

Parental Language Ideologies and Affecting Factors in Bilingual Parenting in Korea

Youngjoo Seo*

Seo, Youngjoo. (2021). Parental language ideologies and affecting factors in bilingual parenting in Korea. *English Teaching*, 76(1), 105-124.

This case study investigated parental language ideologies and the underlying social and familial factors affecting the construction of attitudes toward bilingual parenting and how the parents' ideologies affected the formation of family language policy and home language practices. Numerous familial factors were examined, such as parents' socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and relationships with their children, as well as social context factors. The results of the study suggested the interconnectedness of the parents' beliefs with the status of the English language in Korean society and the role of family capital in supporting English language use at home. Several factors affecting bilingual parenting were also investigated, such as parents' language proficiency, available learning resources, and parents' consistency in parenting, and use of English as the medium of communication at home. The results may resonate with the experiences of many Korean parents who have been practicing home bilingual education or are planning to do so in the near future.

Key words: parental language ideologies, family language policy, bilingual parenting

This work was supported by the BK21 Four Education for Social Responsibility (ESR) Program through the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) under the Ministry of Education (NRF-F21SH7305018).

*Author: Youngjoo Seo, Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Education, Pusan National University; 2, Busandaehak-ro 63beon-gil, Geumjeong-gu, Busan 46241, Korea; Email: yjseo0922@gmail.com

Received 27 December 2020; Reviewed 28 January 2021; Accepted 16 March 2021



© 2021 The Korea Association of Teachers of English (KATE)

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0, which permits anyone to copy, redistribute, remix, transmit and adapt the work, provided the original work and source is appropriately cited.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the Asian financial crisis of 1997 and intervention of the IMF, neoliberal ideologies have intruded deeply into Korea society and individuals' lives. In this climate English has advanced beyond being a symbol of social status to serving as a critical indicator of ideal citizenship in the global society (J. S. Y. Park, 2010). Thus, Korea's neoliberal transformation was a response to the national project to boost Korea's economic power by promoting national competitiveness. Moreover, neoliberalism is associated not only with the shared benefits of one nation, but also with the commodification of its individuals.

Koreans believe that enhancing individual competitiveness is a key to achieving individual goals. As English continues to gain status as a hegemonic language, intra-national competitiveness within Korea outstrips inter-national competitiveness for global power (Byean, 2015). Given this "indexicality of English" as a global language, degree of English competence has become a "sign of a globally oriented person" (J. S. Y. Park, 2010, p. 26). Therefore, Koreans tend to think that the best way to maximize one's human capital in a globalized world is to invest sufficient time and effort into improving one's English competence. Nevertheless, the promise of English has received criticism from many scholars like Pennycook (2006), who has referred to the underlying ideology of the promise of English as the false promise or the English collusion, and Tollefson (1991), who has criticized the idea that acquiring English will yield economic benefits with the argument that the process of language learning itself is laden with unequal power relations.

The growing power of English as a global language accelerates the differences in access to education resources, so, as Nunan (2003) comments, children "whose parents could afford send them to private, after-school language classes" receive far richer English learning opportunities than those whose parents cannot (p. 606). As in most Asian countries, there is considerable inequality of access to English language instruction in Korea (Nunan, 2003), exacerbating the gaps between the haves and have-nots within one nation or city. Koreans are highly aware of these social inequalities that control access to English instruction.

Referring to the "economic capital" which gives middle- or upper-class parents access to special educational opportunities, J. S. Y. Park (2011) describes people's awareness of the power relations at play in the significant impact of class background on Korean learners' chances to achieve high English proficiency by studying abroad to be taught by native speakers of English in English-only contexts. Byean (2015) criticizes this stratification of opportunity in the Korean education system, citing it as clear evidence of how the combination of English frenzy and the ideology of neoliberalism as a driver of globalization has sparked "a class-based English divide" among students (p. 875). Despite

these negative perspectives on the assumptions underlying the push for English language learning and associated social problems, the English promise has remained a main language ideology of Koreans.

As Korean parents' obsession with English education may disrupt the balanced development of their children, they should be aware of the need for an eclectic approach to their children's English language learning. Meanwhile, one solution to the economic stratification of English learning opportunities and resulting in inequalities is the newly emerging global trend of bilingual parenting, called 'maternal English education' (Seo, 2020). Along with this trend, not only parents' socio-economic status but other factors such as the linguistic environment of the family and parental attitudes towards language(s) are becoming crucial factors in children's successful bilingualism. Therefore, it is necessary to examine Korean parental ideologies concerning English education and the sociocultural factors affecting their beliefs and behaviors in raising Korean-English bilingual children.

In terms of family factors in children's bilingual development, the relationship between parents' socio-economic status and children's language education and their second language acquisition has been commonly studied (Baik, 1992; Demick, 2002; J. K. Park, 2009; Park & Abelmann, 2004). Given the great influence that parents have on the language development of young children, it was considered important to identify the underpinning ideologies and home literacy policy, especially non-native English-speaking parents who prioritize child-adult relationships and provide English home activities. Moreover, along with social status of the parents, other forms of family capital (e.g., parents' level of educational attainment and the network of social relationships within the family) can also be effective in their children's language development and academic performance (Ren & Hu, 2013).

Considering that very young children spend most of their time with their parents, their language acquisition is heavily influenced by their parents' language use. However, relatively little attention has been given to the effect of parental language ideologies on children's balanced bilingual development within the home domains and how dynamic family-internal factors interact with broader sociolinguistic environments. To fill this gap, this study aims to examine how parents' attitudes towards the English language and bilingualism impact their language policy decisions and how Korean parents foster their children's bilingual development through home English language practices in a monolingual context.

In this study I set out to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the Korean parents' reported attitudes toward the English language and the importance of English proficiency in Korea?
2. What factors contribute to the construction of their parental language ideology?

3. How does the parental language ideology affect their processes of family language planning, practice, and management?

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. Language Ideologies and Family Language Policy

Silverstein (1979) defined linguistic ideology as “any set of beliefs about a language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (p. 193). Language ideologies have been considered as the most significant underlying forces in language management and practices (King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008). Language ideologies include beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about socially shared language in a community, and these mirror the interests of a particular group in a society (Piller, 2015). Over several decades the notion of language ideology and language attitudes has received much research attention across disciplines, addressing speakers’ feelings and ideas about language(s), processes of language change or shift, language identity, and language in a specific context (Kroskrity, 2016).

Being associated with the perceived value, power and utility of various languages (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009), language ideologies are considered a driving force of language policy (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; King, 2000). In research on Family Language Policy (FLP), Curdt-Christiansen (2016) has found that “raising bilingual children and achieving additive bilingualism have become many parents’ goals and desired objectives” (p. 4). Other recent studies investigating how parents’ attitudes towards language(s) and beliefs about bilingual parenting inform their FLPs (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; De Houwer, 1999; King & Fogle, 2006; King et al., 2008; Shohamy, 2006) have yielded valuable insights into the “interplay between language practices and language ideologies among family members” (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016, p. 6).

As a major index of success in a FLP, parental ideologies or attitudes, referring to the beliefs and goals that parents have for their children’s bilingual development and educational attainment (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009), are formed by the parents’ socio-cultural- (historical) background as influenced by the socialization processes in the society (Curdt-Christiansen, 2008, 2009). Parents’ beliefs are represented by their aspirations for or anticipations of their children’s bilingual development (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016). De Houwer (1999) initially proposed the notion of “impact belief,” which is the parents’ belief that as part of their responsibilities in raising bilingual children they exert control over their children’s linguistic functioning (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016).

Curdt-Christiansen (2009) proposed a representation of the interactive processes of the complex relationship between ideology, interventions and language practices within a FLP based on the two theoretical traditions: “language policy” and “home literacy” (p. 355). Citing motivation as a source of ideology that drives language policy, Curdt-Christiansen (2009, 2013, 2014) also proposed a theoretical framework for FLP research by adopting Spolsky’s (2004, 2012) concepts of four major linguistic and non-linguistic contexts: sociolinguistic context, socio-cultural context, socio-economic context and socio-political context. Therefore, in-depth research on a range of factors that determine the success of FLPs, including consistency of parents’ involvement, children’s cognitive development, and society/community support, is needed to reveal the complicated and dynamic processes of FLPs and the language outcomes of children.

2.2. Family Capital in English Language Learning

Coleman (1988) regards the family as a dynamic entity that actively transfers various forms of capital from the parent generation to the next generation. In Coleman's theory, “family background” is divided into three distinct components: *physical capital*, *human capital* and *social capital* (p. 109). Physical (financial) capital refers to material resources measured by family income and wealth, and this determines the physical environment that affects children’s academic achievement, such as learning materials, places to study, and the financial means to access the support needed to solve any difficulties in studies (Coleman, 1988). Family physical capital is a significant factor affecting the outcomes of students' academic performance.

However, Coleman (1988) cautions that physical capital is not the sole indicator for assessing provisions in the children’s home environment for their language learning. Human capital is created by development of personal attributes such as skills and abilities, which influence the ways that people will act. Parents’ human capital such as their educational backgrounds and their occupations is central to the transference of other forms of family capital to children’s language learning (Li, 2007). Based on these different roles of parents’ human capital, parents with different educational histories may bring different beliefs and expectations to their bilingual parenting practices in raising children.

Unlike the previous two components, social capital refers to the social resources outside the family that are available to the family to use for a child’s intellectual development (Coleman, 1988). Children acquire such social capital by socializing with family members within the familial structure (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Along these lines, Coleman (1988) measured family social capital in terms of family structure and parent-child interactions, such as the presence of the parents, the existence of siblings, parents’ educational and academic aspirations for their children, frequency of interactions among

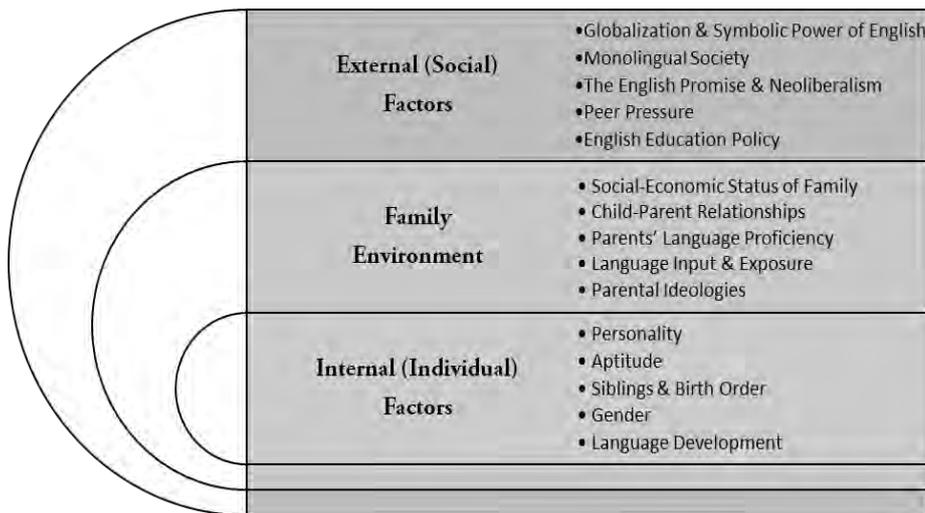
family members, and intergenerational closure (i.e., close relationships with the parents of their children’s friends) (cited in Yang, 2017).

The present study addresses the importance of family capital in children’s English language learning. As mentioned earlier, English language learning in Korea is not limited to formal schooling. It is no exaggeration to say that the Korean education system’s perceived shortcomings reinforce parents’ obsession with their children’s English education, influencing some parents to undertake bilingual parenting. All three types of family capital combine to provide a useful theoretical lens for examining the structure of the home environment for children’s bilingual development and exploring the significance of the role of each form of family capital in children’s English education in the Korean context.

For this study, Coleman’s theory will help to examine the role of the familial factors in children’s Korean-English bilingual development as well as the influence of the physical and socio-cultural environments on parents’ attitudes and behaviors. To represent diverse components of bilingual parenting and the roles of family capital and related individual child factors in children’s language development in South Korea, I created my theoretical framework, entitled “Successful Bilingual Parenting and Surrounding Factors in a Korean Context” (Figure 1) by combining Coleman’s three types of family capital (physical, human and social capital) and some parts of Curdt-Christiansen’s integrated model of a FLP framework (2009) informed by Spolsky’s (2004, 2012) language policy model.

FIGURE 1

Successful Bilingual Parenting and Surrounding Factors in a Korean Context



With this framework, I will analyze how different factors are played out in one Korean-English bilingual family, and how they help to shape different home environments and children's opportunities to acquire second language and literacy.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study addresses the questions of why Korean parents want to raise their children as fluent English speakers through language home schooling, what factors contribute to their language ideologies and bilingual parenting, and how these ideologies impact their family language policy and linguistic practices at home. For in-depth exploration of these issues, this 2.5-year case study is an investigation of how family language policy was planned, developed, and practiced in one Korean family, drawing on semi-structured interviews with a father and a mother, video recordings of everyday family language practices, ethnographic observations with field notes, and the mother's written reflections on their home English-speaking practice. To recruit a family that exemplifies bilingual family practice in Korea and generates rich data, I adopted purposeful sampling (known as purposive and theoretical sampling) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002).

My research site was one Korean family consisting of four members living in Seoul, South Korea. Korean is the only official language in Korea, and English is a primary foreign language that carries high social value. Within the Korean-dominant socio-linguistic context of this study, the father (Taehyun) and mother (Minjung) were raising their two children (Sungjin and Sujin) as balanced Korean-English bilingual speakers from birth. Although English is not an official language of Korean society, Taehyun and Minjung strived to artificially create an English-rich home environment for their two children to have sufficient opportunities to speak English. The status of English in Korea and the role of the parents in their children's bilingual development are inextricable as English plays a crucial role in the Korean neoliberalization (Byean, 2015) of education. Pseudonyms were used to refer to the participants in this study for their privacy.

3.1. Participants

My participant family consists of four members. Father (Taehyun) and mother (Minjung) of the family share the same native language, Korean, which is the dominant language of local society, but both parents regularly and exclusively speak English to their children, which is neither their native nor the locally dominant language. The father in this

case family was actively involved in bilingual parenting. According to their self-evaluations of the English proficiency, he showed relatively high English-learning aptitude and he could speak English more accurately and fluently compared to his wife. Taehyun and Minjung were born, raised, and educated in regular schools in Korea, and they did not have enough English language-related backgrounds or experiences abroad. Both parents designated English as their family home language and established family language policies to promote early childhood bilingualism through homeschooling. Taehyun worked as a high school English teacher since 2009. Minjung, who had an academic background in the study of bilingualism (Master's degree in TESOL), has been a housewife since her first child (Sungjin) was born in 2013. When her second child (Sujin) turned two, she started working as an English teacher at kindergarten.

Sungjin was born in February 2013, and is three years older than his sister, Sujin. Since his birth, Taehyun and Minjung had been exclusively speaking English to him. Except for special occasions, Sungjin's parents had provided him with only English input within the home environment since his birth. Sungjin was 18 months old when he started to get Korean input from his friends and teachers at the regular daycare to which Taehyun and Minjung sent him. The younger sister, Sujin, was born in July 2016, and the parents have applied the same language policy and home language practice with her from her birth.

3.2. Data Collection and Data Analysis

In order to establish trustworthiness in this qualitative study, I used data triangulation, with a combination of data gathering methods, including interviews, on-site recordings, and participant observation. During the data collection period, I collected 10+ hours of Taehyun's interviews, 4 hours of Minjung's interviews, over 200 messages containing her self-reflections with short-video reporting of her two children's English speaking, 20+ hours of four participant observations, and notes from frequent online communications with Taehyun and Minjung. I also used a range of methodological approaches to examine the diverse foci of the bilingual parenting of the target family. I collected data over a 31-month period, December 2015 to June 2018. These sources of family-based interactional data of the Korean family enabled me to examine the parents' perceptions of and expectations for their children's English development.

Among the multiple data sources, I mainly used interview transcripts to support the findings of the study with regard to parental language ideologies and their impact on the family language policy. The first interview for a pilot study, which was conducted with Taehyun in 2015, provided the groundwork for my understanding of the ideological factors underpinning the family language practice and management. Subsequently, I conducted

interviews with Taehyun and Minjung to learn about their personal language learning background, attitudes towards English, and their home bilingual practices.

I conducted thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews of the parents (either in person or online) to understand their experiences, attitudes and concerns of parents regarding their Korean-English bilingual parenting strategy. As a very flexible method, it gives a considerable advantage given the diversity of work in learning and teaching. All audio/video-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. As data for case studies need to be recursively reviewed throughout the data analysis process (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1988) and the analytic cycles of a qualitative study do not follow a linear sequence but rather they are recursive and iterative (Yin, 2015), I read through the whole data repeatedly and cyclically.

I first read each interview transcript carefully, identified codes, and grouped them into categories following Yin's (2015) analytic phases (compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding). I began by formally arranging all data in a useful order. Next, I broke the arrangement into smaller segments to which I assigned codes. Following Saldaña's (2016) coding, categorizing, and interpreting processes, I identified major themes and labelled them. Then I used the scheme I developed to code the transcripts myself and identify salient themes while composing analytic memos.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. English as Linguistic Capital

English is a foreign language in Korea, but the status of English is as high as an official language, and having fluent English proficiency is regarded as essential preparation for competing with others on the academic or financial starting line. In general, to become a fluent English speaker, a child needs parents who can pay for supplementary education whether as tutoring, attending private institutes, or traveling or living abroad. Thus, the socio-economic status of the parents is closely associated with foreign language achievement. As Taehyun understood the importance of parental support on children's achievement of bilingualism, he sidestepped substantial financial investment, which perhaps as a teacher he could not afford, he was determined that he and his wife could create an English learning environment at home and in daily life for their children to experience from birth.

English is still very important, as one of the essential subjects during the school years. What we can do for our children is offering home bilingual

environment. At the same time, this way of bilingual parenting encourages me to study English more. In conclusion, we are all beneficiaries of this family language policy (Taehyun's Interview)

Although Taehyun did not think that having good English was the only option for achieving a successful life, he had no doubt that English would help their children achieve their goals. Moreover, because his motivation for bilingual was related to his efforts to overcome what he perceived as his own weakness he believed that his dedication to his children's bilingual development and perseverance in implementing his family language plan benefitted the whole family. At the same time, he did take possible negative aspects into account:

Being raised as a bilingual...? It's a kind of scaffolding for my son. Whatever he does in the future, English skills would be a "spec" [bonus or premium] for him. I haven't thought about more than that. Of course, English could impact him negatively. For instance, I'm worried whether some people might make fun of his English...or my son can be confused in his language identity. (Taehyun's Interview)

While acknowledging that he could not predict the long-term effects of his project, he remained convinced that English skills were beneficial and criticized the Korean English education system for its inability to narrow the gaps between the haves and have-nots regarding education as well as Korean society itself.

One more thing that I want to add is [that] this [parents' desire for English education] cannot be solved with Korea's public education. This [issue] results from the structural inequality, and the different [levels of] parental involvement in language education may also lead to linguistic inequality. That's because of the structural problems in Korea. (Taehyun's interview)

Throughout his interviews, Taehyun repeatedly mentioned this structural inequality that every Korean understood and perhaps censured but inevitably accepted.

4.2. Parental Scaffolding in English Language Development

There is another commonly shared myth among Koreans that a child who gains "premium English" within his/her family will start one step ahead of others in any competition. Therefore, Minjung, a mother of two children, did not consider any

challenges or struggles she faced in the process of bilingual parenting as problematic as long as her efforts positively influenced her children's language development. That is, it was important to Minjung to prevent Sungjin from going through any difficulties because of lack of English skills.

This is the easiest way for my son to learn English. Thanks to our support, he will not need to spend huge amounts of money and time on learning English [later]. The point is to reduce his effort in English learning. I don't care too much about our efforts. Rather, I think we are so lucky that we can do this for our son. (Minjung's Interview)

This excerpt shows that Minjung's sincere love for Sungjin motivated her to go beyond ordinary parental responsibility and make extraordinary efforts to provide a good learning environment for her son. As both a knowledgeable professional and committed mother, she considered the best way for his son to learn English was to experience minimal stress and maximum happiness while learning with parental support.

My son only learns something that catches his attention, either Korean or English. He is so simple. The best way for him to learn English efficiently is through parental input. Who can take care of him other than us? We can wait for him with patience, meet his needs, and provide one-to-one interactions. In particular, my husband is so kind and patient as he tries to listen to everything that Sungjin says. So, I haven't thought about other ways like English institutes or learning from others. (Minjung's Interview)

With regard to the parents' strong belief in speaking only English at home, Taehyun expressed similar attitudes with Minjung. Here is Taehyun's response to my interview question. I asked him to explain more about his parental beliefs about language learning and advice he would give to any Korean parents wishing to practice bilingual parenting as his family was doing.

This [home immersion in English] could hardly fail [if practiced] before the critical period passes...at least before middle school age. This has theoretical underpinnings and is a sensible method. I cannot understand why people have negative attitudes toward this kind of understandable and easy way. Of course, this would rarely be achievable without parents' resolve and consistent efforts. (Taehyun's Interview)

As Taehyun had been practicing his family language policy for years, whatever challenges he faced, he did not think his way of parenting was abnormal. Rather, he complained about people with negative attitudes toward his way of bilingual parenting, arguing that maintaining parental commitment to practicing English-only in family interaction constantly is the key to children's success.

As Korean is dominantly used in Korea, [whatever] English input the parents can provide to their children contributes to their successful bilingualism. When it comes to accented English, I don't much care about it. Everything should be as acquired naturally, mainly with the parental input. Sometimes my son watches [English] TV, but I don't think the media impact is powerful. (Taehyun's Interview)

In the excerpt above, Taehyun's reference to "accented English" suggests that he did not place much emphasis on his son's pronunciation and whether it reflected a non-native variety of English or was influenced by Korean. Rather than focusing on native pronunciation, which might inhibit family communications and hamper the child's bilingual development, he emphasized the importance of extensive language input and language use in direct interactions between child and parents at home.

4.3. Good Parenting: Offering Good English-Learning Environment

Achieving perfect proficiency in both Korean and English, becoming the so-called "perfect" or "balanced" bilingual, was Taehyun's ideal. From his own experience, he knew how difficult it was to learn a foreign language after reaching puberty. Regardless of his persistent efforts to improve his English, both personally and professionally, Taehyun believed he would never achieve native-like English proficiency. Therefore, Taehyun's goal was for his son to speak English without any L1 transfer or need to translate from Korean. Taehyun claimed that he and his wife were the main source of their son's English education. Rather than sending his son to an expensive private institute, he was providing an English-rich home environment, spending time and effort instead of money.

I know... I have high expectations toward Sungjin's English development. I want him to speak English like a native speaker. To achieve our goal, my wife and I've decided to do bilingual parenting at home. Some rich parents can send their children abroad with the high cost. If the parents can afford to do, this (children bilingualism) can be achieved without big challenges. (Taehyun's Interview)

Working as an English teacher for almost 10 years, Taehyun had observed many students from different family backgrounds who were fluent in English. He acknowledged that there are alternatives to bilingual parenting, such as sending children abroad early or providing private tutoring by hiring a native English speaker at home. But whether parental support involves financial investment in tutors and supplementary programs or direct intervention in the home, both approaches require parental engagement the provision of “parental habitus,” which reproduces social privilege.

On one hand, as a teacher, Taehyun criticized the inequality in the Korean education system, which perpetuates inequality among social classes. On the other hand, Taehyun was proud that he and his wife could provide sufficient language learning support for their children to get ahead. Despite Taehyun’s and Minjung’s ten-plus years of English learning experience, they thought they could not reach native-like levels of competence and so did not fit the Korean notion of a good language model for children. Nevertheless, Taehyun began to plan concretely to make his home an English-speaking environment.

This author compares a family to an island. ... That is to say, the family is the last resort to protect the target language from outside world. The author argues the only persons who can protect the language from the environment surrounding them are the parents, at least, until the child grows up. The main concept of the book was exactly the same as what I thought. (Taehyun’s Interview)

Having studied bilingual theory in the university TESOL program, Taehyun and Minjung could easily understand *Be Bilingual*, a well-known book on parental efforts to raise children who speak more than one language. Convinced of his project’s plausibility, Taehyun began to develop his ideas while Minjung was pregnant. He now claimed:

My son lives in the English world that I’ve provided since his birth. He grows on the English island that I create for him to be the way I want him to be. (Taehyun’s Interview)

Thus, Taehyun viewed his unborn child as a creature that he could shape, which he thought would be easy until he/she reached school age and started to be directly influenced by peers. Based on his own childhood language learning experience in his undergraduate and graduate English studies, Taehyun believed that for perfect foreign language acquisition, learning should start as early as possible before lateralization of the brain occurs. Throughout his interviews, Taehyun often expressed his regret that, although he thanked to his father for inculcating the importance English speaking skills, he had not

begun learning English much earlier in an English-rich environment. Furthermore, as an English teacher, he strongly believed that English would be a major asset in their children's future schooling, careers, social lives, and financial success. This strongly positive attitude toward English education led him to initiate the early bilingual home project hoping that it would help their children enjoy successful lives.

5. DISCUSSION

The current study is an examination of parental language ideologies and underlying social and familial factors affecting the construction of attitudes toward bilingual parenting and how the parents' ideologies affected their formation of family language policy and home language practices. The present study was designed to examine the roles that parental language ideologies and parents' attitude towards children's bilingual education played in both family language policy and home language practices. To explore how parental ideology affects bilingual parenting at home, I examined both numerous familial factors, such as parental socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and relationships with children, as well as social context factors that might influence parental attitudes toward the English language and English education.

The results of the current study suggest that the following family-related factors may strongly influence parents' bilingual parenting and home language practices: (1) parents' beliefs about the relative status of the target language in the society and their instrumental/integrative motivations for promoting English language learning in a monolingual context; (2) parental cultural capital such as language proficiency, available learning resources, and social networks for supporting English language usage at home in a Korean-language dominant society; and (3) both parents' consistent use of English and provision of a rich linguistic environment in conjunction with positive psychological support in a given context.

The findings of the current study show that parents' attitudes toward children's English education are heavily influenced by their socio-cultural backgrounds and the context in which they are currently imbedded. Given the social influence of Korean national policy on language education during Taehyun's and Minjung's early childhood, it seems very likely that their parents were perhaps unconsciously influenced by the government policy (*segvehwa*) in the 1980s, which attempted to boost the national economy through English education nationwide. Inheriting this desire for English fluency in relation to Korea's neoliberal ideology in the years of rapid economic expansion, Taehyun and Minjung dealt with diverse English-related challenges as they were instilled with the high social value of

English in Korean society from their schooling to their teaching lives, perhaps without considering possible hidden costs.

The education reforms of Korean government permeated Korean society to such an extent that Koreans believed in “the promise of English” (J. S. Y. Park, 2011) and passed their faith in this form of linguistic capital from one generation to the next (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). According to the extra interviews with the parents about their stories in early childhood, the English premium ideology seemed to be mostly passed from both sets of their parents to Taehyun and Minjung, who enacted that ideology through their attempt to create an English-rich and English-only home environment for their children’s English education.

The findings of this study also show that throughout his life, Taehyun had a dream of speaking English like a native speaker, and his way of bilingual parenting represented his own desire to have natively like English proficiency. For insight into his beliefs about the English language and English learning, prevailing notions of the concept “native speaker” should be critically considered. Phillipson (1992) described the dominance and promotion of English in Korean society and Koreans’ desire to have natively like English skills as “linguicism,” an ideology and related practices that legitimate and reproduce asymmetries of power and resources among groups based on language (Skuttnab-Kangas, 1988). It is also necessary to take a critical view of Taehyun’s belief that children should learn English from birth surrounding them with English-only environment to achieve an excellent performance as a school subject and as a medium of communication since it can be one of the common myths in foreign language learning (Phillipson, 1992).

However, it must also be taken into account that Taehyun and Minjung were English teachers. As non-native English speakers in English education, Korean English teachers are inevitably struggling with their status in this profession because of a bias against non-native speakers. Thus, his aspirations were not only for his children but for all members of the family, reflecting the general association of English fluency with upward mobility and self-efficacy. In sum, Taehyun and Minjung’s strong beliefs about English education and the benefits of natively like proficiency derived from the Korean education policy aimed toward improving national economy since the 1980s, and their aspiration for their children’s English education led to their family language policy.

Assuming this perspective, Taehyun and Minjung decided to act on their ideas of raising their children as bilinguals so as not only to avoid a financial burden but also, by active parental engagement in home linguistic practices, minimize potential social and individual problems associated with English learning. Taehyun’s basic principle was that learning the target language through authentic interactions with people was most efficient and effective (Schwartz, 2010).

One's attitudes toward acquiring a language and the concomitant learning experiences are often directly influenced by family background, particularly parents' beliefs and their social status in childhood. Coleman's (1988) family capital theory, outlining how children receive cultural capital through socialization in the family, is pertinent to how Taehyun and Minjung intended to endow their children with linguistic capital from their birth, which is to be transformed into cultural capital and ultimately utilized to improve their lives.

Employing English as a tool for family communication as well as the parent's emphasis on the children's English learning increased interactions among the members. Using English among themselves not only brought the family closer together but also provided an environment of love and support, which was an important element in their bilingual parenting. Such positive parent-child relationships provided an important form of social capital utilized in educating children, illustrating the importance of activating family social resources for the children's benefit through parental involvement and mutual family interactions (Coleman, 1988).

6. CONCLUSION

The present study suggests that Taehyun and Minjung raised their children fluent English speakers by making good use of their family capital. Living in Korean society, in which helping children achieve fluent English skills usually requires large monetary expenditures on private English education, Taehyun rationally found his own way of narrowing the financial gap with his parental efforts and educational background rather than incur financial burden or rely on what he perceived as the inadequate Korean education system.

Despite increasing interest in and research on Korean parents' zeal for achieving children's early bilingualism and their excessive investment in private English education outside school (Chung & Choi, 2016; J. K. Park, 2009; J. S. Y. Park, 2011), insufficient research attention has been paid to parental language ideologies and factors underlying parents' efforts to create English-friendly home environments in the unique Korean context. As such, this study is one of the first empirical attempts to investigate the relationship between Korean parents' ideologies concerning English and English education and their direct involvement in their young children's bilingual development through home language practices. Multiple data sources were used during the two and a half years in which this study took place.

There are several limitations in this study. First, as a case study, it reflected the perspectives of the parents as primary informants who were invested in the concept of bilingual parenting and did not critique their policy by providing a balance of its negative

and positive aspects. Future studies might probe more deeply into problematic aspects of using a foreign language for family communications and of the effects of “English fever” on parental-decision making. Another limitation is that the author's personal language ideology might not have been completely excluded in the analysis of the parents’ language ideology as expressed in their interviews. Therefore, for future research, it is recommended that the researcher both fully disclose his/her language ideology and strive to maintain a critical distance in interpreting family language policies. Also, external auditors might be employed to objectively critique interpretations in light of the data.

In spite of the limitations of the study, the results may resonate with the experiences of many Korean parents who have been practicing home bilingual education, who are planning to do so in the near future, or who have been disappointed with expensive outside resources. While it is important to maintain a critical stance on the costs (in every sense) of parents’ high aspirations for their children’s English language development and their herculean efforts to promote it, the pressures of globalization must also be taken into account. These greater forces driving parents to seek their young children’s early acquisition of English might of necessity encourage family-based enterprises and compel examination of deficiencies in public English education. A reasonable outcome might be creating a cooperative movement among individuals, schools, and government policies.

Applicable levels: Elementary, secondary, tertiary

REFERENCES

- Baik, M. J. (1992). Language shift and identity in Korea. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication, 3*(1), 15-31.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passerson, J.-C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society, and culture*. London: Sage.
- Byean, H. (2015). English, tracking, and neoliberalization of education in South Korea. *TESOL Quarterly, 49*(4), 867-882.
- Chung, J., & Choi, T. (2016). English education policies in South Korea: Planned and enacted. In R. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *English language education policy in Asia* (pp. 281-299). Cham: Springer.
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of*

- Sociology*, 94, 95-120.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Curdt-Christiansen, X. L. (2008). Reading the world through words: Cultural themes in heritage Chinese language textbooks. *Language and Education*, 22(2), 95-113.
- Curdt-Christiansen, X. L. (2009). Invisible and visible language planning: Ideological factors in the family language policy of Chinese immigrant families in Quebec. *Language Policy*, 8(4), 351-375.
- Curdt-Christiansen, X. L. (2013). Family language policy: Sociopolitical reality versus linguistic continuity. *Language Policy*, 13(1), 1-7.
- Curdt-Christiansen, X. L. (2014). Planning for development or decline? Education policy for Chinese language in Singapore. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 11(1), 1-26.
- Curdt-Christiansen, X. L. (2016). Conflicting language ideologies and contradictory language practices in Singaporean multilingual families. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 37(7), 694-709.
- De Houwer, A. (1999). Environmental factors in early bilingual development: The role of parental beliefs and attitudes. In G. Extra & L. Verhoeven (Eds.), *Bilingualism and Migration* (pp. 75-95). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Demick, B. (2002, March 31). Some in S. Korea opt for a trim when English trips the tongue: Parents are turning to specialty preschool and even surgery to give their children a linguistic advantage. *Los Angeles Times*, p. A3.
- Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.
- King, K. A. (2000). Language ideologies and heritage language education. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 3(3), 167-184.
- King, K. A., & Fogle, L. W. (2006). Bilingual parenting as good parenting: Parents' perspectives on family language policy for additive bilingualism. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 9(6), 695-712.
- King, K. A., Fogle, L. W., & Logan-Terry, A. (2008). Family language policy. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 2(5), 907-922.
- Kroskrity, P. V. (2016). *Language ideologies and language attitudes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Li, G. (2007). Home environment and second language acquisition: The importance of family capital. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 28(3), 285-299.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry* (Vol. 75). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

- Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Nunan, D. (2003). The impact of English as a global language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific Region. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(4), 589-613.
- Park, J. K. (2009). 'English fever' in South Korea: Its history and symptoms. *English Today*, 25(1), 50-57.
- Park, J. S. Y. (2010). Images of "good English" in the Korean conservative press: Three processes of interdiscursivity. *Pragmatics and Society*, 1(2), 189-208.
- Park, J. S. Y. (2011). The promise of English: Linguistic capital and the neoliberal worker in the South Korean job market. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 14(4), 443-455.
- Park, S. J., & Abelmann, N. (2004). Class and cosmopolitan striving: Mothers' management of English education in South Korea. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 77(4), 645-672.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pennycook, A. (2006). The myth of English as an international language. In S. Makoni & A. Pennycook (Eds.), *Disinventing and reconstituting languages* (pp. 90-115). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Piller, I. (2015) Language ideologies. In K. Tracy, C. Ilie, & T. Sandel (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of language and social interaction* (pp. 917-927). West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Ren, L., & Hu, G. (2013). A comparative study of family social capital and literacy practices in Singapore. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 13(1), 98-130.
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schwartz, M. (2010). Family language policy: Core issues of an emerging field. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 1, 171-192.
- Seo, Y. (2020). An emerging trend in English education in Korea: 'Maternal English education' (*eommapyo yeongeo*): Challenges and strategies in raising a bilingual child as a nonnative speaker. *English Today*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078420000048>
- Shohamy, E. (2006). *Language policy: Hidden agendas and new approaches*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Silverstein, M. (1979). Language structure and linguistic ideology. In P. R. Clyne, W. F. Hanks, & C. L. Hofbauer (Eds.), *The elements: A parasection on linguistic units and levels* (pp. 193-247). Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society.

- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1988). Multilingualism and the education of minority children. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas & J. Cummins (Eds.), *Minority education: From shame to struggle* (pp. 9-44). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spolsky, B. (2012). Family language policy-the critical domain. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 33(1), 3-11.
- Tollefson, J. W. (1991). *Planning language, planning inequality: Language policy in the community*. New York: Longman.
- Yang, H. (2017). The role of social capital at home and in school in academic achievement: The case of South Korea. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 18(3), 373-384.
- Yin, R. K. (2015). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York: The Guilford Press.