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Heritage Language and Culture Maintenance in the U.S.*

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In recent years, the relationship of language maintenance to culture and identity has received increased attention in the language acquisition and education fields. Korean immigrants in the U.S. form one of the biggest Asian groups and their language and cultural maintenance has been a major issue for both parents and ESL teachers. The present research is designed to investigate the cultural and social identities as well as the psychological investment factors that contribute to heritage language maintenance. Three Korean immigrant families in a small Midwest university town in the U.S. were surveyed and later interviewed. Issues and strategies concerning their children's Korean education in the U.S., coupled with the competing goal for the children to learn English were documented through parent interviews and interviews with school-aged focal children. Strategies and stances that facilitate or hinder both heritage and target language maintenance goals are presented along with participants' major reasons for heritage language maintenance in their homes and via Saturday schools. This work will assist ESL teachers and sociolinguists in situating both Korean student and parent goals in the context of shifting cultural and linguistic identities in countries where they have immigrated.

[Language and culture maintenance/ identity]

I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between heritage language maintenance and culture and identity maintenance has received increased attention in language acquisition and education fields in recent years. Many researchers (Guardado, 2002; Hong & Min, 1999; Lee,

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Falbo, Doh, & Park, 2001; Norton, 2000) claim that there is a strong relationship among identity, language, and culture maintenance. Hong and Min (1999) claim that "language is the most salient aspect of ethnic subculture" (p.167) and that the stronger the ethnic identity, the higher the language maintenance.

Korean immigrants in the US have formed one of the largest Asian groups (Hong & Hong, 1996; Hong & Min, 1999), and within this community language and culture maintenance has been a major issue both to parents and educators. Korean-Americans have had several acculturation problems; second-generation immigrants have showed heritage language loss after a significantly large first-generation immigration influx to the US in the 1970s (Hong & Hong, 1996). However, recent immigrants have shown different educational beliefs with regard to heritage language maintenance in order to prevent possible language loss in the next generation.

Tajfel (1981) emphasizes the role of group membership to explain identity, and McNamara (1997) claims that language maintenance is related to social identity and ethnicity. In this research, the relationship between three Korean families' ethnic identities and language and culture maintenance as well as their involvement in the Korean community are described. In the maintenance process, the role of parents, especially mothers, and the role of the Korean community are analyzed. The factors that contribute to the bond between ethnic identity and language maintenance are further explored.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

About 600,000 Koreans moved to the US between the 1970s and the 1990s, in what was the largest Korean immigration wave to the US (Hong & Hong, 1996; Hong & Min, 1999). Most immigrants were from the middle class and had professional careers in Korea before they moved to the US, but they could not attain the same social status after emigrating. Korean immigrants believed that the unattainability of similar professional careers was largely linked to their inability to speak English fluently. Consequently, during the period between the 1970s and 1990s, they emphasized the importance of English education to their children. They tried to assimilate themselves and their children into American mainstream society (Fillmore, 2003; Hansen & Liu, 1997).

Korean parents' strong emphasis on education is linked to the influence of Confucianism, which forms the basis of many Korean traditions. Confucianism greatly emphasizes the importance of education, so Korean parents often believe that children's academic success is related to their lifelong success (Lee, 2002). Korean parents often believe that their children will have more opportunities for better jobs if they speak

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English fluently and they successfully assimilate into American culture. However, communication between these two generations is often limited due to a language barrier: parents do not speak English well, and their children do not speak Korean well. This barrier to full communication has negatively affected the development of functional family units (Hong & Hong, 1996; Hong & Min, 1999; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). Immigrants had difficulty in communicating with their children about their values, beliefs, and traditions due to the language barrier (Fillmore, 1991).

Three out of five Confucian cardinal values emphasize the importance of the relationship between father and son, husband and wife, and the older and the younger. Koreans highly value family connections and they maintain strong family bonds, as well as close social ties with their own ethnic group. However, language and culture loss among second generation immigrants has made Korean immigrants feel as though they are losing their roots. Tannenbaum and Howie (2002) claim that immigrants' identities are often formed on the basis of their heritage cultures and languages, so losing their original culture also means being cut off from their roots; thus, maintenance of culture and language and that of ethnic identity are tied together.

In addition, Lee's (2002) study shows that immigrant children who maintained their heritage language and culture showed stronger academic achievement. Moreover, immigrant adolescents who rejected their ethnic identity or cultural values often faced identity crises in mainstream American culture. Kim and Miura (1999) describe Korean-American adolescents' struggles in the US due to culture and identity conflicts.

> Korean immigrants and second-generation adolescents experience enormous challenges involving conflicting values, norms, and expectations between their parents' native culture and American mainstream culture. Many Korean immigrant adolescents reject their own culture while simultaneously feeling rejected by the larger society around them. They feel alienated and experience identity conflict as well as intense conflict with their parents (p.3).

More recently, Korean immigrants from the 1990s have tried to prevent these kinds of problems. They have realized that acculturation into American mainstream culture while maintaining their heritage language and culture has both personal and sociocultural benefits (Cho, 2000). Consequently, they have tried to find ways to maintain their traditions and to communicate with their children in order to strengthen family bonds. These recent Korean immigrants, including second-generation immigrants, have maintained close social ties with members of their own ethnic group and have shown a strong social and psychological attachment regardless of English speaking ability or their degree of cultural assimilation (Hong & Min, 1999).

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Korean churches play a crucial role in the maintenance of Korean ethnic identity, culture, and language. Korean immigrants tend to actively participate in church activities or meetings when they first arrive in the US, even if they were not Christians in Korea. These churches are often considered good opportunities for newcomers to socialize with other Koreans. At church gatherings, they receive useful information on how to live in a new country, how to adjust to a new environment, and how to maintain their language and culture. More than seventy percent of Korean immigrants attend church, and most Korean churches in the US run weekend language schools to encourage heritage language maintenance (Hong & Min, 1999).

> Korean immigrant churches facilitate second-generation Korean children's ethnic attachment by helping them learn the Korean language and Korean customs and maintain social networks with co-ethnic friends. Thus, second-generation Korean adolescents who regularly attend a Korean church are likely to show a higher level of ethnic attachment than others (p.174).

The Korean church is a public place not only for adults but also for their children; here, children are able to maintain their culture and language and to socialize with other Korean-Americans. The present research is designed to investigate Korean families' cultural, social, and ethnic identities and values as well as the relationship between their identities and heritage language maintenance. Preferred approaches toward maintenance of their heritage language and the reasons for each are also described in the following sections.

III. METHOD

Three Korean families were recruited to explore the relationship between their ethnic identity and culture and language maintenance. All of the participants were recruited through snowball sampling (Merriam, 1998) in which the researcher asked friends to introduce Korean immigrant families who had school-aged children in the US regardless of their ethnic identity or language maintenance. The parents' educational background and length of stay in the US varied. All families had lived in a Midwestern university town near a metropolitan city for 14 to 22 years at the time of the data collection, and all three of the participating families were permanent immigrants. The following table briefly explains the demographic information for the three families.

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TABLE 1

Participants' Demographic Information

Arrived Yr	Interviewed Parent	Focal Child	Siblings
1989	Yoomi, Mother, housewife (in her late 40s)	14 year old boy: Myungchul, born in 1990 in the US	10 year old sister
1991	Sooyoung, Mother, housewife (in her early 40s)	12 year old boy: Sangho, came to the US when he was 4 months.	5 year old sister
Father: 1986 Mother: 1982	Jaemin, Father[1] (in his early 40s), runs a small business in the town	12 year old girl: Youngae, born in 1992 in the US	8 year old and 5 year old brothers

The three immigrant Korean families had adopted language maintenance policies regardless of their plans to stay permanently in the US. The families had recognized the problems faced by first and second generation Korean immigrants during the influx between the 1970s and 1990s, and had tried to avoid those problems by maintaining Korean traditions and language. Each parent and a focal child were surveyed first and interviewed later, and a second, follow-up interview was conducted where necessary. Yoomi and Jaemin were each interviewed once and Sooyoung was interviewed twice. Sooyoung explained her interesting language maintenance policy in the first interview and the second interview was conducted when her son, Sangho, was interviewed. She provided contextual information and explanations to the researcher to enhance understanding of her policies.

Two mothers were interviewed because the fathers were busy working, and the father was interviewed when the researcher visited his place of business. Each interview took between 60 and 120 minutes, and audio-taped interviews were later transcribed. The parents were interviewed first and the focal children were interviewed later; parents were present when the focal children were interviewed. Interviews were conducted in Korean in each participant's home (Yoomi and Sooyoung) or at their place of business (Jaemin) to enhance the quality of the audio recordings and level of participant comfort. Pseudonyms are used for the current study and in the transcripts.

The same interview questions (translated questions are provided in appendix A) were used for all three families. Each parent was asked to provide demographic information such as the date of their first entry into the US or their child's age upon first entry. Questions focused on the family's ethnic identity, cultural maintenance, their participation in the Korean community, and their educational policies related to their

[1] Jaemin, the father, was interviewed instead of the mother due to her full-time job.

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heritage language. Focal children were asked to describe their attitudes and practices toward maintaining their heritage culture and language. They were also asked to describe a picture as well as read and write a passage in both English and Korean to evaluate their language proficiency. For the reading proficiency evaluation, several passages from novels or storybooks were used based on age and level of Korean proficiency (i.e., high, intermediate, and low). The collected data were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Merriam, 1998); recurring patterns were categorized and the categories which emerged were then sorted into themes through constant comparisons among the data. Interviews and observations with the three Korean families were analyzed (1) to describe parents' and children's perceptions about the maintenance of cultural and ethnic identity, (2) to discern their respective strategies for maintaining their heritage language, and (3) to ascertain the role(s) of the Korean community in the process of maintenance.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Ethnic Identity

Hong and Hong (1996) and Hong and Min (1999) claim that second-generation adolescents display a strong social and psychological attachment to the ethnic Korean identity bas a result of having Korean friends and dating Korean partners despite their advanced English ability and cultural assimilation. Language maintenance in children is often controlled by parents' ethnic identity (Guardado, 2002), so the stronger the parents' ethnic identity, the higher the children's language maintenance.

In this study, focal children's best friends were Koreans and all the participants identified themselves as Korean, not as American or Korean-American even though their nationality was American. Parents' efforts to maintain their own ethnic identities in addition to that of their children were shown in their preference for children's future dating partners. Even though their children were far too young to begin planning for marriage, all three parents strongly expressed that they wanted their children to marry Koreans. This indicated the parents' desire to maintain Korean identity through the ethnic homogeneity of their successors (Hong & Min, 1999).

Yoomi, from the first family, moved to Korea in 1989 when she married her husband[2] , a minister at a church in the town. She was a pre-school teacher in Korea and continued

[2] Yoomi's husband, a priest, and Sooyoung's husband, a professor, were not interviewed, so information about their roles in their Korean language maintenance in the US were limited. According to the interviews, the husbands fully supported the wives' language maintenance policies.

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using her training in education to teach her children, Myungchul and his sister, Korean language using the Bible. Her children were born in the US, but she wanted them to maintain their heritage language and culture because of her strong ethnic identity. For example, Yoomi's and Sooyoung's children had Korean names instead of American names because the parents believed that Koreans should have names that reflect their ethnic identity. Yoomi wanted her children to live in the US and have pride in being Korean, which was the main reason why she tried to maintain Korean language and culture in her family. She claimed that Korean-Americans would forever be foreigners in the US, regardless of their degree of acculturation, English proficiency levels, or official nationality. So, they had to speak Korean in order to maintain their culture and affirm their ethnic identity.

> Yoomi: I have emphasized learning Korean because we are Koreans. In spite of the difficulties or discomfort in learning the language, we have to speak Korean because we live in the US. We look different from Americans no matter how hard we try. The differences ultimately come down to language differences, right? I think Americans will laugh at us if we do not speak Korean while living here. Americans speak English because it is their language, but isn't it funny for Koreans to speak only English in the US, even if we were born here and live here? (Interview with Yoomi)

Sooyoung, of the second family, had been in the US for almost fourteen years at the time of data collection. Her husband was a professor at a large university in the town. She studied fine arts in Korea and in the US. Sooyoung and her husband were born in Korea and their native language was Korean. They have two children; Sangho, a boy in the 7th grade, and Daseul, a girl in kindergarten.

Sooyoung maintained a strong Korean identity even after spending fourteen years in the US. All of her family members perceived Korea as their home country, even though they had US citizenship. When the children started their schooling, they expressed confusion about whether they were Americans or Koreans and whether their first language was Korean or English. When they were confused, Sooyoung repeatedly told them they were Koreans and that their first language was Korean.

> Researcher: If you are planning to live in the US permanently, your children do not have to speak Korean, do they?
> Sooyoung: They have to learn Korean because they will live in the US.
> Researcher: Why? They can communicate in English in the US.
> Sooyoung: For example, imagine a case in which an American who was born in Korea can not speak English because he/she lives in Korea. Don't you find the situation awkward? We will not be Americans even if we live here for the

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rest of our lives. (Interview with Sooyoung)

Sooyoung's family had met many Korean-Americans in four different cities in the US before they settled in the town where they currently live. Many of these Korean-Americans strongly regretted not having learned Korean when they were young. She was also very knowledgeable about the problems between immigrant parents and children when they did not maintain their language and culture. She believed that maintaining their heritage language and culture could prevent problems that she might face when her children grew up. She believed that it was very difficult for adults to learn Korean and that adults' proficiency could not reach native levels, so she taught her children Korean from infancy.

Jaemin, the father in the third family, ran a small business in the town. His family was the only participant family who spoke English at home. His wife was a Korean-American who came to the US when she was 11, so she was comfortable speaking English in her daily life and was not eager to maintain her Korean. Jaemin ran a business at which the main customers were English-speaking Americans. Consequently, they felt more comfortable speaking English at home, and Jaemin's wife was too busy to teach their children Korean due to her full-time job. They used to send Youngae to Saturday Korean school at church, but they stopped because they were too busy to give her a ride to the church. This family showed the weakest ethnic identity, and the language proficiency of the focal child was the lowest among the focal children. In other families, focal children's siblings spoke Korean fluently, even though some of them spoke with their siblings in English. However, Jaemin's sons were unable to speak any Korean.

Each of the families explained that they had tried to maintain their Korean traditions. Yoomi's and Jaemin's families watched Korean TV programs and videos, and the parents encouraged their children to read Korean books. Yoomi clearly stated that she installed a satellite TV to teach her children Korean culture and language through Korean TV programs. Each family also taught their children Korean etiquette, and they believed that watching Korean soap operas was an effective way to learn the language and culture.

All the participants, including the children, preferred eating Korean food, and tried to observe Korean traditions and Korean national holidays. Koreans use an honorific form for older people or people of higher social status, and they use a casual form for younger people or friends. Distinguishing these two forms is important because "learning how to speak politely is crucial in order to participate in any socially and culturally organized activities in Korean" (Byon, 2003, p.272). However, this requires extensive effort since immigrant children do not have many chances to learn these formal forms. They learn Korean through daily interaction with their families or friends, which means that they

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have few chances to practice the formal language. Sooyoung and Yoomi had taught the different politeness levels so that their children were able to differentiate the usages. When Daseul, Sooyoung's five- year-old daughter, met the researcher, she bowed and greeted her using honorific Korean forms appropriate to the situation. Jaemin's two sons bowed and greeted their grandmother before they went to bed. They were well aware of the tradition even though they could not speak the language. Sooyoung stated that her children did not have any problems related to language or culture when her family visited Korea once each year.

2. Heritage Language Maintenance

Each of the families was aware of the importance of heritage language maintenance. To maintain the heritage language, parents had devised several strategies, but focal children, with the exception of Sangho (a son in the second family), spoke English with their friends and siblings. They spoke Korean only with their parents because of their parents' "Korean-only at home" policy. Among the families, Yoomi and Sooyoung were very enthusiastic about teaching Korean. To maintain the heritage language, Sooyoung sent her children to Saturday Korean schools, and forced them to read Korean books. She even hired a tutor for Sangho's language improvement when they visited Korea. Sangho went to Saturday Korean school for about six years, from the time he was five years old. He stopped going to Korean school in 2001, a year after moving to the town where he currently resides, since the highest-level class at the weekend school was too easy for him. Yoomi was also eager to teach Korean to her children. She taught Korean every weekend during the school year and every day during vacations. The following table shows the families strategies for teaching Korean. Jamin's daughter, Youngae, used to go to Korean language school on Saturdays, but she stopped going when the family decided to go to an American church.

TABLE 2

Strategies to Maintain Korean

Strategy	Family using the strategy
· Writing a journal in Korean	Yoomi, Sooyoung
· Reading age-appropriate (stories or novels) Korean books	All the families
· Copying passages from a Korean bible	Yoomi
· Either parents or children watch Korean videos	Yoomi, Jaemin
· Installing Korean satellite TV	Yoomi, Jaemin
· Korean-only at home	Yoomi, Sooyoung

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· Saturday Korean language school at church	All the families
· Hiring a Korean tutor	Sooyoung
· Visiting relatives in Korea	All the families
· Frequent trips to Korea	Sooyoung
· Calling relatives and friends in Korea and having children communicate with them	Yoomi, Sooyoung

Sangho's spoken Korean was fluent enough for people to consider him a native speaker of Korean. However, Sangho's reading and writing in Korean were not as good as his speaking skills. He could read a paragraph in Korean, but he would read each word slowly like an elementary school student. Sangho and his sister communicated in Korean, but they spoke English with their friends. They were able to code switch if a friend did not speak English well. When they visited Korea, Sangho did not speak English with Korean friends or cousins.

Myungchul was born in the US and learned Korean there, but he did not speak Korean with an American accent. He did not have any problems understanding most Korean soap operas that he watched, and his writing and reading were good enough to read the Korean Bible every day. Youngae communicated with her grandmother and acted as an interpreter between her brothers and grandmother, but she spoke English to communicate with her parents and brothers as well as friends. She played an interpreter role in the family, but she stated that she was very uncomfortable speaking Korean in front of other Koreans because she believed that her Korean did not sound correct. The following table is a description of the focal children's language proficiency.

TABLE 3

Descriptions about the Children's Korean Usage

Family	Focal Child
Yoomi	Myungchul could understand old Korean language, so he understood Korean soap operas set in the 1700s.
Sooyoung	Sangho did not have any foreign accent when speaking Korean, and could code-switch between honorific and informal forms.
Jaemin	Youngae could understand most Korean and played an interpreter role between her brothers and grandmother, but felt more comfortable speaking English.

Immigrant parents wished to maintain their heritage language because of their strong ethnic identity, but their children tried to maintain the language as a consequence of explicit parental wishes. In this case, as Byon (2003) claims, children's educational motives were weak, but parents' efforts and ethnic identity supported their learning. Korean parents' control over their children was stronger than that of western parents',

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and children were educated to obey their parents' will, regardless of their desires (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). The following table describes reasons for language maintenance in the participant families.

TABLE 4

Reasons for Language Maintenance (RLM)

Family	Parents' RLM	Focal Child's RLM
Yoomi	Strong ethnic identity: she taught her children Korean first [Korean-Only]	Myungchul followed his parents' will. He could not speak English when he first entered school.
Sooyoung	Strong ethnic identity: she taught her children Korean first. [Korean-Only]	Sangho had learned to speak Korean to communicate with his parents. He believed that his parents' English was not good enough to communicate with him.
Jaemin	He wanted to maintain the heritage language 'to bond their family together.' However, only his family spoke English at home.	Youngae's grandmother moved in with her family one year ago, and she played an interpreter role between her grandmother and brothers who do not speak Korean.

The main reasons for maintaining Korean language proficiency were in relation to the parents' ethnic identity. Each of the parents was concerned about communication between grandparents or relatives and their children. Sooyoung and Yoomi often called the children's grandparents in Korea, and the grandparents almost always wanted to speak with their grandchildren over the phone. Jaemin's mother-in-law recently moved into his house but she did not speak English at all. This language barrier motivated the family to work harder to learn Korean. Youngae had learned Korean at Saturday language school and played an interpreter role between the grandmother and her younger brothers who could not speak Korean. Jaemin believed that all families needed one common language that every family member shared, and that Korean might be a better choice than English because he and his mother-in-law were non-native speakers of English. Regardless of his will to maintain Korean, the language spoken at home was English, and he had difficulty recalling some Korean expressions and nouns during the interview with the researcher.

Yoomi's and Sooyoung's strong policy toward heritage language maintenance resulted in English acquisition problems when Sangho and Myungchul entered school. Yoomi and Sooyoung were well aware of the fact that their stubbornness with regard to heritage language maintenance could slow down their children's English acquisition, but they had not changed their language education policy. When the focal children first went to school at age five, they did not speak English well. Even though teachers finally decided to leave them in mainstream classes, teachers seriously considered placing them in an

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ESL class. The mothers had not given up teaching Korean even after their children's initial struggles with English at school, and they did not regret making the choice. The focal children overcame their difficulties and have not since had any problems speaking English. Their English as well as their Korean were fluent enough to be considered native speakers of both languages.

On the other hand, the children did not exhibit a strong ethnic identity like their parents. They did not want to be different from their peers (Fillmore, 2003), so they spoke in English with their peers at school, even with their Korean friends. However, they spoke in Korean at home since they did not want to disobey their parents. Tannenbaum and Howie (2002) claim that there is a strong relationship between children's positive feelings toward their parents and language maintenance; a connection also exists between perceptions of family cohesion and heritage language maintenance.

In this case, the children's motivation was linked to their family traditions. Myungchul and Sangho were the first sons in their families, which meant that their parents considered them successors. Under the influence of Confucianism, Korean families strongly believed that the first son should carry out ancestral rites and, thus, lead the family. The focal children did not say that they obeyed their parents more than other siblings because they were the first sons, but, for both Sangho and Myungchul, the major motivation for language maintenance was consideration for their parents. Sangho and Myungchul tried to speak their heritage language since they thought that their parents' English was not fluent enough to communicate. Youngae, who was the first child in her family, did not try quite as hard to speak her heritage language as her parents' English was good enough to communicate, and her mother did not force her to learn or speak English at home.

Further encouragement was provided when they went to Korea or met other Korean people. Korean people praised them for their high level of Korean proficiency, so it enhanced their motivation. Sangho did not like to go to weekend Korean school when he was young, but later appreciated his mother for teaching him Korean since everyone praised him for his native-like abilities. He enjoyed receiving the praise, and he became proud of having the power to communicate with relatives in Korea and Korean people in the town.

> At first, I did not like learning Korean. The Saturday Korean class was boring. However, I now like having the ability to speak Korean. I do not speak English at all when I visit Korea. I do not want people to think that I am a Korean-American. I speak Korean with my sister and parents because I think my mom does not understand me when I speak English. (Interview with Sangho)

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The focal children were too young to understand their parents' rationales for their heritage language maintenance policies, but they obeyed them anyway because they were educated to do so, regardless of their own will. Guardado (2002) emphasizes the importance of the school environment for language maintenance, and it was this that posed biggest challenge for the participants. Sooyoung said that it was really difficult to maintain the children's heritage language since the children went to an American school where they spoke only English all day long. Children learned and thought in English, so they felt much more comfortable speaking in English. In addition, they were too young to understand the emphasis their parents placed on language maintenance.

In addition to language, the participants kept Korean traditions alive through Korean community gatherings—especially at Korean churches. The Korean churches in the town played an important social role as well as for maintaining traditions and language. All of the participants attended Korean churches, with the exception of Jaemin's family. His family went to a Korean church, but recently started attending an American church. Yoomi's family went to a Protestant church and Sooyoung's family went to a Catholic church. One of the six Korean churches in the town ran Saturday Korean School and all of the focal children attended the school at one time or another. Notably, Yoomi's husband had been a minister in one of the Korean churches. Families celebrated national holidays together and met Korean people at church. The majority of the parents' friends, with the exception of Jaemin's parents, were church members. And the children also had Korean friends at their schools and churches.

Guardado (2002) claims that parental input is insufficient to maintain the heritage language, but rather that there must be a linguistic community where children can share the language. In this research, the central linguistic community for the participants was formed by several Korean churches in the town. Two of the participant families, excluding Jaemin's family, maintained their Korean culture and language through membership to these churches.

V. CONCLUSION

Despite numerous difficulties, the Korean families have tried to maintain their heritage language in the US. Sooyoung concluded the interviews with a comment on the difficulty of language maintenance. However, she did not abandon her language maintenance policy since she believed that Koreans, no matter where they live, had to learn Korean simply because they were Korean, regardless of their official nationality. Her strong ethnic identity encouraged her to maintain the heritage language in spite of the difficulties in doing so in the US.

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The role of the Korean community was a crucial factor in maintaining their heritage language, but this research argues that the more important factor affecting maintenance was the mothers' sense of ethnic identity. Dosanjh and Ghuman (1997) claim that the stronger the mother's will is to maintain the heritage language, the better their children speak the language. Jaemin, a Korean-born immigrant, and his wife, a second-generation immigrant, communicated in English with their children and each other. Jaemin's wife was the only second-generation immigrant among the participants and felt more comfortable speaking in English than in Korean. She spoke Korean, but she did not identify herself as strongly as an ethnic Korean as the other mothers did. Furthermore, they did not attend Korean churches or other Korean community events any more. As a result, their oldest daughter showed the lowest Korean proficiency among the focal children, and their sons could not speak Korean at all.

This research mainly focused on parents' ethnic identities and the role of community in heritage language maintenance, but numerous factors such as class, economics, and the academic background of parents can also influence maintenance or loss. Among the participants in this study, there was a class difference between the other two families and Jaemin's family; Jaemin belonged to the working class, and the others belonged to the middle class, both in the US and in Korea. An exploration of the language proficiencies among different classes or with regard to other variables is recommended for further studies.

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APPENDIX A

Parent Questionnaire[3]

Name:

E-mail:

1. What is your native language? If you have more than one native (heritage) language which you speak equally well, please list them.

2. What is your husband/wife/partner's native language?

4. Is your husband/wife/partner also here? If not, where is he/she?

5. Please list your child(ren):

first name:

gender:

date of birth:

For each child please give the following information:

1. Date of arrival in the U.S. and age at arrival

2. Did your child(ren) study English before coming to U.S.? If so, how long?

3. Do your child(ren) (or have they) attend(ed) ENL classes here in the U.S.? How long?

4. How would you judge the English proficiency of your child(ren)?

a. verbal ability b. literacy skills

5. How would you judge the language proficiency of your child(ren) when speaking/reading/writing your native (heritage) language?

a. verbal ability b. literacy skills

6. Did they attend school in your native country? Which grade(s)?

7. What language(s) do you speak with your child(ren)?

a. in your own apartment/home

b. when you are in public places

Do you speak one or another language exclusively or predominantly with them? Does your husband/wife/partner speak one or another language exclusively or predominantly with your child(ren)?

8. What language(s) do your child(ren) speak with one another? In which situations do they speak your heritage (native) language and in which situations do they speak English with one another?

9. If you speak your native language with your child(ren), what reasons do you give them for doing so?

10. Do you have any rules/agreements regarding the child(ren) speaking your native language?

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[3] The original questionnaire was written by Dr. Martha Nyikos (Indiana University) and the current study used a revised version.

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11. What opportunities do your child(ren) have to communicate with others (playmates, grandparents, relatives, visitors) in your native language? Church, parties, grocery store, restaurant etc.
12. From the time your child(ren) first came to the U.S. how often and for what length of time have you traveled back to your native country with your child(ren)?
13. During your visits to your native country, has anyone noted any change in your child(ren)'s native language proficiency?
14. Do your child(ren) mix their languages? Explain. If they do, how do you feel about it?
15. When your child(ren) make errors in their native language, how do you feel about that? Do you tend to make any comment regarding them?

Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Level: Advanced Adult Learners

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