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A Critical Reflection on the 'Teaching English Through English' Classes in the Korean Context

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The purpose of this study is to critically reflect on the "Teaching English through English (TETE)" classes in the Korean context. For that purpose the study first analyzed three model TETE classes qualitatively and described their weaknesses as communicative classes. It then administered two questionnaire surveys on what the teachers and the students think about and do in the TETE classes and English teaching/learning in general. For some supplementary data the study also conducted a group interview with five middle school English teachers. According to the results, the model TETE classes lack crucial elements of communicative classes, and as such can not be of much help in producing good language learners. Based on the results the study concludes 1) that the English-only policy in the TETE classes is not realistic at least in the current Korean context; 2) that the English teachers need to use the target language maximally but with judicious use of the students' native language; 3) that without appropriate classroom techniques/procedures the teacher's use of target language itself does not guarantee the development of communicative language ability in the students; and 4) that we need to raise the teachers' awareness of their teaching.

I. INTRODUCTION

Developing communicative language ability is the goal of our English language education today. And in order to achieve the goal, various attempts have been made including the administrative encouragement for the implementation of the "Teaching English through English (TETE)" class, which requires the teacher to use the target language exclusively and does not allow the students to use their native language.

Partly recognizing the importance of input in the development of a foreign language and partly pushed by the administrative encouragement, many English teachers today feel that they

are obliged to teach their classes in English and feel under stress for not being able to do so due to various constraints. However, with all those constraints there have been pioneer teachers who voluntarily adopt the English-only policy in their classes, as witnessed in the recent presentations of model TETE classes.

In its exact sense, a communicative class does not necessarily mean that the target language should be used exclusively. However, most of the TETE classes presented thus far as the model communicative classes have adopted the English-only policy, the effects of which are still to be evaluated. In fact, there has been no empirical evidence that the exclusive use of the target language actually produces better language learners (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Moreover, given the claims (e.g., Auerbach, 1993; Cook, 2001; Jensen & Vinther, 1983; Kharma & Hajaj, 1989; Polio & Duff, 1994; Turnbull, 2001) that the partial use of the learners' native language makes the class more effective than the exclusive use of the target language, it seems valuable to seriously reflect on the implementation of the TETE classes.

The purpose of this study is to critically reflect on the implementation of TETE classes in the Korean context. By analyzing three middle school model TETE classes, by administrating two questionnaire surveys on what the teachers and the students think about and actually do in their English classes, and by conducting a group interview with five middle school teachers, the study attempts to evaluate how effective the TETE classes can be in helping the students develop the communicative language ability.

II. BACKGROUND

1. Language Input and L2 Acquisition

Given the crucial role that input plays in language development, it seems natural to believe that the more students are exposed to target language (TL) input, the more they will learn. However, according to SLA theory, mere exposure to TL input is not enough (Bragger, 1985; Swain, 1985). What is crucial for successful L2 acquisition is instead the interactively modified input, which ensures the input to become intake (Gass & Varonis, 1994; Hadley, 1993; Loschky, 1994; Schinke-Llano & Vicens, 1993; Tsui, 1987; Vanpatten & Cadierno, 1993, 1994). In other words, L2 acquisition will not occur unless the learner is provided with ample opportunity to negotiate meaning in relevant and appropriate conversational exchanges. This of course does not mean that there is a linear relationship between the teacher's target language use and the students' target language proficiency, however (Turnbull, 2001).

Since the students in an EFL context spend only a short period of time in class on a daily

basis and since they have little contact with the target language outside the classroom, it is crucial for the teacher to use the target language as much as possible and provide the students with as many opportunities as possible for communicative language use. Thus, the teacher would deprive the students of the golden opportunities for communication if he/she controls too much in the class and becomes the principle participant who does most of the work and gets all the practice, making the students only listeners and observers (Belasco, 1983).

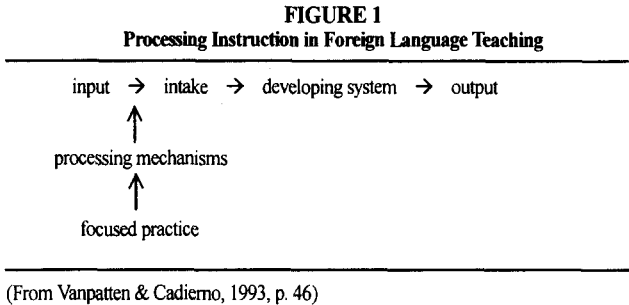
In order to provide enough input the teachers in the classrooms employ a variety of different classroom activities. In the discussion of such classroom activities, Rivers (1983) distinguished between the 'skill-getting' activities and the 'skill-using' activities. According to her, 'skill-getting' activities consist of the 'knowledge' both in the perception of units, categories, and functions, and in the internalization of the rules relating these categories and functions, while the 'skill-using' activities are the opportunities for 'autonomous' use of the language involving the motivation to communicate and the opportunity to do so interactively. For a second/foreign language development with fluency as well as accuracy it is argued that both the 'skill-getting' and the 'skill-using activities are necessary' (Bragger, 1985; Celce-Murcia, 1991). Unfortunately, however, many less skilled teachers too often focus only on the 'skill-getting' activities, depriving their students of the opportunities for negotiating interaction.

It has been claimed that in order to provide the students with opportunities for negotiating interaction, teachers should avoid using the IRF type of discourse, where the teacher initiates asking the student a question or telling him to answer, the student responds, and then the teacher gives a feedback. In contrast to the questions used outside the classrooms, the questions in the IRF type of discourse are not intended to sustain a conversation or to elicit new information, but rather to permit the teacher to evaluate the students' understanding of subject matter (White & Lightbown, 1984). Even though such a type of discourse also demonstrates the classroom interaction (Cook, 2001), it hardly provides exposure to the full range of external language that students will need outside the classroom.

Discussion on language input would naturally draw one's attention to how to provide it in the classroom context. According to the findings of recent research, the best way to provide input in the classroom context is to integrate form-focused instruction and communication because it leads to both acquisition of the target structure and better overall comprehension (Ellis, 1995; Fotos, 1994). Since Long (1991) first used the term 'focus on form,' the meaning has been stretched beyond what he originally used. The 'focus on form' as used today means planned, intensive focus on form rather than incidental, extensive focus on form which is the characteristic of many communicative classes. In other words, as explained in Ellis, Basturkman, and Loewen (2001), focus on form involves repetitive exposure to a single preselected linguistic feature rather than nonrepetitive exposure to numerous linguistic features within a single lesson,

the latter of which is often the characteristic of many CLT classes.

Regarding how to provide the form-focused instruction, Vanpatten and Cadierno (1993) claim that it should be on the input rather than on the output in order to bring about language development. That is, if the instruction attempts to alter the nature of the developing system rather than to manipulate the learner's output, they argue, it should seek to change the way that input is perceived and processed by the learner, as manifested in the processing instruction in Figure 1 below.



In addition to the form-focused instruction, the teacher should also remember that in order to help the students internalize the target structure or vocabulary it must be recycled not only in that particular class but also in subsequent classes (Bragger, 1993). What is required in this recycling process is the repetitive use of the target structure or vocabulary both by the students and by the teacher.

2. The English-only Policy in ESL Classes and the Use of L1 in EFL Classes

The English-only policy, which requires the teachers to use the target language exclusively and does not allow the students to use their first language, originally came from the ESL context, where the teachers do not know the students' first language(s) and thus the TL is the only medium for communication. In such a context the English-only policy has been a natural and inevitable choice. Recently, however, there have been claims against the English-only policy even in the ESL context for several reasons. One of them is that there has been no empirical evidence that the exclusive use of the target language actually produces better language learners (Richards, 1985). Another is that English can serve useful purposes only if the linguistic human rights of speakers of other languages are respected (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996). Still another is that using L1 reduces affective barriers to English acquisition and allows for more

rapid progress (Auerbach, 1993). Given these claims, the English-only policy in the classroom should be considered neither conclusive nor pedagogically sound.

Despite the recent claims against the English-only policy in ESL context, it is very unfortunate to witness that there are teachers in the EFL context who blindly or prematurely adopt the policy. Those teachers seem to believe that the students' L1 is an obstacle and the exclusive use of the target language is a must in developing the communicative language ability. However, unlike their beliefs, many studies claim that the students' L1 can be a resource rather than an obstacle and thus L1 and L2 can exist simultaneously (Auerbach, 1993; Cook, 2001; Jensen & Vinther, 1983; Kharma & Hajjaj, 1989; Polio & Duff, 1994; Turnbull, 2001). For instance, Cook (2001) argues that given the fact of life, the indisputable L1-L2 connection, keeping the languages visibly separate in language teaching is contradicted by the invisible processes in students' minds. In addition, Auerbach (1993) maintains that using L1 reduces affective barriers to English acquisition and allows for more rapid progress. In a similar vein, Polio and Duff (1994) also claim that the exclusive use of the TL in the classroom for nonnative teachers is unreasonable since many nonnative teachers whose own exposure to the TL and culture is quite limited.

According to the arguments for the use of TL and L1 in an EFL context, what is crucial in developing students' L2 proficiency is not whether TL is exclusively used or not or whether to use L1 or not. Rather, it is how TL or L1 is used. Scholars agree on the point that what is necessary for an effective L2 acquisition is the maximal use of TL and the judicious use of L1. That is, as argued in Jensen and Vinther (1983), we need to use TL as much as possible but also use L1 where the use is crucial or mostly needed for the teaching/learning process.

III. METHOD

1. Collection of Data

1) The TETE Classes

Three TETE classes from three middle schools were videotaped, one of which was first grade class, and the other two were third grade classes. The classes were presented as the model TETE classes for middle school teachers. The three teachers who presented the classes were known to be competent teachers and were selected to present the model TETE classes by the local Board of Education. The lengths of their teaching experiences were about 16 years, 14 years, and 13 years, respectively.

In each of the three classes there were guests from other schools to observe the class, which undoubtedly made the class atmosphere rather different from those of other regular classes. Moreover, the three classes observed are quite limited in number and length and thus may not be argued to represent exactly what happens in other TETE classes. This is considered an inherent limitation of the current paper. However, given the similar conditions provided by the Korean classroom context in general, the three videotaped classes are believed to share common features with other TETE classes.

2) Questionnaire Surveys

In order to obtain more accurate information about what goes on in our schools, the researcher conducted two mailed surveys, one for middle school teachers and the other for middle school students. The questionnaires in the two surveys were both composed of 40 items, to each of which the respondents were requested to select one of the five categories of responses: Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided/Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly disagree (1).

Since the purpose of the questionnaire were to find out what the teachers and the students think and do, the items in the questionnaires were developed based on the information obtained from the analysis of the three videotaped TETE classes and the discussions with 16 middle school and high school English teachers enrolled in the graduate program where the researcher was involved. From the analysis and the discussions factors that the teachers think influence the effects of the teaching/learning were collected, which covered a variety of different areas. Based on the information collected the researcher developed the items of each questionnaire. The items thus developed were descriptive rather than prescriptive in nature.

The questionnaires were delivered to each school by mail with a self-addressed return envelope enclosed to facilitate the return of the completed questionnaire. With the cooperation of the teachers in each school all the completed questionnaires were returned to the researcher in about 10 days.

(1) The Questionnaire for Teachers

The respondents comprised 48 English teachers (4 male teachers and 44 female teachers) from ten middle schools. The average length of their teaching experiences was 12.76 years. The items in the questionnaire were made to investigate what the teachers think about the TETE classes, themselves and their colleagues as English teachers, their students as learners, the English education in general, the school environment, , and what they actually do in the TETE classes.

(2) The Questionnaire for Students

Three schools were selected from different school districts by the researcher and one class from each school was selected by the teacher who volunteered to cooperate in the study. The criterion for the selection of the class was that it should be an average class, not a class of good students only or poor students only. The respondents from the three classes comprised 102 middle school second or third grade students (51 male and 51 female students).

The items in the questionnaire were made to examine what the students think about the TETE classes, themselves as learners, their English teachers, the learning in general and what they actually do in the TETE classes. The respondents were told that their responses would not affect any of the school records and thus they could feel free to choose whatever responses they wanted to.

3) The Group Interview

In order to obtain some supplementary data for more accurate interpretation of the data from the TETE classes and the surveys, the researcher had a group interview with five middle school teachers. All of them were competent teachers with an M.A. degree in English education and with an average teaching experience of about 20 years.

The teachers all participated voluntarily in the group interview. Before the interview they were told that they could talk about anything including the model TETE classes recently presented, their own English classes, and the English education in general and that their talks in the interview would be tape-recorded. During the interview the researcher presented the results of the analyses of the TETE classes and the two questionnaire surveys for a more accurate interpretation. The total time taken for the group interview was about two hours.

2. Analysis of Data

1) The TETE Classes

Since the ultimate purpose of this study is to help the English teachers improve their classes and since variations are expected due to the learner variables and the instructional variables, the researcher focused on the quality of the teaching/learning and tried to find out the weaknesses that can hinder the development of communicative language ability. The weaknesses found are described in the following categories: teacher's English, teaching materials/activities, techniques/procedures, and the classroom.

2) The Questionnaires

Since the items in each questionnaire were developed descriptively based on the information obtained from the analysis of the TETE classes and the discussions with the teachers, it was not easy to categorize the items according to particular constructs. Moreover, since the items were not developed prescriptively under careful design, they could not be considered to represent a particular construct to measure. Thus, instead of trying to interpret the data based on any statistical analysis, the researcher arbitrarily divided them into categories only for convenience and tried to give the readers some general idea about what the teachers and the students think and do. Therefore, the title of each category as presented in the paper should not be understood as the construct which the items described under it are intended to measure. The lack of representativeness of the items in each category and thus lack of the statistical analyses of the data are considered to be another inherent limitation of the present study.

For the coding of the data a 5-point Likert scale was used, where 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 means 'Strongly Agree,' 'Agree,' 'Undecided/Neutral,' 'Disagree,' and 'Strongly disagree,' respectively. The mean score (M) and the standard deviation (SD) for each item were calculated and also for an easier interpretation of the results, the responses to each item were also categorized into three types of responses: P (Positive: Strongly agree (5) or Agree (4)), U (Undecided/Neutral (3)), and N (Negative: Strongly Disagree (1) or Disagree (2)). The frequency and the percentage of the each type of responses were then calculated for each item.

The questionnaires collected from the teachers and the students were divided into five and four categories, respectively. Also, the questionnaire responses of the teachers and of the students were compared for their similarities and differences in what the two groups think about the TETE classes and the development of English proficiency in general. In this comparison t-tests were used for the statistical significance. The results of the questionnaire analysis are described in the following categories:

(1) Analysis for Questionnaires for Teachers

- ① Teachers' Beliefs and Opinions about TETE Classes
- ② Teachers' Evaluation of Themselves and their Colleagues as English Teachers
- ③ Teachers' Evaluation of their Students as English learners
- ④ Teachers' Perceptions about English Teaching in General
- ⑤ Teachers' Evaluation of the Teaching Environment

(2) Analysis for Questionnaires for Students

- ① Students' Beliefs and Opinions about TETE Classes

- ② Students' Evaluation of Themselves and their Classmates as English Learners
- ③ Students' Evaluation of their Teachers in the TETE Classes
- ④ Students' Perceptions about English Learning in General

(3) Comparison of Teachers' and Students' Views about the TETE Classes and the Development of English proficiency

3) The Group Interview

The data from the tape-recorded group interview with the five middle school teachers were used as the supplementary data for a more accurate interpretation of the data from the TETE classes and the two questionnaire surveys.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the data analyses show that recently there has been quite a little change in our English classes. As the teacher responses to Item 40 in the questionnaire show (Table 4), as many as 64.58% of the teachers responded that there has been a lot of change, while only 2.08% responded that there has been little change. This was also confirmed by the interview with the teachers. All the teachers in the interview agreed on the point that the governmental push definitely brought the change. However, they said that the change did not always bring about effective teaching due to various constraints and lack of preparation including teacher training.

Presented in the following are the kinds of weaknesses that were commonly found in the three TETE classes analyzed. Though they may not be exhaustive and also they may not reflect all the features of other TETE classes, they are considered enough to give us some insights into what goes on in our English classrooms.

1. The TETE Classes

1) Teacher's English

The English used by the teachers were analyzed for their appropriateness as middle school classroom English and the weaknesses found were categorized into six types with examples. Some of the examples possess more than one type of weakness and there can be some overlap

among the examples.

(1) Use of Incorrect or Unnatural English

Teachers often used incorrect or unnatural English, showing that they lack TL fluency as well as accuracy:

- e.g. fillers such as “so”, “all right.” or “any way” used inappropriately or often enough to irritate the listeners (used habitually or used when the teacher could not come up with an appropriate word)
- e.g. “Think about the restaurants that are the same style as the ones you like.”
(intended to mean ‘Think about the kinds of restaurants that you like.’)
- e.g. “I feel like chanting to make our class more exciting.”
(intended to mean ‘Why don’t we have some fun with a chant?’)
- e.g. “You are to think to say about the restaurant.”
(intended to mean ‘Think about what you want to say about the restaurant.’)
- e.g. “What do you think about making your own chant?”
(intended to mean ‘How did you like making your own chant?’)

(2) Use of Difficult English

Teachers often used difficult words or long/complicated sentences that could have been replaced by easier and shorter/simpler ones:

- e.g. Use of words such as “brainstorming”, “superlative”, etc. (for first graders)
- e.g. “Today’s learning objectives are first, this is for the review of the main text. So we should fully understand the fairy tale “Wiser than the king?” and second, we will review the grammar ‘who/whose’ which we’ve been learning through our various classroom activities.” (for third graders)

(3) Too Much Teacher Talk

All the teachers observed tended to talk too much, and the role of the students were usually that of the listener and observer. Trying to use English themselves to provide enough input, the teachers were actually depriving the students of the opportunity to practice and use the language. Typical examples are given in the following conversations:

- e.g. Right before the class begins the teacher has the students sing a song when she gets ready, she finally says:

T: *"Hi, everyone! What is the title of this song?"*

Ss.: *"Larger than life."*

T: *"Do you like it?"*

Ss.: *"Yes."*

T: *"You sang this song very well. You seem to like Backstreetboy's dance music so much. But I like ballade song of theirs. Let's begin today's lesson. As you know, today is a special day. Many English teachers came to our school to watch our class. So you and I might be nervous. But let's do our best."*

e.g. (In the review session for 'superlatives')

T: *What is the longest river in the world?"*

S1 in Group A: *"Nyle."*

T: *Good. Nyle River. Nyle River is the longest."*

T: *"What is the largest country in the world?"*

S2 in Group B: *"America."*

T: *"America?"*

S3 in group C: *"Russia."*

T: *"That's right. Russia."*

T: *"What's the closest country to the U.S.?"*

S4: in Group A: *"Canada."*

T: *"Which country has most people in the world?"*

S4 in Group D: *"China."*

Notice that in the first example above the students say only two sentences (in words) in chorus, while the teacher says as many as eleven full sentences. Also, notice that in the second example, where the conversation is intended to review the superlative structure that the students had learned, the teacher speaks five sentences including the target structure, whereas none of the students have any chances to speak even one. It is the teacher, not the students who gets all the practice!

Of course the teacher has to say more than the students when he/she gives an explanation about something or tries to induce the students to talk. However, it would deprive the students of the opportunities to talk if he/she does that in most of the teacher-student interactions. Unfortunately, it was exactly what happened during most of the class time in the observed classes.

(4) The IRF Type of Discourse

Another serious problem was that the discourse type that the teachers employed was mostly

the IRF type (i.e., Initiation - Response - Feedback). That is, when the teachers had conversations with their students, they usually had the sequence like the following: the teacher initiates by asking the student a question; the student responds; then the teacher reacts to the response.

e.g. (To a Group)

T: *"Where do you want to go for lunch?"*

Ss: *"Pizza Hut."*

T: *"Why do you want to go there?"*

Ss.: *"Because pizza is good for lunch."*

T: *"Because pizza is good for lunch. Very good!"*

e.g. (Before they start the lesson, the teacher has the students watch the video.)

T: *"Hello, everyone. I'm sorry but we should stop watching the video. Now I need to ask you what day is it today. What day is it today?"*

Ss.: *"It's Wednesday."*

T: *"All right. Anyway, did you enjoy the video?"*

Ss.: *"Yes!"*

T: *"How was it?"*

Ss.: *"Interesting!"*

T: *"Are you sure?"*

Ss.: *"Yes!"*

T: *"All right. I think it's a beautiful, superb, fantastic story."*

As can be noticed, the questions in the above examples are not really for communication but only for practice. Also, the teacher always asks and the students always answer. The teacher is generating artificial interaction when it is possible to generate genuine communication. Also, in the second example one could hardly see why the teacher asks what day it is. Without any subsequent remarks about the day, she abruptly changes the topic of talk, which rarely happens in real communication.

(5) Lack of Repetitive Use of the Target Structure or Vocabulary

All the three teachers tended to pay much attention to providing input but they paid little attention to turning the input into intake, which is considered crucial for language development. Given that providing the input more frequently has a better chance to make it turn into intake, a repetitive use or recycling of the target structure or vocabulary within the class and across the classes not only by the teacher but also by the students would have to be practiced. However,

instead of using the target structure or vocabulary repetitively themselves or giving the students opportunities to do so, the teachers were busy trying to cover the materials/activities prepared. Also, the fact that the class materials and activities were often too many in kinds and were not closely related to each other contributed to the lack of repetitive use of the target structure and vocabulary. For instance, in one class they started the lesson with a song and ended it with another song, but neither of the songs was very much related to the target structure or vocabulary. For the researcher, it was hard to see why the teacher used those particular songs for that particular lesson. Even if songs can be used for an affective reason, it would be better if they could contribute to the recycling of the target structure or vocabulary.

(6) Problem in Pacing

Proper pacing is an important element for an effective class. When asking a question, for instance, the teacher should be patient enough and give students time to try. A common characteristic of the three teachers was that they moved on so fast. For instance, many questions, especially those in the games, were only for the good students who could answer quickly, and the rest of the students were not given enough time to think about what they had heard and try the answer. The policy that the teachers usually employed in the game was 'only the quickest gets the point,' which would only frustrate the students rather than help them practice the target structure or vocabulary. If the class is not for the good students only, the teacher should slow down and wait.

2) Teaching Materials/Activities

The teaching materials/activities here refer to those that the teacher herself prepared to make the lesson more effective. Despite the efforts made in preparing the materials/activities, they were not always helpful in making the class more effective. The problems found with the materials and activities used are described in the following two categories:

(1) Too much variety and lack of economical use of the teaching materials/aids

Another common feature that the three classes shared was that the teachers tended to use too much variety in materials/activities during the limited class time. In one class as many as six activities were used, and in the other two five activities were used. For each of the activities the researcher got an impression that the students definitely needed more time than allotted in order to learn better from it. According to the teachers in the interview, this excessive variety was probably due to the enthusiasm of the teachers to show that they could do a variety of different things. Of course, we need some variety to keep the students from getting bored. However, we

should remember that too much variety confuses the students rather than helps them.

The excessive variety in the materials/aids also resulted in lack of economical use of the materials/aids prepared. For an economical use of the material prepared a material used for one activity (e.g., listening practice) should also be used for other activities (e.g., speaking and reading/writing). In this sense, the three classes observed did not seem to be very successful.

(2) Lack of Coherence and Cohesion among the Materials/Activities

In planning a lesson, the teacher should always know the objective of each activity and how the activity contributes to the accomplishment of the class objectives. The coherence and cohesion must thus be created as a result of specific activity objectives which fit into the class objectives. Unfortunately, however, the teachers observed tended to employ various activities without paying much attention to this matter. For instance, the games and songs which the teachers used were often not quite related to each other and also to the class objectives. As a result, a seemingly exciting class activity did not seem to contribute very much in achieving the class objectives. Teachers should remember that the bigger number of materials and activities used in the class does not mean that the class was actually more effective.

Look at the following activity used in a third year class where the learning objectives were "Students understand: 1. the fairy tale "Wiser than the King?" and 2. who/whose through various activities." There is no reason why the teacher should select that particular sentence in the cue card since it has little to do with the understanding of the fairy tale or the target word "who/whose". Thus, the game could have been fun to the students but it did not seem to be very helpful in fulfilling the learning objectives.

e.g. (Jeopardy Game)

T: *"What is 'jeopardy game'? Can anyone explain?"*

S1: (raises her hand and explains while the rest of the class listen, few of whom probably understand it due to the long answer given in such a fast speed.)

"Let me explain this game to make sure. In this game, if you give the right answer, you can gain some points. But if you give the wrong answer, you will lose these points instead. That's why this game is called 'jeopardy' which means 'take a chance'."

T: *Wow! Excellent!! Probably better than I.* (Students laugh.)

(A native speaker who has been sitting quiet for over half of the class time finally gets employed to read the cue card, which is believed to be a loss of a great opportunity for the students' part to interact with a native speaker and use real English.)

NS: “If a person was experiencing a new culture in a new country, and he was trying to copy the lifestyle of the new culture, then you would say, “When you’re in Rome, do _____.”

(A student raises his hand and gives the answer, which few students probably understood unless they already knew the English proverb.)

S1: “*When you’re in Rome, do as the Romans do.*”

(Thanks to the right answer from the student, the group that he belongs to gets the point.)

3) Techniques/Procedures

(1) Too much Focus on ‘skill-getting’ Activities

Despite all the claims for learner-centered activities in a communicative language classroom, the observed classes were still excessively teacher-controlled. The class activities where the responses of the students were most predictable gave the impression that the teachers did not quite understand the differences between the ‘skill-getting’ and the ‘skill-using’ activities. Most of the activities they were using were ‘skill-getting’ activities, which were most controlled by the teacher. Teachers should remember that in order to develop fluency as well as accuracy we need both the ‘skill-getting’ activities and the ‘skill-using’ activities.

(2) Misuse or Ineffective Use of the Class Activities

The teachers often employed group activities. However, those activities were too often misused. Instead of giving the students opportunities to help each other and come up with a solution to a given problem, the group activities were very often for the good students only, making the rest of the students lookers-on. In fact, by having only the good students do most of the work and failing to involve the rest of the students such activities often provided good chances for the demotivated and uninterested students to ‘relax and feel comfortable’ for they did not have to participate in the activities.

Given that the purpose of the group activity is to make the students work together, there will be no point in giving a bonus point to a particular group for the performance of one good student who happens to belong to that group. Unfortunately, however, this often happened especially when the teachers used a game for the group activity. What looked a more serious problem was that the teacher did not pay very much attention to those demotivated and uninterested students. Unless the teacher employs some strategies to involve the whole class and keep them alert, an exciting game for some good students can turn out to be a waste of time for the rest of the students. The teachers in the interview also agreed on this point.

According to them, quite a few students in the class are simply not interested in what the teacher tries to teach and they often doubt about the effects of the class activities due to lack of cooperation from the students.

(3) Lack of Strategy to Integrate Form-focused Instruction and Communication

Despite the recent emphasis on the form-focused explicit instruction, the teachers in the TETE classes did not seem to pay much attention to providing explicit instruction focusing on the target language form. Instead, they were mostly concerned with using a variety of activities, which for the reasons given above did not necessarily contribute to developing communicative abilities. Teachers should remember the recent arguments that even in CLT framework, it is necessary to embrace explicit and direct instruction so that the students could fully understand the target language structure and vocabulary before they actually try to use them. In other words, it is argued that understanding should precede the use.

(4) Lack of Sensitivity to Student Problems

All the three teachers spent little time observing the students. At least partially this could be attributed to the space problem in the classroom. In fact, none of the three classrooms had enough space for the teachers to move around to observe the students during the class activities. This failure to observe the students made the teachers insensitive to the individual students' problems.

When the students produce something incorrect, correction, immediate or delayed, must be made before it gets fossilized. Of course correction for every single error is not necessary and can even be harmful. However, correction is part of the teaching and it would be a problem if the teacher does not even notice or totally ignores the error made by the students. Unfortunately, this is exactly what happened in one class. In that class the students were often asked to speak the English in chorus and even though they were using the Korean rhythm through the whole class and their English sounded very unnatural, the teacher never paid any attention to it.

(5) Overuse or Inappropriate Use of Technology

Technology is not a cure-all but is just supplementary equipment for more effective teaching. However, the teachers observed tended to overuse or inappropriately use the technology. Look at the following examples:

e.g. T: *"So, anyway, what is the name of the main character?"*

Ss.: *"Cinderella."* [in Korean accent]

T: *"Oh, no! You have a bad pronunciation! Where's the tape recorder? Let's hear the*

tape recorder." (The teacher plays the tape recorder and students listen and repeat after the word twice. However, the teacher never demonstrates the pronunciation of the word herself.)

e.g. The teacher shows TV ads for foods and gives each group a restaurant picture. Each group writes a short ad for the restaurant using superlatives. Then each group presents their finished ad by putting on the board. After all the groups have finished presenting their ads, the teacher says, "OK. Good. All finished." and then moves on to the next activity.

In the first example above, the students are already familiar with the Korean pronunciation of "Cinderella" and it may be necessary for the teacher to draw the students' attention to the English version. However, instead of using the tape recorder, the teacher could model on how to pronounce the word herself. Why rely on the machine and spend more time when the teacher has a good command of English and can do it perfectly? In the second example, the teacher should have replayed the video tape, spending some time talking about the content. This gives the students a chance to go over what they might have missed during the first watch. Without such a chance many students would probably have to move on to the next activity without fully understanding the material presented. In short, the teachers tended to rely on technology too much, reducing the precious opportunities to communicate face to face using the target language.

4) The Classroom

Many of the above problems are related to the classroom itself, which the teachers themselves cannot do anything about. However, even though the teachers may not be responsible for the inappropriate type of classroom or lack of the classroom space itself, they are believed to be responsible for adopting appropriate techniques that would work in a particular classroom environment. In this sense the teachers observed did not seem to be very successful. The problems found in the observed classrooms may be summarized in the following categories:

(1) Inappropriate Type of Classroom

Two of the three classes were taught in the computer room where several students (In one class as many as eight students were sharing one computer!) were sitting around one computer. It was very doubtful that all the students in each group had enough access to the computer. Moreover, in such a classroom it was virtually impossible due to the unmovable huge table to

form groups of different number of students for different activities.

(2) Lack of Space

All the three classes analyzed suffered from lack of space for various class activities. Despite the fancy multimedia equipment in the classroom, this lack of space was one of the most serious problems that hinder the communicative teaching. It was simply impossible for both the teacher and the students to move around in the classroom to observe or to do various activities in such a crowded classroom. This problem was also pointed out by the teachers in the interview as one of the most serious problems that hinder the communicative language teaching.

(3) Use of the Microphone

In two of the three classes observed the teachers used a microphone. It must have been inevitable due to the large class size. Use of the microphone, however, caused the poor quality of the English sound that the teacher produced, and also made the teacher stuck on the podium, not being able to move around in the class. This was probably another reason why the teacher could not be sensitive enough to individual students' problems and thus failed to help them.

2. The Questionnaires

All the five teachers interviewed said that they simply cannot and should not employ the English-only policy because the majority of the students would not be able to understand the lesson. The teachers added that the model TETE classes recently demonstrated by some voluntary teachers are far from what really happens in the real classes. All they can do in their classes, the teachers said, is to try to use English as much as possible, but never exclusively. Thus, the 'TETE' class as used in the two questionnaires must be interpreted as the class where the teacher partly uses the target language.

1) Questionnaires for Teachers

(1) Teachers' Beliefs and Opinions about TETE Classes

Table 1 below shows that even though many teachers think that the TETE classes are necessary and helpful in fulfilling our educational goal, they think that the implementation of the English-only policy is unrealistic in the current situation. Many teachers think that even in the TET classes they need to use Korean in order to make their students understand the lesson better. This was also confirmed by the group interview.

TABLE 1
Teachers' Beliefs and Opinions about TETE Classes (N = 48)

| Item # | Content of Item | Mean SD | Frequency/% of Responses | | |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| | | | P % | U % | N % |
| 1. | We need the TETE classes. | 3.67 | 29 | 15 | 4 |
| 2. | English must be taught in English whenever possible. | 0.83 | 60.42 | 31.25 | 8.33 |
| | | 0.80 | 54.17 | 37.50 | 8.33 |
| 3. | The TETE classes must be expanded in the future. | 3.69 | 32 | 12 | 4 |
| | | 0.78 | 66.67 | 25.0 | 8.33 |
| 4. | The TETE classes are not more effective than the regular classes in achieving the educational goal. | 2.65 | 8 | 16 | 24 |
| | | 0.86 | 16.67 | 33.33 | 50.0 |
| 6. | The TETE classes make the teacher feel more tired than the regular classes. | 3.52 | 25 | 19 | 4 |
| | | 0.77 | 52.08 | 39.58 | 8.33 |
| 7. | We should not employ the English-only policy in the TETE classes | 4.23 | 40 | 4 | 4 |
| | | 0.93 | 83.33 | 8.33 | 8.33 |
| 11. | Teachers need to use some Korean even in the TETE classes to help the students' understanding. | 4.52 | 47 | 1 | 0 |
| | | 0.55 | 97.92 | 2.08 | 0 |
| 15. | The TETE classes will be helpful in developing students' English proficiency. | 4.10 | 40 | 7 | 1 |
| | | 0.72 | 83.33 | 14.58 | 2.08 |
| 16. | The TETE classes are more difficult than the regular classes to the students. | 3.77 | 35 | 6 | 7 |
| | | 0.93 | 72.92 | 12.50 | 14.58 |
| 17. | The TETE classes require more teaching materials than the regular classes. | 3.81 | 34 | 8 | 6 |
| | | 0.94 | 70.83 | 16.67 | 12.50 |
| 24. | I don't think English must be taught in English all the time. | 4.02 | 38 | 8 | 2 |
| | | 0.79 | 79.17 | 16.67 | 4.17 |
| 29. | I don't think the English-only classes are beneficial to all the students. | 4.19 | 41 | 5 | 2 |
| | | 0.79 | 85.42 | 10.42 | 4.17 |
| 31. | Students often don't understand the teacher's English in the TETE classes. | 4.0 | 38 | 7 | 3 |
| | | 0.83 | 79.17 | 14.58 | 6.25 |

P: Positive responses (Strongly agree (5) & Agree (4))

U: Undecided/Neutral (3)

N: Negative response (Strongly disagree (1) & Disagree (2))

(2) Teachers' Evaluation of Themselves and their Colleagues as English Teachers

The survey result shows that many teachers feel uncomfortable about teaching the TETE classes due to lack of appropriate training and confidence in their own ability (Table 2). The result also shows that there are variations among the teachers in various points including their English abilities, the training they received, their efforts, and the techniques they employ. As many as 89.58% of the teachers surveyed think that even in the same school teachers often adopt different approaches/methods. This was also revealed in the interview. According to the teachers interviewed there are teachers in our schools who rarely use even the easiest classroom English. This can be a serious problem in providing a systematic and consistent instruction. For the students, learning from a teacher who rarely uses TL one year and learning from another who uses a lot of TL the next year or vice versa can only be a

confusing experience.

TABLE 2
Teachers' Evaluation of Themselves and Their Colleagues as English Teachers (N = 48)

| Item # | Content of Item | Mean SD | Frequency/% of Responses | | |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | | P % | U % | N % |
| 9. | My English is good enough to teach the classes in English. | 3.08 0.83 | 14 29.17 | 24 50.0 | 10 20.83 |
| 10. | I am familiar with various teaching approaches/methods. | 3.27 0.74 | 17 35.42 | 25 52.08 | 6 12.50 |
| 12. | I sometimes find myself using Korean when I have to use English. | 3.44 1.07 | 28 58.33 | 9 18.75 | 11 22.92 |
| 13. | Sometimes I am not sure of the correctness of the English I use. | 3.94 0.76 | 40 83.33 | 6 12.50 | 2 4.17 |
| 14. | Teachers in the same school often adopt different teaching approaches/methods. | 4.15 0.58 | 43 89.58 | 5 10.42 | 0 0 |
| 22. | I have received training on how to teach the TETE classes. | 3.33 1.24 | 28 58.33 | 6 12.50 | 14 29.17 |
| 25. | Not very many teachers are able to teach their classes in English. | 3.44 0.99 | 23 47.92 | 17 35.42 | 8 16.67 |
| 26. | I often employ pair and group works in my classes. | 3.42 0.82 | 24 50.0 | 17 35.42 | 7 14.58 |
| 27. | I often use a variety of teaching equipment in my classes. | 3.35 0.93 | 22 45.83 | 16 33.33 | 10 20.83 |
| 28. | I often give my students opportunities to use the target language in the TETE classes. | 3.63 0.70 | 30 62.50 | 15 31.25 | 3 6.25 |
| 30. | In the TETE classes students should review what they have already learned rather than learn new points. | 3.27 0.96 | 21 43.75 | 16 33.33 | 11 22.92 |
| 35. | I am familiar with various techniques for teaching TETE classes. | 2.88 0.73 | 8 16.67 | 25 52.08 | 15 31.25 |
| 36. | I want to participate in the teacher training for TETE classes if there is any available. | 4.23 0.78 | 38 79.17 | 10 20.83 | 0 0 |
| 37. | I try to improve my own English proficiency. | 3.35 0.76 | 17 35.42 | 27 56.25 | 4 8.3 |

(3) Teachers' Evaluation of their Students as English Learners

As indicated in Table 3 below, many teachers think that many of their students are demotivated; the students neither like the TETE classes nor are much concerned about improving their English ability (See Items 5 & 20.). This may not be a new problem but it is a serious problem if it is true, as the teachers in the interview expressed their concern, that the number of such demotivated students has recently increased. The teachers in the interview confessed that it is often very hard to make the class activities work in the right way because of

lack of cooperation from those demotivated students. For instance, in a pair work, those demotivated students often use Korean where they are supposed to use English. Also, in a group activity, instead of trying to solve the problem together through cooperation they often just copy the answers that the good student in the group alone has come up with.

One teacher in the interview also mentioned that one noticeable characteristic of the test results these days is that the distribution of the test scores rarely makes a normal distribution. According to her, there tended to be either good students or poor students. With the demotivated students and with the big gap among the student abilities (See Item 18), it seems not easy for the teachers to manage the class. Especially when the teacher does not have much confidence in herself/himself (See Table 2 above), it can be easily imagined how difficult it would be to teach the TETE class.

TABLE 3
Teachers' Evaluation of their Students as English Learners (N = 48)

| Item # | Content of Item | Mean SD | Frequency/% of Responses | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| | | | P % | U % | N % |
| 5. My students enjoy the TETE classes more than the regular classes. | | 2.81 | 11 | 17 | 20 |
| | | 0.79 | 22.92 | 35.42 | 41.67 |
| 8. With the TETE classes students' achievement will be better than the regular classes. | | 3.0 | 20 | 11 | 17 |
| | | 1.05 | 41.67 | 22.92 | 35.42 |
| 18. The differences among the student abilities make teaching/learning difficult. | | 4.29 | 40 | 6 | 2 |
| | | 0.85 | 83.33 | 12.50 | 4.17 |
| 20. The students make efforts to improve their English proficiency. | | 2.85 | 14 | 14 | 20 |
| | | 0.95 | 29.17 | 29.17 | 41.67 |

(4) Teachers' Perceptions about English Teaching in General

The responses of the teachers show that they understand their own responsibility as the teacher but that there are parts that they as teachers cannot help with. All the teachers (100%) surveyed believe that developing the students' English proficiency has a lot to do with individual students' own efforts (See Item 21 in Table 4). Also, most teachers (95.83%) think that with so many constraints existing in the classroom, it is difficult to help the students improve their English proficiency in any effective way (See Item 19). Probably due to this difficulty not a few teachers (20.83%) even think that the traditional grammar-translation approach is more effective for Korean students than the communicative approach (See Item 38.).

TABLE 4
Teachers' Perceptions about English Teaching in General (N = 48)

| Item # | Content of Item | Mean SD | Frequency/% of Responses | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| | | | P % | U % | N % |
| 19. The learning in school is not enough for the students to improve their English proficiency. | | 4.48 | 46 | 2 | 0 |
| | | 0.58 | 95.83 | 4.17 | 0 |
| 21. A student's English proficiency is closely related to his/her own efforts. | | 4.58 | 48 | 0 | 0 |
| | | 0.50 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 23. The success of the TETE class does not depend very much on the teacher's English proficiency. | | 3.02 | 18 | 13 | 17 |
| | | 0.93 | 37.50 | 27.08 | 35.42 |
| 38. The traditional grammar-translation method is more effective than the communicative method for Korean students. | | 2.56 | 10 | 12 | 26 |
| | | 1.01 | 20.83 | 25.0 | 54.17 |
| 39. I do not always rely on the traditional grammar-translation method for my teaching. | | 3.58 | 27 | 17 | 4 |
| | | 0.94 | 56.25 | 35.42 | 8.33 |
| 40. Recently, there has been lots of change in the teaching approaches/methods that teachers employ. | | 3.73 | 31 | 16 | 1 |
| | | 0.68 | 64.58 | 33.33 | 2.08 |

(5) Teachers' Evaluation of the Teaching Environment

As manifested in Table 5 below, the teachers seem to have difficulty in teaching their classes communicatively due to lack of the environmental support. Despite the importance of classroom space for communicative language teaching, many schools seem to be very poor in this sense (See Item 32). According to the teachers in the interview, this lack of classroom space often discourages the teacher's use of diverse classroom activities and also lessens the effect of the fancy equipment in the classroom due to the failure to use the activities that should follow the use of the equipment.

TABLE 5
Teachers' Evaluation of the Teaching Environment (N = 48)

| Item # | Content of Item | Mean SD | Frequency/% of Responses | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| | | | P % | U % | N % |
| 32. The classrooms in my school have enough space for various class activities. | | 2.46 | 13 | 5 | 30 |
| | | 1.20 | 27.18 | 10.42 | 62.50 |
| 33. The classrooms in my school are well provided with various classroom equipment and facilities. | | 2.71 | 11 | 15 | 22 |
| | | 1.03 | 22.92 | 31.25 | 45.83 |
| 34. I usually make or prepare the teaching materials myself. | | 3.56 | 28 | 14 | 6 |
| | | 0.85 | 58.33 | 29.17 | 12.50 |

2) Questionnaires for Students

(1) Students' Beliefs and Opinions about TETE Classes

As the students' responses in Table 6 below show, students seem to be divided in their beliefs and opinions about the TETE classes. Some (32.35%) think that they need the TETE classes, while others (31.37%) do not (See Item 7). Some (37.35%) think that the TETE classes are helpful for them in improving their language proficiency, while others (25.49%) do not (See Item 22). But quite a few students (58.82%) think that the TETE classes are more difficult than the regular classes (See Item 11). The difficulty that the students experience in trying to understand the teacher's English probably explains why many students (41.18%) feel that the TETE classes are less fun than the regular classes and why many students (43.14%) feel even nervous in the TETE classes (See Items 8 & 12). A communicative class should be more fun than the traditional one in that it is student-centered and employs various activities. There must be something wrong if many students think that it is not.

TABLE 6
Students' Beliefs and Opinions about TETE Classes (N = 102)

| Item # | Content of Item | Mean SD | Frequency/% of Responses | | |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| | | | P % | U % | N % |
| | | 3.0 | 33 | 37 | 32 |
| 7. | We need the TETE classes. | 1.15 | 32.35 | 36.27 | 31.37 |
| 8. | The TETE classes are more fun than the regular classes. | 2.75 | 32 | 28 | 42 |
| | | 1.19 | 31.37 | 27.45 | 41.18 |
| 9. | The TETE classes must be expanded in the future. | 2.67 | 28 | 25 | 49 |
| | | 1.21 | 27.45 | 24.51 | 48.04 |
| 10. | I don't think I learn very much in the TETE classes. | 2.70 | 20 | 37 | 45 |
| | | 1.07 | 19.61 | 36.27 | 44.12 |
| 11. | The TETE classes are more difficult than the regular classes to the students. | 3.61 | 60 | 26 | 16 |
| | | 1.07 | 58.82 | 25.49 | 15.69 |
| 12. | I feel more nervous in the TETE classes than in the regular classes. | 3.22 | 44 | 31 | 27 |
| | | 1.13 | 43.14 | 30.39 | 26.47 |
| 13. | I often have a chance to practice speaking in the TETE classes. | 2.44 | 17 | 30 | 55 |
| | | 1.12 | 16.67 | 29.41 | 53.92 |
| 19. | I think we don't need the TETE classes. | 2.59 | 20 | 30 | 52 |
| | | 1.22 | 19.61 | 29.41 | 50.98 |
| 22. | The TETE classes are helpful in improving my English. | 3.11 | 38 | 38 | 26 |
| | | 1.09 | 37.25 | 37.25 | 25.49 |

(2) Students' Evaluation of Themselves and their Classmates as English Learners

As Table 7 below shows, there seem to be not a few students who have lost interest in and motivation for studying English. There are more students (44.12%) who do not like English than

those (22.55%) who do (See Item 1), there are more students (41.18%) who do not study hard than those (22.55%) who do (See Item 2), and there are more students (55.88%) who do not make efforts to improve their English than those (13.73%) who do (See Item 23). Also, many students seem to be very passive in the class; they rarely volunteer to speak out in class and they do not participate in the class activities actively, either (See Items 17 & 27). This negative result was also confirmed by the teachers in the interview. According to the teachers, their students are generally passive, and many of them are not so excited about learning anything. In addition, they said that even those students who are good enough tend not to volunteer for the class activities. This is a serious problem in that motivation and eagerness are crucial in maximizing the effect of learning.

TABLE 7
Students' Evaluation of Themselves and Their Classmates as English Learners (N = 102)

| Item # | Content of Item | Mean SD | Frequency/% of Responses | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|--------------------------|--------|--------|
| | | | P % | U % | N % |
| 1. I like English. | | 2.72 | 23 | 34 | 45 |
| 2. I study English hard. | | 1.05 | 22.55 | 33.33 | 44.12 |
| 3. My English is better than those of my classmates. | | 2.75 | 23 | 37 | 42 |
| 6. I make efforts but I cannot improve my English. | | 1.0 | 22.55 | 36.27 | 41.18 |
| 14. I listen to my classmates when they speak out in the class. | | 2.46 | 16 | 34 | 52 |
| 15. I feel nervous when the teacher calls on students for answers/responses in the TETE class. | | 1.09 | 15.69 | 33.33 | 50.98 |
| 17. I often volunteer to speak out in the class. | | 2.42 | 17 | 29 | 56 |
| 18. I feel frustrated when I see a classmate who is good at English. | | 1.08 | 16.67 | 28.43 | 54.90 |
| 20. My classmates actively participate in the class activities. | | 2.71 | 20 | 45 | 37 |
| 21. Students often don't understand the teacher's English in the TETE classes. | | 0.99 | 19.61 | 44.12 | 26.47 |
| 23. I make efforts to improve my English proficiency. | | 3.29 | 48 | 29 | 25 |
| 27. I actively participate in the class activities in the TETE classes. | | 1.20 | 47.06 | 28.43 | 24.51 |
| 31. I ask the teacher for help whenever I have difficulty in the classes. | | 2.04 | 12 | 17 | 73 |
| 33. I enjoy the pair and group works in the TETE classes. | | 1.06 | 11.76 | 16.67 | 71.57 |
| 35. The differences among students' English abilities make teaching/learning difficult. | | 2.60 | 22 | 27 | 53 |
| 39. I like to converse with the teacher than with my classmates in the TETE classes. | | 1.19 | 21.57 | 26.47 | 51.96 |
| | | 2.82 | 22 | 48 | 32 |
| | | 0.99 | 21.57 | 47.06 | 31.47 |
| | | 3.06 | 41 | 28 | 33 |
| | | 1.15 | 40.20 | 27.45 | 32.35 |
| | | 2.33 | 14 | 31 | 57 |
| | | 1.03 | 13.73 | 30.39 | 55.88 |
| | | 2.63 | 19 | 38 | 45 |
| | | 1.04 | 18.63 | 37.25 | 44.12 |
| | | 2.46 | 21 | 21 | 60 |
| | | 1.16 | 20.59 | 20.59 | 58.82 |
| | | 2.96 | 40 | 27 | 35 |
| | | 1.29 | 39.22 | 26.47 | 34.31 |
| | | 3.44 | 45 | 51 | 6 |
| | | 0.82 | 44.12 | 50.0 | 5.88 |
| | | 2.28 | 9 | 33 | 60 |
| | | 0.94 | 8.82 | 32.35 | 58.82 |

(3) Students' Evaluation of their Teachers in the TETE Classes

Judging from the students' evaluation of their teachers, many students think the TETE classes are difficult to follow. In order to make the classes more effective, therefore, we need improvement in quite a few areas. For instance, the teachers need to make the TETE classes easier, using easy English and slowing down the pace. As many as 44.12% of the students surveyed think that the teacher's English is not easy to understand (See Item 24). Similarly, quite a few students (37.25%) think that the teacher sometimes moves on so fast that they do not understand her (See Item 29). Also, 33.33% of the students think that the teacher talks too much in class, depriving the students opportunities to talk (See Item 26). Another problem noticed is that many students (35.29%) feel that they are not given enough homework to go over at home that they have learned in school (See Item 32).

TABLE 8
Students' Evaluation of Their Teachers as English Teachers (N = 102)

| Item # | Content of Item | Mean SD | Frequency/% of Responses | | |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | | | P % | U % | N % |
| 16. | The teacher in the TETE classes tends to call on good students only for answers to questions. | 2.57 | 20 | 30 | 52 |
| 24. | The teacher's English in the TETE classes is easy to understand. | 1.14 2.62 | 19.61 18 | 29.41 39 | 50.98 45 |
| 25. | We often have opportunities to use the target language in the TETE classes. | 1.01 2.94 | 17.65 28 | 38.24 46 | 44.12 28 |
| 26. | The teacher tends to talk too much in the TETE classes. | 1.04 3.21 | 27.45 34 | 45.10 43 | 27.45 25 |
| 29. | The teacher moves on so fast in the TETE classes that I often don't understand. | 1.04 3.07 | 33.33 38 | 42.16 32 | 24.51 32 |
| 32. | We have homeworks so that we could go over what we have studied in the TETE classes. | 1.15 2.86 | 37.25 32 | 31.37 34 | 31.37 36 |
| 34. | The teacher is concerned with the students' understanding in the TETE classes. | 1.22 3.15 | 31.37 36 | 33.33 43 | 35.29 23 |
| 36. | The teacher in the TETE classes often ask questions to check our understanding. | 0.96 3.71 0.93 | 35.29 65 63.73 | 42.16 27 26.47 | 22.55 10 9.80 |

(4) Students' Perceptions about English Learning in General

As Table 9 below shows, as many as 46.08% of the students think that learning in school is not enough to get a good score in the tests, indicating that they do not have much trust in learning in school. Moreover, as many as 65.69% of the students think that the English-only policy should not be employed in the TETE classes, and as many as 63.73% think it is important to study grammar to improve one's speaking ability. This should give some implication to the

teachers who, following the CLT framework, do not pay much attention to grammar instruction. The teachers must see why so many students still flock to private institutes following the grammar-translation method which we have attempted to remove from our classrooms.

More than half of the students (51.96%) wrongly believe that more multimedia equipment means more effective class (See item 38). Due to the students' preference, the teacher in the class needs to employ something visually exciting. However, this should not mean that the teacher should rely on multimedia equipment any time. A wise use of such high technology to interest the students and thus maximize the learning is required.

TABLE 9
Students' Perceptions about English Learning in General (N = 102)

| Item # | Content of Item | Mean SD | Frequency/% of Responses | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| | | | P % | U % | N % |
| 4. Learning in school is enough to get a good score in the test. | | 2.84 | 34 | 21 | 47 |
| | | 1.16 | 33.33 | 20.59 | 46.08 |
| 5. Learning in the private institute or from a tutor is more effective than the learning in school. | | 2.94 | 33 | 34 | 35 |
| | | 1.18 | 32.35 | 33.33 | 34.31 |
| 8. I don't think grammar is important in improving one's speaking ability. | | 2.27 | 16 | 21 | 65 |
| | | 1.12 | 15.69 | 20.59 | 63.73 |
| 30. We should not employ the English-only policy in the TETE classes. | | 3.95 | 67 | 28 | 7 |
| | | 1.02 | 65.69 | 27.45 | 6.86 |
| 37. It's more important to have a face-to-face interaction than to use various equipment. | | 3.34 | 40 | 46 | 16 |
| | | 1.06 | 39.22 | 45.10 | 15.69 |
| 38. The more multimedia equipment including computer makes the English classes better. | | 3.37 | 53 | 24 | 25 |
| | | 1.19 | 51.96 | 23.53 | 24.51 |
| 40. A student's English proficiency is closely related to his/her own efforts. | | 3.83 | 64 | 30 | 8 |
| | | 1.11 | 62.75 | 29.41 | 7.84 |

3) Comparison of Teachers' and Students' Views of the TETE Classes and the Development of English Proficiency

The comparison of the teachers' and the students' views of the TETE classes and the development of English proficiency in general (See Table 10) shows that the two groups' responses are similar in some points but different in other points. For instance, both the teachers and the students think that students do not enjoy the TETE classes more than the regular classes, that we should not employ the English-only policy in the TETE classes, and that the TETE classes are more difficult than the regular classes for students. However, the t-test results show that the responses of the two groups show statistically significant differences in several other points (For details see Table 10). For instance, many teachers think the TETE classes must be

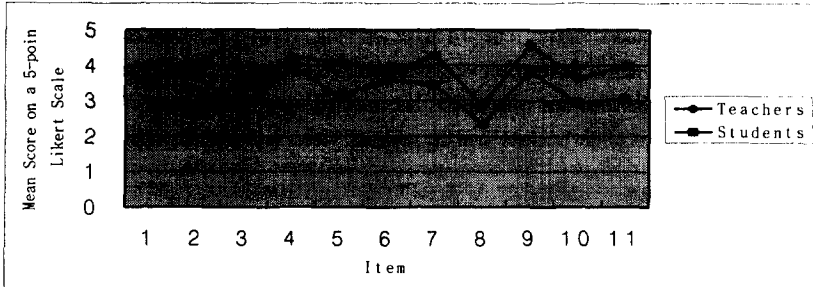
expanded in the future, whereas many students do not (See Item 2). Also, the teachers think that they give the students enough opportunities to use the target language, whereas the students do not think that way (See Item 10). These differences can be a serious problem in the sense that what the teacher thinks is usually reflected in her teaching, which may not necessarily satisfy the students' demands. For a more effective class, therefore, the teacher should be more aware of what she does in the class and what effects her teaching would bring about. The result of the comparative analysis of the teachers' and the students' views is graphically manifested in Figure 2.

TABLE 10
Comparison of Teachers' and Students' Views of the TETE Classes and the Development of English proficiency

| Item # | Content | Teachers (N = 48) | | Students (N = 102) | | t-test |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------|--------------------|------|----------|
| | | M | SD | M | SD | P |
| 1 (T1, S7) | We need the TETE classes. | 3.67 | 0.83 | 3.0 | 1.15 | 0.0000** |
| 2 (T3, S9) | The TETE classes must be expanded in the future. | 3.69 | 0.78 | 2.67 | 1.21 | 0.0000** |
| 3 (T5, S8) | Students enjoy the TETE classes more than the regular classes. | 2.81 | 0.79 | 2.75 | 1.19 | 0.3629 |
| 4 (T7, S30) | We should not employ the English-only policy in the TETE classes. | 4.23 | 0.93 | 3.95 | 1.02 | 0.0501 |
| 5 (T15 S22) | The TETE classes will be helpful in developing students' English proficiency. | 4.10 | 0.72 | 3.11 | 1.09 | 0.0000** |
| 6 (T16 S11) | The TETE classes are more difficult than the regular classes for students. | 3.77 | 0.93 | 3.61 | 1.07 | 0.1713 |
| 7 (T18, S35) | The differences among students' abilities make teaching/learning difficult. | 4.29 | 0.85 | 3.44 | 0.82 | 0.0000** |
| 8 (T20, S23) | Students make efforts to improve their English proficiency. | 2.85 | 0.95 | 2.33 | 1.03 | 0.0014* |
| 9 (T21, S40) | A student's English proficiency is closely related to his/her own efforts. | 4.58 | 0.50 | 3.83 | 1.11 | 0.0000** |
| 10 (T28, S25) | Students often have opportunities to use the target language in the TETE classes. | 3.63 | 0.70 | 2.94 | 1.04 | 0.0000** |
| 11 (T31, S21) | Students often don't understand the teacher's English in the TETE classes. | 4.0 | 0.83 | 3.06 | 1.15 | 0.0000** |

*p < .01 **p < .001

FIGURE 2
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V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The purpose of this study was to critically reflect on the TETE classes in the Korean context. For that purpose the study first conducted a qualitative analysis of three video-taped model TETE classes presented for middle school English teachers and described their weaknesses as communicative classes. It then administered two questionnaire surveys on what the teachers and the students think about and do in the TETE classes and English teaching/learning in general. For some supplementary data the study also conducted a group interview with five middle school English teachers.

According to the results of data analyses, the TETE classes, with their lack of crucial elements of communicative classes, leave much to be desired, and as such cannot be of much help in producing good language learners. We need to remember that the English-only policy as employed in the model TETE classes does not necessarily guarantee an effective class. With the fundamental constraints continue existing, an effective English class in the Korean context needs more than what the teachers of the model TETE classes have shown.

The researcher argues that compared with the time, energy, and money we spend on our English teaching today, we do not harvest as much. We should remember that the TETE classes as currently practiced by the pioneer teachers are far from a communicative language class and that the CLT which the TETE classes are based on is by no means the final answer (Thompson, 1996). It all depends on the teaching context and there is some truth to every method (Prabhu, 1990). This means that the TETE class with the English-only policy is not the only type of class that we can adopt to develop the communicative language ability in our students. Based on the results the study concludes:

1. that an English-only policy in the TETE classes is not realistic at least in the current Korean context;
2. that the English teachers need to use the target language maximally but with judicious use of the students' native language;
3. that without appropriate classroom techniques/procedures the teacher's use of target language itself does not guarantee the development of communicative language ability in the students; and
4. that we need to raise the teachers' awareness of their teaching.

Despite the limitations inherent in the gathering and analysis of the data, it is hoped that the results of this study could contribute to the teachers' better understanding of the core elements of a communicative language class and bringing about some improvement in their classes. Here are some suggestions to make our English classes more effective:

1. With the understanding that it is not the exposure to input itself but the intake that helps the language learners develop communicative language ability, teachers will have to try every effort to turn the input into intake by talking less themselves and providing the students with as many opportunities as possible to use the target language through meaningful interaction. Also, teachers should remember that having the students talk in class does not necessarily mean the communicative use of the language. What is important is the nature of the talk.

2. The learner variables and the instructional variables should be considered to make a decision on adopting appropriate materials/methods. Also, elaboration of appropriate materials/methods for a particular language teaching program should result only from cooperation of all concerned. It would be premature or even dangerous to implement a particular policy which is not the result of such cooperation.

3. Technology should be considered as supplementary equipment to make the lesson more effective, rather than as a cure-all (Slaberry, 2001). Teachers often rely too much on technology without paying much attention to the resulting effect. We need to remember that "without the cooperation of well-informed teachers, precipitous introduction of new technology can lead to equally precipitous abandonment of what may be prematurely judged to be an ineffective enterprise" (Rivers, 1990, p. 78). Teachers must decide which part of their teaching can best be advanced by technology and which other part can best be left to their own personal interaction with the students.

4. As Shuy (1981) argues, teacher knowledge is the key to it all. Materials or texts are only as good as the teachers who use them. It would be a nonsense if we ask anyone to teach what he or she does not even know. A competent teacher would have to possess the required knowledge,

appropriate skills, positive attitudes, and awareness of their teaching (Freeman, 1989). If the teacher fails to possess or lack in any of these constituents of teaching, he/she cannot achieve the maximal effect of the teaching. If we really want to see our students develop the necessary ability, therefore, we must pay more attention to helping the would-be teachers and the in-service teachers understand the core elements of a communicative class and providing them with the training which is practical and thus be truly helpful to the teachers. A real change in our classrooms can be accomplished only after such a fundamental requirement has been satisfied.

5. Developing communicative language ability in the classroom context is not an easily accomplished task. The constraints of our classrooms are real. Tradition, learner attitudes, teacher preparation and expectations, and the instructional environment, all these contribute to individual teachers' adoption of techniques and materials. If there are any recommendations for techniques and materials which ignore this reality, it is evident that they cannot contribute to effective teaching/learning. The teachers who blindly or prematurely practice the TETE classes employing the English-only policy without paying much attention to its effects must remember that learning comes from understanding and their teaching should be for the students' better understanding.

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