

Family support and maintenance of ethno-linguistic identity: A case study of Korean linguistic minority children

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Abstract

This paper investigates how ethno-linguistic identity of linguistic minority children is constructed during their projects for bilingual learning. As a case study, six Korean children in a heritage language learning setting are recruited as participants. This paper adopts Focus Group Interviews as a qualitative data collection and critical discourse analysis as an analytic framework. The interview questionnaires consist of 16 questions in five categories: participants' self-reflection, family support, socializing, schooling, and media contact/leisure. In addition, supplementary interviews with the children and their mothers were conducted. There are two major findings in this study. First, many of the participating mothers' responses represent Korean immigrant parents' double-layered educational goal for their children, which is rearing 'ambicultural' children. In this process, parents' own racial attitudes or the value that parents place on teaching children about heritage history or culture affect children's attitudes towards their ethnic identity positively. Second, the ethnolinguistic identity of the children is also affected by political and cultural environments constructed by the hierarchical relationships among languages and cultures. In short, the six participants' and their mothers' responses reveal that family support, which includes parents' own ethnic identity, encouragement of Korean language and heritage, and parent's projection for children's educational goals, is a significant factor that influences the formation of ethnolinguistic identity of linguistic minority children. The implications of this study's arguments are discussed.

Keywords: Ethno-linguistic identity, Linguistic minority children, Focus group interview, Family support, Heritage language learning

Introduction

The Virginia Tech tragedy in April 16, 2007 brought our attention to the important issue of the identity of immigrant children who have been living in the U.S. as a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society. Putting aside the underlying causes of the tragedy, it is significant to note that it is not simply an issue about the killer's personal psychopathic insanity, nor a loophole in the gun control system in the U.S. The fundamental causes could be found in the deficit of public attention concerning how ethnic minority adolescents in the U.S. are growing up in terms of the particular subjectivities, identities, or cultural representations in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural environments. It also can be traced back to latent socio-cultural problems associated with him, such as his friendships, the interpersonal relationships in his family, the community he belonged to, or the larger society he had struggled with. In fact, as the killer has been described as an anti-social "loner," it seems that the killer was hardly able to feel himself a member of his community, school, or country.

This being said, the ethnic (or heritage) identity of minority children or adolescents is one of key issues worth discussing in terms of the social integration of the U.S. where peoples with diverse ethnic, racial, cultural backgrounds live together. Given that Korean linguistic minority children (henceforth, LMC) in the U.S. live in two different cultural and linguistic environments, Korean and Anglophone, it is expected that they struggle between those two different cultural boundaries. This struggle tends to affect the formation of their identity, which is a very important element in their overall developmental task. To understand the relationship between heritage language learning and the formation of ethno-



linguistic identity, this paper investigates a small group of Korean linguistic minority children in a heritage language learning setting. This paper pays special attention to how family support — parents' ambition, encouragement, heritage language use at home, etc. — affects the formation and consolidation of the Korean LMC's ethno-linguistic identity.

Main issues and methodological considerations

Ethno-linguistic identity and LMC

Ethnic identity can be defined as an innate sense, such as “feelings of ethnic belonging, pride, and positive attitudes toward the group” (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996: 142), through which people identify themselves as a member of the ethnic group. Language is considered one of the most important components of ethnic identity (Noels, Pon, & Clément, 1996) because it facilitates social interactions and represents the people who communicate with the language. Since identity is “constructed through language negotiations” (Noels & Clément, 1998: 114), language and ethnicity are mutually influential as they are used in such terms as *ethno-linguistic identity* or *ethno-linguistic vitality* (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977).

Because of ethno-linguistic identity (henceforth, ELI), a language speaker identifies him/herself with the language community; and it is also applied to second language (L2) learning. Research suggests that L2 competence and frequent use of the target language make the learner identify easily with that group (Landry & Allard, 1998; Noels & Clément, 1998), and that linguistic self-confidence promotes a higher cultural identity with that language group (Noels, et al., 1996). Since learning an L2 has potential social and personal effects, it is significant to investigate the relationship between ELI and L2 learning (Norton, 2000; Goldberg & Noels, 2006).

The relationship is especially significant for LMC who live in a society where a hierarchical order between languages is prominent and their heritage language is marginalized. LMC are supposed to encounter several essential issues from the beginning: i) whether it is the heritage language or the dominant language that purports to be their first language; ii) whether it is simultaneous or sequential bilingualism; and iii) whether it is additive or subtractive bilingualism. The development of ELI depends on these conditions: i.e. the social or cultural representations of LMC are largely determined by the essence of the status of their mother tongue and whether their heritage language is marginalized in the society in which they live. When their first language is their heritage language and their bilingualism is characterized as sequential and subtractive bilingualism, they can be called LMC rather than bilingual children.

Subtractive and sequential bilingualism of Korean LMC

Given that English is a dominant language in the U.S., Korean LMC is supposed to learn English and to be assimilated to its cultural expectations (Gleason, 2005). Consequently, they are susceptible to subtractive bilingualism, which refers to the situation that the competence of first language vanishes in the course of L2 acquisition, because their heritage language becomes marginalized during the process of acculturation through public schooling (Cummins, 1981). Lambert (1975) argued that children are more likely to be suffered from subtractive bilingualism when their mother tongue belongs to different linguistic families from L2, which is the case for Korean LMC (Chung, 1997). Under the subtractive bilingualism, accelerated by their learning of dominant language, their identity can be easily affected by the language and culture of the dominant group (Kohnert, 2002). In this sense, Goldberg and Noels (2006: 425) argued that “subtractive bilingualism may elicit negative feelings toward the original language and culture of the minority group.” Furthermore, since learning languages with different linguistic backgrounds is a great challenge and cognitive burden (White, 2003), the Korean LMC tend to experience more difficulty than other ethno-linguistic minority children (Min, 1998).

In addition, Korean LMC are typically engaged in the process of sequential bilingual development. The term ‘sequential’ (or consecutive) bilingualism is applicable to children who acquire their mother tongue before the age of three and learn another language thereafter (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). Unlike ‘simultaneous’ bilingualism, ‘sequential’ bilingualism does not guarantee parents’ assistance for facilitating children’s mastery of an L2. This is usually the case for Korean LMC whose parents are both non-native English speakers and seldom use English as a tool for communication at home (Shin, 2005). Without having an opportunity to use the parents as a resource in learning L2, Korean children

as sequential bilinguals tend to lose their capacity for the heritage language as well as the appreciation of their heritage culture.

The significance of ELI for LMC

Children learn and acquire the patterns of behavior, beliefs, and values of their parents through the intimate parent-child relationship (Rossi & Rossi, 1990), and ethnic identity is transmitted from generation to generation in the course of such family activities (Chen, 2000). However, one's ethnic identity is constantly defined and redefined (Hegde, 1998), because cultural exchanges or hybrid cultures often make ethnic minority children feel marginalized between their heritage culture and the host culture (Rumbaut, 2005). In this sense, the ELI of minority children is a complicated issue to be addressed in a simple framework. For instance, according to Rumbaut (2005), there are several factors that influence the ELI of children: nativity or citizenship (e.g., being born in the United States), various aspects of the parent-child relationship, such as children's early perceptions of their parents' subjective ethnic identity (e.g., the feeling of embarrassment or pride), parental socioeconomic status (i.e., higher-status professional parents are *more* likely to influence their children's selection of the heritage identity), and, finally, children's own proficiency of English or preference for American culture. In sum, he argues that minority children's choices concerning ELI reflect not simply their linguistic fluency but rather also exemplifies the sociopolitical factor, which determines which languages must be used in what social contexts. If a minority child chooses to switch to English, it entails that a larger acculturation process is ongoing and demonstrates the abandonment not only of an ancestral language but also of an ancestral identity.

Measurement of ELI

Plenty of research has attempted various approaches to employ an appropriate measurement for ELI: i.e., the General Ethnicity Questionnaire (Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000), Orientations for Language Learning (Clément & Kruidenier, 1983), the Language Learning Orientation Scale (LLOS; Goldberg & Noels, 2006; Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000), the Situated Ethnic Identity Scale (Clément & Noels, 1992; Noels & Goldberg, 2006), etc. However, most of the follow-up studies adopting or modifying these questionnaires or scales have not necessarily measured the ELI; oftentimes, they have surveyed adolescent participants for their ethnicity, situated identity, or orientations for language learning.

Using survey alone as a method may not be a useful way for gathering data from young children. This is also the case with using individual interview alone: children are often reluctant to express their thoughts and feelings because they assume that adults know everything already and, in addition, they are afraid to say something wrong or foolish (Maccoby & Maccoby, 1954). In the same vein, Borgers and Hox (n.d.: 15-16) argued that younger children, the less cognitively sophisticated respondents, produce less reliable responses than older children: e.g., children aged around seven to eleven are "more sensitive to social desirability, very suggestible, and very literal in the interpretation of words." This being said, this paper employs various formats of interviews: i) focus group interviews with the target group, conducted while they filled out the questionnaire sheet, ii) supplementary face-to-face interviews with each child, and iii) additional interviews with their parents (mothers). This study aims to investigate the ELI of Korean LMC, especially focusing on what factors might influence the formation of ELI, with an analytical framework of critical discourse analysis for the data collected from focus group interviews.

The Study

The main inquiries of this paper are: i) what factors have the greatest influence on the formation the Korean LMC's ethnolinguistic identities?; ii) what is the role of family support in the context of heritage language learning?; and iii) how does the participants' ELI represent their struggle in the society where hierarchical power relationships between ethnic groups and languages prevail?

The participants and the backgrounds

The participants are six Korean immigrant or long-term resident (more than 5 years) children aged 9 to 11 years old. They live in a medium-sized university city in the mid-western U.S. and attend a Week-



end Korean School to learn their heritage language.¹ The participants are recruited from a class in the Korean school in which the researcher of this study teaches them Korean literacy. They are roughly at the developmental stage at which they can construct and negotiate their own identity, and express their reflections verbally or in paralinguistic form.

Children at this particular stage show variation in their Korean and English literacy skill or proficiency level: in fact, their language proficiency in Korean/English for speaking, writing, vocabulary, and grammar skills varies extensively, which means that thoughtful interpretation of the various aspects of the Korean LMC's ELI is required. Most of the participants' fathers are university researchers or doctoral (post-doc) students, while most of their mothers are full-time housewives. Since the Korean immigrant community in the U.S. tries to maintain its heritage language and culture, Korean parents want their children to learn the Korean language and culture from such Weekend Korean schools. In this sense, the participants of this study may represent typical Korean LMC who live hybrid and ruptured lives in a society where English is dominant.

The following table 1 is a brief description of the participants' demographic information and their home and language backgrounds. All names are pseudonyms.

Table 1: Participants' demography and family background

Name	Inho (M)	John (M)	Silky (F)	Syong (M)	Dew (M)	Allen (M)	
Born in	Dec. 97	Sep. 97	Nov. 98	May 98	Jun. 98	Oct. 96	
How long in U.S.	Born in Canada	Born in the U.S.	Born in the U.S.	Arrived at 4	Arrived at 3	Born in the U.S.	
Korean	Literacy	5	5	3	5	2	1
	Speaking	5	5	4	5	2	1
English (speaking)	4	3	4	4	3	5	
Siblings	1 younger brother	Silky's brother	John's sister	1 younger brother	Eldest in 5 siblings	1 younger sister	
Parents (All Korean)	Father: Researcher	Father: Researcher	Father: Researcher	Father: Graduate S.	Father: Clerk	Single mom	

The Korean and English proficiency marked in the table is assessed by the researcher from his one year of teaching experience. Korean proficiency is categorized into two domains: Korean literacy (reading and writing Korean letters) and speaking (listening) ability; for the assessment of English proficiency, speaking ability is only estimated since the researcher had little chance to assess the participants' written English skills. Their proficiency was graded from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). It should be noted that the evaluation is comparative and perceptual rather than standardized or systematically assessed.

Methodology

Significance of Focus Group Interview

Morgan (1998) argued that, whereas individual interviews may provide an individual's thinking about a specified topic, focus group interviews (henceforth, FGIs) can allow the participants to share and compare their perspectives or experiences, providing researchers with a more comprehensive view of

¹ The Weekend Korean Schools, which are organized by ethnic Korean churches, are the most common community-based institute for teaching/learning Korean. There are over 1,000 community-based Korean language schools in the U.S., and over 60,000 students are enrolled in these schools (OKF, 2006). These Weekend Korean Schools (WKS) are a safe house where the Korean LMC are gathering around and their ethnic culture, language, and identity are respected, revived, and maintained.

the topic than that obtained through individual interviews. Focus groups are a way of listening to and learning from people, a way of gathering data about the "meanings" of an issue to a particular group (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001). FGIs tend to be apt for qualitative rather than quantitative forms of research (Edmunds, 1999), and are increasingly viewed as a valid research method, especially when a researcher is interested in gaining a deeper understanding of issues (Whitney, 2005). For example, you (2005: 714-715) utilized the FGI in a semi-structured way to discuss the Korean LMC's perspectives about the Korean language and culture. FGIs are especially useful since the researcher needed data gathered from more natural dialogues than from formal interviews.

Questionnaires used for FGIs

The questionnaires of this paper selectively adopted from three measurement scales for measuring ethno-linguistic identity: i) the Language Learning Orientation Scale (LLOS; Goldberg & Noels, 2006; Noels, Pelletier, Clement, & Vallerand, 2000); ii) the Situated Ethnic Identity Scale (Clement & Noels, 1992; Noels & Goldberg, 2006); and iii) Social Support (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Only questionnaires appropriate for the theme and the participants of this study were selected, modified, and reorganized as 'Questionnaires for ELI of LMC.' In this inventory, the factors in the three materials were incorporated and integrated into 5 categories —Self-reflection, Family Environment, Socializing, Schooling, and Media Contact/Leisure— with 16 questions in total, considering that there are some overlapping components across the materials, such as friendship, family environment, and school support. FGIs were conducted based on the questionnaires (see Appendix 1).

The questionnaires invoked critical responses from the participants through various forms of interviews. The participants were allowed to speak or write down their answers, and to provide additional reasoning for the 'why?' questions that follow: e.g., "In which language does your mom want you to speak (Please check one level)? Do you know why?" Such follow-up questions are asked to facilitate extended and deep reflections from all the participants. Since this study attempted to conduct FGIs for data-collection, the researcher directed each question to every participant in the group, and waited until all the participants have had a turn to answer. The unanswered questions were asked again later through individual interviews.

Data collection

Data gathering procedures

The researcher has been teaching the participants Korean for two hours each week over the course of a year (2 semesters). The actual data for this study are collected from three sources: i) two sessions (half an hour each) of focus group interviews, ii) individual unstructured interviews, conducted after the FGIs, and iii) follow-up (after the FGIs) interviews with parents. The FGIs are video-recorded and the parental interviews are audio-recorded. The researcher, as the moderator of the focus group interviews, asks the questions one by one. Each child is given a chance to respond to the questions. However, the turn is not fixed: any child can jump in and continue his/her talking. The interview is conducted in Korean, but the participants are allowed to respond freely in Korean or in English as they choose. As Bloor et al (2001) suggested, the researcher moderated the interviews as a facilitator, rather than a controller, and tried to ensure that the interviews were neither too lax nor too hurried.

Additional interviews with children and their parents

Unstructured individual interviews were conducted to supplement unanswered questions or unclear responses. Furthermore, individual interviews could encourage the children who participated less to reveal their ideas to the researcher (see Appendix 2). Additionally, parental interviews are conducted to triangulate the data gathered from the participating children. The actual interview questionnaires are listed in Appendix 3.

opinion to Syong, whose policy for language use might have more to do with his degree of proficiency or convenience. On the contrary, Syong has very different ELI. Even though he replied that he is a Korean (line 2), he seemed not to care much about his nationality. His comment “Half Korean, half American” (line 6) to Inho can be interpreted as a comment to himself. In line 15 and 17, he clearly answered that he speaks English because it is easier to say: Syong’s ELI is not so saliently Korean as Inho’s is.

Nationality itself is not a crucial factor for the ELI of children. Language proficiency (fluency and competence) cannot sufficiently explain the ELI, either. Though Syong was not born in the U.S., like Inho, and his English and Korean proficiency in speaking and writing are at a similar level to Inho’s (see Table 1), they have a different degree of ELI: in general, Inho showed greater inclination toward a Korean identity than Syong. Nevertheless, Dew’s case is an example that language proficiency works as an important factor for ELI.

[Excerpt 3: Q. Do you speak Korean or English at home?]

20 T: Dew?

21 Dew: *I don’t really know because I can’t speak ... any Korean. Huh...*

22 T: OK, then, which language does your mom or dad wants you to speak at home?

23 Dew: *I don’t know!*

24 T: How about you, Syong?

25 Syong: *I did...I did all of’em.*

26 T: You mean, both Korean and English?

27 Syong: *Oh, my mama wants ... (Unintelligible)*

28 T: Can you write it down in the sheet when you speak Korean and when English?

29 Inho: (cutting in) *I always speak Korean...when..* ㄱ

30 Syong: *ㄴ You are speaking English right now!*

31 Inho: *I speak Korean at my house! I never speak Korean in public.*

Inho said that he always speaks Korean (at home) (line 29, 31), and Syong answered that he uses both Korean and English at home (line 25). Their language practices in real life are very different, which discloses the difference of their ELI. Meanwhile, Dew replied that he does not speak Korean at home because he is unable to do so (line 21). In fact, though he was born in Korea, Dew is one of two students who are very limited in all four Korean language skills: he started learning Korean prior to English, but he finally developed much more proficient English than Korean. His limited Korean made him reticent during the FGIs as well as in the actual classes, although, he has been eager to learn Korean and enjoyed learning. More detailed analysis about his ELI follows in the next section.

The role of family support for heritage language learning

Aiming after heritage culture: Dew’s case

Dew started learning Korean (speaking) at three and English (speaking) at four, after he arrived in the U.S.; he began to learn Korean and English literacy simultaneously at the age of five. Since he has spent limited time learning and speaking Korean at home, his Korean, overall, is currently very limited. Since his father has been busy earning a living, and his mother must take care of his four younger brothers and sisters, he has not had the chance to learn or speak Korean at home. Meanwhile, learning English through public schooling, he has been overwhelmed by the experience of speaking English with his American friends. Now his mother worries about his Korean, and she believes that Korean school is crucial to help him learn Korean literacy and ‘catch up’ with the rest of the 1.5 generation of Korean children.

Dew’s mark-ups for the questions during the FGIs showed complicated responses: he likes both Korea and America; he thinks he is a Korean; he speaks English better; and he wants to live in the U.S.

Having these intricate responses, it is hard to tell what his ELI is like. However, his mother's responses may provide a clue. She stated:

He thinks that English is necessary in public school, and Korean is necessary for him as a Korean. (Q: You mean he himself thinks he is a Korean?) Yes, this is what I mean. I have emphasized repeatedly that "However fluent you are in English and although you live in the U.S., you are a Korean! Your parents are Korean and so are you."

Dew's case tells us about the difference between ethnic identity and ethno-linguistic identity. According to the interpretation of Dew's mother's response, Dew's ethnic identity can be saliently categorized as Korean because ethnic identity is strongly influenced by family factors, such as family ties or cultural heritage, norms and thoughts. Meanwhile, considering his limited Korean competence and its effect on his self-reflection concerning identity, it is hard to characterize his ELI. In fact, his socializing and communication, except at home, is entirely Anglophone. For instance, in the survey sheet he wrote that he has two Korean friends and "more than 10" American friends. His mom reported the same story: "Most of his friends are American. There are a couple of Korean friends in the church. The others are all American friends. (Q: Who is his best friend?) His best friends are also Americans. There are no Koreans kids in his school."

Nonetheless, since he is influenced by his parent's constant encouragement for his learning of the Korean language and culture, his ELI is hybrid, a mixture of Korean and Anglophone identities. The impact of family support on minority children's ELI is highlighted from Allen's case, which is rather contrary to Dew's case.

Aiming after host culture: Allen's case

Allen is the oldest in the class, but his Korean is the least proficient in both speaking and writing. He has really struggled in the Korean classroom: the level of Korean used in the lessons is higher than his capacity, and, consequently, he is easily distracted. When he was admonished by the teacher, he replied, "I don't know what you are talking about!" On the other hand, he seems to be proud of his talent in math and science. Allen's mother seems to have recognized that the development of his Korean proficiency is stagnant compared to that of other kids; this made her worry about him.

In contrast to Dew's mother, Allen's mother expressed a somewhat different attitude regarding Korean identity. When asked "what does he think he is?," she replied:

Allen joined Boy Scouts. He learned about Americanism there and heard about civism and American history. He already thinks himself an American. I never told him about "being Korean." ... He once said, "Your ancestry is Korean, but I'm American." (I think) American history is all about people who have immigrated into North America from other countries and settled... Parents came and settled down here...if their children are born here and live here, they are Americans!

Even though Allen's mom is sending Allen to Korean school, her stance is very different from that of other mothers. For her, maintaining Korean heritage is not a must. Allen's ethnic identity, not to mention his ELI, is conspicuously Anglophone. Since his current Korean competence is very low, it is no wonder that his self-reflection on his heritage, language competence, friendship, media contact, etc. is all Anglophone. The following comments made by Allen's mother signify the impact of her support on the formation of Allen's ELI.

There are only different races. We live here. We are Americans. People who live here are the owner of the land. It's enough to remember that our heritage is Korean! ... Sometimes, I have told him "Ask me if you are curious about Korea. He hasn't." ... People really misunderstand this. I think (Korean) parents teach their children a wrong lesson. Americans are not all whites. Peoples who live here...they are all from other countries. I think the word 'racism' itself is stupid. It's not an appropriate term for intelligent people. ... It's a global age!

The different scores of Dew's and Allen's for self-reflection and ELI must have been influenced by the significant difference in their mothers' own projection of ethnic identity and the degree of support for heritage language and culture.

Parents' ambition and the formation of ELI

Raising 'ambicultural' children

Many of the mothers' responses represent Korean immigrant parents' double-layered educational goal for their children: rearing 'ambicultural'³ children. Korean parents' ambition for their children's academic success is double-projected to both Korean society and American society. For instance, even though Allen's mother has such a strong stance vis-à-vis positioning herself or her son toward American identity, she is still concerned about Allen's learning Korean: "I want him speak, at least, basic Korean. That's why I'm sending him to Korean school. Someday he might visit Korea and have a chance to communicate with Korean people."

Another example comes from Syong's case. When Syong's mother was asked how she noticed that "he has a passion for learning and speaking Korean," she replied:

He is not afraid of returning to Korea. He thinks it could be a good opportunity. Because we always tell him that we are going to return to Korea. He takes it as granted... But, he has concerns about having difficulty in school (in Korea) because of his Korean (proficiency). He worries about what if he can't speak Korean well at that time. Since he has experienced it once (he arrived in the U.S. from Korea at four), he knows it would be tough...he really wants to do well.

All the mothers in this study keep two different scenarios in their minds: surviving in Korea and in the U.S. One project works as the centripetal force that integrates them within the category of 'authentic Korean' and the other project works as the centrifugal force that makes them endeavor to survive in the mainstream society of the U.S. Korean parents consider that the period of their residence in the U.S. is a good opportunity for teaching their children English, while they still value the necessity of Korean proficiency at an equivalent level. As a result, they are chasing two rabbits.

Parents' support and transmission of ELI

Parents' own racial attitudes (Branch & Newcombe, 1986) or the value that parents place on teaching children about heritage history or culture (Spencer, 1983) affect children's positive attitudes towards their ethnic identity. This strong tendency of ethnic socialization (Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson, & Spicer, 2006) is very common for Korean parents who are ready to even sacrifice themselves for their children's social success. This strong family support, both socio-cultural and economic, is the driving force of the transmission of ELI from generation to generation in Korean families. For example, Inho's mother commented about the reason why Inho has been able to maintain such a prominent Korean identity in comparison to other children: she said, "Maybe it is because he is still young and influenced by our thought. Maybe he thinks other way when he becomes independent later." The Korean family is highly interdependent: parents sacrifice themselves for their children, who are supposed to take care of them in their old age. Due to this family tie, Korean parents' ELI can be easily transmitted to their children during the journey of their children's heritage language learning and identity formation.

Restrictions on ethnic minority children

The transmission of ELI is also affected by political and cultural environments constructed by the hierarchical relationships among languages and cultures. Since LMC are often marginalized throughout public schooling, the maintenance of ELI is not an easy enterprise even for Korean LMC who get such strong support. For instance, John's (and Silky's) mother almost whispered as she was telling me about the situation at her children's school. "When a class prepares a play for school festival, international (ethnic) students rarely get a chance to play a leading part. Teachers do not assign the role to international students, no matter how talented they are or fluent in English." Such a situation drives

³ According to the Dictionary of Psychology (2001), the term 'ambilingual' refers to a person who has complete mastery of two languages, which is a highly challenging skill even for bilinguals. The term 'ambicultural' in this paper may be a neologism by which this paper suggests similar connotation: the person who has complete mastery of two cultures, which is hardly attainable.



parents to take a resolute stance regarding their children's language learning project. Asked 'which language is more important to your children?', Silky's mom replied, "I would put priority on English because they will live here. We felt many things from our own working experiences. Since they are going to live here, they must be fluent as native speakers."

This paper argues that it is not only the language barrier that defines the ELI of minority children. It is the degree or quality of family support, mother's and father's encouragement in its narrowest meaning, and cultural boundaries which might include home language use, community language use, friendship, etc. in the LMC's journey of heritage and host language learning. In terms of friendship, this study found that the children normally make friends with Korean or other ethnic kids. Their best friends are also ethnic minorities. For example, John's mother told me: "His best friend is Chinese American. He met him at the church. He seems to feel it. Because their parents... They are 1.5 generation. They have sympathy... for their cultural values, family backgrounds... as the same ethnic kids." This corresponds with the argument of Lee and Walsh (2003), who investigated peer relations among ethnic minority children, that it may not be the language itself, but rather colors, cultures, or ethnicity that influences friendship in minority children.

In short, the situation that the Korean LMC face is a hard challenge for them, as it is for other minority children in the U.S. Korean LMC are pressured by their parents' ambitious project – bilingual development and bicultural adaptation – which, in turn, makes them struggle through the process and form a double layered identity. In this process, the parents' resolution and educational goals affect the Korean LMC's ELI in a critical way. If they decide to emphasize their children's learning of English, the dominant language, their children's ELI will be developed as solely Anglophone. On the contrary, if parents put an equivalent emphasis on both English and Korean, children can succeed in and maintain a fairly strong Korean identity.

Conclusion and Implications

This paper is an attempt to understand how family support – parents' ambition, encouragement, or home communication – affects the formation of children's ethno-linguistic identities. To do this, it has targeted a small group of ethnic children situated in a heritage language learning setting and focused on a very specific theme: linguistic minority children's ethno-linguistic identity. This paper had to remind that, first, LMC are situated in multiple cultural, linguistic, and socio-political environments which cannot be analyzed from a simple perspective and, second, the ethno-linguistic identity of LMC is multi-layered, hybrid, and changing, rather than monotonous or fixed.

It is found that, the six participants' and their parents' responses showed that parents' ambition as a form of family support affects the participants' ethno-linguistic identity critically. Inho, who had the strongest family (mother) support, showed robust Korean identity, while Allen was in the contrary. The other four children are in-between. In Syong's case, his own reflection and language practices are in the middle of two different cultures; nonetheless, because of his mother's strong support, his general ELI is inclined to Korean identity. Dew's case is much complicated. Because of the transmission of his parents' ethnic identity, he thinks himself a Korean: however, his ethno-linguistic identity is conspicuously Anglophone since his Korean is very limited and, consequently, his language use and social/media contact are mediated by English. As it is also found in John's and Silky's cases, the ethnic identity and ethno-linguistic identity of the participants are not always resonant. They perceive themselves as Korean-American, even though their language use in socializing, schooling, media contact, etc. is mainly Anglophone. It can be inferred from their cases that family support is significant for the formation of identity: their mother and father use both languages at home, and they encourage their language learning in a balanced way.

As DaCosta (2007) argued that identity is constructed in relation to others, the Korean LMC's ethno-linguistic identity is constructed with strong influence from their parents' projection: their ethnic identity is highly influenced by the way in which their parents perceive, project, and educate them. As long as their parents see them as generations of Korean heritage, the children see themselves as Korean. The pattern of their making friendship is another example. The boundary of Korean children's friendship is restricted by the socio-cultural space of their parents. However, the actual struggle comes from the language problem. Given the social circumstance that English exists everywhere, their language use is dominantly Anglophone and their ethno-linguistic identity is somewhat hybrid and double-layered, a mixture of Korean and Anglophone, which makes them perplexed and confusing.

The situation that LMC face in multi- 'ethnic,' 'cultural,' and 'linguistic' society is very challenging by nature. Family support, in such a situation, plays significant roles in different ways: solid and consistent family support for maintaining the heritage culture and language prevents LMC from wandering among diverse cultures, values, or identities in the course of their lifelong journey. On the other hand, partial and overzealous family support, which is often driven by a highly individualized vision of educational success, forces children to be narrow-minded and self-righteous egoists. They might become 'ambilingual' or 'ambicultural' without gaining cultural understandings of multi-lingual and multi-cultural society. Such a lack of understanding of diverse cultures and various ethno-linguistic groups may abuse their bilingual competence for reinforcing hierarchical power relationships among cultures and ethno-linguistic groups.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaires for ELI of LMC

[Self-reflection]

SR1. Are you Korean or American? Why do you think so?

SR2. Which do you like the most, Korea or the U.S.? Why? (Which country do you want to live in the future, Korea or the U.S.?)

SR3. Which language can you speak better, Korean or English? What made you so?

SR4. Which language do you want to learn more, Korean or English? Why?

[Family support]

FS1. Which language does your mom want you speak, Korean, English, or both? Why?

FS2. Which language does your dad want you speak, Korean, English, or both? Why?

FS3. In which language do you speak at home? (When do you speak Korean/English at home?)

[Schooling]

SH1. What language do you use in your (public) school?

SH2. What language do you use in the after school (e.g. Weekend Korean School)?

[Socializing]

SC1. How many Korean friend or American friend do you have?

SC2. Who is your best friend?

SC3. In which language do you speak to your friends? (If you do, why is that?)

SC4. In which language do you speak at community meeting (e.g. Korean church)? (In what cases, do you speak Korean or English?)

[Leisure/Media contact]

LM1. What are your favorite TV Programs? / Who are your favorite TV stars or characters?

LM2. Do you prefer to read Korean or English book? / What was the most interesting book?

LM3. Which place do you want to travel? Is there any special reason?

* Write (or draw a picture) anything that comes to your mind when you think 'Korea' or 'America'

Appendix 2: Supplementary interview questions (Children)

1. How many languages can you speak/read/understand? (Asking student's own reflection)

2. Do you feel proud of using two languages? When is it?

3. Are you a Korean or an American? Why do you think so?

4. In what language do you feel more comfortable? Why? When?

5. How do you like your school? (How do you like your English class?)

6. How do you like this Korean school?

7. Which language (Korean or English) is more difficult for you? Why?

8. What kinds of situation makes you speak in English or Korean?

9. Who is your best friend?

10. How do you contact with your friend or relatives in Korea? (e.g. letter/email/phone-call)

Appendix 3: Post-FGI Interview questions (Parent)

[Goal Orientation]

1. what are the educational or career goals for your children?
2. Why do you send your children in this Korean school?
3. Why do you think it is worth of becoming bilingual/bi-literate?
4. Which language do you think is more important to your child? Why?
5. What, between Korean and American, does your child think of him/herself?

[Language use]

6. What language does your child use English or Korean at school or at home? When?
7. With which language do your children feel more comfortable when they communicate with you?
8. What language(s) do you speak at home? If you use a particular language only at a specific time, when is the occasion?
9. Do you often code-switch (use or mix two languages)? When?

[Language History]

10. What is their first language? Why do you think so?
11. How is the history of your child's Korean language development? How have your child developed the literacy skills of both languages? (Tell me anything you can remember)
12. Have you ever seen that they have an interest in comparing the two languages?
13. When did your child begin speaking English rather than Korean? Can you explain the situation?

[Socializing & Media contact]

14. How does your child's friendship? Who is his/her best friend?
15. What is the media (TV/Video, music, cartoons, etc.) that your child usually enjoys?
16. What book (in which language) are your child's favorites?