

Sociolinguistics

and
Korean
Language
Education

*Linking Language Learning,
Society, and Culture*

Edited by Hye-Sook Wang

KOREA RESEARCH MONOGRAPH 40

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Introduction

HYE-SOOK WANG

It is no secret that the number of Korean language learners has been steadily increasing, with the surge particularly notable at the start of the twenty-first century. This trend has been acknowledged in many studies citing the ever-popular MLA (Modern Language Association) foreign language enrollment survey statistics. The most recent report, published in November 2023, shows that Korean was one of the three languages whose enrollment increased, along with American Sign Language and Biblical Hebrew, while all other foreign languages recorded enrollment decreases. Korean showed a 38.3% increase while ASL showed 0.8% and BH showed 9.1% increases. This enrollment increase in Korean is quite significant and telling. Various factors have been given as the reason for the boom, with the popularity of Korean popular culture undoubtedly being one of the most, if not the most, influential reasons. K-contents have become a trend not only in the United States but in many other parts of the globe, going beyond K-pop or K-drama.

With the increasing number of learners, the field of Korean language education has responded to the needs and demands of the learners through various activities, from both theoretical and practical perspectives, and this has resulted in increased research and more publications. As such, a few edited volumes on the teaching and learning of Korean as a second or foreign language have recently been published. In fact, two volumes were published over the last three years (e.g., Cho, 2021; Byon & Pyun, 2022) after a long hiatus from the publication of Byon and Pyun in 2012, which was the first edited volume exclusively focusing on the teaching and learning of Korean. However, Cho (2021) was “a textbook mainly intended for courses for prospective and in-service KFL teachers,” while Byon and Pyun (2022) collected studies conducted in a KSL (Korean

as a second language) setting more broadly. Despite the increased attention to KFL (Korean as a foreign language), one can hardly find a book that exclusively focuses on Korean language learning from sociolinguistic perspectives.

In learning foreign languages, it is not only the acquisition of linguistic competence but also of sociopragmatic competence that is crucial for successful learning; this has been well documented and supported in second language acquisition research in general. In addition, there are many variables that affect the acquisition as well as use of a given language in a social context. The goal of this edited volume is to present original research conducted on various aspects of sociolinguistics and Korean language pedagogy and thereby help readers deepen their understanding of these topics as they relate to KSL/KFL.

The twelve chapters included in this volume examine a wide array of topics broadly related to sociolinguistic aspects of Korean language use and Korean language education. Research foci also vary: some are critical reviews of the topic under discussion, some are data-driven empirical, analytical studies, and others are geared more toward curriculum development. They are written by renowned scholars in Korean language education in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

One of the most notable phenomena in the use of the Korean language in recent years, particularly by young generations, is making new words and/or shortening the form of words or expressions. This trend is so prevalent that it can cause lack of communication or miscommunication between older generations and younger generations. The reasons behind this trend and mechanisms of new words formation and shortening are crucial to understanding this type of communication. Neologisms are by-products of the society as they reflect societal issues prevalent at any given time period. A substantial number of new words have been created over the past several decades and are widely used in Korean society. In the chapter "Using Neologisms to Reflect on Contemporary Korean Society and Culture: A Pedagogical Approach in an Advanced Class," Eunae Kim explores the potential benefits of using neologisms in advanced-level Korean language classrooms. This chapter specifically examines Korean neologisms between the 1990s and the 2020s and offers insight to help students better understand Korean culture and society during this time period through learning about newly coined words and what they tell us

ONE

Hallyu and Korean Language Education

Linking Language Learning and Pop Culture

SANG YEE CHEON

1. Introduction

In this digitalized and global era, with the ongoing development of technology and media, people are naturally exposed to the pop cultures of different countries. Language learners are inevitably influenced by the pop culture of their target languages. Accordingly, linking language learning and pop culture can enhance foreign language education and yield better learning outcomes or higher proficiency improvement (Choi & Yi, 2012; Jung & Crookes, 2021; Pai & Duff, 2021; Jung et al., 2022).

According to the most recent “Duolingo Language Report” (Blanco, 2022), Korean is one of the fastest-growing languages on the Duolingo app. The Modern Language Association’s 2023 report on 2021 fall language enrollment data also revealed that Korean enrollments in the United States have grown remarkably consistently while most foreign language enrollments have decreased in recent years (Lusin et al., 2023, p. 5). As predicted, both reports state that the global popularity of Korean popular culture is one of the motivations or reasons why (young) language learners became more interested in the Korean language over time.

The current study explores how Korean pop culture has been integrated into Korean language higher education, particularly in the Korean Flagship program at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM), where Korean pop culture has been included in curriculum development,

TWO

Korean as a Non-Native Language in Use

*Exploring Beliefs, Emotions, and Identities among
International Students in South Korea*

ROBERT J. FOUSSER

1. Introduction

The 1990s saw a “social turn” in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and language education research (Atkinson, 2011; Block, 2003; Firth & Wagner 1997; Steffenson & Kramersch, 2017). Spreading globalization stimulated the growth of English as a Second Language (ESL) as a global educational project, which, over time, stirred critical discussions of identity issues, such as diaspora, gender, and postcolonialism, in second language learning. Following the social turn in general linguistics in the 1960s, the social turn in SLA shifted the focus of discussion away from linguistically defined groups in social isolation to individuals in social situations in society. As Firth and Wagner stated: “Language is not only a cognitive phenomenon, the product of the individual’s brain; it is also fundamentally asocial phenomenon, acquired and used interactively, in a variety of contexts for myriad practical purposes” (1997, p. 296). The shift has resulted in a growing body of research on individual learner beliefs about identity and the social forces that influence its creation and development (Block, 2014; Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton, 2013; Riley, 2006). The social turn also contributed to a growing interest in researching beliefs about identity in complex multilingual and multicultural contexts, which has helped yield a deeper understanding of how the target language affects beliefs (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Duff, 2019).

THREE

Diversity and Inclusion in Korean Language Education

Teachers' Perspectives

MIHYON JEON

1. Introduction

“Diversity” in almost all aspects of life is a contemporary social reality.¹ Korean language classrooms are no exception to this reality, especially as Korean language learning has gained global popularity in recent years. Korean language learners with diverse sociocultural, linguistic, and ethno-racial backgrounds have notably increased. As the multilingual and multicultural nature of language classrooms has become more prominent, increasing diversity operates at multiple levels in the classroom dynamics, encompassing more complex language practices (Scarino, 2022).

Given the greater number of learners with highly diverse sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds, a fundamental transformation in Korean language education is necessary. This shift should steer away from focusing solely on developing language proficiency in Korean toward more multilingual and intercultural orientations. This shift includes the reconceptualization of language from a linguistic code to a means for exchanging meaning through understanding the meaning-making process (Kramsch, 2006) in multiple languages and cultures. Accordingly, it involves an

¹ In this chapter, diversity is defined as “characteristics that can affect the specific ways in which developmental potential and learning are realised, including cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious and socio-economic differences” (Burns & Shadoian-Gersing, 2010).

FOUR

Using Neologisms to Reflect on Contemporary Korean Society and Culture

A Pedagogical Approach in an Advanced Class

EUNAE KIM

1. Introduction

Although a myriad of neologisms are created and forgotten every year, some of them (e.g., *wangtta* 왕따, “bully,” and *nwulikkwun* 누리꾼, “netizen”) stand the test of time and are eventually registered in the National Institute of Korean Language’s Standard Korean Language Dictionary (Jeong, 2017). For instance, a total of 342 new words appeared more than three times in online media from July 2018 to June 2019 (National Institute of the Korean Language, 2019). As neologisms are deeply embedded in Korean language society, it is natural for foreign language learners, especially those at an advanced level, to be interested in learning the meanings of neologisms in Korean as a Foreign Language (KFL) classes to better understand conversations and participate in interactions (Jeon, 2018). This chapter, however, highlights neologisms that harness deeper values than simple communicative competence. As neologisms reflect society, lifestyle, and people (Lee, 2012), they can be an excellent medium for language learners to learn social, cultural, and political issues that were at the forefront of the time periods during which the words were created. This chapter recognizes neologisms from sociocultural perspectives and demonstrates how advanced KFL learners can gain a deeper understanding of the historical

FIVE

Korean Heritage Language Socialization and Transformative Language Learning through Heritage Language Instruction

HI-SUN KIM

1. Introduction

Heritage Language (HL) learners have been defined broadly by scholars in the field over the past decades as those (a) with early and significant exposure to heritage language in the home; (b) who have varying proficiency in the heritage language and thus are bilingual to some degree; (c) who are dominant in a language other than the heritage language; and (d) who have ethnic and cultural connections to the HL (e.g., Benmamoun, Montrul, & Polinsky, 2013; Polinsky, 2015; Polinsky & Kagan, 2007; Rothman & Treffers-Daller, 2014; Valdes, 2001). Van Deusen-Scholl (2003, p. 221) further points out that HL speakers are “a heterogeneous group ranging from fluent native speakers to non-native speakers who may be generations removed, but who may feel culturally connected to a language.” In recent years, Korean heritage speakers have certainly become more heterogeneous, with a broad range of proficiency in oral and literacy skills, as the next (third) generation of Korean heritage learners, who tend to have linguistic characteristics closer to non-heritage second language (L2) learners, have begun to enroll in Korean language classes. The learner demographics of Korean HL have evolved and continues to evolve, meaning that identifying Korean HL subgroups by their linguistic attributes and background is a crucial step in providing a more accurate representation of the HL development and language socialization of each subgroup for research and curricular design purposes (He, 2017).

Learner Profiles for Developing Korean Learner Corpora

SUN-HEE LEE

1. Introduction

The term corpus (pl. corpora) refers to electronic language data that record instances of spoken or written language. The Brown Corpus, the first modern corpus of English published in 1965, marked a significant milestone. Subsequent rapid developments in corpora through the 1980s culminated in a landmark publication in 1987 of the *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary*. Since then, corpus-based language studies and resources have grown exponentially and extended the influence of corpus-based methodology. Furthermore, over a few decades, learner corpus research has developed, which rigorously connects the interdisciplinary fields of linguistics, second language acquisition, and language teaching. Learner corpora provide authentic language samples that are representative and balanced based on clear design criteria, making significant contributions to the study of interlanguage and learner language. This chapter focuses on the variability in learner language and usability of corpora and corpus-based methodology to capture the connection between variables and regular patterns in learner language. The corpus-based studies acknowledge the importance of sophisticated variables in the meta-information and demonstrate how they are linked with regular patterns in language. In corpus linguistics, metadata represent learner background information and include variables collected from learners such as the learner's age, gender, proficiency level, and language background (Bell & Payant, 2020, p. 54).

This chapter addresses the usability of corpora and learner corpora in relevant research on learner language. While paying attention to the

SEVEN

Family Language Policies of Korean-Australian Intermarriage Families

DANIEL ROBERT MARSH AND SEONG-CHUL SHIN

1. Introduction

Language, as a communicative tool, binds communities together through the sharing of information as well as binding communities and identities through the sharing of the language itself. The people of Australia are bound by a common national identity, in which the establishment of English as the official language of the nation unites the people linguistically. This policy exists in a rather paradoxical relationship with the policy and national identity of “multiculturalism.” Multiculturalism is the cultural policy celebrating the diversity of the Australian population as a migrant country. The migrant population of Australia is made up of a variety of backgrounds, including the Korean-speaking population.¹

With the age of globalization, and the porousness of national borders, as well as the movement of populations across these borders, issues of nationalism and linguistic diversity become more apparent. There are many studies that have investigated the use of languages between couples and within the family unit. However, families with mixed cultural backgrounds are heavily underrepresented in the study of Family Language Policy (FLP), and there is a need to frame their use of language as a form

¹ By 2021, the total population of “Koreans” in Australia was 136,888 (ABS, 2022). New South Wales has the largest population of Koreans, who make up around 56 percent of the total Korean population in Australia. Koreans are a significant population in Sydney. If short-term residents and international students are included, it is informally estimated that there are approximately 150,000 speakers of Korean in Australia.

EIGHT

Gender Stereotypes in Korean as a Second or Foreign Language Textbooks

KYUWON MOON

1. Introduction

Gender disparities have emerged as a crucial social issue in South Korea in recent years. Despite increased discussions within and outside academic circles, South Korea remains among the countries with the lowest rankings in terms of gender equality. The World Economic Forum report in 2023 ranked South Korea at 105th out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index, a concerning placement for a country ranked 11th in global GDP. This striking disparity underscores the urgent need for gender equality.

The roots of gender inequality in South Korea are entrenched in social and cultural values historically influenced by Confucianism. The assigned role of women as primary caretakers and domestic support, lacking intellectual abilities, persists despite the absence of a noticeable gender gap in education, as indicated by equal literacy rates between men and women (World Economic Forum, 2023). Educators play a crucial role in challenging these societal norms and values, given that education significantly shapes individuals' perspectives.

Textbooks in education serve not only to impart subject-specific knowledge, such as teaching foreign languages or geography, but also to disseminate prevailing social and cultural values accepted in society. They act as windows to the broader world and wield considerable influence as primary educational materials, often accepted unquestioningly by students. In the context of foreign language textbooks, crucial in introducing students to new cultural norms and values beyond their own, encountering gender

Korean Language Maintenance and Shift in the English-Speaking World

A Review of Research

MI YUNG PARK, MIN JUNG JEE,
AND BETHANY WAUGH

1. Introduction

As a result of the rapid expansion of migration, transmigration, and human mobility, speakers of different languages in our increasingly globalized world live in constant contact with more than one language. These language contact situations, which Vertovec (2007) describes as “superdiverse,” evolve over time and inevitably bring changes to the linguistic and sociocultural behavior of people (Fishman, 2012). What results is a complex dynamic of language maintenance and shift, which particularly affects the linguistic and cultural identity of migrant communities. Thus, processes of language maintenance and shift are a central focus of sociolinguistic inquiry, especially in diasporic and transnational contexts.

The field of language maintenance, in the case of migrant communities, is concerned with the preservation of the minority language by its speakers in the face of constant contact with and pressure from another language, typically the surrounding majority language. According to Baker, language maintenance refers to “relative language stability in the number and distribution of its speakers, its proficient usage by children and adults, and its retention in specific domains (e.g., home, school, religion)” (2011, p. 72). In other words, language maintenance involves the continuous use

TEN

Program Design and the Development of Students' Intercultural Competence in Study Abroad in Korea

JAYOUNG SONG

1. Introduction

The relationship between language and culture learning has been documented in numerous studies (Kramersch, 2014). As Byram (1997) conceptualized, language ability extends beyond the mere exchange of information and communication in a second language (L2). It also involves the ability to relate to others by understanding the similarities and differences between one's own culture and other cultures. This view aligns with current trends in intercultural education within higher education (Taguchi & Collentine, 2018).

With the ever-growing need for students to be competitive in a globalized society, many higher education institutions are investing great efforts and resources to internationalize their curricula. This includes integrating foreign language learning as a crucial component of the internationalization process, enhancing students' ability to communicate effectively with peers worldwide, and promoting cultural understanding (Zhang & Zhou, 2019). It is reported that 85 percent of US universities have adopted intercultural competence as one of their primary learning goals (Stemler, Imada, & Sorkin, 2014). Additionally, intercultural knowledge and skills have been integrated into the learning outcomes of foreign language curricula (ACTFL, 2015).

Study abroad (SA) programs have become a cornerstone of this internationalization effort, offering significant advantages in terms of social

Teaching in a Time of Change

“Politeness Inflation” and Its Implications for Korean Language and Culture Education

HYE-SOOK WANG

1. Introduction

Language changes reflect social changes. Social changes push language changes. Which aspects of language are most susceptible to such changes? Are these changes short-lived or long-lasting? What factors influence the longevity of these changes? Do we need to pay attention to them as language teachers? Why or why not? These are some of the questions that might interest us, although they are quite common questions that many of us have been asking. Among various changes, changes in politeness behavior in general and the use of politeness forms and strategies (i.e., honorifics) in particular concern language instructors. This is particularly true with regard to languages that have a very sophisticated and elaborate system of politeness, such as Korean, and a society that is known to be highly stratified. Let us consider the following example of a communication between a researcher and an assistant for the professional organization for which the researcher is supposed to present a paper at an upcoming annual conference. Pay special attention to the underlined words:

선생님께서 혹시 시간이 더 필요하신 경우 여유를 두시고 진행해 주셔도 되
신다고 회장님께서 말씀하셨습니다. 원고가 힘드시면 PPT 자료를 내 주셔
도 괜찮으시다고 하십니다.

“If you need more time, you could proceed with more time,” said the president. “If it’s hard for you to submit the manuscript, it would be okay to submit a PPT file instead,” the president also said.”

A Review of Pragmatic Competence Studies in Korean Language Education for Native Speakers of English

SANG-SEOK YOON

1. Introduction

Learning a second/foreign language (L2) does not simply consist of learning words and grammar. It also requires learning how to express one's thoughts and feelings to others appropriately for successful communication. This leads us to L2 pragmatics,¹ which refers to the "study of the development and use of strategies for linguistic action by nonnative speakers" (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996, p. 150). To communicate effectively and appropriately with Korean native speakers (KNS), L2 Korean learners need to develop their ability to perform various communicative acts properly, such as making requests or apologies, refusing offers, addressing people, expressing (dis)agreement, and interacting with other people collaboratively.

Since the notion of communicative competence was introduced by Hymes (1972), much attention has been paid to how to communicate appropriately in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Bachman and Palmer (2010) subdivided communicative competence into two components: linguistic competence and pragmatic competence. While linguistic competence is about the system of language, pragmatic competence is about the use of it. Bachman (1990) emphasized that these two components are equally important and included "illocutionary competence" and

¹ In this chapter, L2 pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics will be considered synonymous.