

**Korean *jogiyuhaksaeng*'s early study abroad  
and bilingual development in Australia**

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## **CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY .....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	viii
ABSTRACT .....	ix
CHAPTER 1 NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF KOREANS' EARLY STUDY ABROAD .....	1
Introduction .....	1
My narrative: background to the research .....	2
The first encounter with <i>jogiyuhaksaeng</i> : embryo of the research .....	11
Extant body of research on <i>jogiyuhak</i> .....	14
Research questions .....	17
Significance of the research .....	18
Organization of the thesis .....	19
CHAPTER 2 <i>JOGIYUHAK</i> AND ENGLISH .....	21
<i>Jogiyuhak</i> as educational exodus .....	21
Introducing the concept of language ideology .....	21
<i>Jogiyuhak</i> , <i>jogiyuhaksaeng</i> and <i>gireogi</i> family .....	22
Changing strategies for <i>jogiyuhak</i> and parachute kids of astronaut family .....	27
Push-out and pull-in factors .....	31
<i>Yeongeoyoelpung</i> or <i>gwangpung</i> .....	37
English and globalisation in Korean society .....	39
English in Korean society prior to globalisation .....	39
English and neoliberalist globalisation following 1997 financial crisis .....	43
English and language ideologies .....	46
Meaning of English as a global language .....	46
English as a global language versus American English .....	49
Summary .....	54
CHAPTER 3 <i>JOGIYUHAK</i> , LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND BILINGUALISM .....	57
<i>Jogiyuhak</i> and further language ideologies: the linguistic concerns .....	57

Earlier-better .....	58
Submersion or monolingual approach .....	63
Oral fluency with pronunciation and accent .....	65
Balanced bilingual or prioritised English .....	68
Issues around <i>jogiyuhaksaeng</i> 's bilinguality in the academic field .....	70
First language development: subtractive versus additive bilingualism .....	70
L2 proficiency: conversational fluency & academic language .....	75
Threshold and Interdependence Hypotheses: L1 & L2 relationship .....	78
Research on <i>Jogiyuhaksaeng</i> 's bilingual development and bilinguality .....	87
Summary .....	89
CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS .....	91
Research focus and rationale for research design .....	91
Long-term trajectories, bilinguality, and self-evaluations .....	91
Narrative inquiry and life history .....	93
Recruitment process and associated issues .....	96
Data collection .....	99
Interviews and observation .....	99
Online data and portraits from research and media .....	102
Participant profiles and life history .....	103
Language of interview .....	113
Data analysis .....	114
Analysis process .....	114
Researcher's voice and construction of narratives .....	117
Analytical framework .....	118
Researcher's positionality and reflexivity in the analysis process .....	120
Limitations of the research .....	125
CHAPTER 5 <i>JOGIYUHAK</i> AS LIVED EXPERIENCE IN LIFE TRAJECTORIES .....	127
The meaning of the <i>jogiyuhak</i> context and <i>jogiyuhaksaeng</i> 's status .....	127
"It's a new life in which I should survive, not just study abroad." .....	127
Linguistically, socially and culturally minority students .....	130
" <i>I thought I was so good but there is nothing I can do here.</i> " .....	130
" <i>We used to go out on Saturday.</i> " .....	132
Submersion in a new learning environment .....	134

Incomprehensible classroom instruction .....	134
Absence of institutional assistance .....	136
<i>“As if I were a bird”</i> .....	138
Cases of smooth linguistic and academic adaptation .....	141
<i>Discrepancy in school curriculum and “I repeated the same school year here.”</i> .....	141
Double-edged strategies for academic survival .....	144
<i>“We have rather fixed choices.”</i> .....	144
<i>First language support and HSC exam strategy</i> .....	149
Establishing a social life .....	152
Seeking companions or confronting unfriendly climate and discrimination .....	152
<i>Let me have a day off, please!</i> .....	153
<i>I still don’t want to go to school</i> .....	156
Impact on academic performance .....	159
<i>“I’m going to school to play a monkey.”</i> .....	159
Changes in study habits and perspectives .....	163
<i>“Mom, others got more wrong answers.”</i> .....	163
Changes in life style .....	166
<i>“I thought I ruined my life, but it wasn’t only me.”</i> .....	166
<i>Jogiyuhak</i> paving life pathways and long-term consequences .....	173
Selective advantages in seeking careers .....	173
<i>“English was eating away my life.”</i> .....	174
Transnational movements: returnees, re-returnees and immigrants .....	177
Summary .....	179
 CHAPTER 6 BILINGUALITY AND BILINGUAL DEVELOPMENT .....	 183
Peggy: an early primary school arrival .....	184
Self-evaluated bilinguality .....	185
Tracing features of Peggy’s language development trajectory .....	187
<i>Peggy’s Korea</i> .....	187
<i>Peggy’s English</i> .....	190
Hall, Harry, Helen and John: post-Year 9 arrivals .....	194
Self-evaluated bilinguality .....	195
<i>Hall’s, Harry’s and Helen’s Korean</i> .....	195
<i>Hall’s, Harry’s and Helen’s English</i> .....	198

<i>John's bilinguality</i> .....	201
Tracing the perceived factors in forming bilinguality .....	202
<i>Korean</i> .....	202
<i>English</i> .....	204
<i>John's bilinguality</i> .....	208
Peter, Janice, Julie and Jack: Late-primary school and junior high school aged .....	211
Characteristics of Bilinguality .....	212
<i>Jack</i> .....	212
<i>Janice</i> .....	214
<i>Julie</i> .....	218
<i>Peter</i> .....	219
Tracing the bilingual trajectory .....	224
<i>Korean</i> .....	224
<i>English</i> .....	225
Summary and further discussion .....	231
CHAPTER 7 <i>JOGIYUHAксаENG'S BILINGUALITY, INBETWEENNESS AND</i>	
<i>TRANSNATIONALITY</i> .....	238
Seeking membership: I'm neither Korean nor Australian .....	239
English level in the Australian context .....	243
<i>Shared viewpoint in aspects of language</i> .....	243
<i>Cultural affiliation</i> .....	245
<i>Childhood memory in aspects of language</i> .....	252
<i>Native speakerism</i> .....	253
Lack of language in Korean context .....	261
<i>Language-related and behavioural norms</i> .....	261
<i>Shared life history, discourse and social capital as an aspect of language ...</i>	
.....	266
FOBs versus 'Kossies' .....	271
Grouping based on bilinguality and culture .....	271
Self- and other-ascribed construction of group identity .....	280
Variance among <i>jogiyuhaksaeng</i> .....	282
Summary .....	286
CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION .....	288



Further discussion .....	288
English submersion and age .....	288
Relationship between L1 and L2 and academic development .....	292
Transnational bilinguality and inbetweenness .....	297
Implications .....	304
Conclusion .....	310
APPENDICES .....	315
Appendix A: Romanisation Style and transcription convention .....	315
Appendix B: Consent form for Participant .....	317
Appendix C: Information Letter for Research .....	319
Appendix D: Interview Protocol .....	321
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	324

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. The annual numbers of <i>jogiyuhaksaeng</i> who left the country .....	26
Table 2. The outline of approximate interview duration.....	100
Table 3. Participants' profile.....	107
Table 4. Participants' study abroad profiles.....	108

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Percentage of <i>jogiyuhak</i> destinations (2009).....	52
Figure 2. Percentage of <i>jogiyuhak</i> destination categories in 2009.....	52
Figure 3. Increase in early study abroad of students of primary, middle, and high school .....	59

## ABSTRACT

The local processes of globalisation that have contributed to the heightened symbolic value of English in Korean society have seen an overwhelming desire for English acquisition, termed English fever. For Koreans, good English means a native-like fluency and accent which can be accomplished only by starting early with submersion in an English monolingual environment among native speakers. *Jogiyuhak* (early study abroad) is an embodiment of the prevalent belief that this is the best way to achieve good English with which students expected to become fluent bilinguals.

Through narrative inquiry, this research examines 14 Korean youths' lived experiences in study abroad in Australia, with a focus on academic and language development. The thesis traces the participants' development trajectories in academic, linguistic and social adaptation, and explores self-evaluated bilinguality and their sense of inbetweenness in association with the 'neither-language-is-fully-developed' perception.

The data show that language barriers not only impeded their initial adjustment but also had long term consequences, placing a severe constraint on pursuing academic inquiry in heavily language-dependent fields. The lack of both language repertoires and the associated feeling of discomfort that some participants revealed were related to this consequence.

While such findings indicate a problematic bilinguality and a potentially significant risk of *jogiyuhak*, the data analysis reveals complex and varying bilingualities across

individuals, suggesting that their bilingualities were constructed through their transnational life history and that language proficiency should be viewed as such rather than a set of linguistic skills.

A deep analysis of the 'lack of both language repertoires' perception further reveals the social and ideological aspects of bilinguality. The discursively constructed bilinguality informs the aspects of language as sharedness and membership, suggesting the locally constructed nature of language proficiency and that inbetweenness was related to their transnationality. The 'lack of language repertoires' perception was also derived from the idealised notion of native speakers from both Korean and Australian contexts based on the monolithic and racialised view of language, culture and identity. These language ideologies were fundamentally based on an ontological view of language; language as a fixed entity and hence an object of possession.

This thesis argues that such an ontological view of language is not only misleading in the process of language learning but also reproduces and perpetuates a deficit view of a language learner and a hierarchical stratification in relation to English. Alternatively, the thesis suggests that language should be viewed as social practices in particular locations, rather than a set of skills separate from what one does.