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Discursive Constructions of Korean Identity: University EIL Learners in an Online Community

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DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS OF KOREAN IDENTITY:
UNIVERSITY EIL LEARNERS IN AN ONLINE COMMUNITY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania

December 2008

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Title: Discursive Constructions of Korean Identity: University EIL Learners in an Online Community

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This qualitative study focuses on a community of online English learners at a Korean university. The study seeks to explore how the learners construct their Korean identities and how they feel about the effect of mastering English on their Korean identities.

The study involves both online writing on various topics and one-on-one dialogues between the researcher and the learners. The data suggest that among the learners there is a considerable tension along three ideological dilemmas or dichotomous continua, namely expressing Pride Vs. Shame or Uncertainty concerning being Korean, debating Who's Korean vs. Who Is Not, and determining whether the mastery of English Enhances Korean Identity vs. whether it Threatens It. The study closely analyzes the ways that the participants position their arguments according to those ideological dilemmas.

In addition to analyzing and illustrating the tensions along those three continua, the study also examines the patterns of Agreement, Partial Agreement, and Disagreement that exist within the threads, replies, and dialogues that occur

in the online community. Through explaining the constructions of Korean identity and the patterns of interaction, the study draws inferences for those who teach or research learners in similar contexts.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Context

For a number of years I have been a university EIL (English as an International Language) professor in Korea. In discussing with my students the differences between Korean culture and the cultures of other societies, especially that of the United States, I have increasingly come to see the importance of understanding how Korean students view being Korean. Several years ago, in the midst of a controversy concerning a US military vehicle accidentally running over and killing two middle school girls who were walking home from school on a narrow country road, I composed a graduation essay exam for the seniors in the English Department at my university. They were to imagine a significant newspaper headline of the future and write a short essay to accompany the headline. To my surprise, about half of the headlines and essays involved an event that would have increased Korea's power and leverage in the world, especially with respect to the United States. For EIL teachers who are not natives of the place where they teach, understanding their students' national and cultural identities is not only an important, but also a complex undertaking. In the case of Korea, despite the comparative homogeneity of the Korean population, Korean society and culture are rapidly changing and Korean students are exposed to a plethora of intercultural influences and experiences, resulting in an increasing diversity of thought among the younger generations.

Indeed, the importance of Korean students' national identities and attitudes toward other nations and cultures is particularly relevant at the present time, for at the same time that young Koreans are becoming more globalized or internationalized in terms of their access to international news and opinions, their opportunities for overseas study and living, and their consciousness of Korea's role in the world community, somewhat paradoxically, their nationalistic pride concerning Korea's development and economic success can spark explosive reactions against what are perceived as affronts or slights to the Korean people. In fact, resentment toward the United States' perceived arrogance and alleged attempts to dominate Korea threw a close election into the arms of the "stand-up-to-the-U.S." presidential candidate, Roh Moo-hyun, in 2002. Much of the anti-American sentiment had been precipitated by an earlier controversial Winter Olympic speed-skating decision against a South Korean skater and in favor of an American skater, and by the incompetent handling by the U.S. of the tragic accident mentioned above. Early in 2005, the revelation of Internet bulletin board statements by foreign EIL teachers suggesting that they were primarily interested in making easy money and easily seducing Korean women caused a media uproar. Online sites called for vigilante action against foreigners seen with Korean women, and a TV special investigated the incompetence of foreign teachers and interviewed a number of foreign English teachers who displayed negative attitudes toward Korea and teaching in general. In 2004 and 2005, the mass media and Internet have extensively focused on alleged attempts by China and Japan to distort the history of their

relations with Korea, and the recent claim by a Japanese prefectural assembly that the small Tokdo Islands actually belong to Japan sparked widespread anger toward Japan that resulted in golf clubs prohibiting Japanese from using their facilities and Korean demonstrators cutting off their little fingers.

The complex nature of national and cultural identity is particularly salient in the case of Korea, a country that first forged its notion of modern nationhood under Japanese colonial rule. Since liberation Korea has experienced tremendous growth and development, but there persists a fear of loss of national culture and an extreme sensitivity to being treated by other nations as an equal. Most of the anti-foreign incidents mentioned above involve feelings of not being treated fairly and equally.

Notions of Korean identity and reactions to international issues clearly have an impact not only on the general public, but also on the students who are studying English at various levels. As I indicated above in the account of my students writing nationalistic essays in their graduation exams, university students and other young Koreans are very concerned about national and international issues. In fact, in modern times, university students have been considered the conscience of the nation. Student-led demonstrations sent the first president of Korea, Syngman Rhee, into exile and have caused serious problems for other administrations, as well (Eckert et al., 1990). Many aspects of university students' lives, including the motivation to study English, attitudes towards foreigners, and positions taken in EIL settings, are affected by national ideologies and international events.

I have chosen to use the acronym EIL in favor of the more common EFL (English as a Foreign Language). The reason for this is that I, along with many of my participants, view English as a world language that is useful for international communication, rather than a language that belongs in any sense to the so-called “core” or “inner circle” countries where English is spoken by many as their first language.

Setting and Focus of the Study

The participants in my online community were mostly intermediate to advanced level students from a major Korean university. The participants were recruited through invitation by me and by word of mouth from students who have already joined. In order to join the community, it was necessary to go to the online web site, fill out a short registration form, and download and sign a consent form that describes the goals and conditions concerning community participation. This statement explained my research project and requested permission to use the participants' online writing in an anonymous fashion as one of the conditions of community membership. Shortly after registering, community members received a password and were then able to sign in to the community, compose a self-introduction, fill out a short demographic survey, and begin to participate in community discussions and dialogues. The participants could choose whether to use Western nicknames that they may have or their Romanized Korean names. All of the writing in the online

community, with the exception of occasional Korean vocabulary items, was done in English.

The initial statement expressing the purpose of the community described one of the primary aims of the community as an opportunity to discuss various social issues in English forums. It explained that although I would not actively participate in the forums, the participants and I could communicate with one another through the individual dialogue function and that I was willing to provide feedback on and help with their writing if they requested it. The announcement also explained that in addition to the forum topics that I posted on the site, community members could add new forum topics directly to the website.

Apparently, the opportunity to discuss social issues in English with fellow students, the chance to exchange ideas in “dialogues” with an American professor, and the possibility of receiving some writing feedback from a foreign writing teacher were sufficient incentives to attract dedicated participants. I have been using online writing in some of my classes for the last six years, and although online writing requires a lot of work and effort on the part of the students, I have been pleased and surprised by the students’ very positive reactions to the assignments. In both evaluations and informal discussions, they have generally stated that the writing was stimulating and helpful and have felt that they have had a real audience and have been engaged in meaningful exchanges of ideas and opinions. The feedback that I received at the conclusion of the online community project elicited similarly favorable responses. Many of the participants claimed that being able to exchange ideas

with other university students helped them to understand their peers' thinking and to develop their own ideas through exchanging and negotiating opinions with the other members of the community.

An online community organized around forum-discussion writing (along with dialogic exchanges) provided an excellent environment to explore my research questions. The forums provided the time and opportunity for intermediate and advanced writers to express complicated ideas and respond to one another's opinions. Forum discussion constitutes a "hybrid" form of communication, written, but also exhibiting some of the interactive characteristics of conversation and the exchange of ideas (Herring, 2001). The ongoing dialogues that I had with individual members as community "mentor" constituted asynchronous interviews, which allowed me to explore and probe the ideas that had been expressed in the forums.

Background for the Study

Complicating the study of national and cultural identity, however, is the fact that in the last twenty years or so, in TESOL and the other social sciences, older, received notions of culture and national identity have been seriously challenged by postmodern theories. Researchers have challenged conceptions of culture, both in terms of how objective ethnographers can be when studying other cultures and how flawed cultural dichotomies often are (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997), and of national identity in respect to the increasing significance of transnationalism, hybrid identity, and cosmopolitanism (Schiller

& Basch 1995; Bhabha 1994; Rankin 2003; Delanty 1999; Bowden 2003). Scholars influenced by postmodernism have been highly critical of received views of culture and nation and deny that cultures or nations are monolithic entities; they have insisted, for example, that culture is a heterogeneous notion and have preferred to talk about concepts such as *identity, power, agency, and resistance* (Norton 2000; Atkinson 1999). *Identity*, for example, is a more individualized concept, one that assumes that individuals have their own idiosyncratic, composite identities that include components such as occupation, ethnicity, region, gender, age, and life style (Moran, 2001). In fact, much of the classic, but still frequently referenced, social science literature on East Asian cultures has been criticized as dichotomizing allegedly homogeneous Eastern and Western cultural orientations (e.g., Hall 1976; Pak 1986; Nakane 1970; Doi 1986; Barnlund, 1995). The field of communication studies has been particularly prone to positing Eastern and Western cultures as opposites of one another (e.g., Samover & Porter, 1991). This point is discussed in more detail in the literature review.

Within anthropology, postmodern, interpretive anthropology has been extremely influential. The movement began with Geertz's (1975, 2000) insistence that a good interpretation, a good account ethnographic account, takes the reader into the heart of what is being described. Geertz's thick description, his focus on the local, his stress on anthropology as a textual practice more than a scientific one were all ideas that were congruent with postmodernism. By the 80s (Crapanzano 1980, 1986; Rabinow 1986; Pratt,

1986; Clifford 1983, 1986), some anthropologists had moved even further from a positivistic paradigm and were denying that there was “one truth” out there to be discovered. *Writing Culture* (1986), a landmark collection of essays edited by Clifford and Marcus, focused on the techniques of representation and saw them as closely bound to disciplinary knowledge. By focusing on the text rather than the tribe, the authors implied that anthropology was a creative, even fictional, enterprise (Smith, 2001). Sometimes considered postmodern approaches, these newer versions of interpretive or hermeneutical anthropology emphasized power relations and exposed “truths” as reflections of sexism, colonialism, and so forth. The authors in *Writing Culture* were very concerned with how to represent cultural difference and were searching for how to better present the native point of view through innovative textual strategies (Marcus and Fischer, 1999).

For reasons indicated above, some anthropological and ESL/EFL researchers have even abandoned the concepts of culture and national identity (Atkinson, 1999); however, in general, significant debates continue to be waged concerning what we can know about culture and national identity and what their roles in the language classroom might be, even though many of the approaches to culture and national identity in the field might still be characterized as dichotomous and monolithic. After reviewing the various objections that postmodernists and others have to prevailing notions of culture, Atkinson, for example, concluded that culture should continue to be a central concept in TESOL, but only after significant revision. My study directly

addressed the issue of how Korean EIL university students in an online community context construct their national and cultural identities. It is imperative for EIL teachers to be aware of their students' constructions of those identities in order to effectively deal with the national and cultural representations that emerge in EIL contexts.

In tandem with the questions concerning identity and culture, for the last few decades, scholars have been paying more attention to the subjective nature of nationalism and national identity (Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; Robinson 1993), viewing nationalism as invented or even “imagined” sorts of identity or community. In drawing the boundaries for a collective ideology, other identities and loyalties inevitably are submerged or sacrificed to nationalism. Developed countries are experiencing new waves of immigration, and as people with different value structures come to share the same space, the older notions of the relationship between people and nations are challenged (Marcus & Fischer, 1986). Anderson (1991) has stressed that if ideas or nationhood are invented, they can be reinvented, as well. Korea, a relatively homogeneous nation with 1500 years of centralized rule within stable borders, is an interesting case study in the development of modern conceptions of nationalism and an illustration of Anthony Smith’s arguments (1998) concerning the significance in nations with long histories of cultural continuities of “ethnies” and ethno-symbolism in the creation of nationalism. Smith has contended that nations with long histories and cultural traditions can be thought of as pre-modern nations. My study carefully explored the construction of

national identities among the university participants in our EIL online community in order to answer my research questions, which deal with Korean identity.

In my study, I viewed an individual's cultural identity as being composed of identifications with various social groupings and communities, such as region, profession, race/ethnicity, gender, social class (Moran, 2001). Moran, in fact, indicated national identity as the primary identification that goes into a person's cultural identity. Moreover, some discursive psychologists (Taylor, Bougie, & Caouette, 2003) have argued that "collective identity serves the role of a stable template against which the individual can articulate a personal identity" (p. 197). They have further stated that although people have a variety of collective identities, their collective cultural and national identities affect every aspect of their lives. Although cultural and national identity may overlap and be difficult to untangle from one another, discursive psychologists Wetherell and Potter (1992) have examined how, in New Zealand, the "descriptive methods of race, culture and nation generate their own distinctive ontologies" (p. 118). In Korea, too, identity is variously framed as membership in a blood group, possession of cultural traits, and citizenship in a modern nation. One of the purposes of my study was to examine the various Korean interpretive repertoires associated with those three concepts.

One of the important questions that I explored was how much agreement or disagreement there is among Korean EIL learners concerning the best way to conceptualize Korean identity. After liberation from Japan in 1945, Korea became divided into two ideologically hostile halves. In South Korea,

nationalism has been expressed in three main currents: state-sponsored anti-communism, pro-capitalist conglomerate (*chaebol*) dominated ideology, and the populist *minjung* movement (Song, 1999). In recent years, however, former activists for democracy and progressive parties held power in South Korea from 1997 to 2007. In analyzing the discourse that Korean university students engage in when reflecting on the topic of “being Korean,” I closely examined the above-mentioned feelings of being treated unfairly and the various, competing ideologies of Korean nationalism. It is important, for example, to analyze how the various versions of national/cultural identity sometimes conflict with one another. In discursive psychology, such “contradictions” are taken for granted. What is crucial is the context in which the discourse takes place and the work that the discursive constructions are accomplishing within that context (Wetherell & Potter 1992; Harre & Gillett 1994; Billig et. al 1988; van den Berg 2003).

Although the debate in the social sciences over culture and the role of the ethnographer and the disagreements among scholars over the nature of nationalism have not been conclusively settled, there is no doubt that questions concerning how to respond to clashes between the host and target cultures, what the global role of English should be, and how national identity is created discursively are crucially important in the field of TESOL today. Therefore, fresh approaches to the study of the effects of national and cultural identity in EIL are clearly needed. Some of the more exciting approaches to cultural exchange and negotiation in the language classroom concern sociocultural strategies for

a dialogue of cultures (Savignon and Sysoyev, 2002), the notion of intercultural (Ochs, 1993), and the concept of “third places” (Kramsch, 1993a, 1993b).

Kramsch (1993a), for instance, has argued that when a German interacts with an American, both of them carry in their heads perceptions of the two cultures, as distinct from whatever the reality of the two cultures may be. If we apply this to an EIL context, the foreign teacher possesses a perception of her own culture and another perception of the host culture, while the students will be carrying various versions of their own dual perceptions in their heads. In an imaginative study (1993b), Kramsch brought together teachers of foreign languages from three countries (Germany, France, and the U.S.) and designed activities that forced them to contrast these various perceptions, including differences of opinion within national groups. Her goal was to create a culture of a third kind, where people can create their own meanings without being trapped in either their own culture’s or the target culture’s system of meanings. In a more limited but similar fashion, through their dialogues with me, a knowledgeable and sympathetic foreigner, my Korean students’ discursive constructions of Korean national identity illustrated some possible third-place positions in Korean EIL. It is important to examine how university students in an EFL online community context, in negotiation with both one another and me, assumed various discursive positions in relation to their Korean identity and explore to what extent and to what effect “third positions” can be accomplished.

Although there is an intercultural dimension to my study because the participants did engage in individual dialogues with me, the primary focus of my

study was on the construction of national identity by Korean university EIL learners, discussing among themselves identity issues in an online community. There is an apparent lack of such research in the case of East Asian EIL contexts. Duff and Uchida's (1997) six-month long ethnographic study of a private language school in Japan explored how teachers' social, political, and cultural identities affected the ways that teachers dealt with the teaching of culture. The researchers presented cases studies of four English teachers, two Americans and two Japanese, and explored how their individual personal histories and past educational, professional, and cross-cultural experiences influenced their perception of their sociocultural identities, identities that are subject to constant negotiation. Although the four did not consider themselves as primarily teachers of culture, they did deal with cultural issues differently according to their sociocultural identities. Although the Duff and Uchida article did explore in a preliminary fashion the importance that national and cultural discourse can have in the EIL classroom, with the exception of a brief examination of the Japanese students' resistance to the emphasis by Carol, another young American, on Japanese culture, the study did not explore national/cultural identity from the students' perspective. My study fills that gap in the research.

Another important issue that my study addressed is the question of how, in EIL contexts, ideas of national identity are related to attitudes about and even resistance to the overwhelming importance of learning English for Korean students. In Korea, mastering English has become a requirement for

educational success and finding a “good” job. Various scholars have challenged the global role of EIL teaching, linking it to colonial-like hegemonies (Pennycook 1998; Kubota 1998, 1999, 2001; Canagarajah 1999; Phillipson 2001). Writing primarily about an ESL context, Norton (1997, 2000) has explored the importance of feeling that one has the right to speak out in second language learning situations. In this study, I explored, through online forums, the attitudes of Korean university students toward these controversial issues and attempted to evaluate what effects those attitudes have on national identity.

Purpose and Research Questions

Despite the importance of this matter, virtually nothing has been written about the social constructions of national identity in Korean university EIL classes. This study probed the existing tensions between an increasingly globalistic and Western-oriented perspective and a rising nationalistic consciousness and pride among Korean EIL university learners. More specifically, my research investigated the discursive constructions of national identity among Korean university EIL writers in an online community. I did this from a social constructionist and discursive psychological perspective that argues that conceptions about belonging to groups, including those concerning nations, are basically fashioned in discursive or linguistic accounts that serve strategic and rhetorical functions (Potter & Wetherell 1987; Billig 1987, 1995, 2001).

The two primary research questions that I explored were:

- What variations appear in the social constructions of contemporary Korean identity among the participants in the online community created as part of this study?
- How do Korean EIL students construct attitudes about the importance of mastering English in contemporary Korea?

I thoroughly explored how the Korean university students in this study explained the significance of being Korean in discussions in an online community and analyzed their attitudes toward mastering English.

Problem Statement

Within the field of TESOL, it has been largely accepted that teaching language cannot be separated from teaching the culture of that language (Cortazzi & Jin 1999; Kramsch 1993a, 1993b; Atkinson 1999). Claire Kramsch (1993a) explained the role of culture in language teaching as follows:

Whether it is called (Fr.) *civilization*, (G.) *Landeskunde*, or (Eng.) *culture*, culture is often seen as mere information conveyed by the language, not as a feature of language itself; cultural awareness becomes an educational objective in itself, separate from language. If, however, language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching. Cultural awareness must then be viewed both as enabling language proficiency and as being the outcome for reflection on language proficiency (p. 8).

Various techniques, such as using video materials, value-clarification exercises, and cross-cultural role-playing, have been advocated as effective ways to teach culture along with foreign language. In the process of teaching the target culture, intercultural exchanges take place between the teachers and students when they are from different cultures and also among the students in multicultural contexts. One of the important aspects of intercultural contact is, of course, the national identities of the participants.

Although there have been some studies concerned with identity formation in ESL situations (Norton, 1997, 2000; Harklau, 1999; Nguyen and Kellogg, 2005), there has not been nearly enough attention given to the important roles that the national identities of EIL students play in learning English in foreign language contexts. No one has yet studied the construction of Korean identities in EIL contexts. In learning English as an international language, the ways that Korean learners construct, reconstruct, and negotiate concepts of Korean identity have an important impact on the written and oral discourse that emerges in EIL settings. By not paying enough attention to the role that national identity plays in EIL learning contexts, we neglect the ways that learners position themselves in the various discourses that are produced in EIL settings. It's imperative that TESOL scholars put more effort into studying the roles that national identity plays in learning English as a foreign or international language. My study addresses those issues as they exist in a Korean EIL online community context.

Significance of the Study

Given Korea's rapid economic development and extensive social change, as well as growing opposition to American political influences on the part of some, it is valuable to examine the Korean-identity discourse that occurs in university EIL writing. The issue of how national identity discourse impacts EIL instruction in general, and EIL teaching in Korea in particular, is significantly understudied in the TESOL and applied linguistics fields. My study sheds significant light on the ways that Korean students frame their Korean-identity discourse in EIL contexts. Understanding these framings will help foreign EIL teachers to understand and anticipate the sorts of ideas that often emerge in EIL classroom and online settings. My analysis of young Koreans' discourses concerning these issues will lead to a greater awareness of the sorts of attitudes and positions that Korean learners exhibit in EIL discourse. Such awareness may be effective in promoting meaningful discussion about cultural and national values and practices. In other words, my study helps us understand what kinds of cultural and national discourses students bring to EIL classrooms and may lead to some practical insights on how to effectively approach cultural and national topics in such classes.

In short, since national identity is a key component of cultural identity and because cultural and national topics are frequently discussed and written about in EIL classes, as a result of this study, EIL professionals, including the hundreds of English native-speaking EIL university and institute teachers, can

profit by better understanding the role that national identity plays in Korean university EIL students' discourse.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Identity

In recent years, the study of identity as a subject worthy of investigation in its own right has assumed a position of central importance in the social sciences and humanities. As stated in Chapter 1, I view an individual's cultural identity as being composed of identifications with various social groupings and communities, such as nation, region, profession, race/ethnicity, gender, social class (Moran, 2001). Joseph (2004) contended that one's deep personal identity is composed, in part, of the various group identities to which an individual stakes a claim. Furthermore, Taylor, Bougie, and Caouette (2003) considered national identity as the primary identification that goes into a person's cultural identity. Bucholtz and Hall (2004) claimed that although the term identity itself is relatively recent, "the study of linguistic anthropology is the study of language and identity" (p. 369). They further stated that, in analyzing identity, sameness and difference are the key, complementary concepts, for sameness permits people to imagine themselves as a group, and difference allows the production of social distance among those who see themselves as unlike one another. However, sameness and difference are "not objective states, but phenomenological processes that emerge from social interaction" (p. 369). As such, within social contexts, similarities and differences are organized hierarchically and associated with relations of power and subjectivity. Bucholtz and Hall contended that, because of the political nature of identity, research on identity is sometimes criticized for employing over generalized notions of

similarity and difference, or in other words for promoting essentialism. Despite that liability, for Bucholtz and Hall, studies of identity remained relevant and important. They further defined authentication as the process of constructing a genuine or credible identity, arguing that it “highlights the agentive processes whereby claims to realness are asserted” (p. 385). Anderson (1991) and Gellner (1983) have analyzed how, in nationalist movements, shared language can become a powerful force in forming an imagined national unity and identity.

In the field of second language acquisition, a large number of impressive studies (Lantolf 2000; Wenger 1998; Ivanic 1998; Norton 1997, 2000, 2001; Pavlenko & Lantolf 2000; Kanno 2003; Peirce 1995) have demonstrated the close connections between learning second languages and identity formation. That scholarship has greatly influenced the way that I have come to view the centrality and importance of identity in second language learning. For analyzing the versions of Korean identity that my participants construct, I have identified three strands of identity scholarship that will both inform my own study and serve as templates against which I can compare my own results.

As related to my study, one important strand in this identity scholarship has been the shift toward viewing identity as multiple and changing, a trend much influenced by poststructuralist theories. Norton Peirce (1995) characterized the individual learner as diverse, multiple and decentered. Instead of viewing motivation as a fixed quality that a particular learner has, Norton Peirce spoke of the investment to learn a language that arises from the relationship that the language learner has to a changing social world. In other

words, as language learners use a language in a particular context, they are constantly organizing and reorganizing their identities and their relationship to a certain social world or context. Because identity is both constitutive of and constituted by language (Norton, 2000), identities are manifested through discourse, both spoken and written texts. In other words, as Ivanic (1998) put it, “the ‘self’ should not be conceived of as something to be studied in isolation, but as something which manifests itself in discourse” (p. 18). One of the purposes of my study will be to examine the multiple identities that emerge from the discourses resulting from the participants’ interactions with various individuals, including the foreign mentor, concerning a number of overlapping topics.

Even though multiple identities do exist, it may be worthwhile to attempt to determine the ways that those identities are related to one another. Kanno (2003), for example, argued that although multiple identities definitely exist among the bilingual Japanese students that she studied, it is also true that individuals attempt to seek coherence among their identities. Kanno felt that Norton (2000) could have made greater efforts to find the narrative links among the different identities of her immigrants to Canada. Some of the members of our online community have lived overseas, in some cases for extended periods. For those participants in particular and for the other participants in general, I have analyzed to what extent and in what ways they link their experiences and identities together.

A second important influence in sociolinguistics generally, and especially in the study of identity, is that of Erving Goffman. Although Goffman died in 1982, his approach to the “self” anticipated later postmodern and post-structuralist insights into the study of identity by positing a plastic model of the self that emphasizes the social aspects of identity formation and by resisting the notion of any one “true self.” Many current researchers in the field of identity are using the concepts that Goffman (1959, 1961a, 1961b, 1963, 1967, 1974, 1979, 1981) developed in his work. Pomerantz (2001) argued that Goffman (1959) views the self as a “product of certain local interactional arrangements and the kinds of positions these configurations entailed” (Pomerantz, 2001, p. 63). Furthermore, according to Pomerantz, Goffman’s portrayal of the person as a “performer,” as well as a “character,” opened the way for researchers to study the ways that linguistic practices create, through enactment, aspects of the self. Bucholtz and Hall (2005), in discussing stance, referred to Goffman’s (1974, 1981) “groundbreaking work on footing, participant roles, and participation frameworks” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 595).

With specific reference to Goffman’s relevance to identity constructions and language learning, Nguyen and Kellogg (2005) analyzed the emergent identities of their Asian students in an ESL setting according to Goffman’s (1981) key concept of alignment. According to Goffman, every utterance projects a footing for the speaker, the hearer, and sometimes for a larger audience as well. Furthermore, the utterances cannot be understood in isolation, but need to be analyzed within a participation framework. In

accordance with this, Nguyen and Kellogg (2005) analyzed their students' responses to others' comments concerning gay rights according to whether they align themselves with the expected values in the course, against those values, or with both of the opposing values. In my study, I applied this approach to alignment to the ways that national identity is constructed in our online writing community. Another researcher, Siegal (1996), has explored the relevance of Goffman's (1956, 1967) writing on "face" to language learning. In her study of Western women learning Japanese, Siegal (1996) contended that the "presentation of self becomes complicated for language learners, adults speaking a language they are not completely proficient in" (p. 362). Learners who are trying to construct a "face" in Japanese, for example, may actually be creating an identity that is outside the guidelines of appropriate behavior in Japanese society either because their Japanese is not fluent enough to speak appropriately or because they are resisting some of the rules for proper behavior. In my study, I explored how "face" construction in a second language is influenced by linguistic and pragmatic limitations. Finally, Lam (2000), argued that because CMC facilitates the "crafting of multiple personae and collective identities and the assumption of social roles in the temporal frame of on-line exchanges" (p. 461), it is the ideal place to examine Goffman's (1959, 1981) dramaturgical concept of discursive interaction in action by observing the "personal fronts" that people produce in their self-presentations. In a similar fashion, Nguyen and Kellogg (2005), in the study involving Asian ESL students discussing gay and lesbian issues online, concluded that "on-line discussions

constitute a unique space in the language classroom for learners to manage their stances and construct their identities as they use a second language” (p. 115). From my previous experience with EIL online writing, I concurred with Lam and Nguyen and Kellogg and selected online writing as the context for my study for similar reasons. My study analyzed the types of “personal fronts” that my participants produce in their online identity constructions.

A third key development in identity studies is the importance of the learner’s participation in communities of practice (COP) (Wenger, 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992). Social identities are constructed and negotiated in particular locales, where practices emerge in the course of mutual endeavors (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992). Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) emphasized that to become a member of a community of practice, individuals must necessarily acquire certain forms of sociolinguistic competence. Other studies (Gee, 1996; Luke, 1996; Ivanic, 1998; Scollon & Scollon, 1981) have investigated the centrality of the language user’s identity, which involves enacting certain social roles as a member of a particular group, to the practice of any form of literacy (Lam, 2000). When a learner participates in a second language classroom or an online second language community, the classroom or online site is not simply a place to practice language; it is “where learners actively perform their social identities and form emergent communities as they learn to use the language” (Nguyen & Kellogg, 2005). Furthermore, Wenger (1998) argued that wanting to become the member of a particular community limits an individual’s ability to negotiate the terms of belonging

because the individual feels constrained to follow the expectations of the community. Membership in a community of practice, then, helps one become what one wishes to become at the same time that it limits one's attitudes and behaviors. My study addressed in various ways how membership in a community of practice influenced participation and identity construction in our online community.

Representing Cultural and National Identity in TESOL

My study is of the national identities that are constructed in a particular kind of Korean EIL context. How exactly are we to understand national identity? Although individual and group identities, such as national identity, are different (Joseph, 2004), their relationship to one another is complex. Joseph claimed that one's deep personal identity is "made up in part of the various group identities to which you stake a claim (p. 5). Moreover, even though group identities are more abstract than individual ones, our own individual identities are composed of combinations of such abstractions. According to Joseph, the "reciprocal tension between individual and group identities gives the overall concept of identity much of its power" (p. 5).

Within the fields of applied linguistics and TESOL, a number of scholars have addressed the issue of how to represent national cultures. Pennycook (1998) expressed concern that English teaching originated in a colonial context. Moreover, ELT (English Language Teaching) theories and practices "derive from broader European cultures and ideologies that themselves are products of

colonialism” (p. 19). Although colonialism and postcolonial struggles are the ground upon which Western conceptions of the Self and Other were constructed, Pennycook claimed there is a pronounced absence of concern with this fact in the fields of TESOL and applied linguistics. Pennycook asserted that Young’s (1990) observation that postmodernism can be understood as a Western cultural crisis is very significant, for studies of the effects of colonialism and the growing protestations from former colonies have forced the West to reassess its view of itself as the center of the world. Pennycook’s (1998) primary concern was “with the problematic ways in which contemporary white culture and contemporary cultures of ELT deal with cultural Others” (p. 28).

According to Ruth Spack (1997), TESOL and applied linguistics employ a number of labels, such as "foreign," "limited," and "other," in describing learners of English. Differences among groups of students are often attributed to “cultural” differences, which tend to be thought of as static characteristics. This involves students from particular cultural groups being repeatedly described in terms of a “fixed profile of particular traits” (p. 768). Pennycook (2001) viewed this as a cultural fixity with origins in colonial othering and preferred postmodern and post-structural approaches that view differences and identities as “multiple, diverse, and interrelated” (p. 146). In an ESL context involving 1.5 generation learners, Harklau (1999) has cautioned against “travelogue” and received notions of culture, concepts that can result in students being asked to continually compare “your country” to the host country. Harklau maintained that such approaches do not do justice to the multiple and

complex identities that students bring to ESL classrooms and that 1.5 generation students can greatly profit from topic areas such as immigration and attitudes toward ethnic diversity and should be encouraged to connect their own experiences to larger social issues. To avoid oversimplifying national culture and reduce student resistance, Harklau strongly recommended areas of cultural inquiry that facilitate “a multifaceted representation of culture” and “invites students to define culture for themselves” (pp. 129-30). My study addressed these concerns by examining the ways that Korean learners themselves construct their national identities in EIL contexts.

Ryuko Kubota (2004, 2002, 1998, 1999) has explored how cultural dichotomies are employed to compare Japanese culture and Western culture. Kubota viewed this as cultural determinism and claimed that the Japanese have, by accepting versions of othering from the long history of Western descriptions of Japan, in a sense, othered themselves (1999). Kubota (2002) referred to a Japanese booklet (Wada as cited in Kubota, 2002) on teaching international understanding in English classrooms. Cultural dichotomies such as high context versus low context and collectivism versus individualism are used to explain the differences between Anglophone and Japanese cultures. Kubota insisted that, by treating “common beliefs” as if they were facts, this sort of instruction results in cultural essentialization and dichotomization rather than cosmopolitan pluralism. Kubota criticized *Nihonjinron* (theories about the characteristics of the Japanese) for promoting the same types of stereotypical images of Japanese culture and promoted a nonessentialist understanding of

culture, or critical multiculturalism, which instead of representing “the culture of the Other as homogeneous, traditional, and static, ...problematizes, rather than presupposes, difference and explores a critical understanding of culture” (2004, p. 38).

In contrast to Kubota’s condemnation of the use of cultural dichotomies, Scollon and Scollon (2001) employed the notions of collectivism and inductive rhetorical style, for example, in discussing intercultural communication, but repeatedly cautioned the reader from using the terms in an overly deterministic fashion. They stated, for instance, that although Asian writers may employ an inductive argument structure more often than Westerners (who prefer a deductive argument structure), it is not appropriate to call the inductive structure an “Asian one” because, depending on the situation and context, both structures are used by Japanese and Western writers alike. The issue would appear to be how, if at all, cultures can be compared to one another in a dichotomous fashion and whether national and cultural identities can be studied in an un-essentializing and non-othering fashion. In my study, I carefully analyzed the way that dichotomous comparisons are made by my Korean learners in the course of constructing national identities. My intention was to do a thoroughly descriptive analysis, one in which the positions that the participants are carefully presented and illustrated. Although it was possible to generalize to some degree concerning the overall trends that emerged from the data, I was very cautious about sacrificing the great variety in the positions that

the participants took along the three dichotomous continua and tried to adequately represent that diversity in my presentation of illustrative data.

Although there have been, as delineated above, a number of relevant studies that have dealt with national and cultural identity in ESL contexts, there is a definite lack of research on the roles that national identity play in concrete and specific EIL situations. In the case of Korea, for example, there has been an article concerning linguistic hybridization in Korean pop music (Lee, 2004) and a couple of studies, which will be considered in a subsequent section, that have dealt with national identity in English textbooks in Korea (Yim, 2003) and attitudes about the effect of learning English on Korean identity (Kim, 2002), but virtually nothing dealing with the constructions of national identity in the various contexts that EIL learning takes place. My study begins the process of filling that gap by studying Korean identity constructions in one EIL context, that of an online writing community.

Identity in Discursive/Rhetorical Psychology

I have used discursive/rhetorical psychology as my primary theoretical perspective for analyzing identity construction. In discursive psychology, identities are constructed in everyday discourse. In *Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behaviour* (1987), Potter and Wetherell stated, “In the last analysis, any sociopsychological image of the self, in fact the very possibility of a self concept, is inextricably dependent on the linguistic practices used in everyday life to make sense of our own and others’ actions”

(p. 95). Discursive psychology, they claimed, is not just a new field in social psychology; it is a radical new perspective that has implications for all the topics addressed in social psychology. In analyzing speech, one cannot simply categorize the pieces of speech, for the details of the context in which the speech appears determine its function. There are such a variety of specific and global linguistic functions that it is crucial to read the context very carefully. The same person, for example, may be described very differently on different occasions in different contexts. People use language to construct versions of the world. It is construction in the sense that a variety of linguistic resources are employed, active selection occurs, and the consequential nature of accounts is emphasized. Researchers should focus on the discourse itself as a topic, rather than viewing the language as a signpost to something else, such as internal attitudes. The accounts themselves construct reality.

Individuals' accounts are often contradictory, and the task of discourse analysis in discursive psychology is to ask, for example, on what occasions is one attitude manifested and on what occasions is the contradictory attitude displayed. Potter and Wetherell claim that conditional and contrast structures are a common way to gain audience approval. Because the contrasts in what people say are sometimes extreme, the contexts of the utterances are crucial for understanding the apparent contradiction.

In classifying the types of discourse analysis, Widdicombe and Wooffit (1995) distinguished close analysis of the action orientation of talk, as in Edwards and Potter, and a primary focus on discourse, power, and

subjectification that derives from Foucault. Wetherell (1998) proposed a synthetic approach that can “read the two styles in terms of the other” (p. 388). Wetherell illustrated what this kind of synthesis can accomplish by looking at small group interview data from a project on the construction of masculine identities conducted by her and Edley. She explained that the questions key into two discursive activities, describing events and evaluating them. The project investigated the construction of multiple versions of events and the related construction of troubled and untroubled identities. Wetherell stated that it is useful when viewing the variability in accounts and formulations to ask, “Why this formulation at this point?” (p. 395).

In short, “the significance and connotation of the invocation of positions is local, highly situated, and occasioned” (p. 401). Wetherell argued that conversation analysis is primarily concerned with conversational turn-taking and seldom connects it to larger social issues and relations of power and that post-structuralism often ignores the actual social interaction. She contended that combining the two approaches through the use of interpretive repertoires enables the analyst to better answer the crucial question of “Why does this formulation occur here?”

Edwards (1998) has emphasized that categorization is something that people actively do. Categories cannot be accepted in their conventional forms, for very personal kinds of categorization work can be done while narrating events and assigning accountability. Edwards claimed that Sacks’ analyses of talk were not causal and cognitive, but were ethnomethodological. For Sacks,

talk is always action-performative and is designed for certain occasions. The discourse itself defines events through the kinds of categories that are employed. Edwards stated that discourse analysis is not the only approach that recognizes that one may categorize oneself differently according to the situation, but unlike an approach such as self categorization theory, discourse analysis does not view categories as self concepts that are mechanically “switched on,” but as the discursive elements that define the events themselves.

Closely connected to the discursive psychology of Edwards, Wetherell, and Potter is Michael Billig’s rhetorical approach to social psychology. For both approaches, discourse is seen as essentially rhetorical (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Billig, 1987; Billig et al., 1988; Edwards, 1998). In fact, Potter (1998) has claimed that the two approaches to social psychology, discursive psychology and Billig’s rhetorical approach, have “blurred together” and drawn on ideas from the conversation analysis perspective. In his version of this approach to social psychology, Billig (1987) viewed rhetoric as oriented to persuasion. However, as good as the rhetoric may be, there is never a guarantee that persuasion will be the result, because for every rhetorical move, there are counter-moves that can be deployed. In Billig’s terms, categorizations can be countered by particularizations. For Billig (1987), “witcraft” is the argumentative aspect of thinking. Because individuals possess the commonsense of their society, they also possess the contrary positions associated with beliefs. Those contrary aspects enable people to engage in both internal and external beliefs.

In another important contribution to discourse analysis, Billig et al. (1988) developed the concept of “ideological dilemmas.” The common sense that is expressed in everyday talking and arguing is organized around dilemmas. These dilemmas are frequently ideological in relation to broader societal concerns. Importantly, the dilemmas are not so much problems to be resolved as tensions that structure our social settings. They provide us with contradictory resources that maintain social practices. A sense of identity itself can emerge within a context of argumentation. Furthermore, social argumentation can be viewed as the model for social thinking. According to Billig et al. (1988), ideologies are usually thought of as having an inner consistency, which results in the image of thinkers as helplessly conforming to the dictates of the ideological structure. The dilemmatic approach, however, does not assume this kind of inner unity to thought; in fact, it assumes that contrary themes coexist together. In other words, “ideology can produce conformity, but it also provides the dilemmatic elements which enable deliberation to occur” (p. 31).

For Billig (2001), it is important that the nature of common sense is that contains contrary themes. Because ideologies contain these contrary themes, they provide the resources for common-sense thinking, and “thinking involves dialogic discussion, or the counter-positioning of contrary themes, which can both appear in their way to be reasonable” (p. 218). Billig claimed that a discursive/rhetorical perspective does not aim to describe the “attitude-system” of particular speakers, but strives to describe how the “themes of ideology are instantiated in ordinary talk” (p. 218). To accomplish this, it is necessary to pay

more attention to the nature of particular categories than social psychology, which tends to treat categories as if they were universal, normally does, for categories are for talking (Edwards, 1991), and, therefore, must be studied in their discursive and rhetorical contexts (Billig, 2001).

Billig (2001, 1995) used national identity as an example of a category that carries particular meanings according to the context within which the identification is situated. In our era of nation-states, national communities are imagined in particular ways. Today, the members of a nation in declaring a national identity, are not only claiming a psychological commonality, they are also “making a claim about the rights to statehood and national territory” (2001, p. 219), a notion that is inextricably bound up in the notion of the nation-state. Furthermore, because declaring oneself to be the member of a national group is a discursive act, an act that carries its meaning, as Edwards (1991) has explained, from “what is being said and the context of its utterance” (Billig, 1995, p. 67). In Billig’s approach, it is not enough to look for the similarities in membership in national groupings, for different groups will “imagine’ themselves in different ways and will, therefore, be psychologically different. Nationalism (1995), like other ideologies contains dilemmatic aspects, or contrary themes. Having a national identity involved notions of “us,” the nation, and of “them,” the foreigners. Nationalist ways of thinking look outward, “our nation” in an international world of nations, as well as inward, “our unique identity.” Moreover, in established states, a “banal” form of nationalism (2001, 1995) is established. The link between people and their territory, a connection

once expressed in mystical terms, has become accepted as solid, natural, and banal and citizens are continuously reminded that they belong to this nation-state in numerous taken-for granted ways, a process called the “flagging” of the nation by Billig (2001).

In conclusion, my study employed the discourse analysis associated with discursive/rhetorical psychology as an insightful and valuable framework for exploring the constructions of Korean identity in our online community. This variety of discourse analysis views realities as being constructed in discursive accounts, approaches discourse as essentially rhetorical, and explores positions as being local and situated according to context. I analyzed the constructions of Korean identity by our online participants according to those basic guidelines, searching for both dilemmatic aspects of the participants’ constructions of Korean identity and taken-for-granted notions attending to those identities.

English in Korea

The issue of how Korean university students feel about the necessity of mastering English is fraught with ambiguity. On one hand, most Koreans feel that English skills are necessary in order to be successful. An enormous English teaching economy exists, offering among its various services: tutoring for the College Entrance Exam, preparation for international tests of English such as the TOEIC and TOEFL exams, and conversation classes of all sorts. Parents who can try to get posted to overseas branches before their children

enter middle school or high school, so they can master English and then return to Korea to fiercely compete for acceptance to prestigious Korean universities. Other parents send their young children to English-speaking countries to stay with relatives or home-stay parents for a year or more. A recent development is the creation of English Towns, where students spend from a few days to a couple of weeks living in an English-only environment staffed by native speakers of English.

On the other hand, despite all the effort and expense that goes into learning English, some Koreans resent the emphasis that is put on attaining competence in the English language. Others simply worry that learning English will result in a loss of Korean culture and even a decrease in Korean language skills. When Lee Myung-bak became president in 2008, he announced some ambitious plans for teaching English (“English to Be Used,” 2008, January 24) that included a timetable for teaching all English classes in English and a proposal for teaching additional classes in English, as well. These plans resulted in a public furor over the loss of Korean language and identity that would allegedly result from the implementation of the president’s plans (“President’s Language,” 2008, May 4). In recognition of how contentious issues concerning the study of English can be, this section explores the ideologies that are associated with learning English in Korea.

English and Globalization

Of course, it is not just in Korea that English is recognized as being closely tied to succeeding in a globalized world. Many authors have stressed the importance of having a universal *lingua franca* for global communication and commerce (Crystal 1997; Bailey 1992). Although only 350 to 450 million people speak English as their first language, less than those who speak Chinese or Hindi, a similar number of people speak English as a second language, many of them in countries in which English is an official language (Crystal, 1995, 1997). If the even greater number of people who speak English as a foreign language is added to the total, the estimate of the number of English speakers or users increases to approximately 1.5 billion. Bourdieu (1991) has explored how the processes of state formation resulted in official state languages, and now the same process is being repeated at a global level, with English arguably becoming the dominant world language. However, Phillipson (2001), who strongly argues against "linguistic imperialism," objected to that characterization, pointing out that a majority of the people in the world do not, in fact, speak English. In a similar vein, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) contended that many of the world's six or seven thousand languages are threatened by the global forces that encourage the use of English in favor of local languages.

Phillipson (2001) declared that international organizations such as the World Bank and transnational corporations play a key role in maintaining the dominance of English. Similarly, the spread of distance education and the

extensive use of tests created in the United States and Britain further promote English in the educational arena. Phillipson called English advocates, such as Crystal, Eurocentric, claiming that they ignore the negative effect that spread of English is having on other languages, and insisted on the importance of recognizing that the use of English serves the economic and educational interests of certain nations more than that of others.

Canagarajah (1999) agreed with both Phillipson's (2001) and Pennycook's (1998, 2001) attempts to show how colonial experiences assisted in the creation of discourses that have favored English over peripheral vernaculars, but he insisted that those "same historical conditions generated a significant tradition towards the resistance and appropriation of English" (p. 77). Much of Canagarajah's work (1999, 2002, 2004) has been devoted to analyzing resistance to English discourses on the part of students and teachers in periphery classrooms. In describing student resistance in his home country of Sri Lanka, he discussed the creation of alternate sites and cultures in the classroom, which he terms "pedagogical safe-houses."

In discussing "World Englishes," Kachru and Nelson (1996) stated that English is more widely taught, read, and spoken than any other language in the history of the world. They traced the global spread of English to two diasporas, the migration of people from the present British Isles to overseas colonial settlements, such as the American colonies and Australia, and the later use of English in Asian and African colonial contexts. Kachru (1992a) stated that English, despite its unfortunate colonial legacy, has been largely accepted in its

role as a medium for extending oneself “beyond the confines of one’s culture and language” (p. 10). He opined that historically it has been a normal occurrence for humans to acquire additional languages. Furthermore, Kachru contended that English has assumed its role as an international medium as a result of extralinguistic factors, namely what it “conveys about technology, science, law, and literature” (p. 11). For Indians, he claimed, English has even become a symbol of the “whole universe as a family.”

Although in some respects positive about the international role of English, Kachru (1992b, pp. 357-8) has identified six fallacies about the users and uses of English. These fallacies are that English is mostly learned to communicate with native speakers of English, that it is always learned as a way to understand American or British cultural values, that the goal is basically to approximate native speaker models of the language, that non-native varieties are essentially “interlanguages,” that diversity in English is a sign of linguistic decay, and that native speakers play a dominant role in the global spread of English. Dividing the international use of English into three concentric circles (an Inner Circle, where English is the dominant language, an Outer Circle of mostly ex-colonies, where English has a long history of institutional use, and an Expanding Circle, including countries such as Korea, where English is learned for more specific and restricted purposes), Kachru and Nelson (1996) claimed that there “must be at least three nonnative users of English for every old-country native user” (p. 79). These nonnative speakers generally do not wish to assume British or American identities and speak a variety of “Englishes” in their

own speech communities. In fact, Kachru (Kachru, 1992a; Kachru & Nelson 1996) and others have pointed out the creativity of the literature that is written in English by bilingual writers from the Outer and Expanding Circles. In short, for Kachru (1992a; Kachru & Nelson 1996), English has become a pluricentric language, in which appropriateness is determined within distinctive speech communities. Language teachers should carefully study the cultures and pragmatics of variation of those communities.

Along similar lines, Minhee Kang, one of the English teachers quoted extensively by Moran (2001) in *Teaching Culture*, also stressed the importance of viewing English as a medium for teaching diversity and promoting intercultural communication. Kang stated that, in Korea, American English is viewed as a means for being successful in society. She argued that accepting American "Standard English" as the International Language results in many Koreans seeing cultures and languages in a hierarchical fashion, feeling inferior to white Americans and superior to people from various other countries. Kang confessed that, as a teenager, she idolized American and European cultures. Now, as an English teacher in Korea, she emphasizes the importance of affirming her students' self-identity by teaching them to be proud of being Korean and expanding their worldview "beyond the American and European white upper-class cultures" (p. 120). Many of my TESOL graduate students in Korea initially reacted quite positively to Minhee Kang's ideas when they encountered them in Moran's text. In group discussions, however, some of the students stated that Kang may be of an older generation and that Young

Koreans today are already proud of being Korean and much less likely to idolize Americans or other Westerners than they were in the recent past.

English Ideologies in Korea

Although some Korean scholars and teachers may agree with treating English as a pluricentric language that can be used to teach an appreciation of cultural diversity, most Koreans would probably favor the study of American English and American (and perhaps British) culture as practical ways to help insure educational and occupational success. Although an increasing number of Korean students are studying in English-speaking countries other than the United States, there is still a preference for American English in domestic language institutes and schools and for higher degrees from American universities. A number of recent studies have explored the ideologies associated with English study and mastery in Korea.

In a discourse analysis of language use in various contexts, including public debates, TV shows, and face-to-face interaction, Park (2004) identified three ideologies of English shared by most Koreans: necessitation, externalization, and self-deprecation. Necessitation portrays English as a necessity in Korea, externalization views English as foreign to Korean identity, and self-deprecation pictures Koreans as poor speakers of English. According to Park's analysis, Korean metalinguistic practices consistently strengthen the ideologies of necessitation and self-deprecation, but put much less weight on externalization. The emphasis on necessitation and self-deprecation results in

the problematizing of Koreans as speakers of English and causes intense feelings of insecurity as Koreans attempt to master English.

In a study of globalization and national identity in Korean English language education, Yim (2003) stated that the Ministry of Education posits two goals for secondary school English students: learning conversation skills and learning about the culture of foreign and the culture of Korea. Through developing a strong sense of national identity, Korean students can articulately represent their country in an increasingly globalized society" (p. 28). This is similar to Kubota's (2002) contention that one of the goals of English education in Japan is to prepare learners to describe Japanese culture to people from other parts of the world. Moreover, after analyzing representative English materials, Yim (2003) concluded that Korean culture is consistently affirmed over other cultures. Myths of national homogenization are stressed, and although Korean values are explained, the values of other cultures are neglected. Furthermore, in representing other cultures, the texts promote Americanization by focusing mainly on white middle-class American culture. Yim concluded that *seggyehwa*, or globalization, in Korea "is a way to establish a world class nation through participation in international affairs and leadership in the international community while maintaining a Korean national identity and culture" (p. 195).

Echoing Kubota's concerns about how Japanese culture and students are "essentialized" in much of the literature that deals with Japan and Japanese EIL, Shin and Crookes (2005a, 2005b) contended that Korean students, and

other East Asian students, as well, are not as obedient and docile as they are stereotypically portrayed. In fact, Shin and Crookes argued that East Asian students are “actually active and independent, but the way this independence manifests is different from that of Western students” (2005b, p. 101). Referring to the *Sirhak* movement of the 18th and 19th centuries and the *minjung* movement of the 20th century, they emphasized the Korean activist practices of the past and present and describe a recent two-part case study (2005a), conducted by Shin with Korean secondary EIL students, that indicated that the students were capable of thinking critically and handling a dialogic approach. Shin and Crookes concluded that the “study calls into question the stereotype of East Asian students as passive and non-autonomous and helps dispel the myth about East Asian classrooms as rigidly hierarchical” (p. 133). Taking a similar, but somewhat different tack, Collins (2005) examined the ambivalence toward English that exists in Korea today and called for a study of the local practices of English study in Korea and other countries. My study explored the degree of critical awareness and capacity for dialogic negotiation exhibited in the discourse of my university online participants.

There has been one recent study that looked at Korean university students’ attitudes toward the study of English. In a study of university students studying English at a foreign language institute affiliated with a Korean national university, Kim (2002) argued that the students consider English a threat to their national identity. Ambivalent about controversial issues, such as whether English should become an official language and whether Young students

should be sent abroad to learn English, the students are deeply concerned about Korean identity development. They fear that idolizing U.S. pop culture results in a looking down on Korean culture and worry about validating Korean language and cultural education. Another concern that the university students have is that the native-speaking English teachers are largely uninformed about Korean culture, a fact that causes misunderstandings between them and their students. Unfortunately, Kim simply listed examples of statements that express the above-mentioned opinions without providing the context in which the expressions of fear and ambivalence occur. My study also investigated my participants' attitudes toward English study and English's effect on identity development; however, I did so through a close analysis of the discourse, situating it in the context in which it appeared.

Constructing Korean Identities

As indicated above, national identity is a key component of personal identity. Furthermore, as described in a previous section, in second language learning, national identity plays an important role as learners experiment with constructing new identities in the new language. In the case of EIL in Korea, some scholars have recognized the general importance of native speakers being familiar with the cultural backgrounds of their Korean students. Cho (2004), for example, stated that "English teachers' learning of Korean students' religious, historical, and cultural background can substantially help enhance student-teacher interaction and produce a more rewarding teaching

experience” (p. 6). However, in the case of national identity construction, no one has yet studied the ways that Korean identity can influence the various types of interaction that occur in EIL contexts. My study begins the process of filling that gap by analyzing Korean identity construction in an online community context.

Symbols of Korean Identity

One of my research questions is concerned with the versions of Korean identity that my participants constructed. Analyzing the discourse associated with Korean identity construction is a complex undertaking, however, for Young Koreans draw upon a large inventory of concepts and symbols, some of which are quite ancient and others of which are very modern. Furthermore, the symbols themselves are inextricably connected to contending ideological traditions of the past and present. Therefore, it is important to understand the major historical and contemporary Korean images of the nation in order to make sense of the discursive constructions of Korean identity that emerged among my online participants.

Sino-Centric Korea: The Chosun Dynasty

Many of the symbols associated with “traditional” Korea actually originated in the five-hundred year long Chosun dynasty. Although Koreans speak of five thousand years of Korean history, the first unified state on the Korean peninsula was the Unified Silla state that appeared in 668 A.D. During

Korea's Three Kingdom period that preceded the Silla unification, the three kingdoms on the Korean peninsula (Silla, Paekjae, and Koguryo) competed fiercely with one another as they gradually adopted political and cultural concepts from adjacent and more-developed China. Buddhism, Confucianism, Chinese writing, and political and cultural ideas all permeated the three realms. Finally, in 668 AD, with China's Tang dynasty's assistance, the Silla Kingdom conquered its rivals and established a unified kingdom, whose territory, though, did not include much of the land that had been under the northern Koguryo Kingdom's control. In the 10th Century Silla was replaced by the Koryo dynasty that lasted for almost five-hundred years, which gave way in turn to the Chosun dynasty in 1392. The Chosun dynasty, the longest dynasty in East Asia, lasted until the first part of the 20th Century and Korea's annexation by Japan.

The first two centuries of Choson rule were marked by intensive efforts on the part of the rulers to Confucianize Korea (Deuchler, 1977). More emphasis on agnatic lineage structures, family practices, wedding rituals, inheritance patterns and so forth gradually came to resemble the guidelines laid down in the Neo-Confucian classics. In many cases, there was a compromise between indigenous Korean practices and Neo-Confucian ones. Shamanistic village rituals, for example, were Confucianized to various degrees, as the celebrants donned Confucian robes and read proclamations composed in Chinese characters (Dix 1977; Dredge 1977; Kendall 1985). The earlier animistic and shamanistic elements, involving the worship of various spirits who would reveal their intentions through the shamans who were possessed by

them, were generally either blended together with the Confucian elements or juxtaposed to one another in adjacent segments.

Yangban Koreans (the upper class aristocrats) studied the Chinese classics in Chinese although the characters were pronounced in the Korean fashion. Government offices could only be secured through passing the *Kwago* Examinations which were based on the study of the Chinese classics, a system which itself originated in China.. Letters and documents were composed in Chinese. Even though King Sejong and his royal scholars created the recently much-touted Korean alphabet early in the 15th Century, the educated *yangban* disdained to write in alphabetic script, considering it a tool for the uneducated, and continued to write in Chinese. Hangeul was thus used primarily by women and commoners until late in the 19th Century.

During this last, very long Korean dynasty, ideas of national identity among the elite were rather weak due to the fact that the Korean literati were schooled in the Chinese classics and looked to China as the source of political wisdom and virtue (Palais, 1998). Although it is true that the Korean aristocrats would resist foreign invasions of Korea, the resistance was framed as defense of universalistic, Chinese-derived civilization from barbarian attack. In short, the Korean *yangban* elite participated in a transnational cultural realm of which China constituted the core (Schmid, 2000). Consequently, the *yangban* possessed a two-tiered sense of identity, belonging to the Sinocentric transnational cultural realm, but also having a sense of being separate, of speaking the Korean language and living in the “Eastern Kingdom.” When

Chinese dynasties faltered and fell to “barbarian” conquerors, the Koreans might call themselves with pride “Little China,” but ironically, it appears clear that the Chinese generally considered Korea to be in a sense “barbarian,” for China was the Middle Kingdom, and everywhere else was other and outside of the inner core (Sin, 2000).

When Koreans refer to traditional concepts and practices such as filial piety, agnatic kinship customs, genealogies, the ideals of government service, and the traditional examination system, they are drawing upon symbols that largely originate in the Neo-Confucianism based Chosun dynasty.

Early Nationalism and the Japanese Colonial Period

Other symbols and ideologies can be traced back to the end of the Chosun dynasty and the beginnings of modern Korean nationalism. In the late 19th century, as China was disintegrating as a result of wars and open-door policies and Japan was modernizing under the Meiji Emperor, Korea was threatened from two directions, the increasing incursions of the advanced capitalist powers on one hand and the disgruntled and suffering peasants on the other, and three currents of thought appeared in the late 19th century as responses to the challenges: *Wijong ch’oksa* (Thought of Guarding the Orthodoxy and Refuting the Heterodoxy), Korean Enlightenment Thought, and *Tonghak* Thought (Eastern Learning). *Wijong ch’oksa* was a defense of the traditional system and is considered by Yong Ha Sin (2000) to be a pre-modern form of nationalism, unlike Enlightenment Thought and Tonghak Thought,

which can be considered modern nationalistic ideologies. Sin argued that, unlike the European nations that had a feudal structure and were characterized by hierarchical clusters of decentralized territorial units, ancient societies such as Korea can be considered to have been pre-modern nations. In such nations then it is imperative to distinguish pre-modern and modern nationalisms.

Sin's approach has much in common with that of Anthony D. Smith, who has put great emphasis on the "ethnies" or common cultural background of nations that have long, pre-modern cultural legacies (Smith, 1981, 1986, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1998). In modifying the modernist paradigm (Gellner, 1983, and others) that sees nationalism as an entirely new phenomenon, Smith (1998) began to recognize that social formations resembling the nation can be discerned in pre-modern periods among the Jews and Armenians and also perhaps among the medieval Koreans and Japanese. In short, at certain times and places, national recurrence can be observed. Furthermore, there are numerous examples, over the centuries, of ethnic continuity, expressed in languages, cultures, religious communities, and so forth, among peoples including the Greeks, Persians, and Chinese. Smith argued that these instances do not overturn the modernist paradigm, but they do cast doubt on Gellner's insistence that nations were impossible in pre-modern periods. As a result, Smith's focus began to change "from nationalisms to nations, and from nations to ethnic communities" (1998, p.191). Ethnic communities or *ethnies* were defined as "named human populations with shared ancestry myths,

histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity” (1986a).

Smith asserted that the past is irrelevant for the modernist who sees the nation exclusively as a modern phenomenon, “the product of nationalist ideologies, which themselves are the expression of modern, industrial society” (Smith, 1994a, p. 18). For the post-modernist, on the other hand, the past is problematic because modern nationalist leaders freely select and mix elements for the ethnic past that serve the interests of their “imagined political communities.” Smith believed that those approaches to the nation, in addition to the perennialists’ argument that the nation is simply immemorial, are less than satisfactory. Smith contended that nationalists are “political archaeologists rediscovering and reinterpreting the communal past in order to regenerate the community” (p. 18). To succeed they must insure that their interpretations fit the demands of ideology, scientific evidence, and the citizenry. The nation’s dynamic energy and power to inspire are derived from the two-way relationship between the “ethnic past and the nationalist present” (p.18).

Smith’s ideas are particularly pertinent to a country like Korea, which has a very long history as a pre-modern state, as well as a common language and large inventory of symbols and myths from which the “national past” can be constructed. Smith (1994a) insisted that nationalists rediscover and reinterpret the communal past in a fashion that meets the demands of the present. It is from this inter-relationship between the ethnic past and the nationalist present that the nation derives its dynamic energy and power. In fact, Smith (1998)

mentioned Korea, along with Japan and China, as one of the nations with an ancient history and a pre-modern state.

In the case of Korea, although the Chosun dynasty was decidedly Sino-centric, toward the end of the dynasty, out of Korean *Sirhak* (a school of thinkers who advocated democratic ideas) thought emerged a number of Korean Enlightenment thinkers, who were badly shaken by the collapse of China in the face of Western power (Sin, 2000).

Some of the ideas that they espoused included tearing down the moribund social structure, attaining self-reliance and independence, creating a constitutional monarchy, promoting science, industry, and trade, developing modern weapons, and concentrating on the study of Korean rather than Chinese matters. A form of modern nationalism, Enlightenment thought included the notions of civil democracy and modernization.

When Japan defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5), the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895) constituted China's first recognition of Korea's absolute sovereignty. Over the next fifteen years, Korea's newly established national press agreed that the war symbolized "new knowledge's" (*shinhak*) defeat of "old knowledge" (Schmid, 2000). Along with this, went a shifting in the definition of "civilization" from a Chinese-centered one to one centered on the West.

Korean writers insisted that true independence (as opposed to dependence on China) could only be accomplished through reestablishing cultural purity. Retrospectively, Schmid (2000) claimed that the assumption that

the pure Korean and the Chinese could be easily differentiated from one another after centuries of exchange and interaction is a naïve one. In any case, the attempts to fashion a true Korean identity included such things as the rediscovery of Korean heroes, the glorification of the *hangul* alphabet, the establishment of an archaeological past, the creation of a national flag, and the defining of a Korean Buddhism.

A good example of a rediscovered Korean hero is a Koguryo general, generally ignored in pre-nationalist histories, Ulchi Mundok, who led the Koguryo forces in the seventh century against a Chinese Sui dynasty invading army at the turn of the twentieth century. Korean writers discovered in him a hero from an age before extensive Chinese influences (Schmid, 2000). Schmid has delineated how the Korean nationalist and the Japanese colonialist discourses shared the same new vision of civilization and the same disregard for the stereotypical *yangban* scholar, who in his traditional clothes was depicted as effete and ineffective. Among historian and editorialist Sin Chae-ho's extensive efforts to create new images for Korea was his biography of Ulchi Mundok. Jagar (2003) contended that by looking back to Ulchi Mundok, Sin was searching for a new vision of masculinity, based on authentic ancient warrior ideals.

Another step in reinventing a modern Korean nation was the movement advocating the use of the Korean alphabet that had been invented during King Sejong's celebrated reign in the 15th century. Although some of the *Sirhak* thinkers had advocated the use of King Sejong's alphabet (*hangul*) (Sin, 2000),

by the turn of the 20th Century, many Korean Enlightenment figures were questioning the proposition that Chinese characters were the “true script” (*chinmun*) and the only access to truth (Schmid, 2002). They started to refer to the alphabet as Korean writing, and then later as “national writing” (*kungmun*), rather than as the “vulgar script” (*onmun*). Indeed, writers declared that the national script was worthy of reverence and love. Sin Ch’aeho challenged his compatriots by asking, “Today, if there are still those who scorn the national script more than Chinese writing, can we still call them Korean?” (cited in Schmid, 2000, p.93).

In 1910 Korea was officially colonized by Japan, and from that time onward, nationalism took the form of an anti-Japanese independence movement. Korean intellectuals were anxious to discover the archaeological and cultural origins of the Korean people, largely in reaction to escalating Japanese attempts to subordinate Korean people and culture to the interests of Japanese imperialism. At this point in history, myths and sketchy archaeological evidence concerning the founders of the Korean people, most notably Tangun, became important symbols of Korean culture. In a similar fashion, various scholars looked to ancient animistic and shamanistic beliefs and practices as evidence of a Korean race that predated Chinese and Buddhist influences (Pai, 1998; Pai, 2000).

Although the legendary figure Tan’gun had not been a very significant symbol during the Chosun dynasty, Yu Kil-chun, one of the language reformers, exhorted his compatriots one year before the Japanese annexation, in his 1909

work on grammar, “Fellow Koreans! As the spiritual descendants of Tan’gun, we the Korean people possess our own language and our own indigenous script” (Cited in Baker, 1998, p. 38). The first literary reference to Tan’gun appears in the monk Iryon’s thirteenth-century compilation of myths and legends, the *Samguk Yuksa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms) (Schmid, 2002). In Iryon’s version, Tan’gun descended from Heaven in the year 2333 B.C. onto Mount Paektu and commenced to teach the people 360 arts and to instruct them in moral principles. Although the myth is in this early form simple and short, it could be considered a foundation myth for the earliest of the kingdoms on the Korean peninsula, Old Choson. Interestingly, Kim Pu-sik, in his twelfth-century, Koryo dynasty-sponsored history *Samguk Sagi* (*History of the Three Kingdoms*), did not even mention Tan’gun. In Kim’s account, Kija, another legendary figure who was said to have fled from China to the Korean peninsula, replaces Old Choson and brings civilization to the land. In the highly Confucianized world view of the later Choson dynasty (1392-1910), the Kija legend was favored due to its connection to Chinese civilization in that Sinocentric world. In fact, the Kija legend served to legitimize the Korean kingdoms as recipients of Chinese culture.

By the beginning of the 20th Century, however, many Korean scholars were distancing themselves and Korea from Chinese influence. Korean writers, perhaps borrowing the word from Japanese, where it seems to have appeared first, began to use the word *minjok* to refer to the people of the country (Schmid, 2002). Usually translated into English as race or ethnic group, the

term was useful in referring to the nation as a natural entity. In its very first recorded appearance in the *Hwangsong Sinmun*, one of the main Korean newspapers, in 1900, *minjok* was used to refer to a racial unit that included the various peoples of East Asia. By 1907, the same paper was using *minjok* to indicate the people of the Korean peninsula, and *minjok* became closely connected to Tan'gun. Historian Sin Chae-ho traced the origin of the Korean *minjok* back to the ancestor Tan'gun. As the Japanese colonizers promulgated the Amaterasu sun goddess myth as the basis for their imperial line, Korean nationalists countered with the Tan'gun legend to legitimize the Korean nation as distinct from the state that had fallen under Japanese control.

Gradually, Tan'gun was elevated at Kija's expense, as editorials espoused Korea's equality with China and emphasized the urgent necessity of studying Korean history. After liberation from Japan in 1945, the South Korean government quickly endorsed Tan'gun, adopting the Tan'gi (Tan'gun calendar) as the official system for establishing dates and proclaiming the legendary date of Tan'gun's descent as a national holiday. In the north, materialist conceptions of history had little place for such myths in the early period of communist rule. In the last twenty-five years, however, Tan'gun has reemerged as an important figure, second perhaps only to Kim Il Sung. Arguments of continuity and legitimacy were buttressed by the purported discovery of Tan'gun's tomb in the north in 1993.

Although today it is taken for granted in Korea that Koreans have always had a strong sense of national historical consciousness and a pride in their

past. Pai (1998) contended that, at the turn of the twentieth century, there is virtually no evidence to support the notion that Koreans cared much about the past. Historical sites were in ruin, and the *yangban* class was preoccupied with Confucian rites and family ancestral shrines. The tombs of Yi royalty and merit subjects were maintained, but there was little consciousness of “national place” or “prehistoric origins.” In fact, Deuchler (1992) argued that, even in the early colonial period, the *yangban* class followed the same pursuits as they had during the Sinocentric Choson dynasty.

According to Pai (1998, 2000), after liberation from Japan, scholars from both Koreas contended that they had rediscovered the Korean past; however, in fact, not only was the original study of Korean archaeology done by Japanese researchers during the colonial period, but even today, the organization of ancient finds bears the imprint of Japanese scholarship. At the time, the Japanese archaeologists tended to view the Korean Three Kingdom Period as the lost home land of Japanese art and Buddhist traditions, believing that the Japanese people had their origins in Manchuria and had migrated over the centuries, eventually arriving in Japan. Since liberation, a large Korean literature has depicted the basic relationship between the two countries as one in which culture and technology has passed continually from Korea to Japan. Pai has contended that such arguments rest on hypothetical migrations and invasions, and in reality, “Korean archaeological studies have yet to reveal any systematic or concrete data that explain how Koguryo, Paekche, and Kaya burial forms could have served as direct antecedents for ‘Japanese’ dolmens,

Yayoi tombs, or Kofun burials “ (1998, pp. 13-14). In short, in the absence of hard data, Koreans and Japanese have constructed quite different interpretations of their relationship and ancient pasts.

Pai’s major contention (2000) was that the Koreans’ constructions of their past in time and space have very much been in reaction to the nationalistic and originally colonial version of East Asian history espoused by the Japanese, in which Japanese and Koreans share a common past, with the Koreans occupying an inferior and secondary place in the drama. Through undocumented speculation and hypothetical invasions and migrations, ultra-nationalistic Korean historians and archaeologists have fashioned a past in which Koreans are linked to Tungus-Manchurian tribes, with shamanism as the unifying ideology. In the pursuit of nationalistic causes, myth has been favored over evidence. Tangun’s dates are unreliable, there is no solid evidence of Kija’s existence on the peninsula, it is unclear how Korean and Tungusic forms of shamanism are related given shamanism’s widespread and common occurrence, and there is no convincing model to explain the interactions between the Korean Kingdoms and Japan in the first half of the first millennium. Pai’s advice was for Korean scholars to cease trying to bolster national self-esteem through their research, to abandon the futile search for “racial markers” in the past, and to focus on the formation of the state as the contemporary key to understanding prehistory.

In any case, Koreans do frequently refer to the above-mentioned symbols in constructing what it means to be Korean. Pride in *hangul* and the

glories of the Koguryo Kingdom derives from the efforts of the early Korean nationalists more than a century ago, as does much of the reconstruction of the Korean past.

Contemporary Ideological Divisions and Master Narratives

My participants, like everyone else in Korea, are influenced in their constructions of Korean identity by the main ideological division that exists today in South Korea, and this section will explore the nature of that division. Essentially, this ideological divide is a continuation of the split between the conservatives (today's opposition party), who trace the modern history of Korea through the Enlightenment of the late 19th Century up through the regimes of Park Chung-hee and the military rulers who followed him, and the various progressives and left-leaning reformers (today's ruling and labor parties) who find their origins in the 19th Century Tonghak Rebellion and the resistance to military rule during the mid 20th Century. This ideological division also corresponds with the three main currents of nationalism posited by Song (1999): state-sponsored anti-communism, pro-capitalist conglomerate (*chaebol*) dominated ideology, and the populist *minjung* movement, with the first two currents opposed to the third one. The last two progressive governments headed by Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo Hyun pursued reconciliation with North Korea and subjected the leading *chaebol*, including Hyundai, Samsung, and Daewoo, to stringent investigations. These policies appealed to significant segments of the electorate in the two presidential elections prior to conservative

Lee Myung-bak's victory in 2007, though Lee's election and the National Assembly elections in the spring of 2008 clearly demonstrated a rejection of the overall policies of the former student demonstrators of the Roh Moo Hyun administration, particularly those in the economic arenas (Choe, 2006). Critics have claimed that Roh's policies strained relations with the U.S. and created widening divisions within Korean society over education and taxation issues. In previous elections, young voters had backed the progressive parties while older voters supported the more conservative Grand National Party; by the time of Lee Myung-bak's election, however, Young voters were also more likely to vote for the GNP (conservative Hannara Party) candidate (Kim, 2008).

For several decades, constructions of Korean identity have often included references to Korea's economic growth and international influence. Although the GNP is more closely associated with business interests and an ideology of economic growth, both the GNP conservatives and the progressives are publicly committed to raising the standard of living in Korea. In the 1970's, President Park Chong-hui gambled that significant economic growth would legitimize his authoritarian rule, a strategy that was largely successful. Since then, despite a few economic reversals, most notably the IMF Crisis of 1997, the Korean economy has continued to grow. Contemporary Koreans often take great pride in the overseas successes of Korean products, as well as international sports triumphs, such as a fourth place standing in the 2002 Seoul World Cup, and Korea's growing international stature, a good example of which

is the recent election of Ki-Moon Ban as the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

As for how and why a state constructs and maintains a “master narrative,” Duara (1993) has analyzed the process by which master narratives legitimate the state both internally and internationally. Robinson (1993) has emphasized the degree to which the process is beset by anxieties. He explained that what seems to be harmless academic analysis, an archaeological find or a new linguistic theory, can threaten the legitimacy of the state, which is supported by one of many possible master narratives. Elsewhere, Robinson (1996) delineated, in addition to the official narratives of the North and South, several “counter-narratives” of the nation in South Korea, including a decolonization narrative (connected to the *minjung* and progressive narratives), a narrative in search of a modern but uniquely Korean national identity (involving new explorations into Korean folk and indigenous religions), and a new women’s movement (opposed to past and present repressions of women).

In recent years, an increasingly multi-cultural narrative has also begun to appear. In line with theories that stress the increasing significance of transnationalism, hybrid identity, and cosmopolitanism (Appadurai, 1996; Schiller & Basch 1995; Bhabha 1994; Rankin 2003; Delanty 1999; Bowden 2003), many Koreans are becoming more open to foreign and global influences. Appadurai has stated that his *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization* (1996) is a theory of rupture, a theory that

examines how media and migration have the joint effect of creating a new role for the imagination. Electronic mediation transforms the world, and mass migrations are accompanied by rapidly flowing mass-mediated images and sensations. In the case of contemporary Korea, there are many examples of the effects of the transnational movements of media and population. About half of the movies shown in Korean theaters are either American or international films, and the vast majority of Korean households subscribe to cable TV packages that include international news programs and American reality TV programs, sit-coms, and talk shows. Significant numbers of Koreans have immigrated to other countries such as the United States for several decades. Largely as a result of Korea's economic success, some of those immigrants return to Korea to live every year, whereas even the ones who remain in other countries continue to be connected to their mother country through travel, the Internet, and overseas Korean communities. Because of the great importance that English plays in both Korean education and success in a globalized world, in addition to studying English at domestic language institutes and camps, increasing numbers of Young Koreans spend a year or more studying overseas in English-speaking countries or at international schools in other countries, with or without their parents. Parents who have an opportunity to be posted overseas try to work abroad when their children are Young so that the kids will develop their English skills. Many university students participate in overseas ESL or work-study programs. At my Korean university, there has been a

dramatic increase in the number of students who have lived overseas in the past or have spent a year or so in an overseas ESL program.

In addition to Koreans going overseas, there has been a steady increase in the number of foreigners living in Korea. Exchange students, English teachers, international business executives, and migrant workers from South and Southeast Asia can be seen in the cities, and in the case of migrant workers, in the countryside, as well. As Kubota (2002) has argued for Japan, Korea is not as homogeneous place as it once was. In an interesting and related development, as a result of selective abortion of female fetuses (caused by a preference for boys) and the reluctance of Korean women to remain in the countryside married to farmers, marriage agencies arrange marriages between rural Korean men and women from other Asian countries. In most villages, at least some of the Young wives are from other countries, and nationwide, when all international marriages are included, 14% of Korean marriages were with foreign spouses in 2005 (Yoon, 2006). Some of those marriages were between migrant workers and Korean citizens, and the children of those unions have been granted improved legal rights in recent years. Actually, there have been a number of movements to accord migrant workers, foreign spouses, and foreigners in general more legal rights and benefits. There are also indications that Koreans have become significantly more open to international marriages. In one recent survey (Lee, 2006), 54% of single people said that they would consider marrying a foreigner, whereas according to another survey (Chung, 2006), 61% of parents indicated that they could accept one of their children

marrying someone from another country. As a result of these demographic and attitudinal changes, it could be said that Korea is rapidly becoming a more multi-cultural society.

A good illustration of this multiculturalism is the case of Hines Ward, the Pittsburgh Steelers' wide receiver. Just before the 2005 Super Bowl, the Korean media began to advertise the fact that Ward's mother is Korean. When the Steelers won the Super Bowl and Ward was voted the MVP of the game, there was an explosion in news coverage of Ward and his family situation. Ward quickly was embraced as a Korean hero, and he visited Korea twice with his mother with generous corporate support from Korean corporations. It was Ward's first visit to Korea since he left as a child, and he was interviewed repeatedly on TV. The media reported that difficulties that his mother had experienced in the U.S. after she and her GI husband divorced, and I was told by a couple of Korean friends how moved they were by the mother's courage and determination to make a life for herself and her son in such a difficult situation. Ward helped set up a foundation to help biracial children, and the Korean media covered complaints of discrimination made by biracial Koreans. A few days after Ward's first visit, the Ministry of Education announced that middle school textbooks would no longer describe the Korean people as being of "one blood." In September of 2006, a popular public service announcement featured in newspapers and on the sides of buses shows Hines Ward gazing off in one direction and a Korean man looking off in the opposite direction and proclaims that "Koreans are spreading their influence around the world." The ad

demonstrates both a greater openness to defining who is Korean and a continuing interest and concern in Korea's influence and standing in the world.

Relations with the U.S.: An Examination of Anti-Americanism

My research question concerning my participants' feelings about mastering English has some connection to attitudes toward the influence of the United States. This is an area of great contention and disagreement. For Americans who spend much time in Korea, it is difficult to make sense of the fact that even though anti-American sentiments seem to be increasing (Won, 2005), many young Koreans continue to read Time magazine, enjoy Hollywood movies, and aspire to study in or even immigrate to the United States. It is possible, of course, that Koreans, both young and old, separate their political and personal feelings, or that many Koreans are ambivalent toward the U.S., both admiring and resenting it at the same time. This section explores the complex relationship that exists between South Korea and the United States.

There has been considerable debate over the nature of Korean anti-Americanism. Jinwung Kim (1994) distinguished between "emotional" and "ideological" anti-Americanism, insisting that few Koreans object to the United States on ideological grounds. For most Korean anti-Americanism should be seen as a collective reaction to America's powerful presence, not a complete rejection of that presence. Some writers, such as Risse (2001), have emphasized that anti-Americanism is not a completely new phenomenon. As

long ago as 1905, some Koreans felt that with the Taft-Katsura Agreement the United States had abandoned Korea to Japan's colonial aspirations (S. H. Kim, 2002).

In 1945, when Korea was liberated from Japan at the end of World War II, left-wing Koreans bitterly denounced the U.S.'s refusal to recognize the People's Committees that had been quickly set up throughout the country, including the area south of the thirty-eighth parallel, which was the area to be administered by the U.S. Forces. Under the banner of nationalism, an amazing number of organizations had been set up in a short period of time, including political, cultural, student, labor, peasant, and women's groups (Choi, 1993). In the beginning, ideology was not a problem because nationalism served as a unifying factor, and the Peoples Committees were quickly set up throughout the peninsula. There is considerable debate concerning the nature of those committees (Eckert, Lee, Lew, Robinson, & Wagner, 1990). Conservatives have seen them as fronts for extreme leftist groups, whereas other scholars have claimed that they included representatives from various locations on the political spectrum and were essentially representative of the political opinion of that time. In any case, the US refused to recognize the committees and sponsored those from the right, eventually settling on Syngman Rhee as their candidate to lead the government. In Koo's (1993a) view, civil society was demobilized once again as the United States supported and propped up Rhee's conservative and reactionary regime. The ruling group suffered from a lack of legitimacy, and state and society were again alienated from one another. Upon

the inability of the north and south to agree on countrywide elections, the country became divided, and the scene was set for the Korean War that broke out several years later.

After the protracted period of stagnation that followed the cessation of hostilities in 1953, a military coup finally took place in 1961, the result of which was eighteen years of rule by Park Chung Hee that lasted up to his assassination in 1979. Under the ideological banners of nationalism and anti-communism, civil society was quickly demobilized and a strong state-weak society relationship was once again reestablished (Koo, 1993a). Park's accomplishment was to transform a weak state into a "developmental" one. A developmental state not only relies on the effective use of centralized power, but also depends on an insulated economic bureaucracy and efficacious policy implementation (Haggard & Moon, 1993). Having usurped power from a democratic government, Park was also faced with a legitimacy problem, especially from the nation's university students (Koo, 1993a). Park gambled that the achievement of economic growth would buy him popular support. Although that strategy was largely successful, during the 60's and the 70's, some opponents of Park Chung-hee's authoritarian rule began criticizing the United States for its support of the Park Regime.

By the 70's, a *minjung* movement was beginning to coalesce in South Korea. Although the word *minjung* (a highly-charged word referring to the ordinary Korean people) was also used in the Independence Movement of the 1890s (Wells, 1995) and by Sin Chae-ho in the 1920's as he began to embrace

anarchism and class struggle (Jagar, 2003), the modern history of the term begins in the 1970s with the search by political activists and Christian theologians for a name for their parallel efforts to resist the authoritarian regime of President Park Chong-hui. President Park's *Saemaeul* (New Community Movement) had systematically repressed various village customs, such as elaborate funeral and marriage rites and community shamanistic rituals, on the grounds that they violated the slogan of achieving a "scientific and efficient way of life" (Oh, 2003; Kim, 2003; Lim, 2003). Therefore, it is not surprising that the activists looked to the folk traditions of the common people to symbolize their resistance to authoritarian, antidemocratic, state-led modernization. Folk ritual and political opposition in South Korea became closely linked, not simply out of nostalgia for the rural way of life that was disappearing, but because it was a way to connect "true Koreanness" to a political agenda and an attractive nationalist discourse (Sorenson, 1995). Consequently, religious and secular activists, along with leaders of the influential students' movement, in their search for symbols to resist Park's anti-democratic practices and embraced the concept of the *minjung*, the common, oppressed people of Korea.

During the Park regime, anti-communism and developmentalism constituted the basis of the dominant state ideology (Shin, 1998). As a result of rising income gaps between the urban and rural areas, the creation of a new urban under-class, and other economic and political grievances, opposition leader Kim Dae Jung nearly defeated Park in the 1971 election (Haggard & Moon, 1993). Using a perhaps magnified perception of a security crisis, Park

pushed through his *Yushin* constitution in 1972. The new constitution greatly increased Park's personal power, and the term *minjung* quickly became a slogan for those who were opposed to the regime and sought to struggle for political and economic democratization (Koo, 1993b).

Although *minjung* began as a populist slogan against the *Yushin* consolidation of executive power, in the 1980's it came to have powerful nationalistic and anti-American overtones. The primary reason for this can be found in the 1980 Kwangju uprisings (Shin, 1998). After President Park had been assassinated by his intelligence chief and longtime friend, Kim Jae-kyu, General Chun Doo Hwan seized power in a military coup d'etat, falsely claiming that the Martial Law Commander, Chung Seung Hwa, another general from a senior-to-Chun cohort of the Military Academy, was implicated in the assassination. Student-led demonstrations against this irregular seizure of power in Kwangju, then a politically and economically neglected part of the country (and the home base of opposition leader Kim Dae Jung), escalated into a civil uprising, the suppression of which resulted in the death of hundreds of citizens. The U.S. was blamed for allegedly releasing the Korean troops who committed the massacre from its command. The U.S. has consistently denied the charges and claimed that the Korean media has never fairly portrayed the events, but even today, most Koreans assume that there was U.S. complicity in the massacre. At the time, a virulent anti-American *minjungism* arose, challenging the anti-communism and nation-development state rhetoric. As opposed to the state's discourse, which stressed national unity and

modernization, the oppositional discourse concerning nation and national identity emphasized the unification of the Korean nation and liberation from foreign dominance. The dissident intellectuals and the student activists abhorred the U.S.'s alleged postwar strategy of containing communism and propping up authoritarian regimes in the interests of capitalism. They felt that democratization entailed national liberation from U.S. hegemonic influence.

The effects of the *minjung* movement are still being felt in South Korea today, for many members of the progressive parties, including the former Uri Party, which was in power until Lee Myung-bak became president in 2008, are former activists who participated in that anti-American movement. Although most have modified their positions over the course of the last two decades, among the progressives a spirit of reconciliation with North Korea and a general resistance to American policies are quite evident in policies.

As for the issues that have engendered anti-American reactions among Koreans in the last ten years, trade and economic disputes assumed some importance during the 1990's (Risse, 2001). Korea joined the WTO in 1995 and became committed to following certain trade policies. Overseas critics, especially in the U.S., began to criticize Korea for not opening its markets according to WTO guidelines. Cars and agricultural products emerged as two particularly contentious areas of dispute. Furthermore, with the gradual opening of Korean markets came more American goods and cultural products, causing Korean culture advocates to complain about the invasion of American culture. In 1997, the South Korean economy faced collapse as a result of not being able

to repay foreign loans. The IMF bailed Korea out with a large loan to which was attached a number of demands for restructuring loan policies, work forces, and corporate practices. Although the Korean economy did slowly and painfully recover, some Koreans blamed the IMF, which they saw as an American-controlled organization, for interfering with the Korean economy and even causing the economic problems in the first place. It is perhaps telling that the 1997 crisis is known as the IMF Crisis.

Since the 1997 crisis, there has been a series of events that have resulted in anti-American sentiments. For example, Kim Dae Jung, the progressive, pro-democracy fighter who survived being kidnapped and almost murdered in 1973 by the KCIA after nearly defeating President Park in the presidential election of 1971 and then being sentenced to death in 1980 by the Chun Doo Hwan government for allegedly instigating the Kwangju Uprising against Chun's coup d'etat that followed Park's assassination in 1979, was president of Korea from 1997 to 2002. Kim pursued a "Sunshine Policy" of reconciliation with North Korea and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000, largely as a result of his peace summit with Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang. The present president of Korea, Roh Moo-hyun, ran as successor to Kim Dae Jung's party and used anti-Americanism as part of his campaign strategy (South Korea Flirts, 2003). As a labor lawyer, Roh had called for U.S. withdrawal from Korea in the past and was quoted by the New York Times during the campaign as saying that he would "guarantee the security of North Korea against the United States" (cited in South Korea Flirts, 2003, p. 5). In the

period prior to the election, an American armored vehicle accidentally ran over two Korean school girls on a country road. It was a duty-related accident, so the Americans, citing the provisions of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), refused to grant jurisdiction to the South Korean courts, which caused a great deal of public resentment. When the two sergeants were found not-guilty by a U.S. military court, the South Korean media and public exploded in outrage. Enormous demonstrations were held throughout the country just before the election was held. Largely as a result of this anti-American sentiment, Roh was elected president by a narrow margin (Shin, 2004).

Not long after the election, an American short-track skater, Apollo Ono, was awarded a controversial gold medal in the Winter Olympics held in Utah when Korea's champion skater and only hope for a gold medal, Kim Dong-sung, was disqualified when he was judged to have cut-off Ono in the final stretch. Although the judge was an Australian, the Korean public blamed Ono for "over-acting" and the United States for stealing the medal. In fact, the resentment was so great that when Korea scored its first goal against the U.S. in the 2002 World Cup games in Seoul, Korean players pantomimed skating in retaliation. When Jay Leno made a joke about the Korean skater Kim angrily kicking and eating his dog when he got home, the Korean networks condemned the Americans' attitudes and stoked the public anger even higher (South Korea Flirts, 2003). The skating incident is a good example of how unpredictable and even seemingly trivial events can trigger anti-American sentiments.

American actions and rhetoric against North Korea are a cause of more serious resentment against the U.S. When George W. Bush was reelected president in post 9/11 America, he denounced North Korea as a part of an “axis of evil” and suggested the preemptive attacks were a possibility. Bush’s attitude toward North Korea has angered many Koreans who fear that U.S. actions toward the north will put South Korea at risk. Since the Roh government continued to pursue Kim Dae Jung’s policy of reconciliation with North Korea, even after the nuclear bomb test in the fall of 2006, there was a serious divergence between the two allies’ positions. As strange as it seems to many foreigners, many South Koreans, especially the younger generations, do not fear an unprovoked attack from North Korea. They have come to see the North Korea as a nation that can be talked to and negotiated with. It will be interesting to see how the Korea-American relationship will develop under the new, more conservative president of Korea, Lee Myung-bak.

How are the above-mentioned manifestations of anti-Americanism to be seen? Bong (2004) argued that although there are at least eight terms in the Korean language that describe images of the U.S., *yongmi* (use America) is the most revealing one today. In the past, some Koreans may have felt *hyunmi* (loathe America) as a result of America’s alleged complicity in the Kwangju Massacre or *sungmi* (worship America) because the U.S. liberated Korea from Japan, but these days, Bong contended, there is no fixed image of the U.S. Ambivalence toward the United States is a reflection of Korean pragmatism, or *yongmi*. According to Bong, what is prevalent in Korea is a “Korea-first”

philosophy. When doing so is congruent with South Korea's national interests, Koreans can be either pro or anti-American. Although there may be much to that argument, S. H. Kim (2002) warned that Koreans place a very high value on respect. He claimed that an important reason for the increase in China's popularity among Koreans is that China is perceived as granting respect to Korea (though the recent controversy with China over China's attempt to include Koguryo history as part of Chinese history may have seriously altered that perception). Kim asserted that *kibun* (mood and emotions) and *chemyon* (face and pride) are enormously important in traditional Korean culture, so Americans should strive to convey the impression of being sensitive to Korean feelings and pride.

Conclusion

In analyzing the discourse of my participants, I attempted to discern the symbols and narratives that are utilized in constructing various versions of Korean identity. Key components of the analysis were to examine the ways that symbols of national identity and attitudes toward the United States and the use of English are implicated in the constructions of Korean identity.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The focus of my study is to explore the discursive constructions of Korean identity that occur in an online community composed of EIL university students. I employed two related discourse analytic approaches known as discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter 1992; Edwards 1998; Potter 1998; Potter & Wetherell 1987) and rhetorical psychology (Billig 1987; Billig et. al 1988) to analyze the writing of the participants. The study was a discourse-analytic study of an online community, albeit one that was established by the researcher. In order to examine Korean identity constructions in a variety of online contexts, I collected data from online forum discussions and ongoing dialogues between individual community members and me. To better explore my own role in the interactions with the community participants, I also kept a researcher's journal.

The English language online community for students that I established included intermediate to high-level students (sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have already taken at least two semesters of English at the university level) from Korea's foremost university of foreign studies. I was able to invite some of the students whom I know to participate. I encouraged them to invite some of their fellow students who were interested in participating in online discussions of cultural and social issues. Although the manner of recruitment undoubtedly resulted in a community of individuals highly motivated to improve their English, it is precisely that sort of student who would elect to participate in a voluntary English online community in any case. I set up the web site so that,

in addition to the discussion topics that I propose, the community participants were also able to create new topics for discussion. For the purposes of my research, some of the topics that I proposed were directly connected to the issue of Korean identity. I know from past experience with online topics in my classes, however, that some of the topics not directly related to Korean identity also yield discourse that relates to identity issues. Therefore, a few of the main topics concern issues related to cultural change in general. As mentioned above, the site included a dialogue function that I employed to interview the participants, asking them private questions about their views and backgrounds and to allow the participants to pose questions to me and request feedback on their writing. I informed them that the dialogues can only be seen by the relevant participant and me. During the course of the research, I kept a researcher's journal to record my thoughts, impressions, and strategies throughout the research.

Reasons for Conducting a Discourse Analytic Study

To study constructions of Korean identity, especially in the context of online writing, I chose the theory and analytic method of discursive psychology, which Harre and Gillett (1994) characterize as interpreting “the self-positioning of the subject within the complex structure of rules and practices within which that individual moves (p. 20).” They also state that people inhabit various discourses, and negotiation and adjustment are often necessary because discourses can be in conflict with one another. I had already noticed that

explicit statements about Korean identity by my Korean university students appeared to be very much contingent upon the context of the topic being discussed. Their positions on various topics seemed to be contingent upon changing strategic interests.

I approach discourse as essentially rhetorical (Edwards & Potter 1992; Billig 1987; Billig et. al 1988; Edwards 1998; Potter 1998; Potter & Wetherell 1987). I agree with Billig et. al (1988) that the common sense that is expressed in everyday talking and arguing is organized around "ideological dilemmas." These dilemmas are frequently ideological in relation to broader societal concerns. Importantly, the dilemmas are not so much problems to be resolved as tensions that structure our social settings. They provide us with contradictory resources that maintain social practices. I view rhetoric as often oriented to persuasion and examined how a sense of identity can emerge within a context of opinion presentation and argumentation (Billig, 1987).

Researcher's Role and Experience

My theoretical and analytical orientation is derived from discursive psychology and discourse analysis, and my role in the community was that of community mentor: creating some of the forum topics, providing requested feedback concerning the participants' writing, observing the interactions of the online community, and interviewing the individual members in an ongoing fashion. The reason that I decided to not participate in the actual forum discussions is that, in previous online teaching, I have discovered that when I

do not participate in the discussions, the participants orient themselves more to one another and become less concerned with the fact that the teacher, or in this case the researcher and site mentor, is also observing the interaction. I did, of course, have to carefully study how my dialogues with individual students may have affected their subsequent forum discussion.

My original academic background was in East Asian sociology and anthropology, but except for adjunct face-to-face and online teaching with an American university that offers classes in Korea and Japan, my primary employment for more than twenty years has been as a full-time English professor at Korean universities. My academic interests have continued to be largely cultural, so in addition to the research I have done on cultural topics such as Korean shamanism, I have continually explored cultural themes in my Korean university EIL classes. Through my studies of Korean culture and language, long residence in Korea, and close relationships with many Koreans, including my students, I have become knowledgeable about Korean culture and have the ethnographic background necessary to effectively interpret the identity discourse that occurred in this online community.

Recruiting the Participants

For my study, I wanted to analyze the discourse that occurred in a voluntary online community that I would establish for university students who were interested in discussing social issues and improving their writing through both practice and any feedback on their writing that they might request from

me. I determined that students whose English level was either intermediate or advanced would be best for the purposes of the study due to the fact that beginning-level students would have a great deal of trouble discussing complicated and abstract social issues such as Korean identity, nationalism, globalization, and so forth. I decided to recruit students for the community who were mainly sophomores, juniors, or seniors who had already taken some basic level English classes at the university. I realized, of course, that a sample of intermediate and advanced English learners at a prestigious university of foreign studies does not constitute a random sample, but believed that for a qualitative study of a particular group of learners, such a sample was as good a place to start as any.

About two weeks before the start of the spring semester, I began to email some of the students at this particular university with whom I was familiar to inform them about the online community that I was setting up. Many of them had already heard about the community during the previous semester, but in my email, I explained the community in more detail and, giving them directions for enrolling on the site, I encouraged them to register for the community as soon as possible. Slowly, but surely, the people whom I contacted and a few of their friends began to register for the community. A few days before the semester officially began, I posted flyers (see Appendix A) about the community around the campus, and as soon as classes began, I approached many individuals whom I am familiar with on campus with flyers and encouraged them to register for the community and to also tell any of their

friends who might be interested about this opportunity to discuss issues in English and to receive some feedback on their writing. In the next chapter, I will present the results of my recruitment and the online survey that the participants took.

Data Collection

For my research, I collected data from three sources: forum discussions, researcher-to participant dialogues, and my researcher's journal. In addition to requiring the members to indicate their willingness to participate in the project by clicking an “accept” button as part of the online site registration procedure, I also asked for the participants’ written permission (see Appendix B) to use anonymous selections from their writing and informed them of their right to retract that permission at any time during or after their participation in the community. As another part of the registration process for joining the community, participants were asked to fill out a brief online demographic survey (see Appendix C) covering such matters as age, gender, major, and overseas experience.

From both my online teaching experience and reading that I have done on online communities, I recognize the importance of maintaining a positive community environment. I agree with Li (2004), who emphasizes the significance of establishing a “friendly, free, safe and open online environment” (p. 25), and with Palloff and Pratt (1999), who stress that participants need to be taught good “netiquette,” especially the importance of rereading messages

before posting them to make sure that they are respectful of others and differing viewpoints. They go on to state that some conflict is not necessarily a bad thing and can, in fact, help establish community norms and procedures; if, however, the conflict becomes too intense and has a negative impact on learning objectives, they state that the moderator should contact the individuals immediately and privately to investigate the problem and enforce the community's standards of civility. I followed those guidelines in moderating our online community. In fact, however, there were no problems associated with conflict during the project. There was one rather heated exchange between Jonghun and Virginia, which I will recount in the discussion section, but even that exchange required no intervention on my part.

Forums

For forum discussion topics, I created a number of loosely connected topics related to Korean cultural and national identity. The site was structured in such a way that the participants were able to initiate new discussion threads related to the topic under discussion. In addition, I established an area where participants could suggest new topics. The eleven main topics or forums are listed below:

- Korean Identity: In your case, what are the most important aspects of "being Korean"? How do Korean culture and Korean citizenship affect your self-identity, your sense of who you are, and what is important to you?

- Red Devil Fever: How do you explain the intense interest and participation in the World Cup (and other international sports) by Koreans? Are international sports an important aspect of Korean nationalism? Were the reactions to the 2006 World Cup refereeing and the 2000 Winter Olympics disqualification of Korea's star short track skater reasonable or exaggerated responses to those events?
- Modern Sexuality: In Korea young people are dating earlier and marrying later. Premarital sexual activity and unintended pregnancies are increasing. Why are these changes occurring, and are they a result of "Westernization"? How can the negative aspects of these trends be minimized?
- Globalization: Do you think that globalization is making life around the world more and more similar? Is globalization threatening Korean culture in any ways? What are the main reasons for the globalization trend?
- English for Kids: What are some right and wrong ways to go about teaching Korean children English? Is studying English overseas preferable to learning it here? Can learning English at a young age interfere with being Korean?
- North Korea: How different from South Koreans are the North Koreans today? When and how can the two Koreas be unified? How can the "nuclear weapons" issue be best resolved?

- Nationalism: How do most Koreans (and you) think about people from other countries (Americans, other Asians, Europeans, foreign workers in Korea, etc.)? Is nationalism a good thing? Are Koreans sometimes overly nationalistic or xenophobic?
- Living Together: In the U.S. and many other Western countries, many couples live together before getting married. Do you think that living together before marriage is a reasonable way for couples to determine whether they are compatible and should get married? Is this trend also beginning to happen in Korea? In your opinion, will living together before marriage be common in Korea 10 or 20 years from now?
- Biracial Koreans and Overseas Koreans: Hines Ward's visits to Korea have caused some people to question defining being Korean as being of one blood. What makes a person Korean? Are biracial children with one Korean parent Korean? Are overseas Koreans who speak little or no Korean also "Korean"?
- Learning English: Opportunity or Burden? What have your experiences with learning English been like? Have you resented having to master English? Have you developed a new identity and new perspectives through studying English? Do you think all Koreans should learn English?
- Korea and the U.S.: Would you describe your attitudes toward the U.S. and Americans as favorable or unfavorable? In what ways

would you like to see Korea – n-American relations change? What do you like or not like about the U.S.?

Palloff & Pratt (1999) have stated that the moderator should be careful not to dominate the discussion or impose too much control. They suggested that the moderator make clear from the beginning that he or she should be treated simply as another participant in the discussions. In my case, I decided to not join the forum discussions, but to confine my direct comments to dialoguing with the participants in a private, one-to-one fashion, to avoid having too much influence on the discussions. From previous experience with online writing in university classes, I believed that even though I would be creating the primary discussion topics, because I would not be participating in the forum discussions themselves, at least in those discussions, the participants would be more conscious of their fellow students as an audience than they would be of my involvement.

Mentor-to-Participant Dialogues

The ongoing dialogues that I had with the community members constituted asynchronous interviews, and I used the dialogue function to ask questions about the members' backgrounds and experiences and to further explore and question the comments that they made in the group forum discussions. The interaction that I had with the participants in private, online dialogues obviously involved direct interaction with me, an American professor. That data was examined from a qualitative point of view that considered the

resulting dialogue to be a form of social interaction in which both the interviewer and the interviewee contribute to the resulting construction of meaning (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002).

Because participants sometimes undermine each others' versions, in a discursive psychological approach (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), the interviewing process can be more confrontational than is normally the case, for the interviewer should "try to generate interpretive contexts to see connections between accounting practices and variations in functional context" (p. 163). In other words, the interviewer should attempt to determine how the participants' positions vary according to the issues and context. The same issue can be approached from different angles connected to different topics. Certain responses should elicit predetermined follow-up questions. Potter (2004) has stated that group situations in which the participants argue with one another effectively result in the participants interviewing themselves. In any case, I approached my interview-dialogues as conversational encounters (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) in which the linguistic nuances of the questions are as important as those of the responses. In other words, my questions and comments are also a topic of analysis. Questions are seen "as active and constructive, not passive and neutral" (p. 165).

Researcher's Journal

I kept a journal in which I recorded my thoughts about the data collection and data analysis as they proceeded. In addition to weekly reflective entries, I made entries in connection with my reading of the forums and the one-to-one dialogues that I had with the community members. This journal was invaluable in reconstructing the role that I played in both the dialogues and the community at large. In the course of doing and analyzing my research, I needed to examine the preconceptions that I brought to the study of Korean identity and the effect of those preconceptions on the analysis of the discourse. For example, I believe that very strong nationalistic sentiments can in various ways have negative effects on intercultural understanding and communication. How did that attitude shape the questions that I asked and the resulting discourse? How could I either control the influence of that attitude or provide separate opportunities for the participants' to develop different ideas in non-contentious contexts? Those are the kinds of issues that I addressed in my researcher's journal.

Data Analysis

By far the most practical guide for my data analysis was the approach taken by Wetherell and Potter (Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Margaret Wetherell (1998) has persuasively argued for a discursive psychology that connects conversation analysis and ethnomethodology to the insights of post-structuralist thought (1998). In their classic *Mapping the*

language of racism: Discourse and the legitimation of exploitation, Wetherell and Potter (1992) explained how discursive psychology puts much emphasis on social practice and the context of language use. They prefer the term interpretive repertoire to discourse. Interpretive repertoires are “discernible clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images” (p. 90). They “permit us to understand the content of discourse and how it’s organized” (p. 90). These repertoires are not the same as the representations of cognitive social psychology (Potter, 1996). In much of cognitive psychology, the objects of study, such as "social identities," are conceived of as internal processes that are hidden from view (Billig, 2001). By way of contrast, discursive social psychologists "claim that the phenomena of social psychology are constituted through social interaction, especially discursive interaction" (Billig, 2001, p. 210). Potter (1997) has suggested that the concept of stake is a useful addition to the notion of interpretive repertoires. Stake is explained as a recognition that "people treat each other as entities with desires, motives, institutional allegiances and so on, as having a stake in their actions" (p. 153). In short, rather than starting the research with preordained categories to be analyzed, the qualitative analysis employed by discursive psychology involves reading through the data several times, looking for emerging themes and interpretive repertoires. The goal of my discourse analysis was to discover the interpretive repertoires and stakes that Koreans use in constructing Korean identities.

One of my key assumptions in analyzing the data is that people use language to construct versions of the world (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). It is construction in the sense that a variety of linguistic resources are employed, active selection occurs, and the consequential nature of accounts is emphasized. I agree with Potter and Wetherell that it is important to focus on the discourse itself as a topic, rather than viewing the language as a signpost to something else such as internal attitudes. The accounts themselves construct reality. Individuals' accounts are often contradictory, and the task of discourse analysis is to ask, for example, on what occasions is one attitude manifested and on what occasions is the contradictory attitude displayed. Through an analysis of the participants' discourse on a variety of topics, I explored this issue in the constructions of Korean identity in our online community.

In addition to the above-mentioned discursive psychological approach, Stuart Hall's analysis of the discursive strategies employed in the narration of national culture (1997), and Wodak et al.'s description (1999) of the different types of macro-strategies utilized in the discursive formation of national identity were useful in making sense of the data on Korean national identity that I collected. Wodak et al. delineated the various strategies that are interwoven in national identity such as constructive strategies, strategies of transformation, dismantling strategies, and strategies of assimilation and dissimilation. In analyzing these strategies, they focused on the lexical units and syntactic devices that are employed including personal, spatial, and temporal reference;

vagueness, euphemisms, and rhetorical questions; and synecdoche, metonymy, and use of the pronoun “we.”

Coding and Interpretation

I approached the process of coding as somewhat distinct from the analysis itself (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The goal of coding is to organize a large amount of material into manageable chunks. The process is quite different from standard content analysis, where the analysis is the frequency of occurrence of predetermined categories. In discursive psychological discourse analysis, the categories may sometimes be rather straight-forward, but often the understanding of what should be coded may change repeatedly as analysis proceeds. Therefore, the coding and analysis become cyclical; ongoing analysis mandates additional coding. In the analysis itself, the material must be read and reread repeatedly, searching for patterns in the text. One does not read to catch the gist of the text. On the contrary, one focuses on details that may often be fragmented and contradictory. People’s talk fulfills many diverse functions, and the researcher must be on the lookout for hypotheses of how the functions and effects are connected. Analysis of this sort is no mechanical skill; it is rather a skill that emerges as the researcher attempts to make sense of the occurring patterns of discourse.

In an example from their New Zealand data that relates to my own research, Wetherell and Potter (1992) discovered that there were two distinct constructions of culture, culture as heritage and as therapy. The two

constructions were used in different contexts and for different purposes. The heritage view was used to state the importance of preserving Maori culture, whereas the therapy view emphasized how young Maoris were estranged from their culture and consequently not unlikely to be involved in crime. Similarly, Wetherell and Potter stressed that the subject positions and categorizations of race, culture, and nation imply quite different ideas about identity. Categories of this sort are not natural; they are constructed and are closely “related to social arrangements and build on past discursive achievements” (p. 181). I explored how my Korean community members use various interpretive repertoires, including ones concerning race, culture, and nation, to construct Korean identities. Some of the repertoires were anticipated in the initial topic coding, whereas others emerged in the course of the analysis.

In qualitative research, the codes can be divided into three types (Richards, 2005): descriptive, topic, and analytical coding. In my study, descriptive coding was based on the basic attributes of the participants. Information was sorted according to gender, age, overseas experience, and major. Most of that sort of information was derived from the demographic survey. Topic coding allocates passages to topics. Richards claims that early in a study topic coding often dominates the coding process because it is not necessary to understand everything about a situation in order to store information according to topic. In my study, topics or categories such as Korean history, Korean culture, Korean participation in international sports, foreign workers and visitors in Korea, and experiences with foreigners inside and

outside of Korea emerged as likely topics. As the topics became more fine-tuned, some of them emerged as significant interpretive repertoires.

Richards (2005) stated that, although some analysis is involved at all three levels of coding, it is the analytic coding that requires the researcher to interpret the data. Analytic codes represent the researcher's hunches concerning what certain passages are really about. It is the core of qualitative research. In other words, even though the initial descriptive and topic codes (such as gender and positions concerning nationalism or globalization) involve analysis in the sense that they represent my first ideas about what might be significant in the constructions of Korean identity, it is the analytical coding that "comes from interpretation and reflection on meaning" (Richards, 2005, p. 94). In the case of my research, analytic codes emerged that signified my understanding of how certain passages are related to rhetorical strategies and conceptions of stake. For example, how important is the idea of being of "one blood" in constructions of Korean identity? In what contexts is "blood" likely to be of rhetorical significance and in what contexts is it likely to be downplayed? Does the same participant sometimes employ or ignore the concept according to the situational context? Or to take another example, how do the uses of personal pronouns referring to Koreans and Korea vary according to individual identity, topic, and rhetorical strategy?

Analytic Validation

In order to establish analytic validity, I examined the participants' orientations, deviant cases, coherence, and readers' evaluations (Potter 2004; Potter & Wetherell 1987). In discourse analysis it is imperative that "analytic claims are supported by detailed evidence that the participants in an interaction orient to what is claimed" (Potter, 2004, p. 617). According to Heritage (1997), one important check on analytic interpretations is close attention to turn-by-turn displays. Participants' orientations and the existence of new problems were also explored by asking the participants in my dialogue-interviews what they saw as consistent and different, for new problems are indications for further research to make fuller sense of the phenomenon (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). As for deviant cases, they are very informative in assessing claims (Potter, 2004). In addition to signaling when theoretical orientations need revising, deviant cases presented in detail can provide support for the more normative patterns that are claimed in the research analysis. Although there should not be too many loose ends, the cases that fall outside of the explanatory theory are particularly important and interesting (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

Coherence refers to agreement with earlier studies (Potter, 2004). Research findings that clash with the basic findings of earlier studies are treated more cautiously. If the new findings stand up to further scrutiny, however, those findings would be especially consequential. Coherence is also demonstrated by looking for exceptions after hypothesizing a pattern and goal (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). In discourse analysis readers' evaluations are very

important, so the analytic claims should be laid out so that readers can make their own judgments (Potter, 2004). As for my report, it gives readers full access to the interpretations by presenting representative examples and their corresponding detailed interpretations. My analytic claims are clearly linked to extracts from the discourse data, and difficulties in interpretation are made explicit for the reader. Those difficulties, naturally, sometimes led me back to the coding or the data. I also followed Potter and Wetherell's (1987) suggestion of open dialogue with those who were researched by making some of the interpretive sections of my analysis available to community members through email and encouraging the participants to respond to those interpretations.

Conclusion

This study was a discourse analysis of Korean identity constructions in an EIL online community. Data was collected from several sources: online forums, mentor-to-participant dialogues, and my researcher's journal. My primary theoretical orientations were from discursive psychology and rhetorical psychology. The results explicate the interpretive repertoires, the argumentative contexts of the ideological dilemmas, and the use of linguistic resources such as personal pronouns and metaphors associated with Korean identity constructions in EIL online writing.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

Since discursive psychology, which emphasizes a close reading of the context in which identities are constructed in everyday discourse, was my primary theoretical perspective for analyzing identity construction, it is extremely important to describe the context within which my study was conducted. For that reason, in this chapter, in addition to explaining the methods by which I analyzed the discourse data, presenting the three dichotomous continua that I discovered in analyzing the data, and describing my secondary thread and reply analysis, I describe, in demographic terms, the participants who volunteered for the project, examine the types of forums and threads that the participants engaged in, and analyze the representative forms of agreement, partial agreement, and disagreement found in the data, making use of Goffman's (1981, 1971) concept of alignment. Different types of individuals and other varieties of online communities, with different structures for facilitating the exchange of ideas, would presumably produce at least somewhat different results.

The Participants

I described my method for recruiting participants in Chapter 3. Here, I describe the actual results of the recruitment and the makeup of the participant pool based on the surveys (see Appendix C) that I had them fill out at the beginning of the study.

Launching the Online Community

By three weeks into the semester, 46 participants had registered on the site. In the end, however, only 28 of those had made any posts to the forums, yielding a retention rate of 63%. Of those 28, all but one completed an online survey in addition to making posts. The one individual who did not fill out a survey also did not give me or send me a signed informed consent form and I disregarded the one post that he made before disappearing from the site. There were a few individuals, however, who neither made any posts nor filled out a survey, but continued to log on to the site to read the discussions that were transpiring there. One "lurker," Shanna, logged onto the site up until the end, a total of 84 times. The 27 active participants all eventually turned in signed informed consent forms, which I will keep in a secure place for the next two years as required by law. Some of the participants used their real names on the site while others used English names or nicknames. For research purposes, I assigned all of the participants pseudonyms, and it is those pseudonyms that appear in this study.

Survey Results

Gender and Age

Of the 27 active participants, 10 are male and 17 are female, as depicted below:

Table 1

Gender of Participants

Gender	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Males	10	37.04%
Females	17	62.96%

The almost two to one preponderance of women participants is at least partly due to the fact that there are more women than men at this university majoring in English or other foreign languages.

As for age, unfortunately, the survey does not specify whether age should be reckoned according to the Western or Korean ways of determining one's age. Koreans are considered one year old at birth and everyone adds one year to his or her age on New Year's Day. I suspect that most the ages that were given on the survey are "Korean" ages, which would make the Western ages either one or two years younger according to whether or not the individuals' birthdays had occurred yet. Since the data collection occurred during the fall of 2006, in other words toward the end of the year, more of the Korean ages would be one year older than the corresponding Western age. In any case, the participants indicated their ages as follows:

Table 2

Age of Participants

Age	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
19 yrs	1	3.85%
20 yrs	2	7.69%
21 yrs	2	7.69%
22 yrs	4	15.38%
23 yrs	2	7.69%
24 yrs	5	19.23%
25 yrs	4	15.38%
26 yrs	5	19.23%
35 yrs	1	3.85%
Total	26	100%

The median age of the participants is 24, and although two of the women, Jane and Natalia, are 35 and 25 respectively, most of the participants older than 23 are men who have finished their military service and returned to school.

Majors

All of the participants have declared majors. The breakdown of the participants' majors is as follows:

Table 3

Majors of Participants

Majors	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
English	15	55.56%
Other Languages (Chinese, French, German, Polish, 2 Spanish)	6	22.22%
Math, Science, or Engineering	4	14.81%
International Business or Statistics	2	7.41%
Total	27	100%

In addition to the 15 English majors, three of the participants are minoring in English. The fact that more than three out of four of the participants are language majors is not surprising considering the nature of the project and the fact that the participants were recruited at a foreign studies university.

Overseas Experience

Although many of the students at the university have either lived or studied overseas, it was surprising that almost 90% of the participants (24 out of 27 participants or 88.9%) reported overseas experience. Listed by the country in which most of their experience occurred, the results are as follows:

Table 4

Overseas Experience of Participants

Country	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
United States	7	29.17%
Canada	4	16.67%
Australia	4	16.67%
United Kingdom	2	8.33%
New Zealand	1	4.17%
Philippines	2	8.33%
Europe	1	4.17%
China	1	4.17%
Vietnam	1	4.17%
Mexico	1	4.17%
Total	24	100%

Table 4 shows that 18 or 74.8% of the 24 participants who had overseas experience spent time in English-speaking countries, and if the Philippines, where English is spoken as a second language and where education is in English, are included, the numbers increase to 20 or 83.2% of the people with overseas experience. Those 20 participants with experience living in English-speaking countries amount to 74% of the total online community of 27 members.

Several of the participants resided overseas for extended periods of time. One rather inactive participant, Derrick, lived in Utah for eight years, and a

very active member of the community, Mark, lived in the Philippines for seven years. Another regular contributor, Geri, spent three years in Australia from the ages of eleven to fourteen. Furthermore, although two of the participants had only taken short trips, to Vietnam and Europe, most of the other participants with overseas experience spent about a year overseas in order to study foreign languages, though the languages studied included Chinese and Spanish. It is important to note, however, that Randy, the most active member of the community is one of the three individuals who had never been overseas. Overall, the community turned out to be group of individuals with a surprising amount of overseas experience. These facts must, of course, be considered an important aspect of the context of this study, for as we will see the participants often referred to their overseas experiences as being important in influencing how they felt about being Korean and in forming their Korean identities.

In addition to the above demographic information about the participants, the format that the online community used for discussing topics of interest is a particularly significant aspect of the context of the study. Therefore, we now turn to a consideration of the types of topics, forums, and dialogues that shaped the participants involvement in the online community.

Forums and Dialogues

The primary vehicle for the community's online discussions were forum topics that I posted every week or so. I posted a total of 11 forum topics, and in addition to the newly posted topics, the participants were able to continue to

discuss the existing topics throughout the project. Participants were informed by email from the site whenever someone replied to one of their posts, so it was not necessary for the participants to go back and repeatedly check to see if anyone had replied to posts that they made in earlier forums. I also informed the participants on several occasions that they could start their own topics or threads in an area that was titled "suggest new topics." Eight new topics were started, but there were significantly fewer posts to the new topics compared to the "main topics" that were displayed on the main page of the community site (see Appendix D).

In addition to the forums, I also carried out dialogues with individual participants in a dialogue area on the site. The dialogues were only visible to me and the person with whom I was exchanging messages. Most of the participants (23 out of 27) exchanged dialogues with me. I sent several dialogue messages and emails to the other four individuals concerning their unanswered dialogues, but they never responded to my messages.

Main Forums

The eleven main forum topics, listed in more detail in Chapter 3, dealt with Korean identity, Red Devil fever, modern sexuality, globalization, English for kids, North Korea, nationalism, cohabitation, biracial and overseas Koreans, learning English, and Korea and the U.S.

Table 5

Number of Threads and Replies for Each Forum Topic

Topic	Code	Threads	Replies	Total
Korean Identity (KI)	KI	19	38	57
Red Devil Fever (RD)	RD	14	21	35
Modern Sexuality (MS)	MS	21	11	34
Globalization (GL)	GL	22	28	52
English for Kids (KE)	EN	17	28	45
North Korea (NK)	NK	19	19	38
Nationalism (NA)	NA	10	12	23
Living Together (LT)	LT	20	11	31
Biracial / Overseas Koreans (BK)	BK	10	11	21
Learning English (LE)	LE	22	7	29
Korea & the U.S (KU)	KU	10	9	19
Total		182	195	377

From my experiences with Koreans, especially Korean university students, I felt that most of those topics were rather directly related to Korean identity issues and that the ones that were less directly related to identity, such as modern sexuality and cohabitation, were topics that would evoke comparisons between Korea and Western countries and, therefore, would result in discourse germane to Korean identity. The main forums are listed in Table 5.

For each of the main topics, the participants could either start their own thread or reply to someone in a thread that was already open. For the eleven

main topics, there were a total of 377 posts, 182 thread-starters and 195 replies to open threads. Table 5 describes the participation in the various topics and provides the designators that I used to cite data from the eleven topics.

For the first five topics, with the exception of the Modern Sexuality one, there are more replies than thread-starters, especially for the first topic, Korean Identity, where there are twice as many replies as there are threads. In the case of the Modern Sexuality topic, there are more than twice as many threads as there are replies; although, with a total of 33 threads and replies, the topic was about average in terms of the total number of responses. For the last six topics, except for the Living Together and the Learning English topics, there are about the same number of threads and replies, meaning that the average thread had one thread-starting post and one reply. In the case of the Living Together topic there are about twice as many threads as replies, whereas in the Learning English forum, there are more than three times as many threads as replies. I believe that the reason that there are more threads than replies in the Modern Sexuality and Living Together topics may be that the participants were somewhat more comfortable simply stating their ideas about topics related to sexual behavior than directly responding to other individuals' comments concerning those issues. In the case of the Learning English topic, the fact that it occurred toward the end of the community project might indicate that it was a popular topic, but that there was not enough time for individuals to respond to the threads that were initiated by others. To some degree, that explanation may also be applicable to the Living Together topic since both of

them involved fairly large numbers of threads, 22 and 20 respectively, especially considering how late in the project those forums occurred.

As for the average number of posts per participant, since the 27 participants made a total of 377 posts, each participant made an average of 13.96 posts. Cliff posted more messages than anyone else, with a total of 26 posts, which amounted to seven pages of single-spaced text, and both Randy and Faith made 24 posts a piece. On the other hand, Kerry, who found a job at the beginning of the project (a not uncommon occurrence among seniors at Korean universities), made only 2 posts that added up to one page of text. When all of the forums were copied into document format, they amounted to 404 pages of text, although that includes headers, extra spaces, and some double or triple-spaced entries.

There were a total of eight topics initiated by the participants (see Appendix D). Although the participant-initiated forums did not result in discourse that was useful for analyzing Korean identity, the possibility of initiating topics did allow the participants the opportunity to exercise agency and create their own topics, which probably made the community more interesting to the participants.

Dialogues

The dialogues between me and the participants are a more fruitful source of data. Although I did give the participants feedback on the organization and mechanics of their writing upon request, most of the dialogues

consist of ongoing conversations, usually initiated by me, in which I ask questions to the participants based on the posts that they have made in the forums. In addition to answering my questions, the participants frequently asked me questions about my opinions in return. Twenty-three of the 27 participants engaged in these dialogues with me, and the number of pages of dialogue text, which included 7 pages of member-checking, amounted to 86 pages. When citing the dialogues, I use the code "D" followed by the page number from the dialogue text.

Data Analysis

Summarizing and Coding

During the collection of the data, I regularly compiled short summaries of the participants' posts and dialogues after reading through a week or two's worth of discourse. Those summaries turned out to be invaluable in making sense of the data since the data amounted to several hundred pages of online writing. In addition to the summarizing, I also frequently made entries into my research journal, in which I reflected upon my reactions to reading and rereading the discourse.

At the end of the data collection, following the advice of Silverman (2001) and other qualitative researchers, I read through all of the online writing numerous times looking for patterns in the discourse that would help me answer my research questions. Although there was some order inherent in much of the data since it was originally organized according to the forum

questions, after multiple readings, a number of common themes and topoi became apparent and, after experimenting with a number of possible coding schemes, I eventually derived the following ten-fold coding classification:

Analytic Codes:

- PR Pride
- SH Shame
- TC Traditional/Confucian Culture
- CL Culture/Language loss
- GL Global/Western influences/Change
- FE Foreign experiences
- EG English Language
- DK Defining Korea
- AM United States and Americans
- OC Other countries

Some of the coded concepts are not explicitly present in the forum questions, whereas others combine or cut across the eleven main forum questions.

I applied the ten codes to all of the forum discussions and dialogues. In the case of brief exchanges within a short thread, I usually coded the thread as a whole, whereas in threads that consisted of longer individual entries, I coded the individual entries separately (see Appendix E). For later convenience, I copied the codes onto the forum and dialogue summaries, as well. Most of

entries had between one and five codes attached to them. Next, I arranged the data according to the codes and read through each at least several times.

Positing Ideological Continua

Influenced by Billig, Condor, Edwards, Gane, Middleton, and Radley's *Ideological Dilemmas* (1988), as discussed in Chapter 2, I began to perceive pervasive tensions that existed between a series of related ideological dilemmas or dichotomies. As I continued to read through the coded data, I identified a number of these dichotomous continua along which participants positioned themselves in their posts and dialogues. In retrospect, the three primary dichotomies that I retained as the basis of my analysis were already partially anticipated in my primary analytic codes. Although I started with a larger number of dichotomies, I consolidated some and eliminated others and eventually settled on the following three, somewhat overlapping pairs:

- *Pride vs. Uncertainty*: Korean Qualities, Traditional Society, Unity, and Representing Korea Overseas
- *Who's Korean vs. Who's not*: Biracial Koreans, Overseas Koreans, and North Koreans
- *Embracing English vs. Fearing the Loss of Korean Language*

Those three dichotomies stood out as important to me, not only because of the frequency of participant-posts that related to them, but also for the reason that expressions of both collective pride and shame, debates over the boundaries for membership in the “imagined community” of Korea, and concern over

whether the mastery of English contributes to a new and expanded Korean identity or threatens or detracts from notions of being Korean seemed to be very central to the participants' ongoing constructions of what being Korean meant to them.

After identifying these three primary dichotomies, I went back to the coded summaries and arranged the data according to the proposed dichotomies. Before analyzing each dichotomy in turn, I reread the pertinent entries in their original context to better situate the positionings of the participants. Next, I organized the forum and dialogue data according to the three dichotomies and then reread the corresponding data again as I analyzed each dichotomy in turn. I analyzed the discourse within each dichotomy by repeatedly rereading the data, looking for patterns in positions that the participants took and selecting several representative individuals for further analysis, concentrating on both the continuities and variations in their positionings of those participants according to topic and context.

Secondary Coding and Analysis

After identifying the three dichotomies that seemed most useful and enlightening for analyzing and depicting the participants' viewpoints and positionings and beginning to attempt to describe the results of the study, it became obvious that it would be very helpful to have more information concerning the number of initiated threads and replies that each individual participant made, as well as some indications as to the nature of the replies that

each member made, whether his or her replies were in agreement, partial agreement, or disagreement with the post that initiated the thread. As described in Chapter 2, Goffman's (1981) concept of alignment is a useful tool for examining the positions that individuals take and, therefore, a promising addition to a discursive/rhetorical approach to identity constructions. By analyzing the agreement, partial agreement, and disagreement alignments that the participants staked out, we achieve a valuable perspective on their identity constructions. Similarly, it also became apparent that data concerning the type of statements that each participant made in relation to each of the three dichotomies, whether the post was in apparent support of one end of the continuum or the other or involved recognition of the validity of both sides of the dichotomy, would be very useful. In short, I determined that a secondary analysis would be indispensable for analyzing the alignments to both the posts that initiated the posts and the ideological dilemmas or dichotomies that constituted the basic framework for viewing the participants' constructions of Korean identity.

Therefore, as a result of the above-mentioned need for more information concerning the threads and replies, I went back and counted for each participant all of the initiated threads and replies, noting whether the replies were in agreement, partial, agreement, or disagreement to either the original post in the tread or, on some occasions, to a previous reply to the post that started the thread. Such an analysis required another very close reading of the threads and replies, which was useful for the analysis in general, for many of

the replies were difficult to assign to one category or another. If the reply was mostly in agreement or disagreement, I coded it as either “Agreement” (AG) or “Disagreement” (DG), whereas in the case of replies that involved what seemed to be a genuine mixture of agreement and disagreement or an agreement modified by a serious reservation or qualification, I coded it as “Partial Agreement” (PG). Some replies could not be coded in terms of their agreement with previous posts because they did not state or imply either agreement or disagreement with the previous post or posts, so in the results “Replies” are distinguished from “Coded Replies,” the former referring to the total replies that an individual made and the latter to the number of replies that were coded as AG, PG, or DG (see Appendix F).

Similarly, to satisfy the need for more exact information concerning how the various participants positioned themselves in relation to the three dichotomies, I closely reread all of the posts again, coding them as being positive, mixed, or negative in relation to the three dichotomies. In the case of the Pride vs. Shame and Uncertainty dichotomy, for example, posts might be judged to be PS+ (stating pride), PS- (expressing shame or uncertainty), or PSX (involving elements of both pride and shame or uncertainty). The corresponding codes for the other dichotomies are WK+, WKX, and WK- for Who Is Korean, and EE+, EEX, and EE- for Embracing English. Most of the posts that were coded according to these criteria were coded according to only one of the dichotomies; however, a significant minority of coded posts,

especially the longer ones, was coded according to two of the three dichotomies (see Appendix G).

Context, Interactions and Alignments

Crucial to a deep understanding of the constructions of Korean identity that emerged in the project's online writing is an appreciation of the general context that prevailed during the writing and a general sense of the nature of the alignments and interactions that occurred between the participants and the researcher and among the participants.

Context

The context within which the online community operated is of great importance in understanding the findings that have emerged. One of the key premises of social constructivism and discursive psychology is that the specific context of any segment of discourse is crucially important. Closely related to that is the issue of multiple identities, for as individuals communicate in different contexts and situations, they construct different identities (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Joseph, 2004). In considering the context of the online community, it is important to recognize that although the participants discussed a variety of topics and in many cases connected those topics to their experiences and the experiences of others, the overall context that prevailed within the community was that of an academic setting, mentored by a foreign professor, which members volunteered to

participate in in order to improve their written English while discussing social issues. As for the effects that this context had on the interaction, first of all, the discussions were markedly polite and civil. This is interesting because there is presently considerable concern in Korea about the alleged rudeness and hostility that sometimes occurs in online communication. Many believe that much of the problem stems from the anonymity that has characterized the online chatting and interaction, and measures are now being taken to try to insure that all Internet users can be identified through their user ID. In the case of our community, in addition to being mentored by a professor in an academic setting, the members registered for the community under their actual name or with an English name or nickname for their first name and their real family name. More than a few of them seemed to know each other, often perhaps from having the same major, taking courses together, or actually signing up for the community together, and with only a few exceptions, most of the participants posted a picture of themselves on the website. Moreover, although I neglected to ask the participants whether they had ever taken a class with me, I would estimate that at least half of the members had been in one of my classes at some time during their university career. In other words, the combination of academic setting and ready identifiability probably contributed to the reasonable, civil atmosphere that prevailed throughout the project.

Relationship with the Researcher

It is, of course, very important to determine what sort of influence I, as the researcher, had on the project and the identity discourse that the project generated. I knew the majority of the participants either from classes that they had taken with me or from interactions that had occurred on the university campus. In addition to that, a number of the participants whom I had not met in person either dropped by my office or stopped me on the campus to introduce themselves. As I indicated in Chapter 3, throughout the project, I tried to minimize my effect on the forum discussions by not participating in them, but attempted to engage the participants in one-to-one dialogues in which I could more deeply question them about issues that had emerged in the forum discussions. My involvement in the project must have certainly had some effect on the participants, and in a later section I address the issue of to what degree the forum discussions indicated awareness of the researcher.

Dialogues: Developing Relationships

In respect to the closeness that participants may have felt toward the researcher and the ways that that may have affected identity constructions, one area of possible interest is the terms of address that were used within the dialogues. I addressed all of the participants by their Korean first name or the English name or nickname that they used when registering for the project. Although in the past, some university students may have been

reluctant to have their first names used, at the present time, I believe that such a practice is common among university teachers, especially foreign ones. On the other hand, my practice of allowing students to choose whether to call me by my first name or by last name and title is perhaps a little unusual even among foreign professors. In any case, during the project, I signed all of my individual dialogue messages to the students with my first name. Going back through the dialogues, I discovered that, of the 22 participants who answered my dialogues, eight of them referred to me by my first name and 14 did not. Of those 14, six avoided using any form of address while the rest of them used Professor, Teacher, Professor Concilus, Mr. Concilus, and even Mr. Frank and just Concilus. Of the eight students who addressed me by my first name, six had been in my regular classes. Although one of the eight, Kerry, did not participate in many forums as a result of finding a job during the project, most of the others, including Haeson, Aries, Mark, Marie, Yuri, and Jinhee, were among the most active of the participants in the forum discussions. Therefore, there was some correlation between familiarity between the researcher and the participants and the amount of participation among the community members. On the other hand Randy, the most active of the participants and a member who had been my student in a regular class, although extremely friendly and personable in both face-to-face and online interactions with me, consistently addressed me as Professor or Professor Concilus. Furthermore, Faith, another very personable student, was the one who chose the compromise,

Mr. Frank. Clearly, the form of address chosen was only one of several factors indicating closeness with the researcher.

Some participants, especially those who were not familiar with the researcher at the beginning of the project, were very deferential toward me in the dialogues, particularly the early dialogues; however, in more than a few cases, it was possible to build a friendly relationship with the participants through the dialogues that we had. For example, when, early in the project, I asked Jane about comments that she had made about xenophobia in a forum, she replied with, "Hi teacher~ Thank you for your concern and messages about my comments. I didn't expect that I can get your reply. I'm happy and nervous. Kind of mixed" (D, p. 54). In that first dialogue message to me, which she concluded with a very polite, "Thank you for reading my reply. I don't know my explanation is ok. I hope I can improve to write" (D, p. 55), she did mention some difficulties that a friend of hers had had with repairing a Motorola cell phone in Korea. I asked her in my next message whether her friend was a foreigner and shared some problems that I have had as a foreigner in Korea with credit cards and using my alien registration number for online shopping and reservations. Jane responded that her friend was a foreigner and commiserated with me concerning my problems living in Korea, concluding with, "I hope your life in Korea is not so tired. Fighting!" Here, "fighting" means "Be brave" or "Go for it!" (D, p. 56). I replied, "Hi! Actually those inconveniences don't bother me too much because I've lived here for a long time. In fact, I'm more comfortable here than in the States. I feel a little bit

like a tourist over there! Haha..." (D, p. 57). By saying that, I was trying to convey to Jane that I was a longtime resident of Korea and perhaps even "Koreanized" in some respects. She answered, "I'm glad to know that you enjoy your life in Korea. I shouldn't be so serious then.:P This long holiday is finished and there is no holiday on weekday from now. Aigo! Good night teacher~!" (D, p. 57). The symbol ":P" is a playful one depicting in a sideways-fashion two eyes and a protruding tongue, which in Korea represents a "cheerful embarrassment," and "aigo" is a broad-spectrum exclamation, meaning "alas" in this instance.

By that point in the dialogue, not only had Jane and I exchanged some personal information, but, in the next message, when I asked her, in reference to a comment that she made in a forum about Confucian ideas losing their strength, "Do you think there is still something positive about Confucian ideas in today's Korea or is Confucianism completely out of date?" (D, p. 57) Jane's answer was one that revealed a lot about her personal situation and history. Although she added "sorry to say my private things" (D, p. 58), she recounted the problems that she had had with her ex-husband and ex-mother-in-law, and stating that she did, indeed, consider Confucianism to be out of date, added, "My point is still man has so much benefits in our society and in Korea, maybe in Asia. Think about Islam culture. Men are superior to women. I hate, hate, hate that." In short, Jane and I developed a friendly relationship through the online community and its dialogues, and that relationship made it possible for her to construct a Korean identity that included her personal experiences and

"private things." In her forum posts, Jane expressed several reservations about gender relations in Korea, including complaints concerning women having to assume the responsibility for unintended pregnancies (LT, p. 224) and Korean husbands having relationships with Vietnamese women when working in Vietnam (KI, p. 7), but it is in the dialogue that she directly relates her complaints to her own marital experiences as a Korean woman and to her divorce. It is unlikely that she would have constructed those identities in the more public forums. In fact, this potential for facilitating personal identity constructions in private dialogues is not only relevant to the research at hand, here, but is also significant for TESOL instructors who would like to encourage that sort of expression in their regular classes. In this case, Jane's identity constructions concerning being a Korean woman and being concerned about Korean-American relations were directly connected to her divorce and subsequent friendship with an American man. In fact, Jane actually ended up visiting my office a couple of times, once to discuss some issues she was having with her foreign friend, who turned out to be a serious boyfriend.

On the other hand, some of the participants remained more distant, and five never responded to my dialogues at all. Davey and Eunhye, who made 20 and 12 forum posts, respectively, which was a rather significant level of activity, were among those five, as were Minsook, Yun, and Dave, who had more modest levels of forum activity. I sent the five non-responders, follow-up messages, and even posted general messages on the site, encouraging the participants to respond to my dialogues, but in the case of those five, it was to

no avail. Although it was possible, that some or all of them had not understood the dialogue function correctly, I decided not to further pursue those who, for whatever reason, had not responded to two or three dialogue messages.

Awareness of Researcher in Forum Discussions

Another issue of interest in respect to the role of the researcher is the matter of how aware the participants were of my presence as they discussed the forum topics. I have found three direct references to me in the forum discussions, one by Geri and two by Aries. These references are significant, for they indicate a clear awareness of the presence of the researcher in the project.

Geri's reference to me occurred in post to the first forum topic on Korean Identity. Geri had earlier initiated a thread that dealt with the impact that foreign invasions have had on Korean identity. In that post, after mentioning several negative effects that the invasions had had, she averred, "...but we have *jong* which can not be explained in English and have good unity" (KI, p. 23). (*Jong* is one of the key concepts employed by scholars to elucidate Korean culture. Various translations as feeling, a kind of tie or bond, or the connection that can develop between people over time, *jong* is said to be an essential feature of Korean culture.) In my first dialogue message to Geri, I said, "I was rereading your post about Korean *jong*. I know it's hard to explain, but could you try to tell me some more about why it's an important part of Korean identity? Thanks!" Although Geri replied with an enlightening explanation of

jong, in a later post to the Korean Identity thread initiated by Mindy, in which Mindy and Yuri had exchanged ideas on the importance of knowing a lot about Korea in order to be a "real Korean," Geri exclaimed,

Quite difficult topic, isn't it? This topic even made feel myself foolish. What a foolish citizen who cannot explain or proud of saying about own nationality! I was really depressed by this for a while and I was so embarrassed especially when Mr. Concilus asked me more about Korean identity in dialogue :((KI, p. 3)

Here, agreeing with Mindy and Yuri, Geri directly confessed that my questions to her in a dialogue had been "embarrassing." Koreans often express embarrassment when asked questions by foreigners about Korea that they cannot immediately answer. In her next sentence, though, Geri stated, "But now I would proudly say we are passionate and smart nation even though we have many negative aspects :)" (KI, p. 3). I believe Geri's statements are an indication that, at least in her case, the dialogue with me caused her to further reflect on an issue that she had first brought up in a forum post.

The other two direct references to me in the forums were by Aries. In the first one, Aries was replying to Randy, who, in decrying discrimination against non-whites, had stated:

Suppose that you meet a foreigner on the street. When he/she is a person from America or West Europe, you will think he/she may be

able and nice. On the contrary, when he/she is a person from Southeast Asia or Africa, you will disregard him/her. (NA, p. 207)

Aries responded:

Wait, wait...If I run into someone from the States, then I have to assume the somebody will be nice and kind? That's wrong! I don't expect Americans to be kind. They are more like **y and arrogant (no offense, Frank). They are even pretending as Canadian whenever they are traveling outside of the States by putting a Canadian flag on their backpack. I might have a strong stereotype on Yankees but that's what you are basically telling me, right? (NA, p. 108)

Here, again, Aries has expressed an awareness of me, the researcher, as an audience. Probably because Aries had taken several of my classes and had a good relationship with me, she does not seem to have been much bothered by that awareness, addressing me by first name and not softening her attitude toward Americans. With only three direct references to me in the forums, although it may seem that the participants were not particularly conscious of my presence, it is, of course, unclear exactly how much any awareness of me might have influenced the identity constructions in the forums.

Aries' second reference to me occurred in a long post to a thread that she initiated in the Biracial Koreans forum. After complaining that Hines Ward and Daniel Henny (a biracial actor) are not really Korean, Aries

brought up my daughter, Lori, as an example of a successfully bilingual and bicultural person:

As I joined Prof. Concilus' classes for like 3 years, I've heard a lot of things about her daughter. (Dang. Yet, I don't even remember her name.) Anyway, I believe that she's the one who should call herself as Korean and I am so proud of her. And the way how Prof. Concilus and Mrs. raised her made her as a great person. First of all, she's a perfect bilingual which is important to identify the both of culture. She went to international school in Korea 'til she was in grade 12. And she moved to the States for university, after that, she came back to go to graduate school. Now, she already graduated and she appreciates both cultures. (BK, p. 255)

Again, having a close relationship with me, Aries does not hesitate to directly refer to me and my family in her post. This time, she may have used the more formal "Prof. Concilus" to lend some objectivity to her evaluation of my daughter's bicultural status. Perhaps she thought that the more informal "Frank" might make her judgment appear to be more biased or subjective.

The Researcher's Role in the Dialogues

In discursive psychology, the questions that the researcher asks are as important as the participants' answers, for the interview is seen as a "conversational encounter" (Wetherell & Potter, 1987). Therefore, as part of

my analysis, I went back over the dialogues to examine my role and any "stakes" that I may have had in the dialogue discussions. I distinguished three different roles that I played in the various dialogues, calling them neutral, pointed, and contentious.

Although I classified my role as neutral in the majority of the dialogue posts that I made, it is important to recognize that, in one respect, my questions may have neutral in the sense of simply trying to get more information about something that a participant had said in one of the forums, but, in another respect, my questions did select from among the many ideas that were expressed in the forums those that I wished to have more information about. Take, for example, the question cited above, where I asked Geri to explain further about *jong*. At the time I sent my first dialogue to Geri, she had already made a number of posts to the first two forums. However, knowing from my reading and experience in Korea that *jong* is considered to be an important concept in understanding Korean culture, I chose to ask Geri, who had brought up the term, claiming that it was "one of good aspect about Korea" and "hard to explain just in one word" (KI, p. 23), to elucidate the concept. In other words, my questioning may have often been neutral in its attempt to gain further information, but also selective in terms of deciding which areas were more valuable to explore than others.

Sometimes, my questions were more pointed in that they may have challenged one or another of the participants' statements. In this respect, I

discovered that some of my questions were of the "do you really think" variety. My dialogue with Geri provides an example of a more pointed question, for after we had exchanged several messages about *jong*, I asked, "I wonder if some other cultures (especially traditional cultures) don't have similar feelings? You said Westerners might not think that way. What about Japanese or Chinese?" (D, p. 18). Realizing that Koreans sometimes describe their values and practices as unparalleled and unique and knowing that the Japanese and Chinese have concepts that use the same Chinese character that is used for *jong*, my intention was to challenge the description of *jong* as uniquely Korean. In this case, Geri conceded the point and stated, "In Japan ,I heard, *Jong* has disappeared in Tokyo but if you go to countryside of Okinawa and other regions, you can see similar view like in Korea countryside" (D, p. 19), explicitly confirming her realization that *jong* exists, at least, in another part of East Asia.

To give another example of a "pointed question," Josh had mentioned in a forum that there were some cultural practices that Korea should maintain, so I asked him in a dialogue to give me an example of such a cultural practice. Josh responded, stating that traditionally, "Korean people always respect older people. However, these days, some people's behavior become very rude to elder" (D, p. 61). I replied to Josh, saying, "Do you really think younger people are so rude to their elders these days? What kind of examples could you give me?" (D, p. 62) Here, in addition to the "do you really think" I added the intensifier "so," as well. Although questions of that sort can be asked in the spirit of devil's advocate, they do, in any case, constitute a kind of challenge to

the participant and may also be indicative of a particular "stake" that I, the researcher, may have had in the topic, wanting to deny, in this case, for example, that young Koreans are as rude as some people claim they are. In this instance, Josh answered quite directly, stating, "Yes. I think younger people are so rude to elders these days. For instance, we can find some students who behave very rudely against their teachers. Traditionally, we Koreans regard their teachers as our parents" (D, p. 62). He followed this statement up with a specific example that he had witnessed near his home, in which a "daughter talked to her mother with abusive language and loud voice. Her voice was so loud that people who are on the street looked them very surprisingly." This sort of willingness to freely debate with professors was of no surprise to me and indicates a readiness on the part of some of the participants to defend their positions when challenged with my "pointed questions."

The third type of role that I played in the dialogues, the one that I called "contentious," was characterized by at least several consecutive dialogue exchanges in which one of the participants and I continued to disagree. Such a disagreement is likely to be a definite sign of some "stake" that I had in the dialogue. Tellingly, perhaps, two of the three contentious exchanges that I identified involved discussions related to my daughter. One of those dialogue exchanges was with Cliff, who had written in a thread that he had initiated that he was concerned that children who were learning two or more languages might not speak each language as well as a native speaker could and might

also be confused by trying to learn more than one culture (KE, p. 158). In my second dialogue message to Cliff, I argued:

I think that a child can perfectly master any language that he or she has adequate exposure to. My daughter grew up in Korea but attended international schools (and spoke to one of her parents in English). She's almost perfectly bilingual. Her English is as good as any other native speaker and her spoken Korean is also native (I'm told). Her written Korean is probably not as good as yours because she never attended Korean schools, but she reads a lot in Korean. Anyway, I think it depends on the amount and type of exposure. It's not impossible to be perfectly trilingual under the right conditions. What do you think?? (D, p. 41)

Cliff responded, stating that he did think it was possible to be trilingual, but contended that he meant that "getting several language skills with the fully absorbed understanding of those things is impossible" (D, p. 41). He continued:

Knowing and understanding Chinese character mean much more than just speaking Korean. No offence, your daughter is able to "read" Chinese Characters, but I understand and feel more than just meaning. I'm wondering how you are exposed under several cultures, languages, customs, and people without missing something. What do you think?

I replied, insisting that my daughter was a native speaker of Korean and asking, "When you and my daughter (who by the way thinks of herself as much more Korean than American) watch a Korean movie, is there some difference in your

experiences (besides the obvious individual ones)?" (D, p. 41). Cliff, in turn, responded with:

I'm pretty sure that your daughter's Korean is perfect, but I'm just wondering if she could understand a harsh dialect or ancient Korean. I've seen a lot of second generations in America, and confusions were pretty obvious. Their language is fine, but when it comes to the culture and customs, they couldn't be sure of it. I don't mean that I can understand them all, but I believe I may be able to figure it out with the feeling or root; something other than just knowing the meaning. What I'm trying to tell is not the huge and conspicuous difference. It's a tiny little thing, which maybe exist or not. (D, p. 41)

Here, Cliff appears to be making some concessions to my argument by saying that he is "pretty sure" that my daughter's Korean is "perfect" and adding that the small differences in understanding that he is referring to might "exist or not." However, in addition to qualifying his certainty, he again questions whether she could understand "a harsh dialect or ancient Korean."

In my next message to Cliff, I argued:

My daughter grew up in Korea, watching Korean TV, going to Korean movies, and reading Korean books, too. I think that's quite different from 2nd generation Koreans (like her future husband!). Is it the fact that she's half-American that's getting in the way of seeing her as a native speaker? (D, p. 42)

My frustration is apparent in my use of the phrase "getting in the way of seeing her as a native speaker." In the last reference to this topic in our dialogue, Cliff conceded, "I don't know much about your daughter, so it is kind of cheap judgment that your daughter's Korean is not perfect" (D, p. 42). However, after stating that it is possible that if my daughter has been sufficiently exposed to Korean culture then "she has no problem," Cliff asked, "Eh...Is she familiar with ancient Korean, Korean totemism, or specific words used to talk with older people?" (D, p. 42). Even though his last words on the subject were "I guess she must know, though," I think that Cliff remained unconvinced. By the same token, I would have been prepared to continue to argue my side of the issue, though, in retrospect, I can see that there may be some validity to Cliff' line of reasoning. As Aries' comments cited above indicate, I do refer to my daughter's biculturalism and bilingualism in my classes and surely "had a stake" in the dialogue between Cliff and me. Although I have called that role "contentious," both Cliff and I remained polite, though unconvinced, throughout the dialogue.

Alignments and Interactions within the Forum Threads

Before analyzing the positions that the participants took in relationship to the dichotomies that emerged as central to understanding Korean identity constructions, it is important to examine the general nature of the alignments and interactions that took place within the forum threads. Although, within the 11 forum topics, there were, as I stated above, 182 thread-starters and 195 replies to open threads, there were, in addition to the many threads that had

several replies, also many stand-alone threads to which no one had replied. In fact, a total of 94 threads were of that type. Therefore, even though there were slightly more replies than threads, slightly more than half of the initiated threads received no replies. As discussed above, the ratio of threads to replies appeared to be related to both the subject of the forum and the amount of time there was to reply to the threads before the project ended.

As for the activity of the participants, the 29 members of the online community made a total of 377 posts, a mean of 13.0 per participant (see Appendix F). The men were somewhat more active in their participation. The 12 men made 159 posts for a mean of 13.25, whereas the 17 women's posts totaled 218 for a mean of 12.82. Furthermore the men's median number of posts was higher than that of the women (14 to 11) because the most active participants were mostly men. Of the 7 participants who made more than 20 posts, 5 of them were men (Cliff, Randy, Mark, Josh, and Davey) while only 2 of them were women (Faith and Jane).

There was great individual variance according to whether the participants favored starting new threads or replying to threads that had already been initiated. Over all, there were 182 new threads and 195 replies, amounting to 48.28% and 51.72% of all posts respectively. The women posted an equal number of threads and replies, 109 of each, whereas the men posted somewhat fewer threads than replies, 73 to 86, accounting for 45.91% and 54.09% of their respective posts (see Table 6).

Table 6

New Threads and Replies by Gender

	Number of New Threads	% of Total Posts by Gender	Number of Replies	% of Total Posts by Gender
Men	73	45.91%	86	54.09%
Women	109	50%	109	50%

In terms of extreme cases in the threads to replies ratios, among the women, Jane's total of 20 posts consisted of only 1 new thread (5%) and 19 replies (95%), while Faith's 24 posts amounted to 3 new threads (12.5%) and 19 replies (87.5%). Similarly, among the men, the highest ratios of replies to threads were Andy, who initiated 4 threads (28.57%) to 10 replies (71.43%), and Cliff, with 8 threads (30.77%) to 18 replies (69.23%). At the other extreme, among the women, both Minsook (8 threads) and Hyunsu (10 threads) only started threads and posted no replies, whereas, among the men, Namho also only initiated threads (5 of them) and Dave, out of 5 posts, started 4 threads (80%) and made only 1 reply (20%). Obviously, some participants preferred starting their own threads, whereas others more often opted to reply to existing threads. Furthermore, as we will see below in Mindy's case, some individuals who disliked disagreeing with others preferred to start new threads in order to avoid directly challenging the ideas already expressed by other participants in previous threads.

As part of the secondary analysis that was described in Chapter 3, I went back through the replies and coded them as Agreement (AG), Partial

Agreement (PG), and Disagreement (DG) (see Appendix F). The rationale for doing so was that it became obvious that the alignments between and among the participants were an important aspect of the identity constructions that took place. As we will illustrate below, by agreeing and partially agreeing with one another, the participants supported each other's constructions, or agreed with some and modified others. Through establishing emotional solidarity with one another, the participants created a comfortable atmosphere and a sense of community that, in turn, afforded further identity constructions. In cases of partial agreement and disagreement, the members of the community had opportunities to rethink their opinions and ideas that were relevant to Korean identity. Although it was sometimes, of course, impossible to know to what extent the participants may have been influenced by the ideas of those with whom they partially agreed or disagreed, in other instances, it was clear that modifications in the positions of one or more of the participants had occurred. Indeed, as we will illustrate, the threads that were coded PG (partial agreement) were often the most fruitful ones, at least in terms of affording the negotiation and re-negotiation of Korean identity. In short, the alignments that the participants took toward one another had significant effects upon their ongoing identity constructions.

Of the 195 replies, 157 were coded as instances of agreement, partial agreement, and disagreement, with the breakdown being 73 (46.50%) agreement, 48 (30.57%) partial agreement, and 36 (22.93%) disagreement. Therefore, as in Nguyen and Kellogg's study (2005), the participants were

significantly more likely to agree with one another than to disagree, although my study has added the category of partial agreement, which amounted to 30.57% of the coded responses.

Analyzing the results according to gender, we discover that compared to the women the men were more likely to agree and disagree, whereas the women had more of a tendency to partially agree as indicated in Table 6.

Table 7

Agreement, Partial Agreement, and Disagreement by Gender

Replies	Agreement	Partial Agreement	Disagreement
Men	50.79%	20.63%	28.57%
Women	43.62%	37.23%	19.15%

Furthermore, of the 13 women who posted replies to threads, 7 of them (54%) posted no replies that were coded as Disagreement, while of the 11 men who posted replies, only 3 of them (27%) posted no replies in disagreement.

Although the men were clearly somewhat more likely than the women to agree or disagree, whereas the women were more likely than the men to partially agree, there was again great variation among both the men and the women in respect to their likelihood to agree or disagree. For example, 80% of Jonghun’s and 40% of Aries’ replies were disagreements, and, in addition to the 1 man (Jerry) and 3 women (Eunhye, Haeson, and Yuri) who only posted replies that were coded as agreement, 66.67% of Derrick’s and Mark’s and 85.71% of Mindy’s replies were in agreement.

In the following sections, we will discuss some of the general features of the dynamics that the participants used within the threads for expressing agreements, partial agreements, and disagreements and, also, for special cases of partial agreement and agreement in which the participants made obvious efforts to build emotional solidarity with one another.

Expressing Agreement

In some of the threads that involved two or more participants, it is clear that the individuals basically agreed with each other's positions. In fact, as mentioned above, 46.5% of the coded replies were classified as "agreement"; 43.62% of the women's and 50.79% of the men's coded replies. A good example of thread agreement occurred in the English for Kids forum, where Natalia, Jinhee, and Andy discussed the negative effects on the family that can occur when children go overseas to study English at an early age. In initiating the thread, Natalia stated that, even though "we can not avoid that we have to learn English" (KE, p. 139), she wanted "to set limits of the age to only adult." Natalia's main reason for opposing the sending of children abroad to study was that the mothers often go overseas together with the children, which leaves the father alone in Korea to pay for the expenses. These fathers are called "wild goose fathers" (*kirogi appa*) in Korean, and that is the name that Natalia gave her thread. According to Natalia, through this practice, "the normal type of family is ruined" (KE, p. 140). She concluded her post by asserting that it is only "good for children to go abroad if they'll live there for their whole life" and

averring, "I'm being so extreme, but this is what I really think" (KE, p. 140). Jinhee responded to the thread, stating, "I was also going to speak about the *wild goose father*" (KE, p. 140). Although she did not explicitly say "I agree with you," she obviously did agree with Natalia, arguing that it seemed "crazy" to her that a family would endure a separation "only because of learning English!" and, although admitting that "going abroad to learn English could be a better way than in Korea," she insisted that it is a case of going "too far that a family has to be separated only for their children learning English" (KE, p. 140). On the other hand, Jinhee further qualified her opinion, stating, "However, if the situation is that the father has to go abroad due to his business or his study, then the whole family could follow him altogether. I don't disagree with that." Natalia responded to Jinhee, agreeing with her qualification by saying, "Yes, you're right" (KE, p.141), then returned to her original theme by telling a story that she had heard on the news in which a father raped his daughter when she returned to Korea to get revenge on his wife who had lived a luxurious life abroad and "splashed the money he earned hard" (KE, p. 141). The final post to this thread was from Andy, who though claiming at the beginning of his post, "I partially agree with your opinion" (KE, p. 141), went on to agree with Natalia's original argument, contending that, even though age is important in learning English, young Koreans who study overseas may not be motivated to study hard. He gave an example of a Korean high school student whom he met in Canada who only was "interested in playing with

other teenagers" (KE, p. 141). Andy concluded his post by arguing that separating the family may affect children negatively, so "Before children go to abroad, parents must carefully think about it one more time that sending their children abroad is good for them or not" (KE, p. 141) He believes that "parents can find other ways to improve their children's English skill." Since Andy did not state any disagreement with Natalia's position, it is unclear why he said that he only partially agreed.

In this representative thread, the three participants all conceded that learning English is important for children and that studying abroad while young may be an effective way to master it. However, they also concurred in believing that there are dangers to the children and the family when the family is separated for the purpose of affording the children an opportunity to study abroad. Of course, their opinions are not exactly the same. Natalia argued that only adults should go abroad to study English, whereas Jinhee, who agreed by implication with Natalia's original stand, explicitly qualified her agreement, signaling her departure with "however" and stating that it was alright if the whole family went overseas together, a proposition to which Natalia, subsequently, directly expressed her consent. Finally, though conceding the risks and arguing that parents could "find other ways," Andy, prefacing his remarks with "...one thing is a hard fact," contended that parents should carefully consider those risks before sending the children abroad, a position somewhat softer than those of Natalia and Jinhee.

Building Solidarity

Although many of the thread interactions might be characterized as polite exchanges of opinions of one type or another, there are also a fair number of exchanges that appear to attempt to build closer relationships or emotional solidarity. This building of solidarity is not really a type of agreement because it may take place within threads that are coded as either agreement or partial agreement, but is rather an attempt to strengthen relationships through emotional means. A good illustration of this phenomenon occurred in a thread initiated by Mindy about a week after the exchange in the "Wild Goose Father" thread described above. Naming her thread "The Proper Time to Go Abroad for Studying English," Mindy took a quite different position on the issue of whether it is advisable to send young children abroad to study English. Instead of replying to the "Wild Goose Father" thread that was generally against overseas study for kids, Mindy chose to initiate a new thread, which fits with Mindy's decided tendency to state agreement rather than partial agreement or disagreement. In fact, of Mindy's 7 coded replies, 6 of them were coded as agreement. In this thread, Mindy, like some of the other participants, stated that learning English is "inevitably needed" while expressing concern over parents "pushing their children in the English world" (KE, p. 143); however, Mindy went on to claim that she was "in favor of going abroad to learn English, but what is important is the time to go there. I mean, the proper time" (KE, p. 144). Contending that many parents send their children abroad when they are too young, which makes them "feel confused, stressed between two languages and

two cultures," Mindy argued that parents should aim to motivate their children to learn English; overseas travel, for example, might make the kids "curious about the cultures and try to learn the language." Once they are motivated and "happy to go abroad," parents can send them overseas to study. Mindy also stated that, when she was in the UK the previous year, she "regretted a little bit not coming... much earlier" (KE, p. 144).

Responding to Mindy's post, Marie wrote, "Hi, Mindy.^ I don't know you though I love your idea, so I put my reply here...I love your opinion that give them a interest in English instead of pushing to learn it :)." Calling Mindy by name, even though they did not know each other outside of the community, Marie uses the strong verb "love" twice in reference to Mindy's idea and opinion and uses two different "smile" symbols. Mindy reciprocated in a message stating:

I do appreciate that you love my idea.^ As you said, we may be late to be good English speakers as much as native speakers and it is good if we can speak English well like native speakers, but we don't need to be native speakers, I think. Communication itself is really important. So if we study and practice English very hard, we can deliver exactly what we would like to say. ^ Keep our fingers crossed~!^^

Although Mindy did not call Marie by name, she stated that she "appreciated" that Marie loved her idea, added one of the "smile" symbols after three of her sentences, and used the inclusive "we" six times. This

exchange between Mindy and Marie, which was coded as agreement (AG), is a good example of how participants sometimes attempted to build emotional solidarity with one another.

Another interesting thread that has several instances of solidarity building is one involving Jane, Natalia, and Virginia that was coded as partial agreement (PG) and occurred in the Globalization forum. Jane, who although a very active participant only initiated this one thread, began one of the last threads in that forum with a post, seemingly unrelated to the earlier threads, which she called "Globalization Makes People Impatient?" and in which she argued that global trends such as email, cell phones, and online shopping make people impatient for quick information and instant replies (GL, p. 92). At the conclusion of her post, Jane opined, "We know that we can't survive without westernization. The game is over in my opinion, but hopefully we can accept other cultures wisely" (GL, p. 93). Natalia, with Partial Agreement in 4 out of her 5 coded replies, replied characteristically, stating that she "partially agreed" about "accepting the inevitable global flow wisely," but averred that it was technology, not globalization itself, that makes people impatient, though technology does make "globalization spread more fast" (GL, p. 93) and concluded by asking Jane, "What do you think?"

At this point in the thread, the discussion is of the "partially agree" type of interaction, and Natalia's query to Jane seems to be an invitation for Jane to share whether she agrees with the revision of her ideas or not. Jane, although rather comfortable with disagreeing (with 6 coded disagreements out of 18, the

highest number of disagreements among the women), accepted the invitation, thanking Natalia for her opinion and claiming:

I misunderstood about the meaning of globalization first time but now I understand. You picked up the problem of my story well. You did good job~ thank you for reading my sentences and letting me know my misunderstanding. :) (GL, p. 94)

Here, Jane has thanked Natalia for her opinion, congratulated her for seeing the error in Jane's post, and actually changed her position on the issue, ending her reply with a "happy face." Natalia responded to this by joking, "I hope I made u feel unpleasant. ^^;;; " (GL, p. 94), with a smile symbol followed by a crying symbol. Considering Jane's complete capitulation, Natalia probably meant by this double symbol that she had not intended to be too critical. In any case, she concludes her message with:

But it was good to read you because I was also confused with the meaning of globalization sometimes, just like u did. Have a good weekend and good luck with ur mid-term exams. (GL, p. 94)

Natalia has followed her joking apology with the statement that it was worthwhile for her to read Jane's opinion and with the confession that she, too, used to misunderstand the relationship between technology and globalization, concluding with friendly wishes for the weekend and the exam period. Both Jane and Natalia are performing facework for one another (Goffman, 1959, 1967), protecting each other's face or front, and simultaneously building emotional solidarity.

Although Jane and Natalia's exchanges took place in the middle of the project, about a month later, toward the end of the online writing, Virginia, who must have looking through some of the older posts, joined the thread, exclaiming, "Hi, Jane! How are you doing these days? It is so good to read your writing here~^^" (GL, p. 94). Virginia went on to state that she partially agreed with Jane's opinion, but like Natalia, she doubted whether globalization was the cause of the world's increasing impatience. Virginia, then, added, "However, what I want to say is that I am with your idea that our society changes may be too fast or pursue too much convenience," concluding her post with, "So, I guess sometimes we need to have some time for relaxing and try not to have too much 'hurry hurry' mind" (GL, p. 94). Virginia's message is a continuation of the solidarity building that had occurred earlier in the thread. She called Jane by name, asked how she was doing, exclaimed, with a smiling symbol, that it was "so good" to read Jane's ideas, and stated that she was "with her" basic idea. Jane replied in kind, writing, "Hi, Virginia! I'm glad to see you here. Thank you for being so kind. You were always so cute and very polite :)" (GL, p. 94). Jane, then, dropped the original topic of the thread and, referring to the fact that Virginia had lived in Canada, which Jane may have known through Virginia's earlier posts to other threads, proceeded to explain that she had wanted to study overseas when she was younger but had been unable to do so. One of the older students on campus, Jane stated that, even though her "age is not right to be a student now," she "might go to France to study

when I'm 40? Who knows? ^^" (GL, p. 95). Claiming that she was still "finding herself," Jane, a French major, said that she would like to someday interpret "Korean art by French." Telling Virginia, "If I have a job in France come to see me," Jane wished Virginia good luck in her final exams, told her to have a "great vacation," and expressed her desire to see Virginia again (GL, p. 95). Here, Jane has responded very warmly to Virginia's personable message to her. After calling Virginia by name and thanking and complimenting her, Jane shared some details about her own past and her dreams for the future, while inviting Virginia to visit her in the future. Though Jane does not disclose, in this open forum, information about herself as private as that which she revealed to me in a more private dialogue, the emotional solidarity expressed in this thread encourages Jane to construct aspects of her identity as a Korean woman that are personal in nature.

In these two examples of solidarity building, the participants use techniques such as addressing each other by name, inserting "smile symbols," and expressing pleasure with the exchanges in order to strengthen feelings of closeness and friendship. Although in the first example of solidarity building, Marie expressed strong agreement with Mindy's position, the second example involves the responders partially agreeing with Jane's ideas, but disagreeing with Jane's argument about the relationship of globalization to impatience. Jane, though, quickly accepted Natalia's revision of her position, and rest of the thread is replete with instances of solidarity building. It is interesting that the most obvious

examples involve women rather than men. There are examples of men commenting on similar military experiences and expressing agreement with each other's opinions, but they are less expressive in nature than the examples presented above.

Partial Agreement in the Exchange of Ideas

"Partial agreement" was second to "agreement" in terms of the frequency of agreement types in the coded replies. As presented above, some 30.57% of the coded replies were coded as "partial agreement," 37.23% of the women's and 20.63% of the men's coded replies. As we observed in Natalia's "partial agreement" with Jane on the issue of impatience and globalization in the previous section, a fruitful exchange of ideas can take the form of partially agreeing with someone else, but modifying that person's ideas in some significant way. In fact, a number of the more interesting and productive exchanges of ideas occurred in threads in which two or more participants appeared to agree on some points and disagree on others.

However, in some cases of "partial agreement," the agreement may have been perfunctory, or simply polite, and the exchange may actually be better seen as a case of disagreement. A good example of this was Randy's reply to Josh concerning the feasibility of reunifying North and South Korea. Initiating the thread, Josh called the reunification of the two Koreas "a task we must achieve by all means" (NK, p. 174). Admitting that there would be many difficulties in reunifying, Josh went on to discuss the North's development of

nuclear weapons, arguing that the North's desperate situation was one in which producing nuclear weapons "is the last means to escape the worst situation" (NK, p. 175). Therefore, according to Josh, the most important thing is to reject war as a solution and "keep in mind just peace." Randy, who generally was more likely to agree or disagree than partially agree (7 AG, 1 PG, and 3 DG), replied to Josh, beginning with, "I also partly agree with you that the unification of Korea is needed for the world peace" (NK, p. 175). Although Josh had not directly said that, one could argue that it is implied in the juxtaposition of the first and second parts of Josh's message. Be that as it may, Randy went on to basically disagree with Josh's call for reunification, stating:

However, I'd like to ask you a question. Do you really think that we have to unite for peace even though there can be some dangers?...When we think about the unification of Korea, the most important thing is that how much we want it. Of course, peace is important. However, does our generation want the unification very much?...Our grandparents' generation might want the unification of Korea because there are many of their friends and family members whom they loved so much in North Korea. However, in our case, we have never seen them personally before. We do not know about them even though we heard from our grand parents. Thus, I will ask you again. Do you really want the unification of Korea for yourself? (NK, p. 176)

Here, even though Randy claimed that he was in partial agreement concerning the importance of reunification for achieving world peace, the gist of his post is

in direct disagreement with Josh's ideas, at least in respect to the critical need for reunification. Therefore, although the exchange may appear on the surface to be one of "partial agreement," and was coded as such, in a sense, Randy is rather directly disagreeing with Josh about reunification, arguing that it may be dangerous and that younger generations of Koreans may not really want it..

On the other hand, there were other instances of "partial agreement" in the data that were more genuine cases of participants accepting some aspects of another participant's ideas, but rejecting others. Even though it is not always possible to clearly distinguish the categories of "agreement, partial agreement, and disagreement" that I am employing, the discussion that Natalia and Mindy had about nationalism and "being open-minded," in the Nationalism forum, is a good illustration of the type of thread that I am calling "partial-agreement." Initiating a thread in the Nationalism forum that she titled "Be Open-Minded," Natalia argued that Korean nationalism has "both positive and negative side just like both sides of the coin" (NA, p. 211). Natalia gave examples of both. According to her, when "most of Koreans collected the gold they'd had and sold them to help the country" recover from the IMF economic crisis, that was an instance of positive nationalism. However, an example of negative nationalism is that "most Koreans know wrongly we Koreans are only one ethnic group so that we can't accept and be mixed with other ethnic groups, which leads to xenophobia"(NA, p. 211). This, Natalia averred, is a "dangerous idea." She concluded:

Korean nationalism is good in some ways when we use it in sensible ways. We live in a global world. We cannot live alone without cooperating other countries. We need to be more open-minded enough to be willing to accept them. We can smile foreigners who are visiting and living in Korea no matter what color they have and where they come from. Especially, we should give warm eyes to mixed-race people who were born Korea in order not that they lose their identity. (NA, p. 211-212)

In this thoughtful post, Natalia explored what she considered the positive and negative aspects of Korean nationalism. Although her message was replete with identifying "we's," Natalia made a strong case for not being xenophobic and for being open-minded toward foreigners and accepting toward biracial Koreans.

Mindy began her reply to Natalia with, "I partly agree with you and partly disagree with you" (NA, p. 212). Stating that she agreed with Natalia's opinion about using nationalism in a "sensible way," Mindy confessed, "Before reading your journal, I thought nationalism was just a bad thing. But now I think it may sometimes be helpful, especially when we are in a really difficult situation, it can encourage us to have confidence." Interestingly, Mindy's comment about thinking "nationalism was just a bad thing" was one of the strongest statements against nationalism in the data, but one that referred to Mindy's thinking in the recent past. Although Mindy claimed that she was convinced

by Natalia that nationalism can be helpful, she contended that she did not agree that Koreans "can't accept other groups," claiming:

There are still many conservative people in our country, but we have changed a lot, which means as we have many opportunities to contact with foreigners, we are getting more open-minded and as an example the number of international marriage is also getting higher.

(NA, p. 212)

In her reply, Mindy not only agreed with Natalia's idea concerning positive nationalism, but also revealed that Natalia's post caused her to change her position on the matter. On the other hand, she insisted that Koreans have changed, becoming more open to foreigners, thus implying that Koreans are not xenophobic, which is in disagreement with Natalia's contention that the Koreans mistaken belief that they are "one ethnic group" leads to xenophobia.

Natalia responded to Mindy's reply, stating:

Thanks for ur reply. I understand what u mean and agree that lots of people get married to foreigner but what I want to focus on is the children of the couples. We often hear that they have difficulty in their schools or on the street, especially when they speak Korean with exotic face and can't speak other languages. In our sense, they should speak English or other languages. They can not get accustomed to an ordinary school life because normal kids who don't

have good upbringing sometimes make fun of them. What a shame!

But it still happens in many parts of Korea. (NA, p. 212)

In her response, Natalia conceded that there are many marriages to foreigners in contemporary Korea, but argued that she wanted to focus on discrimination toward biracial children in Korea, especially children whose only language is Korean. Here, Natalia was referring to the distinction that Koreans often make between biracial children who live in the same household as their foreign parent and speak a foreign language, particularly English, perhaps in addition to also speaking Korean, and those "mixed-race" (*honnyorah*) children who do not speak any foreign languages and who were sometimes born to single mothers.

In this "partial agreement" exchange between Natalia and Mindy, both of them conceded points to the other, but also stated opinions that varied from one another in either substance or emphasis. This type of exchange is especially conducive to the negotiation of Korean identities, constituting the sort of interaction that encourages individuals to think critically and to modify their constructions of Korean identity in response to the opinions of others.

Avoiding Disagreements

Before addressing the ways that the participants dealt with disagreements and conflicts, let us briefly consider a couple of the methods for avoiding direct disagreements. One way to avoid disagreements was

already alluded to in the "Building Solidarity" section of this chapter, where we described how Mindy started a new thread, which she called "The Proper Time to Go Abroad for Studying English." At the time that Mindy initiated her thread, other threads that were critical of children going abroad to study were already in existence, including the "Wild Goose Father" thread that was discussed above. Although we cannot be certain that Mindy had read those threads, it is likely that she did, and deciding against replying in disagreement to one of those threads, she determined to start a new thread that addressed the topic in a more positive light. As I read through the threads and my summaries of the threads, it appeared that the participants sometimes chose to disagree with an existing thread and at other times chose to initiate a new thread. Those decisions were influenced by many factors, including the participants' styles of interaction, the tones of the existing threads, and the nature of the topic. When one designs sites for online writing, the effects of allowing the participants to initiate their own threads, which include a freer exchange of opinions, as well as the above-stated ability to choose to minimize disagreement through starting new threads, should be noted and considered.

A second method of avoiding disagreement and conflict was for the initiator of the thread and/or other respondents to ignore a dissenting reply by either not responding or by continuing the thread without any reference to a post that disagreed with some aspect of the thread. For example, early in the project, in the Red Devil forum, Hyunsu initiated a thread in which she argued

that, through the Red Devil cheering during the 2002 World Cup, the Korean "people become one by the soccer game" (RD, p. 44). Although she argued that "people become one by nationalism," Hyunsu went on to express her disappointment in the 2006 World Cup, during which, in her opinion, the "cheering went too far," serving as "just a pretext to some immature people who want to enjoy the time, not to enjoy the game," which resulted in traffic arguments, sex crimes, and "corrupted public morals" (RD, p. 45). Faith, who often took nationalistic stands in the forums, replied:

I like to think positive about 2002, 2006, and 2010. Let's suppose that we all agree 2006 was a worse year than 2002. If that is the case, I would hope those people would help to make 2010 better, rather than thinking just negatively. I believe that what the world saw in Korea, "...our fantastic, passionate cheering, and mature citizen awareness..." was not a misconception. I believe that in 2010 we will have another great World Cup. (RD, p. 45)

In addition to stating that she thinks about all of the recent and upcoming World Cups in a positive way, Faith used "let's suppose" and "if that it the case" constructions, grammatical patterns that make the proposition less definite, in suggesting that everyone might consider 2006 to have been "a worse year" than 2002. The quote that she used to convey how wonderfully the world reacted to the 2002 World Cup was from the first, more positive, part of Hyunsu's post that began the thread.

Interestingly, on the same evening that Faith made her post, she made replies to three other threads, expressing similar opinions about being positive about the Red Devil Fever that has fueled nationalistic sentiments in contemporary Korea. It is significant, however, that in the thread that we are now dealing with, Randy made the next and last post to the thread with a message that ignored Faith's call to be more positive about the street cheering associated with the World Cups. Randy's response followed that of Hyunsu rather closely. He called the street cheering that he did in 2002 "one of the best experiences" and joined Hyunsu in being "disappointed" with the disturbances that occurred in 2006, concluding with the hope that the Korean government would help in 2010 in convincing fans "not to do some terrible behaviors" (RD, p. 46). Randy's ignoring of Faith's opinion illustrates the second method of minimizing disagreement.

This is not to say that there were not threads that were generally more positive about the World Cup experiences. In fact, even though Josh, in one post (RD, pp. 55-56), agreed with the concerns about rudeness that Mindy's expressed in her post, ignoring Faith's disagreement, in another thread in which Minsook argued that pride and excitement occasioned by the World Cups were more important than the "small" problems that occurred (RD, p. 47), Josh replied in enthusiastic agreement, claiming, "I strongly agree with you. Even though some people think that the Red Devil's behavior is like an action of disorder, this is just a small part of their such great outcome" (RD, p. 48). In other words, in other contexts, Josh might have agreed with Faith, but in the

context of the thread begun by Mindy, he chose to ignore Faith's comments and to agree with Mindy's position. Moreover, in Faith's case, in one of the other threads that she responded to, Dave began the thread by arguing that the Red Devil cheering was caused by the Korean fans desire to "cheer with one another," adding, "If there is one thing Koreans are good at, I believe it is unity" (RD, p. 56). Faith replied, "We are of the same mind. What really happens is that people can come together and cheer together. Soccer is the means for the country to rally together. I don't see this negatively, but as something very positive." Therefore, in Dave's thread, Faith found someone to share her strong, positive feelings about the World Cup cheering. However, the point here is that, in some other threads, her dissenting ideas were ignored by the participants in the interest of continuing a thread that was approaching the topic from another point of view.

Disagreements and Conflicts

Although, as we noted above, it is sometimes difficult to clearly distinguish the threads according to whether they are examples of agreement, partial agreement, or disagreement because replies to a particular thread may be a complex combination of those response types, in this section, we will consider an instance of clear, civil disagreement, as well as an example of a more heated conflict that occurred between two participants. Overall, as stated earlier, 22.93% of the coded replies were

coded as "disagreement," 19.15% of the women's and 28.57% of the men's coded replies.

A case of "civil disagreement." An interesting illustration of civil disagreement took place between two of the community's more active participants, Randy and Faith, in the Globalization forum. Randy initiated the thread, arguing that Korea's Chosun dynasty ancestors were "so conservative that they closed their door to other countries" (GL, p. 125). That "ultra nationalism finished as failure," and Korea was dominated by "strong countries like Japan, France or England." Only by trading with Western countries was Korea able to overcome this crisis. Today, Randy contended, Korea "cannot escape globalization," but the "main purpose of the globalization is to make our nation much more powerful." Korea does not have abundant natural resources, a huge territory, or large population, but the Korean people "are very diligent and patient." Randy concluded with, "The more we go abroad and experience the whole world, the more benefits we can get. What about your opinion about this?" (GL, p. 126). Randy sees globalization and overseas learning as ways to increase Korea's strength, a rather nationalistic approach to globalization, but Faith, who tended to be quite assertive about Korea's position in the world in various posts, took issue with Randy's call to learn from the world. She replied, explicitly disagreeing with Randy's statement that Koreans need to go abroad and learn about the world:

We also have LG, Samsung, Hyundai, Kia, Korean pop culture, and Kimchi. These go to other countries. Perhaps people in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam think that globalization means Koreanization. I think that we should keep working hard and help other people. Why do we need to go to other countries? (GL, p. 126)

Expressing pride in Korea's international products and its role in Asia, Faith countered Randy's statement that Koreans need to learn about the rest of the world by emphasizing Korea's internationally successful products and the influential role that Korea is playing in Southeast Asia today.

Randy responded to Faith's direct disagreement by thanking her for her reply and agreeing with her about Korea having "lots of great companies" and products and being envied by many people in Southeast Asia, but asked her whether she thought "Korea was a big country" (GL, p. 126). According to Randy, Korea's land is "very small," but its population density is quite high. Stating, "Thus, we need to go abroad. Why do we have to compete in this small country with our brothers?" Randy went on to argue that, if a company "makes pens," it should try to sell its pens to China's enormous population, ending his post with, "This is just my opinion for your reply. Well, what about your opinion, Faith Lee?" (GL, p. 127).

Therefore, in addition to thanking her for her reply and expressing agreement with some of her points, Randy has sought common ground with Faith by stressing that going overseas will result in benefits to the Korean economy and has asked her, by name, what her opinion of that might be. In

the last post to the thread, Faith, in turn, thanked Randy for his reply and, after presenting the Wikipedia definition of globalization, went on to argue that Korea is already a world player in globalization, stating:

Economically and technologically, Korea is a leader in Asia and throughout the world. Culturally and socially, Korean culture and society is being broadcasted throughout Asia and the world through our pop-culture. Even our political situation with North Korea, Japan, China, and the US are of major importance for the whole world. Just to give you an example, Time's 100 most influential people included 3 Koreans. (GL, p. 127)

Complaining that Randy's "example of selling pens to China falls a little short," Faith argued that such an example does not do justice to Korea's unique buying power because, though, for instance, "The cosmetic company Chanel has only 3 make up studios in the world. Two of them are in Korea" (GL, p. 127).

This exchange between Randy and Faith is a good illustration of what I am calling "civil disagreement." Although they thanked each other and do agree on the importance of Korea being powerful and successful in the world, and even though Randy did express agreement with a couple of Faith's points and called her by name, they basically continued to pursue quite different arguments, Randy insisting that Koreans need to learn about the world in order to continue to succeed internationally and Faith contending that Korea is already an important world player. In light of their

other posts, some of which we will examine Chapter 5, in which Randy generally expresses openness to the rest of the world and Faith states her pride in Korea, their different points of view here are indicative of their different world views. Their agreement on the importance of Korea's success may have helped to promote the civility apparent in this exchange.

A more contentious disagreement. As I mentioned in discussing the academic context of the online community, the overall mood that characterized the exchanges that took place was one of polite civility, marked by more than a few instances of solidarity or friendship building. In fact, the closest thing to an open conflict occurred in a number of exchanges between Virginia and Jonghun in a thread initiated by Virginia in the Korean Identity forum. Virginia (KI, p.19) explained that, while in Canada for a year, she realized her Korean identity when she felt lonely due to her inability to adapt to the Canadian style of friendship. Though she liked her Canadian friends and generally enjoyed herself there, she did not feel completely comfortable with "their way of thinking and having fun." She contended that:

Koreans love to have a very close friend who knows almost everything about them and also expect them to stay with them all the time. If so, they call those friends as best friends. Canadians, on the other hand, they also want to have wonderful friendship but the way of expressing of friendship was different. They think their private time and things very seriously, so they always regard their friend's private lives, too. (KI, p. 19)

Jonghun (KI, p. 19), who was sometimes rather critical of Korea and who was also prone to disagree (80% of his coded replies), replied to Virginia's post, saying that even though he is good at making friends, he was sure that the one year that Virginia spent overseas was not enough time to make truly good friends and further claiming that he has only three best friends in Korea, a number that he said he considered rather large. Jonghun contended, rather directly, "Yeah, maybe you and I can be a so good friend though, but are you sure that you ready to share everything with me? Like individual problems or lending big money? Well, I don't think so" (KI, p. 19). Not only did Jonghun argue that he was "sure" that Virginia had not been in Canada long enough to make good friends, but hypothetically presuming that they might become good friends, he directly averred that he did not think that she would be willing to share "everything" with him. Furthermore, in the first sentence of his reply, Jonghun asked, "You said, you lived there just one year, **no offence**, but how did you make close-friend so soon?" (KI, p. 19, emphasis original). Given the very direct and blunt tone of Jonghun's response, the "no offence" comment, written in bold font, may have struck Virginia as being confrontational, an interpretation supported by Virginia's later sarcastic use of the expression "no offense" toward Jong-ho.

In the second part of his reply, Jonghun used a softer tone, stating: I don't want you feel bad, please understand my opinion. Yes, it's just differences between your thought and mine. No offence~^^. As a matter of fact, what you just said is totally right in some part. Going through to

the differences of cultures is very tough thing. I hope you did not disappoint of your relations up there. Life is just like that. I think you know that~^^ (KI, p. 20)

Here, Jonghun claimed he did not intend to make her "feel bad," used the expression "no offence" with a smile-symbol, agreed with a part of what Virginia had said, and stated that he hoped that she was not disappointed with her Canadian experiences, ending his message with another smiling symbol.

In Virginia's response, the first part of the message seemed conciliatory; she thanked Jonghun for reading her opinion, but she quickly and directly claimed that time was not so important in making friendships, stating, "First of all, thank you for reading my opinion. I don't think time can be that matter for making good friends" (KI, p. 20). She then stated that, during a one month visit to Canada prior to the visit that she had alluded to in her initial post, she had had a Chinese housemate with whom she became very close. They have continued to stay in touch and have remained friends up to the present time. (It is interesting that Virginia does not comment on the fact that that friend was Chinese since her original post concerned the difference between the "very close" friendships of the Koreans and the more "private" relationships of the Canadians.) However, in the second part of the message, Virginia became much more aggressive and accused Jonghun of insulting her, arguing:

Honestly I think you insulted my relationship around me by judging with your standard. You said I got to understand and not to feel bad because we could have different opinion but if you truly think that

why would you feel so suspicious about others friendship things? We might have different opinion about being closeness. Have you ever thought about that before you write? No offense! (KI, p. 21)

Here, Virginia questioned Jonghun's sincerity in claiming that people can hold different opinions because, in her mind, he was overly "suspicious" about her own friendship relations and told him directly that he should have considered that they might have different opinions about closeness before he wrote. Her closing "no offense!" is clearly ironic and suggests that she may have been displeased with Jonghun's bold- type use of it in the first line of his reply.

Jonghun was apparently surprised by Virginia's post, starting his message with, "Wow! I didn't mean like that. I didn't insult or judge you like that way" (KI, p. 21), and claiming that the reason he had asked her not to be angry was that he was simply being cautious with her, which he thought was one way of being polite. Then, in a more combative tone, he argued:

That's just differences between you and me, and I just wanted to express my opinion, and you don't want listen my opinion. I don't mind at all then. What I tried to say waz, finding a good friend and making a deep relationship is usually taking a much time for normal people!

That's all! Nothin more, nothin less! (KI, p. 21)

Although Jonghun accused Virginia, in turn, of being the sort of person who refuses to listen to others' opinions, he did make a final effort to explain himself, saying that what he was trying to say to her was that it usually takes more time for "normal" people to make close relationships. The use of

"normal", along with the exclamation mark, suggest that Jonghun may have been indirectly referring to Virginia as abnormal or unusual. Jonghun's concluding "That's all! Nothin more, nothing less!" can be interpreted as both self-justifying and dismissive. The following semester, when I saw Jonghun on campus, I mentioned his exchanges with Virginia to him and he expressed surprise that she had so "misunderstood" him (personal communication).

Virginia and Jonghun accused each other of not accepting the opinions of others and ended their final messages acrimoniously. However, they stopped short of using truly abusive language, and by the time that I read the thread, the exchange had ended. Although that exchange was the most contentious one that occurred in the online community, in terms of the language used to express disagreement, it did not exceed, in my opinion, the limits of acceptable debate in an academic context. Jonghun had a tendency to disagree with others and to make rather blunt and direct comments in his posts, and, in this case anyway, Virginia took umbrage at his reply to her. Although Virginia and Jonghun had similar levels of participation (9 posts each), their pattern of interaction was quite different. Whereas 4 of Jonghun's 5 coded replies were "disagreements," together with one "partial agreement," Virginia's 6 coded replies consisted of 3 agreements, 2 partial agreements, and this one disagreement with Jonghun. However, in Chapter 5, in our discussion of a difference of opinion between Jonghun and Jinhee concerning the nature of the hierarchical relations that exist in Korea, we will see how

Jinhee responded to Jonghun's style of discourse in a more accommodating fashion.

Conclusion

After a one-month period of recruiting university students into the online community, a total of 46 individuals registered on the online community site. Out of those 46 people, 27 actually made posts to the forums, filled out the online survey, signed the consent form, and actively participated in the community. The 10 men and 17 women had a median age of 24 and a variety of majors although 18 of them were either majoring or minoring in English. A surprising 24 of the 27 participants reported overseas experience, 20 of them having lived for a period of time in an English-speaking country, including 3 individuals who lived in such a country for at least several years.

There were a total of 377 posts to the 11 forums that I created, the number of posts ranging from a low of 2 to a high of 26, an average of almost 14 posts per participant. In addition to the forum posts, 23 of the participants engaged in individual dialogues with me. After rereading the posts and dialogues numerous times and summarizing them, I selected 10 key concepts, according to which I coded the forum posts and dialogues. I recompiled the data according to the 10 codes, and, then, after further rereading and examination, came up with a number of ideological dichotomies that were central to making sense of the data. I selected three of the dichotomies, Pride vs. Uncertainty, Who's Korean vs.

Who's Not, and Embracing English vs. Fearing the Loss of Korean Language, as the most useful and instructive for analyzing the data.

As the analysis of the three dichotomies and the various types of threads that were found in the forums proceeded, however, it became apparent that it would be very useful to have quantitative information that would indicate how common the several kinds of positions that participants took in respect to the dichotomies were and how often the members agreed or disagreed in responding to the various threads. Consequently, I conducted a secondary quantitative analysis of those issues in order to further inform my qualitative analysis of the results.

Although I knew most of the participants, to one degree or another, before the project began, there were opportunities during the project, especially in the dialogues that I had with individual members, to get to know them better and to become familiar with the participants whom I did not know at the onset of the project. One limitation in regard to getting to know the participants was that, for whatever reason, some individuals did not participate very much in the dialogues, including the 5 individuals who never replied to the dialogue messages that I sent them. In the forums, there were only three references to me, one by Geri, who commented on a dialogue that I had had with her, and two by Aries, one apologizing to me for a criticism of Americans and another one complimenting my bicultural daughter.

An analysis of my interactions with the participants in the dialogues indicated that, although in many of the posts I asked for further clarification in a

rather neutral fashion, in other messages, I asked pointed questions and even entered into fairly contentious debates on at least three occasions, two of which involved discussions involving my daughter, apparently a topic in which I am heavily invested.

In terms of participant activity, although there was a great deal of individual variation among both the men and the women, the 377 posts amounted to a mean of 13 posts per participant, with the men being somewhat more active than the women. There were 182 new threads and 195 replies, with the men posting a higher percentage of replies than new threads and the women posting a similar percentage of each. The ratio of threads to replies in the forums was influenced by the timing of the forum; in general, the earlier the forum appeared, the more time there was for replies to the forum threads to be posted. Consequently, with the exception of the forums dealing with sensitive topics related to sexual mores and practices, the forums that appeared later in the project had fewer replies in relation to the number of new threads that were initiated.

As part of the secondary analysis the replies to threads were coded according to whether they were in basic agreement, partial agreement, or disagreement to the post that initiated thread. For the 195 replies, the highest percentage of replies were in agreement (46.50%), the next highest were in partial agreement (30.57%), and the lowest were in disagreement (22.93%). Although both the men and the women were more likely to agree than to partially agree or disagree, compared to one another, the men were more likely than the

women to agree or disagree, whereas the women were more likely than the men to partially agree. Despite these overall tendencies, it is important to remember that there were great individual variations among the men and women in their reply patterns.

In the most common form of replies, stating agreement, although some of the agreements with previous posts took the form of polite exchanges of opinion, there were numerous instances, especially among the women, of using techniques such as addressing each other by name, inserting “smile symbols,” and expressing pleasure with the exchanges in order to strengthen feelings of closeness and create emotional solidarity. The second most common type of replies, the ones that were rated as partial agreement, especially those that involved a genuine exchange of ideas in which the identification of points of both agreement and disagreement results in mutual concessions and modifications of opinions, provided opportunities for the participants to significantly negotiate their Korean identities and to think critically.

Although there were a substantial number of disagreements in the data, in some cases, the participants clearly preferred to avoid disagreement, utilizing such strategies as beginning a new thread rather than responding to a thread or threads expressing conflicting opinions or ignoring a previous reply that is in disagreement with the post that initiated the thread and agreeing, instead, directly to the original post. The disagreements that did take place were divided into “civil disagreement,” where the differences of opinion were handled in a polite and civil fashion, and “contentious

disagreement,” for which there was only one clear case, where civility broke down and an acrimonious exchange occurred.

All in all, the analysis of agreement and disagreement demonstrated that the participants exchanged ideas in a spirited fashion that took a number of forms, but which, in general, indicated the willingness of Korean university students, at least in the context of this voluntary, online English community, to rather freely discuss, and sometimes modify, their opinions with their peers.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DICHOTOMIES

In Chapter 2, we explained that this study would employ a discursive/rhetorical theoretical perspective to analyze the constructions of Korean identity in our online English community for Korean university students. According to Potter and Wetherell (1987), individuals' accounts are often contradictory, and the task of discourse analysis in discursive psychology is to ask on what occasions is one attitude manifested and on what occasions is the contradictory attitude displayed. Adding to this, Billig (1988, 1995, 2001) claims that the common sense that is expressed in everyday talking and arguing is organized around ideological dilemmas. A sense of identity itself can emerge within a context of argumentation, and social argumentation can be viewed as the model for social thinking. In short, the nature of common sense is that it contains contrary themes. Because ideologies contain these contrary themes, they provide the resources for common-sense thinking, which involves dialogic discussion and the counter-positioning of contrary themes, both of which have a sense of reasonableness. The aim of a discursive/rhetorical perspective is to describe how the contrary themes of ideology are "instantiated in ordinary talk" (Billig, 2001, p. 218). National identity is presented by Billig (1995) as a good example of a category whose particular meanings vary according to the context within which the identification is situated.

As explained in the previous chapter, a number of dichotomies or ideological dilemmas emerged during the primary analysis as central to the positions that the participants took in constructing Korean identities. The three

primary ones involved assertions of collective pride and shame concerning being Korean, debates over how to determine who was really Korean and who was not, and deliberations over whether English mastery contributed to Korean identity or detracted from it. In this chapter, we will analyze and discuss those three dichotomies identified as Pride vs. Uncertainty, Who's Korean vs. Who's Not, and Embracing English vs. Fearing the Loss of Korean Language. As mentioned earlier, after identifying the three prominent dichotomies in the data, I did some secondary analysis, which included going back over all of the 377 posts and coding in accordance with Goffman's (1981) concept of alignment, wherever possible, those posts according to whether they were positive, negative, or mixed in respect to the three dichotomies. Some posts could not, of course, be coded according to the final three dichotomies, while certain other posts were coded according to two of the dichotomies. In all, there were a total of 233 coded posts. The numbers of codes related to each dichotomy were as follows: 98 on Pride vs. Uncertainty (PS), 70 for Who's Korean vs. Who's Not (WK), and 65 for Embracing English vs. Fearing the Loss of Korean Language (EE). Out of the 233 posts coded according to the dichotomies, 107 (45.92%) were positive, 83 (35.62%) were mixed, and 43 (18.45%) were negative in relation to the three dichotomies.

However, there was considerable variation in the proportions of positive, mixed, and negative posts according to dichotomy. For example, in terms of percentages, although positive posts were more common in the Pride vs. Shame or Uncertainty (PS) and the Who is Korean and Who Isn't (WK)

dichotomies, there were significantly more mixed posts than positive ones in the Embracing English vs. Fearing the Loss of Korean (EE) dichotomy.

Table 8

Percentages of Positive, Mixed, and Negative Posts by Dichotomy

Dichotomy	PS	WK	EE
Positive Posts	53.06%	47.14%	33.85%
Mixed Posts	25.51%	32.86%	53.85%
Negative Posts	21.43%	20.00%	12.31%
Total	100%	100%	100%

As we analyze each of the dichotomies, we will examine, among other things, those proportions closely.

In general, the manner in which the participants positioned themselves in relation to the dichotomies aptly illustrate Billig's contention (1987, 2001) that discussion and argumentation over the issues that concern people in their everyday lives are generally expressed in the form of conflicting ideological dilemmas. The main purpose of this study is to examine how the participants constructed Korean identities as they confronted the key ideological dilemmas related to Korean national identity, the ones identified in the three dichotomies, exploring the discursive patterns and techniques employed in this particular situated context.

Pride vs. Shame and Uncertainty

The broadest of the three dichotomies that emerged, one that cuts across a number of different topics, involves feelings of being proud of Korea and of being Korean versus feelings of shame and uncertainty. Fierce assertions of pride, especially among the younger generations, are frequently commented on in the domestic and international media. As important and salient as those feelings may be, I will show in this section how the participants of our online community exhibited attitudes of both pride and shame and combinations of the two feelings.

Overall, 53.06% of the posts were positive, 25.51% were mixed, and 21.43% were negative. Among the three dichotomies, that was the highest percentage of positive posts. As in the other two dichotomies, a higher percentage of the women's posts were positive than those of the men (55.56% and 48.57%), and as in one of the other dichotomies (the Embracing English one), a lower percentage of women's posts were negative than those of the men (19.05% and 25.71%). The percentages of the mixed posts were very similar (25.40% for the women and 25.71% for the men).

Although there were a rather high percentage of positive posts, as in the case of the instances of agreement and disagreement examined in Chapter 4, though to a lesser degree, there was considerable variation among the participants. For example, although all of Eunhye's, Faith's, Seonhye's, and Derrick's Pride and Shame (PS)-coded posts were positive, 5 out of 6 of Jane's and 2 out of 3 of Andy's posts were negative. Faith was the most remarkable of

all, with all 12 of her PS posts coded as positive. In fact, since those 12 positive PS posts accounted for 80% of the Faith's coded posts, it might be said that her participation in the online community was focused primarily on her assertions of being proud of being Korean.

Assertions of Pride and Shame

There were numerous expressions of pride in Korea in the discourse data and some of shame, as well. In respect to pride, Christy, for example, in an early post titled "Korea, Koreans, and Me," expressed her love for Korea, concluding with "I love my country and proud of myself as being Korean. We have so much good *potential* to step up in the world. I just *hope* we Koreans make the good use of cooperative spirit and make a better citizen before we expect the country to do something for us" (KI, p. 10). Here, an explicit expression of love of country is mixed with suggestions of the potential to improve Korea's present position in the world and the possibility of becoming better citizens. In a later post to the Red Devil forum dealing with Korea's success in the 2002 World Cup, Christy addressed the issue of Korea's potential again, arguing that the Red Devil fever was a sign of Korea's "strong ethnical power" (RD, p.39) and asserting:

It is regrettable that Koreans can't really stand together with other subjects as much as we could in the world cup. Since we know ourselves that we have the power to be united so well, should work

on other important matters to make a better country. That is the way the red devil power could be truly meaningful. (RD, p. 40)

Once again, pride in Korea is combined with a recognition that Korea could do better and a hope that it will.

Immediately before stating this, Christy used a rhetorical form that is common in Korean discourse to explain why international sports are so important to Koreans. This form involves prefacing some statement about Korea's abilities or strengths with a reference to some disadvantage that Korea or Koreans have, such as a small national territory, a shortage of natural resources, a comparatively small population, or a rather small physique. In Christy's case, she claimed:

It is true that Korea is a small country and Koreans usually have small body. Also, Korea is not completely developed. Therefore, through the international sport game, Koreans expect to gain the victory competing other countries. Naturally, international sport game can be such a big chance to display Korean's skill. (RD, p. 39)

In this post, Christy began by emphasizing both the smallness of the country and the Koreans physical stature and followed it up with a claim that, despite that, the Koreans can show off their skills in international competitions.

In these posts, Christy is contrasting Korea's potential, which she sees as being based on its ability to cooperate, its skills, and its "ethnic power," with her perception that Koreans sometimes do not unite as strongly as they did to cheer on the World Cup soccer team. If they were to do so, she believes, the

result would be a more successful and better Korea. This emphasis on Korea's cooperative abilities and the need for even more cooperation are common themes in Korean identity discourse, and we shall encounter these themes again.

In her first post on Korean identity, in which Christy spoke of Korea's "potential to step up in the world" and which was coded as "mixed," Christy also expressed her concern that the intense stress caused by parents pushing their children to be successful is an obstacle to developing self-identity and complained that, as an "unusually independent Korean woman" (KI, p. 10) she resented the generational conflict that exists in Korea. She stated that:

I frankly don't like the conflict what Koreans have. Korea used to be a very conservative country based on Confucianism. Even though Korea have become westernized very much since a couple of decades ago, still Korea is not as progressive as America or France. Therefore, there's a conflict has existed between young and old generations. I think one of the most important aspects of being Korean is "struggling." Perhaps it sounds weird. However, it is absolutely true especially for the young Korean generation. (KI, p. 10)

The juxtaposition of "even though" with "still...not as progressive" suggests that Christy feels that Korea needs to become more progressive or even "Westernized." In fact, Christy's posts aptly illustrate the complexity of the participants' identities as Koreans, identities that involve a mixture of pride, concern, and hope for Korea's future. Although the two of Christy's threads

referred to above received no replies, possibly as a result of the fact that Christy, who started 12 threads but made no replies to the threads of others, frequently made late posts to forums that had been going on for some time, there were other threads that involved two or more participants agreeing with each other about prideful aspects of Korea.

For instance, Haeson, who often started threads with long, thoughtful comments, began a thread in the Korean Identity forum in which she explored the ways that Korean culture affects her identity. Haeson claimed that spending two months in Canada and some time traveling in the United States, two countries that she described as "multicultural" because she had opportunities to interact with people "from various cultural backgrounds," caused her to love Korea and its culture more, averring, "Many people say we become quite patriotic overseas and I think that it true. The most valuable thing that I got from being in other countries is that I have started to love my country and culture more" (KI, p. 29). After arguing that Koreans generally like to "move together," sharing personal stories and even food, and complaining that she could not find such sharing "easily in friendships with westerners," Haeson contended, "Being Korean also means being proud of Korean culture" (KI, p. 29), recounting:

When I got to the Times Square in New York, the first thing that came into my view was the sign of LG. I could also find the sign of Samsung. I couldn't describe exactly how I felt when I found them in one of the most famous places in the world. It was touching. I am not related to those brands personally except that I used a Samsung cell

phone. However, I became proud of being Korean as Korean brands are famous and powerful in other countries. I realize how amazing it is to have good technology and be famous for that even though we live in a very small place. (KI, p. 29)

Faith responded, expressing very similar feelings, stating:

I know exactly how you felt about seeing Korean products in some of the most famous places in the world viz. Times Square. We are such a small country. We had a devastating war only 50 years ago. Yet today, our country provides the world with some of the best technology and products. This makes me feel very proud to be Korean. Don't you feel the same? (KI, p. 30)

Both Haeson and Faith explicitly referred to being proud of being Korean, and Faith emphasized that commonality with her rhetorical query that asked Haeson whether she felt the same. In addition to agreeing about their pride in seeing successful Korean products while abroad, both Haeson and Faith employed the rhetorical form alluded to earlier in this chapter, which involves referring to Korea's limitations before remarking on the country's successes. Haeson called Korea "a very small place," while Faith used the expression "small country" and also referred to the "devastating" Korean War of not so long ago.

Haeson responded to Faith's question, which was essentially rhetorical since Haeson had already said that she felt pride in being Korean when she saw how technologically advanced and successful Korean products were, by

reiterating, "Exactly. That's why I said that I've become quite patriotic overseas. No country is perfect, but I realized we are more amazing than I thought before" (KI, p. 30).

In contrast to this mutual pride in Korea exhibited by Haeson and Faith, there were other threads that focused on shame and embarrassment related to being Korean. In a telling exchange in the Korean Identity forum, Mark, whose 3 posts coded Pride vs. Shame were comprised of 2 mixed and 1 negative, and Jane, with 5 out of 6 such posts coded as negative, traded stories about being embarrassed by the behavior of other Koreans while overseas. Mark, who was actually struggling with his Korean identity as a result of having spent seven of his formative years in the Philippines and was having some difficulties in readjusting to Korea, started the thread by claiming that he often denied being Korean when overseas because of embarrassment over Korean "bad behavior," stating:

Once when I was in Thailand, some of my American friends and me were drinking beer at a bar, and three "Koreans" were acting strange and they suddenly touched the servers....and I was surprised, then the girl cried and hit one Korean and the others got mad. Of course the fight didn't get big because of the people who were forcing them back, but my friends asked me if they were Korean and I suddenly told them that they were Japanese^^; Well I know I should have told them the truth but I really was embarrassed. (KI, p. 7)

Mark's acute embarrassment over the behavior of other Koreans is a very common reaction among Koreans because of their tendency to experience collective pride and shame over the successes and mistakes that individual Koreans make in situations that are observed by non-Koreans.

Jane replied directly to Mark's story, agreeing with him about the sexual misbehavior of Korean men when they are abroad. She recounted that she visited Vietnam more than ten years ago and witnessed Koreans treating Vietnamese, especially Vietnamese women, badly. According to Jane:

When I was there, Koreans ignored the Vietnamese and I could see Korean men spend a lot of money to Vietnam women at the club and treat them so bad....Vietnamese all knew and thought that Korean's manner is dirty but they only liked that Koreans spend money a lot....I was embarrassed that I'm from Korea. They had some anger about Koreans, especially about men and there were so many Korean men having Vietnamese women as a concubine.... I realized that Korean poor house wives only think their husband work so hard at the poor country and try to believe them they would be good to their wives. But the truth is different. They have fun there and their acting is different than they did in Korea. (KI, p. 8)

Jane, who is divorced, went on to claim that Koreans sometimes seem to become different people when they travel or live abroad. Conceding that she might want to be a different person in a place where no one knows her, Jane argues that it would still be important that she kept control of herself

and did not do any harm to others. In a somewhat unusual instance of comparing Koreans negatively to the Japanese, she states, “I think Koreans has two faces. We used to say that Japanese has two faces and we don't know what's their inside. But Japanese act same over the world” (KI, p. 8). Here, Jane not only accuses Koreans, or Korean men at least, of duplicitous behavior, but even compares them unfavorably to the Japanese in that respect. As an older and divorced woman, Jane sometimes expressed strong opinions about Korean men and the unequal treatment of women in Korea. In this case, the overseas exposure of abusive behavior toward women on the part of Korean men occasioned for Jane feelings of shame, for much like Mark and many other Koreans, Jane feels a sense of collective shame when Korean misbehavior is exposed to the outside world.

Many of the posts concerning pride and shame can be organized according to topics. The following subdivisions of this section on pride and uncertainty, “Collective Pride and Shame” and “The Social and Emotional Qualities of the Koreans,” will explore how the participants positioned themselves on this dichotomy of whether to be proud or ashamed of being Korean in relation to a number of subtopics that emerged in their discourse.

Collective Pride and Shame

Being Korean Overseas

The two threads, one expressing pride and the other shame, that we just analyzed both involved references to how Korea and Koreans are

viewed by the rest of the world, in the first case concerning the prominence of some Korean brands overseas and in the second one relating to the inappropriate behavior of some Korean men in Southeast Asia. This is no accident, for a key issue that evokes feelings along the continuum between pride and shame is the matter of how Koreans represent their nation and culture when overseas. In fact, Koreans are very prone to experience collective pride or shame according to how Korea and Koreans are perceived by those from other countries.

What is particularly significant in the examples below is that the participants frequently reported that going overseas made them very aware of their Korean-ness and that they clearly saw themselves and other overseas Koreans as representing Korea and Koreans to others. Comments by participants such as Mindy, Yuri, and Geri indicated that not knowing as much about Korea as one feels that one should know can be a source of shame, whereas teaching others about Korean culture, as in Marie's and Andy's cases, and making a good impression of Korea on others can be a source of pride and gratification. The participants clearly exhibited a propensity to collectively identify with Korea, reporting pride concerning Korea's economic and cultural achievements and shame over the misbehavior of Koreans, especially when they are visiting or residing overseas.

Mindy, Yuri, and Geri had an interesting exchange on the issue of representing Korea overseas in the Korean Identity forum. Mindy initiated

the thread, stating that she had never thought about Korean identity because it is such a natural thing for a Korean to have. However, according to Mindy:

As many people say, when we are in another country, we can more feel we are Korean and representatives of Korea. I was the same in England and really tried to behave myself there. And I also thought that if a person from a country behaved very badly, all the people from the country might be considered bad, or supposing that the person had behaved opposite ways, all the people from the country as well as the person could have left good impression in there. In my opinion, the fact itself that we feel this is the evidence we are Korean. (KI, p. 2)

In this passage, Mindy clearly stated that she was very much concerned with how her actions while in England reflected back on Korea, using the expression "really tried to behave." Furthermore, by claiming that that sort of concern is evidence that one is Korean, Mindy was asserting what she sees as the central importance among Koreans of making a good impression of Korea on non-Koreans. Mindy also stated that she was disappointed in her ability, compared to that of her foreign friends, to tell others about Korea and contended, "I don't think to be a real Korean we should do enormous things for our country, but we would be closer to a real Korean if we could invest more time in knowing about Korea more" (KI, p. 3). Moreover, Mindy expressed a resolve to learn more about her country, stating, "...then I was determined to concern with ours to be a real Korean' (KI,

p. 3). This statement about the importance of knowing more about Korea so that one can better teach non-Koreans about Korea is a common feature in discourse about Korean identity. In fact, when a foreigner knows more about some aspect of Korean culture or history, Koreans often respond to that with a mixture of admiration for the foreigner's knowledge and chagrin that they do not know more about the subject than they do. Indeed, for Mindy, to be a “real Korean” is to care about making a good impression about Korea on foreigners and to prepare oneself to teach others about Korea.

Yuri replied to Mindy's post with explicit agreement, claiming that she, too, had felt “shameful” when foreign friends asked her questions about aspects of Korean culture with which she was not very familiar. Yuri concluded, “As you said, we have to be a real Korean. ^ -^~” (KI, p. 3). Here, Yuri stressed her agreement and solidarity with Mindy by quoting her and adding a smiling symbol. Smiling symbols, as we saw in Chapter 4, are a common way of expressing agreement among both Korean university men and women, but especially among women. Mindy, in turn, replied to Yuri, along with another smile, saying, “Right~!^^ we need to learn more things about our country before caring for other culture in other countries” (KI, p. 3). The last part of her statement is a complaint about how young people are sometimes more interested in learning about Western cultures than they are in learning more about Korean culture.

Geri made the last post to the thread, claiming that just thinking about the issue makes her feel foolish, for how foolish a citizen is “who cannot explain or proud of saying about own nationality!” (KI, p. 3). It is at this point that Geri made the reference to me that I discussed in Chapter 4, averring, “I was really depressed by this for a while and I was so embarrassed especially when Mr. Concilus asked me more about Korean identity on dialogue 😊” (KI, p. 3). In other words, the feelings of embarrassment and shame that arise when a Korean is not as knowledgeable about Korea as he or she would like to be can occur when one is dealing with a long-time foreign resident of Korea, as well as when interacting with foreigners while overseas. In Mindy’s thread, the three participants clearly stated the importance of representing Korea well to foreigners and the shame and embarrassment that can occur when one is unable to do so.

In another thread in the Korean Identity forum, Andy, the initiator of the thread, wrote about “hot patriotism” (KI, p.33), a term that both Andy and Billig (1995) use to refer to a strong emotional feeling about one’s country, and mentioned that he experienced such patriotic feeling while in Canada. Although the other two of Andy’s three PS posts were coded as negative, in the post beginning this thread, Andy contended that, after playing Korean traditional music in an international festival in Canada:

I won a storm of applause from many foreigners. At that time, I was proud I was a Korean, and I deeply felt patriotism in my mind. Even if I

felt the feeling for a short time, I thought being Korean is feeling patriotism. (KI, p.33)

Marie, who spent a year during high school as an exchange student in the U.S., replied, in her only PS post, saying, "I agree with one of your story that you feel Korean Identity when you are in other country. I always tried to be a NICE Korean when I travel other country 😊" (KI, p. 34). In addition to the explicit agreement and smiling emoticon, Marie capitalized the word "Nice." Intrigued, I asked her in a dialogue, "Could you give me some examples of being nice when you're overseas because you're representing Korea?" (D, p. 30). Marie replied that, even though there were students who did not know where Korea is, she tried her best to educate Americans about Korea. She recounted:

I sang Korean pop song in my dance competition (I was in dance team), and "Arirang" in my church meeting(?) - forgot what it called; and they were very impressed of my song. My host brother was interested in Korean, I gave him Korean CD, Red T-shirt, even taught him Korean letter, and he is still studying it. And they usually think that Asian students are goodie-goodie, like other Asians, I tried to have good grades in school, but I wanted to show them I'm also a person can have fun. It makes me a lot of friends variously. (D, p. 31)

In addition to teaching others the Korean alphabet and "Arirang" (the most famous of Korean folk songs - a kind of informal national anthem), Marie was also concerned with counteracting the American stereotype of Asian students as "nerds and goodie-goodies" by showing others that she also liked to have

fun, thereby attempting to improve the image that she thinks Americans have of Koreans, once again demonstrating the prominent role that Korea's image in the world played in the Korean identity construction of many of the participants.

Cliff (KI, p. 26), in one of the two out of three PS posts coded positive, also claimed that he felt an obligation to behave himself in the U.S. because he was representing Korea. Cliff, like several other participants, recalled how being in a foreign country influenced his awareness of being Korean and linked that awareness to his consciousness of being a representative from his home country. He stated that, during his stay in the United States, surrounded by spoken and written English:

All of a sudden, something just hit me, and I realized that I am a Korean; this could be funny, but seriously I've never been thought about it that much. Whenever some jerky frat boys teased me as a Korean FOB (Fresh Off the Boat) and I knew it was merely a joke, I felt that I am a Korean. Additionally, since I was a Korean who was in US, people in US sometimes wanted to learn about Korea from me. I had to be careful about my behavior and answers; if I do something wrong, they may believe Korean sucks.

Cliff stated that he realized the teasing was "merely a joke," but, never-the-less, he referred to the fraternity brothers as "jerky frat boys," which suggests that he did resent the ribbing. However, he did acknowledge that the experience made him feel that he was Korean and went on to state that he wanted to represent Korea in a positive way.

When I asked Cliff in a dialogue to explain what he felt were the North American stereotypes of Koreans, he replied, “Maybe I am far away from the stereotype of Korean” (D, p. 40), and explained that Americans expected him to drink heavily, play Starcraft (an interactive, online computer game), eat dog meat, and “wander around to find a place where I could eat *kimchi* (Korean pickled side-dishes) for 11 months” (D, p. 40). **B**ecause he did not do any of those things, people told him that he did not act like a Korean. Cliff continued:

However, I hated to watch Koreans making problems and annoying other people while I was there, which means I am Korean, and don't want them to jeopardize an imagination of Koreans. Probably this feeling is the part of my identities as a Korean. (D, p.40)

Intrigued, I asked, “I see. So you must at least identify as a Korean to worry about that, right? What are the ways that Koreans were making problems and annoying people?” (D, p. 40).

Cliff responded to my query, explaining:

For example, there were some Korean people making problems and annoying people. It's a long story, but briefly there was a guy who got a car accident due to his reckless driving; Japanese and Koreans were in the car. Even though it was totally his fault, he insisted that the other people chip in for the payment..... This news spread out all over UCSD. Many Korean students were upset about him. (D, p. 41)

In this example, Cliff realized that his feelings of shame concerning the other Korean student's inappropriate behavior are directly related to the fact that both of them are Korean. Moreover, according to him, many other Korean students felt embarrassed by one Korean student's unreasonable demands upon other international students, both Koreans and Japanese. In short, misbehavior by one Korean student became the occasion for many Korean students, including Cliff, to experience feelings of collective shame.

The Virginia Tech Shootings

A dramatic and illustrative example of the collective identification that often occurs among Koreans was the reaction of Koreans to the tragic shooting of Virginia Tech students on April 16, 2007, by Seung-hui Cho, a mentally ill student who had immigrated to the US from Korea in 1992 when he was eight years old.

In Korea, the first reports were that the shooter was an Asian man. A little later it was claimed that it was a Chinese exchange student from Shanghai. I went to bed, relieved, like many others in Korea, that it had not been a Korean, only to discover early the next morning, along with the rest of Korea, that the killer had indeed been a Korean-American immigrant to the States. All of my Korean students and friends were aghast, and a number of them actually apologized to me. I assured them that an apology was not necessary and that I shared their feelings.

Much to the surprise of many Koreans, Americans did not appear to blame the incident on the young man's ethnic ancestry, and the media did not report reprisals against Koreans residing in the United States. In the online community, we had already finished discussing Korean identity and nationalism and were, in fact, in the middle of a forum discussing the importance of learning English. However, I engaged a number of the participants in dialogues concerning the tragedy. I initiated the dialogues by sending a message to a number of the more active participants directly asking, "How did you feel when you heard that the shooter in the Virginia Tech shootings was a Korean immigrant to the United States, and what are your feelings concerning the reactions to the shootings in the United States, especially the reaction to the fact that Cho was a Korean American?" (D, p. 70).

The dialogues, a few of which are presented below, capture the extent to which the participants concern themselves with Korea's image in the world. They tend to assume a collective responsibility for both Korea's successes and embarrassments on the world stage, which constitutes an important aspect of their Korean identity constructions, though, as we will see, Natalia's resistance to assuming responsibility illustrates the danger of over-generalizing that tendency.

Virtually all of the participants who replied to my dialogue message about the incident expressed their initial concerns about the effect that the massacre would have on America's and the world's image of Koreans, and

most of them declared their relief over the fact that Korea did not seem to be blamed for the incident. Natalia, for example, whose two PS posts were both rated as negative, expressed those very feelings of concern and relief in our dialogue, and, moreover, claimed that the American reaction caused her to realize how nationalistic Koreans are. She stated:

It was shocking that the suspect was Korean. I thought it might damage the image of Korea like 9.11 but I was wrong. All the media of USA don't focus on the nationality of the suspect but on the seriousness of the shootings. I realized once again how Korean people are so nationalistic. (D, p. 71)

The American reaction to the incident caused Natalia to reflect on Korean nationalism and what she saw as a salient cultural difference between the United States and Korea.

Interestingly, though, Natalia stated that it was “kind of strange” (D, p. 72) that many of the Koreans featured on the Korean news that she had watched felt sad because Cho was a Korean. According to Natalia, “If the killer was Chinese or Japanese, would the Koreans do the same thing? I'm 100% certain they wouldn't” (D, p. 72). Furthermore, she criticized those Koreans who actually felt guilty because of the shootings. She argued:

Some people feel guilty about the rampage just because they have the same heritage as the killer. I was a bit angry about it. Even though the killer was born in Korea and grew up here until his age 8, he's almost American. He's been educated in the States for more than 10 years. It

wasn't the nationality that caused the deadliest shootings but his nature, background, culture, his personality and so on. So Korean people please calm down and don't put too many efforts on solving this problem as if they take the responsibility. It's the matter of the USA, not Korea's. (D, p. 72)

Although Natalia admitted to being “shocked” by the incident and worried about the possible effects that the killings might have on Korea's image, she stated that she was puzzled and angered by Koreans feeling sad or guilty over the heritage of the tragic young man. Natalia appeared to be distinguishing between being saddened, shocked, and worried about the incident and its possible fallout and actually assuming responsibility for the tragedy and called for those Koreans who felt responsible to “calm down” and not take responsibility for the tragedy.

Haeson also stated that Cho “was actually more like an American,” but, in contrast to Natalia, admitted to feeling a relationship to and a responsibility for Cho's actions. She averred:

I was very shocked when I first heard the news that there was a shooting in a university campus in America. As I am also a university student, the fact that innocent students were killed without any reasons was shocking. Gun related accidents hardly happen here. The incident itself was something that made me shocked. Then, I heard that the shooter turned out to be a Korean, not a Chinese. Literally, I felt my jaw dropping. Even though he went to America at a young age and

was actually more like an American than a Korean, I felt related to him.

I do not think the crime is associated with the fact that he was a

Korean, but still I felt responsible for that somehow. (D, p. 73)

Unlike Natalia, Haeson's three PS posts were all coded as positive. Perhaps Haeson's strong identification with and pride in Korea accounts for the fact that "somehow" she felt responsible for Cho's actions even though she denied that his being Korean was at all related to the crime.

According to Haeson, although it was fortunate that Americans were not focusing on Cho's ethnic heritage, it could not be denied that Koreans do relate individual actions to nationality. She explained her feelings of responsibility by saying:

I guess it is because if an American did the same thing to us in Korea, honestly we would feel hatred towards Americans. We tend to relate individual things to nationality. Though it is not always reasonable and I try not to do that many of the times, I cannot say I do not have that tendency at all. Especially in this case, which rarely happens in America, either, I think we had better say sorry to innocent victims. Fortunately, Americans seem to focus on other aspects about this outrageous crime. However, if it happened in Korea, which is a very nationalistic country, it would be hard for us to ignore his nationality. We do not need to apologize to America officially, but I think it's a good thing that we express our deepest sorry to Americans. (D, p. 74)

Indeed, as I explained in Chapter 1, when American soldiers accidentally ran over two schoolgirls in 2002, or even when, in the 2002 Winter Olympics, an American skater was awarded an Olympic medal that many Koreans felt that a Korean skater should have received, there were bursts of anger and outrage toward both the United States and individual Americans. Here, Haeson, identifying with Koreans by using “we” and “us,” has recognized the tendency for Koreans to “relate individual things to nationality” and admitted that, even though it is not always reasonable, despite her efforts, she, too, sometimes does so. Furthermore, although the American media was not blaming Korea, she felt that unofficial heartfelt expressions of sorrow were in order,

In addition to concerns about Korea’s image and feelings of responsibility, a few of the participants admitted having worries of a more personal sort. For example, Jane, who has an American boyfriend and is hoping to visit or even eventually move to the US, frankly confessed to worrying about how the incident might affect the proposed visa waiver for Koreans or the attitudes of her boyfriend’s parents about Koreans. Jane claimed:

Well, I was shocked when I saw this news and I was shocked again when I heard the criminal was Korean. I worried about the image of Korea over the world and some people like me expect to go to America without visa very soon but now people say it's gone.... Also I asked that his parents might not want me because I'm Korean. Then he said "it's not like that," so I relaxed. :) (D, p. 76)

Jane, too, spoke of being “shocked” and worrying about Korea’s international image, but also related her concerns to everyday practical manners, such as getting a visa and being accepted by her boyfriend’s parents. She even wondered whether her boyfriend’s parents might not reject her as a result of the tragedy caused by Seung-hui Cho.

The Social and Emotional Qualities of the Koreans

Another key area in the participants' Korean identity constructions was the frequent discussion of what the important social and emotional characteristics of the people are. The Korean Identity (KI) and Red Devil Fever (RD) forums, as well as a number of dialogues were rich sources of discourse concerning those identity constructions. The following illustrations of the members' constructions of the qualities that are central to being Korean are divided into sections focusing on the nature of friendships and relationships, the value of the Korean concept of *jong*, the significance of social hierarchy in Korea, the importance of group unity, and a consideration of some of the purported negative characteristics of Koreans.

Friendship and Relationships

In discussing the qualities that characterize Koreans, one of the key issues mentioned by a number of participants is pride in the nature of Korean friendship. In Chapter 4, we examined the acrimonious exchange that occurred between Virginia and Jonghun when Jonghun questioned Virginia’s complaint

that she was unable to make the same sort of close friendships with Canadians as she could with fellow Koreans. In a forum post similar to Virginia's, Hyunsu, two of whose PS posts were positive, claimed that most foreigners do not realize how important the relationships between Koreans are. She stated:

When I was in Canada, I had some friends that are from other countries to study English. During the class time, we had a lot of time to talk and sometimes we went out for a drink or for some movies. But that was it. I wanted to have a really close relationship as my Korean friends. It was hard that they didn't really open their mind widely to me. (KI, p. 1)

Haeson (KI, 28) also wrote about Korean friendships, explaining that when she spent time in two multicultural societies, Canada, and the U.S., she began to compare Korean culture with the cultures of the people whom she met. Haeson, repeatedly using the deictic pronoun, "we," states that:

Many people say we become quite patriotic overseas and I think that is true. The most valuable thing that I got from being in other countries is that I have started to love my country and culture more. I had never realized how much my culture affected the way I think and behave before, but the culture has a big impact on my behaviors. One of the popular stereotypes about Koreans that I have ever heard is that Koreans love to move together. I think we do though there are some exceptions. We love to be with others, act together and share personal stories. We even share food. Those are Korean culture. I couldn't find them easily in friendship with westerners. How many common things

people share together bonds them strongly and that is why cultural difference can sometimes be obstacles which make it hard to be closer to foreign friends. (KI, p. 28)

In another strong claim concerning Korean friendship and pride, Derrick (KI, p. 7), who spent seven of his earliest years in the States and returned to Korea thinking he was American, had an interesting exchange with Aries. Derrick, all three of whose PS posts were positive, stated that because of his close Korean friends, whom he misses when he travels outside of Korea, he doubts whether he will be able to live abroad again. After describing his return to Korea as “a little scary,” Derrick explained that:

Well, I came and by the time I was a high school student I had discovered that there was a great feeling in my heart to feel about my country. I am proud of my country and I think I'm a lucky person to be born here. First of all I like being Korean is about “friends.” I guess everybody in Korea would admit that they have a good friend or two to open up your mind and chat. In my case I have several friends whom I rely on whether I am happy or sad. This is the friends I make in my high school days. They become an eternal friend. Before I came to Korea, my dad said to me, “I want you to make friends in Korea, friends in Korea are the ones you can trust and rely on.” I now know what he's saying.

(KI, p. 7)

Aries, whose four PS posts were equally divided between mixed and negative, ignored the gist of Derrick's post, which focused on friendship, and addressed,

instead, his pride in Korea. After a friendly salutation, in which she addressed him as “Dave,” she said she had enjoyed reading his opinion, and exclaimed that “it sounds like you are really proud to be Korean” (KI, p. 9). Aries, however, went on to recount three embarrassing incidents that she experienced in Canada and France, the two Canadian ones involving being questioned about North Korea and the French one concerning discovering that a French souvenir was “made in Korea.” Aries concluded her post with:

What I’m saying is I never felt proud of myself when I was outside. It was more like humiliating for being a Korean. I’m not saying I hate to be a Korean or anything but when I think about my experience, it’s not always good. (KI, p. 9)

Apparently, Aries was more concerned with explaining how her overseas experiences did not evoke feelings of pride within her than in exploring Derrick’s contentions concerning the depth of Korean friendships. Although claiming not to “hate being a Korean or anything,” Aries did confess to feeling somewhat humiliated as a Korean overseas. We will explore later how Aries’ feelings about being Korean may be connected to her fierce commitment to becoming a very fluent speaker of English.

In contrast to some of the participants’ espousals of the positive nature of Korean friendships, Mark, with one negative and two mixed PS posts, expressed reservations in a dialogue with me about what he perceived as a lack of boundaries in Korean friendship. Having spent seven years of his childhood in the Philippines and still having adjustment problems many years

after his return to Korea, Mark, although he expressed concern about leaving Korea for graduate study because his friends were in Korea, also complained about his Korean friends in the same dialogue, contending that:

They keep trying to come in my boundary which I have and they always say that I am so selfish not to reveal my secret, and I tell them that if I tell them my secret then it isn't a secret anymore and they just get mad. I just don't like the way of them thinking what friends really are. They think that winning your friend is the key of having a good relationship. (D, p. 66)

Here, Mark, though he is obviously ambivalent about his Korean friendships, is saying that the close type of friendship that Hyunsu and Virginia missed when they were in Canada bothers him because it does not adequately recognize the need for privacy. When I asked Mark in a follow-up dialogue what he meant by "winning your friend," he explained (D, p. 68) that it means making a friend who will be on your side whatever the situation may be. Mark claimed that even elementary school students value such a friendship, which in his opinion is rather "foolish."

Very curious about the emphasis that participants were placing on the nature of Korean friendships, I asked several other people in dialogues further questions about their comments concerning that issue. Having asked Virginia (D, p. 34) to further explain the differences between Korean and Canadian friendship and to elaborate on a reference she made to Koreans also having bad points, she replied by stating:

My Korean friends want to have a sense of unity so they always think that friends should do and share every thing. They think less privacy is better. But, on the other hand, with Canadian friends, even though we are close enough, they always try to keep a certain distance because they are worried about my private things that I want to keep. I don't know which is better and it is quite difficult to say so, but sometimes I feel confused when my Korean friends think that they have to know all my private life and weekend plans and it makes them think to be best friends. (D, p. 35)

In other words, Virginia, who along with Hyunsu had complained that Canadian friendships were not close enough, in a slightly different context, agreed with Mark that Korean friendships can be too close, without enough room for privacy. Moreover, Virginia confessed to being "confused" by her Korean friends' unwillingness to acknowledge her needs for privacy. Therefore, depending on the context and framing of the issue, Virginia has evaluated Korean friendship both positively and negatively.

Jong

Closely connected to the issues of personal relationships and friendships and frequently referred to by the participants with pride is the concept of *jong*. It is widely recognized that concepts that are central to expressing the ethos of a culture can be notoriously difficult to translate. *Jong*, along with the concept of *han*, a feeling of suffering, frustration, and victimization, is one of the key

concepts employed by scholars to elucidate Korean culture. Various translated as feeling, a kind of tie or bond, or the connection that can develop between people over time, *jong* is said to be an essential feature of Korean culture. *Jong* is often contrasted with the more ephemeral *sarang*, or love, and can appear in “good” or “ugly” manifestations. (“*Miun jong*,” or ugly *jong*, describes the close ties that can form between people who have conflicts over time.) In a discussion with my bilingual and bicultural daughter about the differences between relationships in the States and in Korea, after I had struggled to explain what I saw as the salient difference, my daughter blithely replied, “Of course. There’s more *jong* here in Korea.”

The participants referred to *jong* and *han* a number of times in the course of the forum discussions and dialogues. In the Korean Identity forum, Geri started an interesting thread when, attempting to explain the good and bad aspects of the Korean character, she claimed, “Most of all *jong* is one of good aspect about Korea. As I said, it is hard to explain in just one word. It is kind of love and devotion. And it make Korean look very kind and sentiment” (KI, p. 22). Jinhee replied, strongly agreeing with Geri’s opinion and connected the concept of *jong* to that of *han*. Accepting Geri’s explanation that *han* is a result of the anger and sorrow that Koreans experienced because of frequent invasions from other countries, especially Japan, Jinhee went on to say:

It seems to me that the kind of *han* that all Korean people have in their mind has us share *jong*, the heartwarming relationship. We used to

devote ourselves to other people because we understood one another best. (KI, p. 23)

In a separate thread, Cliff stated, like several other participants, that he began to seriously ponder what it meant to be Korean when he lived overseas, and then went on to conclude that that, if he had to pick one word to define Korean, it would not be *kimchi* (spicy, pickled and fermented vegetables), but would be *jong* and *han*. He claimed, "*Jong* is like the feeling of warm relationship that you care about. It is natural thing growing up in our mind while we spend long time with someone else" (KI, p. 25). Faith agreed with Cliff, asserting, "*Jong* and *Han* are great examples of Korean identity. There is not an exact equivalent into English and it is hard to explain to others" (KI, p. 26).

One of the questions that I asked some of the participants about in dialogues was whether *jong* is uniquely Korean or whether it might exist in other cultures, too. Faith, with 12 out of 12 PS posts rated as positive, admitted that as a human experience it may exist in other cultures, but claimed that cultures have special words to describe their unique features, offering as an example the Spanish term *carino*, which though translated as "affection," conveys a special sense of care or understanding. Faith stated:

I think *jong* is similarly unique. For me, *jong* is when you have a special attachment and care for another person. Even though you don't feel like being with the other person or the person may have hurt you, you still have an attachment for them. You can't seem to leave the person and to be with them. (D, p. 26)

Here, Faith is arguing that although similar feelings may exist in other cultures, each culture will imbue those feelings with special characteristics.

Geri (D, p. 19) replied to the same query by saying that she had heard that *jong* has disappeared in Tokyo, but still exists in Okinawa and the countryside, suggesting that Japan, too, has *jong*. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Koreans have a tendency to describe Korea's characteristics as unique, despite the presence of at least similar cultural values and practices in other parts of Asia. In their dialogues with me Faith and Geri, when questioned whether *jong* is truly unique responded in different ways. Geri indirectly admitted that *jong* may exist elsewhere by stating that she has heard that *jong* is disappearing in urban Japan, whereas Faith continued to insist on the uniqueness of the concept. In any case, references to the nature of relationships in Korea and the significance of *jong* in those relationships were important in the Korean identity constructions of many of the participants.

Hierarchy

Another important aspect of Korean relationships is the asymmetry that prevails between people of different ages. Korean society is markedly hierarchical, and distinction based on age is a central feature of the hierarchical order and is often highly valued as an indicator of Korean identity and a source of pride. Eunhye, for example, in a representative statement, averred:

Most of Koreans feel proud of their long history. Limited people have lived in limited land, and most Koreans have common feeling,

consciousness, custom, culture, and morals. “Respect your parents” and “Don’t talk back to adults” is a good example to represent Korean society’s value consciousness. (KI, p. 18)

However, Jonghun, a skate-boarder who had a shaved head a year or two ago and the same person who argued above with Virginia about Canadian friendships, in a thread that he initiated, complained rather strongly about the way that older people treat their juniors. In fact, he claimed, “I don’t like our culture that much, especially ‘honorific titles.’” He further contended that most older Korean people look down on those who are younger than they. Jonghun argued:

Just think about other countries, which don’t use “honorific titles.” Two people, who just met, hang around quickly no matter how old each of those. They don’t ask their age and they don’t think an age is important Marker. What a convenience! We can see some close foreign people despite of differences of ages. In this country, meet a guy who is older than me, I should careful of my word. However I like someone very much, I can’t easily make him/her to my close guy. (KI, p. 25)

Jonghun concluded by saying that he realized that he cannot change Korean culture, and even wondered if some one who does not like his or her culture should move to another country. In his last sentence, asking why Korean culture is so great, he stated, “I just hope someone tells me the reason that there are so many advantages than disadvantages” (KI, p. 25).

Unlike Virginia, in her exchange with Jonghun about Korean friendship, Jinhee, who tended to take middle positions and whose three PS posts were all rated as mixed, replied to Jonghun in a conciliatory manner, saying “I can see your point. I also don’t like the older people who look down on younger people and I don’t think younger people always have to respect and obey older people” (KI, p. 25). However, she disagreed with Jonghun’s assertion that Korea does not deserve the sobriquet bestowed upon it by the Chinese in ancient times, namely, “the courteous people in the East.” She contended that the compliment was a result of the way that Koreans respect their elders and added that respecting another is “not a bad thing.” Jinhee argued that it is possible to at least express one’s opinion to older people and, in fact, feels that older people do have more wisdom than those youngerer than they by virtue of their more extensive experience. What is important is that younger people should be careful “to listen to older people first and not to speak in an impolite way.” Jinhee wondered whether that is not the same in other countries, as well. At the end of her post, Jinhee, after proffering in another conciliatory gesture that “I’m just trying to be positive ^^,” requested that Jonghun:

Imagine that younger female call you “*oppa*” (older brother). Don’t you like to hear more “*oppa*” than “Jonghun” or “*ya*”?? Only Korean culture and language has this heartwarming feeling. ^0^ I’d like you to reconsider about the people around you. You should have really close friends, despite older age than you. “*Hyung*” or “*nuna*” maybe???

In Korea, among people who know each other, people who are somewhat younger are called by those older than they by their given names, while younger individuals call those who are older as “older brother” or “older sister.” Those terms are different according to whether the speaker is a male or a female. “*Oppa*” is what a younger woman calls a man, whereas “*hyung*” and “*nuna*” are the terms that a younger man uses when addressing an older man and older woman. The terms are examples of quasi-kinship, for they are the exact same terms that are used by brothers and sisters within families. Therefore, Jinhee was suggesting that Jonghun probably prefers being called “*oppa*,” or older brother, by younger women to being called by his name, something so rude that it is tabooed, or, even worse, just “*ya*”, meaning “Hey, you!” She claimed that only Korea has such a warm-hearted practice (though, in fact, Japan has the same system) and contended that close relationships are possible between youngerer and older individuals who are in such a relationship. Actually, it is only those who are a number of years one’s senior who can be called by those terms. Individuals approaching one’s parents’ age can be called “aunt” or “uncle,” or even “mother” or “father” in the case of one’s close friends’ parents, but relationships close enough to warrant the use of those terms are very much less common than ones involving quasi-sibling kinship terms.

Because Jonghun did not respond to Jinhee’s comments, I asked him in a dialogue (D, p. 71) whether he agreed with her point, and he replied:

Calling older people “Older Brother” or “Older Sister” sound good to me, such as “*Oppa*” or “*Nuna*.” These words sometimes make my heart warm and sweet. Yes I agree with her. It still makes me feel upper-class though, I don’t want to discuss about this upper-class-thing right now; I wrote about bad effect of an honorific word at my past article. Again, I agree her idea, but still some elder people are downlooking young people. So, I think there are two points, good effect and bad effect, at the same time.

From the context, by “upper-class,” Jonghun meant “superior” or “senior.” In other words, even though he admitted that being called “older brother” can sometime, and he did qualify it with “sometimes,” sound affectionate, Jonghun maintained his complaint against older individuals looking down on those who are younger. He did concede, however, that there are good and bad aspects to the Korean practices.

In another reference to the issue of calling those older than one “older brother” or “older sister” in Korean, Natalia, who had claimed that she was “negative about Korea” (KI, p. 12), when asked by me in a dialogue to further explain why she had said so, stated that, when overseas, many Koreans, especially those in their thirties, do not want to speak English with younger Koreans because they do not like to be called “you” in English by those who are younger than they (D, p.38). The reason for this is that juniors cannot use the second person singular pronouns when speaking to seniors; instead, they must address them by title or use a kinship term as explained above. For Natalia, to

translate that taboo over into English is “stupid” and “ridiculous,” and she claimed that that kind of behavior on the part of Koreans was very disappointing to her. However, questioned whether she sometimes resents having to call those older than she “older brother” or “older sister” in Korean, Natalia (D, p. 39) replied that she does not and that using kinship terms in Korean is both comfortable and natural, which is at variance from Jonghun’s feelings on the matter. When asked as part of the member checking process, though, Natalia (D, p. 49) appeared to share, as probably many of the participants would, Jonghun’s resentment toward older Koreans who disregard the ideas and feelings of those who are younger than they. In this respect, Natalia distinguished two types of older people:

One is who behaves as real adult and doesn’t look down at younger people, is not demanding just because they are old, and doesn’t refuse to listen to young people because they think they are right in every case... I hate to respect this kind of person who doesn’t respect other people but want to be respected. In a word, one who is very selfish. On the other hand, I like to respect the opposite kind of old person. For example, when they make a mistake, they accept it and apologize for what they have done. They sometimes give young people the right way from their life experiences. (D, p. 49)

Natalia’s message is replete with strong references such as “real,” “demanding,” “refuse,” “every case,” “very selfish,” and “right way.” Although the first thing that she mentions about the “opposite kind” of older person, the type

that she respects, is that they apologize to younger people when they make a mistake, something which is rather difficult for more traditional Korean elders to do, Natalia does add that the kind of older person that she respects can “sometimes” lead their juniors in the “right way.”

The discourse presented above affords some insight into the complicated and conflicted attitudes that existed among the participants concerning the value and significance of relationships between people of different ages and statuses in Korean society. Jonghun, at least in the above context, appeared to reject most of the hierarchical aspects of traditional Korean culture, whereas Natalia, although rejecting some hierarchical attitudes, freely accepted other aspects of the kind of hierarchical relationships that prevail in Korea.

Unity and Group Spirit

There were a number of other characteristics mentioned by the participants as being common among Koreans that evoked responses along the pride and shame continuum. Korean unity and group spirit were frequently mentioned as sources of pride and occasionally referred to as causes of concern. The concept of Korean played a prominent role in discussions about the Red Devil (enthusiastic South Korean fans who wore red) cheering phenomenon that occurred during the 2002 World Cup co-sponsored by Korea and Japan when, against all expectations, amidst wild, enthusiastic stadium and street cheering, the Korean team achieved a fourth place finish. Although

some of the participants had reservations about the nature of Red Devil unity, worrying over how temporary or excessive it might have been, an exchange that occurred between Dave and Faith is a good example of the generally positive evaluations of the Red Devil movement that most of the participants had. Even though a number of threads that had been initiated earlier were already debating the value of the Red Devil movement, Dave initiated a new thread in which he argued that the Red Devils had taken rooting for Korean teams “to a whole new level” (RD, p. 56) and explained that the Red Devils “describe themselves as a thirteenth member of Korean soccer team.” Dave did, however, express reservations concerning how indicative the cheering was of nationalistic fervor. Equating nationalism and patriotism, Dave opined:

Yet, I wonder this intensive cheering party has something to do with nationalism. I know they somehow showed distinctive Korean culture and some nice cheering movements such as card sections and the gigantic Korean flag thing. That's very nice of them, but did they do so for their heart is really burning for patriotism? I am not sure.

I'd rather say they just wanted to share the sheer motivation to cheer with one another. If there is one thing Koreans are good at, I believe it is unity. During the World Cup, I got the impression that they were just enjoying being together. (RD, p. 57)

Dave believed the cheering was distinctively Korean, an expression of unity, and an opportunity to enjoy “just being together,” but he questioned, with the

dismissive “just,” whether it constituted a “burning for patriotism.” Dave seemed to regard nationalism as something deeper and more idealistic than simple unified cheering for one’s country.

Faith, who invariably expressed positive and prideful feelings about Korea, replied to Dave, saying they were “of the same mind” (RD, p. 57). Arguing that most of the Red Devils were not really “avid soccer fans,” Faith explained, “What really happens is that people can come together and cheer together. Soccer is the means for the country to rally together.” Picking up on Dave’s reservations about how patriotic the cheering really was, she disagreed, stating, “I don’t see this negatively, but as something very positive. I believe that the Korean soccer team knows that too.” To “rally together” and “cheer together” was, for Faith, “very positive.” Therefore, though they agreed on the positive nature of the Red Devil phenomenon, unlike Dave, Faith was prepared to evaluate the cheering as a decidedly significant expression of national unity.

In another statement linking Korean unity to Korean identity, Seonhye, writing about Korean nationalism, extolled the ability of the Korean people to unite together, stating, “People say Koreans is mud and Japanese is a sand of a sea, individual Japanese is shine and beautiful but it is hard to unify with others. Korean is the opposite of Japanese” (N, p. 217). Although her contention that the unity in Korea is stronger than that in Japan is perhaps debatable, Seonhye’s pride in Korean unity, a feeling expressed by several participants, appeared heartfelt. In a similar paeon to Korean unity, Faith, in

responding to Davey's description of Korea's "enthusiastic patriotism" (KI, p. 32), agreed with his examples concerning the 2002 World Cup and the 1997 IMF crisis and stated, "I also remember when we gathered gold for our country during the period of the IMF. I don't think that there is another country in the world that has the same sense of unity" (KI, p. 34). Faith's comment about "gathering gold" refers to campaigns to donate gold to help Korea in its economic recovery that occurred during the "IMF Crisis," while her assertion that Korea is unparalleled in the world in its sense of unity, an instance of what Wodak et al. (1999, p. 27) term "national uniqueness," is a not uncommon rhetorical feature when people from various cultures stress the positive aspects of their nation.

Although a number of participants spoke of Korean unity as a positive aspect of identification, concerning the unified groups that Koreans form, Natalia claimed that, especially when overseas, Koreans "form so strong group that no other foreigner can get into them. They feel like they have so much in common just because they are the same Koreans" (KI, p. 12). Critical of this group exclusiveness, Natalia tied it to what she sees as the inability of Koreans, as a result of the peculiarities of the Korean educational system, to express their ideas in discussion and debate and stated:

We didn't have any chance to speak out our thinking. Its negative aspects start revealing when we have a debate or discussion. It's just so hard, at first, to give our opinions. Personally, I hope the government changes the education system completely in order that Korean students

can have the courage to express their feelings and integrate to foreign society. (KI, p. 12)

In this post, Natalia, using the expression “just because” questioned the basis of having a lot in common as a result of being Korean. By tying this issue to what she perceives as the difficulty that Koreans have in expressing their opinions, Natalia appeared to be arguing in favor of more individual, as less collective, identification.

In a separate thread, Jane expressed similar ideas when she responded to a participant who had described the strong feelings of identity with other Korean students that he experienced when studying in the United States by questioning how those expressions of unity might be perceived by non-Koreans. Jane wrote:

I wonder what foreigners think when we prefer Korean goods like cars, foods, and talk to them our feeling about Korean identity. Don't they think it's just xenophobia? How can you make good relationship with someone who doesn't like Korean things so much? Then will you give up your Korean identity or will you just ignore him/her? Have you ever felt bad when you saw the people from other countries like only their music and people. Then you might feel alone among them. I want to know how can we handle the expression about Korean identity in new exotic culture.

(KI, p. 21)

Jane, with 5 out of 6 PS posts rated as negative, directly raised the issue of whether very strong feelings of Korean identity might not impede the

development of intercultural relationships. Furthermore, empathizing with those who might feel excluded, she asked the others to imagine how they might feel if the situation were reversed. With an American boyfriend who feels rather alienated in Korea (D, p. 54) and contemplating eventually moving to the States with him (personal communication), it is not surprising that her perspective is more cross-cultural than many of the other participants. Interestingly, although, as we saw in the case of Jinhee's response to Jonghun's criticism of Korean hierarchy, the participants did sometimes respond to negative comments about Korea, no one responded to either Natalia's or Jane's challenges to the value of group unity.

Even though a number of participants accepted the characterization of Koreans as having a strong group spirit, Haeson (D, p. 13) cautioned against the use of stereotypes, claiming that Koreans vary considerably in regard to how group-oriented they are. Asked by me in a dialogue to explain her ideas about this variance further, Haeson went beyond individual differences and stated that even the same person can differ in this respect according to the situation or circumstances. She stated:

It is up to their preference. I hate to go to a movie alone, but some of my friends love it. I prefer being with others in a theater. On the other hand, I traveled alone in the U.S. and Canada though I like to move in a group. My friends never do that though they like to watch a movie alone. Recently, many Koreans feel comfortable being alone at coffee shops like Starbucks. (D, p. 13)

In explaining Korea's group spirit, Yuri (RDF, pp. 43) related Korea's alleged strong sense of belonging to Korea's history during the 20th century, both the colonization of the country by Japan and the modernization that took place after liberation. Yuri stated:

Almost all Koreans have group spirit, so they tend to gather together in groups...Since Japan colonized Korea, people always think if we get together, we will survive. So, people made many groups for independence from Japan, and did movement for a long period for independence. In addition, after the Korean War, we have to have developed our country, so group spirit is emphasized again. As a consequence, Korean economy has been growing very rapidly. (RDF, pp. 44)

Yuri, whose PS posts, like most of her others, were rather evenly divided in terms of being positive, mixed, or negative, adopted a functionalist approach in this post, arguing that group unity served to ensure survival, accomplish independence, and foster economic development. Although Yuri began the passage with "all Koreans" and "they," she switched to "we" and "our" in the following sentence, which is more typical of the deictic identification that she assumed in other posts.

Some Purported Negative Characteristics of Koreans

In expressing pride and shame concerning being Korean, the participants mentioned a number of possibly negative characteristics that are

sometimes ascribed to the Korean people, including hasty, impatient, impulsive, rushed, conservative, unexpressive, and over-passionate. For example, in a thread titled the “Good Side of the Pot Spirit” that dealt with the enthusiastic participation of the Korean fans in the 2002 World Cup in Seoul, Davey (RD, P. 35) claimed that Koreans often compare their characteristics to a type of cooking pot (*nembi* in Korean) because, like a *nembi*, Koreans heat up and then cool down quickly. In explaining this “pot spirit,” Davey stated:

It includes bad meanings that Koreans are quick-tempered and forget something too soon. I think, however, the intense interest and participation in World Cup 2002 is the good example of good side of the pot spirit. The sports events like World Cup which have short period require the intense interest and participation by citizens themselves. And Koreans are people who can do that better than any other countries' citizens. It is related to nationalism, and makes Koreans much more passionate. (RD, p. 35)

Once again, the tendency to use rhetorical conventions that exaggerate the uniqueness of the Koreans when emphasizing what are perceived as the nation's good points can be discerned in Davey's insistence that Koreans unify more effectively than the citizens of any other country. In this case, however, that contention was coupled with an explicit recognition of the potentially negative side of the same coin, namely hot-temperedness and an inclination to lose commitment and enthusiasm quickly. However, the gist of Davey's

message was that the enthusiasm associated with the 2002 World Cup was the “good side of the pot spirit.”

Jane, who was generally quite willing to disagree (6 out of 18 coded replies) and decidedly negative on the issue of Korean pride (5 PS- posts out of a total of 6 PS posts), responded to Davey’s post, arguing that the World Cup enthusiasm was, in fact, just a “temporary fever” (RD, p. 36). Conceding that during the World Cup Koreans “shared happiness and cried together, Jane proceeded to contend:

It seems we love my country so much but unfortunately it doesn't connected with nationalism. It's just temporary fever. The competition and the mood make us crazy just for short time. So it's not rational. After game we all come back to normal life. We cheered players and our country but we don't buy Korean goods out of nationalism except maybe a few people. We spend a looooooot of money overseas. We don't care about the dollars leaking outside and how it affect to Korean economic situation. We don't save and yield something for other people. We are pretty selfish. (RD, p.36)

Here, Jane has turned Davey’s argument about the “pot spirit” against him, insisting that the World Cup spirit was temporary and coupling that argument with claims that Koreans are not nationalistic in their economic behavior.

In an earlier reference to the passionate and emotional nature of the Koreans, Jane brought up the volatility of the Koreans, claiming:

It seems like we were waiting for the time or day to explode our emotion. We are all gentle normal life. But when we have a car accident, we shout with high tone...not logical explanation. We give up so easily to explain. (KI, p. 8)

Here, Jane was criticizing the alleged explosiveness and emotionality of the Koreans. She also went on to criticize Korean impatience, suggesting that Koreans work and study very hard, but do not have the time to read books and think about life. She opined:

It might be our culture. I think Korean is passionate people. We all work and study hard in whole life. We don't have even spare time to read books so much. We are just busy. I think sometimes we need to think about life and have time to listen to other voice... We need little more patience. (KI, p. 8)

Portraying the Koreans as too passionate, overly busy, and impatient, Jane focused on the negative aspects of qualities that can also be seen as essentially positive, namely enthusiastic, industrious, and dynamic. In the “Unity and Group Spirit” section above, we saw how Jane, in a similar fashion, explored the negative side of unity when she asked the others to consider how they would feel when surrounded by people from another culture who very strongly identify with one another. All cultural values can be viewed as having both positive and negative aspects, and as a participant, Jane was especially willingly to challenge the other members by exploring the negative aspects of Korean values and characteristics.

In an interesting attempt to connect what are seen by many as the good and bad sides of the Korean personality, Geri (KI, p. 23), referring to the invasions that Korea suffered through the centuries, argued that the anger and suffering (*han*) that Koreans felt as a result of those attacks formed some of the positive and negative aspects of Korean identity. According to Geri:

Koreans have full-blooded temper, everything has to be done in a second, enthusiasm fade fast, but we do have *jong* (see explanations of *han* and *jong* above), which cannot be explained in English, and have good unity... Negative aspect can turn out to be good ones. Such as Koreans cannot stand something be done slow. This aspect influenced Korean technology and industry. And it brought our technology develop faster and Korea economy grow. (KI, p. 23)

Jinhee (KI, p.24) strongly agreed with Geri in her reply. Jinhee contended that Koreans are still angry at Japan both because of Japan's exploitation of Korea during the colonial period and Japan's continuing reluctance to repent for their behavior. This *han*, according to Jinhee, results in a sharing of *jong* among the Koreans. Furthermore, this sorrow and resentment caused the Korean people to impatiently desire the rapid growth of their economy after liberation from Japan, and they consequently worked diligently toward that end. Jinhee summed up this line of reasoning by stating:

In conclusion, *han*, *jong*, and the hasty disposition of Koreans go together to represent a part of Korean identity. *Han* has caused us to have *jong* and the combination of *han* and *jong* gave us the hasty

disposition to do something faster and faster. I just hope the fast-going disposition is not getting serious. (KI, p.24)

In both Geri's and Jinhee's arguments, ambivalence toward Korea's cultural characteristics can be seen. Passion, impatience, and impulsiveness have both positive and negative aspects. After presenting a quite complex argument concerning the interconnectedness of historical misfortunes, present-day characteristics, and contemporary development, Jinhee concluded by hoping that the Korean tendency toward hastiness and impatience does not become excessive.

In another post dealing with the alleged hurried and hasty nature of Koreans, Jerry (KI, p. 31) stated that, before going abroad, he had often heard that it is becoming hard to live in Korea. Jerry traced that difficulty to the rapid changes and development that have occurred in Korea in recent decades.

According to him:

Korea has been changed swiftly during about 50 years. All of the Korean thought that we have to develop for our survival because we were undeveloped country about 50 years ago. At that time, most of the people had to think how to eat and live every day. So Koreans work hard to success quickly. One day I watched TV program which showed Korean identity that foreigner thinks about. I can remember that one of guys said "bballi, bballi"- quickly, quickly! It's true. (KI, p. 31)

Both foreigners and Koreans comment on the rush to accomplish things quickly among the Koreans. As with other cultures, such as the Japanese, and in line

with the “othering” and “self-othering” analyzed in neo-colonial thought (Kubota, 1999, 2002), it would be interesting to explore to what extent such perceptions on the part of the Koreans are at least partially the results of observations made by those from other cultures.

In the same post Jerry claimed that, while he was in New Zealand, he was able to compare the Korean personality with the personalities of friends from other countries. Some of those friends told him that Koreans are very conservative and impulsive. He found that hard to accept because his friends were about the same age as he, and although Jerry had thought that the younger generation of Koreans might be a little impulsive, he had certainly not considered them to be conservative. After spending more time with foreign friends, however, he gradually did come to feel that young Koreans are somewhat conservative. As an example, he spoke of concepts related to gender:

I had an experience with a woman friend who is German. I met her one place to up mountain together. She brought two bags that both was big size. Also, she was not look so strong. So I wanted to help her. But she rejected my favor politely. She wanted to take her bags by herself and we talked about it. It is very small example to show about conservative of Korean. (KI, p. 31)

Jerry concluded from such experiences, “In my opinion, it is very difficult to know... how much I know myself. It means that it’s more difficult to know about Korean identity which is much bigger than character of one person”

(KI, p. 31). He ended the post by open-mindedly suggesting that, through discovering what Korea's positive and negative traits might be, Koreans could maintain the former ones and "develop" the negative ones.

Faith, who frequently presented Korea in the most favorable light, called Jerry's comments interesting, but questioned whether "a man wanting to help a woman is necessarily conservative" (KI, p. 32). In her opinion Jerry's experience with his German friend "isn't the best indicator of Koreans being conservative and Westerners being more progressive." Although questioning his evidence concerning the conservativeness of Koreans, Faith not only began by describing his comments as interesting, but concluded her post with, "However, I can appreciate what you have to say" (KI, p. 32).

Andy also responded to Jerry's post. Disregarding Faith's earlier reply, Andy stated, "Actually, I have not heard that Koreans were conservative, but I've heard some negative thinking about Koreans from my foreign friends several times" (KI, p. 32). After claiming that "a lot of foreigners" think that the Japanese are kinder than the Koreans, Andy went on to aver, "You indicated one character of Korean identity very well. However, I think it is possible to change their thinking even though it may take very long" (KI, p. 32). Seeming to agree with Jerry's reassessment of Koreans as being conservative in some respects, Andy also accepts Jerry's claim that thinking can be changed, but qualifies that it "may take very long."

These three posts are representative of the participants' discourse in several respects. Jerry's initial comments demonstrate a willingness to sometimes accept the observations that foreigners might make about Korea, Faith's response illustrates the readiness of the participants to disagree with one another in a civil fashion, and Andy's reply exemplifies the capacity to add to and qualify the ideas of another participant. In general, the posts discussed above under the rubric of "Some Purported Negative Characteristics of Korea" indicate a willingness to consider the negative observations that both Koreans and non-Koreans have made concerning Korea's weak points. However, as is clear in the excerpts above, on certain issues at least, some participants, although acknowledging the negative observations, are at pains to contest those observations, or to explain the positive aspects of the alleged weak points, whereas other participants are inclined to take the criticisms to heart and to contemplate how those purported weaknesses can be changed. In short, addressing the Korean characteristics that are sometimes purported to be negative by both Koreans and foreigners assumed some importance in the identity constructions of a number of participants.

Who's Korean vs. Who's Not?

Koreans have long thought of themselves as a homogeneous people with an alleged five thousand years of history. However, as Appadurai (1996) has convincingly argued, recent developments in media technology and the

increased physical movement of peoples have resulted in a rapidly globalizing world. Furthermore, arguments very similar to those that Kubota (2002) marshals in demonstrating that Japan is not as homogeneous as people usually think can be put forth to prove the same point about Korea. Increases in international marriages, movements of Koreans in and out of the country, and growing numbers of foreign workers in Korea, all point to a more and more heterogeneous South Korea.

In our forum discussions and dialogues, a second dichotomy in the discourse of the participants became apparent, namely, an inclusiveness that accepts biracial Koreans, overseas Koreans, foreigners assimilated into Korean society, and North Koreans as part of the imagined community (Anderson, 1991) of Korea versus an exclusivity that rejects those who are thought to not have the appropriate biological descent, linguistic skills, or shared cultural knowledge to be considered true members of that community. The fact that there were seventy posts coded according to this dichotomous continuum is an indication of how important it is for the members of an “imaginary community” to determine the boundaries for belonging to that community. Consequently, we can say that this issue, which separated more inclusive from more exclusive determinations of who is really Korean, was an important part of the constructions of Korean identity in our community.

Overall the participants were fairly positive about extending the notion of Korean-ness to biracial Koreans, overseas Koreans, assimilated foreigners, and North Koreans, with 47.14 % of posts coded for that dichotomy being

positive (WK+), the second highest percentage of positives, exceeded only by the Pride and Uncertainty dichotomy. 32.86% of the Who's Korean posts were mixed and 20.00% were negative. In terms of gender, women were more positive than the men (50% compared to 42.86%), whereas the men's mixed and negative responses (35.71% and 21.43%) were higher than those of the women (30.95% and 19.05%). Four of the men and two of the women had no Who's Korean posts, even though two of them (Jonghun and Virginia) were fairly active in the community, with a total of 9 posts each. Much like the Pride versus Shame dichotomy, there was considerable individual variation among the participants. For example, 100% of Eunhye's (2 of 2) and Namho's (1 of 1) and 83.33% of Randy's (5 of 6) WK posts were positive, along with 75% of both Josh's and Mindy's and 66.7% of Christy's, Hyunsu's, Jane's, and Minsook's. On the other side of the ledger, 100% of Faith's WK posts were negative (though it was only 1 out of 1), along with 60% of Mark's (3 out of 5) and 50% of Aries' (1 out of 2). Some participants had more mixed posts than either positive or negative ones. For instance, 80% of Davey's WK posts were mixed, as were 60% of Jinhee's (3 of 5).

By forum, the Biracial and Overseas Koreans (BK), Nationalism (NA), and North Korea (NK) forums, 19, 17, and 28 posts respectively, accounted for 64 (or 91.4%) of the 70 WK posts. There was a significantly higher percentage of positive posts in the BOK forum, which asked about Hines Ward and biracial children, than in the NK one (42.11% compared to 28.6%), whereas there were higher percentages of mixed and negative posts in the NK forum (42.8% and

28.6%) than in the BK one (36.84% and 21.05%). Surprisingly, the NA forum, which directly asked, “How do most Koreans (and you) think about people from other countries?” consisted of 88.2% of positive WK posts and 11.2% of mixed WK posts. From a broad view, then, it would seem that the participants were most positive about being open to people from other countries, less positive about biracial Koreans (although there were more positive WK posts in that forum than mixed or negative ones), and least positive about national and cultural unity between the North and South in the NK forum (where the largest percentage of posts was of mixed ones).

An unexpected limitation to the methodology employed was that, in addition to there being fewer posts in the later forums (such as the NA, BK, and NA ones), as explained in Chapter 4, due primarily to the fact that there was less time for discussion and replies in the later forums, there were more stand-alone posts and fewer replies to threads initiated by others in those later forums. Consequently, the analysis of the last three dichotomies involves more stand-alone posts than is the case for the first Pride and Shame dichotomy, where the relevant posts were more likely to come from the earlier forums.

The analysis of the Who’s Korean dichotomy is divided into three sections: “The Matter of Race,” “The Significance of Language and Culture,” and “Are North and South Koreans ‘One People?’”

The Matter of "Race"

Koreans have frequently described themselves in textbooks and daily discussions as a "race," and although the term appears in the forums and dialogues twelve times, it is usually used in a problematic sense. Eunhye, who had 6 out of 6 positive PS posts, stated in an early forum, "Korean people have their unique identity because just one race have lived in the Korean Peninsula about 5000 years old" (KI, p. 18). Similarly, in one of the last forums, she claimed, "Koreans also should develop and advance Korea culture, and effort to be race that represent Asia" (KOR, p. 298). These statements appear to be typical expressions of the "Korean race" concept. However, in the nationalism forum, Eunhye contributed a long post, complete with a large photograph of Hines Ward accepting his MVP award while holding his son in his arms, in which she questioned "excessive racism" (NA, p. 210). She contended, "Korea's nationalism is not always good. Nationalism which considers their own race as the best should be changed" (NA, p. 209). In decrying the fact that Ward was not accepted as a young boy because of his mixed-race, Eunhye argued that it is shameful that Korea despised Ward in his youth but now accepts him since he has become famous. She even argued that the national reflection over this situation, which she called the "Ward Syndrome," "is surely an event which would stand out as a significant historical event." Eunhye also contended, "Half blooded people...have the right to live with others with equality," but worried whether this mood of accepting biracial people in Korea will last "because we have

strong dislike of foreigners, some may say 'lockouts', after five thousand years history." She ended her post with:

The proud of being a single race and liking pure bloods is not entirely bad. It has its own positive meanings. However, we have to look back to see if our ideology about race, bloodlines, and people is too narrow. Now, the consciousness of people should accept and respect diversity. There are thirty five thousand half-bloods in Korea. It is difficult to keep a single race now. It is natural to be a multiracial country. We cannot develop further if we do not make a society which respects diverse morals, which would suit in Global society. It is up to us to develop Ward's lesson into progressive nationalism. (NA, p. 210)

Eunhye used "we" when she spoke of Korean dislike of foreigners and maintained that being proud of being "one single race" and preferring "pure blood" is not "entirely bad;" however, she questioned a society whose nationalism is "too narrow" and called for more respect for "diversity." Therefore, although arguably one of the more "nationalistic" of the participants, Eunhye, both of whose WK posts were positive, manifested in this post an openness to biracial Koreans and an acceptance of a multiracial and global world. Eunhye's post exhibited much of the ambivalence and tension that existed in the above-mentioned dichotomy between inclusiveness and exclusiveness in relation to the Korean community.

In another illustration of this ambivalence, Seonhye claimed, "Sometimes we have trouble to accept foreigners because we always heard 'Korean is consisting of one race'"(NA, p. 217). She added that the same idea applies to the rejection of "children of mixed parentage like Hines Ward." In the same post, Seonhye confessed:

I usually estimate foreigners with what race he or she is (ex. White, black, yellow), which country he or she came from, what kind of job he or she does in Korea and so on. I don't think it is right to judge people by those standards, but I usually do. Koreans and other people have some kind of developed country fantasies. Developed countries seemed much better than other countries and our country in every part (economy, culture, politic, citizenship). We wanted to be a developed country, so we tended to follow or imitate other developed countries. (NA, p. 217)

Here, Seonhye stated that she believes that it is wrong to judge people by their race or nation, but admitted to doing so and blamed the tendency to do that on Korea's desire to become a developed country. I asked Seonhye in a dialogue, "Could you also tell me whether you think Hines Ward himself is accepted by most Koreans. I see his picture on the sides of buses and in the newspaper. How do you think most Koreans think about him? Is there a big difference between the generations on this matter?" (D, p. 52). In her reply, Seonhye argued that Koreans are actually more focused on Ward's mother, as a single mother who succeeded in making her son a famous star a very difficult situation

as a single mother in a foreign country, than on Ward himself and averred, "I don't feel Hines Ward is a Korean. He is a foreigner who favors Korea" (D, p. 53). When I replied to Seonhye that I thought that ideas were changing very quickly in Korea regarding this issue and mentioned that my daughter, who is half Korean, has not had any big problems growing up in Korea, adding that a recent newspaper survey indicated that almost 70% of Korean adults had indicated that they would not object to one of their children marrying a foreigner (D, p. 54), she responded by stating, "I don't think there is a big difference between the generations on this matter. Both younger and elder Korean have conservative opinions about accepting mixed race" (D, p. 54). Seonhye went on to contend:

The number of having an international marriage is increasing, and more and more people is accepting it with open mind. But 70%??? I cannot simple believe it. It is too much higher than I thought it would be. I don't think people has changed that much. Marriage is not a matter of nationality and race, though, most people still favor getting married someone who has same nationality and race with her or him, I think. (D, p. 55)

Although Seonhye, the daughter of a conservative farmer, conceded that it is wrong to judge people according to her race, she admitted that she does so and is rather insistent in claiming that most Koreans remain conservative on the issues of race and international marriage. Although she stated that she could not believe the high percentage of Koreans accepting an international marriage,

claiming the number was “too much higher” than she would have thought and using three question marks to emphasize how much she doubted the number I had quoted, recent surveys reported in the Korean press continue to document the rapidly changing attitudes toward international marriage among Koreans (Lee, 2006; Chung, 2006).

Other participants, not as ambivalent as Seonhye, were more unequivocal in rejecting blood descent as a basis for being considered Korean. Yuri, for example, argued that blood was once an important criterion for Korean nationality, but is not an essential factor today. She contended:

In the past, blood was important fact to distinguish one’s nationality. But nowadays, things are changed. People can move to abroad where they want to live. Hence, there are a lot of international marriages, so blood is not a essential fact to see nationality any more. (KI, p. 11)

Here, international marriages were posited as the reason for the declining significance of biological inheritance.

In Chapter 4 we examined Natalia and Mindy’s exchange concerning the nature of nationalism. In that thread, Natalia directly challenged the notion that Koreans are a pure race, seeing it as contributing to xenophobia. She claimed:

Most Koreans know wrongly we Koreans are only one ethnic group so that we can't accept and be mixed with other ethnic groups, which leads to xenophobia. What a dangerous idea! More seriously, Korean

education still emphasize the importance of being aware Korean is pure. Historically, we've been mixed so many times being attacked by many countries. (NA, p. 211)

Calling the common conception of Koreans as one, monolithic ethnic group 'wrong' and "dangerous," Natalia accused Korean education of perpetuating that myth. Next, after recounting Hines Ward's mother's story about the time in Korea when a Korean man who looked well-educated spit behind her because she was holding her mixed-race son, Natalia surmised that "overly nationalist" Koreans have now embraced Ward to simply show "how great Korea is." In her opinion:

We live in a global world. We cannot live alone without cooperating other countries. We need to be more open minded enough to be willing to accept them. We can smile foreigners who are visiting and living in Korea no matter what colour they have and where they come from. Especially, we should give warm eyes to mixed-race people who were born Korea in order not that they lose their identity. (NA, p. 211)

Using positive words such as "open-minded," "smile," and "warm eyes," Natalia expressed a broad concern for the feelings of foreigners who visit Korea, as well as a specific concern over the identity formation of mixed-race individuals in Korea. In other words, Koreans should not only be more accepting of various races, but should particularly accept the biracial individuals who have been born in Korea. Mindy, it may be recalled,

countered that Koreans have already been changing and are now more open toward foreigners (NA, p. 212).

In general, despite a few posts such as Seonhye's, which expressed a degree of ambivalence over the salience of race to Korean identity, direct rejections of race as the basis for Korean identity were more common. A good example of this was Hyunsu's contention that, "Blood is in no use nowadays...The time had arrived to change our attitude toward biracial people. They are all Korean" (BK, p. 245).

The Significance of Language, Culture, and Self-Identity

When it comes to grappling with the issue of what it means to be Korean, a number of the participants directly confronted the question of whether one needs to know Korean culture and the Korean language in order to qualify as truly Korean. At one end of the continuum, some participants would accept as Korean anyone who identifies him or herself as a Korean, whereas at the other pole, there are those who would include only those with a sufficient knowledge of Korean culture and language.

Christy, after conceding that there are many difficult-to-define cases including Koreans adopted overseas, biracial Koreans, and overseas Koreans, clearly tied Korean identity to self-definition, saying:

In my opinion, the most important matter of defining Korean is whether they are willing to accept that they are Korean or not. In exchange, even if a Korean person who is nothing wrong with his citizenship as a Korean

denies or don't admit that himself is a Korean, then he is not Korean.

(BK, p. 245)

For Christy, it all comes down to whether an individual considers him or herself as a Korean.

Minsook expressed an even more inclusive position by explaining that when she was in the U.S., she met various types of Koreans, such as Korean Americans and Korean residents from Japan, who, although they were not legally Korean, did have "Korean mind" and did understand Korean

"sentiments" (BK, p. 247). She extended her argument to include Hines Ward, contending that Ward's Korean mother has had a "big influence" on him.

However, Andy, echoing Christy's stand, responded to Minsook, contending, as Christy also had, that someone is not Korean if he or she does not claim that identity and stating:

Even though someone whose nationality is foreign country has half of Korean blood or was born in Korea, if they do not want to be Korean, can we say they are Koreans? If blood was just measured to determine people's nationality, a lot of people in the world would not have nationality. Lee San who plays soccer in England could be a good example. Though he was a 100% Korean, he was naturalized as a British citizen some time ago. In this case, can we say that he is a Korean or not? Also if a Korean acquired American citizenship and does not want to be a Korean, we cannot conclude the person is a Korean. Hence, I think only blood is not a standard to decide

nationality, and there are diverse and complex things to divide citizenship. (BK, p. 248)

Andy, in addition to denying blood as the criterion, argued that even Korean Americans should not be considered as Koreans if they fail to lay claim to Korean identity.

Interestingly, several days later, Davey initiated a thread (BK, p. 249) in which he told of an American officer of Korean ancestry whom he worked with for two weeks while serving as a KATUSA (a Korean soldier assigned to work together with the American troops in Korea). When Davey discovered to his surprise that the lieutenant, with whom he had been speaking exclusively in English, could also speak Korean, they had a discussion in Korean. Davey stated:

I wondered that how he thought about his identity. Out of curiosity, I asked him "Do you think you're Korean?" I didn't expect he denied his identity as a Korean because of his last name Woo... My prediction was wrong, however. Without any hesitation, he told me he is American. (BK, p. 250)

Davey claimed that he at first felt "unpleasant" when he heard that, but as he thought about it, he realized that the officer had grown up "in American culture with American friends" and should not be treated as a Korean if he did not consider himself as one. Davey concluded his post by averring, "My point is, the factor which defines his identity is a person's own decision whether he is biracial or overseas Korean" (BK, p. 250).

Andy weighed in again, this time agreeing completely with Davey, stating, “Actually, this topic is not so easy to answer, but I think your opinion is exactly true that it depends on people” (BK, p. 250). This time, Andy explored the other side of the identity coin, telling of a Japanese friend that he had in Canada, Ayumi, whose parents are Korean residents of Japan. Like some of the other Korean families who remained in Japan after the end of World War II, Ayumi’s family had been naturalized as Japanese citizens. Ayumi could not speak Korean at all, had never visited Korea, and even looked “Japanese 100%,” but, according to Andy:

She said to me every day that she was a Korean and had Korean blood in her veins... I could not deny she was a Korean. There might be various things to determine people’s nationality, but I think people’s thought is one of the most important things. (BK, p. 250)

Consistent in his espousal of a self-definition solution to the problem of determining who is Korean, Andy objected to Minsook’s very inclusive approach to the problem, arguing that one is not a Korean if one does not claim that identity for oneself and giving examples of Koreans who have taken other nationalities and do not identify as Koreans. However, in another thread, agreeing with Davey’s similar argument that centered on the American officer’s non-Korean identity, Andy used his friend Ayumi as example of someone whom he would recognize as Korean according to her self-definition, even though she appears Japanese and does not speak Korean.

Aries, none of whose six PS and WK posts was rated as positive, initiated a long post that she titled “Mixed Bloods, Korean-Americans, and Us.” Aries, who frequently expressed negative views and who had a higher percentage of “disagreements” (40%) in her coded replies than any of the other women, began her post with a reference to Hines Ward, the Pittsburgh Steeler:

I hate to say this but I think the only reason that Hines Ward was welcoming here in Korea is because he’s already famous. He’s like a celebrity here but he can’t speak a word of Korean (well... maybe some greetings or a couple of words). He’s a star and has a huge fan base over in the States. We liked him as we like the other stars. I don’t think we are thinking and assuming him as a real Korean. We, Koreans are really sneaky and sometimes very mean. We were so excited and thrilled about his visiting because he’s huge in the States and he was actually visiting us. (BK, p. 254)

Emphasizing that Ward does not “speak a word of Korean,” though she parenthetically softened that statement, Aries contended that Koreans do not accept him as “a real Korean” and, using “we” throughout the post, confessed that Koreans are “really sneaky and sometimes very mean,” which was one of the most negative characterizations of the Koreans expressed by the participants.

Aries went on to criticize the half-Korean TV actor Daniel Henny for not speaking Korean and asked “how... a guy who doesn’t speak the

language” could be an actor in Korea. She concluded, “We are only crazy about him because he’s gorgeous and not look at him as ‘Korean’” (BK, p. 255). Then, claiming that she had heard a lot about my daughter through taking several of my classes, Aries argued that my bilingual, bicultural daughter is an example of someone who “should call herself as Korean, stating:

First of all, she’s a perfect bilingual which is important to identify the both of culture. She went to international school in Korea ‘til she was in grade 12. And she moved to the States for university, after that, she came back to go to graduate school. Now, she already graduated and she appreciates both cultures. (BK, p. 255)

Aries, who has been much invested in speaking English fluently since middle school, feels that language is essential to one’s identity and argues that “mixed-blood” Koreans can be Korean if they speak the language and appreciate Korean.

However, after emphasizing the key importance of language and culture, Aries concluded her post with:

Well, as I was saying it’s really hard to call someone based on their looks or what the birth certificate says. Even though I think Daniel Henny’s bullsh*t, if he truly believes himself as Korean, well... then I don’t know what to say but trust him. (BK, p. 256)

In other words, in the end, Aries, like Christy, Davey, and Andy, judged self-definition to be the ultimate determiner of one’s identity.

In responding to Aries, Jinhee (BK, p. 256), who often attempted to stake out intermediate positions between the dichotomous poles, after considering both the inclusive and exclusive approaches, like Aries, basically adopted a self-definition solution to the issue of whether biracial individuals or overseas Koreans are Korean or not. Jinhee, with 7 of 11 replies coded as “partial agreement” and with 7 out of 9 PS and WK posts rated as “mixed,” began by admitting that, even though she had thought about the question for a week, it was difficult for her to come up with an “exact opinion.” At first, she argued that if people consider themselves as Korean, they are. However, she then brought up Hines Ward as one of her examples and decided that because he was brought up in America and does not speak Korean, he might be best considered as an American, not a Korean. That led her to state:

I think the language that one person can speak and the culture in which the person grows up would define the person as where he or she actually is from. Probably more important thing would be the opinion of him or herself about where he or she is from. (BK, p. 257)

Apparently realizing that the two statements might be considered contradictory, Jinhee concluded that both language and culture and self-identity are important so that Ward, if he thinks he is “half-Korean,” then he might be half-Korean and half-American, as well. Both Aries’ and Jinhee’s posts indicate a tendency to stress the importance of language and culture, but a reluctance to deny an individual the right to determine his or her identity.

Mark (BK, pp. 258) also took a self-definition approach, but perceived a problem in applying that principle. He explained that he saw a TV program in which a woman who was born in another country, but had become a naturalized Korean citizen, insisted that she was "100% Korean now." The woman was teaching English in a Korean kindergarten, so the TV crew interviewed the woman's students, who denied that their teacher was Korean on the basis of her looks. Pondering that, Mark decided:

I think that being Korean isn't about blood, or about whether you have a Korean citizenship. I think it is more of how you think you are or how they think they are. If they say they are Korean I think it is time to open our minds and accept that fact because that person isn't going to do any harm on you. You might probably never see that person. So I think it is just best to respect on their choice whether they want to be Korean or not. (BK, p. 259)

Although it is interesting to speculate why Mark added that such a person would not "do any harm on you" and that "you might probably never see that person," apparently Mark, even though he recognizes that there can be a contradiction between "how you think you are" and "how they think you are," favored allowing individuals to determine on their own what their national identity is.

Replying to Mark's thread, Marie (BK, p. 260) claimed that it is very difficult to judge whether biracial people are Koreans or not, for some of them live in Korea or speak Korean, while others do not. However, she stated, "I

don't think they CAN'T be Korean because they can't speak in Korean and their nationality is not Korean" (BK, p. 260). According to Marie, Hines Ward truly thinks of Korea as his mother country and cares about Korea. To her, this is not different from the way her American friends identify as Irish or Chinese because their ancestors came from those places. By drawing an analogy with the manner in which Americans often identify with their ethnic background, Marie provided an intriguing twist to what "Korean identity" might mean.

Some other participants, however, were closer to the pole of exclusivity when it comes to the necessity of being familiar with Korean culture and language in order to be considered Korean. For example, in replying to the thread that Aries initiated, Jane, who was generally quite willing to disagree (33.3% of her coded replies were "disagreement"), struck a very negative note concerning people such as Michelle Wie, the Korean American golfer, and Hines Ward, contending:

I think Michelle Wie and Hines Ward wouldn't say they are Korean when they were not famous... They would want to be American more. Sure why not? They want to enjoy their privilege that they can get from America. They don't need to make people think that they are from weak country, right? I think they are American. They might be Korean but only blood. They might like some of Korean culture but they might more like American life style that's free and comfortable. They don't want to get bother from anyone but Koreans bother each other too much very naturally. (BK, p. 257)

Jane, 5 of whose 6 PS posts were negative, was arguing here that Wie and Ward would surely prefer being American to being from a “weak country.” Positively evaluating the American lifestyle as “free and comfortable,” she stated that Koreans “bother each other too much,” probably a reference to the interconnectedness of people and the relative lack of privacy in Korea. After claiming that “mixed people” might have problems in America because they are “not white perfectly” and arguing that they “would want to say they are American,” Jane concluded her post with:

Sometimes I feel not good when celebrities announce that they are Korean. It looks so fake and make me think they do that only in Korea because they want some common emotion while they are working here... Maybe I'm so bad to say like this but I don't like they assert that they are Korean despite they don't know about Korean well. Korean blood can't mean Korean 100%. (BK, p. 258)

Unlike some of the participants quoted earlier, Jane was cynical about the motivations that celebrities might have in claiming a Korean identity and strongly averred that Korean blood was not enough to make one Korean if one is not very familiar with Korean culture and, in fact, actually prefers life in another country, such as the United States.

Similarly, Natalia, in responding to Mark’s post, in which he said that being Korean was not a matter of blood or citizenship, but “more of how you think you are or how they think you are” (BK, p. 259), stated that she “mostly agreed” (BK, p. 262) with Mark’s idea that Koreans are only interested in

claiming “biracial people” as Korean when they are successful individuals, but ended her post with a strong argument in favor of the importance of nationality in determining who is really Korean. Natalia opined:

As for Hines Ward, I don't think he is Korean. He's got American nationality and he cannot speak Korean. He has Korean blood, though. Let me put it this way. Tiger Woods, a famous golfer, has a mother from Thailand. But no one considers him as a Thai. In my opinion, judging who is Korean or foreigner should be taken into account as what nationality they have. (BK, p. 262)

Although in an earlier post on nationalism, Natalia had argued in favor of accepting “mixed race” people living in Korea with “warm eyes” (NA, p. 211), in the context of an overseas biracial Korean, such as Hines Ward, who holds another nationality and does not speak Korean, she unequivocally stated that she does not consider him as Korean.

In another thoughtful post that set parameters for determining who is Korean, Yuri claimed, “I believe the most important three aspects are capacity of using Korean language, the way of thinking, and nationality” (KI, p. 11). In regard to the importance of knowing the Korean language, she contended:

It does not mean that ‘someone who can speak Korean’ is Korean. For example, even though second generation of the Korean-American can speak Korean, we do not really call them as Korean because they cannot manipulate the language as Korean. They are

almost like other foreigners because without high-level of Korean language capacity, they never can comprehend Korean culture. (KI, p. 11)

Concerning the second factor, the way of thinking, Yuri argued that, even though Koreans do not all think the same way, "we Koreans have some common emotions from traditions, whether that is good or bad..." As for the last of the three factors, nationality, she insisted, "Even though someone can use Korean very well and thinking as Korean, if she or he does not has Korean nationality, we don't call her or him as Korean." In a very analytical fashion Yuri insisted that all three factors, language, way of thinking, and nationality, are essential elements of what it means to be Korean.

In a similar vein, Haeson (BK, p. 256), taking an exclusivist position, in referring to children who speak English better than Korean, argued that, in such a case, the child is not really Korean. Explaining that in the past, since Korea was not an "immigrant country," Koreans could usually be identified by their "physical appearance" (BK, p. 255). However, according to Haeson, with the increase in biracial people and immigrants from Southeast Asia, "There are many Koreans here who don't look like typical Koreans. We learn that Korea is a nation of a single race, but it's not" (BK, p. 255). Therefore, arguing that appearance is no longer the guide to who is Korean because biracial individuals can be Korean, Haeson contended that the opposite is also the case, stating:

On the other hand, there are foreigners who totally look like Koreans. The second or third immigrant generation in America can be an example. Although their parents are Koreans, they are not necessarily considered as Koreans. I've heard that an old Korean was angry at a boy living in America whose parents are Koreans because he couldn't speak our language. Why do the 2nd or 3rd generation overseas have to learn our language and culture when they don't want to? Whether they are Koreans or not relies on who they think they are. The old man must have thought that the boy was a Korean, which was not true. Unless people share Korean values, feelings and culture including language, they are not Koreans no matter how they look. I believe what makes us Koreans is what is inside of us rather than our looks. (BK, p. 256)

Here, Haeson has explicitly stated that, to be Korean, people must "share Korean values, feelings and culture including language." In Korea, second and third-generation overseas Koreans are often criticized if they do not speak Korean almost perfectly, especially when they either visit or reside in Korea. In this post, Haeson has argued that overseas Koreans need not learn the Korean language, but if they have not mastered Korean, they are not really Korean, at all.

In a final example of designating standards that should be met in order to be considered Korean, Josh (BK, p. 254) responding to a long post of Dave's (BK, p. 251) that sympathizes with second and third-generation

overseas Koreans who visit Korea in search of their identities and claims that those overseas Koreans are, indeed, Korean, partially disagreed with Dave and argued:

Yes, there are some people really eager to get identity from Korean among second generations of immigrants. If they really want to be a Korean, they should learn how to speak Korean, also what is the Korean culture. (BK, p. 254)

For Josh, just wanting to identify with Korea is not enough; if one really wants to be Korean, he or she should learn the language and culture. Josh went on to tell of one of his friends who went to Los Angeles to meet the family of her father's brother, who had immigrated to the U.S. some thirty years ago. Although she was very excited to meet her Korean American cousins, that mood quickly gave way to bitter disappointment. According to Josh, his friend claimed, "They couldn't speak Korean at all and they never interested in Korea. Even they formed their attitudes by criticizing Korea" (BK, p. 255). His friend discovered she had nothing in common with her cousins. However, Josh remained receptive to overseas Koreans who are truly interested in reestablishing their connection with Korea. Asking himself whether overseas Koreans can be considered Korean, he conceded, "We can see some Koreans second generation of immigrants. And we can confirm that they really want to be a Korean and to learn about Korean" (BK, p. 255). However, he concluded his post by stating that he believes

that very few second and third-generation overseas Koreans have enough motivation to discover their true Korean roots.

In conclusion, there was a considerable amount of disagreement and confusion over who is Korean and who is not. Many of the participants admitted that it is a difficult question to answer, and although they sometimes could be seen as leaning toward one pole or the other of the inclusivity/exclusivity dichotomy, they often denied the salience of one aspect, say biological inheritance, while insisting on the importance of another, such as cultural knowledge, mastery of Korean, or possession of Korean citizenship.

Are North and South Koreans "One People"?

Although North and South Korea have been separated since soon after the end of the Second World War, they both speak versions of the same language and share a very long cultural history. As we saw in Chapter 2, the anti-authoritarian, pro-democracy political movements of the 70s and 80s placed great emphasis on reunification with the North, and in the case of the radical Minjung Movement of the 1980s, young activists were inspired by ideology that originated in the North. During the time that the data were collected, although the progressive, ruling party was allegedly more pro-North than the conservative opposition party, there was great concern among most Koreans over the economic costs of reunification, especially if it were to be precipitated by a political collapse in North Korea. In addition to that, in 2006,

several months prior to this project, North Korea performed a test of a nuclear bomb in response to failures at the negotiating table, which was followed, during the time the online community was operating, by a tentative agreement with the United States to dismantle its nuclear facilities in return for certain economic and trade incentives. With this as a background, the community participants engaged in a forum discussion concerning South Korea's cultural and political relationship with North Korea. My analysis focuses again on the tension between inclusivity and exclusivity, between accepting North Korea as just another part of Korea and rejecting it as foreign in one respect or another.

Among the participants' references to race, mentioned in a previous section, were a couple of references to Koreans, both from the North and the South, as members of one "race." Namho's post, which included references to the "Korean race," was a very strong statement in the direction of inclusivity. Namho admitted that there are some contemporary differences between the North and the South, but claimed, "Despite their division, Korean people still call their name as 'Korea,' not as 'South Korea' or 'North Korea.' It is because of a intensive spiritual bond and shared history and family" (NK, pp. 198-199). Here, Namho skirted the issue of names a bit, for in Korean, the two countries do use different terms to refer to their nations, *Hanguk* in the case of the South and *Chosun* in the case of the North. Although the Chinese characters for both names refer to Korea, in fact, they do call themselves by different names, but it is true that both countries use the word "Korea" in the English translations of their official names. In any case,

Namho went on to recount the emotional nature of the family visits that have been sponsored by the two countries since 1989 and to speak of inventions made in Korea before the two countries were separated. He concluded:

When they invented a pluviometer (a rain gauge) and built the great temples, they were the same race. Sharing history and family makes North Korean and South Korean concretely as a Korean race... In conclusion, we cannot help calling ourselves Koreans instead of North or South Korean because the saying "Blood is thicker than water" is true. North and South Koreans are brothers by blood. (NK, p. 199)

Several other participants espoused strong inclusive positions. Eunhye, who in other posts extolled the spiritual values of the Koreans in contrast to the more materialist values of the West, with 6 of 6 PS posts and 2 of 2 WK posts all rated as positive, admitted in the North Korea forum that there are cultural, economic, and ideological obstacles to reunification, but argued, "Unification, of course, is indispensable. Unification is necessary not only for getting rid of interference from neighboring countries but also to speak out unified claims but still we are not yet fully prepared" (NK, p. 185). By "interference from neighboring countries" and "unified claims," Eunhye, meant the territorial disputes that Korea has been having with Japan and China.

Although Jinhee, in a stand-alone post, (NK, pp. 191-192) did not directly address the reunification issue, in one of the project's more politically-charged posts, taking a rather sympathetic view of North Korea, she suggested that "we" (presumably South Koreans) are most afraid of war and raised the question of whether North Korea and its president, Kim Jong-il, really desire war. She answered her own question with, "Maybe. But I think he knows the US will open an attack against them when war is necessary in the future" (NK, p. 191). Jinhee continued by criticizing the three major Korean newspapers for distorting the news and having "absolutely no difference as compared with America's GOP" (NK, p. 192). (This objection to the dominant media is a common complaint among Korea's progressives and left-leaning activists.) She, then, called for the U.S. to stop interfering with the two Koreas and attempting to "exploit them." When I asked her in a dialogue what she meant by the world powers "leaving Korea alone" and whether she thought the news media have too much power in Korea, Jinhee asked whether she had said such things and, ignoring those questions, proceeded to answer another question I had posed to her in the same message. I am not sure why she did not feel inclined to further explain her stated opinions. In the above-cited forum post, in regard to what young Koreans should do in the current political crisis, Jinhee argued:

We surely should forsake strained view of everything that's suited to some greedy powers' taste and should take it only for nobody but our

nation (both Korean blood). We are not the puppets of World Powers anymore...Maybe I'm still young to post this kind of the message but I think truly it's worth thinking. (NK, p. 192)

By using the old spelling, *Corea*, Jinhee was expressing solidarity with young activists that prefer the term *Corea* and use it for both Koreas. In short, Jinhee was suggesting that much of the difficulty between the two Koreas was a result of interference by “world powers” and distortion of the news on the part of the overly-conservative print media in South Korea.

However, unlike those who, although generally conceding that there are obstacles, took a strong inclusive position, many of the participants were much more ambivalent, or even hostile, toward North Korea. In an illustrative example of ambivalence, Geri (NK, pp. 193-194), for instance, in another stand-alone post, stated that by testing a nuclear explosive, "North Korea finally has done what they should not have done and now they have stood out among 'enemies' such as Iran and Syria and become the main target of the US and many neighboring countries" (NK, p. 193). On the one hand, Geri complained about the hypocrisy of the world powers that have nuclear weapons themselves, contending:

From 1945 to 1998, there have been over 2,000 nuclear tests conducted worldwide. This fact displays North Korea is not the only country possessing nuclear weapons, but UK, France, Russia, China and the US so on also has nuclear weapon. And Russia, China and USA are the member of six-nation talks. They are the worrying

countries about North Korea's nukes that they already have. What selfish and paradoxical countries they are! (NK, p. 193)

On the other hand, she conceded that there are good reasons why Pyongyang should not possess nuclear weapons. Next, after explaining that North Korea insists that it only wants such weapons in order to defend itself from the U.S. and cataloguing some of the ways that North Korea's "unacceptable action" is hurting South Korea economically, Geri concluded:

With the US that is the most threat to Pyongyang, we should exchange our opinions and develop into wise conclusion. And we should continue the Mount Kumgang tour and the Kaesong industrial complex project (two cooperative projects with the North). However, this project had to be acceptable to world and its peaceful purpose had to be emphasized. Not like other countries we should show intimacy as possible. Also South Korea had to give effort to release many countries sanctions against North Korea. It does not mean to flatter to them, but to continue the peaceful intention between us. (NK, p. 194)

Although the logic of her argument went back and forth, Geri's conclusion was clear: South Korea should continue to cooperate with North Korea in order to preserve peace on the peninsula.

In the North Korea forum, there was a considerable amount of disagreement and spirited debate concerning whether the two countries should reunify in the near future. Arguing for an early unification, Seonhye

claimed that "we came from the same ancestors and we want unification" and that the passage of time "has spread the two Koreas' gaps in every way" (NK, p. 188), whereas Mark, in his (NK, pp. 188-189) reply to her, took a more exclusive position toward the North, stating, "It really isn't that awkward to say that North and South are two different countries because of the way the nations have lived is different" (NK, p. 188). He also reported that he had read that, if the two countries suddenly unified, the South Korean economy "might collapse and we might have to start from scratch" (NK, p. 189). Therefore, Mark told Seonhye, "I think that you are right about our nations being united should happen soon but we should also think of the consequences that might occur after we actually unite ^^" (NK, p. 189). Using one of the "smile symbols," a practice that was much more common among the women than the men, Mark stated his agreement with unifying "soon," but spent most of his post detailing the difficulties and dangers that such a policy would pose.

A rather long thread initiated by Randy and involving five participants illustrates much of the disagreement that existed on the issue of relations between South and North Korea. Randy, who generally took an inclusive position when it came to accepting biracial Koreans and foreigners committed to Korea as part of Korea's "imagined community, had 5 other WK posts that were coded as positive, but assumed a very negative stance toward an early reunification with North Korea. Referring to the lack of freedom, the thirteen years of compulsory military service for all males, and the widespread hunger in

North Korea, Randy asked, "...do you think we have to unite the two parts of Korea?" since "all the images of North Korea are negative, dark, and pessimistic" (NK, p. 182). Asking again, "Do you really think that we have to be one country?" and arguing that, despite South Korea's attempts to "improve the situation," the North has used South Korean support to "threatened the whole world by nuclear experiments," Randy concluded, "...we do not need to do like this for the North Korea anymore." Natalia, with 4 out of 5 replies coded as "partial agreement" (PG), made her only "agreement" (AG) reply in the community when she agreed with Randy, and decrying that "North Korea hasn't tried to make any development in its policy or relationship with S. Korea" (NK, p. 183). Natalia claimed that, prior to the North's development of nuclear weapons, she had "used to think we should unite with N. Korea" and had "thought unification would outweigh what we'd lose in the long run." However, she argued that she now thought that the South "should give them economic sanction in order not they threat the world in the horrible way any longer." She also contended that reunification would result in the "collapse" of the South Korean economy and a dramatic reduction in foreign investment in Korea, arguing that reunification should not be attempted until "N. Korea's economy state is at least a tenth of S. Korea's" (NK, p. 183). In these first two posts to the thread, the resentment of and disappointment in North Korea's nuclear weapon development is very obvious. Natalia, in fact, claimed that the issue had caused her to change her mind concerning the advisability of reunifying.

Jane, who along with Faith and Aries was among the women participants with the highest percentages of “disagreements,” disagreed with Randy and Natalia, arguing, “In my opinion, I still think we have to unite with North Korea. North Korea is my country. If we let North Korea alone then where is North Korea belong to? To China? Or Russia?” (NK, p. 183). Jane’s “still” indicated recognition of the difficult situation that existed in respect to relations with the North, but she contended that, as in the case of Germany, in the long run it would be better to reunify. Jane concluded:

My country is really small and almost no nature resources and the population in South Korea is getting down. I think manpower is also good resource. We can develop North Korea. Am I too positive? I think the dictatorship in North Korea can't go forever. We can make earlier that's why we need to talk with them more and more. (NK, p. 183)

Jane called North Korea “my country,” adding the common formula about Korea’s small size and relative lack of natural resources, and expressed the fear that other countries might come to control what is now North Korea. She also made use of one of the standard arguments in favor of reunification, namely that the more plentiful natural resources and the disciplined workforce of the North can become assets to the development of a reunited Korea.

Jinhee, who, as we mentioned earlier, often took “middle” positions in respect to the dichotomies, posted the third message in the thread, a post that,

echoing Jane, began with, "I also still think South Korea and North Korea have to be united one day (NK, p. 184). After repeating and explaining Randy's position about discontinuing aid to North Korea and stating that, except for the politicians in the North, she guessed that "everyone in both North and South Korea want the peninsula to be unified," Jinhee reviewed some of the economic, cultural, and linguistic difficulties that would accompany reunification and contended that, despite the efforts that have occurred over the last decade, "...we don't see the unification is near." Since "unification is not possible" at the present time, Jinhee argued:

Now the important thing is, however, that we should reconsider if we should keep supporting North Korea. As Randy mentioned, it seems that North Korea is making bad use of our aid. The money from us is flowing to their absurd political purpose, not to North Korean people in poverty. In other words, the reason why we wanted to help North Korea was to help North Korean people in hunger and poverty, not to help North Korea in the nuclear test. (NK, p. 184)

Opining that "support for North Korea should be stopped at this moment," Jinhee also advocated reconsidering the one tourist program that allows South Koreans to visit the Diamond Mountains in the North because the North is "earning so much money" through the program. However, she stated that the program for bringing together separated North and South Korean family members for reunions should be continued because its purpose is to reunify family members, not to generate profits for the North through tourism. In this

post, Jinhee agreed with Jane that the Koreas should be reunified “one day,” but also agreed with Randy’s reasons for reconsidering aid to North Korea. In fact she argued that aid “should be stopped at this moment,” including the tourist program, but exempting the program for reunifying separated family members. In Chapter 4, we analyzed how the women were significantly more likely to partially agree than the men were. Jinhee, who, along with several other women (namely Natalia, Geri, and Seonhye), had more than 60% of her coded replies rated as “partial agreement” (63.64%), often sought to reconcile divergent opinions, either by seeking compromise by directly engaging an individual with strong opinions, as she did in the case of Jonghun’s criticisms of Korean hierarchism, or by staking a middle position between two participants, as she did to some degree with Randy and Jane.

Faith, with only 26.67% of her replies coded as PG and who, along with Jane, was more likely than most of the women to directly agree or disagree with others, usually depending on the other person's position concerning being proud of Korea, posted the last message to Randy’s thread. Although she disagreed with Randy on other issues, such as the importance of going overseas to learn from other cultures, on this topic, she hardily concurred, stating:

I agree with Randy. What has come out of the so-called "Sunshine policy" that was once so popular? What has materialized from all the aid and support? I think that Randy hit on an important point. A more and more popular trend is for the two Koreas to remain

separated, but at peace. Leave us alone and we'll leave you alone.

(NK, p. 185)

Explicitly accepting Randy's argument, she directly questioned the rapprochement with North Korea that the two progressive presidents, Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, pursued during their presidencies.

The thread that Randy initiated was a representative example of the sort of spirited debate that prevailed in a considerable number of the threads. Although, as we have seen, there were threads in which the participants primarily agreed with one another, there were others in which the participants agreed, disagreed, and partially agreed with their fellow members. In this case, Randy expressed a strong opinion on discontinuing aid to the North, Natalia agreed, Jane, though admitting problems, essentially disagreed, while Jinhee partially agreed with Jane but, with some reservations, concurred with Randy, and Faith ended the thread by directly and fully supporting Randy.

In another telling exchange concerning both reunification and nuclear weaponry, Mindy (NK, p. 186), after describing the great ideological differences that exist between the South and the North and calling for a steady and gradual narrowing of those differences, claimed that North Korea wants nuclear weapons as its only source of pride, considering the terrible economic state that the North is in, and argued that Korea and the world powers can gradually convince North Korea to give up its nuclear arsenal. Cliff replied, directly asking Mindy whether she thought that having

nuclear weapons is a bad thing. He stated, "Some countries have those lethal weapons and their power over the world is stronger than us...I wish we had a nuclear weapon, too" , (NK, p. 187). Mindy responded, "In my mind I also think we have to have a nuclear weapon like other countries, but in reality it seem to be impossible that North Korea has a nuclear weapon around the powers, so it is much better to make economic progress by using this opportunity" (NK, p. 188). (By "to make economic progress," Mindy was presumably referring to North Korea giving up its weapons in return for economic benefits and incentives.) What is especially noteworthy here is the agreement between the two on the desirability of South Korea (or a reunited Korea) possessing nuclear arms. Some young Koreans believe that North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons is a good thing since they suppose that South Korea will gain control over them after reunification. In fact, Marie, too, in a separate thread, argued, "Actually developing nuclear weapons can be advantage for the country if we are unified," but was concerned that South Korea might be first "attacked by those weapons" (NK, p. 170). The participants were not only wrestling with the issue of what to do about North Korea's nuclear weapons, but were also wondering whether South Korea or a united Korea should have them, as well.

When it came to the issue of whether the Koreans in the North and South are still one people, some participants were greatly concerned over the cultural gap that already exists between the two nations. Haeson (NK, p.

195) claimed that the North Korean topic is the most difficult one that she has ever written about and mentioned that when abroad she was always embarrassed when foreigners asked difficult questions about the South's relations with the North, questions for which she did not have "clear answers." Haeson stated that her deceased grandparents were from North Korea, contending:

They could not go back to their homes again to see family members ever since the war broke out. Many of innocent Koreans who were separated from their family during the war have gone. The next generation does not feel as intimate to another half of Korea as their grand parents felt. As our division gets longer, our cultural gap gets bigger. Different economic system and ideology have made more differences. South Koreans are open to different cultures and our life style is different. I have seen North Korean cheerleaders on TV who had different accents, vocabularies, and fashion styles. (NK, p. 196)

Although she admitted that the cultural gap is significant, Haeson still concluded on a positive note, stating, "We will keep on trying to be reunified...We are all Koreans after all."

Hyunsu, on the other hand, (NK, p. 171) took a more extreme, exclusive approach to the North. She began by starkly contrasting the two countries, stating:

When I think of North Korea and South Korea, the image of "extreme to extreme" flashes through my mind. These are the examples:

freedom and no freedom, wealthy country and poverty country, pro-United States and anti-American sentiment, peace and disorder, heartily eating and suffering from hunger, etc. Even though we have same ancestor, and use same language, we can hardly understand the meanings of words. (NK, p. 171)

Here, for Hyunsu, having the same ancestors and speaking the same language paled in the face of the difficulty of understanding one another. In fact, Hyunsu went on to say that she does not like North Korea and may even dislike it more than she does Japan. She concluded:

North Korea is a threat to me. I am not sure that they think us as countrymen or just as a financial backer. I don't know what their intention is... So I have a negative thinking of unification. I think many young people think about becoming one in a negative way. (NK, p. 171)

Clearly, the participants took quite different positions concerning whether the two Koreas constitute a single people today. Some were strongly committed to reunification, some came very close to excluding the North Koreans from their imagined Korean community, and many were ambivalent about the North, recognizing both a common ancestry and the formidable obstacles to reunification.

Embracing English vs. Fearing the Loss of Korean Language

Given the key role, explained in Chapter 2, that English has played and continues to play in Korean education and Korea's international relations, it was not surprising that one of the three central dichotomies that I discovered in the data involved the attitudes of the participants toward learning English in Korea. Unlike the two previous dichotomies that we considered, ones in which there were more positive posts than mixed or negative ones, in the EE dichotomy, more than half of the posts (53.85%) were mixed, though positive posts (33.85%) did outnumber negative ones (12.31%). These results indicate a considerable amount of ambivalence concerning the impact that the study of English can have on the ongoing constructions of Korean identity. The participants generally welcomed English as a tool for communicating with the rest of the world, but sometimes worried that if English becomes too dominant, it will be at the expense of the Korean language.

As in the two previous two dichotomies, there was a great deal of individual variation. For example, although 9 of the 17 women who made EE posts, including Marie with 2 out of 3 posts coded as positive, had 50% or more of their posts rated as positive, only 4 out of the 9 men making such posts had 50% or more positive posts and only Jonghun, with one out of one positive, had a percentage higher than 50%. As a result of those differences, in the overall gender statistics, although women, as was also the case in the other two dichotomies, had a higher percentage of positive

posts than did the men (37.21% compared to 27.27%), the gap between the women's (48.84%) and men's (63.64%) percentages for mixed posts was much greater than in the other two dichotomies so that, in other words, the women's posts, unlike the men's, were more equally divided between positive and mixed posts. On the other hand, the men's mixed posts outnumbered the men's positive ones by a more than 2 to 1 ratio (see Table 8).

Table 9

Embracing English (EE) Posts by Type and by Gender

Gender/Posts	Positive	Mixed	Negative	Total
Women	37.21%	48.84%	13.95%	100%
Men	27.27%	63.64%	9.09%	100%

Sixty-two of the 65 EE posts (91.4%) came from the English for Kids (EK) and the Learning English (LE) forums. Probably as a result of the LE forum coming later in the project, there were fewer posts to that forum (26 posts) than there were to the EK one (36 posts). There was decidedly more ambivalence in the forum dealing with children (where mixed posts greatly outnumbered positive ones, 61.1% to 25%), whereas, in the Learning English forum, the results were more evenly balanced (50.0% mixed compared to 46.2% positive).

Table 10

Posts to English for Kids (EK) and Learning English (LE) Forums by Type

Forum/Posts	Positive	Mixed	Negative	Total
English for Kids (EK)	25%	61.1%	13.9%	100%
Learning English (LE)	46.2%	50.0%	3.8%	100%

In general, the participants, although there were many reservations, were more likely to focus on the positive effects learning and using English had had and were having on their own lives, whereas they tended to express more ambivalent or negative attitudes about young Korean children learning English. In analyzing the discourse, we will explore the reasons for these differences in attitudes and will divide the analysis of this dichotomy into three sections: English as a World Language, English and Korean Identity, and Korean Kids and English-Mania.

English as a World Language

Many of the participants put great emphasis on English as an international language although some of them also stressed the fact that learning English can be an enjoyable activity. As we mentioned in Chapter 1, a number of individuals stressed that mastering enabled them to communicate, not only with people from the major English-speaking nations, but with people from all over the world. For example, in the Learning English forum, Eunhye strongly asserted, in a stand-alone post,

that English is a global language, which is necessary "to communicate with people from all around the world" and "to get a good job" (LE, p. 263).

Disagreeing with those who may believe that English is the language of the Americans or the English, Eunhye insisted:

English is a universal language. In global village, if I am not able to speak English, I can't communicate with people easily...I can't be a citizen of the world because a long time ago English already became as a universal language. So it's my responsibility to learn English.

Well, it's may be all students' responsibility who born in Korea. (LE, p. 264)

Furthermore, according to Eunhye, even though learning English can be boring, it is sometimes "fun and exciting" and is definitely important for her in realizing her dreams.

In a similar, stand-alone post, Christy stated that English is "pretty much required to everyone" (LE, p. 264). For her, that fact demonstrated "the great influence of globalization of the world or the power of America." She recounted that she has had "plenty of chances to meet foreigners" because she grew up in Kyongju, the ancient capital of the Silla Kingdom, where many foreigners visit, and her father works for a French company and often has invited foreigners to their home for dinner. At the university, instead of just concentrating on the normal "theoretical stuff," Christy reported that she also has taken as many "conversation classes" as possible. Moreover, in order to make learning English "fun," she has spent a lot of time watching TV shows,

especially American reality shows and sitcoms. However, despite her acknowledgement of the importance of English, like several other participants, Christy contended:

I think it is not necessary for everyone. Like I mentioned earlier, if you were good at another language such as Chinese or Japanese language, that could be a replacement. Therefore, I think learning English is not required for every Korean but learning another language as a Korean might be necessary. (LE, p. 264)

Here, Christy argued that foreign languages other than English are important, too. In yet another stand-alone post, Mindy, stressed the importance of learning English in order to promote the appreciation of Korean culture overseas, saying, "If there were not English, it would be impossible to show our culture like literature to other countries as well as to make some agreements between countries" (LE, p. 266). It is interesting that both Eunhye and Christy referred to the responsibility, as a Korean, to learn English or another foreign language and that Mindy emphasized the role that English mastery can play in propagating Korean culture. Those statements are an indication of the tendency in Korean society and Korean education to stress globalization as a way of improving both Korea's living standards and its status in the world.

More than a few of the participants discussed how learning and using English has changed them as people. Yuri said that she has never regretted studying English, claiming, "Learning English always make me have confidence when I meet new people or do something new" (LE, p. 272). Asserting that she

really enjoys new experiences, she explained that progress in English makes traveling to foreign countries, finding part-time jobs, and getting accepted for international volunteer work much easier. Concluding that studying English hard is important if one wants to "meet people internationally and get new experiences in the global society," Yuri added that it can "affect positively our economy because our companies could be competitive in the world market." In a similar fashion, Kerry called learning English "a first step we can take when we try to go out of Korea into the larger river" (LE, p. 274). She stated:

My dream is to be a novelist (bestseller) in 2 decades. And I am a person who love to go through various experiences to make my dream come true. And go for a trip around the world and meet lots of different people in their culture and spirit and so on would be very helpful to draw various characters of my writing. And like me, many young people want to broaden their career and ability....We have to think English itself as a kind of ladder that connect you to the more big world. (LE, p. 274)

Yuri's and Kerry's posts are very representative of the positive attitudes that most of the participants had concerning English as a tool for communicating with the world, affording individuals new experiences, and developing Korea and increasing its competitiveness.

Although most of the participants expressed enthusiasm about their own English studies, some did have reservations about the emphasis that is put on learning English today. Geri complained about the pressure to achieve high

scores on English tests in order to secure a good job. She stated that English had become a "burden because I need high score for job applications" (LE, p. 265). Furthermore she went on to criticize the way that English is taught at her university. Geri asserted:

My major is English literature but there are only few choices to learn from native speaking professors. And many of Korean professors discuss and explain in Korean so during the class students only rely on electronic dictionary to find the word fast for better translation. This kind of method lowered the ability to think and explain in English that I made an effort for long time. I habitually think in Korean and translate it to English. (LE, p. 265)

Here, Geri was expressing dissatisfaction with the fact that her university has yet to comply with Ministry of Education directives encouraging universities, especially English departments, to do more teaching in the target language, rather than using the traditional translation approach. Many young Koreans share Geri's frustration with teaching methods that do not result in a mastery of English or the ability to use it in practical applications.

Along the same lines, Hyunsu, in agreement with Geri about the overwhelming importance of standardized English tests, also criticized the inefficiency of Korean teaching methods. She stated:

TOEIC, TOEIC, TOEIC! (Test of English for International Communication) If you are Korean, you must have heard about TOEIC and taken the TOEIC test. In Korea society, it is hard to

detach English from people. That means it is one of the biggest and essential ability to live or getting a job in Korea. We have been learned English more than 15 years in my ages, but most of people can't speak English very well compared to years of learning English. They are afraid of meeting foreigners. (LE, p. 267)

Hyunsu complained that Koreans get frustrated because they spend a lot of money on English education, but their ability does not improve as much as they think it should. However, according to her, "I didn't have fear of English compare to other people. I'm not sure why but I think I learned by fun not by sense of duty" (LE, p. 268). Like a number of other participants, she reported that she enjoyed "watching TV program that uses English and very easy movie, soap opera, and situation comedy." Hyunsu ended her post by recommending that, in order to teach English more efficiently, students should be made to feel "close to English" and "not...uncomfortable about English." Hyunsu was arguing that a more practical and useful approach to teaching English will make learning English more efficient and enjoyable. Hyunsu's comments about making learning English more practical and pleasant are representative of many young Koreans complaints about the tediousness and inefficiency associated with studying English in Korea. Watching English-speaking TV programs and movies, activities mentioned by a number of participants, is a common way of studying English in a more enjoyable fashion.

In recent years, there have been various suggestions concerning better ways to teach English in Korea. For instance, there has been some debate

about making English a second official language of Korea, and the former mayor of Seoul and new, conservative president of Korea, Lee Myung-bak, has advocated that policy (Lee, 2004a). Natalia, whose 3 EE posts consisted of 2 mixed and 1 negative ones, discussed that policy in one of her posts to the LE forum. Although she admitted that adopting English as a second official language and establishing English-speaking towns and neighborhoods might be good for tourism and have some positive economic effects on Korea, she worried:

If we accept English common use in the City, it is same thing to agree ourselves that our culture would be inferior to English culture. When we look at the example of another nations which already used English commonly, they couldn't develop as well as their expectations. The most important thing is respect of Korean characters, *Hangul*. As English will become common use language in Korea, we will have possibilities to lose our great language & culture. (LE, p. 269)

Here, Natalia expressed the frequent fear among Koreans of losing Korean culture. Randy, who was somewhat more positive about learning English (with 1 out of 3 EE posts positive and 2 mixed) than Natalia and who, along with Mark, did not hesitate to directly dispute the ideas of others, began his reply to Natalia with a polite phrase, followed by a direct disagreement with Natalia's opinion. He began, "Your topic is very interesting, but I am sorry to say that you are too concerned about English invasion," and then went on to say

that some Korean linguists also worry too much about the way that "Korean young people concentrate on studying English with too much energy while they pay little attention to Korean even though they use wrong words or expressions" (LE, p. 270). This, Randy insisted, is an over-reaction, contending:

Everything changes. Language is same, too...We can not avoid from using English now for it is the world language. Learning English is inevitable, too. You worry that cultural part, but do not worry about it. Even though we have learned English for more than 10 years (it is almost half of our life!), we are still Korean; we speak Korean, we think like Koreans, not Americans...I really understand what your article means. It is precaution, so why don't we keep this sentence in our mind? Let's learn English for richness of our *Hangul* and Korean society! (LE, p. 271)

Randy, dismissing fears about the loss of Korean culture, was arguing that even though Korean culture may change, Koreans will still speak Korean and will still have their own rich, or even enriched, culture. This exchange between Natalia and Randy aptly illustrates the ambivalent feelings that many of the participants had about the use of English.

English and Korean Identity

In addition to the plentiful data concerning learning English that indirectly referred to various aspects of Korean identity, such as the preceding debate

between Natalia and Randy concerning the effect that an emphasis on English will have on Korean identity, some of the participants discussed the issue of how learning English can affect one's identity in a more direct, personal fashion. Davey, for example, served as a KATUSA, Korean soldiers who are attached to the US Army in Korea, while performing his almost three years of mandatory military training. He described how this affected his identity by stating:

While I speak and listen in English for three years as a first language of my ordinary life, I developed new identity. Language affects on human's mind and it represents the culture which that language is used. There's no wonder that my way of thinking has changed, slightly different from other Koreans. I think, however, I tried to learn the positive side of western people. I learned global manners and the way how to get along with people who came from various cultures. I think I became a "globalized" person, not a "westernized" person.
(LE, p. 277)

Explicitly claiming that he developed a “new identity” through English, Davey attributed the new identity to the cultural effect that language has on the mind, but asserted that he thought that he had become a “globalized” person, not a “westernized” one. Several other participants also referred to feeling a bit "different" when they returned to Korea from overseas although, in Davey’s case, his experiences took place among Americans within

Korea. In another explicit reference to identity in a foreign language, Mindy stated:

Whenever I speak English and whenever I speak Korean, I feel as if I have the different mind attitude because of the different language system. When I speak English I feel equality more (I couldn't find the exact expression I want to use). And when I use Korean I am automatically more polite to older people than me. (LE, p. 265)

Here, Mindy recognized that when speaking in English, she takes on some of the cultural attitudes that are intrinsic to English-speaking cultures, which in this case would be more directness, in contrast to the indirection and politeness that is often required when speaking Korean.

In another thread, after arguing for the utility of English as an international language, Natalia (LE, p. 280) stated, "I don't think I've developed a new identity or something but I guess I can have more chances to talk with foreigners after learning and improving it" (LE, p. 280).

Remembering that, in a dialogue with me, Natalia had recounted all the efforts that she had made in England to speak English and to interact with non-Koreans as often as she could, I asked her in another dialogue directly whether she had changed much while overseas. I asked, "Did you change much during your overseas stay?" and Natalia replied, "I think I changed quite a lot in my personality. I used to be conservative but I'm quite open-minded now" (D, p. 37). Interestingly, Mindy felt that her identity had changed while overseas and speaking in another language, whereas Natalia, admitted that her

personality had changed, but did not consider that as a transformation of "identity."

Taking a different tack to the issue of language and identity, Faith, who in several other posts expressed very nationalistic ideas and somewhat critical views of the U.S., referred to English as a worldwide *lingua franca* and argued that learning English "does not interfere with being Korean. It provides another way for a Korean to express himself. In a way it gives the world more of a taste of Korean culture" (KE, p. 136). She claimed that she had "great experiences" in Mexico and the United States, meeting people who were "black, Mexican, white, Asians, and Russians." For her, English is a way for different cultures to connect. Faith had strong opinions about Korea's role in the world, and when, in another thread, Randy urged the participants to go overseas and learn about the world, Faith tersely disagreed, stating:

We also have LG, Samsung, Hyundai, Kia, Korean pop culture, and *Kimchi*. These go to other countries. Perhaps people in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam think that globalization means Koreanization. I think that we should keep working hard and help other people. Why do we need to go to other countries? (GL, p. 126)

Juxtaposing Faith's two posts demonstrates that the specific context of the discourse can lead to statements that may appear to be contradictory. As in Kanno's (2003) contention that people attempt to tie their narratives together in a somewhat consistent fashion, an examination of all of Faith's

posts and dialogues revealed a tendency toward asserting Korea's successes and arguing for Korea to play an increasingly influential role in world affairs. While in the first post cited above, Faith claimed that her experiences overseas were "great" and allowed her to communicate with people from many cultures, in her reply to Randy, apparently reacting to what she saw as Randy's over-zealous insistence that Korea learn from the rest of the world, Faith argued that there is no reason to go overseas, given Korea's important position in the world, especially in Asia. Looking more closely, though, there is a degree of consistency, for in describing her overseas experiences, Faith stressed that using English overseas with foreigners allows Koreans to express themselves and add a "Korean taste" to world culture, instead of detracting from Korean identity by learning world cultures.

In another explicit reference to Korean identity, Marie, after describing how she came to learn English a "little late," in middle school rather than in institutes while still an elementary student, recounted her growing fascination with learning foreign languages. She went to a private institute for conversation classes and thought it was "sooo cool that I could speak to a guy who has blue eyes!" (LE, p. 262). When Marie was sixteen, she took an English test for a subsidized student exchange program and ended up spending a year at an American high school. After getting over being homesick and transferring her home stay to a school friend's home, she began to really enjoy her overseas experience. She asserted that it was important to her that her friends and her

home stay family were very interested in Korea. As for her identity, Marie stated:

I think it definitely influenced my identity. I confirmed myself as a Korean, but in living, I turned very open-minded. I learned only one language, but I could made friends from Brazil, German, Thailand, like all over the world! It always gives me a new thoughts, new attitudes. (LE, p. 263)

Using the assertive "Corean" spelling, which is becoming popular among some young Koreans because they claim that Korea was spelled as "Corea" in European languages until the Japanese campaigned to change the spelling during the Japanese colonization of Korea so that Japan would precede Korea in alphabetical listings (Korea or Corea?, n.d.), Marie claimed she simultaneously confirmed her national identity and became more open-minded toward various peoples and cultures. Her identification is not with one culture, that of the U.S., but with the cultures of the world.

As these selections from the participants' discourse demonstrate, the community members relate learning English to identity change in various ways. Interestingly, even though some of the members expressed reservations concerning the hypothetical effects of emphasizing English learning upon Korean identity and Korean language, when it came to reflecting on their own experiences with learning English, except for Mark and Geri, who as we will see in the next section dealing with children learning English did confess to experiencing some difficulties readjusting to

Korea when they returned to Korea after prolonged residence overseas as children, none of the participants stated that learning English, either within Korea or overseas, had had a negative impact upon them or their Korean language ability. For instance, although Davey did admit to "feeling slightly different from other Koreans" (LE, p. 277) as a result of his KATUSA experience, he saw that as part of becoming a "globalized person." In respect to acknowledging new English identities, some of the community members, such as Mindy, felt that she did develop a different identity while speaking English, whereas others, such as Natalia, preferred to consider the experience one of becoming more open-minded and familiar with other cultures. In addition, a few of the participants, such as Faith, see using English with people from other countries as a confirmation of their Korean identity and as way to spread Korean customs and culture abroad.

Korean Kids and English-Mania

When it comes to the issue of young children learning English, both at home and abroad, many of the participants expressed concern over a number of issues, including cultural confusion on the part of the kids and the separation of family members when the children go overseas, especially when their mothers go with them.

In Korea, to a large extent, mothers are responsible for managing the education of their children. These days, young children often have very hectic schedules as they are moved from one private institute or academy

to another throughout the day to study everything from English to in-line skating. As of 2007, elementary students in the public schools began studying English in the third grade and plans for an English curriculum starting in the first grade are scheduled to be put into effect in 2008. In order for their children to have an advantage in learning English, many mothers are enrolling their kids in English-only pre-school programs, as well as in various after-school private classes. In addition to early English education programs within Korea, an increasing number of children are being sent overseas during elementary school or earlier to master English. These kids may live with relatives or Korean "foster parents" who take children into their homes or operate boarding houses or they might go overseas together with their mothers. Many of my participants, some of whom teach part-time in English institutes, were worried about the effects of this "English craze" on Korean children.

Explaining Korean parents' motivations, Marie, after stating that English is the world's "official language" and necessary for children's future success, complained that parents "make children have operation of oral cavity, push their children to go to institute even they are too young to speak Korean" (KE, p. 131). By "operation," she is referring to media reports that surgeons perform operations on children's tongues to facilitate better English pronunciation, and by "institute," the preschool English academies mentioned above. Marie went on to say that the most drastic

measure to insure that children will master English is to "send them to another country." She argued:

Of course, it would be your choice that you have a lot of money to send your child abroad. But Korean people tend to be scared being dismissed (sifted), so they send their kids to other country not to lose in their competition. It causes "kirogi appa" (a "wild goose father") and it became a social problem. It presents not only destruction of family, also outflowing money. (KE, p. 132)

"Wild goose father" is the recent expression for fathers who remain in Korea to work and earn money while the mothers and children are residing overseas, usually in an English-speaking country. Marie was complaining about the negative effect that this has on families, as well as the attendant loss of foreign currency. She concluded by claiming, "It also causes another problem when kids are too young, losing their identity" (KE, p. 132).

In another thread that she initiated, Haeson, who preferred initiating long, thoughtful threads to responding to others (9 of her 11 total posts were thread-starters), grappled with the same issues, stating that in order to insure their children's success parents "do not hesitate to spend a fortune on children's study" (KE, p. 133). Claiming that it is in the nation's ubiquitous "cram schools" that "kids are stuck instead of their homes or playgrounds," Haeson conceded that this emphasis on study "makes Korea more intelligent and powerful country," but contended that parents are going

"too far in terms of English educations" and are "obsessed with it and are being unreasonable." She stated:

I was outraged when I heard that some parents surgically alter children's tongue to make it better for kids to speak English like native speakers. Also, pregnant women talk to babies in English even before the babies are born and they believe it is an effective way to teach English. More kids are going to English kindergartens to learn from native speakers, but kids barely understand what native teachers say and they need Korean teachers who explain what native teachers speak. Do you think it makes sense or it is effective? I don't think so at all. (KE, p. 133)

Haeson went on to claim that learning English too early will interfere with learning Korean. Furthermore, she asserted:

Even though fluent English gives us the upper hand in our society, Korea is not an English speaking country. I mean, to live and succeed in this country, we also have to have good Korean. People who have troubles speaking Korean, but have perfect English are not real Koreans. They are just English speakers who look like Koreans. (KE, p. 133)

Here, Haeson expressed a clear recognition of the importance of English coupled with a concern that too much emphasis on English at an early age will result in confusion and a loss of Korean language and identity.

Haeson concluded her powerful post by questioning whether it is necessary to go overseas to study English at an early age and arguing that motivation is the most important factor in mastering a foreign language, stating:

Many kids do not really understand why they need to study English that hard. If there is no motivation, there will be no good results. It will be a waste of time and money. That is why I do not think studying overseas at a very young age is a perfect way to learn English. Living in English speaking countries will help people speak the language fluently, but they do not need to be young. What really matters is try and motivation, not an age. Young kids may be able to have a good pronunciation, but can they speak English better than those who learn later? As far as I have seen, only people with a good motivation and effort learn English effectively and fast in other countries no matter how old they are. (KE, p. 134)

Although she conceding that studying abroad while young can result in “good pronunciation,” Haeson contended that, according to her own observations of language learners, only those with “good motivation and effort learn English effectively...”

Four participants responded to Haeson’s thread, with three of them, Mark, Mindy, and Jane, basically agreeing with Haeson’s comments. First, Mark, who had lived in the Philippines and who had had readjustment problems after returning to Korea, strongly agreed with Haeson, stating:

I totally agree with what you are saying but is it really true that parents these days surgically alter their kids tongue to make it more perfect??? That's reeeeeally crazy!!! Ain't the structure of human similar to each other??? Crazy parents!!! (KE, p. 134)

Claiming “I totally agree,” in addition to incredulously asking whether parents actually do resort to oral surgery to try to improve their children’s English, Mark used triple punctuation marks, drawn out vowels, and dialect (“ain’t” was presumably used intentionally) to add expressive force to his statements. Then, Mindy followed Mark’s reply, contending, “It is so cruel and unbelievable. And I totally agree with your opinion and I think everything should be done by their own free-will ,which can bring the best effect” (KE, p. 134). Also using strong words, “cruel” and “unbelievable” to describe tongue-operations, Mindy expressed total agreement with Haeson’s stress on motivation, which Mindy called “free-will.” In a third post concurring with Haeson, Jane argued that separating families is an unfortunate thing and added that parents should realize that when children reside overseas they are deprived of the "chance to get along with Korean friends and learn Korean culture too" (KE, p. 135).

Other participants, however, argued that learning English at an early age could be a great advantage for Korean children. Geri, for example, who disagreed with Haeson in the above-mentioned thread, admitted that there are problems with early English education, but argued that in her generation, students have studied English since seventh grade, but "still

have trouble saying simple sentence in English" (KE, p. 134). Accordingly, Geri maintained that "studying one or two years in English-speaking country in young age is more effective." Here, Geri, who lived three years in Australia as a child, emphasized the effectiveness of overseas study, rather than the problems that sometimes occur when children go overseas at an early age.

In a separate thread, Virginia (KE, pp. 147-148) disagreed that learning English at an early age confuses children. She contended that the Korean Ministry of Education used to believe that, but argued:

Research found that when young children begin to learn a language, the faster learn it is the better to become fluent. Furthermore, children do not get confused when they learn two languages at the same time. They can easily distinguish one from the other without mixing them up. (KE, p. 147)

According to Virginia, the problem with early English education is that it can break up families. The reason is that, when parents send their children to English-speaking countries, the fathers remain in Korea to make money. Therefore, she claimed, "Nowadays Korean family is so focused on their children education and it splits the family up" (KE, p. 148).

In yet another thread dealing with children studying English overseas, Natalia also expressed concern over the negative effects that can occur when families are separated, conceding that going abroad can be invaluable for learning foreign languages, but claiming that when fathers are left alone in

Korea while the rest of the family is abroad, the fathers "usually suffer from missing them everyday" and the "normal type of family is ruined" (KE, p. 140). Moreover, according to Natalia, she has seen children return from overseas study without the ability to do well in school, even in classes "related to something like English." She concluded that even though she is being "extreme," she believes that children should only go abroad if they intend to "live there for their whole life." Jinhee replied to Natalia's post, agreeing and arguing:

It seems crazy for me that the family has to separate from one another only because of learning English! These days, people think the more education, the more success in life. It might be true but success in life is not only to get a high social position or earn a lot of money, but also to have a normal happy life. (KE, p. 140)

Calling the separation of the family for purely educational purposes "crazy," Jinhee felt that it is important to "raise children with protection and discipline of both of mother and father" (KE, p. 141), so children should abroad only if the whole family can go together. Earlier, in the thread initiated by Haeson, Jane had argued that separating families is an unfortunate thing and added that parents should realize that when children reside overseas they are deprived of the "chance to get along with Korean friends and learn Korean culture too" (KE, p. 135).

Marie, Haeson, Natalia, and most of the other participants, as well, recognize the importance of learning English in contemporary Korea.

Moreover, they acknowledge the effectiveness of getting an early start in English and the advantages of acquiring English at an early age in an English-speaking country. However, they are representative of many of the participants in their concerns about the effects of over-emphasizing English study for Korean children, such as pre-school English institutes for kids who cannot yet read Korean, families separated so that the children can learn English abroad, and kids who may be more familiar with English and foreign English-speaking cultures than they are with Korean and Korean culture. Persistent and pervasive concerns of that sort were the main reason that, despite the general acknowledgement of the value of learning English, such a high percentage of the EE posts, particularly in the EK forum, were mixed rather than positive.

Given the concern over the effects of children going overseas and mastering English at an early age, it is not surprising that, in addition to some of the references mentioned above, there was debate over the importance of age in achieving bilingualism. In an interesting exchange, Randy and Aries debated that issue. Randy stated that he was teaching at an English institute where mothers were very concerned about their young children's English. He claimed:

One of the kids is just four years old! Even though the little kid can not speak Korean perfectly, his mother wants her son to study English. In my opinion, this kind of early education will not be helpful for the kids. (KE, p. 142)

An English linguistics major, Randy contrasted what he termed “true bilingualism,” which occurs before the age of three when children learn two languages, with second language acquisition, which he claimed should only begin after children master their first language.

Aries, who is very invested in mastering English, reacted to Randy's insistence that bilingualism has to occur at a very early age, asking, "You were saying that when it comes to language, the timing really matters, right? To make a child as bilingual, he or she should had to study earlier?" (KE, p. 142). She followed this by asserting:

I'm not saying I am a good English speaker (well, to make sure, I don't even call myself as bilingual) or anything (because I am NOT) but I sound pretty good. And I don't have troubles to make my opinion clearly when I speak in English. What age do you think I start to learn English?? I didn't know how to write my name in English until I was 14. (KE, p. 143)

Aries may not believe that she has achieved true bilingualism, but she is proud of her English abilities, especially her exceptional pronunciation. In an other thread she complained how in secondary school, incompetent Korean English teachers and her classmates made fun of her "fake accent" (LE, p. 277). By this, Aries was referring to the fact that she attempted in high school to speak English with a North American accent, but her teachers, who she claimed spoke English with a strong Kyongsan-do (the South-Eastern provinces of South Korea) accent, and her classmates

ridiculed her efforts. Later in the thread, she insisted that even though she did not go to Canada to study English until she was twenty, she and some of her Korean-Canadian and Chinese-Canadian friends with similar English backgrounds did rather well in English. Aries concluded, "I don't think it's all about age when it comes to learning a language. It's more like the exposure to the language" (LE, p. 278). Aries probably recognizes that, in general, Koreans who have lived or studied overseas while young have advantages in terms of their English ability; however, her investment in her own accomplishments in English may have led her to deemphasize the importance of age in Learning English. Furthermore, of course, even though Aries did not get a very early start in English, she did have the opportunity to study in Canada for one year at the relatively early age of twenty.

Mark, who lived overseas for an extended period as a child, struck a very personal key by discussing the difficulties he had had since returning to Korea at the age of eleven after having lived seven years with his family in the Philippines. Expressing his concerns about sending young children overseas to study English, he stated:

I lived abroad since I was 4 for 7 years. But I never knew that I would come back to Korea. By the age 11, I hardly spoke Korea (my mom had to learn English because of me^^) and I had to come back to Korea because of an earthquake that stroke our factory and our house. But when I came back, it took me more then 5 years to blend in. But I still don't think that I am well blended in this community yet. I

know that I have some benefit of speaking English fluently, but English is not the only factor to be alive in this world. When I came to Korea I had no friends at all. They were busy teasing me and making fun of me. After some while I had this feeling that Korea is not the place for me to stay, and still I feel that sometimes these days too. I don't hate my parents for making me live overseas, but sometime I wonder what it would be like if I lived in Korea, because I know that I am not a guy who just sits around the house doing nothing. I like meeting people and making lots of friends, but now I have no elementary or middle school friends at all. (KE, p. 148)

Mark went on to say that although living overseas will usually improve one's English, he knew "a lot of people who speak really fluently with native Americans and never ever had an experience on even going out of Korea. Their English pronunciation is really good and they have no problem with English. They say that they liked learning English a lot when they were in middle and high school." Therefore, he concluded that being interested in English is the most important factor and contended that if children are uninterested in learning English, it is "useless to send them overseas because all they are doing is wasting time and wasting the opportunity to have more friends" (KE, p. 147)

In any case, two of the participants responded very sympathetically to Mark's description of his difficulties in readjusting to life in Korea. Yun, who knew Mark from classes that they had taken together, told Mark:

Actually, at first, I only thought that you are lucky to have fluent English. I did not realize how hard it was to get back to Korea and blend in. But now I can understand your hardships that I did not even imagine at all. (KE, p. 150)

Moreover, Josh, one of the three participants with no overseas experience, shared:

After entering this university, I got unreasonable complaint in my mind to my parents when I saw some students speaking English very fluently in my class. They have experiences in living abroad for years. I major in English. But I myself made me feel diffident because of some students who are very good at speaking English. However, your story taught me a great lesson. I'll be satisfied with my state and study English harder than now.^^ (KE, p. 150)

Both Yun and Josh express a new-found appreciation of the difficulties that at least some overseas residents from Korea experience upon their return to their native country.

In addition to Yun's and Josh's responses to Mark's comments, Geri also replied, stating that she, too, had "bitter experiences" (KE, p. 151) when she returned to Korea. Although she averred she did not live as long overseas as Mark did and perhaps did not have as "hard time than you," when her parents decided to return to Korea after her graduation from elementary school, both she and her brother were angry because "we had

to leave all our friends and everything." Back in a Korean middle school, it was difficult to readjust. Geri explained:

People were curious about me because I was from other country. They always say "speak English!" and teased me for my stupid Korean pronunciation. And I couldn't have friends because I didn't know Korean pop star and popular style. It sounds funny but I was serious then. And English teacher always let me read the English textbook and people hated me for that. All of sudden I became alien in my country. It took more than six months to blend into the school. However, nobody believes me when I tell this kind of story. Hehehe!
(KE, p. 152)

Although empathizing with Mark, Geri claimed that it sounds "funny" now, and the tone of her post is not nearly as serious as Mark's. Indeed, referring to her experiences when she first attended an American grade school, Geri asserted:

It took six to eight months for me to speak English with my friends and I understood 80 % of what teacher was saying. I think I'm lucky to have such an opportunity that made my life easier. (KE, p. 152)

In other words, despite the hardship of readjusting to life in Korea, Geri, who had, as we saw, in an earlier thread disagreed with Haeson over the bad effects of studying English overseas at an early age, felt that she was lucky to have had the opportunity to learn English in another country and culture.

In this final dichotomy, the community members, although generally accepting the value of mastering English, freely, but politely, expressed quite different opinions concerning the best ways to learn English, the effects of learning English upon one's identity, and the advisability of Korean children studying English overseas.

Conclusion

Although it was not possible, considering the large amount of data that the project generated, to deal with all of the dichotomies and issues that were discernable in the participants' discourse, the central dichotomies that we treated in this chapter provide an intriguing view of the manner in which the members of a university online community discursively constructed Korean identity. Out of the project's total 377 posts, 233 were coded as positive, mixed, or negative, according to one or more of the three key dichotomies: Pride vs. Uncertainty, Who's Korean vs. Who's Not, and Embracing English vs. Fearing the Loss of Korean Language.

Overall, 45.92% of the coded posts for the three dichotomies were positive, compared to 35.62% and 18.45% for the mixed and negative posts respectively. By dichotomy, 53.06% of the PS posts, 47.14% of the WK posts, and 33.85% of the EE posts were positive, while negative posts constituted the smallest percentage in each of the three dichotomies: PS 21.43%, WK 20%, and EE 12.31%. In both the PS and WK dichotomies, the percentage of positive posts was highest of the three categories, but in the EE dichotomy,

there were a higher percentage of mixed posts (53.85%) than positive ones (33.85%), though the men had a much higher percentage of mixed posts (63.64%) than did the women (48.84%).

The Pride vs. Shame dichotomy, with 98 coded posts, was the most pervasive dichotomy represented in the data and also the one with the highest percentage of positive posts, with some 53.06% of the posts rated as PS+. Our analysis of the discourse documented the importance of collective pride and collective shame to many of the participants. Members of the community expressed feelings of pride over matters such as Korea's successful technological and commercial products, Korea's athletic triumphs, Korean unity, and the nature of Korean friendships. On the other hand, some participants voiced feelings of shame or uncertainty over issues such as the inappropriate behavior of some Koreans when overseas, especially the sexual exploitation of women from less economically advanced countries, the ways in which Korean unity may sometimes exclude non-Koreans, and the existence of certain Korean characteristics that are alleged by Non-Koreans and/or Koreans as being negative ones.

The Who's Korean vs. Who's Not dichotomy ranked second to the PS one in terms of pervasiveness (70 posts) and positivity (47.14% rated as WK+). However, the percentage of WK posts rated as positive differed considerably according to the forum in which they appeared, with 88.2% of the Nationalism forum, 42.11% of the Biracial and Overseas Koreans forum, and 28.6% of the North Korean forum posts being rated as positive. Except for the North Korean

forum, in which mixed posts outnumbered positive ones, though, positive posts were the most numerous.

In the WK dichotomy, the participants wrestled with the issue of whether to be inclusive or exclusive in respect to considering biracial individuals, overseas Koreans, and North Koreans as belonging to a common “imagined community.” Race, blood, language, culture, and nationality were among the factors that the participants debated as possible conditions for being considered Korean. Although a couple of the participants expressed ambivalent feelings over the issue of whether to consider Koreans as a single “race,” more members explicitly denied that blood or race should be a criteria for being Korean, with a number of people strongly defending the right of biracial individuals, especially those brought up in Korea, to be considered as Koreans. However, more than a few participants had difficulty trying to decide whether self-identification was more important than language mastery, cultural knowledge, or citizenship in determining Korean identity, though there was a tendency on the part of some, despite their recognition of the difficulty of the problem, to give priority to an individual’s own self-identification in resolving the issue. On the matter of whether to include North Koreans in the “imagined community” of Korea, although some of the participants strongly argued that North Koreans had the same language and ancestors as the South Koreans and occupy land that traditionally belonged to a unified Korea, many others expressed great concern over the ideological, cultural, and linguistic differences that separate the two nations. The fact that the mixed replies greatly

outnumbered positive ones in the North Korea forum is a good indication of the considerable ambivalence that existed among the members on this issue.

The Embracing English vs. Fearing the Loss of Korean Language dichotomy, which ranked, with 60 posts, third in frequency of posts among the three dichotomies, was also the only dichotomy with a lower percentage of positive posts (33.85%) than mixed ones (53.85%). Again, the percentages were quite different in the two forums, English for Kids and Learning English, where most of the EE posts occurred. In the EK forum, the percentage of positive posts (25%) was much less than that of the mixed posts (61.1%), while, in the LE forum, the percentage of positive posts (46.2%) was much closer to that of the mixed ones (50%). Furthermore, although the higher percentage of mixed responses for the dichotomy does indicate more ambivalent feelings on issues related to learning English, our qualitative analysis of the EE data indicated that, despite their concerns about the possible negative effects that learning English might have on preserving Korean language and culture, the participants were decidedly positive about their own experiences with learning English. The concerns that they did have, especially in the case of children learning English, over the possible ill effects of too early and too much of an emphasis being put on English, did, however, result in a higher percentage of posts being rated as mixed.

For presenting the qualitative analysis of the EE data, we concentrated on three different areas of concern: English as a World Language, English and Korean Identity, and Korean Kids and English-Mania. In general, although there

was some debate over issues such as whether adopting English as an official language in Korea would jeopardize Korean language and culture, the community members mostly embraced English as a world language, denying that English belonged only to the English-speaking nations such as the U.S. and Britain, and argued that learning English enabled them to learn about and communicate with the rest of the world. As to the effect that learning English might have on Korean identity, a number of the participants spoke of gaining new identities or changing their personalities through learning English and associating with people from different cultures. Those who referred to new identities viewed those identities as global in nature, while a few spoke of the new identity as also confirming their Korean identity or even adding a new “Korean taste” to world culture. In discussing the great importance that Korean parents put on their children learning English at an early age, however, as we mentioned above, there was more concern over possible negative side effects among the participants. Several of the members described some of the difficulties they had experienced returning to Korea after living abroad for rather long periods of time, while other participants complained about families being separated in order to provide opportunities for children to study English overseas and children becoming more familiar with English language and foreign culture than with Korean language and culture. Despite the widespread worries over such negative effects, however, the participants recognized the importance of learning English, and some members argued that the possible

gains associated with learning English while Yun justified the risks or suggested guidelines that would minimize those risks.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Not surprisingly, after more than two years of steady work on this project, upon completing it, I have a number of conflicting emotions. Most importantly, perhaps, is feeling of accomplishment at successfully discovering a few of the keys to understanding constructions of Korean identity among university EIL learners. Although I felt, at several points during the project, a sense of being overwhelmed by the amount and diversity of discourse that was being produced by the members of our online community, in the end, by following some of the recommended guidelines for qualitative research and discourse analysis, a series of dichotomous propositions, three of which constitute the core of the final analysis, emerged as a fruitful way to conceptualize much of the Korean identity construction implicit in the data. Close analysis of the data clearly indicated that those three dichotomous continua were central to how many of the participants dealt with thinking about being Korean. Pride in various aspects of Korean culture and history, an inclusive approach to defining who is Korean, and an embracing of English as a tool for understanding and communicating with the rest of the world can all be juxtaposed against their opposites, namely, shame and uncertainty about aspects of the Korean past and present, an exclusion of others as Koreans, based on biological heritage or linguistic and cultural background, and concern that the acquisition of English will be at the expense of losing Korean language and culture. Naturally, these dichotomies do not exhaust an understanding of Korean identity construction among participants of the sort that belonged to our

online community, but looking back over the data, they do provide a great deal of insight into the nature of discourse that occurred among the community members.

Limitations

As for the inevitable limitations of the study, first of all, as I discussed in the previous chapter, the context within which the project took place was a fairly limited one, one in which intermediate and advanced English university learners, most of whom had overseas experience, discussed social and cultural issues, primarily, I think, in order to improve their English. Less accomplished learners, individuals with less international experience, and students whose main motivations for discussing problematic issues are quite different from our participants might produce discourse qualitatively different from that that was analyzed here. To speculate a bit further on that issue, I believe that the dichotomies that I identified would be equally useful, but the positionings between the dichotomies might be considerably different. Moreover, even though the participants frequently referred to various experiences that they had had while explaining their attitudes and opinions, discussing issues in an academic context is significantly different from other sorts of contexts, such as actual social participation in disparate activities such as interacting with people from different cultures, for instance.

Related to that last observation, a second limitation of the study is the fact that the participants in the forum discussions were all Korean learners. In

university EIL classrooms, of course, non-Korean native speakers will sometimes be teaching the English courses that involve communication skills. Although I purposively restrained myself from participating in the forums because I determined to primarily focus on the interaction among the Korean learners, rather than on their interaction with me, the issue of how the presence of non-Koreans affects the dynamics that accompany Korean identity construction is obviously an important one, particularly for the field of TESOL. As I will mention in the next section, I have already begun to examine Korean identity constructions that occur when Korean university learners discuss cultural issues with learners from other cultures.

A final limitation to my study concerns the level of analysis. Discourse analysis includes various levels of analysis, and it is not feasible to attempt to do too many levels at one time. My study has focused on the topical, or thematic, and rhetorical levels of analysis. The dichotomies, themselves, involve pairs of thematic opposites, whereas the analysis of the participants' positionings and the characteristic patterns of those patterns are rhetorical in nature. Although I have made occasional references to the linguistic level of analysis, such as the use of personal pronouns, that is a level that could be more profitably explored

Implications for Teaching

The participation of the members of the online community that I set up for my research was enthusiastic and productive. The levels of participation and

the comments that the members made at the conclusion of the project indicated that they found the topic discussions about Korean identity and related topics to be stimulating and useful. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 4, the participants engaged in a variety of alignments, sometimes agreeing or partially agreeing and at other times disagreeing with the posts that other members made. Although the alignment patterns differed according to the style of the individual participants, most of the members were involved in all three types of alignments. Therefore, I strongly agree with Shin and Crooks' (2005a, 2005b) contention that Korean students are quite capable of critical thinking when pedagogical practices permit it.

In our online community, as explained in Chapter 4, I intentionally tried to minimize my impact as the site manager by dialoging with the participants privately, rather than participating in the forum discussions myself. In voluntary online communities in which the manager or moderator plays a more active role in the discussions and perhaps even more so in classroom discussions or online writing that is done as part of an academic course, the moderator or instructor may have a greater impact on the discussions, either by steering the discussion in one direction or the other or, especially in the case of foreign instructors, by causing the participants or students to resist what they see as anti-Korean or misinformed ideas on the part of the moderator or instructor. I know of several situations in which university students came to believe that the teacher had prejudicial views about Korea and, consequently, came to resent and resist discussions concerning Korean culture and practices. When,

however, the teacher is seen as positive about and interested in Korea, those kinds of defensive reactions can be minimized and more open discussions about Korean culture and Korean identities achieved.

Although our online community was a voluntary one, the online writing that I have done in many other classes and the in-class pilot project that I set up during the semester prior to my data collection strongly indicate that online communities set up as supplements to face-to-face classes can yield similar results. At least in the context of this study, mostly language majors and a competitive foreign studies university, the students were both highly motivated to improve their English skills and significantly interested in issues related to Korean identity and cultural change. Therefore, EIL instructors would be well advised to build opportunities for their students to explore the identity issues that I identified in my research into their curricula. As Harklau (1999) and Norton (1997, 2000) have emphasized, it is highly advisable to select writing topics that allow language learners to negotiate the cultural issues that are relevant to their lives and emerging identities. As a result of the remarkably rapid cultural and economic changes that have been occurring in Korea during the last few decades, many Korean university students are greatly concerned with exploring and negotiating their Korean identities. Since language classes, by their very nature, through exposure to foreign languages, foreign instructors, and foreign cultural concepts, have an inevitable impact upon Korean identity construction, online communities that facilitate the exchange of ideas and the

mutual negotiation of identities can be very effective and useful in motivating language study and constructing identities.

Another significant area of interest to the Korean learners, the one related to my second research question is the issue concerning whether mastering English enhances or detracts from one's Korean identity. As we pointed out in Chapter 5, there is a considerable amount of ambivalence concerning that issue, so that is another area that might be integrated into the readings and discussions that instructors build into their course curricula. Of particular importance is the issue of whether English should be viewed as a language primarily connected to the cultures of those countries, such as the United States and Britain, that speak English as their mother tongue, or as a world language that enables its speakers to communicate with individuals and cultures around the world. Although this is a stimulating topic that will, in my experience, normally result in the expression of various opinions, as indicated in Chapter 5, a number of the members of our online community strongly argued in favor of the former position, which resulted in this study adopting the term English as an International Language (EIL) to emphasize that fact.

Research Implications

Considering the significant role that culture plays in language teaching and the sharp disagreements that exist over what that role should be, it is essential that more research be done to determine the role that culture plays in English education in Korea and the effects that the cultural contexts of English

education have on the constructions of Korean identity. As Collins (2005) has emphasized, it is imperative that we examine the *local* practices of English in countries like Korea, for English is already a part of local culture. My study is a step in the direction of exploring the constructions of Korean identity that can occur in a particular pedagogical context. Further studies are needed to study Korean identity constructions in other educational contexts.

As indicated in the Limitations section of this chapter, the participants in my study were voluntary members of an online community set up in a fairly prestigious foreign studies university. The members were not only mostly language majors with experiences of overseas study or residence, but also individuals who, by virtue of their voluntary participation, were relatively proficient in English and highly motivated to further improve their English language abilities. Without similar studies of university-age learners with different social characteristics, it is impossible to know to what degree the characteristics of my participants might distinguish their Korean identity constructions from learners with different characteristics. Such studies could elucidate, for example, how similar or different the Korean identity constructions of learners with more limited language abilities or less overseas experience or less prestigious educational backgrounds might be.

In most English education contexts, the role of the instructor may also play an important role in influencing Korean identity constructions. Although my study involved voluntary participants, as I discussed in Chapter 4, I undoubtedly influenced the Korean identity constructions of the community members

through designing the main topics and dialoging with the participants about their posts. In most classroom contexts the influence of the instructor is more direct and influential than was mine as a facilitator in our online community. More research is needed in this important area, research that examines the ways that both Korean and foreign teachers present culture in English classes and the effects of those various methods.

A final type of study that will cast important light on the area of Korean identity constructions is educational projects that examine how contact with learners from other cultural backgrounds affects ongoing identity constructions. In the fall semester of 2007, Professor William Jones of Texas A&M and I set up a moodle and Second Life collaborative project between Korean and American composition students. As part of that project, the participants engaged in various types of discussions, many of which centered on cultural and national identity issues. We co-presented some of the intriguing preliminary research results of that project at the 2008 CCCC in New Orleans and hope that our present and future efforts will be supplemented by other researchers engaged in similar projects.

In short, although my study of Korean learners discussing Korean identity among themselves in a voluntary online community is an important step in understanding the constructions of Korean identity that can take place in such a particular educational context, other contexts, including different settings, various types of instructors, and both domestic and international

exchanges, need to be studied to deepen our knowledge of how the study of English can influence the constructions of Korean identity.

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Appendix A: Flyer

JOIN ENGLISH ONLINE COMMUNITY!!

A free online community devoted to the discussion of social and cultural issues, including Korean national identity, is being established. The community will give you an opportunity to use your English in online discussions with other university students. Additionally, Professor Frank Concilus, the site mentor, will provide feedback on your English writing upon request. The community is part of Professor Concilus' research project and is entirely voluntary and free! We will try to keep the community going after the end of the semester.

If you are interested, go to <http://www.Teachers4schools.com/moodle> to register for the community. Go to the site and after clicking “Korean Universities,” select the Online Community. Enroll by filling out the application. You will receive an email confirming your registration within one day. Please use an email address (such as Hotmail or Yahoo) that will not block emails from unknown addresses such as our website!!! Please do not use a hanmail account! After receiving notification from the server, please attach a brief introduction to yourself and a photo in the profile area on the left and fill out the short online survey.

Now you're ready to start participating in the community. Let's enjoy ourselves, and be sure to let me know when you'd like feedback on your writing! See you online!!

More Directions:

Go to: <http://teachers4schools.com/moodle/>

Click on “Korean Universities” on the left side of the screen. Next, click on “Online Community”.

Now, click on the “Start Now by Creating a New Account” button at the bottom right of the screen. Fill out the form. Use only your Korean name, family name last (SoYunBaek), or a nickname (SandyBaek) with last name so I'll know who you are. (You can't leave blanks in your username.) After you submit the form, the server will send you an email instructing you how to complete the registration. For your email address in this class, please use an address (such as Hotmail or Yahoo) that will not block email from the website or me. Do not use a hanmail address!!!(Hanmail and some other Korean addresses block mail from unknown people, including the website and me.)

Go to one of the forum topics (e.g. “Korean Identity”). I have written a topic for discussion at the top of the page and you should click on “Add a New Discussion Topic” to start a new thread. Give your entry a name in the subject box, and then write a one or two paragraph statement. Also read some of the other threads and

respond to a comment by clicking on the “Reply” button. If you want to respond to someone’s reply to your topic or another person’s comments, click on his or her reply and then click on “reply” at the bottom of that screen. Please respond to members’ comments so as to get a dialogue or group discussion going. Try to write at least two pages (500 words) in entries and comments each week to get the community going. I will add new topics on a weekly basis, and there is an area where you can suggest new topics and vote on the suggestions of other members. I will add the suggested topics that receive the highest evaluations. If you have any questions, email me at fconcilu@yahoo.com!

Welcome to the community. Let’s have fun and make this community a success!!

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Welcome to our online community! You are cordially invited to participate in the community. The following information will help you decide if you wish to participate. The primary purpose of the community is to provide information for my research project on Korean identity, but the project will also provide Korean university students with an opportunity to discuss cultural and social issues in English. I'm an American professor at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and a long-term resident of Korea.

Participating in the project may be valuable for you because, not only will you have an opportunity to discuss issues in English, but I will also be happy to give you feedback on your writing's organization and grammar upon request. In our online community, I will post various discussion topics, some of which will be directly related to Korean national identity, but the participants will also be able to post discussion topics that they think will be interesting. The participants will start discussion threads related to any of the project topics or reply to threads already initiated by other participants. I will not participate in the discussion threads, but will occasionally directly communicate with participants through the site's dialogue function. The participants may in the same fashion send me or any of the other participants' dialogue messages. For my research project, I may use some of your writing from the forums and dialogues, either in the form of summaries or direct quotes, but your identity will not be revealed in the research report or any other publications. Furthermore, you will have an opportunity to review a summary of my main findings and the quotes that came from your writing before I submit my final report. I will happy to correct any mistakes or add additional explanations in accordance with your response to the findings.

Your participation in the online community and research project is entirely voluntary. There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. If you decide not to participate, it will have no adverse effect upon your relationship with me or our university. If you decide to withdraw at any time, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. You may withdraw by emailing me at (fconcilu@yahoo.com).

If you have any questions about the community or research project, you may contact me at 011-706-8479 or email me. The research that I am doing is part of my doctoral study at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. You may also contact the research advisor for the project: Dr. Jean Nienkamp, English Department, Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Nienkamp can be reached at 724-349-3252. This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724-357-7730).

If you are willing to participate in the online community and research project, please print two copies of this form. Sign one of them and mail it to me (Professor Frank Concilus, Department of English, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, 127-1 Mohyun-up, Yongin-si, Kyongki-do). Keep the extra unsigned one for yourself. If you do not send me a signed copy of this form, your registration in the community cannot be accepted, so your profile will be deleted from the site.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the community and the research project. I'm looking forward to learning a lot from you, and I hope that you enjoy this opportunity to improve your English.

<p>Project Director (and Site Mentor): Frank Concilus (Professor of English, HUFS)</p> <p>Ph.D. Candidate at Indiana University of Pennsylvania</p> <p>Phone: 011-706-8479</p> <p>Email: Fconcilu@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Faculty Sponsor: Jean Nienkamp Associate Professor of English</p> <p>Department of English, Indiana University of PA (724) 349-3252</p> <p>Nienkamp@iup.edu</p>
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VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have printed an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Phone number or location where you can be reached _____

Best days and times to reach you _____

Appendix C: Online Survey

Online Survey

- 5 Age _____
- 6 Gender _____
- 7 University major _____
- 8 University minor _____
- 9 Overseas experience Yes_____ No_____

If you have been overseas, please explain where you were, how long you were there, what you did, and from what age to what age you were there.

- 10 Plans for the future: Please explain what your plans for the future might be. (You can include jobs, goals, etc.)
- 11 Please briefly explain your reasons for volunteering to participate in this online community.
- 12 Please describe any other online communities or online discussions that you've participated in. Did you enjoy those experiences? Indicate if any of them were conducted in English.

Appendix D: Participant-Initiated Topics

TOPIC	INITIATOR	NUMBER OF REPLIES
Our Valuable Environment	Mindy	0
Economic African Language, Swahili	Randy	0
Should Only Mothers Stay Home and Take Care of Their Children?	Randy	0
Let Us Know Your Experience of Foreign Countries	Cliff	1
Is It Necessary for Elementary School Students to Use Cell-Phone?	Eunhye	4
What If We Can Go Back to Past to Change Our Life?	Jonghun	3
The Way of Driving	Jane	3
Physical Punishment in Korean Army	Randy	5

Appendix E: Coded Thread

JANE: KI, pp. 7-8

OC SH FE EG

Yes .I've been in Vietnam more than 10 years ago. I went there for sightseeing and I stay there for 1 week. I've been to Hochimin City, in south part of Vietnam. Vietnam was poor country and Korea was much rich country than there. Still we are much richer but they are developing very fast. Now Vietnam is young country and young people's English skill is amazing. So many famous and great companies want to build their factory there and employ Vietnamese. When I was there, Korean ignored them and I could see Korean men spend a lot of money to Vietnam women at the club and treat them so bad. I didn't see how they treat women, but I could hear many bad story from other people very quietly. They all knew and thought that Korean's manner is dirty but they only liked that Korean spend money a lot. I wondered what happens. All Korean losers have been there? They spread unreasonable money everywhere and acted like a king? I was embarrassed that I'm from Korea. They had some anger about Koreans, especially about men. And there were so many Korean men having Vietnam woman as concubine! Despite most of them have a Korean wife though. So I realized that poor Korean house wives only think their husband works so hard at the poor country and try to believe them that they would be good to their wives. But the truth is different. They have fun there and their acting is different than they did in Korea. Well...of course it depends on people.

Appendix F: Posts Coded According to Type of Agreement or Disagreement

NAME	GENDER	TOTAL POSTS	NEW THREADS	REPLIES	CODED REPLIES	AG	PG	DG
Christy	F	11	11	0	0	0	0	0
Aries	F	19	6	13	10	4	2	4
Eunhye	F	12	10	2	2	2	0	0
Faith	F	24	3	21	15	6	4	5
Geri	F	15	4	11	10	2	7	1
Haeson	F	11	9	2	2	2	0	0
Hyunsu	F	10	10	0	0	0	0	0
Jane	F	20	1	19	18	8	4	6
Jinhee	F	16	5	11	11	3	7	1
Kerry	F	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Marie	F	11	7	4	4	2	2	0
Minsook	F	8	8	0	0	0	0	0
Mindy	F	16	9	7	7	6	1	0
Virginia	F	9	2	7	6	3	2	1
Natalia	F	15	9	6	5	1	4	0
Seonhye	F	11	7	4	3	1	2	0
Yuri	F	8	6	2	1	1	0	0
Andy	M	14	4	10	9	5	2	2
Cliff	M	26	8	18	8	3	2	3
Dave	M	5	4	1	1	0	1	0
Davey	M	20	11	9	5	3	1	1
Derrick	M	7	4	3	3	2	1	0
Jerry	M	3	2	1	1	1	0	0
Jonghun	M	9	4	5	5	0	1	4
Josh	M	20	8	12	9	4	3	2
Mark	M	21	9	12	9	6	1	2
Namho	M	5	5	0	0	0	0	0
Randy	M	24	11	13	11	7	1	3
Yun	M	5	3	2	2	1	0	1
TOTALS		377	182	195	157	73	48	36

Post % by Individuals

NAME	GENDER	TOTAL POSTS	NEW THREADS	REPLIES	CODED REPLIES	AG	PG	DG
Christy	F	100%	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Aries	F	100%	31.58	68.42	100.00	40.00	20.00	40.00
Eunhye	F	100%	83.33	16.67	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Faith	F	100%	12.50	87.50	100.00	40.00	26.67	33.33
Geri	F	100%	26.67	73.33	100.00	20.00	70.00	10.00
Haeson	F	100%	81.82	18.18	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Hyunsu	F	100%	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Jane	F	100%	5.00	95.00	100.00	44.44	22.22	33.33
Jinhee	F	100%	31.25	68.75	100.00	27.27	63.64	9.09
Kerry	F	100%	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Marie	F	100%	63.64	36.36	100.00	50.00	50.00	0.00
Minsook	F	100%	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mindy	F	100%	56.25	43.75	100.00	85.71	14.29	0.00
Virginia	F	100%	22.22	77.78	100.00	50.00	33.33	16.67
Natalia	F	100%	60.00	40.00	100.00	20.00	80.00	0.00
Seonhye	F	100%	63.64	36.36	100.00	33.33	66.67	0.00
Yuri	F	100%	75.00	25.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Andy	M	100%	28.57	71.43	100.00	55.56	22.22	22.22
Cliff	M	100%	30.77	69.23	100.00	37.50	25.00	37.50
Dave	M	100%	80.00	20.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Davey	M	100%	55.00	45.00	100.00	60.00	20.00	20.00
Derrick	M	100%	57.14	42.86	100.00	66.67	33.33	0.00
Jerry	M	100%	66.67	33.33	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Jonghun	M	100%	44.44	55.56	100.00	0.00	20.00	80.00
Josh	M	100%	40.00	60.00	100.00	44.44	33.33	22.22
Mark	M	100%	42.86	57.14	100.00	66.67	11.11	22.22
Namho	M	100%	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Randy	M	100%	45.83	54.17	100.00	63.64	9.09	27.27
Yun	M	100%	60.00	40.00	100.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
TOTALS		100%	48.28	51.72	100	46.50	30.57	22.93

Appendix G: PS, WK, & EE Dichotomy Posts Coded According to Type

NAME	GENDER	TOTAL PS	PS+	PSX	PS-	TOTAL WK	WK+	WKX	WK-	TOTAL EE	EE+	EEX	EE-
Christy	F	4	2	1	1	3	2	0	1	2	1	1	0
Aries	F	4	0	2	2	2	0	1	1	5	2	3	0
Eunhye	F	6	6	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	1	1	0
Faith	F	12	12	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	2	0
Geri	F	4	1	2	1	2	0	2	0	4	1	2	1
Haeson	F	3	3	0	0	3	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
Hyunsu	F	3	2	1	0	3	2	0	1	2	1	1	0
Jane	F	6	1	0	5	3	2	0	1	4	1	2	1
Jinhee	F	4	0	4	0	5	2	3	0	3	1	2	0
Kerry	F	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1
Marie	F	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	3	2	0	1
Minsook	F	1	1	0	0	3	2	0	1	2	1	1	0
Mindy	F	5	1	4	0	4	3	1	0	3	1	2	0
Virginia	F	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0
Natalia	F	2	0	0	2	6	3	2	1	3	0	2	1
Seonhye	F	3	3	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	1	1	0
Yuri	F	3	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
Andy	M	3	1	0	2	4	1	2	1	2	1	1	0
Cliff	M	3	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	1	0
Dave	M	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Davey	M	4	2	2	0	5	1	4	0	4	0	3	1
Derrick	M	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0
Jerry	M	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jonghun	M	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Josh	M	6	4	0	2	4	3	0	1	3	1	2	0
Mark	M	3	0	2	1	5	0	2	3	4	0	3	1
Namho	M	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Randy	M	5	1	2	2	6	5	0	1	3	1	2	0
Yun	M	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		98	52	25	21	70	33	23	14	65	22	35	8

Post % by Individuals

NAME	GENDER	PS+	PSX	PS-	WK+	WKX	WK-	EE+	EEX	EE-
Christy	F	50.00	25.00	25.00	66.67	0.00	33.33	50.00	50.00	0.00
Aries	F	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	40.00	60.00	0.00
Eunhye	F	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00
Faith	F	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Geri	F	25.00	50.00	25.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	25.00
Haeson	F	100.00	0.00	0.00	33.33	33.33	33.33	0.00	0.00	100.00
Hyunsu	F	66.67	33.33	0.00	66.67	0.00	33.33	50.00	50.00	0.00
Jane	F	16.67	0.00	83.33	66.67	0.00	33.33	25.00	50.00	25.00
Jinhee	F	0.00	100.00	0.00	40.00	60.00	0.00	33.33	66.67	0.00
Kerry	F	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Marie	F	100.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	66.67	0.00	33.33
Minsook	F	100.00	0.00	0.00	66.67	0.00	33.33	50.00	50.00	0.00
Mindy	F	20.00	80.00	0.00	75.00	25.00	0.00	33.33	66.67	0.00
Virginia	F	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00
Natalia	F	0.00	0.00	100.00	50.00	33.33	16.67	0.00	66.67	33.33
Seonhye	F	100.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00
Yuri	F	33.33	33.33	33.33	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Andy	M	33.33	0.00	66.67	25.00	50.00	25.00	50.00	50.00	0.00
Cliff	M	66.67	33.33	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00
Dave	M	100.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Davey	M	50.00	50.00	0.00	20.00	80.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
Derrick	M	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00
Jerry	M	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Jonghun	M	33.33	33.33	33.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Josh	M	66.67	0.00	33.33	75.00	0.00	25.00	33.33	66.67	0.00
Mark	M	0.00	66.67	33.33	0.00	40.00	60.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
Namho	M	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Randy	M	20.00	40.00	40.00	83.33	0.00	16.67	33.33	66.67	0.00
Yun	M	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS		53.06	25.51	21.43	100.00	47.14	32.86	33.85	53.85	12.31