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Transnational Asian College Students: Bilingualism, Biculturalism, and Identity

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초록

김혜경 · 칸지라 차푸나랑시. 2013. 6. 30. **미국대학에서 공부하는 아시아계 대학생들의 이중 언어, 문화 체험과 정체성.** *이중언어학 52*, 71-99. 본 연구는 미국대학에서 공부하는 아시아계 학생들의 정체성이 학교 내에서 그리고 그 외의 환경에서 어떻게 형성되어 가는지를 조사하였다. 연구 대상은 아시아권 국가인 한국, 태국, 대만에서 태어나 일정 기간 교육받은 후 현재 미국대학에 재학 중인 학생들이며, 조사방법으로는 일대일 개인 인터뷰와 이메일 인터뷰를 통해 자료를 수집하는 질적 연구방법론을 택하였다. 자료 분석을 위해 세계화, 탈국가적 정체성, 제3공간이라는 이론적 틀을 통해 이중 언어와 이중 문화를 경험하는 학생들은 자신들을 어떻게 바라보는지, 미국의 언어, 문화를 습득하는 과정에서 모국어에 영향을 미친 바는 없었는지, 다중 언어 사용자로서 두 문화 사이의 갈등을 어떻게 조율하고 정체성의 혼란을 어떻게 극복해 나가는지를 살펴보았다. 이 연구는 아시아계 미국대학 학생들이 세계화 경험을 통해 겪은 새로운 문화 경험이 그들의 정체성을 재형성시키는 데 어떤 영향을 미치는지를 보여주고, 아울러 자신의 모국사회와 새롭게 이주한 미국사회, 양쪽 모두에 유대감을 보이다가 어느 순간 양쪽 사회에서 모두 이탈하는 과정을 반복적으로 되풀이하고 있음을 보여준다.**(University of Seoul · Indiana University)**

[핵심어] globalization (세계화), transnational identity (탈국가적 정체성), third space (제3공간), bilingualism (이중 언어), biculturalism (이중 문화), heritage language (모국어), discourse (담화), multicultural education (다문화 교육)

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1. Introduction

As working in multilingual and multicultural settings has become the overwhelming reality in the United States, more and more teachers and teacher educators feel that they need greater insight into educating students who do not speak English as a first language. In order to help all students "acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to participate in cross-cultural interactions" and "improve academic achievement and race relations in educational settings" (Gay, 2000, pp. vi-viii), the importance of multicultural education continues to grow.

In response to the increasing globalization and transnationalism of educactional experiences (Albright, Purohit & Walsh, 2006; Hannerz, 1997; Sánchez, 2007), language-minority students in the United States go through the stages of "language shift," sometimes referred to as language transfer or assimilation. By being immersed in an English-only environment, language-minority students experience an inequality of power relationships between the two languages and begin to realize that their home language does not carry as much capital as English. Bourdieu (1991) explains why some language-minority students try so hard to master English and obtain school knowledge and educational qualifications at the expense of their heritage language with the concepts of linguistic capital and cultural capital. Medina and Campano (2006) also view language as "a source of cultural pride" and as "an exercise of power and authority" (p. 340). In a similar vein, Goldstein (2003) discusses how language choices, language discrimination, and identity need to be negotiated on a daily basis in multilingual and multiracial schools by focusing on the voices of bilingual high school students.

In this study, we explore how transnational Asian college students' identities are situated and reshaped in and out of school. To this end, we investigate how bilingual and bicultural students see themselves, how they maintain their heritage language and culture while acquiring English literacy and American culture, and the emergence of tensions and new identities between two languages and cultures. The theoretical frameworks we apply include globalization, transnational identities, and third space. This study is significant in helping teachers and teacher educators working in multilingual and multicultural settings understand these developments to more effectively support language-minority students in their language and identity development. The findings of this study also contribute to the task of successfully implementing multicultural education in South Korea.

2. Literature Review

In this section, we present a review of relevant studies and theories surrounding the issues of how bilingualism and biculturalism shape Asian college students' identities, with a particular focus on the differences between home and school discourses, the differences between English and the home language, and the intersections of language, culture, and identity.

2.1. Between Home and School Discourse

Scholars highlight that norms for speaking and writing can vary significantly between different communities and cultures and point out crucial differences "between home and school language and literacy practices" (Brock, Boyd, & Moore, 2003, p. 447). This means that students come into the classroom with communication styles different from those demanded by schools.

Gee (1996) argues that students learn school discourses rather than school language and that discourses are acquired in natural settings rather than learned through overt teaching. Gee's use of the term "discourse" describes more than just language use. According to Gee (2008), "discourse" includes "ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, dressing, thinking, believing, with other people and with various objects, tools, and technologies" (p. 155). Gee emphasizes that our knowledge of how to use language at school is more than just a knowledge of words and how to combine them to form grammatical sentences. Instead, this discourse knowledge includes "words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes" (p.127).

As many educators note, the home discourse of students could be different from the school discourse, creating problems when students are not used to or equipped with the school discourse. When the learning styles and modes of education differ so greatly between these two places, students are not successful in the school setting unless they are explicitly taught this different discourse or their home discourse is incorporated into school. Dunn (2001) and Hartle-Schuttle (1993) suggest that schools need to avoid a narrow use of literature activities and instead help to create programs that involve a full range of literacy functions for both students' home and school lives.

This issue brings out the concept of third space (Bhabha, 1994), the overlapping area in which we merge home and school. It is absolutely vital that educators find ways to bridge the gap between home and school and start making efforts to bring the two worlds together. Pahl and Rowsell (2005) write, "[The] third space theory allows us to think about how children's meaning-making often lies between school and home" (p. 66). This is exactly what a third space represents; a third space allows the students to bring aspects of school and home together to find the ways in which they truly are integrated spaces. Gutiérrez (2008) reinterprets third space as "a transformative space where the potential for an expanded form of learning and the development of new knowledge are heightened" (p. 152). In the third space, students begin to reconceptualize their image of who they are and what they might be able to accomplish.

2.2. Between English and the Home Language

The home language plays an important role in allowing students to adjust to a school's new language environment. Many language-minority students who are new to the United States come into school knowing no English. Thrown into an English-speaking school, they do not understand what is going on in the classroom. However, they can understand translated directions and begin to feel more comfortable in the new setting by collaborating with other speakers of their native languages. Students' feelings within an environment can affect learning tremendously because they can focus more on the content when they do not worry about their level of comfort (Krashen, 1981).

Another reason to use the home language in school is that students can make connections to better develop ideas in the second, more unfamiliar language. When a child is introduced to a second culture and language, there is a struggle between what is known and comfortable and what is unknown and intimidating. In that case, a student's heritage language plays a fundamental role in learning a second language (Kim, 2009; Krashen, 1998; Park, 2007). This struggle can be significantly minimized when a child's home culture and identity are embraced. If English language learners (ELLs) have opportunities to exercise abilities in the first language, including reading and working with materials that remind them of the comforts of home and introducing peers to their native language, their feelings of being "an outsider" can be diminished.

Beyond this, a body of research shows that many students whose heritage language is treated as a resource will make better conceptual connections within the second language as their first language is utilized and developed (Collier & Thomas, 1999; Hakuta, 1986; Thomas & Collier, 1996). Use of the heritage language reinforces pride in their home culture, which is not always common when students are trying to blend in with their peers and new culture. By organizing classrooms to reflect diverse cultures to allow students to express themselves in their home language, teachers can create an environment reflecting the view of the home language as a resource and not as an obstacle. Teachers can consider the abundance of cultures and traditions within their classroom and world in a positive light. In doing so, teachers not only nurture positive self-images, but they also create a classroom rich in diversity and open-mindedness that all students benefit from.

Interestingly, Shi's (2007) study illustrates that at the adolescence stage, external forces have a major impact on language-minority students' perception of bilingualism and biculturalism and that as they move toward a higher level of cognitive maturity, their internal motivation for maintaining cultural identity and the perceived benefits of bilingualism become more significant. She argues that such maturity and self-awareness motivate them to learn their home language, which consequently assists a bicultural identity development.

2.3. Language, Culture, and Identity

Particular languages symbolize particular social identities. Language teachers should recognize students' home languages as an important part of their identity. Cummings (1996) contends that identities are formed and negotiated through everyday interactions between teachers, students, and the communities to which the students belong. The process by which students and teachers negotiate identities in classroom and school interactions can play a crucial role in determining how students feel about themselves and how they feel about others.

Language cannot be separated from culture. If we do not attempt to learn the culture, we will always have trouble using and understanding language. Language-minority students come to the United States under difficult circumstances and have a very hard time adjusting to the new culture. Dunn (2001) and Hartle-Schuttle (1993) stress the importance of teachers' awareness and understanding of student culture. Schools and teachers can assist in student success by valuing the community and culture of their students. Both authors also emphasize the importance of family involvement in the education of language-minority students, which is one of the most important aspects of successful teaching. In order to provide culturally appropriate literacy education for these children, teachers must know "the local community, something of its cultures, lifestyles, and languages" and incorporate "community interests and preoccupations into early literacy programs" (Dunn, 2001, p. 684).

Hall (1994) argues that in a globalizing environment, language-minority students' identities are transitionally poised between different positions. Hall's notion of transitory identities is central to the concept of transnational identities that emerge from experiences of new culture and new language. Shi (2007) contends that the identity transformation process is accompanied by an exploration of resolving the tensions between one's home language and culture and the dominant language and culture.

It is important for teachers to remember that better communication between teacher and student ultimately contributes to better learning outcomes and success whereas misunderstanding between them could be detrimental in the learning process. Not only are cultural misunderstandings detrimental to learning, they can also lead to a breakdown of students' self-images. When students' culture is not validated, whether through the larger local society or by their classroom teacher or peers, they are more likely to struggle in and out of school. Teachers should offer students a chance to be successful in their new culture by respecting their heritage culture.

As globalization and transnationality play increasingly influential roles in our culture and thinking, mobility and hybridity are emerging as central themes in scholarship (Albright, Purohit & Walsh, 2006; Hannerz, 1997; Sánchez, 2007). Albright, Purohit, and Walsh (2006) point out that "globalization" often operates as a form of deterritorialisation. Similarly, Hannerz (1997) argues that cultural flows are the "reorganization of culture in space" (p.11). One dimension of global cultural flows is the creation of new "ethnoscapes," which Appadurai (1996) defines as "landscape[s] of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live" and "other moving groups and individuals [who] constitute an essential feature of the world" (p. 33). The concept of the "ethnoscape" is closely related to issues of globalization and transnationality because an individual in a new environment is likely to reshape her or his identity. As Luke and Luke (1999) assert, identity is not stable, fixed, or predictable. It is always in a state of change and flux. Transnational identities are defined as those that are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew through transformation and difference (Hall, 1994). Language-minority students acquire new discourse repertoires even as they maintain their heritage language. From these new repertoires, they continue to reconstruct their identities and identifications with others. In addition, Luke and Luke (1999) suggest that Bhabha's (1994) metaphor of "third space" allows teachers to better understand the situation in which language-minority students like our participants find themselves. These three theoretical lenses—global cultural flows, transnational identity, and third space—provide an approach to the study of how bilingualism and biculturalism shape Asian college students' identities.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The study employs qualitative case studies in order to understand how bilingual and bicultural individuals residing in the United States view themselves, how they maintain their heritage language and culture, and what new identities emerge when they are in the third space between languages and cultures. This qualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context through qualitative data collection (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Miles and Huberman (1994) define the case as “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (p. 25).

3.2. Setting and Participants

Employing the method of purposeful sampling, three participants (Jean, Hsin-An, and Nalin, pseudonyms), were selected to participate in the present cross-case study. Their home countries are Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand, respectively. The researchers identified these three participants through their participation in the Asian Student Association. The researchers approached them by explaining the purpose of the study and how their privacy would be protected. Each participant was given a period of three to five days to decide whether he/she wanted to participate in the study.

The participants were all born in their home countries of Korea, Thailand, and Taiwan and currently enrolled as undergraduate students in a top-tier research university in the Midwestern section of the United States. After they agreed to participate, they were invited to the interview at the location of their choice. All participants chose one of the classrooms on campus for their interview.

Jean was a female Korean college student who attended a preschool and an elementary school in South Korea and came to the United States at the age of 8. At the time of data collection, her family (father, mother, and a younger brother) was living in the United States. She usually spoke Korean at home with her parents and with some of her friends. She found it easier to converse in Korean with her parents because they comprehend her better in Korean. Overall, Jean used more English than Korean because most of her friends, with the exception of a few Korean friends and her parents, used the English language. With regard to developing her heritage language literacy in the United States, she did not see the necessity to improve her Korean. Jean believed herself very fluent in Korean. According to her, she improved her Korean vocabulary by watching Korean dramas and talking with Korean friends. When it came to Korean writing, however, she still struggled with spelling and spacing. Jean wanted to improve her Korean writing by taking Korean language courses offered at a university. She had already taken two beginning Korean language courses.

Hsin-An was a 24 year old male Taiwanese undergraduate student. He came to the United States for his senior year of high school at the age of 18. Prior to coming to the United States, Hsin-An was educated in a Taiwanese education system. All of his family members (father, mother, and a younger brother) were still residing in Taiwan. In regard to his heritage language literacy, His-An saw himself as a mature Chinese-literate individual; hence, he did not make Chinese learning as his first priority. At the present time, he uses English more often than Chinese for both communication and academic purposes. He only spoke Chinese with his family when he called home or with a few Chinese friends in the United States.

Nalin was a female undergraduate student majoring in Graphic Design. She came to the United States when she was 16 years old to attend eleventh grade in a U.S. high school. Prior to coming to the United States, she attended Thai public schools, except for the last semester in which she attended an international school in Bangkok in order to be well-prepared for U.S. education. All of her family members (mother and a younger sister) lived in Thailand at the time of data collection. Due to limited exposure to English, Nalin had a difficult time at the beginning of her stay. She lived with relatives whose home language was English, and she attended a small Catholic high school that included only one other international student. She recalled that there had been no international student at that school before her and another Korean boy; as a result, the school did not provide English as a second language (ESL) classes for ELLs. Nalin prefers to spend time with Asian-American students rather than with mainstream students because she thought that she had more in common with Asian students. In terms of maintaining her heritage language and culture, she spoke Thai to her Thai friends, talked to her family members in Thailand using Thai and actively participated in cultural activities through the Thai Student Association.

3.3. Data Collection

The researchers used in-depth interviews to collect data for this study. The questions were semi-structured and all answers were tape-recorded. The interviews took place in one of the classrooms on campus as preferred by the participants. Each interview lasted from one hour to two hours. The recorded interview conversations were transcribed verbatim and sent to the participants for their member checks to ensure the accuracy of the data (Creswell, 2008). The researchers also e-mailed the participants follow-up questions to make certain that their points of view on the topic were accurately understood (Creswell, 2008; Mills, 2003).

All data are based solely on self-reported descriptions. The main reason for not including an observation technique in this study is because all participants were full time college students with little time between classes. We are thankful for their willingness to take time off from their studies to be interviewed with us and to clarify the questions we had via e-email correspondence; otherwise, we would not have had access to these invaluable data. Yet, we could possess richer data given an opportunity to observe the participants in real settings.

3.4. Data Analysis

The thematic analysis approach was employed to analyze the interview data. The researchers chose thematic analysis because it is one of the approaches used to analyze the participant's talk about their experiences in ethnographic interviews. It accounts for themes that emerge from the informants' stories and then form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience (Aronson, 1994).

Upon receiving the transcribed conversations that had been approved from the participants for their accuracy, the researchers reviewed the transcribed conversations several times and established categories from emerged patterns of experiences (themes) that held up across participants (Creswell, 2008). The researchers also cross checked with each other to ensure the congruency of emerging themes with the data. The emerging themes include from home to a new land, assimilation to the mainstream, ties to home culture, and my third space.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. From Home to a New Land

Although the three participants arrived in the United States at different ages, they all experienced difficulties at the beginning of their stay. Those difficulties included a new life style, new culture, new language, meeting new people, and being in a new school. Among these difficulties, trying to communicate in a new language tended to be the immediate issue for the newly-arrived residents. The participants in this study had learned English in their homeland; however, they possessed only rudimentary English at the time of arrival, which was insufficient to help them survive in such an English-dominant community. If lucky, they may have had someone to aid their transition by helping them feel more secure in the new environment. Jean revealed:

> *When I first came to the United States and attended my very first elementary school in America, I didn't speak English at all... however, my class consisted of 20% Asian students and fortunately, my homeroom teacher was a Korean woman who could speak both English and Korean fluently. She taught me the English language and helped me make a huge progress towards improvement. At the same time, I was able to follow through and be able to learn the language quickly due to my personal motivation to be able to communicate and have fun with my American friends.* (10/30/2009)

Nalin faced similar challenges but lacked a teacher who could ease her transition. She talked about her experiences during her first three months in the United States as follows:

> *I could not speak English when I first came. I had some troubles with English at the beginning...I did not understand English...can't communicate. It took me three months to adjust to a new environment.* (10/22/2009)

Nalin came to the United States and lived with her uncle, who was married to an American person. Therefore, she had to speak English both at home and at school.

4.2. Assimilation to the Mainstream

The female informants in this study explicitly stated that assimilation to the mainstream was necessary. When asked whether people should have a greater interest in their own ethnic culture than in the mainstream culture, Nalin asserted, "*I think a person should have an interest in both. When you are in a place, you should learn their culture in order to live well in that place*" (10/22/2009). Moreover, at one point in the interview, she indicated that she had always wanted to master English in order to communicate with people in the new community.

Assimilation to the mainstream was important from Jean's point of view as well. She confirmed that even though her nationality was Korean, she needed to adapt and adjust to the mainstream's culture in some ways because she was currently residing in the United States. Similar to Nalin, Jean recalled that during the beginning of her stay, she was very motivated to study English because she wanted to speak English with her American friends.

However, trying to assimilate to the mainstream was not always easy. Nalin, revealed that she sometimes felt that she was excluded by members of the mainstream. She talked about her experience regarding the issue this way:

> *This university has so many international students. They* [American students] *get used to having so many Asian students that they feel indifferent. They get used to not understanding Asian international students, so adding me as another one on their list does not make any difference.*(10/22/2009)

It should be noted that the participant used "This university" to indicate "American students," the majority group of the university. This is one of the reasons that Nalin would rather spend time with Asian-American students, a group of students who have much in common with her.

4.3. Ties to Home Culture

While accepting and assimilating to a new culture, transnational individuals are able to and usually want to preserve attachments to their home culture. This was evident in the three interviews. The three participants have continued watching popular media and listening to music produced in their home countries along with the American media. For instance, Hsin-An reported that he still watched Chinese T.V. programs although he sometimes did not understand Chinese jokes and slang used among youth as he had been away from Chinese pop culture for quite a while. The other two participants mentioned that they enjoyed T.V. programs from their home countries and they thought that new technology made it easier for them to have access to such programs. In addition to watching T.V. shows, Jean reported other ways in which she preserved Korean culture as, "*I celebrate Korean holidays...for example, the Korean New Year. It's a time where all our family gathers together and celebrates for a good year we've had and wish every one the best for the next year. We also eat the traditional Korean rice-cake soup* (떡국) *and dumplings*" and "*during one of the Halloween, I remember dressing up in the Korean traditional dress to introduce the Korean culture to my American friends*" (10/30/2009). Nalin actively participated in cultural events and at the time of the interview, she was a Public Relation (PR) director for the Thai Students Association. The previous year, she had performed Thai dance at the Thai night and played a Thai musical instrument at one of the International Center's events. In addition, she usually visited a Thai temple whenever time permitted. When she met with older Thai people, she greeted them with a Wai (ไหว้), a specific gesture to show formal respect to an older person in Thai culture. She knew that a Wai was appropriate and perhaps expected by many older Thai people. This reflects her notion of the importance of home culture when interacting with the Thai diasporic community living in the United States.

4.4. My Third Space

In general, the participants in this study saw themselves as a member of their heritage culture. They saw it as their identity and as something that they were born with. Jean said:

> *I always identified myself as a "Korean," never "Korean American" or "American." Since I was born in Korea and still hold a Korean citizenship, I consider myself a "Korean" rather than an "American." (10/30/2009)*

Similar to Jean, Hsin-An defined himself by his home country of Taiwan. Nalin also believed that she would never be able to eradicate her Thai identity because it had been with her since the time she was born. However, despite seeing themselves as a member of their heritage culture, as transnational individuals, there were times they felt different from other members of the heritage culture. For instance, Hsin-An revealed that he felt different from people who spoke his heritage language because after he became used to the American culture, it was difficult to switch back and forth. Nalin asserted that when she went back to Thailand, she sometimes felt she was different, like an outsider. Jean also experienced a situation in which she felt different from her new Korean friends. She did not understand why the person wanted her to speak Korean despite the fact that both parties could simply carry on the conversation in English without any difficulties.

Not only did they sometimes feel that they were different from other members of their heritage culture, but they often felt that they were different from members of the new culture as well. Their situations seemed to naturally create the so-called *third space* (Bhabha, 1994), a unique space not exactly the same as their home culture or the main stream culture. Several parts of the interviews reveal how the participants created new ways of doing things that fit their third space, such as a hybrid use of English and home language and a preference for a particular group of people with whom they wanted to spend time. The first excerpt illustrates the way Jean used a hybrid language between English and Korean.

> *Of course, I respect American culture as well as the Korean culture. I belong to both cultures, America and Korea. I don't think it'd be possible for me to belong in just one group for I've lived in America longer than I've had in Korea. I often speak in both languages, English and Korean, when I talk with my parents and Korean friends. Also, I hold an account in both Facebook and Cyworld, an online website to connect with people. I mostly use English, but sometimes I use Korean to communicate with family residing in Korea.* (10/30/ 2009)

The following excerpt illustrates Nalin's preferred group of friends.

> *In terms of friends, I prefer Asian American friends, Asian people who grew up here* [in the United States] *because we understand each other. They know what it is like to be Asian high school students such as having different appearance from the majority. I am neither keen on having international students nor Americans as my friends.* (10/22/2009)

The fact that the participants have lived in two different places also enabled them to develop cultural flexibility. They seemed to be aware of different social demands placed on them in each cultural community. For instance, Nalin always greeted her Thai senior diasporas with a Wai and used a language that allow the interlocutors to feel superior.

> *Here in the States, whenever I met Thai graduate students or Thai people who were older than me, I always gave them a Wai and spoke politely and humbly to them. I knew that they* [older people] *think it was appropriate. I couldn't change them. It has always been like that in all of their life. They expected it.* (10/22/2009)

Although Nalin was more direct and usually got to the point when she spoke in the mainstream language, she knew that cultural flexibility was necessary to function in both communities. The same is true in Jean's case. She seemed to get along well with American culture and at the same time she was well-aware of Korean culture, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

> *Although I am not an expert in the Korean history, I know that in my culture, youngers are expected to respect the elders and show courtesy and respect. I thought that all Korean people should be able to speak their national language, whether they are U.S.-born or is residing in the U.S.* (10/30/2009)

As a result of being a member of two communities, the participants have become global citizens who know how to interact with others in transnational social spaces.

In relation to the first research question about how Asian students view themselves as bilingual and bicultural individuals, on one level they seemed to identify themselves according to their "assigned" identity: the identity they were given at the time they were born. This was evident in several parts of the interviews, but let us take a closer look at the Korean participant's case. Jean articulated that, "*I always identified myself as a"Korean," never "Korean American" or "American," "Since I was born in Korea and still hold a Korean citizenship*" (10/30/2009). However, from another perspective, she could see her self as a Korean-American since she lives between the two languages and cultures. She felt at home and highly appreciated the two cultures, stating, "*I respect American culture as well as the Korean culture. I belong to both cultures, America and Korea*" (10/30/2009). Similarly, the Thai participant was not sure what answer she should give when asked whether she saw herself as a Thai or American person. She replied, "*It is difficult to say. Thai, perhaps. Thai 70%, American 30%*" (10/22/2009). The first answer that came to her mind was Thai, but her second answer indicated that she also saw herself as a transnational individual.

In order to address the second research question about how Asian students maintained their heritage language and culture while acquiring English literacy and American culture, it appeared that the three participants naturally maintained their heritage language by talking to their family members and friends. They used their mother tongue when they called their family members and used a combination of their first language and English when they wrote a message via social networks on new media such as Facebook or Cyworld. In addition, they interacted in their first language with members of their nation's diaspora community while they were in the United States.

Whether the participants saw the necessity of maintaining home language literacy depended on their views of the strength of their home language literacy. The participant who arrived in the United States at a young age (i.e., Jean) has taken Korean courses to develop her Korean literacy. Jean did not take courses at the beginning of her stay while she tried hard to acquire the mainstream language, perhaps at the expense of the home language. As she grew, she realized that her heritage language literacy could make new discourse repertoires available for her and that from these new repertoires she could continue to construct her identity and identify herself with others who share the same heritage language. Therefore, maintaining home language literacy became essential for her. Nevertheless, the participants who arrived in the United States at a later age (i.e., Nalin and Hsian-An) did not see the necessity of maintaining the heritage language literacy because they were fully literate in their heritage language before coming to the United States. As a result, they did not need formal language training such as classes. In terms of maintaining heritage culture, the majority of participants attended and engaged in many different forms of cultural events held by their student associations or home country communities. The reason they perceived it as important may come from their desire to maintain their ethnic identity, a desire that is quite common for bicultural individuals in young adulthood. This confirms Shi’s (2007) research findings, as discussed earlier.

Regarding the last research question about the tensions and new identities that emerged between the two languages and cultures, all participants reported that there were times when they found themselves different from people who shared their heritage culture as well as those who shared the mainstream culture. Those differences can be explained by several reasons, including their hybrid cultures. That is, they were exposed to elements from both cultures and over time those elements became parts of their personalities and beliefs. Once they formed a new set of beliefs, they saw the world differently from people with only one culture. Furthermore, because of these differences, they created a comfort zone known as a *third space* in which they can act creatively by, for example, codeswitching between the two languages and cultures.

5. Conclusion and Implications

This study reveals that transnational Asian college students' identities in a globalizing environment are situated and reshaped through experiences of new culture and new language. It also demonstrates that language-minority students are constantly involved in processes of association and disassociation in both the homeland and the host society. It appears that a transnational identity that mixes the two cultural sources is almost inevitable, as transnational identities were observed in the participants of our study. In this process, family influence, individuals' cognitive development, and social feedback are all at play (Shi, 2007).

In order to be successful in the mainstream culture's schools, language-minority students need to overcome the cultural discontinuities between the mainstream school and minority family contexts. Therefore, teachers and teacher educators should first realize that language is culture and that students' home language is an important part of their identity. Additionally, teachers should promote a healthy transition by encouraging language-minority students to maintain their heritage language and home culture in order to help students have a more positive experience while acclimatizing. Because of this, they will experience less culture shock and be more open to observing and attempting to use the new language and new culture. Furthermore, teachers and teacher educators should consider that language-minority students' linguistic and cultural identities develop within a third space. In this regard, as Mclaughlin (1984) argues, researchers and educators should understand that bilingualism is more of a social issue than a language issue because language is closely related to one's identity and cultural attachment. By understanding how transnational Asian college students' identities are situated and reshaped inside and outside of school, we learn that transnational young adults could become our best teachers of globalization.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

Interview questions that elicit personal background:

1. When is your date of birth?
2. What is your gender?
3. Where is your birthplace?
4. Tell me about your educational background.
5. Describe your length of residence in the US/ age of arrival.
6. Tell me about your family members (age, gender, occupation, length of residence).

Interview questions that explore their languages:

7. Do you speak your heritage language in the home and/or with your relatives/friends? If so, why? If not, why?
8. What language or languages do you use to tell jokes and make casual conversations? Why do you use that language or those languages?
9. Do you think you need to develop your heritage language literacy in the U.S.? What are your goals for developing your heritage language literacy? How far have you come?
10. Were there any times you felt different either from people who speak your heritage language or English? If so, tell me about the situation. If not, why do you think that is not the case?
11. What are/were some of the tensions you experience when you are/were in between two languages and cultures?

Interview questions that explore plural cultures:

12. Tell me about the history and culture of your country. Is it important to you? How or why?
13. Tell me about your involvement in Asian-related cultural event/activities, including religious functions.
14. Do you feel people should have a greater interest in their own ethnic culture than in the mainstream culture? If so, why? If not, why?
15. Do you feel there should be diverse cultures represented in the U.S.? If so, why? If not, why?
16. What are the names of radio or television shows you like to listen to or watch? What do you like about these shows? Do you share them with your family members, or friends? How do you do that?

Interview questions that explore transnational identities:

17. As a bilingual and bicultural individual, how do you see yourself?
18. Do you see yourself as Korean or American? Why?
19. Do you feel it is important for you to maintain your cultural identity? If so, why? If not, why?
20. What new identities do you think you have when you are in between the two languages and cultures?

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