

The Validity of Establishing an International High School and the Problems of English Education - Focusing on Jeju Island

Seunghyun Seo* · Eunsang Cho**

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국문요약

본 논문에서는 증가하는 제주도 방문 외국인과 관광수입을 근거로 향후 꾸준히 증가할 외국인 방문객 추이와 관광수입을 예측하고, 외국인 방문객에게 서비스를 제공할 수 있는 국제전문인력의 수가 절대적으로 부족함을 확인함으로써 국제전문인력의 양성을 담당할 국제고 설립의 필요성을 입증하고, 현재 국제고등학교에서 실시하는 영어수업의 문제점을 파헤치고 그 대안을 찾아보고자 한다.

2008년 제주도를 방문하는 외국인이 54만 명이었으며, 2020년에는 220만 명의 외국인이 제주도를 방문할 것으로 예측할 수 있기 때문에 향후 매년 500명 이상의 국제전문인력이 필요하다. 이를 해결하기 위해서는 제주국제고등학교의

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설립이 시급한 상황이다. 현재 국제고등학교가 진행하고 있는 영어 수업의 문제 점은 읽기, 말하기, 쓰기, 듣기 중에서 말하기와 쓰기 능력이 다른 나라의 학생들에 비해 현저히 떨어진다는 점이다. 이러한 약점을 극복하기 위하여 싱가포르와 핀란드에서 실시하여 성공을 거두고 있는 영어몰입교육을 도입하여 학생들의 불균형적인 영어 실력을 극복해야한다. 영어몰입교육에서 발생할 수 있는 영어 교사의 수급 문제는 해외 유명 강사의 사이버 강의를 통하여 해결할 수 있다.

주제어 : 제주, 국제고등학교, 몰입교육, 영어 수업, 사이버 강의

I. Introduction

Provincial governments have tried to establish international high schools with the boom of globalization and for the vitalization of the main communicative method, English. The provincial government of Jeju is also planning to establish an international high school in Jeju. This project was not originally composed as a key educational policy of Jeju; however, its importance has been emphasized with the enactment of "A special law for the foundation of Jeju Special Self-Governing Province and formation of international city", that was passed in 2007. In particular, as foreign tourists visiting Jeju increase, it is necessary to establish an international high school in Jeju to educate professionals who can offer high quality services to foreign visitors.

This paper will discuss how expedient and timely the establishment of an international high school in Jeju is, based on the statistical data. It will also reveal the problems of English education in international high schools and suggest alternative ways to learn English through immersion education. Although there are several provincial governments which plan to set up international high schools, the reason why I confine the research

to Jeju is that the establishment of an international high school is linked to the construction of an international city and Jeju attracts the most numerous foreign tourists.

II. The Demand of English Speaking Professionals in Jeju Island

1. The Increasing Number of Foreign Visitors to Jeju.

The number of foreign visitors sharply increased from the 1980s. Between 1991 and 1997, the year of crisis of foreign exchange, there was a marked decrease in the number of tourists. It then fluctuated from 2001 to 2003 amid the September 11 attacks in 2001 and hosting the World Cup in 2002. From then on, with a steady increase 540,000 foreigners visited Jeju. The table (1) below clearly demonstrates the growing number of the visitors to Jeju.

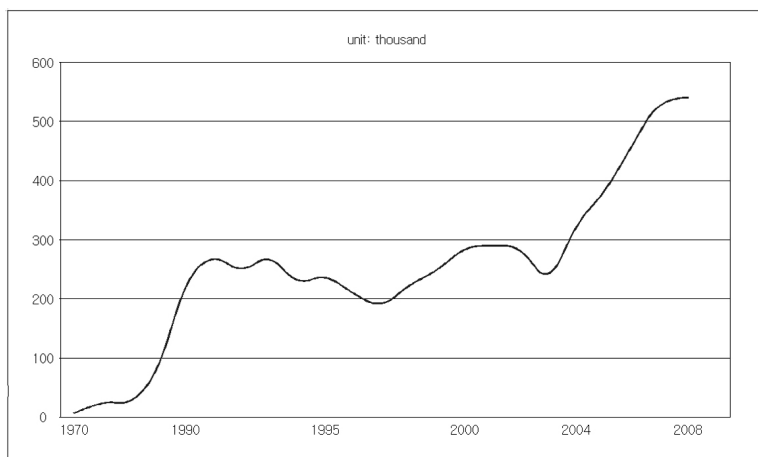


Table 1. Number of foreign visitors to Jeju by year (Jeju Tourism Policy Division)

As shown in table 2., when we classify the foreign visitors by nationality, tourists from the Chinese-speaking world, such as China, Taiwan and Hong Kong are the most numerous, which numbered 280,000, Japanese were the second largest group with 183,240. The rest groups are the people from Singapore, Malaysia and the USA. The data suggests that there is a need for professionals in Chinese and Japanese as well as in English. However, the Chinese-speaking tourists and Japanese ones occupy the large number of total tourist, they expect and are expected to speak English once they are out of their countries since English has become more popular global language. Thus, it could be reasonable to focus on the English education for the professionals in the paper.

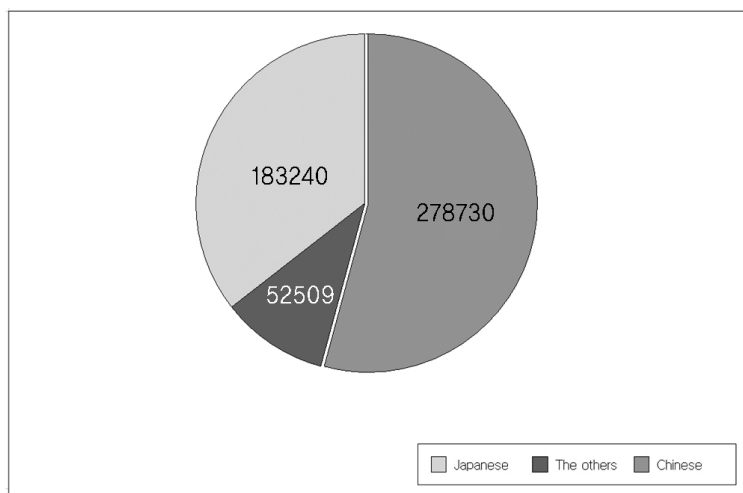


Table 2. Foreign visitors to Jeju by nationality (Jeju Tourism Policy Division, unit: person)

2. The Expectation of Foreign Visitors in the Future

A compound annual growth rate of foreign visitors from 1997 to 2008 reached 12.7%. Based on this rate, according to the forecasting method

by the average growth rate (generally used method in tourism industry), the number will reach approximately 1,000,000 by 2014 and approach 2,200,000 by 2020. The forecasting method used to calculate the average growth rate is: $\text{mean value} + (\text{average growth rate} \times \text{mean value})$.

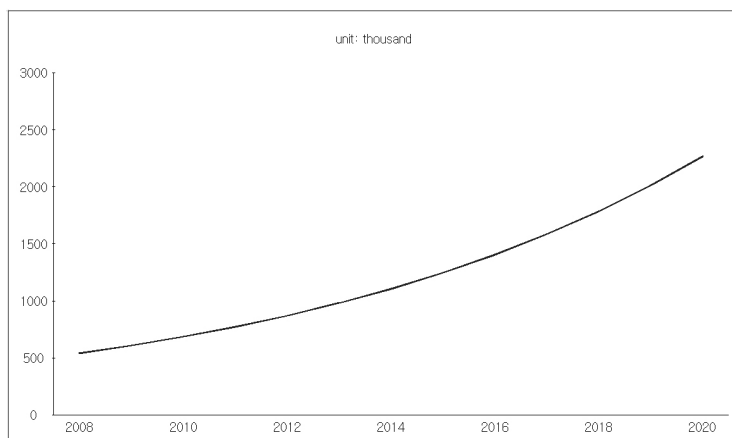


Table 3. The expectation of foreign visitors to Jeju next 10 years

3. The Rate of Tourism Revenue to Gross Product in Jeju

The rate of tourism revenue to gross product in Jeju is approaching as high as 30%. The figure is surprisingly high, compared with the rate of total tourism revenue to the gross domestic product(GDP) of Korea. According to Korea Tourism Organization, the ratio of total tourism revenue to the gross domestic product of Korea is only 1% (GDP in 2008: about 953,500,000,000\$, total tourism revenue in 2008: about 9,020,000,000\$). On the other hand, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) reported the ratio of total tourism revenue to the gross domestic product of Korea would be 6%. The proportion of tourism revenue to gross product in Jeju reaching 30% is still high even though it has been

set at 6% which is a higher numerical evaluated by the World Tourism Organization as a standard. Thus, the table (4) indicates Jeju's high dependency upon tourism revenue among gross income.

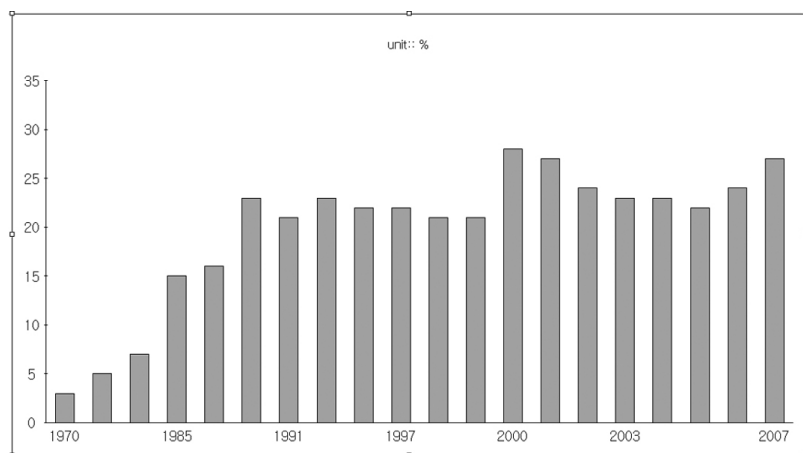


Table 4. Rate of tourism revenue to gross product in Jeju (Jeju Tourism Policy Division)
Calculation method: tourism revenue in Jeju/gross product in Jeju

4. The Increasing Tendency of Tourism Revenue of Jeju

As in the case of the number of foreigners visiting Jeju, tourism revenue was stagnant between 2001 and 2003 without any significant change due to the September 11 attacks in 2001 and 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan. Then, with a rapid and steady increase it soared from 258,000,000,000 won in 2003 to 619,900,000,000 won in 2008. It grew by 2.5 times in five years.

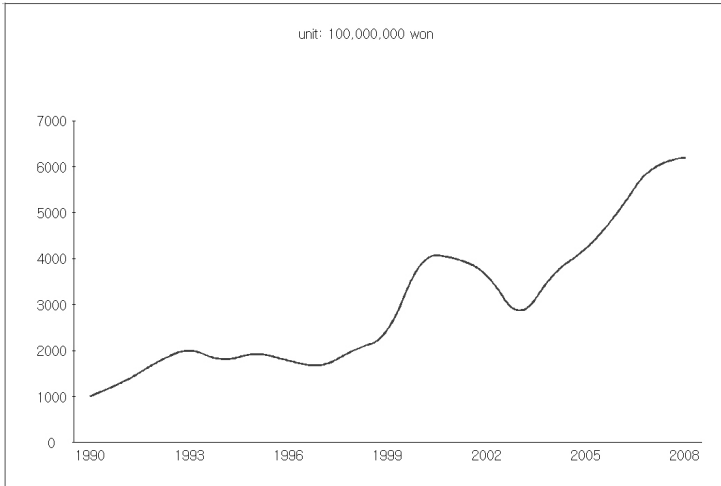


Table 5. Tourism income of Jeju from foreign visitors (Jeju Tourism Policy Division)

5. The Expectation of Tourism Revenue of Jeju in the Future

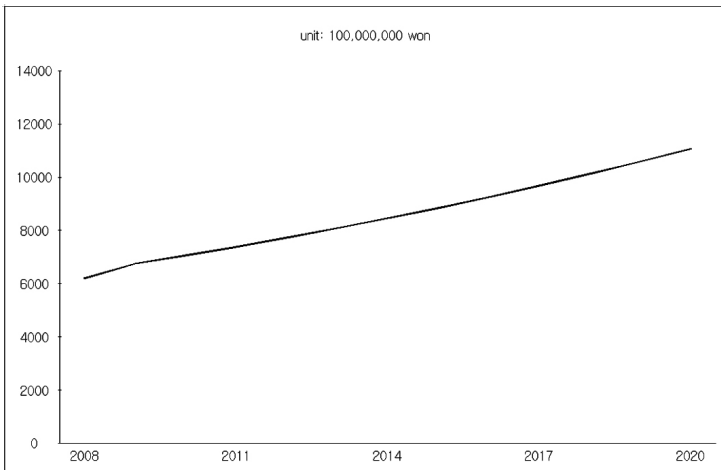


Table 6. The expectation of tourism income of foreign visitors to Jeju next 10 years

According to The Analysis of Tourism Markets in Korea (2009) by the Korea Tourism Organization, the number of foreign visitors in 2009 increased by 8.9% and the number is expected to increase by 4.6% every year. Based on this rate, the tourism revenue of Jeju in 2020 is expected to be 1,107,100,000,000 won.

6. The Expectation of Demand of International Professionals

International professionals generally mean personnel who maintain global minded in international exchange, trade and tourism. However, this paper defines international professionals as tourism personnel with licenses such as tourist guides and hotel managers since it is difficult to get statistic data about personnel in international exchange and trade, and their numbers are reported to be minor compared to personnel in tourism circle. According to the Korea Tourism Organization, in 2008 the total number of foreign visitors to Korea was 6,890,841 while the total number of domestic tourism hosts (tourist guides, hotel managers) was 19,431. This data indicates that each tourism personnel served an average of 355 visitors a year. Jeju needed 1,521 tourism personnel based on the fact that about 540,000 foreigners visited Jeju in 2008. Unfortunately, there were only 1,122 personnel available. That means Jeju needs 400 more personnel this year and will need 5,264 more in 2020 when 6,386 tourism hosts are needed. As a result, it is necessary to train an additional 500 personnel every year to meet the increasing demand. Thus, if the international high school is established in Jeju, it will offer a help in educating international professional who will definitely contribute to tourism revenue. To give a concrete form to establish the high school, it is crucial to find a way to correlate English education with tourism personnel plan. One possible solution is that the high school runs a professional training program

which produces competitive tourism personnel since through professional education trainees can prepare for the job that is based on practical activities. The program can be taught as technical education in which the trainees directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques or technology to become promising tourism personnel.

Ⅲ. Immersion Education

As the importance of English has been emphasized and the need for English has grown in Korean society, there have been two major obstacles in English education which the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has puzzled for decades its mind over the solution of. One is the inefficiency of English education, compared with the amount of the money invested into education. The other is the low abilities of speaking and writing among four major factors; reading, speaking, writing and listening compared with the students from other nations. Since the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology does not evaluate the speaking and writing abilities in the college entrance exam, Korean high school students who devote all their energies to the college entrance exam, show serious defects in these two sections.

Moreover, as we demonstrated in section 2, despite the fact the rate of tourism revenue among total income in Jeju is much higher than that of other regions, overcoming the problems is immediate and urgent to the students of Jeju who will go on to domestic and foreign colleges and universities for their careers. In this respect, the immersion program will help to enhance the unbalanced English abilities of the Jeju High School students.

Thus, as the presidential transition committee proposed in 2008, the

international high school in Jeju will adopt an English immersion curriculum to reconcile these two problems. The English immersion education was first introduced to enhance the English ability and cut down private lessons for English. In fact, the private education expenses and the low efficiency of English education in investment provision bring about social concerns. According to Statistics Korea, in 2007 the proportion of the students who took part in private educations reached 77.7% and the total expenses of the private education are expected to be a surprising 20,040,000,000,000 won a year. Among these total expenses people spent the largest amount on English, ahead of mathematics.

However, in spite of this huge amount of money invested to the English education, Korean students' English speaking ability occupies one of the lowest positions in the world. Moreover, when the system of TOEFL was changed into the new CBT (computer-based TOEFL test), the ranking of Korea dramatically dropped from 77th (out of 134 nations) to 111th (out of 147 nations). Most surprisingly, the ranking of the speaking section was the third lowest of all countries tested (Yonhap News, 2007. 4. 18). Considering the fact that the Korean government has aimed the communicative method as the national object of English education for the last 15 years since the 6th Curriculum, the results reveal that there have been systematic problems in the educational methodology of English education. Thus, the international high school in Jeju realizes the limitations of the current English education and plans to introduce English immersion education based on the successful examples of foreign nations that have practiced the immersion education for quite a long time. However, there are opponents who claim the immersion education could cause some negative side effects to an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) nation. This opinion should be included in the formation of the curriculum of the Jeju High School.

Now, let us examine the model examples of English education in Singapore and Finland. By looking into Singapore as an Asian ESL (English as a Second Language) nation and Finland as an EFL nation carrying out the English immersion education, we can analyze the effect of the immersion education and judge whether the immersion education has a negative influence on course study.

Singapore is an ESL nation where English is used as an official language. English makes multiracial communication possible and Singaporeans can use English in various situations and have more chances to be exposed to English than Finns and Koreans since English in Singapore is used in government agencies, public places and classes. Thus, the learning incentive might be classified as an integrative motivation because English is essential for Singaporean daily lives. However, integrative motivation is not the only learning incentive in Singapore. According to Singaporean school system, because they limit the students to go on to the advanced school and the English ability plays an important role in entering the advanced school, instrumental motivation also becomes a factor for learning English. Moreover, according to Chew (2005), English becomes the first language, already passing over ESL in Singapore society. The number of TV channels in English and the English newspaper's readership exceed those in mother tongue.

Finland shares common denominators with Korea in that both of them are EFL nations. They begin English education at 3rd grade of elementary school, and Korean and Finish belong to the Uralic family of languages. However, Finland puts language immersion programs into practice with a language which is not a native language among English (foreign language), Swedish and Finnish (official languages). Fins are easy to adapt to language immersion education since Finland is a multiracial and multilingual nation in which two official languages are spoken, though.

Although Finnish belongs to the same language family as Korean, every student who speaks Finnish as his or her mother tongue learns Swedish, an identical language family to English. Namely, Fins are exposed to more inclusive and approachable environments for an immersion education than Koreans. Although Finland is a EFL nation, they broadcast TV shows in English without dubbing and subtitles, and Fins are used to absorbing English input from an early age. Thus, Fins mostly learn English to enter advanced schools or improve their grades as instrumental motivation. On the other hand, integrative motivation also exists in Fins because English is used extensively in every life of Finland.

According to Hwang (2008), A European Project (2002) and Ministry of Education, Singapore (2001), the immersion educational system of Finland, Singapore and Korea may be summarized as follows.

Table 7. Immersion educational environment of Finland, Singapore and Korea

	Finland	Singapore	Korea
Nation	Multiracial nation	Multiracial nation	Homogeneous nation
Language	Multilingual nation	Multilingual nation	Monolingual nation
Educational System	6-4-3 (flexible)	9(10)-3	6-3-3
Free Education	6th grade of elementary school	Free up to University	Elementary to middle school
Vehicular Language	English	An official language which is not a native language/Foreign language	Korean
Environment for Using English	ESL, English is a social official language	EFL, Broadcasting TV programs in English without dubbing and subtitles	EFL

Time to Start English Education	From 1st grade of elementary school	Mostly from 3rd grade of elementary school	From 3rd grade of elementary school
Method of English Education	Early total immersion	Mid immersion	Teaching in Korean
Motivation of Learning English	Integrative (instrumental) motivation	Instrumental (integrative) motivation	Instrumental motivation

According to Hwang (2008), students in Singapore and Finland who learn subjects in a foreign language have better English communication skills than Korean students and make a world-class achievement in major subjects such as science or mathematics. Singapore and Finland ranked first in TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) 2003 and PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) 2006 respectively, which were international examinations to evaluate students' abilities of mathematics and science (IEA 2005, OECD 2007). Their TOEFL (IBT) scores also ranked 3rd and 6th in 2007. Korea, however, placed 91st among 155 countries overall and 130th in the speaking section, in spite of the high level of achievement in PISA and TIMSS, ranking 1st to 11th in 2007. This result makes policy makers consider to practice immersion education and research the positive effect and prospect of immersion education.

With the result of the immersion education in Singapore and Finland, Jeju International High School also needs to adopt the immersion program to balance the disproportion of English abilities of students who are preparing their future careers.

As I mentioned above, Finnish which is an official language with Swedish in Finland belongs to the Uralic language family like Korean. Unlike other European languages, Finnish does not distinguish genders

(masculine, feminine and neuter) and has quite free word order. It also carries a fixed accent which always falls on the first syllable. Finnish which does not have an article and uses a postposition, not a preposition is similar to Korean rather than English in linguistic perspective. These linguistic similarities and the same EFL conditions make the Jeju High School choose Finland as a model.

In order for English immersion education to be successful the following conditions need to be met. First, the amount of time students are exposed to English must be increased. For example, the reason why the students in Finland speak English fluently is because they are exposed to English at a very early age through watching television programs in English and thus, are familiarized with the language before they receive English education. Second, the curriculum should reflect skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking in order to make a well-balanced program.

Third, the school needs to obtain teachers who possess fluent English language skills for English immersion education. In order to accomplish this task, it is necessary to actively make use of overseas Koreans and domestic Koreans with excellent English ability. Then, there may be another alternative for the solution; that is to activize the cyber lectures.

A cyber lecture to solve the competent teacher supply problem has mainly three merits. First, there exists no spacial limit. Students can take cyber classes anywhere internet service is provided. Second, there is also no limitation in time. Students may attend the classes anytime they want. Third and most importantly, students have a chance to learn high quality and up-dated contents by taking the lectures of overseas well-known scholars and experts contracted with Jeju High School. In face to face learning a teacher's explanation is transferred to learners with personal characteristics and the relationship with the learners. Then the learners react to it with their individual disposition and social relation with the

teachers. To increase these interactions, Jeju High School offers opportunities to form interactive relations between a learner and other learners, and between a learner and learning environment as well as between a learner and a teacher.

Kim's study (2005) also notes that 'the interactive relation' of cyber-classes plays an important role in enhancing the learning effectiveness. She takes a count of the concentration on the lecture based on the interactive relations as a main factor influencing the students' satisfaction on the cyber-classes. According to the result of Shee & Wang (2008), the learners are absorbed in his or her work when the interactive relations are properly accomplished with the learner's active participation. This emphasizes Jeju High School can increase academic achievements by maximizing the interaction that a cyber lecture maintains. Therefore, the high school can obtain effective academic achievements by utilizing educational contents that a cyber lecture offers.

IV. Conclusion

This paper expects the steadily increasing tourists and income based on growing foreign tourists to Jeju Island and tourism revenue in the past and present, and confirms the absolute lack of the number of the international professionals who can offer the appropriate service to foreign visitors. The article also aims to verify the necessity of the establishment of Jeju International High School which would educate the international professionals, and to provide educational contents well-matched to the need of the high school.

To support the English ability of high school students who will be the international professionals it investigates the effect and the applicability

of an English immersion program at Jeju International High School, which was proposed as a new education policy by the presidential transition committee. The public, however, fears that immersion programs would expand the private education market and exert a bad influence upon learning other subjects. Showing the refutable logicity of the concerns, the data is contrary to the public and the press expectations and reveals that English immersion education can be an effective policy to develop the education system in the high school.

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Abstract

The Validity of Establishing an International High School and the Problems of English Education - Focusing on Jeju Island

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This article expects the upward trend of the steadily increasing foreign tourists and tourism revenue in the past and present. By confirming the absolute lack of the number of the international professionals, the article also aims to verify the necessity of the establishment of Jeju International High School. Then, it provides an alternative for the problems as well as investigates the current problems of English education in international high schools.

The number of foreign visitors to Jeju Island reached 540,000 in 2008 and it is expected that about 2,200,000 foreigners will visit the island in 2020. Based on this expectation, Jeju needs more than 500 professionals each year hereafter. To solve the increasing demand for the experts, the establishment of the international high school in Jeju is urgently needed. Jeju International High School will overcome the markedly low ability of speaking and writing by adopting the English immersion education, successfully practiced in Singapore and Finland. The supply of English teachers that may be one of the major issues in an English immersion program can be resolved through cyber lectures by competent scholars and teachers overseas.

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Key Words

Jeju, International High School, Immersion Education, Teaching in English,
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