

## Exploring English Education in Beauty-Related Programs Focusing on Its Efficacy and Potential\*

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There is a growing need for beauty professionals to serve and interact with foreign customers with varying degrees of frequency and intensity. An inquiry was made into English education, provided to Korean university students in six four-year beauty-related programs, with the primary goal of gaining insights into the purposes, extent, and delivery of the education. In other words, pertinent aspects of English curriculums in the programs were explored. The inquiry was carried out through a survey that asked questions that touched upon various aspects of the English curriculums. Data collected being largely qualitative in nature were coded and classified to identify patterns. Strengths of the curriculums are highlighted in this paper as they can serve as models. Attention is also duly paid to the areas of curricular improvement in the hope of promoting further discussion and refinement, which calls for: (a) a shift in the focus of the education; (b) introduction of greater flexibility into the curriculums together with the provision of incentives for motivated students; and (c) implementation of additional curricular measures to facilitate and ensure students' learning. The study has practical implications for English education for beauty students and other hospitality students at tertiary institutions in Korea and elsewhere with a similar context in which ESP has emerged into the curriculum but not taken firm root yet.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

There is a need for a future workforce to learn to effectively communicate and fully interact with foreign customers, colleagues, and business partners. To cultivate future professionals who can successfully deal with foreigners in times of intensifying globalization and internationalization, it is important to make certain that foreign language education is conducted in a proper, adequate, and effective manner. In this regard, quality assurance of English education should take priority due to the prominent role of English.

Of particular interest here is English education at tertiary institutions. This is because higher education presents the last opportunity for many students to improve their English in the school system, especially for students who are going to pursue careers in the service industry. To ensure that English education is carried out in the aforementioned manner, a firm grasp of its nature, extent, and delivery is vital, which can in turn help ascertain its efficacy and realize its potential.

The present study aims to understand the suitability and adequacy of English education for students in beauty-related programs (referred to as BRPs hereafter) at four-year universities by exploring what purposes English teaching intends to serve and how the purposes are supposedly accomplished. In essence, the primary goal of the study is to appraise the appropriateness of English education in terms of its nature, extent, and delivery.

This study is of practical value as it provides deep insights into pertinent aspects of English education, especially when there is a paucity of research on English curriculums in BRPs and similar fields of study in higher education to date. However, the significance of the study lies in relevant questions that it raises, which have scarcely been asked and addressed before in the broader English as a foreign language (EFL) context at tertiary institutions. Findings of the study can therefore give renewed impetus to discussion among the faculty and administration in the fields about foreign language curriculums – in the spirit of enhancing global competitiveness of an elite workforce.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Importance of English for Beauty Professionals

Korean beauty industries have undergone dramatic change in recent years, partially as a result of expanding globalization and internationalization. Coupled with an influx of foreign customers interested in quality beauty products, services, and cosmetic surgeries available in Korea, worldwide consumption of Korean beauty goods has also been on the

increase, as evidenced by recent expansion of several major Korean cosmetics companies into different parts of the world (T. Ku, J. Byun, & A. Park, 2010; H. Lee, 2014; Y. Lee & K. Kim, 2010). A consequence has been a growing need in Korean beauty professionals to interact with international clientele, which can pose many of them the challenge of having to overcome a language barrier to providing the best possible service.

The challenge comes with great opportunities. Beauty professionals with an operational command of English have an advantage over their monolingual counterparts at the individual level (Y. Cho & J. No, 2008; S. Kang & K. Choi, 2012). A good command of English can facilitate effective communication with foreign customers (S. Kang & H. Park, 2005; Y. Yu & M. Kim, 2011) and help ensure high standards of customer service while heightening satisfaction of all parties involved (G. Oh, 2011). Moreover, bilingual (and multilingual) professionals can also enhance the competitiveness of the nation by leading the way as a whole and unlocking the door to the potential of the talented workforce in beauty industries (K. Lim & J. Kim, 2010). Simply put, English education can benefit individual professionals as well as the community of the beauty profession.

Thus, it is beneficial to foster communicative competence in beauty students, which can smooth the way for them to realize their full potential in the domestic as well as global markets (S. Kang & K. Choi, 2012; S. Lee, S. Kim, & J. Oh, 2009). As a means of achieving the competence in the future workforce, teaching of English as an international language (EIL) is of particular value (S. Kang & H. Park, 2005; Y. Lee & K. Kim, 2010; Y. Yu & M. Kim, 2011). The potential benefits that can be derived from EIL education necessitate a clear understanding of English teaching provided in BRPs across tertiary institutions in Korea.

## 2. English Education in Beauty-Related Programs

The history of BRPs in Korea is relatively brief despite their immense popularity at present. The first program came into existence at a two-year college in 1991, and a similar program was adopted at a four-year university in 1999 (E. Kim & I. Lee, 2011; Y. Lee, A. Cho, & Y. No, 2011). It is said that BRPs have practically exploded at the tertiary level of education in the past 25 years (Y. Kim & S. Choi, 2011, 2012; K. Lim & J. Kim, 2010). Approximately 100 two-year and 30 four-year tertiary institutions currently offer one or more BRPs (S. Kang & K. Choi, 2012).

Despite the popularity of BRPs in Korea, there is a relatively small body of studies that exclusively cover English education in BRPs at tertiary institutions. Of particular interest here is one study conducted by E. You (2015), which looked into the purposes of English education across multiple BRPs. The study considered English curriculums in nine BRPs at eight universities in Chungcheong province. It reports that only three BRPs offered

English courses for occupational purposes, titled Medical Beauty English, Beauty English, and Cosmetics English. According to the study, Medical Beauty English was taught over four semesters while the other two were taught just for one semester each. Based on her finding that beauty students were interested in learning English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), it was put forth in the study that EOP should be the focus of English education.

There is no doubt that it is propitious to stress EOP in BRPs in consideration of the growing demand for bilinguals who can provide goods and services to foreign customers. Nonetheless, the proposal that foreign language education should be centered upon EOP ought to be viewed with caution. It is plausible that beauty students are far more interested in developing their verbal language skills for work-related as well as social situations, as suggested by C. Y. Shin (2015), than merely becoming familiar with workplace English. Besides this concern, English education confined to its occupational application is of limited use in generating students who can freely converse with foreigners.

Accordingly, it is prudent to provide English education that can develop the beauty students' verbal skills to the extent which they can readily converse and interact with foreign customers, as opposed to offering education that is limited to familiarizing students with rudimentary English conversation that can transpire at the workplace. Undoubtedly, as English proficiency can help the workforce converse with and cater to native English speakers and all other foreigners who speak the language as a lingua franca, the education that can enhance the students' communicative competence can also be of practical use to people working in various and sundry sectors of the service industry.

### 3. Compatibility With Beauty Students' English Learning

Beauty students' learning is covered below on the grounds that a reasonable understanding of their learning is necessary toward discussing EFL curriculums in a balanced manner. A few topics were examined in the past concerning beauty students' English learning: compatibility of teaching materials (Y. Cho & J. No, 2008); motivations for learning (S. Jeong, 2012; C. Y. Shin, 2016; E. You, 2015); and learner needs (C. Y. Shin, 2015). These studies are meaningful in that they shed light on pertinent aspects of English teaching in relation to the students' learning.

Notwithstanding the paucity of studies on English education, beauty students' attitudes, needs, and expectations related to English learning and teaching are relatively well-documented in the previous research on overall BRP curriculums. Beauty students' attitudes toward English education are comparatively well-known, for example. A general consensus exists that beauty students find English difficult to learn (E. Choi & Y. Seo, 2008; S. Lee, S. Kim, & J. Oh, 2009; H. Leem, W. Kim, M. Kim, & D. Moon, 2011). The students' difficulty is accounted for by the low level of proficiency in English (Y. Cho & J.

No, 2008). However, it is not perfectly clear what other variables, if any, can also attribute to the students' difficulty. Knowledge of what stands in the way of students' learning is of value as it can help enhance English education in connection with how, when, and by whom the language is taught.

There also exists a sentiment that beauty students generally do not put a high value on learning English, and the reason is speculated to be that they find the language irrelevant to their life and career (E. Choi & Y. Seo, 2008). However, the speculation has been unsubstantiated as to whether it is the case of beauty students not seeing practical value in learning English or them being in conflict with instructional practices in place (e.g., pedagogical purposes, approaches, and materials). This ambiguity is pointed out because beauty students readily acknowledge the importance of the language (Y. Kim & S. Choi, 2011, 2012; C. Y. Shin, 2015, 2016; E. You, 2015) and are willing to put in effort to learn to speak English under certain conditions (Y. Cho & J. No, 2008).

#### 4. English Education Beyond Beauty-Related Programs

EOP comes under the umbrella term English for specific purposes (ESP), together with English for academic purposes (EAP), as classified by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998). EOP is intended to aid those who will use English as a means of communication at the workplace, whereas EAP familiarize prospective (and practicing) professionals – in highly specialized disciplines (i.e., science and technology, medicine, law, and management and economics) – with the pertinent terminology and language use (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). In essence, ESP is supposed to meet specific needs of English learners in relation to their future responsibility as productive members of contemporary society.

ESP instruction and research began to be recognized as an important subfield of applied linguistics in the 1960s (Swales, 2000), which supposedly coincided with a rising prominence of EIL. Clearly, for students who would be required to perform communicative tasks that lay outside the realm of everyday matters, English instruction for general purposes alone no longer sufficed; great importance was attached to ESP in this regard. The inception of an academic journal specializing in ESP in the early 1980s marked a turning point, which has led to a considerable increase in ESP-oriented research (S. Lee, 2015) along with the subsequent introduction of other scholarly journals (see S. Lee, 2015; S. Sul, J. Ahn, S. Baek, & Y. Kim, 2011 for journal reviews).

The idea of ESP being an integral part of post-secondary students' English education has been relatively slow to catch on in Korea. As recently as the 2000s, tertiary institutions as a whole still fell short of providing ESP in a meaningful manner. Although English curriculums may have projected the appearance of availing ESP education, a 'one-size-fits-all' approach has been taken at many tertiary institutions instead (J. Park, 2004). According

to J. Park (2003), "... English education ... so far has focused on teaching English for general purposes (EGP), ignoring the importance of matching the student's specific subject area with relevant [uses of] foreign languages, especially English" (p. 155).

In fairness, considerable attention has been paid to ESP education in the academic community. For example, studies were carried out in the fields of aviation (S. Choi, 2014; Y. Chung & H. Chung, 2015), bio-technology (M. Cho, 2007), cosmetology (E. You, 2015), engineering (H. Kim, 2013; C. Lee & Y. Hong, 2010), English language and literature (H. Kim & M. Kim, 2013), hospitality (H. Kim, 2007), law (M. Kang & E. Lee, 2014), medicine (J. Lee & N. Kim, 2011), and nursing (E. Kim, 2008; Y. Soh, 2004). These studies assessed some aspects of ESP education at tertiary institutions, predominantly through the examination of specific needs of students in the particular fields in relation to the education in place, and drew attention to the status and future directions of ESP.

Notably, J. Ha (2013) points out that ESP research in Korea has been chiefly confined to learner needs analysis. He puts forth that the time is ripe for extension of ESP-oriented research toward evaluation of EFL curriculums and their effectiveness. Specifically, he proposes that future studies should cover course objectives, characteristics, and management. The proposal can be construed as an initiative to attain a sound understanding of how well English education satisfies needs and expectations of students from a wide range of disciplines. The present study can be understood to be in line with the initiative, an important point to bear in mind.

### III. METHOD

#### 1. Research Questions and Instrument

As a means of exploring the nature, extent, and delivery of English education, a survey was employed. It was chosen as the study method based on recognition that it was suitable and appropriate for the research framework (Denscombe, 2014). To guide the study in its pursuit of information pertaining to English curriculums, three questions were formulated at the outset as follows:

- 1) To what ends do compulsory English courses offered in BRPs intend to serve?
- 2) What kind of learning opportunities do beauty students have for learning English?
- 3) What measures are in place to promote and ensure beauty students' English learning?

Grounded on these questions, a questionnaire was drafted in English (Appendix). It consisted of seven sections that largely ask for the following: general information on the

participating program; specific information on compulsory English course(s); management of the course(s); settings for the course(s); options for students who underperform in the course(s); availability of additional opportunities for learning English; and future plans pertaining to English education. There was a total of 24 items with two items that had a couple of accompanying follow-up questions.

The survey instrument was not designed for experts in foreign language teaching per se in consonant with its primary intention of generating a portrayal of English education in broad terms. Hence, it was written in plain English. Open-ended questions were utilized in the instrument on the basis that they would help gain real insights (Geer, 1991) in spite of their relative unpopularity (Fowler, 1995; Roberts et al., 2014).

The instrument was rewritten in the Korean language to better elicit and encourage participation of Korean faculty and administrative staff members engaged in overseeing foreign language education in some capacity, who would serve as key informants. The Korean version of the instrument was checked for its readability and accuracy by the researcher's colleagues. This version was in actuality administered to collect data.

## 2. Participating BRPs

A decision was made to limit the study's exploration to English curriculums in four-year BRPs. The decision was based on the assumption that four-year BRPs were, in all probability, better suited to provide foreign language education with breadth and depth than two-year colleges – in consideration of time and other resources at the disposal. On the premise that it could have been more informative if the study expanded to include two-year BRPs, it would be worth considering the inclusion of these programs in future research.

Four-year universities with undergraduate BRPs were identified as follows. A key-word search was initially carried out in 2013 and 2014 with the following Korean words: *byuti* [beauty], *hwajang* [make-up], *miyong* [cosmetics], and *pibu* [skin] (see <http://www.korean.go.kr> for the revised Romanization system of Korean). After the removal of BRPs centered on the development of cosmetics in the laboratory setting as well as the ones that were not full institutionalized, a total of 27 programs turned up in a government website specializing in university education (<http://univ.kcue.or.kr>) and, which were compiled into a list.

By 2015, curricular information was obtained from six (Table 1) out of 27 BRPs on the list, with a 22.2 percent response rate. There was diversity in terms of geographical location and program size. Programs A and E are located in Seoul. Programs B, C, D, and F are, respectively, situated in Gangwon, Chungcheong, Jeolla, and Gyeongsang provinces. Information was obtained from Program F in 2014 while the rest of the programs provided information in 2013. Approximately 250 undergraduate students were in Program C while

Programs D and E had more than 300 students enrolled. In comparison, Programs A, B, and F had a relatively small body of students with less than 100 individuals.

**TABLE 1**  
Profiles of the Participating BRPs

Program	Location	Year	Student body	Required units	
				English	Total
A	Seoul	2013	100	4	140
B	Gangwon	2013	100	6	140
C	Chungcheong	2013	250	10	140
D	Jeolla	2013	300	8	140
E	Seoul	2013	300	10	140
F	Gyeongsang	2014	100	6	130

The participating programs had different minimum units of English required for graduation (Table 1). Students in the comparatively large programs (i.e., Programs C, D, and E) were expected to spend more time learning English than those in the smaller programs (i.e., Programs A, B, and F). All participating programs required a minimum of 140 course units in total for graduation except for Program F that required 130 units.

### 3. Data Collection and Analysis

Using contact information available on the websites of BRPs on the list, initial contact was made by reaching out to the faculty and administrative staff members who had some familiarity with English curriculums. The top priority was to locate in each program a key informant who had a good working knowledge of the curriculum and was willing to find out pertinent information.

The primary objective of the study was briefly explained to potential key informants over the telephone, followed by an invitation to take part in the study. Once permission was given by the individuals, copies of the questionnaire accompanied by a cover letter were sent out by e-mail, fax, or surface mail as per request. Reasonable efforts were made to encourage participation via cordial reminders sent to prospective respondents. When the completed questionnaires were retrieved from the key informants of the participating BRPs, the information provided was carefully reviewed. Where necessary, requests for clarification and elaboration were made.

Owing to a relatively small number of four-year BRPs, it was decided at the outset that statistical analysis would be of little use. Accordingly, quantitative data were tabulated for examination and comparison. When it came to qualitative data, they were coded, collated, and analyzed using an analytic procedure akin to the marginal remark approach discussed by Miles and Huberman (1994). Throughout data analysis, every effort was made to

provide an accurate, but concise, account of English education in the participating BRPs.

## IV. FINDINGS

Findings are presented in three sections. The nature of English teaching is first considered in terms of the following: instructional purposes; the medium of instruction; and course management entities. Then, for learning opportunities afforded to beauty students, attention is paid to contact hours, course distribution by academic term, and possibilities for additional learning. Lastly, the means by which different aspects of English curriculums work in tandem to facilitate and ensure the students' learning are described with respect to course placement, student-teacher compatibility, classroom set-up, and the course of action open to underperformers.

### 1. Nature of English Education

#### 1) Primary Purposes

English education in the individual BRPs seemed to primarily serve one or two purposes. It was intended to improve students' general proficiency (as in the cases of Programs A, B, and C); prepare them for future dealings with foreigners in workplace settings (Programs D, E, and F); and/or train them for a standardized English test (Programs B and D). Strangely, the programs that offered English courses for occupational purposes did not appear to cover English for general purposes, and vice versa.

More importantly, English education for occupational purposes was, surprisingly, confined to Programs D, E, and F. Work-related vocabulary and dialogues were likely covered in occupational English courses in the programs, which would prove useful when dealing with non-Korean customers at hair salons and in similar business settings. A question arose as to why students in Programs A, B, and C were not given explicit instruction on how to effectively communicate with English-speaking customers. If a need to talk to foreign customers should arise in the future, chances are that many students graduating from Programs A, B, and C would initially feel at a loss.

#### 2) Medium of Instruction

In connection with the purposes of English education, the mother tongue of the teaching staff was considered as well. All BRPs surveyed took on native English-speaking teachers (NESTs). It appeared that NESTs were employed to provide students authentic language

input and opportunities to converse in English. The reliance on NESTs in all programs could be taken as an encouraging sign that English was taught and used as a tool of communication to a certain extent. After all, there was a legitimate expectation for NESTs to conduct their class in English and develop students' language skills.

Based on the premise that Korean instructors at large were dedicated and experienced language teachers, it could be meritorious that Programs A, B, C, D, and F made use of Korean instructors as well as NESTs. By contrast, the absence of Korean instructors in Program E could be problematic, especially for students who did not have a solid foundation in English and thereby could not keep up with instruction given in English.

In Programs B and D, Korean instructors conducted courses that were supposed to prepare students for a standardized test, whereas NESTs taught English, respectively, for general and occupational purposes. In other words, it appeared that NESTs were given the tasks of honing students' communicative skills while their Korean counterparts were in charge of augmenting students' knowledge bases and working on their test-taking skills. There could be a similar division of labor between NESTs and Korean instructors in Programs A, C, and F (even though the basis for division was not clear).

It can be desirable to utilize Korean instructors and NESTs to eminent advantage given that both parties are available to teach. In a best-case scenario, Korean instructors can help improve and integrate students' practical knowledge about English, and NESTs engage students in using the language in a meaningful way. Teacher collaboration is beneficial as it can help students better internalize language lessons.

### 3) Management Entities

On the subject of course management, it appeared that the faculties who ran Programs A, B, and C were not directly involved in English education. Instead, separate entities that administered university-wide English education (i.e., linked to general education requirements) were responsible for staffing and coordinating English courses for beauty students. In all probability, English courses offered in these three BRPs were not tailored to suit the specific needs of prospective beauty professionals.

In Program D, responsibility of managing English courses was shared. While the faculty in charge of managing the program did not have control over English education geared to standardized test preparation, it appeared to have retained considerable autonomy over English courses for occupational purposes. The faculty in the program presumably wielded some influence on decisions on the selection of instructors and textbooks for EOP courses.

In contrast to all other programs, the faculties belonging to Programs E and F were seemingly given full autonomy over instructor recruitment and curriculum development for English courses. In other words, the faculties in the programs had a control over the

curriculums, free of the sway of other departments or institutes whose functions included administration of university-wide English education. Autonomy can be advantageous. When BRPs are able to plan, staff, and oversee English courses independently of external influences, it is more advantageous toward developing and revising language curriculums in response to demands of the contemporary business environment.

## 2. Extent of English Education

### 1) Contact Hours

There was a wide variability in terms of the minimum units of English required: four units for Program A; six for Programs B and F; eight for Program D; and 10 for Programs C and E. The average in all BRPs made up over five percent (5.29%) of the entire curriculums by unit, ranging between about three and seven percent (Table 1). On the whole, English education took up a significant portion of students' undergraduate study, likely indicating that the participating BRPs did not take English education lightly.

**TABLE 2**  
English Course Units (Contact Hours per Week) by Term

Program	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Total units (Weekly hours)
	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	
A	2(2)		2(2)						4 (4)
B	1(2)	1(2)	1(2)						6(12)
	1(2)	1(2)	1(2)						
C		2(2)	2(2)	2(2)	2(2)				10(10)
			2(2)						
D	2(2)	2(2)			2(2)	2(2)			8 (8)
E	1(6)	1(6)	2(6)	2(6)	2(6)	2(6)			10(36)
F			2(2)		2(2)		2(2)		6 (6)

*Note.* Two rows for Programs B and C denote that students needed to, or could, take separate English courses concurrently.

With respect to contact hours (Table 2), students in Program A were expected to spend a sum of roughly 60 hours throughout their study (on an assumption that courses were held for 15 weeks per academic term). Approximately 90, 120, 150, and 180 hours of class time were, respectively, offered in Programs F, D, C, and B. Beauty students spent a significant amount of time in class learning English during their undergraduate study.

Markedly, it was estimated that Program E mandated 540 hours of English learning over a period of three years. This program was clearly an outlier with respect to contact hours. Taking into account how Program E managed its own English courses and put NESTs in charge of all courses, the program had the greatest potential to aid students in developing

their language skills to the extent which they could express themselves in English with ease.

## 2) Course Distribution by Academic Term

The academic terms in which English courses were offered varied widely from program to program (Table 2). In the majority of the participating BRPs, students were supposed to take one or more English courses in their first year, whereas Program F seemed to delay English education until the second year. Since the practice of putting off English education could deter students from building upon their previous learning, it could be prudent, if possible, to take advantage of students' existing knowledge and maintain momentum toward the development of their language skills from the first year.

Interestingly, Program F continued offering English education to students in their final year of study. Those who would have to use English for work, or demonstrate an ability to use it for employment, could find advantageous English teaching offered in the last year – in the sense that the teaching could potentially obviate much of students' needs to refresh their knowledge and refine their language skills on their own. English education offered in the final year of study could be of value to beauty students, whether it be for general or occupational purposes.

It was remarkable that Programs C, E, and F provided English courses for three or more consecutive terms. More contact hours for English learning over the course of study could mean greater exposure, which could in turn provide more fertile ground for language learning. Furthermore, a series of English courses spread throughout their study could better serve students in developing their language skills (on the condition that English education was geared to improve their fluency, as opposed to their knowledge or test-taking skills, and ensure steady progress toward fluency from one course to next course).

## 3) Additional Learning Opportunities Beyond Compulsory Courses

In all BRPs, students were allowed to take additional English courses as electives outside the department if they were interested. In other words, the option of taking extra English courses was in principle open to students in all BRPs free of charge. There was no prerequisite for elective English courses, and any interested beauty students could take the electives outside their programs at any time. It was commendable that all programs granted students this privilege to continue learning the language beyond general education requirements. After all, elective English courses could provide continuity, especially for those who were highly motivated to learn English (on the assumption that diverse electives with varying degrees of difficulty were available).

On the other hand, as enrollment in English elective courses was supposedly on a voluntary basis, it seemed that no special incentive existed at department, school, and university levels for individual students who would take any electives. In the absence of incentives, students who happened to take any electives must have been so motivated as to be willing to fit additional English courses into their busy schedule; the implication being that it would be difficult for many to seize the opportunity in practice.

### 3. Delivery of English Education

#### 1) Course Placement

The participating BRPs took three different approaches to placement of students in English courses. Students in Programs C, D, E, and F were assigned to English courses in a seemingly arbitrary manner – in the sense that individual students' proficiency levels were not taken into account. In the absence of appropriate level placement, it was nearly inevitable that language learning and teaching would take place in mixed-level class.

By contrast, Program A appeared to level-test and level-place all students. English tests were administered to all incoming students in the program, and test scores were used for placing the individuals in suitable English courses. Although it was not evident how students' needs were addressed at the course level, they were at least given an opportunity to learn English with classmates who had more or less similar levels of proficiency.

Program B adopted what seemed to be an unconventional approach to level placement. It appeared that the students who had outperformed the rest on the national university entrance exam (or possibly a standardized test) were subject to level placement, whereas all the others were assigned to English courses irrespective of their proficiency levels. Level placement on a selective basis was sensible when a majority of students fell into a narrow range of proficiency levels, with a relatively small proportion far exceeding the prevalent levels. The approach made sense in the interests of efficiency.

#### 2) Student-Teacher Compatibility

Attention was paid to whether teacher selection was within or outside students' control. Beauty students enjoyed latitude at varying levels in choosing their English teachers, depending on which program they were in. Programs C and D seemed to give students practically complete freedom in how they chose their English teachers.

In contrast, students were given no choice in this regard in Programs A, B, and F. This situation was not optimal as students could differ in their learning styles and teacher preference. However, on close inspection, it seemed that these three programs, being

relatively small, could not afford to avail a wide selection of English courses and teachers for students to choose from.

Students in Program E did not normally have the option of choosing English teachers. Nevertheless, students in the program were allowed to make a switch to a teacher of their own choice. The switch was likely permitted when students had strong feelings about the teacher to whom they were assigned (or whom they were not but would very much like to be), even though other possible reasons (e.g., schedule conflict) could come into play. It can be a viable way of letting students exercise choice if granting all students control is administratively unattainable.

### 3) Classroom Set-Up

Traditional classrooms are typically designed for lecture-based instruction. They are generally set up to direct focus on the teacher while discouraging interaction between students. As far as the arrangement of desks and chairs was concerned, it could be cumbersome to initiate and maintain student-student interaction in traditional classrooms (and so-called audio labs). In this regard, classroom settings were slightly disconcerting: Except for Program B that made use of specially designated rooms, all other programs seemingly utilized traditional classrooms as venues for English courses.

On a positive note, English classrooms in all programs had access to the Internet. Moreover, they appeared to come with easy access to multimedia equipment in all except for Program E. The availability of multimedia equipment with Internet access was praiseworthy as it opened up the possibility of greater use of resources available in the English language on the Web.

### 4) Requirements for the Completion of English Curriculums

With regard to performance assessment in English courses, Programs D and E made it possible for teachers to assign grades as they saw fit as there was no predetermined percentage breakdown for grades. However, in Programs A, B, C, and F, students were graded on a curve. As a consequence of curved grading, a certain percentage of students in these four programs were bound to receive unsatisfactory grades in English courses, possibly including failing grades. Incidentally, an F was regarded as a fail in Programs B, C, D, E, and F while a letter grade below a B- was treated as such in Program A.

In all participating programs, students who were unsuccessful in any of compulsory English courses were required to retake the course(s) for which they previously received a 'fail' or an equivalent. In other words, it was standard practice for the students to repeat the course(s) until they earned a satisfactory grade. In the end, students were obligated to

complete all mandatory courses.

However, retaking the course (in which a fail or its equivalent was previously given) for a satisfactory grade was not a precondition for enrollment in any other English courses, compulsory or elective, in all programs. In other words, students who were not successful in one course could take another course before or while retaking the former. Moreover, underperforming students in a few programs were even expected to take another course, and an explanation offered was that this practice was necessary to keep students from taking English courses out of sequence. For example, the English curriculum in Program B seemed to be rigidly structured as students had to take a series of English courses with their cohort (in sequence over the first three semesters of their study), regardless of their aptitude or course performance.

## V. DISCUSSION

All things considered, it appears that not all BRPs provided English education that prospective beauty professionals would need to successfully deal with foreign customers, as put forth by E. You (2015). Although each BRP is entitled to preserve its own instructional practices, it is assuredly reasonable to intervene and introduce positive change as needed. With this end in mind, the findings are put into perspective below.

### 1. Aligning English Education With Students' Aspirations

To raise a bilingual workforce in four years' time, it is essential to sharpen focus of English education at tertiary institutions. Having said this, it should be borne in mind that generic English education, which is meant for all university students, has proven demonstrably inadequate. The conventional 'one-size-fits-all' approach cannot, by design, completely satisfy specific needs of future professionals who are expected to perform diverse, but specialized, tasks in an intensely competitive business environment. In this regard, English education tailored to suit particular needs of future professionals is definitely preferable.

In other words, the primary purpose of the education should be geared toward EOP. The necessity of stressing EOP is unequivocal for the reason that students should be given an opportunity in school to familiarize themselves with work-related English usage. Moreover, EOP can give beauty students tangible reasons for language learning by placing their learning in context and further increasing their motivation (S. Jeong, 2012). Integration of EOP into BRP curriculums is apposite and beneficial.

Nevertheless, in the spirit of preparing beauty students to rise to the challenge of fully

satisfying foreign customers' needs, it is desirable to go beyond teaching EOP, toward the development of students' overall communicative ability. In other words, English teaching should be geared toward preparing students to be successful in both work-related and social contexts (S. Choi, 2014). A practical course of action is to provide language lessons that can enhance students' communicative competence, with work-related vocabulary and dialogues that would likely transpire at the workplace being interwoven with everyday language use (C. Y. Shin, 2015).

Also, a shift in pedagogical focus toward EOP does not axiomatically mean that opportunities to learn English for other purposes are taken away from students. Elective courses available at university can continue to be utilized to help satisfy students' other needs (e.g., to perform well on standardized English tests). To put it another way, those who are interested in learning English for different purposes can be encouraged and allowed to pursue their interests outside of BRPs.

Whatever curricular direction may be taken, BRPs can and should be at the center of curricular renewal, of course. In case the faculty in BRPs has had little or no part in it, it is opportune to take a greater role in planning for and managing the content of foreign language education. By all means, other entities at university can certainly continue providing administrative support (e.g., course enrollment) as before. For BRPs (and, by extension, other programs engaged in training a versatile workforce in service industries), it is worth the additional effort of resetting the goals and objectives for language courses and then following through. Potential benefits of the education aligned with students' aspirations and occupational/social demands can outweigh the burden of having to restructure foreign language curriculums.

## 2. Letting Students Seize Available Opportunities

It is acknowledged that students in the BRPs were required to spend a considerable amount of time learning English during their study. However, it does not necessarily mean that sufficient time is secured for students to acquire an operational command of English in most programs at present. Concerning this situation, a question arises as to whether it is necessary to create more English courses and demand beauty students to take additional courses in the hope of raising a future workforce that is fluent in English.

The question is valid. However, an increase in compulsory English courses can be costly and, more importantly, unjustifiable as more courses would not necessarily ensure an environment conducive to students' language learning. As a matter of fact, without careful planning and execution, a mere increase in number of mandatory English courses could conceivably do more harm than good: Students who are unwilling or unable to keep up with English education would have to suffer longer and hence become more resentful, at

risk of negligible returns on investment (M. Jung, 2011; J. Park, 2011).

An alternative to expansion of mandatory English education is the introduction and promotion of greater flexibility in the way beauty students are enabled to take additional English courses outside of their program (provided that a variety of courses are, or can be made, available at university to suit student needs). This alternative can help satisfy needs of those who are highly motivated to learn English as a language without incurring the added expense of offering new courses. It is a sustainable approach in that it opens up an opportunity for the motivated to continue developing their language skills throughout their studies while sparing uninterested individuals the ordeal of expanded study of English.

It is vital that this alternative approach entails taking proactive measures that can encourage students to pursue their language learning, an important point to keep in mind as no such incentive currently exists in the BRPs surveyed. In other words, an environment should be created and fostered in which students feel comfortable to engage in language learning within the program and beyond. Forward planning and strategic implementation is also crucial to removing any obstacles in the way of interested students trying to achieve a high level of proficiency in English.

### 3. Measures Taken to Promote and Ensure Students' English Learning

The findings indicate that some of the participating BRPs adopted practices that could be beneficial to English learning and teaching: utilization of level-placement according to proficiency; students' entitlement to selection of their English teachers; use of designated language classrooms; and ready access to the Internet and audiovisual equipment. The BRPs are commended for having adopted the practices.

However, with respect to the curricular measures in place for students whose achievement is unsatisfactory, there is considerable scope for improvement at the administrative level. The practice of having underperforming students retake the course(s) in which they already received a failing grade is acceptable and even ineluctable when the failure is largely due to poor attendance. However, when a lack of interest and/or proficiency is an underlying reason, intervention measures that can better address the individuals' specific needs are warranted prior to their re-enrollment in the course(s).

Likewise, there is little merit in letting unsuccessful students take another compulsory English course, especially if it is more advanced than the course in which they were already unsuccessful for whatever reason. While this concern may not have a dramatic effect in a situation where English courses are intended to increase students' knowledge or improve their test-taking skills, it needs to be taken into full consideration when courses are geared to the language skills development.

The discussion should be understood in the context of delivering English education in a

way that ensures that all students derive maximum benefit from the education. As long as all students are expected to learn English as part of general education requirements at university, it is imperative to include proper curricular measures to prevent underperforming students from slipping through the net. Preparatory and remedial measures can be implemented for comparatively low-level students (C. Y. Shin, 2015), especially when the medium of instruction is English, as in Program E.

#### 4. Limitations

There are three limitations with the study, which are acknowledged below to further contextualize the discussion. The obvious concern is that the sample may not be representative owing to non-response bias. There were potential informants from more than a dozen four-year BRPs, who declined, explicitly or tacitly, to participate in the study. If those who refused to take part had some compelling reasons for not getting involved (e.g., a substandard foreign language curriculum), the findings could have fallen short of presenting a balanced portrayal of English education in four-year BRPs.

Another limitation is linked to the study's reliance on the individual sources of data for their validity. It is possible that respondents could have inadvertently offered inaccurate or incomplete data, however improbable it might have been, considering both their assumed role at university and their deed of taking the trouble of filling in the questionnaire. The preliminary nature of the study did not dictate further scrutiny; however, verification and confirmation of the data, obtained from the key informants, through triangulation (e.g., field observation and interviews) could have enhanced the trustworthiness of the study.

Lastly, the scope of the study is narrow in that it has not delved into pedagogical content, materials, and methods in English education at the course level and beyond. In other words, what actually went on in the classrooms was not covered in the study. In consequence, the findings are never meant to be used as an indicator of the effectiveness of the education in the programs. Although the limitations do not cause the findings to depreciate in value or lessen their importance, a cautious approach is called for to interpreting and generalizing the findings.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study has presented a survey of the nature, extent, and delivery of English education to evaluate its efficacy and realize its potential in the participating four-year BRPs. Although the study is principally limited to the education in the BRPs, the findings are not exclusive to the programs due to considerable overlap between the education

provided to beauty students and university-wide general English education (even though Program E appears to be an exception in this regard). In other words, the findings and discussion in the study can be applicable to English teaching in a wider context encompassing the universities in question as well as other tertiary institutions in the country.

There are several issues that merit attention in the context of maximizing English learning of university students in the field of hospitality. To begin with, the primary purpose(s) of English education should be revisited on the grounds that tertiary institutions have an obligation to equip students with knowledge and skills necessary to take on challenges and opportunities in the world of work to which students are aspiring. In this regard, the faculty and other stakeholders must take an active role in seeking to provide an environment conducive to in-depth EIL learning for work-related and social contexts.

To fulfill the obligation, a greater flexibility should be built into English curriculums to enable motivated students to continue with their learning throughout their study and beyond what is compulsory. At the same time, the curricular measures – involved with students' taking English courses and retaking them – can be refined to make certain that all students have an enjoyable and productive learning experience. Further refinement can begin with efforts to furnish course content, teachers, and classrooms well suited to individual students according to their proficiency, aptitude, and interests. Such efforts need to be accompanied by remedial intervention for ill-prepared students and provision of incentives for committed ones.

To foster an environment where students can receive full benefit from English courses offered at universities, a deeper understanding of English education and its stakeholders (e.g., students) is vital. It is hoped that future research will investigate various components of English education in greater depth. Examination of diverse dimensions of English education in one or more programs can provide impetus for constructive discourse among those conducting, administering, and overseeing English education.

When the process is set in motion reinforcing and overcoming, respectively, curricular strengths and weaknesses, English education can gradually undergo a substantial transformation that will result in a greater number of graduates who are fluent or conversant in English. Dangerous is a slavish adherence to the outmoded view that English education is more or less a means of introducing basic academic tools to students in order to induce cultivation of their minds. To empower students, it is mindfully crucial to restructuring foreign language education to the extent which it can successfully generate bilingual (and multilingual) individuals who are able to communicate effectively with foreign clientele.

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APPENDIX  
Questionnaire

Being a member of the faculty or the administrative staff in a four-year beauty-related program, you are cordially invited to shed light on English education in the program. Information on English courses and pertinent curricular aspects can be instrumental in capturing the current status of the education, and, moreover, provide foundations for exploring future directions. In essence, the information can contribute to our efforts in equipping students with vital skills that can help realize their full potential.

Specifically, the study aims to obtain a snapshot of English curriculums across different beauty-related programs – with **no** intention whatsoever of assessing individual English curriculums or those involved in English education. Accordingly, all information collected during the research process will be handled with care to ensure that anonymity of respondents and their organizations is maintained within reason.

Please explain and elaborate pertinent aspects of the English curriculum in detail.

**I. Basic information**

1. Name of university: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name of program: \_\_\_\_\_
3. A total number of undergraduate students: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Minimum course credits required for graduation: \_\_\_\_\_ units

**II. Survey of English courses**

5. Provide pertinent information and select appropriate items.

Course title	Unit(s)	Hours/ week	Term	Category	Teaching staff	Goal(s)*
Ex) College English 1	2	2	①.1 1.2 2.1 2.2 3.1 3.2 4.1 4.2	<del>Required</del> Elective	<del>Korean</del> <del>NESTs</del> Team teaching	①
a.			1.1 1.2 2.1 2.2 3.1 3.2 4.1 4.2	Required/ Elective	Korean/ NESTs/ Team teaching	

b.			1.1	1.2	Required/ Elective	Korean/ NESTs/	
			2.1	2.2			
i.			1.1	1.2	Required/ Elective	Korean/ NESTs/ Team teaching	
			2.1	2.2			
			3.1	3.2			
			4.1	4.2			

- \*Goals: ① Improvement of general English proficiency (e.g., English Conversation, College English)  
 ② Improvement of English for occupational purposes (e.g., Beauty English)  
 ③ Preparation for standardized English tests (e.g., Introduction to TOEIC)  
 ④ Preparation for employment or career in beauty arts (e.g., Interview English)  
 ⑤ Others (Please specify)

6. A total number of English course credits required: \_\_\_\_\_ units

**III. Management of English courses**

7. Are the aforementioned courses required of all students at the university?  
 a. If not, describe which courses are different (from the courses offered to students outside of the program) and explain how.
8. Are the required courses exclusively managed by the faculty of the program?  
 a. If not, indicate which of the following entities are involved in course management: the department that oversees university-wide English education; the foreign language center; or an equivalent entity.  
 b. If the program shares the responsibility with an external entity, explain over which aspects of the course(s), such as the content and instructors, the faculty of the program manages.

**IV. Settings for English courses**

9. Are students in the program level-tested prior to enrollment in their first English course?  
 a. If yes, explain how level testing takes place.
10. Are the students level-placed?
11. Are the students allowed to choose their English teachers (i.e., instructors and professors)?
12. Do the students take their English courses in regular classrooms and/or audio labs?  
 a. If not, are the courses conducted in classrooms that are specially designed or

designated for language learning and teaching?

13. Is there ready access to the Internet in the English classrooms?
14. Is multimedia equipment readily available in the classrooms at all times?

#### **V. Course of action for the underperformers**

15. Are the students' English course grades determined on a line, curve, or pass/fail system?
16. Which letter grade is not considered passing in English courses?
17. Do students need to retake the course where a failing grade is given?
18. Is it necessary for students to successfully retake the course(s) where a failing grade is given as a condition of taking any other English courses?
  - a. If not, are students allowed to take another course irrespective of their previous performance?
  - b. If not, are students also expected to continue taking another course together with their cohort?
19. Can students be exempted from taking and/or retaking compulsory English courses? If yes, explain on what grounds students are exempted.

#### **VI. Availability of learning opportunities for the motivated**

20. Are there English courses that students in the program can take in addition to compulsory English courses?
  - a. If yes, do the students need to meet certain prerequisites to take elective courses?
  - b. If yes, are there any extra fees charged to the students?
21. Are there any incentives for the students to pursue English learning beyond what is required?
22. Is there a school-wide assessment that measures the students' achievement as English speakers?
23. Is there any reward for those who demonstrate a high level of proficiency in English?

#### **VII. Future plans**

24. Is there any plan for change that will affect English education in the near future?

*Note.* For readability, space for responses has been reduced or removed herein.

**Examples in: English**

**Applicable Languages: English**

**Applicable Levels: Tertiary**

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