

A qualitative study on the bicultural experience of second-generation Korean immigrants in Germany

Hyo-Seon Lee ^{a,*}, Seok-Ki Kim ^b

^a Kangnam Graduate School of Social Welfare, Republic of Korea

^b Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany

Available online 16 September 2014

Abstract

This research focuses on second-generation Korean immigrants and the strategies they used to combine two different cultures – parents' and resident cultures – in their everyday lives. Using a case to reconstruct the meaning behind the strategies employed, this study aims to identify factors that influence immigrants' development when exposed to two different cultures. To investigate this development, an autobiographical interview was conducted on a second-generation Korean immigrant in Germany. The interview was analyzed through objective hermeneutics. The findings of the case study reveal how Ji-Hye Song (interviewee) was able to blend into both Korean and Germany societies, similar to a chameleon. The interviewee developed the ability to combine and control the influences of two cultures in a 'Korean island' located in Germany.

Copyright © 2014, Far Eastern Federal University, Kangnam University, Dalian University of Technology, Kokushikan University. Production and Hosting by Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Qualitative research; Objective hermeneutics; Second-generation Korean immigrants in Germany

Introduction

Multicultural societies are formed when people from different cultures migrate and become members of a different culture. As these migrants carry their own culture and way of life into another setting, they not only experience differences but also absorb, through social remittance, the ideals, norms, practices and

identities associated with the new culture [16]. The first generation of Korean immigrants influenced the breakdown of national and cultural boundaries within the local culture and played a role in integrating and combining the two cultures. By taking their own culture into an unknown region, they were confronted by different cultures. This resulted in culture clashes between the two that affected the people on a personal and social level. The focus of discussion on the subject of multicultural society is *how another culture is understood* and integrated into their personal and social lives. If a multicultural society was born through the influx and mixing of local and ethnic cultures, the second generation of immigrants can reshape the way

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: hyoseon@kangnam.ac.kr (H.-S. Lee), sekim@students.uni-mainz.de (S.-K. Kim).

Peer review under responsibility of Far Eastern Federal University, Kangnam University, Dalian University of Technology, Kokushikan University.

we perceive and define a multicultural society. Unlike the first generation, second-generation immigrants experience their ethnic culture through their parents and the local culture where they reside. The first generation of immigrants moved from one culture to an unfamiliar culture and they experience conflicting cultural norms and rules. Second-generation immigrants are born and raised in two cultures simultaneously. In other words, these second-generation children form their identities and reconcile the norms and values of both cultural groups, those of their parents and of the country of birth [33]. This study shows how second-generation immigrants cross the group boundaries of two cultures and combine different cultural rules and values.

An individual's membership in a group influences his/her sense of belonging. The member knows their position within that group and has a clear understanding of the rules he/she is expected to follow. However, once the boundaries that define a group are blurred, their clear sense of belonging within a group and associated cultural rules become ambiguous [2]. These second-generation immigrants, who live in a world where they must cross two cultural boundaries, form an unstable sense of belonging, which is a fundamental human desire [19]. The blurring boundaries affect their grasp of cultural norms¹ that determine social acts. In the process, they are faced with an identity crisis.

According to Ref. [17]; most children of immigrants ultimately compromise with the norms and institutions of the place where they are raised. Some children, more deeply and intensely embedded in transnational social fields, do not simply choose between the home and the host society. Instead, they strike a balance, albeit tenuous, between the comparable resources and constraints circulating within these fields and deploy them effectively in response to opportunities and challenges that present themselves. Immigrants' children's experiences are not just a continuation of the first generation's involvement in their ancestral homes but rather are an integral part of growing up in a new destination [17].

Berry, who researched this topic, defined acculturation as the cultural and psychological change that occurs when a member has contact with two or more cultural groups [3]. According to the acculturation process, strategies employed by second-generation immigrants can be categorized into four types:

Assimilation, Integration, Separation, and Marginalization.² However, this research does not aim to classify second-generation immigrant assimilation strategies but instead seeks to understand their coping strategies by looking at overall life experiences. The rationale behind this approach is not because their multicultural experience is found in independent events throughout their lives. Rather, these events occur in a continuous series and are affected by each decision made. Therefore, it is important to understand the events in a sequential manner [20]. Namely, if we are to understand fully the control strategies used by the focus group, we need to approach their life events sequentially.

By looking at life stories and events, this paper will explore how second-generation immigrants develop in an environment where two different cultures coexist; find what strategies are used to help define their position in the two cultures; and rediscover the significant effects their strategies have on their lives. Furthermore, by studying case studies of second-generation immigrants, this research seeks to propose topics of discussion regarding the different coping strategies used to address their borderline status. For this purpose, the Autobiographical Narrative Interview of a second-generation Korean immigrant (collected by Fritz Schütze) was chosen and analyzed through Oevermann's objective hermeneutics.

Method of data collection and analysis of data

Method of data collection

Autobiographical narrative interview (F. Schütze)

F. Schütze's Autobiographical narrative interview is done by interviewees telling their life stories without having prepared in advance. The open, unstructured interview gives the interviewee more control and flexibility over what life experiences they want to relate, allowing the interviewer to study their lives more accurately and completely. The life stories, which the interviewees choose to tell or remember in an impromptu setting, have a special significance in their

¹ In sociology, a norm is a shared expectation of behavior that connotes what is considered culturally desirable and appropriate [11].

² *Assimilation* is what happens when immigrant youth have little interest in cultural maintenance combined with a preference for interacting with the host society. *Separation* is what happens when cultural maintenance is sought while avoiding involvement with others from the host society. *Marginalization* is defined as when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance and little interest in having relations with others. Finally, *integration* is defined as when both cultural maintenance and involvement with the larger society are sought [4].

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/999229>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/999229>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)