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**Title:** Korean Early Study Abroad Students:How Do They Narrate Their Personhood as an ESA Student at UIUC?

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**About the Author:** I am a 2nd year Ph D students in East Asian Languages and Cultures. My intellectual interest lies in modern and contemporary Korean Culture with a special focus on cultural identities of Korean women, families, and intellectuals. The pilot research, which I had worked on for this semester, has been meaningful for me because it was not only a small trial to solve my basic curiosity of Korean early study abroad students, but also a related issue, to some extent, to my future research of Korean intellectuals and transnational families.

**Keywords:** International Students, Asian Students, Korean Students, Early Study Abroad Students, Identity, Intra-ethnic Differentiation

**Abstract:** This research will explore the Korean early study abroad students (ESA students: chokiyuhakseng in Korean) in terms of how the pre-college early study abroad experiences in the U.S affect Korean students' decision to end up at UIUC and keep having influences upon their college life. And it will also investigate if ESA experiences have an effect on their identities as a Korean, especially if the experiences generate intra-ethnic differentiation among Korean students, especially among ESA students. I anticipate that this research project will contribute to understanding of what the demographical changes that are brought by increase of Korean ESA students really means to UIUC campus both in individual level of Korean students and in the University level and to get some clues of what the direct outcome of the early study abroad phenomenon in Korea is in broader sense. Looking into the Korean ESA students is not only meaningful for the Korean student community at UIUC , but also for the University as a whole and for many U.S. universities that may face a same phenomenon because all of them are facing a new challenge which is brought by increasing number of Korean ESA students.

**Initial Exercises:**

Reading Response

**Initial Exercises:**

Observation

**Initial Exercises:** Global Campus Message to University Faculty & Staff By B. Joseph White President (January 8, 2007) The word 'global' has always drawn my

**Analysis of a Text** attention in recent years because, especially in my country, the impact of globalization has been so huge that people in Korea are almost obsessed

with the term 'global.' It always gives a groundless assumption that it means something relating to the 'future' and 'progressiveness' in some ways. Here, I found that the term 'global' had the same magnetic power in this campus too. In this president's message, the idea of Global Campus is assumed as an ideal strategy to solve current problems that the University is faced with. However, this assumption or expectation is based on the mythology which is "out of sync with the reality" as Ewell points out in his article. First, President White says, "Global Campus emerged as a need and opportunity from our University-wide strategic planning process." I wonder whose need and opportunity he (or they) exactly assumes. There are many urgent, existing needs that people in this big research university have wanted to be fulfilled. We already know what kind of problems our university has, and most problems that the Boyer Commission on Education Undergraduates points out are shared by our university. Then what makes President White believe that making the U of I "a national leader in online higher education" in the future is a more urgent and important mission than making U of I excellent higher educational institution for all the people in the campus for now and forever? As an answer of why Global Campus, he points out that it is "driven by mission, mastery and money, in that order." He mentioned that U of I's mission and obligation as a land-grant institution is to bring "quality education to large numbers of able and motivated Illinois citizens and others," and online education is "especially important in enabling non-traditional students." I am not saying that this mission statement is totally wrong, but I am confused because it seems like I am now reading the mission of a community college. Who are the large numbers of people who actually pursue their education through U of I? And where is the existence of traditional (especially undergraduate) students reflected on the university plan of "a large-scale innovation"? The students in this campus, now, need 'quality education.' President White points out maybe the future of higher education will be "a rich mix of in-person and online learning." I agree with that. However he goes on to argue that "we must rapidly grow the University of Illinois' mastery of quality online education and increase our capability to offer a large number of such courses at all three campuses. Global Campus is a means of achieving this goal." What is the real goal: Mastery of online education for excellence of education or being a national leader in online education? If the former is the ultimate goal, why should Global Campus be in front? Global Campus will probably be giving more emphasis to teaching than research because of the characteristics of online education. The University needs more teachers for online courses. Although he stresses on the fact that tenure system faculty will have course design and faculty will teach courses—according to him, these are our best means of ensuring quality of online education--, this is our reality that there is already a lack of classes, which is taught by outstanding professors for undergraduates. Who among the professors want to teach online courses? The idea of Global Campus is going toward

the opposite direction of excellence of education and ignores the common challenges that Research University has confronted. Even though President White emphasizes “the Global Campus initiative is driven by mission, mastery and money, in that order,” I cannot help but think the real purpose of this initiative is ‘money’, and the order is reversed. Doesn’t this statement below show the real mission of Global Campus? “[W]ithout a major new source of revenue and surplus, we are unlikely to be able to achieve our strategic priorities and have the brilliant future which we seek. Global Campus is by far our best new financial prospect.” If the real mission of Global Campus is in serving and keeping the excellence of education and its brilliant future by affording money, why does the University have to pursue it in spite of its risks that are already identified--reputation risk, value of degree risk, operational and financial risk? Raising up the reputation is hard, but downfall of it is far easier. As Ewell points it out, “Errors in your mythology are keeping you from solving problems and seizing opportunities.” The idea of Global Campus has many problems in its basic assumption. If U of I offers online education to international students, I wonder which option the international students, especially Korean students, will prefer?

**Initial Exercises:** A Practice Interview: “How did you end up at the U of I?” On Sunday afternoon when I went to the café where I planned to meet my interviewee, she was already there. It looked like she was studying LSAT with a thick book. After brief greetings, I asked her if she was going to law school. She said, “Yes, now I am a senior, so I should definitely go there.” “What’s your major?” I asked. “Literature,” she said. And she told me that her major was not decided by her own determination, and rather it happened to be decided as literature because she took so many literature courses. She added that going to law school was also decided by not her strong determination or grand mission but because of the situation that she was going to graduate soon. I interviewed a Korean student who came to the U.S. with her family when she was a freshman in a high school. She graduated out of a high school in a suburb of Chicago. When I asked her how she ended up at the U of I, she said she had been told about the U of I even in Korea. Her father was an engineer who already knew the Engineering in the U of I was excellent. Some of her relatives (who were mostly in Illinois) in the U.S. also attended or already graduated from the U of I. However, she immediately added this comment: “Frankly speaking, the U of I was not my first choice. I applied for University of Chicago, but I was not accepted. Then the U of I accepted me, so I came here.” I asked her if she was considering any other schools. And she told me that she was not because the U of I was her second choice and she didn’t feel that it was necessary. I asked her why. Her reason was simple: the U of I was close to her parents in Chicago, and it was a good school. She really didn’t think about other schools like the U of Michigan or the U of Wisconsin. The proximity to her family and

parents' recommendation was important to her. I asked her what kind of expectation she had of the U of I and if she was satisfied with her decision to end up at the U of I. She said, "Yes, I am satisfied. Most professors are great, and facilities are good. And it is known as a good school." I asked her if there were disadvantages of attending a big school like learning from TAs or big classes. But she told me that her classes were mostly taught by professors and professors were enthusiastic, and she was wondering if she was lucky. She didn't have any dissatisfaction or trouble with the school and her parents were also satisfied that she was attending at this school. While I was listening to her, I was wondering about where this satisfaction came from. Later, I could find a clue for understanding it as my interview proceeded further. She was grateful that she spent her high school years in the U.S. She compared her life in high school in the U.S. with her sister's high school life in Korea. "Mine was much, much easier than my sister's. I had seen how hard my sister studied till late at night without doing anything enjoyable for most of the time. Even my mom couldn't sleep well to support my sister. The Korean entrance exam, you know, is notorious for how it gives students a hard time. Frankly speaking, high school students in the U.S. do not study hard when I compare them to Korean students. I didn't study as hard as my sister did, but I came here, to a good school." In addition to it, she said she preferred American education that focused on thinking to Korean education that stressed on memorizing. She didn't think Korean education was effective. When the interview reached to the point that I couldn't come up with anymore questions about how she ended up at the U of I, I asked her about how other Korean students whom she knew ended up at the U of I. Interestingly, first, she differentiated her with other Korean students. She identified herself as the 1.5 generation of Korean immigrants, and there were the second-generation-Korean American and Korean students who study abroad. She pointed out that even if they felt good about the University in their inner mind, Korean students who study abroad tended to express their college life negatively complaining of food, homesickness, language problem etc. They mostly chose the U of I because the U of I was known as a good and big school, and especially the School of Engineering was famous in Korea. And she thought that Korean students tended to decide their school by school ranking and fame. She told me that she was not get along with Korean students. I asked her why. She mentioned about the conflict between Korean-students groups. According to her there are some conflicts between the second-generation-Korean American and Korean students who study abroad. They sometimes do name-calling each other. She feels that she does not fit in both sides, but she does not make an effort to fit in. She just thinks that every one is different, and she gets along well with American friends. My interviewee had to leave for other schedule, so my interview was done here. First, I should confess that I made a mistake to select the interviewee. I was told that the interviewee came to the U.S. to study abroad when she was in

high school. However, I found that during the interview, her whole family, in fact, immigrated to the U.S., and it was not exclusively for her education. Thus some of my questions that I prepared for the interview did not fit her situation, so I had to adjust my questions and needed to create new questions. At first, I was a little perplexed, but I could adjust myself to the situation. The pressure that I had to make spontaneous, improvised questions gave me a hard time for a while even though I tried to not show my anxiety to my interviewee. In general, there was a tendency that the respondent made short answers. It was much more difficult than I thought before conducting the interview to lead the interviewee to make answers that I expected. In Weiss article, even though the interviewers didn't talk too much, they could make respondents focus on their issue and continue to talk, so I too was trying to make her to talk. However, I realized that I don't have good interviewing techniques with a little frustration. Furthermore, I couldn't jot down during the interview despite Emerson's recommendation. I brought my recorder for backup, but soon I realized that jotting down only made me more difficult to conduct the interview. Thus I almost gave up jotting down and I relied on the recorder. However, I think the fact that she and I share some experiences and have cultural understanding as Korean helped my interview a lot. I can somewhat established a kind of ideal interviewer-respondent relationship that Weiss mentioned. And when she felt that I knew what she meant, she continued her talk and made longer answers. I am really not satisfied with this interview that I conducted in terms of interviewer's technique, but it shows me several interesting points about Korean students in the U of I.

**Question:** A Revised Question (11/09/07 revised again): The question will focus on how the early-study-abroad (ESA) experiences of Korean students affect their decisions to end up at U of I; how these students evaluate their ending up at the U of I; how students narrate their personhood of the ESA student; how their ESA experiences and their perception of those experiences shape their identities; how they identify themselves or others within Korean student community at the U of I; how ESA experiences keep shaping their college life at the U of I and their expectation of the future.---  
----- (10/29/07): The question will focus on how the early-study-abroad (ESA) experiences of Korean students affect their decisions to end up at U of I; how students narrate their personhood of the ESA student; how their ESA experiences and their perception of those experience shape their identities, their college life at the U of I, and their expectation of the future.----- An Initial Question: I am still a little bit struggling to decide my project topic and to develop the hypothesis. However, I tentatively focus on how the early-study-abroad experiences of Korean students affect their decisions to end up at U of I and shape their expectation and life at the U of I. The Korean students' community at the U of I has rapidly grown, and especially it is true to the great extent that the recent growing number of Korean students, who have

been early-study abroad (Cho-ki-yoo-hak-seng), has contributed to this fast growing. Through the initial practice and interview, I notice that among the Korean students, there were different routes ending up to the U of I, and they also perceive each other differently when they took different routes. In general they identify themselves as three groups: the second generation of Korean American, The students who came after graduating a high school in Korea, and early-study-abroad students. I will particularly focus on the early-study-abroad students. It is because I assume that most of these students have been pushed into the U.S. education system roughly by both the impact of “globalization” and the Korean entrance-exam hell. Whether it has been done voluntarily or by their parents’ will, they had to run a risk of the separation from their family when they were still young—usually in their middle school or high school, or sometimes in elementary school ages. To these Korean students, in a sense, getting into a ‘good university,’ which guarantees not only a good education but also a good reputation that compensate all of their personal, familial, and financial sacrifices that has been caused by early-study-abroad, is their most direct and practical goal. Then I have a curiosity about how these students evaluate their ending up at the U of I. Is their existence in the U of I campus a successful achievement or a failure to them? Does U of I means a ‘good school’ to them that compensate their imaginable hardships that were concomitant with early-study-abroad, and are they satisfying with the education at the U of I? If then, what make the U of I be attractive to these students? Who made a decision? How about their parents? Do they satisfy their children’s ending up at the U of I? Do they believe the U of I afford the high quality education that make their children be global citizens with competitiveness? How do these students envision their future? How do their experiences of early-study-abroad shape their college life and their ideas of the future?

**Plan:** A Revised Plan (11/09/07 revised again): To conduct my pilot project, I plan to interview some Korean undergraduate students who have an experience of early-study-abroad. I think my methods will mostly rely on the interviews. After conducting a few interviews I found that these EAS students differentiate themselves with other ESA students or Korean study-abroad students. Because they came to the U.S. at their early ages, it seems that those students are experiencing an identity crisis, feeling or realizing that they are not same with either Korean American, or just same as study-abroad students. To evaluate the validity of their differentiation and to clarify if there is a difference according to the fact when they came to the U.S., I will conduct more interviews with other EAS students and also research literatures about inter-ethnic differentiation and Korean/Asian American identity. Meanwhile I will look up some surveys and sources to get some information that shows some particular features and the relationship between the growing numbers of EAS students in general and the numbers of EAS students who are actually at the U of I.

And I will also use some recent scholarly works and resources about 'early-study-abroad' phenomenon in Korea as references.-----  
----- (10/29/07): To conduct my pilot project, I plan to interview some Korean undergraduate students who have an experience of early-study-abroad. I think my methods will mostly rely on the interviews. Coincidentally, in my two interviews, my both interviewees have a common feature that they have a father who is a professor in Korea. After conducting interviews I found that these EAS students differentiate themselves with other ESA students. Since it is my pilot project for my future research that is relating to Korean intellectuals whose children are EAS students, if it is possible, I will try to select my future interviewees among students who have a professor father in Korea. I will also look up some surveys and sources to get some information that shows some particular features and the relationship between the growing numbers of EAS students in general and the numbers of EAS students who are actually at the U of I. And I will also use some recent scholarly works and resources about 'early-study-abroad' phenomenon in Korea as references.----- To conduct my project, I plan to interview some Korean undergraduate students who have an experience of early-study-abroad, and they will be a freshman, a senior (or junior), and a female student if possible. I also explore if there are some changes or differences between a freshman's and senior's thoughts and experiences of the U of I. There also are some recent scholarly works about 'early-study-abroad' phenomenon in Korea and lots of literature of globalization effects. I will use those works as references to understand early-study-abroad students' experiences and expectations.

**Data:** As I mentioned it in my question and plan, my research focuses on how the early-study-abroad experiences of Korean students affect their decisions to end up at the U of I and shape their expectation and life at the U of I. I interviewed a Korean early-study-abroad student (cho-ki-yoo-hak-seng) in a café at 10:00 pm. Because the interviewee, whom I initially contacted to and planned to interview with, suddenly cancelled his interview, when I got the reply through email from another student that he was willing to be my interviewee, I immediately made an appointment with him even at 10:00pm when he was available. The café where he wanted to meet me was noisier than I thought, so I was a little bit worried that the recording quality would be bad. As soon as we greeted each other and I introduced myself to him, my interviewee (I will call him Michael) asked me again, if he was the right person that I was looking for the interview. Then he introduced himself to me. Michael was, in fact, born in New York City while his father studied in the U.S. His family went back to Seoul, Korea, when he was 5 years old because his father finished his study. He grew up and went to school there until around his second year of middle school in Korea (8th grade in the U.S.). Then he came to the U.S alone and got into a boarding school in Pennsylvania. His parents are living

permanently in Korea, so he has basically been living his life by himself in the U.S. Now he is a junior in LAS. Then, I assured him that he was the right person, that is, an early-study-abroad student that I was looking for. As soon as he said, "I decided to come back to the States for middle school," I realized it would be the first question I asked him. (Actually, in my plan, it was not the first question). "You said, YOU decided to come to the U.S. Is it true? Did you decide it or did your parents decide it?" "I decided it." "Then, what made you decide to come to the U. S. when you were young?" "Um, I am a kind of... kind of pretty much self-motivated person. I wanted to come to the U.S. And because I have a U.S. citizenship, it was relatively easy for me to come." "Do you have any siblings?" (It was not a quite related question, but I felt I should ask this with my intuition.) "I have an older brother." "Then, why did you come to the U.S. alone? Did your brother not want to come to the U.S.?" "My brother is not a U.S. citizen. He was born in Korea. There are a lot of practical and also financial differences between being a citizen and a foreigner. Like I said, um... I can work here if I want, but he cannot. In addition, my brother's personality is different from me. I am very out going, active, sociable and adjust well, but he is different from me. He is somewhat timid and retiring." According to what he said, there might be two suitable conditions for being an early-study-abroad student, either having a U.S. citizenship or an active personality/self-motivation, and it seems that he fulfilled these conditions. However, they might not be only conditions or reasons for it. I again tried to delve into his motivation to come to the U.S. "You said you decided that you were going to the U.S. to study. Why did you want to come to the U.S.? Was it because you liked the U.S. or were there any other reasons?" "It seemed like small things just worked out together." "For example?" "At first...first of all, it was because I didn't like Korea, not because I especially liked the U.S. Then, I thought I could do it because I had an American background. Um... as the small things...well...I kept watching American sitcoms and shows in Korea, and they were enjoyable than those, which were made in Korea. I just kept thinking it would be easy for me." "You said you didn't like Korea. Specifically, which aspects of Korea did you dislike?" "I must correct my words...uh, I hated the Korean education system, rather than I didn't like Korea. For instance, Korean kids cannot play sports. In my school in the U.S., I had to play some sports that I like at least 3 hours everyday. Although I was not enthusiastic about sports, I enjoyed playing soccer or tennis. But there are no choices at all in Korea. After school, kids have to go to private institutes right away or get tutoring and come back home at midnight. They sleep just for a few hours and have to go to school early... and they have the same routine everyday. And there were corporal punishment in schools... I just hated that kind of life." "Did you have a same routine like the students that you said? You were still in 2nd year of middle school though." "In fact, I, myself, asked my parents to send me to a private institute. Rather, my parents basically thought that it was not

necessary. They are somewhat different from other Korean parents in terms of education...they are more flexible. I think my parents were influenced by American education because they had lived in the U.S. Anyway, I hated the feeling that I was left out because all my friends went to private institutes. So I asked my parents to send me there too. But I didn't like all those things. I think, you know, I think if I had lived only in Korea without the experience of living in the U.S., I might not strongly feel that way." It seemed that in addition to his dissatisfaction of the Korean education system, in his case, his exposure of life in the U.S. affected his decision of early-study-abroad to a great extent. He also said that he adopted himself to new environment of the U.S. boarding school, and he enjoyed the fact that he was away from Korean education although it was sometimes hard for him to feel that he was falling apart from his family. At this point, I tried to move onto the subject of how his early-study-abroad experiences affected his decisions to end up at the U of I. "Then, how did you end up at the U of I?" "Actually, I applied for almost ten schools. My GPA was very good, but frankly speaking my SAT score was not enough for the Ivy League. Thus I decided to come to the U of I when I got an admission. My parents were a little disappointed. You know, for Koreans, the school rankings and fame are very important. It was OK for my dad even though he graduated from an Ivy League school...um...because he knew more about U.S. colleges, but my mom was certainly disappointed. However, for me, I am satisfied with the U of I. I am 110% satisfied with it even now. "You again said that YOU decided to come to the U of I. How much did your parents influence your decision?" "It was my decision. I made a decision. I am pretty much independent. My boarding school was small. It meant that there were always kinds of invisible restrictions. For example, most classes were small, like a class with 7 or 8 students, you know, there was no anonymity, and you couldn't do anything peculiar. I wanted to go to a big school, a big good school. "What does "a big, good school" mean to you? And are you really satisfied with the U of I?" "Yes, you know, the U of I is a good school. This is funny though, you know what, most Koreans (in Korea) tend to think a good school should be a big school. The U of I is big enough and as I said to you, I wanted to go to a big school. The Engineering program of the U of I is especially good, and the U of I has a good reputation in general. I also considered engineering or business as a major, but I eventually chose to get into LAS. And...I...it's always that way...you wish you could do it better...like after you finish your test, you automatically wish you had done better.... However, everything is up to you even if you ended up at the U of I, not at one of the Ivy League schools. Which school you are getting into does not really matter. So I am satisfied with the fact that I am here. And if I was in Korea, there would not be many choices. "So, do you think your ending up at the U of I compensate your experience of early-study-abroad that made you live by yourself? "Yeah, I think so. In Korea, they make kids study a lot, but there are few chances. It seems that the gate is opened for just

very few people. In the U.S., there are many options. Even though you graduate from a small college in countryside, you can still get a good job. I like the U.S. because of this reason. Now in Korea, even if you already served in the military and graduated from a good school like Seoul National University, it is difficult to get a job. So my parents don't mind if I am not going back to Korea forever, rather they urge me stay here because they see how my brother is having a hard time in there. I have a roommate who is majoring in engineering, and he is a senior now. He studies hard so he can get a good job, and he is even staying up all night. I think that I may be like him next year. When you are a freshman or a sophomore, you know, you don't think about the future very often. I have been very happy and satisfied with ending up at the U of I, the quality of education is good, and my college life has been fun. Looking at my roommate, who is majoring in engineering that has an excellent reputation but is still worried about getting a job, I start thinking, if I cannot get a job, would I think it's because I ended up at the U of I? But, my conclusion is that it is up to me not because of the school's name. I expect the best out of it." It looks Michael's satisfaction of the U of I does not only come from the U of I itself, rather, to a great extent, it comes from his personality and it is enhanced by his realization that U.S. education and life styles gives people various chances, options, and freedom than Korea . "Wow, it seems like you have a lot of confidence. Did the experiences of early-study-abroad make you like that? Are there any aspects of your early experiences that make it harder for you? How is your college life at the U of I? "Frankly speaking, building relationship with Korean students in school is the most difficult one, and I easily make friends with Americans though." "Really? How come?" "In high school, it was even harder than now. There are some groups in Korean student community, and among them, getting along with early-study-abroad students (cho-ki-yoo-hak-seng-dul) is the most difficult for me. They are always in groups and don't step out from their group. You know what, I don't regard the students who cannot speak English well because they only get along with Koreans as a cho-ki-yoo-hak-seng although they came to U.S. when they were young. Those students cannot speak well in English even in a college. They are just study-abroad students (yoo-hak-seng-dul). I know it sounds like that I am arrogant. But I think the ones who have a similar approach with me are the real cho-ki-yoo-hak-seng-dul. "It is a very unique and interesting perspective." "Yeah, I know it makes me look like a bad, arrogant guy. "No, why do you think so?" "I'm sure they think I am a bad guy because I usually get along with not-Koreans. But, I cannot understand why they come to the U.S. if they can take advantage of being here. What's the purpose of early-study-abroad? Why do they always make a group with only Koreans? They only get along with Koreans because it is comfortable and they have gotten used to it from middle and high schools. "Do you see yourself as an international student or not?" "Now, I don't see I am an international student. For me, I changed my perspective as soon as I

came to the U.S. Once I came here, my desire to live here as an American has become stronger.” Michael said that after he graduated the U of I, he would get a job in U.S. or he might get a job in Japan. He said he became interested in living in Japan after he visited there. It was interesting to see the way that Michael defined cho-ki-yoo-hak-seng and claimed his authenticity of cho-ki-yoo-hak-seng. We might consider the fact that he has an U.S. citizenship, but I think it still gives us some implications of the purpose of cho-ki-yoo-hak we might have to think about. He has his own very unique notion of cho-ki-yoo-hak, and I wonder if there are many another ‘Michaels’ among Korean cho-ki-yoo-hak-seng-duel. In general, it seems that his experiences of early-study-abroad help him to make his college life at the U of I as a meaningful one with self-confidence. Michael was an interviewee with openness. He said the interview was helpful for him too because he felt as if he confessed his secrete and also had a moment of reflection. He reminds me of Bourdieu’s words that certain respondents seem to grasp the situation “as an exceptional opportunity offered to them to testify, to make themselves heard” (615).

**Data:** **Project Interview #2:** I interviewed another Korean early-study-abroad student (cho-ki-yoo-hak-seng) because not only was it difficult to find U of I archives but I also thought even the U of I archives that I found were too remote to my project. However, it was also hard to find another interviewee. My interviewee (I will call him Josh) is a freshman who is majoring in Literature in the LAS. According to him, he came to the U.S. in his first year of middle school in Korea (7th grade in the U.S.). Josh thought that the early-study-abroad (hereafter ESA) was not initially planned by his family. When Josh’s father, who is a professor in Korea, had his sabbatical year, he decided to come to the U.S. as a visiting scholar at the U of I with his whole family. However, when the sabbatical year of Josh’s father ended, his father decided to go back to Korea alone leaving his family in Champaign. That is the history of how he became an early-study-abroad student. **“Then, it was not you who decided ESA, right? Were you not involved in the decision at all?”** “Um, frankly I cannot remember what exactly happened at that time, it sounds stupid though...I was young and I was just excited about living in the U.S., and ... actually, at first, when my dad left the U.S. alone, I didn’t exactly know that if I would be an ESA student or would leave after one or two years although I wanted to stay in the U.S. In fact, for the first year it didn’t matter for me to stay in the U.S. or not, but later, the more time I spent here, the more I really wanted to stay in the U.S. However, if I had to stay in the U.S. without my family, it would have been a different story. Actually I didn’t think so much about me being an ESA student, and it might be because I lived with my family, with mom and my brother, although my dad was not here.” In his case, it seemed that the main decision of ESA was made by his parents, that he had a vague idea that he might keep

**The Archive**

staying and studying in the U.S., and that he liked the life in the U.S.

**“How did you end up at the U of I?”** “I have lived in Champaign, and the University is my dad’s Alma Mater too. My father got his Ph D degree at the U of I long time ago. I wanted to stay with my family. I often visited campus, so I somewhat got used to the U of I. I like the diversity of the U of I, and I really like this community because people are open and I feel comfortable with this community.

**“So was it your decision to get into the U of I?”** “Yes. Of course I was thinking about other schools too, and I actually visited some of them. However, um ... frankly speaking, I was annoyed by the application process, so when I got an early admission from the U of I, I was glad. It was the first admission that I got, and I didn’t want to keep applying for other schools anymore, so I quit the all the application processes that I was working on...yea, I know, I was a little lazy, ha ha ha ... I like the U of I, and I also felt it would be fun to go to the U of I. I could get into it with the major that I wanted to study and the department of my major has a very good program and reputation too. I know that for Koreans, the school ranking is important, so it might be true that I actually felt some pressure for a while. But I got to know that there were many choices and options according to my own interest. And I thought the school name brand should not be the most influential factor to my decision. I think the school that provides what I need is the good school for me. I think the U of I is the right school for me so far because I just spent two months here, and I am satisfied with my decision.”

**“Do you think that the experiences of ESA actually affect your college decision?”** “Yes, I have lived here and I went to middle and high school here. I am happy that my way of thinking has been changed.

**“What does it mean that your way of thinking was changed?”** “For example, if I was in Korea, I could never have had the experience of living and communicating with people in other countries and contacting with other cultures. In the U.S., in the school, students communicate with teachers in a casual manner. In the classroom, we freely discuss about lots of things. You know what, at first I was annoyed by the students who were outspoken. I cannot understand why I was so annoyed at that time. Maybe it was because I was not used to the culture of discussion and I also had been saturated with the culture that students just listened to and wrote down something that a teacher spoke in the class in Korea. Now I like discussions a lot and enjoy the participation. Above all, the most important thing is that students can share their thoughts and opinions with others. And...and even though in some sense, getting into a good college is the most important thing for an ESA student, it was not until my junior year that I really thought seriously about colleges. The other time, I was enjoying my school and social life with my friends. I liked to meet people who had different cultures and backgrounds. I think it expanded my perspective too. Um ... I like going-to-school itself.”

**“How did your parents react to your decision to end up at the U of I?”** “My parents ..., well ... honestly speaking, I guess my parents wanted me to go to a

better school than the U of I. Korean people in general and my relatives know only the famous schools like Harvard or Yale. Since my father is a professor and I study abroad, if I got into one of those schools, it would be, maybe, helpful for my parents' reputation. But my parents were actually very supportive of my decision. They are more flexible than other Korean parents, and I thank them. Sometimes I feel sorry for my parents, especially for my dad because he is apart from us." **"What was challenging to you as an ESA student?"** "There were some obstacles that I experienced. Sometimes I got hurt emotionally, but now I think it was just a process that I should pass through, and I feel those hard experiences are almost compensated now. It became my memories. At first, the communication with American students was the most challenging one because I was so afraid of making mistakes, but I soon overcame it and I got used to the school life in the U.S. But later, the relationship with other Korean students who came here mostly later than me was challenging. For example, they, especially boys, talked about me behind my back because I made a lot of friends and I also associated well with girls. I actively participated in many activities too. Was it jealousy? I don't know. I couldn't understand why they criticized me. If you are in the U.S., why don't you make friends with American students? What's the point of being in the U.S.? Why should I only hangout with Koreans? It was often more difficult when I had to identify myself with other Korean students, even now." **"Why is it difficult even though you are a Korean?"** "I don't know why exactly, it doesn't mean that I am Americanized...I don't know...but I felt that the way of thinking of Koreans, the way they act, and their attitude did not fit me well and I felt uncomfortable with them." "For example, about what? Could you give me some details?" "Sometimes it was related to the religion. Most of them were Christian but they tended to not be open to other cultures and races. Korean students have a tendency to criticize other students who are not Korean a lot in various ways because American students are different from them. They cannot accept other cultures. I didn't know why they were here. Is college admission their only purpose to be here? And I couldn't understand Korean study-abroad- students who didn't look like they had a dream. It seems that they even don't know what they want to do in the college although they are study-abroad-students and they have studied very hard for getting into the college in the U.S. Sometimes I even feel that they are somewhat lazy." **"You mean the Korean study-abroad-students in U of I?"** "Yes, in the college, in the classroom, I strongly feel like that. In high school, Korean students don't build social relationships with the U.S. students and it looks like what they do and what they care about is only studying and going to colleges. But then, in college, it seems that they have no idea what they want to do for their future." **"How does the experience of early-study-abroad shape your college life? Is it helpful?"** "I think it prepared me for college. It is not just that I learned English and took U.S. courses before. I could understand the U.S. educational system and their way of

education. I know how to discuss with professors and other students in the classroom. And through the experiences of extracurricular activities in high school, I have learned how I can manage my study and my interest and hobbies at the same time. I also learned how I can build relationships with people and understand different people. The experience helped me to not just prepare for college, but also prepare for my future.” **“Then how are you preparing for your future at the U of I?”** “Huh, it has been just two months since I started my college life...but um ...well, I want to be really well-rounded...I am a literature major, and I think I will probably pursue it as my career, but I have a lot of interests and especially wanna be culturally well-rounded. I want to learn as much as I can. Sometimes I feel dumb and really blind in some of my classes like ‘the Literature of Global Culture’ because I realized that I’ve been really ignorant about social and world issues. I want to be one of the people who at least know certain things and have their own opinions and come up with the solutions together. I want to be a part of big discussions. I think that college is the place that we prepare ourselves, contribute our ideas, and try to make this world better. Well, ... I don’t know... I am sure about my major, but at the same time I am still not completely sure about my major, so...I don’t know what’s gonna happen in the future. I just know about what I am gonna do tomorrow or in the next week. But I have confidence.” **“Are you satisfied with the fact that you ended up at the U of I?”** “Yes, definitely. I believe so. I am already learning a lot not only in the classroom, but also outside of the classroom. I think this is a special school and there are lots of opportunities here and I am glad to be a part of it. However, for graduate school, I want to go somewhere else. Of course I like the U of I, but for graduate school, I want to try a different school and I also want to study abroad in England.” **“Are your parents also satisfied with the U of I?”** “Yes ... I think ... ha ha ha ...if I went to a better school, so-called a well-known and illustrious school, they might feel happier... **“Isn’t the U of I a well-known school too?”** “But there are famous schools that Koreans think are the best, Harvard, Yale, ...but in fact I’d rather go to Oxford for graduate school if I can afford it and I am good enough. I will try to go there. I am studying hard.” **“Then, are there any negative influences from the experience of ESA?”** “No, I don’t think so ... but ... I feel I am in... kind of an identity crisis as a Korean, it is not consistent, but sometimes at random moments I am confused where I fit in. It does not mean that I feel lonesome when I am with Americans, but rather I am confused with where I fit in among Koreans. I was especially confused when I visited Korea during the summer vacation. And I wonder whether I exist...or should exist as a citizen or as a Korean in the U.S.” **“In which moments do you feel like that?”** “Um, it’s when I am in the classroom with other Korean students. I don’t know they are ESA students or just FOB (fresh off the board) but I usually think they are mostly FOB. It is weird though, I don’t feel like I am one of them at all, and sometimes I even feel that I don’t want to be one of them. It’s like self-degrading and I

don't think it's healthy, but I feel that I am not one of them and I don't want to be one of them. I don't want to identify me with them who have the culture and attitude that I don't like. They ruin my pride as a Korean and the pride of my Korean culture. **“What causes those feelings? Could you say that more concretely?”** “I don't like to criticize others though... I don't like their attitude, and their way of living in college as a college student. In the classroom, they show the lack of etiquette and the respect to the professor. It looks like they don't care about the class even though they choose and take the course. When I happen to hear their conversation, they always talk about how the professor is boring; how other student's style is unmatched; how much they drank last night etc....they almost always talk about stupid things. I rarely hear about the academic life or positive things. It makes me disappointed. I don't fit in with them.” **“Then, are you going back Korea when you finish your education?”** “Actually, I have hoped that I could be a professor in Korea. But it changed after I visited Korea last summer. I am not sure if I want to live there. I felt that Korean society lacks the humanity. It is developed and they focus on the education. However, I couldn't feel humanity. It is sad though, I have only 3, 4 Korean friends. It is depressing that there are lots of Koreans in campus but I have little Korean friends.” Josh didn't feel like that he was an ESA student. He said he didn't know why, but he was very comfortable in his high school as if he had lived in the U.S. all the time. It was so natural, so he just felt that he was a student, not an ESA student. He differentiate FOB students from ESA students and also felt that he was not similar to other ESA students. He said, “We are tagged as a same brand of ESA students, but we are all different and have a different story. It's hard to generalize the ESA students. And I don't know how other ESA students think about themselves as an ESA student.” Josh said that he wondered if he was in Korea he would be the same person that he is now. He thought that he still depends on his parents and is not fully independent, but if he was in Korea he might be even more dependent and couldn't grow much as a person even if he was a hard working student. He values his ESA experience as meaningful one. I found some similarities and differences between Josh and Michael who I interviewed before as an ESA student. I also found that their ESA experiences are quite relevant to their college decision and their college life. Especially, Josh shows well how the ESA experience shape his college life. Both students' fathers also have similarities: they are professors in Korea (I didn't mention that Michael's father was a professor though); they got their degrees in the U.S.; the students feel that their parents have more flexible attitude of them and their education than other Korean parents. It seems that these facts are actually major contributing factors that make them be ESA students. Two students have some differences: Michael is a U.S. citizen but Josh is not; Contrast to Michael who voluntarily decided to come to the U.S. alone, Josh's ESA was not decided by him and he stated with his family. They also have a little

different personality, and Michael somewhat looks like more out-going, decisive, and independent than Josh. Nevertheless, both of them look like pretty self-motivated students. And I think it is also very important factor/quality for being an ESA student. On the one hand, they evaluated their ESA experiences as successive one and their college life positively, but on the other hand, they both criticized other ESA students who didn't step out from limited boundary of Korean student community. They are satisfied with their decision to end up the U of I, and they are respectively trying to make their college life successful and meaningful. They felt that the ESA experiences contribute not only to their college life, but also to their future. However, it seems that they also confront with identity crisis and feel that they don't fit in Korean student community. Moreover they felt somewhat guilt about it.

**Data:** # Archives: I visited the Student Life and Culture Archival Program to try to find some archives that I could make a connection with my project. Last time, I actually too soon gave up finding archives and instead conducted another interview because I thought those U of I archives in SLCAP were too remote to my project that dealt with very recent phenomenon of Korean Students. This time too, I could not find the one I hoped, but instead I closely examined an envelope of the document of 'Korean Students Association (1955-77)' [Series No. 41/2/41, Box No. 15]. Among them I felt that one document was interesting. The document was created in 1955, and I was not sure though, it seemed that it was a document for first Korean Students Association. This document was created by Korean student Jai Keun Oh who seemed that a president of the Korean Student Association at Dec. 1. 1955. The document was the student's petition for requesting for the KSA to be authorized and officially approved as a student's organization at the U of I. And another document showed that this petition was approved in Feb. 23. 1956. In this petition form, they stated their mission like this: This organization was set up in order to foster greater fellowship, and develop leadership and group initiative among the Korean students as well as the students from other lands and to establish and provide facilities for the advancement of the group socially and scholastically. And this association was started with just 12 Korean students. It made me wonder if these Korean students, probably students who studied abroad, also experienced identity crisis that my interviewees showed and if there was differentiation by the extent of acculturation between students within the group. Now Korean Students have several different organizations in the campus. First, there is KASA (Korean American Students Association) was renamed on April 1995 from KUSA (Korean Undergrad Students Association, founded Dec. 1979). They said "Our members have hyphenated identities and proudly claim their American identity as well as their Korean roots" [Asiantation: Asian Pacific New Student Orientation Records, 1995. Series No. 41/64/45, Box No.1]. There still is KSA (Korean Students Association) that is consisted

**Data Continued**

of Korean Students who study abroad (usually FOB or graduate students). I looked up their website, but there was no specific mission statement. Unlike KASA that “explore the depth of [their] hyphenated identity together,” KSA looks like the group more focused on ‘fellowship’ among Korean study-abroad students who are somewhat remote from identity crisis in spite of experiencing cultural shock. Recently, KCC (Korean Cultural Center) was added as another registered organization at UIUC on Jan. 2006. KCC’s mission statement in their website is like this: The goal of KCC is to raise awareness and appreciation of Korean culture and functions as a place to foster multiculturalism and inter-cultural exchanges in the United States. The center actively seeks to strengthen Korean identity of Koreans and ethnic Korean in globe. I think the appearance of KCC reflects the reality that the population of Korean students has rapidly increased, that the composition of Korean student community has been complex, and that there are new demands from Korean student community. And it seems that in the core of new demands, there are early-study-abroad students who experience identity crisis while they are caught between Korean American (Twinkies) and study-abroad students (FOB). ----- ## I also visited the website <http://www.dmi.uiuc.edu/stuenr/> and read the statistics of ‘Foreign Students at UIUC by Country’ to find how much Korean student enrolment has increased and if it is somewhat related to the increase of early-study-abroad students. According to U of I statistics, number of Korean undergraduate students (KUS) is 627 in 2007. It is surprising to know that the number of KUS in 1997 was only 65 and it was 67 in 1999. There are no statistics of 2000-2002. Then the number abruptly increased to 235 in 2003, and has rapidly increased: 374 in 2004, 507 in 2005, 579 in 2006, and 627 in 2007. When we consider that an ESA student needs certain time-period to be a college student, it seems that this tendency of increase parallels with the recent statistics that shows the rapid increase of Korean early-study-abroad students. According to the statistics of the Korea Educational Development Institute, almost 30,000 pre-college students left the country from 2006 to 2007 for study abroad. It was an almost 45% increase over the same time the previous year. The number of students (1,839 in 1999) leaped to 4,379 in 2000; 7,994 in 2001; 10,498 in 2003; 29,511 in 2006. Furthermore, statistics shows the even faster growth in the number of elementary students who study abroad. ([http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news\\_newissue\\_detail.htm?No=89](http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news_newissue_detail.htm?No=89)). As the number of Korean ESA students has rapidly increased and they tend to leave Korea at a younger age, it seems that the issues of ESA students’ identity crisis and inter-ethnic differentiation will become more serious and this also bring more challenges to the Korean students community at UIUC.

**Data:** My video tries to highlight the changing reality of Korean Student community that is especially brought by the increase of Korean

**Video/Plan** undergraduate students and ESA students' intra-ethnic differentiation in this new environment. I will use Quad Day as a background of this video. \*Revealing reality: the increase of Korean undergraduate students Scene 1 Opening shot with music (15-20 sec.)--Montage of images showing young Korean undergraduate students presence at U of I: For example, students who walk through Quad, students in front of Foellinger Auditorium, students in library, students gathering in front of FLB, students in Korean restaurant, students in Union café, students in a classroom, especially the class that many Korean students are taking, Korean Proficiency Test that is filled with Korean study abroad students, and Koran church service for students, etc. (Music stop) Scene 2 the screen with the scripts: #1. How many are there Korean study abroad UNDERGRADUATE students at the UIUC campus? #2. The number is 663 in 2007. #3. The number was only 65 in 1997. Scene 3 Quad Day clips (around 30 sec.): Cut to the Clips of the Quad day scene that especially shows Korean student circles' activities that seek to new members among freshmen. (Focusing on their invitation and new students' reactions). Observe for a while which actions are made by Korean students and which language they use. \*Interview Scene 4 Zooming out to the distance view of Quad. Panning camera and zooming up to my interviewee: My interviewee is a Korean early study abroad student. He just passed by Quad Day activities and is about to walk through Quad. I am with him but not appeared through camera because I held it, Camera shows what he sees right now, and then he stops at one point of Quad where people are not many. Camera takes middle shot of my interviewee, and the interview starts. Possible Interview questions (Without my appearance, only my voice is heard): - Which grade are you in? And when did you come to the U.S. for study abroad? - What do you think when you see so many Korean students at the campus, especially after passing through Quad day events like this? Do you feel more comfortable because there are many Korean students in the campus? - Have you ever registered to some of the Korean organizations? -Why/Why not? - How is your relationship to Korean students? (Do you have many Korean friends who associate with in the campus?) - How about the relationship with other ESA students? - How was your relationship with other ESA students when you were in a high school? - Which language do you use when you talk with ESA students? - Does the relationship with Korean students somewhat affect your college life? - If it does, how?

**Discuss:** I have worked on the Korean early study abroad students (hereafter ESA students: chokiyuhakseng in Korean) at the UIUC as my pilot research. I started with the hypothesis that pre-college ESA experiences probably affect their decision to end up at the U of I and keep having influences upon them as they shape their college life, and at the same time I tried to find certain characteristics emerging through those processes. This is my findings, and I think that looking into the Korean ESA students is not only

meaningful for the Korean student community, but also for the University as a whole because both of them are facing a new challenge which is brought by increasing number of Korean ESA students.----- It was amazing for me to notice that young undergraduate Korean students have been apparently more visible at UIUC campus these days as I can see them wherever I go. For a long time, graduate students have been a majority of Korean study abroad student community, and undergraduate students have been relatively a very small part of it. However, this tendency has been challenged by rapidly increasing number of Korean undergraduate study abroad students (yuhakseng) in recent years and was finally broken this year (2007) according to the statistics of foreign students at UIUC (<http://www.dmi.uiuc.edu/stuenr/>). The number of undergraduate students (663) exceeded the number of graduate students (627), and it is surprising to know that the number of Korean undergraduate students in 1997 was only 65. Interestingly, it seems that the majority of these undergraduate students is early study abroad students who came to the U.S. when they were in secondary school. When we consider that an ESA student needs certain time-period to be a college student, it is not astounding that this tendency of increase of undergraduate student parallels with the Korean statistics that shows the rapid increase of early-study-abroad students in Korea ([http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news\\_newissue\\_detail.htm?No=89](http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news_newissue_detail.htm?No=89)). In a sense, we are now looking at the outcome of the phenomenon of Korean early study abroad in our campus, and I think it is the time to start a close examination of it and it is also necessary not only for the Korean community at UIUC but also for many U.S. universities that may face a same phenomenon.----- For methods of this pilot research, along with some bibliographic and archival works, I mainly relied on interviews that I conducted with some Korean ESA students. Conducting the interviews, I felt that 'interview' was a powerful research method for my project although I was not a very skilled interviewer. Like Bourdieu's words, my interviewees seem to grasp the situation "as an exceptional opportunity offered to them to testify, to make themselves heard" (615), and they, throughout the interview, expressed their inner thoughts as an ESA student that might be often restrained in their everyday life.----- Through my research, I found some meaningful similarities or common characteristics of the personhood of ESA students. First of all, I found that their pre-college ESA experiences were quite relevant to their college decision and their college life. My interviewees made their own choices to end up at the U of I, and the decisions were out of their own need that was based on their pre-college experiences in U.S. respectively, rather than the ranking and fame of a school or merely their test scores. They also regarded their ending up at the U of I as a successful outcome of their ESA experiences even though the U of I was not their ultimate first choice from the beginning of the applying process and their parents tended to expect them to end up at better schools. The students evaluated

the U of I as a 'good school' that had a good reputation and high quality education, and they were also all satisfied.. Yet, their satisfaction of the U of I does not just come from the U of I itself, rather, to a great extent, it also comes from their realization that they could spent their secondary school years without going through the Korean entrance exam hell, but they still ended up at a good school and that U.S. education and life style gives them more chances, options, and freedom than Korea. Moreover, whether they voluntarily decided to come to the U.S. alone or their parents decided the early study abroad for them at the beginning, it seems that the main factors that sustained their pre-college ESA life and made their ESA experiences successful are certain individual characteristics: self-motivation, self-confidence, and responsibility. It looks like that these characteristics mainly come from their personality that makes ESA possible from the starting point, but at the same time these characteristics were also very much enhanced by their ESA experiences, and especially, their satisfaction with their ending up at the U of I brings them even more confidence. Apparently, these characteristics are still working in and shaping their college life. The students felt that the ESA experiences broadened their perspectives and not only prepared them for college but also were contributing to their college life in many ways and would contribute to their future.----- However, the effects of their experiences of ESA are not always positive. It appears that all my interviewees somewhat confront with identity crisis. They felt that they didn't fit in the Korean student community and they were a little confused by and even felt somewhat guilty about their uncomfortable feeling of the Korean student community. As one EUI research of ESA students already showed intra-ethnic differentiation in Korean student community (Kang), my interviewees also differentiated themselves from other Korean students. Yet, contrast to ESA students in Kang's research, who tended to differentiate themselves from especially the 2nd generation Korean students and feel they are more Korean, and also seek for "comfort zones" making an ESA student group in a Korean church although they were not totally immersed in the membership of the group, my interviewees complained about the difficulty of getting along with Korean ESA students and criticizing other ESA students who didn't step out from limited boundary of Korean student community. This tendency continues from secondary school to their college life. And my interviewees didn't mention the relationship with 2nd generation Korean American students at all. Interestingly, one of my interviewee even asserted that he didn't regard the students who could not speak English well because they have only gotten along with Koreans as an ESA student although they came to the U.S.----- Here, I found an intriguing point. It seems that ESA students extent of acculturation to the U.S. society including language acquirement affects their perception, attitude, or judgment of other Korean students. It looks like that the students like my interviewees who came to the U.S. during their middle school ages might be relatively easily

acculturated to the U.S. and had a better language skill than students who came to the U.S. during high school ages. Especially when commanding English is one of main purposes of ESA and a powerful source of pride, it is not too difficult to understand from where my interviewees' pride comes. It seems that my interviewees are proud of their smooth transition to the U.S society and culture. And it makes them feel more like Americans and keep distance with other Korean ESA students who likes to get along with Koreans and speak in Korean. Then they justify their not associating with Korean with the words "Everyone is different." An interviewee said, "We are tagged as a same brand of ESA students, but we are all different and have a different story. It's hard to generalize the ESA students."----- And I also found that there is a similarity in terms of identity between the ESA students whom I interviewed and that of the 1.5 generation Korean student of immigrant family whom I also interviewed. They all came to the U.S. when they were young and tried hard to fit into U.S. society, and as a result their identities are caught in the middle, somewhere between the 2nd generation Korean American (Twinkies) and the Korean study-abroad students (FOB). They feel that they do not fit in both sides, but they do not make an effort to fit in and keep distance with them.----- Since I conducted very few interviews, it is difficult to hastily generalize my findings on the personhood of ESA student that my interviewees showed to the whole ESA student community. Yet, the findings is telling us somewhat how the early study abroad experiences affect and shape the ESA students and their lives while it is giving some hints of outcome of EAS phenomenon. It seems that for some student, if not many, ESA experiences are quite relevant to their college decision and still help them to make their college life at the U of I as a meaningful and positive one with self-confidence like my interviewees. However, because of their coming to the U.S. at their early ages, it seems that most of these students are experiencing a sort of identity crisis, feeling or realizing that they are not same with either Korean American, or just study-abroad students.----- As the number of Korean ESA students has rapidly increased and the composition of Korean student community has been complex, there will be new demands from Korean student community. And as these students tend to leave Korea more and more at a younger age, it seems that the issues of ESA students' identity crisis and intra-ethnic differentiation will become more serious than before and this also bring more challenges not only to the Korean students community but also to UIUC. The effort is necessary to understand what the demographical change really means to UIUC campus and need to seek practical supports for changing Korean student community.----- References cited: Kang, Yu Kyung, Early Korean Study Abroad Students (chokiyuhakseng), in the Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship, <http://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/handle/2142/1788> (accessed October 14, 2007). Pierre Bourdieu et al. "Understanding" in Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society (Stanford University

Press), 1993.607-623.

**Research Proposal:** Statement of Research Problem: It was amazing for me to notice that young undergraduate Korean students have become apparently more visible at UIUC campus these days since I can see them and also hear them in Korean wherever I go. The University statistics also reveal the demographical changes that Korean students brought at UIUC. For a long time, graduate students have been a majority of Korean study abroad student community, and undergraduate students have been relatively a very small part of it. However, this tendency has been challenged by rapidly increasing number of Korean undergraduate study abroad students (yuhakseng) in recent years (DMI). The number of undergraduate students (663) finally exceeded the number of graduate students (627) in 2007, and it is surprising to know that the number of Korean undergraduate students in 1997 was only 65. Interestingly, it seems that the majority of these undergraduate students are early study abroad students who came to the U.S. when they were in secondary or elementary school. When we consider that an ESA student needs certain time-period to be a college student, it is not astounding that this tendency of increase of Korean undergraduate student at UIUC campus parallels with the Korean statistics that shows the rapid increase of early-study-abroad students in Korea, especially from the year of 2000 (KBS World). In a sense, we are now directly looking at the outcome of the Korean early study abroad phenomenon in our campus, and moreover it may bring more changes at UIUC in the future. Thus I think that it is the time to start a close examination of early study abroad students at UIUC and it is also necessary not only for the Korean community at UIUC and the University as a whole but also for many U.S. universities that may face a same phenomenon now or sooner or later. Through my pilot research that I conducted at UIUC in the fall 2007, I found that for some Korean ESA students, pre-college ESA experiences were quite relevant to their college decision ending up at UIUC and their college life. At the same time it seemed that they were somewhat struggling with identity crisis. However, the findings of my pilot research are only based on a very few interviews, so it is difficult to generalize it to the whole Korean ESA students at UIUC. Therefore, it is necessary to research on it with more interviewees in depth considering the significance of the demographical changes that Korean students brought at UIUC. Moreover, there is another reason for me to conduct this research. Contrast to a previous EUI research of ESA students that showed ESA students tended to differentiate themselves from especially the 2nd generation Korean students, to feel they are more Korean, and also to seek for "comfort zones" making an ESA student group in a Korean church at UIUC campus (Kang), my interviewees rather complained about the difficulty of getting along with Korean ESA students and criticizing and differentiating other ESA students who didn't step out from limited boundary of Korean student community. And this tendency

seems to continue from secondary school to their college life. The discrepancy between these two findings of ESA students also gives a reason why I should conduct further research on this subject although they all somewhat show the intra-ethnic differentiation of Korean ESA students. ----- Statement of Proposed Research: In the proposed research, I will explore how Korean students' pre-college early study abroad experiences in the U.S affect their decision to end up at the U of I and keep having influences upon their college life. And I will also investigate if ESA experiences have an effect on their identities as a Korean, especially if ESA experiences generate intra-ethnic differentiation among Korean students, in particular among ESA students. Based on the pilot data, in this research, I especially want to delve into the question of the intra-ethnic differentiation of Korean ESA students: What kinds of the pre-college ESA experiences have affected their intra-ethnic differentiation. Are there any differences between the students who came to the U.S. in their middle school ages (or younger ages) and the students who came in their high school ages in terms of the intra-ethnic differentiation? How does ESA students' extent of acculturation to the U.S. society and culture including language acquirement affect their perception, attitude, or judgment of other Korean students? How does their intra-ethnic differentiation affect and shape their identities and their college life at the UIUC? Through the research, I will find out if there are meaningful common characteristics of the personhood of Korean ESA students at the U of I, which have been emerging through the ESA experiences, and how they narrate their personhood at the U of I. -----

---- Methodology: The methods of my research project will combine both bibliographic and archival works and interviews. I will research literatures about inter-ethnic differentiation and Korean/Asian American identity as references and as a tool developing my analytical framework for this research. However, as a prime fieldwork method, I will mainly rely on interviews (around 20) that I will conduct for a semester. I acknowledge that the random sampling of interviewees among ESA students may cause the problem that "the part may not represent the whole as we would like to think it does" (Becker 67). Nevertheless, having conducted some interviews for my pilot research before, I felt that 'interview' could be a powerful method for my research. Like Bourdieu's words, some interviewees seem to grasp the situation "as an exceptional opportunity offered to them to testify, to make themselves heard" (615), and I expect that my research subjects shall, throughout the interview, express their inner thoughts as an ESA students that might be often restrained in their everyday life. The identity a person chooses to reveal comes out in stories he or she tells about him/herself (Strauss 2005). In addition, the fact that the students and I share some Korean educational experiences and have cultural understanding as Koreans helped my pilot interviews a lot. I could somewhat establish a kind of ideal interviewer-respondent relationship that Weiss mentioned (Weiss). And when they felt that I knew what they

meant, my interviewees continued their talk comfortably and provided genuine answers. Moreover, because it is not a prepared public speech, interviewees often do not realize that their ideas sometimes conflict when they are interviewed. Through the interviews, I will explore how the pre-college ESA experiences in the U.S affect ESA students' decision to end up at the U of I and keep influencing their college life. And it will also investigate how ESA experiences affect their identities as a Korean and generated intra-racial differentiation. ----- Significance: As the number of Korean ESA students has rapidly increased and the composition of Korean student community has been complex, there will be new demands from Korean student community. And as these students tend to leave Korea more and more at younger ages, it seems that the issues of ESA students' identity crisis and intra-ethnic differentiation will become more serious than before and this will also bring more challenges not only to the Korean student community but also to UIUC. I anticipate that the proposed study will contribute to understanding of what the demographical change that is brought by Korean ESA students really means to UIUC campus both in individual level of Korean students and in the University level and also to getting some clues of what the direct outcome of the early study abroad phenomenon in Korea is in a broader sense. Looking into the Korean ESA students is not only meaningful for the Korean student community at UIUC , but also for the University as a whole and for many U.S. universities that may face a same phenomenon because all of them are facing a new challenge which is brought by increasing number of Korean ESA students. ----- References Cited: Becker, Howard S. *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1998. Bourdieu, Pierre. "Understanding" In Pierre Bourdieu et al. ed. *Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993. 607-623. Kang, Yu Kyung. Early Korean Study Abroad Students (chokiyuhakseng), in the Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship, <http://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/handle/2142/1788> (accessed October 14, 2007). KBS World. "Early-Stage Study Abroad," 8 October 2007. In [http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news\\_newissue\\_detail.htm?No=89](http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news_newissue_detail.htm?No=89) (Accessed 19 October 2007). The Division of Management Information. *Foreign Students at UIUC by Country (Fall Term 2007)*. <http://www.dmi.uiuc.edu/stuenr/> Strauss, Claudia. "Analyzing Discourse for Cultural Complexity." In Naomi Quinn ed., *Finding Culture in Talk: A Collection of Methods*. New York: MacMillan. 2005. 203-242. Weiss, Robert S. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press. 1994.

**EUI Links:** #7 EUI Link: I found four EUI projects that have connections with my project directly and indirectly in IDEALS. Among them I found Yu Kyung Kang's project has the closest connection to my project in terms of the

topic and method. Contrast to my research that will focus on how the early-study-abroad experiences of Korean students affect their decisions to end up at the U of I and shape their expectation and life at the U of I, her project more focuses on psychological aspect of Korean students' self-identification. However, I think I can use her and the other three projects that I found as references for planning my project. 1. Kang, Yu Kyung, Early Korean Study Abroad Students (chokiyuhakseng), in the Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship, <http://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/handle/2142/1788> (accessed October 14, 2007). Kang's project that focuses on the early-study-abroad students (chokiyuhakseng) attending the Korean Church of Champaign-Urbana shares some interesting points that I found out through my two interviews –initial and project interviews of Korean chokiyuhakseng of U of I. That is, they define themselves by differentiating themselves from two other groups of Korean student community: the 2nd generation Korean American and study abroad students (yuhakseng). By reading Kang's project I could have more detailed information of three different groups and how they define themselves and each other. Furthermore even within chokiyuhakseng they feel they are different from others judging their style and language proficiency. But my huntch is that these differences are originated from their different experiences of early study abraod and they shape their college life and their future too. \* More Links: 2. Lee, Jane, Korean American College Application Process, in the Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship, <http://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/handle/2142/1789> (accessed October 14, 2007). Lee's project raises interesting questions about how Korean immigrant parents' language proficiency affects their involvement in their children's college application process. It gives me an idea that the early-study-abroad students and parents also can share the same experiences of immigrant families because they do not share the same language, culture or past experiences, and furthermore they even got long-distance communication between students and parents. I become to think more about to which degree parents in Korea can give influences on the application process and the college decision making of the early-study-abroad students. 3. Whitley, Anona, Korean American Aesthetics and Style, in the Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship, <http://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/handle/2142/1791> (accessed October 15, 2007). Whitley makes an inquiry of how Korean students (apparently "homogeneous" ethnic group) identify themselves through the style. In her interview with a Korean student, the student also distinguishes from different groups inside Korean student community with style. This tendency that Korean students identify different groups with their style was also appeared in Kang's interview. 4. ANTH 499/AAS 450\_07-01, Korean American Online Consumption of Korean Pop Culture, in the Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship, <http://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/bitstream/2142/1787> (accessed October 15,

2007). It deals with Korean American identity relating to online consumption of Korean pop culture. It is not directly related to my project, however, their feeling and attitude to Korean pop culture also give an insight to see the identity-struggles of Korean American student community at U of I.

**Reflect:** This has been a very meaningful class for me because I really conducted a research with practical 'fieldwork methods,' and I got trained. However, I was not enjoying the use of Moodle so much. It was helpful that I could review all my works on one Moodle page and kept tracing my research process with other students' works and comments, but there were always technical problems. When I uploaded my works to Moodle, I always had a problem with formatting: for example, there was no paragraph distinction and I could not select the types of fonts. I struggled to figure it out several times, but later I gave up, and my works looked like a cluster of letters all the time. And I don't understand why it does not copy my documents with an original format. It needs some improvements to make more user friendly environment.

**Recommendations:** 1) As the number of Korean ESA students has rapidly increased and the composition of Korean student community has been complex, there will be new demands from Korean student community. And as these students tend to leave Korea more and more at a younger age, it seems that the issues of ESA students' identity crisis and intra-ethnic differentiation will become more serious than before and this also bring more challenges not only to the Korean students community but also to UIUC. The effort is necessary to understand what the demographical change really means to UIUC campus and need to seek practical supports for changing Korean student community. 2) Korean students, who take a large proportion of international student population, especially value the good reputation of the UIUC and expect excellent, quality education. The idea of global campus to be "a national leader in online higher education" is not an effective, sufficient, and compelling strategy for recruiting international students like Koreans, especially ESA students who are seeking for global competitiveness than convenience at any risk.