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"I don't want her to lose our mother tongue": A multiple case study of the family language policies of Korean American families

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Abstract

In recent years, Family Language Policy (FLP) researchers have demonstrated the importance and necessity of revealing the language policies of immigrant families to investigate the language learning and maintenance processes of immigrant families and communities. This article contributes to a growing conversation of family language policies by presenting a multiple case study of three Korean American families, which conducted audio and video recorded participant observation and semi-structured interviews of family members. It examined the policies that families develop and employ in order to nurture and maintain their native language in monolingual contexts. Analyses of observations and interviews show that families developed family language policies that are resourceful and effective for language maintenance despite larger social institutions that favored monolingualism. The parents of all families pursued and maintained relationships with other Korean speakers in their extended families and church communities and created a home environment that invited and prioritized their heritage language. The article concludes with implications for immigrant families, communities, and teachers of immigrant-origin children.

Keywords bilingualism, family language policy, heritage language

1. Introduction

In recent years, researchers of language policy have highlighted the sphere of the home in the emerging field of family language policy. In one of the earlier descriptions of family language policy (FLP), King et al. (2008) defined family language policy as "explicit and overt planning in relation to language use within the home among family members" (p.907). FLP focuses on the family unit, not as a neutral space separate from its surrounding context but as a site in which language ideologies of the nested macro-structures of community, school, work, and government are both formed and enacted through everyday parent-child, child-child, and parent-parent interactions.

FLP includes broader issues of national and local policies that influence the home, macro-processes that are often difficult to capture through research in child language acquisition, which focuses on the development of linguistic competence in children. Through a close micro-analysis of the language policies in the home, FLP considers the power and influence of the larger social structures that shape the family members and their community (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013). This comprehensive approach sheds light on broader language policy issues at societal levels by highlighting the broader policies' effects in the home. By tracing and pinpointing language policies at all levels of the home, community, and public space, FLP researchers reveal linkages between private spaces and public places and trace the pressures, conflicts, and developments of individuals as they traverse private and public realms.

FLP has been especially helpful for bilingual families in diaspora and immigrant contexts to see the explicit decisions that are made in the home by parents and children to maintain, learn, or adopt a language (King et al., 2008). This article demonstrates the FLPs of three Korean American families through a multiple case study that focuses on the explicit decisions and policies that parents and children create and negotiate in their homes to nurture their native languages that are often deemed less powerful and relevant than the English language in their social context in the U.S.

Fishman (1972) argued that once the first generation of immigrants set foot in the U.S., it would take three generations for language loss to occur. The children in this study were all third generation Korean Americans. Yet, all three families developed policies and practices that drew from Korean, English, and hybrid forms of Korean and English. As such, this study may shed light on the language practices of immigrant groups that have been growing in number and duration in the U.S. and other multilingual countries. Moreover, this study's findings may draw implications for immigrant groups in pointing to the three families' strategies for language maintenance and their development of hybrid language practices through FLPs.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Language Maintenance

Researchers have documented efforts of Korean parents and Korean communities in teaching the Korean language to children of immigrants through heritage language schools, family language policies, and Korean communities (Cho, 2000; Cho & Krashen, 2000; Cho & Song, 2023, Jo, 2001; Harris & Lee, 2021; Kim, 2020; Lee, J.S., 2002; Park & Sarkar, 2007). In the current U.S. educational public school system, Korean American children have limited opportunities to learn Korean, which places the responsibility of teaching the Korean language often on family members and communities (Cho & Song, 2023; Tse, 2001). The National Association for Korean Schools (NAKS, 2023) states that there are over 1,200 Korean heritage schools across the 50 states in the U.S. (NAKS, 2023). The parents of two children in this study planned on enrolling their children in Korean language schools as well. While there is a documented effort of Korean parents and communities to maintain Korean, Kim (1981) reported that Korean parents also emphasize learning English as necessary to the educational success of their children.

2.2. The Context of Power

For Korean immigrants and for the three families in this study, the English language was often tied to power. As Bourdieu (1977) explains in his theory of linguistic legitimacy that language is intimately connected to power and a standard or normalized language is one that serves official uses and is tied to social, economic, and political capital. In the history of Korean immigration, the English language functioned as the standard and normalized language through which immigrants might obtain economic and social access to American society. Bourdieu (1977) continued to theorize that speakers who lacked the legitimate language were excluded from domains of power that required this competence. For Korean immigrants who struggled with the English language, they were excluded from domains of power in business, workplaces, and social centers that required knowledge of the English language. English was seen as a prerequisite for immigrants to receive acceptance and integration into the American society, a reality commonly experienced by immigrant groups in the U.S. (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996).

While learning English was viewed as a social and economic advantage, maintaining the Korean language also provided economic, social, emotional, and cultural advantages to Korean families. Korean families sought to continue speaking Korean at home and in Korean institutions, such as Korean churches or Korean cultural groups (Shin, 2005). For Korean families living in the U.S. during the Japanese occupation of Korea, it was critical to maintain Korean ways of life and speaking so that they could return to Korea once it was freed from Japanese rule (Takaki, 1998). Maintaining the Korean language, for these first-wave immigrants, had a patriotic and nationalistic purpose. For the second-wave and third-wave immigrants, maintaining the Korean language had social, cultural, and economic benefits. Speaking Korean was tied to social cohesiveness of Korean communities. Business associations were created for Korean business owners; Korean churches provided services in the Korean language; Korean language radio stations, newspapers, magazines, and websites were made accessible to Korean Americans; ethnic communities and enclaves such as Koreatowns also known as 'K-towns' prospered in California, New Jersey, and New York (Takaki, 1998; Shin, 2005). For instance, the three families in this study participated in Korean churches on a weekly basis, where sermons were preached in Korean and English. The parents of the families regularly browsed Korean websites and showed Korean television programs to their children. The three families also frequented bookstores, grocery shops, and markets in a Koreatown in northern New Jersey.

At the same time, it is important to note the implications of power and language in the three children's lives. Even though the family's homes were a central part of the children's lives, they were also part of a preschool class that had different language policies and practices. As Blommaert (2005) explained, each person is involved in centering institutions at all levels of social life, from the family to the state and even further out to transnational communities. Thus, any individual's social environment is polycentric and involves a range of criss-crossing centers. Not only are the multiple centers polycentric, they are also stratified because every center has a different range and value. Within these polycentric and stratified centers, individuals possess multiple ways of speaking that are ranked in different levels of legitimacy in the multiple linguistic fields they inhabit. Thus, individuals need to acquire different ways of speaking to have a legitimate voice in different fields. This study analyzed how the larger questions of immigration, language maintenance, and language policy shaped the local practices of the family members in the home. It also examined which linguistic repertoires were deemed legitimate in the multiple contexts of the participant and which linguistic repertoires are connected to what types of capital.

2.3. Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What language preferences and practices exist in the participants' different contexts?
2. What policies and practices do participants enact for the purpose of language maintenance?

What do these language practices and patterns reveal about the larger social contexts and balances of power in the lives of the participants?

3. Research Methodology

The present study investigated the locally situated and emergent language practices of the three bilingual children and their families by tracing their creation and use of family language policies. Data were collected through an eight-month ethnography that consisted of field observations, interviews of children and adults in the study,

collection of artifacts, and audio-video-recordings.

3.1. Selection and Recruitment of Participants

The participants were chosen from a preschool Montessori class located in North Valley, New Jersey. Following the sampling methods of Kent (2012), Kim (2009), and No (2011), the current study used a purposeful sample to recruit students from the class to examine a phenomenon in depth. To answer my research questions on the bilingualism and FLPs of families, I enlisted participants who were bilingual. This study drew from the continua of bilingualism approach proposed by Hornberger and Link (2012) to argue that there are multiple ways of being a bilingual person. For example, bilingualism may range from receptive bilingualism, comprehending the spoken language but not producing through speech or writing, to productive bilingualism, producing the language through speech and writing.

In considering the number of participants, the studies of Bhimji (2005) and No (2011) informed this study. For qualitative research, Yin (2003) advised a small number of participants to capture more in-depth analysis of each participant. With the purpose of analyzing the developing directive repertoires of each child with richer detail and greater depth, this study focused on three Korean American children and their families.

The three families who participated in the study were the Kim family, consisting of Bumjoo (father), Bomi (mother), Karis (age 4.7), and her sibling, Ariel (age 1.7); the Chung family, consisting of Daryl (father), Somi (mother), Juri (age 4.5), and her sibling, Sangdo (age 2.11); and the Park family, consisting of Jim (father), Sarah (mother), and Timothy (age 3.8).

3.2. Participant Observation

This study used participant observation to analyze the FLPs used by the participants. Participant observation is a powerful tool for research because it allows the researcher to enter into the participants' worlds. Canagarajah (2009) maintains that participant observation is the researcher's attempt to enter the community and experience the language relationships of community members. By both observing and taking part in the participants' lives, the researcher may understand viewpoints of the participants while collecting data. Furthermore, Gans (1997) argues that participant observation is an effective method for researching minority groups because it can provide empirical data about often stereotyped or less known minority groups by considering the voices of the participants in the group. As a result, participant observation is a method often used by researchers conducting case studies and ethnographies.

I observed the three children's homes for the duration of eight months for a total of 12 observations of at least two hours, which yielded a total of 24 hours per home and a total of 72 hours for all three families. In addition to the 72 hours, the families were asked to video-record their dinnertimes for an hour at least once a week for eight weeks so that there were an approximate total of eight hours per family and a total of 24 hours for all three families (one hour per eight weeks per three families) of dinnertime recordings. Following the studies of Kent (2012) and Ochs and Taylor (1993), which asked the parents to record family meals so that the researcher's presence did not disturb the family's naturally occurring interactions, this study asked the parents to video record dinnertimes without the presence of the researcher. The total number of recordings included 96 hours (72 daytime hours and 24 dinnertime hours per three families).

For recordings in the home, all field observations were video recorded, and I was present for one hour in each of the three homes for the duration of eight weeks, with a total of 24 hours.

3.3. Interviews with Parents

Semi-structured interviews with parents were conducted to examine the parents' expectations for the child's education in class and at home, goals for language policies, beliefs and attitudes towards the child's developing bilingualism. The purpose of the interviews was also to examine the parents' use of FLPs with their children, their expectations and language policies, and the context of their family's immigration history and trajectory. Following No (2011) and Kim (2009), this study used semi-structured interviews to allow the parents to focus on topics that are of most importance to them. A separate protocol was used for the parents with specific questions related to their expectations for the child's education, goals for FLPs, beliefs, and attitudes towards the child's developing bilingualism in the classroom and at home. The interviews began with a question to 'break the ice' and to assist the parent in becoming comfortable with the interview. Breaking the ice was important because as Cresswell (2007) suggested, qualitative semi-structured interviews may be viewed as conversations. With the purpose of creating an atmosphere that led to comfortable conversations, interviews were held in settings familiar to the interviewee. The interviews began with questions that engaged the interviewee, and the researcher allowed the interviewee to maintain control over how long they would like to discuss a topic.

3.4. Data Analysis

This study was informed by No (2011) and Kim (2009) who both used a thematic approach to data analysis. To elaborate, the thematic approach discovered themes within the data that were related to the research questions. My analysis was informed by Boyatsiz (1998) and Saldana (2009) who described the thematic analysis approach as a process of encoding qualitative information and developing codes that labeled and described sections of data. The codes, according to Boyatsiz (1998) and Saldana (2009) did not refer to the actual themes but to pieces of data that contributed to a larger theme. Codes may be theory-related and theory-driven codes derived from a bottom-up and inductive reading and analysis of the data. The thematic approach was a flexible approach that was often used by ethnographers to examine the larger themes that are present in the rich details collected through multiple sources (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Saldana, 2009). The research questions of this study investigated the developing FLPs of three Korean American families.

Themes that were inductively formed through reading of the data included themes that related to the different characteristics of FLPs, patterns of language use and translanguaging, language maintenance, shift, and loss, bi- and multi-culturalism in the families, and issues of power and legitimacy in the English language.

Conversation analysis and linguistic anthropology contributed to my analysis of the discourse found in the data. For transcription of all discourse, I was informed by conversation analysis to transcribe speech, gestures, and suprasegmental features (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). After collecting data, I drew from the framework of communicative competence to analyze the discourse of participants (e.g., Gumperz & Hymes, 1964; Hymes, 1968). Data analysis occurred in three phases: Organizing the data, coding the data, and synthesizing the data.

4. Findings

A thematic analysis of the data revealed several patterns related to family language policies and language learning in the home by participants. The first theme was the parents' concern with maintaining and honoring the native language of Korean. Second, the parents were concerned that children were becoming more dominant in English due to the linguistic power and legitimacy granted by institutions in the family's lives, namely the children's school and church.

4.1. Language Maintenance and Identity

In all three homes, language maintenance was a major concern for the parents. The parents of Juri and Sangdo, and Karis and Ari deliberately spoke Korean at home for children to maintain their knowledge and use of Korean. The family language policy of all three homes was to maintain the use of the Korean language spoken and heard in the homes for the purpose of language maintenance. The practice of this policy varied across the three homes. For example, while the parents of Timothy spoke Korean, English, and a hybrid form of Korean and English to expose Timothy to the Korean language, Sarah and Daryl chose to speak mainly in Korean. When I asked Sarah, mother of Juri and Sangdo, about language use at home during an interview, she shared:

Excerpt 1. Mother Country Language

> *We speak Korean and sometimes English 'cause my second child seems to understand more when I speak in English. And I speak in Korean because I want to teach them both languages, especially since we're from Korea. We're Korean. I think I believe they should know what their mother country language is.*

For Sarah, speaking Korean was a form of identification. South Korea was her "mother country" and speaking the Korean language identified her family with their country of origin. For the same reason, her husband, Daryl, stated that he spoke "95% Korean at home" when he spoke with his children. For Daryl, he described his children's ability to learn both languages as his ambition:

Excerpt 2. Roots, Heritage, and Identity

> *Starting from now and throughout their lives I want them to be fluent in both languages. Maybe it's my ambition but I think that's important for them to know their roots, their heritage, and their identity as well.*

In his statements about language maintenance, Daryl made it clear that fluency in both languages was important for his children to "know their roots, their heritage, and their identity," which revealed a driving purpose in Daryl's family language policy for developing fluency in both Korean and English. Becoming fluent in both languages, for Daryl, was necessary for his children to understand their past immigration history of how their family had traveled to the U.S., their ever-evolving traditions and forms of heritage in their present time, and the way that their language and culture shapes their multi-cultural identities and trajectories in the U.S.

Another parent, Bomi, mother of Karis and Ariel, discussed how speaking both Korean and English would identify her child as a bilingual and bicultural Korean American. For Bomi, speaking both languages in the home was an important decision for her family:

Excerpt 3. A Conversational Thing

> *I try to mix languages, Korean and English as much as possible. I want it to be a natural process for her to get Korean and English so umm she's not she doesn't think we're just an English speaking household or just a Korean speaking household but that we're a bilingual household so that you know if in the future if she decides to learn Korean more traditionally then it's not gonna be so foreign to her. It's gonna be a conversational thing. She'll have at least the basic conversational skills.*

Speaking in both languages at home was Bomi's way of preparing her daughter for a future of bilingualism. Bomi believed that raising her daughter in a bilingual home would cause the Korean language to be a familiar language, not a foreign one, even though they were removed from the country of South Korea. Bomi's family language policy was not as strict as Daryl's language policy (i.e. 95% Korean in the home) but she made a deliberate effort to use both Korean and English in the home for the language maintenance of her children with a focus on conversational fluency.

For Bomi, the Korean language was a connection to South Korea, and it possessed intimate ties to her identity:

Excerpt 4. Our Mother Tongue

> *I don't want her to lose our mother tongue. I think that's important for me. Because then it's tied in with our identity. I don't want her to lose that. It's important because there are just some expressions in Korean that you can't express in English, not just conversationally but also poetically. Korean's so poetic and if she loses the ability to speak Korean entirely she's gonna lose those nuances in language when she talks with other people, when she hears like. I don't want her struggling when she speaks with other Korean speakers umm and just like she's only like when someone translates you can only translate the bare minimum you know like when you communicate, but you lose a lot of the depth of the language. I don't want her to lose that. I think that's really important for me because for me, even though my Korean is not perfect I still have a foundation so when I*

hear for example, a Korean phrase or Korean hymns or worship songs there's something that really triggers my heart, it really resonates with me.

As evident in this excerpt, Bomi had an intimate connection with the Korean language that was tied in, as she noted, with her identity and helped her to plumb deep emotional responses and form expressions that were difficult to understand and translate in the English language. As a mother, she was afraid that they would "lose our mother tongue," which she stated was extremely important to her family because of the way she connected language to identity: "it's tied in with our identity." Bomi also shared that she wanted to prevent linguistic breaches and struggles when her children spoke with other Korean speakers. Not only did Bomi desire to share this linguistic identity with her children, but she also saw developing multilingualism as an investment in her children's social and cultural wellbeing in the future.

4.2. Language maintenance and community

Another family language policy that families had adopted was the inclusion of cultural communities and relationships. For the purpose of maintaining their native language, families pursued and strengthened relationships with other family and community members who spoke Korean. When I asked Somi about Korean speakers in their families and community members, Somi responded:

Excerpt 5. We Speak in Korean

The grandparents speak in Korean. Some of my church members. When we go to church. I go to a Korean church. Korean ministry. I go to a Korean ministry church and we speak in Korean and we communicate in Korean.

For Somi, her Korean speaking church members were an integral part of the Korean speaking community of her family members. Somi reiterated her belief in the importance of a Korean community for her children by repeating it twice in her last statement: "we speak in Korean and we communicate in Korean." For Sarah's child, Timothy, friends and grandparents who spoke Korean encouraged Timothy to speak Korean:

Excerpt 6. He's Forced to Use It

I think he (Timothy) leans towards English but right now it's changing because like he wants both. Because he knows that his friends speak more Korean. So I think he's trying. He noticed that his friend would ignore him when he said something in English. And I said she's not ignoring you use cause she's being mean. She just doesn't understand what you're saying. I think it helps that he knows they (grandparents) can't speak any other language so he's forced to use it. So I kinda like that aspect.

For Timothy, English was his dominant language but, as Sarah discussed, Timothy began to become interested in learning Korean because of his exposure to Korean-speaking friends. His desire to communicate with his friends and his grandparents was a major factor in contributing to the development of his bilingualism.

In addition, Korean language schools or classes were another way in which the parents pursued maintenance of the Korean language. Somi shared that she wanted to look for a Korean school because she believed that the age of four or five was an appropriate time to send Juri (Interview with Sarah.3). Sarah also shared that her in-laws were Korean teachers:

Excerpt 7. A Whole Curriculum

Going forward I was made aware that Ji's parents they are Korean teachers. um elementary. Yeah they're hardcore. They have a whole curriculum set already. They are retired so they are thinking about using that for him when he turns 5. So I was like oh! Okay, like really rigorously.

From this excerpt, we see that Timothy's grandparents were a major resource for developing Timothy's knowledge of Korean. Timothy's grandparents shared their desire to communicate with their grandson with Sarah, who agreed with and encouraged their plan to teach him Korean. Korean family members, Korean schools, and Korean communities and religious groups were a linguistic resource for these three families who included these connections in their family language policies.

4.3. English in social context

The parents of the three families spoke Korean at home, pursued relationships with Korean speaking family members and communities, and made plans for sending children to Korean language schools and classes to maintain and teach the native language of Korean. The parents' efforts to maintain the Korean language, however, faced many challenges due to the power and legitimacy of the English language. Children in the study were only three and four years old but they were already beginning to forget Korean words they had learned from infancy due to their increasing dominance in English. Bomi discussed her concerns about Karis' diminishing ability to speak Korean:

Excerpt 8. She's Quickly Forgetting

She typically responds in English because that's what's become comfortable for her and if she doesn't know something she'll ask. What does that mean? Sometimes I find myself getting frustrated because I expect her to know because she knew before but she's quickly forgetting. That's why it makes me feel like I have to keep speaking to her and mixing it. I think peers, school, major thing is school. Because when she was home with us she spoke primarily Korean and now that she's at school and most of her peers are speaking English you know she is just more comfortable in English. And I think the video or the television programs that she watches, most of it is in English now so I think that also is a big factor.

According to Bomi, the major factor for Karis' growing dominance in English was that her school, her teachers and friends, all spoke only in English. In addition, the television programs she watched were primarily in English.

Not only the children's school, but the church Sunday school was also English dominant, as Somi shared during an interview:

Excerpt 9. They Prefer English.

The Sunday school is mixed in both languages. Some songs they have English worship songs and I think most of the teaching is in English towards the kids. They prefer English

Even though Somi attended a Korean speaking church, the church's Sunday school pastor and teachers chose to speak in English because the children spoke to each other in English.

Along with the school and church, a participant's medical practitioner encouraged choosing one language and prescribed monolinguistic practices for the child. When Timothy was a baby, Sarah shared that her doctor recommended that she should choose one language and speak to their baby in that language only.

Excerpt 10. Stick with One Language

When he was first born we didn't have a set idea like we have to speak in Korean. We have to speak English but I noticed as he progressed, the doctor did notice that his language development was a little behind. Nothing too drastic. So then she suggested stick with one language. And so that's when we decided to just do English. She was checking. I don't remember the age. But she was checking if he was doing phrases. Four words or something like that. It has to be over a year. Um. But yeah, he wasn't speaking as much so then once we did that, within a month his language just flew, like he was speaking all the time and then we just kinda went with the flow.

As Sarah discussed, Timothy's pediatrician encouraged her and her husband to choose one language. This resulted in the parents' decision to only speak in English at home with Timothy. This decision was a response to the medical practitioner's prescription for their son, which overpowered their desire to raise him bilingually. Timothy's improvement in speaking English encouraged Sarah and her husband to continue with this decision and speak only English with him at home until he was older. This decision, however, led to Timothy's estrangement from his grandparents who could not communicate with him, and a disconnect with his Korean identity and name. He did not recognize or respond to his Korean name, *Jesuk*, and Sarah eventually felt guilty for not teaching him Korean:

Excerpt 11. We Never Used his Korean Name

My in-laws said "He don't understand me". (Laughs.) So I was like I kind of felt bad because I didn't make a conscious effort. We never used his Korean name. "Who's 제석 (Jesuk)?"

Sarah's guilt stemmed from Timothy's inability to communicate with her in-laws. This guilt was compounded by her fear of Timothy's linguistic progress. As evident in Sarah's case, the parents experienced complex and conflicting emotions and thoughts regarding the linguistic preferences and patterns of their children. Daryl, the father of Sangdo and Juri, experienced a desire for his children to maintain their Korean language but faced a reality that his children were already starting to forget Korean words:

Excerpt 12. Speak Korean

I try to speak Korean to them as much as possible but they're used to speaking English with one another so I try to tell them to speak Korean at least at home. They're free to speak whatever they want outside but at home, I want them to communicate in Korean primarily. Because I don't want them to forget about Korean because they have learned Korean as their first language at home and they're starting to lose it. I want them to retain it.

Daryl acknowledged that his children would speak English outside of the home, but he enforced his family members to speak only Korean at home so that his children would maintain their native language. In his language policy at home, it was clear that Daryl was cognizant of the risk of language loss due to the monolingual polices, and practices of the children's social circles and schools outside of the home.

Similarly, Bomi, Karis's mother, experienced a feeling of hope for her child to become bilingual but she also experienced a fear that the reality of her daughter's context will lead to being more comfortable in the dominant language of English:

Excerpt 13. A Comfortable Bilingual

Ten years from now I hope that she's a comfortable bilingual, that she could just speak like I mean by hope, I hope she can speak both languages as well as each other, you know, perfectly. But realistically I think she's gonna be a lot more comfortable in English and then ummm I just hope that her Korean is like that she's not afraid to speak it, like it'll be a foundation that she has. I hope. I hope."

Even as Bomi hoped for her daughter to be bilingual, she faced the realistic future of her daughter becoming more dominant in English. She emphasized her hope in the face of this dim reality by repeating "I hope. I hope." and voiced her hope that her daughter would build a foundation of bilingualism for her future.

5. Discussion and Implications

In summary, while the larger social institutions of the three families, such as the school and church favored English as a dominant language, the parents did not lose hope of raising their children as bilingual speakers. The parents pursued and maintained relationships with Korean speakers in their families and church community. Although Sarah and Jim were advised by their pediatrician to speak one language and chose to speak in English, they made plans to enroll their child in a Korean language school. Most importantly, all the parents created an environment in which Korean became a familiar and necessary language for children at home.

There are several implications that can be drawn from these findings for research, policy, and practice. The themes that emerged from the interviews of parents revealed the parents' desires for their children to maintain the Korean language. The first implication is that the Korean language was a marker of their bilingual and bicultural identity and heritage. The parents expressed an intimate connection with the Korean language, which they desired to share with their children. At the same time, families faced challenges of the dominance of English and

the imbalance of power in public institutional spaces, such as the school and church. The parents countered this imbalance by setting language policies at home that favored bilingualism and connecting their children with other Korean speakers in their social networks. The interviews in this study presented the families' bilingual language policies and the families' goals of maintaining both languages across generations. These findings shed light on research on family language policy (FLP) in Korean American families and communities and may assist research on families and communities of other language groups as well. FLP has been defined by King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry (2008) as explicit planning regarding language use within the home by family members. This field of research has been especially helpful for bilingual families in diaspora and immigrant contexts to see the explicit decisions that are made by families in the home to maintain, learn, or adopt a language.

For families in diaspora and immigrant contexts, research has documented the policy of consecutive or successive bilingualism also called sequential bilingualism, the practice of teaching a second or third language once the child has fully grasped the first language, often after the age of four (Paradis, 2009). Kouritzin (2000) argued that teaching the native language first would assist in maintaining the minority language under threat of shift or loss. This FLP, often used by parents of minority languages living in primarily monolingual cultures, is a method of preserving the child's bilingualism (Kouritzin, 2000). While consecutive bilingualism has been documented as a successful approach for raising bilingual children (Caldas, 2006; Kouritzin, 2000; Moin, Schwartz & Leiken, 2013), the findings of this study question the effectiveness of this FLP in this specific context in the U.S. Specifically, the study revealed that for the two families in this study that chose the FLP of consecutive bilingualism, the children exhibited a shift from Korean to English at the ages of three and four, after having been exposed to an English-dominant preschool in the U.S. This study advances the field of FLP by unveiling the challenges of adopting consecutive bilingualism as an FLP in language contexts that are monolingual and constricting for the use of the native language. Another implication from this study is the need for administrators of early education to consider how to create practices and policy that invites the child's native language into the classroom and the greater context of the preschool as advocated by Genessee, Paradis, and Crago (2004). Particularly for young children of preschool age, when children are developing foundations of language, it is important to welcome the languages that children are speaking at home into the school (e.g., Schwartz, Koh, Chen, Sinke & Geva, 2015). As the findings in this study revealed, an English-only environment may cause language shift and loss for young children, which may lead to negative consequences in their homes and families, as documented by Wong-Fillmore (1991). Therefore, it is important that policy for early education include the consideration of native languages through policies that support bilingual education, as researchers have documented (e.g., Collier & Thomas, 2004; Combs, Evans, Fletcher, Parra & Jiménez, 2005).

Preschool teachers of bi- and multi-lingual children can support the bilingual development of children by inviting the native languages of these children into their class culture and curriculum, as documented by August and Hakuta (1997). If the teacher is in a bilingual preschool that teaches the child's native language, the children may learn both English and their native language. Even if the child's native language is not the official language of instruction, preschool teachers need to include a consideration of the child's language into the classroom to support the child's linguistic development, as García and Frede (2010) had revealed in their research. Examples of including the native language in the classroom may involve assignments that may welcome family members from home, learning phrases or words from the multiple languages represented in the classroom, inviting children to speak the language or share about their language in the classroom, creating assignments or lessons that may involve translations to encourage the child's participation and engagement in class through their native languages, and including a storytelling corner in home languages and songs from multiple languages and cultures. This study confirmed the harm of an English-only environment on a preschool child's bilingual development (e.g., Wong-Fillmore, 1991). To prevent language shift and encourage the bilingual development of children, therefore, teachers need to include their students' native languages in creative ways in their curriculum and classroom culture.

Furthermore, the benefits of bilingualism need to be shared so that teachers, administrators, and parents may support the teaching of multiple languages to young children. Research on bilingualism has documented benefits of bilingualism to include an increased understanding of interpersonal communication (Genessee, Paradis & Crago, 2004); higher problem-solving skills, more linguistic and cognitive creativity, higher verbal IQ, higher metalinguistic awareness, higher quantity skills, higher degree of spatial concepts (García & Nañez, 2011); and increased gray matter in the brain (Espinsoa, 2010). Moreover, this study found through an examination of the FLPs, that children were able to develop and identify in multiple languages from an early age. Therefore, it is crucial that teachers, parents, and medical practitioners are aware of the many benefits of bilingualism.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.