

# A Structural Interpretation of the Corpus Analysis Result of North Korean English Textbooks

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**Abstract:** This paper aimed to explain the characteristics of North Korean English textbooks included in the textbook corpus analysis. The analysis mainly focused on the North Korean educational periodicals; 23 volumes of “Teachers’ Propaganda Notebook” and 54 volumes of “People’s Education”. The analytic approach was 1) digitize all the English education-related articles included in the analytic materials, 2) use Nvivo 13 to categorize English education articles and their thematic propagation, and 3) relate the thematic categories to the North Korean leaders’ statements. The findings were: Articles touch upon English education for the advancement of science and technology, the improvement of students’ English skills, the enhancement of revolutionary ideology, and the improvement of English teachers’ teaching and learning methods. These categories were derived from North Korean leaders’ statements on occasions of field inspections, dialogues with newspapers, and conferences.

**Keywords:** structural interpretation of corpus analysis; North Korean English textbook; English textbook analysis; North Korean educational periodicals

## 1. Introduction

It has been more than 70 years since North and South Korea, the world's only two divided nations, erected substantial military barriers and pointed the most advanced missiles aiming at each other. Nevertheless, we cannot give up on our constant search for means of communication between North and South Korea and for the reunification of the country, even in the midst of a military standoff. There is a sense of despair that, if war breaks out once more, North and South Korea will destroy each other to ashes. Restoring the uniformity of educational curriculum is an important step to widen the common ground of North and South Korea for the reconciliation of the future generation. To this purpose, it's critical to comprehend how the English education content in North and South Korea differ from one another wherein both countries consider English as an international medium of communication occupying a fundamental disciplinary subject. This paper created a corpus of North Korean English textbooks from the era of Kim Il-sung's enormous influence, through Kim Jong-il, and to Kim Jong-un's 2013 New Education Code. [1-3]

Research on English education in North Korea has traditionally been conducted in a fragmentary and indirect manner through North Korean defectors [4-7]. Traditional unstructured research can be used to address specific problems, but it has drawbacks when used to analyze North Korea's English education in its totality. Recently, however, a more direct implementation of a diachronic and generalizable structural approach to English instruction in North Korea has taken place [8, 9].

While conducting various analyses by constructing a corpus of North Korean English textbooks, it was difficult to find the cause of the microscopic analysis results. For example, the listening and speaking content in the textbook adopts a structured syllabus composed of the Audio-lingual teaching method, but the frequency of communicative functions such as asking and answering questions about one's past activities among close friends is so large in proportion that it remains unaccounted. These unaccounted results of corpus analysis of North Korean English textbooks could be found in macro contexts outside of textbooks or education. To understand macro contexts outside of textbooks or education, it is necessary to search for materials that could

explain this phenomenon in the so-called ‘messages’ of the North Korean rulers’ instructions and teachings that could serve as a guideline for the North Korean English curriculum. The current communicative functions can be related to the emphasis on the practical purpose of foreign language education mentioned in Kim Il-sung’s teachings. Kim Il-sung said at Pyongyang University of Foreign Studies, “If you catch Yankee gangsters, “raise your hand.” Shouldn’t you be able to say in English, “Turn back,” and be able to catch them and ask them where they came from, what their purpose was, and what their recent activities were?” [10] In this way, if the purpose of foreign language education is to learn English as a means of digging up information on Yankees held captive in an interrogation room like a classroom, the listening and speaking English teaching method is a structured syllabus consisting of repeated exercises in the Audio-lingual style, asking and answering communicative functions of one’s personal information and one’s past activities. The macro context can account for the frequent communicative function of asking and answering questions on one’s past and current activities like in informal English among friends.

Another thing is that the reading comprehension passages of North Korean English textbooks include lower-than-the-current grade mathematics, science, and technology that students have already learned for more than two units per grade. For example, in the English textbook for first-year middle school students, elementary school scientific content such as the four basic arithmetic operations of mathematics and the hierarchical relationships of biological species are integrated to form textbook units. Although this phenomenon could be discovered through micro-corpus analysis, findings itself do not provide a satisfactory account as to why North Korea’s English textbooks had these content-based characteristics. However, if we investigate the instructions and teachings of North Korean rulers, we can find the relevance in Kim Jong-il’s remarks: “The fundamental purpose of foreign language education is to enrich the lives of our people by learning advanced science and technology from foreign countries.” The teaching appeared in [11], and it is believed that the English textbooks published after that included content integrated units of mathematics, biology, physics, and chemistry.

Changes in education were more often triggered by more macroscopic social and political changes than by internal demands or judgments of education [12, 13]. This phenomenon could be specifically confirmed in the curriculum and textbook writing related to English language education in North Korea. What we learned through the analysis of North Korean English textbooks is that in many cases, the characteristics of North Korean English textbooks are due to the so-called “word rule” of rulers, such as the instructions and teachings of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. In other words, the source of the content and methodological characteristics of North Korean education can be attributed to the instructions and teachings of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, who comprehensively demanded macroscopic changes, and the teachings of Kim Jong-un, who is currently in power [14-16].

The purpose of the current study is to investigate macroscopic social and political accounts for the microscopic findings of corpus analysis results via a structural interpretation based on educational periodicals published in North Korea. The materials collected to investigate are North Korea’s main educational periodicals called “Teachers’ Propaganda Notebook” and “People’s Education” wherein North Korean rulers’ sayings be frequently quoted since they exert an absolute power in basically all sectors of society including the education field. Concrete research questions to address in this study are: Firstly, what thematic categories can be found to account for English education discovered in North Korean educational periodicals? Secondly, what penetrating characteristics can account for the ontology of North Korean English textbooks through the thematization process of North Korean educational periodicals?

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Materials

The current research compiled a corpus of North Korean English textbooks from the height of Kim Il-sung’s dominance through Kim Jong-il era to Kim, Jong-un era with the 2013 introduction of the New Education Code, and then examined the terminology, grammatical structures, communication strategies, and contexts. All collected textbooks were assembled into a corpus of North Korean English textbooks from the 1990s that were published in accordance with the curriculum created under Kim Il-sung era, textbooks from the 2000s that followed curriculum reform under Kim Jong-il era, and textbooks from the 2013 that were published in accordance with the New Education Code created during Kim Jong-un era. The list of English textbooks examined by corpus analyzer is grouped into three chronological categories: Kim Il-sung Era Curriculum, Kim Jong-il Era Curriculum and Kim Jong-un Era Curriculum. Table 1 shows the list of North Korean English

textbook raw materials for the corpus classified by the publishing year, Juche year, school level, grade, publisher, and other nota bene points.

**Table 1.** List of Original NK English Textbook Sources for Corpus

<b>Publishing Year</b>	<b>Juche Year*</b>	<b>School Level</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>NB</b>
1994	Juche 83	High School	1-3	Educational Book Publisher	Kim, Il-sung Era Curriculum
1996	Juche 85	High School	1-2	Educational Book Publisher	
1999	Juche 88	1 <sup>st</sup> High School	1-4	Educational Book Publisher	Distinguished School
2001	Juche 90	High School	1-2	Educational Book Publisher	
2002	Juche 91	High School	1-3	Educational Book Publisher	Kim, Jong-il Era Curriculum
2002	Juche 91	High School	1-6	Educational Book Publisher	
2004	Juche 93	Middle School	1	Educational Book Publisher	
2007	Juche 96	1 <sup>st</sup> Middle School, Middle School	1	Foreign Books Publisher	Distinguished School
2008	Juche 97	1 <sup>st</sup> Middle School, Middle School	1-2	Foreign Books Publisher	Distinguished School
2015	Juche 104	Primary 4-5 Report of English Textbook		Foreign Books Publisher	Kim, Jong-un Era Curriculum
2015	Juche 104	Middle School	1-3	Educational Book Publisher	2013 New Education Code
2015	Juche 104	1 <sup>st</sup> Middle School,	1-3	Foreign Books Publisher	2013 New Education Code
2015	Juche 104	High School	1-3	Educational Book Publisher	2013 New Education Code
2015	Juche 104	1 <sup>st</sup> Middle School	4-6	Foreign Books Publisher	2013 New Education Code

\*Juche year is a year notation used in North Korea in which 1912, the year of Kim Il-sung's birth is year one.

The analytical materials of this study are 23 volumes of “Teachers’ Propaganda Notebook” and 54 volumes of “People’s Education,” which are periodicals published by the North Korean authorities in the field of North Korean education. Periodicals provide macro contexts of North Korean English education since these periodicals present the educational policy goals of the communist party and its leaders. Table 2 provides the details of the analyzed North Korean periodicals by the name, publication year, volume, publishers, and noted nota benes:

**Table 2.** List of Analyzed NK Periodicals

Name	Publication Year	Volume	Publisher	NB
Teachers' Propaganda Notebook	Juche 103(2014)	1~4	Education Press	23 volumes
	Juche 104(2015)년	1~4	Education Press	
	Juche 105(2016)년	1~4	Education Press	
	Juche 106(2017)년	1~4	Education Press	
	Juche 107(2018)년	1~4	Education Press	
	Juche 108(2019)년	1~3	Education Press	
	Juche 100(2011)년	1~6	Education Press	
	Juche 101(2012)년	1~6	Education Press	
	Juche 102(2013)년	1~6	Education Press	
People's Education	Juche 103(2014)년	1~6	Education Press	54 volumes
	Juche 104(2015)년	1~6	Education Press	
	Juche 105(2016)년	1~6	Education Press	
	Juche 106(2017)년	1~6	Education Press	
	Juche 107(2018)년	1~6	Education Press	
	Juche 108(2019)년	1~6	Education Press	

“Teachers' Propaganda Notebook” includes Issue 1, 2014 (Cumulative No. 404) to Issue 3, 2019 (Cumulative No. 426), and “People's Education” Issue 1, 2011 (Cumulative No. 644) to 2019 Issue No. 6 (Cumulative No. 697) to find out macroscopic accounts for how English education is encouraged to be taught in North Korea. The “Teachers' Propaganda Notebook,” which was obtained most recently, is the 3rd issue of 2019, and “People's Education” is the 6th issue of 2019. Due to COVID-19, it is expected that the receipt of educational magazines has not been smooth since the beginning of 2020.

In order to generalize the characteristics and trends of English education in North Korea the current study collected and analyzed as much specific North Korean article data under discussion as possible. “Teachers' Propaganda Notebook” includes articles related to English education between 5% and 10 % of the total articles. Table 3 shows the distribution of English education articles by the publishing year, number of total articles, a number of English education articles and percentage of English education articles.

**Table 3.** English Education Article Information in “Teachers’ Propaganda Notebook”

<b>Publishing Year</b>	<b># of Total Articles</b>	<b># of English Education Articles</b>	<b>Ratio (%) of English Articles</b>
2014 (Juche 103)	425	28	6.59
2015 (Juche 104)	456	45	9.87
2016 (Juche 105)	466	42	9.01
2017 (Juche 106)	460	31	6.74
2018 (Juche 107)	416	31	7.45
2019 (Juche 108)	356	19	5.34

The year 2015 had the most articles related to English education was 2015, with 45 articles out of a total of 456 articles, accounting for 9.87%. It is probably due to the newly implemented education code. The second year in which the most articles related to English education published was 2016, with 42 articles out of 466, accounting for 9.01% of all articles. In 2019, accurate comparison with other years may be difficult as articles from the last issue, Issue 4, could not be obtained, but the proportion of articles related to English education was similar at more than 5% of all listed number of articles.

All articles related to English education in “People’s Education” were counted, and the number and ratio of articles related to English education are shown in Table 4:

**Table 4.** English Education Article Information in “People’s Education”

<b>Publishing Year</b>	<b># of Total Articles</b>	<b># of English Education Articles</b>	<b>Ratio (%) of English Articles</b>
2011 (Juche 100)	370	22	5.95
2012 (Juche 101)	324	23	7.1
2013 (Juche 102)	321	19	5.92
2014 (Juche 103)	318	9	2.83
2015 (Juche 104)	337	15	4.45
2016 (Juche 105)	326	12	3.68
2017 (Juche 106)	300	6	2
2018 (Juche 107)	361	8	2.22
2019 (Juche 108)	373	11	2.95

The year in which the most articles related to English education were published was 2012, accounting for 7.1% of all articles, with 23 articles related to English education out of a total of 324 articles. This is due to the fact that “People’s Education” was instrumentalized to call for changes in English education in preparation for the upcoming New Education Code. The most articles prior to 2013 New Education Code show that “People’s Education” advocated the needs to instrumentalize the nation’s education for the new leadership as precursor for changes, while articles in Teachers’ Propaganda Note post 2013 New Education Code provided actionable guidelines as to how the teachers should implement the changes required in the new curriculum.

The second year in which the most articles related to English education published was 2011, with 22 articles related to English education out of 370 articles, accounting for 5.95% of all listed number of articles. In 2013, 19 articles related to English education were published out of a total of 321, at a rate of 5.92%, similar to 2011. The year with the fewest articles related to English education was 2017, with only six articles related to English education out of 300, representing only a 2% rate.

## 2.2 Instrument

The research instrument used was NVivo 13, a qualitative data analysis program. NVivo categorizes qualitatively collected data into themes, and through the results, it is possible to discover general facts and recurring themes suitable for the research topic.[17] Qualitative analysis can identify the meaning behind quantitatively quantified data, and by using NVivo 13 researchers can easily save, classify, and extract the data to be analyzed.[2]

In order to analyze “Teachers’ Propaganda Notebook” and “People’s Education” using NVivo 13, articles related to English education published in the two periodicals were first transcribed into word documents and converted into text files. After converting and importing the text file into a PDF file supported by the NVivo, general insights about English education in North Korea are inductively obtained by repeating the process of topicalizing the common content of English education-related articles and categorizing the topic sentences into higher-level concepts.

The following Figure 1 illustrates a screen shot showing the operation of loading files to be analyzed. In the Data Files, the loaded files include “Teachers’ Propaganda Notebook,” Issue 1 in 2014 (Cumulative Issue 404) to No. 3 in 2019 (Cumulative Issue. 426). Articles related to English education published in “People’s Education” were retrieved ranging from Issue. 1, 2011 (Cumulative Issue. 644) to No. 6, 2019 (Cumulative Issue. 697). You can click the Import tab at the top and import the desired file. The materials are sorted in Korean alphabet order, and one can view the original PDF file by double-clicking the name. Through this work, one can do coding, which is the task of storing and classifying a large number of English education-related articles published in two educational periodicals in NVivo 13, and search for the original data at any time during the work.

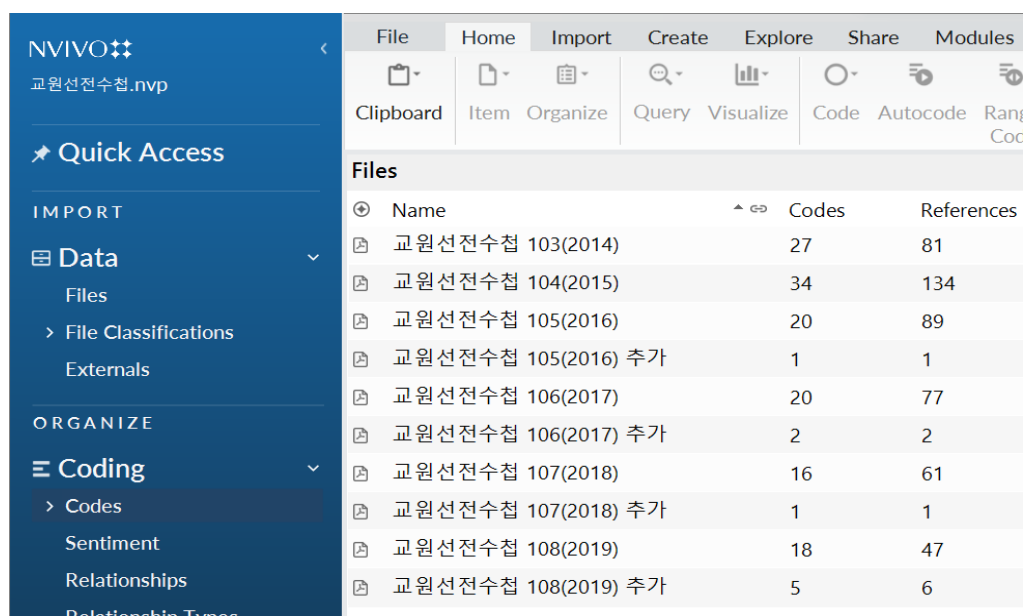


Figure 1. A Screenshot Loading Text Files to Nvivo Workbench

The NVivo program was used to categorize the article data, and the categorized code names were expressed as names that covered the content and intent of the article as much as possible. If they were too long to be expressed as is, they were briefly summarized. At this time, if one wants to move a category to another category, left-click and hold the circle in front of the category and drag it to the category you want to move. A + sign to the left of each category circle means there are subcategories underneath it. In NVivo, users can freely merge categories or create new categories, and categorization and organization of data can be done step by step and efficiently according to the researcher's perspective. By double-clicking each category, you can see which part of the data was coded, and the coded part of the original PDF data can be highlighted. Files to the right of the central code value Name indicates the number of article materials in which each category is mentioned, and references to the right of Files indicates how often it was mentioned in the entire article content.

Figure 2 shows the process of coding English education article data imported into NVivo. One can designate a block from the article's contents that shows the trend of English education in North Korea and create an existing code or a new code during Code Selection. Coding is the process of classifying the collected data into similar topics. By creating categories and categorizing similar content among unsystematized and widely scattered descriptive data, related content is grouped together, and through this, the data collected by the researcher is simplified and generalized. Therefore, the coding process is important because the research topic and related meaning can be discovered through the process of repeatedly thematizing individual data.

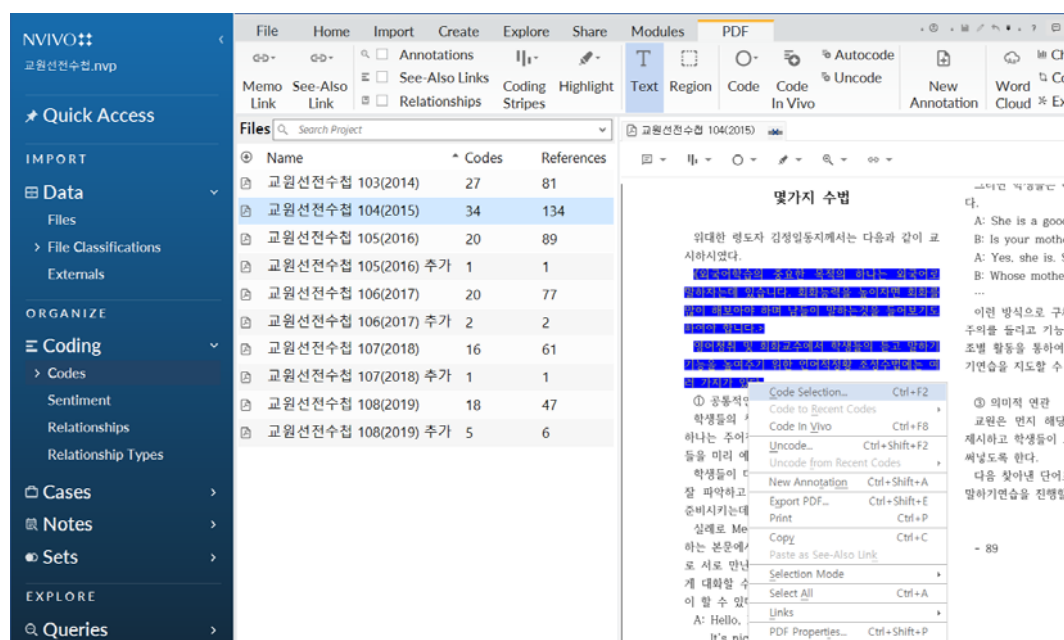
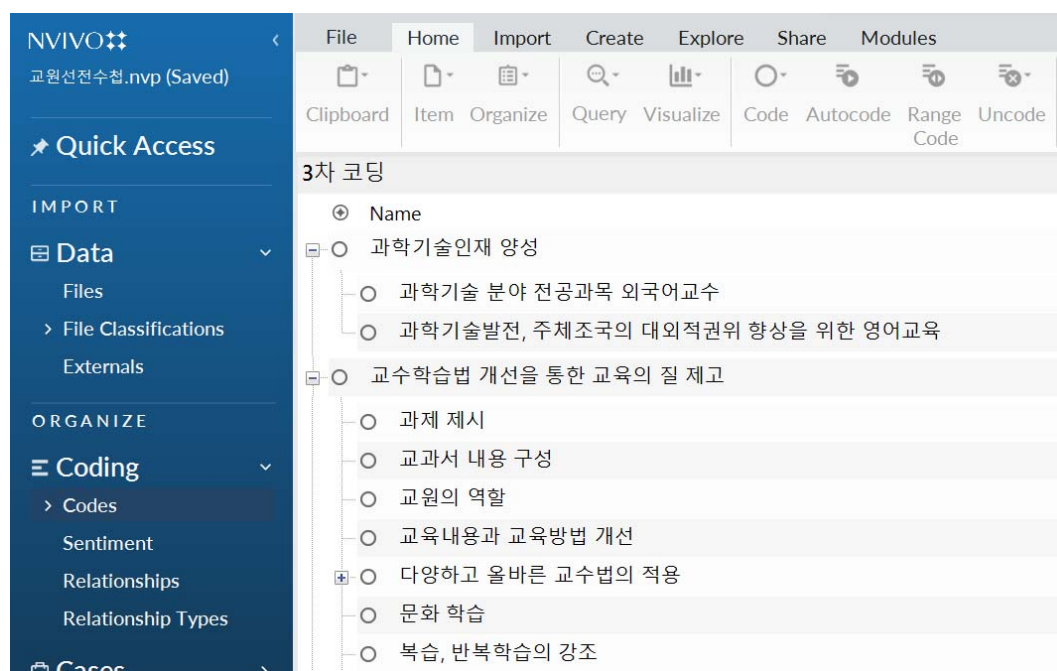


Figure 2. A Screenshot of Coding Process Using Nvivo

Figure 3 is a part of categorizing the contents of English-related articles in “Teachers’ Propaganda Notebook” through the above coding process using NVivo. The code values displayed in the center of the screen have upper categories such as ‘nurturing science and technology talent’ and ‘improving the quality of education through improving teaching and learning methods’, and under the higher categories are ‘foreign language professors in science and technology major subjects’ and ‘science and technology development, subject’. Subcategories such as ‘foreign language education to improve the external authority of the country’, ‘presentation of tasks’, ‘composition of textbook contents’, and ‘role of teachers’ appear.



**Figure 3.** A Screenshot of Thematization in Nvivo

Through this categorization process, NVivo 13 allows you to discover meaningful topics related to one's research topic and has the advantage of convenient data management as one can open the raw data at any time. Accordingly, in this study, NVivo 13 was used to classify and analyze articles related to English education from "Teachers' Propaganda Notebook" and "People's Education" three times.

### 2.3 Structural Interpretation Procedure of Data

"Teachers' Propaganda Notebook" and the "People's Education" are classified using NVivo 13 to categorize meaningful statements related to the characteristics of North Korean English textbooks using descriptive codes. From the constructed descriptive codes, interpretation codes are derived from the purpose of the remarks into semantic categories that can influence the English curriculum or writing of English textbooks. Based on the finally derived interpretation code, the teachings and instructions of North Korea's highest rulers are generalized and abstracted through a final thematization process to explain the characteristics of North Korea's English curriculum and North Korea's English textbooks. The data processing and analysis procedures for grouping and classifying the instructions and teachings of North Korea's highest rulers related to foreign language education by topic are as follows:

Descriptive code example: "If you caught the Yankee gangsters, "Put your hands up." Shouldn't you be able to say in English, "Turn back," and be able to catch them and ask them where they came from, (1) what their purpose was, and their whereabouts?" (Taught by Kim Il-sung)



Descriptive codes into interpretation codes of translating specific implementational measure

Interpretation code example: In a war with the enemy (situation), you must be able to capture the enemy (event) and inquire about his/her whereabouts (communication function) and be able to speak the enemy's language (English) (language skills). (2)



Implementation code of creating action items in English curriculum or textbooks

Implementation code example: English (language) textbook conversation (language skills) focuses on asking and answering commands and past actions (communication function) in a classroom among friends (situation). (3)

This is a primary classification of statements related to foreign language education and is extracted from the analyzed periodicals that can convey meaningful statements in the corresponding project file of NVivo 13.

Contents that are judged to be meaningful statements, that will have an impact on the North Korean English curriculum and the writings of the English textbook from literature excerpts categorized by descriptive codes, are conceptualized by deriving interpretation codes and final implementation codes, and the characteristics and relevance of specific English textbooks are to be presented.

Finally, a specific and integrated thematization process is carried out to obtain a single penetrating theme and implications through the coded data. Within the collected data, themes representing the implementation categories and English textbook characteristics are created, their relationships are identified, and generalized and abstracted characteristics that can penetrate the ontology of North Korean English textbooks are derived through the thematization process of qualitative research.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Nurturing scientific and technological talent

In his 1967 on-site guidance at the Pyongyang Foreign Language Institute, Kim Il-sung said, “We must strengthen foreign language education to help develop the country’s science and technology to a world-class level (p. 257).”[10] In a conversation with officials while looking around the newly built West Middle School in Rakwon-gun in 2009, Kim Jong-il said, “Only by knowing a foreign language we can accept the world’s advanced science and technology and better enhance our country’s authority over other countries (p. 149).”[11] Regarding the promulgation of the new education code in 2013, Kim Jong-un said, “Today’s era is an era of knowledge economy in which science and technology plays a decisive role in social development, and an era of emphasizing talent in which the country’s national power and economic and cultural development depend on talented people.”[18]

These statements of North Korean leaders, if translated into interpretation code, can be interpreted as noting that foreign languages are essential tools in the field of science and technology, and that schools should expand the proportion of foreign language education, provide practical foreign language education, and strengthen the capabilities of foreign language teachers. Based on these interpretation codes, the following implementation efforts were made in schools at each level:

- (1) Expansion of foreign language education: North Korea expanded the proportion of foreign language education by 30%.
- (2) Practical foreign language education: North Korea strengthened content-centered foreign language education so that students could learn the foreign language necessary for the related content fields.
- (3) Science and technology education in English: North Korea enhanced teacher training to integrate science and technology in English education.

#### 3.2 Improving students’ English skills

The importance of language education was emphasized in “Basic Problems of Science and Technology Education,” a compilation of speeches and contributions made by Kim Jong-il on science and technology education from 1978 to 1981 and published by the Korean Workers' Party Publishing House in 1982.[19] He divided language skills into four types: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and viewed these language skills as being organically connected to each other. Therefore, he emphasized that language education should not be limited to acquiring these language skills independently but should be conducted by considering the organic relationship between language functions. If we read Kim Jong-il's remark into an interpretive code, language education is not simply about teaching language grammar or vocabulary but is aimed at enabling students to use language fluently and should be done in an integrated manner, taking into account the organic relationship between language skills. Accordingly, analysis of the articles in “People's Education” and “Teachers' Propaganda Notebook” suggests the following implementation plan:

- (1) Curriculum development considering the organic relationship between language skills: Language education should be achieved by organically connecting the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing through presenting various task types, task performance and self-directed learning. Therefore, the language curriculum must be developed to account for the organic relationship between language skills.
- (2) Utilizing a variety of teaching-learning methods: In order for students to use a language fluently, they must learn using a variety of teaching-learning methods. Therefore, teachers' continuous self-

development, and teachers' self-awareness, initiative, and active thinking about their own teaching-learning methods are important to meet the needs of the times, and the implementation of methods that constantly enlighten students in the learning.

- (3) Providing practical language experiences: Practical language education should be provided so that students can use language in real life. Therefore, language education must provide opportunities for students to use language with practical purposes using tasks which can occur in real life situation. To this end, small group learning is recommended to be used in classroom so that it allows students to demonstrate their spontaneity and creativity in a task-based language learning situation.

### 3.3 Improving teaching and learning method

In "Some Issues Concerning the Development of Science and Technology" in 1978, Kim Il-sung said, "Foreign language teaching methods must be further improved to teach foreign languages more scientifically and effectively." [20] Kim Il-sung believed that improving foreign language teaching and learning methods was essential to improving the quality of foreign language education. In "Basic Issues of Science and Technology Education" in 1982, Kim Jong-il said, "Foreign language teaching and learning methods must be further improved so that students can acquire foreign languages more easily and quickly." [19] Kim Jong-il believed that improving foreign language teaching and learning methods was essential to increase the effectiveness of students' foreign language learning. In his 2022 "Direction of Science and Technology Development," Kim Jong-un said, "Foreign language teaching and learning methods must be further improved so that students can acquire more practical foreign language skills." [21] Kim Jong-un believed that improving foreign language teaching and learning methods was essential for cultivating students' practical foreign language skills. Through these remarks, we can see that Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un all sought to improve students' foreign language skills and improve the quality of education by improving foreign language teaching and learning methods.

Specifically, "Teachers' Propaganda Notebook" and "People's Education" point out that North Korea should make the following efforts:

- (1) Research on foreign language teaching and learning methods: North Korea is strengthening research on foreign language teaching and learning methods and making efforts to develop effective teaching and learning methods.
- (2) Teacher training: North Korea is strengthening foreign language teacher training and making efforts to train teachers with expertise in foreign language teaching and learning methods.
- (3) Development of educational materials: North Korea is strengthening the development of foreign language educational materials and making efforts to develop educational materials that will help students learn foreign languages effectively.

Based on the remarks of Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un, "Teachers' Propaganda Note" and "People's Education" suggest that the following measures be implemented to improve the quality of education through improving foreign language teaching and learning methods:

- (1) Systematic research on foreign language teaching and learning methods: Systematic research is needed to verify the effectiveness of foreign language teaching and learning methods and find ways to improve them.
- (2) Strengthening teachers' expertise: Efforts are needed to train teachers with expertise in foreign language teaching and learning methods.
- (3) Diversification and standardization of educational materials: Create a range of standard materials tailored to students' needs, enhancing educational qualities. Refining language teaching methods is crucial for enhancing educational quality and preparing students for future challenges.

### 3.4 Emphasizing ideological and socialistic education

Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un all emphasized the importance of socialist education thesis and liberal arts education in foreign language education. In "Some Issues Concerning the Development of Science and Technology" in 1978, Kim Il-sung said, "We must strengthen foreign language education to promote our country's science and technology and culture to the world and cultivate talent who can accept the world's science and technology and culture." [20] Kim Il-sung believed that through foreign language education,

students could develop talents who could contribute to the construction of socialism and develop talents who could communicate with the world. In “Basic Issues of Science and Technology Education” in 1982, Kim Il-sung said, “Foreign language education must be strengthened so that students can have the ability to actively participate in the international community.”[20] Kim Il-sung believed that through foreign language education, students could develop talents that could confidently function in the international society.

In his 1987 “Direction of Development of Foreign Language Education,” Kim Jong-il said, “Foreign language education must be strengthened so that students can have a deep understanding of world science, technology and culture, and have the ability to contribute to the construction of socialism.”[19] Kim Jong-il believed that through foreign language education, students could understand world’s advanced science, technology, and culture, and develop talents who could contribute to the construction of socialism. In “The Importance of Foreign Language Education” in 1990, Kim Jong-il said, “Foreign language education must be strengthened so that students have the ability to communicate with the world and inform the world of the superiority of the socialist system.” Kim Jong-il believed that through foreign language education, students could communicate with the world and cultivate talents who could inform the world of the superiority of the socialist system.

In his 2019 “Direction of Development of Foreign Language Education,” Kim Jong-un said, “Foreign language education must be strengthened so that students can actively accept world science and technology and culture and have the ability to contribute to the construction of socialism.”[18] Kim Jong-un believed that through foreign language education, students could actively accept world science, technology, and culture, and cultivate talents who could contribute to the construction of socialism. In “The Importance of Foreign Language Education” in 2022, Kim Jong-un said, “Foreign language education must be strengthened so that students can have the ability to actively participate in the international community.”[21] Kim Jong-un believed that through foreign language education, students could develop talents who could actively participate in the international society and spread out the superiority of the North Korean Juche ideology.

Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un all believed that socialist education thesis and liberal arts education played an important role in foreign language education. “Teachers’ Propaganda Note” and “People’s Education” suggest that the following measures be implemented to improve the quality of education through improving foreign language teaching and learning methods:

- (1) Systematic research on foreign language teaching and learning methods: Systematic research is needed to verify the effectiveness of foreign language teaching and learning methods and find ways to improve them.
- (2) Strengthening teachers' expertise: Efforts are needed to train teachers with expertise in foreign language teaching and learning methods.
- (3) Diversification and standardization of educational materials: Develop a variety of educational materials that meet the needs of students and improve the quality of education through standardization of educational materials. Improving foreign language teaching and learning methods is an important task to improve the quality of education and strengthen students' competitiveness for the future.

“Teachers’ Propaganda Note” and “People’s Education” suggest that the following measures be implemented to enhance the socialist education thesis and liberal arts education in foreign language education:

- (1) Ideological establishment of students: Socialist education thesis and liberal arts education enable students to establish socialist ideology and grow into talented individuals who can contribute to the construction of socialism.
- (2) Cultivating students' international knowledge: Socialist education thesis and liberal arts education enable students to understand world science, technology, and culture, and to have the ability to actively participate in the international society.

Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un all emphasized the importance of socialist education thesis and liberal arts education in foreign language education. Socialist education thesis and liberal arts education contribute to students' ideological establishment and development of international knowledge, allowing them to grow into talented individuals who can contribute to the construction of socialism. In addition, foreign language education can be carried out successfully only with a good foundation of political and ideological education, and firmly adhere to the essence of socialist education from an independent standpoint and perspective, with one’s feet planted on one’s own soil and one’s eyes looking out to the world. North Koreans accept global educational development trends and good experiences in accordance with their reality and develop

them in their own way to confidently lead the world in education. In North Korea everything and everybody is required of a good foundation of political and ideological background in that foreign language education is not an exception, but the core curriculum implemented with socialists' political ideas.

#### 4. Discussion

English education in North Korea attracts the interest of the highest leaders in the country across different eras of leadership. It is due to the clear sense of direction in that it helps promote the students' accessibility to the advanced science and technology and support the societal system by propagating the superiority of the Juche ideology. To this end, English education gained full support of the leadership in increasing class hours in the curriculum, strengthening teacher training to implement better English teaching methods and content-based English teaching.

On the other hand, though it is not the focus of this study, English education in South Korea has lost the interest of the government by downgrading English as a secondary subject in the scholastic ability test, a critical test for college entrance, and making it a selective subject in high school. Middle schools in North Korea have more English class hours a week than those in South Korea. Meanwhile, South Korean parents break their backs to send their children to private English language schools not trusting public school English education.

Understanding North and South Korean commonalities and differences is a step toward unification since one can only unite with each other when they know each other. The commonality this study found is that both Koreans recognize that English is instrumental to be a part of international communities and prosperous. The difference is that North Korea makes serious efforts to improve English education at the level of government, but South Korea leaves English education in private sector education to a large extent. The current paper focused on what sort of serious efforts have been made over different leaderships in North Korea by analyzing educational periodicals.

#### 5. Conclusions

Structural interpretation of qualitative data has been applied to the North Korean defector interview research, [5-7] but the structural procedure of interpretation has not been offered in the research. It is hard to find out how the researchers have drawn the study results as they have from the interviews. This paper is explicit as to how descriptive code is translated into structural code and translated further into implementation code. The current methodology first appeared in [2] and was adapted for use in the current structural interpretation of the English education related articles in the educational periodicals in North Korea. In the study, four categories are elicited: Nurturing scientific and technological talent, improving students' English skills, improving teaching and learning methods, and emphasizing ideological and socialistic education.

Category of nurturing scientific and technological talent is subcategorized into the following three implementation actions: Expansion of foreign language education, practical foreign language education, and science and technology education in English. Category of improving students' English skills is subcategorized into the following three implementation actions: Curriculum development considering the organic relationship between language skills, utilizing a variety of teaching-learning methods, and providing practical language experiences. Category of improving teaching and learning method is subcategorized into the following three implementation actions: Systematic research on foreign language teaching and learning methods, strengthening teachers' expertise, and diversification and standardization of educational materials. Category of emphasizing ideological and socialistic education is subcategorized into the following two implementation actions: Ideological establishment of students and cultivating students' international knowledge.

The current categories and subcategories based on the structural interpretation of North Korean periodicals have contributed to the explanation of the corpus analysis results of English textbooks. The study also illustrated insights in exploring micro issues of English textbooks in macro statements of North Korean leaderships and the writings of English educational experts in North Korea to support their leaders' statements in pedagogic practices of English teaching. However, the current study has its limitation in the scope and coverage of the educational periodicals and statements of leaderships. Two analyzed educational periodicals are government-controlled publications and sometimes do not reflect the full range of views on education in North Korea in addressing the many challenges that the North Korean education system faces. A follow-up study can expand the scope and coverage of the analysis materials to either validate or challenge the current conclusion by investigating a broad view of the North Korean education with focus on English education. The take-away from the study is that South Korean English educational policy should stand on the firm belief that any educational reform takes time to grow and ripe with a consistent care to reach its goal rather than a capricious cycle of too much and too little emphasis on English education in lieu of keeping the reform process at its own pace.

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