NEGOTIATING MULTIPLE INVESTMENTS
IN LANGUAGES AND IDENTITIES:
THE LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION OF
GENERATION 1.5 KOREAN-CANADIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

The increasing number of immigrants in North America has made Generation 1.5 students--foreign-born children who immigrated to their host country with their first-generation immigrant parents (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988)--a significant population in Canadian and American schools (Fix & Passel, 2003; Gunderson, 2007). Of these students, many enter universities while still in the process of learning English as a second language (ESL). This often presents them with unique educational needs and challenges, which sometimes results in a “deficiency-oriented” view of Generation 1.5 university students (Harklau, 2000). However, much of the immigrant education research has thus far been limited to K-12 students, and the applied linguistics literature on Generation 1.5 university students has mostly examined their experiences within college and university ESL, writing, or composition program settings in the U.S. Therefore, this study addresses the gap in the literature through a qualitative multiple case study exploring the language socialization of seven Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students. Triangulated data were collected over ten months through individual and group interviews with students and three English course instructors, questionnaires, students’ personal writings, and field notes.

Drawing on the perspectives of language socialization (Duff & Hornberger, 2008) and language and identity (Norton, 2000), this study examined the contextual factors involved in the students’ language socialization processes and further investigated how these factors affected the students’ investments in languages and identities, as manifested in their everyday practices. The findings suggest that 1) in an ever-changing globalized world, the characteristics, including the educational goals and needs, of today’s Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian students were considerably different from those of their predecessors; 2) through the complex interplay between their past, present, and future “imagined” experiences, the students were socialized into various beliefs and ideologies about language learning and use, often necessitating negotiations of investments in their identities and in their first, second, and sometimes third languages; and 3) given the diverse backgrounds and linguistic goals of these students, Generation 1.5 language
learners should be seen from a “bi/multilingual and bicultural abilities” perspective rather than from a “deficiency-oriented” perspective. The study concludes with implications for policy, research, and pedagogy.
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Purpose of Study

The increasing number of immigrants in North America has changed the demographics of its schools. In Canada, there has been a steady increase in the number of child immigrants since the 1990s, and recent census data reveal that 21% of the 1.1 million who immigrated between 2001 and 2006 were school-aged children 14 and under (Statistics Canada, 2006a). As a result, those who speak ESL make up 20-50% of the student body in secondary schools across major urban cities, including Calgary, Toronto, and Vancouver (Watt & Roessingh, 2001). In the province of British Columbia alone, students whose primary home language is not English increased from 15.4% in 1995 to 20.7% in 2005. In Vancouver, as of June, 2005, 55.5% of its elementary schools’ populations and 47% of its secondary schools’ populations were ESL speakers (Gunderson, 2007). A similar situation exists in the United States, which now has the largest number of children and adolescent immigrants in its history: 10.5 million—that is, one in five students in Grades K-12—are children of immigrants. And of these students, one quarter is foreign born (Fix & Passel, 2003).

Over the last four decades, there has been a significant amount of research on issues pertaining to the post-1960s immigrants in North America. From the early 1970s to the mid-1980s, studies focused exclusively on the economic and psychological adjustment of the first generation (Danico, 2004). Since the late 1980s social scientists

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1 According to Statistics Canada 1986 and 1991, school aged children made up 14% and 15% of the total immigrant population during 1980-1986 and 1986-1991, respectively. Of the 1.8 million who immigrated to Canada in the 1990s, 17% were school-aged children (Statistics Canada, 2001). This steady increase in the number of school-aged immigrants may be attributable to many families’ desires to provide a better educational environment for their children. This is also the case for most Korean immigrant families, as will be discussed in Chapter 2 as well as in Chapters 4 to 6, where I will introduce the individual participants of the study.

2 These numbers are based on the 2000 U.S. census data. The next census will be conducted in 2010, which may show different numbers.
have expanded their areas of immigrant research to include the children of post-1965 immigrants, namely the second generation. In particular, from the mid-1990s, the availability of census data has allowed for a growing number of systematic, empirical studies on the second generation, although such studies have primarily focused on children below the post-secondary educational level and their issues with ethnic and sociocultural identity (e.g., Jo, 2002; Min & Hong, 2002; Portes & MacLeod, 1999; Rumbaut, 2000). However, despite this vast body of work on the post-1960s immigrants, the research literature has long neglected a particular group of immigrants, namely those foreign-born children who immigrated to their host country with their first generation-immigrant parents who have come to be known as Generation 1.5 students (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). Although the Generation 1.5 population has been in existence since the first generation of post-1960s immigrants, it has been only in the last decade or so that they started gaining recognition and acknowledgement as a salient and distinct group (Danico, 2004).

Regardless, until relatively recently, most research on immigrant education, including Generation 1.5 students, has been limited to K-12 students (Crisostomo & Dee, 2001), and issues pertaining to immigrant students have not received much consideration within the higher education research literature (Roberge, 2001). Since about a decade ago, the changing demographics of North American schools mentioned above has focused attention on Generation 1.5 students in higher education within the applied linguistics literature due to the significant growth in the number of students who graduate from North American high schools and enter post-secondary institutions while still in the process of learning English as their second language (Harklau, Siegal, & Losey, 1999). However, despite the gradual increase in references to Generation 1.5 learners in the applied linguistics literature, in reality, they are often underrepresented and misconstrued or simply homogenized with members of the second generation, or in ESL contexts, with international students. And as Talmy (2005) notes, when they are recognized as a distinct

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3 However, as Harklau et al. (1999) note, because most universities do not possess formal records of students’ native languages, the exact number of ESL students at post-secondary institutions is unclear.
group, they are often perceived as a problematic group who are caught in between two cultural and linguistic worlds.

Within the still-growing applied linguistics literature on Generation 1.5 students, much of the published work has looked at this population within the U.S academic context (e.g., Blumenthal, 2002; Chiang & Schmida, 1999; Harklau, 2000; Harklau, Losey & Siegal, 1999; Leki, 1999; Miele, 2003; Roberge, 2001; Schwartz, 2004; Singhal, 2004; Stegemoller, 2004; Talmy, 2005, 2008; Oudenhoven, 2006; Yi, 2005). In Canada, although several important studies (e.g., Duff, 2001; Early, 1989; Gunderson, 2007; Roessingh & Kover, 2002; Toohey, 1992, 2005; Toohey & Derwing, 2006; Toohey & Gajdamaschok, 2005) have looked at ESL immigrant students’ educational experiences, there is still a lack of research that specifically examines Generation 1.5 university students within Canadian higher education contexts.

Elson (1992) asserts that due to exams that pre-screen students’ English proficiency levels, post-secondary institutions often assume that students have already acquired an adequate level of English prior to admission and believe that such language proficiency tests will relieve them of “the responsibilities to provide the language development framework that is the right of the students” (p. 111). Statistics Canada’s (2006b) “Youth in Transition Survey” seems to also support this view. On one of the multiple choice items, students were asked to indicate possible factors that might interfere with their future educational goals. Possible choices included financial situation, health, and lack of interest, among others, but linguistic difficulties (in either English or French—the two official languages of Canada) were not among these selections. This seems to reflect the belief that language proficiency is not a variable that may affect a student’s academic achievement. In addition, the increasing focus on internationalization of many Canadian universities seems to convey a lack of interest in the immigrant student

4 Some of these studies looked at both 1.5 and second generation immigrants and did not specifically use the term Generation 1.5 to describe the foreign-born immigrant students in their research.

5 The Youth in Transition Survey (YITS) was developed by the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Statistics Canada to examine the educational, training, and work experiences of Canadian youth (Statistics Canada, 2006b).
population. In a published report by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (2001), recruiting international students was stated as a means for economical benefits as well as to bring “an international perspective and more diversity to the classroom” (p. 3). While the internationalization of campuses is indeed likely to bring such features, post-secondary institutions should also acknowledge the heterogeneity of their own domestic students, including immigrant students, who also bring experiences that could make valuable contributions to the diversity of their institutions.

Results from Statistics Canada’s 2000 “Youth in Transition Survey” indicated that immigrant teenagers were more eager to receive higher education than their non-immigrant peers (Kopun, 2006). In addition to such findings, when considering the number of immigrant ESL students who are already a significant part of Canadian secondary schools (Watt & Roessingh, 2001; Gunderson, 2007), and when considering that this number will only continue to increase in the future (Friesen, 2006), it is crucial to recognize that these students will also become an important part of the student body within post-secondary institutions. It is also necessary to note that among these students, many are likely to still be in the process of acquiring linguistic skills in English. This is because although basic communicative competence can generally be acquired in 2-3 years, it can take up to seven or more years before ESL learners can catch up with their native speaker (NS) peers in terms of academic language proficiency (Collier, 1989; Cummins, 1981). Thus, to assume that immigrant university students are no longer faced with challenges related to English could place them in a sink or swim situation (Kiang, 1993). In this respect, institutions need to take on the ethical and educational responsibility to first acknowledge the presence of immigrant ESL students in their classrooms and to make efforts to closely examine the students’ experiences, needs, and goals in order to assist them in meeting their educational objectives. Such efforts are not only in the students’ and the institutions’ best interests but also in the best interests of society as a whole.

In light of the above discussions, this study examines the language learning experiences of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students in Vancouver,
Canada. I have chosen Korean-Canadian students for several reasons. First, Koreans are one of the most rapidly growing immigrant groups in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006a) and are the fourth largest non-European immigrant group in Vancouver. Moreover, 35% of Koreans who immigrated between 1996 and 2000 were in the 5-19 age group (Statistics Canada, 2006a), which indicates that Generation 1.5 youth are a significant part of the overall Korean immigrant population in Canada. Moreover, Korean immigrant youth are likely to be a considerable part of the student body at Canadian universities when considering that children’s educational achievement (especially attending a good university) is the number one reason for Korean families to immigrate to North America (Moon, 2003; Yoon, 2001). Second, I have chosen Korean students as they are part of a racial minority group that has received relatively little attention within the higher education community compared to other ethnic minority students. Suzuki (1994) asserts that due to the “model minority” stereotype, Asian immigrant students have been believed to have few, if any, educational needs in higher education. He further notes that “to even suggest that serious problems exist for Asian Americans in higher education may seem to border on the absurd to many people, especially educators” (p. 259). Yet such perceptions have only perpetuated the essentialized view of all Asian immigrant students and have resulted in a lack of effort to examine their educational needs within higher education. Finally, I was motivated to conduct research on Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian students based on my personal background and experiences. As a Korean international student in Canada (who studied in North American primary and secondary schools for some years), I was interested in and committed to understanding the educational experiences of Korean-Canadian youth.

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6 The “model minority” stereotype emerged in the 1960s in the United States, which depicted Asian-Americans as hardworking overachievers who excelled in math and sciences (Zhou and Lee, 2004). It was in stark contrast to the “yellow peril” view of Asian-Americans that was prevalent prior to the 1960s, during which Asians were seen as “clannish, unassimilable aliens . . . cultures backward, corrupt, or simply negligible” (p. 10).

7 A detailed discussion of my researcher-participant relationship is included in Chapter 3.
1.2 Research Questions

This study examines the academic, linguistic, and sociocultural experiences of a group of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students. In particular, it explores how the students were influenced by various socializing agents within their local and global contexts to form beliefs, ideologies, and goals towards learning and use of their first, second, and sometimes their third languages (L1, L2, L3). The study also investigates the extent to which an examination of the experiences of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students can contribute to new understandings of Generation 1.5 language learners.

The following questions have guided the study:

1) What are the contextual factors that shape the language socialization (LS) processes and outcomes of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students?

2) How do such contextual factors influence the students’ investments in their identities and language learning and use, and how are these investments manifested in their everyday lived experiences?

3) To what extent do the perspectives and experiences of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students help to refine and extend current conceptions of Generation 1.5 language learners?

1.3 Significance of the Study

Most of the applied linguistics research pertaining to Generation 1.5 university students has examined these students’ experiences within college/university ESL, composition, or academic writing programs. While this study also looks at students’ experiences in their university English courses, it goes beyond this setting and explores other micro- and macro-level contextual factors that affect students’ language learning and use in their L1, L2, and sometimes L3. Therefore, this study yields a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of the students’ experiences situated within contemporary Canada and the world. As a result, it is hoped that this study will contribute to a reconceptualization of today’s Generation 1.5 language learners whose experiences may differ substantially from those of previous generations of immigrants in North
America. The study also aims to provide important implications for educators and policy makers to help Generation 1.5 students meet their educational goals and needs.

Furthermore, by tracing the students’ trajectories since their arrival in Canada, this study examines the interplay between the various contextual factors within their past, present, and (imagined) future, which contributes to a broader understanding of the complexities involved in LS processes. Finally, by addressing the gap in the Generation 1.5 student-related literature (particularly in higher education) in the Canadian context, this study seeks to make significant contributions to the applied linguistics literature on Generation 1.5 language learners. That is, the study aims to identify aspects of students’ experiences that are unique to the Canadian context, as well as to Korean-Canadian youth, and to also examine findings that are shared with those of U.S-based studies, thereby expanding our overall understanding of today’s Generation 1.5 immigrant students’ educational experiences, needs, and possibilities.

1.4 Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of eight chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides a review of Generation 1.5-related studies drawing from the fields of applied linguistics, sociology, and migration and ethnic studies. In particular, because this research focuses on the experiences of Generation 1.5 Korean immigrant youth in Canada, the chapter presents a broad and in-depth overview of some of the most salient characteristics and issues pertaining to this group within the North American context. Moreover, it identifies the gap in the Generation 1.5-related applied linguistics literature that warrants further investigation. Finally, the chapter provides a brief overview of LS and language and identity (and related literature), two perspectives that have guided my dissertation research.

Chapter 3 describes the qualitative multiple-case study methodology, which was the selected method of inquiry for this dissertation research. The chapter also discusses the research setting, participants, data collection and analysis procedures, trustworthiness of the study, and other ethical considerations. In the three chapters that follow, the cases of the seven student participants are introduced and discussed in depth. Based on similar
themes that emerged among the seven individual cases, two or three of the students’ cases were combined in each of the analytic chapters, 4, 5, and 6.

Chapter 4 introduces Yellina and Sheila’s cases through an in-depth analysis of their interview data and other relevant data sources. It examines the ways in which these two women have been socialized into various beliefs and ideologies towards English language learning and use and heritage language maintenance in the contexts of their past, present, and (imagined) future. It also looks at the women’s negotiation of investments (Norton, 2000) in languages and identities and how these investments were manifested in their everyday practices. The chapter also identifies similarities between as well as the uniqueness of the individual cases.

Chapter 5 investigates the cases of Hannah, Joon, and Mike. Following the same format as Chapter 4, this chapter discusses some of the major socializing agents that were involved in the students’ LS processes and particularly focuses on the theme of positioning as it related to the students’ experiences.

In Chapter 6, the cases of Yuri and Gilbert are introduced. As in the previous two chapters, the data are analyzed to identify the contextual factors that came into play within the students’ LS processes. In particular, this chapter is organized around the theme of ‘goals’ and how these goals resulted in the students’ constant negotiations of their investments in multiple identities as well as in their L1, L2, and sometimes their L3.

Chapter 7 synthesizes the findings from all seven of the individual cases and identifies the major themes that emerged through a cross-case analysis. This chapter also identifies the broader and more global contextual factors that influenced the students’ socialization processes and looks at the ways in which the seven participants themselves described today’s Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian youth.

Chapter 8 summarizes the findings of the research and discusses the theoretical contribution of this study. It also presents implications for policy and pedagogy, and limitations of the study. The chapter ends with suggested directions for future research on Generation 1.5 language learners.
Chapter 2
GENERATION 1.5 COMMUNITIES,
SECOND LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION, AND IDENTITY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part of this chapter, I will examine some of the defining characteristics of Generation 1.5 learners/populations in relation to their sociocultural, linguistic, and academic experiences. Through this process, I seek to historicize this generation by discovering the socio-political and economic contexts within which they emerged as well as how they are situated in the context of present day and future society. In particular, as my dissertation research examines the experiences of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian students, in this chapter, I will provide an overview of some of the defining characteristics of Generation 1.5 Korean immigrants in North America as well as some of the relevant research pertaining to this group. However, in doing so, I do not claim that such characteristics are limited only to the Korean immigrant community nor do I wish to suggest an essentialized view of all Korean immigrants in North America. There are likely to be differences among the various Generation 1.5 populations depending on the groups’ L1, ethnicities, and other external factors, including social, political, and economic conditions, and place of settlement, among others. Even among Korean immigrants, different contextual factors will result in a broad range of experiences for different Generation 1.5 students. Regardless, findings from studies pertaining to Generation 1.5 Korean immigrants may have implications for other non-Korean Generation 1.5 immigrant groups with regard to their sociocultural and academic experiences and may help identify areas that require further research. Additionally, in suggesting the areas for further investigation regarding Generation 1.5 students, I identify gaps in the applied linguistics literature and call for more studies that understand Generation 1.5 language learners’ issues in relation to both the immediate and broader contextual factors in which their experiences are embedded.
In the second part of this chapter, I introduce the perspectives of language socialization (LS) and language and identity, two approaches that have guided my study towards understanding Generation 1.5 language learners’ issues from a holistic and socially situated viewpoint. I provide examples of recent prominent works that have elaborated or adopted such perspectives, and discuss how they have directed my own dissertation research.

2.2 Definition of Generation 1.5

Although many scholars have made reference to Generation 1.5 students over the years, there is a lack of consensus about whom exactly this population is comprised of. The term *Generation 1.5* was first used in the Korean-American community to describe immigrants who arrived as children (Danico, 2004; Roberge, 2002). *Ilchōmo-se*, which literally means Generation 1.5 in Korean, is commonly used in the Korean and Korean-American media as well as in print and on-line publications, and has spread to other Korean immigrant communities, including those in Canada and Australia. A more thorough discussion of the Korean immigrant communities’ notions of Generation 1.5 will take place in a later section of this chapter.

In the educational research context, Rumbaut and Ima (1988) first used this term to describe the challenges faced by Southeast Asian refugee youth in adapting to their new culture in the U.S. Their description of Generation 1.5 is as follows:

‘1.5’ generation […] are neither part of the ‘first’ generation of their parents, the responsible adults who were formed in the homeland, who made the fateful decision to leave it and to flee as refugees to an uncertain exile in the United States, and who are thus defined by the consequences of that decision and by the need to justify it; nor are these youths part of the ‘second’ generation of children who are born in the U.S., and for whom the ‘homeland’ mainly exists as a representation consisting of parental memories and memorabilia, even though their ethnicity may remain well defined (p. 22).

There are especially mixed views among researchers regarding the exact age at time of immigration that would qualify one as a Generation 1.5. In 1990, Portes and
Rumbaut used the term *one and a half generation* to refer to foreign-born youth who immigrated to the U.S. before the age of twelve. They refer to this group as *one and a half* because they possess traits of both the first and second generation and are often caught between two worlds. However, they do not provide an explanation for why twelve is the maximum age to be included in the group. Following Portes and Rumbaut, Chiang-Hom (2004) also defines Generation 1.5 as those who arrived during their primary school years, while those who arrived after puberty are considered the first generation. Zhou (2004), on the other hand, notes that although Generation 1.5 includes those who immigrated to the U.S. prior to adolescence, this group is sometimes categorized together with the new second generation (U.S.-born children of the first generation) based on similar linguistic, sociocultural and developmental experiences. Some scholars, including Vigil, Yun, and Cheng (2004) and Lay (2004), do not differentiate between those who arrived prior to or after adolescence, and all those who immigrated before or during secondary school are given the generic label of “immigrant youth.” In contrast, Gans (2000) goes as far as dividing foreign-born youth into three groups: Generation 1.25, Generation 1.5, and Generation 1.75, although such distinctions are rather uncommon in the literature.8

There are also various working definitions of who makes up this population in the Korean-American studies literature. For example, according to Hurh (1993), Generation 1.5 immigrants are “bilingual and bicultural . . . who immigrated . . . in early or middle adolescence, generally between the ages of eleven and sixteen” (p.19). This age range is based on the ability of the person to have acquired proficiency in the English language as well as familiarity with American culture. At the same time, they have acquired and have the ability to maintain their level of Korean language proficiency as well as their memories of Korean culture. Danico (2004) defines Generation 1.5 Korean-American immigrants as those who were born in Korea and immigrated to the U.S. with their

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8 Gans (2000) refers to Generation 1.5 as those who immigrate as youngsters and who receive some or most of their education in the U.S. However, he does not provide the exact age of immigration that would categorize these youngsters into Generation 1.25, 1.5, and 1.75, respectively.
families before the age of 13, have memories of Korea, and are consciously bicultural. They are fluent in English and conversational Korean, can inter-mingle Korean, Korean-American and local ethnic expressions, and have an appreciation of Korean culture. She does not limit the minimum age of immigration but does choose 13 as the maximum age to define this generation since those who immigrated prior to their preteens can “pass” as native born as a result of their non-accented English speech, and can switch between their generational boundaries. That is, the Generation 1.5 individual can “fit in” relatively well in different situations by presenting themselves as first, second, 1.5 generation or as Korean, Korean-American, or local. In this respect, because teen immigrants are less likely to be taken as native born, she excludes them from the Generation 1.5 category. She also argues that the 1.5 generation is clearly different from the second generation since the second generation includes American-born people who speak English as their dominant language and cannot relate to the immigrant experience. On the other hand, Park (1999) places more emphasis on the bicultural/multicultural aspect of the group rather than on their linguistic dimension. She defines Generation 1.5 as those who immigrated as minors (including infants, children, and adolescents) as well as those born in the host country “who practice aspects of biculturalism and multiculturalism” (p. 158). Some researchers simply assume the experiences of the second and 1.5 generation to be the same, and their working definition of Generation 1.5 includes those who immigrated to North America before the age of fourteen (e.g., Lee, 2003). For the purpose of my own dissertation research, I have broadly defined this population as immigrant youth who arrived in their host country during their primary or secondary school years. Roberge (2002) argues that a broader and more flexible definition of Generation 1.5 students is needed due to the increasingly diverse nature of language minority communities and the blurred boundaries between such communities. Like Roberge, I do not wish to box Generation 1.5 students within rigid boundaries,

9 In Danico’s (2004) study, “local” culture refers to local Hawaiian culture.

10 This is especially true of second-generation students who grow up speaking their parents’ L1 and not English, especially in ethnolinguistic enclaves.
especially considering the hybrid nature of many of their lives. More importantly, however, rather than adapting a clear-cut definition of these students, I seek to give voice to the students who participated in my study, allowing them a chance to describe in their own words 1) who Generation 1.5 immigrants are (in particular, Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadians); 2) what contextual factors led them to such definitions; and 3) what they feel are the salient characteristics of this population.

2.3 Korean-American Creation of Generation 1.5

2.3.1 Korean Immigration to North America

In order to understand the historical contexts in which the concept of Generation 1.5 emerged within Korean communities, it is important to understand the history of Korean immigration to North America. Therefore, I will first provide a brief historical overview of Korean immigration to Canada and the United States. Then, I will discuss some of the salient characteristics of post-1960s Korean immigrants in North America.¹¹

2.3.1.1 Canada

Largely due to the short history of Korean immigration to Canada, few studies have investigated the experiences of Korean-Canadians.¹² The history of Korean-Canadian immigration can be divided into three waves. The “pioneer” generation, who arrived between 1965 and 1975, was mostly white collar professionals consisting of doctors, nurses, engineers, and academics (including graduate students). The second wave of Korean immigrants was either relatives or families of the first wave of immigrants or independent white/blue collar workers, who first arrived between 1975 and

¹¹ I mark the 1960s as an important turning point as it was during this time that immigration policies excluding Asian immigrants from entering the U.S and Canada were abolished. As a result, it was since the mid 1960s that there has been a drastic increase of Asian immigrants to North America, including Koreans (Min, 1995; Song, 1997).

¹² Korean-Canadian diplomatic relations began during the Korean War when Canadian troops were deployed as part of the UN Command. It is believed that the first group of Korean immigrants entered Canada in the 1950s, mainly comprised of war brides and orphans as well as government sponsored orphans. They were listed as “other Asians” prior to 1965, and from the general Canadian public’s perception, Korean identity has been for a long time synonymous with Chinese identity. The Korean-Canadian community was not established until the removal of Canada’s color-conscious immigrant policies in the 1960s (Song, 1997).
1985. The final and current wave is characterized as *investment Koreans*, who began arriving around 1985 and continue to immigrate up to the present. This group of *t’ujain* (which means *investors* in Korean) generally operates various businesses, and often spends relatively equal amounts of time in both Korea and Canada.\(^{13}\) Thus, they are often referred to as “astronaut immigrants” by the first two waves of immigrants (Song, 1997).\(^{14}\) According to Statistics Canada (2006a), there currently are about 100,000 Korean immigrants in Canada, the majority of them residing in Toronto or Vancouver.\(^{15}\) More than half of this population have arrived since 1996 and over 35,000 arrived between 2001 and 2006. Today, Koreans are the sixth largest non-European ethnic group in Canada and the fourth largest in Vancouver. It is anticipated that the number of Korean immigrants in Canada will continue to grow as Canada has become the number one destination for Korean emigrants since the late 1990s (Yoon, 2001).\(^{16}\) In addition to its

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\(^{13}\) Here, it is important to note that although this group is often referred to as *investors*, their primary reason for immigration is not limited to economic investment. As will be discussed in a later section of this chapter as well as in Chapters 4-6, educational investment for their children is also one of the most important reasons for immigration for many Korean families.

\(^{14}\) This notion of astronaut immigrants will be explored further in a later discussion of *kirŏgi* (wild geese) families.

\(^{15}\) Although 100,000 may not be a large number in comparison to the over one million Chinese immigrants in Canada, it is important to note that the number of Korean immigrants has almost doubled since the 1996 census. Since 1999, Canada has been the leading country to which Koreans emigrated, and in 2000 over 60% of all Korean emigrants left for Canada (Yoon, 2001). In 2003, Hyundai Home Shopping, a leading Korean home-shopping channel, sold almost 80 million dollars worth of their “Canada immigration package” in two days. As part of this package, Hyundai included services that would help speed the immigration application process and also help customers to secure jobs in Canada. This package was later criticized for having several flaws, yet until April, 2008, it was recorded as the highest selling item in Korean home-shopping history.

\(^{16}\) There are various explanations for the popularity of Canada as a destination for Korean emigrants. For instance, Han & Ibbott (2004) claim that the depreciation of the Canadian dollar has resulted in Koreans choosing Canada over the United States, which had been the leading destination for Koreans for over 35 years. Park (2006) explains that relatively less complex immigration procedures, a developed educational and social welfare system as well as the overall high quality of life are some of the reasons Koreans are drawn to Canada. The increased “English language boom” in Korea has also attracted Koreans to other English-speaking countries (like Australia and New Zealand), yet Park claims that Canada is better known among Koreans as a multicultural nation. Thus, many Koreans assume that they will face less racism in Canada compared to other English-speaking immigrant host countries. In addition to these reasons, Kim (2008) suggests that Canada has become an attractive destination for Korean families who are seeking cleaner environments for their children.
short history of immigration, Korean immigrants in Canada are also relatively young in age. In 2001, 41% of all Korean-Canadians were 25 or younger. This could be explained by the fact that the majority of Korean immigrants arrived under the independent or business categories and as families, typically consisting of middle-aged parents and their adolescent children. Consequently, 35% of the newly arrived Korean immigrants between 1996 and 2000 were in the 5-19 age group (Statistics Canada, 2006a).

2.3.1.2 The United States

The year 2003 marked the centennial year of Korean immigration to the U.S. For the last 100 years, there have been three significant waves of Korean immigrants. The third wave, which began with the Immigration and Nationalization Act of 1965, constitutes the majority of Koreans presently residing in the U.S.¹⁷ Today, there are over one million Koreans living in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003), although since 1988, there has been a trend of return migration to Korea, especially among the first generation, mostly due to their inability to adjust to life in America, increased quality of life available in Korea, and homesickness (Hurh, 1998; Yoon, 2001).¹⁸

2.3.2 Characteristics of the Post-1960s Korean Immigrants in North America

2.3.2.1 Downward Mobility: Self Employment in Small Businesses

Most of the new Korean immigrants since 1965 are from urban, middle class families and backgrounds. They were highly educated in Korea, yet due to low job transferability and lack of English proficiency, many experienced downward occupational mobility upon immigration to the U.S. In response to this occupational

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¹⁷ The first wave started in 1903 when 121 Koreans, 80% of whom were poor, illiterate, Christian bachelors in their 20s and 30s, landed in Hawaii to work in sugar plantations. The second wave of Korean immigrants resulted from the Korean War in 1950, and from 1951 to 1964, most Korean immigrants were the wives of soldiers who fought in the Korean War. An additional 6,300 war orphans were adopted by American families and another 5,000 students also arrived during that time although not much is known about these two groups (Hurh, 1998).

¹⁸ Throughout this dissertation, I use the term first generation to refer to those who immigrated to their host country as adults, namely, the parents of the 1.5 and second generation groups.
barrier, Koreans have chosen self-employment, making them the highest, in numerical terms, self-employed group of all Asian immigrants in the U.S. (Hurh, 1998).

Like the situation in the U.S., the educational and professional credentials of Korean immigrants are often not recognized in the Canadian job market. Thus, despite the fact that among the top ten immigrant groups, Koreans (age 25 and up) have the highest level of education at the time of arrival in Canada (B.C. Stats, 2001), they have limited access to employment opportunities in their original areas of training (Yoon, 2001). Consequently, although most recent immigrants were admitted under the class of entrepreneurs (since 1999, Koreans were the largest group of entrepreneur immigrants in British Columbia), the biggest occupational category of Korean immigrants in Canada is retail and/or small business. Such occupational barriers, lack of language proficiency, and ethnic enclosure may have prevented Korean immigrants, especially the first generation adult immigrants, from assimilating into the larger society.\(^{19}\) Hence, downward mobility is often perceived as one of the most significant sacrifices made by the parents for the sake of their children’s future and a factor which motivates many 1.5 and second-generation Korean youths to excel in their academic and professional careers (Choi, Cranley, & Nichols, 2001).\(^{20}\)

### 2.3.2.2 The Pivotal Role of Korean Christian Churches

The foundations of the Korean-American and Canadian community were built around Korean Christian churches, and they still remain the core of both the religious and sociocultural activities of Korean immigrants. In fact, two thirds of all Korean-Americans are affiliated with a Korean Christian church (Hurh & Kim, 1990, Min, 2000). The Korean church is a place for ethnic solidarity, especially for the first generation. It is also

\(^{19}\) Although the situation has been gradually improving, compared to other immigrant groups, a significantly higher proportion of Koreans (62.3% compared to 50% of overall immigrants between 1996 and 2000) immigrated without any knowledge of the English language. (B.C Stats, 2001) In addition, Min (1995) asserts that compared with other ethnic immigrant groups, rather than branching out, Korean first-generation immigrants tended to remain relatively more separate from the host culture.

\(^{20}\) This phenomenon of downward mobility is not uncommon among many other immigrant groups where immigrant parents are unable to find jobs with the same amount of prestige that they had in their home countries (Iredale, Guo & Rozario, 2003; Louie, 2004).
a place where they teach Korean culture and language to their children. This is reflected in the fact that more Korean families with one or more school-aged children attend Korean churches than those without children, in order to provide their children with Korean language and cultural education (Hurh, 1998). The church is also significant to the first generation because this is where their pre-immigrant status and educational backgrounds are recognized and validated. Thus, they are granted a status that they cannot obtain in mainstream society (Song, 1997). However, it is interesting to note that although they still attend church regularly, because many 1.5 and second-generation young adults cannot relate to this need for status and are often dissatisfied with the gender roles of their parents, over 80% of them have left their immigrant parents’ ethnic churches and have gravitated to other churches or ethnic campus ministries (Kim, 2004).

2.3.2.3 Emphasis on Educational Achievement

Like many other immigrants from Asia and elsewhere, the most important reason for Koreans’ immigration to the U.S. and Canada is for the education of their children (Hurh, 1998; Moon, 2003; Yoon, 2001). This heavy emphasis on education originates from the long history of Confucian teachings in Korea which stress learning as the best way to obtain wisdom and virtue, and the historical legacy of obtaining social mobility through education that is deeply rooted in Korean society. Thus, it is not uncommon for Korean parents to give up a stable life in Korea and emigrate in order to provide better educational opportunities for their children, even if it entails undergoing downward occupational mobility as a result (Kim, 1993). Korean parents view good education as the most secure means to success and often decide where to live (both in Korea and abroad) based mainly on the quality of public schools in the neighborhood, and many send their children to private after-school programs (Min, 1996; Lee & Zhou, 2004). Accordingly, Koreans show the highest rate of residence in suburban neighborhoods among all ethnic minority groups in the U.S. (Hurh, 1998).

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21 This emphasis on education can also be found among other ethnic groups and has been discussed in various studies that have looked at the experiences of Vietnamese, Chinese, and Hmong-American immigrants (e.g., Kibria, 1993; Lee, 2004; Louie, 2004).
This passion for education has resulted in the high achievement of many Korean-American youth in academics, and they are labeled, along with other Asian-American groups, “model minority” youth (Min, 1995; Silwany, 2007). Many Asian-American youth focus their studies on medicine, business, law, or engineering based on their emphasis on social prestige and economic rewards (Gordon, 2000; Louie, 2004; Pai 1993). Korean youth are no exception, and as Ok and Baek (2000) and Park (2005) assert, most Korean parents desire their children to become doctors, engineers, lawyers or entrepreneurs. However, it is also worth noting here that their concentration on science and technical areas may be attributed to the fact that access to non-academic success is limited because “academic achievement is one of the few routes to social mobility open to Asians in American culture. . . For most Asian youngsters, who see most non-academic pathways to success blocked off, they have ‘no choice’ but to apply themselves in school” (Steinberg, 1996, p. 46).

Included in the notion of children’s education is the opportunity for the children to acquire a certain level of English proficiency. Many parents feel that in this era of globalization, their children cannot obtain a competitive level of English proficiency through the Korean educational system (which places too much emphasis on the university entrance exam), and thus decide to emigrate to English-speaking countries. A new type of immigrant group is emerging from this obsession with the English language, where only some members of the family, usually the mother and the children, emigrate while the father stays in Korea and supports his emigrant family financially, creating the kirōgi family (wild geese family) syndrome (Yoon, 2001).

2.3.2.4 Leadership of the First Generation

Unlike many immigrant communities whose leadership is now in the hands of the second or third generation, the leadership of the Korean immigrant community in North America still remains largely in the hands of the first generation (Hurh, 1998). As briefly mentioned above in my discussion of Korean ethnic churches, the first generation is often able to obtain an executive, authoritative, and high-status position, at least within the Korean immigrant community, through voluntary participation in leadership positions.
This partially compensates for their downward occupational adjustment, and they feel a sense of honor and pride through financial contributions and the demonstration of leadership skills (Song, 1997). In addition, as representatives of their communities, they establish relations with Korean government officials, and thus gain official recognition at public events. On the other hand, the new investment immigrants, who have not experienced as much professional or economic marginalization as the first and second wave of immigrants, are not as motivated to participate in Korean immigrant society. In addition, the children of immigrants do not necessarily face the same obstacles in terms of career opportunities, having been educated within the North American system. Thus, their sense of status may not be limited to the boundaries of the Korean ethnic community. Nonetheless, as a result of the first generation’s central role, the overall Korean-North American immigrant community has a very strong ethnic identity and possesses a strong desire to preserve the Korean language and culture (Min & Kim, 1999; Lee, 2004; Yoon, 1995).

2.3.3 The Generation 1.5 Phenomenon

The vast majority of the over one million Korean-Americans live in metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles and New York City, and accordingly, the term ilchomose (literally meaning Generation 1.5 in Korean) was first used within the Korean-American communities in Los Angeles and New York in the 1970s and was popularized by first-generation Korean community leaders (Hurh, 1998; Park, 1999; Danico, 2004). It was in the early 1980s that the editor of the Korea Times (English Edition), K.W. Lee, first wrote about the Generation 1.5 Korean-Americans and described them as a “transitional

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22 According to Song (1997), first-generation Korean immigrants, especially those from the first and second wave of immigration to Canada, have accumulated capital as small business operators. Thus, they have substituted wealth as the more significant indicator of social status compared to the traditional symbol of status indicated by one’s profession.

23 Within the Korean context, the concept of Generation 1.5 became more commonly known to native Koreans after a Korean drama, titled Ilchomo (One point Five) aired on one of Korea’s most popular television channels in 1995. The main characters of the drama were Generation 1.5 Korean-American youth, who were depicted as heavily lacking in their knowledge of Korean language and culture.
cultural phenomenon before the numerical dominance of the second generation” (Park, 1999, p. 140) within the Korean-American community.

Hurh’s (1993) article is the only published work to date that provides an explanation of the context in which this generation emerged. He offers four factors which created the Generation 1.5 phenomenon: 1) the large proportion of adolescent Korean immigrants; 2) functional bilingualism and biculturalism which were facilitated through the parents’ high socioeconomic background; 3) the centripetal as well as centrifugal nature of the Korean-American community; and 4) the first generation’s adhesive mode of adaptation, which implies that regardless of their length of residence in the U.S and their rates of acculturation, the first-generation immigrants are still very attached to their ethnic culture and society.

Here, I would like to note that the above four factors are certainly not limited only to the Korean-American community. However, the concept of Generation 1.5 is relatively more well-known and commonly used within Korean immigrant communities even compared to other Asian-American immigrant communities (Park, 1999). For instance, Japanese immigrants are referred to simply as issei, nissei, and sansei (first, second, and third generation, where the second and third generations are those born in their immigrant host countries), while Chinese and South Asian groups often refer to them as the knee-high generation (Danico, 2004).

2.3.3.1 Adolescent Korean Immigration

The proportion of adolescent (people under the age of 20) Korean-American immigrants had continuously been the highest among all Asian-American immigrant groups in the US from the early 1970s to the mid 1980s, averaging around 37.9%. Almost 15% of them were between the ages of 10 and 19, which again is a relatively higher proportion than other Asian immigrant groups like Japanese, Chinese, or Filipinos. Thus, considering this large number of adolescent immigrants during the 1970s up to the mid-1980s, it is not surprising that the term Generation 1.5 was first coined in the early 1980s (Hurh, 1993).
2.3.3.2 Parents’ Socioeconomic Background and Children’s Functional Bilingualism and Biculturalism

According to Hurh (1993), the attainment of functional bilingualism and biculturalism involves four socialization or acculturation dimensions for Korean-Americans. These include the enculturation of Korean language and cultural values, which mostly takes place in Korea prior to emigration and the acquisition of English and American values, which are mostly experienced after their immigration to the U.S. Hurh claims that the process of successful socialization of these dimensions is highly dependent on a variety of variables, among which the parents’ socio-economic backgrounds play a significant role. This is true in the case of Korean immigrants who immigrated to the U.S. since the 1970s, as most of them came from relatively high socioeconomic backgrounds and continue to be one of the most highly educated immigrant groups in the U.S. (Hurh, 1998).

2.3.3.3 The Centripetal and Centrifugal Nature of the Korean-American Community

Korean immigrants, the second generation in particular, are scattered in middle class neighborhoods in the suburbs within the major metropolitan areas (the first generation especially look for areas with a good reputation for public schools). Hurh (1993) refers to this as a centrifugal development, where the second generation has left the immigrant enclaves, both physically and psychologically. On the other hand, the first generation is more centripetal, meaning regional immigrant enclaves or “Korea towns” remain a “sociocultural microcosm” (Hurh, 1993, p. 22), where first-generation Koreans share “support, recognition, and a reason for being” (p. 22) and a center for

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24 There are significant differences among the first, second and third wave of immigrants. The first and second wave of immigrants did not have high socioeconomic or educational backgrounds and generally did not immigrate with their adolescent children (Hurh, 1998).

25 Hurh claims that this centrifugal development has already been experienced by the Japanese and Chinese immigrant communities, who have a longer immigration history in the U.S.
ethnic businesses and sociocultural activities. Hence, despite their residence in the suburbs, the first generation still seeks a sense of ethnic community in “Korea town.”

2.3.3.4 The Adhesive Adaptation Mode of the First Generation

First-generation Korean immigrants show a strong sense of ethnic attachment, regardless of their length of residence in the U.S. Ryu (1991) suggests that first-generation Koreans believe that unless you die and are buried in a land, you cannot claim that land as home, for home is where your ancestors are buried. Hurh (1993) claims that it is based on this mindset that first-generation immigrants take on the adhesive model of acculturation, where “certain aspects of the new culture and social relations with members of the host society are appended to the immigrants’ traditional culture and social networks, without significantly replacing or modifying them” (Hurh, 1998, p. 165). Therefore, the Generation 1.5 person’s ability to develop and maintain bilingualism and biculturalism was a byproduct of the above adhesive and centripetal adaptation tendencies of the first-generation parents as they expected their Generation 1.5 children to be “linguistic and cultural brokers while remaining loyal to family and ethnic community” (Park, 1999, p. 140). Furthermore, based on their bilingualism and biculturalism, they also expected Generation 1.5 youth to be bridge-builders between the first and second generation.

2.4 Generation 1.5 Research

2.4.1 Identity and Generation 1.5

Early works on the Generation 1.5 population have often depicted them as a group caught between two worlds. When sociologists Rumbaut and Ima (1988) first coined the term Generation 1.5, it was used to describe the population of Southeast Asian refugee youths they studied in San Diego. They stated:

26 “Korea towns” in major metropolitan cities in the U.S. are now mainly occupied by the Latino immigrant communities (Min, 1996).

27 Kim, Brenner, Liang, & Asay (2003) also report on the bicultural and bilingual characteristics of Generation 1.5 Asian-American university students, who served as cultural brokers for their families.
They are those young people who were born in their countries of origin but formed in the U.S. (that is, they are completing their education in the U.S. during the key formative periods of adolescence and early adulthood) . . . They are in many ways marginal to both the new and old worlds, for while they straddle both worlds they are in some profound sense fully part of neither of them (p. 22).

For the most part, this image of Generation 1.5 continues till today and Generation 1.5 youth are believed to be a group not fully belonging to either world, hence suffering from an identity crisis (Ryu, 1991). Oudenhoven (2006) suggests that while in the process of “creating new lives, learning new skills, and forging new identities . . . they are often caught between two cultures, two languages, and two identities” (p. 318). Thus, as Talmy (2005) asserts, more often than not, the Generation 1.5 population’s range of identity has been simply confined to two worlds, where they are struggling between two cultures and two languages “with their feet at once in two worlds and in neither” (p. 54).

Early Korean-American literature often echoed the above view. For instance, Ryu (1991) characterizes this group as marginalized and claims that “the 1.5 generation can be forever lost, and most of them are lost” (p. 51). As a result of their sense of alienation, they withdraw from social involvement, and in extreme cases, join Korean-American gangs. Ryu claims that most Korean-American gangs are indeed made up of Generation 1.5 immigrants because that is where they find a sense of structure, validation, and belonging. The Du-San on-line encyclopedia (one of the best known on-line encyclopedias in Korea) also provides the following essentialized view of Generation 1.5 immigrants (original text in Korean):

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28 Lee (2004) investigates the experiences of Hmong-American youth and argues that there is also a strong stereotype that simply confines Hmong immigrant youth to either model minorities or delinquents. In addition to the model minority/delinquent dichotomy, Asian-American youth are sometimes stigmatized as either “Fresh off the Boat” (FOB) or a “banana.” The term “FOB” often refers to Asian immigrants who are not yet assimilated to the American way of life (Eble, 1996). On the other hand, “banana” often refers to Asian immigrants who have assimilated to North American ways of life in terms of language, behaviors and values (Kao, 1997). More detailed discussions of these concepts will follow in Chapter 5.
This term refers to those Korean immigrant youth in the U.S who are neither the first nor second generation. They exist between the first and second generation and agonize over the question of ‘Who am I?’ Because they immigrated during their adolescent or pre-teen years, they understand both American and Korean cultures and languages. However, this term refers to a ‘wandering generation’ because although they are U.S. citizens they still perceive themselves as Korean; hence, they are unable to adapt to either American or Korean culture. The first generation is busy making a living. The second generation was born and raised in the U.S. and thus identify themselves as American. Therefore, they rarely experience crises as a result of cultural conflicts or linguistic difficulties. On the other hand, Generation 1.5 youths are caught in between two cultures and languages, not knowing what to do (TuSan Encyclopedia, 2006; my translation).

Hurh (1993), coming from a sociological viewpoint, claims that there are two types of Generation 1.5: 1) a successful cosmopolitan type who has creativity, leadership, a strong sense of Korean-American ethnicity, and is actively involved in both ethnic and mainstream American society and 2) the negative marginalized type who is reserved, socially isolated, exhibits inferiority complexes and hypersensitivity. Although Hurh does not necessarily argue that Generation 1.5 immigrants are caught in between two worlds, he nonetheless provides an extreme, ‘either/or’ perspective of the group.

More recently, however, scholars have argued against the essentialization of immigrant youths’ identities, including that of Generation 1.5, claiming that one’s sense of identity is dynamic with multiple dimensions affected by social environments, sociopolitical interests and transnational experiences (e.g., Jo, 2002; Kibria, 2000; Lee, 2001; Lien, Conway, and Wong, 2003; Park, 2001; Roberge, 2002; Talmy, 2005). Some have adapted the notions of *hybrid identities* or *third space* (e.g., Bhabha, 1990; Kramsch, 2000).

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29 While interviewing the participants in my study, I asked them to read and provide their thoughts about this description of Generation 1.5 immigrants (I provided both the original Korean text and my own translated English version). I will discuss the students’ reactions to this passage in Chapter 7.
to describe the identities immigrant youths create which go beyond simplified ethnic labels such as Korean, Puerto Rican, or Chinese.

Park (1999) investigates the sociocultural, political, and economic contexts in which the identities and definitions of Generation 1.5 Korean-Americans are created. Based on ethnographic interviews with 117 Korean-Americans in their twenties or early thirties, Park suggests that the identities of Generation 1.5 Korean-Americans are fluid and constantly changing. For instance, many of her interviewees claimed to have adopted American, Asian-American, and Korean-American identities at different points in their lives. In this process, they often “demystify images and identities of Korea and the U.S.” (p. 158) and develop a more complex understanding of each country. Thus, Park argues that biculturalism and multiculturalism are the most significant criteria in defining the Generation 1.5 group. For this reason Park claims that even U.S.-born Korean-Americans whose demographic characteristics define them to be second generation could also be seen as culturally Generation 1.5, based on their affiliation with Korean culture and the Korean-American community. He further suggests that the changing structure of the global political economy, the rising economic status of Korea, the post-civil-rights racial structure in the U.S., and the image of Asian-Americans as the “model minority” establish the contexts in which Generation 1.5 Korean-Americans form their own construct of self and community.

Danico (2004) also argues that Generation 1.5 immigrants are not caught between two worlds, but rather have the option to identify with and flow between generations and switch their ethnic identities. In her investigation of Generation 1.5 Korean youth in Hawaii, her participants first acquired negative stereotypes of Korean “FOB” immigrants; thus, this shame led them to desire to pass as second-generation Korean-Americans or as “local” Hawaiians. However, through meeting other Generation 1.5 peers, they discovered shared experiences and positive Generation 1.5 identities, found an appreciation for the uniqueness of their group, and tried to create more positive images of the Korean-American community. Although Danico’s work deserves much credit as one of the very few empirical studies examining Generation 1.5 Korean youth, the fact that
her participants were investigated within the contexts of Hawaii—a state where the majority of the population are Asians—must be taken into account when considering the positive ethnic identities her participants were able to create. In today’s racialized world, the experiences of Generation 1.5 immigrant youth (Koreans in particular) in Canada or the continental U.S. could be quite different from those in the context of Hawaii.30

2.4.1.1 Generation 1.5 Korean Immigrants’ Identity Changes across Time and Place

The notion of Generation 1.5 was created in the 1980s when the socio-historical contexts of both North America and Korea were clearly different from those of today. Not only were Korean immigrants smaller in number, but their status as an immigrant group or as Asian-Americans was also not as high as it is now. Likewise, post-1965 immigrants differed from the first and second wave of immigrants, whose sense of national identity was quite strong due to the loss of their homeland during Japan’s colonization of Korea or the division of Korea during the Korean War (Cho, 2003).

At present, a larger number of Koreans and Asians in North America are generally being recognized as successful immigrants (although this notion of “model minority” is also being problematized). Korea has also emerged as a key player in Asia-Pacific politics and economics. Furthermore, today’s advanced digital technology, means of transportation, and the internet enable immigrants to visit, communicate, and stay in touch with their native homelands far better than they could two decades ago. Many Korean immigrant youth listen to Korean pop music, watch Korean movies and dramas, and search Korean websites. Thus, in a context where it has become much easier to maintain closer ties with the native land, today’s Korean immigrant youth may have a stronger ethnic attachment, and the process of “North Americanization” can be much slower than for not only the first and second waves of Korean immigrants but also the for immigrants of the 1970s and 1980s. Consequently, Hurh (1998) suggests that these

30 For example, in her 2004 study of immigrant Chinese youth (those who immigrated during their adolescent years) in the U.S., Chiang-Hom discovers that her participants did not feel that they had the option to become either Chinese or American. Thus, they were assertive about maintaining their Chinese identity because they either felt that they would never be true Americans based on their race or chose not to identify as Americans because they did not want to lose their distinct identity by being “less Asian.”
immigrants are capable of going back “home” anytime. Hence, it is within this global structure that the present day Generation 1.5 Korean youth construct and develop a sense of self and community, and the context in which they create and negotiate their identities may not limited to the immediate physical location they reside in.

How Generation 1.5 Korean youth will construct their identities in the future will again depend on the historical framework at that particular time. As images of Asians have developed from the “yellow peril” to the “model minority,” the image of future Asian-North Americans may evolve yet again. The notion of what it means to be Korean may also gradually differ as the socioeconomic contexts of Korea are transformed. Korea is now slowly emerging as a target of immigration for many workers from Southeast Asia.31 In this respect, although certainly not in the immediate future, the gradual increase of immigrant workers may change the current notion of “Koreanness” and what it means to be a true “Korean.” As Fischer (1986) claims, “ethnicity is not something that is simply passed on from generation to generation, taught and learned; it is something dynamic” (p. 195). In this sense, the notion of ethnic identity cannot be simplified or understood within an ahistoric context. Rather, it is continuously being negotiated by individuals within the socio-political, economic, historical context in which they are situated.32 It is this dynamic and complex view of identity that has guided my own study;

31 To date, such immigrant workers face much discrimination and are not granted many of the legal rights of native Koreans, and most Koreans do not view them as legitimate members of Korean society. However, Koreans can no longer deny the existence of these immigrants in their land and the important role they play in the small businesses of the Korean economy. Many of these workers have either married native Koreans or are raising children in Korea, who are attending Korean public schools. Non-governmental organizations in Korea have been battling for the humane and equal treatment of these immigrant workers that will grant them rightful membership in Korean society. Lim (2002) argues that whether Koreans like it or not, Korea has already become a land of immigration.

32 Chun (2004), for instance, examines the dramatic shift in ethnic identity among Chinese-Americans in the 1930s and 1950s. In the former period, many Chinese-Americans chose to return to China due to the racial discrimination they experienced in the U.S. However, during the 1950s, when China turned communist, many Chinese-Americans severed all ties to their homeland and assertively adopted American ideals and an American identity. Thus, Chun argues that this shift in ethnic identity was a result of the social, economical, and political context and constraints experienced by Chinese-American immigrants at that time.
thus, I will address the multifaceted nature of Generation 1.5 youths’ identities through the analyses of the data from my own participants.

2.4.2 Generation 1.5 and Language Learning

2.4.2.1 Generation 1.5 in Higher Education

The term *Generation 1.5* is a relatively new concept in the field of applied linguistics. Issues pertaining to the language education of immigrant students are certainly not new in the field. However, as previously mentioned, most research on immigrant language education has been limited to K-12 students, and research on ESL students, in higher education in particular, has centered almost exclusively on international students (Bosher & Rowekamp, 1992; Crisostomo & Dee 2001; Harklau et al., 1999). Hence, the majority of the literature on ESL students in higher education assumes that international students are “the normative population of ESL classrooms . . . students with limited exposure to U.S. society or the English language” (Harklau et al., 1999, p.2). However, Generation 1.5 students’ language learning experiences and needs may be considerably different from those of international students who are often equipped with relatively more socio-economic and intellectual capital (Roberge, 2001).

2.4.2.2 Not All ESL Students are Created Equal

The above perception of ESL students has been reflected in institutional practices, and until about a decade ago, the characteristics and needs of Generation 1.5 students were either unknown or met with complete indifference by many universities and colleges who chose to ignore the pressing concerns of this population of students (Elson, 1992). Gray, Rolph, and Melamid (1996) argue that many institutions have chosen not to distinguish among entering students based on their linguistic backgrounds, which Harklau et al. (1999) further criticize as a result of “institutional reluctance to take on the issue of linguistic diversity” (p. 6).

When colleges and universities could no longer ignore the presence of immigrant linguistic minority students on their campuses, ESL classes started being offered to these students. However, these students were often (and still often continue to be) put into classes designed for international students, and the majority of institutions offered ESL
classes as non-credit bearing courses that were prerequisites to regular first-year composition classes (Williams, 1995). This assumed homogeneity of ESL students is reflected in pedagogical practices, where Generation 1.5 students categorized as ‘ESL’ students, are constantly positioned as outsiders by ESL class instructors who frequently ask students to write “immigrant narratives” or about “your country” (Harklau, 2000, p. 55).  

In her groundbreaking study on immigrant students’ transition from secondary school to college, Harklau (2000) argues that the trouble with placing Generation 1.5 students in ESL classes is not necessarily in the teaching of academic literacy skills; for, as revealed through Harklau’s participants, many Generation 1.5 students are generally aware that there is always room for more improvement in their English language skills. Rather, resentment towards placement in college ESL classes is ignited when writing programs presume that *all* their students need cultural orientation, including those Generation 1.5 students who have already experienced North American culture during secondary school. Thus, despite their familiarity with North American culture, Generation 1.5 students are often perceived as cultural novices who need to be introduced to not only the norms of college but also to the norms of acceptable behavior in North American society in general. Although such teachings may be welcomed by international or newly arrived immigrant students, this is often not the case with Generation 1.5 students. In fact, such practices are often insulting to many Generation 1.5 students who had striven to escape the “FOB” stigma frequently attached to ESL students during their high school years (Blanton, 1999; Talmy, 2005). In her study of Latino Generation 1.5 college students, Oudenhoven (2006) states that Generation 1.5 students would rather be enrolled in remedial English classes with native-speaker (NS) students than be placed in ESL classes with international, non-native-speaker (NNS) students.

By labeling a person as an ESL learner, there is an underlying assumption that despite the comfortable coexistence of two languages in a person’s life, their primary

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33 This is not to imply that ESL classes for international students do not take the students’ various levels and needs into account.
affiliation must be with their heritage language, and thus, they will never have ownership of the English language. If one expresses primary affiliation with English, their linguistic and cultural loyalties are questioned. As a result of stereotypes of ESL learners, Chiang and Schmida (1999) argue that many immigrant students view themselves as incapable of ever achieving the fluency of a native speaker. In the case of Asian-American students, they are expected to excel in math and science and are excused when they do not perform well in other subjects that require extensive writing. This leads back to the “model minority” stereotype discussed earlier and how this image of the “science whiz” Asian student can limit the spaces within which these students can develop their academic and professional potential.

2.4.2.3 Efforts for Improvement

From the mid to late 1990s onwards, there has been growing recognition and concern about the distinct characteristics of Generation 1.5 students and about how preexisting pedagogical and educational structures and policies, especially those of college ESL and composition/writing programs, did not cater to the needs of these students (Blumenthal, 2002; Duff, 2001; Harklau et al, 1999; Miele, 2003; Roberge, 2001; Oudenhoven, 2006). For example, in his 2001 study of a university writing program’s responses to the increase in immigrant students, Roberge argues that a writing program’s practices could assume a gate-keeping function for Generation 1.5 students acquiring academic literacy by confining them to “a kind of remedial or ‘ESL ghetto’” (p. 378). On the other hand, Miele’s (2003) study reveals a more successful case of a community college’s cross-over program which provided Generation 1.5 students with meaningful, college-level reading and writing classes supplemented by grammar instruction based on data from analyses of the students’ errors. There continues to be research on improving placement practices and curriculum development of college writing programs for Generation 1.5 students (e.g., Schwartz, 2004; Singhal, 2004; Stegemoller, 2004), and supporting these students in writing across the curriculum has also gained increasing interest (e.g., Wolfe-Quintero & Segade, 1999).
2.4.3 The Gap in the Literature

As discussed above, there has been a growing number of studies examining issues pertaining to Generation 1.5 immigrants over the last decade. However, the majority of these studies fall within the scope of sociology and ethnic studies, and there is still a lack of applied linguistics research that investigates Generation 1.5 students’ experiences, especially within the context of higher education. Furthermore, of those limited studies that examine Generation 1.5 university students’ experiences, most are within the context of academic writing or composition classes at the community college level in the United States (e.g., Burnside, 2006; Crosby, 2007; Nye, 2006; Wurr, 2004). Although such studies offer much insight about placement and instructional practices with regard to Generation 1.5 students, there is also a need to investigate the broader historical, sociocultural, and political contextual factors within which the students’ lived experiences take place. This linking of the ‘micro’ with the ‘macro’ will yield a more in-depth and broader understanding of the students’ language learning experiences.

Furthermore, a more holistic understanding of the students’ experiences may allow for the reevaluation of the current notion of Generation 1.5, which is viewed as problematic by some due to its “notably deficit-oriented connotations” (Talmy, 2005, p. 46). Harklau (2003) also argues that all too often, the notion of Generation 1.5 is associated with students in need of some kind of linguistic and cultural remediation. Additionally, Roberge (2002) asserts that referring to a group as 1.5 is problematic because it implies that “these students are somewhere between first and second generation immigrants when, in fact, they may have experiences, characteristics, and educational needs which differ markedly from both of these groups” (p. 108). Thus, with such concerns in mind, I am guided by a holistic and poststructural (Morgan, 2007) perspective towards language learning in examining the experiences of Generation 1.5 students participating in my study. That is, from an epistemological position that believes in the existence of multiple realities that are socially constructed, the purpose of my research is not to discover one ultimate truth that is already out there but rather to co-construct meanings of reality(ies) with those who live it.
In the next section, I introduce language socialization theory and the notion of language and identity which are the theoretical perspectives that have informed my research.

2.5 Language Socialization

LS concerns the socialization of newcomers through and into the use of language (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986). Rooted in anthropology, linguistics, sociology, psychology, and education, LS theory emerged out of concerns about perceiving language acquisition from an exclusively cognitive and linguistic point of view (Garrett, 2008; Ochs & Schiefflin, 2008). That is, LS is grounded in the belief that language acquisition cannot be separated from the acquisition of sociocultural knowledge, thereby emphasizing the need to examine “the relationship among language, culture, and society” (Garrett, 2008, p. 190). In this respect, LS theory takes on a more holistic sociocultural approach where the learner is socialized into and through language “not only in the immediate/local discourse context but also in the context of historically and culturally grounded social beliefs, values, and expectations, that is, in socioculturally recognized and organized practices associated with membership in a social group” (Shi, 2006, p. 1). Thus, emphasis is placed on examining contextual factors surrounding one’s language learning both at the micro and macro level.

Early works on LS mainly examined the socialization processes through which young children acquired their first language. The first generation of LS researchers produced pioneering studies on child first language socialization in various contexts around the world, including the United States, Western Samoa, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands (Heath, 1983; Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin, 1990; Watson-Gegeo, 1992). By combining methods typical of psycholinguistic and anthropology research, these studies employed longitudinal, ethnographic approaches to examine the mundane, everyday activities between children and their caregivers. They illustrated how in the process of engaging in everyday interactions with their caregivers, children acquired the different types of languages that are socially and pragmatically appropriate for varying contexts, thereby enabling them to become socioculturally competent members of society.
Thus, they demonstrated how language socialization is far more than the mere acquisition of linguistic structures, and these groundbreaking works continue to inspire LS-related studies.

However, as Duff (2003) suggests, traditional LS research has perhaps implied a somewhat passive role on the part of the novice/newcomer who undergoes a linear, albeit bi-directional process of socialization by experts or more capable members of society who have “sufficient good will and expertise… to assist, mentor, and accommodate them into the target culture and its practices” (p. 315). Hence, it is assumed that newcomers will internalize new social and linguistic practices through the willing help and facilitation of “old-timer” (experienced) interlocutors. Yet, the early understandings of LS were based on studies within relatively monolingual and homogeneous communities and have thus been problematized somewhat in bilingual or multilingual research settings, which are more reflective of emerging communities in a globalizing world.

Therefore, over the years, the spectrum of LS research has broadened from its original examination of first language acquisition among young children to include a wider population of adolescents and adults in bilingual and/or multilingual settings where one is situated in a context of two or more languages and cultures (see Duff & Hornberger, 2008). For example, researchers (e.g., de la Piedra & Romo, 2003; Guadardo, 2008; Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, & Alvarez, 2001; Pease-Alvarez, 2003; Schecter & Bayley, 2002) have investigated language socialization practices within immigrant families in the U.S and Canada. Others have examined language socialization in vocational settings (e.g., Duff, Wong & Early 2000; Li, 2000; McAll, 2003; Roy, 2003; see also Duff, 2008b for a review of current LS research within the vocational setting). Elsewhere, studies have also looked at language socialization within various educational settings (e.g., Duff, 1995, 2001, 2003; He, 2003; Talmy, 2005, 2008), and more recently, with the increasing trend of internationalization within higher education, much attention has been paid to the academic literacy socialization of international students in universities (e.g., Kobayashi, 2003; Morita, 2000, 2002; Morita & Kobayashi, 2008; Séror, 2008; Zappa, 2007).
Consequently, through these various works, new developments have been made in depicting the dynamic and multidirectional nature of interactions through which newcomers, along with expert old-timers, co-construct socialization processes, identities, and linguistic practices and ideologies. Throughout these processes, newcomers may sometimes face gate-keeping practices and unequal power relations that hinder their entry into their target communities (Norton, 2000). Additionally, they may also choose to assert their agency to “evaluate and contest target cultural values and beliefs, struggle to broaden their individual agendas, and actively negotiate and reestablish their multiple identities, ideologies, and social networks” (Shi, 2006, p. 9, also see Garrett & Baquendano-Lopez, 2002). And whatever complexities may emerge within the LS process, they are rooted in and influenced by the equally complex nature of sociocultural, historical, and political contexts.

2.5.1 Second Language Socialization and Generation 1.5 Language Learners

Among recent LS research, a growing number of studies have addressed the linguistic socialization of immigrant youth within educational settings, although not all of them have explicitly labeled their participants as being Generation 1.5. For instance, Harklau’s (2003) study looks at the socialization practices within a secondary school in the U.S., which created a representation of adolescent immigrants as motivated, hardworking youths but who nonetheless remained as “cultural others” and who were cognitively and linguistically deficient. Duff (2001, 2002, 2004) examines Asian ESL students’ experiences in a secondary school social studies classroom in Canada through which she reveals the difficulties these students underwent far beyond English language skills. For example, students were faced with the challenges of lacking knowledge of contemporary North American pop culture and current affairs and needed to interact with local peers who were not as accommodating or sensitive to their linguistic challenges as their teachers or fellow ESL students. Pon, Goldstein, and Schecter’s (2003) work sheds light on Chinese-Canadian high school students’ classroom experiences where they were often caught in a linguistic double-bind. That is, they were caught between loyalties
towards fellow Chinese peers (who discouraged the use of English) and the need to increase English use in order to obtain high grades.

Talmy (2005, 2008) explicitly identifies his focal population as Generation 1.5. Through a critical ethnography, he examines Generation 1.5 high school students in Hawaii and the cultural production of ESL in everyday classroom practices. His study is significant in its attempt to situate the students’ experiences in relation to broader contextual factors, including, for example, the political context of Hawaii, past and present institutional structures, and program policies.

2.6 Language and Identity

Within the field of language education, the language and identity approach asserts that “language constructs and is constructed by identities” (Liang, 2006 p. 145), and numerous studies have offered various perspectives on the relationship between language and identity. As Duff (2008b) notes, the concept of identity has also been an important part of LS research. For instance, Duff and Uchida’s (1997) study of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers at a postsecondary institution in Japan highlights the teachers’ complex sociocultural identities and how they are manifested in their teaching practices. In her investigation of Japanese graduate students at a Canadian university, Morita (2002) suggests that negotiating their identities was a key element for the students to be recognized as legitimate and competent members of their academic communities. Elsewhere, Schecter and Bayley (1997, 2002) and Guardado (2008) look at the language socialization practices of Hispanic families in North America and how these practices related to the creation and/or maintenance of cultural identity.

In addition to adopting LS perspectives in my investigation of the experiences of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students, I am also guided by Norton’s (2000) concept of language and identity, where she defines identity as “how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future” (p. 5). The notion of investment plays an important role in Norton’s approach to language and identity. She argues that traditional notions of motivation are inadequate for grasping the
complicated relationship between power, identity, and language learning because motivation alone does not capture how the learners’ relationship to the target language has been socially and historically constructed. Furthermore, drawing on Bourdieu’s (1977) notion of cultural capital, she argues that if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital (Norton, 2000, p. 17).

In this respect, Norton asserts that an individual’s investment in a target language is in line with their investment in social identity, which constantly changes over time and space. Thus, in her own investigation of immigrant women’s L2 experiences in Canada, she explains that the women’s acts of speaking up or remaining silent in different contexts were reflections of their varying investments in English and their own social identities.

McKay and Wong (1996) employ Norton Peirce’s (1995) notion of investment in their examination of Chinese immigrant teens’ L2 learning experiences at a secondary school in the U.S. The authors highlight the students’ varying investments in English and how they negotiate their multiple and sometimes contradictory identities in order to exercise their agency within the multiple discourses and counterdiscourses in which they are situated. Liang (2006) also incorporates Norton’s notion of investment to partially explain the code-switching dilemmas faced by Chinese immigrant high school students in the U.S. Liang argues that the students had multiple investments in their L1 and L2, and both in their Chinese-speaking and English-speaking communities, which were reflected in the students’ code-switching practices.  

Within the language and identity framework, I also draw on the notion of imagined communities. First coined by Anderson (1991) and further theorized by Wenger (1998), imagined communities refer to “a group of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of imagination” (Kanno & Norton, 2000).

In addition to the notion of investment, Liang also draws on Halliday’s (1985, 1994) functional theory to explain the findings of her data.
2003, p. 241). That is, through imagination, people are able to relate to those beyond their immediate social networks. Recently, this notion of imagined communities has been adapted in relation to language and identity by several applied linguistics scholars (e.g., Blackledge, 2003; Dagenais, 2003; Kanno, 2003; Norton, 2001; Pavlenko, 2003; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007; Silberstein, 2003). These studies see imagined communities as part of creating an imagined identity, which could influence the learners’ investments in their target language as well as the educational practices that they are engaged in. For example, Kanno’s (2003) study looks at the imagined communities that four different schools in Japan envisioned for their students and how such visions were applied and reflected in the schools’ educational policies and practices. Pavlenko’s (2003) research demonstrates how, through notions of multicompetence and contemporary theories on bilingualism, a group of EFL pre-service and in-service teachers in a MATESOL program were able to adapt an identity as competent L2 users rather than as failed non-native speakers (NNS). Additionally, Dagenais’ (2003) research examines how Asian immigrant parents sending their children to a French immersion school in Canada imagine a future identity for their children as members of not only their immediate Canadian communities but also those of transnational and multilingual communities. However, as Pavlenko and Norton (2007) note, members of the learners’ target language community may sometimes hinder or limit the learners’ access to their imagined community. Norton’s (2001) study provides an example of this hindrance, where an ESL teacher discouraged an immigrant learner (Katrina) from taking computer classes due to her poor English skills, thereby positioning her as an illegitimate member of Katrina’s imagined professional community.

Therefore, guided by the notion of investment within the language and identity approach, in examining my participants’ various academic, sociocultural and linguistic experiences, I consider how the students invest in their L1, L2, and sometimes their L3 to negotiate their multiple identities within their varying networks and communities of their past, present and imagined futures. Additionally, I attempt to understand the students’ complex LS processes, including the pressures, tensions, and sometimes conflicting
desires/needs that are reflected in their micro, everyday experiences and language practices, while also situating and comprehending such experiences within a broader, macro-level sociocultural, historical and political context.

The studies discussed in the sections above have not only guided and inspired my dissertation research but have also helped determine areas that still require further investigation. As demonstrated above, there is a growing number of LS and language and identity studies examining immigrants’ language learning experiences in the North American context. In Canada alone, scholars have looked into such issues within various settings of home, work, and school. However, to date, there has been no published work pertaining to the language learning experiences of Generation 1.5 youth in the Canadian university context. Hence, my dissertation research seeks to address this gap by examining the various experiences of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students. Guided by LS perspectives and the language and identity approach, I seek to understand the everyday sociocultural, linguistic and academic experiences of my participants within the contexts of their immediate individual communities (past, present, and imagined future) as well as within the broader contexts of Canadian and Korean society.

2.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of some of the defining characteristics of Generation 1.5, in particular those within Korean-North American communities. I have also briefly introduced the LS theory and the notion of language and identity, which served as the theoretical perspectives that guided my dissertation research. I have reviewed various studies pertaining to Generation 1.5 immigrants’ issues and have addressed gaps in the literature that require further investigation. A discussion of my research questions and methodology will follow in Chapter 3.
Chapter 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As indicated in Chapter 1, the research questions guiding my study were: 1) What are the contextual factors that shape the language socialization processes and outcomes of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students?; 2) How do such contextual factors influence the students’ investments in their identities and language learning and use, and how are these investments manifested in their everyday lived experiences?; and 3) To what extent do the perspectives and experiences of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students help to refine and extend current conceptions of Generation 1.5 language learners? In this chapter, I will provide a discussion of qualitative case study research, which was the methodology I employed to address my research questions. I will then provide details of the research context, participant access and a general profile of the participants. This will be followed by descriptions of the data collection and data analysis process. Finally, I will address issues of the trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations.

3.2 Qualitative Case Study Research

As discussed in the previous chapter, my study was guided by the perspectives of LS and language and identity, which place emphasis on examining both the micro- and macro-level contextual factors surrounding one’s experiences with language.\footnote{As Baquedano-Lopez & Kattan (2008) note, the term LS is used broadly by scholars “as a theoretical and methodological paradigm [or] as a theme of study” (p. 161, italics added). The former approach has traditionally taken on a qualitative ethnographic studies approach, often involving “extended observations, interviews, triangulation, and (other) document analysis” (Duff, 2008a, p. 34). It is the latter approach to LS (theme of study) that I have adopted for my own investigation, and thus I have employed various sources of data in order to yield an in-depth understanding of the language socialization experiences of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students. The data gathered from these sources have also been triangulated in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the study.} In particular, the study sought to uncover the participants’ accounts of both micro and macro factors influencing their language development and use, sociocultural and academic...
choices, and related identities. Therefore, with the purpose of investigating the contextual factors that shaped the students’ experiences, I have employed a qualitative multiple case study approach for my study (Duff, 2008a; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1994; Yin, 2003). Over the last few decades, qualitative case study research has gained increasing visibility and credibility as a valid form of inquiry in social science research. Such developments have also been witnessed in educational research, including the increased popularity of qualitative case studies in second language acquisition and applied linguistics research (Duff, 2008a). Among these studies, some works have served as models for my own research. For example, Harklau’s (2000) three year longitudinal case study traces the changing representation of ESL student identities in different institutional settings and how this, in turn, influences the students’ own self-perception and academic learning. Others (e.g., Duff, 2001; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000) also employed qualitative case studies to illuminate various important contextual factors that impacted individuals’ (particularly immigrants’) language learning experiences. Such studies have produced rich contextual information and insights into, for example, the individual learner’s personal struggles, resistance, agency, and negotiation of identities and how these all related to the bigger context in which they were experienced—all crucial issues that other forms of inquiry may not have been able to address.

In undertaking my study, I drew on the definitions of a few noted scholars who describe case study as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context” (Yin, 2003, p. 13), through the intense and holistic description and analysis of the phenomenon through time and space (Merriam, 1988; Snow & Anderson, 1991). My study follows the experiences of seven Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students, where each student represented a case. I performed an individual case analysis of each student as well as a cross-case analysis of all seven of the students. As Yin (2003) and Merriam (1998) suggest, multiple case studies have the potential to produce convincing evidence with increased trustworthiness of the data.
As noted in Chapter 2, many educators and academics have espoused relatively simplistic or essentialized views of Generation 1.5 youth. As a result, Generation 1.5 students are often categorized under the labels of “good” or “bad” (or “model minorities” or “delinquents”) without a deeper understanding of the contextual factors that affect their language learning experiences. In this respect, I believe qualitative case study research allows for an in-depth examination in understanding the students’ own perspectives of their language learning and use as well as their own identity shapings and negotiations. There have been a number of large scale surveys on Generation 1.5 and second-generation Korean-American immigrants, exploring issues of self-perceived ethnic identity and choice of language (e.g., Ok & Baek, 2000; Yoon, 1997; Yoon, 2001). However, although such studies are valuable in that they provide a sense of how many immigrants think in a certain way, the quantitative nature of the studies make it difficult to comprehend why and how they had reached such perceptions. Other studies like Kibria (2000) and Park (1999) examine identity formation of Korean youth based on interview data, but again, the choice to prioritize quantity over quality strips away most contextual information about the individual participants. In this respect, the latter part of the definition of a case study that I described earlier--namely, the intense and holistic description and analysis of the phenomenon through time and space--afforded me the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of a smaller group of students, delving into not only the current individual and general contexts in which these Generation 1.5 students’ lives were situated, but also their histories and future possibilities.

In addition, the longitudinal aspect of this case study research allowed “the observation of the same real-life units of analysis across a specific period of time” (Snow & Anderson, 1991, p. 161), which has enabled me to trace the students’ trajectories over time and space. In addition, although closed studies are also a form of qualitative case study research, for the purpose of my own inquiry, I have employed a more flexible case study model.

As Duff (2008a) cautions, this is not to imply that all case study research is longitudinal or that all longitudinal studies are automatically case studies. For the purpose of my own particular investigation, I have chosen to undertake an in-depth, longitudinal study of my research participants with the goal of discovering developments/changes in their language ideologies, use, learning, and related identities.
study design, which scholars have noted as one of the strengths of interpretive research (Duff, 2008a). In particular, the semi-structured (Snow & Anderson, 1991) nature of the interviews gave participants the chance to speak of issues and experiences that were significant to them rather than being solely dictated by predetermined interview questions selected in advance by the researcher and unresponsive to participants’ answers and unique experiences. Thus, this aspect of qualitative case studies was very significant for my work as giving voice to the students was one of the most important goals of my research.

3.3 Research Context

The study took place at Pacific Canadian University (PCU), a large public university in Vancouver, Canada. PCU is an internationally renowned institution, ranked among the top 40 universities in the world since 2003. In order to be admitted to PCU’s undergraduate program, all students (both domestic and international) must meet both English language and high school academic requirements. In addition to the general requirements, each program has specific course requirements that the student should meet prior to enrolling at PCU. Upon admission, all undergraduate students at PCU must enroll in the first-year English program regardless of their area of study. Most faculties require six credits of first-year English courses (usually recommended to be completed during their first two years at PCU), although some require only three credits.

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37 Again, this it not to imply that flexibility was chosen at the expense of a systematic, planned inquiry.

38 Students must demonstrate competency in English by meeting one of eight requirements set out by PCU. My research participants had met one of the following three requirements: 1) Complete three or more consecutive years of full-time education in English within Canada immediately prior to attending PCU; 2) Achieve a grade of 70% or better on the provincial examination portion of B.C. English 12 or English Literature 12 or the equivalent; 3) Successfully complete six credits of post-secondary first-year English studies that are eligible for transfer credit to PCU. To be eligible, the course must be taken at a recognized university in an English-speaking country.

39 In order to be eligible to take first-year English courses at PCU, students must either pass the Language Proficiency Index (LPI) exam or receive an exemption from the LPI by meeting minimum grade requirements on Grade 12 level English (e.g., 80% for B.C high school graduates admitted prior to 2008) or on other recognized exams. The purpose of the LPI is to provide post-secondary institutions and professional organizations in British Columbia with an individual’s proficiency level in Canadian English. The test consists of four parts: identifying sentence structure errors; identifying language use errors;
PCU is located in the city of Vancouver, where nearly 40% of the population is foreign-born, second to Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2006a). Since 2001, most of the immigrant population in Vancouver has come from Asia and the Middle East. Koreans are the fourth largest non-European immigrant community in Vancouver. There are numerous Korean churches, businesses, and organizations throughout Vancouver.

3.4 Participants

3.4.1 Recruitment

Upon receiving approval from the Behavioral Research Ethics Committee at the University of British Columbia, I began recruiting participants by posting a call for volunteer participants on PCU’s Korean Student Association website and the Vancouver Korean-Canadian Scholarship Foundation’s student email list (see Appendix A). Postings were written in both English and Korean. In the postings, I provided general information about my research, the criteria I was seeking in potential participants, time commitment required of them, and the type of compensation they would receive for their participation in my study. My criteria for participant recruitment included: 1) students pursuing undergraduate studies at PCU; 2) students of Korean background who had immigrated to Canada during their K-12 years; 3) students who were willing and able to meet with me once or twice a month for individual interviews (and one group interview each term) between September 2005 and April 2006. Those students interested in summarizing short passages; and writing an argumentative essay ([PCU] Applied Research and Evaluation Services, 2008).

40 In the recruitment form, students were informed that participation in the research would involve bi-monthly interviews which would take approximately 16-20 hours of their time between September 2005 and April 2006. However, when the actual data collection began, due to schedule conflicts, we had monthly interviews from September 2005 to June 2007. Only students whose schedules permitted were asked to meet with me after April 2006.

41 I provided a $30 PCU bookstore gift certificate for each participant.

42 As will be discussed in a later section of this chapter, although all participants were invited to take part in the group interview, I emphasized that they were encouraged to do so only if their schedules allowed it and if they were comfortable sharing their ideas with other participants in a group setting.
participating were asked to contact me via email through which I answered any questions or concerns they had regarding their potential participation. All of the participants were recruited through the postings with the exception of Joon, who voluntarily contacted me after learning of my research through his friend, Gilbert, who was also a participant in my study.

3.4.2 Profile of Participants

Four female and three male students took part in my research. They were in their second to fourth years of studies at PCU in various disciplines. One of the participants immigrated to Canada during elementary school while the rest of the six arrived during their secondary school years. With the exception of Joon, who was born in Germany, all of the participants were born in Korea. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the participants’ general profiles. Chapters 4-6 will provide in-depth descriptions of each of the participants and groups of participants, as indicated in the left hand column of the table. In Chapter 4, I will examine the experiences of Yellina and Sheila, two women who have been most attached to and influenced by their Korean peers in their process of LS. Chapter 5 will introduce Hannah, Joon, and Mike, three students whose linguistic, academic, and social choices revolved around not being an “FOB” or a “banana.” In Chapter 6, I will discuss the experiences of Gilbert and Yuri, students whose experiences were heavily influenced by their future academic and professional goals as well as their strong sense of familial duty.
Table 3.1 General Profile of the Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ch.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Age at time of immigration</th>
<th>City of immigration</th>
<th>Family Background</th>
<th>PCU Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yellina</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>Parents, one younger brother</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sheila</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Calgary</td>
<td>Parents, one older sister</td>
<td>Biochemistry/ Microbiology &amp; Immunology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>Parents, one younger brother</td>
<td>Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joon</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>Parents, one older sister</td>
<td>General Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Calgary</td>
<td>Parents, one younger brother</td>
<td>Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gilbert</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>Parents, one older sister</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yuri</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>Parents, one younger brother</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 Background Questionnaire

Prior to the first interview, I asked the students to fill out a brief questionnaire in order to obtain a general sense of their personal backgrounds (see Appendix B). In addition to serving as a basis for some of the questions for the first interview, having some familiarity with the students’ backgrounds prior to meeting them helped in creating better rapport upon meeting them in person. Some of the questionnaire items included basic demographic information, family background, language(s) spoken at home and with

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43 All names are pseudonyms selected by the students themselves.
friends, self-assessed English and Korean language skills, academic experiences at PCU, and involvement in extracurricular activities. Students received a Korean and English version of the questionnaire and had the option to choose one of the versions and to complete it in either English, Korean or both. The questionnaires were exchanged via email.

3.5.2 Individual Interviews 44

Between September 2005 and June 2006, I conducted individual interviews with the students. Depending on each student’s availability, I met with them about five to eight times for approximately 50-60 minute interviews. During our first interview, I asked each individual student which language they would prefer to converse in, and depending on their choice, I spoke to them in Korean, English or a mixture of both. Students also answered questions in the language of their choice. All interviews were digitally audio-recorded and transcribed (either fully or in point form) prior to the next interview with each student. I translated all interviews conducted in Korean into English during the transcription process. Based on the transcriptions, if deemed necessary, I sent students follow-up emails about areas that needed further clarification or elaboration, and I also sent some new questions that I hoped they would try to think about before our next meeting. During our subsequent interviews, I began each meeting with a brief summary of some of the issues we had discussed during our last meeting which allowed both of us to “refresh our memories” before moving on. Interviews took place on the PCU campus, either in empty classrooms or library seminar rooms. All interviews were semi-structured, and questions stemmed from topics discussed in previous interviews, my own field notes, and stories or personal writings that students voluntarily brought to our meetings.

3.5.3 Group Interviews with Students

In addition to individual interviews, I also conducted group interviews with some of the students twice during the data collection period. As Wilkinson (2004) affirms, the

44 Appendix C provides sample questions from interviews with individual students, student groups, and English class instructors.
dynamics of group interaction in group interviews can often encourage interviewees to speak of issues that they may be reluctant to share in an individual interview. Moreover, members of the group may be able to build on each other’s responses, producing more elaborated answers, which Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) refer to as the “synergistic effect” (p. 16). In the case of my participants, although all of them were invited to join the interviews, I emphasized that they were in no way obliged to do so and that they should only take part if they felt comfortable speaking within a group setting and if their schedules permitted time for a meeting. Four of the seven students took part in the group interviews, which took place in October 2005 and January 2006. Although not all of the seven students took part, findings from these interviews generated topics that were later also discussed with students who were not at the group meetings. Each group interview lasted about 70 minutes and were digitally audio-recorded and transcribed. Students spoke in Korean, English, or a mixture of both.

3.5.4 Interviews with First-Year English Course Instructors

At the outset of my data collection, it was not my intention to interview any course instructors as the students’ areas of study were quite diverse, and none of the students was taking any courses together. However, throughout the interview process, one of the most salient themes that emerged was the difficult and frustrating experiences most of the students had had during their first-year English courses at PCU, especially English 110 (Approaches to Literature) and English 112 (Strategies for University Writing). Furthermore, most of the students felt that it was their NNS status that led to such challenging experiences and assumed the situation would be different for NS students. Therefore, I felt it was important to seek the perspectives of those who taught these courses in order to better understand how students in general performed in their class(es). Thus, in February 2006, I contacted five individuals (both main instructors and teaching assistants) who were either teaching one of the first-year English courses at that

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45 I interviewed individuals who were teaching these classes as either the main instructor or as teaching assistants. Thus, my use of the word instructor here (and in later discussions in Chapters 7 and 8) includes both main instructors and teaching assistants (TAs).
time or who had taught a course in the previous academic year. These instructors were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling, where one instructor with whom I had a personal acquaintance introduced me to his colleagues. Of those five individuals that I contacted, three (one main instructor and two teaching assistants) agreed to be interviewed as a group. However, due to schedule conflicts, I was able to interview only two of them (Daniel and Michelle) together in person and one (Sarah) through email. At the time of the interview, Michelle had been a TA for English 110 for three terms, while Daniel had been a TA for it once during the previous academic year. Sarah was teaching English 112 as the main instructor for the second time. The interview with Daniel and Michelle were approximately 50 minutes long and were audio-recorded and transcribed.

3.5.5 Field Notes

During and after interviews, I kept notes of ideas and themes that emerged, which was particularly useful when it came to “serendipitous” findings that surfaced with a particular student that I wanted to discuss with other students as well. In addition, immediately upon transcribing each interview, I organized major themes that were derived and made note of areas that required further clarification or elaboration.

3.5.6 Researcher’s Reflection Journal

During the data collection process, I kept written notes of my experiences as a researcher, including some of the concerns I had regarding my own biases or my relationship with the participants. I also sought feedback from colleagues regarding various aspects of my work. For instance, some colleagues helped review my choice of interview questions and offered insights into the interpretation of my data. I also documented any ideas that developed throughout the entire research process. Often these

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46 Names of instructors are also pseudonyms but were selected by the researcher.

47 Although Daniel and Michelle were working as teaching assistants for the literature courses, they (and not the main instructors) were the ones with direct contact with the students through their discussion sessions, and they were also solely responsible for assessing the students’ works. Sarah, who was teaching the academic writing course, was also in direct contact with her students and did not have TAs for her course.
ideas were spontaneous and occurred randomly, such as during a bus ride or while reading Korean blogs. Thus, keeping a written record of my thoughts during that time allowed me to go back to those ideas later on and helped in the overall organization of my ideas.

3.5.7 Email, Web Messenger Exchanges, and Personal Meetings

In some cases, follow-up interviews were conducted through email or Web Messenger, where I asked students to clarify or elaborate on certain topics we had discussed during our meetings. These exchanges were often brief and very casual in nature. Because I had formed a very close, trusting relationship with the students, my correspondence with some students developed beyond that of researcher and participant. Thus, in some cases, the students initiated contact with me, often through Web Messenger, and we would “chat” about a variety of topics. Some students expressed perceiving me as an older sister figure or mentor and asked to personally meet them to offer advice and guidance. During these informal chats and meetings, I discovered new and valuable information about the students that had not been discussed during our official interviews, which added to the richness of the overall data. In particular, through meetings and correspondence that occurred after the official data collection period, I was able to “observe” even further some changes and developments in the students’ thoughts over time. Therefore, with the students’ permission, some of this correspondence was saved or documented, and it served as an additional valuable source of information to my overall data collection.

3.5.8 Students’ Personal Writings

Although I did not officially request or seek students’ writing samples as part of my data collection (either personal or academic) a few of the students voluntarily shared some of their personal writings (e.g., journal entries, personal narratives, published work in the newspaper) with me either by bringing them to our interviews or by emailing their work to me. These writings, which described their struggles as immigrant youth and their personal thoughts on being Generation 1.5 persons in the Canadian context, were invaluable sources of data as they allowed me to trace the personal journeys of these
students since immigrating to Canada. However, except for one of Yellina’s writings that was published in the local Korean newspaper, due to the very personal nature of the writings, I did not keep copies of any of them. Regardless, they were a very significant part of the overall dialogue that I shared with the students, and they helped create a deeper level of understanding, especially when discussing their past experiences in high school. Table 3.2 summarizes the methods of data collection and sources of data (and the purpose of the data sources) for this study.

Table 3.2 Methods and Sources of Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods of Data Collection</th>
<th>Sources of Data Collection</th>
<th>Purpose of Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured Interviews</td>
<td>Students (individual)</td>
<td>- Understanding students’ own perceptions of their experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students (group)</td>
<td>- Potentially building on each other’s responses, producing more elaborated answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English Course Instructors</td>
<td>- Gaining better understanding of PCU students’ performances in English courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Correspondence</td>
<td>Students (emails, web messenger, personal meetings)</td>
<td>- Follow-up and clarifications of interview discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Following students experiences after the “official” data collection period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher’s Field notes &amp; Reflection Journal</td>
<td>- During and after interviews</td>
<td>- Organization of researcher’s ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Identifying areas that require follow-up and clarification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Documenting researcher’s own reflections and possible biases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of Data Collection</td>
<td>Sources of Data Collection</td>
<td>Purpose of Data Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Written Documents</td>
<td>Background Questionnaire (prior to interview)</td>
<td>- Factual information of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ past personal writings</td>
<td>- Better understanding of students’ past experiences as expressed in their own words at that particular time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.6 Data Analysis

My analysis of the data was iterative in that it began with, and continued throughout, the entire data collection process (Duff, 2008a; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, during the initial stages of data collection, my analysis focused more on listening to interview recordings in order to identify areas that needed to be further explored in subsequent interviews. Upon finishing an interview with the students, I made sure to listen to the audio-recordings again within the next couple of days so as to review them while they were still fresh in my mind. Not all interviews were fully transcribed immediately, but their contents were all summarized in paragraph or point form, and I made note of questions that needed revision and/or expansion, as well as students’ answers that required further clarification and/or elaboration. I asked students to provide clarification/elaboration either through email or Web Messenger prior to the next interview, or in some cases, we went over them at the beginning of our next meeting.

Towards the end of the official data collection period, the analyses became more detailed and in depth (and sometimes more complicated). In addition to the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2, several published works on social science research, qualitative case study research in particular, (Creswell, 1997; Duff, 2008a; Flyvbjerg, 2001; Merriam, 1988, 1998; Stake, 1995; Walker, 1983; Yin, 2003) as well as recent
doctoral dissertations (Guardado, 2008; Kobayashi, 2004; Morita, 2002; Zappa, 2007) provided invaluable guidance in helping me decide which procedures I would (and would not) choose in organizing and analyzing my own data, within and across cases.

I read individual interview transcripts multiple times together with other available sources of data (e.g., field notes, group interview transcripts, instructors’ interview transcripts). Using hard copies of the data and utilizing multi-coloured pens, I identified and coded the salient themes that emerged among most (if not all) of the students. These themes were selected as tentative major categories that would be discussed in the cross-case analysis of the dissertation. I then reviewed each individual student’s data several times separately and searched for characteristics and contextual factors that made each student’s case unique and different from those of the other six students. In particular, because I was following the trajectories of the students’ experiences since their arrival in Canada, I organized each student’s data under the categories of past, present, and imagined future. Within each category, I identified and coded patterns and themes that related to each of the three research questions guiding the study. For example, in organizing one of the students’ data, I identified information related to her language choices (Korean and/or English) in different contexts (past, present, and imagined future) of her everyday life (Research Question #2). With this information, I reexamined the data sources in order to trace the contextual factors behind her language choices, which I separated into two categories: micro-level factors and macro-level factors (Research Question #1). This reexamination helped refine and expand the answers to Research Question #2 found earlier and also generated tentative answers to Research Question #3.

During the process of individualizing each case, I also looked for similarities among the students that would allow me to group them together in the actual writing of the dissertation. This additionally enabled me to locate more in-depth information that could be added to the tentative themes that had emerged during the initial and brief cross-case analysis performed earlier, which in turn further expanded the answers to Research Question #3. Thus, my data analysis was a constant process of going back and forth between the individual cases and the whole, which Tesch refers to as the *hermeneutic*
spiral (1990). I found Tesch’s notion of decontextualization and recontextualization key elements in synthesizing my data into one whole study while still maintaining and honoring the rich contextual information found in each individual case. That is, through decontextualization, I sought to discover themes that emerged across cases (and in pairs or small groups). But through detailed within-case analysis, I sought to recontextualize the themes and examine how they were manifested within the uniqueness of each individual case.

3.7 Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

This study utilized several key approaches in order to enhance its credibility and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These include triangulation, member-checks, researcher self-reflexivity, sharing analyses with colleagues, and extensive data collection over ten months.

3.7.1 Triangulation and Member Checks

Employing multiple data sources, methods, and theoretical lenses is one of the most essential ways in enhancing the trustworthiness of the data (Duff, 2008a; Marshall & Rossman, 1989). As discussed in an earlier section, I employed multiple sources and methods as part of my data collection. Findings derived from these different sources and methods were triangulated with one another, within and across cases, sometimes corroborating and other times disconfirming initial interpretations. For instance, in their individual interviews, most students said they had experienced much frustration and many difficulties in their first-year English courses. This was also one of the biggest challenges that students voiced during the group interviews. Additionally, most of the students assumed that they had probably received the lowest grades in their classes because of their NNS status and accepted this as their fate. At this point, in order to achieve more dependable observations, I felt it was necessary to interview English class instructors at PCU, whose perspectives were, in fact, different from those of the students. In this respect, the comparison of these three data sources provided valuable insights into the students’ ideas about their NNS status, as well as their notions about the ownership of language. In some cases, triangulation allowed the students and me to trace the
development of their ideas over time. For example, with one of the participants, we were able to witness how her thoughts about her ethnic identity had fluctuated and developed over the years by reviewing her personal writings from high school in combination with interview transcripts during the official data collection period, as well as documented Web Messenger exchanges that occurred after our final official interview. Admittedly, not all sources or methods (e.g., instructor interviews and students’ personal writings) were planned from the outset of the study. However, being able to alter or add to the data collection method and sources during the study—the kind of flexibility that Eisenhardt (1989) refers to as “controlled opportunism” (p. 539)—is one of the merits of case studies, which allows the researcher to gain more insight and a deeper understanding of the case, as has been the situation with my own research.

Duff (2008a) explains that member checking can “ensure the authenticity or credibility of interpretations, or shed new light on the analyses . . . and is therefore another form of triangulation or verification of perspectives and interpretations” (p. 171). One of the goals of my study was to learn about Generation 1.5 students’ language socialization experiences spoken in the students’ own voices. In this respect, it was crucial for me not to monopolize the interpretations of the data or to simply allow the data to speak for itself. Thus, I tried to continuously foster dialogue between the students and me so as to share ownership of the entire interview process as well as the final product. At the beginning of each interview, I offered a summary of my understanding of our previous interview. Upon listening to my summary, the students would either corroborate my views or clarify or correct any misunderstandings. In cases where I had to translate Korean interviews into English (especially when I was agonizing over choosing the right equivalent English word), I showed them samples of my translations and made sure they agreed with the word choices I had made. Email messages and Web Messengers exchanges were also useful in member checking. I often exchanged brief messages with the students to confirm an interpretation of a comment they had made during an interview, to ask for additional information, or to help select the right English words for their Korean answers. This invitation for input from the students was a vital component of my research process,
and I believe it was this active participation on the part of students that initially created
good rapport between us and also resulted in the unexpected and voluntary sharing of
their writings with me (which, as I mentioned earlier, were excellent additional sources of
data for my research).

3.7.2 Other Strategies for Demonstrating Trustworthiness

During my data collection period, I was enrolled in two graduate-level courses on
qualitative interviewing and case study research. Elements of these classes were also
beneficial in adding to the trustworthiness of my study. That is, much of the coursework
for these classes required me to continuously reflect on, reexamine, and put into writing
various issues related to my research, from my views of myself as a researcher and the
relationships I had with my interviewees, to the ontological and epistemological position
of my work. These classes also afforded me many formal and informal opportunities to
share my preliminary analyses and findings with my classmates and instructors. Some of
these were documented systematically while I made informal notes of others. However,
all of these records were included as part of the researcher journal I mentioned earlier.

3.7.3 Generalizability

Very often, at the conclusion of a case study, one is questioned about the extent to
which the detailed descriptions of a particular phenomenon can be generalized to other
contexts. There have been different responses to this concern on the part of qualitative
researchers, but many seem to agree that statistical generalization (Yin, 2003), as often
seen in quantitative studies, is not the goal of qualitative inquiries (Davis, 1995;
Donmoyer, 1990; Duff, 2008a; Schofield, 2007; Stake, 1995). This is also the case with
the findings of my study as I do not claim that the findings from seven Generation 1.5
Korean-Canadian students can be generalized to the larger population of Generation 1.5
university students. In fact, that would defeat the purpose of providing rich
contextualization of each individual student’s case. Rather, I seek to increase the
transferability of the findings to populations in different contexts. Stake (1995) argues for
naturalistic generalization, meaning that through the application of tacit knowledge,
individuals are capable of generalizing the findings of one study to another similar
situation. Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest that generalizability be replaced with the concept of fittingness, which stresses the degree to which the researched situation matches other sites of potential research. In a similar vein, Davis (1995) claims that the generalizability of working hypotheses depends on the degree of similarity between two contexts. The key element to all of the above arguments is providing extensive information about the case and the context in which it was studied, which I accomplish through thick descriptions of each individual student and the contextual factors in which he/she was situated. In addition, I believe analytic generalizations (Duff, 2008a; Yin, 1989) can be made from my study, where case studies are “generalizable to theoretical propositions” (Yin, 2003, p. 76). Thus, the aim of my study is to generalize findings to theory, although the detailed findings of the research may not be applicable to other research populations.

3.7.4 Ethical Concerns and Researcher-Participant Relationship

At different stages of the study, I made efforts to ensure that I was meeting my ethical responsibilities as a researcher. Before any of the students agreed to take part in my study (see Appendix D for consent forms), I made sure to explain the purpose of my research, how I hoped they would participate, and how and where the findings would be reported. I encouraged students to ask questions about any aspects of my work and their participation that they needed clarification on and to express any other concerns they might have had. I also emphasized that they were in no way obliged to take part in my study, and if for any reason they wished to stop participating, they were free to do so at any time without any negative consequences. All of this information was clearly stated in the consent form that they signed prior to the first interview. In addition, all of the students (and instructors) remained anonymous through the use of pseudonyms and any information that they requested remain “off the record” was not included in this dissertation.

Another area that I paid particular attention to was the relationship between me and the students. Throughout my interactions with the students, they called me ônni or nuna (older sister) and shared very personal and emotional stories with me like being
teased in high school, recent arguments with their boyfriends, and conflicts with parents and siblings. Outside the official interview setting, students initiated contact with me in order to ask for reference letters or to seek advice on various topics ranging from how to prepare for graduate school to career opportunities in Korea. Thus, I often became the students’ older sister, counselor or confidante. I was happy that I was able to build strong rapport with the students, which allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of each individual student’s experiences. At the end of the data collection period, all of the students expressed regret that the interviews had come to an end because they had not only enjoyed sharing their experiences with me but also enjoyed discovering or reexamining their own perceptions and identities along the way. However, despite such positive feedback, I made the conscious effort throughout the data collection process not to perceive everything the students shared as potential data. Admittedly, I was fascinated by all the students’ stories, and especially during informal meetings, the researcher in me was tempted to take out my digital recorder so as not to miss a single word the students said. Thus, the boundaries between my role as a researcher and my role as an older sister/counselor/confidante were sometimes blurred. In this respect, I had to be extra cautious of these indistinct boundaries so as to find a sound balance between seeking potentially valuable data and respecting the students’ privacy and right to confidentiality. Thus, any information obtained outside our official data collection setting were included as part of the research data only with the students’ verbal consent.

Over the years, there have been debates about the potential advantages and disadvantages of researcher-participant symmetry in terms of gender, age, race, and socio-economic status. Denzin (1997), for example, claims that shared lived experience and member status allow the researcher to identify underlying nuances or meanings of the interviewees. Seidman (1991), on the other hand, suggests that it is important for the researcher to maintain a certain distance so as to “explore, not to share assumptions” (p. 77). He notes that issues such as race, class, and gender are related to the notion of power with regard to “who controls the direction of the interview, who controls the results, and who benefits” (p. 76). In this respect, I strove to be aware of potential biases and
assumptions that I brought to the research as someone who shared the same sociocultural and linguistic background as the students. In terms of academics, I have also experienced high school in Vancouver, Canada and have been educated in English in a number of countries since a very young age. Although it is difficult to know with absolute certainty how truly comfortable the students felt in our interactions, during our final interview I asked each student whether they felt my being an older female Korean affected our collaborations in any way. All of the students responded that my being Korean made it convenient in that they did not feel that they had to explain every little aspect of Korean culture. They also felt that our age gap made them feel more comfortable to open up to me. Female students in particular said it was easier to share their thoughts because we were the same gender.

However, despite our seemingly apparent commonalities (and the convenient and positive aspects that resulted from them) I would also like to point out that there were also various areas in which the students and I differed. For instance, my extensive overseas education (prior to my graduate studies) was a result of my father’s occupation, which required my family to move from one country to another every few years. Thus, my official status while living abroad has always been international student, not immigrant. Furthermore, my education in English took place in both English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries. Additionally, although English is also my second language, I have never actually taken ESL classes, unlike most of my participants. Moreover, my experiences in high school in Vancouver took place in the mid 1990s, a period prior to the increased wave of Korean immigrants, and I returned to Korea for university. Therefore, although it is true that there were many areas in which the students and I had a shared understanding of the issues at hand, there were also many aspects of their experiences (e.g., as immigrants and students in ESL classes) that I was unable to relate to. In this respect, as Vincent and Warren (2001) assert, identities are multilayered and continuously being renegotiated over time, thus the researcher can be an insider in certain aspects as the interviewee, but an outsider with regard to other issues, which was also the case in my study.
Regardless, I acknowledge that my own biases and subjectivities may have affected various aspects of the study. For example, prior to the study, I had the assumption that as visible minorities, Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students would all aspire to work within mainstream Canadian society, and that this would be their main motivation to improve their English skills. Although this idea was reexamined as I began analyzing the data, still, I acknowledge that it may have affected the initial formation of my interview questions. Similarly, other biases may have influenced the interpretation of the data and the selection and organization of findings reported in this dissertation. However, as mentioned earlier, I strove to create a collaborative relationship with the participants, where they were invited and encouraged to offer their own thoughts on my interpretation of the data so as to ensure an accurate portrayal of their experiences. Also, the reflection journal that I had kept (particularly the entries written while taking the two, previously mentioned graduate-level courses) was very helpful with my self-reflections as a researcher.

3.8 Summary

In this chapter, I described the process through which I conducted multiple qualitative case studies on the language socialization experiences of seven Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students in Vancouver, Canada. Guided by the theoretical perspectives of LS and language and identity and the research questions and goals of the study, I have described why I believed multiple qualitative case studies were the appropriate approach for my research. I have also discussed my research setting and general profile of participants. In addition, I discussed issues of trustworthiness, other ethical considerations, and my relationship with the participants. To strengthen the trustworthiness of my study, I employed multiple data methods and sources which were triangulated during the data analysis. I also performed member checks and sought feedback from colleagues regarding various aspects of my data collection and analysis. As is often the case with qualitative case study research, my analysis of the data occurred in parallel with the data collection. The following four chapters will report on the actual findings of the data. As earlier mentioned, Chapters 4 to 6 will examine in depth two or
three individual cases together. Chapter 7 will then provide a cross-case analysis of all the cases.
Chapter 4

LEARNING TO NEGOTIATE MULTIPLE INVESTMENTS:
YELLINA AND SHEILA

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the linguistic, academic, and sociocultural experiences of Yellina and Sheila. I have paired these two students together in this chapter because they both began their lives in Canada with the dream of becoming English professors one day. However, while one student is still pursuing that dream, the other has completely abandoned it. Thus, in this chapter, I highlight the local and global contextual factors and language socialization processes that have influenced the students’ experiences and perceptions of learning and using English. I examine their trajectories from high school to university as well as their goals and desires for the future. In this process, I identify areas where both students display similarities while also drawing attention to the uniqueness of their individual situations. I conclude the chapter with a summary and discussion of the two cases.

4.2 Students’ Backgrounds

Of all my seven participants, the two students in this chapter, Yellina and Sheila, took on the most proactive roles in participating in my research. For example, they brought in notes of ideas and thoughts they had since the last time we had met for an interview. They also shared stories of recent experiences (either through email, Web Messenger, or face-to-face meetings) that made them reflect on what they had previously said in one of our meetings. Without my even asking, they voluntarily shared some of their very personal writings which reflected some of their past struggles as immigrant students. In addition, they were both eager to co-analyze their data with me, and I found their ideas to be very insightful and helpful to my data analysis. In addition to the sisterly bond we had created, I also felt we had formed partnerships of mutual respect between us throughout the interview process.
4.2.1 Yellina

Yellina was originally from Seoul, Korea and immigrated to Vancouver, Canada in 1999 with her parents and younger brother. At that time, her father ran a small business in Korea and her mother worked as a dance teacher at a junior high school. When her father’s business failed, her parents decided to start a new life in Canada, which was also seen as a good opportunity for the children’s education. Yellina described both her and her brother’s academic achievements in Korea as “above average but not outstanding” (Yellina, I#1, January 19, 2006, K-original) and that her parents did not decide to immigrate to Canada because they felt the children could not make it to a good university in Korea (which is sometimes the case for some Korean families). Yellina was in Grade 9 at the time of immigration and confessed that initially, she was resistant to moving to another country. She possessed a romanticized image of university life in Korea which she had created based on Korean dramas and movies. Hence, when her parents decided to move to Canada, she felt that she was being forced to alter her future plans. Upon arrival in Vancouver, Yellina’s parents ran a small restaurant business for about a year but found it too challenging for various reasons. Thus, her father decided to restart a business in Korea and became a gireogi father (Yoon, 2001); going back and forth between Korea and Canada for about six years while the rest of the family remained in Vancouver. When her younger brother entered PCU in 2005, her parents believed both Yellina and her brother were now mature enough to take care of themselves. Therefore, her parents began a process of reverse migration (Hurh, 1998; Yoon, 2001), and in early 2007, returned to Korea for good. At the time of the interview, Yellina and her brother were living together

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48 Due to Yellina’s personal circumstances, “official” data collection with her only began in January 2006 and continued through June 2006. We met for bi-monthly interviews and continued to keep in touch even after the end of our final official interview. Through email messages, Web Messenger chat, or face-to-face informal meetings, Yellina updated me on her life and also shared insights about being a Generation 1.5 student. The information in this thesis obtained after the completion of the “official” data collection period has been included with Yellina’s permission. Interviews with Yellina were conducted in both Korean and English. Comments in Korean have been translated into English by me.

49 K-original indicates that the original quote was in Korean. Transcription conventions are included in Appendix E.
in Vancouver. She had always spoken Korean at home with her family and continued to do so with her brother. In Korea, she learned EFL at her junior high school, and she also received some private tutoring for English grammar and reading comprehension lessons. At the time of the interview, she considered herself quite “fluent” in English, and “felt no burden talking with other Canadians or going to a government office to translate for [her] mom” (Yellina I#1, January 19, 2006, K-original).

4.2.2 Sheila

Sheila and her family (parents and older sister) immigrated to Calgary, Canada in 2000 when she was 15 years old. The decision to immigrate was mostly her mother’s idea. Sheila’s mother was unhappy with her husband’s hectic and stressful lifestyle connected with his job in Korea. Furthermore, unlike some parents who choose to immigrate because of their children’s poor academic performance in Korean schools, Sheila’s mother felt that Sheila, who was the top student in her junior high at the time of immigration, would have an even more successful future if she received quality education within the Canadian system. Sheila was very happy and excited about their move to Canada as she was not looking forward to living the much pressured life of a Korean high school student. Her sister (who was three years older than Sheila), on the other hand, was not happy because she had planned to attend university in Korea. Her father was also hesitant to leave the professional and financial stability he had in Korea as a scientific researcher in order to start a new life in Canada. However, the family finally decided to move to Canada together and chose Calgary as their destination because the parents felt that the children would acquire English faster in a city like Calgary. This would be

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50 In Korea, it is very common for students to receive either private tutoring or attend privately owned after-school supplementary schools.

51 It was difficult to form an impression of Yellina’s level of English proficiency as she used Korean during most of our interviews. She was very articulate in both spoken and written Korean.

52 Interviews with Sheila were conducted in both English and Korean. Korean quotes included in this chapter were translated into English by me. Sheila seemed to be quite fluent in both Korean and English, and she often code-switched between the two languages during our interviews.
because there were fewer Koreans in Calgary compared to in other cities like Toronto or Vancouver, which were very popular destinations among Korean immigrants at that time.

Sheila’s parents started a small business in Calgary, but the family moved to Vancouver when Sheila was admitted to PCU in 2004. Her sister, who was attending a university in Calgary, also transferred to PCU. At the time of the interview, Sheila’s parents ran a small motel on Vancouver Island, and Sheila lived in Vancouver with her older sister. Almost every weekend, she traveled four hours to visit her parents and to help out with the family business. Sheila and her family only communicated with each other in Korean. Her parents spoke enough English to run their business, but when it came to matters requiring more complicated English, they relied on Sheila and her sister for help. Sheila’s sister was a fourth-year commerce student at PCU and was determined to return to Korea upon graduation. Their parents were also planning to return to Korea one day once both Sheila and her sister had settled down professionally. Because he had a relatively more successful career in Korea, her father was particularly eager to return to his native land.

4.3  Life in Secondary School

Both Yellina and Sheila arrived in Canada in Grade 9. Yellina settled quite well into her new school setting, befriending Korean peers who had a strong influence on her throughout her entire high school years. Sheila, however, struggled to belong at first and longed for Korean friends. Yet when the opportunity for these friendships arose at one point, she chose not to socialize with other Korean peers for the sake of her linguistic and academic goals. At the end of high school, Yellina’s dream of studying English literature in university lived on while Sheila’s future plans changed drastically. In the following sections, I will provide a detailed account of each of their experiences.

4.3.1  Yellina

4.3.1.1 Korean Peer Influences on Social, Linguistic, and Academic Choices

Upon immigrating to Canada, Yellina enrolled in Grade 9 at a secondary school in Vancouver. Her school was quite diverse in terms of students’ ethnic backgrounds and included a large Korean student population. In her grade alone, there were about 20-30
Korean students, and many of them were recent immigrants like herself. When Yellina transferred to her first Canadian school, she immediately made Korean friends and continued to form friendships with mainly Korean students throughout her entire high school life. Her initial unhappiness towards immigrating to Canada made her unmotivated to put in the effort to make “Canadian” friends, thus she distanced herself from local, White Anglo-Canadian peers from the start. She expressed feeling relatively more comfortable with other Asian peers, including Japanese and Chinese students, but the depth of communication and friendship was unlike that which she shared with her Korean friends. Socializing with Korean peers enabled her to maintain a peer culture similar to that of Korean high school students as their main areas of interest included contemporary Korean pop culture, including dramas, movies and celebrity gossip. Yellina also continued to maintain contact with her friends in Korea through email and Web Messenger.

One of the most essential factors in being a member of the Korean peer group was to speak only in Korean when they were amongst themselves. Yellina, herself, had very strong views about Koreans speaking English with each other and felt that those who avoided using Korean only did so in order to distance themselves from Korean students:

I have this thing about Koreans speaking English with each other. From the beginning, I hated Koreans who spoke English to other Koreans if I knew they spoke Korean fluently. In high school, there were these two different groups. One group hung out with only non-Koreans and avoided Koreans completely and the other group hung out with both non-Koreans and Koreans. My friends and I were always speaking badly about the first group. It was obvious they were using English because they didn’t want to be close to Koreans.

(Yellina, I#1, January 19, 2006, K-original)

Thus, speaking English among her peer group suggested a lack of allegiance to other Koreans and was perceived almost as an act of betrayal to one’s Koreanness. When I asked her if she ever felt that her decision to socialize with this group might have affected her English skills, Yellina agreed that it might have. Nonetheless, during our first

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53 The notion of “Canadian”=White Anglo-Canadian was a prevalent theme among all of the participants and will be further discussed in Chapter 7.
few interviews, she expressed no regrets about the choices she had made in high school and said that if she had to do it all over again, she would have probably made the same choices. That is, at that time, the relationship with her peers had been too important to her for her to have agonized over whether or not it would affect her English proficiency. Yet by the time of our final official interview in June 2006, Yellina’s views had changed drastically, and she expressed regret about some of the choices she had made in high school. She attributed this sense of regret to the various experiences she had throughout university, which, in turn resulted in considerable changes in her perceptions of life in Canada and her lifestyle and behaviors. However, throughout our correspondence after our final official interview, I yet again observed her returning to the original views she conveyed in 2005. Yellina described herself as having a “fluctuation of emotions” (Yellina, personal Web correspondence, May 12, 2008, K-original) with regard to where she belonged--an attribute she believed was unique to Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian youth.54

In addition to language choices, Korean peers also influenced each other’s academic choices, especially with regard to attending university. According to Yellina, Korean universities were a topic frequently discussed among her peers, and several of her friends returned to Korea after graduating from high school to attend university:

Just about five years before I came, there weren’t that many Koreans in Vancouver. But I think from around the late 1990s, there was this rush of Korean immigrants. So when I arrived here, there were a lot of Koreans in high school, and we were able to have this Korean culture maintained among our group. We would talk about Korean culture and Korean universities, so I think it became natural for us to talk about going back to Korea for university. So there was almost like a trend to go back to Korea at that time.

(Yellina, I#6, March 24, 2006, K-original)

As mentioned earlier, Yellina already possessed a romanticized image of Korean university life, thus talking to her peers about it only reinforced her desire to return to Korea. With her peers’ strong encouragement, in Grade 12, she searched for information

54 A more detailed discussion of Generation 1.5 immigrant youths’ sense of belonging will follow in Chapter 7 where I perform a cross-case analysis of all the participants.
on Korean university entrance exams for overseas Koreans and was prepared to return to Korea upon graduation. However, her father was very much against this idea, especially when she was admitted to PCU. Hence, Yellina stated that had it not been for her father’s strong opposition, she would have most definitely returned to Korea for university.

4.3.1.2 Fierce Competition among Korean Students and their Parents

When Yellina first transferred to her new high school in Vancouver, she was enrolled in ESL classes for one year during Grade 9. As mentioned earlier, her high school’s student body was made up of students from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including newly arrived immigrant students like Yellina. As a result, her ESL classes were comprised of immigrant students from various countries.

During our discussions of her life in high school, her desire to escape from ESL classes was one of the topics Yellina most frequently brought up. However, her motivation to leave ESL was not necessarily based on an aspiration to enroll in regular classes or a desire to improve her English as soon as possible. Rather, she was mostly driven by the intense level of competition among Korean students in the ESL classes. As soon as she began her Canadian high school studies, she would hear rumors about which Korean student moved on to regular classes while other students were still stuck in level one. There were also cases of broken friendships because one friend moved up a level faster than the other:

There was so much competition among Korean students. It was an embarrassment.

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55 In Canada, although the implementation of the programs varies with each school district as well as with individual schools, there are four most common types of ESL support offered in public schools. They include: 1) full-time, self-contained programs; 2) withdrawal or pullout classes (i.e., while taking mainstream classes, small groups of students meet with specialists teachers for ESL support several times a week); 3) transitional programs (i.e., students study grade-level content but with language adaptations); and 4) mainstreaming (Ashworth, 2001). The type of ESL support necessary for each student is determined by the school’s ESL specialists and/or other teachers and counselors (B.C. Ministry ESL Policy Framework, 1999) Students (whether NSs or NNSs) are unable to remain enrolled in high school beyond the age of 19, and Watt and Roessingh (1994) explain that many ESL students are pushed out of school regardless of their need for further ESL support and time in mainstream classes.

56 Most of the Korean students in the class, including Yellina, learned English as a formal subject in junior high in Korea. It is uncertain whether the other students also received private tutoring in Korea, although as mentioned earlier, this is very common for most Korean students.
to stay in ESL especially if you had been here for a few years, and I saw people who eventually couldn’t graduate after being in ESL for a few years. So I felt so much pressure to leave ESL and go on to regular classes. I’ve been in Canada for six years, and I don’t think I’ve ever studied as hard as when I was in ESL. I would study so hard even on the smallest quizzes. I felt like I had to get 100% on all of them so that I can stand out from the crowd and move on to the next level.

(Yellina, I#3, February 3, 2006, K-original)

In addition, she was also eager to break free from her ESL student status because of the stigma attached to the label of ESL student within the Korean immigrant community. Over the years, many studies have cautioned against the deficiency label often associated with ESL classes (e.g., Salzberg, 1998; Séror, 2002; Talmy, 2005; Toohey, 1992; Zamel, 1995) and the negative impact this has on the ESL students (e.g., Cummins, 1996; Gunderson, 2000). Such views were also confirmed in Yellina’s case as she detested the fact that she was taking ESL classes:

I hated the fact that I had to read the books that were K level or elementary school level. Basically, I hated the fact that I was an ESL student. I wanted to be a "REGULAR student" so badly. To describe it in extreme terms, within the Korean community, the word “ESL student” sounded like a handicapped student or something like that.

(Yellina, Email Correspondence, May 31, 2008, E-original)57

Here, it is worth noting that despite the large presence of other non-Korean students in the ESL classes, when it came to competition as well as escaping the “ESL student” label, the Korean students only paid attention to each other.58 She explained that there may have been a stigma attached to ESL students within her school in general, but non-Korean students’ views were not as important to Yellina or to her Korean peers and their parents. As Yellina stated, all the Koreans were “making such a big deal out of it” (Yellina, I#3, February 3, 2006, E-original) and the anxiety spread rapidly. As a result, students were extremely sensitive and emotional about each other’s progress. In Yellina’s case, after much hard work, she was able to move on to regular classes after just one year.

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57 E-original indicates the original quote was in English.

58 Based on Yellina’s memory, there were about four or five Korean students within a class of 15 to 20, where more than half of the students were Chinese.
This was an accomplishment she was very proud of. However, she was aware that some Korean peers were jealous of her achievement and spoke badly about her behind her back. This type of rivalry among Korean students still continued even after moving on to regular classes (e.g., with grades and awards), yet it was the most fierce among students in ESL classes.

In addition to this severe competition among the Korean students, Yellina explained that there was also very strong competition among the parents, especially the mothers, who had sacrificed so much—including their own lives and careers in Korea—to see to their children’s education in Canada, and this was an additional burden for her and her peers. When Yellina’s family arrived in Vancouver, her mother brought home information about how other Korean parents’ children performed in school even before Yellina began her studies at her new Canadian school. In part because her family lived in a kind of Korean enclave community, all the Koreans in the neighborhood knew one another, and unsurprisingly, news spread rapidly. Her parents were very also anxious for her and her brother to leave ESL and tried to provide an environment at home that would help their children improve their English skills. For instance, because they feared Korean videos would delay their children’s English language development, her parents limited Korean video rentals to about once every two months.

However, Yellina reported that she never felt pressured by her parents themselves, but it was rather her parents’ friends or other adult acquaintances who urged her to get out of ESL as soon as possible. Even when she showed interest in attending university in Korea, it was not just her father but also his friends who were the most against the idea. According to Yellina, when someone is accepted to PCU, the Korean community recognizes it as a significant accomplishment as PCU is a symbol of elitism among local Korean parents. Consequently, attending university in Korea was perceived to be only for those who could not make the grades required in high school for acceptance into a Canadian university. Interestingly, this phenomenon is quite different from the situation

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59 Yellina also received private ESL tutoring from a Korean university student for about six months upon arriving in Canada.
of immigrants of the early 1990s, where parents usually chose to leave Korea precisely because the children did not have the grades to enter universities in Korea (Park, 2006). During Yellina’s Grade 12 year, there were rumors among Korean parents that the competition to be accepted to PCU that year was going to be particularly fierce. There was no real certainty as to why this was the case nor did anyone know the source of the information or its degree of accuracy. But most parents and their children believed it nonetheless and were very nervous and anxious. Thus, when Yellina was accepted to PCU, her father convinced her to attend the school.

4.3.2 Sheila
4.3.2.1 A Struggle to Belong

Unlike Yellina, who described having faced no particular challenges adjusting to her new life in Canada, Sheila did not have very fond memories of her first year in her new country. In fact, she often cried when we discussed about this time period of her life during our interviews. This is quite ironic when considering how it was Yellina who initially resented immigrating to Canada whereas Sheila was excited about the move. However, despite her hardships, it was specifically this time of her life that she was most eager to talk about with me, and during several of our interviews, she would bring new stories that she had remembered about her life in high school that she wanted to share with me that day. She also brought in journal entries that she had written during that time, which described the struggles she was experiencing. She conceded that she now liked talking about that time in her life because she was proud of having overcome all the difficulties she had once faced.

Sheila began Grade 9 upon immigrating to Calgary, Canada. She enrolled in a school that was predominantly White Anglo-Canadian and where there was no formal ESL instruction offered to NNS students. Therefore, from day one, she began taking regular classes with NS students and did not receive formal help with her English. Although this was very difficult for her at first, she believed that this was the time during which her English improved the most.
However, with regard to her social life, Sheila described her life in junior high as a very lonely and stressful time. There were very few visible minority students in her school, and the only other Korean girl in her grade never tried to befriend her. Thus, unlike her life in Korea, Sheila had no close friends in her new school in Calgary and felt that a wall existed between her and her NS classmates from the very beginning. This distance that Sheila felt from her NS “Canadian” peers mirrored Yellina’s views mentioned earlier and also echo the sentiments of the Korean-American immigrant high school students in Seo’s (2007) study. However, in Yellina’s case, she never made the effort to make “Canadian” friends because of her unhappiness towards immigrating to Canada. On the other hand, Sheila explained that she initially did want to make local Canadian friends, but her own lack of confidence in her English prevented her from doing so. She also added that she never felt that anyone was discriminating against her because of her race or language skills, implying that the lack of access to her “Canadian” peer group was based solely on her own shortcomings.

Chiang-Hom’s (2004) study of foreign-born Asian-American youth demonstrates how homeland cultures--usually maintained through technology--were an important part of the youths’ ways of coping with the unwelcoming reception from their “American” peers. Such was the case of Sheila, who continued to visit Korean websites almost every day to keep up with the current happenings in her native land. She also relied on her Korean friends back home for comfort and support, and she communicated with them often through email and Web Messenger. This distance that she felt with her local NS peers continued throughout high school, and even at the time of our interview, Sheila still felt intimidated to make White Anglo-Canadian friends:

I lacked confidence in my English and thought I was different from other students, so I just closed myself up. I also didn’t have anything to say when they were talking about celebrity gossip, partying, putting makeup on and so on. So, I was the one that closed the door first from them. I could’ve tried to create a good relationship with them, but I couldn’t. I often regretted that in high school and cried about it. But I had only myself to blame. It wasn’t them. I was embarrassed to approach them. It was me who did it, and since then I continue to feel intimidated when I’m interacting with White people. It’s almost like I feel they might give me a signal that my English isn’t good enough.
(Sheila, I#5, February 7, 2006, K-original).

In Grade 10, Sheila began her life as a high school student at a different school in the city. This new school was known to have many ESL immigrant students and also had the largest Korean student population within the district. Although there was an ESL program offered at the school, the school ESL teachers who evaluated her English exempted her from the class. When she began the new school year, Sheila was excited to finally have the chance to make some Korean friends and to escape the lonely social life she experienced in junior high school. Kanno and Applebaum (1995) reported similar findings in their study of three Japanese high school ESL students in Canada who chose to socialize with students from the same ethnic origin when they felt that access to Caucasian NS peer groups would be challenging. Throughout Grade 10, she only socialized with Korean students; participating in after-school activities with them and keeping up with Korean pop culture, which was the main topic of interest among her Korean peers at that time.

Like Yellina, Sheila also spoke Korean with these friends almost all the time. However, while Yellina was strongly against using English among Korean peers, Sheila struggled with this issue. By Grade 11, Sheila began to notice that her English skills had not improved at all since she started socializing exclusively with Koreans. This became a growing concern for her as she felt she needed to improve her English skills if she wanted to be accepted into university. Therefore, in order to increase her level of English use, she began mixing Korean and English when conversing with her friends. However, this was received with disapproving looks from her friends because there was an unspoken agreement among them that only Korean would be used within the group. If someone spoke English, they were viewed as somehow trying to show off. As a result, Sheila fought an internal battle within herself, trying to reach a balance between her desire to maintain friendships with her Korean peers and her own sense of anxiety about not using enough English:

I would think to myself that I was just stuck in the middle of nowhere. I mean, I wasn’t achieving anything. It’s not so much that I felt I had to hang out with non-Koreans because I wasn’t trying to make White friends or anything like that. But
when I was hanging out with Korean friends, I still felt that it wasn’t the way things were supposed to be. They were always speaking Korean, always talking about Korean culture and stuff. I felt so anxious when I was with them because I desperately wanted to use English. What’s more is that I started seeing some friends skipping classes and being rude to the ESL teacher, and I realized they didn’t have the same kind of academic goal as I did. I was sure I wanted to go to university, but they didn’t have the same kind of ambition.

(Sheila, I#1, September 28, 2005, K-original)

As a result, Sheila started distancing herself from her Korean peers for the remainder of her high school life. Her first step in doing so was to select her locker in a new area where there were more Chinese and Indian students. She started to decrease the amount of time socializing with the Korean group and spent more time with her new friends. She explained that she felt comfortable with her Chinese and Indian friends because they all shared an Asian background, thus she never felt uncomfortable or intimidated to talk to them. At the same time, she was relieved to be able to increase her use of English with them and no longer felt anxious about using too much Korean. She suggested that this might have been seen as an act of betrayal in the eyes of some Korean peers, yet she had no regrets about her choice, since at that time her determination to improve her English as well as to enter university seemed more important than being affiliated with the Korean group.

In this respect, Sheila’s priorities, or investments (Norton, 2000) in high school were very different from Yellina’s. As is the case with most high school students, finding a peer group with whom they could relate was an important investment for both Sheila and Yellina. However, in Yellina’s case, her primary investment remained in maintaining her Korean culture and identity with her Korean peers. This is not to say that she was not invested in improving her English skills, but so long as it was enough for her to “escape” ESL classes, she was satisfied. On the other hand, Sheila struggled with conflicting investments and identities, trying to balance her loyalty to her Korean friends while aiming for her goal to improve her English and enter university. When a balance was deemed unfeasible, she chose a different English-speaking peer group who seemed more compatible with her goals, even if it meant that she would not be able to create the same
depth of friendship that she had with her Korean peers. Therefore, unlike Yellina, Sheila minimized her investment in friendship and placed more emphasis on her linguistic and academic goals.

4.3.2.2 Change of Academic Path: From English to Science

As mentioned earlier, Sheila was the top student in her junior high school in Korea. Although she was an overall A+ student, her favorite subject was English, and she received a perfect score on all her English exams throughout junior high. She explained that she “fell in love with English” (Sheila I#2, October 19, 2005, E-original) at an early age and begged her mother to let her tag along with her sister when she went to receive private tutoring to study English. Upon entering junior high, her love of English grew significantly, and she made up her mind to become a professor of English literature. In fact, had it not been for the family’s choice to immigrate to Canada, she was planning to attend a foreign language high school in Korea. However, Sheila was even happier that she would be moving to Canada, a place where she would be able to make NS friends and more greatly improve her English skills, facilitating her goal to become an English professor.

Yet soon after beginning her studies in Canada, she realized that her dreams of becoming an English professor were “all an illusion” (Sheila, I#2, October 19, 2005, K-original). Because there were no formal ESL classes she could take in her new junior high, she enrolled in regular classes right away. Thus, she experienced much difficulty in many of her classes, particularly in English and social studies classes, where she could hardly participate in any of the class discussions. Sheila’s experiences echo the findings of Duff’s (2001) study of immigrant ESL learners in a Canadian high school who similarly struggled with these classes in particular due to their lack of knowledge of

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60 Foreign language high schools are private schools in Korea which were created with the purpose of specializing in foreign language education. In order to be accepted, most schools require that the students be in the top 10% of their junior high schools and that they pass a very competitive entrance exam. Most students graduating from these schools are accepted into the highest ranked universities in Korea, and more recently, these schools also started offering special classes for student preparing for Ivy League universities in the U.S. Therefore, these schools are considered to be some of the most “elite” and most expensive high schools in Korea.
contemporary Canadian culture and current affairs. Thus, the self-assurance she once had in Korea regarding her English skills quickly disappeared, and this loss of confidence led her to believe that she was no longer capable of pursuing a career in English literature. When asked why she lost her confidence in English so quickly despite the love she had for it in Korea, she explained that the sense of intimidation by and lack of interaction with her NS peers led her to assume that she could not achieve a high level of English proficiency. Another reason why she believed NS-like English skills were beyond her reach was because as one of the very few minority students in her school and the only minority family in her neighborhood, she constantly felt like a foreigner in Calgary:

Very soon after I immigrated to Canada, I started to just assume that I couldn’t be good in English. So, I just pushed it aside from my priority. It’s funny because normally, if I knew I wasn’t good at something, I would try really hard to be better at it. But with English, I kind of gave up. So shortly after coming to Canada, I decided that I wanted to be good at something other than English, and that’s why I studied math and science much harder.

(Sheila, I#2, October 19, 2005, E-original)

Sheila’s comments are similar to the findings in Chiang and Schmida’s (1999) study, where immigrant students viewed themselves as incapable of ever achieving the fluency of a native speaker because they were “not supposed to be good anyway” (p. 93). However, although her dream to major in English would not be realized, Sheila quickly focused her time and energy on other subjects that she could excel in like math and science. Despite her lack of confidence in spoken English, she felt knowledgeable enough in these subjects to be very active in these classes, like leading class discussions and tutoring other students. Her hard work became worthwhile because she was recognized by her peers and teachers as one of the most outstanding students in math and science subjects. When she graduated from high school, she was awarded the top honor in math in her graduating class.

Having excelled greatly in math and science, Sheila decided to major in the sciences at PCU. Regarding this choice, she commented that she was uncertain whether she truly had a talent in the sciences; yet she chose the field because she was confident
she could succeed in it and because her lack of English skills would not be a disadvantage:

I chose a field that would not require a lot of English. So naturally, I came to the sciences. I could never enjoy subjects like social studies when I was in high school because of the stress from English. I couldn’t even wonder whether they could be fun. So in the same vein, I could never even wonder if I could major in something like philosophy or sociology.

(Sheila, I#3, November 23, 2005, K-original)

4.4 Life in University

In the Fall of 2004, Yellina began her studies at PCU as a General Arts major. Even though she was somewhat disappointed that her dreams to begin university life in Korea were not fulfilled, she was happy to pursue her higher education at PCU because she knew that her parents had immense pride in her becoming a PCU student. She decided she could fulfill her Korean university fantasy one day as an exchange student, perhaps during her second or third year at university. Before enrolling at PCU, Yellina was particularly excited at the possibility of becoming an English literature major someday—a dream that she had since Grade 10. In fact, it was her English teacher in high school who strongly encouraged her to major in English literature in university. Her teacher believed that Yellina’s first language, Korean, would serve as an advantage when doing creative writing and that her expressions would become more unique as a result of her bilingual skills. Thus, Yellina began her university life with much hope about her future career. However, over the next few years, she would experience several ups and downs related to this dream.

Sheila also began her studies at PCU in Fall 2004 as a Biochemistry major. Prior to moving to Vancouver with her family, she had heard rumors about the large Korean population at PCU and was afraid she might become part of the Korean university student culture if she began socializing with other Koreans.\textsuperscript{61} She was aware of how students in

\textsuperscript{61}The exact number of Korean students at PCU is unavailable as PCU does not keep statistics on ethnocultural backgrounds of its students. However, it should also be noted that the Korean student population at PCU is not only made up of immigrant students like Sheila. Each year, many exchange students from various universities in Korea study at PCU. For instance, from 2001, Korea University has been sending up to one hundred exchange students to PCU each year. In addition, PCU’s Center for
Korea neglected their studies during their first year of university, thus, in order to avoid this, she chose not to approach any Koreans during her first year and concentrated on her academic life. With the exception of English courses, Sheila did not experience any difficulties with regard to her studies at PCU. She continued to receive excellent marks in all her classes and in the Spring term of 2006, she changed her major to immunology. She hoped to attend graduate school upon completing her degree, and ultimately, pursue a career as a veterinarian in the future.

4.4.1 Continued Influence of Korean Peers

4.4.1.1 Yellina: “They all said I was crazy”

As mentioned earlier, Yellina’s high school experiences were heavily influenced by her Korean peers. In addition, much of the information she gained was from Korean adults (mostly mothers--although much of the information was often closer to closer to rumor than fact). However, upon becoming a university student, parents or adult figures no longer had such a significant effect on her or her peers’ lives. Instead, Yellina was under the influence of a new type of group: namely, her sønbaes or upper classmen at PCU.

Even prior to starting her studies at university, some sønbae students at PCU warned her that on average, only about 20% of the Korean students are able to successfully graduate; thus, Yellina began her university life with much anxiety and worry. Upon enrolling at PCU, Yellina soon joined the Korean Student Association out

Intercultural Communication and English Language Institute (both located on PCU’s campus) also attract many students from Korea each year.

Sheila took the LPI exam twice (failing the first time) during her first term at PCU and was able to take English courses starting her second term. The difficulty with first-year English courses was a salient theme among most of the participants and will be discussed more in depth in Chapter 7.

In Korea, a person usually uses the term sønbae to address someone who is more experienced and often older than him/herself within the community they both belong to. Such communities include, but are not limited to, schools, companies, military, sports teams, religious groups, clubs, and hometowns. Hubae is the opposite of sønbae and refers to a less-experienced and oftentimes younger member of a community. For Korean university students, the sønbae-hubae relationship is very important because sønbaes often play an important role in building personal networks and support systems for the hubaes, thereby facilitating the hubaes’ routes to professional success.
of the desire to make new Korean friends at university. There, she continued to meet many sŏnbaes who offered her various types of advice, ranging from which courses she would get an easy grade in to how to prepare for the LPI:

&Sŏnbaes would tell us that when we are writing the LPI, we shouldn’t choose a topic that would require us to write about our immigrant experiences or learning ESL. They said you don’t want to give even the slightest clue that you are an ESL student and that if you make more than five grammar mistakes, you are doomed.

(Yellina, I#2, January 25, 2006, K-original)

Whether or not such information was grounded on accurate facts was not the issue. As someone who was not familiar with the university culture, Yellina relied on her sŏnbaes for many of the academic choices she made during her first year.

Of all the advice Yellina took from her sŏnbaes, one particular piece of advice played a crucial role in her academic path. Yellina began her university studies with the hopes of being an English literature major as noted above. Additionally, she began developing an interest in studying political science. However, shortly after enrolling at PCU, she encountered strong discouragement from her sŏnbaes, who urged her to change her mind about her major and to simply choose something that would allow her to graduate more easily:

The sŏnbaes, they all said I was crazy and that I’ll never graduate if I majored in those things. They said unless I’m going to med school or business, it’s no different what I major in, so I should just do what everyone else does like Economics or Psychology. Then everyone around me, not just the sŏnbaes started trying to convince me to change my mind. So, I got really scared at that time because I thought I was making the wrong choice. So I decided to just major in Asian Studies and thought it didn’t really matter what I majored in. I just didn’t feel like I needed to study something that was considered more difficult.

(Yellina, I#2, January 25, 2006, K-original)

When I asked her why she thought her sŏnbaes discouraged her from pursuing her original dreams, Yellina provided a detailed and insightful answer. The following is a short excerpt from one of our interviews (I=Interviewer, Jean; Y=Yellina):

I: Why did they discourage you? Were they referring to linguistic difficulties?
Y: No, it wasn’t so much because of the individual differences in English.
I: What do you mean individual differences?

I: Well, they weren’t discouraging me because they thought my English skills weren’t good enough. They were referring to all of us as a group of Generation 1.5. They said that because of the fact that English is not our first language, there were so many things we would have to give up.

I: So it’s more about how you as a group perceive your linguistic limitations?

Y: Yes, it’s something like that. Even today, there are so many things we have to give up. It’s not like there is an external policy or regulations that limit us. It’s more the self-pressure that we feel that scares us away (…) and that keeps us from doing certain things. We just get scared from the start. We also think that because we weren’t born here, we’ll have a disadvantage when we’re looking for jobs after we graduate.(…) There’s this sŏnbae I know who I think has a lot of political ambition. He said if he had been in Korea, he would have run for student president. But the thing is, because we are so pressured and burdened by it all, we have this feeling among ourselves (…) we just don’t even want to look at that direction [of pursuing our dreams]. So, for someone like me, we think to ourselves, English is not even our first language, how can we even dare study English literature?

(Yellina, I#2, January 25, 2006, K-original)

Thus, this fear of failure and lack of confidence, imposed on her by her sŏnbaes and accepted by Yellina herself, eventually led her to declare a major in Asian Studies. In some ways, this is similar to Sheila’s decision in high school discussed earlier, where she gave up on her dream as an English major. She instead chose to study sciences at university because she, too, accepted the view that her English would never be as good as a NS. However, in Sheila’s case, Korean peers and sŏnbaes had no influence on her choice since she chose not to socialize with Korean students from Grade 11 onwards. Also, while Sheila chose the sciences because she thought that was a field she could excel in, Yellina chose Asian Studies with the goal of becoming a professor in the future and playing a role in introducing Asian and Korean culture to Canadians. Her sense of commitment to the Korean-Canadian community was very strong, and she felt that by becoming an Asian Studies professor and disseminating knowledge about Korea, she would be able to contribute to the Korean community in her own way. However, throughout her first two years at university, Yellina became unhappy with her choice to study Asian Studies. Yet because she was surrounded by sŏnbaes and peers who held
fatalistic attitudes about their status and possibilities as Generation 1.5, Yellina was also hesitant to pursue her original dream. Furthermore, discouraging experiences with certain classes and instructors at university also conspired against her realization of that dream.

4.4.1.2 Sheila: “They asked me why I was trying so hard”

Unlike Yellina who continued to socialize almost exclusively with Korean peers upon entering PCU, Sheila avoided them until the summer of 2005, when she began socializing a lot more with her Korean classmates. Although a part of her still had reservations towards the typical Korean university student culture, she became very lonely during her first year in university and longed to form deep friendships with those she could truly connect with. Therefore, when a couple of Korean students approached her in one of her summer courses, she was delighted at the chance to meet other Koreans and to become part of a Korean peer group. In the fall of 2005, Sheila also joined the Korean Student Association at PCU, where her sister was serving as an executive member. Through this organization, Sheila met many new Korean peers and participated in numerous social events. She also started dating a Korean sŏnbae that she met there.

However, she soon faced the same dilemma that she had during high school. That is, she was not using English enough in her daily life. Outside the classroom setting, she was always with her Korean friends with whom she spoke mainly Korean. When she tried mixing English with them, she was again faced with awkward looks and criticism, even from her own sister:

I feel the pressure to use Korean all the time. Sometimes I try to just mix English and Korean but my sister tells me to stop because I look obnoxious, as if I think I’m behaving like I’m better than the others. We used to argue about this even in high school. She’d ask me why I am trying so hard to use English even when I’m with Koreans. She’d say “What the hell is wrong with you?” I know other Koreans feel the same way when I use English with them. I can see it in their faces. So, I’m always feeling anxious about this.

(Sheila, I#3, November 23, 2005, K-original)

64 Over the next few years, Sheila continued to play an active role in the Korean Student Association, and during the 2007-2008 academic year, she served as the vice-president.
Sheila believed her sister’s lack of effort to use English was not only due to the pressure within the Korean group, but also because, unlike Sheila, her sister had plans to return to Korea upon graduating from PCU. Thus, for her sister, her future life plans did not require sophisticated and advanced English skills. On the other hand, Sheila did wish to reside in Canada in the long run and felt the need to increase the amount of English she used every day so as to feel more comfortable conversing with NSs in the future. Moreover, because it was Sheila’s professional goal to become a veterinarian, she agonized over whether her current linguistic choices would enable her to achieve the kind of English proficiency required to work within mainstream Canadian society with NS clients and colleagues:

I think it’s a negative thing that I’m speaking Korean all the time. I know that I won’t be going back to Korea. I will be in Canada for the rest of my life and spending life with these people. So, I ask myself, what am I going to do with my life here if I’m only speaking Korean all the time. I feel like I’m just suppressing or ignoring those feelings inside and just speaking Korean. There are days when I’m watching Korean TV, and I have to stop myself because I feel so pathetic.

(Sheila, I#5, February 7, 2006, E-original)

Additionally, Sheila felt her predominant use of Korean outside of class was affecting her interactions with classmates and instructors in the courses she was taking. That is, although she experienced no difficulty understanding the course content and performing well on exams, she felt she was unable to verbally express herself clearly to her classmates and instructors. She found herself being misunderstood during class discussions or when she asked questions to course instructors after class. After a while, asking questions became such a burden on her that she made sure to practice each word she was going to say the night before she approached her instructor, or she would simply

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65 Sheila’s sister did, in fact, return to Korea upon graduating from PCU and was working for a Korean company. She planned to return to Canada in 2009 for graduate studies.

66 However, it should be noted that while Sheila had no desire to leave Canada in terms of her professional career, her parents’ possible return to Korea in the future added another layer to the complexities of her experiences. This factor will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 7 in my discussion of return migration.
write him/her an email instead. Thus, such stressful experiences only added to Sheila’s overall frustration towards not using enough English in her daily life.

However, when asked whether she considered not socializing with Koreans anymore (like the choice she had made in high school), Sheila expressed a strong reluctance to do so. She felt that her Korean peers provided her with understanding and support that was difficult to find with other ethnic groups. In particular, because she had experienced much loneliness when she first arrived in Canada as well as during the first year of university, she was even more attached to her current group of Korean friends. Although it is true that many NS students also feel very lonely in high school and during their first year of university, it seemed that in Sheila’s mind, it was precisely her NNS immigrant status that led to such feelings. Therefore, having similar experiences as immigrants, particularly as those who left Korea during secondary school, created an even stronger bond between Sheila and her friends. In fact, Sheila mentioned that a few of her friends shared the same concern as her with regard to their lack of spoken English, yet each time they discussed it, they concluded “well, what can we do…maybe next term” (Sheila, I#5, February 7, 2006, E-original).

Nonetheless, there were several times when Sheila came to our interview meetings feeling extremely upset and anxious. As soon as she sat down, she asked me if it would be alright for her to just start “venting” about her frustrations towards not using English enough. On one occasion, she had just returned from a lab session and described feeling awkward conversing with her lab mate because it had been so long since she last used English. With that said, she described feeling glad that she was participating in my study as it allowed her to at least mix Korean and English with me, thereby increasing her overall use of English at least for that day. Even until our final interview in June 2006, Sheila’s dilemma continued. She hoped the situation would change the next academic year.

4.4.2 New and Continued Dilemmas

Despite the amount of emotional support and comfort that Korean peers brought to Yellina and Sheila’s lives, it was apparent that the same peers also created some
pressures and tensions for the students with regard to their use of English and/or academic choices. Yet in Yellina’s case, it seemed she did not question her sŏnbaes’ advice very much and also accepted the limitations of her choices based on her NNS status. On the other hand, Sheila experienced much agony because even though she enjoyed the new company of her Korean peers, the same peers criticized her for trying so hard to use English. In this section, I will describe the various experiences and processes through which Yellina and Sheila had new realizations and continued dilemmas with regard to their use of English.

4.4.2.1 Yellina: A New View towards Learning English

In my discussion of Yellina’s life in high school, it was evident how important it was for her to escape the title of “ESL student.” Hence, she invested much time and energy into improving her English skills in order to “graduate” from ESL classes. Yellina described her academic life in high school as a time when she only studied for English. Yet as she embarked on her life as a university student, she soon realized that she was now in a position where she was studying in English:

In high school, English used to be just a form of survival for me. And I was just happy to get out of ESL and then to get a good enough grade to enter PCU. But now, it’s more a tool for my academic career. I am no longer studying for English but studying in English.

(Yellina, I#4, February 16, 2006, K-original)

This idea was reinforced by courses she took which demanded a high level of English proficiency, especially academic writing skills, as well as background knowledge of Canadian sociopolitical and cultural matters. For example, in her first term at university, Yellina registered for an Anthropology course. On the first day of class, the professor went over the syllabus and emphasized that the course would require excellent writing skills. He also added that if students were not confident about their English, especially writing, then they should drop the course. This came as a shock to Yellina because she was already questioning her English language skills after having just taken her LPI in the summer on which she had received a 4 (which was not sufficient for her to
take first-year English courses at PCU). Consequently, Yellina quickly dropped the course and never reenrolled in it again.

She also experienced much discouragement while taking a Political Science course on Canadian government; yet this time, it was not so much because of the level of English required to take the course. Rather, her lack of knowledge of Canadian politics and sociocultural issues left her feeling completely out of place. Again, this was similar to the experiences of the students in Duff’s (2001) study, and also echoed Sheila’s experiences in her high school social studies and English classes mentioned earlier:

These people, for twenty years, they have lived in an environment where they’ve received certain governmental benefits and so on. So, even if someone has no interest in politics, if you’ve lived here since birth, you can’t help but have some knowledge about Canadian politics. So, certain things are very natural to them. I went to class without those twenty years with the desire to study the subject. And honestly, it wasn’t so much the studying that was hard. I just had nothing to say during class discussions. When people talked about politics, current affairs, hockey, I couldn’t join at all. I felt so disappointed in myself at that time.

(Yellina, I#1, January 19, 2006, K-original)

A point worth noting in the above comment is how Yellina blamed herself for her lack of knowledge of Canadian issues. In particular, she regretted certain choices she had made in high school including not making the effort to befriend “Canadian” peers. She was still uncertain whether she would be able to reach out to “Canadian” friends, but she knew some changes needed to be made in her life. In addition, during her first two years in university, she became more aware that she was in an educational system where she was learning North American academic norms and values. In high school, her primary focus was on learning English and taking exams, and she was also still strongly attached to everything Korean. Consequently, she was indifferent to the kind of values that she was being exposed to under the Canadian educational system. However, at university, although not overtly taught, she discovered Canada in each course she took. And as a result, slowly, but gradually, she started reevaluating her future academic and professional plans.

In the Fall of 2005, Yellina took a leave of absence from school. When the previous academic year ended in April 2005, she was unhappy with her academic life
studying Asian Studies, and difficulties living in an on-campus dormitory left her feeling emotionally drained. She decided to take a break from everything and planned trips to Korea and New York City. Her visit in 2005 was Yellina’s second trip back to Korea. During her first trip back in 2004, Yellina was still in her fantasy world where Korea was a place she continuously longed for. She was only there for two weeks, and she returned to Canada with even bigger illusions of Korea. In the Summer of 2005, she stayed in Korea for two months, which brought about considerable changes in her views towards Korean society. During that time, Yellina worked as an intern for a publishing company. There, she witnessed the reality of fierce competition among Koreans and realized that the Korea she dreamed of was the Korea she remembered when she was 15 years old. She also became more conscious of the differences between those who were born and raised in Korea and Generation 1.5 Koreansémigrès like herself. She believed that because of North American educational influences, Generation 1.5 Koreans were more flexible in their thoughts and less dependent on their parents. She admitted to speaking ill of local Koreans with her fellow Generation 1.5 friends in Korea, and with those experiences, her illusions of Korea were shattered.

In addition, her trip to Korea crushed a belief Yellina had maintained since she first immigrated to Canada in 1999. Whenever Yellina felt discouraged by her lack of English skills, she took comfort in the fact that she was still more fluent than those back in Korea. That is, because she planned to return to Korea upon graduating from university, she believed her Korean-English bilingual skills would give her the competitive edge over her Korean peers (who were born and raised in Korea). However, during her two months in Korea, she realized that her bilingual skills were no longer a major advantage for her:

I used to feel a bit safe (…) I had this sense of relief knowing that I speak better English than those in Korea, but that was a time when I was just a “frog in a well.”67 There are so many people who are good at English back in Korea now, so many bilinguals, so I’m not sure I have a huge advantage.

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67 “A frog in a well” is a Korean expression used to describe someone with a narrow world view.
A visit to New York during her leave of absence also broadened Yellina’s views. While in New York, Yellina met many Generation 1.5 Korean-American university students, whom she believed were different from Korean-Canadians. She saw many students who, in her eyes, maintained their Korean identity but who also actively participated in mainstream American society. More specifically, she envied their ability to maintain close ties with Korean friends while developing an advanced level of proficiency in English. In contrast to these New Yorkers, Yellina believed that Korean-Canadian youth were still too heavily influenced by Korean culture without combining that with Canadian values and ideas. She felt their English skills were also lacking compared to the Korean-Americans she met. Yellina suggested that this was the reason why so many Korean-Canadians ended up pursuing a career within the Korean community, where advanced English skills were not required. In addition, she felt that compared to New York, Vancouver as a city was too small to pursue her future possibilities. Thus, she decided to be open to the idea of living in different cities around the world as part of her future career path. Yet in order to do so, a high level of English proficiency would be required.

I realized that English really is a global language. These days, everything is in English. English is leading the world in technology. If someone asked me a few years ago about officializing English in Korea, I would have said no. But now, I think it is dumb not to do it. If we do not make English an official language, then we are allowing other people to take advantage of all the things in the world that are led by English. English is something you need in this day and age. I may go back to Korea for a few years to work one day. I may go do volunteer work in Africa. Who knows? I know my heart is still close to Korea, so I may want to work on something related to Korea. But no matter what I do and where I go, I will always need English.

(Yellina, I#4, February 16, 2006, K-original)

4.4.2 Sheila: “I feel like I need to prove myself”

Earlier, I described the frustration that Sheila felt about having to speak Korean all the time with her Korean peers. With the amount of Korean she was using, one of her concerns was whether she would be able to acquire the level of English proficiency needed to work within mainstream Canadian society. However, for Sheila, the more
crucial issue at hand was how she would be viewed in the eyes of her friends back in Korea as well as other Korean immigrants in Canada.

Because Sheila was a top student in her school in Korea (and particularly excelled in English), when she immigrated to Canada, her friends expressed envy that Sheila would soon become a NS of English--an expectation that Sheila also had for herself as well. However, although five years had passed since she first arrived in Canada (at the time of our interview), Sheila did not feel that she had reached a level of English that would be deemed “acceptable” for someone who had resided in Canada for that long. Consequently, although she had once planned on visiting Korea as an exchange student, she felt too ashamed to return with her current English skills.

I do want to experience Korean university culture, but I don’t want to go back to Korea yet because I don’t think my English has improved to the level that I want it to be at. I will be embarrassed to go back with this level of English. I’d be less embarrassed if I went there after having forgotten some Korean and I was trying to improve my mother tongue. My friends back home seem to think I’m a total NS because I used to be the best in junior high. So, it’s kind of funny how I don’t want to go back to Korea because of my English. It’s not right to do so yet. I feel like I need to prove myself more first.

(Sheila, I#2, October 19, 2005, K-original)

In addition to having to prove her English skills to her Korean friends in Korea, Sheila constantly compared her English skills with other Korean immigrant students she encountered. This tendency to compare started immediately upon arriving in Canada when she saw that the only other Korean girl in her class spoke relatively fluent English just one year after immigrating to Canada. Since then, whenever she came across a Korean immigrant student who was fluent in English she would automatically wonder how long that person had been in Canada for and would became envious of their English skills. For example, during one of our interviews, Sheila had just come from a biology class where a Korean girl gave a presentation in class. She expressed feeling inferior to the girl because of her fluency in English and began to feel frustrated again by the quality of her own English skills.

Sheila was particularly concerned that she would be judged by other Koreans if her English was not good enough. She, herself, admitted to judging and feeling pity
towards other Koreans if their English did not reflect the level of fluency of people who claimed to have lived in Canada for a certain period of time. Moreover, because she knew she was already being criticized by some of her peers for mixing Korean and English, she felt she had to be extra cautious not to make any mistakes in English when she spoke to other Koreans:

They’ll probably smirk or something if I make mistakes in English. I mean, they might think, “Why does she insist on using English when it isn’t that great to begin with?” So, when I’m using English with other Koreans, I’m always monitoring myself. And if I notice that I’ve just made a mistake, I’ll correct myself right away. In general, I feel like I have to prove myself to other Korean immigrant students, so I’m always comparing myself to them. When I meet someone who arrived around the same time as me and who is more fluent than I am, I ask myself “Why am I like this?” And that definitely motivates me to study harder and improve my English.

(Sheila, I#3, November 23, 2005, E-original)

This level of anxiety was further amplified if she ever met immigrant students who were fluent in both Korean and English. Although Sheila considered herself completely fluent in spoken Korean, she did not feel as confident in written academic Korean. Thus, when she saw someone who possessed strong spoken and written skills in both Korean and English, she became envious and then ashamed of her own skills and felt anxious to improve her Korean skills. Yet soon after, she scolded herself for worrying about Korean when her English was not even good enough yet. In the end, she became even more worried about her state of English and became concerned that she would be “stuck in neither that nor this and just remain at the current stage of English forever” (Sheila, I#2, October 19, 2005, K-original). Sheila admitted that she had never actually received criticism for her English skills from any of her Korean friends either in Korea or in Canada. Moreover, she was uncertain whether her friends back home did indeed have such high expectations of her or whether other Korean immigrants really did judge others based on their English skills. Nonetheless, regardless of whether they were real or imagined, the pressures Sheila felt were indeed very real, and they only escalated as she became more socially involved with her Korean friends.
In addition, Sheila also put more pressure on herself whenever she thought of her parents’ sacrifices. Every time we discussed her parents, Sheila cried. She was very grateful to her parents for having given up so much in Korea for the sake of their children’s education. Thus, she felt extremely guilty about not improving her English and remaining in her Korean peer group, implying that by making such choices, she was not fulfilling her duties as a daughter. She added that she wanted to be someone her parents could be proud of and that she felt very guilty when she was “just hanging out with Korean friends and not speaking English or studying” (Sheila, I#3, November 23, 2005, E-original). It is worth noting here that Sheila was a very successful student academically both in high school and at PCU, and such academic achievement is a source of pride for most parents. However, it seemed that in Sheila’s mind, she had somehow “failed” as a daughter by not using more English in her daily life and not reaching out to members of other non-Korean communities.

4.4.3 Negotiating Change

As discussed above, various factors and experiences influenced the students’ views towards improving their English skills. Classes at university and experiences outside of Canada made Yellina realize the narrow view she used to have about learning English. Sheila’s internal struggle continued as she put more pressure on herself to improve her English skills. Therefore, upon reevaluating their situations, both women felt the need for changes in their lives--some changes more substantial than others--which will be discussed in the following sections.

4.4.3.1 Yellina: A More Proactive Approach to Improving English

Trips to Korea and New York in 2005 served as significant catalysts for change in Yellina as she returned with a new outlook on life and a completely different future plan for herself. The first step towards change involved declaring English as her major in the Summer of 2006. During our final “official” interview, Yellina appeared very excited to finally work on something that she had been truly interested in since her high school years. However, her motivation behind majoring in English was no longer simply to fulfill a long, lost dream. Now, improving her English was the fundamental reason for
selecting English as her academic major. She believed that by making English the center of her studies, she would be able to gain more in-depth knowledge of the English language, which would ultimately aid in developing her English skills. Hence, if learning English in high school was a tool for immediate survival, improving her English in university was somewhat like completing a prerequisite for competing in a global market.

In addition to majoring in English literature, Yellina decided to take on a more proactive and aggressive attitude toward improving her English skills. For example, up until her second year of university, Yellina accepted her “fate” as a NNS and avoided classes that required a lot of academic writing. Yet she now decided to face her fears and to try harder, even though she still accepted that she would always be disadvantaged to a certain extent due to her NNS status.

However, despite Yellina’s enthusiasm about improving her English, there was one aspect of her life that she was not willing to change. That is, she was still very attached to her Korean peers and sŏnbaes and was not ready to change her habit of speaking Korean with them. Yellina regretfully mentioned not using enough English every day and said that on some days, she spoke no English at all. Even at school, she felt she was “listening” to English in classes instead of “using” English herself. Yet Yellina stated that no matter where she ended up in life, she felt that Koreans would remain her closest friends, and her ability to connect with them came from sharing the same cultural background and language. Thus, regardless of how important it was to improve her English and to increase the amount of time she used English on a daily basis, she was not willing to sacrifice her friendships for the sake of English. In fact, Yellina was even reluctant to share with her friends her decision to declare English as her major. She was concerned about their possible reactions and disapproval and hence chose not to disclose anything until the change in major was finalized.

Thus, instead of minimizing Korean usage with her friends, Yellina opted to seek alternative approaches to increasing her time using English. For instance, she decided to

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68 This avoidance of classes with heavy writing requirements was also the case with most of the participants and will be discussed more in depth in Chapter 7.
apply for a part-time position at a local bookstore, where she would be able to have more interaction with NSs of English. She was also planning to join a club at PCU, although she was undecided about which one she was most interested in. In addition, she sought ways to improve both her Korean and English written skills by taking on Korean-English translation work. Because her trip to Korea made her realize that her English skills alone would not serve as an advantage, Yellina felt she also needed to maintain a certain level of Korean language skills in order to have more marketability if she ever returned to Korea to pursue a career.69

4.4.3.2 Sheila: Finding Alternative Opportunities to Use English

Around the time of our fourth interview in January, Sheila decided something had to be done about her situation of not speaking enough English in her daily life. Like Yellina, she was still very much attached to her Korean friends and was thus unwilling to minimize her time socializing with them. Therefore, like Yellina, she chose to increase her amount of time using English by placing herself in situations where she had no choice but to interact with people in English. For instance, she took on a part-time position as a waitress at a Japanese restaurant near her home. She worked during the evening shifts, so by the time she returned home, it was close to midnight. Needless to say, it was extremely physically tiring to work long hours after a full day of studies at school. However, Sheila felt it was a worthwhile investment if it meant increasing her use of English without sacrificing her relationship with her Korean friends. Moreover, she also decided to be more aggressive and talkative during her volunteer hours at a hospital gift shop. Thus far, she had been comfortable with her position as a cashier as it had required minimal conversation with the customers. Now, she was determined to make the effort to at least exchange “small talk” with the customers so as to increase her English communication time as much as possible.

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69 In fact, upon graduating from PCU in May 2008, Yellina returned to Korea to seek temporary career possibilities. She planned to work for a few years then eventually attend graduate school in Korea, where she was hoping to major in English literature with a concentration on Asian-North American diasporas.
Finally, Sheila also returned to a “strategy” she employed in high school. That is, she made some Chinese friends in class with whom she could communicate in English, and she made the effort to create opportunities to converse with them outside the class such as going for coffee or spending time with them during breaks. The very fact that she was conversing in English instead of Korean made her feel as if she was doing something important; hence, she tried to make the most out of the short time she did spend with her Chinese friends by talking as much as possible. Sheila admitted that she never talked to these friends about deeper and more confidential issues that she only shared with her Korean friends. However, she nonetheless wanted to practice conversing about general issues with her Chinese friends--friends who were fluent in English but with whom she did not feel intimidated like she did with her White Anglo-Canadian peers.

In examining the above experiences of Sheila, it is important to consider how someone as academically successful and bilingual as Sheila--whom many would refer to as a “model minority” student--still struggled with finding opportunities to use English and feeling competent in her English skills. The simple explanation could be that Sheila as an individual had set very high standards for herself or that her shy personality kept her from socializing with NS “Canadian” peers. Although there is certainly some truth to such explanations, it also raises the question of whether our schools and society in general have a “false sense of security” (Hurh, 1993, p. 26) with regard to immigrant students who appear bilingual and bicultural, and therefore “successful,” on the surface. That is, it is critical to consider whether the students’ functional bilingualism and academic success serve as a pacifier to some extent, possibly leading to the overlooking of other issues of access, rejection, and for some ethnic populations, racism.

4.5 Summary and Discussion

In this chapter, I have described Yellina and Sheila’s academic, social, and linguistic trajectories since their arrival in Canada. Both students arrived in Canada with a dream to become professors in English literature. In Yellina’s case, the dream still lives on, whereas Sheila has chosen to pursue a completely different field. It is not my intention to judge whether one choice was better than the other. Rather, I have
highlighted the contextual factors that have led to the different decisions made by each student. However, in doing so, I have also identified some of the commonalities between the two young women.

For both women, Korean peers (in Canada and elsewhere) played an important role in their everyday lives and in many ways served as “experts” (Duff, 2003, Lave & Wenger, 1991) in their process of L2 socialization in Canada. In particular, from early on in high school, interactions with Korean peers taught Yellina and Sheila that it was unacceptable to use English among other Korean immigrant youth like themselves—an expectation which continued throughout university. The pressure to use their L1 is similar to the findings in Goldstein (1997a) and Liang’s (2006) studies, where Chinese adolescent immigrant students in the U.S and Canada felt pressured to use their L1 with their Chinese-speaking peers because using English was considered rude and arrogant. Thus, in order not to jeopardize their friendships with their peers, the students chose to speak in their L1s despite their desires to improve their English skills. However, it is also interesting to note that in Fought (2006) and Zentella’s (1997) studies with Latin-American immigrant youth, in some cases, they deliberately code-switched between English and Spanish in order to display their bilingual identity, thereby distinguishing themselves from recently-arrived immigrants. In this respect, the fact that Yellina and Sheila were newly arrived immigrants in high school (hence not yet bilingual) could partially explain why they felt pressured to use Korean with their fellow Korean immigrant friends. However, this does not explain the continued pressure to use Korean in university because by then, the students had become quite bilingual and peer pressure is usually not an issue for most university students. Thus, this raises the question about how much English proficiency one must have in order to truly qualify as a bilingual and not be criticized as a “show-off.” It also makes one speculate whether such pressures are only found among Generation 1.5 youth or if second generation Korean immigrants might feel the same.

In addition to not speaking English among other Koreans, members of the Korean community continued to influence and socialize Yellina and Sheila into various
ideologies regarding English language learning and their future possibilities. In Yellina’s case, in high school, the competitive nature of Korean students and their parents socialized Yellina into believing that her objective for learning English was to escape her ESL status and to “defeat” other Korean immigrant students. Korean peers and parents also influenced Yellina to believe that ESL students were somehow handicapped. In addition, the need to remain familiar with contemporary Korean pop culture (in order to socialize with Korean peers) kept Yellina from being interested in Canadian culture and current affairs—a choice which disadvantaged her later on in various classes at PCU. In university, sŏnbaes took over the role of peers and parents and guided Yellina into a world of Generation 1.5 that is limited by their own perceived disadvantages as NNSs and immigrants. However (although not as explicitly), the Koreans back in Korea and Generation 1.5 Korean-Americans that she met during her leave from PCU also caused Yellina to reevaluate her perceptions towards English as well as her future goals. That is, the encounters with other Korean youths outside of Canada made Yellina realize the importance of improving her English skills, not just because it is a language spoken in Canada, but because it is a crucial element to competing in the global market.

Consequently, Yellina resisted the discouraging “Generation 1.5 boundary” set before her by her sŏnbaes at PCU and reclaimed her original intentions of studying English literature. Yet again, though her decision was no longer influenced by Korean-Canadian immigrants, her points of reference remained Korean nonetheless. Therefore, Yellina’s experiences suggest that in her case, English NSs were rarely taken into consideration as “experts” of her target language and culture nor were they necessarily her role models with regard to English to begin with. For the most part, fellow Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadians were experts to Yellina and served as mentors and advisers with regard to their academic and sociocultural choices, but most importantly, with regard to what was and what was not desirable for Korean immigrant students’ L2 learning and use.

Duff (2003) asserts that traditional LS approaches have often assumed a relatively smooth LS process for newcomers who are guided by “experts who have considerable good will and patience and who helpfully accommodate newcomers to their group, their
culture, their community” (p. 333). She also adds that such approaches may not fully grasp the contexts of contemporary society, which tends to be “much more complicated, fluid, dynamic, competitive, multilingual and potentially unwelcoming” (p. 333). Many of Sheila’s experiences confirm Duff’s arguments. For Sheila, contrary to her expectations to make NS “Canadian” friends upon moving to Canada, she felt too intimidated to approach White Anglo-Canadian NSs in high school and had continued to feel this way ever since. This intimidation was not necessarily a result of rejection or lack of accommodation from the NS peers; rather, Sheila attributed her poor English skills as the main reason for these feelings. However, the indifference on the part of NS peers and the perceived cultural differences that Sheila felt with them also contributed to her building a wall against them. Thus, even when she opted to befriend non-Korean students for the sake of English, she automatically eliminated White Anglo-Canadian students from becoming her potential friends. It is worth noting, however, that despite the fact that she felt intimidated by White Anglo-Canadian NSs because of her perceived lack of English proficiency, she primarily judged the quality of her English based on whether it would be deemed “acceptable” by her Korean friends back home as well as by other Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadians. Hence, the level of English she aimed to obtain was not necessarily that of a NS. Rather, she felt the need to prove herself capable of speaking English at the level of someone who has resided in Canada for five years--namely an “oldtimer” (Lave & Wenger, 1991) by Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian standards. Only then would she be able to proudly visit Korea as an exchange student and only then would she gain legitimacy to mix Korean and English with her Korean peers without the worry of being judged by them.

Both women’s experiences also demonstrate the notion of *continuity and discontinuity* and *ideological considerations*, two of the three major issues in LS studies in educational research, according to Baquendano-Lopez and Kattan (2008) (see also Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002). While many of the studies in Baquendano-Lopez and Kattan’s review look at the discontinuities between the socialization practices at school and at home, Yellina and Sheila’s experiences display a discontinuity between the
practices encouraged within their Korean peer groups (in high school and university) and the practices required to realize their future possibilities. In addition, the differences in their socialization practices also reflected the contradicting ideologies that came into play. That is, within the boundaries of their Korean communities, be it with their peers, parents, or sŏnbaes, the women were influenced by beliefs of what it meant to be an ESL student, a Korean, a NNS, and a Generation 1.5 immigrant in Canada, and these were reflected in their linguistic choices. Yet, such ideologies conflicted with their beliefs of what it meant to be a successful university student, a global citizen, a good daughter, and a member of mainstream Canadian society and pulled them towards another direction in terms of linguistic choices and practices.

I believe that in addition to the above explanations, at the center of both students’ experiences lies their negotiation of multiple and sometimes conflicting investments and identities (Norton, 2000). For Yellina, her initial resistance towards immigration to Canada and her desire to remain connected to the Korean language and culture drew her to socialize exclusively with Korean peers in high school. Hence, at that time, she was heavily invested in her personal Korean identity and group affiliation. Competition among Korean ESL classmates and their parents stimulated Yellina to work hard to “escape” her ESL status, yet she was not willing to sacrifice her friendship with her Korean friends by speaking less Korean or leaving her Korean peer group for the sake of improving her English. That is, she minimized her investment in English and learning about Canadian culture and gave priority to her investment in maintaining her Korean identity with her Korean peers. In university, her identity as a Korean remained strong, and she continued to socialize almost exclusively with Korean peers and sŏnbaes, who strongly influenced her initial acceptance of a somewhat “helpless and hopeless” Generation 1.5 identity and the academic choices she made accordingly. However, through her various experiences over the next few years Yellina’s investments in English grew and she began to take on the identity of a global citizen. As a result, she altered her future plans and decided to major in English literature—a major which was strongly discouraged by her Korean sŏnbaes. This seemed like an act of agency on Yellina’s part.
and a sign of determination to control her own future. However, Yellina was hesitant to share her decision with her Korean friends as she was unsure of how they might react. Also, although Yellina did feel that she needed to speak more English in her everyday life, she was not willing to minimize her time with her Korean friends with whom she always spoke Korean. Instead, she chose to seek alternative ways to increase her time speaking English (e.g., through a part-time job and PCU club activities), which demonstrated how she was still trying to balance between her multiple and conflicting investments in languages and identities. Figure 4.1 summarizes Yellina’s investments in languages and identities.

Sheila also had to negotiate between her multiple investments and identities, and in some ways, her trajectory could be characterized by even more dilemmas than Yellina’s. For Sheila, the very group she desired so strongly to become a member of was simultaneously the source of many of her internal struggles. That is, the loneliness she felt in the past drew her to socialize with fellow Generation 1.5 immigrant Korean friends. Yet this investment in her friendships was made at the cost of her use of and improvement in English. This competed with her investment (in high school) to enter university and later (at university), to participate in mainstream Canadian society in the future. In addition, her desire to prove herself to other Koreans (both back in Korea and in Vancouver) and her sense of duty as a daughter added even more layers to the complexity of her struggles and the pressures she imposed on herself. Yet, despite such internal battles, Sheila never gave up on her affiliation with her Korean peers and instead tried to find alternative opportunities to use English (e.g., through volunteer work and waitressing). Therefore, Sheila was constantly trying to negotiate and renegotiate her multiple investments in her identities as a member of her Korean peer group, future member of mainstream Canadian society, top student in Korea, Korean immigrant in Canada, and responsible daughter. Figure 4.2 summarizes Sheila’s investments in languages and identities.

Finally, the experiences of both Yellina and Sheila need to be examined within the broader sociocultural contexts in which they were situated. The changing
demographics of Vancouver, the role of English in Korea and the world, and technological advancements which allowed easier and more frequent contact with Korean culture were some of the key factors affecting the students’ attitudes, ideologies, and investments in English language learning and heritage language maintenance. In this respect, the process of “Canadianization” or “North Americanization” were quite slow for the two women—a factor which added another layer to the complexities of their language socialization processes.

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<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td>Desire to escape ESL.</td>
<td>Studying in English.</td>
<td>Global competition</td>
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<td>(Competition among Korean peers and parents)</td>
<td>Desire to enter English Department.</td>
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<td>Studying for English.</td>
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<td>Goal to become English professor.</td>
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<td><strong>Korean</strong></td>
<td>Resistance towards</td>
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<td>Marketability in Korea.</td>
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<td>Desire to maintain friendship</td>
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Figure 4.1 Yellina’s Investments in Languages and Identities
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<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td>Dream of becoming English professor. Goal to enter university.</td>
<td>Goal to enter graduate school. Perceived expectations of peers in Korea. Desire to have English ability like “oldtimer” Generation 1.5 students.</td>
<td>Member of mainstream Canadian professional society.</td>
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<td>Responsibility towards parents</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Korean</strong></td>
<td>Contact with peers in Korea to escape loneliness in Canadian middle school.</td>
<td>Pressure from sister. Envy towards Korean immigrant students who are fluent in English <em>and</em> Korean.</td>
<td>Uncertain.</td>
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<td>Pressure from Korean peers</td>
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Figure 4.2 Sheila’s Investments in Languages and Identities
Chapter 5
NEITHER A “FOB” NOR A “BANANA”:
HANNAH, JOON, AND MIKE

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the experiences of Sheila and Yellina and the contextual factors that influenced their linguistic, social, and academic choices since immigrating to Canada. In this chapter, I explore the language socialization of Hannah, Joon, and Mike. Unlike Sheila and Yellina, who were strongly attached to and heavily influenced by their fellow Generation 1.5 Korean peers (particularly those who spoke Korean all the time), the three students in this chapter made the conscious choice to disconnect themselves from such Korean-speaking peers at particular times after immigrating to Canada. As will be described throughout the chapter, their choices were not determined by a single factor, nor were their decisions made overnight. As was the case with Sheila’s and Yellina’s various life decisions, theirs were also the results of past, present, and future (imagined) contextual factors that shaped the students’ sense of identity, practical goals, and general outlook on life. Therefore, in the following sections, I will trace the three students’ language socialization processes and the contextual factors that have shaped their various experiences. First, I briefly introduce each student’s background including family information and studies at PCU. Next, I examine the students’ views towards what they referred to as “FOB” Korean peers in high school and university and their reactions to being labeled a “banana” or “banana-wanna-be.”*70 In doing so, I examine the areas in which the three students displayed similarities while also highlighting their individual, unique circumstances. I conclude the chapter by providing a discussion and summary of the three students’ cases.

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*70 Detailed descriptions of these terms will follow in later sections of this chapter.
5.2 Students’ Backgrounds

5.2.1 Hannah

Hannah was a 20 year old female student originally from Seoul, who immigrated to Vancouver, Canada with her family (mother and younger brother) in 1995 when she was 11 years old. Like most Korean families, Hannah’s family also moved to Canada for the sake of the children’s education. In addition, several members of Hannah’s mother’s family were already established in Edmonton, thus, her mother was even more eager to move the family to Canada. Initially, the family settled in Vancouver, where Hannah attended Grades 6 to 8. Then in the beginning of Grade 9, in order to be closer to Hannah’s aunt’s family, the family moved to Edmonton, where they lived for three years. However, Hannah’s mother was unhappy with the weather conditions in Edmonton, and at the beginning of her Grade 12 year, they made a permanent move back to Vancouver. Hannah’s father was a civil servant in Korea who visited Vancouver about three or four times a year but had plans to ultimately retire in Vancouver. Her mother, who used to be an accountant in Korea, was now a stay-at-home mom in Canada. At the time of the interview, Hannah was living with her mother and brother. At the time of the interview, she spoke mainly Korean with her parents and English with her brother, who was a year younger than her. Upon graduating from high school, Hannah attended a local community college in Vancouver. A year later, she transferred to PCU and enrolled as a General Arts major, with a focus on Asian Studies. At the time of our interview, she was in the second year of the Commerce program at PCU.

5.2.2 Joon

Joon was a 20 year old male student, who at the time of the interview was a third year General Sciences student at PCU. Joon and his family (parents and older sister) immigrated to Vancouver, Canada in 1997 when Joon was 11 years old. Both Joon and his sister were born and raised in Germany, where his parents did their graduate studies and worked for 13 years. His family returned to Korea when Joon was 9 years old but

71 She used Korean with her brother when they first moved to Canada but started using mainly English from about two years later.
decided to immigrate to Canada because of the lack of career opportunities for his parents in Korea. Both Joon and his sister were quite glad when their parents chose to move to Canada because they were not very happy with the strict, conservative nature of Korean society that they experienced upon returning from Germany. They had no idea where Canada was nor what it was like, but his parents and relatives explained that it was like the United States, so they were happy to move to a place that was more “Westernized.” Shortly after immigrating to Vancouver, his mother found a job as a researcher and his father opened a small seafood export-import business. Later on, his mother quit her job and joined his father in operating the family business, which Joon described as being “not so lucrative” (Joon, I#2, November 15, 2005, E-original). None of his family members have visited Korea since immigrating to Canada mostly due to financial reasons. Joon lived with his parents and spoke mostly Korean with them. He only spoke English with his sister who lived alone. At the time of the interview, he was taking German classes at PCU to try and regain his German language skills that he had once had as a child.

5.2.3 Mike

Mike was a 21-year-old, second year Commerce student at PCU. Originally from Seoul, he had been a snowboarder during high school in Korea who was training to compete for the national team. However, with concerns about Mike’s very poor academic achievement, his parents decided to immigrate to Canada when Mike was in Grade 11. Mike’s move to Canada was not his first time living overseas. Due to his father’s occupational circumstances, Mike’s family lived in New Jersey, U.S. when he was 3 to 7 years old. In 2001 (age 17), he moved to Calgary with his mother and younger brother while his father stayed in Korea to manage the family business. When Mike was admitted to PCU, the family all moved to Vancouver. His mother was a stay-at-home mom in Canada, but in the fall of 2006 (when Mike’s brother became a university student), she returned to Korea permanently. Mike spoke only Korean to both his parents and his brother. At the time of the interview, Mike was living at an undergraduate residence on PCU’s campus.
5.3 Detachment from “FOBs”

In her study on slang used by American college students, Eble (1996) states that “FOB” often refers to Asian immigrants who are not yet assimilated to the American way of life. Recently, scholars have examined the use of this term among Korean, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander immigrant youth in the United States and have noted that it is often used among second generation and long-term, U.S.-educated Generation 1.5 youth to distinguish themselves from “uncool” (Talmy, 2005, p. 64), recently arrived immigrants who lacked English proficiency, mainly associated with their ethnic peer group, and who often came from lower class family backgrounds (Jeon, 2001; Reyes, 2007; Talmy, 2005). In particular, these studies found that in some cases, immigrant youth made the deliberate effort to marginalize or “other” the newly arrived immigrants so as not to be labeled “FOBs” themselves.

The term “FOB” also often arose during my interviews with Hannah, Joon, and Mike, and like the findings of the above studies, the students disassociated with Korean peers as a means of distancing themselves from the “FOB” label. Hannah and Joon had formed strong views and stereotypes towards “FOBs” since their high school years. Mike, on the other hand, was not aware of the term until he entered university but had nonetheless formed critical views towards the group at PCU, especially after entering the commerce program. The following sections will describe the various contexts in which the students’ views towards “FOBs” were created, reevaluated, and reinforced.

5.3.1 “FOBs” in High School

5.3.1.1 Hannah: “I wanted to completely shed my Korean identity”

When Hannah and her family first immigrated to Vancouver, she enrolled in Grade 6 at a local elementary school. For two years, she took ESL classes along with a few regular classes, and she became very close to her Chinese ESL friends. Unlike the cases of Yellina and Sheila in Chapter 4, Hannah did not experience any fierce competition among Korean ESL students, which she believed was because of the small

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72 All interviews with Hannah were conducted in English. The quotes included in this chapter are Hannah’s own words. Based on our interviews, I felt that Hannah was very fluent in spoken English.
Korean student population in the school as well as the very small size of ESL classes (usually no more than five students in each class). Throughout Grades 6 to 8, Hannah continued to remain close to her Chinese friends, yet she began to have feelings of wanting to become more “Canadian,” which in her mind meant spending time with White Anglo-Canadian friends. At that time, her school was predominantly made up of White Anglo-Canadian and Chinese immigrant students, and Hannah belonged to the latter group. She never felt particularly alienated or discriminated against by her White Anglo-Canadian peers, but she nonetheless felt too shy about befriending them due to her lack of English proficiency.

In Grade 9, the family moved back to Edmonton to be closer to Hannah’s aunt’s family, and Hannah transferred to a local high school in her new neighborhood. Her new school was very multicultural and also had a fairly large Korean student population. Initially, Hannah started socializing with the Korean student crowd who were mainly made up of recently arrived immigrant students who were enrolled in ESL classes. Although she enjoyed the company of her new friends, she continued to have the feeling of wanting to be more “Canadian” and doing things that her “White” peers did (e.g., socializing after school, playing sports) which seemed more fun to her at the time:

When I was young, I used to feel that since I was here in Canada, I should be more Canadian. So, being with Chinese friends in elementary school and then Korean friends in my new high school, I didn’t feel like I was being Canadian enough. I felt like I was still Korean but just living in Canada.

(Hannah, I#1, September 25, 2005, E-original)

Therefore, upon making some non-Korean friends in some of her classes, Hannah one day decided to socialize exclusively with her new group of friends:

It’s interesting because my school building was shaped like a rotunda, but we had four corners where there was a different ethnic group in each corner. We had the Caucasian/Banana corner, East Indian corner, multicultural corner, and then the Asian corner. One day, I just literally moved myself to the Caucasian corner and said to my friends, “I’m just going to hang out with you guys from now on,” and I never looked back. It wasn’t a gradual change or anything, I just suddenly changed, and I did feel bad because I felt like I was ditching my Korean friends. But at that time, I really felt like I had to get rid of my Korean identity in order to become more Canadian, and that meant not hanging out with any Koreans at all.
When asked what it was about the Korean peers that made them not Canadian enough, Hannah described them as being too “FOB.” In her school, the term “FOB” was used to refer to Chinese and Korean students who recently immigrated to Canada. These students often stood out from the rest of the crowd, but usually in a negative way to the minds of other students. Like the findings in the studies mentioned earlier, the “FOBs” in Hannah’s school were also known for dressing differently from Canadian students, being “nerdy” or “geeky,” or on the other extreme end, being troublemakers (skipping classes, smoking). However, the most defining characteristic of “FOBs” was their tendency to stick to their own ethnic cliques and their predominant use of their mother tongue within those groups. As a result, “FOB” students were often perceived to be “cocky and snobby (…) so [they] would always be like a social outcast” (Hannah, I#2, October 28, 2005, E-original).

Olsen (2000) asserts that to many immigrant students in the United States, becoming American means speaking English, and English becomes “the social and political marker of affiliation and belonging” (p. 198). In a similar vein, the “FOB” traits, including their lack of English use that Hannah observed in her peers, were everything she believed to be non-Canadian. Thus, she distanced herself from Korean friends completely during her high school years in Edmonton and deliberately disconnected herself from Korean culture and language as well. In addition to speaking only English at school, she also spoke English to her parents and brother at home. Her parents were worried that she would lose her Korean language skills and her brother questioned why she only had Caucasian friends. However, she simply explained that she found friends who were more fun to be with and dismissed her family’s concerns. In addition, fearing that she may not be seen as Canadian enough, she never spoke of Korean culture with her Canadian peers and even purposely complained about her parents’ traditional Korean ways so as to assert her “Canadianness” to her friends:

I tried not to show any of my Korean side to my Canadian friends. I really tried to adapt to their ways of thinking and behaving, even if it made me feel uncomfortable at times. For instance, sometimes they would talk back to the
teachers, which in Korea is unimaginable. But my friends would say “You’re in Canada, so you don’t have to be Korean,” and I just thought they were correct. I made fun of my parents and other Asian parents for being so restrictive, and I complained about it a lot to my friends.

(Hannah, I #2, October 28, 2005, E-original)

Therefore, although the desire to shed off her Korean identity was originally initiated by Hannah herself, it was later on further encouraged by her “Canadian” peers to do things the Canadian way. As Gibson, Gandara, and Koyama (2004) suggest, during adolescence, peers have a strong influence on the creation and development of one’s self-perception. In the case of Hannah, the peer pressure that she felt further reinforced her detachment from the “FOB” crowd, who in Hannah’s eyes represented everything “uncool” and embarrassing.

5.3.1.2 Joon: “I felt out of place”

Like Hannah, Joon immigrated to Canada in Grade 6. Although he had only lived in Korea for two years (as mentioned earlier, he was born and raised in Germany until age 9), he was very fluent in Korean at the time of his arrival in Canada. He took ESL classes for three months in Grade 6 but was no longer required to take them upon entering middle school. By Grade 8, he began feeling more comfortable using English over Korean. And out of concern for his potential Korean language loss, his parents asked him not to speak English at home. In middle school, Joon was friends with students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and recalled having an active social life playing sports and taking part in other extracurricular activities. At that time, he was one of the few Korean students in his school.

As it is the case for many teenagers, high school was an awkward time for Joon. He entered Grade 9 determined to be one of the “cool” kids in school, yet over the years, he struggled with self-confidence issues and finding a sense of belonging among his peers. Unlike his middle school, there were a large number of Korean immigrant students in his high school as well as students from other various ethnic backgrounds. He

73 All interviews with Joon were conducted in English. The quotes included in this chapter were his own words. In my opinion, Joon was one of the most fluent English speakers among the seven participants.
remained very close to his friends from middle school, but many of them were not very academically oriented, which caused some conflict between him and his friends.

Trying to find a group that he could belong to, Joon tried approaching some Korean students at his school, but he soon realized that their “FOB” characteristics made them too different from him. Like Hannah’s description of “FOBs,” Joon categorized “FOBs” as geeks or troublemakers who only socialized within their cliques and who were still very much attached to Korean language and culture. However, unlike Hannah who chose to dissociate herself from “FOB” friends and Korean culture because they were not Canadian enough, Joon felt he did not fit into this group because of his lack of Korean language skills and differing “Korean” values:

I think the general thought process of the way most Korean youth think and their values were too different from mine. I also wasn’t able to speak very fast. You know, Korean speech is very fast and witty, and you had to be in with the modern times to have a conversation with the modern views. I guess it’s like when adults try to talk to kids and they can’t speak about the same modern topics because they use colloquial slang. I felt like I wasn’t up to date and felt out of place.

(Joon, I#2, November 15, 2005, E-original)

Furthermore, although he had never received any explicit criticism from his Korean peers, he felt he was being looked down upon due to his relative lack of Korean skills and knowledge of Korean culture. Consequently, he felt he was being pushed away from this group. Joon’s experience is in stark contrast to Hannah’s as well as to the findings of previous studies mentioned above (Jeon, 2001; Reyes, 2007; Talmy, 2005), where it was the more assimilated oldtimer students who mocked or rejected the seemingly less acculturated, non-English-speaking newcomers:

To be honest, I have never felt like I really missed Korea and felt that I had to go back. But the kids in the Korean group were always talking about Korean things, so I felt really awkward. I tried to speak Korean with them, but it was just too weird. I was afraid that they would be too condescending and that I wouldn’t measure up. They were also critical of people who used English and said that person was trying to be too Canadian, meaning, they were trying to be too White. I was one of those who felt more comfortable speaking in English, so I didn’t feel like I was being accepted by them.

(Joon, I#4, January 19, 2006, E-original)
In addition to feeling out of place and criticized due to his lack of Koreanness, Joon felt he could not associate with “FOBs” who were mostly from rich families and who took for granted the sacrifices the parents made for the children. He felt they were “not taking advantage of the opportunities but taking advantage of the situation” (Joon, I#2, November 15, 2005, E-original), and that he was disappointed by their lack of appreciation for the struggles of the first generation. Again, Joon’s observation of Korean “FOBs” is comparable to Jeon’s (2001) and Reyes’s (2007) studies, where Korean and Southeast Asian immigrant students associated “FOBs” with those from relatively poor immigrant families with “FOB jobs” (Reyes, 2007, p. 98). However, as mentioned in Chapter 2, such a difference could be attributed to the fact that many recent Korean immigrants to Canada have been t’ujains (investors) who came to Canada already with enough financial stability, which has often not been the case with Korean immigrants in the United States (Yoon, 2001).

5.3.2 “FOBs” in University

5.3.2.1 Mike: “We were the FOBs”

Mike attended high school in Calgary where there was a very small ethnic minority student population. In fact, he was one of the only three Korean students in his entire school; thus, the majority of his friends in high school were White Anglo-Canadians. His talent in sports, especially snowboarding, helped him to bond with his new friends, and Mike believed that although he immigrated to Canada at a relatively older age, socializing almost exclusively with NS peers in high school helped speed his acquisition of English. Furthermore, he commented that although he had lost most of his English upon returning to Korea, his experience living in New Jersey as a young child may have also helped with his pronunciation skills, which made him almost sound like a NS of English.

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74 Interviews with Mike were conducted in both English and Korean. Thus, comments made in Korean were translated into English by me. Mike comfortably mixed Korean and English during our interviews and seemed quite fluent in both languages.
Unlike Hannah and Joon who had strong views towards “FOBs” since high school, Mike only became familiar with the term in university. Upon entering PCU, he joined the Korean Student Association, and he often socialized with the friends he met there, including going drinking after class and traveling together on weekends. It was during this time with his Korean peers that he learned of the term “FOB,” which was often used to refer to Korean exchange students at PCU or Korean university students who were in Vancouver for temporary ESL studies (not necessarily at PCU). University “FOBs” were often criticized as being cliquish, speaking only Korean amongst themselves, and attached to Korean culture despite their goals to learn English in Vancouver. This description resembled the high school “FOB” stereotypes described by Hannah and Joon. Yet, during his first year at PCU, Mike never gave much thought to the notion of “FOB” as he felt they were a group distant from his own peers and that as a successful university student, he was more Canadianized than the Korean “FOBs.”

However, it was through his academic studies over the next couple of years that led him to reevaluate the notion of “FOB” and to reconsider his socialization patterns with other Korean peers. After entering PCU, Mike enrolled as a General Arts student and took many Political Science courses during the first year. In these courses, he experienced many difficulties with writing assignments not only because of his lack of academic writing skills but also because of his unfamiliarity with assignment topics. He felt that as a NNS and as someone who was not born and raised in the Canadian context, he had to put in extra effort working on his assignments in order to receive a reasonable grade. For instance, in his Canadian Government class, there were often times when he did not understand the assignment topic itself because of a lack of background information on the Canadian political system as well as on aspects of Canadian culture. Mike’s experience was similar to that of Yellina in Chapter 4 (who also took a class on Canadian government) as well the students in Duff’s (2001) study, where Asian ESL students experienced difficulties in a high school social studies classes due to their lack of knowledge of contemporary North American current affairs and culture. He particularly
experienced this more often during class discussions, where students talked about various topics that were very familiar to the average Canadian student:

I don’t think it was just the English that was the problem because a lot of the times, I could understand what the others were saying, but I had no idea what was going on. So it’s not just English, it’s also culture. That’s the bigger problem. Like, if I don’t know who Wayne Gretsky is, then I have no clue what’s going on.

(Mike, I#1, September 26, 2005, E-original)

However, despite such discouraging factors, Mike worked extremely hard and received excellent grades in most of his courses. Yet, after two years in the Faculty of Arts (with a Political Science focus), he became overwhelmed and exhausted by the amount of writing required in his courses. Therefore, upon consulting with a career advisor at PCU, he transferred to the Commerce program, where he was told he would not be required to write as many extensive and creative essays compared to the Arts Faculty. In addition, he felt a degree in Commerce would provide him with more career options in the future.

Indeed, Mike did have less difficulty with written assignments in the Commerce program. However, within the new program, he was faced with a different kind of challenge that he had not experienced before in other courses. That is, he became overwhelmed with the fierce level of competition among the students. Not only were the students high academic achievers, but they were also very aggressive in trying to make themselves known and to “keep on adding to their resumes” (Mike, I#2, November 6, 2005, E-original):

It’s a totally different environment, not just in terms of studying, but the overall atmosphere. It’s like a dog eat dog world (…) there’s also a lot of emphasis on doing extracurricular activities. Even the professors think that’s more important because that’s what potential employers look for. So, now in Commerce, I have a different kind of stress compared to when I was in Arts.

(Mike, I#3, January 12, 2006, E-original)

As noted in Chapter 2, various language socialization studies have investigated newcomers’ socialization into the discourses of their new (or desired) professional communities (e.g., Duff, Wong & Early, 2000; Goldstein, 1997b; Jacobs-Huey, 2003; McCall, 1997; Sarangi and Roberts, 1999). Mertz (1996, 2007), for instance, looked at
how through engaging in certain types of interaction with their law professors, students were socialized into adapting a new identity and a new discourse of a law professional. Similarly, through interactions with his professors and other members of the “real world,” Mike learned that in order to survive within the Commerce program, it was more important to excel socially than academically. Presentations, debates, and portfolio analyses required much group work among the students. There were also many organized events with recruiters where students could find potential internships and other future employment opportunities. Through such social interactions, Mike became aware of the importance of “soft topic skills” (Mike, I#3, January 12, 2006, E-original):

In Commerce, you have to know about current issues, sports, economics, investing, you name it. You have to know those things to survive socially. It’s not about hitting the hard topics; it’s all about the soft topics. Even though you don’t do well academically, you can become really likeable if you know the soft topics. That’s what all the professors emphasize because they’re the ones who used to work in companies and recruit employees, so they emphasize on soft topic skills. (Mike, I#3, January 12, 2006, E-original)

However, Mike felt that as a person who had only lived in Canada for less than five years, it was extremely difficult for him to be familiar with “soft topics” that were of interest to mainstream Canadians. In particular, he felt that his exclusive social relationships with his Korean peers prevented him from learning more about Canadian culture. Thus, he reevaluated his involvement with the Korean Student Association and realized that the only purpose of the group was to socialize among Koreans, where most of the functions were held in Korean. He described being “sucked into the club” (Mike, I#2, November 6, 2005, E-original) because it was so much fun, but at the end of the day, he felt the club members were isolating themselves by speaking in Korean all the time, following Korean popular culture and current affairs, and forming cliques without reaching out to the larger PCU community. In other words, he felt that the Korean group he socialized with was no different from the “FOBs” that they were criticizing. He added that because “we only got together on the basis that we are all Koreans (…) it was almost like we were the FOBs” (Mike, I#2, November 6, 2005, E-original).
Consequently, it was during his studies within the Commerce program that he deliberately began distancing himself from his Korean peers. Although he did not completely abandon his Korean friends as Hannah did, he no longer attended the Korean Student Association events and started joining several PCU clubs to expand his circle of friends. He even started playing hockey to improve his so-called “soft topic skills.” Thus, unlike Hannah, who avoided “FOBs” to become more Canadian, and Joon, who actually felt pushed away by them, Mike chose to gradually leave the boundaries of his Korean peer group for the sake of his immediate survival in the Commerce program and for his future survival in his professional career:

Ever since my Political Science days, I have felt that my being a NNS and not possessing Canadian cultural knowledge was a huge disadvantage. But I just thought that was a disadvantage in terms of studying. But I think after coming to Commerce, I truly realized that life is really competitive. If you live like the Koreans here, then it’s hard to be successful. There’s a lot of things you have to pay attention to and do, but because Koreans are within their own boundaries, you don’t really know what is going on in the outside world. I was like that too. But after coming to Commerce, I realized how the real world was living.

(Mike, I#4, January 27, 2006, E-original)

During our final official interview as well as in subsequent unofficial correspondences, Mike described that despite his hectic schedule, he believed he had the best time of his university life during the 2005-2006 academic year, being involved in diverse activities and making friends from various ethnic backgrounds all the while improving his English and “soft topic skills.”

5.3.2.2 Hannah and Joon: “Stop the Minoritizing”

At PCU, both Hannah and Joon continued to keep a distance from “FOB” Korean students, although by this time, in addition to referring to them as “FOBs,” they also often labeled such students as “Korean-Koreans.” Like Mike, Hannah also transferred to the Commerce program from the Arts Faculty and also felt the fierce competition among the Commerce students.75 Hannah echoed the importance of “soft topic skills” expressed

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75 At the time of the interview, Hannah was planning to graduate with a Bachelor’s degree in Commerce, minoring in Asian studies.
by Mike, and when given the choice to select group members, she admitted that she avoided working with “Korean-Korean” students in classes:

I felt like Korean-Korean students wouldn’t be good at group presentations or other types of group work due to cultural barriers. For instance, they wouldn’t know the similar humor to put in.

(Hannah, I#4, November 22, 2005, E-original)

Hannah explained that at this point in her life, she knew how silly it was to have teased the “FOBs” as being “uncool” during high school, and she regretted abandoning her friends the way she did. Regardless, she felt that within the university academic context, associating with Korean “FOB” students would put her at a disadvantage in terms of obtaining more immediate and practical goals (like getting group work done faster and more efficiently and receiving higher marks on group presentations). Socially, she continued to distance herself from “FOB” peers who only spoke Korean amongst themselves. She was certain that her detachment from these peers in university was no longer about becoming completely Canadian because her experiences at university allowed her to embrace her Korean-Canadian identity and helped her feel more comfortable in her own skin. Rather, she felt that by choosing to remain in a clique that only spoke Korean, that person was choosing to “minoritize” (Hannah, I#4, November 22, 2005, E-original) him/herself and was building a wall against other Canadians, regardless of race.

In addition to the academic and social setting, Hannah also explained that she avoided speaking Korean in her work setting as a sales associate for a popular clothing store in Vancouver. She said that she never used Korean in her workplace with either her Korean-speaking colleagues or customers. Even when her customers spoke Korean, she pretended not to understand and only conversed with them in English. Like her attitude towards forming Korean cliques, she felt that by using Korean in a professional setting, she was again “minoritizing” herself from the English speaking Canadian majority. Thus, to Hannah, English was the only language one should speak in public, especially in order to look more professional.
In Joon’s case, he still continued to hold strong views towards Korean “FOB” students at PCU. At university, most of Joon’s closest friends were either non-Korean students or English-speaking Koreans. However, while he had felt looked down upon or even pushed away by the “FOBs” in high school, now at university, he felt the roles had been reversed. Joon believed that over the years, he had matured enough to know that he did not need a clique to define who he was as an individual. Consequently, he became more comfortable with his unique identity that had been influenced by his combined experiences in Germany, Korea, and Canada. Thus, if it was the “FOB” groups in high school that pushed him away, it was now his choice in university to reject the “FOBs.” When asked why he chose not to engage with them, Joon replied that his perception of Korean “FOBs” included people who were “flaky and shallow, flamboyant and flashy, somewhat ditsy, like what you see on Korean dramas” (Joon, I#4, January 19, 2006).

Most importantly, however, he felt superior to them due to his fluent English language skills:

I don’t mean to be judgmental or anything. Well, maybe it’s that I’m not trying to please everyone now, so I feel more comfortable speaking English. And in a way, I can honestly say that sometimes, I sort of pity them (...) I’d be lying if I said that I didn’t feel that I was superior. I mean, no mal-intent, but I think that there is more that I can do since I’m in an English-speaking society and I speak the language well. It’s such a big tool, right? (Joon, I#2, November 15, 2005, E-original)

Joon also added that his English skills contributed to his ability to be more professional in his extracurricular activities. For instance, he explained that he was reluctant to join one of the science clubs at PCU when he noticed that many of its members were Korean students who spoke mostly Korean amongst themselves. He stated that his immediate reaction to the large number of Korean students was “Oh boy, are we going to get any work done?” (Joon, I#2, November 15, 2005, E-original), because he believed that the Korean students seemed to only be there for the sole purpose of socializing. Joon eventually did join the club and had been playing a significant role in it as an executive member. Still, he added that he was able to work much better with its English-speaking members who were more serious about the club’s objectives. He also
said that he was particularly inspired by one Chinese-Canadian member who was one of the leaders in the club. For Joon, this member served as a role model in terms of his leadership skills, which included being highly articulate in English and delivering excellent public speeches. Joon believed this member’s ability to speak sophisticated English added to his charisma; thus, he aspired to be like him in the future. He also explained that the fact that this member was an Asian-Canadian provided an even stronger incentive to emulate him.

This is not to say that Joon no longer felt judged by Korean “FOBs” when he spoke to them in English. There were still occasions when he felt awkward and knew that he was automatically being stigmatized as a “banana” (a concept that will be discussed in the following section). Nonetheless, for the most part, Joon now felt that it was not necessary for him to accommodate them by speaking to them in Korean, especially if they were going to prejudge him based on his Korean skills. In addition, he now believed that he was doing the Koreans a favor by speaking to them in English:

I know it sounds pretty smug, but my attitude now is that if you’re in Canada, you should be able to speak in English, so I’m doing you a favor by speaking to you in English. I sort of feel pity towards them and feel sorry for them. I feel like they are more close-minded, cowardly and don’t appreciate the fact that they are in an environment where they could really get a leg up on other people that don’t have such opportunities. I think they should get their heads straight.

(Joon, I#1, October 26, 2005, E-original).

In this respect, the English skills which Joon felt contributed to making him an outcast among Korean peers in high school now placed him in a superior position in university against the same peers. Furthermore, although Joon’s views were expressed in slightly more extreme language, his criticism towards the “FOB” groups’ cliquishness and closed-mindedness affirmed Hannah and Mike’s views regarding the need for “FOBs” to stop “minoritizing” themselves and to reach beyond the boundaries of their immediate Korean groups.

5.4 Rejecting the “Banana” Label

Over the years, many scholars have cautioned against the dangers of teachers, researchers, and institutions labeling a student because by doing so, “we may be
imposing an ethnocentric ideology and inadvertently supporting the essentialized discourse that represents cultural groups as stable or homogeneous entities” (Spack, 1997, p.773, also see Harklau, 2000; Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997; Pennycook, 2001; Talmy, 2005, 2008; Thesen, 1997). In the following sections, I continue with this discussion of labeling. However, I focus on Hannah, Joon and Mike’s perceptions of the label “banana” or “banana-wanna-be” imposed on them by their Korean peers and the ways in which they rejected such labeling.

The term “banana” is often used to refer to an individual who is ethnically Asian but who has assimilated to North American ways of life in terms of language, behaviors and values. Similar labels exist in other ethnic groups such as “Oreo” and “coconut” within the Black and Hispanic communities, and they have often been negatively associated with individuals who are viewed as “acting White” by their ethnic group peers (Kao, 1997). In the cases of Hannah, Joon, and Mike, although they acknowledged having adjusted to Canadian cultural norms and speaking English more often than the so-called “Korean-Koreans,” they were uncomfortable with being stigmatized as a “banana” as they believed the term had negative connotations attached to it.

5.4.1 Hannah

As discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, Hannah distanced herself from her Korean peers during the majority of her high school years. However, from around Grade 11, she started wishing she had more Korean friends when she observed Korean girls socializing together at the church she was attending in Edmonton. She was envious of how those girls seemed comfortable showing their Korean sides to each other, while she on the other hand was always trying to hide her “Koreanness” from her non-Korean friends at school.

The opportunity to make new Korean friends came in the beginning of Grade 12, when her family moved back to Vancouver and she transferred to a new school. There, she was approached by second generation Korean-Canadian peers. At first, she was delighted to be with friends who spoke fluent English and who also had an understanding
of the Korean language and culture. However, over time, she felt that there was still a
difference between her and her friends, whom she referred to as “bananas:”

My Korean friends in the [X] high school, even though they were Korean, they
were very “banana” Korean, very White inside. They did a lot of things I
wouldn’t do, like partying and stuff like that. They were fun, but I didn’t feel like
I really connected with them. But in a way, at the back of my mind, I was thinking,
“I’m only here for a year, so they are my short-term friends.”

(Hannah, I#2, October 28, 2005, E-original)

Hannah explained that she found real friends she could connect with at her new
Korean church in Vancouver. These friends were similar to Hannah in that they had also
immigrated to Canada during elementary school. They spoke English, understood Korean
language and culture, but were not too “White.” Thus, because they shared experiences as
Generation 1.5 youth, she felt a much stronger bond with these friends compared to her
teenagers in Hawaii, she found that through interactions with other Generation 1.5 youth,
the Korean teenagers learned to appreciate their Korean identity, which they had been
embarrassed about while growing up. Hannah’s case echoes Danico’s findings in that
through the interactions with her church friends, she became more comfortable with and
appreciative of her Korean identity.

It was during the next couple of years at university that she became even more
aware of her Korean heritage and proud of her Korean identity. She took several Asian
Studies courses at the local community college and at PCU through which she gained
more knowledge of Korean history and culture. She enrolled in Korean language classes
at PCU and also participated in a summer exchange program at a university in Korea,
where she took courses on Korean history, contemporary Korean culture, and Korean
language. Hannah felt that these combined experiences helped her become more
appreciative of her Korean heritage and also led to a deeper understanding of Korean
values, especially those of her parents’ generation. Such experiences of Hannah are not
uncommon among minority immigrant students. Park (1999) suggests that many
immigrant youth experience adopting different identity “categories” as they go through
their formal school years. In the case of many Korean-Americans in particular, many
individuals experience being “bleached back to the original color” (p. 158) as they move from their younger school years to college.

Therefore, Hannah felt that she had experienced several ups and downs since immigrating to Canada to reach a point in her life where she felt proud of being a Korean-Canadian who has successfully adapted to Canadian ways while embracing and appreciating her Koreanness. Thus, in this respect, Hannah felt offended when someone automatically labeled her as a “banana” simply because she spoke fluent English and because she had had more White Anglo-Canadian friends in high school:

Some people refer to me as a “banana,” but I don’t think I am at all because I still have that Koreanness in me. Friends who were born here, they are so much more Canadianized than me, so I think they are the ones that are “bananas.” I don’t like it when people give me the vibe that I have somehow betrayed my Koreanness by having more White friends back in high school and that I should be ashamed of myself.

(Hannah, I#5, January 26, 2006, E-original)

In addition, Hannah defended her Koreanness by adding how she wanted to make a contribution to the Korean community in her own way. That is, although she may not be actively involved in the Korean community (like taking part in Korean cultural events), she nonetheless made the effort to create positive images of Koreans in Canada:

I don’t really have that sense that I must stay connected to the Korean community, like most Koreans seem to think. But I do want to distinguish myself from Chinese people because a lot of Canadians don’t seem to know the difference between Koreans and Chinese. I want to give an impression that Koreans are not Chinese and that we are a separate people. I want to be able to show my work and do my best so that people can recognize me as a Korean. Does that make me a “banana” just because I don’t speak Korean all the time and am not involved more actively in Korean events? I don’t think so.

(Hannah, I#3, November 18, 2005, E-original)

As can be seen from her comment above, Hannah did not view the use of Korean as an indicator of one’s Koreanness. However, although Hannah defended her Korean identity and refused to be associated with the “banana” label in general, there was one

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This sense of hybrid identity (Bhabha, 1990; Kramsch, 2000) was also observed in several other students and will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 7.
particular setting in which Hannah described feeling embarrassed about her lack of Korean skills, which was within the Bible study classes that she taught at her church. Hannah’s family was a member of a Korean Protestant church in Vancouver, and since her first year of university, Hannah taught Bible study classes to Korean children. During her first six months as a teacher, Hannah was assigned to teach classes where the medium of instruction was Korean. Yet, she described having much difficulty teaching these classes because of her unfamiliarity with certain biblical terms in Korean and explained feeling extremely ashamed and embarrassed to face her students as a result. There were times when she had to rely on the students to teach her the correct Korean words, and she felt horrible that she might be seen as a teacher who was not Korean enough in the eyes of the students due to her lack of Korean skills. Therefore, although Hannah was very proud of her fluency in English in all other aspects of her life, within the setting of the Bible study classes she taught, her English skills became almost meaningless because she was in a position where Korean language skills were valued. Thus, when the opportunity came where Hannah was able to teach English Bible study classes, she quickly requested the switch and had been teaching only English classes ever since.

5.4.2 Joon

Joon also felt that he was being judged as a “banana” by other Koreans, particularly by the “FOB” groups who spoke Korean all the time and who remained in their Korean cliques. He was aware that he was attached with this label mainly because he did not speak Korean with them and did not follow contemporary Korean pop culture. However, he felt very offended by this because he believed there was a negative stigma attached to the word:

You know, Koreans are so patriotic, so I think they feel that a “banana” is so weird and morally unacceptable. It’s like (…) I have this gut feeling that they think “bananas” are flaky, abandoning their Korean identity and being White-washed, not having pride in their Korean heritage. Of course language has a lot to do with it because if you can’t speak Korean, people roll their eyes and automatically assume you’re a “banana.”

(Joon, I#5, February 12, 2006, E-original)
In addition, Joon explained that he felt particularly annoyed by the notion that not following contemporary Korean culture was somehow equated with a lack of interest in Korean culture in general. Although it was true that he was neither knowledgeable about nor interested in contemporary Korean pop culture like many of his Korean peers, he still valued and had pride for traditional Korean culture and values. Moreover, even though he might not converse in Korean all the time, Korean had the most personal meaning to him because it was the language of his “family, blood, and roots” (Joon, I#2, November 15, 2005, E-original).

Joon also felt that it was wrong to question his patriotism or perceive him to be a traitor to his heritage when he was making the effort to create a positive image of Koreans. However, unlike Hannah who tried to distinguish herself as a Korean from Chinese-Canadians, Joon was motivated to fight the racial stereotypes of Asians as a more collective pan-ethnic group. For instance, in one of the group interviews in which Joon took part, all of the other students described feeling upset when someone assumed they were Chinese or assumed that Korean culture was similar to Chinese culture. During one of our subsequent email correspondences, Joon described feeling surprised that the other students had such strong views towards the issue and stated that although he agreed that it was important to distinguish oneself as a Korean, it was equally important to “create positive images of Asians so that there will be fewer negative racial stereotypes that Asians, including Koreans, have to fight through” (Joon, email correspondence, June 14, 2006, E-original). In another interview, he explained:

When I’m like in Richmond and there are some White people around, and there’s not that many, I come across them and I want to make sure that they are aware that there are Asian people in Richmond who actually speak English. I try not to reinforce the negative stereotypes of Asians in Richmond. Sort of like this complex that I want to(...) to the Caucasian man that not all Asians are like that. I find that I try to be overly friendly sometimes and strike up a casual conversation, trying to show that “Hey, I’m sociable!”

(Joon, I#2, November 15, 2005, E-original)
Therefore, while Hannah resisted the notion of Asian-sameness (Kibria, 2000) by asserting her Koreanness, Joon made the effort not to reinforce the notion of Asian-foreignness to other ethnic groups, particularly to White Anglo-Canadians.

5.4.3 Mike

Mike found it odd that he was often thought of as a “banana” because he had lived in Canada for less than five years. His definition of a “banana” was “someone who doesn’t understand a lot of Korean cultural stuff like the drinking customs or junior/senior relationship (…) who doesn’t speak Korean that well either, but it’s more on how they think; it’s more White” (Mike, I#3, January 12, 2006, E-original). In this sense, he felt that it was unfair to categorize him as a “banana” because he was indeed familiar with Korean culture and customs but made the conscious choice not to “be sucked into it because once you’re in, it’s hard to get out” (Mike, I#2, November 6, 2005, K-original).

In addition to his intentional detachment from “FOB” Korean peers, he believed that he was also often misunderstood as a “banana” because there was no noticeable accent when he spoke English. In Kang and Lo’s (2004) study, Korean-American youth identified accents as a trait of one’s “fobyness.” In this respect, Mike’s excellent English pronunciation skills seemed to have automatically eliminated him from the “FOB” category. Koreans often asked him how long he had been in Canada and were always surprised when they heard he immigrated in high school. However, although they were initially impressed by his excellent English pronunciation, he soon got the impression that they perceived him as a “banana-wanna-be” (Mike, I#3, January 12, 2006, E-original). According to Mike, a “banana-wanna-be” was somewhat different from a “banana” in that the former arrived in Canada at a relatively older age. The “banana-wanna-be” does understand Korean culture and speaks Korean well but tries very hard to suppress his/her Koreanness in order to fit in with the mainstream White Anglo-Canadian society. However, Mike completely denied that he was a “banana-wanna-be” and in reverse criticized those who attached that label to him:

I am only doing what I’m doing because I think there needs to be a solid balance between being Korean and being Canadian. I know I will live here for the rest of my life, so it will be kind of stupid to just follow the Korean lifestyle. I’m just
doing what I have to do. It’s like, if you are playing soccer and you are bad at shooting, then you have to practice shooting. So, if you are not confident in English, you have to practice speaking English. You have to work hard to improve. I don’t envy “bananas” and I don’t want to be one. But I’m just doing what I have to do because I am being realistic.

(Mike, I#4, January 27, 2006, K-original)

Hence, Mike defended his choices as being wiser and more realistic and claimed that those criticizing his choices were the ones with the real problems. Having had a glimpse of the “real” world in the Commerce program, he felt that it was crucial for Koreans to make the effort to become part of mainstream society while not losing their Korean heritage. In this respect, Mike felt that his current choices were helping to build an infrastructure which would pave the way for younger Generation 1.5 Korean students (including his own younger brother who was in high school at the time of the interview). Mike’s attitude was in line with those of Hannah and Joon who wished to contribute to the Korean-Canadian and Asian-Canadian community in their own way. Furthermore, as the eldest son for whom his parents had sacrificed so much, Mike also felt a sense of duty to give back to his parents through his academic and professional success. In this respect, Mike felt that his seemingly “bananaish” choices in life were a part of his strategies to succeed professionally so as to make his parents proud.

5.5 Summary and Discussion

In this chapter, I have examined the experiences of Hannah, Joon, and Mike and the circumstances that have influenced the linguistic, sociocultural, and academic choices they have made over the years. In particular, I have described the students’ choices to detach themselves from Korean “FOBs” and how such decisions were influenced by their varying contextual factors over time and space. Additionally, I have also examined the students’ rejections of the label “banana” or “banana-wanna-be,” which they were often associated with. Table 5.1 summarizes their detachment from “FOBs” and rejection of the “banana” label.
Table 5.1 Reasons for Detachment from "FOBs" and Rejection of “Banana” Label

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Detachment from “FOBs” in High School</th>
<th>Hannah</th>
<th>Joon</th>
<th>Mike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “FOB” Traits | -Cliquish.  
-Non-English-speaking.  
-Troublemakers.  
-Nerdy/geeky. | -Attached to Korean culture.  
-From privileged families/Lack of appreciation for parents’ sacrifices. | Unaware of the term in high school. |
| Other Factors | -Snobby/cocky.  
-Social outcasts.  
-“Uncool” fashion. | “FOB” peers’ condescending attitudes towards Joon. | |
| Reasons for Detachment from “FOBs” in University | -Desire to be “Canadian.”  
-Pressure from “Canadian” peers. | | |
| “FOB” Traits | -Flaky/shallow.  
-Flamboyant/ditsy.  
-Closed-minded. | -Non-English-speaking.  
-Too attached to Korean culture.  
-Cliquish/Not reaching out to larger PCU community. | |
| Other Factors: | Sense of superiority and pity towards “FOBS.” | Need for Canadian cultural knowledge/Soft-topic skills. | |
### Reasons for Rejecting the “Banana” Label

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hannah</th>
<th>Joon</th>
<th>Mike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative stigma attached to “Bananas.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Did not view herself as “White” as 2(^{nd}) gen.</td>
<td>-Valued traditional Korean culture and language.</td>
<td>-Believed he was being wiser/ realistic &amp; was creating infrastructure for future Gen.1.5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Appreciated “Koreanness” &amp; tried to create positive image of Koreans.</td>
<td>- Tried to create positive image of Asians.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In understanding the experiences of the three students in this chapter, the notion of positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) is helpful.\(^77\)

Although it was at different points in their lives, all of the three students in this chapter positioned “FOBs” as a group of people with whom they did not want to be associated. Furthermore, although they seemed to have peers from many ethnic backgrounds in their schools (particularly Hannah and Joon), their notion of who constituted the “FOB” population was clearly limited to the Korean student group. In Hannah’s case, relatively newly arrived Korean peers who seemed “cliquey,” “nerdy,” “geeky,” who only spoke Korean amongst themselves, or who were troublemakers were positioned as “FOBs.” Most importantly, such “FOB” peers were positioned as non-Canadian; an idea that was initially created within Hannah but further reinforced by her “Canadian” peers, who encouraged her to distance herself from Korean ways of life. Hence, for Hannah, distancing herself from “FOBs” in high school was part of her desire to be a member of the “in group” within the popularity hierarchy at her school. At university, as a result of maturity and a newly found appreciation for her Korean heritage and identity, Hannah no longer avoided “FOBs” because they were not “cool” enough. However, she nonetheless continued to distance herself from the “FOBs” who seemed less beneficial for her academic achievement and who also seemed to “minoritize” themselves from non-

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\(^77\) I employ Pavlenko & Blackledge’s (2004) notion of positioning, which expands Davies & Harré’s (1990) view of positioning as a conversational phenomenon into one that also includes “all discursive practices which may position individuals in particular ways or allows individuals to position themselves” (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 20).
Korean communities. That is, in university, regardless of their length of residence in Canada, if she observed that an individual lacked academic literacy skills (mostly in spoken academic English), Hannah positioned that person as a “FOB.” Furthermore, she positioned members of Korean cliques as “FOBs” due to their lack of engagement with non-Korean communities and criticized them for reinforcing their minority status in society.

Joon also possessed critical views towards “FOBs” from his high school years although it seemed such views were enhanced when he felt he was rejected by this group. As described earlier, Joon initially made an attempt to befriend the “FOB” group as part of a teenager’s attempt to find his own clique in high school. Yet, due to his lack of Korean skills and knowledge of Korean pop culture, he felt he was being looked down upon by members of the Korean group. That is, although the “FOB” students were often teased by local students for their attachment to their native language and culture, in the eyes of the “FOB” students, the fact that Joon lacked these very characteristics positioned him as an illegitimate member of their group. Such findings echo those of Palmer (2007), who reports on the tensions between Korean-born Korean-American (KBKA) and American-born Korean-American (ABKA) high school students based on their negative stereotypes about each other. In Palmer’s study, while ABKAs thought they needed to guide KBKAs (who were seen as too “Korean” and closed-minded) to become more American, many KBKAs actually pitied ABKAs for having lost their Korean identity and heritage. In a similar vein, the Korean “FOB” group at Joon’s high school assigned a marginalized status to Joon based on his lack of “Koreanness” (both linguistically and culturally), thereby positioning him as the inferior other.

Joon admitted that at first he felt he was “not able to measure up” (Joon, I#4, January 19, 2006, E-original) to the Korean students’ standards, which seemed to indicate a reflexive positioning of himself as an inferior member within the Korean “FOB” group. However, he soon rejected this positioning and became highly critical of the “FOB” students’ linguistic and sociocultural choices. In addition to the characteristics of “FOBs” described by Hannah, Joon positioned them as spoiled children from rich Korean families.
In Giampapa’s (2004) study of Italian-Canadian young adults in Toronto, the participants used the term “Gino/Gina” to describe the spoiled children of wealthy Italian-Canadian families, who lacked academic and professional ambition in life. As a result, they positioned such “Gino/Ginas” as not being true reflections of Italian-Canadians. In a similar vein, Joon also positioned Korean “FOBs” as those who lacked a goal in life and who took for granted the sacrifices of first-generation Korean-Canadian immigrants. Hence, Joon positioned one as a “FOB” if he/she was different from his traditional views of Korean immigrant children who worked hard in school to show gratitude for their parents’ sacrifices. In this respect, there seemed to be conflicting notions (and as a result, different positionings of each other as the inferior other) of what it meant to be a true Korean between Joon and his Korean peers, which is similar to the findings of Jo’s (2002) study on the contested ideas of “Koreanness” among a seemingly homogeneous group of Korean heritage language learners. Such conflicting notions of Koreanness also point to the bidirectionality of socialization (Duff, 2003) between Joon and his peers. That is, while their relative newcomer status to the Canadian educational system may have situated them as the novice within school, the “FOB” students positioned Joon (the relative oldtimer and expert) as the novice with regard to his Koreanness. However, Joon resisted this positioning as a novice by his peers by drawing on his traditional views of the Korean immigrant youth, thereby positioning the “FOBs” as novices yet again. Hence, such positionings and repositionings of self and other between Joon and the “FOB” group reflect how one resists and reframes his/her roles and participation in socializing interactions (Garrett and Baquedano-Lopez, 2002).

By university, Joon’s perceptions towards Korean “FOBs” became even stronger and he began to view himself more as the superior individual compared to the “FOB” Koreans, whom he pitied for their lack of English skills. In addition, he positioned Korean “FOBs” as cowards who did not take advantage of the opportunities in Canada and also as those who lacked professionalism in extracurricular settings (e.g., the science club). Therefore, to Joon, the English skills that positioned him as an outsider to the
“FOB” group in high school now placed him as the more open-minded, professional, and courageous person in university.

Mike’s positioning of “FOBs” was quite different from Hannah’s and Joon’s in that not only was he unaware of this term until university, but initially, his image of “FOBs” was only limited to Korean international students in Vancouver. That is, unlike Hannah and Joon, his positioning of “FOBs” excluded immigrant students like himself who had experienced high school and university life in Canada. Thus, he socialized with the Korean Student Association clique at PCU—a group that possessed “FOB” characteristics based on Hannah’s and Joon’s definitions. However, through his combined and gradual experiences at university (particularly within political sciences classes and the Commerce program), he realized that his lack of Canadian cultural knowledge and “soft topic skills” positioned him and his Korean clique as the very “FOBs” they made fun of. Thus, for his immediate survival in the Commerce program as well as his future success in the real world, Mike gradually distanced himself from his Korean “FOB” friends and started being more involved in activities where his “soft topic skills” could be improved. Therefore, Mike’s positioning of “FOBs” began with including only Korean international students in Vancouver then went on to include members of Korean immigrant cliques, including himself. However, later, he no longer positioned himself as a “FOB” based on his efforts to develop his knowledge of Canadian culture and “soft topic skills,” which in Mike’s mind were characteristics that “FOBs” lacked.

All three students’ intentional distance from “FOBs” resulted in being positioned as “bananas” by other Korean peers based on their relative fluency (with no noticeable accent) in English and their choices not to socialize exclusively with other Koreans. As Heller (1987) notes, ethnicity is a social construct, where language plays an essential role in being deemed worthy a member of that ethnic community. In this respect, by referring to Hannah, Joon, and Mike as “bananas”—yellow on the outside but white on the inside—it appeared their Korean peers assigned a non-Korean ethnic identity to these students based on their lack of (knowledge and/or use) of Korean. However, all three students
rejected such positionings and argued that it was unfair to be stigmatized with such labels simply based on the language they spoke or the friends with whom they socialized. In addition, they positioned other Korean immigrants (mainly those second-generation Koreans who were born in Canada, those who did not understand the Korean language and/or customs, or those who thought in a “White” way) as the true “bananas,” which seemed to indicate that as a Generation 1.5 immigrant, they could not be stigmatized with such a label. Furthermore, they also asserted that contrary to the belief that they lacked an appreciation for their Korean cultural heritage, in their own unique ways, they were actually contributing to the Korean and Asian communities in Canada. Furthermore, by emphasizing that they were neither an “FOB” nor a “banana,” the students chose to position themselves in a third space, where they possessed a good balance of being Korean and Canadian at the same time.

To some extent, I believe the students’ choices to resist being placed under either label are the result of their developed maturity and self-acceptance. However, in addition to such factors, I also feel that, like the decisions that were made by Yellina and Sheila in Chapter 4, the choices of the three students in this chapter were also closely related to their negotiation of various identities and investments (Norton, 2000). In Hannah’s case, her investment to appear “Canadian” and to be affiliated with “Canadian” peers led her to abandoning her Korean “FOB” peers in high school who symbolized “non-Canadianess” in Hannah’s views. Over the years, she gradually embraced her Korean identity and befriended more Korean peers, yet she was still heavily invested in maintaining the “Canadianess” that she had acquired since high school. Hence, she still kept a distance from Koreans who appeared cliquish and who only spoke Korean amongst themselves. In addition, her desire to excel in the Commerce program at university led her to avoid students who seemed relatively “FOB” when it came to group work, based on her assumption that they would not be able to contribute as much due to their lack of Canadian cultural knowledge and academic literacy skills. Furthermore, as a result of her investment to appear more professional in her work place, Hannah chose to hide her Korean identity and never spoke Korean to her Korean-speaking colleagues and
customers. However, her fluent English skills became irrelevant in the context of her Korean church where she was assigned to teach Korean Bible study classes to young Korean children. In that setting, her lack of Korean skills placed her at the risk of potentially being positioned as an incompetent teacher as well as someone who was not Korean enough in the eyes of the students. Yet, instead of choosing to improve her Korean skills, Hannah switched to teaching English Bible study classes as soon as the opportunity arose. Thus, even within the context of her Korean church, Hannah chose to assert her identity as a capable teacher by returning to the language that made her more professional in all other areas of her life—English. However, despite such choices, it appeared that for Hannah, focusing on her English skills was in no way an abandonment of her Korean identity. Rather, by using English (and appearing more professional in public settings), she was asserting her investment in her Korean identity. That is, by not “minoritizing” herself from mainstream Canadian society, she was in fact contributing to creating positive images of Korean-Canadians. In this respect, despite her linguistic and sociocultural choices that may lead one to assume that she was indifferent towards her Korean identity, she was in fact searching for her own ways to find a good balance between her Korean and Canadian identities. Figure 5.1 summarizes Hannah’s investments in language and identities.

Joon’s identities and investments also developed over time and space. His needs as a teenager to belong to a peer group drew him to approach Korean students in high school despite their “FOB” characteristics. However, this very group questioned Joon’s true Korean identity based on his lack of knowledge and use of the Korean language as well as knowledge of Korean pop culture. This kind of tension was similar to those reported in Chapter 4 for Sheila, who eventually gave into the pressure in order to remain within her Korean peer group. Joon, on the other hand, felt offended by his Korean peers’ behaviors and chose not to socialize with them any further. Instead, Joon chose to invest in highlighting his identity as a hard-working Korean-Canadian student who, unlike the “FOBs,” possessed strong morals as well as gratitude for his parents’ sacrifices. In university, he continued to distance himself from Korean “FOBs,” but by this time, it was
no longer just about distinguishing himself as a “non-FOB” Korean-Canadian. Rather, he was also invested in his identity as a successful Asian-Canadian immigrant; someone who was fluent in English, sociable, and who reached out to mainstream Canadian society. Thus, his identity was now being framed within the politics of race, where he was fighting racial stereotypes that affected Asian-Canadians, including Korean-Canadians like himself. Therefore, Joon’s investment in English served several purposes: to differentiate himself from “FOB” Koreans, to become the “traditional” successful immigrant child for his parents, and to battle the biases against Asians in Canada. In Figure 5.2, I summarize Joon’s investments in languages and identities.

In Mike’s case, his identity changes and investments seem closely related to his pragmatic views towards academic and professional success. In particular, upon entering PCU (and more specifically the commerce program), Mike recognized the importance of “soft topic skills” in order to succeed in the real world, which included knowledge of Canadian culture and current affairs. Like Joon (and Sheila in Chapter 4), for Mike, it was not only important for him to succeed academically and professionally for his own personal sense of achievement but also as a way to give back to his parents who had sacrificed so much for him. In addition, he was keen on setting a good example for future generations of Korean-Canadians, including his younger brother. However, his choice to prioritize such identities (e.g., successful student within the commerce program, successful professional in the future, responsible son, and role model for his younger brother) resulted in compromising his identity as a member of his Korean peer group, who were a big part of his life during his first year of university. His decisions also often left him stigmatized with the labels of “banana” and “banana-wanna-be.” However, such consequences did not seem to have any agonizing effects on Mike. That is, unlike Sheila and Yellina in Chapter 4, who were determined to maintain their affiliation with their Korean friends regardless of other competing identities and investments, Mike’s imagined identity as a successful member in the “real world” far outweighed his desire to stay within the Korean peer group. Figure 5.2 offers a summary of Mike’s investments in languages and identities.
Based on the above descriptions, it is quite clear that unlike the women in Chapter 4 for whom Korean peers, sŏnbaes, and parents were important agents in their process of language socialization, for the three students in this chapter, members of the non-Korean community seemed to have played a greater role in their linguistic, academic, and sociocultural decisions. For instance, in Hannah’s case, her “Canadian” peers in high school strongly influenced her in developing the ideas of what made an individual “Canadian” in terms of his/her linguistic and sociocultural choices. Although as a university student she was no longer influenced by the same kind of peer pressure experienced as a teenager, the ideologies formed during that time seemed to continue to be a strong part of her beliefs, which influenced her linguistic, academic, and sociocultural choices in university. The “experts” (Duff, 2003) Joon chose as role models also rarely included his Korean peers during high school or university. Rather, Joon sought to emulate images of the more traditional Korean immigrant youths of the past who came from less affluent families but who worked hard to succeed. In addition, he also found inspiration in those that he believed were successful members of mainstream society, particularly other Asian-Canadians like the leader in his science club. For Mike, his Korean peers at the Korean Student Association did initially play an important role during his first year at PCU. As a result, as was the case for the women in Chapter 4, he also spoke mostly Korean and socialized with Korean peers almost exclusively during that time. However, over the next few years, Mike’s professors in the Commerce program and other successful working professionals became much more influential socializing agents in his life decisions, including his desire to improve his “soft topic skills” by learning more about Canadian culture and current affairs. Thus, I believe such varying agents in the students’ language socialization processes reflect the diverse and complex contextual factors that influence Generation 1.5 students’ experiences, cautioning one against simple representations of Generation 1.5 students as a homogeneous group.

Finally, the experiences of the students in this chapter raise an ideological issue that I believe is worth examining. In their positionings of “FOBs,” the students all described them as having negative and/or embarrassing characteristics. In particular at
university, the “FOB” students’ perceived lack of English skills and their preference for Korean language and culture positioned them as individuals lacking in academic literacy skills with no sense of professionalism. In this respect, the ideologies that the students in this chapter were socialized into seem to be along the same continuum as those that Yellina in Chapter 4 was influenced by as well. In high school, Yellina was socialized into the belief that being an ESL student was similar to being intellectually handicapped. In university, she was surrounded by sŏnbae who positioned Generation 1.5 students as somewhat helpless because of their NNS status. Although the students in this chapter never explicitly used the term ESL or NNS to describe the students they avoided working or socializing with, it is nonetheless true that they associated one’s English language limitations with being less professional and less capable of completing intellectual tasks. Therefore, I feel such perceptions of Hannah, Joon, and Mike towards the “FOB” students are not unrelated to the deficiency model often associated with ESL students in general (Séror, 2002; Toohey, 1992; Zamel, 1995), which points to the need to reexamine the sources through which such ideologies are created and spread.

In the following chapter, I will introduce the experiences of the remaining two students in my study, Yuri and Gilbert.

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78 These positionings of “FOBs” and Generation 1.5 youth were in some cases also reinforced by others (e.g., university instructors), which will be discussed further in Chapters 7 and 8.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td>Desire to be “Canadian.” Desire to differentiate herself from “FOBS.”</td>
<td>Desire to achieve academic goals. Desire to appear more professional. ———Desire to “unminoritize” herself. ———Desire to create positive images of Korean-Canadians.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Korean</strong></td>
<td>Desire to be a competent teacher and to appear “Korean enough” to her students in Bible study class</td>
<td></td>
<td>Uncertain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.1 Hannah’s Investments in Languages and Identities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to appear more professional.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>———Desire to differentiate himself from “FOBs.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Korean</strong></td>
<td>Maintaining Korean roots. (conversing with parents)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>German</strong></td>
<td>Education in Germany.</td>
<td>Taking German classes at PCU.</td>
<td>Uncertain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.2 Joon’s Investments in Languages and Identities**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td>Socializing with NS peers in high school.</td>
<td>Academic achievement at PCU.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Differentiating himself from “FOBs.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Developing “soft topic skills” to compete in the “real world.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Building infrastructure for future Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadians.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Korean</strong></td>
<td>Affiliation with Korean peers during first year at PCU.</td>
<td>Conversing with family.</td>
<td>Uncertain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.3 Mike’s Investments in Languages and Identities**
Chapter 6
REACHING THEIR GOALS THROUGH ENGLISH:
GILBERT AND YURI

6.1 Introduction
In this chapter, I will introduce the last pair of students in my study, Yuri and Gilbert. Among all of my seven participants, my impression of these two students was that they were the most driven by their future academic and professional goals, which heavily influenced their past and present linguistic, academic, and sociocultural experiences in Canada. In addition, although gratitude towards their parents was not uncommon among the other five students, a sense of familial duty was particularly strong with Yuri and Gilbert, which again was another driving force behind their English language development. Thus, in this chapter, I will follow the trajectories of these students from their arrival in Canada and examine the contextual factors that have affected their processes of language socialization and negotiation of identities.

6.2 Students’ Backgrounds
6.2.1 Yuri

At the time of the study, Yuri was a 21 year old female student majoring in Mathematics and was planning to apply for the Teacher Education Program at PCU the next academic year. She and her family (parents and younger brother) immigrated to Vancouver, Canada in 1998 when she was 14 years old. In Korea, her father was a computer programmer while her mother was an accountant, but they decided to leave the comfortable life in Korea for the sake of their children’s education. Yuri’s academic achievement in Korea was above average, and she studied EFL at school and at private cram schools in junior high. At the time of the interview, Yuri’s father was working for a construction company while her mother worked for a Korean-owned fish plant in

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79 Interviews with Yuri were conducted in both English and Korean. All Korean quotes included in this chapter were translated into English by me. Yuri seemed fluent in both Korean and English and used the two interchangeably during our interviews.
Vancouver. Yuri explained that her family was struggling financially, and for this reason, although her younger brother was one of the top ten golfers in British Columbia in high school, he had to give up his dream because his parents could no longer financially support his golfing career. At the time of the interview, Yuri’s brother was a student at another university in Vancouver. Yuri lived at home with her parents and brother, and spoke only Korean to her parents whose English language skills were very limited. She spoke Korean and English with her brother. Yuri’s parents did not plan on returning to Korea in the future and also discouraged Yuri and her brother from seeking career opportunities there.

6.2.2 Gilbert

Gilbert immigrated to Vancouver, Canada in 2000 at age 16 with his older sister and parents. His father was a military officer in Korea and his mother was a nurse. Gilbert had very high academic achievement in Korea, but like all the other students in this study, Gilbert’s family also chose to immigrate to Canada for a better educational environment for the children. Both parents retired upon moving to Canada. Gilbert’s English language learning experiences prior to immigration included taking EFL classes in a Korean secondary school, as well as accompanying his father to England in Grade 9, where he attended a public school for five months. Gilbert believed that his English skills improved drastically during this these five months because he as surrounded by NSs and had to function in English all the time. With this improvement in his English skills, Gilbert was confident about his new life in Canada, although initially, he was shocked by his parents’ unexpected decision to move overseas. Gilbert spoke only Korean with his family. At the time of the interview, his sister was a fourth year Commerce student at PCU. Gilbert was a third year student at PCU and a second year student within the

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80 Interviews with Gilbert were conducted in English. During our interviews, I felt that he was quite articulate and spoke in a very confident manner. Outside our official interview setting, I had the opportunity to hear him speak in Korean at a formal Korean community function. At that time, I felt his spoken Korean skills were excellent.
Pharmacy program. He lived at an undergraduate residence on PCU campus but went back home every weekend.

6.3 Goals in Secondary School

6.3.1 Yuri

6.3.1.1 Improving English by Being Noticed

Upon moving to Vancouver, Yuri enrolled in Grade 9 at a local high school in her neighborhood. The majority of her school population was Asian students, including Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino, and East-Indian students. During her first year in high school, Yuri was enrolled in ESL classes full-time. In Grade 10, she moved on to regular classes in all subjects with the exception of English and social studies, for which she was enrolled in transitional classes. By Grade 11, she was taking regular classes for all subjects.

Unlike Yellina in Chapter 4, who had a strong desire to leave ESL classes, Yuri explained that she was never embarrassed or uncomfortable about being an ESL student. Rather, she felt relatively comfortable speaking out in front of her ESL peers who shared similar backgrounds. It was during this time in ESL that she learned of the importance of class participation; an area which her ESL teachers emphasized as an important factor in improving one’s overall English skills and also in excelling academically. Therefore, with the level of comfort she felt with her ESL classmates, Yuri made the effort to increase her class participation, which in her mind was an actual skill that would ultimately help her improve her English. For instance, answering questions or volunteering to read a book out loud in front of the class were all opportunities to practice her English. In addition, the more she participated, the more she was noticed by her teacher who complimented her and offered more support both during and after class hours. This kind of participation practice proved to be beneficial in her regular classes later on, where she actively took part in class discussions. She was aware that her active class participation also caught the eyes of her regular class teachers, whom she felt viewed her as a model student. This motivated her to work harder and also eased the anxiety she felt in approaching the teachers to ask questions after class:
Being able to talk to the teachers and asking them for help was a big part of my improvement in English. They really supported me a lot and even encouraged me to come to them if I ever needed extra help because of my English. I think the fact that I got noticed by the teachers and sort of became a teacher’s pet boosted my overall confidence level in English. I remember in Grade 12, all the teachers in my Grades 9 to 11 classes remembered me. And I thought, “Wow, I must have been a really good student.”

(Yuri, I#1, September 26, 2005, E-original)

In addition to improving her English within the classroom setting, Yuri was determined to develop her spoken English skills through social interactions with her peers. For this reason, she distanced herself from the other Korean students at her school almost from the beginning of her new life in Canada. Like the experiences of Sheila, Hannah, and Joon in the previous chapters, Yuri also observed that most of the Korean students in her school were not academically-inclined and were more interested in socializing with each other. She also noticed that many of them had very poor English skills despite having resided in Canada for two or three years. Thus, because Yuri was eager to improve her English skills and to enter university, she chose not to associate with Korean peers altogether. This resulted in many Korean students labeling her as a “traitor” or the “weird girl” (Yuri, I#2, October 25, 2005, K-original), but she chose to ignore such remarks and has never regretted her choices since:

(In high school, I didn’t hang out with Koreans not only because of English but also because of the fact that they were not interested in studying but rather in fashion and things like that. And I didn’t feel like we had a connection in that sense. I don’t regret my choice at all because I think most of them didn’t go to university right after graduation. They had to go to adult school to get credits.

(Yuri, I#2, October 25, 2005, K-original)

However, despite her determination to make non-Korean friends, it was not easy to befriend them right away due to her lack of English skills. Her peers were kind to her, yet it was difficult to become a member of friendship groups that were already formed. It was during her Physical Education class (PE) that she soon learned that in order to make English-speaking friends, she needed to stand out from the crowd. When Yuri received a grade C in her first PE running exam, she was devastated about receiving the lowest academic grade in her life. Motivated to improve, she “ran and ran out of spite” (Yuri,
I realized that here, people like those who are good at PE, so when I started getting good marks in the class and showing a lot of skills in terms of physical activities, people started talking to me more. So, I was able to speak English with these new friends. They started complimenting me on my pronunciation and said I had no noticeable accent. That actually motivated me even more to improve my English.

(Yuri, I#1, September 26, 2005, K-original)

The experiences of Yuri are similar to the findings in McKay and Wong’s (1996) study, where one of the ESL students was able to define a positive social identity for himself by excelling in sports, thereby contradicting the “nerdy” model-minority stereotype. As a result of his athletic abilities, he was able to gain friends from outside his Chinese peer group, enabling him to improve his aural/oral English skills significantly. In Yuri’s case, her outstanding performance in PE classes as well as her image as a proactive learner in other classes played crucial roles in her development of English and in her overall academic achievement in high school.

6.3.1.2 Giving Back to Her Parents

Filial piety has been viewed as one of the most traditional values in Korean families, where emphasis is placed not only on the young supporting the elderly, but also on “the mutual and interdependent relationship between parents and children” (Park, 2004, p. 14). This notion of filial piety was also a significant aspect of Yuri’s life, and as the eldest daughter, Yuri’s sense of responsibility towards her parents started the moment her family landed in Canada. When they arrived at Vancouver International Airport, she was the only member of her family who understood the questions of the customs officer. So, even with her limited English skills at that time, she had to translate on behalf of her parents. Since then, it had become her duty as the eldest child to take care of things on her parents’ behalf. However, her sense of responsibility was not only limited to translating for her parents, but also included making financial contributions to the family as well. Shortly after immigrating to Vancouver, her parents became victims of a few
business scams, which left the family with enormous financial debt. Thus from Grade 10, Yuri began earning money by tutoring several students a week and had been financially independent from her parents ever since. Although tutoring these students was at the expense of time socializing with her peers, she was glad she was able to lift some financial burden off her parents.

As noted in Chapter 2, downward social mobility is a common phenomenon among many immigrants groups in North America (Yoon, 2001), and Yuri’s parents were no exception. Therefore, in addition to contributing to the family financially, Yuri felt that she had the responsibility to make up for her parents’ downward social mobility by working hard and making them proud. As expressed by several of the students in previous chapters, Yuri also felt deep gratitude for her parents’ sacrifices and felt that her parents would have had a much more comfortable life had they never left Korea:

My dad was a computer programmer and my mom was an accountant in Korea. We weren’t rich, but we were still part of the so-called upper class. But they came here to sacrifice for us. Now my dad works at a construction company and my mom works at a fish plant. So they get paid 10-16 dollars an hour, and when they come home, they are exhausted. They have lost so much of their lives in Korea because of their lack of English skills, and that makes me motivated to work really hard to support them.

(Yuri, GI #1, October 28, 2005, E-original)

Yuri was aware that some people in the Korean community in Vancouver looked down on her parents due to their lower socio-economic status. And in part, this was one of the reasons why she avoided socializing with Korean peers in high school, who mostly came from affluent investor families, or who were parachute kids that had wealthy parents in Korea sending them money every month.\(^1\) Therefore, she became even more determined to differentiate herself from these peers by outperforming them linguistically and academically. Still, her goal to somehow compensate for her parents’ lost status became her greatest motivation to succeed, including her desire to improve her English

\(^1\) According to Zhou (1998), parachute kids are foreign-born children usually from wealthy families who move to North America alone for educational purposes. These children are often taken care of by their relatives or paid caretakers.
skills. She knew her parents were extremely proud of her, especially when other Korean parents perceived her as a role model for their children and asked her to tutor them. Many parents viewed Yuri as an expert in English learning and requested that she teach their children “how to survive ESL” and “how to make English-speaking friends” (Yuri, I# 3, November 18, 2005, E-original). Thus, while Yuri’s avoidance of Korean-speaking peers stigmatized her as the “traitor” and “weird girl” among her Korean peers, this very same behavior awarded her the status as “English expert” in the eyes of the Korean parents.

6.3.2 Gilbert

6.3.2.1 Academic Scholarship

From a very young age, Gilbert’s father had a significant influence on his outlook on life. As a former military officer, his father possessed traditional Korean values and emphasized that Gilbert needed to be more ambitious in life. He also stressed the importance of becoming a “bigger” person through hard work, precise planning, and discipline:

My father is a military person, and he gives us speeches at the dinner table all the time. Haha (…) so he’s all about planning in advance and discipline. He tries to foresee what is coming and plans his days, weeks, years, ten years. So I have been heavily influenced by his philosophies in life.

(Gilbert, I#1, September 28, 2005, E-original)

Thus, when Gilbert first arrived in Canada, he already had a clear goal of being accepted to university with a scholarship and ultimately being accepted to medical school in the future. The first and most crucial step towards this goal was to improve his English skills. Hence, when he was required to enroll in ESL classes for his first five months during Grade 10, he was extremely discontented with his situation. Through his five-months experience in England prior to moving to Canada, he realized that the only way to improve his English skills was to interact with NSs or fluent speakers of English, thus communicating with other ESL students was deemed unbenefficial or even problematic in Gilbert’s eyes:

I’m going to be honest, I didn’t enjoy sitting in class in ESL. I felt that my English was better than the others, so I felt like I didn’t belong in that environment (…) a lot of the students were younger than me, so I felt like their
intelligence level wasn’t as high. They weren’t exactly academically ambitious either. For instance, they played cards, so I felt like I didn’t belong in the group. (Gilbert, I#1, September 28, 2005, E-original)

Like Yuri, Gilbert was determined to improve his English, thus avoided interacting with the cliquish, Korean immigrant peers in his school. He felt no need to socialize with them solely based on their shared ethnic background and instead reached out to other more academically oriented students at his school, who welcomed him into their group. He also added that at that time, he turned away from Korean students for the sake of his survival:

I was at that stage (…) I found myself doing that just for survival. I can tell you right now that I knew people who were in Canada for five years, and they still didn’t speak English fluently. And those people came pretty young, too. And I saw that, and I saw the risk of hanging out with people who speak Korean. (Gilbert, I#4, January 9, 2006, E-original)

By Grade 11, he was taking only regular classes and was already making himself known as the top student in math and science at his school. However, he was still lacking confidence in other classes like English and social studies, and described himself as the “student in the corner” (Gilbert, I#2, October 20, 2005, E-original), who would sit silently and listen. He was still hesitant to speak out in class and was particularly insecure about his abilities to give presentations. He was also less involved in school activities due to his lack of spoken English skills. Yet at the beginning of Grade 12 when he began to seriously consider applying to different universities, he realized that in order to achieve his goal of receiving scholarships, it was necessary for him to take on a more proactive approach to improving his English. That is, if it was difficult for him to improve his English skills through academic subjects at school, he would seek alternate opportunities to increase his time using English as well as to enhance his overall confidence level. He compared his experiences of learning English to running a marathon, and explained that “based on my father’s dinner speeches, if I’m running in a marathon, I have to run even faster if I have disadvantages” (Gilbert, I#1, September 28, 2005, E-original). He also added that although he predicted that the weight of English would be one that he would carry throughout his life, it also served as a motivation to excel.
It was also around this time that Gilbert encountered an alumnus of his high school, who was a student at PCU at that time. Gilbert looked up to this student because in addition to his high academic achievement, he also possessed excellent leadership and athletic skills. However, what Gilbert found most impressive was that this student (who was ethnically Taiwanese) was also a landed immigrant like himself. This inspired him “to have the courage to think that despite where you are from, you can achieve” (Gilbert, I#6, March 27, 2006, E-original).

Thus, soon after starting his Grade 12 year, Gilbert founded and became the president of the mountain biking club at his school and volunteered as an executive of the student council. He also began volunteering at a local senior centre and started tutoring math and science to students after school. His involvement in such various activities, particularly as a leader, proved to have considerable benefits in terms of his English:

Because a part of leadership is delegating people; being in the center and telling them what has to be done. And that was kind of like a presentation, and it required a lot of speaking, and communicating many information at the same time as well. And that was really good training for fast thinking. So there was a transition between translating and just accepting the language itself. So that was a good practice. I wouldn’t say I’m a natural-born leader, but I really wanted to improve my English. But in the end, I realized that I actually enjoyed it. So that built up my confidence. and those experiences really helped me with my English and my social skills.

(Gilbert, I#4, January 9, 2006, E-original)

At the end of the school year, Gilbert was accepted to PCU with a four-year academic scholarship. He also graduated from high school with a medal from the Science Council of British Columbia, which recognized him as the top student in all science subjects among his graduating class. However, Gilbert was still not completely satisfied because he did not graduate at the top of his class. He believed that his lower marks in English had brought down his overall average, and thus was determined to improve his English even more during university.

6.3.2.2 Fulfilling a Son’s Duties

Gilbert’s sense of responsibility towards his parents was similar to that expressed by Yuri. Like Yuri, he felt his parents had placed themselves in a vulnerable situation by
leaving their success in Korea and moving to a country where they did not speak the language. However, while Yuri’s sense of responsibility was mostly due to her role as the eldest child, Gilbert’s sense of duty derived from his position as the only son in the family. Earlier, I mentioned that Gilbert’s father emphasized the importance of being ambitious in life. Yet although he had an older sister, his parents (and grandparents while he was still in Korea) mainly focused their attention on Gilbert and had very high expectations of him as a son. Thus, although he was technically the younger child in the family, more emphasis was placed on fulfilling his duties as a son. And by the time the family moved to Canada, not only his parents, but also his sister expected this of him:

Because I’m a guy, I’m more social and outgoing, and if there’s a phone call or something difficult to say, she’ll come to me. Not just because of the language but because of the certain situation that she is scared of. I think there’s this certain expectation that she wants me to take care of because I’m the son. So, I think it goes three ways; my parents think I should get things done, and my sister thinks that my parents should think that I should get things done, and I think I should get things done. I also don’t think my parents have been pushy with my sister in terms of career aspirations. She’s going to graduate soon, and I think my parents will be happy with any decent job she gets. Whereas me, my dad especially wants me to have a clear target and aim for it, which is being a doctor.

(Gilbert, I#4, January 9, 2006, E-original)

Although at times such expectations were burdensome for Gilbert, he nonetheless felt more mature as a result of such responsibilities. He explained that as a young child, he had experienced learning disabilities which slowed down his overall intellectual development. So growing up, he made the conscious effort to appear mature and responsible. Thus, when his parents began placing more expectations on him as a son, to some extent, he found it comforting and viewed it “like a validation” (Gilbert, I#4, January 9, 2006, E-original) of his abilities.

Another element that reflected Gilbert’s commitment to his duties as a son was his choice to keep his Korean name in Canada.82

82 The pseudonym “Gilbert” was chosen by Gilbert himself. This was quite interesting when considering his strong commitment to his Korean name. However, he explained that sometimes when he introduced himself to people, they mistook his name to be “Gilbert,” which he found to be quite funny.
My name means a phoenix on earth. My grandparents find great value in the name, so it’s important for me as the son in the family not to change it. When I came to Canada, at first I considered having an English name that’s easier to memorize. I found out that [my name] in English is a marijuana smoking device. So it’s a particular name even in Canada. So, people still laugh about it when we talk about medical marijuana in class. So I used to hate that name and looked into names like John, Jack, Tom, all sorts of names. Then I realized, “Why do I have to change that name?” It’s because it’s inconvenient. Then I thought that for the past 15 years, I’ve been responding to that name, and that name is my identity. So I just thought that I really should not change my name based on other’s convenience. So I changed my philosophy that if my name is hard to remember, I will become more important to that person so that that person will try to remember [it]. And if the person thinks I’m important, then he’ll remember my name. And if I’m not important enough to that person, then I’ll have to try harder so that that person will remember my name. And so I changed my philosophy.

(Gilbert, I#3, November 11, 2005, E-original)

As Thompson (2006) asserts, names can play a significant role in one’s negotiation of identity as “personal names are often part of the struggle for identity that immigrants face, as they attempt to imagine the identities that they most want to claim” (p.203). Similarly, as Gilbert’s comment above suggests, keeping his Korean name served two important functions in terms of his identity negotiation. First, as his name was given to him by his grandparents, it was a symbol of his identity as the family’s son. Second, because he understood that most non-Koreans would have a hard time remembering his name, it served as an incentive to work harder in creating a future identity for himself as someone whose name was worth remembering.

Gilbert explained that in high school, he believed the fundamental route to obtaining the above goals was through acquiring a high level of English that would increase his self-confidence. It was through such confidence that he would be able to make a name for himself and ultimately become the son that his parents aspired him to be.

Yet unlike Yuri who felt the need to give back to her parents, Gilbert admitted that he had been more eager to please them at that time. Regardless, it had served as an additional

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83 In Korea, it is common for the eldest male member of the father’s family to give names to a new-born baby.
incentive to excel in his linguistic and academic performances, and he was satisfied with the outcome of his efforts.

6.4 Goals in University

6.4.1 Yuri

6.4.1.1 Preparing to Become a Teacher

Since Grade 12, Yuri had the dream to become a high school math teacher one day. In addition to her own desire to become a teacher (as well as her confidence in math), her choice was in part due to her own math teacher in Grades 11 and 12, whom Yuri admired and liked very much. It was also partly due to her parents’ influence, who both had backgrounds in math. In particular, her mother strongly wished for Yuri to become a teacher because it had been her own lifelong dream that she had had to give up when she was in her youth.

In her second year at PCU, Yuri declared herself a Math major, and at the time of the interview, she was preparing to enroll in the Teacher Education Program the following year. It was with this clear goal to become a math teacher in the future that Yuri approached her linguistic, academic, social development in university. That is, in the context of multicultural and multilingual Vancouver, she anticipated that she would interact with students and colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds, making it crucial for her to develop excellent communication skills in English. Furthermore, because she would be in a position where she was teaching young students, she believed it would be all the more important to serve as a role model for them not only terms of her expertise in math, but also in terms of her linguistic skills. When she reflected on her past experiences with her own teachers in high school, those that she admired and remembered the most were the ones who were mindful of the students’ varying language proficiencies and who accommodated their needs accordingly.

However, Yuri felt that as a Math major, there were not many opportunities to improve her communication skills within the classroom setting because most of her coursework involved individual tasks or lectures. As a generally quiet and shy person, Yuri did not particularly mind this situation. Nonetheless, she felt it was important to
seek ways to develop her English skills outside the Math program. In this respect, her experiences as a tutor were valuable opportunities to help her reach her linguistic goals. Yuri admitted that despite the financial merits, tutoring three to four different students several times a week was physically tiring. It also prevented her from taking part in other social activities at PCU, which may have allowed for more opportunities to practice her English with both NS and NNS peers. In addition, she was aware that some Korean peers looked down on her as “the girl who tutored so much because her family was poor” (Yuri, I#4, November 24, 2005, E-original). However, instead of pitying her situation, she decided to take advantage of these times as a chance to improve her English skills. For instance, she learned new idiomatic expressions while teaching her students English and also purchased a vocabulary book that she studied along with the students. While helping her students with their homework that required much background knowledge of Canadian culture, history, or politics, Yuri viewed it as an opportunity to increase her own knowledge of Canadian society. She felt this would eventually benefit her as a future teacher working within mainstream Canada. Finally, the fact that she was in a position where others were relying on her for their linguistic and academic improvement motivated her to improve her English skills even more:

Although I’ve been really busy tutoring more students, working, and helping my parents with family matters, I had to talk more than usual because of those things, so I think my linguistic skills have improved a lot.

(Yuri, Email Correspondence, June 23, 2006, E-original)

Furthermore, Yuri constantly monitored herself in English and tried to correct her mistakes right away. She also practiced her English while watching television or reading books in English. When she noticed that her English skills were declining because of the increased use of Korean in her daily life, she made the effort to read more English books and watch more television programs in English.

In addition to improving her English communication skills, Yuri took several Spanish classes during her first two years at PCU as part of her preparations to become a teacher. She even considered declaring it as her minor at one point. However, she eventually discontinued taking the classes by her third year because the assignments
became extremely time-consuming. Nonetheless, when asked why she was so motivated to learn Spanish, she explained that she felt it would be beneficial for her future teaching career:

I thought it would be more advantageous for me to have a language skill since nowadays it’s difficult for a teacher to get by with just one major area expertise. I also wanted to be able to teach something different because math is a science subject. Also, I thought that if I didn’t have anything else that I could do, I could go to South America and teach English. I gave it a lot of thought in many ways. (Yuri, I#1, September 26, 2005, E-original)

6.4.1.2 Living a Good Christian Life

Yuri described school and church as the two most important elements in her daily life. School was obviously important for her education as well as a means to achieve her future goal as a teacher. Church, on the other hand, was a place where her values towards life were formed. Like many new Korean immigrant families in North America, Yuri’s family did not attend church in Korea and only began attending a Korean church in Vancouver as a way to network with other Koreans. As noted in Chapter 2, Korean Protestant churches play a pivotal role in most Korean immigrant families’ lives as they provide a sense of group solidarity and validation of (past) social status, particularly for many first generation immigrants. Every weekend, Yuri spent her time at her church volunteering as a babysitter at the church’s daycare centre, teaching Bible study classes to young children, or just socializing with her Korean church friends. Like her experiences as a private tutor, Yuri viewed her experiences as a Bible study class teacher as a great opportunity to improve her communication skills, particularly because she was teaching the class in English. And although the English she used in those classes was adjusted to the level of the children, she believed it helped train her to speak with people of varying levels of English language proficiency, which would be similar to her future situations as a teacher.

Most importantly, however, Yuri perceived her church as a place where her faith was nurtured and her identity was created. During one of our interviews, I asked Yuri if her Korean identity was important to her, to which she replied, “Yes, but not as much as my identity as a Christian” (Yuri, I# 2, October 25, 2006, E-original). This was not to
imply that she did not value her Korean culture and heritage as she explained the following about her Korean identity:

It is very important for me to be connected to Korean culture because even though I will live here forever, I will always be Korean. I don’t think I will ever be able to throw away my Korean identity. Of course I will encounter a lot of Canadian culture, but I will also encounter Korean culture as well.

(Yuri, I#2, October 25, 2005, E-original)

However, despite her commitment to her Korean identity, Yuri did not feel the need to maintain her Korean language skills or to be deeply involved in the activities of the Korean community. Other than her Korean church life, she was not involved in any other Korean community activities and preferred to spend time alone knitting or reading.

Earlier in my discussion of Yuri’s life in high school, I described her avoidance of Korean students based on their lack of interest in academics and their tendencies to use Korean almost exclusively. By university, Yuri was no longer distancing herself from Korean students and even joined the Korean Student Association at PCU. She was an active member (and later on an executive committee) of the Association during her first two years of university. She felt that her Korean peers at university were those who actually tried hard and were accepted to PCU just like herself, unlike the Korean students in high school. In this respect, she felt a sense of solidarity with these new friends. In addition, she felt less pressure to use Korean with them all the time because these students were also bilingual and bicultural immigrants like herself. However, despite their shared experiences as Generation 1.5 immigrants and the fun she had with her peers, Yuri gradually distanced herself from the Korean Student Association as her own Christian identity became stronger over the years:

As a Christian, I noticed things that the students did at the Korean Student Association that I didn’t really approve of. For instance, a lot of the people there smoked, and there were a lot of times when we got together as a group, and we were pressured to drink. None of my church friends smoke or drink, so I felt more drawn to them and their ways of life. That’s when I started realizing that perhaps my identity as a Christian was becoming stronger than my identity as a Korean.

(Yuri, I#2, October 25, 2005, E-original)
This prioritizing of her Christian identity over her Korean identity echoes the findings of studies on second generation Korean-American evangelicals (e.g., Alumkal, 2001; Kim, 1993), which demonstrate how an evangelical form of faith gradually replaced the second generation youths’ core ethnic identities as Koreans.

On a more pragmatic level, Yuri explained that socializing with her church friends limited her chances to use English because many of them were international students who had been residing in Canada for less than a year. Thus, it was extremely difficult for her to communicate in English with these friends. And this decreased amount of time using English did lead to occasional frustration and concerns on Yuri’s part since she was highly motivated to improve her English skills. However, Yuri maintained her friendships with her church peers since, despite the occasional frustrations, their shared values as Christians far outweighed any linguistic benefits that she could gain by socializing with non-Christian peers.

6.4.2 Gilbert

6.4.2.1 Training to Become a Medical Professional

Gilbert was an even more active student in university than he was in high school. In addition to his studies within the Pharmacy program, he was involved in numerous extracurricular activities at the time of the interview. They included: student representative of the Pharmacy undergraduate council, president of PCU’s guitar club, and member of PCU’s triathlon team, among others. On weekends, he worked at a private Korean tutoring school, where he taught SAT and math to Korean high school students. He also continued to volunteer at a senior home every Saturday. In university, Gilbert continued to have friends from various ethnic backgrounds, including a few bilingual Korean peers. As was the case with Yuri who had a clear goal to become a math teacher, Gilbert explained that much of the motivation behind his active participation in various organizations was rooted in his desire to attend medical school in the near future. As a self-described goal-oriented individual, Gilbert focused on participating in activities that would increase his chances of being accepted to medical school. However, he also planned activities that he actually enjoyed so as not to compromise his social life.
During his first year of university, Gilbert learned from various sources that the Pharmacy program would be one of the best routes to take for medical school hopefuls like himself. So, a year later, he applied and was accepted to the program on his first attempt, and thus began his second year at PCU as a first-year Pharmacy student. There, his main priority was to make himself known to his professors and fellow classmates because he was surrounded by so many academically talented individuals, who in some cases already possessed master’s or doctoral degrees. Thus, at the end of his first year, he nominated himself and was eventually elected as representative of the Pharmacy undergraduate council.

My first interview with Gilbert took place at the beginning of his term as the student representative, thus with each subsequent meeting, I was able to follow his experiences as he became more actively involved in this role. One of his duties as student representative was to participate in faculty meetings where he would discuss issues of concern on behalf of his fellow students. While Gilbert had already been comfortable with and confident in his ability to speak among his peers, speaking out in faculty meetings was a new challenge he had to take on. During the meetings, he observed the mannerisms and communication skills of his professors and made the effort to improve his skills so as to sound more professional and sophisticated in those settings. However, for Gilbert, it was not so much the English linguistic skills that he aspired to improve, but rather the overall confident image that one was able to give off as a result of his/her articulate spoken English skills. In this respect, he chose Mi-Jung Lee (a Korean-Canadian television news broadcaster) as one of his role models when it came to his language learning:

I noticed that Mi-Jung Lee was very articulate and always had great posture. When you look at her, she gives you the sense of reliability and confidence. So, I want to be like her. It’s not just the level of English but the overall package and confidence level. Especially back in high school when I was learning English, they emphasized that we should really listen to TV news. I know no one really speaks like that in everyday English, but I thought it was very elegant and admirable.

(Gilbert, I#6, March 27, 2006, E-original)
According to Gilbert, the Pharmacy program placed heavy emphasis on one’s ability to expressing him/herself in an understandable fashion as they were trained to interact with both medical professionals and the general public in the future. At the time of the interview, the Pharmacy program at PCU had just implemented a new curriculum where they offered classes to train students in developing professional communication skills. As part of this curriculum, Gilbert was required to enroll in classes where he was evaluated on his written and spoken fluency for future counseling and interviewing purposes. He expressed no difficulties with the written aspect of this class as it mainly involved learning the technical jargon. However, he still felt he had much to improve on in terms of his spoken communication skills. Accordingly, he was very observant of how other students spoke in classes (during group discussions and presentations), and outside of school, he observed how professional pharmacists communicated with the public:

I am constantly comparing myself with other students and always monitoring when I speak. We have to do a lot of counseling, so we have video-taped exercises. And I watch myself, and I know that I’m not nearly up there yet. I watch my posture, my articulation. I notice that I use a lot of transitional pauses. In Pharmacy, it’s also important to use proper expressions with no wrong pronunciation. Sometimes the professors correct me, and I get embarrassed at first, but I try to correct myself and use it properly next time. I’m not a perfectionist, but I like to excel. Even when I go to interact with pharmacists, I try to make note of how they speak.

(Gilbert, I#6, March 27, 2006, E-original)

As our interview process approached an end, Gilbert had acquired an increased amount of confidence through the numerous activities he had been involved in over the academic year. Like Mike in Chapter 5, Gilbert explained that through those experiences, he realized that in order to succeed in the real world, there was so much more involved than mere linguistic skills. However, unlike Mike who felt that his NNS immigrant status was an obstacle in his acquisition of “soft topic skills,” Gilbert believed that one’s non-native English skills could be overlooked as long as he/she exuded a confident image:

In university, there are some things like cultural things that everyone else understands because they grew up with it. But I don’t know those things and some people ask me “What’s wrong with you?” Those are the things that make me feel that “Wow, I’m not really Canadian yet.” That’s when I think they feel that I am
ESL, which is by definition, English as a second language. So, I simply tell them, “I didn’t grow up here.” I think it really has to do with a lot of confidence. I mean, if I said “I didn’t grow up here” in a very weak tone, then people could easily look down on me. But if I just say it matter-of-factly, I think that makes a whole lot of difference. Sometimes I even say “Hey, I’m fresh off the plane, I don’t know these things. Could you please explain these things to me?” And people start laughing. It’s supposed to be an insult, but I use it so casually. So, I think people find it funny, and that actually starts the conversation.

(Gilbert, I#6, March 27, 2006, E-original)

Indeed, Gilbert’s attitude towards openly referring to himself as a “FOP” (Fresh off the Plane) was in stark contrast to the strong resistance towards the label by the students in Chapter 5. However, while it seemed almost empowering that Gilbert confidently joked about his “FOP” status, it is worth noting that he did so only while amongst non-Korean, NS peers. Thus, it is unclear whether he would have used the same label to describe himself had he been among Korean NNS peers, particularly the Korean cliques that he was critical of (his views towards Korean cliques will be discussed briefly in the next section).

6.4.2.2 Being a Patriotic Korean

During his last year in high school and first year of university, Gilbert experienced what he referred to as “a major identity crisis” (Gilbert, I#1, September 28, 2005, E-original). As a relative newcomer to Canada, in Grade 12, he was considering various possibilities for his future. These included where he would live and work, which made him question where his place was in Canadian society. Such questions continued throughout his first year at university and became especially more important when he resided in a campus fraternity home. During this time, he often felt cultural differences between him and his fraternity mates (mostly White Anglo-Canadian students), particularly related to their partying and drinking culture. It was also around this time when Gilbert was applying for his Canadian citizenship, and thus with all these combined experiences, Gilbert struggled with issues of identity:

84 Gilbert explained that he originally joined this fraternity based on the fact that he would be receiving an academic scholarship if selected as a new member. In addition, he was excited at the chance to live away from home for the first time.
I really had a major identity crisis at that time. I thought to myself, “If I lived in Canada for twenty years, would that make me completely Canadian?” And my mom gave me a simple answer. She said “You like Kimchi soup, and the fact that you have lived here for more than twenty years is not going to change that.” So, I think the essence of myself is Korean. So I don’t think I will be completely Canadianized.

(Gilbert, I#1, September 28, 2005, E-original)

Although coming to terms with his identity was certainly not an easy process, at the time of the interview, Gilbert was very firm in his belief that he was, and would continue to be, a Korean living in Canada. His Canadian passport was merely a document, and he still possessed very patriotic views towards his mother country, Korea. He believed his patriotism derived from his education in Korea (particularly from Ethics classes) where he learned the importance of contributing to his nation and to help those people who are in need. Thus, Gilbert made the effort to emphasize his Korean identity in his everyday life. For instance, in the dormitory room that he was residing in at that time, he hung a huge Korean flag on the wall. When someone complimented him on his character or accomplishments, he explained that it was a Korean virtue. If available, he only purchased Korean products like Samsung phones. He explained that, although he knew it was almost an extreme bias, he wanted to make “my country” Korea as appealing as possible to other Canadians. He added that his desire to create a positive image of Koreans was sometimes stronger than his personal goals to attend medical school. Additionally, he “really took pride that [he was] a person who can stand out despite unfavorable circumstances like language barriers (...) proud that [he] can stand out among other Canadians” (Gilbert, I#3, November 11, 2005, E-original). In fact, his primary reason to attend medical school was not to obtain wealth or fame, but to become a family physician for Korean families in Vancouver:

For my parents, they have a family doctor, but they can’t even make an appointment for themselves. So, how inconvenient is that? So, if I could open a clinic for Korean people, I think that would be great for them, especially for those who can’t speak English. Of course if I worked as a doctor in a major hospital,

85 In Korea, most primary and secondary school curricula include an Ethics class where students learn about the importance of giving back to community and having a sense of national pride, among others.
that will be a personal benefit. There will be more career opportunities if I sought a position within the mainstream. But because I am Korean and there will be more advantages for the Korean community, I’d like to work primarily with Korean families.

(Gilbert, I#3, November 11, 2005, E-original)

However, although he planned to utilize his Korean language skills in the future to help Korean families as a doctor, in further discussions regarding his patriotism, he emphasized the importance of utilizing English as a means to contribute to the Korean-Canadian community. He was critical of immigrant youth, including his own sister, who claimed a Korean identity based on their use of the Korean language and attachment to Korean pop culture. He was aware that his sister and many other Generation 1.5 youth stayed within the boundaries of the Korean community, discouraged by their NNS immigrant status. However, he viewed this as an excuse not to reach out. Thus, he was concerned for his sister’s future because of her exclusive involvement in Korean cliques and urged her to at least “dip her toe” (Gilbert, I#3, November 11, 2005, E-original) into mainstream Canadian society. He argued that what makes one a Korean patriot was not by creating Korean cliques or being active just within the Korean community. Rather, Gilbert suggested that reaching out to mainstream Canadian society placed the Korean immigrant in a position to make the Korean community known, thereby increasing his/her possibilities to contribute to the Korean community. However, he believed that English needed to be the medium through which this was accomplished:

There’s a lot of societies within the Korean community, but most of them are Korean-speaking. So the problem is that everything that goes on in the society stays within the Korean society. So, it’s kind of isolated in a sense. So, whatever goes on in here the Canadian society doesn’t know about it and doesn’t care. So what we [should] try to do is [to] try to find a link so that Canadian society can know more about it, but obviously, this has to be done through English and only English.

(Gilbert, I#2, October 20, 2005, E-original)

In this respect, Gilbert described that his present efforts to develop his English were also related to his desire to link the Korean community to the broader Canadian society. He explained that “when someone can hold an intelligent conversation in English, people will stop and listen (…) I want people to listen to me and make myself known as a
Korean person” (Gilbert, I#4, January 9, 2006, E-original). Gilbert’s views echoed the findings of Lee’s (1996) study on Asian-American ethnic identity development, which suggests that while many Generation 1.5 Korean students’ outward expressions may appear like an emulation of White American ways of life, internally, these students still maintain a strong Korean identity.

6.5 Discussion and Summary

In this chapter, I have introduced the various contextual factors that affected the linguistic, academic, and sociocultural experiences of Yuri and Gilbert. In particular, I have highlighted the major goals that the students had possessed throughout their high school and university years that had specifically guided the choices in their everyday life. For Yuri, such objectives included being noticed in high school to improve her English skills and using her acquired fluency in English to give back to her parents. Gilbert’s experiences in high school were strongly influenced by his desire to enter university with a scholarship while also fulfilling his duties as the only son in the family. In university, both students’ were preparing themselves (linguistically, academically, and socially) to enter their respective future imagined professional community while maintaining their most important self-described identity as a Christian (Yuri) or a patriotic Korean (Gilbert).

In examining the experiences of the two students, I draw on Garrett and Baquedano-Lopez’s (2002) description of language socialization as being “concerned with all of the knowledge and practices that one needs in order to function as--and, crucially, to be regarded by others as--a competent member of (or participant in) a particular community or communities, however broadly or narrowly defined” (p. 345). That is, in the process of participating in their current communities or preparing/training to enter their future imagined communities, both students were acquiring the linguistic and social tools to be deemed competent members of those communities. For instance, upon beginning her life at her new school in Canada, observations of other Korean students’ behaviors and performances informed Yuri that socializing exclusively with Korean cliques would hinder her chances of improving her English. However, she also soon learned that in order to befriend English speaking peers, her non-linguistic resources
such as excelling in PE and math (and thereby being noticed by other students and teachers) became more important elements in gaining access to her desired peer group. Thus, in this process, Yuri was socialized into the belief that in order to improve one’s English skills, it is important to promote oneself as a competent member of the target linguistic and social community. Here, it is worth noting that while gaining access to this target community positioned her as a “traitor” or “weird girl” in the eyes of her Korean peers, she was soon perceived as the “expert” with regard to English learning by newly arrived Korean immigrant students and their parents. In this respect, Yuri was now in the process of socializing a new group of English language learners based on her own acquired ideologies and beliefs towards language learning, which points to the multidirectionality of language socialization involved in her experiences.

In university, although Yuri was a Math major, she was not explicitly being trained to be a math teacher because she was not yet enrolled in the Teacher Education Program. Thus, in contrast to high school where she had an actual target peer group she sought to emulate, at university, Yuri drew on her past experiences with teachers in high school, as well as her own beliefs towards teaching, as resources in preparing for her future career. As part of this preparation, Yuri placed heavy emphasis on developing her proficiency in English as well as her overall communication skills, and utilized her private teaching experiences (e.g., private tutoring, Bible study classes) as opportunities to improve and practice those skills. Moreover, she was also invested in developing Spanish as her third language to increase her qualifications as a teacher. It is worth noting here that despite her already fluent skills in her L1, she perceived Spanish--her L3--as a more valuable language skill to acquire in terms of her future teaching opportunities.

Gilbert’s experiences in high school and university were in many ways also driven by his personal future goals. Fundamental to achieving these goals was acquiring a high level of English proficiency, which he strove to achieve not only through direct language studies, but also through his involvement in various extracurricular activities. Like Yuri, the Korean cliques at his school served as models of what he did not want to become while those like his Taiwanese senior provided a target for Gilbert to reach for.
At university, as a path towards eventually attending medical school, Gilbert chose to enroll in the Pharmacy program, where he took on several leadership roles that required him to interact with various students and faculty within the program. In addition to these non-academic activities, through actual courses required within the Pharmacy program, he was also being trained to acquire the verbal and non-verbal communication skills necessary to become a medical/healthcare professional. During the course of this training, Gilbert paid close attention to the linguistic skills and mannerisms of his own professors, fellow classmates, local pharmacists, and even television news broadcasters to help develop his English communication skills. These individuals (and the Taiwanese student he met in high school) both directly and indirectly socialized Gilbert into the belief that regardless of one’s NS/NNS status, portraying a confident image of self was the key element in gaining respect as a user of English. This view was in opposition to and a rejection of, the beliefs held by many other Korean-Canadian youth, who felt limited and discouraged by their NNS immigrant status. Therefore, I believe Gilbert’s experiences reflect the lifewide/lifelong and incomplete process of language socialization (Duff, 2003) that learners undergo, where the learners may reexamine, contest, reject, or reinforce linguistic ideologies that are prevalent in their various ethno-linguistic communities.

It seems apparent from the experiences described above that the students were heavily invested in their future identities as a math teacher and medical/healthcare professional, respectively, which played a crucial role in their overall language learning experiences. However, in following the students’ trajectories, in addition to their investments in their future (imagined) professional identities, I believe it is equally important to consider other contextual factors and the related identities that came into play. For instance, in understanding Yuri’s language learning experiences since her arrival in Canada, it is also necessary to consider her identity as a daughter who felt deeply indebted to her parents for their sacrifices. Thus, her investment in English was also part of her desire to make her parents proud so that her achievements would make up for their downward social mobility. This identity as a grateful daughter was likely
embedded in the ideas of filial piety that were deeply rooted in her since her life in Korea, but was also possibly further enhanced in Canada. However, without denying her strong desire to give back to her parents, I feel it is also important to note that to a certain extent, Yuri was placed in the role as the caretaker or cultural/linguistic broker upon arriving in Canada, where it was her parents who were relying on her to handle various family matters in English. Tse (1996) asserts that this kind of *language brokering* often places adult responsibilities on many immigrant children. In this sense, the need to look after her parents as a responsible daughter added another layer to Yuri’s investment in English learning. Hence, while her limited English skills positioned her as the “newcomer” within her new Canadian school setting, at home, her English proficiency compared to her parents placed her in an almost “expert” position, thus requiring her to navigate between her multiple identities and positionings in her everyday life.

In addition, Yuri’s Christian faith was another contextual factor that added an extra layer to her negotiation of multiple identities. That is, although many of Yuri’s life decisions were based on her desire to improve her English, it seemed that desire became of less importance in the context of her church. This is evidenced by her choice to remain in her church peer group who spoke Korean all the time, while distancing herself from her bilingual Korean friends at school who displayed behaviors that contradicted her Christian values. Although this demonstrates Yuri’s strong commitment to her Christian faith, I believe it also exemplifies her negotiation of multiple and sometimes conflicting investments in languages and identities. Figure 6.1 summarizes Yuri’s investments in languages and identities.

In Gilbert’s case, it seems his investments in language learning and use were deeply seated in the ideologies and identities that had been developed since his early childhood days in Korea within his home and school settings. For instance, Gilbert’s identity as the only son in the family was an important factor influencing his daily activities as well as his overall outlook on life. Raised in a family where the father had a military background, he was socialized to believe that clear planning and strict discipline were fundamental to success. However, in addition to such values, he was brought up in a
family setting that had clear gender ideologies, where the male was expected to be the sociable, strong, and ambitious leader while the female took on a quieter, supporting role. Such ideologies seemed to be further reinforced after immigrating to Canada, where his parents relied on him with family matters that required English skills. Neither Gilbert nor his sister contested such gender ideologies as his sister also expected and Gilbert willingly accepted his role as the family’s English spokesperson. Thus, Gilbert’s identity as the responsible and ambitious son in the family enhanced his investment in his language learning as well as his investment in academic and professional success.

However, as Gilbert acknowledged, his identity as a proud Korean was one of the most important (if not the most important) factors behind his investments in English language learning and use. After much agony during his late teen years, Gilbert reached the conclusion that regardless of his physical residence in Canada, his core identity was, and would always remain, Korean. It was with this mindset, along with the patriotic virtues that he learned in his schools in Korea that he desired to create a positive image of Koreans in Canada. Accordingly, this served as a strong incentive to work harder to acquire sophisticated English language skills. That is, he wished to utilize his language skills to become an intelligent speaker; one that people would stop and listen to, but more importantly, one that people would recognize as a Korean. Considering how ambitious and driven Gilbert was, it was interesting to observe how, unlike all the other participants in my study, he chose to remain in the Korean community to pursue his future professional career as a doctor. He agreed that there would be more career opportunities if he worked in a mainstream hospital, yet he was more invested in contributing to the Korean community as a family physician for Korean families than in his own fame. Thus, while it was Gilbert’s aim to speak like the members of his target language community, it was not his goal to belong to that community. Figure 6.2 presents a summary of Gilbert’s investments in languages and identities.

It is likely that both Yuri’s and Gilbert’s cases will serve as examples of success stories for many Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian students and their parents, and both students will also likely be the “model minority” or “good kids” (Harklau, 2000) that
many instructors admire in educational settings. However, without devaluing any of the
time, energy, and effort that both students put in to achieve their goals, I believe a few
issues should also be taken into account in examining their cases. For instance, it is
important to note that in both Yuri and Gilbert’s cases, their first access to their target
peer/language communities in high school was relatively smooth. That is, when Yuri and
Gilbert made the effort to enter their target communities, they were met with
accommodation and welcome by the target group members. However, as Duff (2003)
notes, not all learners (including Sheila in Chapter 4) are afforded such opportunities as
they may be faced with issues of gender, race, socio-economic status, religion, and
conflicting affiliations, among others, which could act as gatekeepers in their access to
their target community. In addition, when Yuri and Gilbert first started learning English
in their new Canadian schools, they were met with positive reinforcements from their
teachers and peers, which again may not always be the case for other learners. Thus, to
conclude that pure determination and confidence alone will guarantee one entrance to
their target communities seems to be a rather simple if not naïve view when considering
the complexities of each individual learner’s various contextual circumstances. In the
same vein, however, it would not do justice to the experiences of Yuri and Gilbert to
claim that there were no struggles involved in entering their target communities. That is,
while access to their target community was relatively smooth, it was nonetheless at the
expense of being labeled as a betrayer of their Korean identity by their Korean peers,
which again demonstrates the complexities and possible tensions involved in one’s
processes of language socialization.

Finally, although both students were not yet directly involved in their future
(imagined) professional communities, they were nonetheless directly and indirectly
preparing/training themselves for the linguistic and sociocultural skills that would be
necessary in their respective fields. In Duff et al.’s (2000) study, they examine the
language socialization of adult immigrants in Canada who were seeking jobs in the
healthcare profession. Their study revealed that the academic and linguistic preparations
that the immigrants received in their formal classrooms were not the only skills (or even
the most critical ones) that were required in the actual healthcare settings, where sometimes their L1, and not English, proved to be more beneficial. In this respect, it would be interesting to follow-up on the students’ experiences in the future when they begin working in their actual trained fields to examine if gaps exists between their trained/practiced linguistic and sociocultural skills versus the actual skills required on the job, and if so, what kinds of gaps.

In Chapter 7, I will provide a cross-case analysis of all seven of the participants’ cases. I will examine some of the salient themes that emerged across most, if not all, of the participants and will also provide a definition of Generation 1.5 described in the students’ own voices.

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<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Desire to socialize with NS peers in high school. Desire to enter university.</td>
<td>Tutoring Korean students. Teaching English Bible study classes.</td>
<td>Developing communication skills as a teacher. Responsibility as eldest child.</td>
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<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Developing qualifications as a future teacher in Canada.</td>
<td>Teaching possibilities in South America.</td>
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Figure 6.1 Yuri’s Investments in Languages and Identities
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<th>Past</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td>Desire to enter university with scholarship.</td>
<td>Developing communication skills for medical/healthcare field.</td>
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<td>Desire to socialize with NS peers.</td>
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<td>Desire to contribute to Korean-Canadian society by “standing out” as a successful Korean and by bridging the Korean and Canadian communities.</td>
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<td>Responsibility as the only son.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Korean</strong></td>
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<td>Family physician for Korean immigrant families.</td>
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Figure 6.2 Gilbert’s Investments in Languages and Identities
Chapter 7
BECOMING A “PIONEER” GENERATION:
A CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

7.1 Introduction
In the previous three chapters, I have examined the various contextual factors of the students’ past, present, and (imagined) future that influenced their processes of language socialization and negotiation of identities. To recapitulate, the following is a summary of Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

In Chapter 4, I examined the cases of Yellina and Sheila, highlighting the various socializing agents that affected the women’s creation of ideologies regarding language learning and use. For both students, Korean peers/sŏnbaes provided them with emotional support and a sense of affiliation, but they also pressured the women to use Korean in their daily lives, creating internal struggles for the students who were strongly invested in their English development. In seeking a solution to their problems, both women negotiated change with themselves by seeking alternative ways to increase their use of English without compromising their friendships with their Korean peers.

In Chapter 5, I followed the trajectories of Hannah, Joon, and Mike. This chapter was organized around the notions of “FOB” and “bananas,” which were one of the most frequent topics that emerged in my interviews with the three students. By examining the students’ past and present views towards the terms “FOB” and “banana,” I traced how the students’ investments in languages and identities evolved. Findings from the analysis revealed that, as the students’ linguistic, academic, and sociocultural goals and investments changed over time and space, so too did the ways in which they positioned the Korean “FOBs” or “bananas.” All of the students rejected both the “FOB” and “banana” labels, and asserted the uniqueness of their own identities.

In Chapter 6, I introduced Yuri and Gilbert, two students whose academic and professional goals had the most significant influence on their linguistic and sociocultural investments since high school. In addition to their personal goals, their familial duties as the eldest daughter and the only son, Christian identity (Yuri), and commitment to the
Korean-Canadian community (Gilbert) were also added elements in their investment in English, sometimes necessitating adjustments and negotiations of their affiliations within their L1 and L2 communities.

In this chapter, I conduct a cross-case analysis, identifying major patterns and themes that emerged across all seven of the students’ cases. I divide the chapter into two sections. The first investigates the notion of NNS as it related to the students’ experiences throughout high school and university. I examine how their varying experiences with teachers in high school and peers/sônbaes and instructors in university created a different set of academic expectations for themselves as NNSs. In particular, I look at the students’ experiences in first-year English courses at PCU, which signified their lack of ownership of English. In the second part of the chapter, I examine the broader sociocultural factors that affected the students’ lived experiences. I investigate how various aspects of Canadian and Korean society as well as today’s ever-changing world affected the students’ attitudes towards and investments in their ethnic identities, professional and linguistic goals, and their roles as Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian youth. Finally, I provide descriptions of Generation 1.5 told in the students’ own voices. The chapter concludes with a summary and discussion of the findings.

7.2 Being a Non-Native Speaker

One of the most salient themes that emerged in my discussions with the students was their status as a NNS as it related to their sociocultural, academic, and linguistic experiences throughout their life in Canada. Thus, in this section, I examine the students’ perceptions of their NNS status and how they believed it affected their social and academic experiences in high school and university.

7.2.1 High School

For many students, although in varying degrees, their being NNSs particularly brought various challenges in their social lives in secondary school, especially with regard to forming friendships with NS peers. However, although studying in their L2 and adjusting to a new academic system posed some difficulties, all of the students achieved above average to excellent grades. Still, there were some students like Sheila and Gilbert
who decided to focus more on math or science subjects with the belief that English would never be their forte. Regardless, many of them were perceived as model students by their teachers and generally received much support with their language difficulties. Most of their teachers understood that they were ESL students and offered extra time or help to complete their work. For instance, Yuri remembered that “even in subjects like math or science, they told me to ask questions all the time if I didn’t understand anything (…) they were really accommodating” (Yuri, I#1, September 26, 2005, E-original).

7.2.2 University

The transition from high school to university can be a difficult process for many students as has been documented by many studies over the years (e.g., Hunter & Gahagan, 2003; Sears, 2004; Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). The students in this study also had had similar experiences, as they had been initially quite overwhelmed by their new life in university, in part due to the different set of academic norms and expectations that they encountered. Reading loads were generally heavier, especially for the students in the General Arts (Hannah, Mike, and Yellina), and many of the classes required individual or group presentations as part of the coursework. The amount of academic writing also increased in the form of essays, research papers, and lab reports, among others. Many of the students found academic writing to be the most burdensome, and thus deliberately avoided classes that required much of it. They believed that as NNSs, it would be too time-consuming to produce quality written work, and because of their linguistic skills, their work may not be as valued as those of their NS classmates. Mike, for instance, stated that he felt extremely frustrated knowing that he “should spend more time on working on these things than any other who were native speakers” (Mike, I#2, November 6, 2005, E-original). Hannah also added that it is when she wrote in English that she started to realize her limitations as a NNS, and in those moments she felt that she was stuck in between two languages (English and Korean) that she was only mediocre in.

Their decisions to avoid linguistically demanding classes were also influenced by the realization that, unlike the readily available support that they had received in high school, university culture required them to be much more autonomous learners. More
specifically, the “special assistance” they had been accustomed to as ESL students in high school was no longer granted in university. Additionally, some students encountered instructors or peers who negatively affected their confidence in English:

In high school, the teachers really liked me, and even though my English wasn’t that great, they gave me a lot of chances. So, I had a lot of confidence in terms of English. But I realized in university that my English wasn’t even average. I once went to the writing centre to get some help, and the instructor really put me down about how poor my structure was, and I felt so upset that I never wanted to go back for help! I felt like my efforts weren’t being recognized because they were only focusing on the grammar mistakes.

(Hannah, I#3, November 18, 2005, E-original).

My English teachers in high school, they knew I was an ESL student, so I know they were more generous to me compared to NS students. One teacher specifically told me that she would be less harsh in her grading with my work. But there is no such thing at university. I mean, I had an instructor advising us to drop the course if we were NNSs because the course requirements would be too difficult for us. So, sometimes I wonder if I was spoiled in high school because the teachers were too generous to me. Although at that time I really appreciated it, looking back, it may have kept me from facing reality.

(Yellina, I#4, February 16, 2006, K-original)

Sometimes when I get stuck saying something in class, I deliberately tell people that I’ve only lived here for five years, so that they’ll cut me some slack. And usually, people are initially impressed because I don’t have an accent. But then later on, I can tell that they start to exclude me from certain tasks because now they know I’m a NNS (…) In high school, none of my friends or teachers treated me differently because I was a NNS. They actually complimented me for my efforts. But in university, people look at you differently if you show any signs of language weakness. Maybe because I’m in Commerce, but I’m telling you, it’s a total dog eat dog world out there.

(Mike, I#2, November 6, 2005, E-original)

You have to understand, Jean, that in high school, the whole set of expectations are different. You study hard, put in the effort, you can get a good grade, and people commend you. But in university, you have to do way more than that to stand out among the crowd, and English skills is undeniably a crucial factor in that.

(Gilbert, I#2, October 20, 2005, E-original)
Thus, most students carefully selected courses in which academic writing or presentations had little or no bearing on their overall final grades. As was the case with Yellina in Chapter 4, those students who mainly socialized with Korean peers and sŏnbaes particularly received a lot of advice about which courses to avoid. In terms of the students’ social lives, in contrast with their high school experiences, most of the students no longer felt that their being NNSs affected their social lives in university. This was either due to their relatively increased level of English proficiency or their lack of interest to socialize with NS peers.

7.2.2.1 Dreadful Memories of First-Year English Courses

Although the students were able to avoid most courses with many written assignments, all of them were required to enroll in first-year English courses, which were mandatory for all undergraduate students at PCU. While the seven students’ performances in these classes varied from barely passing to receiving an A, almost all of them remembered English courses as being dreadful, intimidating, and even “traumatizing” (Hannah, I#3, November 18, 2005, E-original). In these classes, the students were generally evaluated on in-class or take-home essays as well as class participation. And while these requirements did not significantly differ from the types of work required in other courses, the sole fact that they were English courses was enough to frighten the students. Many of them heard rumors about first-year English courses

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86 PCU does not make NS/NNS distinctions in offering first-year English courses. New international undergraduate students, for whom English is not their first language, can participate in (paid) academic orientation workshops offered at PCU prior to the academic year. Canadian high school graduates are unable to attend these workshops. PCU offers a non-credit-bearing writing course through its Writing Centre, which helps prepare students for first-year English courses as well as the LPI. The Writing Centre also offers free one-on-one tutoring sessions, where students can make one half-hour appointment per week to receive help on their English writing from trained instructors.

87 As noted earlier in Chapter 3, undergraduate students at PCU are required to complete six credits of first-year English, and they have the option to choose two among five different courses. One of these courses covers university writing strategies while the rest of the four are literature courses. All of the students in my study took the writing course plus one of the four literature courses. While the writing course is taught by one instructor, the literature courses are generally taught by a professor (in the form of lectures with 100-120 students) with discussion sessions (with 25-30 students) led by teaching assistants.

88 Hannah took first-year English courses at the college she attended prior to transferring to PCU.
through their Korean peers or sŏnbaes, and they felt extremely anxious even prior to taking the courses. Thus, despite the fact that they were generally high academic achievers, they had very low expectations of their own performances in theses courses. Sheila, for instance, was so concerned about the first-year English courses that she considered deferring her entrance to PCU for one year. Additionally, Gilbert, whom I earlier described in Chapter 6 as the most academically and professionally ambitious student of all the participants, enrolled in the English courses already anticipating that he would inevitably be one of the students with the lowest grades. The following excerpt describes his experiences. (I=Interviewer, Jean; G=Gilbert):

I: Can you describe what your experiences were like in your English courses?
G: Well, I had an idea going into the class that I would be one of the bottom students. At that time, I had been in Canada for two years, so just getting into the class was a privilege for me.
I: What do you mean by a privilege?
G: As you know, the minimum requirement was 80% in high school, and I got 81%. So what that tells me was that everyone in that class was at least better than me. So I had to accept the fact that I’ve been here for only two years and they’ve been [here] for their life. So, obviously there was no competition. So that was just to take the pressure off my mind, and it turned out to be true because I got a 65% which was lower than the class average.
I: Does that mean you gave up on the class even before you started?
G: It’s not so much that I gave up because I didn’t want to give up on English itself. But I just accepted the fact that I would try, but you’re not going to get 100%. I was just being realistic. I just emptied myself. It doesn’t mean that I wouldn’t try.

(Gilbert, I#4, January 9, 2006, E-original)

In addition to such low expectations prior to the classes, the students’ self-doubt seemed to continue during their actual enrollment in them. They believed that because English was not their first language, it would be difficult to produce the same level of sophisticated work as their NS peers were capable of. So even when they received

89 At the time of the interview, British Columbia high school graduates who received an 80% or higher on their Grade 12 English were able to take first-year English courses at PCU without having to take the LPI. As of 2008, this minimum grade requirement has been changed to 75%.
positive feedback or a high score on their work, they questioned the reliability of that score:

I felt really unstable. Other courses, I am at the same starting point with other students because we have the same basic skills. But in English class, I knew that our starting point, our basic weapon, were different or inferior because I am the ESL learner and they are NSs (...) At the end of the course, I got my grades, then I thought, “Oh, maybe we are the same.” And sometimes when we had in-class essays and I wrote faster than the other students, then I felt that maybe I am not as bad. So there were moments when that feeling of burden went away, but the skepticism was always there and kept on bugging me until the very end of the class. In a way, I think this is a kind of burden that I will need to carry for life because I will never own English.

(Yellina, I#4, February 16, 2006, K-original)

I really don’t know if my marks really reflected my English skills. I find that the marking was very arbitrary. I got good marks in English 112 [the writing course], but I’m not really sure if I was writing that well. I didn’t get a good grade on English 110 [the literature course], and I don’t know, I might have deserved it. I mean, even though at this point in my life English is sort of second nature to me, it’s still not the same as those who’ve been speaking it all their lives. I mean, I still feel like I’m improving in English.

(Joon, I#1, October 26, 2005, E-original)

When it became obvious that such negative memories of English courses were prevalent among almost all of the participants, I felt it necessary to gain a better understanding of the situation by gaining insights from first-year English course instructors at PCU. Thus, I contacted and was able to interview Sarah (main instructor of a course on university writing strategies) and Daniel and Michelle (TAs for literature courses) who had either taught or were teaching one of the first-year English courses at that time. During the interviews, the instructors stated that the average mark earned by

90 Because the students had already all completed first-year English courses by the time of our interview, I was unable to interview the instructors who had actually taught the students in the past. However, I believe the insights of the instructors that I was able to interview were still very valuable in understanding the students’ experiences. Through these interviews, I was also able to identify some possible pedagogical implications that the findings of my study may have for English course instructors at PCU (and elsewhere). These implications will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 8.

91 As noted in Chapter 3, it was Sarah’s second time and Michelle’s third time teaching (or TAing for) the courses. Daniel had been a TA for a literature course the previous academic year. All three instructors had
students was a 70 (which in PCU’s academic system was a low B) with very few students receiving a mark over 80 (a grade ‘A’). They also stated that a high quality essay would be one which demonstrated critical thinking skills regardless of the grammatical features of the writing. They explained that there were no different assessment criteria for NS/NNS students, and unless a student specifically approached them for assistance, they did not initiate offering extra support even if NNS features were apparent in the students’ works. However, they emphasized that they did not necessarily see a difference in the students’ performances based on their NS/NNS status and added that some of their best students were, in fact, NNSs.

However, when asked if they had many immigrant NNS students in their classes, none were able to answer with certainty. That is, although more than half of their students were usually visible minorities, it was difficult to determine one’s NNS immigrant background solely based on his/her ethnicity, given the multicultural context of Vancouver where PCU was situated in. Moreover, none of the instructors were familiar with the term Generation 1.5 and were unsure whether any of their students fit the description. As a result, they were unable to answer my question of whether they observed any unique characteristics of this particular group of students. In general, it appeared that the instructors deemed a student a NNS if he/she had a noticeable accent in their spoken English and if they displayed many grammar errors in their writing. Thus, they did not differentiate between an international NNS student and an immigrant NNS student.

When I explained how the students in my study had dreadful memories of their English course experiences, they all agreed that most first-year English class students seemed to have a “let’s just get this over with” (Daniel, March 2, 2006) attitude because

direct contact with the students and were solely responsible for assessing the students’ works.

92 Here, I would like to emphasize that it is not my intention to judge the instructors based on their unfamiliarity of the term Generation 1.5. However, I believe that the example of these instructors does point to the need for institutions to be more aware of the educational experiences of foreign-born immigrant students, who are likely to be a significant part of their student body. A more in-depth discussion of this is included in Chapter 8.
they were eager to move on to courses within their respective programs as soon as possible. However, when I further explained that the participants felt intimated and insecure in those courses because of their NNS status, they seemed quite surprised. That is, their assumption had been that if a student had graduated from a Canadian high school and also passed the LPI, he/she would feel competent enough to take first-year English courses at university. They said that had they known this was not the case, they would have tried to be more conscious of the immigrant students’ efforts and struggles. At the same time, however, they felt that it would be difficult to try and identify whether a student was a NNS immigrant or not, and even if they did, there was the risk of potentially “pigeonholing” (Michelle, March 2, 2006) the students into one uniform category.

By the time of our interview, most of the students had declared a major for themselves and were taking courses directly related to their respective fields. With their first-year English courses “over with,” other than Yellina who was a student in the Arts faculty (soon to declare a major in English), all of the other students were rarely required to produce extensive written work in their courses. Although most of the students felt that their English skills (written and spoken) could still be improved, their being NNSs did not necessarily affect their academic achievement in university anymore as content knowledge of their respective fields had become increasingly more important as their studies progressed. Thus, when they did poorly on their exams or other assignments, they no longer attributed it to their English skills, but rather to other factors, such as difficulty of the content itself or their own lack of effort to study hard.

7.3 Broader Contextual Factors Influencing Students’ Experiences

One of the main emphases of the LS approach and also the Vygotskian sociocultural theory on which it is based is understanding how individuals’ developmental processes relate to “the sociocultural contexts in which they are embedded” (Garrett and Baquedano-Lopez, 2002, p. 339) and knowing that these factors, which “vary considerably from one time and place to another, condition and substantially influence how these processes unfold” (p. 339). In this respect, in examining the
experiences of the students in my study, I also sought to identify and comprehend the broader sociocultural factors in which their lived experiences took place. In particular, by linking their immediate local and personal contexts to the broader contexts of society, I sought to yield a more in-depth understanding of the students’ multiple investments in language and identities.

7.3.1 English Speaking Canada

Although their non-nativeness was no longer a concern in their immediate academic or social settings, all of the students were very aware that, as long as they were living in Canada, an English dominant country, their English proficiency (including their non-nativeness) was, is, and would continue to be, an undeniable factor influencing their lives. For example, as described in previous chapters, Mike and Yuri anticipated that their English skills would be an integral part of their future profession within mainstream Canadian society, which (positively) affected their current investments in their English language development. For some others (Yellina, Sheila), the same anticipation often created tensions and internal dilemmas as they struggled to negotiate their affiliations between current social and future (imagined) professional communities. In Joon’s case, English was a tool through which he could break the stereotypes that he believed White Anglo-Canadians had of Asians in Vancouver. For Hannah, it was through English that she tried to “unminoritize” herself from the Canadian mainstream, while Gilbert viewed English as a way to promote and assert his Korean identity to Canadian society.

7.3.2 Multicultural Canada and Vancouver

The context of English-speaking Canada was clearly a significant factor behind the students’ investments in English. At the same time, the context of multicultural Canada (Vancouver in particular) presented a unique situation within which the students’ various views of language learning and use were constructed. As noted in Chapter 3, 40%

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93 Although both English and French are the official languages of Canada, issues related to French as a second language were rarely brought up by the students in our discussions. Thus, my use of the term English-speaking Canada is in relation to the students’ perceived view of Canada as an English-speaking nation.
of Vancouver’s population is foreign-born (Statistics Canada, 2006), making it one of the most multicultural and multilingual cities in North America. The students stated that one of the merits of living in a city like Vancouver was that efforts to maintain and celebrate one’s native culture and language were not frowned upon. Thus, in Vancouver, ethnic cultures are displayed all over the city, be it in the form of religious organizations, schools, media outlets or businesses, including those of the Korean community. According to Zhou, Chen, and Cai (2006), sociological views would suggest that ethnic institutions and enclaves could either deter immigrants’ assimilation into the host society through mutual exclusion, or alternately, the ethnic community “despite it’s internal dynamics, contributes to the host society as a whole” (p. 67). The students in my study seemed to fall within the continuum of both approaches, with differing investments in language learning and use as a result. For instance, many of the students stated that, while they were appreciative of having such easy access to Korean culture within the Canadian context, at the same time, this very situation sometimes prevented them from constructing a strong “Canadian” identity:

There are times that I ask myself whether I want to just lean on the Korean community, considering that I will be living in Canada for the rest of my life. I know I have to become a member of the “Canadian” society and have to improve my language and interactions with Canadians. But in Vancouver, if you go to downtown, you don’t really see what Canadian culture is. People are so mixed here, so I wonder, “What is Canadian culture, and what is this ‘Canadian’ society that I have to belong to?” So, I get confused, and sometimes I wonder if I’m having some identity crisis.

(Sheila, I#6, June 27, 2006, K-original)

For some students, the multiculturalism of Canada and the ambiguity of what a Canadian identity is served as additional reasons to invest in their English development. Gilbert, for example, stated that because he felt there was no real separate Canadian identity, he was trying to “fit Korea into Canada because Korea was [his] portion of Canada” (Gilbert, I#7, June 22, 2006, E-original). Yet, again, because English was the

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94 Canada has an official Multiculturalism Act (passed in 1985) which (among others) grants all members of its society the freedom to conserve and maintain, develop, and share their respective cultural heritage and languages (Canadian Heritage, 1988).
medium through which the diverse cultures communicated, his “fitting of Korea” into Canada had to also be done through English. Mike also believed that sophisticated English skills had to be the foundation through which Koreans “carved their own space” (Mike, I#4, January 27, 2005, E-original) among all the diverse cultures in Canada. On the other hand, for some students, such unclear definitions of a Canadian identity seemed to heighten their attachment towards maintaining their Korean language. For instance, Hannah believed that her Korean identity was what made her unique in “a sea of cultures” (Hannah, I#7, June 20, 2006, E-original) in Canada, thus she was very attached to maintaining her Korean language so as to keep what was uniquely hers. She further explained that her aunt in Canada was married to a Chinese man, which she believed influenced half of her aunt’s life to be about Chinese culture and language. For this reason, she said her future spouse had to be Korean because she wanted to maintain 100% of her Korean identity within her home setting. Hannah’s case was rather interesting because, as described in Chapter 5, she emphasized the need for Koreans to stop “minoritizing” themselves from Canadian society. Yet it seemed that, while Hannah did not want to display her Korean identity in the public setting, it was essential for her to maintain it within her home context.

Other students felt an investment in an L3 would be more beneficial within multicultural Canada. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 6, Yuri prioritized improving her Spanish over maintaining her Korean because she felt it had a higher demand in not only Canada, but also around the world. Similarly, Sheila stated that given the demographics of Vancouver where there was a large Chinese population, Chinese would be a far more pragmatic language to invest in than any other immigrant language. She believed that in some business sectors, Chinese skills were even more important than English. And as a result, many of her Korean-Canadian peers who were not confident in English were now learning Chinese to increase their marketability in Vancouver. Finally, Joon took several German courses at PCU to maintain his German language skills acquired as a child because he felt that, in the context of Canada where so many people
were already speaking English and their own mother tongue, bilingualism alone would not be enough to “get ahead of the game” (Joon, I#4, January 19, 2006, E-original).

7.3.3 Transnationalism and Trends in Return Migration

As discussed in Chapter 2, earlier waves of Korean immigrants to North America had primarily working class backgrounds, who immigrated for economic betterment in their host countries. In this respect, return migration was often viewed as “failed migration experience which did not yield the expected [financial] benefits” (Cassarino, 2004, p. 255). The current wave of immigrants, on the other hand, are often equipped with more social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977), and their children’s education (particularly English language development) has become the main reason for emigration. These families are also of a generation who grew up benefiting from the economic prosperities of a developed Korea, unlike the earlier immigrant waves who experienced the aftermath of the Korean War. Thus, in order not to undergo downward socioeconomic mobility, a growing number of families either choose for the gireogi (only one parent migrating) or parachute kids (only the children migrating) options, or some parents decide to return to Korea once the children’s educational goals have been met.95 And as noted in earlier chapters, some of my own participants had gireogi fathers (Hannah and Mike), or parents who reverse migrated after they entered university (Yellina’s parents, Mike’s mother), or who were planning to do so in the future (Sheila).

It was within the above changing trends in migration, in combination with the vagueness of the Canadian identity described in the previous section, that many of the students contemplated possibly moving back to Korea in the future. For instance, Yellina explained in one of our follow-up Web Messenger exchanges that her desire to return to Korea had heightened when her parents moved back to Korea, because she “no longer felt that there was something keeping [her] from leaving Vancouver (Yellina, Web Messenger Exchange, March 27, 2008). Additionally, being surrounded by Korean

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95 This is not to imply that all families of the current immigrant wave who choose return migration do so based on a successful immigration experience. There are still many families who return to their homelands after failing to meet their original migration goals (Iredale, Guo and Rozario, 2003).
culture in Vancouver raised the question of whether she would ever feel Canadian, which only reinforced her plans to return to Korea even more. And as discussed in Chapter 4, Yellina eventually did return to Korea upon graduating from PCU and was preparing to attend graduate school in Seoul.

In Ok and Baek’s (2000) survey of over fifty Korean-American families in the Los Angeles area, over 65% of Generation 1.5 children pointed out the importance of Korean language maintenance due to the possibility of returning to Korea in the future. These findings were also echoed by some of the students in my study. Mike and Sheila stated that although they were certain they wished to remain in Vancouver to achieve their professional goals, when considering their parents who had either already returned or would return to Korea in the future, their future plans became less clear. Thus, while developing their English skills was an absolute priority in light of their future desired careers in Canada, they felt that they could not entirely neglect their Korean skills either because they could not completely rule out the possibility of returning to Korea one day. Similarly, Hannah explained that if she were to offer advice to future Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadians, it would be difficult to tell them which language to focus more on:

Generation 1.5 have the option to go back to Korea these days or even move to a totally different country. And it’s not like old times when they had to stay in their immigrant country forever (…) Everyone’s circumstances are different nowadays.

(Hannah, l#7, June 20, 2006, E-original)

7.3.4 The Status of English in Korea and the World

In his study of immigrant language minority students, Séror (2002) notes the importance of English in one’s native country as a significant factor in determining the learner’s attitudes towards English studies. In a similar vein, the current English boom in Korea was an additional angle through which the participants viewed their English learning and Korean language maintenance. At the time of the interview, Hannah was planning to work in Korea for a few years upon graduating from PCU, where she believed her English skills would be highly valued. Sheila also observed that many of her Korean peers and her own sister were only eager to simply graduate from PCU because “apparently, you can get a job in Korea with any degree from here and decent English
skills” (Sheila, I#6, June 27, 2006, K-original). Such thoughts were similar to those originally possessed by Yellina (discussed in Chapter 4), although she had later realized during one of her visits to Korea that she had had false beliefs. Gilbert echoed Sheila’s views. That is, he felt that precisely because of the English boom in Korea, there would already be too many fluent English-speakers there. Thus, his own English skills would not necessarily be an advantage for his professional advancement. In this respect, he felt it would be wiser for him to stay in Vancouver, where his Korean skills would be more appreciated in his professional context as a family physician for Korean immigrants. Yuri also stated that “there is really nothing special about speaking good English in Korea nowadays, so it doesn’t make sense to go back to Korea for that reason” (Yuri, I#1, September 26, 2005, E-original).

However, while the students had varying views regarding the value of their bilingual skills in Korea, all of the students agreed that in the context of a globalized world, the power of English was undeniable. Consequently, some students considered working in countries where their English skills would serve as an asset. Hannah stated that if a job search in Korea did not work out, she would seek employment in larger cities in China, where she felt English-speaking professionals were highly sought after. Yuri also considered teaching English in South America if her teaching goal in Canada was not met. And while they did not have such concrete plans as Hannah and Yuri, many of the other students viewed their English skills as a benefit or “something to fall back upon” (Joon, I#7, March 18, 2006, E-original), given the importance of English in today’s global society. Yellina, on the other hand, saw English as part of a prerequisite rather than an advantage in competing in a global market, although she did agree with the important role of English within the context of globalization.

7.3.5 Constructing Views of Korea through Internet Sources

In addition to the diverse sources available in Vancouver mentioned earlier, students were able to maintain their sociocultural ties with Korea through a variety of sources available on the internet. Regardless of their intentions to return to Korea in the future, or of which peer group (Koreans or non-Koreans) they were currently socializing
with, most students frequently visited Korean search engines in order to obtain the latest news about Korean society and culture. Some of them did so in order to “fit in” to their conversations with their Korean peers in Vancouver, while others were simply curious to know what the latest news were in Korean society. Many students also kept in touch with their old friends in Korea either through email, Web messenger, or personal blogs. Furthermore, although the frequency varied among each individual student, all of them watched Korean dramas, movies, and other television programs, which were easily accessible on the internet.

While accessing various Korean sources on the internet, the students created various views about Korean culture, society, and its people. For instance, as described in Chapter 4, Yellina created more “fantasies” about Korean university culture as she watched Korean dramas and movies. When she saw pictures and stories of Korean university life on her friends’ blogs, it only increased her desire to go back to Korea. For Sheila, what she saw on the internet reinforced her ideas of Korean university students’ party culture, which influenced her to avoid Korean students altogether when she first entered PCU. Whenever Joon watched Korean dramas and TV programs, he felt contemporary Korean youths were “flaky and flamboyant” (Joon, I#5, February 12, 2005, E-original)--a characteristic he also saw in Korean “FOBs” in Vancouver. He believed today’s Korean youths were too different from traditional Koreans who were “all about helping others and being humble” (Joon, I#5, February 12, 2005, E-original). Consequently, he felt there was less charm to present day Korean society. Yuri and Mike shared similar views with each other and felt that, while Korean society was changing so fast, their lives in Vancouver were moving quite slowly. However, in contrast to Yuri who described feeling “old fashioned” (Yuri, I#2, October 25, 2005, E-original) compared to her peers back in Korea, Mike felt he was more open-minded compared to “Korean youths who [were] obsessed with competing with each other” (Mike, I#4, January 27, 2006, K-original). Gilbert, on the other hand, felt Korea had not changed at all since he left five years ago, and thus he was not interested in returning to Korea in the near future.
7.4 “We are Not a Lost Generation”

The students’ personal histories and lived experiences were shaped within the broader contexts described above as well as their various micro-level contextual factors discussed in Chapters 4 through 6. Thus, it was through this combination and interplay of the macro- and micro-level circumstances that each student constructed and negotiated their perceptions towards and identities as Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadians. As demonstrated in earlier chapters, the processes through which the students’ Generation 1.5 identities were formed were certainly not without struggle, and they involved constant negotiations and renegotiations between competing investments in languages and identities. However, despite the many ups and downs in their personal experiences, all of the students felt a sense of pride and responsibility in their roles as Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadians.

Prior to my last official interview with each student, I asked them to reflect on our overall interview process and to think about the notion of Generation 1.5. I also asked them to read the description of Generation 1.5 that I had taken from a Korean on-line encyclopedia, and then to share their thoughts with me regarding this passage. During our final interview, some students stated that they had never given much thought to the notion of Generation 1.5 before participating in my research, while others said they were able to reevaluate or reinforce their previous thoughts about this generation.

Only Yuri strongly disagreed with the encyclopedia’s description of Generation 1.5 Korean immigrants. She stated that she had never felt like she was caught in between two cultures because she had willingly accepted “the assignment” (Yuri, I#6, June 16

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96 To recapitulate, the definition, as noted in Chapter 2, was as follows: “This term refers to those Korean immigrant youth in the U.S who are neither the first or second generation. They exist between the first and second generation and agonize over the question of ‘Who am I?’ Because they immigrated during their adolescent or pre-teen years, they understand both American and Korean culture and language. However, this term refers to a ‘wandering generation’ because although they are U.S citizens they still perceive themselves as Korean; hence, they are unable to adapt to either American or Korean culture. The first generation is busy making a living. The second generation was born and raised in the U.S and thus identify themselves as American. Therefore, they rarely experience crises as a result of cultural conflicts or linguistic difficulties. On the other hand, Generations 1.5 youth are caught in between two cultures and languages, not knowing what to do” (Tusan Encyclopedia, 2006; my translation).
2006, K-original) that had been given to her for life, which was to develop and balance her bilingual and bicultural identities. She added that someone being a Generation 1.5 immigrant in and of itself did not dictate his/her identity crisis as it “depends on how well a person accepts the circumstances and environment they live in” (Yuri, I#6, June 16 2006, K-original).

On the other hand, the other six students all stated that they partially agreed with the description as they, themselves, had once experienced phases where they were confused about their own cultural identities. However, they all rejected the notion that they were a generation that was somehow stuck in the middle of nowhere. Hannah, Gilbert, and Mike explained that, although it was true that they had undergone periods asking the question of “Who am I,” they had now moved on from that stage in their lives and had accepted and appreciated the uniqueness of their situation of living with two languages and cultures. Joon and Yellina believed that as individuals who had moved from one completely different cultural and linguistic setting to another, it was only natural for Generation 1.5 youth to experience identity confusions. Joon compared Generation 1.5 youth’s identity crises to puberty, where one underwent an awkward period in his/her life as part of maturing into an adult. In this respect, Joon believed that going through a period of identity confusion was also part of the 1.5 generation’s process of growing into a mature individual. On the other hand, Yellina believed that her search for self-discovery would be a life-long process. During many of our personal correspondence after the official interview process, Yellina admitted that there were days when she was completely accepting of her bicultural identity whereas there were other times when she became confused again. However, while such vacillations resulted in occasional frustrations, she had accepted it as part of her Generation 1.5 journey, and tried not to let it affect her everyday life. In contrast to the others, Sheila stated that being confused about one’s identity was not limited to Generation 1.5 immigrant groups as depicted in the passage. Thus, although she agreed that Generation 1.5 youth may go through a period of identity-questioning, “the second generation are also not free of
identity crises because they have their own set of issues and burdens that they have to deal with” (Sheila, I#6, June 27, 2006, E-original).

7.5 “We are a Pioneer Generation”

Regardless of their views towards Generation 1.5 immigrants’ identity crises/confusions, all of the students felt that there were several important roles that current Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian young adults like themselves needed to play. First, because they experienced lives in both Korea and in Canada, they believed the 1.5 generation should utilize their bicultural knowledge and bilingual skills to narrow the gap between the more traditional and conservative first generation and the more “Westernized” second generation of Korean-Canadians. Second, also taking advantage of their bicultural and bilingual backgrounds, they should strive to act as a bridge between the Korean community and the broader Canadian society. Finally, they should make the effort to serve as role models for future Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian youth.

Of the above three roles setting a good example for future Korean youth was particularly important to many students, given the relatively short immigration history of Koreans in Canada. Many students compared the situation of Canada to that of the United States where there was a longer history of Korean-American immigrants. In particular, they pointed out the lack of Korean-Canadians in the media who could serve as possible role models for young Korean-Canadians. In contrast, they believed that there were a growing number of Korean-Americans who were making a mark in various fields such as politics, business, education, and entertainment. This, they felt, was a result of the efforts of previous generations of Korean-Americans who worked hard to “allow life to be a little easier” (Joon, I#2, November 15, 2005, E-original) for subsequent generations. In this respect, the students believed that they were now the generation of Korean-Canadians who had the responsibility to play a pioneering role so as to “be the resource person that young Koreans can go to in order to help them succeed” (Yellina, I7#, June 17, 2006, K-original) and to “build an infrastructure to help future Korean-Canadians to open a bright future” (Mike, I#6, June 21, 2006, E-original). At the time of the study, many of the students were in contact with younger Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadians as
tutors or Bible study class teachers, and thus strove to be positive role models to their own students.

7.6 Describing Generation 1.5 in their Own Words

At the outset of this study, one of my main goals was to allow Generation 1.5 students themselves to describe their own views and understandings of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian immigrant youths. Thus, below I provide descriptions of Generation 1.5 youth produced by each individual student. I believe each student’s understanding of this generation was acquired within and through the contexts of their everyday lives and was also a reflection of their many identities that came into play:

Yellina: Generation 1.5 is a generation that is so unique. The fact that we were born and raised in one country for a relatively long time then moved to a completely different environment says a lot about the generation. We are a generation of potential. I’m sure there will be some problems with the generation, but there are also many promises to the generation as well. There are times when I ask myself, “How do I avoid being in the middle?” which is something that only time will help figure out. But there is no one unified trait of being a Generation 1.5, so in the future the label of Generation 1.5 might become less important as people will become so diverse and have so many different experiences.

(Sheila, I#6, June 27, 2007, K-original)

Hannah: I think the definition of Generation 1.5 is continuously evolving because the situations surrounding people change with time. For example, when I first came here, there weren’t as many Koreans in Vancouver, but the kids who
immigrate these days are surrounded by other Korean friends in their schools. The fact that there are more Korean peers in schools can be good that they are around people from the same culture, so they don’t have to feel so different. But at the same time, I think they are out-casting themselves from other Canadians. So, I think the important thing for Generation 1.5 is to remember that even [though] individual situations might be different, we have to focus on being both and not neither. Don’t give up on being Korean or Canadian. Be real and accept that you are both Korean and Canadian.

(Hannah, I#7, June 20, 2006, E-original)

Joon: I think Generation 1.5 could generally refer to people who immigrated to Canada before puberty. And since one’s identity is formed during adolescence, immigration at that age understandably leads to confusion of national belonging. But that’s just a general definition and not all people fit into that, including myself. I was born and raised in Germany, so I never had a strong Korean identity, so I never felt like I was caught in between two cultures. People today have different experiences, so their identity struggle could be between any two or more cultures and not just between, say, Korean and Canadian culture.

(Joon, I#8, June 14, 2006, E-original)

Mike: I want to borrow the words of Gloria Anzaldua, a feminist who believes in a rather unique ideology, who wrote, “I am cultureless because, as a feminist, I challenge collective cultural/religious male derived beliefs of Indo-Hispanic and Anglos; yet I am cultured because I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet.” I read this in a political science class about 2 years ago and at the instant I read [it], I could never forget it. Perhaps, because I thought this is my way to succeed in this new country. Generation 1.5 must accept the facts and try to realize the benefits of being a generation in between.

(Mike, Email Correspondence, June 23, 2006, E-original)

Yuri: I think Generation 1.5 is a bridge generation between the first and second. We moved to a country that we were not born in and have acquired the culture and language in a way that is different from the first and second generation of immigrants. We are not a generation that is lost, at least not those around me, because we are all hard-working individuals trying to find our way in the world. We are continuously seeking, but that doesn’t mean we are a lost generation. We are a pioneering generation.

(Yuri, I#6, June 16, 2006, K-original)
Gilbert: Generation 1.5 immigrants are those that immigrate to Canada at a young age, who are fluent in both Korean and either English or French. They have a pretty strong idea of what Korea is, and are also open to the idea of new ideas in Canada, but not enough because they didn’t grow up in Canada as a child and they didn’t mature in Korea. So, they have a hybrid of different stages of their lives. So, growing through these different stages, they struggle about which culture they should belong to but they should realize that they can be both and not one over the other.

(Gilbert, I#7, June 22, 2006, E-original)

The above descriptions demonstrate how the students in this study viewed Generation 1.5 youth as individuals who were capable of possessing bilingual and bicultural abilities rather than as those caught between two worlds. However, the students also acknowledged that in the process of developing themselves as bilingual and bicultural individuals, there will inevitably be struggles and challenges along the way. Nonetheless, instead of being discouraged by these hurdles, the students seemed to have accepted them as part of their journeys of becoming Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadians. Thus, the students viewed today’s Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian youth, including themselves, as a generation of promise and possibilities and a generation who can be both instead of either.

7.7 Discussion and Summary

In this chapter, I described some of the major themes that emerged across all seven of the students’ cases by performing a cross-case analysis. First, I examined the students’ views about being a NNS of English, and how this had affected their academic and sociocultural experiences in their Canadian high schools and at PCU. In particular, I looked at how the students’ self-perceived disadvantages as NNSs influenced their expectations and attitudes towards first-year English courses at university. I also provided insights from the instructors who were teaching (or have taught) those courses at the time of my data collection process. In the second part of the chapter, I discussed the broader contextual factors that influenced the students’ identities and language learning experiences, including the context of English-speaking and multicultural Canada, transnationalism/return migration, technological advancements, and the English boom in Korea. I also explored the students’ perceptions regarding the identity confusions that
some Generation 1.5 youths experience. Finally, I discussed the students’ views of their roles as Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadians and provided descriptions of this generation told in the students’ own words.

The students’ perceptions of their NNS status point to the notion of the *ownership of English*, which has produced much-heated debate in the field of applied linguistics, particularly with the spread of English as a global language (Heyhoe & Parker, 1994; Norton, 1997; Pennycook, 1994, 1998; Widdowson, 1994). According to Wee (2002), there are two main schools of thought regarding who can claim possession of the English language. *Purists* suggest that only NSs of English truly own the language and are the “the only true and reliable source of language data” (Ferguson, 1983, p. vii, cited in Davies, 2004). On the other hand, *pragmatists* dispute this argument by asserting that today, there are more non-native English speakers than there are native, resulting in a variety of Englishes around the world (Jenkins, 2000; Kachru, 1986). In this respect, *pragmatists* argue that NSs should no longer be the only standard or the sole owners of the English language (Braine, 1999; Davis, 2004; Heyhoe & Parker, 1994).\(^{97}\) However, despite the arguments put forth by the pragmatic school, many NNSs still look to NSs as their linguistic models, and the intimidation they feel by NS norms results in a lack of confidence in their own linguistic skills (Jenkins, 2000; Kramsch, 1993, Kramsch & Lam, 1999).

The students in my study also seemed to hold a purist and essentialist view of the NS, as they often spoke of how they were disadvantaged compared to those who were born into the English-speaking culture. Consequently, they sometimes lacked confidence in their own linguistic skills and felt intimidated when interacting with their NS peers and/or professors. As earlier discussed, this lack of confidence led to their avoidance of certain courses at university, which the students felt required NS-level English skills. Furthermore, they particularly held fatalistic views towards their performances in first-

\(^{97}\) In addition to these perspectives, the notion of *world Englishes* should also be taken into account when considering the ownership of English. *World Englishes* include the varieties of national/regional Englishes spoken by NSs as well as English spoken as a lingua franca in various regions around the world (Bolton, 2004).
year English courses. While interviews with English course instructors revealed that there was not much significant difference between NS and NNS students’ performance levels, the students in my study clearly believed otherwise.

The fact that the students, for whom high academic achievement and improvement in English was an undeniable goal, had such negative expectations of their own performances in their English courses is quite alarming. Although NS students may also feel the same way about university English courses, it seemed the participants in this study believed that they were the only ones who felt that way precisely because of their non-nativeness. This echoes the findings of Chiang and Schmida’s (1999) study of Asian-American university students, where some students’ self-perceived lack of ownership of English as NNSs discouraged them from making the effort to improve their written English skills. However, while my participants may have viewed themselves disadvantaged in English courses simply because they were not born into an English speaking culture, there appeared to be other factors that also affected the students’ lack of ownership of English. Leung, Harris, and Rampton (1997) assert that TESOL practices have conventionally assumed that ethnic majority students possess NS expertise, while ethnic minority students are beginners/novices of English with expertise in and affiliation with their L1. Such views have been echoed by several other studies (e.g., Miller, 2000; Orellana, 1994) that point to the role of race and ethnicity in deciding one’s legitimacy as English language speakers. The students in my study also seemed to possess this view, as their description of NSs was almost always limited to White Anglo-Canadians. Therefore, not only did the students view English as an inherent skill based on one’s NS/NNS status, but they also seemed to have internalized the belief that only White Anglo-Canadians were considered NSs of English. Consequently, they perceived themselves incapable of ever owning the English language.

In addition, the students’ interactions with their Korean peers/sŏnbaes, as well as encounters with some instructors during the beginning of university, made them feel even more self-conscious of their non-nativeness. That is, because such peers/sŏnbaes and instructors discouraged the students from taking certain classes precisely because they
were NNSs, it became a direct cause in their loss of confidence in their ability to perform well in linguistically demanding classes. As Chiang and Schmida (1999) assert, “the educational society expects [the learners] to make ESL mistakes; they are expected to stumble over the English language for it is not their native tongue” (p. 93). Most of my participants also seemed to have accepted this view, which further reinforced their lack of ownership of English.

Roberge (2002) notes that immigrant students are sometimes face with completely different learning environments between high school and university. That is, while “K-12 schools are characterized by an abundance of support services . . . post-secondary schools are characterized by an abundance of gate-keeping mechanisms” (p. 118). Some of the participants in the study seemed to have also experienced such discrepancies between the two academic settings. Thus, while they were socialized into one set of (discouraging) assumptions in university with regard to their being NNSs, it seemed their high school teachers socialized them into another set of beliefs and expectations. As noted earlier, because of the difficulties they experienced with English, many of the students were often offered extra assistance by their teachers. Yet, without devaluing the enormous value of the teachers’ extra help on the students’ overall academic achievement, it is also worth contemplating whether such generosity may have been more than just the result of the teachers’ care and thoughtfulness. For instance, several studies have reported on how ESL students are sometimes being rewarded for their effort rather than for their actual academic performance (e.g., Kanno & Applebaum, 1995; Klesmer, 1994; Lay, Carro, Tien, Neimann & Leong, 1999; Vollmer, 2000). Roessingh and Kover’s (2002) study, for example, reveal that there was a significant gap between Canadian secondary ESL students’ provincial exam marks and school-based marks, suggesting that students were more generously graded by their teachers at school. Most of the students in this study also stated that they appreciated how many of their high school teachers generously recognized their efforts, overlooking their linguistic shortcomings, especially in their written work. As previously noted, Yellina explained that one of her teachers even specifically told her she would be less strict with grading her work. Such experiences
raises the question of whether the students’ teachers possibly associated their efforts with a lack of linguistic and academic abilities, as was the case in Harklau’s (2000) study. Thus, although generous marking can be viewed more positively compared to penalizing students for their lack of English proficiency, rewarding students on effort alone may be a sign of teachers’ underestimation of students’ actual academic capability.\(^{98}\) In addition, the students’ teachers may have also been affected by the so-called “model minority” stereotype of the ‘science whiz’ Asian student. That is, because Asian students are often expected to excel in math and science subjects (as was indeed the case of several of my participants), they are excused when they do not perform well in other subjects that require extensive writing (Chiang & Schmida, 1999).

Whether or not the teachers were actually influenced by the above views, the outcome of their generous help seemed to have influenced the students’ beliefs in high school that being a NNS would not necessarily impede one’s overall academic achievement. Yet, this belief was quickly shattered upon entering university, as they encountered new socializing agents that influenced them to formulate a new belief that their NNS status would directly affect their academic performance. The experiences of the participants are in line with various studies that have documented the disconnect between the learning environments and academic expectations ESL students experience in high school and university (e.g., Lay et al., 1999; Harklau, 2000; Leki, 1999); between ESL and mainstream classes in high school (e.g., Harklau, 1994; Reeves, 2002; Seo, 2007); and between EAP and other courses in university (e.g., Leki & Carson, 1994, 1997). This also points to the notion of \textit{continuity and discontinuity} and \textit{ideological considerations} discussed by Baquendano-Lopez and Kattan (2008) in that the students were socialized into one set of practices and ideologies through their teachers in high school, which conflicted with those they were socialized into during their initial experiences in university.

\(^{98}\) This is not to imply that all of the students’ teachers graded the students’ works based solely on their efforts. Their teachers may have placed more emphasis on the content (e.g., ideas, arguments) of the students’ works rather than focusing on their language errors.
By the time of our interview, many students were well into their second to fourth years of university and had developed a new set of ideas regarding the relationship between their linguistic skills and academic achievement. That is, while English was still seen as very important in their studies, it was their content knowledge and not necessarily their non-nativeness that was deemed more important in their academic performance. However, by this time, most students were trying to develop their English skills in anticipation of its importance in their interactions and/or competition with NSs in their future professions. This, I believe, signifies the continuous evolution of one’s views of and investments in language learning and use, as the contexts of their lived experiences (and the socializing agents within them) also evolve over time and space.

I now move on to a discussion of the broader contextual factors in which the students’ experiences were embedded. The experiences of the students took place within Canada, a society in which English was one of the official languages, and where multiculturalism was encouraged, if not celebrated. Additionally, they were situated in the context of Vancouver, where there was easy access to numerous Korean organizations and communities. They were also living in a period of time where the English language occupied a prestigious status in their native country, Korea, as well as around the world. Furthermore, the students were from a generation of Koreans who were born into a society that was already socioeconomicly developed, and who grew up with a variety of technological advancements, including the internet. Finally, they belonged to a wave of Korean immigrants who, equipped with relatively more sociocultural capital, were able to migrate back to their home country with less fear towards the stigma of “failed immigrant” being attached to them. However, while these contextual factors both individually and collectively had an impact on the students’ experiences, the degree to which each separate factor affected the individual student wavered during different points in time and space. The fact that the students’ experiences took place under similar overarching contexts may point to the homogeneity of this group. However, the investments in languages and identities that were created within these circumstances, and
the ways in which they were manifested in the students’ everyday practices, varied significantly, indicating that in many ways, the students were anything but homogenous.

Regardless, it is in relation to such larger contextual factors that the students’ past, present, and future (imagined) experiences should be understood. That is, it was within these broader contextual circumstances that the students set their personal goals, sometimes achieving success, while other times encountering disappointments, struggles, or failures along the way, which would require them to reevaluate and reset their original goals. It was also in these contexts that the students were socialized into creating various ideologies towards and investments in language learning and use, which sometimes resulted in tensions between their affiliations with and allegiances to multiple L1 and L2 communities.

Finally, it was within such a historical framework of the students’ particular time and place that they created, reevaluated, and renegotiated their multiple identities, and that they developed a sense of who they were as present-day Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian youth. Despite the numerous ups and downs that they experienced since their arrival in Canada, the students still took pride in their role as Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian young adults and saw themselves as the pioneer group for future Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadians. In this respect, while they may have been sometimes perceived as “novices” in the English speaking world or as “trainees” in their academic and future professional communities, they were becoming “experts” (Duff, 2003) in their own right of what it meant to be a present-day Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian.

As many of the students themselves stated, it is difficult to define today’s Generation 1.5 youth by a set of essentialized character traits due to the wide range of experiences of these youth, embedded in a variety of circumstances within their local and global contexts. In this respect, the list of contextual factors described above is by no means exhaustive. As Duff (2008b) asserts, individuals may experience life-wide or life-long processes of socialization with their “movement into new educational, vocational, professional, and other settings, and into the cultures, language and literacy practices, identities, and stances instilled there” (p. 257). Thus, as the students in this study find
themselves in a wider range of local and global settings and circumstances in the future, they may yet again be socialized into a new set of beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies, thus adding more layers and complexities to their already dynamic, unstable, multi-directional, multi-cultural/lingual and life-long process of language socialization. Figure 7.1 summarizes the students’ experiences in relation to their immediate personal and broader sociocultural contextual factors.

In the following final chapter, I will include a summary of the major findings of the study and discuss contributions and implications for theory, pedagogy, and future research.
Figure 7.1 Contextual Factors Influencing Students’ Experiences
Chapter 8
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I summarize the findings of the study as they relate to the three research questions guiding my inquiry. I then discuss the theoretical contributions of the study to research on LS, language and identity, and on Generation 1.5-related studies in the applied linguistics literature. I also describe implications of the study on policy and pedagogy, and address the limitations of the study. Finally, based on the findings and limitations of the study, I make suggestions for future research.

8.2 Summary of Findings

This study investigated the experiences of seven Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students in Vancouver, Canada. The study was guided by three research questions: 1) What are the contextual factors that shape the language socialization processes and outcomes of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students?; 2) How do such contextual factors influence the students’ investments in their identities and language learning and use, and how are these investments manifested in their everyday lived experiences?; 3) To what extent do the perspectives and experiences of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students help to refine and extend current conceptions of Generation 1.5 language learners? Thus, in this section, I discuss the findings of the study as they related to the above three research questions.

In answering the first research question, I sought to investigate both the macro- and micro-level contextual factors that influenced the experiences of my seven research participants. On a broader contextual level, the data suggest that the students’ experiences were embedded within many of the sociocultural, historical, political, and economical circumstances that characterized today’s world. First, the students’ experiences were situated within a globalized world, where transnationalism has become widespread and where the English language has established itself as the language of global communication. Additionally, the students belonged to a generation of Koreans who
grew up in a Korea that has emerged as a key player in Asia-Pacific politics and economics. Consequently, they also belonged to a newer wave of immigrants to Canada, who generally possessed much more social capital and increased options to return to their homeland than their predecessors. Upon migrating to Canada, the students’ experiences were located within an English-speaking and multicultural society, where diverse ethnic communities were able to maintain their cultural heritage and language. Moreover, the students’ experiences were part of a short history of Korean immigration to Canada, relative to some other immigrant communities in Canada as well as to the Korean community in the United States. The students were also placed in a technologically advanced world, where immigrants had easy access to their homeland cultures at the click of a button, which again had not been an option for previous generations of immigrant communities. Finally, religion, ethnic minority status, and patriotism were also added layers affecting the experiences of some of the students.

Within the above macro-level circumstances, I further examined the various micro-level contextual factors that shaped the students’ experiences. The data indicate that among these factors, the students’ status as NNSs was one of the most crucial elements affecting their experiences in Canada. In addition, the students’ experiences were particularly influenced by their past, present, and future (imagined) interactions with other Koreans, be it with other Generation 1.5 Korean peers/sŏnbaes in Canada or elsewhere (e.g., the United States and Korea), first and second generation Korean-Canadians, their peers back in Korea or Korean international students in Vancouver. Their goals (social, academic, professional) as well as their roles within their families and other extracurricular activities were also important factors influencing the students’ experiences. Moreover, interactions (real or anticipated) with NSs, including past and present peers, teachers, and professors as well as future (imagined) colleagues, also affected their experiences. Furthermore, for some students, observations of successful Korean-Canadians/Americans and Asian-Canadians, and training within their respective academic/professional disciplines, were also significant elements affecting their experiences.
Having examined the contextual factors affecting the participants’ personal histories and lived experiences, I have addressed the second research question which investigates how these factors affected their investments in languages and identities, and how such investments were manifested in their everyday lives. The findings reveal that the students shaped their perceptions/ideologies about and investments in their L1, L2 and sometimes their L3 through the interplay of the immediate/local and broader/global contextual circumstances in their past, present and (imagined) future. This, in turn, affected the linguistic, academic and sociocultural choices and practices of their everyday lives. Sometimes these choices and practices caused internal and external struggles, conflicts, and tensions, and consequently, the students often needed to negotiate among their various personal goals/desires/investments, affiliations with (real or imagined) and allegiances to their diverse linguistic and social communities. In doing so, the students drew on their various identities to prioritize one investment over another, yet this again did not indicate that the process of negotiation was always peaceful and smooth. Rather, the data demonstrate that the students were involved in constant negotiation and renegotiation between the multiple investments and (sometimes conflicting) identities of their past, present and imagined future, which often required reevaluations, adjustments, and sometimes total abandonment of their current perceptions, ideologies, and practices.

Finally, the third research question sought to understand how the experiences of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students could help refine and extend current conceptions of Generation 1.5 language learners. The data indicates that given the diverse contextual factors affecting today’s Generation 1.5 students’ experiences, the language learning goals and needs of these students may also be just as varied. For instance, based on their various circumstances, the students also differed in the level of English they wished to acquire, the reasons for wanting to develop their English skills (or not), and in what context they expected to use English, among others. Furthermore, the students also differed in the importance they placed on developing their L2 and L3 skills and on maintaining their L1 skills. Therefore, findings of this study suggest that an essentialized view of Generation 1.5 students’ backgrounds and linguistic goals does not reflect the
complex and diverse experiences of this group. Moreover, the characteristics of Generation 1.5 youth described by earlier waves of immigrants and by outside observers (e.g., Koreans in Korea) do not necessarily mirror the experiences of present-day Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian young adults. For example, while previous descriptions of Generation 1.5 youth often depicted them as a lost generation who belonged in *neither* world, most of the participants in my study believed they were a pioneer generation navigating their way in *both* worlds, necessitating a reexamination of previous constructs of Generation 1.5 youths.

### 8.3 Contributions to Theory

#### 8.3.1 Language Socialization

One of the perspectives guiding this study was the LS approach. As noted in Chapter 4, Baquendano-Lopez and Kattan (2008) suggest that the notion of *continuity and discontinuity* and *ideological considerations* are two of the three major issues in LS studies in educational research. This study contributes to the discussion of *continuity and discontinuity* in LS research (e.g., Bernstein, 1974; Duff et al., 2002; Heath, 1983; Moore, 1999; Nielsen, 2002) by demonstrating the discontinuity between the socialization practices encouraged between several of the students’ contextual domains. For example, Yellina’s and Sheila’s (Chapter 4) experiences exhibited a disconnection between the practices taught within their Korean peer groups (in high school and university) and the practices required to realize their future possibilities. In Chapter 5, the findings demonstrated how the socialization practices of the students’ peer Korean “FOB” community conflicted with those encouraged within Hannah’s “Canadian” community, Mike’s perceived “traditional” Korean community, and Joon’s perceived “real world” community. My discussion of the students’ NNS status in relation to their academic achievements in high school and university (Chapter 7) also points to the discontinuity of practices encouraged by their different socializing agents in these two different contexts (i.e., teachers in highs school, Korean peers/sŏnbaes and instructors in university).

By exemplifying the different (and sometimes conflicting) socialization practices within the students’ diverse contexts, this study also contributes to the discussion of the
above-mentioned ideological considerations in LS research (e.g., Duff, 1995, 1997; He, 2003; Jeon, 2001, 2007; Lo, 2004; Talmy, 2005, 2008). For instance, the data suggest that many of the participants’ investments in English (and relative lack of interest in maintaining their L1) were based on their ideologies of what it meant to maintain a strong Korean identity as well as to be a committed member of the Korean-Canadian and/or Asian-Canadian communities. Such beliefs were formulated through and within a variety of micro- and macro-level contextual factors, including the contexts of English-speaking and multicultural Canada and the students’ interactions with and/or observations of successful members or public figures in the Korean/Asian-Canadian and Korean-American communities. This view conflicted with those of some of their Korean peers who fostered the belief that the use of English was an act of betrayal of one’s Korean identity, and reaching out to non-Koreans was a reflection of trying to be “White.” Such findings also dispute some studies which suggest that “a strong L1 identity is one of the most critical factors conducive to L1 maintenance” (Guardado, 2008, p. 241, see also Schecter & Bayley, 1997).

In addition to illustrating the conflicting ideologies among the participants and some of their peer communities, findings of the study also revealed the different ideologies among the participants themselves (e.g., perceptions of the role of English in Korea and today’s globalized world, which were reflected in their different investments in their L1, L2, and L3). Therefore, this study also suggests how even among a seemingly homogenous group of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian youths (similar in age, time of immigration, academic achievement, professional ambitions, socioeconomic status), their everyday linguistic and sociocultural practices could differ based on the different sets of linguistic ideologies they were socialized into within their various immediate and broader contextual settings (and the socializing agents within them).

While contributing to the discussions on continuity and discontinuity and ideological considerations involved in LS educational research, I believe this study exemplifies the complex nature of language socialization in bi/multilingual settings well, in particular, ways in which “people are concurrently negotiating and maintaining
memberships and identities in many different communities, in their L1, L2, and even their L3 or a mixture of these at any given time” (Duff, 2003, p. 337). In following the trajectories of their past, present, and imagined future, this study illustrates the frequent vacillations that the students experienced with regard to their linguistic choices and social affiliations (as well as the positionings that occurred as a result). Thus, often pulled from-and in--multiple directions at the same time, rather than a relatively linear and stable path of language socialization, the students steered their ways on a winding road, sometimes experiencing intense dilemmas and agony along the way.

Contemporary works on LS (e.g., Duff, 2003, 2007, 2008; Morita, 2002; Zappa, 2007) have pointed to the highly contested and complicated process of language socialization, where learners are situated in potentially unwelcoming contexts with “experts” or “old timers” who are not as accommodating or helpful as traditional LS approaches have often assumed. The findings of my study also confirm this view as the participants sometimes encountered gate-keeping practices by members of their target language group (e.g., NS peers, university instructors). However, while it is true that professors, teachers, and NSs peers did serve as “experts” in some of the students’ target communities (e.g., “Canadian” society, future professional community), this traditional notion of the “expert” was not reflected in many other contexts. For example, Generation 1.5 Korean peers/sŏnbaes or other “successful” Asian immigrant peers also played crucial roles as “experts” or “oldtimers” that influenced the participants’ socialization processes. Here, it is important and interesting to note that while these Korean peers often served as enablers for the students in this study (e.g., socializing them into aspects of L1 identity) sometimes these very same peers also functioned as gate-keepers; preventing the students from integrating more into English-speaking social and/or academic networks. And now, the students themselves were becoming such “experts” as they mentored/socialized younger Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian students. Moreover, in Joon’s example (Chapter 5), the putative role of “expert” and “novice” became reversed during his initial interactions with the Korean “FOB” group in high school. Thus, the
findings of this study demonstrate the multiple complexities, including contingency and bi/multidirectionality, involved in language socialization.

8.3.2 Language and Identity

This study was also guided by the perspectives of language and identity. In particular, I drew on Norton’s (2000) notion of investment, which suggests that an investment in language is ultimately an investment in one’s identity. The findings of my study support this view as the students constantly drew on their various identities in order to negotiate among their multiple and often conflicting investments in their L1, L2, and sometimes their L3. In doing so, the students drew not only on the identities of their present communities but also those of their past (e.g., top student in Korea) and future imagined communities (e.g., future professional/academic communities), corroborating the findings of other studies that have incorporated this notion of imagined communities in their investigation of language learners’ investments and identities (e.g., Blackledge, 2003; Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2001; Norton & Gao, 2008; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). And within the context of today’s ever-changing world, the imagined communities of the participants in my study expanded far beyond their immediate geographical location (Dagenais, 2003); an option that had perhaps not been afforded to previous generations of immigrant language learners. As Morita (2002) notes, although not always successful, the process of constructing situated identities grants the learner the human agency to “attempt to (re)position themselves in a new community in order to fulfill their goals and desires” (p.184).

One important aspect of imagined communities revealed through this study was the imagined community envisioned for the students by their teachers/instructors. Kanno’s (2003) study suggests the extent to which institutions’ imagined community for its students could impact the students’ future educational and professional paths. In a similar vein, findings from this study illustrated how teachers’/instructors’ imagined possibilities for the students could impact the students’ educational and professional choices. For example, in Chapter 4, Yellina’s high school English teacher encouraged her to major in English in university with the belief that Yellina’s bilingual skills would
enable her to be more creative in her writing. On the other hand, one of her instructors in university discouraged students from taking the course if they were NNSs (although, perhaps, with no mal-intent), which led to Yellina’s dropping the course. Thus, the difference between these two educators lay in their perceptions towards students like Yellina as bilingual individuals with potential and promise or as monolingual NNSs with academic and linguistic limitations. Hence, the findings of this study point to the significant impact educators’ imagined possibilities for the students could have on the construction of the students’ current and future imagined identities. (A more detailed discussion of this topic follows in the pedagogical implications section of this chapter.) Therefore, within the multifarious ways that the students’ identities were being constructed, negotiated, and reconstructed across time and space, so too were their investments in languages as they were manifested through the linguistic and sociocultural practices of their everyday lives.

Many studies on language and identity have rejected a simplistic, essentialist view of identity and have suggested it to be “complex, contradictory, and multifaceted” (Norton, 1997, p. 419). This study corroborates such conceptions of identity while illustrating the processes through which the seven students navigated their ways as Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian youth. That is, within their journeys of becoming Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadians the individual students ascribed various meanings to their understandings of a Korean, Korean-Canadian, and Canadian identity, affected by multiple dimensions such as sociocultural environments, sociopolitical interests, and transnational experiences. And such dimensions were created within the particular times and places in history that the students in this study were situated in. In this respect, this study suggests that a Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian identity, and further a Generation 1.5 immigrant youth identity, is also not one that is static or homogeneous but rather one that is dynamic and fluid, (co)constructed and re(negotiated) under the “play of history, culture, place and power, rather than simple transmission of essentialized past or tradition” (Lowe, 1996, p. 64).
8.3.3 Studies on Generation 1.5 Students in Applied Linguistics

Although the late 1990s saw an increased number of applied linguistics studies on Generation 1.5 students, there is still a lack of studies on this population in the research literature, which Talmy (2005) attributes to the marginalized status of ESL in second language education research. Within this still-growing body of literature, those looking at Generation 1.5 students’ experiences within the post-secondary context have been limited to investigations within ESL, academic writing, or composition classes (e.g., Nye, 2006; Oudenhoven, 2006; Singhal, 2004; Stegemoller, 2004). And with the important exception of Roberge (2001), these studies on Generation 1.5 post-secondary students have focused mainly on placement issues and pedagogical practices (although these are very real and important concerns), without connecting them to broader institutional and/or social contextual factors that may affect the students’ overall learning experiences. Thus, this study contributes to the applied linguistics literature on Generation 1.5 students in several ways.

First, this study steps away from examining the students’ language learning experiences within the context of ESL/writing/composition programs. Rather, it investigates the students’ language learning and use within the broader academic and social contexts in which their experiences take place. In addition, this study explores both the micro-level and macro-level contextual factors influencing the students’ language learning and use. In doing so, the study draws on research from not only the field of applied linguistics, but also from sociology and migration/ethnic studies. Roberge (2002) asserts that educational research on Generation 1.5 immigrant students must begin to incorporate the insights from other disciplines like sociology and immigrant studies in order to “understand immigrant students’ successes and failures during their long-term K-college learning trajectory” (p. 124). In this respect, I believe this study yields a more holistic and in-depth understanding of Generation 1.5 students’ experiences of language learning and use by drawing on works from various disciplines. It is this broader and deeper understanding of Generation 1.5 students’ experiences that helps expand conceptions of today’s Generation 1.5 language learners, whose experiences (and related
goals and needs) may be considerably different from those of previous generation of immigrants.

This study is also important in that it is the first study that I am aware of that examines Generation 1.5 university students’ language learning experiences within the Canadian context. Thus far, most published works investigating this population were situated within the United States. While many similarities exist between the Canadian and American educational systems (as is evidenced by the frequently used term “North American” academic culture), it is important to taken into account the different societal factors in which these systems exist and how they might affect the students’ educational experiences. For example, although each country has seen a tremendous increase in immigrant minority students in its schools, Asian immigrants (particularly Chinese) are the most rapidly increasing immigrant group in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006), while the Hispanic population is the largest minority group in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). As Yu (2007) notes, “for every similarity are a host of differences, and it is out of these telling differences that we might glimpse what the different histories that developed north and south of the 49th parallel can teach us” (p. xvi). Therefore, by examining Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian students, this study yields an understanding of the students’ experiences that are possibly unique to the Canadian context.

8.4 Implications

8.4.1 Policy

A frequent theme that emerged throughout this study was how some of the students chose not to socialize with their Korean peers in order to improve their English while others chose to remain in their Korean peer groups despite the pressure to use Korean exclusively, particularly during their high school years. By making such choices, the students often risked the possibility of either being positioned as a “FOB”/“too

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99 In her 2005 study, Park looks at the cultural identity formation of Korean-Canadian immigrant youth. However, her study does not focus on Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students (although they are among her research participants). And while language is one of the issues she touches upon, her study more broadly examines matters pertaining to multicultural education in Canada.
Korean”/ “traitor” or a “banana”/“too Canadian”/ “White-washed.” In describing her experiences, Hannah said:

My school was really multicultural (...) my school building was shaped like a rotunda, but we had four corners where there was different ethnic group in each corner. We had the Caucasian/banana corner, East Indian Corner, multicultural corner, and then the Asian Corner.

(Hannah, I#1, September 25, 2005, E-original)

Hannah’s comment seemed to contain a contradiction between multiculturalism or inclusion, on the one hand, and ethnic segregation, on the other, which I believe raises the important question of ‘What type of multiculturalism is Canadian society and its schools promoting for its youth?’

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act “recognizes and promotes the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future (Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1990, p. 13). Thus, in theory, the Act encourages the nurturing and retaining of diverse ethnic cultures as part of creating a “Canadian” heritage and identity, thus taking on mosaic approach to multiculturalism (Aoki, 1993). However, according to Bannerji (2001), this approach has often been manifested in superficial celebrations of ethnic foods and customs, and in essence has dichotomized Canadian society into “Canadian” and “ethnic” cultures, resulting in the “othering” of ethnic communities. This is particularly true of Asian ethnic minorities in Canada, who are often seen as forever foreigners, even those Chinese families who have been in Canada for more than three generations (Fung, 1994). As a result, immigrants are often forced to choose between the dominant Anglicized cultural identity and those of their own native cultures (Tse, 1999). And for many immigrants, including the participants in this study, choosing to enter the dominant Canadian cultural community often necessitates the abandonment of their heritage language. As Guardado (2008) argues, although Canada’s Multiculturalism Act works within a “bilingual framework,” the framework “seems to be fully supported only if it is French-English bilingualism . . .
that official multiculturalism should also be understood as multilingualism . . . does not seem to be of enough concern to those in positions of influence” (p. 251).

Jedwab (2002) asserts that today’s immigrant youth will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Canadian society, yet not enough attention has been paid to the risk of these youths growing up in a society that ascribes an “othered” identity to them. In this respect, it is necessary to reexamine the ways in which multicultural policies have been interpreted and applied within educational settings, and how such applications have shaped the positionings and identities of today’s immigrant youth. An important step to take in this process would be the incorporation of students’ diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the actual educational practices of the schools. For instance, in the case of Sweden, where 8.9% of its population is people with foreign backgrounds, immigrant students are sometimes able to receive literacy training in their native language or receive “study help” from teachers who share their mother tongue (Boyd, 2005).

Igoa (1995, cited in Park, 2005) suggests that immigrant students are unable to combine their worlds if their cultures and languages are not included in their education. However, inclusion of their cultures and languages should not be done in terms of simple cultural relativism where a skimming of “superficial” cultural differences dominates the classroom discourse. Rather, an honest and meaningful dialogue between those in different subject positions should take place about the consequences of the discourse of “othering,” as such conversations could serve as a stepping stone through which “Canadian” and “othered” students can better understand each other.

Furthermore, as suggested by Guardado (2008), more investments in developing heritage language education programs will also aid in creating a multilingual framework of multiculturalism. Here, I believe Generation 1.5 university students, particularly those belonging to ethnic minority student organizations, could play an active part in advocating heritage language programs in our educational systems. Many of the participants in this study said that a positive aspect of such student organizations is that they help create solidarity among the students (of the particular ethnic group) and that they also make an effort to serve their respective ethnic communities. While these are all
valuable contributions, these student organizations should also strive to politicize themselves and appeal to policy makers on behalf of heritage language students. However, in doing so, emphasis should be placed on implementing programs that teach heritage languages as belonging to the overall asset base and identity of Canada as a nation and not simply as an entity that belongs to the “other” heritage language group. It is through such joint efforts by all parties involved in mainstream educational settings that minority immigrant students could develop both their L1 and L2s and can choose to be “both” instead of “one or the other.”

8.4.2 Pedagogy

As discussed in Chapter 1, with the increasing number of school-aged children immigrating to Canada, Generation 1.5 students represent a large percentage of the student body in Canadian high schools and universities. Thus, this study presents several pedagogical implications for educators in secondary and post-secondary institutions who will likely work with Generation 1.5 students in their classes.

8.4.2.1 Examining Assumptions and Expectations of NNS Students

The experiences of the participants in their first-year English courses reflected how Generation 1.5 immigrant students, despite having been mainstreamed in high school and despite being such high academic achievers, could still lack a sense of ownership of English (see also Chiang and Schmida, 1999). What is interesting about these experiences was that all three of the English course instructors I interviewed in order to better understand the students’ experiences were: 1) unaware of the concept of Generation 1.5; 2) also unaware of who among their students were Generation 1.5 students; 3) were surprised that Generation 1.5 students had such insecurities about their English skills; and 4) did not differentiate between immigrant NNS and international NNS students. Thus such findings point to the need for educators to first recognize and acknowledge that immigrant NNS students are an increasing part of today’s educational systems and that their experiences differ significantly from those of international NNS and Canadian-born students. With this understanding, instructors should make efforts to be sensitive towards creating an environment that does not further reinforce the students’
intimidation by, or avoidance of, certain classes based on their self-perceived disadvantages as NNSs. In order to do so, instructors (of English courses and courses across the curriculum) need to (re)examine their own biases or assumptions towards NNSs of English and reflect on whether their practices contribute to or reinforce NNS students’ lack of ownership of English.

Findings of this study demonstrated how educators could impart their views of NNSs to their students through their everyday teaching practices, even through seemingly innocent comments intended to help the students. For instance, Yellina’s Anthropology professor at PCU declared on the first day of class that students should drop the course if they were NNSs as the course requirements would be too challenging for them. Hannah’s professors in the Commerce program stated that a new communication course was developed as part of the curriculum because “companies hiring [the program’s] graduates were complaining that Chinese NNS students weren’t professional enough in their interviews because of their English” (Hannah, I#4, November 22, 2005, E-original). While these instructors may not have had any mal-intent in sharing such information with the students, it nevertheless positioned NNSs students as somehow lacking in academic/linguistic capacity and professionalism compared to their NS counterparts. Thus, instructors need to be more consciously aware of the ways in which they intentionally or unintentionally position NNS students in their classes and how this might affect the students’ own academic, linguistic, and professional expectations of themselves.

In relation to the above suggestion, I also draw attention to high school teachers working with NNS students, both in ESL and non-ESL classes. One of the biggest concerns with regard to secondary school ESL support (although certainly not limited to secondary school) is the low status associated with ESL, including the deficiency stigma attached to ESL students (Séror, 2002; Toohey, 1992; Zamel; 1995). Toohey (1992) argues that ESL students are rarely defined by the assets they already possess, but rather by their lack of English proficiency, hence the production of the deficiency model. However, without denying that ESL teachers are often also marginalized by the lack of
status assigned to the field of ESL, and without undervaluing the efforts they put in to assist their students’ language learning, I believe it is crucial for ESL teachers to also evaluate whether their classroom practices are perpetuating the “ESL deficiency model.” For instance, Yellina explained that in her ESL classes, they sometimes used materials designed for kindergarten students, which made her feel “handicapped.” Gilbert also stated that the content of the ESL classes did not meet his maturity level. When Sheila entered high school, the ESL teachers who tested her English level exempted her from the classes because “they were worried that [she] might be influenced by the troublemaker ESL students who weren’t that smart and weren’t interested in studying” (Sheila I#1, September 28, 2005, E-original). Such examples raise the question of whether the students’ ESL teachers themselves believed in the pervasive view that “students who are not proficient in English cannot handle more demanding work” (Wong Filmore, 1989, p. 130), and were reinforcing the deficiency stigma attached to ESL students through their teaching practices. Therefore, ESL teachers should also reflect on their own assumptions and biases towards NNSs as well as their classroom practices, and seek ways in which they could offer a more meaningful learning experience for their students by providing materials that are linguistically beneficial without underestimating the students’ cognitive and academic maturity levels.

With regard to non-ESL teachers, many of the students in my study were granted extra time, help, and even generous grading from their teachers precisely because of their NNS status. Although most students appreciated their teachers’ kindness, it was also this very generosity that brought about a significant decrease in their confidence level as NNSs in university as they encountered less helpful, if not discouraging, instructors in their classes. This, first of all, necessitates more dialogue and collaboration between K-12 teachers and university instructors to examine their respective goals and expectations of NNS students and seek ways in which they could bridge the gap between the two educational contexts. With the acknowledgement that collaborative work between educators in these two contexts is not always easy to achieve, perhaps one of the first steps towards obtaining this goal could be for both parties to engage in an exchange of
ideas at local and national educational conferences. Second, it also points to the need for non-ESL teachers to (re)evaluate their preconceived notions and academic expectations of NNS students. In the case of the participants, the teachers’ willingness to provide extra assistance was highly appreciated and the teachers’ recognition of the students’ efforts had a positive effect on the participants’ overall self-esteem. However, as noted in Chapter 7, Yellina explained in one of our interviews that she sometimes questioned whether she was too “spoiled” by her high school teachers who were generous with her grades compared to NS peers, and who overlooked her linguistic mistakes. In this respect, when teachers do decide to offer extra help or to be more generous when assessing their NNS students’ works, it is important to examine whether their choices are actually contributing to the students’ false sense of security, which may afford them good grades and high school graduation, but a lack of the academic and linguistic skills that would enable them to study alongside their NS peers at the university level.

It is true that in the case of my participants, despite being initially overwhelmed during their first year at university, they all eventually adjusted well to their academic lives. However, this may not be true for all NNS students. For instance, Roessingh and Kover’s (2002) study reveals that ESL students’ teachers in high school granted them generous marking, yet their teachers’ low threshold did not guarantee them success at university. In fact, they discovered that many of such students who went on to university could not survive beyond their second year. Therefore, it is not only crucial to provide NNS students with realistic and accurate feedback on their work, but also important for schools and curriculums to have high expectations of the NNS students’ academic capabilities and performances. Thus, teachers should present academically and cognitively challenging work to these students while at the same time, creating an environment that does not isolate or intimidate them. Teachers should remember that while the existence of a caring teacher does have a significant impact on students’ learning, such an “over-sheltered” approach, despite its good intentions, may hinder students’ successful transition to university.
8.4.2.2 Reexamining Constructs of Current Day Generation 1.5 Language Learners

Generation 1.5 students have often been perceived from a “deficit-oriented definition” (Talmy, 2005, p. 602), which positions them as a problematic group. This view has been commonly based on teachers’ experiences with Generation 1.5 students, who, for instance, resent their placement in ESL classes (particularly at the post-secondary level) despite the obvious need for improvement in their linguistic skills. However, as Harklau (2000) suggests, the students’ resentments in these classes are less a resistance towards improving their English and more a rejection of being positioned as cultural novices or newcomers. Findings of my study add another angle from which the students’ resistance towards ESL classes or lack of motivation to learn English could be understood. For instance, many of the participants revealed some of their Generation 1.5 Korean peers (in high school and university) were not highly invested in improving their English as their intentions were to return to Korea upon graduation. Or, even if they were invested in English, it was not necessarily to socialize/work with NSs in mainstream Canadian society, but rather to be more marketable in Korea and elsewhere, where one’s English proficiency was viewed as an asset. Moreover, Sheila explained that many of her peers considered the Chinese language just as, if not more important a language to develop than English, given the demographics of Vancouver. Thus, the students’ varying investments in language(s) were in line with their desired identities within their imagined communities. In this respect, as Norton and Gao (2008) assert, the concept of target language community (which has often been assumed to be the NS community) needs to be reevaluated when considering the diverse investments in languages and identities of today’s English language learners.

Furthermore, the above findings indicate how an essentialized, deficit-oriented view of this group does not take into account the various contextual factors in today’s Generation 1.5 students’ lives that may or may not increase their investments in their L1, L2, or even L3. Therefore, educators must rethink their previous assumptions about the backgrounds and linguistic goals of these students and “see them for who they are and for who they want to be, rather than what we think they ought to be” (Talmy, 2005, p. 604).
In this respect, pre-service and in-service teacher training programs could benefit by utilizing findings from studies such as this to not only better understand the students’ experiences, but also to focus attention on how a learning environment can be created, where students are able to grow precisely because of and not despite the experiences they bring to the classroom. These programs could also be places in which pre- and in-service teachers can evaluate their own assumptions towards not only Generation 1.5 students but NNS students in general, so as not to perpetuate the aforementioned lack of ownership that NNS students have that could affect their overall educational experiences. Such training could particularly be offered in large urban cities like Vancouver and Toronto, where immigrant students make up a significant percentage of the overall student population of their schools.

Finally, within the classroom setting, instructors should make the effort to get to know their students. As commonsensical as this sounds, it is perhaps so much easier said than done for a variety of reasons, including large class sizes and the instructors’ already heavy workload. However, if one-on-one communication with the students is difficult to achieve, instructors could try to incorporate a background survey of their students to see what kind of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, goals, and expectations they bring in to the classroom. But, in doing so, the instructor should frame it in a way that does not make the students more consciously aware of their disadvantaged NNS or non-mainstream cultural backgrounds (e.g., instead of asking students “Is English your second language?”, the question could be rephrased to “In addition to English, what other language(s) do you know/use?”). Through these background surveys, instructors could seek ways in which they can incorporate course/class materials that are more meaningful and beneficial for all of their students, NSs and NNSs, immigrant and non-immigrant students alike. For example, many of the participants explained that they had difficulties in classes that required much knowledge of contemporary mainstream Canadian culture and they could not contribute to class discussions as a result. While it is easy to say that students should make the effort to broaden their knowledge of mainstream Canadian culture (and indeed it is important), instructors could also try to incorporate non-mainstream Canadian culture
in their class content not only to make the learning more meaningful for the students, but also as a means to stop the “mainstream” vs. “other” dichotomy of Canadian culture and identity mentioned earlier in the previous section in this chapter.

8.5 Limitations of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the language socialization experiences of Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students in Vancouver, Canada through a qualitative multiple case study approach. While I believe the study has yielded a better understanding of the micro- and macro-level contextual factors (past, present, and (imagined) future) affecting today’s Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian youth’s experiences of language learning and use, there are several limitations of the study that need to be addressed.

First, the extent to which my findings based on an investigation of seven Generation 1.5 students can be generalizable to a larger population is unclear. The experiences of my participants are not representative of all Generation 1.5 immigrant youths nor do they represent the experiences of all Korean-Canadian immigrant students of this generation. For example, while I did not purposely seek such a group of students, most of the students in my study were high academic achievers who came from relatively affluent families. This is certainly not the case for all Korean immigrant families or other ethnic minority students. The fact that these students were academically/goal oriented and had desires to contribute to the Korean-Canadian communities is likely to have heightened their interest in participating in my study and is also likely to have been reflected in their perceptions of the issues that we discussed in our interviews. A study of Generation 1.5 students who are not as academically oriented or from less privileged family backgrounds may yield different findings. However, the aim of this study was to gain insights into the students’ experiences taking place within a particular time and space, and providing thick descriptions of each individual student’s case was intended to allow for transferability of the findings and for analytic generalizations (Duff, 2008a) to Generation 1.5 immigrant groups in other settings.
Second, while this study follows the trajectories of the students’ experiences since their arrival in Canada, because this research was conducted with students who were already enrolled in university, many of the findings on their experiences prior to university relied on the students’ own memories. Thus, such accounts may or may not have been accurate portrayals of their lived experiences at that time. Also, although I believe I had established a strong rapport and bond with the students throughout the data collection process, my subject position as an older, female Korean international student may have led the students to choose what and what not to share with me. In this respect, observations of naturally occurring interactions taking place in the students’ daily lives (e.g., interactions with Korean peers, interactions with family) could have enhanced the robustness of this study and might have allowed for an even deeper understanding of the students’ experiences. Also, interviews with parents could have been incorporated to better understand the students’ roles within their families, which was an important theme in my study.  

8.6 Directions for Further Research

Given the findings and limitations of the study, I propose a few directions which future studies on Generation 1.5 immigrant students could take. Considering the increasing number of Generation 1.5 students in our schools, and given the tremendous lack of studies on this generation particularly in Canadian contexts, I believe more studies are needed in order to gain a deeper understanding of these students so as to enhance their overall educational experiences within our schools, communities, and beyond.

As mentioned in the previous section, this study relied on students’ memories in discussing their pre-university experiences. Thus, one possible area of research could be to conduct longitudinal qualitative studies that follow the experiences of Generation 1.5 students from their arrival in Canada to young adulthood, including life after university. It would be particularly interesting to follow the trajectories of students who choose to

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100 Although I had originally hoped to include parent interviews in my data sources, it was very difficult to do so for a variety of reasons, including their physical absence from Vancouver, work schedules, or lack of interest in participating in my study.
return to their home countries upon graduating from university (as was the case with Yellina in this study) and to explore the language socialization processes and outcomes they experience in those contexts and how they (re)negotiate their identities along the way.

Another potentially valuable area of research could be to investigate more in-depth the experiences of Generation 1.5 students in first-year university English courses at North American universities like PCU, where there is no distinction between courses for NS and NNS students. In this study, most of the students described feeling insecure about their performances in first-year English courses, and that in some cases, their lack of ownership of English was reinforced through their experiences in those courses. With this in mind, a closer examination of these courses, including observations of actual classroom practices as well as interactions between students and instructors, could yield more valuable insights with regard to the students’ experiences in these courses. In this process, a detailed analysis of classroom discourse--both between students and instructors as well as among students themselves--could produce a better understanding of students’ socialization *through* language. The in-depth analysis of socialization through linguistic analysis of social interactions has historically been the cornerstone of language socialization research in linguistic anthropology. Moreover, although this study interviewed three English course instructors, the primary focus was on the students’ perspectives. Hence, future research which further incorporates the viewpoints of instructors regarding the various linguistic goals and needs of their students (and how they, as instructors, respond to such diversity) could generate important pedagogical implications for universities, particularly English departments, which may need to cater to more linguistically diverse student populations.

Future research could also investigate the experiences of Generation 1.5 immigrant youths in Canada from other ethnic communities, specifically those who emigrated to Canada with less sociocultural capital than the students in this study. As mentioned earlier, the Korean students in this study came from relatively affluent and highly-educated family backgrounds, and most of them were able to rely on support
networks (usually Korean peers/sŏnbaes or other members of the Korean-Canadian community) either in Vancouver or Korea (with whom they maintained contact through means of the internet) when faced with various socio-cultural, linguistic, and academic challenges in Canada. Furthermore, their home country, Korea, possessed relatively stable socio-economical and political conditions to which they could return—a factor which may not be afforded to other ethnic minority immigrant youth. In this respect, it would be worthwhile to examine and seek ways to best serve the educational needs and goals of Generation 1.5 immigrant youth who arrived in Canada equipped with less socio-cultural capital and who have little or no access to ethnic community support systems upon immigration.

8.7 Concluding Remarks

When I embarked on this study on Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students a few years ago, I found it very difficult to find relevant literature on not only Generation 1.5 Korean-Canadian university students, but also on Generation 1.5 immigrant university students in Canada in general. As I began to write my dissertation, I realized that not much has changed since I started my research as it was still challenging to locate studies on this population within the Canadian context. The natural question that appeared in my mind was ‘why is this so?’ The numbers in and of themselves—that ESL students make up 20-50% of the student body in secondary schools across major Canadian urban cities (Watt & Roessingh, 2001)—point to the fact that these very students are, and will continue to be, a significant part of the Canadian university student population. Yet, how can educational institutions serve the needs of these students when so little is known about the experiences they bring to the classrooms? Are Canadian universities not aware of, or in denial of, this group as an increasing part of their student bodies? Are Canadian universities so caught up in the “internationalization” of their campuses that they fail to recognize the needs of their “domestic” students? Or, as Harklau et al. (1999) suggest, is it a result of “institutional reluctance to take on the issue of linguistic diversity?” (p. 6). It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to answer these questions in depth. However, it is with the hope that my research will contribute to
producing studies that do start addressing such questions (and other issues related to the education of this population of students) that I conclude my dissertation.

I hope this study will also contribute to reevaluating and reconstructing common perceptions of Generation 1.5 students as a problematic group caught between two worlds. As expressed by the students in the study, they are a generation of vast potential, navigating their ways through struggles, achievements, failures, and successes. And I believe it is these possibilities and promises of this generation that we should pay our attentions to in order to support and aid their successful education and development within the university and beyond.
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Appendix A
Recruitment Notices

RECRUITMENT NOTICE ENGLISH VERSION

Korean-Canadian Students at PCU!
Opportunity to discuss your academic and social experiences!

Dear Korean PCU Students,

My name is Jean Kim, and I am doctoral student at the Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED) at UBC. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project that I will be conducting about the experiences of Korean-Canadian students in Vancouver, in particular, those who immigrated to Canada during their elementary or secondary school years. This research will be conducted as part of the requirements for my doctoral program at the Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED). It will be conducted in collaboration with Dr. Patricia Duff, an associate professor in LLED at UBC, who is an expert in the field of language education.

The purpose of the study is to better understand the academic, social, and linguistic experiences of Korean-Canadian university students both in and out of the university community. In order to learn more about your experiences, I will be conducting interviews with you where I will ask you questions, for instance, about your experiences studying English, some of your academic challenges at university, and your social life outside university.

Participating in this project is completely voluntary. The research project would involve completing one questionnaire in September, 2005 and being interviewed by me twice a month from September 2005 to April 2006. In some cases, instead of meeting with me face to face, I will ask you to maintain electronic communication with me. Also, only if you feel comfortable, I will ask you to be interviewed by me with 2-3 other students who are also participating in the study three times during September, 2005-April, 2006. I estimate that participating in the study will take about 16-20 hours of your time during the 8 months. All interviews will be scheduled at a time and place convenient for you, and you can choose to be interviewed in either English or Korean (or both). As a token of my appreciation for your time, you will receive a $30 PCU gift certificate after our first individual interview is completed.

If you would like to participate in this project and/or would like more detailed information, please contact me by e-mail at: jeankim@interchange.ubc.ca. I would be very happy to answer any questions you may have.
I would very much appreciate your participation in this study! Thank you very much in advance for your consideration!

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PCU 한인학생 여러분!
여러분의 대학생활에 대한 경험을 함께 해 주세요!

안녕하십니까? 저는 UBC의 Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED)에서 박사과정을 받고 있는 김진 (Jean Kim)이라고 합니다. 현재 제가 진행중인 밴쿠버 내 한인 대학생들에 대한 연구에 여러분을 초대하고 싶습니다. 구체적으로 본 연구를 위해 한국에서 태어나 초등학교 1학년에서 고등학교 3학년 (12학년) 사이에 캐나다로 이민 온 학생들을 하고 있습니다. 본 연구는 저와 저의 지도교수인 Dr. Patricia Duff와 함께 이루어집니다. Duff 교수님은 LLED 내 부교수로 제시며 언어교육 전문가이십니다.

본 연구의 목적은 한인 대학생들의 PCU 및 캐나다 사회에서의 다양한 학업적, 사회적, 언어적 경험들에 대해 좀 더 깊이 있는 이해를 하는데 있습니다. 이를 위해 저는 여러분들과 인터뷰를 할 것이며, 예를 들어 여러분의 영어학습 경험, 대학생활내의 학업적 어려움, 학교 밖의 여러분의 사회생활 등에 대한 질문을 할 예정입니다.

본 연구는 여러분의 자발적인 참여에 의해 이루어집니다. 참여를 해 주신다면 2005년 9월 질문지를 작성해 주신 후 (약 15-20분 소요), 2005년 9월부터 2006년 4월 사이에 매달 2번 정도 인터뷰를 할 예정입니다. 어떤 경우에는 직접 만나서 인터뷰를 하는 대신 인터넷 상으로 서로 교류를 할 수도 있습니다. 본 연구에 참여를 하신다면 8개월 동안 약 16-20시간 정도의 시간을 할애해 주시게 됩니다. 모든 인터뷰는 여러분께 편한 장소와 시간에 이루어질 것이며 한국어나 영어 중 편한 언어로 말씀하실 수 있습니다. 본 연구에 참여해 주시는 것에 대한 감사의 표시로 첫 번째 인터뷰를 마친 후 $30 PCU 상품권을 드립니다.

본 연구에 참여하실 의향이 있거나 궁금한 사항이 있으신 분은 저의 이메일 jeankim@interchange.ubc.ca로 연락 주시기 바랍니다. 궁금한 사항에 대해 보다 자세한 설명을 해 드리겠습니다.

여러분들의 많은 참여 부탁 드립니다. 감사합니다!

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Appendix B
Background Questionnaires

BACKGROUN QUESTIONNAIRE ENGLISH VERSION

Please fill in the information requested below in Korean or English. Please add extra spaces wherever necessary and try to answer all of the questions. Don’t worry about spelling or formatting as I will only look at the content of your answers. Thank you!

1. Name (this information will not be shared with others):
   __________________________________________

2. Age: __________

3. Your major and year at [PCU]: _________

4. Did you attend any other schools (college or university) before attending [PCU]? If so, where, and for how long?
   __________________________________________

5. The year you immigrated to Canada: ______________________________

6. Age at time of immigration: _________________________

7. Did you entire family immigrate to Canada? _______________
   If not, which members of your family immigrated with you?
   __________________________________________

8. What grade did you first attend in Canada? ______________________

9. Up to what grade did you attend school in Korea? ______________________

10. Did you study English before moving to Canada? If yes, where and for how many years?
    __________________________________________

11. Did you take ESL classes when you first attended school in Canada? If so, for how long?
    __________________________________________

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12. Have you studied the Korean language at [PCU]? If so, which courses and why? 

13. Did you ever study Korean in Korean language programs in Canada (e.g., Saturday Korean school)? ____________
   • If yes, for how long and where? _____________________________.
   • Please describe the experience briefly. 

14. Have you taken (or plan to take) any foreign language courses at [PCU]? 
   If yes, which courses and why? _____________________________.

15. Describe how Korean and English are used in your home. 
   • Who speaks Korean with whom? 
   • Who speaks English with whom? 

16. Do your parents encourage you to speak only Korean or only English at home? Have they ever encouraged you to do so in the past? Please explain. 

17. How would you describe your current ability to use Korean and English, on a scale of 1-5 where 1=minimal proficiency and 5=highly proficient?
   
   **Korean:**
   • everyday speaking ______
   • academic speaking ______
   • everyday reading (magazines, internet, etc.)_______
   • academic reading ______
   • everyday writing _____
   • academic writing ______

   **English:**
   • everyday speaking ______
   • academic speaking ______
   • everyday reading (magazines, internet, etc.)_______
   • academic reading ______
   • everyday writing _____
   • academic writing ______
   - Korean only _____
   - Mostly Korean, some English _____
   - Korean and English mixed _____
   - Mostly English, some Korean _____
   - English only _____
   - Other language____ (please specify the language______________)

19. On an average day, how many hours do you spend reading/listening/speaking/writing in Korean? ____________
   - Other than your family, who do you use Korean with in your daily life?
   - Do you watch Korean TV programs? If yes, which ones do you regularly watch?
   - Do you visit Korean internet websites? If yes, which ones do you regularly visit?

20. On an average day, how many hours do you spend reading/listening/speaking/writing in English outside of class?
   - Who do you use English with outside class?
   - What English TV programs or internet sites do you regularly visit?

21. While taking courses at [PCU], do you have difficulties writing in English? If so, in what ways or in what kinds of tasks (e.g. taking notes, term papers, exams, short reports)?

22. While taking courses at [PCU], do you have difficulties speaking in English? If so, in what ways or on what kinds of tasks (e.g., oral presentations, group discussions, asking questions to TAs or instructors)?

23. Would you describe yourself as Korean, Canadian, Korean-Canadian, or something different (e.g., global citizen)? Has this self-identification changed over time? Please explain.

24. Does the fact that you are a non-native speaker of English in any way affect your
studies at [PCU] (it can be positive and/or negative)? If so, how?

• Does the fact that you are a non-native speaker of English in any way affect your social life at [PCU] (it can be positive and/or negative)? If so, how?

25. What extracurricular activities do you normally take part in at [PCU]? What language do you use in those activities?

• Are you involved in any social activities outside of [PCU]? If yes, what language do you use in those activities, and with whom?

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer these questions!
Please save this file and send it to Jean at jeankim@interchange.ubc.ca!
BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE KOREAN VERSION

설문지
아래의 질문에 대한 답변을 한국어 또는 영어로 작성해 주시기 바랍니다. 저희는 답변의 형식이 아닌 내용만을 중요시 합니다. 공간이 부족할 경우 필요 한만큼 공간을 더해서 답변을 써 주시기 바랍니다. 원할 경우 질문에 따라 긴答え 역시 편안하지만, 여러분들의 경험에 대해 보다 깊은 이해를 할 수 있도록 최대한 많은 정보를 써 주시면 감사하겠습니다.

1. 이름 (본 정보는 절대로 외부로 누출 되지 않습니다):

__________________________

2. 나이:

___________

3. [PCU]에서의 전공 및 학년:

__________________________

4. [PCU]에 다니기 전에 다른 학교 (college 포함)에 다닌 적이 있습니까? 만일 있다 면, 어디서 몇 년을 다녔습니까?

__________________________

5. 캐나다에 처음 거주하기 위해 온 날도:

______________________________

6. 캐나다 이민 당시 나이:

___________

7. 가족 전부와 이민을 왔습니까? 만일 아니라면, 가족 중 누구와 이민을 왔습니까?

______________________________

8. 캐나다에서 처음 입학 당시 학년

______________________________

9. 한국에서 몇 년간까지 다녔습니까?

______________________________

10. 캐나다에 오기 전에 영어를 공부한 적이 있습니까? 만일 있다면 어디서 몇 동안 했습니까?

______________________________

11. 캐나다에 처음 왔을 때 학교에서 ESL 수업을 받은 적이 있습니까? 있다면 얼마나 정도 받았습니까 (몇 학년부터 몇 학년까지)?

______________________________
12. [PCU]에서 한국어를 공부한 적이 있습니까? 만일 있다면, 어떤 수업을, 왜 수강 했습니까?

13. 캐나다내의 한국어 프로그램에서 한국어를 공부한 적이 있습니까 (학교 한국어 학교 등)?
   • ‘예’라고 대답하셨다면, 어디서 또 얼마나 공부했습니까?
   • 그 당시 경험에 대해서 설명해 주세요.

14. [PCU]에서 외국어 수업을 들은 적이 있습니까?
   • ‘예’라고 대답하셨다면, 어떤 수업을 얼마나 들었습니까?

15. 여러분의 가정에서의 한국어, 영어 사용에 대해서 설명해 주세요.
   • 가족 중 누가 누구에게 한국어를 사용합니까?
   • 가족 중 누가 누구에게 영어를 사용합니까?

16. 가정에서 부모님께서 한국어 또는 영어만 사용하라고 권유 또는 강요하신가?
   과거에 그런 적이 있습니까? ________________

17. 본인의 한국어 및 영어 능력에 대해 평가해 주시기 바랍니다. (1점에서 5점 중: 1
   점이 최저점수이며 5점이 최고 점수입니다.)

한국어:
   • 일상생활에서의 말하기 ______
   • 학문적 말하기 (academic speaking) ______
   • 일상생활에서의 읽기 (잡지, 인터넷 등) ______
   • 학문적 읽기 ______
   • 일상생활에서의 쓰기 ______
   • 학문적 쓰기 ______

영어:
   • 일상생활에서의 말하기 ______
   • 학문적 말하기 (academic speaking) ______
   • 일상생활에서의 읽기 (잡지, 인터넷 등) ______
• 학문적 읽기
• 임상생활에서의 쓰기
• 학문적 쓰기

18. 임상생활에서 어느 언어를 사용하는가 편함니까? 하나를 꼽라 주세요.
• 한국어만 사용
  • 대부분 한국어, 약간의 영어
  • 한국어와 영어 섞어서 사용
  • 대부분 영어, 약간의 한국어
  • 영어만 사용
  • 그 외 다른 언어 (구체적으로 어떤 언어임니까?)

19. 하루에 평균 몇 시간 정도 한국어로 읽기/쓰기/말하기/듣기를 합니다?

• 누구와 사용하십니까?
• 한국어 TV 프로그램을 시청합니까? "예"라고 대답하셨다면, 어느 프로그램을 자주 보니까?
• 한국어 인터넷 사이트를 방문합니까? "예"라고 대답하셨다면, 어느 사이트를 자주 방문합니까?

20. 수업 시간 이외에 하루에 평균 몇 시간 정도 영어로 읽기/쓰기/말하기/듣기를 합니다?

• 누구와 영어를 사용합니까?
• 자주 보는 영어 TV 프로그램 또는 자주 방문하는 인터넷 사이트는?

21. [PCU]에서 수업을 들으면서 writing상의 어려움을 겪을 때가 있습니까? 만일 있다면, 어떤 task에서 어렵게 어려웠습니까
(예: taking notes, term papers, exams, short reports)?

22. [PCU]에서 수업을 들으면서 speaking상의 어려움을 겪을 때가 있습니까? 만일 있다면, 어떤 task에서 어렵게 어려웠습니까 (예: oral presentations, group discussions, asking questions to TAs or instructors)?

24. 여러분이 비원어민 (non-native speaker)이라는 점이 [PCU]에서의 학업생활에 영향을 미친다고 생각합니까? 만일 그렇다면 어떻게 영향을 미친다고 생각하십니까?

• 여러분이 비원어민 (non-native speaker)이라는 점이 [PCU]에서의 사회생활 (social life)에 영향을 미친다고 생각합니까? 만일 그렇다면 어떻게 영향을 미친다고 생각하십니까?

25. [PCU]에서 extra curricular에 참여한 적이 있습니까? “예’라고 대답하셨다면, 어떤 활동이었으며 주로 어떤 언어를 사용했습니까?

• [PCU] 밖에서 사회적 활동(social activities)에 참여합니까? 만일 그렇다면 누구와 어떤 언어를 사용합니까?

본 파일을 저장하시고 jeankim@interchange.ubc.ca로 보내주시기 바랍니다! 설문지 작성을 위해 시간을 내 주셔서 진심으로 감사 드립니다!
STUDENT CONSENT FORM ENGLISH VERSION

Background Information

Title of Study: The Academic, Linguistic, and Sociocultural Experiences of Korean-Canadian University Students

Principal Investigator:  
Dr. Patricia Duff  
Associate Professor  
Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED)  
Faculty of Education  
E-mail: patricia.duff@ubc.ca

Co-Investigator:  
Jean Kim  
PhD. Candidate  
Department of Language and Literacy Education  
Faculty of Education  
E-mail: jeankim@interchange.ubc.ca

Purpose:  
This research will be conducted as part of the requirements for Jean Kim’s doctoral program at the Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED). The purpose of this study is to examine the academic, linguistic, and sociocultural experiences of Korean-Canadian university students. The study will ask students about their experiences as a student at a Canadian university as well as their experiences as a Korean-Canadian. Through this study, it is hoped that there will be a better understanding about some of the unique experiences of and challenges faced by Korean-Canadian university students and how institutions can accommodate the needs of these students to aid them in becoming more successful members of their academic and social communities.

Study Procedures:  
Your participation will involve being interviewed by Jean Kim, a doctoral student in the Department of Language & Literacy Education. You will be asked to reflect on your experiences through a questionnaire in September 2005 (which will take 15-20 minutes), followed by two interviews per month during September, 2005 to April, 2006. Each interview will take approximately 1 hour. In some cases, instead of face-to-face interviews, you will be asked to correspond with Jean through email/electronic communication. For this study, there will be several students who will be interviewed by
Jean. Among those students, only with those who agree, Jean will interview the students together in small groups approximately 3 times during the 8 months (approximately 1 hour per interview). In total, it is estimated that the study will take approximately 16-20 hours of your time during the 8 months. All interviews will take place at a time and place convenient for you, and you can choose to be interviewed in Korean, English or both.

With your permission, interviews will be audio-taped. This study is not an evaluation of individual students’ performances or of [PCU].

**Participation or Non-participation**
Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the research project at any time without any negative consequences to you or your status at [PCU].

**Confidentiality:**
In order to protect your identity, you have the option of using a pseudonym of your choice. Pseudonyms will be used to refer to the university and all students in any reports of the completed study. Audio-tapes and transcribed documents will be kept in a secure filing cabinet and will be identified only by a code number. All measures will be taken to guarantee confidentiality. However, please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in a focus group situation. This is due to the fact that the researcher does not have control over the actions of the other participants in the group.

**Compensation:**
For your participation in this study, you will receive a $30 gift certificate from the [PCU] bookstore after the first interview, regardless of how long you decide to continue participating in this study.

**Future Uses of Data**
This study will be conducted as part of Jean Kim’s doctoral degree, and therefore will be published in the form of a doctoral dissertation. In addition, it is expected that findings of the study will be presented at conferences and published in academic journals. However, pseudonyms will be employed for all participants to protect their anonymity. The data from this study will be kept in a secure location in the researcher’s office. The data will not be used for other purposes without the consent of students.

**Contact information:**
If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Dr. Patricia Duff at patricia.duff@ubc.ca or Jean Kim at jeankim@interchange.ubc.ca.

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research participant you may contact the Research Subject Information Line, the UBC Office of Research Services at The University of British Columbia at 604-822-8598.

**Consent**
Please indicate your consent or refusal to participate by completing the attached forms.
Statement of Informed Consent [Student Copy]

Title of Study: The Academic, Linguistic, and Sociocultural Experiences of Korean-Canadian University Students

If you are willing to participate in this study, please fill in the information below. You have the option of using your real name or a pseudonym of your choice on this consent form.

Be sure to keep a signed copy of page 3 for your own records, and pages 1-2.

________________________________________

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

_____ I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

_____ I consent to participate in this study.

_____ I have received a $30 [PCU] gift certificate for my participation.

Name

________________________________________

Signature

________________________________________

Date

____________

Email address

________________________________________

Please keep this copy for your own records.
Thank you very much for your cooperation!
STUDENT CONSENT FORM KOREAN VERSION

Background Information

Title of Study: The Academic, Linguistic, and Sociocultural Experiences of Korean-Canadian University Students

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Patricia Duff
Associate Professor
Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED)
Faculty of Education
E-mail: patricia.duff@ubc.ca

Co-Investigator:
Jean Kim
PhD. Candidate
Department of Language and Literacy Education
Faculty of Education
E-mail: jeankim@interchange.ubc.ca

Purpose:
본 연구는 Department of Language and Literacy의 박사과정생인 김진 (Jean Kim)의 박사논문을 위한 작업입니다. 본 연구의 목적은 캐나다대의 한국인 교포학생들을 대상으로 그들의 대학교 및 캐나다 사회에서의 다양한 경험들을 이해함에 있습니다. 구체적으로 본 연구는 교포 학생들의 다양한 학업적, 문화적, 사회적, 언어적 경험들에 대한 조사입니다. 본 연구를 통해 한국인 교포학생들의 독특한 경험에 대해 더 깊은 이해를 함으로서 그들이 보다 성공적인 대학생활을 할 수 있도록 기대 합니다.

Study Procedures: 여러분이 참여를 하게 된다면 Department of Language and Literacy의 박사과정생인 Jean Kim이 인터뷰를 하게 될 것입니다. 2005년 9월에 설문지를 작성해 주신 후 (약 15-20분 소요) 2005년 9월에서 2006년 4월 사이에 한 달에 약 두 번 정도 인터뷰를 하게 될 것입니다. 각 인터뷰는 약 1시간 정도 소요됩니다. 어떠한 경우에는 직접 인터뷰를 하는 대신 이메일이나 다른 인터넷 수단을 이용해서 Jean과 연락을 할게 될 것입니다. 이 연구에는 여러분 이외에도 다른 몇몇 학생들이 참여할 예정입니다. 그 학생들 중에 동의를 하는 학생들을 모아 소그룹 형태로 인터뷰를 하게 될 것입니다. 소그룹 인터뷰는 8개월간 3회에 걸쳐 이루어 질 것입니다 (각 인터뷰는 1시간 정도 소요). 여러분이 본 연구에 참여를 할 경우 8개월 간 총 16-20시간을 소요하게 됩니다. 모든 인터뷰는 여러분이 편한 장소와 시간에
Participation or Non-participation
본 연구참여는 자발적인 참여에 의해 이루어집니다. 본 연구에 참여도중 언제든지 불참하시면 되며 그로져 인해 여러분들에게 전혀 부정적인 영향을 끼치지 않을 것입니다.

Confidentiality:
본 연구에 참여한 모든 학생들의 신상정보 및 학교 이름은 절대 누출되지 않을 것이며 실명대신 가명이 사용될 것입니다. 녹음된 테이프 및 모든 기록 및 문서들은 안전한 곳에 보관될 것입니다.

Compensation:
본 연구에 참여해 주신 답례로 첫 번째 인터뷰를 마친 후 차후 인터뷰의 참여여부와는 상관 없이 [PCU] bookstore $30 상품권을 드립니다.

Future Uses of Data
본 연구는 Jean Kim의 박사논문을 위한 연구인 관계로 박사논문의 형태로 출판이 될 것입니다. 또한 본 연구의 결과는 학회 또는 학술지에 게재될 것이라 예상하고 있습니다. 그러나 여러분의 신상정보는 절대 누출되지 않을 것이며 본 연구를 통해 수집된 자료는 연구자의 연구목 안전한 곳에 보관 될 것입니다. 수집된 자료는 참여 학생의 동의 없이 다른 목적으로 사용될 것을 거부합니다.

Contact information:
본 연구에 대해 궁금하신 점 또는 건의 사항이 있으시면 Patricia Duff 박사께 patricia.duff@ubc.ca 또는 Jean Kim (jeankim@interchange.ubc.ca)로 연락 주시기 바랍니다.

연구 참여자로서 여러분들의 권리 및 대우에 대한 우려가 있으신 분은 604-822-8598로 (Research Subject Information Line, the UBC Office of Research Services at The University of British Columbia) 연락하시기 바랍니다.

Consent
아래의 문서에 서명함으로써 여러분들의 참여/불참 의사를 밝혀 주시기 바랍니다.
Statement of Informed Consent [Student Copy]

Title of Study: The Academic, Linguistic, and Sociocultural Experiences of Korean-Canadian University Students

본 연구에 참여하실 의사가 있으시면 아래 사항을 채워주시기 바랍니다. 여러분들의 기록을 위해 1-3 페이지의 복사본을 간직하고 계시길 바랍니다.

본 연구의 참여는 자발적이며 어떠한 보이익 없이 언제든지 본 연구에 불참하거나 도중하차해도 된다는 것을 알고 있습니다.

_____ 본인의 기록을 위해 본 동의서의 복사본을 받았습니다.
_____ 본 연구에 참여할 것을 동의합니다.
_____ 본 연구 참여에 대한 답례로 $30 상품권을 받았습니다.

이름 __________________________
서명 __________________________
날짜 __________________________
이메일 주소__________________________

여러분들의 기록을 위해 복사본을 가지고 계실시오. 
협조해 주셔서 대단히 감사합니다.
INSTRUCTOR CONSENT FORM

Background Information

Title of Study: The Academic, Linguistic, and Sociocultural Experiences of Korean-Canadian University Students

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Patricia Duff
Associate Professor
Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED)
Faculty of Education
E-mail: patricia.duff@ubc.ca

Co-Investigator:
Jean Kim
PhD. Candidate
Department of Language and Literacy Education
Faculty of Education
E-mail: jeankim@interchange.ubc.ca

Purpose:
This research will be conducted as part of the requirements for Jean Kim’s doctoral program at the Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED). The purpose of this study is to examine the academic, linguistic, and sociocultural experiences of Korean-Canadian university students. The study will ask students about their experiences as a student at a Canadian university as well as their experiences as a Korean-Canadian. Through this study, it is hoped that there will be a better understanding about some of the unique experiences of and challenges faced by Korean-Canadian university students and how institutions can accommodate the needs of these students to aid them in becoming more successful members of their academic and social communities.

Study Procedures:
Your participation will involve being interviewed by Jean Kim, a doctoral student in the Department of Language & Literacy Education. You will be asked to reflect on your experiences teaching first-year English courses at [PCU]. You will be asked to take part in one interview for about 60 minutes. With your permission, the interview will be audio-taped. This study is not an evaluation of individual students’ or their instructors’ performances, or of [PCU].

Participation or Non-participation
Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the research project at any time without any negative consequences to you or your
status at [PCU].

**Confidentiality:**
In order to protect your identity, you have the option of using a pseudonym of your choice. Pseudonyms will be used to refer to the university, all students and instructors in any reports of the completed study. Audio-tapes and transcribed documents will be kept in a secure filing cabinet and will be identified only by a code number. All measures will be taken to guarantee confidentiality.

**Future Uses of Data**
This study will be conducted as part of Jean Kim’s doctoral degree, and therefore will be published in the form of a doctoral dissertation. In addition, it is expected that findings of the study will be presented at conferences and published in academic journals. However, pseudonyms will be employed for all participants to protect their anonymity. The data from this study will be kept in a secure location in the researcher’s office. The data will not be used for other purposes without the consent of students and instructors.

**Contact information:**
If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Dr. Patricia Duff at patricia.duff@ubc.ca or Jean Kim at jeankim@interchange.ubc.ca.

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research participant you may contact the Research Subject Information Line, the UBC Office of Research Services at The University of British Columbia at 604-822-8598.

**Consent**
Please indicate your consent or refusal to participate by completing the attached forms.
Statement of Informed Consent [Instructor Copy]

Title of Study: The Academic, Linguistic, and Sociocultural Experiences of Korean-Canadian University Students

If you are willing to participate in this study, please fill in the information below. You have the option of using your real name or a pseudonym of your choice on this consent form.

Be sure to keep a signed copy of page 3 for your own records, and pages 1-2.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

_____ I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

_____ I consent to participate in this study.

Name ______________________________

Signature __________________________

Date ________________

Email address _________________________

Please keep this copy for your own records.
Thank you very much for your cooperation!
Appendix D
Interview Questions

Sample Student Interview Questions

1. Why did your family immigrate to Canada and how did you feel about it? What were your expectations about your new life in Canada? What were your expectations about learning English in Canada? What were your English learning experiences prior to moving to Canada?

2. Did you take ESL classes in secondary school in Canada? How was that experience? Did you find the ESL classes helpful? What kind of things did you study in those classes? Did you receive any private tutoring in English or any other subjects in secondary school?

3. Who were your closest group of friends in secondary school? What language(s) did you use with these friends? Did you “hang out” with these friends after school? If so, what kind of activities did you and your friends take part in?

4. What was your favorite subject in high school? Which subject(s) did you most excel in and which subject(s) did you find the most challenging? What aspects about these subjects were challenging for you? How was your experience in regular English classes in secondary school?

5. What were your expectations socially and academically of university life prior to attending [PCU]? Were these expectations met?

6. Why did you choose your major at [PCU]? What kind of courses have you taken related to your major? Have you experienced any difficulties in these courses? If so, what were they? What kinds of assignments were required in these courses (e.g., essays, research papers, group presentations, lab reports)?

7. What other courses have you taken at [PCU] that are not directly related to your major? What were your reasons for taking these courses (e.g., friends’/sŏnbaes suggestions, schedule, personal interest)? What kinds of assignments were required in these courses? Has class participation been a big part of the assessment criteria of these courses? If so, how was your own class participation?

8. How was your experience in first-year English courses? Which courses did you take? What kinds of assignments were required in your classes? Have you ever asked for help from your instructors or TAs? Have you ever been to [PCU]’s writing centre to get help on your assignments? Do you ever ask other people
(peers, siblings) to look over your written assignments?

9. Who are your closest group of friends at [PCU]? What language(s) do you use with these friends? Are you involved in any extracurricular activities both in and outside [PCU]? If so, what were your reasons for participating in them (e.g., friends' encouragement, needed for future job application) Do you socialize with friends outside of [PCU]? If so, in what context, and what language(s) do you use with them?

10. Do you keep in touch with your friends from Korea (e.g., through email, Web Messenger, phone, personal blogs)? Have you ever visited Korea after moving to Canada? If so, how was that experience like? If not, do you plan to visit in the near future?

11. What are your future professional aspirations? Do you have plans to work outside Canada? If so, why? If any, what are some of the challenges you might face in achieving your future professional goal? What role does English play in your future profession?

12. If someone asked you ‘where are you from’, how would you answer this question?

13. Are you involved in any Korean organizations or communities in Vancouver? If so, what are your reasons for taking part in them? What language(s) do you use when you take part in those activities?

14. What kind of advice would you give to newly arrived Korean immigrant students in Vancouver? This can be related to their studies, learning English, making friends and so on.

15. Are you familiar with the term Generation 1.5? If so, would you consider yourself a Generation 1.5 immigrant? What is your understanding of this generation? If someone asked you what/who ‘Generation 1.5’ is, how would you answer this question?

Sample Student Group Interview Questions

1. What are your impressions of second generation Korean immigrants in Canada? Do you see any similarities and differences between the second and 1.5 generations? If so, what are they?

2. What are your impressions of Korean international students at [PCU] and Vancouver in general? Do you see any similarities and differences between them
and Korean-Canadian immigrant students? If so, what are they?

3. What do you think are some of the most common characteristics of Korean immigrants in Vancouver, Canada (e.g., socio-economic background, educational level, professions)? Do you think there are any stereotypes of Koreans in Canada? If so, what are they? How about stereotypes of Asian-Canadians?

4. Are you interested in contemporary Korean culture? If so, why, and how do you keep up with the latest news in Korea? Based on those sources, what are your impressions of contemporary Korean society? What are you most and least proud of regarding your Korean heritage?

5. Many public secondary schools in Vancouver now offer Korean as a foreign language. What are your thoughts on this?

6. English language teaching is a billion-dollar industry in Korea. What are your thoughts on this? Many Korean-American/Canadian young adults return to Korea to teach English. Have you ever considered doing this yourself?

7. Aside from English and French, what do you think is the most valued/important/popular language in Canada today, and why? What foreign language(s) have you studied and why?

**Sample Instructor Interview Questions**

1. What are the grading criteria for your class(es)? What kinds of assignments do you give to your students? What is the average mark in those classes?

2. How would you define good academic writing? Do you look at grammar mistakes when you mark your students’ works?

3. How many students do you teach in one class? Of these students, how many students do you identify to be NNSs of English, and how are you able to identify them as NNSs (e.g., accents, grammar mistakes in their writings)?

4. Are there any differences in the performances between your NS and NNS students? If so, in what ways?

5. Are you familiar with the term ‘Generation 1.5’? If so, do you know if any of your own students belong to this group? Many of the Generation 1.5 students participating in my study explained having dreadful memories of first-year English courses. Could you share your thoughts on this?
Appendix E

Transcription Conventions

| I     | Individual interview with students  
e.g., ‘Sheila, I#2’= second individual interview with Sheila. |
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GI</td>
<td>Group interview with students</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-original</td>
<td>Original quote in English</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-original</td>
<td>Original quote in Korean</td>
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<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>Terminal falling intonation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(...)</td>
<td>Long pause</td>
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<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Rising/question intonation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>!</td>
<td>Exclamatory intonation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____</td>
<td>Speaker Emphasis</td>
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<td>[    ]</td>
<td>Information added for meaning clarification</td>
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### Appendix F

List of Acronyms

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOB</td>
<td>“Fresh off the Boat”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>First Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>Third Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI</td>
<td>Language Proficiency Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>Language Socialization</td>
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<td>NS</td>
<td>Native Speaker</td>
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<tr>
<td>NNS</td>
<td>Non-Native Speaker</td>
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<td>PCU</td>
<td>Pacific Canadian University</td>
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<td>TA</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
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Appendix G

Research Approval Notice

(HO5-80685) B05-0685 - The Academic, Linguistic, and Socio-cultural Experiences of Korean-Canadian University St...

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According to our records, the Certificate of Approval for this study expired more than 10 months ago; therefore we have terminated the file. Please note that any funds remaining in research grants associated with this Certificate of Approval will ...