Discursive Construction of Otherness※

: A Critical Discourse Analysis of News Media Representations of International Students

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Abstract

Kim, Jung Sook. 2020. "Discursive Construction of Otherness: A Critical Discourse Analysis of News Media Representations of International Students". *The Sociolinguistic Journal of Korea* **28(2), 65~93**. This article investigates from a critical discourse studies perspective the news media representations of inbound international students in Korean higher education. In light of the ideological workings of discourse and the media's social impact on the public consciousness, the current study examines the structures and detailed meanings of the media portrayals of international students as regards the three dimensions of the textual feature, discursive practice, and social practice. The findings suggest that the media representations of international students are racialized according to stratified power relations in the context of Korean higher education, and that the racialization and stratification is undergirded by neoliberal capitalist ideology of internationalization, ambivalent diversity discourse of Others, and benevolent care discourse of the minoritized. A range of discursive othering strategies are deployed in the news texts to render more newsworthy the reported issues and incidents concerning international students. The article concludes and argues that more fluid approaches to diversity should be developed to account for the complexity and multiplicity of transnational subjectivities.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, International Students, Otherness, Benevolent Care Discourse, Media Discourse

1. Introduction

Study abroad has become one of major migration channels in the contemporary global flows. Under the structural pressures such as a declining school age population and unease, among many, about the quality of the education system (Cho & Palmer 2013; Jon, Lee, & Byun 2014; Kwon 2012), the Korean government embarked upon a 'Study Korea Project' as an internationalization initiative of its higher education in 2004. In the years that followed, Korean higher education institutions (HEIs) have vigorously recruited and enrolled international students. The result of the aggressive pursuit for the internationalization is a significant upsurge in the number of international students at Korean colleges and universities. In 2004, there were 16,832 international students studying in Korea. Those numbers rose to 160,165 as of April 2019 (Ministry of Education (MOE) 2019). This is an aggregate figure that includes higher education degree enrollments as well as language students and exchange students. Around 90% came from Asia and the largest number of those students came from China (71,067 or 44.4%), followed by Vietnam (37,426 or 23.4%), Uzbekistan (7,492 or 4.7%), Mongolia (7,381 or 4.6%), Japan (4,392 or 2.7%), and USA (2,915 or 1.8%).

With the sudden and dramatic increase in the number, international students soon became a prominent object of public attention and discussion. Mass media pay considerable attention to international students, engendering the proliferation of the media discourses on them. The media attention denotes that such issues and events surrounding the international students are newsworthy (Van Dijk 1987). The mass media, particularly news media, play a key role to sketch the process by which some knowledge, epistemologies, and identities become

discursively constructed and negotiated in a public space (Fairclough 1992, 2003). They have an important role to establish and disseminate common cultural references and thus have a great impact on people' attitudes and common knowledge about the reality (Ter Wal 2002). For instance, the narratives and voices contained in the media texts are exploited to construct a certain stereotyping process (Van Dijk 1987). The negative media coverage, especially in the conservative press, affects large parts of the public. In that respect, media coverage has been studied as an indicator for social phenomena, such as ethnic relations or the construction of collective identity (Ter Wal 2002).

Despite the growing media attention to and its significance for the public consciousness of international students, however, there is a paucity of critical research on how the students are represented in Korean news media. The existing research of the kind does not attend to international students in particular, and, if any, deals with them within the issues of immigrants in general (Kim 2019; Lee & Park 2018). Transnational students with various national, linguistic and cultural backgrounds entail the changing and complex configurations of relations among different stakeholders with different sociocultural and ideological concerns (Soong 2015). Discourses of diversity and internationalization of higher education raise critical questions about the subjectivity of those students in local contexts of Korean colleges and universities as well as in the public perception of them at a broader societal level. Those critical concerns amount to a rethinking of social diversity entailed by the transnational migration. Therefore, it is worth critically examining the media representations of international students and the significance for the students as well as for the public perception about them in Korean contexts. The critical investigation of discourses that are produced, circulated, and reinforced by the media shall shed light on the practices of Korean

colleges and universities in addressing the diversity brought about by international students on campuses.

This article thus investigates the news media representations of inbound international students in Korean HEIs. Informed by critical discourse studies (Fairclough 1995, 2003; Van Dijk 1993; Wodak 1995), the current study examines the ideological representations of international students in three main conservative Korean news media which construct the public understanding and perception of those students as emerging Others in Korea society. The research questions that guide this study are as follows:

(1) How are international students in Korean HEIs represented in Korean news media?

(2) What discursive strategies are used in the news media to construct the international students as Others?

The analysis is grounded on a multidisciplinary approach of critical discourse studies with the understanding of the structures and functions of discourse in relation to social power. The focuses of the analysis are upon main linguistic features of the media texts, concerning the newspapers' headlines, the semantic structures and strategies, style and rhetoric, subject and topics, and quotations patterns. These analyses on the textual level are interconnected to the analyses on the discursive practices and social practices in order to better understand the complexity of the social phenomena concerning international students in social contexts. In so doing, this study aims to offer some critical insights into the process of the discursive construction of Otherness through which social relations are legitimized and maintained in terms of power and dominance.

2. Theoretical Framework

Discourse does not simply reflect social reality, but it also constructs or constitutes it. Discourse is "socially constructive, constituting social subjects, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief, and the study of discourse focuses upon its constructive ideological effects" (Fairclough 1992: 36). Different discourses constitute social entities in different ways, and position people in different ways as social subjects. In this sense, discourse is a social phenomenon in which an individual experiences ideological relations.

The social relations can be revealed by analyzing the materialized ideological product, namely, language, which reflects or refracts the reality in which the social relationships are established and practiced. To account for the socially shaping nature of discourse and its relation to identity, therefore, a critical discourse approach to language ideology is concerned not simply with referential meanings, but more with social connotation and indexical meanings, especially, which entail any kind of social inequality (Blommaert 2010).

Discourse is often seen as a site of struggle over power and dominance through differing and contending ideologies (Fairclough 1992). On that account, the notion of power is of considerable significance to critical discourse studies. Social power is based upon privileged access to its resources such as wealth, social status, group membership, education or knowledge, and upon special access to various genres, forms or contexts of discourse and communication (Van Dijk 1993). In many cases, the access to the resources of social power is institutionalized so as to be condoned, legitimated, enforced, or ideologically sustained and reproduced (Bourdieu 1991; Fairclough 1992). In such ways, the efficacy of discourse entailed by power "resides in the institutional conditions of their

production and reception" (Bourdieu 1991: 111).

News discourse plays a crucial role in reproduction of social relations in terms of dominance and subordinance. Mass media, especially news media, have a significant role as producers of discourses that shape the public perception of social realities on the basis of their wide readership (Fairclough 2003; Van Dijk 1993). Some kinds of perception of Others, especially in forms of prejudice, stereotyping, racism, are conveyed in the mass media. Van Dijk (1993) asserts that the media reproduce racial arguments and prejudices, which are not allowed in an open discourse. For instance, media coverage shapes the way in which people speak and think about immigrants. One of the primary sources for the knowledge about migrants and cultural diversity is the information people retrieve from media. Since most in-group members do not have a direct or daily interaction with immigrants, their beliefs and knowledge about out-group are shaped by the media discourse (Van Dijk 1987). People mention the media in general, or the press in particular, for 'evidence' about the negative characteristics of ethnic groups (Ter Wal 2002).

The media plays a significant role in the maintenance of the hegemony. Much of the problems concerning the influence of the press on the public consciousness lies in its ideological workings, which are almost imperceptible for readers (Fairclough 2003; Van Dijk 1995). These ideological discourses produced by the press have to do with broader societal structures. For instance, as anti-racist norms have been widely accepted in contemporary society seeking for pluralism, differentiation and exclusion of certain minority groups become more covert. Van Dijk (1987) offers the theoretical analysis of the role of the press in the reproduction of racism. He explicitly shows the correlational relationships between media discourse and racism by a multidisciplinary analysis of the

linguistic, cognitive, and social nature of the relationships.

Likewise, news-making routines of the media influence the contents and presentation of reports about international students. The image of international students as Others is constructed and produced in the media discourse. Cho and Shin (2017) examine the media representation of Chinese international students in a Korean newspaper. Based upon the results of a critical discourse analysis on the media texts, the authors conclude that Chinese international students were represented by the ideological square of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Presenting the results of critical discourse analyses of the publication about China in the Chronicle of Higher education, Suspitsyna and Shalka (2019) argue that colonial tropes in the media representation of Chinese international student produce a harmful effect on policy and practice with regard to campus climate, culture, and internationalization of American campuses. As such, the mass media are generally seen as a powerful institution, which fulfills functions of agenda setting, control and opinion making (Ter Wal 2002). They are significant social media which communicate and construct certain imagery of immigrants or Others in a certain way often resulting in prejudice or stereotypical portrayal. On that account, the media discourse on international students is worth a critical investigation. Critical discourse studies shall provide a socially motivated explanation for the sociocultural processes that inform local beliefs and knowledge about international students as Others.

3. Method

3.1. Data Collection

The materials used for this study consist of a range of news texts about international students at Korean colleges and universities, which were garnered from the online versions of three mainstream conservative Korean newspapers: The Chosun Ilbo, JoongAng Daily, and The Dong-A Ilbo. The news articles include news reports, columns and editorials, background and feature articles about international students published between 2016 and 2019. The amount of the articles that covered four years was considered sufficient to build the corpus for the analysis. The articles were searched and identified through the keywords such as international students, foreign students, internationalization of colleges and universities, multiculturalism. The corpus for the analysis is composed of headings, leads, and article texts of the news media. The headings and leads, which are summary sentences located immediately after a heading in the newspapers, serve as a framing device that reflects the priorities and biases underlying the newspapers' construction of social reality, thereby shaping the readers' understanding of the issues concerned (Suspitysna & Shalka 2019; Van Dijk 1987).

The initial numbers of the articles amounted to approximately 251, which were reduced to 176 through the process of checking the contents to see whether they dealt with inbound international students in Korean higher education. After the initial reading, the corpus was determined with a focus upon the articles that addressed specifically the topics of international students at Korean colleges and universities. The articles that discussed multiculturalism and diversity but

centered on immigrants in general or multicultural education at the primary and/or secondary school level were excluded from the corpus for the analysis.

3.2. Data Analysis

This study initially conducted a content analysis of the headlines, leads and main body of article texts through a series of the open, axial, and selective coding process (Strauss & Corbin 1998). To identify themes and topics addressed in the news articles about international students, the news media corpus was first broken down and examined to derive initially emerging subcategories through an open coding process. The subcategories then were reviewed in a recursive fashion and grouped into a set of superordinate categories through an axial coding process. The dimensions of the representation of actors were examined, which included 'more or less racialized, threatening, inclined to crime'. The attitude towards the actors involved 'negative, positive, more or less favorable, emphatic, etc.'. The data were multi-coded when more than two categories were emerging from the texts. Finally, main categories were selected to form sample discourses for a subsequent critical discourse analysis.

And then the study proceeded to the discourse analysis of the selected sample discourses. The critical discourse analysis of the articles served to trace the interconnections between the media representations of international students and larger issues of internationalization, globalization, and Korean orientation towards those students. Based upon Fairclough (1995, 2003), the sample discourses were analyzed at the three levels of texts, discursive practices, and social practices. At the textual level, the lexical, grammatical and stylistic features in headlines and leads were examined and coded. The lexical features included verbs, adjective,

adverbs, and nouns associated with actors and topics. The grammatical features involved syntactical structures such as nominalization, the use of passive and active voice. Stylistic means, such as metaphors used to depict international students and other actors, were examined. To uncover and identify the values and assumptions embedded in the discourses, semiotic structures were also examined in terms of denotations and connotations of linguistic features including metaphor, metonymy, implicature, etc. At the discursive level, it was examined how authors employ different genres to appeal to audiences and establish the credibility of the authors of the articles. Finally, at the level of social practice, the article samples were connected to larger social discourses on international students. For the current article, the analysis is illustrated with examples taken from a limited number of prominent stories in the coverage of international students.

4. Findings

4.1. Negative Representations of International Students

The content analysis of the news articles about international students reveals some intriguing representations of international students: instrumental discourse in which international students are considered as commodified assets in Korean HEIs; predominantly negative portrayal of those students in the news media texts while their Korean counterparts and stakeholders being represented in positive ways; international students from Asia or the global south[1] described as prone to criminality; Chinese students who are mostly highlighted in negative

ways whereas those from the global north are depicted on the ground of elitism; care and responsibility discourse; ideological workings of Hallyu and cultural superiority. The categories of the themes emerging from the analysis and their frequencies are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Categories and frequency of the themes

Category	Frequency
Elitism	8
Capitalist instrumental discourse	35
Criminality (fraudulent/misconduct/deviant/bogus/illegal, etc.)	33
Conflicts with Korean students	5
Increase in the number	25
Success stories	7
Korean language	21
Policy (recruitment, admission, visa, insurance, etc.)	24
University Publicity (event, festival, etc.)	67
Corporate publicity (scholarship)	7
Hallyu	11
Culture (ideological events)	30
Job aspiration	4
Care & responsibility discourse (benevolent)	19

The primary sources of the news reports are official policies, statistic data, and publicity released from the official institutions and agencies, including the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of Justice, the National Institute for International Education, and colleges and universities. The media present the messages or information from those institutions, and commentaries of experts

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1) The North-South divide is a socioeconomic and political divide of rich and poor countries of the world. The global North generally includes the rich countries in North America, Western Europe, and parts of East Asia, while the global South generally includes the poor countries in Africa, Latin America, and developing parts of Asia.

concerned with the reported policies, issues and incidents. They also draw on domestic Korean students' encounters with international students as well as the lived experience of the international students in Korean HEIs.

In presenting these sources, the news texts sometimes mix genres of a storytelling-like informal speech with research reports produced by the government with formal vocabulary and terminology. College professors or experts are often quoted to serve to establish the authority. Their professional languages are used to support the credibility with the authority on the topic. Statistic data are most often used to support arguments in the texts, reinforcing them as a factual claim (Reisigl & Wodak 2001). For instance, the statistics regularly released by MOE are cited to back up the argumentation of how rapidly the number of international students has increased and to problematize the disproportionate composition of the international students in terms of their countries of origin.

The analysis reveals certain ambivalent discursive constructions of those students: valuable resources, on the one hand, and problems or liabilities on the other. The portrayal of international students in the news media is predominantly made against a backdrop of the internationalization of HEIs. International students are represented as commodified assets that contribute to the enhancement of internationalization and financial revenue in Korean HEIs. Neoliberal capitalist rationality is promoted and undergirds the governmentality with respect to the internationalization of higher education. With this grand discourse, globalization is made universal and inevitable (Altbach 2004; Altbach & Knight 2007), and the transnational mobility of international students and the burgeoning number of those students on Korean campuses are considered as a crucial factor indexing the internationalization of the institutions (Byun

et al. 2011; Cho & Palmer 2013). International students are considered as one of internationalization indicators of higher education. One of the criteria to measure the international outlook of higher education is the ratio of international to domestic students. Fee paying international students have created significant financial interests in higher education as a major source of revenue. As such, international students are quantified as an indicator that measures the quality of higher education. The economic rationale justifies the commodification of higher education, thereby resulting in the instrumental approach to diversity and the international students as well.

Meanwhile, as shown in Table 2 below, the analysis reveals that international students are portrayed predominantly in negative ways as a problem causing tensions and conflicts in their social relation to different stakeholders in Korea. There emerge some specific configurations of international students along the lines of national, racial or ethnic background, language, legal status, and migration channels. One of the noteworthy strategies used by the press coverage is to topicalize and thereby foreground certain ethnic groups more than others. Students from Asian countries, mostly Chinese and Vietnamese students, are relatively more topicalized in the news media in comparison to those from Europe, North America, and elsewhere. In particular, Chinese students and Vietnamese students are more frequently and overtly depicted in negative ways by being associated with criminal and/or deviant activities in comparison to other ethnic groups of international students. Within such negative portrayals, the international students are often quantified and represented as overwhelmingly large numbers that cannot be controlled; bogus international students; likely to end up in fraudulent, deviant behaviors or illegal, criminal activities; arrival through illegal organizations.

Table 2. Negative portrayal of international students

Category	Frequency	Negative	Positive	Neutral
International students	61	13	–	48
Chinese students	36	27	6	2
Vietnamese students	12	9	1	2
Thai students	1	1	–	–
Indonesian students	2	2	–	–
Japanese students	2	–	2	–
Africa students	4	2	2	–
European students	2	–	2	–

As such, a range of stratified power relations and hierarchies are exposed along the differentiated depiction of international students. Overall, the structural inequality between the global north and global south is projected into how the international students are represented in the news media. The students from the so-called global south, often stratified into poorer and developing Third Worlds, tend to be depicted in negative ways and associated with their potential for criminality. Those students are portrayed as criminally prone whereas their Korean counterparts or other students from other regions are likely to be made invisible or unmarked in the media discourse.

Table 3. Differentiated identification of international students and negativity

Category	Sample Headings & Leads
International students	▪ 자전거 타고 10대女 엉덩이 때리고 간 **외국인 대학생**, 벌금형 집행유예 ▪ '월세 사기' 먹잇감 된 **외국인 유학생** ▪ 방학 맞은 대학 캐드실서 비트코인 채굴한 **외국인 유학생** ▪ **외국인 유학생** 10만명 중 절반이 공대생… 학생 질적 수준 떨어져 경쟁력 도움 안돼

Chinese students	▪ 학생 아쉬운 대학들, 한국어 안되는 中 **유학생**도 '무분별 패스' ▪ 한국에 속성 박사 유학 '**중국의 학위 공장** 될 판' ▪ "돈만 내면 입학" 한국어 몰라도 오는 中 **유학생**들 ▪ 中 **유학생**들, 가짜 아이폰 리퍼 받아 10억원 챙기다 덜미 ▪ '월세 계약했으니 내 것인 줄' 원룸 가전제품 팔아 넘긴 **중국 유학생** ▪ 여자탈의실 몰래 촬영 **중국인 유학생**, 벌금 200만원 ▪ 친구가 훔친 옷 **중국으로 옮긴 유학생**…法 "출국명령 정당" ▪ 차로 친구 치어 살해하려 한 **중국인 유학생** '집행유예' ▪ 국내 외국인 유학생 14만 2205명 '역대 최고'…**중국인** 가장 많아 ▪ 대학가에 **차이나타운**? ▪ 한국 대학들, **중국 유학생** 없으면 망한다? 실태 알아보니... ▪ 유학생 '**차이나 파워**'…"그들이 없으면 학교 운영 어렵다"
Vietnamese students	▪ **베트남 어학연수생** 2만명 넘었다, 중국인보다 많네 ▪ 주택가 5곳에 불 지른 **베트남 유학생** 징역 1년 ▪ 경상대, **베트남 어학연수생** 30여명 잠적…외국인 유학생 관리 '구멍' ▪ 사라지는 **베트남 유학생**, 경상대 1년새 30여명 잠적 ▪ '**베트남 유학생** 수백명 불법 고용' 파견업체 대표 검찰 송치 ▪ **불법체류 유학생** 3년 새 1만 명 늘어…**베트남 국적** 63%

In addition, there is difference in the amount of information offered when describing actors in the news reports according to the ethnicity and nationality of international students. Particularly for Chinese and Vietnamese students, the identification of the students tends to be explicitly stated in terms of their countries of origin, as shown in Table 3 above (All the sample media texts originally written in Korean are presented without being translated into English in order to preserve their own linguistic and rhetorical features and subtle semantics but the emphasis added). This differentiation indicates that the media representations of international students are racialized in a way to potentially (re)produce and reinforce certain prejudice and stereotyping towards those students, to which I shall turn for a more detailed critical discourse analysis on some sample discourses in what follows.

4.2. Conflicts with Domestic Korean students

International students are negatively depicted in their relation to Korean students, faculty and staff working with them in Korean HEIs. They are represented as illegitimate, less qualified students or peers who undermines the quality of education and/ or as scroungers who takes a fair share of opportunities and welfare. The news reports frequently quote Korean students, faculty and staff working with international students to support the reporting. The anxiety and discomfort caused by the presences of differences brought by international students is manifested in the narratives of the Korean students and faculty in the news reports. In the news discourse, Korean students position themselves as a reversed victim. In conflicts between international students and domestic students, the domestic students often claim that their learning or education is disturbed by international students. The Korean students, quoted in the news reports, argue that educational service and quality of education is undermined by the presumably lower quality international students. The following are some sample texts from the headings and leads that describe the conflicts between international students and Korean students.

"외국인 **유학생** 아닌 **유랑생**?", **커지는** 대학내 학생 **갈등**

"외국인 학생과 **팀하기 싫다**" 유학생 10만명 시대 **커진 갈등**

"中유학생 알바 구했다고 **나오지 말라네요**"

최저임금 **부담**에 한국학생 알바 **해고**⋯ 法 **잘 모르는** 외국인유학생 **싼값** 고용

'홍콩 지지' 대자보 **충돌**⋯한·중 학생 **다툼**에 경찰 **출동**

At the textual level, strong and negative nouns, such as 'conflict', 'burden',

'dismissal', 'clash', 'confrontation', are used to describe incidents and issues concerning the relationships between international students and domestic students. As shown in the expressions of 'ignorant of law', 'cheap labor', the adjectives associated with international students are disparaging descriptors. Taken together, those lexicons evoke negative and emotional imagery. What is more striking about the textual features of those media texts is the verbs and tense used in those clauses. The verbs, such as 'grow' in 'the growing conflict on campus', are more dynamic rather than static, and for the tense, the present perfect progressive is used to insinuate that the tension between the foreign and domestic students has been lasting and continuous as the number of international students has ever increased.

Overall, a reversed victim strategy develops in the argumentation of the texts as shown in the excerpts above. For the syntactic structures, the headlines feature topicalization, passive voice, and agentless sentences among others. The text structures of the news headlines schematically highlight international students by placing them at the initial position of the sentences. In contrast, Korean students are represented through passive voice as a victim, for instance, who was unfairly fired and lost his/her part time job. Further, the employers, who are presumably the responsible agents, are strategically hidden by the agentless clauses that obscure who is responsible for the unfair dismissal and possibly exploitation of international students. In so doing, the responsibility or blame is attributed to 'the international students', who lack the cultural knowledge of law and thus are likely to fall prey to the unscrupulous employers. The Korean students' resentment is implicitly directed toward (Chinese) foreign students allegedly taking or stealing a share of their own opportunity or welfare.

At the discursive practice level, the news reports are mixed with the genre

of informal story-telling narrative. Anecdotal experiences of Korean students who have ever encountered international students are quoted as an evidence to testify the discomfort and anxiety allegedly caused by the foreigners. The voices of the Korean students are explicitly reported in the form of a direct speech with the quotation marks that give an emphatic effect and establish the credibility to the authors of the reporting. In contrast, the voices of international students in the media coverage are absent or otherwise marginalized. International students, when at all quoted, come last in a text, which indicates the lower credibility and news values are assigned upon them than the majority group speakers (Ter Wal 2002). As for the style, rhetorical questions and puns are noteworthy, for instance in "외국인 유학생 아닌 유랑생?". The rhetorical question, along with the pun that exploits similar-sounding words (i.e., 유학생, 유랑생), features the equivalent of a sarcastic statement. The effect of those rhetorical devices is the representation of international students as 'bogus' students while their Korean counterparts are being positioned by default as 'authentic' students with a strong commitment to academic rigor and a high standard of work ethics.

At the social practice level, the disturbances on campuses experienced by domestic students stem from reactionary anti-Other sentiments. The complaints and resentment of the Korean students against international students resemble the anxiety and discomfort of the public at large about racial, ethnic Others, such as immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers in Korean society. Conflicts concerning issues of welfare, employment, quality, and reversed victims are well documented in a significant body of literature on immigrants (Blackledge 2005; Blommaert 2010). Through such a rhetorical framing of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation (Van Dijk 1993, 1995), inequality and discrimination against Others is legitimated and justified.

4.3. Discourse of Care and Responsibility: Others in Need of Care

A 'care and responsibility' discourse is found particularly in the publicity of colleges and universities. As shown in the excerpts below (the emphasis added), lexically, words with morally positive connotation, such as 'care', 'responsibility', 'help', 'assistance', 'blessing', 'mentoring', and so forth are used in the headings. Syntactically, active voice is often used in these clauses whose subjects are mostly colleges and universities whereas international students are the recipients or patients of the benevolent actions performed by the Korean agents. At the discursive practice level, the publicity released by colleges and universities is mixed with the news reports as part of their marketing strategies so as to make 'news', thereby obfuscating its capitalist nature to the readers.

광운대 '외국인 유학생 ALL CARE'…유지상 총장의 네번째 소통 릴레이

외국인 유학생들 입학부터 취업까지 모두 **책임**진다

中 유학생 특별전형으로 인재 유치… "취업까지 **책임**져요"

'G2시대' 발맞춰 중국 유학생 위해 특별전형… 취업까지 풀코스 **지원**

"목숨 구해준 한국과 인연은 **축복**"

"1대1 **멘토링**으로 유학생활 **어려움 극복**"

삼육대 국제교육원, '외국인 유학생 **멘토링** 캠프' 열어

국민대, 외국인 유학생 1200명 대상 바비큐 **파티**

삼육대 은퇴교수들, 외국인 유학생 한국 **적응 돕는다**

The discursive effect of those strategies is the positive presentation of 'us' (Van Dijk 1995) being benevolent, ideal, and ethically and morally superior and benefiting 'foreigners' in need of 'our care'. Semantically, the metaphors of

consumer and caregiver are drawn to implicitly set up an asymmetrical power relation: the relationships between the international students and the Korean agents (i.e., Korean universities, Korean students, faculty) are set on the dichotomy of mentor vs. mentee; advisor vs. advisee; consumer vs. supplier. Within this framing of the power relation, the international students are positioned as those in need of care vis-à-vis the Korean agents who are represented as benevolent caregivers, mentors, advisors, supporters, helpers with strong commitment to Others.

At the level of social practice, the ethical commitment of Korean HEIs to the values of 'care' and 'moral responsibility' is set within an increasingly predominant consumerist model of higher education (Coate & Rathnayake 2013). The discourse of 'care' and 'moral responsibility' indicates the commitment of current practices towards students from the global south, presumably less developed countries. That is, those values are reflected in the benevolent and charitable attitudes towards students from 'poorer' countries.

4.4. Almost-like Korean Discourse: Model Minority Stereotypes

Positive representation of international students is exemplified by some model international students. However, the success of those students is always defined within the assimilationist discourse of 'almost-like' Korean but still lacking essential quality. Mostly, model international students are minoritized in terms of their race, class or gender. For instance, as shown in the excerpts below, in describing success stories of a female international student at an elite university and a male student from Africa, the media headings and leads highlight the unusual achievement of those students despite their being minoritized in terms of social categories of race/ethnicity and gender. The news reports are constructed

in a dramatic way in terms of the style and thus appear to be more newsworthy (Van Dijk 1987).

> **아프리카** 동문회장 "**한국 밥 마이 무따 아입니꺼**"
>
> (...) 그의 한국사랑은 유별나다. 일단 대구에서 한국어를 배워 **사투리가 구수**하다. 경상도 특유의 낮은 톤에 "마이 무따 아이가 ('많이 먹었잖아'의 경상도 사투리)"를 연발한다. 7년째 한국 생활을 하면서 영어·프랑스어, 여기에 **한국어까지 유창**하다. 2014·2015년 경상북도가 주최한 '독도사랑 외국인 유학생 한국어 말하기 대회'에 참가해 입상(장려상)한 실력이다. (From JoongAng Daily, 02.28.2017.)

With a great degree of emphasis placed upon the students' assimilation into Korean culture, 'authentic' native Koreans and the Korean language are explicitly or implicitly set as the primary criteria and norms against which these students' achievement in Korean HEIs is measured. The male student from the Republic of the Congo is illustrative of a model minority who achieved the level of assimilation to be accepted as 'almost-like Korean' by the host country. The submission to the standards and practices are indexed by the student' favor for Korean food and his Korean variety and regional accent that he might have picked up in the region where they studied.

> **김치** 가장 맛나게 익는 시점 알려주는 장치 개발, KAIST **여성 외국인 유학생**
>
> (…) 그는 오는 5월 **결혼을 앞두고 있다. 백년가약을 맺을 상대**는 8년 전 마리아에게 KAIST를 소개했던 노승한(29)씨다.(…) 마리아는 2012년 KAIST에 유학 왔다. 이들 예비부부는 이날 학위수여식에서 나란히 **학위 모를 썼다.** (From JoongAng Daily, 02.15.2019.)

The protagonist of the news reporting above is a female international student at KAIST, one of the most prestigious universities in Korea. As signaled in the multiple modifiers, 'KAIST 여성 외국인 유학생', she is habitually positioned as an 'international' or 'foreign' student. At the deeper level of social practice, the portrayal of this student is evocative of a success story of a woman scientist in STEM fields, which are traditionally male dominant disciplines, even when in such a traditionally patriarchal society as Korea. In describing her achievement, however, the media report even adds irrelevant details about her Korean fiance. This can be interpreted in accordance with prevalent stereotypes about model minority. That is, this female student is portrayed as a model minority who succeeded in terms of her education and career in spite of a multitude of challenges facing her as an international student. Still, the student's success should invoke her marriage to a Korean man simply due to her minoritized social categories: a 'woman' and 'foreigner'. The complexity of the woman's social identities intersecting with multiple dimensions of oppression (Crenshaw 1991; Kim 2019) is reduced and conflated into only her racial or ethnic, gender identity. On this wise, the representation of the student in the news text is racialized, gendered, and thus minoritized.

As alluded earlier, international students are negatively represented in the news media. Thus, the model minority international student comes to be in contrast to the negative representation of international students in general. In this ambivalent depictions, the division between 'good' and 'bad', or between 'high' and 'low' quality, within the international students, is strategically adopted. In contrast to the 'bad' and 'low' quality international students, the model international students are imagined as transnational elites crossing borders in search of 'Korean Dream' and as valuable assets that contributes to the

enhancement of diversity on Korean campuses. The aspiration for Korean culture and transnational experiences of those students are valorized as the legitimate socio-cultural capitals for their future career. The students' success in mastering the Korean language and aspiration for a Korean college degree are constructed as the result of the heightened reputation and competitiveness of Korea on the global market and of its cultural superiority (Pillar & Cho 2013; Yim 2002). In such manner, the totalizing grand discourse of the internationalization of HEIs wipes out individual subjectivities of those international students and reaffirms the imagined desire and assumptions of Koreans about Others.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This article is concerned with the discursive representations of international students in the Korean press in light of the ideological workings of discourse and the media's social impact on the public consciousness. Drawing on an analytical framework of critical discourse studies, the present study examines the structures and detailed meanings of the news texts in terms of the three dimensions of the textual features, discursive practices, and social practices. In so doing, the study illuminates the underlying assumptions and ideologies conveyed by the mass media concerning international students. The findings suggest that the media representation of international students are racialized in accordance with stratified power relations in the context of Korean HEIs, and that the racialization and stratification is undergirded primarily by neoliberal capitalist ideology of HEIs, ambivalent diversity discourse of Others, and benevolent care discourse of the minoritized.

In constructing those discourses, the news media deploy a range of discursive strategies to render more newsworthy the issues and incidents pertaining to international students. In particular, the media discourse obscures the distinct characteristics and subjectivities of international students by framing them within the dichotomy of 'us' and 'them', which has been a typical framework to produce and reproduce the asymmetrical relations in terms of other instances of diversity. The old binary construction is a prominent discursive strategy that is commonly employed to position Others in relation to the unmarked category of the majority (Blackledge 2005; Kim 2019). As demonstrated in the conflicts between international students and Korean students, the framing of the news coverage on international students is value laden in that Korean students and their culture is set as a frame of reference with positive identification whereas international students are framed as the opposite Others lacking quality or liabilities on campuses. This discursive strategy attributes specific negative traits to the marked group of international students and results in the construction of certain stereotypes about the minoritized, whereas Korean students come to gain the unmarked category as a norm or standard by default.

Further, both the neoliberal capitalist ideology and the benevolent care discourse prevalent in Korean HEIs serve to accentuate the stratification. Their paradoxical approach to diversity obfuscates the potential of the linguistic, cultural, and intellectual richness brought by international students to the receiving society. International students are habitually depicted in the media texts as commodified resources that are instrumental to the appearance of diversity and internationalization of Korean HEIs (Macdonald 2009). Multiculturalism is romanticized in the neoliberal discourse of diversity (Kim 2017, 2018). Nevertheless, the diverse student populations are being portrayed with negative

connotations as lacking quality and work ethics in tacit comparison to their Korean counterparts. Therefore, they should be in need of 'our' benevolent care and responsibility. The landscape of global diversity on campus is idealized as vibrant and dynamic with diverse people from different parts of the world. However, in reality, the tensions and conflicts are entailed among diverse constituencies over the power struggles. The contradictory media representations of international students indicate that the mass media are a public site manifesting such power struggles through discourse.

The current transnational mobility of inbound students and its impact on Korean higher education cannot be reduced to stereotypical discourses, for instance, of model minority or illegal migrants as revealed in the news media. The dominant discourses are ideological and restrictive, and thus are inadequate to understanding the complexity and multiplicity of the lived experience of contemporary transnationals. More fluid approaches to diversity should be developed to account for the complexity and multiplicity of subjectivities engendered by the transnational mobility of such students. There needs to explore multiple layers of differences within situated contexts characterized by the complexity of the migratory trajectories.

The power struggles manifested in the media discourse in the wake of the transnational mobility would be important and rich areas of research for sociolinguists concerning the interface of the societal and the discursive. Given the ubiquity of language and the significant impact of discourse on public consciousness, future studies should be continued especially by looking at the relations through a critical lens that can inform the understanding of contemporary transnational flows and the impact stemming from multiple layers of variables from varied scales in terms of time and space. And, they should be moving

away from such modernist and essentionalist reactions to Others towards embracing the challenges of diversity.

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