

Sociocultural Adaptation for Asian Immigrant English Language Learners

Mazlina Che Mustafa*

Faculty of Education and Human Development, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia

Azila Alias

Faculty of Education and Human Development, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia

Juppri Bacotang

Faculty of Education and Human Development, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia

Abstract

This phenomenological study discusses sociocultural adaptation, as one of the findings emerged from the study, among Asian immigrant English language learners (ELLs) and their parents, as well as New Zealand early childhood teachers. The focus of the study is on the analysis of early childhood teachers' beliefs about how they can support English acquisition among Asian immigrant ELLs and how these beliefs influence the teachers' practices in early childhood education (ECE) settings as they adapt themselves. The theoretical framework of this research draws on a range of sociocultural perspectives, including (i) the sociocultural positions initially defined by [Lev \(1978\)](#); (ii) the notion of guided participation articulated by [Barbara \(2003\)](#) (iii) theories of second language acquisition discussed by [Lantolf and Thorne \(2000\)](#); and by [Krashen \(1982\)](#); [Krashen \(1985\)](#) and (iv) acculturation as addressed by [Berry \(2001\)](#). The main participants of this study were seven early childhood teachers and six Asian immigrant ELLs from two ECE centres. Four Asian parents participated in interviews to ascertain the parents' perspectives about their children's learning of English and their maintenance of home language. Research methods for the teachers included observations and semi-structured pre- and post-observation interviews. For each centre, observations were carried out over a six week period which enabled a series of snapshots of how the teachers supported the ELLs as they acquired English. The findings were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that there were dissonances between the teachers' beliefs and their practices, as well as variation between individual teachers' beliefs and practices. This study will provide a basis from which to consider how early childhood teachers in New Zealand can draw upon sociocultural perspectives to better support ELLs as they acquire English, while valuing and supporting their linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: Asian immigrant; English language learners (ELLs); Sociocultural adaptation; English acquisition; Sociocultural.



CC BY: [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

1. Introduction

Adapting to a new and unfamiliar culture is more than survival. It is a life-changing journey. It is a process of "becoming" – personal reinvention, transformation, growth, reaching out beyond the boundaries of our own existence ([Kim, 2001](#)).

When immigrants migrate to another country, their challenge is not only to survive while they adapt to a new and unfamiliar culture. In fact, they are embarking on a very significant journey that will change their lives as they go through a process of becoming adaptive to the new culture. [Kim \(2001\)](#), argued that the process of adapting oneself to another culture, however, does not require abandonment of one's personality or of the culture into which one was born. Rather, ([Kim, 2001](#)) claimed that the process compels an individual to find him or herself as if for the first time, particularly those cultural invariants within the self. Therefore, while the process of cultural adaptation challenges the very basis of who an individual is, it offers opportunities for new learning and growth ([Kim, 2001](#)).

Sociocultural adaptation to dominant and non-dominant cultures emerged as another theme from our study. Sociocultural adaptation is defined as an ability to 'fit in' or effectively interact with members of the host culture ([Ward and Kennedy, 1996](#)). It has been linked with factors that influence cultural learning and the acquisition of social skills in the host culture, like language fluency, acculturation strategies, length of residence in a host culture and cultural distance ([Searle and Ward, 1990](#); [Ward and Kennedy, 1996](#)). In this paper, prevalent aspects of sociocultural adaptation relevant to my findings were discussed: acculturation, and acculturation strategies.

The central purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of a group of early childhood teachers as they support ELLs' English acquisition. More specifically, the aim was to find out what the teachers saw as the essence of the meanings around the phenomenon of how ELLs can be supported in their English acquisition by early childhood teachers in New Zealand early childhood education (ECE) centres.

2. Research Methodology

Qualitative research design has been chosen as we consider that it is relevant to key sociocultural concepts of our study. A qualitative case study approach has been selected for this study for “its very uniqueness, for what it can reveal about a phenomenon, knowledge we would not otherwise have access to Merriam (2009). It was essential for us to understand the range of early childhood teachers’ experiences in dealing with ELLs in order to explore and explain the essence of the lived experiences of early childhood teachers. The term ‘essence’ may be “understood as a linguistic construction, a description of phenomenon” (Van Manen, 1990). In other words, the essence is the central underlying meaning of the experience shared within the different lived experiences.

Purposive sampling was used in this study as a sampling strategy. Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to discover, understand, and gain insight from the participants and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned to illuminate the questions under study (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002).

Selection criteria for the sites to be studied represented early childhood services and programmes which operated on similar programmes. The more demographically similar the participants are the better a researcher’s ability to understand the ‘general’ nature of the experience to be defined (Creswell, 2007). In this study, we narrowed down the demographics of the participants to the extent that we were able to find a sufficient number of participants to validate the study. It was important to examine teachers’ beliefs and practices in similar programmes at ECE centres to offer information-rich-cases. The selection was based on a discussion with the head teachers, an analysis of their centre documentation, identification of the centre philosophies, and expected practices. An important criterion is the linguistic diversity of the children attending the ECE centres which was identified at this stage to ensure that a suitable sample number of child participants was available. Two ECE centres which met the selection criteria were selected to provide the data. This decision was also made in order to meet the expectations about depth and quality.

In the effort of obtaining rich-cases, the selection of participating teachers in this study followed two criteria. Firstly, they had to be qualified teachers. Qualified teachers have been selected for this study as they have undergone early childhood teacher education programmes in New Zealand and these programmes, while retaining roots in developmentalism, have increased their focus on sociocultural and bicultural approaches. Immediately after the implementation of *Te Whāriki*, some teacher education providers significantly redeveloped their ECE qualifications and aligned their programmes with its sociocultural direction (Farquhar and Fleer, 2007).

Another criterion for the selection of early childhood teachers at ECE services is that they have had experience working with ELLs of the age between three and four years because the children’s first language is already established between these ages. This study would yield more meaningful data if conducted with teachers who are familiar with these children. Patton (2002), suggested specifying a minimum sample size “based on expected reasonable coverage of the phenomena given the purpose of the study” (p. 246). The number of participants chosen allowed us to concentrate on each participating case and to document rich information to address the aims of this study.

Table-2. Summary of the teachers of the first centre A summary of the teachers of the first centre is presented below:

Name of teacher	Language background
Rosalind	Bilingual
Heather	Monolingual (English)
Jennifer	Monolingual (English)

Table-3. Summary of the teachers of the second centre A summary of the teachers of the second centre is presented below:

Name of teacher	Language background
Angela	Monolingual (English)
Razan	Bilingual
Ming	Bilingual
Akiko	Bilingual

Table-4. Summary of each case study child of the first centre the summary of the case study children of the first centre is presented below:

Name of child and age	Name of parent Interviewed	Indication of level of English competence	Other language spoken	Any adults or other children spoke child’s home language
Hyun-woo (4 years and 6 months)	-	Gaining confidence to use English with friends and teachers	Korean	Children- Yes Adult -teacher reliever
Seo-yeon (3 years and 3months)	Subin	Demonstrated considerably good efforts in acquiring English.	Korean	Children-Yes Adult-teacher reliever
Ji-Min (3 years and two months)	Jeoung	The initial stage of second language acquisition.	Korean	Children-Yes Adult- teacher reliever

Table-5. Summary of the case study children of the second centre the summary of the case study children of the second centre is presented below

Name of child and age	Name of parent interviewed	Indication of level of English competence	Other language spoken	Any adults or other children spoke child's home language
Masaru (4 years and 5 months)	Zhi	Used more English in her second year at the centre.	Chinese	Children- Yes Adult -Yes (One teacher)
Shin (3 years and 5 months)	Suzu	Began to acquire English as a result of playing with his English peers.	Japanese	Children-Yes Adult- Yes (One teacher)
Ji Hun (3 years and two months)	-	Rarely used English verbally but understood English fairly well.	Korean	Children-Yes Adult- teacher reliever

Two major methods of data gathering were used for each case study to obtain rich and detailed information about teachers' beliefs and practices to support English acquisition among ELLs. One method was field notes encompassing direct observations of early childhood teachers' practices in each ECE centre alongside the reflective notes containing insights, understanding, questions and thoughts generated during the data gathering process. The second method was interviews conducted with each of the early childhood teachers.

Thematic analysis was a useful research tool as it offered flexibility yet provided a rich, detailed and complex account of data. Data was undertaken for two purposes: (1) drawing together each early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices to create a holistic description of the events within each case study and (2) synthesising congruence and differences across all cases.

3. Discussion

In the context of the study, adaptation to mainstream culture describes the process of the ELLs and their families in adapting to the norms of New Zealand culture, and enculturation refers to the process of the ELLs and their families becoming socialised into and maintaining the norms of their Asian culture. Berry (2005), argued that an individual's choice of strategy is influenced by previous circumstances such as the person's level of involvement with each culture, which includes specific attitudinal and behavioural preferences and characteristics. The choice of a particular strategy would also reflect the attitudes of the immigrant towards the host culture or the culture of origin (Berry, 2005;2006); (Sam, 2006).

3.1. Degree of Contact and Positive Interactions

It was also apparent that the participants' choice of strategy in the process of acculturation was influenced by the degree of contact between them and members of the dominant culture. The study demonstrated that Angela, an English speaking teacher, expressed her view that it had been difficult to communicate with the Asian parents due to language and cultural barriers. Angela and the Asian parents did not get the opportunity to engage in meaningful interactions which might influence the degree of contact between the teachers and the Asian parents. Due to low degree of contact, the Asian parents might choose to use a strategy of separation in which they held on to their original culture, and avoid interactions with the English speaking teachers because they might not want to get involved with the dominant culture at the ECE centre.

The formation of ethnic or host society identity is also integral in the process of culture competence (Liebkind, 2006). Phinney *et al.* (2001) described four possible outcomes of identity formation from the acculturation strategies: integration, which involves high levels of both own ethnic and low host society identity; separation, which highlights high ethnic and low host identity; assimilation, in which the ethnic identity is low but the host identity is high, and finally, marginalised ethnic identity, which is an expression of low levels of identification with both sociocultural groups. Each acculturation strategy is linked with particular sociocultural conditions and also is related to specific social and behavioural attainment (Oppedal, 2006).

3.2. Cultural Distance

A sociocultural learning framework emphasises the acquisition of culturally appropriate skills and behaviours, through contact with hosts, cross cultural experiences, and training in sociocultural adaptation (Searle and Ward, 1990). Berry (2006), claimed that one of the most reliable means by which immigrants acquire, improve and master their intercultural knowledge in a host culture is through their interactions with others. Specifically, close intercultural friendships can improve the immigrants' and the hosts' social skills (Berry, 2006). Searle and Ward (1990), claimed that hosts are able to assist in social skills learning as increased contact enables greater participation and skill development in immigrants. From this perspective, it is suggested that if the immigrants have less positive contact with the host, they have more barriers in negotiating daily encounters (Searle and Ward, 1990). The opposite is also true.

Cultural distance refers to the differences or similarities between two cultures in terms of their physical (e.g., climate) and social (e.g., language, education, religion, family, etc.) characteristics (Hofstede, 1980). Cultural distance or the perceived cultural distance between the home and host culture has been viewed as a crucial factor in acculturation orientations (Berry, 2012);Searle and Ward (1990) and sociocultural adaptation (Masgoret and Ward,

2006). Masgoret and Ward (2006), claimed that language proficiency and cultural knowledge are at the core of effective social interaction and are most likely to predict better sociocultural adaptation. The study demonstrated that language and culture seemed to be a barrier to effective communication and good relationships between (1) the Asian parents and the teachers, and (2) the ELLs and the teachers. In terms of language, the lower the English proficiency, the greater the increase in language barriers, and therefore the greater the difficulties faced by the ELLs and Asian parents in interacting with the English speaking teachers and peers. In the context of cultural distance, the more distant the culture between the Asian families and the teachers, the greater the cultural barrier: therefore it was harder for the Asian parents and their children to communicate effectively with the teachers and other children from different cultural backgrounds. In the following sections, I present evidence based on the issues of language and cultural barrier, in particular how teachers adapt to the language abilities of Asian parents and ELLs.

3.3. Adapting to Asian Parents

Language and cultural barriers might have affected the relationships between the teachers and the Asian parents in both early childhood centres. All the teachers from the first centre, Jennifer, Heather and Rosalind, and Angela from the second centre noted in the interviews that they had to adapt to the way they interacted with Asian parents as well. These teachers, except Rosalind, were English speaking teachers. Rosalind, although bilingual, spoke English fluently and was not from an Asian background. In my observation, it was apparent that these teachers adapted the way they interacted with the Asian parents.

Angela, one of the English speaking teachers from the second centre, admitted that she had to adapt the way she communicated with the Asian parents because her relationship with them was not as well developed as it was with the English speaking parents. It seemed that Angela found there were some aspects of communication which were not as apparent with the Asian parents such as sense of humour. Angela explained:

I feel that my relationship with the Asian parents is friendly, but perhaps not as deep, definitely not as deep as with English-speaking parents from a similar culture because we just have that kind of cultural understanding. I think sometimes the subtleties of conversation are not picked up, so the conversations are simplified, whereas with the English-speaking people of a similar culture, you hear those nuances that you pick up on and there's that humour there that's missing from those conversations with Asian parents. And I'm not saying at all that they don't have it. It's just because of the language and the slight cultural difference.

Angela's views on sociocultural adaptation with the Asian parents began with her description of the relationship between herself and the ELLs. According to Angela, the language and cultural barrier made her adapt herself by being 'more careful' about her way of interacting with the Asian parents. Angela mentioned some reasons for her being 'reserved' with the Asian parents such as "not sure whether it was acceptable to say such things" and "it's better to be safe than sorry". From my observations, Angela behaved more formally with the Asian parents though appeared more casual with the English speaking parents where there were jokes involved. Moreover, the conversation usually looked more engaging for both Angela, and the English speaking parents compared to the conversation with the Asian parents.

Rosalind, a bilingual teacher from the first centre, also expressed her view that there could be a barrier of communication between her and Jeoung. Like Angela, Rosalind emphasised that she would like to know more about the Asian parents but there were barriers in terms of communication affecting her effort. She also commented on her difficulty in communicating with Jeoung, Ji-min's father:

When there is an opportunity and you really want to talk to him, Ji-min's dad [Jeoung], he's more a person that's just more a bit in a rush sometimes. Sometimes he's [Jeoung] just kind of like a "pick up and go" dad. When there are things that you need to discuss, like Ji-min's had an accident – for example, the time when he [Ji-min] had the accident just with a swing, I told him [Jeoung] about that, had a good explanation with him [Jeoung], and he [Jeoung] said, "okay, okay," and he [Jeoung] walked away and he [Jeoung] came back and he [Jeoung] said, "So exactly what happened?" And so it's almost like I'm wondering if there's a barrier with communication with dad. Mum's pretty awesome; she's [Ji-min's mother] great with understanding and talking. I think her [Ji-min's mother] language is quite good. But with dad, I'm just wondering if it is that, or is it just because he's [Jeoung] in a rush that he [Jeoung] doesn't have time to process it – it's just all at the same time, very quickly, but he [Jeoung] needs to obviously know what happened. Relationship wise, I think that you'd probably want a bit more of a great scope of an understanding of who Ji-min is and a bit more conversation. I really appreciated that mum brought in the fact that she was baking with him [Ji-min] and he [Ji-min] had made his own name, and it was quite special to bring that experience of home to the centre.

Rosalind's comments were important on two accounts; the Asian parents were perceived to be busy, and there was a communication barrier between her and Jeoung. Rosalind described Ji-min's father as busy by mentioning that he was "a bit in a rush", and "like a 'pick up and go' dad". On the language barrier, she wondered "if there's a barrier with communication". However, Rosalind, then, compared Jeoung to his wife in terms of language by describing Ji-min's mother as "pretty awesome; she's great with understanding and talking. I think [Ji-min's mother's] language is quite good". It was apparent that Rosalind was comparing Jeoung and his wife from the perspectives of language when she highlighted "if it is that" when referring to Jeoung's language.

While Rosalind highlighted the communication barriers from the teacher's perspectives, Jeoung, too, implied that he had uncertainties regarding how he should approach the teachers, interact with the teachers, and participate in his child's learning, particularly when the teachers did not come from the same background. Ji-min's father, Jeoung, reflected this view in the interview:

In my culture, we should not interfere with the teachers' teaching. They are the authority. But, since we moved to New Zealand, my wife was not really happy because she said that Ji-min was playing all day – like not much learning. I send Ji-min in the morning and she picks him up in the afternoon, so she could see that [Ji-min's activities at the ECE centre]. It's hard for me to tell the teachers, I don't want them to feel bad but I don't know how to make my wife happy. But Ji-min looks happy there [in the ECE centre]. Maybe I should discuss with the teachers, but I'll just wait first, see how things go.

Jeoung demonstrated an accepting attitude to Ji-min's learning experiences as he mentioned that "Ji-min looks happy there". However, there could be two interpretations with regard to Jeoung's attitude; he accepted the teachers' way of teaching children at the New Zealand ECE centre that encouraged learning through play or he would have been reluctant to say anything that might be perceived as offending the teachers. However, Ji-min's mother expressed her concern that there was not much 'learning' involved when Ji-Min attended the centre. Ji-min's mother's view reflected that she still believed that there should be some kind of formal learning, as a common practice in her ECE home country, for Ji-min when he attended the centre. However, neither Jeoung nor his wife had approached the teachers at the first centre to discuss their views. Asian culture regards teachers as highly respected professionals who are never questioned, and the Asian parents usually refrain from actively participating in school discussions about solutions to problems in some areas (Kim and Hinchey, 2013). In his acculturation, Jeoung seemed to use the assimilation strategy when he mentioned that he "should not interfere" with the teachers' way of teaching, which was in line with his Asian cultural background. Asian parents have very high expectations and aspirations for their children's education (Chao and Tseng, 2002). Therefore, in Ji-min's situation, his parents expected that there should be some kind of formal learning for Ji-min at the centre.

In summary, this section discussed Rosalind's and Jeoung's perspectives on communication. Apparently, there was a cultural gap that both parties needed to understand. The low level of contact between Rosalind and Jeoung may have contributed to Rosalind's assumption that Jeoung was always in a rush, which made it difficult for her to discuss matters related to Ji-min. Rosalind might not have been aware of the Asian emphasis on the father's role as a hard working provider for the family and assumed that time was very crucial (Kim and Hinchey, 2013). In addition, Rosalind also assumed that Jeoung's English ability made it difficult for him to understand her. Jeoung, on the other hand, assumed that the teachers had the authority to teach and that he should not interfere. These assumptions were made because of both the teacher's and the parents' insufficient cultural knowledge which led to a communication barrier.

3.3.1. Ells' Language Abilities and Cultural Learning

Having a knowledge of the language spoken in the host community plays a central role within the cultural learning process, since language is viewed as the primary medium through which cultural information is communicated (Masgoret and Ward, 2006; Smith, 2013). As language and cultural learning are intimately linked, miscommunication will likely result if the immigrants do not acquire at least some basic verbal skills (Berry, 2006; Masgoret and Ward, 2006). The study demonstrated that the ELLs, namely, Ji-min and Seo-yeon, from the first centre, and Shin and Ji-Hun, from the second centre, faced challenges as they adapted to the New Zealand culture. The challenges were mainly due to their limited proficiency in English, which subsequently affected their understanding of the culture of the New Zealand ECE centre.

From their perspectives, the parents of Ji-min and Seo-yeon,¹ from the first centre, and Shin² and Ji-Hun³, from the second centre, expressed their views that their children's sociocultural adaptation was largely affected by actual, and perceived, English limitations. The common concern for the Asian parents was English proficiency, both for their children and themselves. They were aware of how isolated the children were when they first arrived in New Zealand. Suzu, Shin's mother, commented:

When we first came to New Zealand last year, Shin had tough times. My English, my husband's English is not good, too. But we were exposed to English when we were in school, university. Shin had no English at all. So, I felt sorry for Shin, he had to struggle here [at the ECE centre]. The first few weeks, Shin didn't want to come here [the ECE centre], but we told him, he will get many friends when he speaks English. But we were lucky; we found this centre because there is Akiko [a Japanese bilingual teacher]. But still, with his friends, he does not talk much, I think. When I send him and pick him up, I always see him play with Ji Hun. I think Ji Hun's English is like Shin too.

While settling in at the ECE centre, Suzu noted that having Akiko was helpful but at the same time she hoped that Shin would get more English speaking friends so that he could improve on his English. However, when she observed that Shin was playing with another Asian immigrant child, Ji Hun, she indicated that Shin's English would not improve because Ji Hun was also in the process of acquiring English. Suzu believed that learning English would be useful to help Shin adapt himself better to the ECE centre. It was apparent that Suzu was also concerned when Shin did not have much contact with English speaking friends. Suzu's view on Shin's acculturation seemed important on two accounts: firstly, it was important to have Akiko, a bilingual teacher who spoke the same language as Shin while Shin was settling in, and secondly, it was necessary for Shin to have frequent contact with English speaking friends in order to acquire English. These two accounts were related to the acculturation strategies in the sense that they might help Shin to adapt himself socially and culturally to the New Zealand ECE culture.

¹ Seo-yeon was a case study child of the first centre.

² Shin was a case study child of the second centre.

³ Ji-Hun was a case study child of the second centre.

Nevertheless, Ji-Hun, who was always seen playing with Shin, appeared to have difficulty in adapting himself to the ECE centre.

Ji-Hun enrolled at the centre about the same time as Shin. According to Razan, a bilingual teacher, they soon played together even though they did not speak the same language. However, Shin adapted himself faster than Ji Hun, although they had almost the same level of English proficiency. Razan noted that Shin was observed to settle in faster than Ji Hun, who took a few months to settle in at the centre. As I observed Shin and Ji Hun, Shin looked more relaxed, flexible, and had more friends to play with compared to Ji Hun, who was always seen crying if his needs were not met and preferred to play with Shin most of the time during the process of acculturation. In addition, Razan highlighted Shin's cultural adaptation as better than Ji Hun's due to Shin's temperament:

He [Shin] would just smile and he would just...from his body language, he would just acknowledge you – a smile, and we would call him and get him to be part of the teams and he would slowly start once he knew that this was a safe place, the teachers are good. And it depends on children's temperament too, you know. Most of the time he is quite happy and even I think because Shin is quite a nice-natured boy, and they've [Shin and Ji Hun] become really good friends apart from some times when they just – when he wants him to do the same thing, I mean that would be the case sometimes for non-English speaking children, sometimes there will be children who would expect them to do the things that they want.

According to Razan, Shin's adaptive personality was seen to enable him to develop his friendship with other children, besides being a good friend to Ji Hun. Both Razan's view and my observation of Shin revealed his use of the integration strategy during the acculturation process. He had shown interest in having daily interaction with others at the centre by participating in activities, but was still being reserved and obliging in his character, which was a reflection of being an Asian child. It was apparent that as Shin used the strategy of integration in his acculturation, there was a positive outcome for his sociocultural adaptation because it increased his contact with his English speaking friends and teachers. As a result of the increased contact, there were positive consequences; firstly, he was able to acquire English while he socialised with his friends and teachers, and secondly, he was able to improve and master his intercultural knowledge of New Zealand culture through these interactions.

Ji Hun, on the other hand, was described by Razan and Ming as a struggling English user and he was always seen crying if his needs were not met. All of the teachers from the second centre, Razan, Ming, Akiko, and Angela, expressed their concerns about Ji Hun's behaviour, although they felt that the main reason of such behaviour was due to the fact that he was recently enrolled at the centre. Razan, Akiko, and Angela presumed that over time, Ji Hun would be able to adapt himself with his friends and teachers in the centre. It was evident that Ji Hun's behaviour can be interpreted as potentially leading to acculturation along separatist lines based on the following evidence; he seemed to refuse the friendship of children who were not from the same cultural background as his and insisted on playing only with Shin. In the context of having less contact with English speaking friends, Ji Hun did not have much opportunity to interact with English speaking teachers and friends. Ji Hun's behaviour could be a manifestation of shyness. As such, he had fewer chances to acquire English through his social interactions or to learn about New Zealand culture.

In this section, we have discussed how the ELLs' English proficiency affected their contact with English speaking teachers and friends, which subsequently influenced their English acquisition and New Zealand cultural knowledge. Both Shin and Ji Hun were still at the initial stage of English acquisition. However, Shin had more contact with the English speaking teachers and friends because his behaviour can be interpreted as potentially leading to acculturation along integrative lines. On the one hand, Ji Hun had less contact with the English speaking teachers and friends because his behaviour can be interpreted as potentially leading to acculturation along separatist lines. Hence, Shin and Ji Hun had different experiences as they adapted themselves socially and culturally at the centres.

4. Conclusion

This paper has discussed strategies and challenges of sociocultural adaptation of the ELLs, the Asian parents and the Asian immigrant teachers. During the acculturation process, the Asian parents and their children tended to adapt themselves by using both integration and assimilation strategies. The integration strategy was often the preference of the Asian parents because the reasons for migration were established in their decision to seek full-time employment or engage in the New Zealand community. This was highlighted during the interviews with the Asian parents because all of the parents were in full-time employment in New Zealand. Therefore, they emphasised the importance of preserving their cultural heritage while simultaneously acquiring cultural knowledge of New Zealand society. The assimilation strategy was only evident when two of the Asian immigrants ELLs were conforming to the mainstream culture. Other strategies in acculturation, such as marginalisation and rejection, were not evident in my data perhaps because the length of my data gathering was within a time frame that did not allow me to observe these strategies. As sociocultural adaptation is a two way process, the teachers were also involved in the process of sociocultural adaptation. Unlike the Asian parents and the ELLs, there was no clear evidence that the teachers focused on preserving the ELLs' cultural heritage. However, it was apparent that in the process of sociocultural adaptation, some of the teachers acquired Asian cultural knowledge while some of them were not aware of the needs to acquire this knowledge.

References

Barbara, R. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. Oxford University Press: New York.

- Berry (2001). A psychology of immigration. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(3): 611–27.
- Berry (2005). Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29(6): 697-712.
- Berry (2006). *Stress perspectives on acculturation*. In D. L. Sam & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of acculturation psychology*. Cambridge University Press: New York, NY. 43–57.
- Berry (2012). *Acculturation*. In H. Anheier, & M. Juergensmeyer (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of global studies*. CA: SAGE: Thousand Oaks.
- Chao, R. and Tseng, V. (2002). *Parenting of Asians*. In M. H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting: Social conditions and applied parenting*. 2nd edn: Lawrence Erlbaum: Mahwah, NJ. 59-93.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. CA: SAGE: Thousand Oaks.
- Farquhar, S. and Flear, M. (2007). *Developmental colonisation of early childhood education in Aotearoa/ New Zealand*. In L. Keesing-Styles & H. Hedges (Eds.), *Theorising early childhood practice: Emerging dialogues*(pp. Pademelon Press: Australia Sydney. 27-49.
- Hofstede (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Sage: Beverly Hills, CA.
- Kim (2001). *Becoming intercultural: An integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation*. CA: SAGE: Thousand Oaks.
- Kim and Hinchey, P. H. (2013). *Educating English language learners in an inclusive environment*. Peter Lang: New York, NY.
- Krashen (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press: Oxford.
- Krashen (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman: Harlow.
- Lantolf and Thorne (2000). *Second language acquisition theory and the truth(s) about relativity*. In J. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural approaches to second language research*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Lev, V. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*, Ed. James V. Wertsch. Harvard University Press: Cambridge:.
- Liebkind, K. (2006). *Ethnic identity and acculturation*. In D. L. Sam & J.W. Berry (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of acculturation psychology*. Cambridge University Press: New York, NY.
- Masgoret, A. M. and Ward, C. (2006). *The cultural learning approach to acculturation*. In D.L. Sam & J.W. Berry (Eds.), *Cambridge handbook of acculturation psychology*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK. 58–77.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. CA: Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.
- Oppedal (2006). *Development and acculturation*. In D. L. Sam & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of acculturation psychology*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. CA: SAGE: Thousand Oaks.
- Phinney, J. S., Horenczyk, G., Liebkind, K. and Vedder, P. (2001). Ethnic, identity, immigration and well-being. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(3): 493-510.
- Sam (2006). *Adaptation of children and adolescents with immigrant background: Acculturation or development?* In M.H. Bornstein & L. Cote (Eds.), *Acculturation and parent child relationship: Measurement and development*. Erlbaum.: Mahwah, NJ.
- Searle, W. and Ward, C. (1990). The prediction of psychological and sociocultural adjustment during crosscultural transitions. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14(4): 449-64.
- Smith, A. B. (2013). *Understanding children and childhood: A New Zealand perspective*. Bridget Williams: Wellington, New Zealand.
- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. State University of New York Press: Albany, NY.
- Ward, C. and Kennedy, A. (1996). *Crossing cultures: The relationship between psychological and sociocultural dimensions of sojourner adaptation*. In J. Pandey, D. Sinha, & D. P. S. Bhawuk (Eds.), *Asian contributions to cross-cultural psychology*. SAGE: New Delhi, India.