SOCIOCULTURAL IDENTITY AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING: A STUDY OF KOREAN STUDENTS IN AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate

School of the Ohio State University

By

Choon-hwa Lee, M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

2001

Dissertation Committee: Approved by

Dr. Keiko K. Samimy, Advisor

Dr. Amy Shuman

Dr. Alan R. Hirvela

Advisor

Education

Keiko Samimy
ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the relationships between acculturation and SLA among Korean undergraduate students at an American university. A survey of 115 students and case studies of five students were conducted. The majority of students chose bicultural adaptation as their strategy for acculturation. They were not culturally assimilated although some of them exhibited linguistic assimilation. Students who adopted a high bicultural tendency reported the greater level of English proficiency. The results of multiple regression showed that age of arrival, American acculturation (social contact with Americans and English use), and gender, were important predictors of English proficiency. Overall the results of the case studies supported those of the survey. Students sought for a sense of belonging and emotional support in their intercultural contact, which sometimes superceded their desire to learn English. Students tended to fulfill these needs by associating with non-American or ethnic American friends, which indicates that students' emerging cultural identities are multicultural ones. They expressed difficulties in making white American friends because of racial segregation and some Americans' sense of superiority and prejudices against Asians. Some students' negative experiences with, and perceived prejudice from, Americans caused them to develop negative images of themselves and all Americans, which deterred them from seeking contact with Americans. Students also expressed the importance of personal and intimate relationships with
Americans in order to improve their English proficiency. Both integration into American society and positive acceptance of native cultural and ethnic identity, which was accompanied by a sense of belonging and emotional security, seemed to be important processes for their achievement of successful acculturation and second language learning. Therefore, confidence in native cultural and ethnic identity should be encouraged in order to provide the psychological capacity to deal with acculturation stresses. The researcher recommends utilizing Korean Americans as tutors for Korean students in the ESL program and collaboration between the ESL program and the university's Korean program. Also, the researcher suggests that the ESL program be an agent of students' identity enhancement through emphasizing students' native culture and the empowerment of students using critical pedagogy.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am very grateful to my advisor, Dr. Keiko Samimy, for her insight, encouragement, and support for this project. Through her teaching and research, Dr. Samimy provided this study with invaluable inspiration and impetus by introducing me to the issue of identity in second language learning. Without her positive attitudes and continual encouragement throughout this project, it would have been difficult for me to survive the long journey.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Amy Shuman for giving me an insightful perspective on this project. Through the work in the Korean Community School and the Korean Community, she introduced the notion of identity and the importance of multiculturalism to this project. I also appreciate her encouragement and support throughout my years in graduate school. It has been a privilege to work with Dr. Shuman in the graduate school.

I also thank Dr. Alan Hirvela for his support throughout this project. His interest in, enthusiasm for, and comprehensive knowledge of Korean ESL students were invaluable. He read my dissertation drafts with great care and insight, and made a great contribution to forming research questions, conducting interviews, and organizing the structure of my thesis.
I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Dr. Janet Henderson, Dr. Chan Park, and Dr. David Min. Although they were not in my dissertation committee, they gave me useful suggestions in methodology and structuring the survey questionnaire in the study.

I also appreciate the 115 Korean students who participated in this study for their cooperation. They showed me great understanding and sympathy despite my sometimes intrusive emails and phone calls for the survey. I am especially grateful to the five students who participated in the case studies. They generously gave their time and opened their homes for this project. Lastly, I thank my roommate, Trudi, for her encouragement and for unselfishly giving her time to proofread my dissertation.
VITA

December 28, 1965 .................. Born ~ Taegu, Korea

1992 .................................. M.A. English Education, Kyungpook
National University, Korea

1994-1997 ......................... High school English teacher
Kyungki, Korea

1999-2000 ......................... Graduate Research Associate,
Center for Folklore Studies
The Ohio State University

1998-present ...................... Korean teacher
The Korean American Community School
of Central Ohio, Columbus, OH

2000-present ...................... ESL teacher
The Community Refugee Immigrant
Service, Columbus, OH

2000 .................................. The present research received the Graduate
Student Alumni Research Award (GSARA)

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major field: Education

Studies in: Foreign and Second Language Education: Dr. Keiko K. Samimy

Research and Statistics: Dr. Janet Henderson

ESL Writing: Dr. Alan Hirvela
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................... ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ............................................................................................... iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA ..................................................................................................................... vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................... x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................................................. xii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapters

1. **INTRODUCTION** ................................................................................................. 1
   1.1 Background of the Problem ................................................................. 1
   1.2 Purpose and Objectives of the Study .................................................. 6
   1.3 Significance of the Study ......................................................................... 8
   1.4 Research Questions .................................................................................... 9
   1.5 Definition of Terms .................................................................................... 9

2. **REVIEW OF LITERATURE** ........................................................................... 13
   2.1 The relationships among language, culture and identity ..................... 13
   2.2 Second language acquisition and cultural identity .............................. 14
   2.3 Measurement of acculturation ............................................................... 25
   2.4 Demographic Variables ............................................................................ 27

3. **METHODOLOGY** .......................................................................................... 30
   3.1 Population and Sampling ...................................................................... 30
   3.2 Instrumentation ......................................................................................... 32
   3.3 Data Collection ......................................................................................... 39
   3.4 Data Analysis ............................................................................................ 40
   3.5 Limitation of the Study ............................................................................. 41
4. FINDINGS ............................................................................................................. 43
  4.1. Findings of the Survey Study ....................................................................... 43
    4.1.1. Data Sample ............................................................................................. 43
    4.1.2. Demographic Information ...................................................................... 44
    4.1.3. The Characteristics of Korean Students' Acculturation ...................... 47
    4.1.4. The characteristics of Korean students' Self-perceived Korean Proficiency and English proficiency ......................................................... 54
    4.1.5. The relationships between self-perceived English proficiency and self-perceived Korean proficiency, acculturation, and demographic variables .................................................................................................................. 55
    4.1.6. The Predictors of Self-reported English Proficiency ........................... 58

4. 2. Findings of the Case Studies ....................................................................... 63
    Case 1: Jin ........................................................................................................ 63
    Case 2: Chui ...................................................................................................... 73
    Case 3: Sung ..................................................................................................... 83
    Case 4: Sue ....................................................................................................... 91
    Case 5: Jay ....................................................................................................... 103
    Summary of the Case Studies ......................................................................... 111

5. DISCUSSION ..................................................................................................... 127
    The Research question 1: What are the characteristics of Korean students' acculturation? ................................................................. 128
    The research question 2: What are the characteristics of Korean students’ self-perceived Korean proficiency? ........................................ 130
    The research question 3: What are the characteristics of Korean students’ self-perceived English proficiency? .................................... 131
    The research question 4: What are the relationships between dependent variable, self-perceived English proficiency, and independent variables such as, self-perceived Korean proficiency, Korean and American acculturation, and demographic variables? .......... 132
    The research question 5: To what extent are Korean students’ American acculturation, Korean acculturation, self-perceived Korean proficiency, and demographic variables meaningful predictors of their level of self-perceived English proficiency? .... 134
    The Research question 6: What are the Korean students’ perceptions of their cultural identities in the process of acculturation and SLA? .... 137

6. CONCLUSION .................................................................................................. 140
   6.1. Conclusion and Implication ....................................................................... 140
   6.2. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research ................................. 150

APPENDICES
   The survey questionnaire ............................................................................... 152

REFERENCES ...................................................................................................... 161
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Item description of Korean and American Acculturation</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age of the respondents</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Years in the U.S.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Residential status</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Intended length of stay in the U.S.</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The mean of Years in U.S., Age, American Acculturation, Korean Acculturation, English proficiency, and self-perceived Korean proficiency of three groups divided by residential status</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Comparing the mean of Korean and American Acculturation</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Correlation among Dimension of American acculturation</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Correlation among Dimension of Korean acculturation</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The correlations among Dimensions of Acculturation across cultures</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Acculturation types: Assimilation, integration, Rejection, and Deculturation</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Means of Self-perceived English proficiency of four groups</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The mean difference of Self-perceived English proficiency among four groups</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The mean of students’ self-perceived Korean proficiency</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The mean of students’ self-perceived English proficiency</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16 Correlations between Gender, Age, Age of arrival, Years in the U.S, Korean/American acculturation, Self-perceived English proficiency, and self-perceived Korean proficiency .................................................................56

17 Correlations between Gender, Age, Age of arrival, Years in the U.S, Korean/American acculturation, Self-perceived English proficiency, self-perceived Korean proficiency and dimensions of Acculturation .........................57

18 Multiple Regression: Overall American Acculturation score, Overall Korean Acculturation score, and demographic variables as predictors of English language proficiency .....................59

19 Multiple Regression: Dimensions of Acculturation and demographic variables as predictors of English language proficiency ...............................................................60
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conceptual framework of the multiple regression
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Problem

People in minority groups in the U.S., whether they are recent immigrants or second or third generations, may ask themselves how to keep a balance between their ethnic and cultural heritages and mainstream culture. They may experience conflicts between the two worlds because intercultural and language contact usually entail changing one’s sense of self, behavior, values, and worldviews, and challenge cultural identity. During the intercultural contact and acculturation process, they presumably continue to negotiate their cultural identities.

Recent immigrants in the U.S. may experience more difficulties in the process of acculturation into a new society, especially when the gap between two cultures or languages is large. The lack of both the cultural knowledge and proper behavior mode of the target language group may impede both adjustment and second language acquisition in a new society because language acquisition involves not only acquisition of linguistic skills but also acquisition of cultural knowledge, values, and norms of the target community.

In addition to the language barrier and cultural differences, immigrants in the U.S., for example, are confronted with assimilation, or “Americanization,” pressure from the
mainstream society. Minority students’ language as well as their native culture in the U.S. can be regarded as impediments to adjustment in a new society and have been a primary target in the assimilation movement. According to Ruiz (1984), the perspective of “minority language as a problem” has pushed minority groups to replace their native languages or dialects with standard English.

Even some second and third generation minority groups may struggle between assimilation pressure and the maintenance of native culture and language. As can be seen from Garcia’s (1997) report that 42% of second and third generation Korean families want their children to speak Korean at home, many ethnic group members do not lose their native language because they regard heritage language as an indicator of cultural affiliation or identity (e.g., Buriel, 1984; Fishman, 1989; Lima & Lima, 1998). Without proper institutional or social supports, which incorporate minority groups’ native culture and languages in their education process, the children from minority groups may be less motivated to keep or learn their original culture. Also, the children of minority groups may regard their families’ and ethnic communities’ desire to transmit cultural heritage to them as a burden.

Since the mid-seventies, researchers in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) have studied these minority immigrants’ SLA in terms of the sociocultural process and tried to find the relationships between SLA and acculturation (Lambert, 1977; Schumann, 1978a, 1978b, 1978c, 1987; Krashen, 1980, 1981; Krashen & Scarcella, 1980; Young & Gardner; 1990). Some of these SLA researchers adopted acculturation as a linear or unidirectional process, which implies that acculturation is giving up one’s native culture in order to assimilate into the target culture (Schumann, 1978a). Giles and
Byrne (1982), for example, state that, as individuals become more acculturated in a new society, they are assimilated into the culture, resulting in the loss of the native culture. Some SLA researchers argue that minority group members second language proficiency depends on the level of one’s acculturation in a new society (Schumann, 1987) and they will inevitably lose proficiency in their first language as they acquire proficiency in a second language (Lambert, 1977). The basic assumption of these studies is that immigrants’ native cultures and languages are a hindrance to acculturation into the majority society and SLA.

Meanwhile, in the 1990s, some researchers criticized the language policy established from the assimilationists’ viewpoints. Syed and Burnett (1999) argue that the linear model of acculturation can place a tremendous amount of pressure on those in the process of cross-cultural adaptation. Liebkind (1999) points out that most of the research on the social psychology of language conducted in the 70s and 80s represents a mainstream reaction to the ethnic revival carried out by mainstream researchers who adhered to mainstream theories of and attitudes toward minorities. Liebkind also claimed that even if proficiency in one’s own language declines as a result of the shift to a dominant language, a loss of ethnic and cultural identity does not necessarily occur. In other words, linguistic assimilation does not necessarily mean cultural assimilation.

In addition, according to proponents of bilingual education, second language learners’ native language facilitates second language acquisition in terms of both a cognitive perspective and emotional and psychological perspectives (Cummins, 1979, 1981b, 1986, 1984; Wong Fillmore & Valadez, 1986). Cummins argues that ‘common underlying proficiency (CPU)’ enables skill acquisition in the first language to transfer to
skill acquisition in the second language and facilitates second language acquisition, academic language skills in particular. Cummins’ argument seems to have important implications for minority students’ education including language education. According to Cummins, American educators should support minority students’ native language by including the native language in the school curriculum. In addition, Cummins argues that minority educators should pay attention to and promote minority students’ cognitive, academic language proficiency (CALP) rather than superficial language fluency such as interpersonal oral proficiency, which is rather easily acquired and usually depends on the length of residency in the target language community.

Recent studies have found that second language learners’ strong identification with the majority community does not always lead to assimilation, loss of native culture and ethnic attachment, or loyalty to their ethnic community (Pu, 1994; Bosher, 1995). Allendoerfer (1999) argues that Vietnamese immigrant students generate their own unique culture during the process of adjustment and second language learning in American society, which is neither purely Vietnamese culture nor American culture. Bosher’s study shows that students from the Hmong immigrant community possess bicultural identity that is selectively adopted from the Hmong and American cultures. According to Bosher, Hmong students’ English proficiency is positively related not only to their American behavior and social contact with Americans, but also to Hmong values and attitudes, and these variables are associated with high self-esteem.

Also, some studies have identified the negative social and psychological consequences of the loss of native or heritage language and culture (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980; Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987; Phinney, 1991) and minority groups’
desire and benefits of the maintenance of native language and culture (Fishmen, 1991; Campbell & Peyton, 1998; Gutierrez, 1997, cited in Bosher, 1995; Kondo, 1998). According to Phinney, developing a mainstream identity is important in addition to an ethnic identity in order to maintain high levels of self-esteem. The results of these studies imply the importance of maintaining ethnic languages and culture for many ethnic minorities and of incorporating their linguistic and cultural identity into the educational process.

Is assimilation into mainstream American culture to obtain fluent English necessary for members of minority groups? Does becoming American or succeeding in American society require abandoning one’s native language and native cultural identity? Does preserving one’s native culture and language impede the process of second language acquisition? Are members of minority groups willing to relinquish their original cultural identity to acquire a second language and succeed in American society? It is also important to remember that there are a variety of differences from group to group and from individual to individual in terms of acculturation types and attitudes towards their native culture and language (Allendoerfer, 1999). Therefore, care should be taken in generalizing about individuals and groups when discussing minority groups’ acculturation and second language acquisition.

Considering the increasing interest in multicultural, multilingual education among American educators, it is important to investigate the sociocultural identities of ethnic or minority group members, their relationships to second language acquisition, and their perceptions of cultural identities and SLA from their own viewpoints. In addition, the number of Korean immigrants has continuously increased since the Immigration Act of
1965 that permitted an increased number of Asian immigrants, including Koreans to come to America. Recently, as more of these Korean immigrants’ children come to the age of entering college and a number of Korean international students enter American universities, there is a need to provide American educators who are in charge of Korean students with information about their students. Although there are some studies on Korean Americans’ or Korean immigrants’ sociocultural adaptation in the United States (e.g., Hurh, 1980; Hurh & Kim, 1984), few studies have been conducted on the subjects of relationships between and perceptions of sociocultural identity and second language acquisition.

1.2. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The present study investigates the relationships among acculturation, native language proficiency, and second language acquisition of Korean students who are attending an American university. Also, the present study explores affective and social variables and Korean students’ perceptions of their linguistic and cultural identities in the process of acculturation and SLA.

The objectives of the present study are to investigate:

1. Korean students’ acculturation in terms of language use, social contact, behaviors, attitudes, and values.

2. the relationships between Korean students’ level of American/Korean acculturation, demographic variables, and self-perceived Korean proficiency, and self-perceived English proficiency.

3. affective and social variables involved in acculturation and SLA
4. Korean students' perceptions of acculturation and second language learning.

5. insights into how language teachers assist Korean students in their teaching practices.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the multiple regression in the present study. The dependent variable is level of self-perceived English proficiency and the independent variable in the study is level of American acculturation, level of Korean acculturation, the level of self-perceived Korean proficiency, and demographic characteristics.

**Independent variables**

- Level of American Acculturation (Language use, behavior, social contact, attitudes and values)
- Korean Acculturation (Language use, behavior, social contact, attitudes and values)
- Demographic information
- Level of Korean proficiency

**The dependent variable**

Level of English Proficiency

---

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the multiple regression
1.3. Significance of the Study

The results of the present study will contribute to knowledge of the relationships among Korean students’ sociocultural identities, native language proficiency, and English proficiency in order for language professionals who serve Korean students to improve their pedagogy for Korean students, one of the increasing minority groups in American educational institutions. The understanding and consideration of Korean students’ cultural identities, affective and social variables which may be related with SLA in the process of acculturation will also contribute to adequate choice of teaching materials and language planning as well as developing appropriate educational intervention that caters to Korean students’ cultural and linguistic needs.

According to Syed and Burnett (1999), the manner in which language and language education mediate this process of identity negotiation can have an impact on how these individuals perceive their cross-cultural adjustment and SLA. Cummins (1996) also points out that when educators incorporate minority group students’ cultural identities and native language into second language education, the result will be the empowerment of minority students in the educational setting. In addition, the incorporation of minority students’ identities into the school curriculum will contribute to providing a basis for as the foundation of multicultural and multilingual education in the U.S. and other countries.

In terms of theoretical aspects, the results of the present study will show how Korean students’ acculturation into American society and maintaining Korean culture are related to their SLA. Also, the results of the present study will add perspective to the results of previous studies that have explored the relationships between social and
affective variables and SLA, which can serve a basis for future research on the impact of these factors on second language acquisition.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the major characteristics of Korean students’ acculturation?

2. What are the major characteristics of the level of Korean students’ Korean proficiency?

3. What are the major characteristics of the level of Korean students’ English proficiency?

4. What are the relationships between Korean students’ level of English proficiency, level of Korean proficiency, acculturation, and demographic variables, such as, gender, age, age of arrival, years in the U.S., and residential status?

5. To what extent are Korean students’ acculturation, the level of Korean proficiency, and demographic variables meaningful predictors of their level of English proficiency?

6. What are the Korean students’ perceptions of cultural identities in the process of acculturation and SLA?

1.5. Definition of Terms

**English proficiency**

English proficiency refers to communicative competence that includes grammatical, discourse, and sociolinguistic competencies (Canal and Swain 1985) in English. In the present study, English proficiency will be represented by scores of self-
perceived English proficiency measured by the modified ‘Can-Do scales’ (Clark, 1981).
The Can-Do scales for the present study assess language proficiency in speaking,
listening, reading, and writing in English. Five items assess each of the four language
skills, and the responses for these scales are based on a six-point Likert scale. Scores for
the four language skills in English will be summed up to indicate ‘the level of students’
English proficiency.’

Korean proficiency

Korean proficiency refers to communicative competence that includes
grammatical, discourse, and sociolinguistic competencies (Canal and Swain, 1985) in
Korean. In the present study, Korean proficiency will be represented by scores of self-
perceived Korean proficiency measured by the modified ‘Can-Do scales (Clark, 1981)’.
The Can-Do scales for the present study assess language proficiency in speaking,
listening, reading, and writing in Korean. Five items assess each of the four language
skills and the responses for these scales are based on a six-point Likert scale. Scores of
four language skills in Korean will be summed up to indicate ‘the level of students’
Korean proficiency.’ The sum of one’s score can range from 0 to 120.

American Acculturation

Acculturation refers to the overall process of one’s cultural modification or
adaptation when one enters a different cultural group and experiences first-hand cultural
contact, resulting in changes in attitudes, knowledge, and behavior through the addition,
deletion, and reorganization of cultural elements of either or both groups (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, cited in Bosher, 1995).

American acculturation can be defined as the extent to which one acculturates into American culture. In the present study, American acculturation will be represented by scores for 27 items on American acculturation scales: four items for English use dimension, four items for the American social contact dimension, six items for American behavior dimension, four items for attitude dimension, and 10 items for American value dimension. American acculturation scales are based on a five-point Likert-type scale, except for a six-point Likert-type scale for value dimension. The mean of five dimensions of American acculturation will be calculated to provide a single, overall American acculturation score.

Korean Acculturation

Korean acculturation can be defined as the extent to which one maintains a Korean cultural identity or acculturates into Korean culture. In the present study, Korean acculturation will be represented by scores for 27 items on Korean acculturation scales: four items for the Korean language use dimension, four items for Korean social contact dimension, six items for the Korean behavior dimension, four items for the attitude dimension, and 10 items for the Korean value dimension. Korean acculturation scales are based on a five-point Likert-type scale except for a six-point Likert-type scale for value dimension. The mean of five dimensions of Korean acculturation will be calculated to provide a single, overall Korean acculturation score.
Sociocultural identity

According to Pierce’s (1997) definition, social identity refers to the relationship between the individual and the larger social world while cultural identity indicates the relationship between individuals and members of a group who share a common history, a common language, and similar world views.

Affective variables

Affective variables in the language learning include factors, such as, empathy, self-esteem, extroversion, inhibition imitation, anxiety, and attitudes (Brown, 1994).

Korean students

In the present study, ‘Korean students’ refers to Korean undergraduate students who were enrolled at the Ohio State University during the 1999 – 2000 academic year; this includes Korean international students, Korean immigrant students, and Korean American students.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. The Relationships among Language, Culture, and Identity

Language, culture, and identity seem to be closely related in complex and cyclical
d ways. According to Kim (1988), culture consists of the sum of the consensuses of the
individual communication patterns manifested by the members of a society. Considering
that language is a primary medium through which one communicates and gets access to
social networks, language plays an important role in the formation of the culture in which
the language is spoken. In turn, cultural values that affect one’s perception of oneself,
one’s culture, and one’s relationships to others are carried mainly by language. Language
is also a medium of one’s identity formation because one’s identity is developed and
negotiated through interaction including communication practice to other members in the
society.

In an intercultural context, language seems to be more closely linked to one’s
identity. There has been an agreement among SLA researchers that language acquisition
or learning is not only the acquisition of a linguistic system, but also a socialization
process which involves influencing and changing values, cultural identity, and
perspectives on the world. According to Pierce (1995), when language learners
communicate with target language speakers, they not only exchange information, but also
organize a person's identities, so that an investment in the target language is an investment in social identity.

In the case of ethnic members in the multiethnic society like the U.S. or Canada, ethnic language is considered a symbol of ethnic identity and through which a group's cultural values are transmitted to children. Without knowing one's ethnic language, one may not completely experience one's ethnic culture. However, other researchers point out that ethnic identity can remain after losing or without acquiring one's ethnic language (Liebkind, 1999) and ethnic language can be shifted as a result of the pursuit of pragmatic goals rather than ideological desires (Edward, 1993, cited in Noels et al, 1996). Identity formation is an on-going social process influenced by sociocultural factors as well as psychological factors. In a situation of second language acquisition, the relationships among language, culture, and identity seem to be salient and influence one another, and so they should not be considered separately.

2.2. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Cultural Identity

Acculturation

Acculturation occurs when individuals from different cultural groups experience continuous first-hand contact with members of a new culture, resulting in modification in attitudes, values, behavior, and knowledge of either or both groups (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, cited in Bosher, 1995). Among different groups and individuals within a group, differences exist in terms of degree and modes of acculturation. SLA researchers adopted theories of acculturation from anthropologists, psychologists, and sociologists (Bosher, 1995).
In the field of anthropology, acculturation was regarded as a group process. According to Ruiz, two traditional acculturation theories, which still influence acculturation studies, are assimilation and biculturalism (cited in Syed & Burnett, 1999). Assimilation posits that new groups are absorbed into the majority culture and lose their own separate entity. This theory implies that acculturation is a process in which a group gradually gives up its own language, culture, and system of values and takes on those of another group (Richard et al., 1992, cited in Syed & Burnett, 1999).

On the contrary, the bicultural model is defined as new groups adopting the majority group’s culture while maintaining their pride in their heritage. According to this theory, “acculturation is two directional, involving an accommodation to the host culture as well as retention of the original culture (Szapocznik-Kurtines, 1980, p. 155).” Ruiz defines the bicultural individual as one who has effective language skills in both languages and preference for the values and attitudes of both groups (cited in Syed & Burnett, 1999). In other words, being bicultural means not so much being in the middle of two cultures as having ability to function in both cultures effectively, Appleton (1983) maintains that ‘assimilation’ and ‘modified cultural pluralistic adjustment’ are the two main acculturation perspectives in the U.S. The pluralistic acculturation, which is a social ideal and needs social supports, may take place when each group maintains its own identity while simultaneously sharing common traits with each other and eventually generating hyphenated cultures (Appleton, 1983).

Berry’s (1980) acculturation model seems to be the most dynamic and inclusive of existing models. Berry suggests four modes of acculturation, and assimilation is one of the four acculturation modes. Berry’s four types of cultural modes are: (a) assimilation,
(b) integration, (c) rejection, and (d) deculturation. Assimilation refers to seeking positive relations with the dominant culture, relinquishing one’s native cultural identity and value. Integration involves seeking positive relations with the dominant culture while retaining one’s native cultural identity and value. Rejection indicates withdrawing completely from the majority society and maintaining one’s original cultural and identity. Deculturation implies withdrawal from both the traditional and the dominant cultures. Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok (1987) found that individuals generally prefer to experience integration.

Similarly, Mendoza (1989) suggests four typological levels of acculturation: (a) cultural shift, (b) cultural incorporation, (c) cultural resistance, and (d) cultural transmutation. Cultural shift can be defined as a pattern of behavior and cultural practices under the influence of a dominant culture. Cultural incorporation implies integration of two or more cultures. Cultural resistance means that one resists a dominant culture. Cultural transmutation indicates the formation of a special subculture that differs from one’s original and one’s dominant culture.

Using the qualitative approach, Allendoerfer (1999) studied identity formation in the process of second language learning and acculturation among students from the Vietnamese community in the U.S. She found that students’ identities are constructed both by their inner self and by an outer self that is perceived by others. Also, the results of the study show that the students selectively adopt native and American culture. They limit their ideas of acceptable or necessary Americanization to the outer, public sphere and resist adopting some American traits that are related to the inner self, such as, ways of behaving, attitudes, and general worldview. Therefore, for the Vietnamese students, Americanization could take place at multiple levels, rather than in a direct, linear process.
Recent studies show that many immigrant groups develop some form of biculturalism as a cultural adaptation strategy (Padilla, 1980; Hurh & Kim, 1984; Pu, 1994; Bosher, 1995; Allendoerfer, 1999). For example, Hurh and Kim (1984) show that Korean Americans choose "adhesive adaptation" (p. 190), which means that they selectively adopt American culture such as relations with members of American society without losing or modifying Korean culture such as family orientation.

Syed and Burnett (1999) point out that the process of acculturation includes obtaining sociocultural identities, which means having membership in at least two worlds. A number of studies stressed the difficulties associated with acculturation (Stopes-Roe & Cochrane, 1990; Ghuman, 1991; Phelan, Daidson & Cao, 1991; Wade & Souter, 1992; cited in Syed & Burnett, 1999). In reviewing these studies, Syed and Burnett conclude that the process of acculturation can have an adverse impact on the individual concerned and argue that the cost of acculturation should be accounted for in order to get a fuller understanding of the dynamics of cross-cultural adaptation.

Whether the cultural adaptation process means acquiring proficiency in two alternative cultures or creating new meanings of form, the process of acculturation and the maintenance of native culture in a new society seem to be neither linear nor mutually exclusive. Therefore, it may not be impossible for an ethnic individual to acquire a new culture while retaining the original culture. Also, the cost of acculturation should be considered because the individual identity change in the process of acculturation is closely related to one's self-esteem or self-worth.
Cultural identity of minority groups

Through the process of acculturation, an individual acquires culturally expected behaviors, values, and self-identification (Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987) and develops one’s new cultural identity. According to Phinney (1989, 1990), cultural identity is a component of social identity, which can be defined as a “part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from knowledge of membership in a social group, together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1981, p.255). In a situation of intercultural contact, ethnic identity may play an important role in the formation of cultural identity.

Cultural identity of minority groups seems to be formed by influence of in-group factors, such as, native language and ethnicity as well as factors related to out-group members, such as, “the recognition of limits of one’s world and the effectiveness of our originality in social reality” (Lima & Lima, 1998, p.326). Also, cultural identity is not a static but a creative process (Wakabayashi, 1998) and is constantly being shaped through experiences and interactions (Cummins, 1996). Hall (1976) also states that minority members do not inherit fixed identities, ethnicity, culture, and languages, but rather they are engaged in a continual collective and individual process of negotiating these elements, thereby constantly generating dynamic new identities (cited in Kim, 1988). Therefore, any fixed stereotype of a certain minority group’s culture may lead to misunderstanding or false conception about the members.
The relationships between SLA and acculturation

In the studies on SLA, relationships between acculturation and SLA have been a recurring theme, and the issue of shifting or maintaining one’s cultural identity in the process of acculturation and SLA is still controversial. With regard to the role of acculturation in SLA, some researchers point out that acculturation is a precondition (Schumann, 1987) for SLA or a function of second language proficiency (Clement, 1986). According to this assumption, one’s second language proficiency is positively related to one’s level of acquiring cultural identity of the target language. 

In a situation of minority groups’ second language learning, there have been few agreements with regard to the question, ‘Is minority groups’ cultural and linguistic assimilation inevitable in acquiring a new language and culture?’ One position is that minority groups tend to assimilate linguistically and culturally into the dominant society because the dominant group has the greater influence on members of the weaker group. In other words, the conditions of acquiring the second language and culture inevitably lead to a loss of the first language and culture. The other position is that one’s acquiring second language and culture does not necessarily lead to losing the language and culture of one’s original language. The former is built on the model of acculturation as a linear process and the latter on the model of acculturation on a multi-dimensional process.

According to Lambert’s (1974) ‘Social/Psychological Model of Second Language Acquisition of Bilingual Proficiency,’ for minority groups, although there may be some exceptions, the loss of the original culture is inevitable in the acquisition of new language and culture. Lambert states that for ethnic or language minority students who attend mainstream schools where a dominant and more prestigious second language is the
medium of instruction, assimilation into the dominant language, culture, and society is inevitable, which results in undermining the original ethnic and culture. He identifies this consequence as subtractive bilingualism.

Schumann (1978a, 1978b, 1978c) suggests an acculturation model that explains the influence of social and affective variables on the second language learning by adult minority immigrants. He points out that the social distance between the language learner's community and the target language community has a profound impact on second language acquisition. In other words, when one group is superior to another group in power relations, second language learning is impeded. Schumann (1978b) also explains the social distance in terms of three acculturation types: assimilation, preservation, and adaptation. According to him, a group of immigrants who choose an assimilation strategy and relinquish their native language and culture to adopt those of the host, tend to have little social distance to the majority group. According to Schumann, people who preserve their native culture tend to have greater difficulty acquiring proficiency in the second language because of greater social distance although full acquisition of the second language does not necessarily depend on a loss of the native language or cultural assimilation.

This assumption implies that second language learners can reduce social and psychological distance between themselves and the target language group by assimilating and giving up their own life style and values to adopt those of the target language group. However, reducing social and psychological distance between two groups may not merely depend on individuals' efforts. Rather, as Pierce (1993) points out, social factors, such as, the influence of the dominant culture, power relationships between two groups,
and the availability of interaction in the dominant society may be influential factors in determining second language learners' psychological and social distance from the target language group.

Giles and Byrne's (1982) intergroup model to SLA relates a minority groups' ethnic identification to the social psychology of SLA. In their model, they argue that one who strongly identifies with one's own ethnic group and the ethnic language as an important component of their ethnicity resist assimilation and even learning second language for fear of losing their own language and cultural identity. In other words, one's strong identification with one's ethnic group provides an unfavorable condition for one's SLA. Conversely, weaker identification with one's ethnic group may lead to rapid assimilation into the dominant culture.

More recently, Noels, Pon, and Clement (1996) investigated the relationships between contact, linguistic self-confidence, and ethnic identity among Chinese university students in Canada. Although they used the term, ethnic identity instead of cultural identity, most of the items used to measure ethnic identity in their study are common with those of cultural identity: Chinese lifestyle, language use, community participation, frequency of contact, and quality of contact. The results of the study show that competence in using the second language results from linguistic and social contacts with people in the target language community and is positively associated with losing Chinese identity while acquiring Canadian identity. In addition, people with low communicative competence in English tend to show lower self-esteem, and, on the other hand individuals, people with high level of linguistic efficacy and comfort in using English, show a strong sense of self-esteem and less stress.
However, other researchers argue against SLA theories based on the linear acculturation and claimed that linguistic assimilation does not necessarily entail cultural assimilation. Dion, Dion, and Park (1990) studied Chinese community in Canada and found that greater proficiency in English was positively related to less proficiency in Chinese, but it was not associated with less involvement in different aspects of participation in the Chinese community. Gardner and his colleagues (1990, 1994, 1999) studied on acculturation and SLA among different ethnic immigrant groups in Canada. Young and Gardner (1990) investigated the relationships between Berry’s (1980) four acculturation modes and English/Chinese competency among students from Chinese communities who attend universities in Canada. They found that individuals who identify themselves as Canadian are competent in English and experience a loss of Chinese competency. However, they do not show an assimilation tendency or feeling of marginality to either the Chinese or Canadian communities. Young and Gardner argue that this results do not support Lambert’ hypothesis (1974) that ‘as individuals develop second language proficiency, they experience feeling of marginality, or not belonging to the ethnic group or to a majority group.’ According to Lambert, people who feel marginal are those who perceive cultural assimilation as a threat to the ethnic language and culture. Another similar findings came from Gardner’s (1990) study with Polish immigrants in Canada. The results of the study show that English proficiency among Polish immigrants was negatively related with Polish language maintenance but positively related with integrative acculturation. This positive relationships between integrative acculturation and high level of L2 proficiency seems to comply with Acton and Felix’ (1986, cited in Brown, 1994) psychological perspectives on acculturation and L2 proficiency. Acton and
Felix state that one's experience of acculturation very much depend on the psychological health of the first language ego and so if learners have strong self-esteem in their own culture, their chances of achieving high level of second language proficiency are significantly enhanced.

On the other hand, Gardner and Tremblay's (1994) study with Portuguese immigrants in Montreal, Canada revealed different results. They found that Portuguese immigrants' English proficiency was negatively correlated with integrative acculturation, which implies that the better one's English skills, the less likely one is to favor integration. Interestingly, assimilation was not correlated with Portuguese immigrants' English proficiency, either. More recently, Masgoret and Gardner (1999) studied Spanish immigrants in Canada and reported that assimilation was positively related to self-rated English proficiency. They maintained that an integration mode is not a sufficient condition for Spanish immigrants to achieve English language proficiency since these individuals may lack opportunities to learn and practice the language sufficiently.

Meanwhile, Bosher (1995) studied children of first generation Hmong immigrants. She investigated Hmong students' acculturation, SLA, self-esteem, and academic achievement in American universities using both the survey and interviews. The results of the study indicate that an orientation toward American culture contributes to not only English proficiency but also to Hmong language proficiency while an orientation toward Hmong culture contributes to Hmong language proficiency. Bosher also investigated the relationships between Hmong/English proficiency and five dimensions of acculturation: language use, behaviors, social contact, attitudes, and values. The findings indicate that only dimensions of American behavior and American social contact are associated
positively with English language proficiency. The multiple regression reveals that American acculturation was an important predictor of self-perceived English proficiency with a positive contribution. When using five dimensions of acculturation in the regression equation, American behavior with a positive contribution and Hmong language use with negative contribution were important variables in the prediction of English proficiency. Bosher argued that Hmong students whom she interviewed neither assimilate into American culture nor do they insist exclusively on Hmong culture. Instead, they settle in a middle place between the two cultures, creating “a newly emerging Hmong American culture (p.181).”

Another interesting finding comes from Wakabayashi (1998) who studied language proficiency and cultural identity of Japanese students attending an international school in Japan. She found that those students’ written and oral proficiency was positively correlated with the students’ cultural identities. Wakabayashi interprets the results as follows,

Both [writing and speaking] are more communicative/interpersonal and are more obvious to a third person than reading scores that are more cognitive/academic. Possibly, the kind of cultural identity that students form is based on language skills which are easily assessed by others, i.e., what others think about them may influence how they view themselves (p.202).

The results imply that cultural identity is related to certain functions of language proficiency, writing and speaking. Contact with target language speakers may influence
one's identification with the target culture because writing and speaking is mainly
developed through interpersonal contact.

In sum, the different results of studies that were discussed above imply
considerable group differences with regard to a group's acculturation strategies, adopted
components of a new culture and the native culture, and their relationships to SLA. These
differences may also result from different measurements used by researchers or reflect
group differences. In addition, as Bosher (1995) points out, the results of studies on
acculturation and SLA partially explain the relationship between acculturation and SLA,
and so most of the proposed social/psychological models in SLA need more empirical
support. Therefore, care should be taken when applying the results of one study to
another.

2.3 Measurement of Acculturation

Research on acculturation suggests that acculturation should be defined as being
multidimensional because it involves several different aspects of cultural modification.
Gordon (1964) states that all stages of acculturation involve intrinsic and extrinsic
cultural characteristics (cited in Kim, 1988). The former consists of values, religious
beliefs, identity, and aspects of cultural heritage, while the latter consists of cultural
customs, ethnic food, clothing, language, manner, and life-style.

Olmedo (1979) proposes three factors involved in acculturation. One dimension is
'acculturative balance' that is defined by language proficiency, preference, and use,
cultural identification, and beliefs and behaviors involving the original ethnic group. A
second dimension is ethnic loyalty, which consists of the desire to both contact one's
original culture and retaining traditional values. The third dimension concerns
'socioeconomic status,' such as, the educational and occupational status of individuals.

Padilla's (1980) multidimensional model of acculturation includes language usage,
cultural heritage, ethnic pride, ethnicity, and inter-ethnic distance. Suinn et al. (1987)
suggest that individuals acquire the culturally expected behaviors, values, and self-
children living in the U.S. and found that the acculturation process has developmental
stages: cognitive, behavior, and emotional acculturation. According to her, an individual
who is completely acculturated has culturally appropriate knowledge of a new culture, is
able to act appropriately, and feel comfortable in a new culture.

Other research includes language proficiency, exposure to target language, printed
media, name change, subjective identification with heritage, preservation of native
culture, and active maintenance of social ties with original group (Hurh & Kim, 1984) in
the acculturation measurement. Mendoza's (1989) acculturation measurement consists of
multiple components, such as, language, demographic characteristics, cultural
identification, preferences (e.g., food, music, and friends), and social affiliation in the
acculturation dimensions. Ethnic identity is considered one of the acculturation
components (Suinn et al., 1987; Mendoza, 1989), and usually includes language, social
support systems, self-identification, religious affiliations, varied cultural traditions and
practices, and endogamy.

In addition, because acculturation measurement based on the linear model measures
only the degree of acquisition of dominant culture and cannot measure the maintenance
of native culture, bi-directional measurement seems to be appropriate for the purpose of
the present study. The bi-directional approach shows to what degree individuals actually retain their original culture, while at the same time it shows the degrees to which individuals acquire the majority culture. Mendoza (1989) found that the bi-directional acculturation approach was effective when subjects showed similar tendencies in their levels of acquiring majority culture, but dissimilar tendencies in their levels of retaining their native culture.

In the present study, acculturation scales were adapted from Bosher’s (1995) acculturation measurement used in her study of Hmong second generation college students attending American universities. This instrument measures five dimensions of acculturation: native/English language use, native/American social contact, native/American behavior, native/American attitudes, and native/American values. This bi-directional and multidimensional measurement of acculturation includes important dimensions of acculturation and reflects theoretical considerations shown in the literature on acculturation.

2.4 Demographic Variables

In the present study, demographic variables include age, gender, current residential status, age of arrival, years in the U.S, and intended length of staying in the U.S. These variables are assumed to contribute to acculturation, second language acquisition, and the maintenance of native language.

Length of residence and age of arrival in the host country are usually considered influential factors in one’s achievement in second language in terms of language, affective, input, and cognitive aspects (Schumann, 1975; Brown, 1979; Krashen, 1982).
The common assumption among SLA researchers is that the earlier one starts to learn L2 and the longer one lives in the host country, one tends to have a higher chance of reaching native-like second language proficiency (e.g. Oyama, 1976; Krashen & Scarcella, 1980). However, according to Cummins’ (1979) ‘Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis,’ the level of first language (L1) competence that a bilingual child attains is partially a function of the type of competence the child has developed in L1 at the time when extensive exposure to second language (L2) begins. Cummins (1979) states that common underlying proficiency (CUP) is a critical factor for successful second language acquisition because academic language proficiency developed in the first language will transfer and contribute to the development of academic language skills in the second language.

In addition, other research claims that age on arrival and length of residence may play an important role in cultural identity formation. Minoura (1992) states that one’s development of cultural identity depends on the age at which one acculturates as well as the length of exposure (cited in Wakabayashi, 1998). Minoura studied Japanese children living in the U.S. and found that there is a critical age (9 to 15 years old) at which one can easily reverse one’s cultural identity. She also states that after this period an individual may understand and act according to new cultural norms, but does not feel happy and natural in doing so.

Citizenship status and intended length of residence may influence both acculturation and second language acquisition. Schumann (1978) argues that intended length of staying in a country leads to increased contact with the target language group that provides a favorable condition for second language learning. Kelly, Sachdev,
Kottsieper, and Ingram (1993) studied the role of social identities in second language proficiency among Spanish students who were attending a secondary school in London. They found that a perceived high degree of instability in status is positively associated with increases in self-reported proficiency in English and favorableness toward English use. The results of the study indicate that there is a high propensity to learn the dominant L2 when the acquisition of second language is seen as a prerequisite for improving one's individual and group status.

In sum, second language acquisition can be considered as a part of acculturation process, in which social factors as well as psychological factors play important roles in the formation of one's cultural identities. Acculturation into a new society is considered to facilitate second language acquisition and, in turn, one's level of second language proficiency can influence one's acculturation. Also, studying these psychological and social variables in the second language acquisition separately may not be proper because these variables seem to be complicatedly interrelated. In addition, the relationships among keeping native cultural identity, an acculturation into a new society, and second language acquisition seem to have a variety of group and individual differences.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Population and Sampling

The target population for the present study was Korean undergraduate students who were enrolled at The Ohio State University during the 1999 – 2000 academic year. The list of Korean undergraduate students was obtained from both the ‘Korean Student Association’ and the ‘Korean Undergraduate Student Association.’ The Korean Student Association keeps an updated record of Korean international students’ enrollments. The Office of International Education (OIE) at the Ohio State University quarterly provides the Korean Student Association with the updated record. The list from the ‘Korean Undergraduate Student Association includes Korean immigrant and Korean American student names who are not included in the list from the Korean Student Association. The ‘Korean Undergraduate Student Association has identified those names through examining the student directory published annually by the university. These two lists provides Korean undergraduate students’ names, mail addresses, email accounts, and phone numbers.

Based on the student list provided by the Korean Student Association and the Korean Undergraduate Student Association, 479 Korean undergraduate students who were enrolled at the Ohio State University during the 1999 – 2000 academic year were
identified. The name of 27 students who would participate either in the field study or the pilot study were removed from the list, leaving a total accessible population size of 452. Frame error for the study was controlled by checking and confirming the student names in the Ohio State University student directory. Selection errors were controlled by ensuring that no duplicate names appeared on both the student lists. A random sample of 135 was drawn from the population. According to Cochran’s (1977) formula for estimating a sample size, the appropriate sample size is 100 at alpha level .05 when the acceptable margin of error for the proportion being estimated is ±10%, the risk level for actual margin of error may exceed acceptable margin of error is 1 in 20 (95% confidence level), and estimated proposition of the elements in the population in the category of interest is 50%.

In addition, according to Cohen (1998), the recommended number of cases per variable is 14 for a statistical analysis of multiple regression. Therefore, the estimated sample size is 100 for 7 independent variables when alpha is .05, effect size is .14, and power is .08. In addition to ensuring adequate sample size, proper techniques of random sampling by using random numbers were used to control sampling errors.

Because the subjects of the present study were randomly selected only among Korean students at The Ohio State University, the results of the present study can be generalized to Korean undergraduate students attending The Ohio State University but can not be generalized to all Korean students attending American universities.
3.2. Instrumentation

The survey questionnaire for the present study consists of five parts that contains 99 questions. Part A contains 34 items on Korean and American acculturation; Part B includes 20 items on Korean and American values; Part C includes 20 items on self-perceived English proficiency; Part D includes 20 items on self-perceived Korean proficiency, and 5 items concerning demographic information.

**English proficiency**

To assess English proficiency, modified Can-Do English and Korean Language Proficiency Scales, a self-assessments of one’s language proficiency developed by Clark (1981) and employed by many researchers (Gardner, 1990; Young & Gardner, 1991; Kelley at al., 1993; Bosher, 1995; Li, 1995), were used for the present study. The Can-Do scales for the present study assessed language proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English based on specific situations of real-life language use. Scores for four language skills were summed to represent students’ ‘English proficiency.’ Five items assess each of the four language skills and the responses for these scales are based on a six-point Likert scale, addressing the level of ease or difficulty students would feel to do each type of language task. The six response sets are as follows,

1. Extremely difficult
2. Very difficult
3. Somewhat difficult
4. Somewhat easy
5. Very easy
6. Extremely easy

Scores from these items were summed to provide a single measure of self-reported proficiency in English. To check concurrent validity of ‘Can-Do’ language proficiency
scales, Clark (1981) compared the results of ‘Can-Do’ proficiency measures and those of external, standardized measures of language proficiency. Clark conducted MLS Cooperative tests of listening comprehension and reading with approximately 322 college students and Foreign Service Institute (FSI) interviews with one-third of those students. The results showed that there are high correlations between the Can-Do scales and the external measurements: listening (.59), reading (.60), and speaking (.63). Other studies show that self-assessments when they include real, specific situations where language is used, are not less valid and reliable than standardized tests of language proficiency (Gardner, 1985; Gardner, 1990; Young and Gardner, 1990). In the present study, considering Korean college students’ level of English proficiency, questions assessing very basic level of language skills were dropped from the original Can-Do scales.

Korean language proficiency

Korean language proficiency was measured by using the modified Can-Do self-assessment scale that was used in assessing English proficiency. The Can-Do scales assessed language proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Korean based on specific situations of real-life language use. Scores for four language skills were summed to represent students’ ‘Korean proficiency.’ Five items assessed each of the four language skills in Korean, and the responses for these scales are based on a six-point Likert scale, addressing the level of ease or difficulty students would feel to do each type of language task. Scores from the items will be summed to provide a single measure of self-reported proficiency in Korean.
The six response sets are as follows:

1. Extremely difficult
2. Very difficult
3. Somewhat difficult
4. Somewhat easy
5. Very easy
6. Extremely easy

The Korean acculturation

Korean acculturation indicates to what extent one keeps Korean cultural identity or acculturates into Korean culture. To measure Korean acculturation, Bosher’s (1995) acculturation scales were adopted and modified based on Korean students’ situation for the present study. Bosher’s scales are based on the literature and research on acculturation in the social science. The items on the Korean acculturation scales include five dimensions of acculturation: language use, social contact, behavior, attitudes, and values. Twenty seven items are included in the Korean acculturation scales: four items for Korean language use dimension, three items for Korean social contact dimension, six items for Korean behavior dimension, four items for the attitude dimension, and 10 items for Korean value dimension (Table 1). The responses for these scales are based on a five-point Likert-type scale except for the value dimension, but the content of the scales varies depending on the items. One of the language use items follows:

How often do you speak Korean with your friends?

1. Not at all
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Frequently
5. All the time
The response sets for the value items are based on standardized six-point Likert-type scales, addressing the degree of agreement or disagreement students have about each item:

1. Disagree strongly
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree strongly

The mean of five dimensions of Korean acculturation was calculated to provide a single, overall Korean cultural identification score and the higher one’s score indicates the more one is acculturated into Korean culture.

Table 1 shows five dimensions of acculturation. They include language use, behavior, social contact, attitudes, and values. These five acculturation dimensions and items in each dimension have been included in and used as acculturation measurements in many studies (e.g., Padilla, 1980; Suinn et al., 1987; Minoura, 1984, 1990, 1992, cited in Wakabayashi, 1998). Bosher’s (1995) acculturation scales used in her research with Hmong students combine universal and group-specific perspectives, which provide “culturally appropriate and explicit representation of a given group” (p. 92). Bosher checked content validity of the acculturation scales by consulting Hmong cultural language experts and doing item analysis. She also checked the reliability and validity of the acculturation measurement by conducting Cronbach’s alpha test and comparing the score of students’ ethnic self-identification with overall acculturation score, which showed that the correlation is moderate (r = .30, p = .01).

American acculturation implies to what extent one acculturates into American culture. All items except America values in the American acculturation scales ask the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Use</strong></td>
<td>Speak the language with family</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speak the language with friends</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speak the language with neighbors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speak the language at work</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviors</strong></td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participating in social activities</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using media (TV, videos, and radio)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading/writing in the language</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participating in cultural activities</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participating in religious activities</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Contact</strong></td>
<td>Co-workers</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Associating neighbors or classmates</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Close friends</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td>Importance of speaking in the language</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of reading/writing in the language</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of participating in the culture</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitudes toward people</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values</strong></td>
<td>Living with their parents until they get married</td>
<td>35 (+)</td>
<td>44 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Depending on parents in making decisions</td>
<td>36 (+)</td>
<td>45 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Must care of their elderly parents</td>
<td>37 (+)</td>
<td>47 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respecting elder people because of age</td>
<td>38 (+)</td>
<td>49 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family needs come before personal needs</td>
<td>39 (+)</td>
<td>50 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having close relationships with relatives</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education is very important</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working hard for the future rather than</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enjoying the present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not showing feelings and strong opinions</td>
<td>43 (+)</td>
<td>54 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father/husband should be the head of household</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The importance of independence</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having own idea of one’s future and achievement</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having fun and enjoying life</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Item description of Korean and American Acculturation the American acculturation
same questions asked in the Korean acculturation measurement (See the Korean acculturation discussed above). The American value dimension of acculturation was constructed using culturally specific values for American culture (Bosher, 1995, P. 92). Twenty seven items are included in five dimension of American acculturation scales: four items for the English language use dimension, four items for American social contact dimension, six items for American behavior dimension, four items for the attitude dimension, and 10 items for American value dimension (Table 1). The mean of the five dimensions of American acculturation was calculated to provide a single, overall American cultural identification score, and the higher one’s score, the more one is considered to be acculturated into American culture.

Demographic information

Demographic information includes age, gender, years in the U.S, age of arrival, residential status, and intended length of stay in the U.S. These variables have been considered important factors that influence second language learners’ level of achievement in second language proficiency (Oyama, 1976; Krashen & Scarcella, 1980; Garrett 1989; Kelly et al., 1993).

Validity

In the present study, the acculturation questionnaire was modified from Bosher’s (1995) acculturation scales based on literature on Korean people’s acculturation and second language acquisition in the U.S. (Hur & Kim, 1984; Kim, 1988). To check face and content validity of the instrument, three committee members for the present study,
Dr. Samimy, Dr. Shuman, and Dr. Hirvela, reviewed the instrument and provided suggestions to the researcher. Dr. Samimy and Dr. Hirvela, who have conducted research in the area of second language acquisition and learning and are familiar with the target population in the present study, gave suggestions about wordings in the instrument. Dr. Henderson, who is an expert in research methodology, gave useful suggestions for the wording and the format of the instrument. In addition, the researcher asked a Korean professor and an American professor at The Ohio State University to review the questionnaire. These two experts were also selected based on their familiarity with Korean students or content of the instrument. Dr. Min, a Korean professor, suggested several items for Korean values. Dr. Shuman recommended including three items concerning American cultural values and examining dynamic aspects of students’ acculturation in follow-up interviews. A field study was also conducted with 10 purposefully selected students to determine whether the questionnaire was appropriately constructed or whether further revision was needed.

Reliability

To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted with 15 purposefully selected students. Cronbach’s alpha test of reliability was used to measure the internal consistency of the acculturation scales and English and Korean language proficiency scales.
3.3 Data Collection

For the quantitative portion of the study, a survey was conducted with 135 Korean students who were randomly selected from the target population. The survey consists of 99 questions with a cover letter and was taken about 15 to 25 minutes to complete. The instrument asks about Korean students' acculturation, demographic information, native language proficiency, and self-perceived English proficiency.

The questionnaire with a cover letter was sent via email. After emailing questionnaires to the subjects, the researcher gave the subjects phone calls to encourage them to participate in the survey. The reasons why the researcher gave immediate phone calls to the subjects are as follows. First, some of the subjects may not be familiar with responding to the survey in the attached file via email or have problems in opening the attached file. In these cases, the researcher sent the questionnaires to the subjects by regular mail. Second, the researcher's immediate phone calls could help prevent the subjects from deleting the survey they received via email. One week after sending the survey to students via email, the researcher sent the survey questionnaires again via email and made follow-up calls to the non-respondents from the initial email attempt.

To control non-response error, demographic data of a random sample of ten percent of non-response students was collected and compared to corresponding data from the respondents to determine if there were significant differences. If there were no differences between respondents and non-respondents, the results of the respondents could be generalized to the sample (Miller & Smith, 1983). After conducting the survey, eight names of students who participated in the survey were drawn from a lottery for the prize of 50 dollars for each name drawn.
For the portion of the case studies, the researcher conducted interviews with five students who indicated on the survey sheet a willingness to participate in interviews and observations. Five interviewees were chosen based on differences in terms of their acculturation modes, residential status, and gender. In the interview, the researcher asked students about their cultural adaptation strategies in the process of second language acquisition and perceptions of their cultural and linguistic identities. The researcher did observations in the participants’ working places, church, and houses. As a means of establishing credibility and avoiding researcher bias in data interpretation, the researcher used member checks, which allow the material to be reviewed by the participants and the data, interpretations, and conclusions to be tested with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The interview with each participant was audiotaped and transcribed for analysis. Each student who participates in the interview was given $10 per hour or other incentives.

3.4 Data Analysis

The results of the survey were analyzed by descriptive and correctional statistics using SPSS statistical software. To show an overall picture of Korean students’ acculturation, demographic information and both English and Korean language proficiency, descriptive statistics of means, frequencies, standard deviations, and percentages were calculated for each independent and the dependent variable.

In addition, to investigate the relationships between each independent variable and the dependent variable, the magnitude of the relationships was calculated. The relationships among variables were determined using Pearson Product-Moment
correlation coefficients, Cramer’s V correlation, and Point-Biserial correlation coefficients.

Multiple regression was used to determine to what extent self-perceived English proficiency can be predicted from the linear combination of independent variables. According to Cohen (1998), the recommended sample size is at least 100 for seven independent variables when alpha is .05, effect size is .14, and power is .08. The independent variable sets included in the regression analysis were selected based on whether the variable has statistically significant correlations with the dependent variable.

In the qualitative section of the study, the interviews were described and interpreted from the participants’ perspectives to gain understanding of Korean students’ acculturation and SLA. The results of the case studies were intended to compensate for the limitations of the survey. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies in one study is an appropriate method of supplementing quantitative data. The interviews are expected to complement the survey instrument that includes only closed-ended items on acculturation by providing contexts and explanations for quantitative data in the present study.

The interviews, which were mainly conducted in Korean, were translated into English and transcribed to yield detailed and in-depth descriptions of the participants’ perceptions of acculturation and second language acquisition. The researcher read transcripts of interviews, selected important statements that are related directly to the questions being investigated, formulated meanings of what the participants stated, and drew some explanatory conclusion about the nature of the informants’ acculturation and
second language acquisition. During these procedures, when necessary, the information from the interviews was clarified by asking the informant about the content.

3.5. Limitations of the Study

The acculturation scale that was used in the present study did not include the dynamic aspect of acculturation and a person’s contextualized cultural identities. These aspects of acculturation were investigated through interviews. The Can-do scale that was used in the present study was not a standardized and objective measurement, although its validity and reliability have been proved in previous studies. Therefore, this self-assessment of language proficiency may reflect subjective self-confidence in students’ level of language proficiency. The limitation regarding generalization of the results of the present study was discussed in the population and sampling section.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, the results of the quantitative and qualitative study are presented. In the quantitative section, based on the results of the survey, the characteristics of demographic information, acculturation variables, and self-perceived English and Korean proficiency, are described. The relationships between each independent variable and the dependent variable and important independent variables as predictors of self-perceived English proficiency are presented according to research questions. Also, the relationships between affective/social variables, such as, attitudes, social contact and types of acculturation, and the level of self-perceived English proficiency are discussed.

In the qualitative section, the results of five case studies are presented and discussed. The section includes students’ perception of their cultural identities and perceived difficulties or obstacles in the process of acculturation and SLA. Also, students’ social contacts and friendships and the notions of being American, which were presumably related with English proficiency, were explored.

4.1. Findings of the survey study

4.1.1. Data Sample

The survey questionnaires were sent to 135 students who were randomly selected from a total accessible population of 452 either via email or by regular mail in June 2000.
Seven questionnaires were returned because of incorrect email or mail addresses. The first mailing and emailing data sample resulted in a 57% return rate. The survey questionnaire was sent again to non-respondents ten days after the first attempt. A total 115 students returned their surveys, which resulted in total response rate of 89.8 %, with 5.2% frame error.

To control the non-respondent error, the demographic information for 13 non-respondents was compared with that of respondents. Non-respondents consisted of eight males and five females with a mean age of 23. Three were American citizens, three permanent residents, and seven international (i.e. visa) students. Since no significant differences were observed between the respondents and non-respondents in their demographic information, the results of the study can be generalized to the population of Korean undergraduate students who are attending the Ohio State University.

4.1.2. Demographic Information

Tables 2 through 6 describe student demographic characteristics. The mean age of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean = 22  S.D.= 2.88  Min = 17  Max = 28

Table 2. Age of the respondents  (N=115)
students was 22 years old. The youngest student was 17 years old and the oldest was 28 years old, and 87.8% of the students were between the ages of 19 and 26 (Table 2). The number of female students was 48 (41.7%) and male comprised 67 (58.3%). There was no significant age difference between female and male students.

Table 3 shows students' years in the U.S. The mean of students' years in the U.S. is eight years and six months, and 77.5% of the students have lived in the U.S. less than 12 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in the U.S</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean = 8.64  S.D. = 6.6  Min = 1  Max = 25

Table 3. Years in the U.S.

Table 4 shows residential status of students. Forty eight (41.8%) students are F-1 visa students (foreigner status), 38 (33%) are U.S. citizens, and 29 (25.2%) are U.S. residents. Table 5 shows students intended length of stay in the U.S. Sixty eight (59.1%) students responded that they planed to live permanently in the U.S., 35 (30.5%) wanted to return to Korea more than five years after they graduate a college. Only 12 (10.4%) responded that they would return to Korea as soon as they graduate from college.
Table 4. **Residential status**  (N=115)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential status</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F-1 visa</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Resident</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. citizen</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. **Intended length of stay in the U.S.**  (N=115)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intended length of stay in the U.S.</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living in the U.S. permanently</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going back to Korea more than five years after graduating college</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going back to Korea soon after graduating college</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows the mean of students’ years in U.S., age, American acculturation, Korean acculturation, self-perceived English proficiency, and self-perceived Korean proficiency of three groups divided by residential status. The U.S. citizens group has the highest mean score in American acculturation and self-perceived English proficiency but the lowest in Korean acculturation and self-perceived Korean proficiency. In case of F-1 visa students, the order was reversed. In the U.S. residents group, the mean score of every variable was in the middle between the F-1 visa group and U.S. citizenship group. However, it is interesting to note that the mean of Korean acculturation was the highest.
among students in the U.S. residents group. These students' Korean language use, Korean behaviors, and Korean social contact means were higher than the other two groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F-1 Visa</th>
<th>U.S. resident</th>
<th>U.S. citizen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years in U.S</td>
<td>3.25 (2.37)</td>
<td>8.59 (3.34)</td>
<td>15.50 (5.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>24.13 (2.72)</td>
<td>21.17 (2.45)</td>
<td>21.05 (2.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Acult.</td>
<td>17.29 (2.08)</td>
<td>18.21 (1.82)</td>
<td>20.16 (1.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean Acult.</td>
<td>16.95 (2.03)</td>
<td>17.71 (1.98)</td>
<td>15.83 (2.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English profi.</td>
<td>3.62 (.84)</td>
<td>4.41 (1.06)</td>
<td>5.25 (.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean profi.</td>
<td>5.40 (.72)</td>
<td>4.54 (1.51)</td>
<td>2.97 (1.57)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: American Acult.: American Acculturation
Korean Acult.: Korean Acculturation
English profi.: Self-perceived English proficiency
Korean profi.: self-perceived Korean proficiency
(   ): SD

Table 6. The mean of years in U.S., age, American acculturation, Korean acculturation, self-perceived English proficiency, and self-perceived Korean proficiency of three groups divided by residential status

4.1.3. The Characteristics of Korean Students' Acculturation

Table 7 compares the mean scores for Korean acculturation and American acculturation. All of the dimensions of American acculturation except American social contact scored higher than Korean acculturation counterparts. This result indicates that in terms of language use, behavior, attitudes towards the language and the language community, and values, students incline to adopt slightly more American culture than Korean culture. However, the frequency of students' social contact with Americans and participation in social and cultural activities in the American setting (2.26) were lower than for their Korean counterparts (2.28). In other words, they tend to associate with
Korean people and participate in social and cultural activities in Korean settings more often than they do with Americans. The mean for overall American acculturation was 18.4 and Korean acculturation was 16.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>American Acculturation</th>
<th>Korean Acculturation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Use</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Contact</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall acculturation</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Comparing the mean of Korean and American Acculturation

Table 8 shows correlations among five dimensions of American acculturation. American language use, behavior, social contact, and attitudes are moderately or lowly correlated with one another with a positive direction. This indicates that as one has the more positive attitudes toward English/American people, one tends to have the more social contact with Americans, use more English and, exhibit more American behaviors. However, correlations between American values and other dimensions are negligible.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Language use</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
<th>Social contact</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language use</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social contact</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **. Correlation in significant at the level 0.01 level (2-tailed).
  *. Correlation in significant at the level 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Table 8. Correlation among Dimension of American acculturation**

In Korean acculturation (Table 9), similar to American acculturation, Korean language use, social contact, and behaviors are either moderately or lowly correlated, with a positive direction. This implies that the more one has social contact with Korean people, and the more one uses Korean, the more one exhibits Korean behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Language use</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
<th>Social contact</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language use</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social contact</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td>.41*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **. Correlation in significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).
  *. Correlation in significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Table 9. Correlation among Dimension of Korean acculturation**
In addition, Korean attitudes are positively, lowly, correlated with behaviors, while Korean values are negatively, lowly correlated with all other dimensions except attitudes. This indicates that the more one has positive attitudes towards the Korean language and people, the more one exhibits Korean behaviors. However, as one’s Korean language use, Korean behaviors, and Korean social contacts decrease, one’s level of Korean values tend to increase.

Table 10 shows correlations among dimensions of acculturation across culture. Significant, strong, and negative correlations were found among dimensions of language use and social contact across cultures. The more one language is used, the less the other is used, and the more contact with one cultural group, the less contact with the other cultural group. Behaviors and values are also negatively, lowly correlated across cultures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lang U</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
<th>Social C</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Acculturation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang U</td>
<td>-.64**</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors</td>
<td>-.44**</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>-.38**</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social C</td>
<td>-.50**</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
<td>-.71**</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.96</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>-.23*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **. Correlation in significant at the level 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation in significant at the level 0.05 level (2-tailed).
K. Acculturation = Korean Acculturation
A. Acculturation = American Acculturation
Lang U = Language Use
Social C = Social Contact

Table 10. The correlations among Dimensions of Acculturation across cultures
On the other hand, Korean attitudes are significantly, positively, and lowly correlated with both American attitudes and American values, indicating that the more positive attitudes toward Korean/Korean people one has, the more positive attitudes toward English/American people one tends to have. Those same students tend to adopt greater extent of American values. Also, Korean values are significantly, positively, and lowly related with American social contact, which implies that students who keep more Korean values tend to have more social contact with American people.

In sum, students’ language use, social contact, behaviors and values in one culture tend to be at the expense of counterparts in the other culture. However, their having positive attitudes towards both languages/groups and having two cultural values at the same time are not exclusive.

Table 11 shows the calculation of four types of acculturation based on Berry’s (1980) matrix of cultural adaptation strategies. 1 13.5, a midpoint between possible lowest score, one, and the highest score, 26, was used as a cutter point in order to assign students into four groups. The majority of students (91.3%) adopted ‘integration’ as an acculturation strategy. Eight (7%) were in an ‘assimilation’ group, two (1.7%) were in a ‘rejection’ group, and no one was in a ‘deculturation’ group.

---

1. Berry (1980) identified an individual’s cultural adaptation strategies depending on the answer to two key questions: Has an individual sought positive relations with the dominant culture? And (2) Has an individual retained one’s native culture? If an individual answers ‘yes’ to question one and ‘no’ to question two, one is in an “Assimilation” mode. In other words, one wants to become part of the majority culture while abandoning one’s native cultural heritage. If an individual answers ‘yes’ to both the questions, one is demonstrating an “Integrationist” mode. Such an individual seeks to become part of the larger society without losing one’s native cultural identity. Meanwhile, if one answers ‘no’ to question one and ‘yes’ to question two, such an individual, rejecting the dominant culture while maintaining their original culture, is in a ‘Rejection’ group. Lastly, if one answers ‘no’ to both the questions, such an individual demonstrates a tendency toward “Deculturation.” (Cited in Gardner, 1990)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acculturation types</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>91.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deculturation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. **Acculturation types: Assimilation, Integration, Rejection, and Deculturation (N=115)**

Apart from Berry’s classification, Table 12 compares the level of self-perceived English proficiency among four groups by using the mean of students’ overall acculturation scores as a cutter point (see Table 7). Group 1 includes students whose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall American Acculturation Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Korean Acculturation Score</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.31 (G.4)</td>
<td>5.04 (G.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.81 (G.3)</td>
<td>5.25 (G.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Group 1: high on American acculturation and low on Korean acculturation (N=36)
Group 2: high on American acculturation and high on Korean acculturation (N=21)
Group 3: low on American acculturation and high on Korean acculturation (N=39)
Group 4: low on American acculturation and low on Korean acculturation (N=19)

Table 12. **Means of Self-perceived English proficiency of four groups**
American acculturation score is above the mean but Korean acculturation is below the mean. Group 2 consists of students whose American and Korean acculturation scores were above the mean. Students in Group 3 are those whose American acculturation score was below the mean and Korean acculturation is above the mean. Group 4 includes students whose American and Korean acculturation scores are below the mean. The highest mean of self-perceived English proficiency was reported in Group 2 (5.25), followed by Group 1 (5.04), Group 3 (3.81), and Group 4 (3.31) in order. This finding indicates that the group whose American and Korean acculturation scores were the highest had the greatest proficiency in English.

Table 13 shows the mean difference among the four groups using ANOVA and Post Hoc Tests. The means of Group 1 and Group 2 were much higher than those of Group 3 and Group 4. The significant mean differences were found between Group 1 and Group 4, between Group 2 and Group 3, between Group 2 and Group 4. This indicates that

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) Group</th>
<th>(J) Group</th>
<th>Mean difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>1.20*</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>1.73*</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>1.40*</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>1.94*</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 13. The mean difference of Self-perceived English proficiency among four groups
students who exhibit either high bicultural adaptation or high American acculturation achieve the greater proficiency in English.

In sum, the dominant adapting strategy among Korean students is an ‘integration,’ or ‘bicultural adaptation.’ Among acculturation dimensions, language use, behaviors, and social contact are positively correlated within culture, while these dimensions including values are negatively related across cultures. In group comparision, students who have either high bicultural tendency or high American acculturation revealed greater self-perceived English proficiency.

4.1.4. The Characteristics of Korean students’ self-perceived Korean Proficiency and self-perceived English proficiency

Table 14 shows students’ levels of self-perceived Korean proficiency. The scale of Korean language proficiency ranges from 1 to 6, and the higher score indicates that students perceive less difficulty in performing certain linguistic tasks in Korean. The mean of Korean Listening and Speaking (4.69) is slightly higher than that of Korean Reading and Writing (4.08).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Korean Listening &amp; Speaking</th>
<th>Korean Reading &amp; Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14. The mean of students’ self-perceived Korean proficiency
Table 15 shows the mean of students’ self-perceived English proficiency. The scale of self-perceived English proficiency ranges from 1 to 6, and the higher score indicates that students feel less difficulty in performing certain tasks in English. The mean of English Listening & Speaking (4.49) was slightly higher than that of English Reading and Writing (4.23). Comparing students’ level of self-perceived Korean proficiency with level of self-perceived English proficiency, the mean for students’ Korean Listening and Speaking (4.69) is higher than that for their English Listening and Speaking (4.49). Meanwhile, the mean for Korean Reading and Writing (4.08) is lower than that for English Reading and Writing (4.23).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English Listening &amp; Speaking</th>
<th>English Reading &amp; Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15. The mean of students’ Self-perceived English proficiency

4.1.5. The Relationships between Self-perceived English Proficiency and Self-perceived Korean Proficiency, Acculturation, and Demographic variables.

Table 16 shows correlations among self-perceived English and Korean proficiency, American and Korean acculturation, and demographic variables. Significant correlations were observed between variables. Self-perceived English proficiency is strongly and
positively correlated with both years in the U.S. and American acculturation. The correlation between American acculturation and English listening and speaking was higher than that of American acculturation and English reading and writing.²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender (Male)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in U.S.</th>
<th>Age of arrival</th>
<th>A.Acutt</th>
<th>K.Acutt</th>
<th>E. P.</th>
<th>K. P.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.25*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in U.S.</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.43**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of arrival</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.69**</td>
<td>-.95**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.Acutt</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>-.62**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.Acutt</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>-.23*</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>-.43**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng P.</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>.74**</td>
<td>-.75**</td>
<td>.66**</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kor P.</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>-.81**</td>
<td>.81**</td>
<td>-.57**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>-.61**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
A.Acutt = American Acculturation
K.Acutt = Korean Acculturation
E. P. = Self-perceived English proficiency
K.P. = self-perceived Korean proficiency

Table 16. Correlations between Gender, Age, Age of arrival, Years in the U.S., Korean/American acculturation, Self-perceived English proficiency, and self-perceived Korean proficiency

However, self-perceived English proficiency is strongly and negatively correlated with both age of arrival and self-perceived Korean proficiency. On the other hand, self-perceived English proficiency is moderately and negatively correlated with current age and Korean acculturation.

². The correlation between American Acculturation and English listening/speaking is .69 and the
Table 17 shows correlations between dimensions of acculturation and other variables. Self-perceived English proficiency is positively and highly correlated with American language use, while its relationships with American behaviors and American

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Language Use</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
<th>Social contact</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.P.</td>
<td>.68** -.56**</td>
<td>.48** -.12</td>
<td>.40** -.22*</td>
<td>.24** .23**</td>
<td>.15 .12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.15 -.17</td>
<td>.20* .03</td>
<td>-.01 -.18</td>
<td>.11 .01</td>
<td>-.09 -.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.49** .45**</td>
<td>-.35** .12</td>
<td>-.19* .17</td>
<td>-.11 -.20*</td>
<td>-.03 -.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td>.66** -.59**</td>
<td>.46** -.12</td>
<td>.22* -.11</td>
<td>.23** .24*</td>
<td>.23* .08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrival</td>
<td>-.70** .63**</td>
<td>-.49** .14</td>
<td>-.24* .15</td>
<td>-.22** -.26**</td>
<td>-.20* .10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.P.</td>
<td>-.62** .63**</td>
<td>-.51** .30**</td>
<td>-.30** .19*</td>
<td>-.17 -.05</td>
<td>-.05 .01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
E.P. = Self-perceived English proficiency
Years = Years in the U.S.
Arrival = Age of Arrival
K.P. = self-perceived Korean proficiency
Male =1, Female =2

Table 17. Correlations between Gender, Age, Age of arrival, Years in the U.S.,
Korean/American acculturation, Self-perceived English proficiency, self-
perceived Korean proficiency and dimensions of Acculturation

social contact are moderate. The correlations between self-perceived English proficiency
and Korean and American attitudes are significant, positive, and low, which indicates
that students who have positive attitudes toward either English and American people or
the Korean language and people tend to have a high level of self-perceived English

correlation between American Acculturation and English reading/writing is .60.
proficiency. On the other hand, self-perceived English proficiency is negatively correlated with Korean language use and Korean social contact. That is, the higher self-perceived English proficiency one has, the less one uses Korean and has social contact with Korean people.

4.1.6. The Predictors of Self-perceived English Proficiency.

A stepwise regression was used in order to determine to what extent self-perceived English proficiency is predicted by a linear combination of independent variables. A stepwise regression provides a device for selecting independent variables that are only the best predictors of the dependent variable by eliminating variables that are not significant. In order to validate whether a stepwise regression is an appropriate regression model for the present study, an alternative regression that included all independent variables in the equation was also used. No differences were found between the two regression equations. Considering multicollinearity on the selection of independent variables and overall model fit when including selected independent variables (Hviar, 1998), the researcher concluded that the stepwise regression was a valid model for the purpose of the present study.

In the first regression, overall American and Korean acculturation scores, self-perceived Korean proficiency, and demographic variables were used as independent variables to predict level of self-perceived English proficiency. Gender, residential status, and intended length of stay in the U.S. were dummy coded for the regression analysis. As illustrated in Table 18, three independent variables - age of arrival, American acculturation, and gender - turned out to be significant predictors of self-perceived
English proficiency. Among the three variables, the most important variable is ‘age of arrival’ with a negative contribution, indicating the greater proficiency in English can be predicted among students who arrived in the U.S. at an earlier age. 57% of variance in the dependent variable was explained by age of arrival. The next important variable was ‘American acculturation’ with a positive contribution. The more an individual adopted American culture, the greater was his or her self-perceived English proficiency. The additional variance accounted for by American acculturation is 6%. ‘Gender’ was the third important variable. Male students’ self-perceived English proficiency tended to be higher than their female counterparts. The additional variance accounted for by gender was 6%. The total amount of variance in self-perceived English proficiency explained by the three independent variables in this model was 69%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of arrival</td>
<td>-.59</td>
<td>-8.56</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Acculturation</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Gender: + male

Table 18. Multiple Regression: Overall American Acculturation score, Overall Korean Acculturation score, and demographic variables as predictors of English language proficiency

59
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Model Summary**

Table 19 indicates the results of multiple regression in which dimensions of acculturation were used instead of overall acculturation scores in the regression equation. Age of arrival, gender, American language use, and American social contact were significant variables in the prediction of self-perceived English proficiency. The most important variable was age of arrival with a negative contribution. The amount of variance explained by age of arrival was 57%. The next important variable was gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of arrival</td>
<td>-.57</td>
<td>-7.73</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Language Use</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Social Contact</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Gender: + male

Table 19. Multiple Regression: Dimensions of Acculturation and demographic variables as predictors of English language proficiency
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Model Summary**

Male made a positive contribution to the equation and the additional variance accounted for by gender was 5%.

The third important predictor of self-perceived English proficiency was American language use with a positive contribution, and the additional variance explained by American language use was 5%. The fourth important variable was American social contact with a positive contribution in the prediction of self-perceived English proficiency. The additional variance accounted for by American social contact was 2%. In this regression equation, the total amount of variance in self-perceived English proficiency explained by independent variables was 69%.

In sum, in both regression equations, age of arrival made the most significant contribution in the prediction of self-perceived English proficiency (inversely related). Other significant variables were gender (male), American acculturation, American language use, and American social contact, with a positive contribution. The same amount of variance in the dependent variable was explained by independent variables in both regression equations, which indicates that one is as good as the other in the
prediction of self-perceived English proficiency. Korean acculturation, any dimension of Korean acculturation, and self-perceived Korean proficiency were not important variables as predictors of self-perceived English proficiency in both multiple regressions.
4.2 Findings of the Case Studies

In this section, the results of five case studies are presented. Case 1, Case 2, and Case 3 participants are Korean immigrant students, who are also called ‘1.5 generation students.’\textsuperscript{3} Case 4 and Case 5 students are Korean international students. All the students came to the U.S. four to six years prior to the study when they were high school students. Interviews and participant observations were conducted during eight months. The researcher interviewed not only the five students but also friends of the five students in order to add more information on the participants. Interviews and observations, which were conducted during eight months, allowed for a considerable rapport to be built between the participants and the researcher.

**Case 1: Jin**

Jin is a 23-year-old college senior majoring in Biology. Her family, which consists of her parents, her younger brother, and herself, immigrated to the U.S. from Korea in 1994. Jin’s uncle, who lived in the U.S., had invited her family to the U.S. but it took 10 years to receive immigration permission from the U.S. government. Jin’s family even forgot the fact that they had applied for immigration over 10 years before. Therefore, the notice of permission to emigrate was a surprise for them and they had not prepared well for immigration when they came to the U.S. They had little knowledge of American culture and English proficiency. Jin’s father had a decent job and her family had a middle-class socioeconomic status in Korea. The primary reasons for the decision

\textsuperscript{3} Park (1999) defined 1.5 generations as pre-adult immigrants whose sociocultural characteristics and psychological experiences are distinct from those of either the first or second generation Korean
to leave were better education and advanced job opportunities for the children and quality of life in the U.S. Jin explained the motivation of her family’s immigration as follows:

My family did not immigrate into this country because we were poor in Korea. We belonged to a middle class and everything was ok in Korea. My dad had a decent job and my mom was a housewife. My brother and I did well at school. We expected a better life here, I mean, better opportunities for education and jobs for us [her and her brother].

Jin said that her parents expected that her and her brother would learn English quickly and that things would be better because they could rely on their two children when they had any communication problems in English. Jin’s relatives, who had lived in the city for over 20 years, and people in the Korean community helped her family settle in the U.S. Her parents opened a laundry. Jin expressed appreciation to and responsibility for her parents, who had sacrificed their job and comfortable life in Korea for her and her brother.

During the interview, she answered my question with a polite and eager-to-please manner. She was very slender, and her polite manner and tidy clothes gave me the impression that she was ‘a model Korean girl.’ Actually, her academic performance was outstanding and she had taken a leadership position through her school years in Korea. She is also an honor student in college. Although she sometimes hesitated to say negative things about her family, for example, conflicts between her and her father, most of her answers to my questions were very clear and spontaneous.

Americans. According to Park (1999), the Korean American community expects 1.5 generation to function as linguistic and cultural brokers while remaining loyal to the family and ethnic community.
Social Network and Contacting People

Jin’s social network is limited to the Korean circle. She is actively involved in the worship team and group activities in a Korean church, which her whole family attends. When she attended an American high school, her class consisted of only ESL students. She did not have any American classmates at her high school. She described her one high school year in the U.S. as follows:

I was lonely when I was in the American high school. I usually stayed at home by myself after school. I didn’t get along with my brother because we had different interests. I usually studied at home but my brother liked meeting friends. He seemed to adjust to an American life better than I did. I had a few Japanese friends in my ESL class. I also had an American friend who was actually my friend’s friend. We sometimes got together, but the relationship didn’t last long because we couldn’t see each other after we graduated.

Jin did not seem to adjust her well to a new American life. She said that she was not a full participant in school and did not have a feeling of belonging to her new school partly because she was an ESL student.

When I was in Korea, I was a very active student not only in studying but also in extracurricular activities. I served as a student leader in the school for many years. During my high school years in Korea, I took charge of the school broadcasting job, so all the teachers and students knew me. I was something and kind of popular in those days (laughing). The ESL program in the American school was good. The school had good teachers and much financial support from parents, but I didn’t have any American friends because I was a senior and hadn’t taken classes with them. Few teachers knew me. I felt I was nothing at the school and didn’t feel I belong to the school.

Jin talked about her school life in Korea for a long time with excitement. It seems to be difficult for her to accept her degraded position in her American school. Jin said that her ESL teacher was the only American whom she knew well. She always excelled
academically despite her limited English proficiency. Jin decided to major in Biology at college because it was her favorite subject. Her parents agreed with her decision because they thought studying Biology would be a good basis for pursuing her study at a medical school. During her college years, Jin associated with mainly Korean students although she was acquainted with some Americans and foreign students. Jin did not avoid making friends with Americans but did not take the initiative, either. She did not feel much necessity to make non-Korean friends, including Americans. She attributed her poor English to her limited friendships with non-Koreans.

For six years in America, I have had very few American friends. During my college years, I knew some American and foreign students, but the relationships didn’t develop further. I didn’t make much effort to make foreign friends because I felt uncomfortable with them. Also, I didn’t need American friends because everything went OK without them. What was important to me was having close friends who could understand me and all of them were Koreans. But now, I regret that I didn’t make more effort to have diverse friends. Compared with my brother, my English has not improved much because I got together with only Korean friends.

Although she knew the importance of learning English, she did not feel much necessity to use English because most of the people with whom she interacted were Korean. Jin told me an embarrassing story that happened to her when she visited Korea a few months ago.

I visited Korea a few months ago and traveled to an island with friends. One of my friends had an American visitor and asked me to guide her American friend during the sightseeing. I tried to explain the history and legends of the island to her in English, but I couldn’t do it well. It hadn’t happened before because I rarely traveled with American friends. I was so embarrassed and realized my English was a real problem.
Jin’s reluctance to speak in English was revealed when I first asked her to allow me to interview her. Her immediate response to my request was to ask whether she had to speak in English. She was certainly afraid of speaking in English. However, she was aware that English was very important to succeed in her professional area. She said, “Even if I do an excellent job in my research, people won’t think my accomplishment is great if I can’t present it in an appropriate way in English. Communication, I mean, speaking and writing, is very important even in my area [Biology].” Jin’s primary motivation to learn English is utilitarian: to get a good job and to adjust well in American society. She said that she needs American friends to learn about American culture in order to learn English.

Jin attributed her limited friendships with non-Koreans partially to her parents and to her father, in particular. Jin’s father did not want her and her brother to be Americanized although he wanted them to succeed in American society. He wanted his children to grow up as model Koreans and to be obedient to their parents. Jin’s father was very strict and put much restriction on her social life.

My dad insists that my brother and I become a model of “good and successful Koreans.” He has always said that we should be humble and obedient to our parents. He also wants us to succeed in American society and to get professional jobs, such as, doctors or professors. He doesn’t want me to hang around with friends and won’t allow me to come home late at night, either. One day, I had to work on a project with my study group members in the library. I told my dad over the phone that I would be out late studying. He wouldn’t listen to me and shouted to me to come home right away. But I had to come home late, and my dad was very upset and disciplined me. I cried because I didn’t do anything wrong. However, I accepted that because I didn’t want to make my dad more upset. Over six years, my dad hasn’t change at all.
Jin said that being obedient to her parents and at the same time adjusting in American society has sometimes caused conflicts. Jin seemed to have had more conflicts with her father than her brother had because she was the first child who brought her father new challenges from her college life, for example, parties or long trips with friends. She said that she rarely enjoyed as much freedom as other Korean college students had, not to mention that of the American students. Also, her father seemed to be stricter with her than he was with her brother because she is a girl.

I always had a lot of conflict with my father even when I thought I behaved well. He was controlling and too worried about everything about me. He didn’t want us to grow up like liberal American kids. My brother had less conflict with my dad than I had because my dad got some ideas from the conflicts with me. I think I served kind of as a bumper. My father was also less strict with him because he is a son. You know, Korean parents have a double standard for their daughters and sons.

According to Jin, her father was not that controlling when they were in Korea. She said that she did not like her father’s interfering so much in her life at first but tried not to offend him because she knew that her father’s controlling attitudes came from his fear of losing his children. Jin seems to have developed great understanding of her father and to put family values before her own personal freedom. During the interviews Jin often emphasized that conflicts like hers with her father were common in immigrant families. She expressed her responsibility to protect her parents who can not speak English very well and to be a good older sister to her brother. She said, “If something goes wrong between my parents and me, it will also affect my younger brother. I don’t want that.”

People in the Korean community and the Korean church, in particular, seem to serve as a reference group for Jin. Her family has attended the church since they
immigrated to America. Jin made Korean friends in the church and has had long term relationships with them. She also knew quite a number of Korean international students. When I visited her church for the second interview, about 30 people attended the church service. Jin and I talked over lunch in the churchyard, which is prepared by church people every Sunday. All the people seemed to be close to each other and talked about everyday happenings around them. The atmosphere of the church gave me the impression that it was a big extended Korean family. Even when a small thing happens, it will probably spread quickly and attract everybody’s attention in the church. The church has no activities or events for non-Koreans, including Americans.

During the second interview, I asked Jin whether she had experienced any change during the three months since our first interview. She had graduated from college and had started a data entry job in a bank two weeks before. She also planned to study for the GRE to apply for graduate school. She said that the data entry job was a temporary one and did not give her much opportunity to associate with Americans.

Working in the bank did not bring much change for me. I work on the computer almost all of the time in the office. I don’t have to talk with people there. Sometime, people make jokes, but usually I can’t understand them. I speak to the people only when they speak to me. But I feel I can learn something about American social life there because everybody is a foreigner [American]. Although I thought I had to change my life style, little has been changed yet.

Jin does not want to leave her parents to get a job that is related to her major in a different city because she is afraid to live alone. We talked about any opportunities that might help her to make American friends and to learn English but ended our conversation without any answers.
Perception of Cultural Differences

Jin said that Korean and American cultures were very different and emphasized what she saw a large gap between her family and American families. She said that her parents had traditional Korean values regarding their relationships with children. For example, her parents wanted her to submit to them and did not allow her to make any decisions by herself. Jin said that her parents’ overprotective and controlling attitudes caused many conflicts in her social life.

My parents always said to me that I have to be humble and obedient to elder people as well as to my parents. However, that didn’t fit in with American ways. For example, when I told my American classmates that I couldn’t join the class trip because my parents wouldn’t allow me to do, they didn’t understand me. They did not understand why my parents made the decision about it. They might have thought I was a dummy.

Jin’s perceptions of American culture mainly focused on American people’s behaviors rather than on the values of American culture. She mentioned many times the differences between American and Korean people and expressed discomfort with associating with American people.

As you know, American people respond differently when something happens. It is too much to say everything about differences. Because I was born and lived in Korea for 17 years Korean culture was my culture and I felt uncomfortable with a different culture. I haven’t change much since I came here. I don’t think I will change even if I live here for the rest of my life. American culture is different but the difference is not attractive to me. There are some similarities, though. For example, people say American kids are more independent than Korean kids are and they usually live separately from their parents when they graduate from high school. But I don’t think they are completely independent. Many American parents send them tuition and an allowance and check regularly to see if their children are doing well….I think that is a good thing. I don’t think I have to completely give up Korean culture to follow the American way of life.
Jin showed a strong attachment to Korean culture. She did not think that her
Korean way should be changed and doubted that it would be easily changed even if she
wanted to. Jin had considerable psychological distance from Americans, which seemed to
be derived from different socialization between Korean and American girls.

American girls are strong, outgoing, and very expressive. I feel kind of strange
among them. I think Americans don’t usually take a small Asian girl like me
seriously. I might be wrong, but some of them didn’t treat me as an adult and are
not as nice to me as to Asian men. I feel that they don’t listen to me. I am 23 years
old and want to be treated as an adult.

In addition, Jin’s lack of in-depth knowledge of American culture seemed to make
her perceived gap between American and Korean cultures larger. Jin’s knowledge about
American culture seemed to be limited to the external aspects of American culture, such
as, Americans’ behaviors. Also, she seemed to obtain her knowledge of American culture
as an observer or indirectly from other Koreans around her rather than from close and
long-term relationships with Americans.

I know what I should do and should not do when I talk and do things with
foreigners [Americans]. But, because I haven’t had any long-term and close
relationships with Americans, I honestly don’t know how much their values and
ideals are different from mine.

In sum, as Jin pointed out, her lack of social contact with Americans seems to be
responsible for her low level of English proficiency. Although Jin has lived in the U.S.
for six years, her interpersonal relationships have been limited to within the Korean
community and so her Korean life style and values have not changed much. She did not
feel much need to adapt to American culture in the Korean circle. She could obtain good
grades because her major, Biology, did not require excellent communication skills in
English and she could keep her image as a good Korean girl among the Korean American community. Structural and social barriers, for example, high school ESL class, her father’s restriction on her social life, the cohesive Korean community structure, and her computer job, seem to have prevented her from interacting with American people and to have produced social distance from American society. Also, her vulnerability as a female and her responsibility as a first child in an immigrant family seemed to generate psychological distance from American people, which impedes integration into a new society and learning a second language. (Acton, 1979; Schumann, 1986).

Jin’s limited social contact with Americans, in turn, might not provide her with enough incentives or opportunities to develop her new identity as a full member of American society. Her lack of integration into American society and psychological distance from American people were reflected in her reference to Americans as ‘foreigners’ in the interview. Without social contact with American people, in-depth understanding of American culture and people seems to be difficult. Jin’s strong attachment to Korean culture seems to be derived from her attachment and sense of responsibility to her family as well as from being uncomfortable in American culture. Therefore, leaving Korean culture and the Korean community may mean for her to abandon her parents. Over six years after her family’s immigration into America, America still remains a foreign country to Jin and her English has not improved enough that she could be a guide to an American friend during a trip.
Case 2: Chul

"I want to be one of the average American people."

Chul is Jin's brother and one year younger than his sister. He is a college junior majoring in Biology. Chul is rather short and looks younger than his age. His hair hangs over his shoulders, which makes him look like a student from South Asian countries. In the interviews, Chul talked very quietly and sometimes mumbled, so that I often had to ask him to make clear what he had said. The second and third interviews were conducted respectively four months and five months after the first one. I visited the library where he was working and the Korean church that his family attended. During the several interviews with Chul, I established considerable rapport with him. He became more open and was willing to tell his story to me. During this period, I also observed some changes in him.

Social Network and Contacting People

Chul's social networks include his family, college, part-time job, and the Korean church. He is Christian but does not like to go to the Korean church because he thinks it mainly emphasizes social purposes. However, he goes to the Korean church every Sunday because his parents want him to do. His main associations are with Korean immigrant students whom he met either in the Korean church or on campus. He said that he knew some Korean international students but rarely went out with them. Chul said that his sister, Jin, and he have had very different social lives since they came to America. He said that, unlike his studious sister who usually spent most of her time studying at home,
he liked associating with diverse friends from high school. During his high school years, he had many Japanese friends in his ESL class and a few American friends at school.

His first conflict with Americans happened during his involvement in a bible group at an American church when he was a college freshman. He said that some of the group members had strong prejudices against people who were not white and had religions other than Christianity.

Some of the Americans in the bible group are very narrow-minded. They think they are saint-like figures and people outside of the church are corrupt. They have a strong prejudice against colored people and especially, against black people.

Chul also said that, like a few members in the bible group, he had had a bias toward black people for years. He thought that being American meant having cultural purity, or ‘white people’s culture,’ and that the mixture of diverse culture has contaminated American cultural purity, causing many social problems in America. Chul said that he also believed in ‘the theory of cultural purity’ and avoided associating with Korean people, including Korean immigrants, as well as black people. He seemed to have had strong identity conflicts at that time.

I thought that I should be completely changed into someone else in America. I avoided meeting Koreans and was reluctant to say I came from Korea to others because I didn’t want to either let them know I came from Korea or get to know any Korean students. I wished I would be like white people.

A change seemed to occur Chul met black people at part-time work places. He was working 15 hours a week at a fast food restaurant and in a college library. Both were minimum wage jobs paying five to six dollars an hour. Although his parents wanted him to concentrate only on studying without working, he insisted on the part time jobs for
several reasons. First of all, Chul did not like studying all the time. Instead, he wanted to make money and learn English and American culture in the workplace through interacting with American people. Also, his part-time job seemed to be his expression of independence from his parents and an adaptation to American culture.

My parents are not happy with my part-time job. They want to give me financial support and have told me to dedicate myself to studying to be a doctor without wasting time on working and hanging out with those uneducated people. Studying hard might be important for my future but I don’t like stressful things. I prefer getting a small job and enjoying my life. Also, I don’t like asking for an allowance from my parents every time I need anything. Working means more than making money to me. I can learn English and about American society and people there. I want to be an average American. I don’t think being a doctor is the most important thing in my life.

Chul said that meeting different people in the workplace has brought many good changes into his life. He said that he was no longer prejudiced against black people after he got to know them at his part-time job.

I used to have prejudice against black people. Even though I hadn’t personally had any bad experiences with them, I thought they were rude and dangerous. These prejudices have changed since I came to know them at work. My black coworkers are nice and open-minded although they are discriminated against in this society. They are just different and I realized I have to look at them as individuals. I think God led me to work there in order to change my prejudice against black people.

On the other hand, Chul has some international friends who came from Asian or South American countries. He said that he has dated Indonesian and Taiwanese girls. He met these friends either in class or in the library where he worked. I visited the library where he worked for an interview on a Saturday night in July. The Science Engineering library where Chul was working is open for 24 hours almost every day and is known as the library of international students because many international students study there.
students were studying in the library and, at the front desk, three Asian looking students including Chul and a white-American student were taking care of patrons. Judging from those students’ appearances, languages, and manners, for example, bowing to each other when they greeted each other, one might not be able to tell whether this library was a university library in America or in an Asian country.

While working in the library, Chul knew many Asian students and became close friends with some of them. He said that it was easy to get close with those friends because they shared common experiences, such as, immigration, conflicts with parents, and difficulties in a new country. Also, he felt comfortable in speaking English with those friends because they were not so conscious of imperfect English.

The most important thing in my friendships is mutual understanding. We [Chul and his Asian friends] usually complained about how much our parents expect from us or talk about fun things, such as, cars, girls, and sports. I feel more comfortable with them than with Americans. I think it is because we have similar cultural backgrounds. And I am less conscious of my English and more focused on the message. When I try to say something to Americans, I have to think first whether my English is good or not.

On the other hand, Chul seemed to have few middle class white American friends. Chul attributed his lack of white American friends to racial segregation among college students and Americans’ prejudices against Asian people. However, he said that he did not avoid associating with American friends. He even asked an American girl on a date when he was a freshman.

When I was a freshman, I asked an American girl to go out. She was my classmate, pretty and taller than I am. She didn’t accept my proposal saying that she was busy. I happened to see her on campus a few days ago and talked with her on the street. She told me I got better [in speaking English].
When I asked him whether he was embarrassed when the girl refused his proposal, Chul said that he was disappointed but not embarrassed. He said, “I don’t think she refused my proposal because there was something wrong with me. I might not have been her type.” Chul’s response contrasted with Jin’s reaction to Americans. Jin was very sensitive to what Americans thought about her and was afraid of any unfavorable feedback from them.

The first interview was conducted in English and Chul spoke English rather fluently but used a lot of slang. He said that he learned different types of English from different friends. When he had a Hispanic friend several years ago he had a Hispanic accent in his English. Chul said that he was learning black slang and sometimes spoke English with black accent nowadays. He was worried that his non-standard English might give a bad impression in job interviews.

I don’t have many problems communicating with people around me in English. But my English is kind of informal. I don’t know how to speak like a TV reporter [Standard English] and so I am worried about future job interviews. I sometimes think my life might end like those Americans at my part time job.

In sum, Chul’s sociable personality seemed to facilitate his adjustment in America by promoting his association with diverse people. Also, he had a solid belief in the value of relating to people from outside the Korean community in order to learn about American culture. His main friends were Korean immigrant students. However, he sometimes expressed discomfort with Korean people, for example, some friends of his parents’ in the Korean Community, because they insisted on too much Korean culture and expected him to be a model minority. Also, the conflict between Chul and his parents regarding his career choice seemed to push him outside his home. Part time jobs seemed
to be a channel to connect him to the American society outside of home and the Korean community and provided him with opportunities to learn English. For Chul, a certain degree of separation from home and the Korean community seemed to be inevitable in order to adapt to American society. Meanwhile, as his English indicates, Chul was mainly socialized with Asian students and low socioeconomic class or non-main stream Americans. Instead of struggling with racial barriers and prejudices of middle class white Americans, Chul chose his friends from immigrant students and working class Americans. His world consists of some Korean, some American, and some international components, but he might not truly belong in any one community.

**Being American and Having Pride in Being Bilingual and Bicultural**

With regard to American culture, Chul, unlike his sister who mainly focused on American people’s behaviors, appreciates the values of American society, such as, freedom, individualism, and independence. He has a positive attitude toward American society and pride in being American. Chul is also proud to be bilingual and bicultural.

I think being bilingual and bicultural have many benefits. I would say it is a maximum mixture of two cultures. I can choose the good parts of two cultures. Knowing two languages is beneficial for one’s career and social relationships.

Chul viewed cultural differences positively and was willing to learn about other cultures without insisting on only Korean culture. With regard to cultural conflicts, he said that most conflicts occurred between him and his father, who had authoritarian attitudes, rather than between him and American people.
I didn’t have many cultural conflicts outside of home. Most of the conflicts occurred between my dad and me. My dad is mostly unhappy with my behavior and has told me to be more obedient to him. I am obedient, though. When I wanted to move out and live in a dorm my dad was against it because he thought I would be spoiled. I can’t have my privacy in my parents’ house. Here in America, it’s normal for children to live separately from their parents at the age of 20 or something. But my parents want to live with me forever. I agree with living with my parents when they are very old. But right now I want to live alone because I want my privacy.

Although Chul has conflicts with his father, he usually follows his father’s direction and tries to avoid direct confrontation with his father. He said that the best solution would be to live separately from his parents. However, he did not want to leave his parents without their approval. Chul seems to be more independent than his sister is. His sister, Jin, said that she has rarely thought about living alone not only because her parents would not allow her to do but also because she was afraid of living alone. Jin said that when she visited Korea a few months ago, she missed her parents so much that she realized that living alone would be very difficult for her.

Several months after the interview, Chul moved out with his parents’ approval and financial support. He said that it took four years for him to receive his parents’ approval. Chul liked his new place and his relationship with his parents became better since he moved out. He recently bought a used car with the money that he had saved from his part-time work. He said that his Korean friends, who were mostly Korean immigrant students, often visit his place. Chul’s new place is a one-room efficiency apartment near the campus. When I visited his place, he and his friends were eating Chinese food that they carried out for dinner. The room was very clean and well organized. Chul’s friends were also children of Korean immigrants who came to the U.S. five to seven years ago. One was a freshman and the other was a sophomore at college and they lived separately.
from their parents. They were watching Korean shows that the younger one had rented at the Korean video shop. The younger one said that although he came to America seven years ago he still kept in touch with many friends in Korea and had even made more friends in Korea recently through the Internet chatting. He said that he liked watching Korean shows and reading Korean novels and that he knew plenty of contemporary Korean movie stars, pop singers, and writers. Except language, the culture that the Korean TV shows present is a copy of American pop culture. Most of the Korean young stars on the videos dress and were makeup like Western whites or sometimes black Americans: some dyed their hair blond and others had African American kids’ hairstyles. Although Chul said that those Korean people on the show imitated uncritically western styles, the show seemed to be great fun for him and his friends. They said proudly that Korean people were more fashionable than Americans. In addition, Chul had plenty of videotapes: most of them were American movies and some were Korean. The mass media, such as, TV and the Internet, seems to have great impact on these students’ access to contemporary Korean culture and people in Korea.

Chul seemed to continually search for answers to the questions, “What does it mean to be American?” and “How to deal with Korean ethnicity?” He said that Americans usually regard him not as an individual but as an Asian in general. He does not want others to pay too much attention to his Asian looks; instead, he wants to be regarded as an ordinary American. Chul’s dream, different from his parents’ expectation, is not necessarily to be ‘a doctor’ or ‘professor.’ He wants to be ‘an average American’ who has a job, family, and friends. He seems to have positively accepted his ethnicity and it was an important part of his Korean American identity. He regrets that some
Korean Americans, including his cousin, are in trouble because of having lost their Korean identity.

I know some Korean American students who are in trouble because of the loss of Korean identities. They cannot speak Korean and don’t know about Korea. They think that they are not different from white Americans. But as they grow up they come to know they won’t be accepted equally. For me, they are not Korean at all. My Korean American cousin, who was born here and is one year younger than me, has the same problem. He recently started to learn Korean but it seems to be too late. Accepting Korean ethnicity and keeping Korean identities are important not only for me but also for my future children.

Interacting with diverse people has provided him with the chance not only to learn American culture and English but also to positively accept his Korean identity. He has realized that so many different people make up the American society that he could be a kind of American who has Korean heritage. Chul has identified himself with members of minority groups and has developed positive attitudes toward cultural diversity.

However, for Chul, acculturation into the American society seemed not to have been smooth because it might have cost him his family values. Although he believes that adaptation to American culture is important, he has found that it should not be at the expense of Korean values. He has tried to build his new identity based on his Korean identity. For example, although Chul favored freedom and privacy, he lived with his parents and helped deal with their communication problems until he became a college senior. He kept a decent GPA and attended the Korean church. Chul also tried to learn English and American society through involvement in an American church and working 15 hours a week at a part time job. This involves extra responsibility and effort. For all these efforts, he was not well accepted either by the Korean or by the Americans. He had to tolerate Korean people’s silent criticism of an immigrant child who does not follow the
role model of a Korean American. At the same time, he had to fight against some Americans’ prejudices against Asians and accept his friendships with working class Americans. He is also worried about his non-standard English and his lack of academic English skills. This acculturation process was considerably stressful, and little support was available from either the Korean or the American side. As a coping strategy, Chul seemed to keep his world rather separate from both home and the majority society. He invested much in his friendships with diverse people based on individuality and mutual understanding. Friendship with those diverse people seemed to give him psychological support and a feeling of security in his own identity.
Case 3: Sung

Sung was 21 years old and was majoring in both Communication and Theatre when I interviewed him for this study. Sung’s family immigrated into the U.S. four years ago from Korea in order to get a better education for Sung and his younger sister. Sung wanted to study film in order to be a film producer, and his sister was interested in studying music in the U.S. Sung’s aunt, who got married to an American man, invited Sung’s family to the U.S. Sung and his sister lived with his aunt’s family for two years before their parents came to America. Sung’s parents run a small business in a city which is located 400 miles away from the city where Sung is studying. Sung visits his parents during breaks and holidays.

Sung and his friends visited me once in a while to say hello to me but usually stayed for only a few minutes and left. Sung did not talk much, and his reserved attitude gave me the impression that he was introverted and even shy. Actually, it took much effort and patience for me to interview him because he was always busy. He put off the first interview twice and did not show up for the third appointment. I thought that he might feel uncomfortable about being interviewed, but later he explained that he could not come because of his tight schedule. He was taking 20 credits each quarter, had a part-time job, and joined in two group activities on campus. According to Sung’s friends, Sung is crazy about movies and works very hard, and his English is the best of their friends. Sung’s friends also said that Sung was very Americanized because he was very rational and independent and has many American friends. They also said that Sung really wanted to belong to American society. One of his friends said that Sung might be lonely because he had no best friend although he hung out with many American friends.
Social Contact and Friendship

Sung has been a hard working student since he was young in Korea. He attended one of the prestigious high schools in Korea, which was very competitive to enter. Sung said that he always had to study hard because he wanted to maintain a good academic record in the high school. Sung had considerable familiarity with American culture and knowledge of English when he was in Korea. He said that he watched many English speaking movies not only for fun but also to give him opportunity to learn American culture and English. Sung’s high school in Korea had a native speaker English teacher who taught students English speaking and writing. Having native speaker English teachers is unusual in high schools in Korea and Sung had a unique opportunity to improve his English speaking and writing.

Sung lived with his aunt who had been married with American man for two years when he first came to America. He said that he spoke English with his uncle and learned American culture at home as well as in the school. However, like other immigrant students, Sung had difficulties in adjusting to American high school. He said that those difficulties were due to his lack of English proficiency, cultural difference, and his introverted personality. However, he made efforts to overcome those obstacles and seemed to adjust well in the school.

I didn’t adjust well in American school in the beginning. I learned that I had to change my introvert personality to learn English and make American friends. I tried to be more sociable and outgoing. American kids are much more outgoing than Korean kids and like participating in diverse activities in the school. As I became more outgoing, I got along with American friends and also had American girl friend in the high school. I didn’t feel any isolation and adjusted well in American life. If I had not changed my introvert personality and life style I could not have adjusted well in the new environment.
Although he said that he changed his personality, Sung seemed to modify his behavior to adjust to a new situation such as participating in extracurricular activities. He said that participating in extracurricular activities was very helpful in making American friends and learning American culture.

Participating in group activities gave me a good chance to make friends and learn American culture. In the high school, I actively participated in extracurricular activities and made some American friends. Through interacting with American friends I could pick up English. At college, I also participated in two extracurricular activities. One is a Friday basketball team and the other is filmmaking.

Sung said that he tried to participate in both group activities every weekend in spite of his busy schedule. He said that all his friends were American until he was a college sophomore because he did not have many chances to make friends with foreign students including Koreans. Sung said that most of his classmates and his roommate at college were Americans. He said that he had good relationships with those American friends and his roommate, in particular.

I didn’t have any Korean friends until I was a college sophomore. That was because of the environment. All the people around me were Americans. I got along with them and I didn’t feel alienation. I especially had a good friendship with my roommate when I was a college freshman. We had a lot of common interests such as watching movies and reading novels. He was very sociable and had many friends. We went to see a movie, went for parties and dancing on weekends. Although he moved out and we can’t often see each other, we still keep in touch.

After that Sung had a Korean roommate in the dorm when he was a sophomore, and he came to associate with Korean students. He said that there were not many differences between his Korean and American friends because his Korean friends had adapted to American culture. However, he pointed out that there are some cultural
differences such as the hierarchical relationship between seniors and juniors among
Korean students.

Showing respect to seniors is very important among Korean students. Except that, I
don’t think that there are many differences between American and Korean friends. I
guess that’s because Korean students adapted to American culture while they live
here. I feel comfortable with both groups of friends.

Sung said that he got along with all of his Korean friends although he did not have
any Korean best friends. When he became a junior, the relationship between Sung and
his American friends seemed to be rather remote and he rarely associated with them.

Until last year, most of my friends were Americans and I usually went out with
them on weekends. They don’t hang out with me nowadays even though we see
each other in the class. I don’t know why they are not as close as last year. One of
my Korean friends told me that that is the way Americans usually treat us, but I
don’t think our friendship was collapsed. I think things will be better.

Sung was sorry that he became distant from his American friends but believed that
the friendship would recover soon. He did not attribute the deteriorated relationship with
his American friends to their prejudices against his ethnicity, nor was he affected by
Korean friend’s negative attitudes toward American students. However, this change in
his friendship seemed to bring him more opportunity to associate with Korean friends.

Korean friends remind me of my middle and high school years in Korea. I didn’t
think about it because I had so many things to do here. Nowadays, I meet Korean
friends more frequently than before. I had started to listen to Korean music again
and went to the Korean Student Association meeting with my Korean friends last
month. I think that I need to learn more about Korea as well as about America.

Sung seemed to be confused because he could not find any specific reasons for the
change in his friendship with American students. On the other hand, association with
Korean friends seemed not only to bring him old memories of Korea but also to buffer the stress derived from his relationships with American friends.

It seemed that Sung felt uncomfortable with the tensions that exist between American and Korean students but that he has tried to lower the boundary between Korean and American people. He believes that keeping relationships with both sides is important and not impossible at all.

**Being American and Keeping Pride in Korean heritage**

"Being bilingual and multicultural means being intellectual."

Sung is interested in English literature and movies and has very positive attitudes toward American culture. He wants to learn American culture and to belong to American society. Sung definitely has an integrative motivation to learn English. However, learning English and American culture seems to require something more than having a positive attitude toward American people. Sung pointed out the importance of efforts and commitments during the process of adjusting to a new society.

I enjoyed learning about American culture and English. But learning American culture and English are also kind of a ‘must’ for me to survive and succeed in this country. I don’t think it will come naturally just because I like American culture and live in America.

Also, Sung’s dream of being a film producer and commitment to his career seemed to give him a strong motivation to learn American culture and English.

I want to be a film producer in the future. That is one of my goals in life. Career is really important to me. Film production is one of central parts of American culture
and industry, so understanding American culture and people is very important to me. Meanwhile, Sung appreciates learning different languages and cultures not only for utilitarian purposes, but also as an intellectual pursuit. According to Sung, ‘success’ means not merely material affluence but ‘being a intellectual person.’

The other goal in my life is to be an ‘intellectual person.’ ‘Being intellectual’ means understanding and being open to different cultures and appreciating those differences. I don’t think that people who know only their own culture and language are intellectual regardless of their levels of education. Those people might be successful just in the material world.

Sung defines ‘being intellectual’ as ‘being multilingual and multicultural’ and has a strong belief in cultural diversity. For him, learning American culture and English, and at the same time maintaining Korean culture and language, corresponds with accomplishing his life goal, ‘to be an intellectual’. He pointed out that ethnocentrism or xenophobia is one of the problems that American society has.

Many Americans are not interested in foreign people and cultures although America is a country of immigrants. I think this ethnocentrism or xenophobia is one of the problems that America has. I have a white American friend who came from South Carolina and had kind of ethnocentric viewpoints. Because of that, we sometimes have arguments. Racism is the last thing I like in the world.

Sung was strongly against either judging others or being judged by others based on race or ideology. He said that he has never been ashamed of his Korean heritage and rather has pride in it. Sung said that his roots are in Korea because his parents were Korean and almost 20 years of his life were spent in Korea.

I have never thought negatively about my Korean heritage. Korea is an important part of my life because my parents are Korean and I was born and lived there about 20 years. If I hate my Korean heritage, that means I hate myself. I want my future
children to know that I came from Korea and to be proud of it. I feel that I have to keep Korean culture and to learn more about Korea.

As another reason, Sung pointed out Korean people’s minority situation in America. He said that he had to keep his Korean identity because the majority is white Americans and America is a race conscious society.

I believe there is equal opportunities and freedom in American society compared with other countries, but it is also true that there exists kind of disadvantages for minority people. Maintaining and having pride in my Korean heritage are important for me to keep my self-esteem in America, where white people are dominant. I feel sorry that some Korean Americans do not know Korean language and culture. They might think that they don’t have to keep Korean identity because they speak and behave like white people. I don’t think I have to be like white people. When I accept myself as I am and am proud of my Korean heritage I won’t be hurt by others’ prejudices against my ethnicity. I don’t care what others think about my looks or the accent in my English. The most important thing for me is how I feel about myself.

Sung said that American culture has become so diverse that it is hard to define. Sung did not think that he had to identify himself with the dominant culture, which is represented by white people, in order to be American or to succeed in the American society.

Although the mainstream is Anglo-white American culture, I think it will change because there are so many other ethnic and culture groups and their numbers are growing in America. You can see many Asians in Hawaii and California, who are successful and influential in American society. And, I don’t think that my ethnicity or cultural background will be an obstacle to succeed in America. If I were discriminated against at work for that reason, I would quit the job but I wouldn’t be discouraged because it would not be my fault.

Sung is opposed to any racial or cultural stereotypes and has tried to overcome these barriers. In contrast to his gentle tone through the interview, Sung was very
assertive when he mentioned the importance of cultural diversity. I was surprised at his assertiveness; I actually expected the opposite because of his friends’ comments about him. His strong belief in multiculturalism and multilingualism seemed to provide him with confidence and pride in his Korean heritage.

Sung said that cultural differences between Korean and American people did not bother him much and emphasized more individual differences than intercultural differences. In his interpersonal relationships, he was ‘activity or goal oriented’ rather than ‘people oriented.’ In other words, enjoying the activity itself seemed to be important for him whether he associated with Americans or Koreans. This tendency seemed to not only increase his interactions with American students but also mitigate stresses that were derived from racial or cultural differences. Sung’s positive attitudes toward American culture, desire to belong in the American society, and dedication to pursuing his dream seemed to strengthen his motivation to learn American culture and English. Sung’s strong belief in multiculturalism and pride in Korean heritage seemed to serve as a solid basis for and protector of his self-esteem in his intercultural contact.
Case 4: Sue

"I don't like talking with Americans because they look down on my Asian face and accent in my English."

Sue is the youngest of the students who participated in the case studies, and her current status is a Korean international student. She was 20 years old when this study began and came to the U.S. from Korea in 1996 and was majoring in Communications at college. I have known her for a year and saw her frequently because she lived in the same building where I lived. She dressed like American girls and wore jewelry through pierces on her face, which is popular among American students. Sue appeared sociable and expressive. She had many friends and opened her place for them anytime. She is the only child in her family and her family belongs to the Korean middle class. Her family has been separated for years because she studies in America and her mother lives in Japan for business, while her father remains in Korea. Sue said that her parents pay her tuition and give her a stipend but do not often call her. Sue seems to have an interest in and aptitude for learning foreign languages. When she was in Korea she was selected to be a cultural exchange student because she was good at English. In addition, she recently started to learn Japanese in preparation to visit her mother in Japan. She said that she likes learning Japanese and that her Japanese has been rapidly improving.

Sue started studying in an American high school as a cultural exchange student in 1995 and decided to continue to study in America. Sue attended a small high school in a rural area of Ohio. She lived with an American family and was the only Korean in her school. Sue said that the elderly American couple she lived with was very nice to her and that they liked to talk with her about her day when she would come home from school.
Sue had many happy memories of her host family. The main reason that she decided to study in America was to learn English and to get a better education. She said that she was interested in learning foreign languages and thought that she could utilize those skills in her future career. Also, she believed that living in foreign countries and learning different cultures would help her to be an open-minded and mature person. Although she wants to live in the U.S. she is also considering going back to Korea depending upon where she will be able to find a good job.

Contacting People and Friendships

After Sue agreed to participate in my study, she invited me to her place on one Friday night. When I visited her room, there were two Korean girls including Sue, three Korean boys, and one Japanese boy in the room. They were talking and the room was messy with empty cans and the smell of smoking and pizza. Sue introduced her friends to me and continued to talk with them. They were talking loudly about their friends, Korean seniors, and some courses that they were taking, without paying any attention to me. One of the Korean boys complained about his seniors’ dominant attitudes, and there were controversies about the issue and chaos for a while. Sue showed her friends a doll that her American boyfriend had given her on her birthday and boasted about it. On that night, Sue looked cheerful and led the conversation all the way. They spoke mostly in Korean but sometimes used English.

The first interview was conducted a few days after my visit. I asked her about the background of her coming to the U.S., contact with people, and school life. Sue said that she had adjusted well in the American high school but was bored with hanging out with
only American students. Sue said that she was excited when she came to college because she could make friends with a diverse range of people from different countries. In addition to Korean friends, Sue made a few foreign friends, including her American boyfriend at college.

I met him [her boyfriend] in a class. He is one of those white American students. After the class, he approached and introduced himself to me. It was a surprising to me because American kids usually did not first approach me. He is nice to me and we usually go out on weekends.

Sue said that she was acquainted with some American students through her boyfriend. In addition, Sue expressed interests in joining extracurricular activities such as ‘International Friendship’ and in meeting people from different countries.

I think living in foreign countries and learning different cultures are a lot of fun and beneficial. Different cultures have their own good points. People who live only in their own countries and don’t know other cultures might be narrow-minded like “a frog inside the well.” The frog may think that the small sky it can see from the well is the whole world because it has never come out of the well and seen the outside world.

In the second interview, which was conducted three months later, I did not observe the same enthusiasm about meeting different people that she had showed in the first interview. She told me that she had experienced frustration at American kids’ parties. Sue seemed to feel isolated among American students because she believes that they consider her just a foreigner and not one of their friends.

When I went to a party, America kids usually asked me ‘Where are you from?’ wondering why I was there. I don’t think they regarded me as one of their peers because I looked and spoke differently. I was just a foreigner there and couldn’t enjoy the party.
Sue said that it was unusual and uncomfortable for an Asian girl to go to the American students’ party. Sue also pointed out that her imperfect English and American students’ intolerance of her English made the situation worse at the party.

When our conversation was not smooth because of my imperfect English, they [American kids] usually turned away from me. They usually didn’t give me a second chance. They were impatient because of my imperfect English. Or, they might think I am stupid because I can’t speak English like them. After having this kind of experience a couple of times at a party, I didn’t feel like talking with them except saying short greetings, such as “How are you?” “Nice to see you”, or something like that.

Sue did not think that talking with American kids whom she did not know very well was helpful in improving her English because she usually restricted her conversation to simple greetings or introductions. She said that she had few chances to have long conversations with Americans because they were not willing to listen to her. Sue said that it was impossible for her to maintain a conversation with those people, not to mention making friends with them. Sue said that she rarely approached and initiated conversations with American people because of this unwelcome atmosphere.

With regard to overall English proficiency, Sue was very sensitive to pronunciation and frequently revealed frustration with her accent in English.

No matter how well I might speak English in the future, my English will not be perfect because I have a foreign accent. I really hate my English accent and I wish I had come to the U.S. earlier so that I didn’t have any accent. I don’t like speaking English with Americans because they usually look down on people who have an accent. When I listen to Americans, I always pay a lot of attention to their pronunciations and tried to imitate it.
Sue seemed to have internalized a negative image of her Korean accent and her lack of self-confidence in her English negatively influenced her use of it and her interpersonal relationships with Americans. However, according to Sue’s friends’ comments and by my observation, her English, and her pronunciation in particular, were better than that of any of her Korean friends.

Sue also said that American students’ interaction styles, which were different from those of Korean students, discouraged her from associating with Americans.

American kids’ parties look similar to Koreans’, for example, talking, drinking and watching TV, but they are very different if you take a look at the inside. They each do what they want to do and don’t care about others. Some kids play on the computer, others talk or leave whenever they want to. But in a party with Korean kids, there is a feeling of unity. When one person says something, everybody tends to listen to and to say something about it. You cannot be at the party without drinking when everybody drinks because other kids force you to do it too.

Sue seems to know how to behave appropriately among American kids but prefers Korean friends’ more intimate and cohesive relationships. She seems to feel ignored by American kids who exhibit a lack of cohesion, behave casually, and pay little attention to each other. Sue’s comments on American parties are in contrast with her cheerful nature that I had observed at the meeting with her Korean friends.

The relationship between Sue and her American boyfriend just lasted for a few months. Sue said that although she had many chances to meet American students she could not make friends with them. Apart from cultural differences and the language barrier, she attributed her failure in making American friends to her foreigner status and powerless position.
My imperfect English is a big obstacle to making close American friends. I have few problems in communicating in English in everyday life but my English must be beyond that to make close friends. I mean, my English is not good enough to make a joke or tell them a funny story. They might not make friends with me because they think I only stay here for a while and will go back to Korea. American kids are not interested in you if they cannot get something from you. I am no fun and cannot offer any benefit to them.

Sue also pointed out Americans’ indifference to and ignorance of foreign cultures and people as a barrier in making American friends.

Many of the American people that I met in high school and college were not interested in foreigners and different cultures. They think American people and culture are the best in the world. Some of them didn’t know Korea is a country name. Others asked me if Korean people had electricity and refrigerators at home. Their superior attitudes hurt my self-esteem. To break this barrier and jump into American society may cost my self-esteem and abandoning almost 20 years of my life in Korea. It will take a lot of courage and efforts and I don’t think I have enough courage and patience to do that.

She emphasized that many Americans are ethnocentric and think themselves more superior to people who come from small countries like Korea. Sue perceived a hard and insurmountable boundary that American people set against foreigners. She often used the expression, “jumping into the American society,” which implies something difficult and risky to do.

Sue also mentioned that there was racial segregation among college students, which impeded interethnic contact.

I have one Korean friend who really wants to belong to American society and has many American friends. One day, I saw him playing basketball with American kids in the gym. He was the only Asian in the team. It is unusual for an Asian student to play basketball on an American kid team. Usually, American students vs. Asian students play the game. When I talked with him about it he said that he had to do that in order to learn English. I know how difficult it is to be alone among American kids. It is too difficult for me to make such an effort.
Racial segregation seems to be accepted as normal among college students, which makes individual level interethnic contact tremendously difficult. Sue’s expression, “jumping into American society,” may indicate a breaking through of the racial segregation. However, Sue was not involved in any extracurricular activities in either American or Korean settings. She said that she was not motivated to become involved because most of her Korean friends were not interested in them.

I joined in an extracurricular activity group but I quit it after only a short time. Most of kids came to the meetings with their friends and so I tried to go there with my Korean friends. But none of them was interested in it. My Korean friends liked hanging out with only us [Korean friends]. Especially, Korean boys don’t like Korean girls who are socially active and aggressive. They like American girls who are very active and aggressive, though. They have different criteria for Korean and American girls.

Sue’s initial enthusiasm for joining in extracurricular activities seemed to have faded away because of her Korean friends’ lack of interest in them. Sue did not want to comply with the role model of Korean girls but was influenced by peer pressure from Korean friends. Considering that Sue mainly associated with Korean friends and had emotional attachment to them, her Korean peers as a reference group may have had considerable impact on her behavior. It was also notable that Korean male students have different criteria regarding relationships with Korean and American girls.

After Sue moved into a new place, she visited me for the third interview. She said that her life was messy and she had had a lot of difficulty studying when she had had conflicts with American students. She lost self-confidence not only in social relationships but also in studying. She even suffered from self-hatred. Sue said that she had stopped associating with American students. She moved to change the atmosphere and had a
Korean roommate in her new place. She said that her roommate was actually her boyfriend, although her parents and Korean friends, except her close friends, did not know it. She had changed; she wore neat clothes and did not have any jewelry on her face. Sue appeared to be more peaceful. She said that her life had become more organized. She went back to a routine life and tried to concentrate more on studying. She started to work at a small beverage counter for three hours a day in order to help her Korean friend who had a car accident. On weekends, her Korean friends sometimes visit her place. Sue said that she associates mainly with Korean friends and rarely hangs out with non-Korean students. She feel sorry for her limited friendships but she was satisfied with her current life because it gave her a feeling of security and she can concentrate on studying.

I like the way that I live now and don’t want to change my life style. I am not interested in going to parties or bars to hang out with American friends any more because it caused me a lot of confusion. I also had a lot of troubles in my studying before because I kind of lost confidence. My English speaking has deteriorated because I haven’t practiced speaking English. But I prefer studying English by watching TV or reading books at home to going out with American students.

Sue’s experiences with American friends brought her distressing conflicts and negative attitudes toward herself and Americans. She could not tolerate the feeling of alienation and the pressures from Americans who displayed superior attitudes toward her. Also, her lack of self-esteem and pride in her ethnic identity seemed to worsen the situation. Among them, her inferiority about ethnic identity and limited English seemed to have a negative impact, not only on her social relationships with Americans, but also on her academic performance. To escape from this chaos, Sue chose to retreat to the Korean circle. She seemed to recover a sense of security and confidence among the
Korean peers. For Sue, who came to the U.S. at the age of 16 and lived alone far away from her family, threatened ethnic identities and self-esteem seem to overshadow her purpose for coming to the U.S., learning English and American culture.

The Lack of Pride in Ethnic Identity and Low self-esteem

With regard to her cultural identity, she defines herself as being bicultural. Sue pointed out that rationalism, individualism, and the strict separation of one’s public life from one’s private life were the American cultural characteristics that were the most different from those of Koreans. Sue interpreted these American cultural features as ‘the lack of empathy’ or ‘selfishness’; on the other hand, she appreciated the same traits as ‘being rational’ or ‘respect for privacy.’

American kids don’t care about others. They don’t do anything that bothers others, either. They respect others’ privacy. They are cold but rational. When Americans say ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ it literally means ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ But, for Koreans, sometimes it doesn’t necessarily mean the same thing. For me, the American way is cold but clear, and Korean way is warm but sometimes confusing. I don’t think that is a right or wrong matter, but it’s just different.

With regard to cultural differences, she said that different culture is uncomfortable but interesting. She tried to learn different cultures because she believed it would make her an open-minded person. Her motivation to come to America was to learn English and American culture. Sue learned and adapted to American culture while she lived with an American host family and interacted with American friends in high school. She also appreciates some American cultural values, such as, independence and individuality. Sue said that one interesting thing about her was that she felt herself more Americanized
when she associated with Korean friends. She seemed to enjoy ‘behaving like an American girl.’

When I interacted with American kids I felt my ‘Koreanness’ salient, for example, being quiet and passive. But when I am with my Korean friends I behave like an American girl. I am more assertive and speak more directly.

Meanwhile, Sue did not have confidence when interacting with Americans. This lack of confidence seemed to be related to her negative self-image, which was derived from a negative image of Korean ethnicity and her non-native English. Sue’s following comment reflects her inferiority in Korean ethnicity.

Some of my Korean male friends told me that they asked American girls on dates. I think that is ridiculous because I know American girls usually don’t like Asian guys. The other day, I saw one of my Korean male friends walking with a white American girl who was taller and more handsome than he. He was talking and laughing and seemed to be happy. That looked ugly to me and I was wondering if he was really happy.

In addition to inferiority about Asian people’s looking and status, she had a negative image of a Korean accent in English. She said that perfect English without any accent was one of the most important prerequisites to be accepted as an American.

When I was in high school, my American classmates told me that my English accent was funny. We had a French student in our class and they said that his accent sounded good, though. My English accent sounds stupid and bothers me a lot. Perfect English without accent may be very important to be accepted as an American. I wish I didn’t have an accent!

In addition, Sue evaluated her social status lower than that of black people because she is a non-native speaker of English.
Black people are discriminated and usually poor in here. But their status is better than mine because they are native speakers of English. Because of my limited English and foreign accent, I don’t think I will be even accepted as an American. Because I don’t like changing my life style completely to the American way, my English will not improve much even I live here for 10 or 20 years. Also, my Korean accent won’t go away even when my English gets better.

Sue said that she did not like speaking English with Americans because they looked down on her because of her limited proficiency in English. Sue seemed to be more sensitive to her English proficiency because her college major and her future career require a high level of English proficiency. She is studying Communication and wants to get a job in mass media, such as, a TV anchor or reporter. She doubts that she will succeed in that area because of her limited English.

I doubt I can’t go far in my chosen field in America because of my imperfect English. However, if I go back to Korea, I might have more conflicts because I have changed a lot since I came here. I don’t know which is better for me. If I stay in the States, I want to have my own store like a ceramic store. I won’t have to be worried about my English because I can hire an American.

Sue said that it was painful to struggle with uncertainty about her future career because of a language barrier. In addition, this uncertainty seemed to weaken her motivation to pursue her career. Sue said that she did not want a demanding job and that marriage would be more important than having a career. After she moved, her friendships became limited to the Korean circle. She gave priority to a feeling of security and studying rather than learning English and associating with American students.

I sometimes feel isolated because I hang out with only Korean friends and all of my other foreign friends left me. But I am satisfied with this way of my life. It gives me a feeling of security and my life has became more organized.
As Sue’s friends said, Sue is rather Americanized and in terms of behavior and thinking is far from a traditional Korean girl. She had frequent contacts with American people until recently and her English was as good as that of any of her Korean friends. In addition, Sue had great interest in, and a positive attitude toward, associating with different people and learning about different cultures. However, these interests and positive attitudes seem to have been eaten away by bitter frustration regarding her relationships with American peers. Her frequent contact with American students, which did not develop into any long-term relationships, only brought her feelings of inferiority and insecurity as well as negative attitudes toward Americans. Sue did not positively accept her ethnic and cultural identities that were different from those of Americans. Sue expressed self-hatred because of her Asian appearance, her imperfect English, and her Korean accent. Sue’s difficulties associating with Americans lie in neither a lack of cultural knowledge nor a lack of interest in American culture. A more serious barrier in her relationships with Americans seems to be her negative image of self-identity and threatened self-esteem. In the intercultural situation where ethnic segregation and prejudices from the majority group exist, minority group members’ lack of self-esteem and negative self-image in ethnic identity may produce not only self-hatred but also avoidance of intercultural contact.
Case 5: Jay

Jay was 22 years old and majoring in Aviation at college. He is currently a Korean international student who came to the U.S in 1996. He is cheerful and likes talking with people. His parents are living in Brazil because the company that his father works for transferred him to a branch in Brazil a few years ago. Jay had considerable direct and indirect experiences with American culture through traveling and his friends who lived in the U.S. when he lived in Korea. Because Jay’s father frequently traveled abroad on business, Jay also traveled to a few foreign countries, including the U.S., with his family. Many of his Korean friends studied in the U.S for years and returned back to Korea. Also, Jay’s younger brother had been studying in the U.S a few years before he came to the U.S. Jay said that he envied those friends and his brother because they spoke English very well and had freedom in their behaviors. All that he heard about and saw in the U.S. gave him a positive image of America, such as, a country of liberty and opportunity for education and future career.

Contacting People and Friendship

Jay looks very sociable and outgoing. He likes associating with people and traveling with friends. He said that he did not want to limit his friendships to only Korean students and he had tried to associate with American peers since he came to America. Jay seemed to make much effort to adjust in American school and to make American friends. He tried to belong to an American peer group by joining in many sport activities at the high school. Jay said that Americans had stereotypes of Asian students, such as that Asian students are only interested in studying and are passive participants in
extracurricular activities. He tried to break the nerd image that was associated with Asian students in the school.

I joined in six extracurricular activities and participated in school activities in order to belong to American peer groups when I was in the high school. There were few Korean students who participated in many activities in the school like me. I did not like the nerd image of Asian students that Americans had and tried to break it. When I was actively involved in those school activities, teachers and American kids seemed to be surprised at me and paid attention to me. Also, I could learn American culture and make American friends through those activities.

Although those efforts gave Jay opportunities to associate with American peers and to learn American culture, it seemed to be difficult for him to change the image that Americans had about Asian students. Also, Jay said that he remained in the Korean student group and could not belong to the American peer group. As reasons, he pointed out racial segregation and tension between American and Korean students.

The American high school that I attended was a small private school in Michigan. Most of the students were white Americans. There were 6 Korean students in the school and all of them lived in the same dorm. We usually had lunch and hung out together. Most Korean students didn’t hang out with American students. Although I didn’t want to be with only Korean friends, it was difficult for me to get out of the Korean group and belong to the American student group. Every student in the school belonged to a certain peer group, for example, ‘the nerd group,’ ‘the Korean group’ or ‘the football group’ and there was tension between the groups. Korean students told me that American students wouldn’t equally accept us. I didn’t think that was completely right but sometimes felt that American students considered me just one of foreign students rather than their friend.

In addition to the segregation between peer groups, Jay seemed to feel distance from American students because of cultural differences. He mentioned that, despite his positive attitudes toward American culture, he experienced resistance adopting some
characteristics of American culture, which created him psychological distance between him and American people.

I have changed since I came to America. I realized this change when I visited Korea last year and talked with Korean friends. My behaviors and the way of thinking were different from my Korean friends. But, something inside of me resisted accepting some American culture, such as, casual dating and family relationships. I am conservative in dating and keep close relationships with my parents. I didn’t change much in those things and that made me feel distant from Americans.

Jay said that the fact that he could not belong to the American peer group haunted him through high school. Despite his desire to escape the Korean circle, he came to have more Korean friends at college. He said that knowing one Korean student led him to be acquainted with many other Korean students because Korean students composed the large population at the university and were well connected with one another. Jay said that he had many conflicts with Korean friends at college. He complained that some of his Korean friends were too nosy and interfered in his private life.

I have had more conflict with Korean friends than with foreign friends. That might be because I mainly associated with Korean friends. But some of Korean students like talking about others’ private lives. Also, I don’t like that juniors have to be submissive to seniors. I understand those are parts of Korean culture but they bother me a lot, and I don’t want them to bother me anymore.

Jay complained about Korean students although his main associations were with Koreans. He said that he would keep friendships with Korean students but would avoid associating with those Korean students who insisted on too much Korean culture and made him uncomfortable. He said that although his main friends were Korean, individual characteristics were more important in making friends.
Jay said that he did not join in any extracurricular activities at college because he was so busy studying. He had chances to meet diverse types of students at college and some of them seemed to influence his acculturation and his perception of cultural identities. Jay said that he had a good relationship with his Jewish American roommate when he was a freshman.

I lived in a dorm when I was a freshman and had a roommate. He is a Jewish American and we became close friends. He is an American but had something different from other Americans. For example, he remembered my family and friends’ voices and names and told me who called me even if they didn’t tell him their names. One night, I came back to the dorm very late. He was awake and told me he was worried about me because I didn’t call him. I was surprised at him because I thought Americans usually didn’t care about that kind of thing. He was different from ‘I don’t care’ American students. I found that he put high value on his family and had close relationships with them. He kept and learned a lot of Jewish culture and was proud of it. Although we don’t live together now, we still get together on weekends and go to the Korean restaurant or see a movie.

Jay said that his Jewish American roommate made him look back on his Korean culture and realize that it was valuable for ethnic groups to preserve their native cultures in America. Besides his roommate, Jay had Asian American friends and foreign friends who came from different countries, such as, Indonesia, Japan, and Taiwan. Jay said that he felt more comfortable and intimate with those friends because they were open to other cultures and had mutual understanding.

I have a few Asian American and Asian friends who came from different countries, for example, Indonesia, Japan, and Taiwan, at college. We have similar experiences, such as living in foreign countries or having kind of multicultural or bilingual backgrounds. I felt more comfortable with them than with those Americans who were intolerant to different cultures. I like them because they showed respect to my culture. Also, interacting with them gave me a good opportunity to learn different culture and to practice speaking English.
In addition, Jay’s college major influences his motivation to learn English and his interpersonal relationships. According to Jay, his major, Aviation is a challenging area for him because it requires not only intensive studying but also excellent English communication skills.

Making the decision to major in Aviation was difficult for me because Aviation requires not only a lot of studying but also excellent English communication skills. I haven’t seen any Korean students in my program. I feel pressure that I should be different from other Korean international students. I should spend more time studying with students in my program and improving English. Recently, I came to know a German student in my program and we often get together and talked about our studying and future jobs.

Jay constantly tried to connect with people around him and invested in his friendships. He attributed his success in making friends to his own initiative in approaching those students, despite his own fears of encountering prejudice. He said, “I could not wait until my English was perfect because without making mistakes I couldn’t learn English. I have to live with my imperfect English and a perfect English might not even exist.” Recalling his high school years when he felt left outside of the American student group despite participating in so many school activities, Jay said that he did not want to chase after belonging to the American group any more. He seemed to be rather relieved from assimilation or conformity pressure when he associates with his non-American friends. The target group into which Jay sought membership in America seemed to be less culturally specific and more multicultural. Also, Jay’s friendships seem to have been built based on his emerging identity and his experiences in a new country rather than on existing categories, such as, ethnicity or nationality.
Jay came to the U.S. to receive quality education, which he believed would benefit his future career. In addition to the utilitarian purpose, he longed for a liberal and diverse life in America. Although Jay did not think that he would live in America forever in the beginning, he decided to get a job and live here after he graduates from college. Jay said that being American meant belonging to the American society: having a job, making American friends and being involved in American society without limiting his social contact with Korean people.

**Being American means beyond getting a job and citizenship in America. I want to know and be engaged in many aspects of American society. Social contact of many Korean immigrants as well as Korean international students is limited to the Korean circle. I don’t want to live like them isolated from the American society.**

Although Jay emphasized knowing and being involved in American society, he doubted that the majority group would equally accept him as one of their members. When he came to college, he realized that he did not have to be like Americans in the majority group.

Since I came to America, my main concern was how to break the Korean boundary and belong to the majority group. I played down Korean culture that didn’t fit in American culture. This effort might be continued. But I also realize that I am different and that I don’t have to be completely like Americans. If I try to abandon my Korean heritage to belong to American people, I might learn English quickly and be accepted well by Americans more than now. But, I doubt that Americans will open their minds and completely accept me. At college, I met diverse friends and realized that I could be an American who is proud of Korean heritage. It might not be easy but is worthy.

**Jay selectively kept or adopted Korean and American cultural characteristics. For example, he wanted to have both close relationships with family and to be independent, and believes the two things can go together although it will take extra effort.**
Back in Korea, everything was relationship. Parents, relatives, and friends are very important and they influence making decisions. I think good relationships with those people are still important, but I learned that I have to have my own opinions and make decisions for myself. I became the center of myself. At first, I felt kind of lonely and thought I might have become more selfish than before. But I have more freedom and a feeling of having grown up. Both things [having close relationships and being independent] can go together although it takes much effort.

Meanwhile, Jay said that having excellent English proficiency is the most important thing for him to be successful in America because this will provide him with access to important information and people. He also said that English proficiency would directly influence his success in his major area, Aviation. Jay said that interest in American culture and positive attitudes toward the American society facilitated his learning English in the early years in America, English proficiency became a matter of survival. Two recent accidents with his car seemed to intensify this thought. Jay’s car was vandalized twice within two months in the parking lot in front of his apartment. Jay said that the accidents happened a few weeks after he and his Korean friends had a small argument with American students that they came across on the street one night. A photograph of a lynching that contained racial slurs and threats was found in the car. Jay said that this accident was so shocking and infuriating that it shook the entire positive image and dream that he had about America. Also, he said that he realized that English proficiency was really a matter of survival when he reported the accident to the police and desperately explained the situation that he had with the American students.

In sum, Jay’s high school life was a struggle to belong to the American group because he believed that that was the way he could learn English and get ahead in school. As he came to college, Jay seemed to be relieved from both assimilation pressure and a
feeling of not belonging through developing friendships with diverse students, such as, Korean, ethnic Americans, and other foreign students. He defined his cultural identity as being between the Korean and American cultures and seemed to feel comfortable with this situation. Jay wanted to selectively adapt to American culture without completely abandoning Korean culture. The peer group that was constructed by Jay and his friends from diverse cultural backgrounds seemed to be multicultural and international, which allows a dual membership in their native and American cultures.

Jay has positive attitudes toward American culture and people and believes that America will give him more freedom and better opportunities for his career. Jay’s direct and indirect experiences with foreign cultures seemed to intensify his desire to live in America. He also has a strong belief in American values, such as, liberty, equality, and individual accomplishment, believing that he will be able to enjoy these merits if he works hard. All these factors seem to facilitate his learning American culture and English.

However, the American culture that he experienced in high school was not as diverse as he had expected. In the high school years, Jay pushed himself to belong to the American peer group, which turned out to be unattainable. Cultural differences generated psychological distance between himself and American students and racial segregation did not allow him to have a dual membership in the American and Korean groups. The recent vandalism of his car had made him ponder the cost to live in America and suspect that American values, such as, freedom and equal opportunity may be unattainable goals to him.
Summary of the Case Studies

Despite individual variation in the experiences of five students, common themes emerged. Students preferred and chose an integrative mode of acculturation and related acculturation into American society to their English learning. Students’ social relationships and friendships seemed to impact on both their acculturation and their English learning. Other social factors, such as, family relationships, gender roles, career identities, and available opportunities of contact with Americans to the students, seemed to influence both students’ acculturation and their evolving identities. Meanwhile, considerable individual differences were observed among the five participants in terms of dealing with acculturation stresses, which influenced contact with the majority group. The role of students’ psychological capacity, or multicultural identity and its relationships with their cultural and ethnic identities were also presented in this section.

Acculturation and English learning

The five students in this case study came to the U.S. as either immigrants or international students four to six years prior to the study with an optimistic perspective on better education and other opportunities in America. They belonged to the middle class Korean families and received financial support either from their parents or from their college as honor students. Their diverse majors include Communications, Theatre, Aviation, and Biology. The students put much value on education and believe it will provide them with better jobs and lives. However, not all of them fit the profile of the so-called ‘model minority’ in terms of their career choices and academic performances. Sung and Jin had good academic records and planned to continue their studies in
graduate school to pursue professional careers. In contrast, Chul earned a mediocre GPA, while Sue and Jay struggled to maintain their studies at the college level. These three students did not want to continue their education in graduate school to become professionals, such as, doctors or professors; instead, they wanted to get jobs and live as ordinary people after graduating from college.

All five students realized the importance of English proficiency both for their study and for their future career. They believed that learning English could not be separated from learning American culture. They also claimed that interacting with Americans or other students in English was important both to learn American culture and to improve English proficiency. Except for Jin, the students had American or foreign friends and interacted in English with few difficulties during their everyday life. Jin expressed difficulties with communicating in English and attributed her lack of English proficiency to her lack of limited friendships with Koreans. Although the students made conscious efforts to learn English in high school, such as, taking notes of and memorizing new vocabulary, they mainly depended on social interaction in authentic settings for English learning when they came to college, except for taking required English classes at college. Students’ motivation to learn English was both instrumental and. They said that English proficiency is important because they want to get jobs in American companies and have social relations with Americans. Students’ majors and future careers that require a high level of English proficiency seemed to give them strong motivation to improve their English.

The students’ desire to learn English was related to their desire to integrate into American society. However, they did not think that total identification with mainstream
or white American culture was a requisite to belong to American society or be American. Rather, the target society in which they sought membership was a multicultural society where dual or multiple membership is allowed. Students defined American culture as a mixture of diverse cultures of different groups. Their perception of American culture seemed to have developed through their life experiences in America and their interaction with diverse people who had different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They did not agree that acculturation meant assimilation into American culture, and they emphasized keeping a connection to Korean culture for several reasons: family relationships, a sense of belonging and security, protection of their self-esteem, and the value of multiculturalism. Sung had a strong belief in multiculturalism, claiming that being multicultural is a requirement for being an intellectual. He asserted that neither Korean cultural nor ethnic identities would impede his success in America. Jay, Chul, Jin, and Sue mentioned that although assimilation might be an easier way both to learn English and to be accepted by the majority group, this choice would damage their family relationships and their self-esteem. All the students doubted that they would ever be fully accepted by the majority group even if they tried to assimilate into American culture.

Instead, the students preferred bicultural adaptation. Their acculturation was not linear or moving from Korean culture to American culture. They expressed the importance of adopting American culture without adhering rigidly to Korean culture. They did not think that they had to choose between Korean and American culture, but instead they tried to selectively adopt both cultures. The students wanted to keep key features of Korean culture, such as, close and bonded relationships with family and friends and respecting parents and elders. When the students attended college, they
adopted some aspects of college students’ culture in Korea, such as, strict observation of seniority and compulsive drinking. Although they understood that maintaining Korean culture was a personal choice, they regretted that some Korean Americans did not know the Korean language and culture. Despite their bicultural tendency, they strongly identified with Koreans ethnically.

Meanwhile, students varied in adapting dimensions of American culture. Personal factors, for example, family background, personal experiences, friendships, seemed to influence the degree of students’ adaptation of American culture. It was seen that American pop culture is very popular even among Korean young people in Korea, so most students in the case studies did not have much difficulty in adopting American behaviors. Sung, who seemed to be the most acculturated into American culture of the five students, adopted a variety of American values. According to his friends, Sung is rational, independent, and individualistic, and puts much value on self-fulfillment. On the other hand, Jin seemed to adapt the least to American culture and American values, in particular. She said that she had little knowledge about American values because she did not know much of American people. Jay and Sue also expressed some resistance to adapting American individualism. In general, the students adopted American behaviors more easily than American values. Also, they tended to maintain or adopt more Korean culture in the private domain.

Having American significant others, such as, American relatives, boy or girl friends, and close friends, seems to influence both overall degree of adaptation of American culture and to facilitate adaptation of American culture in the private domain. Also, the connection among every aspect of one’s personal and social life was another
significant factor promoting adaptation of American culture. For example, Sung’s parents adopted American culture and were understanding of Sung and his sisters’ American lives. Sung had an American uncle with whom he lived for two years. In addition, he dated an American girl and had many close American friends. Sung favored American literature and movies, which he related to his future career. All the aspects of Sung’s life, such as, home, school, friendships, and his future career, were connected to each other. In the interviews, Sung said he experienced little resistance in adopting American culture except during his initial period of adjustment at his American school.

Meanwhile, cultural discontinuity between students’ home and the American society was evident among other students. Jin and her brother Chul experienced both separation between home culture and the American society and conflicts between attachment to family and independence. According to Berry (1989), this situation where conflicts between two cultures exist produces acculturative stress and brings to individuals feelings of alienation and inadequacy. Although Jay and Sue received financial support from their parents, their parents were almost ignorant of the problems and difficulties that they faced in American life. Sue’s parents did not know about her grades and her boyfriend. Jay said that he briefly reported his grades to his parents over the phone, and they sometimes scolded him when his grades were not good. However, he did not discuss any problems in his studying or other difficulties with his parents, because they were too worried about even smaller issues reported to them, and their responses created more troubles for him. With regard to the lack of supervision from Korean parents, Woude (1998) states that “the apparent indifference or neglect of Korean parents who leave their children in the U.S. while they reside abroad is actually an
indication of their high regard for the U.S. educational system.” For these four students, the acculturation into the American society seems to be a more difficult task because it may damage family relationships. Also, their acculturation mainly depended on independent efforts with little assistance from either family or people from the American society.

Female students experienced more severe cultural discontinuity and social restrictions than did male students. Jin had greater restrictions on her social life than her brother Chul. Sue also mentioned that Korean male students favored Korean girls who were not Americanized although they liked American girls because of their ‘Americanness.’ Korean girls are expected to keep Korean traditional roles even in Korean American society. In traditional Korean culture, women are treated as inferior to men and their submissiveness and obedience are regarded as virtues. Also, women are not expected to seek achievement in their own name. This traditional Korean cultural value is still maintained among the Korean community in America (Min, 1999). Also, the fact that a number of Korean American men marry Korean women who both grew up in Korea and conform to the traditional Korean woman’s role indicates that considerable social restrictions on Korean females exist in Korean American society. These kinds of social restrictions and cultural expectations within Korean American society presumably influence Korean women to be less assertive in their career pursuits and decrease their motivation for social contact with American people.

The acculturation process involved these students in a struggle to balance their roles as members of both American society and the Korean community. The students were continuously engaged in making choices about behaviors and values in the intercultural
context, which resulted in different degrees of involvement and integration into cultural and social groups. The students’ dual motivations to both acculturate into the American society and maintain Korean culture did not necessarily contradict each other. They tried to selectively adapt both cultures, taking a certain degree of good features from both cultures. Also, they were willing to make extra efforts in order to satisfy both American and Korean sides.

Social Group and Friendships

Students’ friendships are an important part of the five students’ social lives. These presumably influence the level of acculturation and reflect the target group into which they sought memberships. Also, the students’ friendships seemed to have had an impact on their English learning because they are directly related to language choice. Generally, the students had more ethnic or linguistic minority friends than Anglo-white American friends. The university that the students are attending has a considerable number of ethnic American and international students. The five students showed interest in the ethnic organizations on campus, but they were not involved in any of them. Also, the Korean Community in the city and the Korean students at the university had rather well established organizations, such as, the Korean churches, the Korean Community Language School, the Korean Student Association, and others. Three groups of Korean students, Korean international students, Korean immigrant students, and Korean American students, who have different residential status, have a chance to socialize through those ethnic Korean institutions.
All of the five students had Korean friends. Jin and Chul attended the Korean church with their parents and made many Korean friends there. The Korean church that Jin and Chul attended was a small church that usually had 30 people on Sunday services. People in the church spoke only Korean and were familiar enough to know each other’s private lives. They practiced Korean culture, for example, serving Korean foods, celebrating Korean holidays, praying for Korea, and even teaching Korean and Korean culture to children of Korean Americans. The Korean language seemed to be a key component for gaining access to the Korean group. Korean American students who could not speak Korean were dubbed as “dummies” by Korean speakers, although the nickname did not carry with it excessive derogatory connotations. However, the other three students did not belong to any Korean community organizations but made friends mainly on an interpersonal basis. Students said that it was easy to make Korean friends because of Korean people’s cohesiveness and well-connected interpersonal networks.

The shared language and culture served as a strong bond among the Korean students. Of the five students, Jin showed the strongest attachment to Korean friends, and her social circle was almost exclusively with Koreans. She had very few American or foreign friends during six years in America. Chul’s Korean friends were mainly Korean immigrant students. He said that he did not like most Korean international students, because they took for granted the spending money given to them from their parents. The other students had a few Korean American friends who were born in the U. S. as well as Korean immigrant and Korean international friends.

Associating with Korean friends seemed not only to reinforce some Korean cultural values that the students already had but also to provide opportunities to learn more
Korean culture that was not known to the students previously. For example, as the students came to college, they adapted Korean college student culture, such as, hierarchical relationships between junior and senior students, singing at Karaoke, and compulsive drinking. To what degree to adopt Korean culture was one of the popular issues among the Korean students. When the students got together with Korean friends, they listened to Korean songs, watched Korean videos, and shared Korean cartoon books and novels. Even when the students had foreign friends in their gatherings, they usually spoke Korean. They said that they sometimes visited Korean Web sites to get information on popular movie stars or singers in Korea or to download Korean songs.

Jay, Jin, and Sue still maintained contact Korean friends in Korea via email or over the phone. When the students met with Korean friends, they usually did not bring other foreign friends with them. Jay and Sung said that their Korean friends did not know about their American and foreign friends.

With regard to reasons for associating with Korean friends, the students mentioned that shared language, culture and ethnicity gave them comfort, a sense of belonging, and security. Particularly when students were insecure in their social lives, they tended to seek social and emotional support from Korean friends. In other words, Korean friends served as buffers in interethnic conflicts. For instance, when Jin broke up with her American boyfriend and had difficulties in her school performance, she limited her social life solely to Korean friends. Also, Sung increased his association with Korean friends more than before when he had troubles with his American friends. Because of this kind of emotional attachment to Korean friends, the students supported each other even
though they continually complained about the demands of Korean culture and worried about the lack of practice in English.

However, the students realized the importance of having diverse friends, other than Koreans, in order to adjust to the American society. They tried to have diverse friends who had different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Except Jin, the students had dated non-Koreans. The students usually made friends with their classmates or at the part time work, such as, in libraries or dorms on campus or fast food restaurants outside of the campus. For example, the Science and Engineering Library on campus where Chul and Jay worked seemed to be a good place to make Asian friends. Chul continually had as many and close Asian friends as Korean friends. Jay, who invested much time and effort in making diverse friends, kept good relationships with foreign friends from Germany and Asian countries. However, Sung’s friends were mainly either white Americans or Koreans, and Jin did not have any foreign friends including Americans.

On the other hand, the students had much less contact with American students and Anglo-white Americans students, in particular, than with immigrant or foreign students. Jay did not have any American friends except his Jewish American roommate. Chul had a few Asian American and African American friends through his part time work. The two girls, Jin and Sue, did not have any American friends. Actually, except Sung, the students did not have any middle class Anglo-white American friends. Also, Sung was going through hard times with his American friends. In general, students had more frequent contact with members of minority groups than with those of the majority group; made more friends outside of their classes; and male students had more frequent contact with Americans and foreign friends than the female students did.
The reasons for choosing friends other than Koreans were ‘learning English and American culture,’ ‘same major and interests,’ ‘similar cultural background,’ and ‘interests in different people and cultures.’ Also, the students mentioned that ‘mutual understanding and respect’ and ‘openness to other cultures’ were important in keeping relationships with those friends. Some factors seemed to be more important than the others, depending on the individuals. In the case of Sung, who wanted to be a film producer, he had many American friends who were interested in filmmaking. Jay’s college major, Aviation, motivated him to improve his English and to associate with friends other than Koreans. He made an effort to associate with classmates in his program, most of whom were not Korean, both to study together and to use more English. Chul liked associating with Asian or Asian American students for similar cultural backgrounds and experiences. However, all of the students emphasized the importance of mutual understanding and respect rather than their motivation to learn English that as contributing to preserving these relationships with those friends.

Meanwhile, most of the students shared difficulties having ‘intimate and long-term relationships with Americans.’ In particular, two female students preferred in-depth relationships with friends, while the male students had broad friendships with diverse friends through extracurricular activities or part time work. Pursuing broad relationships

---

4 According to Altman and Taylor’s (1973) ‘social penetration theory,’ there are two key dimensions to the developmental process of intimate relationships: breadth and depth. The breadth of a relationship indicates the number of personal characteristics and the quality of those characteristics that one makes accessible to the other. The depth of a relationship refers to sharing the core personal characteristics such as, person’s basic needs, feelings and values. It corresponds with Tajfel and Turner (1979)’s “intergroup relationship” and “interpersonal relationship.” ‘Intergroup relationship’ refers to a relatively undifferentiated perception of one’s cultural membership while ‘interpersonal relationship’ is built on a refined and personalized understanding of each other. According to Kim (1988), both types of relationships serve as sources of information for immigrant groups learn that the host culture and communication pattern.
with friends seemed to give the students more frequent contact with Americans. However, overall students stressed the importance of having close American friends for English learning who would listen to them. Jin said that interacting with Americans in English was not always helpful in her English learning, because her communication with them involved just simple words. Jay also said that it was difficult for him to be engaged in conversations with American classmates, because they did not expect him to speak.

In addition, the students’ tendency to associate with diverse friends other than white Americans seemed to be a reaction to the American majority group, which did not accept them as equal members. Sung, Jay, and Sue, who attended American high schools, where white Americans were dominant, seemed to feel strong conformity pressures from American peers and teachers. Sung and Jay joined in many extracurricular activities to belong to the American peer group in high school. To his disappointment, Jay realized that he still remained as an outsider despite his desperate efforts to belong to the American group. Sue’s experiences with her American boyfriend and other American students brought her a feeling of alienation, inferiority, and frustration, which discouraged her from seeking relationships with Americans. Generally, all five students mentioned that they experienced racial segregation and prejudice from white American students. In a sense, cultural difference and the language barrier were not necessarily the most difficult obstacles in making American friends. Students’ difficulties in making American friends seemed also to in racial segregation, Americans’ negative attitudes toward those students’ cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and the students’ perceived social and psychological distance from Americans.
Students’ friendships with non-Americans imply that the similar experiences of being perceived and responded to in particular ways from the majority society contributed to a sense of community. The students preferred friends or groups that are less threatening and more tolerant toward their culture and language. Those friends and groups that the students mainly associate with included Korean, Asian immigrant or international students, and ethnic Americans rather than white-Anglo Americans. Apart from language use, these social groups and friendships seemed to impact on students’ evolving social identities in a new society. The greatest difference was observed between Jin and her brother, Chul. Jin, who associated mainly with Korean immigrant or Korean international students, defined herself as ‘Korean immigrant’ but referred to Americans as ‘foreigners.’ In contrast, Chul defined himself as ‘Korean American’ and identified himself not so much with Korean international students as with other Asian immigrants.

**Individual Differences in Perceptions of Cultural Identities and Developing Multicultural Identities**

Although all the students preferred and showed tendency toward a bicultural adaptation, they varied in degrees of acculturation and perceptions of their cultural identities. Social and individual variables that were mentioned in the above sections partially explained the different outcomes of acculturation and English learning. At the micro level, individual students’ acculturation seems to be a complex psychological process, which, beyond acquiring knowledge of American culture, entails challenges to self-identity and self-esteem. According to students’ comments, these challenges derived not only from cultural conflicts or the language barrier but also from a power relationship in favor of the majority group and racial prejudice. This implies that Korean students
who integrate into the American society deal with a range of dilemmas: marginality, alienation, inferiority, and insecurity. Students varied in how to deal with these challenges, which seemed to generate different levels of acculturation and different social relationships. From this perspective, acculturation is a struggle to belong to the majority group without losing self-worth.

Among the five students, Sue seemed to suffer most from these challenges. Considering her experiences in America, Sue’s difficulties lay neither in her lack of knowledge of American culture nor in her innate personality. Sue learned American culture and acquired English over a three-year period, during which she lived with an American host family and attended an American high school. According to my observations and interviews with both Sue and her friends, Sue expressed interest in and exhibited positive attitudes towards learning American culture and English. Also, she was sociable, and she was both open-minded and empathetic to different cultures and people. She realized the importance of English proficiency because she wanted to get a job and live in the U.S. after graduating from a college. She seemed considerably Americanized in terms of her behavior, for example, wearing rings through pierces on her face, living with a boyfriend, and expressing herself. These behaviors are far from those of ordinary Korean girls in Korea.

Despite having cultural knowledge and these personal characteristics, which were usually considered facilitators of intercultural adaptation (Kim, 1988), Sue expressed strong discomfort, alienation, and frustration about associating with American students. She mentioned that American kids did not consider her to be a friend because of her Asian appearance and imperfect English. She also mentioned that her powerless position
as a foreigner was an obstacle to making American friends. Sue said, “American kids are not interested in you if they cannot get something from you. I am no fun and cannot offer any benefit to them.” In addition, Sue internalized the negative images about her ethnicity and imperfect English that she received from the majority. In her own words, she said that perfect English without an accent was a requirement to be accepted as an American. Sue evaluated her social status as being lower than that of black Americans who live from hand to mouth because she is a non-native speaker of English. Sue seemed to be stuck in her relationships with Americans because of the lack of receptivity from American students to her efforts\(^5\); in response, she chose to limit her friendship solely to other Korean students.

On the other hand, the other four students, who also mentioned these obstacles in making American friends, did not express as much frustration as Sue did. Sung and Chul held common Korean people’s characteristics, such as, being hard working and having high educational achievement in high esteem. They did not think that Korean ethnicity or their non-native English would be obstacles to success in America. They were proud to be Americans of Korean heritage; and they did not believe themselves to be stigmatized because of their Korean accent in English. This strong belief in their cultural origins gave them confidence and security in the intercultural contacts. Therefore, Sue’s difficulties in her relationships with American students were presumably derived from failing to positively accept her Korean identity and her non-native English. The feeling of inferiority in ethnic and cultural identities caused a loss of confidence in social

\(^5\) Kim (1988) defined ‘receptivity’ from the host society as ‘interaction potential’ and ‘acquaintance potential,’ which allow or deny immigrants or sojourns the opportunities to become an integral part of the
relationships with Americans. Also, a negative self-image facilitated Sue’s self-alienation and her withdrawal from the majority environment, and consequently, interfered with her social contact with Americans. The case studies reveals that a negative self-image was closely associated with a negative image of one’s ethnic or cultural identities. Those students who had pride and developed confidence in their Korean culture and ethnicity tended to have more contact with American people without losing self-esteem and confidence. Therefore, intensifying self-esteem and a positive self-image as well as psychological capacity to deal with cultural differences seems to be fostered to facilitate acculturation and social contact with Americans.

host social processes. She said that it can be explicit, but, for the most part, it is subtle and unconscious, embedded in non-verbal behaviors of people in the majority group.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The present study consists of a survey and five case studies. The objectives of the survey were to determine the relationships between Korean students’ acculturation and their SLA and to examine social, affective variables that are related with acculturation and SLA. Acculturation was operationalized in terms of ‘language use,’ ‘social contact,’ ‘behaviors,’ ‘attitudes’ and ‘values.’ With these acculturation variables, ‘self-perceived Korean proficiency’ and demographic variables, such as, ‘age,’ ‘age of arrival,’ ‘years in the U.S.,’ ‘residential status,’ ‘intended length of stay in the U.S.,’ and ‘gender’ were used as independent variables to predict level of ‘self-perceived English proficiency.’ Simple correlation was used to describe the relationships among those variables, and multiple regression was employed to investigate to what extent self-perceived English proficiency could be predicted by a linear combination of the independent variables.

As follow-ups to the survey, five case studies were conducted employing interviews and participant observations. Overall, the results of the case studies confirmed the findings of the survey. Also, they revealed and partially compensated for, the limitations of a survey that operationalized all of the complex factors in a single questionnaire. In this chapter, the results of the survey and the case study are combined to answer the study’s research questions. Answers to research question one, two, three, four, and five
were mainly drawn from the findings of the survey, while the answer to research question six mainly relied on the results of the case study. Although the research questions guided the discussion, other significant sociocultural factors that are related to the learning of English and their acculturation are discussed.

The Research question 1: What are the characteristics of Korean students’ acculturation?

The results of the survey revealed that the Korean student’s acculturation was bidirectional and multidimensional. The dominant adaptation strategy (91.3%) among Korean students was ‘integration,’ or ‘bicultural adaptation.’ Also, all the five students in the case studies chose bicultural adaptation as an acculturation strategy. They tried to adapt to American culture and did not insist on rigidly adhering to Korean culture. They did not think that they had to choose between Korean and American culture; instead, they tried to selectively adopt both cultures. The students said that maintaining Korean culture is important for their families and their future children. Also, pride in their cultural identities seemed to provide the students with a positive image of self and a higher level of self-esteem.

When comparing mean scores of dimensions of American and Korean acculturation in the survey, the students adopted slightly more American culture than Korean culture in terms of language use, behaviors, attitudes, and values. However, they tended to associate with Korean people and participate in social and cultural activities in Korean settings more often than they did with Americans. This implies that even Korean students who cannot speak Korean very well have a certain level of social contact with Korean people. The lack of social contact with Americans was also revealed in the case studies,
in which the five students had more non-American friends, including Koreans, than American friends.

In terms of American acculturation, students’ use of English, social contact with Americans, and American behaviors were positively related to one another\(^6\). In addition, students who had positive attitudes toward American people and learning English tended to use English more frequently and to exhibit more American behaviors. However, having positive attitudes toward American people and learning English were not related to students’ social contact with American people. The five students in the case studies also showed a similar tendency. They realized the importance of learning English and American culture, which, they believed, would be facilitated through social contact with American people, but they did not have much contact with American people. As reasons for this, they mentioned cultural differences, racial segregation, and the language barrier. They also said that a sense of belonging, emotional security, and emotional support, rather than their motivation to learn English, were sometimes more influential factors in their choice of friendships. This result corresponds with McKay and Wong’s (1996) finding that Chinese immigrant adolescents give priority to agency-enhancement and identity-enhancement, rather than to investment-enhancement in learning the target language. They concluded that for Chinese immigrant students maximizing the future access to “hitherto unattainable resources” promised by investment is not necessarily a learner’s top priority in a given situation.

Similarly, students who had positive attitudes towards Korean people and language tended to exhibit more Korean behaviors. However, interestingly, students who used less
Korean, exhibited fewer Korean behaviors, and had less social contact with Korean people, tended to have strong Korean values. In addition, students' Korean language use, Korean behavior, social contact with Koreans, and Korean proficiency decreased as they lived longer in the U.S., but their positive attitudes towards Korean people and language increased. This implies that Korean students' linguistic assimilation does not necessarily entail either losing Korean cultural values or positive attitudes toward the Korean group and language. Students' Korean language use, having social contact with Koreans and Korean values, exhibiting Korean behaviors, tend to be at the expense of counterparts in their American acculturation. However, the more positive attitudes students had toward the Korean group, the more positive attitudes they had toward the American group. This finding supports the "multiculturalism hypothesis," which suggests that the more positive a minority group feels about its own identity, the more tolerant the members will be toward the ethnic characteristics and activities of other groups (Garrett et al, 1989).

The Research question 2: What are the characteristics of Korean students' self-perceived Korean proficiency?

In the survey, Korean students' Korean proficiency was strongly and negatively related to their years in the U.S. On the contrary, it is strongly and positively related to students' arrival age in the U.S. In addition, Korean students' Korean proficiency is moderately and positively related to students' current age and level of Korean acculturation while it is moderately and negatively related to their English proficiency and American acculturation. Students' Korean proficiency was positively related both to

---

6 In this section, the term 'being related' means the correlation between two or more factors is statistically significant.
their Korean language use and to their Korean behaviors. However, the relationships
between their Korean proficiency and other dimensions of Korean acculturation were
either weak or negligible. The mean of Korean listening and speaking (4.69) is slightly
higher than that of Korean reading and writing (4.08).

The Research question 3: What are the characteristics of students’ English
proficiency?

The mean of students’ English listening and speaking (4.49) was slightly higher
than that of English reading and writing (4.23). The mean of students’ listening and
speaking in English (4.49) is lower than that of their listening and speaking in Korean
(4.69) while the mean of their reading and writing in English (4.23) is higher than that of
their reading and writing in Korean (4.08). Students’ English proficiency was strongly
and positively related to their use of English while its correlation with American
behaviors was moderate. Comparing the correlation between years in the U.S. and
Korean proficiency (-.81) with the correlation between years in the U.S. and English
proficiency (.74), the degree of decrease in Korean proficiency was greater than that of
increase in English proficiency as students’ years in U.S. increased. This indicates that
students’ losing Korean proficiency does not necessarily mean their obtaining English
proficiency.
The research question 4: What are the relationships between dependent variable, self-perceived English proficiency, and independent variables, such as, self-perceived Korean proficiency, Korean and American acculturation, and demographic variables.

Students’ self-perceived English proficiency was strongly and positively related both to years in the U.S. and to American acculturation. This indicates that as Korean students have lived longer in the U.S., they have adapted more to American culture and have higher level of English proficiency. Meanwhile, as years in the U.S. increased, students’ contact with American people, and their positive attitudes toward Americans and English, and American values increased although their level of increase were smaller than their use of English, American behavior, and English proficiency. Also, students’ self-perceived English proficiency was highly and positively related to their use of English, while it was moderately related to American behavior, social contact with Americans, and positive attitudes toward American people and English. The correlation between American Acculturation and English listening and speaking was stronger than that of American Acculturation and English reading and writing. Self-perceived English proficiency is strongly and negatively correlated with both Age of Arrival and self-perceived Korean proficiency. On the other hand, self-perceived English proficiency is moderately and negatively correlated with current age and Korean acculturation.

Interestingly, in the survey, the more positive the students’ attitudes towards Korean people, the higher their self-perceived English proficiency was. Similarly, students who adopted the greater bicultural tendency reported higher levels of self-perceived English proficiency. This finding supports Acton and Felix’s (1986, cited in Brown, 1994) perspective on acculturation and second language proficiency. According to Acton and Felix, if L2 learners have strong self-esteem in their own culture, their
chances of achieving a high level of second language proficiency are significantly enhanced. Svanes (1987, 1988) studied foreign university students in Norway and found similar results. According to Svanes, those students who had balanced and critical attitudes toward the host culture instead of uncritical admiration for all aspects of the target culture showed a higher level of L2. It is impossible to prove through the survey results whether high level of bicultural tendency influenced the success of the students’ English acquisition because ‘correlation’ does not mean ‘causation.’ However, the case study reveals that a positive self-image was closely associated with a positive image of Korean identity. Those students who had pride and confidence in Korean culture and ethnicity tended to have more contact with American people without losing self-esteem and confidence. This finding is similar to Phinney’s (1991) claim that a strong ethnic identity of individuals in minority groups is related to high self-esteem when their orientation towards the majority culture is positive. Therefore, students who have a high bicultural tendency presumably develop a psychological capacity or multicultural identity that mitigates acculturation stress and facilitates both intercultural contact and second language learning.

The survey revealed that higher levels of self-perceived English proficiency were related to lower levels of self-perceived Korean proficiency but were not related to cultural assimilation. This finding supports the claim that the process of identity change or maintenance with SLA is multidimensional, with linguistic aspects defining only one of the dimensions (Gardner & Clement, 1990). Meanwhile, this result is in contrast to the notion of ‘intergroup model of second-language acquisition (Giles & Byron, 1982),’ which hypothesizes that high proficiency in a dominant group’s language will be
“subtractive” to the ethnic identity of members of the minority group. Also, the findings of the present study do not support Lambert’s (1974) argument that minority groups’ acculturation means assimilation into majority culture, and assimilation is necessary in order to achieve a high level of second language proficiency.

On the other hand, self-perceived Korean proficiency was strongly and negatively related to the length of stay in the U.S. Also, a strong negative correlation was revealed between the use of English and social contact with Americans and the use of Korean and social contact with Koreans. This indicates that Korean students who came to the U.S. at an early age and lived longer in the U.S. experienced linguistic assimilation although they maintained their positive attitudes toward learning Korean. Therefore, Korean students learning English as a second language seemed to find it difficult to achieve additive bilingualism because, as they improved their English proficiency, their Korean proficiency declined. Considering that the retention of Korean is meaningful and significant for Korean people as a symbol of their ethnic identity in America (Kim, 1988), Korean students’ retaining full use of Korean while acquiring the English proficiency necessary for social success may be conflicting goals.

The Research question 5: To what extent are Korean students’ American acculturation, Korean acculturation, self-perceived Korean proficiency, and demographic variables meaningful predictors of their level of self-perceived English proficiency?

The regression equation revealed that age of arrival was the most important variable in the prediction of self-perceived English proficiency. The younger the subjects were when they arrived in the U.S., the greater self-perceived English proficiency could be predicted. A widely believed assumption about age of arrival is that younger second
learners do better than older ones for reasons, such as, ‘brain lateralization’ (e.g. Lenneberg, 1967) or ‘affective filters’ (Krashen, 1982). One of the reasons that age of arrival was an important variable in the prediction of English proficiency was that the Can-Do scales for the measurement of English proficiency employed in the present study assessed basic interpersonal communicative skills (BiCS) rather than cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1984). According to Gibbons (1991), those interpersonal communicative skills develop and maintain social contact and enable the learner to make friends and to take part in a variety of day-to-day activities. Therefore, students who came to the U.S. at a younger age and had more exposure to and interactions with American peers in the American school have had more opportunities to develop interpersonal communicative skills in English. Although age of arrival was more important than years in the U.S. in the prediction of self-perceived English proficiency in the present study, it is difficult to isolate age of arrival from years in the U.S. because age of arrival is strongly and negatively correlated with years in U.S.

In addition, ‘gender’ was one of the important predictors of self-perceived English proficiency. Male students generally reported a higher level of self-perceived English proficiency than their female counterparts. In Bosher’s (1995) study with Hmong students in American colleges, ‘gender (male)’ was one of the important predictors of high L2 proficiency. In the present study, when comparing male students’ demographic information and acculturation types with those of females, there was little difference between the two groups. However, the female student’s social contact with Americans was lower than that of their male counterparts. The results of the case studies also support the idea that female students have more restrictions on their social lives and
contact with Americans. Jin’s social life was more restricted than that of her brother Chul, which limited her contact with Americans. Sue also mentioned that Korean male students favored Korean girls who maintained traditional Korean women’s roles. In the traditional Korean culture, women are treated as inferior to men and their submissiveness and obedience are regarded as virtues. Also, women are not expected to seek achievement in their own name. This Korean tradition still seems to be maintained in the Korean community and to impose considerable social restrictions on Korean females. These kinds of social restrictions and cultural expectations within Korean American society may influence Korean women to be less assertive in their career pursuits and to decrease their motivation and opportunity for social contact with American people and English use.

Comparing groups based on residential status, the mean for years in the U.S., American acculturation, and self-perceived English proficiency were the highest among students in the U.S. citizen group followed by the U.S. resident group and the F-1 visa student group. The level of self-perceived Korean proficiency had a reverse order. The U.S. residential group, who were usually born in Korea and called ‘1.5 generation,’ showed an interesting acculturation tendency. These students’ overall Korean acculturation was the highest among the three groups. Compared with Korean international students, the immigrant students revealed a greater high bicultural tendency; reported greater self-perceived English proficiency and American acculturation; had more Korean behaviors, social contact with Korean people, and positive attitudes toward Korean language and people, despite their longer stay in the U.S. than their Korean international counterparts. Similarly, in the case study, three immigrant Korean students,
Chul, Jin, and Sung expressed a strong sense of responsibility toward their parents and pride in their Korean heritage.

The research question 6: What are the Korean students’ perceptions of their cultural identities in the process of acculturation and SLA?

The results of the case studies indicate that students perceive their cultural identity as an important part of their self-identity. Cultural differences and conflicts between Korean and American cultures seem to put this issue in the center of their adjustment in America. They constantly modify their understanding of Korean and American cultures based on their experiences instead of accepting existing stereotypes of the cultures. The students put high value on some of Korean cultural characteristics, such as, family unity, value of education, working hard, delayed gratification, and so on. They also adopted American cultural values, such as, independence from parents, casual dating, expressing themselves, respecting one’s privacy, and others. In terms of language use, they communicate in English with friends other than Koreans, and they speak Korean with Korean friends but sometimes mix English with it.

Overall students in the case studies evaluated their bicultural identity as better than both those of Korean and majority American people because they could selectively adopt good aspects of both cultures. They stressed that they need to adopt American cultural values in order to adjust in American society instead of insisting on adhering rigidly to Korean culture. They also tried to make an extra effort to satisfy both the Korean and American sides when conflicts exist. The students said that although assimilation may be an easier way to learn English and may be better accepted by the majority society, they do not want to be fully assimilated because it may damage their relationships with
parents and their own self-esteem. The students’ cultural adaptation was not limited to
Korean and American cultures. They had considerable contact with other Asian
immigrants, international students, and ethnic Americans. Friends in these groups seemed
to be more tolerant and less threatening to the students’ cultural identities and non-native
English. Therefore, students’ emerging cultural identities appeared to be multicultural
ones in which seemingly opposite components coexist: independence and close
relationships with parents, modesty and expressing themselves, respecting privacy and
collective responsibility to friends, and a desire to integrate into American society while
maintaining an attachment to their Korean heritage.

Despite students’ positive attitudes toward and pride in their bicultural identity, the
process of acculturation seems to be a stressful experience for them. Adopting American
culture and learning English in America seemed to generate a new dimension of
challenge to them because they were neither accustomed to cultural diversity nor
experienced prejudice associated with their racial type or minority situation when they
were in Korea. The observed gap between students’ perceptions of American society
before and after their migrations reflects their difficulties in acculturation. The image of
America that they had before their migration was ‘a country of cultural diversity’ or ‘a
land of freedom.’ The American culture that they experienced in America was neither
inclusive nor tolerant to differences. The students in the case studies said that repressing
their native cultural identities was inevitable in order to be accepted by American peers
and to survive in the American school. Apart from cultural and language barriers, the
students also confronted degenerated self-identities associated with their ethnicity and
imposed by the majority group. Acculturation in this situation entails feelings of powerlessness, alienation, rejection, and vulnerability (Kim, 1988).

Students’ reactions to acculturation stress were different. The three male students, Chul, Sung, and Jay, strongly opposed negative image of Asians imposed by the majority group. They are proud of their bilingual and bicultural selves and claim that American society should value its cultural diversity. They tried not to be isolated from American society through participating in group activities or associating with Americans in part time work. On the other hand, the two female students, Jin and Sue, are less assertive regarding their Korean identities. Their self-concepts seem to be influenced by Americans’ prejudice against their ethnicity. They exhibited vulnerability when interacting with Americans and expressed powerlessness, frustration and a poor self-image. These negative emotions seem to prevent their contact with Americans and acculturation into American society.

Acculturation and second language learning demand students’ capacity to deal with challenges to their cultural identities and to maintaining a positive self-image and self-esteem. A higher level of acculturation seems to relate to a sound resolution of one’s cultural identity, by which they acquire a sense of belonging and identity achievement related to their Korean culture while adopting an American cultural identity.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the conclusion of the study, its implication for research and teaching, discussion of the limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

6.1. Conclusions and Implications

The findings of the present study suggest that acculturation is a central part of Korean students’ second language learning in the U.S. context. Language educators should consider both aspects of Korean students’ acculturation: integration into American culture and maintenance of Korean culture. Therefore, they are faced with the task of facilitating Korean students’ acculturation into American society while helping them to accept their native cultural identity positively. The significance of students’ English use and social contact with Americans in their English learning was revealed both in the survey and in the case studies. Korean students’ multidimensional and bi-directional acculturation does not support an assimilation perspective, which is dominant in the literature on SLA (Schumann, 1978, 1986, 1990). Nor does the assimilation perspective account for the impact of sociocultural contexts, such as, racial segregation, power relations, the cost of acculturation to Korean students and its impact on SLA. The majority of students did not assimilate into American culture while some of them
experienced the loss of their Korean language proficiency to some extent, which indicates that linguistic assimilation does not necessarily entail cultural assimilation. The effect of negative views of the L2 learners’ own ethnic and cultural identity on the process of SLA should be reconsidered.⁷ The fact that students who had a high bicultural adaptation reported high levels of English proficiency both in the survey and the case studies implies that losing Korean cultural identity may impede Korean students’ acculturation and, probably, in second language learning. Although it was impossible from the survey to know if high bicultural tendency facilitates students’ English acquisition, the researcher speculated in the case studies that having positive attitudes toward and pride in Korean culture provides students with a positive self-image, self-esteem, and confidence in their intercultural contact. Although previous studies found that self-confidence in L2 is related to both self-esteem and psychological adjustment (e.g., Pak et al, 1895), they did not explain whether those variables were related to one’s native cultural identity. Consequently, one might conclude that enhancing L2 proficiency has an impact on L2 learners’ self-esteem and psychological adjustment. However, at least in the Korean students’ case, confidence in second language may be not just the product of personality or second language proficiency.⁸ It may be rooted in Korean students’ confidence in their own cultural and ethnic identity.

The Korean students’ acculturation in the U.S. seemed at best a stressful experience. The students in the case study were struggling to deal with cultural differences and racial barriers. Some of the students seemed to lack psychological

⁷ L2 learners’ native sociocultural identity is considered a hindrance to acculturation and SLA.
capacity to deal with cultural differences, and others had role conflicts between their home lives and American society. Their negative experiences with and perceived prejudice from Americans sometimes developed into their negative image of themselves and all Americans, which deterred contact with Americans in general. In addition, students suffered from the lack of a sense of belonging and emotional security and struggled to have positive image of their identities in their social contact with Americans. These kinds of students’ emotional or psychological needs were reflected in their choice of friendships and sometimes superseded their desire to learn English. Students tried to fulfill these needs by associating with Koreans, other immigrants or non-Americans, or ethnic American friends, rather than by making friends with white Americans, the majority in the U.S. They also positively accepted their cultural and ethnic identities through interacting with those diverse friends. In a sense, the positive resolution of one’s cultural and ethnic identity, which was accompanied by a sense of belonging and emotional security, may be an important process for Korean students to facilitate achievement of successful acculturation. Therefore, while a student’s multicultural identity is evolving, confidence in one’s cultural and ethnic identity should be encouraged in order to provide the psychological capacity to deal with cultural differences and acculturation stress.

Based on the findings of the present study, the researcher presents the following educational implications and recommendation.

---

8 Self-confidence in L2 was regarded as one of personality traits or symptomatic of assimilation into the
1. Students’ acculturation needs to be incorporated into the ESL curriculum.

ESL teachers should recognize the importance of acculturation in Korean students’ English learning and should incorporate students’ acculturation into the ESL class. Also, the ESL class should be regarded as an aspect of students’ acculturation into American society. In order to do that, teachers need to understand the complex process of acculturation, such that individuals who have adjusted in a new environment have difficulties and conflicting choices and must deal with a number of issues, such as alienation, powerlessness, inadequacy, racism, and so on. Because Korean students’ acculturation is a conscious selection of the target culture based on their personal needs, facilitating engagement in the target language and culture as one of its members should be emphasized in order to promote their acculturation. Therefore, ESL teachers should foster Korean students’ capability to mitigate acculturation stress through introducing multicultural education into the classroom so that students can function as independent and autonomous speakers in real life and are motivated to use English outside of the classroom. Although much of the adaptation task must be carried out by the students’ themselves, their efforts alone cannot be fully effective without support from both the host society and one’s own ethnic group. Korean students need opportunities to learn American culture and English language through interacting with Americans, and at the same time they need to understand life in the U.S. from the perspective of their own ethnic group through interacting with members of their own ethnic communities. Therefore, students should be encouraged to critically reflect on both their own culture majority group (Pak et al, 1985).
and the culture of the host society and to review their own intercultural experiences and second language learning in order to identify and resolve contradictions.

One of the problems that the Korean students realized in the case studies was that they had difficulties in making American friends and having personal or intimate relationships with Americans in particular, which, they believed, is important for the development of their English proficiency. The students wanted personal involvement with Americans who are sympathetic to their needs, interests, and problems in their acculturation and second language learning. Although the students tried to make American friends through group activities, racial segregation among college students made it difficult for them to join in the white American groups. Students’ choice of friends, mainly non-Americans including Koreans, or ethnic Americans, indicate that shared culture and experiences as linguistic, cultural, and ethnic minorities provide them with a safe and supportive space. There is a need for education and the ESL program, in particular, to take account of and attempt to incorporate this aspect of Korean students’ acculturation into the curriculum.

As a project that caters to Korean students’ affective needs in their English learning mentioned above, the ESL class may utilize Korean American students as tutors of Korean ESL students. The Korean American students seem to be useful resources to Korean ESL student not only because of their linguistic and sociocultural expertise, but they also may be able to act as counselors to help resolve problems in acculturation and second language learning. They may provide Korean ESL students with useful insights, which they have obtained through their own or their family members’ struggles as a linguistic and cultural minority in the U.S. Also, through developing a person-centered
relationship between the Korean American students and themselves, Korean ESL students may have the opportunity to vent and resolve their acculturation stresses and problems in English learning in a less threatening and more accepting atmosphere. Shared cultural backgrouds and sometimes shared language between the two groups of students may create an emotional bonding, which Korean students desperately seek in their acculturation and English learning. Meanwhile, Korean American students’ interaction with Korean ESL students may be able to provide Korean American students with the motivation and opportunity to learn their heritage language and culture, which are considered to be advantages for developing their identity and self-esteem (Angle, 1978).

In addition, the ESL program may collaborate with the university’s Korean program in which students, including Korean American students are studying Korean culture and language. The collaboration could take the form of a project that would pair up Korean ESL students with students in the Korean program and let them help with each other’s homework or other problems in their language learning. These students’ interactions and collaborations may be incorporated into the curriculum. This type of partnership program, which focuses not only on valuing and utilizing students’ native languages and cultures but also on fostering personal involvement in language learning, may yield affective benefits, such as, enhancing self-worth and positive images of their native culture and language. It may also facilitate students’ second language learning by alleviating social distance between Korean ESL students and native speakers of English.
2. American educators should encourage Korean students to value Korean culture and should foster their students’ confidence in Korean identity.

ESL teachers need to encourage Korean students to have positive conceptions of their cultural and ethnic identity. In the present study, there was no evidence that Korean students’ assimilation is related to their achievement in English proficiency. On the contrary, students who had a high bicultural adaptation reported the greatest English proficiency. Also, the results of the case studies revealed that a negative image about Korean cultural and ethnic identity is likely to facilitate Korean students’ self-alienation and withdrawal from American society, and, thus, deter their acculturation and L2 learning processes. When students accepted negative images about their native cultural and ethnic identity imposed by others, they suffered from self-hatred and developed negative attitudes toward society. The risk of losing one’s native identity seems to be troubling to both the students and their parents. Therefore, ESL courses should emphasize the importance of negotiating native culture and should encourage students to have pride in their cultural and ethnic backgrounds through developing culturally congruent materials and pedagogy.

3. The empowerment approach and critical pedagogy

Considering that the students in the case studies expressed feelings of alienation and inferiority, hostility, and even violence, from contact with Americans because of their cultural and ethnic background and limited English proficiency, the social milieu is one of disempowerment for the Korean students. Teachers need to account for these difficulties and encourage the students not to accept the unequal status of relationships in
favor of the majority group. According to Cummins (1996), this kind of disempowerment of linguistic minority students has generally existed in American schools. Traditionally, American teachers have considered that there is something wrong with ESL or linguistic minority students’ sociocultural upbringing, which should be fixed by replacing their native language and culture with English and American culture (cited in Syed & Burnett, 1999). Affirming students’ native cultural identity and encouraging development of their culture and language usually do not conform to the agenda of the school community and the majority society.

In this situation, ESL teachers’ learning about their students’ culture and developing more culturally congruent instructional techniques may not be enough to foster students’ positive concept of and confidence in their own culture and ethnic identity and to reverse their situation of disempowerment. If teachers present themselves as representatives of the authority of disempowerment and try to transmit the ideology of dominant American culture and language to their students in the classroom, it will facilitate the perpetuation of a negative image of students’ identity and their unequal power relations in the broader society (Cummins, 1996). Teachers should have a strong belief in multilingual and multicultural education and be active advocates of their students’ identity. According to Cummins (1996), empowerment derives from the process of negotiating identities in the classroom. He claims that collaborative relations of power enable participants in a relationship to be empowered through their collaboration such that each is more affirmed in her or his identity and has a greater sense of efficacy to create change in his or her life or social situation. When teachers interact with their students based on the collaborative relations of power, students are empowered.
by this relationship and will develop motivation, confidence, and ability to interact with
the majority group and to succeed in second language learning.

Therefore, in terms of pedagogy, teachers should employ interaction-oriented rather
than traditional transmission pedagogy. ESL teachers should be information givers,
facilitators, integrators and communicators who are involved in the interactive language
and culture learning process (Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1981). According to Freire
(1993), critical pedagogy would lead to negotiated interaction through responsive
teaching, providing learners with sufficient support, responding to their changing needs,
and emphasizing meaning over forms. The critical pedagogy claims to employ
participatory, situated, critical, democratic, dialogic, desocializing, and multicultural
pedagogy in the classroom (cited in Griffler & Samimy, 1999). Griffler and Samimy
drew on these basic principles of the critical pedagogy in a TESOL graduate seminar and
encouraged students to deconstruct the native-non native dichotomy that is a product of a
colonial European culture and to construct students’ own identities as non-native
speakers of English. These types of pedagogical instruments can be useful in the ESL
classroom in order to deconstruct negative concepts of cultural and ethnic identities of
language minority students imposed by the American majority group, and to promote
empowerment of the students. When the ESL class incorporates the students’ life
experiences and multicultural and multilingual identities into the classroom and serves as
the agent of students’ identity enhancement, students may be able to not only interact
more directly with the target culture with confidence, but also be motivated to use
English, considering themselves ‘legitimate speakers of English (Bourdieu, 1977, cited in
Norton, 1997).’
Teachers may have limitations in obtaining knowledge of diverse culture of ESL students who come from so many different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The empowerment approach and critical pedagogy will relieve the teachers of the need to be the master in their students’ language and culture, by providing them with opportunities to be participants of their students’ cultural negotiation. Also, as the results of the present study revealed, the Korean students’ emerging cultural identity is neither the traditional Korean culture nor the dominant American culture. It is ever changing and a fusing of elements of two or more cultures. Therefore, if teachers obtain knowledge of their students’ native cultures from traditional culture textbooks, it may be far from the reality of their students’ evolving cultural identities. Incorporating students’ life experiences, struggles and needs into the curriculum may give a clearer picture of their students’ evolving cultural identities.

In addition, in case of immigrant and Korean American students, the school and American society should treat members of ethnic or linguisitic minority groups as a part of American the population rather than foreigners or outsiders, and accept ethnic or immigrant cultures integral segments of American society. This will reduce language minority students’ social distance from the majority society and facilitate their acculturation and second language learning. Also, in order that language minority students’ native cultures have a positive impact on self-identity, those students’ cultures should be enriched and embraced, and every social institution must be open to the expression of culture.
4. The importance of bilingual and bicultural education

Considering that Korean identity plays an essential role for Korean students to have a sense of belonging and emotional security, which the majority group alone does not provide, Korean students who do not speak Korean may be vulnerable to a potential identity crisis. Despite their desire, expressed in the survey, to maintain their Korean language and culture, in the survey, those students were limited in their social contact with Koreans and full development of their Korean identity, because of their lack of Korean language proficiency. Therefore, bilingual education for Korean students should aim at securing the full development of the Korean language, and education for heritage language and culture should be intensified for Korean Americans whose first language is English.

6.2. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

In general, the bi-directional and multidimensional model of the acculturation measurement used in the survey was appropriate for explaining Korean students’ bicultural orientation. However, there exists limitation in attempting to operationalize all of the complex components of acculturation in a single questionnaire. The acculturation measurement in the survey includes neither the measurement of cultural knowledge nor dynamic aspects of the acculturation process. Also, it did not consider students’ frequent interactions with a third group, such as, other immigrant or non-American students. Although the findings of the case study partially complemented these aspects of the survey, it cannot be generalized to the whole population of Korean students because the five students in the case were not representative of all Korean students in the university.
Students' Korean and English proficiency was assessed through the Can-Do scales, which is a self-reported assessment of one's language proficiency. It was not feasible to measure more than 100 students' four language skills with external measurement because of time limitations. Although the Can-Do scale was found to have a high correlation with other objective language measurements, and its validity and reliability were proved in previous literature, individuals' subjectivity cannot be excluded in such a self-assessment of language proficiency.

It is recommended that future research will add objective measurements, such as, TOEFL scores or grades in English composition, to this self-assessment in order to obtain more accurate measurement of students' language proficiency. Also, the researcher recommends that the present study be conducted with different ethnic or cultural groups in order to determine how different groups' acculturation is related to their L2 learning and how their native cultural identities differently influence their second language learning. The results of the present study imply that gender difference has an impact on social contact with the L2 community and on second language learning. More investigation through in-depth qualitative research is needed to better understand how different cultural beliefs and the differential socialization of males and females influences their second language learning needs. Lastly, further research is recommended to investigate whether there are any relationships between college students' acculturation and their academic English proficiency, which is essential to their academic success.
APPENDIX A

The Survey Questionnaire
Letter to students

Dear student,

I am a graduate student in the Foreign and Second Language Education Program at The Ohio State University and working on my doctoral dissertation. As a part of my dissertation, I am doing a survey on Korean students’ acculturation and second language learning. You are invited to participate in the study, and this survey will approximately take 20 minutes to complete. I will draw the names of eight students who will have completed the survey from a lottery for the prize of $400 ($50 for each name).

At the end of questionnaire, you will be asked whether you will participate in interviews. The interview will last one or two hours and be audiotaped. But it does not mean that you need to be interviewed in order to fill out the questionnaire. I will pay participants $10/hour for the interview.

Your decision whether or not to participate is entirely voluntary and any information I have about you in this study will be confidential. Also, there are no risks or discomforts for your participation in this study. Thank you and I hope you will find this survey is interesting and enjoyable.

Sincerely

[Signature]

Choon-hwa Lee
Ph.D. candidate
Department of Teaching & Learning
The Ohio State University
**Part A:** Please, choose the answer that is the closest to the way you act or feel right now.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale of Responses</th>
<th>1. Never</th>
<th>2. Rarely</th>
<th>3. Sometimes</th>
<th>4. Frequently</th>
<th>5. All the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. How often do you speak **English** with your family?  
2. How often do you speak **Korean** with your family?  
3. How often do you speak **English** with your friends?  
4. How often do you speak **Korean** with your friends?  
5. How often do you speak **English** with your neighbors?  
6. How often do you speak **Korean** with your neighbors?  
7. How often do you cook and eat **American** food?  
8. How often you cook and eat **Korean** food?  
9. How often do you take part in **American** social and recreational activities, such as meetings, sports and parties?  
10. How often do you take part in **Korean** social and recreational activities, such as meetings, sports and parties?  
11. How often do you listen to **American** music or watch **American** shows (e.g. TV or videos)?  
12. How often do you listen to **Korean** music or watch **Korean** shows (TV or videos)?  
13. How often do you read and write in **English**?  
14. How often do you read and write in **Korean**?  
15. How often do you take part in **American** cultural activities such as local concerts and shows, etc?  
16. How often do you take part in **Korean** cultural activities such as ‘New Year’s Day’ and ‘Choosuk’ celebrations, etc?  
17. How often do you take part in religious activities that are mostly **American** (churches or bible study in the American setting)?  
18. How often do you take part in religious activities that are mostly **Korean** (churches or bible study in the Korean setting)?  

* **IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A (PART-TIME) JOB, SKIP TO QUESTION #23.**

19. How frequently do you speak **English** at work?  

154
20. How frequently do you speak Korean at work?  
Scale of responses
1. None of them
2. A few of them
3. Half of them
4. Most of them
5. All of them

21. How many of co-workers are American?  

22. How many of co-workers are Korean?  

23. How many of people whom you keep in touch with in your neighborhood or on campus are American?  

24. How many of people whom you keep in touch with in your neighborhood or on campus are Korean?  

25. How many of your close friends are American?  

26. How many of your close friends are Korean?  
Scale of responses
1. Not important
2. Of little importance
3. Moderately important
4. Important
5. Very important

27. Knowing how to speak English well is _______ for me.  

28. Knowing how to speak Korean well is _______ for me.  

29. To read and write in English well is _______ for me?  

30. To read and write in Korean well is _______ for me?  

31. Taking part in American culture is _______ for me?  

32. Maintaining my Korean culture is _______ for me?  

33. To what extent do you have positive attitude toward Korean people?  
1. None  
2. A little  
3. Somewhat  
4. Much  
5. Very much
34. To what extent do you have positive attitudes toward American people?
   1. None
   2. A little
   3. Somewhat
   4. Much
   5. Very much

**Part B: Read the following statements and choose the number which tells how much you agree or disagree. There are no right or wrong answers.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Disagree strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Disagree moderately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Disagree slightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agree slightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Agree moderately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Agree strongly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35. Young adults should live with their parents until they get married.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

36. Young adults should ask their parents or elders for help before making important decisions.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

37. Young adults should take care of their elderly parents.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

38. Respecting the elderly is important.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

39. Family needs come before personal needs.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

40. Having many relatives and having close relations with them are important.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

41. Having good education is very important.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

42. Working hard when you are young for the wellbeing of the future rather than enjoying the present in necessary.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

43. Not showing your feelings and strong opinions in your relations with others is important.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

44. Young adults do not have to live with their parents before they get married.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

45. Young adults should be able to make important decisions without depending on parents or elders.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

46. A father or husband is the head of a household who makes important decisions in the family.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

47. Young adults do not necessarily have to take care of their elderly parents.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

48. Accomplishing what you want without depending on others is important.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

49. Respecting someone just because he or she is elderly is not necessary.
   1  2  3  4  5  6
50. Personal needs can come before the needs of the family. 1 2 3 4 5 6
51. Having your own idea of who you want to be and what you want to achieve is important. 1 2 3 4 5 6
52. Making a lot of money and having many material possessions are important. 1 2 3 4 5 6
53. Having fun and enjoy life is important. 1 2 3 4 5 6
54. Expressing your feelings and strong opinions in your relations with others is important. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Part C: Please, choose the number which best describes the ease or difficulty with which you can perform the following tasks in English.

|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|

55. Understanding American movies without subtitles. 1 2 3 4 5 6
56. Understanding news broadcasts in English on the radio. 1 2 3 4 5 6
57. Understanding two native speakers of English when they are talking rapidly with one another. 1 2 3 4 5 6
58. Understanding the words of American popular songs on the radio. 1 2 3 4 5 6
59. On the phone, understanding native speakers of English who are talking to you as quickly and using many idioms and slang. 1 2 3 4 5 6
60. Talking about your favorite activity in detail using appropriate vocabulary in English. 1 2 3 4 5 6
61. Introducing yourself in social situations, using appropriate greetings and good-by expressions in English. 1 2 3 4 5 6
62. Describing my present job, studies, or other major life activities accurately and in detail in English. 1 2 3 4 5 6
63. Telling what I plan to be doing five years from now, using appropriate future tenses in English. 1 2 3 4 5 6
64. Stating and supporting with examples and reasons a position on a controversial topic (i.e. nuclear safety, environmental pollution) in English. 1 2 3 4 5 6
65. Reading **English** personal letters and notes written as they would be to a native speaker of English.  & 1 2 3 4 5 6  
66. Reading **American** magazine articles such as those in *Time* or *Newsweek* without using a dictionary.  & 1 2 3 4 5 6  
67. Reading popular **American** novels without using a dictionary.  & 1 2 3 4 5 6  
68. Reading “want ads” with comprehension, even when many abbreviations are used in **English**.  & 1 2 3 4 5 6  
69. Reading very technical material in a particular American academic or professional field without using dictionary in **English**.  & 1 2 3 4 5 6  

**Scale of Responses**  
1. Extremely difficult  
2. Very difficult  
3. Somewhat difficult  
4. Somewhat easy  
5. Very easy  
6. Extremely easy  

70. Writing a letter to an instructor or a friend in **English**.  & 1 2 3 4 5 6  
71. Writing an essay in **English** without using a dictionary.  & 1 2 3 4 5 6  
72. Writing a formal business letter in **English**.  & 1 2 3 4 5 6  
73. Writing an article summary or an academic report in **English**.  & 1 2 3 4 5 6  
74. Write more than 10-page academic paper according to proper style and development of idea in **English**.  & 1 2 3 4 5 6  

**Part D:** Please, choose the number which best describes the ease or difficulty with which you can perform the following tasks in **Korean**.  

| Task Description | Scale of Responses: | Difficulty Level |  |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 75. Understanding **Korean** movies without subtitles.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6  | Extremely difficult  |
| 76. Understanding **Korean** news broadcasts on the radio.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6  | Very difficult  |
| 77. Understanding two native speakers of **Korean** when they are talking rapidly with one another.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6  | Somewhat difficult  |
| 78. Understanding the words of **Korean** popular songs on the radio.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6  | Somewhat easy  |

79. On the phone, understanding native speakers of Korean who are talking to you quickly, using many idioms and slang.

80. Talking about your favorite activity in detail using appropriate vocabulary in Korean.

81. Introducing yourself in social situations, and use appropriate greetings and good-by expressions in Korean.

82. Describing my present job, studies, or other major life activities accurately and in detail in Korean.

83. Telling what I plan to be doing 5 years from now, using appropriate future tenses in Korean.

84. Stating and supporting with examples and reasons a position on a controversial topic (i.e. nuclear safety, environmental pollution) in Korean.

85. Reading personal letters and notes written as they would be to a native speaker of Korean.

86. Reading popular Korean novels without using a dictionary.

87. Reading Korean magazine articles such as those in Korean version Newsweek without using a dictionary.

88. Reading “want ads” with comprehension, even when many abbreviations are used in Korean.

89. Reading very technical material in a Korean academic or professional field with little use of dictionary.

90. Writing a letter to an instructor or a friend in Korean.

91. Writing an essay in Korean without using a dictionary.

92. Writing a formal business letter in Korean.

93. Writing an article summary or a short report in Korean.

94. Writing more than 10-page academic paper according to proper style and development of idea in Korean.

Scale of Responses:
1. Extremely difficult
2. Very difficult
3. Somewhat difficult
4. Somewhat easy
5. Very easy
6. Extremely easy
**Demographic information:** Please, mark or fill in the blank in each of the following questions.

1. What is your gender? (Please circle one)
   1. Male
   2. Female

2. What is your current residence status? (Please circle one)
   1. F-1 visa
   2. Resident
   3. American citizen
   4. Other

3. How old are you? ________ years old

4. How long have you lived in the United States? ________ years.

5. After graduating the college, I plan to ________________.
   1. Stay in the U.S. permanently.
   2. Stay in the U.S. more than 5 years from now but return to Korea eventually.
   3. Return to Korea soon.

*Thank you for your cooperation and please mark here if you want to participate in interviews:*

I want to participate in interviews ________. (Phone number: ______________________)

*Your email address for a lottery: ________________________.
REFERENCES


