

Language Choice Patterns among Bilingual Migrant Students

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Park, Seon-Ho. 2003. **Language Choice Patterns among Bilingual Migrant Students.** *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 3-1, 15-36. This paper investigates the patterns of language choice among bilingual Korean students in New Zealand and presents the findings by the individual variables which influence their language behaviour. Respondent variables such as gender, present age, age at migration, region, and duration of residence were adopted as frames of analyses as they were thought to bring us macro-sociolinguistic features of language behaviour in a broad sense. A total of 177 primary to tertiary students from three regions of New Zealand (Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch) were surveyed to find out characteristics of their language choice patterns with diverse interlocutors in a wide range of contexts. It was found that the younger AAM (age at migration) group showed a greater shift towards English. In addition, the longer the respondents had resided in New Zealand the more they used English. The results also revealed that females generally used less English and were more flexible choosing either Korean or English according to the situation. The younger respondents were using more English in some exceptional contexts where tertiary students were ahead of secondary students. Respondents from Wellington, on the whole, shifted towards English more than others from Auckland, and Christchurch. From these findings some implications are suggested for Korean students, teachers, researchers, and the government not only in New Zealand but also in Korea.

Key Words: bilingualism, language choice, respondent variables

1. Introduction

The present study presents an overview of the bilingual

behaviour among Korean migrant students in New Zealand in terms of language choice patterns. This is done using their individual variables such as 'age at migration' and 'duration of residence'. Bilingualism in Korean and English is rapidly gaining popularity in Korea in recent years. English, of course, has always been a major target of learning among the school subjects and has been emphasized as an important language even outside the school for various reasons. However, English now tends to go beyond the level of 'learning' as a foreign language. The expanding opportunities of learning English overseas and the increasing number of returnees who have stayed in English-speaking countries for a short or long term, partially contribute to the changing situations. Moreover, with the rapid globalization in trade, tourism, politics, and transportation, the status of English is shifting towards a language in more practical use rather than only for tests or tools for getting a job. The recent English curricular focusing on communicative competence at various levels of schools in the Korean education system also support these changing phenomena. In other words, bilingualism in Korean and English in the practical perspective is becoming the ultimate goal for most Korean learners of English with increasing needs as a tool of communication in the real life. Migration to English-speaking countries such as the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia is an important partial reflection of the changing phenomenon in relation to learning English, hoping to gain bilingual ability in the bi- or multi-lingual society (for more discussion, see Park 2002, Park forthcoming).

Bilingualism of an individual in bi- or multi-lingual societies can be described from two different perspectives: language ability and language choice/use. However, how do we decide whether a person is a bilingual or not? For example, is a person who tends to speak/use/choose only one language although he or

she is able to speak/use/choose two languages considered bilingual? Or is it only those who actively speak/use both languages who qualify as bilingual? According to Baker (2001), it is necessary to consider two aspects of language ability and language choice/use in practice in order to discuss one's bilingualism. However, it is not the purpose of this paper to describe language ability of Korean migrant students in New Zealand, but rather their use or choice of languages: Korean and English. Furthermore, this paper focuses on the respondent variables, not the situational variables which complement the research for patterns of language choice. The aspect of situational variables based on domains and interlocutors has been dealt with in the researcher's other paper (Park, forthcoming). The situational characteristics of those language choice patterns such as in Korean norms sensitive or Korean norms free contexts have been discussed and the useful roles of the newly developed construct of 'Korean norms sensitive or free contexts' were affirmatively suggested in the study.

As Clyne (1985) claims, it is true that language choice is determined by the situational aspects of the role-relationships with the speech partner, the social venue, the interaction type and the medium. However, respondent variables such as the individual's age, gender, and age at migration, are also important to consider in order to understand the patterns of bilingual behaviors. Whereas the situational variables are good for seeking detailed patterns of language use from a variety of contextualized domains, respondent variables are useful in identifying the language choice behavior from the respondent's individual or ecological points of views. Respondent variables provide a more generalized approach to the same data than do situational variables. In terms of the complexity of interrelationships between the variables this set of 'respondent variables' is more straightforward across the items than

situational variables. The following factors were thought most relevant for the Korean communities in New Zealand. Studies of bilingualism and language maintenance and shift identified these factors as ones greatly influence ethnic groups' language choice behavior: age at migration, duration of residence, age, gender, and region (Gal 1979; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1984; Holmes 1997; Hakuta and D'Andrea 1992; Lambert and Taylor 1996).

In the studies of bilingualism and language maintenance and shift, there is much evidence that these variables play a crucial role in interpreting the patterns of language choice and language ability. Clyne (1976) and Demos (1988) identified age in language ability as having a significant impact on the language maintenance. They attribute this feature to the tendency in younger people, being socially more flexible and motivated, to acquire languages better than older people. Clyne and Kipp (1997) suggested age, gender, and duration of residence as important factors promoting and impeding language maintenance and shift. In the study of Indo-Fijian students in New Zealand, Shameem (1994) found that age at migration had much greater influence on oral skills than on aural skills. Teenagers who arrived in New Zealand aged between 15 and 18 retained a high overall proficiency while the age level of 11 to 14 at time of migration showed a susceptibility to language loss or shift to English. Shameem also found that duration of residence had a more marked effect on oral Fiji-Hindi skills than aural skills. In the meantime, in the writing of the language use patterns of immigrant children in France, Charlot (1981:106) claims:

Young people who arrived as adolescents continue to speak their mother tongue with their parents, but the same is not always true for children who either arrived very young or were born in France.

Charlot further indicated that school age siblings often used French among themselves. With regard to duration of residence, in the Wellington Tongan community in New Zealand, increased English ability and greater codeswitching with Tongan has corresponded with duration of residence ('Aipolo 1989). Looking at the Australian contexts, in the study of Lebanese immigrant families Taft and Cahill (1989) claim that time in Australia is a crucial determinant for language maintenance. They also suggest that with respect to the use of first language with friends and siblings, the preference for English was established so rapidly that there is little statistical relationship with length of time in Australia. Taft and Bodi (1980) also found a similar trend to this in the study of Russian immigrant children in Australia.

In addition, studies have shown differences of locality in the patterns of language behavior especially bilingualism and language maintenance and language shift. Korean communities in New Zealand were also expected to show some difference in their living styles, migration history, social networks, and their solidarity in those networks. Lieberson and Curry (1971) investigated inter-city variations among Italians in the United States who were unable to speak English and observed that cities with larger absolute numbers of Italians had greater proportions unable to speak English. In the study of Chinese in the United States, Li (1982) also discovered that the Chinatown environment had a great role in influencing Chinese to maintain their ethnic language. The extent of language maintenance among Chinese in those areas was much greater than among those who lived in residentially isolated places where opportunities to speak Chinese were much less. It was expected that this kind of regional influence on bilingualism and language maintenance and shift would be happening to some extent in Korean communities in New Zealand as well. Therefore the three cities of Auckland, Christchurch, and Wellington were chosen as

destinations of the study due to their representative characteristics in terms of their sizes, Korean population distributions, and their geographical location in New Zealand. According to Thomson's (1999) 1996 census report, the Auckland region includes the majority of Korean community members (about 70% of the Korean population in New Zealand) and the Canterbury (mainly Christchurch) region has the second largest Korean population in New Zealand (15%). In addition, while the Waikato (mainly Hamilton) region (4%) has the third largest number of Koreans, Wellington (3%) has the fourth largest number of Koreans in New Zealand.

2. The Present Study

The situational variables were adopted as a basic frame for the present study to discover the patterns of language choice behavior among Korean migrant students in New Zealand. Two major categories were used: 'Korean norms sensitive or free contexts' and 'individual language choice contexts'. Firstly, it was supposed that the influence of the norms or expectations of the Korean society for its youth would be crucial with respect to their language choice behavior. The following was put forward as hypotheses for the Korean norms or expectations affecting the younger generation's language choice behavior (for more details, see Park forthcoming).

- Speaking only Korean at home is expected for maintaining Korean proficiency.
- Speaking English to parents or elders is not expected and may be perceived as impolite with the exception of, for example, helping them improve their English or being done for fun.
- Speaking English is not normally recommended at Korean

functions, such as at a Korean church or in social activities. People think these activities are good for their children's Korean proficiency maintenance and even development.

- Speaking English too much in Korean contexts could be regarded as being arrogant.
- Using Korean only at the Korean school is expected.

Korean norms sensitive contexts include 'Home', 'Korean functions', 'Shopping', and 'Korean school'. On the other hand, 'School', 'Outside', and 'Work' were classified under the Korean norms free contexts (for a more detailed discussion, see Appendix and Park forthcoming).

Secondly, not all domain-based criteria used to complement the language use situations were identified. This includes interlocutors and overhearers. Because of this, another description pool, named 'Individual Language Choice' (ILC) contexts, was employed. It includes three components of the independent language use areas: 1) 'Spoken forms' (swearing or cursing, when frightened, and singing to oneself), 2) 'Silent forms' (counting, thinking silently, and telling the time to oneself), and 3) 'Written forms' (writing messages, notes, or letters to parents, siblings, friends in Korea, and Korean friends in New Zealand). Swearing or cursing seems to be a somewhat audience-oriented item, but is still a more inward rather than outward focused language type. These types of language use are basically not interactive at the time of language production.

As mentioned earlier, the present study employed respondent variables as major frames of analyses. From these variables, the following four research questions were formulated:

1. Do students who were younger at their arrival in New Zealand choose English more than those who were

- older (age at migration)?
2. Do students who have resided longer in New Zealand choose English more than those who have lived a shorter time (duration of residence)?
 3. Do students who belong to a younger age group choose English more than those who belong to an older age group (age)?
 4. Do students show any variations in their language choice behavior according to their gender and regional characteristics (gender and region)?

3. Method

3.1. Subjects

To investigate the dynamic situations of recent Korean migrants' language choice patterns in New Zealand, young age groups were selected considering the community's recency of migration. They were classified into three school age groups: 'Primary', 'Secondary', and 'Tertiary'. Eighty-two male students and ninety-five female students from the combined regions of Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch were surveyed. The three regions are representative as a sample of Korean communities in New Zealand in that about 90% of Korean residents are living in those regions. In addition, they have diverse characteristics in their Korean immigrants' residence history ranging from the early 1970s up to recent years and in their population sizes from 400 (Wellington) to over 10,000 (Auckland). The three regions also have diverse geographical distributions in the North Island and the South Island of New Zealand. To gauge the effect of variables discussed above the subjects were limited to those who had over 2 years residence experience, and those not born in New Zealand as they should have lived in New Zealand for a minimum period to have some

bilingual status. The details of the subjects are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Profiles of respondents

	Primary			Secondary			Tertiary			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Number of respondents	23	26	49	36	40	76	23	29	52	82	95	177
Average age (years old)	11	11.3	11.2	16	16.3	16.2	20.8	21.1	21	15.9	16.2	15.1
Average residence (years)	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.5	5	4.7	5.6	4.4	5	4.9	4.6	4.8
Average age at migration(years old)	6.2	6.9	6.4	11	10.8	10.9	14.7	15.7	15.2	10.9	11.1	11

3.2. Data Collection and Procedure

The two methods of questionnaires and interview sessions were adopted to conduct the survey. As discussed earlier, a variety of situational domains or contexts were given to examine language choice patterns of the subjects from their individual to social activities or functions (see Appendix for more details). The questionnaires were mailed to the prospective respondents in advance and they were collected about 3 weeks later when the researcher visited their homes. The interview sessions were carried out in the respondents' home at each visit. Six categories of responses were provided for the questionnaires ranging from 0 to 5: 0 for 'Non-applicable' or 'Missing' data, 1 for 'Korean Only', 3 for 'Both Korean and English equally', and 5 for 'English only'. These scales were calculated for mean scores in each variable category, which were expected to show general tendencies of subjects' language choice behavior.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Age at Migration

Studies have found critical period effects for second language acquisition in terms of the time of arrival of migrants

(Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991; Percival, Howerd, and Hill 1994). As a new migrant group in New Zealand, the Korean community was not expected to show large-scale differences by 'age at migration', but was expected to reveal more subtle differences. The 'age at migration' (AAM) in the present study was grouped into four categories: A: 0-4 YO (0-4 year olds); B: 5-8 YO (5-8 year olds); C: 9-12 YO (9-12 year olds); D: 13+ YO (13 and over year olds). Among the AAM groups, as expected, the younger ones showed a greater tendency to shift toward English. Respective average mean scores in order are: A: 3.05; B: 2.41; C: 1.91; D: 1.72 (see Table 2). There were sharply falling mean differences which reflect the strong influence of the AAM in language maintenance and second language acquisition processes (A-B: 0.64; B-C: 0.50; C-D: 0.19). It strongly reflects the expectation that the younger they were when they arrived, the more they speak English now.

Table 2. Language choice by age at migration (mean)

	0-4YO (N=12)	5-8YO (N=40)	9-12YO (N=46)	13+YO (N=73)	Total (N=177)
Home	2.86	2.23	1.65	1.40	1.78
Korean functions	2.55	2.11	1.44	1.24	1.60
Shop	2.42	1.91	1.44	1.31	1.58
Korean school	2.88	2.09	1.57	1.32	1.68
KNS	2.68	2.09	1.65	1.32	1.66
School	2.95	2.67	2.13	2.01	2.26
Outside	2.89	2.15	1.53	1.44	1.72
Work	2.92	2.18	1.85	1.59	1.75
KNF	2.92	2.43	1.84	1.68	1.91
Spoken	3.83	3.29	3.02	2.61	2.96
Silent	4.27	2.88	2.46	2.22	2.58
Written	2.97	2.61	2.03	2.03	2.23
ILC	3.69	2.93	2.50	2.29	2.59
Total	3.05	2.41	1.91	1.72	2.27
SD	1.42	0.89	1.18	1.65	1.29

The fundamental approach to the discussion of the influences

of the AAM can first be done by contextual differences. Individual language choice (ILC) contexts showed the greatest shift to English, followed by Korean norms free (KNF) and then Korean norms sensitive (KNS) contexts. In general, reports showed that the younger they were on arrival, the more English they used and the older, the less English they used with fairly evenly matched decreases of English use with increases in age. More specifically, it was found that the domains of 'Shop' (mean: 1.58), 'Korean functions' (mean: 1.60), and 'Korean school' (mean: 1.68) were relatively less affected by the AAM in terms of the respondents' English choice patterns.

Among the ILC contexts, 'Spoken forms' showed the greatest shifts to English in three AAM groups but not for the '0-4 YO' group for which 'Silent forms' (mean: 4.27) was the highest. However, 'Spoken forms' (mean: 3.83), the second highest, still showed a higher degree of shift to English than for any other AAM groups. It seemed that the younger arrival age group had acquired their English ability more easily than the other older AAM groups had.

Table 3. Language choice by age at migration and gender (mean)

	0-4YO (N=12)		5-8YO (N=46)		9-12YO (N=46)		13+YO(N=73)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Home	2.92	2.79	2.27	2.21	1.53	1.80	1.35	1.44
Korean functions	2.54	2.58	2.11	2.10	1.34	1.57	1.21	1.27
Shop	2.14	2.80	1.73	2.00	1.26	1.66	1.26	1.34
Korean school	2.67	3.00	2.27	2.00	1.43	1.83	1.20	1.39
KNS	2.57	2.79	2.10	2.08	1.39	1.72	1.26	1.36
School	2.80	3.13	2.99	2.52	1.83	2.53	2.05	1.98
Outside	3.00	2.75	2.42	2.04	1.36	1.78	1.38	1.50
Work	2.75	3.00	2.00	2.23	1.75	2.00	1.43	1.69
KNF	2.85	2.96	2.47	2.26	1.65	2.10	1.62	1.72
Spoken	3.94	3.67	3.34	3.26	3.04	2.97	2.86	2.41
Silent	4.44	4.07	2.93	2.86	2.42	2.51	2.28	2.17
Written	3.09	2.80	2.63	2.59	1.90	2.20	2.05	2.02
ILC	3.82	3.51	2.97	2.90	2.45	2.56	2.40	2.20
Total	3.03	3.06	2.47	2.38	1.79	2.09	1.71	1.72
SD	1.42		0.89		1.18		1.65	

There was a similar tendency in KNS and KNF across the three different contexts of KNS, KNF, and ILC among AAM groups. In KNS contexts, for example, females were ahead of males in shifting to English among three out of the four AAM groups with only the '5-8 YO' one in which males were slightly ahead of females by 0.02 difference in their mean scores. The '9-12 YO' group showed the females' (mean: 1.72) precedence over males (mean: 1.39) in terms of more English use, but they still spoke 'Mainly in Korean' along with the '13+ YO' group. In the ILC context, conversely, males were ahead of females in three AAM groups apart from the '9-12 YO' group in which females showed slightly more use of English than males.

On the whole, with some variations the results clearly showed that the respondents from the younger AAM group shifted more towards English than the others. However, the AAM is not the only crucial factor for language acquisition and maintenance issues. Duration of residence is another important factor to be considered in relation to these issues.

4.2. Duration of Residence

Duration of residence is an unarguably natural and crucial feature in language maintenance and shift phenomena. Respondents were classified by the duration of residence in New Zealand to find the degree of influence of the factor in language maintenance and shift. As the Korean communities in New Zealand are relatively new, the terms of residence are very minutely divided. The duration, which ranged from 2 years to 16 years, was divided into three groups of 'R2TO4' (duration of residence: 2 years to 4 years), 'R5TO7', and 'R8TO16'.

In general, the groups of 'R2TO4' and 'R5TO7' showed almost the same degree of language choice (mean: 1.91 each) with little variation across the domains while the 'R8TO16'

group (mean: 2.79) was far ahead of them (see Table 4). The assumption that the longer duration group would reveal more English choices was generally upheld, with the exception of the KNF contexts of 'School', 'Outside', and 'Work' domains. Among those three domains, 'School' ran counter to the general tendency. In the 'School' domain, the group of 'R2TO4' (mean: 2.26) was relatively far ahead of the 'R5TO7' (mean: 2.03) in their use of English. This indicated that there were more powerful influence(s) than the duration of residence factor in the language choice behavior.

Table 4. Language choice by duration of residence (mean)

	R2TO4 (N=106)	R5TO7 (N=50)	R8TO16 (N=21)
Home	1.64	1.69	2.67
Korean functions	1.44	1.53	2.52
Shop	1.50	1.52	2.05
Korean school	1.58	1.61	2.64
KNS	1.54	1.59	2.47
School	2.26	2.03	2.79
Outside	1.63	1.61	2.50
Work	1.66	1.58	2.39
KNF	1.85	1.74	2.56
Spoken	2.84	2.86	3.81
Silent	2.40	2.48	3.68
Written	2.14	2.14	2.88
ILC	2.46	2.49	3.46
Total	1.91	1.91	2.79
SD	0.53	0.72	2.18

The responses were now classified into regional categories by the residence duration groups (See Table 5). In the 'R2TO4' group, reports from Wellington showed slightly more use of English than from Auckland and Christchurch whereas in the 'R5TO7' group, respondents from the three regions showed a relatively similar degree of language choice across the three contexts. In the 'R8TO16' group, however, respondents reported sharply contrasting degrees of language choice to the above two

groups throughout the regions. Auckland respondents showed the highest level (mean: 3.91) followed by Wellington (mean: 2.98) with Christchurch having the lowest (mean: 1.53). For unknown reasons, respondents from Christchurch who had been living there for quite a long period chose Korean more. This could be partly explained by a comment from a male university student.

I've been here over ten years but I like to use Korean more than English. Of course I think I am more fluent in English but still I prefer to use Korean more. I feel strange speaking English to Koreans.

Table 5. Language choice by duration of residence and region (mean)

	KNS			KNU			KTO10		
	AKL	CHC	WEL	AKL	CHC	WEL	AKL	CHC	WEL
Home	1.55	1.61	1.75	1.68	1.72	1.68	3.71	1.52	2.81
Korean function:	1.35	1.45	1.55	1.51	1.53	1.60	3.50	1.22	2.70
Shop	1.42	1.61	1.47	1.40	1.71	1.40	3.00	1.00	2.18
Korean school	1.41	1.70	1.71	1.75	1.53	1.00	4.00	1.00	2.88
<i>KNS</i>	<i>1.42</i>	<i>1.64</i>	<i>1.58</i>	<i>1.61</i>	<i>1.58</i>	<i>1.42</i>	<i>3.56</i>	<i>1.19</i>	<i>2.64</i>
School	2.33	2.19	2.25	2.01	1.98	2.27	3.67	2.22	2.85
Outside	1.46	1.69	1.76	1.41	1.89	1.40	4.00	1.33	2.64
Work	1.83	1.35	1.70	1.71	1.31	1.75	3.00	1.17	2.74
<i>KNF</i>	<i>1.87</i>	<i>1.74</i>	<i>1.78</i>	<i>1.71</i>	<i>1.73</i>	<i>1.81</i>	<i>3.56</i>	<i>1.57</i>	<i>2.74</i>
Spoken	2.73	2.75	3.01	3.03	2.67	2.80	5.00	2.22	4.04
Silent	2.21	2.38	2.62	2.51	2.47	2.33	5.00	1.89	3.92
Written	1.96	2.11	2.37	2.19	2.07	2.12	4.20	1.70	3.03
<i>ILC</i>	<i>2.30</i>	<i>2.41</i>	<i>2.57</i>	<i>2.56</i>	<i>2.40</i>	<i>2.42</i>	<i>4.73</i>	<i>1.94</i>	<i>3.66</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>1.83</i>	<i>1.88</i>	<i>2.02</i>	<i>1.92</i>	<i>1.89</i>	<i>1.84</i>	<i>3.91</i>	<i>1.53</i>	<i>2.98</i>
<i>SD</i>		<i>0.53</i>			<i>0.75</i>			<i>2.18</i>	

Unlike this student's emotional explanation, the other male university student from Christchurch contended the importance of the continuous efforts to maintain and use Korean everyday.

I am reading Korean newspapers almost everyday in great detail and am getting more interested in Korean things and language as I grow up. I try to speak Korean as

much as possible too, but I think my writing in Korean is not as good as speaking or reading comprehension. Korean spelling is too hard to write correctly, so I try to remember the right forms when I read them.

4.3. Gender

In general, males (mean: 2.06) showed slightly more use of English than females (mean: 1.96) (see Table 6). In individual language choices, however, males showed slightly less use of English than females, in particular, in 'Spoken form' and 'Silent form' than females. Female students seem to have developed their English ability more from personal situations without particular interlocutors. The biggest gender differences in language choice patterns appeared in 'Shop' and 'Work' domains.

Table 6. Language choice by gender, age, and region (mean)

	Gender		Age			Region		
	M (N=82)	F (N=95)	Pri. (N=49)	Sec. (N=76)	Ter. (N=52)	AKL (N=65)	CHC (N=55)	WEL (N=57)
Home	1.84	1.71	2.22	1.71	1.47	1.64	1.64	2.08
Korean functions	1.67	1.53	1.99	1.57	1.31	1.45	1.46	1.92
Shop	1.69	1.43	1.99	1.49	1.29	1.44	1.61	1.70
Korean school	1.76	1.58	2.11	1.57	1.43	1.58	1.60	1.91
KNS	1.74	1.56	2.08	1.59	1.38	1.53	1.58	1.90
School	2.31	2.19	2.66	2.14	2.09	2.22	2.12	2.43
Outside	1.78	1.65	2.19	1.59	1.52	1.48	1.75	1.96
Work	1.84	1.64	N/A	1.78	1.66	1.82	1.32	2.06
KNF	1.98	1.83	2.43	1.84	1.76	1.84	1.73	2.15
Spoken	2.86	3.09	3.29	2.93	2.72	2.88	2.69	3.30
Silent	2.56	2.61	2.95	2.56	2.28	2.38	2.38	2.99
Written	2.27	2.18	2.60	2.06	2.12	2.09	2.07	2.54
ILC	2.56	2.63	2.95	2.52	2.37	2.45	2.38	2.94
Total	2.06	1.96	2.95	2.52	2.37	1.90	1.86	2.29

4.4. Age

Table 6 also shows that the mean scores for language choice decreased steadily across the age groups (Primary: 2.95;

Secondary: 2.52; Tertiary: 2.37). The only situation contrary to the general trend was in 'Written form' where tertiary students (mean: 2.12) were ahead of secondary students in English use (mean: 2.06). There was not much difference between secondary and tertiary students in mean scores for the 'School', 'Outside', and 'Written' domains. The reason why tertiary students' extent of use of English is higher than the secondary students would be that they have more experience writing English partly because they are older and partly because they have been more exposed to writing situations.

4.5. Region

On the whole, as shown in Table 6, across all the domains, respondents from Wellington (mean: 2.29) showed more use of English, slightly more than Auckland (mean: 1.90) and Christchurch (mean: 1.86). This could be expected from the longer duration of residence in Wellington. Reports from Auckland and Christchurch showed very similar language choice patterns. In Christchurch, English was used more in the 'Shop' and 'Outside' domains than in Auckland. In Auckland, 'Work' and 'Spoken form' domains were slightly ahead of Christchurch in language shift. This would be because in Auckland there are more opportunities to work in places where they are exposed to English speakers and are required to use more English.

One of the commonest situations in the Korean communities in New Zealand is the desire to shift to a place where fewer Koreans live in order to seek better conditions for their children's English development. Some families move around several times just for a better all-English environment. For instance, a mother who had moved from Auckland into a small city near Wellington said:

We think we are very successful moving here in this

suburb. In Auckland, my children couldn't learn English at all for two years, I myself didn't have any Kiwi friends there, of course, not many chances to speak English. So we decided to move out even to a place like Nelson, but when we were thinking of the schools for the children, this city is ideal for our family. We are so happy now.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The present study has attempted to discover language choice patterns in terms of Korean language maintenance and shift towards English among bilingual Korean students in New Zealand. To examine macro-sociolinguistic features of the language choice patterns of the community, respondent variables, such as 'gender' and 'age at migration', were employed. In addition, some background stories from the interviewees were included to interpret and support the statistical results on the basis of a qualitative understanding where appropriate.

As expected, the respondent variables analysed and discussed here gave an overall picture of the language choice behavior of the Korean communities in New Zealand. The general tendency was that the younger AAM group showed more shifting towards English. In addition, the longer the respondents had resided in New Zealand the more they used English. The younger respondents were using more English with the exception of the 'Written forms' of ILC contexts where tertiary students were ahead of secondary students. Respondents from Wellington, on the whole, shifted towards English more than others from Auckland and Christchurch, which at the same time also reflects the role of the longer residence at the same time. Turning to gender differences, generally males used more English than females. Females tended to be more flexible or responsive to the norms than males, such as in the Korean norms sensitive situations, restraining themselves from using English. One of the

outstanding features of the gender issues was that primary school boys' shifting towards English was most evident among the sub-groups when they speak with friends regardless of place and the presence of their parents or elders. Likewise, 'respondent variables' proved to have some effect on the respondents' language choice behavior. Although they seemed to be rather simplistic they are still considered important variables in understanding the general patterns of the language choice along with situational variables based on domains and interlocutors.

This study highlights some implications to us mainly from two perspectives: for Korean communities in New Zealand or overseas and for Koreans in Korea wanting to have bilingual competence in Korean and English. As claimed by many researchers, getting help from the New Zealand government for the maintenance of minority languages is essential in that the minority ethnic languages need to be recongnized as being an asset for the country. In addition, it is also suggested that there should be practical support from the New Zealand government for learning English for recent migrants' successful settlement. However, many have also argued quite reasonably that minority communities themselves have the final responsibility for these issues. Throughout the survey period it was found that many Korean families were not very aware of the importance of Korean language maintenance. This was mainly because of their desire for their children to quickly acquire or learn English in their newly adopted country. Balanced bilingualism in Korean and English should remain their most desirable goal in terms of linguistic matters, not the monolingual status only in English in this dynamically interacting globalized world. The tendency of younger students' rapid shifting to English needs to be more closely monitored by the parents and the students themselves for the effective maintenance of their Korean language proficiency, especially at the early stage of migration.

For the Koreans who are eager to achieve bilingual competence in Korea, the study reveals the effect of the early exposure to English resulting in better proficiency and more flexible language choice abilities in bilingual situations. This was supported by the results from the variables 'age at migration' and 'present age'. In the Korean context, lowering the school grade for English teaching down to Year 1 in elementary schools could be one possible option to increase early exposure to English, for instance. However, this kind of application would need to have more thorough research taking other related issues into fuller consideration. Another implication comes from the fact that the effect of the early stage of residence in the English-speaking society is quite strong compared to the later stage in terms of language choice behavior. It could be interpreted that intensive investments at the early stage of the exposure to the practical learning of English will result in better outcomes in English education in Korea. It is suggested that public educational facilities be established for natural English learning situations, such as the so-called 'English zones' or 'English villages'. These would cater for the children in more diverse forms and in wider areas with the governmental support. Zones such as these would give children an opportunity to get early experience of pseudo-residence in English-speaking environments. These could be done over weekends or in vacation periods in Korea and would provide an alternative to sending them to English-speaking countries to learn English. Of course, this kind of relatively new step needs to be closely monitored and reviewed along with other educational and social issues to ensure the right application in the educational system in Korea.

The study has some limitations especially for the following reasons. Firstly, it deals with the language choice behavior almost separately from the situational factors using mainly respondent variables. If the two approaches could be merged into

one more strongly than here, more insightful observation of Korean students' bilingual language choice patterns might result. Secondly, some statistical correlations between the variables could have resulted in more insightful answers to the language choice behavior. Lastly, closer examination of the interrelationships between the situations in English-speaking countries and in Korea could have given us more practical guidance for both maintaining Korean proficiency and learning English and thus achieving a balanced bilingualism. It is hoped that these limitations can be overcome through continued research in the future.

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received: 2002. 12. 1.

accepted: 2003. 2. 26.

Appendix (Questions used in the survey)

Which language(s) do you use in general in the following situations? Please tick the appropriate box.

- 0 Not applicable
 1 Korean only
 2 Mainly Korean
 3 Both Korean and English equally
 4 Mainly English
 5 English only

() specifically or for example *siblings: brothers and sisters	0	1	2	3	4	5
Talking with mother (home)						
Talking with mother (shop)						
Talking with mother (Korean function, service)						
Talking with father (home)						
Talking with father (shop)						
Talking with father (Korean function, service)						
Talking with siblings* (in the presence of parents)						
Talking with siblings* (in the absence of parents)						
Talking with siblings* (Korean function with parents or elderly)						
Talking with siblings* (Korean function without parents or elderly)						
Talking with family members (meal time)						
Talking with Korean visitors/ relatives (home)						
Answering phones (home)						
Talking with Korean visitors/ relatives (home)						
Answering phones (home)						
Talking with Korean friends (at home)						
Talking with Korean friends (at school playtime)						
Talking with Korean friends (on the phone)						
Talking with Korean friends (street, cinema, etc..)						
Talking with Korean friends (Korean function with parents or elderly)						
Talking with Korean friends (Korean function without parents or elderly)						
Talking with Korean friends (at Korean school playtime)						
Talking with Korean colleagues (at part-time work, non-Korean context)						
Counting silently to yourself						
Thinking silently to yourself						
Swearing/cursing						
When frightened						
Telling the time to yourself						
Singing to yourself						
Writing in your diary						
Writing messages, notes or letters to your parents						
Writing messages, notes or letters to siblings						
Writing messages, notes or letters to friends in Korea						
Writing messages, notes or letters to friends in New Zealand						