

The Relationship between Korean Language Use and Linguistic Identity*

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Choi, Jin-Sook. (2014). The Relationship between Korean Language Use and Linguistic Identity. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 22(2), 113-131. This study aims at identifying whether mother tongue use is related to the perception of linguistic identity among Korean immigrants to Australia. For the purpose of the study, the degree of exposure to Korean was investigated, followed by attitudes towards Korean as an index of strength of linguistic identity, and finally their perception of linguistic identity based on Korean use and Korean proficiency was analyzed. The data was collected by means of a questionnaire survey from eighty four secondary school students who have been staying in Sydney, Australia. The results showed that 85% of the participants used Korean at home (77% with their parents), showing only 15% of the participants were learning Korean after school. Furthermore, the participants had more negative attitudes towards Korean compared to English. When the factors of Korean use and Korean proficiency were analyzed, there was a clear relationship: the more frequent and fluent users of Korean language, the stronger perception of linguistic identity they had. Therefore, this study concludes that language use leading to language proficiency is closely related to the perception of linguistic identity and suggests that the exposure to mother tongue is necessary in second language situations in order to maintain one's linguistic identity.

Key Words: Korean language, linguistic identity, Korean immigrants

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I. Introduction

'Language' can be the characteristic which most clearly identifies an individual, because it is clear that every individual somehow has its own language. In a general view, sociolinguists (Fasold, 1984; Edwards, 1985; Hoffmann, 1991) believe that 'language' is closely related to one's linguistic identity. When discussing 'linguistic identity', however, 'language' (objective feature) is not the only ingredient of linguistic identity, but it includes subjective features which refer to the group members' feeling of belonging to a particular group and their perception of the language as a indication or symbol of their group. Therefore, in this study, 'linguistic identity' can be defined "as a knowledge or self-awareness of oneself as belonging to Korea (subjective features), which can be characterized as having its own tangible marker such as the Korean language (objective features)" (Choi, 2013, p. 117). If two features are the ingredient of linguistic identity, a sense of belonging to a particular group (subjective feature) may enable group boundaries to continue, although visible linkers (objective features such as language) have disappeared,

However, there is a claim that a sense of belonging to particular group cannot be maintained without visible linkers such as language (Bourhis, 1997; Choi, 2004; Sorabi, 1997; Winser, 1998). Then in a second language situation where mother tongue (visible linker) loss inevitably occurs as a result of the language shift to English, especially among the students who spend most of their time with English in schools, it is a question whether the maintenance of linguistic identity is possible without using mother tongue, and if mother tongue use plays a role in maintaining their linguistic identity.

Therefore, this study aims at investigating the relationship between Korean language use and Korean linguistic identity among Korean immigrants to Australia who have to speak English in order to adapt to a new life and also for their survival in Australia like many immigrant groups in such English speaking countries (e.g. America, Canada and some European countries). To clarify the issue emerged here, this study will investigate the participants' degree of exposure to Korean language, followed by their attitudes towards mother tongue as a measuring factor of linguistic identity, which will also be compared to those towards English. Finally, how the participants' perception of mother tongue is

different in accordance with the degree of Korean language use and Korean proficiency will be analyzed in this study. The results might be able to demonstrate whether or not mother tongue use affects the strength of the Korean linguistic identity and language and identity are co-dependent. Furthermore, they might enable us to understand the role of mother tongue in maintaining one's linguistic identity, and for Korean immigrants who want to maintain Korean linguistic identity, they will be highly informative.

II. Literature Review

1. How to measure one's linguistic identity?

It is true that there is no a valid measurement for linguistic identity because linguistic identity itself is not a logical one and the concept is based on one's internal psychological state(Choi, 2013). However, in order to draw relevant measuring factors in the study of language and identity correlations, it is necessary to acknowledge that one's external behaviors and attitudes can reflect internal psychological state. Reviewing many studies(Bourhis, 1997; Edwards, 1985; Giles & Johnson, 1987; Hoffmann, 1991; Sohrabi, 1997; Trudgill & Tzavaras, 1977; Winser, 1998; Woolard, 1991) relating identity and language, attitudes towards mother tongue were found as a factor applicable to the maintenance/loss of linguistic identity. In other words, "attitudes towards their own language(mother tongue) can be the most obvious indicator"(Choi, 2013, p. 118) of linguistic identity: when group members hesitate to give a great importance to the group's language or have negative attitudes towards their language, it is assumed that their linguistic identity is losing.

Then, what do attitudes to mother tongue include? According to Giles and Johnson(1987), people identify themselves strongly as members of a particular group when they consider language an important symbol of their identity. Edwards(1985) and Fishman(1991) also report that attitudes to mother tongue may include the perception of their culture and history and Trugill and Tzavaras(1977) view attitudes to mother tongue as a perception of the usefulness of their language and of the necessity of their language for their identity.

Bourhis(1997) believes the survival of French language in Quebec was affected by the group member's pride in their language and culture and their strong feeling of happiness with their French identity, and the perceived value of their language compared to other languages. Hoffmann(1991) and Woolard(1991) view the maintenance of mother tongue as a result of a strong perception of their language with a great effort to use and to learn mother tongue, Catalan.

In fact, it is not difficult to find the cases of linguistic identity loss as a result of attitude changes towards mother tongue in various contexts. For example, Sohrabi(1997) conducted a study on the linguistic identity vitality among the second generation of Iranian immigrants in Sweden. As a result, group members' negative attitudes towards their mother tongue were revealed as the most important factor in measuring linguistic identity vitality. As a similar case, Trudgill and Tzavaras(1977) also reported that the decline of Arvanitika's usage was from the people's negative attitudes to Arvanitika, their mother tongue. In their research, as a politically and socially powerful language, Greek, spread, Arvanitika people showed high interest in learning Greek and consequently, their mother tongue declined dramatically in use. At the same time, Arvanitika people's perception of the importance of linguistic identity weakened. Therefore it is possible to predict that weak perception and negative attitudes towards mother tongue can lead to the loss of linguistic identity(Choi, 2013).

Another studies(Bourhis, 1997; Hoffmann, 1991; Woolard, 1991) show that positive attitudes can lead to the maintenance of linguistic identity. Hoffmann(1991) and Woolard(1991) report that Catalan language has survived among other minority nations in Europe by the Catalan people's positive attitudes towards their language. Although there has been the strong political influence of Spain, they have maintained a strong perception of their language, making a special effort to use Catalan. According to Bourhis(1997), 5 million French-Canadians live in Quebec and they use French even though English is the dominant language in North America. However, as English has shown a high prestige, a number of French speakers started to learn English and French-speaking Quebecois felt that learning English might bring a threat to the French culture and language. Finally, they appealed to the Federal Parliament to learn French in schools and the new legislation to make both English and French the official Canadian languages was made. Currently, French-speaking

Canadians consider French language as a symbol of their linguistic identity and French culture. These cases indicate that a strong positive attitude towards one's mother tongue may contribute to the maintenance of one's linguistic identity. It is therefore now clear that attitudes towards Korean language would be one of the worthwhile measures to identify the perception towards mother tongue.

2. Mother tongue use and linguistic identity

Over the last few decades, there have been some questions about whether the amount of contact with mother tongue plays a major role in maintaining one's mother tongue identity in a second language situation. In the general literature on sociolinguistics, this question has normally been included and tested as a major variable in the perspective of language maintenance/shift in multilingual countries like Australia, North America and some European countries (Bettoni, 1989; Fishman, 1991; Gardner, 1985; Sohrabi, 1997; Wass, 1996; Yagmur, 1997). What they have concluded is that the extent of contact with mother tongue may be significant in terms of understanding how the strength of linguistic identity is different: There was an important implication that the maintenance of linguistic identity is related to the degree of exposure to the mother tongue.

Some researchers (e.g., Bettoni, 1989; Wass, 1996; Yagmur, 1997) who have investigated language attrition among immigrants in the Australian context are concerned about the loss of the mother tongue. According to their findings, immigrants do not often have the opportunity to use their first language. Furthermore, the relationship between the degree of exposure to the mother tongue and the retention of the mother tongue appears to become stronger with increasing time spent in immigrant-based countries. Their findings also show that mother tongue attrition is inevitable after prolonged exposure to English, and thus that maintaining mother tongue is a very difficult task when the degree of exposure to mother tongue is very low.

In the same area as these studies, Sohrabi's (1997) research has also demonstrated this issue from a sociolinguistic perspective. This interesting study has been conducted among second generation Iranian immigrants in Sweden. He claims that one of the social factors strongly affecting mother tongue

maintenance is the opportunity for contact with native speakers of their mother tongue. According to his study, the social factor, the use of mother tongue among ethnic group members in a concentrated geographic location, provided a high exposure to mother tongue and thus was considered as one of the decisive factors in predicting the children's language maintenance. Further, he suggests that in order to raise the degree of exposure to mother tongue, sufficient mother tongue instruction programs should be provided in schools.

With regards to the relationship between mother tongue use and linguistic identity, although people do not use mother tongue in a second language situation, linguistic identity could exist in spite of the absence of communicative function(Yang, 1982). However, strong evidence that the loss of mother tongue affects the loss of linguistic identity has been obtained from a number of studies across different contexts(e.g., Fishman, 1991; Le & Le, 2011; Pakir, 1994). For example, Fishman(1991) reports that in the United States, immigrant groups' linguistic identity has been weakened beyond the first generation because their mother tongue has rarely been used as a result of the increasing replacement by English. His study also found that there is difference between Jews who still speak Hebrew and those who do not in identifying themselves. Fishman(1991) sees such difference came from their mother tongue use, which is interrelated to the maintenance of mother tongue culture and customs. Yim & Lee(2012) found that Korean parents in Canada made efforts to teach their children Korean language, perceiving Korean language use was highly important for maintaining Korean identity.

Choi's(2005) study investigated an inter-group dialect in an inter-dialect place also confirms the link between language use and identity, but using a different approach among Korean dialect speakers. Her study found that the frequent dialect users in a multi-dialectal situation had a strong sense of their local identity than those who did not use their dialect. Miller's(2000) study also support the link between language use and linguistic identity: Those who still speak mother tongue in a English speaking situation showed a strong sense of linguistic identity, but they hardly acclimated themselves to English culture.

Some Asian countries show a mass language shift to English as a result of their policy of bilingual education(Pakir, 1994). However, the language shift to English takes away the group's unique linguistic identities by reducing the use

of mother tongue. A recent study(Le Q & Le T, 2011) reports that the immigrants in Singapore who do not speak their mother tongue are giving up their linguistic identity without hesitation, which implies that the loss of linguistic identity is inevitable without using mother tongue. In short, what emerges throughout many examples is that a mother tongue use plays a crucial role in maintaining one's group identity.

When applying above studies to the Korean immigrant group, their mother tongue, Korean, is very much a minority language in Australia and English is overwhelmingly dominant in public life. Consequently, it is predictable they are in a very low exposure to mother tongue, showing negative attitudes towards mother tongue in terms of usefulness and value of Korean language. Therefore, the results of this study could be very important in terms of prediction of mother tongue attrition, and more importantly, the identification of the importance of mother tongue use in multi-lingual contact situations. Now, we need to integrate the variable of mother tongue use into the perception of linguistic identity through an empirical investigation.

III. Method

I. Participants

Eighty four Korean immigrants(44 boys and 40 girls) who have been staying in Sydney, Australia(26 students for more than 8 years, 21 for 6~7 years, 12 for 4~5 years, 15 for 2~3 years and 10 for less than 1 year) participated in the questionnaire survey. They were attending Australian secondary schools(Public: 67 students, private: 17 students). The age of the participants covers 13 through 18 and school grade ranges 7 through 12. The participants were contacted through their parents known to the researcher and then met in their house(16 participants), Korean language schools(30 participants) and Korean churches(38 participants) in Sydney, Australia.

2. Survey questionnaire

In this study, the questionnaire was designed as a survey instrument. A number of works provided a frame work of questionnaire design and the individual question content was basically drawn from the result of a review of literature(Bourhis, 1997; Choi, 2003; Edwards, 1985; Fasold, 1984; Giles and Johnson, 1987; Gardner, 1985; Hoffmann, 1991) and social science survey(De Vaus, 1995). As mentioned already in the literature review, attitudes towards mother tongue was the most reliable factor in measuring one's linguistic identity. Therefore, the questionnaire was developed reviewing the attitudes to mother tongue(e.g., the perception of their language as an important symbol of their identity and the necessity of their language for their identity, pride in culture and history and perceived positive value of their language and country). Since attitudes and linguistic identity are part of a mental state, it is true that measuring them is a difficult task and thus the use of self-reported questionnaires may have limitations with validity and reliability problems. For establishing the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, 10 Korean immigrants to Australia, who were introduced by the parents known to the researcher, participated in the pilot survey through e-mails. Then in order to check the response consistency, their results were compared to the previous surveys(Choi, 2003, 2009) which deal with the perception of linguistic identity. Furthermore, the results of the pilot survey enabled the researcher to revise and eliminate the contents and served as a check on the possible problems in the actual survey in advance.

The questionnaire consists of four sections. In order to give an outline of socio-economic background, the first section was made up of the participants' individual information: gender, name of school, school grades, resident period, and current English skills. The second section focuses on the degree of exposure to Korean: 1)whether they learn Korean after school. 2)If yes, where they learn and how many hours a week they learn; 3)If yes, how often and where they speak Korean with family members and friends and to whom they mostly speak Korean; 4)How often they have contact with Korean people; 5)How often they travel to Korea; 6)when they speak, how much they mix English words with Korean; 7)what is their degree of Korean skills.

The third section deals with the questions asking the participants' attitudes and views: 1)how much they like two language, Korean and English; 2)how they feel about the importance of the two languages; 3)how they feel comfortable; 4)how they feel good about Korea and English-speaking countries; 5)how much they like two cultures; 6)how much they like learning two languages; 7)how much they are interested in the two languages.

The final section consists of the items eliciting the perception of linguistic identity: 1)how strongly they perceive the Korean language as the symbol of Korea; 2)how much they agree that the Korean people should speak the Korean language; 3) how proud they are of Korean culture and history; 4)how happy they are with their Koreanness; 5)how much they want to learn Korean; 6)whether they agree Korean language is more valuable than other languages. This questionnaire was made up with a five-point Likert-type and written in English. The data obtained from the questionnaire survey were coded and analyzed with SPSS(Version 18.0) computer program. This questionnaire survey was done in January and February 2013 in Sydney, Australia.

IV. Results and Discussion

1. The degree of exposure to Korean language

According to the results of the survey, it appears that of the 84 participants (hereafter 'Ps') in the survey, only 15% of the Ps were learning Korean after school and 85% were not. Therefore it is clear that only the minority of the Korean secondary school students in Australia were spending time learning Korean after school. Among the participants who answered they were learning Korean after school, 13% of the Ps were learning at private colleges; 'from group coaching' for 25%; 'from their parents' for 12%; 'from church' for 38% and 'from their community' for 12%. Concerning the question as to whether they usually speak Korean, 75% answered 'yes' and 25% was 'no'. The exposure status of the participants who answered 'yes' is in Table 1.

Table 1. The Status of Exposure to Korean

	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Korean use to family	52%	28%	4%	12%	4%
Korean use to friends	4%	9%	35%	35%	17%
	At home	At school	At church	At community	
Place to speak Korean	88%	4%	8%	0%	
	Parents	Siblings	Friends	Church member	
Person to speak Korean	71%	13%	3%	13%	
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Frequency of travel to Korea	4%	4%	21%	71%	0%
	Very much	Much	Average	Little	Never
Mix with Korean	7%	21%	36%	32%	4%

According to Table 1, while they often speak Korean to family(52% of the Ps), they sometimes(35%) or rarely(35%) speak Korean to friends. Also, most Ps use Korean at home(88%) and speak to parents(71%). As for the frequency of travel to Korea, 71% answered that they travel to Korea 'rarely'. If we need to define how often they mix English with Korean, 36% of the Ps feel they mix in common and 'little' for 32%.

As a result, Ps did not have many opportunities to contact with Korean language in terms of external description of their language behaviors. Although they use Korean in second language situations, there is tendency for the Ps to use Korean language at home and with their parents, and thus Korean language could be considered as a 'home language' among the Ps. Furthermore, they do not travel a lot, which means they are unlikely to contact with Korean culture and people, but this could be a natural situation as they spend most time in schools as a secondary school student.

These results imply that the Ps use Korean less and were in a low degree of

exposure to Korean. If Sohrabi's(1997) study that the degree of exposure to mother tongue is related to the maintenance of linguistic identity is reliable, these results, the fewer opportunities for contact with mother tongue, provide a possibility that the strength of linguistic identity maintenance is weakening among the Ps. Furthermore, what we can expect from these results(a low exposure to mother tongue) is their negative attitudes towards their mother tongue.

2. Attitudes towards Korean and English

In order to identify participants' attitudes towards Korean and how they are different from their attitude towards English, the two languages were compared and the results were described here. The mean scores for each item are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Scores in Attitudes to English and Korean

Questionnaire items	Mean
1. Favoritism about the two languages	
English(FE)	4.39
Korean(FK)	3.39
2. Perceived importance	
English(PIE)	4.55
Korean(PIK)	4.18
3. Perceived comfort about the two languages	
English(PCE)	4.81
Korean(PCK)	3.54
4. Perceived positive value	
English speaking countries(PPVE)	4.39
Korea(PPVK)	4.07
5. Favoritism about the two cultures	
English culture(FEC)	4.15
Korean culture(FKC)	4.15
6. Feeling about learning the two languages	
English(FLE)	4.61
Korean(FLK)	4.00
7. Interest in the two languages	
English(IE)	4.14
Korean(IK)	4.07

(5 point scale; 5 = 'extremely and 1 = 'not at all')

The mean scores on the table 2 show that in general the participants have more positive attitudes towards English than Korean. First, in comparison between the two attitudes, e.g., favoritism about Korean(FK) and favoritism about English(FE), the Ps gave a better feeling to 'English' than 'Korean', which resulted in a very high difference in mean scores between the two languages: FE showed a 1.00 higher mean score than FK. As for the results regarding the perceived importance of the two languages, e.g., PIE and PIK, the Ps also allocated a higher rank on the scale of English. PIE received 0.37 more in the mean score than PIK.

Looking at mean scores of perceived comfort about the two languages, they perceived English is more comfortable than Korea(PCE=4.81 and PCK=3.54). These mean scores show the biggest difference among items comparing two languages. The mean scores concerning 'Perceived Positive Value about English'(PPVE) and 'Perceived Positive Value Korea'(PPVK) indicate that the Ps perceived English speaking countries to be higher in status compared to Korea, with a 4.39: 4.07 ratio for the perceived value of English speaking countries as against the perceived value of Korea. As can be seen on Table 2, only the mean scores of the favoritism about the two cultures were the same (FEC=4.15 and FKC=4.15). This result can be explained by the fact that they still speak Korean at home and with their parents, and eat Korean food and contact Korean culture. Finally, the feelings about learning and interest in the two languages, English and Korean were still in the predicted direction: English language was more favored and higher in mean scores(FLE=4.61 vs FLK=4.00 and IE=4.14 vs IK=4.07).

Overall, when a comparison was made, the two languages, English and Korean, turned out to have scores with English rating higher in almost all the mean scores except only the item of 'feeling' towards the two cultures. What we need to account for in this survey is that there is the possibility of the loss of linguistic identity, because the comparable negative attitude to 'Korean' in most items can affect their perception of linguistic identity. Their negative attitudes towards Korean, however, might be a result of a low degree of exposure to Korean, which support the fact that the degree of exposure to mother tongue is viewed as the most influential factor in attitudes to mother tongue.

3. Mother tongue use and perception of linguistic identity

As showed already, the Ps had a low degree of exposure and negative attitudes to mother tongue. Now we will look at how their perception of linguistic identity is different as per mother tongue use. In order to identify this issue, items eliciting the perception of linguistic identity(hereafter 'PLI') were analyzed and discussed below.

1) The Degree of Korean use and PLI

The question, "when you speak, how much do you mix Korean words with English" was given the Ps and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. PLI by the Degree of Korean Use with English

	Very much	Much	Average	Little	Never
PKS	4.50	4.47	4.20	3.63	2.50
NKK	5.00	4.86	4.50	4.25	4.10
PK	5.00	5.00	4.40	4.13	2.30
HK	4.00	3.33	3.63	3.50	1.50
DLK	5.00	3.86	4.40	3.25	1.70
PVKL	4.00	3.29	2.90	3.00	2.00

(5 point scale; 5 = 'extremely and 1 = 'not at all')

PKS: Perception about the Korean language as a symbol of Korea

NKK: Necessity of the Korean language for the Korean people

PK: Pride in Korean cultural history and achievements

HK: Happiness(feeling about) with their 'Koreanness'

DLK: Desire to learn Korean in Australia

PVKL: Perceived value of Korean compared to other languages

According to Table 3, the Ps who mixed English words with Korean 'very much' have a strong sense of their linguistic identity than those who 'never' code switched, as the survey data received a fairly high score throughout the indices of linguistic identity from 'very much' speakers. Furthermore, as for the relationship between the degree of mother tongue use when they speak English and PLI, the regular pattern appeared: the Ps in the higher degree of Korean use with English showed the more strong perception, compared to the Ps in the

lower degree.

For the further reliable data, the correlation analysis was carried out and it reports each item by the degree of Korean use as having a significant correlation in Table 4: PKS(0.313, $p=0.0001$), PK($r=0.211$, $p=0.05$), HK($r=0.444$, $p=0.0001$) and PVKL(0.238, $p=0.025$). This result might correlate positively with the question about whether their use of mother tongue with English in a general conversation is related to the sense of linguistic identity.

Table 4. Pearson Correlations between Korean Use and Each Item

	PKS	NKK	PK	HK	DLK	PVKL
Korean Use	0.313**	0.119	0.211*	0.444**	0.105	0.238*

* $p<.05$ ** $p<.01$

2) PLI by the general use of Korean

The next step is to see a comparison between Korean language use and the items eliciting PLI. Table 5 may enable us to identify that there is a statistically significant difference between the Ps who answered 'yes' and 'no' to the questions, "Do you usually speak Korean?".

Table 5. Whether the Ps Usually Speak Korean

	PKS	NKK	PK	HK	DLK	PVKL
Yes	4.43	4.76	4.67	3.79	4.01	3.19
No	3.14	3.86	3.71	2.71	3.20	2.43

(5 point scale; 5 = 'extremely and 1 = 'not at all')

Table 5 shows that the difference of the mean scores of the items by PLI was fairly high between 'yes' and 'no' group. In fact, it is surprising that all the items in 'yes' group showed a higher score than those in 'no' group. The Ps who usually speak Korean more strongly perceived Korean as a symbol of linguistic identity(PKS: 4.43 vs 3.14) and Korean language value compared to other languages(PVKL: 3.19 vs 2.43), and more strongly feel that Korean should speak Korean(NKK: 4.76 vs 3.86) and they were happy(HK: 3.79 vs 2.71), and had more strong pride(PK: 4.67 vs 3.71) and desire to learn Korean(DLK: 4.01 vs 3.20), compared to those who do not speak Korean. These figures also create a

possibility that the use of Korean language at home or wherever are closely associated with attitudes towards mother tongue, Korean linguistic identity.

3) Perceived Korean proficiency and PLI

Now we consider the issue of how the participants' perceived Korean proficiency is related to the linguistic identity variable. For a convenient identification, the results of an examination of the relationship between perceived Korean proficiency and each item eliciting linguistic identity were presented in Table 6 below.

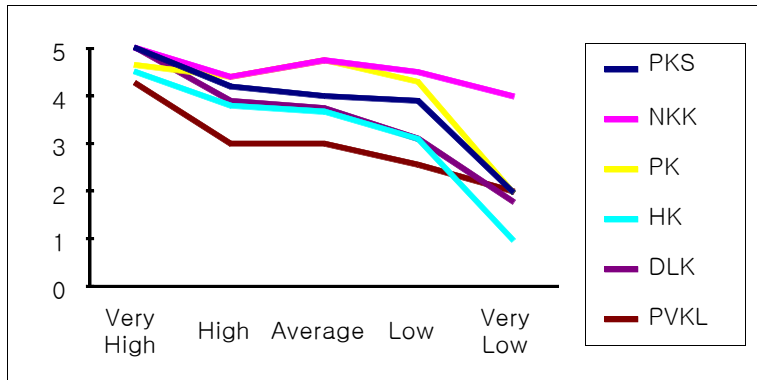
Table 6. Perceived Korean Proficiency and Linguistic Identity

	Very high	High	Average	Low	Very Low
PKS	5.00	4.20	4.00	3.90	2.00
NKK	5.00	4.40	4.75	4.50	4.00
PK	4.65	4.40	4.75	4.30	2.00
HK	4.50	3.80	3.67	3.10	1.00
DLK	5.00	3.90	3.75	3.10	1.80
PVKL	4.25	3.00	3.00	2.55	2.00

(5 point scale; 5 = 'extremely and 1 = 'not at all')

Regarding a relationship between perceived Korean proficiency and PLI, it appears each item by perceived Korean proficiency as having a significant correlation. According to Table 6, a pattern has very similar features throughout all the items, even though it is not a totally consistent. For example, when PKS, HK and PVKL are reviewed, the correlations make a regular pattern: the higher perceived Korean proficiency, the stronger perception of linguistic identity. Although the mean scores of NKK and PK did not make a regular pattern, the association between the two variables is still in a predicted direction; the mean score for those who responded 'very high' represents the highest, while mean scores of 'very low' show the lowest. For the convenient identification of the pattern of correlations, the relationship between perceived Korean proficiency and each item variable is presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. The Degree of Perceived Korean Proficiency and PLI



At the first glance, items generated to PLI show that they are in distinctive regular pattern in accordance with the degree of perceived Korean proficiency: the highest scores were in 'Very high' group, while the lowest scores were in 'Very low' group. Therefore, the results formed by Figure 1 confirms the correlation between perceived Korean proficiency and PLI,

V. Conclusion

This study aimed to identify the correlation between mother tongue use and the perception of linguistic identity among secondary school students in Sydney, Australia. For the purpose of the study, 1)their degree of exposure to Korean, 2)attitudes toward Korean and English, and 3)Korean language use and the perception of linguistic identity were examined through the questionnaire survey. The results were as follows: The degree of exposure to Korean was low as only 15% of the Ps were learning Korean after school. Korean also appeared as a home language considering the fact that most of the participants used Korean language only at home and spoke it only to their parents. In addition, the mean scores of attitudes toward mother tongue, which can be considered as the strength of linguistic identity, were low compared to those toward English. Finally, when the two factors, Korean language use and Korean proficiency were interrelated to their perception of linguistic identity, a significant relationship

was found in the survey. Firstly, the Ps in the higher degree of Korean language use when they speak English showed more strong perception of linguistic identity, compared to those in the lower degree. Secondly, the general use of Korean language at home or wherever also showed a close relation to PLI: the Ps who answered 'yes' to the question: whether they usually speak Korean, were more strong identifiers of their mother tongue, compared to those who answered 'no'. Furthermore, the competent speakers in Korean language identified their language more strongly, compared to the incompetent speakers. Based on the above results, this study carefully concludes that Korean language use is closely related to the perception of Korean linguistic identity.

However, it may be true that the results can raise reliability problems. As mentioned already, the use of self-reported questionnaires itself has limitations, and the number of participants and data collection from different places will also be problems as a method of being able to ensure the reliability of the study. Nevertheless, if the results of the study are acceptable, it is clear that if people do not use their mother tongue in a second language situation, they are likely to lose their linguistic identity. Therefore, in order to maintain one's linguistic identity, this study suggests that the degree of exposure to mother tongue should be strengthened in a particular direction as mother tongue proficiency does relate to the perception of linguistic identity. For Korean immigrants who live overseas, the use of Korean language should be recognized as one of the important factors for their linguistic identity. That may be because language use and linguistic identity cannot operate independently.

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