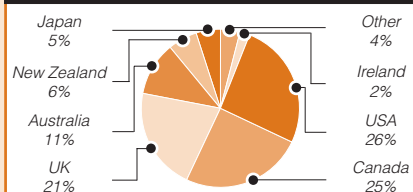


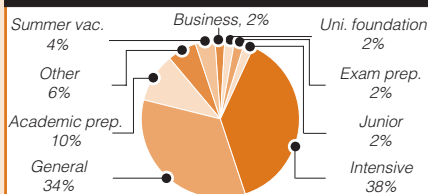
Korea's slowdown

Korean agents reported mixed results last year that resulted in stagnant student numbers overall. This contrasted with the performance of recent years, when healthy increases in the number of Korean students travelling overseas to learn a language have been recorded.

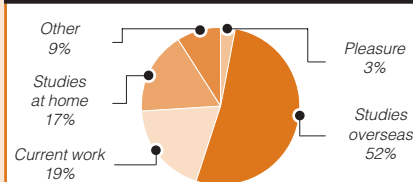
Top destinations



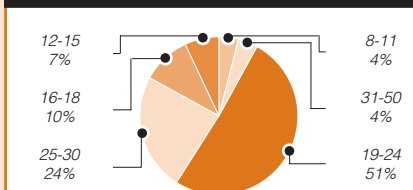
Most popular courses



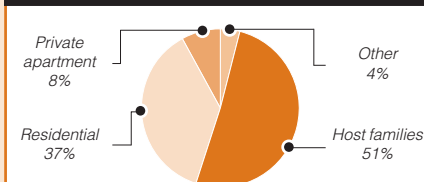
Reasons for language travel



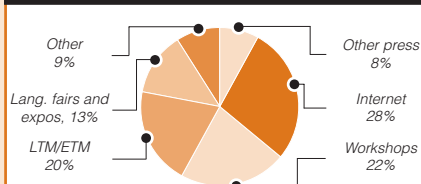
Age range of clients



Accommodation preferences



How do agencies find new schools to represent?



Key points

- The total number of students placed by the eight agencies in our survey was 7,580
- Individual agencies placed between 100 and 4,250 students on language courses per year
- Average growth of combined agency business was minus one per cent
- The average length of stay for Korean students was 16.6 weeks
- Commission rates varied from 15 to 25 per cent, averaging out at 20.3 per cent
- The average spend on tuition and accommodation per week was US\$432
- Three-quarters of agencies charged a handling fee of between US\$100 and US\$250

Market growth

The outgoing student market in Korea recorded a small decrease in numbers last year of just under one per cent, although fortunes for our respondents were mixed. Individual agencies reported results ranging from an increase in business of 30 per cent to a decrease of 36 per cent, while three agents reported that business was constant. Economic difficulties were blamed for the market slowdown, while some of those agents who had seen an increase in their business attributed results to their increased marketing efforts.

Student trends

Study abroad was particularly popular with Korean students aged between 19 and 24 years old, although the youngest age group of between eight and 11 years old showed the most growth since last year's survey, increasing from one per cent in 2001 to four per cent last year (see *Language Travel Magazine*, November 2002, page 10). The 16-to-18 year old age range experienced a decrease of seven percentage points on the 2001 figures. Agents pointed to the 19-to-30 year old group as showing most promise for the future, as

more students were learning a language for their future studies overseas. The most popular month for language travel was August, which was chosen by an average of 18 per cent of clients, while January and September were also popular months for Korean students to travel.

Language and destination trends

By far the most popular language with Korean language travellers was English, which was chosen by 84 per cent of students. This was followed by Japanese, chosen by eight per cent of students and Chinese and Spanish, which were chosen by three per cent of students respectively. The USA was the most popular

language travel destination, closely followed by Canada and the UK. Australia, Japan, New Zealand and Ireland were also noted by our respondents as popular destinations with students.

Agency business

Seventy per cent of Korean students knew what country they want to study in before going to see an agent, according to our respondents, while a further 40 per cent knew which city they wanted to study in and 22 per cent had chosen a school. Following consultation with their agent, comparatively few students changed their minds about where they wanted to study, with nine per cent switching country choice, 14 per cent changing the city and 17 per cent the school.

Forecast for 2003

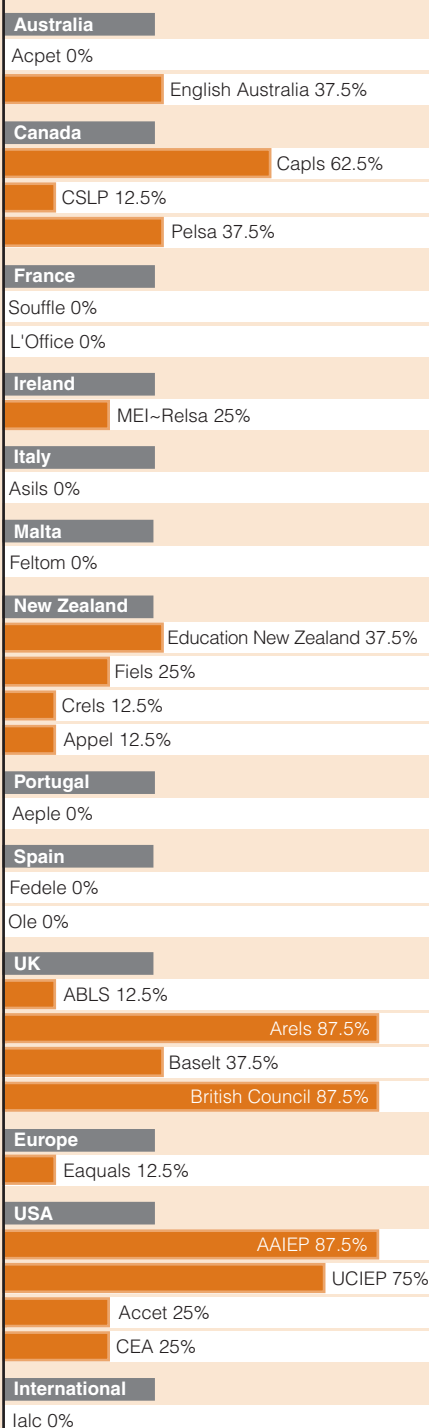
While economic considerations loomed heavily over our agents' predictions for the future, most were looking forward to an increase in agency business next year. One agent predicted that their business would improve due to increased promotion efforts on their behalf, while most of the others thought that an improving economy would encourage more students to study abroad.

Economic overview

- GDP growth was recorded at 1.9 per cent in the second quarter of 2003, its lowest point since the last quarter of 1998. It is also expected to stand at around two per cent in the third quarter of 2003. This stands in stark contrast to last year's growth of six per cent. Such poor economic performance is mainly attributed to sluggish private consumption.
- The Korea Stock Price Index (Kospi) reached a record high of 766.50 in September 2003, which was fuelled by ongoing monthly net foreign investor stock purchases and expectations for an economic recovery at home and abroad.
- The forecast for 2004 is positive with hopes that the recovery of the global economy after a three year recession will benefit Korea's exports. GDP is expected to grow by 4.3 per cent, although a rise in value of the Korean won could hamper this.

Source: Korean Ministry of Finance and Economy, Samsung Economic Research Institute

Percentage of agents who recognised each of the following organisations



Thank you to the following agencies for taking part in our survey: Han Shin Consulting/Edu-Link, Jongro International Studies, KAMC, Study ESL, Uhak.com, Uihakadvice International Education Consulting Company, Ukuhak, YBM Sisa Overseas Education Services

Korean agents named a range of language programmes they work with, including, in Australia: ACTH, Melbourne, VIC; Sydney College of English, Sydney, NSW; Pacific Gateway International College, Vancouver, BC; Shane Global Village English Centres, various; University of Victoria, Victoria, BC. **In Ireland:** LCI, Dublin. **In New Zealand:** Auckland Language Center, Auckland; Northland Polytechnic, Whangarei. **In the UK:** Colchester English Study Centre, Colchester; Harrow House International, various; Richard Language College, Bournemouth; Wimbledon School, London. **In the USA:** Kaplan, New York, NY; San Diego State University, San Diego, CA; Troy State University, Troy, AL; University of California Schools, various, CA; University of Findlay, Findlay, OH. **Worldwide:** Aspect IIA; ELS; Eurocentres.