Research on the Impact of the Expanding Communities Approach in South Korea: Focused on Elementary Social Studies Curriculum

Jongsung Kim
*Graduate School Student of Hiroshima University*

**Abstract**

The expanding communities approach, which is a sequence principal that arranges contents from familiar communities to faraway communities, has been criticized by the people who advocate new social studies and globalization. However, it is easy to find the evidence that the approach is still powerful to design a social studies curriculum in South Korea. How could the expanding communities approach survive in South Korea? Empirical analysis about curriculum materials is based on two standards—"the direction of expanding spatial range" and "acceptance of the criticisms against the expanding communities approach"—is of help to answer this question. Firstly, the expanding communities approach settled down in South Korea while eliminating discrepant elements from the approach and establishing new spatial range to make smooth transitions. Secondly, the approach was attacked by the spiral curriculum that addressed concepts of each discipline. Even though it gave up the restriction of spatial range by introducing world contents to low or middle grade level, the direction of expansion was maintained. Finally, faced with the challenge due to globalization, the approach introduced the experiences to find world in regional scale. Spatial limitation collapsed even more, however, the direction still survived through that effort. This analysis means that the expanding communities approach is flexible and abundant with plasticity. The approach will stand up for many years to come unless the formula that expands from familiar environments to further ones is rejected.

**Introduction**

Scope and sequence are the most important elements when we design a curriculum. Scope means the width and the depth of experiences that are
given to students. It can be called the “what” of the curriculum. Sequence means the order of experiences. It can be called the “when” of the curriculum (Hanna, 1987; 10-11).

The expanding communities approach, which is one of the most well known principles to organize contents, has been a main sequence principle in elementary social studies curriculum since it was introduced into South Korea. This approach’s foundation involves the interactions between human and environment. The interactions with environment that each person lives in give her meaningful experiences. The environment becomes broader as a person develops. One’s experiences grow and her recognition about society deepens. The expanding communities approach is based on this logic.

However, the expanding communities approach was not the only sequence approach that guides elementary social studies curriculum in South Korea. The spiral curriculum, which stresses disciplinary concepts and insists that contents have to be repeated and deepened from detail to abstract, threatened its position. Rapid globalization, especially development of transportation and communication technologies, made it possible to criticize the expanding communities approach because the concept of environment is changing faster than ever before.

Although criticism from new social studies attaches greater importance to disciplinary concepts and rapid changes in the world environment due to globalization, the expanding communities approach has maintained an important sequence principle of elementary social studies curriculum in South Korea. Why did it play a leading role in designing the elementary social studies curriculum in South Korea? As recently as the early 2000s, there was research published that criticized or urged to revise the expanding communities approach in South Korea. There is no guarantee that a person’s familiar environment will be easy to understand (Ryu, 2003). Also, strictly limiting the boundaries of environment for study is not effective in the era of globalization. The expanding communities approach should be adapted to be more flexible (Nam.H, 2002; Lee.M and Nam.S, 2005). However, there was no research that analyzed how the expanding communities approach was adapted into an actual curriculum and its effects. In this research, by analyzing the national curriculum, teaching guidebooks for teachers, and textbooks from the 1940s to the present, the research question, “How could the expanding communities approach survive in South Korea?” can be answered.
Literature Review
- The Expanding Communities Approach by Paul Hanna

It is not clear who developed the expanding communities approach and exactly when this occurred. However, it was Paul Hanna that systemized it and actively utilized it to design curriculums. Many social studies researchers recognized expanding communities of men: emphasis for grade allocation as a completed form of the expanding communities approach, which was introduced in Society-Child-Curriculum (Ando, 1993).

Figure 1. The scope of “expanding communities of men: emphasis for grade allocation”

Figure 2. The sequence of “expanding communities of men: emphasis for grade allocation”

Figure 1 is the scope of this curriculum. Hanna set up content as basic human activities. He thought that interactions between human and environment should be the footing of educational experiences for students (Hanna, 1934; Gill 1974: 51-52). After extensive studies, he established scope with eight basic human activities: education, recreating, organization and governance, expressing esthetic and spiritual needs, protection and conserving, production and distribution, transporting and communication.

Figure 2 is the sequence of the curriculum. After deeply considering the students’ growth stages and the environments where students felt connected, Hanna established a sequence centered on communities. Eleven communities started from family at the origin and broadened in concentric rings outwards. He insisted that people did not belong to just one community, but instead,
they belong to multiple communities simultaneously. Hanna set family as the most important community (Halvorsen, 2006). Children who grow to some degree go to school and encounter neighborhood naturally. Interactions between neighbors create local areas and these neighborhoods grow into cities that populate a state. In addition, by expanding communities continuously, communities create a nation and a world beyond the region. Hanna explained the reason that communities expanded like this was because small communities tended to gather with each other. To satisfy the basic human activities that could not be solved just in small communities, they decided to make alliances and as a result of that, bigger communities could be born.

- Controversies about the Expanding Communities Approach

It is possible to categorize the criticism into two about the expanding communities approach. One is the criticism from new social studies and the other is the criticism from globalization. Researchers who favored new social studies believed that they could teach any social science concepts to any child regardless of age if the concepts were translated suitably based on the child’s development stages. Based on this view, the expanding communities approach can be criticized for “it limits students’ possibilities or interest because it set a space range to learn by grade”. The researchers also valued the concepts of social science and insisted on setting the scope based on conceptual ideas. Based on this view, the expanding communities approach can be criticized as “it makes students bored and just memorize facts because it sets comprehensive and broad learning about society and it means that students study it superficially (Ando, 1993: 223-239). Ravitch criticized the expanding communities approach based on a different aspect. She insisted that its theoretical backgrounds were never proven ever. She also criticized that it just considered the social and political aspect to design a curriculum but not the children’s cognitive and development pedagogical aspect (Ravitch, 1987:334, 349).

- New challenge by Hanna: The Expanding Environments Approach

Hanna attempted a new curriculum that partially accepted the criticisms and change of the era. He embraced the concepts of social science from new social studies and took the advice to loosen the boundary of environments. This idea is reflected in the textbook series Investigating Man’s World. It can be stated that this textbook series differs from other series as it adopted a multi-disciplinary approach and introduced content related with the world as a comparison target; however, this series was evaluated as a mixture of many sequence approaches (Ando, 1993: 213-217). Kusahara reevaluated
the series as integrated social science and as social studies that was based on
geography. He did so because the series was organized by expansion in stages
of areal structure, areal interactions and the way one area defined another area.
Hanna did not intend to educate a member of the community to just acquire
social skills, but aimed to build up open social cognitions that could go from
a region to the world and back (Kusahara, 1999: 28-30, 35-36). Hanna’s new
trial assumed civic qualities that differed from the past ones. Also in this series,
“environments” was introduced as the place where academic concepts were
spread out and they broadened gradually. Like this, the expanding environments
approach features two aspects: 1) it nurtures civic qualities indirectly, 2) it
makes class more challenging intellectually (Moriwake, 1985: 78-90).

Research Method

Qualitative content analysis and research for history of education are
good methods for this paper because its aim is to research the impact of the
expanding communities approach in South Korean elementary social studies
curriculum. It is very important to collect, criticize and verify materials and
make new interpretations based on them in the history of education, which is
more than 70 years old (Cheong, 2000:95-125). Extracting the contents that
are related to the approach in and analyzing them by the standards that come
from literature review will help to demonstrate the impact. The main materials
to analyze are the national curriculum, teaching guidebooks for teachers, and
textbooks from the 1940s to the present.

There are two standards. One is How was the expanding communities
approach realized in South Korean elementary social studies curriculum?
Analyzing the aspect of expanding spatial range, which is referred to as the
essence of the expanding communities approach, makes it possible to identify
how well the approach was adapted. The other standard is How did South
Korean elementary social studies curriculum accept the approach’s criticism?
This standard was created by the hypothesis that the expanding communities
approach’s flexibility in coping with criticism helped the approach survive and
hold a key post in South Korean elementary social studies curriculum up to
now.

Finding

After analyzing the national curriculum, teaching guidebooks for
teachers, and textbooks from the 1940s to the present based on the standards,
it was possible to classify South Korean elementary social studies education
history into three periods: Settlement of the Expanding communities Approach,
The Expanding Communities Approach with the Spiral Curriculum, and Finding World in Regional Scale.

- Settlement of the Expanding Communities Approach: from syllabus curriculum to the second curriculum

After the liberation from Japan, the most emergent task of South Korean education was to open schools as usual and to make new curriculums. However, South Korea was placed under the US military government, and its education was also affected by America. The reason why social studies, the subject that integrated all social science, was introduced into South Korea, not separated into subjects such as history or geography, was in the same context (Kim et al., 1989: 24-25).

Social studies in syllabus curriculum was mainly affected by Colorado’s curriculum. Both curriculums emphasized real life experiences to develop students’ problem-solving abilities. To achieve this, the curriculum adapted the expanding communities approach to value students’ experiences and the places where their experiences happened. It is possible to make Table 1 by comparing grade topics between Colorado’s social studies curriculum and South Korean social studies curriculum in syllabus curriculum.

Table 1. Comparison of grade topics between Colorado and South Korea in syllabus curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Colorado</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>South Korea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Life in family and school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Family and school life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Local life</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hometown life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social life in bigger scale than local</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social life in bigger scale than hometown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Social life in other regions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Life in South Korea and all our federations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Life in United states</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Life in other countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>All federations of United States</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Development of our country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Life in other continents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Development of Colorado and United states</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Revision of Lee. S, 1946:11)
Both of them valued experiences and the direction that it expanded, but they were different in the aspect of distributing the contents by grade levels. Related to this, the executive chief of syllabus curriculum development stated:

Social studies was the priming powder of new educational movement, however, social studies curriculum of that time was the 6-year compact version of the 8-year Colorado curriculum and used Colorado curriculum as it was (Kim et al., 1989: 56).

Trial to compress the 8-year curriculum to 6-year curriculum caused the increase of content to learn and it was a burden for students. Adapting Colorado’s curriculum without considering South Korean educational circumstance was the reason for this problem.

As one can note from Table 1, syllabus curriculum was based on the expanding communities approach. The direction of spatial range expanded from the familiar community to the faraway community such as family – school – hometown – regions – nation – world. However, there were some discrepant examples against the approach in syllabus curriculum:

Grade 2 – 7. Happy days in a year
Grade 2 – 8. Our region’s flag and other region’s flags
Grade 3 – 2. Understanding the differences in life style of each region
   (Education department of the US military government, 1946)

Grade 2’s topic was hometown, but there were some contents related to nation or world. It was different from the direction that the expanding communities approach intended. It is possible to know the reason that Grade 3 had the contents related to world by considering the compressed curriculum and by examining the following sentences:

Teaching contents that were related to Colorado’s natural environments such as Hawaii, Switzerland or Sahara desert and teaching Swiss who were well-known in the world … was ridiculous. Our students didn’t even know about the contents related to our country (Kim et al., 1989: 56).

This problem was also in the same context that was already discussed. There were no considerations about differences of natural environments between Colorado and South Korea. In Colorado, those contents were
connected to their own environments. They were selected to make students' understanding about their region deeper based on the principle of comparison and contrast. However, in the case of South Korea, they were just superficial world geography lessons so they did not have a deep connection to students' lives.

These problems were addressed in the first and the second curriculum and the expanding curriculum approach became more systematic. It was not difficult to reveal the efforts to fix the problems.

Table 2. Comparison of grade topics in the first and the second curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade1</th>
<th>Grade2</th>
<th>Grade3</th>
<th>Grade4</th>
<th>Grade5</th>
<th>Grade6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first</td>
<td>Our family and our school</td>
<td>Life in neighborhood</td>
<td>Life in hometown</td>
<td>History of our life</td>
<td>Development of industry</td>
<td>Development of our nation and world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The second</td>
<td>Family school neighborhood</td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Life in hometown</td>
<td>Environment of our nation</td>
<td>Life in our nation</td>
<td>Development of our nation and world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In syllabus curriculum, there were no contents that related to neighborhood, and it caused a jump of logic in the expanding communities approach. However, in the first curriculum, there was an effort to solve this problem by setting “neighborhood” as a grade topic in Grade 2. Additionally, in the second curriculum, “village” was newly set as a grade topic to help the idea of community expand more smoothly.

Also, it was not difficult to discover the efforts to rid contents that were discrepant from the approach such as the national or worldwide scale contents in the low and middle grades. By deleting contents that dealt with world connected to Colorado, the expanding communities approach firmly made its direction. However, some contents that were not suitable for the approach still existed. The unit “Earth, That We Are Living In” in the second semester in Grade 4 was an example.
Table 3. Textbook contents that were discrepant from the expanding communities approach in the first curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-(2)</th>
<th>A globe – Birth of the earth-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At the end of the class, Hyoseon asked a question to her teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Teacher, the earth that we are living in has been the same shape as this globe for a long time? I heard that the earth was a ball of fire. How can it be changed?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The teacher smiled and said,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Okay. I will tell you the story of how the earth was born…” (omit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-(3)</td>
<td>The teacher showed us some slides today. They were a variety of pictures and the teacher told us stories about animals and plants on the earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“On the earth, there are a variety of nations and various people are living. Also, many animals and plants live on the earth, but the species of them and the ways they live are different depending on climate and places. … Climate can be categorized as the tropics climate, the temperate climate and polar climate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Revision of The Ministry of Education, 1956: 47-50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The topic of Grade 4 was “History of Our Life.” This topic was deeply related to history and made connections between hometown and nation. The unit that dealt with the birth of the earth, animals and plants on the earth and the people who live on the earth did not match with the direction of the expanding communities approach. This unit proved that there still existed contents that related to world geography in the low and middle grades even though they were reduced considerably.

While not perfect, the expanding communities approach settled down in South Korean elementary social studies curriculum. Syllabus curriculum had many contents that were not suitable for South Korean context because it adapted Colorado’s curriculum as it was. Those contents that did not harmonize well with South Korean actual environments disturbed the approach’s sincere adaptation. However, adjusting grade topics and deleting heterogeneous contents that did not match with each grade’s spatial range made it possible for the approach to settle in South Korean elementary social studies curriculum.

- The Expanding Communities Approach with the Spiral Curriculum: from the third to the sixth curriculum

Since the 1960s, because of rapidly increasing knowledge and drastic social change, the discipline-centered approach, which stressed structure of each subject as a core of knowledge and the process of discovering and inquiring knowledge, grew more influential (Kim et al., 1989: 143). By converting an experience-centered approach into a discipline-centered approach, this
movement had a big influence on the third curriculum. In terms of scope, concepts that form the basis of each discipline were addressed instead of social functions. In terms of sequence, the spiral curriculum, which interpreted educational contents based on students’ development stages and encouraged students to learn repetitively and deeply with different levels of understanding, was addressed instead of the expanding communities approach.

Under this atmosphere, the expanding communities approach began to falter. For example, in Grade 3, students did not only learn about their own region, but studied about lives in other regions of the world. According to the approach, in Grade 3, students need to learn about a region bigger than their hometown that they learned about in Grade 2 but smaller than their nation that they will learn about in Grade 4. However, this period’s curriculum was based on the idea that if contents were interpreted in accordance with students’ development stages, it was possible to teach contents related to the world even to lower grade level students. It meant that there was no reason to wait for students’ spatial recognition to expand gradually. The unit “Life in a Variety of Regions of the World” is a good example to show this trend.

Table 4. Textbook that was based on the spiral curriculum in the third curriculum

| 1. Life in a variety of regions of the world |
| People who are in a variety of regions of the world live in different kinds of environments. Some regions are hot and other regions are cold the whole year. People even live in a desert or meadow. Let’s study how people live in these kinds of environments. |
| - Understanding about the regions: hot regions, cold regions and desert or meadow regions |
|   - Understanding about the people’s lives utilizing these environments |
|   - Understanding about the people’s lives that are the result of overcoming bad environments and enjoying their good lives |
|   - Understanding about something common and something different between my region and other regions of the world by comparing them. |
| (Revision of The Ministry of Education, 1973b: 4) |

This unit’s aim is to understand that people live in different ways as the result of adapting to their own environment. First, students learn that there are many environments on the earth and then learn about the people’s efforts to adjust to environments. Then, they learn the concept that life is different depending on which environments they live in and apply the concept to their own region. The important point is that the concept of world can be taught to low or middle grade level students through proper interpretation and the fact
that they can use that concept to relate to the region where they live.

Like this, the spiral curriculum was adapted to many parts of the third curriculum. However, if you see the whole structure of the third curriculum, the story can be heard differently.

Table 5. Grade topics in the third curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grade1</th>
<th>Grade2</th>
<th>Grade3</th>
<th>Grade4</th>
<th>Grade5</th>
<th>Grade6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The third</td>
<td>Family, school, neighborhood</td>
<td>Life of hometown</td>
<td>Life of many regions</td>
<td>Environments of our nation</td>
<td>Development of our nation, Environment of world</td>
<td>Development of our nation, Life in the world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Revision of The Ministry of Education, 1973a)

In terms of grade topics, the third curriculum started from family and broadened to world. It can be regarded as proof that the third curriculum adapted to the expanding communities approach. The third curriculum claimed to support the spiral curriculum, but it could not fully replace the expanding communities approach. It is possible to say that the third curriculum is the result of embedding the spiral curriculum into the expanding communities approach.

This trend ran on the fourth curriculum. The coexistence of the expanding communities approach and the spiral curriculum materialized more. On the other hand, the criticism that the expanding communities approach was not enough to cope with rapid changes of the world by globalization increased. As a result, the fourth curriculum was based essentially on the expanding communities approach, but it suggested a slightly different principle up to this point.

However, the expanding communities approach is not intended to be adapted to whole curriculum functionally. Students can know far places such as America or the Middle East better than a familiar neighborhood (The Ministry of Education, 1982: 149).

The expanding communities approach up to the third curriculum tried to maintain the principle that each grade focused on a certain spatial range. However, the criticism against this principle grew more serious so it became unavoidable to put world contents into the forth curriculum (The Ministry of
Education, 1982: 149-150). This action can be evaluated as the first effort to introduce world scale into low or middle grade levels. Yet, the new contents were just listed, and a relationship was not created that connected them to the students’ own environment. It is possible to mention that the fourth curriculum is the first step of transforming the expanding communities approach in the era of globalization.

Passing through the fifth and the sixth curriculums, the coexistence of the expanding communities approach and the spiral curriculum came into a stable phase. The relationship between them was expressed in the following curriculum document:

One principle is “expanding experience approach.” In other words, Grade 1 learns the fact and the phenomenon of family and school, Grade 2 up to village, Grade 3 up to city, Grade 4 state and nation related to their state, Grade 5 up to nation, and Grade 6 up to world. The other principle is “Learn from lower level concepts to higher level concepts.” It is mainly adapted to deal with knowledge from social science (The Ministry of Education, 1989: 11).

To maintain each discipline’s sequence, we intend that basic concepts are deepened and are expanded developmentally. Also, this idea was adapted in one unit (The Ministry of Education, 1994: 169).

Natural environments, human environments, economic and political concepts are the main contents that appear in social studies repeatedly. However, it is not a simple echo. Concepts in each grade are decided by students’ development stages. The understanding of the concepts deepens and advances as students move to the next grade level and the units progress. The experiences that become subjects to be understood are determined by each grade level’s spatial range of the expanding communities approach. This trend continues up to now.

This period, from the third curriculum to the sixth curriculum, can be called defense of the expanding communities approach against the spiral curriculum’s challenge. The spiral curriculum might be a good approach to deepen and advance students’ understanding of concepts; however, it was not enough to become the primary approach to design a whole elementary social studies curriculum. To make up for the spiral curriculum’s shortcomings, the expanding communities approach was utilized. It was modified to an updated version of the approach, which is adaptable to social scientific understanding.
- Finding world in Regional Scale: from the seventh to the 09-revision curriculum

Rapid globalization, especially development of transportation and communication technologies, is also causing a big change in elementary social studies. The seventh curriculum was for educating democratic citizens to cope with new society actively so elementary social studies needed to be reviewed for this purpose. As a result, in the seventh curriculum, there were efforts to add contents related to the world that harmonized with the former curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The seventh</td>
<td>Life of our hometown</td>
<td>Appearance and Aspect of life of region</td>
<td>Life and culture of our nation</td>
<td>Us in the global era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 07-revision (same as the 09-revision)</td>
<td>Aspect of Life of hometown</td>
<td>Appearance and aspect of life of regional society</td>
<td>Life and culture of our nation</td>
<td>Life in nation and us in the global era</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As in table 6, these curriculums are also based in the expanding communities approach. However, the following document demonstrates the coexistence between the expanding communities approach and the spiral curriculum:

The spiral curriculum was adapted as a sequence from simple to complicated and from detail to abstract while considering both of the social science’s basic concepts and the development of students’ time, space and society awareness. (The Ministry of education and human resources, 2001a: 13-14)

The coexistence of the expanding communities approach and the spiral curriculum can be found up to now. Additionally, one can recognize the movement to introduce global perspectives to elementary social studies curriculum. Especially, the statement, “In each grade, we introduced the perspectives of global village and remedied the expanding communities approach’s shortcomings (The Ministry of Education, 1998: 245-256)”, makes
it possible to predict the curriculum’s direction. With globalization, it is no longer difficult for students to discover global elements in their daily life. The progress of communication technology enables students to experience the things that happen in places they have never been. Students can develop an interest in things that they could not do in the past. Namely, the environments that students encounter in their lives are not the same as those that existed when the approach was born. With this restriction, the perspectives of global village were introduced to the seventh curriculum to solve the problem.

To address this urge to alter curriculums in terms of localization and the perspectives of global village, we focused on local communities, the world, and the interactions between the two. ... Especially, by introducing experiences that can find world in regional scale in Grade 3 and 4, we tried to support the restriction of the expanding communities approach. (The Ministry of Education, 1998: 236)

The experiences that find world in regional scale deal with the world that is deeply connected to the regional range each grade learns. It is not the way to list up world contents encyclopedically, but was intended to make students think about the relationship between familiar region, which is the subject of the class, and world contents. The unit “Economy to Open to World” in the first semester in Grade 4 was an example.

Table 7. Textbook contents that was based on the experiences of finding world in regional scale

| - How do the companies in our region make an exchange with the world? Minji and her sister went to buy toys. They looked similar. However, when they checked the price of the toys, they knew that the areas that the toys were made were different. Some of them were made in our country, but there were quite a lot of toys that were made in other countries. What kinds of products came to our region from other countries? Minji searched how our country trades with other countries based on a variety of materials. What kinds of products were exported from our country to other countries? |
| - Minji read an article that said Naju pear is very famous for its sweetness so it is exported to many other countries. She became curious about other products that are exported to other countries from Naju. (Omit) The products in our region were exported to many other countries. The exports are very important to our regional economy. And they play an important role in promoting our region to other countries. (Revision of Ministry of education and human resources, 2001b: 56-59) |
To introduce the perspectives of global village, in other words to adapt the experiences that find world in regional scale, this unit set the exports from the familiar region as the subject of the unit. First, by researching the products that were related to world even though they were in their own region, students started to recognize the world in their daily life. Next, by researching the facts that there were many kinds of products that were exported to many other countries, students learned of the relationship between their region and the world. The experiences to find world in regional scale are based on the concept that a region is not only connected to other regions but also connected to bigger spatial ranges such as nation or world. It is possible to say that the expanding communities approach, spanning the entire curriculum, and the expanding spatial range, moving from region to world in one unit, progress concurrently.

The 07-revision curriculum also introduced the flexible expanding communities approach.

We adapted the expanding communities approach based on students’ development stages, social experiences and social skills. The spatial range for Grade 3 and Grade 4 is hometown and for Grade 5 and Grade 6 is nation and world. In Grade 3 and Grade 4, we designed to solve the problems based on the understanding of familiar environments or regional society. Then we expanded spatial range in Grade 5 and Grade 6 and designed for understanding the social phenomenon of nation and world and for solving the problems of nation and world. When designing this curriculum, we considered a variety of spatial scales that students experience in their daily lives and reflected the world scale to utilize the expanding communities approach flexibly. (Ministry of education and human resources, 2001a: 13-14)

To adapt the flexible expanding communities approach, two considerations appeared in the 07-revision curriculum: 1)addressing the multilayer of spatial ranges in students’ daily lives and 2)introducing the perspectives of global village in each grade. The former was introduced with the intention for students to understand region more abundantly by adapting the perspectives of nation and world to not just consider relationships with family, school and neighborhood. The latter was introduced for students to cope with globalization by knowing how to move back and forth from regional scale to world scale. Also, spatial range was set by grade band such as 3-4 and 5-6. It was helpful to adjust the expanding communities approach flexibly. In the 07-revision curriculum, the experiences to find world in regional scale
increased. The following are examples in national curriculum.

Table 8. The experiences to find world in region in the 07-revision curriculum

| Grade 3 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unit2 Identity of hometown | Aim4. Understand their hometown events connected to natural and humanistic environments and understand their position based on the global perspectives. (Ministry of education, science and technology, 2008: 319-320) |
| Unit6 Aspect of many lives | Aim2. Understand the character of a variety of student cultures in hometown, regional and national levels and find out common points and differences between them by accumulating and analyzing cases. (Ministry of education, science and technology, 2008: 327-328) |
| Unit6 Aspect of many lives | Aim5. Understand the origin of holidays like Seol-Nal, Dan-O and Chu-seock and anniversaries like Independence day, Memorial day and compare them with other countries’ holidays and anniversaries. (Ministry of education, science and technology, 2008: 327-328) |

| Grade 4 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unit3 The places that are deeply connected to our region | Attention point to teach. It is desirable to reflect the trend of globalization that is possible to find in students’ daily lives, not only in their nation but also in regions in the world. Ministry of education, science and technology, 2008: 334-335) |

In “Finding World in Regional Scale,” the coexistence between the expanding communities approach and the spiral curriculum has held. However, the expanding communities approach had to be modified because there were criticisms that it would not be possible to effectively educate the citizens that are requested in the era of globalization if the approach was adapted mechanically. In detail, the experiences to find world in regional scale were introduced such as understanding economic connection and differences or similarity in students’ global lifestyles.

**Conclusion**

After analyzing the expanding communities approach in South Korean elementary social studies curriculum based on two standards, which are “the direction of expanding spatial range” and “acceptance of the criticisms against the approach,” it was possible to divide South Korean socials studies history into three periods. These are “Settlement of the Expanding Communities Approach from syllabus curriculum to the second curriculum,” “The Expanding Communities Approach with the Spiral Curriculum from the third to the sixth
curriculum,” and “Finding World in Regional Scale from the seventh to the 09-revision curriculum.”

So how did the expanding communities approach affect elementary social studies in South Korea, and how can the expanding communities approach survive in South Korea? The questions can be answered by analyzing the aspect of localization including its approach and the way it has changed.

Localization in “Settlement of the Expanding Communities Approach” can be called “localization in practical context.” The expanding communities approach in this period was just introduced from America so there were many parts that did not match the educational environment in South Korea. To ensure the approach was effective in a real world classroom, contents were eliminated that were not directly related to South Korea and new spatial ranges, like neighborhood, were established for a smooth transition. By these efforts, it is possible to say the expanding communities approach was sincerely implemented. Also, it can be stated that South Korea took an active and independent action following the foreign influence.

Localization in “The Expanding Communities Approach with the Spiral Curriculum” can be called “localization in academic context.” The discipline-centered education, which came with the modern education movement, affected elementary social studies in South Korea. The approach in this period modified its theory to coexist with the spiral curriculum by abolishing its spatial restriction. There were evidences for introducing world contents to help students even in low or middle grade levels to acquire scientific concepts. However, this change was part of the global education trend called modern education movement so it is difficult to say if this period’s modification was autonomous. The originality of South Korea was not reflected greatly because this change was the realistic modification by disciplinary thought of education.

Localization in “Finding World in Regional Scale” can be called “localization in the context of taking action against social changes.” The expanding communities approach was already localized in South Korea, but it had to be re-localized to adapt to social changes such as globalization. The experiences to find world in regional scale meant giving up the stance that understood region as just limited spatial range. By focusing on the multi-layer character of region, the cause to eliminate its restriction was justified. However, this action just kept the expanding communities approach superficially and formally to cope with social change. Even as it yielded its main idea and altered its essence to adapt to social changes, the approach survived in South Korean elementary social studies curriculum without changing its expanding direction. This kind of modification cannot be recognized as an autonomous
action of South Korea.

The history of the expanding communities approach in South Korean elementary social studies can be described as 1)settlement of the curriculum that is based on space concept and 2)maintenance of expanding direction from familiar environments to further ones. Unless the formula that expands from familiar environments to further ones is rejected or unless there is a sequence principle that replaces the expanding communities approach, it is predicted that the expanding communities approach, which is flexible and is abundant with plasticity, will stand up for many years to come.

Note
1 The government of South Korea has published its own social studies curriculum. Before the first curriculum of South Korea, there was syllabus curriculum that was based on Colorado’s curriculum. The government regularly revised curriculums. For that, South Korean curriculum has been called “the first curriculum, second curriculum, and so on.” After the seventh curriculum, the South Korean government decided to keep its main structure and complement it when the change is needed. From the seventh curriculum, the name of curriculum has been called the year that it was revised.

References
- In Japanese

- In Korean
-In English