

Language and the occupational attainment of Asian Americans*

Gloria Luz M. Nelson

and *Calvin Goldscheider*

Population Studies and Training Center

Department of Sociology

Brown University

Introduction

In recent years, Asian Americans have been characterized as a model American minority group, largely because of their high level of occupational achievement, educational attainment, and income earnings relative to whites (Joco, 1975; Jiobu, 1988; Hirschman and Wong, 1984, 1986; Neidert and Farley, 1985; Kuo, 1979; Nee and Sander 1985; Kanjanapan, 1989). But such research has not systematically explored the processes of socioeconomic assimilation among Asian Americans. For instance, the relative importance of education and English language usage in the occupational success of Asian Americans have not yet been examined. Also, the diverse origins of those groups included within the category "Asian American" have mostly been ignored as determining factors of occupational achievement.

Three features of the Asian American population must be considered in understanding their position within American society: 1) the recent increase in their population size; 2) their diverse national origins and 3) their high levels of educational attainment. Asian Americans are among the most recent immigrant groups to enter the United States and are the fastest growing minority. The Asian American population has increased from 1.4 million in 1970 to around 3.5 million

*This is a revised version of a paper presented at the 83rd Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Atlanta, Georgia, August, 1988. Keiko Yamanaka read an earlier draft and provided helpful comments.

in 1980 and are estimated to have increased to five million by 1985 (Gardner, et al., 1985, p. 3). Much of this increase represents their recent immigration to the United States. Only 41 percent of the total Asian American population was born in the United States as of 1980.

Reflecting the diversity among recent Asian immigrants, the increase in population size and the proportion of foreign born is even higher for specific sub-groups among Asian Americans. For example, between 1970 and 1980, the Japanese American population increased by 21 percent, the Chinese American population by 86 percent, the Filipino American by 128 percent, and the Korean Americans by 417 percent. Between 1980 and 1985 the Vietnamese are estimated to have increased 158 percent compared to seven percent increase among the Japanese. Thus, in 1980, Vietnamese Americans were largely foreign-born (90 percent); the percentage of foreign-born varied from 82 percent of the Korean, 70 percent of the Indian population, 65 percent of the Filipinos, and 63 percent of the Chinese. In contrast, only about one fourth of the Japanese were born outside the U.S. (Gardner, et al., 1985, Table 1 and 2). A large proportion of foreign-born accounts for variations in English language patterns and levels of English language abilities.

In addition to its increasing population size and ethnic diversity, a third trait of Asian Americans is their relatively high levels of education. In 1980, the median year of school completed ranged from 16.1 years (Indian) to 12.4 years (Vietnamese) compared to 12.5 years for whites and the general American population (Gardner et. al., 1985). The selectivity of immigration and the emphasis on educational attainment as a means to occupational mobility is reflected in a significantly higher percentage of Asian Americans who have four or more years of college education. Thus, the socioeconomic attainment of Asians who immigrated to the United States after 1965 equals or exceeds those of American-born whites, an indication of "positive selection" of immigration (e.g., Martinez, 1987).

These particular features of the Asian American population evoke two general questions about the linkages between language usage and socioeconomic attainment. First, to what extent is the occupational success of Asian Americans linked to English language skills or to other background characteristics such as education? And second, are the paths to occupational success similar among the various Asian American groups?

Theoretical context

Three theoretical frameworks help explain the connection of language issues to the economic opportunities of minority immigrants. The first perspective, derived from the classical assimilation theory developed by Pard and the Chicago School in the 1920s, can be used to explain immigrant adaptation in the labor market. According to this theory, as immigrants become indistinguishable from the mainstream population in their way of life, culture and language behavior, they have greater access to work opportunities (Gordon, 1964). In this way, immigrants can accelerate the assimilation process in the labor market by suppressing their social and cultural heritage, such as through increased use of the English language.

Related to the assimilationist perspective is the economic theory of human capital applied to ethnic populations. The human capital theory also views the labor market as unified, relatively free, and competitive (Becker, 1964; Chiswick, 1978, 1979). The differential placement of workers in the labor market is determined by characteristics that workers bring into the labor market, rather than the structure of the labor market. Based on the principle of merit and individual achievement, the key determinants of occupational status are levels of education, language skills and work experience.

By contrast, a third theoretical context emphasizes ethnic occupational patterns in the development of an ethnic enclave economy. According to this theory, improving one's employment situation depends more on ascriptive ethnic factors and ethnic social networks than on individual qualifications. For example, the deficient language skills of workers contribute to the development of an organized labor market within the immigrant or ethnic group (Wilson and Martin, 1982; Wilson and Portes, 1980). Ethnic enclaves therefore act as a "buffer" for immigrant groups with weak language skills. Not having to compete in the open economy, the skills (education and experience) that migrants acquired in their own country transfer easily in enclave firms, and hence immigrants are more likely to get a job commensurate with their skills. Underemployment occurs most often when immigrants are absorbed in the mainstream economy but have not yet developed adequate language skills (Boyd, 1974). In an ethnic enclave, the ability to speak the foreign language may therefore be an asset. On the other hand, fluency in the dominant language of a society is necessary for complete assimilation in the open

economy (Freedman, 1985). Ethnic enclaves serve as a buffer for immigrants with English deficiency. Ethnic enclaves "insulate" immigrants from discriminatory practices that are more prevalent in the general economy than in the enclave economy.

Predictions for occupational attainment

These three approaches posit different roles for the effects of language on occupational attainment. From the assimilationist perspective, the immigrant's appropriation of the dominant language is a form of cultural and structural integration. Speaking the language of the host country "signals a common cultural bond, thus a source of group solidarity and collective conscience" (Bach, 1983: 133). The cultural elements of language also facilitate structural assimilation. In an employment situation favoring the dominant population, the new migrant is more likely to learn the dominant language. In this case, the migrant is not only culturally but also structurally assimilated through contracts and networks with the dominant community. Assimilation theory would predict that immigrants with similar language skills should reach similar levels of occupational status.

Similarly, the human capital perspective posits that deficient English skills are a hindrance in the American labor market. Learning to speak the language of the mainstream population is seen as an investment that could increase the marketability of the individual worker. The differential placement of individuals in the socioeconomic order therefore reflects the linguistic patterns brought into the market place by individual workers, assuming they have equal education and work experience. English skills relate directly to occupational attainment. The neo-classical economic perspective would suggest that having proficient English in a society such as the United States, is a great advantage in occupational attainment.

Although drawing on different theoretical traditions, both human capital and assimilation theories of ethnic socioeconomic integration posit that English language usage should be associated positively with occupational achievement. In contrast, the ethnic enclave approach predicts that language ability does not necessarily improve occupational status within an ethnic enclave economy. In a highly developed ethnic enclave economy, migrant groups need not compete with the dominant population for jobs and therefore deficient English skills will deter

occupational attainment only minimally. One inference drawn from this approach is that occupational opportunities are a function of community networks that are particularly characteristic of immigrants with weak English language ability. It follows that the occupational attainment of recent Asian American immigrants is less affected by low levels of English proficiency when they are absorbed occupationally in their own ethnic enclaves. (For interesting parallels to these arguments based on the relationship between language and fertility among Hispanics, see Swicegood, et al., 1988).

Language diversity and ethnic enclaves

While few studies of the occupational status of Asian Americans have explored the interconnections between education, work experience and language, we can draw from studies of language and occupational opportunities for Latinos in the United States. In the case of Latinos, the main concern is whether the use of Spanish language (used by all Latinos) deters social mobility. Some have argued that lower class Mexican Americans are able to move up to the middle class precisely because of their English skills. Other findings suggest, however, that Spanish language usage is not a detriment to social mobility for all Latino subgroups. For example, Cubans have the highest income and occupational levels among Latinos yet they retain high levels of Spanish language usage. Their socioeconomic success is attributed to education, higher social status, and bilingualism (Mirowsky and Ross, 1984; Tienda and Neidert, 1984; Borjas, 1981, 1985, 1987).

Because Asians share some obvious physical features and reside in large concentrations on the West Coast, they are often regarded as a homogeneous group. The fact that Asian Americans emigrated from many diverse societies at many different stages in U.S. history is ignored. Unlike Latino groups that share a common language, there is also considerable language diversity among Asian Americans. For example, the U.S. Census indicates that about four percent of the Chinese immigrants speak one of 18 Chinese languages other than Mandarin, Fukienese and English. In addition to the main Filipino languages, the Census found that two percent of Filipino immigrants speak 11 other Filipino languages. Indians born outside of the U.S. spoke a total of 33 languages, of which 21 are lumped into the "other languages" category. Some Asian sub-groups also reported using European languages, an

indication of past colonial presence, i.e., Spanish is still spoken by a number of Filipinos; French by the Vietnamese; Japanese by the Koreans.

Spoken languages also reflect migratory experiences. For example, *Tagalog*, a language spoken in the Philippines is also spoken by native Chinese, Japanese and Koreans; Samoan, Vietnamese, Catalanian and Greek were used by the Chinese; German and Russian are spoken by a few Japanese Americans. Thus, Asian American men, particularly the foreign born, use a variety of languages reflecting the language diversity among the six major groups of Asian Americans.

What is the significance of this language diversity? For one, language determines the relative cohesion or division of ethnic communities, because sub-groups tend to form separate ethnic communities. The more immigrants there are from one ethnic group and the same country of origin, the more likely new immigrants will submerge themselves in these ethnic communities.

This tendency is further reinforced by the degree of residential concentration, although an ethnic enclave economy does not require residential segregation. Asian Americans are highly concentrated in the western region of the United States (56 percent in 1980). Eighty percent of the Japanese live in the western region, 69 percent of the Filipinos, and 53 percent of the Chinese. Only 19 percent of Indians live in the western region, about one third lives in the Northeast and 23 percent in the East and in the South. The proportion of the Koreans and the Vietnamese in the West is about the same, 43 percent and 46 percent, but the Vietnamese are more concentrated in the South than other Asian Americans, and Koreans are more concentrated in the Northeast (Gardner, et al., 1985, Table 3).

Ethnic enclaves, especially those in the major urban areas of the United States also reveal occupational patterns among Asian Americans. Entrepreneurs are most common among Chinese (Chinatowns in San Francisco and New York), Koreans (green grocers in New York and Los Angeles) and also among the Japanese whose population has increased rapidly since the arrival of Japanese companies in the South and the Midwest (Light and Bonacich, 1988; Nishi, 1985).

Language diversity, population increases, geographic and occupational concentration represent the primary features of enclave economies in the Asian American population. English skills are not always a necessity for Asians seeking employment in such enclaves. Among Asian Americans with comparable education and work experience, to what degree then do English skills influence occupational attainment?

Using occupational attainment as the dependent variable, this study, therefore, aims to address two empirically related questions. First, does the use of languages other than English impede the economic progress and marketability of Asian Americans in the American labor market? Second, is English proficiency related to occupational attainment?

To explore these issues, we look to the Japanese, Chinese and the Koreans because they have the more highly developed enclave economies in the Asian American population. We can see in these particular cases how differential English bilingualism, as opposed to English proficiency, determines the occupational attainment of Asian American men although the importance of linguistic diversity differs from one job to another. For farmers, fishers, foresters, construction workers, operators and laborers, English skills are not always necessary; in contrast, most professional and managerial occupations require adequate English communication skills. Therefore, the type of occupation must be considered to understand the role of language among diverse Asian Americans.

Data and methods

The empirical basis of our study is the 1980 United States Census 1-in-100 public use sample [Public Use Microdata Files (PUMS)]. We selected 7,162 Asian American males, aged 25-64 years, including 1,713 Japanese, 1,970 Chinese, 1,530 Filipinos, 600 Koreans, 975 Indians and 373 Vietnamese. The dependent variable of the study is occupation, grouped into six categories following the 1980 Census Bureau classification. This classification was used mainly in the descriptive analysis of the study. The occupational differences of the six Asian groups and the nationality groups within each racial groups are based on the status scale reported by Ford and Gehret (1985) where scores ranged from 0 to 100.

Education functions as a continuous variable to capture all the variances for each grade level. Age serves as a proxy for work experience. The assumption is that by age 25 most individuals have finished schooling and are probably committed to the labor force. The upper limit was set at age 64 on the assumption that labor force participation is likely to diminish or end by this age.

The linguistic variables include language usage and English proficiency. Language usage indicates whether a person speaks a language other than English at home, regardless of whether English is spoken more frequently

than other languages. It also indicates whether English is used solely as the language at home. English proficiency, on the other hand, is described as either "good" or "poor." Those with "good" English have no difficulty or have only minor problems in their ability to speak English, while those with "poor" English are "seriously limited in their ability to speak English," including those who speak "no English at all." Because the Asian American population is largely foreign-born, differentiation is not only by racial group but also by country of origin.

To analyze the effects of language usage and English language proficiency on occupational status we used the ordinary least square procedure with education and work experience as our control factors. This was done separately for each sub-group of Asians and by country of origin within the selected six groups of Asians. The obtained coefficients were then used for cross-racial and American- or foreign-born comparisons.

We estimated three models of occupational status. Model 1 includes education, age (experience) and a dummy variable, after 1965, as an indicator of length of residence of foreign-born groups. Model 2 adds monolingual usage and Model 3 adds English language proficiency. These models allow us to test the implications of the human capital and the assimilation theories, where monolingual English usage and English proficiency are viewed as important determinants of occupational attainment. The ethnic enclave hypothesis, on the other hand, predicts that these variables will have less effect on occupational attainment.

In all the three models, a dummy variable, after 1965, was added only for the foreign-born group to indicate their length of residence in the U.S. Those who came before 1965 were coded 1 and those who came after 1965 were coded 0. It should be noted that according to the assimilation perspective, the longer one stays, the more likely one will assimilate. However, past findings on Asian Americans show that the immigrants arriving after 1965 are better off because they were positively selected. Many of them are professionals (e.g., doctors and nurses); in contrast, many of the immigrants who came before 1965 were predominantly agricultural and unskilled workers who arrived as hired laborers (Gardner, et. al., 1985).

Results: Descriptive patterns

The empirical analysis begins with the systematic description of the language usage and English proficiency of Asian American men. Cross-

tabulations of national origin, language usage and the ability to speak English are shown in Table 1. As expected, the American-born are more likely than the foreign-born to be English monolinguals. Overall, English is spoken at home by two-thirds of the American-born Asians with a range between 87 percent (Koreans) and 50 percent (Vietnamese). In comparison, only 7 percent of the foreign-born speak only English at home with a range from one percent (Vietnamese) to 15 percent (Indians).

Table 1: Distribution of Asian American Males Aged 25-64 in Civilian Labor Force* According to Language Usage, English Proficiency, Ethnicity and National Origin

<u>National Origin</u>	<u>% Monolinguals</u>	<u>% Bilinguals with Good English Prof.</u>	<u>N</u>
Total Asian			
NB	67.4	94.5	2,148
FB	06.8	81.2	5,014
Japanese			
NB	69.9	93.3	1,315
FB	11.1	79.4	398
Chinese			
NB	55.4	96.2	455
FB	03.5	73.5	1,515
Filipino			
NB	73.8	97.3	294
FB	06.2	93.8	1,236
Korean			
NB	86.5	80.0	37
FB	03.9	66.6	563
Indian			
NB	61.0	100.0	41
FB	15.0	96.9	934
Vietnamese			
NB	50.0	66.6	6
FB	01.1	59.2	367

NB - natural-born FB - foreign-born

*includes unemployed, last worked in U.S. armed forces since 1975 and unemployed, last worked in 1974 or earlier.

The data in Table 1 also show the proportion of the bilinguals within each sub-group of Asian whose English ability is "good." Overall, the American-born Asians are more likely to have good English ability than the foreign-born (95 percent compared to 81 percent). But the proportion of foreign-born Asians with good English proficiency ranges from 59 percent of the Vietnamese and 94 percent of Filipinos to 97 percent of Indians. The high percentage of English proficiency among Filipinos and Indians can be attributed to the use of English as a medium of instruction in their countries of origin. Furthermore, the Philippines and India are multilingual nations (many subjects spoke regional dialects, although American colonizers thought it convenient to establish English as the official language). Foreign-born Chinese have a relatively high proportion of good English speakers, 74 percent of the bilinguals have good proficiency in English.

To further illustrate the relationship of English proficiency to educational and occupational levels, we tabulated the distribution of English ability by occupational and educational levels. These data (not shown in tabular form) indicate that among those in managerial, professional, technical and sales positions, there are few with poor English skills. This is quite understandable since those who have the most education, with high school as the minimum level, are chosen for the high-level occupations because they usually also have better English skills. There are several interesting exceptions. Foreign-born Japanese with college education but poor English skills can still occupy high-level occupational positions. Nearly 30 percent have managerial occupations and 15 percent are in the technical sales and administrative positions. A similar pattern exists among foreign-born Koreans, of which about 30 percent work as managers, executives, or in sales and technical jobs. The high level of occupational attainment of groups handicapped in English may contribute to the development of an "ethnic economy."

The mean levels of education and occupation for each racial and nationality group were computed according to language usage and English proficiency characteristics (Table 2). Comparisons between English monolinguals and English bilinguals regardless of ethnicity or nationality show that monolinguals have higher mean levels in education and occupation compared to the bilinguals. Foreign-born Japanese and Indians are exceptions. There are no differences in the average educational levels between Japanese Americans who are monolinguals and those who are bilinguals; bilingual Indians, particularly those born in the States, have significantly higher levels of education than those who

Table 2: Mean Educational Attainment and Occupational Status of Asian American Males Aged 25-64 by Language Usage English Proficiency, Ethnicity, and National Origin

	English Usage		English Proficiency	
	<u>Monolingual</u>	<u>Bilingual</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Poor</u>
Japanese				
(NB)				
Educ	14.2	12.5	12.7	10.1
Occup	59.6	51.1	51.9	38.7
(FB)				
Educ	14.8	14.8	12.7	13.4
Occup	59.4	62.1	64.4	52.9
Chinese				
(NB)				
Educ	14.8	14.6	15.0	05.9
Occup	66.5	62.4	63.6	32.8
(FB)				
Educ	14.8	13.2	15.0	08.4
Occup	62.6	52.8	63.6	26.8
Filipino				
(NB)				
Educ	12.7	12.2	12.3	09.0
Occup	48.7	43.5	44.3	17.2
(FB)				
Educ	14.9	14.0	14.3	07.7
Occup	69.4	51.2	52.6	24.5
Korean				
(NB)				
Educ	13.3	11.8	11.0	15.0
Occup	52.4	34.8	37.2	27.3
(FB)				
Educ	14.7	14.6	15.5	12.7
Occup	62.4	57.7	62.6	45.7
Indian				
(NB)				
Educ	10.6	15.5	15.5	-
Occup	53.7	61.8	61.8	-
(FB)				
Educ	15.7	16.7	14.3	-
Occup	67.4	73.7	58.2	-
Vietnamese				
(FB)				
Educ	-	12.0	12.9	07.5
Occup	-	44.3	46.7	24.5

are monolinguals. In general, those with good English proficiency have higher levels of educational attainment and in turn, higher levels of occupational attainment. American-born Koreans, however, whose English is poor have higher levels of educational attainment than those whose English proficiency is good.

Effects of English language usage and English proficiency

The effects of English language usage and English proficiency on the occupational attainment of Asian American men were determined using regression analysis. English language usage and proficiency in English were treated as dummy variables. There are three models shown in Table 3. Model 1 includes education and experience (age), and length of stay (before 1965) was included for the foreign-born. Model 2 includes language usage (monolinguals), while Model 3 substitutes English proficiency (good) for language usage.

The results of the regression analysis confirm the strong positive influence of educational level on the occupational attainment of Asian American men. Model 1 shows positive and significant effects of education on the occupational status of foreign- and American-born Asians. Each additional year of education corresponds to 4-5 status points among all Japanese and Filipinos regardless of nationality, and likewise for American-born Chinese and foreign-born Indians. Koreans and American-born Indians experience smaller but still significant gains in occupational attainment due to education. Educational level has the least effect on the occupational status of the foreign-born Vietnamese, most likely because they obtained their education at foreign institutions and arrived only recently in the States. Work experience, as measured by age, on the other hand, was found to have a positive effect on the occupational attainment of the Japanese, American-born Chinese and Filipinos. Among foreign-born Koreans and Chinese, the effects of age on occupation was negative.

The timing of immigration of the foreign-born can affect the process of assimilation and occupational attainment: length of residence (before 1965) has a positive and significant effect for the Japanese but is negatively significant for the Chinese, Filipinos and Koreans. Moreover, the inclusion of "before 1965" as a determining factor reveals the negative effect of work experience (age) on occupation for the Chinese

and Koreans. For the Japanese, length of residence in the United States has positive effects on their occupational attainment. This does not apply for the Chinese, Filipinos and Koreans, perhaps because members of these groups who immigrated before 1965 were negatively selected. Most of these immigrants arrived as contract laborers for the sugar plantations in Hawaii and California. Length of stay does not significantly affect the occupational status of Indians.

English language usage was added to the equation in Model 2. A significant positive effect was found for only three groups – the American-born Japanese and Chinese and foreign-born Filipinos. For Indians born outside of the United States, English language usage has a negative effect, resulting in a three-point reduction in their occupational status. In sharp contrast, the use of English at home has an important effect on the occupational status of the foreign-born Filipinos – 11.4 points is added to their occupational status after controlling for education and experience. Filipinos tend not to engage in private enterprise (a form of enclave economy), making English an even more important means of competing in the dominant economy. For foreign-born Filipinos, the primary use of English is a human capital investment and an indicator that occupational assimilation has occurred. Unlike the Filipinos, the Japanese and the Chinese have long had established enclave economies where English usage is predictably less important in their occupational attainment. However, the data show that the use of English at home is an important investment for these groups as well. For example, the Chinese are typically found in the service-oriented jobs (laundry and restaurant owners) that have frequent contact with the American mainstream. This finding contradicts the ethnic enclave theory proposing that enclave economies are isolated from the dominant economy. Interestingly, it is among the American-born Japanese and Chinese rather than their foreign-born counterparts that English usage proves more useful in their occupational attainment.

Including monolingualism in the equation has no significant effects in addition to education, work experience and length of stay for the foreign-born Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans and Vietnamese. However, monolingualism strengthens the positive effects of experience on the occupational attainment of the American-born Japanese and increases the negative effects of length of residence (before 1965) on the occupational status of foreign-born Indians.

A good command of English among bilinguals, on the other hand, positively affects the occupational status of three foreign-born groups in

Model 3: Chinese (15.3), the Koreans (7.6) and Vietnamese (12.8). The absence of significant effects of English proficiency on the occupational attainment of Filipinos and Indians is noteworthy. Both the Philippines and India are former colonies of English-speaking countries yet Filipino and Indian immigrants enjoy no significant advantage over immigrants from Asian countries where English was not officially imposed. Remarkably, English proficiency does not give even American-born persons of any race or ethnicity an edge over the foreign-born in attaining higher occupational levels. The nationality of Asian Americans contributes to the differential effects of English skill and usage on their occupational attainment. The linguistic variables remain insignificant for foreign-born Japanese, American-born Filipinos, Koreans and Indians.

Introducing good English proficiency as a determining variable changes work experience from a significant to a non-significant effect on the occupational status of the Chinese. For other Asian Americans, adding English proficiency as a determinant of occupational attainment does not alter the known effects of education, work experience and length of stay in the United States.

Conclusion

This study attempted to explain the significance of English language usage and English proficiency in the occupational attainment of Asian Americans. Our overall results show that the effects of the selected variables differ by ethnic-nationality specific groups. Such differential effects reinforce the observation that Asian Americans are a very diverse group. In turn, the heterogeneous characteristics of Asian Americans evoke diverse theories concerning their occupational attainment. The assimilation perspective suggests that the longer immigrants stay in the country where employment is sought, the more likely they will acquire the cultural characteristics of those born and raised there. As a consequence, the American-born and those foreign-born with longer years of residence are more likely to acquire characteristics of the dominant culture and therefore should obtain higher-status jobs than less assimilated persons of the same ethnicity.

Our results confirm this hypothesis for some groups like American-born Japanese and Chinese, and foreign-born Filipinos. These Asian groups have a longer history of immigration to the U.S. dating back to the

1820 for the Chinese, 1908 for the Japanese, and 1920 for the Filipinos. For the same groups of Asians, the sole use of English, even at home, is also an important determinant of their occupational attainment. To speak the language of the dominant culture is not only an indication of assimilation but a human capital investment as well. Therefore, length of stay and amount of English usage are significant predictors of the occupational attainment for these Asian Americans.

Although English proficiency was relevant for only a few foreign-born Asian American groups, it remains an important human capital and positive means of achieving higher occupational status. However, among all the variables, education plays the key role for the occupational success of all Asian American groups. Education consistently produced high positive effects on the occupational attainment of Asian Americans regardless of ethnicity and nationality.

With the exception of education, the same set of factors cannot be used to uniformly predict the occupational achievement of these diverse groups of Asian Americans. The systematic differences found among Asians indicate their heterogeneous character. More importantly, the data suggest that occupational attainment of all Asian Americans depends on education and not necessarily on English language usage or proficiency. The diversity of Asian Americans precludes the use of a single theory to describe the effect of language usage and English proficiency on occupational attainment. Such a project must be approached from several theoretical frameworks in recognition of the different ethnic group traits, the circumstances of their immigration and their projected economic markets.

References

Bach, Robert L.

1983 "Emigration from the Spanish-speaking Caribbean," in Kritz, Mary (ed.) *U.S. Immigrants and Refugee Policy: Global and Domestic Issues*. Washington, D.C., Hath.

Becker, Gary

1964 *Human Capital*. New York: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Borjas, George J.

- 1987 "Immigrants, Minorities, and Labor Market Competition," in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*.
- 1985 "Assimilation, Changes in Cohort Quality, and the Earnings of Immigrants," in *Journal of Labor Economics*.
- 1981 "Hispanic Immigrants in the U.S. Labor Market: An Empirical Analysis," in Tienda, M. (ed.) *Hispanic Origin Workers in the U.S. Labor Market: Comparative Analysis of Employment Outcomes*. Final Report to the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration.

Boyd, Monica

- 1974 "The Changing Nature of Central and Southeast Asian Immigration to the United States: 1961-1972," in *International Migration Review*.

Chiswick, Barry R.

- 1979 "The Economic Progress of Immigrants: Some Apparently Universal Patterns," in Fellner, W. (ed.) *Contemporary Economic Problems*. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute.
- 1978 "The Effect of Americanization on the Earnings of Foreign-born Men," in *Journal of Political Economy*.

Ford, Kathleen and Judith Gehret

- n.d. *Occupational Status Scores from the 1980 Census Public Use Sample*. Mimeographed.

Freedman, Marcia

- 1985 "Urban Labor Markets and Ethnicity: Segments and Shelters Reexamined," in Maldonado, L. and Joanne Moore (eds.) *Urban Ethnicity in the U.S. New Immigrants and Old Minorities. Urban Affairs Annual Reviews*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Gardner, Robert; Bryant Robey and Peter Smith

- 1985 "Asian Americans: Growth, Change, and Diversity," in *Population Bulletin*. Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C.

Gordon, Milton

- 1964 *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*. N.Y.: Oxford University Press.

Gwartney, James D. and James E. Long

- 1978 "The Relative Earnings of Blacks and Other Minorities," in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*.

Hirschman, Charles and Morrison Wong

- 1986 "The Extraordinary Educational Attainment of Asian Americans in the Labor Market," in *Social Forces*.

- 1984 "Socioeconomic gains of Asian Americans, blacks and Hispanics: 1960-1976," in *American Journal of Sociology*.

Jaco, Daniel E.

- 1975 "Asian Americans in the Labor Market," in *Monthly Labor Review*.

Jiobu, Robert M.

- 1988 *Ethnicity and Assimilation*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Kanjanapan, Wilawan

- 1989 "The Asian American Traditional Household," in Goldscheider, F. and C. Goldscheider (eds.) *Ethnicity and the New Family Economy*. Boulder, CO : Westview Press.

Kuo, Wen

- 1979 "On the Study of Asian Americans: Its Current State and Agenda," in *The Sociological Quarterly*.

Light, Ivan and Edna Bonacich

- 1988 *Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Koreans in Los Angeles, 1965-1982*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Martinez, Gloria Luz R.

- 1987 Occupational Assimilation of Asian Americans, 1980. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Mirowsky, J. and C. E. Ross

- 1984 "Language Networks and Social Status among Mexican Americans," in *Social Science Quarterly*.

Nee, Victor and Jimmy Sanders

1985 "The Road to Parity: Determinants of the Socioeconomic Achievements of Asian Americans," in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*.

Neidert, Lisa and Reynolds Farley

1985 "Assimilation in the United States: An Analysis of Ethnic and Generational Differences in Status and Achievements," in *American Sociological Review*.

Nishi, M.

1985 "Japanese Americans," in McKee, J.O. (ed.) *Ethnicity in Contemporary America: A Geographical Appraisal*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

Swicegood, Gray, et al.

1988 "Language usage and fertility in the Mexican-origin population in the United States," in *Demography*.

Tienda, Marta and L. J. Neidert

1984 "Language, Education and the Socioeconomic Achievements of Hispanic-origin men," in *Social Science Quarterly*.

Wilson, Kenneth and Alejandro Portes

1980 "Immigrant Enclaves: An Analysis of the Labor Market Experiences of Cubans in Miami," in *American Journal of Sociology*.

Wilson, Kenneth L. and W.A. Martin

1982 "Ethnic Enclaves: A comparison of Cuban and black economies in Miami," in *American Journal of Sociology*.