with linguistic transitions as a child after being thrown into a new environment overnight. Except for Miyeon, who was born and spent most of her childhood overseas, and Nayeon, who was warmly welcomed by local residents in a small and friendly town in Australia, the other participants recalled struggling with language learning particularly during the initial period of sojourning and claimed that they had no other choice but to learn the language to survive.

정말 아무것도 모를 때 였으니까 – 예 – 거기서 초등학교 입학을 한거거든요, 저는 – 예 – 학교에 가면 다들 다르게 생기고 말도 하나도 못 알아 듣는데 – 예 – 어쨌든 저는 학교를 가라고 부모님이 보내시니까 – 예 – 그래서 아침마다 울면서, 가기 싫다고 그랬던 기억이 나요 – 예 – 말이 안되니까, 왜 애들끼리는 많이 싸우잖아요 – 예 – 그런데서 오는, 뭐라고 해야할까, 말을 못해서 제가 저를 대변할 수 없으니까 상황을 설명을 못하고 덤탱이를 쓰는 그런 경우도 있었어요.

I wasn't aware of anything – right – I started my primary education there [the United States] – right – and I remember that people looked all different from me and I couldn't understand their language – right – Anyways, my parents forced me to go to school – right – and I remember going to school crying and protesting every morning – right – Because I couldn't communicate with them, kids argue a lot you know – right – and sometimes I got, how should I say, wrongly accused because I couldn't defend myself, nor could I explain what happened - Youngmi

그렇게 영어를 하루 종일 배운 적이 없었으니까요 – 예 – 처음 몇 달 동안은 하나도 모르겠으니까 자꾸 추측을 하게 되더라고요 – 예 – 그냥 알아듣는 단어 몇 개로 대충 이거겠구나, 그리고 하루 종일 영단어 외우고 – 음 – 말 그대로 **struggling**한 경험이었죠. I had never been exposed to English like all day – right – During the first couple of months, I couldn't understand anything so I developed an ability of guessing – right – I made a guess based on a few words that I grasped and memorized English words all the time – mm – It was literally a **struggling** experience - Sunhee

Some struggled more than others depending on the extent of parental and/or community support. In the case of Heejeon, who migrated to Australia at the age of ten, her parents were too busy managing their new life as migrants to provide her with much-needed

support. As a result, Heejeon became withdrawn and experienced depression.

저는 처음에 초등학교 5학년 때 정말 거의... 우울증이었죠. 왜냐면 한국에서는 진짜 신나게 매일 애들이랑 놀던 애가 - 예 - 말도 안통하지 친구도 없지 - 네 - 그러니까 자존심도 되게 상하지, 정말 한 마디도 하기 싫지 - 예 - 그런데 초등학교 6학년 때 다른 학교를 가게 되면서, ESL 클라스에서는 상황이 저랑 똑같은 애들이잖아요 - 예 - 스페인에서 오고 홍콩에서 온 애들도 있고 - 네 - 거기서 차라리 영어를 더 많이 배우고 했던 것 같아요 - 예 - 못 하는 애들끼리 다 같이.

When I got into year five, I think my condition... bordered on depression. In Korea, I was a happy and active child playing with my friends all the time - right - And suddenly, I couldn't communicate, didn't have any friends - right - and it really hurt my ego so I shut my mouth - right - When I got transferred to another school in year six, I found some kids in similar situations in the ESL classes - right - Those from Hong Kong and Spain, for instance - right - I think it gave me more opportunities to learn and practice English - right - because we were all poor speakers of English - Heejeon

Heejeon was only finally freed from feelings of linguistic inadequacy in the ESL classes in which students were all non-native speakers of English. The linguistic insecurity that Heejeon experienced as a child migrant is attributed to her consciousness of local native speakers of English as a "language authority". As temporary residents and members of a linguistic minority group in the host country, Heejeon and the other participants began to see the linguistic aspect of their lives in the frame of power relations with local residents whom they considered to be superior users of the language. Language-related disadvantages that they experienced in their day-to-day life reinforced the notion of local native speakers as an indisputable authority.

가서 힘들고 아빠가 말 못해서 손해 보는 것도 보고 - 예 - 섞이지 못하고 (( )) 항상 손해를 보고 - 예 - 편하지가, 정말 편하지가 았더라고요. 미국 친구들의 특징이 그렇더라고요 - 예 - 우선 말이 통하고 인종이 다르더라도 말이 통하면 같은 무리로 쳐주는데 말이 안되면 우선 완전히 다른 사람이 되버리더라고요.

It was tough and I saw that my father was often disadvantaged due to his linguistic incompetence - right - He couldn't mingle with other people (( )) and was always on the losing side - right - It wasn't comfortable, not really comfortable. But my

observation of American people is – right – that they are willing to include you if you can communicate with them regardless of your race but if you are unable to communicate, there is no chance that you can be part of the group - Sunhye

It is notable that this superior-inferior frame was not limited to the way that they negotiated their positions in comparison to native speakers of English, but used it amongst themselves as well. As Yoonjeong's case demonstrates below, the disempowered group of young language learners translated their positions through the same dynamics of linguistic hierarchy, thus creating intra-ethnic othering.

그 때가 처음으로 어려움을 겪었던게 아닐까 호주에 들어가서 – 음 – 애들하고 – 음 – 사실 유학생이면 영어도 잘 못해야 되고 – 음 – 알아듣는 것도 잘 몰라서 막 도와주고 그래야 되는데 애를 보니까 나름 영어도 괜찮게 하고 – 음 – 뭐 이러니까 개가 좀 되게 아니꼬웠나봐요. 지금은 괜찮은데 진짜 생각에 좀 아니꼬웠나봐요.

I think it was the first-ever hardship that I encountered in Australia – mm – with the kids there – mm – Usually, international students don't speak English well – mm – and need a lot of help, because they have trouble understanding the language. But I could manage English speaking reasonably well – mm – and she [a Korean girl] must have been jealous of me. It doesn't sound like a big deal now but I do believe that she was envious - Yoonjeong

Bourdieu (1977) argues that one's initial relation to the language market and the discovery of the value accorded to one's linguistic productions are crucial for shaping the practical representation of the way one conducts oneself. As detailed above, the participants had contrasting experiences from their sojourning. Whereas English and overseas became associated with positive ideas such as self-development and self-fulfillment in the case of the *guknaepa* participants, the language ideologies of the *haewaepa* participants were often shaped by negative associations with English: day-to-day struggles, inferiority complexes, and fear of being judged. It is, therefore, interesting to see how the participants became interested in the field of translation and interpreting in relation to their initial overseas experiences and resultant language ideologies, and I will explore the factors that led to their career decisions in the next section.

## 6.4. Career decisions

This section examines how and why the participants decided to become translators and interpreters. Similar to the previous section, I will first explore factors that influenced the career decisions in the case of the *guknaepa* participants before moving on to investigate what led the *haewaepa* participants to the field of translation and interpreting.

### 6.4.1. Career dilemmas of domestic learners of English

As seen in Table 6.1, more than half of the *guknaepa* participants were engaged in fields related to English before pursuing translation and interpreting degrees: four worked as unaccredited freelance translators; five taught English at private language institutions; two worked as school English teachers; two were employed by foreign companies. As for the rest of the eleven *guknaepa* participants, three were employees for local firms; two worked for broadcasting companies; two were involved in the publishing industry; two were unemployed; and two were university students. I shall begin with the stories of the former group to see if/how their professions that required English influenced their decisions to become translators and interpreters. To begin with, as for the four participants who worked as unaccredited translators, a need and desire for career enhancement through the development of English language skills is identified as a primary factor that led them to decide to study translation and interpreting, so that they could gain legitimacy as English language professionals.

번역하다 보니까 영어 실력의 한계가 보이더라고요 – 음 – 번역한 거 보면 알잖아요 – 네 – 내가 봐도 이렇게 다 보이는데 남들이 보면 어떻겠어요 – 네 – 그래서 공부하기로 맘 먹었어요.

While working as a translator, I realized the limit of my English skills – mm – You can tell from the quality of translation – right – I could see so clearly and it must have been more obvious to other people – right – so I decided to study - Semi

While such a need for self-enhancement was undoubtedly at work in the case of the five participants who worked as institutional English teachers, it is important to note the impact of “English fever” following the neoliberal turn of Korean society. The participants reported that they had felt stressed by having in their classes an increasing number of *haewaepa* students who had learned English abroad through the popular parental practice of early English education abroad. While they had to present themselves as competent

users of English for teaching the language, a growing number of *haewaepa* students represented a dilemma to the participants who felt challenged by students whose level of English acquired from early exposures seemed to be better than theirs.

제가 일을 하는데 정말... 부족하다는 생각을 정말 절실하게 느끼게 되더라고요 – 예 – 왜냐하면 아이들이 더 생똥맞은걸 더 많이 물어봐요 – 아, 그래요? – 네. “뭐는 뭐예요? 이럴 때 정말 대답도 안나오고 – 네 – 그리고 아, 정말 내가 영어를 잘 알지도 못하면서 애들을 가르친다고 폼 잡았구나 이런 생각이 정말 절실하게 들더라고요 – 네 – 그래가지고 제 자신한테 부끄러움이 느껴져가지고요.

While teaching there... I realized how lacking I was – right – it was because kids liked to ask funny questions – oh, really? – Yes. Whenever they asked “How do you say this in English?” I couldn’t answer – mm – and I thought that maybe I was just pretending that I was good at English when I didn’t know English well – right – I was so ashamed of myself - Hyomin

내가 어느 정도 영어를 남들한테 가르치고 이러는건 할 수 있지만 실생활에서 내가 정말 영어를 잘 하고 잘 활용할 수 있을까 라고 생각했을 때 – 음 – 가르키는 거하고 또 영어를 활용하는 거하고는 또 별개의 문제더라고요 – 그쵸 – 그러면서 생각을 하게 된게 아, 내가 영어를 좀 더 한 단계 업그레이드해서 영어를 조금 더 보다 좀 더 **fluent** 하게 하는 레벨로 끌어올리고 싶다는 생각이 들었어요.

I could manage teaching English to others, but I began to wonder if I can be good at English in daily life and if there is any way that I can use English more – mm – teaching English was one thing and being able to use English was another – I agree – so I desired an opportunity to upgrade my English to the next level so that I can be more **fluent** in English - Soyoung

The situation was more or less the same for Minah and Soohyun, who worked as school English teachers. Although school teachers are highly regarded in Korean due to employment security and benefits, English teachers have gradually lost authority in recent years due to a growing number of *haewaepa* students who challenge their linguistic competence (N. Lee, 2007). The degree to which school English teachers are stressed about teaching English is well illustrated in the following interview excerpt from Soohyun:

명예퇴직 한창 많이 했을 때는 제일 많이 한 과목이 영어 과목이었어요 – 네 – 우리가 해외 연수도 있고 뭐 연수가 되게 많아요 – 네 – 그분들은 그런 연수에 참여해서 노력을 많이 하세요 – 음 – 정말 전반적인 분위기는 영어 교사가 영어 못하면 아이들한테 소위 말하면 치인다고 하죠 – 음 – 아이들한테 치이고 또 교육청이나 정부의 압박에서 못 벗어나고요.

When voluntary redundancy was available, English teachers took the offers more than any other teachers – right – English teachers are eligible to go overseas for language learning and there are various types of English language training – right – they [older English teachers] are keen to attend training and make a lot of effort – mm – The overall school atmosphere is that if English teachers are not good at English, they get ignored by kids – mm – They get ignored by kids, while being stressed from pressure from the government and the education authority - Soohyun

The issue of lack of linguistic authority as *guknaepa* resonated with those working for foreign companies as well. In the case of Seoul, for example, she worked for a firm staffed by native speakers of English and Koreans highly competent in English. As English was a key to career success, she got frustrated by her inability to become as proficient as her colleagues despite the amount of effort that she put in English study.

그럼요, 생각 많이 했죠. 여기서도 아무리 해도 티가 안나니까 @ 내가 아무리 발버둥쳐도 – 음 – 안되니까 – 네 – 그래서 차라리 영어 하는 사람이 아무도 없는데 가서 영어를 도맡아 하는게 낫지 않을까.

Oh, yes, I thought about it [moving to another company] a lot, since I don't shine at all here @ no matter how hard I work – mm – it doesn't work – right – So I thought that it would be better to find a job somewhere there is no English speaker so that I can look after English - Seoul

As for the rest of the participants involved in fields unrelated to English, while limited career prospects as female workers in the gendered local employment market was one factor behind their career decisions (See Chapter 7), another was the widely-held perception of English as a key to individual competitiveness in Korea as English emerged as one key terrain in which to compete in a tight local job market following Korea's neoliberal turn (See Section 2.2.1).

한국에서 영어를 잘 한다는 것은 – 네 – 뭐든지 할 수 있는 것 같아요. 현실적으로 말했을 때 영어는 세계 언어니까 특히 한국처럼 영어를 중시하는 사회에서 – 예 – 영어를 통번역사처럼 잘한다면 자기가 원하는 어떤 일이든지 할 수 있을 것 같아요.

Having good English skills in Korea means – right – you can do anything. English is undoubtedly a global language and in a society like Korea that values English so much – right – if you are as fluent as translators and interpreters in English, I think you can do anything that you want - Sara

언어는 경쟁력인 것 같아요. 한국 사회에서는 특히 영어는 기본이죠.

I think language is your competitiveness. In Korean society in particular, English is a basic skill - Mirim

As the participants wanted and needed English to gain both legitimacy and a competitive edge, the amazing images of translators and interpreters that circulated in local media attracted their attention. Regarded as “master English speakers” (J. Choi & Lim, 2002: 635) in Korea, simultaneous interpreters in particular have enjoyed media publicity in which they are portrayed as elite glamorous bilinguals (See Section 4.5.2). For the participants who were looking for an opportunity of self-enhancement and possibly self-transformation, becoming a translator and interpreter emerged as a golden opportunity to realize career transitions.

실제로 아는 통역사는 없었지만 티비에 나오는 통역사는 참 멋있어 보였어요.

I didn't know any real interpreter but thought that interpreters appearing on TV looked so cool - Aeri

멋있고 professional 하고 또 지적이고요.

They looked so cool, **professional**, and intelligent - Junghyun

언어 분야에서는 어쨌든 최고로 권위가 있는 시험이니까, 통역사는 보통 사람은 만나기 쉽지 않은 귀한 인재라고 생각한 것 같아요.

It [an entrance exam for the GSIT] was the most prestigious exam in the area of language. Interpreters were regarded as a rare talent that ordinary people couldn't easily meet - Gyujin

While they strongly desired the profession, however, the participants were, at the same time, strongly aware of the local evaluation of their own language learning backgrounds as *guknaepa*. As *haewaepa* were generally considered competent and prestigious speakers of English in the local linguistic hierarchy, their home-grown backgrounds posed an obstacle to pursuing their dreams.

제가 외고를 졸업했잖아요 – 네 – 외국에 살다온 애들이 너무 많으니까 – 네 – 그건 저하고는 관계없고 영어를 모국어처럼 하는 애들만 하는거라고 이렇게 생각했죠.

I graduated from a foreign language high school – right – Since there were so many friends who had lived overseas – right – I thought that it [the profession] is something irrelevant to me and something that only native-like friends can do - Eunhye

동시 통역사가 되고 싶다고 그러면 동시 통역사가 얼마나 되기 어려운데 그건 특별한 사람들만 하는 거라고 주변에서 맨날 그러니까요 – 네 – 그래서 외국에서 자란 사람들이나 정말 특출난 재능이 있는 사람들만 하는거구나 이렇게 생각했죠.

Whenever I said that I want to become a simultaneous interpreter, people always said that becoming a simultaneous interpreter is such a difficult path and only extraordinary people can do that – right – And it convinced me that it is designed for Koreans from overseas backgrounds or only someone truly extraordinary can do - Gyoungae

The degree to which the participants felt inadequate compared to *haewaepa* is well illustrated in the case of Dabin. After working as a freelance translator for a long time, Dabin successfully passed an entrance exam for a graduate school for international studies, which was and still is highly competitive to enter. Her dream of becoming an international expert, however, was shattered because she suffered enormously from inferiority complex compared to her *haewaepa* classmates, and Dabin quit the school after one month due to English-related stress.

국내파가 태생적으로 느끼는 한계, 가령 어려운 단어나 표현은 잘 알아도 일상적인 단어나 표현이 어렵다는 점, 말할 기회가 없다보니 스피킹이 약하다는 점... 이런 것들이었던 것 같아요. 그들은 힘들이지 않아도 술술 나오는 것 같은 토론 능력이 저는 완전 고생고생해도 따라가기가 힘들었다는 점 등이죠.

The kind of limitation that *guknaepa* naturally experience, like I knew high-level vocabulary and expressions but did not know words and expressions used in daily life. I wasn't good at speaking due to a lack of opportunities to practise... I think that was the kind of issues. While they [*haewaepa*] could easily manage discussions without putting in much effort at all, I had to work so hard but couldn't possibly compete against them - Dabin

Persistent feelings of linguistic insecurity and over-idealization of *haewaepa* sometimes led to frictions in their personal relationships. Some participants confessed that they tried to take advantage of the language skills of *haewaepa* friends in an attempt to enhance their English proficiency, which in turn upset *haewaepa* who considered their behaviours as opportunistic.

교포 이런 사람들 만나면 너무 긴장되는거예요. 영어 잘 하잖아요, 이 사람들은 - 네 - 너무 잘 하잖아요 - 네 - 그러니까 자꾸 제가 그 사람들을 영어를 할 수 있는 사람들로만 생각하고 사람으로 생각 안하고 자꾸 이용하려고 하는거 있잖아요 - 음 - 문법같은거 자꾸 물어보고 에세이 같은거 좀 봐줄래. 이런 쪽으로 자꾸 이용하니까 - 예 - 상대방도 너 왜 나를 이용한다 자꾸 이러는거예요.

I get so nervous whenever meeting Koreans raised overseas, because their English is so good - right - Their English is so good - right - and I tend to regard them only as a machine that speaks good English. They are not human beings for me, so I often try to use them - mm - by asking grammar questions or asking them to review my English essays. Since I tried to use them - right - they were unhappy that I was trying to take advantage of them - Hyunjin

Given the degree to which the participants felt inadequate and deficient against *haewaepa*, it is legitimate to ask why they decided to pursue the profession despite a high level of linguistic inferiority. The data show that it was the popular neoliberal logic of individual development through persistent effort that inspired the participants to pursue the profession.

For one thing, the well-known story of interpreter Choi Jung-Hwa motivated many.

제 롤모델이 최정화 교수님 이거든요. 정말 대단한 분이신 것 같아요.

One of my role models was Professor Choi Jung-Gwa. I think that she is just a wonderful person - Sara

통역사가 되는 법에 대한 책도 읽어봤고요. 최정화 교수님이 쓴 책이 제일 유명하잖아요.

I read some books about how to become interpreters. Books authored by Choi Jung-Hwa were most popular - Gyoungae

Apart from Choi, similar stories of human victories achieved by popular interpreters are well distributed in local media. As an example, interpreter Lee Bo-Young published a book in which she described how she conquered daunting challenges with her super-human commitment to English and strong moral character (B. Lee, 1999). In typical “rags-to-riches” fashion, these stories help people embrace the neoliberal logic of endless self-development, making them believe that “perfect” English is attainable through superior moral calibre and unswerving dedication to the pursuit of the goal regardless of one’s linguistic gifts or language learning background. The participants who suffered from a persistent sense of self-doubt found personal strength from the stories of real interpreters with apparently similar backgrounds.

제가 제일 인상깊게 본 게 - 네 - 천안함 그 사건 터졌을 때 그 때 통역사 남자분이 하셨는데 - 네 - 왜, 정부 발표할 때 있잖아요 - 네 - 그걸 동시 통역을 하는데 너무 멋있었어요. 그 분이 외국에서 생활하신 분도 아니었다고 했는데 - 네 - 유창하면서도 깔끔하게 말하고 되게 professional 해 보이고 - 예 - 그렇게 되면 정말 좋겠다 생각했죠.

I was really impressed – right – by a male interpreter when the ROKS Cheonan incident<sup>7</sup> happened – right – um, the government released a statement you know – right – It was simultaneously interpreted and he was so cool. I heard that he hadn’t studied abroad – right – but he was fluent and his interpreting was so neat and

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<sup>7</sup> ROKS Cheonan was a South Korean navy vessel, which was allegedly torpedoed by North Korea in March 2010.

really **professional** – right – and I thought how cool it would be if I can do that -  
Jiyoung

그 때 배유정이라는 통역사가 되게 유명해서 미디어에 많이 나오셨었는데 – 네 – 그 분의  
그런 인터뷰 같은거 보고 그러면 – 네 – 굉장히 스트레스나 뭐 이런거 잘 컨트롤 해야  
하고 – 네 – 위기에 순발력 있게 대처해야 하고, 그런 부분에 대해서 말하시더라고요.  
그리고 굳이 외국에서 어린 시절을 다 보내서 네이티브여야 하는게 아니다 라는 내용이  
항상 그런 분들 나올 때 마다 계속 나왔었고 – 네 – 그런 정도로 이미지는 가지고  
있었어요.

Interpreter Bae Yoojung was very popular and appeared in media often – right –  
Whenever I saw her interviews – right – she stressed the importance of coping with  
stress – right – and stressed abilities of managing a crisis quickly – right – She and  
other interpreters always said that one doesn't need to spend a lengthy amount of  
time overseas as a child and doesn't need to be a native speaker of English in order  
to become an interpreter – right – That's the kind of images that I had about the  
profession - Hyunjin

It is evident from the data analysis that the binary perception of *haewaepa* as superior speakers of English and *guknaepa* as their inferior others was strongly internalized by the *guknaepa* participants. It was only through the neoliberal logic of personal development through sheer individual effort that the *guknaepa* participants could motivate themselves to pursue their dreams of becoming elite language professionals. As will be discussed in the following subsection, however, the popular neoliberal personhood is also highly relevant to the language journeys of the *haewaepa* participants who, contrary to the popular imagination that they were competent and confident speakers of English, also experienced inferiority complexes related to English back home. The next subsection traces the linguistic readaptation of the *haewaepa* participants who faced the phenomenon of “English fever” upon returning to Korea.

#### 6.4.2. Career dilemmas of overseas learners of English

In this subsection, I trace how heightened competition over English in Korean society feeds into the existence of prior linguistic anxiety held by the participants, whose return to Korea between 1992 and 2004 coincided with the rise of English fever. I begin with Miyeon, who

is the only participant who lived through the early 1990s in Korea. When asked about how she was treated at school upon returning in 1992, she recalled:

I was like an alien. 그런데 내가 아시다시피 성격이 그런걸 뽑내고 그런 성격이 아니잖아요 – 음 – 난 최대한 want to keep a low profile no matter what – 음, 음 – 너무 막 다 날 쳐다보고 있으니까 그냥 다 우리 학년 애들은 내가 외국에서 살다 왔다는거 다 알았던 것 같아요. 그 때 당시만 해도 외국에 살다온 애들이 정말 없었고 – 그렇죠 – 한국 말도 못하면서 영어 발음은 완전히 장난이 아니니까 신기한 대상인 거지. 심지어 영어 선생님이 – 음 – 영어 시간에 나보고 책 읽으래요, 자기가 발음 쪽 팔리니까 - @ - 애들이 너무 좋아하는 거예요! 자기네들이 이런 live English를 들을 수 있다는 게 – 네 – 그 때만 해도 English zeal 이런 게 없었어요, 우리 나라에는. 재미있는 거야 – 음, 음 – 이게 좋고, 살아있는 영어 발음을 들을 수 있으니까.

**I was like an alien.** I am not a boastful character, as you know – mm – and **want to keep a low profile no matter what** – mm, mm – But I received so much attention and I guess that girls in my year all knew that I had lived abroad. Back then, there were few such students with foreign exposure – that’s right – My Korean sounded funny and my English was awesome in their eyes and I was just an interesting subject. My English teacher – mm – always asked me to read English textbooks because he was ashamed of his pronunciation - @ - and the kids REALLY liked me reading! It was **live English** for them – right – because **English zeal** hadn’t started in Korea yet. It was just fun for them – mm, mm – and they liked it, because they could get a taste of real English - Miyeon

One might speculate that the curious reaction from Miyeon’s classmates was due to the fact that *haewaepa* were rare in the early 1990s. As most students at the time had never been abroad, let alone lived and studied in English-speaking countries, Miyeon’s international background and fluent English appeared to be the subject of benign curiosity and even fascination. In addition, “English fever” had yet to take hold in Korea, as Miyeon commented during the interview. It is therefore interesting to trace the ways in which the other younger participants readjusted – a decade later – to life in a country gripped with “English fever” following the neoliberal restructuring of Korean society. Five out of the eight participants – Heejeon, Miae, Sunhee, Sunhye, and Youngmi – returned to Korea in the 2000s and reported feelings of stress due to the enormity of external expectations about their English skills, as illustrated below.

한국에 왔는데 다시 적응하는 것도 힘든데 한국에 와서 그만큼의 영어 공부를 안하니까 – 네 – 금방 또 사라지더라고요 – 음 – 근데 그런거를 제가 다 설명을 못 하잖아요. 친구들은 다 제가 조기 유학 갔다 왔으니까 – 네 – 되게 잘 하겠다라는 그런 것 때문에 – 네 – 부담이 좀 컸던 것 같아요 [...] 학교에서 친구들은 어떻게든 얘기를 막 하면서 이렇게 호주에서의 상황을 설명할 시간이 있는데 회사는 들어가면 – 네 – 제가 고등학교를 외국에서 졸업했고 이런 얘기하면 벌써 얘기가 돌고 그러면 저한테 번역 같은게 한 장이든 두 장이든 시키더라고요. 저한테 대한 기대치가 너무 높아져 있는데 그걸 못 맞추니까 너무 스트레스를 받더라고요.

I had to come back to Korea [in 2003]. While struggling to readjust to Korea, I lost English so quickly – mm – because I didn’t make a conscious effort to maintain it – right – However, I couldn’t explain this to people and my friends believed that I must be very good at English – right – because I had lived abroad at an early age – right – I found it very stressful [...] At school I could take time to explain to my friends what I went through in Australia in detail, but at work – right – it was a matter of time until people found that I graduated from a high school overseas. And then they started giving me small translation jobs. They had such high expectations, and I got really stressed because I couldn’t meet their expectations - Miae

The image of *haewaepa* as impeccable speakers of English in popular neoliberal discourses strengthened pre-existing anxieties held by the participants, who were fearful of being discounted or even delegitimized as English speakers in the face of ever-rising public expectations of the language skills of returnees.

평상시엔 이게 그렇게 힘들지 않은데요. 그래도 일, 이 프로 부족하다는 느낌은 항상 있어요.

It [speaking in English] is not really difficult in ordinary situations but I still have this lingering feeling that one or two percent is incomplete - Sunhye

It is interesting to note that a tendency of discounting their language learning backgrounds and even internal competition among *haewaepa* emerged from the data analysis. As the number of *haewaepa* began to increase rapidly from the year 2000 due to the popularity of early English education abroad, successful management of early sojourning abroad was no longer a matter of “whether” one had lived overseas but “for how long” that served as a

yardstick to measure *haewaepa*'s expected linguistic competence.

요새 막 외국에서 살다온 사람들이 너무 많은데 저는 그에 비하면 아무것도 아니죠... 오 년 십 년 이렇게 유학 갔다온 사람들도 많잖아요.

So many Koreans, um, go overseas these days and I am nothing compared to them... There are so many people who sojourned like five or ten years - Youngmi

제가 외고를 다녔는데요 [...] 저는 그 때 까지는 영어를 무의식 중에 남들보다 잘 하는 줄 알았는데 그 때 제가 아, 내가 영어를 생각만큼 그렇게 잘하는게 아니구나 - 네 - 그 때 선생님들이, 좀 선생님들이 - 음 - 제가 아시다시피 삼 년을 살다왔는데 거기에서는 “너 살다왔니?” 그러면 “아니, 나 안 살았어” 이렇게 되더라고요 - 아 - 기본이 막 팔 년 살다온 애들부터 해서 SAT 반도 있고 막 이러다 보니까 - 네 - 영어가 어렵다는 걸 그 때 처음 알았던 것 같아요.

I went to a foreign high school [...] Before that, I think I had this belief that I am better than other people at English but realized that I wasn't as good as I thought that I was - right - And teachers there, um, the teachers were like - mm - I lived overseas for three years as you know but at that school, if somebody asked me if I had lived overseas, I lied. I said “No, I didn't” - oh - Students there had like eight years of living abroad experiences and the school even had an SAT class - right - So I realized for the first time that English is difficult - Heejeon

Regardless of growing inner conflicts, however, their overseas backgrounds were increasingly envied by *guknaepa*, who attributed their own self-perceived lack of English skills to an absence of overseas experiences and interpreted their linguistic backgrounds as less desirable amidst the growing significance of English in society.

외국 애기도 우리끼리는 그냥 편하게 꺼내고, 그냥 “나 이태리 있었을 때, 나 호주에 있었을 때” 이런 거는 다들 그냥 꺼내고. 이걸 다 인정을 해요. 나 여기서 살다왔고 넌 거기서 살다왔고, 넌 거기 갔다왔고 이렇게. “너 파키스탄 살았을 때 어땠어?” 이렇게 우린 다 인정을 하지만 - 음 - 어떻게 보면 제 친구 중에 안 살다온 애가 하나, 그런 애가 있었어요. “넌 살다왔으니까 영어 잘 하잖아. 난 내가 너처럼 살다 왔으면 난 영어 너보다 잘 할 수 있어” 이렇게, 그게 어떻게 보면은 - 음 - 기회, 찬스? - 음 - 개는 기회가 나한테는 안 주어졌기 때문에 서운하고, 그거에 대한 자격지심을 갖고 있는 애들이 있기는 해요.

We freely talk about our overseas experiences. For example, “When I was in Italy, when I was in Australia” like that. It is part of who we are. I’ve lived in this country, you’ve lived in that country, and you’ve been there, for example. So we casually ask things like “What was it like living in Pakistan?” – mm – There was one person in our group, who was not an immigrant kid, and she sometimes said that “You speak good English because you lived overseas. I could’ve become better than you if I had been given such a chance.” I think it’s, in a way – mm – opportunity or chance? – mm – She wasn’t given opportunities and felt deprived and some friends have an inferiority complex about not having lived overseas - Heejeon

Heejeon’s friend was particularly conscious of her own background because she saw many of her “possible selves” (Markus & Nurius, 1986) in her *haewaepa* friends: she could have joined conversations without feeling excluded had she lived overseas; she could have learned to speak fluent English had she been afforded an opportunity. This indicates how rising expectations with respect to English skills in the context of “English fever” in Korea led to a belief that mastery of English was unachievable within the confines of Korea as previously identified in the cases of the *guknaepa* participants. Under such popularly-held beliefs, English became deeply implicated in the construction of an idealized personhood, with its acquisition serving as an undeniable index of the transnational experiences through which one’s neoliberal spirit is forged (J. S.-Y. Park & Lo, 2012). Such a link between English and a desirable personhood served to aggravate linguistic inferiority on the part of the participants, who increasingly felt that their individual values were determined almost exclusively by their English proficiency. Given the high level of linguistic insecurity felt by the participants, it can be argued that the translation and interpreting profession was seen as an opportunity to bridge the gap between participants’ current and ideal selves, given its reputation as a profession for “master English speakers” (J. Choi & Lim, 2002: 635), as reinforced through glamorous mediatized images of simultaneous interpreters.

다들 정말 professional 해 보이고 이런 완벽주의자 같고. 영어의 신이고 진짜 bilingual만 할 수 있는거다 이렇게 생각했어요.

They [Interpreters] looked very **professional** and like perfectionists. I thought that they are masters of English and that that’s something only **bilinguals** can manage - Nayeon

대학교 졸업하면서 어떤 통역사 분이 아침 프로에 나와서, 되게 오래 통역을 하셨던 분인데 – 네 – 얘기를 하는거 보니까 영어 잘하려면 그냥 오래 꾸준히 공부를 해야 되는거기 때문에 – 네 – 좀 그래도 되게 희망적인 말을 하시더라고요.

After graduating from university, one day, I happened to watch a morning talk show and they had a veteran interpreter as a guest – right – She advised that mastering English takes a long time and one should be persistent – right – and I found her advice very encouraging - Miae

Similar to the stories of the *guknaepa* participants, the *haewaepa* participants also held dreams about the profession which are well illustrated by the pre-conceived images that they reported about the profession when they made the decision to pursue this career path. Six out of the eight participants described the profession with labels such as “멋있고 (glamorous)”, “능력있는 바이링구얼 (competent bilinguals)”, “최고의 전문가 (most professional people)”, “똑똑하고 당당한 (smart and confident)”, or “완벽주의자 (perfectionists)”. Such a high evaluation of the profession is a powerful example of the “dreams” held by the participants who were suffering from day-to-day linguistic struggles. The dreams appeared attainable due to the mediatized images discussed above that held out the tantalizing possibility of achieving, through sheer hard work, endorsement as a perfect language professional. In the next section, I will trace how their dreams unfolded in reality both in classroom and professional/personal contexts with a particular focus on the struggle for linguistic authority between *guknaepa* and *haewaepa*.

## 6.5. Production of language anxieties

This section examines how the dreams held by the participants about the profession are played out in the university classroom as well as professional and personal spheres. I will first explore their experiences in the translation and interpreting classroom, where students are engaged in fierce competition to become “perfect” bilingual speakers.

### 6.5.1. In the classroom: the struggle for linguistic authority

As Bourdieu (1992) notes, linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker who knows their language perfectly. Such a statement is particularly apt in the case of translation and interpreting training, in which a perfect mastery of language is idealized and upheld as a goal to achieve (J. Cho & Roger, 2010). The way in which linguistic

perfectionism is pursued through hard training at translation and interpreting institutions is described as “살인적인 (murderous)” (Baek, 2008), for students study for over twelve hours every single day for the length of the program in order to be “perfect” bilinguals. In the case of the GSIT, retaking a unit is not allowed: if a student receives a fail grade, he or she must leave the school. After completing the two-year program, less than half of the students at the GSIT manage to pass the qualifying examination on their first attempt (Baek, 2008). Those who fail to pass the exam are given seven additional chances within three years of the completion of the program. If they use up their chances, they will forever remain “incomplete” on their academic transcripts. For some, perhaps most, translation and interpreting classroom was the most competitive linguistic arena, in which the Spartan-like training did not tolerate anything less than perfection.

정말 너무 힘들었어요. 내가 준비가 안됐구나 계속 이렇게 생각했죠.

It was so difficult. I kept thinking that I was not ready - Semi

너무 힘들더라고요. 어떤 때는 내가 정말 사년제 대학을 어떻게 다녔나 싶을 정도로.

I found it so tough. Sometimes, I even wondered how I managed to finish a four-year university degree - Soyoung

In a highly competitive environment in which everybody aimed to be perfect, students naturally envied the language resources of the other group, and tensions soon arose between *haewaepa* and *guknaepa*. For *guknaepa*, it was what they regarded as natural and fluent English pronunciations of *haewaepa* that they strongly desired. As they tried to emulate *haewaepa*, they came to believe that becoming as proficient as *haewaepa* in English was a practical goal to achieve in their effort to become an ideal bilingual.

그 친구는 영어를 물론 당연히 잘 하고, 한국 말을 조금 못하지만. 그래서 아, 저렇게도 영어를 잘 할 수 있구나 – 네 – 라는 생각이 들어서 그 친구를 나만의 롤 모델로 삼고 열심히 했었어요.

She [a *haewaepa* classmate] spoke English so well of course, but her Korean wasn't as good. I was so impressed that one can speak English that well – right – so I secretly established her as my role model to motivate me more - Sunmi

In their collective effort to achieve perfection, some, however, felt gradually demoralized due to the enormity of the required norm of perfectionism. The participants reported that they had become increasingly doubtful about their ability to become English language professionals as time went by with no apparent progress in sight.

비교를 해보자면 저같은 경우에는 영어가 잘 안되니까 한영 영한이 다 불안했고 - 예 - 그래서... 원어민들이 좀... 부러웠죠 @ 제 해외파 친구 같은 - 음 - 한국어를 되게 잘 해, 잘 해요 - 예 - 제가 아는 **native speaker** 들은 다들 되게 한국어도 잘 하는 사람들이어 가지고 - 네 - 그냥 비교 많이 했던 것 같아요. 아 그냥... 그냥 미국에서 태어났으면 좋았겠다 이런거.

If I compare, in my case, both English into Korean and Korean into English conversions were not up to the level because of my poor English - right - so... I was... envious of native speakers [classmates fluent in English] a bit @ like my *haewaepa* friend - m - her Korean is, is really good.- right - the **native speakers** that I knew were all good at Korean - right - so I think I kept comparing myself with them. It's like... I wished that I had been born in the U.S. - Jihye

Jihye's description of her *haewaepa* classmates as "native speakers" is worth noting in that it clearly demonstrates how much the *guknaepa* participants valorized the language skills of their *haewaepa* counterparts. In the eyes of the *guknaepa* students, *haewaepa* were ideally equipped with perfect conditions that would enable them to achieve the desired linguistic goals. Through constant comparisons with *haewaepa* and resultant self-abasement, some participants displayed a tendency to discount their linguistic assets. This is well illustrated by Seohye's case below.

서혜: 제 인생이 정말 영어랑 아무런 관련이 없다는게 너무 슬프더라고요... 외국에서 어린 시절을 보내지도 않았고 전공도 영문학이 아니고 - 네 - 제 일도 영어랑 관련이 없고.

리서처: 그래도 영어는 캐나다에서 배우셨잖아요.

서혜: 어... 그건 상관이 없는게 남들처럼 이렇게 체계적으로 영어 공부를 한 건 아니니까요.

Seohye: I felt so sad that my life had nothing to do with English... I didn't spend a

childhood overseas and my major was not English language literature – right – and my job had nothing to do with English.

Researcher: But you learned English in Canada.

Seohye: Um... it doesn't count, because I didn't have a chance to study English as systematically as others.

What the *guknaepa* participants were blissfully unaware was, however, the fact that the *haewaepa* students, who they envied and desired at the same time, were also experiencing a heightened sense of linguistic insecurity due to stresses related to linguistic perfectionism. It was, in a way, more complicated in their cases, as some participants felt lacking not only in English but also in Korean for not having learned the Korean language systematically through formal education. They felt particularly inferior due to their self-assessed inadequate Korean language skills, and saw English as a means to compensate for their weaknesses, so that English became even more significant for some *haewaepa* participants.

학교에서는 학생들이 국내파 해외파로 나뉘잖아요. 누가 그렇게 정하는게 아니라 그냥 선생님이 보기에, 좀 그렇게 대하는 거죠. 내가 영어를 못하면 정말 아무것도 아닌게 왜냐면 내 한국어가 완전 썩었으니까요.

At school, students were categorized into *guknaepa* and *haewaepa*. Not by any particular person, but in teachers' eyes and they kind of treat it that way. And I thought that I would be nothing if I were not good at English, because my Korean was so bad - Miyeon

As the competition intensified, their own language learning backgrounds again presented a dilemma to the *haewaepa* participants. As the *guknaepa* students idealized and idolized them as natural and impeccable speakers of English, the participants felt pressured to live up to the expectations of the fellow students without yet being able to show their inner struggles.

통역은 어차피 저한테도 처음 시도하는 거라서 – 네 – 다 낯설고 힘든데 – 네 – 그런데 여기서 저를 로컬 친구 보듯이 – 예 – 그래도 잘 하겠지 사람들이 이렇게 생각할까봐 – 네 – 통역 시간에 저도 표현을 생각 못 해냈는데 친구들이 “어, 이런 말 호주에서 쓰지 않아?” 이러는 거예요! 그 다음에 “너 호주 살았잖아. 너는 왜 몰라?” 이럴까봐 – 네 – 저 혼자 많이 위축됐었죠.

I had never studied interpreting before – right – and everything was so new and hard – right – But people viewed me as a local Australian – right – and I was afraid that they might expect me to be very good – right – During interpreting class, my classmates always asked me “Don’t you use such an expression in Australia?” when I too was struggling to find the right expressions! I was afraid that they might say “You’ve lived in Australia, and you don’t know this?” – right – I was always so anxious - Miae

The stereotypical images of *haewaepa* as imagined by *guknaepa* frustrated many *haewaepa* participants, who identified their own language learning backgrounds as personal suppression.

나도 걱정이 많은데 [...] 나보다 나이가 많았는데 맨날 “너는 나이도 어린데 뭐가 문제야. 너는 나이도 어리지 영어도 잘하지, 팬찮아” 그런 식으로 얘기했었어요. “야 넌 나이도 어린데 석사까지 했잖아. 넌 영어 잘하니까, 걱정하지를 마” 무조건 이러는거예요.

I had my own worries [...] They [*guknaepa* classmates] were older than me and they always said “You are young, so you will be fine. You are young and speak English well, so you will be fine.” They always said “Look, you are young but you will soon have a Master’s degree. And you speak English well, so you don’t need to worry at all” - Yoonjeong

Similar to the cases of the *guknaepa* participants, some came to blame or even deny entirely their linguistic resources for feeling highly insecure about their own ability to personify the desired interpreter personhood.

다른 사람들은 영어쪽 일을 하다가 이 공부를 한 사람들이 많잖아요. 영어 선생님 하셨다든가 영문학을 전공했다든가 뭐 그런게 있는데 – 네 – 저는 전혀 영어에 대한 백그라운드가 없었기 때문에 거기서 오는 부담감 이렇게 굉장히 컸었어요. 실제로 다른 사람들은 다 재료가 있는 상태에서 요리를 시작한다면 저는 재료도 없는 상태에서 요리를 해야 하는 그럼 상황이어서. 좀 부담도 많이 됐었고 거기에 대해 피해 의식 같은 것도 있고.

Most people at school did something related to English before coming to the school. Teaching English or majoring in English literature, you know – right – However, I didn’t have any English background and it was really stressful. It was like while other

people got ingredients ready to cook, I didn't have any ingredients to cook with. I got stressed a lot and felt inferior - Youngmi

When I reminded Youngmi of her overseas experience in the U.S., she was still reluctant to see this as a “legitimate” ingredient, saying that her English grammar was much weaker compared with that of *guknaepa* who, in her view, had learned it properly through the building of sound grammatical foundations. Two other participants were of the same opinion that their explicit knowledge of grammatical structure was not as sufficient as that of *guknaepa*, because they learned English in a naturalistic setting without having structured opportunities to strengthen their grammatical knowledge base as an important element in training for the mastery of English. Their feelings of insecurity related to English could, however, not be revealed as they were idealized as perfect speakers of English by *guknaepa*. The gap between their self-positioning as an inadequate speaker of English vis-à-vis the external evaluation of *haewaepa* as native English speakers, in turn led them to believe that becoming as competent as a native speaker of that language was the best way to be recognized as an absolute language authority.

외국인이다 이런 느낌이 안들게끔 얘기할 때 표현 같은 것도 자연스럽게 – 음 – 되게 구어적인 표현들도 그렇고. 외국스러운 느낌이 나게끔 어색하지 않게 커뮤니케이션을 자연스럽게 하고 싶어요. 외국인하고 좀 잘하는 사람들하고 영어를 하면 내 영어를 평가받는다는 느낌은 항상 있는 것 같아요 – 음 – 이 사람들은 알잖아요, 이게 자연스러운 표현이구나 아니면 아, 애가 아무래도 이 어휘나 구조나 이렇게 외국인이니까 좀 부자연스럽구나 이렇게.

I don't want to look like a non-native English speaker, and want to use natural expressions [when I talk to native speakers] – mm – I want to use verbal expressions well. Something that sounds like a native speaker and natural so that I can communicate well with them. I think I am obsessed with the worry that when I talk to foreigners or good English speakers, they might evaluate my English – mm – They can tell if I can speak natural English or if I am just trying to compose awkward sentences and expressions as a non-native speaker - Nayeon

The fact that *guknaepa* idealized *haewaepa* as a language authority and *haewaepa* upheld nativeness as an ultimate ideal highlights that both sides were, in fact, not in tension but were in collective pursuit of a particular image of an elite, “standard” speaker that is valued by

the society. While *guknaepa* regarded *haewaepa* as a role model, it was not *haewaepa*'s fluent English itself but a standard image of a perfect bilingual as informed by the interpreter personhood that they desired. In a similar vein, the high evaluation of *guknaepa*'s linguistic competence by the *haewaepa* participants illustrates that it was not *guknaepa*'s explicit grammatical knowledge of English itself, but an image of a perfect speaker that is often embodied in the figure of native English speakers. As perfection is presented as an achievable goal through sheer individual effort in an idealized figure of interpreter tied to neoliberal ideologies (See Section 6.2), they felt frustrated by their own inability to deliver the desired linguistic perfection while simultaneously feeling envious of the other side, who in their eyes was equipped with better resources. With this finding in mind, I now turn to explore the professional and personal experiences of the participants in order to examine the impact of neoliberal ideologies on individual language learners outside the classroom.

#### 6.5.2. In the professional and private spheres: images sustained in ideologies

Analysis of the data reveals that the linguistic struggles which the participants experienced in the classroom did not end even after realizing their dreams of becoming professional interpreters. In a way, the newly-acquired “master English speakers” (J. Choi & Lim, 2002: 635) label served to add more stress in a broader social context, in which both the *haewaepa* and *guknaepa* participants felt obliged to live up to external expectations about professional competence and yet were unable to do so. In the case of the *guknaepa* participants, their continued feelings of linguistic insecurity were predominantly attributed to an inferiority complex related to their local language learning backgrounds. As Gyujin, a veteran interpreter with around 20 years of experience, confessed during the interview, she considered her personal background as an obstacle to her professional career due to what she saw as inadequate English skills compared with *haewaepa*.

주변에서 대부분 영어 발음을 너무 중시하니까요 [...] 국내파 출신이라는게 아킬레스건 같았죠.

People [clients and audiences] usually value good English pronunciation so much [...] I felt that being *guknaepa* was my Achilles heel - Gyujin

Linguistic struggles continued in the case of the *haewaepa* participants as well, as the level of societal competition over English continued to rise and their personal and professional backgrounds are viewed as a threat by *guknaepa* with whom they are engaged in a job-

seeking war (*gujuk jeonjaeng*) in a tight employment market. Since English proficiency is regarded as the most important element in securing a decent white-collar job in the local market, anyone with sound linguistic credentials is likely to meet with jealousy, with some even being excluded due to what is perceived as a privileged background.

친구들 많이 안만났어요, 명분상 취업 준비 한다고 안만나는 거지만 – 네 – 몇 명을 만나본 결과 애네들이랑 나랑은 지금 기본적으로 다른 세상에 있다. **Well, it's a border and I would say invisible, but you can feel it [...]** 만나면은 가벼운 얘기, 남자 친구 얘기를 하거나 학교 얘기를 하지 – 음 – 미래에 대한 비전 이런 거 안해요. **My problem is I don't know what I want to do**, 이들은 어떻게 구직 때문에 이것들을 쌓아야 하는지가 고민인 거 같아요. “너가 그 정도인데 우리는 어떻게겠냐?” 라고 말을 할 때 내가 미안해야 할 일인가 싶을 정도로, 그래서 내가 말을 안해요.

I don't see my friends on the pretext of preparing for job interviews – right – I have met some and realized that they think that they and I belong to fundamentally different worlds. **Well, it's a border and I would say invisible, but you can feel it. [...]** When we meet, we just talk about superficial things such as boyfriends or schools – right – We don't talk about our dreams for the future. **My problem is I don't know what I want to do**, but their problem is how to build all the skills required for a job. They say “Look, if you say it's hard for you, can you imagine how hard it must be for us?” Whenever they do that, I don't know whether I should be apologetic or not so I just shut my mouth - Yoonjeong

While apparent tensions between the two groups showed no sign of ceasing, both sides were, at the same time, faced with a common challenge in relation to an increasing number of Koreans proficient in English due to “English fever”. With a growing number of people speaking English fluently, both sides feared that their professional worth might be questioned at work if they were not viewed as “perfect”.

요즘 영어를 잘하는 분들이 많아서 – 음 – 막상 통역하러 가보면 그 분들이 기술적인 분야라든지 그런건 알아서 하시려 하고 통역사가 쉬고 있어야 하는 그런 상황도 꽤 되더라고요.

There are many people who are good at English these days – mm – Sometimes when I am on an interpreting assignment, they want to handle technical parts on their own and I don't really do anything but just sit there - Kyunghee

버티고는 있는데, 요즘 영어 잘 하는 사람 너무 많잖아요 – 네 – 통역 수준은 아니더라도 – 예 – 그거를 내가 넘어설 수 있을 정도로 훨씬 잘해야 하는데 그냥 얼핏 들리기에 도 되게 잘해야 되는데 – 예 – 사실 아닌데 그게 극복이 쉽지 않잖아요.

I am doing my best at work, but these days there are so many people who can speak English – right – not to the level of being able to interpret maybe – right – My English should be much better than theirs and should sound fantastic when someone hears me speak even briefly – right – but in actuality, it is not and it's hard to get there - Sunhee

At the same time, they came to realize that the status of translators and interpreters was not as glamorous as it had appeared to be prior to their career decisions (See Chapter 7 for further details). The participants were, however, unable to expose the felt reality while the glamorous images of interpreters disseminated in the mass media remain highly visible to Korean society at large. In the end, they decided to perform social selves that masquerade inner conflicts.

내 눈에는 통역사가 멋있어 보이느냐 그건 또 다른 이야기죠 왜냐하면 I know 그 속 사정을 내가 아니까 – 음 – 내가 통역을 안하지만 주변에서 듣는 얘기가 있으니까요. 주변에서 듣는 얘기들은 진짜 insider talk 잭아요 – 예 – 우리가 외부인한테 그런 소리는 안하잖아요 – 예 – to keep that image anyway.

It is a different story if interpreters look glamorous in my eyes because **I know** what it's like – mm – I no longer do interpreting but I hear a great deal from other people about it. That's **insider talk** – right – and we don't say that to other people – right – **to keep that image anyway** - Miyeon

As the feelings of anxiety and insecurity continued to grow, some participants began to consider the possibility of yet another career transition. In the case of Jihye, for example, she successfully applied for an international law school following the completion of a translation and interpreting degree. After feeling highly sceptical about the possibility of becoming a professional interpreter due to her self-assessed lack of English, Jihye was hoping that her law degree would provide her with a competitive edge in the currently tight employment market.

처음에는 – 네 – 처음에는 통번역을 살리고 싶어서 들어간 거였어요 – 네 – 인제 로펌같은 데서도 분명히 법률 지식을 가지고 통번역 지식을 가진 사람을 필요로 할 것 같고요.

Initially – right – initially, I applied with the goal of working as a translator and interpreter – right – I thought that law firms would surely need people with legal knowledge as well as translation and interpreting skills - Jihye

While some participants were trying to find a way to enhance their individual competitiveness by acquiring skills in addition to language skills for survival, many were, however, adamant to accomplish the goal of linguistic perfectionism through persistent effort.

정말 열심히 해야죠. 이거 정말 어렵잖아요 – 네 – 이거 처음 시작했을 때 꿈꿨던 그런 모습이 되려면요 – 네 – 근데... 예, 정말 열심히 해야되고 어쨌든 혼자 해나가야 되는거니까.

You must study really hard. It's really challenging – right – if you want to be the kind of person that I dreamt of when I began this [translation and interpreting studies] – right – but... yes, you should work really hard and you are the only one to explore this path - Eunhye

When the stories of celebrity interpreters who have become perfect bilinguals through individual effort are widely circulated in the media, the participants wanted to believe it possible to become a perfect speaker while at the same time, exhibiting a *mea culpa* attitude in which they continued to blame themselves for lacking the required language competence to achieve linguistic perfectionism.

희전: 왜 채용 공고 보면 항상 “네이티브 수준의 영어 능력 요함” 이러면 “과연 네이티브 수준의 영어 능력은 뭔가?” “나는 어디쯤 도달해 있는가?” “과연 내가 여기에 채용 원서를 내면서 네이티브 수준의 영어를 구사해요 라고 말할 수 있는가?” 고민해요.

리서처: 그러면 답은 뭔가요?

희전: 맨날 그래요, 맨날, 거짓말 하는 것 같아요!

Heejeon: When you see Korean job ads, they always say “We are looking for people who have native-level English competence.” I cannot help but wonder

“What’s native-level English?” “Where am I at?” “Can I really say that I am a native English speaker when I apply for this position?”

Researcher: And your conclusion?

Heejeon: I always say this, always, I feel like I am a liar!

## 6.6. Conclusion

Detailed above are the complex ways in which English as valued capital in Korean operates in individual as well as societal beliefs as informed by neoliberal ideologies. The unique local context in which language learners are hierarchized provides a fertile ground to explore the nexus between language learning and neoliberalism against the backdrop of “English fever.” While it appears that the local linguistic market is marked by competition between *haewaepa* and *guknaepa*, it serves to obscure the reality in which both sides are in fact driven by a powerful societal ideology in which the unachievable is presented as achievable. The discovery of linguistic insecurity felt by English language learners raises one important question: how has the concept of linguistic perfectionism been so deeply internalized among English language learners despite its undefinable and vague nature?

The analysis shows that the media plays a key role in leading people to believe that linguistic perfectionism is feasible. When the figure of a perfect speaker who knows *everything* and never makes any mistakes is celebrated in the mediadization of interpreter personhood, people tend to see that becoming a perfect bilingual is no longer a dream but a real possibility. It bears noting that none of the participants problematized the viability of becoming a “perfect” speaker but rather blamed themselves for lacking the independent spirit required to achieve linguistic perfectionism. It illustrates powerfully that when neoliberal ideologies are combined with particular images of language speakers, it creates and enhances radical images in which achieving the unachievable is presented as real. Such a combination of neoliberalism and perfectionism, in turn, continues to strengthen the apparent structure of competition between *haewaepa* and *guknaepa*, while driving both to an ever-greater level of linguistic insecurity. It is perhaps through this destructive cycle of neoliberal competition that “English fever” has been sustained across society. As long as society operates in the ideology of nothing but individual accountability and responsibility, individuals are destined to suffer from cutthroat competition in which failures are seen not as structural problems but as individual faults resulting from a condemnable lack of strong will. In this sense, attention to the reinforcement of linguistic insecurity and perfectionism as reflected here throughout

the linguistic journeys of English-Korean translators and interpreters may offer a powerful way to highlight the nexus between neoliberalism and English.

## Chapter 7. Fashioning selves: gender bias in language and mobility

### 7.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the motivations behind the participants' English language learning in relation to local cultural norms and individual gendered beliefs. Gender and language ideologies are inextricably intertwined with each other, as together and/or separately, they serve as mediating links between social structures and power relations (See Section 2.4.1). As noted in Chapter Six, the participants were predominantly females – only one male among the 32 participants – and exploring factors that influenced their career decisions can thus help us explore how gender and language ideologies intersect in the context of gender dynamics of Korean society. Given the need for studying gender and language in order to incorporate diversities that exist in different local contexts (See Section 2.4.2), this chapter aims to examine local processes by which gendered beliefs and attitudes have been shaped among Korean females who learn English as a tool to achieve their gendered female agenda. I will begin by sketching out how gendered norms and expectations have been constructed, negotiated, and at times rejected in Korean society.

### 7.2. The burden of female work-life balance

On September 16, 2009, the headline “나는 나쁜 여자입니다 (I am a bad woman)” appeared in a full-page newspaper advertisement placed by one working Korean mother. In the free daily newspaper *Metro*, Hwang Myung-Eun mournfully complained that “I may be a good employee, but to my family I am a failure” adding that “we work harder than anyone to manage housekeeping and earn wages, so why are we branded as selfish, irresponsible women?” As Blaine Harden noted in a *Washington Post* article dated March 1, 2010, the then 36-years-old senior executive of a Seoul-based marketing firm paid \$8,600 to buy the ad to vent her frustrations at a corporate culture that often marginalizes women in the workplace and a family culture that demands prioritization of traditional marital duties over careers for women. Pointing to a lack of childcare support from the government and the world's lowest birth rate, Harden drew attention to the fact that Korean women are expected to play multiple roles with little or no family support under a dominant patriarchal ideology.

The fact that, as of 2013, Koreans worked the second-longest hours among OECD countries (Business Korea, 2014) makes it even harder for Korean women to perform

multiple roles. As women are required to bear the dual burdens of familial and financial responsibilities, one way of coping is to postpone or reject marriage. According to the Population and Housing Census announced by Statistics Korea in 2010, the number of unmarried women in Korea had increased across all age groups during the past five years, particularly in the age group of 25 to 34, the so-called “marriageable ages” or *honki*. To be more specific, the percentage of single women aged between 25 and 29 rose from 59.1 percent in 2005 to 69.3 percent in 2010, while that of unmarried women between the ages of 30 and 34 increased by 10.1 percent to 29.1 percent during the same period. While a growing number of women are postponing marriage and childbirth in order to climb the corporate ladder, they are viewed as egotistical and self-centred by both the family and the society due to the pervasiveness of gendered norms that obligate women to follow a normative female life course dictated by marriage and motherhood. The issue of work-family balance causes concerns to young and educated single women who feel trapped between their own mobility desires and institutional obligations that remain intact, as Nayeon, a 25-year-old single participant, explained:

티비에서도 그렇고 기사도 그렇고 되게 많이 보도가 되면서 – 네 – 그냥 커리어적으로 성공을 했는데 결혼을 계속 안한다든지 – 음 – 가정을 제대로 돌보지 못해서 그런 것 때문에 가정에서 갈등이 있다든지 – 음 – 이런거에 대해서 좀 되게 문제가 있다는 뜻으로 보도를 하는걸 보니까 – 예 – 그게 가벼운 문제만은 아니구나 이런 생각이 조금 들기 시작한 것 같아요.

They [career-oriented single ladies] have been widely covered in newspapers and TV – right – They have a successful career and yet are not married – mm – and some [married career women] are unable to look after their family well and experience related issues within family – mm – As the media portrayed them as kind of a problem – right – I started to realize that it [marriage] is not a simple issue  
- Nayeon

It is against this backdrop that I aim to explore the intersections between gender, language, and mobility among the participants, who were predominantly single females at the time of the research. Among the 31 female participants, only five women were married, two were engaged, and the rest of the 24 participants were singles. Among the five married participants, only one was married at the time of translation and interpreting training, while the other four studied translation and interpreting as singles and married afterwards. As for

the 24 participants who remained unmarried at the time of the interviews, around one-third of the participants or seven women were beyond the socially-acceptable marriageable ages. The predominantly single status of the participants at the time of career changes through English language learning suggests that there is a strong link between gender, language and mobility which is related to career, class and/or transnational movement in this research. In this regard, exploring factors that influenced their career decisions is expected to reveal how English mediates gender and mobility in relation to local particularities, as I will show next.

### 7.3. Translating personal and public female selves

As noted previously (See Section 2.4.3), the ideal of contemporary womanhood in Korea involves a woman who is married and can assume both domestic and financial responsibilities. As discussed in Section 2.4.2, women (and men) respond to gendered norms and expectations in three different ways – acceptance, struggle, or resistance. While few participants reject marriage, it is important to note that many participants were experiencing struggles due largely to the gap between personal and public expectations of an ideal female self. Whereas some were willing to pursue an ideal local female biography, some rejected social demands in pursuit of individuated lifestyles, and some struggled in between. English was viewed as a common tool to pursue desired life styles among those highly-educated ambitious females and, yet, it carried more nuanced meanings in relation to gendered attitudes and goals. Accordingly, I have identified three types of English language ideologies: English as a way to meet normative gender expectations; English as a way to carve out a niche in anormative gender identities; and English as a means to pursue outbound mobility. I will discuss the first ideology of English as a way to meet normative gender expectations in the next section.

#### 7.3.1. English as a tool to write normative female biographies

I shall begin with the ideology of English as a tool to meet normative gender expectations among women who “cannot deviate from the social roles they are obliged to play” (Matthews, 2003:119). Out of the 31 participants, a total of fifteen regarded English as an instrument to achieve a desired female biography. Four were married, two were engaged, and nine were unmarried at the time of the interviews. The age range of the participants was between the early-20s and early-40s.

Table 7.1. The profiles of participants in pursuit of normative gender roles

Pseudonym	Age	Marital status	Job before T&I training	Year of graduation	Current job
Jihye	21-25	Single	Television producer	2010	Law student
Soyoung	41-45	Married	Institutional language teacher	2009	Freelance translator/interpreter
Hyomin	26-30	Married	Institutional language teacher	2010	Full-time housewife
Eunhye	26-30	Single	Freelance translator	2008	Freelance translator
Sunhee	26-30	Single	Unemployed	2006	Corporate interpreter
Sangah	26-30	Single	Unemployed	2008	Corporate interpreter
Miae	26-30	Single	Corporate worker	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Hyunjin	26-30	Single	Corporate worker	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Sara	21-25	Single	N/A	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Nayeon	21-25	Single	N/A	2011	Job-seeking
Junghee	21-25	Single	Unemployed	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Soohyun	31-35	Single	School English teacher	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Gyujin	46-50	Married	Publishing house worker	1993	PhD candidate
Seohye	26-30	Single	Corporate worker	N/A	Job-seeking
Miyeon	31-35	Married	N/A	2002	English news writer

While they all wished to develop their careers through a profession grounded in English, they simultaneously emphasized the importance of institutional norms dictated by marriage and childbirth. In other words, they wanted to “have it all” – career, marriage, and motherhood – with English as a key. Among the four married participants in this subgroup, three women were singles when they studied translation and interpreting. That is to say, a

total of fourteen women in this subgroup made a choice to build a career in the field of translation and interpreting as singles. I will first look at what influenced the career decisions of the then-and-now single participants in the context of a gendered local labor market before moving on to explore how English is leveraged in the current space. Among the fourteen participants who were singles when pursuing a translation and interpreting degree, three women had gone straight into studying translation and interpreting after completing their bachelor's degrees, three had been unemployed, and eight had had a job. In the case of those who had worked previous to translation and interpreting training, it is important to note that their career choices were concerned with the social pressures that they faced in Korea in which women are discriminated against in the workplace. While English seemed concerned with self-development as a mechanism for further career enhancement and personal growth among the participants in general, the participants shared a view that they felt that their career prospects were doomed just because they were women, and wanted to pursue a career in which they thought sexism was less prevalent.

제가 방송국을 다니고 있었는데 그게 제작팀이었고 - 예 - 그게 피디 과정이었는데 - 예 - 근데... 제가 오래 버틸 자신이 없었어요. 그래 가지고 오래 할 수 있는 직업이 뭐가 있을까 하다가 - 예 - 통번역은 인제 여자로서 되게 오래 할 수 있는 직업이라고 생각을 해가지고요.

I worked for a broadcasting company and was part of a production team – right – and I was being trained as a producer – right – but... I wasn't confident about working there for a long time. So I began to wonder about what kind of job I can do on a long-term basis – right – and thought that translation and interpreting is, um, a profession that women can do for a long time - Jihye

Korean women are one of the most-educated groups among OECD countries as seen in the high university admission rate of women at 74.3 percent, which exceeds 68.6 percent achieved by their male counterparts (Y. Kim, 2013). As of 2014, however, Korea ranked the lowest among the OECD countries in terms of the percentage of women with higher degrees who were economically active (Hyundai Research Institute, 2014). As an example, the proportion of female employees with university degrees at the top ten *chaboels* as of 2011 stood at 18.5 percent on average (Yim, 2011). Moreover, the income gap, in which Korean women received an average 39 percent less than men, was the largest among the

OECD member countries as of 2010 (M. Park, 2012). A majority of women – even those who graduated from prestigious universities – work in unskilled predominantly service areas to serve males who comprise 99.3% of the management level staff at *chaboels*. Women are, clearly, disadvantaged in the labour market which favours men (E. A. Kim, 2007). For example, Junghee remained unemployed for over six months before applying for a translation and interpreting graduate school despite her reputable degree in commerce from a top-tier university. Her choice of going to a graduate school was, in part, an escape from the reality in which gender-based employment discrimination was prevalent. Junghee saw English language learning as a strategy to strengthen her qualifications required for a white-collar job in Korea.

정희: 대학교 끝나고 취업 못한 사람들이 끝내 대학원으로 발걸음을 돌리는 경우가 많잖아요, 우리 나라가 – 예 – 저도 그 중의 하나라고 생각했던 것 같아요.

리서처: 지금 생각해보면 어땠던 것 같아요?

정희: 어, 반반이었던 것 같아요 @ 아니, 반반은 아니고 도피가 한 이십 퍼센트는 있었던 것 같아요.

Junghee: In Korea, many university graduates turn to graduate schools as a last resort if they can't get a job – right – They [friends] might have thought that I was one of them.

Researcher: How would you assess your situation in hindsight?

Junghee: Um, maybe half and half? @ No, not half-half, but I think maybe around twenty percent was to escape.

At the same time, the participants faced another important life choice: marriage. As pointed out previously (See Section 7.2), they were increasingly aware of the dilemma that married working women face in Korea and were conscious that career decisions significantly impact marital and family expectations. The findings indicate that whereas the participants prioritized career ambitions and considered marriage as an option when they were younger, they became conscious of their age as they entered the marriage market in which men generally marry younger women (Sports Korea Media, 2010). In addition, a societal view of unmarried women as “losers” significantly influenced their perspective on marriage as well.

시집갈 수 있는 기회는 나이들면 없잖아요 – 네 – 그래서 저는 다른 사람들이 누군가가 시집도 못 갔다고 얘기하면 – 네 – 틀린 말은 아니라고 생각하거든요. 시집도 못 간 사람들은 다 특징이 있어요. 그 나름대로 특징이 있기 때문에 – 네 – 그래서 저는 그걸 이상형이라든지 그러지는 않아요 – 음 – 결혼하는게 더 맞는 것 같아요.

Chances of finding someone to marry will be limited as you get older – right – If people say that somebody didn't EVEN get married – right – I don't think it's wrong to say that. Those people who didn't even get married have reasons. They do have certain reasons – right – So I don't consider them as my role model – mm – I think it's much better to get married - Soohyun

The data analysis indicates that the participants, who were keen to marry as well as enhance a career in the gendered employment market, were attracted to the profession of translation and interpreting particularly by the prospect of leading an ideal female life in which career and family can harmoniously coexist. As language work can fit in well with typical female biographies due to its often casual nature (See Section 2.5.3), the flexibility accorded by the freelance work style of the profession was attractive to the participants for it provides them with the opportunity to pursue an attractive career-family balance.

사실 그게 제일 문제인 것 같아요 – 네 – 그게 가장 큰 고민일 것 같은데요 – 예 – 그래서 제가 아까 말씀드렸듯이 여자로서 프리랜서 활동을 하고 통역을 하는게 그런 면에서는 장점이 있는 것 같아요. 아무래도 회사에 매여있으면서 높은 지위로 올라가는 것 보다 – 음 – 내가 좀 더 자유롭게 시간에 덜 구애받고 할 수 있는 직업을 갖는게 둘 다 이렇게 병행하기에 제일 좋은 것 같고요.

It [balancing work and family] is the biggest issue – right – I will continue to worry about it – right – That's why a freelance lifestyle of interpreters gives an advantage to women, like I mentioned before. Rather than working for a company and wanting to climb up the corporate ladder – mm – I think it'd be better to have a career that allows you not to be constrained by time and lead a free lifestyle so that you can balance both work and family - Nayeon

At the same time, the perception of interpreters as glamorous language elites as well as a feminized profession (See Section 4.5.2 and Section 6.4) motivated the participants to build a genuinely professional career as a woman. The figure of a simultaneous interpreter who works at an international conference as a glamorous cosmopolitan presented them

with a vision for the future that would otherwise remain uncertain as it does for many Korean women.

It is a very prestigious job, I think especially for women, right? – 음 – 남자가 한다면 또 좀 느낌이 다를 것 같아요. 여자들 왜 그렇잖아요 뭐, 유치원 선생, **certain jobs** 가 있잖아요 – 예 – **Definitely** 통역사는 유치원 선생과는 급이 다르고 – 네 – 또 되게 **professional** 하다는, 근데 **professional** 한건 진짜 사실인 것 같아요.

**It is a very prestigious job, I think especially for women, right?** – mm – It might be a bit different if men do this. There are **certain jobs** that women can do, like, such as kindergarten teachers – right – **Definitely**, interpreters have a different class from kindergarten teachers – right – and they are regarded as highly **professional**, and I think being **professional** is true - Miyeon

The contrast in the social status between male and female interpreters pointed out by Miyeon was echoed by the only male participant, Jonghoon. It is, however, worth noting the impact of societal gender stereotypes on individual perceptions of the profession, which has always been regarded as a “woman’s job” due predominantly to gendered expectations of women as additional income earners.

제 생각에 한국에서 여자 통역사들은 **professional** 하고 제대로 인정받고 **high class** 라고 생각합니다 [...] 이 직업의 본질은 남자 여자 관계 없이 똑같이 느끼겠지만 – 네 – 아무래도 어, 경제 활동 참여 면에서는 둘 사이에 차이가 있지 싶어요. 뭐 이게 양성 평등이라든지 차별이라든지 그런건 절대 아니고요 – 네 – 그냥 한국에서 여성은 남자 통역사랑 비교했을 때, 그 가족을 부양해야 한다는 면에서 유리한 것 같아요.

In my opinion, female interpreters in Korea are highly **professional**, properly recognized, and **high class** [...] The nature of the profession should be felt the same by both men and women – right – However, I gather that there are differences between both genders, um, in terms of economic participations. It’s not to do with gender equality or discrimination – right – But in Korea, female [interpreters] are at an advantage compared to their male counterparts, um, with regard to pressures on family support - Jonghoon

While the casual nature of the profession was seen as an opportunity to achieve everything for women who were restricted in job options, it does not conform to the stereotypical societal view of men who need the security of a full-time job and the periodic regular advancement that comes with it as necessities of life in Korea (See Section 2.5.3). Data analysis indicates that fourteen out of the fifteen participants, who defined the profession as an exclusively female job, considered male interpreters as less prestigious compared to their female counterparts.

선희: 좀 더 심각하게 받아들이는 것 같고요. 남자 통역사는 캐주얼한 세팅에 데려가기 보다는 – 네 – 좀 더 포멀한 곳에 선호하는 것 같고 – 예 – 근데 여전히 안 좋아하는 것 같아요. 남자가 영어로 먹고 산다는 거에 대해서 대부분의 회사 분들이 남잔데 그거를 이렇게 못 받아들이는 것 같아요, 제 생각에는.

리서처: 왜 그럴까요?

선희: 글썄요. 그냥 뭐라고 그럴까, 회의실에 여자가 앉아 있으면 분위기가 더 좋아지는 것 같고요 – 예 – 모르겠어요 그게, 인간의 본성인지 모르겠는데 – 네 – 남자들은 대체로 여자를 선호하잖아요.

Sunhee: I think people take them [male interpreters] more seriously. They are preferred at more formal occasions – right – rather than at casual ones – right – Overall, they still have trouble getting accepted. Most corporate workers are males, and I think they don't really understand how males can make ends meet with English.

Researcher: Why is it so?

Sunhee: I am not sure. Well, how to say this, I think having a female interpreter at a meeting helps to create a good atmosphere – right – I am not really sure, well, maybe it's just human nature – right – Males mostly prefer females.

It is important to note that the profession which looks female-dominant is not immune to a gendered hierarchy deeply entrenched in local employment practices. While the industry appears to be feminized, as seen in the ratio of male and female interpreters which is around 3:7 (C. Lee, 2008), it often goes unnoticed that employment prospects of female interpreters are usually determined by males in powerful positions whom female interpreters serve. In other words, the reputation of the profession as a female-dominant

field is a “myth” constructed and reinforced by the cosmetic effects of the field that is technically feminized. The gender dynamics structured in the profession extend far beyond a work domain to a real private space, because the financial sustainability of a female interpreter is often contingent upon having or finding a husband who can provide a regular income. While a freelance work style can be seen as an opportunity to achieve everything, it can translate to a lack of job stability and thus constant financial stress for those who do not have a partner who can offset the financial insecurity endemic in the profession. Although the profession is generally recognized as a well-paying job in Korea (See Section 4.5.2), the reality can vary depending on the type of work that is undertaken. As of 2011, the local translation and interpreting market was estimated at around three trillion Korean won or roughly 270 million U.S. dollars (G. Kang & Lee, 2011). Despite its longest history in Asia, the market remains unstructured and unregulated and pricing is determined by more than a thousand individual agencies (G. Kang & Lee, 2011). Rate discounts are unavoidable and it is reported that in the case of translation, rate differences may be as high as 10,000 percent (G. Kang & Lee, 2011). During the interviews, the participants who were working as professionals shared their frustration at the lower-than-expected translation rates, which are unilaterally determined by agencies keen on eliciting discounts from individual translators.

시장 효율이 뭔지 잘 모르겠어요 – 네 – 그 쪽에서 싸게 해달라 강압이 들어오는 경우 어느 정도는 해줘야 되고요 – 네 – 정말 그 폭이 다양한게 공고 나오는 거 보면 몇 천원 대 이런 것도 되게 많아요 – 음 – 번역 시장은 난립해 있잖아요 – 예, 그렇죠 – 예, 그렇죠. 얼마 전에 왜 번역 때문에 FTA 문제된 적 있었잖아요 – 예 – 신문 기사를 읽었더니 번역의 단가가 백 배가 차이가 난데요.

I am not even sure about what market rates are – right – if they [agencies] try to push prices down, I have to accommodate their needs to a certain extent – right – There is a big range, and if you look at advertisements, there are a lot of cases that pay only several 1000 won<sup>8</sup> - mm - The translation market is unregulated as you know – yes, that’s right – Yes, that’s right. There was a big translation issue with an FTA [Free Trade Agreement] a while ago – right – I read from the news article that there are 100 times of differences in translation rates - Eunhye

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<sup>8</sup> One thousand won is roughly equivalent to one U.S. dollar.

Although not as bad as the case of translation, a gap also exists in interpreting. For example, one participant reported that she charged a daily rate of 400,000-600,000 Korean won (350-540 U.S. dollars) for simultaneous interpreting. In contrast, another participant said that she got paid 150,000 Korean won (135 U.S. dollars) per day for interpreting at a business meeting. While one might assume that simultaneous interpreters are better-off given the high rates that they seem to receive, work is irregular and during the low winter season, some did not work at all for two months. At the time of the interviews, five participants who were working professionally were experiencing a gap between dreams and reality, in which finding work is a perennial concern.

이 직업이 비전이 없다는 말도 많이 들었고요 – 네 – 내가 얼마나 통역사로 지낼 수 있을까 고민도 하고. 이게 통번역사는 요새 웬만해서는 풀타임으로 고용을 안해서 그런 것 같아요.

I've heard many times that this profession has no vision – right – and worried how long I can work as an interpreter. It's because translators and interpreters are hardly hired as full-time workers these days - Sangah

The gendered aspect of the profession is more conspicuous when considering the relationship between individual marital status and career ambitions. Among the five working women at the time of the interviews, two were married and three were unmarried. Although they all shared concerns about the financial aspect of the profession, the married participants appeared to be more relaxed than their counterparts for having a husband who played a breadwinning role. For example, Soyoung, the only married participant at the time of translation and interpreting training, was motivated to learn English in order to enhance her career from an English teacher at a small-scale language institute to a socially-recognized English language professional. Although Soyoung was working very hard as a freelancer, she did not hesitate to describe her work as a “hobby”.

어떻게 보면 이기적일 수 있지만 – 예 – 저는 농담 삼아서 “나는 취미로 일 해” 그런 말 하거든요 “@ - @ - 개네들은 그러면 “어우, 재수 없어” 이라고 @@ 저는 결혼도 했고 아이도 있고 내가 이를 만큼은 많이 이루었다고 생각하거든요 – 네 – 그게 이렇게, 제가 바라건 돈을 많이 벌고 그런 것 보다는 내가 하고 싶은 일 하면서 – 네 – 내가 가지고 있는 재능을 발휘하면서 하는 거기 때문이에요 [...] 저는 제가 수입이 들어오는 통장이 따로 있는데 그거 잘 체크도 안해요, 저는. 그냥 큰 것만 들어왔나 안 들어왔나만 체크를 하지

- 예 - 근데 그 쪽같은 경우엔 되게 안달을 많이 해요. “언니 이거 들어왔어요? 지난 달에 행사한 거 들어왔어요?” “글쎄, 나는 모르겠는데” @ 그래서 제가 느끼는게 - 네 - 아, 이게 받아들이는게 이렇게 다르구나

It might sound selfish – right – but I sometimes say as a joke that “I work for a hobby” @ - @ - and they [unmarried interpreter friends] say “Oh, I don’t like you” @@ I am married and I have a child and I think I’ve achieved a lot – right – well, I am not into making lots of money but I just want to do what I want to do – right – in order to fulfil my potential [...] I have my own bank account exclusively for [interpreting] income but I don’t bother to check regularly. I just occasionally check to see if a big amount has come in – right – On the other hand, they [single friends] are always edgy. They keep asking me “Hey, did you receive the payment? Did you get paid for the last month’s event?” and I say “Well, I don’t know” @ and I realize – right – oh, how different it is between me and those single friends -  
Soyoung

For Soyoung, who was happily married with a child, the decision to study translation and interpreting was related to her desire to develop a respectable career, the only missing piece in her otherwise perfect life. Relatedly, the two participants who were engaged were planning to build a career that would minimize disruptions on their expected family life. Eunhye, whose fiancée was about to be posted to a regional area, was working as a book translator, a job that she can manage anywhere. While expressing frustrations at a situation in which she was unable to secure a more stable employment, she constantly stressed the importance of working “within the boundary,” a compromise between her own career ambitions and marital obligations.

은혜: 얼마 전에 잡 오퍼를 받았는데요 - 네 - 그게... 사실 통역은 아닌데 그 한미 교육 위원단이라는 데서 온 건데... 주한 미군하고 연결이 되었어서 - 네 - 페이가 정말 좋거든요 - 음 - 근데 “저는 못 합니다” 그랬어요.

리서처: 왜요?

은혜: 조금 있으면 결혼할 거고 남친이랑 가족도 있을 텐데, 그 boundary 안에서요 - 네 - 근데 이걸 제가 일할 수 있는 그 boundary 밖이잖아요.

Eunhye: I received a job offer recently – right – it... wasn't interpreting but it was, um, from the Korean-American Educational Commission... because it was affiliated with the U.S. Army – right – their payment was really good – mm – but I told them “I can't do this.”

Researcher: Why?

Eunhye: It's because I am going to marry and start a family with my boy friend, um, within a **boundary** – right – but it was outside of the **boundary**, where I was expected to work.

For those women feeling obliged to stay within the boundaries dictated by convention, English was a strategy to exercise agency within structural constraints for the actualization of a comfortable future drawn up along gendered beliefs and norms. As for the rest of the eight single participants, for whom no apparent constrictions yet forced them to compromise on life choices, their commonly-shared singlehood seemed to represent an opportunity to “upgrade” their life with English as a key in some cases. In other words, the time-honoured ideology of English as a tool for social mobility was at work in the case of the single participants keen to marry at a certain stage of their life. As interpreters in particular are generally viewed as a high-class profession due to the status of English in Korean society and extraordinary mediatized images, becoming an interpreter represented an opportunity to climb the social ladder by finding a husband at the same level as the perceived social status of the profession. The extent of mobility desires held by aspiring interpreters is well illustrated in the following account:

통번역사 하는 사람들 중에 그런 사람들 많잖아요, 이걸 통해서 신분 상승을 이루고 싶은 – 네 – 처음에 놀랐던게, 통번역사가사람들이 이렇게 멋지게 보는 직업이었나 깨닫게 된게 친구들 때문에, 친구들이 어디 가서 통번역 공부 한다는걸 자랑스럽게 얘기한다거나, 그거를 자랑스러워 하는걸 보면서 통번역이라는 직업이... 그런 용도가 있구나 – 음 – 네, 그런 기능도 하는구나 – 음 – 그걸 느낀 이후로 가만히 보니까 그 뭐랄까, 사회적 신분을 중요시 하는 언니들이 통번역을 선택을 한 경우가 있구나 라는걸 느꼈어요.

I know that there are many such translators and interpreters who want to realize upward mobility through this profession – right – When I started, I was very

surprised to find how glamorous the profession is seen by people. I realized it through my classmates. They were so proud to say that they were doing translation and interpreting to other people. Looking at how proud they were, I realized that translation and interpreting... could be used for that purpose – mm – right, it's got that function as well – mm – After the realization, I noticed that is why older classmates chose this profession because they valued, well, how to say this, a social status - Junghee

At the same time, the existing ideology of English as an instrument for distinction was also identified among those participants. They regarded English as part of their core identity or a personal brand that can distinguish them from others through which to earn recognition and symbolic admiration.

현진: 저는 연관이 없는 사람이면 좋을 것 같아요.

리서처: 어, 그래요?

현진: 네, 저랑 다른 분야에서 잘 할 수 있는 사람 있잖아요. 제가 이런거를 좋아하고 잘한다고 믿고 싶으니까. 예를 들어 제 남편도 통번역산데 저보다 더 잘한다든지 그러면 굉장히 피곤할 것 같은거 있잖아요 @ 차라리 영어를 아예 못하던지 – 예 – 나를 존중하는 그런 사람이면 좋겠어요.

Hyunjin: I would like [to marry] someone who has no connection [to English].

Researcher: Oh, would you?

Hyunjin: Yes, someone who is good at other things, because I like what I do and want to believe that I am good at it. For example, if I have a translator/interpreter for a husband and he is better than me, it might be very tiring @ I would rather choose someone who doesn't speak English at all – right – and respects my ability.

As upwardly mobile as they are in terms of career and class, it should be noted that “mobility is, as it were, a reward for docility” (Bourdieu, 1977). While the participants' individual mobility desires seemed to be personal projects, it bears noting that their seemingly independent projects are intricately interwoven with gendered societal conditions in which female employment has become a key pre-marital condition. Amid a sluggish local economy, it is increasingly difficult for jobless women to marry, as Korean

men prefer a financially-capable woman in order to strengthen combined family finances (S. Hwang, 2013).

지금은 맞벌이 부부가 당연하게 되었잖아요, 한국이 – 네 – 그래서 이제는 직업 없이는 사실 선을 보더라도 직업이 없이는 인제 선도 볼 수 없다고. 정말 남자 입장에서도 자기 혼자 벌어서 먹고 살기가 힘들니까 – 네 – 직업이 있는 여성을 다 선호하고 – 네 – 지금 여성들도 옛날처럼 현모양처 뭐 이런게 아니라 – 예 – 자기가 원하는 일을 하면서 자유롭게 자기가 원하는 커리어를 만드는 그런 여성시대에 저희는 살고 있는 것 같아요 – 음 – 그래서 저도 거기에 걸맞게 제 직업을 가지고 – 음 – 그리고 가정에도 충실하고 예, 전 그렇게 다 해나갈 자신이 있어요.

These days, double-income families are a majority in Korea – right – without a job, even if you are introduced to someone through family-arranged blind dates, without a job, you can't even get a chance to meet a guy. Guys know how tough it is to make a living on one income – right – so they all prefer a woman with a job – right – and women themselves want to find a job where their passion lies and build a career out of it, rather than wanting to be a wise mother and a good wife – right – I think that's the kind of era that I am living now – mm – So I want to pursue a career in line with such a trend – mm – and want to do my best for my family at the same time. Yes, I am confident to do it all - Sara

The conversations with this group of young and ambitious females indicate that their career decisions were carefully calculated at the intersection of gender, language, and mobility, and English serves as a life-designing tool to pursue their mobility projects while keeping within conventional norms and restrictions. English carries the same significance as a life strategy with which to design an ideal future in which they have it all: fulfilling individual ambitions, finding emotional fulfilment, having children, and attaining social status. In the next section, I will examine another facet of English language ideologies by exploring motivations behind English language learning among those who were keen to construct anormative gender identities in Korean society.

### 7.3.2. English as a key to pursue individuated biographies

I will now trace the gendered aspect of the language journeys of women who spoke about English as a way to pursue individualized gender goals. As noted in Section 7.2, a growing

number of contemporary Korean women defer marriage in order to focus on careers, and this trend can be observed among the participants as well. While all the participants were highly driven by career considerations, for some ambitious participants work emerged as the core of their identity constructions. A total of six women who ranged in age from the mid-30s to mid-40s said they prioritized career development with English as a key. As all of them were at or past the so-called marriageable ages, it might appear that the participants rejected gender norms in pursuit of career success. It is important, however, to note that none of them repudiated marriage outright. Just like their younger counterparts, they too had wished, and still wished, to have it all, but fulfilling career ambitions had taken precedence over following a set female life course. By retracing their language journeys, I will explore what English means to this group of women who are carving out anormative gender identities in a society where the traditional role of women is highly delineated. The following table summarizes the profiles of the six women.

Table 7.2. The profiles of participants seeking female individuation

Pseudonym	Age	Marital status	Job before T&I training	Year of graduation	Current job
Aeri	41-45	Single	Language institute teacher	2009	English language teacher and freelance translator/interpreter
Kyunghee	41-45	Single	Language institute teacher	2008	Freelance translator/interpreter
Minah	46-50	Single	School English teacher	2010	School English teacher
Seul	36-40	Single	Foreign company employee	2008	Foreign company employee
Gyoungae	31-35	Single	Foreign company employee	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Dabin	41-45	Single	Freelance translator	2008	University lecturer and freelance translator/interpreter

While the increasing deferral and avoidance of marriage among Korean women is often considered a key indicator of their individualization (Chang & Song, 2010), for some participants in this subgroup, their never-married status was not necessarily an individual choice but an outcome of having to accommodate expectations of familial responsibilities embedded in local tradition. Two out of the six women – Aeri and Gyoungae – suffered from the impacts of the 1997/8 Asian Financial Crisis and had to alter their career or mobility plans accordingly. In Aeri's case, she had enjoyed her short-term English language learning experience in the U.K. so much that she ended up staying there for two years in her early-20s. She had to come back to Korea eventually to complete her university degree but was going to go back in order to pursue a higher degree. However, her plan was abandoned as her father's business went bankrupt during the crisis and she had to teach English at a language institute to support herself and her family. Gyoungae, too, had to become the breadwinner for her family following the crisis, in which her father lost his job. She got a job at a foreign company based on her English language skills learnt from a short-term English education program overseas, and supported her family for ten years. As being the eldest daughter in Asian families comes with greater filial duties to support a father and male siblings (Ferguson, 2000), they had to take on financial responsibilities as required by local gender norms.

제가 장녀라서 – 네 – 장녀는 가족을 부양할 책임도 크고 – 네 – 저희 아버지도 다른 사람들 처럼 IMF 때 타격을 입으셔서 제가 돈 벌어서 가족을 책임쳐야 했거든요. 일을 그만두고 싶을 때마다 항상 그만둘수 없는 이유가 있으니까 그냥 그런가 보다 했죠.

I am the eldest daughter – right – and being the eldest daughter comes with a heavy financial responsibility for the family – right – Like many Koreans, my father got heavily affected by the Asian Financial Crisis and I had to earn money to support my family. Whenever I was tempted to quit my job, there was always a reason that made me not quit, and I had to just accept it - Gyoungae

When they were finally freed from familial obligations, both participants began to pursue career changes through translation and interpreting. While personal growth and career enhancement through high-level English language study influenced their decisions, it is important to note that the financial consideration of being a single woman was a significant factor as well. Although they had never intended to stay single, they unintentionally passed

the “marriageable ages” while trying to support their families, without realizing how they were evaluated in the marriage market.

나는 나이가 많다고 생각을 안했는데 – 네 – 남자들 생각에는 여자가 서른 넘어가면 많다고 – 네 – 그 때도 난 “여자가 서른 넘은게 어때서?” 근데 아예 그냥 만날 기회조차 없게, 나이 많다고 – 예 – 그래서 모... 어떻게 하도 바쁘고 이러다 보니까.

I didn't think that I was old – right – but from guys' perspective, women over 30 were too old – right – and I was like “What's wrong with being over 30?” But I got denied chances of meeting guys just because I was too old – right – and um... I was busy working and that's how this happened - Aeri

Despite such an external evaluation of their marriageability, neither of them indicated that they felt impatient about marriage. After having been the sole earner for the family for many years, they became used to being financially independent and did not wish to rely on men for financial support. Their immediate concern was thus not necessarily marriage but long-term employment prospects in the context of the gendered employment market, in which women, particularly older women, are disadvantaged because breadwinning men are favoured due to their perceived familial obligations (Jaesook Song, 2006). The independent and professional images of the feminized translation and interpreting profession thus seemed to offer a golden opportunity to build a career free from gender discrimination. The self-regulated nature of a freelance career – the harder you work, the more you accomplish – as well as the versatility of English for employability convinced them of the possibility of achieving financial stability as well as self-realization on a long-term basis, as often touted in interpreter personhood (See Section 6.2).

전문직이고 항상 열심히 해야 되니까 정말 이상적인 직업이구나. 회사 다닐 때는 무슨 부족품 같은 느낌이었거든요. 임원이건 평사원이건 회사 다니면 다 똑같애 지는 것 같애요 – 네 – 몇 년 지나면 느슨해지기 십상이고. 그러니까 정말 괜찮은 직업이고 한 곳에 메일 필요도 없잖아요.

It is such an ideal job since it is a professional career and requires hard work all the time. When I was working for a company, I always felt like being one of components. Whether you are an executive or staff, people might feel that way in a workplace – right – It is easy to get complacent after a few years. In this sense, it looked like a great job and I don't need to belong to any organization - Gyoungae

At the time of the interview, Aeri had already begun planning for an early retirement. She was hoping to achieve an individuated lifestyle free from institutional expectations with English as a key through financial independence.

지금 이렇게 열심히 하는게 빨리 돈 벌어서 은퇴를 해야되기 때문에 @@ - @@ - 빨리 은퇴를 해야 되겠다, 이제 나이 들고 이러면 어디 다니기도 좀 그래서 - 네 - 어, 공부도 계속 하고싶을 것 같기도 해요 - 네 - 근데 일단 노후 준비나 그런 게 좀 되있는 상태에서 - 네 - 내가 스트레스 안 받고 공부 하고 싶을 때 하고 외국도 다시 나갈 수 있으면 나가고 - 네 - 열심히 빨리 돈을 벌어야죠.

The reason why I am working so hard is that I want to earn enough money as quickly as possible to comfortably retire @@ - @@ - I am planning to retire as early as possible. It's a bit difficult to attend a social gathering as an old single girl - right - um, I might want to consider doing further study - right - but I need to ensure that I will have enough nest egg for retirement - right - so that I can study if I want to without getting stressed or go overseas again if I have a chance - right - Making lots of money is my top priority now - Aeri

The appropriation of English as a tool to pursue individualization supported by financial stability was echoed by the other four women, although the types of English language ideologies identified in their cases seem to be more diverse. Unlike Aeri and Gyoungae, the other four participants in this group did not report the burden of familial responsibilities in relation to their language journeys. Their motivations behind English language learning seemed concerned with their mobility desires exclusively through careers, which had always been prioritized over marriage throughout their journeys. To be specific, Minah went to a university again in her late-20s to become a school English teacher after completing a bachelor's degree in French and working as a French teacher for two years. Similar to Minah, Seul majored in French and worked as a school French teacher for five years, before going overseas to take a short-term English language learning program. She later got a job at a foreign company on the basis of her language skills. Dabin worked as a freelance translator until the age of 30 and entered a graduate school of international studies, which was and still is highly competitive to enter. As all the classes were conducted in English only, however, she suffered from linguistic inferiority compared to her *haewaepa* classmates and eventually dropped out (See Section 6.4.1). In Kyunghye's case, she quit her job as a science researcher in her mid-20s in order to study English

overseas with the hope of specializing in an English-related field and got a job later as an English teacher at a reputable language institute. As such, a common element that emerged from their language journeys is that they had been highly driven by careers and had pursued career development exclusively through English. That is to say, the long-standing ideology of English as a mobility enabler was at work in their pursuit of English language learning.

그게 취직하는데 유리할꺼다... 라고 생각했고. 그렇네요, 꼭 배우고 싶어서 만든 아니었네요.

I thought that... it [English] will help me to find a good job. That's right. It wasn't just because I liked learning - Seul

At the same time, the cultural aspect of English language ideologies as expressed by the participants bears noting. It is in particular the gender dimension of the language ideologies in which the West was associated with equality and emancipation constructed by popular (female) imagination influenced largely by foreign media.

어... 저는, 굉장히 영향을 미쳤죠. 저는... 한국에서 여성의 의견을 무시하고 그런건 참 싫었는데, 영화같은데 보면은 외국에서는 여성들도 당당하게 자기의 의견을 내세우고. 그 다음에 가족에서 가족 구성원에서 켈 어리다고 해서 무시하고 이러는게 아니라 그냥 동등하게 의견을 표시하고. 이런 걸 볼 때 “아, 외국 문화는 참 그렇구나” – 음 – 그런 면에서 우리도 달라져야 할텐데.

Well... I, it [cultural images] influenced me a lot. I... didn't really like the fact that women were not allowed to raise their opinions in Korea. But in movies, I was impressed that Western women had rights to say what they think. And within family, even the youngest members of the family didn't get ignored but had an equal say. Whenever I saw such a thing, I thought “Oh, foreign cultures are like that” – mm – and I wished that we were different - Dabin

As such, English had also served as a tool to express their interest in other cultures, which in their imagination were more egalitarian and fairer compared to Korea's patriarchal and traditional society. Given their career ambitions and attitudinal disagreement with gender restrictions at home, it is not surprising that the participants were not so interested in following a set female life course dictated by marriage and childbirth. Although they were

all aware of the cultural significance of marriage embedded in the fundamentally gender-based structures at home, they were keen to develop their careers which they started relatively late. For them, marriage was an individual life choice rather than a decisive choice in life.

리서처: 그럼 젊을 때는 결혼에 대해서 별로 관심이 없었어요?

다빈: 네, 결혼에 대해서 제가 별로 관심이 없었고요, 저는 어떻게 하면 나를 더 개발할까 – 네 – 돈을 많이 벌고 남들 위에 서야겠다 이런 건 없었는데 – 음 – 꾸준히 뭔가 노력하고 성취 하는데 더 관심이 많았던 것 같아요.

Researcher: Does that mean that you were less interested in marriage when you were younger?

Dabon: Right, I was not really interested in marriage, but was more interested in developing myself – right – It wasn't like making lots of money or boasting of myself – mm – I just wanted to work hard to achieve more things my life.

While the participants had always been highly ambitious about career development, our reflective conversations about factors that led to the decisions to study translation and interpreting reveal a growing inner conflict with regard to the practicality of self-reliance as a single woman. Although Minah and Seul had relatively stable jobs as a school teacher and a foreign company employee, both of them felt increasingly sceptical of their long-term career prospects due to a self-perceived lack of English language skills, which were critical to their jobs. In Seul's case, it was an enduring sense of linguistic inferiority compared to her native English-speaking colleagues as well as Korean colleges fluent in English that gradually lowered her work performance as well as self-esteem. Minah, too, experienced an inferiority complex compared to an increasing number of students proficient in English as a result of early English study abroad. Studying translation and interpreting was related to their desires to gain linguistic legitimacy as an indisputable English language expert through which to strengthen their positions at work.

우선은 영어 교산데 해외 한 번도 못가봤잖아요. 여행은 해봤지만 가서 공부를 해본 적도 없고 [...] 그냥 회화랑 잘 알아들었으면 좋겠다, 그리고 그러려면 통번역을 공부해야겠다. 그렇게 생각한거죠.

First of all, I was teaching English but I'd never been overseas. I'd travelled before but never studied overseas [...] I wished that I could speak and comprehend well and in order to do that, I should study translation and interpreting. I thought so -  
Minah

In the case of Kyunghee and Dabin, who had worked as a language institute teacher and a freelance translator, they felt stuck in a job which offered neither personal development opportunities nor employment security. Although both women enjoyed the freelance nature of the work at individualized stages of their lives, the issue of employment stability linked to financial sustainability began to cause concerns as they got older. The independent and elite images of translators and interpreters with high earning capacity, therefore, were attractive, because the profession seemed to be the best available option for a 30-something single woman specializing in English.

그냥 좋아 보이는 거요. 동경의 대상. 전에는 그 때 고소득자로 많이 인정받았던 것 같아요. 우리나라에서 어학을 좋아하고 어학을 잘 할 수 있는 사람한테 최고의 길이라는 그런 사회적인 인식이 많이 작용을 했던 것 같고.

It just looked fancy. Something that I admired. I think there was a perception that it is a well-paid job. The best profession that people who are good at English or like English can pursue in Korea. I think that kind of social perception influenced me -  
Kyunghee

Unlike their expectations of the profession as an opportunity to build an autonomous individual life, however, the participants experienced a gap between their dreams and the realities in the field, in which older women are undervalued compared to their younger counterparts (H. Lee, 2011: See also Chapter 8). As an example, Kyunghee reported that she had tried in vain to find a job as a translator and interpreter at a government agency for six months after completing her master's degree. Given the local cultures in which younger females are preferred to older females, she speculated that her age might have been a disqualifying factor.

리서처: 혹시 왜 떨어졌는지 이유를 물어본 적 있어요?

경희: 이유를 물어보고 싶었는데 좀 그렇더라고요... 일단 제 생각에는 여러가지 이유가 있는 것 같아요. 뭐 한 두 가지 그런게 아니고. 나이가 아무래도 뭐, 관공서는 보수적인 기관이고 채용에 확실한 요구 사항이 있으니까요.

Researcher: Did you ever ask [recruiters] why they failed you?

Kyunghee: I wanted to ask them but hesitated... I think it was a mixture of many reasons. I don't think it was, um, just one or two. My age, well, might have been, since government agencies are conservative and have definite requirements for hiring a person.

At the time of the interview, Seul expressed her wish to work as a freelance translator and interpreter in the future rather than belonging to a particular organization. It was, however, not because of her proclivity for personal autonomy but because of age-based discrimination that particularly affect females in a workplace.

리서처: 프리랜서로요? 어디 소속되고 싶지는 않으시지요?

슬: 될 수 있음 좋겠는데 좀 힘든 것 같더라고요. 나이가 많이... 나이가 많이 좌우되는 것 같아요 우리 나라에서는.

Researcher: You wish to work as a freelancer? Don't you wish to belong somewhere?

Seul: It'd be good if I could but it seems a bit difficult. I think age... it seems that age is a big factor in Korea.

Age also figured prominently as an issue in their private space particularly in relation to marriage. As mentioned above, the participants in this group were at or had passed the "marriageable ages". At the time of the interview, Kyunghee was feeling increasingly anxious about the declining prospect of entering marriage as a woman in her 40s.

통역사이기 때문에 남들과 다른 결혼관이라기 보단 저와 잘 맞는 좋은 사람을 만나고 싶다는 일반적인 소박한 꿈이구요. 결혼 꼭 하고 싶어요.

Compared to other people, I do not have a particularly different idea about marriage just because I am an interpreter. Like everyone else, I just wish to find someone who is compatible. I do want to marry - Kyunghee

The issue of marriage was particularly affecting Dabin, who confessed during the interview that she regretted not having tried hard to find a husband when she was younger. In a society where single women are viewed as different or deviant, her self-perceived sense of lacking coupled with the ever-decreasing probability of finding someone with each passing year made her feel anxious and even desperate.

결혼이 제일 큰데 결혼을 꼭 해야 되거든요, 저는 @@ - @@ - 근데 정말 결혼 선배로써 - 네 - 이거 정말 어떻게 해야 될까요? 정말 괴로워요.

Marriage is the biggest issue in my life and I MUST marry @@ - @@ - As you are experienced with marriage – right – can you tell me what I should do? It just kills me - Dabin

While Seul and Kyunghee seemed less concerned about marital prospects, they could not be completely free from external influence on their current singlehood, either. Considering the high level of parental intervention with marriage particularly in the case of daughters in Korea (Chang & Song, 2010), it was getting harder for them to refuse their parents' authority to oblige them to choose marriage as they got older.

결혼에 대한 계획이요? - 예 - 어, 결혼 기회 되면 해야 되겠죠 @@ 기회 되면? 어, 이렇게 말하면 우리 엄마한테 혼나는데 @@ - @@ - 저는 할 생각은 있는데 - 네 - 적당한 기회가 아직, 좋은 사람을 아직 못 만났어요.

My idea about marriage? – right – Well, I guess I should marry if there is a chance @@ If there is a chance? Oh, my mom will scold me if she finds me saying like this @@ - @@ - I want to marry – right – but haven't had a proper chance, haven't met a nice guy yet - Seul

While the participants were feeling increasingly uncertain about their career and marriage prospects to varying degrees, it is worth noting that their attachment to and beliefs in English remained firm. Amid continued doubts about job security as an older single woman, English still figures as a key to ensure financial stability above everything else.

어... 영어...음... 제... 제... 음... 저를 먹여 살려주는 수단? @@ 어쨌든 제가 지금 하고 있는 일도 그렇고 - 네 - 영어를 못했으면 - 네 - 들어갈 수 없는 곳이었어요.

Well... English... mm... to me.... to me... mm... it's a tool to feed me? @@ My current job for example - right - I wouldn't have been able to get it - right - if I hadn't been good at English - Seoul

With the chances of actualizing career dreams and a family of their own slipping by, it was English that remained the sole certainty in their life. As discussed so far, the ideologies of English held by the participants vary: a tool for career enhancement and personal development; an instrument to ensure self-reliance; and a medium to connect to an imagined community characterized by gender equality. The multiplicity of English language ideologies indicates that their journeys have been significantly shaped by their beliefs in English, and English is inseparable from their life as something akin to a life project perhaps predetermined by fate as discussed by Minah:

그냥 막연히 하고 싶었어요. 그냥, 그냥 막연히 하고 싶다가 - 네 - 어, 그냥 잘 모르겠어요. 그냥 약간 운명 같은 생각을 했어요. 왜 내가 이렇게 영어에 목을 매나 - 네 - 모르겠어요 근데 전에, 예전에 한 친구가 한 번 점보러 간대요. 그래서 쫓아갔거든요 - 네 - 그 분이 그러더라고요. 저는 전생에 외국인 이었다는 생각이 들었어요 @ - @@ - 이유가 없어요. 그냥 막연하게 그냥 영어를 잘 하고 싶었어요.

I just wanted to do it [English language learning]. I just, just wanted to do it - right - Well, I'm not really sure. I thought that I was destined to do this. I don't know why I have been so desperate to learn English - right - I don't know. Well, a long time ago, one of my friends went to see a fortune teller. And I went along with her - right - While talking to the fortune teller, I thought that I might have been a foreigner in my previous life @ - @@ - there's no reason for this. I just wanted to be good at English for no reason - Minah

The findings from this section highlight that language ideologies are multiple and, at the same time, are inextricably interwoven with sociocultural conditions that shape gendered beliefs and behaviours. While English serves the practical purpose of self-reliance among the single participants, its ideational meanings as a female individualizer also feature as a central ideology. For the participants, English was perhaps the only available means with which to carve out anormative identities in a society in which a normative gender ideology

is emphasized. With this facet of English language ideologies in mind, I will move on to discuss another dimension of language ideologies among women who also wish to pursue individuated biographies yet beyond their homeland.

### 7.3.3. English as a means to actualize outbound mobility

I now turn to the last remaining group of women in search of maximal opportunities or “greener pastures” through English in a foreign land. A total of ten participants regarded English as a tool to actualize their outward mobility desires as influenced by individual perceptions of traditional gender identities at home. As the outbound mobility desires of the participants are closely related to their previous sojourning experiences, I will include brief details about those experiences in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3. The profiles of participants with outbound mobility desires

Pseudonym	Age	Sojourning	Marital status	Job before T&I training	Year of graduation	Current job
Semi	41-45	Short-term English learning in the U.S.	Single	Freelance translator	2006	PhD candidate
Jiyoung	21-25	Short-term English learning in Australia	Single	Institutional language teacher	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Sunmi	26-30	Short-term English learning & exchange student in the U.S.	Single	Corporate worker	2011	Corporate translator/interpreter
Junghyun	26-30	Short-term English learning in the U.S.	Married	Magazine editor	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Mirim	26-	Short-term	Single	University	2011	Freelance

	30	English learning in Canada		student		translator/interpreter
Yumi	36-40	Short-term English learning in Britain	Single	Freelance translator	2007	Waitress
Youngmi	26-30	Sojourning in the U.S. and France as a child/adolescent	Single	Foreign company employee	2011	Interpreter for supranational organization
Yoonjeong	21-25	Sojourning in Australia and the U.S. as a child/adolescent	Single	N/A	2011	Job-seeking
Sunhye	26-30	Sojourning in the U.S. as an adolescent	Single	Foreign company employee	2010	Institutional language teacher
Heejeon	26-30	Sojourning in Australia as a child	Single	N/A	2010	Corporate translator/interpreter

As noted in the table, four out of the ten participants were returnees. As discussed in Chapter Six, the returnee participants in general did not have positive sojourning experiences due primarily to day-to-day linguistic struggles in the host countries. It is, therefore, interesting to see why some of them considered going overseas as desired mobility destinations despite their early struggling experiences, and I shall begin with their stories first. Among the four returnee participants in this subgroup, Yoonjeong's feelings of exclusion and marginalization as *haewaepa* in the context of "English fever" in Korea were discussed in Section 6.5.2. Whereas Yoonjeong preferred to move overseas due to her sociolinguistic maladjustment back home, the other three participants reported the impacts

of local gendered norms and expectations on their growing outward mobility desires. It should be noted that the issue of gender among the participants is closely related to the issue of identity as returnees. In many cases, returnees experience trouble readjusting and subsequent identity crises due to two conflicting desires, to be included in the society's mainstream and at the same time to assert their uniqueness (See also Kanno, 2000). As a heavy emphasis is placed on ethnic and cultural homogeneity in Korea, returnees are often treated as different and many Korean returnee students are reported to express stress back home and are eager to get away again (I. Choi, 2009). The experience of intra-ethnic othering throughout readjustment processes, therefore, often results in identity crises among returnees, whose cultural identity is not the same as it used to be when they left the country.

고민은 해본 적 있어요, 왜냐하면 어떻게 보면은 외국에 있었을 때는 한국인이라는 취급을 받고 - 음 - 제가 또 호주에서 태어난 애들이랑 한국인 2 세들이랑 어울리면서 “어, 재랑 나랑은 진짜 틀리다. 재는 정말 걸만 한국 사람이고 정말 호주 사람이구나” 이렇게 느낄 때가 있고요 - 음 - 또 한국 와가지고 별거 아닌걸 가지고 사람들이랑 대화하다 보면 “어, 내가 백프로 한국 사람도 아니구나” 이렇게 느끼죠.

I thought about it [identity], because when I was overseas, I was regarded as Korean - mm - and when I saw people born in Australia, second-generation Koreans in Australia, I sometimes thought “Wow, they are so different from me. They look like Koreans on the surface but are Australians at heart.” - mm - When I came back to Korea, some little things that I talked about with Koreans made me think “Well, I am not really 100 percent Korean”. - Heejeon

It is largely through this position of being an “outsider” that they interpreted the existing gender structures. Having been exposed to different cultures at a formative stage of their lives, the participants felt resistant to the homogeneous cultures at home and yearned to assert their individuality. The set female life course defined by marriage and childbirth was contested and even repudiated in relation to their desire to pursue individuated biographies.

그니까 고등학교 때 엄마가 아빠가 열심히 공부하라고 해서 열심히 했고 - 네 - 졸업하기 전에 취직을 해버려서 - 네 - 이 년 동안 열심히 일했고 - 네 - 그 다음엔 남자 만나서 결혼하고 애기 낳고 그래야 되는데 - 네 - 근데 어머니 아버지도 다른 길이 뭔지 모르시더라고요. 그걸 대화를 통해서 알았어요, 어머니 아버지도 나한테 보여줄수 있는

길이 정해져 있구나 – 음 – 다른 사람이 어떻게 사는 것도 많이 보고 – 네 – 다른 사람이 어떻게 사는지 한 번도 몰라가지고 알고 싶었어요.

Well, I studied very hard during high school because my parents wanted me to do so – right – I got a job even before graduating from university – right – and worked hard for two years – right – The next step was obviously finding a guy to marry and have children – right – I realized that my parents didn't know any other way. I found through conversations with them that there are only limited choices that they can show me in life – mm – I wanted to see what others do – right – I didn't know how others lead their life and wanted to find out about it - Sunhye

The participants in this group of returnees, all of whom were of “marriageable age”, were particularly critical of institutional imposition on individuals to enter marriage at a certain stage of life. Images of the West, in which marriage is constructed not as an outcome of social pressures but as an individual choice, were attractive to the participants who began to see the West as offering an ideal condition to realize female emancipation with more opportunities.

아무래도 한국 사회에서는 저를 보는, 그런 20 대 후반의 여자를 보는 그런 틀이 있잖아요 – 네 – 일단 “졸업은 했으니까 회사는 다니냐?” “남자 친구는 있냐?” “시집은 안가냐?” 뭐 그런거 @ 그런거 에서부터 일단 자유로워질 수 있고. 그리고... 한국에 있을 때보다 외국에 나가 있으면 뭔가 더 기회가 열려있는 것 같은 느낌을 많이 받아요. 그런 기회가 뭐 구체적으로 있었던건 아니지만 그냥 그런 느낌이 있는 것 같아요.

Well, Korean society has certain stereotypes in terms of seeing me, about women in their late 20s – right – Like, “Did she get a job since she graduated a university?” “Does she have a boyfriend?” “When is she going to get married?” Things like that @ I can be free from such things [overseas]. And... I feel like I have more opportunities when I am overseas. Not that I had any real opportunities, but it's kind of a feeling - Youngmi

As critical cultural ideas constructed through intra-ethnic othering at home were strengthened and reinforced over time, two participants – Sunhye and Youngmi – actually attempted to migrate to the United States before studying translation and interpreting. In the case of Sunhye, she quit her job at a foreign company to explore the possibility of migration while staying with her relatives in the United States. Youngmi, too, went to the

United States to pursue postgraduate studies with the ultimate goal of settling down there. Sunhye, however, could not find a job that could support her towards achieving her migration goal and Youngmi failed to be admitted to a postgraduate institute. As chances of migrating to the United States appeared very slim, both women eventually had to come back to Korea. Their decision to study translation and interpreting in Australia was related to the desire to pursue individual mobility away from the homeland with English as a key.

전에 외국에 살고 싶었으니까요 – 네 – 영어는 기본이라는 생각을 했던 것 같아요.

I wanted to live overseas before – right – and I think I had this idea that English is a must - Sunhye

Unlike their expectations, however, Australia did not offer the opportunities that were imagined to be abundant in a foreign land. For one thing, the participants were disappointed at a lower-than-expected demand for translation and interpreting in Australia and had trouble finding a job that could ensure financial stability. As they failed to find opportunities that would enable them to settle down in Australia, the participants had to return home (again) following the completion of their translation and interpreting degree.

공부할 때는 좀 더 뭔가 다른걸 공부해 보고 싶고 쪽 공부를 할거라고 생각을 했었어요 – 네 – 이제 공부를 하다보니까 이걸 해보고 싶은 거예요 – 네 – 근데 호주에서는 사용할 수 있는게 한정이 되어 있었잖아요.

When I was studying [translation and interpreting], I was going to do something else, and I thought that I might continue to study for the rest of my life – right – But while I was studying, I really wanted to do it [translation and interpreting] – right – But there were only limited opportunities to use my skills in Australia - Heejeon

At the time of the interviews, the three returnee participants expressed different ideas about outward mobility desires. In the case of Sunhye, her fantasy about living overseas had largely died down after her two previous failed migration attempts. Sunhye, who was working as an English teacher at a language institute, enjoyed her job and was planning to open her own English language institute in the future. As for Heejeon, she was also quite content with her job as a corporate interpreter for a large conglomerate and was devoted to

developing her career, first and foremost. Marriage was an option for both women who were keen to pursue individuation free from marital obligations and restrictions at home.

희전: 제 친구들이 시댁이랑 맨날 난리치는걸 보면서 @ - @ - 그런걸 보면은... 그냥 제가 편하기는 해요.

리서처: 뭐가 편해요? 혼자라서?

희전: 네, 제가 하고 싶은걸 마음껏 할 수 있어서.

Heejeon: Watching my friends arguing with their parents-in-law all the time @ - @  
- Looking at them... I think my life is comfortable.

Researcher: What exactly is comfortable? Because you are a single?

Heejeon: Yes, because I can do whatever I want.

While English transitioned from a tool to actualize outward mobility desires to becoming an instrument for career enhancement and individuation at home for Sunhye and Heejeon, it remained as an outward mobility enabler in Youngmi's case. Despite her failed migration attempts, Youngmi had remained determined to go abroad and eventually found a job on the basis of her trilinguality – English, French and Korean – at a supranational organization overseas. It was not necessarily career development that influenced Youngmi to move abroad but the prospect of leading a life that was unfettered and unrestricted in a foreign land that beckoned as a land of opportunities.

저는 더 궁금한 것도 많고 제가 보지 못한 세상을 보고 싶기도 하고 하고 싶은 것도 많고.  
그래서 물론 정착을 하는게 좋기는 하겠지만 아직까지는 그게... 시기가 아닌 것 같아요.

I still want to know lots of new things, want to see a world that I haven't seen, and have lots of things that I want to do. It'd be good to settle down some time, but it...  
I am not ready for that yet - Youngmi

The appropriation of English as an outward mobility enabler was also identified in the remaining six participants, all of whom reported positive outbound experiences with regard

to their previous short-term English language learning abroad as adults. It is important to note that their migratory desires were tied to individual circumstances in relation to the felt degrees of “push and pull factors”. That is to say, depending on the existence of immediate institutional pressures at home, some participants felt more pushed out of the home country than pulled somewhere else, whereas some, who did not report any gender issues at home, were nevertheless pulled abroad for better opportunities. Two participants – Mirim and Jiyoung – expressed these desires. Both participants were attracted to stress-free, relaxing lifestyles overseas and decided to pursue a quality life away from unsustainable working cultures in Korea. Their choice of studying translation and interpreting overseas thus signified a prelude to settlement, a growing practice among international students (G. Yang, 2003). Both of them had long-time Korean boyfriends to whom they were committed and wished to pursue a family life in what they thought were ideal conditions that were inconceivable in Korea.

저는 그런 한국에서의 힘든 삶이 싫었던 것 같아요 – 네 – 호주 사람들은 여유 있고 가족을 우선으로 하고 – 네 – 결혼 생활에도 좋은 게 한국 같으면 남편은 맨날 일 하느라고 바쁘니까 가족에 신경을 쓸 수가 없잖아요 – 그렇죠 – 호주는 애들 교육에도 좋고요. 이런 저런 생각을 하다 보니까 호주가 살기에 좋은 나라구나 싶었어요.

I think I didn’t like the tough life in Korea – right – Australian people look so relaxed and they are family-oriented – right – It’s good for marriage as well, because in Korea, a husband is always busy working and cannot pay attention to his family – that’s right – Australia is good for children’s education too. Considering all these factors, I thought that Australia is such a good country to live in - Mirim

The participants can thus be seen as “lifestyle migrants” (Youna Kim, 2011b: 41), a recent migratory trend led by educated, middle-class and upper-class female travellers from Asian countries. Their second sojourn abroad was, however, significantly different from their first worry-free experiences as a temporary language learner. Jiyoung in particular found it stressful to cope with demanding translation and interpreting training in which nothing but perfection was condoned (See Chapter 6.5.1). In addition, feelings of exclusion as an international student in relation to linguistic and racial barriers led her to seriously doubt whether life overseas would necessarily deliver her desired opportunities. At the time of the interview, Jiyoung had just finished her first semester at university in Australia and had

decided to go back to Korea after completing her degree as a result of experiencing a gap between dreams and realities in life overseas.

기회가 좀 적을 것 같아요. 그리고 만약에 제가 정말 통역사를 한다 치면은 괜찮을 수도 있는데 그게 아니고 제가 영어로 말하는게 좋아서 그걸 직업으로 삼으려고 한다면 – 음 – 호주에서는 그게 안되는거 같아요, 다 영어를 쓰니까. 아무리 열심히 해도 못 따라가니까. 근데 한국에 가면은 제가 그걸 많이 이용을 하고 제 커리어로서 쓸 수가 있으니까요.

Fewer opportunities I guess. If I can work as an interpreter, it might be fine but if I want to seek a job that involves English speaking in Australia, just because I like English speaking – mm – it wouldn't work here because everybody speaks English. It wouldn't work no matter how hard I try. But in Korea, I can utilize it [English] well and build a career on it - Jiyoung

While some altered their migratory journeys along the way, some were determined to actualize outward mobility plans due primarily to stresses related to social pressures at home. Junghyun, the only married participant in this subgroup, was experiencing a gap between dreams and realities in her married life. Part of the reason she married while she was attending a translation and interpreting institute was her expectation that marital stability would help her to focus on her studies. Contrary to her expectation, however, marriage rather hindered her studies due to marital obligations as a daughter-in-law. As an example, Junghyun initially planned to study overseas after completing her translation and interpreting degree. She had to abandon that plan in the face of opposition from her parents-in-law, who wanted her to pursue a normalized family life at home. Feeling stressed by parental interventions in her personal choices, Junghyun was hoping to migrate with her husband in order to lead a life of their own. She believed that the profession of translation and interpreting, which is often viewed as one of the most internationalized professions that women can manage overseas (Kelsky, 2001), would confer an advantage in terms of her career development as a migrant.

저희 시부모님은... 그 분들은 그냥 전형적인 한국 스타일이세요. 며느리가 일도 하고 아들도 잘 챙겨줬으면 좋겠고. 이걸 외국에서 계속 일하기에도 좋을 것 같아서요.

My parents-in-law... they are just typical Korean in-laws, who expect their daughter-in-law to earn money while looking after their son well. I think it [translation and interpreting] will help me to keep working overseas - Junghyun

The ideology of English as a tool for migration by becoming translators and interpreters was echoed by the remaining three single women, who felt that they were pushed out of the country due to marriage pressures. Sunmi had been pressured by her parents to find a husband ever since she graduated from university. She had been constantly on blind dates arranged by her parents and relatives, and was actually engaged and disengaged twice. In the aftermath of her second breakup, Sunmi, who had enjoyed apparent gender equality and freedom in the West through her previous sojourning experiences, was led to look outward. Similar to Junghyun, her choice of translation and interpreting was strongly tied to her desires to be away from gendered expectations at home.

선미: 저는 사실 외국에서 직업을 갖고 일하고 싶었고, 그리고 호주에 당시 있을 때 싱가포르에 통번역사를 뽑아가지고 거기에 당시 지원을 했었는데 – 네 – 그게 잘 안되서 – 예 – 항상 외국에 나가서 살고 싶어요.

리서처: 왜 그러고 싶을까요?

선미: 어... 이것도 좀 유치한데 @@ 부모님이 너무 되게 좀 간섭... 간섭이라고 하면 좀 그렇지만 너무 결혼, 결혼 그러셔서. 그래서 이제 좀 안그랬으면 좋겠어요.

Sunmi: Frankly, I wanted to get a job overseas. When I was in Australia, I applied for an interpreter position in Singapore – right – but it didn't work – right – I have always wanted to live overseas.

Researcher: Why have you wanted to do that?

Sunmi: Um... it's again a bit childish @@ but my parents like to intervene... well, it might not be a right expression, but they are overly concerned about marriage. I hope that they stop doing it.

In the case of Semi and Yumi, who were in their mid-40s and late-30s respectively at the time of data collection, both of them had worked as unaccredited freelance translators in Korea for multiple years before starting their translation and interpreting studies in

Australia. While studying translation and interpreting through institutionalized avenues might appear as a logical step of career enhancement for unqualified translators, it should be noted that they were not necessarily motivated by career mobility alone. Semi, who was doing a PhD in Australia after completing a Master's degree in translation and interpreting, confessed during the interview that becoming a housewife had been her lifetime goal. As her first choice of marrying at the socially-defined ages did not materialize, she decided to study translation and interpreting overseas as a "second choice" away from public bias against an older single woman.

세미: 무슨 중요한 결정을 내릴 때는 내가 좋아하느냐가 관건이죠... 제가 하고 싶은거 위주로 살았던 것 같아요.

리서처: 어, 그거 좋은 자세데요. 좋아요.

세미: 그게 제가 아직 싱글이니까, 어찌 보면 사치죠. 나만 돌보면 되니까. 제가 돌볼 가족이 있으면 이거 안하죠. 그럼 공부 안할거예요.

리서처: 그럼 뭘 하시게요?

세미: 차라리 거리에서 행상을 해도 하죠 – 음 – 정말로요.

Semi: Well, if I have to make a big decision, I decide based on whether I like it... I think I have followed my heart.

Researcher: Well, it's a good attitude. I like it.

Semi: It might be a luxury because I am a single. I only need to look after myself. If I have a family to support, I wouldn't do this [a PhD]. If I do, I wouldn't study.

Researcher: What would you do then?

Semi: I would rather sell things on the street – mm – seriously.

In a similar pattern, Yumi felt that she had run out of choices in Korea in which neither marital nor career prospects looked promising. Yumi, who had already completed her degree in translation and interpreting in Australia and had applied for Australian permanent residency in 2007, was residing in Australia at the time of the interview in 2011. While she had been on a bridging visa after graduation, Yumi had tried for a year to find a job in

Australia on the basis of her postgraduate degree and a professional translator's accreditation, to no avail. Seriously homesick and financially stressed, Yumi returned to Korea in 2009. Unfortunately, life as an unmarried and unemployed 30-something woman in Korea was not any better. Apart from marital pressures from the family, employment prospects for the translation market were bleak due to low rates, with no other alternatives in sight. Unable to find emotional and financial comfort that she was seeking, Yumi felt again being pushed out of her home.

일단 집에 너무 가고 싶어서 왔거든요 – 네 – 너무 가고 싶어서 왔는데, 그런데... 제가 첫째로 나이가 많잖아요 – 네 – 그래서 주변에서 친구들이나 아는 사람들이 이거 해봐라 저거 해봐라 그러고. 번역은 제가 물어봤더니 단가가 너무 낮더라고요.

I just went home, since I got homesick – right – I was so homesick that I went back to Korea, but... I was old you know – right – so people like my friends suggested doing this and that. I inquired about translation rates but it was way too low - Yumi

After debating for months, she came back to Australia again in 2010 and got a job as a waitress at a restaurant. Despite continued financial stress and loneliness, Yumi, who no longer saw any opportunities at home, was trying to remain hopeful about living in Australia. After all, the unknowns of the foreign land in which she could at least “dream” about a new life provided more comfort than the cold realities at home. Australia was the only space for her to be able to imagine the future in which she wished to have it all by finding a respectable career, a relationship, and ultimately a family of her own, all of which seemed impossible to achieve at home.

내가 여기에 영구적으로 거주할거냐는 가정 문제와 직장 문제 그게 어떻게 풀리느냐에 따라서 달라질 수 있다고 말씀드렸던 것 처럼 – 네 – 가족도 제가 여기서 만들수 있는 거잖아요 – 네 – 또 직장도 잡겠다고 생각을 한거니까 그렇게 해야지 – 네 – 그 다음에 나머지 것들은 언어는 제가 얘기를 할 수 있을 정도는 되니까 괜찮을거다, 그리고 나머지는 사람 사는데는 다 크게 다르지 않을거다 저는 그렇게 생각을 했거든요.

As I told you, how I would fare here on a permanent basis depends on the chances of building my career and starting a family here – right – I thought that I can make a family here – right – I wanted to find a job, so I was going to looking for it – right – and the rest of the issues, I thought that because I can speak the language, I would

be fine. And I thought that things shouldn't be that different here because there are people living here anyways - Yumi

As discussed throughout this section, individual motivations behind outward mobility vary, although they are all closely related to gendered sociocultural conditions. The participants' narratives as presented here indicate how motivations are complexly layered and how differently language ideologies related to the issues of space, gender and career can be employed in relation to individual circumstances and gendered beliefs. The findings thus suggest that language ideologies are not a fixed entity, but fluid and appropriated differently depending on the life circumstances of individual actors.

#### 7.4. Conclusion

Detailed above are the complex ways in which gender, language, and mobility intersect in Korean society. As Butler (1990) said, it becomes impossible to separate gender from political and cultural intersections, in which it is invariably produced and maintained. Individual language ideologies and practices do not exist in a vacuum but are tied to ideological forces as exemplified in this chapter. Along with macro-forces, it is individual propensity – degrees of docility or independence – that strongly influences the shaping of language ideologies and practices at a micro level. Their choice of language learning is a response to social and gender norms, and English constitutes different meanings accordingly: a tool to achieve a normative gender identity; an instrument to pursue female individuation; and a key to actualize outward mobility desires. Under each theme, English again holds different meanings as a mobility enabler, a key to distinction, a cultural window, and a financial tool.

The multiplicity of English language ideologies draws attention to the diverse spectrums of women's language and mobility desires, which at time intersect. As noted in Section 2.4.2, language learning motivations among Asian females have so far been explored largely from the perspective of Western fetishism and outward mobility. While female sexual desire of Western men seems to be one existing facet of gendered language ideologies particularly in the Asian context, it is important to note that *none* of the 31 female participants expressed such desires at all in relation to their linguistic motivations. Their decisions to learn English were rather strongly related to their individual interpretation of institutional norms and their (un)willingness to follow a set female life course. The striking absence of the sexual aspects of language desires and the discussed role of female agency

on mobility desires stresses the multiple dimensions of language ideologies as a mediating link between social structures and individuals' awareness of language (See Section 2.3.1). The findings thus highlight a need to break away from the ideological monolith of female language desires in order to broaden the concept to account for macro-social specificity as well as micro-individual differences.

## Chapter 8. Adding value to language proficiency: English and beauty work

### 8.1. Introduction

This chapter sets out to explore the intersections between language, gender, and power in the context of the saturation of the local language market in which the focus is currently being shifted from language proficiency alone to ways in which value can be added to language proficiency. As the number of translation and interpreting institutes has increased since the late-1990s in the context of the globalization of the Korean economy, the local translation and interpreting market has almost reached a saturation point. Enhancing individual competitiveness has become an imperative for English language professionals, and appearance has emerged as one way of adding value among female interpreters. This process is best embodied by the recent media phenomenon of *eoljjang tongyeoksa* or “good-looking interpreters”. Since the beginning of the 2010s, the phenomenon has attracted public attention, as a group of beautiful female interpreters working on television has been sensationalized in the media. Against this backdrop, this chapter explores how the participants position themselves vis-à-vis the imperative to perform “aesthetic labour”. Defined as “a supply of embodied capacities and attributes possessed by workers at the point of entry into employment” (Warhurst, Nickson, Witz, & Cullen, 2000: 4), aesthetic labour is an important component of work in the contemporary service industry. By examining the self-positioning of the participants in relation to this market shift, the chapter attempts to demonstrate how English has been remoulded as an embodied capital in which aesthetic qualities of speakers can enhance the value of English.

### 8.2. The saturation of the language market

Whereas language was treated as political and cultural before the advent of late capitalism, language has been primarily treated in economic terms in the context of the new economy, which is characterized by a transition from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-based one (Heller & Duchêne, 2012). While the notion of language as a commodified object has drawn critical attention from a relevant scholarship (See McGill (2013) and Holborow (2015)), as regards language workers, this shift to a service-based economy has entailed new forms of linguistic and other agency that workers in principle must develop to meet the demands of the new economy (Cameron, 2000). The Korean translation and interpreting industry represents a key site in which to explore the commodification of

language and speakers, as language workers are now under pressure to perform beauty work in addition to language work in the context of market saturation.

Following its exposure to the national media between the late-1980s and early-1990s (See Section 4.5.2), the profession of translation and interpreting continued to gain popularity throughout the 1990s thanks to the government-led globalization drive and the subsequent growth in public interest in English language learning (See Section 4.6.1). In addition to benefitting from the national pursuit of globalization and English, the 1997-8 Asian Economic Crisis gave a further, even if unexpected, boost to the translation and interpreting industry, which had largely been dominated by freelancing conference interpreters or corporate translators/interpreters working for a limited number of foreign-owned companies. The field of translation and interpreting enjoyed an explosive growth in demand following the deregulation of the national market which allowed foreign capital to enter the domestic market (C. Lee, 2008). A growing demand for English-Korean translators and interpreters by companies which fell under foreign ownership, in turn, led to a rapid growth in the supply of English language professionals. Whereas the GSIT had been the only institute to offer translation and interpreting degree programs before the crisis, by 2004 nine institutes in Korea offered such programs. Most institutes were established between the late-1990s and the early-2000s, when the demand for translators and interpreters soared thanks to market liberalization (Herim Park, 2010).

Table 8.1. Translation and interpreting institutes in Korea

Name	Founding year
Graduate School of Interpreting and Translation at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies	1979
Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation at Ewha Woman's University	1997
Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation at Handong University	2000
Graduate School of Translation at Sungkyunkwan University	2000
Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation at Jeju National University	2000
Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation at Sunmoon University	2001

Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation at Busan University of Foreign Studies	2002
Seoul University of Foreign Studies	2003
Translation and Interpreting Program at Korea University	2004

Apart from a numerical increase in postgraduate institutes, several other factors have contributed to the oversupply of translators and interpreters. Firstly, bachelor-level translation and interpreting programs have been established as part of institutional internationalization efforts. At present, three major universities based in Seoul (Dongkuk University, Gyeonghee University and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies) offer translation and interpreting degree programs, and another university (Geumgang University) outside Seoul as well. Secondly, unaccredited translators and interpreters have increasingly entered the market as semi-professionals (Hyerim Park, 2010). As returnees, and even those who learned English overseas through short-term English language learning programs, tried to enter the market at reduced rates, their cheaper labour appealed to government organizations and small and medium-sized enterprises in particular (H. Lee, 2011).

Lastly and relatedly, the demand for translators and interpreters has dropped significantly as the number of Koreans proficient in English has increased in recent years due particularly to early study abroad (See Chapter 6). Returnees employed by local companies have begun to take on translation and interpreting tasks as companies asked employees with overseas backgrounds to do small-scale translation and interpreting work instead of hiring professionals (Hyerim Park, 2010). As Hyunjin, a translator/interpreter for a government organization, reported, the overall demand for English-Korean translators and interpreters has dropped noticeably in recent years due to an increasing number of Koreans fluent in English.

요즘 대기업이나 정부기관에 취업한 젊은층은 유학파도 많고 해서 영어로의 의사소통에 관리자급만큼 부담을 느끼는 사람들이 드물어요. 이런 상황에서는 아무래도 통역사의 역할이 위축될 수 밖에 없고 때문에 경기불황으로 인한 구조조정이나 업무분장에서 통번역사들이 가장 먼저 불이익을 당하게 되는 것 같아요.

Among young people employed by large conglomerates and government organizations, there are many people who have studied abroad. Few people have trouble communicating in English except for those at managerial levels. Under these circumstances, the role of interpreters is seen as less important, and translators and interpreters are the first to go in case of restructuring or reclassification of labour resulting from an economic downturn - Hyunjin (email)

As demand has dropped and the market has been overfilled with more than 200 new entrants annually from accredited institutes alone (N. Kim, 2004), the profession began to suffer from reduced remuneration. Market rates have been cut by 30 to 40 percent on average since the 2000s when the market began to be filled up (N. Kim, 2004). In less than a decade, translators and interpreters have been reduced from a scarce human resource to one characterized by oversupply. In the context of the oversupplied market, English language professionals have strived to enhance their market appeal by acquiring extra skills. Doing another master's degree or going abroad to study for an MBA after working as translator or interpreter has become a growing career-change trend in the industry (Heyrim Park, 2010). Furthermore, personal aesthetics have emerged as another way in which value can be added to English language proficiency as seen in the phenomenon of *eoljjang tongyeoksa* or "good-looking interpreters" to be discussed next.

### 8.3. From "Gurus of English" to "Goddesses of English"

"What is happening today is that all the professions into which women are making strides are being rapidly reclassified – *so far as the women in them are concerned* – as display professions." (N. Wolf, 1990: 27; emphasis in the original)

As Piller and Pavlenko (2007) note, multilingual skills are commodified in any form of labour where the work that is remunerated is linguistic, and multilingualism as a commodified practice has in itself become gendered. The idea of "multilingualism as a commodified practice" fits the notion of commodity as developed by Karl Marx (1967), who defines commodity as any good or service produced by human labour and offered as a product for general sale on the market. Not all commodities are, however, products of human labour and some can be traded "as if" they are commodities. In the Korean context,

English has long been regarded as a valued commodity for it has been perceived as an exclusive tool to achieve cultural, economic and/or social mobility throughout its development there (See Chapter 4). In the case of English-Korean translators and interpreters, their professional identity has been exclusively associated with English being a sought-after commodity as illustrated in the reputation of “master English speakers” (J. Choi & Lim, 2002: 635). As the market has become saturated in recent years, however, their linguistic asset has gradually lost value as seen in the reduced remuneration mentioned above. It is precisely against this backdrop that the aesthetics of female interpreters have been increasingly attached to English language skills as “value added” as exemplified in the phenomenon of “good-looking interpreters”.

The rise of “good-looking interpreters” emerged around 2010 most palpably in areas which are highly visualized, primary examples being sports and television broadcast interpreting. To begin with, sports interpreters serve the linguistic needs of imported foreign players or *yongbyeong* by mediating communications between coaches and team players as well as helping foreign players to manage their daily lives. When a ban on the import of foreign sports players was lifted around 20 years ago in Korea, only male players were allowed to be recruited (Yook, 2000). Due to the nature of escort interpreting which requires an interpreter to accompany a client all the time, the same gender was preferred and the field was male-dominated at the beginning. Female sports players were allowed to be imported in the mid-2000s, however, leading to a growing visibility of female interpreters in popular female sports such as volleyball and basketball. Just as the camera in contemporary media has been put to use as an extension of the male gaze at women (Coward, 2001), the male-dominated local media paid attention to the visual images, rather than the linguistic competence, of female sports interpreters. Interpreter Lee Se-Yoon is a good example. Lee, who was an interpreter for a local volleyball team in 2012, attracted public attention after she was shown (repeatedly) on camera during a televised volleyball match. Following the media exposure, captured pictures of Lee spread rapidly online and Lee was established as a “good-looking interpreter” among the public (S. Park, 2012). Since then, the physical attractiveness of female sports interpreters has been constantly highlighted in the Korean media in which young and attractive female interpreters are now called *tongyeok yeoshin* or “goddess interpreters”.

Relatedly, the field of television broadcast interpreting also began to grow around 2010. Since foreigners in Korea have increasingly participated in popular television talent show programs, their presence has led to a demand for interpreters to mediate between foreign contestants and show hosts on stage. This has resulted in the development of television broadcast interpreting. The mediatization of the distinctive look of broadcast interpreters soon drew attention from the public. Interpreter Park Hye-Rim is perhaps the best-known of these “good-looking interpreters” in Korea. Park initially earned fame following her appearance as an interpreter for a foreign participant on the popular music talent show program “Superstar K” in 2011. Coupled with her unique background as the former winner of a beauty contest, her aesthetics attracted keen public attention and she, too, became popular as a “goddess interpreter”. Amid continued popularity, Park recently wrote a book about her language journey and became the CEO of *Eunoia*, the translation and interpreting service provider.

Some celebrity media interpreters have successfully made a career shift after gaining fame as a “good-looking interpreter”. As an example, interpreter Kim So-Yeon earned popularity for her personal aesthetics following her appearance in 2011 on *Wedaehan tanseng* or “Great creation”, a popular television talent show program. After being established as a good-looking interpreter, Kim was successful in entering the highly competitive job of television news anchor. Another example is Lee Yoon-Jin, who served as an interpreter for the popular Korean singer *Rain* during his project to make inroads into the American entertainment market in 2005. She later married actor Lee Beom-Soo and has frequently appeared in the media as an interpreter, an English language teacher, or an entertainment show host. As a popular good-looking interpreter, Lee is currently running her own fashion business *Vielta*.

While the commercialized representation of beautiful interpreters illustrates a shift in the image of interpreters from “Gurus of English” to “Goddesses of English”, the ongoing beautification trend that has emerged in sports and media interpreting naturally raises the question of whether the trend is limited to celebrity interpreters working in particular fields or has percolated down to other segments of the field in which interpreters are under pressure to enhance their individual competitiveness. I will next explore if and how performing aesthetic labour has become an imperative among non-celebrity interpreters.

#### 8.4. The burden of aesthetic labour

When the interview data was collected in 2011, the phenomenon of “good-looking interpreters” had just begun. It was, therefore, not extensively covered among some participants, particularly among those who had not experienced the field yet (See Section 3.3.2). In order to strengthen the data to explore the impact of the current beautification trend on English language professionals in depth, I contacted the participants via email in the early-2015 to find out about their opinions on the phenomenon (See Section 3.3.2). Out of the 32 participants, a total of 27 people responded. As all of the student participants at the time of the interviews had graduated and were working at the time of the follow-up data collection, the data mostly comprise firsthand accounts from practitioners on the ongoing trend that emphasizes personal looks. The following table provides the profiles of the participants who responded to my e-mail request.

Table 8.2. A summary of respondent profiles

Name	Age	Marriage status	Year of graduation	Job
Semi	46-50	Single	2006	University lecturer
Jihye	26-30	Single	2010	International lawyer
Aeri	41-45	Single	2009	Institutional/university English teacher and freelance translator/interpreter
Kyunghee	46-50	Single	2008	Freelance translator/interpreter
Soyoung	46-50	Married	2009	Freelance translator/interpreter
Hyomin	31-35	Married	2010	Full-time housewife
Eunhye	31-35	Single	2008	Freelance translator
Sunhee	31-35	Married	2006	Corporate translator/interpreter
Sangah	31-35	Married	2008	Corporate translator/interpreter
Miae	31-35	Married	2012	Freelance translator/interpreter
Hyunjin	31-35	Single	2011	Translator/interpreter for a government organization
Youngmi	31-35	Single	2011	Interpreter for a supranational organization
Sunhye	31-35	Single	2010	Institutional language teacher
Sunmi	31-35	Married	2011	Corporate translator/interpreter
Minah	46-50	Single	2010	School English teacher

Yumi	41-45	Single	2007	Freelance translator/interpreter
Seul	41-45	Single	2008	Foreign company employee
Nayeon	26-30	Single	2011	PhD candidate
Mirim	31-35	Married	2011	Freelance translator/interpreter
Gyoungae	36-40	Single	2012	Freelance translator/interpreter
Soohyun	36-40	Single	2012	School English teacher
Heejeon	31-35	Single	2010	Corporate interpreter
Gyujin	46-50	Married	1993	University lecturer
Dabin	46-50	Single	2008	University lecturer
Miyeon	36-40	Married	2002	English news writer
Jonghoon	46-50	Married	2011	Local broadcasting company
Yoonjeong	26-30	Single	2011	Employee for a Korean embassy overseas

Of the 27 participants, eighteen were working as translators and/or interpreters in the field, and the remaining nine participants were working in different fields that are yet related to English (e.g. English language teaching, international law practice, and foreign affairs) except for Hyomin, who was a full-time housewife. As regards the first question of whether they had heard of the phenomenon of “good-looking interpreters”, 25 out of the 27 participants were aware of it. The two participants who had not heard of the phenomenon were residing outside Korea and stressed language skills as the most important professional qualification.

부끄럽게도 얼짱 통역사라는 말을 들어보지 못했어요. 대충 설명하신 것 보고 의미는 알겠는데, 개인적으로 영어를 하는 통역사에게 가장 중요한것은 영어실력이라고 믿어요. 굳게...

It is a bit embarrassing to admit that I had not heard of the term “good-looking interpreters”. I roughly got the meaning from your description, but I believe that it is English language skills that matter most for English language interpreters. I firmly believe so... - Hyomin

통역사의 임무는 언어 통역이기 때문에, 굳이 앞에서 빛날 필요는 없다는 생각이 듭니다. 결론적으로 저는 '플러스 알파'를 외모보다 영어실력에 더 치중하여야 할 것 같다는 생각을 합니다.

Interpreters are responsible for delivering messages, so I don't think they need to shine in front of people. In conclusion, I believe that they should focus more on improving English language skills than looking after appearances if they want to enhance competitiveness - Yoonjeong

As for the participants who were based in Korea and cognizant of the trend, many of them engaged critically with the phenomenon due particularly to their perception that the prioritization of individual aesthetics goes against the fundamental tenet of the profession's deep grounding in linguistic competence. As an example, Nayeon, a 29-year-old PhD candidate, expressed worries about the ongoing beautification trend which, in her opinion, leads to the devaluation of the linguistic and professional competence of interpreters.

'얼짱'의 경우 외모에 대한 화제성 때문에 성과나 실력이 대한 평가가 뒷전이 되는 상황이 발생할 수 있기 때문에 근본적으로 문제가 있다고 생각합니다. 통역사의 경우도 정확하게 내용을 통역하여 전달하고 회의든 인터뷰든 상황을 잘 전달하는 것보다는 얼굴에 주목하게 되거나 하는 상황이 발생할 수 있기 때문에 결코 바람직한 상황은 아니라는 생각이 듭니다.

As for "*eoiljjang*" [good looks], I think it is fundamentally problematic as it sensationalizes appearance and risks devaluing professional performance or competence. In the case of an interpreter, a focus might be placed on her face rather than the messages, which should be delivered accurately on any occasions such as conferences or interviews. So I don't think that it [the phenomenon] is desirable at all - Nayeon

As an emphasis on appearance was viewed as incongruent with the traditional professional identity of interpreters, celebrity interpreters were assessed as semi-language workers or

some sort of “infotainers”, whose beauty is more valued than professional competence in a field of their own.

얼짱 통역사를 동종 업계의 통역사로 간주하기 보다는 일종의 연예인 정도로 즉 ‘통역사’라기 보다는 대부분 ‘얼짱’으로 인식해 왔던 것 같습니다. 해당 분야에 나름 실력이 있어서 뉴스거리가 되는 분들이겠지만 얼짱이라는 말이 다른 직종도 아닌 통역사라는 단어 앞에 붙어있기 때문에 왠지 부정적인 느낌이 있었고 따라서 전문통역사라는 확신은 들지 않았습니다.

Rather than treating “good-looking interpreters” as fellow colleagues engaged in the same field, I think I considered them as some sort of entertainers. To me, they were more of “good-looking celebrities” than of “interpreters.” They must be competent enough to be newsworthy, but the fact that “good-looking” is attached to none other than interpreters gives a negative nuance, and I didn’t considered them as professional interpreters - Kyunghee

While the participants were trying to distinguish themselves from those whose names were circulating in the media, it bears noting that few were in denial of the benefits of appearance on the profession in the fields in which they were involved. The abovementioned participant, Kyunghee, for example, admitted in her three-page-long response that additional skills can benefit the profession due to the current market oversupply and appearance can be one way of adding value to an interpreter.

공급 과다로 인해 통역업계의 경쟁이 갈수록 치열해지고 있어서 실력 외에도 플러스 알파가 있으면 도움이 될 것입니다. 서비스적인 속성이 있으므로 얼짱 수준까지는 아니더라도 단정한 외모는 요구되며 가장 중요하게는 전문직의 위상에 적합한 외모는 유지해야 한다고 생각합니다 (복장, 태도, 매너 등).

It will be desirable if interpreters are equipped with additional skills in addition to linguistic competence, as the industry is getting more and more competitive due to the oversupply. A decent appearance, not to the level of *eoljjang* [good looks], is required due to the nature of the profession as a service profession. More importantly, I believe that interpreters should maintain aesthetics that are

appropriate to its professional status (attires, behaviours, demeanours etc.) -

Kyunghee

The rather contradictory positions that Kyunghee held on the beautification trend in the industry signify internal conflicts experienced by contemporary interpreters, who had been trained to be “Masters of English” through rigorous training (See Section 6.5.1) but were required to perform aesthetic labour in addition to language labour. The data show that the profession is increasingly undertaking beauty work across the industry in which personal aesthetics in assessable forms are required not only by agencies but also by clients. As both agencies and clients now have the luxury of “choosing” interpreters out of a pool of so many in contrast to trying to “woo” them when they were in short supply, demands for “professional beauty qualifications” (N. Wolf, 1990) have arisen in the saturated market in which interpreters feel increasingly anxious and worth less.

에이전씨들도, 뽀샵한 사진들을 클라이언트들한테 보내는거 보면... 일단은 이력서  
보고 한번이라도 기회가 더 가는것 같았구요.

Agencies enhance photos through retouch before sending them to clients... It seems  
that a good photo gives interpreters one more chance - Aeri

인하우스 통역사 위주로 구직을 해 본 결과, 통역 실력 외에도 연령 제한을 자격  
요건으로 내세우는 곳도 많고 수행 통역의 경우 취업 공고에서 남녀 모두 체격 요건을  
제시한 경우도 있었습니다 (키 ~ 이상 등).

I tried to find a job as a corporate interpreter, but a lot of organizations set age  
restrictions in addition to English language skills. In the case of escort interpreting,  
some companies demanded physical requirements for both males and females (e.g.  
a certain level of height) - Gyoungae

Another participant, Sunhee, a corporate interpreter with eight years’ experience, gave a  
more intimate account of the ongoing employment practices in the industry. As English  
language proficiency is no longer the single determinant to evaluate interpreters, it is

beauty that is used as the final yardstick by mostly male-dominated companies to measure the employability of female interpreters.

일례로 제가 2013년부터 2014년 초까지 근무했던, 남성이 90%인 공기업의 경우에는 본사에 근무하는 영어통역사 5명, 중국어통역사 1명이 평균 이상의 외모 (호감가는 첫인상, 신체조건, 옷차림 등) 와 스펙 (학력 & "해외파"라 일컬어지는 배경) 이었어요. 입사후에 당시 면접관들 (부장, 처장급) 과 친해져서 물어보니, 능력이 비슷하다면 외모와 나이를 본다고 하더라고요.

As an example, in the case of a state-owned company where I worked between 2013 and early-2014, ninety percent of employees were males. There were five English interpreters and one Chinese interpreter at the headquarters. All of them had above-average appearances (good first impressions, physiques, and fashion) as well as good conditions (academic credentials and education abroad or *haewaepa*). After I started to work there, I became friendly with those who interviewed me. I asked them [about how they choose people], and they said that if competence is similar, they value appearance and age - Sunhee

The ongoing shift in the local translation and interpreting market in which language work is being redefined as gendered work in relation to sexualized images of workers is clearly part of a global trend in which female-dominant fields are reclassified as “display professions” (N. Wolf, 1990) or “aesthetic labour” (Warhurst et al., 2000). In aesthetic labour, embodied competencies and attributes possessed by workers are mobilized, developed and commodified by employers through processes of recruitment, selection, and training and become aesthetically geared toward producing a “style” of service encounter in order to appeal to customers for increased business profits (Warhurst et al., 2000). Similarly in contemporary language service workplaces, detailed specifications of aesthetics through standardization, or “styling” in Cameron’s (2000) term, have been imposed on workers from the top for the purpose of enhanced customer satisfaction. Cameron’s (2000) research on the work practices of call centre workers illustrates that particular service styles defined by certain types of linguistic competencies and attributes (e.g. standardized accents and feminine attitudes) were required among call centre workers, most of whom were females.

In the case of translators and interpreters, however, such a view of “styling” as a top-down instruction does not seem to fit their employment status, as most of them are self-employed or freelance. Although the market demands aesthetics as an additional professional qualification, occupational status as self-employed service providers entails more of a community practice than a top-down order, and the way in which personal aesthetics are defined and embodied might vary among individual interpreters. In this regard, I will use the term “self-styling” to refer to personal strategies employed by interpreters to enhance individual competitiveness. Classically in sociolinguistics, style or styling is defined along an axis of individual language performance (Cameron, 2000). That is, “a stylistic agent appropriates resources from a broad sociolinguistic landscape, recombining them to make a distinctive style” (Eckert, 1996: 3). My own use of the term “self-styling” is grounded in Coupland’s (2007) notion of “style”, which he defines as “a way of doing something” (2007: 1). In this regard, “self-styling” is comprehensive in meanings. It not only refers to the speaker’s choice of verbal language but also non-verbal, aesthetically-gearred practices designed to enhance the value of an individual language worker (e.g. speech, attire, and makeup). I shall next examine the self-styling practices of interpreters who strive to increase individual worth by aesthetically appealing to the market that is currently overfilled.

### 8.5. Self-styling of language workers

In the following discussion, I will show in detail how various strategies are appropriated and recombined among contemporary interpreters to produce a particular service style. While some participants indicated that they resorted to a single strategy, others used a mixture of strategies, including age, smiling, voice, and professional beauty aids. I will begin with the discussion of age as a self-defined strategy among the participants in the context of gendered employment structures.

#### *Age*

As noted in Chapter Seven, many participants viewed the profession as a self-managed lifetime occupation grounded predominantly in linguistic expertise, which has no so-called “entry barrier” such as age restrictions. In reality, however, the gender dynamics of the market are such that younger interpreters are at an advantage compared to their older counterparts. Age (and appearance) is more valued than linguistic competence even in the case of recruiting simultaneous interpreters who are hardly seen by anyone because they

are working isolated in booths (H. Lee, 2011). It is, therefore, hardly surprising that age was highlighted by the participants as an important factor that influences the employability of interpreters.

종종 헤드헌터한테서 연락이 와 얘기를 나눠보면 한국은 특히 경력에 관계없이 젊은 통번역사를 선호합니다.

I often get calls from head hunters and have realized that Korean clients prefer young translators and interpreters regardless of work experience - Miae

요즘은 특히 나이도 플러스 알파 요인으로 인식 되고 있습니다.

These days, age in particular is regarded as an additional value - Heejeon

The market demand for young interpreters is deeply embedded in the gendered employment structures in which predominantly male clients hire predominantly female interpreters (See Section 7.3.1). As Gyu-jin, a veteran interpreter of nearly twenty years' experience, reported, male clients who are nowadays in a position to choose an interpreter out of so many want a "perfect" service package, in which an interpreter should be competent, beautiful and young.

저도 얼마전에, 기업에서 통역사를 추천해달라고 할 때 외모를 중시한다는 얘기를 들은 적이 있습니다. 통번역사의 이러한 불안정한 직업적 특성은 외모를 중시하는 현상과도 무관하지 않다고 봅니다. 외모라는 것은 멋있고 아름다워보이는 외적인 부분도 있지만 나이 역시 중요하게 인식되기 때문입니다. 통역 서비스를 사용하는 사용자의 입장에서 보면 실력도 있고 젊고 외모까지 갖춘 통역사라면 더할 나위가 없겠지요.

I recently heard that appearance counts a lot when recommending interpreters to companies. The job insecurity of translators and interpreters is not irrelevant to the ongoing trend of emphasizing personal looks. As for appearance, it includes the external effect of looking glamorous and beautiful but in actuality, age is important

too. From the perspective of clients who use interpreting services, if an interpreter is competent, young, and beautiful, they cannot ask for more - Gyujin

It is important to note that those who expressed concerns about the new aesthetics demand were not necessarily “old” by typical societal standards (See Section 7.3). For example, Eunhye, who was 33 at the time of the additional data collection in 2015, stressed that she was trying to look younger as part of her competitiveness strategies:

저는 어려보이고 예뻐보이고 그러면서도 능력있어 보이는 모습을 위해서 운동도 더 열심히 하고 잘 꾸밀 수 있게 가꿔야 하지 않을까 싶습니다.

I should look younger, prettier, and professional, so I should do exercise more and look after myself more - Eunhye

Considering such concerns with ageism in the workplace, a parallel can be drawn between flight attendants and interpreters. In a study of Japanese flight attendants working for a low-cost airline, Piller and Takahashi (2013) found that Japanese flight attendants had been hired by the airline based on their Japanese language skills (See also Section 2.4.2). Due to the popularity of flight attendant jobs among young Japanese women, however, older attendants felt threatened by younger competitors with a similar profile, who they considered were more economical and desirable from an organizational perspective. Similarly, the participants also felt that they were easily replaceable due to the decreasing value of English in the market full of competent (and younger) interpreters. Efforts to look younger were, therefore, important self-styling strategies employed by those who felt increasingly insecure about their individual worth in the gendered market structures.

제가 ‘플러스 알파’를 만들기 위한 노력은 아무래도 나이...가 있다보니 저는 건강관리가 제일 중요한 것 같아요. 통역을 앞두고 늘 최상의 컨디션을 유지하기 위해 노력하고 새치머리를 그 때 그 때 커버한다든지 하는 소소한 노력이에요.

The kind of effort that I make to create an “additional value” is because I am older... I think it is very important to look after my health. Before an interpreting

assignment, I always try to maintain the best-possible condition and make additional efforts such as covering my grey hairs - Soyoung

The increasing redefinition of the profession as a service-oriented one is well illustrated in another feminine strategy as to be discussed next.

### *Smiling*

Other recurrent styling concerns are to do with the management of interpersonal relationships by employing feminine qualities such as smiling. It has been argued that smiling is a symbolically feminine behaviour (Cameron, 2000). This is even more the case in the Korean context in which prescriptive gender stereotypes emphasize authority, independence and seriousness for men (S.-Y. Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2011). I will now discuss how smiling as a feminine behaviour is leveraged among the female participants. In the context of market saturation, securing a customer base was one of the primary concerns for the participants, who were keen to strengthen a long-term business relationship with clients by utilizing interpersonal skills. Smiling was commonly used among the participants as part of strategies to create a good rapport with clients.

의전통역의 경우, 회의석상 외에 같이 다니면서 편하게 대화를 끌어내려고 노력하고 평소보단 많이 미소 짓는게 전체적인 분위기를 좋게 하더라고요. 나중에 사적으로 통역 부탁을 하시는 손님도 있고요. 요새는 해외파도 많고 영어 잘하는 통역사들의 공급이 늘어나서, 이런 플러스 알파를 겸비해야 좀더 유리하다고 생각해요.

In the case of escort interpreting, I accompany my clients outside a meeting in order to help them feel comfortable talking to me, and smile more than usual, as it helps to create a good atmosphere. Some of them personally contacted me later in order to give me interpreting work. There are so many people who studied overseas as well as interpreters equipped with good English skills, so I believe that it is advantageous for me to have such additional skills - Sangah

Another participant, Jihye, who had made a career shift from an interpreter to an international lawyer, shared her first interpreting experience as a trainee. The effect of

appealing to a male client with feminine gestures such as smiling is well illustrated in the following quote:

외모로 플러스 알파 받는 현상은 분명히 존재 하는 것 같습니다. 학교 다닐 때 첫 통역을 나갔을 때 스스로 터무니 없는 실력이라고 생각했는데 없는 실력을 친절과 미소로 대했더니 업체에서 전담 통역사 하자고 했었거든요.

I strongly believe that appearance benefits interpreters. When I did my first interpreting job during school, I knew that I was far from competent. I tried to compensate for the lack of competence with geniality and smiles, and the clients asked me to become their full-time interpreter - Jihye

While Jihye's self-assessed lack of competence is her subjective evaluation, her strategic choice of building rapport with the clients with a feminine quality worked like a charm for her and she believes that the offer of a full-time interpreting position was due to her self-styling strategies. Her case illustrates that smiling is meaningful precisely because of the existence of strong links between smiling, femininity and subordinate status (Cameron, 2000). Smile often functions to signal deference and appeasement as "a gesture offered upward in the status of hierarchy" (Henley, 1986: 171). The fact that it was used as one of the professional strategies by the participants signifies that they were highly cognizant of the gendered employment structures, in which an increasing male demand for female aesthetics is justified by the accentuation of the service aspect of the profession in the new economy.

### ***Voice***

While the significance of rapport building with clients was highlighted by some participants, others stressed the importance of appealing to an audience with yet another strategy associated with women speakers. Voice was regarded as an important skill with which to attract attention from an audience. Voice, or vocal performance to be specific, is highly important in the case of interpreters who are required to perform often in front of a large audience (J. Cho & Roger, 2010). Well aware of the importance of keeping an audience focused due to their training as well as their professional experience, the participants stressed the ability to adjust their vocal performance to suit a given environment. It is interesting to note that quite a few participants drew a parallel between interpreters and newscasters with voice as a key professional feature.

더불어 통역자의 목소리도 중요하다고 생각합니다. 아나운서처럼 통역하는 경우라면 청중의 관심을 끌수 있다고 생각합니다. 우리가 선물을 줄 때 선물자체의 가치에도 신경을 쓰지만 그 선물의 포장에도 신경을 쓰는 것을 보면 통역의 내용도 중요하지만 그 내용을 전달하는 통역사의 목소리, 외모 등 외부적인 측면도 무시하지 못할거라고 생각합니다.

I believe the voice of an interpreter is important as well. If an interpreter can perform like a news anchor, she will be able to attract attention from an audience. When we give a present, we worry about the value of the present itself but at the same time, we take care of the wrapping of the present as well. The content of interpreting is important, but I believe that the visible aspects of an interpreter such as voice and appearance cannot be undervalued - Minah

On the surface, the newscaster analogy for interpreters seems relevant due to the shared occupational commonality of having to perform to be seen and heard by people. Just as appearance and voice are key variables in determining what viewers think of a newscaster (Sanders & Pritchett, 1971), it can be argued that the appearance and voice of an interpreter strongly influence an audience in judging the interpreter's performance. The more positive a newscaster's image, the more likely he or she will be believed (Sanders & Pritchett, 1971). Likewise, an interpreter who has the look and the voice to engage an audience is likely to be viewed and heard with more interest and possibly more credibility. While the performance aspect of newscasters and interpreters is well acknowledged, it is also worth noting the gender aspect of both professions as a so-called "feminized profession". After decades of struggle, women are now significantly more involved in the broadcast media worldwide than ever before (Ross & Carter, 2011). Despite a significant incursion of women into a newsroom, however, female news anchors are often described as the "velvet ghetto" (Creedon, 2004). An ability to perform aesthetic labour is significant for female news casters, who are mostly treated as the attractive younger half of a news team combination (an attractive female anchor with an older man) as a "display profession" (Ross & Carter, 2011). Given the requirement for aesthetic labour for female news anchors placed at the lower rung of hierarchical gender structures in the media, it might not be a coincidence that the participants considered female news anchors as models from whom to learn how to maximize the impact of their aesthetic labours to appeal to the

similarly gendered market structures. After all, none of the participants emphasized voice as a single variable that determines the level of competitiveness of individual interpreters: it was voice combined with appearance that adds value to a female interpreter who seeks to embody a perfect service package.

이미 요즘은 영어를 잘하시는 분들이 굉장히 많고 또 근래들어 통번역  
학과가 우후죽순 생겨남에 따라 역량을 갖춘 통번역사들이 많이 배출되고 있으므로,  
저 또한 그 분들과의 경쟁에서 뒤처지지 않기 위해 영어 실력은 기본이요 발음,  
목소리, 표정, 외모 등을 더 나아지게 하는데 어느 정도 투자를 하려 하고 있습니다.  
발음이나 목소리 표정 등은 아나운서 학원이나 관련 사이트 등을 통해 팁을 얻고,  
외모는 꾸준히 운동 및 피부관리를 하며 가꾸려고 노력 중에 있어요.

These days, there are so many people who are good at English. In addition, the number of translation and interpreting institutes has mushroomed recently and there are so many competent translators and interpreters. In order to compete with them, I know that English skills are basic. At the same time, I try to invest to improve my pronunciation, voice colour, demeanour, and appearance. I have attended coaching schools designed for aspiring news anchors to improve my pronunciation, voice colour, and demeanour, and I look for useful information from relevant websites. I do exercise on a regular basis and do skincare in order to enhance my appearance -  
Mirim

The ongoing striving to become a perfect human resources package among language workers has led some to resort to some rather extreme measures, which will be discussed in detail next.

### ***Bodily effort***

It is important to note that performance necessitates bodily effort: it would be impossible to understand performance without considering bodies (Pettinger, 2015). In this regard, I now turn to the last remaining theme of the data that concerns the bodily effort of interpreters keen to maximize personal aesthetics. As Wolkowitz (2006: 55) says, “our bodies are built out of and through our role as a paid worker”. Workers have to invest effort and resources to produce an acceptable working body, and yet what this body should be like varies by

occupation (Pettinger, 2015). As regards the question of an “appropriate” body for an interpreter, opinions from the participants varied. On one hand, some stressed modest and professional images, rather than just a pretty face, as important to the profession.

어느 직업이나 외모가 안중요하다곤 말 못하겠지만 통역사는 외모가 뛰어나야 하는 직업은 아니라고 생각합니다. 단정 한 이미지가 중요하다고 생각합니다.

In any profession, it is hard to say appearance is not unimportant, but I believe that appearance is not important when it comes to being an interpreter. It is modest images that are important - Miyeon

On the other hand, however, the data analysis reveals that bodily effort to produce an aesthetically immaculate working body is not uncommon among contemporary interpreters. Whereas the previous generation of interpreters had to get up early in the morning on the day of an interpreting assignment in order to study relevant materials to perform at their best (Roh, n.d.), contemporary interpreters wake up early in the morning of an assignment to beautify themselves, often with professional help.

고등학교 선배들이 셀프 메이크업이 어려워서 통역있는 날은 새벽부터 청담동 샵에 가서 헤어와 메이크업을 하고 출발한다고들 하던데 대부분 그래왔고 앞으로도 그럴 것 같다는 생각을 해봅니다.

My high school seniors said that they go to a hair shop in Cheongdam-dong<sup>9</sup> for hair and makeup early in the morning on the day of an interpreting assignment, as they are not confident of doing it on their own. Many of them do, and I think they will continue to do so - Eunhye

Furthermore, some interpreters even resort to even more drastic measures such as plastic surgery to present themselves as a perfect human resources package.

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<sup>9</sup> Cheongdam-dong is the poshest area located in Gangnam, the southern part of Seoul, the capital city of Korea.

당연히 실력도 중요하겠지만 비슷한 수준에서는 수려한 외모를 많이 선호하는 걸 볼 수 있습니다. 클라이언트나 대중들에게 실력을 평가받기에 앞서 우선 수요 자체를 만들려면 외모를 갖춰야한다는 인식이 있다보니 제 주위에도 몸매 관리나 패션(옷, 헤어)에 대한 투자는 물론이고 성형을 하는 경우를 많이 봅니다.

Professional competence is, needless to say, important but I have seen many cases in which people prefer better-looking interpreters, if all other things are similar. Interpreters now believe that they should be presentable in order to create demand, so that they can at least have an opportunity to get their competence assessed by clients or other people. I have seen a lot of cases in which interpreters invest in body management, fashion (clothes and hair), and even plastic surgeries - Miae

Though it sounds extreme, it is not entirely unusual by local standards. As of 2008, around twenty percent of Koreans underwent cosmetic surgery, and the actual number is likely to be considerably higher as only a fraction of surgeries are recorded for official statistics (Holliday & Elfving-Hwang, 2012). In the general context of the Korean job market, physical appearance is, indeed, increasingly recognized as a target of investment by job applicants or *spec*, which refers to a required set of skills possessed by jobseekers for white-collar employment (Herald Corporation, 2016). What is noteworthy about this beautification of language workers is how language can be combined with personal aesthetics to create a distinctive speech commodity. It is also interesting to note that not all participants regarded the demand for aesthetic labour as an imposition but self-activities, a form of “Do-It-Yourself” culture (Holtzman, Craig, & Meter, 2007). Rather than feeling forced, some viewed their self-styling practices positively as self-investment or confidence boosting, and hence as a choice based on individual autonomy.

하지만 사실 직업적인 이유보다는 내 자신에 대한 투자, 자기 관리, 내 자신에 대한 애정의 일환이라고 볼 수 있지 않을까요? 사회생활을 하는 사람이라면 자기관리가 겉으로나 속으로 모두 잘 되어 있어야 기회도 잡고 능력 발휘도 잘할 수 있으며 그만큼 자신감도 생길 수 있다는 것이 제 개인적인 생각이기도 하답니다.

I was wondering if we can see the trend not necessarily for occupational purposes, but as part of self-investment, self-management, and some sort of self-care? I personally believe that people in a workplace should look after themselves both internally and externally in order to grab opportunities and unleash their talents, which in turn will help them to feel more confident - Sunmi

While bodily effort can be seen as a reflection of self-autonomy, many felt obliged to conform to the market order despite internal conflicts about the shifting professional identity.

결과적으로 승부에 한계가 있는 외모보다는 '아이템'에 더 신경을 쓰고 있습니다. 아이템이란 말이 정확하지는 않지만 요즘은 어느 분야든 전문성과 틈새시장을 노려야 하기에 같은 영어 분야이고 통번역사 업무 내에서도 좀 더 세분화된 자신만의 무기로 어필하는 것이 중요한 것 같습니다. 하지만 그 무기 중 외모가 아주 큰 역할을 한다는 건 씁쓸하지만 인정할 수 밖에 없네요.

In conclusion, I focus more on “items” than appearances that do not last long in games. I am not sure if items are correct expressions, but in any profession, it is important to specialize in a certain domain and target a niche market. I think English-Korean translators and interpreters should also appeal to the market with individual strengths which are more specified. Among the kind of individual strengths available, however, it is sad but I should admit that appearance plays a very important role - Miae

The findings suggest that while the self-styling strategies employed by the participants might appear to be synonymous with DIY culture which aims to move beyond capitalism (Holtzman et al., 2007), their seemingly self-organized activities are indeed capitalistic. Whereas a DIY commodity is produced for its use value rather than for its exchange value, their self-activities are meant to increase exchange or trade value in the gender-based hierarchical market. The case of language workers in Korea, therefore, serves as a powerful illustration of the commodification of bodies in capitalist economies, in which bodily work is seen as a “care of self” and thus mobilized in the enactment of the neoliberal self.

## 8.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the intersections between gender, language, and commodification in the context of the beautification of the local language market, in which the focus has shifted from language competence by itself to language competence coupled with aesthetics. As interpreters are pressed into new modes of objectification and commodification, material conditions like these govern the choices speakers make about language and commodification. When English that comes out of the mouth of a beautiful woman is more valued than the words spoken by a less attractive woman, speech has taken on different market values depending on the identity of the speaker (Bourdieu, 1977). In that way, the value of English language proficiency has become embodied for professional language workers. English as linguistic knowledge has become subject to inflationary pressure; and, in order to compete, other forms of value need to be added to the interpreters' human resources package. Considering the ongoing phenomenon in which the value of English is best embodied when it is linked with the material value of individual aesthetics, the beautification trend in the local language market clearly illustrates that the linguistic and the material, which has been considered as separate for a long time (Shankar & Cavanaugh, 2012), are no longer separate.

The findings also highlight the relationship between gender and commodification. Technically, the participants were at liberty to choose any conceivable individual strategy to raise the value of their human resources. Most resources chosen for self-styling were, however, drawn from the pool characterized by exclusively feminine qualities, and their choice was predominantly determined by the preferences of a patriarchal employment context. Their "self-styling" was, in actuality, "sexy styling" intended to produce an aesthetically acceptable working body that conformed to the gendered norms of Korean society. The implications of the research can be explained from both macro and micro perspectives: at a macro level, the findings in which English has emerged as an embodied capital represent an ideal site to explore the conjuncture between language, gender and political economy in contemporary globalization. At a micro level, the emergence of English as an embodied capital illustrates that English language ideologies continue to evolve through linguistic practices of language speakers who in turn increasingly become "market biographies" or lives that are shaped by market demands (Constable, 2009:50).



## Chapter 9. Conclusion

### 9.1. Introduction

This thesis has explored the gap between dreams and realities in English against the backdrop of “English fever” in Korea through the notion of language ideologies from three distinctive perspectives: historical; macro-social; and micro-individual. This concluding chapter revisits the research questions and proceeds to answer them on the basis of the key findings presented in Chapter Four to Chapter Eight. I then move on to offer the implications of this research for the fields of English language ideologies in globalization, language and gender, and translation and interpreting.

### 9.2. Constructing English language ideologies in Korea

The impetus for the research began with two research problems: why is English so popular in Korea and why is there such a gap between dreams and realities in English? I have tried to address these problems by tracing the historical evolution of English, examining the construction of English as an imperative in media globalization discourses, and exploring the use of English in individual domains. In each of these domains, different aspects of ideologies relating to English were identified, which together constitute the linguistic ideological landscape in Korea. This section provides some insight into the five main questions that were investigated in this research (See Section 2.6).

#### 9.2.1. Question one: historical construction of English language ideologies

First of all, the genealogy of English in Korea highlights historical embeddedness in language ideologies, in which images from the past have contemporary resonance. By drawing on the concept of “capital” developed by Bourdieu, I have argued that English has developed into distinctive forms of capital – cultural, economic, political, social and symbolic capitals – throughout local history each of them tied to global geopolitical development. Distinction between capitals is sometimes not entirely clear, as any capital may undergo a process of conversion (Bourdieu, 1986). As an example, English as cultural capital refers to the use of English among Koreans as a means to acquire new knowledge and credentials to distinguish themselves from others. Such a practice of leveraging English for class distinction can also work as symbolic capital, because an ability to speak English is recognized as representing legitimate class prestige in the local context. The same also applies to economic and social capitals. While English has consistently been

regarded as a way to earn economic capital for Koreans, it often serves the dual purposes of expanding social capital, which can influence the power and profit from economic capital. The convertibility of capitals suggests that English language ideologies operate in multiplicity, seldom in isolation, due primarily to multiple meanings accumulated throughout history. It is important to note the ways in which English has become exclusively tied to a particular social class throughout its evolution as a valued language capital. That is to say, those with vested interests in the practical and symbolic meanings of English and the United States began to utilize the language as a tool to maintain class prestige. The exclusivity of English has, in turn, led to popular beliefs that fluency in English is a pathway towards actualizing social mobility. Government-led globalization campaigns in which English has been presented as an imperative for national/institutional/individual competitiveness have only added more prestige and legitimacy to the language, which has grown into multiple forms of power in the local context. The discovery of English as a valued capital grounded in history represents a significant response to the first research problem of why English is pursued so heatedly in Korea to the point of creating a particular sociolinguistic phenomenon known as “English fever”. The historical meanings alone, however, fail to answer the other related problem of why there is such a mismatch between dreams and realities in English in Korea. This is the focus of the remaining four questions.

#### 9.2.1. Question two: dreams versus realities in English-medium lectures

The key findings in Chapter Five to Chapter Eight show that, just as the ideologies of English vary, there exist multiple factors that have contributed to the sustained gap between promises and realities in English. One important answer to why this should be can be found in the use of English among the powerful as an instrument to improve their already advantaged positions. The media discourse analyses reveal how the powerful conservative media take advantage of the status of English as a global language to create particular globalization discourses, in which English is constructed as a key to global academic excellence tied not only to institutional but also national benefits. The unchallenged concept of English as indispensable to institutional internationalization has, in turn, pushed local institutes to adopt extreme measures, as seen in the case of the 100% English-MoI policy at KAIST, the national elite university. While key educational stakeholders such as students and professors suffer, the powerful conservative media continued to benefit from English-medium lectures as demonstrated in the analysis of the

role of English in university rankings. English served as a key criterion to determine the outcomes of highly influential university ranking surveys led by the mainstream media, and local institutes whose reputation was at stake scrambled to expand English-medium lectures as a quick fix to enhance institutional rankings. The conservative media which were experiencing fierce market competition, in turn, was able to profit from the commercialization of university rankings by selling advertisements to local institutes, for example. The Korean case of English-medium lectures clearly demonstrates why the notion of English as a global language is orchestrated by powerful forces with a high stake in sustaining existing social structures. The ideology of English as a primary tool to protect vested interests in the local context explains how and why dreams related to English are continuously reinforced and why such dreams fail to match experiences at a macro level.

### 9.2.3. Question three: dreams versus realities in neoliberal personhood

The micro-level analyses of the gap in the neoliberal discourses of English provide another meaningful answer to the question of dreams versus realities in English in Korean society. The analyses show how individuals are driven to pursue ideal speakerhood constructed in popular neoliberal discourses in which becoming a *perfect* speaker of English is presented as feasible. Similar to the previous findings regarding English-medium lectures, the media is found to play a key role in shaping dreams relating to English. As the mediatized images of glamorous elite bilinguals, exemplified in the case of English-Korean celebrity interpreters, keep attracting ambitious young Koreans, neoliberal ideologies work continuously on linguistic perfectionism in which mastering English is seen as achievable through sheer individual effort. I have shown that the reason why neoliberal ideologies in English language learning have worked so successfully in Korea is attributable to the unique local linguistic hierarchies in which people are categorized into two distinctive groups – overseas versus domestic English learners – depending on their language learning background. Such competitive structures provide a fertile ground for the spread of neoliberalism in which competition is covertly encouraged in the name of individual choice and freedom. The enormous value attached to English has, needless to say, contributed to the internalization of neoliberal ideologies among English language learners. The degree to which neoliberalism has influenced individual learners can be demonstrated by the fact that none of the participants questioned the feasibility of becoming a perfect bilingual. They rather exhibited *mea-culpa* attitudes, blaming themselves for lacking the independent and entrepreneurial spirit required to achieve desirable interpreter personhood.

The current situation in which individuals continue to be self-deprecating and self-disapproving, rather than developing critical perspectives on socially imposed ideals in language learning, explains why dreams fostered in English are seen as real and possible and, perhaps more importantly, why the gap between dreams and realities tends to be concealed. As the gap remains largely invisible to the public, the mediatized glamour of neoliberal personhood continues to attract more people to pursue linguistic perfectionism, and it is through this vicious cycle that the phenomenon of “English fever” continues to intensify in Korea.

#### 9.2.4. Question four: dreams versus realities in English as a gendered goal

In an attempt to present a more diverse spectrum in English language ideologies, I have also explored the meanings of English from gendered perspectives. The findings illustrate how English is leveraged among educated ambitious Korean women under institutional pressures that demand both financial and familial responsibilities. Whereas the existing literatures in gender and English in the case of Asian women mostly discuss English as a way to achieve female individuation away from gendered restrictions at home, the analyses emphasize the diverse ways in which English is used as a common tool to pursue diverse gender goals: English as a tool to write normative female biographies; English as a key to pursue individuated biographies; and English as a means to actualize outbound mobility. Under each ideological theme, English again holds more nuanced meanings that include a mobility enabler, a key to distinction, a cultural window, and a financial tool. Despite the apparent promises of English associated with various gendered meanings, realities again come in contrast to dreams. Analyses indicate that the reputation of English-Korean interpreters as one of the most glamorous professions is indeed a gendered construct, because interpreting is hardly desirable from the perspective of Korean males primarily due to its lack of job security. The gendered nature of the profession is also well highlighted by market hierarchies in which predominantly female language workers serve predominantly male clients. Translation and interpreting as a woman’s job is all the more compelling in their private domains, in which the issue of job insecurity can be offset by the regular incomes of their male partners who are socially expected to pursue a stable position with periodic promotion. Marriage is, indeed, a key to understanding individual motivations behind the pursuit of English among the female participants. While English represents a perfect opportunity to fulfil mobility ambitions for the married as well as young single women, it is viewed significantly as a female individualizer among those who

are near or have passed the socially-defined marriageable ages. Similarly yet differently, English is regarded as a tool to pursue individual mobility overseas among those who resist the societal gender norms. The findings demonstrate that the choice of translation and interpreting is inextricably tied to individual attitudes to societal gender expectations. The findings also highlight the evolutionary nature of language ideologies. While using English as a means to resist traditional social ordering has indeed historical resonance, as seen in the case of New Women (See Section 4.3.3), the ideology of English as a key to achieve normative gender goals is a new concept, one associated profoundly with the ongoing socioeconomic transition of Korean society. It highlights, therefore, the multiple and fluid nature of language ideologies that are invariably influenced by changes in social structures as a mediating link between society and individual actors.

#### 9.2.5. Question five: the impact of the commodification of language

The aforementioned fluidity of language ideologies in a gender context is again illustrated in the case of the beautification trend in the local language market. Once predominantly associated with linguistic competence, English has become increasingly tied to personal aesthetics in the context of market saturation. The ongoing shift from linguistic proficiency to beauty in the Korean language market highlights the impact of the new economy on English language ideologies. In line with new work orders imposed under the new economy, female translators and interpreters are now under market pressures to enhance their personal aesthetics in order to stay competitive. The commodification processes of language workers have been further accelerated in the highly gender-stratified market, in which female language workers are now required to present as a perfect service package that has not only good English skills but also an attractive look. While some claim it as self-investment or self-care in line with popular DIY culture, the fact that they resort to exclusively feminine strategies such as smiling and looking younger and beautiful emphasizes that they are indeed complicit with the demand of the market under male control. It is important to note the ideology of English as an embodied capital in which the materiality of a speaker determines the value of her or his speech. The ongoing decoupling of language and competence and increasing coupling of language and beauty, in which actual competence has become less important than physical appearance for becoming an interpreter, represents an ideal site in which to explore changing meanings of material skills and their impact on work performance in the context of the new capitalism, using language as a key prism. Given the evolutionary nature of language ideologies relating to

English in Korea as discussed so far, research efforts should continue to examine if and how the local linguistic landscape undergoes transitions to produce new language ideologies. I will, therefore, move on to discuss the implications of this study for relevant scholarship in the next section.

### 9.3. Implications

This section discusses the implications of this dissertation, focusing on three areas of scholarship to which the findings of this research are of particular importance. Those areas are English language ideologies in globalization, language and gender, and translation and interpreting.

#### 9.3.1. English language ideologies in globalization

The contribution of this dissertation is unique in that it has approached the issue of “English fever” in Korea from multiple perspectives that have remained under-researched. It should be noted that each of the key analytical categories has relevance to the study of English language ideologies in the broader context of globalization. First of all, the relative lack of study dealing with the historical development of English in Korea (as pointed out in Section 2.3.4) has been complemented by the historical documentation of English as forms of capital. The findings enabled richer and more sophisticated analyses of contemporary ideologies of English in Korea, in which English is predominantly regarded as a global language. It is indeed in this context of English as a global language that many scholars attempt to discover meanings for English in various societies. The overriding conceptualization of English as a global language might, however, risk simplifying local particularities inextricably tied to the development of particular ideologies of English in specific contexts. In this regard, it is highly important to gain a more fundamental understanding about how English has evolved to become what it is in local context through historical and critical studies. These will, in turn, enable scholars to better deal with the complexities of English language ideologies that push for the spread of global English in various local contexts.

Secondly, the macro-social approaches to discover how English is leveraged as an ideological vehicle to maintain the existing social structures are of significant importance to both global and local scholarship. While the phenomenon of “English fever” has attracted attention from global scholars due to its intensity, the question of *why* “English

fever” remains unchallenged has been under-researched (See Section 2.3.4). The findings, therefore, emphasize a need for more critical approaches to the popularity of English in Korea and possibly beyond as an urgent task. Asking how and why English holds a particular status in relation to macro-social structures can be helpful to global scholars to gain fresh insights into the spread of English across the globe. This study is also highly important to the relevant Korean scholarship. As noted in Section 2.2.1, the enormous popularity of English in Korea holds dubious positions in the local scholarship in which “English fever” is hardly problematized because pursuing English is seen as only a natural act in the local context. Described as “colonized state of consciousness” (J.-K. Yoon, 2007), the naturalization of English in Korean consciousness has led to a dearth of relevant research in the Korean scholarship to date. It is, therefore, high time for local scholars to critically approach and possibly galvanize public discourse about the issue of English in Korean society, in which the cost of English remains high and yet largely concealed due to macro-level operations. Meaningful discoveries from relevant sociolinguistic phenomena that they can observe at hand can be, in turn, informative to global scholars, who can expand their horizons on the nature of the investigated sociolinguistic processes. Only through local-global scholarly collaborations on the issue of English in Korea can we expect to see a more comprehensive picture of English language ideologies in Korean society.

Thirdly and lastly, the micro-individual investigation of English language ideologies has also contributed to the field of English in neoliberal globalization, in which more attention has so far been paid to macro-level analyses of English language ideologies (See Section 2.3.3). The discussed interrelationships between linguistic insecurity and linguistic perfectionism is particularly useful for understanding how neoliberalism works on the ground and why it has been so successful in the realm of language learning. This micro-level study on the impact of neoliberalism on individual language ideologies relating to English, therefore, encourages global scholars to pay heed to processes by which particular ideologies become internalized and popularized among social actors.

### 9.3.2. Language and gender

In Section 2.4, I pointed out a need to approach the issue of English language ideologies with regard to gender from diverse perspectives as informed by poststructuralism. While recent years have seen a growing number of studies that deal with the issue of English

language learning among Asian females, it is important to note the ways in which their motivations have been conceptualized from a particular cultural viewpoint. It has been argued that female Asian learners of English leverage the language as a tool to pursue female liberation and individuation overseas in order to escape from gender stratification at home (Kelsky, 2001; Takahashi, 2013; Youna Kim, 2011b). It is worth noting that the concept of female romantic desires for the West and Western men, or *akogare* in Japanese, has been theorized as a key prism for understanding gendered motivations behind English language learning among Japanese women. While the ideology of English as a tool for realizing female longings for the West has thrown new light on relations between power and female agency, caution is needed in applying the concept due to the existing essentialist dichotomies between Western versus Asian women (Takahashi, 2013). It is important to note how the distinction between Asian women from different cultural backgrounds is sometimes blurred in this existing dichotomy. While very little work deals exclusively with the issue of gender and English language learning among Korean women, Korean female English language learners are, in some cases, treated as part of “Asian women” in ways that fail to account for cultural and individual specificities. The outcome is that they are portrayed similarly, as suffering from patriarchal social structures at home and also pulled to an imagined foreign land.

As shown in Chapter Seven, however, women, not just Korean women for that matter, have different attitudes to gender norms and display a range of language ideologies in correspondence with their views on institutional requirements. It is worth noting that while many participants discussed their cultural admiration of the West, none of them expressed romantic or sexual desires in relation to Western men. English rather commonly serves as a career tool with varied meanings – as a key to normative gender biographies, female individuation, or migration – attached to it. Such diversities found in the ways Korean women leverage English as a gendered tool emphasize a need to look more carefully into local and cultural grounding of gender and language in the target context. The findings also have implications for the study of migration among international students. While current international migration studies, particularly those related to international student migration and gender, remain under-explored (Ono & Piper, 2004), the existing literatures have paid more attention to economic advancement as a motivation (Habu, 2000). It thus fails to explain the socially, linguistically, and ideologically based nature of gendered migratory motivations which are innately tied to various sociocultural conditions as well as individual

circumstances. The findings, therefore, call for more situated approaches to the issue of gender and language that account for contextual differences with a focus on diversities in female agency.

Another meaningful contribution of this dissertation to the issue of gender and language can be found in the study of aesthetic labour performed by English language workers. While language is largely regarded as a marketable commodity in the new economy defined by globalization and neoliberalism (Heller, 2002), precisely what form such value manifests in addition to the existing value of language has remained under-explored (See Section 2.5.4). The findings in which personal aesthetics are being added to linguistic competence to enhance the value of individual language workers illustrate how extra value can be added to the traditional value of language under the new economy. Gender serves as a key prism through which to understand how female language service providers succumb to the new market order in which female aesthetics are regarded as important value added. Given the scale and impact of the new capitalism across the globe, it is important for global scholars to continue their efforts to find out about specific ideologies related to language and commodification, and this Korean case thus contributes to the field of gender, language, and commodification.

### 9.3.3. Translation and interpreting

It has been my aim to explore the sociolinguistic aspect of translation and interpreting with English language ideologies as a key tool in this research. Translation and interpreting, which is by nature located between cultures, has been viewed traditionally from cultural perspectives (Pym, 2006). A recently growing field of the sociology of translation and interpreting has attempted to explore its social dimension by considering translation and interpreting as social practice or socially driven processes (M. Wolf, 2007). While the social is also the cultural (Pym, 2006), it bears noting that less attention has been paid to the sociolinguistic aspect of translation and interpreting with even less attention paid to translators and interpreters as sociolinguistic agents. As an emphasis on the sociocultural dimension of translation and interpreting (e.g. literary translation) has led to no real shortage of social and cultural approaches to translations as texts, there has virtually been zero focus on individual human translators (Pym, 2006). While some attempts in recent years have been made to fill the vacuum, an emphasis has been on the context-bound role of interpreters as linguistic mediators (Rudvin, 2006; Valero-Garcés & Martin, 2008), for

example, not necessarily as a constructor of social meanings of a particular language from a broader sociolinguistic perspective.

Based on the new way of thinking that views translators and interpreters as a constructing and constructed agent in relation to language ideologies, this research demonstrates that the study of individual translators and interpreters has huge potential for the field of sociolinguistics. As social and linguistic agents who act in correspondence with their cultural value systems and ideologies, translators and interpreters represent an ideal site for exploring how particular meanings relating to a specific language are constructed, negotiated, and reinforced in relation to social and linguistic particularities. The sociolinguistic approaches to translators and interpreters allowed for a more sophisticated examination of the processes by which particular language ideologies were identified in this dissertation. As an example, the study of linguistic motivations among English-Korean translators and interpreters reveals the meanings of English that operate at multiple levels: while English is believed to hold infinite potential among individuals in Korea, it serves at the same time as a source of insecurity and anxiety. Such conflicting ideologies, in turn, drive them further to pursue linguistic perfectionism through which to gain personal and social validation. The study of the gendering of translators and interpreters also enabled me to identify new language ideologies which are specific to their professional contexts. Analysing the nexus between language and commodification in the case of translators and interpreters allowed me to explore an emergent coupling of language and aesthetics, which might have been impossible had I not used translators and interpreters as research participants. This dissertation, therefore, indicates that the study of translators and interpreters is an area that holds a high level of interdisciplinary collaboration, relating not just to sociolinguistics but to cultural studies and sociology.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Sample Email to Participants

Dear (Participant's name),

(Opening greetings as appropriate)

I am writing to ask if you would be willing to participate in a PhD study that I am conducting to explore personal and professional journeys among English-Korean interpreters and interpreters-in-training.

If you decide to participate, I would like to interview you about your own particular path into the interpreting profession, what your work looks like and what expectations you have of your future career development. I would expect that the interview would run for approximately one hour, and (with your consent) I would audio-tape it. I would not use participants' real names in any reports or publications to arise from my study **and will not use any other information that could lead to you being recognised.**

I have attached an information and consent form, which provides more information about the study. If you would be interested in participating, or if you'd like to ask further questions before deciding, please contact me at [jean.cho@mq.edu.au](mailto:jean.cho@mq.edu.au) and I'll be very pleased to discuss the study further with you. If you'd prefer not to be part of the study, that's perfectly fine too.

Thank you for considering this and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Jean

## Appendix 2. Information and Consent Form



### **Personal and professional journeys among English-Korean interpreters**

You are invited to participate in a PhD study designed to explore personal and professional journeys among trainee as well as professional English-Korean interpreters. The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of professional backgrounds, work experiences, and aspirations of English-Korean interpreters.

The study is being conducted by Ms Jinhyun (Jean) Cho, who is an associate lecturer in translation and interpreting (Department of Linguistics) at Macquarie University. She can be contacted on +61 2 9850 8836, or by e-mail at [jean.cho@mq.edu.au](mailto:jean.cho@mq.edu.au). The project is being carried out as part of Ms Cho's PhD degree research under the supervision of Professor Ingrid Piller ([ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au](mailto:ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au), telephone +61 2 9850 7674).

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview with the investigator, who will ask you questions regarding your professional background, interpreter training, language learning, current work and future career plans in a semi-structured manner. The interview will be audio-taped with your permission, and will run for approximately one hour. If you do not wish to be audio-taped, you will have the rights to refuse to have your interviews audiotaped. In this case, the researcher will take notes while the interview is conducted and you will have access to the note-taking. You may also be invited to participate in follow-up interviews in the future.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the recordings. A summary of the overall findings of the research can be obtained by contacting the Investigator (Jean Cho) at the e-mail address above.

If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw from participation in the research at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence. If you are a student, your decision whether or not to participate, and your interview responses will have no bearing on your grades in any of your university course units.

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I, (participant's name) have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name (block letters):

Participant's Signature:

Date:dd/mm/year

Investigator's Name (block letters):

Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

*The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone 61 2 9850 7854, fax 61 2 9850 8799, email: [ethics@mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@mq.edu.au)). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.*

### Appendix 3. Research Questions

The followings are sample questions designed to explore personal and professional journeys targeting English-Korean interpreters. I have divided them into 3 main categories of research topics as follows:

- History – Getting to know the interviewees’ professional background
  1. How did you get into this field?
  2. How did you learn English?
  3. Did you make additional efforts to learn English outside schools?
  4. Was there any particular motivation to learn English?
  5. Did you have some kind of ‘dreams’ about the interpreting profession? If you did, could you please give an example of the kind of ideas you had?
- Present – Working as an interpreter
  1. What kinds of interpreting work do you do now?
  2. What do you like about your current job in this field?
  3. Could you please describe a typical day at work?
  4. Could you give an example of what you see as the best aspects of your current job?  
Are there aspects of the job that you dislike, and if so, what would they be?
  5. What kind of skills other than language skills do you think are useful for the profession?
- Future – Building a career path
  1. Can you picture yourself in five years from now? Do you think you will still do what you are doing now?
  2. If the answer is “no”, why is that?
  3. Would you recommend this profession to others? If “yes”, why would you recommend it? If “no”, can you explain why you would not do so?
  4. What advice would you offer to those who are interested in entering this field?

#### Appendix 4. A summary of participant profiles

Pseudonyms	Age	Sojourning experiences	Marriage status	Year of graduation	Job
Semi	41-45	Short-term English learning in the U.S.	Single	2006	PhD candidate
Jihye	21-25	Short-term English learning in Ireland and Britain	Single	2010	Law student
Yumi	36-40	Short-term English learning in Britain	Single	2007	Waitress
Aeri	41-45	Short-term English learning in Britain	Single	2009	English language teacher and freelance translator/interpreter
Kyunghee	41-45	Short-term English learning in the U.S.	Single	2008	Freelance translator/interpreter
Soyoung	41-45	Short-term English learning in Britain	Married	2009	Freelance translator/interpreter
Hyomin	26-30	Short-term English learning in Canada	Married	2010	Full-time housewife
Eunhye	26-30	No sojourning experience	Single	2008	Freelance translator
Minah	46-50	No sojourning experience	Single	2010	School English teacher
Sunhee	26-30	Sojournd in Kuwait and Malaysia as a child/an adolescent	Single	2006	Corporate interpreter
Sangah	26-	Short-term English	Single	2008	Corporate

	30	learning in Australia & Exchange student in the U.S.			translator/interpreter
Miae	26-30	Sojourned in Australia as an adolescent	Single	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Hyunjin	26-30	Exchange student in Canada	Single	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Youngmi	26-30	Sojourned in the U.S. and France as a child/an adolescent	Single	2011	Interpreter for supranational organization
Sunhye	26-30	Sojourned in the U.S. as an adolescent	Single	2010	Institutional language teacher
Jiyoung	21-25	Short-term English learning in Australia	Single	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Sunmi	26-30	Short-term English learning & Exchange student in the U.S.	Single	2011	Corporate translator/interpreter
Junghyun	26-30	Short-term English learning in the U.S.	Married	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Sara	21-25	No sojourning experience	Single	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Seul	36-40	Short-term English learning in New Zealand	Single	2008	Foreign company employee
Nayeon	21-	Sojourned in	Single	2011	Job-seeking

	25	Australia as a child			
Mirim	26-30	Short-term English learning in Canada	Single	2011	Freelance translator/interpreter
Gyoungae	31-35	Short-term English learning in Singapore	Single	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Junghee	21-25	Short-term English learning & internship in the U.K.	Single	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Soohyun	31-35	Short-term English learning in Canada	Single	N/A	Trainee translator/interpreter
Heejeon	26-30	Sojourned in Australia as a child	Single	2010	Corporate translator/interpreter
Gyujin	46-50	No sojourning experiences	Married	1993	PhD candidate
Seohye	26-30	Short-term English learning in Canada	Single	N/A	Job-seeking
Dabin	41-45	No sojourning experiences	Single	2008	University lecturer and freelance translator/interpreter
Jonghoon	46-50	No sojourning experiences	Married	2011	Local broadcasting company
Miyeon	31-35	Sojourned in Latin America and the U.S. as a child/an adolescent	Married	2002	English news writer
Yoonjeong	21-	Sojourned in	Single	2011	Job-seeking

	25	Australia and the U.S. as a child/an adolescent			
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## **Appendix 5. Final ethics approval letter**

Dear Prof Piller,

Re: "Personal and professional journeys among English-Korean interpreters"

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and you may now commence your research.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Prof Ingrid Piller - Chief Investigator  
Ms Jean Cho - Co-Investigator

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports. Your first progress report is due on 1st May 2012.

If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:  
[http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how\\_to\\_obtain\\_ethics\\_approval/human\\_research\\_ethics/forms](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms)

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).
4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:  
[http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how\\_to\\_obtain\\_ethics\\_approval/human\\_research\\_ethics/forms](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms)
5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy>

[http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how\\_to\\_obtain\\_ethics\\_approval/human\\_research\\_ethics/policy](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy)

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of Final Approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have Final Approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of final ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Katey De Gioia  
Acting Chair  
Faculty of Human Sciences Ethics Review Sub-Committee  
Human Research Ethics Committee

\*\*\*\*\*

Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)

Ethics Secretariat

Research Office  
Level 3, Research HUB, Building C5C  
Macquarie University  
NSW 2109