



**KDI SCHOOL**

**WORKING PAPER SERIES**

---

# KDI SCHOOL WORKING PAPER SERIES

---

## **English Education Program for North Korean Refugee College Students: Evaluations based on Socio-educational model**

Sunghee Shin

Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education, Queens College, City  
University of New York, USA

Booyuel Kim

KDI School of Public Policy and Management, Sejong, Republic of Korea.

Insook Kim

Education Training Center, Evaluation Institute of Regional Public Corporation, Seoul,  
Republic of Korea

Shieun Yu

Korea University Medical Center, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

*December, 2017*

*Working Paper 17-12*



This paper can be downloaded without charge at:

KDI School of Public Policy and Management Working Paper Series Index:

<http://www.kdischool.ac.kr/new/eng/faculty/working.jsp>

The Social Science Network Electronic Paper Collection:

<https://ssrn.com/abstract=3090138>

\* We are grateful to the KDI School of Public Policy and Management for providing financial support.

# English Education Program for North Korean Refugee College Students: Evaluations based on Socio-educational model

Sunghye Shin<sup>1</sup> · Booyuel Kim<sup>2</sup> · Insook Kim<sup>3</sup> · Shieun Yu<sup>4</sup>

**Abstract** This study was designed to expand our understanding about the ways in which North Korean Refugee College Students (NK RCS) acquire English as their second language in their newly adapted South Korean society. Using a socio-educational model, we paid close attention to their perception toward English, which includes their openness and identification with the target language community and their culture. By examining the six-month English education program for NK RCS, we analyze factors that hinder NK RCS from success in English learning in relation to their motivations. Despite the instrumental goal of the English education program to improve English test scores, most of the participants were not ready to take the test but wished to learn more about basic and conversational knowledge of English, which reflected integrative motivation. Results suggest that this motivational discrepancy may demotivate the participants and lead to low attendance and low performance on the test.

**Keywords** North Korean refugee college students (NK RCS), English as second language (ESL), socio-educational model

## Introduction

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education, Queens College, City University of New York, USA.

<sup>2</sup> KDI School of Public Policy and Management, 263 Namsejong-ro, Sejong, Republic of Korea.

<sup>3</sup> Education Training Center, Evaluation Institute of Regional Public Corporation, Seoul, Republic of Korea

<sup>4</sup> Korea University Medical Center, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

According to the South Korean Ministry of Unification, the number of North Korean refugee migrants in South Korea was only 947 in 1998 but twenty years later, it reached 30,805 in 2017. Recent patterns of North Korean refuge show an increase of family-level entry to South Korea, where over 40 percent of all North Korean refugees in 2017 was in their teens and twenties. One of stumbling blocks young North Korean refugees are facing is preparation for college education (Park & Lee, 1999; Ahn, 2010). While they struggle at the individual level, the lack of a systemic solution delays their progress in quality preparation for college education. Despite their unpreparedness, they are easily admitted to colleges or other higher education institutions in special admission cases simply because they have reached a certain age to attend college.<sup>5</sup> Without proper preparation and the absence of credible information, they depend on unreliable information from their small refugee community, which leads to high drop-out rates (Yu et al., 2013).

North Korean refugees receive government support for college education up through age 35. When refugees attend college at a non-traditional age, they experience more difficulty in adapting and higher likelihood of dropping out due to their lack of necessary preparation for college education. North Korean refugees' drop-out rate at college is double that of South Korean students (Koo et al., 2012; Ministry of Unification, 2013). In addition, their re-entering rate is almost 50% less than that of South Korean college students. According to Yu et al. (2013), many North Korean refugee college students experience disenrollment or leave of absence at college. The prevailing reason for their discontinuation of schooling was to return with a competency in English required for college education. In addition, achieving a certain score on an English test such as TOEIC is required to apply for jobs in the South

---

<sup>5</sup> For example, 12 North Korean waitresses defected in groups from a North Korean restaurant in China in April 2016 and all of them have become college students in South Korea in 2017.

Korean labor market, so their ability to learn English plays a critical role in their college success and adjustment to South Korea.

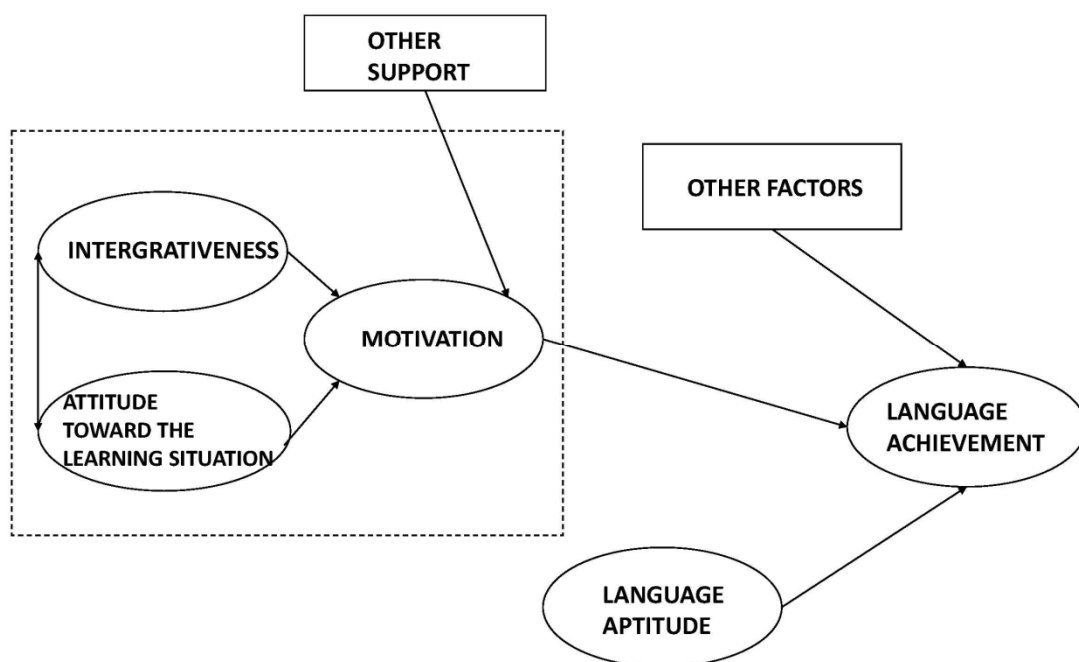
Thus, this study is designed to expand our understanding about the ways in which North Korean refugee college students acquire English as their second language in their newly adapted South Korean society in terms of their motivation and attitude toward English learning. Our research question addresses what factors hinder North Korean refugee college students from success in English learning, specifically in terms of their English learning motivation and difficulties they face in learning English. Thus, we employed a socio-educational model and examined their perception toward English, which includes their openness and identification with the target language community and their culture.

### **Socio-educational Model in Second Language Learning**

Factors that affect second language acquisition in socio-educational perspective can be divided into two categories – socio-psychological and culture variables. A socio-educational model in second language acquisition not only pays attention to an individual's self-efficacy in learning but also looks carefully at language learning motivation. The premise of a socio-educational model begins with the assumption that an individual with high self-efficacy in both intellect and linguistics tends to show higher performance in second language acquisition. In addition, an individual with higher motivation is more successful than one with lower motivation.

When Gardner (1979) first introduced the socio-educational model, it involved four elements: social environment, individual differences, condition of second language acquisition, and performance. In 1985, Gardner added attitude towards the learning situation and integrative motivation within individual motivation variables. The learning situation includes the school environment, attitude towards textbooks, and attitude towards the teacher

and class (Figure 1). These are learning situations that affect an individual's learning motivation. Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) suggested two motivations for second language acquisition — integrative motivation and instrumental orientation. While integrative motivation represents interest towards the language and culture, instrumental orientation provides more practical reasons for second language acquisition, such as a better chance at getting a higher paying job or better educational opportunities. Gardner did not see these two factors working against each other; rather, he saw them interact positively with each other. Gardner (2004, 2010) suggested the Attitude Motivation Test Battery for second language acquisition into four points: integrativeness, attitude towards learning situation, motivation, and language learning anxiety. This study applied major elements (motivation, attitude towards the learning situation, and language learning anxiety) in Gardner's socio-educational model to analyze the data.



*Figure 1.* A Basic Model of the Role of Aptitude and Motivation in Second Language Learning (Gardner, 2001)

## **Literature about Second Language Learning in Korea**

A motivation research approach in second language learning was introduced to Korea in 1980 and was accelerated by Lee (1996) that combined Gardner's (1985) motivational study and Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory. Although motivation research has been conducted with populations of second language learning, Korean researchers realized that research in Korea should incorporate Korean English language learners in a Foreign Language (EFL) context who are less likely to be exposed to opportunities to use English in their everyday life. Although, this is true, dramatically globalized Korean culture requires English as almost second language level urgency for young learners. On top of this, Koreans' strong motivation toward English learning reflects English as a valuable asset for college entrance, career, and promotion (Kim, 2009a, 2010a). Moreover, most of the studies that discuss socio-educational model involves second language learning. For example, Gardner, the most prominent researcher in the area, conducted research in Canadian context where French and English are official languages. To clarify, he denoted that French or English is not readily available in every individual's environment, although Canada is officially a bilingual (French/English) country. However, he still chose to use the term second language meaning that it is another language. For the same reason, although Korea is not an official bilingual country, the language learning studies are done with a framework of second language learning since English is chosen as a representative foreign language by necessity.

Im (2001) surveyed 668 elementary students about their English learning orientation and he found that students were most motivated to learn English because 'English is essential to go to a better school and to find a better job' and 'English is needed when one travels abroad.' While instrumental orientation was more prevalent, answers that indicated integrative motivation, such as 'to make foreign friends' or 'to learn about the world better', were less frequent. Maeng (2001)'s qualitative research with 17 elementary students did not

find much integrative orientation; however, instrumentally oriented students performed better in their early stage of English learning. Kim (2015) summarized discussions of English learning motivation in Korea in his book *English Learning Motivation Research in South Korea* and explained why Korean English learners are more inclined to instrumental orientation than integrative orientation and extrinsic motivation than intrinsic motivation. The underlying trend of instrumental orientation in Korea reflects a social belief that fluency in English assures a better job, education as a short-term goal, and improvement of social status as a long-term goal (Kim, 2008). Drop-out rates among North Korean refugee students are a downside of the current trend in English learning in Korea. However, rapid globalization of Korean society calls for a need to research integrative orientation in English learning (Kim, 2009b, 2010b). Thus, this study examines the struggles of North Korean refugee college students to learn a second language in the current state of English learning in South Korea through both quantitative and qualitative methods.

### **Settings and Data**

We designed six-month English program for North Korean refugee college students in order to help them improve their English proficiency. 48 North Korean refugee college students were recruited in October 2014 and classes met three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) in the evenings starting the first class in November 2014. The first two months were arranged to teach the basics of English grammar along with conversational skills and the classes for the next four months focused on TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) preparation.<sup>6</sup> To record the participants' progress, TOEIC practice tests

---

<sup>6</sup> Since many universities require a certain level of TOEIC score for graduation and a high TOEIC score is necessary in applying for quality jobs in South Korea, we designed the English program focused on TOEIC preparation.

were given in November 2014, January 2015, and March 2015. The actual TOEIC was administered in December 2014, February 2015, and April 2015.

In order to answer the research question “what factors hinder North Korean refugee college students from success in English learning,” this study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods to cross-reference the findings. Qualitative interviews were conducted to gain knowledge about North Korean refugee college students’ attitude toward their learning situation. A quantitative survey was designed to measure the relationship between variables such as motivation, anxiety, and TOEIC score. The survey data were analyzed through descriptive analysis, whereas the interviews provided in-depth information to support developing themes.

First, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 24 students of the total 48 participants (50%) and the average interview time was an hour-and-a-half for each person. Interview questions included: 1) Did the instructors provide helpful comments and assessment on your performance? 2) Did you gain some confidence from the classes? 3) Did the way instructors teach the class enhance your learning? 4) Please share your thoughts about how to improve English education for North Korean refugee college students.

Second, survey questions were developed through a literature review and a pre-survey. The pre-survey was administered to five North Korean refugee college students. A pre-interview was also conducted to modify the wording and expressions that the participants could not comprehend. We administered the survey for 28 students out of the total 48 participants (58%) while mainly examining the correlation between the dependent variable of TOEIC score and the independent variables of language learning motivation, and anxiety about foreign language acquisition.

## **Results and Findings**

The average age of the thirty-six survey participants was 27.4 years old. The average time spent in South Korea since their refuge was 6.4 years, while the average time passed since they left North Korea was 8.2 years. The average amount of time they received public education in North Korea was 8.2 years, and 36% of the participants attended a public or charter school in South Korea before they entered college.

The attendance rate of the experimental groups was 34%. Only 12.5% (6/48) attended more than 80% of the classes. Most of those who dropped out left the institute as early as one month after classes began. Surprisingly, 18.8% (9/48) never attended class at all.<sup>7</sup> 54.2% of the participants (26 out of 48) took TOEIC exam (mock exam or real exam) while attending classes from the designated institutes. Results on the TOEIC taken during the study show very low performance. 73% of the participants (19 out of 26) earned scores lower than 400 out of total 990 score, which illustrates the participants' very poor English skill. Only two participants earned a TOEIC score higher than 600 while one participant scored 845, which is quite a high achievement for a North Korean refugee college student.

## **Discrepancy in Learning Goals**

The most frequently mentioned problem in the interviews also was that while the goal of this English education program (targeting 800 points on the TOEIC exam) was highly instrumental, most of the participants were not ready or motivated enough to engage themselves in test preparation. The investigators presumed that the participants would be highly motivated to prepare for the test like other South Korean college students since a

---

<sup>7</sup> This low attendance rate implies that it must have been very challenging for North Korean refugee college students to manage both their study at college and three-times-a-week evening English class at the same time.

TOEIC score is necessary in applying for jobs. Thus, the investigators set up the instrumental goal of improving test results, but were not aware of the participants' integrative orientation such as their interest to become familiar with the culture of the target language speaking country or people from countries where English is spoken as a first language.

Gardner discussed two variables (attitude toward the learning situation and integrativeness) that affect language learning motivation. Attitude toward the learning situation includes attitudes toward the institute, facility, textbook, and the instructors. The interview data indicated that the participants were positive about the facility and instructors; however, they complained about the delayed distribution of teaching materials. This was critical because they need more time to preview the materials to prepare for class. The positive attitude toward the instructor motivated the participants to try to attend classes even when they had reasons for absence, such as the burdensome amount of school assignments for North Korean refugee students who were admitted to college in special cases and not by test scores. Most of the students pointed to the reason for their low performance on the test was their lack of preparedness and lack of time to review due to their personal situation, including school work.

### **Attitude toward the Learning Situation**

The loyalty to the institute was due to the high quality teaching and the instructors' inclusive attitude toward the participants. Their positive attitude toward the instructors led them to be more attentive to what they were learning and resulted more engaging classroom behavior. The participants often showed their appreciation by bringing food for the instructors. They said they would introduce the institute to other friends and will study harder when they have another chance. One of the students at Institute B recalled good memories about the instructor.

We used to make a joke saying it's more fun to meet the instructor than to learn English. I still remember he encouraged me with a few good words when I was tired or sick. I think he did everything from the bottom of his heart.

The overall interview data indicated that the participants were positive about the facility and instructors; however, they complained about the delayed distribution of teaching materials. This was critical because they need more time to preview the materials to prepare for class. The positive attitude toward the instructor motivated the participants to try to attend classes even when they had reasons for absence, such as the burdensome amount of school assignments for North Korean refugee students who were admitted to college in special cases and not by test scores. Most of the students pointed to the reason for their low performance on the test was their lack of preparedness and lack of time to review due to their personal situation, including school work.

### **Integrative Orientation**

Integrativeness indicates openness to the target language culture and people and is another factor that affects motivation. Viewed from a long-term perspective, Gardner believed that integrative orientation affects and better sustains motivation for learning. Surprisingly, the majority of students displayed integrative orientation toward English learning. The discrepancy between the learners' goal and the program's revealed through a series of interviews.

I was admiring those people who can talk with foreigners without any help of an interpreter. I also want to be like one of them. I guess this kind of desire motivated me to learn English.

My goal was to learn communication ability with foreigners so I liked Institute B's teaching methods.

They clearly stated their integrative goal of learning, and many of them noted that “skill-oriented teaching didn't work well,” therefore, an approach “to understand English itself as a language and to be familiar with the language” seemed like a more necessary and appropriate approach. Although they acknowledged the effectiveness of the strategy of drill and practice by focusing on tips to raise their test score, they still preferred to learn the basics of English. Many of the participants indicated an interest to learn “more details of grammar such as conjunctive particle, part of speech, and so on” because they “wanted to learn English, not the TOEIC.” The participants recognized that the instrumentally oriented goal did not sustain their own learning goals which were, first, to learn conversational English and knowledge and, second, to have a basic understanding of the language. A participant suggested that the pre-survey may have been helpful to set a more reasonable learning goal. Table 1 also indicated that instrumental motivation such as ‘8. Learning English would be useful for my future career’ and ‘9. Learning English would be useful for finding a job’ marked the lowest score.

Table 1  
*Descriptive Statistics for Motivation in Language Learning*

Variable	Observation	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
1. I want to better understand the world by learning different culture	28	2.11	0.99	1	4
2. I am interested in American culture, history, and literature	28	2.71	0.94	1	5
3. English is an important language worldwide	28	1.75	0.80	1	4
4. I want to learn other languages as well	28	2.36	1.10	1	5

by learning English

5. Learning foreign language is a way to develop other capabilities	28	2.07	1.05	1	4
6. I want to use English when I talk to English-speaking friends	28	2	0.94	1	4
7. I want to use English when I travel to English-speaking countries	28	1.71	0.90	1	4
8. Learning English would be useful for my future career	28	1.46	0.64	1	3
9. Learning English would be useful for finding a job	28	1.46	0.64	1	3
10. I want to talk to people in Korea who speak English	28	2.18	1.12	1	5
11. English is a core requirement at college	28	1.75	1.00	1	5
12. Learning English is a part of requirements in my major at college	28	2.11	1.03	1	4

---

*Note.* Each question is based on a 5-point Likert scale (1: Strongly disagree ~ 5: Strongly agree)

### **Reasons for Drop-out and Demotivation**

The most frequently mentioned issue during the interviews was the goal of earning 800 points on the TOEIC exam and that the teaching strategies that were set up were not appropriate for North Korean refugee students. Based on the post-survey and in-depth interviews, the investigators found that the participants were divided into three groups. First, those who were equipped with basic knowledge in English and thus ready and motivated to learn the TOEIC; second, those who were not in urgent need of the TOEIC so that they only needed a basic understanding about the test; and third, those who needed to build confidence by having a basic understanding about English in general.

A major suggestion from the first group was that the first two month basic English classes were unnecessary. The second group felt that both basic and TOEIC skills are necessary but they were satisfied by a basic understanding about the TOEIC since their needs were not urgent. Since the third group was more interested in learning English in general, they had the highest dropout rate when it came time for TOEIC. The first interview below is a

participant's report on the ineffectiveness of learning TOEIC due to the lack of basic skills necessary to learn the test. The second case is a participant who was positive about the TOEIC lecture but still preferred to learn more applied language skills to use every day.

I think the instructors were really good at teaching the classes but I hoped our English skill was a little bit higher than it actually was so that we could really enjoy the TOEIC lectures. I mean if we were more prepared, we would probably be more motivated to learn. It was first time I learned TOEIC so it was a bit burdensome.

I also believe that the key to master TOEIC is to develop the right skills. If we were taught how to study, we would earn high scores. The teachers taught very well. However, I wanted to learn more about speaking and listening since I am sometimes embarrassed at my poor language when I meet foreigners.

Reasons for demotivation in learning in our research program are two-fold. First, participants lost interest due to their lack of readiness. Second, their motivation decreased when the class moved to a different content area than what they were interested in learning. On top of this, as mentioned earlier, when the college semester began they did not have enough capacity to deal with both their school assignments and the TOEIC lessons. From the survey, we found that language learning motivation and class attendance rate (or TOEIC score) are not correlated in our study sample (Table 2).

Table 2  
*Correlation between Motivation in Language Learning and Class Attendance Rate (or TOEIC Max Score)*

---

Dependent Variable:	(1)	(2)
---------------------	-----	-----

---

	Class Attendance Rate	TOEIC Max Score
Total Score of Motivation in Language Learning	-0.001 (0.006)	0.442 (5.409)
Gender ( 1 = female)	0.227** (0.088)	-73.112 (77.976)
Age	0.010 (0.008)	-3.927 (3.974)
How many years since leaving North Korea	-0.016 (0.025)	21.519** (9.305)
How many years since entering South Korea	0.013 (0.023)	-20.091 (14.773)
Education Attainment in North Korea	-0.024 (0.024)	-8.080 (14.261)
Observation	28	28
R-squared	0.173	0.334

*Note.* Robust standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

### **Desire to Learn with Peers**

Another interesting factor that decreased the participants' motivation was their desire to learn with South Korean college students were not met in current research setting. This research was conducted with a homogenous group consisting of North Korean refugee college students, but interview data indicates that they preferred to learn with South Korean college students. The investigators were concerned about assigning them into general classes with South Korean students because North Korean refugees generally have lower performance in English. From their interviews, however, the participants did not indicate reluctance to be in the same class even though their English level was much lower than their South Korean peers. Instead, the participants did not think they would be helpful to their South Korean counterparts because of the difference in their English competency. At the same time, the refugees showed a strong will to learn how South Korean students study. They were open to learn South Korean culture and desired to have them as role models to learn successful study strategies. They wanted peer pressure from South Korean students and wanted to learn about South Korean culture through them.

I was once a class with South Korean students. If it were only North Koreans, we are all at a very low level, but with South Korean students I could see higher level students in my class. It motivated me to struggle to catch up and made me study harder since I hear things that I never knew before from those South Korean students.

I would rather be in the same class with South Korean students since I want to learn how they study and see and experience how much they study etc. Being only with North Korean students, I became like ‘well, we are all the same’ so I did not have that tension to study hard, although a few North Korean students were also very good, they did not motivate me enough.

It was interesting to find that refugee students were not reluctant to be with South Korean students despite of their inferiority in English. It seemed that the anxiety of speaking poor English in front of peer Korean students was a risk to take to learn better which includes South Korea’s culture of learning. In relation to this, the result of survey about language learning anxiety show interesting result which indicates anxiety is not a negative factor at all. The anxiety survey (see Table 3) is composed of eight questions and among them were three positive correlations between items 2, 6, 7 and the TOEIC score (see Table 4). Those were “2. I get nervous when I don’t understand every word the teacher says,” “6. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students,” and “7. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.” Among them, 6 and 7 are called output anxiety which comes around when they speak in front of others. This complies with Gardner (1982)’s argument about positive relation between motivation and ‘language retention’ which affects the degree to use the language they acquired.

Table 3  
*Descriptive Statistics for Language Learning Anxiety*

Variable	Observation	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
1. Memorizing too much English grammar makes me anxious	28	2.54	1.17	1	5
2. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the teacher says	28	2.32	1.19	1	5
3. I often think that other students speaking English are better than me	28	2.32	1.16	1	5
4. The more I study English, the more I get confused	28	3.14	1.11	1	5
5. I do not feel comfortable to voluntarily speak up during English class	28	3.07	1.27	1	5
6. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students	28	2.96	1.07	1	5
7. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English	28	3.14	1.11	1	5
8. I worry if I do not perform well in English test	28	2.75	1.24	1	5

*Note.* Each question is based on a 5-point Likert scale (1: Strongly disagree ~ 5: Strongly agree)

Table 4  
*Correlation between Language Learning Anxiety and TOEIC Max Score*

Dependent Variable:	TOEIC Max Score	Obs.	R-square
Total Score of Language Learning Anxiety (8-40)	9.371*** (2.387)	22	0.648
Language Learning Anxiety Q2 "I get nervous when I don't understand every word the teacher says."	43.090** (19.072)	22	0.618
Language Learning Anxiety Q6 "I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students."	60.553*** (12.534)	22	0.663
Language Learning Anxiety Q7 "I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English."	56.674*** (18.619)	22	0.649

*Note.* Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Each regression includes controls such as gender, age, years since leaving North Korea, years since entering South Korea, and education attainment in North Korea. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

## Discussion: Unexpected Phenomena of Integrative Orientation

The findings suggest implications of Gardner's model in North Korean refugee college students' English learning. First of all, the complexity of refugee students' cultural and educational context somehow motivated them with integrative orientation in English learning. The refugee students' motivational factors positively influenced cultural contact, however, discrepancy of learning goal and academic burden negatively affected their persistence in learning. Most interestingly, some of the output language anxiety positively affected language retention. Most of all, we found more critical implications are laid beyond simply accomplishing higher scores in language test.

Based on a literature review of previous studies about North Korean refugee college students, which indicated that earning high scores on the English test will help them overcome problems they face during their college and job preparation period, we set the study's learning goal to be to improve scores on the TOEIC. Therefore, an integrative approach was used in the beginning sessions and an instrumental approach for the rest of the sessions. The instructors used teaching strategies that supported their instrumental approach accordingly. The results of the survey, however, suggest that the participants had a similar motivation level in both instrumental and integrative orientation, although their integrative motivation may have led to their instrumental motivation. This is different from Kim's (2008, 2015) research findings that support instrumental orientation as dominant trend in English learning motivation in South Korea. Apparently, if motivation is not strong, they are less likely to be successful in their performance, but the participants in this study did not display high motivation in either case. As Gardener (1982) observed motivation to learn as a rather complex construct in that a motivated individual is 'goal directed, expends effort, is persistent, is attentive, has desires (wants),' the less motivated learners in this study were less persistent in their learning by multiple cognitive, emotional, and behavior reasons. Although, the refugee students were supported by favorable Attitude toward the Learning Situation and

Intergrativeness, they did not show high level of motivation and, therefore, did not display high achievement. Given that integrative motivation is a product of the interplay of those variables, the current research findings suggest that researchers and education practitioners should put more efforts on finding the refugee students' motivations to English before setting up what to teach.

Language anxiety is a very common phenomenon in second language learning and is categorized into three stages depending on different learning points: input, processing, and output (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). The quantitative analysis of this study found that language learning anxiety in the current setting worked as a signal to progress and, consequently, positive motivation toward learning. The higher level of the language learning anxiety seems to correlate with better performance. Among these anxieties, output anxiety was positively related to language learning motivation. Output anxiety occurs when learners try to demonstrate their ability to use previously learned material (Tobias, 1986). Although MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) claimed that high levels of output anxiety can possibly hinder students' ability to speak or write in the target language, it increases motivation for learning. Observing the fact that output anxiety has more to do with their motivation toward conversational language learning, the result corresponds to their integrative learning goal discussed above. When the participants were motivated with the desire to use English in their everyday life, they performed better than when they had input and processing anxiety. This demonstrates another evidence that refugee students' anxiety factors seemed to interplay with integral motive than instrumental.

### **Experience of Crossing the Borders**

The investigators observed that the participants were characterized by their experience of crossing the borders and adapting to the new culture of South Korea. This unique

experience has both positive and negative aspects. As found from the interviews, one participant confessed that she lost confidence in speaking in general and gained anxiety toward language in general after her negative experience of using her North Korean accent in public. Meanwhile, their experience of risking themselves in illegally crossing borders of multiple countries including China and many Southeast Asian countries helped them develop capability of adapting to new culture, including languages. They did not show much resistance toward their enculturation process. As evidence, many of the students we interviewed revealed eagerness to learn English by going abroad. If the learner has a strong attachment toward their native language, learning motivation decreases. Noting that North and South Korean languages developed their own uniqueness due to their division history, North Korean refugees had to learn South Korean ways of speaking as part of their enculturation. The experience of border crossing appears to moderate resistance toward learning another language, which is just another border to cross after a series of crossing experiences that occurred in their lives.

All of the participants we interviewed shared positive opinions toward having a heterogeneous class with South Korean students. They did not mind exposing themselves to South Korean students in English classes despite their inferiority in English. They preferred to be with South Koreans because they felt that a homogeneous class would not help them much in their learning because they all were at a low stage and, hence, had no peer models. Another factor that influenced their desire for a heterogeneous class was to learn the way South Korean college students study and about their culture. Their strong devotion to learn English and their Korean peer group's culture led them to learn from Korean peers whom they look to as their role models. This indicates that assimilation to the South Korean peer culture was another goal to achieve. Their motivation to learn English as well as culture of learning seemed to lead them to perceive peer South Korean students as their 'cultural contact

(Gardner, 1985).’ According to the 2003 Korea Institute for National Unification survey, 52.3% (KINU, 2003) responded that it takes more than three years to gain command of the South Korean language. This is one indicator of North Korean refugees’ prevailing difficulties in obtaining and keeping jobs. Thus, seeking opportunities to contact their deemed peer model is a demonstration of a desperate desire to be acculturated into South Korea.

## **Conclusion**

Research on North Korean refugees has focused on various hardships they experience in South Korea, such as economic difficulties, maladjustment to schools, and emotional distance or isolation (Kim & Jang, 2007). This study found that NKRCSSs’ struggle with English interrelates with all of these issues. Hence, to understand the difficulties of NKRCSSs’ adjustment in South Korea, we need to pay attention to the issues they face in their previous and current schooling experiences. This study was conducted in an attempt to assist educational practitioners and policy makers to understand the difficulties of NKRCSSs’ English learning, to help them prepare for better job opportunities, and, ultimately, their successful adjustment to South Korea. Thus, the authors investigated this issue of language learning by examining their motivation and attitude toward English learning, their educational experiences both in North and South Korea, their psychological needs, and their view of Korean education through in depth interviews. The issues and problems we did not discuss here include the relationship between their test performance and their beliefs and hopes, psychiatric needs, family relationships, adjustment level, and mental health status, to name a few. Among the many educational issues around this vulnerable group of people, these are areas for further research.

## References

- Ahn, S. K. (2010). A Study on the Plan for Supporting Adolescents Defecting from North Korea for Their Adjustment in South Korea Society. *Korean Journal of Youth Studies*, 17 (2010):25-45 (in Korea).
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-determination in Human Behavior*. New York: Plenum.
- Gardner, R. C. (1979). Social Psychological Aspects of Second Language Acquisition. In H. Giles, and R. St. Clair (Eds.), *Language and social psychology*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Gardner, R. C. (1982). Language attitudes and language learning. In E. Bouchard Ryan and H. Giles, *Attitudes towards language variation: Social and applied contexts*. London, United Kingdom: Edward Arnold.
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitudes and Motivation*. London: Arnold.
- Gardner, R. C. (2001). *Integrative Motivation: Past, Present and Future*. Paper presented at the Temple University Japan, Distinguished Lecturer Series, Tokyo, February 17, 2001; Osaka, February 24, 2001.
- Gardner, R. C. (2004). *Attitude/Motivation Test Battery: International AMTB Research Project*. Canada: The University of Western Ontario.
- Gardner, R. C. (2010). *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition: The Socio-educational Model*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Gardner, R. C., and Lambert, W. E. (1959). Motivational Variables in Second Language Acquisition. *Canadian Journal of Psychology* 13(1959): 266-272.

- Gardner, R. C., and Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning*. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House Publishers.
- Im, S. -B. (2001). A Study on the Effective Teaching Strategies to Stimulate and Maintain the Motivation of Elementary School Students of English. *Primary English Education* 7(2001): 121-163 (in Korean).
- Kim, J. -U. & Jang, D. -J. (2007). Aliens Among Brothers? The Status and Perception of North Korean Refugees in South Korea.” *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 31, No. 2.
- Kim, T. -Y. (2008). Korean Immigrants' English Learning Motivation and Learner Beliefs in Toronto: A Qualitative Case Study Based on NVivo. *Social linguistics* 16(2008): 141-168 (in Korean).
- Kim, T. Y. (2009a). The Sociocultural Interface between Ideal Self and Ought-to Self: A Case Study of Two Korean Students' ESL Motivation. In Z. Dornyei, and E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 274-294). London: Multilingual Matters.
- Kim, T. -Y. (2009b). The Dynamics of L2 Self and L2 Learning Motivation: A Qualitative Case Study of Korean ESL Students. *English Teaching* 64(2009b): 133-154.
- Kim, T. -Y. (2010a). Socio-political Influences on EFL Motivation and Attitudes: Comparative Surveys of Korean High School Students. *Asia Pacific Education Review* 11(2010a), 211-222.
- Kim, T. -Y. (2010b). Ideal L2 Self and Sensitization in L2 Learning Motivation: A Case Study of Two Korean ESL Students. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 10(2010b): 321-351.
- Kim, T. -Y. (2015). *English Learning Motivation Research in South Korea*, Seoul: Hankookmunhwasa, 2015 (in Korean).

- Koo, J. U. et al. (2012). *A Study of Analysis in Educational Statistics*. Korea Educational Development Institute, 2012 (in Korean).
- Korea Hana Foundation. (2016). *Research on Adaptation of Residents from North Korea*, 2016 (in Korean)
- Korea Institute for National Unification. (2003). *Research on Adaptation of Residents from North Korea*, Research Series 03-07, 2003 (in Korean).
- Korea Ministry of Unification. (2013). *Current State of North Korean Refugee University Students*, Settlement Support Center for North Korean Refugees, 2013 (in Korean).
- Lee, H. -W. (1996). The effects of attitudes and motivation on learning English in Korean middle and high school students. *English Education* 51(1996): 3-34 (in Korean).
- MacIntyre, P.D. & Gardner, R. (1994). The subtle effects of induced anxiety on cognitive processing in the second language. *Language Learning* 44(1994): 283–305.
- Maeng, E. -K. (2001). The effects of motivation on language learning. *Modern English Education*, 2 (2001): 157-170 (in Korean).
- Park, M. -S., & Lee, J. -N. (1999). Difficulties and solutions for North Korean refugee families' acculturation issues. *Unification Forum*, 17(1999): 63-64 (in Korean).
- Tobias, S. (1986). Anxiety and cognitive processing of instruction. In *Self-related cognition in anxiety and motivation*, In R. Schwarzer (Ed.), 35–54. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1986.
- Yu, S. -E., Bae, H. -J., Jo, M. -S., Kim, K. -H., and Choi, Y. -S. (2013). *A Study on Measures and the Problem of the Drop-out Rate of North Korean Refugee University Students*. Seoul: North Korean Refugees Foundation, 2013 (in Korean).