

RACE, LANGUAGE, AND IDENTITIES OF BIRACIAL CHILDREN IN  
MULTICULTURAL SCHOOLS IN SOUTH KOREA

By

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To my beloved family and friends



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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
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MULTICULTURAL SCHOOLS IN SOUTH KOREA

By

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As global capitalism increases human mobility, South Korea witnesses a significant demographic shift. Globalization and increasing international marriage rates destabilize South Korea's sense of national identity as a nation of one race, one language, and one culture. It is critical to hear biracial Korean children's voice in public education and to rethink about its sense of national identity in order to effectively confront these demographic changes.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the identity construction of biracial Korean children in the context of multicultural schools in South Korea. Specifically, the goal is to generate a substantive theory on how the identities of biracial children are constructed with and against Koreans' conceptualization of race. The research question for this study was, "How are the identities of biracial children constructed with reference to race and languages in multicultural schools in South Korea?" By gaining a greater understanding of Korea's increasing population of biracial children, educators can more effectively meet the educational needs of their students.



This qualitative research focuses on four biracial children selected through theoretical sampling in two multicultural schools in South Korea. Using constructivist grounded theory, interviews and observations were conducted, and archival data were collected from the summer of 2013 to the summer of 2014. The data are analyzed using narrative analysis and thematic analysis through a constructivist approach to grounded theory.

The themes are categorized and presented through a poststructuralist approaches to sociocultural theories and through the intersectionality of critical race theory (CRT). Research findings show the racial prejudices and educational inequality between biracial children of White heritage and non-White heritage. According to their racial capital and linguistic capital, participating children were positioned and repositioned differently according to their social worlds. The process of the identity construction is theorized, and the substantive theory is visualized at the end of this dissertation. This study concludes with a call for rethinking the diversity model of multicultural education for racially and linguistically diverse students.



## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### **Overview**

The world-wide phenomenon of human mobility has forced South Korea to witness demographic shift. The diversity addresses social changes. It is now time for South Koreans to rethink their traditional concept of race and ethnicity in relation to issues of social justice and human rights. Diversity has been the mode of social life in some countries and is becoming an emergent norm of the daily life in other countries. Diversity may contribute to mixing of races, cultures, and languages and brings democratic values into our reality on the one hand, but results in inequality and segregation in various sectors on the other hand. This chapter will accomplish three goals. First, I will provide an overview of educational segregation in South Korea to raise the problems for this study. Then, I will describe Korean's conceptualization of race and current demographic diversity in South Korea, which provide the historical context and synchronic context for this study respectively. Finally, I will propose a research study exploring identity construction of biracial Korean children and clarify the rationale for why I intend to explore the central phenomenon underlying segregation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

One of the most sensational scandals in the spring of 2013 in South Korea was that the grandson of the owner of Samsung Group was illegally admitted to an international middle school through so-called Affirmative Action for single parent families (Bae, 2013; Kim & Um, 2013). The boy was qualified for the application, which is designed to give equal opportunities to single parent families because his parents divorced a couple of



years prior. The boy, the presumed heir to Samsung Group, was illegally accepted to the school after the school faculties falsified his entrance exam score.

The school's reputation is such that the owner of Samsung Group wanted to send his successor there. South Korea has two different international schools: international middle/high school mainly for native Korean students and international schools for foreign students including Korean students with dual nationalities. In the four international middle schools and seven international high schools, high-achieving students of wealthy families network with privileged peers and prepare for prestigious colleges. International schools for foreigners are for students whose parents can support expensive tuition.

The word "international" is associated with developed countries, White culture, and the English language. High academic achievers are admitted to elite schools and learn English as well as white cultural values. They dream of becoming qualified leading members of a globalized world. It is also true in Japan that many international schools are regarded as elite for the children of Western diplomats and businessmen, as well as upper-middle-class Japanese children. The international schools in Japan provide highly academic curriculum and encourage their students to become citizens of the world with Japanese-English bilingual instructions (Kanno, 2008).

In contrast, there are some schools that have a different social category from that of international schools. Even though the schools not only offer English and foreign language courses but also focus on universal values such as reciprocal respect and human rights, it is unlikely that academically promising students attend these schools. The schools are titled as "multicultural." Alternative educational institutes called



"multicultural schools" began to be established to educate culturally and linguistically diverse children from migrant families, international marriage families and national citizen families from North Korea. In South Korea, the first private multicultural school was established in 2006, and the first public multicultural school was established in 2012. The word *multicultural* includes diversity of cultures and languages, but "multicultural" is getting devalued in South Korea due to the sociocultural contexts in which the word is used. As the demographic pattern has been changing, the word "multicultural" has become gradually associated with negative images of people of darker skin and poverty.

Global capitalism increases human mobility, and South Korea is not an exception to that world-wide trend. Currently, foreign migrant workers and international marriage spouses increase in Korea's population. Thanks to the demand for English education, English native speakers are hired by public schools and private institutes. While learning English and Western cultures is positively associated with "international", foreign languages of racially different people are associated with "multicultural." Because South Korea has long been homogeneous racially and ethnically, it is shocking to Koreans to find racially different people living in their country, not simply on overseas trips or in movies. International schools are a dream to parents and students and a symbol of upper socioeconomic status and high academic performances. Generally speaking, multicultural schools represent lower socioeconomic status, low Korean language proficiency, and low academic performance. Why are some students able to be "international" by means of becoming bilingual and bicultural? Why are other



students "not" able to be international by means of keeping their languages and cultures?  
Why are they labeled 'multicultural' because of their bilingualism and biculturalism?

Despite the negative social categorization, diverse students choose to go to multicultural schools. Why do they go to the schools? Multicultural schools, hence, are a thorny alternative choice for biracial children who claim Korean-ness. The multicultural schools are Janus-faced: a site of hope for multicultural education as well as evidence of segregation for half-Koreans. As a social apparatus, schools cannot be isolated from larger social structures and power relationships. In this sense, the Korean socio-political context is reflected in multicultural curriculum and classroom instruction, which will influence racial and linguistic identity of biracial children through their schooling. Through focusing on biracial children, this study will reveal the racial reality and multiculturalism in two schools that are intended to serve diverse students regardless of their races and cultures. This dissertation has a stance advocating for biracial children's Korean-ness from multicultural perspectives and linguistic pluralism.

### **Koreans' Conceptualization of Race**

As seen in the types of schools, students have been segregated according to their skin color, language background, and socioeconomic status as the global economy has spurred the interconnectedness of nations. As Freire (1972) discovered in the U.S., the "Third World" is not a geographical concept, but rather socio-political or socio-economic one. Multicultural schools may be more associated with the Third World, as were the poor peasants in Freire's literacy programs in Brazil, while, in contrast, schools titled "international" in South Korea are more likened to the First World, as are the elites in Latin America.



The main reasons why the international middle school was preferred by the owner of Samsung Groups and why multicultural schools have negative associations are closely related to Korean's racial categorization. Koreans appear to have three different layers of categorization in terms of race and ethnicity (Figure 1-1): the first and outmost layer is a binary classification dividing "we" of blood purity from "they"; the second layer is one in which racial classification exists actively according to skin color and physical phenotypes within the group of 'they'; and the third layer is to distinguish Light-Yellow people from Dark-Yellow ones within the category of "Yellow." These layers show that racial categorization is constructed in the Korea's sociohistorical context.

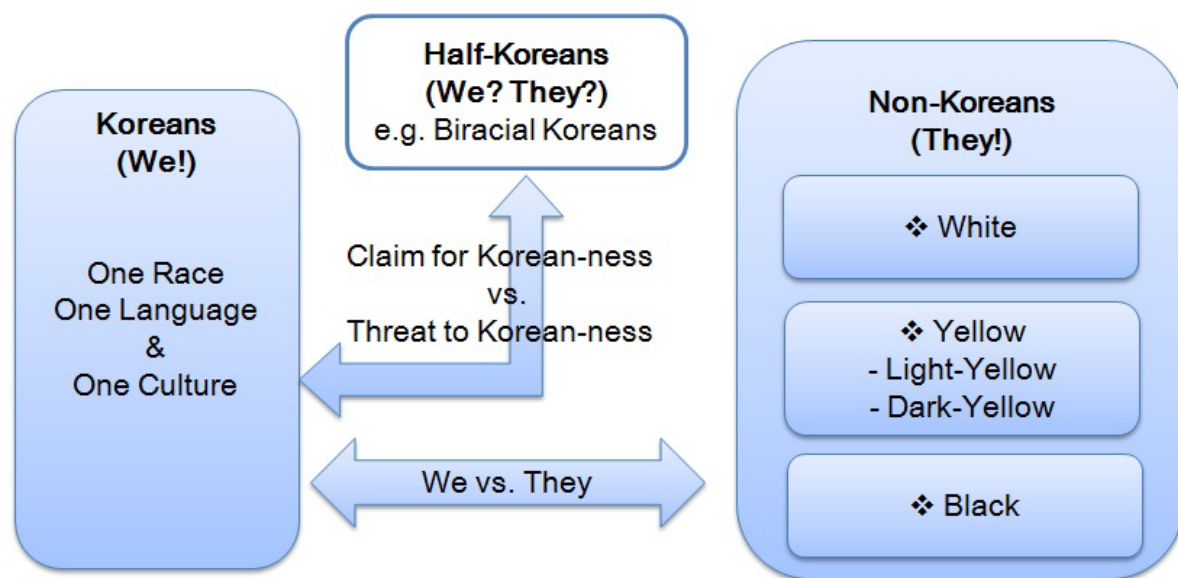


Figure 1-1. Koreans' Conceptualization of Race.

In the first layer of racial categorization, Koreans are "we" while non-Koreans are "they." Koreans believe themselves as racially/ethnically pure (Kang, 2010; Moon, 2003; Park & Watson, 2011; Wagner, 2009) while the outside world is regarded as racially complicated, mixed, and not pure. Park and Watson (2011) note, "Koreans, both North



and South, take great pride that they are a member of a very homogeneous society, and this genetic and cultural homogeneity has been maintained throughout its history, which in turn gives rise to a strong sense of nationalism" (p. 4). Such strong monoethnicism places various racial groups in "they" as long as they are not Korean, as shown in Park and Watson's (2011) assertion that Koreans distinguish *real* Koreans from cultural others, *not-so-real* Koreans, who are less than *real* Koreans. In addition, Koreans feel equal with American or Japanese people while they are uncomfortable with equal relationships with other people of darker skin (Han, 2011; Moon, 2003). Although Koreans are not a dominant group in the global context, Koreans, as the very dominant group in South Korea, enact their racial categorization in daily life.

The second layer is basically to differentiate people with three skin colors: Whites, Yellows, and Blacks. Accordingly, the inventory of Korean vocabulary has Sino-Korean terms indicating the three races: *Baek-Injong* (백인종, 白人種) for White people, *Hwang-Injong* (황인종, 黃人種) for Yellow people, and *Heuk-Injong* (흑인종, 黑人種) for Black people. These words are combination of Sino-prefixes and a Sino-word root: *Baek* meaning white, *Hwang* meaning yellow, or *Heuk* meaning black is added to a word root, *Injong* meaning human race. As for the origin of these words, it seems that they were imported from China many years ago. The three Sino-Korean words contribute to Koreans' conceptualization of human races. Angela Reyes and Adrienne Lo title "Beyond Yellow English" on the volume on linguistic anthropology of Englishes spoken by Asian American speakers (See Reyes & Lo, 2009). The authors problematize the terms such as "Asian Americans" or "yellow" and explain how these words are situated in a racializing discourse. Nevertheless, while European Americans impose "ed" on



Native Americans, Asians name themselves "yellow" in terms of race. "Yellow" is used as comparatively neutral when Asians, at least Koreans, identify themselves in relation to other peoples.

Koreans are taught that they belong to Yellows, but usually do not mention or recognize their race because race cannot be an identifier of their identity. Instead, Koreans are frequently identified with their or their parents' birth places, for example, Southeastern area, Southwestern area, Seoul, etc. The birth place forms the distinct feature of their cultural and political identities, which causes many problems and conflicts among South Koreans in the name of regionalism (Huer, 2009; Kim, Choi, & Cho, 2006; Kwon, 2004).

The third layer is to differentiate people of light-skinned Yellow from people of dark-skinned Yellow within the category of Yellow people. Before globalization, Koreans thought that Asians were all Yellows. As people from South East Asia and South Asia have increased, Koreans began to distinguish Asians of darker skin from East Asians. For example, in his experimental study on Korean's dual attitude toward different races, Han (2011) measured how Korean participants respond differently to photos of Western Whites, East Asians, and South East Asians. The underlying assumption for the study is that East Asians are racially different from South East Asians. Take as another example the official announcement of Statistics Korea, the Korean National Statistical Office (2013). Statistics Korea distinguishes international marriages with East Asians from marriages with people of other race/ethnicity. Japanese and Chinese people from East Asia are classified into foreigner-with-the-same-skin color while Western Whites, Blacks, or South East Asians are grouped into foreigners-with-different-skin-colors. The Korean



National Statistical Office uses skin color to classify people's race. Generally, South East Asians or South Asians who do not belong to East Asians are usually classified into Dark-Yellow.

The pride of homogeneity is justified and reinforced by *Dangoon* mythology, a folktale telling that the son of heaven descended upon earth to help all mankind and that he married a woman. Their son, *Dangoon*, became the ancestor of current Koreans. Koreans have defined themselves as descendants of *Dangoon* and members of *Danil-Minjok* (Park & Watson, 2011). *Danil-Minjok* (단일민족, 單一民族) indicating 'one blood and one culture' was long taught through national curriculum to promote Korean-ness and Korean national identity (Park & Watson, 2011; Tschong, 2009; Won, 2008). The message that Korean schools construct is that pure Koreans are legitimate people of the nation because of their cultural and genetic membership of *Danil-Minjok* and that non-Koreans are illegitimate citizens who do not share the culture or ethnic "purity" of Korea. This word of *Danil-Minjok* was banned from school textbooks in 2002, but its concept is still instilled and maintained through alternative expressions in national curriculum and school textbooks.

Globalization and increasing international marriages have given rise to a threat to the existing Korean national identity as one-blood ethnicity, that is, biracial children. The existence of biracial children brings fatal crisis in time-honored racial pride as *Danil-Minjok*, which had never happened in South Korea before. Situated as cultural others, half-Koreans faced hardship socially, but they were invisible in number in the past. The United Nation's Committee on Eliminating Racial Discriminations (CERD, 2007) expressed a concern that the Korean nationalism and its emphasis on ethnic



homogeneity justify superiority and racial discrimination against people grouped as half-Koreans or non-Koreans. Koreans are not prepared to include biracial people into their traditional boundary of Korean-ness based on *Danil-Minjok*. However, they need to hear half-Koreans' voice, as they are not invisible in the social discourse. Demographic patterns are rapidly changing in South Korea.

### **Growth of Demographic Diversity in South Korea**

Such different associations between *international* and *multicultural* are based on Korea's history of contacts with foreigners and foreign countries. Korea clung to the policy of national isolation from foreign countries except for the extremely limited number of tribute trades with China for 518 years during *Chosun* Dynasty (1392-1910). Under the national policy, private contacts with foreigners were strictly controlled, and trades with foreigners were regarded as illegal. Later, Korea underwent Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945), U.S military administration (1945-1948), the Korean War (1950-1953), and the division of the Korean peninsula (1953) into the Republic of Korea (hereafter referred to as South Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (hereafter referred to as North Korea). Even since the first government was officially established in South Korea in 1948, people were legally prohibited to travel to foreign countries except travels with government-guaranteed and diplomatic purposes before 1989. South Koreans had regarded Japan and America as the major foreign countries until the 1990s (Park, 2009). Currently, things have been changing in demographic homogeneity. The increasing number of migrant workers, North Korean defectors, and international marriages have brought demographic diversity in the fabric of South Korea (Kim, Lee, Kim, & Cha, 2009; Moon, 2008).



First of all, since Foreign Industry Internship Program was enacted in 1993, migrant workers called Asian "industrial trainees" have increased every year (Kang, 2010). The number of foreign residents comprised 2% of the entire Korean population in 2007 (Figure 1-2), which means that South Korea joined the multicultural and multi-ethnic countries. These migrant workers mainly from China and South East Asia work as simple laborers predominantly in "3D (Dirty, Dangerous, and Difficult) jobs" that domestic workers are reluctant to do (Tschong, 2009).

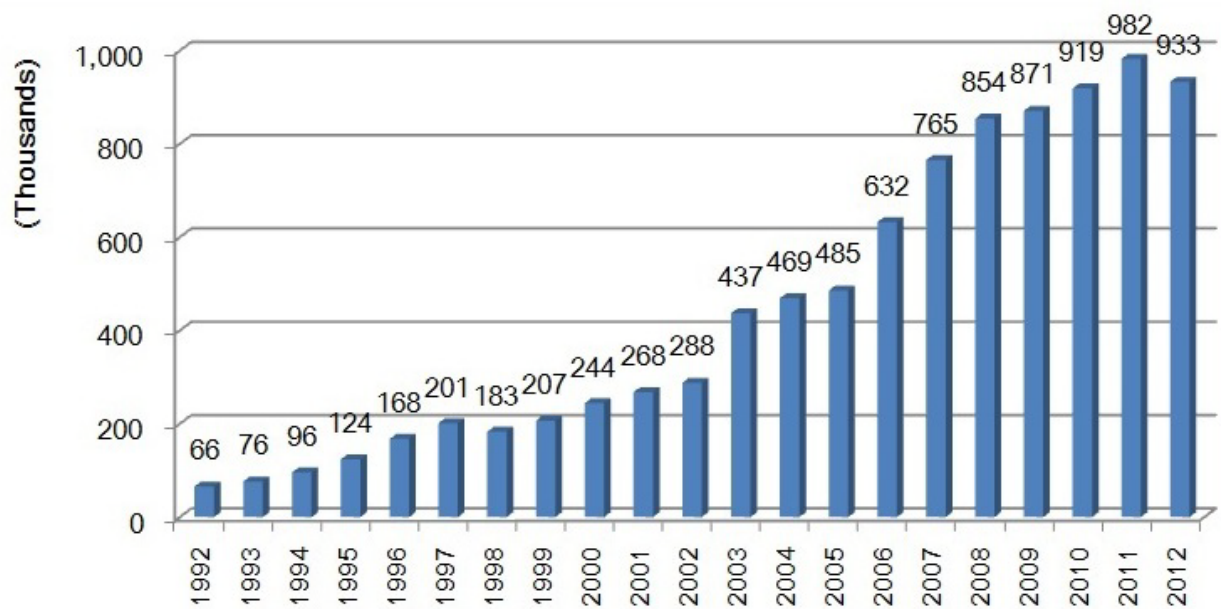


Figure 1-2. Transition of Foreigners Residing in South Korea (Source: KOSIS (Korean Statistical Information Service), 2014).

Another factor for changing the demographic pattern is the increasing number of North Korean defectors residing in South Korea, which has increased sharply since the mid-1990s. The total defectors escaping from North Korea was 633 persons for 40 years between 1953 and 1992, but economic difficulties in the North have caused a growing number of people to escape to South Korea. The Ministry of Unification identifies the defectors as newly entered national citizens, calling them *Saeter-min*



(Ministry of Unification, 2007). *Saeter-min* people are treated differently from other ethnic minorities because they share the same ethnicity, language, and traditions as South Koreans. Nevertheless, they suffer the consequences of having different cultural and political backgrounds, especially their different Korean accents, which reveal easily that they are not native South Koreans. The total North Korean defectors residing in South Korea totalled officially to 24,614 as of 2012 (Figure 1-3).

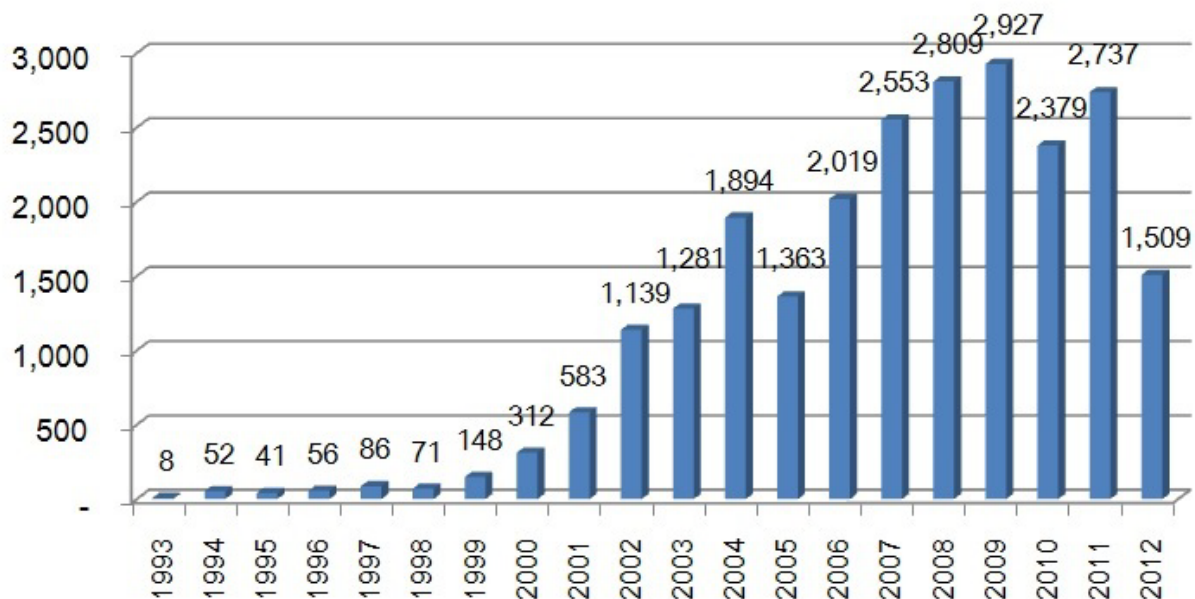


Figure 1-3. Newly Entered National Citizens from North Korea (*Saeter-min*) (Source: Ministry of Unification, 2014).

Closely related to this study, the most important factor of demographic changes is foreign-born spouses of international marriages. Most international marriages occurred in two different forms before 1990: interracial marriages between Korean women and American soldiers of US armed force, and religious marriages between Korean men and Japanese women known as "Blessing Wedding" of the Unification Church (Park, 2009). The total number of international marriages was very low, but the connotation was likely to be linked with the marriage with people from the developed



countries like Japan and America. However, since 1992 when diplomatic ties were established between South Korea and the People's Republic of China, international marriages with Chinese people, especially with Korean Chinese women, have increased (Park, 2009). After 2003 when MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) was abolished between South Korea and the People's Republic of China, international marriages of Korean and Chinese people have been legally recognized if registered in either country. International marriages have drastically increased and hovers at about 10% of the total marriages (Table 1-1).

Table 1-1. Demographic Statistics of International Marriages in South Korea.

Year	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2012
Total Marriages	399,312	398,494	334,030	316,375	326,100	327,100
International Marriages	4,710	13,494	12,319	43,121	29,762	28,325
International Marriages	1.2%	3.4%	3.7%	13.6%	9.1%	8.7%

(Source: Statistics Korea)

The Figure 1-4 shows their native countries of foreign spouses who stayed in South Korea in 2010. Immigrant spouses of international marriages come mostly from China, Japan, and South East Asian countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Thailand. Nearly half of Chinese spouses were Korean Chinese coming from *Yanbian* Korean Autonomous Prefecture in China, because South Koreans prefer to marry people of the same ethnicity, language, and culture. Interesting is that Statistics Korea, the Korean National Statistical Office, provides statistical information of Korean Chinese spouses separately from that of other Chinese people rather than including them into the group of "Chinese" spouses (Figure 1-4).

Korea's "Population and Housing Census for Foreigners" has a section of "nationality", which consists of 15 items: China, China (Korean), Taiwan, USA, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Uzbekistan,



Russia, Pakistan, and Other. Korean Chinese people are classified as a separate group from the Chinese in the section of nationality because they keep Korean traditions and maintain the Korean language. The items of Korean Census are intertwined with nationality and ethnicity unevenly, and the 2010 Census result reflects the social construction of race and ethnicity (Figure 1-4). Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean Chinese spouses rank top three ethnic groups who stayed in South Korea in 2010 Census.

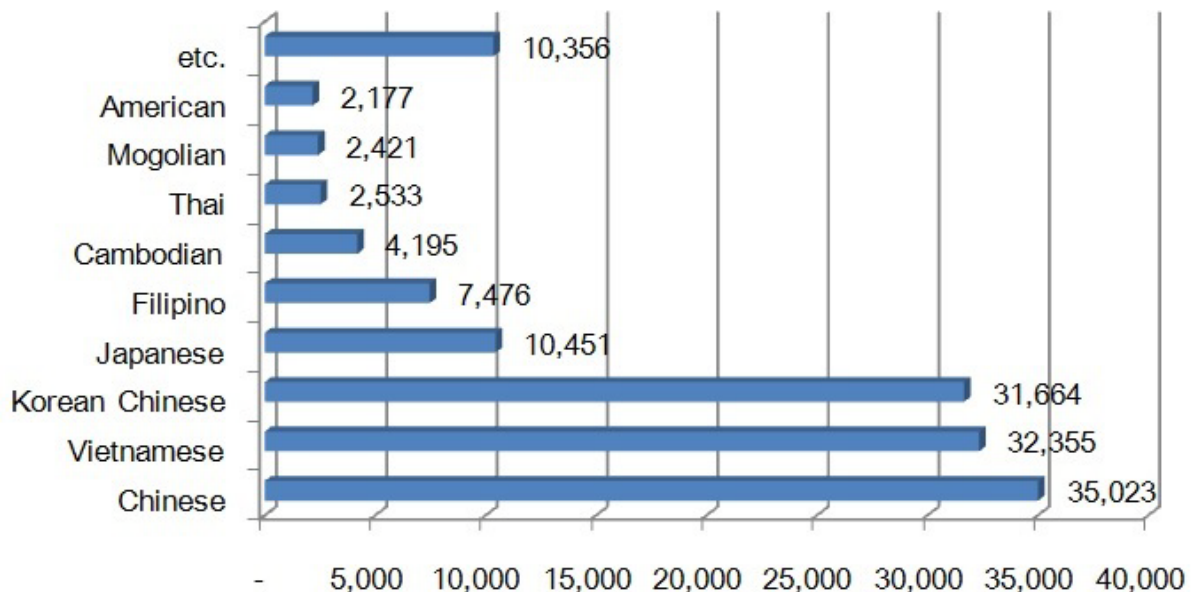


Figure 1-4. Foreign Spouses who Stayed in South Korea (2010) (Source: Statistics Korea).

In the name of "Evolving Multicultural Families and International Marriages" on its official website, Statistics Korea (2013) announces the ratio of marriage with people of different skin color among total international marriages. The ratio of marriages with people of different skin color relatively increases when comparing data from 2004 and 2012 (Figure 1-5).



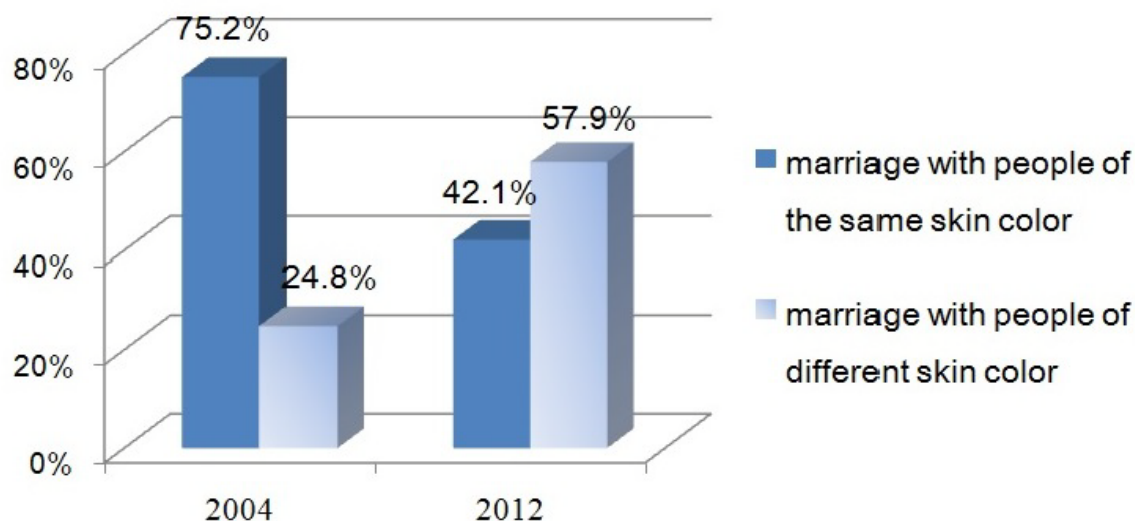


Figure 1-5. Increase of Interracial Marriages in Total International Marriages in 2004 and 2012 (Source: Statistics Korea).

Despite this demographic diversity, Statistics Korea did not consider the number of multicultural children from international marriage families in the Census. Until 2006, there had been no statistical data of multicultural children in national statistic surveys. When multicultural children of international marriage families entered schools, they began to be visible. The Korean Ministry of Education (MOE) conducted surveys throughout regional districts of education from 2006 to 2011. In 2012 under permission from Statistics Korea, MOE conducted a survey, newly adding sections about multicultural children in Korea 2012 Educational Census (MOE, 2012) (Table 1-2). The total number of multicultural children enrolling in elementary and secondary schools is 46,954 in 2012, which occupied 0.7% of the entire students. Multicultural children in MOE surveys include children from international marriage families and foreign children from foreign families although Korean laws do not include foreign children in the category of "multicultural children." MOE assumes that multicultural children will occupy 1% of total student population as of 2014.



Table 1-2. Growing Number of Multicultural Children in Grades 1-12.

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Multicultural Children	9,389	14,654	20,180	26,015	31,788	38,678	46,954

(Source: MOE, 2012)

When the multicultural students enrolling in schools are classified by their parent's national origin, children of Japanese heritage are the largest population, followed by those of Korean Chinese, Chinese, and Filipino heritage (Figure 1-6).

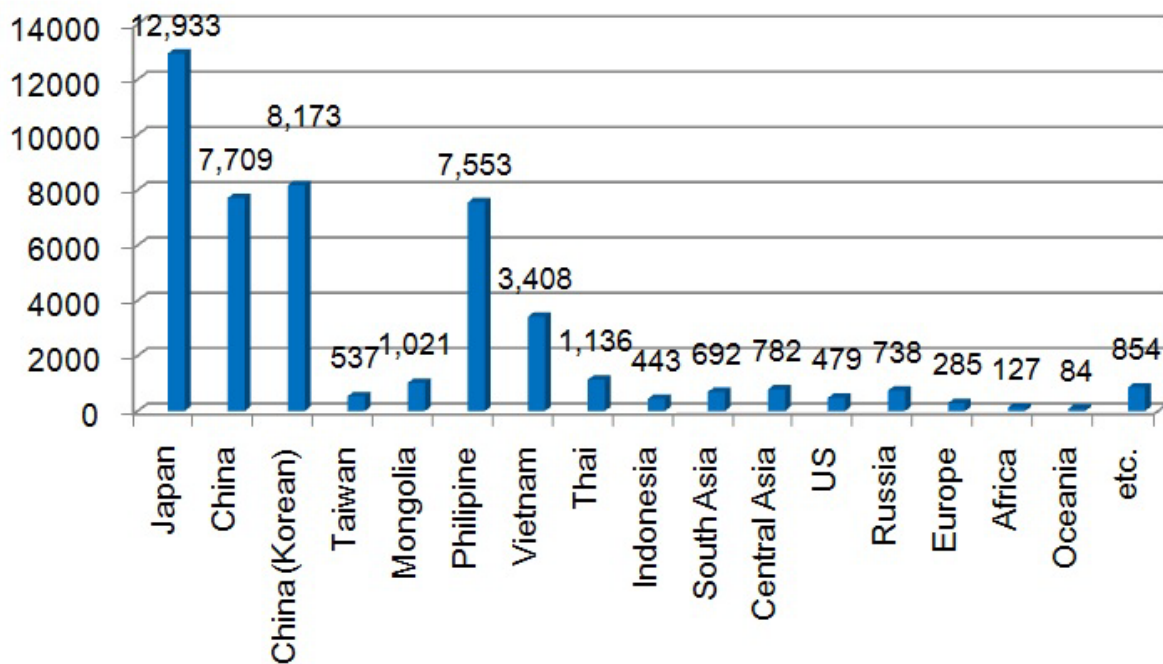


Figure 1-6. Multicultural Children Classified by their Parent's Original Nationality (Source: MOE, 2012).

There are various statistical data on foreigners, international marriages, multicultural families, and multicultural children. There is a Statistics Korea's comparison on international marriages with people of same skin color versus marriages with people of different skin color. However, there are no data on biracial children who might be seriously challenged by Korea's concept of *Danil-Minjok* and racial prejudice.



### **Purpose of the Study**

This qualitative study will investigate the identity construction of biracial Korean children in the context of multicultural schools in South Korea, a country viewed to be homogenous in terms of race, language, and culture. The purpose of this study is to generate a substantive theory on how the identities of Korean biracial children are constructed. Substantive theory here means "a theoretical interpretation or explanation of a delimited problem in a particular area such as family relationships, formal organizations, or education" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 189) rather than duplicable generalization driven from quantitative research. The findings will inform teachers and teacher educators of multiplicity of identities of participating biracial children in their lived educational experiences in terms of race and languages. At this stage in the research, "biracial" will indicate mixed ethnicity, that is, Korean plus another background which is recognized as racially different by South Koreans.

### **Research Question**

The central research question for this study is: How are the identities of biracial children constructed with reference to race and languages in multicultural schools in South Korea?

This study has two sub-questions as follows:

1. How are the identities of biracial children constructed in terms of race?
2. How are the identities of biracial children constructed in terms of languages?

### **Significance of the Study**

This dissertation is unique in several respects; it made an important contribution to our understanding of the growing biracial members of South Korea and to multicultural education and the issues of educational equity in general. First of all, this



study investigated the biracial children of international marriage families among racially diverse populations residing in South Korea. As seen earlier in this chapter, international marriages have increased compared to the total number of Koreans' marriages. The marriages with Chinese and Japanese people occupy the largest portion of Korean multicultural families. Nevertheless, interracial marriages with people of different skin color have significantly increased during current years. This was the first in-depth study of biracial children and multicultural education conducted in multicultural schools in South Korea. Although studies on racially mixed people focused on Korean Americans in America (Kim, 2008; Park, 2012; Standen, 1996; Turner, 2007) and racially mixed adults in South Korea (Lo & Kim, 2011), no study has been conducted regarding the current educational experiences of biracial Korean children in an ethnographical method in school and classroom environments in South Korea.

Second, this study focused on both multiculturalism and multilingualism from pluralist perspective. Under the pre-existing conceptual frame of *Danil-Minjok*, people of half-Korean groups are strongly expected to be assimilated to Korean cultural and linguistic norms to become legitimate members in South Korea. If researchers focus on phenotypes and skin color to criticize assimilationist perspectives and racial discrimination, they may present only their racial experiences and racial identities. Similarly, if researchers explore language differences or language learning, they may be limited to linguistic diversity and bilingual identity of biracial children. Instead, this study uncovered the complex construction of multicultural and multilingual issues in the multifaceted process of identity construction of biracial children.



In this vein, the research findings contributed to culturally responsive teaching and multicultural education in South Korea. Teachers and teacher educators can benefit from description and understanding of this qualitative study through reviewing their multicultural awareness on culturally and linguistically diverse students. South Koreans need to move beyond ethnocentrism which has been derived from its history to survive as a minority nation under the cultural and political control of China, Japan, and the United States. Teachers and teacher educators need to teach multicultural worldviews across the curriculum to meet the needs of the growing number of multicultural children in their classrooms. Through exploratory research in school settings, this study helped educators working with diverse children to improve their self-reflections on diversity and social justice.

### Definition of Terms

This study will focus primarily on the term of biracial, however, the interchangeable and related terms are frequently found in the identity research.

Beginning with *biracial*, the terms cover *interracial*, *multiracial*, *multicultural*, and *racial identity*.

- **Biracial:** It refers to any individual who belongs to two racial groups by parentage. It includes an individual whose parents are of two different racial groups (Root, 1996; Tatum, 2003).
- **Interracial:** It is used to refer to marriages between individuals of different races and/or a families that are made up of individuals of different racial backgrounds (Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995)
- **Multiracial:** It is used to refer to individuals who are of two or more racial backgrounds, including biracial individuals. It is the most inclusive term to refer to racially mixed people (Root, 1996).
- **Multicultural:** It is used to refer to a perspective that recognizes, respects, affirms, and celebrates human diversities (Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995).



- **Racial identity:** It is an individual's sense of belonging to an racial and an ethnic group, closely reflecting one's thinking, perceptions, and feelings regarding the racial and ethnic group membership (Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995).

### Chapter Summary

This chapter described how students are placed into different types of schools according to their skin color, language background, and socioeconomic status. Such segregation causes the term of "multicultural" to be associated with dark skin, multilingualism, and poverty. Multicultural children are regarded as low-achieving students of color. Educational segregation is a consequence of a perception of racial purity and an ethnocentrism that have existed in South Korea for more than five hundred years. Koreans' conceptualization of race has been formulated and reinforced by its historical context, and Koreans have remained quite homogeneous until recent years. Their preference for racial/ethnic homogeneity was effective as a uniting force against foreign invasions in the past, but the current world-wide trend of human mobility is challenging their long-lasting ethnic pride and exclusive attitudes toward non-Koreans. In short, demographic changes confront Korea's historical conceptualization of race. The emerging phenomenon is the birth of biracial Korean children. The interconnection of educational segregation, race, and contemporary diversity point to the importance of investigating how the identities of biracial Korean children are constructed and how, if at all, they are able to challenge those constructions. This study will explore the identity construction of biracial children in multicultural school settings. The findings will contribute to addressing multicultural education and educational equity for diverse students in South Korea.



## CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### **Overview**

South Korea has long been classified as a country of emigration rather than immigration and, accordingly, could remain homogenous in terms of ethnicity, language, and culture. Meanwhile, the world is closely interconnected by global capitalism. The development of technology promotes human mobility, human diversity, and cross-cultural communication. South Korea is not an exception from the world-wide transition from a long-standing homogenous country to a global community of migration. South Koreans began to experience racial and cultural differences in their daily lives, but are not prepared for the current racial diversity and multiculturalism. This chapter will examine the literature regarding a theoretical framework that can be applicable to demographic diversity and education for diverse children in South Korea.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Sociocultural theories and critical race theory comprise the conceptual framework for this study (Figure 2-1). These theories will be used to interpret the processes of the identity construction and to systematically describe the interrelationship between race and language. Both sociocultural theories and critical race theory contribute to overcoming the prevailing mainstream discourse of the deficit model imposed on racially diverse children (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2000). Sociocultural theories will be helpful to view and to understand the central phenomenon with various social and cultural factors. The multiplicity of identity construction of biracial children can be well described within a sociocultural framework. In addition, critical race theory will enable me to collect and analyze their meaning and interactions in relation with race



and racial experience. In particular, the notion of intersectionality, within critical race theory, is a link between sociocultural theories and critical race theory in dealing with various factors rather than oversimplifying with one major analytical toolkit.

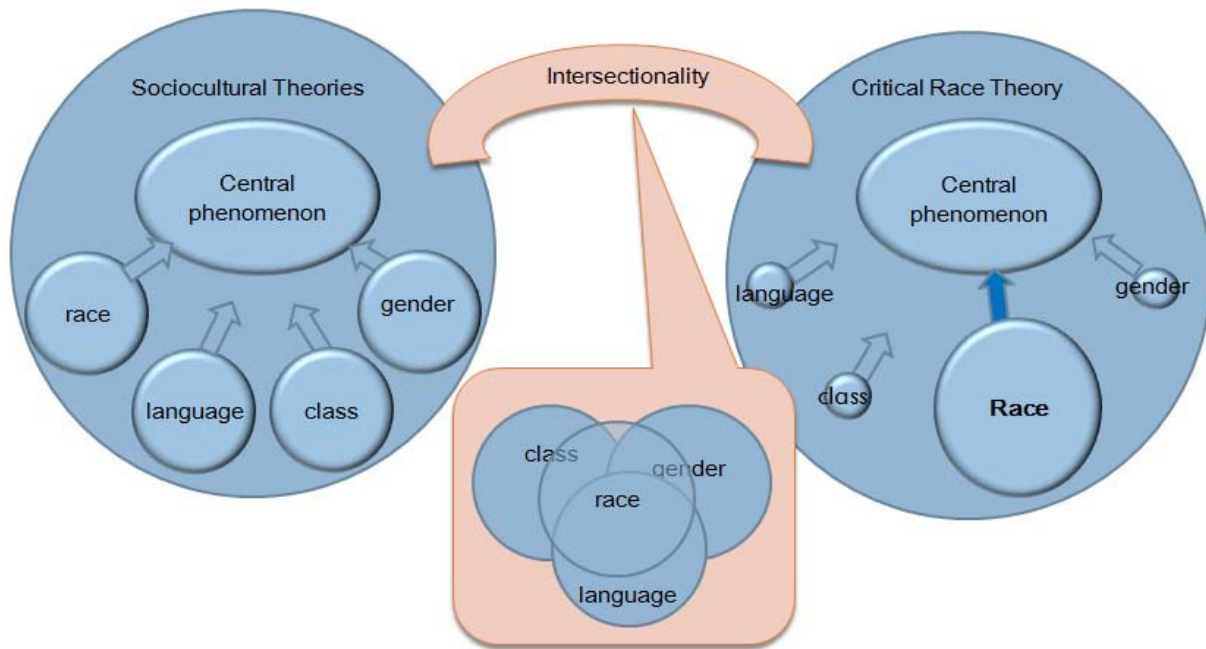


Figure 2-1. Diagram of Conceptual Framework

### **Sociocultural Theories**

Social constructivism suggests that people cannot be separated from culture. According to Geertz (1973), culture is the very source rather than the resulting product of human thoughts and behaviors because people are framed by culture to judge their behaviors and organize their experiences. At the center of the conceptual framework is sociocultural theories about identity construction.

Identity refers to a person's perception about him/herself in relation to varied and multiple contexts. In most cases, a person's identity can be revealed through many different social variables such as race, gender, class, age, language, culture, and sexual orientation. To explore identity with respect to language, language learning,



ethnicity, and race, according to Pavlenko (2002), a sociopsychological paradigm must be replaced by a new approach. Adopting the sociopsychological paradigm, Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) link the identity of language learners to innate language-learning factors such as motivation and attitudes. Under the sociopsychological approach, researchers isolate individuals from larger contexts and exclude social and cultural factors. Viewing social identity as a result of group membership, Tajfel (1974, 1981) asserts that individuals tend to change their group membership to make themselves "look better." Based on this view, Giles and Byrne (1982) and Giles and Johnson (1987) view language as a site for identity. They developed a theory of ethnolinguistic identity, suggesting that people with weak in-group identification (a weak ethnolinguistic boundary) are likely to easily assimilate and learn the target language, compared to members whose ethnolinguistic boundary is strong (Giles & Byrne, 1982; Giles & Johnson, 1987).

There have been critics of the sociopsychological paradigm, claiming that a sociopsychological paradigm fails to consider various social and cultural elements (Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2002; Syed & Burnett, 1999). Under a sociopsychological approach, monolingual and monocultural bias lies in language learning and unidirectional acculturation from home culture to host (target) culture. The critics suggest that psychological factors such as motivation and attitudes are not only related to specific sociocultural contexts, but are also reshaped in different contexts. The implication here is that a theory of identity construction must include social and historical contexts.



Over the past several decades, this world has experienced the growing diversity in race, language, and culture. As seen in demographic diversity even in South Korea, a nation which believes itself to be homogeneous, the world is increasingly diverse. Human mobility, instability, and fluctuation should be central concerns in the social sciences. Fundamental rethinking of social and cultural theorists can be a tool that reflects how participants constitute and reconstitute their meaning in this changing world. Sociocultural theories are a lens to investigate social relations and multiple social dynamics in the processes of identity construction of biracial children.

Sociocultural theories contribute to a shift from monolingual and monocultural bias to hybrid identities. Pavlenko (2002) argues that people in the same social contexts may have different experiences due to the different relation with gender, race, language, and class. These approaches affirm multiplicity and mobility of identities, driven from multi-competences and cross-cultural competence rather than idealized native-speakerness and monocultural stance. Exploring identities with reference to race and languages, this study will deal with the notion of ideology, investment, and agency surrounding identity rather than motivation, attitude, and personality.

In this vein, the study on multiplicity and hybridity of identities needs to take various cultural attributes into account. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) state, "No one has a single, easily stated, unitary identity" (p. 9). Identity should be viewed as the intersection of multiple social dimensions and historical contexts (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). Ahistoric and non-contextual perspectives would be useless to disentangle the identity construction of biracial Korean children. Thus, sociocultural perspectives about identity employ three important lenses: 1) thoughts and behaviors are organized and



interpreted through social interaction with the world; 2) identities can be changing and fluid by multiple social and cultural aspects; and 3) identities can be constructed through connecting past interaction to present encounters.

### **Poststructuralist approaches to the sociocultural factors**

The premise that social relationships between Whites and non-White minorities are equal is inherently racist. A sociopsychological approach assumes that power relation between language learners and native speakers is an egalitarian one. The notion of "power" takes on explanatory validation in the study of race, languages, and identity (Pavlenko, 2002). Pavlenko(2002), advocating a poststructural stance, claims that power relations and human subjectivity determine language learning in social, cultural, and political contexts. Poststructuralism is a philosophical attempt to investigate and theorize the construction and reproduction of social relations and social dynamics. In this sense, poststructuralist approaches help me to identify the sociocultural and political factors that hinder or advocate multilingual and multicultural ideas in terms of power relations between the intersected factors.

Sociocultural theories in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) began merging with poststructuralist concepts in the early 1990s when Pennycook(1990) argued for a critical applied linguistics lens to study race, gender, and other factors of power, which are then bound to notions of subjectivity. His epoch-making concept was followed by Norton Peirce's (1995) and Norton's (2000) study of the *investment* of female immigrant learners in Canada and Rampton's (1995) study of *code-crossing* in the multicultural and multilingual United Kingdom (U.K.) (Pavlenko, 2002). Such theoretical approaches gave birth to a new term, *super-diversity* in ethnic and racial studies (Vertovec, 2007;



2010) and in sociolinguistic studies (Blommaert, 2013; Blommaert & Rampton, 2011) engaged with the global heteroglossia and transnational phenomena.

Moving away from the perspective that the classroom is like a closed box, Pennycook (2000) examines political aspects in language teaching and learning. He suggests that researchers understand that what happens within the classroom mirrors what happens in society: “[t]he relationship of classroom to the outside world is a reciprocal one: the classroom is not determined by the outside world but the classroom is part of the world, both affected by what happens outside its walls and affecting what happens there” (Pennycook, 2000, p. 97).

Learning styles, textbooks, and teaching materials reflect and reaffirm culturally ideological messages. A group of seemingly homogeneous students still includes a wide range of diversity. Immigrant children, language minorities, or culturally diverse students cannot be categorized accurately using one label. Learning is never an abstract cognitive process; it is a complex sociocultural process. From the perspective of cultural politics, what happens in and outside of the classroom is perceived and interpreted in the minds of students. The politics of culture operate between cultural individuals and classrooms as well as between classrooms and the larger social world outside the classroom walls. In this regard, the classroom is the site in which identities are both produced and changed (Pennycook, 2000).

Our classroom walls, whether in developed or developing countries, are "permeable" (Pennycook, 2000), meaning that everything outside of classrooms has an impact on teaching and learning in classrooms and that teaching and learning are social and cultural practices, part of the real world. Politics of culture, therefore, provide more



room for human agency in both teachers and students. In terms of identity construction, individuals position themselves through the interplay of politics and human agency. At the center of the poststructuralist approaches are the politics of subjectivity (Walkerdine, 1990; Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989) and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1991).

### **Subjectivity and positioning**

Subjectivity can be formulated amid relations of power. Weedon (1997), a feminist poststructuralist, defines subjectivity as “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (p. 32). On the politics of subjectivity, Walkerdine (1990) articulates in detail how children are positioned as subjects within discourses coupled with mainstream education. Meanings and subjectivities shift according to relations of power. This shifting implies that children’s subjectivities are not unitary or static but entail the possibility of change (Hicks, 2002; Walkerdine, 1990). Focusing on subjectivity and prevailing power relations, Norton (2000) reconceptualizes three aspects of identity: identity as a non-unitary subject, identity as a site of struggle, and identity as changing over time.

Norton (2000) uses “identity” to reference how a person understands his/her relation to the world, and how that relation can be changed and constructed over shifts in time and place. She argues that identities are related to a desire for recognition, a desire for affiliation, and a desire for safety, which cannot be separated from the sociocultural contexts in which the person is positioned. Based on Bourdieu’s concepts of cultural capital and “the right to speech” (1977b, p. 75), Norton’s (2000) study of female immigrant women depicts a paradox between the right to speak and social participation. According to her, language learners need to be socialized in order to be



recognized and affiliated, but they cannot participate in socialization with target language speakers because as non-native speakers, they do not have "the right to speak." People are positioned relatively by their relationship to language, culture, gender, and social status in a given time and place. Norton views identity as neither essential nor fixed. Instead, identities are fluid and flow according to the contexts in which they are positioned. Power relations and social ideology co-construct identities and agency in turn.

Poststructuralist approaches bring into focus relations of power. For education researchers using a poststructuralist lens, power determines and is reinforced throughout the process of teaching and learning. As such, poststructuralist approaches in language education examine subjectivity and positions, and produce the subjectivity of the speakers, especially with regard to identity construction and social practices.

### **Cultural reproduction**

Bourdieu's (1977a, 1977b) theory of cultural reproduction shows that schools privilege the cultural practices of a society's dominant group(s). Such practices are endorsed as a cultural template, which manifests in ideals about how a culture eats, speaks, and lives. Expecting students to accept the cultural template, schools sort and subsequently disadvantage culturally diverse students who cannot fit into the designated norm. Bourdieu (1977a, 1991) positions his cultural reproduction as different from Bowles and Gintis' (1976). Bourdieu captures how schools play indirect mediating roles in maintaining cultural templates and power relations, whereas Bowles and Gintis link the relationship between schooling and students to the relationship between economic structures and potential workforces.



Cultural capital is a key to cultural reproduction. Cultural capital enables certain people to earn power and labels others as "inferior." One form of capital can be transformed to another; linguistic capital, for example, comes to bolster the prestige of certain speakers at the top of cultural hierarchy. Within one language, speakers of a particular form of the language are more privileged than speakers of another. Growing up speaking a prestigious language and prestigious varieties of a language, students will be privileged at school from the beginning. Bourdieu (1977b, 1991) asserts that language users-with-power have the right to speech, which is central to successful language learning. He views language as symbolic capital and the very site of identity construction of language users.

### **Critical Race Theories (CRT)**

Critical race theory (CRT) is derived from Critical Legal Studies in the mid-1970s. Critical legal studies are interested in racial reform, but they failed to provide pragmatic implications about racism (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Since the mid 1990s, critical race theory (CRT) has regarded the color line as the very cause and context of social disparity. CRT scholars suggest that race should be at the center of their analysis, together with other social factors influencing the current social outcomes (Dixson & Lynn, 2013; Hairston & Strickland, 2011).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) first introduced CRT to the field of education. The dissemination of CRT into education enables researchers examine race and racism that students of color have experienced in schools even after the U.S. civil right case *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954. In other words, CRT in education intends to reveal the relationship between race and educational inequality, in opposition to the perspective that views cultural mismatch and poverty as causes of unequal educational



practices (Dixson & Lynn, 2013). Critical race theorists agree to the tenets that Delgado and Stefancic (2001) identify: 1) normalization of racism, 2) interest convergence, 3) race as a social construction, 4) intersectionality, and 5) voice and counter-narrative.

The first major idea of critical race theory is that racism is not random but normal in U.S. societies. Advocating normalcy of racism, CRT scholars view racism as residing in institutional beliefs and behaviors beyond persona and individual boundaries.

Suggesting two concepts of "anomaly thesis" and "symbiosis thesis," Hochschild (1984) insists that racism is present in normalized forms in our society. Anomaly thesis is a view that "race discrimination is a terrible and inexplicable anomaly stuck in the middle of our liberal democratic ethos" (Hochschild, 1984, p. 3). Anomaly thesis is widespread among those who are blind to the ongoing presence of racism beyond slavery. In contrast, Hochschild (1984) writes about symbiosis thesis in racism:

Liberal democracy and racism in the United States are historically, even inherently, reinforcing; American society as we know it exists only because of its foundation in racially based slavery, and it thrives only because racial discrimination continues. (p. 5)

The difference between anomaly thesis and symbiosis thesis distinguishes critical race theory from traditional race theory (Ladson-Billings, 2013). Use of normalcy of racism in CRT can be an analytical toolkit to explain school re-segregation and the matter of educational equity (Brown & Jackson, 2013).

White people will respond to racial justice only when their interests can be aligned to interests of people of color. Bell (1980), the father of critical race theory, explains the historical meaning of *Brown vs. Board of Education* by the concept of interest convergence: the U.S. could attain trust from other countries in the era of the competition against the communist USSR. Another example of interest convergence is



affirmative action, which was adopted for racial minority students to have equal access to post-secondary schools. By adding "sex" to the Executive Order 11246 prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, religion, and national origin, the students who benefit most are White women, unlike the original intent. According to lens of CRT, interest convergence is another name for alignment, not altruism (Ladson-Billings, 2013).

Biologists, anthropologists, and sociologists agree that racial classification has no scientific evidence. Instead, humans have imposed physical phenotypes which reflect socially constructed meanings such as superiority, inferiority, Whiteness as property, racial hierarchy, etc. They use genetic differences to construct ideology of White supremacy and to closely connect racial characteristics to the ideology. Thus, race is a social construct.

As for the notion of intersectionality, Delgado and Stefancic (2001) state that "intersectionality means the examination of race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation and how their combinations play out in various settings" (p. 51). Since people are accustomed to binary classifications such as White and Black, White and non-White, the haves and the have-nots, and male and female, intersectionality is a complicated concept to research. When thinking of our messy life in the social world, CRT scholars investigate intersected identity categories simultaneously such as Black females, immigrant women of color, or language minority children from low income families. This study focuses on the intersection of race and language among various social factors.



Last, Ladson-Billings (2013) indicates how narrative and stories reflect the ethnocentric and hegemonic ideology, mentioning an African proverb, "Until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter." A historical and non-contextual nature of science defines the oppressed people to be silent. The stories of children of color were full of cultural deprivation, and the educational policy derived from the stories were full of attempts to "compensate" their deficits (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Cultural deficit models view culturally and linguistically diverse people as objects to be acculturated or assimilated to mainstream culture. To overcome the deficit perspective, CRT scholars call for the voice and storytelling of racial minority groups in educational research. The storytelling of minorities will lead to building their counter-narrative against existing narrative.

Among the CRT notions, this study will emphasize more on the concept of intersectionality and storytelling. The notion of intersectionality of CRT reflects the complexities of real life through refusing essentialism or reductionism in analyzing social practices that we explore. Also, Ladson-Billings (2000) states the importance of the stories about children of color to debunk the myth of cultural deprivation and cultural disadvantage. These CRT tenets will be a tool to examine constructed meaning of racial experiences of biracial children in this study.

### **Race and Identity Theories**

This section will discuss the ways in which race, prejudice, discrimination, and White supremacy are closely connected and operate in this world and next address how people develop their identity in a racially stratified society. Then, the literature of the theories of racial identity development will be reviewed to better understand the identity



development of racially diverse people. Finally, this section will present how biracial people and racially mixed people navigate their identity in their life.

### **Race, Racism, and White Supremacy**

The concept of race is socially constructed, and racial classifications are without scientific basis (MacEachern, 2003; McLaren & Torres, 1999; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Root, 1992; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012; Spickard, 1992). Historically, pseudoscientific biologists in the 19th century maintained a typological view of race. In the 20th century, the successors of this idea referred to genetics to support their construct of race (Spickard, 1992). An example of the social construction of race is evident in the U.S. census' whimsical and changing categories of race across time (Hodgkinson, 1995). Such racial categories in the U.S. census differ in definition from those of England, South Africa, and Brazil (Spickard, 1992). It means that the construct of race does not have scientific evidence to support it (Hodgkinson, 1995). Critical race theorists study racial inequality from the assumption that race is a social construction.

Generally speaking, those in power felt the need to uphold racial stratification and to maintain the boundaries between groups of people (Spickard, 1992). In the U.S., this resulted in the "one-drop rule", which defined people of color as any person whose ancestry had any heritage that included people of color. The one-drop rule shows that race is not a biological but social category. White people created the rule and clearly benefited and gained power through it. In this sense, it is true that dominant White people oppress others by using the one-drop rule to define race. Therefore, race was a powerful tool for oppression by the dominant group by justifying the oppressors' discrimination. People have individual racial prejudices, but these prejudices translate to racism when they are forcibly imposed.



Prejudice becomes discrimination when individuals and groups exclude other group(s). Bennett (1999) writes, "prejudice is an attitude based on preconceived judgments or beliefs (usually negative) that develops from unsubstantiated or faulty information" (p. 72). Nobody can be free from prejudice, and people as a group always have their own prejudices (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). Power plays an important role in translating individual prejudices into discrimination in a society. Power leads to institutional discrimination, and this appears to manifest in schools, among other places. One way that institutional discrimination occurs is through schooling systems such as tracking, labeling, and testing (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012).

It is important to remember that racism and discrimination are not the same thing. Racism is a form of discrimination and oppression in which one racial group dominates over others. For this reason, racism should be addressed at the group level, not at the individual level. When racism is viewed as an individual binary dimension, i.e., racist or not, people do not think of themselves as racist (Leonardo, 2004). Consequently, we experience racism without racists (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Racial discrimination should be understood in terms of a matter of system and power relations.

In the U.S., racism is historically connected to White supremacy over other racial minorities, in particular, African Americans. The socially constructed concept of race contributes to White privilege through White domination. Leonardo (2004) asserts that a White dominated system enables White privilege to work successfully all over the society. Fundamentally, White privilege is based on White supremacy, and White supremacy is supported by power structures. Those who want to capture the nature of



Whiteness, therefore, have to focus more on the power dynamic of White supremacy (Leonardo, 2004; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012).

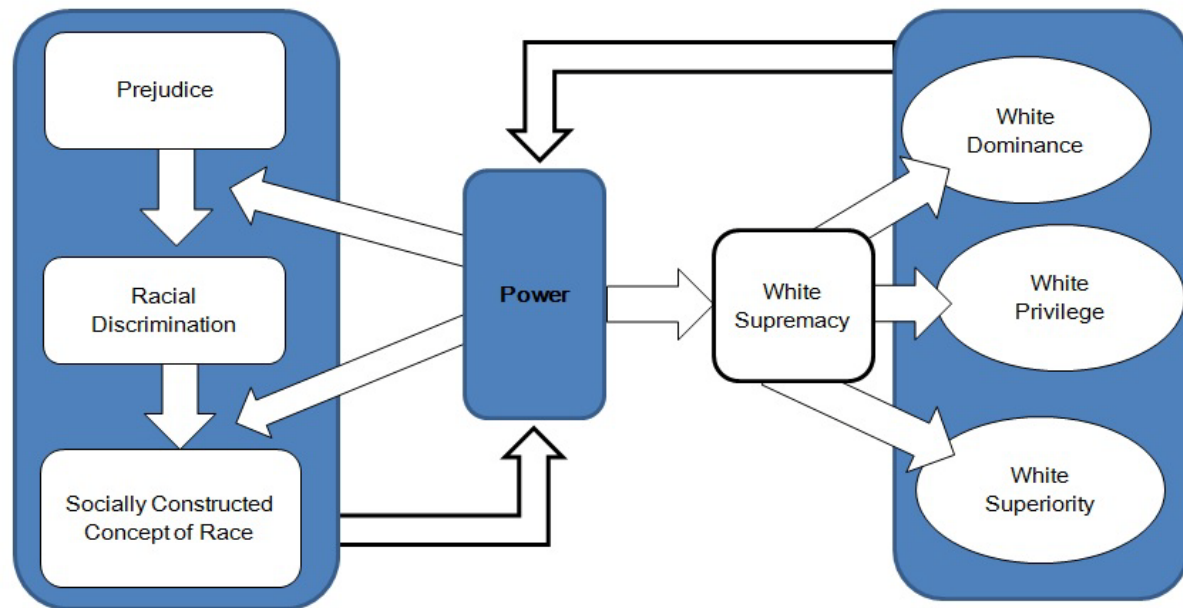


Figure 2-2. The Relationship between Power and Racial Concepts

Based on the above discussion, the relationship between power and other racial concepts are evident as seen in Figure 2-2. People are not free from prejudices, and among these prejudices, racial prejudices were historically formulated on the basis of visible phenotypes. It is power that formulates the prejudices into discriminations. Some racial prejudices develop into racial discrimination, i.e., racism, by those who have or contribute to institutional power. To justify racial discrimination, people in power have historically developed the social construct of race. Such power reinforces White supremacy, which consists of dimensions of White dominance, privilege, and superiority in society.

It is essential to understand that the notion of race is situated in racial ideology. McLaren and Torres (1999) note, "it is racism as an ideology that produces the notion of



'race', not the existence of 'races' that produce racism" (p. 47). Despite the obvious visualization about race, racism and White supremacy, in most cases, racial differences, racial prejudices, and racism are inseparable. As such, according to the principle of racial realism, "racism is an integral, permanent and indestructible component of the society" (Bell, 1992, p. iv).

Critical race theorists criticize multiculturalism and multicultural education for affirming diversity and replacing race talk with cultural talk (Alcoff, 1996; McLaren & Torres, 1999). In reality, multicultural education tends to be superficial, dealing with holidays and food (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). Calling for attention to White supremacy, Lenoardo (2004) argues that multiculturalism is focused too much on celebration of differences without considering power and oppression. McLaren and Torres (1999) write that multicultural education concentrates on diversity and disregards social and political construction of race. Whereas multiculturalists emphasize cultural and racial differences, critical race theorists tend to focus on revealing the essence of White supremacy and hegemony.

Critical race theory has received critiques for its emphasis on race as the major factor. Harris (2000) argues against the essentialist paradigms based on race, viewing critical race theory as reducing the lives of people of color into monolithic experiences. Various cultural aspects are intersected within individuals, and race is regarded as one of the cultural attributes (Hairston & Strickland, 2011). Despite such a limitation of critical race theory, its implications for multicultural education are obvious in terms of social justice and advocacy to change schools so that all students can be prepared to change the society (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004).



## Racial and Ethnic Identity Development

How do people in a racially stratified society develop their identities? To better understand the identity development, we need to review the discussion about what produces racial and ethnic identities and how individuals develop their own racial and ethnic identities. The diverse lenses of race and ethnicity can help understand identity development of racially diverse people.

McLaren and Torres (1999) assert that racial divides shape and contribute to a social hierarchy. They insist that the existing racial ideology makes young White people develop racist White identity by means of negating racism. For example, while White children live in racially segregated school zones, they are not aware of racism. In a society where racial lines exist, identities develop differently according to race: White identity for Whites and Black identity for African Americans. From the 1960s in the U.S., racial identity development was studied with the focus on African Americans. For example, Cross (1971) investigates the process of "being Black", describing five developmental stages: in stage one, or *pre-encounter*, Black people are assimilated to White culture; in stage two, or *encounter*, Black people face challenges against previous ethnic self-image; in stage three, *immersion-emersion*, they live in hatred and negation of Whites; those in stage four of *internalization* have healthy sense of Black identity and pride; people in *internalization-commitment* stage transform the rage toward anti-racist world. The theory of Black identity can be applicable to other ethnic minority groups (Bennett, 2003).

In the 1980s, racial identity theories were developed for Whites, Asian American, and other minorities (Ponterotto, Pedersen, & Utsey, 2006). A series of theories of White identity development have been studied. These theories share common themes,



and Helms' (1995) White racial identity model (WRID) is one of the most notable models. She describes how a healthy White identity can be developing through two phases: *Abandonment of Racism* and *Defining a Nonracist White Identity*. Her conceptual work contributes to development of the instruments of the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale and the White Racial Consciousness Development Scale (Ponterotteeo, Fuentee, & Chen, 2000).

There are few studies on models of Asian American identity. Asian Americans are typically homogeneously grouped into a category of "Asian." Lee (1999) maintains that despite different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, Asians and Asian Americans tend to be treated as the same racial group, which causes them to develop a pan-ethnicity, i.e., pan-Asian identity. Although Asians or Asian Americans want to be ethnically identified, they cannot escape dominant race categories. She concludes that pan-Asian identity is largely formulated by the racial categorization by non-Asian people, not by Asians themselves.

Another study of Asian American identity development was conducted by Kim (1981). In the exploratory study on how Asian Americans construct their identity in a White dominant society, third generation Japanese American women develop Asian American identity in five-stage model. In the stage of *ethnic awareness*, 3-4 years old children form their own ethnic origin, depending on ethnic exposure; when children enter school, they begin the stage of *white identification*, resulting in self-blame and identification toward White society; in the third stage of *awakening to social political consciousness*, they accept a new perspective and understand the racial oppression; during the fourth stage of *redirection to Asian American consciousness*, they reconnect



with their own heritage and culture; the last stage of *incorporation* is characterized by a positive identity as Asian Americans and respect toward various heritages.

These identity models not only imply that racial tension exists in the United States, but also people develop their social identity differently based on their race, as White supremacy and racial divides exist around the world. Research on racial identity development has been derived from multicultural scholarship, attending to diversity of minority groups (Sue & Sue, 1999). The main contribution of racial identity research is that it allows individuals to look for sociopolitical influences in shaping minority identity.

### **Biracial Identity Development**

Despite the proliferation of racial identity theories, the problem is that they are largely predicated on dichotomous frameworks: White versus Black, or White versus non-White. The one-drop rule is clear between Whites and people of color, but it ignores diverse people of color by placing them within one singular category of non-White or people of color. Racially mixed people were expected to choose only one racial category, and did not have any other option (Spickard, 1992; Thornton, 1996). Race-mixing was sometimes thought of as a problem. Biracial people can be more vulnerable to racism than monoracials (Nieto & Bode, 2008) because their mixed identity challenges the clarity of the racial divide and racial identification. Evidence of the lack of understanding of biracial individuals is founded in the U.S. Census conducted prior to 2000, which failed to address racially mixed people. Multiracial people were basically regarded as Black or forcibly identified as "betwixt and between" (Hodgkinson, 1995; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Root, 1992, 1999).

Racially mixed people had rarely attracted academic interest before Root, a biracial scholar, published her book on bi-race in 1992. Biracial people are still



seemingly invisible, as evident by the dearth of scholarly articles describing race-mixing. In the limited literature that have dealt with biracial people, the focus has been on bi-race of White and African American heritage, neglecting individuals of other backgrounds (Root, 1992). Historically, there was a biracial baby boom in the United States, following the 1967 U.S. Supreme Court decision in which interracial marriage was legally allowed (Root, 1996). The resulting children of mixed-racial families began to raise their voices. Biracial scholars (Root, 2003; Standen, 1996; Thornton, 1996) shared their own experiences about biracial identities and constituted counter-narratives.

From his review of the literature on identity paradigm, Thornton (1996) provides three approaches about multiracial people: problem approach, equivalent approach, and variant approach. The problem approach views race-mixing as a problem for racial identity and accepts dichotomous scales as  $A+B = A \text{ or } B$ . The equivalent approach emphasizes an assimilation process in identity development regardless of race. Hence, in theory, racial background would play an equally minor role for both biracial and White children; biracial children would experience the same process that White children experience for identity development. The equivalent approach focuses on similarity, resulting in  $A+B = A'$ . In this approach, the combined identities are "indistinguishable from A" (p. 114). However, both perspectives cannot embrace the "new color" of biracial identity. Instead, a variant approach views each identity juxtaposed in the form of  $A+B = A \text{ and } B$ .

According to Root (2003), racially mixed people pass through five identity choices: accepting the identity that society assigns, choosing a single identity, choosing a mixed identity, choosing a new race identity, and choosing a White identity.



- Racially mixed people *accept the identity that society assigns* under the belief that one is born into an identity according to the one-drop rule;
- The choice of *choosing a single identity* is an active choice, requiring racially mixed people to critically think about racial identification.
- *Choosing a mixed identity* appears beyond the early school years when their racial label may be supported by their parents' or caregivers' advice. Racially mixed people understand that solidarity with both racial groups matters.
- The choice of *choosing a new race identity* can come after people realize their blended identity. The motivation behind this identity is to avoid fractions such as half Black.
- Racially mixed people *choose a White identity* when they are isolated from both ethnic members. They do not have any emotional attachment or disdain to their racial heritage. Their default value of identity is White.

In his study of biracial Korean/White experience, Standen (1996) writes that few studies deal with biracial Koreans, and most studies of biracial people deal with White and Black race mixing. Despite socialization in the Korean language values from their mothers, most Korean-White biracials experience difficulties accessing to Korean culture because of their limited Korean language ability. Language is the key element for Korean-White biracials to construct a biracial identity. In addition, Turner (2007) demonstrates that Korean-White biracial people experienced racism, difficulties in self-identification, and rejection from both heritages. He indicates strengths of biracial individuals as one of his findings: biracial people feel they are stronger persons with their dual identity and unique experiences, and they tend to be open-minded and more empathic towards those who face racial hardship.

A long-standing notion is that biracial individuals are doomed to be problematic and rejected by all groups due to their racial mixture (Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995). Many studies examining biracial identity development have focused on the negative aspects, reinforcing the "tragic mulatto" stereotypes (Tatum, 2003). As a small population of



biracial scholars brought their biracial identity into scholarship, identity theories for biracial people have been recently explored with new approaches. The current studies above demonstrate that racial issues are not simply a matter of a White and Black dichotomy. There is a shifting trend to focus on the strengths and flexibility of biracial people and their bicultural competence (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Park, 2012; Root, 1996; Tuner, 2007).

### **Intersection and Diversity**

Throughout the period of nationalism, colonization, and globalization, people have contacted and interacted with each other and have constructed the concept of nation and race. The concepts have been spread into the world and nested into public and private realms of people's lives. The current globalization entails mobility of human beings and resources. This section describes how race and language are intersected and how race and ethnicity are mixed with other factors in the world which is extremely diverse. Unpredictable diversity can make people feel unprepared. Vertovec (2007) names "superdiversity" for the diversity in London, UK. This section defines "intersectionality" and "superdiversity" and discusses the relation among race, ethnicity, and languages in super-diverse societies

### **Intersectionality of Race and Language**

As White supremacy has spread throughout the world since imperial colonization, it is likely that racial minorities are also language minorities. For example, race based on White supremacy is intersected with language in the U.S. history of immigration. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, large numbers of European immigrants could maintain their native language as well as participate in U.S. society (Gándara, Losen, August, Uriarte, Gomez, & Hopkins, 2010). By the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, bilingual education



was thriving among European immigrants. However, by the 1880s, the U.S. government mandated repressive Indian language policies to Anglicize Native Americans (Gándara et al, 2010; Nieto, 2009). Whereas European languages were tolerated, those of Native Americans and African Americans were suppressed (Wiley, 1998).

To show how race has been intersected with language and national identities, Pavlenko (2004) compares European immigrants at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to non-White immigrants in the 1970s and 1980s. According to her comparative study, America shared American dreams with European immigrants while African Americans were segregated and discriminated against in terms of skin color and a local variety of English. However, American policies reinforced a link between English proficiency and national identity to maintain a unified America. When most language minorities were immigrants of color and AAVE speakers, America required people of color to have high level of Standard English proficiency for national identity. U.S. language policies deprived minorities of their linguistic rights and instituted a belief of the United States as an Anglo-dominant nation (Crawford, 1995, 1998).

The intersection is evident when people of color are roughly overlapped with language minorities. Privileged 'Standard English' is conceptually associated with White people from middle and upper class families. Since the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965, most immigrants have been people of color, and demographic diversity has been increasing in the U.S. The strong link between language and national membership has led to an emergent form of exclusion and racism against people of color. As a result, race as a social construct has been associated with language minorities and bilingual issues in the U.S.



According to Shohamy (2006), linguists closely interconnected people and language for the nation-statism. She provides parallelism between language and people: a set of correct words, native speakers, correct people, and right blood and another set of non-native speakers, people of color, and inferior people. The term of Aryans, "Indo-European people" is stemmed from the Indo-European language family of historical linguistics (Hutton, 1999). "Race science took its lead from the study of language" (Hutton, 1999, p.3). The language spoken by people of dominant groups becomes privileged, whereas bilingualism and non-native accents are proxies of racial, social, and economic inferiority. It is more likely that non-native people of color may be doubly discriminated against if a racially stratified nation connects language to national identity.

Rapid globalization beyond the U.S. territory makes the world witness more complexity in real life. At the center of identity research are the "messiness" of life and intersection of social factors with race. Critical race scholars view the theoretical simplification as artificial and arbitrary, which cannot reflect real life of minoritized people (Ladson-Billings, 2013). Recognizing the diversity and differences among people who belong to the same group, they study within-group differences and other forms of oppression related to race (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991 cited in Teranishi & Pazich, 2013). The notion of intersectionality shows how various factors can be disadvantaging factors in combination with race (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). In this sense, racial stratification began to be intersected with class, gender, language, and other minority issues.

Such intersectionality occurs in South Korea. The concept of *Danil-Minjok* (Park & Watson, 2011) claims strong bond between Korean ethnicity and the Korean language for the unified Korean-ness. However, even under the ideology of "one-blood,



one-language, and one-culture" (Moon, 2010), since White people are ranked top as neutral foreigners (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012), the non-native Korean accents of White foreigners and the use of their native language are tolerated. In contrast, most migrant workers with dark skin are discriminated against because of their skin color and different languages. People of color are expected to learn Korean with a greater degree of fluency. Language pluralism is applied to Whites, while assimilationist policies are applied to foreign people of color. White supremacy operates in South Korea as well as in the U.S., and race is intersected with language even in South Korea where Koreans are majority in population. Intersectionality of race and language plays out on the basis of White supremacy.

### **Superdiversity**

The term of "superdiversity" was created by Vertovec (2007) to "underline a level and kind of complexity surpassing anything the country has previously experienced" (p. 1024). Vertovec (2007) claims that the notion of superdiversity can take sufficient account of the coalescence of ethnicity with other variables when considering the nature of various communities. Multiculturalism is often considered mainly from the perspectives of African-Caribbean and South Asian citizen in the United Kingdom, but according to Vertovec, viewing diversity in terms of ethnicity is not enough to explain the current diversity of communities. Existing theories of diversity and multiculturalism are not fitting to the emergence of "new, smaller, less organized, legally differentiated and non-citizen immigrant groups" (p. 1027). Actually, the increase of these people has radically transformed the social landscape in the large portions of this world. The social changes cannot be explained only with the aspect of diversity in race and ethnicity (Vertovec, 2007).



New immigrants are diverse in many aspects beyond their ethnicities: diverse in the countries of origin; diverse in language backgrounds; diverse in religious variations; diverse in the migration channels and immigration statuses; diverse in resident space/place. Unlike the classic immigrants, new immigrants tend to actively connect to their home countries. Enhanced transnationalism brings and mingles social, political, and economic practices in the every country that they migrate. Public facilities need to meet the challenges of increasing cultural, linguistic, and religious complexity. This has consequently led to a current situation of super-diversity. In this context, the notion of superdiversity introduces researchers to new research areas: new patterns of inequality (Keith, 2005), new patterns of segregation (Kyambi, 2005), new experiences of contact (Amin, 2002), new forms of creolization or multi-lingualism (Blommaert, 2010, 2013; Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; Harris & Rampton, 2002), and the issues of "more transnational and less integrated" (Snel, Engbersen, & Leekes, 2006).

In the area of sociolinguistics, Blommaert (2013) claims that the classic link between language and speech community began to be ineffective. The agenda in the study of languages is moving from homogeneity, stability, and boundedness to mobility, mixing, and historical embedding under the contribution of linguistic anthropologists and sociocultural theorists such as Bakhtin, Bourdieu, and Goffman. Linguists played a major role to link "a language" to "a people" in the past (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; Hutton, 1999). There are two groups of sociolinguists: modern sociolinguists and postmodern sociolinguists. Criticizing the closed ideology of language, modern sociolinguists (Labov, 1966, 1972 cited in Blommaert, 2010) focused on linguistic diffusion spoken within the specific resident space. Postmodern sociolinguists (Heller,



2003, Pennycook, 2007 cited in Blommaert, 2010) began to see the mobility of people and mobility of linguistic resources, criticizing the modern sociolinguists for limiting their studies to "fixed" people.

Blommaert (2010) provides two paradigms regarding these two different sociolinguistic perspectives: *sociolinguistics of distribution* for the established paradigm of the modern linguists and *sociolinguistics of mobility* for the emerging paradigm of the postmodern linguists. *Sociolinguistics of mobility* focuses on language-in-motion, following the "trajectory through different stratified, controlled and monitored spaces" (p. 6). Increase of diaspora leads to social diversity and further superdiversity, which renders social phenomena of race and language more diverse, more complex, and more unpredictable.

### **Culturally Responsive Teaching**

The discussion about racial identity and multicultural education in South Korea should begin with understanding the racial homogeneity. International marriages have not been culturally recommended and a small portion of interethnic marriages with Chinese or Japanese people have not caused serious racial problem (physical difference is not necessarily apparent between Korean, Chinese, and Japanese people). It was estimated in 1999 that approximately 613 biracial children of American soldier fathers and Korean mothers could not threaten the Korean advocacy for pure heritage and "Korean-ness" (Yoo, 2007). Such historical contexts have seemingly left South Korea homogenous until recently.

Social conformity for "Korean-ness" and assimilationist perspective were adopted for educational policy. For example, differences from Korean culture were considered "abnormal": not speaking Korean was "wrong"; racially diverse students were expected



to accept Korean norms for social integration (Moon, 2010). In terms of race, ethnicity, language, and culture, anything different from Korean norms was regarded as deficit. The myth of "one-blood, one-language, and one-culture" began to be challenged due to the demographic changes (Moon, 2010). As South Korea becomes culturally and ethnically diverse, social harmony cannot be attained without the equity of culturally diverse and racially mixed people.

Students from racially different families have different values and different educational experiences. Racially different people develop different racial identities, resulting in different cultures, different behavior norms and different values. In the United States, African American children have different racial and cultural values from those of the White mainstream society. Culturally responsive teaching is a teaching philosophy which positively embraces different cultures and the languages of racially minoritized African American or other minority students in the U.S. (Gay, 2000, 2002). The core idea of culturally responsive teaching can be applicable to education of biracial minority children in racially homogeneous societies such as South Korea.

### **Educational Needs of Culturally Diverse Students**

For students from middle class families, learning may be a part of life and a necessary process for life. However, the demographic diversity has increased in U.S. schools. Diverse minority students have different cultural backgrounds, different oral discourse, different literacy practices, and different learning styles. Their different backgrounds cause them to feel alienated and minoritized in classrooms, and they may be low in school grades and high in dropout rates. The overall U.S dropout rate is 22-25%, but the rates are higher among Black, Hispanics and Native American (Kao & Thompson, 2003; Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). Ethnic differentiation is quite apparent in



achievement level in public schools. Statistics show that half of Asian and white students are placed in the highest track; Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans are likely to be in general or vocational tracks (Kao & Thompson, 2003).

In South Korea, children from international marriages with Chinese or Japanese people do not suffer from physical differences, but they have some different cultural and linguistic issues. It is most probable that biracial and racially different children have salient differences in language and cultural backgrounds in South Korea since the country has historically been racially homogeneous. This shows the obvious intersectionality of race and language in a racially homogeneous country. Biracial children consist of the emergent part of multicultural children in South Korea. The traditional norms of Korean identity are not working any more for children from different backgrounds. When their diversities are negatively evaluated, the students from different cultures struggle with low academic performance, and have higher drop-out rates.

The drop-out rates of multicultural children in South Korea are estimated to be 9.4% in elementary schools and 17.5% at the secondary levels, whereas those of native Korean youths are approximately 3% (Docuinfo, 2004 cited in Kang, 2010). The Korean traditional monoethnicism forced racially different students to be assimilated into Korean norms, imposing Korean mainstream curricula and devaluating their cultural values. Such an assimilationist approach tends to result in high drop-out rates of racially diverse students.

### **Deficit Model and Cultural Mismatch Model**

The most prevalent theory to explain the underachievement of culturally diverse students of low-income families is the deficit model (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). The



deficit model asserts that student's school success results from internal insufficiencies and characteristics of the student or some other deficiency. The origin of deficit paradigm lies in the racist discourse that began in the 16th century, insisting that racial minorities were physically, cognitively, and culturally inferior to Whites. This racism provided a basis to impose the deficit model on minority students in the beginning of the 20th century (Menchaca, 1997). This thought reduces underachievement to the race and genetic intelligence of individuals, blaming the victims for failure.

There was a shift from the deficit thinking based on genetic characteristics to cultural deprivation model based on what Lewis (1965) called the "culture of poverty." The main idea is that people in poverty live by inadequate morals, norms, and social practices and their socioeconomic status perpetuates to the next generation. This idea of culture of poverty developed into the cultural deprivation argument (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Pearl, 1997). Such a deficit perspective interprets discourse mismatch between home and school as the major cause of low achievement.

Gee (2005) defines Discourse as "ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity" (p. 21). To become successful learners, students need to be able to understand the school-based language and middle-class discourse, but minority students of diverse language and cultural backgrounds are marginalized due to the mismatch in cultural and linguistic practices between home and school.

Educational policies and interventions within the deficit model intend to "fix" the students and their families (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Pransky & Bailey, 2002; Skrla &



Scheurich, 2001). Based on the deficit thinking, educators and classroom teachers view the values of White mainstream as the standards and assist culturally diverse students with additional academic support services. Minority students are expected to be assimilated to mainstream culture and discourse with compensatory and remedial education. These interventions may serve to reinforce deficit thinking regarding minority students (Garcia & Guerra, 2004).

### **Diversity Model and Culture-as-Resources Approach**

Public schools should meet the educational needs of students of different racial backgrounds. Pennycook (2000) argues that classrooms are dependent on the social worlds outside of the classroom. In this regard, he warns that the focus on teacher-student power relations in the classroom fails to represent the larger context. National curricula and language policies have a tremendous influence on minority students in shaping identity intersected with race and language.

Children from mainstream families show high academic achievement because school knowledge conforms to mainstream cultures. Culturally diverse students can be engaged in learning and build up positive self-images when the school curriculum and academic content reflect their lived experiences, i.e., home language and community cultures (Banks, 1988; Gay, 2002; Harmon, 2012). This cultural diversity model views home culture as the source of diversity and educational resources, leading to culturally responsive teaching for all students as well as minority students.

Gay (2002) defines culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (p. 106). Culturally responsive teaching is an interchangeable term with culturally compatible, culturally congruent, culturally relevant,



and multicultural education (Irvine & Armento, 2001). When minority students are taught in culturally responsive pedagogy, their school performance will likely improve (Gay, 2002). When school are culturally responsive rather than raceless, color-blind, or assimilationist, they can no longer be "drop-out factories" or "school failure." Ideally, this educational perspective aims at preparing students to change society, not to fit into society (Bank, 1999; Harmon, 2012).

In terms of culturally responsive instruction, teachers understand that students come to school with their home cultures and prior knowledge, and thus utilize this knowledge as resources to learn school knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 2004). From the perspective of culturally responsive teaching, crucial is the use of "cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2000, p. 29). Within deficit model, the prior knowledge that culturally diverse students bring to school is regard as deficit. In contrast, from the philosophy of culturally responsive pedagogy, their cultural experiences of minority students are what Moll and Gonzalez (2004) call "funds of knowledge."

Kang (2008, 2010) suggests an inclusive approach to Korean multicultural education. Children of undocumented migrant workers do not have equal access to attend public school because schools are basically believed to serve Korean citizens. In addition, racially diverse children are alienated or discriminated against through schooling. Even children from interethnic marriages without any racial difference have difficulty making friends with Korean classmates when their ethnicity is disclosed to classmates (Kang, 2010). Therefore, culturally responsive teaching should be



implemented not only to promote inclusion and desegregation of culturally diverse children, but also to teach anti-racist lessons.

Children cannot learn from what Freire (1972) called "banking education," where teachers deposit school knowledge into the students' brains. Unlike empirical Westerners who believe in a core curriculum, teachers advocating culturally responsive teaching ask who constructs the school knowledge. The racial and linguistic experiences of the knower determine knowledge construction (Banks, 1993). When a uniform curriculum for social unity can be changed through curriculum transformation, when children can be involved in knowledge construction, and when learning is situated in lived experiences, educators can meet the educational needs of culturally diverse students and provide equitable educations.

### **Linguistic Issues of Culturally Diverse Students**

The intersectionality of race and language is salient among culturally diverse students. In most cases, culturally diverse students are usually classified as racial/ethnic minorities and language minorities. Just as the cultures that culturally diverse students bring to school are frequently regarded as deficit from an assimilationist perspective, the different languages and non-mainstream dialects that they speak at home are devalued at school. While the achievement gap between mainstream students and culturally diverse students is wide, the literacy gap between two groups is even wider.

Minami and Ovando (2001) criticize language research for being focused on the differences between home language and school language or between oral and literate language orientations. Such home/school language or oral/literate dichotomies resulted in a match/mismatch formulation. According to Minami and Ovando, linguists may have



found a cause of low academic performance from the mismatch in language use, but it could be a label to minority students. Instead, they assert that research focus should move to the underlying assumption of the biases against minority cultures from the match/mismatch frame.

Through comparison of various minority educations, Ogbu (1987) explains variability of minority students' school performance. Unlike immigrant children, involuntary minorities view cultural differences as markers of identity to be maintained, not an object to be overcome. It is not easy for involuntary minority students to cross cultural and language boundaries because school practices related to academic success and standard English are perceived as "acting white" (Ogbu, 1987, 2001). Ogbu (1987) concludes "learning some aspects of the school curriculum and adopting the school's conventional attitudes and practices appear to be threatening to their language, culture, and identity" (p. 330).

Gay (2002) discusses cross-cultural communications to implement culturally responsive teaching in school settings. Her argument is that minority students may be intellectually silenced when they are regarded as problematic in their communication discourse. Educators are encouraged to teach code-switching explicitly as well as to respect the discourse of their primary speech community.

Au (2006) proposes culturally responsive instruction in multiethnic classroom, suggesting that educators bridge home cultures and school cultures. Based on her study of Hawaiian children, she asserts that language teachers can use the students' primary language as a bridge to literacy. In addition, she argues that speakers of non-



mainstream English should be considered as English language learners, blaming the mainstream linguistic views for discriminatory treatment of Hawaiian Creole English.

The gaps in academic performance between mainstream students and multicultural students are wide: culturally diverse children from migrant families and international marriage families struggle in traditional school curricula and low language and literacy proficiency. The empowerment of minority students and parents is crucial to improve literacy achievement and academic performance of language minorities or children of linguistically diverse backgrounds (Au, 2006; Minami & Ovando, 2001). Language minority students can learn better when they are taught through inclusive curricula rather than collective instruction emphasizing monoethnicism, when they are invited to knowledge construction, and when their home cultures are respected as a resource within school curricula. Students feel empowered when their languages and dialects are respected as assets from a pluralist perspective rather than regarded as deficit.

### **Chapter Summary**

As the world becomes interconnected by technology and the global economy, South Korea is becoming racially and culturally diverse. Having emphasized blood purity and unified culture throughout its history, South Korea is confronting racial diversity due to an increasing population of migrant foreign workers and immigrant spouses of international marriage. This chapter proposed a conceptual framework and reviews research concerning racial concept, theories of racial identity development, intersectionality, superdiversity, and culturally responsive teaching.

I first proposed sociocultural theories and critical race theory as the conceptual framework for this study. This study will consider various social and contextual factors in



relation to race, using the concept of intersectionality to bridge both perspectives. Next, I discussed racism and racial identity based on critical race theory. Institutional power formulates racism, and the concept of race has been socially constructed by people in power. This construct results in White racism. Furthermore, dichotomous frameworks for racial identification and racial classification are too simple to encompass the identity of racially mixed people.

People from different races may have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Race, in many cases, intersects with language and culture. Race seems to be a visual proxy for linguistic and cultural differences. Schools become drop-out factories when they accept only mainstream culture into standardized curricula and devalue the cultures and primary speech discourses of culturally diverse students. Instead, advocates of culturally responsive teaching respect home languages and home cultures and encourage minority students to utilize their home cultures to learn better at school.

Briefly speaking, the drastic increase of racially diverse populations has begun to produce culturally diverse children, who become a major concern in education in South Korea. Until more recently, the scope of race, language, and culture was identical and overlapped throughout the Korean history, and Koreans were taught to be proud of the unique phenomenon of this intersection. The long-held belief of a single ethnicity has been used to justify discrimination toward people from different backgrounds just as the one-drop rule reinforced racism in the U.S. However, Korea's culturally diverse population is challenging Koreans' belief of one-blood, one-language, and one-culture.



Through utilizing culturally responsive teaching rather than mainstream discourse or color-blind instruction, educators can meet the needs of diverse students and contribute to celebrate hybridity and multicultural identities in this superdiverse global era. When curricula pursue cultural diversity rather than ethnocentrism, South Korea can provide equal education for all learners. Further, South Korea must move beyond simple awareness of language differences and discourse discrepancy between home and school, and actively implement color-sensitive education.



## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

### Overview

In order to answer the research question posed, this study utilized a qualitative research design and followed Morse and Richards' (2002) concept of methodological congruence. Methodological congruence suggests that there is systematic cohesion between the research purpose and methods, and those follow from the research questions. This study relies on four elements as described by Crotty (1998) to guarantee cohesion in the research design: methods, methodology, theoretical perspective, and epistemology. In addition, this study follows the guidelines of 'decision juncture of theoretical and methodological choices associated with theoretical perspectives' that Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, and Hayes (2009) provide. The outline of the methodological design of this study is depicted below. This chapter describes the epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods used in the study (Figure 3-1).



Figure 3-1. The Structure of Research Design.



### **Epistemology: Constructionism**

Epistemology, as a theory of knowledge, is related to how we know what we know. It is a philosophy embedded inherently in the theoretical perspective and methodology. To investigate the identities of biracial children in a multicultural educational setting, this qualitative study subscribes to a constructionist epistemology.

Constructionism rejects an objectivist idea of truth. Objectivism is the notion that truth, that is, meaning, exists in objects independently from the operation of any consciousness. Objectivist epistemology undergirds the positivist stance such as survey inquiry and quantitative methods. In contrast, constructionism is the view that "all knowledge and all meaningful reality are contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 1998, p. 42).

Constructionism allows researchers to understand the social construction of reality and meaning. According to this understanding of knowledge, different people construct meaning in different ways and within a particular context. Therefore, a constructionist epistemology is a proper approach to view how biracial children transmit meaning through their interaction with their world in the given contexts. Moreover, it contributes to investigating how sociopolitical factors, for example, may impact the identities of biracial children in a racially homogeneous society, aiming at describing the social construction of the identities of biracial Korean children.

### **Theoretical Perspective: Social Constructivism**

The meaning of human action can be understood by grasping the consciousness of the subjective actors (Schwandt, 2000). Social interactionism is a philosophical frame "derived from pragmatism which assumes that people construct selves, society, and



reality through interaction" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 189). This frame considers culture as 'lived experience' and represents an affirming stance with respect to culture and reality rather than challenge the impact of prevailing culture (Crotty, 1998). Individuals are influenced by culture and, at the same time, they are active, creative, and reflective in the meaning-making process.

This study employed social constructivism to understand the process of identity construction among Korean biracial children. According to a constructivist worldview, individuals make sense of the world in which they live and work, constructing their meaning through social interaction (Creswell, 2007). In this sense, social constructivist perspectives seek to unravel the complexity of the experiences and multiple identities of biracial children in their contexts rather than focusing on narrow categories. The identities of biracial Korean children are constructed through discussions or interactions with other persons and through historical and cultural norms, which are at work in their lives. Social constructivist inquiry aims at inductively developing a pattern of meaning instead of starting with a theory. In other words, this study describes the social construction of identities of the biracial participants within their historical and cultural contexts of the multicultural school.

### **Methodology: Constructivist Grounded Theory**

This qualitative study relied on constructivist grounded theory to best examine the study's purpose and research questions. Because the posed theories such as sociocultural theory and critical race theory do not provide specific detail to guide the study, the constructivist approach of grounded theory is used in terms of methodology.

Before drawing upon Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory, this chapter will first discuss traditional grounded theory. Basically, the goal of grounded theory study is



to move beyond simple description and to build a theory of the focal participants or phenomenon. Theory development should be generated or grounded in the data from the participants who experienced the process, not from other sources (Creswell, 2007; Crotty, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Based on the nature of methodology, grounded theory can be the best qualitative methods when a theory, if any, is not available or incomplete. Thus, the substantive theory developed by the research can provide such an empirical basis for the participants or phenomenon.

In relation to this study, grounded theory might be helpful to understand biracial children because theories regarding biracial Korean children are not available. As the conceptual framework of this study, sociocultural theories and critical race theory recognize human agency and counter-narrative of racially underprivileged people. In addition, grounded theory results in a substantive-level theory about racial minorities because their voices have been silenced by the discourse of *Danil-Minjok*, the long-lasting concept of ethnic pride and racial discrimination. In this regard, the conceptual framework is well connected to the methodology.

Grounded theory was initiated by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 and is based on a post-positivist framework in which the entire truth can be approximated through the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). In this sense, this methodology tends to move away from the statistic tradition of theory testing and theory generalization in deductive methods. Research questions guide the initial exploring of the issues, and researchers should return to the participants to ask detailed questions. According to principles of grounded theory, such questions can be answered through interviews instead of other forms of data collection like observations, audiovisual materials, or



archival data. Usually, 20 to 60 interviews may be necessary to gather sufficient data (Creswell, 2007). Collected data are analyzed on the basis of systematic procedures. A substantive-level theory, as a result of data collection and data analysis, emerges with the help of the researcher's memoing. As seen in the strict steps, Strauss and Corbin (1998) emphasize systematic procedures in grounded theory.

Grounded theory follows systematic procedures, but its objective approach to data analysis has caused criticism (Charmaz, 2000; Clarke, 2005). Grounded theory methods do not specify data collection methods in detail, but rely mainly on respondents' overt concerns. The first step of data analysis begins with dividing and fragmenting the collected data. Such an acontextual approach can distort or narrow research.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) believe that reality is independent of the observer and follow objective canons, which result in an objectivist stance. Most grounded theorists trust their data and analysis, saying that "data do not lie" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 85). The prescriptive approach to data stems from a positivist and objectivist stance (Charmaz, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). However, data are narrative constructions (Maines, 1993) and analysis is "a reconstruction of experiences" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 514).

More recently, Charmaz (2000, 2006) reclaims a constructivist grounded theory to overcome the positivist methodology in traditional grounded theory. Traditional grounded theory does not reflect the participants' voices and does not portray their stories because the methods fracture the data (Riessman, 1990a, 1990b). Even Strauss and Corbin (1994), the proponents of grounded theory, expect that future researchers



will use other approaches to grounded theory. A simplified and constructivist version of grounded theory can be a useful approach for qualitative researchers of diverse areas. Methodological transition occurs from traditional grounded theory to constructivist grounded theory.

Opposed to the objectivist stance and positivist worldview of classic grounded theory, Charmaz (2006) advocates a constructivist approach:

In the classic grounded theory works, Glaser and Strauss talk about discovering theory as emerging from data separate from the scientific observer. Unlike their position, I assume that neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvement and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices. (p. 10)

Classrooms are determined by social relationships with the outside world and, at the same time, a part of the world (Pennycook, 2000). Such a dynamic relation can be revealed with the constructivist approach rather than positivist assumptions of world that we explore. The multicultural schools and biracial students in South Korea may be educational byproducts of rapid demographic diversity and a part of the complex outside world.

Constructivist grounded theory allows flexible guidelines for on-going data collection and analysis, data coding, comparative methods, memo writing, and theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2000, 2006). Constructivist grounded theory methods should not be prescriptions or methodological rules or recipes. Further, a constructivist grounded theory focuses on the views, values, and ideologies of individuals rather than the single process of research methods.



Table 3-1. Comparison of Traditional Grounded Theory vs. Constructivist Grounded Theory.

	Traditional Grounded Theory	Constructivist Grounded Theory
Stance	Positivist/Realist	Constructionist/Relativist
Knowing subjects	Interview and Ethnographic Data	Interview, Ethnographic, Narrative, Visual, and Historical Discourse Data
Worldviews	Universal Truth and Generalization	Situated Knowledge
Researcher's Role	Researcher as <i>Tabula Rasa</i>	Researcher as Knowledgeable about Theory and Substantive Area
Literature Review	After Analysis	Prior to/Part of Research Design
Coding	Intensive Grounded Theory Coding	Intensive Grounded Theory Coding and Situational Maps and Analysis
Analysis Focus	One Basic Social Process and Subprocesses	Multiple Possible Social Process and Subprocesses Possible
Way to Fill Conceptual Gaps	Theoretical Sampling	Theoretical Sampling
Theory Development	Formal Theory	Substantive Theorizing
Author	Authority of Author as Expert	Accountability of Author as Reflexive Research Processes and Products

Note: modified from Clark, 2005.

Clarke (2005) compares traditional grounded theory and constructivist grounded theory (or his situational analysis) for readers' reference. As shown in the comparison between these two versions of grounded theory (Table 3-1), researchers who want to describe reality with meaning, not "truth," choose a constructivist approach. In this research, I sought co-construction of meaning of the respondents and me as a



researcher. Therefore, this constructivist grounded theory helps to construct a substantive-level theory emerging from the data. By adopting a constructivist approach, I intend to reflect both the biracial participants' meanings and my voice.

### **Subjectivity Statement**

In this statement, I acknowledge the frame of reference from which I engaged in this research. I am a South Korean female who in my mid 40s at the time of the study. I was born in a rural district in South Korea, where most residents were my relatives or my parents' friends. My family moved later to a city. While living in the city, my parents' reference group was our relatives and friends in our hometown. My family fluctuated, both culturally and geographically, between the rural hometown and the city. My parents and my older siblings often dreamed of returning to their birth place, and I was always afraid of returning to my birth place. They were accustomed to the discourse of the rural hometown, and I was an outsider there.

I was the first college-bound girl among 16 female cousins, although most male cousins graduated from college. I am the first master's degree holder, and the first person who studied abroad in my extended family. Education is ambivalent: I wanted to free myself from the traditional gender role through higher education, but my education has confined me. I graduated from a girl's middle school, a girl's high school, and a national college of education whose students were mostly female. I was firstly assigned to a girl's high school. My marriage was arranged, and all house chores waited for me after my wedding.

I rarely met foreigners until I was in my 30s. Several U.S. soldiers, five to six English native language instructors, and a couple of Mormon missionaries were all I met before I came to America in 2002. Approximately ten of the foreigners were White. Until



now, I have never met or interacted closely with migrant workers of color in South Korea despite the surprising statistics that I have provided. They may work at factories while I worked at public schools and my office at a national university. Their children attend multicultural schools or alternative institutes, while I taught at gifted programs or college-bound tracks. As a student, I was taught to be proud of being a member of genetically pure *Danil-Minjok*, and I believed it without doubt. As a teacher, I taught the greatness of the Korean people who survived various kinds of historical suffering and tried my best to instill the spirit of *Danil-Minjok* in my pupils' minds.

While pursuing the master's degree in America, I rarely felt racial or cultural domination or White supremacy even though I struggled as a language minority student. White people were and are not my reference group. However, I brought my 10-year old son to America in 2011, and he has been culturally assimilated and wants to be a White American. Whenever I tell him about Korean identity, he runs far away from me. I feel the reality of racial stratification, realizing that I was an arm-chair educator. I have a Korean identity, but I do not have much of an Asian identity because Asians belong to the category of foreigners under my ethnic conceptualization. My son has developed an Asian identity in relation to his peers. He enables me to sincerely think of children of racially and linguistically diverse backgrounds in my home country. More specifically, I think of educational equality and racial identities of biracial children.

As a researcher, I am not a *tabula rasa* who lives in a world detached from the biracial Korean children. Rather, I can be a knowledgeable researcher, reviewing related literature prior to research or setting up a theoretical stance or conceptual framework as part of a research design. These are to prepare me as a researcher



rather than to prescribe a methodology which may limit research. On the one hand, I, as a member of *Danil-Minjok*, can understand Korean ethnic pride and the historical backgrounds regarding why Koreans stick strongly to ethnocentrism. On the other hand, I call for educational equality and social justice for racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse people, which may stand against what I was taught through the school curriculum in my home country. My son is racially minoritized in America. In the transnational context, I experience what cultural assimilation is like in America through my son's schooling and socialization with his peers.

I have experienced visible and invisible marginalization due to my gender during my entire life. On the one hand, I was proud of being a Korean in South Korea, but I felt inferior, on the other hand, to boyhood, fraternity, masculinity, and manhood. In addition, motherhood, not fatherhood, are usually emphasized or praised in most cases. My identities were socially constructed to hang around ironic tensions between racial pride and gender marginalization in my home country. Since I lived in America, I come to understand the mechanism of oppression based on the physical phenotypes; oppression occurs among racial groups in the way that oppression occurs in gender.

The transnational contexts made my social factors intersect in more complicated ways in terms of my race, gender, and language and my son's race, gender, and language. All are intersected and incorporated within me as a researcher. My position of a native Korean female with 11 years of teaching experiences will be alive and, furthermore, my role of the mother of a 14-year old Asian boy who longs for blond hair contributes to co-constructing meanings through social interaction with my participants. This subjectivity will be my strength and limitation.



## **Findings from the Pilot Study**

I conducted a pilot study during the summer of 2013 at the Cultural World School. The pilot study had two purposes. As I described in the subjectivity statement, I did not have enough experiences with the education of multicultural children even though I was a school teacher at the secondary level for eleven years and a parent of an elementary child for four years. The first purpose was to gain a basic understanding of multicultural educational practices. The second purpose was to investigate the perceived identities and educational experiences of biracial students enrolled in a multicultural school in South Korea.

For the pilot study, the school principal and teachers recommended two biracial children as focal participants. I was assigned to the 4th grade classroom for observing the whole class. Hanna was a girl with a Korean mother and an American White father, and Mustafa was a boy with a Korean mother and a Jordanian father. I observed regular classes, recess time, and school activities such as club activities, extra-curricular activities, school cleaning, and student cooking. I interviewed the mothers of the two biracial children when they visited the school for parent volunteering. I interacted with school teachers in classrooms, the counseling room, the teachers' room, and the school cafeteria while observing the regular classes, taking a rest, and having lunch together. The focal students were 4th grade biracial children, but I became so familiar with all students and teachers that I was a semi-member of the school faculty. Also, I collected school documents, newspaper articles, and a couple of scholarly works and a master's thesis regarding multicultural children in the school. During the research period, I usually arrived the designated classroom by 8:30am and stayed until 4:30pm and sometimes until 8:30pm for data collection.



For the first purpose of my pilot study, I had sufficient opportunities to observe how multiculturalism and a multicultural curriculum were implemented in a representative educational institute. Also, I gained a basic understanding of the multicultural students enrolled in the school. For the second purpose of the perceived identities and educational experiences of biracial children, the emerging theme was racial stratification. Under Koreans' concept of race and its historical context, biracial children had experienced racial minoritization in public schools. Their statuses were redefined in the multicultural school according to their racial heritage and linguistic backgrounds. Children with White heritage were more favorably treated in many contexts than children of color. Racial stratification was evident among biracial children with different heritages.

The findings of the pilot study contribute to the present research in two ways. First, the findings concerning the multicultural school and multicultural children provided me with an understanding of the research site and participants' peers, which will be helpful as I consider sociocultural contexts and social interactions. I also gained familiarity with the daily routines and children in the school, and I built rapport with the principal, staff, and the students. Second, racial stratification as a major theme may be questioned because the pilot study had only two focal participants although there were over ten participants in total including parents, teachers, and students. The present study will employ theoretical sampling and add more focal participants. Based on the findings from the pilot study, this dissertation will provide an update concerning the previous participants by adding information about their change and development. Furthermore, the addition of focal participants will enable me to compare biracial



children from various backgrounds in terms of race and language and to gain depth and breadth in the data.

### **Site Selection**

"Site" means that the studied phenomenon happens in a certain social and physical environment (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By using "site" rather than "setting", I clarify that I intend to investigate biracial children and their identity construction in particular contexts. The selected city for this study was a large city in southeast area of South Korea. The city that I lived in South Korea for more than 30 years had three multicultural alternative educational institutes: the Cultural World School, the Future School, and Re-unification School<sup>1</sup>. The first two schools were mainly for racially/linguistically diverse children while Re-unification School was only for the children of North Korean defectors. The selected sites for this research were the Cultural World School and the Future School. Originally, I planned to choose only the Cultural World School, but in the middle of conducting this research, one of participants moved from the Cultural World School to the Future School. I needed to include both schools for this research, and I was introduced to the second school with the help of a mutual friend.

The Cultural World School, a well-known multicultural school, was established with ten children of foreign migrant workers in a shabby storeroom in 2006. The Cultural World School became famous for offering multicultural programs and diverse alternative curriculum in relatively well-established school systems, compared to other multicultural schools. In 2011, the Cultural World School was officially recognized as a multicultural

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<sup>1</sup> All the names in this dissertation are pseudonyms.



educational institute, not an accredited public or private school. After 2011 when the school was authorized from the City Office of Education, the school rented the campus of a previously closed elementary school, and the students of the school have been able to advance to higher education without passing the GED (General Equivalency Diploma) test.

Table 3-2. Students' Nationalities of the Cultural World School in 2013 and 2014.

Country of Origin	2013	2014
	How Many Students	How Many Students
Russia	14	15
China	13	16
Vietnam	6	9
Uzbekistan	5	5
Philippine	3	4
Japan	2	3
Taiwan	1	1
Peru	1	1
UK	1	0
US	1	4
Jordan	1	0
France	1	0
India	1	0
N. Korea	1	0
Pakistan	0	2
Thailand	0	1
Canada	0	1
S. Korea	20	18
Total	71	80

(Source: School Document of the Cultural World School, 2013 & 2014).

The Cultural World School not only follows the national curriculum from 1st to 12th grades but also provides KSL (Korean as a second language) courses as a language transitional program. Each grade had only one class due to the low number of enrolled students. Although school policy noted that the maximum class size was ten



students, the largest class has only eight students, and the smallest class had three students. 1st grade and 2nd grade were combined because only a couple of students enrolled for each grade. As of the summer of 2013, 71 students who came from 15 countries were officially enrolled. 80 students from 13 countries were enrolled in 2014 (Table 3-2). The major ethnic groups were students of Russian, Chinese, and South Korean nationalities.

The Future School was established with three students and three teachers in April of 2011. The school principal was one of the four founders of the Cultural World School, and worked there as a teacher and a main fundraiser for five years. She decided to open another multicultural school in the same city in 2011. The number of students increased up to 25 in 2013 and 22 in 2014. Despite its name, this school was not recognized or accredited as a school or an educational institute. This school waited to be approved as an "educational institute" by the City Office of Education after applying for recognition in June of 2014.

Table 3-3. Students' Nationalities of the Future School.

Level	KSL (Korean as a Second Language)						Standard			
	Beginner		Intermediate		Advanced		Elementary			
Origin #	China 6	Russia 1	China 5	Russia 1	China 4	Russia 1	Uzbek 1	Russia 1	Jordan 1	Korea 1
Total	7		6		6		3			

(Source: School Document of the Future School, 2014)

The Future School provided two different curricula: KSL (Korean as a Second Language) programs for foreign-born immigrant children and a standard elementary class for a native Korean student or biracial students with dual nationalities. There were nineteen students in KSL programs and three students in the standard elementary class. Unlike the Cultural World School, the Future School did not rent a stable campus due to lack of budget in 2011. Instead, the school was open in a local youth center for two



years, research labs of a university for a semester, classrooms of a community college for four months, and, at last, seminar rooms of a church since 2011. In 2014, the Future School had a teachers' room, four classrooms, a church choir room for music classes, and a dining room during the weekdays by favor of the pastor. The school had no playground, gyms, counseling rooms, and activity rooms.

Since Koreans classify multicultural children mainly by the criteria of race and ethnicity, the other social factors such as sexual orientation, gender, and learning disabilities are not considered within the categories of multiculturalism in South Korea. Government departments affiliated with multiculturalism deal with issues of international marriage, international marriage families, children of international couples, Korean language programs, and bilingual education. Similarly, the two multicultural schools emphasize diversity education focusing on race, ethnicity, and linguistic pluralism rather than other factors.

### **Description of Student Population**

South Korea follows the principle of *jus sanguinis*, i.e., the law of blood, not *jus soli*, i.e., the law of the soil, in terms of bestowing nationality. As long as both parents are not Korean, children are foreigners even if they were born in South Korea. For example, Chinese residents who live in South Korea remain Chinese even if their ancestors went to South Korea many generations ago. The Multicultural Family Support Act of South Korea defines "multicultural families" as families consisting of a "recognized or naturalized Korean" and a "foreigner." Racially and ethnically different foreign children cannot be included in the legal scope of "multicultural" children.

Nevertheless, the extent of who is defined as multicultural children or families is gradually expanding to include foreign children. Foreign children are allowed to enroll in



elementary (1st to 6th grade) and middle schools (7th to 9th grade) under compulsory education regardless of their visa status after the Enforcement Decree of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was revised in 2008. However, challenges await them because they may be barred from enrolling in Korean public high schools based on discretion of school principals.

Table 3-4. Student Groups of Multicultural Schools.

Students		Parents	Nationality	Home Language
Native Korean Students		Both parents are native Koreans	Korean	Korean
Mixed Korean Students	Ethnically Mixed Korean Students	One of parents is a native Korean while the other comes from East Asian countries. (No physical difference)	Dual (Korean & Foreign)	Korean and/or the other parent's language
	Biracial Korean Students	One of parents is a native Korean while the other is racially different. (Physically different from native Koreans)	Dual (Korean & Foreign)	
Foreign-born Immigrant Students	Children of International Couples by Remarriage	After one of parents remarried to Koreans, they moved to South Korea.	Foreign	Their L1 & Korean
	Children of Foreign Families	Both parents are foreigners.	Foreign	Their parents' language(s)

Both the Cultural World School and the Future School, as multicultural alternative schools, accepted the wide range of definition of multicultural children and give admission to foreign students from 1st to 12th grades. As of the summer of 2014, 80



students and 22 students were officially enrolled in each school. Mixed students with dual nationalities were counted on other countries than South Korea in the school documents. For example, both a foreign student of Japanese parents and a student with a Korean father and a Japanese mother were counted in "Japan" in the official reports.

There were three different student groups in the schools: native Korean students, Mixed Korean students, and foreign-born immigrant students. Description of characteristics of each group will help explain how the participants of this study interacted with their peers in their school environment.

Native Korean Students had parents whose national origin are South Korea. Some of them attended the schools to learn on its multicultural curriculum while others were maladjusted students at risk at their previous public schools based on academic and behavioral performances. The school districts allowed the school to admit such native Korean students with a maximum of 30% of total enrollment. Native Korean students were counted as South Korean or non-multicultural students in the schools' demographic information. Their native and primary language was Korean, but they had learned English from third grade according to the Korean national curriculum. Also, they were exposed to diverse foreign languages according to the multicultural/multilingual policy of the schools.

Mixed Korean Students were children of international couples with one native Korean parent and a foreign parent. They were regarded as blood-mixed Koreans under Korean racial frame. While ethnically mixed children such as children of Korean-Chinese couples do not have physical difference, biracial children have physical difference in their appearance. Because most of them hold dual nationalities from each



parent, they are qualified to enroll in either international schools or Korean public schools. They had bilingual and bicultural backgrounds from their families and communities, but their language practices varied in proficiency and use. Korean was their native language and primary social language. They might be exposed in various degree to the heritage language from their foreign-born parents. They had to learn English as a required subject according to the national curriculum. They had to learn a second foreign language among Chinese, Japanese, and Russian language courses in the Cultural World School. Hence, racial and linguistic diversity were intertwined through the interplay of three or four languages: Korean as a primary language, another parental heritage language, English as a first foreign language and international language, and a second foreign language learned in the school.

Some foreign-born immigrant students were children who had been born from the previous marriages of foreign spouses who re-married a South Korean. They moved to South Korea after one of their parents, usually their mother, remarried a South Korean. They were foreign-born immigrant children of international couples, and their statuses were quite different from biracial children who acquire South Korean nationalities from the principle of *jus sanguinis*, the law of blood. They were legally classified as foreigners since they did not have Korean nationalities. They had bicultural and bilingual backgrounds within families and communities because their step-parents and step siblings speak different languages. They might be acculturated or experience first language attrition through subtractive bilingualism.

Others of this group were children from foreign migrant worker families. Both of their parents were foreigners, and their families were likely to be mobile according to



their parents' working places. Also, when their parents might be undocumented workers, the degree of psychological security and safety might influence on the schooling and social experiences of the students in this group. They were racially and culturally different from native Koreans. They spoke Korean in school and their native language(s) at home. Their language use was similar to what is commonly observed among immigrant ESOL children in the United States.

Foreign-born immigrant students, whether they were children of international couples or foreign migrant families, were Korean language learners and speakers of other languages than Korean. The schooling experiences and language use were very diverse among individuals with different backgrounds. Whereas students from all five groups enrolled in the Cultural World School, most students of the Future School were foreign-born children struggling in Korean language learning.

## **Participants**

Qualitative sampling tends to be purposive rather than random (Kuzel, 1992; Morse, 1989). Sampling can be designed prior to conducting research or systematically developed during the initial stage of data collection (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In participant selection, I considered, in particular, the below three aspects in the checklist provided by Miles and Huberman (1994):

- Is the sampling related to the research questions?
- Do the selected participants experience the phenomenon that I am interested in?
- Is the sampling plan feasible in terms of time, resources, and accessibility?

This study followed the principle of theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2000; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Since the purpose of theoretical sampling is to sample to develop the theoretical categories, this study did not sample representative distribution of the



studied population. When finding gaps in the data and theories, I went back to the field and collected data to fill the conceptual gaps, to develop emerging categories, and to refine ideas. As a pivotal part of the theory development, this process of theoretical sampling was emphasized in both traditional grounded theory and the constructivist version. For this study, four biracial children were chosen by recommendation and in collaboration with the school principal and/or teachers. The participants were selected using purposeful sampling procedures. The sampling criteria of this study were:

- Participants were biracial children who enrolled in a multicultural school in South Korea. They attended their school during 2013 and 2014 academic years;
- Participants were born to international couples with a native Korean parent and a non-Korean parent who were perceived as racially different from typical native Koreans.
- In this sense, children of international couples were excluded if their non-Korean parents were Light-Yellow people who came from Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese, or Mongolian heritages.

I considered the research questions and feasibility in participant selection. It helped to create a sampling matrix to understand identity construction of biracial children with reference to the race and languages in use. The focal participants were exposed to at least two different languages from birth, and while they attended the multicultural schools, they were encouraged to learn foreign languages. Moreover, the peers and classmates that they interacted with in their daily routines spoke diverse languages and different variations of the Korean language. Race is defined differently across cultures and that primary language in use and language preferences can be changing especially with younger children. Thus, I kept in mind that it might not be appropriate to simply classify them into monolingual and bilingual categories. I admitted that race concept and primary language might be fluid to biracial children. The sampling



matrix (Table 3-5) conceptualizes how race and language can be intersected within each biracial participant in diverse pattern.

Table 3-5. Sampling Matrix of Race and Language.

Heritage	Primary Language	Korean	Community Language	Bilingual
White American & Korean				Hanna
Jordanian & Korean		Mustafa		
Vietnamese & Korean			Nghia	
White Russian & Korean				Ki-Jun

- In 2013, Hanna was a 4th grade girl with a White American father and a Korean mother. Her father was an English language instructor in South Korea. She was born in South Korea, and her family often visited to America to visit relatives on her father's side.
- In 2013, Mustafa was a 4th grade boy with a Jordanian father and a Korean mother. His father works at a company. He was born in South Korea. He stayed in Jordan for over one year and returned to South Korea. His family planned to permanently return to Jordan.
- In 2013, Nghia was a 4th grade boy with a Vietnamese mother and a Korean father. He was born and grew up in Vietnam. Her mother re-married to a South Korean, and Nghia moved to South Korea when he was 8 years old.
- In 2014, Ki-Jun was a 1st grade boy with a half White Russian mother and a Korean father. He was born in South Korea and fluctuated between Russia and South Korea back and forth.

The four focal participants were Hanna (a White American Korean biracial girl), Mustafa (a Jordanian Korean biracial boy), Nghia (a Vietnamese Korean biracial boy), and Ki-Jun (a Russian Korean boy). Their backgrounds were diverse in race and language.

## Method

Grounded theorists should put a focus on the studied phenomenon or process rather than on the setting itself. I asked "what is happening in this setting?" to answer



the research questions. The logic of grounded theory is to go back to data and move forward to analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Moving back and forth between data collection and data analysis helped me to grapple with the data and to avoid fitting them into expected findings. The data and interpretation were frequently revisited and continuously revised to answer the proposed question. Grounded theory emphasizes simultaneous data collection and analysis, but I need to describe methods of data collection and data analysis separately to explain each process in detail.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

For this study, I contacted the principal of the Cultural World School in the summer of 2013. I could be assigned to the 4th grade class as a researcher and teacher aide to observe the six fourth grade students in 2013. Also, I meet Ms. Oh, the school principal of the Future School to hear her experiences as an ex-teacher of Hanna and Mustafa in 2013. I came back to the Cultural World School to update data and to collect more data on June 9, 2014. The fifth grade class had only four student because two students left the school. I met the rest four students again every day for two weeks. From the next week, I came to the Future School to collect data on the other two participating children for three weeks. After five weeks, I needed to fluctuate between two schools until August 8.

During the summer of 2014, my son attended the Cultural World School as an eighth grade student. I became a PTA member of the school. My son, a 13-year old Korean English bilingual boy, socialized mainly with the English-speaking children, native Korean children, and Van Binh, a 17-year old Vietnamese boy. Since the school had about 50 regular students excluding foreign-born immigrant students in KSL programs, students knew each other and knew what happened at school. Every night,



my son told me what happened, who dated whom, and who told what in what contexts. I could develop interview and observation focus in detail, based on what my son informed me of.

Table 3-6. Overview of Data Collection Procedure in Sites.

Year	Period	Research Activities	School(s)
2013	6/17 ~6/19	Interviews with Teachers	CWS
	6/17 ~6/19	Interviews with Parents	CWS
	6/20	Interview with Principal of FS	FS
	6/17 ~7/17	Observation, Interview with Children	CWS
	7/18 ~ 7/31	Member Checking	CWS, FS
2014	6/9, 6/18, 6/20	Interviews with Teachers	CWS
	6/9 ~6/19	Observation, Interview with Children	CWS
	6/19, 6/20	Interviews with Teachers	FS
	6/24, 6/25	Interviews with Parents	FS
	6/20 ~7/10	Observation, Interview with Children	FS
	7/11~ 7/25	Observation, Interview with Children	CWS, FS
	7/28 ~8/1	Observation, Interview with Children	FS
	8/1 ~8/29	Member Checking	CWS, FS

(Notes: CWS: the Cultural World School, FS: the Future School)

For my observation and informal interview with children, I usually stayed from 8:30am to 4:20pm in the Cultural World School and 9:30am to 3:30pm in the Future School. I participated in school activities such as field trips, volunteering activities, and general cleaning beyond class observation. The data were collected and updated until themes were repeatedly emerging due to data saturation.

### Methods of Data Collection

Gathering rich data is crucial for a significant analysis. "Rich data are detailed, focused, and full" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 14). When gathering data, constructivist grounded theory researchers draw from various resources. "Observation, conversations, formal interviews, autobiographies, public records, organizational reports, respondents' diaries



and journals, and our own tape-recorded reflections" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 514) are examples of sources of rich data.

Table 3-7. Data Collection and Documentation.

Data Collection	Activities of Data Collection	Documentation
Interviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewing Teachers</li> <li>• Interviewing Parents</li> <li>• Interviewing Children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview Notes</li> <li>• Audio Recording files</li> <li>• Interview Transcripts</li> </ul>
Observing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing Regular Classes</li> <li>• Observing School Activities</li> <li>• Observing Social Interactions of the Focal Participants in Classrooms, Hallways, Social Hang-out place, Cafeteria, etc.</li> <li>• Observing School Environments including School Bulletin Boards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fieldnotes including Descriptive Notes &amp; Reflective Notes</li> <li>• Photos</li> <li>• Drawings</li> <li>• Audio Recording Files</li> </ul>
Collecting Archival Data (Extant Texts & Elicited Texts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collecting Students' Diaries, Notes, Worksheets, Drawings, &amp; Artifacts</li> <li>• Requesting School Official Documents and School Newsletters</li> <li>• Photographing Display Sheets of School Bulletin Boards</li> <li>• Searching School Websites, Local Newspapers, Handouts, &amp; Textbooks</li> <li>• Collecting Text Messages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photos</li> <li>• Photocopies</li> <li>• Printed Documents</li> <li>• Notes on School Information from Websites</li> <li>• Written Materials (School Newsletters, Handouts, &amp; Documents)</li> <li>• Text Messages</li> </ul>



Grounded theory researchers depend on many of the ethnographic tools to collect their data (Glesne, 2011). This study collected data from interviews, observations, documents, artifacts, and writing samples. From these extensive sources, data were recorded in the various forms (see Documentation in Table 3-7). The collection of different types of data sources helped guarantee data sources triangulation. The specific methods of data collection are described in the next sections.

## **Interviewing**

Charmaz (2006) explains how objectivist and constructivist approaches direct interviews. She notes,

The focus of the interview and the specific questions asked likely differs depending on whether the interviewer adopts a more constructivist, or more objectivist approach. A constructivist would emphasize eliciting the participant's definitions of terms, situations, and events and try to tap his or her assumptions, implicit meanings, and tacit rules. An objectivist would be concerned with obtaining information about chronology, events, settings, and behaviors. (Charmaz, 2006, p. 32)

Drawing on the constructivist approach, I conducted formal and informal interviews with teachers and parents, and informal interviews with children to gather their meaning, attitudes, perceptions and experiences. An interview is defined as a directed conversation (Lofland & Lofland, 1995), permitting an in-depth exploration of participants' interpretation. Beyond simple back-channeling of "uh huh" or "hum", the use of open-ended questions enabled me to ask for more information. When I need clarification from their narratives, I developed directed and focused questions during or after interviews.

By creating interview protocols with semi-structured open-ended questions, I intended to elicit significant stories or statement from the interviewees. The protocol for formal interviews with teachers and parents included the questions about the Korean



language in use, heritage language in use, English learning, cultural differences, racial issues, and identity statements (Appendix A and Appendix B). Formal interviews with teachers and parents were scheduled in the beginning stage of field research, which helped me to understand the basic information about the multicultural school and the focal biracial participants. Formal interviews with parents and teachers were audiotaped with their consents and later transcribed for analysis. The CWS fourth grade teacher, fifth grade teacher, FS homeroom teacher, the FS principal and four parents participated in formal interviews. Each formal interview lasted about 40 minutes to an hour. While conducting field work, informal interviews with teachers were conducted in teacher's offices, classrooms, or other social places. Likewise, informal interviews with parents were conducted when they visited the schools for counseling, volunteering, or PTA meetings. The time length of Informal interviews with teachers and children ranged from five minutes to an hour. In the interview notes, I wrote the social and conversational contexts as well as interview summaries. All the interviews were conducted in Korean and transcribed in a single spaced format. The interview transcripts were 92 pages in total.

Interview questions for students (Appendix C) covered the same issues, but had room for revision on the basis of the data from the interviews with teachers and parents. However, I preferred to conduct "informal" interviews with children in natural conversations or daily interactions in unstructured and less formal formats. My concern in informal interviews with the children was that I needed to interview them after sufficiently building rapport with them because the participating children were young and fragile. Informal interviews with biracial children were audio-recorded or when the



recorder was not prepared, I wrote the social and interactional contexts as well as interview summaries on interview notes (15 pages in total).

## **Observing**

I employed both direct observations and participant observations during my fieldwork. As I stayed in the field, my position was shifting from "outsider" to "insider" over time, which enabled my perspectives to be gradually changing. Just as ethnographers do in the fields, I sought detailed understanding of the multiple dimensions of daily routines within the studied contexts. Charmaz and Olesen (1997) note that the aim of such ethnographical observations is to describe and understand taken-for-granted assumptions.

I tried to understand about biracial children's schooling experiences in the give contexts. To do so, I compared the data from observation with other data sources and illuminated how social diversity was reflected in school diversity, how such school diversity played a role in racial and linguistic issues, and how social factors intersected within diverse identities of individuals. Thus, the locations of observations included regular classrooms, teacher's rooms, activity rooms, hallways, social hang-outs, the cafeterias, the counseling room, the playground, etc. (Appendix D).

When engaging in observations in a wide range, I wrote fieldnotes, developed theoretical categories, and kept observing in a cyclic mode. Guiding questions for observations provided basic ideas, but not limited my research. My fieldnotes included both descriptive notes and reflective notes about my observations (Creswell, 2007) such as my learning, feeling, and questioning for further investigation. The fieldnotes were recorded in three notebooks on the spot and later word-processed, amounting to 220 pages in total.



Table 3-8. The Focus and Guiding Questions for Observations.

Focus	Guiding Questions for Observations
Regular Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the physical arrangement such as seats?</li> <li>• How are the social interactions between teachers and students?</li> <li>• How are the social interactions between students?</li> <li>• What are participants' responses to learning materials?</li> <li>• Which languages are used?</li> <li>• Do social and cultural elements play a role in the interactions and responses?</li> <li>• How can the interactions and responses be related to race and language?</li> </ul>
School Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who leads the activities?</li> <li>• Who follows the leader(s)?</li> <li>• Which languages are used?</li> <li>• How does the power relation operate in the activities?</li> <li>• Do social and cultural elements play a role in the leadership?</li> <li>• How can the power relation be related to race and language?</li> </ul>
Recess Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who interacts with whom in hallways, classrooms, the social hang-out, the counseling room, the cafeteria, etc.?</li> <li>• How about physical setting and arrangement?</li> <li>• Which languages are used?</li> <li>• Do social and cultural elements play a role in the interactions?</li> <li>• How can the interactions be related to race and language?</li> </ul>
School Bulletin Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What postings are on bulletin boards?</li> <li>• Who writes and reads?</li> <li>• Which languages are used?</li> <li>• Do social and cultural elements play a role in the public announcements?</li> <li>• How can the use of bulletin boards be related to race and language?</li> </ul>



## **Collecting archival data**

People interact with texts or artifacts for specific purposes within social, cultural, historical, and situational contexts. Research investigators collect data through observations, interviews, documents, and artifacts (Glesne, 2011; Spradley, 1980) although interviews and observations are the most essential sources of rich data (Creswell, 2007). As such, Charmaz (2006) writes about the importance of archival data,

Qualitative researchers often use texts as supplementary sources of data. Ethnographers rely most heavily on their fieldnotes but make use of newsletters, records, and reports when they can obtain them. Comparisons between fieldnotes and written documents can spark insights about the relative congruence - or lack of it - between words and deeds. (p. 38)

Written documents raised questions and directions about my observations and interviews. They sometimes provided historical, personal, and group information. Despite the familiarity with written documents, artifacts also represented the story of the culture of the studied people and central phenomenon. Charmaz (2006) divides archival data into extant texts and elicited texts and approaches them in different ways.

Extant texts are the text data that helped to address the research questions although the texts were created for other purposes. Generally speaking, extant texts have long been valued because of their relative availability and seeming objectivity. Since such texts do not mirror reality, I kept in mind that extant texts, both documents and artifacts, were written or created to fulfill their purposes in specific sociocultural contexts. I collected school documents, school webpages, school newsletters (20 newsletters of the Cultural World School and 3 newsletters of the Future School), ten local newspaper articles about the schools, 12 student report cards, 25 class hand-outs, and students' writing samples such as 25 worksheets, 3 writing journals, and 102 diaries.



In contrast, elicited texts were attained when I request participants to create texts. In this sense, elicited texts showed 1) how I interacted with the participants with obvious purposes and 2) how the participants and I co-authored meaning and stories. This approach relied on the participants' literacy proficiency and language practices, and the elicited texts generated rich data which could bridge the gaps of the interviews or observation.

For this study, I had opportunities to elicit the identities of biracial children through various methods since I taught them or helped teacher as a class aide. As a part of class activities, I, along with their homeroom teachers, asked the students to send text messages to express themselves and future dreams. The students sent me text messages with short phrases showing themselves. After that, they needed to write or draw their dreams or future careers.

Another method of collecting elicit data was interactive feedback. As one of daily routines, elementary students are recommended to keep diaries and to submit them to their homeroom teachers. I collected their diaries and wrote my comments at the end of their diary, expecting that they would write their feeling to my comments. As a mother, I frequently wrote comments in Korean and/or English after reading my son's diary while he was an elementary pupil. He used to write his short responses in Korean and often in his broken English. It seemed to be useful for his language and literacy development as well as for building up familial ties with my son. I believed that such interactive journaling helped him to view this world from different angles and to compare his ideas with other's perspectives. From my personal experiences of motherhood, I implemented the same interactive journaling with my participants. Sometimes, they did not write



anything or sometimes wrote back with simple responses like "Thanks, teacher," "Yes, Ma'am," "I don't know, Ma'am" or emotions. However, they were eager to read my comments, and I could further chat with them about the topics. I collected ten diaries for interactive feedback from each participants.

The topic of these activities was their stories written in their diaries. Their ideas and prior knowledge that they bring to school were utilized and summoned in regular classes or social conversations. Their stories and perspectives could be central resources for further discussions and they could be easily engaged in their stories as agents of identity construction. School may be a site of cultural reproduction but allows students to manifest relative agency. In addition, these activities were connected to what Bakhtin (1986), a sociocultural theorist, terms "addressivity." Utterance, according to Bakhtin, is formed through the speaker's relation to others and presupposes the history of prior texts expressed by others in a chain of ongoing cultural and political moments. When the students submitted their diaries to homeroom teachers, they are already aware of addressivity: teachers as readers indicate the chain of textual dialogues; students and teachers are positioned within a dialogic community; likewise, I was positioned as a member of the dialogic community through collecting elicited texts. These activities established rapport with the biracial children and heard their inner voices in specific time and space.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

For this study, the interview narratives, written narratives, and my fieldnotes were analyzed to reveal the inner voices and to create the counter-narratives against mainstream discourses. Riessman (1993) notes that "narrative analysis takes as its object of investigation the story itself" (p. 1). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) assume that



individuals construct their identity through their stories of their daily life. They claim that through narratives, researchers can investigate participants' experiences and feeling in specific time, in specific space, and in contextualized relationships. Since individuals construct their experiences in personal narratives to claim identities and define their lives, narrative analysis allowed me to approach their identity construction and invited me to find themes from their narratives. Participants describe personal experiences about poverty and inequality in their narratives, which will be the focus of the narrative methods (Chase, 2005). Individuals' narratives are situated in social, cultural, and political contexts, which are interpreted through narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993).

Riessman (2008) proposes four different analytic approaches for the human sciences: structural analysis, dialogic/performance analysis, visual analysis, and thematic analysis. Structural approach of narrative analysis looks into the meaning and theoretical positions of the narratives on the textual and the cultural level. "Structural narrative analysis can generate insights that are missed when interpretation concentrates narrowly on what is said, ignoring how content is organized by a speaker" (Riessman, 2008, p. 101). Dialogic/performance narrative analysis expands the attention to how talk is produced among speakers, focusing on the difficulty in analyzing accounts that are co-constructed. Visual narrative analysis is a developing area focusing on all visual media (art, video, and digital media) alongside spoken and written texts. Lastly, thematic narrative analysis is most fitting to classic qualitative methods, theorizing and identifying common thematic elements across participants, events, and actions.



This study depended mainly on thematic narrative analysis, but did not exclude the rest of them: structural approach was employed to interpret conversation structure and discourse context; visual approach was needed to analyze drawings and text messages. In particular, Riessman's thematic approach to narrative analysis was useful to categorize accounts and aspects of accounts that are being narrated. Gibson and Brown (2009) suggest that narrative analysis should be directed toward working through discursive themes across interviews and transcriptions.

Theme is a key aspect of qualitative analysis. Thematic analysis refers to "the process of analyzing data according to commonalities, relationships and differences across a data set" (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 127). Gibson and Brown (2009) state that themes are useful in constructing narrative because themes can be knots in the webs of lived experiences and recontextualize the taken-for-granted through lenses of commonality, difference and relation. In thematic analysis, I coded the data, read coded data thoroughly, and looked at what was at the core of the codes and saw how they were connected to other factors. In this procedure, I was encouraged in finding themes from the data and coding. As grounded theorists do, I was weaving through the data and searching for themes to build a theory in the substantive area.

There are three major goals in thematic analysis: the first goal is to examine commonalities by categorizing all the data in the form of "an example of X"; the second goal is to examine differences by finding the peculiarities and contrasts in a data set; the third goal is to examine relationships in order to look at the ways in which individual characteristics relate to general themes. To identify major themes, subthemes, and



metathemes through similarity, differences, causality, etc., Gibson and Brown (2009) provide five techniques, which are not exhaustive:

- Researchers can see the commonality across a data set when something occurs repeatedly.
- Researchers can find relevance with research interests when something is said with emphasis such as the use of emphatic speech or revealing of strong emotions.
- Researchers can understand how and why people behave when participants easily agree or go unnoticed.
- Researchers can be interested when people disagree.
- Researchers can see the mechanism of the studied worlds when mistakes occur and resolutions are proposed.

Thematic analysis is used in various data analysis methods including grounded theory, case study, and discourse analysis (Boyatzis, 1998, Gibson & Brown, 2009). During and after collecting data on the central phenomenon, grounded theorists analyze the data for conceptual categories, link the categories to themes and a tentative theory, and then collect more data to see if the theory fits (Glesne, 2011). Following these principles, I began data analysis simultaneously while collecting data. The beginning step of data analysis was to read the data repeatedly prior to coding. The process of data analysis was not discrete steps, but a spiral contour (Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2011). The basic process of the data analysis for this study relied on Charmaz's (2006) constructivist approach to grounded theory to find themes and to build up a substantive-level theory. The first analytic turn in grounded theory is coding. "To code is to create a category that is used to describe a general feature of data; a category that pertains to a range of data examples" (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 130). Grounded theory coding



forms links between data collection and emergent theory and has specific steps of initial coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding.

The logic of initial coding is to compare data with data to learn about the research participants' views. The process of constant comparative methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) includes comparison of the similarities and differences in and among the data. In this coding, codes should fit the data in an inductive way. Rather than applying pre-existing categories, initial coding allowed me to grapple with collected data. I used gerunds during initial coding to have strong sense of action and process as Glaser (1978) recommends. For example, compare two sets of code names: experiencing versus experience, stating versus statement, and gazing versus gaze. Gerunds lead to a strong sense of action and sequence, while the nouns make these actions topics (Charmaz, 2006).

Initial coding (Appendix E) is involved in coding word-by-word, line-by-line, or incident-to-incident. When I was immersed in the studied world, I depended on line-by-line coding to analyze the data. Sometimes, I used incident-to-incident coding to have insight into observations of daily routines through comparing incidents, i.e., incidents including different people in similar settings or the same people on different days. In addition, through using in vivo codes that preserved the everyday terms of the participants, I unpacked underlying meaning regarding the identity construction.

Focused coding (Appendix F) is more selective and conceptual than initial steps of word-by-word, line-by-line, and incident-by-incident coding. In this step of focused coding, I selected the most significant and/or frequent codes from the initial coding. I determined the adequacy of the codes and sifted codes to categorize the data in this



phase. This was not a linear process, and I returned to earlier data and compared them. In this coding stage, I read through the initial codes repeatedly and developed categories. I collected the initial codes from the data and grouped them under developed categories. Each focused code had the supporting data, the initial codes, and data sources. I extracted, for example, "asking Jin-Hee of the meaning of 'active'" and "being blamed by Jin-Hee for not knowing the meaning" from class observation fieldnotes (06/20/2013); "being asked not to interrupt Hanna's talk" and "being treated differently from Hanna's interruption by Jin-Hee" from class observation fieldnotes (06/20/2013); "being regarded as problematic by Jin-Hee" from the interview with Jin-Hee (06/20/2013); and "being forced to clean by Jin-Hee," "cleaning every day," and "complaining forced cleaning" from interview with Mustafa's mother (06/24/2014). These codes were categorized into a focused code of "being insulted by the homeroom teacher." In the same ways, I developed other focused codes such as "being insulted by the math teacher," "being disciplined by Ms. Ahn," and "being excluded by the Chinese teacher."

Theoretical coding (Appendix G) is used to identify possible relationships between categories developed from focused coding. Theoretical codes should be integrative and conceptualizing to form an analytic story in a theoretical direction, using organizational schemes such as similarities, differences, conditions, and consequences. In this sophisticated level of coding, I connected the codes to substantive codes in a coherent manner to theorize the concepts.

Through the constructivist process of data analysis, the narratives of biracial children's were analyzed and formed their own storylines about how they constructed



their identities and how their identities were constructed. Their stories were woven with their voices and my positional perspectives, which sought to challenge mainstream discourse about them. The findings will be reported and represented according to the themes emerged from the data.

### **Trustworthiness**

Validity is an issue that is frequently debated in qualitative research. Qualitative validation should not be viewed from traditional quantitative approaches to validation (Creswell, 2007). Using quantitative terms is not congruent with and adequate for qualitative works (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner & Seinmetz, 1991). As long as we choose interpretivism, believing that meaning is socially constructed, there cannot be true and correct interpretations (Crotty, 1998). Lincoln and Guba (1985) use an alternative term of "trustworthiness" that is more appropriate for naturalistic research. Creswell (2007) describes eight strategies to increase credibility or trustworthiness: 1) prolonged engagement and persistent observation, 2) triangulation, 3) peer review and debriefing, 4) negative case analysis, 5) clarification of researcher bias, 6) member checking, 7) rich and thick description, and 8) external audit. It is not necessary to attend to all the eight means of increasing trustworthiness (Glesne, 2011).

Among them, this study adopted the strategies of clarification of researcher bias, triangulation, and member checking. First of all, in the beginning stage of research design, I wrote a subjectivity statement to describe my personal history with lived agonies and passions. Merriam (1988) states that clarifying researcher bias from the beginning of the study is important because the readers can understand the researcher's position and assumptions in the inquiry. I clarified my position and limitations as a daughter of a family who fluctuated between rural culture and city



culture, as a Korean female with 11 years of teaching experience in mainstream schools, and as the mother of a bicultural and bilingual boy. Such experiences, prejudices, and orientation shaped my interpretation.

While collecting data in the field, I used multiple data-collection methods such as formal interviews, informal interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and collection of archival data. Also, the focal participants were four biracial children, but this study had multiple participants such as school principals, teachers, parents, and peers beyond the focal biracial children. Multiple data collection methods and sources from multiple participants contributed to triangulation of the study.

The last strategy for trustworthiness in this study was member checking during the stage of data analysis. I solicited participants' views and interpretation while reviewing data such as the interview transcripts or fieldnotes. Lincoln and Guba (1985) view member checking to be "the most critical technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). The participants and I could represent the interpretation of how the identities of the participating biracial children were constructed in their social contexts.

In short, this study employed the term of "trustworthiness" rather than using the quantitative perspectives and terms. To increase the trustworthiness of this qualitative research, I used the strategy of clarification of researcher bias in the stage of research design, triangulation in the stage of data collection, and member checking in the stage of data analysis. These strategies increased trustworthiness and credibility of this study.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has outlined methodological framework I will employ to collect and analyze data. This study is designed, based on the methodological congruence among the four components of epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and



methods. In this chapter, I have briefly discussed why a qualitative research is appropriate and how constructionism as the epistemology and social constructivism as the theoretical perspective will elucidate my research. I described my subjectivity statement in the section of methodology. Also, I provided the findings of the pilot study, site selection, a description of student population, and participants. This study will incorporate multiple data sources through interviewing and observing participants, and collecting archival data. To generate analysis of the collected data in systematic methods and process, this study will employ a constructivist approach to grounded theory in narrative analysis and thematic analysis. Finally, I described how trustworthiness can be established by employing multiple strategies in the research process.



## CHAPTER 4 FOUR STORIES OF PARTICIPANTS

### Overview

In order to understand the identities of biracial children in South Korea, it is important to know who the four participants were in terms of their families, race, languages, and schooling experiences. This chapter provides the background profiles and stories of the four biracial children addressed in this study.

Table 4-1. Summary of Participants' Backgrounds.

	Hanna	Nghia	Mustafa	Ki-Jun
Father	White American	Korean	Jordanian	Korean
Mother	Korean	Vietnamese	Korean	Korean & White Russian
Siblings	1 sister ( Jo Jessica)	1 brother (Le Vinh Dung)	2 brothers (Abdulla, Sami)	1 brother (Sergey)
Nationality	Dual	Vietnamese	Dual	Dual
Birthplace	S. Korea (2003)	Vietnam (2003)	S. Korea (2002)	S. Korea (2006)
Residence	S. Korea	Vietnam →S. Korea (2011)	S. Korea →Jordan (2008) →S. Korea (2010)	S. Korea →Russia (2008) →S. Korea (?) →Russia (?) →S. Korea (?) →Russia (June/2012) →S. Korea (June/2013)
Language Background	English Korean	Vietnamese Korean	Korean (Arabic)	Korean Russian
Schooling	Korean K → Korean PS → CWS	Vietnamese K → Vietnamese PS → FS → CWS	Korean K → Jordanian PS → Korean PS → CWS → FS	FS

Notes: K: Kindergarten, PS: Public School, CWS: the Cultural World School, FS: the Future School.



Each biracial student had a unique history. They were sometimes interconnected across the selected two multicultural schools. They came to meet each other in a specific space during a specific time, and some of them left to attend other schools and met other children. The basic profiles of the participants are summarized in Table 4-1. This chapter describes the children's racial backgrounds, familial backgrounds, linguistic backgrounds, and life/schooling experience. The sections below present the basic profiles and schooling experiences of four biracial students.

### **Hanna, an American Korean Girl**

I met Hanna, an American Korean girl, in 2013 when she was a fourth grade student in the Cultural World School during the time of this study. Hanna was born to an international couple in South Korea. Hanna's family consisted of her White American father, her mother, and her younger sister, Jessica. Her father had taught English in colleges or language institutes for more than ten years in South Korea. Hanna's mother, a Korean housewife, had studied in America and France, majoring in fine arts. Hanna had dual nationalities, Korean and U.S. citizenship. Hanna had fine skin, brown eyes, and dark brown hair. She was quite tall for Korean girls and boys when she was a fourth grader. Her physical appearance showed that she was an Anglo White and Korean. Unlike Hanna, who looked half-White and half-Korean, Jessica, her younger sister, looked more Anglo-White and less Korean.

Ms. Ahn, a senior school teacher who had been working there since 2006, said that Hanna was a "four dimensional (사차원)" girl. I had no idea of what *four dimensional* meant at the beginning of my research. The Korean expression is commonly used to describe a "weird" person or a person who does not fit into any



specific group. The school principal and Ms. Ahn of the Cultural World School were the gatekeepers during the initial stage for my fieldwork of this study. Ms. Ahn was kind to me, but I felt like cowering whenever we made eye contact. Her gaze was aggressive, and her voice and demeanor were authoritarian. Whenever we talked, I wanted to run away from her. I was nervous and uncomfortable around her. I felt from the first impression that she was capable of a hot and violent temper.

Hanna enrolled in a public elementary school when she was seven years old. She dropped out of the school and transferred to the Cultural World School in 2010 when she was a first grade student. There was a bulletin board in the fourth grade classroom. A passage titled "song of meal" was posted in Jin-Hee's handwriting. Next to it, there was a sheet of paper listing classroom rules that students should follow. It was Hanna's handwriting, not typed or written by Jin-Hee. My guess was that Jin-Hee had asked Hanna to write the rules and post the sheet on the bulletin board.

As a student leader or reliable judge, she played important roles in school on many occasions. While staying at the Cultural World School for the observation, I never saw Hanna scolded by teachers. Hanna was getting along well with other students, and other students liked her. In her reflective writing, she actively represented herself as *Mulan*, a heroic individual, after watching the movie, *Mulan 1*.

Title: *Mulan 1*

It was so fantastic. It was impressive that Mulan went to the battlefield on behalf of her father. She was so brave. Mulan is like me. She and I share many things in common. Cri-kee was so cute in the movie. I enjoyed the movie. (Hanna's Korean Journal, 06/03/2013)

Since there were no other girls in her grade, Hanna did not have a female friend. The best female friend was Mi-Do, a third grade Japanese Korean. On July 1, Hanna



and I had lunch together and then went to Cafe *Sarang*, a popular hang-out. When we entered the room, Mi-Do was drinking Capri Sun. We all sat at a table, and everything was going well until Hanna talked about Hello Kitty.

Hanna: The inventor of Hello Kitty burned our Korean national flags. Japanese people who hate Korea make Hello Kitty. Not long ago, Japanese people invaded Dok Island<sup>1</sup>

Me: No, it is impossible for Japanese people to invade there. You may have got the wrong information.

Hanna: I am correct. It's 100% true. I hate Hello Kitty (with a sigh). (07/01/2013)

I was quite shocked to see Hanna reveal anti-Japanese resentment based on inaccurate information in front of her best friend, Mi-Do, who had half Japanese heritage. Meanwhile, Hanna frequently talked about America. She talked to me about American public schools and colleges.

The school teachers told me that Hanna was balanced in English and Korean. The teachers believed that Hanna learned English in a familial context because her home language was English. Indeed, her father spoke English at home and taught English at his work and Hanna's mother, a Korean native speaker, spoke English fluently. Hanna claimed that her home language was English. Hanna lived with her parents and younger sister on the second floor, and her mother's parents lived on the first floor in the same house. She spoke English at home on the second floor and spoke Korean with her grandparents on the first floor. Nevertheless, English was her primary language before she went to the kindergarten at a church that her parents attended.

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<sup>1</sup> Dok Island is a set of islets that both Korea and Japan claim sovereignty over.



Her English teacher told me that Hanna was the most fluent, praising Hanna for her English skills and good manners. Wondering if the fourth grade English classes were too easy, I asked Hanna:

Me: Which is your favorite class?

Hanna: English. I like English. I can get high scores in English because that is my language. I must study science very hard because I want to become an animal doctor, but I like English the most. (06/24/2013)

When the math teacher asked students which number was larger,  $\frac{4}{4}$  or 1, Hanna chose 1 and held to her answer while a couple of students strongly asserted that  $\frac{4}{4}$  was larger. When asked which number,  $\frac{4}{4}$  or  $\frac{5}{5}$ , was larger, Hanna insisted that  $\frac{5}{5}$  was larger. She did not change her answer in response to peer pressure. Nghia, a Korean Vietnamese boy, who was best in math, initially answered that both were the same, but abandoned his answer in response to Hanna and sat silently. The math teacher respected Hanna's attitude and encouraged her to explain her answer with confidence.

Gradually, I was curious as to why she was described as a 'four dimensional' girl. The expression is a derogatory term to describe a maladjusted individual. Hanna did not have any behavior problems and actively participated in classes. During reading time, she picked up books from the media center or class library and read silently, unlike other boys who made noises and shouted around the room. She sat in her designated seat or around a corner of the library, obviously concentrating on her reading despite the noise.

When I asked Jin-Hee why some teachers had used 'four dimensional' to describe Hanna, she smiled and answered, "It's because Hanna is so independent. Liam and Hanna are both independent, but Hanna is more so." Describing



independence as "four dimensional" implied that independence was not valued in Korean mainstream culture. Nevertheless, the White culture of a White Korean biracial student was an acceptable kind of cultural pluralism. Hanna was definitely respected in many cases as part of the school's multiculturalism.

In the summer of 2014, I came back to the Cultural World School to update my data. Hanna had grown up a lot. She looked mature. On the first day of my observation, I heard that Hanna was elected vice president of student government. The student president was Ji-Sung, the boy who said Hanna was the prettiest girl in the school. Later, my son let me know that Ji-Sung was the son of the school principal and the math teacher who taught math to elementary students. All the students knew that Ji-Sung was their school principal's son, and the social status of Ji-Sung was absolutely secure as a student leader. The same was seemingly true for Hanna.

Nevertheless, it was not true that everything was going well with Hanna. Min-Su, a native Korean boy was very gentle and nice, but Nghia and Jahongir frequently teased her. Throughout 2014, she was frequently hurt or teased. Both boys were corporally punished by the teacher for teasing Hanna, but did not stop teasing. I was embarrassed with the unexpected situation. Hanna's position seemed socially secure, but she was beginning to be teased by the boys.

Fifth grade English courses were too easy for Hanna. For example, she needed to work on coloring or writing simple sentences, which did not help to improve her English proficiency. She believed that she was a bilingual, saying that English was 'her' language. I wondered what happened to the so-called "balanced bilingual" when she did not have opportunities to learn grade-appropriate English. Hanna was pretty confident in



speaking in English, and she used to interact with several English-native students at school. While my son and Jessica conversed in English, Jessica asked my son to change the language. Language attrition occurred to Jessica. “Richard 오빠, can we talk in Korean? I like Korean. 오빠, 우리 한국말로 해요. 오빠.” Hanna stared at Jessica with an angry look, and told my son that he needed to speak English with Jessica. She tried to keep English in her and Jessica’s lives, insisting that they were AmeKorean<sup>2</sup>.

The fifth grade homeroom teacher was a male teacher majoring in ESL in college. He encouraged her to write her diary in English, and Hanna began to write an English diary on April 7. She wrote her spoken English in her diary, using colloquial expressions and an informal structure, because she did not learn how to write in English. Her diaries had lots of obvious errors in capitalization, punctuations, and spelling<sup>3</sup>. On top of that, her English writing showed code-mixing of two languages: she kept Korean diary format in date and title; in the middle of English sentences, she wrote Korean names or a cartoon title in Korean. In short, she code-switched to support written communication.

While I observed at the school, I never saw Hanna discouraged or punished by the teachers. Even though she was recognized as a ‘four dimensional’ girl, her appearance was preferred, her home culture was positively accepted, and her home

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<sup>2</sup> Hanna refused to use "American Korean" because it is a combination of two "separate" words. Instead, she used the term "AmeKorean" to better express herself.

<sup>3</sup> a sample of Hanna’s English diaries (04/21/2014)

7 월 21 일 날씨: 맑음

제목: 홍장미의 비밀에 다가오는 그림자

when I came home from school I watcht 홍장미의 비밀에 다가오는 그림자 with my phone. it was detective conan seson 12. so it's pretty new in korea. anyway at this episode 홍장미 turns to 안시호 and 양세라 is in this episode. and it's very fun. and 박세모 sends the vidio of 안시호 to 유명한 and 안기준 sees the vidio and 안시호 had the mystery train ring like the on 홍장미 had. so tomarrow when I get home I'm going to watch 철흑의 미스터리 트레인.



language was taught as an important subject. She was respected as a balanced bilingual and reliable student leader. She was therefore a model biracial girl. She planned to go to college in America and study veterinary medicine to become an animal doctor.

### **Nghia, a Korean Vietnamese Boy**

Before I was assigned to the fourth grade classroom as a teacher's aide and researcher in 2013, Ms. Ahn told me, "Nghia is smart, but...Yes, right. He is smart, but..." I was waiting for the next description after 'but', but she stopped talking. When I visited the Future School to interview the school principal a couple of days later, Mrs. Oh remembered Nghia. "He was smart and very good at learning, but umm...umm...." She stopped talking, too. I was curious about the missing words.

Le Vinh Nghia was born as a second son to a Korean father and a Vietnamese mother. His appearance was somewhere between Korean and South Eastern Asian. He was slightly short for fourth grade boys. Generally speaking, biracial children are of dual nationalities, but Nghia was legally classified as a foreign-born immigrant child because he did not have Korean nationality. His legal name was Vietnamese, not Korean. Nothing was told about his father except that he was a native South Korean man. I did not ask why Nghia's father left the family and why Nghia did not have a Korea nationality.

Before moving to Korea, Nghia lived with his mother and older brother, Le Vinh Dung, in Vietnam. Their hometown was a one hour drive from Hai Phong. His mother was a college graduate and a devote Christian. She wanted to make a new life in South Korea, and she paid approximately \$20,000 USD to a marriage broker to re-marry a South Korean man. In 2011, she re-married, and the family moved to South Korea. Her



new South Korean husband was a retired seaman. Nghia's mother was in her thirties, and his step father was in his sixties when they married. As soon as she re-married, her Korean husband registered her as his legal wife, and she could easily have Korean nationality thanks to his sponsorship. It was not often the case because old Korean husbands tend to fear that young wives will run away after getting Korean citizenship. Her two boys were not sponsored or adopted by the step father, so Nghia and his brother, Vinh Dung, remained Vietnamese.

His mother rented a basement to run a karaoke bar. Later, she opened a Vietnamese restaurant on the first floor of the same building. His step father helped her with the two businesses. Nghia's parents had to work late on weekdays and weekends. The restaurant gradually became a meeting place for her Vietnamese community. Nghia's mother was satisfied with the Cultural World School and believed that Nghia performed well there. She did not transfer him to a regular public school after exit from the KSL programs. Instead, she allowed him to be placed in the regular curriculum class.

While Nghia lived in Vietnam, he almost completed the second grade in a public elementary school. When Nghia arrived in South Korea in November of 2011, he could not understand Korean. His mother sent him to the Future School, expecting that he adapted himself to the Korean language and schooling before entering a regular Korean public school. He attended the school for two months before leaving to attend the Cultural World School in 2012. There, he was placed in the pull-out KSL program. While he learned his heritage language, Korean, as a second language for one year, he almost skipped the third grade learning in 2012. Although he exited KSL placement and was mainstreamed, he was still a Korean language learner. He met Jahongir, an



Uzbekistani boy in the KSL courses in 2012, and they progressed to the fourth grade in 2013.

Min-Su, Hanna, and Mustafa were current students, and Nghia, Jahongir, and Liam were new fourth grade students in 2013. The three existing students and Liam had native Korean accents while Nghia and Jahongir were Korean language learners. Nghia and Jahongir usually got along well with Liam, a British Korean boy, who dropped out of a public school because his other classmates teased him. The three boys helped and played with each other during their classroom activities or during recess time, even though Liam tended to be relatively independent. Nghia tended to play games with a loud and assertive voice, and Jahongir would support or follow him. Liam frequently joined in their games. Sometimes, Min-Su participated, but Hanna and Mustafa rarely took part in the boys' games. Nghia acted authoritatively with the other boys, who served as his troop. Nghia's voice was strong enough to compel other children to listen and obey him.

During the social studies class, Mustafa asked Jin-Hee about the differences between 'natural environments' and 'cultural environment', but she did not hear him. As soon as Mustafa asked again, Nghia shouted, "Shut up, Mustafa!" All of us were surprised by his loud voice. Mustafa looked uncomfortable. Surprisingly, the rest of students and Jin-Hee returned to doing what they were doing as if nothing had happened. Their responses indicated that such an incident frequently occurred during the classes. Nghia frequently bullied Mustafa. When Mustafa reported it to the homeroom teacher, Nghia used to revenge on Mustafa. Tension was rising. Mustafa was frequently at a loss about what to do and asked questions. Whenever Mustafa



asked questions, Nghia or Jahongir got irritated. I felt like I was sitting in a multicultural tinderbox.

Most young female teachers working there did not have sufficient teaching experience and were not skillful in dealing with Nghia. The fifth grade homeroom teacher described Nghia as the bully. He added that Nghia attracted more attention from teachers than any other student. While collaborating or playing with older boys, Nghia socialized with them in a good manner. Also, he was docile in front of Ms. Ahn, his P.E teacher. He suddenly changed his attitude into an innocent angel. Nghia wrote in his diary, "I am always nervous when the P.E. teacher looks at me or asks a question" (Nghia's diary, 04/29/2014). Likewise, his attitudes were different with male teachers: he was docile with the fifth grade male homeroom teacher; he was gentle with the school principal. He was a high-achiever in math and was proud of it. He was affable with the female math teacher, who was the wife of the school principal.

Nghia's name was Vietnamese. Most school documents read only 'Nghia', not his full name. Le was his family name, Vinh was his middle name, and Nghia was his given name. He stressed that *Nghia* is monosyllabic in Vietnamese. He demonstrated repeatedly how to pronounce it, and I mimicked. Because the Korean language does not allow such sound chain, *Nghia* is tri-syllabic in Korean, which was why his name appeared only as "Nghia (응히아)" (without his family and middle names) on school documents.

On the first day when I met Nghia again in 2014, he said to himself:

Nghia: Mustafa was not here...umm....

Jahongir: Right. He is gone.



Min-Su: I cannot believe it.

Me: (looking at Nghia) How do you feel?

Hanna: (interrupting) Peaceful! Very peaceful! But, (pointing to Nghia and Jahongir) these two boys are a nuisance. (06/10/2014)

I was looking at their faces to find out what they were thinking, but they stopped talking. During the 2014 academic year, the fifth grade class had four students, Hanna, Min-Su, Nghia, and Jahongir. At a glance, from an outsider's perspective, they interacted with each other in a friendly manner. On June 17, I taught them because the fifth grade homeroom teacher was busy meeting with the principal. Shortly after my tutoring began, Nghia and Jahongir lost interest. Hanna and Min-Su asked me to move over to the table and to tutor them more closely. They asked questions, and I tutored them. Nghia complained,

Nghia: Why do you tutor only Hanna? All teachers love Hanna.

Me: Come and join us.

Nghia: I don't like Korean History. It is not interesting to me.

Me: So, do you....

Nghia: (interrupting) Always Hanna, Hanna. Why don't you study with me? I should learn. (06/17/2014)

He hurt my feelings, and I realized that I excluded him first. I imagined that he frequently experienced such exclusion, watching teachers care so intently for Hanna. His behavior could have been a yearning for the same attention and care that the other students experienced.

In 2014, children and teachers called Nghia "Kim Sung-Jin (김성진)." I wondered why people called Nghia the Korean name, "Sung-Jin." The fifth grade homeroom teacher explained:



I cannot remember when he changed his name, but one day in this semester, he said that he changed his name to Sung-Jin. So, I called him 'Sung-Jin.' (Interview with the fifth grade homeroom teacher, 06/12/2014)

The fifth grade homeroom teacher could not remember when Nghia changed his Vietnamese name, but I found some clues in Hanna's diaries.

I taught English to the boys because I heard that our English teacher would be late. I planned to teach how to introduce ourselves in English. I demonstrated my introduction in English. And then, I asked Nghia to introduce himself, but he was strange. He said, "My name is 'I don't know.' I'm from 'I don't know.'" And he said, "I want to change my name." I asked again and again, but he repeated the same answers. He stared blankly.... (translated Hanna's Korean diary, 03/10/2014)

Nghia expressed anguish about his name and national origin. He was named after his stepfather, even though his stepfather never legally adopted him. The self-made Korean name was readily accepted among classmates and teachers. He threw away all his notebooks and diaries bearing his Vietnamese name. He wrote his Korean name, 김성진, on his belongings: his textbooks, notebooks, pencil case, and ping-pong paddle. Because of the name, my son regarded Nghia as a Korean boy who spoke "strange Korean."

Though Nghia played mainly with his classmates or the elementary children in 2013, he spent most of his lunchtime with Vietnamese boys in 2014. At school, Vietnamese students united their group around Van Binh. Nghia sat near Van Binh, and four to six Vietnamese students usually sat at the end of the table near the entrance. My son liked Van Binh; he liked Van Binh's smile and gentle demeanor. One day in July, my son sat beside Van Binh, a seat usually occupied by Nghia or other Vietnamese students. Seeing the seat beside Van Binh occupied, Nghia asked my son if he was Vietnamese, and then urged my son to go away. My son and Nghia quarreled,



My son: Sung-Jin! You can find another seat. Van Binh is not your brother. uhuh?

Nghia: He is Vietnamese.

My son: So what? This little boy! Are you Vietnamese?

Nghia: .... (07/04/2014)

Holding his lunch, Nghia stood for a while. Finally, instead of leaving, Nghia brought a chair and sat at the edge of the table. He always sat with Vietnamese students in the cafeteria and requested an eighth grade boy (my son) to give up his seat so that Nghia could sit together with the Vietnamese group. He spoke both Vietnamese and Korean with them.

Nghia was a bilingual, more specifically, a sequential bilingual- child. His mother tongue was Vietnamese, and his primary language was Vietnamese. He was placed in the KSL programs in two multicultural schools, in 2011 and 2012. Korean became his second language and social language for communicating with his friends. He learned how to read and write in Vietnamese in Vietnam. He learned how to read and write Korean as a second language learner. His home languages in South Korea were Korean and Vietnamese: Korean with his step father and Vietnamese with his mother and brother. The Korean teachers considered him a Korean language learner rather than a bilingual.

Although he exited KSL level at the end of the 2012 academic year, his Korean needed improvement. Korean, an agglutinative language, does not have linguistic affiliation with Vietnamese, a tonal language. Korean is complicated in a variety of honorific forms, postpositions in case, and verbal conjugation in terms of tense, aspect, voice, and mode. His Korean did not reach the grade-appropriate proficiency level. He was definitely good at math, but he struggled to use academic words in math. He



understood the concepts quickly, but could not pair the terms with the concepts. The teachers did not explain how these academic words are linguistically coined or combined in the inventory of Sino-vocabulary.

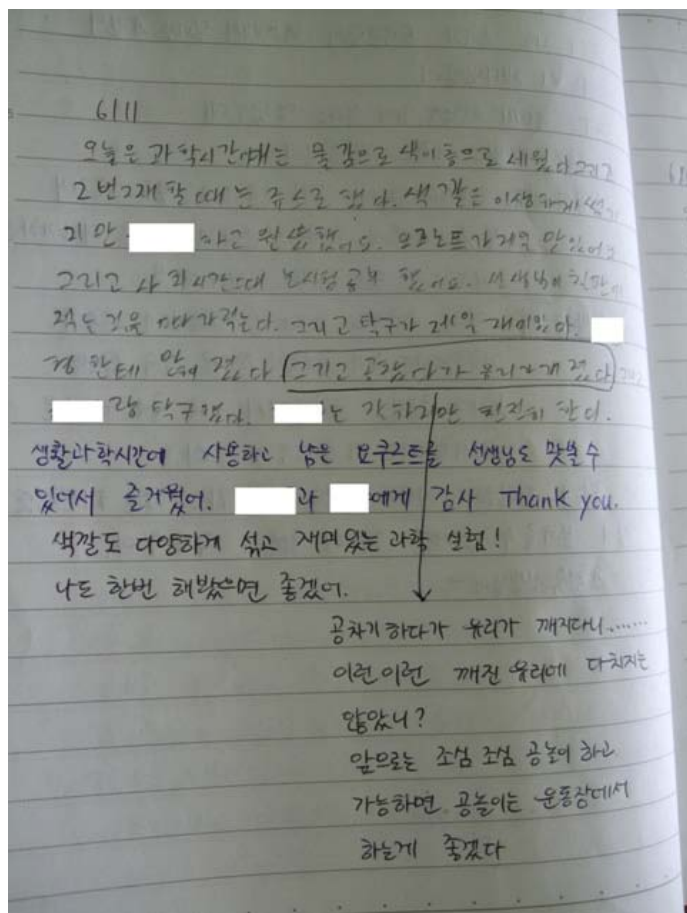


Figure 4-1. Nghia's Diary and My Comments. Photo courtesy of author. (Note: Real names are erased).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> We did a science experiment with water colors. And, we did the second experiment with juice. I mixed the colors and drank it with Jahongir. Yogurt was delicious. In social study class, I prepared for the final exam. I wrote after what the teacher wrote on the blackboard. I like playing ping pong game. I lost a ping pong game with a six-grader. And I kicked a ball and broke a window. Later, I played a ping pong game with Min-Su. Hanna is good at playing ping pong, but very slow.

My comments:

- 1) I am happy to taste the yogurt that you gave me. Thank you.
- 2) You mixed the juice of different colors. Lots of fun! I like to try it.
- 3) Whew...broke the window...aren't you hurt with the broken glass? Be careful! I like you to kick a ball in playground, not in hallway.



Nghia rarely read books. It was not easy to find Vietnamese books. The Korean books that he could read were picture books, written for kindergarten children. Teachers never read books aloud to children. When I saw him again in 2014, he, a fifth grade student, still read picture books. Jin-Hee's policy in 2013 was that writing a diary should be at student's discretion, and Nghia rarely wrote diary. However, Nghia's fifth grade homeroom teacher required all the students to write diaries on a regular basis, and Nghia had to write his diary. His written Korean was still in the language developmental stage in terms of postpositions, honorific forms, word choice, and verbal conjugations.

Despite many developmental errors in his diaries, teachers provided only simple feedback for his writing. Teachers did not utilize them as resource for further learning by responding with positive and corrective feedback. I wrote some comments (Figure 4-1), and, the next day, I got a rapid response from him. Rather than turning in his diary to his homeroom teacher, he brought his diary notebook to me, saying "Please read and check my diary." I advised him that he should submit his diary to the homeroom teacher next time. When I returned it to him after writing my comments, he was quick to run away and read the comments alone at the corner of the classroom. The next day, he turned in his diary to the homeroom teacher, and asked me if I would read and comment on his diary. It seemed that he was quite motivated and had been longing for feedback from his teachers. I guessed that the missing words after 'he is smart' were related to bad reputations about him. He was smart and motivated, and he used to suddenly change his attitudes. His dream was to be a doctor to make money.

### **Mustafa, a Jordanian Korean Boy**

Mustafa was born to an international couple in South Korea. Mustafa's family consisted of his father, his mother, and two younger brothers, Abdulla and Sami. He



had a Jordanian Muslim father who spoke Arabic as his primary language. Mustafa's Jordanian grandfather was involved in trading between Jordan and Germany when Mustafa's father was young. His father grew up as a global child, transitioning back and forth between two countries as a result of his grandfather's work. He worked for a trading company near Seoul, South Korea. Mustafa's mother was a native Korean who grew up in a rural area. She graduated from university because her parents held high expectations for the education of her and her siblings.

Mustafa was short and thin. He looked weak. His thick eye lashes and brown eyes were quite impressive at the first glance. Mustafa's appearance showed that he was never a physically 'typical' Korean. His younger brothers, Abdulla and Sami, looked more Korean and less Arabic than Mustafa. The most peculiar thing about his physical appearance was that his mouth was dry. He was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) when he was young. His ADHD medicine not only lowered his appetite but also caused his mouth to be watery. He also preferred wearing a jacket or long-sleeved shirt, even in summer.

His family lived in the city where the trading company was located. Mustafa went to a kindergarten in South Korea. Afraid of the racial discrimination that their children might face in the future, his parents decided to leave South Korea. They moved to Jordan at the end of 2008 when Mustafa was six years old. Mustafa attended a public elementary school in Jordan for one year. His mother, who did not speak Arabic, realized that she could not support her three children in Jordan. She needed to depend on Mustafa's father even when buying school supplies. Language was the biggest obstacle.



Mustafa's ADHD condition was getting worse in Jordan. She persuaded her husband to go back to South Korea. They moved back to the city where they had lived and sent Mustafa to a public school. He was a first grader in Jordan, but he repeated first grade in South Korea. While Mustafa attended the school, he was placed in a regular class, not a special education track, because his ADHD was not serious enough for him to be eligible for special education services and because his condition was getting better after they returned to their hometown. The homeroom teacher, however, had discriminatory prejudices about multicultural children, and his classmates paid constant, unwanted attention. After eight months, Mustafa withdrew from the public school and stayed at home until the end of the 2010 academic year.

Mustafa's mother wandered through many clinics to find a 'cure' for Mustafa's ADHD. Meanwhile, she was also considering which school would be most appropriate for her son. She heard from her sister that there was a school for multicultural children. Mustafa's mother visited the Cultural World School to have more information and met a counselor, Mrs. Oh, who later established the Future School. She thought that Mrs. Oh was a reliable person and decided to enroll Mustafa in the school. Mustafa's father stayed in the hometown city because of his work. His mother, his brothers, and Mustafa moved to the city where the Cultural World School was located. He officially enrolled in the multicultural school.

Mustafa was placed in the regular second grade class without going through KSL programs because he could read and write in Korean. Mustafa met Min-Su and Hanna there. To better understand Mustafa, the second grade homeroom teacher requested books from Mustafa's mother pertaining to Mustafa's condition. His mother explained:



Mustafa's second grade homeroom teacher was devoted to alternative education. When he asked me to bring books on ADHD, I was so happy. I did not need to explain his condition again and again. He was open-minded. He helped Mustafa learn in a caring atmosphere. Whenever Mustafa was in conflict with other classmates, the teacher tried his best to help the other kids understand Mustafa. (06/24/2014)

Mustafa's mother was thankful to the homeroom teacher and felt that moving to the city was a good decision. The same teacher was designated as the homeroom teacher for the third grade students in the following academic year. Nghia enrolled in the Cultural World School in 2012, but the regular third graders seldom met Nghia because Nghia was placed in pull-out KSL courses. Mustafa's mother recalled with a sigh, "The two years were the happiest time to me when Mustafa was with Mr. Kim and Hanna and Min-Su in 2011 and 2012." Mr. Kim, Mustafa's homeroom teacher, left the school in February of 2013.

Mustafa's name as well as his physical appearance told a lot about his background. I knew from his name that he had an Arabic origin. Since I was not accustomed to Arabic naming practices, I asked him for his full name, which he wrote on my observation notebook. It was 11 syllables. I asked which one was his family name and which one was his given name. He refused to elaborate. Unlike Hanna, his name did not fit the traditional Korean name scheme.

His ADHD drove him to distraction and sometimes made him sensitive to minor disturbances. My first observation took place during a math class, and I noticed that Mustafa often got distracted, and the teacher scolded him a couple of times. In a Korean class taught by Jin-Hee, Mustafa could not pay attention to the lesson. He seemed to be perpetually lost. When I asked Jin-Hee whether she had resources to help her understand ADHD, she answered that she had not Googled it or read any



books about ADHD or other learning disabilities. I asked the same questions to the math teacher, science teacher, and English teacher, but I received the same response. One of teachers understood ADHD as a sort of mental disease. The school teachers in the Cultural World School had a poor understanding of ADHD and of learning disabilities and made no effort to learn.

Mustafa's mother said that she was satisfied with the school because Mustafa had friends and was not singled out for his identity. She believed that Mustafa was not teased any more about the differences in his physical appearance. She was half correct and half wrong. Mustafa was isolated from his classmates and frequently quarreled with and physically fought against the other boys. The most hostile classmates to Mustafa were Nghia and Jahongir, who frequently harassed him. Mustafa fought back, but he was physically too weak to fight against two boys. Mustafa reported the harassment to Jin-Hee, and Jin-Hee would punish and admonish the boys or seek the opinions of Hanna or Min-Su. Jin-Hee's interventions and punishments were not effective or only worked temporarily. Sometimes, she pretended to be unaware of their minor conflicts. This cycle continued repeatedly while I was at the school.

In the morning of June 20, Mustafa was talking to himself, scribbling on the blackboard.

Min-Su: Don't write there. Wipe it out.

Jahongir: Islam should be shut up. Islamic people should be silent and pray.  
Mustafa! Shut up!

Mustafa: What did you say, Jahongir?

Jahongir: Islamic people should be silent and don't talk back.

Mustafa: (gesturing to beat him) Don't call me "Islamic." I will kill you. (06/20/2013)



Jin-Hee told me that Mustafa hated anything having to do with Jordan or Muslim, but she asked him to explore things about Jordan during a classroom activity. He gave a good presentation about it in class. Later, according to his mother, he understood more about Jordan. Still, it seemed that Mustafa disliked being called 'Islamic' or 'Muslim' even though he identified himself as Muslim.

One day in July, Jin-Hee took the fourth grade students to the backyard to clean up. Together we cleared away rubbish under the hot sun during the first period and rested during the second. The boys ran about and played in the backyard, and Mustafa squatted on the ground alone. He wrote Chinese characters on the ground with his finger. A boy stepped on the letters, and Mustafa looked upset. Seeing that, Jin-Hee said,

I was worried about his isolation at the beginning of this semester, but now I am familiar with the situation. Three or four boys are playing with each other, and Mustafa stays alone. When all the boys play together, I feel nervous. It means that there will be a conflict sooner or later between Mustafa and the other boys. Separation seems natural to me. (Interview with Jin-Hee, 07/09/2013)

Jin-Hee accepted Mustafa's isolation as a fact, not as something requiring change. She added that Mustafa tried his best to avoid any interaction with Nghia and Jahongir because he was alone against a group of boys.

Mustafa had bilingual background from his parents, but the level of Mustafa's bilingualism was not clear to me. His primary language was Korean, and Korean was also his home language. His Jordanian father spoke Korean at home and spoke both Arabic and Korean at work. Mustafa learned Korean as a mother tongue, but he moved to Jordan and attended a Jordanian elementary school for one year. He did not learn



Arabic there. He remained a Korean monolingual. According to his mother, Mustafa began to read and write Korean at a very early age.

My parents had high expectation on their children. I resemble them. I taught Mustafa how to read and write Korean letters when he was young. When he wrote 키세스<sup>5</sup> in Korean, I used to give him kisses chocolates. He was able to write at age four. He liked reading story books, and he could read and write in Korean before he entered school. (Interview with Mustafa's mother, 06/24/2014)

Mustafa's mother was positive about her parents' educational zeal. She was proud of Mustafa's literacy practices, but still she worried about his ADHD condition. She sent Abdulla and Sami to a public school near their home. Abdulla was successful at academic learning as well as in physical education. Abdulla usually received the top scores in his grade, which made him the pride of Mustafa's mother. She preferred the regular public schools for Abdulla and Sami.

Mustafa liked reading. In June, I saw him read books on ancient Indian culture, ancient Orient countries, and medieval chivalry. He frequently went to the library to read an iconographic encyclopedia about medieval knighthood and did a drawing of a knight defending against a villain. He worked on the drawing for two days, referencing the books.

Generally speaking, Hanna and Min-Su were well-mannered and polite. Min-Su did not develop a good relation with Mustafa. Min-Su usually interacted with Hanna. Mustafa rarely talked to anyone. Lee and Koro-Ljungberg (2007) reported on how Korean minority students were bullied by African American minority students in U.S. schools. Racism basically indicates White racism, but marginalized minority immigrants

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<sup>5</sup> 키세스 is a Romanized Korean word for 'KISSES', a short form of American Hershey's chocolate.



tend to feel friendly toward White people and hostile toward other people of color (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). Likewise, in the Cultural World School, the three most marginalized boys, Nghia, Jahongir, and Mustafa, were always in conflict.

At the beginning of a math class, Mustafa was fidgeting with his metal pencil case, rattling the pencils and ruler inside. It distracted me. The math teacher told him to stop, saying firmly, "Bring another pencil case that will not make any noise." The lesson was 'a mixed fraction = a natural number + a proper fraction.' Mustafa asked 'what is a natural number?' but the teacher did not answer him. Suddenly, Liam began to make noises, attaching and detaching magnets to his metal pencil case. The repeating sound was irritating. I waited for the teacher to stop Liam, but she never did until she finished her class.

Liam, a British Korean biracial and bilingual boy, was not diagnosed with ADHD, but he was quite disruptive. Whenever he was distracted, teachers rarely admonished him. Whenever he gave wrong answers, teachers would give him more time. When Mustafa and Min-Su were absent, the class had only four students. After her fourth class, the math teacher and I had lunch together at the school cafeteria. She talked about Liam:

Math teacher: Did you feel that Liam was really disruptive today?

Me: He was as he usually is. You were just aware of his disruptive behavior today.

Math teacher: Today, I was so annoyed because of him. He was too disruptive today.

Me: You can see his behavior today because Mustafa is absent.

Math teacher: Really? I cannot believe it. (07/15/2013)



While I observed at the school, Mustafa had to clean the classroom, school library, and/or hallways every day. Cleaning was Jin-Hee's punishment for Mustafa when he quarreled with other boys, was late for school, and did not prepare school supplies. He had to sweep and mop for a week for quarrelling, a week for being late, a week for anything else, which left him cleaning twice or three times a day. Mustafa, a weak and thin boy, cleaned with bare hands while Jin-Hee supervised him, saying "Mustafa, wipe up here with your tea-towel" or "Sweep here." Nghia and Jahongir sometimes asked (or ordered) Mustafa to clean the floor. Observing his cleaning every morning and every afternoon, I felt that it was child abuse, but Jin-Hee saw it as appropriate punishment, objective and fair. One day, I watched a sixth grade boy beating Mustafa. Mustafa clung to the stairway, shouting at the boy, "I don't want to clean. I hate cleaning." A teacher sent the sixth grade boy to get Mustafa, and Mustafa refused to go because he thought that the teacher would make him do more cleaning. I sent the boy back to the teacher. He whispered again and again, "I hate cleaning."

Mustafa could not speak Arabic, and he did not want his Jordanian heritage to be recognized. However, Mustafa's eyes, eyelashes, and name kept him from being a "typical" Korean. His religion was deeply important to him as he did not eat pork. He could not learn Arabic from his father at home, and the school did not offer Arabic courses. There was no language center to offer Arabic tutoring in that city. How could he learn Arabic? He did not have a non-native accent in his oral Korean language, and his voice was firm and coherent while reading the passage. He was isolated from his classmates and ignored by teachers. I never saw him interacting with others in friendly contexts. He usually talked to himself. How can he be good at Korean?



His eclectic language course was Chinese. He really liked Chinese characters, but his Chinese teacher refused to teach him. While other students learned Chinese, he had to write Chinese letters on his notebook in a separate room. Whenever he was given free time, he resorted to his Chinese textbook and practiced writing Chinese. One morning, he was writing Chinese letters on the blackboard when I entered the fourth grade classroom. He looked very happy, showing me his new pencil case, which was made of soft cloth. I asked him to teach me Chinese characters. He was so eager to teach me: 火, 立, 使, 日, 玄, 史, 海, 王, 商品, and 蟲. I never saw him happy and cheerful during my observation. He said to me, “I am so happy to have a person to talk to.” I was happy and deeply saddened to hear that.

The last day of my observation was approaching. I told Jin-Hee that Mustafa was at risk, adding that I hoped to see him next year. When I came back to the Cultural World School in 2014, Mustafa was gone. I contacted his mother and heard what took place over the past ten months. She teared up telling me the story.

When the new semester began at the end of August, Mustafa refused to go to school. He sometimes escaped from the school. Whenever he was late for school or ran away from school, Jin-Hee made him clean as punishment. Finally, he refused to clean. He became a trouble-maker. His appetite lowered, and teachers forced him to eat his lunch, which he threw up. He resisted to the bitter end. Jin-Hee could not handle him anymore. Ms. Ahn, the P.E. teacher, was in charge of handling the trouble-making boys because most students lost their nerve in front of her hot and violent temper. When Mustafa's mother went to the school, she found Mustafa almost fainting in front of Ms. Ahn.



Mustafa's mother decided not to send him to the school. She tried to give him a Korean name, but Mustafa refused. She met Mrs. Oh, the former teacher in the Cultural World School, to discuss Mustafa's situation. Mustafa attended the Future School one or two days per week from November of 2013, before enrolling officially in March 2014. Mustafa asked the Future School not to make him clean or force him to eat. He resumed schooling again as a fourth grade student in 2014.

He had to repeat the fourth grade curriculum because he did not learn enough to progress to the fifth grade. According to Mrs. Oh, Mustafa attacked, with a long stick, a Chinese male student who transferred from the Cultural World School in May. Mustafa was afraid that the male student came to the Future School to take Mustafa back to the Cultural World School. He hated everything associated with the Cultural World School.

When I met Mustafa again on June 19 (Thursday), 2014, he was taller and wearing a long-sleeved jacket. I greeted him with a smile, but he asked me, "Who are you? How do you know me?" He could not remember me. I was disappointed with his response. Ji-Young, his new homeroom teacher, asked me to take care of him while she taught the other two students. I stayed with him for a moment while Mustafa read a book and occasionally glanced at me. Suddenly, he stood up and left the school. According to his mother, Mustafa refused to go to school again. Mustafa came back to school on June 27 (Friday). I was happy to see him again, but he notified Ji-Young that he would go to his hometown because he wanted to join Islam Ramadan<sup>6</sup> with his father. I never saw him after that. However, I got a call from his mother, telling me that Mustafa

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<sup>6</sup> Ramadan in 2014 started on Saturday on the 28th of June and continued for 30 days until Sunday, the 27th of July.



remembered me as the guardian of his drawing of knight. I reminisced about the Cultural World School, Nghia, and Jahongir. Upon seeing me, he was pained by the terrible memories of bullying, cleaning, and vomiting. Later, I got another call from Mrs. Oh, telling me that Mustafa returned to the school. I prayed for him. Insha'Allah.

### **Ki-Jun, a Russian Korean Boy**

I visited the Future School to interview Mrs. Oh during the summer of 2013. She worked as a teacher/counselor in the Cultural World School until April 2011. She established the Future School, an 'unauthorized' multicultural alternative school (see description of these schools in Chapter 3), mainly for foreign-born immigrant children. I wanted to interview her because she taught Hanna and Mustafa at the Cultural World School. When I visited her school, it was located on the fifth floor of a local youth center.

As soon as I entered the hall, Mrs. Oh greeted me. She looked to be in her late fifties or early sixties. Her Korean accent sounded well-educated and cheerful. There was a little boy next to her. He stuck to Mrs. Oh like chewing gum. The boy did not talk or move away during the interview. I did not ask Mrs. Oh about the little boy. He was not White, not Black, not South Eastern Asian. He did not speak Korean, Russian, or Chinese. He did not make any sounds. He did not smile. When our eyes did meet, he leaned toward Mrs. Oh. Mrs. Oh said, "He cannot speak Korean. He cannot understand Korean."

Ki-Jun was born to an international couple. He had a South Korean father and a Russian mother, Alisha. Alisha's native Korean grandparents fled to Russia to avoid Japanese imperialism and to make a new life during Japanese rule over the Korean peninsula. Her bilingual mother married a White Russian. She was born as the first child to the interracial couple. Russian was her primary and home language, but she learned



basic Korean from her mother. Native Korean speakers could easily notice her non-native accent.

Alisha married a Russian, and she gave a birth to a boy, Sergey. After her husband left her and Sergey, she decided to make a new life in South Korea. She asked her parents to take care of her young son. She worked in a medical clinic whose owner hired her because she spoke Russian and had an basic level of spoken Korean. She married to a South Korean. She gave birth to Ki-Jun, a quarter White Russian and three quarter Korean boy. After her re-marriage, Alisha became a Korean citizen. Without the consent of Alisha's ex-husband, Sergey could not be adopted by Alisha's husband, and Sergey remained Russian. Sergey attended the Cultural World School and the Future School and transferred later to a public school. Ki-Jun had a Korean father, a Russian Korean mother, and a Russian elder brother. They were a multicultural family. Alisha's grandparents fled to Russia to make a new life, and Alisha and her sons returned in South Korea a century later.

Alisha wanted to work, but could not find a babysitter for Ki-Jun. She sent Ki-Jun to Russia and brought him back to Korea three times between 2008 and 2013. He was sent to Russia in 2012 when he was six-year old. He stayed in Russia for one year, and had just returned to Korea in June of 2013 when I met him. People said that he was a Russian monolingual in 2013. When I met him again in 2014, Ki-Jun was bilingual in Russian and Korean. Ki-Jun's primary language fluctuated back and forth between Korean and Russian. He spoke Russian with his mother and brother alone, and spoke Korean with his Korean father.



When Ki-Jun returned from Russia in June of 2013, his parents sent him to the Future School to learn Korean, which put him a full curricular year behind his Korean peers. He learned Korean in the KSL programs for eight months. His Korean improved, but he developed a stammer, speaking in both Korean and Russian. His parents and teachers worried about his stammering habit, which would likely invite teasing from other children. Instead of transferring to a regular public school, Ki-Jun remained in the Future School as a first grade student.

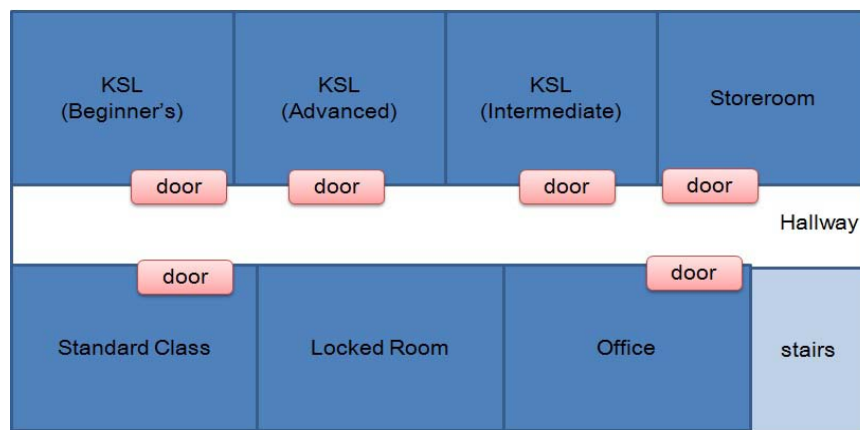


Figure 4-2. The Future School (on the Fourth Floor of a Church Building).

The school relocated to the building of a Presbyterian church from the building of a local youth center. The classrooms and school office were all small seminar rooms designed for bible study and located on the fourth floor. Students who spoke Korean at their grade-appropriate level were placed in the standard class and taught the national core curriculum. There were three students in the standard class in 2014: Ki-Jun (1st grade), Mustafa (4th grade), and Mi-Hwa (3rd grade). Mi-Hwa was transferred from the Cultural World School in April, 2014. She left the school because she was allegedly scolded and abused by Ms. Ahn, her homeroom teacher. She abhorred cleaning. When



I was assigned to the standard class, I was already familiar with all three students from my previous observations.

Ki-Jun was physically active and handsome in a slightly exotic way. His behavior was not well-mannered, but never rude. He was taller than the average first grade Korean boys. He spoke grade-appropriate Korean without non-native accent. He was often stammering when he initiated the speech, but looking back then, I was amazed to see the once-mute boy speak Korean at the grade-appropriate level. Whenever he stammered, teachers smiled at him or told him, "Take time, my sweetie." When he stammered, a teacher once hugged him with love, saying, "You're eager to tell me something. What's that?"

As stated above, maladjusted students were often punished by being forced to clean the classroom. Mustafa and Mi-Hwa hated to be forced to clean. The forced cleaning started causing emotional trauma. Teachers were otherwise responsible for school cleaning in the Future School, but Ki-Jun was willing, without having been punished, to help Ji-Young. One day after school, seeing Ki-Jun clean up the table by himself, Ji-Young told me, "He is so sweet, isn't he?"

Most students in KSL programs were high school students or young adults who arrived in Korea in their teens. The three elementary children in the standard class got along with each other. Mi-Hwa liked Ki-Jun. He was somewhere between her classmate, her boyfriend, and her younger brother. Ki-Jun was kicking a ball near the church entrance during a recess time, saying, "We don't have many friends. I sometimes play alone. I am lonely. Lonely." I was very surprised with the word *lonely* because young children use *boring* or *bored* (심심해요), not *lonely* (외로워요).



Ki-Jun wanted to play and interact with young children, but there were no other elementary children to play with. He frequently interacted with Russian students in the KSL program. Ki-Jun ate lunch with the Russian adolescents, and Mi-Hwa joined Ki-Jun. I had lunch with the teachers during the initial days of my observation. Later, I realized that the cafeteria was separated according to their primary language, gender, or race/ethnicity. During lunchtime, Chinese students spoke Chinese, teachers spoke Korean, and Russian students spoke Russian. Ki-Jun spoke Russian except when communicating with Mi-Hwa.

During recess or after lunch, Ki-Jun spent time playing with Mi-Hwa in the hallway or chatting with the Russian male students in KSL classrooms. Ki-Jun frequently played phone games with the Russian teens, using his and their cell phones. According to the teachers, the Russian parents decided to send their children to the school on Alisha's recommendation. In fact, the Russian parents were closely connected with Alisha through an online Russian community network.

Usually, teens do not lend their cell phones to others, but the Russian male students happily allowed Ki-Jun to use their cell phones for gaming. The primary language of their cell phones were set in Russian, while Ki-Jun set his cell phone in Korean. When Ki-Jun interacted with Chinese KSL students, he spoke Korean. Chinese students, especially, female students were friendly with Ki-Jun, but I did not see Ki-Jun to ask them to show or lend him their cell phones. Ki-Jun's group included Mi-Hwa and Russian KSL male students.

In the standard and multi-age classroom, three elementary students studied in a church seminar room. During most of my observation, Ji -Young taught two students,



since Mustafa stayed in his hometown to observe Ramadan. Ji-Young took turns teaching the students individually (Figure 4-3). She sat in her seat while teaching Ki-Jun, and would move to sit next to Mi-Hwa when teaching Mi-Hwa. Sometimes, I taught Ki-Jun while Ji-Young was working with Mi-Hwa, which helped me to gauge his academic performance.

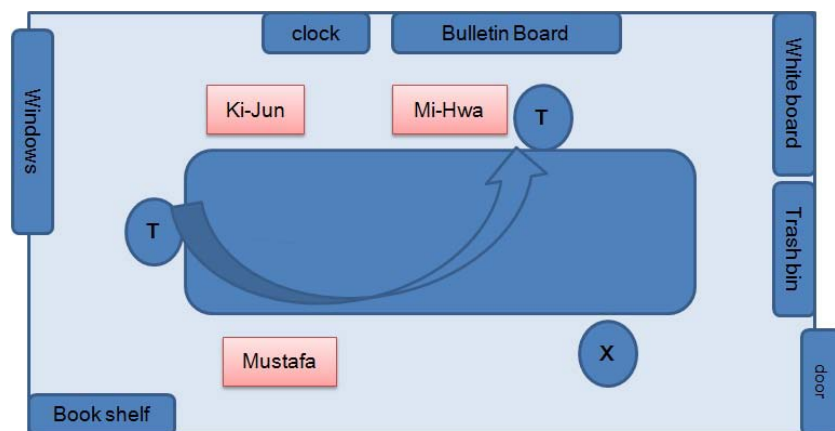


Figure 4-3. The Standard Classroom. (Notes: T=Teacher, X=Researcher).

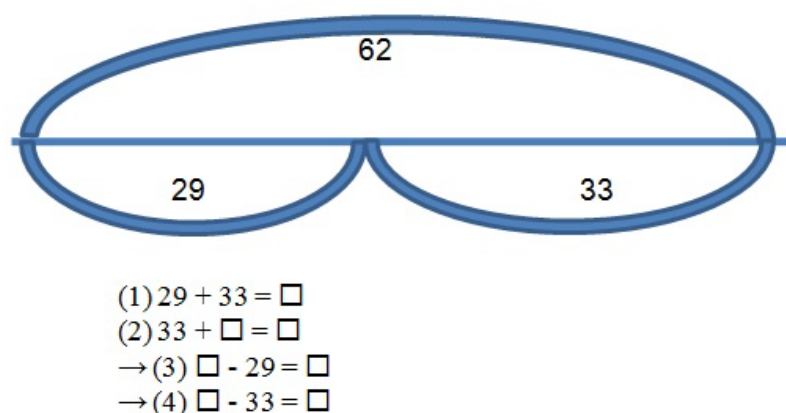


Figure 4-4. Ki-Jun's Math Problems on June 27.

Ji-Young began to teach Ki-Jun the rules of multiplication in June. I wondered why she taught multiplication to the first grade boy because the conception of multiplication is for the second grade students in the national curriculum. Ji-Young told



me that Ki-Jun was ready to learn the second grade content since he was smart and did well. It seemed that he completed the first grade content during a single semester.

Ji-Young was right. On the next day, I taught how to connect addition to multiplication. Without my assistance, he wrote right answers in his worksheet. I commended him. He was happy and stammering, "I I I like math (수 수 수 수학은 좋아요)." He solved the rest of math problems quickly and began to talk to us, "My family went to Youjang. To to to the water park near a department store (가족들이랑 유장에 갔는데요. 백 백 백 백화점 옆에 워터파크 갔는데)." He was cheerful, describing what he did during the weekend.



Figure 4-5. Applied Problem in Ki-Jun's Math Worksheet on July 4.

The next day, Ki-Jun was working on a math worksheet. It included several applied problems with flowers and calculations (Figure 4-5). He looked at the flowers for few seconds, and quickly wrote numbers. His answers were all correct:

$6+6+6+6+6+6+6=42$  and  $6 \times 7=42$ . He did well with simple help or verbal assistance. Ji-Young was proud of Ki-Jun's progress in both math and Korean language arts.

Ji-Young was strict about managing class and recess time.

Mustafa: (trying to check his cell phone)



Ji-Young: Cell phone can tell the time. You need to know how to read an analog clock.

Mustafa: What time is it now? Can I go out?

Ji-Young: Look at the clock. Not yet. If you tell the time, I will let you go out earlier.

Ki-Jun: (interrupting) Really? I want to learn how to read the analog clock.

Ji-Young: (turning to Ki-Jun) You can try. (06/27/2014)

Since then, Ki-Jun wanted to practice reading the analog clock with me. I used a toy clock to teach time-reading. He expected an earlier dismissal. On July 4, his math task was the five times table in multiplication. He was whispering to himself, "The five times table is easy. Half of ten." Suddenly, he shouted to Ji-Young, "The clock and the five times table are the same." He asked me to pass the toy to him and showed Ji-Young why the clock was the same as the five times table. Ji-Young was smiling.

Ki-Jun was smart, but tried his best to avoid learning. He did not like reading. One morning, he was encouraged to read any book from the shelf.

Ki-Jun: These books are not interesting.

Ji-Young: You may want to make your own book.

Ki-Jun: Can I?

Ji-Young: Why don't you make a book for children like you who don't like reading?

Ki-Jun: How about ghost stories? I like ghosts. I will tell the stories, and you can write them down. Are you ready?

Ji-Young: You have to write yourself. (07/03/2014)

The next day, Ji-Young prepared a short story about a lion and a tiger and handed it to Ki-Jun. He never voluntarily tried to read. He did not enjoy reading and writing.



I noticed a drawing in Ki-Jun's sketchbook and asked him about it. He told me that it was him as an inventor, his dream job (Figure 4-6). In the drawing, he wore glasses and had high-tech arms and legs that he invented. His drawing had a variety of functional gloves, shoes, glasses in his drawers. He told me he would be working on inventing electric vehicles. Teachers praised his drawing and encouraged him to become a famous inventor in his future. He changed his future dream after hearing that he needed to go to a graduate school and study hard until he would be 30. His new dream was to be a pop singer.



Figure 4-6. Ki-Jun's Drawing about his Future Dream as an Inventor. Photo courtesy of author.

During a class, a little bird flew into the classroom through an open window. Ji-Young and Mi-Hwa were fascinated with the bird and lowered their voice so as not to frighten it. Ki-Jun said, "It may be yummy. My Russian grandfather is good at bird hunting. We often went hunting and cooked birds." He was extremely interested in hunting and guns. He drew him going to a gun store with his Russian grandfather. On



the drawing, he wrote 총포, a Korean word meaning "gunnery" - a high-level Korean word and depicted various guns in the drawing. Since South Korea strictly restricts the private ownership of guns, children are not knowledgeable about them.



Figure 4-7. Ki-Jun's Drawing about Dinner Table. Photo courtesy of author.

Ki-Jun also drew his typical dinner table at home (see Figure 4-7). There were name tags such as 밥, 깍두기, 버섯, 두부, and 멸치 under the rice and Korean foods, but some dishes did not have name tags. Ki-Jun was a fluent Russian speaker but was still illiterate in Russian. He did not attend a kindergarten while staying in Russia. His illiteracy in Russian kept him from naming the Russian food. He ate Korean and Russian food in his daily life. Russian culture influenced him in terms of association of bird, guns, and food.

After school on July 9, Mrs. Oh chatted with Ki-Jun in the office. Mrs. Oh explained why his brother had a different family name and a Russian given name. He told her, "I already understand. Sergey has a Russian name, and I am named after my father's family name." He already understood how his brother's name did not fit in the



Korean naming scheme, and he refused to have a Russian name in Russia as well as South Korea.

After school on July 18, I was chatting with Ji-Young and another teacher in the office. Mrs. Oh submitted documents to the City Office of Education, hoping the school could be an authorized multicultural institute like the Cultural World School. All of us worried about the authorization process. At that moment, we heard little children's voices outside the office. Ji-Young investigated and found Ki-Jun and Mi-Hwa. They did not immediately go home after school and offered to help Ji-Young by emptying the trash bin and cleaning the floor and table. I was surprised to see Mi-Hwa with Ki-Jun. Mi-Hwa was totally averse to cleaning, but joined Ki-Jun's suggestion that she help their teacher. Ji-Young was touched by their gesture. She hugged them, proclaiming "Oh! My super sweeties! (우리 매력 덩어리!)"

### **Chapter Summary**

Each story of four participant children was summarized and retold according to school documents and interviews with parents and teachers. The four children were born to international couples. They grew up in multiethnic and multicultural households, and their language backgrounds were diverse. The history of their residences showed tremendous human mobility. The biracial children interacted with each other in multicultural schools, and sometimes left one multicultural school for another school. Through my observation and interaction with the participant children, I collected kaleidoscopic experiences and heard their voices.

This chapter described the stories and narratives of each biracial participant in the schools. Hanna, an American Korean girl, regarded a model minority student



despite the "four dimensional" aspects of her home/community cultures, constructed her identities as a bilingual and bicultural AmeKorean girl. Nghia was intellectually capable and motivated in his favorite subjects. However, he bullied his classmates and behaved awfully to the teachers. Despite giving himself a Korean name and wanting to look Korean, he was more inclined to belong to the community of Vietnamese fellow students. Mustafa was the most marginalized multicultural boy because his ADHD compounded the challenges of having a multicultural background, resulting in the interpersonal dynamic for which teachers were not prepared. He was isolated from his classmates, ignored by school teachers, and abused with cleaning and forced feeding. Ki-Jun, one quarter White Russian and three quarters Korean, appeared to be well-adjusted to schooling and became a bilingual and bicultural child. He experienced Russian cultures and practiced the Russian language as daily routines at home and at school. He was a beloved boy though he felt lonely. The identities of each student were constructed through interacting with people and activities in various contexts. The construction of their identities reflects the dynamic and complicated intersections of race, language, and diverse social factors.



## CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS

### Overview

Michael-Luna and Marri (2011) contend that it is meaningless to consider identity as an essentialized form without considering other factors such as race, language, class, ethnicity, nationality, and culture in the social context of an increasingly mixed-race population. This study was framed by sociocultural theories and the notion of intersectionality of race and language in order to examine how those various factors would intersect with the process of identity construction of biracial children.

The main research question was, "How are the identities of biracial children constructed with reference to race and languages in multicultural schools?" This research demonstrated the importance of power relationships among participants in and across multicultural schools. Using the research questions to guide this work, this chapter employs poststructuralist lenses. I first address how the children were positioned in different schools in terms of race and name. Next, I describe how they experienced and resisted insults and insensitivities. Also, I represent how language policies were different according to race and primary language. Lastly, this chapter shows how the trait of fluidity influenced and contributed to the process of identity construction of biracial children.

### **Being Racially Legitimate and Not Being Racially Legitimate**

As noted in Chapter 3, Koreans have long believed themselves to be *Danil-Minjok*, a nation of one-blood, one-language, and one-culture. These three clearly overlapping social factors have distinguished "real-Koreans" from others. This is the first layer of Koreans' conceptualization of race. People classified as "non-Korean" are



categorized into White, Yellow, and Black, which is the second layer of Koreans' conceptualization of race. Koreans further finely categorize people from a broader category of Yellow into Light-Yellow and Dark-Yellow. Since biracial children are not easily classified into any category, they are the most threatening to this traditional conceptualization of Korean-ness. In this sociohistorical vein, biracial Korean children are likely to be positioned as racial minorities. Biracial children are regarded as being not “normal” because they are neither “real-Koreans” nor “non-Koreans.” This section demonstrated how participating children were regarded as being less legitimate in terms of *Danil-Minjok* in public schools and how the children were positioned differently in multicultural schools. Consequently, their experiences indicate that racialized mainstream narratives permeate into public and multicultural schools.

### **Not Being Racially Legitimate at Public Schools**

In their positioning as racial minorities, both Hanna and Mustafa were compelled to drop out of their previous public schools and move to a multicultural alternative school. When Hanna enrolled in a public school, she was classified as a child of multicultural family. She experienced racial and cultural discrimination in the public elementary school over the one semester she attended. Her mother described,

Hanna was the only student different from the other students. She was the only biracial in her class, the only multicultural girl among several hundred students in her school. The classmates were always teasing her, teasing her about her eyes, her noses, and her face. It was their daily routine. (Interview with Hanna's mother, 06/25/2013)

Children are not equal in the public school. They hated me. Anyway, I was scared. I don't want to go back there. (Interview with Hanna, 06/28/2013)



Hanna was teased by classmates because of her physical differences of nose, eyes, and face. Mustafa attracted unwanted insults and attentions due to his apparent deviation from the traditional conceptualization of Korean-ness.

When Mustafa was poor at learning, his teacher and classmates ignored him. When he was good at something like reading and math calculation, they hated him. They didn't like a multicultural child to be better than native Korean children. Whatever he did, they looked down on him or were jealous of him. Because Mustafa looks different at a glance, he experienced more discriminations than Abdullah or Sami. Korean parents did not want their children to play together with my sons. They didn't like multicultural children. (Interview with Mustafa's mother, 06/24/2014)

Native Korean students were my enemies. They were my enemies. I was scared. (Interview with Mustafa, 07/16/2013)

Although their Korean classmates were first grade students, they were not color-blind. Their noses, eyes, and faces were not typical and, therefore, not "normal" to the Korean first grade children. Some Korean students teased Hanna and Mustafa while other students were interested in their different appearance. Hanna and Mustafa were gradually positioned as "multicultural" children within their peer's racial and cultural template. They were not racially legitimate at public schools.

Since Hanna and Mustafa were not physically typical Korean children, they were not accepted as legitimate friends to their native Korean classmates in the public schools. Consequently, they did not have the right to tease back their native Korean classmates because they lacked legitimacy as "real-Koreans." They were not able to receive meaningful responses from their Korean peers. Hanna did not find any American friends or friends with White heritage, and she was racially isolated. Mustafa did not have any students of Arab heritage, and he was racially isolated.

The parents of Hanna and Mustafa requested those public schools to take action, but it was in vain. Hanna and Mustafa were not legitimate students to the school



teachers in public schools. Their parents paid a couple of visits to the city office of education to take an action, but they could not make any difference. Through her diary and writing samples from a class activity, I got a glimpse into Hanna's reason for leaving the public school:

개 두마리를 기릅니다. 제가 동물을 좋아해요. 제가 동물을 좋아하는 이유는 동물은 우리를 놀리지 않고, 괴롭히지 않아요. 하지만 사람들은 놀리고 괴롭이기 때문입니다. 제가 수의사가 되고 싶었냐면요 제가 3 살에 처음으로 강아지를 길렀기 때문이에요. (Hanna's Korean writing sample, 04/12/2013)

(Translation: My family has two dogs. I like animals. The reason that I love animals is that animals do not tease me and do not bully me. However, people hurt me and bully me. I would like to become an animal doctor because I have had pets since I was 3 years old.)

Hanna and Mustafa were racially silenced and dropped out of the schools before they completed the first grade. Racial illegitimacy ended up with dropping out of schools through being teased and labeled as “multicultural.”

### **Being Legitimate at Multicultural Schools**

When Hanna moved to the Cultural World School, her parents were satisfied with the school because Hanna was not teased about her racial differences. Hanna's mother told me that she was satisfied with the Cultural World School.

I live without worry after sending her to this school. She is happy here, and she can learn on a national curriculum. I could not sleep when she was in the previous school. Koreans, biracial and immigrant children are mingling here, and nobody cares about race and nationalities (Interview with Hanna's mother, 06/25/2013).

Mustafa's mother moved in the city where the Cultural World School was located to enroll Mustafa in the multicultural school. Mustafa's father stayed in their hometown for his work. Mustafa's mother told me that she was satisfied with her decision as long as he had "friends" in a welcoming climate. The majority of students of multicultural



schools were foreign-born immigrant students and biracial children, and native Korean students were admitted up to 30% of total number of students.

I like my school. There are many different students here. Both Korean students and multicultural students attend our school, so I like our school.  
(Interview with Hanna, 06/17/2014)

Since Hanna and Mustafa belonged to the majority, they were regarded as racially legitimate in the multicultural school. Nevertheless, they were again positioned differently, even in the multicultural school. While the main discourse of public elementary schools were closely related to the first layer of Koreans' racial categorization, the discourse of the multicultural schools were coupled with the second and third layers, in addition to the first layer.

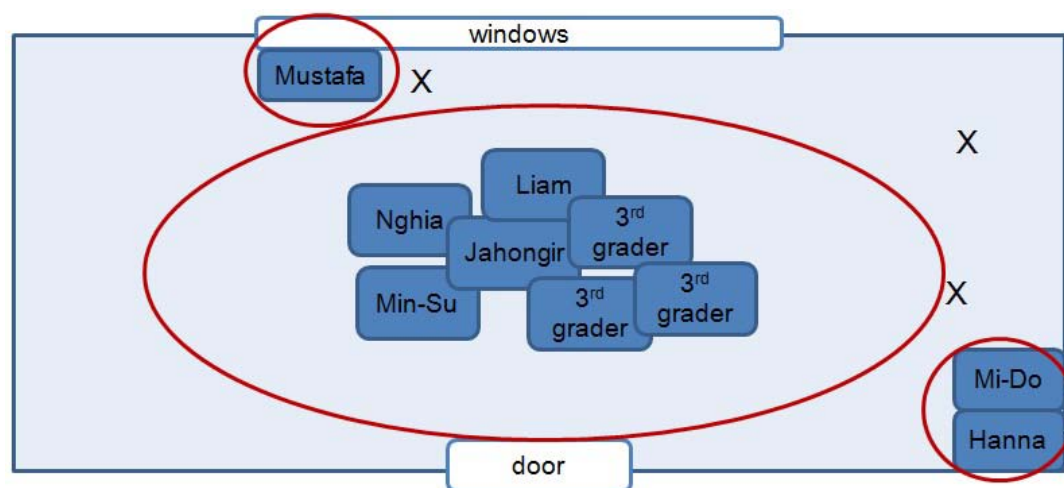


Figure 5-1. Students' Spatial Occupancy in an Activity Room in the Cultural World School (X: Researcher's Positions).

Just as Mustafa was culturally and racially isolated in the public school, he did not have any multicultural friends with Arab heritage in either the Cultural World School or the Future School. As seen in a reading activity, a combined class of the third and fourth grade students, Mustafa was totally isolated from two girls and other boys (Figure 5-1).



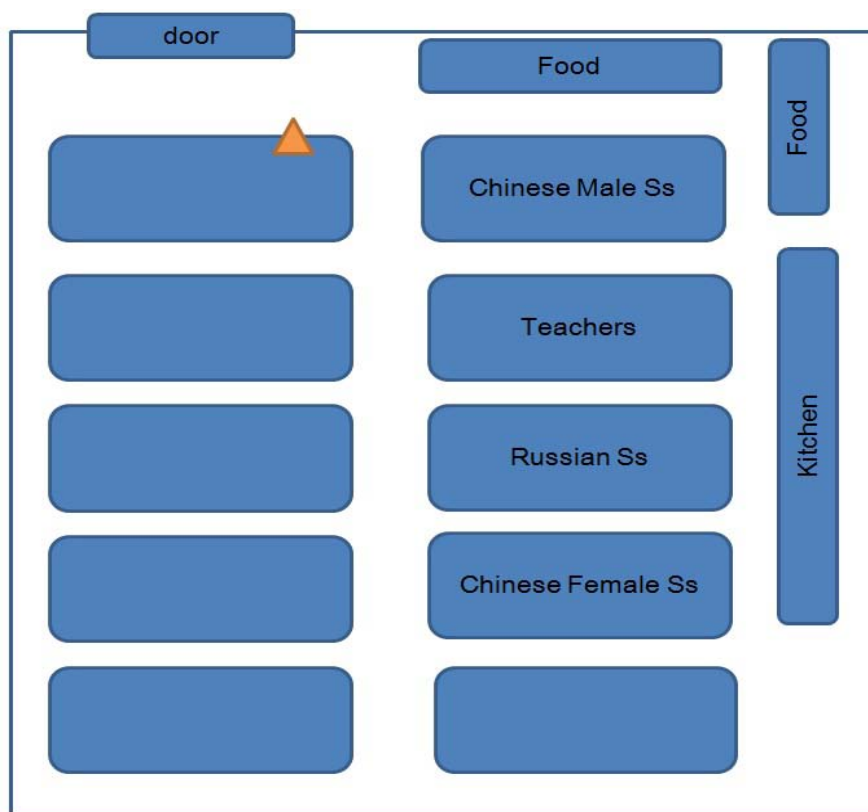


Figure 5-2. Groups in the Cafeteria of the Future School (Ss=Students, Δ=Mustafa)

During lunch time, Mustafa usually sat away from other children at the cafeteria of the Future School (Figure 5-2). Ki-Jun sat at the Russian student table, and Mi-Hwa, a Korean girl, sat beside Ki-Jun in the Russian table. Mustafa did not belong to the Chinese male table, Chinese female table, Russian table, or Korean-speaking teachers' table. Although he was not illegitimate in terms of race in multicultural schools, he was a marginalized minority due to his Muslim Arab heritage.

I: Why don't you sit with other people?

Mustafa: I am not Chinese. I am not Russian.

I: Mi-Hwa is not Russian. She sits beside Ki-Jun with the Russian students.

Mustafa: Anyway, I cannot sit there. I don't know. Don't ask me anymore.  
(06/24/2014)



Racial legitimacy did not ensure that he had lots of racially and culturally diverse friends. He did not have friends of similar Arab heritage. Rather, he was bullied by other multicultural children in the Cultural World School while he was irritated by unwanted insults and attention in the public school. In fact, racial legitimacy did not imply that he was accepted in a welcoming atmosphere.

In the Cultural World School, Hanna was considered to be a racially "good" and "pretty" girl because of her Anglo-White heritage. She was teased by her classmates, especially female classmates, in the public school, but nobody teased her about her nose, eyes, or face, in other words, her physical appearance, in the multicultural school. She wrote:

제목: .....오빠!

오늘 지성 오빠가 나한테 내가 예쁘다고 말했다. 난 이말을 듣고 기절할 뻔했다. 물론 기분이 좋았지만, 중학생이 초등 4학년이 예쁘다고 말하니까 이상하잖아. 몇일 전 지성오빠가 사진 찍고 있었다. 내가 이렇게 말했다. "왜 찍어?" 지성 오빠가 이렇게 대답했다. "예뻐서" 그리고 오늘 내가 이학교에서 켈 예쁘다고 말했다. 지성 오빠는 내가 예쁘다고 말했다. 남자들은 내가 예쁘다고 말했다. 아~....오빠! (Hanna's Korean diary, 05/22/2013)

(Translation: Title: .....Ji-Sung

I heard from Ji-Sung that I was so pretty. It was scary. Of course, I was happy, but how surprising it is for a middle school boy to tell a 4th grade girl, "you are so pretty!" In fact, a couple of days ago, he took a picture of me. I asked, "Why did you take a picture?" Ji-Sung answered, "Why not? It's because you are pretty." Today, he said that I was the prettiest girl in this school! Boys told me that I was pretty. Ah~.....Ji-Sung!)

Boys were attracted to her. Her half Korean half Anglo-White appearance was generally preferred by Korean boys. Indeed, she was recognized as the prettiest girl by Ji-Sung, the son of the school principal and the math teacher. She was a student leader in 2013 and elected vice president of the student government in 2014. Racially



empowered, she was no longer an illegitimate member in the multicultural school. Her half Anglo-White appearance was preferred on the basis of White supremacy in the second and third layers of Korean racial classification in multicultural school.

Hanna was positioned as a child with high cultural capital and earned what Bourdieu (1977) terms "the right to speech" (p. 648). In the multicultural school, this right instantly translated into authorship and authority. For example, she told her classmates lots of stories about America. She told her friends what she knew of Disney Land in Los Angeles, a large flower known as Angel's Trumpet, American school systems, and how to transfer in an airport. Hanna believed, "Because I am American, I can go to America freely. It is so fantastic to travel around America. I learned a lot about America, and I can tell my friends a lot about what I saw in America." There was a section on the back wall of the classroom for expressing praises for other classmates. Mustafa wrote about Hanna in the bulletin board, "I praise Hanna for telling us a lot about America."

When boys were quarrelling, Hanna's teacher asked her to judge who should be punished.

Jin-Hee: Did Liam and Mustafa quarrel verbally? I will ask Hanna or Min-Su. Hanna? Min-Su? Did Liam and Mustafa quarrel or fight with each other? Do you think that they should be punished?

Hanna: I don't think so. It was not so serious.

Jin-Hee: Oh! Okay! I see. I will forgive both of you (to the two boys). Be friends, please.

Hanna: (giggling) Be friends? Can they be? (laughter)

Other Students: (giggling)...be friends. (07/02/2013)



The homeroom teacher asked Hanna or Min-Su for a judgment in public, and Hanna, not Min-Su, answered, which implied that she felt the right to speech. Once Hanna giggled at the teacher's comment, so did the other three students. Hanna's laugh seemed to generally trigger laughter in other classmates. She played important roles in school on many occasions.

She posted the classroom rules on the bulletin board and made sure people obeyed them. There was a sheet of paper listing classroom rules that students should follow: listen when other classmates are talking, raise a hand before taking a turn, do not cross legs, do not look at the clock during class, etc. It was Hanna's handwriting, not typed or written by Jin-Hee. I once sat cross-legged near the windows during recess. Hanna approached but hesitated to talk to me. I asked her, "Do you have something to tell me?" She said in a shy voice, "Excuse me, teacher...Don't cross your legs." I uncrossed my legs. She regulated me to uncross my leg according to her rules.

Language is not only an instrument of communication or even of knowledge, but also an instrument of power. A person speaks not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished, Hence the full definition of competence as right to speak, i.e. to the legitimate language, the authorized language which is also the language of authority. Competence implies the power to impose reception. (Bourdieu, 1977b, p. 648)

She had "the right to speech" and "the power to impose reception" in the discourse regarding the classroom rules. Her shifting positions from a racial minority showed how racism was systematically normalized in both public and multicultural schools, revealing how the walls of classrooms were permeable.

All the participating children chose to attend multicultural schools mainly due to their physical differences and multicultural backgrounds. The biracial children were all physically different from native Korean children, which demonstrated the power of the



first layer in Koreans' conceptualization of race. Further, they did not look legitimate to Koreans in the discourse of “one-blood”, but there were different meanings among biracial children: the children with White heritage looked “pretty” or “lovely” to Koreans: the children without White heritage were “not attractive” to Koreans. Hanna, Liam, Jessica, and Ki-Jun were beloved and respected more than children of non-White heritage. White heritage was interchangeable with legitimacy in this study, and the second and third layers in Koreans' conceptualization of race represent such racial preference. Children's hierarchical status shows that all the layers were at work in multicultural schools.

### **The Social Meaning of Children's Names**

#### **Illegitimacy of Multicultural Names**

Children's names were sometimes the indicator of their heritage and cultural background. Le Vinh Nghia, Mustafa Tarek Kuhee Ziyad, Jahongir, Liam Johnson, and Jo Jessica did not fit in Korean naming schemes, informing native Koreans that the person called such names are culturally different from native Koreans. Because Mustafa's name reflected his Muslim heritage, his name was not considered as a Korean boy's name, and, accordingly, because of his name, he was not regarded as a member of “real-Koreans.” On the very first day when Mustafa went to public school, his homeroom teacher asked him,

Teacher: You are Mustafa? Is your name Mustafa? You cannot read Korean letters yet, can you?

Mustafa: I can read and write.

Teacher: Really? (surprised) Can you read? Okay. Anyway, you should study much harder than native Korean peers do. If you try at least three times harder, you can keep up with other students. (turning to Mustafa's mother) Multicultural children are usually poor at content learning because they



have a different background. Multicultural children have difficulties understanding Korean. (reconstructed from an interview with Mustafa's mother, 06/24/2014)

His teacher told him, "You are Mustafa? Is your name Mustafa? You cannot read Korean letters yet, can you?" Mustafa faced the prevailing prejudice that the multicultural name did not fit in Korean naming practices, that the owner of the multicultural name was not legitimate, and that the multicultural child might be poor at Korean literacy. Even after Mustafa confirmed his Korean literacy competence in a joyful tone, the teacher responded with an unbelieving look, adding that Mustafa could keep up with Korean students if and when he tried three times harder. His name caused the teacher to infer that Mustafa was cognitively inferior to native Korean students.

After transferring to the Cultural World School and the Future School, Mustafa was not teased due to his physical differences, but he faced the mainstream social message beyond the school walls that his name was not legitimate according to Korean naming practices. His full name, with 11 syllables, never appeared in Korean school documents in either public or multicultural schools because spaces for student's name were usually for three syllables and for no more than four syllables. School documents alluded that the Muslim name was not legitimate and that the name owner not legitimate. No school documents showed his full name. His homeroom teachers did not know his full name. He attended the Cultural World School over three years, but nobody knew his full name.

I: What is your full name?

Mustafa: (surprised and looking at me) Nobody has asked me my full name.  
(Writing his full name on my notebook) This is my full name.

I: How did you feel when people did not ask it?



Mustafa: I don't like people to have unnecessary curiosity about me. I am so sad with no interests in me.

I: Do you like your name?

Mustafa: Just because my name is mine. I did not choose my name. (07/08/2013)

Full names with more than three syllables rarely appeared in school documents. Long names were shortened into three or four syllables by omitting family and/or middle name: Le Vinh Dung and Le Vinh Nghia were brothers, but their names appeared in school documents as "Le Vinh Dung (레빈덩)" and only "Nghia (응히아)." Schools forced to stuff multicultural children's names into three and, at the maximum, four syllables to register and record them. Nghia and Mustafa found their names shortened on the printed, whether official or unofficial, documents.

Even when children filled in test answer sheets or activity forms with their name, children with long names had to shorten their full names by themselves. Test answer sheets or activity journal forms had narrow spaces for tri-syllabic names of Koreans who consisted of less than 30% of total enrollment. Whenever Nghia had to write his full name, he managed to cram his five-syllable name into the narrow spaces or gave up writing his full name. Once he was angry at his pencil while he crammed a narrow space with his full name, "Darn it! Darn this pencil! My name is going out the line." Mustafa never tried to fill in a form with his eleven-syllable full name. The narrow spaces had the institutional power to impose the mainstream social message that long names are not legitimate in school documents and that Nghia and Mustafa's name should be shortened simply without his family and middle name.



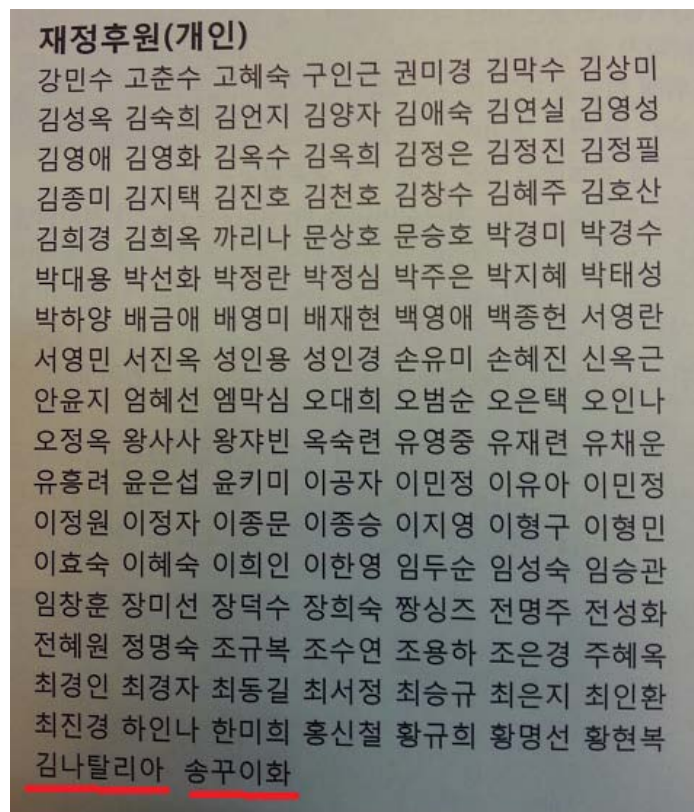


Figure 5-3. Names Printed in the Future School's Newsletter. Photo courtesy of author.  
(Note: Tri-syllabic names are arranged in alphabetic order, but two longer names are placed at the end of the list. This newsletter shows implicitly that tri-syllabic names are more legitimate, while longer names are not legitimate in terms of syllable and should be placed at the end of the list.).

Even the multicultural schools adopted mainstream Korean naming practices, and determined, at least, tri-syllabic names as a name template (Figure 5-3) and that subsequently humiliated the multicultural children, who had more than three syllabic names. The school document formats implemented institutional discrimination unconsciously but strongly. In fact, there was no reason that schools could not make the spaces a little wider. Schools were not sensitive to how to record children's names in school documents and did not take into consideration how much mainstream practices could insult their multicultural children. Furthermore, the narrow spaces for names forced the children to cram or shorten their full names "by themselves", which made the



children negate their names. Modifying their names, the children felt frustrated and rejected.

### **Legitimacy of Three-Syllable Korean Names**

The two White biracial participants had three syllable Korean names, one syllable for family name and two syllables for given name, as seen in Jo Hanna and Park Ki-Jun. Jin-Hee told me that Hanna had a Korean family and a Korean given name. I was curious about how Hanna got her Korean name, especially her Korean family name. She was named after her mother's family name, and her given name was Hanna. During the break, I asked Hanna,

Me: Don't you have an English name?

Hanna: Hanna! Hannah Catherine Miller! My Korean name is Jo Hanna and American name is Hannah Catherine Miller. I was born in Korea, and I have Korean nationality. I am Korean. I have U.S. citizenship and I am American, so I am Korean and, at the same time, American. I am both! (Interview with Hanna, 06/20/2013)

I just asked her whether she had any English name, but she was quick to answer about her nationality and citizenship. She looked confident in her self-image as a biracial and bicultural identity. *Hanna* is a common name for Korean girls. The teachers and I thought that Hanna was a two-syllable Korean given name, but we were wrong. Her name was compatible with both Korean and English naming practices. Anna, Hanna, Hana, Ian, Eugene, Noah, and Suzy are widely accepted as two-syllable Korean given names because of the influence of American culture.

My name is really good. My name is an English name, but it can be a Korean name. It can be both. I love my name. (Interview with Hanna, 07/08/2013)

Hanna's name had its origin from her English name, but nobody knew that because American culture has long been part of Korean culture since American military



government. Her English name was so easily recognized as a Korean female name by Koreans that Jin-Hee and I were not aware that her name came from her English name. She was not teased due to her English-origin name in her public and multicultural school. Her name was accepted in the public and multicultural school, which implicitly informed that the name owner was legitimate, at least, regarding the name.

Ki-Jun lived in Russia, and his grandparents, mother, and older brother all had Russian names. I asked him the same question that I had asked Hanna,

Me            Don't you have a Russian name?

Ki-Jun:      No, I don't have a Russian name. I am Ki-Jun. Just Park Ki-Jun (He enunciated).

Me:            Would you take a Russian name if you lived in Russia in the future?

Ki-Jun:      Koreans don't like Russian names. (07/09/2014)

He already understood how his mother and brother's name did not fit in the Korean naming scheme, and he refused to have a Russian name in Russia as well as in South Korea just because "Koreans don't like Russian names." Korean social meaning of names permeated into school walls and into Ki-Jun's mind.

Hanna and Ki-Jun never had difficulties writing their names in the designated spaces for Korean student's name. Their full name appeared in school documents, and all their teachers and classmates knew their full names. They liked their names and never tried to change their names. Their names sounded “normal” in terms of both family name and given name. Both children were legitimate in terms of their names in schools. Their names helped them to gain legitimacy, compared to Mustafa and Nghia who had long “multicultural” names.



## Insults and Insensitivities

Although the multicultural schools were physically separated from the outside world, a different form of separation and discrimination took place inside the schools. This symbolic separation occurred and was evidenced in several ways: through the actions of the teachers toward different students; through the behaviors of the students toward each other. This section is divided into three subthemes: forced exclusion, insults by teachers, and insults and bullying by peers.

### Forced Exclusion

Schools as institutions are important in formal education. All the focal biracial attended multicultural schools after dropping out of public schools like Hanna and Mustafa or giving up enrolling in public school like Nghia and Ki-Jun. In this sense, multicultural schools were the last resort to these children although Ki-Jun planned to transfer to a public school the next academic year. Institutional insensitivities may reveal how school transmits mainstream prejudices into classrooms and children's minds.



Figure 5-4. Hanna and Liam Giving Thank-You Letters to the Representative of a State-Run Company in the Ceremony. (Note: nationwide broadcasting reporters recording the ceremony.).



Multicultural schools were established and/or authorized mainly to educate multicultural children, but schools treated students differently in terms of racial heritage. Hanna and Liam, both White biracial children, were chosen to represent the "charity" images for a state-run company (Figure 5-4). All six children wrote thank-you letters, and the two White biracial children were chosen to give the six letters to the representative of the company. The other students without White heritage watched the White biracial classmates pose in front of cameras. The ceremony photos were later uploaded on the school webpages. The two White biracial students were authorized by the school, while the others were excluded from the legitimate thanks discourse. Whiteness constituted part of a school hierarchy in which children with White heritage were positioned as superior to non-White children.

People tend to be socialized to accept their position in social hierarchy through internalized dominance and internalized oppression (Adam, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Freire, 1972). Internalized dominance refers to the ways people in power enact the social message that code them as superior to minority groups and thus deserving of their higher status (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). Internalized racial oppression occurs when people of color take their invisibility for granted as inherent to their being (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012).

Participated in it by applauding as Hanna and Liam were selected to represent the school, Mustafa, Nghia, and Jahongir learned unconsciously that the two White biracial children symbolized the ideal image of a multicultural child. Internalized dominance may have occurred when the White biracial children were chosen as class representatives and occupied higher positions in their group without making any special



effort to do so. It was likely that the three multicultural boys internalized the social messages about racial preferences within the discourse of celebration held in the newly renovated classroom. When the school chose two White biracial children, the school was aligned with mainstream racial preferences and simultaneously informed the multicultural children of color that they were less, at least symbolically, legitimate students even in the multicultural school. The children were racially silenced and did not dissent openly to the racial hierarchy imposed on them.

Students are sometimes controlled by institutional rules and excluded from the language socialization they are situated in. In a language arts class, students read a passage about mice. Jin-Hee told the class about her experience with disgusting mice when Hanna interrupted Jin-Hee, saying cheerfully, "It's so disgusting. French people eat snails. It's so disgusting, too." Mustafa cut in and talked about cockroaches. Jin-Hee scolded Mustafa in a firm tone, "Mustafa, please wait while Hanna is talking. Look at the turn-taking rule." She indicated the classroom rules.

Mustafa was silenced while Hanna was talking. Following the classroom rules for speaking, the homeroom teacher provided Hanna with the right to speak and required Mustafa to maintain the class turn-taking rule. The class rules controlled less legitimate students like Mustafa. When their conversation was over, Mustafa lost his attention on the topic. The turn-taking rule was not applied to the interactive conversations between legitimate members like Jin-Hee and Hanna. Instead, it was utilized to exclude Mustafa from their disgusting mice-snail discourse.

Mustafa liked learning Chinese characters and reading cartoon books called "Magic Chinese Characters (마법천자문)." He was hyper-active during Chinese classes,



which his Chinese teacher regarded as disruption. Because she refused to have Mustafa in her classes, Mustafa had to stay alone in a separate room.

I am excluded (난 왕따예요). I am excluded from Chinese classes by the Chinese teacher (중국어 선생님이 왕따시켰어요). So, I cannot attend the classes (그래서 수업에 못 들어가요). I like Chinese, but she disliked me. She is one of my enemies. (Interview with Mustafa, 06/26/2013)

Jin-Hee said,

The [Chinese subject] teacher was annoyed because of Mustafa. She was very stressed out because he was very disruptive during her class. I need to take care of Mustafa while other students learn Chinese with the teacher. So, I brought Mustafa to a room, and he stays alone there. (Interview with Jin-Hee, 06/24/2013)

Mustafa was excluded from his favorite classes by his subject teacher, and his homeroom teacher supported her colleague teacher, not her student. Sympathizing with the Chinese subject teacher, Jin-Hee isolated Mustafa in a separate room.

Schools are institutions where mainstream values are transmitted and discriminatory practices occur (Bourdieu, 1977a). When students are excluded by school policies or classroom rules, children have difficulties resisting the institutional mechanism. It was difficult for children of non-White backgrounds to resist the ceremony photos uploaded on the school webpages. It was also difficult for Mustafa to be angry about the turn-taking rule. Teachers made decisions to be in favor of children of White heritage in legitimate discourses and excluded children of color from legitimate discourses. Schools do not intend to teach oppression, but multicultural children internalize dominance and oppression through minor and trivial routines.



## Insults by Teachers

Students internalized social messages through teachers' feedback and responses in their daily lives. When Mustafa blamed Americans for being harsh toward American Indians, Hanna advocated for Americans. Instead, she blamed Europeans for the historical discrimination and planned genocide (Forbes, 1973; Hraba, 1994; Tierney, 1991).

Mustafa: (to Jin-Hee) Americans took territories from American Indians.

Hanna: That is not correct. It was European that took territories, not Americans. Americans never did harm. Nowadays, Americans try to protect and help Indians since they knew that Europeans did wrong. (07/11/2013)

Mustafa had read books regarding American history, but he was speechless in front of Hanna, who appeared to be an authority on American history and society. Although Jin-Hee majored in social studies in a college of education, she was silent when Mustafa looked to her for further clarification. Their teacher agreed with Hanna by being silent and smiling at Hanna. Jin-Hee's response resulted in distortion of historical facts within the small classroom, and the rest of the students learned in the social studies class that Americans protected American Indians from cruel Europeans. The solidarity between Hanna and Jin-Hee became strong. The relationship between Mustafa and Jin-Hee began to deteriorate, but Jin-Hee was not aware of it. Instead, she always attempted to "fix" Mustafa's behavior, believing that Mustafa made his peers and teachers irritated.

The relationship between Jin-Hee and Nghia was illuminated when Nghia shouted "Social studies is boring!" Jin-Hee pretended not to hear him. Nghia shouted in a louder voice, "Boring! Boring!" She pretended not to hear again. Nghia had the right to speak, but Jin-Hee ignored the loud voice. Looking at Hanna and Min-Su, Jin-Hee said



"Open your book to page 66." She began her class. Other children opened their books. The teacher's response was to tell all the students that Nghia should be ignored. In essence, he was invisible to his peers. I was surprised with Nghia's loud voice, but the other three children were calm. He was not reprimanded like Mustafa.

Nghia had difficulties memorizing ancient Korean and Chinese dynasties. He frequently memorized but frequently forgot what important wars and allies took place in Korea during the Chinese *Tang* and *Song* Dynasty.

Korean history is difficult to me. I need to memorize Korean history along with Chinese history. Difficulty is doubled to me. The words in civic are difficult. 고구려 (*Koguryea* Dynasty), 발해 (*Balhae* Dynasty), 북진정책 (expansionist policy), 전성기 (period of prosperity)...hmm...과거제도 (civil service examination)...hmm...and 공공기관 (public institutions), 인문환경 (human environments), 생활양식 (a way of life). I don't know what these words mean. Difficult and difficult. (Interview with Nghia, 06/18/2014)

Jin-Hee never asked why social studies was boring to him. Nobody asked Nghia why he did not like social studies. His loud appeals went nowhere. He could speak in a loud tone, but the right to speak did not equate to having the power to be audible to his teacher and classmates.

All of the teachers agreed that Nghia was smart and learned well, but he was not high-achieving. Mustafa did not have the right to speak, and he was silenced by the teachers. In contrast, Nghia had the right to speak, but he did not have the power to make others listen. He did not have the power to impose his speech. His voice was loud but inaudible. Speaking out in a loud voice, Nghia was gradually positioned as a "rude" boy. He was not considered to be a legitimate student, but a "rude" student. Teachers tolerated his rudeness, tried to soothe his whining, or scolded him. They, however, were not sensitive to Nghia's educational needs.



Children's lies revealed teachers' racism without reservation. Jin-Hee responded differently to children's lies, based on the race of the children. When Mustafa reported Nghia and Liam' bullying at restroom, Liam apologized to him in front of Jin-Hee, but Nghia did not admit his bullying. Instead, Nghia claimed that Mustafa told a lie, staring at Mustafa. He explained what happened in the restroom, but Jin-Hee and I could not understand his Korean. His point was that he did not do anything wrong. When Nghia denied his fault and tried to tell a lie, Jin-Hee shouted at him, and Nghia shouted back. The teacher's concern switched bullying to lying - or repositioned this behavior - which subsequently incriminated Nghia more than Liam. Nghia had to clean the classroom and library as a punishment for a week, while Liam was forgiven. Mustafa was bullied, the bullying was forgiven, but Nghia's lie was punished.

Jin-Hee's response was totally different to Hanna's lie. Hanna notified Jin-Hee that she would be absent the next day. She wanted to go to a veterinary clinic with her father. Jin-Hee did not allow her to be absent. Hanna looked unpleasant, complaining, "My homeroom teacher did not take care of my family issue. My father cannot go alone to the vet clinic." Hanna was absent the next day anyway. When I met Hanna on the next morning, I asked her what she did the previous day:

Me: Did you go and see an animal doctor yesterday?

Hanna: Yes, we did. My dogs are very heavy, and my father cannot handle them alone. I needed to help him. I had to translate for my daddy.

Me: You are so sweet to help your daddy. Great! (07/11/2013)

I told Jin-Hee that Hanna helped her father, unaware about the fact that Hanna turned in her diary with a fabricated story (Figure 5-5). Jin-Hee showed me her diary, saying "I don't know how to handle this." Unlike her worry, Jin-Hee pretended not to



know of her lie even though I told her the whole story unwittingly. Jin-Hee asked Hanna nicely, "Hanna? Is everything okay with you?" Both Hanna and Jin-Hee seemed content with the situation.

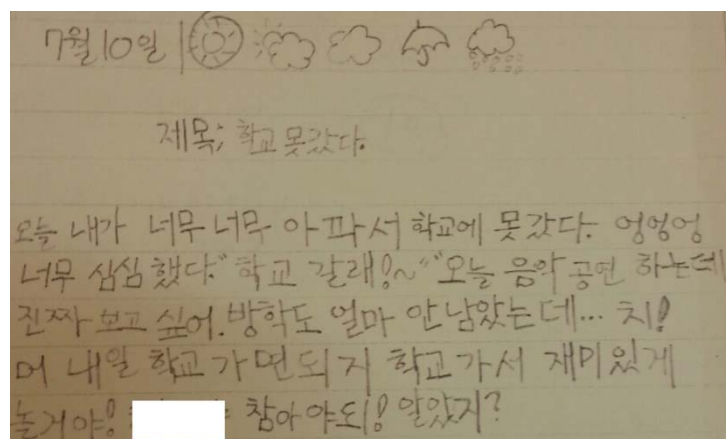


Figure 5-5. Hanna's Korean Diary with a Fabricated Story (07/10/2013). Photo courtesy of author. (Note: a real name is erased).

Nghia was positioned as a "bad" boy who told a black lie, and Hanna was positioned as an "innocent" girl who could not help telling a white lie. The teacher classified their lies differently: a black lie for a boy of South East Asian heritage and a white lie for a girl with White heritage. The teacher positioned each biracial student differently through her shouting discourse or caring discourse. Nghia did not have the power to impose reception of his lie while Hanna had the power to impose her lie. The power of reception stemmed from White heritage and White supremacy. Their skin color became their lie's color.

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<sup>1</sup> Translation: Title: I cannot go to school.

Today I was very very sick and could not go to school. I was crying. I was bored. "I want to go to school!" I like to see a music concert at school. I do not have many days before summer vacation. I hope that I can go to school tomorrow. I will be happy tomorrow in school. Hanna! Cheer up!



Mustafa's questions were rarely answered or caused teachers annoyed. When he fidgeted with his pencil case and made noises in a math class, he was scolded, but when Liam made noises with magnets, the same teacher did not scold Liam. In a social studies class, Jin-Hee told the students to color each continent on a map. Mustafa asked whether there was a guideline for coloring, but Jin-Hee pretended not to hear him. Mustafa asked again and again. Nghia complained, "It's so noisy!" Jin-Hee responded quickly to Nghia, "Nghia, Mustafa was noisy?" Mustafa asked again the same question. He earned a response from Jin-Hee after asking the same question six times. In a science class, the teacher explained about erosion, sediment transportation, and accumulation. Mustafa began to be disruptive, saying "A sheet of paper... the sheet will be going down...umm...will be going down the river. Later, it will be mixed with pet dung." The science teacher was annoyed and responded, "Pet dung? Why do you interrupt me with such words like pet dung?"

Hanna and Ki-Jun received positive feedback from teachers several times a day. Nghia was often praised for being smart by teachers, especially in math classes. During my entire observation in the Cultural World School, Mustafa received three positive responses from teachers. Those were simple verbal praises for being silent without asking questions during the classes. He received positive feedback when he did not saying anything and did not ask a question. This implied that Mustafa was not legitimate or afforded social power in the classroom to say anything. Teachers thought that Mustafa concentrated on learning when he was silent.

Whenever Mustafa was late or quarrelling with other boys, Jin-Hee punished him with compulsory cleaning. He became the class janitor. He felt sick and tired of cleaning



and wanted to escape the cleaning. When he ran away from school, Jin-Hee gave him another one-week of compulsory cleaning. Cleaning was a common tool for disciplining trouble-makers in the school. He gradually looked angry, but nobody cared. Most insults by teachers were related with Mustafa, Nghia, and Jahongir, all of whom were not native Korean students but multicultural children with non-White heritage. Native Korean children or multicultural children with White heritage received positive responses or were forgiven for their faults.

### **Insults and Bullying by Peers**

Social interactions with peer groups appeared to be critical in these children's identity construction. The most serious insults by peers happened to Mustafa in the form of isolation, teasing, and bullying. Mustafa's ADHD made him angry at peers, which caused his peers to become annoyed. His condition made him distracted from the teachers' lessons and caused him ask questions during classes, which caused his peers and teachers to be further annoyed. When Mustafa asked questions or said something, Nghia shouted at him, "Shut up! Mustafa." Mustafa was startled or unpleasant with Nghia's shouting at him, but other classmates were calm. They positioned Mustafa as a child of low status who deserved such treatments, and the teachers allowed it.

During a language arts class, when Jin-Hee asked students to draw their family, Min-Su drew his father playing a computer game at home. Seeing this, Mustafa asked

Min-Su:

Mustafa: Does your father play computer games? Weird! My mom won't allow me to play any computer games.

Min-Su: Why weird? Adults like my father play different games to use their brain.



Jahongir: (interrupting and bowing) Does your father bow again and again?

Mustafa: No, he doesn't.

Jahongir: Yes, he must bow every day.

Mustafa: No. My father comes home late, and he doesn't do that. (07/12/2013)

Mustafa's comments and questions were usually answered with cultural attacks from his classmates. Hearing these attacks, Jin-Hee did not intervene in these cultural insults by Jahongir toward Mustafa.

Mustafa was usually isolated in small group activities or whole class activities. Sometimes his peers asked him to step back from them and to stay alone while they discussed their group projects. Instead of participating in group projects, Mustafa had to read books or draw in his notebook. He rarely had meaningful interactions with his peers because he was not legitimated by either Hanna-Min-Su group or by Nghia-Jahongir group. Hanna and Min-Su often blamed Mustafa for asking unnecessary questions during classes and for quarrelling with Nghia and Jahongir. One example of these occurred during a recess as follows:

Min-Su: Mustafa, (turning to Mustafa) you love only yourself. Think about others. Our classroom is always noisy because of you.

Mustafa: It's because they hate me.

Hanna: It's because you are selfish. It's because you are talkative.

Mustafa: Min-Su, Hanna, You two are my enemies, too.

Min-Su: Selfish again! I will stop talking to you. (07/03/2013)

Hanna and Min-Su were not seriously involved in physical bullying or violent quarrelling. Nghia and Jahongir bullied Mustafa: Nghia initiated physical bullying on him, and Jahongir supported Nghia. Liam sometimes participated in their bullying even though he dropped out of a public school because of native Korean students' bullying.



After Mustafa hit Nghia in the shoulder once, Nghia, Jahongir, and Liam jumped together on Mustafa to beat him. Mustafa's mother asked for help from teachers and discussed it with other parents, but her attempt turned out to be a failure: she was as ignored as Mustafa. Mustafa was a victim, Nghia and his friends were aggressors, but there was no winner. Nghia was regarded as a "bully", not a winner. In this sense, Mustafa as well as Nghia and Jahongir were not legitimated in their class by their peers. Mustafa was more angry at his classmates. He thought of them as his enemies and wanted to defend himself. The only possible way to defend himself was not to interact with them. He rarely talked to anybody, he was rarely talked to by anybody, and he was totally socially isolated until he dropped out of the Cultural World School. He began to read and write Korean letters at age four and liked reading, but he did not have sufficient opportunities for Korean oral language development through socializing with peers and teachers.

When I met him again in the Future School in 2014, he did not ask as many questions as he did in his previous school. One of the reasons was that his questions were readily answered by Ji-Young, his new homeroom teacher. The other was that he was depressed and lost his words after he experienced bullying and isolation in the Cultural World School. He was still angry at Nghia and Jahongir even after he left the school.

Mustafa could not sleep last night. He beat his breast, cried, and said, "they should be bullied by other classmates." "They have to experience like me." "I hate them." I had to tell a lie for him. Just like "They transferred to a public school, and they were bullied and isolated by native Korean students." It's not easy to live as a mother of multicultural children of non-British or non-American heritages. (Interview with Mustafa's mother, 06/25/2014)



Mustafa was insulted by his peers, but he insulted Hanna. Mustafa touched Hanna's legs and thighs. Jin-Hee believed that Mustafa was interested in sexuality, saying, "Mustafa begins to be aware of sex." He also threatened Hanna, saying that he would touch somewhere secretive in her body. He was a victim and aggressor in terms of peer bullying and insults. Social isolation and bullying drove Mustafa to drop out of the multicultural school. In 2013, Hanna was a reliable student who could judge who should be punished when bullying took place in their class. She identified herself as *Mulan*, the heroine of a Hollywood movie. After Mustafa left the school, Hanna was the next victim of Nghia and Jahongir's bullying.

Nghia: Hanna is a hen. Hanna is a hen.

Hanna: I am not a hen. Why? I'm not a hen.

Jahongir: Are you a cock? Right, you are a cock. Nghia, did you hear that?

Nghia: Yes. I heard. She believes that she is a cock.

Hanna: No, I'm not a cock. I'm a human.

Nghia: Are you female or male? female! You're female. We are male. You are like a hen. (06/13/2014)

Hanna used to cry, saying, "I am a female human being." Nghia was angry at Hanna, "I am just talking to you. Why do you cry? Darn it! I don't want to see you cry." Beside Nghia, Jahongir smiled without saying anything. More often than not, Nghia and Jahongir insisted that Hanna was a man, not a woman. Hanna shouted that she was a woman. They replied, "Right! You are a woman, and we are men. Ha Ha Ha...You know that." When she answered that she was a man, they teased her, "Hanna is a fool. Hanna is a fool." When Hanna was left alone without teacher's supervision, she was



positioned between a hen, a chicken, a woman, and a fool. She cried and reported it to her homeroom teacher, but the boys did not stop.

The two boys did not bully Min-Su, a native Korean boy. While they bullied Mustafa in 2013 because his ADHD condition made them irritated, they bullied Hanna because she was female and because teachers were in favor of Hanna. They identified her as a hen through gendered discourses. Hanna was teased because of her racial differences by her Korean female classmates in the public school. She was insulted and bullied because of her gender by her multicultural classmates in the multicultural school. Race, learning disability (ADHD), religion, and gender were the main causes of teasing and bullying in the student-student relationships.

### **Resisting Insults and Insensitivities**

Schools and teachers insulted children by being insensitive to the children's needs. In the same way, children insulted their multicultural peers because they were insensitive to difference and diversity. Schools, teachers, and children insulted multicultural children, based on mainstream narratives such as racial preference and gender prejudice which permeated into classroom walls. The four biracial children resisted mainstream ideas; they acted as agents who negotiated their own meaning within the social world that marginalized them. According to the resistance theory of Erickson (1987), refusing to actively participate in class activities can be an example of not learning, a pattern of refusing to learn. The four biracial children resisted when their identities were threatened. Their resistance can be interpreted as constructing a counter-narrative and reflecting their struggles for legitimacy.



## **Dropping out of School**

Hanna and Mustafa were teased by their classmates in their previous public schools. Native Korean children and teachers viewed the biracial children as not legitimate, based on the ethnocentrism and racial prejudices. Their parents asked the schools to take care of the children and visited the city office of education to claim for taking an action against racial discrimination, but they failed. Before the children completed the first year, they gave up learning and dropped out of the schools. According to resistance theory, "dropping out is an extreme form of refusing education" (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 288). They resisted racism of their public schools and decided to transfer to a multicultural school in 2010.

Jin-Hee viewed Hanna as a bilingual and bicultural student, but she was aware of no difference between Mustafa and native Korean students in terms of language and culture, a presumption based on an assimilationist perspective toward culturally diverse children. Mustafa was compliant in Jin-Hee's assumption to the extent that he resisted being identified as Jordanian. However, he chose to keep his Muslim name when his mother tried to change his name into a tri-syllabic Korean name. He also voluntarily followed his father's Muslim practices, such as observing Ramadan. His Muslim identity was the outcome of his resistance to assimilationist approaches. Once again, he enacted the extreme resistance by dropping out of the Cultural World School in 2013.

## **Self-Isolation from Class Activities**

Mustafa refused to participate in class activities when he was insulted by teachers. After the student-teacher relationship was almost ruined, Jin-Hee asked the students to draw their family in order to use as a requirement of the art therapy course



that she took. Mustafa finished his drawing activity quickly and then worked on drawing a fully armored knight. Referring to the book of medieval chivalry and the encyclopedia, he finalized the medieval knight on his social studies notebook. After the class, Jin-Hee collected the drawings. In Mustafa's family drawing (Figure 5-6), his mother was watching a TV, his father was playing only with his two brothers, and he was sleeping in his bed.



Figure 5-6. Mustafa's Drawing of His Family. Photo courtesy of author. (Notes: 1=Mustafa, 2=mother, 3=father, 4 & 5=brothers).

Since then, I saw Mustafa always carry his social studies notebook. He was proud of the armored knight (Figure 5-7). He was afraid that the naughty boys would steal it. He used to whisper to himself and me, "This drawing is mine. I drew it by myself."

Me: (showing the drawing of his family) It is your family drawing. I photocopied this drawing. Can I have this?

Mustafa: I don't care. Just throw it away.

Me: What?



Mustafa: I rarely nap. And we don't have a TV. The drawing is a lie.

Me: ....

Mustafa: Can you watch this notebook and make sure they don't steal it?  
(07/12/2013)

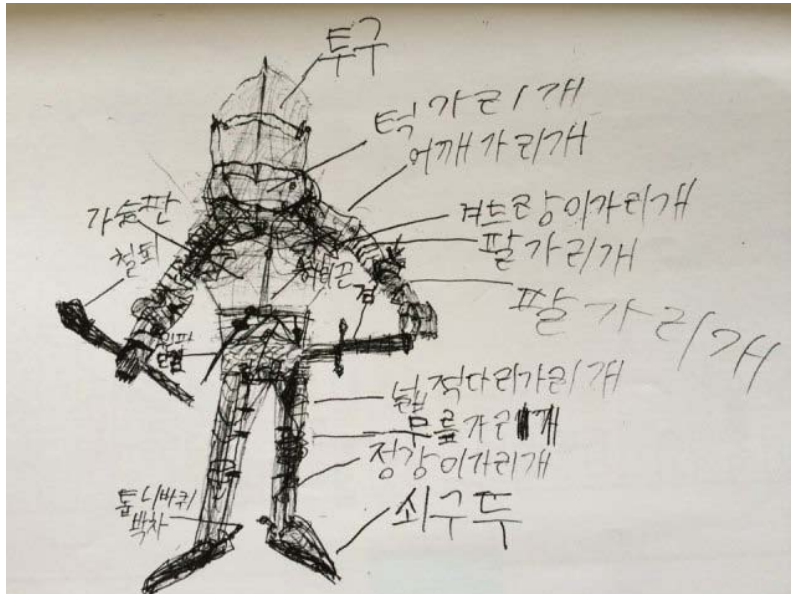


Figure 5-7. Mustafa's Drawing of an Armored Knight. Photo courtesy of author.

It seemed that the knight became his avatar, and, suddenly, I became the guardian of his knight. He told me to throw away the copy of his family drawing and to protect the notebook holding his knight. Mustafa's mother confirmed that Mustafa rarely took a nap because his ADHD medication made him alert, that they did not have a TV at home, and that his father spent most of the weekend with Mustafa rather than with his younger brothers. He got revenge on his homeroom teacher through deception. As a kind of revenge, his family drawing demonstrated his struggle and his resistance against his homeroom teacher who epitomized the prevailing mainstream discourse that frequently blames the victims. He was not engaged in the classroom activity but clung to his own writings and drawings. He resisted Jin-Hee with the family drawing and set up



the counter-narrative with his knight. He wanted to become a fully armored knight to defend himself.

Nghia was “rude” toward young female teachers in 2013, and much more frequently “rude” in 2014. When he kicked his pencils toward a female teacher, the teacher stared at him. Nghia said simply, “sorry”, but he did not look apologetic. He used to throw class handouts in front of teachers who prepared the handouts. In an English vocabulary class, he crumpled a sheet of English handout into a ball, murmuring “It’s meaningless to me.” The handouts included English sentence patterns about favorite sports and favorite hobbies. His English female teacher in her first year teaching, picked it up and handed it over to Nghia. He kicked it away, saying “Meaningless!” The female English teacher avoid eye contact with Nghia even when he behaved disrespectfully. He expressed that English was meaningless at least to him, but nobody asked why. He told me later that he was angry because he had to learn Hanna’s language while he was going to forget “his” language.

When Jin-Hee prepared a world map for a coloring activity, Nghia resisted doing any work. Jin-Hee forced him to do the worksheet, but he talked back.

Nghia: I don’t know what to do.

Jin-Hee: You can fill with different colors for each continent.

Nghia: What do you mean? I don’t know. I don’t know.

Jin-Hee: Do the coloring on the map!

Nghia: I cannot. I cannot.

Nghia used to refuse to participate in any classroom activities in social studies classes. When he attracted female teachers’ attentions, teachers’ responses were to



neglect him or to scold him. Nobody heard him or asked him why. Nghia's rudeness, that is, his resistance continued because his educational needs were never met.

### **Refusing to Participate Orally**

Although her identity fluidly passed between Korean and American in her interactions with her peers and teachers, Hanna was Korean and, at the same time, American. Actually, she stated that she was both. She refused to be recognized as simply Korean or simply American. She also refused to be described as American Korean because two separate words could not indicate one person.

When students practiced the sentence pattern, "I am (nation's adjective) ", Nghia answered, "I am Vietnamese" , and Jahongir answered, "I am Uzbekistani."

Hanna: I am AmeKorean.

Nghia: There is no such a word!

Jahongir: You can say "I am American."

Hanna: I cannot say in that way.

Jahongir: Go ahead and give the turn to Min-Su.

Hanna: ....

Min-Su: I am Korean. (turning to Hanna) Say "I am American" or "I am Korean." Anything is okay.

Hanna: I cannot say in that way. Skip my turn.

Nghia: Hanna is a hen.

School documents stated clearly that Hanna and Jessica's national origin was America. That was the official norm of the multicultural school, but she never accepted the designated origin in her daily life. Hanna refused to practice the sentence and stayed silent during the class. She was both Korean and American, i.e., an AmeKorean girl, which was her counter-narrative.



## Refusing to Read/Write

Ki-Jun resisted when he was confronted with culturally deficit mainstream thinking. He was good at academic learning. He learned multiplication and analog clock time-reading, which was above his grade levels. He was also good at test-based language arts activities such as finding main ideas, summarizing, or inferring. He did not have difficulty writing in short diaries or journals (Figure 5-8). His bilingualism and academic performance were evidence of overcoming the mainstream narrative that multicultural children are poor at language learning and content learning. He was a high-achieving bilingual and bicultural child.

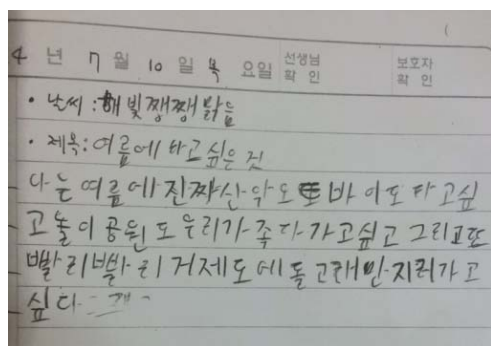


Figure 5-8. Ki-Jun's Korean Diary (07/10/2014). Photo courtesy of author.

Nevertheless, he did not enjoy reading storybooks. Believing that he was cognitively smart, his homeroom teacher suggested that he should make a storybook. His expectation was that he would tell ghost stories and that his teacher would write the stories for him. After his teacher refused his expectation, he gave up making a story book. The next day, Ji-Young prepared a short story about a lion and a tiger. Ji-Young urged him to 'try' to, but he answered, "It takes over one hour to read this story. I cannot read it. I don't want to." He resisted obstinately. Ji-Young asked him to read once again.

Ki-Jun: You can read out for me.

Ji-Young: You can do that by yourself.



Ki-Jun: I don't like reading.

Ji-Young: You can read later when you want to. (07/04/2014)

The tension between them was resolved, but I was surprised by his adamant resistance. It was surprising because he did not show any reading problems when I taught him with some activities in Korean language arts.

Ki-Jun was accustomed to oral storytelling due to his experiences with his Russian grandparents. He enjoyed telling stories and hearing stories. When his teacher refused his request for writing his oral stories, he then refused to make a storybook. When his teacher refused his request to read aloud for him, he then refused to read the story. He resisted his homeroom teacher's literacy teaching. Not understanding an oral language tradition as his home/community culture, his teachers asked Ki-Jun to read and write stories. Ki-Jun likely needed the teacher to make connections between oral language to literacy in school. Ki-Jun refused to read and write when his home culture was not respected.

In summary, the children resisted mainstream discourse and assimilationist policies. Following Nieto and Bode's (2008) finding, "not learning what schools teach can be interpreted as a form of political resistance" (p. 287). Hanna refused to practice the sentence pattern, Mustafa lost his interest in the classroom activity regarding family, Nghia shouted in a loud voice to express his needs and learning desires, and Ki-Jun refused literacy activities with his homeroom teacher. Hanna and Mustafa experienced the extreme form of resistance to education by means of dropping out of their schools. They gave up learning and resisted when their home/community cultures were not respected or when they were forced to be assimilated into mainstream narrative.



## Language Policies and Politics

A language and the language speakers are interconnected. The language that real-Koreans speak is regarded as the most prestigious within the territory of Korea, which is related to the first layer of Koreans' conceptualization of race. Just as the first layer sorts real-Koreans from non-Koreans, the layer distinguishes Korean speakers from other language speakers. In the dichotomy of "our" language versus "their" languages, Korean is positioned as a language of prestige, the superior language, spoken and used in South Korea. European languages, East Asian languages, the other Asian languages, and African and aboriginal languages are positioned identically with racial hierarchy. Obviously, English, especially American White English, is positioned as a very powerful language in South Korea. But insofar as language is irreducible to race and culture, the legitimacy of a language is never separated from the skin color of the speakers.

Table 5-1. Language Profiles of Four Biracial Children.

Language		Hanna	Ki-Jun	Nghia	Mustafa
Bilingual/Monolingual		Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	monolingual
Language Background		E & K	R & K	V & K	A & K
Home Language		E	R & K	V & K	K
Language in Use	Oral	E & K	R & K	V & K	K
	Written	E & K	K	V & K	K
Primary Language (Self-identified)	Oral	E	K & R	V	K
	Written	K	K	K	K

(Notes: A=Arabic, E=English, K=Korean, R=Russian, V=Vietnamese)

Language and culture are linked inextricably (Kramsch, 1998). Linguistic capital intersects language with race and culture. The four biracial children in this study had bilingual backgrounds from their parents and siblings. The basic profiles of the



participants' language backgrounds (Table 5-1) reflect the fluidity of their identities, that is, how they weave between the languages. This section discusses how language policies are different between native Korean-speaking students and between Korean language learners and how language policies are applied differently between students of White heritage and non-White heritage. Also, this section addresses how race intersects language through language maintenance, bilingualism, and language socialization.

### **Language Policies for Korean-Speaking Students: Supporting English but Not Supporting Arabic at Home and at School**

Hanna's home language was English, but she developed Korean at the grade-appropriate proficiency level when she firstly enrolled in a public school. Hanna was highly encouraged to speak English at home because English language ability was valued by prestigious colleges and employers in South Korea. Her home language was a required subject of the Korean national curriculum. Her home language policy was helpful for Hanna to get high scores on English tests at school. When I asked her which subject she liked most, Hanna answered that she liked English because she could have full scores easily. When a group of people is able to attain higher social status without special effort, internalized dominance takes place. Internalized dominance refers to the ways people in power enact the social message that codes them as superior to minoritized groups and thus deserving of their higher status (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). When she had highest scores, Hanna seemed to have internalized her social and linguistic dominance unconsciously. That internalized sense of superiority, of dominance, reinforced the message that English, Hanna's home language, was important and prioritized.



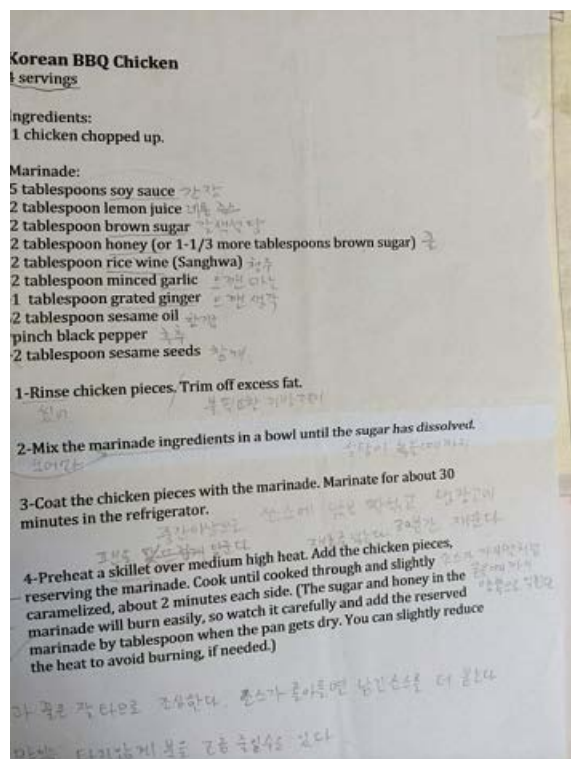


Figure 5-9. Hanna's Recipe of Korean BBQ Chicken. Photo courtesy of author.

Hanna learned well at school through what she learned at home. Her home language was connected to school content knowledge and academic achievement. Students can learn well at school through what they bring from their home. For a cooking activity, Hanna prepared a recipe of Korean BBQ chicken which came from her home cookbook. Her recipe was bilingual: it was printed mostly in English, and she wrote the key words in Korean in the margin (Figure 5-9). The math teacher accepted the recipe for their cooking. Holding the recipe, Hanna translated it or took charge of the most of the class activity. When the recipe was accepted for the whole class activity, her home culture was respected and authorized and, further, her home language became linguistic capital, which can, in turn, could be converted into cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1991).



Furthermore, English as a required course caused Hanna to be motivated to speak English at home. She tried to maintain English in her daily life. In sending cell phone texts to her Korean monolingual friends, she wrote an English text first and then translated it into Korean text (see below).

English Text:        jessica and I gonna 영지 park. let's go and see 뽀로로 library. see at 11:30 to lotte department store to go to the lotteria.

Korean Text:        제시카랑 영지공원 갈건데 뽀로로 도서관 같이 가자. 11:30에 롯데백화점 롯데리아에서 만나. (05/18/2014)

When I asked her why she sent two texts of the same content, her answer was that she liked to use English when sending texts at home. She was afraid that she would not have full scores in English exams and could not study in America if she forgot English. When Hanna was not confident in writing in English, her fifth grade homeroom teacher encouraged her to write her diaries in English. Hanna wrote her English diary on a regular basis, and the teacher provided his English responses to her English diaries. The maintenance of her home language was helpful for her school achievement, and, at the same time, her high achievement motivated her to maintain her home language in her daily life. In these reciprocal processes, school and teachers helped the maintenance of her home language, reinforced the high status of English, and further elevated her social status in school.

Despite his bilingual background at home, Mustafa was monolingual. Although Mustafa attended a school in Jordan for a year, he was monolingual in Korean. Arabic is a minority language in South Korea, and Mustafa did not have any opportunities to learn his father's language in and out of school. Unlike English, Arabic was not included in a multicultural and multilingual curriculum. With geographical proximity and the rise of



China and Japan in the global economy, Chinese and Japanese began to enter the school curriculum as elective courses. Chinese and Japanese in addition to German and French are popular in foreign language education. However, neither the public nor the multicultural schools offered Arabic language courses. The Cultural World School offered Chinese, Russian, and Japanese classes as second foreign language courses. School policies and the national curriculum marginalized Arabic, which implied that his father's language was not legitimate to enter school curriculum. Mustafa did not have access to bilingualism and was not motivated to learn the illegitimate language. Mustafa remained monolingual in Korean. School language policies were applied to assimilate multicultural children of minoritized languages into Korean monolingualism. Whiteness and bilingual policies intersected institutionally in a way that power dynamics resulted in unequal access to bilingualism and bilingual education in school settings. Hanna and Mustafa were split into elite bilingualism for biracial children with White heritage versus monolingualism for biracial children with non-White heritage.

### **Language Policies for Language Learners: Not Supporting their Primary Language at Home and at School**

Hanna and Mustafa's Korean were grade-appropriate in spoken and written modalities with native accents when they enrolled in schools in 2010. In contrast, Ki-Jun and Nghia enrolled in a multicultural schools from the beginning of their education because they did not have Korean language competence and could not understand the Korean national curriculum. Worrying that their racial backgrounds and language difference would minoritize them, their parents decided to send them to multicultural schools. The fact that Ki-Jun and Nghia did not try to enroll in public elementary schools represents how the intersection of racial differences and linguistic minoritization defined



the educational opportunity of non-native multicultural children in South Korea. They were discriminated against before their enrollment in public elementary school.

Ki-Jun and Nghia's bilingual practices at home related to their family structures. Their parents' remarriage resulted in racially-, ethnically-, and/or linguistically-blended families. Sergey and Alisha communicated in Russian before Alisha's remarriage and Ki-Jun's birth; Nghia, his brother, and his mother communicated in Vietnamese before her remarriage. The existing Russian and Vietnamese speech communities were further blended by Korean-speaking fathers. Two languages were compartmented within each family. The native Korean-speaking fathers had legitimacy (the right to speak Korean) and higher social status, and they remained monolingual Korean speakers. The rest of family members were sequential bilingual speakers. The particular marriage and family structures, as well as general or social power relations influenced the bilingual practices of Ki-Jun and Nghia.

Ki-Jun and Nghia enrolled in KSL programs of multicultural schools to learn Korean instead of attending public schools. Ki-Jun and Nghia stayed one semester and one year respectively in the KSL programs. Both multicultural schools offered three different courses according to the student's proficiency levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced courses. There was no bilingual support in order to learn Korean or grade-level content knowledge. While learning Korean in the KSL programs, Ki-Jun was delayed in learning first grade content following the first grade curriculum. When he stayed in KSL programs, Nghia skipped the entire third grade content learning and was mainstreamed into the fourth grade class the next year. KSL curricula were designed to teach foreign-born children Korean so that they could understand the Korean national



curriculum. School language policy for the Korean language learners was close to assimilationist approach: linguistic assimilation first and content learning later.

South Korean schools rarely offer Russian or Vietnamese courses or bilingual supports. The Cultural World School did not offer Vietnamese course although the Vietnamese student population outnumbered the English-speaking children: six Vietnamese students and one English speaking child in 2013 and nine Vietnamese students and five English speaking children in 2014. Nevertheless, they were different from Mustafa who did not have any multicultural friends of Arabic heritage in either the public or the multicultural schools. Mustafa was always alone without an Arabic peer group, but Ki-Jun and Nghia interacted with their ethnic peers at school. Schools allowed Korean language learners to communicate in Russian or Vietnamese with the students of their ethnic community at the school cafeteria or hang-out places. From the school policies, the students likely learned that their languages were used only for private interactions. Ki-Jun and Nghia learned implicitly through schooling that their primary languages lacked linguistic and cultural capital for official usage.

### **Splitting into a Korean Language Learner and a Bilingual Child**

The two phrases of *language learner* and *bilingual speaker* have different meanings in South Korea. *Korean Language learner* (한국어 학습자) is a euphemistic but negative phrase indicating a person who is "poor" at Korean. In contrast, *bilingual speaker* (이중언어 구사자) is a positive expression indicating a person who is "good" at "two" languages. This section presents how Nghia and Ki-Jun came to be split into a Korean language learner and a bilingual child.



Since 2011 when he was eight years old, Nghia began to learn Korean as a second language. When I met him in 2013, his non-native accent and linguistic errors prevented him from engaging in complex verbal interactions in Korean even after he was exited from KSL status. When I met him again in 2014, his Korean was slightly improved but never grade-appropriate, although he learned Korean for more than two and half years beginning at the age of eight. In contrast, Ki-Jun improved his Korean up to the grade-appropriate level in one year. He was seven years old when he arrived from Russia. He did not produce oral language during the summer of 2013, but by the summer of 2014, no one could tell that he was ever a Korean language learner. His Korean improved strikingly in both spoken and written modalities despite his stammering habit. Both boys had similar familial environments: a Korean-speaking father, a non-Korean mother, and a Vietnamese/Russian speaking brother. Both Korean language learners were subject to assimilationist school language policies. However, teachers regarded Nghia as a Korean language learner, but Ki-Jun as a bilingual child in 2014.

The school excluded Nghia from visibly participating in school activities. For example, Nghia was marginalized in the school-company celebration and excluded himself from my tutoring. He behaved badly toward Mustafa and Hanna. Hanna described him as "a nuisance (짜증나는 인간)" in public and one of the "bad boys (저것들)" in her diary. Hanna interacted mainly with Min-Su, a native Korean boy, in the classroom, and both native Korean-speaking children helped each other in peace. Nghia frequently failed to be a legitimate classmate in the interaction with his teachers or Hanna-Min-Su group (Figure 5-10).





Figure 5-10. The Interactional Groups in the Fifth Grade Classroom in 2014 (X: Researcher).

Nghia interacted mainly with Jahongir in the classroom and ate lunch with Vietnamese students at the cafeteria. During weekends, he sometimes met a Mongolian friend, a former KSL classmate who transferred to a public school. He interacted with Korean language learners or former KSL classmates rather than with Korean-speaking friends or with teachers capable of offering him the verbal scaffolding of his target language. He spoke Korean with Jahongir and his Mongolian friend. He frequently code-switched between Korean and Vietnamese in interaction with Vietnamese children. He was a legitimate speaker to Jahongir, his Vietnamese students, and his Mongolian friend rather than to target language speakers.

Nghia's language development reminded me of what Norton (2000) calls a catch 22 situation: language minorities cannot participate in social practice because of their low proficiency in their target language, and, subsequently, this failure of social participation hinders language development. Nghia wanted the right to speak, but his struggle kept him from his desire to become legitimate. He earned his teachers' attention, but the teachers that I met in the counseling room frequently described him as a “rude” and “bossy” boy.



응히아 개가 사람 간 보면서 행동하니까 조심해요. 어이구. 불쌍하기도 하고 태도가 안 좋아요. (Translation: Nghia is so mean, so you have to be careful. What a poor boy he is! But his attitude is so bad.) (Interview with the art teacher, 06/24/2014)

응히아는 골목대장 스타일이죠. 지 마음대로 하려는 경향이 있고. 좀 그럴죠. 골목대장이죠. 좋게 말해서 골목대장. 휘젓죠. (Translation: Nghia is a sort of a bully. He wants to control everything. Yes, he does. He is bossy. A bossy bully.) (Interview with his fifth grade homeroom teacher, 06/13/2014)

He was trapped in exclusion and a bad reputation, and it did not seem that his Korean was noticeably improved in 2014, compared to that of 2013. School teachers classified Nghia as a Korean language learner, not a bilingual child, from assimilationist perspectives.

In contrast, Ki-Jun was a Korean language learner in 2013, but was no longer in 2014. Like Hanna, he was regarded as bilingual rather than a language learner. He was orally bilingual to the extent that both languages were identified as his primary languages. He was able to maintain Russian and to speak Russian fluently and also learn Korean successfully in the span of a year. Surprisingly, he became fluent in Korean without second language socialization with native Korean peers. Before Mustafa and Mi-Hwa transferred to his school, he did not have any single classmate whose primary language was Korean. He interacted with Russian KSL students in Russian and with Chinese KSL students in Korean.

All the school teachers loved Ki-Jun. Mrs. Oh, the principal, picked up Ki-Jun to drive him to school every morning. One of the teachers brought a newspaper every day for him because he liked the Pokémon cartoons in the daily section. She wanted Ki-Jun to like learning through the Pokémon cartoon characters. Whenever he felt thirsty during class, he asked Ji-Young to let him go to the office to get a drink of water. When he'd



arrive in the office, he would tell the staff, "I miss you" or "I love you." Mrs. Oh and the school administrator adored this.

One day in July, he drank milk and threw the empty milk carton pack into a plastic-only-recycle bin. Seeing this, a church elder told him, "Milk pack should go into a bin for paper." "Is this paper?" "Yes, it's paper, not plastic." "Thank you. It looks plastic. I need to ask my teacher." Puzzled, he ran into the office. It was impressive to see how much he trusted his homeroom teacher. The student-teacher relationship was healthy. When I followed him, a couple of teachers as well as his homeroom teacher were eager to cut a milk container and to show the paper material. They praised him for asking such a scientific question. He was smart and learned well in most cases. He was high-achieving at content learning. Teachers called him using the words of "Dr. Park", "smart", "cute", "lovely", and "handsome" every day. A KSL instructor said, "When Ki-Jun grows up, women will line up from South Korea to Moscow, and all around Eurasia to marry him." The school administrator responded, "Of course!" When I heard this, I agreed. A male teacher added, "He is a good boy. I love him." Ji-Young just burst out laughing, "He may be sick and tired of our love and caring. All of us love him." Ki-Jun was a beloved child.

When teachers loved and praised Hanna, Nghia used to complain, and Jahongir supported Nghia. However, nobody was jealous of Ki-Jun because he was a youngest student in the school and because Ki-Jun was a former KSL student like other language minority students. After Mi-Hwa, a third grade Korean girl, moved to the Future School, Ki-Jun developed a good relationship with her. For example, when Ki-Jun spilled a box of straight pins in the hallway, Mi-Hwa ran and helped him. She worried about whether



he would be hurt with the pins. The girl loved him as her boyfriend. She ate lunch with Ki-Jun at the Russian table, not at the female students' table. The school climate and healthy relationships with people around him certainly affected his language development.

Despite his loneliness, a warm-hearted learning climate contributed positively to Ki-Jun's desire for recognition and safety. He was accepted by his close friends and teachers. Instead of spending his time with linguistically less-capable peers, Ki-Jun received high-quality Russian feedback while interacting with Russian adolescents and socialized with well-educated teachers and an older Korean classmate. His language proficiency and native accent in both Russian and Korean brought him to the world of prestigious bilingualism and, accordingly, made him a bilingual, rather than a Korean language learner.

As Kanno (2008) observes, "those who come from families where acquisition of the legitimate language is not possible are therefore handicapped from the beginning" (p. 26). In the similar vein, Nghia and Ki-Jun did not enroll in public school, and were therefore positioned as speakers of illegitimate languages in Korean mainstream society. Nghia arrived in South Korea in his age of eight while Ki-Jun arrived in South Korea in his age of seven. The two boys developed different linguistic identities: one for a non-native language learner and the other for bilingual speaker. The comparison between Nghia and Ki-Jun reveals the importance of social participation and verbal interactions with capable adults in an accepting climate for language learning and development.

Underlying the different social participation, Ki-Jun's social status in the racial stratification had an impact on his legitimacy to speak. The legitimacy was closely



connected to social participation and inclusion through which he was socialized in order to improve his knowledge of the target language. His White heritage as property was intersected with his language development. In contrast, the mainstream racialized discourse viewed Nghia as less legitimate, and he experienced micro-discriminations such as "everyday slights, insults, and insensitivities" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012, p. 50) in his daily life. He struggled and shouted against the racism, but he was inaudible and positioned as a "bossy" nuisance. In the discourse of native language versus target language dichotomy, Nghia was labeled as a Korean language learner, not a bilingual speaker. He was never marginalized like Mustafa, but was also never beloved like Hanna and Ki-Jun. It was not easy for Nghia to attain the caring and positive responses that children with White heritage attained with ease.

In summary, Hanna, a White biracial child born in South Korea, became a bilingual student since her multicultural school supported her bilingualism and biculturalism. Mustafa, a biracial child with non-White heritage born in South Korea, became a monolingual student since his schools did not support Arabic language learning. Ki-Jun, a White biracial child, became bilingual while Nghia was regarded as a Korean language learner who was poor at Korean. Racial heritage and racial preference are interdependent with social participation and inclusion, which then affect language development and proficiency. Different racial backgrounds, social participation, and language socialization classified the linguistically diverse students into a bilingual child, a Korean monolingual speaker, and a non-native language learner.

### **Being Fluid between Multiple Social Worlds**

When viewing sociocultural factors and the intersectionality of those factors from poststructuralist lens, each biracial student produced and reshaped their identities



through different positionings in the multiple social worlds. Hanna's identity was fluid in terms of race and languages. Her positioning shifted from that of a racially minoritized girl in one social context to that of the prettiest girl in a different context. She was teased in a public school and racially empowered in a multicultural school. Her identity traversed discrimination and empowerment across the racialized discourses of Korean schools. In short, the multicultural school elevated her status, linguistically and racially. Her White heritage contributed to her racial empowerment, which her primary language, English, reinforced. She was a legitimate biracial child, and the intersectionality of race and language promoted her social identity in the multicultural school.

Hanna's position, however, was fluid. Hanna's *Mulan* was too fragile to defend herself against Mustafa's male sexuality. After Mustafa left the school and was no longer the target for bullying, Nghia and Jahongir belittled and ridiculed Hanna with the male-oriented discourses. As for her national identity, Hanna took on a Korean position when she mentioned Hello Kitty to Mido, a friend with Japanese heritage. Her identity took on an American citizen and patriotic identity when she defended Americans from charges of violence against Native Americans by blaming these crimes on Europeans. Her identity was always fluid to gain legitimacy within the dynamics of power structure.

Nghia's fluidity appeared in how his positions differed over the time and place. Nghia looked “rude” toward young female teachers and docile toward the school principal, his wife, and male teachers. Nghia looked “rude” toward Mustafa and affable toward Jahongir, Liam, and Min-Su. His attitude was compliant with Hanna in 2013 but frequently sought to humiliate her along gendered lines in 2014. Focusing on a participant's essential traits cannot explain how frequently Nghia shifted reputations



among "bossy", "docile", "rude", "affable", and "compliant." His attitudes are ostensible phenomena of his effort to gain and exercise legitimacy. Power relations and positioning reveal his fluid identity within the social contexts.

In addition, Nghia had multiple and contradictory desires and negotiated his identity to fulfill those desires. In the summer of 2013, he wanted to explain the structure of Vietnamese names and taught me eagerly how to pronounce his Vietnamese name. It implied that he wanted to be called and identified with his Vietnamese name. In March of 2014, when Hanna asked his name and national origin to practice English sentence patterns, he answered, "My name is 'I don't know'" and "I come from 'I don't know.'" He had a desire to be recognized as a Korean boy and made a tri-syllabic Korean name. He asked his teachers and classmates to call him "김성진 (Kim Sung-Jin)", and his request was so successful that my son recognized him as "a native Korean student" who spoke "strange Korean." His words were audible, and he had the power to impose the reception of his new name on his classmates and teachers. This did not mean that he was culturally dominated by the Korean mainstream culture. Seen from the poststructuralist approaches, there is no blind acculturation toward host cultures (Pavlenko, 2002). As forms of resistance and to gain legitimacy, he was negotiating and constructing his identity and subjectivity in his own ways.

Despite being called "Sung-Jin", he still desired to belong to the Vietnamese student community in the cafeteria. He desired to sit beside Van Binh, the Vietnamese leader, and tell the eighth grade Korean boy to go away. He might have thought he had more right to sit at the table than the Korean boy. When the Korean boy (my son) asked, "Are you Vietnamese?", Nghia was silent. While he hesitated between expressing his



desire to be recognized as Korean and expressing his desire to belong to his ethnic group, he hesitated and lost his words temporarily. His identity was fluid as his positioning fluctuated according to multiple desires and power relations.

Mustafa was also fluid in his two heritages. Mustafa was angry when he was called as Islam. When Jin-Hee asked him to present the culture of his father's nation, Mustafa researched and gave a good presentation instead of refusing to participate in the class activity. Since he did not like to be recognized as Muslim, he refused further conversation with me when I asked which one was his family name and which was his given name. Jin-Hee regarded him as a monolingual and monocultural child. He frequently read books about the ancient Orient, world religions, and Muslim cultures. He kept Muslim rules in his life by means of adhering his Muslim name and by not eating pork. He was monolingual and bicultural. Monolingual and monocultural dichotomy cannot explain his identity, which looked fluid and contradictory in his desire to maintain his Muslim culture while concealing it from his Korean culture. Additionally, while he was marginalized by teachers and classmates, he used to tease Hanna, the only female. His identity fluidly shifted from marginalized victim to a male harasser.

As a minoritized Russian monolingual, Ki-Jun could not enroll in public school, and was mute in a multicultural school in the summer of 2013. When he improved his Korean the next year, he became beloved by his classmates, Russian students, and Korean teachers. His Korean was equated to an elevated social status among his peers. The grade-appropriate bilingual child with White heritage attained the right to speak and was legitimated in both his Russian and Korean speech communities. He was positioned over time as a language minority and Korean language learner to a



handsome bilingual speaker. His linguistic and social identity was fluid as his Korean improved gradually.

Nevertheless, it is not true that bilingual biracial children accept both cultures in balanced ways. Ki-Jun had lunch at the Russian table in the cafeteria and played cell phone games with Russian KSL students. He mainly interacted with Russian students in Russian, but he refused to have a Russian name. As long as the classroom walls were permeable, having a Russian name would lower his legitimacy because, as he stated, "Koreans don't like Russian names." As seen in Nghia's case, Ki-Jun ensured both belonging and safety in the name's assurance of a more powerful position and decreased racial marginalization.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I first presented what the Korean-speaking biracial children experienced in racialized school environments: they were not racially legitimate in public schools and were considered legitimate in multicultural schools. Even though they were racially legitimate in multicultural schools, their social statuses differed according to their location in the racial and linguistic hierarchy. Also, I described the legitimacy and illegitimacy of the four children's names. I depicted how the children experienced and resisted insults and insensitivities in their daily lives. In addition, to capture the relationship between identity and language, this chapter delved into how the language policies were implemented to Korean-speaking students and Korean language learners. Finally, I elaborated on the fluidity of biracial children's identities. To gain legitimacy in multiple social situations, the children weaved through diverse stances and contradictory desires.



## CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION

### **Overview**

This study explored how Korean biracial children construct their identity in terms of race and languages. Findings showed that social relationships and power were reflected through race and language in the context of multicultural schools in South Korea. This study employed sociocultural theories and intersectionality in critical race theory, particularly through the lens of poststructuralist approaches. This chapter discusses racial and linguistic stratification, theorizes the process of identity construction, and connects this particular study to the practice of multicultural education. The discussion begins by focusing on schools as sites where identities were produced and changed, revealing how public and multicultural schools reflect the concepts of racial and linguistic stratification in Bourdieu's (1977a, 1977b, 1991) concept of cultural reproduction and in Blommaert's (2010) sociolinguistics of mobility and superdiversity. Next, since constructivist grounded theory aims at developing a substantive theory, I theorize the process of identity construction of biracial children through concepts of cultural capital, cultural reproduction, positioning, and counter-narrative. I offer a visual representation to demonstrate the process of identity construction. Lastly, this chapter provides an opportunity to rethink multicultural education based on the substantive theory.

### **Racial Stratification**

In the pilot study conducted in the summer of 2013, the main themes that derived from the data concerned the ways that racial stratification among biracial children persisted even in a school established principally for multicultural children. My findings



were questioned due to the small number of the focal participants: Hanna and Mustafa. To fill the conceptual gap, I added two more participants using theoretical sampling, resulting in a study with two biracial children with White heritage and two biracial children with non-White heritage.

The Korean conceptualization of race consists of multiple layers. The first layer is a dichotomous split between Koreans and non-Koreans. This division offers a general rubric for normalcy. As a criterion for sorting "normal" from "not normal" Koreans, Whiteness or White supremacy (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Leonardo, 2004) does not function as strongly as it does in the U.S. Before attending a multicultural school, my participants could not break through the layer of "real" Korean dominance and subsequently dropped out of the public school system. They all belonged to the "not-real" Korean category and were subsequently considered as being "not legitimate."

My participants with White heritage, however, came to project a high social status within multicultural schools. The next layer divvies to sort not-real Korean in a racial hierarchy. The group of not-real Koreans consists of White, Yellow, and Black, and is categorically stratified. This racial stratification is formulated by two norms: Korean dominance based on *Danil-Minjok* and White supremacy over the other non-Whites. As the phenomenon of globalization further accentuates and reinforces the racial stratification and prioritizes Whiteness while Korean dominance exists in South Korea, multicultural schools are spaces where two norms are mixed in reality.

This study found that White supremacy, or the racial capital of having a White heritage, reinforces White supremacy among "not-real" Koreans in multicultural schools. The social divide between Hanna and Mustafa was already widened for behavioral



reasons in 2013. When I returned to the Cultural World School in 2014, their statuses were further polarized: Hanna was the vice president of student government, while Mustafa was considered by teachers and peers to be a trouble-maker turned drop-out. But the updated findings, driven from Nghia and Ki-Jun's cases on the basis of the existing data, further underscored the inequality between children with White heritage and non-White heritage.

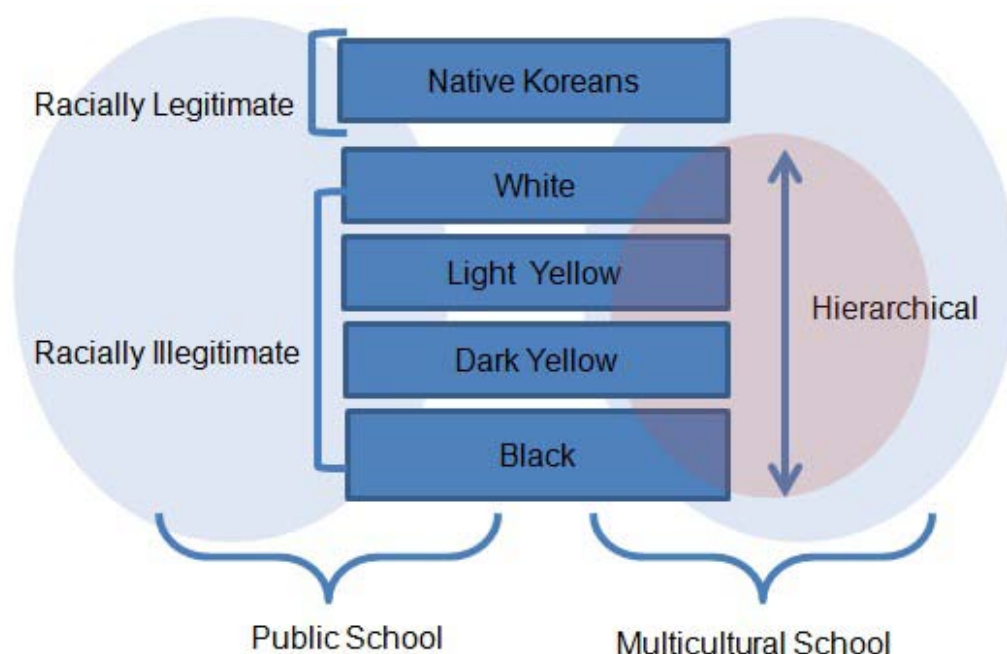


Figure 6-1. Racial Stratification in School.<sup>1</sup>

Native Korean heritage secures the higher social statuses of students such as Min-Su and Ji-Sung in the Cultural World School. In my study, I could see that having a White heritage lifted the statuses of Hanna, Liam, and Ki-Jun in the multicultural schools. The students' racial heritage was closely connected to each student's social status.

<sup>1</sup> The labels of White, Light-Yellow, Dark-Yellow, and Black are Korean society's views for categorizing people. Because this study needs to understand how the racial frame exists in reality from sociocultural perspectives, I use the social labels here. I challenge Koreans' conceptualization of race in a sub-section of this chapter.



Racial discrimination was normalized in both public and multicultural schools. In this regard, multicultural schools were locations in which the various layers of race co-exist. The multi-layered concepts of race circulated within and reinforced the racial stratification of multicultural schools.

Seen from Bourdieu's (1991) theory of cultural reproduction, a poststructuralist social theory, social factors can be converted into cultural capital in the process of cultural reproduction. Likewise, biracial children are either racially beloved or stigmatized according to their skin color, which converts into racial capital at school, a racialized institutions. Schools are stratified: international schools are mainly for privileged students from middle or upper class; general public schools are mainly for common native Korean students; multicultural schools are mainly for maladjusted Korean students and multicultural children ("not-real" Koreans). Similarly, public schools sort native Korean students from non-native Korean students, and multicultural schools sort students with White heritage from students with non-White heritage. It should be emphasized that multicultural schools also stratify the students in general terms of physical appearance (attractive versus unattractive), but in multicultural schools, the divisions become racial splits between the racially pretty and handsome children of White heritage and the not-attractive children of color. In this study, their racial capital was always stratified.

The shift of racial capital reflects layer-shifting within multilayered conceptualizations of race, a phenomenon similar to what Blommaert (2010) calls "scale-jumping." Blommaert (2010) argues that scales should be understood as levels or dimensions at which specific forms of normativity are organized in complex and



ordered processes. Scale-jumping is "a move from one scale-level to another [that] invokes or indexes image of society, through socially and culturally constructed (semiotized) metaphors and images of time and space" (Blommaert, 2010, p. 34).

Friendship, as an example of scale-jumping, is socially and culturally constructed normativity symbolizing equal social status within a scale. Friendship is developed through complex and/or ordered processes. In multi-layered institutes, students of higher racial capital tend to move upward from "racially illegitimate" scale through developing friendships with native Korean students having racial legitimacy. "Real Korean" dominance is slightly blurred by scale-jumping by means of friendships with native Korean students. Students of lower racial capital move from one scale-level to another through developing friendships with diverse ethnic/racial groups. "Real Korean" dominance and White supremacy can be challenged by collaboration of racially minoritized students. Racial capital is source of children's friendships, which influences the shift of racial capital and social statuses.

Hanna experienced racial discrimination and exclusion from native Korean peers in a public school, but she could interact in a friendly manner with native Korean students such as Min-Su and Ji-Sung in the Cultural World School. Ki-Jun, a biracial Korean boy with White Russian heritage, did not enroll in a public school due to his racial and linguistic difference, but he became a best friend or boyfriend of Mi-Hwa, a native Korean student. The multicultural schools as multilayered social spaces allowed biracial children to cross racial labels through the welcoming interaction with native Korean classmates. Nghia did not develop deep friendships with native Korean students, because he was not accepted as a legitimate classmate. Instead, he could develop



friendships with diverse students beyond the range of his ethnic community group since racially and culturally diverse students enrolled in multicultural schools. Multicultural schools allowed him to interact with Jahongir, a Uzbekistani boy, in his classroom and to hang out with a Mongolian boy. Although Mustafa was totally isolated in both multicultural schools, he wanted to stay in multicultural schools rather than enrolling again in a public school. Mustafa and his mother believed that the barrier of "real Korean" dominance was lower in multicultural schools. They expected the shift of racial layers through moving from the "racially illegitimate" scale.

In a stratified and hierarchically-layered system, children with White heritage move up socially, while children with non-White heritage are relatively marginalized and reproduce an almost universal image of people of color. Nevertheless, it is true that the children were exposed to more chances for interacting with diverse children beyond the racial categories that were socially imposed on them. Their interaction contributed to blurring the social borders within the Korean conceptualization of race. The biracial children began to cross the racial layers through scale jumping in multicultural schools.

Layer-shifting may change the value of their racial capital. Nghia's agency in making a Korean name as well as Ki-Jun's refusal to have a Russian name can be understood as their desires for a higher status. Their agency directs them toward strategies of increasing their racial capital toward becoming more legitimate in their social world. Multilayered conceptualizations of race capture the complexity of race and how it is stratified among students in the Korean multicultural schools.

### **Linguistic Stratification**

In the era of nation-states, languages are territorialized and connected to specific locations. Linguists are the leading group who connect language and nation or place of



origin (Blommaert, 2010; Shohamy, 2006). Based on the concept of territorially bounded language, South Korea has historically developed as a one blood, one language, and one culture country. The intersection of race and language leads to linguistic stratification. As shown in previous chapters, schools are racially stratified, and race and language are interconnected. In other words, schools are linguistically stratified when languages are connected with the speakers' physical phenotype.

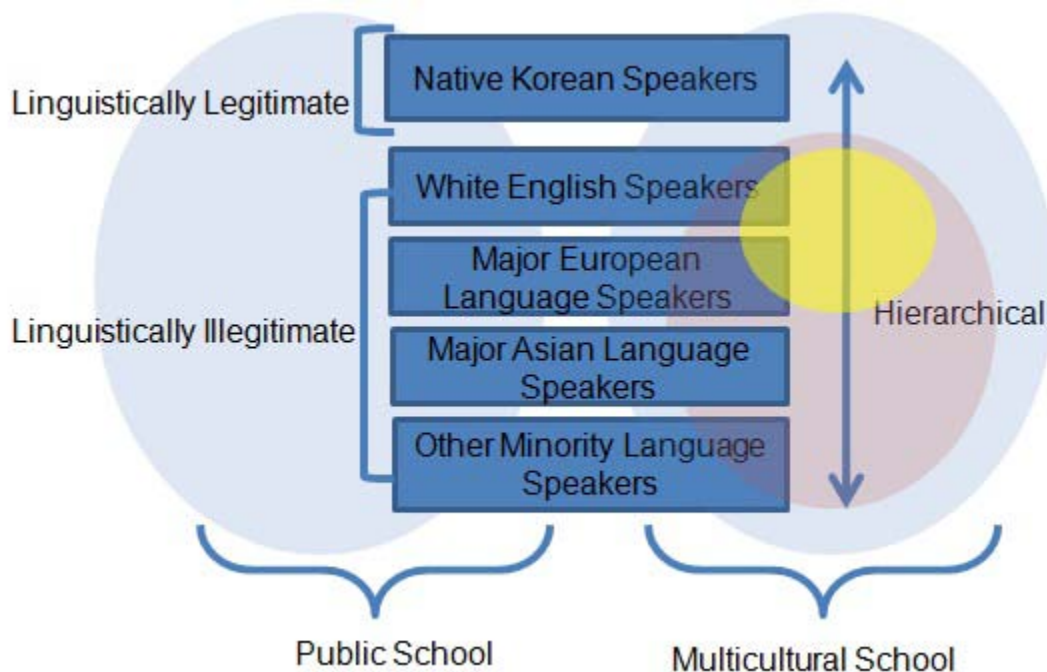


Figure 6-2. Linguistic Stratification in School.

The language spoken by dominant groups becomes privileged, while the forms of language spoken by racial minorities are devalued or stigmatized (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1991). The status of a language is defined in the relation with other languages in multi-layered institutions. The classic triad of territory-culture-language, however, is powerful as the mainstream linguistic orientation in South Korea. The first layer of Korea's conceptualization of race appears in the dichotomous linguistic stratification at public school: the language spoken by dominant groups is Korean; native Korean speakers



are legitimate and privileged; public schools sort native Korean speakers from non-native speakers.

In his theory regarding sociolinguistics of a superdiverse society, Blommaert (2010, 2013) argues that the link between language and location begins to break in the era of human and resource mobility. Multicultural schools have more complex layers. Diverse languages are stratified: European languages, Asian languages, and the other minority languages are stratified respectively. White English, as an international language, is at the top of the hierarchy due to linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992).

Advocating linguistics of mobility, Blommaert (2010) provides this study with the concept of orders of indexicality, referring to "stratified patterns of social meanings often called 'norms' or 'rules', to which people orient" (p. 172). The indexical orders are complex but structured. The social meanings of languages are ordered: some languages are more privileged than others in multi-layered contexts. Languages are linguistically equal, but socially hierarchical from a poststructuralist perspective. Just as White dominance and White supremacy allow White English to be more privileged than Ebonics or Yellow Englishes as well as other languages, Korean dominance influences linguistic hierarchy in Korea. Applying Blommaert's idea and Bourdieu's theory of linguistic capital to this study, Korean, as a dominant language, provides the native Korean speakers with an image of linguistic legitimacy, which public schools reinforce by putting the speakers of other languages into the category of linguistic illegitimacy, i.e., non-native Korean speakers.

In multicultural schools, the intersection of race and language divides and stratifies diverse languages and their speakers. In the process of the linguistic



stratification, English, especially White English, with the help of English imperialism, occupies the top of European languages. Kachru (1983) categorizes English-speaking countries into the inner, outer, and expanding circles, and South Korea is one of the countries of the expanding circles where English is taught as a major foreign language in school. The orders of indexicality in multicultural schools include norms like Korean dominance and Korean language domination, and White dominance, White English privilege, English imperialism, and stratification of foreign languages.

The orders of indexicality result in inequality, meaning that diverse languages are stratified with different social meanings. Different layers organize different patterns of normativity of language(s). English is a required course in both public and multicultural schools, while Russian and Chinese are offered as elective courses in multicultural schools. Multicultural schools sort the speakers of more privileged languages from the speakers of less privileged languages. The linguistic capital of English speakers is converted to high currency especially when White English is spoken by speakers of White heritage, as seen in Hanna's case. However, Korean schools rarely offer Vietnamese or Arabic as an elective course. The linguistic capital of Nghia and Mustafa cannot turn into the same currency as Hanna's. Linguistic minorities seem to fall into educational inequality with unequal access to bilingualism and fewer benefits from their heritage/community languages within the school curriculum. The orders of indexicality finely stratify children of extremely minoritized language backgrounds: Nghia sat together with Vietnamese students in the cafeteria at the Cultural World School; Mustafa did not have any Arabic-speaking students in his previous public school or two



multicultural schools. Arabic is a major language at the global level, but it cannot be used for local currency in any Korean school context.

### **Theorizing the Identity Construction of Biracial Children**

Bourdieu's concept of cultural reproduction, cultural capital, and the right to speech are useful, on the one hand, in discussing how schools and teachers interact with multicultural children differently and how their education sorts children within racial, social, and linguistic stratification. On the other hand, relative human agency and the right to speech enable biracial children to navigate multiple identities amid demographic changes. Some scholars (Canagarajah, 1999; Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001) criticize Bourdieu's cultural reproduction as being deterministic, contending "the culturalist models fail to exploit this detachment of the school to consider how it may function as an oppositional site to help change social institutions" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 28). Compared to Bowles and Gintis' social reproduction, however, Bourdieu provides schools with relative autonomy from the larger economic system. He recognizes some possibilities for human agency through the relative autonomy of schools. Such autonomy promises a hope for schools as equalizers and sites for student agency. This section theorizes (re)production of social status and children's counter-narratives and develops a substantive theory.

### **Reproduction of Social Status through Cultural Capital**

Race and language intersect; accordingly, racial capital and linguistic capital intersect within individuals. This is not to imply that individuals' identities are constructed exclusively through race and language. As seen in the power relations between Hanna and Mustafa, between Hanna and Nghia, and between Nghia and the young female teachers, gender intervened in shifting and weakening existing power relations. In



addition, Mustafa's learning disability lowered his social status, as seen in the relationships between Mustafa and his classmates and between Mustafa and his teachers. The phenomenon of intersectionality is not confined to only race and language.

Employing Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital in the process of cultural reproduction, race and language yield capital in racially and linguistically stratified institutions. Racial capital and linguistic capital merge through the intersectionality of race and language to produce cultural capital. According to Bourdieu (1977b, 1991), the culture of people-with-power is privileged, and the value of their cultural capital is reinforced directly by their power. In her multicultural school, the value of Hanna's cultural capital peaked at the intersection of her White heritage, native Korean accent, and American White English competence. Despite his White heritage, Ki-Jun's cultural capital appeared to be less valuable than Hanna's: he was a Russian monolingual or a bilingual speaker of Korean and Russian, a language that does not carry English's status. This difference revealed itself in Hanna's pride in her English name and in Ki-Jun's eschewing of a Russian name. As racial and linguistic minorities, Nghia and Mustafa's cultural capital was lower than Hanna and Ki-Jun's: Nghia created a Korean name by himself; Mustafa's mother attempted to change her son's Muslim name. The value of cultural capital is determined by dominant groups and is transmitted into the school curriculum via the classroom's permeable walls.

I should stress, however, that cultural capital is not fixed (Bourdieu, 1977b). It is not likely that cultural capital results directly in class reproduction. Instead, as seen in the cases of the four biracial children, the cultural capital of each student is generated



and reshaped by power dynamics. In this sense, cultural capital is mobile and malleable in multi-layered, centering institutions like multicultural schools. Changing values of cultural capital inevitably shift an individual's positionality in relation to others.

In her public school, Hanna was positioned as racially minoritized, and her bilingualism and White background were not recognized as high currency. When she moved to a multicultural school, her cultural capital was highly valued, and her "four dimensional" behavior was respected as an acceptable form of cultural diversity. The cultural capital Ki-Jun derived from his White heritage, and his bilingualism positioned him as a beloved child and cultural bridge. They had the power to speak to their school teachers and classmates. Hanna interacted mainly with native Korean students or with English-speaking students, and Ki-Jun was the student who most frequently interacted with teachers. They were undeniably legitimate in their social worlds.

In contrast, the more Nghia asserted his right to speak, the more his teachers considered his behaviors to be "rude." He became a less legitimate student to his school teachers. Hanna considered him to be "a nuisance", implying that Hanna did not consider him to be a legitimate peer. After teasing Hanna through gendered discourse, he suffered corporal punishments from his male homeroom teacher. He interacted mainly with foreign-born immigrant students who held low cultural capital. He was a legitimate member to the Vietnamese students in the cafeteria, a legitimate classmate to Jahongir, an Uzbekistani immigrant child, in the class, and a legitimate friend to a Mongolian child beyond school.

Due to his race, language background, and learning disability, Mustafa's cultural capital was regarded as severely low. Neither teachers nor students with high cultural



capital interacted with him in a welcoming manner. Nghia bullied Mustafa, and Mustafa had difficulty earning the right to speak with his teachers and peers. He sought legitimacy in his father's Muslim community. His cultural capital might be higher in his Muslim community. These cases demonstrate that minorities are never categorized into a single group because the social status of minorities is finely stratified according to their cultural capital.

Individuals behave according to an evaluating authority that Blommaert (2010) calls a center. The macro and micro layers of our everyday world imply that human environments are polycentric. Multicultural schools are also polycentric, multi-layered spatial locations where mainstream culture co-exists with diverse evaluative layers. Polycentricity is a key aspect of human interactions (Blommaert, 2010). Nghia and Mustafa can be better understood through the concept of polycentricity: Nghia experienced exclusion and labeling as a bully and drifted gradually to the Vietnamese minority community at school; Mustafa could not be legitimate in any school groups and drifted toward his father's Muslim community outside of school. "The world is different when seen from the periphery rather than from the center" (Blommaert, 2010, p. 22). Nghia and Mustafa's self-segregation and subsequent transition into community groups constitute their migration from marginalization to legitimacy—to a center where their cultural capital is valued and privileged. Depending on their cultural capital, my participants were positioned differently across times and places. Their positionings provided them with different degrees of legitimacy. Their social status (i.e., class) is stratified and reproduced as a consequence of their positioning and legitimacy in their



multi-layered and polycentric worlds. The social statuses of biracial children reveal the ways that cultural capital, positioning, and legitimacy play out in multicultural schools.

### **Mainstream Narrative and Counter-Narrative**

Bourdieu (1977a, 1991) views the reproduction of an individual's class (social status) as part of a larger process of cultural reproduction. The reproduced class (social status) is valued or devalued according to mainstream norms. People experience such a reproduction through the process of cultural reproduction, but the social meanings for their produced and reproduced positions are contextually (spatially and temporally) different. Korean mainstream culture is based on a strong sense of *Danil-Minjok* (one-blood, one-language, and one-culture). The biracial students in this study either gave up trying or has yet to attempted to challenge the mainstream discourse in public schools. They were all "multicultural" children, i.e. "not-real" Koreans, "not-pure" native Korean students by the norms of the traditional mainstream narrative (*Danil-Minjok*).

People contain multiple layers and norms to which migrate and refer within polycentric institutions. Minoritized and oppressed people can establish their own counter-narrative to raise their own voices with relative ease in multi-layered, polycentric institutions. In multicultural schools, biracial children weave together and traverse multiple layers, holding different norms and establishing their own counter-discourse narrative through resistance and agency.

Hanna resisted the mainstream Korean monolingual bias and made efforts to maintain bilingualism and biliteracy. She tried to impose on her younger sister an English-speaking language policy with English speakers. Ignorant of the needs of a multicultural family living in a Korean monolingual society, Jin-Hee did not permit Hanna's absence from school the day she accompanied her father to the veterinarian.



Hanna, however, was absent to help her father as the family translator, which was not an easy decision for Hanna to make, given that she was a high-achieving, exemplary student and that, as vice president, she was expected to comply with all school policies. Through the resistance in the form of "absence", she established her own counter-narrative as bilingual and bicultural child.

Hanna was proud of her bilingualism. Since she wanted to keep home language policy at home to become a bilingual, Hanna wrote text messages in both Korean and English at home even though the receiver was monolingual in Korean. She regulated her sister not to code-switch into Korean when conversing with English-speaking children. Despite her determination to be bilingual, Hanna remained silent when she was refused to tell "I am AmeKorean." English was her favorite subject, but when she was forced to tell either "I am American" or "I am Korean", she was silent during the class. Her counter-narrative was "AmeKoran", not simply Korean, not simply American, and not simply American Korean; this demonstrated her (albeit limited) resistance and agency.

Ki-Jun could not speak any Korean in June of 2013, and his parents and teachers were unable to enroll him in public school. After becoming bilingual in Korean and Russian, he became a cultural bridge between Korean teachers and Russian students. He became an active learner by taking on cognitively demanding course content like multiplication and analog clock time-reading. He established the image of a bright bilingual/bicultural student against the mainstream prejudice that multicultural children are academically low achieving and struggle with understanding Korean.



Jin-Hee saw no cultural uniqueness in Nghia and Mustafa despite their racial difference from native Korean students. Teachers like Jin-Hee responded sensitively to Hanna's independence, but had a color-blind and culture-blind attitude toward multicultural children with non-White heritage. Despite the assimilationist perspective, Nghia and Mustafa began to navigate their identities within their community culture and established their counter-narratives as legitimate bicultural children. Nghia was a smart and motivated student as teachers acknowledged, and good at recognizing power relations. His bullying and self-isolation were a possible form of resistance as an elementary child and a signal to inform that teachers' understanding and caring would be urgent for meeting his educational needs. With a clever manner, Mustafa resisted Jin-Hee's discrimination by means of turning in a family drawing full of false information. He resisted Jin-Hee's punishment by means of refusing compulsory cleaning that she imposed on him. He was excluded from the Chinese course, but he learned Chinese "by himself", referring to his textbook in a separate room. The resistance and agency of both children demonstrated that there is no blind assimilation and acculturation into systematic manifestations of the majoritarian perspectives.

Multicultural schools were not enclaves isolated from the surrounding worlds; mainstream narratives and assimilationist perspectives permeated the multicultural schools. School curricula, teachers, and teaching materials all reflected mainstream Korean cultural norms. Unlike mainstream public schools, the multicultural schools gave children relatively more opportunities to project their counter-narratives across diverse layers and multiple centers. Hanna and Ki-Jun's counter-narratives enhanced their social statuses. Seen from resistance theory (Giroux, 1983; Kohl, 1994), Nghia and



Mustafa's counter-narratives may "in the long run be self-defeating and counter-productive" (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 287) because Nghia was labeled as a "bossy" boy and because Mustafa dropped out of the school.

Just as children in the black-white doll experiments were not color blind (Clark & Clark, 1950), Korean biracial children were not blind to skin color, language, and gender. Instead, by weaving together dynamics of racial and linguistic power, they negotiated their identities in educational inequality in public and multicultural schools. Public schools discriminated against all kind of racially and linguistically different children, but multicultural schools provided opportunities at least to children of higher racial and linguistic capital such as Hanna and Ki-Jun. Hanna enjoyed higher status in the multicultural school, and Ki-Jun was prepared to move to a public school. Nghia was able to enhance his social status within his social "centers" in the multicultural school. He, for example, challenged Hanna's high status and internalized dominance through social interaction with other racial groups because the school had diverse student population unlike public schools.

Ironically, Mustafa's experiences about compulsory cleaning and everyday discriminations made him approach closely toward his father's Jordanian Muslim community. Prior to his official enrollment, Mustafa asked the Future School not to force him to clean classrooms. His requests showed his negotiation competence for affirming his social identities, attempting to (re)gain social status. Mustafa and Mi-Hwa's dropping out of the Cultural World School caused the school to re-think their teaching and discipline principles of compulsory cleaning. When I came back to the school in 2014, compulsory cleaning was less used for punishment or discipline although it was not



eradicated. In addition, Mustafa "notified" the school of his absence for observing Ramadan in the Future School, rather than seeking the "permission" from the school. The Future School allowed him to observe the cultural rituals that he chose. Both mainstream narratives and counter-narratives actively reshaped the students' cultural capital.

### **Substantive Theory of Identity Construction**

The final goal of constructivist grounded theory is to develop a substantive theory of how the identities of Korean biracial children are constructed in terms of race and languages in multicultural schools. Employing sociocultural theories and intersectionality in critical race theory, this study depends mainly on the lens of poststructuralist approaches. The concepts of positionality, cultural reproduction, and resistance help me to theorize the identity construction of my focal participants.

Based on the above findings and discussion, I develop a substantive theory of the process of identity construction of biracial, multilingual children. Various factors, such as race, language, and gender, intersect and interact within an individual biracial student who enrolls in multicultural school. Social factors, especially race and language, are differently valued and privileged by social and cultural norms. Racial capital and linguistic capital intersect and develop into cultural capital, which is the basis of cultural reproduction. Based on their cultural capital, biracial children are positioned and repositioned in relation to others and gain the power to speak.

Their positioning and legitimacy determine their social status in multicultural schools as multi-layered and stratified institutions. The biracial children are influenced by the mainstream narratives and assimilationist perspectives that are transmitted through the permeable walls of the school. The mainstream narratives enter the schools



and classrooms in the forms of teachers' verbal directions (e.g. the expression of "four-dimensional" to describe Hanna's independent inclination), teachers' non-verbal messages (e.g. Jin-Hee' ignoring of Nghia's loud voice), teaching content (e.g. English as a required course in elementary school), punishment for anti-social behaviors (e.g. compulsory cleaning for being late for school), and peers' responses to different cultures (e.g. Jahongir's cultural attack regarding Muslim). Multicultural children as well as school teachers participate in transmitting mainstream social norms in their social interactions.

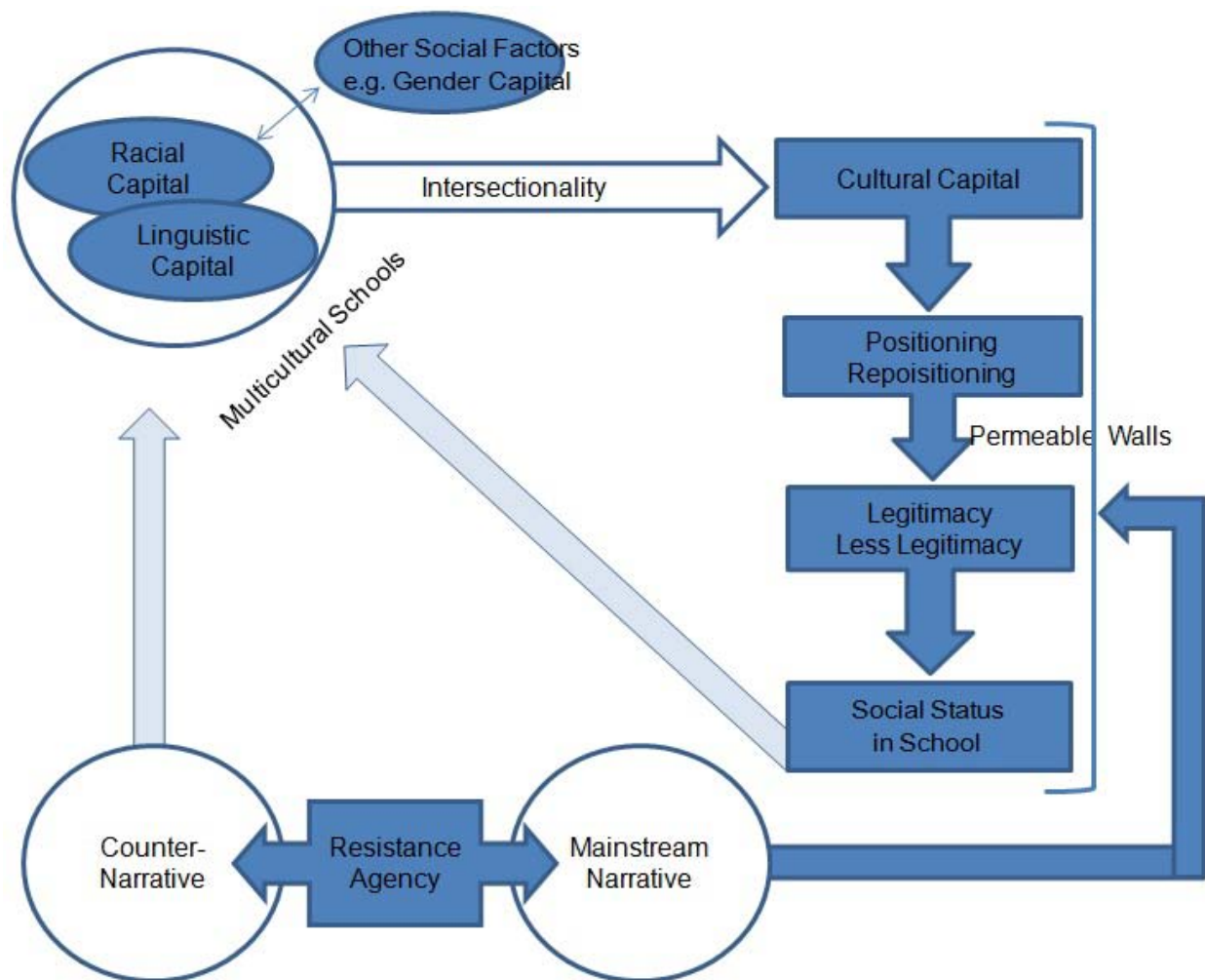


Figure 6-3. The Process of Identity Construction of Biracial Children in Multicultural Schools.



The multicultural schools are not exact microcosms of society. Rather, they are social spaces on the one hand; the larger social context of the classroom determines social relations within the schools and classrooms on the other hand (Pennycook, 2000). Thus, schools are influenced by mainstream discourses and also contribute to social changes through permeability. School are never separated from the larger world because the social norms reflect and are transmitted into the school activities. For example, the Cultural World School and the Future School, whether authorized or not, depended basically on the Korean national curriculum in regular classrooms, but they infused into the national curriculum some multicultural programs such as "learning Thailand music," "foreign language competition," and "issuing multi-language Newsletter." Both schools utilized nationally authorized textbooks or reference books as in-class teaching materials rather than creating alternative textbooks, but sometimes offered the students to introduce their different cultures. All the full-time teachers in the Cultural World School were native Korean and monolingual in Korean. The racial and linguistic spectrum was true to most the school teachers in the Future School. The main language as a teaching medium was Korean in both school, but diverse languages were spoken according to interactional contexts around school campus without being prevented or ridiculed.

The national curriculum, teaching materials, teachers, and Korean language dominance are usually transmitted into the multicultural schools and classrooms. Multicultural curriculum, infused projects, diverse student population, and their language use in school campus create unique landscapes and reflect social changes. The



transmission of mainstream norms and creation of unique multicultural landscapes demonstrates the permeability of school walls.

When they resist mainstream narratives, the children exercise agency to establish their own counter-narratives and to raise their own voices. "I am both." "I am AmeKorean." "Since English is my language, I like English." "English is Hanna's language. Vietnamese is 'MY' language." "You can call me Kim Sung-jin (김성진)." "Why don't you study with me? I should learn." "I hate cleaning. I really hate cleaning at school." "I like to major in Chinese in college." "I like to learn how to read an analog clock." "I am a bridge between Koreans and Russians." These voices contribute to social changes in an ongoing process of their identity construction.

This study does not intend to generalize this theory. Rather, this substantive theory is effective with the focal biracial children in the micro world of two Korean multicultural schools. As seen in the visualization of the process of identity construction, this theory utilizes poststructuralist ideas of sociocultural theories, including Bourdieu's cultural reproduction, Pennycook's cultural politics, and Weedon's subjectivity, as well as concepts of intersectionality and counter-narrative in critical race theory (CRT). Put simply, identities of biracial children are fluid and never fixed in the circulating process, which cannot be explained with a single simplistic theory. This implies that biracial children construct their identity while weaving through diverse power relations with other people of diverse backgrounds.

### **Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Racial Categories**

Biracial children were discriminated against in public schools because racial hegemony- in this case Korean- does not permit biracial individuals to become



legitimate members of a "one-blood" culture. The children's social statuses were polarized according to racial categories despite polycentricity of multicultural schools. As such, while human beings are biologically egalitarian, they are, in most cases, not sociopolitically equal as long as supremacist discourses of race based here on Korean dominance and White supremacy categorize diverse people according to color lines.

At the same time, biracial Korean children do not adhere to the strictly imposed racial labels used to discriminate against them. No participants in this study belonged to "real" Koreans of "one-blood." Nor did they belong exactly to a single racial category. The Korean conceptualization of race is not an effective route to understanding biracial Korean children. Indeed, any ideology of racial paradigm based on hegemony fails to account for bi-racial individuals. For example, Hanna define herself as "both," Ki-Jun defined himself as "a bridge," and Nghia "chose" and "picked up" his social identity through defining himself as a Korean through a self-made Korean name. In these examples, racial paradigm alone is ineffective because biracial individuals do not accept passively imposed racial labels. As discussed earlier chapters, Korean supremacy and American White supremacy share a principle understanding of race as source and purity, i.e., an individual's color indicates his or her cultural origins and affiliations absolutely. This model permits discrimination of bi-racial individuals to the extent that they are impure; the model does nothing, however, to understand them. Supremacy models "other" bi-racial individuals according to categories that do not apply to them. Their race instead exists between these terms, invisible to racial categories, but visible as "impure."



Biracial Korean children actively debunk traditional racial categorizations by means of defining themselves as biracial and bicultural individuals. Hanna not only defined herself as *Mulan*, (a strong girl) but also declared, "I am Korean and, at the same time, American. I am both!" Ki-Jun defined himself as a bridge between Koreans and Russians. These children of White heritages covered multiple categories. In addition, Nghia tried scale-jumping with his new Korean name and competed with Hanna, a child of high social status, through gendered bullying. Nghia's attitude showed how he resisted racialized mainstream discourses. The racialized color labels omit biracial children such as Mustafa because it is difficult to code Arabs or people from the Middle East along traditional color lines. The phenomena of multiple-category-covering, scale-jumping, and omitting underscore the uselessness of racial categorization for biracial children.

Biracial children develop their own hybrid identities in this study: an AmeKorean bilingual girl; a bicultural and bilingual boy who is willing to bridge two cultures; a Vietnamese boy creating his Korean name; and a Muslim Korean boy called Mustafa Tarek Kuhee Ziyad who only speaks Korean. They bring human diversity into Korean society and complicate familiar modes of racial delineation. Furthermore, they reveal that we cannot place biracial children into a single group of "multicultural" children. They should not be objectified with one-size-fits-all approaches based on color lines that other them. Since they are racially diverse and culturally unique, biracial children construct and reconstruct their identities while blurring the racialized mainstream labels through their diversity and hybridity. Racial hybridity is inherently a deconstruction of



race because calls attention to factors beyond "blood" that determine the legibility and performance of race.

## **Rethinking Multicultural Education**

### **Deficit Model and Assimilationist Approach**

The deficit model assumes that multicultural children are low-achieving due to internal deficiencies like genetic characteristics (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001), a premise that absolves schools of responsibility and blames the victims. This deficit thinking prevailed especially in the public schools that Hanna and Mustafa attended. Mustafa's school teacher stated, in his first meeting with Mustafa's mother, that multicultural children were low-achieving in content learning and poor at Korean literacy. Since such prejudices are mainstream "common sense", Nghia and Ki-Jun, minoritized children in terms of both race and language, did not dare to enroll in public schools.

The deficit model brings school teachers to discriminatory teaching practices and leads schools to assimilationist policies. The Chinese content teacher of the Cultural World School did not allow Mustafa to attend her classes, and Mustafa had to learn Chinese characters alone in another room when his classmates learned with the teacher. She regarded him as a cognitively deficit learner and scolded him for being disruptive and hyperactive. She refused to teach Mustafa, and Mustafa's homeroom teacher did not take any action in response to the Chinese teacher's decision. Rather than adapt or adopt different practices, teachers blamed Mustafa, or at least Mustafa's internal condition, for his difficulties in class.

School teachers did not think that Mustafa needed more professional caring from them. In this regard, teachers' educational interventions, based on the deficit model, aimed at fixing the ADHD behaviors with scolding or punishment. What teachers wanted



was to fix a biracial child with ADHD and to correct his behaviors through punishment. They did not want to recognize that compulsory cleaning could never fix behavioral issues like tardiness (derived from a need to acquire skills in organization of time, of space) or quarrelling (derived from a need to acquire social behavior and interaction skills) with other boys. Mustafa's story shows how much teachers who teach children of color depend on deficit thinking even in multicultural schools.

Deficit thinking produces a cultural mismatch model that views discrepancies between a student's home culture and school culture as the cause of a student's failure (Garcia & Guerra, 2004). Sometimes, deficit thinking is based on a cultural assimilation ideology, a one-directional assimilation that compels minorities to give up their home cultures as the condition for absorption into their host culture (Sills, 1968). When the home culture that students bring to school is different from school's culture, the cultural mismatch model regards difference as a mark of deficit and inferiority. When Hanna's home culture did not fit mainstream school culture, her school teachers viewed her as "four dimensional." From the mainstream perspective of such a collectivist culture as South Korea (Spring, 2008), Hanna and Liam's independence was frequently viewed as selfish, arrogant, and uninterested in the common goals of a community. Teachers felt that independence, a trait of Western White culture, was abnormal and should be fixed as part of their assimilation into Korean collectivist values. The negative expression of "four dimensional" not only indicated the anomaly of an independent orientation but also revealed the school teachers' assimilationist desire.

### **Diversity Model, Pluralist Approach, and Culturally Responsive Teaching**

As stated above, the deficit model is widely accepted by school teachers who view cultural differences as disadvantages (Bennett, 2003). In recent years, the diversity



model has emerged as an alternative to the cultural assimilationist paradigm. Cultural pluralism is "a process of compromise characterized by mutual appreciation and respect between two or more cultural groups" (Bennett, 2003, p. 52). The basic idea of cultural pluralism fits well with the era of human and resource mobility. School teachers need to be prepared to teach through a diversity model and pluralist approaches.

Culturally responsive teaching seemed absent from Nghia and Mustafa's classroom environments. I was not sure whether Nghia received sufficient feedback on his daily diaries full of vivid stories with linguistically developmental errors. I was not sure how much the school teachers were able to connect Mustafa's experiences of Ramadan to his knowledge construction. Both experiences demonstrate how the home culture and home language of children of color are less appreciated and less respected in multicultural schools. The same teachers teach children with the same materials in the same curriculum, but minoritized children learn different lessons or resist not to learn from the teachers (Kohl, 1994).

In contrast, if teaching is to produce students' learning, the home culture and home language that diverse students bring to classrooms should be resources for connecting their prior knowledge to school knowledge (Cummins, 2001). Students learn within and from their lived experiences (Fu, 1994) when their home cultures and home languages are utilized as resources. Advocating a diversity model, teachers tend to implement culturally responsive teaching with culturally diverse children. For a cooking activity, Hanna brought the English recipe of her parents, and the teacher accepted her recipe and allowed Hanna to become a coordinator to direct the whole process of cooking chicken barbeque. In addition, she was allowed and encouraged to write her



diaries in English, and her homeroom teacher provided his feedback on a regular basis. Ki-Jun was also encouraged to bring his prior knowledge to school. As soon as teachers were aware of his interests in guns, he was encouraged to draw them as a main activity of an art class. He was encouraged to draw the Korean and Russian food he ate at home. He had an opportunity to verbally present some characteristics of Russian foods. It seemed that he accepted his bicultural background as part of his identity within his teachers' culturally responsive teaching. Both children became model biracial children through the educational implementation of the diversity model.

School teachers may be familiar with culturally responsive teaching. The problem is that teachers tend to implement culturally responsive methods only with students possessing high cultural capital, while withholding those methods from students with low cultural capital. All the school teachers I met for this study believed that they were professionals and that they were devoted to multicultural education. The teachers were proud of their vocational calling, believing that they were fair in using corporal punishment and compulsory cleaning to discipline students. Teachers considered these punishments to be part of multicultural education, while to outsiders (like my son and myself) these punishments looked like child abuse. Teachers, like students, were victims and recipients of culture, unable themselves to resist broader, institutionalized constructs of race and linguicism. In short, the teachers in the multicultural schools lacked the knowledge and skills to talk back to those dominant Discourses (Gee, 1992).

### **Teacher Preparedness for Multicultural Education**

I proposed a substantive theory of identity construction of biracial children. On the basis of the theory, I need to address teacher-preparedness for multicultural education. "Multicultural education is a process of comprehensive school reform and



basic education for all students" (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 44). Multicultural education should be implemented holistically in a curriculum and in teaching strategies as well as in interactions with all students. This approach emphasizes that multicultural education is not limited only to those multicultural students with high cultural capital or to students of color.

In-service teachers of multicultural children need to be prepared through what Freire (1972) stresses as reflection and action (praxis). Biracial children navigate through the circulating process and construct their identities as they are positioned and repositioned by their cultural capital in its relationship to the capital of others. In-service teachers need to reflect their teaching and interactions based on cultural pluralism and anti-racism to develop a multicultural perspective that promotes democratic ideals of social justice. When the teachers of multicultural students transmit mainstream norms into their teaching and when they blame their students, learning does not occur at school.

When multicultural children are treated as illegitimate in their classrooms, teachers are also illegitimate as pivotal members of a learning community, and, accordingly, multicultural schools are illegitimate as alternative sites where the identities of racially diverse children are produced and nested. Since the identities of biracial children are fluid, Nieto and Bode (2008) argue that multicultural education must be open to an always ongoing and changing process. "No one ever stops becoming a multicultural person, and knowledge is never complete" (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 54). As the identities of biracial children are complex and shifting, multicultural teachers should be prepared to meet their students' complex and shifting needs throughout the larger,



ongoing and changing process of multicultural education. The cultural sensitivity that multicultural teachers represent is critical for empowering the counter-narratives of biracial children and for fostering democratic ideals of social justice.

### **Chapter Summary**

Employing poststructuralist approaches, this chapter theorized the identity construction of biracial children in multi-layered multicultural schools and discussed multicultural education. First, I discussed the racial stratification and linguistic stratification of multicultural schools, using Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction and Blommaert's orders of indexicality and polycentricity. Second, I theorized the identity construction of biracial children in racially and linguistically stratified multicultural schools and visualized the substantive theory of the circulating process. Finally, on the basis of the discussions, I deconstructed the social labels and elaborated on multicultural education in terms of the deficit model, the diversity model, and teacher preparedness.



## CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

### **Conclusion**

The concept of *Danil-Minjok*, a nation of one-blood, one-language, and one-culture, defines and determines racial stratification and linguistic stratification in South Korean schools. This study examined the identity construction of four biracial Korean children in terms of race and languages. The research questions specifically examined how race and language intersected to the identity construction of the students. The study found that whether they dropped out of public school or did not enrolled in public schools, the biracial students who enrolled in multicultural schools were provided with different educational opportunities according to their race. In addition, as children of diverse language backgrounds, they experienced different language policies, which enabled them to develop different language identities such as bilinguals, language learners, and Korean monolinguals.

The main themes represented in this study showed how the biracial children were not considered legitimate in terms of race (according to their dominant discourse) and their racial (mixed-race) capital lowered their status in public schools, but they were considered racially legitimate in multicultural schools. Although being legitimate in multicultural schools, they were again repositioned within a stratified racial hierarchy. Likewise, their multicultural names were treated as not legitimate in both public and multicultural schools, and the schools preferred three-syllable Korean names (two-syllable first names and single-syllable surnames). Children suffered insults and insensitivities by teachers and multicultural peers and resisted mainstream narratives and assimilationist approaches. In terms of language, biracial children were subjected to



different school language policies according to their race: supporting English for Korean-speaking biracial children of White heritage while not supporting Arabic for Korean-speaking biracial children of non-White heritage. In addition, language policies for non-native Korean language learners were based on assimilationist approaches that explicitly do not support students' primary languages. Nevertheless, one of the students, a language learner of White heritage, learned Korean in a welcoming atmosphere and strikingly improved his Korean language proficiency, while a second language learner of non-White heritage frequently had difficulty gaining legitimacy in interactions with native Korean speakers. Though both were biracial language learners, one took on the positive identity of "bilingual," while the other took on the negative identity of "a language learner" who was poor at Korean. Lastly, when the biracial children navigated different situations, their social positionings revealed their social identities as fluid, not fixed according to the different social worlds.

To deeply understand and interpret these themes, this study employed poststructuralist approaches of sociocultural theories and intersectionality of critical race theories. More specifically, the findings were discussed with Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, Weedon's subjectivity and positioning, Pennycook's cultural politics, and Blommaert's sociolinguistics of globalization and superdiversity. Applying these theories to this study, I developed a substantive theory to represent how the identities of biracial children were constructed in terms of race and languages. The racial and linguistic capital of biracial children converted into cultural capital throughout intersectionality. The cultural capital positioned and repositioned the biracial Korean children differently in different times and places in school. This study showed that the



biracial children of White heritage gain legitimacy with ease, when compared to the children of non-White heritage. The social statuses of biracial children were privileged or devalued by dominant mainstream discourses, and children devalued by these discourses resisted the mainstream values to create their own counter-narratives.

Findings showed that most school curricula and school policies were deeply rooted in deficit thinking, cultural mismatch, and cultural assimilation. Even when their assimilationist approaches were often withdrawn, the basic idea of their teaching stemmed from racial preferences for children of White heritage. I stressed the necessity of the diversity model based on cultural pluralism and linguistic diversity. As the racially and linguistically diverse students are currently increasing, multicultural education is urgently needed to educate diverse children.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Given the methodology and the findings of this study, I propose three suggestions for future research. First, this study examined the identity construction of biracial Korean children in terms of race and languages. Although I designed a conceptual framework to consider diverse social factors, the main focus of this study was placed on race, language, and their intersectionality. As seen in the cases of Hanna, Mustafa, and Nghia, gender played an important role in shaping and reshaping their social relationships. In addition, Ki-Jun had a good relationship with Mi-Hwa, a third grade Korean girl, as a classmate and close friend. If Mi-Hwa had been a boy, the relationship might have created a different picture. I did not investigate the role of gender deeply in the process of identity construction. For future research, it is important to explore gender roles and their intersections with other diverse social and cultural factors.



The second suggestion I call for pertains to the limitation of my theoretical sampling. In participant selections, I excluded mixed children of East Asian heritage because they do not have physical differences from native Korean students. Instead, I intended to select children of White, Dark-Yellow, and Black heritage to clearly reveal the racial stratification in the spectrum of Korean's conceptualization of race. Unfortunately, I could not find any child of Black heritage in either multicultural school. Through including more biracial children of racially and linguistically diverse backgrounds, future research can fill the sampling gap of this study.

Lastly, this study showed how teachers of multicultural children were blind to the educational needs of racially minoritized students while they were culturally responsive to students of White heritage. I also stressed the importance of culturally responsive teaching for all students as well as multicultural children. I argued in principle that teachers need to know that children learn through lived experience and need to improve their cultural awareness as multicultural educators. Nevertheless, this study focused mainly on children's narratives and experiences rather than on the pedagogy and teaching methodology of the schools' teachers. More research is called for to examine way for implementing culturally responsive teaching in actual classroom settings. Future research will help educators reflect on their own prejudices and apply research findings to classroom instruction.

Taken together, future studies are called for to examine multicultural and multilingual education beyond the scope of this study. It is important to keep in mind that researchers should confront their internalized sense of racial norms and analyze their own dispositions toward multiculturalism while conducting the research.



## Concluding Thoughts

This study provided me with many opportunities to think over my changing positions on race, language, and education. As stated in the subjectivity statement, from my childhood and through my school days, I was taught to be proud of being a member of a nation of "one-blood." Probably, my pride in being a Korean was not that different from racial superiority, based on the classic triad of territory-culture-language. While I lived in South Korea, I seldom felt that I was racially minoritized or inferior to other racial groups. Furthermore, I rarely felt or recognized White supremacy and institutional racial discriminations since I lived in a sociocultural atmosphere of Korean dominance in South Korea.

When I applied to American graduate schools, I faced racial issues in a shocking way. The application forms frequently asked me to choose my racial category: I was sometimes categorized into Asian and sometimes into Asian and Pacific Islander. I wondered why they asked about my race, since I already wrote in my statement of purpose that I was a Korean female. I also wondered why I was categorized into Asian and Pacific Islander. It was shocking that American academies classified me into the same group with Pacific Islanders.

I planned to study language policy and teaching methodology in the area of EFL education. My research interests, however, changed into multicultural and multilingual education after I was admitted to the doctoral program. I was fascinated with multiculturalism and critical race theories. To understand White supremacy in the U.S., I used to compare it to Korean dominance and the conceptualization of *Danil-Minjok*, recalling the superiority of native Koreans over biracial Koreans. I questioned why Koreans felt equal with American or Japanese people, while they were uncomfortable



with having equal relationships with non-Korean people of darker skin (Han, 2011; Moon, 2003). I also questioned why Koreans did not criticize Korean dominance over other people of color while they criticize White supremacy over other people of color. I began to question the pride of being a member of a nation of "one-blood."

As I began to understand "race" as a social construct, I could gaze at my inferiority and anger as a female, i.e., a human being of a minoritized gender. My parents loved me, but I was their daughter, not their son. My husband loves me, but I am his wife, not his equal counterpart. I was happy when I was assigned to a girl's high school, but the school principal declared in public that he wanted to have a male teacher, not a female teacher. When I did well, I heard, "She did well, even though she is female." When I did not do well, I heard, "She is just female." I felt that my gender was/is my inborn sin. Through gender oppression, I began to empathize with those who might experience racial oppression. This structure of gender oppression in some ways applies to racial oppression which critical pedagogy and critical race theory taught me.

I tried to enroll my son in a public school while I stayed in South Korea for this study. Public middle schools refused to enroll him because he attended a school in America. When I tried to enroll him in an international middle school, the school principal refused his enrollment because the school was open only to high-achieving students who went through very stringent entrance exams. When I tried to enroll my son in the Cultural World School, the school teachers refused his enrollment because he was not a racially different, "multicultural" student but a Korean "international" student who would eventually go back to America. My son was South Korean, but an international middle school, two public schools, and a multicultural school refused to



enroll him in his native country. Later, he attended the Cultural World School as an audit student (without official enrollment). He was a racial and linguistic minority in America and an undocumented student in his home country. In transnational contexts, his position was marginalized and hybrid.

When I conducted observations in the schools during my dissertation research, I often faced uncomfortable antipathy. It was shocking to me that some teachers, including a school principal, described me as "an Americanized woman of a wealthy family." They believed that I could not understand their teaching philosophy because my residence in America had removed so much of my Korean-ness. It was not easy for me to become an "insider" during my research. Just as an acrobat walks a high wire, I had to conduct my research, feeling shaky and at risk between my two stances as a native Korean and as a researcher who was academically trained in an American educational institute.

When writing my dissertation, I faced another criticism, this time from Americans that I seemed like "a fish in water" as I profiled South Korean racial issues. The work illuminated in my dissertation should be understood as challenging educational inequality rather than accepting racial stratification as social norms. Apparently, my identity as a native Korean researcher studying in America attracts skepticism from both Koreans and Americans. As Blommaert (2010) states, "The world is different when seen from the periphery rather than from the center" (p. 22). In this sense, my stance may be somewhere between South Korea and America, between a relatively homogeneous country and a racially diverse country, and between a nation of ethnocentrism and a



nation of multiculturalism. In this space, I am neither totally Korean nor totally American, while at the same time *too* American and *too* Korean.

These conflicting critiques of my positioning reveal the fact that race is not a safe topic. My stance as a Korean female researcher was a strength as well as limitation on my dissertation topic. Since I am Korean, I had easy access to the multicultural schools located in South Korea. I was personally acquainted with the Korean education system. As a mother, however, I was also culturally pressured to delay my doctoral study in America for years. Being a woman in a culture so patriarchal as Korea, I could understand how racial and linguistic discriminations generally occur in native Korean dominant societies. My understanding is that my position lies in the ongoing process of revealing and challenging the mechanisms and institutions of inequality.

Many things are fluid and hybrid in a transnational context. I hope that my stance located in somewhere between an "Americanized" Korean woman and "a fish in water" can be a small step toward equality and social change in South Korea. I dedicate this dissertation to the process of challenging normalized discrimination by means of revealing certain dynamics of racial and linguistic minoritization. If somebody were to ask me, "Do you think that diverse groups enjoy equal opportunities?", I may answer, "No." If the person ask me, "Do you think that diverse people should have equal opportunities?", I may answer "Definitely!" There are many situations that we must keep dreams, knowing that our dreams will not come true easily. We may approach there step by step. Research on cross-cultural and transnational identities needs to be aware of its own sense of racial and cultural identity, with who is allowed to research what and where.



APPENDIX A  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR TEACHERS

1. What is most enjoyable about teaching? What is least enjoyable?

이학교의 교사생활에서 가장 즐거운 것은 무엇입니까? 가장 힘든 것은 무엇입니까?

2. Describe (student's name)'s learning and speaking Korean.

(학생의 이름)이 한국어를 배우고 말하는 것에 대해 이야기해주세요.

3. Describe (student's name)'s learning and speaking their heritage (native) languages.

(학생의 이름)이 자신의 모국어 혹은 부모의 언어를 배우고 말하는 것에 대해 이야기해주세요.

4. Describe (student's name)'s learning and speaking English.

(학생의 이름)이 영어를 배우고 말하는 것에 대해 이야기해주세요.

5. Describe any cultural issues (including cultural similarity/differences and cultural diversity) that (student's name) may feel and encounter in relation to the friends, teachers, and people in societies.

(학생의 이름)이 교우관계 혹은 사회생활에서 겪을 수 있는 문화적 상이점, 문화적 다양성 등 문화적 문제와 관련하여 이야기 해주세요.

6. Describe any racial issues (including racial identity, racial prejudices, and racial discrimination) that (student's name) may feel and encounter in relation with friends, teachers, and people in societies.

(학생의 이름)이 교우관계 혹은 사회생활에서 겪을 수 있는 인종적 편견 및 인종차별 등 인종문제나 자신의 인종적 정체성에 관하여 어떤 견해를 가지고 있는지 이야기 해주세요.

7. Describe how (student's name) construct and experience race.

(학생의 이름)이 어떻게 자신의 인종적 정체성을 찾아가는지 말해 주세요.

8. How is (student's name) different from others? Describe who s/he is.

(학생의 이름)이 다른 사람과 어떻게 다른가요? 그 학생이 누구라고 생각하나요?

**Demographic Questions:**

1. age, gender, and ethnicity (나이, 성별, 출신국가)

2. language background (언어적 배경)

3. teaching background (교사경력)



Is there anything else you would like to add?  
Thank you for your participation.



APPENDIX B  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PARENTS

1. Why did you decide to send your child to this school? What makes you most satisfied or worrying about education of your child?

왜 자녀를 이 학교에 보내기로 결정했습니까? 자녀의 교육과 관련하여 어떤 점이 가장 만족스럽고 어떤 점이 가장 걱정스럽습니까?

2. Describe your child's learning and speaking of the Korean language?

자녀가 한국어를 배우고 말하는 것에 대해서 어떻게 생각하십니까?

3. Describe your child's learning and speaking of his/her heritage languages?

자녀가 한국어 이외의 부모님의 언어를 배우고 말하는 것에 대해 어떻게 생각하십니까?

4. Describe your child's learning and speaking of English and other foreign language?

자녀가 영어를 배우고 말하는 것에 대해 어떻게 생각하십니까?

5. Describe any cultural issues (including cultural similarity/differences and cultural diversity) that your child may feel and encounter in relation with friends, teachers, and people in societies.

자녀가 교우관계 혹은 사회생활에서 겪을 수 있는 문화적 상이점, 문화적 다양성 등 문화적 문제와 관련하여 이야기해 주세요.

6. Describe any racial issues (including racial identity, racial prejudices, and racial discrimination) that your child may feel and encounter in relation with friends, teachers, and people in societies.

자녀가 교우관계 혹은 사회생활에서 겪을 수 있는 인종적 편견 및 인종차별 등 인종문제나 자신의 인종적 정체성에 대해 이야기해주세요.

7. Describe how your child construct and experience race.

자녀가 어떻게 자신의 인종적 정체성을 찾아가는지 말해 주세요.

8. How do you think your child is different from others? Describe who your child is.

자녀는 다른 사람과 어떻게 다릅니까? 자녀가 어떤 사람이라고 생각하십니까?

**Demographic Questions:**

1. age, gender, and ethnicity (나이, 성별, 출신국가)

2. resident years in Korea (한국 거주기간)

3. language background (언어적 배경)



4. family backgrounds if possible (가족 배경)  
Is there anything else you would like to add?  
Thank you for your participation.



APPENDIX C  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR CHILDREN

1. What is the most enjoyable in your schooling? What is least enjoyable?  
학교생활 중 가장 즐거운 것은 뭐니? 가장 걱정스럽거나 실망스러운 것은 뭐니?
2. Describe your learning and speaking of the Korean language?  
한국어를 배우고 말하는 것에 대해서 어떻게 생각하니?
3. Describe your learning and speaking of your heritage languages?  
한국어 이외의 부모님의 언어를 배우고 말하는 것에 대해 어떻게 생각하니?
4. Describe your learning and speaking of English and other foreign languages?  
영어와 외국어를 배우고 말하는 것에 대해 어떻게 생각하니?
5. Describe any cultural issues (including cultural similarity/differences and cultural diversity) that you encounter in relation with friends, teachers, and people in societies.  
교우관계 혹은 사회생활에서 겪는 문화적 상이점, 문화적 다양성 등 문화적 문제와 관련하여 이야기해 줄래?
6. Have you ever been treated differently because of your physical appearances?  
Describe what you feel in such experiences?  
너는 외모가 달라서 다르게 대우받은 적이 있니? 그럴 때 어떤 느낌이 드니?
7. How do you think you are different from others? Describe who you are.  
너는 다른 사람과 어떻게 다르다고 생각하니? 너는 스스로 어떤 사람이라고 생각하니?

**Demographic Questions:**

1. age, gender, and ethnicity (나이, 성별, 국적)
2. resident years in Korea (한국 거주 기간)
3. language background (언어적 배경)
4. family backgrounds if possible (가족배경)

Is there anything else you would like to add?  
Thank you for your participation.



## APPENDIX D OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

I will observe participant children to know how the students learn languages and interact with teachers and classmates and formulate their identity through language practices. To do this, I will observe them:

- 1) in classes (e.g. English classes or Korean language arts classes)
- 2) in school activities (e.g. cooking activity, club activities, and student government )
- 3) in recess time (e.g. at hallways, classrooms, social hang-out, and playground)

The main focuses for the observation are their participation in class and school activities and interaction with friends and teachers. More specifically, my observations will be guided by the following aspects:

- How do they participate in class and school activities?
- How do they interact with teachers and friends?
- How do they respond to racial issues?
- How do they respond to linguistic issues?
- Which languages are used for communication?
- Which languages are spoken for socialization?

While observing the study participants, I will write down what I will observe and understand. I will not videotape the events or students' behaviors. If the students are involved in writing or drawing related to their identity formulation, the writings or artifacts may be collected for further analysis.



## APPENDIX E EXAMPLE OF INITIAL CODING

Data are extracted from a formal interview (06/24/2014) with Mustafa's mother.

5	무스타파 엄마: <u>압둘라는 핸드폰이 없어요 무스타파만 있어요. 다른 요즘세도 바꿔달라고 무스타파</u>	메모 [SK4]: being scolded↵
6	<u>는 다른 애들이 오락을 하니까 자기도 하고 싶어서 핸드폰 <u>새걸로</u> 바꾸고↵</u>	메모 [SK5]: being angry at school↵
7	나: <u>작년에는 핸드폰 있었나요↵</u>	메모 [SK6]: resisting seriously over Jin-Hee↵
8	무스타파 엄마: <u>1학년때 사줬어요. 엄마랑 학교 마치고 이런 이야기하는 용도로 14000원 짜리 <u>였</u></u>	메모 [SK7]: being disciplined by Ms. Ahn↵
9	<u>는데 지금은 이걸로 오락도 하고 그러니까 요즘제 못마땅하다고↵</u>	메모 [SK8]: being sent to Ms. Ahn↵
10	나: <u>작년에는 안 그랬는데 요즘은 수업을 안 하려고 해서 <u>걱정이예요</u>. 언제부터 그랬어요?↵</u>	메모 [SK9]: being threatened by Ms. Ahn↵
11	무스타파 엄마: <u>작년 하반기 여름방학 마치고 나서부터 분노 폭발하고 <u>그때부터는 학교를 아예 안</u></u>	메모 [SK10]: being insulted by school teachers↵
12	<u>가려고했어요</u> <u>학교 데려다 놓으면 도망쳐 나오고</u> <u>여기 김선생님처럼 부드럽게 하는 게 아니</u>	메모 [SK11]: being insulted by school teachers↵
13	<u>라 애들 불러다가 기가 넘어갈 정도로 닦아세우고</u> <u>그러니까</u> <u>아이도 분노가 너무 커지고</u> <u>담임</u>	메모 [SK12]: worrying of bad reputation↵
14	<u>이 안되니까</u> <u>훈육을 위해 안영미 선생님이 무스타파 전담이 되어서</u> ↵	메모 [SK13]: being skeptical about multicultural education↵
15	나: <u>그래요?↵</u>	메모 [SK14]: being proud of Abdullah↵
16	무스타파 엄마: <u>무스타파가 돌출행동을 하면 무섭다고 인식이 있는 그분 안영미 선생한테 보내</u>	메모 [SK15]: telling about Abdullah's physical appearance↵
17	<u>서 <u>아이를 잡으니까</u>. 그분이 호랑이 선생님이라는 인식이 있으니까</u> ↵	메모 [SK16]: telling about Mustafa's physical difference↵
18	나: <u>그분이 호랑이 선생님이라는 인식이 있어서 그기에 아이를 맡겼구나↵</u>	메모 [SK17]: questioning teachers' attitude toward multicultural↵
19	무스타파 엄마: <u>그만두고 나올 때 저한테 말 많이 하셨어요</u> <u>후회할 거라고 온갖 소리 다</u> <u>하고 제</u>	메모 [SK18]: questioning parent↵
20	<u>가 여기 온 거 어떻게 다들 아셨지?↵</u>	메모 [SK19]: being ignored by↵
21	나: <u>뭐 알면 아는 거고↵</u>	메모 [SK20]: being insulted by↵
22	무스타파 엄마: <u>그거서 한 명이라도 빠지면 내가 데리고 나온 걸로 오해할까 봐 걱정되었어요↵</u>	메모 [SK21]: being insulted by↵
23	나: <u>그런 걱정을 많이 하셨군요. 너무 <u>걱정마시고</u> 아이 생각만 하세요. 점차 학교도 변하고 좋아지</u>	메모 [SK22]: mentioning the↵
24	<u>겠죠.↵</u>	메모 [SK23]: being asked about↵
25	무스타파 엄마: <u>근데 아이들 학교 보내면서 <u>압둘라</u>, <u>싸미도</u> 학교에 보내면서 그렇게 쉽게는 안 될</u>	
26	<u>거라고</u> <u>생각해요</u> . <u>압둘라 학교에 가서 정말 잘하거든요</u> . <u>모든 면에서 잘하고</u> <u>엄마들이 제가</u>	
27	<u>느끼기에 얼마나 질투하고 저도 한국사람이면서 다문화 가정 다문화 엄마잖아요</u> . <u>압둘라는</u>	
28	<u>많이 외모로 표시가 덜 나는데도</u> <u>그런데</u> . <u>무스타파는 외형적으로 표시가 나지만</u> <u>압둘라는</u>	
29	<u>우리나라 기준으로 선진국이였다면 한국사람들 한국교사들이 어떻게 받아들였을까 그런 생</u>	
30	<u>각을 되게 많이 해요</u> . <u>왜냐면 엄마들이 처음에 학년이 바뀌어서 모임을 하면 청소당번 정하</u>	
31	<u>고</u> <u>그러면서 아빠나라가 요르단이라고 하면</u> <u>이미 이 사람들 인식 속에서 나랑 똑 같이 나랑</u>	
32	<u>비슷한 또래잖아요</u> . <u>그런데 내가 다문화 엄마가 아니고 무스타파 아빠랑 결혼을 안 했다면</u>	
33	<u>나도 저런 사람처럼 생각했을지도 모르겠다</u> <u>그런 생각도 들어요</u> . <u>이 사람들 머릿속에는 영</u>	
34	<u>국 미국 빼놓고는 자기를 보다 다 아래인 거예요</u> . <u>그래서</u> <u>압둘라가 반에서 원가 두드러지게</u>	
35	<u>잘하면 그게 빈정거리면서 이야기하고</u> . <u>압둘라가 학교 대표로 경시대회 이런 거 나가고 그</u>	
36	<u>러면 상을 받고 그러면 다른 엄마들이 못 견뎌 해요</u> . <u>무스타파 입학시키러 갔을 때도 그래</u>	
37	<u>요</u> <u>담임이</u> <u>그분은 나이 많고 경험이 많은 분인데 하는 말이</u> <u>니가 무스타파야? 이름이 무스</u>	
38	<u>타파니?</u> <u>내년에 학교 올 아이냐?</u> 이렇게 물어면서 <u>너 한글 읽을 줄 알아?</u> 물어봐서 애가 '	



## APPENDIX F

### EXAMPLE OF FOCUSED CODING

Focused Code	Supporting Data	Initial Code	Data Source
Being insulted by the homeroom teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>무스타파: 선생님 '적극적' 이란 뜻이 뭐예요? 교사: 그 뜻 몰라요? 적극적 몰라요? 아직 적극적을 모르고 있어요? (단어의 의미를 끝내 설명해주지 않음)</li> <li>(무스타파가 대화에 끼어들자) 무스타파, 친구들이 이야기할 때 기다려 주세요. 지금 한나가 이야기하고 있지요. 한나 이야기 다 끝나면 이야기 하세요. (한나가 쥐 이야기를 가로채며 끼어들었을 때와 다른 태도를 보임)</li> <li>무스타파는 좀 그렇잖아요. 하여튼 좀 그래요. 아주 심할 때도 많아요.</li> <li>담임도 아이만 보면 내내 청소시키고 매일 청소시키고 아이가 청소라면 치를 떨어요. 어쩌면 젊은 선생이 그럴 수 있는지. 다른 선생님들이 하는 거 보고 배워서 그런 거 같아요.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>asking Jin-Hee of the meaning of 'active'</li> <li>being blamed by Jin-Hee for not knowing the meaning of 'active'</li> <li>being asked not to interrupt Hanna's talk</li> <li>being treated differently from Hanna's interruption by Jin-Hee</li> <li>being regarded as problematic by Jin-Hee</li> <li>being forced to clean by Jin-Hee</li> <li>cleaning every day</li> <li>hating forced cleaning</li> <li>complaining forced cleaning</li> <li>being angry at Jin-Hee</li> </ul>	<p>Class Observation &amp; Fieldnotes (06/20/2013)</p> <p>Class Observation &amp; Fieldnotes (06/20/2013)</p> <p>Interview with Jin-Hee (06/20/2013)</p> <p>Interview with Mustafa's mother (06/24/2014)</p>
Being insulted by the math teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>무스타파가 가장 잘 안 지켜지고 있어요.</li> <li>선생님 얼굴 쳐다보고 수업에 집중하라고 했지요.</li> <li>그런데 무스타파는 안 지키고 있어요.</li> <li>무스타파만 항상 안 지키고 있어요.</li> <li>그러면 선생님은 무스타파 투명인간 취급할 거예요.</li> <li>그런 건 묻지 마세요. 이미 이야기 했어요. 다른 친구들은 이미 알고 있어요.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being blamed for distraction</li> <li>being scolded for not concentrating</li> <li>being blamed for not concentrating</li> <li>being blamed for not concentrating</li> <li>being threatened that Mustafa will be treated as an invisible person</li> <li>being banned to ask questions</li> </ul>	<p>Class Observation (06/19/2013)</p>

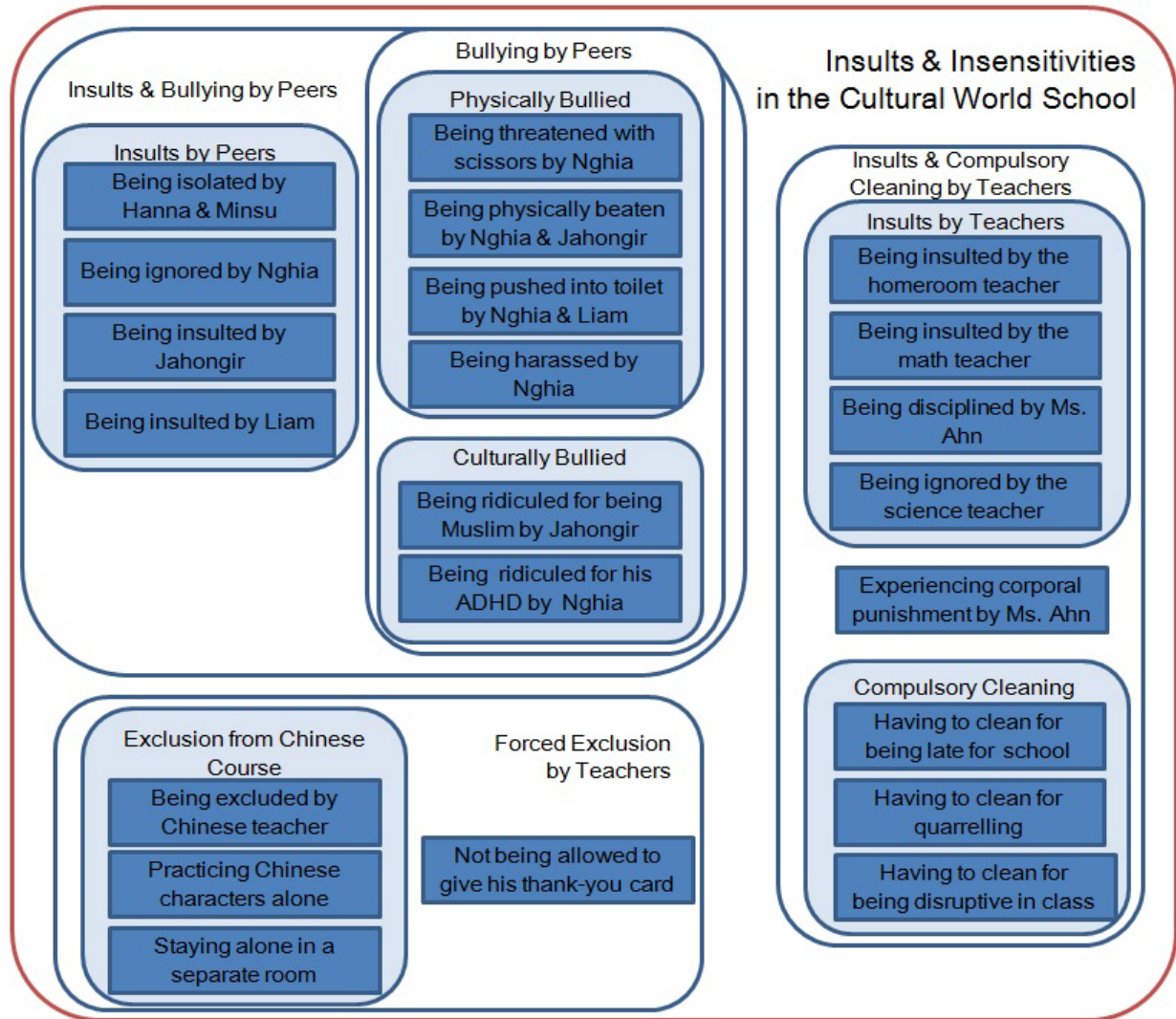


Focused Code	Supporting Data	Initial Code	Data Source
Being disciplined by Ms. Ahn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 무스타파. 너 앞에 나가서 손들고 서있어.</li> <li>• 선생님들 일할 때 왜 너 혼자 책 읽고 있는데.</li> <li>• 제발 눈치 좀 있어라.</li> <li>• 너 한 번만 더 그러면 용서 안 한다.</li> <li>• 책상 빨리 청소해.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being punished to raise arms</li> <li>• being scolded for reading a book while teachers clean</li> <li>• being blamed for his insensitivity</li> <li>• being threatened that Mustafa will not be forgiven later</li> <li>• being forced to clean up desks</li> </ul>	Observation & fieldnotes (06/28/2013)
Being excluded from Chinese course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 난 왕따예요. 중국어 선생님이 왕따시켰어요.</li> <li>• 중국어 수업에 못 들어가요.</li> <li>• 내가 한자 중국어 이런 거 이야기하면 중국어 선생님이 싫어해요. 모두 다 나를 미워해요.</li> <li>• 다 원수들이예요.</li> <li>• 그 선생님 (중국어 선생님)이 무스타파랑 수업하기 힘들어해서 그리고 애들이랑 싸우고 그러니까 그냥 수업에 안 들여보내고</li> <li>• 제가 자습을 시켜요.</li> <li>• 책보고 그냥 한자쓰기 시켜요.</li> <li>• 무스타파 혼자서 상담실에서 한자를 쓰고 있다.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognizing his isolation</li> <li>• being excluded from Chinese classes</li> <li>• being disliked by his Chinese teacher</li> <li>• being disliked by classmates in Chinese classes</li> <li>• regarding people as his enemies</li> <li>• being banned to attend Chinese classes</li> <li>• forced by Jin-Hee to stay alone</li> <li>• forced by Jin-Hee to write Chinese letters alone</li> <li>• being observed for him to write Chinese letters alone in counseling room</li> </ul>	<p>Interview with Mustafa (06/26/2013)</p> <p>Interview with Jin-Hee (06/26/2013)</p> <p>Observation (06/22/2013)</p>



## APPENDIX G EXAMPLE OF THEORETICAL CODING

This example is extracted from part of Mustafa's data.





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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Hyoung-Sook Cho was born and raised in South Korea. She received her Master of Education in Language Education (with specialization in Teaching Additional Languages) at the University of Georgia in May 2004. She completed a graduate-level certificate program of TKSL (Teaching Korean as a Second Language) at Pusan National University in 2004. She worked in South Korea as a public school teacher for 11 years (1995-2006) and taught gifted students for two years (2005-2007). Later, she worked as an admissions officer at a national university (2008-2010).

As for research and project experiences, she was the PI of a project about English teacher learning community (2.5 million (approximately USD 2,500)) funded by Busan Metropolitan City Office of Education (2006) and a Co-PI of five projects about educational assessment and college admission policy (KRW 10 million (approximately USD 10,000) for each) funded by Korea's Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (2009-2011). Since 2011, when she began her doctoral studies, her work has focused on multicultural and multilingual education for Korean ESOL students in the U.S. and for multicultural students in South Korea. From fall 2011 to spring 2014, she has served as a research assistant in Project DELTA (Developing English Language and Literacy through Teacher Achievement) to study the collaboration between mainstream teachers and ESOL teachers and to examine the infusion of ESOL instructions into mainstream pre-service teacher training programs.

She has delivered eight presentations at regional, national, and international conferences, including Sunshine State TESOL, SRATE, SAGE, NAAAS & Affiliates, and FSSS. She is an author of five peer-reviewed publications and has contributed chapters to several textbooks for gifted students. As non-scholarly activities, she worked as a



correspondent for three Korea-based mass media outlets: Kookje Daily Newspaper (2011-2013), Busan Daily Newspaper (2013-2015), and TBN Radio (2013-2015).

Hyoung-Sook Cho graduated with a Ph.D in Curriculum and Instruction from the College of Education, the University of Florida in 2015. She is now pursuing an academic career in multicultural and multilingual education in South Korea and elsewhere.