

# **The Role of Heritage Language in Social Interactions and Relationships: Reflections from a Language Minority Group**

Grace Cho  
California State University, Fullerton

## **Abstract**

This article examines the experiences of one language minority group in regard to the effects of their home or “heritage” language (HL) competence. The results indicated that competence with one’s HL has an effect on social interactions, relationships with HL speakers of their ethnic minority group, and the individuals themselves. Having developed one’s HL, in addition to English, has a number of sociocultural advantages, as well as personal and societal benefits. Those who have developed their HL have a strong ethnic identity, are strongly connected to their ethnic group, and have greater understanding and knowledge of cultural values, ethics, and manners; this further enhances their interactions with HL speakers. Moreover, HL development is shown to provide a personal gain, eventually contributing positively to the betterment of the society. The results are discussed here, and implications are presented for heritage language education.

A heritage language (HL) is the language associated with one’s cultural background. Studies have long recognized that maintaining one’s HL, in addition to English proficiency, is beneficial. More specifically, developing the HL of ethnic minorities, in addition to English, has been shown to have cognitive, social, and cultural benefits (Garcia, 1985; Hakuta & Diaz, 1985; Krashen, 1998; Peal & Lambert, 1962).

Research has shown that HL development can be an important part of identity formation and can help one retain a strong sense of identity to one’s own ethnic group (Cho, Cho, & Tse, 1997; Feuerverger, 1991; Tse, 1996). Developing one’s HL, in addition to English, has a number of sociocultural advantages, as well as personal and societal benefits. Those who have developed their HL have greater understanding and knowledge of cultural values, ethics, and manners; this further enhances their interactions with HL speakers. Moreover, HL development has been shown to contribute positively to the betterment of the society.

Despite these benefits, there are consistent findings that show that HLs are typically not maintained and are rarely developed among ethnic minority group members. As evidence of the fact that HL development is difficult to maintain, many studies show that language shift to the dominant language of the country is powerful and rapid. Fishman (1991) has documented the steady move to the dominant language across a number of language communities, and Wong Fillmore (1991) has documented language shift to English in the United States. In general, language minority individuals are shifting to the dominant language and, at the same time, losing their HL with remarkable speed. The transition is generally completed within a few generations (Krashen, 1996; Veltman, 1983). The shift to the dominant language is also noted in research on Korean Americans.

Korean Americans are one of the most rapidly growing ethnic groups in the United States. According to U.S. Census data in 1990, the estimated population of Americans of Korean ancestry was approximately 790,000, of which 142,000 were born in the United States and 654,000 were immigrants. In California alone, the Korean population is 251,981, which represents an increase of 153% since 1980 (Hing & Lee, 1996). In addition, Korean immigration has increased rapidly, from 271,956 in 1980 to 338,800 in 1990, representing an increase of 24.6%, and it is expected to continue to grow.

Korean American adults have been actively involved in the maintenance and development of their HL. This involvement stems from a concern for passing on to future generations the essence of Korean cultural heritage. Kim, Sawdey, and Meihoefer's (1980) research shows that Korean parents have a strong desire for their children to retain Korean cultural traits while, at the same time, adopting American cultural traits. As such, Korean parents have established ethnic schools, ethnic associations, newspapers, and professional organizations to promote culture and language (Geer, 1981). In addition, Korean immigrants in America, being predominantly latecomers, are largely a Korean-speaking group and the language spoken at home is Korean (Kim, Lee, & Kim, 1981). Kim et al. (1981) reported that 99% of the Koreans living in Los Angeles' Koreatown, New York, and San Francisco use Korean as their primary language.

Despite the above mentioned factors that help retard or prevent English from replacing the HL, a language shift to the dominant language is evident in Korean immigrant families (Cho & Krashen, 1998; Kim et al., 1981). A statistical analysis of 1990 U.S. Census data supports the fact that language shift in the second generation of Korean Americans is high (Hing & Lee, 1996).

Language shift to the dominant language is evident, yet the HL still plays an intricate role in the lives of Korean Americans. Research has shown that the first-generation adults tend to maintain and preserve their language and ethnic culture, while the second generation consciously succeeds in a partial

assimilation into the dominant culture. However, since Korean Americans, due to racial differences, cannot be completely assimilated into American society like European immigrants, they come back to search for the language of their parents as well as their lost identity (Kim et al., 1980).

However, little empirical information is available on the effects of HL maintenance or loss among language minority groups. No previous research has explored or compared the consequences of those Korean Americans who have or have not developed their HL. As such, this study examined the effects of having or not having HL competence in second-generation Korean American adults. Specifically, this study revealed the ways in which HL competence played a role in social interactions and relationships with second-generation Korean Americans. In this way, this study provides a unique outlook on HL development, based on the perspectives of adult Korean Americans. The findings of this study can be used to argue for the importance of maintaining one's heritage language, from a personal, cultural, and societal perspective.

## Methodology

A total of 114 participants were included in the analysis; 98 participants filled out a questionnaire and 16 participated in in-depth interviews. Of these 114 participants, there were 72 females and 42 males, of whom 55 second-generation Korean Americans were born in the United States and 59 came to the United States at an early age ( $M = 2.02$  years,  $SD = 2.42$ ). The ages of the participants were limited to adults between the ages of 18 and 35 ( $M = 21.07$  years old,  $SD = 3.07$ ) (see Table 1).

The criterion of second generation was broadened by including Korean American adults who immigrated to the United States before school age, in addition to those who were born in the United States; as such, they all grew up and began their formal education in this country. The participants were recruited through Korean language classes, Korean churches, and personal acquaintances.

Sixteen second-generation Korean American adults participated in the in-depth semi-structured interviews, which were used to determine the experiences and perceptions of these participants (Patton, 1987) in regard to their language and family backgrounds, as well as their social relationships in which HL played a role. The interview questions concerned personal background, language use in the family, attitude toward the HL, and personal experiences using the HL outside the family. Although the main questions were used to organize the interviews, the participants were encouraged to elaborate on their thoughts as freely as possible. The participants included both women and men, those who had experienced and had not experienced learning the HL, and those who lived in both Korean and non-Korean neighborhoods.

A questionnaire was distributed to all second-generation Korean American students enrolled in beginning through advanced level Korean language courses at a private language program and at a university. The interview data and the responses to the two open-ended questions from the questionnaire were examined in regard to the effects of having or not having developed one's HL among Korean American adults. Using qualitative analysis procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), both the interview transcripts and the open-ended part of the questionnaire were coded and categorized, allowing several themes to emerge.

Table 1  
*Participants' Demographic Information*

	n	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
18 20	41	36.0
21 30	71	62.3
31 35	2	1.7
<b>Generation</b>		
U.S. Born	55	48.2
Foreign Born	59	51.8
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	72	63.2
Male	42	36.8
<b>HL Class Level</b>		
Beginning	47	48.0
Intermediate	30	31.0
Advanced	21	21.0
<b>Group</b>		
Weak	69	60.5
Average	28	24.6
Strong	17	14.9

(N = 114)

This study compared one group of participants who had “strong HL competence” to another group who had “weak or no HL competence” in a self-assessed HL proficiency measure (see Table 2). These assessments were made by asking participants to rate their own levels of HL ability in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and overall skills on a Likert-type scale (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = very good).

Table 2

*Characteristics of Partipants*

HL Competence	Interview	Questionnaire
Weak HL Competence	Females: n = 6: Cami [P], Elena [C], Karen [C], Lis [P], Nancy [P], Sandy [P],	Females: 35
	Males: n = 2: Hyn [C], Eric [P],	Males: 26
Average HL Competence	Female: n = 1: Eun Ae [C]	Females: 16
		Males: 11
Strong HL Competence	Females: n = 6: Emily [P], Hae Jin [C], Judy [P], Su Mi [C], Ji Yeon [P], Yuri [P]	Females: 8
	Male: n = 1: Albert [P]	Males: 2
Total Participants	N = 16	N = 98

(N = 114)

Note: C = College; P = Post College

## Findings

The results indicated that HL played an important role in which HL competence affected individuals and their social interactions and relationships with second-generation Korean Americans. There were a number of sociocultural advantages as well as personal and societal benefits in developing one’s HL as discussed below.

### Sociocultural Advantages

#### *Better relationships with heritage language speakers*

The findings showed that HL development positively affects interactions and social relationships with HL speakers. Those who developed their HL had a strong ethnic identity, further enhancing their interactions with HL

speakers. Those who had “strong HL competence” had a strong sense of who they were (i.e., being proud of their culture and ethnicity), were strongly connected to their ethnic group (i.e., had strong group membership, had no fear or avoidance of HL speakers), and had greater understanding and knowledge of cultural values, ethics, and manners. These factors enabled them to have better relationships with HL speakers, both in and outside the HL community. Yuri shared that her strong HL competence made her have a positive attitude toward her language and culture:

I never felt like ashamed of my culture or my language. Even though at this university, there are a lot of Caucasian people, I always felt proud of my heritage. I didn't mind sharing it. I didn't mind talking on the phone when other people were around. I never, it really never bothered me. I was never ashamed of it.

Albert said that his Korean proficiency helped him not only to overcome his identity crisis but also to interact with Korean international students during his college years:

When I came to college, I think everyone goes through an identity crisis when they go to college, and they want to know who they are, and I had sort of this leaning towards a lot of Korean students. And then I met all of these older international students. And they were so interesting. They were just intriguing to me. And I said, “wow.” Oh they treated me fine. I think they liked me because I made such an effort to learn [the HL]. And they were always like “Wow, you were born here? Your Korean is so good, considering you were born here.” And I think they liked the fact that I kept speaking to them in Korean.

Knowing one's HL helps one to understand one's ethnic culture, allowing one to participate freely in cultural events or activities. Su Mi shared that, because of her fluent Korean skills, she was able to watch Korean videos and soap operas with her parents and also played traditional Korean games such as “Yut” during holiday seasons. Similarly, Hae Jin was able to participate in reading and watching Korean television programs and expressed having strong emotional bonds with her culture and with HL speakers:

My mom has a friend whose husband is a writer, and every time he publishes a new book, he sends it to her, and whenever a miniseries comes up on TV, we watch it together. Maybe this summer, I will experiment with reading older types of books, like *Ye Meng E Nun Dong Ja*. I have watched it on video so I know the story; now I want to read the book.

In addition, she was able to use her parents to further gain cultural knowledge and learn nuances of the Korean language that need to be understood in certain situations:

I had two different worlds. In school, it was completely English and, at home, completely Korean. . . . Learning language, there was always a chance for me to ask my parents about Korean, about culture, history . . . you can always interpret or translate, but don't always get the same type of meaning and it is not always the exact meaning in each situation. I think it could have been a lot different if I didn't speak the language.

Yuri could actively participate in church activities:

Most of my Korean contact comes from church, being with my church friends who are Korean. I feel good that I'm capable of reading in Korean. I remember, I think, in junior high, or it might have been high school, when we had worship at my church. I was the president, so I had to pray in the pulpit, so I wrote a prayer in English but . . . I was speaking Korean, so I think my parents felt really proud, and I was happy that I was at least able to read it and do that instead of having to speak in English. And the congregation wouldn't understand any of it. I like being able to speak Korean.

Further, Albert felt that he would have no problem associating with Koreans in Korea because of his high HL proficiency (note, however, his limitations):

If I were to go to Korea, I could get by fine. Ordering food, driving a taxi, buying clothes, talking with friend[s]. You know, basic stuff, no problem. I can almost sneak by as almost a native. But, if I were to engage in a discussion about education or politics, then they would know immediately that I'm limited in vocabulary. But I can't express myself using words like culturally, academic capital, college preparation.

## Sociocultural Disadvantages of Not Having Developed One's Heritage Language

### *Difficulties interacting with the heritage language community*

Loss of the HL interfered with interactions outside the immediate family. The "weak HL competence" group was more reticent to interact with Korean speakers than the HL fluent Korean Americans and participated less in cultural activities and events. Some strictly avoided contact with Koreans.

Some participants reported a feeling of isolation and exclusion from members of their own ethnic group. Sandy commented on problems with family acquaintances and people in the neighborhood where the HL is spoken:

Whenever someone calls my home and are looking for my parents and they don't speak English, I say the word "market" in Korean. That's all. After that, if they ask me anything else I get so frustrated. I wish

I could be very personable and ask about their kids . . . because many times I know who they are.

Su Mi shared how her sister also feared and avoided answering phone calls because of her weak Korean:

My sister didn't want to pick up the phone because she can't speak in Korean because of her "American style of speaking." She always passes me the phone to speak. My sister feels more comfortable being around people who speak English. She felt isolated when we all went to Korea because of her limited Korean speaking. She doesn't want to go to Korean language school anymore. She has attended for more than three years.

Kris reported the following incident:

Once I went to Koreatown to get a haircut to get ready for a sorority event. The hairdresser started doing a French braid, but I asked her to do a French twist. I kept saying "no, no." The two people with me were Filipino and Japanese. The hairdressers were talking about us. You know, once they knew that you didn't speak Korean fluently, they were saying to each other that we were Chinese, Japanese . . . it was kind of an insult for me. . . . If I go to Koreatown or go to a Korean restaurant, usually I would say "an young ha sae yo," meaning "how are you?" and they think I speak Korean fluently. . . . It's kind of embarrassing that I can't speak my own language.

Sandy works in a company that employs a number of fluent Korean speakers:

In my office, my coworkers and the board decided it was a good idea to get all Koreans together to network and get to know each other. All these people spoke Korean as their first language . . . but the fact that they had to sit there putting so much effort to speak English just so that I could understand them . . . made me feel so awkward and frustrated. At that point I decided to not hang around with them; it was too much of a headache for everyone.

Sonia reported that,

At home, when we have company, I feel left out because my communication skills are limited and I guess the people get fed up with me, too. After a while, they just ignore me since I can't speak Korean that well and they don't really speak English.

### *Difficulties interacting with heritage language speakers outside the United States*

Another frustration for those with "weak HL competence" occurs when dealing with native Koreans in the home country. Those who have lost even some ability in the HL, or who have not developed high levels of competence,



face special problems when visiting the country where the language is spoken, especially when they look like native speakers.

Cami had tremendous difficulties when her aunt called from Korea. “She never spoke to me before and we only exchanged three sentences and her final words were, ‘Why don’t you learn to speak Korean?’”

Yuri, when she was traveling in Korea, was yelled at by a taxi driver:

In Korea, I really felt like burdened, not ashamed but . . . a taxi driver would yell at us like “How come you can’t speak Korean. You are Korean, why don’t you speak it?” And I hated taking the taxi, I’d rather take the subway because they would really like . . . it was more than once that they would say to us “Why can’t you speak Korean?”

Lisa experienced strong rejection from HL speakers, while living in Los Angeles and also while visiting her homeland:

Whenever I encountered Koreans, many of them looked down on me because I can’t speak Korean. Some are bold enough to scold me. Some blame me or my parents because I didn’t learn. As a result, many times I would have mixed emotions. Shame, embarrassment and anger [towards Koreans]. I remember feeling resentful and angry at Koreans, both in Los Angeles and in Korea, for not understanding why I didn’t speak Korean. I also rejected them as a result. . . . In other words, I went through a stage thinking they were the ignorant ones because they couldn’t speak English very well. Plus, I always felt English was more important, and if the Koreans couldn’t accept me as who I was, well then, I didn’t need to associate with them.

She added,

The language issue was a major factor why I didn’t associate with many Koreans. Every time I got together with a Korean group, they tended to speak Korean only! Thus, I was excluded.

Another participant, Elsa, shared her sincere wish to develop her HL:

I want to be able to speak more than one language. I want to be able to communicate with others in fluent Korean. Just once, would I like to be able to go to Korea and feel at home with my language abilities.

One’s frustrations and conflicts with the Korean community may not be related only to HL speaking ability. However, as seen in the above cases, having one’s HL developed may facilitate understanding more about the culture and about individuals. This, in turn, helps to minimize conflicts and frustrations.

As presented in Table 3, there were five respondents in the “weak HL” group and 11 in the “strong HL” group who specifically mentioned having no conflict with family or with HL speakers. However, the meaning of having “no

Table 3

*Summary of Areas of Conflict*

	Family	Relatives	HL Community	Other	No Conflict	More Than One Conflict
Weak (n = 51)	21	18	45	14	5	18
Average (n = 19)	4	1	15	0	4	1
Strong (n = 18)	0	0	2	1	11	0

(N = 114)

Note: 26 responses were missing

conflict” differed between the two groups. For all 11 participants from the “strong HL” group, “no conflict” meant having no problem in basic communication in Korean, whereas for the “weak HL” group, it meant having no conflict because they totally avoided contact with HL speakers.

Dave, who rated himself “strong” on HL stated that, “I have no problems with communication because I can speak and understand well.” Similarly, June, a fluent HL speaker, stated that having developed her HL did not cause any conflict in socializing with others:

Knowing Korean has never imposed any problems or conflicts on me. It has been very useful as I was able to communicate with my parents and help other students who just immigrated from Korea. It has also allowed me to talk to other Korean adults who didn’t know much English.

In comparison, Amy, who rated herself as “poor” on HL, stated that she did not have any conflict because she could avoid contact with Koreans. Therefore, she could avoid speaking in Korean:

In high school, most of the Koreans that I knew were mostly Korean Americans and we communicated through English. Now, I don’t really hang out with Koreans anymore.

Carol shared how her inability to speak Korean fluently was not a hindrance in school, but was a problem at home:

I have never really encountered any frustrating problems at school due to my inability to speak Korean fluently. Because my friends and classmates speak in English, I never felt excluded or isolated at school.

At home, I do feel somewhat uneasy because my parents do not totally understand me when I speak English.

Similarly, Lisa said that not having developed Korean does not affect her much now, since she is living in a community where there are no Koreans. However, she confessed that she had a different reaction while living in Los Angeles and that she would have benefited from having better HL competence:

I have mixed reactions. . . . When I was living in L.A., I used to always feel sort of like I was missing out. However, when I really think of things, it's only if I'm with Koreans. . . . Professionally, if I wanted to continue working with the Korean community, it would definitely be important. It is pretty impossible to have any ties with the Korean community if you don't speak Korean. In my field, I do realize I would have had many advantages if I spoke Korean.

The findings also indicated that, even though the participants were born or raised in the United States, many claimed their HL is an integral part of their Korean identity. Evelyn, age 17 and born in the United States, wrote "When I raise my future children, I want them to be able to speak Korean. I see too many second-generation children who only speak English." Lisa, despite her limited HL competence, asserted that she would support her children in developing their HL:

Definitely! I really really will try everything to have them learn Korean and the culture. This will be very difficult, of course. I want my children to be bilingual and to be proud of being Korean. I am very proud to be Korean, but it took a while for me to reach this level.

Lisa shared how she finally realized the need to learn her HL; however, she is more closely identified with Asian Americans who, similar to her, were not fluent in their HL, rather than identifying with Koreans:

I feel like I've gone through so many phases of whether Korean is important. In a nutshell, yes, it's very important. Yes, it would have helped me tremendously professionally. Yes, I would have liked to work with the Korean community closely. Truthfully, I have always felt much more at ease with my close friends because I have much more in common with them than I do with Koreans. I classify them as Asian Americans who also speak English only.

Those who had "weak HL competence" suffered far more than those who had "strong HL competence." The "weak HL competence" group was more reticent than the fluent Korean Americans, participated less in cultural events and activities, and avoided contact with Koreans. These results indicate that ethnic minority individuals may benefit from HL development.

## Personal and Societal Benefits

In addition to the HL being a tool needed to communicate and socialize with one's family and with others, HL development provided a personal gain, eventually contributing positively to the betterment of the society.

### *Professional advantages*

In addition to wanting to communicate with family, friends, and community, and a desire to hold on to one's Korean heritage, a number of the respondents mentioned the career benefits of being bilingual as a reason for their desire to acquire the HL. Those interested in working with the Korean community especially believed that Korean proficiency would help them in their work, as well as give them more legitimacy. Being fluent enough to translate or interpret for others spurred participants' HL development as well as their cultural knowledge.

Having developed one's HL was also shown to provide advantages for individuals when interacting with the community, such as knowing the Korean language provided, for some, the freedom to express their feelings and thoughts to HL speakers at any given moment; and knowing their HL allowed them to serve the community. For some, their ability helped them in translating and interpreting for others who were not fluent in English.

Luke, 20, wrote that, in addition to wanting to be closer to the Korean community, he is developing his Korean so that he can "become more marketable in the business community." Christine shared a similar thought:

I'm going into the entertainment industry and I'm trying to bring Asians in. It would be a shame if I didn't even know how to speak my own language. I know a lot about my culture. I just need help with reading and writing.

Ralph also wanted to improve his Korean for career-related reasons. "I intend to have a large number of Korean clients in the future, and fluency in Korean is obviously an essential part of that."

Jessica experienced the need to know her HL when she applied for an internship:

There was a time that I can distinctly remember where I wished I could study Korean in order to learn how to write correctly, when I applied for an internship job last summer here [Southern California]. The company assumed that because I was Korean, and spoke the language, that I could also write fluently. When I explained to them that I could not, they told me they were very sorry, but they would have to turn me down, because the position required someone who could fluently speak and write in a foreign language. I was utterly embarrassed and disappointed in being turned away. But more than anything, I was ashamed of that fact that I could not write in what is supposed to be my native tongue.

Ana stated that, “It’s embarrassing for people to say to me, ‘You are a Korean and you don’t speak Korean?’ I hate that! Plus, I want to become a dentist and would like to be able to converse with my Korean patients.”

Jeannine, 17, is the president of a Korean American student association and feels that “it would look really bad if the president didn’t know how to speak Korean.” Jack, 28, also felt this way and stated that “I am interested in working with Korean families and thus it is vital for me to improve my Korean language skills.”

Some participants mentioned personal benefits of having developed one’s HL. Tammy, who has “weak HL proficiency,” mentioned that she participates in Korean beauty pageants. However, she feels at a substantial disadvantage during the interview portions of the competitions because of her limited HL ability.

Another respondent, Jasmine, feels that having maintained her HL would have helped in her cognitive development:

It isn’t until recently that I picked up my native tongue again. I feel almost handicapped as compared to those who maintained their HL. I felt as though I have lost opportunities to better advance my language skills both in English as well as Korean. If I would have studied Korean, my English would have been enhanced instead of stifled. Learning a different language helps any student learn to communicate in many forms. It helps restructure their way of thinking to fit in both paradigms, therefore increasing their insight and knowledge.

### *A resource for society*

The degree to which HL development is supported or opposed will vary depending on how one views the value of language diversity. While some laud it as a resource, others see it a serious problem. Those who see language diversity as a problem would view multilingualism and cultural diversity as a weakness to be overcome rather than as one of the country’s greatest strengths (Ruiz, 1988). However, our findings support the latter point of view.

Albert, a fluent speaker, tried to convince his friends that not maintaining Korean language was a waste of resources:

I’m always comfortable with Korean, which is great. But I want to be able to speak in Korean with them [my friends]. They think it [speaking in Korean] is odd. They’d say “Why should we speak Korean? It’s so much easier to speak English.” . . . And, I’d say, “Don’t do that, because it is a waste. It’s a waste of perfectly good talent and resources to not speak a language that you can with somebody who can also. . . . Why not encourage each other and somehow keep the language for our future?”

Tim wanted to develop HL for his own benefit and also to contribute to society:

I want to learn Korean because I am Korean and I feel that learning and speaking Korean is part of being Korean. I like to watch Korean shows on TV and, at times, I don't understand. I want to speak fluently and eloquently with my parents and my relatives. I want to major in law and I want to do as much as I can to help the Korean community.

Having developed one's HL was shown to have an additional gain for an individual as well as for the society. Some of the fluent HL speakers were able to translate and interpret for others who were not fluent in English. Similar to Tse's (1997) research, our participants found that "brokering," an act of interpreting or translating a language for another, provided positive results for the individual as well as for the society (see also McQuillan & Tse, 1995).

Those who brokered established a trusting relationship with their parents through the process of "brokering." Yuri, who used to translate for her parents, shared how her father feels more comfortable when she accompanies him when he has to deal with non-Korean speakers. She shared, "If we go to the bank, my dad takes me with him so he feels comfortable in feeling that he is not, you know, being misunderstood. Usually he can stand on his own, but he likes to take me."

Similarly, Su Mi was able to translate for her parents and they "depended on me a lot." Besides being a source of emotional support, she was also able to be a moderator between her sister and her parents who were struggling to communicate with one another. She shared that "My parents trusted in all of my judgments."

Aside from the above benefits, some respondents also reported that being fluent enough to translate English into Korean spurred one's HL development as well as the cultural knowledge. Hae Jin shared that, "My mom started learning English at the same time I was learning Korean, but she would make me translate things for her. . . . I realized practicing the translation really helped me to maintain the Korean language even more." Su Mi provided a specific example that showed that "brokering" helped her expand her vocabulary and maintain her HL. "I explain the easy way in Korean and they [my parents] supply the key word. That's how I gained Korean vocabulary." Both Hae Jin's and Su Mi's cases showed that brokering helped them to maintain the HL. Su Mi's case demonstrates the important role of brokering in maintaining and developing one's HL. Su Mi lived in the same conditions as her sister (i.e., attended HL class, parents spoke in Korean at home, came to the United States at an early age), yet, she maintained her HL while her sister did not. The only difference was that Su Mi took the responsibility of brokering for her parents.

In conclusion, having developed one's HL, in addition to English, is an "additive" form of bilingualism, as Lambert (1977) has discussed. It is additive in the sense that the HL is being added to children's language repertory at no cost to their English proficiency. Having developed one's HL positively affects interactions and relationships with parents, relatives, and HL speakers. Moreover, HL acquisition plays an important part in the personal, social, and intellectual life of those who are proficient in their HL.

Understanding the experiences of language minority groups will provide practical information to educators, immigrant parents, and new generation immigrants on the factors that are involved in HL maintenance and development and the impact on adjustment to the mainstream society, as well as within the family and ethnic community.

## References

- Cho, G., & Krashen, S. (1998). The negative consequences of heritage language loss and why we should care. In S. Krashen, L. Tse, & J. McQuillan (Eds.), *Heritage language development* (pp. 3-13). Culver City, CA: Language Education Associates.
- Cho, G., Cho, K., & Tse, L. (1997). Why ethnic minorities want to develop their heritage language: The case of Korean Americans. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum, 10* (2), 106-112.
- Feuerverger, G. (1991). University students' perceptions of heritage language learning and ethnic identity maintenance. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 47* (4), 660-677.
- Fishman, J. (1991). *Reversing language shift*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Garcia, H. (1985). Family and offspring language maintenance and their effects on Chicano college students' confidence and grades. In E. Garcia & R. Padilla (Eds.), *Advances in bilingual education research* (pp. 226-243). Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
- Geer, C. H. (1981). Korean Americans and ethnic heritage education: A case study in western New York. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 42*, 3896.
- Hakuta, K., & Diaz, R. (1985). *Bilingualism and cognitive development: Three perspectives and methodological implications*. (CLEAR Technical Report 2). Los Angeles, CA: Center for Language Education and Research, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Hing, B. O., & Lee, R. (1996). *Reframing the immigration debate. The state of Asian Pacific America series*. Los Angeles: LEAP Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute and UCLA Asian American Studies Center.

- Kim, B. L., Sawdey, B., & Meihoefer, B. (1980). *The Korean American child at school and at home: An analysis of interaction and intervention through groups*. Washington, DC: Administration for Children, Youth and Families, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare.
- Kim, K., Lee, K., & Kim, T. (1981). Korean-Americans in Los Angeles: Their concerns and language maintenance. Los Angeles, CA: National Center for Bilingual Research.
- Krashen, S. (1996). *Under attack: The case against bilingual education*. Culver City, CA: Language Education Associates.
- Krashen, S. (1998). Heritage language development: Some practical arguments. In S. Krashen, L. Tse, & J. McQuillan (Eds.), *Heritage language development*. Culver City, CA: Language Education Associates.
- Lambert, W. (1977). The effects of bilingualism on the individual: Cognitive and sociocultural consequences. In P. Hornby (Ed.), *Bilingualism: Psychological, social and educational implications* (pp. 15-27). New York: Academic Press, Inc.
- McQuillan, J. & Tse, L. (1995). Child language brokering in linguistic minority communities: Effects on culture, cognition, and literacy. *Language and Education*, 9(3), 195-215.
- Patton, M. Q. (1987). *How to use qualitative methods in evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Peal, E., & Lambert, W. E. (1962). The relation of bilingualism to intelligence. *Psychological Monographs*, 76 (27), 1-23.
- Ruiz, R. (1988). Orientations in language planning. In S. L. McKay, & S. C. Wong (Eds.), *Language diversity: Problem or resource?* (pp. 3-25). New York: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Tse, L. (1997). Affecting affect: The impact of ethnic language programs on student attitudes. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 53 (4), 705-728.
- Tse, L. (1997). The effects of ethnic identity formation on language attitudes. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, New York.
- Veltman, C. (1983). *Language shift in the United States*. Berlin: Mouton.
- Wong Fillmore, L. (1991). When learning a second language means losing the first. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 6, 323-346.