

# The Multicultural Education in Korea: A Comparative Study of Korea & Canada's Multicultural Education

Dae-Won Kim  
(Yonsei University)

## ■ ABSTRACT ■

Using the observation technique and in-depth interview, the current study compared various aspects of multicultural education between Korea and Canada and suggested the direction Korea's multicultural education needs to take. As a part of class curriculum, the researcher interviewed the representative of Ansan Foreign Center (AFC) and the president of the Kosian's House, a NGO for multicultural educations. The observations and experiences of the researcher were also used in this study. The results of the current study are as follows. First, multicultural education is provided for the minority group in Korea, whereas multiculturalism is included and taught for every student in Canada. In addition, the current multicultural education of Korea focuses on language and culture acquisition to help the students to adjust. Canada, on the other hand, focuses on accepting other cultures and ethnic equality, creating both identities as their ethnic origin and as Canadians. Second, in language educations, both countries had students enrolled in lower school years than their age. However, the differences occurred in terms of emotional support and availability of expert teachers. Third, comparing teacher's attitude towards multicultural education, Korean teachers were not free from perceiving the multicultural student as 'different', whereas Canadian teachers have been taught since little to consider multicultural students as Canadians, but accept

their ethnic backgrounds. Based on the results, the current study suggested multicultural education program for the majority group, increase in number of expert language teachers and teaching assistants, and an education program to teach multiculturalism as part of an identity of humankind. The limitations and suggestions for future studies were provided afterwards.

---

#### Key Words

Multicultural Education, Language Education, Teacher's Attitude, Multicultural Identity, Comparative Study

## I. Introduction

### i. Why is this study needed?

It is perhaps too early to assume Korea as a multicultural society because the proportion of multicultural population is little compared to the entire Korean population (Han, 2013). In the United States., Germany, Canada, United Kingdom, countries that are portrayed as major multicultural society, have at least 5% of the population composed of immigrants. The current population of immigrants and international marriage families are approximately 1.5 million, which is about 3% of the Korean population. However, the number of foreign workers, international marriage couple, and their children are steadily increasing. The number of multicultural students increased from approximately 10,000 in 2006 to over 38,000 in 2011 (Han & Hong, 2012). A statistic by the Ministry of Justice (2011) also showed that the number of multicultural children is increasing from 2,000 to maximum of 10,000 since 2005. As mentioned above, although the number of multicultural population is low in percentage, because of the steep increase in population, social/cultural adjustment, childrearing, and education of the multicultural population have surfaced as a critical

issue in Korea.

For the increasing number of multicultural population, several departments of the Korean government are running various policies for the welfare of multicultural population. The efforts of the government are shown through the fact that several departments, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Culture, and Ministry of Education, do researches and publish statistics. However, in doing so, criticisms on the efficiency of the budget and manpower are constantly surfacing on multiculturalism policies. Particularly, the problems in education policies for multicultural students are continually reported through researches. General multicultural education in Korean schools consists mostly of sporadic events; rather than implementing programs with a long-term vision. For these events, a substantial amount of capital is used (Chang & Jeon, 2013). Contradictory to the amount of budget and number of events, the number of schools engaging in long-term education programs are significantly low (Kim & Han, 2010). Furthermore, language and Korean culture education for the minority students are predominant in current education programs, rather than raising awareness on multiculturalism to all students. In other words, although the objective of multicultural education is to bring confidence in one's identity and promote a harmonious living regardless of cultural background, the current policies in Korea are focused on the majority to recognize the minority, and the minority to assimilate into the majority culture (Chang & Jeon, 2013; Cho et al., 2010). Some programs are also found to be impractical. Rather than providing support for the students to adjust into school, some programs introduce traditional Korean culture, and go on a field trip to public institutions.

In school enrollment, multicultural students are enrolled based on their language fluency and many students are enrolled in lower school year than their actual age. This illustrates the reality of education system in Korea: schools are more concerned with the students' ability than emotional

support and growth of students. In reality, students that are in lower school year have difficulty adjusting to school, and tend to have complex to the fact that they are put in lower school year. Furthermore, many multicultural students are bullied and isolated in class because of they are older.

Lastly, when observing the teachers in charge of multicultural education, Korean teachers are likely to stress and continue with the assimilative aspect of multiculturalism despite the fact that they recognize the need to change the multicultural education program. Because they lack knowledge in multiculturalism and proper pedagogical practice, teachers become exposed to the negative aspects and emphasize assimilation (Chang & Jeon, 2013). In other words, because of low language fluency, multicultural students show distress in communication; are likely to have below-average grades, and tend to face peer rejection. As a result, teachers end up concentrating on aiding the students to adjust into school more than respecting their identities. Furthermore, the results of Kim, Lee, and Kim's study (2009) showed that teachers recognized physical difference, disability, and occupation more than cultural differences. The parents of multicultural students, on the other hand, desire their children to receive multiple language education, and equal peer relationships (Kim, Lee & Kim, 2009).

In order to implement an efficient and successful multicultural education and change the perception of multiculturalism, Korea needs to observe multiculturalism policies of other countries and model after their policies. Although countries such as the U. K., Germany, and France have officially announced the failure of their multicultural policies, countries in North America are continuing to declare themselves as multicultural societies. Of the countries that were recognized to have multicultural society, Canada has gained recognition over Germany, France, and the United States in terms of labor market accessibility, family reconciliation education, discrimination prohibition, and acquisition of nationality for immigrant population (Kim, 2012). Korea could consider modeling Canada's

multiculturalism policies; its ultimate goal would be developing a pedagogical practice that is equal to all students, rather than separating the students by their ethnic backgrounds (multicultural students vs. regular students).

Previous studies mostly analyzed the current multiculturalism education policies in Korea, or education policies, among other multicultural policies, were compared with other countries. Not many studies have directly compared the education policies in detail from various aspects. Although the purpose behind comparing multiculturalism policies of Korea and other countries was to observe various policies from each country and find the most suitable policies to model, modeling after the country that is recognized as the most successful in implementing multiculturalism would be effective, regardless of the cultural differences between Korea and Canada.

## ii. Purpose of the study

Many countries have been declaring their failure in multicultural policies. Most recently, European countries, such as the UK, Germany, and France have announced that they have been unsuccessful in developing a multicultural society. Korea has been implementing various multicultural policies for the increasing number of immigrants. However, the practicality of these policies and the improper use of budget have been created controversy. The imprudent use of budgets, the possible threat of losing jobs to foreigners, and the quick spread of news of crimes committed by foreigners through the Internet and SNS have created anti-multicultural attitude in Korean society. For example, people have reacted negatively towards the news that 100,000 foreign workers from Malawi could be coming to Korea (Media Daum, 2013). Some have posted derogatory and slanderous comments about the Malawians. Previous studies have reported that these perceptions can be improved through proper education

on multiculturalism. This study compared the differences in multicultural education policies between Korea and Canada, as Canada is recognized worldwide as the most successful country in implementing the idea of multiculturalism. Therefore, the current study will observe the differences between Korea and Canada in terms of: multicultural education, language education, and teachers' attitudes towards multiculturalism.

## II. Literature Review

### 1. Definition of Multicultural Education and its Implementation in Korea

Education on multiculturalism began in the United States for the minority groups to regain their human rights. At the beginning stage of multiculturalism, as the number of immigrants was not significant, governments took the assimilation approach; to teach the minority groups the cultures of the majority group and draw the minority to become a full citizen of the majority society. As the number of minorities increased and more diversity began to appear in minority groups, the principles of assimilation approach transformed into 'Melting Pot' approach: combining various cultures, including both minority and majority cultures, to create one unified culture. This progressed further into 'Mosaic' approach; accepting both the minority and majority culture as separate entities, and respect all human rights regardless of ethnic backgrounds. As the number of migrant workers and international marriage families has increased in Korea, the need for education programs to help the minority groups adjust in Korea started to be issued. The development of multicultural education programs accelerated when Hines Ward, a Korean-American football player, visited Korea after the Superbowl (National Human Rights Commission of Korea, 2010).

Banks (1998) described that an ideal multicultural education should progress from content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, empowering school culture, to social structure formation. That is, an ideal multicultural education involves the entire population to understand multiculturalism and receive equal education to reduce biases, ultimately building an ideal school environment and social structure. Banks also explained that recognizing the dissonance between reality and theory, and continuous reformation to reduce the discrepancy is also an integral part of an ideal multicultural education (Jo, 2012). The ultimate goal of multicultural education would be to teach everybody the dignity of mankind and equality among humans (Campbell, 2004). Based on these ideology, multicultural education should include adjustment education for the minority group, identity education, minority society education, appreciation education of the minority group for the majority group (Jo, 2012).

Previous studies, however, has shown that multicultural education in Korea have not followed the ideal process Banks mentioned. Some educational programs for the majority group do exist. Nonetheless, because of the cost and efficiency, most multicultural education programs are targeted to minority groups and their main goal is to help them to adjust to Korean society. The problem with these programs is that they are able to provide aid for only short term, and programs that support the multicultural population continually for longer term is inadequate within the curricula. In order for the multicultural population to settle in and function as society members, their unique culture and independence must be acknowledged through educating the public. Unfortunately, the number of the programs available for the general students is low. Because of the lack of education on multiculturalism and human rights, multicultural students are bullied and discriminated due to skin color, language, and culture. In more severe cases, some students drop out of school (Oh, 2006). Among multicultural students, children of migrant workers are

discriminated against the most, with the most common reason being because they are foreigners (Kim, 2006). Another study by Jeon et al. (2007) analyzed the problems of the current multicultural education policies, and found lack of cooperation between departments, limited number of beneficiaries, event-based programs, lack of promotion, and limited fulfillment of the demands as reasons behind the problems. These show the necessity to modify the current education programs. Furthermore, although the curriculum and textbooks contain contents on multiculturalism (Ministry of Education & Human Resources, 2006; Ministry of Education, Science, & Technology, 2008), there is no specific section covering multiculturalism. Rather, the contents are discretely included throughout the curriculum (Jang & Jeong, 2012). As a result, current multicultural education in Korea depends heavily on the attitude and competence of the teacher on multiculturalism.

## 2. The Role of Teachers in Multiculturalism

Banks (2004) listed the qualities as a multicultural teacher. First, multicultural teachers have to have knowledge on social sciences and education principles. Second, multicultural teachers must have an accurate understanding of his/her own culture and other cultures. Third, multicultural teachers must have a non-discriminant attitude towards any ethnic group. Finally, multicultural teachers must have a teaching method based on instructional knowledge. Jang (2009) also listed requirements as a multicultural teacher in Korea. To be a multicultural teacher in Korea, one must recognize the current society's cultural situation properly; improve and reinterpret the stereotypes from various perspectives; accept all cultures and implement pedagogical practice based on equality; and ultimately foster independent, democratic citizens of Korea (Jang, 2009). To be such teacher, one also has to have a high cultural competence with rich knowledge on other cultures (Jang, 2011). A high cultural competence of the teacher

would affect the students to adjust faster and have more accepting studying attitude (Han, 2010).

Comparing to Banks' (2004) virtues, Korea's multicultural teachers understand the need for multicultural education, have appropriate attitudes, and have high understanding of the education program (Jang & Jeong, 2012). However, a study by Jang and Jeong (2012) also found that Korean teachers exhibited a low level of increase in expertise. Thus, compared to high awareness, Korean multicultural teachers had low personal interest in expanding knowledge on other ethnicities and cultures, which could lead to having difficulties in developing class materials to teach multiculturalism. This corresponds to Park's study (2009), which found that only 2.9% of the teachers took classes on multiculturalism during undergrad, and only 10.5% received teacher training on multiculturalism. Therefore, the ability to implement multicultural education is subpar for the Korean teachers (Choi, 2009; Jang & Jeong, 2012). Because there is a lack of programs in multicultural education for teaching prospects, Korea's multicultural education heavily depends on the personal interest of a teacher and his/her understanding on multiculturalism (Jang, 2011).

One of the most difficult aspects for teachers is the language education. From difficulties running a class due to low fluency in Korean to have suspicions that the multicultural students are mocking the teacher when the students talk in their native language; many difficulties with language were reported. To reduce language problems, many schools run language classes for multicultural students. Not many problems have been reported on the language programs themselves. However, lack of emotional support for students in language program has been reported in previous studies. Other than language classes, the most common method schools use is to enroll multicultural students in lower year. Although there are advantages in enrolling students in lower year, being put in same class with younger peers may affect multicultural students to feel inadequate and insecure. Also, multicultural students in lower year are ridiculed and bullied because

they are older than the rest of the class, leading to maladjustment.

### 3. Language Programs in Korea

Although many studies have reported that multicultural students have difficulty adjusting in school, the findings on language programs were mostly positive. One study observed the outcomes of language programs in model schools. Results showed that language programs led to deeper understanding of the multicultural student, academic growth, and improvement in student-teacher relationship in most model schools (Lee, 2009). However, some schools reported that some students misbehaved in class because they did not want to be treated differently (Lee, 2009). Language programs are usually run either as after-school program or a replacement class during Korean class. Both methods could give negative emotional effects on students. If multicultural students are gathered separately for the language class, these students are isolated from the rest of the class, losing the peer bond with regular students. After-school programs are beneficial in parents' perspective because with the current status of the multicultural families, parents are likely to work late hours. Having a place their children can stay under adult supervision brings a sense of security to parents. From the students' perspective, however, much like the reaction of any other students, having to stay at school after hours could be irritating. Students could also feel inferior to others and lose their motivation to learn Korean when they realize they are taking supplementary classes because they are not doing well in school (Lee, 2009).

Another problem in language class is that the number of teachers qualified to teach Korean is significantly low. Language class teachers must be able to plan and implement lesson plans; describe the question; correct mistakes; create materials; evaluate students; and counsel students and parents (Oh, 2010). The expertise in the field is crucial as not only are

they in charge of teaching languages, but they also have to provide guidance for parents. However, in order to have such expertise, one must have a depth of experience in education. One study showed that the number of years teaching affected the efficacy beliefs of kindergarten teachers on multicultural education (Chae & Shin, 2012). Because the longer the teaching career, the more opportunities to enrich knowledge on pedagogy and personal interest, having a depth of experience in teaching is crucial in providing support for multicultural students. Moreover, longer teaching career also means more flexibility in class material preparation and accommodating the instant interests of the students (Chae & Shin, 2012).

#### 4. Multicultural Education – Canada.

Unlike Korea, which have just began to study the child-rearing methods and support for multicultural families, policies for the Natives, associated states and immigrants have been established for a significant period of time in Western countries. At the beginning, the multicultural policies in Western countries were also rooted in assimilation and homogeneity (Kymlicka, 2007). In North America, history shows that Europeans colonized America and removed the Aborigines from their land and attempted to assimilate them into the European culture. Furthermore, even within White populations, English Canadians attempted to assimilate French Canadians until Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau declared French as one of the official languages of Canada (Esses & Gardner, 1996). However, with rapid increase in minority populations, Kymlicka (2007) believed that the multicultural policies have transformed to accept each culture and their rights in language and autonomy. Moreover, a study by Jung-Gyu Kim (2010) showed that countries accepting multiculturalism tend to run policies considering the characteristics of minority groups, redistribution of political power and resources, and national unification.

A study comparing multicultural policies of the U.S., Canada, and

Australia showed that each country's policies were slightly different (Kim, 2010). Although both the United States and Australia have policies based on assimilation, the U. S. acknowledges the diversity whereas Australia attempts to have other cultures absorbed into the traditional 'White Australian' culture. Canada, on the other hand, each ethnicity is able to maintain their identity along with building the 'Canadian' identity; putting Canada ahead of the States and Australia in terms of integration of cultural identities (Kim, 2010). Studies comparing the policies of Germany, France, the States, and Canada showed that Canada had more positive reviews in social integration policies than other countries (Huh & Jung, 2011; Kim, 2012). Thus, from the political perspective, Canada's multicultural policies could be an exemplary candidate for Korea to model after.

In most nations, education plays a critical role in creating national identity. In Canada, not only the education on national identity, more contents on human rights and diversity also have started to appear on textbooks. Promoting national identity and multiculturalism appeared to be contradictory to each other, raising concerns on national unity. Currently, the civics education incorporates the traditional principles of nationalism, as well as multiculturalism and human rights. Instead of having two concepts on each ends of the linear scale, the concepts are rather interactive (Bromley, 2011). In short, with the interaction of the two concepts, multiculturalism and diversity become 'nationalized' and multiculturalism is fused into Canada's national identity (Philippou, Keating, & Hinderliter Ortloff, 2009). This was proven in Bromley's study (2011) by analyzing the textbooks used in British Columbia. The results showed that more than half of the textbooks introduce human rights and multiculturalism through Canadian law or social protocol. This means that students are taught that every citizen has equal human rights and to respect other cultures, but the government limits the protection of the human rights and multiculturalism to the 'citizens' of Canada. Within the legal boundaries,

each citizen is free to express multiple ethnic identities (Bromley, 2011).

Despite all the positive reputations on Canada's multicultural policies, some criticisms also exist. Canada's population still consists majorly of White population from England and France. The root of Canada's multiculturalism started as accepting languages, instead of cultures (House, 1992). Because England and France had colonized many countries they had considered as "inferior", the said countries, a significant part of Africa and Asia, spoke English or French. According to Brown (2008), a Jamaican-Canadian who immigrated to Canada in 1969, explained that Trudeau's multicultural policy started in order to prevent the separation of the French population (Brown, 2008; House, 1992). Trudeau's original intention was to endow equal power to both French and English, only in languages; no consideration on ethnic backgrounds occurred at the time (Brown, 2008). The emphasis on ethnicity came along afterwards. Furthermore, Canada was technically a colony of Britain and France, with the Aboriginal population as the colonized. However, the movements to ensure the rights of the Aboriginal population did not come until later, and the effectiveness of the Aboriginal decrees are still in debate.

Brown (2008) also argued that the Canadian education system exerts less emphasis on slavery, colonization, and political domination. The curriculum downplays the traumatic experiences of the ethnic minorities and the teachers are not prepared to discuss such topics through the curriculum. Furthermore, the stereotypes continue to exist in the Canadian society. Much like the U.S., Canada's black population is still viewed as having low socioeconomic status, tend to be less educated, with higher crime rates. Although Canada accepts and respects each ethnic group's own culture, little action is taken to mitigate the socioeconomic gap between the majority group and minority groups. As a result, students learn the importance of multiculturalism and equality; however, they also see the society with no equality in capital gain.

Along the similar line, some Canadian textbooks also covers cultural

clash between majority and minority cultures (Bromley, 2011). Bromley (2011) introduced a textbook that included a controversial case where a religious practice created a conflict with safety regulations. Although the ruling of this case showed that the liberality in religion and its respective culture is respected, the conflicts between cultures, based on history and/or religion, nonetheless exist.

There are few studies comparing the overall multicultural policies between Korea and Canada. One study compared the multicultural policies of Korea, Canada, and Japan (Jang, 2010). The results showed that a direct comparison of policies among the countries is difficult due to the unique culture in all countries. However, since Korea's multicultural policies have not been established completely, it would be beneficial for Korea to refer to the policies of Canada; a country with fully established legal system and policies on multiculturalism (Jang, 2010).

### III. Methods

#### A. Participants

The purpose of this study is to provide direction to the future multicultural education policies by comparing the multicultural education in Korea and Canada. Two non-government organization workers participated in the interview. One participant, Pastor Chun Ung Park has been working to preserve the rights of multicultural population in Ansan since the 1990s. In discussing multiculturalism in Korea, Pastor Park is recognized as an integral figure. Not only is he the first doctorate on multiculturalism in Korea, he coined the term 'Kosian', which represented the international marriage population before the term 'multicultural family' surfaced. Furthermore, he has founded and has been appointed as the representative for various organizations working towards the human rights of multicultural

populations, including Borderless Village, Ansan Foreign Center, and Migration and Human Rights Association. Pastor Park is also the author of 'The Genesis of Multicultural Education', and has been asked for counsel by various schools on running programs on multiculturalism. Finally, he is the recipient of the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism Award in 2007 for his work with multiculturalism. Another participant is the principal of the after-school for multicultural students. Principal Kim is the wife of Pastor Park, and has been working alongside Pastor Park.

## B. Data Collection

The data for the current study consists of the in-depth interview, personal observation, and research. The interview was conducted as part of curriculum for 'Theories and Practice of Multiculturalism' at Yonsei University, a class offered for graduate students by the Graduate Department of Education. This class is taught by Dr. Jin-Sang Han, the author of the few of the studies referenced in the current study. Interview was conducted twice: May 19, 2013 with the pastor, and May 26, 2013 with the principal. All interviews were conducted at Ansan Foreign Center, and all interviews were unstructured. However, interview questions were developed through class discussion before the interviews. All of the contents were recorded by digital voice recorder. A total of six questions were developed during class discussion, and one question was asked during the interview for the interview with Pastor Park. With the principal, a total of six questions were also developed during class discussion, and two questions on alternative school was also asked during the interview.

Research data were to observe Canada's multicultural education policies. The data consists of previous studies and textbooks while the experimenter was attending schools in Canada. The findings from previous studies consist of the studies conducted in Korea comparing the multicultural policies, and studies from Canada on Canada's multiculturalism. To compare

the teacher's attitude on multicultural education, personal observation of the researcher was included. However, the researcher included objective aspect of the personal experience, removing any personal sentiments towards the teachers. Finally, the multiculturalism policy proposal by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2013) was used in observing the educational policies in Korea.

## IV. Discussion

### A. Difference in Multicultural Education between Korea and Canada

Through the interview with the principal, the researcher found out that much like the findings from the previous studies, the current multicultural education in Korean public schools are only applied to minority groups.

Principal: Last month, the immigrant children told us they went on a field trip, just them. I later found out that the school took only the multicultural students and took them to the court, using the project funds. Our teachers and I thought it was ridiculous. Why would they bring them to court? Why didn't they bring all the students? Why just the multicultural students? (Interview on May 26, 2013).

Pastor also emphasized that the current minority group-based education should transform to the education program for the general population; not just for the students. This was also reflected in the multicultural policies presented by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. In their program plans for 2013-2017, the focus on the programs are on the improvement in language fluency and general academic ability of multicultural students. Programs on education general population was proposed less (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2013).

Pastor: They need to get rid of the bias that multicultural education is for the minority groups. If so, general population as well as the multicultural students should receive education on multiculturalism. How many multicultural adolescents do you think there are? Let's say 100,000. Then, how many are the general students? What I'm saying is that, as the Multicultural Family Law excluded all the other minority groups other than the international marriage families, the government is excluding everybody else other than the supposed 100,000 multicultural students in education. (Interview on May 19, 2013)

Furthermore, in managing the multicultural students, public schools delegated the management to only few teachers; even in schools where more than half the students are from minority groups.

Principal: One school made a 'Multicultural Children Management Card', like some sort of personnel management card. In the making process, they had an intense inquiry of the students' information. I really didn't want to give them that information. What's worse is that one teacher, one teacher, would be managing the whole system. I don't think it was advisable. The children don't like it. Not many parents have the ability to inquire much about the management program.

The contents of the multicultural education were also inappropriate according to the pastor. Rather than teaching them the essentials, such as guiding in having healthy interpersonal relationships and providing them aid in school adjustment, the current education mostly focuses on introducing different cultures.

Pastor: ...People think, from an evolutionary perspective, that they have the most advanced culture, and that the others should be labelled as 'savages', 'uncivilized', 'primitive', and be controlled that way. Same kinds of thoughts are portrayed in media too. Therefore, they

have the bias that ‘the 3rd World should be like this.’ Think about how those incorrect biases contribute to us. We need to change the textbooks. Check out the multicultural education programs at school. This is just international relations education. Nobody teaches anything about interpersonal relationships and how to form a respectable one. International relations educations show up on TV all the time. Everybody learns about it already. We need to look at the textbooks with some critical perceptions.

Although not a member of public organization, but as a member of the educators devoted in multicultural education, the NGO representatives strongly felt that the current education does not provide the essentials that students require. Especially, the opinion seemed stronger when they mentioned that even at Won-gok elementary school, where more than half the students are from minority groups, the multicultural programs are not operated properly, and the principals do not want to have multicultural students because of the reputation. More will be discussed in the ‘Attitudes towards multicultural students’ section.

Overall, the NGO representatives showed concerns on separating the multicultural students and administer programs and events only for them. Furthermore, as experts in the field, they wished the educational aim for multicultural students to be shifted to aid the multicultural students to allow them to be a part of the class, and encourage them to form relationships, and interact equally, rather than providing them with informations on other cultures.

In Canada, through the researcher’s personal observation, no class teaches multiculturalism specifically. However, in Social Studies class in elementary & middle school, students learn that the Canadian population comprises of people from various countries and cultures, and the Social Studies class focuses on the various ethnic backgrounds in Canada and how to live harmoniously. Furthermore, if a student was making derogatory comments on someone’s ethnicity, that student would receive a strict

form of punishment, such as temporary suspension. In Ontario, where the researcher attended schools growing up, one would learn more about multiculturalism at high school: through Civics class at Grade 10, and Sociology/Psychology/Anthropology (S.A.P) class in Grade 11. Similar curriculum applies to the B.C. education system (Bromley, 2011). Civics class introduces Canada's policies, basic rights as a Canadian citizen, judicial system, and politics. Its purpose was to form a group with a sense of belonging to the country. However, the current emphasis on citizenship extends from the national boundary (Bromley, 2011). Through the Multiculturalism Act, and as a basic virtue in a democratic society, students learn multiculturalism as a political idea; in S.A.P. class (an elective subject), students would look at multiculturalism again from a social perspective. Overall, all students start to receive education on multiculturalism at a young age in Canada. Furthermore, the effect is maximized by integrating the notion of 'respecting other cultures' with basic human rights.

## B. Differences in Language Education between Canada and Korea

In Korean school environment, the most common method for language education is to enroll the multicultural student in lower year than his/her actual age. It happens more often for the immigrant students who are exposed to Korean language less than students from international marriage families. Because the students' language proficiency does not comply with the grade level, some students are enrolled one or two, sometimes even three, years lower than the actual year he/she should be in by age. This may be necessary for the multicultural students themselves, the regular students, and for the class itself. However, these students were not receiving sufficient psychological care and support after being enrolled in lower year, according to Principal. In reality, these students, regardless of the language problem, were not forming good friendships with classmates

and showed some intimidation in their behaviors. Furthermore, the researcher found that schools tend to assign students from same ethnic background in same classroom, which ends up minority students only interacting with minority students. Upon telling the aforementioned cases, Principal emphasized the competence of the teachers in dealing with multicultural students.

Principal: ...because it's like that, students do not feel any sense of belonging to the peer groups. They mostly interact with themselves (the multicultural students) and they do that again here at our center. Because they interact together more, they end up interacting with each other only. As a result, the multicultural students have little chance of having a sense of belonging to other peer groups. However, teachers, they can provide more opportunities. They can intervene. Like, when they assign seats, they can assign a student that is easy-going to be matched up with a multicultural student... I am a believer of teacher's intervention in these situations. If a teacher fosters an atmosphere suitable for the environment, that would be helpful for the multicultural students, and start building some understanding to one another.

In Canada, similar methods have been used to support the adjustment of immigrant students. For the immigrant students in Canada, many students enroll in lower year than their actual age. The author immigrated to Canada after finishing the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of 2<sup>nd</sup> year in middle school. However, the school board was concerned with language fluency, and asked if I would like to start from Grade 8 (equivalent of 2<sup>nd</sup> year middle school in Korea) again. In Canada, the border between Grade 8 and 9 could mean middle school and high school in most schools; making the decision appropriate.

In language education, cities with many immigrant students provide ESL (English as Second Language) classes. Before registering at a school, each student writes the number of years spent in Canada, and self-assessed

language fluency to the guidance counselor. Each student will be enrolled in ESL class after discussing with a guidance counselor. Although some differences exist by school board, ESL classes are divided into several levels, and students have a role in which level they are to be enrolled in. For example, ESL classes are operated with 5 levels in Toronto District School Board, and their actual year in school does not matter in taking the ESL classes (Toronto District School Board, 2009). If a student's language proficiency seems higher than the class requirements, with the teacher's judgment and the consent of the student, that student could move to a higher level in the ESL class, or even to a regular English class. If there are no ESL classes due to a little number of immigrant students, teaching assistants attend classes for the immigrant students and aid the students in understanding the class material. A significant number of them are not 'multicultural teachers', but many of them have educational background in special education for challenged students and students with low grades.

The main difference is that in Canada, although the teacher's efforts are also a significant contributor in adjusting, the school respects the students' independent choices. In peer relationships, an integral part of school life, Canadian schools leave it up to the students and their independent choices, rather than the teachers' intervention. It is common to see minority students mingling with peers from same ethnic background. This is a characteristic of Canada, where a significant amount of minority students are international students. Because international students do not receive intimate support physically from their families, they tend to mingle together and form a closer bond among themselves. Also, the number of minority students is higher in Canada than Korea because Canada simply has longer history of immigrants; helping the immigrant students to form friendship easier.

Overall, Canada and Korea's language education shared a similarity: schools tend to enroll students in lower year than their actual age, putting

language education in priority. The main differences, however, are that student's opinions are taken into account in enrollment and in the language education system. In Korea, the opinions of the students are not considered in enrollment, and the language education is not divided thoroughly. Furthermore, enrolling the student in lower year is the extent school is going to provide on adjustment support for the multicultural students. Consequently, the psychological support is not provided much. On the other hand, immigrant students in Canada prevent possible inferiority complex by assigning students in language classes regardless of their age. Furthermore, classes are separated into many levels and are free to advance depending on the language fluency of the student.

### C. The difference in teachers' attitude towards multicultural students between Korea and Canada

Through the interview with Pastor and Principal, a negative perception on Korean schools and teachers were observed. Especially, they believed that teachers perceived multicultural students as potential threats for the class/school environment.

Principal: There is a tendency. A teacher would have multicultural students in his/her classroom. Then as soon as the multicultural students make trouble, they send them to "that" class. They think these students deter the entire class. If they don't perform as well as the other students, it is perceived as hindrance. You go there and hang out with friends who are similar to you. That is heartbreaking. If the students go there, it's like they are branded. If a teacher is really concerned and sends them there, that's great. However, most teachers send the students there because they do not want to handle a difficult situation.

In this context, "that class" means a classroom where all multicultural students are assigned to. The author was able to sense that the NGO

representatives were concerned about the multicultural students being perceived as problem students. This is because regardless of their backgrounds, only the grades and performance evaluation are used in school evaluation.

Principal: In our neighborhood, there are three elementary schools. More than half of the students are multicultural students in one of them. The academic achievement is significantly lower in that school. That's the trend. So the principals do not want to be in charge of those schools, because that would also affect their reputations.

As mentioned above, Korean teachers have the assimilative attitude on multicultural education. A report by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2013) also showed that Korean population showed double standards towards advanced countries and developing countries. More importantly, their attitude on multicultural students limited the identity to being "Korean". Pastor used the example of school food and how teachers force the multicultural students to eat all the Korean food to explain the aforementioned attitude.

Pastor: (To the researcher) People look at you starting to take some Canadian cultures, and some will ask you, "You need to find your cultural identity. Are you a Korean or a Canadian?" Why do you need to ask that? You can maintain your Korean identity if you need it. If not, you can live as a Canadian. But how is the culture right now? Everybody looks at them and say they have to be Korean. They have to be Korean and they have to love Kimchi. To be Korean, one has to love Kimchi. People are injecting these stereotypes to these kids. And forcing the identity into them may bring out side effects. So they need to have a third identity.

Furthermore, from the school's perspective, multicultural students are

“supposed to” have poor living condition, with no financial flexibility; hence need to be protected. Pastor indirectly described this attitude with the example of field trips. This, he explained, is in line with the country viewing the minority culture as uncivilized.

Pastor: When they go somewhere, when they go camping, multicultural students do not pay for the trip. But other students do. What does that say? The multicultural students are being pointed as students under watch. Things like that are continuing in school system. As a result, a normal school education is being distorted. So the current multicultural education is all project based. If they run these multicultural education projects, who should ‘benefit’ from these projects? It has to be the multicultural children. (omit) The thought like that expresses the view that the minority cultures are uncivilized and barbaric.

In Canada’s teachers’ education, multicultural education teachers are not specialized. Canada’s teachers’ education is different by province. In Ontario, where the researcher went to schools, people enter undergraduate and advance to teachers’ college, where multiculturalism is part of the curriculum (Ontario College of Teachers). Consequently, “multicultural teacher” is defined as the teachers teaching in the Aboriginal reserve, and teachers with the ESL certificate only. However, the attitude of looking at every ethnicity equal and accepting other cultures are established as law. Moreover, these attitudes have been taught to the teachers since they were young. As a result, the attitude towards the multicultural students is indifferent to regular students.

## V. Results, Limitations and Suggestions

This study aimed to bring some perspectives on the future direction of Korea’s multiculturalism education by comparing various aspects of

Korea and Canada's multicultural education. The results of interviewing multicultural NGO representatives for Korean aspect, and personal observation and analyzing the materials for Canadian aspect are as follows. In general comparison of Korea and Canada's multicultural education, the main difference was the target students. Korea's multicultural education still operates mostly targeting minority students, whereas every student learns of human rights and respect for ethnic diversity in Canada. Specifically, multicultural education in Korean schools only applies to multicultural students, with focus on language acquisition and learning Korean culture. On the other hand, Canada uses multiculturalism as a mandatory concept for students; that multiculturalism and respecting human rights are duties of being a Canadian. Furthermore, since the number of multicultural students is low, the education programs in Korea are mostly operated as short-term projects or cultural events, whereas multiculturalism is dispersed in Canadian education system as an integral ideology. Of course Canada has been accepting immigrants for longer periods of time than Korea, and the period multiculturalism has settled into the education ideology is significantly longer in Canada, with longer period to undergo several trials and errors. Therefore, it cannot be assessed that Korea's multicultural education is inferior to Canada's multicultural education. However, Korea's multicultural education cannot progress further from short-term projects without an increase and efficient use of the budget. Currently, Korea's public schools propose multicultural education projects to the Ministry of Education, and receive funds, which in turn, are combined with the school's general budget. Hence, in order to continue the development of multicultural education in Korea, as many studies have previously suggested, the government should gear the programs towards the general population, and assert multiculturalism as an educational ideology, respecting and accommodating each other regardless of ethnicity and cultural background. Furthermore, ultimately, the budget for the Ministry of Education should be increased to implement continuous

multiculturalism education programs, rather than intermittent events and short-term projects.

Second, comparing the language education between Korea and Canada, some similarities, such as enrolling students in lower grades than their age, existed in both countries. The most critical difference between two countries is whether the opinions of the students are taken into account. In Canada, upon entering schools, school board could suggest the student to be enrolled in lower year. However, if the student does not want to enroll in lower year, the school board accepts the choice. In Korea, students' opinions were not asked, and be put in a class based on language proficiency. As a result, some students are enrolled in a class with a significant age gap. Furthermore, classroom system is different between Korea and Canada. In Canada, classes are run with students moving into different classrooms every period. Also, as students attend higher schools, students have more liberty in taking high level classes, as long as prerequisites are met. Same applies to the ESL programs in Canada. ESL programs divide the students by language proficiency, but students are free to advance to higher level if they are performing well in class. In Korea, however, most schools have the format of students staying in one classroom, and teachers come in and out every period. As a result, the sense of 'homeroom' is stronger in Korean classrooms. Furthermore, in Eastern society, age is a significant factor in forming social groups. To be alienated from peers in same age group and studying with younger peers may be embarrassing to some students. Since most of the multicultural students are from Eastern Hemisphere countries (i.e. Japan, Mongolia, Vietnam, Philippines, China, etc.), many students could feel shame by being forced to enroll in lower years because of language proficiency. This may result in students to feel inferior to students in the same age group, and could lead to maladjustment in school. However, overhauling the entire classroom format just to treat the inferiority complex of the students would be inefficient. A suggestion would be an increase of teaching assistants with an educational

background in multicultural education and/or special education; instead of enrolling multicultural students in lower year without their consent. At the same time, schools need to raise awareness for general students to prevent multicultural students from ridicule and bullying because they receive help from the teaching assistants.

Finally, there was a significant difference in the attitudes of teachers towards multicultural students between the two countries. Previous studies on Korean teachers showed that teachers were aware of the importance of multicultural education and its effects. However, according to the interview, some teachers perceive the problems that multicultural students are facing as bothersome, and sometimes sends the students to the “multicultural students class” for the benefit of the general students in the class. Furthermore, as many of the multicultural students perform below average due to various reasons (i.e. low language proficiency, bullying, homesickness, etc.), some teachers have negative perspectives on multicultural students because lower grades could affect the reputation of the classroom and the school. The main reason for such attitudes is because teachers are viewing the multicultural students as separate entities, apart from the rest of the class. The fact that the number of multicultural students per classroom is small in Korea also solidifies such perspective. However, as much as receiving respect for their identities, multicultural population do not want to be labeled as ‘different’, and desire to interact with others as general members of society. This is in line with the multicultural policies in Canada, where each member of society is accepted as a regular member. Canadians grow up learning that everybody has basic rights to be respected regardless of ethnic backgrounds and cultures, and that it has to be obeyed by law (Multiculturalism Law, 1988). As a result, teachers view each student as a separate identity, rather than looking at them by their ethnic backgrounds. The current attitudes and policies towards the minority groups may be potential threat in Korea to develop as a globally recognized democratic country; especially with

the prediction that the number of immigrants will steadily increase. To form a successful multicultural society, education policies should concentrate on changing the perception of the views on multiculturalism, rather than on special education method for multicultural students. Before assorting citizens by their ethnic backgrounds and culture, the educational focus should be on that everybody is a 'human being' that has equal rights without discrimination; and that everyone's identity should be accepted and respected. If this principle is implemented in the minds of students, some of these students will become teachers, teaching the same principles to the next generation; ultimately building a strong multicultural society.

There are some limitations to the study. First is that the representatives of the multicultural NGO, instead of the school teachers, were interviewed. The advantage of interviewing NGO representatives is that they are working independently from school boards, and the Ministry of Education. This means that the change in policies by the Ministry would affect the organization less than public schools. Furthermore, the fact that the number of students per teacher is smaller in these organizations also helps in developing closer bonds with students and learning what they really want. Indeed, many contents of the interview came from the episodes that students told the teachers at Kosian's House. However, the contents of the interview may reflect the negative aspects of the public school's multicultural education more than reality. Although many contents of the interview came from the anecdotes from the students, one has to know that multicultural students are also students. What this means is that just like regular students, multicultural students also may not like to go to school or do not like his/her teacher for "regular reasons" (i.e. do not want to do homework; teacher is too strict, etc.)

Materials of Canada's multicultural education policies explain the current policies and curricula through the educator's perspective. Although the Canadian contents include the personal observation of the researcher's

time spent in school growing up, the experiences of the students in the most current period are lacking. As a result, it was difficult to find the students' opinions on multiculturalism. Future studies should investigate the opinions of current teachers and the students' opinions on multiculturalism and make an objective assessment. Furthermore, since Canada accepts immigrants from various countries, future studies on Canada's multicultural education should collect the needs from various cultures. This in turn would also aid in discovering the needs of the multicultural population in Korea's education.

## ❖ References

- Banks, J. A., Multiculturalism's Five Dimensions. NEA Today Online, September, 1998.
- Banks, J. A., An introduction to multicultural education (3<sup>rd</sup>ed.) Massachusetts, Allyn & Bacon, 2004.
- Bromley, P., Multiculturalism and human rights in civic education: the case of British Columbia, Canada, Educational Research, 53, 151-164, 2011.
- Brown, Y., Ghosts in the Canadian Multicultural Machine – A Tale of the Absent Presence of Black People, Journal of Black Studies, 38, 374-387, 2008.
- Campbell, D. E., Choosing Democracy: A practical guide to multicultural education, New Jersey: Pearson Education. Inc., 2004.
- Chae, Y. R., & Shin, S. K., Kindergarten Teacher Teaching Efficacy Beliefs and Teaching Practices about Multicultural Education, The Journal of Korean Education, 30, 227-246, 2012.
- Chang, I., & Jeon, K. J., Case Study of Elementary Teachers' Perception and Practices for Multicultural Education Multicultural Education Studies, 6, 73-103, 2013.
- Chang, O. J., A Study on the Performance Reality of Multi-cultural Education System in the Elementary School, Journal of Korean Practical Arts Education, 24, 281-304, 2011.
- Cho, Y. D., Park, Y. K., Sung, K. H., Lee, S. Y., & Park, H. The actual conditions of the multicultural education in elementar and secondary schools, Theory and Research in Citizenship Education, 42, 151-184, 2010.
- Choi, J. Y., Pre-service Elementary School Teacher's Educational Experience and Perceptions about Multicultural Education, Journal of Korean Practical Arts Education, 15, 183-202, 2009.
- Esses, V. M., & Gardner, R. C., Multiculturalism in Canada: Context and Current Status. Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 28, 145-152, 1996.
- Government of Canada, Canadian Multiculturalism Act, Parliament of Canada, July 21, 1988.
- Han, J. S., A Qualitative Study on the Conflict Experience of NGO MultiCultural Cases, The Journal of Curriculum Instruction, 14, 245-263, 2010.
- Han, J. S., & Hong, W. P., A Critical Analysis of Multicultural Education in Korean Elementary schools: Through the Lense of 'Culturally Relevant Pedagogy', The Journal of Elementary Education, 25, 207-233, 2012.
- House, E. R., Multicultural Evaluation in Canada and the United States, The

- Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, 7, 133-156, 1992.
- Huh, Y. S., & Jung, C. H., A Cross-State-Case Comparative Analysis regarding Migrant Integration Policy: Focused on the Cases of Germany, France, America, and Canada, *Journal of European Union Studies*, 31, 55-80, 2011.
- Jang, J. S., A Comparative Study of Multiculturalism and the Integration Policy of a Nation-State, *The Journal of Public Law*, 11, 97-128, 2010.
- Jang, W. S., A Study on The Curriculum for Multi-cultural Teacher Education Suitable to Korean Society, *Social Studies Education*, 48, 57-79, 2009.
- Jang, Y. Y., & Jeong, K., The Relationship between Elementary School Teachers' Perception and The Executive Ability of Multicultural Education, *The Journal of Elementary Education Studies*, 19, 91-110, 2012.
- Jeon, K. S., Jung, K. S., & Lee, J. H., Multicultural Education Program Study, Department of Education, Gyunggi-Do, research report, 2007.
- Jo, N. D., A Study on the Current Education of Children of Multicultural Families in Seongnam City, *The Korea Educational Review*, 18, 263-293, 2012.
- Kim, J. A Comparative Study on Integration Policies of Multicultural Society – Focusing on Germany, France, the United States, and Canada, Master's Thesis at Sookmyung Women's University Graduate School of International Service, 2012.
- Kim, J. G., A Comparative Study of Multiculturalism: United States, Canada and Australia, *Social Theory*, 37, 160-200, 2010.
- Kim, J. W., Lee, J. Y., & Kim, K. B., Recognition of Parents with Multicultural Background and Preschool Teachers about Multicultural Education, *The Korean Society for Study on Welfare of Early Childhood Education and Educare*, 13, 7-26, 2009.
- Kim, S. G., & Han, J. S., A Fundamental Study on Multicultural Families to Develop the Lifelong Erudition Plan, *Andragogy Today: Interdisciplinary Journal of Adult & Continuing Education*, 13, 7-26, 2010.
- Kymlicka, W., *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Lee, M. J., A study on the effective plans of after-school classes for multicultural family children, Master's Thesis at Daegu National University of Education, 2009.
- Media Daum, 「Government, “We have not discussed bringing in workers with Malawai”」 Original Source: Yonhap News, <http://media.daum.net/politics/others/newsview?rMode=list&cSortKey=depth&allComment=T&newsid>

=20130531185410850, 2013.

Ministry of Education & Human Resources, “Support plans for multicultural families” press release, <http://www.moe.go.kr>, 2006.

Ministry of Education, Science, & Technology, Kindergarten curriculum commentary, Seoul: Research Institute of the Differently Abled Person’s Right in Korea, 2008.

Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, The 2<sup>nd</sup> Multicultural Family Policy Plan(2013-2017), retrieved from <http://blog.naver.com/wasuk4070/70175764587>, 2013.

National Human Rights Commission of Korea, Actual Condition of Migrant Children’s Right to Education, National Human Rights Commission of Korea, 2010.

Oh, E. S., An Analysis on situations and needs of the supporting strategies for Korean-language education for multicultural family students, *The Journal of Korean Multicultural Education* 3, 37-69, 2010.

Oh, S. B., The implication of the ‘Kosian’ case for the multicultural education in Korea, *Journal of Korean Education Research*, 16, 137-157, 2006.

Ontario College of Teachers. [www.oct.ca](http://www.oct.ca).

Philippou, S., A. Keating, & D. Hinderliter Ortloff. Conclusion: Citizenship education curricula: Comparing the multiple meanings of supra-national citizenship in Europe and beyond, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 41, 291-99, 2009.

Public District School Board Writing Partnership, Course Profile: Civics, Grade 10, Open. Ontario Public District School Board, April, 2000.

Toronto District School Board, English as a Second Language & Literacy Development. Toronto District School Board Course Choices, 66-67, 2010.

## Appendix: Interview Questions

\*\* The interview questions are translated in English for this paper.

Pastor Park

1. What is your opinion on multiculturalism in Korea being viewed as an environmental phenomena?
2. What are the positive aspects of multiculturalism? And do you have any personal experiences of the multicultural experiences transforming into theory?
3. Your papers talk about sulbatern and the sulbatern culture. However, those cultures are excluded when the government discusses multiculturalism. Why is that?
4. How can Korea achieve resistant multiculturalism? What is resistant multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism?
5. You talked about 3<sup>rd</sup> identity. How will the current trend of finding identity through culture affect the goals, process, and contents of the multicultural education?
6. Is there an ideal model or blueprint for multicultural education that you believe in?
7. Could you tell us any struggles and difficulties you faced during your work for the multicultural population?

Principal Kim

1. Based on your experience as an educator, are there any programs that you think is unnecessary for the multicultural students?
2. In your school, an alternative school, is there any code of ethics and rules that your students and teachers must follow? How are the relationships between students and teachers?
3. How are the interpersonal relationships amongst students in the school? Was there any problems such as bullying and outcast in this school? Are there no problems in this school that usually occurs in regular schools to the multicultural students?
4. Some students acquire Korean identity early. But that could also cause some identity issues. What kind of education should we take as educators on identity formation of these students?
5. How many students are attending at the facility? How many teachers are there?
6. Some people view alternative schools as educational isolation because it separates multicultural students into one environment. What are your thoughts?
7. Are there things that the general population could learn from the multicultural population? Anything that you have learned?