FRAGILE CIVILITY: AN EVANGELICAL AMERICAN SCHOOL MEETS KOREAN EDUCATIONAL SOJOURNERS IN NEOLIBERAL TIME

BY

HYE-YOUNG PARK

DISSERTATION

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Violet Harris, Chair, Dissertation Director
Professor Nancy Abelmann, Dissertation Director
Associate Professor Yoon Kyung Pak
Professor Arlette Willis
Abstract

This study is situated in the burgeoning body of scholarship on South Korea’s “Early Study Abroad” (ESA) movement and English hegemony and bilingual education, and in the larger narrative of global educational migration, especially the integration of international students into U.S. schools. It examines the conflicts that emerged when a noncompetitive evangelical Midwestern Christian high school, predominantly white lower-middle class, enrolled escalating numbers of Early Study Abroad (ESA) Korean teenagers. It focuses on the importance of language, in particular the emergence of English as today’s *lingua franca*, in terms of integration as opposed to assimilation.

The school implemented polices regarding the use of English–Only at school and guardianship of those students who were unaccompanied by parents. During three years of ethnographic interviews and observations of fourteen upper-middle class 10th-12th grade Korean students (nine male and five female), their parents, and school personnel, both at the school and outside of the school (in the U.S. and in Korea), I asked how those policies came into being and how various groups of students, teachers, administrators, and parents viewed them, and why they had these views. I observed what the effects of the policies actually were, in practice.

Examination of these policies provided a window into uncomfortable, underlying, and unstated incompatibilities among the educational and social goals and expectations of the Korean students, their parents, and the school’s staff and leadership. A veneer of civility hid from the various parties – students, parents, and school staff – their diverging goals and viewpoints. Their reactions were further convoluted with linguistic, religious, racial/ethnic issues, as well as class, citizenship, and identity. The fraught experiences that resulted suggested that neither the Korean
ESA families nor the school staff were prepared for the conflict that resulted from linguistic, racial, and class differences.

Using constant-comparative cross case analysis in an iterative manner, I looked for themes within and across the individuals and the groups and formulated analysis codes. The discourses surrounding the issues reflected the values and goals and power relationships of the various parties concerned. These discourses each had a history that needed to be examined. Therefore, I paid particular attention to how power relations around the policies were structured, constructed, and rationalized in the daily practice of schooling. I relate these observations to how such mechanisms of power were utilized, complicated, and transferred by the anonymous workings of global hegemonic domination. Further, I explore how the Korean students’ cross-border educational experiences contributed to their evolving senses of self, to their constitution of their subjectivity.

Major findings are: (1) Mismatched goals, motivations, and expectations existed between the Koreans and the school. The Koreans were seeking to acquire human capital via English competence, eventual credentialing from American higher educational institutions, and the acquisition of the tools of world citizenship; the school sought to develop individuals with strong Christian values in a climate of multicultural tolerance of diversity. Both visions seemed to be integrationist, but in practice led to conflict: The Korean students found the school conservative and academically mediocre, and felt treated as a “foreign” minority; the school found the Koreans excessively concerned with grades, clannish, and unethical (perceived to be cheating, lying, and showing lack of respect). (2). Instead of recognizing and acknowledging the underlying mismatch of goals, however, the school attributed its problems with the Korean students to their lack of guardianship and of sufficient commitment to Christianity. The Koreans,
in turn, attributed their problems at the school to its academic mediocrity, conservativeness, and lack of teaching skills. (3). Despite its acceptance by Korean parents and school officials and even to a large extent by the students themselves, the English-Only policy neither facilitated Korean students’ English learning nor enhanced the school’s unity. It operated primarily as a policing mechanism that unconsciously highlighted suspicions and prejudices on all sides. While the school considered language neutral yet a critical medium for the transmission of Christian benevolence for students and their parents, *English-only* spoke to a racialized and Christian-inflected American hegemony. The school’s desire to integrate a diverse population was undercut by their policy of English-Only. The English-Only policy neither served pedagogically nor did it serve for integration. (4). The school considered living with a guardian or just one parent (typically the mother) an unsatisfactory living arrangement that violated their religious principles and led to parental neglect and lack of discipline. The Koreans accepted family separation as a sacrifice they needed to make to help their children achieve international mobility and future economic success. (5) Racism on all sides played roles that were not recognized by the parties involved. The Korean students brought with them U.S. racial ideology favoring white values, learned at home through past U.S. influence in Korea; the school’s English-Only policy unconsciously reinforced those racist tendencies. (6) Individual Korean children learned to become foreigners at the school in different ways; responses to the school’s policies, survival strategies, and choices of ethnic/racial/national identification varied considerably. While the majority adopted a rebellious stance by joining largely homogenous Korean social groups, some adopted an “honor white” attitude. But from a global economic perspective, choices related to strategic identity—such as choice of nationality, language mastery, and future location—were somewhat uniform among the Korean students. They chose what they believed will be beneficial
in becoming entrepreneurs of themselves, and their choice was the self of enterprise, a neoliberal \textit{homo economicus} as a personal and familiar investment strategy.
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I dedicate this dissertation Mr. Williams and Mrs. Karen Jassim for your undying sympathy and love. Foremost I dedicate this work to our creator.

God hath not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through;
God hath not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

But God hath promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.

Annie Johnson Flint (1866-1932)
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Chapter One

Introduction

I am sitting at a local cafe, sipping a coffee and looking through a window at a sign across the street that reads “Education for Busy Adults.” What does it mean to educate? How do we educate? After having just reread the introduction of my dissertation, the sign makes me recall the day I first left Korea. It brings up the memory of my first day in the United States and encourages me to reflect on what I have experienced, why I am here, and why I am doing this particular study. My dissertation mirrors the history of my present (Denzin, 1989a, 1999), I am bringing my emotional, physical, and psychological embodiment as a lens to the research: my “past me,” “present me,” and, more than anything else, my own struggles and conflicts.

Overview

When I learned that Joshua, an American Midwestern Christian high school, had expelled several South Korean students,\(^1\) I was immediately curious. Knowing well the intensity of the educational competition young people face in Korea and the language barrier that many of these ESL students confront abroad,\(^2\) I could well imagine the challenges facing Korean youth at an American school. Further, I was curious about what happens in an American school when Korean nationals become a significant fraction of the student body. I wondered particularly about the interactions among religion, language, race, citizenship, and identity. Thus began my

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\(^1\) Hereafter, “South Korea(n)” will be replaced with “Korea(n)” except when the “South” wording is necessary.

\(^2\) As of 2008, I had a Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) certificate through Sook-Myung Women's Univ., Graduate School Of Education, Seoul & Univ. of Maryland, Baltimore County, Joint Program, and I finished the required course work for Certificate in the Second Language Acquisition & Teacher Education (SLATE) Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
three-year-long ethnographic study of Korean “Early Study Abroad” (ESA) students at the school in question.

A few months after I started my observations at Joshua, I began to realize that all of the constituents at the school were caught between competing expectations and ideologies. The differing educational goals and expectations of Korean students, their parents, and the Christian school officials made for daily struggles and challenges at the school: an uncomfortable fit for many of the South Korean students, as well as an uncomfortable fit for the school.

Joshua’s fundamental Christian ideology had been challenged by lack of applicants, which had led it to begin to admit students who showed little interest in transforming their lives through the power of the gospel, including an African American and Korean international population. It was also about that time Joshua was beginning to recognize that the school needed to diversify to meet its Christian goal, “Christianity to all.” These factors underlay the situation I found when I began my fieldwork at Joshua.

Specially, Joshua’s growing Korean population—often playfully referred to as “Asian Invasion” among students of all races—disrupted the school’s routine ways of thinking, resulting in more complexity and conflict about its own status and its underlying motives and beliefs. Although the school personnel considered the Korean students as “Christian souls” who had brought diversity to their school, they began to fear the Korean identity as encroaching on their school culture, especially its Christian ethical base.

While some school officials blamed Korean students for causing the conflicts within the school, there already existed a feeling of the divide between reality and life inside Joshua among

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3Early Study Abroad is defined as the practice of sending pre-college-aged children abroad for education. To be considered a “study abroad” student by South Korea (Regulations for Overseas Education, 1988, article 2.1), a child must come to the U.S. officially for the purpose of study and must stay for at least six months.

4Hereafter, “the school officials and teachers” will be replaced with “the school” except when the “officials and teachers” wording is necessary.
American students. This fundamental conflict, which used to be latent, had begun to rise up between school officials and Korean international students, between American students and Korean international students, and, even among the American students as the Korean population grew.

In this dissertation, I recount this cross cultural encounter — what was happening at Joshua, the conflict and its tensions — caused by the introduction of South Korean youth into this school with a focus on the narratives and observations of fourteen 10th-12th grade Korean students and their parents, as well as those of school personnel and American students. To this end, I introduce the following: South Korean educational culture and Korean students’ response to that culture, the American educational response to Korean educational migration, Korean students’ response to American education, and how Korean students were becoming made subjects in two different systems in an era of global neoliberalism. Most broadly, I focus on power relations among all parties concerned. By exploring how relations of power at the school are structured, constructed, and rationalized, my project examines how such mechanisms of power have been and continued to be utilized, complicated, and transferred by broader forms of anonymous workings of global hegemonic domination (Foucault, 1980). The project also examines how the power relations, in turn, can affect Korean students’ evolving senses of self, constitution of their subjectivity (Foucault, 1982).

Through a three-year ethnographic study of the children, the school, and the countries that were involved and the religious, political, economic, social, cultural, linguistic, and educational confrontations that occurred, I attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How do the competing educational and cultural expectations of these students, their parents, and Christian school personnel work out in the daily practice of schooling?
2. How do Korean youth negotiate school cultures and their emergent bicultural subjectivities?

To this end, I aim to maximize understanding of the complexity of the problem at Joshua to facilitate value debates for policy development and practices, especially regarding issues of language, culture, race/ethnicity, nationality, and identity in a global educational context. I adopted a qualitative ethnographic methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; F. Erikson, 1984) that emphasizes routine and problematic moments and events by capturing the nuances of episodes and meanings in the lives of the Korean students and those around them, and the interaction among them in natural settings on a day-to-day basis. I also aim to honor multiple viewpoints (Chase, 2005) through empathetic understanding while assisting readers in recognizing the researcher's subjectivity. Consequently, I explore the synergies and resistance that diversity engendered at the school.

I hope to contribute to a burgeoning body of scholarship on South Korea’s “Early Study Abroad” (ESA) movement and the recent scholarly attention to the integration of international students in U.S. schools by providing some insight into the following: differing expectations in relations among parents, Korean students, and the school; English language hegemony; challenges (issues) in teaching and integrating multicultural students; changes in policies and pedagogies to address those challenges; meanings of developing cross-national and cosmopolitan identities; and implications of research methodology. Examined, also, are implications of global educational migration as a part of a larger narrative of integration of international students into formerly local, regional, and national schools, and, above all, how this migration may affect the fundamental purposes of the education offered in those schools.
Motivation

My desire to learn more about Korean students at Joshua stemmed in part from my own frustration, confusion, and worries as a former teacher and private tutor in South Korea; a mother in South Korea; a student in American higher education; and a mother of a generation 1.5 Korean bilingual teenager, Adam, in the United States.

In Korea, I was a member of the middle class who had a modicum of cultural capital in my community. But eventually I was very disappointed with Korean education and expectations and daily practices of Korean mothers for their children. I began to realize that something was seriously wrong with Korean education, and that I was not only a victim, but also a practitioner, of the very grade-obsessed Korean educational culture. As a private tutor serving rich communities, I was also very critical of the fact that some Korean mothers did whatever it took for their children to achieve high grades. I observed, as a teacher and tutor that they were often jealous and selfish, and undertook unethical competitive tactics. Yet I profited from their desires and ambitions for their children. Complicit in perpetuating the grade obsession in Korea, I decided to participate in U.S. educational systems as a graduate student seeking answers to what I perceived to be critical problems in Korea’s educational system.

In retrospect, it is interesting that I never considered any country other than the U.S. for my graduate study; I had developed an indefinable affinity with America. I had learned to think of having fluent English and an American degree as a means to success. Getting an American degree, speaking standard American English, and having mainstream American friends would

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5 The "1.5-generation" (Ilchomose) refers to Koreans who immigrated to the U.S. as children. Unlike their first-generation parents and second-generation children born in the U.S., 1.5ers have been socialized in both Korean and American cultures and express cultural values and beliefs of each (Danico, M., 2004). I took my son with me to the U.S. neither for ESA nor for immigrant purposes, but simply due to my responsibility as a mother.

6 While there is no single dialect that corresponds to a standard because the standard is defined by a certain social group, I will use the term “Standard American English” which is “a composite of the real spoken language of this
be something I could show off. America was my rich, beautiful white friend who would also help me fix the Korean educational system. This idea came to me so naturally that I did not even question how I developed it.

I also went through struggles as a mother of a teenager boy, Adam, who came to the U.S. with me at the age of five in May 2000. The tensions between us as we negotiated the cultural processes that we both experienced as Korean nationals in the U.S. were the impetus of an on-going study, beginning in 2004, of the cross-cultural and linguistic experiences of my son as he moved between the U.S. and Korea. That study would later lead me to an ethnographic study of Joshua, the subject indeed of this dissertation.

Adam was struggling to negotiate his Korean-American cultural identity. His difficulty with having mixed Korean and American cultural identities was reflected in the isolation he felt in America as well as in Korea. He felt excluded when peers bullied him for his ethnicity in the U.S.; and on visits back to Korea, his non-fluent Korean language singled him out as different from other Koreans. These experiences with my son resulted in the case study (H. Park, 2009a, 2009b).

My dissertation project thus builds upon and expands my previous work. When I began my observations at Joshua high school in fall 2008, Adam was thirteen and had entered a local public high school. This also inspired my interest in Korean ESA students at Joshua. I thus had two windows into a larger educational issue through which I could observe the phenomena of Korean ESA educational experiences in the U.S.

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group [influential with high social status], generally professionals and others in [U.S. educated middle class (Wolfram, et al., 1999, pp. 16-17).]
Conceptual Framework

In his book titled *Being and Time (Sein und Zeit in German)*, Martin Heidegger (1962) argues that we cannot exist without connecting to the world in which we are located. The mode of human being means “[human]being-in-the world” (Dasein in German). Our being in the world also cannot be separated from time—the “historicality” and “temporality” of “being-in-the world.” *Being and Time*, these two are not separable from one another; human beings exist, experience the world in which they are, and interpret the world, which has its own history through the temporality of Dasein. In other words, one’s being in the world and experiencing the world in time together constitute one’s existential and experiential knowing (ontological epistemology). Heidegger’s philosophy has become a framework for hermeneutic phenomenological methodology.

Following Heideggerian tradition, van Manen (1990) maintains “phenomenological research, unlike any other kind of research, makes a distinction between appearance and essence, between the things of our experience and that which grounds the things of our experience” (p. 32). Phenomenological research thus brings our reflection on our natural attitude of things, people around us, and ourselves, as well as on the nature of our natural attitude of them: what is it that constitutes the nature of our lived experiences, our knowing, and our experiential knowing? It has been helpful to consider the following four existential themes, which have guided my research process: “lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationally or communality)” (p. 101).

In relation to my research, this implies that different cultures may see things differently according to the way things are grounded and different individuals may see things differently according to the way each individual experiences the things within the individual’s culture.
According to anthropologist Clifford Geertz, cultures have been characterized as sets of “control mechanisms—plans, recipes, rules, instructions, what computer engineers call programs for the governing of behavior” (Geertz 1973, p. 44). These programs are internalized through our experiences in cultures.

Influenced by Heidegger’s concepts of being and time, as a being in two different, often conflicting cultural worlds, I bring my own individual bicultural experiences in East and West as a lens to the research sites. I use myself as a research tool, my existential and experiential knowing. My critical thought has developed from such influential thinkers as, but not limited to, Edward Said, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jacques Derrida, Martin Heidegger, Max Weber, Michel Foucault, Noam Chomsky, Norman Denzin, and their successors.

Living and studying in Korea and the U.S. have shaped how I view the world; my research is filtered through that lens. While we need to avoid bias to the best of our ability, I am fully aware that some degree of bias is inevitable. As Agar (1980) argues, “The problem is not whether the ethnographer is biased; the problem is what kinds of biases exist—how do they enter into ethnographic work and how can their operation be documented” (p. 42). I bring my own bias, which has been shaped by my personal and professional struggles. I well acknowledge that my dual cultural bias also limits my interpretation. For compensation, I have attempted to adopt a critical method to my thought, i.e., on-going problematization of my interpretation, by asking what led to each interpretation and by inviting the comments of others who have cultural backgrounds different from mine.

I also value emotion as much as logic. Antonio Damasio, neuropsychologist, in his books entitled Descartes’ Error (1994) and The Feeling of What Happens (2000), argues that the body is the genesis of thought, which is a physiological function. Logic stems from emotion whereas
emotion is only a reflection of our bodily senses. Reasoning has its origin in our bodily senses through feelings and emotions that are an indispensable ingredient of human logic. Additionally, anytime we interact with a person, place, object or situation, we are in a constant state of change and re-organization. Our bodies are never exactly the same biochemically and/or structurally, moment to moment.

Using my own power struggles as a prism, I present a portrait of this cross-cultural encounter that had considerable tension but still maintained a veneer of civility. Around the veneer of civility, my research demonstrates the importance of focusing on particular day-to-day power relations between the students, parents, and the school. As the proportion of Korean students increased, the civility was perhaps most profoundly challenged when, in the fall 2007, Joshua announced its English-Only\textsuperscript{7} policy. Although the veneer of civility continued without any overt ensuing rebellion, I nonetheless consider it an outward civility that was maintained because both parties—albeit for different reasons and perceptions on what it means to support the policy—were to some extent invested in having this experiment work.

It was this English-Only policy that most caught my attention when I began my observations at the school. From the outset of my research crucial questions arose: What does it mean to be Korean without being able to turn to the Korean language to mediate social relations among Koreans? In particular, what happens when one Korean student encounters another in an American high school that requires all students to speak only English on the school premises? When speaking English, do Korean ESA students learn to code-switch these language-related behaviors? If so, how do they code-switch? This experience motivated me to further investigate the origins and the implications of Joshua’s English-Only policy.

\textsuperscript{7}English-Only refers to Joshua’s specific policy as distinguished from the English-only movement in the U.S.
All parties concerned (school officials and teachers, parents, and students) agreed that mastery of English is a must. This is not surprising considering that English has become the global lingua franca and the major language used for international exchanges in the globalized economy. However, the more I learned about Joshua’s English-Only policy, how it came into being, how it evolved, and how various groups of students, teachers, administrators, and parents viewed it, the more I realized that the policy was in fact a window into uncomfortable, underlying, and unstated incompatibilities among the educational and social goals and expectations of the Korean students, their parents, and the school’s staff and leadership. Partly, Joshua’s English-Only policy was the product of conflicting educational goals between the school’s mission goal and the goals of the Korean parents and ESA students. The goals of the Korean parents and ESA students -- their desire to acquire human capital via English competence and credentialing from prestigious American higher educational institutions -- were at odds with that the school’s Christian mission goals are for its students.

As I proceeded to investigate how the discourse associated with the English-Only came to be accepted as legitimate and became a system of thought and practice at the school, I realized that I needed to probe issues that had emerged before the English-Only policy was adopted. It would be important to understand the opinions of all parties on a micro level, but also to examine their macro implications as part of larger discourses. Understanding of these larger discourses required a rigorous examination of the ideological history of English-only in the U.S. and globally. According to Bernhart (2000), in spite of the political insistence on the policy of diversity in the U.S., the English-only movement reveals the determination to resist racial and cultural diversity in the U.S. for fear of threatening national unity, ushering in the major political movements of “Americanization” and “homogeneity” (pp.793-795).
Ideology, however, is not sufficient to understand what happened at Joshua. The construct of ideology might be a necessary condition for what has happened, but not sufficient. Foucault (1980) maintains that an understanding of these power relations does not just constitute ideology; what happens can be both “much more and much less ideology” (p. 102), and when power operates through multiple and minute mechanisms, the power “cannot but evolve, organize and put into circulation a knowledge, or rather apparatuses of knowledge, which are not ideological constructs” (p. 102). In other words, Foucault (1991) believes that what governs our daily experience is not always ideology driven, rather it is an “ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics, that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power” (p. 102).

Ultimately, for Foucault (1971, 1972, 1973, 1977/1995, 1984), factors other than ideology might promote the dynamics of the power relations, and this is most clearly seen on an everyday minute level through his ideas about the “history of the present” and “genealogical method.” Such ideas allowed for understanding of the conundrums similar to those occurring at Joshua which reflect the historical entangling of the power relations and prompted me to problematize the English-Only policy by challenging our assumptions rather than concluding that the policy was or was not the right solution for English learning and the school’s unity.

Foucault’s genealogical method requires patience and cognizance of detail, and demanded meticulous research, as Foucault suggests in the opening pages of *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* (1984):

Genealogy is gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times…. [T]he world of speech and desires has known invasions, struggles, plundering, disguises, ploys. From these elements, however, genealogy retrieves an indispensable restraint: it must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising places, in what we tend
to feel is without history—*in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts* [emphasis added]; it must be sensitive to their recurrence, not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles. (pp. 76-77)

Foucault argues that the goal of a genealogical analysis is not to trace the evolution of a concept—“origin”—, but to see how the concept plays out differently in different contexts or times—“singularity.” His genealogical analysis reveals a system of thought that is the result of contingency in a given period (archaeology of knowledge), not the outcome of reasoning through a marvelous scheme of gradual history.

Likewise, the analysis of power relations at the school sometimes revealed its lineage for being inconsistent, multiple, and sometimes contradictory to hegemony and ideology alone such as dominant and dominated or privileged and unprivileged, as discussed in the remaining chapters. For example, English hegemony (ideology) was not sufficient for the understanding of the establishment of Joshua’s English-Only policy. Yet discourses surrounding the development of the policy that were adopted as legitimate also reflect the values and goals of the dominant party in power relations; there were perhaps unconscious reasons for the hegemony of English, which trace back to the seventeenth and eighteenth century capitalism and imperialism.

In other words, I needed to dig into a history of the present—the genealogy of the present form of the English-Only policy—by observing similar occurrences elsewhere of the English-only ideology. For instance, there has been an American national movement of English-only, and the English-only movement in U.S. schools, as well as, the hegemony of English, especially American English, as a global Language (Crystal, 20003). I also needed to connect such linguistic ideologies with the following: Edward Said’s (1978; 1980; 1993) concept of the West and the East; Max Weber’s (2009) concept of Christianity and non-Christianity (including Buddhism and Confucianism) relating to capitalism; Cumings’ (1992, 1993, 1997, 2002) concept
of U.S. global domination in Asian countries and U.S. imperialism in South Korea; and Foucault’s (2003, 2008) concept of neoliberalism, global capitalism, and technology.

Foucault (1984) also stresses that genealogy must record those things felt to be without history such as commonly embraced sentiments (e.g., love, generosity, conscience). Likewise, the school’s English-Only policy was legitimatized as care and love for the Korean nationals, English language learning on the part of the Korean students, and the school’s integrity. The school maintained that the use of the Korean language in school would hinder English learning, as well as undermine the school’s unity. Beneath this unquestioned description of the rationale for the policy, which relied on the seemingly ahistorical concepts of love and care, there were other unstated reasons to establish the policy, including what the school took to be Korean students’ undesirable behaviors and the school’s fear of the Koreans’ criticism of the school.

It is important, however, to point out that while all parties had their own specific aims and purposes in their power relations, such aims did not originate solely from their own independent decisions as Foucault (1998) argues, “power relations are both intentional and nonsubjective” (p. 94); in other words, he maintains that specific aims and goals always exist in power relations, yet, “it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them, and few who can be said to have formulated them” (p.95). This he attributes to anonymous workings of discourse or spirit, which are embedded in a neoliberal sentiment.

Ideas from such critical thinkers including Martin Heidegger, Michel Foucault, Max Weber, and Edward Said form the foundation of the theoretical perspective that guides my analysis and interpretation of how the power relations among Korean students, school officials, American students, and parents rallied around the issues leading to the policy.
This examination and articulation of issues and policy has possible larger implications for “how we educate our children in our time,” including the integration of international students in U.S. schools and worldwide.

**Background**

The world has become inextricably interconnected as well as interdependent in an era of globalization. Educational migration across national borders is irresistible and thus educators cannot ignore the impact of this reality on domestic education.

Based on a combination of the OECD\(^8\) and UNESCO\(^9\) report (OECD, 2011), the number of tertiary students enrolled outside their country of citizenship has risen from 0.8 million worldwide in 1975, to 2.1 million in 2000, to 3.7 million in 2009, more than a four-fold increase over a period of 34 years,\(^10\) especially to English-speaking destinations such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

On the global scale, most international students come from Asia. In 2009, Asian students represented 52% of foreign students enrolled worldwide; the largest numbers of international students are from China, India, and South Korea. This rapid growth in the internationalization of tertiary education mirrors the global market, the hegemony of English as an international language, Asia’s economic rise, and universities’ expansion.

The U.S. has received the most international students, with 18% of all foreign students in 2009, followed by the United Kingdom (10%), Australia (7%), Germany (7%), and France (7%).

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\(^8\)The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

\(^9\)The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

\(^10\)More people are education oriented and more people pursue study-abroad. There is a drastic increase of students’ participation in formal tertiary education worldwide and a drastic increase in the number of international students in tertiary enrollment. According to UNESCO data, 165 million students participated in formal tertiary education around the globe in 2009; this is an increase of 65 million students since 2000 and growth of 65% (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011). The number of foreign students increased during the same period from 2.1 to 3.7 million students, i.e. growth of 77%.” (OECD, 2011, p.320). Thus, about 2% of a total of 165 million tertiary students studied abroad.
According to the Institute of International Education’s (IIE) *Open Doors 2012 report* (IIE, 2012) the international students enrolled at U.S. universities contributed more than $22.7 billion to the U.S. economy in 2011-12. Of the international students in the U.S., 68.4% came from Asia. The number of Korean international students enrolled in U.S. undergraduate and graduate programs reached 72,295 in 2011-12 (9.5% of the 764,495 international students in the U.S.), becoming the third biggest contingent of international students, following that of China (194,029: 25.4%) and India (100,270:13.1%). The Korean number is much more significant when we consider that “the Chinese and Indian populations are larger than the Korean population by about 29 and 25 times, respectively” (Min, 2011, p. 19).

Just as American universities have attracted international students, now increasingly, secondary schools also attract the world’s children. More and more parents throughout the world are “outsourcing” their children’s education to the U.S. The number of recent educational migrants to the U.S. has resulted in schools that have a large population of students who speak languages other than English. According to the Washington Post (September 8th in 2012), “The number of Fairfax County students who speak a foreign language at home is likely to surpass 50 percent of the school population for the first time this month” (Shapiro, 2012). This reflects a surge of migrant families with transnational movement of cultural and economic capital in a globalizing world (Waters, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006).

The phenomenon of going abroad for study used to be the province of the wealthy or elites of a country, and the phenomenon itself is not new to South Korea; in response to globalization, however, the number of Korean students participating in the ESA project is skyrocketing and not just for the wealthiest elite. Driven by a shared dissatisfaction with Korea’s formal educational system, the aspiration for global citizenship characterized as “English fever”
in Korea (J. S. Park, 2009; J.S. Park & Wee, 2012). Now 58.9% of Korean parents\textsuperscript{11} would like to send their children abroad (Korean Statistics, 2010). The majority of Korean parents would like to send their children to English-speaking countries, especially to the U.S.

In retrospect, U.S. schools were an inevitable destination of South Korean ESA students because of wartime ties with the U.S. and South Korea since the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945). World War II (1939-1945) led the Soviet Union and the United States to become super powers. In July 1945, near the end of World War II, the Korean peninsula was demarcated by latitude 38° N (about in the middle) by U.S. military planners at the Potsdam Conference.\textsuperscript{12} In 1948, rather than letting Korea be independent as a single nation, the United States and the Soviet Union chose the 38th parallel to divide Korea into two separate nations, North Korea and South Korea. The Soviet Union established a communist regime in North Korea while the United States established a U.S.-oriented democratic regime in South Korea (Cumings, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1997, 1999, 2002; Liem, 2010; Seth, 2010).

South Korea was later saved from a total collapse by U.S. troops during the Korean War (1950–1953). At the time, many Eastern Europe countries and Mainland China had become communist countries. The U.S. had a critical reason to become involved in the Korean War since the Korean Peninsula is strategically situated politically and geographically. In retrospect some historians such as Bruce Cumings (1997) questions the role of the U.S. Korea, and the Soviet Union in deciding on the 38° parallel to divide the north and the south of Korea. But in spite of the speculations as to U.S. involvement in the origin of the Korean War, and in spite of

\textsuperscript{11}Korean parents aged 30 and over 30
occasional, and persistent expressions of anti-Americanism and xenophobia, South Korea has become Americanized to the degree that American culture has shaped perceptions of language, race/ethnicity, and culture (Kim, 2008). The fervor for English language coupled with a degree from a U.S. educational institution is apparent among Korean high school students, and even elementary students and their families. Consequently, there are growing numbers of Korean students in U.S. schools. South Koreans’ desire to go abroad for study is now not limited to the elite who seek cultural enrichment. This phenomenon is increasingly shaped by complex global economic interdependence and geo-political alliances. In fact, the escalating number of Koreans attending school in the U.S. demonstrates this favorable relationship. But the schools that enroll these students face challenges. Joshua is one such school.

Korean ESA students in the U.S. are becoming the largest group among the country’s K-12 international students (Onishi, 2008). There are only sparse data; according to U.S. and New Zealand government statistics, Koreans comprise the largest group of foreign students in K-12 U.S. schools, outnumbering Chinese and Indian ESA students. Koreans make up the second largest contingent in New Zealand, following only the Chinese. A significant proportion of these Korean ESA students also enroll in U.S. higher education (Min, 2011). Such global educational migrations reflect transnational movement of cultural, linguistic, and economic capital in a globalizing world. In addition to economic revenue and international competitiveness, the U.S. could eventually reap the benefit from their work and their home culture vital to the U.S. by attracting foreign students from all around the world and educating them in an effort to utilize them for global coordination, world peace, and justice (humanistic based education).
Significance

There are significant educational, cultural, and economic ramifications of the Korean educational exodus for communities in both the U.S. and South Korea. South Korea’s recent education exodus “syndrome” has increasingly aroused many Korean domestic social concerns and has become increasingly controversial in South Korea (e.g., Ministry of Planning and Budget, 2006; Yoon, et. al, 2009; Youm et al., 2009). Personal, familial, and financial costs are significant (Cho, et al., 2006). The phenomenon is enmeshed in a multitude of factors that are embedded in Korea’s particular historical and geographical situation. This newly emerging population of Korean students is also changing the realities across U.S. schools. U.S. schools are slowly recognizing the serious impact of the students’ growing presence.

According to Korean National Youth Policy Institute report I and II on Korean early study abroad students to the U.S. (e.g., Yoon, et al., 2009; Lim, et al., 2010), while some benefits existed through participating in ESA project, many Korean ESA returnees from the U.S. reported such issues including linguistic and cultural barriers; loneness, isolation, and limited friendship only with Koreans or other Asian international students; the prejudice and cultural discrimination they experienced as foreign minorities; lack of global citizenship developments; and identity crisis.

Consequently, it is imperative that we better understand the struggles of the students and of the host schools. It is also imperative to intervene in debates on ESA phenomenon, as well as goals and meanings of education on a transnational level. Thus, U.S. schools are able to welcome the opportunities the Korean ESA and other international students provide while educating these students to contribute to the society as a global citizen. However, early educational migration to the U.S., especially by young Koreans, is a relatively recent, rapidly growing, and little-studied
phenomenon, and America, the world’s leading educational destination does not seem to provide adequate services (e.g., Abelmann, 2009; Lee & Rice, 2007). For instance, the matching of young foreign students with American high schools appears for the most part to have been haphazard and improvised, as have been the responses of those schools to their new clientele (e.g., Byun, 2011).

Given this context, Korean statistics (2012) revealed that the number of Korean ESA students has been decreasing since 2006 which saw the largest amount of Koreans studying abroad; 29,511 pre-college aged children left Korea, nearly seven times the number in 2000 (See Table 1). This number only includes who went abroad for the purpose of study. It does not include students whose parents work, study overseas, or immigrate.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Elementary-school Students</th>
<th>Middle-school Students</th>
<th>High-school Students</th>
<th>Total Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>1,799</td>
<td>1,893</td>
<td>4,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2107</td>
<td>3171</td>
<td>2666</td>
<td>7,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>3464</td>
<td>3301</td>
<td>3367</td>
<td>10,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>4,052</td>
<td>3,674</td>
<td>2,772</td>
<td>10,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>6,276</td>
<td>5,568</td>
<td>4,602</td>
<td>16,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>8,148</td>
<td>6,670</td>
<td>5,582</td>
<td>20,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>13,814</td>
<td>9,246</td>
<td>6,451</td>
<td>29,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>12,341</td>
<td>9,201</td>
<td>6,126</td>
<td>27,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>8,369</td>
<td>5,723</td>
<td>4,026</td>
<td>18,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>8,794</td>
<td>5,870</td>
<td>4,077</td>
<td>18,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7,477</td>
<td>5,468</td>
<td>3,570</td>
<td>16,515</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Center for Education Statistics, Korean Educational Development Institute (2012).

This recent decrease and research studies on Korean early study abroad students to the U.S. (Lim, et al., 2010; Yoon, et al., 2009; Youm, et al.) reflects that many Korean ESA students and parents did not satisfy their expectations of ESA experiences.
While there was a robust media discourse about the issues around Korean ESA (Kang & Abelmann, 2011) and Asian ESA has continued for more than thirty years—students first emerged in the 1980s (Hamilton, 1993), Korean ESA students as a foreign minority have attained little attention in scholarship due to several reasons (Han, 2012): 1) (Korean) ESA students are relatively small population comparing other minority groups (e.g., Latino/a, African American, and Asian American); 2) They have been considered as a successful group with high socio-economics and strong academic motivation, thus do not need much help.

Global educational migration and immigration are irresistible in an era of globalization. Like Joshua, the schools that enroll these Korean ESA students might face challenges. Cultural, and educational issues, as well as issues of identity might have arisen in schools challenging traditionally accepted notions of school knowledge and belief systems that have served students, educators, and researchers for the last century.

In light of the urgency of these concerns, the first conference on this issue was held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign entitled “South Korea’s Education Exodus: Risks, Realities, and Challenges” (Asian American Studies, 2008). While the conference offered a first step in critically examining the phenomenon and though there are many anecdotal stories relating to it, very few research-based studies exist. Most of the limited research studies are valuable for background information on Korean parental beliefs about Korean public education (Cho, 2007), including English education (Chung, 2008; J. Park, 2007, 2009; J. Song, 2007) and their parental role in educating their children (e.g., An, 2007; J. Park, 2007; S. Song, 2003); ESA as a transnational strategy and parental sacrifice in the process (e.g., An, 2007; Ahn, 2009; Cho, 2007; Ihm, 2008; H. Lee, 2007); ESA students’ academic and social adjustment and their identity formation in the U.S. (e.g., Byun, 2011; Choi, 2012; D. Lee, 2010; K. Han, 2012).
However, these studies have primarily depended on interviews with parents, students, and guardians in non-school settings and descriptive oriented, as opposed to more ethnographic approaches that might include observations inside schools and would relate curricular and instructional matters to cultural ones on a transnational level. Furthermore, even the few school-centered studies have tended to focus on one single aspect such as race rather than considering other factors such as language that go with race/ethnicity to shape school experiences. For example, Palmer and Jang (2005) investigated Korean born and Korean-American high school students’ social interactions to understand race and racism. He, et al. (2008) argue that despite a “dearth” of research on Asian students’ experience in schools, there is an urgent need to locate “Asian Americans’ experience of language, culture, identity, and power” as interconnected phenomena “in the context of families, schools, and communities in order to locate their experience of curriculum” (pp. 228, 231). Additionally, although Asian international students are quite different from Asian Americans, the majority of scholarly work on educational issues surrounding Asian international students follows immigrant children and their educational experiences only within the U.S., not beyond national borders. Such work mainly points out inequity issues raised by cultural and linguistic gaps between home and school, and suggests including minority families’ funds of knowledge in school curriculum and instruction (e.g., Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992).

There is an increasing need for U.S. educators to understand the impact of the ESA phenomenon. It is highly likely that many other U.S. schools have found themselves in situations similar to Joshua’s. As the ESA movement continues, more and more schools will have to figure out how to embrace transnational students and the students themselves will continue to struggle to understand their own place as non-Americans in the U.S. educational system (Isin & Wood,
1999). They face troubling issues as to their status and role vis-à-vis citizenship and culture. In this context of ethnic, national, and global entanglements, these students often feel identity conflicts when faced with the task of defining themselves in relation to their environments (Lin, 2008). These struggles are especially acute for adolescents (Erikson, 1963, 1968, 1970; Reyes, 2007). The cultural, linguistic, and national identity of international students is sometimes indeterminate for the students themselves (Bhabha, 1990, 1994; Kanno, 2003; Ong, 2004; Osborne, 2006).

Although a significant body of research examines diversity and inclusion in North American education (e.g., Banks, 2006; Banks & Banks, 2007; Harris, 2009; Harris & Willis, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Willis, 2008), the analysis has been focused primarily on local, state, and national level issues for minority and immigrant children, not transnational ones (Zúñiga & Hamann, 2009). Few published studies have investigated what is happening in a U.S. school setting vis-à-vis surrounding international children and the impact of global educational migration on American education on a transnational level. More specifically, there has been little research in the U.S. on such topics as what is happening in a school setting when transnational students begin to arrive in more than token numbers.

The following is a list of particular considerations included in my research.

1. Why Korean students decided to go abroad for study and why they came to Joshua;

2. The opportunities and challenges the Korean students presented to the school and how the school personnel and American students dealt with the growing Korean student population (background);

3. The key forces/circumstances/pressures/problems that were brought to the surface in the encounter between the school and the Korean students, in terms of curriculum, instruction, and administration (issues);

4. The factors that made the Korean students difficult and/or easy to integrate into the school);
The impact of learning English and the hegemony of English on the Korean students;

The roles parents, teachers, administrators, students, and others played (the effect of power relations);

In what ways religion, class, and socio-economic status affected this encounter (the effect of power relations);

How the power relations around Joshua’s English-Only policy operated (the effect of power relations);

What curricular, ideological, personnel-related, and other changes were implemented by the school as a result of having these Korean students, and what factors made it difficult, and/or easy for the school to accommodate Korean students (policy);

How Korean students’ power struggles in the Korean educational context and after arriving at Joshua contributed to their subject making (the constitution of subject-subjectivity).

Not only has there been little research conducted in the daily practices of international students in American schools, I am unaware of any longitudinal ethnographic research conducted with interviews and observations of international students and school personnel in the school environment and locating their experience of language, culture, identity, and power as interconnected phenomena.

My dissertation may help us rethink what it means to educate all children, not just minority or international ones, in an era of globalization (Appadurai, 1996; Bauman, 2000), transnational migration (Eldridge & Cranston, 2009; Hass, 2006; McCarthy, 2009), and global capitalism (Harvey, 2005, 206; Jameson, 1991).

Goals

The main goals of this study are fivefold and my research questions stem from these goals: 1) to explore in what ways Korean international students’ educational experiences in South Korea play out at Joshua; 2), to unpack the issues encountered at the school and their
concomitant power relations (linguistic, racial, and transnational—global capitalism); 3) to understand the process of bicultural identity formation of adolescent Korean nationals engaged in ESA; 4) to explore the possible transference of meaning of findings for U.S. schools in general; and 5) to investigate what governs our thinking in the discourse of neoliberal globalization and education while exploring how to develop tools applicable to educational issues engendered by disparate cultures and systems of thought.

Chapter Overview

Chapter Two introduces topics that include: 1) Korean educational culture, competition, Korean nationalism, and aspiration of the aspiration for global citizenship; 2) Early study abroad as a family strategy and a human investment; 3) U.S. imperial shadow on South Korea; 4) Asian education in the U.S.; and 5) U.S. English only policy and English hegemony of global language. These topics provide a means for understanding what happened in an American school when Korean nationals became a significant fraction of the student body. They also provide an overarching lens for examining the complexity of the problem existing at Joshua, the power struggle among school officials, Korean youth, and American youth, and, especially, the concepts of disciplinary discourse, investigating the patterns of power within a society, and the way the self was involved in the power structure while guiding the analysis, interpretation of data, and my larger arguments.

Chapter Three details the ethnographic methodology and method adopted to answer the research questions. It describes the community in which Joshua was situated, including the Korean subcommunity and the overview of the school, to help the reader gain a sense of the school culture and its context. Next, it provides recruitment procedures, research procedures including data collection, and data analysis. It also addresses interpretation as analytic and
interpretive description relating to stories/narratives and screenplay as a mode of data representation.

Chapter Four reviews background to the following chapters, which address how two cultures, South Korean educational culture and Joshua’s Christian missionary goal, clashed when Korean students came to the school. It addresses push factors for the Korean students, pull factors for the school, Joshua, financial situation at Joshua, admission process policy creation and additional adjustments. Finally, it introduces the first day observation of Korean students at Joshua, which gives a sense of their daily struggles at the school. The chapter helps the reader understand how these students’ struggles played out at Joshua as the struggles are described in the later chapters.

Chapter Five documents the foundational cultural divide that existed at the school, which involved the following: school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Additionally, it documents how the competing educational and cultural expectations of these students, their parents, and Christian school personnel worked out in the daily practice of schooling. Especially, its moments in which the school’s mission goals clashed with the Korean students’ educational culture: spiritual goals of a private American Christian school vs. instrumental goals of Korean education. It also addresses from both sides their differing integrationist visions for religion, race/ethnicity, language, citizenship, and imperial experience, and their mutually unrealistic expectations. The chapter sets the background for Joshua’s implementation of its English-Only policy.

Chapter Six reviews the history and ideology of the English-Only policy and its consequences. It addresses why and how Joshua’s English-Only policy was implemented. It also examines why and how the Korean students used the Korean language, as well as what and why
the school said about the use of Korean language. Then it introduces U.S. major political movements of “Americanization” and “homogeneity,” as they relate to Christianity; it applies such findings to the school’s Christian-inflected American ideology and practices. It also examines the unintended consequences of the English-Only policy in terms of integration and language learning.

Chapter Seven investigates how Korean youths’ power relations with Korean educational culture and Joshua governed their experiences and how such experiences have contributed to the constitution of neoliberal subjects. It especially focuses on how Korean youths’ competing experiences across the two systems were reflected in their identity choices: both strategic and felt identity in neoliberal time. Four Korean students are introduced to capture a wide range of variation among the Korean students at Joshua in terms of the way that they were becoming foreigners at the school: their response to the school’s assimilation policy, their survival strategies, and their choice of ethnic/racial/national identity.

Chapter Eight includes the summary and discussion of the findings of the study. Next, it offers implications. Finally it addresses the limitations of my study and ends with some suggestions for future research. Specifically, the chapter discusses Joshua’s infinitesimal mechanisms of power in relation to its Korean nationals “have been—and continue to be—invested, colonized, utilized, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended etc., by ever more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination” (Foucault 1980, p. 99), including neoliberal governmentality in Korean education; U.S. global and the hegemony of English, the U.S. imperial shadow in South Korea, white supremacy and the English-only movement in the U.S., and globalization. Then, it attempts to offer possible solutions to problematic issues as part

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13 Foucault speaks in general of made subjects of neoliberalism and not Korean nationals per se.
of a larger narrative of integration of international students in U.S. schools. It also includes what would have happened if Joshua had been bilingual and multilingual in my imagination, as well as methodological implications. Finally the chapter reflects on the limitations of my study and ends with some suggestions for future research.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

My study of the cross-national encounter in neoliberal times at Joshua intervenes in a
global discourse of education, global migration, identity, citizenship, and more importantly it
gives an opportunity to reflect on the role of education in the process of Korean ESA students
constitution of their unique subjectivity.

Several historic and ongoing processes provide a means for understanding what happened
in an American school when Korean nationals become a significant fraction of the student body;
how two cultures, South Korean educational culture and Joshua’s Christian missionary goal,
clanched when Korean students came to the school: conflicted emerged and English-Only policy
implemented. Among these are: 1) Korean educational culture, competition, Korean nationalism,
and aspiration of the aspiration for global citizenship, 2) Early study abroad as a human
investment in the process of an accumulation of family capital; 3) U.S. imperial shadow on
South Korea; 4) Asian education in the U.S.; and 5) U.S. English only policy and English
hegemony of global language.

There has been growing dissatisfaction with Korean formal schooling and the grandiose
enterprise of the private after-school market in South Korea. There has been growing Korean
desires to achieve economic stability and middle or higher SES statue through U.S. education
and the acquisition of English along with growing conversion to Christianity. Additionally, there
has been growing acceptance among Koreans that English is critical for future, their participation
in global society, and their cosmopolitan or global perspectives along with the willingness of
Korean parents to send their children, increasingly elementary through high school to the U.S.
for study.
In order to understand the aforementioned issues, it would be important to explicate the critical historic and cultural factors that shape the Korean ESA phenomenon and its impact on American education. These factors include: 1) Korean educational culture and the aspiration for global citizenship, 2) South Korean racial and language ideology, as well as U.S. imperial shadow on South Korea, 3) Early study abroad, 4) Asians in the U.S. schooling, and 5) English only in the U.S. and worldwide.

A key element missing from the research would be studies that document the lived experience of the Korean ESA and the conflicts that emerge when the Korean students attend U.S. schools. Although my study is beyond the scope of Korean ESA high school students in the U.S., I wish to point out that a more robust understanding of transnational interaction at Joshua helps teachers and policy makers better meet the needs of all ESA students.

**Korean Educational Culture and the Aspiration for Global Citizenship**

In order to contextualize the demographic characteristics of recent Korean ESA phenomenon and the intricacies of cultural nationalist discourse, the next section offers a brief Korean (im)migration history, emphasizing the situation in the late 1990s and 2000s. It also identifies Koreanness that includes the country’s homogeneity in language, culture, and, to some extent, values (its ethnic nationalism and racial ideology; and its linguistic ideology), as well as the current educational phenomena of “education fever” and the “English fever” in South Korea (J. 2009; J. S. Park, 2009; J. S. Park & Wee, 2012)—the context from which my focal participants students emerged.

Korean (im)migrants have become one of the fastest growing minorities, contributing to the United States’ becoming a “‘majority minority’ nation by 2050” (Jo, 1999, xi). Demographic characteristics, motivation, and the treatment of Korean (im)migrants in the host country
(America) differ over time depending on the circumstances. However, according to Jo (1999), they all have experienced much more difficulty in living in the U.S. than those immigrants from Europe, most of whom are racially white, or those from such countries as Hong Kong, the Philippines, India, and Pakistan, who have had Anglo-colonial experiences and are thus more familiar with Western culture and the English language.

After the Immigration Reform Act of 1965 (the third wave of immigration),\textsuperscript{14} most Korean immigrants arrived in large family groups. They settled down in urban areas such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York City. The majority of these immigrants came to seek a better life, forming Korean neighborhoods mainly composed of first-generation immigrants and their generation 1.5 Korean bilingual and cultural children (Hong & Min, 1999). They have thrived through family and community support around the church while contributing to businesses, churches, and academic communities in the U.S. (Clark, 1986).

According to Min (2011), the Korean (American) population one of the fastest growing and largest Asian-American populations in the country. As South Korea has continued to improve economically since the latter part of the 1970s, more economically established and well-educated professionals are coming to the U.S. (1990s and 2000s) for different purposes compared with immigrants in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s (Lowe, 1996). The majority of these relative Korean newcomers are academically related temporary residents who are related to “early study-abroad students” (Min, 2011).

\textsuperscript{14}The first wave of Korean immigration started as laborers to Hawaii in the early 1900s (1903-1905). The second wave began in 1950 after the Korean War (1950-1953) with the number gradually increasing to 15,050 by 1964. Most of the immigrants were brides and orphans related to the Korean War and international college students. And the third wave started as a result of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965, which repealed the national-origin quota system. Most current Korean-Americans trace their roots to the third wave of immigration. They have thrived through family and community support around the church while contributing to businesses, churches, and academic communities in the U.S. (Cho, 2007; Clark, 1986).

A common Korean belief is that education is the only way to acquire economic and social capital. There had been different types of Korean caste systems, including slavery, within Korea (Choson Dynasty) until the Gabo Reform (1894-1896) under which little social mobility was achieved. However, social mobility became a possibility after the hierarchy (similar to a caste system) of Korea’s Choson Dynasty\(^\text{15}\) broke up under Japanese colonial rule (1910 to 1945). Korea was opened to the West through Japan at the end of the 19th century. Like other Asian nations subjugated in the era of Western colonialism, the Japanese were forced to sign unequal treaties with Western powers. Although anti-Western feelings were growing, Japan successfully accommodated to Western pressures, acknowledging the huge advantages of the Western science and military. Right after Korea was finally liberated from Japanese colonial rule, Korea was divided into North and South Korea. The United States took its authority over to South Korea (the Republic of Korea) in 1948 while the Soviet Union took control of North Korea (the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea).

South Korea was invaded by North Korea on June 25, 1950. The Korean War lasted three years and inflicted terrible damage to Korea. Especially after the Korean War, there was

\(^{15}\text{The period began in 1392 and ended in 1910. The Choson Dynasty is commonly regarded as the last and longest-lived imperial dynasty before opening the door to the Western modern culture.}\)
starvation, and people came to believe that education is the most powerful means to get away from hunger.

Current neoliberal sentiment about the global economy in South Korea has been intensified to the extreme in terms of its education—the culture of competition and academic pressure. In South Korea, education is a highly emphasized tool needed to secure employment. In order to survive in a highly competitive job market, college ranking along with English-language skills plays a critical role (Lim, et al., 2010; Yoon, et al., 2009; Youm et al., 2009). Consequently, South Koreans’ current extraordinary education fever, along with English fervor has evolved as a basic means of frantic survival strategy, which stunned some non-Korean scholars like Seth (2005). He notes, “Education is important in every modern society but in few does it seem to have been such a preoccupation” (p. 1) as in South Korea. This preoccupation is well manifested by South Korea’s highest rate (82%) of college attendance and the highest percentage of income Koreans spent on education in the OECD countries (Geneva, OECD, 2005).

Additionally, more and more, South Koreans have invested in education as a means of economic and social security and a way to rise in class, most notably since the International Monetary Fund (IMF) financial crisis in the 1997-98 periods that especially affected South Korea through the Asian financial crisis in November 1997. The financial crisis has fueled a sense of fear and insecurity that has fed the cosmopolitan desires for global citizenship in a fast-changing and interdependent world (Seth, 2010). As a result, a new internationalization policy called Segyehwa (globalization in Korean) during the president, Kim Young-Sam’s, administration (1993-1998) was implemented. This policy has promoted English language learning which enables South Korea to be competitive in a global market and has facilitated

English has become an international language and a global means of communication (Kayman, 2004). To keep abreast of this trend, the Korean government, which has played crucial roles in leading and shaping most of the development of university entrance exams, has changed its policy in testing English language competence. More communicative competence questions have replaced grammar knowledge, which had been the main focus in the national entrance exams of English until 1994 (J. Park, 2007).

Most companies began to require a certain Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) score in the process of hiring while not allowing the existing employees who do not meet the score to get promoted. Moreover, for admission to the colleges and universities in the US, a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score is necessary. Wherever you go, there is incentive for the people with good marks in internationally recognized English tests such as the TOEFL and TOEIC. English has become a means of survival. Accordingly, English, which used to be taught beginning in middle school, has been introduced as a required subject in the third year of elementary school since 1997 (Ryu, 2007).

Despite Ministry of Education-led reforms, there has been a shared dissatisfaction and distrust with South Korea’s quality of formal educational system, especially, English language education (Cho, 2007). People have been critical of English education in South Korea since people who have studied English for more than 10 years in formal schooling are unable to carry on a simple conversation in English. Most people attribute this “deaf and mute” phenomenon to emphasis on English grammar rather than English communicative competence (Ryu, 2007).

Most Koreans used to believe that whether rich or poor, with utmost perseverance and formal schooling, they could gain access to the prestigious universities, which guarantee a future
of wealth and influence. However, with remarkable economic growth in the 1980s and early 1990s, this emphasis on the value of education corresponded with the growth of the private after-school market for helping children gain admission to better high schools and prestigious universities (Kim, 2007; S. Park, 2006; J. Park, 2007). Using Bourdieu’s concept of capital (1984, 1991), this economic capital leads to academic capital, linguistic capital, and social capital while producing and reproducing knowledge (academia) and power (money and social position).

The current credentialism in South Korea described has driven “the most exam-obsessed culture in the world” (Seth, 2002, p. 5), fueling extreme competition among parents (Park, S. J. 2006; Park & Abelmann, 2002; Tokita, A 2006), and the expansion of the Korean private after-school market. Contemporary Korean educational practices reflect these ideas and processes. In this process, mothers play a critical role in managing their children’s education while placing enormous demands on them as managers and primary educational consumers (Park, 2006).

Almost all Korean parents, whether rich or poor, are sending their children to additional private educational institutions called hagwon (학원). “It estimated that the costs of private tutoring in South Korea were equivalent to 80 percent of government spending on public education. Nearly nine out of ten South Korean elementary pupils have private tutoring” (Agence France Presse, 2012). Korean children effectively attend two schools: day school as formal public schooling and private night school. Less affluent families live in a less affluent community and send their children to less expensive private educational institutions or private tutors.

Parents’ aspiration for privileging their children with academic and linguistic capital and the expansion of the Private After-School Market (The grandiose enterprise) come side by side.
This aspiration facilitates the escalation of the Private After-School Market while the private after-school market, in turn, fuels education fever and English language fever (J. Park, 2007; J.S. Park, 2009). Thus, the situation feeds parents—especially mothers’—sense of competition involving their children’s education while partly leading to the malfunctioning of regular schools. In turn, the inability of regular schools to provide high-quality education has furthered the expansion of the private after-school market up to the point where private after-schools have gained supremacy over public schools, at least in the eyes of the education-obsessed public.

Although the range of costs for the private after-school tuition depends on geography, the cost has become a burden even for the middle class. Families are looking for ways to escape the increasing private after-school expenditures, educational pressures, stress from too much competition, distrust with public education, and frustration and sympathy regarding children’s abilities to get good grades. In rapidly expanding numbers, parents are seeking to give their children an opportunity to become fluent in English while sparing them (Y. Kim, 2002), and themselves, the stress of South Korea’s educational fever. Some of them have been coming to the U.S. with their children for academic capital and linguistic capital as much as economic capital. These students are known as “early study-abroad” students.

South Korean Racial and Linguistic Ideology and U.S. Imperial Shadow

According to the recent OECD report, South Korea has risen to become one of the most developed countries in the global realm and Koreans have cosmopolitan desires for global citizenship. Accompanying the desire for global citizenship, however, is the emphasis still placed on family honor, the purity of blood, and the authenticity of Koreanness. South Korea, an ethnically homogeneous nation sharing a common language, has had a long tradition of being “one pure-blood” as “one people” (danilminjok;단일민족;單一民族) and Korean people have
been proud of this national identity. With little linguistic and racial diversity, the community of practice in South Korea (the dominant discourse of the South Korean community and what is normalized) leaves little room for diverse thinking. What it means to be a Korean has not really been challenged. So it has been a struggle for South Koreans to make sense of the fast paced globalization and changing ethnic landscape of their nation within its own national border. As South Korea has been globalized at such a fast speed, South Koreans have also gained swift exposure to other cultures. There are fast growing numbers of foreigners including migrant workers from; however, South Korea has not developed diversity in thinking on issues with different ethnic/race, language forces (C. Lee, 2012; E. Han, 2012; Hong, 2009, 2010; Joo, 2007; J. S. Park, 2009; J.S. Park & Wee, 2012; N. Kim, 2012).


Liem (2010) argues that USIS tried to project a positive cultural image of U.S. policy on South Korea and other countries through media including print, radio, and personal contacts while competing with the Soviet Union in order to maintain its global hegemony. Liem also maintains that although dissident students and intellectuals challenged U.S.’s direct control over South Korea, most Koreans accepted the ideology the U.S. promoted and became highly receptive to U.S. mainstream image that the U.S. promoted in order to gain acceptance of U.S.
involvement in South Korea by imprinting

an image of the U.S. as a benevolent ‘big brother’ to the Korean people and
a symbol of political maturity, modern technical knowledge and economic prosperity.
The activities carried out to achieve this goal reinforced and strengthened the unequal
and dependent relationship between South Korea and United States with strong
implications for Koreans’ perceptions of both societies. (xi)

American hegemony has influenced South Korea through U.S. white mainstream culture
and linguistic ideology since 1947, that Koreans can become honorary white Americans by
mastering Standard American English, perceived to be apparent among white American in
general. According to N. Kim’s work in The Imperial Citizens (2008), U.S, racial ideology
"travels" to South Korea and impacts Koreans and Korean Americans’ attitudes and beliefs about
race. S. Lee (1996) found that, most commonly, Koreans identified with white culture.
Furthermore, she found that Koreans differentiated themselves from other Asians with a
perception of Korean superiority, suggesting Korean nationalism. But for all that South Korea’s
racial ideology has been influenced by mainstream American attitudes and beliefs about race,
South Korean society ignores the intricacies of U.S. racial politics. American mainstream racial
ideology has been transported to Korea, and many Koreans have subconsciously subsumed
similar views adopted from white supremacy conveyed in the U.S. and Europe (N. Kim, 2008).

U.S. mainstream culture came to South Korea as a set of powerful, enmeshed practices
and ideologies, especially, since the Korean War. Capitalism, Christian charity and missionaries,
a military regime, and U.S. media have functioned as the U.S. imperial shadow in South Korea
and have manifested itself through this multifaceted package (Cumings, 1999, 2005). As much
as this package improved the nation’s economy, advanced its technology, and pushed for
educational advancement, it also opened the door for cultural and capitalist exploitation and
coercion, both overtly and ideologically. Until 1945, there were few Christians (about 2%) in
Korea, but soon thereafter a rapid growth of Christianity ensued (Korean Overseas Information Service, 1993). In South Korea, evangelical Christianity has spread throughout the country (Chong, 2008). A 2010 survey reveals Korea’s religious make up to be “Christian 31.6% (Protestant 24%, Roman Catholic 7.6%), Buddhist 24.2%, other or unknown 0.9%, none 43.3%” (South Korea Demographics Profile, 2013). According to the South National Statistical Office (2005), South Korea had the third highest percentage of Christians in East Asia or Southeast Asia.

It is more so for the Korean Americans. According to Hurh (1998), approximately 70% of Korean Americans and Korean migrants attend Korean churches in the U.S. Many scholars (Hurh, 1998; I. Kim, et al., 2006; Kim, Y & Grant D, 1997) argue that Koreans in the U.S. have attended Korean churches not only for religious reasons but also for practical reasons such as social network and resources for Koreans. Korean churches in the U.S. function as religious purposes as well as a Korean ethnic enclave.

Consequently, a growing number of Korean international students, including early study-abroad students in the U.S., have brought with them a perception of being Korean, and contemporary Korean perceptions of the U.S., of Christianity (Clark, 1986), of the English language (J.S. Park, 2009) and of race, all in the context of widespread acceptance of neoliberal ideas of the role of individuals in a global economy. Korean racial ideology has absorbed an acceptance of the global hegemony of the U.S., the hegemony of English, and often even U.S. racial ideology—including American racial stereotypes (C. Kim, 2000; N. Kim, 2008).

Early Study Abroad

Origin of early study abroad. Before the Korean Early (chogi yuhak in Korean) boom started in the middle of 1990, Taiwanese precollege students first emerged in the 1980s and
received attention from media both in Taiwan and the U.S. (e.g., Hamilton 1993a, 1993b; Helena & Watanabe 1990; Watanabe, 1989).

According to Hamilton (1993a, 1993b), the majority of ESA students were Taiwanese living alone or with one parent (mainly mothers). The first academic unpublished master’s thesis on ESA is a 1990 UCLA study by Helena and Watanabe (1990) which estimated that there were 40,000 unaccompanied Taiwanese minors in the U.S., primarily in Southern California. The majority of ESA students were Chinese teenagers mainly from Taiwan, followed by Hong Kong, and China. As children of wealthy families, they attended schools in affluent communities. They came to be called *Parachute Kids* in the media because they came with parents who dropped them off then returned to their home country. The subsequent lack of parental supervision became an issue of concern. Tsong and Liu (2009) applied the term specifically to foreign precollege students from Asian countries who live without parents mainly in developed English speaking countries.

Over time, variations on the theme emerged and came to be labeled differently. *Satellite Kids* live with one parent (mainly mother) while the other parent (the astronaut) works in their homeland to support them. With the rise in Korean ESA students since 2000, the term “goose family” was added to the Korean dictionary in 2004. The Korean ESA phenomenon is characterized by mothers and their children who live overseas while the fathers live and work in South Korea to support them. Fathers flying over to visit a couple of times a year are called *girogi appa* or “goose fathers.” Mothers who live apart from husbands are called *girogi umma* or “goose mothers.” This “goose” terminology grew out of the tendency of such families toward
“annual migration.”¹⁶ More recently, depending on fathers’ financial ability, two more terms were added in media to refer to the fathers who sent their family abroad for their children’s education. If the father is rich enough to pay for frequent visits to see his family, he is called an “eagle dad.” If the father can afford to visit their family abroad once or twice a year, he is called a “goose dad.” A so-called “penguin dad” is lonely; while eager to see his family, he cannot pay for flying abroad. Fathers’ financial ability, as one might expect, also results in goose mothers having different experiences abroad themselves (Ahn, 2009).

Asian families and their children migrating for the purpose of precollege education in the 1980’s and 1990’s were the more elites in high socio economic status from less developed countries to a more developed English speaking country especially the U.S. and Canada, in the 2000’s, many middle class Asian families also chose educational migration in a wider selection such as from China to Singapore and from South Korea to Australia, New Zealand, China, and Singapore.

The findings of ESA studies on children from affluent families who were able to send children to a developed English speaking countries such as the U.S. and Canada (Zhou, 1998; Waters, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006) were drastically different from those of ESA studies on children from less affluent families who send their children to less developed countries such as Singapore (Huang & Yeoh, 2005; J. Kim, 2010).

Zhou (1998) conducted the study on Chinese parachute kids in Southern California who came from Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, and Singapore. In general, the parachute kids had a clear goal: going to a good college (in an affluent community) and performing well academically.

¹⁶ For my study, about 20% of Korean 10th to 12th graders at Joshua were goose families (4 out of 18 students). The rest of Korean ESA lived without parents.
They enjoyed luxurious living conditions and generous monthly allowances, but remained under the oversight of their parents’ social network in the U.S. Isolation from American peers allowed them to tie to other parachute kids and their parent’s connections in the immigrant community while meeting their parents’ expectations of them. Waters (2002, 2003, 2005, 2006) conducted similar studies with similar upper middle class students. In most cases, mothers did not need to work while the fathers worked in their home country.

On the other hand, in their study of Chinese mothers in Singapore coming from China for their children’s education, Huang and Yeoh (2005) found that these lower or working class mothers had a hard time working and looking after their children. Although the majority of them were highly educated and had professional and managerial jobs in China, they had to take menial jobs in the U. S. due to their lack of English. Many of these mothers worked hard to support their stay and not to burden their husbands in China.

Even among less affluent families who send their children to Singapore, significant difference exists depending on their financial status. For example, in his study of low/middle class South Korean ESA students in Singapore, J. Kim (2010) found that relatively rich families among them who were able to send their children to international schools were much more satisfied than those who had to send their children to a public school. Many children in public schools faced many difficulties including high competition, rote memory and exam oriented education, and the very things they wanted to escape from Korea. This study shows how economic capital can influence the way transnational schooling experience operates for children from different class background. Both individual family economic factors and destination shape the schooling and influence the success and failure of ESA participation.

Connecting Water’s middle-class transnational mobility as a parental choice to
accumulate family’s cultural, economic, and social capital, Ball (1993, 2003) and Brown (1990, 1995) see education as a commodity for parents and their children to choose as customers in the education market. Education is a power investment through which middle class families maintain and improve their existing capital.

In a similar vein, Foucault (2008) suggests that educational migration in neoliberal regimes is an investment to produce *homo economicus* (economic human)—as entrepreneurs of themselves in an enterprise society. Foucault (2008) maintains that neoliberal governmentality has become a guide for all human actions on a global scale, emphasizing humans of enterprise:

> The society regulated by reference to the market that the neo-liberals are thinking about is a society in which the regulatory principle should be not so much the exchange of commodities as the mechanisms of competition. It is these mechanisms that should have the greatest possible surface and depth and should also occupy the greatest possible volume in society. This means that what is sought is not a society subject to the commodity-effect, but a society subject to the dynamic of competition. Not a supermarket society, but an enterprise society. The *homo economicus* sought after is not the man of exchange or man the consumer; he is the man of enterprise and production. (p. 147)

In neoliberal regimes, human beings are no longer perceived as laborers or workers in the Marxist sense. Rather, human beings are themselves human capital, entrepreneurs of the self, and containers of capacities and potentials. Thus, the *homo economicus* of neoliberalism is equated with income; individuals accumulate sufficient elements of human capital so that they become “entrepreneurs of themselves.” Human beings become producers of themselves and the source of their own incomes in an enterprise society.

While neoliberal discourse leads human activities, which can be seen as investment in human beings themselves as entrepreneurs, individuals might potentially increase their capacity to earn more income. This investment strategy also produces the following behaviors that are considered as investment: 1) language learning including achieving near-native fluency in English, 2) marriage including marrying partners with a high socio-economic status or U.S.
citizenship, 3) a degree from a top tier university or a degree from a “Western university,” 4) enhancing in physical appearance including tanning and hair dying, even changing genetic elements (e.g., race, plastic surgery, and muscle building), and 5) participating in ESA for my research.

Neoliberal governmentality opens up the question of citizenship. Legal citizenship of a nation, cultural identification with a nation, and global citizenship through entrepreneurship of the self all complicate subject-making. For example, one born in the U.S. and raised in Korea who returned to the U.S. as a U.S. citizen might identify him or herself culturally as Korean. Yet, one might have been born in Korea with Korean citizenship and come to the U.S. in his/her early years, and considered him or herself culturally American. This situation often produces flexible citizens in a global space (Ong, 2004; Kanno, 2003).

Korean ESA in the U.S. In this section, I limit the literature review to ESA students’ experience in the U.S. partly because I have already discussed the literature review on ESA, which covers background information on Chinese ESA phenomenon (e.g., Huang & Yeoh, 2005; Waters, 2002, 2003, 2005; Zhou, 1998), as well as Korean ESA phenomenon, Korean parental beliefs about Korean public education, including English education, and their parental role in educating their children (e.g., Ahn, 2009; J. Park, 2007; J. Song, 2007, S. Song, 2003; Park, 2006) and ESA as a transnational strategy and parental sacrifice in the process (e.g., An, 2007; Byun, 2010; Cho, 2007; Ihm, 2008; Waters, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006). It is also partly because my own work has centered directly on Korean ESA students’ encounter with an American high school.

Few studies exist on the Korean ESA high school students’ social, cultural, academic, and identity issues in the U.S. (e.g., A. Lee, 2006; Byun, 2010; K. Han, 2012; Y. Park, 2011).
Byun (2010) investigated the ESA students’ academic, psychological adjustment and identity formation using a 90 minute to a 4 hour ethnographic interview with ten Korean ESA high school students who attended public or private Catholic schools in Southern California. She found out 1) the students’ main reason for ESA was for escaping from their lack of academic status, and they had little time to prepare for their ESA participation; 2) their lack of English skill was a major hindrance to their adjustment in schooling; 3) they lived either with paid non-kin guardians or with a relative while communicating with their parents through web-based technology, and their physical separation had a positive impact on their independence; 4) they studied harder in the U.S., considered their foreign status as being positive, and planned to go to an American college; 5) while having an official relationship with U.S. teachers, they could not develop a close relationship with American peers due to the lack of common grounds, they felt helpless with other ESA students although they were sympathetic with one another as a ESA student, they felt extremely lonely while no systematic support was available, thus ending up with attending church for their sense of belonging and psychological comfort.

K. Han (2012) also conducted a two-month ethnographic case study of 12 Korean ESA students who lived with paid non-kin guardians, were not religious, yet attended two private, religious U.S. high schools (one expensive: $17,000 for tuition and the other less expensive: $5,600 to $6450). A survey was used for recruiting participants. In order to investigate the students’ academic performance and cultural adaptation in the U.S., about a 45 minute interview with each student was conducted, and thirty-minute, semi-structured interview with four teachers, four parents, and four guardians was also conducted. Several findings include: dissatisfaction with Korean education, academic pressure from their parents, high SES family, and their parents’ compensation for their physical absence with money; and struggle mainly due to language
barriers, cultural difference and curricula difference in their schooling in the U.S.

K. Han found variance in the cultural adaptation and academic performance of the students. Based on information from their school counselors, four types were identified respectively: 1) two students: low in both, 2) three students: low and high, 3) three students: high and low, and 4) four students: high in both. For type 1 students, K. Han speculated the students’ low in academic performance was caused by their academic pressure from their parents. For type 4, K. Han found that the four students in type 4 tended to be involved in more in-school activities, their parents more were involved in the students’ studies than the students in the other types while none of them got an extra academic help outside their U.S. schools. K. Han speculated that the students’ involvement in school activity helped them to adapt to American culture.

The teachers interviewed had a perception of “the Model Minority” toward the ESA students, assuming that they were hard workers. The challenges they had were the students’ lack of English skills, their shyness to ask questions when needed, and no opportunity to talk to their parents. They also expressed the students’ extreme focus on grades and their seriousness in their education. Additionally, the teachers noted that the Korean ESA students had a strong Korean identity and did not want to assimilate with their American peers, rather they liked to form their own groups, which, they believed, hindered the students’ academic progress. Han suggests that guidelines should be provided for the parents of Korean ESA students, as well as educators in the U.S. in order to help the academic performance and cultural adaptation of the students in the U.S.

Additionally, Y. Park (2011) conducted a study of eight Korean ESA secondary school students in the U.S. who lived either with their paid non-kin guardians or their mothers in order to investigate how these students dealt with psychological and cultural difficulties for gaining
linguistic, cultural, and academic capitals in the U.S. Using a 16-month long ethnographic approach, data collected from two time interviews with the eight students, interviews with their parents and guardians, as well as participant observation. Park found that the Korean parents perceived their children’s ESA participation in the U.S. as a critical tool to gain cultural capital and symbolic power for their children. They also wanted their children to have less academic burden through U.S. education. For the Korean students, they perceived their ESA participation as a shelter from the Korean educational culture, which is described as being grade, exam, and competition oriented. Before coming to the U.S., Korean parents and their children had fantasized about U.S. education. The students, in general, reported that American curriculum were easier than Korean curriculum. They continuously negotiated their cultural identity between Korean and American cultural boundaries, and some of them felt that they had been too much changed to fit back into the Korean society.

Through data from sixteen in-depth interviews with both Korean ESA students and second-generation Korean Americans, A. Lee (2006) investigated the identity formation of the Korean ESA students by utilizing the identity formation of Korean Americans. He found several difference between the two groups: 1) for the Korean ESA students, the physical absence of their parents’ presence allowed them to be more independent while fostering their Korean identities; whereas, in contrast, for the Korean Americans, their identities seemed to be controlled by their parents’ constant presence; 2) for the Korean students, the complete absence of an American identity necessitates the creation of new identity. As they overcame initial obstacles, they experienced less stress while enjoying the freedom they had abroad. Finally, they were able to negotiate with their parents, and their Korean ethnicity. In contrast, for the Korean Americans, they experienced their identity mainly through Korean ethnicity that was defined by their
familial environment and American mainstream attitude toward Asians.

The studies on Korean ESA secondary students in the U.S. informs us that such factors including living arrangement, absence of parents, peer relations, and English language skills can contribute to their psychological and cultural adjustment, as well as academic performance either negatively or positively. While these studies are the foundation for further research on Korean ESA social, cultural, academic adjustment, as well as their identity formation, research studies are missing that document the transnational cultural encounter — what was happening at U.S. schools, the conflict and its tensions— caused by the introduction of Korean ESA students into the schools. The next section discusses how Korean ESA students are situated in the U.S., especially in the U.S. schools.

**Asians in the U.S. Schooling**

Model Minority Stereotype is a transnational phenomenon. In the U.S., the majority of scholarly work on the educational issues around children of Asian origin, including Asian ESA students follows Asian American immigrant children and their educational experiences within the national border (S. Lee, 1996a, 1996b, 2009). Asian American education is still mainly structured by the “model minority” discourse. The myth of the discourse argues that Asians are a homogenous model minority group of obedient hard workers, unlike some other minority groups, (Cho, 1993). This minority thesis has been historically constructed as a political response to “discipline activists in the Black Power, Black Panther, American Indian, United Farmworker, and other radical social movements demanding institutional change” (ibid, p. 203). This means that the concept model minority has been used as a way of disciplining the activists listed above. However, depending on political and economic conditions, this model minority group has, also, been depicted as a *yellow peril*, implying threatening, sneaky, greedy, and manipulative
individuals who pollute the U.S. culture and steal economic opportunities from *authentic* Americans (Chae, 2004). The stereotype ignores Asian-Americans’ contribution to businesses, churches, and academic communities in the U.S., and justifies colonial/racialized discourses on immigrants. Tuan (1998) argues that there has been the constant stereotype of Asian/Asian Americans living under the constant scrutiny of not being an “American” and “forever foreigners.”

It is also critical to understand that the model minority discourse is no compliment for Asian Americans; “the flip side of model minority discourse is a stereotyping of Asians as over-conformist, lacking in individuality and initiative, emotionally repressed and socially inept, and physically unattractive, or ‘nerdy’ - the price they have to pay for economic success” (McKay & Wong, 1996, p. 586).

Additionally, model minority discourse has its origin in Confucian family values such as deep respect for parents, teachers, and adult authority which are frequently cited as the factors for the attainment of academic capital (Chae, 2004; McKay & Wong, 1996) and for appearing quiet, obedient, and consistent while experiencing racial discrimination (Pang, Kiang, & Pak, 2004; Yeh, 2003).

Many research studies (e.g., Ng, Lee, & Pak, 2007; S. Lee, 1994, 1996a, 1996b, 2001, 2005, 2009; S. Lee & Zhou, 2005; Zhou & J. Lee) show that the model minority thesis does a disservice to the experiences of Asian immigrant students with diverse backgrounds. Zhou (2001) found that fifty three percent of Vietnamese origin youth who lived in San Diego identified themselves as Vietnamese rather than Asian American, confirming the variance among Asian origin youth. Lee (1996a) argues that the very minority contributes to the racial inequality for Asian origin children by maintaining “the dominance of whites in the racial hierarchy by
diverting attention away from racial inequality and by setting standards for how minorities behave” (p. 6).

S. Lee (1996a, 2009) also challenged the model minority discourse by bringing forward four identity groups within Asian American students. One of them was the Korean-identified group. Koreans in the group endeavored to adapt to the White dominant group, honoring White (Tuan, 1998), confirming the findings of N. Kim’s work in *the Imperial Citizens* (2008) that U.S. racial ideology “travels” to South Korea and impacts Koreans and Korean Americans’ attitudes and beliefs about race. Lee (1996a) also found that the Korean ESA students differentiated themselves from other Asians with a perception of Korean superiority over them.

Korean-American children risk being set apart from the mainstream majority not only culturally and interactively, but also linguistically, and perhaps ethnically as well (S. Lee, 1996a, 2009). These circumstances may be a breeding ground for responses as apparently benign as social withdrawal or as aggressive and dangerous as violence, leading to a sense of isolation and self-segregation. Next, I introduce U.S. English only movement and English only movement worldwide.

**English Only in the U.S. and Worldwide**

No official language exists in the U.S. Yet the U.S. has consistently pursued the primacy of English both in public and in U.S. schools; whereas, the European Union (EU) has declared its embrace of multilingualism (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010). While issues surrounding language policy have always been a controversial issue since the early 1900s, the contemporary English only movement named “the Official English movement” dates back to 1981 when the late linguist, educator, Japanese American, and Senator S. I. Hayakwa (1992) first introduced the English Language Amendment, the Resolution 72, to amend the U.S. Constitution to title
English as a U.S. official language. The bill was, in fact, was not approved; yet, since then for the last nearly 32 years, the English only along with bilingual education has rapidly grown a controversial issue and has become a more prevalent issue in recent years.

The Resolution 72 contains the following six sections:

Section 1. The English language shall be the official language of the United States.

Section 2. Neither the United States nor any state shall make or enforce any law which requires the use of any language other than English.

Section 3. This article shall apply to laws, ordinances, regulations, orders, programs, and policies.

Section 4. No order or decree shall be issued by any court of the United States or of any State requiring that any proceedings, or matters to which this article applies be in any language other than English.

Section 5. This article shall not prohibit educational instruction in a language other than English as required as a transitional method of making students who use a language other than English proficient in English.

Section 6. The Congress and the States shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

For Hayakwa and his supporters, the main reasons for establishing the English language as the official language have been related to patriotism and unity, and English language learning. One opponent of the official English bill, James Crawford (1992) explains the reasons for Hayakawa’s bill as follows: 1) national unity: a common language unifies people by resolving national conflicts among diverse racial, ethnic, and religious groups, 2) English language learning: all immigrants should learn English as an indispensable tool of social mobility and economic advancement, 3) participation in democracy: immigrants’ learning English is the only way for their full participation in democratic government.

Crawford (1992), however, maintains that proponents of the official English proposal view alternate languages as a problem, a “threat to civil right [s],” “an insult to the heritage of
cultural minorities,” and a justification of “racist and nativist biases under the cover of American patriotism” (p. 3). Crawford (2000) goes on to say even though the U.S. English and similar groups have repeatedly disavowed the English only label, it reveals a “covert agenda: determination to resist racial and cultural diversity in the United States” (p.23). In the discourse of immigration and education, there has been the fear that non-English speakers and the languages they would bring harm to the U.S. (Gándara, & Hopkins, 2010).

Language ideologies and power are important for understanding the initiatives that led to bilingual education, as well as the critiques of native language instruction (Crawford, 2004; Crawford, J. & Crawford, J, 2004). Many scholars (e.g., Baker, 2006; Commins & Miramontes, 2005; Crawford; 2004; Cummins, 1979; Gándara & Hopkins, 2010) in the field of second language education and bilingual education see language as a right and language as a resource. They underscore the relationship between language policy and language rights and discuss the inequality issues around language ideologies and power. Language choice is considered as a basic human right, thus a freedom of individual expression. Language as a resource is viewed in terms of a personal asset as a social, cultural, and national resource. Language abilities help to build bridges across different groups while promoting cross-cultural communication and understanding, as well as economic gain.

Such scholars also bring to our attention critical aspects of language education and bilingualism while providing an historic overview regarding language rights in the U.S. Their studies explore how current perspectives regarding English only and bilingualism are connected to the past and investigate the myths held by many regarding language learning.

Bilingual education has been introduced as a means to help schools to get over the challenges that increasing immigrant students face when they negotiate and re-establish bilingual
and bicultural identities in a new linguistic, cultural, and social environment. Although the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 provided official legitimacy to the use of native language instruction for English language learners (ELLs), it did not contribute to bilingual education, but to new ways of teaching English (Garcia, 2000). “The campaign to officialize English has resulted in an accelerated English immersion program rather than bilingual education” (Nunez & Karr-Kidwell, 2000, p.7). This Education Act of 1968 did not address the issue of other spoken languages.

Tse (2001) argues that supporting English-only in U.S. schools rests on two prevalent beliefs, (1) that their children are failing to learn the English language and (2) that low academic performance of immigrant children is due to lack of English proficiency. Such belief appeals to “casting language minorities in the role of outsiders who deliberately ‘chose’ not to learn the English language” (Draper & Jiménez, 1996, p. 1). However, many research studies (e.g., Cummins, 1981a, 2000; Porters & Runmbaut, 1996) have shown that successful English learning does not necessarily mean academic success in schools. In fact, Porters and Runmbaut’s studies (1996) in 1986, 1989, and 1992 shows that language minority children perform almost as well as monolingual English children even with limited English proficiency. Additionally, opponents to bilingual education insist that students in bilingual programs are the ones dropping out of school earlier. However, according to Stephen Krashen (1999), bilingual education is not the cause of dropping out in U.S. schools, and his review of the evidence suggests that it was economic factors, not educational factors that mostly affected the Hispanic drop-out rate. “Those who had experienced bilingual education were significantly less likely to drop-out” (Baker, 2001, p. 262). If Krashen is correct one, one might ask, “what other factors might be responsible for their low achievement?”
Stephen Krashen (1996) points out “the quality of the child’s education in the first language, although not the only determinant, makes a critical difference for academic success” (Tse, 2001, p. 22). The background knowledge of immigrant students in school subjects and literacy in the native language will greatly influence their educational attainment in the United States, for better or worse. Kouritzin (1999) also argues that the main problem with low academic achievement among most immigrants is not a lack of English language learning, but the rapid loss of native language and culture; children’s rapid loss of the first language had detrimental effect on the child’s self-image and as “identity crisis” (Corson, 2001; Kouritzin, 1999; Tse, 2001; Wong Fillmore, 1991, 2000).

This larger English only context gives rise to a lack of appreciation for bilinguals in spite of the benefits of being bilingual. Research on the use of the native language in schools has shown cross-linguistic transfer between two languages, which can be viewed as linguistic capital for second language learners. (i.e., Carlisle & Beeman, 2000; Garcia, 1998; Jimenez, Garcia, & Pearson, 1995; McCarthey & Garcia, 2005; Proctor et al., 2005; Verhoeven, 1994). While the issue of the use of students’ first language (L1) in the second language (L2) learning has been controversial and California’s Proposition 227\(^{17}\) eliminates most native language instruction, arguing that native language impedes English development, the pedagogical literature does not support the idea that total immersion in a new language is required. On the contrary, the literature supports the idea that some use of a native language can actually facilitate acquisition of a second language. Many studies (e.g., Cummins, 1979, 1981a, 1981b, 2000) have shown that the inclusion of L1 by students and teachers improves both content learning and L2 language learning.

\(^{17}\) “Californians decisively rejected bilingual education on June 2, 1998, approving a mandate for English-only instruction known as Proposition 227” (Crawford, 2000, p. 104).
A body of research has been conducted on the benefits of using of L1 and on cross-language transfer in an attempt to address the cultural and linguistic capitals of second language learners (August & Hakuta, 1997, 1998; Corson, 2001; Crawford, 2001; Droop & Verhoeven, 1998; Green, 1998; Jimenez, Garcia, & Pearson, 1995, 1996; Ramirez et al., 1991; Verhoeven, 1994).

Citing August and Hakuta (1997), Greene (1998), and Ramirez et al. (1991), Crawford (2001) argues that we can produce “higher levels of school achievement by having well-designed bilingual programs over the long term, at no cost to English acquisition” (pp. 84). These research findings confirm that developing fluent bilingualism and cultivating academic excellence are complementary and that investing in children’s native-language development ultimately facilitates English development. According to the ‘threshold hypothesis’ developed by Cummins (1979, 1981a, 1981b, 2000), there may be minimum levels of confidence that bilingual children must attain in their first languages to avoid cognitive disadvantages and to allow the potentially beneficial aspects of becoming bilingual to influence cognitive functioning. His second hypothesis ‘interdependence’ supports the idea that “less instruction in the learner’s second language” and more instruction in the learner’s first language “often result in higher second language proficiency scores for students who are young users of a minority language” (Corson, 2001, pp.114).

Verhoeven (1994) looked for evidence of transfer of five subcategories of linguistic and cognitive skills: pragmatics, lexicon, grammar, phonology, and literacy (reading). Verhoeven found interdependence between L1 and L2 in three subcategories: pragmatics, phonology, and literacy (reading) in support of Cummins’s linguistic interdependence hypotheses.
Jimenez, Garcia, and Pearson (1996) compared the strategic reading processes of 8 successful Latino bilingual English readers with two small groups—3 successful monolingual Anglo students who were successful English readers and 3 Latino bilingual students who were less successful English readers. This study found that the successful Latina/o readers used the same strategies in both languages. The successful Latino readers used the benefits of cross-linguistic transfer using cognate vocabulary and the strategies of invoking prior knowledge, inferencing, question, context, and monitoring. The authors made a conclusion that metacognitive strategies exist and those strategies facilitate transfer of strategy knowledge. The successful Latino readers were aware of the transference of knowledge across languages by using questioning, rereading, evaluating, and monitoring.

Arguments against bilingual education also seem to be grounded in the research that has methodological problems. Willig’s meta-analytic report (1985) points out the problems inherent in conducting research on bilingual programs in relation to the outcomes of the quality of the research studies. Willig argues that inappropriate comparisons of children, as reflected by uncontrolled differences between experimental and comparison groups, contribute significantly to the results of the studies, leading to diverse conclusions and controversy concerning the effectiveness of bilingual education. Perhaps more important, Willig found that the better the quality of the study, the better the outcome for bilingual programs by showing mean “effect sizes”, favoring bilingual education over submersion. For example, when statistical controls for methodological inadequacies were employed, participation in bilingual education programs consistently produced small to moderate differences favoring bilingual education for tests. Also, the author points out that the best plausible way to equate groups adequately is through the use of random assignment.
Additionally, language skills in bilinguals have almost always been appraised in terms of monolingual standards (one person with two monolingual minds), especially English–language monolingual standard (Pennycook, 2001; Grojean, 2002). Pennycook’s notion of ‘heterosis’ helps us obtain a different configuration of bilinguals and redefines bilinguals from bilingual standards. He tries to present how multiple different domains of life produce ‘heterosis’: the creative expansion of possibilities resulting from hybridity “with the notion of synergy as the productive melding of two elements to create something larger than the sum of its parts” (2001, p.9).

In a similar vein, François Grosjean (1982, 1989, 2002) pointed out that bilinguals are now seen not so much as the sum of two (or more) complete or incomplete monolinguals but rather as specific and fully competent speakers-hearers, who have developed a communicative competence that is equal, but different in nature, to that of monolinguals. Pennycook’s and Grosjean’s political view urges the decolonization of studies on bilingual/culture from a traditional standard monolingual and cultural paradigm. It also suggests that we should view bilinguals not as one person with two monolingual minds, but rather as another creation from the productive melting of two respective monolingual characteristics, which can be seen as an asset.

Some scholars (e.g., Draper & Jiménez, 1996) argue that the appearance of the English only movement in the 1980s is out of sync with global capitalism and growing demands for multilingual abilities. However, such an English only attitude reveals the hegemony of English as a global language and the hegemony of America (Macedo, et al., 2003) while exposing how the neoliberal ideology of globalization promotes the U.S. English only sentiment and English only trends worldwide and serve as neocolonialism in collaboration with postcolonialism in disguise (Phillipson, 1992, 2009a, 2009b).
In his book, *Linguistic Imperialism*, Robert Phillipson (1992) argues, “Linguistic Imperialism is a sub-type of Cultural Imperialism. Linguistic Imperialism permeates all the other types of imperialism, since language is the means used to mediate and express them (p. 65). Phillipson is saying that language power permeates political power. Following the 1992 publication of *Linguistic Imperialism*, in his book, *Linguistic Imperialism Continued* (2010), Phillipson continues to argue that the global dominance of English has persistently been maintained, invested, and legitimized while strongly influencing all domains of power including language teaching, language policy, and sociolinguistics. While Phillipson promotes that people should learn English optimally in an era of global capitalism, he insists that “English should not be learned or used in ways that serve to subjugate or obliterate other languages, for instance through a monolingual approach, which is educationally unsound and installs or reinforces an inequitable language hierarchy” (pp. 15-16). Like Pennycook and Coutand-Marin (2003) argue that English teaching is highly political, Phillipson raises ethical issues by noting that the dual role of U.S. Christian missionary activities worldwide in spreading English language through the sending of English teachers.

Phillipson additionally asserts that the hegemony of America and its influence on the global hegemony of English with global capitalism. He argues that U.S. funding in Europe has influenced the way “many academic disciplines such as anthropology, medicine, and sociology were fashioned,” the way English has become as the dominant language in EU-US negotiations, and the way “the EU has become monolingual,” “Englishization” (2010, p. 158).

In summary, the ESA phenomenon is enmeshed in a multitude of factors that are embedded in Korea’s particular historical and geographical situation combined with consequences of South Korea’s embrace of global capitalism and American mainstream
language and ideology. In the next chapter, I introduce my methodology and methods for the research.
Chapter Three
Methodology

In this chapter, I first discuss the use of ethnography and case study in relation to my research. I then describe the researcher as a tool, setting, participants, and the methods of gathering and analyzing data with interpretative techniques and data representation.

Ethnography

This study is a three-year long ethnographic study of the cross-cultural encounter that involved the children, the school, and the countries, as well as the religious, political, economic, social, cultural, linguistic, and educational confrontations. This study attempts to answer the following question, “How do the differing educational goals and expectations of Korean students and Christian school officials clash when negotiating school cultures and bicultural identities?” I first examined everyday practices by looking at what was happening or had happened in an ascending manner rather than descending manner in order to find the derivation of power (Foucault, 2003). I then connect the micro-level account of daily practices at the school to its macro-level understanding of social processes and power relations across and within the national borders. My project aims to maximize understanding of the complexity of the problems at Joshua while honoring multiple views in order to facilitate valuable debates for policy development and practice.

Ethnography is a methodology to study culture and social organization in a natural setting, conducted mainly through participant observation and interviewing over an extended period of time. Van (1988) defines ethnography as “the peculiar practice of representing the social reality of others through the analysis of one’s own experience in the world of these others” (ix). With regards to school ethnography, Erickson (1984) reports that educational researchers
need to understand routine life in educational settings and identify the processes by which educational outcomes are produced. Those processes are often invisible because they are habitual and local.

Ethnography enables us to make visible the implicit and taken-for-granted aspects of everyday life and provides interpretive and descriptive analyses of meanings that inform everyday practice (Schwandt, 2000). My crossing national border experience enabled me to stir up the taken-for-granted worlds (Denzin, 1999). As Gadamer (1983) points out, “only when our entire culture for the first time saw itself threatened by radical doubt and critique did hermeneutics become a matter of universal significance” (p.100). As an ethnographer, living in Korean and American cultures and negotiating in-between, I was able to situate myself somewhere between “stranger and friend” (Agar, 1980; Hammersley & Atkinson 1995).

I also adopted a qualitative multiple case study technique, which stresses the essence of qualitative study, “interpretation” in the contemporary time and space through “understanding” (e.g., Wolcott, 1994). The use of a multiple case study method enlightened my research because it provides multiple perspectives: focal participants, the relevant groups of the focal participants, and the interaction between them (Tellis, 1997). It also enabled me to emphasizes routine and problematic moments and events, the nuances of episodes, and meanings in the Korean youths’ individual lives and the others around them, and the interaction among them in natural settings (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Eisner, 1998; Geertz, 1973, 1988). On a micro-level, I conducted the study of fourteen Korean students at the school as individual cases while examining school officials as individual cases. At the same time, I considered school officials as a group case while considering Korean students as a group case on a broader level of international context: how opinions and attitudes are formed among the school officials and among the Korean students.
I also paid attention to language use: what language and to whom my participants used their language and in what context. Through the ethnography of communication (Gumperz & Hymes, 1986, Hymes, 1971, 1972, 1974; Saville-Troike, 1996, 2003), I was able to understand the ways in which “social meaning is conveyed, constructed, and negotiated” (Saville-Troike, 1996, p.351) and the ways in which the identity of my participants were being constructed in their use of Korean language and English language.

Unlike traditional ethnographers, I also adopt critical aspects in the ethnography. Many traditional ethnographers are concerned simply with identifying, understanding, and describing similarities and differences in thinking and behaving within and across social and cultural groups (Toohey, 1995). They take a cultural relativistic attitude, which is the widely accepted notion that all cultures are of equal values and of legitimate expressions of human experience, and thus should not be judged in terms of good, or bad; culture should be studied from a neutral perspective (Boas, 1887), emphasizing diversity and multiculturalism. On the other hand, I bring a critical awareness that all cultures have the pre-existing system, “a set of control mechanism” for “the governing of behavior” (Geertz, 1973, p.44) by which we shape our perceptions. Different cultures use different sets of control mechanisms like the way Koreans use grades as markers of being a good human being and Americans use race and language as a way of distributing privilege. By approaching culture across the nations solely from a cultural relativistic perspective, we are unable to deal with the complexities of cultural clash in a more nuanced way. Thus, critical ethnography enabled me to look beyond the cultural differences to recognize the underlying power structures that use categories of difference—race, gender, family lineage, voice, physical look, or language, for instance—to create and affirm social hierarchies.
A critical ethnographic approach provided an overarching lens for examining the struggle at Joshua in a broader context of global power structure allowing me to investigate the patterns of power within a society and the way the self is involved in the power structure. Further, critical ethnography enabled me to situate the workings of quotidian power relations at Joshua—the complicated, immediate, live, practical, and infinitesimal power mechanisms in our reality—in the context of an expansive historical and geographical perspective on politics and power: how globalization and education have precipitated the movement of cultural, linguistic, social, and economic capital in a global context.

Said (1993) insists that all categories, including religion, language, race, culture, geography, types, and mentalities are constructed in such a way as to penetrate and dominate our thinking without coercion. The image and role of each category is not a neutral designation but an evaluative interpretation that connects with power, racism, colonialism, and imperialism. These generally sanctioned images have affected the way people identify themselves. Thus, Said’s work was useful in examining why the school’s seemingly “color-blind” mentalities drove its “English-only” policies; how Korean youth learned about America and race in Korea; how their perception of America and race played out in the school; and how the Korean youth’ transnational experience shaped their identity choice. Said tells us that our job is “not to accept the politics of identity as given, but to show how all representations are constructed, for what purpose, by whom, and with what components” (Said, 1993, p. 314). This quote expresses the need to untangle the power structure of the school in order to understand the impact of its workings.

While an ethnographic study and a qualitative multiple case study are interconnected and hard to distinguish, I employed ethnography (Anderson, 1989; Lather, 1986), which emphasizes
“the complex relationship between human agency and social structure” (Anderson, 1989, p. 251) and a qualitative multiple case study in an attempt to raise serious questions about the role of schooling and bring changes to the field of education on a transnational context.

Setting

**The Korean community in a university town.** As a typical Midwestern university (MU) town with a population of 231,891 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 census), faculty members and students from around the world are neighbors, and the population included highly educated international students and their families. The number of internationals has increased dramatically since 2000. According to the figures the MU released, 3,765 internationals (out of 36,936 total university population), 5,726 internationals (out of 42,883 total university population), and 8,648 internationals (out of 42,883 total university population) were registered for fall 2000, fall 2008, and fall 2012 respectively. According to the 2005 national data from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, in the past decade as of 2005, U.S. international student and exchange visitor admissions including family members have risen by approximately 46 percent from 716,113 in 1996 to 1,046,421 in 2005. From this data, it can be inferred that the international students and visitors in this town reflected the realities across the U.S.

Diverse cultures and diverse ethnic groups were represented by a visible array of churches, stores, and restaurants in the community. Informal conversations with individuals and almost ten years of my experience living in this community suggest that the South Korean population has been growing remarkably in this community since the year 2000. According to the figures the MU released, the top three countries of origin for foreign students are South Korea, China, and India: 589 Korean, 943 Chinese, and 363 Indian internationals (out of 3,765 total internationals) for fall 2000; 1,462 Korean, 1,139 Chinese, and 724 Indian internationals
(out of 5, 276 total internationals) for fall 2008; 1,386 Korean, 3,842 Chinese, and 919 Indian internationals (out of 8,648 total internationals) for fall 2012 respectively. These figures of Korean internationals reflected the realities across the U.S. academic institutions (Chung, 2008).

According to the 2008 national data from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the top three countries of origin for foreign students were Korea, China, and India in 2008. Citizens of South Korea (142,875), China (114,802), and India (94,247) made up 37 percent of the total 1.3 million foreign academic student admissions in 2008 (occupational students and students’ family members are not included in these figures).

A majority of Koreans in the town were temporary residents (Korean sojourners) as students, visiting scholars, research workers, postdoctoral fellows, and their families staying in the U.S. from one to a few years before the completion of their studies or work (Chung, 2008). There were seven religious organizations, which include five Korean churches, one Catholic students association, and one Korean Buddhist student association in town. They socialized with one another mainly through religious organizations, mainly Korean churches.

Over one thousand Korean undergraduates attended the Midwestern University and the other institution of higher education in the community, Dreamland Junior College. While a clear number was not available, as of fall 2008, more than half of undergraduates from the two institutions came to the U.S. as middle or high school students and decided to stay in order to continue their further education according to the representatives of international offices of the MU university and Dreamland Junior college (Conversations with a church leader, 2009, 2010; Ly, 2008).

More and more South Korean pre-college aged children were believed to be living abroad, making for a new era of globalized education. These so-called early study-abroad
students comprised a prominent demographic characteristic in the local schools, which was reflective of the realities across the U.S. and even worldwide (Yim, et al., 2010).

Many academic families hosted or are parents to these students, making them the largest international population in local public school districts and local private schools. By word of mouth among Koreans in the town, the Korean ESA population had also grown remarkably since 2000, comprising a prominent demographic in the town, where schools and Korean churches were facing challenges in serving this population according to some school officials from the two school districts in town. They drew the schools into an increasingly recognized cultural phenomenon. “Joshua High School” was one such school.

Four types of Korean elementary and secondary school students were apparent in the community based on their reasons for being abroad and their living arrangement.

Type A: children of American citizens or permanent residents such as pastors, professors, who were born in South Korea.

Type B: children whose parents are currently visiting scholars or students doing graduate work at the university. The primary reason of leaving South Korea is for the benefit of one or both parents.

Type C: children whose parents initially were visiting scholars to spend their sabbatical year or students doing graduate work at the university. One parent (usually fathers) drop their families in the U.S. and go to South Korea for their job after having achieved their own goals such as getting a degree or completing their mission, what has been called the “drop and run.” These children now stay with just their mothers or a host family.

Type D: children who came alone living with extended family, family friends, and/or host families or came with one of their parents (their mothers) and lived with their mother.

My focal Korean students at Joshua belonged to Type C and Type D. They lived with siblings, roommates, mothers, or mainly with guardians. In other words, the majority of them lived without their parents or lived with their mother. The newly emerging phenomenon was that the mothers and children live overseas while the fathers live and work in South Korea, flying
over to visit a couple of times a year. The mothers who live apart from husbands are called Gireogi umma or wild goose mothers. Their original idea was for children to learn English and to study in U.S. schools, but they planned on returning to Korea. However, children have been staying longer and are not clear about their future plans; they made infrequent trips to Korea and some were losing their Korean linguistic and academic skills.

**Joshua.** Joshua Christian School was founded in 1983 as a private Christian secondary school by parents who were concerned over the lack of Christian Education at the secondary level in town. The purpose of the school was to train youth in an educational environment that promotes the faith in a Christ centered home.

For the first two years, the school used a local Church facility, and then moved to its current place located in the midst of a predominantly African-American neighborhood. Over time, preschool, kindergarten, and elementary school were added to the school. As of fall 2008, the school served children from preschool through high school.

As an independent Christian school, Joshua “reinforces Biblical values taught in the home, educates young people from a scriptural perspective, and prepares them to live, learn, and work as faithful citizens of God’s Kingdom” (Mission statement, 2008). In the 2007-08 school year, the school was serving approximately 600 students, pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. Of these, 144 students were in the high school (grades 9-12) and 80 in the junior high (grades 7-8). Students and staff were affiliated with more than 80 different local churches. The vast majority of Joshua’s students and instructors were white Americans as of fall 2008. Koreans comprised the vast majority of non-white students in Joshua. Between the 2000–01 and the 2008–09 academic years, Koreans grew from 2 out of 117 high students to 23 out of 137 high
students (See Table 1). My main research site was the high school at Joshua, which I equate with Joshua. Throughout the paper, Joshua in general refers to Joshua High School.

**Recruitment Procedure**

The project involved an eight-month informal period (July 10th 2008–February 26th, 2009) and then a thirty-six-month formal period (February 27th, 2009–March 14th, 2012).

**An eight-month informal period.**

(July 10th 2008–February 26th, 2009)

**July 2008 in Korea:** Informal conversation with neighbors, relatives, and friends about their educational experiences and their opinion on “early study abroad” phenomenon.

**Aug. 2008–Feb. 2009 in the U.S.:** With permission from a church and a school, I began informal observations and conversations at the local Korean churches. In addition, I interviewed several early study abroad students. I then moved into the high school setting. I met key informants that assisted the identification and recruitment of focal children while starting conversations with some of focal children along with some observations from a distance.

In Summer 2008 in Korea, with the approval of the IRB 08723 & 06437, I began to interview Korean mothers of my acquaintance about their educational experiences and their opinion about the “early study abroad” phenomenon. None of these mothers were related to my focal Korean students at Joshua, and they did not send their children (middle or high school students at the time of interview) abroad for study mainly due to financial reasons. Their experience with their children’s education in Korea provided valuable insights about Korean education in general in addition to those who participated in ESA project including those of Korean parents at Joshua.

I searched for public schools in the local district and Korean churches that had a relatively higher population of Korean students. Information came through key informants, educational Web sites and Web sites of Korean people since July 2008. Based on my research
for the recruitment, I selected the largest Korean church (UC), which I used to attend. Some key informants were the parents of students at Joshua and members of the Korean church whom I had known for a long time.

During the fall 2008, with permission from UC church, I began informal observations and conversations at the local Korean churches to learn about “the process of Korean adolescent boys’ identity formation. I conducted interviews with several Korean students from the Korean church about their life in the U.S. Some of them attended Joshua. I heard about the school from them and others. After learning of controversial issues at the school, including several students being expelled, my interest migrated to the school. While my curiosity became piqued about what was going on in the school over the course of the pilot study, a friend also introduced me to the Dean of Students at the school, Mr. Dean, the Dean of Students by mentioning that Mr. Dean attended a panel titled, “South Korea’s Education Exodus” in spring 2008 hosted by Asian American Studies at the University of Illinois. I then moved into the high school setting.

I illustrate the first day I entered the school, November 5th in 2008, the following vignette demonstrates Mr. Dean’s willingness to help my research with the hope that it would in turn help the school. He was well respected by school officials, as well as students at Joshua. I shared this vignette with Mr. Dean to make sure that I successfully portrayed what we exchanged during that day. My bias came through this vignette. I was critical about Korean education.

**Opening the Door of Joshua Christian High School:**
**The First Day of Meeting With Mr. Dean**

After exchanging a few e-mails with Mr. Dean, in an effort to recruit participants for my study, I walked into Joshua Christian High School. Mr. Dean showed up with warm smile and said, “I am more than happy to see you.” Clearing my throat, cautious yet trying to show

18 Pseudonyms are used for the school and the names of the participants. However, some names were changed into generic terms such as Mr. Dean or Mrs. English so that the new names can represent the official positioning.
cheerful confidence, I said, “I am happy to meet with you.” He escorted me to the School/Junior High wing with gymnasium where his office was located. On my way to entering the wing, I noticed the majority of the adults and students were “white,” with a few Asian looking students.

In Mr. Dean’s office, the clock was ticking a few minutes before 3 o’clock. The sunlight was shining through the window illuminating a picture. The picture was a map of Korea, divided into two parts (North Korea and South Korea) with a black string. It was surrounded by family photos and pictures of other school events. I was sitting facing Mr. Dean.

Mr. Dean was willing to help me find participants for my study. He mentioned the growing number of Korean students since 2000, consisting primarily of study-abroad students who did not live with their families. He also said that the Korean students were the product of a major transformation, which had taken place in the school, often jokingly referred to by American students as our “Asian Invasion.”

I responded with excitement, “A lot of Korean students! Oh, that’s VERY good! I need them. You might know by now, we, Koreans are obsessed with academia. I grew up in that culture.” Mr. Dean immediately asked me why Korean students are so seemingly obsessed with SAT scores. I pointed out that I disliked the emphasis on test taking and that was one of the reasons I came to the United States.

Mr. Dean appeared overwhelmed, stressed, burned out, and replied,

It is too much! I have 13 years of experience at Joshua. I am growing weary of teaching, in general. The issues related to my Korean students have been an additional burden. I think we’ve worked through the hard parts, but for the future, I am fearful that this phenomenon may cause a lot of social problems.

I, too, felt overwhelmed by the phenomenon or “major transformation,” to use Mr. Dean’s words, spawned by world events (global capitalism: economic oriented world). I felt connected with Mr. Dean’s concern, yet fatigued with the issues. He was speaking my language. The educational system in Korea choked me. In my head, I had a flash back to the fall of 1984 when I was in high school. I was on a subway and still in high school, crossing the Han River standing alone, close to the door, staring at the Han River through the window, and leaning toward the door with sagging shoulders. I was thinking of plunging into the Han River on my way back home from school when I scored 76 out of 100 on a test.

Thinking back, I felt outraged, feeling like I used to be a victim of the system. At the time, I did not think I was worried about my learning other than the grade. This memory made me very angry because this should have been the time to dream of my future, not to have suicidal thoughts just because of one bad grade. My parents never put any pressure on me; however, I felt that the whole educational system and even the structure of society were able to choke me even in the absence of parental coercion.
Mr. Dean brought me back to our conversation when he stated, “Korean students have drawn our school into an increasingly recognized cultural phenomenon.” Further, he added, “Ethical situations have been problematic and perhaps rate among our most unsettling challenges. Some of our Korean students feeling the pressure to succeed have sometimes gone beyond what we would consider ethical behavior.”

Mr. Dean leaned closer to me and with an incredulous and pleading tone, “We have caught students with copies of exams, received from graduates.” He continued to list the concerns he also had with Korean students: struggling with an unfamiliar American education system and a formidable language barrier while migrating toward one another socially. Further he expressed his thought that this selection was self-segregation and that it had become more obvious at lunch period and continued to remain an issue. Mr. Dean’s voice somewhat reflected a deeply felt frustration. As Korean, I felt sorry to show my people’s ugliness.

Next, Mr. Dean asked if I attended the conference at the U of I. He then confided that due to his busy schedule, he only attended his session. He wondered what they were doing with it by just studying the phenomenon without giving any practical stuff. The conference was mainly presenting the phenomenon of South Korea’s early study-abroad. However, I being well aware of this phenomenon, I myself did not feel it would be of practical interest for me at that point to attend either.

I myself had had misgivings regarding the topic of my dissertation. I had doubts about studying the Korean students, since most of them came from wealthy families. They all had benefits that had come from wealthy parents, such as private tutoring. I also did not like the competition of Korean mothers’ with regard to their children’s education; they often met and talked about their children. It seemed to me that they competed with themselves for nothing. After spending over eight years on my education as of 2008, here in the U.S., I privately asked myself why bother to use my education for those children? And then I noted the need to be vigilant about the class difference between this researcher and the participant. If had I been in that class in Korean I wondered, whether I would not, also participate in the similar practices that most upper and middle people in Korea do. As an educator once in Korea, I did know the impact of Korean educational system on Korean children, mothers, and family, as well. I was aware of complex global economic interdependence and geopolitical alliances that had shaped the experience of going abroad for study. Then, beginning to feel sympathetic about their choices. I reasoned, they were not the only ones who need to take responsibility. It seemed we, as educators, both in the U.S. and Korea — including this researcher — need to rethink what it really means for education in this increasingly globalized world. Some practical solutions are needed, and this need for practical solutions drove my research.

Mr. Dean again brought my thought back to our conversation by asking me how we could solve the problem while mentioning that there should be something practical. Accordingly, I informed Mr. Dean of my similar concern with the need for practical solutions. I commented

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19Mr. Dean shared with me his paper in progress requested for publication by the conference committee on South Korea’s Education Exodus (Chogi yuhak): Risks, Realities, and Challenges; A Conference at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, March 28–29, 2008.
that he needed me as much as I needed him. While we were talking, an Asian boy
approached Mr. Dean with his laptop through the open door. He asked, “Can I show this
PowerPoint presentation to the group?” Mr. Dean replied, “You can, but make sure to keep it
short.” The boy nodded and left. Turning back to me, Mr. Dean said, “He is a Korean boy
who is the most Americanized and wants to live as an American. You might want to study
him.”

Mr. Dean, a teacher and administrator, had worked closely with Korean students and their
families for the last thirteen years as of fall 2008. He was more like a representative of school
officials. He was well respected by other school officials. But, the Dean of Students was not
without reservations regarding the school’s role in educating the Korean students. He wrote:

While [Joshua’s] overall experience with the Korean “Education Exodus” was not
without challenges, we were blessed by the opportunity to extend our educational
ministry to a level far beyond the scope of our community. As we observed the impact of
the study-abroad experience on our Korean students and their families, we were not
always confident in our role in this fundamental cultural development. (Williams, in
press, p. 391)

In spite of the mixed feelings with regard to the Korean students’ presence in the school, I
decided to choose my participants at the school rather than the church. This decision was based
on my conversation with the Dean of Students: he identified some problems with Korean
education which were reflected in the school and initiated conversation about how the school
could improve the issues with their Korean international students.
Table 2

*Korean Student Enrollment 2000-2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>H. S. Enrollment</th>
<th>Korean Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>2 female (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2 male, 2 female (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>7 male, 1 female (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4 male, 2 female (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>6 male, 7 female (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>7 male, 7 female (12.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>9 male, 13 female (16.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>20 male, 9 female (20.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>13 male, 10 female (16.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participants**

I used a purposive sampling method in order to select my focal participants (Korean students and school officials at Joshua) and a convenient sampling method for my non-focal participants. Purposive sampling is a type of non-random sampling technique, which is selective based on the goal of the researcher. There are different types of purposive sampling techniques depending on research goals\(^20\) (Patton, 1990, 2002; Miller & Salkind, 2002). For my focal participants I used total population sampling which is a type of purposive sampling technique where I chose to examine the entire Korean population that have a particular set of characteristics as discussed below. Through a ‘purposive’ sampling technique, participants were selected based on their interest in, and willingness to commit to the project, as well as completion of the informed consent documents. The non-focal participants were part of a convenience sample of people known to the researcher: The researcher (myself) has known parents, church leaders, counselors, community activists, and teachers in the Korean church and language school since the fall of 2003. The researcher has been an insider as a parent, teacher at the Korean language school, and a graduate student, situated within the Korean community of

\(^20\) See Patton 1990, 2002 for different types of purposive sampling techniques.
this Midwestern college town. This convenience sample assisted with the identification and recruitment of participants.

**Focal Korean ESA participants (fourteen).** When I entered the site in the fall of 2008, 23 out of 127 high school students were Korean nationals: 13 Korean males and 10 female. Most of them did not live with their families. Out of a total of 23 Korean high school students, I excluded 9th graders to narrow the age gap so that I could categorize the cohort (all focal students) as 12th graders by the end of the study in May 2011.

Seventeen10th to 12th graders were Korean nationals out of a total of 98 10th to 12th graders available as of the fall of 2008. Of thirty-three juniors, five were Koreans (two females and three males); 11th grade Korean female later transferred to a public high school. Of the 34 sophomores, six were Koreans (three females and three males) and one additional Korean female transferred into the school, Joshua in the fall of 2009 as a sophomore. That is, during my research one Korean female moved out and one Korean female moved in. Thus the total of 17 Koreans in the 10th to 12th grades was stable while I observed a total of 18 Koreans over the course of the research.

Table 3

*Korean ESA Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Availability and Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class of 2009:</td>
<td>Four males and two females were available. All participated and one female partly participated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Koreans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of 2010:</td>
<td>Three males and one female were available. All participated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Koreans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of 2011:</td>
<td>Three males and four females were available. Two males participated and two females participated. Three Koreans did not participate due to their unwillingness to participate in the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven Koreans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: Seventeen Available</td>
<td>Out of seventeen, fourteen participated (nine males and five females). Four representatives were included in Chapter 7 while all fourteen were included across the analysis and throughout the dissertation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10 males and 7 females)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fourteen Korean students participated in the study; all had prior Korean schooling. Although three Korean students did not participate in the study, I had no choice but to observe them too. For example, I observed fourteen participants interact with the three participants; or, I had a chance to observe them during my observation of the fourteen participants’ interaction with the three students, as well as classroom observation. I also knew one of the participants.

Eight out of 14 had prior ESA experience in North America. Most of their parents were professors, doctors, and businessmen with high socio-economic status (See Table 2 other categories of employment). Because the grade level had changed over time, I applied the grade level of the Korean students to the time of observations and interviews. For example, if I interviewed a student on September 13th in 2009, I document “senior” although the grade level of a student was listed as a junior as of fall 2008 in the tables.

Table 4

Six 12th Grade Korean Student Enrollment in Fall 2008 (4 Males and 2 Females)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>How long at Joshua</th>
<th>ESA experience before coming to Joshua</th>
<th>Living arrangement</th>
<th>Church Attendance</th>
<th>Socio-economic status*</th>
<th>Job parents (Father/mother)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hwan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Business owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miki</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Doctor/doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kang</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Roommates **</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Run a small business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joon</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Roommates **</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Professor/professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bin</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Sam-Sung Company worker/teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuki</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Researcher judgment ** Joon and Kang used to have Joon’s brother as a guardian who attended MU university and left for Korea after graduation. Joon and Kang lived together as of fall 2008.
Table 5

*Four 11th Grade Korean Student enrollment in fall 2008 (3 males and one female, the other female student transferred to a public school)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>How long at Joshua</th>
<th>ESA experience before coming to Joshua</th>
<th>Living arrangement</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Socio-economic status*</th>
<th>Job parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suk</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Middle High</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kay</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Guardian (Drama teacher)</td>
<td>Yes Catholic church</td>
<td>High High</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chul</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinny</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YJ</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle High</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transferred girl **

* Researcher judgment
** One female student transferred to a public school.

Table 6

*Seven 10th Grade Korean Student Enrollments in Fall 2008 (3 Males and 3 Females + One Female Student Who transferred to Joshua in Fall 2009)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>How long at Joshua</th>
<th>ESA experience before coming to Joshua</th>
<th>Living arrangement</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Socio-economic status*</th>
<th>Job parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hoon</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8yrs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Professor and business owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyung</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3yrs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle High</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jung**</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4yrs</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hae</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4yrs</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle High</td>
<td>Government official</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 continues
Table 6 continues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>How long at Joshua</th>
<th>ESA experience before coming to Joshua</th>
<th>Living arrangement</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Socio-economic status*</th>
<th>Job parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sook***</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3yrs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle High</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| * Researcher judgment  
| **His mother participated. His teachers talked about him. However, he did not participate in the study. Clearly he did not want to spend time for interviews while he kept saying later. The mother’s comments about her son’s Korean peers at Joshua are included.  
| ***One female student, Sook, transferred from a public school as an 11th grader in fall 2009.  
| ****Sung and Eun did not participated. |

Parents and guardians. Twelve parents and seven guardians of 10th to 12th Korean students at Joshua participated in the study.

Table 7

Parents and Guardian Participants of Korean Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Parents and Guardians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class of 2009:</td>
<td>One parent (mother) and five guardians (one sister, one brother, one aunt, and two non biologically related Koreans*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Koreans</td>
<td>and two non biologically related Koreans*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of 2010:</td>
<td>Seven parents (four mothers and three fathers) and two guardians (Drama teacher at Joshua and one Korean*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Koreans</td>
<td>Four parents (three mothers and one father) and one American guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of 2011:</td>
<td>Nineteen parents/guardians (twelve parents and seven guardians)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven Koreans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Two Korean participants had the same guardian.

School officials at Joshua. During my research period, thirteen school officials participated. *Four out of 13 school officials left the school during my study.
Table 8

School Officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Dean/World*</td>
<td>Dean of Student, World View teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Principal</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Bible</td>
<td>Bible teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Science</td>
<td>Science teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. English*</td>
<td>English teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Younger</td>
<td>Science /PE teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Life</td>
<td>Life curriculum teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Math</td>
<td>Math Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Math</td>
<td>Math Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. History*</td>
<td>History Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Drama*</td>
<td>Drama Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Spanish</td>
<td>Spanish Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Substitute</td>
<td>Substitute Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection

Multiple types of documentation provided information sources for the study: in-depth semi-structured interviews, observations, questionnaires, written materials, school documents including school websites, emails, Facebook information, and reflection journals (in the US as well as in Korea). Most parents of these students live in Korea, and most of the students visit Korea during the summer break to go to “cram school” (extra tutoring sessions outside school) for SAT or ACT preparation. Most interview data were tape-recorded, transcribed, translated, and analyzed. Observation data were documented through field notes and reflection journals. Follow-up interview questions offered a better understanding of the changes that took place in the children. In addition to focal Korean participants, their parents/guardians, and school officials at Joshua, I also interviewed 22 American students, 10 American parents, 5 church leaders, and

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21See Appendix for interview protocols.
22After listening to the recordings repeatedly with a short memo, I transcribed only when it is clear that they are vital to the final report.
others for 1-7 times. Additionally, I included the opinions of approximately 30 non-Korean participants as a supplementary source to compare the experiences of Koreans with non-Koreans. The observations/opinions of the 30 non-Korean participants were solicited in a non-systematic fashion. I simply asked questions of non-Koreans in a local food establishment. Some of them were the parents of American students at Joshua, American ESL tutors, American guardians of the Korean students, international coordinator, a counselor at the Dreamland College and my American friends who were also parents of American students.

In order to investigate one of the issues at the school, i.e., the school’s English-Only policy, I interviewed school officials, Korean students, American students, Korean parents, and others while observing Koreans interactions with school officials and Korean students and American students at the school. I also included other sources including research review, document, historical background, community, economic condition, educational system, school website, and Facebook.

A brief of summary data collection includes following formal period.

**A thirty six-month formal period (February 27th, 2009–March 14th, 2012)**

**March. 2009–May 2009 in the U.S.:** After I established a presence in the school, I began formal classroom observations that allowed me to observe Korean students in a natural setting. I sent teacher and school personnel questionnaire through e-mails that helps me construct individual interview. I focused on six 12th, one 11th, and three 10th graders (a total of ten).

**Summer 2009 in Korea:** I interviewed some focal Korean participants and their parents. And follow-up in depth individual interviews on educational experiences of my friends who had not sent their children abroad for study, and their children based on the conversations during the summer of 2008.

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23 The coordinator was hired under “International Home Exchange” program. She got paid by arranging an international student to an American family who want international experience by volunteering to have international student without charging any fee. She herself also had a lot of paying international students from Germany, Russia, Korea, and other countries over time.

24 The counselor, African American, perceived Korean international students gatherings to be “self-segregation” and to be problematic.
Spring 2010 in the U.S.: Three more 12th graders and four more 11th graders agreed to join the study as potential participants, making it a total of 17. Ten of them graduated while the remaining 7 children who were 12th graders as of fall 2010.

Spring 2011 and Summer 2011 in the U.S. and Korea: Out of the remaining 7 children, only four students participated.

Fall 2011 and spring 2012 in the U.S.: Follow-up interviews, observations, and Facebook investigations still continued and necessary information gathered.

In spring 2009 with a newly approved IRB with Mr. Dean’s and Mrs. Principal’s permission, I began visiting the school in order to blend into the environment as much as possible and to establish a presence in the school. Mr. Dean tried to help my research by introducing me to the school officials and the students at the school. I began formal classroom observations that allowed me to observe Korean students in a natural setting. I intentionally tried to socialize with American students first lest the Korean students might feel uncomfortable due to my Koreanness. I also politely declined Mr. Dean’s assistance when Mr. Dean offered to help me by gathering Korean students as a group in one setting where I could ask the students to participate in the study and do survey questionnaire or lead a group discussion. Although this would be a convenient way of reaching the students, I intentionally avoided the group gathering or the group discussion, lest the individuals’ opinions should influence one another. I wanted to study their experience in a natural setting. At first, I chose to use participant observations then, switched to use pure observation because I sensed my participation in the classroom might have influenced the nature of classroom. My presence, after some time, however, seemed to be of minimal influence in the behavior of the students in their daily school life.
Table 9

One Student’s Daily Schedule Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>R#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period 1 (8:10am-8:54am)</td>
<td>SPA 3-A</td>
<td>R# 114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 2 (8:59am-9:43am)</td>
<td>Chem-A</td>
<td>R# 218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 3 (9:48am-10:32am)</td>
<td>APOL-A</td>
<td>R# 217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 4 (10:37am-11:20am)</td>
<td>PCALC/TROG-A</td>
<td>R# 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 5 (11:20am-12:20pm)</td>
<td>S HALL-5A1</td>
<td>R# 219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 6 (12:25am-1:09pm)</td>
<td>JOURN-A</td>
<td>R# 113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 7 (1:14pm-1:58pm)</td>
<td>11 ENG-B</td>
<td>R# 113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 8 (2:03pm-2:47pm)</td>
<td>S HALL-8</td>
<td>R# 216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 9 (2:52pm-3:35pm)</td>
<td>APUSGOV-A</td>
<td>R# 216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday JH/HSCHAP-A Gym</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to investigate what it means to be a Korean student in the U.S. setting, I had to engage with each student in a variety of settings: school, church, and so on, and speak with different individuals—family members, peers, church leader, and neighbors in order to create a portrait of the experience. The way of collecting data varied among participants depending on the participant and the situation. I observed the interpersonal events/activities in natural and physical settings; overall physical characteristics of each Korean (e.g., height, weight, hair color, eye color); interpersonal verbal (e.g., code-switching, code-mixing) and nonverbal interactions (e.g., how he or she walks, talks, eats, smiles, body language, mannerisms, gestures). This comes from my belief that a person’s over-all appearance in a sense affects the way he feels about himself and he behaves.

School observations included classroom, cafeteria, and hallway. At the school, overall, I individually asked each Korean student if he or she would like to volunteer to participate in the study. After gaining signed informed consent documents from the student, I began to observe the student from a distance trying not to interfere in the student’s activity by trying not to show
any interest, rather interacting with other students and teachers. I focused on one student each
day while mainly observing from a distance in the classrooms, cafeteria, and hallway at the
school. Thus, my schedule often changed to that of the student. This enabled me to observe the
Korean student’s interactions with other students and teachers, as well.

In the classrooms, I observed teachers’ instruction and the student’s responses and
behaviors. While following each Korean student to world view, civic, history, language art,
science, Bible, physical education, chapel, math and Spanish classes ranging from 3 to 10 times
for approximately 44 minutes per observation during the school year. Through the observations,
I explored each teacher’s approaches and each student’s responses by taking notes. In addition to
the classroom observations, I observed each student informally in the cafeteria and the hallways.
In the classrooms, I focused on the followings: (a) the topic and content of the instruction, (b) the
teacher’s instructional style, (c) classroom activities, tasks, and assignments, (d) the Korean
students’ participation in classroom activities, (e) the teacher’s responses, especially to the
Korean students, and (f) the Korean students’ interactions with other students and the teacher
(paying particular attention to the effective communication of the classroom activities).

In the school cafeteria and hallway I focused on the following: (a) With whom do they eat
lunch? (b) What do they eat (from school menu or lunch box from home? (c) Whom do they
interact with? (d) How do they behave? (e) What topic do they talk about, and (f) what language
do they use?

In other settings such as home, church, restaurant, etc., I observed each child two to five
times, focusing on their interaction with other Koreans and Americans along with informal
observation of various communicative events such as gestures, code-switching/code-mixing. My
position was a researcher as well as a friend/church member so that I might be able to observe them naturally without the inhibiting possibility my presence might create.

After observing for a while, I actively conducted semi-structured interviews with the students (two to ten times), their teachers and administrators (one to five times), parents, church leaders, and friends for about one to five hours per meeting along with several informal conversations and e-mail exchanges. I, also, tried to observe the student in multiple other settings such as church, homes, and public places across the national borders of the U.S. and South Korea. I interviewed four mothers of Korean students at Joshua, and I saw or interviewed three Korean students in Korea during summer break.

Additionally, I utilized Facebook to gather information about the student including whom they interacted with and what language they used. To sum up, to examine a focal Korean student, I observed the student and tried to include an interview with the student, the parents, his/her school teachers and officials, his/her Korean peers, his/her American peers, and his/her neighbors in both South Korea and the US.

I sent most teachers and school personnel questionnaires through e-mails that helped me construct individual interviews. The idea of convenience sampling is well-known in qualitative research (Saumure & Given, 2008). The technique allows a researcher to study a phenomenon within a context in which the opportunities to select participants that meet strict criteria may be limited. I argue that the method used to conduct interviews is analogous to convenience sampling, something I term, “convenience interviews.” That is, I was able to collect information based on the participants’ schedules, willingness to participate, provision of transportation, moods, and geographic location (U.S. or South Korea).
By the end of spring 2009, the main issues emerged. In Summer 2009, 2010, and 2011 in Korea, I interviewed five focal participants and their parents while following up with in depth individual interviews on educational experiences of my friends and their children based on the initial conversations during the summer of 2008. Primarily, these interviews and observations took place in the Joshua High School setting and the church settings in fall 2008, spring 2009, and fall 2010.

While I was actively involved at the school, I got an email from Mr. Dean. The email on May 26th in 2009 said, “…Let’s meet at 9:00. Could you please bring the interview permission forms you've had students and guardians sign so I can make copies for our files?” I speculated that there must have been a meeting at the school where they raised my way of being as a researcher. The next day I was called to the Dean’s office. The following is my journal entry after meeting with Mr. Dean.

After exchanging a few ominous e-mails with Mr. Dean, Dean of Students, I was called to a meeting with the interview permission forms I have had students and guardians sign that he asked for. Heart is pounding. Stomach doesn't seem right. Breathe in and breathe out, walking into his classroom cautiously, yet with a big smile [Reflective Journal 5/27/09].

Mr. Dean as a person who introduced my research to the school expressed his concern with my being a researcher at the school. He informed me that Mrs. Principal did not want me to come to the school. He noted,

We want to figure out how to do this right. There are a lot of difficulties we endure…a lot of things we want to do, including bringing in your research, but we feel that there are some fear that in the course of doing research, particularly what the committee at the university might want you to do with this research. We don’t want to wind up being the focus of criticism for something we did not even set out to try to do. For some reason, in the last couple of weeks of school, many teachers were coming to me seemingly very concerned about what you are up to. Mrs. Principal, she seems very concerned. (5/27/09)
The school was worried that my research might bring a negative image of the school to the community, especially the Korean community in town. After discussing my research with Mr. Dean including the purpose of my study and helping clean up his classroom, and doing other nice things for the school, the school allowed me to continue my research. However, since then, I very cautiously conducted the research, trying to be quiet and invisible.

On May 5th in 2010, I happened to encounter Mrs. Business Manager. Our eyes met suddenly. I could also see Mrs. Principal and Mrs. Math near Mrs. Business Manger. They were walking on the hallway at 7:40 am. When Mrs. Business Manager saw me, she looked puzzled and seemed to try to make the other two aware of my presence. As soon as they saw me, I greeted with a big smile, “How are you?” Mrs. Principal smiled back awkwardly. I knew that they were uncomfortable with my presence. Inevitably ethnographic fieldwork like mine can be risky to one’s emotions and safety, having differential effects on the participants and researcher. Gaining acceptance into the site and acquiring the assistance of participants can be an exciting and emotionally taxing process. I tried to be invisible as being a quiet observer.

From spring 2011, I only visited the school when necessary because words and observations were routine, and they confirmed older data. By March 2012, the data-collection component of my dissertation was completed. I conducted about 300 hours of observation at the school, church, homes, and other public places mainly with 14 focal participants along with in-depth interviews for 2-10 times.

Data Analysis

Data collection, analysis, and interpretation occurred in an iterative process across the different types of data. This process was bolstered by member checking, triangulation, and extended fieldwork to increase the validity of my study. While the initial data gathered were
analyzed, new questions evolved, and follow-up data were collected. To increase the validity of the study, I adopted a) Member Check: I received the feedback and discussed my interpretations and conclusions with my participants for verification; b) Theory and Data Triangulation: I used multiple theories and perspectives (e.g., the views of parents and students as well as teachers) and multiple data sources (e.g., interview, observation, documentation) to help understand and interpret the data; c) Extended Time: a three-year period of time enables me to find ways to use multiple rather than single observations of the same thing.

Following “Grounded Theory” methodology (Glaser, 1969; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) that allowed the “emergence” of categories from the data, I adopted multiple case study analysis (Stake, 2006) to systematically explore the conflict at the school. Using the constant-comparative method, I looked for themes within and across the cases and formulate analysis codes. First, I paid most attention to each individual case while relating the overarching thematic question to the situational uniqueness of the individual case and anticipating “a tension between the particular and the general as a healthy tension” all across my fieldwork (Stake, 2006, p.10). First, I read and re-read the text while listening to tape recordings several times. I took a note of any impression I had.

Second, in order to gain an overall picture of one individual (e.g., each Korean student and each school official), I transcribed and translated quality data case by case. In the case of Korean-language data, it was transcribed. I then translated into English. I only translated and transcribed the parts that are relevant to my findings. I used literary translation not literal translation. Korean to English translation was a challenge, especially finding “equivalent lexical

25 “How do the differing educational goals and expectations of Korean students and Christian school officials clash when negotiating school cultures and bicultural identities?”
items” when Korean cultures are different from American culture and my participants were using Korean the language of adolescence as Larson (1984) notes:

When the cultures are similar, there is less difficulty in translating. This is because both languages will probably have terms that are more or less equivalent for the various aspects of the culture. When the cultures are very different, it is often difficult to find equivalent lexical items. (Pp. 95-96)

Therefore, I chose “literary” translation, which is a meaning-based translation while taking context as “an original subjective activity at the center of a complex network of social and cultural practices” (Bush 1998, p.127) rather than “literal” translation, which is "word-for-word" direct translation. I translated Korean into English at the level of paragraph level rather than at the level of the sentence, phrase, word, and syllable. For example, I read the following paragraph repeatedly and then translated it into English focusing on what my Korean male participant wanted to convey. Often, I had to add some words such as subject, change word order, and take out some honorific endings in order to help the reader understand what he meant as follows:

My mom is very social and has a sense of humor and is always a center of her friends. With my mom, it is love and hatred relationship. It is, I guess, because [we] have similar personality. Out of hot temper, we argue hard, but we miss each other if we are apart. [When I visit Korea,] my mom prepares good food for me, but [we] get a little upset and end up fighting in just less than three days and [she] asks me to eat ramen by myself if I am hungry. In this respect, it is not bad idea [for us] to be separated.

For example, different word order exists between Korean language and English language. In case of Korean, to express the meaning of “I love you”, the following order should be applied:

I you love. What matters here is that the relationship between subject and object is established
before the appearance of the verb, which shows the event while, in case of English, the relationship between subject and object can be established only through the intervention of the verb which represents the event. This proves that the defining factor of meaning is concentrated on this subject in case of English while subject and object share the defining factor of meaning in Korean.

Another difference exists in terms of word omission. If we look more into Korean, we often see the omission of the subject, thus making the defining factor of meaning (subject) not play a role in determining the meaning of statement or sentence. A third difference exists in terms of honorific expression. The reason for the development of an honorific expression in Korean comes from the fact that the subject, the defining factor of meaning, in sentence shares the influential with object as well as it gives up the role of defining factor of meaning as is often the case. If we take it into consideration that an honorific expression can be understood through not only linguistics level but also cultural level, language acquisition theory without the consideration of different worldview which is described by different language can be limited to only descriptive dimension. Therefore, to increase the validity of my translation, I used cross-examination by having my Korean colleagues look at some of the Korean written data.

Third, after translating into English and transcribing data, I paid most attention to each individual case while relating the overarching theme, the conflict at Joshua to the situational uniqueness of the individual case. Additionally, I anticipated “a tension between the particular and the general as a healthy tension” all across my fieldwork (Stake, 2006, p.10). Throughout the research, I identified similarities to investigate differences. I also identified differences to investigate similarities.

On a macro level, I focused on what the East and the West had in common, as a way to
eliminate these similarities as causes of the difference: the absence of something is equally significant as the visible presence of what we are studying. Therefore, I focused on what South Korea and the U.S. had in common, as a way to eliminate these similarities as causes of the difference. Cross-case analysis between the school and Korean students involved issues surrounding the following were considered: culture, language, nationality, race/ethnicity, religion, gender, class, nation, and educational context in both countries. The categories shaped by Christian education, guardianship, parenting, transformation by the gospel, and academic mediocrity; Korean education fever, grade obsession, cheating, English learning, English only, and model minority; global evangelical mission and global citizenship; and neoliberalism, human capital, and family investment.

On a micro level, I focused on what one Korean males and another males had in common by identifying similarities to investigate differences. Even within one same individual, I identified similarities and differences over time. Several categories for individual cases were shaped by the individual educational experiences in Korea and in the U.S., others’ by perceptions of the individual with regard to parents, school teachers, church members, and friends. Cross-case analysis among Korean students involved the categories shaped by the individual educational experiences and socialization in Korea and the U.S., as well as others’ perceptions of the individual (parents, school teachers, church members, and friends).

Additionally, while contextualizing each participant on both a micro-and macro- level, themes and patterns emerged around individual identity, group identity, and global identity, as well as the individual’s choice of nationality, global citizenship, and cultural identity. These themes and patterns included the following: personal and familial background, as well as social, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic/racial background within institutional power structures. Such
categories to address the research questions are as follows: inner/personal and social/collective identity; youth experience and unequal social relations of gender, race, class, and nation; youth culture and resistance through rituals; power and public policy; cultural imperialism and center-periphery relations; and the impact of identity studies across the disciplines in education (Bazeley, 2009; Pope, et al., 2000).

**Interpretation**

I relied heavily on direct interpretation of an individual’s experience, action and speech, e.g., the basic unit of verbal thought, written language, gesture, and electronic mediation in order to analyze my data. Following Vygotsky’s sociocognitive/cultural approach, Penuel and Wertsch (1995) assume that such mediated means as tools, languages, and other sign systems play a critical role in forming and representing identity; the individual self (agent) uses mediated means that are embedded in sociocultural, historical, and institutional contexts. These mediational means, or cultural tools, are “not simply as representational systems, but as resources in action. …not simply servants of individuals’ purposes, but in important ways, transform those purposes and mediate mental function” (ibid., p.86). In turn, such cultural mediational tools facilitated inner mental functioning, as well as social interactions, making possible fashioning another version of identity and social change. By examining Korean students’ use of cultural mediators such as tools, languages, and other sign systems, I understood their relationships to others, their social interactions, and their inner thoughts and feelings. Code-switching was one unit of analysis for investigating the relationship between language and identity (Tracy, 2002), for example, the language choices these adolescent students made, language loss, and the revelation of their identity as a starting point for understanding particular attitudes and behaviors.
Wolcott (1994) argues that description is the core foundation of qualitative work for analysis and interpretation, as well as an important way of understanding the phenomena by itself; description is not just putting raw data on the pages, rather it is analytic and interpretive thick description through the filtering of selection and exclusion. In his view, description tells not only who, what, where, when, and how but also why. Lofland (1971, pp. 128-129) points out the importance of balancing between description and analysis. If too much emphasis is put on description, it might not be persuasive because it does not provide structure and pattern to the study. On the other hand, if too much emphasis is put on analysis, it might deaden the world of the participant by filling up too many abstract categories. Lofland (1971) calls the harmony of the two “analytic description.” Geertz (1973) identifies thick description with interpretation, suggesting ethnographers “inscribe” social discourse rather than write or describe because inscription is accompanied by in-depth insight of the researcher.

In this sense, Denzin (1994) defines the thick description as interpretative description. Stake (1995) also argues the fact that “thick description is not complexities objectively described. It is the particular perceptions of the actors,” (p. 42) such as “the testimony of participants and the judgments of witnesses (ibid, 2005, p.454),” suggesting that description and interpretation come together, appearing as one.

Even though researchers’ voices are embedded all the way through, as seen by what Geertz (1988) calls “I-witness, “the studies center around the following definitions:

1. Description emphasizes the world of participants by zooming in on experiential knowing mainly through the activities of the case;
2. Analysis emphasizes the scientific and systematic world of the data;
3. Interpretation emphasizes the world of us, zooming out and making meaning in a broader context.
In the present study, each participant’s experiences were enlightened mainly through analytic thick description (inscription) weaving with the first, second, and third-person voices of the researcher and the participants. In qualitative inquiry, text transforms from “field text” to “research text,” to “interpretive text,” and to ‘public text,” while knowledge transformation continues with the change of the focus, context, and viewpoint (Denzin, 1994). Mainly, the voices were represented in narrative dialogue or story form. The nature of stories is “open ended, inconclusive, and ambiguous, subject to multiple interpretations” (Denzin, 1999, p. 100) as van Manen (1990) points out, stories have long continued to have a low status in scholarly writing because of “dubious factual evidence” (p. 118). Therefore, I triangulated initial findings from across the different types of data along with member checking during my iterative data analysis. As Denzin (1989b) suggests, I used several kinds of triangulation such as the following: 1) multiple observations and perspectives of the same thing and the same person, e.g., the views of parents and focal kids as well as teachers; 2) multiple methods on the same thing, e.g., observation, interview, Facebook; and 3) I checked carefully to decide how data warranted generalization, checking such things like do my conclusions generalize to other times, to other places, to other individuals, to other populations?

The goal of triangulation of my research was to ascertain consistency, as well as inconsistency in order to explore a deeper meaning of my data. As Patton (2002) cautions the goal of triangulation is not to secure consistency across data; in fact, such inconsistencies may provide an opportunity to uncover hidden meaning in the data. For example, if my interview data were not consistent with my observation, this inconsistency would be a good chance to delve further into the reason why they were not consistent for deeper meaning.
Representation

**Story line.** The final write-up of the stories involved three processes: transcription, translation, and creation. Although the stories were created based on the interviews and observations, I created the final stories in a way to help the reader understand topic/theme better (Carspecken, 2005; Denzin, 1999; Eisner, 1988; van Manen, 1990).

The story was also created partly from the researcher’s memory. For example, after transcribing and translating my observation of Kang, my interview with Kang, my interview with others about Kang, I found that Kang was popular with his Korean peers both in the U.S. and in Korea, but not with American peers. Although he was very social, he was not able to socialize with his American peers due to his language and cultural barriers. I saw two different selves inside of him. With Koreans, he functioned so magnificently while he did not function well with American peers at Joshua. Then, I selected the relevant data to this finding, people around him, and my observation, put them under the theme of “He had two selves”; and then created his stories. Some of them are as follows:

A. From field note, memory, observation, impression, interview, etc.

Most of time at the school, Kang was quiet and sleepy. He usually sat together with another quiet Korean male student. However, he became a totally different person within a Korean cultural environment. After several attempts to set up a meeting, I was able to meet Kang at a Korean restaurant. The minute I saw him at the restaurant, it appeared as though somebody had infused blood into his dead cells. He was a totally different person than the one I had observed in the classroom. His voice and his gestures were animated…. He continued to articulate his thoughts in a sophisticated manner with his Korean words, including honorific expressions. His Korean male friend worked at the restaurant we visited. They were joking around while exchanging greetings. Whenever I met with Kang, his Korean friends who did not go to Joshua gave him a ride or waited for him. They appeared to be very closely tied together and faithful to one another.

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26That includes my interviews with him as follows; 4/1/09 Korean restaurant; 4/15/09 college library; 5/1/09 subway restaurant; 5/12/09 school library; and 5/13/09 school exit gate
In Korea, he used to be a class leader in his Korean school, not because of his academic record but because of his popularity among friends. While Kang was well-rounded enough to get along with all types of kids, he belonged to his group that consisted of kids who were mostly similar to him. According to Kang, the requirements to belong to his group consisted of studying hard and well, being humorous, liking sports such as baseball, soccer, and basketball, and not misbehaving. He had fond memories such as running away from teachers and watching kids physically fight. Kang began to collect the reminiscences of his school life back in Korea:

B. Insert evidence from interview.

(One day, there was fighting going on in a class, we flocked together and wanted to see what was going on. Another day, there was another incident happening. Continuous events occurred, which would cause immense excitement. On weekends, we arranged meetings with females from an all-girls school. I went to an all-boys school, so it was exciting.)

C. Insert evidence from interview.

Two weeks later, he elaborated his exciting and fun youth culture in Korea by noting there was no fun in Joshua, [Insert evidence from interview] he complained, “[조슈아]에선 그냥 수업만 하다가 오죠. 어떤 재미있고 신나는 일 이 없어요” (4/15/09). ([In Joshua], there is nothing more than just taking courses. I can’t find any exciting activities and entertainment at the school)

Kang really missed his enjoyable social life in Korea. He had a lot of Korean friends in Korea with whom he still kept in contact. He continued to articulate his thoughts in a sophisticated. He also had a leadership position only among the Koreans and was popular only within his Korean peers at Joshua as the following example illustrated.

D. Insert evidence from observation

On one afternoon in May 2009, I entered the school auditorium. It was PE class. Most of the students were Korean males from freshman to senior. I saw only two American males. They were setting up for the play the next day, by laying down rugs. Some Koreans bowed down to me, staying quietly “hello” in Korean with honorific language and gesture. I replied in Korean, “hello!” in non-honorific, yet with a great smile. Mrs. Principal and Mr. PE were giving the students directions. Soon after, the teachers left the students to finish on their own. One Korean senior student was pulling a cart filled with rolled up rugs. Some Korean students were unloading the rugs. Others spread the rugs out, and Kang duck taped them so they wouldn’t move. Still others brought in chairs.
They were working in teams. I helped Kang with the taping and stomping the rugs down flat. One Korean sophomore student asked Kang in Korean with an honorific expression, “Older brother! Where should it go?” The senior Korean, Kang, replied in Korean, “Do it this way,” demonstrating how it should be done. There was an established social structure along with unwritten rules among the Korean students. Kang was seen to initiate the activity and to give some directions while wiping sweat from his face.

Then, I concluded that he could not function well with American culture due to his lack of English skills and knowledge about American youth culture. This finding of one Korean student contributed to the findings within Korean students at Joshua.

In addition, I incorporated non-language elements, such as facial expression, body gesture, the tone of language, and some other elements that come with human language to enact specific identities and activities on an as needed basis.

The next chapter addresses how Korean students came to Joshua by providing South Korean educational context, the lived reality of South Korean children, and the context of Joshua at the time of Korean students’ arrival at the school. Additionally, Korean educational practices in Korea are presented by introducing the lived reality of South Korean children through stories of Korean focal participants and their mothers.
Chapter Four

A Romantic Rendezvous With Global Mission

Joshua’s Korean students and their parents alike, wanted English language learning and a U.S. high school diploma as a stepping-stone to gain admittance to an American college while the school needed applicants to fill their space while maintaining their Christian unity and diversifying the school. This chapter details why the Korean students at Joshua decided to go abroad for study, why they came to select Joshua, how Joshua came to admit a Korean population, how the school dealt with its growing Korean student population, what curricular, ideological, personnel-related, and other changes were implemented by the school as a result of having these Korean students. This chapter provides background to the following chapters, which address how two cultures, South Korean educational culture and Joshua’s Christian missionary goal, clashed when Korean students came to the school.

Push Factors for the Korean Students

A top university degree along with English proficiency fulfills South Koreans’ image of life success as Hoon, one focal male participant’s stated life goal, “if I could not have good grades, could not go to a top university, and could not speak fluent English, I would suffer for the rest of my life.” (Interview, 5/13/09). His attitude manifests the South Korean image of success. In pursuit of this Korean version of a life-success project, Korean ESA was a necessary choice for the Korean parents and their children at Joshua. It was a survival strategy to maintain or secure their social status and economic capital.

While the reasons for coming to the U.S. for study were multiple (e.g., dissatisfaction with South Korean education; search for English language learning, liberal education and cosmopolitan desire; escape from extreme competition, bullies, and maladjustment to Korean
schooling), the majority of the Korean students at Joshua escaped the Korean competitive educational system; many came to the U.S. mainly because their grades were not high enough to go to a top-tier college in South Korea as in the findings in Ahn’s study (2009) even after Korean parents devoted a great deal of energy and money to prepare their children for admission to top universities. This finding is also generally consistent with the KEDI survey (2005), which reported the main reasons of Korean ESA participation: English proficiency, high competition for top-tier college admission, high cost for private after-school education, preference for a foreign degree, and the aspiration for global citizenship.

Expectation of private schooling has become the norm; virtually all the focal Korean students at Joshua attended after-school programs in Korea prior to their migration to the U.S. Getting a degree from a top tier university seems to be “must” to secure a decent job as South Korea fills with college graduates. According to Korean national statistics, 83.8 percent of all high school graduates went on to college in 2008. Consequently, fewer decent jobs remain even for top tier college graduates. Consequently, competition becomes extremely intense for getting a decent job even for graduates of a top tier university (S. Yoon, 2012).

My interview with a job recruiter at a leading company, 3M in Korea on August 9th in 2011, similarly reflects such reality that there are too many well-qualified applicants who are graduates of top universities. This situation has produced the phenomenon of “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer” among universities in South Korea. It gets much harder to be admitted to a prestigious university; and it gets harder for provincial universities to attract enough students to meet their quota of classes, so sometimes they have to actively recruit students for their university. This extreme gap between the two has been continuously accelerated, often times, leaving the professors at non-prestigious universities jobless (Interview with one professor in
Korea, 7/17/11).

Korean parents also sought an opportunity for their children to develop global citizenship and/or cosmopolitan human capital\(^{27}\) along with the development of English language proficiency to become competitive in the twenty-first century global economy. Thus, English learning and the development of global citizenship were also reasons for studying in the U.S., yet secondary incentives.

While Korean educational culture is widely acknowledged to be dysfunctional and hard on children, it is hard to fix in the highly competitive social system of modern South Korea (e.g., Abelmann, et al, 2012; Byun, 2010; Cho, 2007).

All Korean focal students and their parents I interviewed were also well aware of the problems with South Korean educational culture (e.g., Oh, 2000). They called attention to grade obsession, South Korea’s fixed school curriculum, rote learning rather than intellectual freedom and potential, inefficiency in English language teaching, the grandiose enterprise of the private after-school market, and excessive competition for entrance into top-tier universities.

However, given the situation of high competition for a top-tier college and a decent job, Korean parents placed enormous demands on themselves, as well as on their children as primary educational managers and consumers. Most Korean parents of my participants are also themselves highly educated which is consistent with the findings from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (2005) that 97.3% of Korean ESA students’ parents had at least a bachelor’s degree. Overall, Koreans are highly educated. Especially, Korean mothers, in general, played a critical role in managing their children’s education (Abelmann & Park, 2004; 

\(^{27}\) See Schattle (2007, 2009) and Madeleine (2012) for the concept of global citizenship. Cosmopolitan human capital is often defined as the qualities that enable individuals to work effectively in diverse cultures across national borders (Haas, 2006).
In my study, Korean mothers in particular, expressed their confusion and their own stress over the situation where high grades were needed for admission into one of the few high-ranked Korean universities.

Nevertheless, they felt the need to push their children to get high grades because a strong academic record is required for access to a top-tier college, without a degree from which one cannot find a decent job. In addition, they thought failure in education and in the job market brings shame and dishonor to one’s family. Korean mothers were in dilemma in their desire that their children (e.g., S. J. Park, 2012) experience more creative education; however, they realized the importance of standards and grades to get admittance to the most prestigious colleges. Given the situation, the daily lives of the students I studied had been dominated by high expectations from their parents and by focus on high-stakes testing of their academic achievements.

For example, in my interview with Miki on May 27th in 2009, Miki reported that in Korean elementary school she scored an average of 95 overall. However, her mother was not generous in praising her achievement. Even when Miki was ranked first in her class, getting 98 out of 100, her mother asked her why she did not get 100. Miki felt that her mother, who was intelligent and pretty, did not understand her. Miki thought that she was measured by her mother’s wishes. In middle school, the situation with her mother became even more difficult. Miki used to come home around 12:30 a.m. after taking several private lessons. She did not like science, ending up with about 87 out of 100 overall. Her mother complained about her poor performance; her mother’s nagging, high-pitched, operatic voice made her miserable and angry. Sometimes her mother would nag until 2 a.m., so that she wouldn’t be able to go to bed. Her mother used to say that Miki was smart, but was not doing her best and that was why she did not get better grades. Miki told her mother that that was all she could do for her mother.
When I met Miki’s mother, she surprised me by stating that she had sent Miki abroad for study because she thought that there is no humanity in Korean education, that it is too focused on grades. “Why do you think most parents want to send their kids abroad?” she asked me. “Why do you think white-collar people give up their positions in Korea and migrate to the U.S.? Even those who are lower middle class?” (Interview, 5/25/09)

Miki’s mother was clearly of two minds. She criticized the Korean education system vigorously, but she remained focused on her daughter’s grades and school performance. This ironic dissonance between her professed disapproval of Korean education and her behavior toward her daughter seemed to reflect the values and goals of that same Korean system. In the face of fierce competition, parents either caved in or went along with the excesses of after-school tutoring, etc., or they gave up, or they sent their children to study abroad.

Korean parents at Joshua in general concluded that seeking success in Korea was futile for their children and that it was preferable both financially and emotionally to send them to study abroad. In fact, many Korean parents at Joshua believed that it would be better for their children to get their degrees from a second- or third-tier U.S. college with better English skills and a broader cultural perspective than getting a degree from a second- or third-class college in South Korea. Thus, Korean parents at Joshua were anxious to send their children to English-speaking advanced countries for their children’s college education.

For Korean students, Joshua was just the American education they happened to end up with—less a matter of choice than of taking the only practical route open to them. Most of them came because of their connections with the existing Korean Christian community and MU University in town. Most Korean students ended up specifically at Joshua through word of
mouth from relatives, acquaintances, friends, and siblings living in the area, which were related
to the University of the town as visiting scholars and students and local Korean churches.

The Korean community thrived through family and community support around churches
and academic communities in town. The Korean population at Joshua was rooted in a strong
Korean Christian community connected with the university. There were six local Korean
churches which many Koreans in the community attended. Koreans received strong support
through the churches, especially the largest church named UC in town. Most Koreans attended
UC in town that mainly served first-generation parents and 1.5-generation immigrant children, as
well as non-immigrants regardless of their religious status. UC systematically provided a strong
social network and resources for Korean visiting scholars, college students, and ESA students.
Fourteen out of eighteen Korean 10th to 12th graders attended a Korean church and nine out of
the fourteen attended UC church during my fieldwork.

Pull Factors for the School, Joshua

The following information is based on my interview with several school officials and the
school’s documents/websites. Joshua is an “evangelical,” but not fundamentalist Christian
school. According to Mr. Dean (Interview, 5/15/11), “Evangelical” is a word with many
meanings. Most basically it is used to identify churches that focus on “spreading the Gospel”
through preaching and evangelism, drawing people to a personal conversion experience in
contrast to churches that are more “sacramental” in orientation, with communion/mass as the
central act of worship and a more corporate sense of salvation in Christ.

Mr. Dean also noted that in the early 20th century, “evangelical” churches in America felt
threatened by the ways modern science and higher education seemed to challenge traditional,
historic teachings about the Bible, human origins, and morality. More conservative groups
within evangelicalism isolated themselves and drew strict lines around acceptable teaching and behavior. These groups were called “fundamentalists” because of their own determination to stick closely to what they understood as “fundamental” Christian teachings that were being lost in “modern” culture. They gained a reputation of being separatist, strictly judgmental, and often ridiculed as ignorant and close-minded. Mr. Dean continued to inform me that many small, private Christian schools were founded during this era with the same mindset, seeking to “protect” children from the “evils” of modern public education and cultural “decline.”

By the middle of the century, some Christians were beginning to see the problems with this approach, and they purposefully tried to re-engage culture with traditional Biblical teachings without being isolated and judgmental. They reclaimed the “evangelical” label to distinguish themselves from “fundamentalists.” They tried to be more open to working within the cultural moment (while still maintaining Biblical standards) and strengthen their academic integrity with modern curricula and teaching methods. Joshua is one such school.

Originally, Joshua was uniquely interracial among Christian schools in the early 80s. The first principal was African-American. However, as time went by, in the middle of 90s, it became predominantly white and remains so. According to several school officials, for the last several years as of fall 2008, the school had made a determined effort to connect with local African-American churches and their own neighborhood. The school gained new junior high students through a relationship with a K-6 school run by a black congregation in town, and because of increased dissatisfaction with public schools in the local African-American community which helped the school turn back toward its racially diverse origins. According to the Dean of students at Joshua, for the 2007-2008 academic year, grades 7-12 more closely mirrored the community with 75% white, 9% black, and 14% Asian.
As for Joshua, the school genuinely wanted to offer the educational opportunity to those they felt were a good fit for the school. According to school officials, the school’s outreach to Korean families was genuinely motivated by its desire to bring gospel-based education to a wider, more culturally diverse, population. While that was one reason, it seems safe to say that it was also the case that there was room for Korean applicants because of declining application numbers. Based on an interview with Mr. Dean (Interview, 3/7/12), there was never a time when Joshua was at capacity. Therefore, Joshua would take seriously any application and would accept all students who applied, met their criteria, and successfully interviewed. Mr. Dean however stressed that financial considerations were never paramount. Mr. Dean suspected that the school suffered from not having a person whose main responsibility was development. He noted that the school was reactive, not very proactive in its approach to the community (market).

The school came to the point they got many more applicants from Korean students than local students. The school claimed that Korean students applied and were considered equally with all other applicants, but in fact, the school did not have enough American applicants; Mr. Dean speculated that if the school would have local people filling the classrooms, they would have never admitted so many Koreans. Additionally, Joshua’s lack of applicants was somewhat related to the establishment of a local Catholic high school, which opened its doors in August 2000 and drained some of their clientele.

Although financial reasons seemed to be important for the school to stay in operation, and the dwindling financial resources of the school seemed to fuel the admittance of Korean students, Mr. Dean insisted that there was no consideration given to the increased revenue that came with Korean international students. He further noted, “[i]n fact, it was almost opposite of the goal of Joshua. The school was not in the business of selling education, that is not who we
are and what we do” (Interview, 2/6/11). When I asked if it might have been financially hard if there were no Korean international students, he simply replied that he did not know. Although Mr. Dean did not have much to do with class size or any financial management, he strongly emphasized that maintaining school culture was always more important than accepting any student—international or local—just for the revenue. He also stressed that the school never recruited Korean students.

**Financial Situation at Joshua**

While financial reasons per se were not a main reason to admit students in general, Joshua had a hard time maintaining a quality operation with its limited tuition. The school was run by mostly students’ tuition with few outside gifts. Chartered in 1983 and located in the midst of a predominantly African-American neighborhood, Joshua served 144 students and charged $5500 a year for tuition for the year 2008-2009, relatively modest compared to about $7,563 charged by the local Catholic high school during the same academic year. For the year 2008-2009 tuition for international students at that school was $7,200.00 with an additional fee per student (Freshmen $325, Sophomore/Juniors $335, and Seniors $460). For the 2012-2013 academic year, Joshua’s high school charged $7,356 tuition annually and $375 a one time extra documentary work fee and a one-time $250 academic guidance fee for the 11th or 12th grade for international student. The Catholic school served 285 students for the 2012-2013 school year (about twice as many as that of Joshua) and charged $11,592 for international students.

Joshua’s school website indicates that the school board, which consists of parents, pursues several goals. They include its commitment to the offering of in-depth professional program, the increase of benefits for faculty to attract and retain skilled teachers, its diligent efforts to keep tuition cost low, and its promotion of racial and ethnic diversity to demonstrate
the way in which Jesus Christ breaks down the barriers, thus accomplishing a model of unity among diversity.

While keeping tuition low, however, it did not seem to be feasible to meet such goals as having a professional program including AP classes and extra-curricular activities, and retaining skilled teachers by providing increasing benefits. Joshua, as a high school, was founded by families who were committed to keeping tuition low. It was founded by a group of parents and has always been significantly controlled by parents. Although the socio-economic character of its families is harder to define, the school had a strong core of devout working class and professional families willing to sacrifice to give their children the kind of educational experience that they felt mirrored their values.

According to a previous school official at Joshua, “parents would be so upset even with a 3 or 4 percent of tuition increase from one year to another” (Interview, 5/7/11). Therefore, it was like catch 22; the school would make them upset by increasing tuition and they would leave. Yet, if the school wanted to appease the parents, the school had to keep tuition stable year after year.

Despite these hard financial times, many teachers seemed to feel called by God to their work at Joshua. Mr. Dean struck me as a warm and caring person. He served a pastoral role over the spiritual life of the student body, along with providing academic oversight and guidance. He was well respected by most of the American and Korean students I interviewed at Joshua and was particularly known for his careful preparation for his worldview class. One day I commented on his unusual tie and he explained, “I wear my ‘psychedelic’ tie on the last day of teaching the sixties.”

Outside of the classroom, Mr. Dean used Facebook to maintain connections with alumni and to extend learning experiences with his current students. Mr. Dean mentioned that his
family had made sacrifices because of his lower salary and lack of benefits, including insurance. He felt, though, that the rewards of serving at Joshua far outweighed these challenges because he had been able to “spend the last twelve years around my children all day every day” since all of his own children had attended Joshua. He also mentioned that he enjoyed great working relationships with his colleagues in this Christian school environment (Interview, 5/7/11).

Mr. Dean and most of the other Joshua teachers had been educated in a monolingual, small-town, and monoracial environment. Many of these teachers displayed a very strong, caring manner. I observed that they willingly helped their students other than class periods. For instance, I observed Mrs. Math help one Korean male, Hoon, during her lunch period. Mrs. Principal, a white woman who was a very energetic, modestly dressed 55-year-old mother and grandmother seemed to be a very caring person. She welcomed me and supported my research by saying “I'll answer as many of the questions as pertain to me” (4/8/9). Sometimes she kept herself busy serving food, moving a cart, and even cleaning up around the school. Other times I saw her in the hallway talking with teachers and students. Once, when students were taking dance lessons for the prom, Mrs. Principal appeared to be embarrassed by an African American girl who was flailing her limbs while other students were following the instruction from the invited dancing couple. She approached the student and tried to calm her down in a very motherly, caring manner. She seemed to care about all the students regardless of their race. One African American male and one African American female told me they did not feel racially discriminated against at Joshua, as the Korean students did; rather the African Americans felt that they were getting extra care.

Mr. Science said that he viewed each student regardless of their ethnic or language background. He stated that he viewed all students as unique and had the opportunity to be of
influence for life in Christ. He did not want to contrast Korean and American students. Rather, he saw Korean students as any child with special needs. He stated that he had a daughter with special needs who had suffered brain damaged in the uterus and was developmentally handicapped. Consequently, he felt himself to be more sensitive to the difficulties of children and students with special needs. He stated:

So, I treat my daughter differently; I help her out. So, I look for the students who struggle in class. I want to help them. Everybody else will be fine if I concentrate on them. If I help the most intelligent kid, not everybody will understand it. If there is a kid who is struggling in the class, and I am concentrating on the kid who is in need at his/her level, everybody else will understand it. That’s just an easy concept. (4/18/9)

Although many of the school’s teachers and administrators claimed that they felt called by God to support Christian education at Joshua and accepted its low wages and extremely limited benefits, there was considerable turnover as staff left Joshua for positions that paid better and offered better benefits and job security. Most of the long-term teachers at Joshua secured their insurance benefits through their spouses. Until the middle of 1990’s, Joshua was staffed primarily by Christian women whose husbands were professionals and provided mostly the income and all of the benefits, so these women would teach.

Several newly joined faculty who claimed that they were called to Joshua by God as of fall 2008 are not there anymore at this time of writing in spring 2013. Even the Dean of Students told me that it was hard to support his family only on his income. In fact, the Dean of Students was searching for another job at the time of this research and left the school soon after spring 2011. Although several reasons existed for his leaving Joshua, the financial reason was an important factor. When he started to work at Joshua in 1996, he was only paid $ 20,000 with his

28 At Joshua, some American students and the staff seemed to have low middle economic status. I observed some American students worked to pay tuition and chose a college mainly based on their financial situation. I also observed some teachers had an extra job in order to live. For example, Mr. Bible worked as a painter for the school during the summer in 2009.
master’s degree. In addition, like many of teachers at Joshua, Mr. Dean had his children at Joshua. His children were no longer in school, and that was one of the reasons he stayed so long. Additionally, he was getting burned out on the workload of teaching and administration demands including the issue with Korean international students. Currently he enjoys a job, which pays better, is more flexible, and has a very generous full benefit package, yet he misses teaching children. Despite his devotion to Christian ideology, one of main reasons that drove him away was financial consideration.

**Admission Process**

International student enrollment procedures both for Joshua and the Catholic high school included application form, a personal interview, previous grade transcripts and standardized test scores in English, the Secondary Level English Proficiency (SLEP) test and basic placement tests, recommendation letters, etc. While the Catholic high school admitted fifteen percent of the student population who were not Catholic in the year 2012-2013, spirituality and ability were the two most important criteria in Joshua’s admission process. The school claimed that Joshua did not want the student who works against and undermines its school culture regardless of race, as well as the student who would not be able to be successful at the school for whatever reason. According to Mr. Dean who was a part of reviewing the applications, the applicants had to have the mindset to fit into the nature of Christian school culture and the ability to succeed. He somewhat lamented that regardless of race, the school’s sense of community should come from their common faith, but the reality in his classroom was that students’ faith “identities” were mostly secondary to their identity as “teenagers.” Many of his students’ media consumption habits, attitudes about popular culture, and ethical compasses would not be much different than the average American teen.
The school believed that parents should be the primary source of their moral and spiritual development while the school nurtures spiritual formation, character building, respect, modesty, relationships, healthy sexuality—each of these areas have become more purposefully addressed in the school curriculum. Mr. Dean noted that he consciously took the time in his classes to address issues related to all of these topics whenever the opportunity arises, sometimes even at the expense of the content.

When Joshua began to get an increase in applications from African American students in the last several years as of fall 2008 as mentioned earlier, the school had two issues with the African American students. According to a school official, while some of them were genuinely seeking Christian-based education, others were seeking an alternative to the local public schools. In addition, a number of the African American students failed the entrance exam that Joshua had. They had not been academically prepared to succeed. The school did not want their parents to pay money for them to come and fail.

The school even had some difficult situation where some parents really wanted their children to go to Joshua and the child seemed to express that they would work hard with their best effort. Mr. Dean noted that all the teachers were very willing to try to work with students and help them. But it was a struggle. Every year was a struggle. Mr. Dean had a boy who he had to practically hold his hands through everything he had ever done in his class so the boy could finally graduate. Mr. Dean further noted that it was hard to discern who does not really have skills and who does not want to work hard in the sociocultural dynamics.

As for Korean international students, the school had some difficult situations where Korean families were very upset with them because after the extensive interview, the school told parents that this student would not be successful because of their lack of language skills. The
school often turned away especially younger Koreans because the school could tell they did not have the language skills to be successful. This was because the school had no ESL programs and no extra help. Mr. Dean noted that the school made it clear that for all the Korean applicants, the school had no support system other than the graciousness of their teachers.

The admission process was (1) the school gets applications in mail, (2) Mr. Dean and Mrs. Principal would meet and review applications. Based on the application, they would invite the applicants for an interview to determine the ability to be successful (academic a background, language skill, etc.), and (3) they would discuss the observations of the interview and make a decision.

Unlike my interviews with Korean students at Joshua and their parents which uncovered feelings that the school had not been entirely forthcoming with them, during the admission process (other than on paper), in informing them that “transformation” of its students by the gospel was the school’s primary mission, Mr. Dean noted that the school always communicated that their first mission was the transformation of lives through both learning and the ministry of the gospel when Koreans applied for the school. When the application process began (usually with an email inquiry, or even when the school just received applications in the mail), they would respond with an acknowledgement that communicated their policies and goals.

Mr. Dean further noted that Mrs. Principal and Mr. Dean would ask questions during the interview process that would reveal the applicant’s understanding of the Gospel, and they asked all applicants to give the school a testimony of the applicant’s personal faith in God. Mrs. Principal and Mr. Dean prayed before and after every interview and trusted the Holy Spirit to guide them in discernment. They followed the same procedures with all applicants, not just with Koreans.
On the other hand, the first and most important goal of Korean parents and their children was to acquire admission into an American school. For them, Joshua was a stepping-stone to gain admittance to an American college. They knew that Joshua was less selective in its admission process and charged less for tuition than the Catholic high school in town. Even though Joshua’s tuition was more affordable than that of the other school, most students did not base their school decision on the financial factors. Rather, Joshua drew them in primarily with easier admission standards as well as the fact that the other school had no openings for new students. Only one student admitted to not knowing about the existence of this other religious high school at all.

Joshua’s admissions standards were less selective than those of the other private high schools in the community. Not surprisingly, based on the college admissions of its graduates the school was perceived to be academically mediocre. For Joshua, although nearly 100 percent of all graduates attended college or university, based on my observations, interviews, and Joshua’s official documents, most American seniors at Joshua applied to 2-3 colleges while most Korean seniors applied to about 6-10 colleges; about 40 percent of American seniors ended up attending a local community college. On the other hand, in the Class of 2011, the other school, eighty percent of the graduating class attended a four-year university, and 20 percent attended a two-year institution.

Later, in a follow-up interview with Mr. Dean (3/7/12), he asked me if Koreans understand that a small Christian high school like Joshua is not really held in a very high regard by top tier universities, indicating that Joshua is not a school for the Koreans who want to send their children to top tier universities such as Ivy league and Big Ten. He further noted that such top schools do not highly regard the degree from a small evangelical Christian school since the
top tier universities always assume that students succeeded in that school because it is not a challenging school. Upon my request of what might be the reason for the lack of applicants although it is less expensive than the other school, Mr. Dean speculated:

Partly because evangelical Christian education does not have as good of a reputation for strong academics and broad curriculum as Catholic education. Also because we did not offer much in the way of good extracurricular activities. Our “core” families were generally financially modest, middle-class people for whom any expense was a sacrifice. People who had $$, and perhaps less of an “evangelical” commitment, would choose to pay more for a better-developed program with more offerings and opportunities.

Overall, the Korean students were of a higher socio-economic status than the American students and even the school officials. Indeed, most of the Korean students did not apply for any kind of college scholarships because they feared it might affect their admittance. In addition, they preferred to go to a more prestigious college without scholarship funding than go to a less prestigious one when the less prestigious school offered them a modest scholarship.

For the Korean parents, transformation of their children through Christianity was of little concern although it was featured prominently in the school’s information materials. Some of the Korean parents expressed that they sent their children to Joshua partly because they thought it would be a safe environment due to being a Christian school and partly because there were limited choices (only two private high school candidates in town).

**Policy Creation and Additional Adjustments**

With regards to the Korean population at Joshua, the school did not anticipate any issue that involved introducing Korean international students into Joshua. The school just reacted to the sudden interest from Korean students. Until Mr. Dean got invited to the conference on “South Korea’s Education Exodus” held at the U of I in March 2008, the school was not thinking in terms of local students vs. international students. Mr. Dean speculated that the invitation came
through several Korean families and some teachers/former teachers at Joshua who had MU university connections.

Almost all their earlier Korean students were the children of faculty, visiting scholars, or graduate students, so for the school, it was no different than any other admission process. Then, as the school started getting applications from Korea, the school began to understand the logistics of how much work were involved. They had to deal with immigration, figure out how to alter or adapt their interview process for someone who lived abroad, so they went though a tough couple of years where they just had to make a judgment based on telephone conversation and application, later they were able to conduct the interview through Skype before the applicants came. There were a couple of years when the school conducted interviews after the applicants went through the immigration process and came to town. There was just one time the school had to send somebody home because the student was in trouble and was not able to succeed at the school.

At first, the school tried to have the English proficiency test (e.g. the Secondary Level English Proficiency test). They looked at how their former students had done on the test and looked at their ability and their language skill at the school and set up a benchmark. Once they set up a benchmark, everybody (Korean applicants) scored above the benchmark, yet they still did not have the language skills required.

As the Korean population grew, Joshua had to create several policies and make additional adjustments. The school implemented a guardianship policy, which required all international students to live with an official guardian who is a family member, or someone designated by the family. As of spring 2013, the school requires international students to live with a parent or other family member, who does not including siblings. The school also established an English-Only
policy in fall 2007. This policy required speaking only English during the school day, and then it was relaxed by having the exception of lunch period.

The school insisted that the English-Only policy was made mainly for Korean students’ development of the English language ability. They were included in the Rules and Conduct Expectation section of the Student Agenda/Handbook given to all students at the beginning of the school year since the 2008-2009 academic year. The school also created a special study hall in fall 2008 for all first-year international students. The Korean students, whose language skills were weak, could not just choose an elective. They had to be in a special study hall during the elective hour where a regular teacher (not an ESL teacher, then Mrs. Math) would help them with English and homework. The school did not have any ESL program other than the study hall.

As of 2012-2013 academic year, it became obligatory for international students to receive the services of a tutor at least three times a week and provide the evidence to the school during their first year. International students are also required to attend an English speaking class outside the school at the High School Principal’s discretion. The school also made fee adjustments (additional charges) for its greater paperwork and demands for international students such as immigration and visa issues (I-20) and for college application processing.

Up to now, I discussed the backdrop for the reasons why Koreans at Joshua were eager to send their children abroad for study, why they came specifically to Joshua, what Korean early-study abroad students brought to the school, and why Joshua had so many Koreans, what they went through by introducing Korean nationals into their school.

Next, I introduce my first day class observation in order to provide a sense of how Koreans were situated at Joshua. I focused on Korean students’ double burden of both content and language in their American classroom. Their positioning in the school was far different from
that of American students. Despite Mr. World’s passion and well-prepared course, for the Korean students, it was as hard as it was in Korea. However, most of the Korean students studied harder here at Joshua than in Korea because there was hope. They did not want to lose their last chance to succeed. I begin by introducing one-day’s observation of the Worldview class in order to document a typical Korean’s behavior over all the classes. The following excerpt describes the overview of one class.

First Day of Class Observation—“Worldviews”

(2 sections, Seniors), November 20, 2008

The researcher was guided to the teacher’s desk at the back of the classroom. “You might want to sit here for better view. Feel free to make yourself comfortable,” the teacher said, handing the researcher a seating chart and student handout for the day. Putting a videotape into the machine, the teacher walked fast to his desk and picked up some copies of handouts. He put transparency on the projector while a hymn is echoing in the background. At 9:00 am the bell rang, and students began to come in and sat at their desks. To begin, the teacher introduced the researcher to class: “Ms. Park has come to observe me and see if I teach you well.” Class members say, “Good morning, Ms. Park.” The researcher waved her hand with a smile, saying, “Hello, everyone!” Class began (a discussion of the chapter, “Romanticism,” from the book students are reading for class, Sophie’s World).

Teacher: “What words would you use to describe Romanticism? Give me some “Romantic” words.”

Class: “Passion, feeling... Emotion.”

Teacher: “Passion, burning, yearning!”

He begins to play Beethoven’s “Moonlight Sonata” and reads from a book of “Love Poems.”

Teacher: “Is this the only thing that is meant by “Romantic’ in the context of philosophy/art? No—it is anything that brings you into an emotional EXPERIENCE—passion can be any emotion fear, longing, anger. That is why “Romantic” literature is also Frankenstein or Dracula—and the writings of Edgar Alan Poe! Romanticism is a movement focused on the idea of a ‘world spirit’ or the ‘spirit of the times/age.’ Romantics tried to go ‘inside’ themselves to find how they were connected with a greater ‘whole’—a ‘world ego.’ Think of how you sense the ‘feel’ of the 1960s—or the 1930s. Or think of how you would describe the ‘identity’ of your whole class just as you know the ‘feel’ of your own ‘identity.’ Romantics are trying to idealize a time, a place, and give a sense of ‘identity’ to something much bigger—culture, nationhood. Romantics want to
experience life to its fullest—like Thoreau said: ‘I wanted to live deliberately—to suck all
the marrow out of life.’ The problem is that life is not always a wonderful experience;
sometimes it is just plain old life. This reality frustrates Romantics and can lead them to
deep pessimism and depression—even to the point of giving up on life altogether, suicide.

Here’s a video clip that relates German romantic philosophy with American
transcendentalism” (teacher plays a scene from the film, Little Women; Jo March (the
Louisa May Alcott character) is in an exchange with “Professor Baer,” (a recent émigré
from Germany). They recite lines from a Walt Whitman poem together on the screen. As
they discuss books, he learns of her love for German romantic poetry. She points out the
influence of her family’s devotion to transcendentalism.

One Korean boy on the right looks at the handout. The other students watch the movie
relaxing.

**Student 1:** This is my favorite movie. I love her!

While all the classmates were watching the movie relaxing and, a small thin Korean boy,
Joon, was sincerely and calmly busy with filling out blanks on the handout while turning
the pages of a book and handouts. He rarely watched any scenes from the movie.

Later in class, the teacher returned a previous day’s assignment to a student while asking
him to read it aloud for the class. The student reads his short essay [responding to the
question, “Does Sophie Exist?”; in reference to the main character of the book].

**Student 2:** Before I can get into if Sophie exists or not I think it is necessary to discuss
the topic of the truth behind Sophie’s world. It is my professional opinion that there is no
Jostein Gaarder [the author of Sophie’s World]; that in fact our very own Mr.[Teacher] is
the author of Sophie’s World and that every time a student appears on the verge of a
breakthrough as far as understanding this twisted pile of mess we call a book…. So in all,
Sophie exists, as a character of a character written about by a character created by Mr.
[Teacher].

**Teacher:** (shaking head) I don’t know whether to give you an A or an F. You don’t really
answer the question, but you do write a very clever and insightful response.

**Class:** Laughter.

The bell rang. Students walked out the classroom. Soon after, the bell rang again. It was
9:50 am. His next group of senior students were coming in the door and sitting down.
Class begins much the same; greetings exchanged, opening discussion, etc.

**Teacher:** Can I have your attention! Who is the first philosopher in America?

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29 I received permission from the student and Mr. Worldview to use his paper for my research purpose.
Silence followed

Teacher: Who is the first philosopher in America?

Silence continued

Teacher: (pleading comically with shoulder shrug) When I ask a question, all I get is blank looks, staring at me. But when I lecture, the noise comes. Shouldn’t it be the other way around?

Another silence followed.

Student: Friedich von . . .

Teacher: Well, as you see on the handout, the person on the right is Ralph Waldo Emerson. He was closely linked to the German romantics and tried to combine Kant’s critical philosophy with a broad account of the importance of art. In his “System of Transcendental idealism” he had followed Fichte, but got fed up with it.

Student 4: He looks like a ghost!

Student 5: Ghost? Chicken ghost!!!!

Student 6: Chicken ghost, heehee, heehee…

Some students leaned toward other students, whispering and laughter spreads—others laying back, relaxing, and laughing.

One Korean girl in the first row was calm. The other Korean girl at the back was busy writing something. While laughter and chatter filled up the classroom, one Korean boy seemed to sleep at his desk in the 5th row. Resting his head on his crossed arms, rarely moving at all. The other Korean male was busy filling the blanks on a handout, and turning over a book. From time to time, he watched the video.

Such classes like Worldview gave Korean students a double burden: content and language. The content was philosophical, hard for American students, even harder for Korean ESL students. The teacher thought that it would help his students answer and form their own “worldview” if the students understood where these ideas came from and why they were so influential in the 21st century. However, Korean students’ academic pressure did not seem to allow them to explore a multitude of philosophies, religions, and ideologies while pondering over the meaning of life, the
ontological reason for human-being in the world. In addition, the examples given in the class were U.S. culture specific. The class often required prior knowledge about U.S. history.

For many Korean students, it was just another class to pass. It was more important to get a good grade from the class. To catch up to the class, Korean students did not have room to be relaxed and joke about in the class. All Koreans except one Korean male 30 looked pressured.

It was difficult to be a student in Korea.

It was also not easy to be a student at Joshua.

The next chapter further introduces what was happening with Korean students at Joshua: how current South Korean educational culture was reflected at the American Christian high school.

30 He was the only Korean participant who could not afford to go to a 4-year college. He was also the only one who claimed that English was a severe problem for his ESA experience. He studied hard during his sophomore and junior years, but after realizing there was little hope to go to a four-year college, his motivation to study plummeted. Worldview class was too overwhelming for him to be awake. He gave up. Later he dropped the class.
Chapter Five

A Fraught Encounter

A foundational cultural divide existed between Joshua’s Christian educational commitments and the instrumental goals of the Korean ESA students at the school. My observations of Joshua, especially during the fall 2008 and spring 2009, made it clear that all parties involved – school administrators, teachers, parents, and students – failed to anticipate, recognize, or address predictable issues.

While teachers and administrators made few special arrangements to accommodate students raised in Korea, they had a hard time understanding Korean students’ behaviors. The teachers did not understand why young Korean students would come to the U.S. for study without their families, why they were so obsessed with grades, why they were often found cheating during exams or otherwise behaving unethically, and why they seemed to associate only with each other, speaking Korean instead of the English that they said they wanted to learn.

Unlike the earlier ESA students, whom the teachers and administrators had perceived as ideal, the ESA students at the time of my observations had come to be seen by their teachers as grade-obsessed cheaters and liars with unsatisfactory, poorly supervised, living arrangements that led to such disruptive behavior such as sleeping in class.

On their part, Korean students sought proficiency in English and hoped to pursue a U.S. college degree. Some Korean youth, coming from a highly competitive culture, did not understand the “God first” environment of Joshua. One Korean female student, Miki, expressed her difficulty comprehending the practices at Joshua, “It is kind of weird here. Christian leadership is more important than going to a good college; little motivation and no competition
for college. While we, in Korea, applaud good grades, here people applaud the kids who do missionary work” (Interview, 5/30/09).

Korean students also sought to be like American teenagers who they believed to have more freedom than their Korean counterparts, and they expected the school to endorse creativity, free discussion, free liberal and diverse thinking, less authoritarian teaching practices, freedom of speech, and thus global citizenship development. However, these were not the case at Joshua.

The school’s model of religious integration and its particular Christian idea of cosmopolitanism flew in the face of the Korean students’ ideas and desires for a global experience. Many Korean students complained of the school’s “lack of openness to the world outside.” For example, Chul, 11th grade Korean male, expressed, “[The school is] like a frog in a well, isolated from the outside world without diversity, having its own nested culture. It won’t ever change and there is no will to change” (Interview, May 4, 2010). What is interesting in this quote is that this is the sort of language often used to refer to Korea—a small relatively isolated country—so its use in describing Joshua eloquently underscores the irony of coming all the way to the U.S. only to find oneself in another insular little world.

Both parties had no idea of how to handle this fraught encounter; it seemed to be trial and error. For the school, the enactment of policies forbidding the use of any language other than English in school and requiring more highly supervised living arrangements seemed to be a universal solution to all that bothered them about the Korean contingent. Among the Korean students, these newly made policies met with mixed responses; yet, their negative opinions were not expressed because they worried they might be expelled and forced to return to Korea. Silence prevailed. No discussions of the issues mentioned above, much less issues of gender and class,
which also separated the experience of the Korean students from that of their American hosts, were clearly voiced in the classroom.

The complex amalgam of Christianity, race/ethnicity, language, citizenship, imperial experience, instrumental goals of Korean education vs. spiritual goals of a private American Christian school, and the mutually unrealistic expectations that resulted from these factors are examined next, in detail. I begin by providing background information about the identity and situation of Joshua at the time when the percent of Korean ESA students in Joshua’s student body began to escalate. The information was collected mainly in 2009 and 2010.

Joshua

Joshua at a Christian crossroads: Spreading the gospel. Joshua had already been experiencing difficult times even before the numbers of Korean students increased. The Koreans arrived at a moment when Joshua was beginning to believe that they should diversify the school both for “its lack of applicants” and to “bring Christianity to all.” As the school continued to pursue diversity and to increase paid enrollment, the Korean ESA population and the African American population had been increasing. By the fall of 2008, Joshua’s sophomore, junior, and senior classes included seventeen Korean internationals, five African Americans, one African, one Vietnamese, and one adopted Indian American—about 25.5% of its 98 10th to 12th-grade high school students.31

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31 The school’s senior class of 31 included six Koreans (two females and four males) and one Vietnamese (male). Its 32 juniors included five Koreans (two females and three males) and one African American (male). YJ, a female student, transferred to a public school during my research. Of the 35 sophomores, six were Koreans (three females and three males); one was an African American male; one an African male; and three African American females. Sook, a female student, joined Joshua during my research. One African American female transferred to a public school during my research.
Mr. Dean explained that the school was first and foremost committed to a Christian education for its students. Above all, they sought to bring the power of the gospel to each and every student at Joshua. Mr. Dean thought of Joshua as an institution of sinners endeavoring to reach that ideal. He was realistic, however, that many parents sending their children to Joshua do so because they are looking for a safer environment than that of the public schools, not because they particularly wanted their children exposed to the gospel. This was always a tension at Joshua: on the one hand, they wanted to be welcoming and open, but on the other hand, they did not want to have their mission entirely ignored:

Because we [Joshua] have the same concern, whatever I am sharing with you [the researcher] about, our concern with you, we have the same concern with many of students. They are just using us. But that could be true with anybody. We have that same concern with white students who show no concern for allowing the power of the gospel to transform their lives: they are using us, too. Their parents are using us as being a safe place. Now we have felt compelled that we are OK with a certain percentage of the student population being like that. We know. But what is hard is that I don’t know how to quantify this? But you reach a point . . . there is a point when the percentage of the student body becomes . . . it reaches a point that students who are not open to the gospel...it transforms the whole dynamics of the school. (Interview, 5/27/09)

Mr. Dean was frustrated that students and their parents were not fulfilling their part: coming to Joshua primarily for such reasons as safety, not for the power of the gospel. Mr. Dean acknowledged that many of the parents of his American students were seeking access to a better academic environment that would have less of the religious, racial, class, cultural, and secular conflicts they perceived to be occurring in the public schools. At Joshua, there were no police in the hallways, no one seemed to use foul language, and students did not dress extravagantly or provocatively. Ironically, given their parents’ concerns, I found that all of Joshua’s students I asked considered the school’s policies and commitments unrealistic and out of sync with the times.
“Jesus is the answer?” All students that I interviewed\(^{32}\) and talked to, including both American students and Korean students were critical of Joshua’s Christian unreality. They recognized the divide between Joshua’s Christian mission and its sheltered reality (e.g., dress code and social/sexual interactions between the sexes) and the reality outside of school today.

The following observations were documented in a Life Curriculum Class on May 1st in 2009, taught once a week by a visiting teacher, Mrs. Teacher, as a part of Bible class. The class was largely centered on giving and receiving love, with a focus on relationships between boyfriends and girlfriends and sex.

Mrs. Teacher leads the topic, brain-storming the ways people give and receive love. Students are supposed to fill out the chart in the handout. On the right side of the classroom, four girls sit close to one another. One of girls keeps bringing up “Sex! Sex! We like it!” Some girls and boys giggle. Mrs. Teacher appears to be approximately 50 years old, a white woman who is modestly dressed and in a good shape. She claims to want interaction and feedback, but when she gets unexpected responses or questions from the students she does not always answer them. She avoids the questions that make her uncomfortable.

**An African American female:** (shaking her head and looking back at me; I [the researcher] am sitting at the back right corner of class). We don’t like her. (Girls are laughing).

**A white male:** I want to know when girls get pregnant and if they can pregnant during their period.

**Mrs. Teacher:** (avoiding the topic) Making love is not the right thing to do before marriage.

Based on my interviews with the students in her class, the students found Mrs. Teacher to be an extremely problematic teacher for a number of reasons, including her extreme defensiveness, her answers that always adhered strictly to the Bible, and the fact that she could not connect course material to the real world. After class, I happened to ask students their opinion about the class.

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\(^{32}\)Twenty-two students, which includes the students I happened to have engaged in small talk.
**Henny, a white male:** We are sheltered here at Joshua. Once you are out in the real world, it’s a surprise. Not like what we were taught in the classroom. We need to be prepared for the real world…. I want to know when girls are not able to be pregnant instead of keep hearing “no sex before marriage.” (5/1/09)

**John, white male:** Being at a Christian school, it can be secluded and we don’t have pressures that are out there in the world….I would suggest spending more time talking about each topic so that you can have more discussions and will be able to go deeper within the information. (5/4/09)

As these student discussed, there was no real discussion about “sex” other than “none before marriage” according to “the Holy Bible.” Some students rebelled against what they perceived as unreasonable and outdated school policies and regulations. I observed the students expressing their sarcastic feelings, such as answering “Jesus” when a teacher asked, “Who made the New Deal policy?” This response seemed to be a cynical commentary on the school’s insulated scripture-based teaching.

In a similar vein, most American students whom I interviewed noted that it was stupid to follow such rules as “Boys can’t get their ears pierced but girls can.” The Korean students that I asked about Joshua’s dress code anonymously considered it “ridiculous.” Joon, one Korean male complained that the school made rules just so students would learn to obey the rules:

> It is ridiculous that kids should learn to obey rules. When we ask if there is any mention of a dress code in the Bible, such as “tuck in,” the school says that there is no mention of wearing certain type of clothes in the Bible, but a dress code is a sign of “giving up something (i.e., sacrificing) for God.” In fact, a teacher said, “We provide rules so that we can teach kids to obey rules and to follow rules because we believe it’s important…as a school and we believe that’s what Christians should believe.” (Interview, 3/25/09)

Another Korean student mentioned:

> Most of the students [American and Korean students] hate the policy [dress code] as well; it’s something that we just have to follow. Because Joshua is a private school, if we don’t like it, we have the right to leave and go to another school. If we don’t like it, the school has to have the right to say, “If you don’t like the code, you may leave.” So, I can’t complain. (Interview, 5/19/10)
The school was perceived as having a firm idea that their perspective was so true that they did not even think others’ perspectives might have any validity and legitimacy. Joshua’s religious commitments – in the name of Jesus (“Jesus is the answer”) – justified its rule-bound approach to discipline and its tight control over student behavior and expression (e.g., re: sex, dress code, etc.).

However, Mrs. Principal reminded me that in fact the dress code policy had never really been their decision. Interestingly, she mentioned that the school board, their governing body, not school officials, makes the policies including its dress code, and its international student requirements for Joshua. Mrs. Principal stated:

The board approves it and I enforce it. I’m not part of the discussion…. School board members are elected officials from among the group of parents whose children attend Joshua (Pre-school through 12th grade). Seven board members are selected by the “community” of parents to serve for 3 years, and can be reelected for a 2nd and three year term. … They make the policies, but they’re not running the school day to day, they hear from administrators, but they are the ones who must make the policies such as dress code, international student requirements for Joshua, etc. (Interview, 05/11/09)

In fact, the majority of school officials including Mr. Dean and Mrs. Principal did not like their dress code. It seemed that there had been some conflict going on between the Administrative Team (The administrator and principals) and the School Board (a group of parents).

**Korean headache.** Having a growing Korean population was demanding and challenging for the school. It is especially true when school officials had a lot of issues other than issues with Korean students as Mrs. Principal stated:

There’s the complication of, the Korean students are just a small part of our group and so then we have a lot of students that we are dealing with too, and some that have special needs, it’s got nothing to do with language or race, it’s just their learning style, and so for a teacher to try and juggle all of these things, it’s just difficult, a lot of demands made on teachers, so it’s very challenging and its very demanding work…. Nothing is perfect. We all try. (Interview, 5/11/09)
The school did not prepare well to introduce international students into the school as Mr. Dean finally confessed his inner feelings:

Do you [the researcher] understand? It’s trouble…we don’t want to be criticized by so much things that we are doing wrong when the reason to exist is not…. We did not set out to be the school where all Koreans can come. We want to figure out how to do this right at our most basic. So, we want to make sure that we are happy to have you bring your research, but we don’t want to be criticized by so much things that we are doing wrong. (Interview, 5/27/09).

Joshua’s issues with Korean students included the following: Korean students’ misrepresentation of Christian religious preference to gain admittance; their separation from family–living arrangements that the school considered unsatisfactory; their self-segregation; their excessive concern over grades; and their cheating, lying, and lack of respect. Joshua admitted Korean students and then adjusted to issues perceived to be created by the presence of this particular student population. School officials tried hard to resolve the issues with Korean students. It did not, however, come easily.

Some of the issues with Korean students at the school were expressed by the Dean of Students. He addressed the increasing enrollment of South Korean nationals at his school and his concern about their lack of “openness to Christianity” and their tendency to socialize only with other Koreans, excluding non-Koreans. He stated, “The larger the [Korean] group becomes, the less openness to allow their lives to be transformed by the gospel because they can focus now on their own little social group” (Interview, 5/27/09). This quote demonstrates that Joshua’s issue with the Korean students’ social segregation was seen as a threat to the school’s perception of itself as focused on religious transformation and integration.

An important observation of Korean students on the part of the administration at Joshua was that although some of the Korean students, as well as their Korean families were not Christian, they claimed to be Christian in order to gain admittance to the school. This posed a
dilemma for the school. Mr. Dean noted, “We know that it sounds judgmental, I don’t know, I don’t know people’s heart. But we are pretty confident that the majority of our international students don’t come here for that reason that school exists” (5/27/09).

Mr. Dean continued:

They [Koreans] want academic capital; they want linguistic capital as you mentioned. Our hope is that in the course of being here, their lives will be transformed by the gospel. That’s the first heart of desire. We are genuinely motivated by a desire that our school is culturally diverse. We feel like it does disservice to the gospel to have a Christian school that is full of nothing but white students.

This statement can be interpreted as a distressed awareness of the desire among the Korean students to acquire academic capital through English language study and through their apparently singular focus on grades without religious motivation.

On the other hand, it was clear that the school did not complete a critical evaluation of the Koreans’ profession of a religion. Later, upon my request of how he knew that Koreans were not Christian and falsely calmed to be Christian, he replied, “Obviously only God knows a person’s heart” and addressed that one of things that was difficult with Koreans was: “We [the school] never felt like we can have genuine honest conversation. There was this cultural barriers that the Korean students and their parents always seemed that they would say what they thought we wanted to hear” (Interview, 3/7/12).

Mr. Dean continued to talk about what it means to be “transformed by gospel” and how he knows if someone is transformed by gospel:

Being a Christian is about much more than just believing in God and/or “getting saved.” The Gospel—the good news of God’s plan for humanity from Creation to redemption in Christ—transforms the way you understand who you are as a human being, what the purpose and meaning of existence is, and how you should correspondingly live your life. The Bible says we can see Christians in the “fruit” they bear as transformed believers—the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Of course, none of us can bear such fruit in our own goodness—
the Holy Spirit transforms our natural sinfulness and helps us to bear fruit as we surrender our lives to His influence rather than acting in our own strength [emphasis added].

I responded:

Sometimes, I think God uses a person’s miserable life as a way of transforming the person. I have heard stories about how people were saved from their malpractices, including drug, alcohol, lying, and stealing and then transformed by the gospel through them. Such characteristic as love, joy, and kindness do not always mean you are transformed by gospel. There are a lot of non-Christians who behave well and humanely.

As of fall 2008, out of seventeen Korean students, four students did not go to church, eight students attended the same Korean church, two attended another Korean church, one attended a Korean American church, one attended an American church, one attended a Catholic church. Many of the thirteen Koreans who attended the churches listed Christian as a religion on their Facebook. However, some of them claimed that they were not really devout. For example, Kang, 12th grade Korean male, mentioned that he attended a church, yet Jesus came and went in his mind. Hoon, 10th grade Korean male also noted that he was not sure of Jesus. Several Korean students expressed that they attended a Korean church because their parents attended the church. Others expressed that they attended a Korean church because their peers attended the church. This Korean communal nature around churches seemed to promote the conversion of Korean students to Christianity (Yoo & Chung, 2008). Nobody including twelve parents and seven guardians of eighteen 10th to 12th Korean students33 told me that they chose to attend Joshua due to religious reason; rather many of them expressed that they chose Joshua due to easy admission and easy access.

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33 As mentioned in Chapter 3, eighteen Korean students were available during my research while the total of 17 Koreans in the 10th to 12th grades was stable (one moved in and one moved out of Joshua).
Korean Students

If Korean students were critical of Joshua’s Christian unreality, they also felt that the school hid its academic mediocrity under the cloak of its religious commitments. Indeed, Korean students’ foremost goal was to get admitted to a U.S. college. So, for the Koreans, the greatest dissatisfaction with Joshua was its academics. They saw the school’s focus on religion as an excuse for mediocre academics and lack of focus on college preparation.

“We teach the gospel first, and educate second?” For Korean students, more than Joshua’s religious isolation, it was the school’s academic mediocrity that troubled them. The trouble began in the admission process. For the students, the Christian content of the education was not an important factor in their school choice. The encounter between the school and the Korean students was not fully intentional on either side.

These Korean students came in search of a new hope and more opportunities compared to their situation in Korea. They wanted two somewhat contradictory things: to experience a more liberal education than was available in Korean, and to acquire academic and linguistic capital that they felt they needed to be able to succeed. Korean students were prepared to work hard at Joshua for this second chance. However, many Korean students thought Joshua was not college preparatory. One Korean student argued that the school curriculum and instruction were out of date. He addressed his concerns.

Hwan: Why still teach parts of speech in 12th grade? I don’t know why we are still learning about gerunds and nouns. We have been trained in parts of speech since 10th grade. … What about the examples in English, the examples were written in old English, like Thou thee, thy, and thine. They (the school) might think we are foolish since we don’t talk, but Koreans are way smarter than them. I wish I were a fool, and then I wouldn’t be so critical and be able to see all the ugliness. I wish the school had pushed

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34 Most Korean students pointed out that there was strong need for teachers at Joshua to improve their teaching method.
35 The other Korean students also pointed out the lack of teaching method and outdated curriculum.
more, probably twice as much, and set high levels of achievement. Human beings adapt themselves to such a system. This school is small and poor and low quality even though it is a private school. It has few resources, no money, just two AP classes, and just a few extra-curricular activities. It’s like almost nothing, which leads to fewer opportunities and motivations to go to a good college. Even if you have an F average, Joshua will accept you if you donate lot of money. This school is detached from reality; it should be updated…teaching method and curriculum should be updated…the school should incorporate ACT or SAT system into Curriculum rather than doing letter puzzle like in Bible class. (Interview, 3/23/09)

Joshua’s very limited financial resources seemed to make it impossible to provide additional academic and social programs including more AP classes other than two AP classes and more extracurricular activities including club football, tennis, swimming, and indoor soccer.

This economic reality made it difficult for students, teachers and other school personnel. Another Korean student, Joon, who appeared to be a very sincere Christian and was well respected by others, expressed his thoughts about Christianity and academic focus:

In my opinion, the school has to find the right balance between Christian things and secular educational stuff. Sometimes I see too much God blocking students from pursuing a better education. Also, sometimes I see too little “God” when there should be more. There are a lot of things Joshua can and needs to fix. Not some, but a lot of things. Like, for example, having so many school events to collect money. I understand it, but it’s too much. I used to wonder if the school needed to do all that? Another thing is that Joshua doesn’t focus on college preparation very well; so students have to prepare for college on their own. For school exams, we don’t need to do anything extra because teachers provide study guides, which are helpful, but for college we should learn to prepare individually. I started preparing my SAT intensively in 12th grade, which I regret. I should have started to prepare for it earlier. (Interview, 3/18/09)

Joon admitted that the main focus for Christian schools should be Christianity, but he still believed that the school should be able to differentiate between academic purpose and Christian teaching. He wished Joshua would offer more preparation for standardized tests. Additionally, Joon commented that there were quite a few intelligent students at Joshua who joined the school after having “home schooling,” but that they were not able to cultivate their potential given the school’s very confined educational environment which “brings all of us [Korean students and
Americans students] down” (Interview, 3/25/09). The ESA students were especially surprised at their American peers’ lack of motivation. Joon further noted that there was very little academic competition, which results in little motivation. Another Korean student male, Hwan, also stated:

American students are not well aware of the importance of going to college. I informed some American peers of some college resources and provided some motivation. That’s why most students just go to [the local junior college] when they are able to go to better colleges. … The school should have provided the why, what, and how for college: why do we go to college, and what and how we prepare for college admission. Here, we are left to do this alone …. The school doesn’t know the importance of being admitted to a good university. Why a good university? Going to a good university means you can explore interesting fields in more depth so that you may be better able to contribute to society. Learning is not there just to satisfy oneself….Nobody other than the Dean has offered college information. He should have been the principal. (Interview, 5/01/09)

**Seeking liberal education.** In addition to college admission, the Korean students also wanted to experience liberal education. They used to have a very tight daily schedule in an effort to pursue a high grade. Many Koreans wanted to have a more relaxed daily routine than that of Korea. They also wanted liberal and diverse thinking in U.S. schooling.

Most of the Korean students attended private after-school institutions and private tutoring after regular school. The pursuit of high grades controlled Korean children’s daily lives. Bin’s account of his typical day as a student in Korea illustrates further the situation from which he came when he enrolled at Joshua. Most Korean students I interviewed reported similar daily routines.

**Bin’s typical day:**

On a typical day during that period of time, I came home from my middle school about 4:00 pm, had dinner, and headed off to the private academy at 5 pm. There I stayed until 11 pm. Long hours at the private institute would cause students to sleep during day class in middle school. What they taught at the middle school is what the students already learned at the private institute, so students seemed to lose focus during middle school class. I tried to spend my class time in middle school playing with friends rather than studying. Only a few students who were eager to learn were able to focus on what the teacher said. Instead of studying hard at the private institute, I spent most of my time socializing with friends. However, I should say the private institute did help me a little bit
since I was there for about 6–7 hours every night and the closed circuit television installed in every room let the teachers keep an eye on us. However, I wasn’t very motivated to attend, so I didn’t get as much out of it as I should have. (Interview, 4/2/09)

Most of the Korean students wanted to escape from such a long daily routine in Korea. In addition, they sought a less rigid school life.

In Korea, corporal punishment is fairly common to Korean students who do not show proper respect and obedience to teachers and parents, and is another reason for early-study abroad, but only for families who could afford it. In this regard, I introduce Suk and his father, whom I met at a local coffee shop on May 21st, 2010. I tape-recorded our conversation.

Suk’s parents had come to the U.S. to attend Suk’s graduation from Joshua. His father told me why he had had to send his son abroad for study. This father had accepted and taken for granted the violence in his own education. He recalled,

> When I was young, instead of wondering why teachers hit me for not knowing the answers, I assumed teachers hit me because I answered wrong, that I shouldn’t have. I took it for granted that this was the way things were; therefore, I was determined to study much harder in order to not get hit. In other words, I thought not to get hit, I must get 100.”

However, he continued:

Suk [his son] came from school, in his 8th grade, or 7th grade, and told me that something is wrong with the school system, so I asked what is wrong. He said that it doesn’t make any sense that teachers hit kids when they don’t know something instead of teaching them kindly. “Why bother to go to school if kids know all? That’s why they go to school.” When I heard this, I was struck; I thought, that’s right; I felt that that is right! (Interview, 5/21/10)

The father realized that his son would not survive in the Korean educational system if he constantly challenged it, and this motivated the father to send his son abroad to study. Indeed, Suk himself eventually confirmed that he had experienced many instances of physical and verbal abuse for challenging the school’s authority. Initially, however, Suk’s response on a questionnaire of mine to a question about his motivation for going abroad for study did not
mention this abuse: “I’ve always had a desire to learn and experience different kinds of environments, which motivated me to come.” In interviews, the real reason emerged:

**Suk:** I did [challenged teachers and school authority], so I got hit a lot. There was a teacher who objected to one of the policies of the institution. I did not think it was a bad policy, but the teacher tried to recruit me to publicly revolt against the policy. I said I did not want to join the protest because I agreed with the policy. And then he tortured me by grabbing my face and pulling hard around my eyes. Like this, there were no human rights. Singling out an individual and publicly slapping and humiliating him or her is not humane.

Here in Joshua, even detention is issued privately. They put a slip inside the locker. So, if I open the locker, I am the only person who knows it. It is a very humane approach. I have challenged authority a lot since I was young. Consequently, I got many hits. Back in Korea, when I was in middle school, there was an incident that made me blow up. (Interview, 5/4/10)

An incident during Suk’s middle school solidified his determination to leave Korea:

**Suk:** At that time, kids brought basketballs to school and accidentally broke classroom windows very often while playing with them. I neither brought a ball to school nor played with a ball since I don’t like ball sports.

One day, a boy accidentally put a basketball under my desk. After seeing the ball through my classroom window, all of a sudden the student dean dashed into the classroom and grabbed my neck without asking anything and pulled me outside. I said that the ball was not mine. However, he kept pulling me outside even when I told him a couple of times, “That’s not mine!” So I went crazy and screamed at him, “NOT MINE, why are you pulling me outside? Why? WHY?” I stood up against him, people might have seen me as a disobedient child, but it was not me who brought the basketball to school, and why did he keep pulling me? On that day, I was hit here and there all over to death. This was the first time in my life to get hit so badly. (Interview, 5/4/10)

Suk was frustrated because, even though his parents sent a letter to the minister of education about the incident, no action was taken. “[Even] if you appeal to the human rights committee, the problem teacher has a three-month suspension and then goes back to work.” Suk and expected the freedom of expression of dress and thought at Joshua.

However, that was not the case at Joshua. Consequently, similar conflicts arose for Suk who expected to indulge in freedom of thought at the school. Suk, felt the need to change himself to accommodate to Joshua’s conservative climate, to live a double life or be forced out.
The school is very traditional and conservative, whereas I am very progressive. It is very secluded. Lots of regulations, too many things they ask us not to do. I am not religious. I am social, outgoing, progressive, and I like to have people around .... I have a lot to say, but I have to shut my mouth and obey the school rules to survive because I can’t say anything when they say if you don’t like our policy, get out. You know, I am international; this is a Christian private school. (Interview, 5/19/10)

Another Korean male student, Kang, also asserted that in these respects Joshua was no better than Korean schools. He further commented, “The world is changing, but this school isn’t moving and doesn’t want to move” (Interview, 5/13/09).

The Korean students expected to move closer to global citizenship by socializing with Americans while learning English and enjoying freedom. For many Korean students being American is identified as being global. Regardless of their preferred citizenship, they all yearned for global citizenship since they recognized the advantages it confers. However, they found themselves in a school that, from their point of view met only the desire to learn English.

Clashing Integrationist Visions

The school expected that their Korean students would concentrate on studying (especially on improving their English), would be obedient to the school’s authority, and would integrate into American society by mingling with both white and non-white American students. The school’s expectations for the Korean students are consistent with the stereotypical notions of Asian-American immigrant children as a model minority: obedient, smart, studious, hard workers, good at math and science and respectful of teachers, unlike some other minority groups.

The fervor of these Korean students and their families for English language, especially American English, coupled with a U.S. degree followed from their vision of global citizenship and the advantages they expected it to confer on them in a global employment market. They often identified with what they understood to be “white” American aspirations. In fact, the school and the Korean students were united by an integrationist vision stemming from a similar
imperial origin. This similar vision of integration changed for the both parties as time went by as discussed in the remaining chapters.

Model minority, the image of South Korean students. The school’s integrationist expectations that their Korean students would be a model minority proved to be at great odds with their experience with these Korean students. The school’s preconception of their Korean students had been based on the school’s earlier experience with a few Korean students before Korean educational migrants became a significant fraction of the student body at the school. Such experience had not contradicted what they had heard about Korean students and Korean education, which followed a widespread U.S mainstream attitude about Asian students as a model minority. Mr. Dean recalled that the small number of Korean students enrolled at Joshua in the late 1990s had been very smart, studious, and eager to speak English; moreover, they had readily joined in with the school’s American students.

Mrs. Principal commented,

Maybe it’s just a misunderstanding, maybe we thought this about Korean students, that they were all very focused, very diligent, very hard working, very motivated, like that was the norm (Normal), we said oh, this [the school’s experience of its recent Korean students] is disappointing, but I’m not sure where we can put that idea, but that’s just what we thought. I think because what we understood of the Korean educational system was that it was very strict, very rigid, kids worked for 12 hours a day or something like that, 12 seems like a lot, it seems like your whole life is what it is, and maybe sleep a little, so we had this notion from that understanding of their system that these were kids that really were going to be the hardest working and the most focused and diligent. (Interview, 5/11/09)

Thus, she expected the new wave of students from Korea to be obedient, studious, and well behaved. For many of school officials at Joshua, the idealized aspects that were expected to exist among current students included respect for adult figures and a study ethic exemplified by nine-hour school day followed by afterschool private tutorials lasting up to an additional five hours.
At odds with these expectations, the school came to see the Koreans as extremely threatening to their way of running the school. Mr. Dean and other school officials believed that Korean students made professions of Christian belief in order to be accepted for enrollment but then some “chafed at, challenged, or even mocked the Christian elements that were at the heart of our school culture” (Williams, in press, p. 390).

The school staff was particularly upset by this because they were committed to a pastoral mission that welcomed all races, seeking to build Christian unity in their school while educating all its students to be good Christian parents and citizens. As the Korean population continued to grow, what had been at first submerged conflicts, as discussed earlier, began to rise to the surface between school officials and Korean international students. For example, one day in May 2009, when I was called into Mr. Dean’s office, he expressed his regret that introducing these Korean students had disrupted the Christian culture of the school:

Part of reason we [Mr. Dean and the researcher] are sitting here today is because as we headed down this road more and more in the last five or ten years, we [the school] had to stop and assess the impact of the larger percentage of our student body being, I say, international students, but you and I know that that means Korean students. You know that the larger percentage of student body they become, the less there is, it seems, the less there is the openness to allowing their lives to be transformed by the gospel. (Interview, 5/27/09)

Mr. Dean mentioned that the increase in Korean students had created extra work for Joshua’s faculty and staff. There was no compensation for teachers for this extra work, including paperwork associated with immigration and visa issues.

U.S. imperial shadow on South Korea, the image of America. On the other hand, at the beginning, many of the Korean students at Joshua aspired to integrate into the school culture. Teachers observed a similar phenomenon. On May 3rd in 2010, when I asked Mr. History about his perceptions of Korean students before and after his experience with them, he said that he
enjoyed working with Korean students “because they are so willing to assimilate into American culture oftentimes and they don’t feel [to me] as different as a Chinese or Vietnamese immigrant often might. Also, because they’re willing to Americanize, they’re more similar.” He drew interesting distinctions between Korean ESA students and Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants whose purpose for coming to the U.S. is different from these ESA students. This teacher believed that the Korean students came to Joshua with a desire to assimilate and become a part of the school. He further believed that Korean students are more open-minded. He noted,

> When I was at the university taking an East Asian class, my professor compared Koreans culturally to the Irish. Her point was that Koreans have a very vibrant culture….I really enjoy working with Korean students, and again, stereotypes in comparing Korea with other East Asian cultures, … I think the comparison with the Irish, there’s a warmth or an openness I’ve encountered with a lot of Koreans, not all of them, but with a lot of them.

Through further conversation, I came to notice that this teacher was using the term “assimilation” without realizing the distinction between assimilation and simply fitting in (integration).

All of the Korean participants other than one Korean male, Kay,\(^36\) really wanted to integrate without losing their Koreanness by assimilating into American culture, more specifically here at Joshua as one Korean male student, Kang, expressed, “We, Koreans, did not come here to give up our Koreanness and become Americans” (Interview, 4/1/09).

Most Korean students at Joshua began with abstract concepts of the U.S. English language and of race that had been derived in large part from U.S. news media and the U.S. entertainment industry. American culture has been a key influence in South Korea since the Korean War. Many Koreans have been very receptive to the views conveyed in American media. Race is not discussed much for most Koreans in the Korean context where the racial differences are minimal; in the U.S., it’s a major issue, both historically and to this day.

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\(^36\) He is the only Korean student who was willing to assimilate into American white culture and white language, as well as to lose his Koreanness. Further detailed discussion will follow in chapters 7 and 8.
When I asked my focal participants to describe their perceptions, immediately before migrating, of the English language, of race, and of North American society in general, they answered that they had thought of America as a good and rich country without any problems, filled with mostly white and some black citizens. They expected as Koreans to identify more with the majority whites. Here are some of the answers about their expectations of the U.S.:

**Chul (11th grade male):** [. . .] a huge city-based country with lots of white and black people. I didn’t much think about race and English language. (Interview, 3/25/9)

**Bin (12th grade male):** Right before coming to Canada as a 4th grader, I couldn’t speak English, but I had a perception of English; whether it was standard English or Ebonics, it was superior to Korean, as shown in Hollywood movies. I had an aspiration to learn and use English like native English speakers. I pictured Canada as a place where beavers and moose are walking in the streets. I thought only white and black people lived in Canada and the U.S. (Interview, 3/13/9)

**Kay (11th grade male):** At one time I wanted to be white because whites look so comfortable and are well respected all over the world, especially in Japan. They are respected and well treated wherever they go in foreign countries. The English language and the white race are well honored in Japan. (Interview, 7/8/9)

Contrary to their expectations, Korean students who were used to being in the mainstream in Korea found themselves situated as a foreign minority at Joshua. It is not surprising, then, that the relationship between the school and Korean students became fraught.

In the next section, I explore further sources of conflict between the school and its Korean students that emerged as the Korean population at Joshua increased: (1) The Koreans’ family and living situations, (2) the importance the Koreans placed on grades and how intensely they pursued good grades.
Family first, Joshua. One major concern of the school was the Korean students’ separation from their families. According to several school officials and school documents including Mr. Dean, Mrs. Principal, and Mr. Science, the school saw the situation as a Christian issue and an abrogation of the duties of a Christian family as specified in Joshua’s mission statement. The school website (2008) stated that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children, guided by the Christian Bible which is God’s absolute true Word.

This issue reflected a clash with class and gender. Living arrangements for Koreans at the time of study included the following: of seventeen 10th to 12th graders, eleven lived with non-family related guardians (including two families affiliated with Joshua); two lived with the mother alone; one lived with her aunt; one lived with his sister; and two of the 12th graders had been living with the older brother of one of them, but were living without a guardian because the brother had left for Korea after he graduated. Mr. Dean noted that, according to its mission statement, his school exists to “reinforce Biblical values taught in the home.” However, the school witnessed that more and more younger students came from Korea and lived without their parents. By allowing such students to enroll, Joshua felt responsible for the resulting strain in families. Many teachers wondered why Korean parents would send their children abroad for study at the cost of separation at a young age, and doubted that doing so would really benefit the Korean children in general. Mr. Dean shared his firm belief that children should live with their parents. Here is our conversation about the guardianship issue on May 27th in 2009:

Mr. Dean: In my world view, in my way of seeing the world, out of it, it is INFINITELY more important to me for my children that I be there to nurture them, to love them, to discipline them, to train them up to protect them and lead them, guide them and let go as they mature. I would never in a million years, I would never give a remote thought, to sending my children to a different country for all of high school.

Researcher: There are variances among parent-child relationships.
Mr. Dean: I just can’t imagine, you know, if I am honest, I can’t imagine this is good for young people to be separated from their families.

Researcher: Sometime, it is better, sometimes, not, depending on situation. All parent-child relationships are not like yours. And there are a lot of single mothers bringing children up, like Obama – he had a single mother. And there are a lot of children going to boarding schools. That used to be a privilege in the American upper class. There are a lot of kids who live with their parents and mess around. Remember, Kelab, Korean-American? He was kicked out of this school although he has wonderful and well-respected pastor parents living together. For elementary students, I fear, but for high schoolers, it is different . . . .

Clearly, Mr. Dean, similar to others on the school staff, had issues with guardianship for Koreans. In response to its concerns, the school had changed its policy regarding the guardianship of international students. The school now required either a family member, other than a sibling, or an official guardian appointed by the family. They found that most Korean students ended up living with a host family, which many school officials thought did not provide adequate supervision and resulted in negative consequences for the school. Mr. Dean argued that Korean students living without parents lacked adult guidance, especially in issues such as the students’ time management; some host families did not provide a supportive environment for the Korean students. He noted gender difference in living arrangements, as well. He observed that males had more behavioral problems than females and speculated that males, more than females, were inclined to be negatively influenced by living only with guardians or their mothers, without a male figure in their household.

He stated, “I have participated in many meetings where stern fathers, visiting from Korea, press their surprisingly humble sons for explanations regarding their poor performance. Once the father is gone, however, things return to the status quo” (2/6/11).

Mr. Dean further noted that the Korean students do not get enough sleep and consequently sleep in class, which he felt was caused by the lack of supervision in the home. He
stated, “If there is a single stereotypical image that has become associated with Korean students at our school, it is sleeping in class.” He speculated that Korean students often spent their time in late nighttime activities and did not get enough sleep. In fact, he asserted that sleeping in class was common even among the best Korean students, and, for some, was a daily occurrence. He thought the sleeping issue was related to the lack of guardianship. Another school official, Mrs. Principal, strongly agreed with Mr. Dean on the subject of guardianship.

Like Mr. Dean, she strongly believed that guardianship had become a significant issue for the school, and that family guardianship was important to the success of students. Mrs. Principal mentioned a call from a Korean family asking the school to find a host family for their child. The school had declined to offer help in this matter, she said, because they wanted students to live with their own families. She added that the new requirement automatically eliminated some potential students.

She perceived that Korean students had too much freedom, which they were not prepared to handle because many of their guardians did not care much about discipline and had become guardians only for financial reasons. She stated, “We’ve heard about Korean families who offer home stay just to make money. We don’t want to promote that. We feel that’s not a good living situation for the kids and not a good learning environment.” She also indicated that “We absolutely have to be in contact with a parent regularly, and there are guardians that just aren’t reliable. It’s not their child, so they’re just not as diligent” (Interview, 05/11/09).

In addition to the principal and dean, three other teachers commented on how the guardianship issue affected Joshua’s Korean students. Like his colleagues, Mr. Science believed that the Korean students were at a great disadvantage without their families. “If they are just here renting a room from someone, without parents, they’ll be at a great disadvantage. We found
that some of the people that were renting to Korean students were abusing them: not abusing physically but not providing a good environment.” (Interview, 5/1/09). The English teacher was another who commented on this topic. When I talked to her one day in spring 2009, she said:

Joshua has in the past two years implemented a new policy that says international students have to live with a guardian like a parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle. This must be some close family member but not a sibling because, like Hwan living with his older sister who is in college, they may have a life style that is not appropriate. We don’t want them to live with people whom they barely know or who don’t have any investment in their education. In that situation, it would be difficult for us to contact these people because they don’t necessarily care when students are having trouble. Not living with parents has been problematic; that’s why we’ve changed the policy.

I responded that many children living with parents have problems. She agreed but added that then we are able to address that problem with the parents.

Mrs. Spanish was more sympathetic to the Korean students’ situation. She was not sure if they were doing just fine without parents; however, she said that she, herself, would not send her children abroad because they need parents near when they are fourteen. She felt that the Korean students, in general, missed their parents a lot and their parents did not have much chance to see their children grow up. Mrs. Spanish stated, “They [Korean students] will go to college soon and they will grow up, and then the parents and the students will have missed all those growing-up years” (Interview, 05/03/10).

While her sympathy toward Korean children growing up without their Korean parents being around, for Kang, one 12th grade Korean male, did not seem to miss his life with father’s physical presence in Korea—Kang,37 who stood out as a “sleeping Korean” for Mr. Dean and many teachers. The school attributed Koreans’ sleeping in class to their home stay situation where some home-stay hosts did not provide a satisfactory level of adult supervision. When I first saw Kang in his World View class, on November 20, 2008, Kang slept at his desk in the

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37 Kang is discussed in Chapter Three as a complex personality.
fifth row in the middle, resting his head on his crossed arms. He rarely moved while laughter and chatter filled up the classroom. When the bell rang, he slowly began to move his head. In Bible class, again I observed him resting his head on crossed arms. From time to time, he would slowly raise his head, write something on a handout, and then return to his resting position. Sometimes he talked to another 12th-grade Korean male, Bin. Most of the time, they were together. Both were quiet and mostly invisible at the school. When I asked his teachers about Kang, they brought up his sleepiness. One teacher remarked, “Yes, he is tired all the time. That is sometimes a trend with Korean students who stay up late to study by themselves or with tutors, and then they don’t get enough sleep. Then they sleep through class.”

Kang was very quiet and invisible in class. One day in English class, students were taking turns reading a book. When it was Kang’s turn, he read with a very low monotonous voice. As he read, there was a weird silence in the class. Nobody said anything; no laughter, not even breathing sound was noticeable. It seemed that nobody dared to say a word or even laugh at his reading. After several attempts to set up a meeting, I was able to meet Kang at a Korean restaurant on April 1st in 2009. The minute I saw him at the restaurant, it appeared as though somebody had infused blood into his dead cells. He was a totally different person than the one I had observed in the classroom. His voice and his gestures were animated. He told me he had been popular in Korea, a class leader. I found out that he was leading Korean students at Joshua, too. Here is his side of the story from my interviews with him over the several meetings (4/1/09, 4/15/09, 5/1/09, 5/12/09, 5/13/09).

Kang had a dream to study hard in the U.S. However, despite all his efforts, language and socialization did not come easily during his sophomore and junior years at Joshua. By the time he became a senior, he had almost ceased socializing with American students, and no longer
had much hope of attending a four-year college because his parents could not afford it. He had decided to go to a community college in Florida where he could live with his sister.

As for the sleeping issue, he stated that very often he had to stay up late or all night to finish his homework. But he did not tell his teachers that this was his reason for being so tired. Based on my conversation with Kang, I speculated that he did not make excuses for sleeping during his classes partly because he felt guilty that studying was not always the reason, but mainly because he thought he should humble himself. The latter is strongly related to Korean Confucius humbling thinking: Kang may have thought that using “staying-up to study” as an excuse would be a way of showing off. Many of Kang’s teachers mentioned his tiredness and sleepiness, language issues, and academic performance. Although teachers appeared to care about him, they confessed that they were not close to Kang. In our conversation related to sleeping in the class and guardianship, I discovered that Kang did not know what the school thought of Korean students until I brought up the issues:

**Researcher:** How does “Not living with parents” affect you and your relationship with your parents?

**Kang:** The school thinks we live uncontrolled lives because we do not live with our parents. But actually, living without parents doesn’t lead to an uncontrolled life. The fact that I sleep in class is not related to the lack of parental supervision. Sleeping late is common among Korean youths. It is not uncommon for my Korean friends to stay up until 1 am. American kids go to bed early like 10 P.M. and sleep many hours. I wonder if that might be one of reasons why American kids are so tall? You know, enough sleep and height growth is related and kids grow especially between the hours of 10 P.M. and 2 A.M. I guess my relationship with my father is better than it was when I was a freshman in high school. All along, my mom told me to work hard and do my best. She used to be my good friend, but now she is just my mom, a mother figure far way. On the other hand, my father is intent on sending me to a good college. I used to hate my father very, very much since he almost tried to kill me (hitting, swearing, and hurting my feelings) if I did not do well on my exam. I didn’t get along with my father. My mom studies continuously, getting a Chinese language certificate and a Real Estate certificate, and now going to college. She teaches me by being a role model herself.
In contrast to the school’s worry about guardianship for Koreans, Kang thought that “not living with parents” had not affected him in a negative way. Indeed, he felt that his relationship with his father got better since he came to the U.S.

The school appeared to have made a dogmatic judgment about ESA living arrangements without exploring the subject beyond superficial observations of their ESA students. Family separation is widely acceptable to many upper-middle class Americans and Europeans who often send their children to boarding schools, as one American who was aware of a guardianship issue at the school commented. She noted that Joshua seemed to feel strongly that something is wrong with children’s lives if they did not have their parents around physically. The informant further stressed that the school’s view of guardianship as pathological was definitely, in the U.S., a mainstream idea only in the middle and working classes.

Besides raising issues of class, the issue of guardianship reflected at Joshua a clash between the school’s idea of gender roles and the ideas of their Korean clients. The school especially saw this absent father situation as engendering problems with their Korean male students.

To sum up, unlike the school’s concern for Korean students’ family separation, the students living without their parents did not seem to be negatively affected. Although most Korean students felt lonely due to their physical separation from their family and missed their family, friends, especially their own Korean youth culture in Korea, they became independent and pushed themselves harder to meet their parents’ expectations. The guardianship issue did not seem to be causally related to the lack of breaking Christian ethics and had little to do with grade obsession or cheating. In some cases such as Kay and Bin, it was actually better that they studied away from home since some parents were violent verbally, physically, and emotionally
when their children did not receive good grades. In addition, for Joon, although he did not have any guardian, he was the most respected by the school officials at Joshua. By contrast, in the case of Hoon, he came to the U.S. when he was 11 years old, so he might appear to be a counterexample to the school’s concern for Korean students’ family separation, Hoon came to the U.S. with his mother, and therefore the parent-child relationship continued at the time of my research. Indeed, in Hoon, we find a strong need (although Hoon may not admit it) to separate from his mother. Another counterexample to the school’s concern is Kay’s case. For Kay, his guardian, Mrs. Drama teacher, and her husband were excellent caregivers who gave love and boundaries based on my interview with Kay, Mrs. Drama, and other teachers and neighbors.

In addition, most of the Korean students stayed in continual contact with their parents by means of informational technology such as Skype, webcam, e-mail, iPhones, and Facebook. They seemed to continue the strong relationship with their parents. In fact, my data showed that for most Korean students their relationships with their parents were considerably improved when they lived apart. Most of the Koreans at Joshua also had earned grades that would lead to admission to the top tier universities in the U.S. as discussed in Chapter Seven. Very often, back in Korea, a grade that did not meet parents’ expectations had been the cause of conflict in the family. Korean parents would often push their children and punish them. Parents’ wishes for their children’s success sometimes led even to physical and verbal abuse. For some students at Joshua, coming to the U.S. had reduced such tensions and given them space in which to study without destructive pressures. The Korean parents’ push for grades, however, did not completely stop with their children’s transfer to Joshua. They also came to appreciate their parents’ love when they were separated over time. Although they did not like their mothers’ nagging, they well knew that their mothers did the nagging out of love.
Grades first, Korean students. Parents took to heart that through ESA they were providing their children with a “second chance” at academic success, most often because their children had not fared well in South Korea’s hyper-competitive schooling environment. The experience of Bin, one of the students I observed at Joshua, illustrates how grades in Korea, especially what grades meant to him and how grades were connected to his relationship with his mother and his family honor, play a role in the lives of these students that a U.S. school might have difficulty understanding. I chose Bin’s story because most Korean students at Joshua had a similar reason for studying abroad, namely, an escape from a system that was not serving them to a system they believed would give them a second chance at success. Despite having spent considerable time and money in their private after-school lessons in Korea, they could not survive in the excessive competition for admission to top-tier Korean universities. For these students, joining the American educational system was another way to connect to the socioeconomic power structure.

Bin’s family lives in Apgujung, a rich town, the richest and the most academic-oriented neighborhood in Korea. Both of his parents graduated from the most prestigious university in Korea; his mother obtained a Ph.D., and his father a master’s degree. His parents and his relatives had high academic expectations for him, especially, his mother. On his mother’s side, there are three doctors out of four children. His grandfather used to be the CEO of a bank. His mother is the youngest child who grew up in a privileged environment. For example, her maid did all the chores for her before marriage. From a young age, Bin felt academic pressure, especially from his mother. He was stressed because he could not meet the expectations of others. He reported that his relatives and neighbors used to say, “Since your mother and father graduated from Seoul National University, don’t you think you should go to Harvard?”
(Interview, 5/11/13). His memories of school in Korea were dominated by stress and fear. Nevertheless, Bin would rather receive a physical punishment than a lower grade. “I wish Korean educators would not hit students…. However, I prefer to get hit as they did in Korea rather than teachers at Joshua cutting down my grade when I don’t turn in my assignments on time.” Grades meant a lot to Bin, as they do to other Korean students. He explained: (Interview, 4/2/09)

Academic pressure from my mother went to the extreme during my secondary school years [from 7th grade to the first semester of 10th grade in Korea]. During my first semester in middle school I got an average of 80, which must have shocked my mother. She came to my room almost every day, had me kneel down, and talked about my school record for hours and hours. She used to say, “Give up studying and do farming instead, it is a waste of money to invest in you.” I was very afraid of my mother because she got furiously mad, which caused me to skip meals.

The scariest thing was when she screamed at me, “Let’s die.” I was wondering why we should die for this. This kind of incident happened periodically. There were times that were peaceful. There were other times that were very uncomfortable when she became hysterical, hit me on my cheek and my head, and pulled my hair. While going through this, I talked to myself, “Please let me get over this moment. This is all my fault because I did not study hard enough.” I carried a big burden. Playing games was the only way to escape from this stressful situation.

The pressure on Bin to earn top grades in order to get admitted to top-tier colleges is typical of the ESA students I interviewed, as are issues of at least maintaining if not enhancing family honor. The pressure on this 15-year-old boy to succeed was enormous. As Bin’s story reveals (“I was wondering why we should die for this”) based on my interview on May 11th, 2009, Korean mothers like his experience extreme stress when their children’s academic performance is mediocre. His grades contributed to the construction of his negative self-image. “Dummy! I am a kid who can do nothing well.” He could hear his mother’s voice inside of him, “You do nothing well other than being tall. The sons and daughters of my friends go to Dae-
Won Foreign Language High School and to MIT, but what about you? You can’t even make it into U of I?” Bin blamed himself and felt considerable guilt for his mediocre achievement.

Bin’s grade anxiety and fear of failure is a constant theme: “I should starve since I did not get a good grade” and “I should die if I did not earn a good grade.” Korean students rank as the unhappiest in the OECD countries and they have the highest suicide rate (Chow, 2012).38

For Korean students at Joshua, grades were extremely important. They were willing to arrange supplementary education tutors for their children so that they could survive the English curriculum at Joshua. For most Korean students, ESA at Joshua was their only second chance. They wanted to get the most of this second chance.

They wanted to study harder to get good grades. However, they also felt overwhelmed. Trying to catch up in a U.S. school setting, they found that their assignments took them much longer to complete than the time their native speaking classmates needed. Struggling to master English and unfamiliar subjects (such as American history), along with the lack of emotional outlets, led many Koreans at Joshua to feel that they had been thrown into conditions where they had to immediately either sink or swim. Some of them had a strong desire to succeed at any cost—to stay up too late at night at the cost of sleeping in class, to persuade their guardians to give the school excuses for their absences when in fact they were skipping school in order to finish up an assignment, even to cheat on tests and assignments. These were survival strategies for some Korean students.

Teachers who had not grown up in a grade-obsessed culture did not appreciate the cultural demands for grades in Korea. They sought other explanations for the behavior they were observing. Mr. Dean: “Grades are important, no matter what. But also important is the social

38 One can easily access to most of information in this chapter through many articles in media.
dimension of school. My struggle with Korean students is that [they] generally seem more interested in grades than in learning” (Interview, 3/3/09). Similarly, Mr. Science felt that the Korean students “are highly motivated, sometimes [but] they put too much stress on getting grades. The grade isn’t really important, but learning is” (Interview, 5/01/09).

Faculty discussion of “Korean grade obsession” would invariably lead to the issue of cheating. In all fairness to the school, having tutored a Korean student from Joshua I understand the dilemma faced by Joshua’s teachers. My student was so heavily focused on getting the “right answer” for a grade that he failed even to try to understand the main concepts. I explained to him the need to learn and to understand concepts rather than simply to get the answer right in that moment, an attitude that would not serve him in the long run. But he was so stressed out that I became concerned and sought to comfort him and to calm him down. In the end, his too-narrow conception of academic achievement limited both my ability to teach and his ability to learn.

Visible and invisible Koreans: Cheating and curriculum. Their intense focus on grades was intimately intertwined with what Mr. Dean perceived to be the most unsettling challenge Koreans students presented the school, especially given its emphasis on Christian values: ethical lapses, such as cheating and lying. Mrs. Spanish was less concerned. She said she had caught very few Koreans cheating. Her perception was that all kids cheat, but their reasons differ. “American kids cheat because they are lazy and don’t want to study, but want to pass; Korean students who cheat “[are afraid that] my parents will kill me if I don’t do well”(Interview, 05/03/10). She disagreed that the problem with Koreans was a lack of Christian principles, as Mr. Dean had surmised.
The cheating problem was not exclusive to the Korean student population, according to a cursory survey of the past few years’ experience, but Mr. Dean observed that a high percentage of the Korean student population had been involved in such unethical situations. Korean students had been caught cheating during the school year, from tests to labs to homework; they were also found to possess copies of exams obtained from previous Joshua graduates. A large percentage of Korean students had been caught plagiarizing a paper or cheating on an exam, Mrs. Principal said although she did not provide numbers or percentage.

Mr. Dean had concluded that Korean students and their parents felt pressured to do whatever it took to get their children into Joshua, and to win high grades once there. As he saw it, shading the truth about their commitment to Christian values during the admissions process was connected to unethical behavior by the Korean students once enrolled.

Mrs. Principal, too, was troubled by lying. In my interview with her on May 11th, 2009, she noted “whether this relates to cheating on a paper, test, homework assignment, etc., or just flat out telling a lie. Sometimes lies are told to cover something up even when the thing doesn’t seem to be a big deal—at least to me.” Although she saw cultural differences in patterns of cheating and lying, she went on to say that it might be more of a generational problem.

It’s not really a Korean problem. It is my perception that lying is on the increase in this generation, regardless of cultural orientation. It doesn’t seem to be taboo like it was years ago— even in the past ten years, I have seen a marked increase.

She wondered whether the school’s Korean students might simply not be as good as other students at concealing their cheating. The perception that the Koreans were especially unethical might be because “[T]hey get caught more often or it’s more obvious.” She also speculated that Joshua’s teachers found ethical lapses by their Korean students especially upsetting because they had been led to believe that Korean students are generally very studious and obedient to teachers.
Nevertheless, it was undeniable that many of Joshua’s teachers saw ethical problems, especially cheating, as a major issue with their Korean students.

Mr. Science, for example, believed that Korean students were more likely than others to cheat. He had to confront 8-10 out of about 37 Korean students at Joshua for cheating. Mr. Science felt that the Korean students “are highly motivated [but] sometimes they put too much stress on getting good grades” (Interview, 5/01/09). Mr. Science described cheating as a moral issue, and he believed that the Koreans used their native language in school to cheat. “I’ve caught more Korean students cheating on tests than other students” (Interview, 05/03/09).

Although he did not understand the Korean language, I speculated that he knew that by their physical behaviors that came with Korean language and tone of the language. He perceived the cheating issue as part of a larger issue of school unity and integrity. Mr. Math also noted, “I’ve noticed that some of my Korean students like to use each other’s homework assignments” although he countered that “[b]ut this happens with other non-Korean students as well” (Interview, 04/30/10).

It worried both teachers to see small groups of Koreans gathered and talking to each other in Korean. I speculated that this was because previous inappropriate behaviors by Koreans led the teachers to equate the use of the Korean language with a negative image.

Mrs. English, who had mixed feelings about the guardianship issue, also saw cheating as a major problem, though she felt that it was an understandable consequence of cultural pressure. “With new Korean students, a lot of times, they think it is okay in a certain situation. [. . . ]” There is so much pressure on them to succeed and, it’s so difficult when they don’t know the

39The researcher did not gain an access to the comparative numbers of white students’ incidents of cheating, which seemed to be related to Federal Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA). However, school officials admitted that white students also cheated; yet they believed that Koreans in general cheated more.
language, so not all of them, but a lot of them, cheat as a method to get through.” Asked if only Koreans cheat and if she had a problem with students getting copies of the previous exam, she answered (one day in spring 2009) as follows:

**Mrs. English:** Not that we never catch American kids cheating too, because we do. I don’t know that I’ve ever had a problem with students getting copies of the exams, but, cheating has been kind of recurring problem.

**Researcher:** Not only Korean students, but also American students?

**Mrs. English:** Yes, certainly both, I think. But then, we catch them [Koreans] in a lot of situations where they knew that it was wrong, or the same person will get in trouble for the same type of cheating multiple times, so you knew that they knew it was wrong but did it anyway.

Although not all of Joshua’s teachers perceived cheating to be an exclusively Korean problem, they saw cheating as an issue especially acute with their Koreans. But when I asked fourteen Korean students about cheating at Joshua, all of them asserted that Americans cheat just as much as Koreans do. One Korean male, Hwan, was furious when I mentioned the school’s perception that Koreans are especially likely to cheat. His perception was similar to that of Mrs. Principal. “Some of the Koreans cheat,” he said, but they were more often caught than cheaters in other groups. He attributed this to differences in behavioral patterns and to ethnic stereotyping. He made other observations. “By the time we get to be 12th graders, we know each other. We know who is cheating and who is not cheating, not only among Koreans but also among Americans, I mean all.” Hwan thought that only young 10th graders report cheating. The older seniors just overlook it. About the specific issue of looking at old exam copies prior to the test, he did not think that referring to examinations from previous classes was cheating. For Hwan and other Koreans, the copies of previous exams are more like references in order to know what are the important things they need to get from the class.
Hwan criticized the teachers for not updating the exams. “What is funny about it is that teachers do not change exams, not even the order of the questions, EXACTLY THE SAME! ... Teachers are lazy and choose an easy way because even a little care and effort can make a difference such as changing wording and numbering” (Interview, 3/23/09). Hwan also claimed that he saw some Americans with copies of old exams. Finally, he noted that not all exams are cheatable; and, unlike other Koreans who cheat and get caught, he is too smart to get caught even though he is Korean.

Despite Hwan’s confidence, I found that his teachers suspected Hwan of cheating. Hwan chose to deceive his teachers about using copies of prior tests to study for his exams even though some of them had expressly forbidden this practice. Whether or not he agreed with his teachers’ perspectives, he knew they considered it cheating. He rationalized his behavior by blaming the teachers for being lazy and by refusing to take responsibility for his action. Hwan took advantage of this situation for his own benefit, as did other students, including the Americans. On the other hand, I wonder whether anyone in Hwan’s position would have been able to resist the temptation to look over copies of earlier exams. Hwan acknowledged an obsession with his grades and identified its origin in the burden he was under to meet his parents’ expectations. Given the pressure on him to earn good grades, his actions become understandable. Bin, Korean male, stated that a Korean student would prefer to be slapped in the face than to receive a lowered grade (Interview, 4/2/09).

An interesting observation regarding cheating, and perceptions of cheating, came from another student, Joon. He said that the mistake Koreans made was in sharing with other

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40My experience as a tutor of a Korean student at Joshua confirmed this assertion. Interestingly and unexpectedly, the test that my student ultimately took at Joshua was exactly the same as the practice test I used as I tutored him.
Koreans. Their American peers look honest when actually they are being selfish (not sharing questionable materials with each other). He stated:

Americans, due to their own selfishness, don’t like showing their answers to others, which makes the American students appear hypocritical. Overall, most students cheat at one time or another. I don’t mind other people copying my test answers, but I don’t intentionally show others my answers because that makes me look bad, as well. (3/25/09)

Another Korean student, Miki, addressed the issue of cheating in similar terms. “What’s funny is American students also cheat” (5/29/09). She said that some American friends asked her to show them her homework and asked her for answers during the exam when the teacher left the class. Sometimes they looked at her test sheet when teachers were not looking. Some cheated to make their grade 100%. Her observation was that American students were better at making excuses; for example, when they were copying someone else, they said they were just checking the other student’s grade. She argued that American kids at Joshua have siblings who could help with their schoolwork and could share previous quizzes and tests.

Having been alerted to the fact that cheating was an issue for teachers and students alike, I paid greater attention during my subsequent class observations. Eventually I witnessed some instances of cheating by students of all races even when the teacher was present.

My initial view of cheating was biased. I assumed Korean kids would do much more cheating because of the extremely heavy societal, cultural, and familial pressures on them to succeed in academia. And I assumed that American kids at Joshua would rarely cheat because academic pressures on them were lower and this was a Christian school. These assumptions turned out to be wrong.

I had several opportunities to observe kids during their exams. My observation was that American kids cheated as much as did the Korean kids. On April 24 2009, I observed Mr. Worldview’s second and third period classes. Afterwards, I visited Mr. Worldview’s office. It
was around 11 am. Surrounded by stacks of paperwork, he seemed to be very busy and looked stressed. I told him about my observations: in the second period, no one was cheating; in the third period, almost everybody was cheating. Looking even more stressed and frustrated than before, Mr. Worldview asked me how they had cheated. I described some parts of what I had seen very cautiously, trying to be dispassionate, hoping not to get on his nerves. I told Mr. Worldview that while he was talking to a student about the exam, and when he left the classroom, I had seen:

- an American boy turning to one side to look at another student’s sheet (front right)
- an American girl turning around to see an American boy’s test sheet, and they exchanged answers (back left)
- two American boys showing their sheets to each other (middle middle)
- three American girls talking to each other while they still had their sheets (front left)
- Hwan making several attempts to look at Miki’s sheet, but apparently failing to do so, because he seemed nervous.
- American students cheating (back middle)

One thing that stood out to me, I said, was that some American kids remained very relaxed while cheating, even having conversations and looking openly at each other’s work, whereas Hwan, the only Korean kid who appeared to be trying to see someone else’s work, appeared much more guarded and nervous.

Mr. Worldview responded that he knew the seniors were not ready for the test because they had just returned from their senior trip. He added that he disagreed with the requirement that they take an exam right after their trip. With regard to Hwan, he said: “I’ve talked with Hwan about the cheating and grade issues a lot over the years, but it didn’t seem to work.
“I don’t know what to do about it. The whole world is against me. This time of the year, I feel frustrated. Grades are just numbers to me; the grades are not so important.” He was really upset and stressed. I told him, “You look so busy. I will leave you alone.” And I left. [Later Mr. Worldview apologized. I told him I would have been even more upset, under those circumstances, than he had been.]

Mr. Dean clearly was upset when I mentioned how much cheating I had observed in that class. He said that he now realized he had expected too much after the senior trip and that he had failed to prepare the seniors adequately. He seemed ready to dismiss this incident as unrepresentative of the usual behavior of his American students. He was unwilling to acknowledge this incident as evidence that he might be mistaken in his perception that Koreans at Joshua were more likely to cheat than were American students. This is an example of what I believe to be Joshua’s unwillingness to confront an uncomfortable truth. I believed that Mr. Dean did not want to see and admit; I decided not to push him further.

The following is another observation of exam.

5/8/09 Bible class exam -10th grade 9:15 am

A substitute teacher (Mr. younger Science) was sitting at his desk in the front left of the room. I was sitting in the back right of the room. I could not tell if there was a lot of cheating going on, but I saw a lot of inappropriate behaviors. Mike, a white boy in the class, says “Holy Crap.” Chris, another white student, is talking, while African American girls are giggling. One of the African American girls, Grace, is singing and is smiling. She was told to quit singing by the substitute teacher. Mike says spirit has moved her to sing since it is a Bible exam. In the front left section of the classroom are sitting two white girls who are quietly talking to each other. One white girl puts her head down and starts sleeping. The teacher wakes her up. There are three Korean boys, Hoon, Kay, and Kyung. They sit separately. They do not seem to be close. No talking is seen among themselves. They do not cheat. They are quietly taking the exam. They look somewhat bored.

Kay was 11th grade then. The three Korean boys were not close. Especially, Hoon and Kyung did not like each other and even talked to each other. For Kay and Hoon, they claimed that they had never cheated through their lives, which is consistent with what school officials talked about them in terms of cheating.
I was beginning to realize that the school’s concern that its Korean students were inclined to be unethical was strongly connected to its concern over their use of the Korean language in school. Korean students who cheated were highly visible not just due to their ethnic appearance and their often-awkward manner of cheating. Their use of Korean among themselves also made it seem as if they were concealing something from those around them. When American students misbehaved, they did so in ways that did not attract attention because they were more comfortable in and attuned to their environment. Talking to each other in English was not in itself suspicious, even when in fact they were making private jokes about their teachers, sharing homework answers, or cheating on tests. But the fact that administrators, teachers, and non-Korean students could not understand what Koreans were saying to each other in Korean made any use of the Korean language in school automatically suspect.

Koreans were visible in a white English environment, especially when they behaved inappropriately while they were invisible in the school’s curriculum and instruction. Based on my observations of classes and interviews with teachers, little curricular and instructional change was instituted beyond the generosity of teachers’ willing to help.

I realized that the school was seeing color and race through language. Korean students’ use of Korean among themselves had come to be associated with (and even seen as causing) problems that the school considered serious. The school’s response contradicted their professed commitment to universal brotherhood and Christian tolerance. Joshua took a stance on language that was indicative of ignorance at best and institutional racism at worst. However, the school was not the only one. In general, Korean students had racist sentiment while perpetuating white supremacy under the influence of U.S. racial ideology.
Benevolent Ignorance: The Workings of Kindness and Race at Joshua

The school and Korean students were also troubled by U.S. racial ideology and a silence on race in general. While I observed no overt racism in the behavior of individual school officials, institutional racism seemed to be unavoidable at Joshua, as well as U.S. schools in general. This applies not only to Americans at Joshua, but also to Korean students. But neither the Korean students nor the school staff seemed to believe that race was an “issue” at the school. The Korean students were especially troubled by the gap between stated ideals of Christian benevolence and the reality of race and class at Joshua.

Christian benevolence? Diversity and Race talk at Joshua. In order to give the reader a feeling for the disjunction between, on the one hand, the school’s benevolent desire to bring diversity to the school and, on the other hand, their silence on racial and cultural diversity, I introduce several relevant episodes. One day in a U.S. History class, the teacher was talking about an African American slave story. Right after that, a white girl said, “Wow, it really happened?” in an unbelieving tone. An African American girl shouted at her, in a asserting tone, “Yes, it happened!” The white girl appeared uncomfortable and defensive. Conflict arose and the conversation was not pursued further. It struck me as a missed teaching opportunity. If the white girl was ignorant of U.S. history, this would be the time to discuss the issue openly.

Similarly, one Korean male revealed his misunderstanding of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s use of the term “black.” He had mistaken King’s examination of the history of the term “black” for an argument for not using the term to describe African Americans. For example, he said, “Don’t use that!” when I described an African American student as “black.” I asked why.

Because Martin Luther King says [the word] black used to refer to evil. Even the Bible says that black represents something bad. Maybe it’s because of white people calling African American people black, like intentionally…. If you keep calling them black, they
[African Americans] might get offended. Do you ever call an Asian yellow? I don’t think so. Yellow is a racist phrase against Asians. (Interview, 5/14/9)

This student was hypersensitive to any mention of race and misinterpreted King’s message relating the connotations of the word “black” to a black race.

Not all Korean students at Joshua were overly sensitive to race. Some showed very little sensitivity to matters of race and ethnicity, perhaps indicating that they held racist sentiments.

On August 28th, 2009, at the school retreat, I overheard a conversation reflecting racist sentiments between a male Korean senior, Chul, and a male Korean junior, Kyung:

Korean Senior: I am the oldest kid in this school. One of my friends was admitted at the U of I and will live at the dorm.

Korean Junior: Who will be his roommate?

Korean Senior: A black man

Korean Junior: What a bummer, sorry for that.

The Korean Junior did not even know the black man, yet he must have had a preconception about “black man.” It is not really surprising to hear that, given the history of U.S. imperialism in South Korea, but it is surprising to hear it expressed so openly, and in an insensitive manner. Usually, mainstream U.S. culture does not talk openly on the matter of race in an educational setting (Pollack, 2004).

The problems of race cross all school systems in the U.S., not just Christian schools, and also cross national borders. The junior Korean student made a racially insensitive remark because he was racially insensitive. He did not recognize that the Korean nationals at Joshua, including the speaker, were objects of the racial discrimination at Joshua (as I discuss in Chapter 6). Most of Joshua’s Korean students were not aware of, or ignored the sensitivity of, the issue of race in America. Technically, they could be characterized as “racists.” On the other hand,
overall, Koreans’ racial attitude toward African American was also formed by their daily observation of African Americans living near the school, a predominately poor black section of town.

On the other hand, two Koreans had atypical accounts. For example, one Korean female, Jinny, noted that African American males looked much fancier and had a better personality than white males, and she rarely found good-looking white males (3/9/10). She also noted that whites, in general, are narrow-minded. Additionally, one Korean male, Joon, addressed diverse images under one race/ethnicity (3/25/9). In general, the Korean students’ view of race suggests that American media has been changing over time and portraying different images of race abroad and in Korea than was portrayed in earlier times.

Many of the Korean students at Joshua began to become aware of their foreign minority status in the U.S., more specifically at the school. Although they began to reflect on the issues of nationality, race, and language after experiencing Joshua, they still did not have much direct experience with other ethnic/racial groups except for seeing a few black students around the school. Their thinking about diversity continued to be influenced strongly by the racialization of South Korean society and Korean ignorance of the intricacies of U.S. racial politics.


[t]here would be some moments in which you would consciously worry about using race labels, other moments when you would use race labels without thinking twice, and still other moments when you would erase race terms from your talk quite purposefully—and that all these actions would actually mimic the actions of others in an astonishingly precise choreography. (p. 8)

Her argument suggests that both insensitively using race words and sensitively using race words at Joshua might reproduce “the very racial inequalities that plague us” (p. 4).
On the other hand, Korean students experienced a dawning awareness of their own status in the school and in the U.S. in general. Some of the Korean students, coming primarily from upper-middle class Korea, began to realize that they were different from other Korean-Americans socio-economically and legally (legal status: citizenship and permanent resident). One Korean male, Kay, commented, “I thought all Koreans in the U.S. were students like me, but I see some Korean-Americans working in Wal-Mart and in airports who, apparently, came to America to make money, just like Hispanics and other immigrants” (4/3/10). Another Korean male, Suk, when asked to clarify what he had termed “Asian insults,” replied that the insult he found most childish and upsetting had been “Go back to your country” (5/5/10). I responded, “We [Korean citizens] have our country to go back to, but it still doesn’t feel good if people say go back to your country. I guess it is much worse for Korean-Americans.” He replied,

My father said that when he was a student in the U.S., he saw some Americans ask a Korean-American how he could speak English so well. How hurt he might have been, because he had no other country like us, I can’t imagine. Anyhow, it is not good manners to [comment on someone’s English proficiency], regardless of citizenship.

As the Koreans at Joshua became more aware of the differences between legal status and cultural status, they began to realize that even Korean-American citizens may not be perceived by white and black Americans as having achieved “American” cultural status.

In summary, Joshua’s administrators, teachers, and students were unprepared for the difficult and complex interactions and cultural processes they experienced when Korean students seeking to acquire an American education as a channel for cultural capital and global citizenship became a significant contingent in Joshua’s student body. The Korean students were seeking proficiency in English, entry into higher education, economic stability, and maintenance of familial class status, and development of global citizenship. In contrast, administrators and teachers believed salvation to be the central reason for a Christian education.
In addition, the school attributed its Korean students’ grade obsession and ethical issues, such as, cheating, to their lack of parental influence and Christianity. In fact neither of these factors was as plausible an explanation for the conflicts that I observed as the alternative explanation. I see main issues are school’s inability to be aware of the background of these Korean students, Koreans’ lack of understanding of Joshua’s culture, Korean students’ inappropriate code switching (e.g., when Americans who don’t know Korean (Korean students should switch into English language out of courtesy), and a Korean educational pressure reflected behaviors at the school.

What was interesting here is that the school’s concerns began to focus on the students’ use of Korean with each other at the school. This focus on language made it possible to address the issues surrounding a lack of Christian identity and perceived self-segregation without attacking the issues head on. Koreans’ use of the Korean language among themselves at school was a point of conflict that was strongly interrelated with the school’s issues with its Korean population in that the Korean educational culture was clashing with the school’s Christian ideology and integrationist aspirations.

The next chapter introduces the school’s response to Korean students’ behaviors – the school’s implementation of an “English only” policy. That policy brought out issues of language, pedagogy, race, and class in both American and Korean society, and conflicts between the school’s vision of Christian unity and the Koreans’ vision of a global multicultural society and economy.
Chapter Six

The English-Only

Korean students’ use of Korean language at Joshua—which resulted in an English-Only policy—is a subject worthy of consideration. All parties (the school, the parents, and the students) unanimously agreed on the necessity of mastery of English. Indeed, there was a consensus in general between school officials and Korean parents that the use of the Korean language in school was a hindrance to English learning. It was, thus, ostensibly a measure in support of Korean students’ English language learning and their integration into the school. Above all, the school reasoned, the parents and students wanted to learn English. However, contrary to the school’s and the Korean parents’ expectation of facilitating the Korean nationals’ linguistic (English learning) and social adjustment (integration), the English-Only policy hindered both. I argue that the school’s Christian inflected, American, monolingual ideology and practices were reflected in their English-Only policy whereas the Koreans’ U.S. imperial ideology and their cosmopolitan desire were reflected in the English-Only policy.

On one of my first visits to Joshua (Nov. 10, 2008), I saw in the school’s auditorium two Korean boys whom I had met previously (one at Joshua earlier and the other at the local public library). No one else was around. I approached them and said in Korean, “잘지내? [How are you doing?]” One of them, an 11th grader, bowing, responded “안녕하세요? [Hello!),” using the Korean honorific form appropriate to such a situation: that of a student responding to an adult. The other, a 9th-grader, said nothing. Thinking he had not heard me, I went closer to him. Speaking louder, I asked again with a big smile, “잘지내니? [How are you doing?]” He stopped
for a moment and answered quickly in English, “Fine,” and immediately walked away. I wondered if I had done something wrong.

The first boy explained that the other boy had probably been afraid of getting in trouble by violating the school’s English-Only policy, which stated that no Joshua student was ever to use any language other than English when on school property. At first, I was upset that the second boy had not behaved as a Korean youth is expected to behave with a Korean adult when only Koreans were present. Soon after, I realized that the boy whose behavior had puzzled me had disciplined himself into following the policy as if he were being watched: internalized self-policing. Later, when I happened to see the second boy with his father in a car while I was driving, he waved at me.

I was struck by how unnatural the school’s policy made this situation. For Koreans with other Koreans, it is very strange and disconcerting not to show respect through proper use of the Korean language and the behaviors that accompany its use, bowing and other body language gestures. It is also disconcerting not to be able to switch between the two languages, English to Korean, Korean to English in an increasingly globalizing world.

There has been the growing acceptance among some Koreans that it is critical for future to participate in global society with their cosmopolitan or global perspectives. In fact, cultivating global citizenship was one reason for the Korean students at Joshua to have come to the U.S. It has been widely agreed in South Korea that young people cannot advance in a global society without command of global languages, and careers at all but the lowest levels of Korean government, business, and education now require fluency in English, Chinese, Japanese, and other languages.
More and more Koreans have developed cosmopolitan desires, and the trend often characterized as “English fever” serves as a major example of this aspiration for global citizenship. However, learning (English) language in order to be at ease and effective in global society requires more than just linguistic aptitude. One must also cultivate social skills that integrate language and culture through efficient ways of connecting and negotiating with the people from different cultures across national borders. One such skill is code switching. Code switching refers to moving from one language to another with the retrieval of a word, a phrase, or whole sentences; especially, when speaking with groups of individuals whose native languages or ability to speak second languages are varied (Grosjean, 2002).

Some of the best practitioners of code switching are cosmopolitan Europeans who seem to effortlessly include those around them in conversations, either by switching into a language that everyone in the present group understands or by translating key points for those who do not command the language currently in use. They are comfortable while communicating with people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. These skills must be learned for better global interaction.

At Joshua, it was clear that all parties were not familiar with appropriate ways of code switching as a cosmopolitan marker. Clearly, the skills of code switching could not bring the school the same celebration it brought to a global market world. The boy I encountered certainly had not succeeded in such code switching as a cosmopolitan marker. On the contrary, the same code switching was negatively perceived through the punitive nature of the English-Only policy.

In this chapter, I introduce the history of Joshua’ English-Only policy. Next, I examine Joshua’ monolingual vision and Korean students’ persistent use of Korean language. Finally, I discuss unintended consequences of the school’s English-Only policy. I begin by introducing
some background information about the policy, including the year the discussion began, the reasons why, people involved in creating it, dissemination of the new policy, and implementation/monitoring the policy.

The History and Ideology of English-Only Policy

The English-Only policy emerged and was established in the fall 2007 at Joshua. The policy was applied only to the junior high and high school because no issues had emerged in the preschool (3-4), elementary (K5-6), and junior high schools (7-8); nonetheless the secondary school (Junior high and high school) was run by the same administration.

The discussion about an English-Only policy began in the 2005-06 school year. Administration and staff first discussed the possibility of such a policy in faculty meetings. The school had experienced a significant increase in their Korean-speaking student population in the previous few years, and they were finding those students increasingly less inclined to speak English.

In the process of establishing the policy, students, parents, and host families were invited by email (through the school management system; all communications with parents were managed that way) to an informational meeting conducted by Mrs. Principal and Mr. Dean. Many parents/guardians came to the meeting, but no students attended. In the meeting, they informed those gathered that they were considering an English-only policy in order to help Korean students develop English proficiency and asked parents and guardians for their input.

According to the Mr. Dean, this policy was implemented after careful consideration and in consultation with Korean families and students at the school. The school had always presumed (and often been told) that the primary reason students came to the U. S. was to develop English proficiency.
The school also claimed that the English-Only policy responded to the goals of Korean parents, their new clientele. The school reported that Korean parents often asked how many Koreans the school had, from which the school inferred that parents were afraid that too many opportunities for each Korean student to speak in Korean would reduce their incentive to practice English. Mrs. Principal explained:

Although Korean mothers want their kids to come here, they are distressed at the large number that we have because Korean parents see that as a problem, …their [Korean students’] language acquisition is going to be delayed because they are just going to stick together. We tried to keep the numbers, the percentages manageable within a class, that doesn’t necessarily happen. But, …They [Korean parents] were all in support of “they should be speaking English [in school], that’s what they’re there for”, “they can speak Korean at home, and we sent them to the U.S. because we want them to learn English,” “we want them to be proficient in English, in preparation for college,” and you know. (Interview, 5/11/09)

This finding is consistent with Park’s study (2007; 2009), which found that Korean parents did not want to send their children to a school with many Korean students. The parents worried that their children’s interactions with Korean children would hinder English development for their children. The parents had a strongly negative attitude toward the use of Korean language in English language development.

In fact, most Korean parents stated that Korean students must speak English in order to learn the English language and American culture. According to interviews with Korean parents, without having expertise in the field of second language acquisition, many Korean parents as well as school officials at Joshua believed that their children could speak English well through speaking only English. One such Korean father strongly expressed his regret:

Korean father 1: It is not desirable for us to see that Korean children flock together while speaking Korean when they come to the U.S. We must make sure that they do not speak Korean. Why did they come to the U.S. if they flock together and speak Korean?
(Interview, 7/11/11)
And one Korean mother further claimed it to be “natural” for Korean students to speak English in the U.S. because it is the language of the country:

Korean mother 1: Here is America, so must speak English, the native tongue in America. (Interview, 10/17/10)

Like the school administration, most Korean parents supported the American (preferably white), English speaking school environment. They wanted their children to be competitive among American elites. They knew that English ability is necessary to be invested in this global market.

The Principal and Mr. Dean collaborated on crafting the policy, and it was approved and implemented by the Administrative Team, which consisted of the Administrator and Principals. The English-Only policy did not have to be approved by the School Board. Initially, no language other than English was allowed during the school day, and then later the policy was relaxed by making an exception for lunch period since the school thought it was too rigid to exercise during the lunch hour. Mrs. Principal stated:

We have changed it, it’s changed a little over time, because initially we didn’t have [a policy] at all, … And then we tried that you can’t speak anything but English at all during school and we found that was too… just too restricting for them. So then the last two years we went to this, during lunch, you can speak Korean with each other, and that’s pretty much when [they]’re supposed to talk in Korean. You can’t speak Korean in the hallways, and definitely not in the classrooms, and we need to hear you speaking English so we know that your English is developing. (Interview, 05/11/09)

In terms of dissemination of the new policy, staffs were informed of the policy in a faculty meeting. Korean students (and their families, including hosts) were informed (it is unclear whether this was through an email or a letter). According to some Korean students, they were informed of the English-Only policy when they were called to a special meeting in Mr. Dean’s office. It was then included in the Rules and Conduct Expectation section of the Student Agenda/Handbook given to all students at the beginning of the 2007 school year. Subsequently, the school explained the policy to applicants during their interviews.
With regards to the implementation and monitoring of the policy, at first the staff gave friendly reminders. Continued violations brought more serious verbal warnings. Mr. Dean noted, “I can’t recall there ever being the need for stronger consequences, though I think perhaps some teachers may have issued detentions for more belligerent transgressions of the policy” (Interview, 3/7/12).

In spite of the school’s and the Korean parents’ support of the policy, the school found it difficult to enforce the English-Only policy. Such an outcome is natural because it is unnatural when Korean students of mixed ages speak English among themselves. Mrs. Principal stated, “It’s difficult to enforce” (Interview, 05/11/09).

When the school explained to me that they had ended up relaxing the policy, it was no surprise to hear that because I knew that it was unnatural to speak Korean to Koreans at the school as in my linguistic experience shared earlier— the unnaturalness of Koreans speaking English to Koreans especially in exclusive Korean-Korean situations such as in the school’s auditorium and a hallway. The apparent easy consensus of learning English made the situation too unnatural for the school to enforce the policy, as well as, for the Korean students to follow it.

But it was surely a surprise to discover that the school’s justification for the English-Only, the Korean students’ acquisition of English, proved to be surprisingly acceptable to all the parties concerned. Most Korean parents, far from taking any issue with the assimilation attitude, supported the policy without questioning the validity of the rationale. The school justified their English-Only policy, which is a rationale not true in terms of language acquisition. As a person specialized in second language learning and bilingual education, I already knew that the policy was not going to work for that reason in many ways. The justification for the English-Only, the
polite half-truth, led me to speculate that there was something other than just a matter of English language learning.

I wanted to know issues associated with the school’s English-Only policy. The school’s English-Only policy was legitimatized as care and love for the Korean nationals, English language learning on the part of the Korean students, and the school’s integrity. The school maintained that the use of the Korean language in school would hinder English learning, as well as would undermine the school’s unity. Beneath this unquestioned description of the rationale for the policy, which relied on the seemingly ahistorical concepts of Christian love and care, there might have been other unstated reasons for establishing the policy. Rather than concluding that the policy was or was not the right solution for English learning and the school’s unity, I felt the need to dig into a history of the present—the genealogy of the present form of the English-Only policy at Joshua—by historically observing similar occurrences elsewhere of the English-only policy informing the ideology behind Joshua’s English-Only policy, including globalization, the hegemony of English, especially American English, as a global Language, and imperialism. I wanted to know how (un)stated reasons from all parties concerned at Joshua had been and continued to be invested, transformed, stretched, distorted, decolonized, or recolonized by the nature of global force. How had the discourse around the English-only concept played and continued to play out differently in the specific context at Joshua.

All parties seemed to have their own specific aims and purposes in their power relations around the decision to establish the policy. The school seemed to have their own specific goals

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42 In a recent interview on June 11th 2013 (about 1 year after the fieldwork period of this dissertation) (member check), Mr. Dean (who left the school in 2011 during my field research period) informed me that at the time there was also some concern among faculty that students might have been communicating inappropriately in class with one another in Korean.
without any hostile intentions. In fact, no party seemed to have bad intentions; on the contrary, all parties seemed sincere in their approval of the policy.

My curiosity was then immediately piqued about what were the possible reasons of preventing the use of Korean language at the school, what were the discourses surrounding the development of the policy that were adopted as legitimate, how and why such discourses were formed, what values and goals were behind the discourses, how each party was affected by the policy, what were the differences between the school, Korean parents, American parents and their children in their goals and expectations, and why and how each group had developed in the way they had.

First, I found out that Joshua’s English-Only policy has its origin in the monolingual paradigm. Joshua’s monolingual ideology was founded on three commitments or beliefs: (1) unity: Christian unity and national unity through a shared language; (2) language learning: a belief in exclusive English use in order to efficiently master language; (3) mistrust: the school’s fear about Korean students’ critical commentary with the school in their gatherings, and its anxieties about the school’s integrity (ethics such as cheating). I begin by introducing Joshua’s fashioning Christian unity through English as the vehicle.

Joshua’s Monolingual Vision

Unity

*Fashioning Christian unity through English as the vehicle.* One of the reasons for English-Only was very much related to the school’s sense of its mission as a Christian institution. The school presented its English-Only policy as supportive of its ideal of Christian unity. For instance, some school officials at Joshua strongly believed that the Korean students’ use of Korean language along with forming a Korean group tended to undercut the Christian
unity by excluding non-Koreans. For example, Mr. Dean stated, “The larger the group becomes, the less openness [they have] to allow their lives to be transformed by the Gospel because they can focus now on their own little social group” (Interview, 5/27/09). Banning the use of Korean, then, was consistent with the school’s commitment to discourage groupings based on race/ethnic differences—a clash with culture of race overall even previous to the Korean issues. He and others made it clear that it was not just the Koreans about whom they were concerned; they also worried about the school’s African American population and its tendency to create a “subculture.” I observed that while three African females stuck together, they also got along with other white American females and males. Two African males integrated into every racial group. Mr. Dean addressed his concern over racial identity at the school:

We have seen that also to be true for African Americans. The larger our African American population becomes, the more they create their own little subculture within our school. Now, I understand that we are blinded to the fact that even within the white population there are subcultures; but we understand that. But that racial identity throws an additional factor into the mix – that we are having hard time trying to figure out.

The dean acknowledged multiple “white cliques or subcultures” within the white student population; however, he did not seem to construe them as problematic. In fact, some teachers viewed that African American students formed a “subculture” that threatened the school’s matters when only a few African Americans attended the school.

Next, I want to introduce Mr. Math, a newly graduated Korean American teacher at Joshua, in order to show how his perceptions of English language and Americanness had been formed, as well as how such perceptions were connected to learning English and U.S. national unity.

Mr. Math came to the U.S. at the age of four. He began his teaching career at Joshua in fall 2009. He believed God led him to this school and provided this job for him although he left
soon after. He told me he did interact with a lot of Korean people because his church was made up mostly of Korean people. But they were mostly Korean-Americans who spoke English among themselves.

After observing his class and exchanging several emails (4/28/10, 4/29/10), I was able to interview him on April 30th and May 5th in 2010. Although he was able to speak Korean (He told me that he spoke with his mother in Korean due to his mother’s limited English proficiency.), Mr. Math was annoyed when I questioned him in Korean. Even a single word of Korean (e.g., hello) would induce a negative reaction. He informed me that his parents immigrated to America for a better future for his brother and him. Therefore, the reason they did not focus on Korean language as much is because they wanted their children to fit in with American culture. I asked, “To me, being able to speak in Korean has nothing to do with fitting in with American culture. Would you be willing to challenge me?” He responded, “I agree that being able to speak in Korean has nothing to do with fitting in with American culture.” Then, I asked:

**Me:** Then why did you say that your parent did not teach Korean since they wanted you to fit in with American culture, may I ask?

**Mr. Math:** I don't need to speak Korean to fit into American culture. Most Americans do not speak Korean at all. As a child growing up and in Junior High/High School, being able to speak fluent English was incredibly more helpful in fitting in, than being able to speak Korean.

**Me:** If I understand you correctly your parents did not see any value in teaching you Korean, so they did not make much effort to teach Korean. They were more worried about your learning English to fit into American culture, right?

**Mr. Math:** Yes that is correct. I would like to learn Korean, but it seems that it would be very difficult in terms of time and resources to do so.

Mr. Math and their parents seemed to associate learning Korean language with preventing him from learning English and from fitting in with American culture. It is consistent with the story of
my acquaintance, a son of an Italian immigrant (his father is Italian and his mother is American who teaches Italian language) in Philadelphia, a city which, at that time hosted many Italian immigrants (low social status). He grew up with English only because his parents were worried he would speak English with a foreign accent, or would spend too much time within their ethnic community, rather than making friends with “Americans.” Especially, his father, an Italian, insisted, “I “fit in” as an American and embrace America as my home” (Interview, 3/15/10).

With regards to Joshua’s English-Only policy, Mr. Math strongly advocated the policy and associated speaking Korean with social isolation from American students. He believed the stance of Joshua school was to try to incorporate the Korean students into the school’s culture. He also connected the school’s culture with American culture. He noted, “I believe the stance of our school is to try and have our Korean students learn about American culture and learn together with American students” (Interview, 5/5/10).

He thought that when Korean students spoke in Korean and only talked with other Korean students, they were segregating themselves. He saw no benefit in “students speaking a language that most of the people in the room will not understand” and (except for language courses in the class), “I don’t think students should speak any other language than English” (5/5/10). He cited another issue not knowing what is being said: “You never know what they are saying and they can be saying things that are inappropriate or offensive.”

Mr. Math viewed the issue broadly. He stated, “this should be a time where they can practice their English skills. It would be a waste of an American school experience, for them to act like they are in school in Korea.” He went on to say:

I think it would not be a success if the Korean students were only friends with Korean students by the time they graduate. I always tell my Korean students not use Korean in my classes. I think it isolates them from other students, and makes the other students not want to communicate or be friends with them.
Additionally Mr. Math informed me that he always wanted to treat his students fairly and respectfully regardless of their race. He noted, “As a teacher, I view and treat the Korean students just like any other students” (Interview, 4/30/10). I asked,

Me: I personally think that they are different so they should be viewed and treated differently. Would you be willing to challenge me again?

Mr. Math: I don’t want to treat my students differently based on their nationality, but based on their academic abilities. If the Korean students need help with language, I don’t mind helping them with language but I don’t want to treat them in a “special” way (negatively or positively) just because they are Korean. *Some of the other students in class may not appreciate that* [emphasis added]. It seems to me that the material they are learning in my math class is too easy for them. Sometimes it is hard to tell how much work they are actually putting in. I’ve noticed in class often times they aren’t engaged.

Similar to Mr. Math, some teachers addressed that some American students and parents were offended by their belief that Korean students received special treatment from teachers with schoolwork. Additionally, like many other teachers and Korean students, Mr. Math thought math class was easy for Koreans, and it was hard distinguishing language issues from content issues. Mr. Math noted that Korean students did fine with the mathematics, but they struggled with reading comprehension and with explaining the processes, and also in describing how these statistical concepts could be applied to real life situations. Korean students often struggled with the English portions of his Statistics class. He addressed, “a Korean student is much faster than my other three statistics students who are strong math students… but often he will have errors in his explanations or even spelling” (Interview, 4/30/10). Mr. Math saw his Korean students as faster, but not as good in their explanations in English.

Overall, most administrators and teachers believed that the school’s English-Only policy reflected the school’s commitment to Christian unity without regard to race and ethnicity and its desire to assist its “foreign population” in acquiring English. It seemed they did not intentionally
consider that their policy could stem in any way from racial prejudice or misguided pedagogy.

However, the school’s overall perception of race and ethnic gatherings as a deviation from its unity was the very example of institutional racism whereby non-white racial/ethnic groups were placed in an unprivileged position with respect to the school due to the white institutional systemic practices and policies that had placed racial/ethnic groups at a disadvantage.

“When in the U.S.”: English-Only and respect. In addition to the association of English-Only with English learning and academic success, there also existed an attitude of When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Some school officials strongly believed that foreign students coming to the U.S. should speak English as a matter of respect toward America, an English speaking country: an unspoken element of the English-Only is its implicit ideology of the American hegemony of English. For instance, Mrs. Principal stated that not speaking Korean is also a matter of respect for Joshua and American culture. She expressed the ideal that one should know the language of the host culture; she said that, were she to go to Korea for an extended stay, she should speak Korean. Mrs. Math expressed similar sentiments. Most of her ancestors came over in the late 1800’s from Scandinavia; her father was Swedish, her mother Norwegian. She rejected learning anything but English:

Researcher: Can you tell us about your language and cultural background?

Mrs. Math: I grew up in a home of English speaking – Scandinavian heritage – ancestors settled in a Scandinavian, farming area from Norway and Sweden – children were expected to learn English not their language of heritage – “Americans speak English”. My husband and I did live in Swaziland, Africa from 1982 to 1993 as missionary teachers of Swazi high students. The teaching language was English. Colleagues – Swazi teachers – were quite fluent in English.

I was born in […] I grew up on a farm about 30 minutes from here, my dad was Swedish and my mom Norwegian, but most of them came over in the late 1800’s from Norway and Sweden, and around here, there are more German but there’s still a lot of Norwegian
and Swedish people up in my area. Paxton is very Swedish; the actual town of Paxton is more Swedish where out in the country, further east is more Norwegian. But even I thought, since you’re talking about English, the attitude I remember my mother and father, more my grandmother saying, “Why did you not learn Swedish or Norwegian?” and I said we came to America so we speak English, so that’s the attitude. (Email, 5/14/09)

As seen above, there existed an attitude that if you come here to “my” school, then you should speak English out of respect for “my” culture; that speaking English is what “we” do in America and what you should do if you live here. The English-Only policy thus reflects, I learned, deep-seeded ideas about the U.S. and even the formation of America. Taken together with Christian unity attitude, the policy traces back to Christian-inflected America ever since the founding of the country. Another reason for the English-Only policy originated from the belief that Korean language hinders English language learning.

Language Learning

Historically, the attitude promoting English only builds upon a monolingual paradigm, which promotes assimilation of minority students into the dominant language culture. The school did not seem to consider their Korean students’ particular linguistic context. The English language was a foreign language in South Korea. In this case, is it possible that the assumption that speaking only English might speed up the language acquisition process may not be accurate? This policy, at worst, actually slowed down the process or caused excessive stress for the students who were often struggling to figure out what is going on within the short time frame of a class session.

Why don’t you learn English? The “unnatural” way of learning English. The use of Korean language to inform Koreans as in Mr. Science’s class or Mrs. Math’s class had become a problem for the staff. For example, Mr. Science expressed his concern for what he considered
the Korean students’ inappropriate use of the Korean language in order to know the meaning of English language in his class.

They will go ahead and group themselves with Koreans. They all sit together. In my classroom, I don’t let that happen, you probably notice that… they are all comfortable with each other. That’s mostly language. If I say something, they will go, “What did he just say? Or what did it mean?” And I rather have them ask American students. And have that exchange back and forth. They learn English better that way. As soon as Korean students ask the other Korean students, blah blahblah, in Korean, they are getting an explanation, and doing it that way, that doesn’t help. (Interview, 5/01/09)

Another teacher, Mrs. Math, also talked about the use of Korean in her class. She felt that the Korean students initially were far more prepared than their American peers in math. However, their better math preparation led the students to tune her out. Later, when they had to learn new math concepts, they preferred to learn them in Korean from Korean friends rather than in English from Mrs. Math. She stated, “They seem to not want to learn from me but rather a friend who can explain it in Korean” (Interview, 05/14/09) when she felt they needed her to explain. She seemed to view this behavior as negative as she felt at that point they needed to listen to her and work very hard to catch up. Unlike the teachers’ perception that the usage of Korean language hinders English language learning for the Korean students, effective use of the Korean language in the classroom at Joshua might actually facilitate their learning of both the English language as well as the content. This is, especially, needed for the Korean students trying to slowly learn English. While some teachers at Joshua addressed the issues with the use of the Korean language, Korean students’ peer help using Korean language (Vygotsky, 1978) enhanced their language and content learning potential instead of hindering it as the teachers assumed. Appropriate use of language during social interaction enhances cognitive development; with non-intrusive dialogic help from more competent others, a learner can perform a task beyond his or her own current level of competence within the “zone of proximal development.”
Therefore, help from Korean peers in understanding the English language concepts through the use of Korean helps advance their learning since some aspects of linguistic, cognitive, and academic proficiency are cross-linguistic phenomena (Cummins, 1979, 1981). This means that the linguistic knowledge of one language transfers into another language, enabling the transfer of cognitive, academic or literacy-related skills across languages.

Taken all together, the use of the Korean language might actually facilitate Korean students’ English language acquisition and academic development. For example, unlike Mr. Science’s concern over an explanation or direct translation from Korean peers in his class, the use of Korean language for clarification facilitates the Korean students’ learning especially in a fast-moving class in English. In the case of Mr. Science’s classroom, it would have been better pedagogically to allow the Korean students the use of the Korean language as a medium to learn English language as well as science content from Cummins’s cross-linguistic point of view. Further, the use of Korean language would allow the Korean students to work within their comprehensible range of comprehension. Finally, the Korean students could facilitate their learning by drawing on their Korean peers’ help in their Zone of Proximal Development as suggested by Vygotsky. If the Korean language were used properly in the classroom at Joshua, it would provide scaffolding for the Korean students to help each other and to reach higher levels of understanding.

In a similar vein, in the math class described earlier, for the Korean students with limited English vocabulary, learning the concepts in Korean might accelerate language learning and content learning through their interaction with Korean peers in their native language. For example, if a student is familiar with both the topic and the text structure (topic and structure background knowledge), the student is able to spend more time learning the target language (in
this case, English) without having the burden of focusing on both the content and the language simultaneously. If the topic, especially a math concept, is too difficult to understand in the target language, neither content learning nor language learning takes place. The better way to facilitate target language learning might be to teach the content in the dominant language (Korean) first, and then try it in the target language. As some Korean students explained, it is very inefficient to explain complex ideas such as math concepts, English grammar, and meanings of English words in English. When Korean students discuss course content among themselves in Korean, this actually helps English language learning by removing the content barrier. This can be explained by Cummins’ Cross-linguistic view. Cummins’ Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis (1979) suggests that some aspects of linguistic, cognitive, and academic proficiency are common across languages. If a student is familiar with both the topic and the text structure in language X, the student is able to spend more time learning language Y. In other words, if the topic is too difficult to understand in Language Y, teaching it in language X (a dominant language) relieves the burden of learning both the content and the language simultaneously.

In alignment with the ideas described above, in order to clarify meaning of English words, the Korean students might better use one’s already known Korean words through translation. Another example of applying learning the target language through the dominant language is using a translator. Should teachers allow Koreans to use their translators? Mr. Science recalled that a few years ago, some of the students frequently used their translators. He felt he had to tell them to limit the use of translators only to certain words. However, by using a Korean translator for an English word, especially, when the student does not have much time to spend on learning the word (during class), Koreans may more easily conceptualize the word and consequently be able to focus on the overall topic in class.
I was curious about how much time and about what topic they used Korean language in a typical school day at Joshua in an effort to know if preventing the use of Korean language helped English language learning. After observing Koreans at the school over time, I found out that the Korean students rarely had time to talk to each other except lunchtime or in the hallway when they exchanged books in their lockers. Their talk involved very small daily routine conversation greetings, asking homework or ride: “안녕하세요? [Hello],” “잘 지내니? [How’s it going?],” “숙제했나? [Did you do your homework?],” “Do you have ride? [너 라이드 구했나?],” or “Hey! What did the teacher say? [야! 선생님이 무슨 말했나?]” This kind of conversation was needed to get a practical aid or exchange some information that was related to international students as Psychologist, Beverly Tatum (1997) also expresses this sentiment in her book, Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? She argues that blacks are together because they share common interests. The Korean students had their own common interests as foreign students in the U.S. This suggests the need to adopt another way of looking at racial issues: shared interest groups, in other words, the community of similar interest. In a similar vein, one Korean male noted that Korean gatherings should be perceived as gatherings based on similar concerns and interests:

Korean grouping is not not racial segregation; it is a problem of choosing friends. When people make friends, one person has to approach the other person. Koreans find it easier to approach another Korean person. That is how they become friends. However, when approaching an American person, it may be a little uncomfortable because of the language issue and differences in life style, behavior, and even how we look. For example, Koreans and Americans grow up in totally different cultures and thus they don’t have fun doing the same things. More specifically, Korean gag style (comedy) is different. Every culture has its own distinct joking style. This is why it may seem like self-selected segregation. For example, when there happens to be a fight between a newly arrived Korean and a Korean-American, it should not be taken as a fight between two different groups within one race. Instead, it should be perceived as a fight between individuals. It is not a racial problem. (Interview, 5/7/9)
This Korean male was saying that the Koreans grouped together because the Koreans at the school have their own issues and concerns as international students. This finding suggests that to a certain degree, Korean gatherings are necessary for Korean students at Joshua. While the school perceived Korean groupings or African American groupings as racially motivated, as the above Korean male stated, cultural motivation existed behind the groupings. This suggests that such grouping phenomenon might be studied from a new perspective termed a community of interest rather than from racial motivation or class essentialism. Additionally, I wondered how much they could develop their English skills by replacing it with English language. Is it really worth it at the cost of their psychological comfort?

**Does fluent English guarantee socialization, language, and academic learning?**

Several misconceptions around language, especially regarding English language ability, socialization, and academics existed at Joshua. First, in terms of English language ability and socialization, the school and Korean parents assumed that English proficiency would secure Korean students’ socialization with Americans. While fluent English helps socialization, it does not guarantee socialization. English fluency seemed to have little to do with Korean students’ socialization with Americans at Joshua; rather, it had more to do with personality. For instance, one Korean male, JH, did not speak English well, yet he was able to socialize well with American peers by playing soccer. Another Korean male, Hoon did speak well, but he could not socialize with either Korean peers or American peers. A Korean female, Miki, did speak well, but she could not socialize with American peers. In most cases, social skills seemed to transfer from one culture to another with Kang being an exception. Kang was a respected senior leader among Korean students at Joshua, yet his social skills did not transferred to his American peers mostly due to a cultural and especially language barrier.
Second, while fluent oral language skills helped literacy skills, they did not guarantee fluent literacy skills. For example, Kay spoke fluent English, yet his literacy skills were poor. In a similar vein, his fluent oral proficiency did not guarantee academic achievement. Another example might be that American peers were much more fluent speakers or in most cases, better writers, but valedictorian and second valedictorian were Korean students. Many Korean students took grades seriously, worked hard to get good grades, or develop skills to adjust to the format of exam. This finding is consistent with Porters and Rumbaut’s study (1986, 1989, & 1992) that demonstrates that learning English successfully doesn’t necessarily mean academic success.

An additional reason for the English-Only was related to the school’s fear of Korean students’ dissatisfaction with the school.

Mistrust

When the Korean students and I used the Korean language, it caused some school officials concern. Most school officials ignored unwritten rules of social hierarchy among the Korean students and me that accompany different ways of speaking and gesturing. When the Korean students interact with me as a grown up, it is customary for them to use honorific expressions coupled with gestures such as bowing down. In this regard, such scholars including Auer (1984,1988,1995a, 1995b, 1998), Gee (1999), and Grosjean (1989) argue that code switching, a strategy for bilingual and multilingual individuals, is based on whom you are talking to (interlocutor) and where you are talking (place). Language choice aligns with certain behavior, which is expected of people who use a specific language, suggesting that code switching should be understood not only at the linguistics level but also at the behavioral and cultural level. This lack of such a sociolinguistic understanding may have caused them to feel suspicious and anxious in the presence of spoken Korean.
It was not just the fact they could not understand the Korean language. Students’ and my own, use of Korean was a lightening rod for school administrators and teachers who had considerable anxiety about the satisfaction of Korean students; to wit, they worried that Korean was the language of subversion with which students were perhaps voicing their dissatisfaction with the school.

Korean language anxieties. It was not until I was called to the Dean’s office that I deeply felt that a number of negative images had been connected with speaking Korean. My speaking Korean during my interviews with some of Korean participants at the library also troubled the school. This was especially due to the perceived subversive nature of allowing the use of multiple languages in a school where most of the students and school officials were monolingual with similar cultural backgrounds. For me, it was so natural I did not really pay attention to the policy until Mr. Dean, warned me of the use of the Korean language between my participants and me at the library as described above on May 27th, 2009. Mr. Dean stated:

Korean students use the library a lot. I don’t understand why they do research a lot, but she [librarian as an English monitor] is even supposed to make sure that as they [Korean students] are in the library working, they are not speaking to each other in Korean.

(Interview, 5/27/09)

The dean spoke honestly about why the school worried. The school feared that Korean students were challenging their authority by speaking in Korean. More importantly, the school feared that Korean students might talk about issues with the school, not related to schoolwork or Christianity behind their backs during their gathering in the library. Furthermore, the school also feared that Koreans would speak badly of them during my interviews in the school library. In fact, other students could do these in English, but they were not mentioned.

My speaking Korean in the school was more trouble for the Dean because he helped me arrange my fieldwork with the school, drawing on good intentions and his expectation of my
research helping with issues around the Koreans. However, unintended outcomes of having me in his school as addressed above also prompted issues. In a similar vein, drawing on monolingual Christian benevolence, the school presented its “color-blind” attitude and “English-Only” policies as supportive of its ideal of “Christian unity.” But unintended outcomes of the same monolingual Christian benevolence challenged the school’s naïve perception of the policy and its implications and thus troubled the school. Mr. Dean continued:

She [Mrs. Principal] just doesn’t want you to come back. Not because of you personally, but she is afraid of what your research is going to turn into. Then we are winding up being used for our graciousness. I need to be able to trust you that you won’t allow yourself in the name of research to be a point where Korean kids who are unhappy with us come to you and criticize us. You use that in your research. I want Korean students who feel like they are being mistreated to come to me and be honest with me, but there are, I know they are afraid to, I know there are big cultural barrier. (Interview, 5/27/09)

There was mistrust between the school and the Korean students. While the school did not have any malicious intent, they were fearfully dogmatic; they seemed to sabotage their own policy by being so fearful of exposing all the contradictions of their English-Only policy. The school seemed to be uncomfortable in that they might not have acted correctly in the matter of English-Only and they were concerned about the Korean students talking to outsiders about their experience at Joshua. The teacher in the class might have felt uncomfortable and suspicious of them because the teacher did not understand what the Koreans were saying. Unspoken fear was visible; the truth of this uncomfortable fear was hidden under a veneer of civility and a fear of honestly expressing themselves. The school worried that it was comfort driving what they labeled as students’ self-segregation. Through my research at the school, I found that the school had the perception that Koreans flock and migrate together because they are Korean; thus, they like one another and complain about the school in general as described above. However, there was no easy ethnic solidarity.
Ethnic solidarity. Mr. Dean had an idea that I was very close to Korean students because I am Korean and spoke Korean with them. Actually, being a researcher and Korean made most of the Korean students feel uncomfortable as shown in the following conversation with Suk, an 11th grader Korean, on May 7th in 2010.

Suk: I thought you were a teaching assistant, and then later I heard that you are a researcher.

Researcher: From whom did you hear that?

Suk: I can’t remember well.

Researcher: Seemed like you were wary of me. Were you more wary of me due to my being a Korean?

Suk: Whoever the researcher was, it would have been the same... Even if you were an American, I would have been vigilant. For a person who is not a student, nor a teacher or staff, who wants to volunteer to participate in a study at the first sight?

Researcher: (laugh) So, you thought you should be careful?

Suk: (reminisce and laugh) Not so much careful, but I felt that I should be cautious so as not to be caught by you.

Researcher: (laugh) You are not the only one. Most of Korean students felt that way.

Unlike the Dean’s perception, most of them avoided me because I was a Korean, who, they thought, came to the school in order to study them specifically as a researcher. The situation was more true to Kay, a Korean male student who, though he was American and did not like his Koreanness and Korean things, felt that being singled out by me meant that he was identified with being Korean. At the beginning of my fieldwork at the school, although he was not explicit, I was able to sense that he was trying not to get attention from me. To make it worse, one day, his classmate jokingly said, “Kay, she came to do research about you.” I responded by saying to the classmate, “I came here to do research about you, not Kay.” Since then, I tried not to show any interest in Kay in order to avoid alienating him. He asked me to contact him by his cell later,
and I found out that he expressed to his guardian that he had not liked me approaching him later during my interview with his American guardian.

As seen in the above examples, there has been what I characterized as an undeclared “psychological” battle between the Korean students and myself from the first day of my attendance at the school. In order to observe the Korean students with their natural behavior, I had to pretend to have no unique interest in those students. I had to very slowly work to gain their trust and later their willingness to participate directly in my research. I had to make myself more approachable to the Korean students by bonding with the American students first.

In a similar vein, the school perceived that Korean students were very close to one another because they were Korean and spoke Korean. Unlike the misconception that Koreans all stuck together because they are Korean and share the Korean language, just being Korean did not mean that Korean students were compatible with each other at Joshua. They had not known each other before coming to Joshua and happened to be there although they were sympathetic with their situation of being an international and felt the need to share information as international students. From the school’s perspective, Korean students liked to “self-segregate” because they liked associating other Korean students.

The Korean students were self-segregating by speaking Korean amongst themselves, but did they really prefer to stick together, rather than make friends with the non-Korean students? Interestingly, according to my observations and interviews, that was not the case. Unlike most American students who had been together since Kindergarten, the school’s Korean students had met each other for the first time only in America, at the school. Some liked each other and made new Korean friends, but others did not. Korean females were more likely to stick together than the males. Although Koreans shared some information with each other relating to their common
experiences as international students at the school including how to get driver’s license and how
to apply for college as an international, they were not generally close to each other while they
had their own lives outside the school. For example, there were two Korean females and four
Korean males in 12th grade. The two girls, Miki and Yuki were not close to each other. The
four males, Hwan, Kang, Joon, and Bin sometimes helped each other with a ride or haircut for
their own benefits; yet they had different connections and practices. Kang and Joon lived
together, yet their lives were totally different. Hwan was not really close to the other Korean
students other than Miki. He was more associated first with Americans and later with a
Vietnamese international male. Kang and Bin stuck together almost all the time at Joshua.

In 11th grade, there were three Korean males and one Korean female. Two of the three
Korean males, Suk and Kay spent time mainly with Americans while just saying hello to their
seniors politely to show respect, thus not to get on their nerve. Kay actually avoided their
Korean seniors as much as possible to escape the uncomfortable situation—he did not like his
seniors but when he used Korean, he was supposed to use honorific Korean language, which is
natural for Korean high school students. These Korean males were not close to the other 11th
grade Korean male. One 11th grade Korean female, Jinny, was well integrated into Americans
and Koreans.

There were seven 10th graders, three male and four females. Indeed, in 10th grade, Korean
males strongly disliked the others while two Korean females, Sung and Eun stuck together all the
time. None of the three 10th grade Korean males, Jung, Kyung, and Hoon would even talk to
each other; they sat very far from each other in class, and expressed strong dislike of the others
in their interviews with me. And their parents also expressed that the students did not like each
other as well as the parents themselves did not like each other. One mother expressed they did
not even greet each other. Sook, a transferred Korean female from a local public high school to Joshua as a sophomore in fall 2009, first interacted with her peers who were Asian international students at the public school and began to become friends with Hae, another Korean female, 11th grader as of fall 2009.

In sum, the school perceived their Korean students as others, thinking they were their own kind and comfortable with making in-group comments to each other (presumably unpleasant ones) about other students or the school’s teachers. Furthermore, the school was worried that the use of Korean in the school might make it easier for the Korean students to violate their ethics and thus its integrity. Thus, one last reason for the English-Only seemed to associate with ethics and safety including cheating as I discussed in chapter 5.

**Ethics and integrity: Korean as a critical subtext (commentary).** The school had negative perceptions associated with the use of Korean language. For the school, the Korean students’ small groupings were often connected with undesirable behaviors; thus causing them to think the use of Korean language threatened their integrity especially as a Christian school. An increase in the use of Korean language rather than English was perceived to reflect a noticeable decline in cross-cultural socialization and an increase in intra-cultural socialization connected to inappropriate behaviors, and thus played a critical role in forming their idea of “breaking down unity” as I addressed earlier. The school officials’ negative ethnic perceptions of Korean students seemed to reinforce the stereotype of Asian (“yellow peril” rather than “model minority” in this case). Yet, most of time, school officials did not talk in this regard in a straightforward manner probably due to my Koreanness. Therefore, this time on May 1st in 2009, I raised the subject with Mr. Science by initiating, “I have heard Koreans cheat,” and his response was clear and straightforward as follows:
Mr. Science: Oh, yes, yes, yes! I did notice that there were students that were cheating on exams.

Researcher: That’s just Korean kids, a lot?

Mr. Science: I noticed more of the Korean students seem to think that it is OK to copy or, also, to hand in the same laboratory work that someone else handed in when they didn’t do the experiment. They think that I don’t know (laughter), but it did happen…. It used to be that there were a lot of kids that would go ahead and write on the chalkboard in Korean. That’s OK, but I didn’t know what it was. If they were writing something bad, I didn’t know. So, I had to then say . . . because I saw someone “huhuhu” like that . . . I had to say, “No! No more!” You can’t [write on the blackboard in Korean] because it was in front of the whole class. They were all sitting there on the chalkboard.

Through his classroom experience, Mr. Science brought up the school’s suspicions that Koreans speaking Korean with each other was somehow undermining the school’s sense of community (by freezing out teachers and American students), or cheating and thus violating the school’s moral code. Naturally, Korean students would be better able to cheat and speak ill of non-native Korean speakers if they spoke Korean. In fact, one Korean girl noted that speaking Korean would make teachers feel suspicious and insecure because she saw one Korean girl talking in Korean in front of a teacher, saying “개같은년 [“Son of a bitch”]” to a teacher (Interview, 2/17/09). I, the researcher, also noticed that some Korean students were giggling while speaking Korean amongst themselves in the classroom. This would be normal behavior for white students and black students, too.

The teacher in the class might have felt uncomfortable and suspicious of them because the teacher did not understand what the Koreans were saying; especially, in view of the fact that linguistic elements came with universal behavioral elements and gestures (laughing and pointing) that gave a sense of the Korean students’ tones and intents. Such undesirable behaviors of Korean students were mediated through the Korean language. The negative images and
patterns connected with Korean language as they had experienced with Korean students led some school officials to begin to support the English-Only policy. The school insisted that the school’s desire to keep Koreans from speaking Korean were related to school safety and morality. They wanted no language spoken in school that school staff could not understand. Korean students’ inappropriate code switching contributed to reinforcing negative connotations and stereotypes about the Korean language and Korean students, thus reproducing the very negative Asian image of “yellow peril.” As a result, the American students might internalize these perceptions and learn to devalue the Korean language, and consequently Koreanness.

Joshua’s English-Only was, in fact, a “yellow peril” policy. Instead of frankly confronting such issues as cheating and clique-formation, the school tried to avoid them by focusing on pedagogical concerns solely— and acting as if there were the reasons behind its English-Only policy. The school officials claimed to have created the policy primarily to encourage their Korean students to develop better English skills. Mr. Dean noted:

[b]ut if indeed one of the reasons why these Korean students are here at our school is to improve their English, we have come to the point where we feel like we are confident that they should only speak in English at school except at social times. (Interview, May 27, 2009)

It was, however, clear that more was involved because the policy was not based on linguistic knowledge. If I [the researcher] were to be speaking in Korean with Korean students at the school, Mr. Dean said, “It was going to be a problem.” (Interview, May 27, 2009). He continued:

You [the researcher] don’t criticize the authorities. But, as you build relationships with [Korean students] we [the school officials] can’t because we are not Korean. Even at the basic level, you can sit in the library and speak Korean with Korean students. See that’s a level of empowerment you are giving them that we have taken away from them.
I had heard of the school’s English-Only policy, and I had indeed associated it with the school’s desire to assist the student in acquiring English. During my interview with Korean students at the school library, however, I had switched English to Korean language without thinking about the school’s English-Only policy because it seemed to me so natural to speak in Korean language to Korean students at Joshua. I had not expected that to be problematic for the school and was surprised when the Dean suggested that it was.

One of the reasons for the fear expressed by the Dean of the Students above was that I might undermine some of their authority by speaking Korean to Korean participants, and allowing them to respond in Korean was thus perceived to challenge the school authority. Another reason for the fear was that Korean students might express to me their criticism of the school. The school wanted to know what the Koreans were saying. I wanted to mention to Mr. Dean about the policy and its negative impact on English language learning, as well as, the topic of integration, but I decided not to, fearing that the school would not let me continue this project at all. I did not want to get in trouble: trouble for my research and trouble for undermining the school’s authority. Next, I examine why Korean students persistently used the Korean language.

**Korean Students’ Persistent Use of Korean Language**

I found that the Korean language was used as a way (1) of explaining the content of subjects by Korean peers; (2) of sustaining Korean social ties; and (3) of getting a sense of belonging as an inevitable emotional outlet. I argue that the use of the Korean language was natural and necessary for their social interactions as well as their English language learning.

**The folly of English-Only, Even for learning English.** For Korean students, using Korean language was not antithetical to their ideas about successful English learning. The Korean language was used as a medium for explaining the content of the subjects among Korean
students. Some students had a well-developed idea that the use of Korean was helpful to the mastery of English.

I often observed Koreans teach one another. I also observed one Korean become the other Korean’s private paid tutor. They told me that it was much easier to conceptualize the content of the subjects. The following excerpts illustrate this point. One Korean male student, Hwan, noted that when he learned a math concept, he preferred his Korean peers as a tutor and the use of Korean language with his peers because it helped him learn the content of the subject efficiently. Our conversation on March 23th in 2009 demonstrates this:

**Researcher:** I saw you learn Math from Jin-Hee Park [Korean female student]…. Mrs. Math did not seem to like the fact that you guys used Korean.

**Hwan:** If we do not use Korean, use English? What a ridiculous idea? Why should we use English to teach Math concept? Why should we use English when we can communicate much better in Korean?

**Researcher:** To learn English and English-Only policy as the school argues.

**Hwan:** Nonsense, we do not learn English just by explaining math concept in English. It will get much more difficult to understand Math concept. It is much easier to learn the content in Korean and catch up with Math class.

Another Korean male student, Joon asserted that the use of Korean helped content learning, which, in turn, helped English language learning. I read Joon’s writing on his Facebook dated April 20th in 2011. It stated:

> Why do we [Koreans] use English [in Korea] as an instructional language when teaching subjects, without using our brilliant Korean language. Korea is strange…it is much better to use Korean than use English since it would be a lot of hassle to understand the English language itself. It is our privilege to study in Korean in Korea.

Following up with his writing, I asked through his Facebook message on April 21st in 2011:

**Researcher:** I read your discussion on language choice in classroom in Korea on your facebook. Do you also find it helpful to use Korean language at Joshua?

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43 At this time, Joon was a sophomore at the U of I.
**Joon:** Did you? Well, it is much more efficient to learn in Korean when it comes to English grammar or Math concept. Why should we learn them in English? If we learn the contents faster in Korean, it is much easier to learn English language because we already have content knowledge.

**Researcher:** It might be helpful to learn English language if we also explain the concept in English.

**Joon:** (laughing) How much can we learn English language by replacing it with Korean language other than making things complicated and awkward?

For the Korean students, the use of Korean language was actually a facilitator of content knowledge as well as English language learning. Another reason for the Korean students using Korean language at Joshua was to maintain social relationships with Korean peers.

**Using Korean language to sustain Korean social ties.** The English-Only policy was untenable for these students who were adjusting to a new school while maintaining Korean cultural and social conventions. In this context, it made sense to use some Korean in order to be appropriately engaged with a Korean peer.

As I introduced in the example above through the story of my frustration with one student’s refusal to speak Korean to me, all Korean participants at Joshua agreed that it was profoundly unnatural for Koreans to speak to one another in English when only Koreans were present. Understanding some Korean cultural and linguistic characteristics helps to demonstrate how difficult it was to embed Korean social conventions surrounding age and hierarchy by using English language.

As I briefly mentioned earlier, there was an established social structure along with unwritten cultural rules among the Korean students; within the structure, the use of Korean language is inevitable in order to be appropriate with peers and to connote social hierarchy or age. Talking to Koreans in Korean was too automatic for Koreans due to the inseparable
linguistic and cultural behavior, specially oriented to Koreanness. Language choice (mode) often aligns with certain behaviors that are expected of people who use a specific language, suggesting that switching, as was mentioned earlier should be understood not only at the linguistic level but also at the cultural level (Gee, 1999; Grosjean, 1989; 2002). For example, uttering the word “Hello” in English is commonly used regardless of social hierarchy or age. Americans, for example, can use “Hello” to both a grandfather and a child. This is not the case in Korean language and cultural traditions. There are specific greeting terms, different ways of saying “hello,” depending on to whom you are talking.

Interestingly, the same respect expected to be shown towards one’s grandfather is also applied to someone who is a year older in high school as introduced earlier. Seniors can say, “hello [잘있너?]” to Juniors (11th grader), but Juniors are not supposed to say “hello [잘있너?]” to seniors (12th grader). Instead, Juniors should say, “hello [잘게셨어요? 형].” I often heard and observed such Korean cultural and linguistic characteristics exchanged at the school, which is invisible to the school officials who had little understanding of this cultural and linguistic norm attached to the Korean language.

Further, there are the ways in which names of address, such as “older brother (형),” along with honorific expressions and bowing gestures that would be used for addressing a peer even a year older—a 10th-grader would use when addressing an 11th-grader—, were impossible to capture in English-Only. Even for the 11th grader Korean male, Kay, who did not like Koreanness and thus Korean seniors, well recognized that he must speak to 12th grader in Korean. Therefore, he avoided speaking to his seniors because if he spoke to seniors, he had to speak in Korean. If he spoke in Korean, then he had to use honorific expressions and gestures related to his use of the Korean language. He would rather maintain his silence than speak to his
Korean seniors. Very often, I could hear the complaints that the policy made the situation very uncomfortable and awkward as an 11th grader, Korean male student, Suk, shared his strange feeling when he had to stop talking in Korean to his peer in the school bathroom when teachers came. Nevertheless, most of Korean students talked to me in Korean and they talked to each other in Korean.

All Korean focal participants wanted to learn English by socializing with and by wanting to be accepted by American peers. They worked hard; but it did not come easily. The culture of the class of 2009, 2010, and 2011 were different. For example, the Korean students in class of 2009 had much harder time than the Korean students in the class of 2010. Based on my observation and interview, three out of four Koreans in class of 2010 socialized with Americans well in the school and outside of the school. For the majority of the Korean students (ten out of fourteen), it did not happen. In addition, more importantly, the majority of the Korean (twelve out of fourteen) students did not want to lose their Koreanness, especially after experiencing Joshua. They were proud of being Korean although they did not like Korean education. After realizing that American peers did not know much about Korea other than Korean War and North Korea, some Koreans tried to show that Korea is a developed country and Korean people are highly modernized, even superior. I witnessed their interactions with their American peers by uploading fancy pictures about Korea and by teaching Korean language to some American peers despite the English-Only policy.

In addition, there was a previously established social structure along with unwritten rules among the Korean students as well as among the American students. Thus, if a Korean wanted to belong to an American group, he/she should also be able to negotiate with a Korean group. There was a power struggle between Koreans who belonged to Korean groups and Koreans who
belonged to American groups. For example, Hwan had a hard time getting approved by Korean students while he made an effort to socialize with American peers. Kay also struggled with how to avoid senior Koreans without getting on their nerves. For Suk, he had to flatter Korean seniors to gain an approval from them. Most Koreans at Joshua had their own life and their own close friends outside of Joshua. Korean girls stuck together more. The Korean Church became a place they would go for emotional support and a sense of belonging. Although Korean students at Joshua very often were not close or did not like each other, yet they all expressed empathy toward one another as international students at Joshua. Most of Koreans needed to belong to a group. Korean socializing along with the use of Korean language was inevitable for these students’ psychological comfort.

Dashed hopes: Inevitable segregation or self-segregation. While English-Only was a means to “better” integrate Korean students for the school by breaking up Korean groupings, for some students, this was registered as the exercise of unfair power. In fact, all Korean students were willing to and made an effort to join American groups or make American friends for learning English that is connected to American English hegemony. Desire to make friends across nationalities should be mutual. Yet, their efforts often did not turn out well.

One example is of a Korean female student, Miki, who was a fluent English speaker according to her teachers at Joshua. She shared her story on May 29th in 2009. Her English was good, so she was confident in attending this school; however, she was very shocked at the way in which she perceived that the American students mistreated her. She thought everyone at school was, “very cold and official.” On the surface, the people smiled and looked kind, but she complained that nobody was there when she really needed them. When she came to Joshua, nobody was interested in her. When she asked a question, they would answer it, but that was all.
For example, if she asked such question, “Is the due date for this assignment tomorrow?” they would answer by saying, “Yes.” without going any further. She said, “While my English was good, it was of no use since I had nobody to talk to, and the American kids did not want to talk with me.” Worse, sometimes, some American kids were mean to her. For example, around homecoming season in 9th grade, some boys were making fun of her about homecoming dance partners. One of the boys joked that nobody wanted to go to the dance with him, so he asked her. But she refused because it was a joke. Then he said, “Oh, god! Even Miki refused me.”

Interestingly, Miki thought discrimination took place based on her looks and personality. Miki felt that there was an unfair comparison with her and another Korean girl who was tall, slender, very pale white, had long hair, and spoke in a high-pitched, girly voice. Miki insisted that this other Korean girl had received good treatment from the teachers at Joshua. Miki said, “She [the other Korean girl] even told me that ‘teachers excuse me generously.’” Miki thought this was because she, Miki, was “independent and straightforward” in her behavior; whereas, the other girl was pale and very slender, which “elicits sympathy and knows how to flatter the teacher.” She said, “I am tall, fat, with little facial expression. I am not the kind of person who approaches others first.” This was not just a racial distinction but related to her personality and her appearance.

Although Miki had been at Joshua for four years, she had not felt any affection between her or her teachers or all students. She felt the atmosphere to have been very official and with little trust between teachers and Korean students. Miki felt alienated from the teachers whom she found hostile. Sometimes she did not even want to talk to the teachers who she often felt had a cold look on their face. After reciting the pledge of allegiance out of courtesy, she was offended.
when she heard from a teacher, “You guys can’t do this because you don’t have the right.” She had to go to her Korean peers for emotional support.

As a senior, Miki received more attention from her American peers, but her experience had already hardened her heart. American students often talked to her and expressed their surprise that she was good at speaking English. She expressed that she would have appreciated their interest in her if they had talked to her before. Now she did not know if they were speaking from their heart or not, and she said, “I don’t even bother to know. I am sick and tired of their coldness.” For her, learning English was not the problem; her English was fluent even before attending Joshua because of her prior two-year stay during U.S. grade school. English proficiency did not secure social acceptance at the school. Miki further addressed her concern that if one were to come to the U.S. as an adult to learn English, it would be hard to connect with native English speaking adults. Instead of taking an English class in an ordinary American school, it might have been better to attend ESL where one could get emotional support from others in similar situations.

Another student, Kang, unlike my first impression of him that he was lazy and did not care about his life, I now believed he must have tried hard to do well academically and socially at Joshua. He told me that at the beginning of his life at Joshua, he struggled to be accepted by his American peers. However, there were always cultural and linguistic barriers. In addition, Kang’s efforts seemed one sided to him and led to nothing but lowering his self-confidence and frustrating him enough to give up.

**Kang:** In addition to the language barrier, there are cultural differences such as when I try to find American students with whom I can share my thoughts about the soccer game I’d watched the night before, it is hard to communicate with Americans because they like to watch football. I should have tried harder to adapt myself to the American students’ culture.
Kang took his experience positively while taking others’ position into a lot of consideration. He had no negative memories of racial/ethnic issues at this school. He said this was because Joshua is a Christian school. Although some kids showed clearly that they did not like Korean students and most Korean students knew who they were, he thought that there were many good kids at Joshua.

Additionally, my similar experience with some white students at Joshua also enabled me to sympathize with him. At the beginning of my fieldwork at Joshua, some Koreans informed me of several white students, who hated Korean students including a high-ranking student council representative. I tried to interview them several times, but failed to go further other than having a small talk like, “how are you doing?” Most of time, I was ignored or got a simple response, like “fine.” Definitely, there was under current of disapproval of the Korean population, including the presence of the researcher. It might be more accurate to say that they were at best dispassionate or ignored me.

On April 25th in 2011, I received an unexpected response from a 12th grade Korean female student, Hae, whom I had observed for a couple of years, yet with whom I had not had a chance to have a deep conversation. She looked very actively engaged with both Korean students, as well as, American students, and teachers mentioned the same thing about her. On the issue of segregation, she mentioned that, in her opinion, Koreans were not self-segregated, but rather Americans “made us segregate.” She also mentioned that it was the same with American students who had their own cliques. She stated that the reason for Korean students sticking together was that American students saw Koreans as foreigners rather than friends. She also mentioned that after making a big effort to connect with American students, she began to ask herself “why are we the only ones who struggle to make an effort?” This experience led her
to reflect back on the foreign students at her old school in Korea, the Sun-Hwa Art high school, and feel sympathy for them.

The Korean students at the school, like the Korean students above, needed a sense of belonging which, as Erikson (1963, 1968, 1970) argue, is strongly connected to their psychological well-being, the fundamental nature of the person, especially for adolescents. Their story tells us that the Korean students must get together to survive the school system. Similarly, the following story of a Korean male student, Joon, 12th grader, suggests that it is not an undesirable self-segregation, per se, as the administrator of Joshua claimed, but a need for survival that resulted in forming alliances with other Korean students. They needed to belong to somebody. He noted that he had seen discrimination against people who could not speak English. When I asked him how they were discriminated, he responded:

Well, this is not really discrimination, but in school projects and stuff, some American students didn’t want to be in the same group with non-English speaking students because they knew this means that they had to do more work. So I fully understand their not wanting to work with the non-English speaking students. Nobody wants to do more work. So, I guess it’s not really discrimination. … It is visible in their faces. When they get in the same group with a non-English speaking person, they frown and sigh. (Interview, 3/25/09)

This student thought that not wanting to be in the same group with non-native English speakers had nothing to do with racial/ethnic discrimination, but rather it was simply a matter of avoiding additional work. On the deeper lever, however, such attitude seemingly lacks the critical consciousness that would enable understanding the school’s and the American students’ power in relation to that held by Korean students.

**Unintended Consequences**

The English-Only policy did not serve its articulated purpose of unification or integration; rather, it served as a system of surveillance and punishment in which the school
officials, American peers, and even Korean students themselves became the policemen. The English-Only policy also did not serve the purpose of English language learning.

Integration, assimilation, or separation? The English-Only policy also served to worsen the gaps between Korean students, American students, and the school’s staff. For example, one of the Korean students, Hwan, received detention for asking his friend, in Korean, whether he had finished his homework. His sister, also his guardian, was called and he was subsequently labeled a problem student. Such an extreme policy escalates small issues into major problems between the school and the Korean students, resulting in unspoken resentment towards the school by many Korean students. A female Korean student, Miki, 12th grade female, reported that American students said to her, “Do you want to have a detention? Follow the rules! You guys shouldn’t speak in Korean. Stop or I will tell the teacher” (Interview, 04/08/09). Hae, a 10th Korean female, whom I had observed teach some Korean language to her American peers, also noted, “the school took our right to speak our language (4/16/11). She addressed that she wanted to speak Korean more loudly than necessary.

Miki, Suk, Bin, and Chul also mentioned an incident from two years prior, in which two Koreans had been talking in the hallway. One of them had begun to talk to the other in Korean. A teacher had waited until the other spoke Korean and then gave both of them detention. Miki stressed that she complained about the policy in a small group Bible study. Her teacher responded only with, “Oh, is that so?” but did not take any action despite being sympathetic. Miki felt that the teacher could not do anything because “a rule is a rule.” After all, the above incidents consolidated Koreans at the school and they complained about the school behind the teachers’ back as stated by a Korean male student who was respected by the school officials, “the English-Only policy only provokes more problems between the Koreans and the school.”
Korean students, through their experience at Joshua, developed their perspective in various ways as they experienced outcomes of the English-only policy. It was interesting to know that at the beginning of the policy implementation, no Korean students, even one student, took an issue with the policy when the school established it. Most Koreans, at least initially, agreed to the idea of English learning or did not seem to contemplate the issue of the policy; others feared to challenge; some others were skeptical about the school’s change; and still others were indifferent to the issue. However, many of Koreans changed their attitude toward Joshua’s English-Only policy as they experienced its effects on their daily lives at the school. For example, one Korean male, Bin, changed from “indifferent” attitude to “strong disagreement.” He shared a story relevant to the English-Only policy. Upon my request, he described the story in his writing. His writing was not very descriptive, so Bin and I revised it together while I was asking further in an effort to provide a vivid scene as follows:

*One day in the fall 2007, when the bell rang, group of students is heading toward lunchroom, they are discussing about how the classes were as students are walk through the hallway. Two students were discussing about the announcement that forbid the Korean students to speak Korean in the classroom. Student A, Bin, is Korean and Student B is American who has lots of interest in Korea*

A: Hey what up yo?

B: Pretty good.

A: Wasn’t the test so hard?

B: Let’s not talk about it. Hey, have you heard the announcement at the morning?

A: What announcement?

B: The school forbid the Korean students to speak Korean in the classroom

A: I heard it a week ago, doesn’t mean a lot to me
B: It doesn’t mean a lot to you? You cannot speak your own language in the classroom. Don’t you think the school has gone too much? If I couldn’t use English in Korea, I would feel sorrowful.

This Korean student was indifferent when he heard the policy, but my follow-up interview revealed that his attitude toward it changed; he strongly disagreed with the policy and insisted that he had the right to choose language at the time of interview:

Bin: I am Korean. I used to speak Korean with my friends in the classroom, but the school officials took away my right to speak Korean. Even some of my American friends complained about the decision. Speaking our own language is important. (Interview, 5/11/09)

He also noted, “American kids other than Korean nationals asked teachers, ‘Why Korean student must not use Korean. Why not use Korean? So, if we visit Korea, and speak in English, should I have to be punished at school?’” (Interview, 4/2/09).

Over the course of experiencing the English-Only policy at the school, most of them strongly disagreed with this “nonsense attitude” (ten out of fourteen Koreans) but response included “Here is in America. We must speak English” (one out of fourteen) and “I don’t care” attitude (three out of fourteen). For example, after experiencing its effect on their daily lives at the school, most Korean students became rebellious against the English-only policy although it was not spoken openly as the following quotes indicate:

Joon (12th grade male): Kind of ridiculous. It [“English only policy”] has the right intention behind it, but the way the school forces it is simply too much. They sound very valid. Those are great intentions on creating the English only policy. However, how the school enforces it is what I think is wrong. English only policy should be promoted in classrooms. But not enforced in lunchrooms and hallways. (Interview, 4/3/09)

Kang (12th grade male): It is very awkward and disgusting if we communicate in English rather than using Korean that is more comfortable. Because we use English with American people without doubt, it is not right to regulate Korean use among Koreans. (Interview, 2/27/09)
Like the above students’ responses, most Korean students perceived the implementation of English-Only and thus the school negatively after experiencing its impact on their lives at Joshua. In fact, contrary to the school’s intention of integration through its English-Only Policy, the policy facilitated Korean students’ segregation. Like the school, Korean focal participants except one Korean male wanted integration. They wanted to integrate into the school. They desired to interact with American peers while being proud of being Korean. They wanted to develop English language skills while socializing with American peers as well as maintaining relationships with other Korean students. The majority of Korean students worked hard, but it did not seem to come easily. They began to realize their sorrow as a foreign student. They became frustrated while accumulating animosity toward American peers to a varying degree. Although the majority of Koreans were not so much patriotic and did not like Korean educational practice, their experience at Joshua led to their patriotic mood as exemplified in one Korean male, Bin’s account. His voice was calm and sorrowful.

I plan to go back to Korea because it is my home country. All the things I left in Korea, especially my family, cannot be lost. Although my mother nagged me a lot, she did it out of love. I am here for the purpose of studying, not living here permanently. I do not want to lose my Koreanness by assimilating into American culture, although I do want to be accepted by American peers. I want a green card, but I don’t want to give up Korean citizenship for American citizenship. My passion is to be admitted to a university and attain a bachelor, master, and Ph. D. degree if possible. I want to be a professor of physics. I will go back to Korea, my home country. And all my things that I left there cannot be lost. Those things such as family are essential. I will go into a Korean military after graduating from college, sacrificing myself to improve the situation in Korea. I want to find a job globally without limiting myself to Korea. However, I will miss Korea and devote myself to my country wherever I live. I am Korean. (Interview, 5/11/09)

Like the student above, the majority of Korean students (9 out of 14) chose to be self-segregated. I followed one of the main founders in the field of acculturation psychology, John W. Berry for my study of ESA participants. I adopted Berry’s four modes of acculturation (1994; 1997) on the
individual relationship with both native and host culture, Berry (1997) identifies four modes of acculturation:

1. Assimilation – Individuals adopt the host culture. They are not interested in maintaining their relationship with their native culture.

2. Separation – Individuals reject the host culture and maintain their relationship with their native culture.

3. Integration – Individuals adopt the host culture while maintaining their relationship with their native culture.

4. Marginalization – Individuals reject their native culture and their host culture.

Based on Berry’s distinction between assimilation and integration, assimilation is defined as a cultural change process of acquiring characteristics of the host culture without maintaining a native identity while integration is defined as a cultural process of fitting into a host culture and maintaining a native identity.

Although Berry used the modes of acculturation mostly with immigrants unlike my participants who came to the U.S. as ESA students, thus residence was meant to be temporary; the modes are a useful way to think about the cultural interactions that occurred at Joshua. The level of acculturation of Korean students shifted dramatically after having attended Joshua. Although it is hard to have clear cut distinction, in general, nine students out of fourteen went from integration to separation (segregation); three students (Joon, Suk, and Jinny) went from integration to integration; one student (Hoon) went from integration to marginalization; one student (Kay) went from assimilation to assimilation. Relative to the English-Only policy, twelve of them disagreed while one Korean male, Kay, agreed and the other Korean male, Hoon, was indifferent.

Within the context of Joshua, all the Koreans except Kay, as well as the school were eager to have integration; this would mean the ESA students being accepted socially by the white
students for the quality they bring to the school without losing their Korean identity in the school’s culture and social strata. It was only later, after gaining some experience at Joshua, that Korea students had become less eager to integrate and began to accumulate negative feelings toward the school.

**English language learning (practical and ideological).** In addition, the policy contributed to missing the opportunity to take advantage of using Korean, a dominant language, as a way of promoting the development of English language (e.g., Cummings, 1981).

Through my fieldwork at the school and findings in the literature, I discovered that the English-Only policy at the school impeded English language learning and the acquisition of code switching skills in the use of language and culture as addressed earlier in the chapter. Although language pedagogy and philosophy vary depending on multiple factors including learner’s age and proficiency level, as well the socio historical, cultural and political context of any language, many research studies show L1 use by both students and teachers was encouraged when needed for understanding content and learning a second language in the language classroom (e.g., Cook, 2001; Tang, 2002; Wells, 1999). Use of L1 is helpful for L2 learning when used for clarification, complex concepts, and grammar explanation. It also helps L2 learners to build up metacognitive skills that are interlinked to the learner’s two cultural and linguistic knowledge. This finding is consistent with Park (2007; 2009)’s study with ESA elementary children. He argues that that the use of L1 facilitates the acquisition of L2.

Throughout the research, I found that Korean students used Korean in order to communicate efficiently when they learn from each other about the content of the subjects; to maintain social relations with their Korean peers; to relieve their loneliness by forming a Korean group; and thus establishing a sense of belonging especially when they struggled in fact to build
meaningful social relations with Americans peers. Additionally their disappointments with Joshua were such that they wanted to use Korean to wrestle with and comment on their experience. This process is comparable to what other speakers of a myriad number of languages undergo.

In summary, findings revealed that school officials and Korean parents had not been fully aware of the negative experiences these Korean students faced and ignored the non-neutrality of the school’s language policy. The school officials and Korean parents saw the English-Only policy as serving the benefit of the Korean students’ English language learning. The school partly attempted to adjust their policy to fit the needs of the students. Most, if not all, Korean parents, school staff, and even a significant number of Korean students were initially in agreement that allowing the use of Korean in the school would impede the acquisition of English, yet, each party had differing perceptions on what it means to support the policy.

The problematic behavior of white students, for example, tattling on Korean students who speak Korean in the school and their refusal to imagine themselves in situations where they would be struggling to learn the dominant language, highlights their intolerance for difference. Interestingly enough, I also observed that many American students including white and black cheated, giggled, or complained about teachers behind their backs. In that case, the English language did not seem to be problematic. The use of the English language seemed too attuned to Joshua’s environment to be an issue for American students’ misbehaviors.

I argue that the English-Only policy neither facilitated Korean students’ English learning, nor did it enhance the school’s unity. Rather, it formostly operated as a policing mechanism (Foucault, 1977) that had profound implications both for the life of Korean students and for the school at large. Namely, the school officials, American peers, and even Korean students
themselves were mobilized as policemen assigned to enforcing the English-Only policy, which in turn made for a climate at odds with Christian unity and contributed to disrupting the unity.

Chomsky made an analogy between the workings of human languages and those of human mind. He asserts, “Language differences are a source of richness and need not be the cause of pain or confusion” (Maher, et al., 1996, p.127). Such an analogy well applies to Joshua; the source for potential racial conflict and Christian unity at Joshua was neither ethnic grouping nor the use of Korean language as such, but a foundational mistrust between school officials and the Korean students, which stemmed from the lack of cultural understanding among all the parties concerned.

The problem with unity is not the use of the Korean language, but rather, monolingual, American, white perspective of the school, the school’s lack of familiarity with a multilingual environment, and the linguistic, cultural, and ethnic/racial inequalities prevalent in schools globally. The issue with English language learning was not the use of the Korean language, but rather the lack of knowledge of L1 use in second language learning and bilingual code switching grounded in a bilingual/multilingual paradigm.

The next chapter explores how South Korea’s educational culture and this American school have competed in the lives of these Korean students, affecting their ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and national identity formation.
Chapter Seven  

Becoming Korean and American Investment Subjects  

As discussed in the previous chapters, South Korea’s unique history is related to its geographical, sociopolitical, and economic contexts, including its colonial and neo-colonial experiences; more importantly, the lives of South Korean people were deeply affected by the Korean War and the subsequent U.S. presence. I also discussed how language, race, culture, geography, stereotyping, and frame of mind contribute to our propensity to accept ideas without questioning them. These factors have also affected the way individuals construct their identity. Neither the image nor the role of any of these factors is neutral, but they function as evaluative interpretations related to power and knowledge, racism, slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism. These factors have shaped the unique version of Korean neoliberal ideology and have converged with globalization and American imperial hegemony to influence Korean ESA children’s choice of identity at Joshua.

I found that there was considerable variation in the way that Korean children learned to become foreigners at the school: their response to the school assimilation policy, survival strategies, and choice of ethnic/racial/national identification all varied. While most of them adopted a rebellious stance to the dominant school ideology by joining largely homogenous Korean social groups, some adopted alternative stances. For example, Kay chose to relinquish his Korean identity to comply with the school’s assimilationist approach to diversity. Another, Hoon, also suppressed his Korean identity but was not able to join an American group. Thus, he had to and chose to isolate himself from others and became confused about his identity. A third, Suk, joined a popular American group while still maintaining a connection with Korean students. He was aware of his positioning and the choice he had made in power relations. Other Korean
students fell somewhere in the middle of this spectrum, partially assimilating and partially rebelling. In addition, Koreans who joined mainly American groups were caught between the social practices among the American groups and an established social structure among the Korean students, along with its unwritten rules. Each student developed his or her own individual strategy for coping with the power relations between the Korean group and the American groups. All of the Korean students seemed to be involved in a continuous struggle to negotiate multiple value systems.

In this chapter, I begin by defining my use of the term identity. I focus on the Korean students’ survival strategies and their choices of national, geographical, and cultural identity. I then introduce four representative students out of fourteen in order to show how Joshua’s fragile power relations described above came to life for a handful of Korean international students.

The Strategic and Felt Identity in a Neoliberal Regime

Identity formation is a complex and fluid process that is shaped by a myriad of factors such as family, personality, socio-economic status, race, language, culture, and nation. In this chapter, I focused broadly on how a person developed both a deeply felt and a strategic identity within these parameters. What I mean by strategic identity is the result of choosing whatever is beneficial in becoming an entrepreneur of oneself, namely, the self of enterprise, or a “neoliberal homo economicus” Foucault (2008). I include choices of nationality, which language to study, and future location as elements of a personal investment strategy. Individually felt identity refers to what one feels about oneself, including one’s cultural (felt, or inner) identity. While from a global economic perspective, shared strategic identity among Koreans, as a group, is somewhat uniform as a survival strategy, felt identity is different because it is based on unique personal experiences. The determining factor in the students’ felt identity choices depended especially on
the unique ways in which they had experienced trauma beyond the national border, i.e., the traumas or negativity they underwent in power struggles with their family, Korean schooling, and American schooling experiences.

There were undoubtedly positive and joyful experiences for the Koreans. Some expressed that they grew over time in their ability to “connect” with American teaching style. They realized the importance of augmenting their traditional textbook reading and memorization of facts with information and insights gained in the classroom experience. Some school officials expressed that many became more skillful at taking class notes, more comfortable asking for clarification or for repetition of details, more confident in offering their own perspectives and points of view. They also expressed that over the years, many students had expressed their appreciation for classroom activities they were better able to relate to as visual or kinetic learners, and some found themselves able to understand and express what they were learning at higher cognitive levels than mere memorization of facts allowed. Certainly their cultural horizons were broadened through this experience (as were those of the school’s own staff and students), and they grew in their understanding of more nuanced aspects of race, language and social dynamics. Most importantly, some Koreans’ lives seemed to be genuinely and powerfully transformed by exposure to the Gospel, discipleship experiences, and missionary opportunities. Some Koreans began to understand Joshua’s missionary oriented school culture. Nonetheless, their choice of inner/felt identity was strongly influenced by the harmful and hurting experiences of the Korean focal participants beyond the national border.

These Korean ESA international students are distinct. They, in general, differed from Korean-American students in terms of factors like citizenship, SES status, Korean educational experience, and English proficiency. They are also different from Korean international college
students. They brought with them their Korean experience to this small Christian high school; they brought Korea’s educational culture, its linguistic and racial ideology, and its perception of America, as well as its aspiration for global citizenship. These Korean ESA students, often understood their experience through nationality rather than race, seeing themselves as being discriminated against because of their non-citizen status rather than their ethnicity. In general, when they entered the school, all the Korean students made an effort to fit into the school culture, and did not resist the school’s English-Only policy or its perception of self-segregation. As time went by, however, most of the Korean students developed negative feelings toward the school’s assimilationist regime. After a while, their life became an apparent struggle for them, and yet none of my Korean participants said they regret coming to the U.S. The Korean students were not aware of racism; they were all simply proud of their ethnic appearance. Although struggling, they were glad to be in the U.S., even at Joshua.

I also found that these students reacted to their environment in very different ways and had very different approaches amongst themselves to the experience of marginality and racism in the U.S. Among the Korean students, experiences and identity varied from a feeling of Korean superiority to a desire to become American both through cultural assimilation and through the achievement of American citizenship. For example, their preferences for citizenship and identity varied as follows: more Korean, more American, neither Korean nor American, or a person aware of self-positioning in power relations between South Korean and American cultures. I introduce four students, Hwan, Kay, Hoon, and Suk, in order to show how South Korea’s educational and cultural values and those of this American school competed in the lives of these

44By contrast, in general, Korean-Americans are more likely to be native speakers of English because they were born into the American social and educational system. The Korean-American students tend to be more sensitive to issues of race and ethnicity, and they understand that their experiences may have been affected by race/racism.
students, and how they individually experienced their sense of “Koreanness,” given the structure of schooling that emphasized assimilation into the school culture.

Hwan’s story is about becoming more Korean. The majority of Korean students belonged to this type. On the other hand, Kay’s, Hoon’s, and Suk’s stories are not typical. They are not statistically significant, yet they have educational significance, as Michael de Villiers (n/a) points out:

Statistical significance and educational significance are often two completely different things. One child out of a thousand who does something uniquely different from other children has no statistical significance, but it [sic] may have huge educational significance. We need only look at the history of mathematics and science to note the tremendous impact that some ‘statistically insignificant’ individuals have had by thinking vastly differently, and daring to deviate from the norm of their times.

These four students’ stories demonstrate the uniqueness of their situations: particularity/situationality (Polkinghorne, 1995; Stake, 1995). This positioning has its origin in the fact that no one has the same situation or the same experience. The complexity of a person’s situation influences how that person will respond to and perceive things. These responses and perceptions are grounded in their personal history, and cannot be understood without acknowledging that accumulated set of circumstances. Most scientific research is aimed at making generalizations about cases or types, but my qualitative case research is aimed more at understanding the particularity of an individual. My approach may also yield unexpected insight in broader contexts. Each student’s story is presented beyond the national border in its entirety because the whole experience, including family life and school life, contributed to their choice of identity.

The Four: Hwan, Kay, Hoon, and Suk

As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, many of the Korean students felt deeply that they were foreigners at Joshua. The school was for Americans and the Korean students used to be a majority from the upper-middle class in Korea. However, they had to learn to become foreigners
in this monolingual white American context. Contrary to the school’s expectation that its seemingly “color-blind” school culture and “English-only” policy would facilitate the Koreans learning English and joining American groups, the assimilationist agenda fostered separatism, leading the Korean students to feel like outsiders and causing most of them to gather in largely homogenous Korean social groups. For example, one Korean student asserted, “Wherever I go, I am Korean;” while another noted, “because of them [some of the American students], I studied harder.”

Hwan45: Becoming More “Korean”: Assimilationist Agenda Fosters Separatism/Nationalism

“Write! Write down whatever I say. Write them all down! I will graduate soon,” he finally shouted at me. His tone was filled with anger (Interview, 5/1/9).

Initially, it seemed difficult for Hwan to reveal his true inner feelings about the school to me. Hwan’s voice was a little playful. However, as the time of his graduation drew closer, he became more honest in revealing both his emotions and his thoughts concerning the school. As he expressed his many complaints about the school, he became serious and, at times, intensely emotional.

Background.

Hwan was a 19-year old male high school senior. His father worked in a construction-related business, and his mother was a full-time homemaker. His parents, especially his father, used to tell him: “Dream big and regard the world as a stage” (Interview, 3/5/9) His ambition was to

45Data mainly includes interviews, conversations with Hwan, Interviews with his teachers, his Korean peers, and his American peers at Joshua about Hwan, as well as approximately 15 observations in class, hallways, school cafeteria at Joshua and gym outside of the school. Interview dates with Hwan includes 2/28/09 School lounge; 3/5/09 Grainger library evening; 3/23/09 at the Espresso royal 8pm-11: 30; 5/01/09 at the union, 5/07/09 at the school library 5/8/09 at a local restaurant; Email exchanges, FaceBook, telephone conversations, and many interactions in the school.
become an international businessman. Having grown up in a wealthy village, he had worked at a construction site in order to become familiar with the workers’ conditions and world views.

He came to the U.S. as a 16-year-old high school freshman (9th grader), attended the Living World Academy, a Christian school in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In an effort to experience American culture in a natural setting, Hwan lived in the home of an American Christian family. After about one year in Lancaster, Hwan moved to live with his sister in Champaign where he had attended Joshua Christian School since 10th grade.

Observation.

Hwan was not quite 5’10” tall, dressed casually, favoring collarless, round-neck t-shirts with neatly cut hair. He had broad shoulders from working out daily at the gym as a means of maintaining an attractive appearance. I first encountered Hwan in his Worldview class in November 29th 2008. While the American students in the class were laid back, laughing and watching a video, Hwan was hard at work filling in the blanks on a handout and turning pages in his textbook.

Immediately after the bell rang, Hwan approached me, asking in a lively voice why I had come to his class. He then sat down. Speaking in Korean, he quickly shared many of his private thoughts without waiting for specific questions. Our conversations were conducted in Korean. Speaking in Korean was so natural that I did not even think about the English-Only policy at the school. He mentioned that Koreans are different from Americans “due to our complexion [pointing to his face].” He said he did not have a problem socializing, but he had noticed that it took time to adjust to the grading system at Joshua. He concluded our conversation by saying, “Feel free to ask me any time you need me,” then stood and bowed at the waist.
Hwan was the only student who approached me before I approached him. He seemed to be very inquisitive, personable and courteous. I felt fortunate to have found such a willing participant. However, after our first few conversations, he began to demonstrate a reluctance to meet with me. Perhaps this was due, in part, to his discomfort in sharing some of his school experiences as well as his growing understanding of how much time his involvement in my research would require.

**Korean schooling experience.**

Hwan is somewhat seemed to stand in contradiction. He knew, as a young child, that he would go to study in the U.S. after middle school, just as his sister had done. He told me that this was why he had made so little effort in Korea and “did not study hard”; he knew he would be going to America for high school. On the other hand, Hwan came to study in the U.S. because of his inability to survive academically in the competitive system in Korea.

His after-school lessons provided him with summaries and the main points of the lessons being taught at the regular school, enabling him to prepare for his exams (the mid-term and final examinations determined the course grade) with little effort. He acknowledged that this made him consider regular school as a place to “waste time” since the private institutes made “learning” easy for him. While the service provided by the private lessons might have been helpful in the short run, it did not seem to help him over the long run because he depended too heavily on the summaries and main points and thus actually deprived himself of the skills needed for summarizing on his own.

According to Hwan, another motivation for studying in the U.S. was that his parents wanted him to “think big” and acquire an international education, perceiving U.S. education as a key to global citizenship because of the improved English language skills they expected him to
acquire and the prestige of having attended an American school. Hwan told me he matured in his thinking when he came to the U.S. in terms of his academics, and valued learning English in order to be more competitive in global business. He also realized how patiently his parents had made major sacrifices to support him.

**Hwan:** My parents are a source of power for me. They patiently support me. So I began to study hard after I came to the U.S. so that I may be able to meet their expectations of me and return it to them in a way that makes them feel good. (Interview, 5/8/9)

Reflecting on his educational experience in Korea, he admitted that while after-school private lessons did not help him much, they gave him emotional comfort academically for his exams. However, it was a struggle to survive at Joshua, which did not provide as much help for international students.

**Experiences at Joshua.**

Hwan had a difficult beginning socially at Joshua. When he entered as a 10th grader, he struggled to adjust to the new environment. He was in a lot of trouble in his first year. He was argumentative with school staff but eventually recognized that such behavior would get him into more trouble, so, in 11th grade, he turned around his behavior, shut his mouth, and studied harder.

Like most Korean students at Joshua, Hwan made an effort to associate with American students as a way of improving English and experiencing a different culture. However, his efforts in this regard led him to a group whose behavior was inappropriate.

**Hwan:** I ended up belonging to a gang-like clique of American kids at Joshua that practiced drugs and open sex. They were nice to me when I got here. They aid more accepting of me than other students were. In Korea as well as in the U.S., sex is very common. There were some suggestions from the girls for sex, but I have never done it. Some of the girls liked me. So we hung out at the school because they were cool, but not much outside of school since I didn’t feel their practices were good. (Interview, 3/23/9)

Hwan’s early social connections at the school also got him in trouble with the school administrators. During his first year, he was accused unjustly, he felt, of stealing money from a
girl’s locker (next to his). Adjoining her locker on the other side was the locker of a good friend of his from the “gang.” The thefts continued. The girl wrote her name on a $5 bill, which later turned up at the KFC where Hwan and his friend went to lunch:

**Hwan:** they found the bill at the KFC where Antonio, the African-American, and I used to go for lunch. Mr. [Superintendent] and Mrs. [Principal] called me to her office again and showed a video camera while telling me that they videotaped me stealing her money. I told them to take it to the police so that they could realize their misunderstanding of this whole situation after having the police investigate this. I was so mad about how they dealt with this incident. I was thinking of moving to another school. I did not get any apology or closure from them. You know if I want to steal, I will steal big money like 5 million dollars, not $5! I am not coming from a poor family. Do you think I’d risk everything taking just $5? I told Mrs. Principal that I would have something to tell her before graduation. (Interview, 3/23/09)

Hwan is definitely still very angry about this incident, in which, at least in his own mind, he was assumed to be and then treated as a thief. He also expressed several other concerns about the school.

On another occasion he was given a detention for speaking in Korean. The school had an English-only policy (except for the lunch room), and Hwan ran afoul of the policy and the bureaucratic mentality that enforced it.

**Hwan:** In Korean I asked a Korean friend who sat next to me if he did his homework. I received detention for speaking in Korean, just one sentence. I hated the detention since I would miss the bus and that would ruin my whole day’s schedule, especially when I was stressed out by accumulated homework and exams. It cost me too much, just for asking one question in Korean. So I asked the teacher for forgiveness just for once, but the teacher extended the detention time from 30 minutes to one hour. I was so mad. I went to the bathroom and punched the toilet paper dispenser. It fell down and I got a one-week suspension. That means everything, including homework, quizzes, exams, and projects would be graded as zero points. My sister, who is my guardian, was called to school. So I became a problem child for the one Korean spoken sentence. Of course, teachers knew about it. When a school visitor who was black asked me why I stayed after school, and I told him the story, he said, “How can this kind of thing possibly happen? You cannot speak your own language?” (Interview, 3/23/09)

Hwan’s perception of the incident is very different from the teacher’s. He said that when he asked to be forgiven, his teacher doubled the detention time. The teacher took Hwan’s
response as a direct challenge to her and to the school’s authority, even though Hwan did not challenge the English-only policy but rather just asked to be forgiven for violating that policy. However, I do not know how Hwan actually asked for forgiveness. On the other hand, when Hwan shared the information with an African-American adult visiting the school, the visitor’s immediate response was to question the policy. The Korean students I interviewed, including Hwan, tend not to be that aggressive in questioning the rules openly because of their vulnerable position as international students at a private school (i.e., they feared that their visas might be revoked) and perhaps because of the Confucianist idea that one should unquestionably obey one’s teachers.

Likewise, most Koreans recognized the negative and unjust application of the policy but did not voice their feelings; yet, I found out that this incident only added to their already accumulated hostility and frustration. As Hwan struggled emotionally and academically, he hid his true feelings from the teachers and leaders at Joshua.

As his sophomore year progressed, Hwan decided to focus on college preparation and his GPA; his life at Joshua settled down as he chose to suppress his anger after these conflicts. Hwan focused on his efforts on learning English, getting a good GPA, and understanding this different culture. Although he recognized that most of his American peers at Joshua did not welcome him, those in the “gang-like” group, as labeled by Hwan, were kind and accepting. While he chose to engage with Americans in order to learn English and American culture, he became isolated from the other Korean students. One Korean girl (Miki) told me that some of the Korean students did not like Hwan initially because he hung out only with the American kids. At the same time, when he needed help with his homework or other important matters, he would ask the other Korean students. As Miki helped him in those early days, the two of them
developed a very close friendship, becoming quite open and frank about everything with one another.

During his junior year, Hwan took some private tutoring both in the U.S. and in Korea during his summer visit. This time, private lessons helped him a lot. This is probably because he was motivated to study harder. Unlike the private lessons that were his daily routine and his main learning resource during his studies in Korea, Hwan now sought those lessons voluntarily and saw them as a necessary complement to his lessons in school.

On the subject of college, Hwan explained that he “might go to Penn State University because its business school, which is my interest, is ranked high [in university rankings].” For many of the students I interviewed who come from upper middle-class families, the prestigious name of a university is much more important than financial aid. Subsequently, few bothered to apply for scholarship.

As a senior, Hwan’s daily routine was to go to school, exercise at the gym twice a day, do schoolwork, and study Japanese. His main concern was how to learn Japanese and Chinese for a career in international trade. He was now interacting with other international Asian students or American students rather than with other Koreans—with the exception of Miki. This seems to be a result of his carefully determined choice to provide an English language environment for himself. Hwan told me that with his Asian friends he was able to speak English as well as share feelings about being an international student in the U.S.

After coming to the U.S., Hwan hardly met with any of his relatives. They would just exchange “hellos” over the phone on major holidays, but the distance (both geographically and culturally) strained their relationship.
**Hwan:** Then I met one of my cousins after two and a half years. I expected him to greet me with a big welcoming smile, but what he first said was, “You cannot escape the army although you are able to escape from the Korean college entrance exam.” (2/28/9)

Later, Hwan interpreted his cousin’s reaction as his way of releasing stress from having to study day and night for the Korean college entrance exam. He might have been jealous of study-abroad students, thinking that they had an easy life after escaping from the Korean educational system. However, Hwan’s cousin did not seem to think of some of difficulties that go with studying abroad. Early study-abroad experiences gave rise to a duality in Hwan’s struggle beyond national borders.

**Teachers’ evaluation of Hwan.**

In order to contextualize Hwan’s complaints about the school, I interviewed most of his teachers. I include here three major informants who were experienced teachers at the school and had concerns for Hwan. They include Mr. Dean, who was responsible for international students; Mrs. Principal, who interacted with all the students as their student advisor; and Mr. Science, who had important information about Hwan.

Mr. Dean had taught Hwan the previous two years in both of his classes, and he believed that they had “moved from a relationship of mutual suspicion to mutual respect.” Even though Hwan had been appropriately respectful from the beginning, Mr. Dean was not sure Hwan believed that he was truly concerned for his well-being. He explained.

I at first considered him potentially deceitful and manipulative for cheating and absences. I think he has learned and grown a lot during his time here, and I have come to a better understanding of his true self. We have spent much time together in my office, discussing life and the struggles he faces in his situation as a study abroad student. (5/1/9)

Mr. Dean speculated that Hwan had to ask his older sister to report to the school that he was sick when he was really staying home to do school work. These behaviors and actions in trying to
cope seemed to lead Mr. Dean, like the teachers whose interviews are discussed below, to suspect Hwan of trying to manipulate and deceive them.

Mr. Dean perceived that Hwan had become more satisfied with the school and was doing better in his studies. However, this perception is not quite accurate. Based on my interviews and observations, Hwan simply hid his real feelings and any complaints he may have had about the school officials in an effort to stay out of trouble. As he mentioned above, Hwan simply kept everything to himself despite harboring a lot of anger within himself. He masked that anger by flattering teachers and presenting himself as a model student.

Additionally, Mr. Dean mentioned, “Hwan works hard and does well with material that can be memorized. He has a more difficult time with written work, but he has progressed considerably” (Interview, 5/1/09). This may reflect his previous dependence on excessive help from the private after-school programs in Korea in processing information for him, which he would simply memorize in summary form.

Mr. Dean speculated that Hwan’s efforts in his studies were more to please his parents than to satisfy himself. Mrs. Principal shared a similar view of Hwan’s “rocky start” at Joshua. She confessed that the situation was so serious that the school “[was] seriously considering whether or not to allow him to return to Joshua.” However, in an email, Mrs. Principal wrote, “He has really turned a corner though, and his junior and senior years have been much less confrontational and more positive from a personal and educational perspective.”

During my follow-up interview on May 11th in 2009, Mrs. Principal she said “he didn’t like rules and so he broke them, and wasn’t always honest.” It also seemed she was about to say more about the theft incident, but then pulled back. She said that they never identified the thief, but it was clear to me that she was still suspicious of Hwan.
Mrs. Principal: (uncomfortable silence) I have to go back to see his discipline files, but that’s kind of private, security information, so…All I can do is to speak in generalities. His discipline files speak to the specifics, but I don’t want to do that in this specific context. There were some issues with him where we just felt like he wasn’t being honest. Things showed up missing from a locker right next to his….

Researcher: Did you discover the identity of the thief?

Mrs. Principal: hm, um (shaking head).

Researcher: No?

Mrs. Principal: No!

Recognizing that the conversation was becoming uncomfortable, I intentionally changed the subject. Upon reflection and learning more about the school policy, I realized that she was in an uncomfortable situation because officially she was not supposed to reveal details about the students according to Federal Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA).

Mrs. Principal continuously described how Hwan had changed his attitude and related to her personally: “He came to see me after the senior trip to just talk to me about what an amazing experience he had […] and how he saw some of the real faithfulness of God […] he has become much harder working […] more cooperative in general, more content” (5/11/9). These comments from Mrs. Principal conflict with what Hwan said in a later interview about her and religion. He explicitly told me that he was not religious and that he did not like people who depended on God. Thus, I speculate that his behavior described above is another example of his attempt to secure his position at the school while being uncomfortable with how the school perceived him. I suspect that he just wanted to be personable with her to get on her good side.

While Hwan was insecure about how the school perceived him, the school was also suspicious of his sincerity. Mr. Science was very frank and honest about his feelings towards
Hwan, and he seemed to struggle to sincerely understand Hwan’s behavior and what he perceived as Hwan’s duplicity (4/27/9).

There seemed to be some discrepancy between what Mr. Science said about his physics class and what Hwan said about his own performance in the class. It is possible that Mr. Science had a negative experience with another Korean student and projected it onto Hwan. I speculate that this was due to his experience with Hwan being manipulative, the teacher’s weakness with foreign names and faces, or simply confusing the two people. This might be an example of the teachers’ difficulty in relating to students from different cultures. Obsessive attitudes and behaviors regarding grades are typical among young Koreans. On the other hand, it appeared that Hwan went to extremes in his criticism of the school, because he was seeking purely tangible and practical knowledge rather than simply committing himself to genuine learning and accepting the realities of Joshua.

Us vs. Others

Clearly an invisible battle existed between Koreans and Americans at Joshua. Perhaps, Hwan’s negative attitude toward the American students at Joshua became apparent in an incident in the school library on May 7, 2009. Four Caucasians, three girls and a boy, were at a table joking and laughing. They seemed to be working on a project together in the library. Hwan and Miki, one Korean female, were also present, and I engaged them in conversation. I also greeted the Caucasian group and gave them a pack of gum. They appreciated it and shared with one another. At that point, Hwan said in Korean with a serious and urging tone, “Did you just give them all the gum? Why did you give it to them? Don’t give them.” It was the same pack of gum I had given to Hwan and Miki shortly before. Hwan’s over-reaction seemed to demonstrate his unhappiness and antipathy toward American students and the school. This accumulated anger
and resentment towards the American students at Joshua was similar to that of some of the other Korean students.

However, they did not express their complaints openly mainly due to their international status. Upon my asking why the Koreans did not express their complaints to the school, many responded that as international students they did not want to cause trouble.

In these circumstances, naturally the Korean language was used for critical commentary as a way of relieving their emotional stress and loneliness while sharing experiences as internationals. Hwan did not regret coming to the U.S. despite all the struggles at Joshua. But he wanted to keep his mouth shut, get what he could and move on because he knew full well that it was useless to complain or offer suggestions. He thought the school would not change no matter what.

Hwan sometimes thought that it would be better if he was a fool, then he wouldn’t be so critical and he wouldn’t be able to see all the negativity. On the other hand, Hwan’s attitude toward class discussion reveals a cultural clash. The American ideal seems to be that the person who speaks up is to be valued, but the silent one is not.

Hwan: We Koreans do not randomly spit out words just because we have something to say. It is not desirable without taking other students into consideration. If you have a question or something, think first if the question is worth knowing for other students. If not, it is better to go to the teacher in person later so that you may not interfere with others …I feel sorry for some teachers who have prejudice against Koreans without knowing us well enough. This is partly because we do not talk frankly, due to social hierarchy. (Interview, 3/23/9)

Hwan also pointed out the lack of a discussion-oriented classroom environment at Joshua while suggesting how to motivate Korean students to participate in discussion.

Hwan: We Koreans are smarter than they think. If they want real discussion, provide an environment where we will be eager to participate in discussion such as giving some credits or forming some issues that that are controversial. Help motivate me to
participate. If they give points for discussion, we Koreans will aggressively join in—even at the cost of life. (Interview, 3/23/9)

Even where there was some discussion, Hwan noted, the teachers failed to provide valuable and stimulating topics that could provide stronger motivation for classroom participation, which is higher grades or accumulation of credits.

**Shifting perception: language, race, and family**

During interviews, Hwan seemed to validate perceptions that the primary value of studying in the U.S. was to develop English language skills that would be beneficial in securing a good career position. After immersion in U.S. culture, however, that goal may have been integrated into a larger cultural identity with many more facets than mere language skill. Growing familiarity with hip-hop culture (music, dress, attitude) engaged particularly male Koreans with racial dynamics that are not generally discussed in Korean context. Further, the religious context of the Christian school introduced a cultural vocabulary and identity challenges that were much more complicated than either students or the school administration and staff recognized. To be “Christian,” particularly in this evangelical context, could too easily be understood as an aspect of being “American.” In reverse, to be “Christian” in a Korean context may have quite different meaning and involve distinctive identification than in the evangelical context of the school.

In addition, national identification as “Korean” became somewhat of a source of pride (again, particularly among males) in the American school context. Hwan recognized that, even though he was “not that patriotic,” the realization that speaking like an American and even one day gaining American citizenship would not necessarily make him a Korean-American. “My thoughts, appearance, and ideology are not the same as American people.” Looking at future identity in terms of marriage and family, Hwan retained much more traditional aspirations to
marry a Korean woman and honor his parents’ cultural expectations of family life. This attitude partly reflected an understanding of the Korean Confucian understanding of “filial piety” — children must obey and respect their parents, and they have particular obligations to fulfill concerning them. It was also partly motivated by a genuine understanding of what was owed to parents whose sacrifices allowed him to experience the opportunities he’d been given. This was an attitude which Hwan recognized was markedly different from American concepts of parent-child relationships and family structure. It was also something that was largely unrecognized (perhaps even undervalued) by school administration and staff.

In the end, Hwan did not want to become an American. His desire to take advantage of opportunities that came with studying in the U.S., while unquestionably influenced by attractive elements of American popular culture, was nonetheless rooted in family expectations and obligations, which he fully intended to honor in the long run.

Kay 46: Becoming More “American”: Mimicking Americans with a Vengeance: Whiteness and English

“Korean education is TRASH!” Kay’s tone was intense. “Beyoncé is White” Kay was certain.

Background.

Kay was born in Korea in 1991. He was a 17-year-old high school junior in the fall 2008. His father was a well-known professor of communication and sometimes appeared on a Korean TV panel show to discuss such topics as the new media law’s impact on the media industry, the

46Data mainly includes interviews, conversations with Kay, interviews with his teachers, his Korean peers, and his American peers at Joshua about Kay as well as approximately 15 observations in class, hallways, school cafeteria at Joshua and gym outside of the school. Interview dates with Kay includes 3/24/09 at the Atlanta Bread Company; 4/3/10 at a local bakery; 7/08/09 at Starbucks in GangNam Station in Korea; 7/08/09 telephone conversation with his mother; 5/20/10 with his parents in the U.S.: Facebook, telephone conversations, and many interactions in the school.
environmental movement, and broadcasting. His mother stayed at home. Both of his parents graduated from a top university in Seoul. He had one younger sister who lived with his parents. Unlike Kay, his sister did very well academically.

Due to his father’s profession success, Kay grew up living in Madison, Wisconsin; the Philippines; Champaign, Illinois; Japan; at times returning to Korea, and North Carolina. While at Joshua, he initially stayed with a Korean guardian and some other Korean study-abroad students whom he did not like. As of spring 2009, he was residing with his drama teacher at Joshua because he had an issue with his prior guardian.

**Observation.**

I met Kay during my first visit to Joshua on November 3 in 2008. I was there to recruit potential participants. I was having a conversation with the dean when Kay, tall and big, about 6 feet 2 inches tall, approached us as described in Chapter 3. Right after Kay left, the dean informed me that Kay was the most Americanized Korean kid at Joshua and that, I might therefore be interested in getting to know him. Thus, I began to observe Kay from a distance. Although Kay did not make it explicit, I had the distinct impression that he did not want to be singled out by me in the presence of his American friends. Therefore, I tried to act as if I were not interested in him at all, by talking to other American students or to teachers or by pretending to focus on my work. During my observations, I saw that he was very involved in many school activities, actively engaged in audio work during chapel, the school play, as well as taking pictures during graduation and working at the booster for school sales.

Finally, we had a chance to talk personally at the local bakery on March 24th in 2009. After sitting down, he said that he is a careless speaker, meaning that he speaks whatever comes

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47 The school, Joshua, did not have a policy about currently employed teachers providing paid room and board for students while enrolled at Joshua.
to his mind regardless of what others think. Kay was a very talkative boy in his youth years in the U.S., so he picked up English quickly.

After Kay came back to Korea when he was five, he remembered becoming more and more anti-Korean. He didn’t like anything Korean, even things that were related to Korea only a little. A trip to the Philippines in fourth grade enabled him to understand Korea in a broader global context. Before the trip, Kay thought Korea was the worst country in the world, but he realized after the trip that there was a place even worse than Korea, yet he wanted more than what Korea could offer. He reflected that his problem was that I just compared Korea with America. When I made a trip to the Philippines, wow, it was really very poor, filled with trash and pollution. Except for the resorts, beaches, and sightseeing places, the Philippines are dirty and ugly. It was then I realized that half the earth is filled with poor people like in the Philippines. (Interview, 4/3/10)

**Korean schooling.**

Kay asserted, “Korean education is TRASH!” He liked U.S. schooling better because he thought that American schools were more liberal and offered many extracurricular activities; on the other hand, the typical Korean classroom was very passive, and Korean education focused too much on grades. He also mentioned that American schools were better in terms of discipline. Kay said, “In Korea, teachers scream and beat the kids as a means of discipline, rather than giving suspension or detention when kids misbehave. This creates lots of stress for both teachers and kids. You know, the pen is stronger than the sword.” Kay took private lessons and was tutored in such subjects as English, art, math, Korean, and piano. He even took Korean writing lessons because he did not know how to write Korean by the time he was in first grade due to his stay in preschool in the U.S. Because he was not doing well academically, his mother thought that he wouldn’t be able to survive in the competitive society of Korean. Kay was unhappy about
Korean education and was critical of it. His negative attitude seemed to cause him to not study further.

During my 2009 summer visit to Korea, I had a conversation with Kay’s mother. Upon my asking about Kay’s good points, his mother responded that he was very sociable, that wherever he went, he adapted well. Back in Korea, however, she said he did not get along with his Korean peers, the children of his mothers’ friends.

Kay’s mother: I used to socialize with people who are highly educated and wealthy. They were really into their kids’ education. Their children were academically doing really well, but Kay did not do well so it was hard for him to fit into the group. (conversation, 7/8/9)

Whatever academic skills Kay may have lacked, he made up for through his social skills. Wherever I went, I heard from his teachers and classmates at Joshua, both Korean students and American students, that Kay was sociable and had leadership skills. However, that did not seem to be the case when he was in Korea, especially, among the academically high-achieving children. Kay wanted to be a leader, but he did not seem to pursue this potential in a system where he was evaluated only by his grades. Because he did not fit into the elite kids’ group. He was isolated from his peers. Eventually, he lost the motivation to study, which made his grades lower and lower, in a vicious circle, he summed up by saying, “I am not a study-oriented person anyway.”

Kay’s frequent movement during his middle school years seems to have made it even more difficult for him to succeed academically. He found it increasingly harder to adjust to new environments. His arrival at Joshua marked the beginnings of four years of stability.

Experiences at Joshua.

During his freshman year at Joshua, Kay told me, he did nothing. He was disappointed that the school was so small, and he felt like nobody seemed to care about college except Mr. Dean. But after a short time, he realized “there are some things that Joshua can give me, like a home
environment, while there are other things it cannot give.” Although he did not have high
expectations for the school, he admitted that it has a warm-hearted interactive environment.

There were teachers and school personnel who gave him a sense of a welcoming atmosphere.

He started by developing a relationship with the teachers, then after he felt comfortable with the
environment, he moved on to the American kids.

After being involved in many volunteer and extracurricular activities, he felt kind of empty since he thought he did not get anything but “thank you” in return. Especially

approaching his senior year, he was beginning to get nervous about his academic performance.

He felt that his academics had not improved much while other Koreans were focusing on

academics for their bright future. He started complaining about such things, as that Joshua was

not preparing its students well for college.

Looking back, Kay’s mother reflected on Kay’s difficulties with the Korean educational

system and their decision to send him abroad for study.

Kay’s mother: His father and I have been wondering a lot about Kay. Dealing with my
son’s issues has given me an opportunity to reflect on what is education. We seem to box
him up within a frame without enhancing his merits. Wishing to raise him well, we seem
to drive him too much, evaluating him by his grades without looking at his merits.

Researcher: Why did you send him abroad for study?

Kay’s mother: Kay did not fit well into the Korean educational system, and we tended to
drive him hard to study without understanding him. There was one moment when I
began to wonder if what I have done to him, which I thought was best for him, is right? I
thought I was doing the right thing for him. I am Catholic, so I pray to God for wisdom,
asking for wisdom to do the right thing.

...

Researcher: Do you have anything to say about Korean education?

Kay’s mother: We need to eradicate homogeneous education, which ignores
individuality. While there are kids who go to Seoul National University after being forced
into the academic system, there are others who went to elementary and middle school, but
during high school they resisted and their grades plummeted. Quite a few of them killed
themselves.
She must have struggled because of her son; however, such struggling gave her a chance to reflect on her way of educating her son and on Korean education in general.

Kay’s criticism of Korean education was evident in the way he responded to Korean children and later included all things Korean. He did not like Korean students at Joshua who displayed too much “Koreanness” by his definition. He did not seem to be a person who as willing to negotiate, but rather he stuck to his opinion and preferred to work by himself.

**Korean students at Joshua.**
(Interview, 4/3/10)

**Kay:** I used to hang out with Korean kids during 9th and 10th grades, but not any more. I used to go to Korean church from time to time, but this is boring, so I don’t go to church. I hang out only with Americans so maybe Korean kids don’t like me.

**Researcher:** No, as far as I know, they feel good about you.

**Kay:** Do they? I still do not like Korean students. … Why do Koreans bother to come here if they only hang out with themselves, speak Korean among themselves, and focus only on their studies? That’s a waste of money! The main purpose we are here in the states is to have other opportunities that we can’t get in Korea. I speak Korean with Korean friends in the classroom and during lunch hours because the upper class students think it is rude to speak English in front of them. Whenever I hang out with Korean students, I have cultural problems that make the situation very strange. I know many Koreans who get all A+ each semester; some bad Koreans even brag about their grades. Korean students at Joshua used to have lots of problems such as cheating. I hope it gets better.

**Researcher:** By the way, what do you mean by “upper class students?”

**Kay:** Seniors. I don’t want to call them seniors because I don’t like them. I hang out with American students. I am different from other Koreans because typical Koreans hang around with themselves instead of with other groups.

Whenever Kay would interact with Korean seniors, he had to speak in Korean, but in that case he also had to use honorific expressions, which he preferred not to do. His dislike of using Korean honorifics did not stem from his lack of language abilities, but from his disrespect for Korean seniors and Korean culture in general. Kay was proficient in speaking both Korean and English.
However, speaking English to Korean seniors at Joshua would be seen not only as inappropriate but also as rude behavior among the Korean community at Joshua. It would seem that in his efforts to reject all things Korean he had limited his opportunities for success. He was critical of the success of the Korean students but did not recognize that he could acquire valuable information from them about achieving it for himself. His sense of rebellion against Korean culture lay at the center of his comments and attitudes.

**Teachers’ evaluation of Kay.**

Kay was typically more comfortable with older people. He often consulted with teachers rather than peers. He used to go to Mrs. Principal, Mr. Science, Mr. Williams, and Mr. History. They talked about Kay.

**Mrs. Principal (5/11/09):** As to Kay Lee, he is the most time consuming of all the Korean students. He has changed over time, from a very friendly, engaging, positive freshman into an unhappy, disgruntled, dissatisfied junior. His grades are fair, but probably not what he is able to do. He is very social and wants to be involved in lots of things, but doesn’t take direction well. He won’t accept the word “NO” without considerable discussion. He and I have talked at length, and I believe he is one of those kids who “wants” more attention than he “needs,” but he is unhappy when he is not the focus of attention. He never wants to go home for the summer. I think his parents keep him very busy with school-related work, and he believes he could just “do his own thing” if he were able to stay here, which is what he prefers. So the closer we get to the end of school each year, the more unhappy he becomes.

**Mr. Science (Interview, 3/23/10):** I have had Kay for two years. I feel like I know Kay better than anybody else. He and I have had a lot of private conversations about many personal issues. He comes to me with problems he is having, wondering about people’s perceptions of him. He has concerns about emerging sexuality. He talks about all sorts of different things. He is a very talented young man. I talked to him most recently about being mature. He asked me, “Do you think I can be a policeman?” He yearns to be a policeman. “Sure, Kay, but you need more maturity to do that.”

And so, I am trying to teach him. He is insecure about many things. He is talented …, yet he has not met other people’s expectations. As far as his performance in my class, he does well, but he could do better. He is serious about his studies, but on an irregular basis. I believe he is distracted by many teenage thoughts. He is sensitive to others, with a big heart. He is very intelligent, perhaps a leader in the making. His English skills are
excellent. He is very respectful of others. Occasionally he exhibits silly behavior, even for a young teen.

The more Kay became involved in school activities and events with American kids, the more he seemed to feel he was accepted into the school system. He seemed to do his school spirit work in an effort to be accepted.

However, in some ways, he did all that to act like an American. Sometimes his extreme anti-Korean behavior made teachers wonder why. One day, in the spring of 2009, the dean, who was teaching a civics class, told me with a shocked voice that I should have observed his class where Kay spoke out in front of the class. Much to the dean’s astonishment, he told me, Kay said, “I do not want to be a Korean citizen, not at all!” in a dismissive way.

Kay’s efforts to be included in white groups well perpetuate the concept of honoring White (Tuan, 1998). His efforts were well described by his English teacher who taught him Journalism.

**Mrs. English:** I’ve observed what I believe is Kay trying to be like certain white males in his class as a means of fitting in. He has become more “goofy” and ornery than he was when he was a freshman. I believe he thinks he’s getting positive attention, but sadly, I think the other boys are amused at his expense. (Interview, 4/20/10)

The more he got involved in the school, the more he felt accepted into the American kids’ group, but the less time he spent on his studies. Whenever I asked Kay’s classmates about him, their first reaction was to burst into laughter while describing him as being funny. His American classmates seemed to simply think that he was acting the jokester. On the other hand, Korean students thought of him as a Korean who was able to freely interact with both student groups, Korean and American, while feeling good about him as a person who was actively involved in school activities and, therefore, improving the overall image of the Koreans.
Perception of the U.S. and of race/ethnicity and of language.

Kay’s experiences in foreign countries made him more flexible in his attitudes toward language and race. In Korea, he often spoke English with Americans, because he said he “felt sorry for them.”

As one might expect, Kay’s attitude toward the English-Only policy also differed from most others’.

Kay: Why should we speak Korean in the U.S.? If we come to the U.S., we must use the English language; although, it is awkward to speak in English to Korean people. Why do you think the school made the policy if there was no problem with Korean students? I do not have many chances to speak in Korean since I hang out only with American friends. (Interview, 7/8/9)

Kay’s attitude toward English also reflects his perception that English equates with “whiteness.”

Kay: At one time I wanted to be white because whites look so comfortable and are well respected all over the world, especially in Japan. They are respected and well treated wherever they go in foreign countries. The English language and the white race are well honored in Japan.

From time to time, I think, if I were born white, I would be well respected. I am very disappointed with the fact that they are white, not me. People around the world like to be friendly to white and English speaking individuals. Therefore, when in Japan, I speak only English. If you speak English in a restaurant in Japan, you will be well treated. (Interview, 4/3/10)

Kay came to the U.S. to study, and therefore he came here with considerable financial resources, whereas many other immigrants came here as a means of daily bread survival. For someone with a lot of money, it doesn’t matter if you are yellow, white, black, or whatever: you are less likely to experience racism. Kay continued by expressing a great deal of belief in white superiority.

Kay: I think we are all equal; however, I feel more comfortable dealing with white people than other races even when they do not speak English. If we feel racism in the U.S., I feel it is the way it is supposed to be. Whites are blessed, white and tall. For black African-Americans, they flock together with baggy jeans, speaking in a drawled sound. They sleep in the classroom, fight against their teachers, and perpetuate the notion that “I can’t because I am black.” Blacks make fun of Asian people saying “Chingchong” when
they do not know where I come from. Hispanics and blacks get together but I don’t feel like being in those groups. Although I admit blacks and Hispanics have never personally harmed me, I want to interact with white students. I have few opportunities to interact with blacks since this is mostly a white school. I do not feel any racism in this school. Nowadays, I can see fancy-looking blacks who are popular. I used to think all whites are good. However, while I get along with whites, there are good whites and there are bad whites. The same is true of blacks, but generally more blacks fail in school. Still, I am more attracted to the whites than the black. If you look at magazines, all the good-looking models are whites. (Interview, 4/3/10)

On the same day, Kay’s equation of whiteness with English speaking, education, and manners is demonstrated in his perceptions here:

Kay: Beyoncé is White.

Researcher: No.

Kay: One of her parents is white and her skin is a little black and her style is white. So I see her as a white.

Researcher: I don’t think so; neither of her parents is white. Nobody sees her as white (laugh).

Kay: I want to consider her as a white.

Researcher: Then [President] Obama is black?

Kay: He has black skin, but he lived as a white, was raised by a white mother and educated in the white system. He speaks white English.

Researcher: If someone looks black but is educated within the white system, is he black or white?

Kay: I don’t know.

Although he acknowledged that white and English together do not always go hand-in-hand, he was well aware that “white” and English together are the most privileged group. Next, his topic changes.

Kay: Thinking about it, the American system itself does not serve well for the blacks. Under the system, they can go to prison easily. I have seen a lot of black people going to jail since they flock together and they look strange at the station close to my school. If they have been in jail, they are limited to work. They deprecate themselves by thinking
why I am what I am and hang out with the people in a similar situation. If they go to jail, they become crazy. They want to play there but they can’t since they might get caught.

On a surface level, he seemed everywhere, talking here and there. He even had a tendency to contradict himself. However, on a deeper level, it was a sign of his maturing over time.

**Future identity.**

In many ways, Kay did not wish to exert much effort. He thought that becoming a U.S. citizen would enable him to live a privileged life. He also did not understand the actual cost of living in the U.S.; his privileged status and the fact that his parents paid for everything skewed his understanding.

**Researcher:** How do you identify yourself? Do you see yourself as an American or Korean? How do you feel about being an American or Korean? Why do you feel that way? Can you define an "American" and “Korean”?

**Kay:** I am an American-Korean. I really feel proud of myself as being an American-Korean, because I lived in Champaign for 5 years and I am really used to American culture, like people who have American culture in their blood. I am somad when Koreans have American citizenship just because they were born in the U.S. while they spend most of their time in Korea.
I really wish to be born as an American. I really want to become an American citizen as a self-esteem. (Interview, 4/3/10)

**Mrs. Drama.**

On May 14th in 2011, I had a chance to meet his guardian, Mrs. Drama, and exchange some emails with her. Mrs. Drama, a white woman, had been recently retired at the time of interview. She noted that Kay had had no problem with social adjustment at his college but had suffered academically in Purdue University. She talked about her experiences with Korean students, especially with Kay:

In general, my observation is that the Korean students basically stuck together. One or two Caucasian Americans would become part of the group and many times start to take on the ways of the Korean students. One of my best drama students even started learning
Korean and has gone to Korea. She [Alice]\textsuperscript{48} intends on going to school there this coming year as well. Having had two different Korean boys live in my house as home stay students, (One for one school year, one [Kay] for two and a half years), I do have some observations about Koreans placed in non-relative homes. For the most part, I saw (usually boys) taking advantage of their situation by lying about where they were and what they were doing. More than once, I knew of students who were not living with anyone – which was against the rules – and lying to the school about what they were doing. It takes committed and wise adults to parent these students if they are not related to them.

\textit{About Kay}

Kay and my family have a very close, lifelong experience now because of his home stay with us. He is like my son and I treat him the same way. Kay is caring, thoughtful, responsible (in most things). He has a good heart, even though he sometimes makes foolish choices. He is very social and highly values his friends.

Kay has boundary issues. He has trouble knowing what he can and cannot do in regards to rights and when to ask permission, or knowing when things are just off bounds to him. He is lazy and undisciplined when it comes to school. Yet, he can be a very hard worker when he is interested and committed to something.

Kay comes across as very fluent in English. Conversationally, that is usually the case. We learned though that sometimes he has no idea what we are trying to communicate and is very good at making us believe he understood us. We will discover later that either he did not want to take the time and energy to understand or may have wanted to please us by just saying he understood when he didn’t. Reading and comprehension on the other hand, could always be improved upon. These deficiencies became obvious on the ACT tests with very poor scores.

Initially when Kay moved in with us he was very “anti-Korean.” He adopted an American name and spelled his Korean name in an English way. With our other Korean student, I would go to the Korean grocery regularly and get the Korean food he wanted. I learned how to make Bulgogee (sp?) When I asked Kay what I should get for him at the Korean grocery he said he didn’t really like Korean food. My husband and I had even learned to like Kimchee, but Kay did not want us to buy any. Kay made a point to only hang out with Americans and was very selective about Koreans he would interact with at

\textsuperscript{48}The American female, Alice, used to bow down to me with Korean greeting words whenever she saw me inside of Joshua and outside of Joshua. She grew up in a multicultural environment before attending Joshua. She was very unique because she showed a lot of interest in Korean Youth Culture, including Korean Pop and dramas. I had several chances to interview Alice. She spoke Korean well, liked Korean youth, and also had a Korean boy friend. Like many other people, her mother found her daughter’s keen interest in Korean culture to be interesting. I, however, heard from her best Korean female friend, Jinny, that Alice confessed to her that she did not like Korean accented English and often frowned until she became close to Jinny.
school. I am happy to say that he has relaxed in this, now uses his Korean name and we don’t see the imbalance in his attitude toward his culture that we first experienced.

Even though at times Kay wanted to move out—he thought we were too strict—in retrospect he is glad he stayed with us for the duration of his school years. He even made me promise that we would never sell the house without him knowing because he wants to buy it and raise a family here. We believe that this has been a good experience that he wants to keep.

Hoon⁴⁹: Being Neither Korean nor American: Isolation and the Wages of Maternal Zeal

“I feel American at heart. I accept that America is my true home, but other Koreans see me as a Korean—Why? So I don’t know who I am. Am I Korean or American?”

(Interview, 4/29/09).

Conflicting identities were an issue for Hoon as he expressed above, Clearly, this student was experiencing an identity problem with the Korean social system nested in an American school.

**Background.**

Hoon was a seventeen-year old tenth grader when I met him at Joshua in the fall of 2008. He was born in Korea and had received most of his schooling in Seoul until fifth grade. He came to the U.S. in 2002 with his mother while his father stayed and worked in Korea to support Hoon’s education. His was one of the so-called wild goose families, which separate temporarily for a child’s education. Hoon and his mother first came to California with a tourist visa (B-2) and extended their stay by changing to a student visa (F1) for Hoon and a dependent visa (F2) for his mother. Hoon’s uncle, who attended the University of Illinois, introduced them to Joshua where Hoon began fifth grade. He and his mother did not visit Korea from 2004 to 2010. Hoon’s mother said her husband often visited. Based on my conversation with his mother, Hoon’s

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⁴⁹Several informal conversations at the school and the public library; A few telephone conversations; Observations including school (class, lunch, hall way), Retreat, Public library, Home visit, Bookstore; Interviews include on April 29 school library 2:00-2:50, April 30 school library 2:00-2:50, May 1 school library 2:00-2:50, May 4 school library 2:00-2:50, May 13 school library 2:00-2:50, May 14 school library 2:00-2:50, and May 17 public library 12:00-1:00.
family communicated on a daily basis through a web-cam, which was always on. Hoon’s father earned a Ph.D. at one of the top universities in Korea and was well known in his field. He ran a civil engineering business with about 20 employees. Hoon’s mother had earned a bachelor’s degree and then quit her job as a journalist right after Hoon was born because her husband did not like for her to work, and she wanted to spend her time with Hoon, their only child.

At first, I did not have a particular interest in Hoon because I thought he was too perfect for my study. It was not until my interviews with several other Korean students that Hoon got my attention as a participant. While conducting one-to-one interviews with some of the Korean students at Joshua, I had several opportunities to hear about Hoon, which I did not expect, and what I heard was somewhat shocking to me. It was late fall 2008 when I began to develop my interest in Hoon as a focal participant. While most Korean students were not interested in him and did not bother to get to know him, they had a vague notion that Hoon had some psychological and language problems.

*Kang, 12th grader Korean male (Interview, 4/15/9)*
Hoon was viewed unfavorably by both Korean and American peers, a kind of outsider. He does not get along with the American students either. American students do not like him. I don’t know why, but I feel some weird spirit from him. I’ve heard something is wrong with him, some kind of disability… that makes him that way. It is not serious, but there is something.

*Bin, 12th grader Korean male (Interview, 4/2/9)*
American kids also make fun of him by saying he’s on steroids, because of excessive reactions in PE or in the hallway. He reacts very seriously to stuff that doesn’t need to be serious. So people are afraid of him. Many got injured due to his reactions. Scary! He doesn’t seem to control his emotion and strength.

**Researcher:** His mom seems to be very smart.

**Bin:** He is extremely counter to his mom, very different.

*Kay, 11th grader Korean male (Interview, 7/8/9):*
No sports, no extracurricular activities. Too much obsession with grades. Pronunciation is not good but good English skills. Too much Koreanness, such as asking questions
inappropriately, asking some improper questions during exams, or not saying “excuse me.” He is too much under his mom’s influence. No challenge. Mom ruins him. His mom seems to talk to school a lot, getting involved in his school experiences. Anti-social. He will be isolated if he goes to a university.

Observation.

He was an 11th grader in early spring 2009 when I observed him more closely. Most of the time, I saw him hurrying with books down the hallway, sometimes seeking extra help from his math teacher. Very often, he would ask teachers about assignments and grades right before and after class. In most classes, Hoon sat in front and participated well, especially in his history class, while taking verbatim notes as if he did not want to miss even a single word. Teachers seemed to give him extra help by asking the class to be quiet in order that Hoon’s comments could be heard. However, unlike other kids that usually have their own clique, he did not seem to be engaged with other classmates. When I mentioned Hoon to Mr. Dean, he replied that he looked sad, worried, and depressed all the time. He was so much into grades. So, whenever I met Hoon at the school, I would approach him with an extra lively voice and say, “Hoon, everything is OK?” He would reply in Korean, “Hello” while bowing down politely. Hoon was willing to give his self-study time for my interviews. I communicated with him in both Korean and English.

*Why study abroad? Because it is easier to study here than in Korea (interview, 4/29/9)*

**Researcher:** Do you enjoy school life here?

**Hoon:** More enjoyable than Korea. In Korea, it is difficult, in high school…

**Researcher:** How do you know that?

**Hoon:** I think of it by myself.

**Researcher:** How do you know when you don’t have any experience in Korean high schools?
Hoon: It’s because I have heard from my father. My father heard others talking about their children, the children of my father’s friends stayed up late to study. And they go to private schools and come back around 1 am. Now I felt that education in America would be better than education in Korea. I feel that I can find it easier and enjoyable compared to Korean education. Korean high school students study for the SAT and are living a really hard life. I do not like that.

It became clear that his perception of Korean education is based on what his parents told him. When I asked him why he came to the U.S., he told me that it was because he did not want to study as much and as hard as Korean children do. Feeling that there was more to the story, I asked him to tell me about his childhood before coming to the U.S. It turns out to be the main reason for Hoon’s study abroad was that he was frequently bullied and beaten up as a young student in Korea.

The reason.

Hoon: As a first grader, I have very dark memories of Korea. When I was a first grader in 1998, I got mugged—was beaten by my classmate. He ambushed me and beat me in the gut until I felt pain, until I threw up. I thought that the world is so dangerous. So I began to learn taekwondo.

Hoon continued relating his experience in the U.S.

Life in the U.S.

Unfortunately, Hoon’s experiences with bullying continued as more and more Korean students began to attend Joshua. Hoon’s lack of Korean language also seemed to bring him problems.

Hoon: My Korean pronunciation is not good when I am speaking Korean, so that’s why. I know a good Korean student who is older than me. He asked the Korean student at Joshua who used to bother me why he annoyed me and he said, “He is Korean, but he can’t speak his own language, damn it!”

He continued to share his painful experience, more specifically with a Korean student, Suk, at Joshua.

Hoon: Here is another example. Last year (2008), at this school camp, there was a session where everybody introduced oneself. The teacher called a Korean boy’s name, Hee Hoon, but I misheard Hee Hoon for Hoon, which is my name. So I introduced myself, but realized that was not my name, so I stopped. After Hee Hoon, I introduced myself, and then [Suk] swore at me in Korean, saying, “Fucker, What the heck are you
doing? Are you kidding?” I just endured and ignored since I didn’t want to get involved in fighting. He doesn’t seem to like me. If I ask a teacher a question, he often says, “병신 (Retard)” He did a lot like “Shut up!” or “Shh” while putting his finger on his lips.

It was clear that Hoon had a lot of anger toward Koreans. He wanted to do something back to them, he appeared to be scared of what might happen to him and especially his mother. He said that the reason he did not want his mother to be involved was to protect his her from a situation that might be risky for her. On the other hand, he seemed to know that his mother would not be able to help at all in spite of her efforts.

When asked about his perceptions of identity, Hoon responded,

I feel that I am American, but others see me as Korean. Since I hang out with Americans often, I feel like I am becoming more like an American. But Koreans see me as Korean, so I don’t know. I am confused whether I am Korean or American, but I see myself as American because I accept that America is my true home. (Interview, 5/14/9)

At first, Hoon said he was close to American classmates, but he eventually admitted they were not so close. He did not seem to fit with either Korean or American groups, but he was more comfortable with the Korean-Americans in his church (who were young adults, not his age).

Hoon also seemed to value the idea of American citizen above all things—even ethnic identity, claiming, “I don’t mind about my ethnicity, but I just wish I was an American citizen, because then I would be more American than Korean.” To him, citizenship was the most important thing. “I don’t care whether I am an African, Korean, or White, as long as I have American citizenship. I know that I would have a better life if I was an American citizen.”

Language also was a source of cultural confusion for Hoon. “My English is not very good; I speak Konglish,” he said, and he senses, “I am losing my Korean more and more.” Even though he said he feels American, he seems to realize he is perceived as Korean, and with that
perception comes the expectation he can speak his own language. “People judge me by my skin color, not by my mindset,” he said. “That is a problem.”

Overall, Hoon thinks he is an American culturally, but Korean students and I, the researcher, perceived him as Korean. For Hoon, color or culture is not that important, but citizenship matters. Before coming to the U.S., he thought that America was good country without any problems, filled with mostly white and African-American citizens. After coming to the U.S., Hoon realized that America is multiracial and there is variance among blacks. He also thought that racism used to be very strong, but not at this school.

*Interview with American students about Hoon*

Niki (a 10th grade, African-American girl) (5/19/09):
We are not close. We don’t talk, but it seems to me that he stresses too much and worries too much about grades. He gets good grades, but if he misses one point, he blows it out of proportion. He thinks very low of himself. He always says negative things about himself. Like for instance, Oh, I am not that smart. I am so stupid. He talks to himself. I don’t know why he thinks like that. He seems to be very unhappy when everybody seems to be nice to him.

Andrew (a 10th grade, Caucasian boy) 3/27/9 10:51am At Panera
I have a Korean friend, Hoon. His focus is just on study and grade.

Nick (a 10th grade, Caucasian boy) 5/4/9
Hoon is funny a lot of the time because he likes doing martial arts moves during free time at school. The only thing that worries me about him is that he lets himself get stressed out about his grades. He would do much better in my opinion if he would calm down.

Jason (a 11th grade, Caucasian boy)(constructive criticism) 5/4/9:
Hoon is very intelligent, especially in mathematics. One time I saw he got 103/100 on a math test! Hoon sometimes displays a sense of paranoia in regards to his possessions such as getting upset when kids move his lunch box just jokingly. He is way more on the defensive than others.

Most American students were not close to Hoon, although they do not treat him badly. Overall they felt that he was just strange, worried, and/or funny. They seemed to be curious about why he was so much into grades when he was doing so well. Sometimes, I saw Hoon doing martial
arts by himself. He told me he did that to protect himself from people like gangsters. When he practiced martial arts, American kids thought it was funny and interesting; however, for Korean kids, Hoon seemed to get on their nerves.

Hoon was tender hearted, but he was easily put on the defensive. Sometimes, he was very sensitive when other kids were just goofing around. Here is my observation of his American history class.

**Observation.**

*Putting himself on defensive: 4/20/09  9:00 am*

The clip is about Japanese interment during WWII. Japanese Americans were put into camps in the desert so that they wouldn’t spy on America. A Japanese boy shows up on the screen. Davis, a Caucasian boy says, “Is that Hoon?”

Later, I had a chance to ask another African-American girl who sat close to Eujury (Uziri) about what happened. The African-American girl explained that Eujury accidentally called Hoon Japanese and he got mad. After learning that the Japanese had invaded Korea, she realized Korea and Japan did not like each other. So she understood why Hoon had gotten upset then.

But, Hoon thought she was blaming him for something. There is something in Hoon that turned off the other kids. He was too defensive, which seemed to be related to his painful experience in Korea.

In my interactions with Hoon, he was soft hearted and the kind of person who was willing to help people, but he did not seem to know what he was supposed to do to connect with his peers.

*At the school Auditorium, May 2009*

In PE, there were Korean boys from 9th to 12th grade. The boys are unloading the rugs and spreading them out even and taping them so they won’t move. They are working in teams, some spreading the rug, others ducktaping, still others bringing chairs in. Hoon grabbed one roll and played with it. One Korean boy says, “Hoon! Bring it here!” He is wandering around. In a corner Hoon pulling a cart for a Korean kid who was about three years younger than him.
School retreat on August 28 in 2009

Scene 1:
After Hoon was done with climbing exercise, I saw him standing alone. I approach him and greet him lightly. I notice that two white girls are standing a few steps away from him. Hoon accidentally farted while the two girls were standing close by. Embarrassed, he began apologizing profusely.
Hoon: (very politely kind of out of context, dead serious with no facial expression): Sorry, I did not mean to, I didn’t mean to, but it comes out without my intention, oh…I’m so sorry (repeatedly apologizing).

The girls visibly move away and shun Hoon.

White girl 1 (completely disinterested): We don’t need to know; I am not interested in your explanation about anything.

Scene 2:
An African-American kid, Tony, is touching him jokingly and then, Hoon responds to him, “Don’t do that! Why are you doing this?”

Later, Tony remembered the incident and said, “Hoon just like, I don’t know, sometimes, he is just really like having a personal space. I was touching him like ‘hey, how is it going, man?’ he just kind of acting like, ‘Oh, man, Ohhh’ and drew back.”

Now I turn to other observations about Hoon. Here, I include two representative life curriculum class examples (4/8/09 and 5/01/09). The 4/8/09 class is largely around giving and receiving love focusing on relationship with boy friends and girl friends with respect to sex. The 5/1/09 class period focused on what to include or not include in a course evaluation for the next semester.

Hoon came to class and asked the teacher how his grade turned out. At the end of the class, Hoon asked the teacher how he should do the handout homework. She approached him and explained. After class, students were leaving while Hoon and another Korean male approached the teacher. Hoon asked her to see if the teacher looked over the PowerPoint presentation he had sent her. She said no, and then he asked the teacher to give him some comments so that he could work on it more for the final.
After class, I asked the teacher about her experience with Hoon. She told me that she comes to the class once a week so she does not know much about him. She said he asks about grades and assignments a lot without participating in the class very much. Later, I had a chance to ask Hoon his opinion about Bible class. He did not think it was a good class, saying dismissively, “It is not helpful in college. It is a waste of time.”

Hoon did not like the class because he believed it did not do any good for college admission. Also, he did not think it was good to have a girl friend when he was in high school. Overall, the majority of American students liked topics that were covered, but they did not like the way the teacher approached them, not discussing them further in depth.

Family and relationship with parents.

interview, 5/17/9

Hoon: To my father and mother who work diligently, I thank you. My mom is witty and has common sense. She is also able to adapt to the situation that she’s in. That’s how I see it. If she’s with a friend who lost her father, she knows what sort of situation she’s in and tries to comfort her. My mom often tells me to study hard and go to a good college and get a good job. I study hard. I don’t like it when she says that I cannot go to college.

Researcher: How about your father?

Hoon: My father just says, “Study hard.” That’s it!

Researcher: I have heard that you communicate with your father through the web cam. What do you talk about with him?

Hoon: I am his only son. The son of one of my father’s employees went to Berkeley. He expects me to attend at least a state university so that he won’t lose face.

Researcher: How about your mom?

Hoon: My mom? She has guts. My mother is the only one who can talk to my father when he gets angry. It is uncomfortable when he gets angry, because you don’t know what to do. You don’t know what to say because if you say something wrong, his anger will get worse. My mom will say anything even though he is angry. My mom is good at word fighting; you do not want to get into an argument with her.
Motivation for grade and study.

Nothing was more important to Hoon than his grades. For example, in sixth grade, his grades were mostly Cs. In 7th grade, mostly Bs. In 8th and 9th grades, as now, he gets mostly As. Good grades, good college, good job, and good money were Hoon’s life goals. His thoughts were very extreme: if you did not have good grades, you would suffer for the rest of your life, even dying because you could not pay hospital bill. I was beginning to wonder where he got these extreme ideas.

**Researcher:** You study very hard. What is your motivation for studying?

**Hoon:** Study well and go to a good college so that later I can have a good job. I will be 20 soon.

**Researcher:** Do you hear “Do study” a lot?

**Hoon:** Long time ago. I was lazy when I was 5 to 10 years old, but I matured and improved my grades. The reason I came here is for study, so if I don’t study, it is a loss for my parents and me. I promised to study by myself. How can I put it? Because I don’t want to hear my mom’s nagging.

**Researcher:** You father pushes hard about your grade, too?

**Hoon:** Not much, but if I have most B’s, I will be really in trouble.

**Researcher:** Not acceptable.

**Hoon:** I get a serious talk from them. They will talk about how my life will be corrupted if I am getting B or C.

**Researcher:** Why corrupt if you get B?

**Hoon:** I think it’s because colleges also look at your grade as well. I mean they look at GPA and SAT score. But they also look at your high school grade as well. So I have to get almost perfect score.

**Researcher:** You have all A’s!

**Hoon:** Not all As, Bible is B’s
Why was he so obsessed with grades, money, and jobs? Based on my conversation with his mother, he did not need to worry about college tuition, even if it cost $100,000 a year. Hoon came from a wealthy family. I am not the only one who heard about his background. When it came to dating, race or ethnicity did not matter to Hoon; however, his father had said that Chinese and Blacks were not acceptable. He did not know about Blacks, but he thought Chinese girls were lazy.

**Teachers’ evaluation of Hoon.**

*Mr. Dean*
Seems that his mother has too much control over him.

*Mr. Bible*
Hoon stays within his own box. Umm, (he began to chuckle) he is funny, but he is a very interesting kid. I will call him an enigma. All the pieces that fit together to make the kid don’t make sense together. He is very inquisitive about everything…., but he struggles with lecture notes. This last year with 10th graders, the bulk of all materials come from lecture notes. He is listening and writing, because he wants to do exactly right.

*Mr. Science*

**Mr. Science:** Hoon comes to me frequently to check on assignments and to make sure he is doing what he is supposed to do. I had him last year, his freshman year, one class. Very intelligent, but he lacks self-confidence. His self-concept with peers is lacking. He checks on what we have discussed to make sure he has recorded it correctly. Difficult English words make it hard to understand complex subjects. Hoon is very unsure about a lot of things. He doesn’t have confidence, so he asks questions over and over again.

**Researcher:** But most Korean kids are into grades. He is not the only person.

**Mr. Science:** It’s not just that he is worried about the grade. He is worried about everything. He is worried about where his book is. He is worried about someone having taken his pencil. You know, just about everything.

**Researcher:** Oh, that makes sense.

*Mrs. English (one day in spring 2010)*

**Mrs. English:** Hoon gets bullied; but Hoon also bullies. I’ve seen him bully other kids, but I’ve seen other kids bully him too. I think he’s somewhat ashamed of being Korean because Koreans don’t accept him. He doesn’t want to be associated with that culture for
some reason. I think he so badly wants to fit in that he just wants to be an American, so
he doesn’t like to be identified as Korean, but he’s got more social issues that concern me
than what’s typical of an international student. His English is great, I mean he can speak
English and write very well.

He’ll get so frustrated about school or so frustrated about other students and he will say
things like that. He will keep saying it so other people are bothered by it, and that’s the
kind of thing that people pick on him for. It’s not OK. I mean they shouldn’t be picking
on him, but it’s like it was hard for me to believe that he can’t see that. It’s like he’s
trying to get them to pick on him more.

Mr. Science & PE (5/4/10)
Mr. SP: Hoon is a very strong student. He sometimes gets more wrapped up in his final
class than he does in knowing the material. He takes a lot of time to study, participates
well in class, and sometimes stays after to get a question answered….Hoon focuses too
much on grades and sometimes forgets that he is learning. He is also a very slow note taker….Hoon sometimes has trouble bridging the gap
between what he has memorized for a test and the application of that knowledge. In PE,
Hoon seems to be 110% all the time. He seems like he has a lot of pressure at home for
academics and that may transfer into his effort in PE. He seems pretty much stressed. He
occasionally says that if he doesn’t get 100% on his tests, “My parents are going to kill
me.” During the test, he runs his hands through his hair: “Ooh, I forgot about this one!!!”
He doesn’t seem to get along with American kids any better than Korean kids. Don’t
know why.

Mr. History (5/31/10)
He is my favorite in many ways. He really likes history, but he has a social problem
(might be an effect rather than a cause). He is kind of strange, kind of nerdy. He has very
little social skill. As a result, his peers aren’t nice to him. That is what he needs help with.
He gets good grades, but he is too serious. He doesn’t understand how to act in social
situations, which causes him problems. But I like him a lot. He is very sincere. He is a
good kid, you can trust him. He is a hard worker. If he is ever not nice or disrespectful to
kids, I think it is because he does not know how to act, rather than being mean. So I think
he has trouble fitting in. I feel bad for him.

Mrs. Math (5/14/9)
Hoon, very conscientious, almost extreme. He tries very hard. He wants that A+.
Everything seems cut and dried with him, right or wrong, not flexible. I got to know him
because I do detention duty. I knew him in junior high because he would get detention on
a regular basis. I thought he was a little bit strange, but he’s come a long way. He has a
long ways to go but…I think sometimes he talks and gets frustrated and makes
comments…his peers influence that to some extent. He is very hard working. He is trying
for A+ in algebra 2, he usually gets an A’s; if he gets a B, it totally frustrates him. He is
always asking questions in class, and after class too. Sometimes I don’t have time to
respond, I have to move on with my teaching because I do not have time. Sometimes he
asks questions that I just answered two minutes ago because he wants to copy everything down in his notes, he wants every little detail.

*Spanish class observation, 8:23 am 5/5/10*
Hoon ask something in Spanish. Mrs. Spanish responds to him by saying, “too much college and grade, little learning.” Soon after, kids were sharing their Bible verses. That was an assignment. Hoon’s turn: Hoon’s verse: Deuteronomy 31:6, “I’m not sure I believe it, but it is a verse I chose. ‘Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you’.” Mrs. Spanish responds, “It is perfect for you. Just relax.”

**The mother.**

I started a conversation with Hoon’s mother by talking about what I saw at the school a little bit.

It took quite some time for Hoon’s mother to reveal her true feelings.

Hoon’s mother: We haven’t been to Korea since 2004. At first, I planned to stay here for two years at the most, but things turn out this way. Hoon seem to have conflicts with Koreans students at Joshua because his Korean social culture is limited to his memory back in 5th grade in Korea. However, frankly speaking, he had a harder life in Korea.

He is an only child; I overprotected him by keeping him inside the home. He got all love from us. He did not want us to have another child since he wanted to have 100% care from us. So it was hard for him to adjust to school. I should have sent him outside. I regret. He is so naïve and warm-hearted, but easily gets upset about something that is not necessary to get angry about. He has fits of anger. His personality doesn’t change.

Hoon wanted to be a car designer. His teachers talked about it. On his Facebook page, he wrote, “If you want to talk about cars, I’m all ears.” However, his parents wanted him to be a civil engineer because his father is well known in the area and can use his power, knowledge, and connections for Hoon.

*Hoon’s mother (2/12/10)*

He looks like a man, but still is a baby. I am worried that he doesn’t know the world out there. Hoon’s father used to say that throw him outside to learn how to survive. I am kind of nervous when I think how Hoon and I soon will be apart. Later, if he goes to college, we want to send him on a backpack trip abroad.

Later, I talked with Hoon and his mother and observed during our lunch.

*Crazy buffet with Hoon and his mother (3/5/10)*
We talked about college preparation. Hoon’s mother complained how little information Joshua had provided for college preparation, such as AP exams and TOEFL requirement especially for international students; the dean did not know even the basics. She also complained about the discrepancy between GPA, and ACT score and AP score. Hoon took 2009 summer and winter ACT lesson run by Joshua. She mentioned that she becomes a resource supplier for college admission. 3 AP subjects are required. Hoon will plan to take an exam for AP (city government) (AP for science and math) in December 2010. She is concerned that Hoon did not get a good grade on reading. He did not read books other than school assigned books. Hoon informed me of his ACT score, 24/36, upon my request when his mother went to the restroom.

If Hoon goes to the U of I, she is planning to buy a house so that he may be able to come and go instead of his staying at the dorm, which is obligatory if his family does not live in Champaign. Hoon’s father visited his mother in the U.S. in 2010. He almost died in a car accident in spring 2000, and found out the importance of family. He wants Hoon’s mother to come back so badly. He mentioned that he prepared a luxurious home for her in Seocho-Dong. He used to say that I am a hard worker to support family, but you guys live a comfortable life. But this time, he showed his appreciation toward her. After the car accident, he seemed to realize that life is short and should not be empty, no need to live like a worker bee.

**Pastor.**

(Email exchange with Hoon’s pastor of church 11/30/2010 and 12/2/10)

I am Hoon's primary youth group teacher. I have known of Hoon for about 4 years. I have known him personally for about a year and half, but I do know he is a stress filled individual. He carries a large burden of academic performance on his shoulders. Yes, most students deal with this at some point, but with Hoon, it is exceptional. All of his thoughts and daydreams follow his fear of failing as a student. This failure carries over to his relationship with his parents. I think the definition of parental love for Hoon equals his success in academia. In turn, this stress and inability to sometimes meet his parents’ standards of performance cultivates anger and frustration.
Suk50: Self-made to Negotiate Between Cultures

Background.

Suk was born in Seoul, Korea in 1991. After attending school through 8th grade in Korea, he spent one year as an eighth grader in Canada before coming to Joshua as a ninth grader in 2006. While he was actively involved in interviews during spring 2009, he was eighteen years old, in 12th grade, and had five and a half years of experience studying abroad. He was about 5 feet and 7 inches tall, small but firm. He exercised to keep in shape. He spent $50 a month for a gym membership out of his pocket money of $200 per month. He had a keen sense of fashion. He told me he had too many clothes and shoes to pack for college. No wonder he was selected as “a best dresser” by the students at Joshua!

On his Facebook page as of November 15, 2010, Suk had more than 681 Korean and American friends with more than 463 pictures, including art-related pictures, pictures from Korean culture and his schools in the U.S., along with 25 videos. His father was a college professor of art. His mother had a job as a show window designer in a famous department store, but she quit that job and became a housewife for her children. Suk has a younger brother in Korea who also spent a year in the U.S., but unlike Suk, he did not seem to like studying in the U.S., so he returned to Korea.

When I entered Joshua in the fall of 2008, I saw Suk in the hallway. He walked actively and talked loudly while glancing at me a couple of times. As soon as I noticed that he was wary

50Facebook, observation fall 2008 to spring 2012; Interviews includes 1/2/10 telephone conversation, 5/4/10: Panera (mall) 9:45am-2: 40pm, 5/5/10: Panera (mall) 9:45am-11:00 am, 5/7/10: Kirby Panera 9:45am-2: 40 am 5/17/10: telephone conversation, 5/19/10: Kirby Panera 6:00-9:00; 5/21/10: father interview with Suk about one hour 5/22/10: conversation graduation day
of me, I began to pretend not to be interested in him by interacting with American girls and boys. As time went by, he did not seem to be conscious of me.

**The school cafeteria incident.**

On a sunny afternoon in spring 2009, Suk captured my attention at the school cafeteria. Kids getting together and having lunch. A KOREAN BOY (Suk) is having lunch with several of his American friends and one Korean friend. Suddenly,

1. Suk shouts loudly “I HATE him! I HATE him!”
2. The dean warns: “Stop! Stop!” from the opposite end.
3. Suk shouts back at the dean, “Do you know what he said?”
4. Two American boys and a Korean boy try to calm him down.
5. Caleb talks to his friend next to him quietly.

In the middle of lunch, Suk shouted angrily at an American Caucasian boy, Caleb, who was facing Suk on the other side of a table with a friend. I was eager to ask Suk and others what had happened, but the tense situation convinced me to hold my questions until the right moment. After a long and patient observation, I finally had a chance to interview him in May 4th 2010.

**Talking about “The school cafeteria incident”**

**Researcher:** By the way, last spring, when you were in 11th grade, I saw you arguing with Caleb at the school cafeteria.

**Suk:** Ah! I remember that. One day, he is nice and gentle, but another day, he gets on my nerves right in front of my face. He knows he doesn’t belong to a leading group and other kids don’t like him. He wants attention, but he fails. I can’t remember exactly what he said, but it was kind of insulting Asians. I’ve heard a numerous insulting remarks about Asians, making Asians look inferior. If you see the behavior from their (American) point of view without knowing what is going on, it might be perceived in a negative way, like me as a person who gets angry easily…Because Asians cannot express well their emotion due to the lack of English ability…. If we debate, I can never win due to English ability, but I have to show that I am not happy with you. So, as a means of showing my unhappiness, I get angry.
It seemed clear that Suk got angry easily. In order to get a better sense of his personality, I directed our conversation toward his school life at Joshua. He was not pleased with the school for many reasons.

**Suk:** Lots of regulations, and I am not religious. Too many things they ask us not to do. I am social, outgoing, progressive, and I like to have people around. I have lots of things to do such as having pierced rings, growing hair, and am eager to have jeans, but there are a lot of regulations here at this school.

**Researcher:** Then, why did you come to this school?

**Suk:** It is not that I wanted to come. It is a long story, but to make it short, my father had an acquaintance with whom he felt comfortable sending me abroad. As you know, I can’t go to a public school due to my status as an international student. And it was easier to get into this school than [the other private Catholic high school]. I was doing academically terrible. I am a person who does my best when it comes to what I like, but when it comes to the stuff that I don’t like, I never do it. So you might understand why I did not have good grades.

He liked studying abroad. However, apparently, he did not like being at Joshua. Our conversation continued toward the motivation for studying abroad. When I asked him about the motivation for going abroad for study through a questionnaire, he responded, “I’ve always had a desire to learn and experience different kinds of environments, which motivated me to come.” However, it did not take long to find out the real reason.

**The incident in his middle school in Korea.**

(5/7/10)

**Researcher:** Is there any specific motivation why you asked your parents to let you study abroad?

**Suk:** I attended Ban Po Middle School in Korea. I was sick and tired of the verbal and physical abuse. It is like the army. Face slapping is not unusual. Everyday violence…

**Researcher:** But isn’t the BP middle school good? Many parents move to that community so that their children can attend the school.

**Suk:** Good school has nothing to do with facilities. It has more to do with the schools’ records to send their students to the prestigious colleges and their parents feverish drive
to send their kids to the top universities…. I [challenged teachers and school authority], so I got hit a lot.

...

Suk: The important thing is the educational field in Korea doesn’t recognize how it is humiliating and insulting to students by doing such stuff. They don’t take this issue seriously. That is one of the things that I feel sorry about for my country. I really don’t know what to do. If an American asks me why I came here for study, I can’t say that I must suppress the real reason deep inside because otherwise, it would be like spitting on my own face….In other countries, we should be careful about every word we say, even a single word, and how we behave because it can contribute to Korean image making and stereotypes about Koreans and Korea.

Experiences with Canadian and American education.

Suk came from a family of successful high-achievers and understood the pressure he was under to uphold status and expectations. “When I first came to the U.S., I was so nervous. Unlike people’s perception of me as social and outgoing, I am very introverted.” He recalled life in Canada when he was young as a very different experience, and he wanted to stay there. “In Canada, people are not from the upper class, but they are humble and live happy lives in a much less competitive environment. The people in Canada are much friendlier than American people.”

The Canadian academic system allowed Suk to be much more successful as a young student than he would have been in Korea. “I could get very good scores on tests easily [especially in Math], because the eighth-grade math level in Canada corresponds with second-grade math in Korea.” When he came to America, he did find it easy to make new friends. “In America, as in Korea, personal connections are important. I made 3 or 4 really good American friends who will be my friends for life. My American friends are more naïve and natural; they don’t cover up their laugh or hide their feelings [like Koreans]” (5/7/10).

Looking back, Suk found America “a better fit” for his personality, and he confides on May 19th in 2010, “In almost every aspect, America is better than Korea.” He felt that in
American culture, he was able to “see things from multiple perspectives” rather than having a single focus—only on grades—during his years as a student. He sees this as the primary reason for Korea’s “education exodus.” “Some kids cannot survive in the Korean educational system, so their parents send them to explore diverse cultures and thought in order to help them live a better life. But each kid has a different outcome [depending on their focus].” One of the biggest differences he noticed in American education was students’ approach to college testing [SAT, ACT]. “Americans . . . do not study SAT separately, but they do well—better than I did although I studied for 3 years. For American kids, there is not so much pressure to go to college.”

Regarding Joshua’s English-only policy, Suk was somewhat ambivalent. It seemed a bother, but not so much that he felt angry. “It is a private Christian school . . . so they are the boss.” He noted that it was uncomfortable when “Koreans speak Korean to each other in the bathroom and stop talking and be silent if we notice teachers coming in.” Yet he did seem to understand the importance of developing strong English skills. “I want to speak English well because I have a lot to say to make my point understood. I want to speak very fluently.”

Social life is more significant element in American school culture than in Korea, and Suk was accepted among the social leaders of his class Joshua. With his American friends, “We talk and joke around, throw a party, and sometimes go to a café.” Although he acknowledged, “there were more things to play with in Korea,” he found that relationships with “Koreans make me bored.” He professed a preference for “white American girls” when it came to romantic relationships, particularly “glamorous, shapely girls.” He also expressed appreciation for the “family environment” that existed at Joshua among classmates and teachers. At the end of each year there is a dinner for Seniors where parents attend and share fond memories of their children.
Suk recalled being touched when “Mr. Dean, as international student counselor, expressed his sorrow that he couldn’t get some comments from international parents because they were not able to attend the dinner.” He recalled being singled out by Mr. Dean, who told him that even though he singled him out a lot in class, it was because he cared. “It is out of his wishing me well, and he hoped I knew that he loves me so much.”

**Summary and Reflections**

My observations of and interviews with the Korean students were marked by enjoyable; yet, more often awkward and changeling, “posturing” between them and me from the first day of my attendance at the school. In order to observe their natural behavior, I had to pretend to have no unique interest in them. I had to proceed very slowly to gain their trust and later their willingness to participate directly in my research. I had to make myself more approachable to them by bonding with the American students first. On the other hand, the Korean students were immediately highly attuned to my presence and demonstrated a lack of comfort with it. As time passed, my presence became routine and the students appeared to return to their natural behavior.

The four students’ unique stories I have presented here can be characterized (with obvious simplicity) as: I am Korean (Hwan); I am American (Kay); I don’t know if I am Korean or American, (Hoon); and I can belong to both as a free subject (Suk). As emerged from our discussions, it was the trauma that hit them, albeit at different ages, which determined the differences among them. The painful experiences were strongly shaped by a Korean version of neoliberal power relations both in South Korea and in the U.S.: an obsession with the educational investment in them. The contact zone, or third space, a space of subjectivity in which their experiences were formed, allowed the students to choose their identification with either country or culture.
Like Hwan, for most Korean students segregation became a survival strategy at Joshua. It might have been self-segregation, as Mr. Dean suggested, after all, but for different reasons—a method of self-protection as opposed to an exclusionary rationale. It was hard to tell segregation from self-segregation because it was at once their choice and the situation they were in because that situation led them to make the choice. For example, Hwan made an effort to belong to only American groups at the beginning in order to learn English. Outside the school, he played basketball at the U of I gym with American students and hung out with other international students (Vietnamese). But, not many Americans welcomed Korean students. Only people from a gang-like group were nice to Hwan, and he ended up belonging to a “gang-like” group, became the victim of a stealing incident, and got a detention for speaking one Korean sentence, which turned into a week’s suspension.

Every Korean participant wished to learn English and tried to assimilate into White American groups at the school. Some were successful. But many met with too much of a cultural gap or language barrier to deal with American students’ attitudes. This finding is somewhat consistent with what Jo (1999) argues that Korean im(migrants) experienced double difficulties in living in the U.S. due to race (non-white) and culture (no direct Anglo-colonial experiences, thus less familiar with than those immigrants from rope, most of whom are racially white, or those from such countries as Hong Kong, the Philippines, India, and Pakistan, who have had and are thus more familiar with Western culture and English language. Given this situation, local Korean churches gave many Korean students at Joshua emotional comfort and strength, yet they unintentionally facilitated the Korean students segregating themselves from mainstream.
For example, through their church meeting, Korean female students especially became close. More than half of the Korean students at Joshua went to the same Korean church. One of the girls used to go to a public high school (Central) and used to go to the American church, which her American guardian attended. However, after transferring to Joshua as an 11th grader, she changed her church to the Korean church that most of her Korean classmates (6 out of 7) attended. The church gave her emotional comfort yet little chance to be exposed to American culture. Some segregation seemed to be necessary for psychological reasons and practical reasons, but it also appeared to be necessary to get out of the comfort zone and interact with multiple ethnicities.

Kay’s story problematized Korean education while showing how American race and linguistic ideology has influenced the way Koreans see race and language. Hoon’s case shows Korean educational fever and how his mother played a role in his negative experiences with Korean peers both in Korea and at Joshua. Suk’s story shows how he navigated both Korean and American culture. His subjectivity was self-made to negotiate power relations for what he perceived to be best for him.

Since it seemed most students who came to Joshua intended to stay in the U.S. for college, it makes sense to conclude here with information regarding their post-secondary outcomes. Of seventeen students observed, most went on to attend four year colleges and universities (see table).
Table 10

**Student and School Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>School Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>U of I (later transferred to a top Korean university)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>U of I at U-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pennsylvania State University Park, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pennsylvania State University Park, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>U of I at U-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Virginia common wealth university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Purdue University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>U of I at U-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Parkland College (Plan to transfer to U of I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rutgers University-New Brunswick (Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>U of I at U-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>U of I at U-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Go back to Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Southeastern University Lake land, Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>University of Minnesota twin cities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Up to now, I discussed that a neoliberal discourse is a governing ideology which overwhelmingly controls current Korean education including English education, thus strongly affecting Korean students’ identity formation. The majority of Korean students at Joshua escaped from the Korean educational system mainly because they realized that they could not survive in the excessive competition for top-tier universities. Most of them did not just stick to Korean citizenship or American citizenship. Most of them made their decision depending on the individual situation, weighing which would be the most beneficial to their economic future while wanting to have both to get the most out of it. Some preferred American citizenship because they thought pursuing an American citizenship would benefit them even though they felt profoundly and unshakably Korean. Likewise, they did not limit their future places to stay in Korea or the U.S. They wanted to be competitive in a global market.
Beyond the shared identity, a felt experienced identity existed. The students forged their inner (felt) identities in-between the Korean and U.S cultural boundaries based on their individual painful experiences, and they often did so independently of their choice of citizenship, their English language ability, or the outside perceptions about them. An experience of pain in either context (Korean or American) was likely to push the student more towards the other identity category. The hurting experiences were, also, strongly related to Korean neoliberal ideology. They experienced the trauma in the process of neoliberal subject making in connection with developing the capacity to produce human capital—to invest in themselves as entrepreneurs (Foucault, 2003, 2008).

These dual identifications reflected in practice their response to the pressures of global capitalism and their in-between status, yet represent subject making of themselves as a choice mainly determined by pain as punishment or investment in themselves as human capital as reward rather than by any ethical standard. They did not seem to have any kind of informed choices for self-subject making other than avoidance of pain or receiving rewards. One must remember that these students were adolescents who had not fully develop their mental capacity for judgment. Many Korean individuals internalized ideology of submission in multiple aspects of their lives, most especially in economic sphere. The Korean students were willing to compete among peers with a strong interest in this self-investment without being aware of what they must sacrifice. In other words, they used the freedom opened up by neoliberalism rather than using their freedom for the care of an ethical self, for example. This leads one to consider developing tools, which connect the ways individuals constitute themselves without solely being governed by capitalistic ideology. In the next chapter, I provide summary and discussion of findings, implications, limitations and suggestions for future research.
Chapter Eight
Discussion, Implications, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research

In this chapter, I present the summary and the discussion of the findings of my study. Next, I offer implications of my study. Finally I reflect on the limitations of my study and end with some suggestions for future research.

Summary and Discussion

Romantic rendezvous with global mission. The evangelical high school began accepting significant numbers of Korean students because it lacked other applicants and believed that the Koreans would fit into its evangelical mission. Administrators at Joshua were keen to introduce greater diversity into their school, partly due to their professed and genuine motivation to have a culturally diverse body of students as part of the school’s evangelical mission, partly on the basis of Christian inclusion and benevolence, and partly for financial reasons: the school needed additional students.

The Korean students at Joshua can be best thought of as teens trying to maximize their personal value in a transnational system. Their departure from Korea was not a rejection of the entire South Korean educational system; rather, it was a realistic response to their likely lack of success there. This is not to say that they did not have criticisms of South Korean schooling: they did. There were things about the education at Joshua, too, that they objected to (including both their foreign status—being treated as outsiders—and the school’s relatively lax academic focus and conservative social values). But their primary goal was to make the best of Joshua so as to invest in their own futures in a global capitalistic society: they sought to become productive economic beings, as Foucault argues (2003, 2008), in ways they believed were not open to them in Korea. For the Korean students, ESA was an competitive survival strategy.
As Waters (2002, 2003, 2005, 2006) maintains, what for the students was an investment in the self was, for their families, an investment intended to maintain family capital (membership in a domestic elite) that would be threatened if their children could not attain the sort of educational success that is now associated with high status. It was also a step toward global citizenship, which is now in Korea and elsewhere considered a mark of entrance into a global elite. For their families, then, ESA was an expression of traditional family love and investment in the future, not a matter of “dumping” kids abroad.

The goals of the Korean parents and ESA students – their desire to acquire human capital via English competence and eventual credentialing from American higher educational institutions – were at odds with the school’s goals for its students – the development of individuals with strong Christian values, in a climate of multicultural tolerance of diversity.

**Conflict and silence.** Mismatch existed in the goals and motivations of the encounter. Both the Korean students and the Joshua Christian High School administration had specific expectations of one another at the time of Korean students’ arrival at the school. The school expected, based on media characterizations of Koreans and on the school’s own past experience with earlier Korea ESA students, small in number, that Korean ESA students would be a “model minority” (S. Lee, 2009). When unexpected difficulties arose, they were surprised, confused, and to some extent in denial. Their reactions reflected this surprise and consternation. For their part, Korean students expected little difficulty in being accepted into mainstream American culture. And they expected an educational experience less rigid and more liberal than they had encountered in Korea, but rigorous enough to prepare them for success in a respected American university. Instead, they found that they were viewed as outsiders and that their education was less focused on preparing them for college than they had assumed it would be.
The school and its Korean ESA students both had integrationist visions but those visions were different and clashed with each other. For the school, the vision was one of Christian fellowship that would bridge racial, ethnic, and national differences. For the Koreans, the vision had its origin with U.S. mainstream ideology, which has a vibrant life in South Korea as well: they associated U.S. education with international economic success and greater personal freedom, an extension of their perception of the success of liberal democratic capitalism.

When the South Korean student numbers increased and a natural Korean language sociality emerged at the school – coincident also with the matriculation of some academically weaker South Korean students – these students no longer conformed to the school’s vision of a model minority that would melt into an existing Christian unity. The school’s English Only policy was motivated in part by a desire to fashion these students into model minorities again. But when the Korean students were confronted with what they perceived as a Yellow Peril-like policy, English Only intensified their isolation, anger, and national zeal – because they felt entitled to the quite natural sociality among co-nationals that comes from speaking one’s native language. Their expectations, then, reflected the different educational and sociopolitical, historical, and cultural ideologies of the two groups; yet they had somewhat similar origins. Specifically, a Christian-inflected American English-language hegemony embraced, if unconsciously, by the school clashed with the Korean students’ educational culture, their cosmopolitan desire, and their image of America, which was rooted in South Korea’s 20th century experience as client of the U.S., an imperial power (Cumings, 1981, 1984, 1999, 2005).

Disappointments on both sides were hidden under a veneer of civility. Korean students and their parents were in fact very comfortable with the U.S., English hegemony, and Christianity: indeed, that they had made their way to a non-selective Christian school in a small
city spoke to their embrace of the success of English as an international language and of American democratic capitalism. But the Koreans did want to be able to acquire global and linguistic capital in the comfort of co-national peers and with the understanding that these peers could be a resource for managing this foreign educational setting. For the school’s part, its notions of U.S. and English hegemony precluded segregated national or linguistic circles, which the school saw as a failure of its religious mission – and hence the birth of its English Only policy.

Much of the literature on English Only presumes pro and con camps that are ideologically polarized (Crawford, 1992, 2000, 2004). My study instead offers a case in which the policy makers and recipients actually shared foundational ideas about the global centrality of English (not to mention the role of the U.S., and to some extent even Christian modernity). But the particulars of the promulgation had the effect of polarizing the two groups.

School officials were struggling, with little thought or preparation, to figure out how to improve the integration of their new Korean students in the face of the students’ unexpected behaviors. They feared that Korean identity was encroaching on the school’s established culture, including (and especially) its ethical base. At the same time, Joshua’s Korean students found themselves caught between two different educational systems and left to their own devices to discover how to be a “foreign student” once it became clear that they would not instantly be admitted into the American mainstream.

Both the school officials and the Korean parents seem to have made educational decisions without awareness of their larger implications. When conflicts and discomfort emerged, they were mostly met with denial and evasion. All sides were reluctant to air their honest feelings. Varied and diverse shades of reality from multiple perspectives emerged around the focal
participants, the related groups of participants, and the interactions between them, but most of the shades were not directly expressed.

Korean students at Joshua, on the other hand, had, long before English Only, lost confidence in the school because of its apparent lack of quality and modernity. They had come to Joshua having concluded that they could not advance towards top-tier Korean colleges by staying in Korean schools. Thus they hoped to connect to the Korean (and international) power elite in a different way, by joining the American educational system. From a consumerist perspective, their consumption of U.S. education as ESA students could potentially raise their human-capital (Ball, 1993, 2003; Brown, 1990, 1995). They had been willing and excited to integrate into Joshua’s culture.

Part of their retreat into a Korean clique, speaking Korean among themselves, was their profound disappointment with the school. The Koreans were not per se bothered by the Christian identity of the school, because in fact Korean modernity is very Christian inflected (Chong, 2008; Clark, 1986). However, when it became clear that the school’s evangelical mission was at odds with academic excellence, then the tables were turned; and Koreans began to equate the school’s religious character with its lack of quality. Similarly, when the Korean segregation became clear, the school was concerned not only that its religious mission had failed, but also that perhaps it had been deceived by the Koreans. It began questioning the extent and maturity of these students’ religious commitment.

Another important factor in the tensions that emerged was the very different perceptions of the guardian residential arrangements that many of the students had made. For the Koreans, some of whom could not afford the split family residence pattern (in which one parent accompanies the children abroad while the other remains in Korea, supporting the ESA effort),
guardianship allowed for a cheaper option. In other words this is an arrangement that with considerable economic sacrifice allows families to nonetheless send their children abroad. Sending children to live abroad with strangers can thus be seen as extraordinary sacrifice by parents for children, not rejection or callous disregard.

But for the faculty and American students at Joshua who were unfamiliar with cosmopolitan travel and educational migration of global elites (and elite-seeking middle classes), the guardianship arrangement struck them as family neglect and perhaps even anti-Christian in some way. Separation from family—living arrangements that the school considered unsatisfactory—joined (and perhaps somewhat explained) the school’s alarm over the Koreans’ self-segregation, excessive concern over grades, perceived cheating, lying, lack of respect, and inappropriate use of the Korean language. All seemed evidence of the ESA students’ failure (and failure of their families) to respect the school’s values.

Problems with the Korean students, then, came to be attributed to their lack of guardianship and their nominal or feigned commitment to Christianity. In fact neither of these factors was a plausible explanation for the conflicts that I observed. When the minorities do not behave as a model minority, they were seen as a threat to the dominance of white, English-only, and Christianity. Perhaps they then became a “yellow peril.”

**Joshua’s yellow peril policy: English-Only.** English hegemony is an international phenomenon. “Official English” is the U.S. political movement to recognize no language but English in U.S. public and official life. While the intention behind Joshua’s “English-Only policy” was a far cry from the chauvinistic Official English movement, in that they arose from different concerns, Joshua’s policy-makers shared ideology with groups seeking to make English the official U.S. national language. Requiring all residents of the U.S. to master English,
including non-citizen legal residents, is a mainstream attitude, associated with ideas of melting-pot “national unity” and facilitation of government and private business.

Similarly, the school justified its English-Only culturally by reference to school unity and the universality of Christianity, and pedagogically by emphasizing the importance of mastering English (and thus of practicing it as much as possible). Hence its efforts to discourage use of other languages (especially Korean) on school premises. On the surface, its policy and stated reasons were not different from what is often found in other U.S. schools (Baker, 2006; Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Commins & Miramontes, 2005; Crawford, 2004; Faltis & Coulter, 2008; Faltis & Wolfe, 1999; Gándara & Hopkins, 2010).

My interviews suggest that the stronger, unstated, motivations for instituting this policy were what the school saw as inappropriate behaviors by their Korean ESA students. The school interpreted these behaviors through a Christian-inflected monolingual, American, white perspective. However natural any American school might find it for twenty Korean kids to speak Korean to each other, once the use of Korean at Joshua became confounded with suspicions that use of a “private” language was a way to cheat, to criticize the school’s culture, and to maintain separateness for its own sake, the school found other reasons for restricting its ESA students to English and ignored compelling counterarguments (such as the utility of allowing one Korean student to assist another in math by translating unfamiliar English words for mathematical concepts back into the Korean words for the same concepts).

As Fredric Jameson (1981) suggests in The Political Unconscious, his discussion of the unconscious motivations of politics, the school’s English-Only policy came into being without malicious intent. The school did believe that English-Only would help the ESA students master English more quickly, and integrate into the existing student body rather than retreat into a
Korean clique. The policy was legitimatized as care and love for the Koreans as Foucault (1984) stresses that we must record those things felt to be without history such as commonly embraced sentiments (e.g., love, generosity, conscience), and as consistent with the school’s educational, cultural, and spiritual missions. But the school also had unstated goals (e.g. breaking up Korean gatherings and preventing cheating) and they implemented the policy to promote those goals.

What the school did not consider was the socially symbolic nature of English-Only. As Jameson or Foucault would say, what the school did not understand was what the school’s implementation of its English-Only policy “actually did.” The same was true, when the policy was first implemented, for the majority of the Korean parents and their children. They believed that their own commitment to English and to integration into multicultural American (Christian) experience was parallel to that of the school. While it is true that the English-Only policy raised questions from the start among Korean parents, Korean students, American students, and the faculty, it is safe to say that, in general, all parties concerned accepted or acquiesced in the English-Only policy.

**Race, identity, and acculturalization.** Tuan (1998) notes that Asians are typically perceived in the West as honorary whites. I found that Korean students at Joshua expected to be accepted as equals by the American English speaking white friends that they thought they would easily make when they came to America. What they knew about America came to a large degree from the global mass media, which thrive on stories about racial conflict and on the differences in economic and social status among racial groups. What the ESA students did not know is that, in American schools, silencing the topic of race and class differences and conflicts is still common. (Pollack, 2004).
Unlike the findings in Byun’s study (2010) with Korean ESA high school students that her participants considered being international as a benefit, Koreans students felt disadvantaged due to their foreign status. Korean students in my study also felt unprivileged due to their English language ability, but did not feel discriminated against due to their race/ethnicity. Their struggle as a foreign minority at Joshua actually reinforced their Korean culture, which also led some of the Korean students to study even harder.

It is an apparent struggle for them, and yet none of my Korean participants has said they regret coming to the U.S. This is because they felt that life in Joshua was more humane and gave more opportunity, which is consisted with studies on Korean ESA in the U.S. (e.g., A. Lee, 2006; Byun, 2010; D. Lee, 2010; K. Han, 2012; Y. Park, 2011). Some expressed that they grew over time in their ability to “connect” with American teaching style, and one voiced appreciation for the way disciplinary matters were handled in a more discreet way. “Here in Joshua, even detention is issued privately. … It is a very humane approach.” Kang, Korean male, also noted that his study-abroad experience gave him a chance to think in multiple ways while comparing two educational systems. He pointed out the lack of Korean educational opportunity to succeed, “just once for all.”

Most of them were proud of being Korean as in S. Lee’s study (1996) and became more culturally sensitive through their ESA experiences. Unlike the phenomenon of Asian-American ethnic evasion, identified by Tse (2001), there was no one who did not like his or her biological looks including ethnicity.51 Many studies on the ethnic identity of immigrant youth (e.g., Hall, 1996; Tse, 2001; Zhou, 1997) show that immigrant youth desire assimilation while adopting a very negative view of their own cultural heritage or race. In this context, immigrant youth lose

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51 Kay was the only student who wished he had been born white, yet he did say he liked his ethnic appearance and his individual look.
their native language. Studies examining the effects of language loss (Corson, 1999, 2001; Wong-Fillmore, 2000; Kouritzin, 1999; Tse, 2001), in turn, show that children’s loss of the first language is detrimental to the child’s self-image and to communication with parents and the community. These findings of studies of ethnic identity and bicultural identity in the field of bilingual education and Asian studies are not consistent with findings regarding the ESA participants in my research.

**Benevolent ignorance: The workings of kindness and race.** Foucault warns, “People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don’t know is what they do does.” (Hubert, et al, 1983, p. 187).

When the Korean students identified unanticipated problems with or disappointments in their ESA experience, they “did” almost nothing beyond sharing among themselves their issues with the school. They feared that open discussion might get them kicked out. And they were willing to endure inconvenience and disappointment. As long as they could earn a U.S. diploma and have access to a U.S. college, they could other tolerate other things.

The school thought that by preventing Korean students from speaking in Korean, Koreans would improve their English ability; would be less likely to exclude Americans; would engage less frequently in unethical practices such as cheating; and thus would behave more in accordance with the school’s principles. But the most public justification for the English-Only policy was the argument most easily accepted by Korean parents: that it would promote the Korean students’ language learning.

Interestingly, school personnel expressed comparable views about the tendency of the school’s African American population to group together and to create a “subculture.” The
school’s profession of interest in diversity was in fact rooted in an assimilationist vision in which continued racial and ethnic identity was not valued but rather seen as a sign of failure.

I argue that such a view increases the potential for racial conflict by labeling normal tendencies of people with common interests and backgrounds to spend time with each other as “self-segregation.” The literature on racist attitudes suggests that they are most often found in people who have not traveled extensively nor been exposed to diverse communities. Ignorance and a lack of a diverse life experience paves the way to overt and covert racist attitudes.

School officials and ESA parents alike viewed acquisition of English as culturally neutral rather than as a process fraught with cognitive, emotional, social, and power struggles. Even for many Korean students, the policy sounded plausible. Yet issues around language are never neutral (Macedo et al.; Beykont, et.al, 2000; Pennycook, 2001; Phillipson, 1992, 2009a, 2009b), and there is a risk of cultural and political domination when native speakers of one language are learning another.

Macedo et al. (2003) argues that the neoliberal ideology of globalization promotes the hegemony of English worldwide. The allure of global capitalism is a major force driving the Korean educational exodus to the U.S. for study. Although Joshua’s English-Only policy had its own particular story (more intentional and conscious) on the surface level, power relations around it were more complicated than appeared on the surface. No one involved could see that the professed mission of the school to included Korean nationals was not the simple ethical integrationist mission they thought it was; instead, that mission was undercut by not recognizing how the hegemony of English in neoliberal discourse is ultimately anti-integrationist. Beykont and Macedo (2000) remind us:

We conveniently fall into historical amnesia, forgetting the English reeducation camps designed primarily to yank out the tongues of Native American children, who were taken
from their parents and sent to boarding schools with the primary purpose of cutting them off from their “primitive” languages and “savage” cultures. (p. 31).

Cultural constructions of racial, linguistic, and national images of South Korea can be traced back to Christianity, English language dominance, and conceptions of whiteness. According to Alistair Bonnett (1998), the social construction of white identity, racial ideology, Christianity, and freedom in America draws on the social construction of a racialized European whiteness beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. Connecting the concept of race, white identity, and religion in a colonial, imperial and global context, Bonnett argues that the modern idea of race is “the product of European naturalist science and European colonial and imperial power” (p. 1031), and that “a triple conflation of White = Europe = Christian arose that imparted moral, cultural and territorial content to whiteness....denoting nobility, more specifically a noble line of descent, to the more socially inclusive idea of a people and/or nation” (pp. 1038–1039).

The implementation of the English-Only policy was not a sound solution to any of the school’s issues with Korean students. The English-Only policy actually hindered the Korean students’ English language learning while promoting the potential for racial conflict by promoting perception of Koreans’ segregation as Korean self-segregation. Parents and school officials were not fully apprised of the negative experiences their children often faced as a consequence of the English-Only policy. Contrary to the adults’ integrationist visions, the English-Only policy unwittingly promoted assimilation rather than their professed desire for integration. The school wanted its students to be transformed by the gospel, learning to use their freedom to make ethical choices and become ethnical beings; yet Joshua’s educational policy was suffused with ideas about cultural and linguistic assimilation that were the antithesis of freedom.
The English-Only policy has remained in place until the time of this writing (spring 2013) even though the original intention of the school has been clearly out of sync with its undesirable outcome (see Chapter Six). The school has continued to insist that the English-Only policy is for the benefit of Koreans’ language learning in preparation for U.S. colleges, and to meet the demands of the Korean parents, their clients.

The school was not aware that the school’s ideology of Christian unity and its seemingly “color-blind” attitude, overtly justified through the ideology of Christian benevolence and pastorship, is an ideology that demands not just accommodation but surrender. English-Only made that clear to the Koreans.

The school also seems unaware that its English-Only policy is in harmony with contemporary neoliberal discourse, which far from focusing on Christian values and ethics instead stresses the primacy of economic advancement, a value-ordering that the school might in fact be expected to reject. Neoliberal values were more familiar to the Koreans than to the school. The Korean version of neoliberal power relations had a strong impact on the Korean participants’ choices of strategic identity, as well as their deeply felt identity in a transnational context. Korean ESA parents and children were willing to participate in this neoliberal subject making. Korean parents invested in their children’s education at any cost. The Korean children, in turn, invested in themselves by their ESA experience, by seeking US academic degrees, and by learning, especially, languages of international commerce (especially English, but also Chinese, Japanese, and/or others). The ESA families hoped to make good connections with Americans. All of these efforts were seen as investments in the human capital of their families. Most Koreans were willing to participate in this neoliberal subject making without considering alternatives.
Although Koreans at Joshua acknowledged a problem with the Korean educational system and were dissatisfied with Korean educational culture, they had also willingly participated in the high-grade making project within the existing socioeconomic power structure in South Korea. South Korean’s education has become a frantic survival strategy in the global economy. Joshua’s Korean students’ departure from South Korea was not an act of rebellion against a flawed system, but rather a survival strategy within the system. Kang and Abelmann (2011) report that “many South Koreas have come to see the [recent ESA since the 2000s] as merely an extension of, rather than any real challenge to, the South Korean educational market” (Abelman et al., 2012, p. 2). Importantly, the children whose families could afford to send their children to the US did so, reinforcing a vicious cycle of inequality that has induced less-wealthy families to attempt a similar way to get ahead in the extreme competition that afflicts Korean education. Similarly, Robert Phillipson, author of Linguistic Imperialism (1992) and Linguistic Imperialism Continued (2009a), stated in his interview about European Union language policy on May 13, 2009, that the financial crisis is connected to the dominance of English. Koreans are keenly aware that the benefits of mastering English accrue to the elites, not to the mass population. Consistent with Bourdieu’s concept of Capital (1984, 1991), the Korean students’ economic capital (their parents’ willingness to send them abroad) was convertible into linguistic and academic capital, which, in turn, they expected would enable them to produce economic capital and social capital in their own adulthood.

While certain beliefs clearly existed at the school about Korean nationals as expressed through the decisions and practices of the administration, the controlling power mechanisms at

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52 Although there is a dramatic increase of foreign students participating in formal tertiary education worldwide recording 3.7 million, the number (3.7) is only 2.2% proportion out of 165 million students who participating in formal tertiary education around the globe in 2009 as mentioned in Chapter One. Thus, such students are the privileged few domestic elites, even truer for ESA students.
Joshua functioned primarily on a symbolic level that no one consciously intended or recognized. Fredric Jameson (1982), in *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, writes about what he considers the unconscious motivation of politics. He demonstrates how cultural texts were unconsciously hidden. The “unconscious” in the title is not a linguistic, a psychological, or a cognitive, but a political unconscious. Jameson argues that attacking the political unconscious enables one to reveal something that is antithetical to the ordinary way of seeing things. In other words, one must historicize text—narratives and social experiences to uncover elements that are not consciously intended in order to discover larger unconscious motivations. Jameson (1982) notes:

> It is in detecting the traces of that uninterrupted narrative, in restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history, that the doctrine of a political unconscious finds its function and its necessity. (p. 20)

What happens in daily life, Jameson argues, are socially symbolic acts. He maintains that underlying each act is an unconscious narrative that is often political and requires a historical, and critical perspective to uncover.

In Jameson’s terms, Joshua’s English-Only policy was symbolic. Ostensibly designed to promote, among other things, integration and Christian unity, the unconscious underlying the narrative reveals that the school system was in fact geared to assimilation. Jameson’s argument of “the repressed and buried reality” of the “fundamental history” can be justified by the way we are born into the world. We are born into a system, already established and reproduced by a multiplicity of power dynamics that we do not consciously promote. In other words, we inhabit the pre-existing system and take on a generalized social attitude that Mead (1934) conceptualizes as a social phenomenon, which arises and develops within the empirical matrix of social interactions in the culturally transformed world. From the day we are born, we have images of
ourselves and our roles that cause us to conform willingly to different influences in our social environment without awareness of any overt coercive power. But non-overt coercive power penetrates us and becomes internalized subconsciously. It becomes so natural that it dominates our thinking without rising to a conscious level.

The school’s English-Only was not the product of a single individual or idea; it emerged from a tangled web of institutional power relations. Each group and each individual had its own reasons for entering these power relationships. The results of the negotiations between individuals and groups—made without malicious intent—became evident in the daily power struggles in the school before and after implementation of English-Only policy. All parties and individuals connected differently to the power grid for their own reasons. But they were politically unconscious that their positions on the policy reflected larger agendas – in the school’s case, for example, that the policy reflected Christian inflected American monolingual hegemony and white supremacy.

Foucault notes that power is unequally distributed, depending on the type of power relations, which are relational, multifaceted, fluid, and thus always reversible. For example, Korean parents had the economic power to send their kids to Joshua which needed additional students; Joshua had the power to accept or reject Korean students and to impose rules on them once accepted.

The exercise of power can have unintended consequences. The school’s apparent assimilation regime encouraged rather than discouraged Koreans’ separatism and their nationalism. Korean students’ initial integrationist vision turned for most of them to segregation or separation when their efforts to learn English by socializing with American friends at Joshua did not come easily in the school’s monolingual, predominantly white, Christian environment.
Foucault (1998) and Jameson (1981) are useful in interpreting what happened at Joshua by reminding us that humans often function on levels of which we are unaware. As Foucault (1998) maintains, even when we are aware, few can control our own circumstances, because power is entangled in an anonymous micron and macro level of power structure.

A multilayered silence settled at the school around the subjects of language, educational goals, and cultural norms. But the silence of the unspoken and the uncomfortable reflects minute and multiple forms of power that are constructed and rationalized, to some extent, by the unconscious workings of power, over which one individual and one group alone cannot exert control. It is important to decipher the microdynamics of the power relations that were nested in that silence that forbade discussion of the meanings of unification through English language learning.

Implications

Joshua has the most important thing, a caring humane approach in spite of little resources. Joshua has also many chances for a positive future.

What was happening at Joshua by introducing Korean nationals demonstrates, on a quotidian and minute level, the impact of students immersed in an intense global economy entering a private U.S. Christian school and the effects of this impact on their transnational integration. Conflict emerged with the increasing Korean student population and the English-Only policy was implemented as a solution. This particular research may also demonstrate a productive way to integrate all minorities by thoroughly considering the position of all parties before and after implementing policy regarding those issues.

The school’s problem with its Korean students was neither lack of guardianship nor the lack of Christianity as such; rather, the issues resulted from the Korean educational culture reflected behaviors at Joshua. Additionally, the problem was neither ethnic grouping nor the use
of Korean language as such, but mistrust between school officials and the Korean students. This mistrust stemmed from the lack of cultural understanding among all the parties concerned. The problem was not the use of the Korean language, but rather Korean students’ inappropriate behaviors and lack of appropriate code switching when using the Korean language. The school’s lack of familiarity with a multilingual environment, knowledge of second language learning, awareness of the background of these Korean students, and the linguistic, cultural, and ethnic/racial inequalities prevalent in schools globally exacerbated the conflict (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

Educational migration across national borders is irresistible and thus educators cannot afford to ignore the impact of this reality on domestic education. What education means in this global era for all nations is a question that must be asked. My dissertation research would be a modest step to reflect on what it means to educate children in this global time. Although my project is beyond the scope of Korean ESA high school students in the U.S., I wish to point out that a more robust understanding of transnational interaction at Joshua helps teachers and policy makers better meet the needs of international students in the U.S. In this section, I provide pedagogical and methodological implications for my research. I start by imagining a bilingual Joshua.

**Pedagogical implications**

*An imaginary bilingual Joshua.* If Joshua were bilingual/multilingual, the teachers would feel comfortable code switching; and, further, they would not be alarmed by small ethnic groupings. Rather, they would feel comfortable to hear various accents and languages while incorporating diversity into their curriculum and instruction. Koreans would, also, feel comfortable with their non-native accent or grammar. Koreans would not worry excessively
about their use of the Korean language. They would develop confidence while exchanging
Korean culture and language with their American peers. In turn, American peers would not sigh
when a Korean is assigned to their group project. Even better, if the project is related to Korean
history or the relation of the U.S. and South Korea, it would be great for both sides. The Koreans
would be comfortable with the topic and feel more confident to talk in English about it while the
Americans in the group would be happy for the contribution the Koreans might make. Further,
American peers would be able to explore a variety of topics and thoughts on a global level. As
one Korean female, Jinny, noted, “American peers are narrow in thinking. They do not know
what is going on in the world” (5/14/10).

**Staff training, diverse staff, and liaison.** Joshua had the most important thing: a caring
humane approach and many opportunities to enrich their classrooms, yet little knowledge about
diversity from their all white staff (except one Korean American young math teacher newly hired
in fall 2009 and left soon thereafter). Teacher training in diversity (language/race/ethnicity,
nationality) are needed, especially, training in language learning and ideology. Recommended
are hiring an ESL/Bilingual or seek out culturally trained volunteers from the diverse community
and church in the university community, especially from the Korean community.

At Joshua high school, while expecting independent learning on the part of the Korean
students, Korean students’ language barriers and their unfamiliarity with cultural resources were
not recognized in the school curriculum and instruction. Personal support was absent notably in
ethical matters such as cheating on tests and copying work for assignments. The education of
Korean parents, school officials and teachers, and an orientation for Korean students as to
expectations would go a long way toward successful integration. I suggest some
recommendations for Joshua, for Korean parents, for high schools enrolling East Asian students, teacher training in global education, and for researchers.

To Korean parents and to American educators and policy makers, I would recommend a representative from all races/ethnicities of students and parents be appointed. Especially Korean expertise is needed to bridge the gap between and across, and within the groups. This might be a volunteer position filled by a Korean community remember to serve as a liaison between the school and the Koreans.

*Use the conflict.* Conflict presents the opportunity for positive change. In the words of Paulo Freire, “an education that was not connected to the struggles for emancipation and against exploitation was not worthy of the label ‘education,’” (Apple, 1999). This means without conflict or struggle, it is not education. Both sides expected an intimate connection: the experience of welcoming and being welcomed; yet two similar expectations collided and resulted in conflict. The very conflict itself might potentially be the incubator of diverse thinking by provoking each party’s system of thought. Only through these conflicts, were both sides of the school able to reflect on their own thinking about diversity, which might potentially promote effective institutional change. This reveals the need to diversify the classroom because it would be nearly impossible to achieve multicultural, critical, and diverse thinking without mixing up the contexts in which things are discussed.

Although the school tried hard, it was with little knowledge. Having a growing Korean population was demanding and challenging for the school. Training in Korean culture and orientation as to expectations for the Korean students are a must, as well as a Korean parent orientation and information about these expectations. After all, the very conflict is an opportunity to reflect on what it means to educate.
Create a safe environment. Christian schools, American schools, and schools in general might consider the importance of creating contexts where students feel safe to learn, to grow, to be challenged, and to challenge each other and their teachers appropriately. For Koreans, Joshua was not the safe place in which Koreans could confide in their teachers and/or other American students while the school was also insecure about Koreans’ behavior. Both parties seldom revealed their true inside feelings.

Additionally, there was a silencing of the topic of race, ostensibly not to cause misunderstanding about the issue. The silence regarding race and racism hid deeper structures of racial inequality, yet it can be dangerous to talk about race openly without securing a safe environment because historically race is so deeply interconnected with emotion and power. The race talk at Joshua revealed that it is very important to create a safe environment where everyone can cross borders: break the ice, ease the tension, and heal emotional hurting through help with well-trained educators. This is a challenge that needs sensitivity training about emotionally fraught topics. For example, race is an emotionally fraught topic with which many American high schools struggle. Many schools do not teach Huckleberry Finn because of all the controversy surrounding race, politics, and power. A “safe setting” discussion facilitated by trained and knowledgeable teachers who have developed international competence would be an ideal forum for this kind of discussion for both students and teachers.

Guidance for Korean students. The school might need to hire a staff (at least one resource teacher or even volunteer) that can bridge the gap between the school and the Korean students, who is knowledgeable about the U.S. and South Korea in terms of culture and language. As I argued earlier, the problem was not grouping, per se, but the mistrust between school officials and Korean students, which stemmed from the lack of cultural understanding
from both sides. The problem is not the use of Korean language as such, but rather the specific ways of using the language, including the lack of Korean students’ social etiquette. For example, when Korean students gathered together and spoke in Korean, they inevitably (but perhaps unintentionally) excluded non-Koreans. The students were, to some extent, unaware of the kind of social etiquette to follow regarding their code switching. If an American peer joined a group of Korean students speaking among themselves, they should switch to the English language to show respect toward the peer. Or when they have issues with the school, they needed to find out the right way to address the issues. However, Korean students rarely approached the school officials with frankness partly due to mistrust while the school similarly did not confront unethical and undesirable behavior issues such as cheating and lying. Now I turn to the ways in which we can integrate difference by emphasizing similarity.

**Maximization of similarity to bring diversity.** Integration offers tremendous potential for humans to know one another and creatively interact in spite of their differences. The Korean students at Joshua who successfully integrated did so because of shared similarities (soccer, style, and band). Opportunities at Joshua to maximize points of similarity as a bridge between cultures, both national and class, would go a long way toward integration. P.E. classes were culturally segregated at Joshua; whereas, little language is needed for P.E. It might be an occasion to maximize similarities. You don’t need language to play soccer or basketball, if the participants are familiar with the games. This might serve as a grounding moment to socialize better and develop the qualities for global citizenship for all while learning another language. For example, bring Korean youth culture and language (e.g. Korean pop: K-pop), as a fund of knowledge into school curriculum and instruction (resource rather than hindrance). For example, a Korean and an African-American student at a local public high school became close friends.
through a shared interest in K-pop and Hiphop. The African-American even began learning Korean. One Korean male, Joon, addressed,

Korean and American cultures are similar for two basic reasons: 1) there is a strong American cultural influence on Korea, and 2) we are all human beings after all, with similar wants, needs, and desires. Any differences that do exist between the two cultures are analogous to the minor differences one might find between two regions of the same nation. (5/7/9)

The unique relationship between South Korea and the U.S. as Joon brought up allows Joshua to be able to enrich the school culture on a transnational level by emphasizing similarity to bring diversity. Another example would be one white American female at Joshua, Alice, used to bow down to me with the Korean greeting words whenever she saw me inside of Joshua and outside of Joshua. She grew up in a multicultural environment before attending Joshua. She was very unique because she showed a lot of interest in Korean Youth Culture, including Korean Pop and dramas. I had several chances to interview Alice. She spoke Korean well, liked Korean youth, and also had a Korean boy friend. Like many other people, her mother found her daughter’s keen interest in Korean culture to be interesting. I, however, heard from her best Korean female friend, Jinny, that Alice confessed to her that she did not like Korean accented English and often frowned until she became close to Jinny. This example demonstrates that racial discrimination or bias may break down on a personal level focusing on similarity as human race (Chomsky, 1976), which may, in turn, contribute to the larger implications on a group level.

Include Korean language as a way of learning English. I suggest that Joshua include Korean language and cultural content for English language learning and socialization for unity.

As I discussed earlier, both the school and the parents were unaware that from a language pedagogy perspective, optimal second language acquisition would integrate native language use; the English-Only policy was not pedagogically accurate from a language learning perspective.
More specifically, those areas relating to optimum second language learning would include L1 usage and code-switching as a strategy. The policy of English-Only aimed to prevent the use of the Korean language and supported a monolingual paradigm. In a monolingual paradigm, the native tongue, Korean for example, is perceived as a problem to be overcome in learning the second language, English. This monolingual ideology the school advocated is at odds with the bilingual/multilingual paradigm, which perceives the native tongue as an asset, using the cultural and linguistic skills and resources that all students bring to the classroom.

For example, Korean male, Kang suggested positive reinforcement of English rather than punishment for speaking Korean:

**Kang:** I think it would be better if the school encouraged our English speaking by setting up a system, which promotes English speaking rather than preventing us from speaking Korean among ourselves. For example, a system that pairs up Korean and American students in order to exchange cultures on a school level. They might introduce a Korean culture or language course as an elective. (4/15/9)

My research also offers pedagogical implications especially in terms of code switching as a cosmopolitan marker.

**Code-switching as a cosmopolitan marker.** My research suggests that appropriate code switching might enhance social interaction for the school. Eventually, students (both Korean and American) and teachers might learn to interact as a global community.

The sociolinguistic aspects of how language and language-associated customs are acquired are not high among the educational concerns of most American educators. Nearly all of Joshua’s students enjoyed English as a native language. Further, when I discovered that the Spanish teacher was the only faculty member who was proficient in a language other than English, I realized how difficult it must be even for the school's faculty to empathize with these students. These teachers had no personal experience of having studied in a language other than
the one they had spoken all their lives, much less with courses that presume a familiarity with an interest in cultural values and customs other than those of their parents, including history courses taught from a point of view potentially at odds with that of their previous school experience in their native country. The American teachers and students were not alone in having a limited sense of how language functions on a global level. The Korean students and their parents were, also, limited in their perceptions of language functioning on a global level. Although there are cosmopolitan desires for global citizenship in South Korea, growing up in an ethnically homogeneous nation with a homogenous language and culture, the Korean students at Joshua were not exposed to diverse cultures and thinking, thus, did not develop the skills and ability to get along with people from different cultures. Thus, we need research that has the potential to inform both research communities and communities of policy and practice in education on how to help students create cross-cultural citizenship or global citizenship. We need scaffolding such as code switching to help schools and students bridge cultures as a way of destabilizing inequalities such as the following: linguistic, racial/ethnic, and other cultural differences prevalent in this global world.

Additionally, Chelsea, a 12th white American girl with whom I had a brief conversation was well aware of the benefits of learning other cultures and languages, as shown in her e-mail below:

At Judah Christian, the Korean students (girls) stick together and are very close. During sixth hour (extra curricular hour) I would love to learn about Korean Culture or History. It is as though Koreans get to learn more about our culture [than we do about theirs]. I believe that as a school it is our duty to learn more about them. I believe Judah is on the way to incorporating multiple cultures into one Christian atmosphere. (2/9/10)

Such students’ attitudes seem to point to a future hope and a positive future direction. In fact, depending on how the American students perceive the situation, it could be a wonderful
opportunity for the Americans. American students could also benefit from having Asian friends because it would give them a chance to become exposed to a different culture and ethnicity across national borders. Bringing diversity into the mainstream for the majority, as well as, the minority on a global level is necessary when one considers the irresistible globalization of economic and cultural exchanges and the global migration in education (Khagram, & Levitt 2008). If Joshua value Korean students’ bilingual and bicultural competence instead of depriving the Korean students of their cultural context, the school would be able to move easily and fluidly between English and Korean and enter into global unity as a sign of one’s cosmopolitan belonging.

**Social groups and peer relationship.** It also very important for school officials to be aware of peer relationships and social groupings within and across the racial/ethnic groups. Most School officials ignored interventions needed for groupings. There had been well-established American social groups before the Koreans came. It is especially true when Joshua had served K-12. The Koreans, however, met each other at Joshua for the first time. The students all formed their own social structure along with unwritten rules among themselves.

There was at least one small white group that did not like Koreans. Korean students told me all Koreans knew who they were and called them the Korean Hate Group among Koreans. Some American students did not like to have Koreans in their group due to the lack of English language skills meaning they have to do extra work. There were also some sentiments from the perspective of some American students and some American parents that they did not like the extra care given to the Korean students. They thought being fair means “equal.” Lisa Delpit in her book is *Other People’s Children* (1995) challenges the politically correct notion that everyone is the “same” and thus has “equal opportunities.” As she argues, some differences
make a difference in how well prepared kids are to take advantage of the opportunities of school. By serving different students the same, teachers are in effect marginalizing the students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds the students. In that sense, I challenge the politically correct notion that everyone is the “same” and thus has “equal opportunities.”

There was also a struggle for Koreans who wanted to associate with American groups as in K. Han’s study (2012). Additionally, there were unwritten rules of social hierarchy among the Korean students and myself that accompany different ways of speaking and gesturing. In P.E. class, all Korean males were together which was not desirable in terms of language usage; this is the time to socialize with each other without the burden of schoolwork.

Now, I turn to methodological implication in terms of atypical sampling, researcher dilemma, and multiple triangulations.

**Methodological implications.**

*Atypical sampling.* Throughout the study, I found that learning extreme cases, one can highlights what is typical. For example, by studying Korean extreme educational fever and English fever, I was able to examine education, global hegemony of English and neoliberal governmentality around education in general. In addition, by studying an extreme case, a Korean male student, Hoon, I was able to thoroughly investigate Korean mothers’ role in Korean education. Furthermore, by studying another extreme case, a Korean male student, Kay, I was able to examine American hegemony and white supremacy. To sum up, my findings on methodology suggests that atypical cases are a good way to illuminate what is typical and usual.

*Researcher dilemma.* As qualitative inquiry has unexpected elements in its nature, I constantly had to deal with unanticipated emotional, physical, and professional difficulties (R.
Lee, 1993, 1995; Lee-Treweek & Linkogle, 2000). I hope to offer valuable information to other researchers through my experience in the fieldwork.

Over the course of the research, I was able to bring my empathetic understanding to my participants while seeing multiple versions and roles of myself within them and across them in the hermeneutical research process. But, because of this multiple positioning, I faced a dilemma, the dilemma of the duality of personal and academic connection especially in terms of emotional, ethical, professional aspects of the researcher (Lee-Treweek & Linkogle, 2000).

First, my position as a researcher was a precarious one because although I was permitted to the school officials, Korean students, and their parents, I could be refused at any time since as a researcher I had only limited power. I did not offer any financial reward, other than paying for lunch or drink, and I had no power over the students and teachers. I did not have any position other than researcher who was dependent on the teachers and participants giving me permission to collect data during my fieldwork. My Koreanness put me in a difficult situation. For example, school officials were more gracious and open in the beginning, but later the school administration feared that my research would put them in a critical light, which might negatively influence their reputation. For Korean students at Joshua, many Korean students were suspicious of me as a researcher because I was also Korean, and they suspected that I was studying them specifically.

Second, the nature of my research involved immersing myself in the experiences of the participants. They spoke through me. I was the medium. Therefore, this personal connection was strength for the project but also an issue for me as a researcher. I had a vicarious experience of my participants: funny, pleasing, and joyous, but also often painful, sorrowful, and angry. When they laughed, I laughed; when they cried, I cried. After listening to one participant’s emotional
conflict at night, I woke up early the next morning and found my heart literally pounding. Grasping my chest, I was at a loss what I was supposed to do with this reaction. I was shocked at his story, and as a researcher, I could not tell anybody. These personal connections hurt, but I could not intervene or directly help my participants because I have to be a professional. I faced a dilemma. I was an observer, like a biologist researching bird migration who documents the bird being eaten by crabs. The researcher cannot intervene with that particular bird even though he wants to help the bird because he knows that it would interrupt the natural phenomenon. However, his/her work will help the birds in the long run.

Third, my dual positioning led me to an uncomfortable situation. My participants have graciously provided me with their time, their opinions, and their personalities. However, I must return to my academic position and interpret the data more critically in the broader academic context. Because I have become friends with my participants, I find it difficult to criticize them in the broader social context. I am in a dilemma in the continuum across an insider/a friend and an outsider/a stranger. My relationship with my participants keeps changing. As their friend, I could not help them directly because I am also a researcher; as a researcher, I am uncomfortable criticizing them because they are my friends. I am the uncomfortable struggle between the duality. In order to write my dissertation professionally and academically, I had to gain critical distance from my participants. I had to distance myself from the people I care about and who gave me time and the chance to explore the issue around Korean early-study abroad students at the school until they lose their interest in this project. At this time of writing, in order to help other students in similar situations, I detached myself from my participants, hoping that their memory about this research is dimming and disappearing until they “forget” me and my existence. On the other hand, I can argue that because my participants provided me their
graciousness, it is my responsibility to bring my critical lens to the research so that it may contribute to a broader community.

Fourth, I have had the ethical dilemma of the potential of revealing of my participants’ identities. Although I used pseudonyms and my focal Korean participants already graduated from Joshua, the study was mainly conducted in a small community where participants could be easily recognized and a majority of the school officials and teachers remain at the school. Although I strongly believe that the outcome of the research is beneficial, it is hardly predictable what the school response might be.

Finally, I also experienced the complexity of social research and its inevitable discomfort. Through my research, I had to interpret, reinterpret, and multi-interpret from a messy and inconsistent data set while continuing to analyze in a circular mode. This is because the nature of my research is often “inconclusive, and ambiguous, subject to multiple interpretations” (Denzin, 1989, p. 81), and its aim is meaning making rather than discovering casual relationships. By this means, I hope to offer readers the opportunity to experience the experience of the participants and the researcher’s interpretation, thus allowing the readers to shape their own interpretations.

**Multiple triangulation.** I also want to provide researchers with some insights into the importance of having multiple methods for data collection and interpretation (Denzin, 1989b). This is because I often found that one method, e.g., interview, was not consistent with what my interviewee said, my observation with the interviewee, and with what others said about the interviewee. Multiple kinds of triangulation are necessary to increase research validity and see a phenomenon holistically. Additionally, my bias has advantages, yet my own cultural bias also limited my interpretation. Thus, as data analysis proceeds, inviting others’ opinion about the data
along with ongoing provoking and criticizing of my way of interpretation (history of my thought/genealogy of truth as Foucault (2001) terms) is necessary to increase the validity of the research.

**Limitation of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research**

Several limitations were acknowledged. First, I studied only one private Christian high school, so the results may not be applicable to public high schools nor to other private schools that are not religiously affiliated. My study does not account for the other religious schools such as Muslim or Buddhist institutions, either. Furthermore, there are variations even among the Christian schools, from more fundamental to more progressive.

Second, my participants were all Korean international students. The experience of international students from other national backgrounds may be vastly different from the findings in this study. Among groups that share the Asian ethnic affiliation with my participants, there are differences in nationality and other determining factors, such as language ability and experience of schooling in their native country. Korean American students, as a category, share with my participants their national origin but have experienced acculturation into the American system to a much greater extent. Since my research focuses on the ESA experience overall, I do not offer an extensive analysis of gender differences among my participants and their experiences. While I found some distinguishing characteristics along the gender lines, further research would be required to accurately assess the role of gender in early ESA experience.

Third, my Koreanness as part of my approach might dismiss something that other researchers might offer. For example, a non-Korean researcher would offer a different perspective and interpretation, and might have forged a different kind of a relationship with the white school officials. Similarly, a male researcher could have engaged the students, staff, and teachers in a different way. As a mother of a son, my attention might have been inadvertently
more focused on male participants over the female ones. Given my status as a parent of a child studying in the United States, I could relate closely to the experience of the ESA students’ parents. This might have led me to take something for granted and process their answers through the lens of my own experience. My bias has not been resistible. Therefore, it is necessary for the researcher to bring different perspectives from academic professionals from diverse disciplines to increase validity.

Finally, in terms of translation, it was hard to incorporate social meanings inherent in the Korean language, including Korean honorific expressions and Korean adolescent cultural terminology into English language because translation requires not only linguistic knowledge of Korean and English, but also the frame of mind of the native language and the target language and accompanying different culture or the worldview. Finally, it is recommendable for future research to extend to other nationalities, other schools, and other countries to compare my findings with those of other researches by asking such questions as follows: (1) In what ways do the needs of Korean students differ from those of other nationalities?; (2) In what ways do the needs of the school differ from those of other schools?; (3) In what ways do the needs of American public school differ from those of other countries’ public schools?

Dynamics associated with global educational migration, proliferation of images, movement of cultural and economic capital are translated into contemporary schooling like Joshua high school where a microcosm of South Korean local educational context and global phenomena were found in a small town, which is reflective of the realities across the U.S. and even worldwide. The results of the study of this cross-national encounter in neoliberal time, urges us to rethink and redefine the boundaries of curriculum practice and instructional methods, which has served in the last century within the national border (Juliano, 2008, McCarthy, C, et
al., 2009). For example, such concepts as race, culture, and youth experience, identity, and the like should be reconsidered in a way that responds to the need of current schooling experiences for the students, the educational practitioners and researchers alike.
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Appendix A

Sample of Interview Questions

MEASURE 1: STUDENT INTERVIEWS
MEASURE 2: SCHOOL TEACHER/SCHOOL PERSONNEL INTERVIEWS
MEASURE 3: PARENTS/GUARDIAN INTERVIEWS/QUESTIONNAIRE
MEASURE 4: CHURCH TEACHERS OR PERSONNEL INTERVIEWS

MEASURE 1: STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Background information

Please start by telling us about yourself and your family.

• When and where were you born?
• What does your father do? What does your mother do?
• Have you attended school in Korea? How long?
• Where did you learn English? How long?
• How long have you been in the United States?
• Why do you study in the US? Do you like it?
• What language(s) do you usually speak at home with your parents and your brothers or sisters?
• How do you identify yourself? Do you see yourself as an American and/or Korean? How do you feel about being an American and/or Korean? Why do you feel that way? Can you define an "American" and “Korean” for me?
• What is your passion?
• Can you tell me about your parents, teachers, and friends?

Perceptions about school

Please tell me about your school life.

• If you had an experience of schooling in Korea, what are some differences you see between Korean schooling and American schooling? What are some challenges you face at school in Korea and/or in America?
• Which schooling do you like better, in Korea or here in the US? And why?
• What are the challenges you face in the US that you didn’t not have in South Korea?
• Do you feel accepted? Have you ever experienced the feeling of discrimination or isolation due to ethnicity, home language, culture, etc.? In other words, have you ever felt that you are isolated since you are different from your classmates? If so, why?
• Do you feel you get along well with American kids and/or Korean kids? If not, why do you think you cannot get along well with that person?
• Can you identify some features in yourself that are different from typical Koreans and/or Americans?
• Do you feel your teacher and your classmates treat you differently because of your different origins (language, culture, ethnicity, and nationality)?
• Can you see yourself (culture, language, ethnicity) in your school such as textbooks you read or classroom?
• What are your favorite subjects and school activities? Why?

*Attitudes toward Korean and English language/culture and learning*

• What do you think about Korean and American language and culture?
• Do you know Korean? Would you want to learn Korean? If so, why would you want to learn?
• Do you use Korean with your Korean friends in the classroom and lunch hours? If so, why? If not, why not?

*Future Plan for adolescents*

• Do you plan to go back to Korea? Why or Why not?
• Have you ever considered staying in the US?
• What citizenship do you want to have if you have a choice? Why did you choose that? Do you have any desire to live in the US permanently by getting a permanent job? If not, why do you think you cannot live in the US permanently?
• What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of staying in the U.S.?
• What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of going back to Korea?
• If you go back to Korea, what might happen in your life?

*Perception of English language, race (black, Asian, white, Hispanic, etc, and the United States)*

• Right before coming to the US, what is your Perception of English language, race (black, Asian, white, Hispanic, etc, and the United States and what made you think and/or feel that way?
• Right after coming to the US, what is your Perception of English language, race (black, Asian, white, Hispanic, etc, and and what made you think and/or feel that way?
• and Now?

*Evolving issues at the school: What do you think about the following issues?*

• Are you struggling with unfamiliar American teaching styles?
• Are you having English language barriers?
• Are you self-segregating? If then, why? If not, why not?
• Have you ever cheated? If then, why? If not, why not?
• What do you think of your living arrangement? For example, does living without your parents affect you negatively or positively?
• What do you think of the school’s “English Only policy”?
MEASURE 2: SCHOOL TEACHER/SCHOOL PERSONNEL INTERVIEWS

General information
• Please start by telling me a little bit about yourself.
• How long have you been teaching at this school?
• Can you tell us about your language and cultural background?
• How long have you been teaching Korean students?
• Can you tell us about your experience with Korean students in general?

Teacher’s perspectives and instructional approaches
• Please tell me a little bit about your subject. What is your philosophy and goals of teaching your subject? What are your main teaching materials?
• Do you use any different or special approaches with Korean students? If so, what instructional approaches do you incorporate for Korean students in your class?
• What struggles do you have when teaching your Korean students in your class?

Teacher’s perception of participant students
• What are your main teaching materials?
• Please tell me a little bit about (student’s name) and your relationship with him?
• How long have you had the student in your class?
• Please tell me about his or her performance in your class.
• What are _____’s strengths?
• What are _____’s areas in need of improvement?
• Do you have a particular Korean student who needs your attention more than any other students? If so, why?
• Do you share similar experience with them in terms of culture, language, and ethnicity?
• Have you met his or her parents? If so, how was the meeting?
• What aspect of your subject is most problematic for ______?
• Please tell me a little bit about his or her family background.

Evolving issues at the school: What do you think about the following issues?
• Are your Korean students struggling with unfamiliar American teaching styles?
• Are they having English language barriers?
• Are they self-segregating? If then, why? If not, why not?
• Are you having a problem with Korean cheating?
• What do you think of their living arrangement? For example, do you think living without their parents affect them negatively or positively?
• What do you think of the school’s “English Only policy”?
• Could you tell me your Perception of Korean students before and after your experience with them? What were your preconception of Korean students and your perception now?
MEASURE 3: PARENTS/GUARDIAN INTERVIEWS/ QUESTIONNAIRE

A. Starting Sample Interview Questions with Korean Parents

General questions

• Please tell me a little bit about your family background.
• Please start by telling me about yourself and your family.
• Please tell me a little bit about (student’s name). What is his everyday routine?
• Why did you come to the United States?
• When did _____ arrive in the United States?
• Would you describe the relationship between you and your child?
• Do you think your child is happy in school, with his or her friends?
• Do you know your child’s friends?
• What are your expectations of your child for future?
• Can you identify some features in your child that are similar to other Koreans you know?
• Have you made a conscious effort to give your child a Korean identity? If you have made a conscious effort, what do you do to support that?

Would you fill out Family Interview Questionnaire?

B. Family Interview Questionnaires

Family member information

• Please tell me a little bit about your family.
• List the people who live with the child.

Mother’s Information (Mother or the primary female who functions as the mother figure)

• Mother’s ethnicity and nationality, (e.g., Korean/ Korean-American)
• Job (a home manager, working part time, working full time). Please tell us the kind of work and the hours of work a day)
• What is the first language of the mother? What is the dominant language? How much can you do with the language?
• What is the second language and what level of fluency? For example, how much can you do with the language?

Father’s Information (Father or the primary male who functions as the mother figure)

• Father’s ethnicity and nationality, (e.g., Korean/ Korean-American)
• Job (a home manager, working part time, working full time). Please tell us the kind of work and the hours of work a day)
• What is the first language of the Father? What is the dominant language? How much can you do with the language?
• What is the second language and how much can you do with the language?

Purpose of being in the United States

• Why did you decided to come to the US?
• How long have you and your family been in the United States?
• Why did you choose this town?
• Why did you choose to send your child to (school name)?

Parental attitude toward Korean educational environment
• Opinion toward both Korean and US educational environment
• General tendencies of parental actions toward English education in Korea
• General assumptions toward English education (age, environment)
• Educational Environment preferred – ideal environment for English education
• Parents’ beliefs about language, identity, culture and development

Support for Korean Language and Culture
• Please tell me a little bit about his or her family background.
• If you have made efforts to support your child for using the Korean language, can you tell me how?
• If you have made efforts to support your child for practicing the Korean culture, can you tell me how?
• How much do you think your child’s school support the Korean language and culture?

Language Routine
• Can you tell me what languages your family members use to communicate each other?
• What language does the child use (Korean, English, Both), when, how much?
• What language does your child generally speak outside the home?

The Child’s Friends and Commitment to the Child
• Who are the friends of the child?
• How much time do you spend with your child?
• What do you usually talk about?
• How much do you think you know about your child?
• What kind of efforts do you make to support your child’s education?
• What resources of information about raising the child do you consult?

Future Plan for Adolescent Parents
• Do you plan to go back to Korea?
• Have you ever considered staying in the US, or bringing your child back to the US in the future?
• Do you have any desire to live in the US permanently by getting a permanent job? If not, why do you think you cannot live in the US permanently?
• Where do you want to live in the US or in Korea?
• What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of staying in the U.S.?
• What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of going back to Korea? If you go back to Korea, what might happen in your life?

-- Follow-up Individual Interviews with Parents
Similar to the above, but detailed and confirming questions.
MEASURE 4: CHURCH TEACHERS/ PERSONEL INTERVIEWS:

- Please start by telling us about yourself.
- When did you come to the US?
- Can you tell us about your language and cultural background?
- Can you tell us about your experience as a Korean?
- Would you share with us your experiences with this youth group? How long have you served as a teacher in the youth group?
- In your group, can you tell us about your relationship with the students? Do you share similar experience with them in terms of culture, language, and ethnicity? Do you have a particular student who needs your attention more than any other students? If so, why?

Follow-up individual interviews
Similar to the above, but detailed and confirming questions.