

한국 사회에서의 아프리카계 미국인 학생의 제 2언어로서의 한국어 학습과정

A Journey of an African American's Korean as a Second Language Learning in the Korean Community

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요약

본 연구는 아프리카계 미국인 학생의 한국에서의 성공적인 제 2 언어 학습 경험을 조사하였다. 한국에 많은 다문화 가정들이 있지만, 아프리카계 미국인 학생들의 제 2 언어 학습에 관한 연구는 부족하다. 과거에, 몇몇 미국 연구자들은 아프리카계 미국 학생들을 학습부진아들로 분석하였지만, 그들의 제 2 언어 학습의 성공적인 사례에 대한 보고는 거의 없다. 질적 연구 방법론을 사용하여, 본 연구자들은 메리라는 한 아프리카계 미국인 여학생을 인터뷰하고 관찰조사 하였다. 또한, 메리의 어머니, 선생님, 그리고 친구들을 인터뷰하여, 메리의 한국어 발달에 대하여 조사하였다. 연구 결과로 메리의 한국어 화자로서의 노력은 가족, 한국사회, 그리고 친구들의 도움으로 이루어졌다. 메리는 언어 발달에 있어서 특별한 사회적 조직적 지원들을 경험했음을 또 한 묘사하였다. 본 연구는 한국에 있는 다문화 학습자들 교육에 대한 교육적 시사점을 논의하고, 아프리카계 미국인 학습자에 대한 부정적인 편견을 극복할 수 있는 가능성에 대하여 토론하였다.

■ 중심어 : | 소수자 교육 | 제 2 언어 학습 | 아프리카계 미국인 교육하기 | 다문화주의 | 한국어 |

Abstract

This case study examines the experiences of an African American student's successful second language acquisition in Korea. There is an increasing number of multicultural families in Korea; but few research on African American students' second language learning. In the past, some American researchers have analyzed African American students as academic underachievers for learning and there is a scarcity of research on African American students' successfully acquiring a second language. With this qualitative research design, the researchers interviewed, and observed an African American girl named Mary. The researchers also interviewed Mary's mother, teacher, and peers about Mary's Korean language development. The results of this study revealed Mary's determined efforts to become a fluent Korean speaker with support from family, community and friends. Mary underwent unique social and systematic supports for her language development. This paper concludes with the educational implication for multicultural language learners in Korea and the possibility to diminish the common stereotypes of African Americans as underachievers.

■ keyword : | Education for minorities | Second Language Learning | Educating African American | Multiculturalism | Korean Language |

I. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to report how one African American (hereafter AA) student is prosperously acquiring a second language in Korea. The increased number of foreigners in Korean's educational community is becoming a huge issue, in terms of how to successfully educate and teach Korean language. It was reported nearly 120,000 international students study Korean language as of 2016 and Korean government plan to serve more than 200,000 foreign students by 2023[1]. Currently, Korean public schools struggle to academically fulfill the linguistic needs of expanding foreign students. The process of learning Korean as a second language for foreign students can be complex and it should be further investigated. This way, schools can better understand foreign students' experiences of learning Korean.

At the same time, research on AA in Korean academic settings is rare. Historically, AA students are reported as academic underachievers and have been under the deficit view in a myriad of research, essays, and books[2] and few AA have a chance to study a foreign language abroad[3]. However, the interest of AA acquiring a second language is insubstantial with limited and rare global case studies.

In addition, the AA's individual development of survival within the Korean linguistic community was rarely reported. This paper investigated one unique case study of an African American girl, acquiring Korean language, while positioning herself amongst native Koreans.

II. Literature Review

1. Multiculturalism in Korean Communities

There are some observations on how Korea takes limited and narrow approaches to multiculturalism [4-7]. Among the common critiques, the assimilation approach is consistent throughout multicultural education in Korea. This can be related to reconfirming the dominant cultural beliefs as normal and superior. While multicultural education should target every student, Korean education includes only students from multicultural families. Related to this, the notion of culture tends to be that of Korea, instead of appreciating diverse cultures. Helping minorities to acquire Korean language and culture is the main focus of multicultural education in Korea and this might have an implicit message that multicultural minorities as those in need. In this sense, there is a lack of systemic approach to facilitate minorities by only focusing on celebrating diversity within the framework of Korean stereotypes or biases toward minorities.

Table 1. Types of Multicultural Policy Related to Language and Culture in Korea[8]

Policy Objectives	Language Education	Teaching Korean for Multicultural Families
	Culture Education	Teaching Korean Conventions and Traditions
	Multicultural Understanding Education	Reducing prejudices and Raising Multicultural Understanding of Koreans
Target Population	Marriage-related immigrants	Marriage-related immigrants and their school-age children
	Immigrant workers	Immigrant workers and their school-age children
	North Korea defector	North Korea defectors and their school-age children
	Korean families	Korean parents, teachers, and their school-age children

While most of marriage-related immigrants' children can speak Korean, immigrant workers' or foreign children usually moved from other countries without previous exposure to Korean language. In this regard, understanding the Korean language learning process of a foreign school-age child will contribute to a deeper exploration of Korean multicultural education. In a more recent report on Korean multicultural policy[8], Kim pointed out that while mostly marriage-related immigrants and immigrant workers bring different language issues, their needs were not met properly with the current practices of multicultural policy.

2. The Learning Styles of African Americans

The academic achievement of AA students has been haunted by a history of denial. As [9] analyzed, the AA student has been maligned by the American educational system. Many AA students are being labeled as behaviorally challenged to learn and many are placed in special education classes, labeled as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), linguistically inferior, and measured as having a low IQ [2]. AA children have been subjected to inequality in educational opportunity for more than 100 years [10-15]. The problem also occurred in international contexts[16].

In addition, AA children have different learning styles compared to other ethnic groups [17] which require different educational approaches. The learning styles of AA children are referred to as "verve"; an orientation toward people; motoric precocity; sensitivity to nonverbal communication; and speech patterns characterized by spontaneity and participation. AA students prefer open and spontaneous learning environments and feel "imprisoned" in a highly structured classroom[6]. Also, the cognition style of AA children is one of

artistry, motoric precocity, relational and personable touch. [17] and [2] contrasted the analytical style common in regular classrooms, to the relational style, a style which reflects the strengths of the African culture. Then, we need to understand how these historical stereotypes and unique learning styles can come into play when an AA situated herself as a language learner in Korean multicultural educational context.

3. African American Students' Second Language Learning Abroad

A study showed AA students rarely study abroad but when they do so, they tend to face more traumatizing experiences than other ethnic groups[3]. The following factors were identified as concerns that affect AA students, such as personal and psychological problems; academic problems; difficulties experienced in replacing social network of family, neighbors and friends at a time when they are regarded as strangers and even intruders; cultural differences, etc [18-22]. Probably with these reasons, AA have difficulty acquiring a second language and its culture because they feel it is of no avail to them. African Americans graduating with a degree in foreign language studies are less than three percent[23]. Since the number of AA study-abroad experiences is so small, we cannot get a thorough picture of their journey of acquiring a foreign language and need to explore more not just to disrupt their stereotypes but also to envision more multicultural sensitive approach to educate this particular cultural minority group.

This paper answers the following research questions with the purposes of understanding the experiences of acquiring a second language through the lenses of a minority AA student residing in Korea:

- 1) How does Mary, a 10 year-old AA, experience learning Korean as her new second language? What are her main ways of acquiring Korean as her second language?
- 2) How does Mary cope with and develop language learning to become a member of her Korean school community?

III. Methodology

1. Research Design

This case study used a qualitative research design, based on the interview techniques of Friedan[24-26]. The data was collected through the use of classroom observation, home observation, and interviews with teachers and friends. The data was compiled by categorizing Mary's efforts in the following categories: friendship, passiveness, participation, and identity ownership (see [Table 2]). As van Lier [27] writes, advantages to the case study approach include 'attention to context and the ability to track and document change (such as language development) over time' (2005: 195). Van Lier writes that a major task of the case study researcher is that of telling the story of the case (2005: 206). Therefore, this study focused on Mary's learning a second language and understanding how she experienced the contextual factors.

2. Participant

The 10-year-old AA participant, Mary, comes from a rural town in the southern state, U.S.A. This community consisted of 36% Caucasians, 61% African-Americans, and a 3% Hispanics. Located within this town area small number of educational museums and a small variety of historical monuments where AA students can make no claims to cultural

significance. Mary relocated to Korea with her mother due to the mother's employment and has been residing in Korea for two years.

Mary has been enrolled in the Korean public school system for a year and a half, starting from the 3rd grade and is now a 4th grader. Mary's school has a very small portion of multicultural families with a total of 5 students; three Caucasian students, one Nigerian student and Mary, an African American. Her school offers a special class with an English speaking teacher for these students, due to their limited Korean. Mary now attends the mainstream classes in Korean, along with her English class.

In terms of language use, her first language with her mother is English. However, Mary's discourse with her friends is verbalized in Korean with very little utilization of her English. Therefore, her daily language usage is roughly 40% English spoken at home and 60% of her language practices in Korean. She had minimal to no exposure to Asian culture or language prior to relocation to Korea.

3. Data Collection

The data was collected through several different sources. One of the researchers interviewed Mary, Mary's mother, and a small group of Mary's best friends in school (four Korean girls), and her school teachers (a special class teacher, her English teacher, and her mainstream homeroom teacher). Several informal and semi-structured interviews were conducted with Mary. One of the researchers met with Mary and talked about her school lives, friendships, and her academic performance. Since the purpose of this interview was to get as many stories as possible, the researchers thought informal interviews were appropriate.

The researchers observed and interviewed several times four of her best Korean friends. There was one

semi-formal interview; where one of the researchers invited them to her office and asked about their interactions with Mary, their perceptions of Mary's Korean and English, etc. Also the observations of their play time in Mary's place were conducted over 10 times. They usually get together in Mary's home, after their piano lessons in the afternoon. The researchers visited Mary's home and observed Mary's interactions with her friends and mother.

The researchers visited Mary's school three times to observe her Korean and English classes. They observed one of her homeroom Korean classes and one special class, where Mary was pulled out of the main class to have individual tutoring. The researchers observed her English class. The two Korean teachers and her English teacher were interviewed concerning Mary's performance in their classes.

Mary's mother also was asked to write her reflection throughout the course of the research. She finished and submitted 6 one-page reflection journals about Mary's Korean lives and her language development.

4. Data Analysis

[24] discussed how recursive themes across the data would be meaningful to pay attention to, especially when there are multiple sources of information collected. Thus, the data collected was recursively and inductively analyzed, so as to identify emerging themes aiming to understand Mary's experiences of her second language development. All the participants' names are pseudonyms.

Table 2. Emerging Themes of Mary's Strategies of Learning Korean

Coding	Categories	Explanation of Categories
Individual Efforts	Friendship	Strong peer supports and personal friendship boosted Mary's Korean development.
	Immersion	Mary intentionally chose to use Korean only.
Unique Social and Systematic Support	Passive participation	Mary rarely participated in public settings in school. Mary chose not to address her needs in public settings.
	Mechanical literacy practices	Mary's tailored special classes were mainly constructed with mechanical practices, not critical expansion of her academic works.

[Table 2] shows emerging themes of Mary's journey. First, our data identified Mary's individual ways to learn Korean include friendship activities and immersion to Korean language and culture. Her school life showed different engagement of passive participation and mechanical literacy practices as dominant learning experiences. These themes will be explained in Findings.

IV. Findings

1. Individual Efforts to be a Korean Speaker: a Journey to be a Part of Korean Community

While there were some educational efforts that Mary's school provided to support Mary's bilingualism and her access to quality education, the identified strategies Mary used were centered throughout her individual efforts and her own active engagement with Korean language and culture. Mary's mother recalled:

Mary's after school schedule consists of piano practice, playing with her Korean friends where they take turns visiting one another's house engaging in games such as: hide and seek, wrestling, cards, and magic tricks. Mary has shown a high level of social interaction within this Korean culture. Her Korean

started to develop significantly as she attended her taekwondo and piano institutes and hanging out with the three girls. One of them are now in the same class with her and whom she brings to her place every day after their piano lessons. They talked in Korean and I started not to understand them much. (Mother's Interview 1, on May 5th)

Mary's friends also mentioned Mary's significant development of Korean:

(...)

Friend 2: 처음에는 한국말도 하나도 못하고, '응' 이라고 말 안하고 고개만 끄떡였어요. [Translation: At first, she could not speak Korean at all. She didn't say 'yes', but only nodding her head.]

H: 아, 진짜? [Oh, really?]

Friend 3: (To Mary) 그럼 영어라도 하지! [You should have spoken even in English] (meaning that Mary did not talk to them at all in any language)

Friend 4: 영어로 말하라고 해도 별로 말 안했어요. [Although we asked her to speak in English, she wouldn't say anything.]

(...)

Friend 2: 나중에는 익숙해져 가지고요 대답했어요. 이제는 한국말로만 말해요! [But later on, she answered to us once she got used to us. Now, she only speaks in Korean!]

Friend 1: 한국 게임도 엄청 잘해요! 우리랑 맨날 놀아요! [She can play Korean games really well! She hangs out with us all the time.]

H: 그럼 모하고 놀아요? [What do you do when hanging out?]

Friend 4: 드라마! [Soap operas!]

H: 아, 드라마 봐요? [Oh, do you guys watch soap operas together?]

Friend 4: 아뇨, 드라마를 우리가 짜서 비디오 찍어요. [No, we create our own dramas and make video clips.]

H: 아, 어떤 얘기 만들어요? [I see, what kinds of

stories do you make?]

Friend 2: 고양이 얘기, 무서운 엘사 얘기도 하고 그래요! [We make cat stories, scary Elsa stories!] (Friends' Interview 3 on April 30th)

(...)

Observing Mary with her Korean friends confirmed her effort to use Korean and fitting into this Korean community. In Mary's mother and her friends' interviews, Mary hangs out with this group of friends every day after school for about two hours, sharing snacks, piano institute, and playing on the playground, playing different kinds of games in Korean. It appears that her Korean developed significantly through interaction with these friends.

Mary used Korean exclusively with her friends and other acquaintances. This type of language practice was interpreted as her individual effort to fit into Korean language community. Mary's mother reflected:

Mary sometimes showed strong identity separation between her American identities with her newly emerging Korean identities as a way to fit into her new linguistic and social environment. She does not want to speak in Korean in front of me, even if I asked her to teach me some Korean. She also never wants to speak in English in front of her Korean friends. She does not want to be different from others with a language marker (Mother's Interview 3 on June 9th).

In the researchers' observation of her classes, her dominant language in school is Korean. Even when she was in a special class with other English speakers, she liked to talk to her tutor in Korean. In her English class, she was learning different kinds of jobs with the target expressions, "What does your uncle do? He is a police officer." When her English teacher asked students to volunteer to guess the particular careers in English, she never raised her

hand and appeared unwilling to speak in English. It looks like volunteering makes her feel uncomfortable and noticeable. Instead, she communicated with her group members only in Korean.

This Korean-only language practice continued outside the school setting. Mary uses the Korean language on a constant basis within the home by frequently introducing new vocabulary to the mother and how to pronounce the words. The mother states, “when I arrive home in the afternoon, she says “*anyo ha sayo*”, instead of “hello” or she now uses replies such as “*naneun dangsin-eul salanghabnida*” versus “I love you mama” (Mother Interview 2 on May 24th). These data sets were interpreted as the evidence of not only her strong effort to fit into this particular language community, but also a strong indicator of how Mary is a successful language learner of Korean. Mary was extremely adaptable and well-coped with her new environment and the illustrated anecdotes here were all consciously intended and planned by Mary. It seemed important to understand that her success was not actually about strong or organized social support, but her individual efforts to fit in and communicate with her peers.

2. Unique Social and Systematic Supports for Multicultural Students in Korea

Throughout the data analysis process, we learned that Mary’s individual efforts were not really reflected and enacted in her regular interactions. As mentioned previously about her English class, Mary rarely participated in class discussions as the following interview with Mary indicated (Mary’s Interview 1 on March 15th):

(...)

H: How do you interact with your teachers and students in class (meaning her main homeroom class)?

Mary: Nothing! I don’t say anything.

H: Oh, what do you do then when you don’t understand or have questions?

Mary: I ask my friends.

H: What about your teacher?

Mary: I don’t ask her.

H: Ok, then you mostly talk to your friends and ask them and do not usually talk to your teacher?

Mary: Right!

(...)

Mary’s interview was confirmed by the researchers’ observation of her Korean and English classes, except when directly asked question by her teachers. Mary was extremely shy and rarely talked to her classmates during the researchers’ observation. Her homeroom teacher mentioned, that “Mary does not like to be active in classes. It is not about her language, but more about her academic abilities, I would say. Something that requires critical thinking or new creative ideas! Mary is having a hard time.” This data was the direct contradictions of what her good friends shared as their play time activity where Mary took a role of creating new stories with her friends.

Also, Mary is a totally different person when hanging out with her good friends outside of school settings. Her friends commented on Mary as follows:

(...)

Friend 1: 학교에서는요, Mary 가 이런지 몰랐어요. [In school, I didn’t realize Mary is this kind of friend.]

H: 이런지 모르게 뭐지요? [What do you mean not knowing if Mary was ‘this kind of friend’?]

Friend 1: 이렇게 활발하고 웃긴 줄 몰랐어요. 엄청 웃겨요. [I didn’t know she was this active and funny. She is really funny.]

H: 아, 그렇구나! Mary 가 학교에서 말을 안해서 몰랐어요? 아니면, 한국말을 몰라서 그런가요? [Oh, I see! You did not realize that because Mary didn’t talk

much in school? Or, because she didn't speak much Korean?

Friend 1: 아뇨, 한국말 잘해요! 그런데, 우리랑 있을 때 더 잘해요! 너무 재밌어요. [No, she can speak Korean well! But, she speaks even better when she is with us. It is so fun.] (Friends' Interview 4 on May 2nd)

(...)

Here, Mary's friend 1 implied Mary as being shy and reserved in her classes, rather making Mary's actual personalities invisible. This is another evidence of Mary being less communicative and raising her own voices to her teacher and other friends.

Mary's friends also added how Mary had to invite her friends' help without strong guidance from her homeroom teachers. The researchers' observations in her school confirmed what Mary's friends discussed below:

(...)

Friend 4: 국어시간에 원고지에 써오는 숙제가 있었어요. 그런데, Mary 가 쓸 줄 몰라가지고 그냥 숙제를 안해온거예요. 그래서 제가 뭐하고 싶냐고 그러니깐 토끼에 관해서 쓰고 싶다고 해서 제가 원고지가 20 칸이 니깐 토끼 이렇게 쓰는거 가르쳐 줬는데, 선생님한테 또 물어보니깐 그러지 말고 자기에 관한거 쓰라고 해서 Mary 소개하는거 제가 가르쳐 줬어요. [In our Korean class, there was a homework on writing in squared manuscript papers. But Mary didn't understand how to use this particular paper for Korean writing. So, I asked her what she wanted to write about and she said, 'rabbit.' So this Korean squared paper consisted of 20 for one letter. So I showed her how to write 'rabbit.' We asked our teacher and teacher told us that Mary can just write about herself, so I showed her again how to write about her.]

(...)

Friend 2: Mary 가 사회시간에 빈칸 쓰는거 잘 몰라가지고, 제가 3학년 때 제 책 보여줬어요. [Mary did

not know how to fill in the blanks in social studies class. So, I shared my book with her.]

H: 친구들이 아주 착하게 많이 도와줬구나! [You guys helped Mary a lot! How kind!]

Friend 1: 리코더 부는 것도 어려워서 가르쳐 줬어요. [She had hard time playing a recorder, so I taught her.]

H: 아, 그렇구나! [Oh, I see!] (Friends' Interview 3 on April 30th)

(...)

In this transcript, we can see that Mary's friends became strong supports and we can also assume that if her regular classes included some types of systematic assistance, Mary might have achieved her learning more effectively and have engaged more in her academic work.

Meaning of Attaining Korean Language while being an AA.

According to Mary's mother, "in African American communities, it is customary to speak in a specific vernacular, such as colloquial utterances. You don't want to act distinctly differently from other African Americans, as you could be labeled as an individual who acts 'WHITE.' Acting 'white' includes learning a foreign language as well. As an African American, you just stick to your own community and do not go beyond that (Mother's reflection on May 16th)."

Here, we can see how Mary's Korean language acquisition would not be possible in American contexts, not just because of the lack of exposure to Korean culture and language, but more from the cultural boundaries as a racial being. Especially for African Americans, racial marker was the strong indicator of what you would not ordinarily do within that community. In this sense, Mary's coming to Korea decreased her risks of being different from other African Americans and in a way opened up her possibility to grow as a Korean speaker. While Mary

was still young to articulate this heavy issue, she recalled her previous life in America and imagined what her life would be, if she had not come to Korea as followed:

I want to stay in Korea forever. I really love Korea, because I feel safe compared to the United States. I sometimes heard of adults talking about crime, theft, drugs and guns. But I feel safe here (Mary informal conversation with her mother).

Also, time spent outside of the home was reported by Mary's mother as, "when she is walking down the street, she mimics other Koreans' behaviors, e.g., walking style". Mary states she is 'living in Korea'; therefore she is 'a Korean and not an American.' Mary's mother also mentioned that "I don't think Mary can come back to the U. S. A. and fit in there, because she is already very different from them and experiences living abroad, which is really rare for African Americans (Mother's interview 2 on May 24th)."

In these anecdotes, Mary's racial identity seemed to have different meanings in Korea and Mary seemed to be able to grow linguistically as she felt safe to be away of her racial identity with its special connotations and boundaries in American contexts.

In the researchers' interview with Mary's friends, they mentioned Mary as an American, but never as an African American. The researchers asked Mary's friends about Mary's ethnic identity and they playfully responded:

(...)

Friend 1: Mary 는 미국인이잖아요. 그래서 영어를 잘하니깐 좋아요. 가끔씩 영어 가르쳐 달라고 해요. [Mary is an American. So, she can speak English well. I often ask her to teach me English.]

H: 아, 그래요? 그럼 Mary 가 잘 가르쳐 줘요? [Oh, yes? Does Mary teach you well?]

Friend 1: 가끔은요. [Often times]

H: 아, 좋겠다! [Ah, that is cool!]

Friend 4: 우리 선생님이요 다문화 학생들이랑 잘 지내는건 좋은 거라고 했어요. 그래서 저는 Mary 랑 잘지 내요. [My teacher said hanging out with multicultural students is a good thing. So, I hang out with Mary well.]

Friend 3: 너 맨날 Mary 랑 싸우잖아? [You always fight with Mary?]

Friend 4: 그건 좋아서 그러는 거야. 이 미국사람!! (Mary를 보면서 장난 시작함) [Because I like her. This American!! (Looking at Mary and starting to tease her)]

Friend 2: 우리 엄마가 Mary 한테 영어 좀 배우라고 했어요. 같이 잘 지내면 좋다고 했어요. [My mother told me to learn some English from Mary. Being a good friend with her would be good, she said.]

Friend 1and3: 저희 엄마 아빠도 그랬어요. 영어 배우면 좋대요. 미국영어! [My mother and dad also said that. Learning English is good. American English!]

(...)

Mary's friends brought a special meaning to Mary's national identity and her first language. They did not seem to see Mary as an African American, but an American. They often said, "미국사람 (Americans)" and "미국 (America)." In these discourse markers, Mary was more of an American who speaks American English than an African American. This identification seems to interact with her linguistic growth as well as her seeming less burdened to enclose herself in her racial identity.

At the same time, home is a safe place for Mary to be whoever she wants to be and home is the only space where she was able to be an African American. Race is something that you can never deny, however to deny you race would be to deny your own existence. According to Mary's mother, within the home she strives to assimilate with her AA culture by asking her mother questions about their family

members and family experiences (family reunions and holidays with family) in the States. For example, her mother recalled their conversation as follows:

Many times Mary has asked about her grandfather's favorite cousin who like to sing and play the guitar. She often reflect back on family gatherings when the family was together singing and praying. Mary feels intrigued about her family backgrounds time to time... (Mother's Interview 4 on June 17th).

Also, Mary uses colloquial language (black vernacular and idioms) with the mother during peaks of extreme happiness.

(...)

Mom: hello

Mary: wats up my dear mama?

Mom: what are you doing?

Mary: nothing, chillaxin

Mary: Mom, can I wear a different hairstyle to school tomorrow cause I want to be fly?

Mom: so, you think you're cute

Mary: my name is black berry, didn't you know

(...)

Mary continues to make a cultural assimilation to the AA culture by watching black situational comedies such as: Martin Lawrence's "Martin", "The Steve Harvey Show" and Tyler Perry's "House of Payne" All three programs portray African American family and social life.

This can be evidence to suggest that a strong ethnic identity, when accompanied by a positive mainstream orientation, is related to high self-esteem, whereas without some adaptation to the mainstream it may be problematic. Therefore, the researchers can say that Mary is immersed within a society that has accepted her as a national being, because of this acceptance; Mary's self-esteem has been elevated.

V. Discussion

First, Mary's case illustrated how she was determined to situate herself into a Korean community as a Korean speaker and implement Korean-only language practice in order to fit into her current surroundings. Mary was persistent in using only Korean and seldom speaks English. Mary's Korean practices were those of immersion without making much connection to her first language. This observation seemed connected to assimilation approach of multicultural education in Korea as some scholars have critiqued as limited and narrow. Mary's individual efforts seemed to imply a new direction of Korean multicultural education through an immersion approach. The researchers conjecture about individuals making their own efforts would be the best way multicultural groups can be educated. We understand that the existence of a strong systematic support can boost the acquisition of students' second language. Mary's story provides sturdy implication for providing more than an assimilation approach, which bring in both of their first language and second language for academic success, whereby students can have educational opportunities to develop both their first and second languages.

Second, we can see that previous research shows AA struggles in education have been reported and their unique learning styles have not been appreciated. In Mary's case, we can imply that if AA is exposed to a highly motivated environment for second language learning and other academic activities, they can be engaged in academically challenging works as Mary has done herself. This analysis demonstrates that stereotypical images of African Americans can be untrue and should be interpreted with more dynamic interaction with social contexts and prevalent norms around AA. If adequate opportunities are introduced, they will learn and

should not be stigmatized for their unique cultural styles of learning. Mary's engagement in education showed a counter-example of previous research about African Americans.

Third, it was interesting to notice that while Mary's individual efforts were rewarded, we were interested to know if her active involvement with bilingual language practices might have stronger educational effects. Throughout our observation of her school life, the researchers perceive that she needs to get more first language support, as well as Korean language learning. If this happens, Mary would be exposed to a better quality of education that advances her linguistically as well as meeting her academic needs. Mary would have strengthened further with extensive reading, elaborate discussions in English and learning concepts or abstract academic knowledge in English. Thus, academically her metacognitive ability to articulate the English language would be more engaging. In this sense, bilingual approaches to learn Korean and English would have been an important consideration for Mary.

Fourth, Mary's cultural identity seemed to have complicated interactions with her second language acquisition. Mary seemed to foreground her national identity-American, more than her racial identity. In the Korean context, she was more American than African American. Situating herself as a national being seems to help her Korean acquisition. In the process, she did not demonstrate the unique learning styles of African Americans. If she had stayed and gotten her education in the U. S. A., she may not have been able to feel less marginalized because of her racial identity, which stereotyped her in a rather negative manner. She might have been stigmatized for her individual efforts to learn a second language as she tried to be different from other African Americans. This racial identity not only has strong

influence for Mary's second language learning, but it also provided her with unique meaning of being a particular racial being in a particular social context.

VI. Conclusion

Acquiring Korean as a second language was achieved from Mary's strong efforts. It was interesting to view how most of her Korean development seemed to be enacted as she initiated her own exposure to Korean culture and language-speaking environment. This research found that the participant's individual effort and tenaciousness were the strong factor of Mary's becoming a Korean speaker. A Korean-only learning environment seemed to have had some detrimental effects for Mary, as she could not obtain both her first language and second language supports. Furthermore, language and identity were strongly connected for successful language acquisition and unique meaning of what it means to be an African American. Thus, should be carefully explored in different language learning contexts.

This study was conducted without the notion of representing all African American students' cases for second language learning and is not meant to stereotype or denigrate AA children. Also, these findings are not to generalize other AA students' language learning experiences. More cases of successful studies of African American language learners should be examined, in order to modify the negative stereotypes from maligned. It would also be meaningful to follow up on Mary and other foreign students with similar experiences to see long-term impacts of second language learning. To conclude, more research is essential to examine the AA students' approach of acquiring a second language in Korea.

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