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## An Ethnography on the Experience of Language Ability Improvement of Refugees Resettled in Korea\*

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### Abstract

The Korean government piloted the resettlement refugee system in 2015. Since then, seven groups of refugees, mainly from Myanmar, have resettled in Korea. They have been diligently studying the Korean language, having understood the importance of language ability in their former asylum countries. This study explores the experience of resettlement refugees' language ability enhancement process.

The participants of this study are fifteen adult refugees whom the Korean government invited as resettlement refugees. They belong to the fourth group, the first to resettle in Gimpo, unlike the earlier three groups relocated to another town. The ethnography was adopted as a research method, and two cultural themes were discovered: accepting reality and attempting breakthrough. Through the process of language ability development, they have experienced accepting the reality, such as different learning speed, need for help, social isolation, and discrimination. After recognizing the reality, they pursued the breakthrough by positive thinking and strengthening their motivation. The findings of this study indicate several factors that hinder the resettlement refugees' language ability enhancement. Therefore, this study provides implications for supporting their improvement of language ability and aspiration for independent living.

**Keywords:** Resettlement Refugee, Language Ability Improvement, Ethnography

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## I. Introduction

In 2015, South Korea (Korea hereafter) became a new destination country for resettlement refugees as the second country in Asia. Resettlement is the transfer of refugees from the country in which they have sought asylum to another State that has agreed to admit them as refugees and to grant them permanent settlement and the opportunity for eventual citizenship (UNHCR, 2018). Coercion by the UNHCR and the competitive pressure between Japan and South Korea played a role in developing annual resettlement programs in East Asia (Soh et al., 2017).

Since the Korean government introduced the resettlement refugee system as a pilot program, seven refugee groups, mainly from Myanmar, have resettled in Korea. Although the resettlement refugees are the invited refugees by the government, Korean people generally do not recognize that those invited refugees are living as their neighbors. It is necessary to gather public opinions and form a social consensus to institute the resettlement refugee system as a regular program (Cho Young-Hee, 2017; IOM, 2015; Lee Ho-Taeg, 2018; Oh Jung-Eun, 2014).

Meanwhile, the language ability of the adopted country<sup>1)</sup> and the socio-cultural adaptation of refugees are inextricably linked (Park Mi-Suk, 2019). Resettlement refugees recognize that the language ability of the destination country is essential, for they have learned its importance through the struggles of settling down into their former asylum countries. The recent studies on the refugees who resettled in Korea show that language is one of the crucial factors for their resettlement (Chae Bo-Geun, 2021; Jeong Kum-Sim, 2020; Lee Ji-En, 2019).

This study started with a simple question, “Can the resettlement refugees live in Korea independently?” This is because their lack of language ability may force them to be dependent and constantly need help. Accordingly, this research aims to investigate the experience of the resettlement refugees’ language ability improvement and ascertain what is impeding their progress. This study seeks to

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1) In this study, ‘language ability’ refers to the language ability of the refugees’ destination country.

answer the following two research questions: First, how do refugees interpret and accept the reality they experience in Korean society? Second, what strategies do the resettlement refugees utilize and are self-motivated to overcome the reality?

## II. Theoretical Background

### 1. Resettlement Refugee System

#### 1) Definition and Current Status

According to UNHCR, resettlement is the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another state that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent residence.<sup>2)</sup> From 2003 to July 2020, 1,089,664 refugees referred by UNHCR departed for 45 countries. Of these, 81.7% resettled to the top three resettlement destinations, namely the United States, Canada, and Australia. In Asia, Korea and Japan are the only destination countries.<sup>3)</sup>

〈Table 1〉 Projected global resettlement need for 2022

Region of Asylum	Projected Resettlement Needs	
	Case	Person
Africa	162,948	593,598
Asia & the Pacific	39,286	106,400
Europe	106,700	401,740
Middle East and North Africa	91,857	315,778
The Americas	17,662	55,640
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>418,453</b>	<b>1,473,156</b>

\* UNHCR, 2021

2) <https://www.unhcr.org/resettlement>

3) UNHCR(2020). The Impact of Government-Sponsored Refugee Resettlement: A Meta Study of Findings from Six Countries,

In 2022, UNHCR estimates that global resettlement needs will slightly increase to 1,473,156 persons, compared to 2021, when 1,445,383 were assessed to require resettlement. Syrian refugees account for 42 percent of the total needs globally. Refugees from Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan are estimated to have the second and third highest needs globally.

In the current global context, with ongoing conflict preventing refugees from safely returning home, overburdened asylum systems that limit possibilities of local integration, and the emergence of the worldwide pandemic further impacting the precarious situation of many refugees, the need for increased resettlement opportunities is more urgent than ever.<sup>4)</sup>

Nevertheless, most countries have historically treated refugee resettlement as a purely administrative issue and have not developed systematic resettlement policies. There is a growing consensus that the role of resettlement in refugee protection needs to be drastically expanded (Teytelboym, 2016).

## 2) Korea, a New Destination Country

Korea recognized its first refugee in 2001. Two years after enforcing the Refugee Act, it launched a pilot resettlement program for refugees in 2015. Since then, seven groups of resettlement refugees have arrived in Korea.

From the assimilationist point of view, minority groups are recognized as beings of potential maladaptation. It regards their uniqueness and diversity as a threat to social cohesion and order (Kim Young–Soon, 2017). In this sense, the Korean government, which had never received resettlement refugees before, decided to accept Karen people<sup>5)</sup> who were expected to adapt and integrate into Korean society relatively faster (Jeong Kum–Sim, 2020). Consequently, it limits achieving the ultimate goal of refugee resettlement as refugees who seek urgent protection have not been included (Cho Young–Hee, 2017; Lee Ho–Taeg, 2018).

Although there has long been widespread hatred of refugees in Korea, the resettlement refugees are slightly in a different situation. The state has more

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4) UNHCR(2020). Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2021.

5) It changed from the fourth group, and therefore the participants of this study have various ethnic backgrounds.

responsibility for resettlement refugees because the government invited them. Employers also welcome resettlement refugees who have a more stable status than other migrant workers, and resettlement refugees also appreciate the country that has given them new life opportunities (Jeong Kum-Sim, 2020; Lee Ho-Taeg, 2018).

The Korean government offers the resettlement refugees an about six months training program mainly to learn the Korean language and culture at the immigration reception center located in Incheon. In addition, the government supports them with housing, employment, child allowance, and a mentoring system to get used to living in Korea smoothly. Korean mentors are aware of the importance of language ability for the refugees' successful resettlement and have tried to encourage the refugees to continue studying the Korean language (Lee & Lee, 2021).

According to a research report conducted at the request of the Korea Immigration Service, Ministry of Justice, resettlement refugees of the earlier groups had language problems, especially at their workplace. For this reason, it suggests that the curriculum of language courses should contain more useful expressions of the workplace (Lee Ho-Taeg, 2018). Finding and deploying Korean instructors who can speak the resettlement refugees' native language is desperately needed (Cho Young-Hee, 2017; IOM 2015).

In preparation for introducing the resettlement refugee system, Korean government explored Japan's case, which accepted resettlement refugees five years earlier than Korea as the first Asian country. Some studies, analyzed in the case of Japan, illustrate that it is challenging for refugees to resettle down in the destination country (Jeong Kum-Sim, 2020; Shin & Shin, 2013). To lower the language barrier, its government provides Japanese language education before the arrival of resettlement refugees and guarantees the same teacher to continue teaching the language after entering Japan (IOM, 2015). It is necessary to ensure continuity of pre-training and early education instructors since resettlement refugees mostly face communication problems at the beginning of their entry into the destination country.

## 2. Language ability of Immigrants

Robert Godwin-Jones (2019) raises an intriguing question: Why learn another language in a world of smart technology? After describing three scenarios for the future of language learning, he argues that teachers will be more guides or mentors than formal teachers. This argument seems to be applicable for immigrants familiar with utilizing smart devices. Still, if they do not improve their language ability, they can not avoid being dependent on smart devices.

The language ability of the adopted country plays a vital role for immigrants. Existing studies have demonstrated that the language proficiency of immigrants affects determining the type of occupation immigrants can enter. It is associated with higher employment probabilities and higher earnings (Berman et al., 2003; Dustmann & Fabbri, 2003; Sherrie, 1988). Learning the mainstream language is crucial to adapt to a new society successfully. Refugees and immigrants in Canada face many uncertainties and challenges, and a revealed key to their integration is language (Stewart et al., 2008). In Australia, a representative immigration country, teaching English, the official language to immigrants, is an important issue too (Min et al., 2016: 28). Language barriers even limit immigrants' access to health and social services in crises (Chan, 2000).

Immigrants in Korea, including refugees, develop their Korean language ability through the Korea Immigration & Integration Program (KIIP). KIIP aims to help immigrants learn the Korean language and culture as fast as possible to integrate into society through good communication with Koreans.<sup>6)</sup> Despite its importance, KIIP is operated with the framework introduced in the early stage, and it seems not to function properly to enhance immigrants' communication skills (Lee Gyeong-Joo, 2018). Instead of applying a uniform curriculum to all immigrants, if the subjects of education are subdivided according to their type of stay, such as 'overseas Koreans', 'marriage immigrants', 'migrant workers', 'refugees', and so forth, it will be possible to provide language education more efficiently (Choi Ah-Young, 2018; Hwang & Moon, 2017; Min & Park, 2019). It should be more detailed than it is now, reflecting on the characteristics and needs of immigrants (Lee et al., 2018).

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6) [www.socinet.go.kr](http://www.socinet.go.kr)

Unlike the refugees in general, the resettlement refugees are the invited refugees. Their expectation of life and willingness to settle down in the destination country may appear higher. In other words, they recognize they need to improve their language ability in the adopted country more than any other immigrants because the government granted them permanent residence. If a customized language course is designed and provided for them, the resettlement refugees seem to enhance their language ability more smoothly and faster.

### III. Research Design

#### 1. Research Method

Everyone does qualitative field research in their daily lives whenever they observe or participate in social behavior and try to understand it, even though they are not conscious of doing any investigations. Whenever they describe their observations to others, they report their field research efforts (Earl, 2010).

The narrative inquire was initially considered a research method of this study among the qualitative methods. But later, ethnography was selected to develop the research by accepting the supervisor's advice. The reason to change the research method was apparent: I have already observed and built rapport with the participants as a mentor of one of the families, although there was no intention to conduct any studies.

According to anthropologist Tim Ingold, ethnographic research focuses on 'entangled relationships' among humans, non-humans, and natural, social, and virtual environments. The ethnographic knowledge emerges not through 'detached observation' but through 'conversations and exchanges' of many kinds among people interacting in diverse zones of entanglement (Culhane & Elliott, 2016; Ingold, 2008). This is the reason why ethnography is referred to as a methodology of inquiry into 'collaborative' or 'co-creative' knowledge-making (Culhane & Elliott, 2016). I was a family mentor and could form entangled relationships with the whole family in this group. When the oldest refugee of

this group passed away, or some refugees had operations at the hospitals, I was with them, laughed and cried, shared food together countless times. Before spreading the Covid 19, I regularly joined their religious meeting once a month. With entangled relationships and collaborative knowledge-making, this study has been developed.

There are two approaches to understanding culture in ethnographic research: interpretive and totalistic. First, 'interpretive ethnography' sees culture as a system of unique and individual meaning deciphered by interpreting key symbols. Second, 'totalistic ethnography', on the other hand, depicts the structure and functions of society, patterns of constant and repeated culture (Kim Young-Chun, 2013). This study was based on the totalistic approach and tried to determine the meaning of culture embodied in the refugees' resettlement in Korea.

## 2. Research Participants

The participants of this research are fifteen adult refugees who belong to the fourth group of resettlement refugees invited by the Korean government. There are eight families in the fourth group. Including children, twenty-six people came, but sadly one grandmother passed away shortly after moving to Gimpo from the refugee center, and two babies were newly born. Adult refugees in this group were chosen as research participants by purposive sampling for the more concentrated research results.

The participants were often called 'city-refugees' to distinguish them from the former groups who mainly had stayed in refugee camps. They had to mingle with local people of the cities in Malaysia, their former asylum country, and learn new languages. It indicates that they already knew that language ability would also be important in their new destination country, Korea.

Small but sincere gifts were given to them as rewards for participating in the research. I shared ideas with peer researchers to secure the study's objectivity during the research process.



### 3. Data Collection and Analysis

Participant observation and in-depth interview were used as the method of collecting data. From May 2019, I visited their places and met them up frequently. After one and a half years of building rapport with the refugees, I observed them from December 2020 to May 2021 with a specific research purpose. Initially, I did not have a research intention and therefore did not write observation logs, unlike other ethnographers. After the research was decided, I tried to remember memories and take memos. I called the participants and collected data through informal conversations when the memories were unclear.

In-depth interviews were conducted with eight refugees, one per household, from February 2021 to May 2021.<sup>7)</sup> The interview was done once per person for an average of one hour and thirty minutes, using semi-structured questionnaires. Except for an interviewee, I visited their places to have face-to-face conversations.

Data analysis was conducted based on in-depth interviews and participant observation to answer research questions. Spradley's method was applied, consisting of domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, and componential analysis (Spradley, 1979). The interviews were recorded and transcribed shortly after each interview. I read and compared the transcribed material and memos repeatedly to figure out meaningful parts. As a result, they were written on one hundred and nineteen cards, and I classified sixteen attributes by grouping the cards with similar meanings. Six categories were derived from those classified attributes, and according to the categories' characteristics, two cultural theme domains were extracted.

### 4. Ethical Issues

The ethical issue was the most concern of this study since I, as a mentor appointed by the Ministry of Justice of Korea, was responsible for not revealing these resettlement refugees' personal information. Therefore, it had to get permission from the participants and the immigration officer in charge of the

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7) With an interpreter's help, three languages were used in the interviews: English, Burmese, and Korean. English was the main language.

mentoring system, I asked for the participants' consent by explaining the purpose of this study in their official language. It was also shared that their names would be written anonymously for the confidentiality. Before the interviews started, I clarified that the interviewees could refuse to answer the questions they did not want to mention and stop the interview anytime they did not want to continue.<sup>8)</sup>

## IV. Results

There are two cultural theme domains of this study: accepting reality and attempting breakthrough. The research participants accepted the reality they had faced while improving their language ability, trying to break it down. The categories of accepting reality are different learning speed, need for help, social isolation, and discrimination, and the categories of attempting breakthrough are positive thinking and strengthening motivation.

〈Table 2〉 Structure of meaning on the experience of resettlement Refugees' language ability improvement

Domain	Category	Attribute
Accepting Reality	Different learning speed	Women learn faster
		Children learn faster
	Need for help	Who can help?
		Uncomfortable to ask for help
		Help is not always guaranteed
	Social isolation	Difficult to practice speaking
		Less interaction with Korean
	Discrimination	They don't talk to us
Because we don't speak Korean well		
Attempting Breakthrough	Positive thinking	Grabbing hope
		Encouraging ourselves
		By trying harder
	Strengthening motivation	To support children
		To acquire citizenship

8) Once, an interview was stopped because the interviewee cried for being reminded of her traumatic memories. A bit later, it continued with the interviewee's approval, and I tried to avoid mentioning her painful memories.

## 1. Accepting Reality

### 1) Different learning speed

The speed of learning a new language is bound to vary from person to person. Some learn fast, but some acquire slow. Even in similar learning environments, learners differ significantly in how quickly they pick up a language and in their ultimate proficiency level (Roberts & Meyer, 2012).

The participants of this study recognized that there was a gap between faster learners and slower learners; they replied that adult women and children were fast learners in their group. The adult women and children had in common that they interacted relatively more with Koreans than men adult refugees. Surprisingly, all their Korean mentors were women, and kindergarten teachers or Red Cross volunteers were primarily women as well. Therefore, adult refugee women naturally formed a closer relationship with Korean than adult men refugees.

*“Whenever mentors come, they first talk to mothers. When they call, they only call mothers but not fathers.” (Participant A)*

The language gap between children and adults was already discovered in the case of other resettlement refugees who came to Korea earlier than the participants. A study found that 15 out of 32 respondents said the language gap between adults and children was too large; none of them said there was no gap (Lee Ho-Taeg, 2018). Undoubtedly, the participants of this study all agreed that children were faster learners. Children were able to socialize with many Korean friends and teachers at kindergarten or school. For the adult refugees, the children appeared almost Korean. One day, Participant D said, *“We should go to the kindergarten to improve our language skills like our kids.”*, so everyone there laughed.

### 2) Need for Help

Whether the speed of language ability improvement was fast or slow, they were all aware of the need for help. Due to the lack of language ability, they

often had to find someone for support, both inside and outside their family. Children assisted parents, wives helped husbands, and the fastest learner of this group frequently aided the rest of the family. From the beginning of their resettlement, many refugees asked the fastest learner to help them. Even officers from the immigration reception center and Korean mentors often asked for the fastest learner's assistance to deliver critical information to the refugees accurately. Curiously, Participant F received support from her daughter in Myanmar, who learned Korean by online class. The refugee said that *"I am slow to learn because my children are not with me. If they had come here together, I would learn the language faster."*

The resettlement refugees needed Korean mentors' help in many situations, but there has been a dilemma among the mentors; it is impossible to support these resettlement refugees all the time, and receiving assistance might produce a dependence problem. A case of a resettlement refugee family who could not receive their mentor's help became more self-sufficient and independent through efforts on their own proves it.

*"When they needed help, their mentors assisted. But my mentor fled away from us from the beginning. When we called, sometimes she did not pick up the phone. I was discouraged, but that discouragement became a blessing for us. Because I had to do it by myself; after all, I could help my friends sometimes."* (Participant B)

In fact, none of them wanted to be dependent, and many felt uncomfortable asking others for help. The participants knew that they could not always expect help from others and often used translators to overcome the language barrier by themselves; however, it was another type of dependence. In some cases, when the expected support did not come, conflicts have occasionally appeared.

### 3) Social Isolation

A sense of social isolation was discovered among these participants, for they did not have enough chances to practice speaking Korean. Overall, their daily routines were simple as Participant F described, *"I want to learn the language*

*fast, but my daily routine is just to go to work and come back home. No place to practice.*” During the interviews, the participants repeatedly said they had no one to talk to in Korean. They usually did not communicate much with Korean co-workers at their workplace, and some of their co-workers were not even Korean.

The former resettlement refugee groups who came to Korea earlier than this group experienced the same. A study on the former resettlement refugees shows that they rarely had people to practice the language. 92% of them replied that they had no Korean friends except their mentors or the red cross volunteers. The earlier groups, at least, could enhance their language ability through Korean language classes (Lee Ho-Taeg, 2018), but the situation of these research participants was different. About seven months after they resettled in Gimpo, Korean classes turned online due to pandemic spread. Consequently, it deepened their feeling of social isolation.

*“KIIP helps me 60%, because I can only listen. While learning Korean, we are okay in the book, but we have no place to practice. Sometimes, I do not say even one word in Korean the whole day. Before the Pandemic, I used to talk with Korean people at church, but I could not go to church for a long time. How can I have friends? I really want to, but...” (Participant A)*

#### 4) Discrimination

Some participants explained that their Korean fellow workers did not want to talk to them, and they recognized it as discrimination. These refugees often felt Koreans did not intend to speak with them. According to the participants, it differed from their experience in Malaysia, the former asylum country. Participant D, who had stayed in Malaysia for 18 years, said, *“Although we don’t know the language, we lived like brothers with our neighbors, but it is completely different here. We don’t even greet each other.”*

Unfortunately, coming to Korea, they were shouted at, scolded, and looked down at many places such as workplaces or public offices because of their deficient language ability.

*“People at the office are very tough and unkind if we do not speak Korean well. Many times, the officers scolded us because of the language.” (Participant B)*

*“Sorry to say that, but other workers discriminated against me. Especially when we did not understand each other, Korean workers shouted at us. Not only one or two times, but almost all the time. I controlled my emotions and prayed not to respond to them. Over and over, I should have cried. Only a few times, they explained kindly.” (Participant F)*

Although they recognized discrimination, their response toward discrimination has appeared differently. Most refugees were discouraged, but some tried to understand and overcome it. For example, Participant H, who is relatively younger than the other participants, did not want to use the term ‘Discrimination’ and said, *“Malaysians were indeed more friendly than Korean. However, different cultures and different people. I do not want to blame Korean people.”*

## 2. Attempting Breakthrough

### 1) Positive Thinking

While reading the transcribed material several times, it was found that the word ‘hope’ was used repeatedly by the participants. Despite many difficulties, most participants did not give up improving their language ability through positive thinking. They grabbed hope, encouraged themselves, and tried harder, hoping to overcome the reality they had faced. The participants hoped that they would improve their language ability and live independently without others’ help in the future. In the same way, they encouraged themselves that it was okay to make mistakes because they were still learning a new language, and they tried harder to avoid being dependent on others.

*“I stayed in Malaysia for quite a long time and heard Malaysian from people*

*every day. Maybe because of that, I learned the language. After staying here ten years, fifteen years, I hope I can speak Korean fluently.” (Participant C)*

*“We, of course, face the language problem, but I am not discouraged. Before we came here, we already knew that we might be facing this problem because this is not our land. However, I believe that all these problems will be overcome one day. With that positive thinking, I encourage myself.” (Participant H)*

Of course, not everyone in this group had the same level of positive thinking. Each person had a different inclination, but one thing was for sure that the more they were positive, the higher they had possibilities to break through all the difficulties.

## 2) Strengthening Motivation

There were apparent reasons for them not to give up on improving their language ability. One was supporting their children, and the other was acquiring citizenship.

First, the participants tended to have high aspirations for their children’s education because they strongly desired that their children do not live as painful as they have endured. They knew the Korean language is essential to understand official documents of schools or speak with teachers. Besides, the Korean language had become their children’s primary language over time, so the parents had to improve their Korean language ability to communicate with their children.

*“My daughter will enter elementary school next year. I am worried that there will be so many languages I do not understand.” (Participant K)*

Second, they motivated themselves to develop their language ability to achieve Korean citizenship. The participants’ one earnest wish was to visit their hometown freely, and for that wish, they needed Korean citizenship. Participant F, whose three children are still in Myanmar, tried to enhance her language

ability for achieving citizenship because she wanted to bring her kids to Korea. As the political situation of Myanmar worsened, the participants have worried about their family members and friends in their hometowns.

Additionally, to avoid discrimination, they needed citizenship. Participant B, who had been consistent with a positive attitude more than anyone in this group, was afraid of discrimination. She said, *“If I don’t get citizenship, local people will call my child a ‘foreigner’ forever. I can’t tolerate it. I must learn Korean.”*

## V. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to discover the cultural factors that the resettlement refugees who come to Korea confront in the procedure of improving their language ability. As a result, it is revealed that they recognized the reality in the process of improving their language ability, accepted it, and tried to break through. Based on the results of this study, suggestions for supporting the improvement of the resettlement refugees’ language ability are as follows.

First, it was discovered that social isolation and discrimination prevent improving their language ability. Secondary migration may be viewed as support-seeking behavior (Simich et al., 2003). No matter how hard individual efforts, it is exacting to adapt if the society has many social and structural limitations.

The discussion on introducing the resettlement refugee system in Korea has not been performed by a bottom-up method but by a top-down approach centered on the government agencies (Oh Jung-Eun, 2014). It is time to advance public awareness by considering the resettlement refugees so that the local community accepts them as its neighbors and provides social support. Specifically, it is necessary to establish social participation programs to connect with the local community to assist them in experiencing sufficient social support without being isolated (Jeong Kum-Sim, 2020).

Second, dependence on relatively faster learners or Koreans around them was



taking place among the participants. This dependence turned out to be another factor that prevents improving their language ability. Interestingly, none of them willingly wanted to depend on others, and some refugees even did not recognize that they were dependent on others.

The evaluation of the mentoring system designed to help the resettlement refugees has been generally positive, but it has a dilemma related to dependence; if the refugees become too dependent on their mentors, they may lose opportunities to advance their capabilities. It is required to provide mentors with proper guidance to encourage the refugees to adapt as much as possible on their own. Moreover, immigration service officials, in many cases, delivered important announcements through the fastest learner in their group, which further deepened the gap in terms of language proficiency between the refugees and intensified dependence on the fastest learner. This study suggests reconsidering the issue of dependence that is inevitably arisen in supporting the refugees. The resettlement refugee policies should be developed to balance 'support' and 'self-reliance' to assure the refugees' independent living in Korea.

Third, hopes for the future, such as supporting their children and acquiring citizenship, led them not to give up on improving their language ability but to continue trying. Hope has a significant meaning to these resettlement refugees, for they are the refugees who have experienced failures of settling in their previous asylum countries and now desperately seek resettlement. However, the language barrier seems like the biggest obstacle threatening the refugees' hope. As the prior studies indicated, KIIP is limited to enhancing immigrants' communication skills; unfortunately, the participants of this study experienced the same. Furthermore, the pandemic situation exacerbated the problem exceedingly.

The resettlement refugees are a new type of immigrant who has a strong desire to integrate into Korean society. This study proposes designing a customized language program for the resettlement refugees to improve their language ability without losing hope.

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