

미국 내 거주하는 한국 국적을 가진 아동의 초기 학교 적응에 관한 연구

- 언어발달과 어머니의 영향 중심으로 -

Understanding of Foreign-born Korean Children's Early School Adjustment in the U.S

- Language Development and Maternal Influences -

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<Abstract>

The purpose of this study was to provide a better understanding of foreign-born Korean children's early school adjustment in the U.S. The interaction between the foreign-born Korean children in the U.S. and several of the children's microsystems, including family, school, and peer was assessed to meet this purpose. The study subjects were 43 foreign-born Korean children who were sampled from Korean Sunday Language schools and who attended local schools in the Boston area, MA, USA. Quantitative analysis was conducted to identify which variables of interest predicted the early adjustment of this group of children. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were conducted with mothers of the children from the top and bottom groups: 1) the most successful (in the top quartile) and 2) the least successful adjustment groups (in the bottom quartile) sorted by scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R). The interview results were analyzed to elicit maternal perceptions/beliefs on education, in general, and those of home-school relationships, in specific.

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Several conclusions can be drawn from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses. The results of multiple regression and path analysis showed that the children's language development predicted their adjustment, but the effects of the other two variables, peer relationships and school experiences, on the adjustment of children, were mediated through the children's language. Moreover, common themes and patterns in the responses to a series of open-ended questions emerged from the interviews with the two groups of mothers. The two mothers of the least successful group were concerned about their children's future and school success, but they did not show any responsive attitudes toward achieving this goal. By contrast, the mothers from the most successful group were self-determined with regard to their children's education and had strong beliefs and values on how to raise their children in the new culture. The implications were discussed.

본 연구는 미국 내 거주하는 한국 국적을 가진 5, 6세 아동을 대상으로 그들의 초기 학교 적응에 관련된 변인을 가족, 학교, 또래, 그리고 아동의 언어발달의 측면에서 분석하는데 주목적을 두었다. 또한 연구대상의 아동을 적응 집단과 부적응 집단으로 구분하고 두 집단 어머니의 양육태도 및 방식을 심층면접을 통해 살펴보고자 하였다. 본 연구의 주요 결과를 요약하면 다음과 같다. 첫째, 언어발달, 또래관계, 학교경험이 아동의 초기 학교 적응에 유의한 정적 상관관계를 보였다. 둘째, 언어발달이 아동의 초기 학교 적응에 가장 영향력 있는 변인으로 나타났다. 또한 경로분석 결과, 아동의 언어발달은 또래관계, 학교 경험, 그리고 초기 학교 적응의 관계에서 중요한 매개역할을 하는 것으로 나타났다. 적응집단과 부적응 두 집단 어머니들과 심층면접에서도 어머니의 양육신념은 아동의 언어발달 및 초기학교 적응에 중요한 것으로 나타났다.

주제어(Key Words): 초기학교 적응(Early school adjustment), 언어발달(Language development), 어머니의 신념(Maternal beliefs)

I. Introduction

The number of culturally and linguistically diverse children who are entering U.S. schools is increasing. It is estimated that students of color(including a large percentage of linguistic minorities as well) will make up about 50% of the K-12 population by 2020(Holmes Group, 1995). Minority children came into the United States because of their parents' immigration to work or study. The increase in the number of minority students in the U.S. school strikes us as an important gap in the literature, given that previous studies yield stereotyping findings on Asian American children's school success. Consequently, the findings from previous studies on Asian American children's school success as an ideal model in the education field do not provide useful information to

educators who are facing challenges in providing appropriate education to classrooms of children who are increasingly diverse linguistically and culturally.

The majority of earlier studies(from 1970-1990) on Asian American children and their achievement in school looked at Japanese-Americans(Devos, 1973; 1983, cited in Slaughter-Degoe, Nakagawa, Takanishis, & Johnson, 1990). Devos(1983) stated that compatibility of Japanese and American cultural/familial values that stressed both the need for achievement and accomplishment and the need for affiliation, nurturance, and dependence contributed to children's academic success in the U.S. school system. Prevailing stereotypes on Asian American children's success at school have influenced the theory and design of research on educational achievement among Asian American children(Ogbu, 1983). Some studies examined the

demographic characteristics of both immigrant and native-born populations that shaped the Asian Americans living in the U.S., but did not explore how these new immigrant families were adapting to the U.S. educational system at that time period(Slaughter-Degoe et al., 1990).

In recent years a body of research began to criticize the findings of previous research that has predominantly focused on Japanese American children's school success as an ideal model minority living in the United States(Nakanishi, 1995). Two main interests began to redirect the current research in the field of education. First, research has begun to make it clear that the Asian/Pacific American population is a heterogeneous population with respect to ethnic and national origins, as well as socioeconomic status. Next, factors influencing Asian American children's successful school adjustments, as compared to Caucasian counterparts were investigated from a broader perspective, not limiting interests to intrinsic family influences. Specifically, foreign-born children living in the U.S. not only face the initial stress and expected adjustment problems, but also confront an alien culture. The problems they may face include language barriers, difficulties in social networks (e.g., peer relationships), and cultural differences that prevent them from adapting to the new social environment and culture. The following highlights the findings in the current research stream.

James(1997) addressed the fact that children can develop an integrated sense of self, if they can be helped to integrate successfully their past culture with their current culture. In this process a child's primary language plays a significant role. Children's own ethnicity is experienced and persists through language. If the language is different between children and their parents, the

generational and cultural conflict may widen within Asian American families(Ho, 1992). Bilingual children have the advantage of being able to establish a more positive ethnic self-identify and self-acceptance(Yu & Kim, 1983). Children whose Chinese parents showed more positive attitudes toward their own Chinese heritage had higher scores on the child measures, such as self-concept, racial/ethnic attitudes, and their native language ability than their counterparts(Ou & McAdoo, 1999). Here, social reinforcement and parental encouragement are considered important for bilingual and bicultural children to develop an integrated sense of self, which, in turn, contributes to successful adjustment to the new culture(James, 1997; Ho, 1992; Ou & McAdoo, 1999).

Along the same lines, researchers began to shed light on the degree of English fluency that may affect children's competency in school settings(Ho, 1992a; 1992b). Canino and Spurlock (2000) pointed out that lack of English proficiency has been rarely considered as a potential cause for achievement difficulties, and a child who is undergoing the acquisition of a second language is frequently diagnosed incorrectly as a learning-disabled child. Since the Asian culture places less emphasis on verbal skills in interpersonal relationships, Asians do not have parallel vocabularies or may not know multiple meanings of various words(Ho, 1992a). Asian children who are not fluent in English may experience degrees of depression and confusion, and they do not fit well into the American education systems, if they do not understand the language well. The language minority child who is once diagnosed as a learning-disabled child becomes alienated from school(Canino & Spurlock, 2000). Children who are not fluent in the language of the host country may experience degrees of culture shock in the school setting.

Peer relationship is a common experience of children across culture, which may influence the foreign-born children's adjustment to a new school environment. The social networks that children establish and maintain with peers may play an important role in terms of social support for children to cope with emotional stress associated with adjustment difficulties. Peer sociability makes positive contributions to children's social and emotional development and school adjustment beyond the impact of socio-economic status(Chen, Chen, & Violet, 2001). Chen et al.(2001) pointed out that constant peer evaluations and reactions, based on culturally prescribed group norms and values, may serve to regulate and direct children's behaviors, influencing normal developmental processes. Also, researchers have found that children who lack meaningful interactions with peers will not have the information that is necessary to make accurate judgments about themselves(Cillessen & Bellmore, 1999). Children with poor relationships with their peers had low self-other agreement scores, and it was found that self-understanding may depend upon the quality of interactions and relationships with significant others, especially their friends/peers in the school setting(Cillessen & Bellmore, 1999).

Children's beliefs and behaviors are influenced by school experiences. Researchers have consistently found that the American school system can influence the educational achievement and behavioral adjustment of an Asian child(Bhattacharya, 2000;Chiang, 2000; Canino & Spurlock, 2000;Ho, 1992 a; James, 1997; Kibria, 2002). School was identified as an arena where minority children first experience cultural conflict and behavior adjustment problems(Ho, 1992b). A lack of acceptance by peers and teachers may foster a sense of being different (James, 1997). As Canino

and Spurlock(2000) pointed out, teachers should acknowledge and appreciate children's home cultures, providing children opportunities to express individual and cultural differences. The school curriculum should include the cultural and racial diversity of the U.S. society(Canino & Spurlock). Those efforts help minority children adjust well to a new school environment. Parents of Asian American children suggested that academic success was a way of overcoming the racial exclusions and barriers in the United States. The message to do well at school was offered as a racial strategy, a way of overcoming the barriers. Doing well at school was found as an effective means to achieve socioeco-nomic status and rewards in the U.S.(Kibria, 2002).

Children's psychosocial adaptation to a new school and culture is mostly shaped by the family context. Chao(2000) examined successful school adjustment of Asian American children. In his study, a sample of 187 parents(123 immigrant Chinese or Asian Americans and 64 Euro-Americans) of first, second, and third graders were asked to complete questionnaire concerning parenting styles, parental socialization goals, and parental involvement in school that might contribute to the academic achievement of Asian American students. The authoritarian parenting styles, socialization goals emphasizing filial piet and parental school involvement were more important for immigrant Chinese or Asian Americans in comparison to Euro-American parents. Those factors contributed to students' school success(Chao, 2000). The evidence from Chao's research is compelling in that it accounts for, to some extent, the effect of culture on the role of parents in the school success of Asian American children, specifically foreign-born Asian children in the U.S. school system. Moreover, this finding can

be discussed on the continuum of earlier research evidence because it parallels the importance of parents' school involvement on children's achievement as related to cultural influences. The degree to which foreign-born children have positive adjustments to a new school environment is moderated by parental ethnic socialization, social status, and parent-child relationships.

In summary, previous research findings lend support for the view that the adjustment of minority children living in the U.S. is likely to be influenced by several factors, discussed herein. However, there are still gaps in the literature on minority children's adjustment (especially foreign-born children) in the U.S. school system. Little research initiative has been conducted with a sample of foreign-born children in the U.S., especially those who do poorly or do not adjust well in school. The academic performance of children at an earlier age serves as a sensitive yardstick in a certain Asian culture (e.g., Korean culture) because it expects to measure change in achievement over a key transition that may involve the time period when children began school and school challenges them. Some children meet that challenge better than others, so the variance among children increases. From this time on, parents' expectations or values on education also increase. The paucity of research efforts that examine the variation in foreign-born children's school adjustment should be focused on both the educators and parents who may have high expectations for children's academic achievement in school because of the prevailing stereotypic views of Asian American children as the model minority of school success. Next, the diversities of Asian-American families of different ethnic groups or even in the same group in school experiences have not been largely studied using a qualitative

approach. A qualitative approach best serves the uncovering of the essence of Asian American parents' early school experiences for their children because Asian Americans tend to communicate analogically or metaphorically, and rely on nonverbal communication (Uba, 1994) which could not be explicated by quantitative methods. The need for understanding the role of parents in fostering early school success in their children should be cultivated with a qualitative approach.

1. Research Objectives

To fill voids in the literature addressed earlier, this study had a three-fold research purpose. First, this study was designed to provide a better understanding of foreign-born children's early school adjustment in the U.S. The construct of adjustment of interest in this study is borrowed from a Taft and Steinkalk's 1985 study in which adjustment was defined as a function of the degree to which the environment fulfills a person's needs and goals and it is reflected directly in feelings of satisfaction with various facets of life. Keeping with the ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), the assessment of interaction between the foreign-born Korean children in the U.S. and the environment at different levels including family, school, and peer was made to meet this research purpose. Finally, in-depth interviews were conducted with mothers of the children in this study to elicit maternal perceptions of home-school relations and their values on education. Specific research questions that drove this study were as follows:

- 1) What variables of interest predict foreign-born children's adjustment in the U.S. school?
- 2) What are the common themes and patterns in the responses of mothers, as a primary caregiver, in the most and least successful groups?

II. Research Method

1. Subjects

The subjects of this study were 43 foreign-born Korean children living in the United States and their mothers. Lists of all Korean children were provided by three local Sunday Korean Language Schools in Boston, Massachusetts. Each of the three Sunday Korean Language Schools where the children and their families were sampled have been affiliated with the Korean church for more than 15 years and opened every Sunday for Korean American children(kindergarten through 5th graders). The children attended local elementary schools in the Boston area during the week and they need basic literacy skills in Korean. Consent forms and letters describing the objectives and procedures for the two tests(Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised, PPVT-R and Adjust-ment Scale for Foreign-born Children, ASFBC) which would be administered to the children of this study were sent to all eligible families. To become an eligible family in this study, three qualifications should be met: 1) children should be born outside the U.S. (citizenship of Korea); 2) children must attend a local school (kindergarteners or first graders); and 3) children must have language minority parents. Forty-seven parents agreed to participate in the study, but only forty-two parents were included to have a homogeneous group of children in terms of mother's nationality. The other four parents who were excluded had different citizenships. It was expected that a mother with a U.S. citizenship may affect a child's language test score.

2. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher directly contacted 43 parents

(mothers as a primary caregiver) who had agreed to participated in this study and visited their home. The two tests of Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised(PPVT-R) and Adjust-ment Scale for Foreign-born Children(ASFBC) were administered to the children during the home visits.

The PPVT-R was administered individually to all of the children sampled in English and the test of the PPVT-R took 10~20 minutes depending on the levels of children's language development. For the PPVT-R, all of the children sampled were tested in English, and the administration of the PPVT-R took 15 up to 30 minutes to complete depending the levels of children's language development. But, the researcher presented two versions of the ASFBC(Korean and English) to assist the understanding of the young children and to better explain to them what each question is asking depending on which primary language the children spoke at home and school. Furthermore, for the young children who might have trouble understanding some of the questions on the ASFBC measure the researcher presented a colorful card with symbols representing each possible response in the following: 1)big blue smile symbol and small smile symbol and 2) big red crying symbol and small red crying symbol. Each symbol has a corresponding caption indicating strong agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. On average, the interviews lasted for 30~40 minutes long. In addition, mothers were asked to provide their demographic information to the researcher at the time of home visit.

According to the results of quantitative data analysis, the children of this study were divided into the two groups based on their scores on the PPVT-R: 1) children who are in the top quartile and 2) in the bottom quartile based on their test scores on the PPVT-R. The in-depth interviews were conducted

with the four families to write case studies to illuminate further maternal perceptions or beliefs about their children's education, in general and those of home-school relations, in specific. Thus, brief descriptions of four families which were based on interviews with mothers—two from the least success group and two from the most successful group—were presented. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identifies of the participants.

3. Sample Characteristics

Demographic information of the sample was obtained by the Parent Survey Questionnaire which was filled out by the parents whose children were enrolled in the Sunday Korean Language Schools in Boston, MA. The demographic data obtained from the Parent Survey Questionnaire provided information about the child's age, gender, the length of stay in the U.S., primary language used by the child at home, and communication language with parents, and employment status of both parents.

The total sample of this study consisted of 43 child-mother pairs. Of the children, 19 were male and 24 were female. The age of the children ranged from 5 years 6 months(66 months) through 6 years 8 months (80 months). All of the children sampled were born in Korea and the mean length of stay for the children in the U.S. was 59 months. A summary of demographic characteristics of the sample is presented(Table 1).

4. Measures

The following research instruments were used in this study: 1) Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised(PPVT-R); 2) The Adjustment Scale for Foreign-Born Children(ASFBC); and 3) Semi-

<Table 1> Family Demographic Characteristics(N=43)

Variable	Percent	Mean(SD)	Range
Child's age(months)		73(13.1)	66-80
Child's length of stay in the U.S.(months)		59(18.3)	4-73
Child's gender			
male	44%		
female	56%		
Child's primary language at home			
Korean	47%		
Bilingual	37%		
English	16%		
Communication language with parents			
Korean	83%		
English	17%		
Maternal education			
<4yrs college education	3%		
4yrs college education	67%		
>4yrs college degree	30%		
Maternal employment status			
unemployed (full-time staying at home)	78%		
employed (including enrolled students)	23%		
Father's education			
4yrs college degree	15%		
>4yrs college degree	85%		
Father's occupational status			
Unemployed	25.8%		
Employed	44%		
Major professional	30.2%		

Note. Father's occupational status has three categories as follows:

- 1) Unemployed category includes both not working and enrolled students;
- 2) Employed category includes skilled workers, administrative personnels, independent businesses; and
- 3) Major professional category includes lawyers, college professors, dentists, medical doctors.

structured, open ended Interview.

1) Peabody Picture Vocabulary

Test-Revised (PPVT-R) The PPVT-R is a measure of receptive vocabulary that test whether a child

knows the meaning of words that he or she has heard spoken. The child indicates the meaning of word by pointing to one of four pictures that correspond to the word. The PPVT-R has been widely used in large-scale studies with ethnically diverse samples(Baker & Mott, 1989), and correlations between the PPVT-R and achievement test scores and academic scores (Peabody Individual Achievement Test), ranging from .50 to .72 (Markwardt, 1989). In this study, the children's levels of language development were assessed by the PPVT-R.

2) Adjustment Scale for Foreign-Born Children (ASFBC)

The ASFBC was compiled by the researcher for the purpose of this study. The ASFBC consists of five subscales. The following section is provided to discuss each of the subscales of the ASFBC in detail: 1) self-confidence scale, 2) peer relationships scale, 3)family relationship scale, and 4) school experience scale.

3) Self-Confidence Scale

This scale(Hightower, Cowen, Spinell, Lotyczewski, Guare, Rohrbeck, & Brown, 1987) was designed to measure perceptions of sureness about one's school abilities. The perceived cross-cultural adjustment scale was revised for the purpose of this study. The sample item is "I like to do my school work". Each of the items(8 items in total) is scored "yes" or "no". A total score is computed by counting the number of items scored yes. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .84.

4) Peer Relationships Scale

Items of the Peer relationships scale were combined from the Child Rating Scale(CRS)

(Hightower et al., 1987) and assess perceptions of interpersonal functioning and relationships with peers. For this study children responded to seven items and the sample items for this study are "I have a lot of American friends" and "I make friends easily". Possible responses range from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Higher scores indicate that children have good interpersonal social skills. The reliability coefficient for this scale was .78.

5) Family Relationships Scale

Family relationships scale incorporates items from the Child's Attitudes towards Family Scale(Vergne, 1982). For this study, children responded to four items(e.g., My parents and I do a lot of things together)and possible responses ranged from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree). High scores indicate that children more frequently feel family warmth. The reliability coefficient for this subscale was .76.

6) School Experience Scale

The school experience scale was a modified version of the Family, Friends, and Self Assessment Scale for Mexican American Youth which was developed by Simpson(1992). For the purpose of this study, the adapted version of the school experiences scale assessed children's opinions about quality of school life and relationships with teachers with five items. The sample item for this study is "My teachers care about me". Possible responses ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". High scores indicate that children have good school experiences(alpha=.79)

7) Interviews

Semi-structured, open-ended interviews took place in the mother' home in the presence of their

child. The interviews lasted for approximately 2 hours long in their shared native language (Korean). In terms of recoding interviews, the researcher had to deal with some dilemma associated with a use of tape recording. It was assumed that a use of tape-recorder ensures the accuracy of what would be said and permits the researcher to fully take charge in the interview process. However, there might be the potential effect of the recording itself because the interviewees would not be comfortable with using it. Thus, the researcher should keep track of thoughts, sense, and questions while keeping notes in the interviewing setting. Extensive notes were taken in Korean and then were translated into English. Several overarching questions were developed to better illuminate the complexity of the life situations of the children and their mothers prior to conducting interviews. These questions were:

- 1) What are your big concerns about your child's success/adjustment at school?
- 2) How often do you involve in your child's school activities(school homework, PAT, etc.)?
- 3) What is the most challenging part, you think, in establishing a good relationship with your child's school?

The common themes and patterns that emerged from interviews with four mothers in the most successful and least successful groups were analyzed.

III. Results

1. Preliminary Analysis

Since the ASFBC had no normative data, the mean(89.5) and standard deviations(14.3) obtained with this sample was used. Also, scores from the

PPVT-R varied over a broad range from low of 40 to a high of 116(M=89.93 SD=16.85) Raw scores from the PPVT-R were converted to standard scores equivalent, which allowed comparison of individual performance with that of one of more well-defined age reference groups. Results of bivariate correlations found no significant correlations between the family demographic variables and the children's adjustment. If a one-tailed test was used, however, the relationships between the child's length of stay in the U.S. and the ASFBC scores were statistically significant. Also, there were no significant relationships between the child's length of stay in the U.S. and the PPVT-R scores.

2. Predictors of Children's Adjustment

Results of Pearson Product Moment Correlation analyses revealed several statistically significant correlations between the children's adjustment and variables of interest(Table 2) as follows: 1)the relationships between the children's adjustment and the children language develop-ment were significant($r=.58, p<.01$); 2)the relationships between the adjustment of children and the peer relationships were statistically significant($r=.35, p<.05$); and 3)there was a significant relation between the children's adjustment and the school

<Table 2> The Relation between the Predictor Variables of Interest and the Children's Adjustment

	1	2	3	4
1. Adjustment				
2. Language	.58**			
3. Peer relationship	.35*	.43**		
4. School experience	.38*	.42*	.23	

Note. * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$

<Table 3> Multiple Regression Analysis: Predictors of the Adjustment of Foreignborn Korean Children in the U.S.

Predictor variables	Outcome: The Children's Adjustment(N=43)
Child's language	.65**
Peer relationships	.17
School experience	.23
R square=.43 F=11.2**	

Note. Betas presented are standardized betas. **p<.01

experiences($r=.38, p<.01$). Furthermore, the children's language development was significantly related to both children's school experiences($r=.42, p<.05$)and peer relationships($r=.43, p<.01$)

To determine the combined influences of the variables of interest on the adjustment of children, multiple regression analyses were performed to determine which of the predictors are significantly related to the outcome variable, when the other predictor variables were controlled for. The three variables(children's language development, peer relationship, and school experiences)which were found to be significant covariates of the adjustment of children were all entered into the regression equations. The analysis showed that the children's language development was found to be a significant predictor of the children's adjustment. However, neither the children's school experiences nor the peer relationship was predictive of the adjustment of children. These three predictors

<Table 4> t-test Analysis

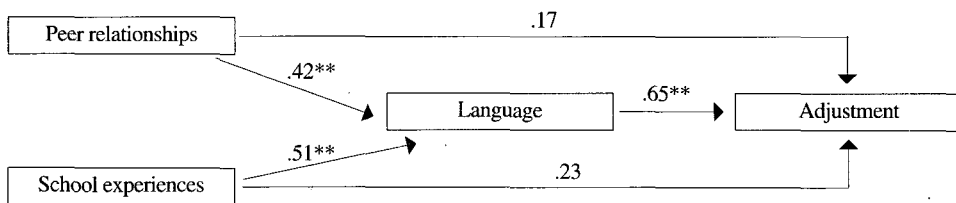
Group(children's primary language)	ACFBC Mean(SD)	t-value
Korean(n=20)	90.12(11.23)	3.2**
Bilingual(n=16)	93.32(10.28)	

**p<.01

accounted for 43% of the variance in the adjustment of children scores with this sample. The F value for the model was found to be significant($F=11.2, p<.01$). <Table 3> presents this.

In addition, the children of this study were divided into the three groups according the type of primary language used at home: Group 1) 20 foreign-born children were speaking Korean, Group 2)16 were speaking both Korean and English equally, and Group 3) 9 were speaking English. A t-test was conducted for the two groups of children(Group 1 and Group 2) to test for differences in both adjustment(ASFBC) and language development(PPVT-R) measures. Significant difference were only found in the children's adjustment measure. Children who were speaking both languages had higher score on the Adjustment Scale for Foreign-born Children (ASFBC)(Table 4).

Path analysis, which relies on multiple linear regression, was further conducted in order to isolate the separate contributions to the outcome variable, that is, the adjustment of children made



<Figure 1> Path Model of Children's Early School Adjustment
Path Coefficients are Standardized Betas. **p<.01

by a set of interrelated predictor variables (children's language development, peer relationships, and school experiences). Peer relationships and school experiences had an effect on children's language development, which had a direct effect on the adjustment of children. However, the results of path analysis revealed that the effects of peer relationships and school experiences on the adjustment of children were mediated through the children's language development (Figure 1). When the children's language development were controlled for, those two variables did not significantly predict the adjustment of Korean children. The path model is consistent with the proposition that children who have a good relationship with their peers as well as teachers at school are more likely to develop their language, and higher levels of language development with this foreign-born children may contribute to better adjustments.

3. Interviews with Two Groups of Mothers

The quantitative data revealed that the children's language development mediated the effects of study variables of interest on the adjustment of children. To further understand this group of foreign-born children's adjustment and the role of language development, the children were divided into the two groups. Additionally, qualitative data analysis was only conducted for children who scored in the top quartile on the PPVT-R (designated as the most successful adjustment group, n=5) and those who scored in the bottom quartile on the PPVT-R (designated as the least successful group, n=6). The average PPVT-R score for the most successful adjustment group (in the top quartile) was 109.18(14.29), while that of PPVT-R

score for the least successful adjustment group (in the bottom quartile) was 41.75(11.08).

Interviews with the four families were conducted in their homes, at times that were convenient for them with the presence of their child: 1) two from the least successful and two from the most successful group. The researcher interviewed each four Korean mothers once for approximately 2 hours in their shared native language, Korean. Descriptions of the two families of the least successful children are presented first. Initials have been used to protect the identifies of the participants.

4. J.K. and her son B.Y.

J.K. was a full-time graduate student in a local university. This family has stayed in the U.S. for almost 1 year. B.Y.'s parents, all full-time graduate students, intended to Korea after they complete their study. J.K.'s big concern about her son's (first grader) school success was related to her hectic schedule as a student. The following is the quotation she made:

"I feel very sorry and guilty that I cannot take care of my child, B.Y. because my hectic schedule as a full-time student. I received phone calls from my child's teacher. Yesterday, my child's teacher called me to tell that B.Y. caused some kind of trouble at school. He often does not pay attention to his teacher and talks to another Korean child during the class. I was very upset with my child's misbehavior. I expected that my child is getting better adjusted to the new school life. He seems not get along with other Caucasian peers. Because of this, he could not master fluent English, I believe. I am very worried that he might have trouble demonstrating his academic competence later on"

The nature of her relationship with B.Y.'s school, elicited from her direct comments, was not positive enough to influence B.Y.'s early school adjustment. Even though she is eager to know every facet of how B.Y. is doing in school, it seemed that there was no effective way to communicate with the teacher. As J.K. elaborated, she typically accepted the teacher's opinions about B.Y.'s behaviors without openly questioning. J.K. was also reluctant to take active role in school policy-making decisions(e.g., the PTA board) not because she was very busy with her school work but because she feared that voicing her concerns would be seen as disrespectful.

5. M.J. and her son H.J.

This family immigrated from Korea 4 years ago. M.J. was working with her husband as a proprietor managing a laundry shop. Her biggest concerns about H.J.'s(kindergartener)education were similar with those of J.K. This family came to the U.S. to provide better education and brighter future to their child. Since the parents should have survived and settled down in the new life for the past 4 years, H.J. has been taken care for by someone else. The only thing she does her best is to contact H.J.'s teacher on a regular basis by phone call to get exact and detailed information about his academic performance, though her English is not fluent enough to communicate with H.J.'s teacher. She did not have much time to get involved in other school activities(volunteering activities, the PTA). M.J. held a willingness on her part of building a strong relationship with the teacher and school, which was apparent throughout the interview with her. The following is her direct response on this regard:

"I wish I could become a key informant in helping

my child's teacher to develop the understanding about every aspect of H.J.'s, if my situations in reality gets better. I wish I could provide my own personal views of education and share my concerns with the teacher. But, I do not have any idea about how the relationship with the teacher and school turns out to be strong".

6. M.H. and her daughter J.Y.

M.H. was a full-time, stay-at home mother and had a Master's degree. Her family came to the U.S. in 1998. She had been involved in a professional career in the field of pharmacy back in Korea, but made the decision with her husband that it was of value to their child, J.Y., and the family to study abroad in the U.S. Last year, her husband finished his Ph.D. degree in mechanical engineering and got started working as a post-doc researcher in a local university. It seemed that she missed the intellectual stimulation of her work and struggled with the meaning of her new role in another country. But, she were driven by the value that this sacrifice was important and necessary for her child's development and better life in the future. She has been actively involved in volunteering activities from her community and local church for the purpose of learning English as well as for her child's school activities. Interestingly, she wanted to speak English much more fluently than her daughter, J.Y. who was a first grader at school. Her strong motivation to learn English was distinct in the following comments she made:

"I wanted to speak English very fluently. I mean, much better than my daughter, J.K. does. I know my daughter, J.Y. learned English faster than me, and she does not have a language problem in communication. Most Korean parents whom I know here are getting

more likely to rely on their child as an interpreter whenever they need to speak up in the public, as their children's English proficiency is getting improved. Some parents are happy with this in that fluent English-language qualifications will their children secure the best jobs in the future. Sometimes, this kind of situation where the children of language minority parents may play an authority figure, on behalf of their parents, makes parent-child relationship worse, I believe. We, as parents, ought to take a lead in our child's early life otherwise we cannot control over and correct her misbehaviors in the appropriate way."

M.H. clearly addressed the fact that she believed that she had a positive working relationship and that she did her best to maintain effective communication with her child's teacher at school. A critical key to making this partnership successful, it was very helpful for her as a more recent Korean parent to have a chance to participate in the informal meetings that were facilitated by those who have been in the community for a longer period so that her family could learn about the cultural norms and expectations in the U.S. school. In addition, she showed special appreciation to the teacher of her daughter who pays careful attention to the needs, skills, and comfort level of her student's families, especially language minority families in her class. Her teacher often e-mailed M.H. and let her know about how her daughter is doing at school these days. As a non-native English speaker, like her, email was considered an effective tool of communication to bridge some communication difficulties, as she mentioned. Whenever M.H. feels a need for personal contact with the teacher in both formal and informal situations, the teacher is willing to make efforts to meet the needs of her child as well as those of hers.

7. J.H. and her son, S.H.

At the time this family came to the U.S., her son, S.H. was very young(11 months). Even though J.H. had been accepted to the business graduate school as a full-time student, she could not keep her full-time student's status because her baby was too young to be left to someone's hands. Until her son S.H. reached his age of four, she had stayed at home most of the day and taken only one class per semester. Beginning last year, she could fully concentrate on her study. She has been a teacher at this Sunday Korean school for the past 2 years. Her son, a first grader, was ranked at the top(95%) in the PPVT-R test. Overall, J.H. reported that she cared the most about her son with regard to education and readaptation to her own culture. She decided to pursue a higher degree(Ph.D.) than she originally planned because her son wanted to stay in the U.S. until he finishes his college education. The following is her direct comments:

"My son often told me that he wanted to stay longer in the U.S. than we originally planned. Actually, we planned to go back to Korea after graduation. My son were adapted much better than what we expected. He has a strong peer network and he likes his school a lot. Most of his friends are Americans. He preferred speaking English to Korean even at home. But, I am very strict to the one rule that he should work hard on basic literacy skills in Korean because he is Korean, even if we might get a residence status in the U.S. That is the main reason why we forced to put him in this Korean language school. Every Sunday, I have to struggle to send him to this school. I was heard from one of the Korean teachers in Sunday Korean school that my son often told other classmates that he wanted to die rather than go to school every Sunday. I felt very hurt and had a chance to reflect upon what I have done to him. But, I

am very confident on where I am going for”.

J.H. tried to instill Korean heritage and culture in him by putting great pressure on his son. It seemed that she strongly advocated bicultural enrichment in his later years. In addition, as J.H. clearly elaborated during the interview, she and her son’s teacher at school had an opportunity to come to better understand each other’s culture-based expectations pertaining to education, and that understanding could, in turn, benefit her son. What makes this happen is that J.H. speaks English very well, having been an editor in one of the English newspaper companies in Korea. She serves on the PTA board at school. This case is probably not typical of the other Korean parents.

IV. Discussion and Implications

The main purpose of this study was to provide a better understanding of foreign-born children’s early school adjustment in the U.S. A broad range of variables within the context of a child’s microsystems including the family, peer, and school was incorporated to achieve this purpose. Several conclusions can be drawn from both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

As expected, several significant relationships were revealed between the children’s adjustment and variables of interest, including the levels of the children’s language, peer relationships and school experiences. Especially, the children’s language were significantly related to both children’s peer relationships and their school experiences. This result supports the conclusions from previous studies that the children’s levels of English proficiency influence their acculturation and adjustment process(Ho, 1992, James, 1997;

Bhattacharya, 2000). It may be possible to explain that limited language skills in English may prevent children from interacting with other friends and from participating in a variety of activities at school, thus influencing their peer relationships and school experiences. In this study, however, the significant relationships between the children’s length of stay in the U.S. and the adjustment were not detected. Also, there were not significant relationships between the children’s length of stay in the U.S. and their language outcomes. These two unexpected outcomes should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size. Further research should be conducted with a larger sample size to clarify these relationships of interest.

In addition, those three variables were entered into the regression to determine which variable predicted the outcome of the children’s adjustment when the other variables were controlled. Only the children’s language was found to be a significant predictor of the adjustment of children, and the three variables accounted for 43% of the variance in the children’s adjustment scores. The results of multiple regression and path analysis, which relies on the multiple linear regression, showed that the children’s language development predicted the adjustment of children, but the effects of the other two variables, including peer relationships and school experiences on the adjustment of children, were mediated through the children’s language.

The results of the t-test analysis found that children who are bilingual had higher scores on the adjustment measure(ASFBC). Those bilingual children may speak primarily in Korean with their parents at home and speak in English at school with their peers. This finding is congruent with the contention that language competency of the host country alone cannot be accounted for the children’s successful adjustment, though it is one of the

necessary factors. Also, this finding is contradictory to those of previous studies that reported that children reared by primarily Korean speaking parents may have difficulties with socialization and early learning experiences in the new culture(Ho, 1992; Kim, Kim, & Rue, 1997). But, 87% of the mothers reported that Korean is a primary language used for communication with their children and the children of this study were attending the Korean language school. This evidence implies that most of the mothers who are language minority parents cherish their cultural heritage and ethnicity through their native language.

Moreover, in-depth interviews were conducted with four mothers from the two groups: 1) the most successful and 2) the least successful adjustment group sorted by the PPVT-R scores, given that the results from quantitative analysis that the children's language development mediated the effects of variables of interest on the children's adjustment. The common themes and patterns in maternal responses from each group emerged occasionally in the interviews. For the least successful group, mothers frequently and repeatedly mentioned during the interviews sentiments such as, "I am very busy and I do not have much time spending with my kid", "I cannot fully pay attention to my kid's needs, "I feel very sorry for my kid 'cause I cannot take care of my kid like other parents do." The two mothers of this group seemed that they were concerned about their children's future and school success, but they do not show any responsive attitudes toward achieving this goal. Such an attitude was apparently permeated in the process of building a relationship with the teacher and school. On the surface, at least, they appeared to take charge in initiating work on this relationship-building process, but in fact demonstrated that they did not

identify and implement effective strategies or ideas to facilitate this relationship. Or it may be possible that this is deeply rooted in the Korean's parents' culturally-based deference to authority, thus hampering the possibilities of making strides toward developing an effective partnership between teachers and parents.

By contrast, the mothers from the most successful group appeared self-determined with regard to their children's education and had strong beliefs and values on how to raise their children in the new culture. In the interviews, it was evident that the two mothers of this group strongly believed that the American educational system ensures a good opportunity to benefit from the school experiences. The mothers from the most successful group were much more involved in their children's school life and, in fact the one mother was taking an active role in the school policy-making decision, which was an important distinction, as compared to the least group mothers. Unlike the least successful group, the mothers of this group, at least, initiated efforts to overcome their own communication difficulties and in turn, that increased positive adjustment to the new cultures. Possibly, the degree to which the child does fit well to the U.S. school may depend on the levels of the mother's adjustment to the new culture. Maternal social-networking plays an important role in this scenario, especially for a more recent mother who came from another country.

Notably, the child named S.H, who often refused to go to Korean language school every Sunday had scores below the mean on the Family Relationship Scale. As Bhattacharya(2000) pointed out, pressure from parents to uphold the family's reputation and to fulfill family expectations may cause emotional problems (alienation and loneliness) as children grow older, though it was not examined in this

study. Exploring this possible association and the corresponding results may highlight the fact that both parents and children experience ongoing mutual change over time. There is a need to focus future research efforts on delving into this regard.

The results of this study provide useful information in an area where there is a dearth of research. Specifically, teachers can be informed of the way Asian families of language minority transmit their cultures to their children and familial expectations for their children both behaviorally and academically. Also, the results of this study imply that in the Asian population, significant differences exist based upon multiple socio-cultural variables(language usage, generational status, country of origin, etc). Also, having awareness of diverse constellations of characteristics of individual families and children even in the same group of culture/ethnicity is important, when it comes to an understanding of early school adjustment among foreign-born Korean children and maternal values and expectations in the U.S. schools.

Several limitations must be addressed. First of all, in the process of conducting interviews with mothers and interpreting their responses there may be an effect of researcher(who shared Korean language and culture) in the presence of the interview setting. Some mothers interviewed might respond to some sensitive questions in a socially/culturally appropriate way to rationalize their behaviors in such a defensive voice or just please the researcher's intended purpose. For instance, one mother tried to ensure that what she said on the issue would be heard in light of the researcher's intentions and purposes of the interview. She often asked about the researcher's opinion and wanted what she said to be reinforced by the researcher. Second, all of the foreign-born Korean children sampled in this study who live in

Boston area, Massachusetts, are not likely to be representative of the Korean children who live in other regions of the U.S. Thus, generalizations to the population of Korean children outside this environment should be limited. Also, the sample size of 43 is relatively small. If the sample size was larger enough, there would be more statistical power to detect significant associations and regression coefficients. Finally, statements and reports from teachers in the U.S. will be helpful to get better glimpses on these children's school adjustment in terms of teachers' experiences, opinions, subjective appraisals or misunderstandings of foreign-born Korean children in their classes.

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