A Study on the Development and Implementation of a Task-based ‘English Village’ Program in Korea*

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I. INTRODUCTION

English Villages (EVs) in Korea have attracted English learners since their introduction. The Korean government and second language learners in Korea believe that EV is a unique model and setting to trigger communication (Im, 2011a). Therefore, in 2004, local governments or education offices established EVs throughout the nation. Even though each EV, administered independently by cities or provinces throughout Korea, consists of different facilities and programs, their objective is to improve English communication skills in ‘real life’ settings like the restaurant, post office, and library. Lee (2005) and Rha (2010, 2011) states English camps in Korea can give positive effectiveness to participants. However, the effectiveness of EVs’ programs (Im & Kim, 2009; Lee, 2008; Lee, 2009; Woo, 2009) is still a controversial issue. Previous studies (Im & Kim, 2009; Kang, Kim, Lee, & Lee, 2008; Lee, 2005; Lee, 2008; Lee, 2009; Woo, 2009) have pointed out the importance of EV’s program and curriculum.

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development. Woo (2009) mentioned the need of in-depth study of program implementation as well as development. Lee & Oh (2007) state that good curricula and programs in EVs determine whether students revisit or not. Even though large investments were initially made, student attendance in EVs has recently declined (Hong & Son, 2011). Accordingly, curriculum in EVs may require fundamental re-design. Some research regarding EVs (Im & Kim, 2009; Jeong & Park, 2006; Kang, et al., 2008; Lee, 2009; Lee, 2008; Lee, 2005; Woo, 2009) has suggested various improvements and changes in curriculum. However, there is lack of research evaluating the implementation of the newly developed program. In this sense, researchers need not only to suggest more effective curricula in terms of learners’ needs, but also to examine the effectiveness of the newly developed curriculum.

This study focused on how the program was revised and young learners reacted to the revised program during its implementation. The developed program was conducted in ‘B’ English Village in Seoul and the diverse data of seven fifth and sixth-grade elementary students were analyzed qualitatively. The research question is as follows:

- How can the program be revised to improve B English Village program?
- How do the students react to the revised program during its implementation?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. English Villages in Korea

English Villages are an experiential learning model where students can learn English by experiencing the culture and daily life of an English speaking culture (Lee, 2008). In that sense, the number of EVs has rapidly increased in Korea since 2004 and currently there are approximately 45 EVs nationwide. About 18 EVs by local governments

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