

Beliefs about Language Teacher Competence and Microteaching in the In-service Teacher Training Program*

Hyun Jin Kim

Cheongju National University of Education

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The study intended to investigate the beliefs of Korean secondary school English teachers about language teacher competence, and their opinions about the microteaching courses that are an element of the in-service teacher training program. For the purpose of the study, the following research questions were raised: 1) What are the secondary school English teachers' beliefs about language teacher competence? 2) Does the microteaching course meet their needs? 3) Does the microteaching course contribute to their language teacher competence development? 4) What are their demands for the next teacher training program? Twenty-seven teachers that participated in a six-month-long intensive teacher training program participated in the study, and responded to the course evaluation questionnaire. Between general English communication skills, classroom English skills, L2 teaching skills, interaction skills, and lesson planning skills, the teachers perceived L2 teaching skills and interaction skills to be the most important qualifications for language teachers. They evaluated the microteaching course as satisfactory compared to their needs, and as useful for the development of their skills. While they perceive teaching skills and interaction skills to be the most important goals of the program, they want to invest as much time in developing general English skills as in developing teaching skills and interaction skills.

[microteaching/teacher training/language teacher competence/
마이크로티칭/교사 연수/언어 교사 능력]

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I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, the ability of English teachers to teach English through English has been emphasized, with the communicative teaching method being applied to English education practice in Korea. Accordingly, social expectations of the English proficiency level of Korean non-native English teachers have increased, and to meet these expectations, in-service English teacher training institutes have been providing programs that are designed to effectively develop the English proficiency of teacher trainees, and to improve their competence as language teachers. Under the government plans (The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2006), all in-service English teachers will be required to reach a level of English competency at which they are able to teach English through English from 2010, and intensive in-service teacher training programs will be provided to about 10,000 English teachers (1,000 teachers a year) from 2007 until 2015.

To meet this requirement, teacher training institutes commissioned by the government have been running six-month-long residential or non-residential intensive English teacher training programs. Among the institutions, two institutions have run a residential program since 2003 and 2005 respectively, and eight institutions have run a non-residential program since 2007 (Unkyoung Maeng, 2008). Until 2008, 3,260 teachers had completed the intensive English teacher training programs. In January 2009, thirteen more institutions were newly designated for teacher training, and the number of teacher trainees for one year was extended up to 1,500 (The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2009). In 2009, twenty two intensive teacher teaching programs have been running in Korea for the purpose of development of English teachers' ability to teach English in a communicative approach.

Most of the intensive teacher training programs focus more on the development of teachers' communicative competence than on the development of their teaching competence or language teacher competence (Woo-hyung Kim, 2009). It seems that these programs almost equate language proficiency with language teacher competence. It is true that language teacher competence is developed on the basis of proficiency in the target language, and that the latter should be developed prior to the former. However, language teacher competence cannot be equated with language competence, and the short duration of the six-month-long training program does not enable an effective and dramatic progression in language

competence. Furthermore, the language ability required by a language teacher is specific to teaching situations (Douglas, 2000). Considering this, any teacher training program for language teachers should be designed in a manner that supports the direct development of the practical teaching skills required to teach English through English, rather than the development of general communication skills first. In other words, to develop the ability of teachers to teach English through English, it would be more effective to have them conduct as many English medium lessons as possible than to have them focus more on general communication skills and expect them to teach English through English later.

Most intensive teacher training programs consist of the following courses: language skills, teaching methodology, microteaching, teaching presentation contests, and evaluation. Among these, the microteaching course is an essential and useful element of the teacher training program, as it gives the trainees opportunities to experiment with their teaching skills before applying them in practice, and a context within which they can receive feedback on their teaching in a less complex situation than a real classroom setting (Benton-Kupper, 2001). Microteaching is a very useful activity, through which teachers can practice teaching English through English, as well as practice their teaching skills. So, are English teacher trainees being trained in a manner that enables them to develop the required skills? Are the teacher training programs providing the training that will enable them to grow into more competent language teachers?

In designing and running a teacher training program, the teacher trainee's needs before training and comments after training should be considered and reflected in subsequent training programs. For this reason, it is necessary to hear the voices of the teacher trainees who have completed the training program. In this context, the present study sought the opinions of English teachers regarding the intensive English teacher training program, particularly the microteaching course. Therefore, the study raised the following research questions:

- 1) What are the secondary school English teachers' beliefs about language teacher competence?
- 2) Does the microteaching course meet the needs of the secondary school English teachers?
- 3) Does the microteaching course contribute to the secondary school English teachers' language teacher competence development?
- 4) What are the secondary school English teachers' demands for the next teacher training program?

II. THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1. Language Teacher Competence and Teacher Training

It is generally believed that language teachers should be both proficient in the target language and skillful in language teaching. This means that language teacher competence includes both linguistic competence and pedagogical competence (GyeongHee No, 2006). Linguistic competence, in this context, should be understood as an extended concept such as L2 communicative competence, the ability to communicate in the target language. Pedagogical competence is the ability to teach the target language to the students by using appropriate teaching skills, based on the principles of language learning, and includes both language teaching skills and classroom English ability (Hyun Jin Kim, 2009).

Previous research on teacher education has attempted to define language teacher competence, but a common specification has yet to be derived. Therefore, the definition can vary, from one encompassing general knowledge and skills to one focusing on the specific knowledge and skills necessary to teach a lesson. For example, the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers stated suggested guidelines for foreign language teacher preparation programs (Baslaw et al., 1978) and the minimal competency of foreign language teachers. According to their guidelines, language teachers should have competencies in five areas: practical command of the language, language analysis, culture, teaching/learning process, and professionalism. This gives us a wide definition of language teacher competence.

The definition of language teacher competence can also be found in teaching evaluation tools. One of the teaching competence evaluation rubrics developed by Yeong Ye Park and Yoon Lee (2000) specifies three aspects to be evaluated: lesson building competency, lesson conducting competency, and classroom English language use competency. Lesson building competency refers to the ability to build a lesson that has clear attainment criteria and consists of diverse and balanced activities. Lesson conducting competency includes the ability to motivate students, to provide them with appropriate amount of practice and correction, to check their understanding, to give them clear directions, to interact with them, and to maintain an appropriate teaching pace. Classroom English language use competency refers to the ability of the teacher to adjust the English to the level of the students, to command the expressions necessary for managing classes, to

respond to students' utterances and correct their errors, to ask various types of questions in order to elicit students' utterances, and to use correct English in lesson plans. Dongil Shin (2003) developed performance criteria for nonnative English teachers' language teaching and identified four areas to be evaluated: interaction with students, preparation for teaching, management of class activities, communication in class. These definitions are related to the pedagogical competence definition given by GyeongHee No (2006).

A more narrow definition of language teacher competence is the one given by Richards, who defines it as "the ability to use comprehensible language, to provide explanations, instructions and feedback in the target language, and to provide a good language model in the classroom" (as quoted in Renandya, 2009). This definition combines lesson conducting competency and classroom English use competency.

Based on these definitions, language teacher competence can be defined as encompassing the skills required to: plan lessons, teach lessons by applying appropriate teaching skills, interact with students, and manage classes using appropriate language; all of which require general English communicative competence as a foundation. In other words, language teacher competence, based on communicative competence, consists of lesson planning competency, teaching skills competency, interaction skills competency, and classroom English use competency.

So, what elements of language teacher competence does the in-service teacher training program focus on? Unlike pre-service teacher education, which takes place over a longer period of time, the in-service teacher training program necessarily focuses on supplementing the areas in which in-service teachers are lacking, and which they need to promote. For Korean non-native English teachers, what they need to know and practice is how to build lesson plans and teach lessons using English as the instruction medium language. Considering this need, the in-service teacher training program should provide trainees with teaching contexts in which they can practice planning lessons in English, as well as teaching, providing explanations, modeling, interacting with students, and managing a class in English, and these teaching contexts can be provided in microteaching courses.

2. Microteaching

Microteaching, one of the activities used in pre-service and in-service teacher

education, provides teacher trainees with a teaching context in which they can practice teaching, yet is differentiated from 'real' teaching in several aspects. In microteaching, teaching is scaled down in three ways compared to a 'real' lesson (Wallace, 1991). First, microteaching focuses on only one specific teaching skill at a time. The teacher trainer explains the teaching skill to the trainees so that they can understand exactly what they are supposed to do in the microteaching. Secondly, the teaching time is shortened to five or ten minutes, since only one teaching skill is targeted at a time. Finally, the class size is reduced to a small number of students, usually less than 10. Trainees will teach peer trainees or real students.

The microteaching approach usually takes place in four stages: the briefing, the teach, the critique, and the re-teach. In the briefing stage, teacher trainees are briefed on the target teaching skill and the microteaching procedure. In the next stage, the teacher trainees teach a microlesson to real students or peers, applying the target teaching skill. Usually, this stage is videotaped, so that it can be played back and reviewed in the next stage. In the critique stage, peers watch the videotaped microteaching session, and discuss how the teaching skill has been applied. In the final stage, which is re-teaching, trainees teach the microlesson again. In some programs, trainees are asked to teach the microlesson repeatedly until they reach a certain criterion. This last stage is optional.

Since it was first introduced, microteaching has undergone some evolution in its application. According to Subramaniam (2006), two main differences between the traditional version and the modified version of microteaching can be found. In traditional microteaching, the evaluators were clinical supervisors, and the feedback was given from the videotape playback. However, these evaluators have been replaced by course instructors and peers, and feedback is now given based on the microteaching evaluation forms with evaluation criteria.

Microteaching can be applied in several ways (Wallace, 1991). Teacher trainees can prepare microlessons either in groups or individually. In an extended microteaching session, a group of trainees may prepare one lesson together. In this case, either all of the group members will prepare the whole lesson together and each member will teach every stage of the lesson, or the group members will prepare different activities in a lesson with common topics or contents, and teach in a relay. Another extended type of microteaching is performed in a rather lengthy lesson for about twenty minutes, and, with a focus that is spread over more than one teaching skill, it is closer to a 'real' lesson than other types of microteaching. The former type is called a linked microlesson, and the latter a

minilesson. In addition to these approaches, microteaching can be adapted to various teaching situations.

III. METHODOLOGY

1. Participants

Twenty-seven Korean secondary school English teachers participated in the microteaching course, titled "Practicum," in the intensive in-service teacher training program. At the time of this study, they had completed a five-month period of training in Korea, and were about to continue the program abroad. Their teaching experience ranged from 6 to 35 years, with the average teaching experience being 14.2 years. Eighteen out of twenty-seven teachers reported that they have been participated in other teacher training programs. As can be seen in Table 1, they reported feeling language anxiety as a language learner, and language teaching anxiety as a language teacher. They felt language teaching anxiety (mean = 3.760) more than language anxiety (mean = 3.444). They rated their language teacher competence as an English teacher as moderate (mean = 3.296), which seems to be affected by their high language teaching anxiety.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics the Background Information

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
TA	25	2	5	3.760	1.052
LA	27	1	5	3.444	1.251
PTC	27	1	5	3.296	0.953

Note: TA = teaching anxiety, LA = language anxiety, PTC = perceived L2 teaching competence

2. Course Design

The program consisted of courses on English skills, teaching methodology, lesson analyses, microteaching, a teaching presentation contest, and evaluation. As all of the courses were delivered in English, the trainees were required to speak English only, and were encouraged to communicate in English only during class

breaks. In the microteaching course, trainees were required to perform three cycles of microteaching: one group microteaching lesson, and two individual microteaching lessons.

Each microteaching cycle was designed to include three stages: lesson planning, teaching, and critique (See Figure 1). In each cycle, the teacher trainees were numbered off and scheduled to go through three stages, one by one.



Figure 1. Three cycles of microteaching.

In the lesson planning stage, the trainees chose teaching materials and planned a lesson. The instructors [teacher trainers] reviewed the lesson plan and gave feedback, and the trainees revised the lesson plan and performed teaching practice based on the plan. In the teaching stage, each group (in the first cycle) or individual (in the second and third cycles) taught peer trainees. They were required to teach in English, and their lessons were videotaped. The videotaped lessons were burned onto a CD so that the instructor could review it in advance of the next stage. In the critique stage, the instructor played each videotaped lesson in class, one at a time, and discussed it with the trainees. During this stage, the instructors gave comments and feedback, asked the trainees for clarification about the intentions or specific parts of the lesson, and guided the other trainees to reflect on the lesson and teaching skills. Comments, feedback and discussion topics covered English skills, classroom English, teaching skills, interaction skills, lesson planning. Three different instructors participated in the critique stage in each cycle, and the researcher was the third instructor.

3. Procedure

The study was conducted as follows. A survey was conducted to collect the opinions of participants about the microteaching. After the participants completed

three microteaching cycles, they were asked to complete questionnaires, which included questions on their expectations of the course, their opinions about language teacher competence, and their satisfaction with the course, and also included background information such as their teaching experience and L2 learning and teaching anxiety. The questionnaires used a 5-level Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree/Never, 5 = Strongly agree/Very much. Their responses to the research questions were gathered, coded, and analyzed using SPSS 15.0.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. What are the Secondary School English Teachers' Beliefs about Language Teacher Competence?

Language teachers' beliefs about language teacher competence and qualifications may affect their needs in terms of education and their attitudes regarding the teacher training program. In order to identify teachers' beliefs about language teacher competence and qualifications, they were asked to rate the importance of each of the following skills: general English communication, classroom English, interaction, language teaching, and lesson planning.

In the questionnaire, "classroom English" refers to the formulaic expressions that are commonly used for the purpose of managing lessons and controlling students. "Interaction skills" refers to the ability to conduct instructional conversations, providing comprehensible input and giving comments or feedback (i.e., recasts) to the students' utterances. The definition of each skill was explained and discussed in class before the trainees responded to the questionnaires. As you can see in Table 2, the trainees rated language teaching skills as the most important skill (mean = 4.000) to be a competent language teacher. The importance of other skills was evaluated in the following order: interaction skills (mean = 3.333), lesson planning (mean = 2.889), general English communication skills (mean = 2.852), and classroom English skills (mean = 1.926).

What implies that teaching skills were evaluated the most highly is that in an English medium lesson, the ability to appropriately use comprehensible English in presenting and explaining specific contents (i.e. words, expressions, structures, concepts, culture) and activities in the order that the chosen specific teaching

method is to proceed is considered the most significant skill by secondary school English teachers. The second-most highly rated skill was interaction skill, which means that secondary school English teachers value the communicative teaching method and linguistic interaction between teachers and students in the classrooms, and therefore believe that qualified language teachers should have interaction skills.

Table 2
Importance of Competencies

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
GE	27	1	5	2.852	1.406
CE	27	1	4	1.926	1.035
Int	27	1	5	3.333	1.441
TS	27	1	5	4.000	1.038
LP	27	1	5	2.889	1.340

Note: GE = general English communication skills, CE = classroom English skills, Int = interaction skills, TS = L2 teaching skills, LP = L2 lesson planning

2. Does the Microteaching Course Meet the Needs of the Secondary School English Teachers?

To investigate whether or not the microteaching course satisfied the needs of the teachers, two questions were asked: how much did the teacher trainees want to develop their skills before the program, and how useful did they find the course to have been after the program. They were asked to rate four skill areas—general English communication skills, classroom English skills, teaching skills, lesson planning—considering these two questions.

Table 3 summarizes the findings of the first question. Overall, expectations of progress in all four competencies were rather high, with the means rated at more than 3 points. According to the findings, before the program, trainees wanted to develop their skills and receive feedback from the trainers in the following order of priority: L2 teaching skills (mean = 4.519), L2 lesson planning (mean = 4.407), classroom English (mean = 4.185), and general English communication skills (mean = 3.852).

Table 3
Course Expectations

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
GE	27	1	5	3.852	1.134
CE	27	2	5	4.185	0.879
TS	27	3	5	4.519	0.580
LP	27	2	5	4.407	0.797

The paired t-test showed that there is significant difference ($t = -2.865$, $p = .008$) between the expectations regarding teaching skills and the expectations regarding general English communication skills. From the findings, it can be inferred that the trainees lack confidence when they apply teaching skills in an English medium lesson. It is assumed that since lessons in secondary schools are textbook-based, the need for the development of the teaching skills required to deliver the contents presented in the textbooks was stronger than the need for general English communication skills development, which has a wide range of expressions and requires a longer period of time.

Table 4 shows how useful the trainees found the microteaching course for the development of each skill. All skills had means higher than 4.000 points, which means that, overall, the trainees found the course to be very useful in the improvement of all competencies. Among these, they evaluated that the microteaching course was the most useful in developing their L2 teaching skills (mean = 4.778) and was second most useful in developing their lesson planning skills (mean = 4.481).

Table 4
Course Usefulness

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
GE	27	2	5	4.185	0.879
CE	27	3	5	4.111	0.751
TS	27	4	5	4.778	0.424
LP	27	3	5	4.481	0.643

The paired t-test showed that the means of teaching skills were significantly higher than the means of the lesson planning ($t = 2.842$, $p = .009$), classroom

English skills ($t = -4.163$, $p = .000$) and general English skills ($t = -3.309$, $p = .003$). The t-test also indicated that the means of lesson planning were significantly higher than the means of classroom English skills ($t = -2.294$, $p = .030$). These findings tell us that the teacher trainees were the most satisfied with their experience of practicing teaching skills in their microlessons, and with the feedback from the trainers on this work.

Considering the findings of the course expectations and usefulness together, it can be concluded that the course matched the needs of the teacher trainees. The priority the trainees assigned to the four skills they expected to develop through microteaching, in order, was teaching skills, lesson planning, classroom English skills, and general English skills. The order of perceived usefulness after the course was almost the same, except that satisfaction with general English skills development was higher than satisfaction with classroom English skills. However, it is clear that the trainers provided the trainees with what they expected from the course, and that the trainees were able to learn what they needed to.

3. Does the Microteaching Course Contribute to the Secondary School English Teachers' Language Teacher Competence Development?

To investigate whether the teacher trainees perceived an improvement in their competence as language teachers, the questionnaire asked them to evaluate their own microteaching, and the results of this are presented in Table 5. From the three rounds of microteaching, the trainees evaluated their third microteaching the highest (mean = 3.565) and their first microteaching lowest (mean = 2.696). This means the trainees perceived an improvement in their competence as language teachers through the microteaching course.

To determine whether these improvements show significant differences, the paired t-tests were conducted, the results of which are presented in Table 6. A significant difference between the first and the second microteaching can be found, while there was no significant difference between the second and the third, which means that the perceived level of the third microteaching is still significantly higher than that of the first. This implies that the trainees are gaining confidence in teaching English through English, and perceive that their language teacher competence is progressing, accordingly.

Table 5
Self-evaluation of Microteaching

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
1st M	23	1	4	2.696	0.926
2nd M	23	2	5	3.478	0.730
3rd M	23	2	5	3.565	0.728

Table 6
Comparisons of Self-evaluation

	M	SD	t	p
1st M - 2nd M	-.78261	.95139	-3.945	.001
2nd M - 3rd M	-.08696	1.16436	-.358	.724

4. What Are the Secondary School English Teachers' Demands for the Next Teacher Training Program?

To learn what the teacher trainees thought that subsequent teacher training programs for English teachers should include, the study asked them two questions: 1) How important is each goal of the program? and 2) How much time should be allotted to the development of each skill? The responses of the trainees are presented in Tables 7 and 8.

First, of the five goals of the program, the trainees rated the goal of teaching skills (mean = 4.519) as the most important, and the goal of interaction skills (mean = 4.385) as the second-most important; this is shown in Table 7.

According to the paired t-test, there was no significant difference between teaching skills and interaction skills ($t = -0.901$, $p = .376$) while there were significant differences between teaching skills and lesson planning ($t = 3.863$, $p = .001$), between teaching skills and general English skills, ($t = -3.502$, $p = .002$), and between teaching skills and classroom English skills ($t = -4.274$, $p = .000$). Furthermore, there were significant differences between interaction skills and lesson planning ($t = 2.687$, $p = .013$), between interaction skills and general English skills ($t = -3.285$, $p = .003$), between interaction skills and classroom English skills ($t = -3.784$, $p = .001$), and between lesson planning and classroom English skills ($t = -2.107$, $p = .045$).

Table 7
Goals of the Language Teacher Training Program

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
GE	27	1	5	3.407	1.279
CE	26	1	5	3.346	1.129
Int	26	2	5	4.385	0.752
TS	27	2	5	4.519	0.700
LP	27	2	5	3.926	0.730

The findings of the t-tests showed that teacher trainees consider the development of teaching skills and interaction skills to be more important goals of the teacher training program than the development of the other three skills. The findings also showed that classroom English skills and general communication skills are less important goals compared to the other three skills.

From these findings, it can be argued that the trainees believe that they will be able to conduct successful English-medium classes when they can skillfully present and explain contents in English, in diverse classroom activities and using diverse teaching methods and strategies (i.e., when they have developed teaching skills) and when they can adjust their English to the English level of their students and lead instructional conversations with them to expand their speaking ability (i.e., when they are skillful in interaction skills). Based on the results, the hierarchy of the goals of the teacher training program is: teaching skills, interaction skills > lesson planning > classroom English skills, and general English skills, as shown in Figure 2.

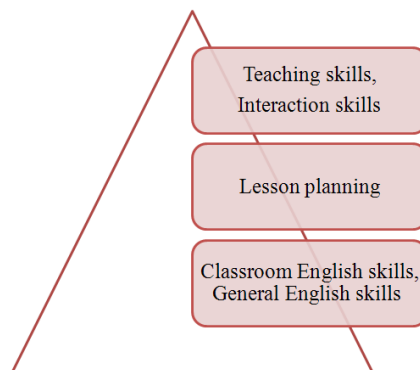


Figure 2. Hierarchy of the goals of the language teacher training program.

When they were asked how much time should be allotted to each skill, their answers were as follows: more time should be allotted to general English skills (24.11%) than to the other four skills, which were ranked in the order of teaching strategies (23.57%), interaction skills (22.5%), lesson planning (15.71%), and classroom English (14.46%), as shown in Table 8.

Table 8
Ideal Time Allotment

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
GE	28	5	60	24.11	12.842
CE	28	5	30	14.46	6.137
Int	28	10	50	22.50	9.280
TS	28	10	40	23.57	7.505
LP	28	5	35	15.71	7.159

The paired t-tests were conducted to identify any significant differences, and the results are as follows. There were no significant differences between general English skills and teaching skills ($t = -.056$, $p = .956$), or between general English skills and interaction skills ($t = .367$, $p = .717$), whereas there were significant differences between general English skills and lesson planning skills ($t = 2.296$, $p = .030$), and between general English skills and classroom English skills ($t = 3.261$, $p = .003$). In addition, there was no significant difference between teaching skills and interaction skills ($t = -.582$, $p = .566$), while there were significant differences between teaching skills and lesson planning ($t = 4.646$, $p = .000$) and between teaching skills and classroom English skills ($t = -5.311$, $p = .000$). Significant differences were found between interaction skills and lesson planning skills ($t = 2.506$, $p = .019$) and between interaction skills and classroom English skills ($t = -3.882$, $p = .001$), but were not found between lesson planning and classroom English skills ($t = -1.402$, $p = .173$).

These results indicate that there should be no significant differences in the time allotted in the training course to each of three skills (general English skills, teaching skills, and interaction skills), and imply that the same proportion of time should be allotted to these three skills. The results also indicate that there should be no significant differences in the time allotted to lesson planning and classroom English skills, and imply that the same proportion of time should be allotted to

these two skills, and furthermore, that more time should be allotted to the former three skills than the latter two skills. Based on the results, the proportion of skills should be: general English skills, teaching skills, interaction skills > lesson planning, classroom English skills. Figure 3 summarizes these results.

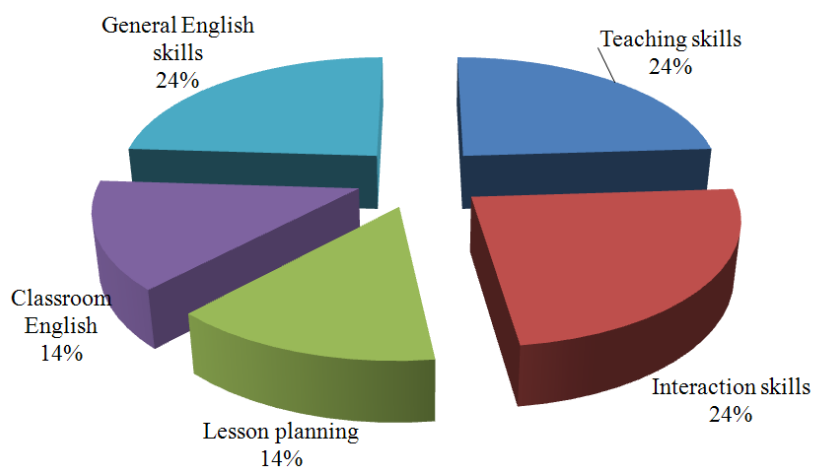


Figure 3. Ideal allotment of time for each skill.

The order for each skill mentioned concerning the proportion is different from the order concerning the program goals. Teaching skills and interaction skills were perceived as a significantly more important goal than general English skills. However, general English skills were recognized as skills to which the same proportion of time should be allotted as teaching skills and interaction skills. In addition, lesson planning was evaluated as a significantly more important goal than general English skills and classroom English skills. However, it was recognized as being at the same level as classroom English skills in terms of time proportion.

Considering the results regarding the program goals and the time allotment together, it seems that the teacher trainees want to invest as much time as possible on general English skills within the time framework of the program, as they need to increase their level of English proficiency, which requires a longer period of time; they still want to spend as much time as possible on their teaching skills and interaction skills, since they recognize these as essential for language teacher qualification. Even though they perceived the development of lesson planning skills as an important goal, they do not want to spend as much time on it as on general English skills, teaching skills, or interaction skills. This

may be because they consider it to be a skill that does not require as much time to develop as teaching skills and interaction skills. In addition, the finding that the teachers did not want to invest much time in developing their classroom English skills compared to their general teaching skills and interaction skills may tell us that they want to practice the expressions required in the context of teaching specific contents, rather than the formulaic expressions that fall under the category of "classroom English".

V. CONCLUSION

This study explored the beliefs of secondary school English teachers regarding the elements of language teacher competence, and their opinions on the microteaching course provided in the intensive in-service language teacher training program. Specifically, the study investigated which skills the secondary school English teachers believe are required for language teacher competence, which skills they want to develop the most, whether or not the microteaching course trains them to develop these skills, whether or not they perceive their skills to have improved, which skills they perceive to be the most important goals of the program, and what proportion of the time should be allotted to each skill.

From the findings, it can be concluded that among general English communication skills, classroom English skills, teaching skills, interaction skills, and lesson planning skills, the trainees (in-service secondary school English teachers) consider L2 teaching skills and interaction skills as the most important qualifications required to be competent L2 teachers. Regarding the needs for the microteaching course, they wanted to develop and receive feedback on teaching skills and lesson planning more than the other skills, and they found the trainers' feedback on those two skills to be a useful element of the course. In terms of their perception of their own competence as language teachers, they believed that their teaching of English medium lessons improved through the three cycles of microteaching, and that the microteaching course contributed to the development of their competence as language teachers.

Concerning the goals of subsequent teacher training programs, the trainees believe that teaching skills and interaction skills are the most important goals, with lesson planning skills the second most important. They consider general English skills and classroom English skills to be less important goals of the

program. However, they want an equal amount of time to be allotted to general English communication development as to teaching skills and interaction skills. This may be because they rate general English skills as a skill that they need to develop continuously and therefore need to invest as much time in this area as possible. They do not want as much time to be allotted to lesson planning as to general English skills, even though they evaluate the former to be more important than the latter. This may be because lesson planning skills may be considered as a skill that they can improve during a short period of time. Classroom English skills were not evaluated highly, and it is also believed that this skill, like lesson planning, can be developed within the limited proportion of the time.

The development of language teacher competence to a satisfactory level cannot be achieved in both the language competence area (general English communication skills) and the pedagogical competence area (teaching skills, interaction skills, lesson planning, classroom English skills) in the short term (6 months) of the intensive teacher training program. There may be two options for language teachers who wish to increase their skills in both areas. One is to focus on language competence more than pedagogical competence. In this case, the courses for language teacher competence development may be spent more on the development of general English skills, and the program may not devote enough time to pedagogical competence. Another option is to concentrate on pedagogical competence more than language competence. In this case, the courses can be designed to focus on instruction-specific English (a kind of English for Specific Purposes), and have teacher trainees practice English while they practice teaching skills and instructional conversation skills.

Language teacher competence development requires time, and the teacher training program is a short-term program. For this reason, the short-term intensive teacher training program should focus on improving English for specific teaching purposes, while upgrading teaching skills and interaction skills. This is proved by investigating the opinions of secondary school English teachers on the microteaching course and the entire teacher training program. By participating in as many teaching contexts where they can develop their teaching skills and instructional conversation ability as possible, English teachers can effectively develop their ability to teach English medium classes, and enhance their overall language teacher competence.

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Hyun Jin Kim
Department of English Education
Cheongju National University of Education
135, Cheongnamro, Heungdeok-ku, Chungbuk
Tel: (043) 299-0822
Email: 37hjkim@hanmail.net

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