

# Heritage Language Learning Trajectories and Multiple Influencing Factors: A Multiple-Case Study of University-Aged Korean Canadians

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Résumé de l'article

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## ***Heritage Language Learning Trajectories and Multiple Influencing Factors: A Multiple-Case Study of University-Aged Korean Canadians***

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### *Abstract*

This study explores six university-aged 1.5 and second generation Korean Canadians' varied heritage language (HL) learning experiences and the factors that encourage and discourage HL learning in Canada. Drawing on sociocultural perspectives (Duff, 2007, 2019; Norton, 2013), this multiple-case study reveals the core HL learning domains of home, friends at school and ethnic communities, Korean media, and university classes and various familial, sociocultural, and transnational factors. The participants' HL learning trajectories fluctuated depending on life environments, accessibility to HL learning, and their identities and different responses to social factors. This study also underscores the importance of educational inclusivity of HLs.

*Keywords:* heritage language, sociocultural perspective, identity, 1.5 and 2nd generation, higher education, social justice

A growing number of racialized immigrants and demographic changes in Canada over the past few decades have brought unprecedented diversity to classrooms (Statistics Canada, 2017a) and the educational inclusivity of cultural and linguistic diversity has become a challenge for education. Despite multiple definitions of heritage language (HL) (see He, 2010; Ortega, 2020; Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003), HLs often stand for all immigrant languages except for English, French, and Indigenous languages in Canada (Cummins & Danais, 1990), which this study employs. In educational settings, HL is generally employed as “a language spoken in the home that is different from the main language spoken in society” (Bilash, 2009, para. 1). The Canadian multiculturalism policy declared in 1971 is construed to encourage the linguistic diversity and immigrant families' HL maintenance, viewing HLs as familial and national resources. Yet, linguistic minorities seem to be assimilating into the mainstream faster and language loss may be taking place more quickly than the generally accepted three generations (Jedwab, 2014).

Scholarship has investigated various individual, academic, familial, social, and national benefits of HL development and maintenance, stressing the importance of HL maintenance (e.g., Guardado, 2010; Guardado & Becker, 2014; Kang, 2013; Lee & Suarez, 2009; Park, 2013; Tse, 2000; Wong Fillmore, 1991). Studies have also revealed numerous linguistic, individual, familial, and sociocultural factors which facilitate and hinder HL learning and development, through various approaches such as sociolinguistic perspectives and usage-based approaches (see Flores et al., 2020; Lynch, 2014). Language development largely relies on the amount and quality of “exposure to relevant language input” (Ortega, 2020, p. 27), but HL learners are exposed to unbalanced input while becoming dominant in the main language in society. HL learners display more variation in their HL learning processes and outcomes,

influenced by multiple factors (Montrul, 2018). The factors are combined in complex ways, reflecting individually and socially different contexts (He, 2010; Duff, 2019). This perception still challenges what factors facilitate and hinder HL learning (Ortega, 2020), calling for HL research to advance more comprehensive inquiries to understand “the multiplicity of relevant linguistic, social, and contextual variables” (Flores et al., 2020, p. 9).

Alongside the sociocultural turn in second language education, the role of identity appears pivotal to language learning (Norton, 2013). Recent research in HL education has provided insight on the interplay between identity and HL learning, the different ways of HL learning, and how HL speakers are positioned in social circumstances which often do not value HLs (e.g., He, 2003; Hornberger & Wang, 2008; Park, 2011; Polinsky, 2008; Shin, 2016). How HLs and HL speakers are positioned in their social domains and the ideologies they are exposed to influence their bilingual identity development (Seals, 2018). HL learners are caught within various social factors and dealing with these factors are interlocked with their identity construction, which in result crafts their unique HL learning trajectories. The role of identity in HL learners is critical to understanding HL learning processes (Hornberger & Wang, 2008), and thus there is a need for further research on varied HL learning experiences situated in different social contexts (Duff, 2019; He, 2010; Lynch, 2014).

This study aims to better our understanding of the different ways of HL learning and the multiple factors of HL learning, which can lead to HL maintenance. This study particularly explores university-aged 1.5 and second generation South Korean Canadians in a mid-sized city in Manitoba through their retrospective reflections. It examines the factors that encourage and discourage HL learning and how learners negotiate social constraints and opportunities for HL learning, thus shaping their learning trajectories. Due to the short history of Korean immigration in Canada, less is known about Korean descendants’ HL learning in Canada, especially in a context with a small Korean population and limited social resources for HL learning. Current HL research needs to portray various communities’ experiences with different HL populations by taking their varied social contexts into account (Duff & Becker, 2017). The findings of this study can enhance our understanding of how to facilitate immigrant students’ HL learning, informing immigrant families, ethnic communities, education program developers, and educators and emphasize the importance of educational inclusion of HLs.

The following research questions guide this study: 1) What are 1.5 and second generation Korean Canadians’ HL learning experiences in Canada and what were the main domains for the Korean Canadians’ HL learning and practice?; 2) What sociocultural, political, and other factors do 1.5 and second generation Korean Canadians perceive have encouraged or impeded their HL learning and practice?

Despite various definitions of 1.5, and second generation, which often indicate differences in bilingual development (see Ortega, 2020; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988; Tse, 2000), for this study, 1.5 generation represents individuals who have arrived in Canada before the age of 13 and second generation means those who are born in Canada to Korean immigrant parents (Danico, 2004). HL learning represents language learning practices conducted in HL and HL learning practices refer to all cognitive and physical learning activities and psychological processes of thinking (Shin, 2015).

### *HL Learning and Various Factors*

The critical factors of HL learning and development often include age of immigration or age of onset of bilingualism, parental education, SES, and birth order (e.g., Ahn et al., 2017; Armon-Lotem et al., 2015; Kim & Pyun, 2015; Montrul, 2008), parents' attitudes and home environment (e.g., Kang, 2015; Park & Sarkar, 2007), community engagement (e.g., Leeman et al., 2011), ethnic and cultural identity (e.g., Lee, 2002), school ideologies and teachers' attitudes (e.g., Seals, 2018; Yilmaz, 2016), and societal accessibility to HL learning (e.g., Becker, 2013). However, debates on the critical factors are ongoing due to the varying contexts, dynamics among factors, and methodological issues (Duff, 2019; Flores et al., 2020; Ortega, 2020).

Scholarship has observed that children in early years have strong HL abilities, but they weaken with chronological age (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). A shift in the dominant language often follows once HL speakers start formal schooling due to its greater assimilative forces. In many Korean immigrants, parents' priorities on English and academic achievements commonly function negatively for HL learning (Kang & Kim, 2012). However, as Jeon (2008) states, Korean HL learners began investing in their HL in universities, likely when they had reached English mastery. Similarly, He (2006) states that Chinese university HL students are "ready to embrace their cultural heritage from the past, they are eager to learn Chinese HL" (p. 19). HL development is an ongoing process through one's lifespan and this notion requires the need to capture the long-term HL learning trajectories with contextual factors (He, 2006, 2010).

The traditional domains for HL learning involve home/parents and ethnic communities. However, since each family's and ethnic community's environment varies, these domains cannot guarantee HL development. King and Fogle (2013) highlight the role of family language policy through the language socialization perspective. Yet, according to Guardado (2013), a strict policy may be ineffective, as children can resist parental coercion in Hispanic Canadian families. Parents' attitudes and consistent use of HL is a common positive factor for children's HL development across different ethnic groups (e.g., Kharchenko, 2018) but as Kang (2013) finds, there can be disparity between parents' actual practice of HL and their attitudes to HL. Seemingly assumed positive functions of home/parents can hinder children's HL learning due to their ideologies favoring English over HL (Yilmaz, 2016). This complexity suggests the need to focus on the dynamic interplay of various factors (Duff, 2019).

Studies affirm the critical roles of learners' ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities in HL learning, suggesting the importance of social supports for immigrant children's bilingual identity development (e.g., Lee, 2002; Leeman, 2015; Phinney et al., 2001; Shin, 2015; Tse, 2000). These findings often place importance on educators' roles to help students develop their HL user identity in schools and communities. Schools' and teachers' negative attitudes towards HLs can discourage HL learners' identities and their HL learning. The marginalized positions of HLs alongside the limited social resources for HL learning in certain communities can "shape the inequitable multilingual learning experiences of HL speakers and their minoritized communities" (Ortega, 2020, p. 41). HL researchers, Ortega argues, should consider the lack of social accessibility to HL learning in each geography through a social justice lens.

The poststructural view of identity has broadened our understanding of identity as multiple and in-flux, valuing learners' human agency (Norton, 2013). As Hornberger

and Wang (2008) argue, HL learners have multiple identities which are contextually negotiated, contested, and (re)shaped, responding to social contexts. As such, this study explores individuals' varied HL learning experiences to better understand the interplay of multiple factors, alongside the role of identity and equitable access to HLs.

### *Korean Immigrants and Korean HL in Canada*

Korea has been one of the top ten immigrant source countries for Canada over the last two decades. As of 2019, there were 241,750 Korean immigrants in Canada (Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019), and about one third arrived between 2000 and 2006 (Chan & Fong, 2012). In 2016, Korean ranked fifth with over 90% of immigrants retaining their mother tongue in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017b). However, due to the large component of the first-generation population, these statistics do not accurately reflect the HL development of 1.5 and second generations.

There has been an increase in Korean language learners with the proliferation of Korean language programs at postsecondary institutions in Canada for over a decade (Cho, 2017). Less commonly taught languages such as Arabic, Tagalog, and Korean have shown growth in university enrolment in North America, responding to the increasing diversity (Leeman, 2015). The increase in Korean programs also reflects the rising global popularity of Korean pop culture such as music, films, and television dramas, which has generated many foreign language learners of Korean across the world (Cho, 2017). The growing Korean programs cannot be equated with an increasing number of HL learners, yet increasing Korean programs provide opportunities for more HL learners to explore the Korean language (Shin, 2015).

This study is unique due to its focus on the long-term HL learning experiences of university-aged students who are situated in a mid-sized city in the Canadian prairies. There have been a handful of studies on Korean immigrant children's HL maintenance in Canada, but most Korean HL studies have explored community programs, home, and parenting, focusing on school-aged children while investigating the perspectives of parents, teachers, and administrators (e.g., Cho, 2008; J. Kim, 2015; M. Kim, 2015; Park, 2009). This study responds to the research gap by probing university-aged HL learners' long-term experiences, focusing on their own perspectives (Duff, 2019; Ortega, 2020). Young adulthood is critical in terms of one's self-discovery associated with larger sociopolitical contexts and their cultural and linguistic identity (Kang & Lo, 2004). University-aged adults can construct narratives that help them make sense of their identities given the social contexts (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), thereby analyzing the meanings of social contexts in HL learning.

Moreover, most researchers also focus on the contexts of metropolitan cities such as Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal, where over 85% of Korean immigrants in Canada are distributed. To illustrate, Park (2009) highlights the roles of Korean churches and parents' attitudes towards young children's HL maintenance in Montreal. Kim and Duff (2012) explore Korean Canadian university students' HL learning alongside bilingualism in Vancouver. Jang's (2019) ethnographic study shows optimal environments for children's bilingual development at a Korean church in the GTA. Education in Canada is administered at the provincial level, suggesting a contextual difference. This study thus adds information to the existing literature in the particular context of a mid-sized city in Manitoba with a small Korean population. By reporting on the meanings of the participants' first institutional HL learning experience at a university, this study also highlights the importance of institutional HL education.

### *Theoretical Frameworks*

This study employs sociocultural perspectives in language learning. Socioculturalists understand that language and culture are understood as tools for sharing social values, norms, and thoughts (Atkinson, 2019; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), and as Duff (2019) states, “there can be no learning - or human existence - in a contextual vacuum” (p. 6). Participation in sociocultural activities and language practice in the linguistic communities are the product and the process of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998), and the source and structure of language learners’ sociolinguistic knowledge are embedded in daily practices in which learners engage (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Language learning is a socioculturally situated practice that occurs between specific speakers situated in specific sociocultural contexts (Norton, 2013). Larger sociocultural research hence investigates “social structure, hierarchy, ideologies about language, issues of inclusion/exclusion, human agency” (Duff, 2019, p. 7). Sociocultural perspectives also highlight the role of identity in language learning (Norton, 2013). Thus, the multifaceted aspects of identity and the role of social contexts and HL learner agency in crafting their HL learning are often delved into in HL education (Seals, 2018).

Language socialization also suggests a useful frame for understanding individuals’ language learning. Language socialization is “a process by which individuals acquire, reproduce, and transform the knowledge and competence that enable them to participate appropriately within specific communities of language users” (Lee & Bucholtz, 2015, p. 319). Socialization is an ongoing process that spans one’s entire life (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) through one’s engagements in particular linguistic communities.

HL learning can be understood through learners’ substantial participation and interactions in multiple practices/communities such as parents, siblings, peers, instructors, and (ethnic) community members, whose responses to the learner construct the learner’s language development and social roles. How the learners construct meanings in relation to the sociocultural contexts is a core aspect in understanding their HL learning experiences (Duff, 2007, 2019). In this process, HL socialization takes place so that the learners become gradually competent culturally, linguistically, and behaviorally (Guardado, 2018; He, 2008). HL learning is thus grounded in each learner’s constant ongoing adaptation to various social activities and identities in their social worlds (He, 2010).

These theoretical frameworks allow me to explore how 1.5 and second generation Korean Canadians socialize/participate in the linguistic communities, how they deal with the sociocultural surroundings, and how they can access HL in the given contexts.

### *Methodology*

This study employs a multiple-case study, where each participant comprises each case (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995). In the field of second language and HL education, cases are studied to understand individuals’ experiences within a particular linguistic context, focusing on sociocultural, discursive, and personal aspects (Duff, 2014).

This study is situated in the Korean language program at the University of Manitoba. The Korean population in Manitoba was approximately 4,545 in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2017c). The University offers introductory and intermediate Korean

credit courses. As the first Korean instructor since 2011, I observed an increasing number of Korean Canadians desiring to take Korean courses. There are two weekend community Korean language programs in Manitoba, but they are non-credited and mainly consist of younger children. Thus, university Korean courses are the first formal HL learning opportunity for most Korean Canadians in Manitoba. The Korean classes are a mixture of heritage and non-HL learners, and approximately 10% to 15% of the classes (about 2 to 4 students) consist of HL learners.

Following the rigor of the university Ethics Board, I recruited six participants consisting of four 1.5 generations and two second generations based on convenience and purposeful sampling (see Table 1 for the participants' profiles). The participants satisfied 1 and 2 or 3: (1) those who took any Korean language course at the university; (2) 1.5 generation Koreans who migrated to Canada before they had completed elementary school in Korea; (3) second generation Korean Canadians who were born in Canada.

I had kept in touch with some former students, so I personally contacted them to recruit and asked that my contact information be passed along to other prospective participants. I recruited only those who had completed the Korean courses to avoid any power relations between instructor and student. Each course is a two-semester-spanned course, and this long-term commitment often created rapport between instructor (myself) and student. I invited eight prospective participants and six replied to my invitation. Five participants were my former students, and one participant was not. Despite some critiques such as researcher's bias in data collection and interpretation (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009), my insider position has contributed to this study in terms of better understanding of their backgrounds, HL proficiency, and the trust between researcher and participants.

To attain multiple perspectives of the situatedness of the participants' HL learning, I also recruited four community leaders who were dedicated to Korean communities and HL education through convenience and purposeful sampling and contacting people who I already knew. The community leader participants have led Korean community organizations in Manitoba such as Korean community language schools and Korean ethnic churches, and provided insights as community leaders as well as parents of their own 1.5 and second generation children.

Table 1

*Primary Participants' Profiles*

	1.5 generations (N=4)				Second generations (N=2)	
	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3	
Name	Jung-Ah	Steve	Ariel	Minny	Jen	David
Age	26	23	21	26	23	20

Sex	F	M	F	F	F	M
When they left Korea	12y	11y	5y	7y	Born in Winnipeg	
Current Position	Nurse	Student	Student	Master's student	Accountant	Student
Language use for family interactions	Mainly Korean for both parents & siblings		Mainly Korean for parents/English for siblings	Both English & Korean for Parents/English for sibling	Predominantly English for both parents & siblings	

In-depth interviews from the primary participants were the main data source. Researcher's reflection journal entries were also collected and triangulated with the interview data. For in-depth interviews, I created semi-structured open-ended interview questions, but the interview protocol differed among participants depending on their backgrounds. Five had three face-to-face interview sessions with each session lasting about 2 hours between 2017 and 2018, while one participant, Steve, participated in written interviews upon his request.

All the participants chose pseudonyms and selected English as their interview language. Each interview was audio recorded, and once the transcription for each participant's interviews was complete, member checking was conducted. For the community leaders, I conducted one 2.5-hour focus group interview. They chose pseudonyms and used Korean as their interview language, and I transcribed and translated the interview into English and then conducted member checking.

The data analysis was informed by Stake's (1995) methods of categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, and "through experience and reflection" (p. 77). Instead of using software, I read transcripts multiple times with intervals with interview field notes, coded key words and phrases, and found emerging themes from each transcript. I coded the emerging themes of each transcript into numbers according to the related research questions, and sorted them accordingly (Creswell, 2007). The focus group interview transcripts, my reflective journals, and field notes from interviews were also coded, and salient themes were generated from the collective data. There were two levels of analysis of within-case and cross-cases. Each case was treated individually, and cross-case analysis was conducted. I focused on the complex configurations within each case and understood the particular and local conditions, and then identified patterns surpassing cases (Yin, 2014). Finally, natural generalizations were formed as conclusions (Stake, 1995).

I recruited multiple cases and used multiple data methods and sources and member checking to address validity. I reported the study in detail and used overlapping methods to address reliability. My insider position and engagement in prolonged and



in-depth observations with the participants contributed to my credibility. Lastly, I provide detail of the local contexts in which the participants and the researcher are situated, in terms of transferability (Mills, 2007). The small number of participants may create limitations in generalizing the findings, but the goal of this multiple case study is to better understand the complexity of each case.

### *Findings and Discussion*

Each participant's life experiences revealed the complex interplay of familial, sociocultural, and transnational contexts, which shaped each participant's particular HL learning trajectory. The participants are categorized into three groups based on their duration of time living in Korea, language choices for family interactions, and HL maintenance levels, which are interlocked: (1) Group 1: 1.5 generations who left Korea over age 10 and used predominantly Korean for family interactions; (2) Group 2: 1.5 generations who left Korea under age 10 and used both Korean and English for family interactions; and (3) Group 3: second generations who were born in Canada and spoke mainly English for family interactions. The participants' proficiency levels of Korean were based on their self-evaluation and my previous observations as the instructor in the Korean courses.

#### *Group 1: Home Language Policy and Daily Practice for Family Interactions*

Jung-Ah, who works as a registered nurse after graduating from university, immigrated to Canada at age 12, while Steve, an undergraduate student, left Korea at age 11 and migrated to Canada after living in the U.S. for 3 years. This group showed the highest HL maintenance and proficiency in all language skills due to their formal education in Korea and their daily practice of Korean at home.

This group's HL learning was characterized by strict home language policy and consistent practice of Korean for family interactions at home. Both used Korean at home in almost 100% of their interactions with their parents and siblings, which they viewed as critical towards contributing to their HL learning and maintenance in Canada.

Jung-Ah expressed, "[even] with my siblings I mainly speak to them in Korean," and "I like speaking Korean, and I don't want to lose it. I prefer to speak Korean at home because that's the only opportunity I can speak Korean because I don't have Korean friends." Jung-Ah, however, reported that her father pushed her to acquire English as quickly as possible once in Canada, while discouraging interacting with Korean friends until high school, when she had acquired English proficiency. Jung-Ah further developed Korean skills and knowledge of Korean culture by regularly consuming Korean media, but she perceived her proficiency of Korean as stuck at the level she attained when she moved to Canada. She expressed, "I felt a little ashamed that I'm not able to fully express myself in Korean...because I'm starting to shy away from speaking Korean other than [with]...my family members." Jung-Ah reported language anxiety in using Korean outside the home, due to her lack of opportunities to practice Korean in other social settings and her shy personality.

Steve also emphasized the strict home language policy and daily practice at home as the key contributor to his HL learning:

I think it would be beneficial overall to have the parents emphasize learning Korean, at least on a usage, because of the idea of maintaining tradition and pride of our roots. My parents had rules to speak only Korean in our home which helped me a lot to keep my Korean fluent.

Steve's HL learning involved various social domains beyond the home: interaction with other 1.5 generation Korean Canadians at school, various Korean media, attending a Korean community school, and frequent visits to Korea. His wide participation in multiple domains helped his confidence with Korean, and he had the highest Korean proficiency among the participants.

*Group 2: Different Contexts, Assimilation, and HL Learning Pathways*

Ariel, an undergraduate student, left Korea at age 5, then lived in an English-speaking country in Europe for 5 years, and then moved to Canada. Minny, a graduate student, has lived in Winnipeg since age 7. This group showed heterogeneity in their HL learning pathways; Ariel assimilated into her Korean friend group at school, while Minny's HL learning involved mainly the home. For interactions with parents, Ariel used mainly Korean, but Minny used both Korean and English, and both participants used English with siblings.

For Group 2, home was the primary domain for their HL learning where they practiced Korean, but their parents did not enforce any strict home language policy, despite their positive attitude to children's HL maintenance. Ariel recalled:

[In Europe, my mom] just kept reading together... it was an ongoing process... After we came to Canada, she didn't teach me [Korean] that much. Just like general speaking at home. In Canada I did 한글 학교 (Korean school)...[at] the church that my father worked at...I did on and off because I didn't really like it.

Her father was a minister at a Korean church, so Ariel felt more encouraged to learn Korean. Regardless, Ariel's meaningful HL learning took place through her socialization with Korean friends at high school. She recalled:

There was a shift of friends and...changing views... because from that point I started hanging out with more Korean friends and Asian friends. It was around that time that I started watching Korean dramas and listening to Korean music, from high school Gr. 10.

Her Korean friends encouraged Ariel to learn Korean and Ariel desired to assimilate into the Korean friend group who was proficient in Korean and Korean culture, and share similar cultures, values, and interests such as Korean dramas with them. Ariel's case signifies how Wenger (1998) explains learning takes place as "an encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities' membership" (p. 158).

Minny also reported that her mother taught her Korean for a few years after their migration to Canada. She recalled:

They would always show us, even now, [Korean] historical dramas... that was one way for us to listen to Korean. When we were kids, she made us have 일기 쓰기 (Writing journals). She made us write to our grandparents in Korean regularly.

However, Minny pointed out the negative impact of her parents' busy life on her HL development as they began running a convenience store. Minny recalled that "there wasn't a lot of family involvement teaching Korean," thus, although they "tried to...juggle things," "it just didn't work out." In fact, the community leader participants unanimously recognized the negative impact of Korean immigrant parents' busy lives on their children's HL learning. Also, for Minny, linguistic assimilation into English

was more important than HL learning for her school life. Minny reported that she realized the value of HL and bilingualism beginning from high school and this maturity helped her register for the Korean course at the university.

### *Group 3: Self-discovery of the Meanings of HL Learning*

Jen, who works as an accountant after graduating from university and David, an undergraduate student, were both born and raised in Winnipeg. Both had a relatively low proficiency and use of HL and spoke English at home and their parents neither taught Korean nor enforced a home language policy. These different parental commitments clearly contrasted to those of 1.5 generations' parents.

Jen, who was from a working-class background, reported that her parents never encouraged HL, family conversations, and academic achievements, unlike many other Korean parents. Jen used English almost 100% for family interactions, her younger siblings used only English while her father used only Korean, and her mother used mostly Korean. Due to her parents who spoke only Korean, Jen developed Korean listening skills, so she expressed, "there's no problem," in communication.

Interestingly, Jen's HL learning began with her sudden interest in Korean dramas in Gr. 5. Her parents loved watching Korean dramas, so Jen started watching them together, and this sparked her motivation in learning Korean. Jen reported:

Starting in Gr. 5, I started taking an interest in Korean dramas... I watched this one drama, *쾌걸춘향* (Delightful Girl, Chun-Hyang); the first drama I watched is my favorite, I watched it like 3 times... Then I started watching more things ... that's when I started learning Korean too. *I decided I wanted to learn* [emphasis added].

She highlighted, "that also determined what path I took. I could have become like my sister or my brother," who cannot speak Korean at all. Although she strived to fit in with the mainstream culture, and felt embarrassed by her Korean background at school, ironically, Jen desired to learn Korean by herself. She further took university Korean classes, as she had never learnt Korean "formally."

Similarly, David's parents never forced him to speak Korean. He recalled, "I just want to speak in English with my friends, why do I have to learn Korean? If my parents just force me to talk [in Korean]... I can be rebellious." David's parents instead sent him to a community Korean school. However, he quit the school after several years since he felt a language barrier where most students were 1.5 generations who already spoke Korean, and the teachers used only Korean in classes. Also, David distanced himself from any markers of Korean identity such as Korean language, since being Korean was not "cool" at school.

David's real HL learning started when he entered university. Alongside a shift of friends, he started engaging with Korean friends at a Korean church, who also attended the same university. David realized similar educational goals and values shared among other Korean Canadians, and his desire to be accepted in the community pushed him to learn Korean. He expressed:

It's the biggest motivator, and the biggest contributor to my Korean language abilities and my learning drive. Without these communities, I believe there are no reasons to learn, practice Korean. Embarrassment drives me. Disappointing my fellow members in the community drives me... if anyone is not in a community that shares a language... they're not going to learn it.

This group's HL learning was initiated by their own realization of the need to learn Korean through self-discovery of the meanings of HL rather than their parents' desires.

Examination reveals the key domains for HL learning in Canada as home, Korean friends at school and ethnic communities, Korean media, and university Korean classes, with varying levels of engagement. The findings highlight the critical roles of Korean media and the university classes across the three groups. Notably, the findings also show a language shift from Korean to English in Group 3, although their language choices at home reflected the dynamic interplay of the multiple factors surrounding the participants.

Next, I present the influencing factors on their HL learning. Although the factors are categorized into encouraging and discouraging factors based on their interpretations, the factors were dynamic, thus, sometimes conflicting, and mutable rather than being fixed dichotomously.

### *Encouraging Factors*

*Parents and home environments.* Parents and home environments are often regarded as most critical for immigrant students' HL development and family socialization (Cho, 2008; Guardado & Becker, 2014; Kharchenko, 2018). Home language policy also plays a role in HL maintenance (Kang, 2015). This study found that the parents' consistent spoken use of Korean functioned as the common encouraging factor across the three groups, which helped the participants exposed to Korean daily. The 1.5 generations' parents clearly enforced a Korean language policy for family communication, while the second generations' parents primarily provided oral communication in Korean without having a strict policy or teaching their children Korean at all. This difference seemingly corresponded to the participants' different HL maintenance levels. However, although some 1.5 generations' parents taught their children reading and writing when they were younger, most parents practiced Korean orally rather than through writing or reading, which is congruent with a line of studies (e.g., Carreira & Kagan, 2011; Kang, 2015).

HL socialization in each participant's home was also noted. All the families maintained Korean culture, lifestyles, and values, and the participants learnt culturally appropriate ways of greeting adults, use of accurate kinship terms, and cultural practices such as holidays. Jen said, "If I say hi and just wave, it feels a little bit rude, the culture is different. You should say 안녕하세요 (Hello), bow a little bit and then go." Jen always used Korean when she referred to cultural terms (e.g., 제사 (ancestral memorial), 설날 (New Year's Day)), kinships (e.g., 작은 아버지, 작은 어머니 (uncle and uncle's wife)), and Korean food (e.g., 김치 찌개/볶음밥 (Kimchi stew/fried rice)). David also called his older sister "누나 (older sister)" instead of calling her name because he learnt that it was rude to call one's older siblings by their names in Korea.

*Interactions with coethnic Korean friends at school.* Korean friends at school functioned positively to the participants' HL learning. The high school period appeared critical to many participants since they were assumed to have acquired English, their parents loosened their control over their children's language use and thus, many participants began embracing HL. Most participants found similar educational aspirations and cultural values with other Korean friends, which helped them acknowledge the importance of being Korean and knowing HL. Ariel reported, "I wanted to keep up with my friends and be able to follow up with them, talk with them

and write and they encouraged me to do that.” This finding suggests implications for parents who restrict their children from interacting with other Korean friends due to their priority on English.

However, not all participants chose to interact with Korean friends when they encountered the opportunity. David resisted associating himself with Korean students, for example, when they invited him to perform Taekwondo on school culture day, as being Korean was not “cool” at school. Jung-Ah felt disparities with the newly immigrated Korean friends, so she avoided interacting with them. Whether the participants accepted or refused the HL learning opportunities was complex, depending on their identities and life priorities. Individuals respond to the contexts, reflecting on what is more important and what resources are available to perform their identities over time (Chee, 2003; Norton, 2013), and this impacts their HL learning.

*Non-coethnic friends who were positive to Korean culture.* Studies suggest that non-coethnic peers at school who respond positively to linguistically diverse students may help the students learn their HL and cultural identity (Lee, 2013; Vietze et al., 2019). Many participants in this study experienced a positive influence of non-coethnic friends on their HL learning. This phenomenon was often found with friends with Asian backgrounds as many participants felt secure about sharing their HL and culture with Asian friends, due to similar phenotypes, cultural values, and shared experiences as immigrants. Jung-Ah reported:

K-pop started getting really popular. My [Asian] friends were saying get into it and they are watching dramas and it gives me something to talk to them about or I can share with them, all of the cultural things related to that... I’m just happy that I have friends who are very open to my culture and it’s very important.

Community leader participants also expressed the critical role of peers in Korean Canadians’ HL learning and identity formation through their experiences as parents observing their own children and seeing young adults in their communities experiencing peer pressure; when peers’ views on Korea and Korean culture are positive, this strongly influences Korean Canadians’ pride in their heritage, helping them invest in their HL and culture.

Meanwhile, Minny experienced her monolingual Caucasian friends’ acknowledgement of her bilingual ability in high school, which boosted her pride in knowing Korean. Minny expressed, “It was really nice, having that advantage of knowing a different language because I knew my Caucasian friends didn’t have that...They’re always fascinated when I call my parents and I talk in Korean.” As Maher (2005) argues, the use of HLs by ethnic minorities can be regarded as “cool” in the highly multicultural cosmopolitan area, suggesting their multilingual identities. The participants realized the value of uniqueness and difference living in a multicultural society as they grew up, as Guardado (2018) asserts.

*Engagement in ethnic communities.* Korean churches play crucial roles for Korean immigrant families’ HL dissemination (J. Kim, 2015; Park, 2009; Park & Sakar, 2007). This study found that involvement in ethnic communities such as ethnic churches or Korean community schools functioned positively for the participants’ HL learning in the long term, although their interpretations of their experiences at the communities evolved over time. David began investing in Korean through his

participation in a Korean church. He expressed, “my first time involving myself with other Koreans, that’s what helped me realize that I needed to learn Korean, although it is discouraging at times.”

However, recall that David withdrew from the community Korean school when he was younger. As Lee (2002) states, Korean HL learners feel that the community weekend HL programs are not effective as it is a class that the host country may not value. David had experienced a similar situation but began reinterpreting the meaning of the Korean school positively with maturity. Considering immigrant parents’ busy lives and lack of social opportunities to learn HL, community leaders highlighted the pivotal roles of ethnic communities.

*Regular consumption of Korean media.* The participants’ regular consumption of Korean media such as Korean TV dramas, K-pop, and movies appeared as one of the strongest factors that encouraged the participants’ HL learning across three groups. They learned Korean to understand the entertainment and the embedded cultural aspects presented in the media. Steve reported, “I keep up with the new terms, slangs, trends, and events in Korea by watching...Korean variety programs.” Jung-Ah emphasized, “I can sense the change of language... I’m aware of how language is changing,” and she updated herself on the changes in language and culture in Korea. Kim and Duff (2012) describe that 1.5 generation Korean Canadians acquire contemporary Korean language by consuming Korean TV shows and Korean music and embracing Korean fashion trends. My participants highlighted the importance of their transnational territory where they negotiate their broadened identities as transnational consumers of the cultural products as well as learn Korean.

*Global popularity of Korean pop culture and local acknowledgement.* The participants also expressed the positive impacts of the global popularity of Korean pop culture and ensuing local acknowledgement of Korea(ns) in their HL learning. The global popularity of the Korean cultural economy, including K-pop and TV dramas, has surpassed the geographical and linguistic realms (Kim, 2013). The participants were mindful of this global phenomenon, as they felt the local acknowledgement of the Korean culture; they included locals’ interests in Korean pop culture, the increasing number of Korean restaurants, and Korean music on a local radio program. David described, “it helps other people’s perspective on Korean people, like wow, they make great music, they’re great dancers, so talented...In that sense, I see the positive impacts about learning about my Korean heritage.” The participants who had rarely experienced any recognition of Korean culture before, sensed the dramatic shift in the local climate toward Korea(ns), thus, they incorporated this global factor into their motivation for HL learning.

*University opportunity to learn Korean.* Institutional opportunities to learn Korean at the university proved to be a critical factor for the participants’ HL learning. The university Korean classes were the participants’ first institutional HL learning in Canada, so they felt “fascinated”, “surprised”, or “excited” about the Korean courses, and utilized this opportunity to engage with Korean formality and writing practices in which most participants felt weak in. Ariel mentioned, “I improved a lot in writing, my spelling got better, my grammar got better. That was a huge improvement...” David viewed the university class as a “blessing” as he could invest in HL without feeling any

peer pressure unlike during his adolescence. The participants also perceived that inclusion of Korean in the university curriculum denotes social recognition of Korea. Jen expressed, “in high school there was more interest [compared to middle school], so the value [of Korean] goes up a little bit...Then [in] Korean class in university, the value goes up more [as it is an official course].” Institutional inclusion of HLs reflects the power relations among various immigrant ethnic groups and social views on HLs (Duff, 2008), and the school curriculum accords values to each language through inclusion/exclusion of certain languages (Apple, 2004).

*Canadian multiculturalism.* This study found the positive influence of Canadian multiculturalism on HL learning. Ariel reported, “multiculturalism influences language learning. If there wasn’t any multiculturalism, you wouldn’t want to learn, you’d want to stick to Canadian language and culture.” Most participants perceived multiculturalism as an overarching ideology, by which they could claim their HL, culture, and equity, although they felt multiculturalism needs to be practiced more for HL education. As Cho (2017) describes, multiculturalist discourse supports ethnic minorities to achieve their perceived “duty” of learning HL, and many participants perceived this effect in their HL learning and cultural maintenance.

*Transnational trips to Korea and personal factors.* Visiting the parents’ home country can be effective in immigrant children’s HL maintenance (M. Kim, 2015; Song, 2012), although this factor relies on financial stability, time availability, and the existence of extended family in the home country. My participants reported that their trips to Korea enhanced their interest in learning Korean, reinforcing their knowledge of the language and culture. Some participants explicitly underscored internal motivation and desire as key for their HL learning. Jen reported that her strong desire drove her to learn HL, since her siblings in the same household never initiated learning Korean by themselves. Personal components can be critical for language learning because one can ‘accept’ or ‘resist’ the contextual factors (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

### *Discouraging Factors*

*Priority on English and adjustment stress.* The participants’ priority on English and adjustment stress in school environments appeared as the most prominent hindrance for HL learning and development. This well-known factor is often compelled by parents’ desire for their children’s academic and social success, which requires mastery of English (Kang, 2015; Kouritzin, 2000). This stress could be greater for the 1.5 generations since they immigrated from Korea to Canada. Steve mentioned, “Educational pursuits, mainly intense English-related activities. Writing essays is very hard, interviews can be stressful, and English examinations always make me motivated to pursue English more than Korean.” For the second generations, this phenomenon occurred earlier around when they entered school, which often leads to replacing their HL with English at both home and school, as Lee and Shin (2008) find.

Many Korean immigrant parents prioritize developing English for their children’s social success, despite their value of bilingualism (Shin, 2005). Brown (2011) thus states, “Immigrant parents’ self-imposed hegemony of English over HL thus reinforces the implicit societal message for their children” (p. 31), and parents may function as a suppressor of HL learning. This factor should be understood as a combined effect of parental, cultural, school, and social contexts.

*Others' perspectives and lack of social opportunities to use/learn Korean.* The participants reported others' perspectives, which were manifested by peer pressure at school, as hindrances to HL learning. Others' views of Korean language and culture largely influenced the participants' attitudes to their HL. Most participants strived to fit in with the school environment, and HL could function as a marker of difference, which hampers their integration into the mainstream. Minny recalled, "As a kid I always wanted to be more Canadian to fit in better and have white people food and watch white TV..." She invested in English to avoid the stereotype of FOB (Fresh off the Boat), at the cost of her HL. Similar to Shin's (2016) findings, the second generations seemed most vulnerable to others' views, thus, they distanced themselves from their heritage to assimilate into the mainstream. Jen reported, "other parents...speak in English, but my mom speaks in Korean...I don't want her to speak Korean in front of my friends." However, their perceptions evolved with their maturity throughout high school or university. Group 1 appeared least influenced by the dominant group's views as they never avoided their HL and culture.

Lack of social need and opportunities to use and learn Korean in Manitoba also hampered their HL learning. The local context, where there is a small Korean population and no access to institutional Korean programs before university, negatively influenced their investment in HL. For example, in Toronto, there are large Korean communities and institutional opportunities to learn Korean in public schools. Minny recalled, "junior high only offered Spanish and French, and high school too," and no participants had any opportunity to access Korean classes at schools. As Becker (2013) states, social opportunities to access HL is critical as the environments impact HL learners' motivations and attitudes towards HLs.

*Ethnic gatekeepers and elders.* Korean adults or elders could function as gatekeepers, discouraging the participants' HL practices. Most participants experienced that elders or first generation adults, who responded negatively to young Korean Canadians and their lack of HL skills, impeded the participants' motivation to learn HL. Ariel reported, "they criticize other people... if you can't speak Korean and have some accents, they would look down upon you." The age hierarchy embedded in the language also challenged the participants' willingness to practice Korean. David mentioned, "there are times I would say something that's not respectful. So, I was quite fearful of talking to the elderly," thus encumbering his practice of Korean. When the participants experienced gatekeeping from ethnic members, they usually chose withdrawal from the communities, which resulted in deprivation of HL learning opportunities. Park (2011) finds similar gate keeping factors in the Korean church, which prevented 1.5 generations from becoming legitimate members of the church, thus limiting their identities. Some community leader participants perceived that young Korean Canadians should be able to speak Korean, suggesting the essentialized relation between HL and ethnicity, which can create young Korean Canadians' refusal to HL practices.

*Use of a dialect.* Use of a Korean dialect could discourage HL learning. Jung-Ah mentioned, "all my friends are speaking like standard Korean. And they... make fun of a bunch of people speaking dialects and stuff..." Dialects can be regarded as inauthentic forms of Korean and users of dialects are placed inferior to standard language users (Kang, 2013). Thus, the learners struggle with producing the forms



constrained by the standard language (Hornberger & Wang, 2008), and this situation creates marginalization of the HL learners' diasporic life trajectories and their own use of HL (Jo, 2001). Some participants reported their perfectionism or shy personality functioned as hindrances to their HL learning.

### *Implications and Conclusion*

The findings of the study contribute to our understanding of the multiple influencing factors of HL learning and the varied HL learning trajectories, which reflect the participants' identities and their unique ways of negotiating social factors for HL learning. Each participant's HL learning experience fluctuated depending on an interplay of multiple forces in social domains such as family, friends, school, ethnic communities, and transnational realms, and the forces often interacted with each other, creating complex permutations.

This study shows that a factor can have both positive and negative functions, linked to other micro and macro factors. For example, engagement in communities encouraged HL learning, but judgmental gatekeepers and age hierarchy in these communities hindered HL learning. Home can produce both positive and negative forces simultaneously, and parents' low commitment to HL maintenance is analyzed as a multifaceted result of familial, social, and economic factors such as priority on English, employment status, or parents' well-being. In this regard, the common approach of macro and micro levels of analysis, and other conceptual tools in understanding the sociocultural factors in HL learning can be problematized, since seemingly stable macro factors can occur on different scales (Duff, 2019).

The findings demonstrate the critical roles of parents, friend groups, ethnic communities, schools, transnational media, and institutional HL classes, generating suggestions for stakeholders. Parents can help immigrant children navigate multiple domains for HL learning ranging from friend groups to transnational media, while challenging the subtractive approach, where attaining English costs HL loss. Immigrant parents should further actively seek resources to build a financially and emotionally healthy home where children can maximize their ethnic capital, and this requires accessible social support for immigrant families. Considering the limited social opportunities to learn HL, leaders of ethnic communities can play an important role, for example, by creating HL programs connected to official institutional credits. Community members should discard the essentialized notion that all Koreans should be able to speak Korean, acknowledging the diverse ways and stages of HL development, thus supporting bilingual identity.

As evidenced in the study, identity plays a role in whether immigrant students accept or refuse their HL and is strongly influenced by school environments and others' perspectives. Teachers should be aware of the socio-affective needs HL learners have, explicitly acknowledge the value of each HL with the asset-based pedagogy, integrating immigrant students' diversity into curricula. Teachers, thus, can help HL speakers feel valued as bilinguals in communities and schools (Seals, 2018). The underlying ideologies and biases that teachers and students presume should be debunked openly with the social constraints surrounding linguistic minorities.

This study particularly highlights how institutional HL classes represent social recognition of immigrant students' HL and identity. For some participants, the university program was a "blessing" as the most optimal period for HL learning compared to childhood learning due to reduced peer pressure and greater efficiency.

Education program developers can advance various formats of HL programs such as online HL classes or community jointed credit programs reflecting the needs of the student populations. HL educators should encourage HL learners to reflect on their language choice in different contexts and any hindrances to their identities and HL development. As seen in the critical role of transnational media, HL educators and learners should utilize various educational modes including media, TV dramas, and music.

HL learning is a continuing trajectory through life beyond the childhood period (Keh & Stoessel, 2017). Instead of ‘what is given,’ ‘how much is given’ should be understood for linguistic minorities’ HL development (Polinsky, 2014). This argument is extended to a claim for greater social responsibility for educational inclusion of HLs, besides in the home and communities, calling for the adoption of the social justice lens (Ortega, 2020). This study demonstrates that providing social opportunities to learn HLs contributes to the practice of Canadian multiculturalism and HL maintenance, which help preserve national resources of linguistic diversity in society. HL education innately implies bilingualism, which has invaluable individual, social, and national benefits (Canadian Heritage, 2016; Duff, 2008).

Future research should continue to explore long-term HL learning experiences and influencing factors with varied HL populations and other HLs. Research into the roles of identity and different identity practices regarding HL learning needs to continue as identities reflect the interplay of various social and ideological factors over contexts. Finally, comparisons of different sites and provinces in Canada can depict the different sociopolitical realms in HL learning.

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