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# Language Use and Maintenance in Korean Migrant Children in Sydney<sup>1</sup>

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University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2052, Australia. [s.shin@unsw.edu.au](mailto:s.shin@unsw.edu.au)*

신성철. 2008. 시드니 한인 이민자 자녀들의 언어 사용과 유지. *외국어로서의 한국어 교육* 33 (139-168). 본 연구에서는 시드니에 거주하는 한인 이민 자녀들이 그들의 모국어 내지 가족 언어인 한국어를 어느 정도로 사용하고 유지해왔는지를 알아보았다. 특히, 본 연구는 한인 자녀들이 어떤 방법으로 한국어를 유지하려고 노력하고 있는지, 그를 위해 한인사회내의 시설 자원 등이 어느 정도로 활용되는지 등과 한류가 모국어 유지와 문화적 태도에 영향을 주었는지 여부를 조사하였다. 조사 방법은 시드니에 거주하는 4 학년에서 9 학년 학생들을 대상으로 설문 조사하여 응답자 149 명의 응답을 분석하였다. 분석결과 이들 한인 자녀들은 대화상대자와 상황에 따라 언어 즉, 한국어와 영어를 구별하여 사용하고 있었는바, 대화 상대자가 한인 어른일 경우는 한국어를 상당히 충실하게 사용하는 반면, 그 외의 거의 모든 상황에서는 한국어 사용의 '충성도'가 아주 낮았다. 본 연구는 이와 같은 응답자의 언어 사용, 선호도, 용이성 및 동기유발의 요인들을 논의하고, 한인 자녀들이 보다 넓은 활동 영역에서 한국어를 사용하고 한국어 유지에 대한 긍정적 태도를 갖게 해야 함을 주장한다.

(뉴사우스웨일즈대)

**Key words (핵심어):** language maintenance (모국어 유지), language use (언어사용), Korean migrant children (한인 이민자 자녀), motivation and attitude (동기와 태도)

## 1. Introduction

The Korean community in Australia has a relatively short history, compared with other Asian communities such as the Chinese community. Although the Sydney Korean community has just celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> year of Korean migration to Australia in 2007, the first Koreans who migrated to Australia with really intentional immigration schemes can only be traced back to thirty years ago. Those Koreans who have come to Australia since the early 1980s have migrated under the skilled migrant, business or investment classes. The vast majority of the Koreans who have come to Australia have settled in Sydney.<sup>2</sup> The current number of Korean living in Sydney is approximately 60,000 or

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<sup>1</sup> This is a revised version of my paper entitled "Language Maintenance in Korean Migrant Children in Sydney" presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> *International Conference on Korean Studies in Pacific Asia* (25-27 November 2008, USSH, VNU, Hanoi). I thank the organisers for giving me the opportunity to present this paper. Also, I thank unknown peer-reviewers for their valuable comments.

<sup>2</sup> In relation to 'Korean' population in Australia, governmental and civil organisations informally estimate that as of 2008, there are approximately 100,000 permanent or long-term residents, 35,000 international students and another 30,000 working-holiday makers in various parts of Australia.

around 100,000 if you count the Korean students who study in various institutions and the temporary residents (e.g. business people) staying in Sydney.<sup>3</sup>

The primary and secondary students of Korean background follow a similar demographic trend as that outlined above. In an informal consultation with the NSW Department of Education, it was found that there were around 10,000 students of Korean background in NSW, and approximately 90 % of them live in the Sydney metropolitan area.

The Korean community in Australia is interesting to study as it is a relatively small group and has not to date attracted much attention from sociolinguistic researchers. Because the Korean language was relatively unknown to all but a few non-native speakers in Australia the Korean community was less accessible than other groups such as the Chinese community. This inaccessibility was further reinforced by the small size of the Korean community. Although this demographic trend (accordingly geographic locations and size of the Korean centres) has changed greatly in the recent years, sociolinguistic interests in the Korean community have not been much explored, if explored at all. Studies on language maintenance are not exception.

I am interested in whether and to what extent Koreans (migrant children here), who are a minority group among the ethnic communities in Australia, have maintained their first language (L1). In particular, I want to examine in what ways the Korean community, as individuals and as a corporate group, is attempting to maintain its L1; to what extent the community resources to that end have been utilised; and the implications for language maintenance.

This type of research has been done for other ethnic groups in Australia, e.g. Lebanese (Taft and Cahill 1989), Russians (Kouzmin 1988) and Poles (Janik 1996), and in other parts of the world, e.g. Russian-Jewish immigrants (Schwartz 2008). These and other studies (e.g. Gilhotra 1985) indicate that the members of minority communities support the learning of their own language to identify with their own ethnic group and to develop better opportunities such as job advantages in the future. Language policy-related studies and documents (e.g. Cho H-R 2004; Lee K-K 2008; NALSAS Taskforce 1998; Shin S-C 2008) recognise the value of ethnic schools and their important roles in the community. Cho H-R (2004: 200-01)<sup>4</sup> emphasises the importance of teaching Korean to overseas Korean children in three aspects: 1) to develop their identity as a person with Korean heritage; 2) to improve communication skills and understanding of Korea; and 3) to accommodate the needs of a large number of overseas Koreans in various Korean programs. Kim H-J (2007) proposes that the priority task necessary to establish a Korean language policy should be fundamental ethnographic research on language use by overseas Koreans and their attitude towards Korean and Korea.

This study aims to address issues of Korean migrant children's language use and maintenance that are faced by the Korean community in multicultural Australia. It also

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<sup>3</sup> Informal figures obtained from the Sydney Korean Consulate General's Office. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the number of permanent residents with Korean ancestry living in Australia as of 2006 was approximately 61,000, of which approx. 40,000 (or approx 66%) were living in New South Wales (NSW) and of the NSW residents 38,000 were living in Sydney.

<sup>4</sup> Cho H-R (2004) presents detailed language policy issues concerned with overseas Koreans, pointing out inadequacy in philosophical goals and legal provision, as well as inefficient and repetitious implementation of policies by different governmental agencies.

intends to examine whether or how “Hallyu” or Korean Wave, which is a vigorous socio-cultural phenomena in Asia and beyond, has impacted on the maintenance of language and cultural practices.

## 2. Subjects and Data

The subjects chosen for this study are primary to junior high school students in Sydney as they would be among the groups within the Korean community who were forced by the nature of their day to day activities to use English, the school system being English-orientated. The fact of them being primary and high school students also gives some uniformity to the subjects in regards to age, occupation and the range of everyday language use. I decided to survey students in three main ethnic schools in the Korean community firstly from a very pragmatic point of view. This was the best way I could find the required number of Korean primary and high school students economically and quickly. Also by choosing particular school years or levels, I had the ability to introduce more uniformity among the subjects studied. In the end I chose to survey students from Years 4-6 and Years 7-9 as I assumed that they would be more likely to face daily issues of language maintenance and identity on the one hand and to have the reasonable maturity to give accurate answers and reasoned response on the other hand. They would have most likely done at least two or three years of study of Korean and Korea in the community ethnic schools. They would have also spent enough time in the Australian education system with fluent or sufficient command of English.

The data for this study was obtained by survey questionnaires distributed to the teachers of Years 4-6 primary and Years 7-9 junior high classes in three community schools (Linfield Korean School, Sydney Korean Full-Gospel Church Korean Language School-Greenacre and Sydney Central Presbyterian Church Korean Language School-Belfield)<sup>5</sup> where Korean is taught. The surveys were distributed and collected (March – April 2008) from the students by the class teachers. Their cooperation was requested by telephone and letter. I decided to confine this study to questionnaires because it was easier to obtain the information quickly. An initial thought of interviews was abandoned due to the lack of time available.

The questionnaire consists of four sections: 1. background data; 2. frequency of language use, where the students were asked to indicate how often they use Korean in various situations, etc; 3. language preference, where they were asked to indicate which language they prefer to use with various interlocutors, etc.; and finally 4. socio-cultural aspects and language learning, where they were asked to indicate how socio-cultural activities are related to their learning of Korean. Some questions should be answered by circling the most suitable answer (3- to 5-point scale) or putting a tick or a number next to the question. Others required them to write their comments in spaces provided.

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<sup>5</sup> I chose these schools in consultation with the Korean Education Centre at the Sydney Korean Consulate-General Office which suggested that they were running well organised programs. I thank the principals of the schools for their kind permission to conduct the survey. I also sincerely thank students who completed the questionnaires and teachers who kindly distributed and collected them for this study.

In the following, I will present the survey results starting with the characteristics of the subjects chosen for this study, followed by the results of each section mentioned above with brief interpretations.

### 3. Characteristics of the Subjects

As mentioned above, the target group consisted of Years 4-6 primary and Years 7-9 junior high school students in various levels of classes at three Korean community schools. The total number of students who responded to my survey was 149. As it can be noted from Table 1 below, the students were divided into 88 girls (59.1%) and 61 boys (40.9%), and their age range was from 9 to 16, with 10 (17.7%) to 12 (25.2%) years of age being the largest group. A large group of respondents were in Year 7 (37 or 25%), Year 4 (31 or 20.9%) and Year 6 (26 or 17.6%).

**Table 1: Gender, Age and School Year**

Gender	N	%	Age	N	%	School Year	N	%
Girls	88	59.1	9	18	12.2	4	31	20.9
Boys	61	40.9	10	26	17.7	5	21	14.2
TOTAL	149	100	11	26	17.7	6	26	17.6
			12	37	25.2	7	37	25.0
			13	16	10.9	8	19	12.8
			14	14	9.5	9	11	7.4
			15	8	5.4	10	2	1.4
			16	2	1.4	11	1	0.7
			TOTAL	147	100	TOTAL	148	100
			U/A*	2		U/A*	1	

\*U/A: Unanswered.

The length of time lived in Australia by the students as shown in Table 2 was 5 to 15 years (except one 16 years) with the mean length of residence in Australia being 8.8 years. The percentage of students who have lived in Australia for more than 5 years was 74.3% with 25.7% living in Australia for 5 years or less.<sup>6</sup> Among those who answered that they had schooling in Korea, 82% had up to 5 years, with a further 18% having studied in Korea for more than 5 years, as is shown below in Table 2. Among 130 students who answered about schooling in Australia, 65.3% have had schooling for more than 5 years, with 34.7% having studied in Australia between 1 and 5 years.

**Table 2: Length of Stay and Length of Schooling**

Years	N	%	Years	of	N	%	Years	of	N	%
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<sup>6</sup> There is no particular reason for using the five-year breakdown to describe the results but it was considered that in NSW children normally begin school at five years of age.

lived in Australia			Schooling done in Korea			Schooling done in Australia		
1 or less	5	3.6	1 or less	16	32.0	1 or less	5	3.9
1<3	17	12.1	1<3	10	20.0	1<3	17	13.1
3<5	14	10.0	3<5	15	30.0	3<5	23	17.7
5<7	15	10.7	5<7	4	8.0	5<7	42	32.3
7<9	21	15.0	7<9	2	4.0	7<9	31	23.8
9<11	26	18.6	9<11	1	2.0	9<11	7	5.4
11<16	42	30.0	11<15	2	4.0	11<16	5	3.8
TOTAL	140	100	TOTAL	50	100	TOTAL	130	100

#### 4. Frequency of Language Use

To ascertain how frequently the students were using Korean with different interlocutors, they were asked to indicate the frequency of their use of Korean in various situations. The results from those who responded are in Table 3.

**Table 3: Frequency of Use of Korean (%)**

Interlocutors	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1) with grandparents	60.0	10.7	12.7	6.7	10.0 <sup>7</sup>
2) with parents	36.7	37.3	19.3	6.7	0
3) with other Korean adults	47.0	34.2	13.4	2.7	2.7
4) with siblings	13.7	25.3	30.8	17.8	12.3
5) with Korean friends at school	10.1	23.0	24.3	31.1	11.5
6) with Korean friends when socialising	13.5	25.0	36.5	18.9	6.1
7) in dreams	12.8	14.2	21.6	18.9	32.4
8) in prayer	20.1	18.1	34.9	13.4	13.4

The first thing that is obvious from these results is that the age of the interlocutors has great influence on the language chosen. With their grandparents (60.0%), parents (36.7%) and other Korean adults (47.0%) the response of always using Korean is in stark contrast to always using Korean with their siblings (13.7%) and their Korean friends (10.1% and 13.5%). This is probably due to a large extent to the language abilities and preferences of the interlocutors. In other words, some children would use Korean with adults as part of the process of developing their ethnic identity. However, in many cases it is more likely that they would choose to use Korean themselves or be

<sup>7</sup> It is possible that 10% of the respondents did not have grandparents (e.g. as they had passed away), did not yet have a chance to talk with them or talked in languages (e.g. English) other than Korean.

requested to use Korean at home or in community situations due to the low English proficiency of their parents and other Korean adults.

Another interesting result is that the students were less likely to use Korean with their Korean friends in the school situation than they were to use it when in a social situation with the same friends. This is possibly due to the inhabitation of the English environment of school and the presence of non-Korean speakers. I included the categories of dreams and prayer as ones where the interlocutor is of less importance, as people in dreams and God are perfectly bilingual. The results show that the respondents use Korean at a similar rate in their dreams as with their siblings and friends. The greater use of Korean in prayers may be due to prayer being restricted to formal (i.e. Korean church) situations or to the greater respect shown to God, or simply talking to Him in the language he habitually preferred.

The extent that the respondents participated in the Korean community by visiting various venues or participating in community events was also investigated. The results are in Table 4.

**Table 4: Visiting Korean Venues and Participating in Korean Events (%)**

Venues and Events	Weekly	Monthly	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Churches / temples	67.1	4.0	12.0	8.7	8.0
Shops	57.7	11.4	28.9	1.3	0.7
Restaurants	14.0	28.2	49.7	8.1	0
Functions /events	20.8	16.7	50.0	22.2	9.0

The single biggest influence is that of Korean churches where 67.1% of the respondents attended on a weekly basis. But if we look at the overall trend of the cumulated frequencies Korean shops have greater influence. Korean restaurants have less influence than shops (as would be expected as not everyone goes to a restaurant regularly). The Korean community functions do not seem to have much influence as a whole as 31.2% seldom or never attend them.

I was interested in the influence exerted by the Korean mass media. The greater access to English language media has an impact on frequency of use of Korean media resources. Korean viewers can watch selected Korean television programs in Australia but only with a special antenna and subscription, and SBS TV does not seem to cater for Korean viewers except the half-hour news on Sunday mornings. There is also Korean language radio programming (e.g. SBS Radio) in Australia but aired for limited time only. So, in order to produce some equivalence among the mass media, I counted visual media (video, DVD and TV) as one category, with the others being radio and newspapers / magazines. I also included Korean song as one category of media as it is strongly related to teenagers. The results are in Table 5.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 5: Frequency of Use of Korean Media (%)**

<sup>8</sup> It may be more desirable to investigate the frequency of use by the number of hours exposed to the media rather than by days and weeks but in this survey I decided to utilise 'everyday' frequency words for an immediate response and in consideration of the age group of the respondents.

Media	Most days	Weekly	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Newspapers / magazines	6.3	14.6	18.1	21.5	39.6
Videos, DVDs, TV	36.7	20.4	29.9	8.8	4.1
Radio	5.4	3.4	8.8	20.4	61.9
Songs	45.9	14.4	24.7	8.9	6.2

The Korean media's biggest influence as shown in Table 5 is from Korean songs with 45.9% of the respondents listening to Korean songs most days of the week. But visual media (videos, DVDs, TV) have a greater overall effect than any other media. More students listen to Korean music or watch videos on a day to day basis, but newspapers (or magazines) and radio programs do not seem to have much appeal as 61.1% seldom or never read them and an overwhelming 82.3% seldom or never listen to Korean radio programs. The order of influence of the Korean media, which was dominated by visual media and songs, is possibly due to the interests of teenagers, who like to watch videos and films and listen to contemporary songs, but it is also likely to be due to being easier to understand than newspapers and magazines and the ease of access compared with radio as there are only limited hours of Korean radio programming in a week.

The strength of ties with Korea is a significant factor in language maintenance. Students were firstly asked how frequently they send post including parcels to Korea or receive them from Korea. The other major factor in maintaining ties with Korea these days is through emails or internet communications. Then students were asked how frequently they contact people in Korea by phone. The results are in Table 6.

**Table 6: Frequency of Contact with People in Korea**

Means of contact	Fortnightly	Monthly	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Post	3.5	0.9	24.8	24.1	38.2
Emails /internet	20.0	10.3	29.0	11.7	29.0
Phone	30.0	18.1	34.0	11.1	6.9

The majority (62.3%) of respondents seldom or never communicated with Korea by post. Only 4.4% of the respondents communicated with Korea by post on a fortnightly or monthly basis, while 24.8% did so occasionally. The frequency of using emails or the internet in communicating with Korea is much higher than that of post as expected, at 20% on a fortnightly basis and 39.3% on a monthly or less frequent basis. 40.7% seldom or never email or chat on the internet with people in Korea. The difference is most likely due to the wide email or internet access and the much greater convenience of computer communication than post. However, the means which was most frequently used by the respondents in contact with Korea was phone calls, with 30% phoning on a fortnightly basis and 52.1% on a monthly or occasional basis. This frequent use of the phone is probably because the cost of phone calls these days is much cheaper than



before thanks to internet phone services and increasing competition in the market and/or because it is done with quicker verbal interactions.

## 5. Language Preference

The language that children from migrant families prefer to use often has an impact on the extent and speed of learning the language of the country their parents adopted and the extent and speed of loss of their or their parents' L1. The language a migrant child uses is often determined by the circumstances he/she needs to communicate in, but the attitudes shown towards L1 and L2 will determine language choice where choice is available.

I wanted to investigate and determine language preference firstly by inquiring about whether the students read English or Korean language books other than those required to be read for school. The results are in Table 7.

**Table 7: Types of Books Read for Pleasure**

Questions	Answers	N	%
Reading for pleasure?	Yes	116	80.6
	No	28	19.4
	TOTAL	144	100
Type of books?	English books only	38	33.6
	More English books	61	54.0
	More Korean books	12	10.6
	Korean books only	2	1.8
	TOTAL	113	100
	U/A	3	

The results show that 19.4% of the respondents did not read for pleasure. Among those who read for pleasure and answered the question about the type of books they read, overwhelming 87.6% show overall preference for English books with only 12.4% preferring or strongly preferring Korean books.<sup>9</sup> This statistical information is related to the length of stay in Australia. It was observed that those who preferred Korean books had lived in Australia a few years less than the vast majority who preferred to read books in English.

The choice of friends can be influenced by language preference as humans tend to become friends with those with whom we have things in common, so people would tend

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<sup>9</sup> On that point, Kim J-W (2002) raises problems with existing textbooks used by overseas Korean children and demonstrates with principles how to integrate linguistic and cultural components in conversational books for them. Kim G.G (2008) demonstrates how image texts can be utilised to strengthen the understanding of Korean culture by second and third generation overseas Koreans.

to choose friends who were able to speak, comfortable and agreeable with speaking the language we prefer to speak. The choice of friends in turn influences the language used as we usually speak the language that our interlocutor is able to or prefers to speak. When the students were asked if they had more Korean friends than non-Korean friends or not, 60.4% said that they had more or only non-Korean friends, with 39.6% having more or only Korean friends, as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Types of Friends**

Types of friends	N	%
Korean friends only	1	1.9
More Korean friends	20	37.7
More non-Korean friends	25	47.2
Non-Korean friends only	7	13.2
TOTAL	53	100

It was assumed that it would be interesting to determine how often the students used English in reply to a Korean stimulus. This phenomenon was investigated with regard to various types of interlocutor. The results are in Table 9.

**Table 9: Frequency of Reply in English when Spoken to in Korean (%)**

Interlocutors	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Friends	26.4	38.9	22.9	6.9	4.9
Siblings	23.4	35.2	27.6	5.5	8.3
Parents	18.0	21.5	31.3	18.8	10.4
Other adults	18.8	11.8	25.7	20.8	22.9

The results show that the respondents are more likely to reply in English to a Korean stimulus with others of a similar age than adults. They used English in reply to their parents (39.5%) more often than other adults (30.6%), and with their friends (65.3%) than with their siblings (58.6%). The interaction with adults was more likely to be bilingual between Korean and English, with more frequent replies in Korean to other adults. This is probably because the adults were more likely to be comfortable with Korean (i.e. less likely to be comfortable with English) and because they were accorded more respect by remaining with the language preferred (and chosen) by the adults. Where the status difference is less defined interlocutors tend to be freer to impose their preference on the conversation, and the above results seem to reflect such a trend. This type of question is considered by Taft and Cahill (1989) to be a very good indicator of language preference and the ‘loyalty’ shown towards the mother tongue.

I was interested in the students’ perceptions of their language ability as this has great influence on the language they prefer and use. To discover this, the students were

asked as to the language they found easier for each of the four language skills, i.e. speaking, listening, reading and writing. As shown in Table 10 below, in all four skills English was perceived as being much easier than Korean. The greatest margin was for writing,<sup>10</sup> where 82.6% found English easier.

**Table 10: Easier Language in Four Skills (%)**

Language skills	English	Korean	U/A
Speaking (N=135)	75.6	20.0	4.4
Listening (N=136)	66.2	29.4	4.4
Reading (N=134)	80.6	14.9	4.5
Writing (N=132)	82.6	13.6	3.8

The respondents were then asked about their overall preference for using English or Korean. They showed 49.3% preferring English, only 13.8% preferring Korean and 29.7% having preference in either language, while 7.2% having not decided or answered.

The students were given the opportunity to explain their language preferences. The first idea that came strongly from a large number of the respondents was that English was easier and they were more comfortable with it because it was their first language, because they were born in Australia or had lived in the country for a long time or because they were using English everyday.

“It’s easier and I’m more used to it.”

“It is my first language. I’m better at English.”

“Because it was the first language I was taught.”

“I was born in Australia. It’s just easier.”

“I’ve lived here all my life.”

“I have been in Australia longer and I can speak it [English] more fluently.”

“Easier, because I use it everyday.”

“Because I am used to it a lot.”

A slightly smaller number of respondents indicated that they liked to use both Korean and English because they were good at and/or comfortable with both languages, so situations determine the language chosen.

“Because I can speak both.”

“I feel comfortable with both of them.”

“I find both languages easy for me.”

“Even though English is my second language, it is still natural to me as Korean.”

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<sup>10</sup> Pointing out the necessity of devising an efficient instructional method for English-speaking Korean children, Yoon I.C (2007) reports words frequently misspelled by Korean children in a Korean community school in Auckland.

“I’m so used to speaking English at school but I’m also used to speaking Korean at home...”

“Because I do like my original language and I also do like English. It’s like choosing my mum or dad.”

“It’s because I have to speak Korean to my grandparents and English to my friends.”

“Because I use English with my friend so I get used to it but on the other hand I prefer to Korean because I use Korean with my parents.”

A few respondents indicated that they preferred Korean because it was easier and comfortable for them being their first language, because they wanted to maintain ties with their heritage or because they used it everyday.

“It’s easy for me.”

“it’s easier for me to say to my parents and they can understand.”

“It’s more comfortable.”

“I feel more comfortable in Korean and know much more words in Korean.”

“Because I use Korean more often.”

“I always use it and it’s easier.”

“Because we are Korean.”

“Because I am Korean and I learnt Korean more than English.”

“Korean because I was born in Korea.”

Overall, a large number of respondents who gave comments said that they found English easier and were more comfortable with it than Korean, so they preferred to use English in everyday situations, but at the same time many others were confident in and comfortable with both Korean and English and/or recognised the need to use Korean. It appears that the respondents’ preferences for using English were influenced by the dominance of English in Australian society but those who felt the necessity to use Korean and actually used it often were comfortable with both languages, which is desirable.<sup>11</sup> The comments, to a large extent, support and reflect the statistical information presented earlier.

## **6. Socio-Cultural Aspects and Learning of Korean**

As language and culture are inseparable, there must surely be a certain relationship between language learning and socio-cultural elements. I was interested in finding out what importance the socio-cultural aspects may have on the students’ efforts to be motivated to study and maintain their Korean. Students were first asked about Hallyu (Korean Wave) and its influence on their motivation to learn Korean. 87.6% of the respondents said that they never heard of Hallyu or had heard but didn’t know it well. Only 12.4% were well aware of the socio-cultural phenomenon. Then, students were

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<sup>11</sup> In an experimental study on Korean-English bilingual children (aged 3-8), Kim K-R (2003: 327-28) concludes that children can acquire vocabularies and grammars of two languages simultaneously without much confusion but the dominance of language environment greatly affects bilingual acquisition.

asked about whether they felt they were motivated to learn more Korean by cultural activities performed by visiting high-profile Korean entertainers. The majority (60.4%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to that motivational factor while 38.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed to that idea, as shown in Table 12. Similarly, more than the half (58.3%) of them were also motivated by Korean community events and cultural activities but the remaining students did not agree.

**Table 11: Motivation Influenced by Hallyu and Community Events**

Answers	Visiting stars & entertainers		Community Events	
	N	%	N	%
Strongly agree	7	5.6	5	3.8
Agree	69	54.8	72	54.5
Disagree	32	25.3	42	31.8
Strongly disagree	17	13.5	12	9.1
U/A	1	0.8	1	0.8
TOTAL	126	100	132	100

It would also be useful to know about which cultural aspects the students were interested in as it might be related to the area of language learning. Students were asked about what Korean cultural activities/aspects they are interested in or wish to learn about. They were more interested in food/cooking (30.8%), followed by songs and music (27.3%) and dances (11.6%), as shown in Table 12. Perhaps these results reflect the general trends of teenagers who like readily accessible and contemporary cultural items such as food, songs and dances. They were much less interested in ‘traditional’ cultural elements such as brush-writing, pot-making, Korean painting and school or family life.

**Table 12: Socio-Cultural Activities Favoured by Students**

Activities	N	%
Songs and music	47	27.3
Dances	20	11.6
Student/family life	17	9.9
Food/cooking	53	30.8
Pot-making	12	7.0
Korean painting	13	7.6
Brush-writing	10	5.8
Others		
TOTAL	172	100

It would be useful for the community and teachers to know what makes the students keep learning and trying to maintain Korean most. The students were asked about the most important motivating factors for studying Korean. The results are in Table 13.

**Table 13: Most Important Motivating Factors for Learning Korean**

Motivating Factors*	N	%
Korean way of life & culture	40	14.9
Family and relatives	72	26.9
Communication in writing with Korean people	24	9.0
Korean newspapers and magazines	9	3.4
Korean media, music and films	36	13.4
Good mark in Korean at school or in HSC	15	5.6
Personal enjoyment	20	7.5
Basis for learning other languages	15	5.6
Korean literature	10	3.7
Travel	27	10.0
Others	0	
TOTAL	268	100

\*Allowed to indicate more than one.

Thus, the four reasons receiving strong support (10% or more) from the students as being most important were:

- Family and relatives (26.9%)
- Korean way of life and culture (14.9%)
- Korean media, music and films (13.4%)
- Travel (10%)

The students clearly saw the importance of all four reasons, however one of these was outstanding: language of family and relatives. This reason, along with the promotion of understanding of the Korean way of life and culture, is regarded as being directly connected with the preservation of family bonds. As Smolicz (1981b: 1) saw a language as a link for family cohesion and an element of their ethnic identity, the Korean students saw the importance of the learning of Korean in contributing to communication with family members and an identification of their own culture.<sup>12</sup> As identified earlier in the paper, the reason related to Korean media, music and films, as well as the usefulness for travel to Korea, were also strongly supported by the students.

On the other hand, what did not much appeal to the students as the reasons for studying Korean were reading newspapers and magazines, appreciating Korean

<sup>12</sup> In her survey study on Korean-Americans who suffered from identity crisis during their adolescent period, Ahn H (2008: 164) argues that the more they learn Korean as their mother tongue or family language, the more likely they will form a healthy identity as Korean Americans.

literature, the hope of gaining a better mark in school, a basis for learning other languages and personal enjoyment through the study of Korean.

## **Summary and Discussion**

The Australian Korean-heritage population is concentrated in a few major cities, particularly in Sydney. This provides much more opportunity to maintain the use of Korean than would be expected if population alone was considered. The Korean population of Australia tends towards the higher economic status which firstly allows Koreans to put more influence, effort and financial resources towards maintaining their L1. Also the temptation is removed or at least reduced to abandon their L1 in favour of English in order to pursue economic status or gain.

Korean culture is quite distinct from other Asian cultures. It has also a history of attempted suppression by outside powers, so Koreans in general are proud of their distinctiveness and their 'Koreanness' and are strongly motivated to maintain it. Their distinct language is an important part and indicator of their cultural identity. As the Korean language is very different from English it could be easier to maintain the distinction between the two.

The Korean community in Sydney has established a good network of support systems that aid in the maintenance of the culture and language. These include numerous ethnic churches, grocery and video shops; professional and service industries such as doctors, lawyers, travel agents, restaurants, etc.; ethnic media; and several Korean community organisations which provide Korean migrants with a range of services, for example, a Korean telephone directory service for both business and private individuals, enabling Koreans to maintain contact with other Koreans.

One of the major purposes of this survey was to determine the extent to which these resources were being utilised by the respondents. It was found that Korean churches and shops were being well utilised by the respondents and community functions were of less importance. The Korean media was also well utilised with the exception of radio and newspapers which do not seem to appeal to the respondents anyway. Strong ties were also maintained with their or their parents' homeland, with email or internet and telephone calls being very significant, but post of less significance, which is understandable in this information technology era.

The respondents seem to make distinctions between the languages they need to use 'inside' and 'outside', and according to interlocutors. The students clearly indicated that they chose to use Korean in conversations with grandparents, parents and other Korean adults but they preferred not to use Korean (i.e. preferred to use English) in all other situations given in the question. It appears that this separate everyday language management is related to family policy factors including parental language attitudes (Schwartz 2008). This result was reinforced by the language preference indicated by the students. They were strongly in favour of English in all other areas in question such as book reading, friends, verbal response and language skills. English books were preferred overall to Korean books, and they had more non-Korean friends. The test of language preference provided by the question about answering in English when spoken to in Korean showed reasonable 'loyalty' to Korean in replying to their parents or other adults but a strong preference to English in replying to their friends and siblings. The

strong majority of the respondents found English easier to use than Korean in all four macro-skills areas. This result seems to support previous studies such as Janik (1996) who argues that the longer Polish students live in Australia the less they use Polish in almost all tested areas.

A few cautions about such results, however, need to be made. Firstly, considering the sufficient length of time (48.6% for 10 or more years) in Australia, the proportion of students preferring to use English is understandable. Secondly, the positive attitude towards the contemporary culture in the media as well as the preference to use Korean towards adults should be noted. On reflection, this survey's results should also be considered in the light of the respondents' limited exposure to a daily Korean-speaking environment.

Most respondents knew little about the Hallyu phenomenon but the majority agreed that visiting Korean entertainers and local community events provided a certain influence on their motivation to study Korean. However, they were more interested in contemporary cultural elements such as food, music and dances, with minimal interest in 'traditional' cultural activities such as brush-writing, pot-making and Korean painting. Overall, their motivational factors to study and maintain Korean came from integrative orientation: language of family, Korean way of life and Korean entertainment. Ethnic communities in Australia vary in their relative emphasis on the core values of their culture (Smolicz et al. 2001), and the children in the Korean community placed their emphasis on those three factors as their core values.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) found two types of motivation for second-language learning: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is defined as "a willingness to become a member of another ethnolinguistic group" (p12), whereas instrumental motivation indicates "a desire to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of a foreign language" (p14). If we apply this framework to the results, it is clear that the subject group was integratively motivated. They were interested in studying their or their parents' mother tongue in order to be able to identify with their family, or because they were interested in understanding the culture and way of life of Korean people.

Though the students didn't realise much of the instrumental benefits yet and their use of Korean was largely defined to Korean adults, this does not seem to be something to worry about greatly as both integrative and instrumental motivation can be modified in the course of studying the language (Gardener and Smythe 1975, 218-230). So, if they enjoy studying Korean for family reasons for now, this might well encourage positive attitudes to further integrative or instrumental reasons with the growing maturity of the students and their increasing concern with job opportunities. This type of change in attitudes may be further facilitated when "social distance" (Shuman 1976)—cultural, technical, economic and political status—between Australia and Korea is perceived to be close, heightened and tangible.

In the process of developing children's attitudes towards the language of their family, it is probably parents or family who play the most influential role. As Gilhotra (1985) found, parents want their children to learn their community language "because it is [their] own language, to maintain contacts with [the] homeland, for better chances in life, and to talk to parents/elders" (p 63). Similarly, the results of this survey indicate



that the attitudes and motivation of the students were closely related to immediate family and cultural reasons mostly encouraged by their parents and community.

## Conclusion

It would appear from the indications of this survey that the group in the survey has an integrative inclination towards the maintenance of their family's L1, but their integrative orientation is limited to certain specific circumstances (parents and adults in particular). As the Korean speech community gets older, such a trend might be natural in that it reflects the children's separate identity as Korean-Australian within the wider Australian society. To maintain the language and its cultural identity in the multilingual community, children need to be encouraged to use Korean more and participate in community functions more often for such motivation. After all, the maintenance of Korean is largely the responsibility of the Korean community itself. Finally, this study leaves a number of research topics to explore, such as children's attitude towards the use of Korean, the interrelationship between children's language use and parents' language abilities and relevant curriculum issues at both community and public school levels. Questions raised from these perspectives must await answers from further research, which will provide more information and insight about the future of Korean programs of Korean-heritage students in Australia and beyond.

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