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Cultural divergence in children's selective word learning: Korean and Canadian children differ in their trust of adult informants

Jisoo Oh[1] | Narae Ju[2] | Susan Graham[3] | Youngon Choi[1]

[1]Department of Psychology, Chung-Ang University, Dongjak-gu, South Korea

[2]Department of Psychology, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada

[3]The Owerko Centre, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Correspondence
Youngon Choi, Department of Psychology, Chung-Ang University, Heukseok-ro 84, Dongjak-gu, Seoul 06974, South Korea. Email: yochoi@cau.ac.kr
Narae Ju, Department of Psychology, The University of Calgary, 2500 University Dr. N.W. Calgary, AB, T2N 1N4, Canada. Email: ju.narae@ucalgary.ca

Present address
Narae Ju,The Owerko Centre, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

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Abstract

Although children generally regard adults as more knowledgeable than their peers, an informant's past accuracy trumps age when in conflict. In a recent study, however, Korean 5-year-olds were more likely to trust a less accurate adult informant over a more accurate peer informant when learning new information. To examine whether such a pattern was attributable to the cultural influence of shaping early respect for the elderly among Korean children, a pattern of selective label endorsement was examined among Canadian 5-year-olds, who were raised under different cultural values, relatively putting less emphasis on social relationships than individual expressions (Experiment 1). We also investigated Korean 6–7-year-olds' selective endorsement pattern when the informant's past accuracy conflicted with the informant's age to examine how cultural influences shift as children develop (Experiment 2). When the adult was 25% accurate in labeling familiar objects, relative to the 75% accurate child informant, Canadian 5-year-olds tended to endorse the label offered by the child, demonstrating a prioritization of the epistemic cue over the social cue. By comparison, Korean 6–7-year-olds were equally likely to choose between two informants,

showing difficulty disregarding inaccurate adults, even when they always mislabeled familiar objects. These results offer insight into cultural influences on the development of selective word learning and suggest the relative weighing of social and epistemic cues evolves with development.

KEYWORDS
cultural influence, epistemic cue, selective trust, social cue, word learning

1 | INTRODUCTION

Children acquire much of their knowledge about the world through social interactions, relying on information from others. To avoid unreliable information, it's important for children to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources. Thus, children need to exert epistemic vigilance—assessing the competence and honesty of potential informants (Mascaro & Sperber, 2009; Sperber et al., 2010). Previous literature on the development of epistemic vigilance shows even infants selectively learn from more competent individuals based on cues like accuracy and age (see Poulin-Dubois & Brosseau-Liard, 2016, for a review). For example, infants tend to learn novel words from informants who accurately label objects (Brooker & Poulin-Dubois, 2013) and imitate novel actions from adults over their peers (Zmyj et al., 2012).

The ability to evaluate knowledge sources becomes more sophisticated as children develop and accumulate experience. By the preschool years, children consider various epistemic cues (see Harris et al., 2018; Mills, 2013; Sobel & Finiasz, 2020; Tong et al., 2020, for reviews), like their confidence (e.g., Jaswal & Malone, 2007), knowledge access (e.g., Robinson et al., 1999) and epistemic reasons' quality (Koenig, 2012). One well-documented cue is the informant's history of accuracy (Harris et al., 2012; Henderson et al., 2015; Koenig et al., 2004; Koenig & Harris, 2005; Pasquini et al., 2007). The classic paradigm, the conflicting sources paradigm by Koenig et al. (2004), has been widely applied to investigate how the informants' past accuracy influences children's judgments (see Sobel & Finiasz, 2020; Tong et al., 2020). Here, children are presented with two informants—one correctly labels familiar objects and another mislabels them. They are then given conflicting labels for the same object by the two informants and asked to choose which label they would endorse. Using this paradigm, numerous studies have found children distinguish between informants based on their past accuracy and choose to learn novel words from the informant who has been accurate in the past (e.g., Koenig et al., 2004; Koenig & Harris, 2005). Children's use of informants' accuracy changes over the preschool years. Three-year-olds consider informants trustworthy but withdraw trust after a single error. On the other hand, 4-year-olds are more discerning, considering both accuracy and inaccuracy and selectively trusting the more accurate informant (Corriveau et al., 2009; Harris et al., 2012; Pasquini et al., 2007). For example, when one informant was relatively more accurate than the other (e.g., 75% correct vs. 25% correct), 3-year-olds didn't trust either. However, 4-year-olds selected to learn from the more accurate informant (Pasquini et al., 2007).

Beyond these direct epistemic cues, children also consider cues like social relationships, personality, and consensus when selecting a source of learning (see Harris et al., 2018 for a review). One is the age of the informants. Generally, children perceive adults as more knowledgeable compared to peers of similar age (Taylor et al., 1991). Preschoolers still trust adults even when peers are equally reliable. (Jaswal & Neely, 2006). An informant's age and epistemic competence could be related indirectly, leading children to trust adults more than their peers when informants' accuracy is ambiguous. However, adults are not omniscient, and children may possess expertise in areas like play or toys, where children may actually be more knowledgeable. Thus, when cues directly indicating the informant's epistemic

competence, like accuracy, contrast with the informant's age, children need to prioritize the former to acquire new information. Supporting this notion, previous studies have shown preschoolers don't blindly trust adults. For example, preschoolers expect their peers would know better about toys than an adult (VanderBorght & Jaswal, 2009). Furthermore, when a child informant accurately labeled familiar objects and an adult informant mislabeled them, 3–4-year-olds tended to learn from the child rather than the adult (Jaswal & Neely, 2006). Thus, when preschoolers encounter a child and an adult informant with different past accuracy, they prioritize epistemic cues over social cues, selectively trusting the more accurate informant.

In previous research comparing child and adult informants, the informants' accuracy and inaccuracy were consistent. However, children's prioritization between relative accuracy and age—a child is relatively more accurate than an adult—remains unclear. Recent South Korean studies addressed this question revealing an interesting developmental pattern (Beom & Choi, 2020; Jeong & Choi, 2017, 2018). When a child informant consistently labeled familiar objects accurately while an adult consistently mislabeled them, Korean 4- and 5-year-olds, like American 3-4-year-olds, trusted the child over the adult (Jeong & Choi, 2017), even though they tended to choose adults over peers when age was the only available cue (Jeong & Choi, 2018). However, when age conflicted with relative accuracy—child 75% accurate, adult 25% accurate—Korean 4-year-olds were still more likely to endorse the more accurate child informant, while 5-year-olds tended to endorse the less accurate adult informant showing divergence in endorsement patterns (Beom & Choi, 2020).

Why do Korean 5-year-olds choose the label provided by a less accurate adult instead of a more accurate child? This age difference seems to be at odds with the evidence indicating 4–6-year-olds' prioritization of epistemic cues over social cues when they are in conflict (Tong et al., 2020). That is, around age four, children tend to endorse information from a knowledgeable informant who has a negative social characteristic (e.g., unfamiliar person) over a less knowledgeable informant who has a positive social characteristic (e.g., familiar person). One possible explanation for the Korean 5-year-olds' tendency to endorse the previously inaccurate adult's label is they show "respectful deference" to adults, influenced by cultural factors rooted in Confucian values. Notably, some Asian children, including South Korea, interact differently with adults compared to their Western counterparts (Harris & Corriveau, 2013), emphasizing discipline, obedience, and respect for elders (Jung & Han, 2019). Western children, however, are encouraged to make independent choices (Tamis-Lemonda et al., 2008) rather than to heed social hierarchy. The Korean language also employs honorifics to display respect for elders, and beginning around 4–5 years, children are encouraged to use honorifics for elders to show respect (Kim et al., 2008; Park & Kim, 2010) which can foster a child's awareness of social relationships and age-related hierarchies. It's possible that the socio-cultural values and linguistic practices in Korea may start influencing children's selective trust around age 5, as they accumulate social and cultural experiences.

Evidence around how culture influences children's selective trust has accumulated in recent years. For example, children consider social dominance in accepting one's claims (Bernard et al., 2016; Castelain et al., 2016) but children from a culture that values dominance less, like Japan, were less likely to take for granted the claims made by the dominant (Charafeddine et al., 2019). In addition, a number of studies reported cultural differences in the rate of conformity (Corriveau et al., 2013; DiYanni et al., 2015; Enesco et al., 2016), although young children have a general tendency to conform to group consensus (Bernard, Harris, et al., 2015; Bernard, Proust, & Clément, 2015; Haun & Tomasello, 2011). Chinese preschoolers were more likely to conform to a group of teachers' opinion on excluding a child from a play than Spanish preschoolers (Enesco et al., 2016). Asian-American children, compared to White-American children, were more likely to conform to the inefficient behavior endorsed by consensus (DiYanni et al., 2015) and accept incorrect testimony from the consensus in the presence of an adult (Corriveau et al., 2013). Cultural differences have also been shown in studies on selective teaching as well as learning. For example, Japanese preschoolers selectively taught ignorant puppets but didn't selectively learn from knowledgeable puppets compared to ignorant ones. However, German preschoolers showed a stronger pattern of selective learning than selective teaching (Kim et al., 2018).

To our knowledge, no cross-cultural studies have investigated how children selectively trust when learning words, especially when an epistemic (i.e., relative accuracy) and social cue (i.e., informant's age) are in conflict. In two

experiments, we investigate cultural differences in selective learning, specifically examining the role of culture when Western and Asian children encounter conflicting epistemic and social cues. We aim to directly test whether the Korean 5-year-olds' trust in the inaccurate adult can be attributed to socio-cultural values and practices. In Experiment 1, we tested 5-year-old Canadian children to compare their selective learning patterns with those of Korean 5-year-olds in Beom and Choi (2020). The present study used the same task to make the data as comparable as possible between the two studies. Based on the findings in Tong et al. (2020), we hypothesized Canadian 5-year-olds would endorse a more accurate child informant's label than a less accurate adult's label. We then descriptively compared Canadian children's and Beom and Choi's (2020) Korean 5-year-olds' endorsement tendency. As described above, since children in Western countries, like Canada, and Asian countries, like Korea, interact with and learn from others differently, we expected Canadian and Korean children's endorsement patterns would differ.

2 | EXPERIMENT 1

2.1 | Methods

2.1.1 | Participants

Data from 48 Canadian 5-year-olds ($M = 67.19$ months; range = 62.93–71.70 months; 24 girls) were analyzed. Two additional children were tested but excluded due to failure to choose an informant. Children were recruited from a participant database in Calgary in Western Canada, where English is the dominant language (90%) and visible minorities constitute 36.2% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2017). Parents of children in the final sample confirmed English as their primary language for their children and the majority identified their child as being of European-Canadian (72%) background. Most parents had achieved post-secondary or higher education (86%). The study was approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary, with parental and child consent obtained.

The sample size of Canadian 5-year-olds matched those of Beom and Choi (2020). In Beom and Choi (2020), 48 Korean 5-year-olds from Seoul and nearby cities were included in the final sample ($M = 65.6$ months, SD = 3.4 months; 21 girls). Although no specific demographic background information was provided, similar educational and socio-economic backgrounds were estimated from the 2017 Panel Study on Korean Children. Approximately 76.90% of parents residing in Seoul and its adjacent cities had achieved post-secondary or higher education (Korea Institute of Child Care and Education, 2017).

2.1.2 | Materials

The same visual stimuli from Beom and Choi (2020), featuring pictures of a young girl and a female adult wearing matching T-shirts, were used. The accuracy demonstration phase involved presenting pictures of four familiar objects: a car, a cup, a clock, and shoes. In the label endorsement phase, a novel object was presented. Auditory recordings were provided by a 6-year-old girl and a female adult, both speaking English with the same Western Canadian accent. The novel object was labeled either modi or dopa. Pictures of informants and objects were combined with audio recordings into a PowerPoint presentation file.

2.1.3 | Procedure

The procedure mirrored Beom and Choi (2020) but was conducted on Zoom due to COVID-19 public health restrictions. Parents were sent an email before the experiment with a consent form and an encrypted Zoom link. The Zoom

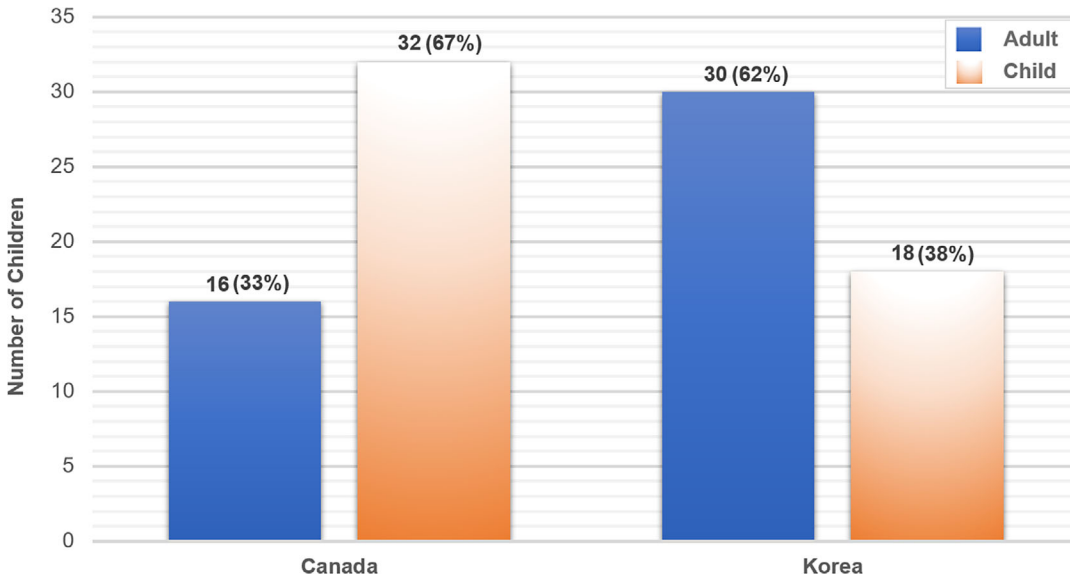

FIGURE 1 The number of children selecting each informant by nationality. *Note*. Numbers in parentheses indicate the percentage of selecting each informant. Korean 5-year-olds' data are from Beom and Choi (2020).

session was recorded for later coding. A child typically sat beside or in front of their parents. The experimenter first introduced the task and two informants by presenting the pictures of each informant on the screen (see Figure S1). The experimenter then instructed the children to listen carefully to what the informants said.

Accuracy Demonstration Phase. On each trial, children watched two informants labeling a familiar object accurately or inaccurately, while appearing on a screen (see Table S1). The child informant labeled three of the four objects accurately (75% accurate), while the adult informant accurately labeled only one (25% accurate). The child was always inaccurate on the third trial while the adult was accurate. After labeling the object, the experimenter asked what each informant called the object and which informant was not good at naming it. If the child was hesitant or did not remember what each informant said, the experimenter repeated the naming phase and asked again.

Label Endorsement Phase. A novel object appeared on the screen and the experimenter asked the child whether they had seen it before, and suggested asking the informants. If the child claimed to know the object, the experimenter expressed uncertainty and moved on. Each informant then produced novel conflicting labels. Next, the experimenter repeated the labels and asked the child what the novel object was called. We counterbalanced the order in which each informant was introduced (adult or child first) and the novel label each informant provided, which resulted in four different orders.

2.2 | Results and discussion

Preliminary analyses revealed no differences in children's selections by gender in Canadian 5-year-olds ($p = .153$). Thus, the following analyses collapsed across gender. First, we examined how many Canadian children endorsed the novel label provided by the more accurate child informant as compared to the less accurate adult informant. Out of 48 Canadian children, 32 5-year-olds (67%) selected the novel label suggested by the child informant (binomial, $p = .015$). In Beom and Choi (2020), 30 out of 48 Korean 5-year-olds (62.5%) selected the adult informant's label. Children's performance in the present study and that of Beom and Choi (2020) are shown in Figure 1. A chi-square test for independence was conducted, combining the current data with that of Beom and Choi

(2020), revealing a significant difference in the selection patterns between Canadian and Korean 5-year-olds, χ^2 (1, N = 96) = 8.18, p = .004. As expected, Canadian 5-year-olds tended to endorse the label provided by the more accurate child informant over the less accurate adult informant, while the pattern was the opposite among Korean 5-year-olds.

When two informants varied along the age and the past accuracy, Canadian 5-year-olds prioritized the informant's accuracy to learn new information. In contrast, Korean 5-year-olds showed a greater tendency to learn from an adult rather than their peers even though the adult was relatively less accurate (Beom & Choi, 2020). These suggest that the way children weigh informants' multiple characteristics, especially accuracy and age, differ between the two countries.

It's important, however, to acknowledge a methodological difference between the current study and Beom and Choi (2020). While the present study was conducted online, Beom and Choi's (2020) was in-person. Although it's possible the online format of the current study may have influenced Canadian children's performance, we believe this may not be the critical factor accounting for the observed difference. Previous research has successfully replicated in-person experiments online (e.g., Leshin et al., 2021; Scott et al., 2017). For example, Scott et al. (2017) adapted tasks of Pasquini et al. (2007) on Lookit and found that although children's performance was lower on Lookit compared to in-person, the overall patterns followed the original results.

Furthermore, since children in the current study were 5 years of age, their performance is less likely to be influenced by the presentation of the study (see Lapidow et al., 2021, for discussion regarding age-related differences in children's performance online). More importantly, both the current and the previous Korean study presented the accuracy of the two informants through screen presentation with no physical presence of informants. Still, having another adult experimenter present in-person could have influenced the children's behaviors (see Corriveau et al., 2013). If this factor truly contributed to the observed effect in the Korean study, we would expect similar behavior to the Canadian children from Korean children in our second online experiment.

3 | EXPERIMENT 2

Having demonstrated that Canadian 5-year-olds, contrary to Korean 5-year-olds (Beom & Choi, 2020), chose to endorse the more accurate child informant, Experiment 2 aimed to explore whether the selective trust pattern of the older Korean children would persist or change. Recall Korean 4-year-olds endorsed the more accurate child's label whereas 5-year-olds endorsed the less accurate adult's label (Beom & Choi, 2020). We propose this age difference is attributable to 5-year-olds' greater accumulated social and cultural experience as well as more time spent in preschools. Although there has been some influence from child-centered philosophies, Korean preschool teachers share beliefs that children should obey the teacher and a major goal of education is to teach basic information to children (Clarke-Stewart et al., 2006). This proposal leads to two key questions: First, will older Korean children show a similar tendency to trust the relatively inaccurate adult informant as 5-year-olds did? Older Korean children may endorse an adult's label out of respectful deference. However, they may have learned respect for elders does not necessarily mean blindly accepting adults' statements and thus, it may be better to consider an informant's accuracy when learning new information. In fact, American 6–7-year-olds decreased their trust of social in-group members when they were inaccurate in labeling objects, unlike their younger counterparts who maintained their trust despite inaccuracy, suggesting that older kids differ in weighing epistemic cues relative to social ones (Elashi & Mills, 2014). To examine these possibilities, we tested Korean 6–7-year-olds' selective learning behavior in a condition where a child informant was 75% correct and an adult informant was 25% correct.

Second, it remains an open question whether 6–7-year-olds would endorse an adult informant who has been consistently inaccurate versus an adult with a minimal degree of accuracy. To address this, a second condition was introduced, where the adult informant had 0% accuracy while the child informant had 75% accuracy. By comparing performance in this condition with that of the 75% (child) versus 25% (adult) condition, we can examine if an adult's accuracy is crucial for children to display respectful deference. Additionally, children were asked explicit judgment and endorsement

questions on each trial, enabling exploration of how their performance is influenced by the adult informant's accuracy, the number of trials, and the question type.

3.1 | Methods

3.1.1 | Participants

Sixty-six Korean children participated in the study: 37 6-year-old children (M = 77.34 months; range = 72.07–83.13 months; 21 girls) and 29 7-year-old children (M = 90.47 months; range = 84.07–95.37 months; 9 girls). All participants were from middle-class, Korean-speaking homes in the Seoul and vicinity areas. None of the participating children had any known developmental delays. Written parental consent was obtained from parents before participation.

Previous work on 5-year-old Korean children's selective trust (Beom & Choi, 2020) yielded an effect size of .26 (Cohen's g). Assuming the effect size of .26 and a power criterion of .8, with two conditions as a within-participant factor, G*power calculation resulted in a minimum of 30 children (Faul et al., 2007, 2009). However, we tested additional children who had been scheduled. One child was excluded from the data due to network connection failure. Ten children's answers were excluded from final analyses due to ambiguous responses (75% vs. 25% condition: 3 in Trial 1 and 4 in Trial 2; 75% vs. 0% condition: 1 in Trial 1 and 2 in Trial 2).

3.1.2 | Materials

Pictures of four young girls and four female adults were used. The colors of their T-shirts were consistent within each trial but differed across trials. The accuracy demonstration phase involved presenting pictures of four familiar objects, while the label endorsement phase involved novel objects. Recordings of auditory stimuli were obtained from four Korean-learning children (aged 6–10) and four Korean-speaking women. Pictures of informants and objects were combined with audio recordings into a PowerPoint presentation file.

3.1.3 | Procedure

Each child completed a total of four test trials: two trials each for accuracy comparison conditions (75% vs. 25%, 75% vs. 0%). The presentation order of the condition was counterbalanced. The experiment was conducted via Zoom. First, the experiment introduced the task and asked for the child's consent (see Figure S2). To make sure children understood the task, photos of three familiar objects (e.g., spoon) were presented and children were asked to name each object. All children named the objects correctly receiving positive feedback. Next, the experimenter introduced a child and an adult informant and began the accuracy demonstration phase. Here, the child and the adult informant were each introduced as a friend and a grown-up, following previous Korean studies (Beom & Choi, 2020; Jeong & Choi, 2017). Unlike in Western countries, calling adults by their names is uncommon for Korean children. Additionally, their peers are often introduced as friends. Thus, the two informants were introduced as a friend and an adult, rather than by their names.

Accuracy Demonstration Phase. On each trial, children watched the two informants label a familiar object either accurately or inaccurately (see Table S2). The child informant always labeled three objects correctly but mislabeled one, but the adult's accuracy varied between the two conditions. In the 75% versus 25% condition, the adult informant accurately labeled only one object. However, in the 75% versus 0% condition, the adult informant always mislabeled objects. Next, the experimenter checked whether the children heard the labels correctly. If the child was hesitant or did not remember what each informant said, the experimenter showed the labeling presentation and asked again.

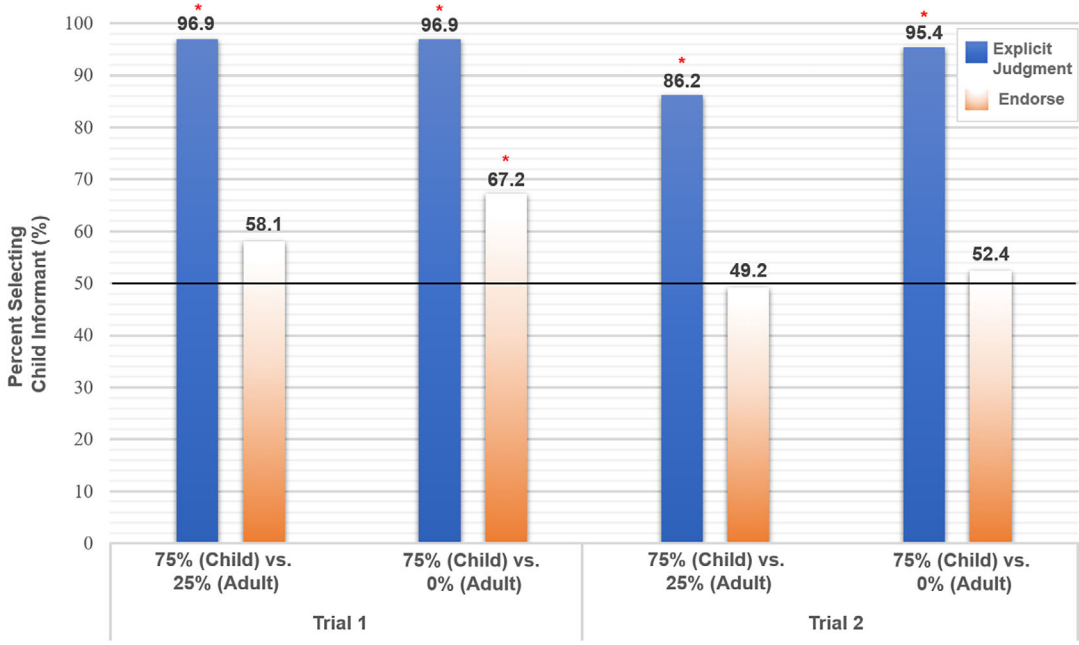

FIGURE 2 Percentage of 6–7-year-olds selecting the child informant in explicit judgment and endorse questions split by trial and condition. *Note*. Child Informants were always 75% accurate but adults were either 25% or 0% accurate in naming familiar objects. Asterisks indicate above-chance selections ($p < .05$).

After all four labeling trials, the explicit judgment question, which asked who the better informant was in labeling, was presented. If the child answered they did not know or both were good at naming the object, the experimenter prompted again. Six were asked twice because they did not respond for up to 20 s after the first question ($n = 2$) or they chose both ($n = 4$). One was asked four times because she did not respond to the previous prompting questions. All seven children chose one informant after the prompting question and the confirmed response was coded. All other children chose one after the first question. The presentation order of the informant was counterbalanced across participants.

Label Endorsement Phase. The experimenter showed a novel object (see Table S3), asking the child whether they had seen it before and suggesting asking the informants. If the child claimed to know the object, the experimenter expressed uncertainty and moved on. Each informant then produced novel conflicting labels. Next, the experimenter repeated the labels and asked what children thought the novel object was called. When the child selected one, the trial ended, followed by another accuracy demonstration and label endorsement phase until all four trials ended. The novel labels were counterbalanced across informants and participants. Between each trial, a short game (i.e., guessing the name of animals, fruits, or sports) was played to prevent carry-over effects.

3.2 | Results and discussion

Figure 2 shows the percentage of children selecting child informants by experimental condition, trial, and question type. We first analyzed children's performance using Generalized Linear Mixed Models (GLMM; Baayen et al., 2008) with a binomial error structure and logit link function. We examined whether children's performance differs as a function of condition (75% vs. 25%, 75% vs. 0%), question type (explicit judgment, endorse), trial (trial 1, trial 2), and the

TABLE 1 Generalized linear mixed models results of the final model in Experiment 2.

Main model	*M*[a]	*SE*[b]	χ^2	*z*	*CI*[c]	*p*
Fixed effects (Intercept)	−1.18	.38	9.80	−3.13	.15–.64	.002
Question type	−2.49	.29	73.47	−8.57	.05–.15	< .001
Trial	.60	.23	6.71	2.59	1.16–2.89	.010

[a]Means.
[b]Standard error.
[c]Confidence interval.

interactions between these factors. Next, we assessed children's performance on each trial in each question type and condition against chance.

A series of GLMMs were conducted using glmer from lme4 package in R version 4.2.1 (Bates et al., 2015). Model comparison was done using likelihood ratio tests obtained using lrtest from lmtest package. The model fit is reported using marginal and conditional R^2 (Nakagawa & Schielzeth, 2013) obtained using r.squaredGLMM from MuMin package. Preliminary analyses on the effects of children's age (6, 7 years), gender (girls, boys), and the condition order (75% vs. 25% first, 75% vs. 0% first) yielded no significant effects (*p*s > .901). Therefore, they were excluded from the subsequent analyses.

The full model included Condition (75% vs. 25%, 75% vs. 0%), Question type (Explicit judgment, Endorse), Trial (Trial 1, 2) as well as their two-, three-way interactions as fixed effects and a random intercept for participants. In the full model, the fixed effects alone accounted for 26.99% of the variance (marginal R^2), and the fixed and random effects together accounted for 28.12% of the variance (conditional R^2). We created a minimal model from the full model by sequentially dropping a term from the full model and testing whether the inclusion of the term significantly improved the model fit. The final model included the main effects of Question type ($\chi^2 = 73.47$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$, see Table 1) and Trial ($\chi^2 = 6.71$, $df = 1$, $p = .010$). All two- and three-way interactions among the fixed effects and the main effect of Condition didn't significantly improve the model fit (*p*s > .100). In the final model, the fixed effects alone accounted for 22.94% of the variance (marginal R^2), and the fixed and random effects together accounted for 23.99% of the variance (conditional R^2). Overall, Korean 6−7-year-olds tended to select the more accurate child informant when responding to explicit judgment questions than to endorsement questions. And they were more likely to choose the accurate child informant on the first trial than on the second trial.

3.2.1 | Comparisons with chance on each trial in each question type and condition

We compared children's performance on each trial in each question type and condition with chance using binomial tests. On the explicit judgment questions, children correctly selected the child informant as better at naming objects above chance, regardless of the trial number and the condition (*p*s < .001). When asked the endorse questions, however, children endorsed the child informants' labels significantly above chance only in the first trial when the adult informant was 0% accurate (67.2%, $p = .004$). Children's endorsement of their peers' labels remained at chance on the second trial in 75% versus 0% condition, and all the trials in 75% versus 25% condition (*p*s > .100).

In summary, Korean 6−7-year-olds' performance varied depending on question type and trial order. They excelled in explicit judgment questions and performed better in the first trial. Regardless of condition and trial, children correctly identified the child informant as the more accurate. However, their endorse questions' performance was mostly at chance level, except for the first trial where the adult informant was completely inaccurate. These suggest that overall, despite their awareness of child informants' accuracy, Korean children didn't disregard the adult informants' labels.

4 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

In the current studies, we examined children's consideration of informants' age and accuracy when these cues conflicted in a word learning situation and whether the way children weigh these cues is the same across two different cultures and across age groups.

Experiment 1 tested how Canadian children weigh informants' accuracy and age in word learning. As predicted, Canadian 5-year-olds tended to endorse a child's label when the child informant was more accurate than an adult informant. Canadian children were more likely than Korean children to endorse a more accurate child's label. This study is the first to assess how children from Western cultures endorse a label when an adult informant is relatively less accurate than a child informant, but the child is not completely correct. The results align with Tong et al. (2020), highlighting that Canadian children prioritize epistemic competence over age when making such judgments. If children viewed adults as more knowledgeable in their social and linguistic community and considered this in relatively uncertain situations, Canadian children's endorsement patterns would've been similar to those of Korean 5-year-olds. The divergence in endorsement patterns between Canadian and Korean children suggests cultural values and practices may play a role in shaping children's selective trust in informants.

The different endorsement patterns observed between Canadian and Korean children are consistent with previous studies revealing culture-specific patterns in children's conformity to majority opinion. For example, Enesco et al. (2016) found Chinese children conformed to a group of teachers' unanimous opinion even when it contradicted their own opinion, whereas most Spanish children defied the consensus. Similarly, Asian-American children, compared to Caucasian-American, were more likely to conform to the inefficient behavior sanctioned by the consensus (DiYanni et al., 2015) and accept incorrect testimony from the consensus in the presence of an adult (Corriveau et al., 2013). Together, these suggest cultural differences in children's responses when faced with conflicting information from the majority and differing informants in terms of accuracy and age.

Interestingly, culture-specific patterns in selective word learning emerged when the epistemic contrast became relative. Similar to children from the United States (Jaswal & Neely, 2006), Korean 5-year-olds strongly rely on the epistemic cue when the accuracy between child and adult informants contrasts in all or none fashion (Jeong & Choi, 2017). This was similar to the Mayan children who could weigh in argument strength against the informant's power and social dominance (Castelain et al., 2016). When the epistemic contrast is attenuated, however, Korean 5-year-olds' patterns shifted and became more reliant on the informant's age whereas Canadian children still endorsed relatively accurate peer informants. These suggest cultural factors may exert their influence when the selective learning situation is epistemically less certain.

It's also important to acknowledge not all studies have found a similar pattern of cultural differences in children's conformity. For example, Chan and Tardif (2013) found that when a teacher referred to a button as "a wheel," Chinese children relied on their own knowledge, whereas American children followed an adult's label to categorize an object. This disparity was attributed to Chinese parents and schools emphasizing children's autonomy and self-reliance in the academic domain from early in development. Thus, Chinese children aimed to make "correct" judgments based on their knowledge, whereas American children felt less pressure to make correct answers. Although comparing this study directly to the current research is difficult due to methodological differences, it's possible that Korean children's endorsement may change depending on the task's goal. It further suggests that children's behaviors need to be considered by the broad dimensions of cultural differences (e.g., individualism vs. collectivism) as well as other aspects of culture and contextual factors. (see Fischer & Poortinga, 2018, for a discussion of challenges in cross-cultural research).

According to Beom and Choi (2020), considering social cues, like age, emerged around 5 years but not before. In Experiment 2, we further explored how older Korean children weigh accuracy and age when a child informant who was mostly accurate was paired with an adult who was mostly inaccurate or completely inaccurate. We found Korean 6–7-year-olds were equally likely to endorse labels from child and adult informants, unlike 5-year-olds. This

pattern contrasted with children's responses to the explicit judgment questions where children recognized the peer informant's greater accuracy than the adult. These suggest Korean children's appraisal of the informants' epistemic competence did not directly lead to their selective endorsement.

Furthermore, Korean 6–7-year-olds' endorsement patterns did not differ between the two conditions where adult informants were 0% accurate as compared to 25% accurate. Even when adult informants were completely inaccurate, some children still chose adults to learn new information when their peers made a single error (32.8% in Trial 1, 47.6% in Trial 2). These findings are in line with Sebastián-Enesco et al.'s (2020) study on Spanish and Chinese children's trust in peer consensus. Most Spanish children accepted the function of an unfamiliar, or an ambiguous object proposed by their peers, whereas Chinese children were reluctant to follow them. It's possible that Asian children are more critical of their peers' opinions when learning new information than those of adults. Additionally, Asian children may be more likely than Western children to consider adults as reliable knowledge sources because of the culturally valued social hierarchy based on age and status. For young children, regardless of culture, it would be difficult to understand why an informant mislabels familiar objects (Koenig et al., 2004). It's likely that children consider the informant as incompetent at a global level or bizarre (Lucas & Lewis, 2010). Although it's only speculative, cultural differences may influence children's interpretation of an informant's mislabeling. For Canadian children, whoever mislabeled more might be viewed as incompetent and therefore a less reliable informant. Korean children in our study, however, may have interpreted adult informants' errors differently from child informants' single error. They may have construed an adult's error as being silly whereas a child's error as incompetence.

Although Korean 6–7-year-olds didn't show clear endorsement patterns for information provided by adult or child informants, evidence suggests they begin prioritizing past accuracy over age. When the adult informant had 0% accuracy, children tended to endorse a child's label in the first trial. Further examination showedthat 21 out of 62 children endorsed a child's label in both trials, while 21 initially chose a child's label but switched to an adult's label in the second trial. Among children who correctly chose their peers in the first trial, half endorsed an adult's label in the second trial. Although these children still correctly evaluated informants' accuracy on the second trial, they possibly switched their endorsement to show respect to an adult. These findings tentatively suggest Korean 6–7-year-olds recognize that despite their peers' mislabeling, they can be more reliable than adults, considering the overall accuracy difference.

So far, we have only briefly mentioned the development of Korean children's use of informants' age and accuracy. Beom and Choi (2020) found Korean 4-year-olds tended to endorse a more accurate child's label, whereas 5-year-olds showed the opposite pattern. In the current study, Korean 6–7-year-olds performed at chance level. Direct comparison of Korean 4- and 5-year-olds' performance to that of older children is limited due to methodological differences. However, it appears that Korean children initially perform based on accuracy, but by age 5, become heavily influenced by the informant's age, and the influence weakens over time. Similar developmental patterns in the way children weigh accuracy and conflicting cues have been reported in previous studies (Bernard, Proust, & Clément, 2015; Elashi & Mills, 2014). For example, Bernard, Proust, and Clément (2015) showed when accuracy conflicted with a group consensus, 6-year-olds, but not 4- and 5-year-olds, adjusted their trust to the consensual group after learning about its unreliability. They further provided evidence that 5-year-olds may be in a transitional period, with some showing sensitivity to the reliability of the group consensus but the majority still following group consensus. As children develop, these suggest they assign greater importance to the epistemic characteristics when deciding on sources for learning (Tong et al., 2020).

The remaining puzzle is why Korean children's performance is interrupted around age 5. We speculate it may be related to children's experience during this stage. Although Korean children can attend childcare centers before elementary school, many parents send their children to preschool around age 5 to prepare them for elementary school. In Korea, preschools primarily focus on early education and school readiness. As a result, children learn new information from teachers and are instructed to use honorifics to them. Such experiences may lead children to adopt a new strategy of having to trust adults when learning new information. This new strategy may weaken as children realize adults can be wrong and do not always deserve deference (see Pauls et al., 2013; Sigler, 2004).

There are some limitations to consider. First, Korean children's perception of the informants' errors in Experiment 2 is difficult to interpret. They may have viewed the adult informant as silly or funny instead of ignorant. Thus, while correctly identifying the child informant better at naming, children may have believed the adult intentionally made errors. To address this, providing cues indicating informants' knowledge state or the inclusion of the Ask question may be helpful in future studies. Additionally, it's important to consider older Korean children's motivation in selective trust. Children are susceptible to social conformity, conforming more in public than in private (Haun & Tomasello, 2011). Asian children, especially, tend to conform more in public situations (Corriveau et al., 2013). In Experiment 2, children publicly endorsed labels due to the constant presence of the experimenter via a zoom screen. Therefore, older Korean children may have chosen the relatively less accurate adult informant to meet social expectations. Future studies could explore this by examining selective trust in private settings. Lastly, cross-cultural differences in children's selective trust should be interpreted cautiously. For example, Bernard et al. (2016) found Western culture (e.g., French) tends to endorse the dominant's testimony, while Japanese children lean towards the subordinate's testimony (Charafeddine et al., 2019). However, in a recent study, Fonn et al. (2022) found Norwegian children's trust in the dominant's testimony was at chance level, indicating a difference within Western culture. This suggests cross-cultural differences in children's trust in testimony may reflect unique elements of specific societies. Replication involving other individualistic or collectivistic countries could help determine the generalizability of socio-cultural influences on selective word learning beyond Korean and Canadian contexts.

With the results of two studies combined, we add to a growing body of evidence on cultural influence on selective trust. Specifically, our findings illuminate the epistemic circumstances as well as the developmental period with which social/cultural factors can play stronger roles in selective word learning. Our findings also further support the idea that selective word learning is part of cultural transmission processes where socio-cultural factors interplay with children's cognitive inferences about learnable knowledge sources.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors certify that they do not have any financial, personal, or professional interest that raises an actual or potential conflict of interest pertaining to this research or this submission.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

ORCID

Jisoo Oh https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2992-9425
Narae Ju https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1992-4425
Susan Graham https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7667-1650
Youngon Choi https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0698-1511

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

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