KOREAN-NESS: Creating and Embracing New Identities Through Language and Culture
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Introduction
This multi-sited research project focuses on the ways in which Korean immigrants and Korean Americans use language to establish cultural networks, preserve dual/plural identities, and develop shared practices or appropriate behavior. Ben Rampton’s foundational work on language crossing serves as one of the building blocks of our analysis.

Language crossing: “The use of a language which isn’t generally thought to ‘belong’ to the speaker. Language crossing involves a sense of movement across quite sharply felt social or ethnic boundaries, and it raises issues of legitimacy that participants need to reckon with in the course of their encounter.” (Rampton 1998)

What do Korean dive bars and catholic churches have in common?

Method

- Observations: ~50 hours
- Interviews: 4
- Observations: ~50 hours

- Pints:
  - Observations: ~50 hours
  - Patrons: Male, 25-35, Tech industry; Female, 30+, blue collar; Black, White, native San Franciscans
  - Interviews: 4
  - Pints takeaways

- Pews:
  - Observations: ~50 hours
  - Congregation: 4 different priests, 30-55; 12 Sunday school teachers, 18-27
  - Kitchen Staff: English mass, Sunday school/summer camp meetings, cafeteria
  - Interviews: 3
  - Pews takeaways

Literature Review

Assimilation (traditional and alternative models):
- Community of practice and Organizational socialization:

Existing work on Korean American and language work:

Discussion & Findings

Language, Social Interaction, and Identity
- Switching between one’s own languages to switching into other people’s
- Not just conversation

Pews takeaways:
- Younger generations are socialized into Korean cultural practice.
- Korean Americans born in the US actively choose to engage in paralinguistic signs.

Pints takeaways:
- Urban centers still offer much for further scholarly exploration
- Evidence for continued re-evaluations of monolithic notions such as “Straight-line assimilation” and “American melting pot”

Further Study:
- Extending “Pints and Pews” beyond the boundaries of the bars and church

Bibliography