2026학년도 2학기 외국어 시험 자료

*출처

1. **Montgomery, B., Robins-Early, N., & Kerr, D. (2026, July 7). *Big tech's lofty climate goals wrecked by energy-hungry AI*. The Guardian. (**내용 재구성**)**
2. **The Korea Times. (2026, September 7). *Prepare for era of extreme aging*. (**내용 재구성**)**

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1. Big Tech's Lofty Climate Goals Wrecked by Energy-Hungry AI

Google and Amazon are finding it more difficult to reach their climate goals because of their large investments in artificial intelligence (AI). As AI continues to grow, the two companies are using much more energy and producing more carbon emissions.

Both companies recently released their annual sustainability reports. The reports showed a significant increase in emissions, mainly because of the rapid growth of AI data centers. Building new data centers, transporting goods, and using more electricity all contributed to the increase. Google's total carbon emissions rose by 25 percent from the previous year, while Amazon's increased by 16 percent.

Google highlighted some of its progress in sustainability, but it also admitted that AI has created a difficult problem. AI data centers need large amounts of electricity and water. As demand for AI services grows, companies need to build more data centers while also trying to reduce their environmental impact. This creates a difficult balance between technological growth and environmental protection.

Amazon expressed a similar view. The company said that becoming more sustainable is not always a simple or direct process. Although its emissions increased in 2025, Amazon said it would continue to work toward its sustainability goals.

Google, Amazon, and Microsoft had presented themselves as leaders in climate action during the previous decade. At that time, many investors were interested in ESG, which stands for environmental, social, and governance issues. The three companies announced ambitious plans to reach net-zero carbon emissions and invested heavily in renewable energy projects, including wind and solar power.

The situation has changed as the companies compete to develop and expand AI. AI systems require enormous amounts of electricity, and technology companies need to build more data centers to support them. Their growing need for power is now making it harder to keep their earlier environmental promises.

Other major technology companies are facing the same problem. Microsoft reported that its emissions in 2025 were 23 percent higher than in 2020. Because the company has continued to increase its investment in AI infrastructure, its emissions may rise further. Meta reported an even larger increase: its emissions rose by 64 percent in 2025 compared with the previous year, despite its goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2030.

Google has also reported higher emissions every year since 2023. The company has mainly connected this increase to the growing amount of energy used by its data centers. By 2025, Google was no longer presenting its 2030 climate plans as specific targets. Instead, it began describing them as “climate moonshots,” meaning ambitious projects whose success is uncertain.

Another concern is the growing use of fossil fuels. Google, Amazon, Microsoft, and Meta have all made agreements to obtain additional electricity from natural gas to power their AI data centers. These agreements involve large amounts of gas-generated electricity in several US states.

The need for fossil fuels may continue to grow as more data centers are built. A recent report by the Environmental Integrity Project examined plans for 74 new gas-fired power plants that would provide electricity to data centers across the US. According to the organization, these plants could produce more than 660 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions each year if all of them are built. This amount would be similar to the total annual greenhouse gas emissions of Australia.

The rapid growth of AI therefore creates a difficult challenge for the technology industry. AI can bring major economic and technological benefits, but it also requires huge amounts of energy. For companies that have promised to reduce their carbon emissions, meeting the growing energy needs of AI while reaching their climate goals will be a difficult task.

2. Prepare for Era of Extreme Aging

South Korea is expected to have the oldest population in the world by 2060, passing Japan. This is more than a change in population statistics. It is a warning that one of the world’s advanced economies will soon face serious challenges in its pension, health care, labor, and government spending systems.

According to a 2025 report by the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage of people aged 65 and older in Korea is expected to increase from 20.3 percent in 2025 to 41 percent in 2060. This would be the highest level in the world. The percentage of people aged 80 and older is also expected to increase sharply, from 4.8 percent to 18.3 percent. At the same time, the number of older people compared with the working-age population will grow greatly. By 2060, there could be about 82 older people for every 100 working-age adults.

This is not only a problem for the welfare system. It could also slow economic growth. For many years, Korea benefited from having a large working-age population. However, this advantage is

disappearing. A smaller workforce, a growing number of older people, and greater demand for public services could put increasing pressure on the economy and government finances.

Korea's high level of poverty among older people makes the situation even more serious. In 2020, about 40.5 percent of older Koreans were living in relative poverty, the highest rate among OECD countries. Several factors have contributed to this problem. Korea introduced its national pension system relatively late, and not all older people receive enough pension benefits. In addition, many workers retire early because salaries are often based on seniority. This can make it difficult for older people to continue working.

Successive Korean governments have spent large amounts of money trying to increase the birth rate and prepare for population aging. Financial support for families, longer parental leave, and housing assistance for young couples have all increased. However, these policies have not changed some of the basic problems that make marriage and having children difficult. These include high housing costs, strong competition in education, expensive private tutoring, and unstable employment.

The recent increase in Korea's birth rate is encouraging, but it is too early to believe that the population problem has been solved. Changes in population take a long time to appear. Even if the number of births continues to increase, it will take many years before those children become part of the workforce. Korea therefore needs to follow two strategies at the same time: it should make it easier for people to have children while also preparing for an aging society that is already approaching.

This means that the government needs to focus less on short-term financial support and more on long-term changes. Young people need affordable housing, stable employment, and better ways to balance work and family life. Education policy also needs to reduce the intense competition for university entrance and the high cost of private education. Family policies should reflect changes in society and provide support for different types of families, including unmarried couples.

Korea must also make better use of the workers it will have in the future. The government and companies could consider allowing people to work longer, creating more jobs for older workers, changing seniority-based pay systems, and helping more women enter or remain in the workforce. Carefully managed immigration could also become increasingly important as the working-age population becomes smaller.

Pension reform is another urgent issue. Korea also needs to redesign its health care, long-term care, and other social programs for an aging population. The government may need to reconsider the age at which people become eligible for some senior benefits as people live longer. However, such changes should not place additional financial burdens on older people who are already struggling with poverty. Any reform must find a balance between protecting older people and keeping government spending sustainable.

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