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Between Nationalism and Globalization: A Critical Case Analysis of South Korea's English Ban in Kindergartens

Truong Anh Khoa*
Faculty of Foreign Languages, Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

***Abstract*: This paper will critically discuss and analyze the South Korean government's ban on English instruction in kindergartens from management's perspectives. This case was selected for analysis because of the South Korean government's dilemma: heritage language for national identity or English for socioeconomic mobility. It will examine the policy's motivations, implementation, and its broader implications for early childhood education and linguistic development within the nation. Additionally, this analysis will delve into the complex interplay between linguistic ideology, educational equity, and social pressures that inform the decisions, and then make a comparison between Southeast Asian countries and South Korea to draw lessons and solutions. The analysis on this dilemma and choice is expected to bring dynamic and new insights into language policy in non-native English-speaking countries.**

***Keywords*: heritage language, English-at-kindergartens, South Korea, Southeast Asian, language policy.**

1. Introduction

Language policy refers to the decisions and ideologies that governments, organizations and even individuals used to adopt and control the use of languages; while language planning refers to measures and strategies used to implement those policies (Spolsky, 2004). When there is a rise of English as an international language, both language policy and planning frequently involves navigating the tensions between promoting national or cultural identity through indigenous languages and addressing the pragmatic demands of a globalized economy, where proficiency in languages like English is often seen as crucial for economic mobility (Velasco, 2024). In January 2018, the South Korean Ministry of Education (MOE) announced a policy banning English-language instruction in public kindergartens, arguing that early English exposure was developmentally inappropriate and pedagogically ineffective for children under age six. At first, this controversial decision has triggered a debate among educators, policymakers, and parents regarding its potential restrictions on early childhood development and future language competencies (Zein, 2017; Kim & Choi, 2022). The policy formed part of the MOE's broader initiative to reduce academic pressure in early childhood education and to normalize Korean-centered learning environments. Under the revised rules, English classes would no longer be permitted in public childcare centers or kindergartens, Moreover, English is limited in the form of play-based activities of no more than one hour per day and must be allowed in consultation with parents. This shift reflects a broader trend observed not only in Korea but also in various countries, where national language policies intersect with early foreign language acquisition, often prioritizing native language development over early immersion in global lingua francas (Lytra & Gelir, 2023; Nikolov & Djigunović, 2023).

This policy, as aforementioned above, triggered a significant public debate. Critics argue that restricting early English education could restrain Korean children in globalization, hindering their future academic and professional prospects (Zein, 2017). Conversely, educators and policy-makers of the ban emphasized the importance of facilitating heritage language proficiency and cultural identity during early ages, aligning with research suggesting the benefits of mother-tongue instruction in early childhood education (Velasco, 2024). Besides critics, educators and proponents, there were also parents' voices in this public debate. As Spolsky (2004) notes, language policy is not just top-down regulation. It includes the beliefs and practices of communities and families, which often resist or reshape state agendas. In Korea, parents function as informal language planners, using private education to compensate for perceived gaps in public policy (Kim, 2011). Many parents, especially from Korea's middle and upper classes, criticized the ban, arguing that early English education is essential for future academic and career success (Kim & Lee, 2024). Although Korea is officially monolingual, English has long held symbolic and economic value as a key to global opportunities. This social preference on English (often called English fever) led many Korean parents to invest heavily in their children's English education, creating disparities in early linguistic exposure based on socioeconomic status (Seo, 2020). Scholars described English proficiency in Korea not merely as a skill, but as a signal of intelligence, class status, and international readiness. For many families, English education begins in early childhood, even at the preschool level, with some sending children abroad or enrolling them in expensive

*Corresponding author: anhkhoa090196@gmail.com

English immersion programs (Lee, 2020; Ku, 2024). The strong focus on English education in Korea is also influenced by the country's social and economic system. Families have different levels of income, so not everyone can spend the same amount on their children's early language learning. This creates a significant disparity in educational opportunities, which are not fully recognized (Seo, 2020). After the English ban in public kindergartens, many people worried that this would make educational inequality even worse, because richer families could still pay for private English lessons (by private tutors or at language centers), while others could not (Liang et al., 2022). In other words, children of low-income families can only access English in public kindergartens but the ban took their only opportunity. These different opinions showed the complex situation where government ideas, social expectations, and the desire to learn English early all affect how people respond to the policy (Lytra & Gelir, 2023). Historically, Korea's language policies have swung between preserving linguistic purity and embracing global competitiveness. While English education was institutionalized as early as the late 19th century, postcolonial language planning has often prioritized Hangul and linguistic nationalism (Paik, 2018). The MOE's 2018 ban reflects this nationalist impulse - a reaction to the perceived threat of English-language invasion on Korean identity during children's early ages.

In this context, the 2018 English ban also illustrates the tension between linguistic nationalism (protecting heritage language) and English parentocracy (English learning is shaped by parental wealth and choices). The result is a growing gap between official intentions and educational reality. Overall, this paper has no place to conclude whether the policy was right or wrong (and it should not). On the one hand, the policy succeed to reserve Hangul and linguistic nationalism among young generations. On the other hand, it failed to account for entrenched parental expectations, societal beliefs about English, and equity for public and private educations. This fact has undermined its effectiveness, highlighting the limitations of top-down language management in a globalized society. Detailed analysis using the Spolsky's Tripartite Model will be depicted in the next sections.

2. Theoretical Framework

A. Spolsky's Tripartite Model

Spolsky's model posits that language policy is comprised of three interacting components: language practices, language beliefs, and language management (Spolsky, 2004). Language practices refer to the actual language use by individuals and communities, while language beliefs encompass the values and attitudes people hold towards specific languages. Language management, the third component, involves explicit efforts by authorities to regulate language use and practices through policies and interventions. In the current case, the ban on English in kindergartens indicate the authority of governemnt, embodying the component of language management. Yet its reception highlights the critical role of pre-existing language practices and deeply held societal beliefs about English proficiency (Lew & Choi, 2022). This framework is particularly useful for analyzing the disjuncture between governmental policies and the realities of language education, especially when considering the widespread societal belief in English as a key to socioeconomic mobility. This model effectively dissects how language policies, even when formally implemented, can encounter resistance and varied outcomes due to ingrained societal attitudes and established linguistic behaviors (Do, 2024).

B. Linguistic Nationalism

Linguistic Nationalism refers to the association of a particular language with national identity and political unity, often promoting one dominant language over others within a nation-state (Patten, 2006). In many contexts, this ideology underpins policies designed to preserve heritage languages or elevate a selected national language, often at the expense of foreign language instruction or minority languages (Poudel & Choi, 2021). This concept is particularly relevant in post-colonial nations seeking to reassert cultural sovereignty and linguistic independence, where language policy becomes a tool for nation-building and identity formation. In Korea, linguistic nationalism has historically manifested in efforts to promote the Korean language as a symbol of national heritage and unity, often influencing educational policies to prioritize its use and development over foreign languages. This emphasis on the national language is often coupled with efforts to regulate the presence and influence of other languages, particularly those perceived as threats to linguistic homogeneity or national identity (Conama, 2024). The 2018 ban on English instruction in Korean kindergartens, therefore, can be interpreted as a manifestation of linguistic nationalism, aiming to reinforce Korean linguistic identity during critical early developmental stages (Wang & Zhong, 2022). This is further complicated by the fact that language ideologies, which underpin linguistic nationalism, are deeply intertwined with beliefs about language structure and use, often reflecting the political and economic interests of various social groups and the state itself (Lytra & Gelir, 2023).

C. Linguistic Instrumentalism & Parentocracy

Linguistic instrumentalism emphasizes language as a tool for achieving social, economic, or political goals, viewing proficiency in certain languages, particularly English, as a form of capital for upward mobility (Kubota, 2011). This perspective often drives parental decisions to invest heavily in English education for their children, perceiving it as a critical asset for future success in a globalized world. This often creates a parentocracy, where parents' socioeconomic status directly influences their children's educational opportunities and linguistic capital (Brown, 1990). This dynamic frequently results in significant disparities in language proficiency among students from diverse backgrounds, reflecting broader societal inequalities (Curdt-Christiansen et al., 2023). An opposite concept is micratocracy, where a child's success depends on his/her own talent and ability. Despite the opposite notions of the two concepts, it cannot be concluded which one is positive

or negative. They obviously exist in society. Because the target group of the ban is young children, this paper will focus on the concept of parentocracy. The interplay between linguistic instrumentalism and parentocracy thus illuminates how individual family choices, driven by a desire for competitive advantage, can inadvertently undermine national language policies aimed at fostering linguistic equity. In South Korea, the strong emphasis on English education, even in defiance of official policies, highlights how parental investment in private language instruction can perpetuate a cycle of unequal access to linguistic resources. This phenomenon underscores the complex interaction between individual aspirations, governmental regulations, and the socio-economic stratification that inevitably shapes educational landscapes in a globalization. Consequently, analyzing the Korean kindergarten English ban through these theoretical lenses reveals a complex interplay between state-driven linguistic ideologies and deeply rooted societal perceptions of language value (Shin et al., 2023).

3. Analysis Using Spolsky' Model

A. Language Practices

1) Public Kindergarten Curriculum

The policy issued by South Korea's MOE aimed to eliminate formal English instruction from the public kindergarten curriculum. The revised guidelines emphasized play-based, child-centered learning and discouraged academic activities, particularly foreign language learning, during early childhood. Public kindergartens were instructed to shift their focus entirely to Korean-language development and socialization, aligning with the belief that structured English learning at this stage could hinder native language proficiency and cognitive development (Clark, 2000). In practice, this meant the removal of conventional English classes, English storybooks, or any foreign-language materials from daily instruction in public institutions. This indicated a clear attempt by the government to reassert control over early language exposure and redefine educational priorities in line with national developmental goals.

2) Early English Exposure

Many families, particularly from the middle and upper classes, tried to integrate English to their children before primary school through private tutoring, digital learning tools, and enrollment in English-immersion kindergartens. These private institutions, operating outside the public education system, often offer full-day programs in English with native-speaking instructors. In some cases, parents enroll their children to weekend English classes, English camps, international travel, or even temporary overseas stays to accelerate their children's proficiency. This behavior reflects a deeply rooted belief that early English acquisition offers a competitive edge in later schooling and university admissions (Kubota, 2011). As a result, parental practices often run counter to state efforts to delay English education until age nine. This divergence underscores a significant tension between national language policy objectives and individual family language planning (Curdt-Christiansen et al., 2023).

3) Education Culture

South Korea's education culture is famously competitive, and this extends into early childhood. The phenomenon reflects parents' intense investment in their children's academic success, often beginning at preschool age. Within this culture, English is not only a school subject but also a status symbol and a strategic asset. Parents in urban areas invests significant resources to ensuring their children do not fall behind peers in English proficiency, enrolling them in after-school academies (hagwons) and purchasing educational software, books, and media in English. Digital media and commercial apps have also become a routine source of English input in homes, further normalizing early exposure. The education system's high-stakes nature tends to encourages families to view early English learning as essential, not optional (Butler, 2013). This entrenched mindset presents a cultural barrier to state policies aimed at reducing early academic pressure, including the 2018 English ban.

4) Korean Nationalism

The decision to remove English from public kindergartens also reflects a broader ideological commitment to Korean linguistic nationalism. For decades, the Korean state has promoted the Korean language (Hangul) as a cornerstone of national identity, especially in contrast to historical periods of colonization and foreign influence. Additionally, Korea's rising economy, which often stood at top 4 in the area and top 15 in the world, urged a strong demand for a national image. Policymakers have framed the dominance of English in early education as a threat to Korea's cultural sovereignty and linguistic heritage. The 2018 policy embodies this protectionist stance, asserting that Korean children should first master their mother tongue before being introduced to foreign languages. This aligns with nationalist sentiments that see Hangul not just as a communication tool, but as a cultural emblem that binds the nation. In this sense, the ban was not only educational, but also symbolic - a reaffirmation of national identity in an era of growing globalization.

B. Belief/Ideologies

Language beliefs and ideologies play a crucial role in shaping language policy, as they reflect societal attitudes towards linguistic diversity, national identity, and the perceived value of different languages. The 2018 English ban in Korean public kindergartens reflects a strong nationalism in language policy. The government believed that early exposure to English could harm children's development of Korean, especially in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and cultural identity. Officials also expressed a concern that learning English too early could increase pressure and inequality among young learners. These beliefs show a desire to protect the national language and reduce the "English fever" that has long existed in Korean society.

At the same time, there is a clear conflict of ideologies between government policy and the beliefs held by many Korean parents. While the state follows a protectionist view of language, parents often have an instrumentalist and parentocratic perspectives. This explains why, after the ban, many parents moved their children to private kindergartens or

after-school English programs to continue English learning.

Teachers, on the other hand, may hold mixed beliefs. Some agree with the government's concern about overloading children with English and support the focus on developing Korean in the early years. However, many teachers also feel caught between policy and parental expectations. In schools where parents push for English, teachers may feel pressure to offer informal English activities, even if not officially allowed. Without clear support or training, this situation can create confusion and discomfort among educators.

Young learners themselves are less directly aware of policy but are influenced by their environment. Some children enjoy learning English in fun ways, such as through songs or games, and see it as a part of modern life. Others may feel stressed if English becomes competitive or exam-based too early, especially when they see older siblings attending hagwons or preparing for tests.

C. Management

The management of Korea's 2018 English ban in kindergartens was done through top-down regulation from the national government. The implementation was done by using official guidelines and curriculum changes. MOE sent a clear message to public kindergartens that English classes should not be part of the regular teaching hours for young children. This rule was part of a new policy for early childhood education. The goal was to protect the Korean language and reduce pressure on children who were starting to learn English too early.

This policy worked like a regulation, telling public kindergartens what they were allowed or not allowed to do. English lessons were no longer accepted in daily schedules, especially in government-funded schools. However, the government did not give extra money or strong punishments to help apply the rule. There were no clear incentives for schools to follow the policy, and no financial support to help teachers or parents adapt. Schools were expected to follow the rule because it came from the Ministry, but there were few tools to check or enforce it.

A big problem was that the rule was only for public kindergartens. Private kindergartens were still free to offer English classes, so many parents moved their children there. This caused a mismatch between the public and private systems. Wealthier families had more options, while other families had to follow the ban, even if they wanted early English exposure for their children. This situation made the policy less effective and increased educational inequality(Paik, 2018).

In terms of enforcement, there was no strong system to observe what each kindergarten was doing. Some public schools may have continued teaching English in informal ways, like during after-school time or through storytelling, to satisfy parents. Without regular checks or a clear monitoring process, it was hard to make sure that the policy was followed equally across the country.

In short, the government used top-down management to ban English in public kindergartens, but the policy had weak enforcement and did not control private providers. This made the policy hard to apply in practice, especially in a society where many parents strongly value English for their children's future.

4. Tensions, Gaps, and Unintended Consequences

The ban on English instruction in public kindergartens generated multiple, interrelated tensions that reveal a deep mismatch between policy design and social realities. Applying Spolsky's (2004) insight that effective language policy requires some alignment among practices, beliefs, and management, the Korean case shows how divergent stakeholder beliefs and market-driven practices produce gaps that weaken top-down management and generate unintended social effects.

A. Policy–practice Gap

A central tension is the gap between regulatory intent and lived practice. Although the 2018 guideline targeted public kindergartens, empirical evidence shows that English input for young children remains widespread in South Korea through multiple informal and private channels. Upper- and middle-class families commonly enroll children in "English kindergartens," hagwons (private cram schools), weekend programs, or one-to-one tutoring; some parents even send infants and toddlers to short overseas stays or English camps to secure early exposure. Because the ban mainly targeted public institutions, wealthy and motivated families easily circumvented it by turning to private providers or supplementary markets. This resulted in an enforcement paradox: the policy could alter official curricula, but it could not readily change household practices or the private market that supplies demand. In short, the law altered formal opportunity structures without displacing entrenched parental practices—exactly the kind of policy–practice mismatch Spolsky warns against (Spolsky, 2004).

B. Equity and Parentocracy

The ban intensified an existing parentocracy dynamic in which parental resources determine children's linguistic capital. In contexts of so-called education fever, English is widely perceived as an investment in future social mobility; therefore, families with means purchase early English provision outside the public system. As a result, the ban disproportionately affected less-advantaged families who rely on public kindergartens for early education, while affluent families preserved or expanded their children's English access via private routes. This outcome aligns with shadow-education research showing that restrictions on public provision tend to increase demand for private tutoring and raise stratification. Thus, although the policy aimed to reduce pressure and equalize childhood experiences, it risked increasing inequality by shifting the burden of access to the private market. This unintended consequence exacerbates disparities, transforming early English education into a mechanism for neoliberal management of youth, where parental hopes and fears regarding their children's future drive investment in private language learning (Bae & Park, 2019).

C. Nationalism versus Instrumentalism

The policy also reflects a fundamental ideological tension between linguistic nationalism and instrumentalist views of English. The state framed the ban as a protective measure for Korean language development and childhood well-being, drawing on nationalist and developmentalist beliefs that privilege Hangul and unhurried socialization. Conversely, many parents and parts of the education sector perceived English as an instrument for economic and symbolic asset, essential for competitive schooling and employment. This perpective produced a strong public debate and limited legitimacy for the ban: when many people in society do not agree with the main idea behind the policy, they are less likely to follow it seriously. As a result, they may ignore the ban and find ways to go around them. This divergence highlights the complexities inherent in language policy implementation, where top-down directives frequently encounter resistance when they conflict with the prevailing beliefs and practices of diverse stakeholders (Shin et al., 2023).

D. Public - Private Split and Market Effects

The policy had impacts on not only students and parents, but also the education market in Korea. The policy led to a tension arises from the public and private divide. The ban applied more strictly to public preschools, leaving private providers relatively freer to adapt or rebrand their services. As a result, the private market grew to meet the rising demand. Many kindergartens began offering high-cost English programs, more hagwons (private academies) focused on early English, and companies started selling commercial learning products for toddlers. This market response created a balloon effect: squeezing supply in one institutional niche inflated it elsewhere, often in less regulated and more expensive arenas. The management tools used by the state (ministerial guidance and inspections) proved insufficient to control these adaptive private responses. This dynamic further exacerbated social inequities, as only economically privileged families could afford the escalating costs of private English education (Exley, 2021). This creates a dual system where access to early English language acquisition becomes a commodity, reflecting broader trends of neoliberal marketization in education (Poudel & Choi, 2021).

5. Comparative and Regional Reflection

When comparing South Korea's early English education policy with other EFL countries' approach (especially the South East Asia countries), we can see clear differences in both ideology and policy direction. Most notably, most Southeast Asia countries do not have any ban on English instruction at the kindergarten or primary level. In fact, English is encouraged as part of early education in many urban and semi-urban schools. Moreover, governments in some countries have introduced English as a second language in official frameworks and aim to promote it as a key skill for globalization, regional integration, and labor mobility. This approach reflects an instrumentalist ideology, which views English as a tool for success rather than a threat to national identity.

In recent years, education curricula in these countries have also started encouraging the use of both English and Vietnamese in classroom instruction, especially in bilingual or international programs. This dual-language goal aligns with the global trend of English-medium instruction (EMI), especially in subjects like science and technology. However, this policy direction can create double pressure for students. Not only must they master content knowledge (such as math or science), but they must also improve their English proficiency at the same time. For many students, especially those in rural areas or from low-income families, this results in higher learning stress and inequality, as not all schools have enough qualified English teachers or resources.

In contrast, South Korea's decision to ban English instruction in public kindergartens in 2018 was based on a more nationalist and developmentalist ideology. Korean officials worried that early English learning could delay Korean language development and harm children's natural growth. While Southeast Asia countries encourage early English exposure, Korean policymakers chose to limit it to protect Korean culture and identity, especially during early childhood. This shows how each country frames language education through different beliefs: Southeast Asia countries focus on global integration, while Korea emphasizes cultural preservation (at early ages).

At the same time, Southeast Asia countries are also facing challenges that Korea used to face in the past (now resolved by the ban). In big cities, younger generations increasingly mix English words into their daily conversations in their heritage language. While this can be seen as a sign of internationalization, it also raises concerns about the erosion of the pure heritage language. If this trend continues, it could weaken the country's linguistic identity. As a result, Southeast Asia countries might need to adopt some protective policies that encourage pride in the Vietnamese language, without banning English, but by reinforcing the importance of maintaining Vietnamese fluency and cultural values.

In summary, both Korea and Southeast Asia are dealing with the complex balance between globalization and nationalism. Southeast Asia countries' open policy supports bilingualism and global readiness, but may also create learning stress and long-term risks to language identity. Korea's restrictive policy tried to prevent these risks but created other problems, such as inequality and policy resistance. Each country's experience offers useful lessons for the other: Southeast Asia countries might consider stronger cultural safeguards, while Korea might rethink how to support equitable bilingual development rather than suppress it. This comparison highlights how different language ideologies produce different outcomes, and how careful planning is needed to ensure that both national values and individual opportunities are protected.

6. Recommendations

The 2018 English ban in Korean public kindergartens was introduced with good intentions—to protect children's development and national language. However, as seen in the earlier analysis, the policy faced several practical challenges and mismatches. While public kindergartens were forced to stop English lessons, many parents turned to private schools or

cram centers (hagwons), which were free to continue English instruction. This led to more pressure on families and wider gaps between children of different social backgrounds. To improve the current policy, four realistic and balanced recommendations are suggested below.

A. Move from Prohibition to Additive Bilingualism

Instead of banning English completely in kindergartens, the government should allow limited, playful English exposure that supports Korean development, what experts call additive bilingualism. This means keeping Korean as the main language of instruction but including short, age-appropriate English activities like songs, picture books, or games a few times per week.

This approach would help reduce the policy-and-practice gap. Many parents still want early English exposure, and when it's not allowed in public schools, they look for expensive private options. If public kindergartens can offer simple and fun English moments in a safe way, families may feel less pressure to turn to the private sector. For example, Seoul or Busan could try this as a pilot project, using play-based activities without tests or grammar drills. Additive bilingualism allows children to enjoy English while growing strong in their first language: Hangul.

B. Strengthen Teacher Training in Bilingual Early-Childhood Pedagogy

One key reason the policy failed to gain support was that teachers lacked training in handling early bilingual education. If teachers are only trained in Korean instruction, they may feel uncomfortable or unsure about using English in any form. Therefore, the government should provide simple, practical training programs for early childhood teachers.

For instance, a short online course could introduce teachers to ten playful English activities suitable for 4–5-year-olds. Regional workshops could also invite master teachers to share their ideas. When teachers understand how to use English in a gentle and age-appropriate way, they are more confident and can follow new policy guidelines with care. According to Spolsky (2004), good language policy must include management support, and teacher capacity is a key part of that.

C. Engage Parents through Negotiated Policy and Public Communication

Another issue was that the policy ignored parents' voices. In Korea's strong education fever culture, many parents see English as a basic need—not a luxury. When the government banned English in public kindergartens without asking parents, they felt left out and even angry. As a result, many found ways to bypass the ban through private schools.

To solve this, the MOE should start a dialogue with families to both persuade parents and to revise the policy. To persuade parents, they can use short surveys, public information campaigns, or meetings at local schools to explain why full English lessons are not recommended for young learners, but also show that limited playful exposure is safe and helpful. Clear communication builds trust. For example, a video showing five-year-olds enjoying a simple English storytime could help parents see the value of fun, low-pressure bilingual activities. When parents feel heard, they are more likely to support the policy instead of avoiding it. On the other hand, future policy revisions should involve active consultation with parent groups, perhaps through open forums or surveys, ensuring their perspectives are integrated into the policy-making process (Bronteng et al., 2019). Such engagement could lead to a more socially negotiated policy, which would enhance public trust and reduce the perceived need for costly private alternatives to fulfill parental aspirations for early English exposure (Huang, 2023).

D. Regulate Private Providers while Supporting Positive Innovation

One of the biggest problems with the ban was that it applied only to public kindergartens, while private institutions continued English instruction freely. This created an unfair system: wealthy families could pay for English learning, but others could not. The government should work to close this gap by setting minimum standards for English teaching in private kindergartens, while also offering positive incentives. This regulatory oversight could include guidelines on age-appropriate content, teacher qualifications, and instructional methodologies to prevent potential developmental disadvantages associated with overly intensive early language instruction (Kim & Lee, 2024). This does not mean banning private schools, but making sure their English programs are child-friendly and developmentally appropriate. For example, private kindergartens could be asked to register their English programs, follow play-based rules, and avoid test preparation. In return, schools that follow these standards could receive small funding or be featured in official school directories as "trusted providers". This kind of fair regulation would help keep the system more equal and let families from all income levels access safe and good-quality early English education. It would also help reduce the fast-growing private tutoring market, where many parents pay a lot of money for private English lessons because they think public education is not enough. This puts more pressure on families and makes educational inequality worse (Tan et al., 2025; Chang & Wang, 2024).

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Korean case shows that language policy is not only about writing laws, it is about understanding people's behaviors, beliefs, and needs. The 2018 ban failed partly because it did not consider how parents, teachers, and private schools would react. If families want English, and private markets offer it freely, simply banning it in public schools creates inequality and stress. A better way is to allow small, well-managed English exposure in public kindergartens, train teachers to do it properly, communicate clearly with parents, and make sure private schools follow fair rules. By doing this, the government can protect the Korean language while also respecting families' hopes for their children's future. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Korean government succeed to reserve heritage language and national identity. In

short, any decision by policy-makers, which may influence all citizens of a country, is not easy to make. Language policy must be balanced, inclusive, and realistic. It should aim to guide people, not fight against them.

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