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**Observing Census Enumeration of Non-English
Speaking Households in the 2010 Census:
Korean Report**

Kyung-Eun Yoon ¹
Yuling Pan
Stephen Lubkemann

¹ University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Center for Survey Measurement
Research and Methodology Directorate
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20233

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Abstract

This study was part of an ethnographic research project in the 2010 Census Assessment and Research Program to observe the 2010 Census Nonresponse Followup (NRFU) interviews with households that speak a language other than English, in areas of the U.S. with heavy concentrations of residents with limited English proficiency. A multilingual research team consisting of seven sub-teams in the seven primary languages (Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese) was commissioned to carry out the research in the 2010 Census.

The objectives of this research were to identify: (1) how language and socio-cultural factors affect the enumeration of non-English-speaking populations during the Nonresponse Followup interview process; (2) what measures were taken by enumerators to negotiate and maintain access to non-English-speaking households and to collect the required census data from these households; (3) how in-language census materials were used in the field; (4) how non-English-speaking immigrant populations perceived and reacted to the census and its public messaging; and (5) what changes, if any, are needed to improve the enumeration process with households that have limited or no English proficiency. Findings from this study will help develop recommendations for planning the 2020 Census, including the Decennial Language Program, questionnaire development, translation of census questions, use of interpreters in enumeration interviews, and interviewer training.

This report presents findings from the Korean research team of bilingual ethnographers who studied the Korean community to highlight the issues observed in the research. While the findings clearly draw attention to the importance of linguistic competency among NRFU enumerators, they also demonstrate that we need more than linguistic competency, language aids, and minority language media campaigns in order to increase successful census participation among linguistic minorities. The negotiation of interview access, effective communication about the census' objectives, the translation of concepts that do not carry conceptual equivalence, the ability to successfully sustain the interview as a communicative event, and ultimately the ability to elicit the information that the census is designed to obtain—are all demonstrated to require robust understandings of the highly differentiated social and cultural contexts of particular immigrant communities. Drawing on findings from the ethnographic study, the report suggests recommendations for planning the 2020 Census.

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1. Introduction

In 2010, the Census Bureau undertook the decennial census to enumerate the U.S. population, with a mission of counting everyone once, only once, and in the right place. Accurate enumeration of households in which little or no English is spoken (conventionally designated as “linguistically-isolated households”) represents an enormous challenge for the Census Bureau. In an effort to meet this challenge, the Census Bureau developed a comprehensive language assistance program, which included the 2010 Census Fulfillment form in the five primary non-English languages (Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Russian, and Vietnamese), language assistance guides in 59 languages, and telephone questionnaire assistance in the top five non-English languages.

Yet, as of the time of the 2010 decennial census the Census Bureau still lacked an adequate understanding of how well the census data collection interview is carried out with households in which no one 14 and over speaks English only or speaks a language other than English at home and speaks English “very well” (Pan, 2010). Consequently, a comparative study was designed to ethnographically observe Nonresponse Followup (NRFU) interviews amongst eight different communities of language to identify what, if any, social and linguistic factors influenced the reliability and validity of the NRFU data collected from linguistically-isolated households.

This report focuses on the findings from the observational field study of census enumeration conducted amongst Korean-speaking households. Our overarching objective was to assess the extent to which the NRFU interview process obtained valid and satisfactory responses from respondents who were primarily or solely Korean speakers, and to assess social, cultural and linguistic factors that created barriers or otherwise mediated that goal. Consequently, our observations and analysis focused on several broad questions that were addressed by all ethnographic teams in the broader comparative study, namely:

- How did the linguistic background of respondents whose sole or primary language was Korean rather than English affect their interaction with enumerators and their participation in the NRFU interview?
- What social and cultural factors affected interaction between enumerators and respondents and with what effect upon the communicative process?
- How was the challenge of translation addressed and more specifically what role did interpreters play, how were they recruited, and what effect did they have upon the communicative process?

This report first provides an overview of Korean immigrants in the U.S., followed by a description of the research field site, team, and data sources. We then discuss our most significant observations and findings followed by our recommendations about how to improve NRFU interviews amongst Korean speakers. We conclude with recommendations.

2. Community Background: Overview of Korean Immigrants

Even though Korean immigration to the United States dates back to as early as 1903, substantial numbers of Korean immigrants only began to arrive after the Korean War (1950-1953). These immigrants arrived primarily as refugees, wives of American servicemen, orphans, or as students (e.g., 6,400 Korean war brides and 5,300 orphans between 1951 and 1964) (Kang, 1990). By 1970, the number of Korean immigrants in the U.S. totaled 38,711 (0.4% of all immigrants). Within a decade (by 1980) this number had dramatically increased to 289,885 (2.1% of all immigrants), and over the decade that followed it virtually doubled yet again to 568,397 (2.9%). Steady growth increased the number of Korean Americans to 864,125 (2.8%) in 2000, and to 1,030,691 (2.7%) in 2008 (Terrazas & Batog, 2010).

Korean immigrants have tended to concentrate in large metropolitan areas in a few states -- particularly California, New York, New Jersey, and Virginia (Kang, 1990; Terrazas, 2009) -- even though they are more widely dispersed in all states throughout the U.S. than are most other Asian-American groups (Kang, 1990; Chang, 2003). For example, according to Yu (1977), 41% of all Koreans resided in the Western region (compared to 81% of the Japanese and 57% of the Chinese populations), while 19% of Koreans lived in the South (compared to 5% of the Japanese and 8% of the Chinese). Similarly, Chang's study (2003) argues that Koreans have been faster than other Asian Americans in attaining broader patterns of distribution throughout the United States -- exemplified most dramatically by the remarkable growth of the Korean immigrant population in the South (46% growth experienced between 1990 and 2000).

According to Terrazas' report (2009), almost all Korean immigrants in the U.S. are of South Korean origin. Between 2000 and 2007 the U.S. admitted only 37 North Koreans as refugees and 257 as tourists, business travelers, students, or exchange visitors on temporary visas. By 2008 the majority (54.7%) of Korean immigrants had already become naturalized U.S. citizens (Terrazas & Batog, 2010), evidencing a rate of naturalization that is relatively high when compared to that of the foreign-born population overall (43%). Koreans also account for a significant portion of the United States' non-immigrant residents (whose status is lawful but does not involve permanent residence -- i.e. green cards -- or naturalized citizenship). According to a report by the Department of Homeland Security (Monger & Barr, 2010), the numbers of Korean non-immigrant resident admissions in the fiscal years of 2007, 2008, and 2009 were 211,013, 216,648, and 192,970 respectively -- accounting for 5.9%, 5.9%, and 5.6 % of the total number of nonimmigrant resident admissions in each of those years.¹

Korean-born immigrants are also estimated to account for about 2% of the all unauthorized immigrants in the United States, numbering approximately 200,000 in 2009 (Hoefler, Rytina, & Baker, 2010). During the last five years of the last millennium, the number of unauthorized Korean immigrants grew significantly. Thus, whereas in 1996 the U.S. Department of Homeland Security estimated that approximately 30,000 illegal immigrants were Korean-born (0.6 % of total 5,000,000 illegal immigrant population), in 2000 this number was estimated to be six times

¹ The report by Dept. of Homeland Security distinguishes two categories of nonimmigrant residents, which are short-term residents and expected long-term residents. However, they do not report on the expected long-term resident category because of low admission numbers. Short-term residents include temporary workers, intra-company transferees, students, exchange visitors, diplomats, and families of each category.

greater: 180,000 (2% of the total 8,460,000) (Hoefler, Rytina, & Baker, 2010). Since 2000, the number and the proportion of unauthorized Korean immigrants have stabilized. Thus, in 2009, the number of Korean-born unauthorized immigrants was estimated to be 200,000 (representing 2% of the whole unauthorized immigrant category) (Hoefler, Rytina, & Baker, 2010). Largely anecdotal evidence suggests that most Korean-born unauthorized immigrants are non-immigrant overstays -- individuals who enter the U.S. legally on a temporary basis and then ultimately fail to depart. In the Korean case it is likely that many came to the U.S. as students, temporary visitors, or on working or family visas but failed to return after their requests for permanent residency were turned down. A significant portion of this unauthorized population is believed to work as suppliers of labor for small businesses in Korean enclave communities, though there are some who run small businesses on their own, either using social security numbers they received before their temporary visas expired and they lost legal status, or by using the identities and legal documents of friends or relatives.

In terms of the annual household income, Koreans also earn more than the total population: with a median household (or individual) annual income of \$53,887 compared to \$52,029 for the U.S. population as a whole in 2008; and \$53,025 compared to \$50,221 in 2009 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008; 2009). Yet interestingly, the proportion of Koreans age 16 and older who participate in the civilian labor force has been lower than the total population: (60.6% to 65.4% in 2008 and 60.2% to 64.7% in 2009). Within the group of the civilian labor force, the proportion of Koreans who are “private wage and salary workers” or “government workers” has been lower than the whole population, but those in the categories of “self-employed workers in own not incorporated business”² and “unpaid family workers” have been higher: 11.6% and 0.6% respectively compared to 6.4% and 0.2% amongst the total population in 2008, and 10.9% and 0.5% respectively compared to 6.4% and 0.1% in 2009 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008; 2009).

Drawing upon on a different data source (2000 Census 5% Public Use Microdata Samples), Le (2010) noted that Asian-Americans were the most likely to own their small businesses (along with certain European immigrant groups) and that Koreans had the highest self-employment rate (24.0%) of all the Asian groups. According to Le, traditional Asian small businesses were relatively low-skill service industries such as restaurants, retail, groceries, beauty services, etc., which were found within ethnic enclaves. Chang (2003) and Noland (2003) have attributed this record of strong entrepreneurship amongst Korean immigrants to their high educational achievement and high levels of self-esteem. They argued that a lack of proficiency in the English language and unfamiliarity with American culture prevented many Koreans from fully exploiting their Korean qualifications within the American economy -- but that this led many to shift from white-collar work to entrepreneurial options because of the psychological satisfaction and social status that could be obtained from running and owning a business. Noland (2003) stated that as a result, a network of mutually-supporting businesses emerged to cater to Korean communities in large metropolitan centers -- including restaurants, green groceries, dry cleaning, and newspapers, along with the ubiquitous churches. He further reported that these first generation Korean immigrants maintained a strong commitment to education and professional attainment even though a lack of English proficiency impeded their ability to pursue their previous careers.

² According to the definition provided by U.S. Census Bureau, “self-employed in own not incorporated business workers includes people who worked for profit or fees in their own unincorporated business, professional practice, or trade, or who operated a farm” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

As a result, these immigrants' children have obtained professional accreditation in the U.S., reinforcing a trend in recent years towards growth in the number of Korean professional service providers such as doctors, lawyers, and insurance agents, etc.

As a whole, Koreans are more educated than both other immigrant groups and the U.S. population. For example, in 2008, 51% of Korean-born adults age 25 and older had a bachelor's or higher degree compared to 27.1% among all the foreign-born adults (Terrazas & Batog, 2010) and to 27.2 % of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Yet interestingly, despite their relatively high levels of educational achievement, they evidence relatively low levels of English proficiency. Thus, 57% of Korean immigrants reported speaking English "less than very well," placing them only marginally higher than the 52.4% reported amongst all foreign-born in 2007 (Terrazas, 2009). Moreover, this rate of English proficiency actually dropped to 46.9% in 2008 and even further to 40.7% in 2009 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008; 2009). As this study alluded to, the lack of English proficiency is often reported as a main barrier for Korean immigrants to participate in the U.S. Census. This report will summarize findings from the Korean research team regarding Korean respondents' reaction to and perception of the U.S. Census and their participation (or lack of) in the U.S. Census.

3. Methods

3.1. Field Sites

The Korean research team conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Maryland, Virginia, and New York. Some parts of these areas are known to have tightly-knit Korean communities with their own businesses and churches. However, the Local Census Offices (LCOs) in these areas could not predict where to find Korean-speaking households. Thus they did not assign Korean-speaking enumerators based on the likelihood of finding Korean-speaking households at the beginning stage of the NRFU interview process. As a result, all three members in the Korean research team had difficulty observing interviews with a Korean-speaking respondent, although we followed Korean or Korean-American enumerators for the NRFU visits. In fact, all our observations on NRFU interviews with Korean respondents came from the cases which the LCOs had reassigned to Korean-American enumerators after receiving reports that these were Korean-speaking households. For such cases, we visited apartment complexes and senior housings in middle-class neighborhoods and single houses and town homes in upper-middle-class neighborhoods. The area we visited in New York is especially well-known for its high concentration of Korean residents, stores, restaurants, and churches. As an example, we visited two senior housing complexes, and most of the residents seemed to be Korean in both complexes. The LCO itself had many Korean-American staff members, and they were greatly knowledgeable of Korean and other diverse communities in the area. Based on their extensive knowledge, they organized a Korean NRFU interview group very efficiently and crew leaders and enumerators from different teams were very cooperative in accomplishing the interview tasks together.

3.2. Research Team and Enumerators

The Korean team consisted of three researchers. The team leader was a native Korean speaker who was an expert in Korean linguistics and conversation analysis. The other two members were Korean-Americans who were bilingual: one was born in the U.S. and the other came to U.S. as an infant. Both of them had high Korean proficiency; however, they had somewhat limited knowledge of formal styles and expressions typically used in news broadcasts or official documents. To overcome their limitations, the team leader trained and supervised them, focusing on the formality aspect from the initial stage of translating the enumerator questionnaire.

The research team members accompanied 14 enumerators from May 11th to June 18th, 2010 in the field and observed 84 complete NRFU interviews, 9 refusals, and 3 rescheduling cases, of which 23 complete interviews, 1 refusal, and 1 rescheduling involved Korean-speaking households. The team leader conducted the fieldwork in Maryland and New York. She observed four different enumerators in Maryland and three in New York. The second member in the Korean research team accompanied three enumerators in Maryland, and the third member followed four enumerators (three Americans and a Korean-American who is fluent in Korean) in Virginia. Table 1 presents the 14 enumerators, their characteristics, and the number of their interactions with respondents observed by the three research team members.

Table 1. Enumerator (E) Characteristics by Research Team Members

	E Ethnicity	E Gender	E Age	E Korean-Speaking Fluency	# of Interactions Observed³
Researcher 1					
E 1-1	Korean-American	Male	40	Low	15
E 1-2	Korean	Female	40's	Native	8
E 1-3	Korean-American	Male	20's	Low	5
E 1-4	Korean	Male	60's	Native	14
E 1-5 (NY)	Korean	Male	50's	Native	7
E 1-6 (NY)	Korean-American	Male	20's	High	5
E 1-7 (NY)	Korean	Female	50's	Native	4
Researcher 2					
E 2-1	Korean	Female	20's	Native	13
E 2-2	Korean	Male	50's	Native	2
E 2-3	Caucasian	Male	30's	None	11
Researcher 3					
E 3-1	African-American	Male	40-50's	None	6
E 3-2	Caucasian	Female	50's	None	1
E 3-3	Caucasian	Female	30's	None	2
E 3-4	Korean-American	Male	20's	High	3
TOTAL					96

³ These cases include complete NRFU interviews, refusals, and rescheduling cases. The total number of interview attempts was approximately 400.

As noted earlier, all our observations on interviews with Korean respondents came from the reassigned cases to Korean-American enumerators based on the reports that these were Korean-speaking households. As a result, only six of the 14 enumerators visited such households. Four of them were paired with the team leader (Enumerators 1-4, 1-5, 1-6, and 1-7). Enumerators 1-4, 1-5, and 1-7 were native Korean speakers in their 50s to 60s, and they were very polite and skillful in interviewing Korean respondents in a wide range of ages. Enumerator 1-6 was an American-born Korean heritage speaker. The level of formality in his Korean was not native-like, but his proficiency was high enough to conduct the NRFU interviews without any communication problems during five cases the researcher observed. By accompanying these four enumerators, the research team leader observed 23 cases out of 25 Korean interactions. The LCOs in Maryland and Virginia, which arranged the field visits of the second and the third research members, somehow had very limited numbers of cases that required a Korean-speaking enumerator. As a result, the two researchers observed only one Korean interaction each through Enumerators 2-1 and 3-4. Enumerator 2-1 was a native Korean speaker in her 20s and Enumerator 3-4 was a Korean-American in his 20s who immigrated to the U.S. as an infant. His Korean was fluent in a colloquial style and he was able to manage an interview with Korean-speaking respondents. However, the lack of formal expressions and speech style in his Korean caused communication issues, which will be discussed in the section on findings.

3.3. Observations and Data Sources

During the course of our field study, our research team made four different types of observations. The first type of data was the NRFU interactions between enumerators and respondents. As noted earlier, we observed a total of 84 complete NRFU interviews, nine refusals, and three reschedules. Of the 84 NRFU interviews, 23 involved Korean speakers, and one of the nine refusals and one of the three reschedules were cases with Korean households. Ten of the 23 NRFU interviews were observed in Maryland and Virginia by all the three research team members (eight by the leader and one each by the second and third members), and 13 were observed in New York by the team leader. Both the refusal and reschedule cases with Korean households were observed in Maryland by the team leader. Table 2 is a summary of NRFU observation cases according to the types of enumerators and respondents, and the interview languages.

Table 2. Ethnic Background of Respondents and Interview Languages by Background and Linguistic Competence of Enumerators

Type of Enumerator (Ethnic Background/ Linguistic Competence)	Type of Respondent: Ethnic Background (Interview Language)						
	Korean (Korean)	Korean (English)	Caucasian (English)	African-American (English)	Hispanic (English)	Hispanic (Spanish)	Others (English)
Korean (Fluent English competency)⁴	13 (1 re-schedule/ 1 refusal)		13 (1 refusal)	3 (2 refusals)	2		1 Jap 1 Mid-East
Korean (Strong English competency)⁵	8		1		3		2 South-Asian (1 refusal)
Korean-American (Poor/ Korean competency)⁶		1	15 (1 refusal)	2			2 South-Asian 2 East-Asian (both refusal)
Korean-American (Fluent Korean Competency)⁷	4	2 (1 re-schedule)					
Caucasian				3	2	9 (1 refusal)	1 Bahai (re-schedule)
African-American		1	2				3 South-Asian
Total (96)	25	4	31	8	7	9	12

The researchers tape-recorded approximately 45 NRFU interviews including all the ten interviews with Korean households with their permission in Maryland and Virginia. The researchers also took field notes on all the interviews, refusals, and rescheduling cases. Tape-recording was not allowed in New York, and thus the researcher took field notes as closely as possible. After the NRFU interviews were completed, the researchers conducted debriefing

⁴ These Korean enumerators were “fluent” in English in that they were able to conduct NRFU interviews in English without major misunderstandings. They had noticeable Korean accents, which sometimes caused minor communication issues during the interviews.

⁵ The English competency of these Korean enumerators was strong in that their English proficiency was native-like with little to no Korean accent.

⁶ These Korean-American enumerators’ Korean proficiency was very low in that they had difficulty in understanding basic vocabulary. None of their cases involved Korean-speaking households.

⁷ These Korean-American enumerators were “fluent” in Korean in that they were able to conduct NRFU interviews in Korean without major misunderstandings when they were assigned to Korean-speaking households. They had limited knowledge of formal styles and expressions, which caused one of them communication trouble during his visit to Korean-speaking respondents. More background information on these enumerators (Enumerators 1-6 and 3-4) was provided in the previous section.

interviews with the respondents regarding their experiences with and views of the census. The debriefing questions were developed under the guidance of the Census Bureau (See Appendix 1 for the questions in English and Korean).

For the second set of data, we conducted debriefing interviews with all the enumerators (See Table 1 in the previous section for the background information including their linguistic competencies). The enumerator debriefing questions were also developed under the guidance of the Census Bureau to examine their point of view on the census operation (See Appendix 2 for the questions).

Third, in an effort to collect more data on Korean speakers' experiences with and views of the 2010 U.S. Census, our field researchers conducted an additional set of interviews with 18 Korean-speaking respondents. Two of the researchers recruited these 18 native Korean speakers using their personal connections. We conducted individual interviews with eight of the 18 participants and two focus-group interviews with six and four participants each. Table 3 provides the information on these participants.

Table 3. Participants in Individual/Focus-group Interviews

	Residing Area	Gender	Age	Residency Status in U.S.	Response to the Census
Individual 1	CA	Male	80s	Citizen	Mailed the form
Individual 2	CA	Female	50s	Citizen	Mailed the form
Individual 3	CA	Female	30s	Permanent Resident	Mailed the form
Individual 4	OR	Female	40s	Permanent Resident	Mailed the form
Individual 5	VA	Male	40s	Permanent Resident	Did not receive a form or a visit, thus did not respond
Individual 6	MD	Female	30s	Short-term resident ⁸	Husband mailed the form
Individual 7	MD	Female	30s	Citizen	Mailed the form
Individual 8	MD	Female	30s	Short-term resident	Husband mailed the form
Group 1-1	MD	Female	50s	Citizen	Mailed the form
Group 1-2	MD	Female	30s	Short-term resident	Mailed the form
Group 1-3	MD	Female	30s	Short-term resident	Mailed the form
Group 1-4	MD	Female	40s	Permanent resident	Had NRFU visit
Group 1-5	MD	Male	40s	Permanent resident	Had NRFU visit
Group 1-6	MD	Female	50s	Short-term resident	Had NRFU visit
Group 2-1	VA	Male	50-60s	Citizen	Mailed the form
Group 2-2	VA	Female	50-60s	Citizen	Mailed the form
Group 2-3	VA	Female	50s	Citizen	Mailed the form
Group 2-4	VA	Female	50s	Citizen	Mailed the form

For these interviews, we first asked whether the participants mailed the 2010 Census form or had an enumerator visit them for an NRFU interview. For those who had NRFU visits, we asked how the interviews were initiated, how they responded, and how the interactions developed. Then we used the same questions as the respondent debriefing questions which we used during the NRFU field visits.

Fourth and finally, in order to gather a broad range of data, we analyzed census-related postings on a high-traffic Korean community website. More specifically we reviewed and analyzed 23 postings at a Korean community website called www.missyusa.com. The primary audience for this website is Korean women in the U.S., and the users share all sorts of information on living experiences in the U.S. and a variety of concerns. Although this website caters to women, it is the highest-ranking Korean website in the U.S. according to www.alexacom (on August 23, 2010). It has a large number of users and is so well-known among Korean people in the U.S. that men, who cannot have accounts on this website, seek for information and advice regarding various topics through their wives. The users share their concerns and worries about any possible topic in a very lively and frank way, especially in an anonymous community board section of

⁸ The definition of this term was provided in the section on overview of Korean immigrants.

this website. In this section, we found 23 anonymous postings by (potential) respondents about the Census and ten postings by six Census workers from March 15 to June 1, 2010.

4. Findings

4.1. Views and Knowledge of the Census

Based on our observations of the 23 NRFU interviews conducted with Korean-speaking respondents and our subsequent debriefing interviews with both respondents and their enumerators, we found that Korean respondents generally exhibited a positive and accepting view of the Census. Most of the respondents, whether or not they had been aware of the census before, stated that they believed it was important to participate in the Census. Many New York respondents even expressed their eagerness to participate. No respondent that we observed showed a negative attitude toward the government or the Census. As far as we could determine, a positive view of the Census seems to be universal across different groups in terms of their socio-economic status, at least within our data: some of them were single-house or townhouse owners in suburb areas, some were residents in public senior housings, and some were apartment renters in middle-income areas.

In contrast to a universally positive view of the Census, we found significant variability in their knowledge and awareness of the Census. Thus most of the Korean respondents debriefed in the Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC area had only vague knowledge of the Census. Some of them remembered receiving the form in the mail, but “did not care enough to respond” mainly because they were nervous about filling out an English form. Some remembered seeing advertisements about the Census “somewhere,” but they said that these had been sporadic and they had obviously not made a significant impression.

By way of contrast, many of the respondents in New York said that they were well aware of the Census, largely as a result of what had evidently been an extensive blanketing campaign on Korean radio shows, of TV ads on Korean channels, and in Korean newspapers. The respondents and enumerators in New York mentioned the information campaign in these forms of media had increased their willingness to participate in the Census. Four of the 15 respondents in New York said they had mailed the form already, but still proved willing to participate in the NRFU interviews.

A positive and accepting view of the Census was also exhibited by the 18 Korean speakers who participated in focus-group/individual interviews. None of the 18 participants had a negative view of the government or the Census, which is consistent with the previous observation from Korean NRFU interviews. Just as most Korean NRFU respondents in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC were not well aware of the Census operation before the NRFU visits, most of the focus-group/individual interview respondents in these areas said that they had not heard a lot about the census before they received the census form or an enumerator’s visit. The four respondents who did not respond by mail lived in these areas, and they said they did not mail the form mainly because they were busy with other things and not comfortable dealing with the English form. They all agreed, however, that responding to the Census was important. None

reported having problems interacting with the English-speaking enumerator when they had a visit.

Notwithstanding the lack of awareness amongst the Korean community in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC , we collected evidence that suggested the Census conducted effective campaigns targeting the Korean communities in other areas of significant concentration. According to respondents from communities in California and Oregon, ads in Korean seemed to have been widely available to Korean communities in California. All the California respondents said that they had seen many ads in various Korean media and reported it had positively influenced their participation in the Census. The Oregon respondent noted that Korean TV channels produced in California are available in Oregon as well, and thus that she saw many Korean ads about the Census.

Finally, none of the postings that we reviewed on the Korean website displayed any negative view of the government or the Census. A couple of postings expressed the writers' concerns about their illegal status, and other users posted comments encouraging the original writers to participate in the Census. Many of the comments mentioned that the status should not matter; however, the fact that this was being addressed reveals it was a concern. Some even posted detailed information regarding the census procedure and the confidentiality policy, to which many other users responded with their appreciation. Those who mailed back the form or had an NRFU interview all reported that it was a positive experience for them. Some examples are:

“I did it as soon as I got it in the mail. I did it while I was in my car, waiting for my son from his school. It was really simple and easy. I think it was complicated ten years ago...”

“I also thought it would take a while when an ad asked to invest 10 minutes. But it was nothing. Even people who can't speak English can do it! At first, I thought I didn't get a complete set of the form (because it was too short and easy).”

“I did the census yesterday. I really can't speak English, you know. But the census interviewer was very nice and smart. He noticed that my English was bad. So he pointed at each phrase on the form while he was talking. Anyway, it was easy and good. I boasted at my husband later, saying I filled out an official document for the first time in the U.S.”

4.2. Negotiating Access: Ethnic Identity as a Key Factor

Perhaps one of our most significant findings was that Korean respondents who had not mailed the census form responded to the NRFU interviews most favorably when they perceived the enumerator to be (ethnically) “Korean.” In our debriefings, respondents and enumerators alike identified the Korean ethnicity of the enumerators as a key factor in securing access to Korean respondents. Many of the respondents made explicit remarks such as the following:

KOR1-015: “↓Oh boy↓, (the enumerator) is Kore:an, then what kind of doubt would I have. .h There is NOTHING to have doubts about, IS THERE?”⁹

KOR1-NY005: ((This elderly respondent had already mailed the form.))
“I mailed the form in order to avoid your trouble like this... I should’ve treated at least coffee to you?”

Enumerators were well aware of the advantage that clearly signaled “Koreaness” could provide them in negotiating access and responded accordingly; most obviously by always initiating interaction in the Korean language. Thus all of the Korean-born enumerators said “hello” in Korean when respondents opened the door. One of them even prompted a positive response by asking “anybody home?” in Korean before he saw the respondents’ faces.

On the other hand, Korean-American enumerators often initiated the interaction in English. However, they would immediately code-switch whenever respondents responded in Korean, as in the example below:

KOR1-NY009 E: ((at the door)) “U.S. Census!”
R: ((in Korean)) “Who is it?”
E: ((in Korean)) “I am from the Census office.”

As we observed it, Korean ethnicity, rather than fluency in the Korean language, seemed to matter the most in terms of securing access. This is illustrated by the cases in which Korean-American enumerators were often excused their failings in Korean proficiency. Thus, on one occasion, a young Korean-American enumerator had a NRFU interview with two Korean elderly respondents. The enumerator had Korean language proficiency high enough to manage daily life interactions probably with his family members and friends, but not quite sufficient to interact with elderly Koreans in a formal setting such as conducting a NRFU interview.¹⁰ In this interview, the enumerator inadvertently used impolite terms and non-honorific expressions many times toward elderly respondents. This would generally be considered to be extremely rude in Korean society. However, the respondents readily excused these failures because he was “Korean” and evaluated the enumerator’s interview skills positively during the respondent debriefing session, noting that: “He was very kind and did a good job.”

Korean-American enumerators themselves noted how respondents tended to excuse their linguistic ineptitude: “My Korean is not actually good, but they are willing to help me out when I have trouble in Korean expressions.”

A remark by another Korean-American enumerator whose Korean proficiency level is very low also supports the important role of an enumerator’s Korean ethnicity rather than actual Korean language competency:

⁹ Korean respondents’ remarks in this report are translated from Korean to English. The translated and transcribed remarks of this report use the conventions which are commonly used in conversation analysis research. For example, in “Kore:an,” the underline signals that the particular part of the word got stressed or emphasized, and the colon indicates that the vowel, “e,” got lengthened. See Ochs, Schegloff, and Thompson (1996, pp. 461-465).

¹⁰ He had issues in taking information from the respondents due to his limited language proficiency.

“There were cases in which they would not even open the door, but as soon as I switched to Korean, they opened the door.”

This same enumerator noted that he was not able to conduct the interviews in Korean due to his poor Korean, but being able to say just “hi” in Korean signaled his Korean ethnicity to the respondents and it enabled him to conduct the NRFU interviews.

None of the three researchers had a chance to observe a Caucasian or African-American enumerator interact with a Korean monolingual respondent, but we have indirect evidence that they were less preferred and less readily welcomed by Korean respondents. Thus in one case in which a Korean-American enumerator interviewed two elderly Koreans, one of the respondents said they had refused an interview with “American” enumerators who had come previously:

“We had an American interviewer, twice. So we said, send us a Korean person. It has to be Korean.”

Interestingly, the only refusal case that we observed among Korean respondents also indicates preference for a Korean enumerator. This household was visited by a male Korean enumerator in his 60s. When he knocked on the door, the respondent, a female in her 60s to 70s, was taking a walk around their townhouse complex. When she saw us, she walked up to us and asked in Korean, “What brought you here?” She was a bit cautious, but friendly, and when the enumerator told her that he came for the Census, she stated, still in a friendly tone, that she was just visiting her children in this household and so she was not able to answer. She also provided information on what time her children would usually come back home -- and then tellingly noted:

“I wouldn’t have even come to talk to you if it had been American, but I saw Korean people standing in front of our place, so I came.”

It may be that the favorable orientation towards Korean enumerators is related to an ethos of “collectivism” (Sohn, 2006, p. 10). According to Sohn (1986), Korean interpersonal relations are strongly tied to collectivistic ideals and Koreans highly value interpersonal dependency. He further says that:

“Whereas Americans are willing to talk to strangers or people they don’t know well and smile and offer greetings to anybody who passes by, Koreans usually don’t smile or offer greetings to strangers, tending to avoid talking to strangers or out-group members, while they are eager to talk to in-group members, acquaintances, and interested parties such as one’s clientele” (Sohn, 2006, p. 11).

Whereas this dynamic would likely take on different forms within a society in which all participants were Korean, in American society Korean ethnicity tends to signal “in-groupness.” Thus Hurh and Kim’s report on Korean immigrants in the Chicago area (1988) found that 81% had Korean friends whereas only 38% reported any American friends. Based on his observations in Los Angeles, CA, and Queens, NY Kang (1990) also stated that Korean immigrants tended to have social networks that exhibit a high degree of ethnic enclosure. In this study, respondents reported that Korean friendships were established through old school ties from home, church

affiliations, or at the place of work. Friendships with Americans were also described as problematic due to the cultural differences and the language barrier which made the respondents frequently feel uncomfortable. Even those who resided in mostly white suburban neighborhood areas developed and maintained their Korean friends through ethnic Korean churches and ethnic voluntary organizations. Le's study (2005) of tension between long-time residents and new Korean residents within the Korean community in Northern Virginia similarly notes that "many Korean business owners in Annandale are not shy to say that because of the large population of Korean in the metro area (about 70,000), they do not need to rely on non-Korean customers to stay in business and therefore, they have no need to cater to non-Korean customers."

As Kang (1990) mentioned, cultural and linguistic barriers tend to reinforce a tendency for Koreans in the U.S. to define the in-group in terms of "ethnicity." However, other factors may also underwrite respondent preferences for ethnically-Korean enumerators.

Age may be one factor. Thus we should note that the favoring of Korean enumerators was observed within first generation Koreans who were the most likely to be monolingual (15 out of 25 of our observed cases, all of whom were 50 or older and some of whom were residents in designated senior housing units). In contrast, in four cases in which younger Korean respondents responded to the NRFU interviews in English (three with a Korean-American enumerator and one with an African-American one), they displayed no sign of favoritism toward Korean-American enumerators or less acceptance toward the African-American enumerator.

Another factor may be legal status. As discussed earlier, approximately 20% of the Koreans in the U.S. are estimated to be unauthorized immigrants. Although no researcher in the Korean team had many chances to actually verify the legal status of any respondent, this particular group of people with a highly unstable social status is more likely to trust in-group members -- that is, if they choose to respond to the Census at all. Thus in one case in New York, a respondent in his 20s said during the debriefing interview that he was nervous about responding to the NRFU interview because of his legal status, but he felt he could trust the enumerator was being truthful when he said it would be confidential because he was Korean.

4.3. Fear of Fraud

While Korean respondents did not express any mistrust against the government or the Census, we did notice that some were concerned about whether interviews or other forms of provision of information were actually related to the Census at all, or conversely, might be part of a possible fraudulent scheme. Some of respondents, especially those who had already mailed back the form were particularly suspicious of whether the enumerator was actually from the census office. An enumerator in New York said during the debriefing interview that most of his refusal cases resulted from such a suspicion.

Such suspicions are exemplified by the experience of one female enumerator in New York. The enumerator, in her 50s, knocked on the glass entrance door of a duplex house and a female in her 50s or 60s answered. The interaction began as follows, with the glass door still closed:

((All in Korean))

E: "Hello, I came from the Census Bureau."
R: "We did it before."
E: "Huh? Is this the first floor?"
R: "I mean, we completed it."
E: "Do you live on the first floor?"
R: "I said we all did it."
E: "Then, please give me some information."
R: ((about to close another entry-door inside the glass door))

To the researcher/observer, it was obvious that the respondent was suspicious because they had already returned the census form. However, this enumerator failed to respond to this concern by explaining that there was a possibility that the form might have been lost in the mail, etc., as the other enumerators usually did. As a consequence, the suspicious respondent was going to shut the door completely. When she was closing the door, her husband came to the door and looked out:

R-Hus: ((opening the glass door)) "Yes?"
R-Wif: ((going inside)) "We did it before, but then why are they..."
E: "I am here to do the census."
R-H: "We did it and sent it out."
E: "The first floor?"
R-H: "Yes, we did it for the first floor and the second floor."
E: "Please give me the information. Otherwise, it won't be reported, you know."

This enumerator's request was very brief and blunt without any further explanation, which made it sound even more rude and inappropriate. The male respondent showed a very stern, bothered face in response -- yet surprisingly, he ultimately complied with the request and answered all the NRFU questions. During the subsequent debriefing interview, our researcher took some time to explain the possibility that the form might have been lost in the mail or misplaced due to some other error in the procedure, saying that she had seen many similar cases. While the researcher explained, the wife came out again and both of them changed their facial expressions in ways that indicated they understood and accepted this explanation.

Fraud was also a particularly prominent concern that was repeatedly highlighted in the Korean community website discussions about the Census that we reviewed. Indeed the main issue that was discussed on this website was whether a phone call or a visit from the census office was authentic or false. As with the Korean respondents from the NRFU interviews, the issue here was not mistrust against the government or the Census, but a suspicion about a possible fraudulent scheme. Below, some examples of expressions of concern are excerpted from the postings we reviewed:

"I already did the Census, and then why would a Korean person call and ask questions? Did this happen to any of you, too? A Korean guy called and said he would like to confirm something. I told him that I had filled in accurate information, but he explained as if the call was legitimate. He asked me to respond. He already called several times, but I refused."

“Somebody came from the Census. I already mailed it out, you know. But I used a Korean form from a Korean grocery store. Do you think it was an invalid form? I don’t even remember if I wrote my SSN on the form. Anyway, I mailed it out, but this guy came and said they didn’t get it. The funny thing was his English was worse than mine. He even brought a form that was already written in pencil. He was trying to erase it, so I told him to come back with a new form. Oh, I checked his badge, too.”

“I lost the paper form, and so somebody came last week. But now I think he came too early. Do you think he was really from the census? I don’t remember exactly what he asked about. I don’t remember if he asked my SSN, either. I didn’t have any doubt at the time, but now I don’t feel good about it.”

4.4. Enumerator (Korean) Proficiency as a Factor Affecting Comprehension

Generally speaking, we observed that native Korean enumerators interacted with Korean-speaking respondents with the greatest ease during the interviews, selecting appropriate forms of politeness terms and honorifics, and generally acting according to cultural norms appropriate to this official, yet in many ways also intimate, setting of the NRFU interview.

The Korean language has several words for the second person pronoun (‘you’) but all are highly context-specific. Thus, Korean people usually use a title such as ‘teacher,’ or ‘doctor’ with an honorific suffix or a kinship term such as ‘elder sister’ or ‘elder brother’ instead of second person pronouns. Also, it is considered rude to call someone by his/her name, especially so if using the first name only. If the caller is younger or a more junior person, calling or referring to someone by his/her first name -- or even by full name -- without an honorific title would be a serious violation of the culturally-prescribed communicative norm. The native Korean enumerators were obviously aware of this, and consequently exhibited skills in their use of various titles (such as ‘Teacher’) that often signal a culturally-appropriate sign of respect (as opposed to an actual professional title or designation). Alternatively, even kinship terms such as ‘Mother’ or ‘Grandmother’ followed by an honorific suffix, along with the respondent’s full name followed by an honorific suffix (also often used in official settings) also proved adequate. The Korean language has a very complex honorific system, which the native Korean enumerators had no difficulty using appropriately, always selecting appropriate honorifics that conveyed the appropriate forms of politeness to respondents, whether they were younger or older.

The native Korean enumerators made sure to be polite and task-oriented in the course of interviews, but also sometimes responded to invitations or demands from respondents that are typically observed in Korean culture. The most common of these was an invitation to come inside to conduct the interview. Native Korean enumerators who usually did not accept such an invitation from respondents from other ethnic backgrounds did accept such an invitation from Korean respondents. On one occasion, the respondent living in a senior housing had a health issue, and the enumerator went so far as to conduct the interview with the respondent lying back in bed. The respondent did not seem to treat it as invasion of personal space (as might be the case for a typical American interviewee) but rather seemed to consider that the enumerator was doing her a favor, by taking measures that both respected her seniority and took her health condition into consideration.

By contrast, we observed that the Korean-American enumerators sometimes had greater difficulty handling linguistic/cultural issues during their interviews with Korean respondents. The most evident case was an interview between a Korean-American enumerator in his 20s and two senior respondents in their 60s and 80s. During the interview, the enumerator called the senior respondents by their names without an honorific title, which is extremely rude in Korean culture. One of the respondents did not show any sign of being offended, while the other briefly tried to deliver the message that she is “a grandmother in her 80s,” yet even she did not seem to mind much even when she saw the enumerator did not understand the message. Indeed, both respondents evaluated the enumerator’s interview performance highly at the end of the interview, saying “he was very kind and did a good job.” This enumerator and other Korean-American enumerators made many observable mistakes in choosing honorifics, and yet their mistakes did not hinder the interview process, and the respondents did not seem to mind.

Although the Korean-American enumerators’ low proficiency in Korean did not have a negative impact on the respondents’ willingness to participate, this linguistic deficiency did at times pose challenges to successful completion of the interview task. Thus, in one case in which a Korean-American enumerator interviewed two elderly respondents, the respondent in her 80s gave out the information of the six household members, but the enumerator did not ask her to spell the six members’ names in English when the respondent listed them. Pronunciations of Korean names are often difficult to other-language speakers, and romanizing a Korean name is even harder. Writing down all the six names correctly in English without asking was an almost impossible task in the researcher’s judgment as an expert in the area of communication between Korean speakers and English speakers -- and thus it is almost inevitable that the enumerator’s report on that particular household was at least partially incorrect or incomplete. The enumerator probably thought the elderly respondent would not be able to accurately spell all the names out, and his assumption might have been correct. However, had his own Korean been stronger he could have utilized a useful resource offered by the respondent due to his linguistic barrier: she asked if the enumerator would want to see the driver’s license when he asked the name of the first member in the household, but he did not hear or understand the respondent’s offer.

4.5. Census Questions

Korean is one of the six major languages, including English, that have their own census questionnaires and also one of the 21 that have printed language assistance guides. However, none of the enumerators that we observed used either of them as a reference. When we asked during the enumerator debriefing interviews whether they sometimes used the language assistance guide or the Korean questionnaire, they all said that they did not even know about them. Without the help of the language guide or the reference of the Korean version of the original census form, all the native Korean and Korean-American enumerators translated the NRFU questions on-the-fly using whatever language skills they had.

The native Korean enumerators all conducted the interview covering every section in the form from the formal introduction with the confidentiality statement to the verification of the respondent information on the last page. The female enumerator in New York described earlier forgot to show her badge and skipped the confidentiality statement in one particular case but covered everything in two other cases.

While the native Korean enumerators generally covered every section on the questionnaire, they did not literally or fully translate every question into Korean. Especially for the questions on gender, Hispanic origin, and race, all the native Korean enumerators used a strategy of asking a “confirmation-question” or eliciting the respondent to complete his or her incomplete utterance:

((All in Korean))

[Confirmation-question]
E: “You are male, right?”
R: “Yes.”

[Eliciting completion of incomplete utterance]
E: “This section is asking about gender, and (*Name*) is:;,”
R: “Female.”

The strategy of changing the format of the original question, “Is (*Name*) male or female?” into a confirmation-question was also used by English-speaking enumerators when they interviewed English-speaking respondents. One of the English-speaking enumerators mentioned during the debriefing sessions that he “had to change up” some of the questions including this gender question because “it did not work well” when he just read them as written in the form. His practice of asking the gender question was “So is Tom male?” or “You are female.” Another English-speaking enumerator said that he often “brought it up more clearly as a joke” because he felt the respondents found the gender question to be awkward. The reason these enumerators used a different strategy to ask this question more smoothly might be that they felt uncomfortable asking an obvious question. One’s gender can usually be distinguished based on physical appearance, but if s/he is asked what gender s/he is, then it means that his/her gender is not obvious. This implication can be offensive, and this may be why the enumerators felt they should modify the question. One of the Korean enumerators also mentioned that he changed the wording of this question when he interviewed Korean respondents “because it made the interview process smoother” whereas he adhered to the original wording on the form to remain “safe” by following the protocol. Thus it seemed common that the enumerators, whether they are Korean or American, rephrased some of the questions when they perceived them as obvious questions and they felt competent to make the interview process more fluid by changing the wording in their primary language.

The Korean enumerators used similar strategies when they asked questions on Hispanic origin and race. The following is an example in which an enumerator elicited the respondent to complete his incomplete utterance:

((In Korean))
[Eliciting completion of incomplete utterance]
E: ((pointing the section on the Hispanic origin on the form)) “And this section is here because there are a lot of Hispanic in U.S., and:;,”
R: “No, we are not.”

The Korean enumerators sometimes made statements on their own rather than asking the respondents questions about it:

((All in Korean))

E: "They are asking if you are Hispanic origin, but for Koreans, ..."

((checking "no" on the form without asking))

R: ((looking at E checking "no" box without disapproval))

E: "For the race, there is an option for Korean. I am checking both of you as Korean."

R: ((nodding))

The Korean enumerators used these strategies probably because these questions on Hispanic origin and race were too obvious to ask. The Korean enumerators visited these respondents because they were reported to be Korean-speaking households. They had already initiated the interviews in Korean and thus it should be obvious to both of them that the respondents were not Hispanic origin and their race should be Korean.

One question should be explained in terms of its possible cultural interpretation, and it was the question on the relationship between the respondents and their children. One of the native Korean enumerators interviewed many respondents who have children, and for the choices between biological and adopted child, he added an excuse to the question in every case:

((In Korean))

E: "That question was not appropriate for Koreans, but I had to ask because it's on the form."

It is important to understand why these strategies were deployed in this cultural context. Deeply influenced by Confucian tradition, blood ties have been viewed as essential to a family organization in Korean culture. As Kim and Ryu (2005) put it, "Korean families have a clear boundary as to who is "in" and who is "out" (p. 352). As they explain, the term *jip-an* ("family") means literally "within the house" and identifies family membership, values, and traditions practiced within a particular family (p. 352). Such a rigid view of family boundaries has made Koreans extremely reluctant to adopt orphaned children, a culturally-informed orientation that has led to the infamous image of Korea as a sender of adoptees to foreign countries ever since the Korean War. The enumerator quoted above explicitly characterized the particular question as "inappropriate for Koreans," because he understood this traditional perspective of family value in blood relationships and he assumed the recipients, as Koreans, would share this same set of values. Consequently, he deviated from the script in order to avoid causing offense.

It was precisely by using a variety of script-deviation strategies that native Korean enumerators managed to conduct NRFU interviews so smoothly and efficiently, obtaining necessary information without offending the respondents.

By way of contrast, the Korean-American enumerators, who also translated the questions on-the-fly, tended to focus only on asking the questions about the names, ages, and dates of birth. In all four cases, they skipped the formal introduction and the confidential statement at the beginning

and the verification of the information at the end. They also skipped the section on gender and Hispanic origin probably because they thought the answers were obvious and they would not need to ask. As for the relationships among household members, the enumerators did not have to ask because the respondents looked at the form together while the enumerators were writing the names in the first column and told them what the relationships are even before they asked. They did not ask the question about an alternative place of staying such as college housing, military, etc., either.

Since they skipped many questions, there was not much confusion elicited regarding expressions in the questions. However, in one case, the Korean-American enumerator asked about the respondent's race:

((In Korean))

E: "I'll mark you as Korean"

R: "I am an American citizen, you know"

E: "Oh, are you?"

R: "Yes."

((Pause))

E: "Yeah, but for the 'race-' 'race,' [it is]"

R: ["Oh, yeah if it is the race, I am Korean."]

Note that this enumerator did not actually ask the question in any directly translated form ("What is your race?"), but rather chose to lead the respondent by suggestively declaring "I'll mark you as Korean." A similar strategy was used by a native Korean enumerator regarding the same question on race, and the example was presented earlier, "For the race, there is an option for Korean. I am checking both of you as Korean." This remark by the Korean enumerator was responded to by an affirmative nod from the respondent. The difference between this native Korean enumerator's and the Korean-American enumerator's strategies is that the native Korean enumerator began with a contextual cue for the question item ("For the race, there is an option for Korean.") and then made an assertive statement of the respondents' race ("I am checking both of you as Korean"), so the respondents could understand what his remark was about. In contrast, the Korean-American enumerator made a similar statement without providing a contextual hint. This failure to inform the respondent in advance that the question item was about the race caused confusion.

The already-discussed difficulties that Korean-American enumerators had in handling linguistic/cultural issues (such as polite and formal language) tended to compound the difficulties their low linguistic proficiency generated in addressing specific questions, such as those about race, and often created other forms as confusion as well. The following example of a Korean-American enumerator's interview with two elderly respondents shows exactly how confusing such interviews could get. The enumerator initiated the questions to one of the elderly respondents as follows:

((First, a teenaged boy answered the door in English, and the enumerator asked him if he could conduct the census interview with him, the teenaged respondent agreed and said there were 6 household members. The E made a confidentiality statement to him and

asked for the boy's parents' names. The boy gave out his father's name and then turned inside to ask his grandmother what her name was. The grandmother came to the E. All in Korean from this moment))

R-Grandma: "What is it?"

E: "I am from the census."

R-Grandma: "The census?"

E: "Yes."

R-Grandma: "You will just need our names?"

E: "Yes. Your names and just gender? And ages."

R-Grandma: "Then there is this grandfather, you know?"

E: "The boy just said there are 6 people."

R-Grandma: "You mean, you got all the 6 people?"

E: "Yes. So uhm just tell me the names now."

Upon E's request for the names, the respondent gave out six household members' Korean names one by one, and the enumerator wrote them down without confirming the spellings (which itself might have resulted in misinformation on the form as we have already noted). After receiving the names, the enumerator was supposed to ask questions about the relationships, genders, dates of birth, etc. for each member, but he did not. The elderly respondent assumed that the interview had to be done with these other individuals too, and suggested that the enumerator go talk to them as well:

R-Grandma: "Shall I ask them, too?"

((Pause))

R-Grandma: "My renters downstairs?"

((Pause))

R-Grandma: "You said you are here for the census."

((Pause))

E: "Yes."

((Pause))

R-Grandma: "They are Korean, too."

E: "Oh, you mean there are other people?"

R-Grandma: "Yes, I'll go check if there are in." ((moving toward inside))

E: "Okay."

R-Grandma: "You wrote down everything for us, right?"

E: "Yes."

((R-Grandma went downstairs and came back with an elderly male respondent who represents the other household. E started the second interview with questions on their names.))

After this exchange, enumerator did not pursue the next sets of questions for the first household, instead taking up the respondent's suggestion that he pursue another interview with her renters. Even though the respondent made the suggestion, the enumerator should have completed the interview with the first household. He never attempted to finish the first interview, even though

the initial respondent actually checked with the enumerator if her interview was complete; the enumerator simply confirmed that it was.¹¹

Now to the male respondent from the second household, the enumerator did pose the questions on the relationship, gender, age, date of birth, Hispanic origin, and race of the household members. When he completed the interview with him, he then returned to the female respondent from the first household to ask these same questions. She became confused, but agreed to respond. In response to his query about the relationships of the six members with Person 1 on the form (her son) she responded by reviewing the relationship of all six with her. This proved confusing to the enumerator who had trouble because of his lack of Korean fluency. When he sought clarification by asking about the first person's birthday, she did not remember.

The enumerator then asked for the ages of all the six members. There were two problems with the question on the ages. First, he asked, "How old is (*Name*) now?" in which he forgot to mention it should be the age on April 1st. Second, he did not mention that the ages should be "American" ones rather than "Korean" ones which start from 1 at birth, not 0, and are added on every New Year's Day, not on every birthday. This way of reckoning Korean age is a cultural practice rather than an official system, but given the respondent's age in her 80s, it is highly possible that she counted her family members' ages in the traditional way. In short, the enumerator was not able to adequately translate many of the census questions into Korean and properly handle the interview procedure due to his linguistic and cultural limitations.

4.6. Assessments of Census Outreach to the Community

Some of the Korean respondents, especially those in Maryland and Virginia, did not remember receiving the Census form in the mail. When asked about details of how they handle mail, most of them said they might have received it, but they did not care enough to figure out what it was or they might have thought it was just another piece of junk mail (many receive a lot of junk mail every day). They said they usually threw away most of the mail that they thought to be junk. A couple of New York respondents said that they expected and waited for the census form to be delivered by mail. They said that they were aware of the census through media such as Korean radio shows or newspaper.

Most Korean respondents in both the Maryland and Virginia area and New York reported that main sources for their entertainment or information are Korean media such as TV or radio shows, newspaper, or internet websites. When the main researcher visited the LCO in NY, where there is a large Korean community, the staff members proudly said that they had put a lot of effort into advertising the Census through Korean media. However, whereas respondents in NY area said that they saw and heard a lot of advertisements about the Census through Korean media, those in Maryland and Virginia said that they did not see much in their local Korean media.

¹¹ Another communication glitch observed in the excerpt was that the enumerator failed to understand the female respondent's message that there was another household he could conduct the interview with. He finally understood it after the respondent's multiple attempts. His lack of Korean proficiency might have caused four household members to not be enumerated.

Most of the respondents who remembered receiving the form in the mail mentioned the reason that they did not respond by mail was their lack of fluency in English. The expressions which they used were “because of the language/my English issue”, “because I don’t have the language/English skill,” or “because of the language barrier.” Given the fact that more than half of Korean-born adults age 25 and older had a bachelor’s degree or higher as mentioned in Section 2, and English has always been an important subject in education in Korea, they must have at least some knowledge in English and be able to read and understand the form at least partially. They seemed to label it “a language barrier” because they could not completely understand every detail, not because they could not understand the form at all. Some of them said that they might have been able to manage to answer the census questions in English if they had tried hard, but that they would still have felt afraid to make mistakes on an official document.

No respondent was even aware that a Korean form was available. However, it is notable that respondents were actually explicit that they would not have gone through the step of asking for a Korean form even if they had been aware one was available. They said they would only respond if a Korean form was actually delivered to their hands rather than requiring them to go through the step of requesting one. Some of them suggested the Census office ask Korean churches help advertise it and distribute the Korean form.

5. Recommendations

Based on our observation that Korean-speaking respondents show a strong preference for “Korean” enumerators for NRFU interviews, we suggest that Korean enumerators be assigned to areas where Korean-speaking households are likely to be. This seems likely to help in securing access. However, as our comparison of native Korean and Korean-American enumerators demonstrates, not just ethnicity, but also fluency in Korean is important in order to ensure successful and valid collection of desired information. The Maryland and Virginia offices did not seem to consider enumerators’ language abilities when assigning them to certain areas. Nor did they seem to encourage forms of co-operation that could have helped overcome linguistic isolation, such as the reassignment of a house to an appropriate language speaker once a case with a particular language was reported after an English-speaking enumerator was unable to complete the interview, or even gain access, because of language barriers. One of the reasons that New York seemed to fare better in coping with this issue was that the LCO reassigned cases to Korean-speaking enumerators once it was determined a household had Korean respondents.

We believe that advertising the census and its procedure to non-English speaking communities in their languages will significantly increase the response rate from them. The census offices in New York and Los Angeles, CA advertised the census, targeting the Korean communities, and we were able to observe Korean-speaking respondents’ highly welcoming attitudes toward enumerators in New York. Advertising the census and thereby educating people on what the census is about and why it asks particular questions will help people to understand the census process and its value. Such an effort especially targeting non-English speaking communities in their languages can bring out positive results from them.

For example, the Korean communities in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC are visibly large, and thus specifically targeting them through the social institutions that are most heavily subscribed will make a difference in respondents' participation in the census. A great proportion of Korean people go to Korean churches. Kang (1990) reported that somewhere between 70 to 80% of Korean immigrants were Christians, whereas only about 25% of Koreans in Korea were of the Christian faith. Most Koreans listed churches as the most important place to form their social network. The 2010 Korean telephone directory of Maryland and Virginia alone lists 346 Korean churches. Churches are a ubiquitous social institution in all Korean communities in the U.S., even if not in such large metropolitan areas. The Korean team leader personally lived in small cities with the populations from 50,000 to 100,000 in North Dakota, Illinois, and Florida, and knew for a fact that there was one Korean church in the city in North Dakota with approximately ten Korean households, and at least three Korean churches in small cities in Illinois and Florida. Korean churches have very powerful and extensive influences in many aspects of life in the Korean communities, and hence probably provide the most effective social mechanism for advertising and educating about the census. Going a step further and actually distributing Korean census forms through them would probably further enhance the participation rate. This has been suggested by others as well. Kang (1990) suggested that churches and social organizations with wide networks in the community be utilized as assistance centers for the census. The staff members of a New York LCO operated such assistance centers in their areas and that it had positive effects on participation rates. We recommend that such assistance centers be operated in as many areas as have Korean communities. People in the community could bring their census form to these centers and fill them out with the help of trained volunteers. Youth groups in Korean churches, for example, can be utilized as volunteers.

We found from our observations that the fear of fraud prevented the enumerators from gaining an easy access to Korean respondents. Some respondents, especially those who had already mailed out the form, were particularly suspicious of whether the enumerator was actually from the census office. Such cases were frequently observed and the enumerators had to explain to them that the form might have been lost in the mail. They had to persuade the respondents to participate in the interview again, which was often a challenge. If it is not possible to prevent mail loss, it would be helpful to inform respondents of the possibility that they might have a NRFU visit even after they mail the census form. This information and maybe even the information on the whole procedure of the census could be included in the advertisements. The Census Bureau delivered to each household an advance letter, questionnaire, and reminder letter to inform the respondents of the procedure of responding by mail. These letters could also be utilized as a resource to provide more information on situations in which a census taker might visit them, e.g., if they do not return the form by mail, the form is lost in the mail, or the information on the form is incomplete. This information can be distributed to social institutions such as Korean churches so that they can provide assistance in Korean to the Korean monolingual speakers in understanding the census procedure. The Korean respondents in New York and California were generally aware of the importance of responding to the census as community members. Additional information on the procedure might increase mail response rates and mitigate the problem of the fear of fraud.

Regarding linguistic resources, informing the LCO staff members of the availability of translations in multiple languages, including Korean, and providing them with such materials

seems the most obvious first step in maximizing returns on resources that are already available but somehow were not used because they were not known. An enumerator also said that it would be helpful to make available a translation of the *Information Sheet* which they are supposed to hand to a respondent before starting the questionnaire. It would make respondents understand the census quick and clear and thereby expedite the interview procedure.

Enumerators made another suggestion regarding the training sessions. Most of them valued what they learned through the training sessions, but they felt that simply reading the manuals was not the best practice option. We would suggest that the trainees be given different real-situation scenarios in which they try to solve various kinds of challenges and learn appropriate strategies and responses. More specifically for enumerators who might be assigned to Korean-speaking households, it would be helpful to let them know that Korean respondents have strong preference for “Korean” enumerators. Korean-American enumerators even without high Korean proficiency can be instructed to use basic expressions in Korean such as greetings and their purpose of their visit to gain access to Korean respondents. Korean-American enumerators were observed not showing their badges or giving the respondent an *Information Sheet* which included a statement that the information would be confidential. They should be trained to show their badges to mitigate the issue of the fear of fraud and also be trained to clearly state the confidentiality policy to relieve the respondents’ possible concerns. Another issue that should be handled in the training sessions would be the Korean age concept. Since the Korean practice of reckoning age is different from the American way as explained earlier in this report, the enumerators should be trained to make sure that the Korean respondents counted their ages in the American system, and also at the Census day, which was in April 1st in 2010.

A final recommendation is for further research on the impact of legal status. Korean respondents’ legal status might have played a significant role in the preference given to Korean enumerators relative to others with different ethnic backgrounds. This issue bears more extended and focused research than was possible in a study of as limited, and general, a scope as this one.

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7. Appendices

Appendix 1

Respondent Debriefing Questions - English

- Have you responded to a census in the US before? If so, was there any difference between the last time and this time?
- Have you used a census form written in Korean? If so, did the Korean material help you understand the process of the census and the questions?
- Did you get help from an interpreter before? If so, how were you able to get the interpreter? Was it helpful? In what way was it (not) helpful? How can you compare it to today's experience with/without an interpreter?
- Have you known that the census was carried out by the US government?
- Then what do you think the government will do with the information from the census?
- Other than your thoughts, do you also think that the information can be used to determine property tax, count citizens and non-citizens, or locate illegal immigrants?
- Do you think the census is an invasion of privacy or the information could be misused?
- Or do you think it will contribute to a better community for your family and others?
- Or do you think it won't matter much to respond to the census?
- Did you find it taking too long to fill out the census form?
- If you thought the census as unrelated to the government, what institution did you think was carrying out the census?
- Also, for what purpose did you think they conducted the census?
- Have you not responded to the census or given wrong information because you thought the information could be used for other purposes?
- Has there been any change in such a thought?
- Do you still have concerns? If so, what are they?
- Have you responded to a census in another country before? If so, where was it?
- Did it affect your attitude to the census this time? If so, how did it?
- Who in this household usually opens the mail?
- Is there anyone else who doesn't usually live in this household deals with the mail for this household? If so, who is the person?
- If you see mail in English or another language that you don't understand, what do you do?
- From what sources do you usually get information or entertainment? From TV or radio? Or from newspaper or internet? Are these mainly American sources or Korean sources?
- What are the channels or websites that you use a lot?
- Why did you not return your census mail through the mail? And what made you cooperate with the census interview today?
- Do you remember seeing any ads about the census on TV, in the news paper, magazines or any other media? If so, what ad(s) do you remember from what media? Did you learn something about the census from the ad(s)?
- Did you see more ads in English or more ads in Korean?

- Besides ads, did you hear or see anyone in your community talk about the census? Was it somebody who speaks English or Korean? Who in your community was it, and what did you hear from the person about the census?
- Do you have children in your households who attend kindergarten through 12th grade in schools? Did the student(s) tell you anything about the census? Did they bring any materials about the census from school?
- Besides ads, did you hear or see any personal opinions or stories about the census on TV or the internet? What did you learn from them?
- Among those various sources, what source do you personally rely on the most?
- Among the different sources you mentioned earlier, did anything have an influence on your thought about responding to the census? How?
- Did you feel comfortable with the interpreter? Was it helpful? In what way(s)?
- Did you feel comfortable with the process of how the interpreter got recruited? If not why?
- Who would you find to be a better interpreter in the future?
- Was the information sheet printed in Korean helpful? Or was it more confusing?
- Was there anything confusing in the census questions or the interview process? What do you think was the cause of the confusion? How did you feel it was resolved? If it wasn't resolved, what would you suggest for the future?
- How did you find the way the census taker managed the interview? Was there any aspect that helped the interview go very well or hindered the interview somehow? What was it?

Appendix 2

Enumerator Debriefing Questions - English

- Have you conducted census or survey interviews in the US before?
- If so, was there any difference between the last time and this time?
- In particular, was the use of the written materials in Korean helpful? How so?
- Did the use of an interpreter help your interviews?
- Was there any difference in the use of interpreters between last time and this time? What are those differences?
- Do you find the enumerator training helpful? If you think training was not enough, in what area, do you think more training is necessary?
- What were the most challenging things during interviews today?
- How did you cope with reluctant respondents? What approaches did you use? What way was effective?
- Was it more difficult to interview Korean speaking respondents, or English speaking respondents?
- Did you feel language was a major barrier in your interaction with the respondents? If not, what was a bigger barrier?
- Was it not hard to find an interpreter? Or was it not difficult or uncomfortable to conduct the interview with an interpreter?
- Was an interpreter helpful? Or the opposite?

- How do you find an interpreter? Also, how do you verify the interpreter's language ability?
- Were there any points at which you felt confusion about the census questions or process?
- What do you think the source of that confusion? How did you resolve it? If it was not resolved, how do you think it will be able to be resolved in the future?