

Linguistic and Cultural Minority Immigrants' Integration in the Multicultural Society

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ABSTRACT

In this study, Korean immigrants' participation in ethnic religious institutions was examined within the multilingual context of Montreal, Canada in order to understand the role of ethnic community institutions for Korean immigrant parents' attitudes toward their younger generations' Korean language and cultural identity preservation. The present study focuses particularly on the parent participants' attitudes toward their children's majority languages (i.e., English & French) and Korean language learning in general, and on their attitudes toward the role of the religious ethnic institution in their lives, particularly related to the linguistic and cultural responsibility of the church for Korean immigrants. In this study, total 23 Korean immigrant parents participated. All of them live in the Montreal area and actively participate in a Korean immigrant church. For this study, qualitative interviewing and participant observation were conducted. Interviews were conducted only in Korean for less than one hour on the average. Observations were conducted in the church where all the participants attended for a five-week of period in 2019. Field notes were taken in full detail during the observation period for analysis. Overall, the findings of this study confirm the socio-cultural and linguistic role of ethnic religious institutions for Koreans abroad, and also for their integration to the multicultural society.

1. Introduction

The role of ethnic religious institutions, the role of religion in particular, and the importance of immigrants' participation in those institutions have been emphasized by many scholars within the multicultural host societies (e.g., Chong, 1998; Warner, 1998; Ganga, 2005; Ley, 2008). Warner

(1998), for instance, mentions that immigrants' religion should be understood "in the form not of texts but of living communities" (p. 9) as a way of reproducing their ethnic and cultural heritage including language. Ganga (2005) also claims that cultural values, ethnic identity, and ethnic language have been transmitted through the use of the ethnic language in cultural activities and worship services. In his study with ten Italian origin immigrant families in the UK context, he also claims that religion serves as a means of forming ethnic identity.

Hurh and Kim (1990) mention that the number of Korean immigrant churches in the United States increased from 75 churches in 1970 to approximately 2,000 churches in 1988, which increased to 4,937 in 2018 (Seo, 2018). They claim that the reason for the sudden and huge increase of Korean immigrant churches is due to their psychological, educational, and social roles along with their original religious role. Concerning the role of Korean immigrant churches, they mention that the Korean immigrant church serve as a "reception center" (Hurh & Kim, 1990, p. 30), as a place where no specific requirements are needed for membership, and also as a place where they can meet other Koreans on a regular basis through church related activities and congregations. They also point out that Korean immigrants' religious faith and participation help them overcome the difficulties and intensifies the bonds of ethnic identity in the host society.

In a similar vein, Chong (1998) also claims that Korean younger generations' religious participation and faith are strongly related to their ethnic identity formation and maintenance based on his qualitative study with 62 second generation church members and pastors in two Korean Protestant churches in the United States. She also puts an emphasis on the role of the church for the transmission of Korean values including language and customs.

With regard to the role of immigrant churches within the Canadian context, Ley (2008) notes that immigrant churches in Canada play a hug role "as an urban service hub in which relations of trust and compatibility generate bonding social capital" (p. 2057) in the qualitative interview study with pastors from 16 Korean-Canadian churches. However, he claims that the roles and functions of Korean immigrant churches are limited to Korean immigrants only, for Korean immigrant churches "saw their community in co-ethnic terms" (p. 2067), which focused solely on Koreans compared to other ethnic immigrant churches including German immigrant churches which consider their community in multi-ethnic terms focusing on other ethnic groups in the community. In a similar vein, Park and Sarkar (2007) also points out that Korean immigrant parents are mainly dependent on Korean immigrant churches for their next generations' Korean language and ethnic identity preservation in Canada in his interview study with nine Korean immigrant parents within the multilingual context of Montreal.

This review supports the community function of Korean immigrant churches for Koreans abroad. In this regard, the aim of this study is to examine the socio-cultural and linguistic community function of one special institution among diverse ethnic community institutions, that is the Korean immigrant church and to see how Korean immigrants' participation and religious faith may have an influence on their integration process to the multicultural Canadian society.

2. Overview of Language Events in Canada and in Quebec

Canada's linguistic duality, Bourhis (1994) introduces the two Accords, the Constitution Act (1982) known as the Meech Lake Accord and Charlottetown Accord (1990-1992), which tried to recognize the distinctiveness of Quebec society within the Canadian Federation, in order to explain the confrontation between Anglo-Canadians and Francophones in Quebec. He claims that the rejection of these two Accords reveals two totally opposed concepts from both Anglo-Canadians and Francophones. The rejection of these Accords shows that Anglo-Canadians have become more unsympathetic to Quebec's needs and aspirations to have equal status, whereas Quebec Francophones feel the rejection of their status as a distinct society within the Canadian Federation. He also claims that the territorial segregation of the French and English communities has been increased despite the federal government official bilingualism policy which has taken the personality approach instead of the territorial approach.

In addition, he introduces two largest Francophone groups outside of Quebec, French mother tongue speakers in Ontario and the Acadians in New Brunswick. He mentions that Franco-Ontarians have experienced language shift from French to English because of the mixed marriages between French and English, whereas Acadians still maintain a very strong ethno-linguistic vitality.

Finally, Bourhis (1994) provides an overview of language-related events in Canada focusing on Canada's two official languages in order to explain the current political, social, and legal situation of its two official language groups in Canada as follows (focusing on the key issues from his overview from 1534 to 1993): 1) Establishment of British rule and the introduction of the British Common Law system in the Province of Quebec (1763); 2) The Act of Union to make English the only official language of Parliament and of legislation (1840); 3) The British North America Act which recognizes implicitly two official languages, English and French (1867); 4) Regulation 17 in Ontario which prohibits the teaching of French in public schools (1912); 5) The Quiet "Quebec Revolution" which initiates the cultural revival movement of Quebec as a distinctive society (1960s); 6) Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism which recognizes multiculturalism and multilingualism in Canada (1963-1970); 7) Official Language Act which made English and French Canada's two official languages and regards Quebec as a distinct society (1969); 8) Bill22 which makes French the official language of Quebec (1974); 9) During the 1976-1981 period, more than 100,000 Anglophones left Quebec because of the increased Anglophone insecurities in Quebec; 10) Charter of the French Language (Bill101) which makes French the only official language in Quebec (1977); and 11) Bill86 which allows languages other than French as languages on commercial signs on the condition that French is a predominant language (1993).

Overall, this review shows the history and background information of the institutional bilingualism in Canada, which makes Canada more multilingual due to the increase of immigrants who have different heritage languages which are "other than one of the official languages of Canada (i.e., English & French) that contributes to the linguistic heritage of Canada" according to Canadian Heritage Languages Institute Act, which was passed in 1991 (Government of Canada, 2019).

2.1 Multilingual Environment of Montreal within the Province of Quebec

This study, in particular, focuses on the role of one special ethnic religious community institution among Koreans abroad (i.e., Korean immigrant church) within the multilingual Montreal context, where two majority languages are used along with immigrants' diverse ethnic languages (Bourhis, 2001; Park & Sarkar, 2007). As reviewed above, Canada has two official languages (i.e., French and English) at a federal level as a result of Official Language Act made in 1969 while each province is allowed to choose its own official language at a provincial level. Thus, French was chosen as an official language in the province of Quebec by Bill 22 in 1974. Even though French is the only official language in the province of Quebec, English is considered also a majority language which has the social, economic, educational, and political power within the North America context (Bourhis, 2001).

Preservation of heritage languages among immigrants has always been an issue in multilingual societies (Cavallaro, 2005). Hence, Montreal is an ideal place for such an issue due to its multilingual environment compared to other regions in Quebec due to the huge number of allophone immigrants "who have neither French nor English as a mother tongue" (Bourhis, 2001, p. 105).

2.2 Korean immigrants and immigrant churches in Montreal

With regard to the number of Koreans in Canada, there are 240,942 Koreans in total as of 2017 in Canada. Among them, around 110,000 reside in the province of Ontario, around 77,000 reside in the province of British Columbia, and around 8,200 reside in the province of Quebec in which Montreal is located (Hanca Times, 2018; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). In fact, the total population of Koreans in Canada increased to 241,750 as of 2019 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019)

Concerning the increase of Korean immigrant churches except Catholic churches overseas, there are 6,147 Korean immigrant churches in total as of 2018 (Seo, 2018). Among them. Most of the Korean immigrant churches (i.e., more than 80%) are concentrated in the United States (i.e., 4,937) and in Canada (i.e., 483) (Seo, 2018). Within the Montreal context, there are 14 Korean immigrant Protestant churches along with one Korean immigrant Catholic church which has over 700 members who are mostly Koreans (Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea, 2008). There also other religious institutions for Korean immigrants other than Korean immigrant churches (e.g., 1 Won-Buddhism and 2 Buddhist congregations) in the Montreal area (Hanca Times, 2018); however, these ethnic religious institutions do not provide regular services or meetings unlike Korean immigrant churches which provide regular services, meetings, and church-related activities (e.g., Korean language school).

3. Methods

3.1 Participants

In this study, total 23 Korean immigrant parents participated. All of them live in the Montreal area and actively participate in a Korean immigrant church. Demographic information data were gathered through a questionnaire before individual interviews. The participants were 23 Korean immigrant parents who had a child (or children). Their average age is 43 years old (i.e., 42.52), and they have been residing in Montreal for six years (i.e., 5.87) on average. Among 23 participants, four parents did not have any religion in Korea before they immigrated to Canada.

3.2 Data Collection

For this study, qualitative interviewing and participant observation were conducted to elicit information on the general characteristics of the Korean immigrant church within the multilingual host society, the parent participants' perspectives on their children's majority languages (i.e., English & French) and Korean language learning in general, and their attitudes toward the role of the church in their lives, particularly related to the linguistic and cultural responsibility of the church for Korean immigrants and their integration to the host society.

Observations were conducted in the church, where all the participants attended, for a five-week of period in 2019. Field notes were taken in full detail during the observation period for analysis. The main contexts of the participant observation include all the activities including worship services.

3.3 Data Analysis

Overall, the data of this research were analyzed in a thematic and nonmathematical way so that inductive data analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) was possible through a thorough analysis of the parent participants' words and their behaviors within the Korean immigrant church context.

4. Findings

4.1 General characteristics of the Korean immigrant church within the multilingual host society

The findings of the participant observation reveal that the Korean immigrant church provides a unique linguistic and cultural environment due to its diverse groups of people depending on their different background (e.g., age, legal status in Canada, & length of stay in Canada). The church consists of a group of first-generation Korean adult immigrants, a group of younger generations who were born in Canada, a group of young members who immigrated to Canada recently; and a group of students from Korea for their studies. The results show that this unique structure of

the church itself provides an opportunity for Korean immigrant children to be exposed to the use of the Korean language and Korean culture through the social interactions and actually to the Korean language for communication with other Korean members. Even though younger members use English or French with each other, they only use Korean with adult members and new comers from Korea.

In fact, all the worship services and activities were almost entirely conducted in Korean except a few services provided in English including an English translation service for non-Koreans and an English worship service for members who are not capable of communicating in Korean.

Overall, the results indicate the Korean immigrant church plays a linguistic, social, and cultural role in the lives of Koreans abroad especially in the lives of Korean immigrant children within the multilingual host society.

4.2 Perspectives on their children's majority languages (i.e., English & French) and Korean language learning in general

The findings of this research reveal that all the Korean immigrant parents think that their children need to preserve the Korean language along with two majority languages, and their ethnic language preservation is strongly related to their ethnic identity preservation in the host society as well.

Language and culture, in my opinion these two are undeniably related and interdependent, if a child does not know his native tongue than it is very unlikely that he knows his native culture and his parents' country. The understanding of culture and the settling of an environment all starts with language. (PPF¹⁾ 3)

I find that the learning of Korean language is the same as the learning of Korean culture. In which case the individual is incapable of speaking the language, it is the equivalent of this individuals' cluelessness to the culture as well. This would leave no other choice than the individual to be in an identity crisis. (PPF 7)

One parent also points out that keeping the Korean language along with the acquisition of the majority languages can help Korean immigrant younger generations preserve a more stable and enriched ethnic identity as a Korean Canadian.

Using only French or English, or both, as an excuse to live as a Canadian while forgetting the fact that you are visually and by root Korean, can lead to future problem with your ethnic identity. So it is important to maintain the fluency of your native tongue in order to maintain a more stable and enriched ethnic identity as a Korean Canadian. (PPF 19)

In particular, the importance of the Korean language maintenance was emphasized by one parent in order for immigrant children to be considered Koreans and to claim themselves as Koreans

1) PPF stands for Parent Participant Father

through his study experience in Korea. He clearly mentions that his Korean skills could make him feel more Korean.

I believe the Korean language is a significant factor in ensuring one's identity. When I first attended university in Korea, my friends used to talk with each other and to me and say "Koreans are...", in saying this, I feel like they had a premise that I am not a full Korean. However, in Korean university, being able to compete and even do better than Korean friends who were born and raised in Korea gave me confidence and helped me solidify my identity as a Korean. (PPF 20)

In addition, one parent claims that children's Korean language maintenance can make them more competitive in the future as a great asset in the host society.

It is for sure important for second generation immigrants to be able to communicate well in English and French, but being able to communicate in Korean will be a great asset and it will give them pride as a Korean in the future. This will provide Korean communities all over the world a chance to improve more and enhance the nation's position in the world. (PPM²) 1)

However, the findings of the observation point out that immigrant parents' positive perspectives do not always correspond with the support for their children's Korean language in reality due to "immigrant parents' ambivalence about the acculturation of their children in the host society" (Shin, 2005, p. 55). This implies that immigrant parents spend more time making their children learn the majority language and adopt the culture of the host country even though they believe that their children should learn the heritage language for their ethnic identity preservation. This result is in line with Ogbu's (2001) claim that "the primary cultural differences of voluntary minorities and the secondary cultural differences of involuntary minorities affect school learning differently" (2001, p. 586).

Based on the classification of minority groups by Ogbu (2001), Korean immigrants can be classified as voluntary minorities who have immigrated to Canada voluntarily in order to seek a better quality of education and life. He states that voluntary minorities do well in school even though they are likely to experience some difficulties in their initial stage of schooling. The findings of the participant observation reveal that immigrant parents from Korea are so eager to educate their children in a better educational environment and to help them succeed in school, because they strongly believe that their children's academic success in school will guarantee their children's success in their future employment and career.

In this regard, immigrant parents do their best to foster their children's grades in school. In order to make their children succeed in school, Korean immigrant parents put too much emphasis on the fast acquisition of the majority languages of the host society. They believe that their children must be fluent in both English and French as two majority languages to succeed in school and to be prepared for their future in the dominant society. With this reason, they try to make utmost

2) PPM stands for Parent Participant Mother

efforts to help their children learn French and English. In the Montreal context, immigrant students are not allowed to attend English schools with a few exceptions due to Bill 101, which was passed in 1977 and made French as the only official language in the province of Quebec. Thus, some parents hire private tutors, and others send their children to private institutions after school for their children's English, because they are fully aware of the importance of English as a socio-economic and international lingua franca not only in Canada but also in the North American context. The observation results also imply that immigrant parents do not seem to be eager to teach their children the Korean language compared to their yearning for the French and English education. In this situation, immigrant children might gradually ignore the importance of learning the Korean language and keeping their cultural practices. It is not hard to expect that they will be likely to lose their competency in the Korean language and to lose their cultural identity as Koreans. In particular, the second generation children who were born in the host society or young children who immigrated to Canada before school age are likely to lose their Korean language easily in the early years of school because of the great emphasis on the importance of mastering English and French for their fast learning of the majority languages and their full integration to the host society.

4.3 Attitudes toward the role of the church in their lives and their children's Korean language and culture maintenance

Before the interview, all the participants were asked to rate their opinion about the role of the Korean immigrant church for their children's Korean language and culture maintenance on a scale of 1 to 7 with 7 as very strong. The results show that the parents rated higher scores on the linguistic responsibility of the church (i.e., Mean=5.75) than on the cultural responsibility of the church (i.e., Mean=4.5). The relatively low standard deviations for linguistic responsibility of the church (i.e., SD=1.81) indicate that there was little variation in the participants' opinions on the linguistic role of the church while the relatively high standard deviations for cultural responsibility of the church (i.e., SD=2.09) indicate that there was some variation in the participants' opinions on the cultural role of the church in the immigrant society.

I think Korean education from Korean churches is very important because children live in an environment where they can only learn Korean from parents only and not from Canadian institutions. (PPF 3)

Korean immigrant churches are the center of the Korean Christian community, over half of the Korean Christian community take part in Korean immigrant churches, so I find that the church should be responsible not only for religious purposes, but also for the maintenance of the Korean language. (PPM 15)

However, not every parent agrees with the linguistic role of the Korean immigrant church. One parent claims that the immigrant family should be responsible for their children's Korean language and culture maintenance.

I don't think that the Korean church has an obligation on our children's Korean language learning. I think that the biggest responsibility and roles come from the family, and Korean churches and communities should provide help with teachers and different programs. However, we need to take into consideration that teaching Korean in order to keep people speaking Korean can lead children to have negative views on Korean and won't give children a concrete motivation. Parents need to take full responsibility in children's Korean education, not depending on others to teach them. (PPF 4)

The findings of this research also show that the parent participants emphasize the linguistic responsibility of the Korean immigrant church more than the cultural responsibility of the church.

I think Korean immigrant churches do not have a duty to maintain Korean culture and tradition, but have a duty to expose children to a learning environment. However, they do not have a duty to teach Korean culture to children within the church unlike the Korean language which should be taught directly in the church. (PPM 15)

In fact, one parent strongly argues that the forceful and unnatural teaching of ethnic culture may have a negative impact on immigrant younger generations. He puts an emphasis on the natural exposure to Korean culture within the church instead of teaching culture directly to the children.

I think the role of the church in Korean culture education is to support younger generations with a place to learn in a natural way. Forcing children to learn Korean culture and making them follow the culture will only bring negative feelings to the children. (PPF 22)

In particular, some parent participants point out that the multilingual environment of the host society can give more opportunities to learn all three languages since children have to be educated only in French in school, they also have to learn English to communicate with others, and finally they have to use Korean at home, at the Korean immigrant church, and at other Korean community institutions.

Most of the immigrants' children will go to school and learn in French, whereas in society they will be more prone to use English and in the Korean immigrant church they will be using Korean. So it is like this that the children will naturally grow to be trilingual individuals. (PPM 15)

This result can also be linked to Korean immigrant children's identity preservation in the host society, since they do not have to choose a single identity either as a Canadian or a Korean. As Bourhis (2001) suggests, "allophones and immigrants do not need to identify only as Francophones or only as Anglophones when multiple group identification including the Heritage one remains a viable option especially in multicultural Montreal" (p. 123).

5. Conclusion and implications

Overall, the findings of this study confirm the role of the Korean immigrant church for Korean immigrants' Korean language and culture maintenance. The results reveal that it is one of the responsibilities of the Korean immigrant church to teach Korean for the Korean younger generations since an ethnic identity crisis would occur with language at its base, which would explain the importance of the Korean language education in order to help prevent an ethnic identity crisis from happening for Korean immigrant children. Although forcing this upon the young ones is not possible, but it is possible to try and help immigrant children learn and maintain the Korean language in order for them to be able to identify their ethnicity and deal with their ethnic identity crisis, and also it's the responsibility of the Korean immigrant church.

This research also shows the role of diverse parties including parents, schools, and ethnic communities since immigrant parents may not be capable of keeping their children's Korean language without any support from schools and ethnic communities. In addition, they may not expect full support from schools in the host society; thus they are likely to rely more on the ethnic community particularly the ethnic religious institution, that is, the Korean immigrant church for their children's Korean language and cultural identity maintenance.

In conclusion, the findings of this research suggest that immigrant children's active participation in the Korean immigrant church can be of benefit to their Korean language and cultural identity maintenance, and also the linguistic and cultural role of the Korean immigrant church should be expanded so that Korean younger generations can have more chances to be exposed to the Korean language and culture in the host society where Korean is just one of the minority heritage languages. Furthermore, for future directions, the harmonious combination of immigrant parents, schools, and ethnic communities can ensure immigrant children's ethnic language and culture maintenance and eventually their successful integration to the host society. This result imply that Korean immigrant parents believe that their younger generations' full acquisition of the majority languages along with the ethnic language can enhance their next generations' integration to the host society and increase their international competitiveness in the global world as global citizens since they do not have to choose a single identity either as a Canadian or a Korean according to Lambert's (1975) claim "a dual heritage to become full-fledged members of two cultural communities" (p. 72) is possible and important as well in the multicultural and multilingual context.

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