Article

Educating Language Minority Students in South Korea: Multilingual Sustainability and Linguistic Human Rights

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Abstract: In the context of globalization, the landscape of language in Korea has changed dramatically in the last three decades because of the influx of marriage migrants and foreign workers. The growing number of immigrant and international marriages has led to the emergence of new linguistic minorities in Korea who have multicultural and multilingual backgrounds, and they challenge Korea's long-lasting tradition of linguistic homogeneity and purity. Language related education for this newly emerging group of language minority students, whose number has increased dramatically since the late-1990s, has become a salient issue. This paper critically analyzes the current education policies and programs designed for the newly emerging group of language minority students, and examines the prospects for sustainable development of these students in Korea. In particular, it focuses on the underlying ideology of linguistic nationalism and assimilationist integration regime embedded in various education policy initiatives and reforms, which require language minority students to forgo their multilingual background and forcibly embrace linguistic homogeneity. The paper elaborates on alternative educational programs that could enable language minority students to achieve sustainable development and progress.

Keywords: multilingual sustainability; minority language education; language minority students; South Korea; sustainable development; minority language policy; linguistic human rights

1. Introduction

Korea has, in general, been looked at as a nation with historical homogeneity, where there is high emphasis on the same-blood line, common language, ethnic unity, and centuries of a common history. Indeed, the prevalent ideology of "our country, our language, our ethnicity" (ulinala, ulimal, and uliminjog) and the inherent nationalist discourses have served as a cornerstone for establishing the historical homogeneity of the Korean nation (Lee [1]; Pai and Tangherlini [2]; and Shin et al. [3]). In particular, linguistic nationalism has played an important role in shaping the nation building process and articulating national identity that became complicated due to colonialism and post-war recovery (Pieper [4] and Yoo [5]). As a result, under the influence of linguistic ethnic nationalist discourses surrounding the Korean language, the monolingual tradition has been deeply embedded in various language education policies and practices in the country. These largely lay emphasis on the importance of acquiring Korean as a national language and maintaining linguistic homogeneity.

In the context of globalization, the landscape of language in Korea has changed dramatically in the last three decades because of the influx of marriage migrants and foreign workers. The estimated number of foreign-born residents in Korea, for example, is more than two million. This accounts for about 4.6% of the total population (Ministry of Justice [6]). The growing number of immigrant and international marriages has led to the emergence of new linguistic minorities in Korea who have multicultural and multilingual backgrounds, and they challenge Korea's long-lasting tradition of linguistic homogeneity and purity (see Lee [7] for more discussion). Language related education for this newly emerging group of language minority students, whose number has increased dramatically

since the late-1990s, has become a salient issue. Approximately 137,225 students who belong to this group are currently a part of the formal educational system in Korea. This indicates an increase of more than three times as compared to 46,954 students in 2012 (Korean Educational Statistics Service [8]). Even though the Korean government has implemented various policies and programs designed for the newly emerging group of students, the dropout rate of these students is about two times that of Korean students (Seoul Public News [9]).

This paper critically analyzes the current education policies and programs designed for the newly emerging group of language minority students, and examines the prospects for sustainable development of these students in Korea. In particular, it focuses on the underlying ideology of linguistic nationalism and assimilationist integration regime embedded in various education policy initiatives and reforms, which require language minority students to forgo their multilingual background and forcibly embrace linguistic homogeneity. The paper elaborates on alternative educational programs that could enable language minority students to achieve sustainable development and progress.

The paper begins by investigating the characteristics of the newly emerging and rapidly growing linguistic minority groups in Korea and their current social, political, and demographic status. This is followed by an examination and analysis of educational plans, policies, and programs that exist to support these students in the country, and their effectiveness in terms of sustainable development of the students. The aim is to encourage students to develop their voice as responsible citizens and appreciate diversity highlighted by the Sustainable Development Goals. The paper concludes with a detailed discussion on educational alternatives for language minority students in Korea.

2. The Emergence of Language Minority Students in Korea

In the context of globalization, Korea has seen a large number of marriages between immigrants or foreigners and Koreans over the last three decades. There are 2,367,607 foreign residents in Korea, which indicates an increase of 8.6% as compared to the previous year (Ministry of Justice [6]). Figure 1 illustrates that the number of foreign residents, including foreign workers and marriage migrants, has dramatically increased in the last three decades. As Pennycook [10] points out, the process of globalization in Korea not only brings ethnoscapes, which refers to the flow of people between nations (Appadurai [11]), but also causes linguascapes, which indicates the advent of multilingual contexts. Indeed, the growing number of marriage migrants and foreign workers has led to the emergence of language minority students who have become a part of the public education system with their multicultural and multilingual backgrounds.

The Korean government introduced the term "the multicultural student" or damunhwahagsaeng (this term is derived from the term "multicultural families" or damunhwagajog, that indicates families that comprise of a person with Korean citizenship and the other with foreign citizenship) to characterize the rapidly growing group of language minority students in Korea (Ministry of Education [12]). The Ministry of Education categorizes this newly emerging group of linguistic minorities into three groups: (a) Korean-born multicultural students, (c) foreign-born multicultural students, and (c) multicultural students with foreign parents (see Table 1 for details).
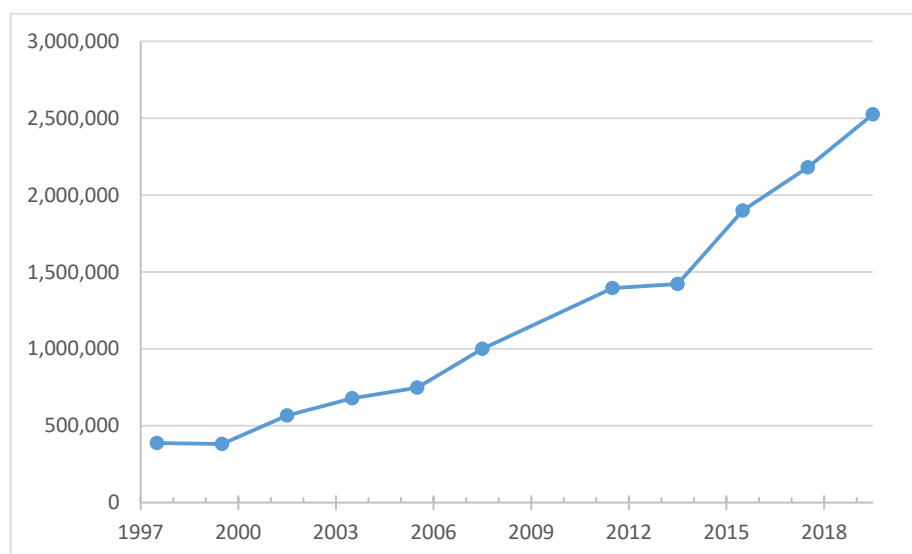
Figure 1. The number of foreign residents in Korea between 1997 and 2019 (Ministry of Justice [6]).

Table 1. Types of multicultural students in Korea (Ministry of Education [12]).

Multicultural families emerging from international marriage	Korean-born students	• Students were born between a Korean and a marriage migrant • Students can speak Korean but struggle with academic literacy • In adolescence, students feel marginalized due to the stereotypes against multicultural families
	Foreign-born students	• Students came to Korea with a foreign-born parent who remarried a Korean or were born between Korean and a marriage migrant but grew up abroad • Students are under pressure to adjust to new family members and Korean culture, and experience identity conflict and depression • Students struggle to enter and adjust to Korean schools due to their lack of Korean language proficiency
Multicultural families resulted from foreign labor workers	Students with foreignparents	• Students were born with foreign parents (including Chinese with Korean ethnic background, Korean Russian and Syrian refuses) • Students have a hard time attending schools due to their unstable status • Since the Korean government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (the CRC is an international convention initiated on 20 November 1989. This convention secures the educational rights for every child in the world without any discrimination because of ethnicity, skin color, gender, language, religion, or different background) in 1991, students have an equal educational right with Korean students regardless of their immigrant status

As indicated in Figure 2, the number of language minority students currently enrolled in the formal education system in Korea has increased by about three times and is now 122,212, as compared to 46,954 students in 2012. Out of these students, 76.1% are in elementary schools, 14.8% are in middle school, and 8.7% are in high schools. It is noteworthy that the number of young children from multicultural families has dramatically increased, reflecting the recent increase of marriage migrants and foreign workers in Korea. Currently, three out of 100 elementary school students are from multicultural families. Due to the record-low birthrate of 0.98 on one hand, and the constant increase of marriage migrants, foreign labor workers, and international students in Korea, it is estimated that language

minority students in the public education system will consist of one-third of the entire student population in the near future.
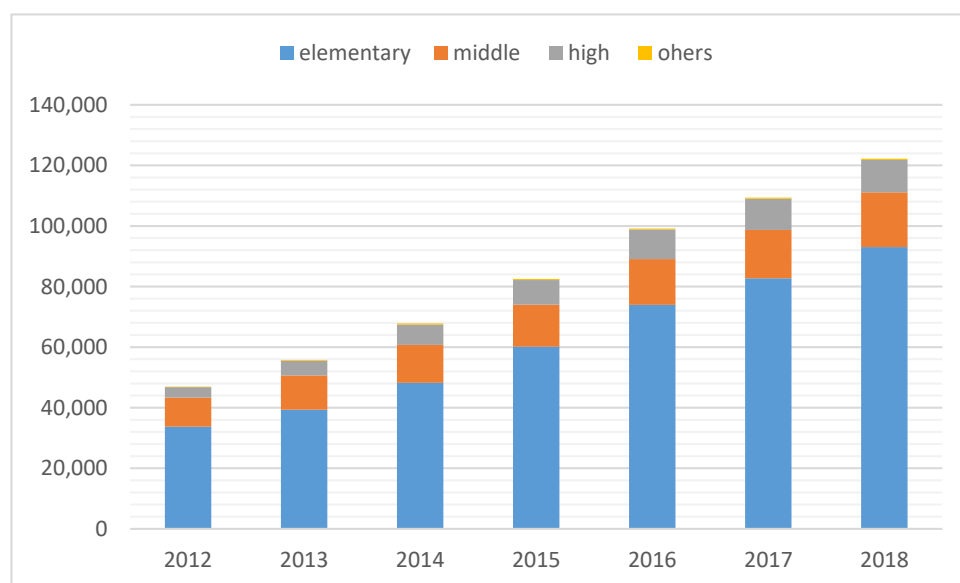

Figure 2. The number of language minority students in the public education system (Ministry of Education [8]).

Among these language minority students, 80.4% come from multicultural families resulting from international marriages. Most of these children are born in Korea and have a Korean father whose mother tongue is Korean and a foreign-born mother who has a non-Korean language as her mother tongue. The ethnic background of their foreign-born parents includes Vietnamese (29.1%), Chinese with non-Korean ethnic background (22.3%), Filipinos (11.5%), Chinese with Korean ethnic background (10.2%), and Japanese (8.5%). As this particular group comprises the majority of language minority students who are currently enrolled in the formal education system in Korea, most education and language policies and programs designed for language minority students tend to heavily focus on this student population.

Many language minority students come from the working class or traditional agricultural families, mostly living near industrial sites, rural areas, and low-income areas (Lee, 2018). Previous studies demonstrate that these students, especially those from low-income families, show relatively poor performance in academics and cognitive development (Gersten [13] and Ogbu [14], among many). It can be seen that a large number of language minority students in Korea have relatively low academic achievement and success (e.g., Kim et al. [15]; Lee [16]; and Ryu et al. [17]). According to the recent educational statistics released by Ministry of Education [18], the school attendance rate of language minority students is 97.6% (average: 98.5%) in elementary schools, 93.5% (average: 96.3%) in middle schools, 89.9% (average: 93.5%) in high schools, and 53.3% (average: 68.1%) in tertiary education. It is evident that the educational gap between language minority students and mainstream students becomes greater in higher education, showing a difference of 14.8%. In addition, the dropout rate of language minority students in Korean middle schools is twice the dropout rate of other students.

3. Education and Language Policies for Language Minority Students

As an increasing number of language minority students enter the public school system, the Korean government has started paying attention to the significance of language and educational support for these students who struggle academically, and as a result experience a lot of anxiety and frustration (e.g., Kim, M. [19]; Kim, J. [20]; Lee, M. [21]; and

Oh [22]). To better assist this newly emerging group of students and to aid their adjustment and adaptation to the Korean education system, the government has implemented various policies and programs since 2006.

3.1. The First Phase: From the Early Social Movement to the First Education Policy for Language Minority Students

With more than two million foreign residents and their children, Korea can no longer claim national and ethnic homogeneity. In fact, more and more scholars argue that Korea is now a multiethnic and multicultural society and needs to appreciate diversity as a social asset (Lee, S. [7] and Seol [23]). The early education campaign for securing educational linguistic human rights for language minority students was initiated by religious organizations in the late 1990s (Park, Y. [24]). These organizations offer Korean language and culture programs for linguistic minorities to help them learn Korean language and cultural practices.

Under the pressure of various social movements and international organizations, the Korean government announced The Educational Plan for Children from the Multicultural Families (EPCMF) in July 2006. This was designed to address the needs of language minority students with limited Korean language proficiency and to address maladjustment in the mainstream education system. It aimed to prevent both educational and social discrimination against them.

As shown in Table 2, the EPCMF strongly emphasizes the immediate need to provide Korean language support for language minority students. The most salient language support initiative implemented under the EPCMF is the nationwide introduction of Korean as a second language (KSL) programs. These are after-school remedial programs specifically designed to support Korean language acquisition and practice for language minority students. While the EPCMF received a lot of support from the society as the first national-level language plan for minority students, there were some concerns that this plan could create forcible sociocultural integration and assimilation (Park, Y. [24]). Suh [25], for example, argues that the Korean government needs to lay more emphasis on multilingual education for language minority students, which can enable them to appreciate their multilingual and multicultural background and further enhance their self-esteem.

Table 2. The main contents of the EPCMF (Ministry of Government Legislation [26]).

The Educational Plan for Children from the Multicultural Families
A. Main objects (EPCMF: §8)
• Encourage social unification by reducing multicultural families linguistic and cultural barriers by developing proficiency in Korean language and supporting cultural adjustment • Increase social bonding and multicultural understanding among students • Secure the educational rights of multicultural students
B. Specified practices (EPCMF: §10–12)
• Offer Korean as a second language (KSL) program • Design curricula and textbooks for KSL program • Provide teacher training • Encourage multicultural education • Operate an educational center for multicultural students • Give credit to teachers holding a KSL certificate • Support local government or nongovernmental organization-based language

3.2. The Second Phase: New and Revised Educational Policies for Language Minority Students

The goal of educational policies and programs introduced in the initial phase for language minority students was to aid quick acquisition of Korean. This underlies the ideology of assimilation, which potentially treats the multilingual background of these students as a source of interference or a problem (c.f., Carrasquillo and Rodriguez [27];

Wiese and García [28]. With the growing awareness among educators and parents that multilingual and multicultural backgrounds of language minority students should be looked at as an asset and not a problem, the Korean government started to revise initial educational policies and programs for language minorities in an attempt to incorporate diversity (Lee [16]).

In 2012, the Ministry of Education announced the plan to offer customized educational programs that would meet the unique needs of multicultural students. In 2013 and 2014, the Ministry of Education announced its intention to ensure a friendly educational environment for multicultural students so that no student would be left behind (han myeongui hagsaengdo nohchiji anhneun damunhwa chinhwajeog haggyo yugseong). In the initial phase of this process, the government proposed an expansion of the KSL programs, an increase of career development programs for multicultural students, the initiation of mentoring programs, and the promotion of bilingual education. As of 2018, there were 179 KSL classes to support acquisition of the Korean language and culture, and 78 students were participating in the mentoring program that paired a multicultural student with a college student who could speak the mother tongue of the student. The government also began to host nationwide bilingual speech contests to promote bilingual development of multicultural students and construction of positive academic identities. In addition, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family started offering language support programs for multicultural students (damunhwa gajog janyeo eoneobaldaljiwon seobiseu) who exhibited language developmental disorders and were under the age of 12. Additionally, a customized Korean language tutor program for multicultural students (damunhwa gajog bangmungyoyug seobiseu) who were under the age of 12 and needed Korean language support was introduced.

3.3. Current Educational Policies for Language Minority Students: Possibilities and Limitations

Even though the Korean government initiated and implemented various educational policies and programs designed to meet the needs of language minority students, it is evident that the emphasis is on supporting immediate acquisition of Korean language, with little consideration to the multicultural and multilingual development of students. The government-led language support programs are mainly to facilitate Korean language acquisition through programs like KSL and Korean language support. This implies that the current educational policies are largely based on an assimilationist and deficit perspective rather than a pluralist view that appreciates diversity and promotes sustainable language development of students.

Many scholars who examine education policies and plans for language minority students in the context of the U.S. warn against the danger of the assimilationist orientation as it can force language minority students to blame their multilingual and multicultural backgrounds for academic failure and does not give them the opportunity to develop their own voice as responsible citizens (Pease-Alvarez and Hakuta [29]; Skutnabb-Kangas [30]; Stritikus and Garcia, 2003 [31]). Others further argue that bilingualism and multilingualism need to be encouraged throughout the nation to secure linguistic and education rights of language minority students and promote sustainable development throughout their life trajectories (e.g., Cummins [32]; Thomas and Collier [33]). Similarly, a number of Korean scholars and educators have started pointing out the need to promote bilingual and multilingual education that could enable students to see their diverse backgrounds as an asset, prepare them to be competent global citizens, and help them to develop their voices and identities (Lee [16] and Park [34,35]). In her study of marriage-migrants and their mixed-heritage children in Korea, Park [35] claims that most of language minority students have little chance of receiving heritage language education and/or bilingual education and developing their multilingual and multiethnic identities. She further points out that the assimilationist orientation deeply embedded in Korean society serves as an obstacle for migrant mothers to teach their children the heritage language related to the mother's linguistic and ethnic background.

4. Toward Sustainable Development: Educational Alternatives for Language Minority Students in Korea

With a constantly growing number of language minority students, it is important to critically examine educational alternatives that could promote sustainable development of these students in Korea. This section will explore some possible educational programs for language minority students, which include both Korean-literacy development and bilingual education programs. The following criteria was used to select appropriate and feasible educational programs for language minority students in Korea: (a) local particularity: as the newly emerging group of language minority students in Korea have unique characteristics in terms of their social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, it is important to consider local particularities when choosing educational programs for these students, and (b) needs of language minority students: even though multilingualism can be an important resource, it should not be seen as an absolute agenda for all minority language education programs. An overly emphasized belief in multilingual education can undermine the immediate need to acquire Korean language proficiency among language minority students by imposing a burden of developing both minority and majority languages on them. To develop language programs for language minority students, I agree with August and Hakuta [36] who emphasize the importance of "finding a set of program components that works for the children in the community of interest, given the goals, demographics, and resources of that community (p. 147)".

Based on these criteria, five programs have been selected for further discussion: Korean-only instructional programs, two-way developmental bilingual education, community-based bilingual education, family literacy bilingual education, and distance education. These programs are examined in this paper with reference to the characteristics, goals, target population, feasibility, and impact of each. In addition, the paper also explores how each program meets the needs of minority language students in Korea, and fits into current resources of the society and nation (see Table 3).

Table 3. Educational alternatives for language minority students in Korea.

Program		Goal	Target Population	Medium of Instruction	Related Researches
Korean as a second language Program		Korean language development	Minority	Korean	Auerbach [37]
Bilingual Education	Two-way developmental bilingual education	Bilingualism	Minority and mainstream students	Korean, Target-minority language	Lindholm-Leary [38], Perez [39]
	Community-based language learning	Bilingualism	Minority	Target-minority language	Galbraith [40], Compton [41]
	Family literacy	Bilingualism	Minority	Target-minority language	Amstutz [42], Hannon [43]
Distance Education		Bilingualism	Minority and mainstream students	Korean, Target-minority Language	Bates [44], Schlosser and Anderson [45]

4.1. Korean as a Second Language Programs

KSL programs are remedial programs designed to help language minority students to develop Korean language proficiency. There are three types of KSL programs implemented for minority language students in Korea: (a) a pull-out KSL program: students are pulled out of the mainstream classrooms for special instructions in Korean, (b) a high-intensity language training (HILT) program: students receive highly intensive Korean language education for a particular period of time before entering into the mainstream class, and (c) an afterschool KSL program: students receive additional instructions to build Korean literacy skills.

Feasibility and impact:

KSL programs require hiring additional teachers, development of curriculum and material, administrative changes, and teacher training. The recruitment of qualified teachers who specialize in KSL education for these programs and at the same time have sufficient knowledge and skills to teach language minority students can be a major challenge for administrators (Lee [16]). Even though KSL programs can lessen the burden on classroom teachers by providing specialized Korean language programs to support language development of these students, teachers still face difficulties in helping students understand the content knowledge in the mainstream class. As a result, teachers need to make extra efforts to help students who attend separate pull-out classes to catch up with the content knowledge. Additionally, the HILT program does not include any academic content, but rather concentrates only on Korean language development, students from the program also need extra assistance from their teachers to keep up with the subjects.

From the perspective of students, special Korean language programs can be of great help for them to achieve language proficiency needed to succeed in the mainstream Korean-only classroom. KSL programs, however, tend to devalue the heritage language background of students by laying emphasis on the importance of acquiring Korean language proficiency. In addition, they can make language minority students feel segregated from other mainstream peers or feel stigmatized for being labeled as language-deficient students who need special help. Given the fact that multicultural students already experience a high risk of maladjustment and subsequent school disengagement in Korea (Park [35]; Park and Oh [46]; and Lee [16]), KSL programs could heighten the risk of segregation between language minority students and mainstream peers.

4.2. Bilingual Education Programs

Bilingual education programs can be largely defined as an "educational program that involve the use of two languages of instruction at some point in a student's school career" (Nieto [47] p. 20). Though the target population varies, most of these programs widely share the same goal, which is to aid bilingual and biliteracy development of language minority students. Three different bilingual education programs that could be implemented in Korea are examined here: (a) two-way bilingual education, (b) community-based bilingual education, and (c) family literacy bilingual program.

4.2.1. Two-Way Developmental Bilingual Education

Two-way developmental bilingual education (DBE) programs, also known as two-way maintenance bilingual education and dual bilingual programs, are enrichment programs. These programs combine the maintenance bilingual education and immersion model in an integrated classroom with both mainstream language and minority language students under the goal of bilingualism and biliteracy (Lindholm-Leary and Howard [48]). These programs serve both minority language students and majority language students by providing equal literacy instruction in both languages simultaneously (Christian [49] and Christian et al. [50]). The content areas are taught in both languages depending on the needs of each school, and the availability of human and material resources. To complement the deficiency of remedial programs, the DBE programs emphasize the importance of multicultural education, which can lead to the integration of minority and mainstream language students (Christian et al. [51]).

Feasibility and impact:

To apply DBE programs in Korea, there are several important requirements: (a) since DBE programs include both minority and mainstream language students and place them in the same class, there should be sufficient interest and support from both minority and mainstream language groups, (b) the minority language must have a relatively privileged status in the given society, and (c) the community or the district must have a sufficient population of minority language students (c.f., Christian et al. [51]). Currently, the Korean government recognizes eight foreign languages as officially approved languages for foreign

language education at the high school level: German, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Chinese. As these languages are used for not only foreign language education, but also used for assessing foreign language skills in the Korean Scholastic Assessment Test, these compared with other minority languages, can garner sufficient attention and approval from both minority and mainstream language students.

From the administrator's perspective, DBE programs pose various challenges such as recruiting qualified bilingual teachers, garnering mutual agreement from both groups, and constructing a supportive relationship between two different groups of teachers (Calderon and Carreon [52]). It can be challenging for teachers to encourage both minority and mainstream language students to develop collaborative relationships. While DBE programs require a lot of work from administrators and teachers, these can provide a positive influence on both groups of students by leading to the creation of multilingual classrooms and sustainability of diverse language communities (c.f., García and Woodley [53]). In addition, as mainstream language students also take the role of language learners in DBE programs, it can give them an opportunity to understand the academic and emotional challenges faced by language minority students in mainstream Korean-only classrooms. It can also help language minority students develop their voice by making them realize and appreciate the value of their multicultural and multilingual backgrounds, while enabling majority language students to perceive linguistic and cultural diversity as an asset (c.f., Shin [54] and Pérez [39]).

4.2.2. Community-Based Bilingual Education

The idea of a community-based bilingual education program stems from community-based education, which is generally initiated by the needs of the community and its members and designed by the members for the good of the community. Indeed, many ethnic immigrant and indigenous communities in the United States operate community-based heritage or indigenous language programs to preserve and maintain their own language resources (e.g., Lee and Wright [55] and Liu et al. [56]). By combining the model of community-based and bilingual education, the community-operated language programs can address the needs of minority language students who may desire to develop the target language proficiency and maintain their heritage language at the same time.

Feasibility and impact:

Community-based education is widely associated with active participation and support of the community and its members, hence, these bilingual programs need to have the support and approval from members of the community. In other words, these programs have three important requirements: (a) the language minority group and the community must recognize their need to maintain heritage language backgrounds, (b) they must have sufficient interest in bilingual education, and (c) the community must have a considerable population of language minority students. In Korea, the population of minority language students is usually concentrated in certain areas such as industrial-complexes or traditional agricultural areas. Around these areas, there are approximately 60 community-based organizations that largely support language minority populations. While many of these organizations provide Korean language programs for students and their parents, very few offer bilingual or heritage language education programs. Given the fact that various community-based Korean language programs have already been operated by community-based organizations, community-based bilingual programs seem to be quite feasible. These programs include community-based bilingual and bicultural training programs aimed at enriching students' understanding and appreciating of their linguistic diversity, community-based language exchange programs, and community-based heritage language schools.

Administrators, however, need to draw not only support from community members, but also active participation of members. Another challenge can be the lack of availability of material resources of the less taught languages such as Tagalog and Cambodian. The resources available to teach these languages in Korea are usually limited.

In addition, as a majority of the administrators and teachers currently working in community-based organizations in Korea are volunteer teachers, they may face difficulties in dealing with language minority students as they have little or no previous training or experience in teaching. From the student's perspective, community-based bilingual education programs can be one of the most accessible programs as these are operated within the community. Additionally, students can be actively involved in curriculum and material development as they can voice out their needs and preferences. While these programs have a number of advantages, students may lose their motivation or interest as the program proceeds since they are not a part of regular and mandatory school programs.

4.2.3. Family Literacy Bilingual Programs

The original family literacy program is an intergenerational program, which sets out to help language development of both students and their parents and broadens their social network (Nickse [57]). Family literacy programs are one of the most noteworthy literacy models that combine adult basic skills education for parents with early childhood education for children. It encourages parents to understand parental roles, create a positive image and perception of their multicultural and multilingual background, and have a positive influence on the children's academic success as literacy role models with acquisition of basic literacy (Amastutz [42] and Hannon [43]). The family bilingual education program proposed here is a combination of the original framework of family literacy program and the bilingual education program with an emphasis on active participation of parents by assigning them the role of language models and teachers. In this program, parents can eventually become active participants in their child's bilingual education by not only taking on the position of "language learner role-model," but by also taking on the role of a "teacher" in the extracurricular bilingual education class.

Feasibility and impact:

The biggest advantage of the family literacy bilingual education program is that it serves a dual purpose with negligible additional expense by providing Korean language programs for both language minority students and their parents, and giving heritage language lessons for both minority and mainstream language students. As this program encourages minority language parents to function as heritage language teachers, hiring of bilingual or additional teachers to run classes is not required. Despite the overt and misleading stereotypes equating Southeast Asians as uneducated people in Korea, most minority language parents have high educational background and many had a well-established professional career prior to immigration (Oh [58]). Using the linguistic and cultural knowledge from their previous educational and social experiences in their home countries, they can be capable teachers who promote bilingual education.

This program emphasizes the role of parents and their active participation. Hence, administrators have to garner complete involvement of parents. Administrators also need to encourage and motivate parents and students to participate in both family Korean literacy programs and heritage language programs. While this program encourages parents and ensures that they have a positive influence on their children and strengthens the family-school bonding, yet parents may find it difficult to fully participate and be a language teacher if they have little or no teaching experience.

From the perspective of students, this program can create a positive attitude toward their multilingual and multiethnic background and facilitate the understanding of the advantages of a multicultural background among majority language students. For instance, Jangsu elementary school, a public school in a rural area, which has 8.3% language minority students, has facilitated a similar bilingual and family literacy program. One of the language minority student in the program stated that his school life became much more content after his Filipina mother started teaching English as an assistant teacher and began participating in school activities. On the other hand, students whose parents cannot participate in the program may feel segregated from other students and feel neglected by both teachers and parents.

4.3. Distance Education

Even though distance education is not generally considered as an educational alternative for minority language education, it can be an alternative language teaching model for minority language students in Korea. Distance education is a teaching method in which learners are physically separated from their teachers. Open High School Sydney is one good example, which adopts distance education to provide instructions for less taught language programs. The school offers various language courses such as Modern Greek, Russian, Indonesian, and Korean courses through the distance education model by using printed material, visual devices, computer-assisted lessons, and internet-based exercises. Students from this school achieved high scores in the Higher Secondary Certificate Examination in Australia, hence it shows the possibility of distance education as an alternative method for teaching minority language students. In the Korean context, the goal of distance education can be bilingualism and its target students could be both minority and majority language students if there is sufficient interest among students.

Feasibility and impact:

One of the major advantages of distance education is that there is no need to hire teachers, reschedule classes, or make administrative changes at the school-level. It can be a realistic method for minority language education in the Korean context as the population of language minority students is still relatively small, and it may be hard to hire bilingual teachers for diverse minority students. Distance education requires highly developed technology devices, various material, and well-trained teachers who can deal with the distance education mode and are familiar with online teaching or technology-assisted teaching. In addition, a considerable amount of effort is required to develop material and human resources. Even though the development of high-technology material can cost a considerable amount of money in the initial stage, one of the major advantages of distance education is the wide distribution of material and its long-term usage.

In terms of disadvantages, for both teachers and students, it can be challenging to learn to use different technologies. Additionally, as there is a physical distance between students and teachers, it can lead to distraction and demotivation as the program progresses (c.f., Murphy [59]). However, distance education can open the possibility of learning and preserving the heritage language background for all minority language students whereas most minority language programs tend to be limited to certain districts or communities. Moreover, distance education can broaden the choice of foreign language education for majority of language students.

5. Conclusions

Currently, a majority of linguistic minority students are placed in submersion classes without any consideration of securing their linguistic rights nor their sustainable development. Even though the submersion program may appeal to administrators from the point of view of administrative advantages and high applicability, it highly undermines and devalues multilingual and multicultural backgrounds of language minority students. In fact, in this aspect, diversity is considered a problem (Ruiz [60]). Skutnabb-Kangas [61] emphasizes the importance of appreciating minority language students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds: one of the basic linguistic human rights of persons belonging to minorities is- or should be-to achieve high levels of bi-or multilingualism through education. Becoming at least bilingual is in most cases necessary for minorities to exercise other fundamental human rights, including the fulfillment of basic needs (137). In other words, it is important to see minority language students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds as an asset, and provide them adequate educational support. In terms of educational and linguistic rights of language minority students and their sustainable development, the submersion program cannot be seen as a desirable alternative. Undoubtedly, there are strengths and weaknesses for each educational alternative program examined above. The choice of the educational alternatives for minority language students, therefore, should be done with careful consideration of various issues including the demographic composition

of language minority students in the particular school district, the needs of students, parents and community, the availability of human and material resources, and the availability of financial support. Only after careful consideration can educators and policy makers design educational programs for minority language students, which are suitable for the unique requirements of different school districts, and meet the special needs of students.

In addition, educators and policy makers need to consider the potential benefits of bilingualism and bilingual education while designing language programs and policies for language minority students in Korea. Though the promotion of bilingualism may require various administrative changes and additional expenses, it can bring in sustainable development for students where they can develop their voice and appreciate their diverse backgrounds. It can also lead to a change in the negative social attitudes and discriminatory discourses against language minority students. In other words, the promotion of bilingualism can break down the remnant of a monolingual and monoethnic tradition, and lead to the emergence of a multilingual and multicultural society where diversity is appreciated and the linguistic and educational rights of minority language students are secured. Although the paper focuses on the case of Korea, the discussion presented here can be extended to other countries where the issue of educational and linguistic rights of language minority students and their sustainable development becomes crucial.

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