

# Korean-Immigrant Parents' Support of Their American-Born Children's Development and Maintenance of the Home Language

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**Abstract** This study explores Korean-immigrant parents' language ideologies and practices with respect to their American-born children's language development. Participants were seven ethnic Korean families composed of immigrant parents and their American-born children, aged between five and seven, in Midwestern America. Interviews in the medium of Korean with the parents, and naturally-occurring family conversations during a meal time, reading time, and play time were audio-recorded and analyzed. The findings suggest that Korean-immigrant parents have a strong desire to pass on their mother tongue to their American-born children, largely derived from their language barrier, and perception of language as an identity marker and socio-economic capital in case they return to Korea for familial obligations and economic opportunities, which represent the context-specific nature of family language policy. Language strategies, such as parental feedback and language-mixing, serve as a catalyst for the implementation of family language policy on the levels of functions, forms, and teaching of the Korean language for Korean-American children's bilingual development.

**Keywords** Early childhood bilingualism · Immigrant parents · Family language policy · Korean families in America

## Introduction

Family interaction has been studied as a venue through which parents facilitate children's language and cognitive development (Blum-Kulka 1997). Conversations in immigrant families in a multi-ethnic society like the U.S. constitute a site to support the development and maintenance of children's home language. As a result of long-term exposure to the home language in informal contexts, children of immigrants tend to understand and speak the home language less often. However, previous research has shown that few children of immigrants achieve complete acquisition of their home language (Montrul 2010). Similar experiences about language transmission have been observed across different immigrant groups and their children in the U.S. (Tuominin 1999). Korean immigrants and their children are not immune to the language loss and shift often observed among immigrants and their children in the U.S. This study aims to investigate how Korean-immigrant parents support their American-born children's development and maintenance of the home language through parent-child interaction which in turn reflects the immigrant parents' beliefs and planning for their children's language development.

## Family Talk in Language Development

Parental language use is a primary factor in achieving bilingualism for children in immigrant households (De Houwer 2007). A plethora of evidence points to the importance of family support in language-minority children's development of their home language and additive bilingualism. When it comes to empirical research on familial interaction in home language maintenance and bilingualism, there are two paradigms. While one paradigm

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has primarily relied on parents' self-reports (De Houwer 2007; Duursman et al. 2007), the other paradigm has attempted to uncover what is actually happening in families' conversations with two languages (Kasuya 1998; Pan 1995).

In a self-report study, De Houwer (2007) investigated the home language use of families with parents speaking a non-majority language and children between the ages of 6 and 10 years old. The questionnaire data from 1,899 families in a Dutch-speaking region in Belgium found a strong correlation between parental language input patterns and children's use of the minority language. The patterns where both parents used the minority language with their children and where at most one parent spoke the majority language often led to success in bilingual development. Similar results were found in Spanish-speaking families in the United States. Duursman et al. (2007) found that, for Spanish-speaking English-Language Learners, proficiency in Spanish required support both at home and at school, although English proficiency did not require parental use of English. The authors attributed this finding to the minority status of Spanish in the wider society and concluded that maintenance of their home language depended more on home support than development of English.

The other paradigm on bilingual families has captured actual familial interaction during everyday activities, engaging children with two available codes. Kasuya (1998) examined the naturally-occurring interactions between parents and preschool children in English-Japanese families where one parent's dominant language was English and the other parent's language was Japanese. Pan (1995), on the other hand, studied bilingual families in the U.S. where both parents' dominant language was Mandarin Chinese. Both studies show that despite parental motivation and efforts, the preschool children incorporated English into more of their utterances and were more likely to code-switch in the direction from the home language to English. The children also complied with their parents' code-switches when the switch was in their preferred direction from the home language to English. This all suggests the challenges associated with the maintenance of home languages, and the need for parents' reflection on their language use and teaching strategies in achieving the maintenance of home languages (Kasuya 1998; Pan 1995).

### Family Language Policy

*Family language policy* has been defined as explicit and implicit planning in relation to acquisition of language skills in home settings, in contrast to those espoused by the state or other organizations (King et al. 2008). This perspective, derived from language policy and child language acquisition, has turned attention to areas few studies have

addressed. Research on language policy tends to focus on such global issues as planning and implementation of the status (the functions of language), corpus (the forms of language), and acquisition (the teaching and learning of language) at a societal level (Cooper 1989). While empirical investigations of child language acquisition, on the other hand, have shown a number of micro-analyses of child-caregiver interaction patterns, the approach falls short of offering explanations for the wide variations among individuals and families in achieving (or failing) bilingualism.

Drawing on the intersections of language policy and child language acquisition, family language policy concerns what families actually do with language, based on parents' beliefs about language which in turn are shaped by societal values (King and Fogle 2006). Research from this perspective has addressed two broad questions: (1) what ideologies parents formulate with respect to their children's language development; and (2) how parents implement their ideologies about their children's language development. King and Fogle (2006) conducted interviews to explore what ideologies mainstream American parents have about their children's bilingual development. The families all expressed a desire to achieve Spanish–English bilingualism, although they were aware of the minority status of Spanish in the society and many of them were not Spanish speakers. Their interview discourses suggest that the parents rely on popular parenting books and their personal experiences in making decisions about their children's bilingualism.

### Korean Children in America

Since the passing of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, well-educated professionals have immigrated to the U.S. from South Korea to seek economic advancement or political freedom from the military occupation of their government during the 1970s and 1980s (Lee and Shin 2008). More recently, a growing number of Koreans have moved to the U.S., often driven by an interest in securing their children's education in American schools. While Korean children assimilate into American life, they learn their home language through parental and community support, such as Saturday schools (Kim 2011). Research has shown that these heritage learners often exhibit weak literacy skills and that their production skills lag behind their comprehension skills (Montrul 2010), which might be a direct result of the exclusive focus on acquisition of English. Taking into account the cognitive, personal, and societal benefits of bilingualism (Cho 2000), it is important to better understand the development of home languages among children of immigrants.

To this end, this study looks into the language practices in Korean-American families with young children vis-à-vis

immigrant parents' language ideologies and planning for their American-born children's language development. Drawing upon the literature on family language policy and child language acquisition, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What language ideologies do Korean-immigrant parents formulate with respect to their children's language development?
2. What language strategies do Korean-immigrant parents employ to put their family language policies into practice?

## Method

### Participants

Seven ethnic Korean families in Midwestern America participated in the study. The Korean parents were all born and educated until college in South Korea, and moved to the United States to pursue their graduate studies as international students. The parents were native speakers of Korean who learned English as adolescents as part of formal schooling in Korea. They were competent English speakers, as indicated in that they have worked at jobs and attended classes in the United States requiring exclusive use of English. The parents reported that they used Korean between themselves more than 80 % of the time. The focal children, aged between 5 and 7 years at the time of data collection, were all born in the United States.

A questionnaire was administered to the parents to gather additional information about their children's linguistic and literate environments. None of the parents reported using more English than Korean with the child. All of the children were reported to use English exclusively with their teachers, and only English with playmates. The parents showed great interest in their children's language development, and reported that they read to their children frequently in both Korean and English. The seven children

were reported to hear Korean every day in the home, with occasional exposure to other speakers of Korean, such as their grandparents. The background information of the participants is given in Table 1.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The parents were solicited through personal contacts in Midwestern America. During the initial meeting, the participants—some in pairs, others alone—were asked to sign a consent form and complete a background questionnaire. Some of the meetings took place at their homes, others at their offices or the local Korean church. During the meeting, an informal interview, lasting 15–20 min, was conducted in the medium of Korean on the parents' experiences of raising children, with an emphasis on their children's linguistic development, and the parents' responses were recorded with copious note-taking and translated from Korean to English by the author. After the initial meeting, the audio-recorder was left with the family, and the parents were instructed to audio-record their conversational interactions with their children during a meal time, reading time, and play time, once in each context. The naturally-occurring family conversations ranged from 65 to 105 min in total. Brief follow-up interviews were conducted after the completion of the audio-recording of familiar interaction for clarification, and the audio-recorded data were transcribed and analyzed.

A grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin 1998) was employed in analyzing the two kinds of data, i.e., interviews and familial interaction, for the two research questions. The data at each context were reviewed for meaningful units, such as phrases, sentences, or conversation turns, and grouped and coded into conceptual categories. A nested coding system, "using Korean at home" was developed, followed by general categories, such as Korean parents' belief in using Korean as an identity marker and their challenges with using English. Then the relationship between these general categories for each case was established. Korean-immigrants' use of Korean with

**Table 1** Demographic information of the participants

Focal child	Gender	Age	Birthplace	Father	Mother	Sibling
Yumi Yoo	F	6	The U.S.	College professor	Home maker	None
Jamie Cho	F	7	The U.S.	College professor	Home maker	Two older sisters
Jenny Moon	F	7	The U.S.	Engineer	Home maker	An older sister
So-young Cha	F	6	The U.S.	University staff	Home maker	None
Harry Kim	M	5	The U.S.	Business owner	Home maker	A younger sister
Danny Kwon	M	6	The U.S.	College professor	Home maker	A younger brother
Henry Rhee	M	6	The U.S.	College professor	College prof.	None

All names of participants are pseudonyms

their children is linked to difficulties expressing feelings in English, which results in their perception of the Korean language as an identity marker. The parents' family ties in Korea (coded as "Korea connections") and consideration of returning to Korea for a career opportunity (coded as "return to Korea") amplify the use of Korean in Korean families.

## Findings

### Korean-American Family Language Policy

The first research question concerns the Korean-immigrant parents' ideologies about their children's language development. The interview data suggest that the participating Korean parents all had strong desires to raise their children bilingually in English and Korean. They believed that their children would achieve competence in English without their support, but that they need to provide additional support to achieve their children's development in Korean, which is consistent with the findings on language-minority children's bilingual development (De Houwer 2007; Duursman et al. 2007). The underlying force of these parents' desires might have stemmed from their belief in language as an identity marker. These immigrant parents tend to perceive Korean as a "we" code, and wish to share the code with their children (Gumperz 1981). Mrs. Moon shares her desire to teach the Korean language to her daughters, as follows:

My house is a Korean island in the U.S. territory. We speak Korean all the time and eat Korean food all the time. I tell my daughters to maintain the Korean customs and culture. I don't allow my second daughter to address her elder sister with her first name like American kids do. She was born here and doesn't want to speak Korean at home after starting to go to school. Yet she has to call her sister '*enni*' (kinship term for a big sister) in the house.

Despite her desire, Mrs. Moon admits the challenges associated with enforcing the Korean language with her children, and perceives her house as an insulated space where only the Korean language and customs are allowed in the midst of an American upbringing for her daughters. Another Korean mother, Mrs. Cho, gives more specific reasons for using Korean with her children, the language barrier:

Of course, I speak Korean to my daughters. My husband's English is good and communicates well with our daughters in English. But my English is not that good. As a homemaker, it's hard to improve

English although I have been living in the U.S. for many years. To communicate with me, my daughters have to speak Korean to me. It takes long for them to say something in Korean, but they have to use Korean at home with me.

Mrs. Cho expresses her desire to use Korean with her daughters, derived from her insecurity about English even after residing in the U.S. for a long time. A similar situation was reported by Sohn and Wang (2006). They demonstrated in an interview study that regardless of the length of residency in the U.S., the language barrier was the most significant challenge experienced by Korean-immigrant parents in getting involved in American school activities. They attributed the Korean parents' language barrier to their segregation from the mainstream society by forming their social networks in the Korean community. The language challenges are more pronounced among the mothers than they are among the fathers because it is more common for the mothers to stay home with little opportunities to practice English.

In addition to the parents' language barrier and their perception of language as a cultural identity marker, economic factors come into play in shaping immigrant parents' ideologies about their children's language development. The idea of returning to Korea if they come across better career opportunities back in Korea lingers at the back of some of the participating Korean parents' minds. Within the higher education sector in Korea, there is a strong priority to hire faculty and scientists educated in the U.S. (Lee and Kim 2010). Given that five of the seven families had parents affiliated with a local university, it comes as no surprise that some of the Korean parents were considering the possibility of returning to Korea for better career prospects, as Mrs. Kwon remarked below:

If we go back to Korea for Dad's career, kids (Danny and his younger brother) need to know Korean, both speaking and writing. Grandparents are in Korea. They can't fly a long distance from Korea to America just to see their grandkids. We never know what's ahead of us, so they (Danny and his younger brother) need to speak and write good Korean.

Mrs. Kwon's comment addresses the economic factors, indicating that her family will follow her husband's career opportunities. At the same time, she touches on the familial obligations as a reason for their possible return to Korea. This is consistent with the findings by Lee and Kim (2010) whose interviews with Korean college professors who returned to Korea after completing their education in the U.S. show that economic factors alone couldn't account for their return to Korea, and that many of them, especially the only son or the eldest of the family, felt obligated to return

home to be close to the family. As noted in Mrs. Kwon's remark above, if the family decides to return to Korea for familial obligations, as well as for better economic opportunities, one of the greatest challenges they will encounter is the language issue, i.e., their children's lack of language competence, in Korean society, where antipathy has been experienced by foreign-born Koreans. The cultural and economic factors and familial obligations are at play in formulating and implementing language policies in the Korean-American families.

In view of the intersections of the multiple factors observed in the Korean-American families' language policies, Korean-immigrant parents show long-term language planning for their children's bilingual development. These parents desire to transmit their mother tongue to their children in an attempt to remain connected to their home country, without ruling out the possibility of returning to Korea for familial obligations and economic opportunities. Some Korean parents even had favorable ideas about spending an extended time period in Korea to improve their children's Korean-language skills, as shown in the following excerpt of an interview with Mr. Rhee:

We had a chance to spend a whole summer in Korea last year. Henry was 5 years old. While staying there, we just sent him to a local kindergarten there, so that he could meet and make friends with Korean kids around his age. His Korean was improved a lot during that time period. I don't think he ever learned as much Korean at *Hangul hakkyo* (a supplementary community-based Saturday school) for a few years as he did in one summer. That was the best way of teaching Korean. It was full immersion. We're hoping to do it again one summer.

Mr. Rhee advocates the benefits of spending a summer in Korea, immersing his son in the Korean language, over the option of sending him to a local Saturday school. Lee (2002) noted that Saturday schools are not the most effective model for American-born children because of the lack of Korean-American youths' motivation to learn in a supplementary program. She suggested that the Korean-language program be offered as part of regular schooling to increase their motivation and learning outcomes. Mr. Rhee makes similar observations about the difficulty in achieving high competence in Korean by enrolling his son in a supplementary school. Korean parents, such as Mr. Rhee, are willing to take it one step further: spending an extended period of time in Korea for their children's bilingual development.

#### Korean-American Families' Language Practice

The next research question addresses Korean-American families' language practices to implement their family

language policies. Language policy concerns societal planning and implementation of the status (functions), corpus (forms), and acquisition (teaching and learning) of language (King et al. 2008). Family talk illuminates Korean-immigrant parents' ideologies about what role and functions the Korean language has, or should have, in their family, what forms and styles of the language they wish to transmit to their children, and what language intervention strategies the Korean parents employ for their children's language development. The following shows a Korean-American family's interaction during a meal time:

Kim family talk during a meal time

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 1. Harry   | (Making loud noise in the middle of the dinner time)  |
| 2. Father  | <i>Pap mekul-ttaynun coyonghi hanumkeya</i><br>‘When you eat, (you should) be quiet.’   |
| 3. Mother  | Harry, <i>tamekessni?</i><br>‘Harry, did you finish eating?’  |
| 4. Father  | <i>Pap mekultay ipul pelrimeyn pelrey tuleka</i><br>‘If you open your mouth while eating, a bug gets into your mouth.’  |
| 5. Harry   | Uh, <i>mwerakwu?</i><br>‘What did you say? (in an informal way)’  |
| 6. Father  | Harry, <i>mwerakwuyo. mwerako hasyesseyo hayyatway. ttarahaypwa</i><br>‘What did you say (in a polite way). You should say, “What did you say in a polite way?” Repeat after me.’ |
| 7. Harry   | (No response)   |
| 8. Father  | Harry, you listen. <i>mwerako hasyesseyo</i><br>(enunciates slowly)   |
| 9. Harry   | What did you say?   |
| 10. Father | Uh-uh. <i>mwerako hasyesseyo</i>  |
| 11. Harry  | <i>Mwerako HASYESSEYO</i>   |
| 12. Father | <i>Kuray. calhaysseyo</i><br>‘Alright, good job.’   |

This segment of a longer meal time conversation shows that the Kim family has specific plans for the status and functions of the Korean language as a “we-code” in the home domain. They use the Korean language consistently while interacting with their son, although they have high proficiency in English, judging by their report that they use English exclusively at work as professionals. They enforce to their son the formal register of Korean, which is appropriate and native-like in this parent-child interaction context, as part of their corpus planning in the family language policy. In line 5 above, Harry utters a grammatically correct, but informal sentence, “*Mwerakwu?* (What?)” which is not appropriate when responding to his parents. His father, in line 6, immediately recasts Harry's words in more polite expressions and, further, elicits an alternative form from him. The parent employs an

intervention strategy for the purpose of enforcing appropriate forms of the home language in a given context as part of corpus and acquisition planning (King et al. 2008).

Another interesting observation is that as soon as his father inserts the English expression, “You listen,” in the Korean-based sentence, presumably out of frustration in line 8, Harry swiftly switches back to English. As previous studies (Kasuya 1998; Pan 1995) report, a parental code-switch to English almost always leads to the child’s use of English, which suggests that the parental desire to maintain the home language is hard to achieve unless parents use the home language consistently. The juxtaposition of intervention strategies, such as immediate feedback, and language strategies, including consistent use of Korean and borrowing English expressions when necessary, reflects the Korean-American families’ plans for the status, corpus, and acquisition of language. The following shows another family’s use of language strategies during a reading time:

#### Cha family talk during a reading time

1. Mother (Reading a book in Korean) *Kurem, acwu eypukeyssney. Aniya, acwu koysanghay poil kkeyeyo*  
‘Then, (it) looks very pretty. No, (it) looks very strange.’
2. So-young *Koysangi mweya?*  
‘what does “strange” mean?’
3. Mother *Koysangun maliya. Isanghakey poinunkeya.*  
Strange *hakey poinunkeya*  
‘As for ”koysang,” it means it looks strange.’ ‘it looks strange.’
4. So-young *Way? ‘Why?’*
5. Mother *Elkwuley mak hwacangul hayssunikka koymwlcherem poikeyssi*  
*Koymwlcherum isanghako mwusepkey poinunkeya*  
‘Because (it) put on a lot of makeup on its face, it looks monstrous.’ ‘Because it looks monstrous, it looks strange.’

In the above family talk, the mother reads a book out loud in Korean. During the reading activity, So-young stops her mother and asks the definition of a word, “*koy-sang* (strange).” The mother’s initial response is to define “*koysang*” with a more frequent synonym “*isang*.” Realizing So-young could not understand the synonym either the mother inserts an English equivalent, “strange” in a Korean matrix sentence, leading to intrasentential language mixing. The mother alternates language strategies of explaining the definition of a word with a Korean synonym and integrating an English word into the structure of Korean as part of corpus and acquisition planning. A parent’s borrowing of English expressions in the Korean

sentential structure is found in another family’s interaction during a meal time:

#### Yoo family talk during a meal time

1. Mother *Yumi, wuri hankwuk kanun nal achimey ilccik ile nayatway*  
‘You should get up early when we leave for Korea.’
2. Child *Way? ‘Why?’*
3. Mother *Yekise bus-lul thako Chicago konghangkkaci kayahaketun. kulayse achim ilkobsiey bus-lul thayahay*  
‘We have to take a bus to go to the airport in Chicago. So, we have to take a 7 o’clock bus early in the morning.’
4. Child *Uh-uh, you mean in the morning? Oh my god!*
5. Mother *Hummm. Yumi, yocum nuckey ilenaci. yocum myech sie illenaci? yelsie ilenaci?*  
‘You get up late nowadays. What time do you get up nowadays? Ten o’clock?’
6. Child *Ummm, palsie ‘Eight o’clock (with an incorrect form)’*
7. Mother *Uh, yetelp-sie. Yumi-ka nine forty five-ey art-hare kacanha*  
‘Eight o’clock (with a correct form). Yumi, you have an art class at 9:45.’
8. Child *Uh-huh*
9. Mother *Kurenikka ten-un anici. ‘So, it’s not ten o’clock.’*
10. Child *Kuntey, car thamyen toyenaha? ‘By the way, can we drive?’*
11. Mother *Nwuka cha thako Chicago konghangkkaci teyryeta cwuntakwu?*  
‘(You mean) can someone drive us to the airport in Chicago?’
12. Child *Kurayto toyci. kuremyen,ku saramun kacctaka tto tasi wayatoycanha*  
‘That’s possible. If we do that, that person has to come back after dropping us off at the airport.’
13. Child *Kuntey, bus-lul thamyen, bus-nun wenray wasstakassta haketun. wurika tonul nayko thanun kecanha*  
‘If we take a bus, we just have to pay because the bus usually runs between here and the airport.’
14. Child *Kurayse, bus thamyen doyntey. Tatul murehkey thantey yekisenun*  
‘So, it’s better to take a bus. Many people take the bus here.’
15. Child *Wuri cha thako kayen toyenaha?*  
‘Can we drive our car?’

13. Mother *Kurem konghangey kase chalul ettehke? kyesok konghangey nadwuntakwu?*  
 ‘Then, what shall we do with our car at the airport? Do you mean we should leave our car at the airport?’
14. Child *Ung* ‘Yes.’
15. Mother *Yeki konghangun free-intey, Chicago konghang-un pissa*  
 ‘It’s free to park at the airport in our town, but it’s expensive to park at the airport in Chicago.’
16. Child *Nacwungey olttaynun?*  
 ‘(What are we going to do) when we come back?’
17. Mother *Nacwungey wurika olttaynun appaka teyrire osilkkeya*  
 ‘Dad will pick us up when we come back.’
18. Child *Appa-nun?*  
 ‘(What is) Dad (going to do when he comes back)?’
19. Mother *Appato bus-thako nayryewayaci. animyen rent car thalswuto isskwu*  
*Yumi, wuri hankwukey kamyen halmenichipey encey kakosipe?*  
 ‘Dad will take a bus, too. If not, he’s going to rent a car. Yumi, when do you want to visit grandma when we go to Korea?’
20. Child Hmmmm, (we’re staying in Korea) 7 weeks
21. Mother *Aniya, 7 weeks aniko 5 weeks-ci*  
 ‘No, not 7 weeks, but 5 weeks.’
22. Child Oh yeah. Seven days a week
23. Mother *Ung* ‘Yes.’
24. Child *Kurem, (shall we spend) a half day in grandma’s?*  
 ‘Then’
25. Mother *Kuntey, appa kako namyen wuri halmeni chipey isseyahay*  
 ‘But we have to stay with grandma longer after Dad leaves.’
26. Child Last year when I was *tasess salttay, halmeni cipey manhi casse*  
 ‘Last year when I was 5 years old, we stayed with grandma long.’
27. Mother *Halmenika manhi pokonipesstey. kurayse, kuttay manhi issesse*  
 ‘Grandma missed you so much that we stayed (with her) for a long time.’
28. Child Wow, you were very nice

In this dinner time conversation, Yumi and her mother talk about their upcoming trip to Korea. A pattern emerges in Yumi’s code-switching that contributes to the meaning of constituent messages (Gumperz 1981). While Yumi

sticks to the Korean language when probing about the details of their trip, such as the transportation method between their house and the airport in lines 12, 16 and 18, both Yumi and her mother switch to English in expressing numeric concepts, such as the time of a day in lines 7–9 and the length of a stay in lines 19–24. Although Yumi attempts to use Korean for the time expression in line 6 above, she does so with an ill-formed expression. Her mother immediately intervenes and provides a correct form in English as in line 7. She continues to insert English time expressions into the Korean sentence structures throughout. The meal time talk illuminates that the Korean-American family’s use of language strategies, such as immediate intervention and language-mixing, to implement their language planning of the functions, forms and teaching of the home language.

## Discussion and Conclusions

This study aimed to explore Korean-immigrant parents’ beliefs about their children’s bilingual development through a hybrid lens, family language policy derived from language policy and child language acquisition. Family interaction as a site to support the home language was examined in terms of language intervention and language-mixing strategies, which in turn reflect the Korean-immigrant parents’ planning of functions, forms, and acquisition of language for their children. Korean-immigrant parents’ intention to pass on the Korean language to their American-born children and raise them bilingually is, at least in part, derived from multiple underlying forces: their perception of language as an identity marker, their language barrier in the host country and their possible return to Korea for familial obligations and economic opportunities.

This finding about the Korean-American families diverges from other cases about family language policies. Chinese-Canadian parents reported in Curdt-Christiansen (2009) perceive multilingualism (i.e., proficiency in Chinese, English, and French) in Québec as socio-political capital for social advancement in Canadian society, which implies that Chinese-immigrant parents make efforts and investments to get ahead in the host society with linguistic capital. Mainstream American families’ decisions to bolster English-Spanish bilingualism in King and Fogle (2006) were made, primarily based on the parents’ personal experiences in an attempt to be “good” parents in the modern society. The variation in the underlying force for family language policies can be attributed to the context-specific nature, which is often shaped by societal values and ideologies in and outside of families.

In an effort to put their family language policies into practice, the Korean-American families employ language intervention strategies, such as immediate feedback,

provision of definitions, and language-mixing, as observed in family talk. Previous research (Kasuya 1998; Pan 1995) argued for the exclusive benefits of intervention strategies, such as error correction, over implicit strategies such as code-switching, underscoring the value of consistent parental use of the home language. This study demonstrated that the juxtaposition of language strategies to facilitate meaning comprehension and language development. Language strategies serve as a catalyst for the implementation of family language policies on the levels of status, corpus, and acquisition of language for these Korean-American children's bilingual development.

Despite the merits of the findings, this study has a few caveats. First, the findings of this study warrant some caution in interpreting and applying them to other immigrant populations in other contexts, because this study was conducted with a small number of Korean-American families residing in one geographic location. Although it was not the primary aim of the study to generate generalizable results to other large populations in other contexts, it is worth pointing out the small sample size from a narrow socio-economic stratum as a limitation of the study. Next, the qualitative nature of the data analysis in this study might have limited the scope of the study despite its merits of providing a fine-tuned analysis of familial interactions. It is worthwhile to examine familial interaction shaping or shaped by family language policy by employing a quantitative analysis of interaction and genre features of family talk, ideally from a large number of immigrant families. The triangulation of data sources via a mixed-methods research design might be appropriate for such a complex matter as family language ideologies and practices.

Notwithstanding its limitations, this study has several implications for the theory and practice of bilingual development for language-minority children. Conceptually, the findings of this study on Korean-American families' conversations as a site where family language policies are implemented will contribute to the current effort to bridge the gap between societal language policy and family interaction research paradigms. Further, the findings on Korean-immigrant parents' language policies and practices will contribute to the documentation of family language policies and practices across different ethnic groups in a linguistically diverse society like the United States. Practically, the findings of the study will serve as guidelines for immigrant families and practitioners working closely with children from language-minority homes. While parents and teachers agree on the importance of bilingualism for children's cognitive and emotional development, as well as for national security reasons in this global society, there is still a need for more concrete support informed by empirical research as to effective ways to promote bilingualism. The findings of

this study will provide a context-specific basis for recommendations for parents and teachers who directly influence children from language-minority backgrounds.

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