

Transforming Multicultural Education in South Korea

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Introduction

Multicultural education in South Korea as a solution to minority disintegration and underachievement in schooling has served a reform movement in the education for children from multicultural families. However, this has remained instrumentalist, limiting the topic of any relevant discussions to its effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity. We are hardly engaged in any epistemological dialogue or conceptual problematization about multicultural education. Therefore, this conceptual paper is intended to rethink Korean multicultural education by posing epistemological questions and challenging taken-for-granted discourses inscribed in the current multicultural education policy. From a poststructuralist perspective, I deconstruct Korean multicultural education policy documents, including the Plan for the Advancement of Multicultural Education (PAME, Korean: **다문화학생 교육 선진화 방안**) and the 2011 Plan for the Support of Education for Children from Multicultural Families (PSECMF, Korean: **2011 다문화가정 학생 교육 지원계획안**).

Multicultural families are one of the fast growing segments of the Korean population. According to the report of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2012), the number of children from multicultural families has increased from 14,654 in 2007 to 46,954 in 2012, which shows a 21 percent rise in the number of multicultural children over last year. This social phenomenon of change in demographic compositions has resulted from the rapid expansion of a global community (Kymlicka, 2004).

The linguistic and cultural diversity of the population in this multicultural society calls for the support for education of children from multicultural families so that they can become a democratic citizen realizing their full potential. However, it is questionable that Korean multicultural education promotes multicultural children's unique capacities. Although policy documents suggest that multicultural education should be customized to meet the individual needs of children from multicultural families (Plan for the Advancement of Multicultural Education, 2012), we still find many stories that reveal the children's sufferings which prevent them from fully integrating with regular schooling (KBS Special, 2012). It is therefore necessary to look into hidden dividing practices registered in the well-intended multicultural education.

The poststructuralist encounter with the issue of multicultural education is a rare event. Initially, multicultural education was an attempt to support cultural pluralism that emphasizes adding more contents to the dominant curriculum (Sleeter & Grant, 1988). Then, the critique of this conventional approach to cultural diversity was named critical multicultural education that emerged from the critical structuralist paradigm that is oriented to the emancipation of the oppressed supposing the oppressor-oppressed dichotomy (McCarthy, 1994; McLaren, 1994). However, a poststructuralist framework has been rarely applied to addressing multicultural education in South Korea. This paper employs poststructuralist conceptual tool, including an inclusion/exclusion system, pastoral power, linguisticism, and fabrication in order to critically analyze the Korean multicultural education policy texts.

A Poststructuralist Toolbox as a Conceptual Window

As Foucault's work is described as a toolbox that can be used to disclose power/knowledge systems, a set of poststructuralist concepts as a toolbox are used in this paper in order to take a new look at Korean multicultural education from a different epistemological stance. This section provides a brief account for conceptual tools used in the paper. The following four concepts, including inclusion/exclusion, pastoral power, linguisticism, and fabrication, involve dividing, categorizing, and differentiating practices shaping children from multicultural families.

First, inclusion and exclusion are one strategy in that when something is included, the others become excluded deliberately and unconsciously at the same time. In this sense, Popkewitz (1998, p. 125) uses a term of 'inclusion/exclusion' as a single concept with different, mutually related poles. Exclusion is considered against the background of something simultaneously included (Goodwin, 1996; cited in Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000, p. 6). What is excluded is unconsidered, unspoken, and concealed, but while it is mentioned and exposed, it is regarded as the opposite of the normal. Therefore, the system of inclusion/exclusion is none other than a process of normalization. In addition, the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion are moving and redesigned within a particular context and among different contexts (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000, p. 10). The mapping of inclusion/exclusion boundaries is an effect of power and should be problematized.

Second, pastoral power refers to the government of souls in the name of the salvation of every one (Foucault, 2007). A metaphor of the shepherd watching over the sheep is used to describe "the government of men" which implies each and every one is subject to scrutiny and supervision for the safety of the whole. Although the exercise of pastoral power assures salvation of all, it also generates the assumption that any disruptive sheep/person should risk sacrifice for the good and security of the whole community. Individuals thus subordinate themselves to others through the conducting of their conduct (Dean, 1999). Although pastoral power originated from Christian practices that assure individual salvation in the next world, Foucault (2007) emphasized that the function of pastoral power is still sustained in modern times.

Third, the term 'linguicism,' created by the linguist Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, is analogous to racism, classism, sexism, and so forth. It denotes "ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988, p. 13). According to Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), linguicism results in linguistic genocide; standard official language of the nation, as a killer language, makes minority languages disappear in the end while involving all other factors: material, non-material, and symbolic (Phillipson, 2007).

Finally, 'fabrication' means "how the identities of individuals are made up through categories and distinctions applied" (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000, p. 25). Hacking (1986) shows, through the notion of "making-up" of people, that creation of new categories makes it possible to view and think about things as 'real'. According to him, "once the distinctions were made, new realities effectively came into being" (p. 226). The reality that we see is what is actualized through new categories that we make, and is what is fabricated as we believe to be real. The notion of fabrication involves changing, producing, and intending. It is the tool to investigate which is changed between before and after, what categories are contrived, and for what those changes and inventions are made.

These conceptual tools produce a kaleidoscopic window through which to view different ideas, thoughts, and reasoning inscribed in the Korean multicultural education policy since

questioning the epistemological basis of multicultural education poses a transgressive challenge to the valorization of the dominant narrative of what multicultural children are and should be.

A System of Inclusion and Exclusion Inscribed in Multicultural Education

Excluding Multicultural Children through the Discourse of 'All'

Multicultural children are excluded in reform discourses so that they can be included through the benefit of programs and services offered by the reform. They are separated as disqualified from the 'all' just because they are the children from 'different' family backgrounds. The discourse of 'all' seems to be an inclusive one, but is the discourse that indicates and discriminates some groups of children as 'others'.

Plan for the Advancement of Multicultural Education announced on March 12, 2012 suggested 'Multicultural education for all, which makes differences talents'. It proposed 'to help all students grow up to be creative global people' and 'to establish multicuture-friendly education system in order to lead multicultural students outside of school into school and make multicultural education for all, including ordinary students and multicultural students'(p. 1). It stressed that 'multicultural education should be education for all in that understanding of diversity and respect for differences are the core competence in the multicultural society'(p. 6). On the other hand, the discourses of the plan continued to differentiate multicultural students from ordinary students. They distinguish between supports for children from multicultural families and policies for ordinary children. For instance, KSL(Korean as a Second Language) program, support for understanding for Korean culture and adjustment to school, and Dasom School as vocational-education alternative school are prepared for multicultural; mutual understanding education is proposed for ordinary students and parents; and bilingual education is for both multicultural and ordinary students. Children from multicultural families keep being differentiated from ordinary children through the programs and policies of multicultural education.

While the plan above makes us doubt the meaning of 'all', *Major Policies and Plans for 2011* confirms who are not in the 'all'. It elucidates 'students in need of extra care', including 'students with special needs', 'students from multicultural families', 'young North Korean defectors', 'students from low income families', and 'students with troubles including maladjustment'. The discourses of policy documents exclude such students from the 'all' in order to include them by providing them with special supports and programs. For example, extra care for students from multicultural families is as follows:

The Ministry will establish a support system tailored to each development stage, mobilize parents of multicultural families for education, and enhance teachers' capacity in teaching multi-cultural students. It will select 100 high-performing students from multicultural families and nurture them into key talents for the "Global Bridge" project, in which they can play an important role in exchange with the countries that their parents are from (Major Policies and Plans for 2011).

The reason why students from multicultural families are distinguished is not because of their low-performing or maladjustment, but because of their family backgrounds. The discourse above empowers high-performing multicultural students to play an important role in new exchange program. The discourses of 'all' clarify their 'difference' first and then empower them to be in through the simultaneous system of inclusion/exclusion.

Situating Children inside/outside of the Boundaries of Normalization

The system of inclusion/exclusion is one of the strategies of normalization. The discourses of multicultural education produce desirable qualities of children from multicultural families, qualities which draw the boundary of inclusion/exclusion. Unless they have the qualities, they will be placed outside of the normality. The 2008 Plan for the Support of Education for Children from Multicultural Families promises supports for improvement of Korean language and learning ability and for establishment of their identity as follows:

- Support for improvement of reading and writing of Korean language through KSL course, Korean Language Class with parents, and afterschool program
- Support for understanding, guiding, and counseling Korean culture through visiting teacher program and mentoring by undergraduate students
- Offering consultation to help understanding their families and backgrounds and developing positive identity
- Cultivation of multiple talents by supporting immigrants and their children's mother tongue education and understanding of their native country through mentoring by foreign students (p. 5).

According to the discourses above, children from multicultural families would understand Korean culture as well as culture of their native country with positive identities and have multiple understanding and abilities of languages and cultures through multicultural education. These qualities are the norms through which who are the (desirable) children from multicultural families are embodied. If a child is not fit for the norm since he/she cannot cultivate positive identity or bilingual ability in spite of support by multicultural education policies, he/she will be categorized into a boundary of exclusion.

Another boundary of the norm embedded in 2008 Plan for the Support of Education for Children from Multicultural Families is children as 'global citizen', or 'cosmopolitan'. Instead of explaining the qualities of cosmopolitan, the opposite qualities are indicated: "learning deficiency", "maladjustment to their school", and "identity confusion"(p. 19). These features of non-cosmopolitan are in contrast to the qualities above, which belong to the norm of desirable children. Here the normal is not examined, analyzed, or scrutinized, but is made to seem natural only when the non-normal is classified and defined (Popkewitz, 1998, p. 127). Who is the cosmopolitan or not is embodied and categorized through the process of normalization, which differentiate and exclude the non-normal qualities such as adjustment difficulties or identity confusion from the norm and locate them out of the boundary of the cosmopolitanism.

Multicultural Education as Institutional Governance Incorporating Pastoral Power

Enacting the Promise of Secular Salvation of 'Other' Children

As the shepherd is responsible for keeping an entire flock of sheep safe, policy makers and practitioners of (multicultural) education seek to protect the population from any possible danger. The Plan for the Support of Education for Children from Multicultural Families (2011) states regarding the purpose of multicultural education:

Strengthening the support for education for children from multicultural families is intended to narrow the linguistic and cultural gap between them and an unmentioned group of children—children from so-called 'ordinary' families—and to help them become a valued member of a society: Preventing children from multicultural families from being left out of education; and bridging the educational gap as part of educational welfare (p. 1).

The above statement certainly falls within the bounds of differentiating and dividing practices. In this passage, children from multicultural families are described as disqualified to be a valued member of a society unless they conform to the linguistic and cultural norms of the mainstream society (Popkewitz, 1998). Those who are dispossessed of the membership of a society, namely citizenship, remain marginalized until they are properly educated.

Here education functions as an instrument of pastoral power. It promises secular salvation by means of ensuring the children's well-being. Figuratively, "[t]he shepherd has to protect the flock [of sheep] by all means... he has to keep track of every sheep that gets astray, and bring it back to the flock safe and sound" (Balke, 2005, p. 79). Likewise, 'othered' children are differentiated from unnamed children and controlled through multicultural education under the guise of protection of their rights and quality of life.

Children from multicultural families, particularly immigrant children (Korean: **중도입국자녀**), can enter regular schools after attending a program in which they learn Korean language and culture for about 6 months, in accordance with their wishes... They have to apply for an Alien Registration Certificate in the immigration office. Once they become Korean citizens, guidance on matriculation procedures will be strengthened.

Coordinators for multicultural education support the whole matriculation process from school entrance counseling and placements to the follow-up management

(Plan for the Advancement of Multicultural Education, 2012, p.2).

Although multicultural educational services are intended to provide children with necessary assistance considering their individual differences, children are simultaneously placed under constant surveillance and supervision. Data on individual students are collected, organized, and used for the follow-up management (Plan for the Advancement of Multicultural Education, 2012), which "enables the state to know its people" (Gustafsson & Driver, 2005, p. 539). 'Keeping track of every sheep' thus works as pastoral power governing the entire social body through the government over each and every soul (Foucault, 2007).

The goal of multicultural education ("help them become a valued member of a society") resonates with the work of rehabilitating and reforming social outcasts. For example, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which is an educational policy that is intended to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged students in the United States, is based on the premise that disadvantaged and marginalized students, often racial and ethnic minorities, would be left behind if they fail to receive proper interventions in a timely manner (Jahng, 2011). This way of reasoning about education supports the idea that education is a means of saving children in need from poverty, hardship, and danger.

Governing Children's Souls through the Development of Their Self-knowledge

Different tactics, such as assessment and intellectualizing, are employed to govern multicultural children. Government gets to know its subjects, multicultural children and families, in great details through the assessments of their language skills and statistical data of their number and drop-out rates, which have been used to classify them into different categories. As Foucault (1982) argues, pastoral power "cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of people's minds" (p. 783). Therefore, collecting intimate information about children from multicultural families is a way of making them subjects to governance.

Intellectualizing multicultural children through Korean language and culture education is a way of governing their souls through inculcation of Koreanness. Pastoral power is conditioned

upon children's understanding of themselves (Foucault, 1982). 'Knowledge of the self' is fostered by the process of intellectualizing children as well as their parents.

The goal of the support for parents from multicultural families is to provide them with education of Korean language and technology information in which they can learn with their children, in order to strengthen their capacities. Also, collaboration among agencies concerned is strengthened in order to offer to them the information related to children's education and counseling services (Plan for the Support of Education for Children from Multicultural Families, 2011).

Multicultural education thus provides their parents with parent education and counseling so that they can become 'better' parents. Gustafsson and Driver (2005) describe counselors and psychologists as "experts in human conduct" (p. 540) that assess parents, children, and their relationships. Expert discourses that comprise underlying reasoning of the information provided by these experts shape the parents' understanding of themselves—their souls.

According to the notion of pastoral power, local stakeholders actively participate in the governing process (Gustafsson & Driver, 2005). Likewise, parents as well as children from multicultural families are not passive recipients of knowledge; rather, their engagements in multicultural education lead to their self-actualization or, in other words, self-government. For example, parents in multicultural education are invited to work as an instructor of their mother tongue after taking necessary courses and receiving an evaluation. Similarly, children are expected to show leadership and an understanding of their parents' home cultures (Plan for the Support of Education for Children from Multicultural Families, 2011). This informal, yet active, participation indicates that formal government takes place at the different levels of institutional practices and individual self-governance.

Linguicism: Korean Language as an Official/Killer Language

Seeking Multicultural Without Wanting Multilingual

Acknowledging different languages that children use is vital to respect for diversity. However, Korea is not multilingual yet though it is a multicultural society. For example, Korean multicultural education emphasizes multicultural children's Korean language acquisition as the first priority as the Plan for the Advancement of Multicultural Education (2012) suggests:

- (1) Korean as a Second Language (KSL) curriculum is introduced in stronghold schools that hold many children from multicultural families so that the KSL is implemented as a regular course.
- (2) J-TOPIK, a measurement tool for Korean language skills, was devised in order to measure multicultural children's Korean language skills necessary for learning.
- (3) Considering children's abilities, KSL textbooks were produced for speaking, listening, reading, writing and grammar in Korean language (p. 14).

In addition, stronghold schools that are designated as such due to the enrollment of large populations of multicultural students provide Korean concentration education. In the United States, "English, held up as the symbol of the successfully assimilated immigrant, is promoted as the one and only possible language of a unified and healthy nation" (Lippi-Green, 2003, p. 217). Likewise, Korean is considered the qualification of the successfully assimilated multicultural children¹ and has been the only acceptable language as an official language in South Korea. The

¹ In South Korea, immigrant children are defined as those who were born in foreign countries and immigrated to South Korea. Multicultural children generally include both immigrant children and those who were born in South

excessive focus on Korean language acquisition in multicultural education creates the “process of language subordination [which] targets not all variation, not all language varieties, but only those which are emblematic of differences in race, ethnicity, homeland, or other social allegiances” (Lippi-Green, 2003, p. 240). Difference has been long perceived as threatening social solidarity, nationalism and sovereignty (Druckman, 1994; Raustiala, 2003). Korean language as an official/killer language legitimates Korean-speaking people as normal and natural while rejecting others who speak ‘other’ languages in South Korea. Therefore, Korean concentration education provided as part of multicultural education consolidates the population at the expense of other languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

Linguicism, discrimination on the basis of language, sustains such intolerance to a multilingual society. Like racism, it envisions and sanctions the norm, what is normal and natural, while producing a social hierarchy.

With respect to linguicism in schooling... [t]he resulting power dynamic supports the muting or negation of any cultural/linguistic capital that minoritized people might bring to their schooling experience. Further, it establishes a very powerful language/discourse that speaks through the marginalized (Dei, James, Karumancherry, James-Wilson, & Zine, 2000, p. 102).

Linguicism embodied by the Korean concentration program, such as KSL, circulates through children and parents from multicultural families as well as other unnamed people and constitutes their social and personal identities while degrading and displacing their cultural/linguistic capital (Liggett, 2008). Linguicism pervading people’s identities could endanger the harmony of a multicultural society as its subtle practices idealize monolingualism (Phillipson, 2003).

Institutionalized Linguicism

Of course, the multicultural education policy proposes cultivating some multicultural children as human capital with global capacities and provides dual language programs in which all children can take a basic course about foreign languages during after-school hours. This program is intended to enhance their reciprocal understanding of other cultures and languages (Plan for the Advancement of Multicultural Education, 2012). However, higher-level courses in foreign language education are not available in regular schools; only stronghold schools of multicultural education introduce foreign language classes at the intermediate and advanced levels during the summer/winter vacations and on the weekends, not during the regular school hours. Basically, multicultural children are expected to develop and demonstrate Korean proficiency (Plan for the Advancement of Multicultural Education, 2012). This educational policy mobilizes the tacit agreement on the marginalized status of these foreign languages.

Considering that half of their foreign parents came from developing countries², it is doubtful that foreign language skills of these children would be competitive and attractive out of school, though the Global Bridge program covered by the multicultural education policy supports competent multicultural children as global human capital. First, regarding the job qualifications of a competitive candidate in South Korea, strong foreign language (Korean:

Korea but live within two or more different cultures, under the condition that they have one Korean and one foreign parent.

² According to the report of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2012), the nationality of foreign parents include China (33.8%), Japan (27.5%), Philippine (16.1%), Vietnam (7.3%), Thailand (2.4%), Mongol (2.2%), and others (10.7%). Excluding China and Japan, almost half of the parents immigrated from developing countries.

외국어) skills are required. However, in almost all cases, the foreign language mentioned herein refers to English. For instance, according to the Civic Service Commission of South Korea, most government employees should pass an English ability test. Recently, Samsung Group accepted job applicants' scores from the Test of Spoken Chinese (TSC) in addition to seriously evaluating their English proficiency, as in the United States some positions prefer or require Spanish skills for qualified candidates. This indicates that only languages of the nations with power and resources remain dominant and valued whereas those who speak 'other' minority languages are silenced and excluded in the mainstream society (Lippi-Green, 2003).

Second, linguistic institutionalization can be found not only in the children's future job markets as discussed above, but also in legal systems related to the Immigration Control Act. The Foreigner Protection Decree and its Enforcement Rules (Korean: 외국인보호규칙 and 외국인보호규칙시행세칙) have not been translated in other languages, therefore foreigners who are unable to read Korea find it difficult to understand the rules they need to follow as legal procedures regarding the periods of sojourn and scope of activities in South Korea. Even in detention centers, few officials could communicate with detainees in other languages. According to the Amnesty International (2006), "the quality of interpretation provided [for those who are unable to communicate in Korean] is often problematic" (p. 19) since the officials hire undergraduate students to translate languages without ensuring their capacities for translation. Of course, there are numerous examples of discrimination on the basis of language in the workplace (e.g., when one's speech and accent, not work performance, affects his/her promotion in the job) (Lippi-Green, 2003).

Linguicism is a form of racism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), racism in linguistic disguise. When it is institutionalized in social and educational systems, it authorizes any racist practices and ways of reasoning in relation to children from multicultural families and their education. For this reason, it is necessary to challenge linguistic racism in and through which Koreans live.

Conclusion

The globally-accepted notion of multicultural education is that multicultural education should be oriented toward social integration and successful achievement of all people without being discriminated against on the basis of their race, language, culture, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and class. However, according to Asher (2007), multicultural education of today is "generally focused on race and culture, paying limited attention to differences of sexuality, gender, and class" (p. 65). Particularly in South Korea, multicultural education often implies education for 'other' children classified according to language and culture (Plan for the Support of Education for Children from Multicultural Families, 2011). The inclusion of these selected groups of children entails their simultaneous exclusion from the mainstream Korean society since it affirms the assumption that they are different from unnamed children unless they participate in multicultural education. The system of inclusion/exclusion thus operates through the discourse of 'all' and the process of normalization.

This paper was intended to rethink multicultural education in South Korea from a poststructuralist perspective. Although multicultural education was designed to empower minority children by taking into account and responding to their needs and wants, it has given rise to labeling this 'so-called' multicultural children as a fixed category and perpetuating the minoritizing process in education. The analysis of policy documents of multicultural education reveals how children from multicultural families are governed and differed by dividing practices that embody discourses such as xenophobia and racism.

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