Korean and Korean Linguistics

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한국어 조선말
Writing System
History

• Hangul was created during the Joseon Dynasty (1393-1910) in 1446
• It was created by King Sejong (세종대왕) to teach the common people to read and write
• They used Chinese Characters as a writing system previously
• Only the elite knew how to read and write because the masses were illiterate
Korean Alphabet
Hangeul - 한글

• Each character corresponds to a natural sound the mouth makes
• Korean is written in quadrants
• It is composed of 19 consonants and 21 vowels
Quadrants in Korean

1.  
   3
   2
   1
   → 한

2.  
   3
   2
   1
   → 길

3.  
   2
   1
   1
   → 보

4.  
   1
   2
   1
   → 기

Usually sound from one consonant carries over to the next when followed by a vowel!
Phonology

- Consonants
  - Korean has 19 consonant phonemes
  - There’s basic, tense, and aspirated consonants

- Vowels
  - 8 vowel phonemes with their long vowel variants

### Consonant phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant phonemes</th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Alveolo-palatal/Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nasal [2]</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>η</td>
<td>ʊ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop and affricate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plain [3]</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ts, tsʰ</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>ɡ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tense [4]</td>
<td>pʰ, pʰʰ</td>
<td>tʰ, tʰʰ</td>
<td>tʃ, ts, tsʰ</td>
<td>kʰ</td>
<td>ɡʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aspirated</td>
<td>pʰ, pʰʰ</td>
<td>tʰ, tʰʰ</td>
<td>tʃʰ, tsʰ, tsʰʰ</td>
<td>kʰ</td>
<td>ɡʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plains/aspirated</td>
<td>s, sʰ</td>
<td>s</td>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>ɻ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tense</td>
<td>s, sʰ</td>
<td>s</td>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>ɻ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid [7]</td>
<td>l, lʰ</td>
<td>l, lʰ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximant</td>
<td>w, j</td>
<td>j</td>
<td></td>
<td>u, ʊ</td>
<td>u</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vowel Chart

- i
- u
- o
- ø

### Long-Vowel Chart

- iː
- uː
- øː
- oː
Grammatical Features

- Korean has **honorifics**, with **seven speech levels**
  - Higher status = the speaker uses special nouns or verb endings
  - Each speech level has its own verb ending to indicate formality
    - This is meant to show respect to those listening to the speaker
  - 5 of these levels are grouped into **반말** (casual language) and **존댓말** (formal language)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STYLE</th>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>RULE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>합쇼체</td>
<td>먹습니다</td>
<td>먹습니까?</td>
<td>Stem + 습니다/까</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>하오체</td>
<td>먹소</td>
<td>먹소?</td>
<td>Stem + 소</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>하게체</td>
<td>먹네</td>
<td>먹는가?</td>
<td>Stem + 네; stem + 는가</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>해라체</td>
<td>먹는다</td>
<td>먹느냐?</td>
<td>Stem + 는다/느냐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>해요체</td>
<td>먹어요</td>
<td>먹어요?</td>
<td>Stem + 어/아요</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>해체</td>
<td>먹어</td>
<td>먹어?</td>
<td>Stem + 어/아; 먹니? Stem + 니</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**하소서체** is missing because it is only used with royalty or in religious texts.
Grammatical Features (cont.)

- Korean is an agglutinative language
  - Words contain morphemes to determine their meaning
  - Morphemes remain unchanged after coming together

- Korean has no grammatical gender
  - The third-person singular pronoun has gendered forms
    - 그 geu (male)
    - 그녀 geunyeo (female)

Caveats:
- Women often introduce themselves as a wife or child’s mother once they have gotten married or given birth
- Titles have gender differences
  - 사장 sajang (company president)
  - 여사장 yōsajang (female company president)
Dialects
Dialect Separation

- There is no rule for dialect demarcation; some are named after provincial boundaries, others are arbitrary in nature
  - Gyeonggi
  - Chungcheong
  - Yeongseo
  - Yeongdong
  - Gyeongsang
  - Jeolla
  - Jeju

- Standard Korean or 표준어 is defined as the Seoul dialect but does not include all features specific to the Seoul dialect
  - Standard South Korean and North Korean are still intelligible

Ice cream in South Korea is literally the same pronunciation as in English (아이스크림)

In North Korea, ice cream is ’icy frosting’ (얼음 보송이)
Difference Between Regional Dialects

• Seoul Dialect (standard Korean): 밥 먹었어? Did you eat?

• Busan Dialect (Gyengsang Province): 밥 못나?

• Gwangju Dialect (Jeolla Province): 아야 밥 먹었냐?

The map on the right shows the variations between the word ‘dragonfly’ by region.
Naming Conventions
Family Names

• There are ~300 family names
  • Kim, Park, and Lee are ~50% of last names

• Each family name is divided into 1 or more clans
  • Gimhae Kim’s are the Kim clan from the Gimhae city

• Last names are passed down from fathers to their children
  ❖ Historically, last names were given to those in a King’s court
  ❖ After Mongolian invasion, kings and aristocrats had Mongolian family names
Given Names

- Given names are typically composed of hanja, or Chinese characters.
- These used to be Generation Names; two people born in the same generation share the same character in their name.
  - Korean names are three syllables; 1 for the last name, 1 for the generational name, and 1 for the given name.
- Starting in the 70’s, Korean names were based on native Korean words as opposed to Chinese characters.
- Popular given names include:
  - Haneul (하늘; "Heaven" or "Sky")
  - Areum (아름; "Beauty")
  - Iseul (이슬; "Dew")
  - Seulgi (슬기; "Wisdom")
Thank you for listening!