Interpretation in Terms of Critical Multiculturalism on the Multicultural Education Policy in Korea

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Abstract: With a rapid influx of immigrants, South Korea has turned to multicultural society. The population of South Korea is more ethnically diverse. In the flow of globalization, mobility of human resource has enhanced the transnational migration. The main elements are "immigrant labors", "international marriage women", "defectors of North Korea", and they classified as "the Multicultural" in Korea. They are having a lot of difficulties in adjusting to Korean culture and social systems by economic deficits, cultural differences and discriminations. In this situation, it is needed to develop the ability to understand and empathize with diversity. Multicultural education may be the effective way to help people to gain this ability. This study was intended to critically analyze the policy, especially multicultural education policy, of Korean Ministry of Education. The major problems are the limit to cognitive improvement for all. It is certainly true that Korean society has developed by changing process towards being multicultural. However, current multicultural education policy in Korea has been focused on the minority and still based on conservative multiculturalism or left-liberal multiculturalism. In addition, more detailed logical analysis is required. That is, it is necessary to expand the view of critical multiculturalism. This study suggests the direction of critical multicultural education as follows: citizenship for democratic society, the possibilities of post-colonialism, social integration, and critical human practice. The discussion of this paper will provide a new paradigmatic viewpoint on the understanding of critical multiculturalism and multicultural education.

Key words: critical multiculturalism, multicultural education, education policy

1. Introduction

Korean government has been formulated and executed multicultural education polices, because Korean society has been multiculturalized rapidly since 2000. The influx of foreign workforce and immigration through marriage may be closely relate to the discourse of multicultural society, and it is also needs to be understood in the contest of globalization. The students from multiethnic families have been increased steadily. The number of immigrants is over 1.5 million with amounting to nearly 2.8 percent of today's population in Korea. According to the Korean Ministry of Education, in 2009, the number of students from multiethnic families was 26,015 and the percent of those was 0.35, on the other hand, in 2013, the number of them was 55,780 and the percent of those

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was 0.86. This increasing is meaningful for educators and administrations for multicultural education. However, the multicultural education in Korea is focused on the children from multiethnic families rather than the majority of children. Moreover, the policy is based on overly the conservative multiculturalism. Conservative multiculturalism can be traced to colonial view, and it wants to assimilate students to an unjust social order for the potential market value (P. McLaren, 1995). This study aims to critically analyze the multicultural education policy of Ministry of Education. Multicultural education should be developed based on the solid theoretical framework that reflect social and political context. In addition, it should be considered the particular situation in Korea. In this sense, this study is intended to review the multicultural education policy in terms of critical multiculturalism.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Multicultural Education

The term of "Multicultural education" is popular term in Korea. It is important to clarify the concept of multicultural education when they use the term. Multicultural education is an educational reform movement designed to restructure schools and other educational institutions so that students from all social-class, racial, cultural, and gender groups will have an equal opportunity to learn (J. A. Banks & C. A. M. Banks, 1993). Another important goal of multicultural education is to help all students develop more democratic values and beliefs and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function cross-culturally. School restructuring is a major and vital aim of multicultural education. The reformed school is called the multicultural school. The characteristics of the multicultural school are as follows: (1) The teachers and school administrators have expectations for all students and positive attitudes towards them. (2) The formalized curriculum reflects the experiences, cultures, and perspectives of a range of cultural and ethnic groups as well as both genders. (3) The teaching styles used by the teachers match the learning, cultural, and motivational styles of the students. (4) The teachers and administrators show respect for the students' first languages and dialects. (5) The instructional materials used in the school show events, situations, and concepts from the perspectives of range of cultural, ethnic, and racial groups. (6) The assessment and testing procedures used in the school are culturally sensitive and result in students of color being represented proportionately in classes for the gifted and talented. (7) The school culture and the hidden curriculum reflect cultural and ethnic diversity. (8) The school counselors have high expectations for students from different racial, ethnic, and language groups and help these students to set positive career goals (J. A. Banks, 1994). Multicultural education should be also conceptualized as a strategy for all students. That is, the multicultural education approach seeks to reform the entire process of schooling for all people. It is for everybody, and it seeks not only to integrate people into the society but to improve society for all. Furthermore, it seeks to change more about schooling than just the curriculum (C. E. Sleeter & C. A. Grant, 1994). The interaction between school and community helps children to understand things in relation to their social environment. If the school acts an agent for social change, then it must necessarily engage with reflection to social reality. Furthermore students are ready to enter the global society. The multicultural school should realize multicultural education based on critical multiculturalism. Democracies are constructed by human effort. Schools play a role in either advancing cultural democracy or restricting it (D. E. Campbell, 2010).

2.2 Critical Multiculturalism

Critical multiculturalism provides a framework for identifying and comprehending the intersecting mechanisms of oppression and the "power relations of difference" (J. Sisneros, C. Stakeman, M. C. Joyner, & C.

L. Schmits, 2008). Emancipation, social construction, and a dedication to eliminating suffering create a model that links ending oppression with building social and economic justice. The power of relationships is crucial to social and political context. The perception of the historical, social, political, and economic contradictions through the reflection and action of Freire's dialogic action are required to transform the situation. This is the key to process of humanization and liberation (P. Freire, 1994). From the perspective of critical multiculturalism, representations of race, class, and gender are understood as the result of larger social struggles over signs and meanings and in this way emphasize not simply textual play or metaphorical displacement as a form of resistance but stress the central task of transforming the social, cultural, and institutional relations. Critical multiculturalism interrogates the construction of difference and identity in relation to a radical politics. Difference is intimately related to capitalist exploitation (P. McLaren, 1995).

Cultures become the self-same, the local, the particular, where the national and international frame of their relation does not. That frame is the *system* in Harbermas' terms, the central organizing principle for what modern nation-states are all about, indeed for what the whole world order is about. It is not "culture", in this ideology's terms, but economics, politics, law, international relations (Chicago Cultural Studies Group, 1992). Dehumanization is caused by neoliberalism, individualism, and capitalism. Human society should be recovered through humanistic communication. That is, equitable democratic society is the center for critical multiculturalism.

3. Multicultural Education Policy in Korea

3.1 Trend of Multicultural Education Policy

According to the Korea Ministry of Education in 2009, there have been several efforts to multicultural education so far. The local government and public foundations have established counseling multicultural students, and teaching Korean language and Korean traditional culture. In addition, the institutions like NGOs and the religious center provide these supports to foreign workers and their children. However, in the view point of multicultural education policy, the state is relatively weak in the area of legal and institutional framework of the Koreansociety. It is true also that a lot of legal and institutional arrangements in terms of the need for the supplement of the right to protection against discrimination on the education of migrant workers. Multicultural education is urgently requested to help their communities adapt to the cultural diversity while recognizing this multicultural families to promote social integration and eliminate discrimination ordinances of Koreans. It must take the role to solve social problems in Korea's entry into the multicultural society. As Korea is officially declared that we are entering into a multicultural society, the government is actively pursuing a variety of multicultural education policies in order to integrate new immigrants into Korea society. According to the status of the school's multicultural education policy, since May 2006 the Ministry of Education established and conducted "multicultural children's education support measures" and the plan were established measures such as annual agenda with different names. Multicultural education policy has the character of "citizenship education" generally. Eventually, it is the key to any citizen through the orientation which can contain a variety of fields such as language, culture, and institutions.

It was the major achievements of the Ministry of Education Policy. Multicultural Education supports school-level, including providing a systematic plan, parenting support relating to multicultural education research and development support, after-school and historical study of multicultural education support. It was placed to

help support the business objectives of multicultural education benefits children. This multicultural education was not alienated from mainstream education. It was to prevent this welfare level of education reported by the underprivileged children of multicultural families.

In 2007, a set of systematic management policies and business support measures for the general direction of the problems encountered while driving in 2006, after the strengthening of multicultural education School business information center, built by multilateral cooperation support systems research and support captured the information to enforce such after-school program, strengthen teacher training, in conjunction with the Department of Education and the Regional Center Assistant enabled, the curriculum and textbooks reflect multicultural education policy element by setting specific measures aimed at enhancing professionalism.

Relatively long-term and promote comprehensive and systematic plan over four years from 2009 to 2012 "multicultural education student support long-term plan" was presented to the student multicultural education support in 2008, even when the conditions of the local school board the priorities and to consider the educational needs of the rapidly growing multicultural student as erecting a detailed action plan for measures prepared.

The plan for 2009 was the need to support education tailored considering the characteristics of multicultural students on the basis of the need to recognize and develop improvements to the multicultural teachers, and parents of regular students. The purpose of the policy was supported by a consideration of the nature of the multicultural student support for early adaptation to rapidly customize training, educational achievement, and to enhance their multicultural society such as the teachers, regular students and parents to enhance understanding of cultural activities placed to improve the awareness of the urgent.

Multicultural education student support plan was published in 2010 under the vision of a multicultural society living together in learning and understanding the implementation. It was established as part of the measures about the growing multicultural student may plan accordingly for such marriage was in accordance with recent immigrants and foreign workers as a rapidly growing diversification of our society considering language and cultural background. Teacher training could solve the language and cultural gap between multicultural students and mainstream society, and support to enable a growing multicultural understanding cultural sensitivity training for improving the understanding of the nature of diverse cultural awareness that it is a need to strengthen.

3.2 Current Multicultural Education Policy

As the numbers of students from multicultural families has increased, in March 2012, Ministry of Education announced the "multicultural student educational advancement plan" to grow as a global creative talent that all students understand the diversity grows. Meanwhile, there is a need to switch recognition. It is recognized only if the target of support are considered as marginalized, disadvantaged students was on the only multicultural. Korean society has developed a multicultural student aptitude and talent to the future. In addition, multicultural society was released to critical literacy. Although, all students should have the multicultural education for all and multicultural education is about understanding and respect for differences in diversity, the current multicultural education policies are insufficient for all people, especially for teachers and education administrators. Critical multicultural curriculum can help teachers explore the way in which students are differentially subjected to ideological inscriptions and multiply-organized discourses of desire through a politics of signification (P. McLaren, 1995). The current policy has been changed that multicultural students are considered to the human resource for the society, not the beneficiary. The current multicultural education policy in Korea has been focused on the minority and still based on conservative or left-liberal multiculturalism. The government needs to refocus

on structural oppression in the form of neoliberalism, capitalism, and patriarchy. Educators must critically teach the power relations.

4. Proposals for the Multicultural Education Policy

4.1 Citizenship for Democratic Society

Teaching Korean language and culture to those who have different race and ethnicities is undoubtedly an important task. However, beyond the minorities' adaptation, the majorities change by themselves at the same time. Democracy is defined as (Webster's Third New International Dictionary):

> Democracy: Political, social, or economic equality: the absence or disavowal of hereditary or arbitrary class distinctions or privileges… A state of society characterized by tolerance toward minorities, freedom of expression, and respect for the essential dignity and worth of the human individual with equal opportunity for each to develop freely to his/her fullest capacity in a cooperative community.

A democratic commitment to a culturally pluralistic life assumes the need for a democratic, responsive, and representative government to ensure a basic level of equality and equity for each citizen. Multicultural schools teach critical-thinking skills, and encourage students to create a more democratic society (D. E. Campbell, 2010). Multicultural Education policy in Korea is still focused on the children from multiethnic families. Multicultural education should be a democracy education for all, not just for minority.

4.2 The Possibilities of Post-colonialism

The multicultural education policy has been focused the children from multicultural families and their parents. Since 2006 the policies of Korean Ministry of Education have been changed and developed for multicultural education. Nevertheless, the policies construct "Subject" and "Other". Students from multicultural families are labeled "multicultural" students, and they received a great deal of benefit. It seems that the Korean government provides a lot of effort for minorities; however, it is colonial view of conservative multiculturalism towards to non-Western world. There is a premise that Eurocentrism has been imbedded in every aspect of Koreans' lives, and it plays negative role in accepting and applying the idea of multiculturalism which emphasizes the rights, interests, and respects of all races and ethnicities. Multicultural education policy in Korea should listen to the voice of subalterns in Korean Society. In this sense, the possible ideas of post-colonialism in multicultural education should be discussed.

4.3 Social Integration in Multicultural Society

The current multicultural education emphasizes cultural difference and diversity in the multicultural society. This is the perspective of left-liberal multiculturalism. Those who work within this perspective have a tendency to essentialize cultural differences, however, and ignore the historical and cultural situatedness of difference. Left-liberal multiculturalism treats difference as an essence that exists independently of history, culture, and power. Critical multiculturalism does not consider "diversity" itself as a goal but rather argues that diversity must be affirmed within a politics of cultural criticism and commitment to social justice (P. McLaren, 1995). For the sake of social integration, we need to understand difference with historical, social and political context. Therefore, the Korean government policy for multicultural education should aspire to critical multiculturalism, beyond left-liberal multiculturalism.

4.4 Critical Human Practice

The basis of critical multiculturalism is the critical theory. Horkheimer (1982) described a critical theory as it seeks "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them". We should conceive the social structure which is related to the power and privilege. We should resist in the neoliberalism. We should live in the struggle against capitalist exploitation, against petrified ideologies, against hatred, against racism, against dehumanization (S. R. Steinberg, 1995).

Multicultural education is an outgrowth of the civil rights movement of the 1960s with its demands that human dignity, individual freedom, full citizenship rights, and representative democracy be extended to disenfranchised and oppressed groups (G. Gay, 1995). Multicultural education policy should provide variations and multiple perspectives on the common concern of the quality of education. Moreover, it should improve the life for individuals from a wide variety of racial, ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds.

Critical multiculturalism defamiliarize and make remarkable what is often passed off as the ordinary, the mundane, the routine, and the banal. Critique of the political-economic context of schooling must be ongoing. Multiculturalism is being domesticated as diversity becomes fashionable, necessitating a continuous critical examination of multicultural practice (C. E. Sleeter & P. McLaren, 1995). Multicultural education policy requires an engagement with the issues of critical reflection on the society. These issues should be articulated in the context of cultural, historical, political, and social elements.

Acknowledgments

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