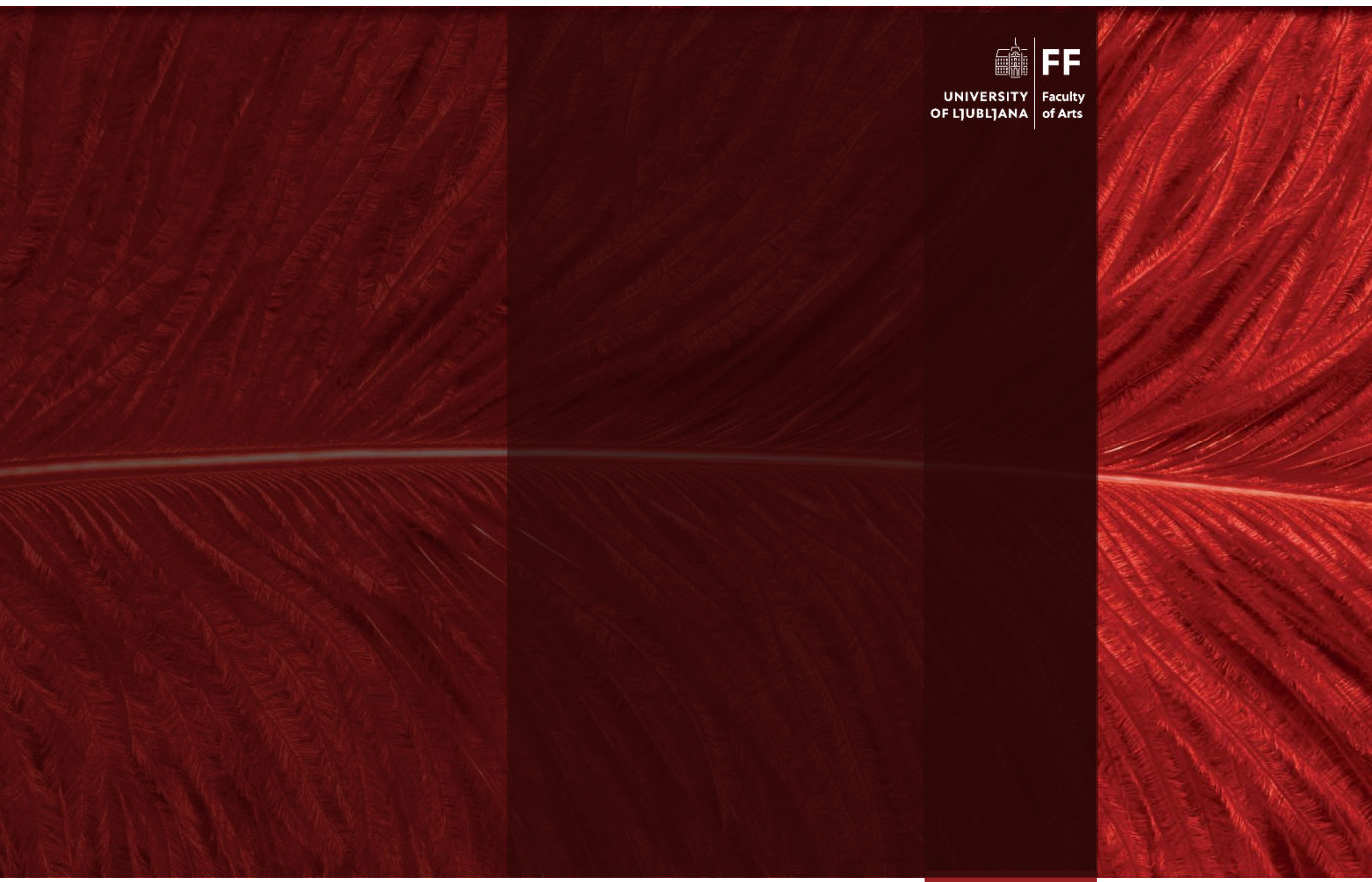
ACTA LINGUISTICA ASIATICA



ACTA
LINGUISTICA
ASIATICA

Year 2025, Volume 15, Issue 1

UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
Faculty of Arts

Acta Linguistica Asiatica

Volume 15, Issue 1, 2025

Acta Linguistica Asiatica
Volume 15, Issue 1, 2025

Published by: Založba Univerze v Ljubljani (University of Ljubljana Press)

Issued by: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani
(Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts).

For the publisher: Dr. Gregor Majdič, Rector of the University of Ljubljana

For the issuer: Dr. Mojca Schlamberger Brezar, Dean of the Faculty of Arts

Journal's web page:
https://journals.uni-lj.si/ala
The journal is published in the scope of Open Journal Systems

ISSN: 2232-3317

Abstracting and Indexing Services:
Scopus, COBISS, dLib, Directory of Open Access Journals, MLA International Bibliography, Open J-Gate, Google Scholar and ERIH PLUS.

Publication is free of charge.

Address:
University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts
Department of Asian Studies
Aškerčeva 2, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

E-mail: nina.golob@ff.uni-lj.si

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword

Studying the Korean language serves as a vital key to understanding the interconnected realms of linguistics, history, culture, literature, and education. This issue seeks to highlight the richness of contemporary Korean Studies through a diverse collection of articles spanning these various fields. Notably, this edition showcases the passion and interest in Korean linguistics from scholars across Europe, Asia, and the United States. Through the global engagement, we envision the potential for building a new Korean Studies network and, ultimately, fostering an expanded network for Asian Studies.

This issue begins with **YOON Sang-seok**'s "The Use of the Honorific Suffix *-si-* for Non-human Subjects: An Analysis of Talk-shows," which examines pragmatic nuances in the misuse of honorifics, shedding light on broader social tendencies.

Following this, **Maša ŽBOGAR**'s "An Overview of Korean Case Marker Alterations: Focusing on the *eul/reul* 을/를 – *i/ga* 이/가 Alteration" investigates the substitution of accusative and nominative markers in specific constructions, offering fresh perspectives on Korean grammar.

Bishwanath KUMAR's "Grammaticalization in the Korean Aspectual System" concludes the grammatical studies section, exploring the evolution of Korean aspectual markers in a global linguistic context.

The historical dimension of the Korean language is addressed in two intriguing articles. **MOON Hyun-soo**'s "Differences in Linguists' Perceptions of the History of Korean Language: Focusing on the Causes" contrasts how distinct socio-political contexts shape linguistic interpretations.

Andrew E. SHIMUNEK's "Puyŏ and Han: Morphological and Lexical Analysis of Two Distinct Language Groups of the Early Korean Peninsula" challenges the traditional notion of Puyŏ-Han linguistic unity, demonstrating their distinctiveness as independent language groups.

The cultural aspect of Korean linguistics is explored through **Eva VUČKOVIČ**'s "Workplace Discourse and Expression of Hierarchy in Yoon Tae-ho's Webtoon *Misaeng*," which uses critical discourse analysis to examine hierarchical dynamics in corporate settings, as depicted in this iconic Korean webtoon.

In the realm of translation, **KANG Byoung Yoong**'s "Unveiling Koreanness in Yoon Ha Lee's *Dragon Pearl*: Cultural Representation and Translation Strategies" investigates the representation of Korean identity within the space opera genre, exploring the challenges and strategies involved in translating such cultural elements.

Finally, **JEONG Eun Kyung**'s "A Comparative Study of Idiomatic Expressions Related to Staple Foods in Korea and Türkiye: Rice and Bread" bridges linguistic and cultural divides, comparing idiomatic expressions tied to staple foods in Korean and Turkish traditions.

The ICKL conference, held late in the winter of 2024 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, sparked a commitment to high-quality collaboration and professional growth in our field. As a key outcome of this fruitful exchange—supported by AKS-2022-INC-2250001—we are pleased to present this issue, which showcases the insights and advancements fostered through this collaboration.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the Korean Studies Promotion Service at the Academy of Korean for their unwavering support. Their commitment to advancing Korean Studies globally has been fundamental to the scholarly efforts presented here.

This issue highlights the vibrancy and interdisciplinarity of Korean Studies, offering fresh perspectives and fostering dialogue. We sincerely thank the authors, reviewers, and contributors whose dedication made this issue possible and hope it inspires further exploration of Korean linguistics and culture.

Guest editors

RESEARCH ARTICLES

The Use of the Honorific Suffix *-si-* for Non-human Subjects: An Analysis of Talk-shows

YOON Sang-Seok
University of Iowa, United States
sang-seok-yoon@uiowa.edu

Abstract

The Korean language has a complex honorific system that reflects the social dynamics between speakers, listeners, and referents. Korean honorifics include address terms, sentence endings, honorific words, and the subject honorific suffix *-si-*. In principle, the suffix *-si-* should be used only with human subjects; however, in actual communication, it is often used with non-human subjects. This so-called 'misuse' is especially common in service sectors, where businesses aim to show extreme politeness to customers. Public media criticizes this trend, arguing that it improperly elevates inanimate objects rather than people. Research on this phenomenon is limited, particularly in the context of everyday conversation. This study aims to investigate the use of *-si-* with non-human subjects in TV talk show conversations, exploring the factors contributing to this seemingly ungrammatical usage.

Keywords: Korean honorifics, subject honorific suffix *-si-*, honorific agreement, referent honorifics, addressee honorifics

Povzetek

Korejščina ima zahteven način izražanja spoštljivosti, ki odraža družbeno dinamiko med govorci, sogovorci in referenti. Korejski spoštljivi govor se izraža z rabo nazivov, stavčnih končnic, spoštljivega besedišče in pripone *-si-*. Slednja izraža spoštljivost do osebka v stavku in se praviloma uporablja v primerih, ko je osebek človek. Vendar se v dejanski komunikaciji pogosto uporablja tudi, ko osebek ni človek ali je celo stvar oziroma pojem. Ta 'nepravilna raba' je še posebej pogosta v storitvenih sektorjih, kjer želijo ponudniki strankam izkazati prekomerno spoštljivost. Javni mediji kritizirajo tako rabo in trdijo, da se z njo povzdiguje stvari in pojme namesto ljudi. Raziskave o tem pojavu so omejene, zlasti v kontekstu vsakdanjega govora. Namen študije je v pogovorih televizijskih oddaj raziskati rabo pripone *-si-*, ki se nanaša na nečloveške osebke, ter raziskati dejavnike, ki prispevajo k tej na videz neslovnični rabi.

Ključne besede: korejski spoštljivi izrazi, spoštljiva pripona *-si-*, spoštljivostno ujemanje, spoštljivi izrazi za naslovnika, spoštljivi izrazi za referenta

Acta Linguistica Asiatica, 15(1), 2025.
ISSN: 2232-3317, http://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/ala/
DOI: 10.4312/ala.15.1.9-30

1 Introduction

The Korean language has a complex honorific system manifested extensively in the Korean linguistic structure. Korean speakers use honorifics based on the social relationship between the speaker and the listener, as well as the referent when talking about someone else. For example, when they talk to a socially higher person, they use appropriate address terms and use honorific sentence endings. Additionally, they consider the relationships between the conversation participants and the referent when talking about other people. When they talk about someone in a socially higher position than themselves, they may use proper reference terms, use honorific particles, and attach the honorific suffix *-si-* in the predicate, or use honorific verbs or adjectives.[1]

The suffix *-si-* is known as the subject honorific suffix. According to traditional descriptive grammar, *-si-* cannot be used with non-human subjects. However, sentences like those in example (1), though considered ungrammatical, are commonly used in practice.

(1) a. 커피 나오셨습니다.
Keopi nao-si-eot-seumnida.
coffee come-SH-Pst-Def
'Here is your coffee.'

b. 이 디자인이 더 잘 어울리세요.
I dijain-i deo jal eoulli-si-eoyo.
this design-Nom more well match-SH-Pol
'This design fits you better.'

c. 이 펀드는 이율이 높으세요.
I peondeu-neun iyur-i nopeu-si-eoyo.
this fund-Top rate-Nom high-SH-Pol
'The interest rate of this fund is high.'

The subjects in the sentences in (1) are 'coffee,' 'this design,' and 'this fund,' respectively, yet *-si-* is used in the predicates. This grammatically incorrect use of *-si-* is particularly prevalent in the service sector such as coffee shops and department stores, where a high level of politeness is

[1] Regarding the term *-si-*, we follow Sohn (1999), a widely referenced source for Korean linguistics. Since *-si-* attaches to a predicate stem rather than occurring within it, it cannot be classified as an infix. It may be referred to as a 'subject honorific marker,' or as a 'pre-final ending,' terminology used by Vučkovič (2025) in the same issue.

expected. This phenomenon has been highlighted as a social issue by public media, which argues that such improper honorific usage is harming the Korean language.

A news article on this phenomenon mentions that "In various service industries where customers are served, the intention to convey respect for the customer has resulted in the incorrect usage of honorifics, where inanimate objects like coffee or merchandise are being elevated instead of people" (YTN, 2023). The article further argues that such inappropriate use of honorifics should be corrected. However, the suffix *-si-* appears to be increasingly used in casual conversations in contemporary Korean.

Regarding the use of *-si-* with non-human subjects, Baek (2016) found that although many people recognize this usage as incorrect, they generally find it acceptable. In particular, younger generations seem more inclined to accept it. She further argues that this extended use of *-si-* has become conventionalized and is considered polite, even though it remains grammatically incorrect. Similarly, Lee (2022) noted that while the general public recognizes the inappropriate use of *-si-* in online posts, they are not bothered by it and view it as natural. Lee concluded that *-si-* is now perceived primarily as a politeness marker, with its grammatical correctness not taken seriously by Korean speakers. Additionally, Yoon (2018) identified instances where *-si-* is used with verbs describing the speaker's actions or states in complex sentences. Yoon (2018) suggests that people may unconsciously express emotional attachment using *-si-*, sometimes without clearly identifying the subjects related to the predicate.

There have been various discussions about its syntactic and sociolinguistic characteristics regarding the characteristics of the honorific suffix *-si-* (e.g. Choe, 2004; Choi, 2010; Lee, 2010; Mok, 2013; Song et al., 2019; Kim & Findlay, 2023; Jou, 2024). Among those, only a few have examined how *-si-* is actually used in real conversations. The purpose of this study is to explore how *-si-* is used with non-human subjects in natural conversations. This study further investigates the elements that trigger its use, aiming to understand why such seemingly ungrammatical usage occurs.

2 Korean honorifics and the subject honorific suffix *-si-*

According to Sohn (1999, p. 408), "honorifics are grammatical and lexical forms encoding the speaker's socioculturally appropriate regard towards the addressee (i.e., addressee honorification) and the referent (i.e., referent honorification)." Honorifics can thus be categorized into two aspects: addressee honorifics and referent honorifics. Among these, Korean

speakers primarily evaluate the relative social status between themselves and the addressee. Based on this assessment, they select suitable address terms and apply appropriate sentence endings to the predicate.

When talking about someone who deserves the speaker's deference, the subject honorific suffix *-si-* is attached to the predicate or a fossilized honorific predicate such as *deusida* 'to eat' *jumusida* 'sleep' or *gyesida* 'to stay, exist' should be used. Note that these fossilized honorific words already have *-si-* in their stem. Further, they may consider using other referent honorific features such as honorific referent terms and honorific case particles. While the use of addressee honorifics is more strictly observed, the use of referent honorifics is less strict than that of addressee honorifics, especially when the referent is not present. The use of referent honorific elements depends on the speaker's attitude toward the person being talked about and the context of the conversation. Examples in (2) are all acceptable but they differ in their use of honorific elements: example (2a) has all possible referent honorific elements (the honorific title suffix *-nim*, honorific subject particle *-kkeseo* and the subject honorific suffix *-si-*), while examples (2b) and (2c) lack some of them.

(2) a. 김 교수님께서 한국에 가세요
Gim gyosu-nim-kkeseo hangug-e ga-si-eoyo.
Kim professor-HT-Nom Korea-to go-SH-Pol
'Prof. Kim is going to Korea.'

b. 김 교수님이 한국에 가세요.
Gim gyosu-nim-i hangug-e ga-si-eoyo.
Kim professor-HT-Nom Korea-to go-SH-Pol
'Prof. Kim is going to Korea.'

c. 김 교수가 한국에 가요.
Gim gyosu-ga hangug-e ga-yo.
Kim professor-Nom Korea-to go-Pol
'Prof. Kim is going to Korea.'

The use of these honorific forms depends on the context, making it impossible to evaluate the appropriateness of a sentence without considering the specific context. Yoon (2018) examined the strategic use of the honorific marker *-si-* in talk-show conversations, focusing on how conversation participants regulate its use alongside other referent honorific elements. The study reveals that in political debate conversations, participants employ minimal *-si-* when referring to politicians from opposing

parties, while they utilize more *-si-* along with other referent honorific elements (e.g., honorific particles, honorific nouns, and verbs) when discussing politicians within their party, filling all possible slots where these forms can be used. Yoon (2018) also found that in talk show conversations, guests increase their use of *-si-* when speaking about individuals who have significantly supported them, suggesting that repeated use of *-si-* in all available contexts may indicate the speaker's emotional attachment to the referent. Additionally, Yoon (2018) noted that emcees of the programs consistently use *-si-* in all possible slots during their opening and closing remarks, attributing this usage to the emcees' ritualized and professional attitudes. Thus, the results of this study imply that the use of *-si-* is influenced by the speaker's attitude toward the referent and the atmosphere of the context.

Although the use of *-si-* is mainly dependent on the context, there are some exceptional cases when the use of *-si-* can be considered incorrect regardless of the given context. When the referent is socially lower than the speaker or the referent is the speaker themselves, as in the examples in (3), Korean speakers consider it wrong to use the subject honorific suffix *-si-* in the predicate, unless in a sarcastic or playful situation. Additionally, when the subject is a non-human entity, as in the examples in (4), it is considered incorrect to use *-si-* in the predicate.

(3) a. *남동생이 책을 읽으세요.
Namdongsaeng-i chaeg-eul ilg-eusi-eoyo.
brother-Nom book-Acc read-SH-Pol
'My younger brother is reading a book.'

b. *제가 책을 읽으세요.
Je-ga chaeg-eul ilg-eusi-eyo.
I-Nom book-Acc read-SH-Pol
'I am reading a book.'

(4) a. *서울은 한국의 수도이시다.
Seoul-eun hangug-euy sudo-i-si-ta.
Seoul-Top Korea-Gen capital-Cop-SH-Dc
'Seoul is the capital city of Korea.'

b. *이 개는 잘생기셨다.
I gae-neun jalsaenggi-si-eot-ta.
this dog-Top handsome-SH-Pst-Dc
'This dog is handsome.'

While the use of *-si-* is highly context-dependent and optional, obvious violations of honorific agreement are taken seriously. Kwon and Sturt (2024) examined how native Korean speakers process sentences with honorific violations and found that they experienced processing difficulties when encountering violations of honorific agreement, as these were perceived as grammatical errors.

Another unique characteristic of *-si-* that needs to be considered is that, although the suffix *-si-* is intended for the referent honorifics, it is often associated with addressee honorifics when talking about the listener's actions or states because the referent coincides with the addressee. For example, when asking questions, making suggestions, or making requests to someone higher than the speaker socially, *-si-* should be used in the predicate and honorific sentence ending at the same time. In the following examples, the verb *-ga* 'to go' is about the addressee's action, and the speaker can consider inserting *-si-* before the sentence ending. The sentence endings are honorific endings and if *-si-* is added, the question sounds more courteous.

(5) a. 김 교수님, 어디 가요?
Gim gyosu-nim, eodi ga-yo?
Kim professor-HT where go-Pol
'Prof. Kim, where are you going?'

b. 김 교수님, 어디 갑니까?
Gim gyou-nim, eodi ga-mnikka?
Kim professor-HT where go-Def
'Prof. Kim, where are you going?'

c. 김 교수님, 어디 가세요?
Gim gyosu-nim, eodi ga-si-eoyo?
Kim professor-HT where go-SH-Pol
'Prof. Kim, where are you going?'

d. 김 교수님, 어디 가십니까?
Gim kyosu-nim, eodi -ga-si-mnikka?
Kim professor-HT where -go-SH-Def
'Prof. Kim, where are you going?'

As shown in the example (5), *-si-* and the honorific sentence endings (i.e. *–eoyo/ayo* and –[*seu*]*mnita*) result in variations, each of which expresses a different nuance of the speaker's honorific intention. In contemporary Korean, when talking to a social superior, the use of *-si-* is considered

appropriate and in particular, when asking a question, proposing, commanding, or requesting something from an addressee, *-seyo* form, which is derived from *-si-* + *eoyo*, is considered the most appropriate honorific ending (Park, 1976). Yoon (2018) argues that *-si-* expresses the affective stance of emotional attachment to the referent, and *-seyo* (*-si-eoyo*) form is now considered as a default honorific form, fixed as one of the addressee honorific endings conveying the speaker's affective stance to the addressee.

To summarize, the subject honorific suffix *-si-* is a key element in referent honorifics, and its usage is highly context-dependent. It is used to express the speaker's polite attitude toward the referent, and Korean speakers often employ it strategically to convey their psychological stance. The suffix is also associated with sentence endings related to addressee honorifics, helping to express politeness toward the addressee. The next section will discuss the use of *-si-* with non-human subjects.

3 The use of *-si-* with non-human subject

In principle, the use of the suffix *-si-* is triggered by the subject of the sentence, but there are cases when its use is prompted by other elements closely related to the subject. Regarding this phenomenon, Lee (2015) argued that a grammar-oriented approach to honorifics has limitations and that honorifics should be examined from a sociolinguistic perspective, based on real data. From this viewpoint, Lee (2010, 2015) asserted that the use of *-si-* is not simply triggered by the grammatical subject but by the person to whom the speaker intends to show respect in a given context. He introduced the term 'situation subject,' referring to "the person who is the addressee and has more power to control the situation" (Lee, 2005, p. 113). According to this explanation, the use of *-si-* is not restricted when the addressee has the power to control the situation, though, as will be discussed below, it does not appear that the use of *-si-* is entirely without restrictions.

More specifically, Sohn (1999) discussed the element that triggers the use of *-si-* other than the grammatical subject, considering the relationship between *-si-* and the grammatical subject of the sentence. First, when the possessor of the subject is a socially higher person deserving honorification, the use of *-si-* can be considered natural. In examples (6a) and (6b), the subjects of the sentences are *nun* 'eyes' and *os* 'clothes', respectively. Although they are inanimate, the use of *-si-* is generally accepted because

the owner of these nouns is *eomeoni* 'mother', who deserves the speaker's honorification.

(6) a. 우리 어머니의 눈이 크세요.
Uri eomeoni-ui nun-i keu-si-eoyo.
our mother-Gen eye-Nom big-SH-Pol
'My mother's eyes are big.'

b. 우리 어머니의 옷이 예쁘세요.
Uri eomeoni-ui os-i yeppeu-si-eoyo.
our mother-Gen clothes-Nom pretty-SH-Pol
'My mother's clothes are pretty.'

Example (6a) is considered more natural than (6b), as the word *nun* 'eyes' represents a part of the mother, whereas *os* 'clothes' refers to something merely associated with her. According to Sohn (1999), using *-si-* is more natural for inalienably possessed entities such as body parts, ideas, and health. However, for alienable nouns like one's house or clothes, using *-si-* may be optional.

Secondly, when the possessor topic of a sentence is a socially higher person than the speaker, the use of *-si-* is acceptable. Korean is considered a topic-prominent language (Sohn, 1986), and the topic may or may not coincide with the grammatical subject. In the following double nominative construction, the first NP, the topic, is the possessor of the following NP, the subject of the sentence. In this structure, the possessor topic is thought to trigger the use of *-si-*. Note that similar to the examples in (6), while (7a) sounds natural, (7b) may sound a little awkward.

(7) a. 우리 어머니는 눈이 크세요.
Uri eomeoni-neun nun-i keu-si-eoyo.
our mother-Top eye-Nom big-SH-Pol
'As for my mother, her eyes are big.'

b. 우리 어머니는 옷이 예쁘세요.
Uri eomeoni-neun os-i yeppeu-si-eoyo.
our mother-Top clothes-Nom pretty-SH-Pol
'As for my mother, her clothes are pretty.'

There are also occasions when the experiencer of the predicate triggers the use of *-si-*, particularly when the predicate is an adjective or a verb that denotes an uncontrollable state (Sohn, 1992/2013). According to Sohn

(1992/2013), a predicate can be 'affective' or 'descriptive' depending on its thematic structure. Sohn (1992/2013, p. 539) states that "a predicate is affective if its referent affects the referent of the experiencer NP." The experiencer can be a syntactic subject, locative, or topic. Some predicates can be either descriptive or affective depending on their meaning in the sentence. For example, *jota* is descriptive when interpreted as 'to be good,' as in *oneul nalssi-ga jo-ayo* 'Today's weather is good,' but it can be affective when interpreted as 'to like,' as in *gyosunim-kkeseo-neun oneul nalssi-ga jo-eusi-eoyo?* 'Do you like today's weather, professor?' The experiencer could be a topic or locative, as shown in example (8). The key idea is that the experiencer's state or condition is influenced by the predicate.

(8) a. 아버지는/아버지께 약속이 있으세요.
Abeoji-neun/abeoji-kke yaksog-i iss-euse-yo.
father-Top/father-to appointment-Nom have-SH-Pol
'Father has an appointement.'

b. 아버지는/아버지께 일이 많으세요.
Abeoji-neun/abeoji-kke ir-i man-euse-yo.
father-Top/father-to work-Nom much-SH-Pol
'Father has a lot of work.'

c. 아버지는/아버지께 문제가 생기셨어요.
Abeoji-neun/abeoji-kke munje-ga saenggi-si-eoss-eoyo.
father-Top/father-to problem-Nom rise-SH-Pst-Pol
'A problem has arisen for father.'

d. 아버지는/아버지께 제 목소리가 안 들리세요.
abeoji-neun/abeoji-kke je moksori-ga an deulli-se-yo.
father-Top/father-to my voice-Nom not hear-SH-Pol
'Father cannot hear my voice (My voice is not heard by father).'

e. 아버지는/아버지께 선물이 마음에 드세요.
Abeoji-neun/abeoji-kke seonmur-i maeum-e deu-se-yo.
father-Top/father-to present-Nom mind-to enter-SH-Pol
'Father likes the gift.'

Sohn (1992/2013) explained that such predicates include adjectives or verbs to describe psychological state (*bureopda* 'to be enviable,' *maeume dulda* 'to like'), sense-related passive verbs (e.g., *boida* 'to be seen,' *deulldta* 'to be heard'), and adjectives in the meaning of possession (e.g., *itda* 'exist,' *manta* 'many, much,' *saenggida* 'come to possess').

Overall, when the subject is a person who deserves honorification in common situations, the use of *-si-* is considered necessary. The use of *-si-* can also be triggered by other elements that include possessor genitive, possessor topic, experiencer topic, and experiencer locative. However, as will be discussed below, the naturalness of such structures may depend on the meaning of the predicate or the context.

One hypothesis for the use of *-si-* in this way is that it has evolved into an addressee honorific marker. Lee (2005) presented examples from online community posts and argued that the omitted 'situation subject' is the addressee, which triggers the use of *-si-*. Thus, Lee's argument is that *-si-* functions as the type of addressee honorific marker, used to express the speaker's honorific intent toward the addressee who holds more social power. Lee (2022) further found a trend in which such inappropriate use of *-si-* is considered more polite than statements without it.

Similarly, Baek (2016) noted that the prevalent use of the *-seyo* (*-si* + *eyo*) ending is related to this trend. According to her, this ending became more common around the 2000s, replacing its more formal counterpart *-sipsio*. As the use of *-si-* for addressee honorifics became widespread, *-si-* is now recognized as an addressee honorific. The discussions in Lee (2005, 2022) and Baek (2016) focus on service sectors, including stores and coffee shops, where this use of *-si-* has become very common. The following sections will explore how *-si-* is used in more formal and public contexts.

4 Data and methods

4.1 Data

For the analysis of *-si-* usage, this study examined an oral communication corpus of public conversations published by the National Institute of the Korean Language in 2018.[2] The corpus consists of 196,542 lines, with each line containing 1-2 sentences. It is composed of conversations from various TV programs, including a variety of talk shows such as political debates, interviews, cooking shows, and educational programs. These shows typically feature one or two emcees along with guests, and the conversations are moderated by the emcees. While the conversations follow certain formats, they are not pre-scripted, allowing extensive interaction.

[2] This research used datasets from 'The Open AI Dataset Project (AI-Hub, S. Korea)'. All data information can be accessed through 'AI-Hub (www.aihub.or.kr)'.

4.2 Methods

This study focuses on the use of *-si-* in sentence endings. Instances of *-si-* in incomplete sentences or embedded/subordinate clauses were excluded due to the volume of such cases and the challenge of conducting a comprehensive search through the data. The present dataset is large enough to reveal various patterns in complete sentences. Sentence endings containing *-si-,* such as *-seyo*, *-syeoyo*, *-syeosseoyo*, *-simnida*, *-simnikka*, *-syoessseumnida*, and *-syeossseumnikka,* were manually searched in the corpus, and sentences with non-human subjects were selected for analysis. Duplicate expressions were counted only once, and sentences with unclear meanings were removed. The final set consisted of 137 sentences.

For the analysis, this study considered the thematic roles of NPs within a sentence. Following Sohn (1992/2013), the study examined thematic roles beyond the grammatical subject that trigger the use of *-si-*. Sentences were categorized by whether the NP represented a possessor or experiencer, and predicates displaying similar patterns were classified. Contextual analysis was conducted to clarify sentence meanings.

5 Results

Of the 137 cases of *-si-* with non-human subjects, only 27 were classified as being triggered by the possessor of the grammatical subject. The remaining 110 cases were considered to be triggered by the experiencer topic or the locative element, with many of these triggers omitted.

5.1 The use of *-si-* with possessor

When a listener is the possessor of the subject of a sentence, the use of *-si-* seems natural. The most common structure in this category was the pattern *...i/ga eotteoke doe-si-eoyo*? 'What is ...?' This is the basic structure used to ask for information related to the addressee and is fixed in the form with *-si-*. There were no sentences where this structure would be used without *-si-*. The subjects of the following examples are *yeonse* 'age' and *haru ilgwa* 'daily routine,' which can be understood as 'your age' and 'your daily routine' from the context.

(9) a. 지금 연세가 어떻게 되세요?
Jigeum yeonse-ga eotteoke doe-si-eoyo?
now age-Nom how become-SH-Pol
'How old are you?'

b. 하루 일과가 어떻게 되세요?
Haru ilgwa-ga eotteoke doe-si-eoyo?
day routine-Nom how become-SH-Pol
'What is your daily routine?'

Similarly, the use of *-si-* was found when asking about personal information closely related to the listener, and it is thought to be triggered by the omitted experiencer topic. The subjects of the following examples can be interpreted as 'your marriage' and 'your personality.'

(10) a. 결혼 안녕하세요?
Gyeolhon annyeongha-si-eoyo?
marriage well-SH-Pol
'Are you doing well in your marriage?'

b. 성격이 내성적이세요?
Seonggyeog-i naeseongjeog-i-si-eoyo?
personality-Nom interverted-Cop-SH-Pol
'Is your personality introverted?'

There are occasions when possessive relationships are vague. Example (11) is taken from a situation where the host of a talk show is asking the guest about their children. The superficial meaning of (11A) is 'How are your daughter and son?' and the subject of the sentence is 'daughter and son.' However, considering the context and the following answer, the host already knows that the guest has a son and a daughter, and the intention of the question seems to be to inquire about the overall situation of their family. The omitted part may be reconstructed as *seonsaengnim-ui ttal adeul sanghwang-i eotteoke doe-si-mnikka?* 'How is your overall situation with your daughter and son?' Thus, the subject can be interpreted as 'the overall situation concerning your children,' and the omitted element triggering the use of *-si-* could be the possessor of this situation, namely, the listener.

(11) A: 딸 아들 어떻게 되십니까?
Ttal adeul eotteoke doe-si-mnikka?
daughter son how become-SH-Def
'How are your daughter and son?'

B: 아 큰 아이가 아들이고요. 작은 아이가 딸입니다.
A keun ai-ga adeur-i-goyo. Jageun ai-ga ttar-i-mnida.
well big kid-Nom son-Cop-and little kid-Nom daughter-Cop-Def
'Ah, the older one is a son, and the younger one is a daughter.'

Similarly, in the following situation, the guest talked about his experience with *pansori* (a genre of Korean traditional music), and the host is asking if he still performs *pansori*. She is simply asking about the general situation regarding the guest by saying *eotteoke doe-si-mnikka?* 'How is pansori for you?' The subject of the sentence is *pansori*, but the suffix *-si-* is used in the predicate. The possessive relationship between the guest and *pansori* is somewhat unclear but the omitted topic of the sentence is still the guest, which triggers the use of *-si-*.

(12) A: 그 판소리는 그냥 생활 속에 계시는
Geu pansori-neun geunyang saenghwal sog-e gyesi-neun
well pansori-Top just life inside-to stay-Rl

겁니까 어떻게 되십니까?
geo-mnikka eotteoke doe-si-mnikka?
thing-Def how become-SH-Def
'Is pansori just a part of your everyday life, or how is it for you?'

B: 어 저는 이 판소릴 전공으로 한 사람이
Eo jeo-neun i pansori-l jeongong-euro ha-n saram-i
well I-Top this pansori-Acc major-as do-Rl person-Nom

아니고…
ani-go…
not-and
'Well, I am not someone who majored in pansori, so…'

5.2 The use of *-si-* with experiencer

5.2.1 Predicate with possessive meaning

A significant portion of the data in this study comes from interviews, as there are many examples where an emcee asks questions to the guests. In such

examples, the meaning of the predicate can be interpreted as affecting the listener and the use of *-si-* is often found with non-human subjects. The most common representative of this is when *itda/epsta* 'to be existing/not existing' is used in the predicate. The adjective *issta* 'to be existing' and its negative form *epsta* may indicate simple existence in sentences like *mun ap-e jadongcha-ga iss-eoyo* 'There is a car in front of the door'. However, when the topic is included, as in *seonsaengnim-eun jadongcha-ga iss-eusi-eoyo* 'The teacher has a car', *itda* expresses that the topic possesses the subject, and the use of -si- sounds natural. In the data, when the *iss-eusi-eoyo* and *eop-eusi-eoyo* forms were found with non-human subjects, these cases could be interpreted as indicating possession and it is therefore considered that the omitted experiencer topic triggers the use of *-si-*. In the following examples in (13), the omitted topic can be restored as either *seonsaegnim-eun* 'As for you... ' or *seonsaengnim-kke* 'To you... .'

(13) a. 기억에 남는 거 혹시 있으세요?
Gieog-e nam-neun geo hoksi iss-eusi-eoyo?
memory-to remain-Rl thing possibly have-SH-Pol
'Is there anything that stands out in your memory?'

b. 아직은 [그런 계획이] 없으십니까?
Ajig-eun [geureon gyehoeg-i] eops-eusi-mnikka?
yet-Top such plan-Nom not have-SH-Def
'Do you still not have such a plan?'

Furthermore, adjective phrases composed of 'NP + *itda/eopda*', such as *piryo-itda* 'to be in need, to be necessary', *piryo-eopda* 'to be unnecessary', *gwansim-itda* 'to have interests', and *gwansim-eopda* 'not to have interests', are found to be used with *-si-* when asking about the listener's psychological state. Structurally, the NP is the subject of the adjective *itda/eopda*, but 'NP + *itda/eopda*' phrases are interpreted as independent adjectives describing the topic's psychological state. The use of *-si-* is thought to be triggered by the topic.

(14) a. 선생님도 그런 경험 있으세요?
Seonsaengnim-do geureon gyeongheom iss-eusi-eoyo?
teacher-also such experience have-SH-Pol
'Do you also have such experiences?'

b. 돌아보시면 나름대로 어떤 면에 좀
Dorabo-si-myeon nareumdaero eotteon myeon-e jom
Look back-SH-if In your way what aspect-to little

보람이 있으세요?
boram-i iss-eusi-eoyo?
worth-Nom have-SH-Pol
'When you look back, are there any aspects that you find fulfilling in your way?'

c. 버섯은 필요 없으세요?
Beoseos-eun piryo eops-eusi-eoyo?
muchroom-Top necessity not have-SH-Pol
'Do you not need mushrooms?'

d. 그런 데는 관심 없으십니까?
Geureon de-neun gwansim eops-eusi-mnikka?
such thing-Top interest not have-SH-Def
'Are you not interested in that kind of thing?'

Also, auxiliary verb phrases 'bound noun + *itda*/*eopda*', such as *-jeok itda* 'have an experience of doing…', and *-su itda* 'be able to' function similarly as in the examples in (15). Thus, when *itda*/*eopda* and its extended phrases and structures are used to express the possessive meaning, the use of -si- was found frequently and sounded natural.

(15) a. 혹시 당해 보신 적 있으세요?
Hoksi danghae bo-si-n jeok iss-eusi-eoyo?
possibly experience-try-SH-Rl case have-SH-Pol
'Have you ever experienced that, by any chance?'

b. 샐러드 느낌으로 드실 수 있으세요.
Saelleodeu neukkim-euro deusil su iss-eusi-eoyo.
salad feeling-as eat-SH- can have-SH-Pol
'You can eat it like a salad.'

In addition to *itda*, adjectives like *manta* 'to be many; much' and verb *doeda* 'to become' are also used to convey possession. In such cases, the use of *-si-* was found.

(16) a. 의원님은 별명이 많으세요.
Uiwonnim-eun byeolmyeong-i man-eusi-eoyo.
congressman-Top nickname-Nom many-SH-Pol
'Mr. Congressman, you have many nicknames.'

b. 삼 부 끝나고 시간 되세요?
Sam bu kkeunna-go sigan doe-si-eoyo?
tree part end-and time become-SH-Pol
'Do you have time after the part 3 is over?'

In sum, when the predicate can be interpreted as possession of the experiencer topic, the use of *-si-* is often found. The most representative examples are *itda*/*eopda* and phrasal expressions with *itda*/*eopda*. Further, when *manta* and *doeda* can be interpreted as possession of the topic, the use of *-si-* is considered natural.

5.2.2 Predicate for describing psychological state

Adjectives or transitive verbs that describe psychological states also fall into this category. One frequently used adjective is *gatda* 'to be the same'. When *gatda* is used in the structure *-geot gatda* 'seems like', it describes one's psychological state. *Gatda* can also function as a descriptive adjective, as in *seonsaengnim, sikdang ajumma gat-eusi-eoyo* 'Teacher, you look like a restaurant worker', where the subject *seonsaengnim* 'teacher' triggers the use of *-si-*. However, the subjects of the sentences in (17) are *jeo* 'I' and *geomchal* 'prosecutor', respectively, yet *-si-* is still used in the predicate. As seen in the English translations, the *-geot gat-eusi-eoyo* structure here conveys *-geot gatdago saenggakha-si-eoyo* '(You) think/feel …', which refers to the psychological state of the listener. Thus, in such cases, *-geot gatda* has an affective meaning, describing the psychological state of the experiencer, and the use of *-si-* sounds natural.

(17) a. 제가 몇 살일 것 같으세요?
Jega myeot sar-i-l geot gat-eusi-eoyo?
I-Nom what age-Cop-Rl thing seem-SH-Pol
'How old do you think I am?'

b. 검찰이 제대로 수사할 것 같으세요?
Geomchar-i jedaero susaha-l geot gat-eusi-eoyo?
prosecution-Nom correctly investigate-Rl thing seem-SH-Pol
'Do you think the prosecution will conduct a proper investigation?'

Similarly, the adjective *eotteota* 'to be how' is used to express the state of something, but with an experiencer topic, it means how the experiencer feels about something. When it is used to ask someone how they feel or sense something, *eotteo-si-eoyo* form is used.

(18) a. 소감이 어떠세요?
Sogam-i eotteo-si-eoyo?
impression-Nom how-SH-Pol
'How do you feel about it?'

b. 보시기에 [상황이] 어떠세요?
Bo-si-gi-e [sanghwang-i] eotteo-si-eoyo?
see-SH-Nm-to situation-Nom how-SH-Pol
'How do you perceive the situation?'

When an adjective describes a psychological state, it takes *-si-*, as shown in the examples in (19). Verbs that describe uncontrollable psychological actions also fall into this category. As indicated by the translations, the sentences in (19) contain an omitted topic, namely the listener. Additionally, passive structures with *-doeta* function to describe the listener's psychological state and also fall into this category as shown in (20). In such cases, the listener is affected by the predicate, and the use of *-si-* is triggered by the omitted topic.

(19) a. 영화가 재미있으세요?
Yeonghwa-ga jaemiiss-eusi-eoyo?
movie-Nom interesting-SH-Pol
'Is the movie interesting to you?'

b. 이 음식이 맛있으세요?
I eumsig-i masiss-eusi-eoyo?
this food-Nom delicious-SH-Pol
'Is this food tasty to you?'

c. 어떤 느낌이 드세요?
Eotteon neukkim-i deu-si-eoyo?
what feeling-Nom rise-SH-Pol
'How do you feel?'

d. 어떤 사건이 기억나세요?
Eotteon sageon-i gieongna-si-eoyo?
what event-Nom remember-SH-Pol
'Do you remember any particular events?'

e. 어떤 게 떠오르세요?
Eotteon ge tteooreu-si-eoyo?
what thing float-SH-Pol
'What comes to mind?'

f. 농업이 소중하세요?
Nongeob-i sojungha-si-eoyo?
farming-Nom valuable-SH-Pol
'Is agriculture important to you?'

(20) a. 교수님은 대충 이해가 되셨습니까?
Gyosunim-eun daechung ihae-ga doe-si-eot-seumnikka?
professor-Top roughly understand-Nom become-SH-Pst-Def
'Did you roughly understand?'

b. 근데 어쩌다가 고건축에 매료가 되셨어요?
Geunde eojjeodaga gogeonchug-e maeryo-ga doe-si-eoss-eoyo?
but how old-architecture-to fascination-Nom become-SH-Pst-Pol
'But how did you become fascinated by traditional architecture?'

c. 그 이유가 뭐라고 추정이 되십니까?
Geu iyu-ga mwo-rago chujeong-i doe-si-mnikka?
that reason-Nom what-as guess-Nom become-SH-Def
'What do you suppose is the reason for that?'

d. 어떤 기류라고 짐작이 되십니까?
Eotteon giryu-rago jimjag-i doe-si-mnikka?
what trend-as guess-Nom become-SH-Def
'What kind of trend do you speculate it might be?'

In summary, the use of *-si-* in adjectives and verbs describing psychological states, as well as in passive constructions like *-doeda*, reflects the speaker's respect for the listener, even when non-human subjects are involved. The examples provided show that *-si-* is triggered by an omitted experiencer topic.

6 Discussion and conclusion

This study examined the issues concerning the use of the subject honorific suffix *-si-* when applied to non-human subjects. This seemingly ungrammatical use of *-si-* has often been dismissed as an inappropriate application of honorifics due to the trend of overusing them in contemporary Korean society. However, as Baek (2016) and Lee (2022) have noted, many Koreans consider the use of *-si-* with non-human subjects to be natural, even if they recognize it as grammatically incorrect.

In this context, sociolinguistic studies have attempted to explain this so-called inappropriate use of *-si-* with examples from retail and customer service settings. While these studies offer insights into how *-si-* is perceived in contemporary Korean, they have not sufficiently addressed the elements that trigger the use of *-si-* with non-human subjects.

The current study identified some patterns in the use of *-si-* with non-human subjects. The naturalness of this usage seems to depend on the relationship between the triggering elements and the grammatical subjects. Firstly, *-si-* was observed with non-honorific subjects when the possessor of the subject merits honorification. The naturalness of such use of *-si-* appears to depend on the relationship between the possessor and the possessed. If the subject pertains to the possessor's trait, such as personality or appearance, the use of *-si-* seems to be considered natural. Conversely, if the possessed can be easily detached from the possessor or the possessive relationship is temporary, the use of *-si-* may seem unnatural. In the data for this study, there were few instances of this category, except for cases like … *i/ga eotteoke doe-si-eoyo*? 'What is …?' This structure is used as a fixed expression with *-si-* to request personal information from the listener, sometimes involving general information rather than specific details.

Secondly, the meaning of the predicate affecting the experiencer topic was found to influence the use of *-si-*. The use of *-si-* in adjectives and verbs describing psychological states, as well as in passive constructions like *-doeda*, seems to reflect the speaker's respect for the listener even when non-human subjects are involved. The data indicate that *-si-* is often triggered by an omitted experiencer topic, particularly when the predicate is interpreted as describing a psychological state or perception.

In the introduction section, the example sentences in (1) were initially presented as inappropriate, but they might be understood as omitting the experiencer locative, as illustrated in the example below.

(1') a. (손님께) 커피 나오셨습니다.
(Sonnim-kke) keopi nao-si-eot-seumnida.
customer-to coffee come-SH-Pst-Def
'Here is your coffee (for/to you).'

b. (손님께) 이 디자인이 더 잘 어울리세요.
(Sonnim-kke) i dijain-i deo jal eoulli-si-eoyo.
customer-to this design-Nom more well match-SH-Pol
'This design fits better (for/to you).'

c. ?(손님께) 이 펀드는 이율이 높으세요.
?(Sonnim-kke) i peondeu-neun iyur-i nop-eusi-eoyo.
customer-to this fund-Top rate-Nom high-SH-Pol
'The interest rate of this fund is high (for/to you).'

The results of this study further suggest that the use of *-si-* extends beyond its grammatical function, serving as a marker of politeness when the referent is the possessor of the grammatical subject or is affected by the predicate. Thus, the data demonstrate how *-si-* can be applied in a broader sociolinguistic context, reflecting both grammatical and pragmatic considerations.

Finally, it should be noted that this study has its limitations, as the data was collected exclusively from TV talk shows. Although the conversations were not pre-scripted, there were instances where the emcees directed the flow of conversation, and participants may have tried to use language in a more refined manner. Future studies examining more casual conversation genres may reveal additional uses of *-si-* with non-human subjects, expanding on the findings presented here.

Abbreviations

Acc accusative case particle
Cop copula
Def deferential sentence ending
Gen genitive case particle
HT honorific title
Nm nominalizer
Nom nominative case particle
Pol polite sentence ending
Pst past tense marker
SH subject honorific suffix

Top topic particle
Dc declarative ending
Rl relativizer

References

Baek, S.-Y. (2016). Politeness strategies and pragmatic extension of the Korean subject honorific suffix -si-. *Proceedings of the Korean Linguistic Society Conference*, 99-110.

Choe, J.-W. (2004). Obligatory honorification and the honorific feature. *Studies in Generative Grammar, 14*(4), 545-559.

Choi, K. (2010). Subject Honorification in Korean: In Defense of Agr and Head-Spec Agreement. *Language Research, 46*(1), 59-82.

Jou, E. (2024). Honorification as Agree in Korean and beyond. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics, 9*(1), 1-48. https://doi.org/10.16995/glossa.9565

Kim, Y., & Findlay, J. Y. (2023). On the 'subject' honorific -si- in Korean. *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America, 8*(1), 5534. https://doi.org/10.3765/plsa.v8i1.5534

Kwon, N., & Sturt, P. (2024). When social hierarchy matters grammatically: Investigation of the processing of honorifics in Korean. *Cognition, 251*, 105912.

Lee, J.-B. (2005). On the Studies on Korean Honorifics from the Sociolinguistic Standpoint. *Gugeohak* 국어학 [Korean Linguistics], *47*, 407-448.

Lee, J.-B. (2010). The Dissusion of Honorific Ending '-si-' for the Situation Subject and its Background. The *Journal of Linguistic Science, 55*, 217-246.

Lee, J.-B. (2015). Internet media and regional dialects. *The Journal of Korean Dialectology, 22*, 83-134.

Lee, J.-B. (2022). A Study on the Use of Honorific Ending '-si-' for the Situation Subject by Netizen. *Korean Dialect Studies,* 35, 107-144.

Mok, J.-S. (2013). On the Prefinal Ending '-si-' in Korean: as a subject indicator. *Gugeohak* 국어학 [Korean Linguistics]*, 67*, 63-103.

Park, Y.-S. (1976). Gugeo Gyeongeobeobui Sahoeeoneohakjeok Yeon-gu 국어 경어법의 사회언어학적 연구 [A sociolinguistic study on Korean honorifics]. *Korean language and literature, 72/73*, 47-65.

Sohn, H.-M. (1986). *Linguistic Expeditions*. Seoul: Hanshin.

Sohn, H.-M. (1992/2013). Honorific Agreement in Korean. In H-M. Sohn (Ed.), *Topics in Korean Language and Linguistics* (pp. 531-554). Seoul: Korea University Press.

Sohn, H.-M. (1999). *The Korean Language*. Cambridge University Press.

Song, S., Choe, J.-W., & Oh, E. (2019). An empirical study of honorific mismatches in Korean. *Language Sciences*, *75*, 47-71. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2018.12.003

Vučkovič, E. (2025). Workplace Discourse and Expression of Hierarchy in Yoon Tae-ho's Webtoon Misaeng. *Acta Linguistica Asiatica*, *15*(1), 125-152. https://doi.org/10.4312/ala.15.1.125-152

Yoon, S.-S. (2018). The Social Meanings and Functions of the Korean Subject Honorific Suffix -(u)si. *Japanese/Korean Linguistics*, 25, 1-11.

YTN. (2023, June 12). Your coffee has arrived? 'Object honorifics'. *YTN*. https://www.ytn.co.kr/_ln/1224_202306120243561788

An Overview of Korean Case Marker Alterations: Focusing on the *eul/reul* 을/를 – *i/ga* 이/가 Alteration

Maša ŽBOGAR
Yonsei University, Republic of Korea
zbogar.masa@gmail.com

Abstract

In this research, we examine the manifestation of the accusative case marker *eul/reul* 을/를 alteration, where it is replaced by the nominative case marker *i/ga* 이/가, specifically in *-go sipda* -고 싶다 construction and in clauses with a transitive predicate (NP *i/ga* 이/가 NP *eul/reul* 을/를 VP). The results show that the object or theme must have a definitive reference, and the verb immediately preceding *-go sipda* construction should not form part of a complex predicate within the inner clause. In case of the NP *i/ga* 이/가 NP *eul/reul* 을/를 VP structure, the verb should convey a static meaning. The case marker *i/ga* attached to NP2, does not indicate the subject. Instead, it functions as type of auxiliary marker with characteristics similar to those of determiners.

Keywords: case marker alteration, *eul/reul* – *i/ga* alteration, *-go sipda* construction, case marker functions, determiner

Povzetek

Članek preučuje primere konstrukcije *-go sipda* -고 싶다 in stavkov s prehodnim povedkom (NP *i/ga* 이/가 NP *eul/reul* 을/를 VP), v katerih se namesto tožilniškega člena *eul/reul* 을/를 uporablja imenovalniški členek *i/ga* 이/가. Rezultati kažejo, da mora predmet ali tema stavka vsebovati določeno referenco, hkrati pa glagol neposredno pred obliko *-go sipda* ne sme biti del kompleksnega povedka notranjega stavka. V primeru stavkov s prehodnim povedkom NP *i/ga* 이/가 NP *eul/reul* 을/를 VP mora glagol vsebovati statični pomen. Sklonski členek *i/ga*, pritrjen na NP2, ne označuje predmeta. Namesto tega deluje kot vrsta besedilnega členka s podobnimi značilnostmi, kot jih imajo členi.

Ključne besede: sprememba rabe sklonskih členkov, sprememba rabe *eul/reul* – *i/ga*, struktura *-go sipda*, funkcije sklonskih členkov, členi

Acta Linguistica Asiatica, 15(1), 2025.
ISSN: 2232-3317, http://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/ala/
DOI: 10.4312/ala.15.1.31-46

1 Introduction

Case marker alteration (*gyeogjosa gyoche* 격조사 교체) is a phenomenon where one case marker is replaced by a different case marker. In this paper, we will look at the examples of syntactic structures where one case marker *eul/reul* 을/를 is changed, or altered, with case marker *i/ga* 이/가, and try to determine in what environment can alteration occur, whether there is a change in the syntactic or pragmatic meaning of the sentence, and what is the meaning of *i/ga*.

A typical example of case alteration is the *-go sipda* -고 싶다 construction, where the noun phrase immediately before the predicate connected with *-go sipda* construction changes the case marker from *eul/reul* to *i/ga*. However, in Korean, case marker alterations are not a rare phenomenon. They appear in various sentence constituents. One of the most commonly used case marker alterations is the subject case alteration form, where the type of case marker to appear depends on the preceding noun phrase's features such as [± group], and [± honorific].

(1) a. 철수가 집에서 게임한다.
Cheol-su-ga jib-e-seo ge-im-han-da.
Cheolsu-NOM house-LOC game-do-present- DEC
'Cheolsu is playing a game at home.'

b. 회사에서 중요한 상을 받았다.
Hoi-sa-e-seo jung-yo-han sang-eul bad-ass-da.
company-NOM(+group) important-ADN prize-ACC receive-past-DEC
'The company has received/won an important award.'

c. 할머니께서 댁에 계신다.
Han-meo-ni-kke-seo daeg-e gye-sin-da.
grandmother-NOM(+hon) house(+hon)-LOC be(+hon)- present-DEC
'Grandmother is at home.'

In (1b), the 'company' *hoisa* 회사, having a [+group] feature, is followed by case marker *eseo* 에서 while in (1c), 'grandmother' *halmeoni* 할머니, having an [+honorific] feature, is followed by case marker *kkeseo* 께서. The first example presented, namely (1a) 'Cheolsu' *cheolsu* 철수, which is characterized by [-group] and [-honorific] features is followed by case marker *i/ga* and could be considered an unmarked case marker.

There are numerous case marker alterations in an adverb (*busaeo* 부사어) positions as well. Let us look at the *e* 에 – *(eu)ro* (으)로 case marker alteration.

(2) a. 부산에 가는 기차
bu-san-e ga-neun gi-cha
Busan-LOC go-ADN Train
'a train going to Busan'

b. 부산으로 가는 기차
bu-san-eu-ro ga-neun gi-cha
Busan-DIR go-ADN train
'a train going to Busan'

This paper will focus on case marker alterations that occur in object positions and analyze their functions or meanings. It is organized as follows. Section 2 will briefly review case markers in Korean and discuss them in a sentence or clause. Section 3 will first delve into case marker alterations in the *-go sipda* construction and continue with case alterations in a transitive sentence of the following structure: NP1 이/가 NP2 을/를 VP. In Section 4, the focus will be on the meaning of the case marker *i/ga* and its function when it appears as the alternative case marker. Lastly, Section 5 will sum up our findings.

2 The position and functions of case markers in a noun phrase

In Korean, grammatical case is usually indicated by the use of case markers.[1] Case markers point to the syntactic relation between a predicate and its arguments. However, case markers do not necessarily have to appear for the case to be expressed, and are indicated without a marker. When so, the sentence constituent loses the ability to move to a different position in a sentence.

To better understand the position of case markers, let us look at what position they take in a noun phrase. Due to the case markers' ability to be omitted, their inability to appear as a free-standing form, and the fact that they only carry a grammatical meaning, it could be considered, that they are not the head of the phrase; instead, the noun is. However, according to Lim (2008) case markers take the position of a head of a phrase. As proof of that, he points out that the presence or absence of case marker changes the

[1] In Korean, reference grammars define case markers as follows. In Nam et al. (2019), a case marker binds to a noun or noun-like form and expresses the relation that the noun or noun-like form has with a different word. In Ko and Koo (2008), case markers denote grammatical relations between words.

meaning of the clause or sentence.[2] And that in cases where the predicate can facilitate the use of two different case markers for the same argument, the use of either of cases does not depend on the different theta roles but on the meaning of the sentence. For example, the verb 'to leave' *tteonada* 떠나다, which is a motion verb, demands a noun phrase NP2 to denote a departure or exit point. However, the verb 'to leave' *tteonada* 떠나다 can realize both *eseo* 에서 and *eul/reul* 을/를 within the same noun phrase. Let us look at the examples below.

(3) a. 친구가 한국에서 떠났다.
Chin-gu-ga han-gug-e-seo tteo-nass-da.
friend-NOM Korea-LOC leave-past-DEC
'Friend left Korea.'

b. 친구가 한국을 떠났다.
chin-gu-ga han-gug-eul tteo-nass-da
friend-NOM Korea-ACC leave-past-DEC
'Friend left Korea.'

According to Lim (2008), the theta role of the NP2, namely 'Korea' *hangug* 한국, remains as a departure point in both examples, however, while in (3a), it is the semantic relation that is more enhanced, in (3b), the grammatical relation takes the enhancement.

Moreover, the accusative case marker *eul/reul* appears to have more than just a pure syntactic function. Lee (2015) examined the phenomenon of the case marker *eul/reul* being attached to an adverb which immediately preceded the main predicate in long negation form. The findings indicate that the appearance of case markers *eul/reul* is due to the auxiliary predicate *anihada* 아니하다 which is a transitive verb, and therefore, requires an object. However, in this case, a case marker no longer performs the function of marking an object of the sentence; instead, it functions as a focus marker.[3]

[2] Kim (1991) and Kim (2007) found that when noun phrase is not marked with a case marker, it expresses a specific or definitive reference. In other words, when case is expressed without the use of a case marker, it expresses already-known information.

[3] Sentences with two accusative case markers are observed to behave similarly. Their NP2 and NP3 are both marked with accusative eul/*reul*, however, the accusative case marker attached to NP2 does not express the meaning, object, or patient. Instead, the function of case marker seems to be closer to the one of an auxiliary marker. For example:

It seems that although the primary meaning of case markers is purely syntactic, there are situations where markers express meanings that go beyond their grammatical relations with predicates and their arguments. In such examples, case markers seem to add to the overall semantic meaning of a clause or sentence.

3 *Eul/reul – i/ga* case marker alteration

In this section, we will look at the examples where the accusative case marker *eul/reul* is replaced by the nominative case marker *i/ga*. The focus will be on two types of constructions or clauses where the alteration takes place: the *-go sipda* -고 싶다 construction and a transitive verb clause or sentence.

3.1 *Eul/reul – i/ga* case marker alteration in the *-go sipda* construction

Arguably, the most typical example is the replacement of the case marker *eul/reul* with the case marker *i/ga* in the *-go sipda* structure. With the most well-known example illustrated as follows.

(4) a. 저는 친구가 보고 싶다.
Jeo-neun chin-gu-ga bo-go sip-da.
I-TOP friend-NOM see-CONN Want-DEC
'I miss my friend(s).'

b. 저는 친구를 보고 싶다.
Jeo-neun chin-gu-reul bo-go Sip-da
I-TOP friend-ACC see-CONN want-DEC
'I miss my friend(s).'

Researchers generally agree that the case marker change does not necessarily occur in all of the *-go sipda* constructions. Um (2003) focused on the type of structures where case marker alteration can or cannot occur. He found out that the alteration cannot take place in the following two cases: 1. When the 'inner' predicate consists of a main and an auxiliary verb, as in (5a).

(i) 철수가 영희를 손을 잡았다.
Cheol-su-ga yeong-hui-reul son-eul jab-ass-da.
Cheolsu-NOM Yeonghui-ACC hand-ACC grab-past_DEC
'Cheolsu grabbed Yeonghui's hand.'

2. When the entire *-go sipda* construction modifies a noun, as in (5b). According to Lee (2016), the alteration cannot be realized when a verb before *-go sipda* is an adjective with the *ha* -하- suffix as in (5c).[4]

(5) a. 치마{를/*가} 입어 보고 싶다.
Chi-ma-reul-ga ib-eo bo-go sip-da.
skirt-ACC-NOM wear-CONN see- CONN want-DEC
'I would like to try on the skirt.'

b. 그런 이야기{를/*가} 듣고 싶은 생각도
Geu-reon i-ya-gi-reul-ga deud-go sip-eun saeng-gag-do
this-ADN story-ACC-NOM hear-CONN want-ADN thought-AUX
없었다.
eobs-eoss-da.
not have-past-DEC
'I had no intention of listening to this kind of story.'

c. 오늘만큼은 우리의 승리{를/*가}
O-neul-man-keum-eun u-ri-eui seung-ri-reul-ga
today-AUX-TOP our-GEN win-ACC-NOM
기뻐하고 싶다.
gi-ppeo-ha-go sip-da
happy-suffix-CONN want-DEC
'Today I want to celebrate our victory.'

Whilst Um (2003) examined the overall characteristics of the *-go sipda* construction involving case marker alteration, Lee (2016) and Kim (2020) focused on analyzing the noun phrases where alteration takes place and the types of predicates (verbs) that permit such alteration. According to Lee (2016, p. 35), predicate must be either a transitive or non-transitive verb with an argument which can be perceived as patient or target.

(6) a. 도서관에 가고 싶다.
Do-seo-gwan-e ga-go sip-da.
library-LOC go-CONN want-DEC
'I want to go to the library.'

[4] Example (5b) corresponds to the example (19a') in Um (2003, p. 181) and (5c) corresponds to the example (17)ㄴ in Lee (2016, p. 36).

b. 도서관이 가고 싶다.
Do-seo-gwan-i ga-go sip-da.
library-NOM go-CONN want-DEC
'I want to go to the library.'

Interestingly, though example (6b) is grammatically possible according to Lee (2016), Kim (2020) does not accept it as such due to the lack of examples in corpora of Korean language. He extends his claim to all motion verbs that appear in the main clause. Kim also argues that in constructions with typical transitive verbs (*jeonhyeongjeogin tadong guseong* 전형적인 타동 구성) and in cases where the noun phrase directly preceding the verb must serve as its object or theme, it typically denotes a definitive or specific reference. In sentences where a noun phrase in the object position does not refer to a specific reference, alteration cannot occur.

(7) 우리 강아지{를/가} 그리고 싶다.
U-ri gang-a-ji-reul-ga geu-ri-go sip-da.
our puppy-ACC-NOM draw-CONN want-DEC
'I want to draw our puppy.'

(8) 어떤 것{을/*이} 그리고 싶니?
Eo-tteon geos-eul/i geu-ri- sip-ni?
What-ADN thing-ACC-NOM draw-CONN want-INT
'What would you like to draw?'

If we sum up, the following conditions have to be met for the marker alteration to take place. First, the target noun phrase must serve as an argument functioning as a specific object or theme of the predicate. Second, the predicate of the main clause must be a transitive verb and not an adjective with the suffix *ha* -하-.

Even though the environment in which a case marker alteration occurs can be pinned down, there is no clear consensus on what motivates case markers to change, and how to classify the marker *i/ga* once it replaces the original *eul/reul*.[5] The reason for this might be in the fact that the case alteration is not obligatory. To put it plainly, the occurrence or the non-occurrence of case marker alteration has no influence on the grammatical correctness of the entire construction. Despite the fact that the factor or motivator for case marker alteration is not necessarily agreed upon, there

[5] Park (2001) sees the NP2 as the cause of the action or state in the predicate that the NP1 wishes to occur, which facilitates case marker *eul/reul* to be replaced by case marker *i/ga*.

seems to be an agreement regarding the function of *i/ga*. That is, it no longer has the ability to function as a case marker. As seen from the examples, the overall grammatical meanings of the sentences that undergoes alteration are not affected. On the contrary, the semantic meanings are. *I/ga* functions as a focus marker for the patient, the target of the action, or the state that is expressed in a predicate.

On the other hand, Ko (2003) and Lee (2016) argue that with the occurrence of a case marker alteration, a change in grammatical structure also arises. According to Ko (2003) a case marker alteration is nothing more than a phenomenon which occurs when the syntactic properties of some predicates require multiple argument structures. Lee (2016) partially agrees but adds that it is a combination of the main verb's argument structure and auxiliary verb's lexical characteristics.[6]

3.2 Case marker alteration in NP1 *i/ga* 이/가 NP2 *eul/reul* 을/를 VP constructions

The case marker *eul/reul* can undergo the alteration to case marker *i/ga* even in constructions with simple predicates. Unfortunately, there is not much literature on the *eul/reul* – *i/ga* case marker alteration in non-complex sentences, compared to the works that focus on case marker alteration in the *-go sipda* constructions.

Yu (2009) looked at the verbs which allow the alteration and divided them into different groups based on their meaning. She further looked into the semantic changes of sentences before and after case marker alterations and found out that verbs belonging to 'middle voice auxiliary verbs' (*piwiseong junggandongsa* 피위성 중간동사) which can be categorized by meaning as *dachida*-type verbs 다치다류 act differently than the verbs belonging to the group of 'reflexive middle verbs' (*jaegwiseong junggandongsa* 재귀성 중간동사). In case of the former, the NP2 *i/ga* 이/가 receives more focus, and in case of the latter, the entire clause reportedly expresses the meaning of a patient. Let us look at a few examples.

[6] The *-go sipda* construction is not the only construction where the combination of two verbs causes an overlaying effect. In Lee (2015), it is pointed out that a similar phenomenon takes place in sentences with long-form negation. In long-form negations, a case marker *eul/reul* can occur in the main clause behind an adverb (*busaeo* 부사어). They argue that eul/reul appears due to *anihada* 아니하다's transitive characteristics, which overlay into the main clause.

(9) a. 교통 사고에 철수가 머리를 다쳤다.
Gyo-tong sa-go-e cheol-su-ga meo-ri-reul da-chyeoss-da.
traffic accident-LOC Cheolsu-NOM head-ACC hurt-past-DEC
'Cheolsu hurt his head in a traffic accident.'

b. 교통 사고에 철수가 머리가 다쳤다.
Gyo-tong sa-go-e cheol-su-ga meo-ri-ga da-chyeoss-da.
traffic accident-LOC Cheolsu-NOM head-NOM hurt-past-DEC
'Cheolsu hurt his head in a traffic accident.'

(10) a. 영희가 아주 졸려서 눈을 감았다.
Yeong-hui-ga a-ju jol-lyeo-seo nun-eul gam-ass-da.
Yeonghui-NOM very sleepy-CONN eyes-ACC close-past-DEC
'Yeonghui closed her eyes because she was very sleepy.'

b. 영희가 아주 졸려서 눈이 감았다.
Yeong-hui-ga a-ju jol-lyeo-seo nun-i gam-ass-da.
Yeonghui-NOM very sleepy-CONN eyes-NOM close-past-DEC
'Yeonghui closed her eyes because she was very sleepy.'

In (9a), 'hurt (his) head' *meorireul dachyeossda* 머리를 다쳤다 merely expresses where Cheolsu got hurt. On the other hand, in (9b) 'hurt (his) head' *meoriga dachyeossda* 머리가 다쳤다 puts an emphasis on the fact that Cheolsu hurt his head. Therefore, the semantic meaning of the sentence has changed with the alteration of a case marker. Whereas, in the case of the latter, the case marker alteration prompts changes in the meaning of the construction – the agent is not as clear anymore and the meaning of a patient is more widespread. To go further, in example (9b), a case marker *i/ga* seems to carry the meaning of exclusivity that affects an object or target. The case marker alteration in example (10b) seems to convey a different meaning. Namely, due to the verb expressing an involuntary action, the action is not intentionally or purposefully done by the subject.

Parallels can be drawn with findings by Hong (2017), who identified *i/ga* as a case marker that marks a controller, and *eul/reul* as a target of change either caused by the controller or expressed with a full clause. He further classified verbs into different groups. One of the groups includes verbs that describe situations where change is possible without a controller, allowing for the *eul/reul* – *i/ga* case marker alteration. According to (Hong, 2017, p. 977), the verbs allowing this case marker alteration share the following characteristics: the predicate must be a state verb expressing the continuation of a state and must be non-accusative, while the subject of such predicates is non-specific.

It does appear there is a common thread that indicates the use of and function of the case marker alteration in this environment. The alternative case marker *i/ga* does not fulfil its function or meaning as a subject case marker. On the contrary, it seems to hold purely pragmatic meaning of altering the overall meaning of the clause or sentence. Therefore, the case marker *i/ga* has lost its syntactic meaning, and it functions similarly if not identically as an auxiliary marker.

4 Characteristics of the case marker i/ga in contexts of case marker alteration

In this section we will look at the characteristics of case marker i/ga in more detail. In cases like these, the question that may occur is whether with the change of marker, a change of function of the noun phrase also occurs. For example, the noun phrase changing from object to subject of the predicate. According to Lee (2016), in instances of case alteration, where the previously object noun phrase receives the subject case markers, it does not make the entire noun phrase a subject marker. Lee (2016) concludes that this means that *i/ga*, when replacing *eul/reul*, is not functioning as a subject case marker but is instead more akin to auxiliary markers.

From distribution's point of view, it is easy to draw the similarities between the case marker *i/ga* and auxiliary markers, as both belong to the same family of parts of speech – markers (*josa* 조사). However, considering the meaning expressed by *i/ga*, it does not function as a case marker. It appears to do more than just place focus on the noun phrase, as an auxiliary marker would; it also conveys definitiveness, making the noun phrase more specific (Um, 2003; Kim, 2020).[7] Let us compare the sentences in which case alteration occurs and where *eul/reul* is replaced by auxiliary marker.

(11) a. 영희는 민수를 보고 싶다.
Yeong-hui-neun min-su-reul bo-go sip-da.
Yeonghui-TOP Minsu-ACC see-CONN want-DEC
'Yeonghui misses Minsu.'

[7] Kim (2020, p. 43) points out that noun phrase with *i/ga* expresses a more concrete object.

b. 영희는 민수가 보고 싶다.
Yeong-hui-neun min-su-ga bo-go sip-da.
Yeonghui-TOP Minsu-NOM see-CONN want-DEC
'Yeonghui misses Minsu.'

c. 영희는 민수만 보고 싶다.
Yeoung-hui-neun min-su-man bo-g- sip-da.
Yeonghui-TOP Minsu-AUX see-CONN want-DEC
(literally) 'Yeonghui misses only Minsu.'

d. 영희는 민수까지 보고 싶다.
Yeoung-hui-neun min-su-kka-ji bo-go sip-da.
Yeonghui-TOP Minsu-AUX see-CONN want-DEC
(literally) 'Yeonghui misses everyone up to Minsu.'

In the examples above, we can see that in (11b), 'Minsu' *minsu* 민수 is the friend who 'Yeonghui' *yeounghui* 영희 misses. However, when comparing this sentence to (11c), we notice a difference in meaning when the auxiliary marker *man* 만 is used instead. With *man*, the only person Yeonghui misses is Minsu, and no one else. On the other hand, when *kkaji* 까지 is used, it conveys the meaning that Yeonghui misses everyone up to and including Minsu. In contrast, in (11b), it is not explicitly stated whether Minsu is the only one missed; however, Minsu is the person who is in focus.

When comparing this to auxiliary markers, we can also observe that the meaning is not fully aligned. It is argued that in case marker alterations, *i/ga* points out that the noun phrase (NP2) refers a specific entity, which is the object or theme of the action or state verb in the predicate. From this, we can infer that *i/ga* expresses some form of exclusivity. However, when compared to *man,* we can observe that the meaning differs. *Man* expresses 'strict' exclusivity, meaning that out of all friends, only Minsu is missed. In contrast, *kkaji* 까지 also carries a sense of exclusivity but is not as rigid as in *man* 만. It suggests that there are more people than just Minsu whom Yeonghui misses.

This far, we have only examined examples of case marker alterations where the noun phrase refers to something or someone specific. Now, let us investigate whether case marker alteration is possible when NP2 refers to a non-specific noun.

(12) a. * 철수는 아무 사람을 보고 싶다.
Cheol-su-neun a-mu sa-ram-eul bo-go sip-da.
Cheolsu-TOP any person-ACC see-CONN want-DEC
* ‘Cheolsu wants to see anyone.’

b. * 철수는 아무 사람이 보고 싶다.
Cheol-su-neun a-mu sa-ram-i bo-go sip-da.
Cheolsu-TOP any person-NOM see-CONN want-DEC
* ‘Cheolsu wants to see anyone.’

c. 철수는 아무 사람이나 보고 싶다.
Cheol-su-neun a-mu sa-ram-i-na bo-go sip-da.
Cheolsu-TOP any person-AUX see-CONN Want-DEC

‘Cheolsu wants to see anyone.’

(13) a. 철수는 떡볶이를 먹고 싶다.
Cheol-su-neun tteog-bokk-i-reul meog-go sip-da.
Cheolsu-TOP tteogbokki-ACC eat-CONN Want-DEC
‘Cheolsu wants to eat tteogbokki.’

b. 철수는 떡볶이가 먹고 싶다.
Cheol-su-neun tteog-bokk-i-ga meog-go sip-da.
Cheolsu-TOP tteogbokki-NOM eat-CONN Want-DEC
‘Cheolsu wants to eat tteogbokki.’

c. 철수는 아무 음식{*을/*이/이나} 먹고 싶다.
Cheol-su-neun a-mu eum-sig/i/a-ni meog-go sip-da.
Cheolsu-TOP any food-ACC/NOM/AUX eat-CONN Want-DEC
‘Cheolsu wants to eat any food.’

Looking at the above examples (12c) and (13c), we can observe that in sentences where a noun phrase expresses a non-definite reference, case marker alteration cannot take place. Instead, the auxiliary marker *(i)na* (이)나 is used.

(14) a. 철수는 사람을 보고 싶다.
Cheon-su-neun sa-ram-eul bo-go sip-da.
Cheolsu-TOP person-ACC see-CONN want-DEC
‘Cheolsu misses people.’

b. 철수는 사람이 보고 싶다.
Cheon-su-neun sa-ram-i bo-go sip-da.
Cheolsu-TOP people-NOM see-CONN want-DEC
'Cheolsu misses people.'

(15) a. 철수는 음식을 먹고 싶다.
cheon-su-neun eum-sig-eul meog-go sip-da
Cheolsu-TOP food-ACC eat-CONN want-DEC
'Cheolsu wants to eat food.'

b. 철수는 음식이 먹고 싶다
cheol-su-neun eum-sig-i meog-go sip-da
Cheolsu-TOP food-NOM eat-CONN want-DEC
'Cheolsu wants to eat food.'

Examples (14) and (15) show that, despite the nouns for people and food being less specific and definitive compared to 'Minsu' *minsu* 민수 in (11) and 'tteogboggi' *tteogbokki* 떡볶이 in (13), case marker alteration can still occur. The potential reason for the alteration to take place are the nouns with their contrasting meanings. In case of 'people' *saram* 사람 it can be contrasted with 'animals' *dongmul* 동물, and in case of 'food' *eumsig* 음식 it can be contrasted with 'drinks' *eumnyo* 음료. On the contrary, with 'any person' *amu saram* 아무 사람 and 'any food' *amu eumsig* 아무 음식, which also express the lack of specificity, a reference with a contrasting meaning cannot be found.[8]

Considering the case marker *i/ga* following a noun phrase and denoting a relatively specific reference, it would also be interesting to analyze the case marker *i/ga* from the point of view of a determiner. Mok (1998a, 1998b) researched this angle and concluded that case markers *i/ga* and *eul/reul* function as determiners [9] though expressing a different meaning. Whilst the

[8] This does not seem to be the case in other cases of alterations, such as *e* – *eul/reul* alterations. In those cases, alteration is possible due to syntactic characteristics of the verb in a predicate position. In other words, a verb enables both case markers *eul/reul* and *e* to appear in the same structure. However, there are different views on why alteration is possible. As already pointed out, Lim (2008) argues that with case alteration, theta roles remain the same and only the semantic meaning of the sentence changes. Kim (2014) explains the phenomenon as the NP2's ability to express two semantic roles – theme and goal. In some research, the condition that dictates whether alteration can take place or not is assigned to a predicate, which should contain a motion verb or a resultative state verb (*gyeolgwa-sanghwang dongsa*, 결과-상황 동사) (Kim, 2004; Park, 2007).

[9] It should be pointed out that Mok (1998a, 1998b) holds the position that case markers do not possess the function of marking cases. Instead, NPs are the ones who do so through the position in the sentence and argument relation with the predicate.

case marker *i/ga* expresses a distinct and subject-oriented meaning, the case marker *eul/reul* expresses a common and object-oriented meaning.

5 Conclusion

In this paper we looked at the possible case marker alteration that takes place in the object noun phrase position. To be more specific, we looked at two instances in which the case marker *eul/reul* is replaced by *i/ga*: one in a construction with a simple predicate and the other in the *-go sipda* construction. Our analysis focused on the conditions that allow case marker alteration to take place and the changes that take place in clauses or sentences after the alteration.

Regarding the conditions, alteration can occur if the noun phrase is not a non-specific reference. The predicate also plays an important role in the facilitation of case marker alteration. In case of the *-go sipda* construction, the verb immediately preceding the construction should not be part of a complex predicate of the inner clause. In case of the NP *i/ga* 이/가 NP *eul/reul* 을/를 VP structure, the verb should carry static meaning, such as state or result of a situation.

The changes that occur within a clause or sentence once the alteration takes place are more often semantic than syntactic or grammatical. We observed, that the structure NP2 *i/ga* 이/가 does not have the function of marking the subject. Instead, the case marker *i/ga* generally functions as a type of a focus marker, which makes the reference in the noun phrase more definitive. We have briefly looked at the characteristic of case marker *i/ga* in this environment and compared it with auxiliary markers.

Though the case marker *i/ga* conveys some similarities with them, it would be worthwhile to explore *i/ga* as an auxiliary marker in more detail in future studies. Further research into *i/ga* as a determiner could also offer deeper insights into its characteristics.

Abbreviations

ACC Accusative case marker
ADN Adnominal case marker
AUX Auxiliary marker
CONN Connective ending
DEC Declarative ending
DIR Directional case marker
GEN Genitive case marker
INT Interrogative ending
LOC Locative case marker
NOM Nominative case marker
TOP Topic marker

References

Hong, K. 홍기선 (2017). A Semantic Analysis of 'ka' and 'lul' in Korean: Case and Meaning 한국어의 조사 '가'와 '를': 격과 의미. *Korean Journal of Linguistics 언어, 42*(4), 961–988. https://dx-doi-org.access.yonsei.ac.kr/10.18855/lisoko.2017.42.4.013

Kim, C. 김천학 (2020). A Study on the Syntactic and Semantic Function of the Korean Adjective auxiliary construction '-ko sip-' 보조형용사 '-고 싶-' 구성의 통사적, 의미적 특성. *The Society for Korean Language & Literary Research 어문연구*, *48*(2), 31-53.

Kim, J. 김지은. (1991). Gugeoeseo jueoga josa eobsi natananeun hwangyeonge daehayeo 국어에서 주어가 조사 없이 나타나는 환경에 대하여. *HAN-GEUL 한글*, 212, 69–88.

Kim, J. H. 김지현 (2007). A Study on the Non-particle phenomena of subject NP in Korean: focused on the informational properties on discourse-pragmatic Level 한국어 주어의 무조사 현상 연구 – 담화.화용층위의정보성을중심으로 –. *The Study of Korean Language and literature 우리어문연구*, 28, 7-31.

Kim, M. R. 김미령 (2004). The studies of verbal classes according to Case mark-alternation 격교체 양상에 따른 동사 분류에 대한 연구 - '에/를' 교체 동사의 특성과 분류를 중심으로-. *Korean Linguistics 한국어학*, 25, 161-190.

Kim, Y. S. 김예선 (2014). *A Study on Case Marker'-e', '-reul' Alteration Sentence 격표지 '-에', '-를' 교체 구문에 대한 연구* (Master thesis). Graduate School, Silla University 신라대학교 대학원.

Ko, K. J. 고광주 (2003). A Study on Case Alternation Constructions in Korean 국어의 격교체 구문 연구. *Korean Linguistics 한국어학*, 18, 389-408.

Ko, Y., & Koo, B. (2008). *Urimalmunbeobron 우리말 문법론*. Seoul: Jipmoondang Publishing 집문당.

Lee, E. 이은섭 (2016). On the Verifying the Subjectivity of 'NP+i/ka' Preceding the Main Verb in '-ko sipt'ta' Construction '-고 싶다' 구문의 본용언에 직접 선행하는 '이/가' 조사구의 주어성 검증. *Eomunhak 어문학*, 134, 21-51.

Lee, K. H. 이금희 (2015). 'I/Ga', 'Eul/Leul' in the Long-form Negation Construction and Discourse Meaning 국어 장형부정문에 출현하는 '이/가', '을/를'과 담화 의미. *The Study of Korean Language and literature 우리어문연구*, 52, 423-449. http://dx.doi.org/10.15711/05214

Lim, D. 임동훈 (2008). On the headedness of Korean case-markers 다시 격조사는 핵이다 - 한정한(2003)을 중심으로 -. *Morphology 형태론*, *10*(2), 287–297.

Mok, J. S. 목정수 (1998a). The potential meaning of delimiting particles in Korean : with special reference to French article 한국어 조사 {가}, {를}, {도}, {는}의 의미체계 – 불어 관사외의 대응성과 관련하여 –. *Studies in linguistics 언어연구*, 18, 1-49.

Mok, J. S. 목정수 (1998b). Re-examination of Korean case markers as special particles: a typological approach 한국어 격조사와 특수조사의 지위와 그 의미 – 유형론적 접근 – . *EONEOHAG : JOURNAL OF THE LINGUISTIC SOCIETY OF KOREA 언어학*, 23, 47-78.

Nam, K. 남기심, Ko, Y. K. 고영근, Yu, H. 유현경, & Choi, H. 최형용. (2019). *Pyojun gugeo munbeobron (jeonmyeongaejeongpan) 표준 국어문법론* (전면개정판). Seoul: Hankookmunhwasa 한국문화사.

Park, H. 박한기 (2001). Semantic Function of the Nominative Case Marker 주격 교체 구문의 의미. *HAN-GEUL 한글*, 251, 233-260.

Park, H. M. 박희문 (2007). An HPSG Analysis on the Case Alternation between the Korean Case Markers '-e' and '-lul' 한국어 격조사 '-에/를' 교체에 대한 핵어중심 구구조문법(HPSG)의 응용. *The Journal of Studies in Language 언어연구*, *23*(3), 373-395.

Um, J. 엄정호. (2003). Case Alteration in '-go siphta' Construction -고 싶다 구문의 격 교체. *Journal of Korean Linguistics 국러학*, 41, 169–195.

Yu, H. 유혜원. (2009). 'I/ga'wa 'eul/reul' gyoche gumune daehan yeongu '이/가'와 '을/를' 교체 구문에 대한 연구. *Journal of Korean Linguistics 국어학*, 56, 61-86.

An Overview of Grammaticalization in the Korean Aspectual System

Bishwanath KUMAR
Seoul National University, Republic of Korea
philomathbishwanath@snu.ac.kr

Abstract

This paper examines the grammaticalization of aspectual markers in Korean, focusing on the evolution of *-go iss-* (-고 있-) and *-eo iss-* (-어 있-) from Middle Korean to modern Korean. In Middle Korean, these markers conveyed both resultative and progressive aspects, with *-go is-* (-고 잇-) indicating the duration of a resultant state and *-eo is-* (-어 잇-) serving broader aspectual functions. Over time, *-go is-* became primarily associated with the progressive aspect in modern Korean, while *-eo is-* retained its role in marking the duration of a resultant state, though its usage diminished. The study situates these changes within a broader typological framework, demonstrating that the evolution of Korean aspectual markers aligns with global linguistic trends. The paper also critically reviews existing literature, highlights gaps, and suggests avenues for further investigations on the interaction between pragmatics, transitivity, and aspect in the grammaticalization process.

Keywords: aspectual markers, grammaticalization, *-eo iss-*, *-go iss-*, Korean aspectual system, linguistic typology, Middle Korean, Modern Korean, progressive aspect, resultative aspect

Povzetek

Prispevek preučuje razvoj gramatikalizacije in označevalcev za izražanje glagolskega vida v korejščini, pri čemer se osredotoča na spremembe v rabi *-go iss-* (-고 있-) in *-eo iss-* (-어 있-) v srednjeveški in sodobni korejščini. V srednjeveški korejščini so ti označevalci izražali dovršnost in progresivnost, pri čemer je *-go is-* (-고 잇-) označeval trajanje nastalega stanja, *-eo is-* (-어 잇-) pa je služil širšim funkcijam glagolskega vida. Sčasoma so začeli *-go is-* povezovati predvsem s progresivno obliko glagolskega vida v sodobni korejščini, medtem ko je *-eo is-* ohranil svojo vlogo pri označevanju trajanja nastalega stanja, navkljub vse redkejši rabi. Te spremembe v članku umeščamo v širši tipološki okvir in dokazujemo, da je razvoj korejskih označevalcev za izražanje glagolskega vida usklajen s svetovnimi jezikovnimi trendi. V članku kritično pregledamo obstoječo literaturo, izpostavimo vrzeli in predlagamo možnosti za nadaljnjo raziskavo interakcije med pragmatiko, prehodnostjo in vidom v samem procesu gramatikalizacije.

Ključne besede: označevalci glagolskega vida, gramatikalizacija, *-eo iss-*, *-go iss-*, korejski glagolski vid, jezikovna tipologija, srednjeveška korejščina, sodobna korejščina, progresivni vid, rezultativni vid

Acta Linguistica Asiatica, 15(1), 2025.
ISSN: 2232-3317, http://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/ala/
DOI: 10.4312/ala.15.1.47-62

1 Introduction

Understanding complex linguistic components necessitates an in-depth investigation into the historical trajectory of a language.[1] The Korean grammatical morphemes *-go iss-* (-고 있-), *-eo iss-* (-어 있-), and *-eoss-* (-었-) share a common semantic origin, making an examination of their grammaticalization processes crucial for grasping their nuanced meanings. The tripartite aspectual system[2] in Korean grammar comprises *-go iss-* for the progressive aspect, *-eo iss-* for the resultant state, and *-eoss-* for past tense, all originating from the common ancestor *-eo iss-*. According to Kim (2003, p. 127), in the 15th century, this ancestor exhibited a dual function, encompassing both resultative and progressive ongoing duration.

Aspect, as defined by Comrie (1976, p. 3), refers to "the different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation." This conceptualization is crucial for understanding the evolution of the *-go iss-* construction in Korean. Jeong (2006, p. 139) notes that in 15th and 16th-century *Eonhae* texts, the auxiliary verb construction *-go is-* primarily expressed resultant static duration rather than progressive ongoing duration, with occasional use to denote repetitive duration. The grammaticalization processes of these forms have been explored in studies by Kim (2003, 2009), Jeong (2006), and Park (2011), among others. These studies are selected because they provide foundational insights into the evolution of aspectual markers, specifically focusing on the grammaticalization of *-go iss-* and *-eo iss-*. These studies are seminal in their approaches to understanding Korean aspectual markers within the historical context and demonstrate varied theoretical and methodological approaches: Kim (2003) offers a broad historical overview, providing data-driven insights into the transformation of aspect markers from Middle Korean to Modern Korean. Kim (2009) challenges traditional models (like Bybee et al.'s separation of perfective and imperfective paths) by presenting an argument that these domains intersect within Korean. Jeong (2006) offers a detailed syntactic and semantic exploration, focusing on how *-go iss-* shifted from resultative to progressive meanings, while also noting the influence of transitivity. Park (2011) emphasizes morphological and syntactic developments, showing the transformation of *-go iss-* and its establishment as the primary progressive marker in Modern Korean. Together, these works provide complementary perspectives on the grammaticalization of aspectual markers in Korean. By addressing different facets-such as

[1] For those interested in an in-depth study of the historical trajectory of the Korean language, Shimunek's paper (2025) in the same issue is recommended.

[2] 'Aspectual marker' and 'aspect marker' in this paper refer to the same concept.

diachronic data, syntactic analysis, and morphological changes-they offer a multifaceted understanding of the grammaticalization process.

The grammaticalization of the Korean construction *-go iss-* offers an insightful case study in the evolution of aspectual systems. Originally a combination of the connective suffix *-go* (-고) and the existential verb *iss-* (있-), this construction has evolved into a key marker of progressive and resultative aspects in modern Korean. This transformation reflects a common grammaticalization pathway, where verbs of existence or location evolve to encode aspectual meanings (Heine & Kuteva, 2002; Bybee, Perkins, & Pagliuca, 1994).

Historically, *-go iss-* may have begun as a structure indicating continued existence or state. Over time, it specialized in marking ongoing duration (progressive aspect) and later extended to describe resultant states (resultative aspect). This shift mirrors broader typological trends in the evolution of aspectual markers, where concrete meanings gradually become more abstract and grammatically fixed (Hopper & Traugott, 2003).

This paper traces the grammaticalization of *-go iss-* through previous research and historical data, analyzes the grammatical typology of Middle and Modern Korean aspectual systems, and discusses whether these developments align with universal grammaticalization patterns.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews previous studies, while Section 3 compares them in terms of the grammaticalization of the Korean aspectual system, with a focus on *-go iss-*. Section 4 critically examines these studies, and section 5 investigates the aspectual typology of Middle and Modern Korean, discussing its alignment with universal grammaticalization patterns. Section 6 concludes by summarizing the findings.

2 Previous research

In this section, I will provide an overview of the seminal works on the grammaticalization of the Korean aspectual system, focusing on the studies by Kim (2003, 2009), Jeong (2006), and Park (2011). Special emphasis will be placed on the grammaticalization of *-go iss-* (-고 있-), as the primary aim of this paper is to examine how *-go iss-* became integrated into the aspectual system of Modern Korean. This section will not include any examples of how the interpretation of the aspect markers *-eo is-* and *-go is-* changed across different historical periods, as this will be covered in Section 3. Through a

comparative analysis of these studies, Section 3 will examine these changes across various historical periods, using illustrative examples.

2.1 Minju Kim's analysis (2003, 2009)

Kim (2003) explores how the existential verb *is-* (있-) branched into various grammatical markers, with *-eo iss-* (-어 있-) and *-go iss-* (-고 있-) both emerging from the source construction *-eo is-* (-어 있-). She highlights the diachronic changes that led to the development of these markers, focusing on the dynamic relationship among grammatical markers with common origins, particularly the intersection between grammaticalization pathways of connectives and aspectual markers.

Kim argues that the aspectual marker *-eo iss-* in modern Korean represents the imperfective aspect and that when it conveyed static duration in Middle Korean, it also functioned as an imperfective aspect. She outlines the grammaticalization pathways that the Middle Korean form *-eo is-* underwent, showing how it served as the source for the imperfective resultative *-eo iss-* and also as the origin for the past/perfective aspect marker *-eoss-*.[3] Additionally, it demonstrated early stages of development into a progressive aspect.

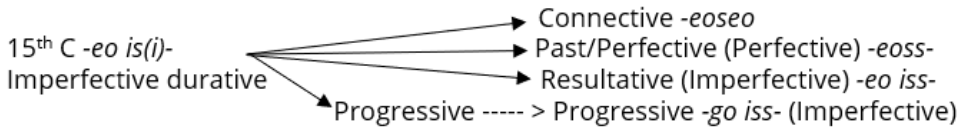


Figure 1: Multiple paths of the Grammaticalization of the Mid Korean *-eo is(i)-*

This dissertation presents the grammaticalization of *-go iss-* as particularly unique. Unlike *-eo iss-*, which retained a static, resultative meaning, *-go iss-* developed to express dynamic, progressive actions. The transition from *-eo is-* to *-go iss-* involved replacing the connective *-eo* with *-go*, altering the aspectual meaning from resultative to progressive. This shift reflects universal grammaticalization tendencies and introduces unique complexities in the Korean aspectual system.

Kim (2009) further examines the grammaticalization of Korean aspectual markers, focusing on the progressive *-go iss-*, the resultative *-eo iss-*, and the anterior *-eoss-*. She argues that all three markers originated from the 15th-century construction *-eo is-*, which expressed both resultative and

[3] See Kim (2003, p. 129, p. 169).

progressive meanings. This challenges Bybee et al.'s (1994) model, which posits separate grammaticalization paths for perfective and imperfective markers. Kim highlights the replacement of *-eo is-* by *-go is-* beginning in the 15th century, especially with transitive verbs, and traces how *-go iss-* evolved into a specialized progressive marker in modern Korean.

The key differences between Kim (2003) and Kim (2009) lie in their focus, theoretical engagement, and methodological approach. The 2003 study provides a broad examination of the grammaticalization of Korean aspectual markers, aligning with Bybee et al.'s model while highlighting unique aspects of Korean. In contrast, the 2009 study specifically challenges Bybee et al.'s separation of perfective and imperfective paths by demonstrating an intersection between these domains in Korean. Additionally, the 2003 study employs a more data-driven approach with diachronic corpus analysis, whereas the 2009 study relies more on historical texts without the same quantitative emphasis.

In her 2009 work, Kim discusses the gradual expansion of the *-go is-* construction. Initially used with transitive verbs as a marker of durative aspect, *-go is-* gradually emerged as a progressive aspect marker. Prior to the 15th century, *-eo is-* marked both progressive and resultative aspects, irrespective of transitivity (Stage 1). As the connective ending *-go* expanded, *-go is-* began to replace *-eo is-* with transitive verbs, leading *-go is-* to express both resultative and progressive meanings (Stage 2). Over time, *-go is-* solidified its role as a progressive marker, and by the 18th century, it began to actively mark the progressive aspect even with intransitive verbs (Stage 3). Kim summarizes these stages in the table below.

Table 1: Gradual expansion of *-go is-*[4]

Verb typology	Aspectual meaning	Stage1 (Pre-15th cent.)	Stage 2 (16th-17th cent.)	Stage 3 (18th cent.)
Transitive	Progressive	*-eo is-*	***-go is-***	***-go is-***
	Resultative	*-eo is-*	***-go is-***	***-go is-***
Intransitive	Progressive	*-eo is-*	*-eo is-*	***-go is-***
	Resultative	*-eo is-*	*-eo is-*	*-eo is-*

[4] This table is a slightly modified version of a citation from Kim (2009, p. 194), with adjustments made to the table headings and transcriptions for clarity.

2.2 Jeong Eonhak's analysis (2006)

Jeong (2006) provides a detailed exploration of the grammaticalization of Korean aspectual markers, focusing particularly on the development of the *-go iss-* construction. During the Middle Korean period, *-eo iss-* was widely used to express a resultative state or ongoing action, roles that were gradually overtaken by *-go iss-* in Modern Korean. Initially, *-go iss-* shared meanings with *-eo iss-*, particularly in indicating the duration of a resultant state or repeated action. However, over time, *-go iss-* became more specialized in expressing the progressive aspect, marking ongoing actions in real time.

Jeong's analysis reveals that *-go iss-* began as a resultative marker, similar to *-eo iss-*, but evolved into a dominant progressive marker through grammaticalization. This process saw *-go iss-* become increasingly associated with transitive verbs and eventually used with both transitive and intransitive verbs in Modern Korean.[5]

Using a multifaceted approach, Jeong traced the evolution of the *-go iss-* construction from Middle Korean to Modern Korean. He explained that while *-go iss-* initially conveyed the duration of a resultant state, it gradually expanded to include the progressive aspect as the language developed. Jeong emphasized that although *-go iss-* was initially key for indicating the duration of a resultant state in Middle Korean, it transformed over time to express progressive meaning.

Jeong's study highlights that both *-go iss-* and *-eo iss-* in Middle and Modern Korean were used to indicate a resultant static duration. However, he found that *-go iss-*, particularly when combined with transitive verbs, gradually encroached upon the role of *-eo iss-* due to diachronic changes. As a result, in Modern Korean, *-eo iss-* is now mostly restricted to intransitive verbs for indicating a resultant state, while *-go iss-* is primarily used with transitive verbs for the same purpose.

Jeong's analysis presents a clear picture of how the *-go iss-* marker transitioned from Middle Korean through Modern Korean to its current usage in Contemporary Korean.

[5] Jeong's 2002 and 2006 studies are consistent in their core findings but differ in the depth and scope of analysis. The 2002 study identifies the basic grammaticalization trends of *-go iss-* in historical Korean, while the 2006 study provides a more detailed exploration of these trends, incorporating a broader dataset and offering a more nuanced understanding of the shift from resultative to progressive meanings. The 2006 work reflects an evolution in Jeong's thinking, offering a more comprehensive view of the grammaticalization process.

Table 2: Grammaticalization process of the *-go iss-* construction (Jeong, 2006, p. 369)

Period	Middle Korean		Early Modern Korean		Modern Korean	
Aspectual reading	Progressive	RSD*	Progressive	RSD	Progressive	RSD
Transitive verb	X	*-go is-* -eo is-	(*-go is-*)	*-go is-* -eo is-	*-go iss-*	*-go iss-* X
Intransitive verb	X	-eo is-	X	-eo is-	*-go iss-*	-eo iss-

* RSD: Resultant static duration

2.3 Jinho Park's analysis (2011)

Park (2011) explores the evolution of the Korean aspectual system, focusing on the grammaticalization of the *-go iss-* construction. Park discusses how, in Middle Korean, aspectual distinctions were not clearly marked in the present tense but were more distinct in the past tense, particularly between perfective and imperfective aspects. He explains that the construction *-eo iss-*, originally indicating a resultative or continuous aspect in Middle Korean, underwent grammaticalization, leading to its transformation into the modern past tense marker *-eoss-* in certain contexts. However, *-eo iss-* also evolved into *-go iss-* in Modern Korean, where it became specialized as a progressive marker, replacing *-eo iss-* for indicating ongoing actions. Park emphasizes how *-go iss-* became the dominant marker for the progressive aspect in Korean, marking a significant shift from its historical usage.

Park argues that grammaticalization in Korean evolved from the resultative aspect to the past tense. He categorizes *-eo is-* in Middle Korean into two forms: *-eo* is_1*-*, which indicated the resultative aspect, and *-eo* is_2*-*, which marked the continuous aspect. According to Park, *-eo* is_1*-* developed in two directions: one retained its original structure, continuing to express the resultative aspect in modern Korean, while the other underwent morphological reduction to *-eoss-*, acquiring the meaning of past tense.

For *-eo* is_2*-* in Middle Korean, the connective ending *-eo* was replaced by *-go*, leading to its substitution by *-go* is_2*-* in modern Korean, reflecting a broader linguistic trend. The *-go is-* construction, which initially indicated the resultative aspect in Middle Korean, transformed into *-go* is_2*-* in modern Korean. This process of change is summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Grammaticalization of the Korean aspect system

Aspectual Reading	Middle Korean	Modern Korean
Continuative	*-eo is*$_2$- →	*-go iss*$_2$-
Resultative	*-eo is*$_1$- →	*-eo iss-*
		-eoss- (Past tense)
	-go is- →	*-go iss*$_1$-

3 Comparative analysis of the grammaticalization of *-go iss-* (-고 있-)

In this section, I will compare the above-mentioned studies by focusing on the grammaticalization paths of the contemporary Korean progressive marker *-go iss-* (-고 있-). Following this, I will examine how the interpretation of the aspect markers *-eo is-* (-어 있-) and *-go is-* (-고 있-) changed across different historical periods, using illustrative examples. These examples will highlight the evolution of each marker's meaning and usage, offering insight into their grammaticalization and the shifting aspectual roles within the Korean language.

All three studies recognize *-go iss-* as the result of a complex grammaticalization process, transitioning from a marker of resultant static duration to one of progressive aspect. Kim (2003) offers a broad historical analysis, while Kim (2009) provides a more focused, data-driven examination of the intersection between perfective and imperfective aspects. Jeong (2006) emphasizes the syntactic and semantic shifts of *-go iss-*, particularly its evolution from Middle Korean, and Park (2011) concentrates on the morphological and syntactic developments that shaped the current usage of *-go iss-*.

Each study contributes uniquely to understanding *-go iss-*, with variations in focus, methodology, and theoretical approach. Collectively, they enrich the scholarship on the grammaticalization of the Korean aspectual system. Kim (2009) does not address *-go iss-* in the pre-15th century, focusing instead on *-eo is-* as the dominant aspectual marker and presenting a clear timeline of *-go is-* expansion. Both Jeong (2006) and Park (2011) confirm the existence of *-go is-* in Middle Korean, primarily as a marker of resultative readings, especially with transitive verbs. They note that it did not convey progressive meanings during this period.

Kim describes *-go iss-* as emerging in the 16th-17th centuries with transitive verbs, initially for both resultative and progressive aspects, and later expanding to intransitive verbs, becoming the primary progressive

marker by the 18th century. Jeong highlights the gradual shift of *-go is-* from resultative to progressive meanings, noting its expansion from transitive to intransitive verbs, particularly during the transition from Middle to Modern Korean. Similarly, Park details how *-go is-* began with resultative meanings in Middle Korean and later evolved into a progressive marker that combines with both transitive and intransitive verbs in Modern Korean.

Kim initially associates *-go iss-* with transitive verbs, with a later expansion to intransitive verbs. Jeong emphasizes that *-go iss-* was originally restricted to transitive verbs for expressing resultative meanings and only later expanded to intransitive verbs as it developed progressive meanings. Park highlights the same progression, with *-go iss-* initially linked to transitive verbs in Middle Korean, later broadening its grammatical function to include intransitive verbs in Modern Korean.

Together, these studies provide a comprehensive picture of how *-go iss-* evolved gradually in the Korean language[6]. This comparison deepens our understanding of the significant grammatical role of the *-go is-* construction in 15th-century Middle Korean and how its meaning and usage evolved. The value of each scholar's research lies in the different perspectives they offer on these changes, contributing uniquely to the broader discourse on grammaticalization and aspectual development in Korean.

Next, we will explore the changes in the interpretation of aspect markers *-eo is-* and *-go is-* over different periods through illustrative examples. These examples will demonstrate how each marker's meaning and usage evolved gradually, providing a clear picture of their grammaticalization and the shifting aspectual functions within the Korean language.[7]

(1) In 15th-century Middle Korean, *-eo is-* had two interpretations: resultative and progressive, depending on the lexical aspect of the

[6] Several other well-known studies, such as those by Hur (1975) and Lee (1981), also discuss the grammaticalization of the Korean aspectual system. Hur (1975) listed auxiliary verbs in 15th-century Middle Korean but gave limited attention to *-go is-*, not recognizing it as a distinct grammatical element, and concluded that its usage was relatively minor at the time. His analysis emphasizes that *-go is-* was not considered a major component of the grammatical system in the 15th century. In contrast, Lee (1981) argued that *-go is-* primarily expressed the duration of a resultant state, especially with transitive verbs, and noted its importance as an auxiliary verb in Middle Korean, though its usage was somewhat restricted.

[7] Since this study does not focus on verb typology in combination with *-eo is-* and *-go is-*, it will provide only one example from each stage of the grammaticalization of the Korean aspectual system for *-eo is-* and *-go is-* to verify the interpretations of these forms. All examples provided here are cited from sources referenced by Kim (2009) and Nam (2010).

preceding verb. According to Kim (2009), these two aspectual functions belong to the same grammatical category, namely the imperfective aspect. In the example below, when *-eo is-* is combined with intransitive accomplishment verbs like *gidalida* (기다리다), it conveys a progressive aspectual reading (1a), while with transitive accomplishment verbs like *ibda* (입다), it conveys a result state reading (1b).[8]

(1) a. 眞에 보물 나ᄅᆞ와다 서르 기드려이시니…
Jin-e bo-m-al nalawad-a seoleu gideul-yeo isi-ni …
truth-LOC see-NOMZ-ACC raise-CON together wait-yeo isi-CON
'To obtain the ability to see truth, (they) stayed waiting together…'
[영가 Yeongga 1464, 1:78b]

b. 善慧 니버잇더신 鹿皮 오솔 바사…
Seonhye nib-eo is-deo-si-n nogbi os-al bas-a…
Seonhye put.on-eo is-RETRO-HON-REL deer.skin clothes-ACC take.off-CON
'Seonhye took off the deer skin clothes that he was wearing and…'
[월인석보 Wolinseogbo 1459, 1:15b]

(2) Beginning in the 16th century, the process of replacing the progressive *-eo is-* with *-go is-* began, primarily in transitive, non-reflexive accomplishment verbs.

(2) 火禪定에 드르샤 큰 光明 펴고겨시거ᄂᆞᆯ…
hwaseonjeong-e deuleu-sya keun gwang-myeong pyeo-go gyeosi-geoneul.
fire.meditation-LOC enter-HON big bright-light shed-go gyeosi[9]-CON
'In the fire samādhi, (he) entered, spreading great light, and…'
[월인석보 Wolinseogbo 1459]

(3) Starting in the 18th century, the use of *-go is-* to indicate the progressive aspect expanded to include simple action verbs, regardless of whether they were intransitive or transitive. In the sentence below, the verb *sujeolha-* (수절하-) is an intransitive verb.

[8] During this period, some transitive verbs, when combined with *-eo is-*, allowed for ambiguous aspectual readings.

[9] *gyeosi-* is the honorific form of *is(i)-*.

(3) 일즉 홀로 되어 슈졀ᄒᆞ고 잇더니...
iljeug hollo doe-eo syujyeolha-go is-deoni...
early alone become-CON live.alone-go is-CON
'Having become a widow at an early age, she was living alone and...'
[오륜 Olyun 1797, 열 yeol:9a]

(4) The interpretation of *-go is-* as indicating resultant static duration was rarely observed, even in the 15th century, and when it did occur, it was typically in combination with reflexive achievement or accomplishment verbs.

(4) 普賢이 空中에 六牙白象 ᄐᆞ시고 겨시거늘...
bohyeon-i gongjung-e lyugangbaegsang ta-si-go gyeosi-geoneul
bohyeon-NOM air-LOC white.elephant ride-HON-go gyeosi-CON
'(Buddhist Saint) Bohyen was riding a white elephant...'
[남명집 Nammyeongjip1482, 1:73b]

(5) The interpretation of *-go is-* as indicating the resultant static duration persisted throughout the 16th to 18th centuries.[10] In the illustration below, *gajida*, meaning "take," is an achievement verb.

(5) 내사 구연을 편히 가지고 잇고 집도 무사하다.
nae-sa guyeon-eul pyeonhi gaji-go-is-go jib-do musaha-da.
I-EMP strength/mind-ACC comfortably take-go-is-CON home-also fine-DEC
'I have my strength/mind at ease and other family members are also fine.'
[Suncheon Kim family letters, 16th c.]

(6) In modern Korean, for *-go iss-* to be interpreted as indicating the duration of a resultant state, lexical reflexivity requires pragmatic conditions.[11]

[10] In 15th to 18th century Korean, the use of *-go is-* to indicate the duration of a resultant state was lexically associated with verbs that referred to reflexive events.

[11] Since this paper focuses on the grammaticalization of the Korean aspectual system, it will not address the reflexivity semantics, or the pragmatic conditions associated with *-go iss-*.

(6) a. 현지는 이불을 덮고 있다.
Hyeonji-neun ibul-eul deop-go iss-da.
Hyeonji-TOP blanket-ACC cover-go iss-Decl
'Hyeonji is covering herself with a blanket.' [Progressive reading]
'Hyeonji is covered with a blanket.' [Result state reading]

(6) b. 현지는 운동장에 비닐을 덮고 있다.
Hyeonji-neun undongjang-e binil-eul deop-go iss-da.
Hyeonji-TOP playground-LOC vinyl-ACC cover-ko iss-Decl
'Hyeonji is covering the playground with plastic.' [Progressive reading]

4 Critical review

In this section, I will critically review the works of Kim (2003), Jeong (2006), and Park (2011), with a particular focus on the grammaticalization process of *-go iss-* (-고 있-). While the previous section provided a comparative analysis, this section will focus on evaluating the strengths and, more specifically, the limitations of their arguments.

Kim (2003) offers a comprehensive historical analysis of how the *-go is-* construction in Middle Korean evolved into its modern form. However, several aspects of her study warrant closer scrutiny. Firstly, Kim's analysis predominantly focuses on internal changes within Korean, without adequately situating these changes in a broader typological context. A more extensive comparison with other languages such as those discussed in Comrie's (1976) typology of aspectual systems could have provided a richer understanding of how the Korean aspectual system aligns with or deviates from global linguistic patterns. While Kim attempts a comparison with Japanese *-te i-*, expanding this to include a wider range of languages would enhance the analysis. The absence of such typological discussion limits the broader implications of her findings and leaves a gap in understanding the universality or uniqueness of the Korean aspectual developments.

Jeong (2006) offers a historically grounded and detailed analysis of the grammaticalization of *-go iss-* within the Korean aspectual system. However, the study could be further enriched by incorporating a comparative perspective and considering additional factors such as discourse context and pragmatic usage. While Jeong effectively traces the transition of *-go iss-* from resultative to progressive meanings, the paper focuses heavily on grammatical and syntactic aspects, with less emphasis on pragmatic factors that might have influenced this shift. A discussion on how *-go iss-* was used in different social or communicative contexts could have added another

layer of insight into its evolution. Additionally, including comparisons with similar grammaticalization processes in other languages could have strengthened Jeong's argument and provided a broader context for the changes observed in Korean.

Park (2011) excels in tracing the grammaticalization of *-go iss-* within the Korean aspectual system, offering valuable insights into its historical and morphological developments. However, Park's analysis could have been deepened by exploring the semantic overlap and transitional stages where *-eo iss-* '-어 있-' and *-go iss-* coexisted with ambiguous meanings, which could have provided a more nuanced understanding of the gradual nature of grammaticalization. While Park thoroughly discusses the divergence of *-eo iss-* and *-go iss-*, the emphasis is primarily on morphological changes, with less attention given to the syntactic and pragmatic factors that might have influenced the adoption and solidification of *-go iss-* as the primary progressive marker. Including a more detailed discussion on these factors would have provided a more holistic view of the grammaticalization process. Additionally, while Park references global linguistic patterns, a more detailed comparative analysis with other languages that have undergone similar grammaticalization processes could have further strengthened the argument by showing how Korean fits into or deviates from these broader patterns.

5 Evolution of aspectual systems: Middle Korean to Modern Korean

In this section, we will examine the typology of the aspectual systems in Middle Korean and Modern Korean, evaluating whether the changes from the 15th century to the present represent a natural linguistic evolution.

As discussed, the aspectual system in 15th-century Middle Korean primarily conveyed the imperfective aspect. The *-go is-* (-고 잇-) construction originally indicated resultative states or iterative continuity, falling under the broader semantic category of the imperfective aspect, as defined by Comrie (1976). However, this imperfective aspect was limited in scope, primarily indicating resultant static duration rather than ongoing processes (progressive aspect). Additionally, in Middle Korean, the *-go is-* construction was restricted in its combination with transitive verbs, a notable syntactic feature.

During this period, the *-eo is-* (-어 잇-) and *-go is-* (-고 잇-) constructions expressed various forms of static duration, including present perfect and

past perfect states, allowing for both temporal and aspectual distinctions within the language's nuanced system.

In contrast, the aspectual system of modern Korean has evolved significantly. Today, *-go iss-* (-고 있-) primarily denotes the progressive aspect, indicating actions or states that are currently ongoing. Meanwhile, *-eo iss-* (-어 있-) continues to indicate the continuation of a resultant state, though its usage has become more limited.

This shift can be seen as a natural evolution within aspectual system typology. The grammaticalization of durative aspect (*jisogsang* 지속상) into progressive aspect (*jinhaengsang* 진행상) is a common phenomenon observed across many languages (Bybee et al., 1994). The *-go iss-* construction, which initially expressed repeated duration in Middle Korean, has evolved into a marker of the progressive aspect in modern Korean. Additionally, Bybee et al. (1994) note that the transition from resultative to perfective aspect or past tense is a frequent change in language development. This is evident in the evolution from Middle Korean, where *-eo is-* indicated a resultative state, to modern Korean, where it has developed into markers of perfective aspect (*-eo iss-* [-어 있-]) and past tense (*-eoss-* [-었-]).

Thus, the changes in the aspectual system from 15th-century Middle Korean to modern Korean can be understood as a progression in line with natural linguistic evolution. These changes align with typological theories of aspectual systems proposed by scholars like Comrie and Bybee, demonstrating that Korean follows general patterns of change observed globally.

In summary, the transition in the aspectual system from 15th-century Korean to modern Korean represents a natural and typical phenomenon, consistent with typological research on aspectual systems. According to Comrie's (1976) typology, the aspectual system in modern Korean is characterized by the opposition between perfective and imperfective aspects, with the former realized through *-eo iss-* (-어 있-) and the latter through *-go iss-* (-고 있-).

6 Conclusion

This paper has examined the grammaticalization of aspectual markers in Korean, focusing on the transition from Middle Korean to modern Korean, particularly with *-go iss-* (-고 있-) and *-eo iss-* (-어 있-). In Middle Korean, these markers expressed both resultative and progressive aspects, with *-go is-* (-고

잇-) indicating the duration of a resultant state and *-eo is-* (-어 잇-) serving a broader aspectual function. Over time, *-go is-* became primarily associated with the progressive aspect in modern Korean, while *-eo is-* retained its role in marking the duration of a resultant state but saw reduced usage, especially with intransitive verbs.

These shifts align with typological patterns observed in other languages, where durative markers often transition to progressive aspects, and resultative markers evolve into perfective or past tense markers. The evolution of these markers in Korean reflects broader linguistic developments, reinforcing the idea that the changes in Korean's aspectual system are consistent with global linguistic trends.

This study contributes to our understanding of aspectual system evolution within Korean by situating these changes within a broader typological framework. However, challenges remain in fully understanding the mechanisms behind these shifts, particularly regarding the role of pragmatics and the interaction between transitivity and aspect.

References

Bybee, J., Perkins, R., & Pagliuca, W. (1994). *The Evolution of Grammar: Tense, Aspect, and Modality in the Languages of the World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Comrie, B. (1976). *Aspect: An introduction to the study of verbal aspects and related problems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heine, B., & Kuteva, T. (2002). *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hopper, P. J., & Traugott, E. C. (2003). *Grammaticalization (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hur, W. 허웅 (1975). *Uri yenmalbon 우리 옛말본*. Seoul: Saemmunhoesa.

Jeong, E. 정언학 (2002). '-go itda' guseongui munbeopwae daehan tongsijeok yeongu '-고 잇다' 構成의 文法化에 대한 通時的 硏究 (A diachronic study on the grammaticalization of the '-go issda' construction). *Jindanhakbo 진단학보*, 94, pp. 167-204.

Jeong, E. 정언학 (2006). *Sang irongwa bojo yongeonui yeoksajeok yeongu 상 이론과 보조 용언의 역사적 연구*. Paju: Taehagsa.

Kim, M. (2003). *Discourse, frequency, and the emergence of grammar: A corpus-based study of the grammaticalization of the Korean existential verb is(i) -ta* [Dissertation]. Los Angeles: University of California.

Kim, M. (2009). The intersection of the perfective and imperfective domains: a corpus-based study of the grammaticalization of Korean aspectual markers. *Studies in Language, 33*(1), 175-214.

Lee, K. 이기갑 (1981). 15segi gugeoui sangtaejisoksanggwa geu byeoncheon 15 세기 국어의 상태지속상과 그 변천. *Hangeul* 173-174, pp. 401-422.

Nam, S. 남승호 (2010). Hangugeo jisoksang gumun '-go iss'gwa '-eo iss'e gwanhan myeot gaji munje 한국어 지속상 구문 '-고 있'과 '-어 있'에 관한 몇 가지 문제. *Korean Society for Language and Information* 한국언어정보학회.

Park, J. 바진호 (2011). Sije, sang, yangtae 시제, 상, 양태 (Tense, aspect, and modality). *Gugeohak, 60*, 289-322.

Shimunek, A. (2025). Puyŏ and Han: Morphological and Lexical Analysis of Two Distinct Language Groups of the Early Korean Peninsula. *Acta Linguistica Asiatica*, *15*(1), 79-123. https://doi.org/10.4312/ala.15.1.79-123

Differences in Linguists' Perceptions of the History of Korean Language: Focusing on the Causes

MOON Hyun-soo
Inha University, Republic of Korea
punglim@gmail.com

Abstract

Differing perceptions of Korean language history exist among South Korean, North Korean, and Korean-Chinese linguists. Notably, they disagree on the timing of Old Korean and Medieval Korean. North Korean scholars place Old Korean into the period from the early 30th century to the 3rd century BC, and Medieval Korean into the period from the 3rd century BC to the 19th century AD. South Korean linguists, however, fit Old Korean into the period from the 4th century to the 10th century AD and Medieval Korean into the period from the 10th century to the 16th century AD. These variations stem from differing research perspectives: South Koreans rely on literary and linguistic sources, while North Koreans emphasize Marxist historical development. Korean-Chinese linguists initially aligned with North Korean views but have shifted due to evolving diplomatic relations between China and South Korea.

Keywords: Korean language history, Korean linguistics, South Korean linguists, North Korean linguists, Korean-Chinese linguists

Povzetek

Med južnokorejskimi, severnokorejskimi in korejsko-kitajskimi jezikoslovci obstajajo razlike v dojemanju zgodovine korejskega jezika. Predvsem se ne strinjajo o časovni razporeditvi stare in srednjeveške korejščine. Severnokorejski jezikoslovci umeščajo staro korejščino v obdobje od zgodnjega 30. stoletja pr. n. št. do 3. stoletja pr. n. št., srednjeveško korejščino pa v obdobje od 3. stoletja pr. n. št. do 19. stoletja n. št. Južnokorejski jezikoslovci pa opredeljujejo obdobje stare korejščine od 4. do 10. stoletja n. št. ter obdobje srednjeveške korejščine od 10. do 16. stoletja n. št. Te razlike izhajajo iz različnih raziskovalnih perspektiv: Južnokorejci se opirajo na literarne in jezikovne vire, medtem ko Severnokorejci poudarjajo marksistični zgodovinski razvoj. Korejsko-kitajski jezikoslovci so sprva delili severnokorejske poglede, vendar so zaradi razvijajočih se diplomatskih odnosov med Kitajsko in Južno Korejo kasneje sprejeli južnokorejsko perspektivo.

Ključne besede: zgodovina korejskega jezika, korejsko jezikoslovje, južnokorejski jezikoslovci, severnokorejski jezikoslovci, korejsko-kitajski jezikoslovci

Acta Linguistica Asiatica, 15(1), 2025.
ISSN: 2232-3317, http://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/ala/
DOI: 10.4312/ala.15.1.63-77

1 Introduction

Linguists studying the history of the Korean language in South Korea, North Korea, and China often hold different perspectives on the same historical narrative. This is because academic exchanges between North and South Korea have been impossible since the Korean War in 1950, and scholars in both countries have studied Korean independently. While linguists of Korean history in China could conduct academic exchanges with linguists in North Korea, a communist country, academic exchanges with South Korea were essentially impossible until the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1992.

This historical background has led to different views of the same linguistic facts among South Korean, North Korean, and Chinese linguists. Although these differences in perception are recognized, little attention has been given to understanding their underlying causes. In the following discussion, we will examine these differences, focusing on the history of the Korean language and explore the causes of these differences. We highlight that these differences may not solely stem from variations in the analysis of linguistic facts but could also be influenced by the researchers' nationalities.

2 South Korean linguistic perspective: *Gugeosagaeseol* 국어사개설 (Introduction to Korean Language History)

Although there are different opinions on the periodization of Korean language history, linguists in South Korea generally follow the periodization presented in *Gugeosagaeseol* 국어사개설 (1972) by Professor Lee Ki-moon from the Seoul National University.[1] In this study, the periods of Korean history are categorized as shown in Table 1.

[1] For the discussion of different views of South Korean linguists on the periodization of the Korean language history, See Chung (2019), Hong (2019), Song and Park (2019).

Table 1: The periodization of Korean language history in *Gugeosagaeseol*

Chronology	Era	Key events	Periodization	Language resources
2333 BC 194 BC 108 BC	Gojoseon era	Dangun Joseon Wiman Joseon Fall of Gojoseon		
57 BC 37 BC 18 BC	Proto-Three Kingdoms era	Founding of Silla Founding of Goguryeo Founding of Baekje		
Early 4c. 660 668	Three Kingdoms era	Gwanggaeto Inscription Fall of Baekje Fall of Goguryeo	Old Korean	Materials written in Chinese borrowed character
676 698	North and South Kingdoms era	Unification of the Three Kingdoms by Silla Founding of Balhae		
918 936	Goryeo era	Founding of Goryeo Unification by Goryeo	Early medieval Korean	
1392 1443 1446 1592-8 1876 1894	Joseon era	Founding of Joseon Creation of Hangeul Promulgation of Hangeul Imjin War Japan-Korea Treaty Gab-O Reform	Late medieval Korean Modern Korean	Materials written in Hangeul (Korean alphabet)
1897	Korean Empire era	Declaration of Korean Empire	Contemporary Korean	
1910 1933	Japanese colonialism era	Korea-Japan merger Unification of Hangeul Orthography		
1945 1950 1953	The Republic of Korea era	liberation of Korea Korean War Truce		

In *Gugeosagaeseol*, the Old Korean period is reported to extend from the 4th to the 10th century AD. The Medieval Korean period is divided into early and late periods. The early medieval period is from the 10th century to the 14th century AD, and the late medieval period is from the 15th century to the 16th century AD. Modern Korean is also divided into early and late periods: early modern Korean extends from the 17th century to the mid-18th century, and late modern Korean spans the late 18th century to the 19th century. Contemporary Korean is categorized from the 20th century to the present.

The most distinctive feature is that it dates the beginning of Old Korean to the 4th century AD, during the middle of the Three Kingdoms period. This is because the earliest written material is found from this time. The earliest written source of Korean is the *Gwanggaeto Daewang* inscription from Goguryeo, one of the Tree Kingdoms. It is written primarily in classical Chinese using Chinese characters but is considered to reflect Korean word order in some places. The *Imsinseogiseok* inscription of Silla, one of the Three Kingdoms, which is regarded as a 6th-century source. Although it is also written in Chinese characters, it consistently follows Korean word order and is therefore treated as a representative Korean source (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: *Imsinseogiseok* inscription (552)

The details of Figure 1 are shown in example (1), where the A row represents the characters as they appear in the original text, the B row shows the Contemporary Korean writing along with its transliteration, corresponding to A. The C row provides the English translation of B, and finally, the D row presents the English translation of the entire Korean sentence. Unlike the A row in (2) below, the A row in (1) does not represent

case markers or endings. This does not imply that there were no morphemes for case markers or endings at the time. Rather, the development of the Korean writing system, based on borrowings from Chinese characters, was not yet complete, and therefore, characters for case markers and endings did not exist.

(1) A 若 此 事 失 天 大 罪
B manyak i il eogi(myeon) haneul(eui) keun beol(eul)
만약 이 일 어기(면) 하늘(의) 큰 벌(을)
C if this thing violate heaven big punishment

A 得 誓[2]
B bad(gileul) maengse(handa)
받기(를) 맹세(한다)
C receive swear

D 'If we violate any of these, we swear that we will be punished by the heavens.'

After the unification of Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla by Silla in 676, the language of *Silla*, located in the southeast, became the center of the Korean language. As a result, the period before the establishment of Goryeo, with its capital in the central region, in 918, is considered the period of Old Korean, with the *Silla* language at its core. During this time, Korean grammatical morphemes were transcribed using adapted Chinese characters, and Korean sentences were recorded according to Korean word order (See Figure 2).

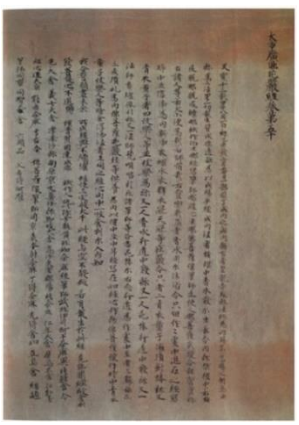


Figure 2: A document on how to transcribe the *Hwahum* Sutra (775)

[2] Chinese word order: 若失此事, 誓得大罪於天.

The details of Figure 2 are shown in example (2). The labeling of rows A, B, C, and D is the same as in example (1).

(2) A 經 之 成 內 法 者 楮根 中
B gyeong eui mandeu neun beob eun dagnamuppuli e
경 의 만드 는 법 은 닥나무뿌리 에
C sutra genitive make suffix methods topic paper mulberry locative

(2) A 香水 散 尒 生長 令 內 弥[3]
B hyangsu ppulyeo seo saengjang siki neun(geos) (i)myeo
향수 뿌려 서 생장 시키 는(것) (이)며
C perfume spray conj. grow causative suffix conj.
D 'The sutra is made by (first) spraying perfume on the roots of a paper mulberry and growing it, …'

Compared to the A row in (1), the A row in (2) actively uses characters that represent case markers and endings. This is because the development of the Korean writing system, which is based on borrowing from Chinese characters, has progressed considerably.

The medieval Korean period begins with the founding of Goryeo, reflecting the shift in the linguistic center from the southeast to the central region, as Goryeo's capital, Gaeseong, was located in the central Korea. One of the best examples of this linguistic shift is the *Gyerim Yusa* (1103), a collection of Korean vocabulary recorded during the Song Dynasty in China. In this work, a man named Sun Mu (孫穆) documented Goryeo vocabulary firsthand, transcribing it into Chinese characters based on the Chinese pronunciation of the time (See example (3)).

(3) A 天 曰 漢榛[4]
B Cheon wal hʌnʌl
천 왈 ᄒᆞᄂᆞᆯ
C sky say "hʌnʌl"
D 'Sky is pronounced "hʌnʌl" in Korean.'

The characteristics of the language in this lexicon are more similar to the language of the later *Joseon* period than of the earlier Silla period. Therefore, the Korean of the Goryeo and early Joseon periods is grouped together as the Medieval Korean period.

[3] Chinese word order: 成經之法者, 散香水於楮根中, 令生長之, …
[4] 漢榛 [hʌnʌl] (12c.) > ᄒᆞᄂᆞᆯ [hʌnʌl] (15c.) > 하늘 [haneul] (21c.)

The period of Modern Korean is considered to have begun in the 17th century, during the middle of the Joseon Dynasty. This transition is believed to have been influenced by the wars between *Joseon* and Japan, as well as *Joseon* and the Qing Dynasty of China. These conflicts caused people to flee their homelands, leading to significant language changes. For example, this resulted in the loss of tones, except in the southeastern dialects, and the loss of major simple vowels such as ㆍ *ʌ* and initial consonant clusters such as ㅺ *psk* and ㅽ *pst*.

For example, the following sentence from the first edition of the *Dusieonhae* (杜詩諺解), published in the 15th century, was revised in the 17th-century intermediate edition.

(4) a. [15th century *Dusieonhae* 22:30]
男兒ᄋᆡ 功名 일·우미 ·ᄯᅩ 늘·근 ·ᄲᅴ·도 잇ᄂᆞ니라
namaʌi gongmyeong ilumi sto neulgeun pskeuido isnʌnila
'Boys may be given a name at a later stage in life.'

b. [17th century *Dusieonhae* 22:30]
男兒의 功名 일우미 ᄯᅩ 늘근 ᄲᅴ도 잇ᄂᆞ니라
namaeui gongmyeong ilumi sto neulgeun pkeuido isnʌnila
'Boys may be given a name at a later stage in life.'

In this revision, ᄋᆡ *ʌi* has been changed to 의 *eui* as ㆍ *ʌ* has lost the status of a phoneme, and ᄲᅴ *pskeui* has become 픠 *pkeui* as the initial consonant cluster has been lost. Also, in the 15th century, tonal markers (a single dot presented a high tone, two dots a rising tone, and no dots a low tone) were indicated with dots placed on the left side of a syllable to indicate tonality, but by the 17th century, these dots had disappeared together with the loss of tonality.

The Contemporary Korean language period is considered to have begun in 1894, when the Joseon Dynasty opened the country to foreign influences, including Japan. This exposure led to the adoption of various loanwords and efforts to harmonize the spoken and written Korean, resulting in major stylistic changes. In addition, a comprehensive revision of orthography was undertaken to eliminate obsolete consonants and vowels and to standardize spelling practices.

For example, the Korean-Chinese hybrid sentences such as (5a) from the Declaration of Independence of *Kimi* (1919) was changed to a colloquial form as follows in (5b).

(5) a. 吾等은 玆에 我朝鮮의 獨立國임과 朝鮮人의 自主民임을 宣言하노라
odeungeun jae ajoseonui dongnipgugimgwa joseoninui jajuminimeul seoneonhanora
'We hereby declare that Korea is an independent country and that Koreans are sovereign people.'

b. 우리들은 이에 우리 조선이 독립국임과 조선인이 자주민임을 선언하노라
urideureun ie uri joseoni dongnipgugimgwa joseonini jajuminimeul seoneonhanora
'We hereby declare that Korea is an independent country and that Koreans are sovereign people.'

Additionally, the characters ㅺ *sk*, ㅼ *st*, ㅽ *sp*, and ㅾ *sj*, which were used to represent fortes, were replaced by ㄲ *kk*, ㄸ *tt*, ㅃ *pp*, and ㅉ *jj*, respectively. Also ㆍ *ʌ*, which continued to be written even after losing its status as a phoneme, was replaced by ㅏ *a*.

3 North Korean linguistic perspective: *Joseonmallyeoksa* 조선말력사 (A History of Korean Language)

Joseoneohakjeonseo 조선어학전서 (e.g. Ryu, 2005a; Ryu, 2005b; Ryu, 2005c; Ryu, 2005d) is a compilation and systematization of North Korean research on the Korean language conducted over the past 60 years since the founding of the government. It was initiated by the Institute of Linguistics of the North Korean Academy of Social Sciences and began publication in 2005, culminating in a total of 63 volumes. As a whole, the series appears to serve as both a theoretical and normative body of work, unified in system and methodology, and declares North Korea's official stance on Korean language research for both domestic and international audiences. As such, it provides a complete picture of the history of Korean language research in North Korea.[5]

Among these volumes, those specifically related to the history of the Korean language are volumes 4 through 13. In particular, volumes 4 through 10 form the *Joseonmallyeoksa* series, which traces the history of the Korean language from the Gojoseon Dynasty (30th century – 3rd century BC) to the present day. This series was authored by prominent linguists Ryu Ryeol, Kim

[5] For a scholarly assessment of *Joseoneohakjeonseo* by a South Korean linguist, see Kwon (2012). For an evaluation of the history of linguistics in North Korea up to 1990 by North Korean linguists, see Kim and Kwon (1996). For an analysis of the history of linguistics in North Korea since 1990 by South Korean linguists, see Lee et al. (2018).

Inho, and Baek Woon-hyuk. Volume 4 covers the history of the Korean language from the Gojoseon period to the era of the North and South Kingdoms period (3rd century BC – 10th century AD), and Volume 5 covers the history of the Korean language from the Goryeo period (10th century – 14th century AD) to the 16th century. Both are reprints of Ryu Ryeol's (1918-2004) earlier works of the same titles, originally published in 1990 and 1992, respectively, with some modifications. Volumes 6 through 10 present new contributions by Ryu Ryeol, Kim Inho, and Baek Woon-hyuk, addressing the history of the Korean language in later periods.

The *Joseonmallyeoksa* series categorizes the periods of Korean language history as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: The periodization of Korean language history in *Joseonmallyeoksa*

Old Korean	Medieval Korean				Modern Korean	Contemporary K.	
	Early	Middle		Late		Early	Late
		Goryeo	Joseon Early				
30c. BC – 3c. BC	3c. BC – 10c. AD	10c. – 14c.	15c. – 16c.	17c. – 1866	1866 – 1925	1926 – 1945	1946 – now

The Old Korean language period is referred to as the Gojoseon period, spanning from the early 30th century BC to the 3rd century BC. The Medieval Korean period is divided into the Early, Middle, and Late periods. The Early Medieval period is combines the Three Kingdoms period and the North and South Korean periods without making a clear distinction. The Middle Medieval period is divided into the Goryeo and the Joseon period.[6] The Late Medieval period spans from the Imjin War (1592) to the late 19th century (1866) in the Joseon Dynasty, and the Modern Korean period begins in the late 19th century (1866) and extends to 1926, when Kim Il Sung is said to have formed an anti-Japanese fighting organization. The Contemporary Korean language period is divided into two phases: the first, from 1926 to 1945 (prior to Korea's liberation), and the second, following the liberation of Korea.

[6] Similar to the periodization used in South Korea, the Goryeo period reflects the shift in the location of the central language from the southeast to the central region with the founding of Goryeo, while the Joseon period is marked by the creation of *Hangeul*.

The Old Korean language period includes the Gojoseon period and the early Three Kingdoms period, prior to the establishment of the feudal state. During this time, the Ye (濊), Mac (貊), and Han (韓) peoples lived in Manchuria and the Korean Peninsula and are believed to have spoken a common language. The transition from The Old and Medieval Korean is considered to be the establishment of the Three Kingdoms period in the 3rd century BC. This reflects the position of North Korean historiography, which, according to the Marxist theory of five stages of historical development, considers the Medieval period to begin with the establishment of the feudal state, contrasting it with antiquity. Consequently, North Korean research on the history of the Korean language recognizes it as a continuous process of historical development.

The Middle Medieval period spans a much longer period, from the 3rd century BC to the 10th century AD. Historically, this period includes the Three Kingdoms period of Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla, as well as the North and the South Kingdoms periods of Unified Silla and Balhae. However, *Joseonmallyeoksa* does not treat these as meaningful divisions of time and instead combines them all into the Early Medieval Period. This periodization reflects the belief that Korea was a single people from the beginning, with the languages of Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla regarded as a dialect of a single language. Furthermore, it emphasizes that the center of the language was the Goguryeo language, and even after the Silla's unification of the Three Kingdoms, the Goguryeo language continued through Balkhae, which was founded shortly afterward.

The Middle Medieval period is differentiated from the Early Medieval period by the establishment of the unified Goryeo kingdom. Linguistically, the distinction is marked by changes resulting from the relocation of the capital and the emergence of new phonemes such as consonants ㅱ /β/ and ㅿ /z/and semi-vowels ㅣ /i/ and ㅜ /u/. On the other hand, the founding of the Joseon Dynasty is seen merely as a dynastic change within the feudal system. Thus linguistically, the 15th and 16th centuries are grouped with the Goryeo period under the broader Medieval Korean period. It is important to note that, unlike South Korea, North Korea does not consider the shift of the central language due to the capital's relocation as a major dividing point for distinguishing Old Korean from Medieval Korean. Instead, it maintains that the languages of Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla were fundamentally one language with no significant differences.

The late medieval period covers the period from the 17th century to the late 19th century (1866), which South Korean linguists categorize as part of

the modern language period. This partly reflects the North Korean historical community's view of the Joseon Dynasty as a medieval feudal state.

The modern Korean language period is considered to have begun after 1866, marked by the burning of the U.S. merchant ship General Sherman by civilians in Pyongyang. North Korea views this as a symbolic event that defeated the American invasion ship, a symbol of Euro-American capitalist power, and preserved the nation's sovereignty, marking the beginning of the modern era, when the country broke away from the feudal state of Joseon. In terms of language, it is used as a reference point for the division of the period, noting that the emergence of a vocabulary that reflects the characteristics of modern ideas, institutions, etc.

The beginning of the Contemporary Korean language is also defined by the year 1926, when Kim Il Sung is said to have formed an anti-Japanese fighting organization. This period is divided into two phases: the early period and the late period, the later beginning after liberation.

4 Korean-Chinese linguistic perspective: *Joseoneobaldalsa* 조선어발달사 (A History of the Development of the Korean Language)

Joseoneobaldalsa (1982) is classic work on the history of the Korean language written by Professor Ahn Byung-ho of Peking University in China. Ahn, a Korean-Chinese scholar, was born in 1929 in *Heilongjiang* Province, China. He graduated from the Department of Korean language and literature at Yanbian University and pursued further studies at *Kim Il Sung* University in North Korea. The book was published in 1982 in Shenyang, China.

Before 1992, when South Korea and China officially established diplomatic relations, academic exchanges between the two countries were essentially impossible. Thus, it is not surprising that Ahn's academic background aligns more closely with North Korea than South Korea. In his work, Ahn uses North Korean academic terminology to describe linguistic phenomena, and given his choice of academic terminology and the timing of his studies in North Korea, it is likely that he was heavily influenced by Professor Hong Ki-moon, an early and prominent North Korean scholar specializing in the history of the Korean language.

This is best illustrated by the concept and terminology Ahn uses for *Yidu* (吏讀). Hong (1957) is a book-length publication based on Hong's doctoral thesis, submitted in 1957, which presents his original research on *Yidu*. Hong's findings differ from those of researchers in Japan and South Korea.

In Ahn (1982), the terms and concepts from Hong (1957) are employed to describe the scripts used prior to the creation of Hangeul in his chapter 3.

Table 3: The periodization of Korean language history in *Joseoneobaldalsa*

Old Korean			Medieval Korean		Modern Korean	Contemp. Korean
Proto	Early	Late	Early	Late		
	2c.	7c.	10c.	15c.	17c.	20c.
–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2c.	7c.	10c.	14c.	16c.	19c.	now

Table 3 summarizes the periodization of the history of the Korean language in *Joseoneobaldalsa*. It is interesting to note that these periods are largely the same as those of Professor Lee Ki-moon in South Korea, rather than the periods of Professor Ryu Ryeol in North Korea. This difference stems from Ahn's focus on linguistic history rather than political or historical perspectives.

Although North Korea and China are both socialist countries, their approaches differ significantly. North Korea is a mono-ethnic state, while China is a multi-ethnic state centered around the Han (漢) Chinese. To emphasize its national unity, North Korea emphasizes that a single ethnic group has spoken a single language from the beginning. According to this view, the languages of the Ye (濊), Mac (貊), and Han (韓) peoples were identical before the Three Kingdoms period, and the languages of the Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla peoples were the same during the Three Kingdoms period. North Korean scholars further claim that the central language was the language of Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea and the ancient Goguryeo kingdom. Additionally, they assert that Korean has no cognate language family in comparative linguistics.

However, Ahn (1982) does not fully adopt this North Korean political and historical perspective. He expresses his reservations about the idea that the languages of various tribes or nations before and after the Three Kingdoms period were identical. In addition, his work reflects the influence of global linguistic research trends at the time, including studies on the genealogical relationships between Korean and other languages.

For example, in chapter 10 of Ahn (1982), he discusses the Korean language family and compares Korean with Mongolian as well as with Japanese. This perspective clearly differs from that of North Korean linguists, who assert that Korean has no related language family.

North Korea's politically driven periodization ties the beginning of Contemporary Korean to 1926, the year Kim Il-sung is said to have begun his anti-Japanese resistance. Ahn, however, does not adhere to this political framework. Instead, he organizes historical periods according to linguistic changes, and as a result, his categorization of the periods closely resembles that of Lee Ki-moon in South Korea.

With the establishment of diplomatic relations between South Korea and China in 1992, academic exchanges between the two countries became possible, giving Korean-Chinese linguists greater access to research findings obtained in South Korea. Additionally, many young scholars who studied in South Korea returned to China and assumed university positions, bringing South Korean academic methodologies and terminology with them. As a result, in the 21st century, Korean-Chinese linguists have become more aligned with their South Korean counterparts than they were in earlier periods.

5 Conclusion

There are some notable differences in perception of the history of the Korean language among South Korean, North Korean, and Korean-Chinese linguists. One of the most significant differences is in how the periods Old Korean and Middle Korean are defined. North Korean linguists consider the Old Korean period to span from the early 30th century BC to the 3rd century BC, and the Medieval Korean period to cover the time from the 3rd century BC to the 19th century AD. This reflects the perspective of North Korean historians, who, based on the Marxist theory of historical development, define the beginning of the Medieval period as the establishment of the feudal state.

South Korean linguists, on the other hand, consider the Old Korean period as spanning from the 4th century AD to the 10th century AD, and the Medieval Korean period as lasting from the 10th to the 16th century AD. This is because they study the history of the Korean language from a positivist perspective based on strictly literary and linguistic sources.

North Korea's classification of Korean language history reflects its political ideology, making it challenging to reach a consensus unless South Korean linguists align with their perspective. However, agreeing with a viewpoint rooted in North Korea's political position could result in legal repercussions for South Korean scholars. Additionally, South Korean linguists are unlikely to classify periods without sufficient literary and linguistic evidence as part of the Old Korean period.

At first, Korean-Chinese linguists were heavily influenced by North Korean scholars and their perception of Korean language history was similar. However, after China and South Korea established diplomatic relations in the 1990s, Korean-Chinese linguists gradually adopted the research findings of South Korean scholars. Unlike South and North Korea, where academic exchanges are impossible, China permits scholarly collaborations with both countries.

It is ironic that the interpretation of the same linguistic facts is shaped not by the language itself, but on the nationality and political stance of the linguists' respective countries.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2022S1A5C2A02092184).

References

Ahn, B.-H. 안병호 (1982). *Joseoneobaldalsa 조선어발달사.* Liaoning: Liaoning People's Publishing House.

Chung, K. 정광 (2019). Hangugeoui Hyeongseong Gwajeong 한국어의 형성 과정. *Gugeosayeongu 1 국어사연구 1* (pp. 64-127). Paju: Thaehaksa.

Hong, K.-M. 홍기문 (1957). *Riduyeongu 리두연구*. Pyongyang: Science Press.

Hong, J. 홍종선 (2019). Gugeomunbeopsaui Sidae Gubun 국어문법사의 시대 구분. *Gugeosayeongu 1 국어사연구 1* (pp. 362-376). Paju: Thaehaksa.

Kim, Y. 김영황, & Kwon, S. 권승모. (Eds.). (1996). *Jucheui joseoneoyeongu 50nyeonsa 주체의 조선어연구 50 년사*. Pyongyang: Kim Il Sung University.

Kwon, J. 권재일 (2012). *Bukanui Joseoneohakjeonseo Yeongu 북한의 『조선어학전서』 연구*. Seoul: SNU Press.

Lee, H. 이현희, Choi, S. 최성규, Kim, H. G. 김한결, Jeong, H.-R. 정혜린, & Hong, E.-Y. 홍은영 (2018). Bukanui 1990nyeondae eoneosawa eoneohaksa yeongu 북한의 1990 년대 언어사와 언어학사 연구. *Nambukan Hyeomnyeokgwa Baljeoneul Wihan Gichoyeongu 1 남북한 협력과 발전을 위한 기초연구 1* (pp. 10-61). Guacheon: JinInjin.

Lee, K.-M. 이기문 (1972). *Gugeosagaeseol 국어사개설.* Seoul: Tower Press.

Park, C.-W. 박창원 (2019). Hangugeoui Gyetong 한국어의 계통. *Gugeosayeongu 1 국어사연구 1* (pp. 13-63). Paju: Thaehaksa.

Ryu, R. 류렬 (2005a). *Joseonmallyeoksa 1 조선말력사 1* (Joseoneohakjeonseo, Vol. 4). Social Pyongyang: Science Publishers.

Ryu, R. 류렬 (2005b). *Joseonmallyeoksa 2 조선말력사 2* (Joseoneohakjeonseo, Vol. 5). Social Pyongyang: Science Publishers.

Ryu, R. 류렬 (2005c). *Joseonmallyeoksa 5 조선말력사 5* (Joseoneohakjeonseo, Vol. 8). Social Pyongyang: Science Publishers.

Ryu, R. 류렬 (2005d). *Hyanggayeongu 향가연구* (Joseoneohakjeonseo, Vol. 13). Social Pyongyang: Science Publishers.

Song, M. 송민, & Park, C.-W. 박창원 (2019). Gugeosaui sidae gubun 국어사의 시대 구분. *Gugeosayeongu 1* (pp. 339-361). Paju: Thaehaksa.

Puyŏ and Han: Morphological and Lexical Analysis of Two Distinct Language Groups of the Early Korean Peninsula

Andrew E. SHIMUNEK
Woosong University, Republic of Korea
andrewshimunek@woosong.org

Abstract

There were many different languages spoken on the Korean Peninsula in the past, and not all of them were 韓 Han (Koreanic). In the traditional approach, Puyŏ and Han – the two best attested non-Chinese languages of early Korea – are treated as daughter branches of a common Puyŏ-Han proto-language. Christopher I. Beckwith has solidly demonstrated that the Puyŏ or Puyo-Koguryoic languages form a unique branch of the Japanese-Koguryoic language family, unrelated to the Han or Koreanic languages. Nevertheless, speculation on Puyŏ-Han linguistic unity continues to persist. The comparative data in this paper, focusing on the earliest attested Puyo-Koguryoic grammatical morphemes and content words and their translational equivalents in early Han (Koreanic), thoroughly disproves the Puyŏ-Han hypothesis, demonstrating that Puyŏ (Puyo-Koguryoic) and Han (Koreanic) are two mutually distinct unrelated language groups.

Keywords: Puyo-Koguryoic languages, Koreanic languages, historical-comparative linguistics, ethnolinguistic contact, history of the early Korean Peninsula

Povzetek

Na Korejskem polotoku so v preteklosti govorili veliko različnih jezikov in vsi niso bili del skupine hanskih jezikov 韓 (korejske jezikovne družine). Tradicionalno gledano sta pujščina in hanščina – dva najbolj dokazana jezika zgodnje Koreje, ki ne spadata med kitajske jezike – obravnavana kot hčerinski veji skupnega pujohanskega prajezika. Christopher I. Beckwith je prepričljivo dokazal, da pujski ali pujokogurjojski jeziki tvorijo edinstveno vejo japonsko-kogurjojske jezikovne družine, ki ni povezana s hanskimi ali korejskimi jeziki. Kljub temu se domneve o jezikovni enotnosti pujohanskega prajezika še vedno pojavljajo. V tem članku s primerjavo podatkov, ki se osredotočajo na najzgodnejše dokazane pujokogurjojske slovnične morfeme in polnopomenske besede ter njihove prevodne ustreznice v zgodnji hanščini, ovržemo hipotezo o pujohanskem prajeziku in dokažemo, da sta pujščina (pujokogurjojski jeziki) in hanščina (korejska jezikovna družina) dve medsebojno različni, nepovezani jezikovni skupini.

Ključne besede: pujokogurjojski jeziki, korejska jezikovna družina, zgodovinsko-primerjalno jezikoslovje, etnolingvistični stik, zgodovina zgodnjega Korejskega polotoka

Acta Linguistica Asiatica, 15(1), 2025.
ISSN: 2232-3317, http://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/ala/
DOI: 10.4312/ala.15.1.79-123

1 Introduction

In Korea today, the language family to which Modern Standard Korean, Korean dialects, and other closely related languages such as Cheju (Jeju), Koryŏ-mar, and Yukchin belong is conventionally called 韓國語族 *Han'guk ŏjok*, literally, 'Korean National Language Family'.[1] The inclusion of the word 國 *kuk* 'country' in the term 'Korean National Language Family' implies an a priori assumption that all languages spoken within the modern borders of the modern states of Korea (i.e., South and North) are included in this 'national language family'. By this same logic, Old Chinese, which was spoken in the Four Han Chinese Commanderies (漢四郡 *Han sagun*) of Korea's early history and which was spoken in the state of 辰韓 Chin Han (Beckwith, 2010, p. 215), as well as Middle Chinese, Middle Mongol, Yuan Mandarin, Jurchen, and other languages spoken at one time or another in the area that is now modern Korea should all be included in this 'national language family.'

Given the inherent logical problem of the 'national language family' terminology, I prefer to call the language family to which Modern Standard Korean belongs the 韓語族 *Han ŏjok* 'Han language family' or in English, the Koreanic language family. This terminology correctly asserts a connection with the 韓 Han (earlier read *Kara*) ethnolinguistic group and removes the unintentional or intentional connotations of the 國 *kuk* 'country' element.

The dominant variant of the 'Korean National Language Family' theory treats Puyŏ and Han – the two best-attested non-Chinese languages of early Korea – as daughter branches of a common Puyŏ-Han proto-language, which some have labeled as "扶餘・韓祖語" *Puyŏ-Han choŏ*, or 'Puyŏ-Han Ancestral Language' (e.g. Lee, 1972; Lee, 2017, p. 414).

Christopher I. Beckwith (*KLJ*) has demonstrated the Japanese-Koguryoic language family and the Koguryŏ language's place within that family. In this paper, I will incorporate additional 韓 Han (hereafter: 'Koreanic') and Puyo-Koguryoic data and offer functional morphological and lexical data further demonstrating that Koreanic and Puyo-Koguryoic are separate language groups: Koreanic is a unique language family in its own right, and Puyo-Koguryoic is a divergent branch of the Japanese-Koguryoic language family.

Claims of Puyŏ-Han linguistic unity are often based on little to no actual linguistic data, and no study has yet systematically and comprehensively examined the primary sources on the Koreanic and Puyo-Koguryoic languages to demonstrate or disprove a relationship between Koreanic and

[1] For the romanization of Modern Standard Korean I employ the McCune-Reischauer system because of its phonetic precision and because it is the international standard for the fields of Korean history and historical-comparative linguistics.

Puyo-Koguryoic. In this paper, I analyze the Chinese, Korean, and Japanese primary historical sources on the early Koreanic and Puyo-Koguryoic languages, including the *Zhou shu*, the *Samguk sagi*, the *Samguk yusa*, and the *Nihon shoki*. This data is supplemented by Chinese, Korean, and Japanese primary sources on Early Middle Korean, including the 12th century *Jilin Leishi* (*Kyerim yusa*), the Koryŏ *Toijanga* (1120 CE), the 12th century Middle Japanese sources *Nichūreki* and *Sezokujiruishō*, and the 13th century *Hyang'yak Kugŭppang*, as well as Koryŏ kugyŏl readings (q.v. Lee, 2011), supplemented by references to Chosŏn Late Middle Korean as attested in the earliest Hangŭl texts. Thus, this work focuses on the earliest solidly attested linguistic data on the Koreanic and Puyo-Koguryoic languages.

Through a systematic comparison of grammatical morphemes and content words from both language groups, I demonstrate that the correspondences between Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic are exceedingly few. Those that do exist are loanwords, the primary directionality being from the Puyo-Koguryoic languages to the Koreanic languages as a result of the prestige associated with the Puyŏ dialects after the Puyŏ invasion and subsequent political domination of the Korean Peninsula which lasted until the Tang-Silla alliance led to the unification of the Korean Peninsula under the Unified Silla state in 668 CE. Fascinating sporadic loanword correspondences with Nivkh (Gilyak), Serbi-Mongolic, and Jurchen-Manchu are highlighted when etymologically relevant.

Following a strictly data-based approach (following *KLJ*), this paper provides new lexica on both Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic languages. As much as possible, I focus on phonetic readings, and words and grammatical morphemes with semantically glossed or clearly discernible meanings. Speculative traditional readings have been avoided, with few exceptions.

Some traditional readings are undoubtedly correct. For example, it has been long known in the field of Korean studies that the Chinese glyph 火 (MChi *χʷa) is sometimes used to render the phonetic value 伐 (MChi *buar) (*KLJ* 74n, 77n, 78, 83) in transcriptions of early Koreanic languages. That is, the glyph 火 functioning phonetically as 伐 can render the phonetic sequences *pʊr ~ *pɨr ~ *puar in non-Chinese languages of the early Korean Peninsula: For example, early Koreanic *pʊr 'city' and *pɨr 'fire' are sometimes written with the Chinese glyph 火 'fire'. Another, albeit lower frequency, example may be the glyph 文 'writing' for the phonetic value 峴 *kɨr in rendering Old Koguryŏ *kɨr 'writing' (*KLJ* 87). The hyangch'al writing system of the *Samguk yusa* also includes some well-known examples of this kind of mixed, partially semantic and partially phonetic writing. However, such traditional readings are only accepted in this paper if they are solidly

confirmed, especially with unambiguous phonetic transcriptions, ideally with variant transcriptions, such as the example of the partially semantic, partially phonetic rendering of Han-Silla 齒叱今 with the semantic value 齒 'tooth' and the final phonetic sequence 叱今 *-tś-ki̱m and its purely phonetic variants 尼叱今 *ni-tś-ki̱m and 尼師今 *ni-s-ki̱m, which clearly indicate that in Silla territory, the Chinese glyph 齒 'tooth' could be traditionally read with the phonetic value 尼 *ni rendering the Han-Silla word for 'tooth', cognate to Koryŏ Early Middle Korean *ni, Chosŏn Late Middle Korean *ní*, and Modern Standard Korean *i* 'tooth' (see section §6 lexicon below).

By and large, the most reliable data on early Koreanic and Puyo-Koguryoic languages are straightforward phonetic transcriptions in Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese. This Chinese dialect is not the same as that spoken in the Tang capital. Beckwith has termed it 'Archaic Northeastern Middle Chinese' for which Shimunek prefers the term 'Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese'. I will employ the latter term in this paper. (On this phonetically conservative variety of Chinese, see *KLJ* 93-105; *LASM* 81-82, 84, 86, 87-88; Shimunek, 2021a, pp. 65-67, 72-75; Shimunek, 2021b, pp. 133, 152, 156, 160; and Shimunek, 2023, p. 85.)

This article does not provide an exhaustive listing of all identifiable Puyo-Koguryoic and early Koreanic linguistic lexica – there are many more grammatical morphemes and words attested in early Koreanic and also some additional data in Puyo-Koguryoic languages, especially from Puyŏ-Paekche and Han-Paekche. The data set in this paper has naturally been limited to Puyo-Koguryoic words and grammatical morphemes which have semantic translational equivalents in Koreanic.

2 Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese

Traditional studies on languages of the early Korean Peninsula often rely on Modern Standard Korean readings, or at best, Late Middle Korean readings, but these are inaccurate. "The Middle Chinese dialect or dialects of the Korean Peninsula before the middle of the Unified Silla period were highly conservative, retaining phonological characteristics of Late Old Chinese" (Shimunek, 2021b, p. 133). This uniquely Korean Peninsular variety of Early Middle Chinese – hereafter 'Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese' (equivalent to Beckwith's 'Archaic Northeastern Middle Chinese', *KLJ* 93-105) – is a *sine qua non* for historical-comparative work on the languages of the early Korean Peninsula. The author has employed Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese readings to reconstruct the phonetic forms of Puyo-Koguryoic and early Koreanic data.

3 Language families of the early Korean Peninsula

Historically documented and identified languages of the early Korean Peninsula, defined here as Korea before the 高麗 Koryŏ period, include languages belonging to the Koreanic language family, languages belonging to the Puyo-Koguryoic branch of the Japanese-Koguryoic language family and varieties of Chinese (Beckwith, 2005, pp. 34-64; *KLJ* 28, 118-163; Shimunek, 2021a, p. 66; Shimunek, 2021b, pp. 129-167; Shimunek, 2023, pp. 98-100, 102-103). This is not an exhaustive list – as the author has demonstrated elsewhere, there may be other distinctive and previously unidentified extinct languages of the early Korean Peninsula, vestiges of which remain in the *Samguk sagi* toponym corpora. Some fascinating and unique lexical data is attested in Kara and Paekche, indicating a third (or more), non-Han, non-Puyŏ language of unknown identity. This data will be the subject of a separate study in the future.

4 Koreanic languages vs. Puyo-Koguryoic languages

The Puyo-Koguryoic languages are demonstrably divergently related to Japanese, and do not form a cognate relationship with the Koreanic language family (*KLJ* 1-28, 232; Beckwith, 2005, pp. 49-51 et passim). In the currently dominant tradition, Puyŏ (Puyo-Koguryoic) and Han (Koreanic) are often portrayed as two divergent branches of a common proto-language, as exemplified by Lee Seungjae's summary of Lee Ki-Moon's view (Lee, 2017, p. 414). The traditionalists' primary motivation for including the Puyŏ languages as a sister branch to Han seems to be the preconceived view that they *should be* related, rather than a scientific approach to the data.

4.1 Koreanic vs. Puyo-Koguryoic functional morphology

If we examine the earliest attested Puyo-Koguryoic grammatical morphemes and words, they are clearly unrelated to early Koreanic (see Table 1).[2]

[2] For a discussion on grammaticalization in the Korean aspectual system, see Kumar (2025) in the same issue.

Table 1: Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic grammatical morphemes

Puyo-Koguryoic	Early Koreanic*
CJK ***na*** 'genitive' > AKog *na : AJpn *nâ > OJpn *nö > MSJ *no*	≠ CKor ***-ɦɨy*** > HS *-ɦɨy : HP *-ɨy : MSK /-ɨy/ 'genitive'
CJK ***si ~ *śi*** 'attributive' > OKog *si ~ *śi : OJpn *-si- > MSJ *-shi*	≠ CKor ***-tś ~ *-ts*** > HK *-s : HK/HP *-(t)s : HS *-tś ~ *-ts > LMK *-s* 'genitive-attributive'

* 'Early Koreanic' denotes the earliest attested 韓 Han languages and dialects.

4.2 Koreanic vs. Puyo-Koguryoic content words

A comparison of content words in Puyo-Koguryoic and early Koreanic languages reveals no regular cognates. If Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic were indeed related as two branches of a common source node (i.e. a common proto-language) as is claimed in most variants of the traditional 'Korean National Language Family', one should expect a significant number of lexical cognates, especially in the highest frequency words. This basic law of language change is summarized below:

> THE LAW OF FREQUENCY AND RETENTION
>
> "The highest frequency morphemes in any language have heavy functional load and light semantic load, and are inherited from the proto-language" (Beckwith, 2008, p. 19; cited here from *LASM* 283).

Hypothetically, any words and morphemes can be borrowed between any languages, but if the Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic languages were indeed two branches of a "Korean National Language Family" as is often claimed, the *highest frequency morphemes* (including both grammatical morphemes as well as content words) of these two language groups should exhibit many regular correspondences.

The Puyo-Koguryoic and early Koreanic words compared below are very close to being an exhaustive list of all the Puyo-Koguryoic words and early Koreanic words available to the author at the time of writing for which semantic equivalents or near-equivalents exist in the respective languages. That is, the lists below consist of near-exhaustive lists of semantically or functionally equivalent words and morphemes in the two language groups.

I am not an adherent of any of the 'basic vocabulary' theories: As shown by Beckwith and many others, Swadesh lists, lexicostatistics, and glottochronology are untenable at best, if not pseudoscience (*KLJ*). Nevertheless, organizing the data into semantic categories is useful for

demonstrating that the earliest grammatical morphemes and words in Han languages exhibit no regular cognates with Puyŏ. In the current data set employed in this article, there are exceedingly few lexical correspondences between Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic, and the few that exist are well-known loanwords with very clear or inferable historical contexts (e.g., see notes below on Han-Silla *paɦɨy 'rock, precipice', and Koryŏ Early Middle Korean *namur 'lead (metal)' and *kɨr 'writing' in Table 5 and in entries §6.1.1.14 and §6.1.2.1.15).

In order to aid the reader in processing the lexical data, I have organized the lexical items by general semantic spheres. I do not advocate for any of the 'basic vocabulary' theories; the general semantic groupings employed below are simply to help the reader see the scope of lexical comparisons available to the comparativist. The content words discussed below are listed by their lexical categories: numerals, nouns, adjectival verbs, and verbs. The nouns are further divided into the following semantic groupings:

- direction words;
- body part terms;
- rocks, minerals, metals, and geological formations;
- human made structures;
- plant names;
- zoonyms;
- people;
- water and watercourses;
- and supernatural concepts.

Unless otherwise noted, Archaic Koguryŏ (AKog), Old Koguryŏ (OKog), Old Japanese (OJpn), and Common Japanese-Koguryoic (CJK) data cited below are from Christopher I. Beckwith (*KLJ*).

The semantic values in the tables below have been abbreviated and simplified for ease of reading. The reader is advised to consult section §6 for detailed notes on the semantic values of each word listed below, etymological notes, and sources.

4.2.1 Numerals

The Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic languages have clearly distinct numeral systems which do not exhibit any cognates between them (see Table 2).

Table 2: Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic numerals

	Puyo-Koguryoic	Early Koreanic
'one'	Not attested; cf. OJpn *pitö	≠ HS ***…tʌ*** : EMK *hatʌn ~ *harʌn : LMK *hànàh ~ hàn-* : MSK *hana*
'two'	Not attested; cf. OJpn *puta	≠ HS ***…ɣɨr ~ *…r*** > EMK *tuβur(h^{ʔ}) (*KYS*, *NCR*, *SZR*) : LMK *tŭrh ~ tŭ-* > MSK /tur/ ~ /tu-/
'three'	OKog ***mir** : OJpn *mi	≠ HK ***ts(ʷ)əy(h)*** : EMK *səyh > LMK *sə˘yh ~ sə̀- ~ sə̀k-* > MSK *set ~ se- ~ sək-*
'four'	Not attested; cf. OJpn *yö	≠ HS ***(nəʔ)ri*** : EMK *nəyh ~ *^{n}dəyh : LMK *nə˘yh ~ nə̀- ~ nə̀k-* > MSK *net ~ ne- ~ nək-* (cf. Nivkh)
'five'	OKog ***ütsi** : OJpn *itu	≠ EMK ***tasɨs*** ~ ***tasʌs*** : LMK *tàsʌ́s ~ tày-*
'six'	Not attested; cf. OJpn *mu	≠ EMK ***yəsɨs*** ~ ***yəsʌs*** : LMK *yèsʌ́s ~ yèy- ~ yès-* > MSK /yəsət/
'seven'	OKog ***nan** : OJpn *nana	≠ EMK ***irkip*** ~ ***nirkup*** ~ ***nirkʊp*** : LMK *nìrkúp* : MSK /irkʊp/ [iɭgʊp]
'eight'	Not attested; cf. OJpn *ya	≠ EMK ***yətʌrp*** : LMK *yètʌ́rp* > MSK /yətər/ [jədəɭ]
'nine'	PP ***tɨr*** (≠ OJpn *koko ← Ch.)	≠ EMK ***ahʊrp*** : LMK *àhúp* > MSK /ahʊp/
'ten'	OKog ***tək** : OJpn *tə ~ *təwo	≠ EMK ***yər(hʔ)*** : LMK *yə́rh* > MSK /yər/ [jəɭ]
'hundred'	Not attested	≠ EMK ***ɦʊn*** : LMK *ɦún*
'thousand' ~ 'ten thousand'	PP ***tɨ ~ *tsir ~ *tir*** '1,000 ~ 10,000, abundant' → OJpn *ti	≠ LMK ***tsʌ̂mɨ̀n*** 'thousand'

As shown above, the attested Puyo-Koguryoic numerals exhibit cognates only with Japanese, not with any of the Koreanic languages. The Puyo-Koguryoic numerals and the Koreanic numerals thus form two clearly distinct lexical sets unrelated to each other.

By contrast, the numeral sets of well-demonstrated language families of the world regularly exhibit systematic correspondences in their numeral systems. For example, English *three*, German *drei* /dʁaɪ̯/, Italian *tre*, French *trois* /tʀwa/, Persian *se(h)*, Pashto *dre*, Agnean *tre*, Kuchean *trey ~ trai* /trəi/, Hittite *teri*, and numerous others are cognate reflexes of a common Indo-European root denoting 'three'. Likewise, for the Serbi-Mongolic languages: Kitan *ɢur 'three' (*LASM*), Middle Mongol *qurban ~ yurban* /gʊrban/, Khalkha *ɢʊrəw*, Buryat *gʊrbən*, Kalmyk *ɢurwn*, Daur *kʷarpə*, Shira Yoghor *kʊrwan*,

Kangjia *kʊrɔ*, Santa *quraŋ*, Moghol *qurban* 'three', and others are cognates (Svantesson et al., 2005, p. 164). Numerous other examples could be cited from any of the world's well-demonstrated language families.

There are also counterexamples in languages of the world, but most have very clear contexts. For example, the numerals of Mangghuer (a Mongolic language) have been replaced by Chinese in the speech of younger speakers due to intensive language contact with Chinese (Dpal-ldan-bkra-shis et al., 1996, p. 4). Modern Standard Korean also has a unique set of Sino-Korean numerals alongside 'native' Koreanic numerals, with each set used in overwhelmingly (but not entirely) mutually exclusive environments (e.g., when telling time, 'native' numerals are used for telling the hour and Sino-Korean numerals are used for telling the minute). (One rare but striking example of free variation between 'native' and Sino-Korean numerals is Modern Standard Korean 四거리 *sagŏri* /sakəri/ and its free variant 네거리 *negŏri* /nekəri/, both denoting 'intersection', literally 'four roads', and which both occur in daily speech with free variation between Sino-Korean *sa* 'four' and the 'native' numeral root *ne-* 'four'). Even English numerals have been borrowed in Modern Standard Korean, albeit in a highly limited context – for tallying baseball scores – but all of these are exceptions to a general trend of numerals retained in divergently related languages.

4.2.2 Nouns

Direction words

The attested Puyo-Koguryoic and Early Koreanic direction words exhibit numerous cognates *within* each language grouping but no cognates between each other (see Table 3).

Table 3: Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic direction words

	Puyo-Koguryoic	Early Koreanic *
front ~ south	AKog *kor 'front' : PS ***kʊr** 'south' : PP *kʊrʊ	≠ HS ***mak** 'south' : LMK *màh* 'south' HK/HP ***arp** : LMK *àrpʰ* 'south, front' > MSK /apʰ/ 'front'
back ~ behind ~ north ~ west ~ above ~ evening	AKog ***tsɨar** 'back, behind' > OKog *tśɨri 'north' : OJpn *tsiri ~ *siri 'back, behind; rump, buttocks' OKog ***ɦaɨp** 'west' : OJpn *yami 'darkness, evening'	≠ HS ***tɨra/*tʊra** 'west' ~ ***tɨy** 'north' : HP *ti : LMK *tùýh* > MSK *twi* 'behind; north' HK/HP ***ʊk/*uk** 'above, top' : HS ***ukʊk/*uyʊk/*urʊk** 'north' : LMK *ùh* > MSK *wi* 'above'

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic *
			HS 夜音 ***…m** (genitive 夜未 *…m-ɨy) : LMK *pàm ~ pám* > MSK *pam* 'evening'
east	OKog ***kati*** 'east', OJpn *kəti ~ *koti 'east wind' ~ *pimukatśi 'east' > MSJ *higashi* 'east'	≠	HK ***śa*** 'east' : HS ***sɛyra*** 'east' ~ HS dial. *sey 'south' : LMK *sáy* 'east' > MSK /sɛ-/ 'east'
root/base > below	OKog ***tśɨəm*** 'root, base', OJpn *tśɨməw 'below' > MSJ *shimo* 'below'	≠	HK/HP ***arɨ*** : HS *ara : LMK *ara* : MSK /arɛ/ 'below'

* (See 'Body part terms' for the metaphorical extension of 'heart' > 'center'.)

The attested Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic direction words are distinct and clearly unrelated to each other. The only words that appear even hypothetically relatable are Archaic Koguryŏ *tsɨar 'back, behind' and Han-Silla dial. *tɨra/*tʊra 'west' ~ Han-Silla dial. *tɨy 'north'. If the primary semantic value of the Han-Silla word-forms is 'behind', then one could exploratorily hypothesize a loanword scenario between these Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic words, but before such a proposal can be demonstrated or disproven, the Korean-internal etymologies of the Han-Silla words and their cognates in Koreanic must first be established. If the hypothetical metathesis and affrication that must be proposed for such a scenario to be possible can be explained, it could be a loanword of uncertain directionality. All other direction words listed above exhibit no cognates between Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic.

Body part terms

The attested body part terms in Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic are strikingly different (see Table 4).

Table 4: Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic body part terms

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
tooth	OKog ***keyr*** 'tooth' : OJpn *ki ~ *gi 'canine tooth'	≠	HS ***ni*** > EMK *ni > LMK *ní* 'tooth'
heart > center	PS ***kɨr*** 'center, central' : OKog ***kɨr*** : OJpn 'heart' > MSJ *kokoro*	≠	HS ***…m*** 'heart' LMK ***mʌ̀zʌ̀m*** 'heart; mind' LMK ***ryə̀mtʰʊ̀ŋ*** ~ ***nyə̀mtʰʊ̀ŋ*** 'heart (anat.)' LMK ***kə̀βʌ́ntʌ́y*** 'center, central'
foot	OKog ***ɦa*** : OJpn *a-	≠	EMK ***par*** : LMK *pár*

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
arm ~ shoulder	OKog ***maɨ** 'arm, shoulder'	≠	LMK ***pʌ̀rh*** 'arm' LMK ***ə̀skə́y*** 'shoulder'
head	OKog ***kan** : OJpn *ka-	≠	EMK ***mati** : LMK *mə̀rí ~ màrí*

Words for 'tooth' and 'heart' are usually cognate in many of the world's demonstrated language families. For example, English *tooth*, Latin *dens*, Armenian *atam*, Ancient Greek *odoús*, Sanskrit *dát ~ dánta* and others derived from a common Indo-European word for 'tooth'; Hungarian *fog*, Mansi *puŋk*, Finnish *pii* and others from a common Proto-Uralic word for 'tooth'; and Akkadian *šinnum*, Arabic *sinn*, Hebrew *šén*, Ge'ez *sənn* and others derived from a common Proto-Semitic word for 'tooth', to name just a few examples from well-known language families.

In contrast, Puyo-Koguryoic *keyr 'tooth' and early Koreanic *ni 'tooth' are distinct from each other and are unrelatable. Likewise, Puyo-Koguryoic *kɨr 'heart' and early Koreanic 'heart' (e.g. LMK *mʌ̀zʌ̀m ~ ryə̀mtʰʊ̀ŋ*) exhibit no demonstrable connection.

Rocks, minerals, metals, and geological formations

Table 5: Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic words for rocks, minerals, and geological formations

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
mountain	AKog ***ɣapma** > OKog *ɦaɨp : MSJ *yama* OKog ***tar** 'mountain, high', Puyo-Kara *ta 'mountain; high' < CJK *tar	≠	HS ***mʊr** : HK *pʊ : HP *mʊra ~ *mʊre : EMK mʊy(h$^{?}$): LMK *mʊ̌yh ~ mʊ̀rʊ́ ~ mʊ̀h* HS ***…ɨm** : Old Cheju (T'amna) *ʊrɨm
valley	OKog ***tan** 'valley' : OJpn *tani 'valley'	≠	LMK ***kʊ̌r*** 'valley'
mountain pass ~ highland	CJK ***taw** 'pass' > OKog *taw 'mountain pass' : PP 'highland' : OJpn *təwpu ~ *təpu ~ *təpaw 'pass'	≠	HS ***tsɛyra** 'highland' : LMK *tsáy* > MSK S. /tɕɛ/ ~ N. /tsɛ/ 'ridge, mountain pass'
stone/rock, cliff, precipice	Nivkh ⇄ OKog ***paɦɨy** 'cliff, mountain, crag, precipice'	→	HS ***paɦɨy** > LMK *pàhʊ́y* > MSK *pawi* 'rock, stone; cliff; precipice'

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
silver/white/gold	OKog ***tśiar*** ‘silver’ : OJpn *tśira- ~ *śirö- > MSJ *shiro ~ shira-* ‘white, silver’ : PS ***sɨra*** ‘gold; Silla’	≠ →	EMK ***tʊr*** : LMK *tʊˇrh* > MSK /tʊr/ [tʊɭ] ‘stone’ HS ***sɨra*** ‘Silla’
metal ~ iron	OKog ***taw*** ‘iron’ ← Ch. dial.	≠	HP ****zɨrɨ/*zirɨ*** : EMK ****sʊy*** : LMK *súy* ‘iron, metal’
jade	OKog ***kʊ*** ‘jade’	← Ch. →	LMK ***úk*** ‘jade’
lead (metal)	OJpn *namari : OKog ****namur***	→ ≠	EMK ****namur*** LMK ***náp***

Among the currently decipherable and reconstructible Puyo-Koguryoic and early Koreanic words for geological formations, only one exhibits a clear connection between Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic: Old Koguryŏ *paɦɨy and Han-Silla *paɦɨy both denote ‘rock, stone; cliff, crag, precipice’. These words are clearly related to the Nivkh word for ‘stone’ (*KLJ*). Given the political dominance of Puyŏ speakers after their invasion of the Korean Peninsula, the directionality must be from Puyo-Koguryoic to Koreanic. The word is retained in Modern Standard Korean as *pawi* ‘rock, stone, cliff, crag, reef’.

In the territory of Paekche, the attested word for ‘rock, stone’ is 珍惡 *tśirak ‘stone, rock (石)’ (*SS* 36, 37). This interpretation relies on a regular Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese (KPEMC) phonetic reading of the characters 珍 *tśir and 惡 *ak, and supersedes previous *a priori* attempts to force a Koreanic reading (*pace* Toh, 2005).

As the Puyŏ people were located in Manchuria, neighboring the 鮮卑 *Serbi (*Xianbei*) and other Serbi-Mongolic speakers before their invasion of the Korean Peninsula, it is highly likely that this should be identified as a *Puyŏ*-Paekche word. I thus propose the following etymologies:

> Puyŏ-Paekche ***tśirak*** ‘stone, rock’ ← ? early Serbi-Mongolic dialect *čʰɪlaɣ < *čʰɪla-ɣU < Common Serbi-Mongolic *čʰɪla ‘stone, rock’ > Kitan *čala ‘stone, rock’. (The Kitan word was discussed by György Kara (2021)).

> Common Serbi-Mongolic *čʰɪla ‘stone, rock’ > pre-Proto-Mongolic *čʰɪla-ɣU > Proto-Mongolic *čʰɪlaɣʊ > MMgl *čila’u-n* [ʧʰilaɦʊ-n] > modern Khalkha Mongolian **чулуу** [ʧʰʊˈɮʊ] ~ attributive **чулуун** [ʧʰʊˈɮʊ̃] ‘stone, rock’.

These words are clearly unrelated to Han-Silla *paɦiy (and its reflexes Late Middle Korean *pàhúy* and MSK *pawi* 'rock, stone; cliff; precipice') and are likewise unrelated to Early Middle Korean *tʊr ~ Late Middle Korean: 돐 *tʊˇrh* ~ MSK 돌 /tʊr/ [tʊl] 'stone, rock'.

The retention of the velar **k* in the Paekche form indicates a borrowing from a language of the Mongolic branch of Serbi-Mongolic as it exhibits a reduced reflex of the *-ɣU suffix which is one of the morphological innovations distinguishing the Mongolic branch from the Serbi branch of the Serbi-Mongolic language family (see *LASM* 415-416, 449, 459). One may speculate a loanword scenario connected with the historically documented interaction between the 柔然 Jou-jan (*Rouran*) Avar Empire of Mongolia and the Koguryŏ kingdom in 479 CE. Alternatively, it could be the result of a much earlier borrowing from a Serbi-Mongolic dialect into Proto-Puyo-Koguryoic before the establishment of the Koguryŏ kingdom, at a time when Serbi-Mongolic and Puyo-Koguryoic speakers lived together in Manchuria. (On the linguistic homeland of Serbi-Mongolic in Manchuria and North China, see *LASM*.)

Human-made structures and inventions

The earliest unambiguous attestation of a Koreanic word for 'writing' is Koryŏ Early Middle Korean *kɨr 'writing', a well-known borrowing from Old Koguryŏ with a plausible historical context (*KLJ* 174). Attested words for humanmade structures and human inventions exhibit no cognates between Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic (see Table 6 below).

Table 6: Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic words for humanmade structures and inventions

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
fortress/city/capital ~ mound ~ place ~ land ~ plot of land	AKog ***kuru** > OKog *kuər ~ *kɨr : PP *ki ~ *kɨ ~ *kur : PK *kʊr : PS *kɨr ~ *kʊr PS ***na** : OKog *na 'land'	≠	HK ***pʊr** : HP *pʊri : HS *pʊri ~ *pʊr 'mound, fortress, city' HK/HP ***(t)sas** : HS *…tśʰ : LMK *tsás 'walled city' HS ***miti** : HP ***meti** ~ ***miti** : LMK *màtʰ ~ màt* 'plot of land' LMK ***stáh ~ stàh*** 'land'
ford	OKog ***ʊ ~ *ʊy ~ *wəy**	≠	LMK ***nλrλ***
well (for water)	PS ***ɨr** : OKog *ɨr : OJpn *wi	≠	EMK ***umur** > LMK *ùmɨ́r*
door ~ gate	PK ***tʊk ~ *tʊ** : OJpn *tö	≠	LMK ***ùráy***
writing	OKog ***kɨr**	→	EMK ***kɨr**

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
drum (musical instrument)	OKog ***taw*** : OJpn *tʊtʊmi	≠	EMK ***puk*** : LMK ***púp*** ~ ***púpʰ ~ pùpʰ*** : MSK *puk*

Plant names

Table 7: Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic plant names

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
tree, wood, forest	OKog ***kɨr*** ~ ***key*** : OJpn *ki : PP ***ki***	≠	EMK ***namk*** > LMK ***nàmk*** ~ ***nàmú*** HP ***sɨp*** : LMK ***súp*** ~ ***sùpʰîr***
bamboo	OKog ***na*** : OJpn *nö	≠	HK ***tay*** : EMK *tay : LMK *táy*
vegetable ~ vine	PS ***na*** : OJpn *na	≠	LMK ***nətsʰúr*** LMK ***nʌ̀mʌ̀rh***
soybean	OKog ***pɨy***	≠	LMK ***kʰʊ̀ŋ***
orchid ~ bloom ~ cherry ~ flower	OKog ***śayk*** : OJpn *sakura ~ *tsakura OJpn ***pana*** 'flower'	≠	LMK ***pə̀s*** ~ ***pə̀t*** 'cherry' LMK ***pʰîy***- 'to bloom' EMK ***kʊr/*kʊ(ts^{ʔ})*** : LMK *kʊ̀ts ~ kʊ̀s* 'flower'
garlic ~ chives	OKog ***meyr*** : OJpn *mira	≠	LMK ***mànʌ́r***
leek ~ onion	OKog ***kakey*** : OJpn ***ki***	≠	LMK ***pʰá***
chestnut	OKog ***taw***	≠	LMK ***pắm***
pine	OKog ***kur*** ~ ***ku***	≠	LMK ***sʊ́r***
willow ~ poplar ~ aspen	OKog ***kü ~ *kɨ*** OKog ***ya***	≠	LMK ***pə̀tî̀r*** Early Modern Korean ***sʌsʌ*** (17th c.) ~ ***sʌsɨy*** (18th c.) 'aspen, white poplar'*

* MSK /**sasi**-namu/ [sʰaɕinamu] 'aspen, white poplar' is now read in as *sashi* and folk-etymologizable as Sino-Korean 四時 'four seasons', but perhaps the tree name was originally a distinct non-Chinese word.

Zoonyms

It is not uncommon in languages of the world for zoonyms to be borrowed. The currently deciphered Puyo-Koguryoic words for 'ox' are loanwords from Chinese and Serbi-Mongolic, and are unrelated to the earliest Koreanic words for 'ox'.

It is well known that words for 'horse', 'bear', and certain other animal names are widespread areal words transcending language boundaries and

are thus not usable for determining language family relationships (*KLJ*). See Table 8 below.

Table 8: Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic zoonyms

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
ox ~ cow ~ cattle	OKog ***ʊ*** ← Ch. PP ***ker*** ← ? SM	≠	HS ***śu*** > EMK > LMK *syǔ* > MSK /sʊ/
pig	OKog ***ʊ***	≠	EMK ***tʊr/*tʊ(tˀ)*** ← Ch.
horse	OKog ***merʊ***	← areal →	EMK ***mar/*mʌr***
owl	OKog ***tsʊ***	≠	LMK ***útpámí*** LMK ***púhèŋ***
vulture ~ eagle	OKog ***kami***	≠	LMK ***sùrí***
bear	OKog ***kum***	← areal →	HP ***kʊma*** (*kʊ̀má) LMK *kʊˇm*
fowl ~ bird ~ pheasant ~ chicken	OKog ***tawr*** ← Ch.	≠	LMK ***skwèŋ*** (onom.) LMK ***sǎy*** 'bird, fowl' LMK ***tʌ̀rk*** 'chicken, hen' (← areal word)

People

Table 9: Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic words for people

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
human ~ person	OKog ***pen*** : OJpn *pi-	≠	LMK ***nʊ́m*** LMK ***sărʌ́m*** ~ ***sărʌ̀m*** ~ ***sàrʌ̀m***
man ~ boy ~ child	OKog *~~**paɨ**~~ 'man' : PS *~~paɨ~~ 'boy' OKog ***ku*** 'child' < CJK ← SM	≠	HS *~~**pʊk**~~ : HK *~~**mʊk**~~ 'child, boy'
king ~ ruler ~ lord	OKog ***kay*** ~ ***key*** 'king' ← East Scythian	≠	HK/HP ***nirim*** : LMK *nĭm*

Water and watercourses

Table 10: Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic words for water and watercourses

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
water ~ river	OKog ***mey*** : OJpn *mi	≠	HK ***mur*** 'water' HK ***ta ~ *tay*** : HP *nari ~ *nare : LMK *nǎyh* 'river' HS ***kuər ~ *kur*** : LMK *kʌ̀rʌ́m* > MSK *karam* 'river'

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
sea ~ ocean	OKog ***pa** : OJpn *pa-	?	HS ***...tʌ** ~ ***...ak** LMK ***pàtáh*** ~ ***pàrʎ́r***

"If the Old Koguryo word and the root of the Middle Korean words are related, it is by convergence—Korean having borrowing *pa 'sea' from Koguryo and subsequently adding further derivational elements to it" (*KLJ* 178-179).

Supernatural concepts

Attested words for 'spirit, soul, ghost' exhibit no cognates across Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic (see Table 11 below).

Table 11: Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic words for supernatural concepts

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
spirit ~ ghost ~ soul	PS ***tɨ** : PP ***tɨr ~ *tśɨr** ~ *tɨ : OJpn *ti	≠	EMK ***(nək$^{?}$)ś-i** : LMK ***nèks*** (cf. MSK /kwisin/ ← Ch. 鬼神)

4.2.3 Adjectives and Adjectival Verbs

Table 12: Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic adjectives and adjectival verbs

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
yellow	AKog ***kweru** > OKog *kuər : OJpn *ki ~ *ku	≠	HK ***tʊra-** : LMK *nʊ́rá-*
red	OKog ***śapɨy** : OJpn *(t)sapi ~ *(t)sabi	≠	MSK /**p̈arka**-/ < /parkah-/ < LMK *pʌ̀rk-ʌ hʌ-* ~ LMK *pʌ̀rk-* 'bright, brilliant' (cf. Common Nivkh *bayla- 'red')
shallow ~ flat ~ level ~ wide ~ broad ~ vast	OKog ***pirar** ~ ***piriar** ~ OKog *piar : OJpn *pira- ~ *pirö	≠	LMK ***nyèt^{h}-*** 'shallow' LMK ***nèp-*** 'wide, broad, vast'
deep	OKog ***puk** : OJpn *pʊka-	≠	EMK ***kip^{h}-** : LMK ***kìp^{h}-***
abundant ~ flourishing ~ rich	OKog ***śa** : OJpn *sa-	≠	LMK ***nèk nèk*** LMK ***mʌ̆n hʎ́-*** ~ ***màn hʎ́-***
cool ~ cold	OKog ***śamiar** < CJK *sam-	≠	LMK ***ts^{h}íp-*** ~ ***ts^{h}íβ-*** (cf. Common Nivkh *tiv-)

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
good	OKog ***mey*** 'good' : PP ***mey*** 'peaceful'	≠	HK ***na-*** 'outstanding'
long	OKog ***namey***, OJpn *naga- ~ *naᵑga-	≠	HK ***kir*** : LMK *kǐr-* (cf. Common Nivkh *gəl- 'long')
happy ~ praise ~ enjoy	Not attested; cf. OJpn ***tanō-*** 'enjoy'	≠	HK ***ki*** : HS *ki : LMK *kìs-*

4.2.4 Verbs

Attested verbs in Puyo-Koguryoic and early Koreanic reveal no cognates (see Table 13 below). However, there may be one Serbi-Mongolic verb borrowed into Puyo-Koguryoic (details in the entry for Puyŏ-Paekche ***tɨ*** 'gather, meet' in §6.2.2.13 below).

Table 13: Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic verbs

	Puyo-Koguryoic		Early Koreanic
overlook ~ look	OKog ***ɦa***	≠	HS ***pʊ-***
take	OKog ***taw*** : OJpn *təwr- < CJK *taw- 'take'	≠	LMK ***kàtsí-*** 'take' LMK ***pàt-*** 'receive' LMK ***əˇt-*** 'acquire'
enter	OKog ***i ~ yi-*** : OJpn *ir ~ *yir-	≠	LMK ***tîr-***
encounter ~ meet	OKog ***paɨk***	≠	LMK ***màts-***
open	OKog ***tawpi***	≠	LMK ***yəˇr-***
gather ~ meet	PP ***tɨ*** (← ? SM)	≠	LMK ***mʊ̀t-***
exist	Not attested; cf. OJpn ***ar-***	≠	HS ***ɨtś- ~ *ɨtś-*** > LMK *ìs-*

5 Concluding remarks

As demonstrated by the grammatical morpheme comparisons in §4.1 Table 1 and by the numerous lexical comparisons in section §4.2, the Puyo-Koguryoic languages and the Koreanic languages clearly do not form a language family relationship. (See section §6 below for primary and secondary sources and for detailed etymological notes.)

The available linguistic data thus cannot support the traditional speculative attempts to connect the Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic languages as two branches of a common source node: That is, Puyo-

Koguryoic and Koreanic are unrelated and mutually distinctive language groups.

From this sample of attested Puyo-Koguryoic words and their semantic equivalents in early Koreanic, it is clear that the functional morphology and the vast majority of the lexicon of these two language groups are distinct, aside from a few loanwords from Puyŏ to Han.

Other loanwords include borrowings from Chinese to Puyŏ, Serbi-Mongolic to Puyŏ, and from Puyo-Koguryoic to Jurchen-Manchu. There are also a few Nivkh-Puyŏ and Nivkh-Koreanic lexical correspondences indicative of loanwords. The Han (Koreanic) data in this paper exhibits only one possible connection with Serbi-Mongolic but this is doubtful: Early Koreanic *mur 'water' resembles Common Serbi-Mongolic *murə 'large river' (*LASM* 354).

The logical conclusion is that Puyo-Koguryoic and Koreanic are two distinct, mutually exclusive language groups: That is, Puyŏ or Puyo-Koguryoic is a branch of the Japanese-Koguryoic language family (as demonstrated by Beckwith, *KLJ*) and Koreanic (Han) is a unique language family.

6 Attested and reconstructed Early Koreanic and Puyo-Koguryoic forms

Early Koreanic and Puyo-Koguryoic words and morphemes in this article are discussed in detail below with cognates, etymologies, sources, and earliest reconstructible etyma.

6.1 Early and Medieval Koreanic

This paper addresses some of the earliest linguistic data from the Koreanic language family, including Early Koreanic and Middle Korean. Common Koreanic (CKor) denotes reconstructions based on the comparative method applied to the earliest Koreanic linguistic data. Lexical entries in the sections below are organized alphabetically by their reconstructed forms. Words transcribed in the *Samguk sagi* (*SS*) and the *Samguk yusa* (*SY*) are reconstructed based on Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese (KPEMC) readings (q.v. *KLJ*; Shimunek, 2021b; Shimunek, 2021a; and Shimunek, 2023).

6.1.1 Early Koreanic ('Old Korean dialects')

Early Koreanic languages or 'Old Korean dialects' in this paper include Han-Silla, Han-Paekche, and Han-Kara.

6.1.1.1 Han-Silla (HS)

Han-Silla is the Koreanic language spoken Silla. The data here primarily dates to the Unified Silla period, and encompasses the earliest *hyangga* data, semantically glossed and phonetically transcribed words in the Silla toponym corpus in the *Samguk sagi* as well as data from the *Samguk yusa*.

1. HS 二肹 (*SY*) *…ɣɨr ~ 二尸 (*SY*) *…r 'two' < CKor > EMK *tuβur (*KYS*, *NCR*, *SZR*) : LMK *tŭr(h)* > MSK *tur* [tu˺] ~ *tu-* 'two' (Shimunek, 2021b, pp. 145-147).
2. HS 矣 ~ 衣 (*SY*) *-ɦɨy : HP *-ɨy (see HP *sɨp 'forest' below) < CKor *-ɦɨy ~ *-ɨy 'genitive-attributive suffix' > > MSK 의 /-ɨy/ 'genitive suffix'.
3. HS 隱 (*SY*) *-ɨn : EMK *-n < CKor *-ɨn ~ *-n 'deverbal relative clause forming suffix'.
4. HS 於叱 ~ 有叱 (*SY*) *itś-/*ɨtś- > LMK *ìs-* > MSK 있- /iʂ-/ [it̚- ~ iʂ-] 'to exist' (Shimunek, 2021b, p. 146; Shimunek, 2023, p. 96 n. 74, p. 101). The kugyŏl orthographic form 有七 in the 13th century text 舊譯仁王經 *Kuyŏk Inwanggyŏng* (Lee, 2011, p. 60) renders the same verbal root, which I reconstruct as EMK *itś-/*its- 'to exist'. On the change of final *tś/*ts to later *s*, see entry for HS *-tś ~ *-ts 'genitive-attributive suffix' below.
5. HS 岳音 (*SY*) *…ɨm 'mountain' : Old Cheju (T'amna) *ʊrɨm 'mountain' < CKor *ʊrɨ- 'to ascend, go up'. Cf. Common Nivkh *ul- 'high' (*CND* 186).
6. HS 近 (*SS*) *kɨ-r ~ 巾 (*SS*) *ki-r 'good, praise, commend (嘉)' < HS *kɨ- ~ *ki- 'to praise, commend, be good' + *-r 'relative clause forming suffix' (cf. *ki- 'praise' + *itś- 'exist' > LMK *kìs-* 'to rejoice, to be happy').
7. HS 骨 (*SS*) *kuər ~ *kur 'river (川)', perhaps cognate to LMK *kàrʌ́m* > MSK *karam* 'river', though the vocalism is problematic.
8. HS 心音 (*SY*) *…m 'heart' (also attested as 心未 *…m-ɨy with *-ɨy 'genitive-attributive suffix') : LMK *màzàm* 'heart' > MSK *maɨm* 'heart'.
9. HS 莫 *mak 'south' (erroneously glossed in *SS* as 北 'north', corrected to *南 'south' by Toh, 1987) : LMK *màh* 'south'.
10. HS 彌知 (*SS*) *miti 'vicinity of the capital, royal domain (畿)' : HP *meti ~ *miti 'city' : LMK *màtʰ ~ màt* 'plot of land' < CKor *mati (perhaps *mat-i with -i 'nominative case suffix'). Cf. Jpn *miti* (MSJ *michi*) 'street, road', *mati* (MSJ *machi*) 'town' ← ? early Koreanic.

11. HS 文 (*SS*) *mʊr (KPEMC *mur rendering foreign *mʊr) : HP *mʊra ~ *mʊrɪ : LMK *mʊˇyh ~ mʊ̀rʊ́ ~ mʊ̀h* > MSK 뫼 *moe* [mwe] ~ 메 *me* [me] 'mountain' (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 98-101).
12. HS 四 刂 (HW) *(nə[?])ri 'four' < CKor *nəri(h[?]) > EMK *nəyh : LMK *nəˇyh* (Shimunek, 2021b, pp. 142-143; revised from Lee, 2017, p. 143). Cf. Common Nivkh *nə(r)- 'four' (*CND*).
13. HS 尼 (*SS*) *ni ~ 尼 (*SY*) ~ 齒 (*SY*) *ni 'tooth' (attested in HP 尼師今 *ni-s-kɨm and its variants 尼叱今 ~ 齒叱今 *ni-tś-kɨm, composed of HS *ni 'tooth' + *-s ~ *-tś 'genitive-attributive suffix' + *kɨm (noun of unknown meaning) : EMK *ni > LMK *ní* > MSK *i* 'tooth' < CKor *ni 'tooth'.
14. HS 波衣 (*SY*) *paɦɨy 'rock, cliff, precipice'← OKog 波兮 *paɦɨy ⇄ pre-Nivkh > Common Nivkh *baʁ 'stone' (*CND*, *pace* Kang, 1983, p. 124).
15. HS 卜 ~ 伏 ~ 福 (*SY*) *pʊk 'child, youth, boy' : HK *mʊk 'child, son'; no cognates in medieval or modern Koreanic (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 92-94, *pace* Lee, 1970, pp. 201-210).
16. HS 火 (*SS*) [=伐] *pʊr 'mound (丘); fortress, walled city (城)' : HP *pʊri 'soil mountain; mound; high level ground' : HK *pʊ 'mountain' < CKor *pʊr 'mound; fortress, city' (cf. Kōno, 1987, p. 83).
17. HS 火 (*SS*) [=伐] *pʊ-r 'overlook (臨)', analyzable as HS *pʊ- 'to look, overlook' (cognate to EMK > LMK *pʊˇ- ~ pʊ́- ~ pʊ̀-* 'to look' > MSK /pʊ-/ 'to look') + *-r 'relative clause forming suffix'.
18. HS *-r 'relative clause forming suffix' (see HS *kɨ-r ~ *ki-r 'good' and HS *pʊ-r 'overlook' above) (cf. also Sin, 2002, p. 63, for this suffix in 慕理尸.).
19. HS 竹尸 (HW) *...r ~ 竹伊 (HW) *...i ~ 竹利 (HW) *...ri 'bamboo' : HK *tay 'bamboo' : EMK *tay : LMK *táy* > MSK /tɛ/ 'bamboo' (Shimunek, 2021b, pp. 142-143; revised from Lee, 2017, pp. 272-273).
20. HS 蒜尸 *...r 'garlic' (compare LMK *mànʎr* 'garlic').
21. HS 西良 (*SS*) *sɛyra ~ 東尸 (*SY*) *sʌyr 'east' : HK *śa 'east' (~ dialectal 'south') : LMK *sʎ́y* 'east' > MSK /sɛ-/ 'east' in sailor's jargon 새바람 /sɛ-param/ [sɛbaram] 'east wind' (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 90-91, 100-101).
22. HS *sɨra ~ *sira ~ *sɨrʊ 'Silla' (← PS *sɨra ~ *sira ~ *sɨrʊ 'gold; Silla' q.v. infra). With the added Han-Silla word *pʊr 'city', the capital city of early Silla is *sɨra *pʊr 'Golden City (金城)' (*SS*) or 'Silla City'. Although the Silla capital was located in what is now the modern city of 慶州 Kyŏngju (Gyeongju), this city name, originally two separate words, was reanalyzed as a single word, and was semantically extended to denote 'capital city' in general: Its Late Middle Korean reflex *syəˇβɨr* 'capital city' is the immediate origin of the capital city of modern South Korea, 서울 MSK /səur/ [sʰəu[]

'Seoul' (see Kōno, 1987, p. 83, and Lee & Ramsey, 2011, pp. 47, 75 for similar proposals). The Han-Silla reading *sɨra ~ *sira 'Silla' – and specifically the form 新羅 (KPEMC *sirla), read as HS *sira – was replaced in MSK with the later, modern Sino-Korean reading 신라 [ɕʰilːa] 'Silla'.

23. HS 首 (*SS*) *śu 'ox, cow, cattle (牛)' > EMK *śʊ : LMK *syǔ* > MSK */sʊ/ 'ox' (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 96, 101; *KLJ* 168)
24. HS 一等 (*SY*) *…tʌ(N) 'one' : EMK *hatʌn ~ *harʌn (*KYS*, *NCR*, *SZR*) : LMK *hànàh ~ hàn-* : MSK *hana ~ han-* 'one' (Shimunek, 2021b, pp. 145-147, revised; Lee Seungjae 2017, p. 145, revised; Tsuji, 2000a, 2000b).
25. HS 海等 (*SY*) *…tʌ(N) ~ 海惡 (*SY*) *…ak 'ocean, sea'. Insufficient phonetic details to confirm or demonstrate a connection with LMK *pàrár ~ pàtáh* 'ocean, sea' nor for a loanword relationship with OKog *pa 'ocean, sea' (q.v. infra).
26. HS dial. 豆良 (*SS*) *tɨra/*tʊra 'west (西)' ~ HS dial. 知 (*SS*) *tɨy/*ti 'north (北)' : HP *ti 'north' : LMK *tŭyh* 'behind, back; north' > MSK *twi* 'back, behind'.
27. HS 叱 (*SS*) *-tś ~ HS northern dial. 次 (*SS*) *-ts 'genitive-attributive suffix' : HK *-s : HK/HP *-(t)s : LMK *-s* (-ㅅ) 'genitive-attributive' < CKor *-tś ~ *-ts (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 94-98). As noted by Ross King, 19th century Russian sources on northern dialects attest an affricate /-ts/ 'genitive-attributive suffix' corresponding to Modern Standard Korean orthographic *-s* 'genitive-attributive' (King, 1991, p. 121; Shimunek, 2023, p. 96).
28. HS 城叱 (*SY*) *…tś (☆tśatś) : HK/HP *(t)sas : LMK *tsás* 'walled city, fortification' (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 95-96 n. 72, p. 101, with revision *pace* Kōno, 1987, p. 79).
29. HS 切也 (*SS*) *tsɛyra 'highland (皐)' : LMK *tsáy* 'ridge, mountain pass, ridge' > MSK *chae* S. [ʧɛ] ~ N. [tsɛ] 'ridge, mountain pass' < CKor *tsayrĕ 'ridge, mountain pass'. On the KPEMC reading of the HS transcription, see Shimunek, 2023, p. 86 n. 12.
30. HS 雨谷 (*SS*) *ukʊk/*uyʊk/*urʊk 'north (北)' : HK/HP *ʊk-/*uk- 'above' : LMK *ùh* 'above' > MSK *wi* 'above, upper' (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 97, 101).

6.1.1.2 Han-Paekche (HP)

Han-Paekche is the Koreanic language spoken in the bilingual Paekche kingdom. This language, like all Han languages, is divergently related to the modern Korean language. It was spoken alongside the unrelated Puyŏ-Paekche language (below).

1. HP *-ɨy ‘genitive-attributive case suffix’ (see entry for HP *sɨp ‘forest’ below).
2. HP *kʊma (*kʊ̀má) ‘bear’, attested in transmitted form in Late Middle Korean in the Paekche toponym *kʊ̀má *nʌ̀rʌ̀ ‘Bear Ford’, the name of the Paekche capital Ungjin near modern-day Kongju (Gongju). See LMK *kʊ̆m* ‘bear’ for etymological notes.
3. HP 仇知 (*SS*) *kuti ‘gold (金)’ : LMK *kùrí* ‘copper’ > MSK *kuri* ‘copper’.
4. HP 未知 (*SS*) *miti ~ 旀知 (*SS*) *meti ‘city (邑)’ < CKor *mati (perhaps */mat-i/ with *-i ‘nominative case suffix’) ‘plot of land’ > LMK 맡 *màtʰ* ~ 맏 *màt* ‘plot of land’ > MSK 마당 *madang* ‘plot of land, yard’, a blend of LMK 맏 *màt* + Chosŏn Sino-Korean 댱 (場) *tyang* ‘plot of land’ (cf. Jpn *miti* ‘street’, *mati* ‘town’ ← ? early Koreanic).
5. HP 毛良 (*SS*) *mʊra ~ ムレ ~ 武例 ~ 牟礼 ~ 茂梨 (*NS*) *mʊrɪ ‘tall, high (高); mountain (山)’ : HS *mʊr ‘mountain’ : HK *pʊ ‘mountain’ : LMK *mʊ̆yh ~ mʊ̀rʊ́ ~ mʊ̀h* ‘mountain’ > MSK 뫼 *moe* [mwe] ~ 메 *me* [me] ‘mountain’ (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 98-101, *pace* Kōno, 1987, pp. 76-77).
6. HP ナリ (*NS*) *nari ~ ナレ (*NS*) *narɪ ‘river’ : HK *ta ~ *tay ‘river’ : LMK *nă̆yh* > MSK /nɛ/ ‘river, stream’ (Shimunek, 2023, p. 101).
7. HP 夫里 (*SS*) *pʊri ‘soil mountain (阜); walled city, fortification (城); high ground (敞)’ : HS *pʊri ~ *pʊr ‘mound, fortress, city’ (cf. Kōno, 1987, p. 83).
8. HP *sɨp ‘forest’ (*SS*, attested in the genitive case form 所非 *sɨp-ɨy ‘[of the] forest (林)’ = *sɨp ‘forest’ + *-ɨy ‘genitive-attributive case suffix’) : LMK *súp* ‘marsh overgrown with wild plants’ ~ *sùpʰɨ̏r* ‘forest’ > MSK 숲 /supʰ/ [sup̚~ supʰ-] ‘forest’.
9. HP 實於 (*SS*) *zirɨ/*zɨrɨ ‘iron (鐵)’ < ? CKor *ź́irɨ/*zʊ́rɨ > EMK *sʊy ‘iron’ > LMK *sʊ́y* ‘iron, metal’.
10. HP 知 (*SS*) *ti ‘north (北)’ : HS dial. *tɨra/*tʊra ‘west’ ~ HS dial. *tɨy ‘north’ : LMK *tŭ̆yh* ‘back, behind; north’ > MSK *twi* ‘back, behind’.

6.1.1.3 Han-Kara (HK)

Han-Kara is the Koreanic language spoken in the southern kingdom of Kara (Kaya) before it was absorbed by Silla in the early years of its territorial expansion.

1. HK 吉 (*SS*) *kir ‘long time (永)’ : LMK *kĭr-* ‘to be long’ : MSK /kir-/ [kiɭ- ~ kiɾ- ~ ki-] ‘long’ (cf. Common Nivkh *gəl- ‘long’, *CND*). The word 吉 ‘long time’ has previously been treated as a word from Silla territory (Lee & Ramsey, 2011, p. 52). Toh (1987) correctly identifies

this as a word from former Kara territory. It is thus a Han-Kara word.

2. HK 木 (*SS*) *mʊk 'child, son' : HS *pʊk 'child, youth, boy'; no cognates in medieval or modern Koreanic (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 92-94).
3. HK 浦 (*SS*) *pʊ 'mountain (山)' : HS *mʊr ~ HP *mʊra ~ *mʊrɪ : LMK *mʊˇyh ~ mʊ̀rʊ́ ~ mʊ̀h* > MSK 뫼 *moe* [mwe] ~ 메 *me* [me] 'mountain' (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 98-101).
4. HK 勿 (*SS*) *mur 'water (水)' : EMK *mur/*mɨr : LMK *mɨ́r* > MSK /mur/ [muɭ ~ ᵐbuɭ] 'water' (cf. Late Kitan *mur 'river' < CSM *murə 'large river', *LASM* 354).
5. HK 內 (*SS*) *na- 'outstanding (善)' : MSK 나- *na-* 'to excel, be outstanding' as in MSK 잘나- *challa-* 'to be excellent, extraordinary, remarkable' (literally: 'to emerge well') < CKor *na- 'emerge; excel, be outstanding, remarkable'.
6. HK 斯 (*SS*) *-s : HK/HP *-(t)s : HS *-tś ~ *-ts > LMK *-s* 'genitive-attributive' < CKor *-tś ~ *-ts (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 97-98).
7. HK 沙 (*SS*) *śa 'east (東)' (~ dialectal 'south') : HS *sɛyra ~ *sʌyr 'east' : LMK *sʌ́y* 'east' > MSK /sɛ-/ 'east' (e.g. MSK sailor's jargon *saebaram* [sɛbaram] 'east wind') (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 90-91, 100-101).
8. HK 多 (*SS*) *ta ~ 大 (*SS*) *tay 'river (河); brook (谿)' : HP *nari ~ *narɪ 'id.' : LMK *nʌ̌yh* > MSK /nɛ/ 'river, stream' (Shimunek, 2023)
9. HK 推 (*SS*) *tay 'bamboo (竹)' : HS *…r ~ *…i ~ *…ri : LMK *tʌ́y* > MSK /tɛ/ 'bamboo'.
10. HK 推 = *崔 (*KLJ* 15) *ts(ʷ)əy(h) 'three': EMK *səy(h) > LMK *səˇyh* > MSK *set ~ se- ~ sək-* 'three'.
11. HK 召羅 (*SS*) *tʊra (MChi ˣ*ḍiawla*) 'yellow (黃)' : EMK Kaesŏng dial. *narʊ- : LMK Hanyang dial. *nʊ́rʌ́-* 'yellow' < CKor *ⁿdʊra- ~ *nʊra- 'yellow'.

6.1.1.4 Han-Kara or Han-Paekche (HK/HP)

Some of the early Koreanic words transcribed in kana in the *Nihon shoki* are difficult to identify as Kara or as Paekche (cf. Kōno, 1987, p. 77). The words are certainly from one of these two kingdoms, but in instances when the exact provenance between these two is unknown, I have indicated them as 'Han-Kara or Han-Paekche' to remain faithful to the source material.

1. HK/HP *arɨ- (*NS* アル- OJpn *aru- ~ アロ- OJpn *aro- ~ 阿留- OJpn *aru-) 'below, lower (下)' : LMK *àrà* 'below' : MSK /arɛ/ 'below' (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 97, 100, *pace* Kōno, 1987, p. 77).

2. HK/HP *arp- (*NS* アリヒ- ~ 阿利比- OJpn *aripi-) ‘south (南)’ : LMK 앒 *àrpʰ* ‘front, south’ > MSK 앞 /apʰ/ [ap̚- ~ apʰ-] ‘front’ (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 97, 100, *pace* Kōno, 1987, p. 77).
3. HK/HP *nirim (*ˣnìrím) (*NS* ニリム OJpn *nirimu) ‘lord’ (cf. Kōno, 1987, p. 76): LMK *nĭm* : MSK *-nim* ‘respectful person suffix’ (see etymology in entry for LMK *nĭm* below).
4. HK/HP *-(t)s (*NS* -シ OJpn *tsi/*si) : HS *-tś ~ *-ts > LMK *-s* < CKor *-tś ~ *-ts ‘genitive-attributive suffix’ (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 97-98).
5. HK/HP *(t)sas (*NS* サシ OJpn *tsatsi/*sasi) ‘walled city, fortification’ : HS *...tśʰ ‘walled city, fortification’ : LMK *tsás* (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 95-96n72, 101, with revision).
6. HK/HP *ʊk-/*uk- ‘upper, above part’ (*NS* オコ- ~ ヲコ- ~ ウヲコ- OJpn *oko- ~ *woko- ~ *uwoko-, glossed ‘upper; highest, head, foremost; thriving’) : HS *ukʊk/*uyʊk/*urʊk ‘north’ : LMK *ùh* > MSK *wi* ‘above’ (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 97, 101).

6.1.2 Middle Korean

Middle Korean is solidly attested in two different periods: Koryŏ Early Middle Korean (EMK) and Chosŏn Late Middle Korean (LMK) (see Lee & Ramsey, 2011 for this periodization). Modern Standard Korean (MSK) forms are only cited when particularly progressive or otherwise informative.

6.1.2.1 Koryŏ Early Middle Korean (EMK)

This data is primarily attested from the early part of the Koryŏ Kingdom before it became a vassal state of the Mongol Empire. The primary sources of EMK data in this paper are sourced in the 12th-century *Jilin Leishi* (*Kyerim Yusa*), the *Nichūreki* (*NCR*), the *Sezokujiruishō* (*SZR*), the 1120 *Toijangga* (*TJ*), the mid-13th century *Hyang'yak Kugŭppang* (*HYKP*), and kugyŏl readings in the 13th century *Kuyŏk Inwanggyŏng* (Lee, 2011). Some of the differences between attested EMK and attested LMK which cannot be explained as regular changes from one period of the language to the next may be due to geographical dialectal differences: In Koryŏ when EMK was spoken, the capital was in Kaesŏng, whereas LMK data is mostly attested from the Chosŏn capital of Hanyang (Seoul).

1. EMK *ahʊrp (*SZR* アフル ~ *KYS* 鴉好) : LMK *àhŭp* > MSK /ahʊp/ [aɦʊp] ‘nine’. No word for ‘nine’ is attested in earlier Han (Koreanic) sources. If the final glyph ル in the Middle Japanese transcription アフル (MJpn *aɸuru) is faithful to the original, taken together with the Chinese transcription 鴉好 (KPEMC ˣaχʊ ~ MChi Pul. 354, 121

ˣʔaiχaw) it suggests EMK *ahʊrp ‘nine’. (Cf. Attested Middle Chinese 好 *hau ~ hou* Cob./Tak. 0428).

2. EMK *han/*hʌn *sʊy (*KYS* 漢歲) ‘silver (銀)’ (literally: ‘white metal’) : LMK *hńy-n* ‘white’ – based on the *KYS* form, Nam reconstructs LMK **hʌy-n* **sʊy* ‘silver’ (Nam, 2024, p. 1470; I have added the asterisks to indicate that this LMK form is not attested in LMK sources – the source Nam cites is *KYS*, so the LMK form is thus Nam’s reconstruction).
3. EMK *hatʌn ~ *harʌn (*KYS* 河屯, *NCR* カタナ, *SZR* カラナ) : LMK *hànàh* : MSK *hana ~ han-* ‘one’ (Shimunek, 2021b, pp. 145-146). Considering the limitations of Middle Japanese phonotactics, the kana transcriptions カタナ (*NCR*) MJpn *katana and カラナ (*SZR*) MJpn *karana transcribe EMK *hatʌn ~ *harʌn ‘one’, as Middle Japanese does not have /h/, /ʌ/, nor does it have coda /n/ (Shimunek, 2021b, pp. 145-146).
4. EMK *ɦʊn (*KYS* 醞) : LMK *ɦún* ‘hundred’.
5. EMK *irkip ~ *nirkup ~ *nirkʊp (*KYS*, *NCR*, *SZR*) : LMK *nìrkúp* > Early Modern Korean *nirkʊp* > MSK /irkʊp/ [iɭgʊp̚] ‘seven’. As Tsuji Seiji (2000a, 2000b) has correctly demonstrated, the EMK numeral ‘seven’ is misglossed as ‘eight’ in the Middle Japanese sources. The Middle Japanese phonetic transcriptions in *NCR* are the most problematic and clearly involve several layers of copyist errors. I propose that チリクニ is an error for *ニリクチ, and that チ is an error for *フ. The original transcription should thus be reconstructed as *ニリクフ (MJpn *nirikuɸu), rendering EMK *nirkup ‘seven’ (though erroneously glossed as ‘eight’). The transcription タリクニ is an error for *ニリクタ in which the glyph タ is an error for *フ, rendering the same transcription as above, i.e., *ニリクフ (MJpn *nirikuɸu). These necessary revisions, though complicated, are clearly correct, as the *SZR* transcription ニリコフ (MJpn *nirikoɸu) for EMK *nirkʊp precisely matches the *KYS* transcription 一急 *irkip ‘seven’ and LMK *nirkup ~ nirkʊp* ‘seven’.
6. EMK *itś-/*its- (*Kuyŏk Inwanggyŏng* 有七) ‘to exist’ (see entry for HS *ɨtś- ‘to exist’ above).
7. EMK *kipʰ- ‘deep’, attested in EMK *kipʰ-ɨn (*KYS* 及欣) ‘deep (深)’ : LMK *kìpʰ-* > MSK /kipʰ-/ ‘deep’.
8. EMK *kɨr (*KYS* 乞) ‘letter, glyph (字); writing (書)’ > LMK *kɨ̀r ~ kɨ́r* > MSK /kɨr/ [kɨɭ] ‘writing’ (see OKog *kɨr ‘writing’ for etymology).
9. EMK *kʊr/*kʊ(s?)/*kʊ(ts?) (*KYS* 骨) ‘flower (花)’ : LMK 곶 *kʊ̀ts* ~ 곳 *kʊ̀s* > MSK 꽃 /k͈ʊtɕʰ/ [k͈ʊt̚ ~ k͈ʊtɕʰ-] ‘flower, blossoms’.

10. EMK *mar/*mʌr ‘horse’ ← non-distinctive areal word. See LMK *màr* > MSK /mar/ [ma˩] ‘horse’ below.
11. EMK (*KYS* 麻帝) *mati ‘head (頭)’ : LMK *màrí* ‘head’ > MSK ‘head; hair on one’s head’. The EMK word is also the etymon of the LMK sortal unit classifier *màrí* used for counting certain animals, and its MSK reflex *mari*, e.g., MSK /mar han-**mari**/ ‘one horse’. (On phoronyms, including classifiers, see Beckwith, 2007b)
12. EMK *mur/*mɨr (*KYS* 沒) ‘water (水)’ : LMK *mɨ́r* ‘water’ (see HK *mur ‘water’ above).
13. EMK *mʊy(h?) (*KYS* 每) ‘mountain (山)’ : LMK *mʊˇyh ~ mʊ̀rʊ́ ~ mʊ̀h* > MSK 뫼 *moe* [mwe] ~ 메 *me* [me] ‘mountain’ (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 99).
14. EMK */namk-i/ (*KYS* 南記) ‘tree (木)’ = */namk/ ‘tree’ with /-i/ ‘nominative case suffix’ > LMK *nàmk* **~** *nàmʊ̀* > MSK *namu* ‘tree, wood’.
15. EMK *namur (*HYKP* 那勿) ‘lead (metal)’ ← OKog *namur ‘lead (metal)’ (*KLJ* 175; Lee, 1964, p. 17). Replaced in LMK with the unrelated word *náp* (see below).
16. EMK *narʊ-n (*KYS* 那論) ‘yellow (黃)’ (see entry for HK *tʊra- ‘yellow’ above).
17. EMK *narʊnɨy (*KYS* 那論義) ‘gold (金)’. The root is EMK *narʊ- ‘yellow’ (see HK *tʊra- ‘yellow’ above).
18. EMK (*TJ* 魂是) *(nək^{ʔ})ś-i, inflected form of */(nək^{ʔ})s/ ‘soul’ with */-i/ ‘nominative case suffix’ : LMK 넋 *nèks* > MSK 넋 /nəks/ [nə̀k̚]# ~ [nəks-] ~ [nəkɕ-] ‘soul, spirit, ghost’.
19. EMK *nəyh ~ *^{n}dəyh (*KYS* 迺 ~ *NCR* トヰ MJpn *towi ~ トヒ MJpn *toɸi ~ *SZR* トイ MJpn *toi) : LMK *nəˇyh* ‘four’ (Shimunek, 2021b, pp. 142-143). See HS *…ri ‘four’ above for etymology. As with EMK *səyh ‘three’ below, Middle Japanese *ɸ in the *NCR* and *SZR* transcriptions of Early Middle Korean are attempts to render EMK coda *h#* positionally limited by Middle Japanese phonotactics.
20. EMK *ni (*KYS* 你) ‘tooth (齒)’ > LMK *ní* > MSK /i/ ‘tooth’ (see HS *nitśkɨm above).
21. EMK ***p**ar (*KYS* 潑) ‘foot (足)’ : LMK *pár* ‘foot’.
22. EMK *pʊ- (*KYS* 鋪) ‘look’ (attested in the sense of 讀 ‘read’) < HS *pʊ ‘look’ above.
23. EMK *puk (*KYS* 濮) ‘drum (鼓)’ : LMK *púp ~ púpʰ ~ pùpʰ* > MSK *puk* ‘drum’.
24. EMK *səyh (*KYS* 洒) > LMK *səˇyh* > MSK *set ~ se- ~ sək-* ‘three’. Middle Japanese transcriptions of EMK: *NCR* サヰ MJpn *sawi ~ ソヒ MJpn *soɸi and *SZR* ソイ MJpn *soi ‘three’. Tsuji Seiji (2000a, 2000b)

correctly demonstrates that the semantic glosses for ‘three’ and ‘four’ were flipped in *NCR*. The Middle Japanese (MJpn) segment *ɸ is an attempt to render the final *h of the Korean form. Thus, in my analysis, サヰ (MJpn *saɸi) and ソヒ (MJpn *soɸi) are both attempts to render EMK *səyh ‘three’. Middle Japanese phonotactics do not allow coda *h#*. Likewise, MJpn *o could render Korean *o*, *ʊ*, or *ə*.

25. EMK *sʊy (*KYS* 歲) ‘iron (鐵)’ (see HP *ziɾɨ/*zɨɾɨ ‘iron’).
26. EMK *śʊ (*KYS* 燒) ‘ox, cow, cattle (牛)’ (see HS *śu ‘ox’ above).
27. EMK *tasɨs ~ *tasʌs : LMK *tàsʌ́s* ‘five’. The EMK forms are attested as follows: 打成 (*KYS*), ハスヽ ~ ハソヽ ~ サソヽ (*NCR*), and タヽス ~ タスソ (*SZR*). In my analysis, ハ (MJpn *ɸa) is a scribal error for the premodern kana 太 (MJpn *ta). Thus, the transcription ハスヽ should be revised to *太スヽ (MJpn *tasusu) and ハソヽ should be revised to *太ソヽ (MJpn *tasoso). The form サソヽ is a copyist’s error for *太ソヽ (MJpn *tasoso). The form タヽス is likewise an error. As Tsuji Seiji (2000a, 2000b) has correctly demonstrated, the *NCR* semantic glosses are flipped: The numeral for five is labeled as ‘six’, and the numeral for six is glossed as ‘five’.
28. EMK *tay (*KYS* 帶) ‘bamboo (竹)’ : LMK *táy* > MSK /tɛ/ ‘bamboo’. See EMK *tay above and HS *…r ‘bamboo’ above for etymology.
29. EMK *tuβur ~ *tuβu(r) ~ *tuβʊr (*KYS* 途孛, *NCR*, *SZR*) : LMK *tŭr(h)* > MSK *tur* ~ *tu-* ‘two’ (Shimunek, 2021b, pp. 145-147). Middle Japanese kana transcriptions of EMK: ツフリ ~ トフ (*NCR*) and ツホル ~ ツフル (*SZR*) (cited from Tsuji 2000a, 2000b), which I read as MJpn *tuɸuri ~ *toɸu ~ tuɸoru ~ tuɸuru.
30. EMK *tʊr (*KYS* 突) ‘stone (石)’ : LMK *tʊˇrh* ‘stone’ > MSK *tor* [tʊ̜] ‘stone’.
31. EMK *tʊr/*tʊ(t?) (*KYS* 突) ‘pig (豬)’. See LMK *tʊ̀t ~ tʊ̀t^{h}* ‘pig’ below.
32. EMK *umur (*KYS* 烏沒) ‘well (井)’ > LMK *ùmɨ́r* (cf. LMK *úmh* ‘cellar, hole’ + *mɨ́r* ‘water’) > MSK *umur* [umu̜] ‘well’.
33. EMK *yər(h?) (*KYS* 噎 ~ *SZR* エル) : LMK *yə́rh* ‘ten’. It is generally agreed that the *NCR* transcriptions of EMK ‘ten’ are erroneous; as such, I have not cited them here.
34. EMK *yəsɨs ~ *yəsʌs : LMK *yə̀sɨ́s* ‘six’. The EMK forms are attested as follows: 逸成 (*KYS*), エスヽ MJpn *yesusu ~ エソヽ MJpn *yesoso (*NCR*), and エスヽ MJpn *yesusu ~ エスソ MJpn *yesuso (*SZR*). The Japanese glyph エ is pronounced *e* in Modern Standard Japanese, but in Middle Japanese it was pronounced *ye (IPA */je/), and could thus transcribe Middle Korean *yə or *ə. Given the Late Middle Korean and Modern Korean forms, the Japanese glyph エ (MJpn *ye) here is clearly a transcription of EMK */yə/.

35. EMK *yətʌrp (*NCR* エタリ MJpn *yetari ~ *SZR* エトロフ MJpn *yetoroɸu ~ *KYS* 逸答) : LMK *yətɨrp* ‘eight’. The *KYS* transcription 逸答, read *yərtVp, is undoubtedly an attempted phonetic transcription of EMK *yətVrp limited by the phonotactic constraints of Chinese, which at this point in time did not (and even today still does not) allow consonant clusters.

6.1.2.2 Chosŏn Late Middle Korean (LMK)

Late Middle Korean is the language of the earliest Hangŭl texts of the 15th to early 16th centuries. It is important to distinguish these earlier Hangŭl texts from the later, Early Modern Korean texts. Note that the Late Middle Korean and Modern Standard Korean vowel ㅗ (rendered as “o” in most conventional romanization systems) is phonemically treated as /ʊ/ in this paper. Likewise, Late Middle Korean and Modern Standard Korean Hangŭl ㄹ represents the phonemic /r/. Unless otherwise indicated, the Late Middle Korean words below are my phonemic representations of early Hangul orthographic forms in Nam, *Koŏ sajŏn* 古語辭典 (2024) and Hangŭl Hakhoe, *Uri mal k'ŭn sajŏn* 우리 말 큰 사전 (1992).

1. LMK *àhʊ́p* > MSK /aɦʊp/ ‘nine’ (see EMK *ahʊrp ‘nine’ above).
2. LMK *àrà* ‘below’ < CKor > HS *ara : HK/HP *arɨ- ‘below’ (Shimunek, 2023, p. 97).
3. LMK *àrpʰ* (see entry for HK/HP *arp above).
4. LMK *ə̀skə́y* ‘shoulder’ > MSK /əkɛ̰/ ‘shoulder’.
5. LMK *ə ˇt-* > MSK /ət-/ ‘get, have, obtain, acquire, etc.’
6. LMK *hʌ̀nàh ~ hʌ̀n-* : MSK *hana ~ han-* ‘one’ (See EMK *hatʌn ~ *harʌn ‘one’ above).
7. LMK *ɦʊ́n* ‘hundred’ (replaced in MSK with Sino-Korean 百 (백) *paek* [pɛk̚] ‘hundred’).
8. LMK *ìs-* ‘to exist’ (see HS *itś- ~ *ɨtś- above for etymology).
9. LMK *kàβʌ́ntʌ́y* > MSK /kaunte/ [kaunde] ‘center, central’.
10. LMK *kàtsí-* ‘to take, bring’. Superficially similar to Manchu *gajĩ-* ‘bring’, but perhaps unrelated, cf. Manchu *gai-* ‘take’ and Manchu *jĩ-* ‘come’.
11. LMK *kʰòŋ* ‘soybean’ > MSK ‘bean’ (in general).
12. LMK *kìpʰ-* > MSK /kipʰ-/ ‘deep’.
13. LMK *kĭr-* ‘to be long’ : MSK *kir-* [kiɭ- ~ kiɾ- ~ ki-] ‘long’. See HK *kir ‘long time’ above for etymology.
14. LMK *kìs-* ‘to rejoice, to be happy’ < HS *ki- ‘to praise, commend, be good’ + *itś- ‘exist’ (see HS *ki-r and HS *itś- above). Cf. MSK 기쁘-

kippŭ- /kipi̯-/ ‘to be happy’ < LMK *kìs-pɨ́-* < LMK *kìs-* ‘to be happy, rejoice’.
15. LMK *kɨ̀r ~ kɨ́r* > MSK /kɨr/ [kɨɭ] ‘writing’ as in /han kɨr/ [haŋgɨɭ] ‘Hangŭl’ (see EMK *kɨr ‘writing’ above for etymology).
16. LMK *kàrʌ́m* > MSK *karam* ‘river’. (See HS *kur ‘river’ above.)
17. LMK *kʊ̌m* ‘bear’ ← widespread areal word with comparanda in Chinese, Tibeto-Burman, Koreanic, and Japanese- Koguryoic (*KLJ* 152-153). See HP *kʊma (*kʊ̀má) ‘bear’ above.
18. LMK *kʊ̌r* ‘valley’ > MSK 골짜기 ‘valley, vale, canyon, ravine, gorge’.
19. LMK *kʊ̀ts ~ kʊ̀s* > MSK /kʊ̯tɕʰ/ [kʊ̯t̚- ~ kʊ̯tɕʰ-i] ‘flower, blossoms’ (see EMK *kʊr/*kʊ(s?)/*kʊ(ts?) above).
20. LMK *màh* ‘south’ (see HP *mak ‘south’ above). Replaced in MSK with Sino-Korean 南 *nam* ‘south’ but retained in sailor’s jargon as 마파람 [mapʰaram] ‘south wind’ from */mah-param/ ‘south-wind’.
21. LMK *maň hʌ́ - ~ màn hʌ́ -* ‘to be abundant, plentiful, many’ (← Ch. 萬 ‘ten thousand; plentiful’ + LMK *hʌ-*) > MSK 많- *manh-* ‘to be plentiful, abundant’.
22. LMK *mànʌ́r* ‘garlic’ (compare HS 蒜尸 *…r ‘garlic’).
23. LMK *màrí* sortal unit classifier for counting certain animals (see EMK *mati ‘head’ above).
24. LMK *màts-* ‘meet, receive, greet, encounter, etc.’, the root of MSK 맞- /matɕ-/ ‘match, correct, agree’ etc. and MSK 만나- /manna-/ ‘to meet, encounter’ etc.
25. LMK *màrí* ‘head’ (see EMK *mati ‘head’ above).
26. LMK *mʌ̀r* > MSK /mar/ [maɭ] ‘horse’ (see EMK *mar/*mʌr ‘horse’ above for this non-distinctive areal word).
27. LMK *màtʰ ~ màt* < CKor *mati (perhaps */mat-i/ with *-i ‘nominative case suffix’) > HP *meti ~ *miti (SS) : HS *miti (SS) (cf. Jpn *miti* ‘street’, *mati* ‘town’ ← ? early Koreanic).
28. LMK *mɨ́r* ‘water’ (see HK *mur ‘water’ above).
29. LMK *mʊ̀t-* > MSK /mʊi-/ ‘gather’.
30. LMK *mʊ̌yh ~ mʊ̀rʊ́ ~ mʊ̀h* ‘mountain’ > MSK 뫼 *mwe* ~ 메 *me-* ‘mountain’.
31. LMK *mʌ̀zʌ̀m* ‘heart’ (> MSK *maɨm* ‘heart’) < CKor (see HS 心音 *…m ‘heart’ above).
32. LMK *nàmk ~ nàmʊ̀* ‘tree, wood’ (see EMK *namk above) > MSK *namu* ‘tree, wood’.
33. LMK *náp* ‘lead (metal)’ > MSK *nap* ‘lead’. The LMK and MSK words are unrelated to EMK *namur (see above).
34. LMK *nə̀k nə̀k* > MSK /nək nək/ [nəŋnək] ‘plenty, wealthy, well-off, sufficient, rich, abundant’.

35. LMK *nèks* > MSK /nəks/ [nəks̄]# ~ [nəks-] ~ [nəkɕ-] ‘soul, spirit, ghost’.
36. LMK *nèp-* > MSK /nərp-/ ‘wide, broad, vast’.
37. LMK *nètsʰúr* ‘vine’ > MSK /nəntɕʰur/ [nəntɕʰuɭ] ‘vine’.
38. LMK *nəˇyh ~ nè- ~ nəˇk-* > MSK *net ~ ne- ~ nək-* ‘four’. See HS *…ri ‘four’ above for etymology.
39. LMK *ní* > MSK *i* ‘tooth’ (cf. HS *niskɨm ‘tooth’ above).
40. LMK *nǐm* ‘lord, monarch, ruler’ < CKor *nirim (☆nìrím) ‘lord’ > HK/HP *nirim (☆nìrím?) ‘lord’ (*NS*). The Modern Standard Korean reflex *-nim* is a suffix added to titles and personal names to express respect. The older meaning of ‘lord’ is retained in MSK /imkɨm/ [imgɨm] ‘lord, monarch, ruler’ < LMK *nǐm-kɨ́m ~ nǐm-kúm* < LMK *nǐm* ‘lord’.
41. LMK *nìrkúp* > Early Modern Korean *nirkʊp* > MSK /irkʊp/ [iɭgʊp] ‘seven’.
42. LMK *nʌ̀mʌ̀rh* ‘herbs, wild vegetables, sprouts, greens’ > MSK /namur/ [namuɭ] ‘id.’
43. LMK *nʌ̀rʌ̀* ‘ford’ > MSK *naru* and its bound post-lateral variant *-laru* ‘ford’ (e.g., Jamsillaru Station on the Seoul Metropolitan Subway).
44. LMK *nʌ́m* ‘person, human’ > MSK /nʊm/ ‘guy, blighter, bloke, bastard, jerk’ (the modern word is mostly pejorative). Perhaps related to LMK *nʌ́m ~ nʌ̀m* > MSK *nam* ‘other person, stranger’.
45. LMK *nʌ́rá-* ‘yellow’ (see entry for HK *tʊra- ‘yellow’ above).
46. LMK *nyèmtʰʉ̀ŋ* (see LMK *ryèmtʰʉŋ* below).
47. LMK *nyètʰ-* > MSK /yətʰ-/ ~ /yatʰ-/ ‘shallow’.
48. LMK *pʰá* ‘onion, green onion, scallion, spring onion, leek’.
49. LMK *pàhʌ́y* > MSK *pawi* ‘rock; crag; reef’ (see OKog and HS *paɦɨy above for etymology).
50. LMK *paǐm* ‘chestnut’.
51. LMK *pár* ‘foot’ < EMK ***p**ar ‘foot’.
52. MSK 빨가- /p̈arka-/ [p̈aɭga-] ‘to be red’ < 발갛- /parkah-/ ‘red’ < LMK *pʌ̀rk-ʌ hʌ-* ~ LMK *pʌ̀rk-* > /park-/ ‘to be bright, brilliant’ (cf. Common Nivkh *bayla- ‘red’ *CND* 189, *pace* Kang, 1983, p. 123).
53. LMK *pʌ̀rʌ́r ~ pʌ̀táh* > MSK *pada* ‘ocean, sea’.
54. LMK *pʌ̀t-* > MSK /pat-/ ‘get, have, receive, take, obtain, be given, etc.’
55. LMK *pʌ̀s ~ pʌ̀t* ‘cherry (blossom)’ > MSK 벚 (orthographically *pec*, phonemically /pət/), e.g., MSK 벚꽃 ‘cherry blossom’.
56. LMK *pʌ̀tɨ́r* ‘willow’.
57. LMK *pʰɨ́y-* > MSK *pʰi-* ‘to bloom, blossom’.
58. LMK *pʊˇ- ~ pʉ́- ~ pʉ̀-* ‘to look’ (see HS *pʊ- above for etymology).
59. LMK *pʌ̀rh* ‘arm’ > MSK /pʰar/ [pʰaɭ] ‘arm’.
60. LMK *púhəŋ* > MSK /puəŋi/ ‘tufted owl’.

61. LMK *púp ~ púpʰ ~ pùpʰ* ‘drum’ (see EMK *puk ‘drum’ above).
62. LMK *ryèmtʰʊ̀ŋ ~ nyèmtʰʊ̀ŋ* ‘heart (bodily organ)’. This word has no currently identified etymology. It may be an onomatopoetic word, imitating the sound of a beating heart.
63. LMK *sărʌ́m ~ sărʌ̀m ~ sàrʌ̀m* ‘person, human’ > MSK *saram* ‘human, person’.
64. LMK *saĭ* ‘bird, fowl’ > MSK /sɛ/ ‘bird’.
65. LMK *sə˘yh ~ sə̀- ~ sə˘k-* > MSK *set ~ se- ~ sək-* ‘three’.
66. LMK *sʌ́y* ‘east’ < CKor > HS *sɛyra ~ HS dial. *sey ‘south’ : HK *śa ‘east’ (Shimunek, 2023). Though retained in sailor’s jargon, this word has been largely replaced in MSK with Sino-Korean 東 *tong* ‘east’.
67. LMK *skwèŋ* ‘pheasant’ (onomatopoeic in origin) > MSK 꿩 [k̟͍wəŋ] ‘pheasant’.
68. LMK *stáh ~ stàh* ‘land’ > MSK 땅 [t̪͍aŋ] ‘land’.
69. LMK *sʊ́r* ‘pine’ > MSK /sʊr/ [sʊ[~ sʊ-] ‘pine’.
70. LMK *sùrí* ‘vulture, eagle’ > MSK /tʊksuri/ ‘vulture, eagle’ with the added Sino-Korean element 禿 /tʊk/ ‘bald’.
71. LMK *sʊ́y* ‘iron, metal’ (see HP *ziri/*zɨri ‘iron’ above).
72. LMK *syə˘βɨr ~ syə˘ʰʊ̀r ~ syə˘ʰʊ́r ~ syə˘ʰʊ̀rh ~ syə˘ʰʊ̀rh* ‘capital city’ < HS *sɨra ~ *sira ~ *sɨrʊ ‘Silla’ (← PS *sɨra ~ *sira ~ *sɨrʊ ‘gold; Silla’) + HS *pʊr ‘city’.
73. LMK *syʊ́* (see HS 首 *śu ‘ox’ above).
74. LMK *tàsʌ́s ~ tày-* > MSK *tasət* ‘five’.
75. LMK *táy* > MSK *tae* [tɛ] ‘bamboo’. See EMK *tay above and HS *…r ‘bamboo’ above for etymology.
76. LMK *tɨ́r-* > MSK /tɨr-/ [tɨ[- ~ tɨr- ~ tɨ-] ‘enter’.
77. LMK *tsás* < CKor ☆tśátś > HS *…tśʰ : HK/HP *(t)sas ‘walled city, fortification’ (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 95-96n72, 101, with revision).
78. LMK *tsáy* ‘ridge, mountain pass’ > MSK S. [ʦɛ] ~ N. [tsɛ] ‘ridge, mountain pass’ (see HS *tsɛyra above for etymology).
79. LMK *tsɨ́mɨ̀n* ‘thousand’ (replaced in MSK with Sino-Korean 千 (천) *ch’ŏn* [ʦʰən] ‘thousand’).
80. LMK *tsʰíp- ~ tsʰíβ-* > MSK /ʦʰup- ~ ʦʰuw-/ ‘cold’ (cf. Common Nivkh *tiv- ‘cold’ *CND* 183, *pace* Kang, 1983, p. 110).
81. LMK *tŭr(h) ~ tŭ-* > MSK *tur ~ tu-* ‘two’ (Shimunek, 2021b, pp. 145-147).
82. LMK *tŭyh* ‘behind; north’ < CKor > HP *ti ‘north’ : HS dial. *tɨra/*tʊra ‘west’ ~ HS dial. *tɨy ‘north’.
83. LMK *tʊ˘rh* ‘stone’ > MSK /tʊr/ [tʊ[] ‘stone’ (see EMK *tʊr ‘stone’ above).

84. LMK *tʊ̀t* ~ *tʊ̀tʰ* ← LOC dial. 豚 (Shimunek, 2021b, p. 138). MSK *twɛʤi* < *tʊyaʤi* < *tʊdaʤi* < LMK *tʊ̀t* 'pig' + - *atsi* 'diminutive suffix denoting the young of certain domesticated animals'. Cf. EMK *tʊr/*tʊ(t?) 'pig'.
85. LMK *tʌ̀rk* 'chicken, hen' is an areal word with comparanda in Serbi-Mongolic, Turkic, Manchu-Tungusic, Hungarian, and other languages (*LASM* 372).
86. LMK *ù̀h* 'above' < CKor > HS *ukʊk/*uyʊk/*urʊk 'north' : HK/HP *ʊk-/*uk- 'above, top' (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 97, 101).
87. LMK *ʊ́k* 'jade' ← 玉 Ch. 'jade'.
88. LMK *ù̀mɨ̂r* 'well' (cf. LMK *úmh* 'cellar, hole' + *mɨ̂r* 'water' < EMK *umur 'well', *KYS*) > MSK /umur/ [umu̯] 'well'.
89. LMK *ʊ̀ráy* 'door, gate', replaced in MSK by Sino-Korean Replaced in MSK by Sino-Korean 門 *mun* 'door, gate'.
90. LMK *ʊ́tpámí* > MSK /ʊrp̈ɛmi/ [ʊ̯ɭp̈ɛmi] 'owl (without tufts)'.
91. LMK *yə ˇr-* > MSK /yər-/ [jə̯ɭ- ~ jər- ~ jə-] 'to open'.
92. LMK *yə́rh* > MSK /yər/ [jə̯ɭ] 'ten'.
93. LMK *yə̀sɨ́s* ~ *yə̀y-* ~ *yə̀s-* > MSK /yəsət/ 'six'.
94. LMK *yə̀tɨ́rp* > MSK 여덟 /yətər/ [jədə̯ɭ] 'eight'. The final /p/ of the LMK form was lost in MSK at the phonemic level, though it is retained in the orthography. According to Lee and Ramsey, 2011, p. 160, the /p/ phoneme is retained in Cheju [jʌdʌp] 'eight'.

6.1.2.3 Old Cheju (T'amna)

Old Cheju or Han-T'amna is minimally attested in the 17th century *T'amnaji* (*TNJ*). The data in that source indicate a language belonging to the Koreanic language family.

1. Old Cheju (T'amna) 兀音 (*TNJ*) *ʊrɨm 'mountain (岳)' : HS 岳音 (*SY*) *...ɨm 'mountain' < CKor *ʊrɨ- 'to move up, ascend, rise'.

6.2 Puyŏ (Puyo-Koguryoic)

The Puyŏ (Puyo-Koguryoic) languages are distantly related to Japanese, forming a distinct branch of the Japanese-Koguryoic language family (*KLJ*). These languages were spoken by the Puyŏ people of Manchuria, who invaded the 三韓 Three Han states of the early Korean Peninsula and formed the powerful kingdoms of Koguryŏ and Paekche. Puyŏ people also seem to have been instrumental in the early politics of Silla (*KLJ*).

Comparative reconstructions based on more than one Puyŏ dialect are 'Common Puyo-Koguryoic' (CPK). Reconstructions based on Puyŏ and Japanese data are termed 'Common Japanese-Koguryoic' (CJK).

6.2.1 Koguryŏ

Koguryŏ is the language of Koguryŏ, the largest kingdom in Korea's history, which included all of today's Korean Peninsula, extending north into Manchuria and including parts of modern China and Russia. Unless otherwise noted, all Archaic Koguryŏ (AKog), Old Koguryŏ (OKog), Archaic Japanese (AJpn), and Old Japanese (OJpn) cognates cited below are from *KLJ*. As the Koguryŏ lexica in §6.2.1.1 and §6.2.1.2 below have been studied in detail by Beckwith (*KLJ*), I have not reproduced the original Chinese character transcriptions.

6.2.1.1 Archaic Koguryŏ (AKog)

Archaic Koguryŏ is the earliest attested stage of the Koguryŏ language, documented in Late Old Chinese transcriptions of the ca. 3rd century CE (*KLJ*; Shimunek, 2021b, p. 153).

1. AKog *ɣapma > OKog *ɦaɨp : MSJ *yama* < CJK *ɣapma 'mountain' (*KLJ*).
2. AKog *kor 'front' ~ AKog *kör 'right (side)' : ? MSJ *ko* 'this, previous' < OJpn *kö < PJpn *koi (*KLJ*). See entry for PP *kʊrʊ 'south' below for cognate and CPK etymology.
3. AKog *kuru > OKog *kuər 'walled city, fort' : ? OJpn *kura 'storehouse' < CJK *kuru 'walled city, fort, embankment' (*KLJ*), and probably also denoting 'moat'. Additional reflexes of the CJK form include PK *kʊr (*NS*, Shimunek, 2023, p. 95 n72) and PS *kɨr ~ *kʊr (*SS*, see below). See additional comparanda in the entry for PP *ki ~ *kɨ 'walled city, fortification' below.
4. AKog *kweru > OKog *kuər 'yellow' : OJpn *ki ~ *ku (> MSJ *ki-* 'yellow' in *kiiro*) < CJK *kuer(u) 'yellow' (*KLJ*).
5. AKog *mey 'good' (see OKog *mey 'excellent, good' below for etymology and cognates).
6. AKog *na : AJpn *nâ > OJpn *nö < CJK *na 'genitive-attributive' (*KLJ* 118-119, 238, 250, 251).
7. AKog *tsɨar ~ *ts^{w}iar 'back, behind' > OKog *tśɨri 'north' : OJpn *tsiri ~ *siri 'back, behind; rump, buttocks' < CJK *tsɨri 'back, behind' (*KLJ*).

6.2.1.2 Old Koguryŏ (OKog)

Old Koguryŏ is the language of the *Samguk sagi* Koguryŏ toponym corpus (*KLJ*; Shimunek, 2021b).

1. OKog *ɦa 'overlook' (*KLJ*) : PP *ɦa 'riverbank, shore' < CPK *ɦa 'overlook'. No identified Japanese cognates.
2. OKog *ɦa : OJpn *a- 'foot' < CJK (*KLJ*).
3. OKog *ɦaɨp 'mountain' (see AKog *ɣapma 'mountain' above for etymology).
4. OKog *ɦaɨp 'west' : OJpn *yami 'darkness, evening' (*KLJ*).
5. OKog *i ~ *yi- 'enter' : OJpn *ir ~ *yir- 'enter' < CJK *i 'enter' (*KLJ*).
6. OKog *ɨr 'spring, source; well' : OJpn *wi 'well' < CJK *wir 'spring, well' (*KLJ* 142 and Beckwith, 2006, p. 225). Also cognate to PS *ɨr 'well' (see below).
7. OKog *kakey 'leek blossom' : OJpn *ka 'scent' + OJpn *ki 'onion' (*KLJ*).
8. OKog *kami 'vulture' (*KLJ*).
9. OKog *kan : OJpn *ka- > OJpn *kabu 'head' ~ *kapo 'face' (*KLJ*).
10. OKog *kati 'east' : OJpn *kəti ~ *koti 'east wind' ~ *pimukatśi 'east' > MSJ *higashi* 'east' < CJK *kati 'east' (*KLJ* and Beckwith, 2006, pp. 207-208).
11. OKog *kay ~ *key 'king' : PP *key 'king' : OJpn *kimi 'ruler, lord' < CJK *kay ~ *key 'ruler, monarch' (*KLJ*) ← East Scythian *kay ~ *key < *χšayă* 'king' (Christopher I. Beckwith, p.c., 2024).
12. OKog *keyr 'tooth' : OJpn *ki ~ *gi 'canine tooth' > MSJ *ki-* as in *kiba* 'animal tooth' (< OJpn *ki 'canine tooth' + *pa 'tooth') (*KLJ*).
13. OKog *kɨr 'center' : < CJK *kɨrɨ 'heart; center' > OJpn 'heart' > MSJ kokoro 'heart' (*KLJ*). Also cognate to PS *kɨr 'center, central' (q.v. infra).
14. OKog *kɨr 'mound; ruins of a city' (*KLJ*) : OKog *kuər 'walled city, fort' below.
15. OKog *kɨr 'tree, wood' : OJpn *kɨ ~ *ki 'tree' < CJK *kɨr 'tree, wood' (*KLJ*).
16. OKog *kɨr 'writing' → EMK *kɨr (*KLJ* 174) > LMK *kɨ̀r ~ kɨ́r* > MSK /kɨr/ [kɨɬ] 'writing, glyph'.
17. OKog *ku 'child' : OJpn *kʊ (> MSJ *ko*) < CJK *ku 'child' (*KLJ*) ← Serbi-Mongolic > MKit *ku (*LASM*).
18. OKog *kʊ 'jade' ← Ch. (*KLJ*).
19. OKog *kuər < AKog *kweru 'yellow' : OJpn *ki ~ *ku > MSJ ki- 'yellow' in *kiiro* (*KLJ*).
20. OKog *kuər 'walled city, fort' (see AKog *kuru for etymology).

21. OKog *kum ‘bear’ : OJpn *kuma < CJK *kuma ← widespread areal word with comparanda in Chinese, Tibeto-Burman, Korean, and Japanese- Koguryoic (*KLJ* 152-153).
22. OKog *kur ~ *ku ‘pine’ < CJK *kɨr ‘tree, wood’ (*KLJ*).
23. OKog *kɯ̈ ~ *kɨ ‘poplar, willow’ < CJK *kɨr ‘tree, wood’ (*KLJ*).
24. OKog *maɨ ‘arm, shoulder’ (*KLJ*).
25. OKog *merʊ ‘colt’ ← areal word, cf. English *mare* (*KLJ* 1 45-146).
26. OKog *mey ‘water, river’ : OJpn *mi ‘water’ > MSJ *mizu* ‘water’ (*KLJ*).
27. OKog *mey ‘excellent, good’ < AKog *mey ‘good’ : OJpn *mi ‘exalted, honored’ < ‘excellent’ < CJK *mey ‘excellent, good’ (*KLJ*). Also cognate to PP *mey ‘peaceful, pacified’.
28. OKog *meyr ‘garlic’ : OJpn *mira ‘leek, Chinese chives, fragrant-flowered garlic’ < CJK *meyra ‘allium’ (*KLJ*).
29. OKog *mir ‘three’ : OJpn *mi ‘three’ < CJK *mir ‘three’ (*KLJ*).
30. OKog *na ‘bamboo’ : OJpn *nö > MSJ *-no* in compounds (*KLJ*).
31. OKog *na ‘land, province, prefecture’ : pre-OJpn *na- ‘earth’ > OJpn *nawi ‘earthquake’ (*KLJ*) : PS *na ‘area in the vicinity of the capital’. Superficially an exact match to Manchu-Tungusic *na* ‘land’, possibly suggesting a Puyo-Koguryoic loanword in Manchu-Tungusic. For other identified Puyo-Koguryoic loanwords in Manchu-Tungusic, specifically in Jurchen-Manchu, see Shimunek, (2021a); Beckwith (2014); and Beckwith (2017).
32. OKog *namey ‘long’ : OJpn *naga ~ *na^{ŋ}ga < CJK *na- ‘long’ (*KLJ*).
33. OKog *namur : OJpn *namari (*KLJ* 133) < CJK *namVr- ‘lead (metal)’. OKog *namur → EMK *namur ‘lead (metal)’ (*KLJ* 175; Lee, 1964, p. 17; *pace* Lee and Ramsey, 2011, p. 96, who read “namol”). Unrelated to LMK *náp* ‘lead (metal)’.
34. OKog *nan ‘seven’ : OJpn *nana ‘seven’ < CJK *nan ‘seven’ (*KLJ*). Superficially similar but probably unrelated to Manchu-Tungusic *nadan* ‘seven’ (*KLJ* 180-181).
35. OKog *pa ‘sea’ : OJpn *pa- < CJK *pa ‘sea’ (*KLJ* 134, 178-179). Superficially resembles the first syllable of LMK *pàrʌ́r ~ pàtáh* ‘ocean, sea’, but a connection, if any, remains to be demonstrated or disproven.
36. OKog *paɦɨy ‘cliff, mountain, crag, precipice’ (*KLJ*) ⇄ ? pre-Nivkh > Common Nivkh *baʀ ‘stone’. (See HS *paɦɨy above).
37. OKog *paɨ ‘man’ (*KLJ*) : PS *paɨ ‘boy, youth’ (*SY*) (Shimunek, 2023, p. 93n55, 102) < CPK *paɨ ‘male human’.
38. OKog *paɨk ‘to encounter, meet’ (*KLJ* 134, 182).
39. OKog *pen ‘human, person’ : OJpn *pi- ‘human, person’ (*KLJ* xii; Kiyose, 2004, p. 237).

40. OKog *pirar ~ *piriar ‘shallow’ ~ OKog *piar ‘level, flat’ : OJpn *pira- ‘level, flat’ ~ *pirö ‘wide, broad, vast’ (*KLJ*).
41. OKog *pɨy ‘soybean’ (*KLJ*). Previously unidentified cognate in OJpn *pi (*pɨ?) ‘soybean’, via internal reconstruction methods applied to MSJ *hishio* ‘fermented soybean paste’ < OJpn *pi(t)sipo < *pi ‘soy’ + *(t)sipo ‘salt’.
42. OKog *puk ‘deep’ : OJpn *pʊka- ‘deep’ < CJK *puk ‘deep’ (*KLJ*).
43. OKog *śa ‘abundant, flourishing, luxuriant, rich’ : OJpn *sa- in OJpn *sati ‘fortune, fortunate’, *sapa ‘much, abundant’, *saki ‘fortune, fortunate, properous, prosperity’, and *sakay- ‘flourishing, glory, splendor, abundant, prosperous’ (*KLJ*).
44. OKog *śamiar ‘cool’ : OJpn *samu- ~ *tsamu- ‘cool, cold’ < CJK *sam- ‘cool’ (*KLJ*).
45. OKog *śapɨy ‘red’ : OJpn *(t)sapi ~ *(t)sabi ‘rust, to rust; red’ < CJK *sapɨy ‘red’ (*KLJ*).
46. OKog *śayk ‘orchid’ : OJpn *sakura ~ *tsakura ‘cherry (blossom)’ < CJK *sak- ‘bloom’.
47. OKog *si ~ *śi ‘adjective-attributive suffix’ : OJpn *-si- < CJK *si ~ *śi ‘adjective-attributive’ (*KLJ* 119, 251; Shimunek, 2023, p. 98 n. 88).
48. OKog *tan ‘valley’ : OJpn *tani ‘valley’ (*KLJ*).
49. OKog *tar ‘mountain, high’ < CJK *tar ‘high, tall; mountain’ > OJpn *take- ‘high mountain, mountain peak’ ~ OJpn *taka- ‘high’ (*KLJ*) : PK *ta ‘mountain; high’ (Shimunek, 2023, p. 102).
50. OKog *taw ‘iron’← ? 鐵 Ch. dial. (*KLJ*).
51. OKog *taw ‘take’ : OJpn *təwr- ~ *təwri- ‘take’ < CJK *taw- ‘to take’ (*KLJ*).
52. OKog *taw ‘chestnut’ : OJpn *tʊti ‘horse-chestnut’ < CJK *taw ‘chestnut, horse-chestnut’ (*KLJ*).
53. OKog *taw ‘drum’ : OJpn *tʊtʊmi ‘drum’ < CJK *taw ‘drum’ (*KLJ*).
54. OKog *taw ‘mountain pass’ : OJpn *təwpu- ~ *təpu- ~ *təpaw- > MSJ *tō-* ‘to pass through’ < CJK *taw- ‘pass’ (*KLJ*) : PP *taw ‘highland’ (q.v. infra).
55. OKog *tawpi : OJpn *təwpu- ~ *təpu- ~ *təpaw- ‘to pass through, open’ < CJK *tawpu- ‘to open’ (*KLJ*).
56. OKog *tawr ‘pheasant’ : OJpn *təwri ‘fowl, bird’ < CJK *tawr ‘fowl’ ← 鳥 OChi *təwr ‘fowl, bird’ (*KLJ* 138).
57. OKog *tək : OJpn *tə ~ *təwo < CJK *təkwo (*KLJ*).
58. OKog *tśiar ‘silver’ : PS *sɨra ‘gold’ : OJpn *tśira- ~ *śirö- > MSJ *shiro* ~ *shira-* ‘white, silver’ (*KLJ*).
59. OKog *tśiəm ‘root, base’, OJpn *tśɨməw ‘below’ > MSJ *shimo* ‘below’ (*KLJ*).

60. OKog *tśɨri ‘north’ (see AKog *tsɨar for etymology).
61. OKog *tsʊ ‘owlet’ : Ojpn *tʊku ‘owl’ (*KLJ*).
62. OKog *ʊ ~ *ʊy ~ *wəy ‘ford’ : PJpn *u ‘crossing’ < CJK *u ‘crossing; ford’ (*KLJ*).
63. OKog *ʊ ‘ox, cow, cattle’ : OJpn *usi/*utśi/*utsi < *u ‘ox’ + *si ‘animal’ < CJK *u ‘ox, cow, cattle’ ← Old Chinese 牛 *ŋû ‘cow, ox, cattle’ (*KLJ*).
64. OKog *ʊ ‘pig’ : OJpn *wi ‘boar, pig’ < CJK *wi ‘pig, boar’ (*KLJ*). Middle Kitan *uy/*wi ‘pig, boar’ may be a borrowing from Japanese-Koguryoic (*LASM* 410).
65. OKog *ütsi ‘five’ : OJpn *itu ‘five’ < CJK *itu- ~ *ütu- ‘five’ (*KLJ*).
66. OKog *ya ‘willow’ : OJpn *ya- ‘willow’ < CJK *ya ‘willow’ (*KLJ*).

6.2.2 Puyŏ-Paekche (PP)

Puyŏ-Paekche is the Puyŏ language of the bilingual kingdom of Paekche, founded by Puyŏ people who had invaded the early Koreanic state or confederation of 馬韓 Ma Han.

1. PP 阿 (*SS*) *ɦa ‘river bank (湄)’, shore (濱)’ : OKog *ɦa ‘overlook’ < CPK *ɦa ‘overlook’.
2. PP 支 (*ZS*) ~ 瑕 *key ‘king (王)’ (see OKog *key ‘king’ above for cognates and etymology).
3. PP 見 (*SS*) *ker ‘ox, cow, cattle (牛)’ ← ? Serbi-Mongolic (cf. MMgl *hüker ~ üker*).
4. PP 其 (*SS*) *ki ‘forest (林)’ : OKog *kɨr ‘tree, wood’ (see OKog entry above for etymology).
5. PP 基 ~ 只 ~ 岐 ~ 已 (for *己) (*SS*) *ki ~ *kɨ ‘walled city, fortification (城), embankment, ditch (溝)’ ~ *kɨr 斤 ‘city (邑)’ < earlier PP *kur 屈 ~ *kuər 骨 ~ *χuər 忽 ‘walled city, fortification (城), dike, ditch, embankment (堤)’ : PK *kʊr ‘fortress, walled city’ : PS *kɨr ‘mound’ ~ *kʊr ‘walled city, fortress’ (Shimunek, 2023, p. 95 n. 72, revised. cf. Kōno, 1987, p. 82). See AKog *kuru ‘walled city’ above for cognates and etymology.
6. PP 古龍 (*SS*) *kʊrʊ ‘south (南)’ : PS *kʊr ‘south’ : AKog *kor ‘south, front’ < CPK *kʊrʊ ‘south, front’ (see AKog *kor ~ *kör above for JK comparanda).
7. PP 買 (*SS*) *mey ‘peaceful, pacified (安)’ : OKog *mey ‘excellent, good’ (see OKog *mey ‘good’ above for etymology).
8. PP 買 (*SS*) *mey ‘river (川)’ < ‘water’ < CJK *mi ‘water’ (for detailed etymology and OJpn cognates, see OKog *mey ‘water, river’ above).

9. PP 乃 (*SS*) *na ‘land, place’ > ‘walled city, fortification (城)’ ~ ‘unit of area (頃)’ attested in the Puyŏ-Paekche phrase 加知乃 *kati *na and its variant 加乙乃 *kar *na ‘market’ (literally, ‘selling place’, with PP *kati ~ *kar ‘selling’ perhaps cognate to Japanese 借り- *kari-* ‘to borrow, rent, owe’ or perhaps a borrowing from 價 MChi ˣkaɨ ‘sell’). This word is cognate to OKog *na ‘land, province, prefecture’ (q.v. above for etymology).
10. PP 斯 (*SS*) *-si ‘adjective-attributive morpheme’ (see entry for OKog *si ~ *śi above).
11. PP 冬 (*SS*) *taw ‘highland (皐)’ < CPK *taw- ‘mountain pass; highland’. The CPK form *taw- ‘mountain pass’ is superficially similar in form to Middle Mongol *daba-* ‘to cross a mountain, pass over, overcome an obstacle’, but a connection, if any, remains to be demonstrated.
12. PP 近 (*SS*) *tir/ˣtɕir ‘ample, abundant (殷)’ ~ 豆 (*SS*) *tɨ ‘ten thousand (萬)’ : OJpn 知 *ti ‘thousand, thousands, large in number’ < CJK *tir/*tɨr ‘thousands, large in number’. Alternatively: 千 EMC dial. *tsʰeɾ̌ → PP → OJpn *ti ‘thousand(s), large in number’.
13. PP 豆 (*SS*) *tɨ (KPEMC ˣtʊ rendering foreign *tɨ) ‘gather, meet (會)’ ← Serbi-Mongolic, cf. Middle Kitan *tiw- ‘to gather, meet’, cognate to Written Mongol *tegü-* and Middle Mongol *temgü- ~ tüü-* ‘collect, gather up’ < Common Serbi-Mongolic *tʰəɣu- ‘to gather (transitive or intransitive)’ (*LASM*).
14. PP 突 (*SS*) *tɨr (KPEMC ˣtʊr rendering foreign *tɨr) ‘spirit, ghost (靈)’ : OJpn 智 *ti ‘spirit, spiritual power (靈)’ (*JDB* 452) (> MSJ *chi* ち (霊) ‘id.’) < CJK *tɨr ‘spirit, ghost, spiritual power’.
15. PP 堎 (*SS*) *tɨr/*tʊr ‘nine (九)’. No identified cognates. Distinct from MSJ *kokono-* < OJpn *kökönö ‘nine’, which is ultimately a loanword from Chinese as demonstrated by *KLJ* 161.
16. PP 珍惡 (*SS*) *tśirak ‘stone (石)’ ← ? early Mongolic dialect *čʰɪlaɣ < *čʰɪla-ɣU < Common Serbi-Mongolic *čʰɪla ‘stone, rock’ > Kitan *čala ‘stone, rock’. My reconstruction *tśirak is based on a straightforward KPEMC phonetic reading of the characters. This reading solves a major problem with traditional readings which attempt to force the Paekche form to match Modern Standard Korean 돌 /tʊr/ [tʊɭ] or its LMK etymon :돓 *tʊˇrh* ‘rock, stone’. Given the otherwise attested ethnolinguistic contact between early Japanese-Koguryoic peoples and Serbi-Mongolic peoples, and the lack of identifiable early Koreanic lexical contact with Serbi-Mongolic, this is undoubtedly a Puyŏ-Paekche reflex of an early loan from Serbi-Mongolic. Other words for certain geological

formations are known to be borrowings from neighboring languages, e.g. OKog *paɦiy ‘cliff, crag, mountain, precipice’, borrowed from Nivkh (q.v. *KLJ*).

17. PP 舌 (*SS*) *źiar ‘west (西)’, cognate to AKog 順 *źör ~ 慎 *dźir ‘left, east’. Note that dialectal differences in direction orientation are common in languages of Central Eurasia, see Shimunek, 2023, p. 87.

6.2.3 Puyŏ-Silla (PS)

Although the bulk of linguistic data from Silla consists of the Koreanic language Han-Silla, the *Samguk sagi* provides evidence of an intrusive Puyŏ dialect as well, especially among the ruling elite of early Silla. On Puyŏ political influence in early Silla, see *KLJ*. Strikingly, the national progenitor of Silla was born in a place with an obvious Puyŏ etymology: 奈乙 *na *ɨr (*SS*), glossed as 蘿井 ‘Vine Well’, composed of PS *na ‘vine’ and PS *ɨr, both with unique cognates in Japanese and no cognates in Korean (see below). The early name of the Silla state is also a Puyŏ word, PS *sɨra ‘gold; Silla’, borrowed into Han-Silla (see HS *sɨra ‘Silla’ above), and other recently identified Puyŏ elements exist among the Silla linguistic data in the *Samguk sagi* and the *Samguk yusa*. The language of later Silla, however, and certainly the language of the *hyangga* is irrefutably uniquely Koreanic (i.e., Han-Silla). Nevertheless, the intrusive, distinctively Puyŏ linguistic data in early Silla must be acknowledged as such. I term this Puyŏ linguistic data from Silla territory as ‘Puyŏ-Silla’.

1. PS 乙 (*SS*) *ɨr ‘well (井)’ (see OKog *ɨr ‘well’ above for OJpn cognate and CJK etymology).
2. PS 根 (*SS*) *kɨr ‘center, central (中)’ : OKog *kɨr (q.v. for etymology).
3. PS 近 (*SS*) *kɨr ‘mound (丘)’ ~ 月 (Tang AMC *ŋgʷar*, Cob./Tak. 0734) ~ 活 (*SS*) *kʊr (*SS*) ‘walled city, fortress (城)’ : PK *kʊr (*SS*) : PP *ki ~ *kɨ ‘walled city, fortification’ ~ PP *kɨr ‘city’ < earlier PP *kur ~ *kuər ~ *χuər ‘walled city, fortification, dike; ditch; embankment’ (Shimunek, 2023, p. 95 n. 72; see AKog *kuru above for Puyo-Koguryoic etymology).
4. PS 官 (*SS*) *kʊr ‘south (南)’ : PP *kʊrʊ ‘south’ : AKog *kor ‘south, front’ < CPK *kʊrʊ ‘south, front’ (see AKog *kor ~ *kör above for JK comparanda).
5. PS 乃 (*SS*) *na ‘area in the vicinity of the capital’ : OKog *na ‘land, province, prefecture’ (q.v. for etymology).
6. PS 奈 (*SS*) *na ‘creeping plants, vines (蘿)’ : OJpn *na ‘vegetable’ < CJK *na ‘vines, vegetation, vegetables’.

7. PS 巴 (*SY*) *paɨ ‘boy, youth’ : OKog *paɨ ‘man’ < CPK *paɨ ‘male human; boy, man’ (*pace* Lee, 1970, pp. 201-210).
8. PS 徐耶 (*SS*, KPEMC *sɨʌa) ~ 斯羅 (*SS*, KPEMC *sɨla) ~ 新羅 (*SS*, KPEMC *sirla) *sɨra ~ 斯盧 (*SS*, KPEMC *sɨlʊ) *sɨrʊ ‘gold (金); Silla’ : OKog *tśiar ‘silver’ (q.v. etymology). On the KPEMC readings of the Chinese transcriptions and on KPEMC *ʌ, which is capable of phonetically transcribing foreign *r and *y, see Shimunek, 2023, p. 86 n. 12. See HS *sɨra ‘Silla’ above.

6.2.4 Puyŏ-Kara (PK)

The Kara (Kaya) state was absorbed by Silla early in its history. Nevertheless, important linguistic data from Kara can be recovered by analyzing the toponym corpus in the *Samguk sagi* (see Toh, 1987; and Shimunek, 2023).

1. PK 巳利 ~ コリ (*NS*) *kʊr ~ PK 支 (*SS*) *key ‘fortress, walled city’ : PS *kɨr ~ *kʊr ‘mound; walled city, fortress’ (Shimunek, 2023, p. 95 n. 72, p. 102; see AKog *kuru above for Puyo-Koguryoic etymology).
2. PK 多 (*SS*) *ta ‘high mountain (嶽)’ (Shimunek, 2023, pp. 87, 98, 102; see OKog *tar above for detailed etymology).
3. PK 督 ~ 梁 *tʊk ~ *tʊ ‘door, gate (門)’ : OJpn *tö ‘door, gate’ < CJK *tʊk > CPK *tʊk → Jurchen-Manchu /duka/ [duqa] ‘door, gate’ → ? Late Kitan 墮瑰 *tʊqay ‘door, gate (門)’ (Shimunek, 2021a, pp. 71-76; Shimunek, 2023, p. 102).

Symbols

:	cognates between languages
≠	not cognate
?	uncertain segment or etymology
#	word boundary
>	language-internal change
→	borrowing or loanword across languages
⇄	borrowing or loanword of uncertain directionality
*	reconstruction according to mainstream historical-comparative linguistic methods
⭑	speculative reconstruction or traditional reading using rhymes, 反切 *fanqie*, or other traditional methods
[abc]	phonetic transcription
/abc/	phonemic transcription

-	morpheme boundary
*a/*b	competing reconstructions
a ~ b	variant forms (free or conditioned variation)
V	vowel

Sigla and Abbreviations

AJpn	Archaic Japanese
AKog	Archaic Koguryŏ
AMC	Attested Middle Chinese
anat.	anatomy
CJK	Common Japanese-Koguryoic
CKor	Common Koreanic
CN	Common Nivkh (Fortescue's "Proto-Nivkh", cited from *CND*)
CND	Comparative Nivkh Dictionary (Fortescue, 2016)
Cob.	Coblin (1994)
CPK	Common Puyo-Koguryoic
CSM	Common Serbi-Mongolic (*LASM*)
dial.	dialect, dialectal
EMC	Early Middle Chinese
EMK	Early Middle Korean
HK	Han-Kara
HP	Han-Paekche
HS	Han-Silla
HW	Ham'an wooden tablets, from Lee (2017) with revision
HYKP	鄕藥救急方 *Hyang'yak Kugŭppang*
JDB	Omodaka (1967)
JK	Japanese-Koguryoic
JNAH	*Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* (NAHF)
KLJ	Beckwith (2007a)
KPEMC	Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese
KYS	雞林類事 *Jilin Leishi* (*Kyerim Yusa*), 12th century
LASM	Shimunek (2017)
LMK	Late Middle Korean
MChi	Middle Chinese

MJpn	Middle Japanese
MSJ	Modern Standard Japanese
MSK	Modern Standard Korean
N.	northern
NAHF	Northeast Asian History Foundation
NCR	日中歷 *Nichūreki* (based on 12th c. Japanese sources).
OChi	Old Chinese
OJpn	Old Japanese
OKog	Old Koguryŏ
onom.	onomatopoetic
p.c.	personal communication
PJpn	Proto-Japanese
PK	Puyŏ-Kara
PP	Puyŏ-Paekche
PS	Puyŏ-Silla
Pul.	Pulleyblank (1991)
S.	southern
SM	Serbi-Mongolic
SS	三國史記 *Samguk sagi*
SY	三國遺事 *Samguk yusa*
SZR	世俗字類抄 *Sezokujiruishō* (12th c.)
Tak.	Takata (1988)
TJ	悼二將歌 *Toijangga* (1120)
TNJ	耽羅志 *T'amnaji* (1653)
ZS	周書 *Zhou shu*

References

Primary Sources

Anonymous (12th c.). *Nichūreki 日中歷*.
Anonymous (12th c.). *Sezokujiruishō 世俗字類抄*.
Anonymous (13th c.). *Kuyŏk Inwanggyŏng 舊譯仁王經*.
Anonymous. (13th c.). *Hyang'yak Kugŭppang 鄕藥救急方*.
Iryŏn 一然 (13th c. original, cited from 1512 ed.). *Samguk yusa 三國遺事*.
Kim Pusik 金富軾 (12th c. original, cited from 1512 ed.). *Samguk sagi 三國史記*.

Linghu Defen 令狐德棻 (636 original, cited from 1971 ed.). *Zhou shu 周書*. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.

Sun Mu 孫穆 (12th c.). *Jilin Leishi 雞林類事 (Kyerim Yusa 계림유사)* (see Sasse, 1976).

Yejong 睿宗, King of Koryŏ (1120). *Toijangga 悼二將歌*.

Yi Wŏnjin 李元鎭 (1653). *T'amnaji 耽羅志*.

Secondary Sources

Beckwith, C. I. (2005). The ethnolinguistic history of the early Korean Peninsula region: Japanese-Koguryoic and other languages in the Koguryo, Paekche, and Silla kingdoms. *Journal of Inner and East Asian Studies*, *2*(2), 34-64.

Beckwith, C. I. (2006). Methodological Observations on Some Recent Studies of the Early Ethnolinguistic History of Korea and Vicinity. *Altai Hakpo*, *16*, 199-234.

Beckwith, C. I. (2007a). *Koguryo, the Language of Japan's Continental Relatives*. Second Edition. Leiden: Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004160255.i-274

Beckwith, C. I. (2007b). *Phoronyms: Classifiers, Class Nouns, and the Pseudopartitive Construction.* New York: Peter Lang.

Beckwith, C. I. (2008). An introduction to theoretical and methodological problems in the comparative-historical linguistics of Eastern Eurasian languages. In C. I. Beckwith (Ed.), *Medieval Tibeto-Burman Languages III* (pp. 10-48). Halle: IITBS GmbH.

Beckwith, C. I. (2010). Could There Be a Korean–Japanese Linguistic Relationship Theory? Science, the Data, and the Alternatives. A State-of-the-Field Article. *International Journal of Asian Studies*, *7*(2), 201-219. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1479591410000070

Beckwith, C. I. (2014). The Aramaic source of the East Asian word for 'Buddhist monastery': On the spread of Central Asian monasticism in the Kushan period. *Journal Asiatique*, *302*(1), 111-138. https://doi.org/10.2143/JA.302.1.3030680

Beckwith, C. I. (2017). Once again on the Aramaic word for 'monastery' in East Asia: data and science versus doctrine and belief. *Journal Asiatique*, *305*(2), 211-224. https://doi.org/10.2143/JA.305.2.3262804

Coblin, W. S. (1994). A Compendium of Phonetics in Northwest Chinese. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics Monograph Series*, 7, 1-504.

Dpal-ldan-bkra-shis, Slater, K., et al. (1996). Language Materials of China's Monguor Minority: Huzhu Mongghul and Minhe Mangghuer. *Sino-Platonic Papers, 69*. https://sino-platonic.org/complete/spp069_monguor_language.pdf

Fortescue, M. (2016). *Comparative Nivkh Dictionary*. Munchen: Lincom.

Hangŭl Hakhoe 한글학회 (1992). *Uri mal k'ŭn sajŏn 우리 말 큰 사전*. Volume 4: *Yennalgwa idu 옛날과 이두*. Seoul: Ŏmunhak.

Kang, K. 강길운 (1983). Hangugŏ-wa kiryagŏ-nŭn tonggye ida 한국어와 길약어는 동계이다. *Hangŭl 한글*, *182*, 103-144.

Kara, G. (2021). Two rhyming Mongolic words in Kitan Assembled Script. *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, *74*(4), 673-684. https://doi.org/10.1556/062.2021.00198

King, R. (1991). *Russian Sources on Korean Dialects* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Harvard University.

Kiyose, G. N. 清瀬義三郎則府 (2004). Nippon no naka no Koria-go no chimei 日本の中のコリア語の地名. In K. Yoshida 吉田金彦 and M. Itoi 糸井通浩 (Eds.), *Nippon chimeigaku wo Manabu hito no tame ni 日本地名学を学ぶ人のために* (pp. 234-456). Kyōto: Seikai shisosha.

Kōno, R. (1987). The Bilingualism of the Paekche Language. *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, *45*, 75-86.

Kumar, B. (2025). Grammaticalization in the Korean Aspectual System. *Acta Linguistica Asiatica*, *15*(1), 47-62. https://doi.org/10.4312/ala.15.1.47-62

Lee, K.-M. (1964). Materials of the Koguryo language. *Bulletin of the Korean Research Center: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 20, 11-20.

Lee, K.-M. = Yi Kimun 이기문 (1970). Sillaŏ ŭi 'pok' tong e taehayŏ 신라어의 '福' 童에 대하여. *Kugŏ kungmunhak 국어국문학 49-50*, 201-210.

Lee, K.-M. = Yi Kimun 이기문 (1972). *Kugŏsa kaesŏl 國語史 槪說*. Seoul: Minjung Sŏgwan.

Lee, K.-M., & Ramsey, S. R. (2011). *A History of the Korean Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lee, S. = Yi Sŭngjae 이승재 (2017). *Mokkan-e kiroktoen kodae hangugŏ 木簡에 기록된 古代 韓國語*. Seoul: Iljogak.

Lee, Y. (2011). Morphology and syntax in holes and scratches. *Acta Linguistica Asiatica*, *1* (1), 53-69. https://doi.org/10.4312/ala.1.1.53-70

Nam, K. 南廣祐 (2024). *Koŏ sajŏn 古語辭典*. Seoul: Kyohaksa.

Omodaka, H. 澤潟久孝 (1967). *Jidaibetsu kokugo daijiten: Jōdaihen 時代別国語大辞典. 上代編*. Tokyo: Sanseido.

Pulleyblank, E. G. (1991). *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Sasse, W. (1976). *Das Glossar Koryŏ-pangŏn im Kyerim-yusa*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

Shimunek, A. (2017). *Languages of Ancient Southern Mongolia and North China: A Historical-Comparative Study of the Serbi or Xianbei Branch of the Serbi-Mongolic Language Family, with an Analysis of Northeastern Frontier Chinese and Old Tibetan Phonology*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Shimunek, A. (2021a). Loanwords from the Puyo-Koguryoic languages of early Korea and Manchuria in Jurchen-Manchu. *Altai Hakpo*, *31*, 65-84. https://doi.org/10.15816/ask.2021..31.004

Shimunek, A. (2021b). On Korean Peninsular Historical Linguistics: A Review of Recent Studies on the Languages of Early Korea. *The Journal of Northeast Asian History*, *18*(1), 129-167.

Shimunek, A. (2023). The earliest Koreanic words for 'child', 'east', 'mountain', 'river', and 'shore': a comparative-historical linguistic study of several Kara (Kaya) toponyms in the Samguk sagi. *Acta Koreana*, *26*(1), 83-108. https://doi.org/10.18399/acta.2023.26.1.004

Sin, C. 신재홍 (2002). *Hyangga ŭi haesŏk 향가의 해석* [Deciphering *hyangga*]. Seoul: Chimmundang.

Svantesson, J.-O. et al. (2005). *The Phonology of Mongolian*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Takata, T. 高田時雄 (1988). *Tonkō shiryō ni yoru Chūgokugo shi no kenkyū 敦煌資料による中国語史の研究*. Tokyo: Sōbunsha.

Toh, S.-H. = To Suhŭi 都守熙 (1987). *Paekcheŏ ŏhwi yŏn'gu* 1: *Chŏngiŏrŭl chungsimŭro 百濟語 語彙 研究 1: 前期語를 中心으로*. Sŏul: Paekche Munhwa Kaebal Yŏn'guwŏn.

Toh, S.-H. = To Suhŭi 都守熙 (2005). *Paekcheŏ ŏhwi yŏn'gu 百濟語 語彙 研究*. Seoul: Cheiaenssi.

Tsuji, S. 辻星児 (2000a). Nichūreki Sezokujiruishō shoin no chōsengo sūsi ni tsuite 「ニ中歷」「世俗字類抄」所引の朝鮮語数詞について. *Okayama Daigaku Gengo Gakkai Ronsō 岡山大学言語学会論叢*, *8*, 1-18.

Tsuji, S. 辻星児 (2000b). Nichūreki Sezokujiruishō-ŭi hangugŏ susa-e taehayŏ 「ニ中歷」「世俗字類抄」의 韓國語 數詞에 대하여. In *21 segi kugŏhak-ŭi kwaje 21 세기 국어학의 과제* (pp. 527-544). Seoul: Wŏrin.

Acknowledgments

This research was funded by Woosong University Academic Research in 2025. This article developed from a paper the author presented at the Seoul International Altaistic Conference (SIAC), July 16-17, 2021, and subsequent research. The author wishes to thank the following people and institutions for helpful advice, resources which the author used in writing this paper, and for supporting the author's research in various ways leading up to the writing of this paper: Christopher I. Beckwith, György Kara†, Juwon Kim, Ross King, Dongho Ko, the Kyujanggak Institute, Joseph Jeong-il Lee, Yong Lee, Maurizio Riotto, Seiji Tsuji, Eva Vučkovič, and two anonymous peer reviewers. Any errors in this paper are entirely my own.

Workplace Discourse and Expression of Hierarchy in Yoon Tae-ho's Webtoon *Misaeng*

Eva VUČKOVIČ
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
Eva.Vuckovic@ff.uni-lj.si

Abstract

The article provides an in-depth analysis of workplace discourse and hierarchy as depicted in the popular Korean webtoon *Misaeng*. Its story takes place in a large trading company and portrays workers' daily lives, focusing on the work of Sales team 3. Through critical discourse analysis, the research shows how power relations among team members are expressed through language and interactions in a Korean corporate setting. Key events, such as the introductions of new team members, are examined to demonstrate how workplace hierarchy shapes interpersonal communication. The findings provide insights into the portrayal of Korean corporate culture, highlighting the significance of hierarchy in professional relationships and its impact on workplace communication.

Keywords: webtoon, *Misaeng*, workplace discourse, corporate culture, hierarchy

Povzetek

Članek se skozi poglobljeno analizo diskurza na delovnem mestu osredotoča na prikazovanje hierarhije v priljubljenem korejskem internetnem stripu *Misaeng*. Zgodba tega stripa se odvija v velikem trgovskem podjetju in predstavlja vsakdanje življenje delavcev, v ospredje pa postavi delo ekipe prodajnega oddelka 3. S kritično analizo diskurza raziskava pokaže, kako se v korejskem podjetju odnosi moči med člani ekipe izražajo skozi jezik in medosebne interakcije. Še posebej v trenutku, ko se ekipi pridružiti nov član, se delavno vzdušje spremeni in se pokaže, kako hierarhija na delovnem mestu oblikuje medosebno komunikacijo. Ugotovitve nudijo vpogled v prikazovanje korejske delavske kulture, poudarjajo pomen hierarhije v poklicnih odnosih in njen vpliv na komunikacijo na delovnem mestu.

Ključne besede: internetni strip, *Misaeng*, diskurz na delovnem mestu, delavska kultura, hierarhija

Acta Linguistica Asiatica, 15(1), 2025.
ISSN: 2232-3317, http://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/ala/
DOI: 10.4312/ala.15.1.125-152

1 Introduction

Webtoon *Misaeng* 미생 is a story about office workers in a trading company. Written by Yoon Tae-Ho 윤태호, the first season was published between January 17, 2012, and July 19, 2013, on the *Daum* 다음 platform, today known as *Kakao Webtoon* 카카오웹툰. It contained 145 episodes and was also released in physical form by *Wisdom House* in 2013 (Yoon, 2013a; Yoon, 2013b). It was followed by a series with the same title, which aired on *tvN* (cable television) between October 17 and December 20, 2014. It achieved a 10.3% viewership during its live broadcast on television, which is very high considering that the usual ratings for cable TV series fall as low as 1 or 2% (Park, 2022a). The webtoon's second season started on November 10, 2015, and ended on February 12, 2024, with the final, 216th, episode. As of August 4, 2024, *Misaeng* has 1.28 billion views and 305.8 million followers (as seen on the portal *Kakao Webtoon*), which makes it one of the most successful webtoons of the time.

The webtoon *Misaeng* "realistically represents the joys and sorrows of office workers" (No, 2013), which is why it reached many readers and was considered a "business bible" (Seo, 2015, p. 284). The story emphasizes the unique pressures employees of trading companies face, such as the demand for quick decision-making, the need for proficiency in multiple languages, the understanding of clients from different cultural backgrounds, and the willingness to work at unconventional hours to accommodate global markets. Korean trading companies were crucial for the development and economic success of the country and that is why they are known for their intense work culture, international focus, and discipline.

In this research, we will focus on the presentation of the main characters of *Misaeng* and analyze how the hierarchical relationship between them is depicted. Power relations are embedded in the language that can be observed while reading dialogues between the workers, although the reader is usually not conscious of that aspect. Therefore, the analysis of the *verbal* part (characters' speech) of this webtoon will help us understand how the hierarchy is formed among the characters.

The selected approach is critical discourse analysis, which focuses on how language reflects social hierarchies, power relations, and ideologies. It is commonly employed in media content or political speech analyses to reveal the underlying meanings and assumptions embedded within these texts. The press is, nowadays, an important platform for spreading ideological representations in various societies, since the articles, meticulously written by journalists, reflect values, beliefs, and prejudices inherent in the socio-political landscape (Galafa, 2023, p. 48). It is particularly

important that the readers, who are actively engaging with the text published online, can understand the hidden meaning of the text.

Critical discourse analysis is not commonly used in examinations of narrative texts, because these are fictional and did not emerge from real-world situations. However, according to Stephens (1992, p. 2), the discourse of narrative fiction produces not only a story but also significance, and ideology, which can never be separated from discourse (its presence can only be more or less obvious), can be observed in both. Even if the events in the story are wholly or partially fictional and do not exist in reality, the narrative sequences and character relationships will be shaped according to recognizable forms that express ideology. Therefore, "fiction must be regarded as a special site for ideological effect, with a potentially powerful capacity for shaping audience attitudes" (Stephens, 1992, p. 3). This is why some studies adopts critical discourse analysis to examine narrative texts. Among such, recent research focuses on the representation of gender roles in literary text (Abdullah et al., 2020), the depiction of the refugee experience in children's literature (Yetkiner, 2021), the construction of racism in cartoon films (Audah Kadhim & Fadhil Abbas, 2023), etc.

Through critical discourse analysis, we will observe how power and hierarchical relations between workers are shown through dialogues in the webtoon *Misaeng*. For comparison, we will include examples from the webtoons *The Story of Head Manager Kim, Who Lives and Works for a Large Company in Seoul* (*Seoul jagae daegieop danineun Kim bujang iyagi* 서울 자가에 대기업 다니는 김 부장 이야기), and *New Employee, Chairman Kang* (*Sinipsawon Kang hoejang* 신입사원 강 회장). Both webtoons are published on the Naver Webtoon platform and are currently in production. *The Story of Head Manager Kim* started in December 2023, whereas *New Employee, Chairman Kang* was first published as a web novel in 2021, then as a webtoon in September 2023. Like *Misaeng*, these two webtoons depict the lives of employees in various roles within a company, so this comparison aims to provide a deeper understanding of Korean work culture and the hierarchical relationships between employees.

2 Workplace discourse

The workplace is an example of a space only available for research in a limited capacity (Mullany, 2007, p. 49). The main problem is that many companies are reluctant to share information with outsiders, which was also noted by the author Yoon Tae-ho when he wished to learn about the company work and collect sufficient material before writing *Misaeng*:

> "It is an impossible mission from the start. In order to gather some resources, I contacted several big trading companies; however, they refused to open their door. Therefore, I had to find someone else who was working at a mid-sized trading company. They provided a lot of necessary information" (Jin, 2019, p. 2226).

Workplace discourse encompasses a variety of interactions in many professional settings – schools, hospitals, factories, offices, etc. There are different expressions for 'workplace discourse', such as 'institutional discourse', 'professional discourse', 'business discourse', etc. (Koester, 2010, p. 5). Drew and Heritage (1992, pp. 22-25) list three criteria that distinguish institutional discourse from ordinary discourse, namely:

- goal orientation (at least one of the participants in the interaction will want to reach some goal, work done through conversation)
- compliance with certain restrictions (participants of the interaction take into account the circumstances and behave accordingly, e.g. formal circumstances, as in the case of a job interview, defense before a judge, etc.),
- the existence of inferential frameworks and procedures that are characteristic of certain institutions and their correct interpretation (e.g. when concluding deals, participants will hide feelings of surprise or they will not show (dis)agreement directly, because this type of interaction is expected).

Interactions in the workplace are often asymmetric, and power is not evenly distributed between participants. Such interactions are observed mainly between experts and amateurs, superiors and subordinates, where an imbalance of knowledge or power between the participants is evident (Koester, 2010, p. 4). Power relations in certain organizations are expressed at different levels. In the workplace, we usually talk about power due to position (legitimate power) but at the same time, we must also consider power due to knowledge and experience (expertise power) (Vine, 2004, p. 1). Power can be realized in different ways, and those in a position of power decide what is appropriate in an interaction (Fairclough, 1989, p. 72).

In addition, Korean society is based on Confucian beliefs. Neo-Confucianism was reinforced on the Korean peninsula during the long era of the Joseon dynasty. Hierarchy in Korean society is based on its ethics, which define interpersonal relationships according to gender, age, and position in such society, following the so-called Five Codes: between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brother, two friends (Cho & Yoon, 2001, p. 78). All relationships, except one among two friends, are supposedly unequal (Cho & Yoon, 2001, p. 78). It is believed

that if everyone performs their role in the above-mentioned relationships, society will be peaceful (Lee & McNulty, 2003, p. 38). Confucianism is not solely to blame for the introduction of hierarchy and authority into the Korean workplace. After the devastating Korean War, the country went through quick development and the economy started to rely heavily on large family-owned business conglomerates called *chaebol* 재벌. Their power, in both the economic and social sense, is so strong that the Korean economy is often identified with them (Cho & Yoon, 2001, p. 75). A key characteristic of *chaebol* is their family-controlled management, which emphasizes family-like relationships among employees and fosters paternalistic and authoritarian leadership, where leaders are seen as symbols of power (Cho & Yoon, 2001, pp. 75-76).

How power relations are reflected in a discourse can be checked through critical discourse analysis. Teun A. van Dijk (1996, p. 84) says that critical analysis should "describe and explain how power abuse is enacted, reproduced or legitimized by the text and talk of dominant groups or institutions." In this case, power is understood as an asymmetry between participants in discourse and in terms of unequal possibilities of control over how discourse is created, understood, and disseminated in certain sociocultural contexts (Fairclough, 1995, pp. 1-2). Power can also be defined as the control exercised by a certain group or organization over the actions and thinking of another group, thereby limiting its freedom of action, and influencing the knowledge, attitudes, and ideology of the members of the other group (Van Dijk, 1996, p. 84). In other words, the dominant group influences the other group in such a way that the knowledge, attitudes, values, and norms of the other group are in favor of the dominant group (Van Dijk, 1996, p. 85).

Van Dijk also adds that one of the main elements of power manifests itself precisely in access to discourse and communicative events. It is important "who may speak or write to whom, about what, when, and in what context, or who may participate in such communicative events in various recipient roles, for instance as addressees, audience, bystanders and overhearers" (Van Dijk, 1996, p. 86). When we talk about access, we can study how speakers initiate communication, how they respond to it, and how they control various other features of discourse, for example, how they start topics of conversation, how they interrupt a conversation, etc.

Fairclough (2013, pp. 21-22) adopted critical approach to discourse analysis based on three dimensions of discourse: text, interaction, and context.

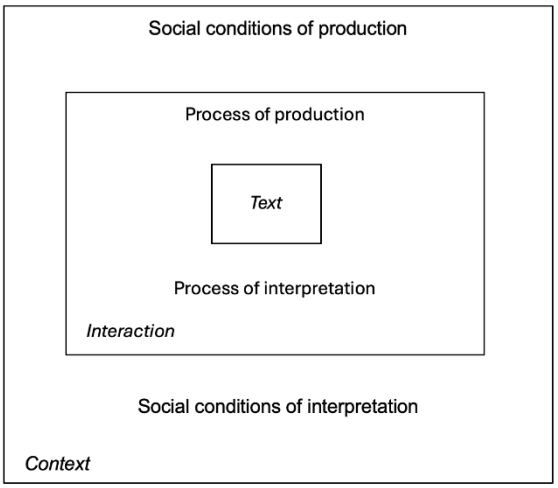


Figure 1: Fairclough's approach to discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2013, p. 21)

To identify hierarchical relations, it is essential to conduct a detailed analysis of the text. This involves systematically examining grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and text structures, as these elements contribute to the construction of meaning. Following this, the text must be analyzed from the point of view of the "process" dimension, which focuses on how text is produced, disseminated, and interpreted. Additionally, intertextual analysis is required to explore the relationships between the text and other texts produced in similar situations. The final dimension is the context, which situates discourse within its broader social and cultural context. This entails analyzing the historical, social, and institutional forces that both shape and are shaped by the discourse.

This approach provides a framework for analyzing the complex relation between language and society. It helps reveal the underlying power dynamics and hierarchical relations embedded in everyday communication.

3 *Misaeng*'s story and main characters

The story of *Misaeng* is set in the large trading company called One International. The main narrator, Jang Geu-rae, joins the company as an intern through personal connections and becomes part of Sales team 3, led by Section Chief Oh.

One of the central messages of *Misaeng* is that everyone has a place in society and must fulfill their role accordingly. This is consistent with the previously mentioned Korean Confucian tradition, where place in society

and age play an important role in maintaining social hierarchy. The author introduces this message in the very first episode by comparing the functioning of the social system to two cogwheels (Yoon, 2012a). Each person in society represents one cog of the cogwheel. The machine only works when all the cogs are in place. If a single cog is missing, the machine either stops or breaks down, highlighting the importance of collective spirit within Korean society.[1] Everyone has their own role to play and thereby contribute to the progress of society as a whole. However, it is difficult to replace someone's role with that of another. The cogs of the gear are fixed in place. If we take a closer look at the cogs—representing people—of the two cogwheels, we can see that they are all company workers, as indicated by their formal suits. Through this, the author highlights the importance of hierarchy and a collective mindset in the workplace, emphasizing that company workers cannot easily move or climb up the hierarchy ladder.

The main characters of the webtoon *Misaeng* are members of Sales team 3. Hierarchical relationships between them are established throughout the story. In the beginning, Sales team 3 consists of Section Chief Oh Sang-sik 오상식 과장, Deputy Kim Dong-sik 김동식 대리, and contract worker Jang Geu-rae 장그래. The team is known for their hard work, with members constantly looking for new opportunities and projects—in this case, finding new products to sell. When the team decides on a new project, which is selling used cars from Korea to Jordan, they urgently need an additional team member to help them. Initially, they bring in Section Chief Park Jong-sik 박종식 과장. After a short time working with Park, other members of Sales team 3 discover that he has engaged in corrupt activities and has repeatedly caused financial damage to the company. They expose his dishonest practices and Park must leave the company. Sales team 3 is determined to continue with the project, so they are soon joined by Section Chief Cheon Gwan-ung 천관웅 과장, who later becomes a permanent member. Each member has distinct characteristics that influence the atmosphere within the team.

3.1 Jang Geu-rae 장그래

Jang Geu-rae is the narrator of this webtoon. He grew up in a poor family and showed an interest in playing the board game Go (in Korea known as *baduk* 바둑) from an early age. He wanted to become a professional *baduk*

[1] Beyond the importance of the collective spirit within Korean society, a broader discussion on various aspects of Koreanness is necessary. For an in-depth analysis of how Koreanness is represented (and translated) in literature, see Kang (2025) in the same issue.

player but was unsuccessful. A family friend then recommended him to the company *One International*, where he started as an intern, and later got a two-year contract. Jang Geu-rae understands well that he does not have the proper education for the job but being the sole caretaker of his elderly mother, he is determined to do everything he can in order to fulfill filial piety. By nature, he is quiet and hardworking (he often stays overnight at the company to finish the work) and is ready to dedicate his time to new challenges.

3.2 Section Chief Oh Sang-sik 오상식 과장

The leader of Team 3, Section Chief Oh Sang-sik, is one of the main characters of this webtoon and is present in almost every episode. Deputy Kim Dong-sik and contract worker Jang Geu-rae work under him. In the story, Oh Sang-sik is presented as a workaholic who never refuses any work. He is also a father of three children and has a wife who does not work, which makes him responsible for the well-being of the entire family. Over time, the constant work started showing – a worn-out face and body, red eyes from lack of sleep, and an unshaven beard due to lack of time (Yoon, 2012b). His longer hair is drawn as if fluttering in the wind behind someone who is always in a hurry. The appearance is unusual for a worker in a Korean company, but it fits his character as a devoted worker. He is fair towards his colleagues and subordinates and does not seek to cause unnecessary difficulties or conflicts. It is more important to him to work sincerely rather than opportunistically.

3.3 Deputy Kim Dong-sik 김동식 대리

Visually, Kim Dong-sik is similar in age to Jang Geu-rae. He has a round face and curly hair (Yoon, 2012c). If we compare him to Section Chief Oh, we can see that he is not exhausted from overworking, so we can assume that he has not been employed at this company for very long. Before Jang Geu-rae's arrival, he was the lowest-ranking member of the team, and after Jang Geu-rae's arrival, he was given the more important position of deputy. Therefore, he is quite patronizing towards Jang Geu-rae and wants to teach him, not only teamwork but also manners in the workplace.

3.4 Section Chief Park Jong-sik 박종식 과장

Section Chief Park joined Sales team 3 when they wanted to begin a new project of selling used cars from Korea to Jordan. Since he had previous

experience selling things in Jordan, he seemed to be a suitable candidate. However, there are many rumors about him, especially about his laziness and lack of work ethic. He prefers to spend his working time playing billiards, among other things. He is also adept at communicating amiably with his superiors and pretending to work well. However, soon after he joins, we find out that he has harmed the company due to his corruption, which is revealed to the company seniors by the members of Sales team 3.

3.5 Section Chief Cheon Gwan-ung 천관웅 과장

After Sales team 3's members exposed the corrupt practices of Section Chief Park, several people had to leave the company or, at least accept a change of position. Team 3 found themselves in the position of "the traitors," since they exposed their own colleague who then lost his job "because of them." Hence, Section Chief Cheon, who is assigned to Team 3, does not have an easy job. Despite the fact he had a fair relationship with Section Chief Oh (it seems they are of a similar age), and also holds the same title as Oh, he is now afraid that someone will find something on him, and he will lose his job as well. Although he has no criminal history and is a good worker, from the very beginning he wants to assert his authority and protect himself from any doubts and suspicions.

4 Analysis of the webtoon *Misaeng*

In this article, we will, according to the Fairclough model, analyze the dialogues that take place on two occasions; the first is when Section Chief Park joins Sales team 3, and the second is when Section Chief Cheon joins the same team. Each time a new member joins, the structure of the team changes. Everyone must get used to one another and adapt to a new way of working. At the same time, everyone wants to showcase their strengths (especially the new members) and defend their social position in the team (especially the old members of lower rank), so the expected discourse is that of power and authority. This emphasis on demonstrating strength and authority can lead to conflicts.

The analysis of *Misaeng* employs Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to examine how language reflects and shapes power dynamics in workplace interactions. The model will be applied in textual analysis, as well as in the analysis of interactions and socio-cultural background.

In textual analysis, we will focus on the linguistic features of dialogues, such as the use of honorifics, appropriate verb endings, pronouns and titles, vocabulary, and speech styles. These elements will help us reveal how characters establish or challenge power relations through the linguistic perspective. While analyzing interactions, we will focus on discourse, interpreting how dialogues unfold among team members. We will examine who initiates the conversation, how the participants respond to certain demands, the significance of interruptions during the conversation, etc. Through this, we can explore how power is displayed and how workers without power react. Finally, we will analyze and discuss the socio-cultural background of the webtoon *Misaeng*. This section will include an explanation of the broader cultural and societal context, particularly the Confucian-influenced emphasis on hierarchy and respect in Korean workplaces and workplace interactions.

By integrating these three levels, the analysis will demonstrate how *Misaeng* mirrors the sociocultural norms of Korean corporate life through the linguistic choices and interpersonal dynamics of its characters. This approach underscores how language not only reflects but also reinforces systemic power structures in professional settings.

Although the webtoon consists of both verbal and visual elements, this analysis will focus specifically on the verbal aspect, considering only the characteristics of the Korean language and its related cultural norms. Due to the length of the dialogues included in the analysis, they will be provided as an appendix to the article. The translations of all dialogues have been done by the author of the article, aiming for a literal translation to better demonstrate the linguistic features of the Korean language.

4.1 Power expression: Park joining Team 3

The first dialogue (see Appendix, Table 2), which we will analyze happens when Park joins Team 3, and it is his first day of working with them. The conversation opens up between Park and contract worker Jang Geu-rae. However, we should keep in mind that Korean company workplace is usually an open-air office, so even when someone is addressing only one colleague, others can hear what is going on.

Section Chief Park initiates the conversation by ordering Jang Geu-rae to bring his things from the resource team. Park's command to Jang (1) is informal and direct, lacking polite expressions such as *-si-* -시-, a pre-final

ending used for showing respect towards the subject of the sentence,[2] and *-yo* -요, a verb ending used for showing respect towards the addressee. He addresses Jang with *ibwa* 이봐, a casual term meaning 'Hey (you),' which is an informal address and can only be used with either someone very familiar or a colleague of lower rank in a work environment. With the order of picking his (Park's) things from the resource office, he shows his authority directed at Jang. He considers himself to have more important things to do and does not want to lose time. However, he does not consider that Jang has more important tasks to do.

As a subordinate, Jang must manage tasks from multiple superiors while maintaining respect and seeking guidance to avoid conflicts, which is why he hesitates about Park's request (2). He is in the middle of some other work that was given to him by Section Chief Oh and feels obliged to ask for permission from Oh, because he will conclude the task later than expected (3). Jang uses consistently polite language, incorporating honorific verb endings (such as verb endings *-si-* -시- and *-yo* -요), polite subject particle *kkeseo* 께서 and honorific suffix *nim* 님 added to the official title of both Oh and Park. Jang even uses double honorifics when explaining Park's request to Oh, reflecting his desire to show respect to both superiors (3).

Listening to the conversation, Deputy Kim involves himself in the conversation (4). He is addressing Jang with *ssi* 씨 'sir, Mr.', a suffix added to someone's name to show a formal relationship but is usually used towards someone of a similar or lower position. While Kim does not use polite verb endings, we can understand that he feels entitled to correct Jang's behavior as a slight superior. He critiques Jang's use of honorifics, implying that the language Jang used was inappropriate and that Jang lacks an understanding of proper hierarchical subtleties. This highlights the importance of using proper language in the Korean workplace, and mistakes in language use can be seen as a lack of awareness or professionalism. Jang replies with uncertainty and seeks clarification (5). Kim uses a didactic and corrective tone, pointing out the mistake in the use of double honorifics (6). Double honorifics mean that the subject and the object of the sentence are both "honored" simultaneously and it is typically used in contexts where both the subject and the object are individuals who deserve respect, such as elders or people of higher social status. In a workplace environment, it is advisable to use it when talking about seniors. However, from Kim's perspective, he should not use it because it implies that Section Chief Oh is of the same rank as Section Chief Park. As we can see, both Oh and Park have the same title

[2] For detailed discussion of contemporary possible uses of *-si-* in Korean daily life, see Yoon (2025) in the same issue.

– Section Chief. However, Kim considers Oh as someone of higher rank than Park, which is probably because Oh has been working in this company for a longer time than Park, but has not yet been promoted. For Kim, Oh is of the highest rank and wants to show Park he ranks below Oh.

Jang accepts the remark made by Kim without resistance (7) and tries to correct himself. He again turns to Oh and asks him for permission to run an errand for Park. However, while addressing Oh with honorific suffix *nim* 님, Jang does not use the same suffix when talking about Park (8). Therefore, Park strongly rebukes Jang for using his name without the honorific suffix *nim* 님 (9). As a superior, Park expects proper forms of address as a sign of deference. He takes it very personally as if he is losing his authority. After that, Park also expresses frustration with Kim, who creates unnecessary tension or conflict (10). He does not use any polite endings while talking to Kim, addressing him as *neo* 너 'you,' which can be used only among close friends or peers and is rude in this context. The attention shifts to the fight between Kim and Park (11, 12). Since Park does not use proper words of politeness when addressing Kim, Kim takes it as a sign of disrespect. Each of them tries to show authority. Kim is of lower rank than Park by the title, but he has been working in this team for a longer time. Park is a higher ranking and is trying to make his position as a leader.

The whole situation is resolved by a simple command uttered by Oh (13): "Stop (*geuman* 그만)." He manages to stop the escalating conflict, using his authority to restore order and prevent further disruption. This reflects the role of higher management in maintaining workplace harmony and the expectation that their directives will be followed without question. He commands Park to pick up his things and explains that Jang has other work to do (15). Park is dissatisfied but he cannot talk back to Oh. Park shows his frustration and dissatisfaction with the hierarchical structure because he feels his authority or actions are not respected or valued (16).

At the end of this conversation, the hierarchy of the team becomes clear; Oh is the highest-ranking and most respected member. Following is Park, who is second highest by title, and Kim, who is second highest by experience. Jang has the lowest position in the team.

4.2 Power expression: Cheon joining Team 3

Soon after, Park's corruptive behavior is exposed by other members of Team 3, and he has to leave the company. Team 3 feels uncomfortable because everyone is gossiping about them. However, they still want to continue with the project, so Section Chief Cheon joins them. From the story, it is obvious

that Oh and Kim worked with Cheon in the past, because both of them are positive about the new member. However, since Sales team 3 exposed Park's case, Cheon is careful when he starts working with the team and feels the need to show his authority.

The second dialogue, which we will analyze (see Appendix, Table 3), happens when Cheon joins the team for the first time. Cheon initiates the conversation with Jang and establishes a professional yet approachable demeanor, emphasizing collaboration and mutual adaptation (1, 3). He addresses Jang with politeness by using the word *ssi* 씨; he uses polite verb ending *-yo* -요 and formal ending *-eupsida* -읍시다 (when suggesting that they should get along well) but does not lower himself, which can be observed from the use of the pronoun *na* 나, instead of *jeo* 저 (3). This reflects a leadership style that values flexibility and approachability within hierarchical boundaries. However, he quickly changes his way of speaking, uses informal speech, and shifts from work-related to personal topics about Jang's hairstyle, as if he wants to teach Jang about proper professional appearance (5, 7). That reflects cultural norms about maintaining a tidy and professional look in the workplace. The comment is shocking to Jang (6), but he shows readiness to follow Cheon's suggestions (8), because is his superior.

Kim, listening to the conversation, intervenes. He humorously reminds Cheon of their boss, Section Chief Oh's hairstyle, trying to ease the tension and show familiarity within the team (11). However, Cheon does not take it well; he reasserts authority, shifts the focus back to work, and directs the next task (12).

After that Cheon and Kim go to another office and do the work-related briefing there. A tense conversation between them takes place, showing that Cheon (who knows what happened with Park) is not comfortable working with the team. He harshly reminds Kim that they should keep a formal relationship and that if he (Kim) starts putting his nose into Cheon's work, he (Cheon) will do the same. Kim is shocked by Cheon's attitude but does not want to argue. They both return to the office and meet Section Chief Oh. This is also the last dialogue, which we will analyze in this article (see Appendix, Table 4).

Section Chief Cheon greets Section Chief Oh with deference, using formal polite language, such as verb endings *-si-* -시- and *-seumnikka* -습니까. He is also addressing him as 'team leader' *timjangnim* 팀장님, adding honorific suffix *nim* to the title (1), through which he acknowledges Oh as his superior. That could reflect his respect for his higher rank. But in this situation, the use of respectful language also reflects his fear – fear that Sales team 3 would find some mistakes he might have made in the past, reveal them and

he would lose his job. This is why he is careful while establishing relationships with his new teammates. On the other hand, Oh greets him in an informal way, which shows that he feels comfortable and is on friendly terms with Cheon – he sees him more as a colleague than a subordinate (2). Cheon keeps his polite and formal tone by saying: "*Jal butak deurimnida* 잘 부탁드립니다", which is usually used when asking for a favor or request, but in this sense, it means 'please be nice to me' or 'please take care of me and guide me well'. Oh is surprised by Cheon's use of polite language and formality and responds to it in a way that could be interpreted as both teasing and critical of the sudden change and the unexpected behavior (4). Cheon does not reply. They all get back to their work.

Then Cheon requests Kim to check the work progress together in a direct and formal way (5). Cheon and Kim are now in a similar relationship as Kim and Park. Cheon is higher ranking by his title, but Kim has been working as part of Sales team 3 for a longer time. The difference is that Kim had not heard any bad gossip about Cheon before, so he thought they could be good colleagues, but Cheon made it clear, in a private conversation, that they were not as close as Kim imagined, so he answers to Cheon's request with politeness (6).

While they are checking the work progress report, Cheon uses a direct, informal, and slightly accusatory tone, questioning the responsibility for previous work (7). Finally, Cheon brings up the subject of Jordan's project and the case of Section Chief Park (9). He connects the current task with a previous incident, indicating a pattern of issues. When Kim tries to provide context or justify the team's actions regarding Park's case (10), Cheon interrupts him and sets a clear deadline for the check-up of the previous project (11). He expresses dissatisfaction with the current state of work and emphasizes the need for revision. At that point, Oh involves himself in the conversation with a sharp and authoritative tone (13). He sarcastically says to Cheon: "You are an interesting guy" (15). He criticizes Cheon's behavior, implying that he is not being productive, and stresses the importance of working diligently. Furthermore, Oh questions Cheon about his actions towards Kim by introducing the analogy of playing games (17). Since Cheon responds with confusion (18), Oh keeps explaining Cheon's behavior through the analogy and emphasizes the importance of focus (19).

As in the previous case, Oh shows absolute authority, defending the work previously done by his team. He shows that at the workplace, he prioritizes productivity. The superior (Oh) monitors and corrects the employees' focus and efforts.

5 Discussion

In this section, we will closely examine the previously mentioned situations and analyze them within the broader context of the Korean workplace. For comparison, we will take examples from two other webtoons: *The Story of Head Manager Kim, Who Lives and Works for a Large Company in Seoul*, and *New Employee, Chairman Kang*. Both webtoons are set in a large Korean company where the hierarchy is clearly evident. We will comment on the expression of hierarchy through the use of polite language, the dynamics of requesting and refusing work among employees, and trough methods used to resolve conflicts that occur in the workplace.

Language is crucial for expressing hierarchy in the workplace. There are several factors influencing speech styles, such as age, social hierarchy, and position (Kiaer et al., 2019, p. 281). However, deciding on the appropriate use of polite speech is complex, even for native Korean speakers. It can often be observed that avoidance of honorifics on the speaker's part can make the listener feel comfortable, while the use of honorifics can lead to discomfort, which means that the use of appropriate politeness levels is completely strategic (Lee, 2018, p. 62). In our case, we see that Park did not use any polite endings when speaking to contract worker Jang from the very beginning. Moreover, he addressed him with *ibwa* 'hey you' rather than *ssi* 'Mr.', which would have been expected since this was their first encounter. This lack of courtesy made the situation uncomfortable, drawing the attention of Deputy Kim, who intervened in the conversation. Even though it seemed Kim wanted to teach Jang about the correct use of polite speech, his true intention was to let Park know that the most powerful member of the team was Section Chief Oh, who deserved the utmost respect, despite both Park and Oh holding the same title. Furthermore, after that, Kim and Park had a fight precisely due to the inappropriate use of language and titles.

In the second and third dialogues (when Section Chief Cheon joins the team), we continue to observe the importance of using polite speech, but in a different context. Although Cheon speaks politely and formally to Jang, he maintains this level of formality when addressing Section Chief Oh. Oh is surprised: "What's with the way you're talking? It's weird… acting all new." This remark suggests that Oh and Cheon have known each other for a long time and are closer in the organizational hierarchy, so the unexpected use of polite speech makes the situation uncomfortable.

In other webtoons dealing with the lives of company workers, we can similarly observe situations where hierarchy is expressed through language. *The Story of Head Manager Kim* (Song, 2023a) begins with a scene of a

photographer taking a family photo of Head Manager Kim's family. When the photographer addresses him as *seonsaengnim* 선생님, here meaning *'sir', 'mister'*, Kim frowns at him and insists: "Head Manager! Head Manager Kim," correcting the photographer on the proper title. The episode suggests an ironic theme presented by the author – while high-ranking company workers easily wield their power within the company, they quickly lose that power in the outside world (Lee, 2011, p. 41). People who do not work for the same company as Head Manager Kim fail to recognize the significance of his title and position in the company and therefore do not regard it with the same importance. In later episodes, the author continues to emphasize how important hierarchy and the expression of it through language and titles are for Head Manager Kim. In episode 14 (Song, 2023b), a senior director calls Kim and asks his opinion on companies where workers no longer use different titles but address each other more equally. Kim does not support this idea and replies: "If titles are unified, how will we know who is senior and who is junior?" The author caricatures Head Manager Kim, portraying him as an old-fashioned worker who would mourn the loss of power he derives from the proper use of polite language by others.

The expression of hierarchy through language is also observable in the webtoon *New Employee, Chairman Kang*. In the first episode (Sangyeong, 2023a), an accident occurs when an intern rushes to deliver some documents. From the balcony on the first floor, he notices that the chairman of the company has just entered the building. A document slips from his hands and falls over the balcony. Trying to catch it, the intern falls over the balcony as well, landing directly on top of the chairman. Their souls switch, and the chairman wakes up in the intern's body. Now that the chairman is in the body of an unknown young intern, he loses all his power overnight, dropping from the highest rank of chairman to the lowest rank of intern. There are several situations where he realizes he has lost his former authority when speaking to others. His previous manner of communication (as a chairman) is now inappropriate and not accepted by his interlocutors anymore. For example, in episode 3 (Sangyeong, 2023b), the chairman (now in the body of an intern) arrives at the company and asks the front desk for information without using any honorifics, as if the receptionist were a close friend: "*Ibwa, gil jom mureobogenne* 이봐, 길 좀 물어보겠네 'Hey (you), I want to ask for directions.' The receptionist's reaction takes him aback. If he was in the body of the chairman, nobody would be bothered by his inappropriate language, but now he gets the following answer: *Jigeum nugusinde banmarieyo?* 지금 누구신데 반말이에요? 'Who are you, using *banmal?*' The receptionist is offended by his lack of formality and politeness and scolds him. After this encounter, he heads to the office where his team works and

gets involved in a conflict with a colleague who actually holds no significant position in the company (just a regular staff member, *sawon* 사원). This colleague, having been employed longer than the intern, expects a certain level of respect. During the argument, both resort to an informal form of speech (*banmal* 반말), and everyone around is surprised by the intern's audacity to confront his senior colleague.

In addition to the strategic use of language when expressing hierarchy, it is important to consider the expectations placed on certain workers by their superiors and how subordinates react to these demands. In *Misaeng*, Park initiated a conversation with Jang asking him to pick up his things from the resource office. Jang hesitated, as he had other, more important work, but he did not directly refuse Park's request. The socio-cultural context plays a significant role in the method of rejection. Many cultures place more importance on *how* someone says 'no' rather than the refusal itself; the speaker must understand the appropriate method of rejection and the intention behind it (Pedrosa García, 2024, p. 97). Instead of outright refusing, Jang asked Oh within Park's earshot whether his current work could wait. This way he avoided the responsibility for not completing the work assigned by Oh on time, while at the same time letting Park know that, despite his lower-ranking position, he also had more pressing tasks.

Similar situations can easily be found in other webtoons. In the first episode of the above-mentioned webtoon *New Employee, Chairman Kang*, we can observe an interaction that takes place before the intern and the chairman switch their souls. The regular staff member, Cha, approaches the intern and the following conversation takes place between them.

Table 1: Dialogue between Cha and an intern (Sangyeong, 2023a)

No.	Conversation
(1)	차 사원: 어이, 인턴. 저기 커피가 다 떨어졌는데? *Cha sawon: Eoi, inteon. jeogi keopiga da tteoreojyeonneunde?* Cha: Hey, intern. The coffee over there is all gone …
(2)	인턴: 아, 네, 알겠습니다! 저기, 혹시… 이 작업만 마무리하고 가지러 가도 될까요? 거의 다 끝났거든요. *Inteon: A, ne, algetseumnida! Jeogi, hoksi… I jageomman mamurihago gajireo gado doelkkayo? Geoui da kkeunnatgeodeunyo.* Intern: Yes, I see! Umm, could I possibly … finish this task before going to get more coffee? I'm almost done.

No.	Conversation
(3)	차 사원: 잉? 인턴, 너 사회성 겁나 떨어지는구나. 지금 뭐가 더 급한지 몰라? 네 그 별 볼 일 없는 작업 따위보다 내 카페인이 더 중요하다고. 우리팀 전체가 커피가 없어서 능률이 떨어지고 있어, 지금. 아, 지잡대 출신이라 일의 순서를 모르는 건가? *Cha sawon: Ing? Inteon, neo sahoeseong geomna tteoreojineunguna. jigeum mwoga deo geupanji molla? Ne geu byeol bol il eomneun jageop ttawiboda nae kapeini deo jungyohadago. Uri jeonchega keopiga eopseoseo neungnyuri tteoreojigo isseo, jigeum. a, jijapdae chulsinira irui sunseoreul moreuneun geonda?* Cha: Huh? Intern, you seriously lack social awareness, don't you? Don't you know what's more urgent right now? My caffeine is more important than your insignificant task or whatever. Right now, the whole team's efficiency is dropping because we don't have coffee. Oh, is this because you attended the university outside of a capital that you can't figure out priority tasks?
(4)	인턴: 알겠습니다. 커피부터 채우고 오겠습니다. *Inteon: Algetseumnida. Keopibuteo chaeugo ogetseumnida.* Intern: All right. I'll refill the coffee first.

It is clear from the dialogue that the intern is hesitant to refuse Cha's request directly but seeks understanding as he is in the middle of another task (2). Unfortunately, Cha took his answer as defiance and rudely told him that coffee was more important than his work (3). He further argued that the coffee is not only for him but for the entire department, with which he emphasized the importance of the collective effort. Moreover, Cha even became insulting, claiming that the intern does not understand what is more urgent because he attended one of the universities outside the capital, which is considered inferior. The tense situation was defused by their section chief, who ordered the intern to immediately take the documents to the Sales department. This 'saved' the intern from further harassment. After the intern left, the section chief reprimanded Cha for harassing junior colleagues, warning him that the company takes bullying seriously and that it will negatively impact his performance evaluation. The section chief resolved the situation, but only after the intern left. Thus, the intern was unaware of the real intentions of his supervisor.

When analyzing the dialogues in *Misaeng*, we can observe that only someone with sufficient authority, like Section Chief Oh, can quickly solve conflicts. The disagreement between Park and Kim is abruptly halted by Oh with a simple 'stop' *geuman* 그만. When Section Chief Cheon later joins the team and tries to provoke a conflict with Kim, Section Chief Oh intervenes, reminding him to focus on work instead of looking for trouble. The role of a supervisor is to maintain harmony in the workplace and to support colleagues in lower positions. By protecting them, the supervisor fosters

loyalty and commitment in return (Cho and Yoon, 2001, p. 79). Section Chief Oh looks after Kim and Jang, and they reciprocate his care with loyalty and diligent work.

6 Conclusion

The webtoon *Misaeng* is a valuable resource for analyzing workplace discourse and hierarchical relationships, as it focuses on office life. Understanding character interactions and hierarchies is crucial to interpreting the story and its outcomes.

Hierarchy is reflected in the linguistic features and interaction dynamics within the context of Korean society. Section Chief Oh wields the most power due to his experience and position; he uses informal language to assert authority and maintain team harmony. In contrast, Section Chiefs Cheon and Park, despite holding the same title, have less power because they have fewer years of experience. Deputy Kim is loyal to Section Chief Oh, supporting his authority when needed. Contract worker Jang, positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy, remains polite and avoids conflicts due to his lack of status and experience.

Through detailed analyses of these two situations, the author's message is clear and easy to understand. When reading in detail, we perceive that the author satirizes Korean society – wondering why Koreans are so sensitive to expressions of hierarchy and authority. He further highlights this point with a situation in which a conflict arises precisely due to improper use of polite speech. While expressions of hierarchy have evolved over the years and with each new generation, they remain a crucial aspect of Korean society, as evidenced by other cultural content.

By including the visual part in the analysis, alongside the verbal part of the webtoon, a more detailed, in-depth study could be done. However, since the verbal part was sufficiently expressive to lead to a detailed conclusion, it was decided that it alone would be used in the present analysis. The selected webtoon proved to be a suitable subject for examination, as it represents a topical text that can help us gain insight into the Korean trading company and the relationships within it.

However, it is important to remember that *Misaeng* gained popularity in the early 2010s. As South Korean society rapidly evolves, the corporate culture and workplace hierarchy are also changing. Over the past decade, CEOs of major South Korean conglomerates, such as SK Group, Samsung, Lotte Group, have strived to encourage a more horizontal corporate culture

by asking employees to address them by English names or initials instead of formal job titles. This trend, initially popular in startups and IT companies like Kakao, is spreading to more traditional corporations. However, skepticism remains. A survey conducted by *Saramin* 사람인 in November 2021 revealed that only 6.3% of workers favor using English names, suggesting that broader structural changes are necessary for genuine cultural reform (Park, 2022b).

In April 2024, Kakao Games CEO Han Sang-woo announced the decision to discontinue using English names for employees, citing confusion among workers. Employees will now address each other by their Korean names, adding the honorific suffix *nim* to their names rather than their titles, showing respect in an egalitarian manner (Lee, 2024).

Such news shows that changing workplace hierarchy and organizational culture cannot happen overnight. Deeply rooted societal and linguistic practices require time, effort, and a genuine willingness to change.

Acknowledgment

This work was supported by the Seed Program for Korean Studies of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the Korean Studies Promotion Service at the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS-2022-INC-2250001).

References

Abdullah, N. F., Ghazanfari, M., Sabbagh, M. R. G., & Ghonsooly, B. (2020). Representation of gender roles in the discourse of a literary text: A CDA study of Hemingway's a farewell to arms. *The Journal of Research on the Lepidoptera*, *51*(2), 834–849. https://doi.org/10.36872/LEPI/V51I2/301137

Audah Kadhim, N., & Fadhil Abbas, N. (2023). The Construction of Racism in Cartoon Films: A Critical Discourse Analysis. *Arab World English Journal, 14*(2), 221–235. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol14no2.16

Cho, Y.-H., & Yoon, J. (2001). The Origin and Function of Dynamic Collectivism: An Analysis of Korean Corporate Culture. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 7(4), 70–88. https://doi.org/10.1080/713999116

Drew, P., & Heritage, J. (Eds.). (1992). *Talk at work: Interaction in institutional settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: the critical study of language*. London, New York: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2013). *Language and Power, Second edition.* London, New York: Routledge.

Galafa, B. (2023). Critical Discourse Analysis of Malawian Online Newspaper Reporting: Passing of The Access to Information Bill in 2016. *Journal for Foreign Languages*, *15*(1), 45-60. https://doi.org/10.4312/vestnik.15.45-60

Jin, D. Y. (2019). Korean Webtoonist Yoon Tae Ho: History, Webtoon Industry, and Transmedia Storytelling. *International Journal of Communication 13*, 2216–2230.

Kang, B. Y. (2025). Unveiling Koreanness in Yoon Ha Lee's Dragon Pearl: Cultural Representation and Translation Strategies. *Acta Linguistica Asiatica*, *15*(1), 153-176. https://doi.org/10.4312/ala.15.1.153-176

Kiaer, J. 조지은 et al. (2019). The Roles of Age, Gender and Setting in Korean Half-talk Shift. *Discourse and Cognition* 담화와 인지*, 26*(3), 279-308. https://doi.org/10.15718/discog.2019.26.3.279

Koester, A. (2010). *Workplace Discourse.* London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Lee, E. M. (2018). Analysis of politeness strategies in Japanese and Korean conversations between males: focusing on speech levels and speech level shifts. *Pragmatics*, 28 (1), 61-91. https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.00002.lee

Lee, H.-C., & McNulty, M. P. (2003). *Korea's Economic Crisis and Cultural Transition toward Individualism*. ESRI Discussion Paper Series No.71. Tokyo: Economic and Social Research Institute, Cabinet Office.

Lee, J. (2024). Kakao Games employees will no longer be known by English names. *Korea JoongAng Daily.* Retrieved from https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/2024-04-22/business/industry/Kakao-Games-employees-will-no-longer-be-known-by-English-names/2030962, November 30, 2024.

Lee, J. 이정복 (2011). Hangugeo gyeongeobeobui juyo gineung 한국어 경어법의 주요 기능 (Major Functions of Korean Honorifics). *URIMALGEUL: The Korean Language and Literature* 52, 25~53.

Mullany, L. (2007). *Gendered Discourse in the Professional Workplace*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

No, J. 노정동. (2013). Rotdechilseong, ingi weptun 'Misaeng'gwa kollabo...resseubi kapetaim chulsi 롯데칠성, 인기 웹툰 '미생'과 콜라보...레쓰비 카페타임 출시. *Hangyeong News 한경뉴스* . Retrieved from

https://www.hankyung.com/news/article/201308136246g, September 8, 2024.

Park, J. (2022a). Crying Men Watching Webtoons: Misaeng and Korean Male Audiences. In M. Tanter & M. Park (Eds.), *Here Comes the Flood: Perspectives of Gender, Sexuality, and Stereotype in the Korean Wave* (E-book). Lexington Books.

Park, J. (2022b). Call me by my English name. *The Korea Times*. Retrieved from https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/tech/2024/11/129_327466.html, November 30, 2024.

Pedrosa García, I. (2024). Refusals in Japanese and Spanish: Pragmatic Transfer in L2. *Acta Linguistica Asiatica, 14*(2), 93-119. https://doi.org/10.4312/ala.14.2.93-119

Sangyeong 산경 (2023b). *Sinipsawon Gang hoejang 3hwa 신입사원 강 회장 3 화*. Retrieved from https://comic.naver.com/webtoon/detail?titleId=814766&no=3&week=sat, September 8, 2024.

Sangyeong 산경. (2023a). *Sinipsawon Gang hoejang 1hwa 신입사원 강 회장 1 화*. Retrieved from https://comic.naver.com/webtoon/detail?titleId=814766&no=1&week=sat, September 8, 2024.

Seo, S. 서선근. (2015). Teuraenseumidieo seutoritellingeuroseo Misaengui ganeungseonggwa hangye 트랜스미디어 스토리텔링으로서 <미생>의 가능성과 한계. *Eomunhak* 어문학 *128*, 277-308.

Song, H. 송희구 (2023a). *Seoul jagae daegieop danineun gim bujang iyagi 1hwa 서울 자가에 대기업 다니는 김 부장 이야기 1 화* Retrieved from https://comic.naver.com/webtoon/detail?titleId=819929&no=1&week=tue, September 8, 2024.

Song, H. 송희구 (2023b). *Seoul jagae daegieop danineun gim bujang iyagi 14hwa 서울 자가에 대기업 다니는 김 부장 이야기 14 화* Retrieved from https://comic.naver.com/webtoon/detail?titleId=819929&no=14&week=tue, September 8, 2024.

Stephens, J. (1992). *Language and ideology in children's fiction*. London, New York: Longman.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1996). Discourse, power and access. In Caldas-Coulthard, C. R. & Coulthard, M. (Eds.), *Text and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analyses* (pp. 84-104). London, New York: Routledge.

Vine, B. (2004). *Getting Things Done at Work: The discourse of power in workplace interaction.* Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Yetkiner, N. K. (2021). A critical discourse analysis approach to othering: Depiction of the Syrian refugee experience in Turkish children's literature. *Sic Journal of Literature, Culture and Literary Translation*, *11*(211), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.15291/SIC/2.11.LC.5

Yoon, S.-S. (2025). The Use of the Honorific Suffix -si- for Non-human Subjects: An Analysis of Talk-shows. *Acta Linguistica Asiatica*, *15*(1), 9-30. https://doi.org/10.4312/ala.15.1.9-30

Yoon, T. 윤태호. (2012a). *Misaeng: Ajik sara itji motan ja, 1su 미생 : 아직 살아 있지 못한 자, 1 수*. Retrieved from https://webtoon.kakao.com/viewer/%EB%AF%B8%EC%83%9D-003/15135, September 8, 2024.

Yoon, T. 윤태호. (2012b). *Misaeng: Ajik sara itji motan ja, 3su 미생 : 아직 살아 있지 못한 자, 3 수*. Retrieved from https://webtoon.kakao.com/viewer/%EB%AF%B8%EC%83%9D-005/15219, September 8, 2024.

Yoon, T. 윤태호. (2012c). *Misaeng: Ajik sara itji motan ja, 5su 미생 : 아직 살아 있지 못한 자, 5 수*. Retrieved from https://webtoon.kakao.com/viewer/%EB%AF%B8%EC%83%9D-007/15299, September 8, 2024.

Yoon, T. 윤태호. (2013-2024). Misaeng: Ajik sara itji motan ja 미생 : 아직 살아 있지 못한 자. Retrieved from https://webtoon.kakao.com/content/%EB%AF%B8%EC%83%9D/818, September 8, 2024.

Yoon, T. 윤태호. (2013a). *Misaeng: Ajik sara itji motan ja 4 미생 : 아직 살아 있지 못한 자 4.* Seoul: Wisdom House.

Yoon, T. 윤태호. (2013b). *Misaeng: Ajik sara itji motan ja 5 미생 : 아직 살아 있지 못한 자 5.* Seoul: Wisdom House.

Appendix

Table 2: Dialogue Between Members of Team 3 and Park, Episode 61 (Yoon, 2013a, pp. 195-197)

No.	Conversation
(1)	박 과장 (장그래에게): 이봐. 자원팀에 가서 내 물건들 좀 갖다줘. 바로 오느라고 못 챙겼거든. *Bak gwajang (Janggeuraeege): Ibwa. Jawontime gaseo nae mulgeondeul jom gatdajwo. Baro oneurago mot chaenggyeotgeodeun.* Park (to Jang): Hey. Go to the resource team and please bring my things. I couldn't bring them because I came here right away.
(2)	장그래: 아... *Janggeurae: A...* Jang: Uh ...
(3)	장그래 (오 과장에게): 오 과장님, 박 과장님께서 심부름을 시키셨는데요. 지금 기안 작성하던 중인데, 바로 필요하신가요? *Janggeurae (O gwajangege): O gwajangnim, Bak gwajangnimkkeseo simbureumeul sikisyeonneundeyo. Jigeum gian jakseonghadeon junginde, baro piryohasingayo?* Jang (to Oh): Section Chief, Mr. Oh, Section Chief, Mr. Park, asked me to run an errand. I was just in the middle of making a draft, do you need it right away?
(4)	김 대리 (장그래에게): 장그래 씨, 무슨 존칭이 그래? *Gim daeri (Janggeuraeege): Janggeurae ssi, museun jonchingi geurae?* Kim (to Jang): Mr. Jang, what kind of honorifics are you using?
(5)	장그래: 예...? *Janggeurae: Ye...?* Jang: Sorry ...?
(6)	김 대리: 오 과장님과 박 과장님, 누가 더 위야? 존칭을 겹으로 쓰는 게 어딨어? *Gim daeri: O gwajangnimgwa Bak gwajangnim, nuga deo wiya? Jonchingeul gyeobeuro sseuneun ge eodisseo?* Kim: Who is higher, Section Chief Oh or Section Chief Park? How can you use double honorifics?
(7)	장그래 (김 대리에게): 아... 네... 그렇군요. *Janggeurae (Gim daeriege): A... Ne... Geureokunyo.* Jang**:** Oh ... yes ... right.
(8)	장그래 (오 과장에게): 오 과장님. 박 과장이 심부름을 시켜서 지금 하던 일을 멈춰야 하는데... *Janggeurae (O gwajangege): O gwajangnim. Bak gwajangi simbureumeul sikyeoseo jigeum hadeon ireul meomchwoya haneunde...* Jang (to Oh): Section Chief, Mr. Oh, section chief Park asked me to run an errand. I have to stop what I was doing ...

No.	Conversation
(9)	박 과장 (장그래에게): 야! 내가 니 친구냐? 어따 대고 박 과장이야? *Bak gwajang (Janggeuraeege): Ya! Naega ni chingunya? Eotta daego bak gwajangiya?* Park (to Jang): HEY! Am I your friend? How dare you call me like that?
(10)	박 과장 (김 대리에게): 넌 왜 괜한 시비를 만들어? *Bak gwajang (Gim daeriege): Neon wae gwaenhan sibireul mandeureo?* Park (to Kim): Why are you causing unnecessary trouble?
(11)	김 대리 (박 과장에게): '넌'이라뇨? '넌'이 뭡니까? 박 과장님! *Gim daeri (Bak gwajangege): 'Neon'iranyo? 'Neon'i mwomnikka? Bak gwajangnim!* Kim (to Park): Did you say 'you'? What do you mean 'you'? Manager, Mr. Park!
(12)	박 과장 (김 대리에게): 뭐? *Bak gwajang (Gim daeriege): Mwo?* Park to Kim: What?
(13)	오 과장: 그만. *O gwajang: Geuman.* Oh: Stop.
(14)	박 과장: 어디 대리가 과장한테... *Bak gwajang: Eodi daeriga gwajanghante...* Park: How can a deputy talk like that to the section chief ...
(15)	오 과장: 박 과장. 본인 물건은 직접 챙겨오지. 장그래 씨는 하던 업무가 있었으니까. *O gwajang: Bak gwajang. Bonin mulgeoneun jikjeop chaenggyeooji. Janggeurae ssineun hadeon eommuga isseosseunikka.* Oh: Section Chief Park. Your own things should be brought by yourself. Mr. Jang was in the middle of his work.
(16)	박 과장: 아놔~ 이거 희한한 대우 받네~ 미친다, 미쳐. *Bak gwajang: Anwa~ Igeo huihanhan daeu banne~ Michinda, michyeo.* Park: Wow. What kind of treatment I am getting. Crazy, crazy.

Table 3: Dialogue Between Members of Team 3 and Cheon, Episode 72, first part (Yoon, 2013b, pp. 75-77)

No.	Conversation
(1)	천 과장: 장그래 씨. *Cheon gwajang: Janggeurae ssi.* Cheon: Mr. Jang Geu-rae.
(2)	장그래: 네, 천 과장님. *Janggeurae: Ne, Cheon gwajangnim.* Jang: Yes, Section Chief Cheon.

No.	Conversation
(3)	천 과장: 나는 업무적으로 너무 디테일하거나 격식을 따지는 형식주의자가 아니니까 편하게 지내요. 아무래도 내가 가장 많이 업무 지시할 사람은 그래 씨가 될 것 같으니까 서로 스타일은 적절히 맞춰갑시다. *Cheon gwajang: Naneun eommujeogeuro neomu diteilhageona gyeoksigeul ttajineun hyeongsikjuuijaga aninikka pyeonhage jinaeyo. Amuraedo naega gajang mani eommu jisihal sarameun Geurae ssiga doel geot gateunikka seoro seutaireun jeokjeolhi matchwogapsida.* Cheon: I'm not someone who's overly detailed or formal when it comes to work, so just be comfortable. It seems like you'll be the one receiving most of my work instructions, so let's adjust our styles to fit each other.
(4)	장그래: 네, 감사합니다. *Janggeurae: Ne, gamsahamnida.* Jang: Oh, thank you.
(5)	천 과장: 그리고 … 그 머리는 어떡할 건가? *Cheon gwajang: Geurigo… geu meorineun eotteokal geonga?* Cheon: And… what are you going to do about that hair?
(6)	장그래: 네? 머 … 머리요? *Janggeurae: ne? meo … meoriyo?* Jang: Sorry? Hai… hair?
(7)	찬 과장: 음 … 너무 긴데? 내 생각에 옷깃에 안 닿을 정도로 깎고 구레나룻도 조금 짧았으면 좋겠는데… 앞머리도 그렇고. 본인 생각은 어때? *Chan gwajang: Eum … Neomu ginde? Nae saenggage otgise an daeul jeongdoro kkakgo gurenarutdo jogeum jjalbasseumyeon jokenneunde… Ammeorido geureoko. Bonin saenggageun eottae?* Cheon: Hmm… It's a bit too long? I think it would be better if you cut it short enough so that it doesn't touch your collar, and maybe trim the sideburns a bit too… and your bangs as well. What do you think?
(8)	장그래: 아! 단정하게 정리하도록 하겠습니다. *Janggeurae: A! Danjeonghage jeongnihadorok hagetseumnida.* Jang: Oh! I'll make sure to tidy it up properly.
(9)	천 과장: 깎겠다는 거지? *Cheon gwajang: Kkakgetdaneun geoji?* Cheon: You're going to cut it, right?
(10)	장그래: 아… *Janggeurae: A…* Jang: Ah…
(11)	김 대리: 오 팀장님도 뭐, 머리에 있어선 할 말 없으신 팀인데요~ *Gim daeri: O timjangnimdo mwo, meorie isseoseon hal mal eopseusin timindeyo~* Kim: Well, Section Chief Oh also doesn't really have much to say about hair …

No.	Conversation
(12)	천 과장: 자, 김 대리. 업무 브리핑 좀 받읍시다. *Cheon gwajang: Ja, Gim daeri. Eommu beuriping jom badeupsida.* Cheon: Alright, Deputy Kim. Let's get a briefing on the work.

Table 4: Dialogue Between Members of Team 3 and Cheon, Episode 72, second part (Yoon, 2013b, pp. 82-86)

No.	Conversation
(1)	천 과장 (오 과장에게): 팀장님, 오셨습니까. *Cheon gwajang (O gwajangege): Timjangnim, osyeotseumnikka.* Cheon (to Oh): Team Leader, you're here.
(2)	오 과장: 어~ 천 과장. 우리 팀 발령 받았나? *O gwajang: Eo~ Cheon gwajang. Uri tim ballyeong badanna?* Oh: Oh~ Section Chief Cheon. Have you been assigned to our team?
(3)	천 과장: 네, 잘 부탁 드립니다. *Cheon gwajang: Ne, jal butak deurimnida.* Cheon: Yes, please guide me well.
(4)	오 과장: 말투가 그게 뭐야~ 새삼스레. 이상해졌는데? *O gwajang: Maltuga geuge mwoya~ Saesamseure. Isanghaejyeonneunde?* Oh: What's with the way you're talking? It's weird... acting all new.
	/.../
(5)	천 과장 (김 대리에게): 업무 진행표 좀 봅시다, 김 대리. *Cheon gwajang (Gim daeriege): Eommu jinhaengpyo jom bopsida, Gim daeri.* Cheon (to Kim): Let's take a look at the work progress report, Deputy Kim.
(6)	김 대리: 예, 바로 보내드리겠습니다. *Gim daeri: Ye, baro bonaedeurigetseumnida.* Kim: Yes, I'll send it right away.
(7)	천 과장: 이거 누가 진행했던 거야? *Cheon gwajang: Igeo nuga jinhaenghaetdeon geoya?* Cheon: Who handled this?
(8)	김 대리: 저희 팀에서... *Gim daeri: Jeohi timeseo...* Kim: Our team ...
(9)	천 과장: 요르단 건, 이거구만. 박 과장 뒤진 게... 이 계기로, *Cheon gwajang: Yoreudan geon, igeoguman. Bak gwajang dwijin ge... I gyegiro,* Cheon: Jordan case, this is what screwed over Section Chief Park ... because of this,

No.	Conversation
(10)	김 대리: 그게 아니라... 그만한 이유가... *Gim daeri: Geuge anira... Geumanhan iyuga...* Kim: It's not that... the reasons why ...
(11)	천 과장: 오후까지 자료 다시 봅시다. 이거 안 되겠어. *Cheon gwajang: Ohukkaji jaryo dasi bopsida. Igeo an doegesseo.* Cheon: Let's review the materials again by the afternoon. This won't do.
(12)	김 대리: 아... 과장님. *Gim daeri: A... Gwajangnim.* Kim: Ah... Section Chief.
(13)	오 과장: 천 과장! *O gwajang: Cheon gwajang!* Oh: Section Chief Cheon!
(14)	천 과장: 예? *Cheon gwajang: Ye?* Cheon Section Chief: Yes?
(15)	오 과장: 재밌는 친구네? 일을 해, 일을. 회사에 나왔으면. 힘 빼지 말고. *O gwajang: Jaeminneun chingune? Ireul hae, ireul. Hoesae nawasseumyeon. Him ppaeji malgo.* Oh: You're an interesting guy, huh? Get to work, get to work, if you already came here ... Don't waste your energy.
(16)	천 과장: 예... *Cheon gwajang: Ye...* Cheon: Yes...
(17)	오 과장: 왜 사람들이 질퍽이는 게임에 빠져 허우적거리는 줄 알아? *O gwajang: Wae saramdeuri jilpeogineun geime ppajyeo heoujeokgeorineun jul ara?* Oh: Do you know why people get caught up in messy games?
(18)	천 과장: 예? *Cheon gwajang: Ye?* Cheon: Sorry?
(19)	오 과장: 게임을 하니까 빠지는 거야. 일하러 와서 게임이나 하고 있다간, 자네부터 게임에 빠질 거야. *O gwajang: Geimeul hanikka ppajineun geoya. Ilhareo waseo geimina hago itdagan, janebuteo geime ppajil geoya.* Oh: It's because they play them. If you start playing games at work, you'll get caught up in the game.

Unveiling Koreanness in Yoon Ha Lee's *Dragon Pearl*: Cultural Representation and Translation Strategies

KANG Byoung Yoong
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
ByoungYoong.Kang@ff.uni-lj.si

Abstract

The paper explores the representation of Koreanness in Yoon Ha Lee's *Dragon Pearl*, a novel that uniquely blends elements of Korean culture with the space opera genre. By examining key cultural markers such as character names, traditional food, and folklore (notably the gumiho), this study highlights how the novel portrays a diasporic sense of identity and belonging. Furthermore, the paper delves into the challenges and strategies of translating these cultural elements into Korean. Through case studies of key passages, it discusses how to maintain cultural nuance and the author's intent while adapting the work for a Korean readership. Ultimately, this paper underscores the importance of preserving cultural integrity translating science fiction works that embody cross-cultural narratives.

Keywords: Koreanness, translation strategies, diaspora, space opera, Korean mythology

Povzetek

Prispevek raziskuje zastopanost korejskosti v romanu *Zmajev biser* (ang. *Dragon Pearl*) avtorja Yoon Ha Leeja, ki na edinstven način združuje elemente korejske kulture z žanrom vesoljske opere. S preučevanjem ključnih kulturnih označevalcev, kot so imena likov, tradicionalna hrana in folklora (zlasti gumiho), članek izpostavlja upodobitve diasporičnega občutka identitete in pripadnosti v romanu in obenem obravnava izzive in strategije, povezane s prevajanjem teh kulturnih elementov v korejščino. Skozi primere ključnih odlomkov razpravlja, kako ohraniti kulturne odtenke in avtorjevo namero pri prilagajanju dela korejskemu bralstvu. Prispevek poudarja pomen ohranjanja kulturne celovitosti pri prevajanju znanstveno-fantastičnih del, ki vključujejo medkulturne pripovedi.

Ključne besede: korejskost, prevajalske strategije, diaspora, vesoljska opera, korejska mitologija

Acta Linguistica Asiatica, 15(1), 2015.
ISSN: 2232-3317, http://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/ala/
DOI: 10.4312/ala.15.1.153-176

1 Introduction

1.1 Yoon Ha Lee and *Dragon Pearl*

Yoon Ha Lee (born 1979), a Korean-American author, has constructed a distinctive literary world that draws significantly upon his bicultural experiences. Born in Houston, Texas, Lee spent his formative years divided between the United States and South Korea. His family resided in both Texas and South Korea, where he attended high school at Seoul Foreign School, an English-language international school. This dual exposure to Korean and Western cultures was a significant factor in the formation of his early literary identity. Subsequently, Lee pursued studies at Cornell University, where he majored in mathematics, and subsequently obtained a master's degree in secondary mathematics education at Stanford University. In addition to his literary pursuits, he has also pursued a career in analysis for an energy market intelligence company, engaged in web design, and taught mathematics. These diverse experiences contribute to the depth and complexity of his writing, particularly his approach to blending science fiction with elements of Korean culture.

Lee's *Dragon Pearl* (2019) is a notable contribution to the young adult genre, distinguished by its innovative fusion of Korean folklore and space opera, a subgenre historically dominated by Western narratives. At the 2019 Dublin World Science Fiction Convention (Worldcon), Lee was recognized as one of the most prominent authors, marking his third consecutive year as a Hugo Award nominee. Reflecting on his work, he articulated his aim to enhance cultural diversity within science fiction. Much like the contributions of 'Afrofuturism' in advancing narratives rooted in African heritage, he sought to enrich the genre by weaving elements of Korean history and cultural identity into his storytelling (Yi Young-Kyung, 2019).

The novel follows the protagonist, Min, a teenage gumiho (fox spirit), as she embarks on a journey to uncover the mystery of her brother's disappearance. In this intergalactic adventure, Lee incorporates elements of Korean mythology, character names, and traditional cultural elements, thereby imparting a distinctive Korean sensibility to the science fiction genre. The novel's distinctive cultural backdrop not only enhances the narrative but also encourages readers to engage with themes of identity, belonging, and the diasporic experience. Notwithstanding the growing interest in science fiction within the Korean literary world, there has been a noticeable absence of academic attention to Lee's work, both in Korea and in European Korean studies. This gap in the literature highlights the importance of introducing and studying works like *Dragon Pearl*, which

contain deeply embedded Korean cultural elements, in both academic and literary circles.

The Korean edition of *Dragon Pearl* was published in 2020 by Sagyejeol Publishing, a prominent South Korean publishing house renowned for producing some of the most exemplary works of young adult literature. Song Kyung-ah 송경아, the translator, is not only a proficient translator but also a highly regarded science fiction writer. Although the Korean translation of this work is of an excellent standard, it is nevertheless necessary to consider the specific challenges that arise from translating this particular novel (Baek, 2001, p. 22). The objective here is not to evaluate the quality of the translation itself, but rather to consider the broader implications of reintroducing Korean cultural content into Korea through translation. It is of the utmost importance to comprehend how cultural nuances and contexts are re-embedded into the target culture, to ensure the continued integrity and relevance of such works for Korean audiences.

1.2 Purpose and scope of the study

This study aims to examine the representation of Koreanness in *Dragon Pearl* and to evaluate how Yoon Ha Lee successfully incorporates elements of Korean culture, including mythology, traditional cuisine, and character names, within a space opera framework.[1] The aforementioned elements permit readers to experience a synthesis of two distinct worlds: the opulent traditions of Korean culture and the futuristic, expansive realm of space exploration. By analyzing these aspects of the novel, this paper aims to elucidate how Lee navigates intricate themes of identity and belonging, particularly from a diasporic perspective (Midkiff, 2023, p. 154).

Despite the growing popularity of science fiction in the Korean literary market, there has been a notable absence of significant academic attention directed towards Lee's work, both within Korea and within the field of European Korean studies. This study posits that works such as *Dragon Pearl*, which incorporate culturally significant elements, should be introduced and discussed more widely. The increasing global influence of Korean culture, evident in areas such as cuisine, fashion, and media, is now extending to literature. It is therefore vital to consider how works like *Dragon Pearl* can be effectively translated and presented to Korean readers. The translation of these cultural markers, while maintaining the integrity and depth of the

[1] For the notion and reinterpretation of Koreanness in Korean literature also see Kang (2022).

original, presents unique challenges that demand careful consideration from translators.

In examining these translation challenges, this study draws on key translation theories to provide a framework for the preservation or adaptation of Korean cultural elements for a Korean audience. The concept of the skopos theory, which emphasizes the purpose of translation, is particularly pertinent in determining the most appropriate approach to cultural markers such as names, food, and mythology. For a Korean readership, many of these elements may already be familiar, which influences the degree of explanation required in the translation process. It is of the utmost importance to ensure that the purpose of the translation is aligned with the cultural context of the intended audience.

Furthermore, Lawrence Venuti's concepts of domestication and foreignization provide a framework for translators to consider whether to adapt cultural elements to enhance familiarity with the target audience or to retain the original cultural references to preserve the distinctiveness of the source text (Venuti, 2012). The translator's decision between these strategies will influence how the cultural and narrative depth of *Dragon Pearl* is conveyed.

Functionalist translation theory concentrates on the function of the text in the target language and culture. In the process of translation, it is of the utmost importance that the function and impact of cultural references, such as those of food, mythology, or names align with the overall narrative and thematic goals. It is of the utmost importance to strike a balance between cultural authenticity and narrative fluency to preserve the richness of Yoon Ha Lee's work while ensuring its accessibility and meaningfulness to a Korean readership.

This study aims to demonstrate how the aforementioned translation theories can be employed to highlight the intricacies and techniques that were used in translating *Dragon Pearl* and can help maintain the cultural and narrative integrity of the novel for Korean readers.

1.3 Significance of Koreanness in diasporic science fiction

The concept of Koreanness is not straightforward but for the purposes of this study, it can be defined as comprising "ideas and cultural elements that, while not exclusive to Korea, originated there or can be better understood through the lens of Korean history and culture". This definition elucidates why items such as kimchi, hanbok, and hanok are frequently regarded as emblematic of Korean identity. Such elements are typically associated with

traditional values and practices, rendering their appearance in an American science fiction novel both unexpected and noteworthy.

In *Dragon Pearl*, various manifestations of Korean cultural elements are observed, including references to the gumiho folklore, the names of characters and foods. The incorporation of these elements into a Western-dominated genre such as space opera challenges the established norms and expands the conceptual boundaries of what constitutes science fiction. Lee states that the incorporation of these Korean cultural elements was deliberate, allowing the novel to stand out for its distinct blend of global and local influences. The novel's success also indicates the growing influence of Korean culture on a global scale, as evidenced by the increasing prevalence of Korean films, music, and traditional elements in global entertainment. In essence, a deeper comprehension of Korean cultural contexts enriches the understanding of Lee's literature, enabling readers to engage with the text on a more profound level. This mirrors the way familiarity with Korean history enhances the enjoyment and appreciation of historical (popular) sageuk dramas. It seems likely that this trend will continue, which makes it essential for Korean translators to approach works like *Dragon Pearl* with extra care, ensuring that the cultural nuances are effectively conveyed to a Korean readership.

2 Cultural representation of Koreanness in *Dragon Pearl*

Despite the space opera genre's historical association with Western narratives, Yoon Ha Lee demonstrates an adept incorporation of Korean cultural elements into the narrative of the *Dragon Pearl*. This integration presents a novel literary challenge, offering a familiar yet distinctive experience to readers with an interest in Korean culture. For readers unfamiliar with these elements, the novel piques curiosity, while for those who appreciate Korean culture, it provides a deeper connection. The inclusion of Korean identity throughout the narrative enriches the story and broadens the space opera genre's scope, introducing new cultural dimensions to both longtime science fiction fans and those looking for more diverse representation.

2.1 Koreanness in the names of characters and their identities

In both Western and Eastern literature, character names often play a significant role in shaping identity. However, in Korean literature, names assume a particularly prominent role due to their inherent meanings. Each

name is imbued with particular cultural and linguistic significance, offering insight into the character's traits and origins. In *Dragon Pearl*, the protagonist Min (민, 敏) and her brother Jun (준, 俊) have distinctly Korean names, which are not only novel in the space opera context but also deeply reflective of their personalities and identities. (The Chinese characters added alongside the names were derived from the Chinese characters most frequently used by Koreans in their personal nomenclature. The interpretations were based on the intrinsic characteristics of the work.)

The name Min, which means 'agility' and 'neutrality,' is an apt representation of the protagonist's adaptability and quick-thinking nature as she navigates her journey across galaxies. The name Jun, which signifies 'obedience' and 'excellence,' reflects the character's dedication and sense of duty as a cadet in the Space Forces. These names serve to illustrate the distinctive characteristics of the characters and to indicate their Korean heritage. The significance of these names within the context of Korean culture serves to enhance the depth of characterization, offering readers a more profound understanding of the characters' identities. Those familiar with Korean naming conventions will gain a deeper cultural connection, while others will gain insight into a new aspect of character development.

Consequently, while names serve significant functions in Western literature, the Korean names in *Dragon Pearl* underscore each character's heritage and individualism, thereby marking their identities as distinctly Korean, even within a futuristic, intergalactic context. This introduces a greater complexity to the characters, reflecting the synthesis of their traditional heritage with their position within a novel socio-cultural milieu.

2.2 Korean folklore and mythology: The role of the gumiho

One of the most intriguing aspects of *Dragon Pearl* is the inclusion of the gumiho, a legendary fox spirit in Korean mythology renowned for its capacity to undergo shape shifting. Its quality resonates with the diasporic experience, wherein individuals frequently find themselves compelled to disguise aspects of their genuine nature to ensure their survival in unfamiliar surroundings. In this way, the gumiho's capacity for transformation serves as a potent metaphor for the immigrant experience (Kim, 2014, p. 14).

The protagonist, Min, is a gumiho, and her shape-shifting abilities serve to illustrate the necessity for adaptability among those who live in the diaspora. Those who live diasporic lives frequently find themselves compelled to undergo a process of transformation to fit into new societies.

This often entails concealing one's true cultural identity, a strategy employed to survive or thrive. This concept of transformation is fundamental to an understanding of the diasporic experience, in which individuals are required to adapt continuously to new cultural and social environments. Min's status as a gumiho not only adds an element of excitement to the narrative but also serves to underscore the central theme of survival and transformation in unfamiliar environments.

The author's decision to cast Min as a gumiho introduces a new dimension to the narrative, illustrating that survival in an alien environment frequently necessitates transformation. For those with diasporic experiences, this metaphor is particularly resonant, as it mirrors the experience of navigating multiple identities in different social contexts. For those unacquainted with the gumiho myth, Min's transformation introduces a fascinating aspect of Korean mythology, enriching the narrative with a culturally unique symbol while reflecting the broader challenges of living between cultures.

2.3 Korean culinary references: Food as a cultural anchor

Culture, race, and ethnicity are inextricably linked and form an integral part of the study of food and food practices. The preparation and consumption of food are frequently not only symbolic but also tangible and concrete means by which migrants in multicultural societies maintain their ethnic identities (Reddy & van Dam, 2020). One of the most striking manifestations of cultural identity in any diaspora is food. Food represents a powerful anchor to one's heritage, particularly in foreign lands, where cooking and consuming traditional dishes become a means of preserving one's identity. In *Dragon Pearl*, food is not merely a source of nourishment; rather, it serves as a conduit for cultural preservation and a means of maintaining identity.

A variety of traditional Korean dishes, including 'kimchi', 'ssalbap' (rice), 'nokdu namul' (mung bean sprouts), and 'jeon' (vegetable fritters), are featured throughout the novel, serving to anchor the characters in their cultural roots. For Min, these foods are more than a source of sustenance; they serve as a conduit to her familial roots, her hometown of Jinju, and her Korean heritage. By including these traditional dishes, Lee not only emphasizes Min's identity but also reflects his cultural background. The role of food in the novel is to serve as a conduit between disparate realms, enabling both Min and the readers to maintain a connection to Korean culture, even when situated in the far reaches of space.

The function of food in *Dragon Pearl* is analogous to its role in actual diasporic communities, where traditional dishes serve as concrete manifestations of cultural identity. By utilizing food as a symbol, Lee underscores the notion that identity is not solely preserved through linguistic or traditional practices, but also through the mundane act of nourishment. Consequently, the appearance of Korean cuisine in the novel serves not only to reinforce the protagonist's identity but also to highlight the author's cultural heritage, offering readers an insight into how cultural traditions are preserved and maintained.

2.4 Diasporic themes: Home, identity, and belonging

Yoon Ha Lee incorporates a variety of elements that pertain to Korean culture throughout the narrative of *Dragon Pearl*, thereby enriching the text and offering readers a novel perspective. The incorporation of these Korean cultural references serves to enhance the narrative's dynamism and engagement, while simultaneously elucidating Lee's personal Korean heritage. The themes of home, identity, and belonging are central to the novel and resonate with the experiences of many in the Korean diaspora.

Min's journey through space is not merely a quest to locate her brother; it is also an endeavor to ascertain her true place of belonging. The search for identity is a common theme in diasporic literature, where the concept of home is often presented as fluid and complex. For Min, the concept of home is both a physical location, *Jinju* 진주, and a sense of belonging, which she carries with her as she navigates different worlds. The novel reflects the broader diasporic experience of balancing multiple identities, finding new homes in foreign lands, and maintaining a connection to one's roots.

Lee's portrayal of these diasporic themes is both nuanced and universal in scope. By incorporating Korean cultural elements throughout the novel, the author demonstrates that identity is not a concept that can be readily relinquished, even in the vast expanse of space. The integration of these elements within the space opera genre challenges conventional science fiction narratives and offers a fresh, culturally enriched perspective to the field.

3 Space opera meets Korean culture: A transcultural analysis

Yoon Ha Lee's *Dragon Pearl* represents a transcultural work that blends the elements of space opera with Korean cultural motifs, offering a narrative that transcends the boundaries of traditional science fiction. This chapter

examines how *Dragon Pearl* incorporates tropes characteristic of space opera, combining them with themes that pertain to Korean identity and diaspora. This distinctive combination, which I term Space Diaspora, refers to a genre that employs space as a metaphorical backdrop to represent the human experience of displacement on Earth. It highlights the struggles of individuals who, much like diasporic individuals, wander through space in search of belonging. This genre reflects the broader phenomenon of human migration, demonstrating how individuals, whether on Earth or in space, must negotiate their identity and sense of community in unfamiliar environments.

3.1 Space opera tropes and their cultural translation

The space opera genre is typically defined by several characteristics, including the portrayal of grand intergalactic adventures, the use of advanced technology, and the depiction of epic battles. *Dragon Pearl* incorporates numerous elements of the space opera genre, including space battles and futuristic spaceships. However, it does so through a distinctly Korean cultural lens, offering a unique interpretation of these tropes. One notable aspect of this cultural translation is the emphasis placed on the role of family, which holds a central position in Korean society.

Min's dedication to her family, particularly her pursuit of her missing brother Jun, exemplifies a fundamental aspect of Korean culture: the importance of familial loyalty and cohesion. Rooted in Korea's longstanding Confucian tradition, this concept emphasizes the family as the foundational unit of society (Geum, 2004, p. 122). In Korean culture, there is a profound sense of collective identity, whereby family members perceive themselves as part of a unified entity rather than as isolated individuals. This familial loyalty serves as a pivotal motivating factor in Min's actions throughout the novel, underscoring her Korean identity within a futuristic, interstellar context.

Unlike the archetypal space opera hero, often defined by physical strength or technological expertise, Min's strength derives from her heritage as a gumiho, a fox spirit from Korean mythology. Her capacity for shape-shifting and the utilization of magic, abilities that are deeply entrenched in Korean folklore, serve as a pivotal means of overcoming adversity within the galaxy. This cultural translation of space opera tropes – where mystical abilities derived from folklore take precedence over technology – demonstrates a uniquely Korean approach to heroism and personal identity. In contrast to the typical space opera hero, who is often defined by

physical strength or technological prowess, the protagonist of *Dragon Pearl* is shaped by her cultural heritage, particularly her status as a gumiho, a fox spirit from Korean mythology. This emphasis on cultural heritage as a driving force in the protagonist's journey is a distinctive aspect of the series.

3.2 Blending American sci-fi traditions with Korean motifs

Dragon Pearl represents a fusion of traditional American science fiction conventions with Korean cultural elements, creating a new form of storytelling that bridges two distinct cultural perspectives. The novel incorporates familiar American science fiction tropes, including futuristic technologies, intricate political systems, and interstellar travel. However, it also incorporates distinctly Korean motifs, such as folklore, cuisine, and cultural values, which are superimposed upon these elements.

One of the most striking examples of this blending is the juxtaposition of advanced technology with Korean mythology. The capacity of Min to transform into a gumiho, a creature from ancient Korean legends, stands in stark contrast to the high-tech spaceships and futuristic worlds in which she navigates. However, rather than being in conflict, these elements coexist harmoniously, symbolizing the intersection of the traditional and the futuristic, where traditional Korean culture can flourish even in a space opera setting. This harmonious blend reflects the continued importance of cultural identity, even in the context of highly advanced technological environments.

Furthermore, the novel reflects the experience of the Korean diaspora, particularly the challenge of reconciling one's cultural heritage with the demands of living in a foreign society. The internal conflict experienced by Min, as a result of her dual identity as both a human and a gumiho, and her subsequent need to adapt to an intergalactic society, serves to illustrate the challenges faced by many individuals belonging to a diaspora, who are required to maintain a balance between their cultural roots and the pressures to assimilate. This fusion of American science fiction traditions with Korean cultural motifs provides a transcultural narrative that speaks to the universality of these experiences and the specific challenges faced by those in the diaspora (Park, 2003, p. 289).

3.3 Korean diaspora reflected in an intergalactic setting

The theme of diaspora is a fundamental element of *Dragon Pearl*, manifesting not only in the characters but also in the setting. The vastness of space serves as a metaphor for the displacement experienced by those in the diaspora. Similarly to diasporic individuals, who are frequently separated from their homeland both physically and culturally, the characters in *Dragon Pearl* must negotiate unfamiliar and often hostile environments in their pursuit of a sense of belonging.

Min's journey through the galaxy reflects the experiences of individuals from diasporic communities who must adapt to new social and cultural norms while maintaining a connection to their heritage. Her capacity to assume a different form as a gumiho represents the necessity to 'wear a mask' or adopt new identities to survive in unfamiliar environments. This metaphor can be understood as analogous to the concept of a 'persona' employed by immigrants or those living in a diaspora, who frequently find themselves compelled to adapt their behavior or appearance to integrate into new societies. This often involves suppressing certain aspects of their genuine identity (Yi Young-Ok, 2019, p. 316).

In this way, Min's utilization of her gumiho abilities in an extraterrestrial setting exemplifies the universal challenge of negotiating multiple identities in unfamiliar environments. The novel posits that survival in an alien environment necessitates adaptation and, at times, transformation, a concept that resonates with the experiences of those displaced from their homeland. The narrative of *Dragon Pearl* illustrates that the tension between adaptation and cultural preservation is not exclusive to Earth; rather, it is a universal experience that can be reflected in an intergalactic context.

The Space Diaspora genre examines the parallels between humanity's displacement in space and the terrestrial experiences of migration and adaptation. The genre employs the metaphorical backdrop of space to depict the challenges of cultural displacement, identity, and the search for belonging, which are central to the diasporic experience.

In essence, *Dragon Pearl* is a narrative that explores the concepts of identity and belonging, situated within the context of space opera but imbued with diasporic and Korean cultural elements. The novel follows the protagonist, Min, as she embarks on a journey to locate her brother and simultaneously ascertain her sense of identity and her connection to her heritage. Her quest reflects the broader struggles faced by individuals in the diaspora, namely the challenge of balancing cultural roots with the demands of living in a foreign or unfamiliar society. The Korean elements woven

throughout the novel, such as the significance of family, loyalty, and reverence for tradition, are pivotal to Min's journey. The concept of "We-ism," which prioritizes the collective unity of family over individualism, is a pervasive theme that resonates throughout the narrative (Shim, 2008, p. 68). In search for her brother, Min is not only seeking to locate a missing family member but is also engaged in the process of reaffirming her connection to her cultural identity and her place within her family and community.

In conclusion, *Dragon Pearl* represents a distinctive contribution to space opera and diasporic literature genres. The protagonist's journey through space is as much about locating a collective identity as individual self-discovery. To fully comprehend the intricacies of this literary work, it is imperative to gain an understanding of the cultural elements that are intrinsic to the narrative, as shaped by the Korean cultural context. It is of the utmost importance to pay special attention to the translation of these cultural nuances when introducing this English-language novel to Korean readers to ensure that the depth of the Korean identity within the work is preserved. It is therefore imperative that the translator pay close attention to detail to convey the novel's full meaning to a Korean audience.

4 Translation considerations for *Dragon Pearl*

Reading is an activity in which others can hardly observe what is happening inside the reader (Moritoki Škof 2023, p. 36). Reading translations, especially those that cross cultural boundaries, is made more challenging by the natural complexities of language. While the novel's transcultural themes of identity, diaspora, and belonging are fundamental to its essence, translating these elements into a Korean context presents a unique set of challenges. Korean readers may be more familiar with the cultural elements of the novel, yet it is essential to handle the linguistic and contextual differences between English and Korean thoughtfully.

This chapter examines the principal considerations involved in translating *Dragon Pearl* into Korean, including the treatment of names, cultural allusions, culinary references, and tone. It is essential to address these translation challenges in a manner that preserves the novel's integrity while ensuring it resonates with Korean readers. It is crucial to highlight that although the novel incorporates numerous references to Korean culture, it fundamentally remains a space opera. Consequently, it is essential to ensure that this genre element is accurately represented in the translated version.

4.1 Adapting cultural and mythological references

Korean mythology plays a pivotal role in *Dragon Pearl*, with the gumiho, a nine-tailed fox spirit, occupying a particularly prominent position. As discussed in Chapter 3, the gumiho is not merely a traditional mythological figure; it also serves as a metaphor for adaptation and survival in the novel, reflecting the diasporic experience. For readers unfamiliar with Korean folklore, additional explanation may be required to understand the significance of the gumiho. Nevertheless, in the Korean language, the translator must exercise caution in determining the extent of contextualization to be provided, ensuring that the mythological depth is conveyed with clarity while avoiding undue elaboration on elements that would be easily understood by Korean readers.

In addition to the gumiho, the novel features another prominent figure from Korean mythology: the tiger. In traditional Korean folklore, the tiger is frequently portrayed as a formidable yet occasionally misguided figure, lacking the astute qualities of the protagonist. This pattern is sustained in *Dragon Pearl*, where the tiger is depicted as a formidable yet somewhat inept figure, thereby reinforcing the character's archetypal role within the context of Korean storytelling. It is the translator's responsibility to ensure that this culturally resonant portrayal of the tiger is acknowledged and preserved by Korean readers.

Additionally, the novel examines the function of cultural values such as family loyalty and respect for ancestors, which are of considerable consequence in Korean society. While these values are firmly established in Korean society, the translator must nevertheless contextualize them within the futuristic, intergalactic setting of the novel. The challenge is to maintain the cultural relevance of these elements without making the story feel excessively anchored in the past, ensuring that they integrate seamlessly into the space opera narrative.

Furthermore, the novel explores the role of cultural values such as family loyalty and respect for ancestors, which are of significant importance in Korean society. While these values are deeply entrenched in Korean society, the translator must nevertheless contextualize them within the futuristic, intergalactic setting of the novel. The challenge is to maintain the cultural relevance of these elements without making the story feel too anchored in the past, ensuring that they integrate seamlessly into the space opera narrative.

I believe the current translation effectively conveys the nuances of the text. However, I want to emphasize that this is an important quality that

should always be prioritized when translating Lee's work, regardless of how successful the existing translation may be.

4.2 Localizing food and tradition for Korean audiences

As previously discussed, food plays a significant role in *Dragon Pearl*, functioning as both a cultural marker and a means of facilitating connections between characters and their Korean heritage, even within the context of an intergalactic setting. The consumption of traditional Korean foods, such as 'kimchi', 'ssalbap' (rice), and 'jeon' (vegetable fritters), is referenced throughout the novel, thereby reinforcing the cultural identity of the characters. Nevertheless, the difficulty of translating these culinary references into Korean lies in the fact that they are already well-known to Korean readers.

In the English version, the author occasionally provides detailed descriptions of these foods, particularly when introducing unfamiliar ingredients or dishes to English-speaking readers. To illustrate, kimchi may be described not only by its name but also by its ingredients, such as fermented cabbage and spices, in order to provide non-Korean readers with an understanding of its composition. However, in the context of Korean translation, such descriptions would be superfluous, given that kimchi is a ubiquitous ingredient in Korean cuisine. It is incumbent upon the translator to exercise discernment in determining the circumstances under which such explanations should be omitted or adjusted. In the extant translation, no supplementary clarification is provided, and the text remains comprehensible to the reader. However, this is one of the aspects that translators should consider when translating foreign works with Korean characteristics into Korean in the future.

This aspect of translation should be approached on a case-by-case basis, contingent on how the food is presented in the original text. When food is referred to by name only, the Korean translation should be done in a similar manner without unnecessary details. However, if the food is described with its ingredients or preparation methods, the translator must determine whether to simplify the description or omit it entirely to avoid redundancy for Korean readers.

4.3 Retaining authorial tone and cultural nuance in Korean

Although *Dragon Pearl* incorporates numerous elements of Korean culture, it is, in essence, a space opera. The translator must ensure that the science

fiction elements of the narrative, including intergalactic travel, futuristic technology, and epic space battles, are not eclipsed by cultural references. While Korean cultural elements are central to the characters and themes, the translation must also maintain the fast-paced, action-driven narrative typical of the space opera genre. It is essential for the translator to find a balance between these two aspects, ensuring that the novel appeals to the science fiction audience while still resonating with those who appreciate the cultural depth of the story.

Furthermore, while Korean cultural elements, including names, food, and mythology, play a significant role in the narrative, it is essential for the translator to maintain a clear understanding of the novel's fundamental nature as a space opera. The genre conventions associated with this type of literature, such as intergalactic conflict, political intrigue, and space exploration, must be upheld in the translation to ensure that the science fiction elements remain engaging for the reader.

The translation of *Dragon Pearl* into Korean carefully balances the preservation of the novel's cultural and mythological depth with its fast-paced space opera elements. While certain elements, such as names, food, and mythology, are deeply rooted in Korean culture, it is also essential that the novel's genre conventions and action-driven narrative resonate with Korean readers. By addressing the use of honorifics, cultural references, food descriptions, and the author's tone with precision, the translation can effectively disseminate *Dragon Pearl* to a new audience, allowing the novel's transcultural themes and genre-blending style to be fully appreciated.[2]

5 Case studies: Key passages and their translations

The process of translating *Dragon Pearl* from English to Korean presents several significant challenges, particularly those regarding the conveyance of cultural elements rooted in Korean tradition to an audience already familiar with these elements. It is the responsibility of the translator to ensure that the cultural integrity of the source material is preserved while simultaneously ensuring that the translated text resonates naturally with Korean readers. This chapter examines pivotal translation concerns, including the treatment of traditional Korean elements, proper nouns, and culinary references, and proposes methodologies to reconcile cultural accuracy with comprehensibility.

[2] For a deeper understanding of the significance of honorifics in Korean society, see Vučkovič (2025) in the same issue.

5.1 Translating elements of Korean tradition: Challenges and strategies

One of the principal difficulties encountered in translating *Dragon Pearl* into Korean is that of negotiating cultural elements that are intrinsic to the narrative, many of which are already familiar to Korean readers. In the English version, concepts such as family loyalty, ancestral rituals, and respect for elders are often elucidated for the benefit of a non-Korean audience. However, in the Korean translation, these elements require a more sophisticated approach, given that the target audience is likely to be already intimately familiar with these concepts. Providing excessive explanations of such traditions may alienate readers, whereas omitting context entirely may diminish their significance within the narrative.

A particularly illustrative example is the translation of terms associated with Korean folktales. To illustrate, the term 'charm' is translated as *holigi* 홀리기, which refers to the gumiho's capacity to enchant or bewitch others. While the literal translation of 'charm' *maeryeok* 매력 suggests a benign or attractive quality, the term *holligi* 홀리기 evokes a more magical and mystical atmosphere, which aligns with the supernatural elements of the gumiho's powers. This lexical choice is significant in that it reflects the translator's effort to enhance the fantastical elements of the narrative in a way that remains faithful to the cultural and mythological context.

Similarly, the translation of 'fox spirit' as *yeouryeong* 여우령 exemplifies a strategic deployment of classical Korean vocabulary. In lieu of a more contemporary or direct translation, such as *yeouui yeonghon* 여우의 영혼 (fox's soul) or *yeouui jeongsin* 여우의 정신 (fox's spirit), the utilization of the term *ryeong* 령 evokes a more archaic and conventional association, thereby establishing a profound historical and cultural context for the narrative. This deliberate choice serves to enhance the mythological resonance of the character and adds a layer of authenticity to the narrative.

The translation of the title *Dragon Pearl* presents a further distinctive challenge. Rather than translating the title directly as *Yongeui Jinju* 용의 진주, it was decided that the transliteration *Dregon Peol* 드래곤 펄 should be retained. This decision likely serves two purposes. Primarily, it maintains consistency with the original English title. Secondly, it avoids confusion with the word *Jinju* 진주, which in the novel refers to a specific location. The name Jinju is also that of a real city in South Korea, which introduces an additional layer of cultural meaning for Korean readers. A direct translation of the title as *Jinju* 진주 could potentially lead to ambiguity. Therefore, the decision was taken to maintain the transliterated form, which ensures clarity while preserving the original's intent.

In all of these cases, the translator must tread a fine line between cultural transparency and linguistic fidelity, ensuring that the nuances of Korean tradition are retained without disrupting the natural flow of the narrative. This necessitates not only a profound comprehension of the cultural and mythological allusions but also an appreciation for their integration into the broader narrative.

5.2 Handling Korean proper nouns: Standardization and cultural fidelity

In the case of *Dragon Pearl*, handling Korean proper nouns, character names in particular, does not present a significant challenge. As previously stated, the characters in the novel are given distinctly Korean names, which will be rendered in the Korean alphabet (Hangeul) for the Korean translation. However, one significant issue arises from the fact that the author does not adhere strictly to the Romanization guidelines established by the National Institute of the Korean Language (*Gungnipgugeowon* 국립국어원). It is therefore recommended that the original intent of the author be respected in the transliteration of these names into Korean.

Fortunately, the author has provided a pronunciation guide at the conclusion of the text, which offers readers insight into the intended pronunciation of the names. This inclusion suggests that the author's transliterations were intentional, designed to correspond with a particular phonetic interpretation suited to an English-speaking audience. It is imperative that the names in the Korean translation adhere as closely as possible to the original intent while being converted into Hangul. It would be beneficial to include a table listing the proper pronunciation guidelines, as presented in the original book, as a reference to ensure consistency throughout the text. This approach not only honors the author's original intent but also provides clarity for Korean readers who may be familiar with the names in their Romanized forms.

As observed in the table below, there is a lack of clarity with regard to the transcription of Korean names. The Korean sound sequence /jʌ/ ㅕ , is sometimes Romanized as '-yeo' (e.g. Seo-hyeon /sʌ.hjʌn/ 서현) and at other times as '-yu' (e.g. Myung /mjʌŋ/ 명). Additionally, the Korean consonant ㄱ is occasionally represented as 'g' (e.g. Gi /ki/ 기, Gimchi /kim.tɕʰi/ 김치) and at other times as 'k' (e.g. Kim /kim/ 김).[3] This is not merely an issue for a writer;

[3] The Korean consonant ㄱ is pronounced as /k/ when positioned at the beginning of a word or syllable; /g/ when occurring between voiced sounds, such as vowels; and /k̚/ at

it is a challenge faced by the majority of individuals with knowledge of the Korean language. Nevertheless, it is incumbent upon the translator to monitor this matter. This is particularly pertinent when translating into Korean, where nuances can have a significant impact on the intended meaning.

Table 1: Pronunciation guide (Lee 2019, p. 311)

Name	Pronunciation	Name 2	Pronunciation
Areum	ah-room	Hye	Hyeh
Baduk	bah-dook	Hyosu	hyoh-soo
Bae	beh	Hyun-Joo	hyuhn-joo
banchan	bahn-chahn	Jaebi	jeh-bee
Bora	boh-rah	Jaebo	jeh-boh
Byung-Ho	byuhng-hoh	Jang	Jahng
Chae-Won	cheh-wuhn	Janggi	jahng-ghee
cheongju	chung-joo	Jeonbok	juhn-bohk
Cheongok	chuhng-ohk	Ji-Eun	jee-yoon
Chul	chool	Jinju	jeen-joo
dokkaebi	do-geh-bee	Jun	Joon
Eui	oo-ee	Ju-Won	joo-wuhn
Eunhee	yoon-hee	Kim	geem
geomdo	guhm-doh	Madang	mah-dahng
Gi	ghee	Manshik	mahn-sheek
gimchi	geen-chee	Min	meen
gukhwaju	gook-hwah-joo	Myung	myuhng
gumiho	goo-mee-hoh	Nari	nah-ree
Gyeong-Ja	gyuhng-jah	Seo-Hyeon	suh-hyuhn
Hae	heh	Seok	suhk
haetae	heh-teh	Seonmi	suhn-mee
Haneul	hah-nool	Sujin	soo-jeen
Hongok	hohng-ohk	Woo-Jin	ooh-jeen
Hwan	hwahn	Yong	yohng

It is crucial to acknowledge that the issue of Romanization is not exclusive to *Dragon Pearl* but rather pertains to all translations encompassing the Korean language. The inconsistency among

the syllable-final position. The Romanization issue is demonstrated only for the word initial position.

Romanization systems – both the official standards set by the National Institute of the Korean Language and personal phonetic rendering by authors – can create confusion during the translation process. In the case of *Dragon Pearl*, as the author's chosen Romanization does not follow the official guidelines. Therefore, the translator is required to make a deliberate choice: either to localize the names in accordance with standard Korean usage or to maintain the author's unique approach.

While standardizing proper nouns is often necessary to maintain cultural fidelity, in this case, the translator's role is to ensure that the author's unique transliterations are respected, particularly in cases where they deviate from formal Romanization rules. It is essential for the translator to balance between preserving the original text's integrity and ensuring that Korean readers can engage with the narrative in a natural and culturally relevant way.

5.3 Translating Korean food: Level of detail and cultural relevance

One of the most significant challenges when translating Korean culture, particularly food, into a foreign language is to determine the level of detail that is required. The translator must determine whether to leave certain terms, such as 'kimchi,' untranslated or else to provide supplementary context, such as providing an explanation that kimchi is a dish made from salted and fermented cabbage, often consumed with rice by Koreans. This decision is critical for balancing cultural fidelity with textual accessibility and comprehensibility. The dilemma of how the author handles the translation and explanation of Korean food is evident throughout *Dragon Pearl.*

To illustrate, the term 'mung bean sprouts' is elucidated in the text rather than simply employing the Korean term *sukju namul* 숙주 나물. The author elected to elucidate the concept for non-Korean readers, thereby rendering the food more accessible by describing it in lieu of relying on direct translation. This decision reflects the broader challenge of how to strike a balance between cultural specificity and accessibility for an international audience with no prior familiarity with Korean cuisine.

Another noteworthy example is the term 'cinnamon-ginger punch,' which refers to the Korean beverage *sujeonggwa* 수정과. In lieu of utilizing the original Korean terminology, the author elected to employ a descriptive methodology, referencing the beverage by its constituent components. This decision raises a significant issue when translating the work into Korean: should the term 'cinnamon-ginger punch' be translated back to the original Korean, *sujeonggwa* 수정과, or should it remain a descriptive phrase in the

target language, such as *gyepiwa saenggangeuro mandeun eumnyo* 계피와 생강으로 만든 음료? The decision to utilize a single culturally specific term or to provide a detailed explanation has significant implications for the way in which the text is perceived by Korean readers.

For readers of the Korean language, food items such as *kimchi* 김치 or *sujeonggwa* 수정과 possess a profound cultural significance within a single word. Explanation that breaks down the ingredients may be perceived as superfluous or reductionist, particularly for those who possess an intimate understanding of the cultural context. However, the issue is becoming more complex as Korean culture and cuisine are gaining greater exposure and recognition in global contexts and the need to balance authenticity with clarity for readers unfamiliar with the cultural nuances presents a significant challenge in translation.

It is therefore imperative that translators give these aspects their full consideration during the translation process. The question of whether to maintain the integrity of Korean terms or provide additional context for the reader must be addressed in a consistent and thoughtful manner. In the case of *Dragon Pearl*, the translator must determine whether to embrace the concise cultural significance of terms like *sujeonggwa* 수정과 or to offer a more detailed explanation to accommodate the varying levels of cultural knowledge among Korean readers.

In conclusion, the process of translating *Dragon Pearl* into Korean presents a series of intricate challenges, particularly with regard to the elements of Korean tradition, the rendering of proper nouns, and the portrayal of food. Each of these aspects requires careful consideration of the amount of the necessary explanation to achieving a good balance between cultural fidelity and comprehensibility for Korean audience already familiar with these elements. The translator must determine whether to maintain the author's original transliterations, provide comprehensive explanations, or retain the cultural nuances embedded in terms like *sujeonggwa* 수정과 and *sukju namul* 숙주 나물. These decisions have broader implications for the presentation of Korean culture globally, as the novel continues to be introduced to a wider international audience. The translation of *Dragon Pearl* must respect the author's original intention and the cultural resonance of the source material. Therefore, it must ensure that Korean readers experience the novel in a way that feels authentic and engaging, while also addressing the unique demands of the text's speculative and diasporic nature.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Koreanness and cultural preservation in *Dragon Pearl*

This study has demonstrated how Yoon Ha Lee's *Dragon Pearl* integrates elements of Korean culture within the space opera genre. By incorporating elements of Korean mythology, cuisine, and nomenclature into a futuristic narrative, Lee presents a Space Diaspora where cultural heritage coexists with space exploration. This distinctive fusion elucidates the pivotal themes of identity and belonging, central to the discourse of diasporic literature, while simultaneously extending the frontiers of science fiction. The novel not only introduces Korean culture to a global audience but also creates platform for readers to explore the challenges of cultural preservation in the context of speculative fiction. Nevertheless, translating *Dragon Pearl* into Korean gives rise to significant considerations about how cultural markers should be handled. As Korean culture is becoming increasingly recognized on the global stage, reintroducing culturally significant works to a Korean audience requires careful attention to how these elements are treated. It is incumbent upon translators to strike a balance between fidelity to the original text and the cultural context of the target audience. This study underscores the crucial importance of preserving the integrity of Korean cultural elements in translation, particularly in an era marked by a rapid expansion of global interest in Korean media. The translation of *Dragon Pearl* illustrates the necessity of exercising due consideration to cultural nuances to maintain the richness and depth of the source material.

6.2 The future of translating Korean content written in English into Korean

As translation technology continues to evolve, there are ongoing discussions about the future role of human translators. While technological advances have made significant progress in facilitating translation processes, *Dragon Pearl* illustrates the constraints of technology in handling works of a culturally intricate nature. The novel's fusion of Korean cultural elements and space opera themes necessitates a translator's profound cultural and literary expertise, a nuance that automated tools alone cannot replicate.

The advent of new genres and hybrid works, exemplified by *Dragon Pearl*, underscores the pivotal role of human translators in navigating the intricate nuances of both source and target cultures. In an increasingly globalized literary landscape, the role of human expertise in translation is paramount. It is essential to ensure that translations retain cultural

authenticity and resonate with diverse audiences in a meaningful way. The maintenance of cultural depth and literary nuance through the medium of skilled translation is of paramount importance in ensuring the continued integrity of works such as *Dragon Pearl* across languages and cultures.

Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge that a comprehensive grasp of cultural nuances is a prerequisite for a successful translation. In certain instances, content that incorporates Korean elements and is interpreted through a non-Korean lens may be reintroduced into Korean through translation. Given these circumstances, translators must approach presenting such content to Korean readers with particular care. They must ensure that cultural authenticity is preserved while also accounting for shifts in context that may have occurred during the initial adaptation. The translation of content that has undergone this process requires not only linguistic proficiency but also a profound understanding of how cultural nuances have been reinterpreted. This enables Korean audiences to experience their heritage in an authentic yet refined manner.

Translating Korean content originally written in English requires a meticulous and culturally sensitive approach. Above all, it is crucial to accurately identify and understand the Korean cultural elements within the work to ensure they are faithfully conveyed to Korean readers. Translators must approach these elements with depth and precision, capturing the essence of the original while preserving the cultural integrity of the work. Beyond simply recognizing these elements, translators face the challenge of interpreting them within the context of a Korean readership. This involves reflecting on how Korean cultural aspects may have been understood or reshaped through a Western lens, then thoughtfully determining how to present them to resonate with Korean audiences. By considering these cultural differences, translators can offer a more meaningful reading experience that is both authentic and accessible. Moreover, translators must decide whether to incorporate annotations or additional explanations to enhance the reader's comprehension of culturally nuanced elements. While some aspects may be self-evident to Korean readers, others may benefit from subtle contextualization to bridge cultural gaps created during the initial adaptation. This strategic approach allows the work to maintain depth and comprehensibility, respecting the reader's familiarity with the cultural background.

Taken together, these considerations highlight the importance of engaging with evolving cultural trends in translation. The era of merely introducing Korean culture to the West has shifted; we are now entering a phase where Western interpretations of Korean culture are returning to

Korea. This new dynamic calls for a thoughtful reassessment of the translator's role. Translators must now embrace the responsibility of reintroducing Korea's cultural elements with clarity and integrity, adapting to this complex cultural landscape, and fostering cross-cultural dialogue that resonates meaningfully within Korea.

Acknowledgment

This work was supported by the Seed Program for Korean Studies of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the Korean Studies Promotion Service at the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS-2022-INC-2250001). The author also gratefully acknowledges the financial support from the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS) in the framework of the research project (J6-50202) "The Confucian Revival and its Impact on Contemporary East Asian Societies through the Lens of the Relation between the Individual and Society."

References

Baek, J. 백지연 (2001). *Milo sogeul jiljuhaneun munhag 미로 속을 질주하는 문학*. Paju: Changbi.

Geum, J. 금장태 (2004). *Yugyo sasanggwa jonggyojeog segye 유교 사상과 종교적 세계*. Paju: Hangughagsuljeongbo.

Kang, B. Y. (2022). The Role of Translation in Understanding the Literature of the Korean Minority in the United States: Analysis of the Translation of Chang-rae Lee's Novel Native Speaker. *Acta Linguistica Asiatica*, *12*(1), 131-146. https://doi.org/10.4312/ala.12.1.131-146

Kim, J. 김정희 (2014). *Seutolitellingilan mueosinga 스토리텔링이란 무엇인가*. Seoul: Keomyunikeisyeonbugseu.

Lee, Y. H. (2019). *Dragon Pearl*. Los Angeles: Disney-Hyperion.

Lee, Y. H. (2020). *Dregon pyeol 드래곤 펄* (Song, Kyung-ah 송경아, Trans.). Paju: Sagyejyeol Publishing 사계절.

Moritoki Škof, N. (2023). Understanding Vocabulary of L2 Learners of Japanese. *Acta Linguistica Asiatica*, *13*(1), 35-52.

Midkiff, E. (2023). Not Just Boys and Toys: Gender Intersextionality in SF for Children. In L. Yaszek (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Science Fiction* (pp. 153-159). London: Routledge.

Park, N. 박노자 (2003). *Hayan gamyeon-ui jegug 하얀 가면의 제국*. Seoul: Hankoreh.

Reddy, G., & van Dam, R. M. (2020). Food, culture, and identity in multicultural societies: Insights from Singapore, *Appetite,* 149: 104633. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195666319311602?via%3Dihub

Shim, T. Y. (2008). *Changing Korea Understanding Culture and Communication*. Lausanne: Peter Lang.

Venuti, L. (2012). *The Translator's Invisibility*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Vučkovič, E. (2025). Workplace Discourse and Expression of Hierarchy in Yoon Tae-ho's Webtoon Misaeng. *Acta Linguistica Asiatica*, *15*(1), 125-152. https://doi.org/10.4312/ala.15.1.125-152

Yi, Young-Kyung 이영경 (2019). Gumiho-e yeouiju, hangugjeog SFlo segyejeog jumog badneun iyunha da-eum jagpum-eun ilje sigmin jibaegeul geulin SF 구미호에 여의주, 한국적 SF 로 세계적 주목 받는 이윤하 다음 작품은 일제 식민 지배글 그린 SF (Lee Yoon-ha, who drew global attention for her Korean-style science fiction in Gumiho, next work is a science fiction story about Japanese colonial rule). *Kyunghang Shinmun* 경향신문, August 19, 2019. https://www.khan.co.kr/culture/culture-general/article/201908191124001

Yi, Young-Ok 이영옥 (2019). *Migugsoseolgwa gongdongche uisig 미국소설과 공동체 의식*. Seoul: Sechang.

A Comparative Study of Idiomatic Expressions Related to Staple Foods in Korea and Türkiye: Rice and Bread

JEONG Eun Kyung
Istanbul University, Türkiye
eunkyung.jeong@istanbul.edu.tr

Abstract

This study aims to examine idiomatic expressions related to food culture in both Korean and Turkish from a contrastive linguistic and cultural perspective, with a focus on the staple foods of rice and bread. Previous contrastive studies of idiomatic expressions in Korean and Turkish have mostly focused on contrasting the meanings of idioms related to body parts or emotions, while there has been limited research on expressions associated with food culture. However, since staple foods play a crucial role in shaping a nation's cultural identity, investigating idiomatic expressions related to rice and bread offers valuable insights into the identities and thought patterns of both languages. By comparing and analyzing the lexical composition and meanings of major idiomatic expressions related to staple food culture, this study aims to elucidate the characteristics of idiomatic expressions, thereby enhancing the understanding of the linguistic and cultural nuances in both Korean and Turkish.

Keywords: contrastive linguistics, idiomatic expressions, lexical composition, meaning, intercultural communication

Povzetek

Namen te raziskave je preučiti idiomatske izraze, povezane s kulturo prehrane v korejščini in turščini, s kulturnega vidika in vidika kontrastivnega jezikoslovja. Raziskava se osredotoča predvsem na idiome o osnovnih živilih, kot sta riž in kruh. Prejšnje kontrastivne študije idiomov v korejščini in turščini so se večinoma osredotočale na pomensko primerjavo idiomov o delih telesa ali čustvih, raziskave o idiomih, povezanih s kulturo hrane, pa ni bilo veliko. Ker imajo osnovna živila ključno vlogo pri oblikovanju nacionalne kulturne identitete, raziskovanje idiomatskih izrazov, povezanih z rižem in kruhom, ponuja dragocen vpogled v identiteto in miselne vzorce obeh jezikov. S primerjavo in analizo leksikalne sestave in pomenov glavnih idiomatskih izrazov, povezanih s kulturo osnovnih živil, želi ta raziskava razjasniti značilnosti idiomatskih izrazov in s tem izboljšati razumevanje jezikovnih in kulturnih odtenkov v korejščini in turščini.

Ključne besede: kontrastivno jezikoslovje, idiomi, leksikalna sestava, pomen, medkulturna komunikacija

Acta Linguistica Asiatica, 15(1), 2025.
ISSN: 2232-3317, http://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/ala/
DOI: 10.4312/ala.15.1.177-203

1 Introduction

Idiomatic expressions are closely related to the way human perceive the world, and examining these expressions can enhance our understanding of the society and culture associated with the target language. Both Koreans and Turks place significant importance on food, particularly staple foods such as rice and bread, intrinsically linked to concepts of life, death, and the value of an individual's existence. In Korean idioms, the phrase for a meal is the value of a person's existence, and 'putting down a spoon' means 'dead.' The Turkish idiom 'enemy of ekmek' has the meaning of 'a person who cannot properly realize the value of his or her existence by not working and relying on the efforts of others. Thus, rice and bread serve as crucial elements for understanding the thought processes and cultural values of Koreans and Turks, extending beyond mere linguistic expressions.

The purpose of this study is to explore the cultures and thought processes of both Korea and Türkiye through a contrastive analysis of idiomatic expressions related to staple foods in each language. Food culture is intrinsically linked to human survival; thus, examining related idiomatic expressions can reveal the identities of language users and provide insights into their respective cultures. This study particularly aims to enhance our understanding of the language and culture of students in Türkiye by comparing and analyzing idioms associated with staple foods in both Korean and Turkish, especially as the field of Korean language education has been rapidly developing in recent years. To achieve this goal, the study will discuss the universality and specificity of idiomatic expressions related to staple foods in Korean and Turkish from the perspective of contrastive analysis.

2 Idiomatic expressions and intercultural communication

Few things are as essential to human life as eating. In Korean, the word for 'life' is expressed as 'living,' which highlights that eating is not only fundamental to survival but is, in many ways, synonymous with it. A wide range of applications of the Korean word *meokda* 먹다 'to eat' and the Turkish word *yemek* 'to eat' further demonstrates the significance of eating. In Korean, the verb *meokda* 먹다 is typically used in contexts related to consuming food, as in 'I ate kimbap for lunch and then had fruit for dessert,' where it refers to the act of putting food into the mouth, chewing it, and swallowing.

However, the word also extends beyond the literal act of eating to figuratively mean things like *naireul meokda* 나이를 먹다 'growing older,' *kkulbameul meokda* 꿀밤을 먹다 'getting scolded,' *guksureul meokda* 국수를 먹다 'getting married,' or *pibuga hwajangeul jal meokda* 피부가 화장을 잘 먹다 'applying good makeup to the skin,' showing its extended and figurative use in idiomatic expressions.

In Turkish, there are similar idiomatic expressions that utilize the verb *yemek* 'to eat,' which combines with nouns to form expressions like *başını yemek* 'to eat one's head,' meaning 'to put someone in a very difficult situation,' *para yemek* 'to eat money,' meaning 'to waste money recklessly' or 'accepting a bribe,' and *haraç yemek* 'to eat land tax,' meaning 'to take something that does not rightfully belong to you.' These examples illustrate the broad range of applications for the verb 'to eat' in idiomatic expressions.

Idiomatic expressions are descriptive linguistic forms used to convey images, characteristics, and states of objects. These expressions link closely to the psychological traits and lifestyle habits shaped by the history, culture, and geographical environment of each nation or ethnic group. Although Korea and Türkiye are geographically distant, they share significant cultural commonalities and similarities. In most languages, food-related vocabulary constitutes some of the most fundamental lexicons, reflecting the fact that food is essential for human survival. Therefore, it is only natural that there are numerous food-related terms. Moreover, the perception of food varies by context and is reflected in distinct linguistic expressions, leading to idioms with figurative meanings.

The communicative competence of foreign language learners refers to their ability to engage in smooth interactions and convey ideas effectively with native speakers. A crucial aspect of this competence is understanding the target culture. Effective communication requires not only knowledge of the language but also awareness of the consciousness, attitudes, and values that individuals, societies, and groups have developed over time. Additionally, non-verbal behaviors, such as gestures and facial expressions, play a significant role. For instance, while Koreans shake their heads side to side to indicate disagreement, in Türkiye, people often tilt their heads backward to convey the same sentiment. This difference can lead to confusion for Koreans who are unfamiliar with the Turkish gesture when they first encounter it.

In other words, culture encompasses the entire way of life of an individual or a specific group. Intercultural communication refers to any situation in which people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds meet and interact, either verbally or non-verbally. Language serves as the

primary means of communication, conveying thoughts, emotions, and information between individuals while providing a framework for mutual understanding among people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Consequently, understanding a language necessitates an understanding of the characteristics and context of its associated culture. This suggests that communication can flow more smoothly when one is aware of the significance and meanings of specific vocabulary expressions within that culture.

In the field of foreign language education, Byram (1997) in his book *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence* developed the concept of intercultural communicative competence, which he defines as an ability to speak another language, build relationships, and communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. He links this concept to the primary focus of foreign language teaching, known as 'communicative competence,' and introduces the notion of 'intercultural communicative competence.' In his work, Byram proposes a set of principles designed to help teachers cultivate learners' individual abilities, particularly in complex language skills. He emphasizes that understanding the nuances and context of language is essential for enhancing communication effectiveness, as the same word may be interpreted differently depending on the cultural context (Byram, 1997, pp. 34-37).

From his perspective, a person with intercultural communication skills is someone who can interact with individuals from different cultures using a foreign language. Such individuals can engage in smooth communication through various interaction methods and can effectively convey their thoughts to others. They can act as intermediaries among people from diverse cultural backgrounds. In other words, their understanding and knowledge of other cultures links closely to their linguistic ability to speak the target language appropriately. Consequently, they possess the capacity to comprehend and embrace new languages and cultures through their language acquisition skills (Byram, 1997, p. 71). When learning a foreign language, it is not enough to merely learn the usage patterns mentioned in its grammar and reading books and dictionaries, it is also necessary to know the culture of the society speaking that language, their social interaction habits, expressions to be used in different situations, reaction styles, ways of addressing, and behaviors (Bulut, 2013, pp. 561-562).

Following, teaching a foreign language is not only teaching the phonetics and morphology of that language, but also conveying the culture of the target language. Language and culture are interconnected, so culture must also be taught and learned (İşcan & Yassıtaş, 2018, p. 47). Besides, in

discussing the significance of the relationship between language and idioms in social interaction, Gibbs articulates the following:

> "Idioms facilitate social interaction, improve text coherence, are an integral part of language, reflect patterns of human thought, and help people communicate. It conceptualizes events and expresses abstract ideas through idiomatic meanings rather than literal meaning alone. In other words, studying idiomatic expressions can reveal one aspect of human thinking and closely related to daily life in a specific language helps to understand the people who use that language and the society in which they live." (Gibbs, 2012, pp. 697-707)

Communication barriers due to linguistic differences can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Therefore, efforts are needed to minimize linguistic mistakes that may arise during interactions between speakers of different languages. Learning and understanding another person's language can help build positive relationships and trust and further serve as a shortcut to breaking down cultural barriers.

In other words, because language reflects the values, beliefs, and customs of a specific culture in intercultural communication, understanding a particular language is essential for grasping the cultural background of its speakers. From this perspective, idiomatic expressions, which embody a society's historical values and social norms, offer valuable insights into that society's worldview and cultural identity. This makes idiomatic expressions a crucial factor in understanding the interaction between language and culture. In summary, since linguistic elements play a vital role in interactions among people from diverse cultural backgrounds, intercultural communication and studying the target language are complementary, facilitating more effective and seamless communication.

3 Previous studies and research method

First and foremost, existing studies on idiomatic expression contrast underscore the necessity and significance of this research. With the rapid proliferation of the Korean language, driven by the influence of the Korean Wave and the growth of the Korean economy, various comparative and contrastive studies have been undertaken not only in China and Japan but also in Western languages such as Spanish, German, French, and English. Since much of the research has focused on body language and idioms that express emotions, there is a notable lack of studies comparing idiomatic expressions related to everyday life, such as eating habits.

Let us take a brief look at the research on dietary habits conducted in Korea and abroad. Baek and Mak (2010) analyzed the similarities and differences between Korean and Chinese food-related idiomatic expressions to enhance the understanding of these expressions for learners studying either language. Kim (2011) analyzed idiomatic expressions related to rice and rice cakes, derived from the staple food rice, within the broader food culture of both Japanese and Korean languages, from a comparative linguistic and cultural perspective. In a subsequent study, Kim (2012) classified Korean and Japanese food-related expressions into categories such as drinks, staple foods, and side dishes, discussing the perceptions of life and human relationships reflected in the idiomatic expressions of both countries. Seo and Zemanek (2014) contrasted expressions related to alcohol in Korean and Czech, highlighting the similarities and differences in cultural characteristics, value systems, and thought processes of the two nations. Kim, analyzed the commonalities and differences between Korean and Malay by selecting idiomatic expressions that include terms related to cooking methods and food ingredients (Kim et al., 2024). In a similar study conducted in Türkiye, Has and Atay (2020) examined the similarities and differences between Turkish and Japanese by contrasting the meanings of idioms and proverbs associated with the Turkish word *ekmek* 'bread' and the Japanese word *kome* 'rice.'

Previous contrastive studies of idiomatic expressions in Korean and Turkish have primarily focused on comparing the meanings of idioms related to body parts and emotional expressions, with limited research conducted on idiomatic expressions associated with food culture. However, as noted by Gibbs (2003, p. 367), food serves as a symbol that delineates a nation's culture and identity. Consequently, an examination of idiomatic expressions associated with staple foods in both countries can provide valuable insights into the identities and cognitive frameworks embedded within the two languages.

There have, however, been a few contrastive linguistics studies of idioms for native Korean or Turkish language students in an educational context. Türközü (2003) offers a comprehensive guide that compares Korean proverbs and idioms while also discussing some food-related expressions to benefit Turkish students. The author aims to explore the potential for Korean cultural education in Türkiye by providing educational content specifically designed for beginners who are new to the Korean language. Also, Türközü and Ferendeci (2004), in their study "Idioms Related to the Names of Body Parts, including 'Head' and 'Facial Organs' in Turkish and Korean" examined and compared idioms associated with head and facial organs such as the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth in both Turkish and Korean.

They identified similarities and differences among the idioms. A noteworthy conclusion of their study was that both languages contain numerous idiomatic expressions related to the head and facial organs, which exhibit similar meanings and patterns of expression.

Research on linguistic contrasts between Korean and Turkish has been conducted to a certain extent. Cho and Türközü (2020) in their comparative study analyzed the concepts of onomatopoeia and their linguistic functions in Korean and Turkish to reveal differences and commonalities.

Jeong, in her study "Comparative Study of Emotion Expressions in Turkish and Korean" (2020), examined the diverse ways in which emotions such as joy, love, sadness, anger, fear, and hatred are expressed in Korean and Turkish. By focusing on body-related expressions and comparing emotion-related idioms, she aimed to explore similarities and differences in emotional expression between the two languages. This study is valuable as it approaches the target cultures through idioms, offering a more systematic understanding of how emotions are conveyed in each country.

Surveying on idiomatic expressions in both countries, the Standard Korean Language Dictionary, published by the National Institute of the Korean Language, defines an idiomatic expression as a phrase used habitually. It explains that an idiom consists of two or more words whose combined meaning cannot be deduced from the individual meanings of the words, and it conveys a specific meaning. For instance, while 'having a wide foot' literally means 'having a physically large foot,' it is also used idiomatically to signify 'being sociable and knowing many people.'

The Turkish Dictionary defines an idiom as "a formulaic phrase or expression that usually carries an interesting meaning, more or less separate from its literal meaning" (Ayverdi, 2005, p. 517).

Leading scholars in both countries have also debated the definitions of idiomatic expressions. In Türkiye, Püsküllüoğlu defines an idiom as "a linguistic unit that functions as a single component within a sentence, characterized by an original expression that generally conveys a meaning different from the literal meanings of individual words." He further describes idioms as fixed forms of figurative expressions that have become established through habitual use, employing metaphorical meanings to convey concise and implicit ideas, thereby assisting speakers in grasping and understanding abstract concepts (Püsküllüoğlu, 2006, pp. 7-8). Özdemir defines an idiom as "a fixed and fossilized form of lexical art where words are often combined to convey a meaning different from their literal sense" (Özdemir, 2000, p. 6). According to Aksoy, idioms are formulaic expressions

composed of words that carry metaphorical meanings, which explain a situation, issue, or concept in a more aesthetically pleasing and engaging manner (Aksoy, 1993, p. 50). Demir states that "idioms are stereotyped phrases used to enhance the power of expression, often embodying irrational dreams and thoughts that transcend their literal meanings" (Demir, 2004, p. 612).

Moon (2022, p. 52) defines idioms as combinations of two or more lexical units that convey a specific semantic meaning and are structurally fixed. She classifies idiomatic expressions into broad and narrow definitions. The broad definition encompasses expressions that are habitually used and familiar to language users, including set phrases, proverbs, metaphorical expressions, direct and indirect speech acts, and conventional expressions that arise from euphemisms.

As indicated by dictionary definitions and scholarly interpretations in both countries, idiomatic expressions are unique phrases that have been habitually used and widely adopted. They reflect the historical, cultural, and social contexts of a nation and convey meanings that differ from their grammatical and logical interpretations and possess a fixed structure that cannot be easily dissected. Furthermore, idiomatic expressions are employed in a manner that reveals a new, third meaning, which is not merely the sum of the individual meanings of their components; at least one of the words within the idiom is utilized outside its literal context. Another characteristic of idiomatic expressions is the presence of stereotypes in their structures, which do not change readily.

Students are born into their native language and acquire it naturally as they grow. However, the target language is learned through deliberate methods for various purposes, such as communication, daily living, and knowledge acquisition. Regardless of whether a language is acquired naturally or artificially, the key to effective learning lies in understanding the cultural elements inherent in that language. Contrastive analysis offers the advantage of identifying unique characteristics by comparing and analyzing different languages. This approach enables learners to grasp the cultural nuances of the target language. Shim highlights the benefits of contrastive cross-linguistic analysis in her research by stating that, even if the language is in the same form, it can be communicated and interpreted differently depending on the situation and context, reflecting the shared cultural experiences of the speakers. As a research method for understanding implicit meanings, a contrastive study between languages that considers the learner's native language and the culture behind it can be significant (Shim, 2009, pp. 268-269).

Heo and Kim, who have been actively conducting research in the field of contrastive linguistics in Korea, emphasizes the following research methods when comparing two or more languages:

> "1) It must be clear which elements correspond to each other; 2) The terms and units of the items being compared must be described as uniformly as possible; 3) The commonalities and differences between languages must be identified, while also considering universality; 4) Consistency must be maintained in contrast with the primary language and the target language" (Heo & Kim, 2016, pp. 17-20).

Because idiomatic expressions related to rice and bread are closely tied to the cultural realities of both countries, this study selected widely used idiomatic dictionaries that demonstrate strong practical relevance. The idiomatic dictionaries referenced in this study are as follows. Korean Idiom Dictionary (Choi, 2017), the Dictionary of Korean Idioms (Park & Elliot, 2013), Turkish Idiom Dictionary (Püsküllüoğlu, 2006), Idiom Dictionary (Özdemir, 2000), and Idioms in Turkish (Aktaş, 2021). Additionally, online resources were utilized, such as the National Institute of the Korean Language's Standard Online Dictionary,[1] the Korean Basic Online Dictionary,[2] and the Turkish Online Dictionary.[3] From these dictionaries, 30 idiomatic Korean expressions related to rice and 23 idiomatic Turkish expressions related to bread were commonly extracted and were utilized as primary data for contrastive research. In this study, the two languages exhibit distinct linguistic characteristics and identities, which are analyzed through a contrastive method that highlights their similarities and differences. From this perspective, this paper does not focus on the syntactic aspects of idiomatic expressions related to staple foods in Korean and Turkish; instead, it primarily addresses the semantic and cultural dimensions.[4]

As mentioned above, idiomatic expressions have been a fascinating topic for many researchers, leading to numerous discussions from various

---

[1] https://stdict.korean.go.kr/main/main.do

[2] https:// https://krdict.korean.go.kr/m/kor

[3] https://sozluk.gov.tr/

[4] Regarding the lineage of the Korean language, the current academic opinion is as follows. First, there is the argument that Korean is not included in Altaic because the lexical commonalities found in the Altaic language do not appear in Korean, and second, there is the view that Korean is included in Altaic due to phonological and grammatical similarities. Lastly, there is a negative view about the Altaic language family itself. This is due to the view that the linguistic commonality among the Altaic language family is significantly lower than that of other languages, making it difficult to view them as a common language family. (Heo, 2023, pp.13-14)

perspectives. However, research on idiomatic expressions between Korean and Turkish remains limited, and there is a notable absence of studies focusing on dietary idiomatic expressions in both languages. Furthermore, contrastive research on idiomatic expressions related to food habits is crucial for enhancing cultural communication skills. Therefore, in Chapter 4, I plan to compile and discuss idiomatic expressions related to staple foods in both countries.

4 Comparative analysis of idioms related to Korean *bap* 'rice' and Turkish *ekmek* 'bread'

The food cultures that have developed alongside the natural environments of each country are deeply infused with the nation's culture, history, and way of life, making food one of the most effective and immediate keys to understanding a community. With this understanding, Chapter 4 will examine the linguistic and cultural characteristics of idiomatic expressions related to rice and bread, the staples of Korean and Turkish cultures, to explore the similarities and differences between the two.

4.1 Idiomatic expressions related to rice in Korea

Although there are various perspectives on the origins of rice cultivation in Korea, it is believed that rice farming began around 2000 BCE during the late Neolithic period, based on rice grains discovered in the lower reaches of the Han River. Over 5,000 years, Koreans have preserved the traditions of a single ethnicity and an agricultural culture, embedding their unique traditional practices within their extensive historical narrative. Among these, food culture stands out as the most enduring of all traditions and customs, remaining one of the areas in daily life where traditional influences are most prevalent today. While modern Korean cuisine has been significantly influenced by Western dietary habits, Koreans continue to uphold a traditional meal structure in which rice serves as the staple, accompanied by a variety of side dishes.

Idiomatic expressions are closely tied to the lived experiences of native speakers. Many idiomatic expressions in Korean involve 'rice'. According to a frequency survey of Korean idiomatic expressions found in an idiom dictionary, expressions containing the word appear 31 times, making it the second most common food-related idiom after 'water,' with 39 occurrences (Choi, 2017).

This demonstrates that the vocabulary employed in idiomatic expressions related to food reflects the cultural identity and significance of certain elements in the lives of Koreans. The expression 'Koreans live by the power of rice' illustrates how deeply rice cultivation is embedded in Korean culture, symbolizing not only sustenance but also the foundation of national identity and cultural heritage.

The dictionary definition of 밥 *bap* 'rice' in Korean refers to cooked grains, and the medieval form of the word has remained unchanged. It can also be associated with early child language, such as 'mamma' (food), with variations like 'bab,' 'babba,' and 'papa,' in the context of theories regarding the origins of language or stages of early language acquisition. In the Hamgyong dialect in Korea, rice is called 'babu,' which corresponds to the child's word 'bap.' The Korean term 바보 *babo* 'fool,' meaning 'a foolish or stupid person,' originated from the combination of 밥 *bap* 'rice' and the suffix -보 *-bo*, which denotes a person, with the consonant ㅂ '*b*' being dropped (Bae, 2018, p. 246).

Cheon (2007) emphasizes that the word 밥 *bap* 'rice' likely originated from terms related to eating and drinking, which later evolved into parental terms. Infants' first words, such as 'mamma' or 'babba' (often used when asking for food), naturally solidified as terms for parents. In other words, it is believed that the word for food, baba' (meaning food) transformed into 'bap' (rice), which became the basis for the word for father, while 'mamma' or 'mam' evolved into the word for mother. The terms bap 'rice' and 맘 *mam* 'food' lost their initial nasal sounds 'p/m' and evolved into 압/업 '*ap*/*eop*' and 암/엄 '*am*/*eom*,' respectively. With the addition of various suffixes, these terms formed modern parental titles such as 아빠, 엄마, 아버지, 어머니 *appa, eomma, abeoji, eomeoni* 'dad, mom, father, mother' (Cheon, 2007, pp. 99-100).

Table 1: Idiomatic expressions related to the Korean staple rice

No.	Idiomatic exp. (Korean)	Meaning	Turkish translation
(1)	밥(을) 벌다 *bap(eul) beolda*	to earn a living through effort.	*pilavi kazanmak*
(2)	밥값 *bapgap*	the term worth or payment equivalent to the meal.	*pilav ücreti*
(3)	밥그릇 *bapgeureut*	a job or position for earning a living.	*pilav kasesi*
(4)	밥그릇을 축내다 *bapgeureuteul chuknaeda*	to live without doing any meaningful work.	*pilav kasesini azaltmak*

No.	Idiomatic exp. (Korean)	Meaning	Turkish translation
(5)	밥그릇 싸움 *bapgeureut ssaum*	a dispute to gain more money or power.	*pilav kasesi kavgasi*
(6)	밥줄이 끊어지다 *bapjuli kkeuneojida*	to lose one's means of livelihood.	*pilav hatti kesilmek*
(7)	밥통이 떨어지다 *baptongi tteoleojida*	to lose one's means of job	*pilav kutusu düşürmek*
(8)	밥 먹듯이 하다 *bap meokdeuti hada*	to do something frequently or easily as if eating rice.	*pilavi yer gibi*
(9)	밥알을 세다 *bapaleul seda*	to pick at food, not eating properly due to lack of appetite.	*pirinç tanelerini saymak*
(10)	밥술이나 뜨다 *bapsulina tteuda*	to live reasonably well, or to be able to afford food.	*bir kaşik pilavi yiyebilmek*
(11)	밥술깨나 먹다 *bapsulkkaena meokda*	to be well-off enough to not have to worry about food.	*bir şeyler yiyebilmek*
(12)	밥술(을) 놓다 *bapsul(eul) notda*	a colloquial expression meaning to die.	*kaşik birakmak*
(13)	눈칫밥(을) 먹다 *nunchitbap(eul) meokda*	to live uncomfortably, always being cautious of others.	*başkalarinin gözün içine bakarak pilavi yemek*
(14)	튀밥 튀기다 *twibap twigida*	a slang term meaning to exaggerate.	*pirinç patlağı yapmak*
(15)	남의 밥에 눈독 들이기 *namui bape nundok deuligi*	to covet someone else's work.	*başkalarinin pilavina göz dikmek*
(16)	밥 구경을 못하다 *bap gugyeongeul mothada*	to go hungry without eating any rice.	*pilavi görememek*
(17)	밥 구경(을)하다 *bap gugyeong(eul) hada*	to eat rice after a long time.	*pilavi görmek*
(18)	밥알이 곤두서다 *bapali gonduseoda*	to feel disgusted or offended.	*pirinç taneleri diken oluyor*
(19)	밥맛 떨어지다 *bapmat tteoleojida*	to be disgusted by someone's words or actions.	*pilavin tadini kçirmak*

No.	Idiomatic exp. (Korean)	Meaning	Turkish translation
(20)	찬밥 더운밥 가리다 *chanbap deounbap garida*	to refer to someone in no position to be picky and being choosy about their situation.	*soğuk pilavi ve sicak pilavi seçmek*
(21)	찬밥 신세 *chanbap sinse*	to be ignored or treated poorly.	*soğuk pilav durumu*
(22)	한 솥밥을 먹다 *han sotbapeul meokda*	to become like family.	*ayni tencereden pilavi yemek*
(23)	밥맛이다 *bapmatida*	to experience an extremely unpleasant feeling, as if losing one's appetite.	*pilavin tadi*
(24)	그 나물에 그 밥 *geu namule geu bap*	to say that people of similar nature or status is matched together.	*o sebzeye o pilavi*
(25)	콩밥(을) 먹다 *kongbap(eul) meokda*	eat a prison meal.	*fasulyeli pilavi yemek*
(26)	짬밥을 먹다 *jjambapeul meokda*	to serve in the military or work in an organization.	*asker yemeği yemek*
(27)	철밥통 *cheolbaptong*	a job that guarantees job security and is almost impossible to be fired from.	*demirle yapilmiş yemek kutusu*
(28)	낚싯밥을 던지다 *naksitbapeul deonjida*	use seductive means to lure people	*balik yemi atmak*
(29)	나랏밥을 먹다 *naratbapeul meokda*	work as a civil servant	*devletin pilavini yemek*
(30)	물고기 밥이 되다 *mulgogi bapi doeda*	drown in water	*suda boğulmak*

In expressions (1)–(7), such as 밥을 벌다 *bapeul beolda* 'to earn a living,' 밥줄 *bapjul* 'lifeline,' 밥그릇 *bapgeureut* 'rice bowl,' 밥통 *baptong* 'rice container' and 밥그릇 싸움 *bapgeureut ssaum* 'fight over rice bowls,' the term 'rice' conveys the fundamental concept of a specific task, income source, or job elements that are essential for sustaining one's livelihood.

In example (8), 밥 먹듯이 하다 *bap meokdeuti hada* 'to do something like eating rice' illustrates the frequent and repetitive nature of rice consumption in daily life, emphasizing the persistence of Koreans in routine tasks, as 'rice' symbolizes actions that are performed 'always' or regularly.

Examples (10) and (11), such as 밥술이나 뜨다 *bapsulina tteuda* 'to take a spoonful of rice' and 밥술 깨나 먹다 *bapsul kkaena meokda* 'to have eaten enough rice,' the spoon used for eating rice signifies a certain level of affluence or a comfortable lifestyle, suggesting that one is financially secure enough not to be concerned about food.

In expression (12), 밥술을 놓다 *bapsuleul notda* 'to lay down the spoon,' however, the spoon is used as a euphemism for death.

The phrase in (13), 눈칫밥을 먹다 *nunchitbapeul meokda*, can be translated literally as 'eating rice that is offered reluctantly,' keeping in mind the various inconveniences associated with the act of eating. This implies that the individual partaking in the meal is consistently attentive to and observant of the reactions of others.

(20), 찬밥 더운 밥 가리지 않다 *chanbap deoun bap gariji anda* 'to not distinguish between cold and hot rice,' conveys the urgency of a situation in which one cannot afford to be selective.

Expression in (21), 찬밥 신세가 되다 *chanbap sinsega doeda* 'to become cold rice,' utilizes the temperature of rice (cold) to describe a situation in which an individual is ignored or treated poorly. In this context, cold rice symbolizes an unwanted or neglected person who is excluded and not treated with kindness. Conversely, the Korean proverb 거지도 부지런하면 더운밥 먹는다 *geojido bujireonhamyeon deounbap meokneunda* 'even a beggar can eat hot rice if diligent,' uses 'hot rice' to represent respect and warmth, thereby contrasting sharply with the negative connotations associated with cold rice.

Example (22), 한솥밥을 먹다 hansotbapeul meokda 'to eat from the same pot of rice,' signifies a closeness akin to that of family, reflecting a strong sense of camaraderie within a group or community. The term 한솥밥 *hansotbap* 'one pot of rice' encompasses more than just rice; it symbolizes the bond that unites a family or group, representing shared affection. The phrase 한식구 한솥밥 *hansikgu hansotbap* 'one family, one pot of rice' is frequently used to describe workplace communities, promoting a sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization.

In (23), 밥맛이다 *bapmatida* means 'flavor of rice'. This phrase refers to the intrinsic flavor of rice, which can evoke an extremely unpleasant sensation akin to a loss of appetite.

In (24), 그 나물에 그 밥 *geu namule geu bap* is literally translated as 'that vegetable with that rice,' refers to individuals of similar status or level, suggesting something predictable, mundane and unremarkable.

Expression in (25), 콩밥을 먹다 *kongbapeul meokda* 'to eat bean rice,' refers to serving time in prison. This expression likely originates from the fact that inmates were historically served unappetizing bean rice while incarcerated. Such idiomatic expressions illustrate that the type and condition of rice can vary based on the emotional state or situation being described.

Example (26) is similar to (25). The phrase 짬밥을 먹다 *jjambapeul meokda* 'to eat military rice' also refers to living within a specific environment or organization. This expression metonymically uses the rice consumed in the military to describe life in the army.

The term in (27), 철밥통 *cheolbaptong* 'iron rice container,' is a somewhat sarcastic expression that refers to a secure job, such as a civil servant position, where one is guaranteed lifetime employment with minimal effort or stress. The negative connotation of 철밥통 *cheolbaptong* evolved from 밥통 *baptong* 'rice container' to 철밥통 *cheolbaptong* 'iron rice container,' symbolizing an individual who benefits without making a meaningful contribution.

(28), 낚싯밥을 던지다 *naksitbapeul deonjida* 'to throw fishing rice,' employs the term 밥 *bap* 'rice' to denote bait used for attracting fish. Metaphorically, 밥 *bap* signifies a method of enticing an individual. The idiomatic expression that serves as the antonym of this phrase, which conveys the idea of succumbing to temptation, is articulated as 낚싯밥에 걸리다 *naksitbape geolrida* 'to be caught in a fishing rice'.

Example (29) is 나랏밥을 먹다 *naratbapeul meokda* and means 'to eat the nation's rice'. The phrase 'nation's rice' pertains to the obligation of serving the country in the role of a civil servant. The term 밥 bap 'rice' in 'nation's rice' denotes a public official or civil servant, similar to its usage in 27). However, in contrast to the term 'Iron rice container,' it does not appear to carry a negative connotation.

Finally, (30) is 물고기 밥이 되다 *mulgogi bapi doeda* 'to become fish's rice'. The meaning of 'becoming rice for fish' is an idiomatic expression that means 'drowning' in water. This phrase is clearly different from that of 'fishing rice' in example (28). This pertains to a circumstance in which one or more individuals succumb to death by drowning.

Examining Korean idiomatic expressions related to rice reveals that they often carry negative connotations, suggesting traits such as being easily manipulated, foolishness, impatience, triviality, or selfishness in

professional contexts. Furthermore, expressions such as 밥맛 떨어지다 *bapmat tteoleojida* 'to lose one's appetite,' 밥맛이다 *bapmatida* 'to be unpleasant,' 눈칫밥을 먹다 *nunchitbap(eul) meokda*' to live with caution and fear,' and 찬밥 신세 *chanbap sinse* 'to be ignored or treated poorly' convey feelings of dislike or aversion towards others. Notably, more than half of these expressions possess negative connotations, while neutral expressions are relatively uncommon. Second, most of the idiomatic expressions in Table 1 are formed through metonymic extension. For example, 밥그릇 *bapgeureut* 'rice bowl' symbolizes a means of livelihood, 콩밥 *kongbap* 'bean rice' denotes prison, and 짬밥 *jjambap* 'military rice' refers to military service, 철밥통 *cheolbaptong* 'iron rice bowl' means of a secure work environment in which individuals will not be dismissed, irrespective of their capabilities, 낚싯밥 *naksitbap* 'fishing rice' refers as a method of enticing. These examples demonstrate how these idioms are driven by metonymy, in which a part signifies the whole or a larger concept.

4.2 Turkish idiomatic expressions related to bread

In ancient civilizations, bread and food culture related to bread were inseparable. Through numerous historical excavations, it has been established that bread production dates to the Neolithic Age, originating in the southeastern region of Anatolia, an area abundant in grains, and subsequently spreading to Mesopotamia (Naskali, 2014, p. 157). Originally, the Turkish people, due to their nomadic lifestyle, consumed thin, unleavened bread that could be quickly cooked on iron plates and stored for extended periods. After settling in Anatolia, this process gradually evolved, and by the 19th century, the bread known as became the standard form.

Although there are no precise records regarding the origin of the word *ekmek* 'bread,' some theories suggest that the staple food that appears on every Turkish table regardless of wealth derives from the verb meaning plant grains. In the Divan-ı Lugati't-Türk, the oldest surviving Turkish dictionary, it is associated with *emek* 'labor,' and in some regional dialects, variations like *emakh*, *etmah*, *itmek*, and *e'mek* are still in use (Zülfikar, 2012, p. 12).

Meanwhile, Naskali indicates that the form of the word *ekmek* 'bread' did not emerge until the 18th century and posits that the term is derived from the combination of *et* and *mek*, in accordance with the phonological and morphological rules of the Turkish language. At present, *et* refers to food that is closely associated with meat, while *mek* is interpreted as a

combination of 'soft' and the suffix *-mek*, which conveys the meaning of 'like something' (Naskali, 2014, pp. 347-375). Furthermore, it has been noted that there are a total of 397 variations of *ekmek* 'bread' in the history of Turkic languages, including *asak ekmek*, *adak ekmek*, and *afar ekmek*. Prior to the 18th century, the term *nan* was predominantly used instead of *ekmek* for bread, as evidenced by expressions such as *nan-i nohut*, *nan-i gevrek*, and *nan-i çakil* (Işın, 2022, pp. 117-125). In terms of frequency, *ekmek* 'bread' ranks second among food-related idioms, with 32 occurrences, following 'water,' which has 53 occurrences (Püsküllüoğlu, 2006; Özdemir, 2000; Akyalçın, 2012).

Table 2 below and the following subsection 4.3 will examine linguistic and cultural characteristics of idiomatic expressions related to *ekmek* 'bread,' a staple of Turkish culture, as well as the similarities and differences between the Turkish and Korean cultures.

Table 2: Idiomatic expressions related to the Turkish staple bread

No.	Turkish idiom	Idiomatic expression (Korean translation)	Meaning
(1)	*ekmeğine yağ sürmek*	빵에 기름을 바르기 *ppange gireumeul bareugi*	an unintended action that benefits someone else.
(2)	*ekmek çarpsin ki*	빵에 부딪히게 *ppange budithige*	a vow made to convince someone of the truth.
(3)	*ekmek aslanin ağzinda*	빵이 사자 입에 *ppangi saja ipe*	a situation where earning a living has become extremely difficult.
(4)	*ekmek düşmani*	빵의 적 *ppangui jeok*	a family member or person who contributes nothing to the household but only consumes.
(5)	*ekmek elden su gölden*	빵은 손에서, 물은 호수에서 *ppangeun soneseo, muleun hosueseo*	someone who lives idly off the income of others without doing anything.
(6)	*ekmek kapisi*	빵의 문 *ppangui mun*	a job or livelihood (source of income).
(7)	ekmek kavgasi	빵 싸움 *ppang ssaum*	continuous effort and hard work done to make a living.
(8)	ekmek parasi	빵 값 *ppang gap*	money or income used to sustain livelihood.
(9)	ekmek yemek	빵을 먹는 *ppangeul meokneun*	to make a living.

No.	Turkish idiom	Idiomatic expression (Korean translation)	Meaning
(10)	eli ekmek tutmak	손으로 빵을 잡기 *soneuro ppangeul japgi*	to earn a living on one's own income.
(11)	ekmeğini taştan çikarmak	돌에서 빵 찾기 *doleseo ppang chatgi*	to work extremely hard to earn a living in a difficult situation.
(12)	ekmeğinden olmak	빵을 잃다 *ppangeul ilda*	to lose one's job or be dismissed.
(13)	ekmeğinden etmek	빵을 앗아가도록 했다 *ppangeul atagadorok haetda*	to cause someone to lose their job.
(14)	açin gözü ekmek teknesinde olur	빵 운반 그릇에 눈을 뜨라 *ppang unban geureute nuneul tteura*	the idea that basic survival needs take priority over all other needs.
(15)	(birini) ekmeğini elinden almak	(누군가의) 빵을 빼앗다 *(nugungaui) ppangeul ppaeatda*	to fire someone from their job.
(16)	ekmeğine göz koymak: ekmeğine göz dikmek	빵을 유심히 쳐다보기 (빵에 눈독들이기) *ppangeul yusimhi chyeodabogi (ppange nundokdeuligi)*	to covet someone else's job.
(17)	ekmeği ile oynamak	빵으로 장난치기 *ppangeuro jangnanchigi*	to jeopardize or interfere with someone's livelihood or job.
(18)	tuz ekmek hakki	소금과 빵에 대한 권리 *sogeumgwa ppange daehan gwonri*	a moral obligation to someone who has fed or helped you.
(19)	ekmeğini ayağiyla tepmek	발로 빵을 차기 *balro ppangeul chagi*	to reject or refuse a good opportunity without realizing its value.
(20)	ekmeğini kazanmak	빵을 벌다 *ppangeul beolda*	to earn a living through effort.
(21)	ekmeğine kuru, ayranina duru mu dedik?	빵을 보고 말랐다고, 아이란에게 희다고 말했나? *ppangeul bogo malratdago, airanege huidago malhaetna?*	a question asking if one has offended or upset the other person.

No.	Turkish idiom	Idiomatic expression (Korean translation)	Meaning
(22)	ekmek bedr'in, su hidir'in, yiyin kudurun, için kudurun	빵은 베드리의 것이고 물은 흐드리의 것, 먹고 놀고, 마시고 놀고 *ppangeun bedeuriui geotigo muleun heudeuriui geot, meokgo nolgo, masigo nolgo*	a phrase used to mock someone living off others without making any effort.
(23)	ekmek çiğnemeyince yutulmaz	빵을 씹지 않고서 삼킬 수 없다 *ppangeul ssipji aneumyeon samkil su eopda*	you cannot earn money without working

In the above Table 2, idioms (5) through (17) and (20) such as *ekmek kapısı* 'bread's door,' *ekmek parası* 'bread money,' *ekmek teknesi* 'bread-carrying bowl, *ekmek kazanmak* 'to earn bread,' and *ekmek kavgası* 'bread fight' indicate for Turks, bread is directly linked to work and labor, with a stronger association with livelihood than rice has in Korean idiomatic expressions. Additionally, phrase (3), *ekmek aslanın ağzında* 'bread is in the lion's mouth' signifies a situation in which earning money to sustain a living has become extremely difficult. In (4), *ekmek düşmanı* 'enemy of bread' refers to an individual who does not contribute financially to the family and only relies on its sources, the strong expression. In examples (11) and (23), *ekmeğini taştan çıkarmak* 'to make bread from stone' and *ekmek çiğnemeyince yutulmaz* 'you cannot swallow bread without chewing it,' respectively, illustrates that earning a living is not easy. In (12) and (13), bread is used synonymously with a job. Bread also represents a very important value in life. In the phrase *ekmeğini ayağıyla tepmek* 'kicking bread with your feet' in (19), *ekmek* 'bread' highlights the consequences of missing an important opportunity due to carelessness.

One of the common features found in both Korean idioms involving rice and Turkish idioms involving bread is their use of symbols for employment or means of livelihood. In Korean, the concept of a job is represented by terms such as in the example (3) from Table 1, *bapgeureut* 밥그릇 'rice bowl' analogous to the example (14) from Table 2, 'bread bowl' in Turkish. Both terms share the commonality of 'containing' something, which serves as a means of livelihood. Example (6) from Table 1, *bapjul* 밥줄 'lifeline' that is similar to example (6) from Table 2, *ekmek kapısı* 'bread's door,' signifies an occupation or workplace in Turkish. Both example (2) from Table 1, *bapgap* 밥값 'price of rice' and example (8) from Table 2, *ekmek parası* 'price of bread'

refer to the income earned through effort. The expressions *bapjuli kkeuneojida* 밥줄이 끊어지다 'lifeline is cut' (example (6) from Table 1) and *ekmeğinden olmak* 'to lose one's bread' (example (12) from Table 2) both signify losing one's job or being dismissed. On the other hand, example (6) from Table 1, *bapjuleul kkeunda* 밥줄을 끊다 'to cut someone's lifeline' and example (15) from Table 2, *ekmeğini elinden almak* 'to take away someone's bread' mean to fire or dismiss someone. The Turkish phrase (16) from Table 2, *ekmeğine göz dikmek* 'to eye someone's bread' corresponds to the Korean phrase (15) from Table 1, *namui bapgeureute nundok deuligi* 남의 밥그릇에 눈독 들이기 'to covet someone else's rice bowl'. They both indicating a desire for someone else's job. Phrase (1) from Table 1, *bap(eul) beolda* 밥(을) 벌다 'to earn rice through effort' is frequently employed in everyday life with a meaning synonymous to example (20) from table 2, *ekmeğini kazanmak* 'to earn a bread through effort'. Finally, phrase (4) from Table 1, *bapgeureuteul chuknaeda* 밥그릇을 축내다 'loss of rice bowl' presents an action which results in the loss of food while engaging in consumption without contributing to any productive effort. This concept is analogous to the Turkish idiom (4) in Table 2, *ekmek düşmanı* 'enemy of bread' although the form is different.

4.3 Cultural feature of rice and bread

Both Koreans and Turks have long regarded rice and bread as sacred, making them significant elements in folk beliefs. In Korean culture, rice represents more than just a simple meal; it embodies the concept of interconnection among individuals. The term (22) in Table 1 *hansotbapeul meokda* 한솥밥을 먹다 'eat rice from one pot' which signifies a communal dining experience. This phrase suggests that pot rice is not just the rice itself. It symbolizes a shared meal that unites the hearts of family members, fostering a sense of togetherness and community.

In traditional Korean culture, rice is regarded as more than a mere grain; it holds significant cultural and spiritual value. Historically, rice has been an integral component of various ceremonies conducted by Koreans, serving to address the challenges associated with significant life events such as birth, marriage, and funerals. During these rites of passage, rice has played a multifaceted role. It is utilized as a food offering to pray for the longevity of both the infant and the mother, as well as a medium through which individuals communicate with and honor their ancestors during ancestral ceremonies. Furthermore, rice is considered a valuable offering for the deceased. Following the ritual, rice soaked in water, known as 'Banham,' is traditionally scooped three times with a willow spoon and placed in the mouth of the deceased (Jeong, 2018, pp. 327-328). This act symbolizes the

provision of sustenance for the journey to the afterlife. Consequently, rice *bap* and the rice offered during each rite of passage—from birth through growth to death—are perceived as symbols of good fortune and prosperity (Shin & Sohn, 2008, pp. 350-351).

The fact that in Table 2, the term (2), *ekmek çarpsın ki*, which means that people swear 'on bread' to assure others of their honesty, demonstrates that Turks have long regarded bread as sacred. Consequently, bread has played a significant role not only in folk beliefs but also in major life rituals such as birth, marriage, and death, thereby preserving and developing the identity of the community. The term which remains prevalent in everyday language, translates to seeing bread, disloyalty to the individual who provides bread. Since the Ottoman era, the phrase (18), *tuz ekmek hakkı* 'the right to bread and salt,' has also appeared in numerous literary works, representing loyalty and hospitality. In this context, both salt and bread symbolize loyalty' within the social order, indicating that individuals who share the same food at the same table forge friendships (Samancı, 2022, pp. 145-146).

Before bread became the staple food in Türkiye, Turks traditionally made and consumed a type of bread called *nan*, borrowed from Persian, which is still widely enjoyed in Uzbekistan today. Another name for this bread is *nan-ı aziz*, meaning 'sacred bread,' indicating that Turks have long revered bread as sacred. Even in the Turkish dictionary of the Ottoman period, the word *nanpare*, which translates to 'a piece of bread,' also signifies working and living for a livelihood (Nihat, 1979, p. 651). The word *ekmek* 'bread' held sacred value during the Ottoman period. It was regarded as the most fundamental blessing that should never be wasted. It was believed that leaving a piece of bread or spilling bread crumbs after a meal was a sin that could lead to misfortune. A book on ethics from the Ottoman era states the following regarding the proper attitude toward bread: "To avoid wasting bread, even the crumbs that fall on the table must be collected and consumed. Eating the crust of bread while leaving the inside behind is disrespectful and may result in drought or rising prices. By tradition, bread is to be torn apart with both hands, as cutting it with one hand is considered impolite. Bread should not be cut with a knife. Furthermore, sharing the same bread is an act that symbolizes camaraderie and trust (see Cunbur, 1990, pp. 33-35).

Another example that bread was regarded as sacred dates back in the 17th century bakery, where dough workers were required to step on the dough to prepare bread. Following traditional practices, they would visit the nearest bathhouse every morning to perform a full body washing ritual named *gusul*, as they believed that bread was a sacred blessing.

Consequently, this ritual had to preformed before stepping on the dough (Yasin, 2022, p. 260). Bread was also used symbolically as a form of incantation and in folk remedies. Abdülaziz and Arısan, who documented the social and cultural life of Istanbul at the end of the 19th century, explain how bread was incorporated into ceremonies associated with folk religion. It played a role in significant rituals, such as childbirth and circumcision, and was also utilized in folk medicine as a remedy for the *kem göz* 'evil eye'. He documented the customs and folk rituals of the Ottoman period, noted that when a mother was about to give birth, the midwife would place a piece of bread in a corner of the room where the delivery was taking place to ward off malevolent spirits. Following this, the bread was distributed to animals outside the home in accordance with Islamic rituals. Additionally, on the 40th day after the birth, guests were invited, and a series of celebratory ceremonies were conducted. As a concluding ritual, when the guests departed, several pieces of bread were torn into small portions and passed around the heads of the mother and her child three times. In the end, the pieces were given to dogs on the street (Abdülaziz & Arısan, 2023, pp. 25-49).[5]

However, the term can also carry a negative connotation, as exemplified by the word *nankör*, a combination of *nan* 'bread' and *kör* 'blind,' which means 'ungrateful person' (Ayverdi, 2005, p. 2300). The term *nankör* is derived from *nan-kur*, which refers to a person who disregards the value of the sustenance received from others. It is also synonymous to an individual who is ungrateful. Additionally, the Hadith—a record of the words and actions of Muhammad, recognized as a significant source of Islamic teachings alongside the Quran—emphasizes the importance of expressing gratitude for the good deeds of others, further elucidating the concept of *nankör*. One hadith states,

> "He who is not grateful for a little will not be grateful for much. He who is ungrateful to others is ungrateful to Allah. Always remembering Allah's blessings is an expression of gratitude, while disregarding them is *nankörlük* (the noun form of *nankör*)" (*Islam Ansiklopedisi*, 2006, pp. 382-389).

[5] Also, according to Islamic traditions, when a boy reaches a certain age, a circumcision ceremony is performed. The day following the circumcision, to promote a swift recovery, ekmek (bread) is divided into several pieces and placed at the head of the bed where the boy sleeps, after which it is given to the dogs (Abdülaziz & Arısan, 2023, p. 72).

5 Conclusion

Although idioms may sometimes appear illogical and ungrammatical, they represent a unique form of vocabulary that facilitates fluent communication among people. Idioms often carry original background stories and can be more expressive than standard word expressions, reflecting the culture of the speakers. Without prior knowledge of the subject matter, understanding idioms can be challenging, creating significant barriers to effective communication and hindering a satisfying linguistic experience.

Idiomatic expressions are fixed phrases that have become deeply embedded in a language community through extensive usage. This can pose challenges for non-native speakers who may lack the cultural context necessary to grasp their meanings, as understanding these expressions requires more than just a literal interpretation of the words. Consequently, this study aims to assist learners from both countries, as well as those interested in cultural nuances, in gaining a deeper understanding of the target language and its associated culture. Additionally, it seeks to serve as a valuable resource for advanced vocabulary learners engaged in translation and interpretation.

Idiomatic expressions do not merely combine the literal meanings of their components. They also convey the figurative meaning of the entire phrase. Native speakers, immersed in their culture and language from birth, typically do not encounter significant difficulties in understanding idiomatic expressions during communication. In contrast, non-native speakers often feel confused and struggle with communication when they first encounter idioms in a foreign language. From this perspective, learning idioms is crucial for helping non-native speakers attain a higher level of proficiency in the target language.

This study examined the patterns and characteristics of idiomatic expressions related to rice and bread, which are staple foods in the culinary cultures of Korea and Türkiye. A common feature identified in the idiomatic expressions for rice and bread in both Korean and Turkish is their use as symbols of essential income sources or means of livelihood. More importantly, it is evident that both nations share a core value in their food culture, which fosters emotional connections within the social community and is passed down through their traditional culinary practices. For instance, the Korean idiom *hansotbap hansikgu* 한솥밥 한식구 'one family one pot of rice' conveys respect for others and signifies spiritual abundance, suggesting that rice embodies notions of emotional and communal well-being.

Similarly, in Türkiye, bread is traditionally torn apart with both hands rather than cut with a knife. Besides, sharing the same bread is an act that symbolizes camaraderie and trust. As illustrated by the folk belief, bread transcending its material nature makes people believe that those who break bread multiple times at the table will have many children. This belief, along with the concept of *tuz ekmek hakkı* 'the right of salt and bread' or the act of sharing bread and salt, serves as a powerful expression of friendship and trust among people and highlights the importance of a balanced social life through sharing and caring for others. In essence, these traditions reflect social identity and foster a sense of belonging, indicating that shared meals strengthen social bonds and promote unity. These idiomatic expressions from both countries reveal that Korea and Türkiye reject the individualism prevalent in modern society and instead embrace the cultural values of traditional sharing and harmony.

Another linguistic commonality is that idiomatic expressions in both languages often employ metonymy, where a part represents the whole. For instance, rice and bread symbolize jobs, values, and occupations, underscoring this metonymic characteristic. Additionally, a shared cultural feature is that both Koreans and Turks have long regarded rice and bread as sacred, making them significant elements in folk beliefs. If teachers and learners of idiomatic expressions in a foreign language comprehend and apply the conceptual meanings and cultural contexts embedded in the target language, it will not only enhance their ability to understand idiomatic expressions but also positively influence their overall language proficiency.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by the Seed Program for Korean Studies of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the Korean Studies Promotion Service at the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS-2022-INC-2250002).

References

Abdülaziz, B., & Arısan, K. (Ed.). (2023). *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*. Istanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat.

Aksoy, Ö. A. (1993). *Atasözleri ve deyimler sözlüğü*. İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları.

Aktaş, Ş. T. (2021). Türkçe'de Deyimler. Istanbul: Akçağ Yay.

Akyalçın, N. (2012). *Türkçemizin Anlamsal Zenginlikleri Deyimlerimiz*. Istanbul: Eğiten Kitap.

Ayverdi, İ. (2005). *Misalli Büyük Türkçe Sözlük*. Istanbul: Kubbealtilugati.

Bae, M. S. 배문식 (2018). *Urimal eowon sajeon 우리말 어원사전 (Korean Etymology Dictionary)*. Seoul: Bakijeong.

Baek, N. C. & Mak, H. R. (2010). Han·jung eumsik gwanryeon gwanyongpyohyeonui teukjing bigyo-hangukeogyoyukjeok jeopgeuneul wihayeo 한·중 음식 관련 관용표현의 특징 비교-한국어교육적 접근을 위하여 (A Study on the Idiom expression of Food between Korean and Chinese). *Hanguksasanggwa munhwa 한국사상과 문화 (Korean Thought and Culture)*, 53, 217-243.

Bulut, M. (2013). Türkçe Eğitimi ve Öğretiminde Dil ve Kültür Aktarımı Aracı Olarak Atasözleri ve Deyimlerin Önemi. *Turkish Studies, 8*(13), 559-575. http://dx.doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.5993

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. UK: Multilingual Matters.

Cheon, S. Y. (2007). *Hangukeowa hanguk munhwa 한국어와 한국문화 (Korean language and Korean culture)*. Seoul: Uribooks.

Cho, E. S., & Türközü, S. G. (2020). Korece ve Türkçedeki Yansımalar (Onomatope) Üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Çalışma. *Kare 8*, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.38060/kare.656305

Choi, G. B. (2017). *Urimal gwanyongeo sajeon 우리말 관용어 사전 (Korean idiom dictionary)*. Seoul: Iljogak.

Cunbur, M. (1990). *Eski bir Görgü Kitabında Yemek Kuralları*. Ankara: Türk Halk Kültürü Araştırmaları Yay.

Demir. T. (2004). *Türkçe Dilbilgisi*, Ankara: Kurmay Yay.

Gibbs, R. W. (2003). *Maeumui sihak 마음의 시학 The Poetics of Mind* (Nah, I. J, Trans.). Seoul: Hangukmunhwasa.

Gibbs, R. W. (2012). Idioms and formulaic language. D. Geeraerts & H. Cuyckens (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics* (pp. 697-725). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Has, S., & Atay, A. (2020). The meaning values of the words “bread” and “rice (kome 米)” in terms of language-culture interaction. *Abant Kültürel Araştırmalar Dergisi, 5*(10), 141-153.

Heo, Y. & Kim, S. J. (2016). *Eoneodaejohak 언어대조학* (*Contrastive Linguistics)*. Seoul: Sotong.

Heo, Y. (2023). Oegukeoroseoui hangukeohakui ihae 외국어로서의 한국어학의 이해 (Understanding Korean Linguistics as a Foreign Language). Seoul: Sotong.

İşcan, A., & Yassıtaş, T. (2018). Yabancı Dil Olarak Türkçe Öğretimi Ders Kitaplarında Kültür Aktarımı: Yedi İklim Türkçe Öğretim Seti Örneği (B1-B2 Düzeyi). *Aydın Tömer Dil Dergisi, 3*(1), 47-66.

Işın, P. M. (2022). Klasik Osmanlı Döneminde İstanbul'da Ekmek. In B. Tapan (Ed.), *Her Yönüyle Ekmek* (pp.104-129). Istanbul: IBB Yay.

Islam Ansiklopedisi. (2006). 32 cilt. Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı.

Jeong K. J. (2018). Bapgwa ppang Jusik munhwaga naeun hangukgwa seoyangui munhwa chai 밥과 빵 주식 문화가 낳은 한국과 서양의 문화 차이 (The cultural distinctions between Korea and Western societies as influenced by the staple foods of rice and bread). *Hanguksasanggwa munhwa 한국사상과 문화 (Korean thoughts and culture), 94*, 309-335.

Jeong, E. K. (2020). Türkçe ve korecede duygu aktaran deyimlerin karşılaştırılması. *RumeliDE Dil Ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* (Ö8), 849-859. https://doi.org/10.29000/rumelide.816651

Kim, G. Y. (2011). Il-han yang eoneoui 'sik'munhwa gwanryeon gwanyongpyohyeonui daejogochal 일 · 한 양 언어의 '식'문화 관련 관용표현의 대조고찰 (A comparative study of idiomatic expressions related to 'food' culture in Japanese and Korean languages-Focusing on rice and rice cakes), *Ilboneowa munhak 일본어와 문학 (Japanese Language and Literature), 20*, 33-54. https://doi.org/10.17314/jjlc.2011.20.002

Kim, G. Y. (2012). Il·han yangeoneoui Eoryu-Yukryu gwanryeon gwanyong pyohyeon daejo gochal:munhwawaui gwanryeonseongeul jungsimeuro 일.한 양언어의 어류-육류 관련 관용표현 대조 고찰: 문화와의 관련성을 중심으로 (A comparative study of idiomatic expressions related to fish and meat in both Japanese and Korean Languages-Focusing on relevance to culture). *Ilboneowa munhak 일본어와 문학 (Journal of Japanese Language and Literature), 81*(1), 3-26. https://doi.org/10.17003/jllak.2012.81.1.3

Kim, J. A., Kim, G. H., Wong, Y. Y., & Li Y. L. (2024). Hangukeowa Malreieoui gwanyongpyohyeon daejo yeongu: Siksaenghwal gwanyongpyohyeoneul daesangeuro 한국어와 말레이어의 관용표현 대조 연구:식생활 관용표현을 대상으로 (Contrast study on idiomatic expressions between Korean and Malay-Targeting dietary idiomatic expressions). *Donghak 동학 (Donghak Journal),70*, 519-555. https://doi.org/10.46639/kjds.2024.70.15

Kukripgukeowon. 국립국어원 (n.d.). *Pyojungukeo daesajeon 표준국어대사전 (Standard Online Dictionary)*. https://stdict.korean.go.kr/main/main.do

Kukripgukeowon. 국립국어원 (n.d.). *Hangukeo gichosajeon 한국어기초사전 (Korean Basic Online Dictionary)*. https://krdict.korean.go.kr/m/kor

Moon, G. H. (2022). Gwanyongpyohyeon yeonguui hyeonhwanggwa jeonmang 관용표현 연구의 현황과 전망, (The Present Condition and Prospect of Idiomatic

Expressions Study), *Hangukeohak 한국어학 (Korean Linguistics),* 95, 51-81. https://doi.org/10.20405/kl.2022.05.95.51

Naskali, E. G. (2014). *Ekmek Kitabi*. Istanbul: Kitapevi.

Nihat, M. (1979). *Osmanlıca Türkçe Sözlük*. İstanbul: İnkılap Kitabevi.

Özdemir, E. (2000). *Deyimler sözlüğü*. Ankara: Bilgi Yay.

Park, K. B., & Elliot, M. (2013). *Hangukeo gwanyongeo sajeon 한국어 관용어 사전 (Dictionary of Korean Idioms)*. Seoul: Munyerim.

Püsküllüoğlu, A. (2006). *Türkçe deyimler sözlüğü*. Ankara: Arkadaş Yay.

Samancı, Ö. (2022). Ekmek in the 18th and 19th Century. In B. Tapan (Ed.), *Her Yönüyle Ekmek* (pp.131-147). Istanbul: IBB Yay.

Seo, J. S., & Zemanek, M. (2014). Hangukeo mit chekoeoui 'sul' pyohyeon bigyo yeongu 한국어 및 체코어의 '술' 표현 비교 연구 (A comparative study on the expression of 'alcohol' in Korean and Czech). *Hanguk sasanggwa munhwa 한국사상과 문화* (*Korean Thought and Culture), 72*, 385-408.

Shim, H. R. (2009). Hangukeo hakseupjareul wihan 'munhwagibaneohwi' yeongu 한국어 학습자를 위한 '문화기반어휘' 연구 (The Study on 'Culture Based Vocabulary' for Foreign Leaner). *Eoneowa munhwa 언어와 문화 (Language and Culture), 5*(2),175-195. https://doi.org/10.18842/klaces.2009.5.2.007

Shin, J. M., & Sohn, J. W. (2008). Hanguk jeontongeumsik tonghapgeomsaek siseutem guchukeul wihan tonggwauirye eumsik yeongu 한국 전통음식 통합검색 시스템 구축을 위한 통과의례음식 연구 (A Study on the Traditional Korean Rites Foods for the Construction of a Traditional Korean Food Data Integration System). *Hanguksikpum yeongyanghakhoe 한국식품영양학회 (Korean J. Food & Nutr), 21*(3), 344-354.

Türközü, S. G. (2003). A study of Korean Education as a Foreign Language from the Linguistic and Cultural Factors's Point of View. *Korean language education research,16*, 5-38.

Türközü, S. G., & Ferendeci, S. Y. (2004). Türkçe ve korecedeki "baş kafa ve başta bulunan organ adlarıyla ilgili deyimlerin incelenmesi". *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil Ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, *44*(1), 93-109.

Türk Dil Kurumu Başkanlığı (n.d.). *Türk Dil Kurumu Sözlükleri (Turkish Online Dictionary)*. https://sozluk.gov.tr/

Yasin, M. (2022). Kutsal Ekmek. In B. Tapan (Ed.), *Her Yönüyle Ekmek* (pp. 255-270). Istanbul: IBB Yay.

Zülfikar, H. (2012). Anlamları, Deyimleri ve Çeşitleriyle Ekmek. *Dil ve edebiyat dergisi*, *728,* 12-18.

Erratum: Pedrosa García, I. (2024). Refusals in Japanese and Spanish: Pragmatic Transfer in L2. *Acta Linguistica Asiatica*, *14*(2), 93-119. https://doi.org/10.4312/ala.14.2.93-119

The author has brought to our attention that two errors occurred in the published paper.

Firstly, in Table 3 (p. 103), there is a mismatch in rows and the corresponding data. Data of the second row of "Promise of future acceptance" belongs to the following codified category "Avoidance", and all the rest applies accordingly.

Incorrect:

Table 3: Distribution of strategy use across total number of responses

Codified categories	**Group**							
	NSS		JLSFL		NSJ		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Explicit refusal	5	1.34	2	0.56	0	0	7	0.64
Negation of the proposition	85	22.85	73	20.56	32	8.56	190	17.26
Subtotal – Direct	**90**	**24.19**	**75**	**21.13**	**32**	**8.56**	**197**	**17.89**
Excuse/explanation	64	17.2	89	25.07	107	28.61	260	23.61
Regret/apology	27	7.26	33	9.3	54	14.44	114	10.35
Wish	9	2.42	12	3.38	10	2.67	31	2.82
Alternative	8	2.15	7	1.97	3	0.8	18	1.63
Dissuasion/disagreement	61	16.4	34	9.58	37	9.89	132	11.99
Promise of future	12	3.23	1	0.28	10	2.67	23	2.09
acceptance	10	2.69	20	5.63	26	6.95	56	5.09
Avoidance	20	5.38	9	2.54	11	2.94	40	3.63
Refusal on principle/belief	5	1.34	2	0.56	5	1.34	12	1.09
Conditioning of future/past acceptance								
Subtotal – Indirect	**216**	**58.06**	**207**	**58.31**	**263**	**70.32**	**686**	**62.31**
Positive opinion	16	4.3	27	7.61	41	10.96	84	7.63
Solidarity/empathy	17	4.57	12	3.38	4	1.07	33	3
Gratitude/appreciation	33	8.87	34	9.58	34	9.09	101	9.17
Subtotal – Adjuncts	**66**	**17.74**	**73**	**20.56**	**79**	**21.12**	**218**	**19.8**
Total Results	**372**	**100**	**355**	**100**	**374**	**100**	**1101**	**100**

Acta Linguistica Asiatica, 15(1), 2025.
ISSN: 2232-3317, http://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/ala/
DOI: 10.4312/ala.15.1.205-206

Correct:

Table 3: Distribution of strategy use across total number of responses

Codified categories	**Group**							
	NSS		JLSFL		NSJ		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Explicit refusal	5	1.34	2	0.56	0	0	7	0.64
Negation of the proposition	85	22.85	73	20.56	32	8.56	190	17.26
Subtotal – Direct	**90**	**24.19**	**75**	**21.13**	**32**	**8.56**	**197**	**17.89**
Excuse/explanation	64	17.2	89	25.07	107	28.61	260	23.61
Regret/apology	27	7.26	33	9.3	54	14.44	114	10.35
Wish	9	2.42	12	3.38	10	2.67	31	2.82
Alternative	8	2.15	7	1.97	3	0.8	18	1.63
Dissuasion/disagreement	61	16.4	34	9.58	37	9.89	132	11.99
Promise of future acceptance	12	3.23	1	0.28	10	2.67	23	2.09
Avoidance	10	2.69	20	5.63	26	6.95	56	5.09
Refusal on principle/belief	20	5.38	9	2.54	11	2.94	40	3.63
Conditioning of future/past acceptance	5	1.34	2	0.56	5	1.34	12	1.09
Subtotal – Indirect	**216**	**58.06**	**207**	**58.31**	**263**	**70.32**	**686**	**62.31**
Positive opinion	16	4.3	27	7.61	41	10.96	84	7.63
Solidarity/empathy	17	4.57	12	3.38	4	1.07	33	3
Gratitude/appreciation	33	8.87	34	9.58	34	9.09	101	9.17
Subtotal – Adjuncts	**66**	**17.74**	**73**	**20.56**	**79**	**21.12**	**218**	**19.8**
Total Results	**372**	**100**	**355**	**100**	**374**	**100**	**1101**	**100**

Secondly, a punctuation mark was omitted in the Abstract on the journal's website.

Incorrect:
[…] and native speakers of Japanese We found that linguistic ability […]

Correct:
[…] and native speakers of Japanese. We found that linguistic ability […]

We apologize for any inconvenience caused.

Sincerely,
Mateja Petrovčič
ALA editor

TABLE OF CONTENTS