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FIGHTING THE TIGHTROPE:
LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES, BALANCING ACTS,
AND FIGURES OF ELUSIVE MODERNITY IN SOUTH KOREA

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

There has been a growing interest in how local linguistic practices are being shaped by the global force of neoliberalism. Though it is a powerful paradigm, I hope to illuminate through this dissertation how neoliberalism alone is insufficient to be held accountable for the changing meanings of English in Korea, and how invoking the framework of language ideologies allows for a more complete analysis of language change. To this end, I explore the interconnectivity of neoliberalism, displays of consumption, and language change with a focus on gender. By tracing the uptake of a particular phoneme, I examine how speakers use phonological accuracy as a tool to construct new indexical orders by appropriating chronotopic symbols of the past, reinscribing gendered narratives of Korean womanhood as figures of successful or failed modernity. These associations provide a window into the reconfiguration of language ideologies surrounding English, as well as how a new global neoliberal order is melted into the pedestrian lives of locals.

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*Far and away the best prize that life offers is
the chance to work hard at work worth doing.*

- Theodore Roosevelt, September 7, 1903

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| CHAPTER 2: FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY..... | 9 |
| CHAPTER 3: NEOLIBERALISM AND LANGUAGE IN SOUTH KOREA..... | 19 |
| CHAPTER 4: WOMEN, CONSUMPTION, AND THE NATION..... | 30 |
| CHAPTER 5: THE HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF FOREIGNNESS..... | 53 |
| CHAPTER 6: MEDIATED IDEOLOGIES AND FIGURES OF FOREIGNNESS..... | 73 |
| CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION..... | 98 |
| REFERENCES..... | 100 |

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis is built upon two main ideas; that phonological changes are motivated by changing language ideologies, and that ideologies are in constant overlap, eclipsing one another to create complex renegotiations of meaning. In modern day Korea, a nation in which Korean is the sole national language and primary medium of communication, new phonemes influenced by foreign languages have found their way into Korean speech. Such practices create tensions within the society as they are scaled (Blommaert 2007) upon axes of differentiation (Irvine & Gal 2000). By examining the pathways (Wortham & Reyes 2015) through which these tensions arise, I claim that the foreignness is but a veneer, and that language ideologies linked to widely recognized chronotopes (Agha 2007c) and figures of personhood (Agha 2011b, Goffman 1974) are the true source of the conflict.

Multilingualism in Korea is not new. Contrary to the nickname ‘the hermit kingdom’ that Korea gained from attempting to close off its gates to foreign nations through the late 19th century policy of diplomatic isolation, Korea has always been in active trade relations with other neighboring nations. Chinese, Mongolian, and Japanese were used by envoys and emissaries, and some Korean scholars even suggest that the Korean alphabet was created with the additional purpose of clarifying Chinese phonology for them (Kim H. S. 2014). Even among the general population, many dialects evolved due to the mountainous terrain of the peninsula. Also, during the Japanese annexation of Korea (1919-1945), Japanese was forced upon the people as the “national language,” and used chiefly for communication and education. Today, Japanese is nowhere to be found in the everyday speech of the modern Korean, and has once again become a foreign

language. Amazingly, through all the foreign influence, this is the first time since the creation of the Korean alphabet in 1443 that the language is actually gaining new consonants, leaving the people in an orthographical conundrum. What could be the reason behind this monumental change in ideas and practices, and how is it meaningful to the Koreans who choose to use, or not use, these foreign phonemes?

With the birth of a new nation, education was touted as a means of social mobility. Especially key in this discourse was the construction of English as a tool for modernization of both the self and the nation (Park and Lo 2012). Hence, languages (i.e., Korean, Japanese, English, and as of late, other languages including French and Spanish) come to be symbolized in a meaningful way to a certain group of listening subjects (Inoue 2006) through their linguistic practices. As in the case of English in Korea, English and English phonemes gain symbolic meaning as they come to be emblematic (Agha 2005) of a specific group, such as foreigners, *kyophos* (immigrants), expats, and study abroad returnees. In this sense, English used by a foreigner and English used by an ESA returnee can be understood differently even when the speech produced may be indistinguishable, or as being voiced (Bakhtin 1981) differently even when it is produced by the same individual depending upon how the individual positions himself in the conversation (Goffman 1972, Besnier 2011, Heller & Duchêne 2012, Lo & Kim forthcoming). As these emblems and their token types (Agha 2007b) are mapped onto *axes of differentiation* (Irvine & Gal 2000), they are endowed contrasting vector values that are historically and socially constructed.

For example, demonstrations of familiarity with English used to be perceived in a negative light due to conflicts with traditional Korean values calling for modesty. I identify this phenomenon as a result of a shift in language ideologies; Korean society is at a crossroads where the neoliberal necessity of self-promotion, consumerism, and individualism are beginning to precede traditional post-war ideologies of modesty, hard work, frugality, and nationalism. Women especially are being called out for their supposedly frivolous consumerism and shamed for letting down their countrymen who worked hard to modernize the nation, because of their language practices that associates them with shadowed figures of the past.

From this, we can locate Korean on one end of the axis, and English on the other. Likewise, many contrasting models can be created: the juxtaposition of “traditional” Korean vs. “modern” English (Lee 2005), patriotic male with military duties vs. unpatriotic female without military duties (Choo 2006), cosmopolitan global elite vs. “fake” hypercorrecting poser (Lo & Kim 2012, Kim 2015), the honorable Kileki Father deserving sympathy vs. immoral Kileki mother deserving criticism (Kim K. 2009), etc. These bifurcate and divisive valuations are socially constructed and circulated discursive formations that gain momentum with every use or dwindle in power as frequency drops. To make this argument, I recall Agha’s concept of *enregisterment*, the process through which particular linguistic forms and socially constructed meaning are interlinked (Agha 2003, 2007b).

Much work has been built upon Austin and Searle’s speech act theory, Saussure and Peirce’s signs, and Hymes and Gumperz’s theories of communicative competence towards analyzing language and interaction. The framework of language ideologies is a

vital basis for my research. The concept of indexicality has produced a rich vein of research since Silverstein's seminal works (1976, 1992, 2003) on 'orders of indexicality,' as we attempt to understand the process of how language is imbued with meaning and how that relationship comes to be reproduced and circulated in society.

At any given moment in any community of practice, there are various language ideologies that are in coexistent circulation with one another (Kroskrity 2000). These language ideologies often relate linguistic variation with social variation (Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity 1998; Gal and Irvine 1995). These phonemic variations also become linked to figures of personhood (Agha 2007a, 2011a) that are generated through this compounding of historical usage. Language cannot travel by itself in a vacuum, but always through a speaker or agent. These figures include the trendy modern cosmopolitan, the naïve and backwards expatriate who left Korea before the 1990's, or the neoliberal Korean businessman in the global arena, etc. As each speaker circulates new metapragmatic assessments, these new cultural frameworks are strengthened and validated, and propagated as socially sanctioned ideologies. By outlining the process of metapragmatic typification in which language is associated with persona, this dissertation will demonstrate how micro semiotic exchanges are layered and build up to construct macro language ideologies that change language in conjunction with historically constructed ideologies.

Using the concept of scales, I will demonstrate how successful speakers skillfully integrate phonemes, lexical items, and narrative to weave together a projection of authenticity (Wortham et al. 2011). A successful speaker not only manages one's own image or footing in a given interaction, but by the same token, is able to size up others by

incorporating models of personhood indexed through linguistic features as well as paralinguistic features such as linguistic practices, speaker image, voice quality, or spatial context (Bucholtz 2011, Inoue 2006, Irvine and Gal 2000).

Also, by applying scales alongside the concept of axis of differentiation, it becomes possible to understand how the same migrant can be seen in one context as a patriot whose time abroad has helped to develop the country, but in other contexts may be seen as disloyal to the nation, and how indexical values of demonstrations of oral proficiency in English come to be highly gendered and associated with typified figures of the past (Gal 2012, Irvine and Gal 2000).

My main concern in this work is not how English and its various forms are taken up by speakers who use it in South Korea. There are a plethora of studies from countless disciplines on the hegemonic status of English not in Korea alone, but around the world. Nor is this an account of the life cycle of loanwords, i.e. how loanwords found their way into Korean speech, or how they are categorized into borrowings, loanwords, calques, etc. My interest lies in tracking the social process of how the shifting and evolution of people's beliefs about language are able to change the acceptability of a foreign phoneme. Through consideration of the larger speech chain process, I wish to capture how chronotopic figures are created through the course of history, and how these figures are emblemized in social persons whose interactions transform traditional repertoires, enregistered values and identities, and eventually the linguistic field overall. The social domain of enregisterment is transformed by considering the larger speech chain process (Agha 2007c).

Through this dissertation, I hope to trace how the Korean people are using phonemic variation as a tool for identity formation. I look at how the manifestation of foreign influence went from a marker of snobbish, inappropriate flaunting to a marker of the cool, sophisticated, intellectual global citizen. In particular, I study how Koreans re-index certain phonemes and lexical items as old-fashioned, as well as how cosmopolitan identities are constructed against those figures who use (or are imagined to use) this style. I will also explore the way Koreans employ the style as a status symbol, effectively “doing being” a modern, global Korean citizen of the world.

Research Question

The skyrocketing status and importance of English in Korea has garnered much attention in the scholarly literature, but how has this language contact situation impacted the increasingly global language of Korean? There is a venerable plethora of studies regarding English loan words in Korean (Lee 2006, Nam 1994, Tranter 1997), and loanword phonology (De Jong & Cho 2012, Ha et al. 2009, Harkness 2012, Oh 1996), yet only a handful of studies have investigated its effect on the Korean spoken language itself in popular discourse beyond the scope of code-switching and loanwords. Hence, this dissertation seeks to investigate the following research questions:

1. How have ideologies regarding English (i.e., the language’s phonetic features and indexical values) in Korea been impacted by neoliberalism in the aftermath of the IMF financial crisis, and in turn reshaped the Korean language?

2. How do historically and sociotemporally constructed figures of personhood gain momentum, and become associated with bifurcate ideologies of personae and their enregistered (Agha 2005) speech?
3. How do particular phonemes and lexical items come to be understood as “foreign” and interlinked with discourses of gender and social power?
4. How are some discourses reified and redistributed as “authentic” and “legitimate” while other voices are silenced (Gal 1991)?

Organization

This dissertation explores modern Korean usage of loaned phonemes, words, and phrases from English and other languages, and the narratives constructed from its usage as pertaining to gender. I first start out by introducing the phenomenon in Chapter 1, and lay out the theoretical concepts that are necessary for an analysis of language use along with the methodology for my inquiry in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 gives an overview of neoliberalism and language in Korea, followed by identification of gender as a key factor in this discourse. In Chapter 4, two ideologies of consumption and betraying the nation are discussed as reasons for past and current tensions. Chapter 5 is a chronotopic exploration of how each phoneme came to be associated with a particular period in Korea’s modern history. Chapter 6 reveals the construction process of different models of personhood (Agha 2003) and their emblematic phonemic counterparts, focusing on relationships of power and consumption in mediatized discourses, and Chapter 7 is a discourse analysis demonstrating how these figures are reinforced, reproduced, and disseminated in actual interactions. The final chapter provides a synthesized discussion of

my findings in lieu with larger issues in the field of linguistics, linguistic anthropology, and education.

CHAPTER 2: FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

As social beings, we have a set of predetermined social identities. We are the son or daughter of so and so; we are born to a certain citizenship; and with a preset biologic ethnic background (that differs from the social construction of race and ethnicity). As we mature to become independent human beings in society, we amass a manufactured social identity that is the collection of personal and environmental choices. We receive education, form social networks, and affect others around us in accordance with our upbringing and adult influences. Through speech, we consciously and unconsciously adopt an identity that others can understand and identify, through their own understanding of the world. In other words, the use of language makes each speaker an index that can then be associated with figures in the symbolic order of the transsubjective world of the listener (Lacan 1989:265).

Structural anthropologists and linguists once believed that people spoke in ways that reflected their own social identities. The primary focus was on discovering correlations between particular groups of people and the linguistic structures they used, accepting the production by an individual to be representative of a ‘speech community.’ Labov’s seminal study linking the language change of Martha’s Vineyard islanders with their attitudes and identities set off a mountain of literature that associated language practices with speech communities (Labov 1972). Eckert’s ethnography of students in Detroit follows students as they create social groups to segregate themselves into categories such as ‘jocks’ and ‘burnouts (Eckert 2008).’ These essentializations are created through the recognition and indexification of group styles, which include manners of dressing, non-verbal cues, phonological variations, etc. As these stylizations continue,

interesting social phenomena unfold: students self-identify with a certain group while labeling others, orient their actions to ideas that they form about how members of a particular group should act and dress, and based on these formed notions, identify other styles. Eckert claimed that the identification of social categories and naming practices reify the group as “sufficiently constituting community to develop a joint style, and as sufficiently salient to public life to name and learn to recognize (Eckert 2001:123). These reifications then serve as a basic resource upon which to build other styles and new communities.

Though the “jocks” and “burnouts” in Eckert’s study were the two most salient social groupings that she made the decision to focus on, her work recognizes the continuum of actors (e.g. the “in-betweens”) and various other identities that the teenagers identified with as they navigated and plotted themselves and others in their social landscape. These pioneer studies relied on essentialism, which dictates that “the attributes and behavior of socially defined groups can be determined and explained by reference to cultural and/or biological characteristics believed to be inherent to the group (Bucholtz 2003). Two assumptions must be made for this position to work: that it is possible to clearly delimit each group, and that group members share a homogeneity in regards to the particular characteristic under scrutiny. Now people are obviously not homogenous, and neither is meaning. Contemporary variationist scholars now recognize that meaning is not simplistic and one-dimensional; it can also vary greatly among speakers, and also among various contexts (Bucholtz 2011, Mendoza-Denton 2008). Though Saussure identifies a signifier and its corresponding signified meaning, what is meant by one person may differ dramatically from its uptake by another. In his critique of

one-dimensional models of meaning (Silverstein 1992:57), Silverstein presents a multidimensional view of interaction, in which communicative behavior relies on inseparable pragmatic and metapragmatic aspects, thus highlighting the notion of indexicality.

Once scholars moved beyond the simplistic dichotomy of making broad, direct correlations between linguistic variables and macro-sociological categories, indexicality takes center stage as the focus shifted to the identification of contextually contingent meanings and social positioning through symbolic capital expressed via linguistic variation. In this tradition, language change was not automatically linked with a particular demographic category divided by factors such as sex, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, geographical location of residence/origin, or political alignment, but thought to index social categories in an indirect way by identifying associations that people made with those who were thought to be members of these groups.

Yet this is not enough to capture the ever-changing, dialectic nature of speech and meaning. A new lineage of scholars seek the answer by addressing indexicality – “language ideologically “loaded” semiotic features (indexicals) come in as a “translocal” but “locally” enacted layer of *historical* meaning (Blommaert 2015).” Silverstein’s orders of indexicality makes it possible to relate the micro- to the macro- in a dialectical manner, linking different semiotic dimensions to one another to capture the process of semiotic construction and historical condensation of meaning. Blommaert argues that by acknowledging the historical conventionalization of metapragmatically attributed meanings, or *tropes* (Silverstein 1992; Agha 2005), we can track the shifting of meanings that occur in different contexts. In doing so, the historical dimension of language is

emphasized and presented as a solution for the macro-micro divide, since “the interstices between distinct “levels” of context disappear because each “local” (micro) act of contextualization operates by means of locally (in)validated invocations of “translocal” (macro) meanings. In this sense, studies situated in micro/local contexts can claim to be meaningful in the macro/translocal context, as they are necessarily interlinked, one constructing and ratifying the other’s existence. Also, to return to Silverstein’s multidimensional model of meaning, we can understand that meaning is built into a complicated historical network of semiosis that is a “multidimensional package of effects, some of which are “locally enacted and others occurring later in forms of re-entexualization (Silverstein & Urban 1996). What is “taken along” from one semiotic event is “brought along” into the next one (Blommaert 2015).”

Hence, in the constructionist view, language variation is understood as a tool for the creation of social identities. In this school of thought, both the speaker and the listener are engaged in an active process of meaning building. When we speak in a certain way that is associated with a particular group, we are *voicing* (Bakhtin 1981) our identities through a performance of typified personae (built up from historical and social usage), which is understood by others in the way that they comprehend the world. This process of *enregisterment* (Agha 2003, 2005) is used not only to categorize ourselves and guide our actions, but also to make sense of the people and the speech environment around us as we navigate our social world. The manifestation of one’s social identity is not limited to language, but created through multiple channels, such as demeanor, grooming, manners, style of dress, material possessions, etc. These *emblems*, or as Agha defines them, “a thing to which a social persona is attached (Agha 2007b: 253),” allows us to position

figures according to our own ideologies and understandings of the world. Speakers and listeners alike are able to communicate by relying upon a shared knowledge of the world; each instance of communication becomes a process of verification and ratification, as well as a compilation of meaning. Thus, scholars began to work with the effects of meaning, or the second- or higher indexical order rather than structuralist scholars who focused more on what the speaker and listener intended (first indexical orders), opening up new ways of analyzing semiosis.

The Role of the Researcher

In a handbook chapter devoted to the work of Labov, Hazen begins the chapter by outlining the sociolinguist's birth and personal background, because the researcher's background plays a role in understanding how his research came to be shaped. Though the researcher must strive to be as neutral and objective as possible, the *observer's paradox* (Labov 1972) outlines the linguist as an obstacle to linguistic authenticity, as it is widely believed that the presence of the ethical researcher will necessarily have an impact on the production of "authentic" speech, even when elicited from the most "authentic" speaker.

While investigating the pursuit of "real language" by sociolinguists who strive to empirically study "the systematic use of language by social actors in social situations (Bucholtz 2003)," against the idealism of the Chomskyan paradigm, Bucholtz identifies three ideologies of linguistic authenticity in sociolinguistics. The ideology of linguistic isolationism holds that "the most authentic language is removed from and unaffected by other influences, and thus the most authentic speaker belongs to a well-defined, static,

and relatively homogeneous social grouping that is closed to the outside (Bucholtz 2003:404).” We saw above that this concept, while an important underlying notion, is now *eclipsed* by others in the linguistic anthropological tradition. The second ideology identified, linguistic mundaneness, says that “the most authentic language is ... unremarkable, commonplace, everyday.” Ethical concerns prohibit the modern conscientious researcher from “capturing” this “elusive” language, hence such language is all but accessible. I attempt to address this issue by taking the bulk of my data from mediatized sources of speech, opting to trade the agenda of the producer and the influence of the film set for my own. Instead of a controlled research situation, I gain the “natural” production setting and atmosphere in which the actors, talk show guests, press journalists, or online writers go about their daily routines without being influenced by my presence. Speakers are in their “natural” environment without being taken out into a forced research situation, effectively removing at least one layer of the observer’s paradox. Moreover, this data selection allows me to focus on the authentic voicing of the speakers and its social and historical construction as authentic, and the public endowment of power and reification that occurs as this speech is mediated.

Even more applicable in qualitative research, the researcher is as much of a part of the inquiry as the participants themselves in immersive ethnographic work (Briggs 1986). Though removed from production, my identity plays a role in the third ideology identified; that of the linguist as an arbiter of authenticity. As the researcher, I have the final say on who is included in my study as an authentic speaker and who is not, and what and what is not considered authentic speech to be incorporated in my data. Being a native speaker of Korean, I rely on my access to an emic perspective that comes from decades

of knowledge and experience in the community of practice of Korean to present what I feel is a representative slice of historical and socially contingent discourses, a privilege that is a highlight of my ethnographic inquiry. Now it is true that this may be a hindering fault that prohibits me from having an outsider viewpoint, or an objective opinion. To keep this at a minimum, I have consulted faculty members as well as other native speakers of English who are unfamiliar with the Korean language and Korean culture. This process not only improves the possibility of objective analysis, but also helped me notice things that I could have overlooked on my own.

Data

For my analysis, I draw upon a curated collection of mediatized portrayals, news articles, online discussion boards, interview data, and ethnographic data personally collected over a period of nine years. The genre of news articles and TV discourse is a mediatized metadiscourse in which English is assigned a market value in Korea, and formulated as an index of class and gender distinction. The archival data are representative slices of media; they are also sites where the social ideas of power, politics, standardization, privilege and inequality are regimented and reproduced. The overlapping of these social sites is important in demonstrating the layering effect of the circulation of ideologies.

In essence, I aim to divulge to the reader the many mediums an ordinary person in Korea living in Korea would be exposed to. To achieve this goal, it is insufficient to use data from a few select sources. I felt that a broad approach was necessary to cover multiple facets of the phenomenon. As this study hopes to capture the most up-to-date

usage of English in Korean society and its media representation, efforts will be made to include speech data from a variety of registers.

My data for the main analysis will come from two primary sources: TV dramas and print ads. TV dramas have been chosen for their availability and representativeness of the contemporary culture, as well as being a multi-modal media. Once the dissertation is written, it may be deemed that in-depth interviews may be beneficial for further evidence of related language ideologies, but as for now interviews will be excluded. Instead of working with proprietary data, I have selected to analyze popular media that is publicly available for their objectivity and reliability. We do not reasonably expect individuals to have picked a category and watched all episodes of a certain show, or a particular genre, or shows pertaining to a certain theme. Moreover, it would be absurd to even imagine that one person could possibly watch all TV shows of any given period in time. I chose my data set the same way any other person would; I watched what is interesting for me, as a 25-35 year-old Korean-American woman. Sometimes I watched shows I chose on my own, sometimes the selection was made by someone else; a friend, family member, or guest/host; all fluent speakers of Korean. Selection criteria included personal interest, recommendations by word of mouth, mediated advertisements (both audiovisual content and online publications), and popularity as reported by both network ratings and gossip.

The reasons for choosing TV dramas are multifold. Dramas occupy a huge part of Korean life, and are among the strongest of moving forces in popular culture. Prior to the 1990s, South Korea's main export product was manufactured goods. In May 1994, a report was released by the Korean Presidential Advisory Board on Science and

Technology to argue for the promotion of digital technology, which was a pivotal point in the country's history for the shift to a booming entertainment industry. Nowadays, film and TV dramas are a prominent export for Korea, accompanied by high domestic consumption rates. This development in the audiovisual industry strongly influences the daily lives of people as a key form of media, a site through which ideologies are disseminated and reproduced. Televised dramas, especially those aired during prime time and with higher ratings, may be a rich source of linguistic data as a reflection of both how modern Koreans speak, and how modern Koreans hope to speak, or at the very least imagine themselves as speaking. It is a reflection of how contemporary Koreans speak because the actors themselves are of modern Koreans, and though they may vary their speech style slightly to better portray the character that they are playing, much of the phonetic production will be authentic to the actor. That said, it is also a reflection of how the community imagines contemporary Koreans to speak, because the characters can be understood as portrayals of popular figures of personhood (Agha 2003; 2007b; 2011b, Wortham et al. 2011).

Due to the historical nature of the research, examination of existing records is especially superior to other methods of qualitative inquiry such as focus groups or observations for example; the former has a significant chance of being influenced by modern experience and sentimental recollection, and the latter being physically impossible.

Measures were taken to ensure objectivity as much as possible. Online blogs and user-made video content, though referenced, were not relied upon as a main source of data. The personal aspect of private blogs makes them a double-sided sword as a source

of digital ethnography. The private nature means the topic arose from a voluntary and a genuine interest, which increases validity of the site. However, because the narrative may reflect an intensely personal and independently held viewpoint, it should be interpreted with caution with the understanding that the opinions presented as mainstream may in fact be only the opinion of the author. On the other hand, with online forums, the burden of content creation is shared with multiple other users rather than the blog owner alone. This aspect also has its positive and negative sides. The negative side is that the content is generally brief, limiting deep insight; the onus of interpretation befalls the researcher then to decide whether or not to take the content at face value. The positive is that they are also volunteered and authentic, as speech that is not elicited by the researcher but prompted from “naturally occurring” conversation. They also have censorship built in, where dissident or socially non-conforming claims by members can be argued by other members. That said, bandwagoning does happen, so the ethnographer’s filter of assessment and evaluation is called upon when trying to understand whether the responses are justified, or there is some other reason.

I focus on televised and printed advertisements regarding fashion, food culture, and other imported goods, because of their likeliness to have high occurrences of foreign phonemes due to direct borrowings and the salience of words containing them. Using this set of data, I will employ a mixed methods approach to strengthen the validity of the results using triangulation of the data collected. The data presented in this thesis was collected over the span of seven research trips to South Korea between 2006 and 2017.

CHAPTER 3: NEOLIBERALISM AND LANGUAGE IN SOUTH KOREA

This chapter follows the rise of neoliberalism in South Korea and the effects it has in relation to language and society. The first decade of the new millennium in Korea was awash in wave of neoliberalism (Piller and Cho 2013). Political struggle over crisis discourse and management lead to the selection and reinforcement of neoliberal attitudes (Ji 2013), which in turn raised a generation who place the utmost importance in “spec.” The term *spec* was coined in the mid-2000’s; circulating first among college students, then picked up immediately by the media. An abbreviation of the word “specifications,” it is the likening of the self to the detailed list of features used to describe electronics, such as computers. The neoliberal worldview is evident from the creation of the list to compare and select between viable competitors; just as one would select the product with more perceived value for the same price when shopping, the potential future employer is imagined to do with applicants for a job (Urcholi 2008). Therefore, students became increasingly centered on accumulating specs as a way to ensure a better future, and English became an important factor in beefing up specs at this time. Studying abroad becomes recognized as a sure-fire way to stand out in terms of ‘specs’ because of the notion that “real” English is attained outside of the realm of Korea.

Neoliberal Korea

As a nation, South Korea has come far in terms of economic development, owing in large to the quality of its human resources. The land was in ruin after emancipation from the annexation to Japan in 1945, with the destitution only compounded by the

Korean War that ended in 1953. The government devoted its efforts entirely into rebuilding the nation, in the psychological sense as much as the physical infrastructure. In the process, discourses of hard work, frugality, and nationalism were indoctrinated as commendable. Proliferate were vignettes of the hungry yet diligent student achieving success through assiduous industry, or the eldest sister who sacrificed her education working at a factory to support the tuition of her brothers. These tales demonstrate the high public interest in the pursuit of education, as a means of delivering the family out of poverty into a comfortable and honorable middle class life. The promise of social mobility was presented as a goal worth enduring hardship for. Also prominent was the account of the selfless miners and nurses who were deployed to Germany to bring in valuable foreign currency to fuel the domestic economy, suffering through horrific living conditions and labor for the noble cause of the good of the homeland. These stories relay how individuals were indoctrinated to suppress the individual and patiently withhold needs, wants, and comfort for the welfare of the society as a whole, whether it was for the family on a micro scale to the nation and mankind on the macro.

Values that countered these notions were scaled as detrimental to the nation: wastefulness, feckless displays of affluence, and tarnishing the name of the nation. Expressions of individuality were frowned upon, as it was equated with a disregard for the social norm of collectivity and as a threat to the mantra of the greater good mentioned above. Foreign manufactured goods held an especially contradictory positioning. They were on the one hand much desired since they were known to be superior in quality, but framed as a domestic leaking of foreign currency. As domestic production of modern products increased, the ideology of “our products are best for us (‘우리 것이 최고야’)”

was promoted both by commercial manufacturers and the government alike, to encourage the consumption of Korean products. In this light, people who sought after foreign goods were framed as selfish indulgers who put personal priorities above that of the nation, and thus became a liability to the entire population. By associating the negativity of foreign goods with figures of foreign consumption, a longing for Western products and culture. Abelman succinctly captures these ambiguous feelings as a “longing and disdain” (Abelman and Lie 1995:62). These ideologies are still very much alive in Korea, especially among the older generations.

The onset of neoliberalism in the past few decades saw the rise of some newer ideologies. Lim and Jang (2006) identify the globalization (*seykyeyhwa*) and internationalization (*kwukceyhwa*) policies of President Kim Young-sam’s cabinet (1993-1998) as hasty half-baked policies that led to the IMF financial crisis in 1997 that were nevertheless important in bringing a sweeping transformation to the whole of Korean society.

Globalization is the shortcut which will lead us to building a first-class country in the 21st century. This is why I revealed my plan for globalization [...] It is aimed at realizing globalization in all sectors — politics, foreign affairs, economy, society, education, culture and sports. To this end, it is necessary to enhance our viewpoints, way of thinking, system and practices to the world class level [...] We have no choice other than this (*Korea Times*, January 7, 1995)

This excerpt from a speech by President Kim shows how globalization was equated with new ways of thinking, scaled against the strict military regime of the previous decades. The government promoted globalization as a panacea to the malpractices of Korea's past. The reality was that the depletion of foreign currency reserves led to intense "market-oriented" structural reformations that saw mass layoffs. Faced with contradictions to the life-long model of employment, people experienced first hand Bourdieu's hysteresis effect as their habitus failed to carry them through the changing times (Bourdieu 1977). Adapting to a new neoliberal social order, a culture of free for all competition was born.

As competition became a way of life, self-promotion became not only necessary, but also highly desirable. The figure of the modern cosmopolitan elite exudes confidence, modernity, and professionalism through emblems that include demonstrations of English abilities. This may include fluent swaths of spoken English, American exertions and exclamations, and English pronunciation of loan words inserted into Korean. Many of these practices have been normalized and picked up by the general Korean population, including interjections: "oh my god"; epithets: "honey," "baby," "darling" (Park 2004); and insertion of foreign phonemes.

However, forthright promotion of the self lands one squarely in a conundrum from a conflict with existing habitus (Bourdieu 1977); self-promotion is in direct contrast to the traditional value of modesty, practiced through self-deflection (Park 2008). Thus, figures that do not display modesty are problematized. For example, the *colpwu* 'nouveau-riche' figure carries negative connotations due to his inappropriately

unreserved display of newfound wealth. The orange-*cok* ‘orange tribe’¹ (Connor 2009) were also censured for unrestrained spending and leaking hard-earned dollars out of the country through their consumption of foreign goods, when in hindsight, what they did is nothing out of the ordinary today in Korea as a result of renewed free trade agreements. A key factor in the criticism of orange-*cok* is the idea that they failed to acquire skills that are beneficial to the nation, which was reframed in the 2000s and they were reassessed as global leaders once spoken English became highlighted as a useful skill.

Scholarly work on international and biracial adoptees (Kim 2010, Park Nelson 2016) point out the changed attitudes towards these figures owing to the reindexation of English, especially spoken English in the post-IMF era. Once considered unfortunate outsiders of mainstream Korean society, adoptees were promptly reassessed at the turn of the century as global citizens with powerful potential due to their fluent language abilities. This reassessment was possible through the rescaling of English as a sign of neoliberal success, recalibrating adoptees as flexible citizens (Ong 1999, 2006) who are able to fly the Korean flag as they successfully navigate the world. The fact that many of them could not speak Korean let alone identify themselves as anything more than ethnically Korean - as well as being foreign citizens officially on paper - was erased from these narratives, as they were hailed as heroes to represent Korea in the international arena. These flexible

¹ -*cok* is a suffix meaning ‘clan’ or ‘brood’. Orange-*cok* is the term coined to refer to the materialistic, individualist youth armed with purchasing power in the late 1980s to the early 1990s. Connor (2009) claims that they were named “for the liberal lifestyle they pursued and because young women of this group could be enticed by oranges and expensive cars.” They were emblemized with oranges due to the fruit being unreasonably expensive in Korea at the time, along with bananas and other imported tropical fruit. There is also the metaphorical association of returnees coming back from the popular study abroad destination of California, which is famous for its oranges. The name captures the self-centeredness characteristic of the figure, as they were imagined to indulge themselves with overpriced luxuries solely for the sake of their own satisfaction.

readings of these dichotomized figures demonstrate the power of changing ideologies to frame the same people or indices in different ways, thus underscoring the importance of understanding language as it gets linked to figures.

English and its Indexical Values in South Korea

English as a marker of tenacity

While critiquing the treatment of capital as a singular notion, Bourdieu identifies four different types of capital: economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986). These four types of capital are essential currency for agents to properly function within a social field, in which they must demonstrate appropriate adherence to its rules and conditions in their daily practices.

Economic capital: tantamount to the material fortune a person possesses, i.e., the homologous capital discussed by traditional economists. It is the capital that is most easily converted to other capitals, as well as the most easily quantified. In a neoliberal society, these traits make it the most obvious and evidently visible form of capital.

Social capital: an individual's network of interpersonal relationships. Who you know, who you are related to can have very real consequences in a field, such as differences in access to other forms of capital. Nepotism is a prime example of exploiting social capital.

Cultural capital: the collection of cultural knowledge amassed by an individual that enable social mobility. Bourdieu differentiates between three forms: embodied, objectified, or institutional. Embodied (incorporated) capital is a robust system of dispositions, intellectual knowledge, cultivated tastes, and attitudes. The objectified form of cultural capital has a physical state, e.g. books, instruments, artwork, etc. The institutionalized form of cultural capital appears in a certificate of qualification issued by an institution. These institutions vary in their socially accepted prestige, and whereas culture cannot be compared in quality, institutionalized cultural capital may be comparable through the reputation of the institution that gives the degree.

Symbolic capital: encompasses the other three types of capital. It cannot exist by itself, but gains value only through the active recognition of it by other individuals in the field.

The notion of cultural capital is highly compatible with that of neoliberalism's meritocracy and agency, because it is the one type of capital that cannot be acquired for you by someone else. It requires labor, effort, and time on the part of the individual who wishes to accumulate more of it. In this sense, linguistic capital is a form of cultural capital that is understood as a product incorporated to the singular self through time-intensive labor. This aspect is highlighted when English is metapragmatically framed as a marker of tenacity, a virtue that is especially valued in traditional Korean educational and

workplace culture (Lo & Kim forthcoming). This ideology stems from the way English competency is commonly believed to be gained in the South Korean education system; as the end product of many long hours of dedicated study (Park 2010).

This particular vein of English should not be thought of as the vehicle of communication used in the English-speaking world. Rather, it is the knowledge of English grammar amassed through repetitive and thorough study of prescriptive grammar tomes. The most notorious and representative of these are the tomes *Sengmwun Kicho Yengmwunpup* (*Sengmwun Elementary English Grammar*) and *Sengmwun Chonghap Yenge* (*Sengmwun Comprehensive English*), first published in 1967. The series of books achieved iconic status as the English bible that every Korean high school student must know by heart, and infamy for making the easiest concept seem difficult. Essentially written in the same style, the books introduce a grammatical equation, then provide a string of example sentences along with (often faulty) Korean translations. The example sentences are old-fashioned English by any modern standard, and extremely formal. The author also prefers grammatically correct expressions over colloquially useful ones, for example, ‘It is I’ would be prescribed over the more frequently heard ‘It’s me.’ Changes in exam styles with the new *Swuhak nunglyek phyengka* (often shortened to *Swunung*) made such texts obsolete, and even subject to mocking for its cryptic and useless prescriptivism.

Swunung, or the College Scholastic Ability Test, is a test that Korean students take in November of each year, has been adapted since 1993 for the 1994 academic year. Mostly taken by high school students in their last year of study, the test measures scholastic aptitude and likelihood to academic success in college. It was introduced in

lieu of criticism of its predecessor the *Tayhak.iphak Hak.lyek.kosa* (shortened to *Haklyekkosa*), used from 1982 to 1993. The *Haklyekkosa* was disposed with for having too many subjects for which students had to rely mostly on rote memorization. The idea behind the *Swunung* system with only four integrated subjects of Korean, Mathematics, Social and Scientific Inquiry, and Foreign Language, was that it would supposedly encourage critical thinking. The new system brought a huge change in the way that the English was tested as a subject. Whereas prior generations dealt with fill-in-the-blank style questions where idioms and grammar played an important role, current generation students are required to have higher comprehension skills of academic passages that are much longer than before. The *Swunung* not only requires a thorough grasp of complex grammar, but also the ability to fully digest entire passages of academic text.

In spite of such changes, English learned from school is still considered English acquired for the sake of academic purposes, and not regarded as a true communicative tool. After graduating from high school with at least ten years of public English education under one's belt since the third grade, Koreans still turn towards private English education institutions called *hakwons* where they can take a variety of classes on more exam preparation for tests such as the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), and the IELTS (International English Language Testing System). Even then, what product they end up with is framed as a far cry from the most desirable varieties of English; *salaissun yenge* (living English) and *kokup yenge* (high class English).

Hence, this variety of English learned in Korea is more than a linguistic ability. The scores become a marker of how much time and effort was spent poring over books,

and the acquisition of English becomes equated with one's *willingness* to adhere to the traditional system and also the *ability* and *tenacity* to withstand such hardship. Park (2010) assesses this narrative and how it comes to be semiotically constructed in news media, promoting the figure of the successful language learner as emblematic of diligence, trustworthiness, and compliant acquiescence to Korea's hierarchical social structure and work culture. When these discourses become the dominant mainstream ideology, individuals who fail to conform to the norm are scaled against the successful language learner, marginalized and labeled with adjectives such as "incompetent," "lazy," and "unwise." Further fueling meritocracy are hundreds of early study abroad guidebooks that focus on the period spent abroad, highlighting the *time* that was spent in order to gain this capital (Kang and Abelmann 2013). Success stories of the elite use metapragmatic typification to link ownership of the commodity to notions of class and privilege, as well as certain prestigious occupational positions. Hence English is formulated as an instrument of class mobility (Abelmann, Park, and Kim 2009). Whereas traditional views of language learning dichotomized language learning in Korea as costing effort and labor, and language learning abroad as costing time taken away from Korean society, these narratives argue that language learning abroad is also as a feat of effort and agency by stressing the agentive pursuit of capital, a position that students had to take to learn English (Park 2010). In this light, English learned in Korea becomes *double-voiced* (Bakhtin [1935] 1981) as "uninspired," "unmotivated," and "unusable," as it is linked to the poor English of the learner who "chose" to remain in Korea. In this way, ideologies of language become multiple, complex, and contradictory ideologies of modernity (Bauman & Briggs 2003) as they are mapped onto models of personhood.

No doubt, anyone who is serious about learning a language presumably invests considerable amounts of both time and effort into the endeavor. Yet these language learners - who are ultimately after the same capital of “English” – are scaled as different people in pursuit of different goals. The same Korean person learning English is semiotically realigned and assigned different values linked with various figures of personhood, contingent upon the social situation and targeted audience. In the next section, let us see how they resort to the formation of personae, reclassification of spaces, various sets of emblems to demonstrate their identities, and also employ these semiotic tools to construct advantageous footings as they navigate the Korean linguascape (Pennycook 2003).

Yet because this type English is thought to have been acquired within Korea, it is not held in contest with the negative values associated with mobility. Further discussion on this ideology continues in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: WOMEN, CONSUMPTION, AND THE NATION

In the previous chapter I outlined how a new neoliberal order impacted South Korean society as a whole. We saw that with a new neoliberal order, self-promotion became inevitable, a culture of consumption was established, and displays of affluence were reassessed on the axis of differentiation. As the hegemonic status of English in Korea is established, I tighten the scope of inquiry to different models of personhood, especially those regarding women. In this chapter I examine how women were scapegoated in mediatized discourses of consumption.

Gender roles are an especially sensitive subject area in Korea, owing to factors such as traditional images of Confucian gender roles and segregating mandatory military service policies. Men are currently required to serve in the military for the duration of 18 months to 36 months and have limited traveling privileges without fulfilling the requirement before the age of 35, whereas women are exempt from service. As can be imagined, this is the source of much contention between the two genders, serving as the basis for men often being framed as more patriotic than women due to their selfless sacrifice in protecting the nation from enemies, both foreign and domestic.

Interestingly, many media sources point to the modern Korean transnational woman as a domestic threat while semiotically linking her with emblems of status, wealth, and consumption. Especially in these neoliberal times, women who flaunt their social positions or desires to be recognized as belonging to a certain class through their belongings and demeanor are sometimes lauded for their achievements and success, but at others mocked and criticize for their excessive spending (*kwasopi*) and for being

fixated on outwardly appearances (Nelson 2000). Why, and how, are men's displays of consumption and English read as refined and debonair, while women receive backlash for the same practices? How come, there isn't a figure or a TV show about the vacuous wastefulness of powerful Korean men, when most every show on TV has some depiction of the consuming female figure? Why is there so much *effort* spent on a national scale into framing women as vainglorious, gold-digging dilettantes who are obsessed with Western goods?

Mediatized portrayals of women construct them as excessive consumers of foreign products, who waste away the success built by men, past generations, and even other women. Women are problematized as traitors to the nation, in discourses of figures such as the Bean Paste Girl (*toyncangnye*) who is characterized by her unwise financial decision to scrimp on food and other necessities in exchange for visible luxuries such as Starbucks coffee, and the *Kileki Mother* (mother who stays with her children studying overseas while her husband remains in Korea working) who is imagined to spend her languid days shopping while her children are learning English abroad. I take the position that the size of the expenditure is not the problem here; but rather the idea that these women are 1) spending for the sake of showing off to others, thus challenging the traditional virtue of modesty and 2) indulging the self, in direct contrast to the self-sacrificing motherly woman figure. In doing so, the ideal of good citizenship surfaces as a common theme, and the locus of identity read as belonging outside of Korea is what is actually taken issue with. Women's consumption practices and demonstration of high levels of spoken English are disputed as they are linked with the threat to traditional ideas of Koreanness and of cultural and physical invasion from abroad.

The Bean Paste Girl

Confucian gender roles limit women to the domain of the home, as seen in the Korean words for 'wife': '*anay*,' '*ancwuin*,' and '*ansalam*.' These are all terms used for the woman of the house, where the 'an-' prefix means 'inside.' Notions of restricting women to the domicile sphere are openly recognized as medieval, patriarchal, and authoritarian, yet it is an ideology that is still widely practiced. When women leave the house, they open themselves up to blatant criticism and worry from family members, shaming from strangers, and in some extreme cases, even as inviting and deserving of rape.

In her study of the figure of the Bean Paste Girl (*toyncangnye*), Song (2014) suggests that the Soybean Paste Girl claims the café as a feminine space, where she is free to “challenge a concept of gendered modernity and even a form of liberation” from the codes of Confucian patriarchy. Yet this claim of liberation is a compromised form of liberation, as women end up receiving backlash for their “excessive” consumption practiced as a form of liberating resistance to the system.

The Bean Paste Girl is a figure that appeared in the South Korean blogosphere and media in the mid 2000s. Coined in Internet forums (most sources cite the DC Inside Gallery online forum as the origin) from misogynistic backlash against overspending women, the term is used to describe women who are considered to be excessively materialistic, doting on Western luxury items often beyond their financial means, relying upon the wealth of others to satisfy her material needs and rich tastes. Mediatized discourses linked her with emblems such as designer goods (*myengphwum*) and a paper

cup emblazoned with the Starbucks logo in particular. The Bean Paste Girl was imagined to scrimp on food or even skip meals, starving herself to save money to savor a cup of coffee that cost more than her meal. Rather than being called the Starbucks Girl, she was given the homey epithet of the Bean Paste Girl to maximize shaming potential. Soybean paste (*toyncang*) is infamous for its strong odor, and often compared with excrement for its similar coloring and texture. It also indexes a moral corruptness as well as imprudent foolishness from being featured in sayings such as “do you need to taste it to distinguish *toyncang* from dung? (똥인지 된장인지 짚어 먹어 봐야 아나),” or “can’t tell *toyncang* apart from dung (똥인지 된장인지 구분도 못 한다).” These sayings are used upon people lacking in insight, who do not have the common sense required to discern between two obviously different things that are superficially similar. Instead of being read as an expression of personal taste and preference, her choices of bagels and cream cheese or just a cup of coffee over a traditional Korean breakfast were scaled on an axis of citizenship, and the Bean Paste Girl was made commensurable with traitors who had betrayed the nation. While she could have been lauded for her penny-pinching frugality and determined tenacity to save up for large purchases she really wanted, and celebrated for claiming her neoliberal right to spend her rightfully earned money however she wished, the Bean Paste Girl was promptly framed as unwisely squandering money that was squeezed out of the thin pockets of those who cared for her enough to provide for her. Thus, the Bean Paste Girl is condemned as a woman who insists on frivolous spending to fulfill her desires for individuality and unrestrained consumption.

The Bean Paste Girl is not imagined to speak much English. Rather, because she is understood as a vacuous fake with little substance or skill, she is imagined with limited

knowledge of the neoliberal marker of English. What English she does use is an amalgam of low- to intermediate-level school English abetted with fragmented snippets of language picked up from product labels, magazines, and casual conversations. Hence her broken English is often typified as Konglish and understood as a second-order (Silverstein 2003) marker betraying her identity as a vain copy of the truly successful neoliberal elite woman. As a result of this emblem-token-type-ontology construction (Reyes 2017) the emblem of demonstration of English, especially spoken English due to its instantaneous identifiability and difficulty of acquisition, becomes a vital tool that can be relied upon to discern between the two token-type figures who otherwise share many *typical emblems* (Putnam 1975, Reyes 2004) such as luxury fashion items and well-coifed hair.

Toyncang is also recognized as an inherently Korean food item, serving as an iconized reminder that no matter how much she consumes Western goods, she will never escape her essentially Korean identity. Song reports of her participants taking issue with the opening of Starbucks in the historically symbolic neighborhood of Insatong in Seoul, as “an incursion or encroachment of US cultural imperialism and the erosion of traditional Korean culture.” Although there were already hundreds of Starbucks shops all over Korea, news of a new location in Insatong touched a nerve, causing fierce public uproar. To open a shop in Insatong against the strong public outcry, Starbucks acceded to the governmental policy of writing the store name in Korean script, allowing the store to write its trademarked name in Korean, leaving the public sated with the knowledge that it is the only store in the world with the name of the franchise written in its own script. From this point of view, Starbucks and coffee culture becomes indexical of much more

than an expensive cup of coffee; it brings up the question of gender and class disparities as well as who can openly claim to be a consumer of Western cultural experiences. Coffee is indexed as a foreign drink, coffee culture is framed as adoption of a foreign practice, and the coffee drinker comes to be understood as aligning with the foreign Other, choosing it as a new identity over Koreanness.

“Foreign” food, language, and citizenship

Coffee is especially foreign, and this aspect is duly problematized in the media as much as its foreign image is appropriated in commercials and ads. According to a study released by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA 2015), statistics indicate that the average Korean adult consumes 338 cups of coffee in a year, making “coffee” a high-frequency lexical item that occurs nearly daily for most, considering the social nature of the drink. This article is provocatively titled as “Coffee, eaten more than rice? ... yearly per person consumption 338 cups (밥보다 많이 먹는 커피? ... 1 인당 커피 소비량 年 338 잔)”

According to the data from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs on the 16th, coffee is the most frequently consumed food of single food items at 12.3 times a week, which is more frequent than napa cabbage kimchi (11.8 times) or cooked rice (7 times).

16일 농림축산식품부의 '가공식품 세분시장 현황조사' 자료에 따르면 커피는

단일 음식 중에서 주당 소비빈도가 12.3회로 가장 높은 품목으로

배추김치(11.8회), 쌀밥(7회) 보다도 더 자주 먹는 것으로 조사됐다.

The second sentence of this news article covering the report begins with the consumption of coffee compared with two food items: napa cabbage kimchi, and cooked rice. Not only are these two items staples of the Korean diet, but they are also symbolic of Korean heritage and pride. Through their juxtaposition against coffee at opposing poles of differentiation, coffee is made an indicator of foreignness. Its prominent position as the top consumed food item surpassing kimchi and rice creates a tension and a manufactured contextual “threat” to the Korean identity.

Such polarization is visually manifest in this display case of coffee and milk products. The photos below were taken from an ordinary mini-mart in Seoul. Note the type of products, and the language that the product names are written in.

Figure 4.1: Coffee display case in a convenience store in Seoul



The display contains 24 different coffee drinks and one type of bottled milk tea (the white bottle with the pink cap at the left end of the middle row). Without a single exception, there is some form of Romanized script prominently displayed on the packaging for all of these coffee drinks. Whether it is the brand of the product or the contents held within, coffee lingo is printed in English everywhere: “café latte,” “barista,” “cold brew,” “French cafe,” “White Chocolate Mocha,” “espresso,” and “skinny latte,” just to name a few. Here we can also see the recent trend of using loan words in or alongside their original form from the foreign language, understandable as an attempt to be orthographically as well as semiotically accurate as possible. In fact, it is hard to see any Korean at all on some of the cups, and the little Korean that is used is in considerably smaller font sizes across the board.

Just below the coffee section in the same display case, we face a completely different picture. Take a look:

Figure 4.2: Milk display case in a convenience store in Seoul



This bottom section contains an assortment of soymilk, milk products, yogurt drinks, juice, and a Korean rice drink. Where did all the English go? Why, it's in the top two rows on the Seoul milk cartons, showing us where the "coffee" milk is in smaller font, along with the considerably larger and visually attention-grabbing picture of coffee beans. In this section, Romanized script takes a decorative backseat. The only products it is used in with any real heft are the Ghana chocolate milk, Denmark yogurt, and Cold orange juice. Could it be a coincidence that the first two are geographically significant in the image construction of the product, and the latter the juice of a fruit whose name was under intense phonological scrutiny in Korea? I discuss 'orange' and its peculiar moment

in Korean linguistic history later (see further discussion in Kim J. 2015), but let us consider the geographical factor in more detail.

Seoul Milk, whose product is prominently featured in all four rows, is a well-loved staple in many Korean households. Seoul being the capital and most influential city in Korea, to bear its name as a trademark endorses it with a certain national pride. This is evident in the swirling blue and red *thaykuk* mark indexical of Korean heritage, proudly stamped in the top rightmost corner. To strengthen the nationalistic image, the use of English is minimized. On the other hand, chocolate is a foreign food item, and the country name of Ghana where chocolate is imagined to be produced (or where the cocoa nut farm might be) is used to mark it as foreign, hence ‘Ghana’ is written out in the language and script most often associated with foreignness: in this case, English.

‘Denmark milk’ is presumably written in English for the same reasons – to evoke the projection of Denmark’s reputation of excellent dairy products while distancing itself from negative associations with sketchy Korean or Chinese food preparation and distribution practices which are routinely aired out on TV exposés.

Indeed, food itself is often associated with global influence in South Korea, with a slew of unfamiliar dishes from foreign locales introduced to the public within the past two decades. A venerable explosion of global food has taken place in Korea, requiring diners to educate themselves beyond the familiar and traditional Korean cuisine with familiar Korean names. Factors such as long working hours, communal dining and drinking cultures, and the increasing number of women in the workforce have brought considerable development to the restaurant industry in Korea. Taking pictures of food and posting it on social media has become a familiar scene in Korea as it is in other

developed countries around the world, and the trope is widely recognized in media accordingly. Menus reflect the wider culinary choices made available through the free trade agreements and increasing travel abroad; as the Korean education market has been expanded and domesticated (Kang and Abelmann 2011, Koo 2015) to include studying abroad, so has the food industry. Dishes (i.e., tacos, pasta, barbeque, Indian curry, etc.) and ingredients (i.e., cilantro, saffron, Stilton cream, etc.) alike are commonly found in supermarkets and enjoyed by the masses beyond the many international fast food chains. This means not only is the food popularized, but also the foreign food names go from once exotic items to every day commodities as they are brought into the Korean language. Whereas there were efforts to nativize foreign names in the past, the loanwords these days aim to be an authentic carrier for the original language and culture. Hence the generation of people influenced by such a culture begins to incorporate foreign food names and product names into their language use, and this contact-induced change brings others to let down their guards against the use of foreign languages and phonemes.

Also, the knowledge of such food is accumulation of cultural capital, gained through repeated exposure and experience. Korean women who bear the bulk of the housework burden have more opportunities to access this register as a result of more exposure to it, yet in many cases their familiarity with these foreign food items or manufactured products is associated with indulgent spending and an alliance with the foreign when they may simply be choosing from the selection made available for them by stores.

Because domestic cooking is considered women's work in Korean culture, eating out equates a dereliction of duty, and constructed as women's consumption. When a

married man chooses to have meals outside with his coworkers, it is explained away as an extension of work, as unavoidable and obligatory “networking.” The same action, even when taken under by a woman who has a career of her own, could be (and often is) shamed as it becomes framed as a woman leaving her family by themselves to fend for their own while she “indulges” herself outside, unnecessarily spending money outside of the home, with the household funds “trickling out (*saynta*),” associated with the saying “going out (of the house) equals money spent (*cip nakamyen tonita* 집 나가면 돈이다).” Women are still expected to be guardians of the home, taking on the role of the domestic servant (Choo 2006) and the designers and managers of the children’s education (Ong 1999, Kang and Abelmann 2011). Time spent away from this domain is metapragmatically associated with negligence of the duties befitting these roles as these narratives are taken up and circulated across events and social domains (Agha and Wortham 2005, Wortham and Reyes 2015). Tropes of a wife cooking a huge pot of soup for her husband while she goes away on a trip (either for business or pleasure) are well recognizable and widely circulated, as can be seen in this online conversations in the replies made to a forum post title “Wife made bone soup~!! (와이프가 곰국을 했습니다~~!!)”:

Table 4.1: Bone soup post

| Original forum interaction in Korean | English Translation |
|--|---|
| <p>DENDOC 님</p> <p>와이프가 곰국을 했습니다~~!!</p> | <p>DENDOC posted</p> <p>Wife made bone soup~~!!</p> |

Table 4.1: Bone soup post (cont.)

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>빙그레바나나님 (2016-12-23 11:14) 이제 "데워먹어 나 잠깐 모임있어서" 콤보가 나올수 있습니다. ↳ DENDOC 님 (2016-12-23 11:20) 빙그레바나나님// 헉... 그게 더 최악이군요....</p> | <p>You can expect the “heat it up I’ll be right back” combo ↳ Oh... that’s even worse...</p> |
| <p>그물새 님 (2016-12-23 11:10) 할... 제목 보고 축하하려고 들어왔는데.... ㅠㅠ ↳ DENDOC 님 (2016-12-23 11:15) 그물새님// 저도 아침에 자기 어디가? 라고 물을 뵈</p> | <p>Whoa... I saw the title (of your post) and came in to congratulate you but ... ㅠㅠ* ↳ I almost asked her “are you going somewhere?” this morning too....</p> |

* The “ㅠㅠ” emoji represents falling tears in Korean, indicating sympathy.

(http://clien.net/cs2/bbs/board.php?bo_table=park&wr_id=51644133)

Bone soup has become construed as a marker emblematic of the woman leaving the home, whether it be for an afternoon’s outing or a longer period of time, such as a week or even a month, because it can be heated up again and again, only getting better in flavor with time as the broth requires many hours to cook. Instead of highlighting the adult male’s incompetence to feed himself, or praising her cooking skills or her preparedness before she leaves the house, the wife’s outing becomes augmented as the topic of these online conversations. Upon closer inspection, the Wife’s supposed outing

apparently hasn't even happened yet, nor is it clear if the Wife even really had an appointment or not, as the original poster does not make it known. In spite of this ontological fuzziness, the Wife is critiqued for leaving her station, without staying home to care for her husband. She is metapragmatically formulated and ratified through the online exchange into a woman who is eager to leave the home, abandon her family and responsibilities, only to enjoy hanging out with her friends and spend money. With men, there is no such similar discourse, nor figure; the man's duties, and spending by extension, are quietly erased.

Now remember that so far the figures I examined are just regular Korean women, shamed for putting her own desires (coffee for the Bean Paste Girl and the mysterious outing for the bone soup wife) before socially accepted morals and the good of others. These women are grounded in the Korean culture, someone that can be seen –and imagined to live – down the street, and understood as a domestic problem. The epitome of the woman leaving the husband to fend for himself with a pot of soup is the topic of our next examination, made all the more contestable and abominable because of the foreign aspect she brings into the equation as she is situated as external to the Korean nation: the Kileki Mother.

The Kileki Mother

The Kileki Mother has received much spotlight in the field of education (Abelmann & Kang 2011, Park and Abelmann 2004) and across the Korean media as well. A product of the wave of early study abroad in the early 2000s, this helicopter mom is imagined to spend her restless days at the golf course, congregating with other mothers

under the excuse of information sharing, and relieving loneliness through shopping. She is the recipient of much scrutiny as her activities are framed as “wasteful” and “indulgent” as they are constantly weighed against the labor of her children and husband who work and study “faithfully” to bring honor to the nation through their “constructive” behavior (Kim 2009, Nelson 2000).

The consuming and immoral figure of the Kileki Mother is brought to life by framing her against the woeful and noble figure of the father, selling his labor to support his family, trapped in a disintegrating model of family he did not bargain for. The figure of the father providing for the family is a stereotype familiar around the globe, but in this reiteration it is especially sore because he is framed to be “deserted” and “betrayed” by the very ones he worked so hard for. Left behind in Korea while the rest of his family “reaps the benefits” of globalization, the figure of the Kileki father is painted in a grievous light. The mothers are quick to be blamed for the dissolution and destruction of the family as a functional social unit (Park and Abelmann 2004), with news stories of depressed fathers who gain/lose weight from subsisting on fast food, and commit suicide (Ly 2005).

However, the condemnation of the Kileki Mother perpetuates another ideology, of expecting a woman to *sacrifice* for her family. The mother is expected to drop everything, pick up her family, and move, and continue to be loyal and servile. Self-sacrifice is a praise-worthy characteristic and expected of Korean women, especially of mother figures. When women do not adhere to this standard, they are problematized and framed with labels that side step the issue at core. Neoliberalism and its promotion of the self have raised an increasingly vocal generation of women who refuse to self-sacrifice

without a valid reason, hence bringing forth tension and anxiety in modern Korean society.

The figure of the Kileki Mother provides a scapegoat for this tension. Juxtaposed against the father's frugality and self-sacrifice, the mother is demonized as a woman who is obsessed with indulging herself, contradictory to the traditionally self-sacrificing motherly woman figure. Erased from this bifurcate construct is the sacrifice of the mother, who suspends her life in Korea for the sole purpose of supporting her children in a foreign environment, as noted by some researchers (Chamberlain and Leydesdorff 2004, Yeoh et al. 2005). Often, the mother is blamed for abandoning her duties as a wife and daughter-in-law (it's never about her own parents) and escaping to a life of leisure and freedom overseas (Waters 2002). She is also framed as not fulfilling her motherly duties to her children who are students in need of managing and individuals in need of loving care, because she is too busy and obsessed with indulging her own desires.

As the mother is imagined in this way, the entire early study abroad movement as well as the figures and emblems involved become tainted in negativity. The morality and ethical standards of her children who are raised in the absence of the father (who is traditionally portrayed as the "strict" and "hard" parent, instilling propriety to ready the children for the harsh social world, in contrast to the "loving," "nurturing" and "soft" mother who supports her children emotionally from home) are brought under scrutiny, and the linguistic capital they sought out becomes tinged with immorality. Through the process of fractal recursion (Irvine & Gal 2000), the figure of the Kileki Mother contributes to the spatiotemporal location of English and its speakers as morally questionable. Such individuals face more than personal shaming; they become framed as

second-class citizens that are morally suspect and are excluded from professional and social networking opportunities. This discourse is especially damaging for women, who are held to higher standards of the body and moral and sexual virtue in Korea, as they bear the risk of being scaled with well-known figures with historical baggage such as the *yangkongcwu* (Western Princess) figure or the forward *Sinyeseng* (New Woman) figure (Lo & Kim 2012, Lo & Kim forthcoming).

Through the use of words like “shocking reality(충격 실태),” this discourse is metapragmatically constructed as “real” and “authentic.” This article reporting the derailment of Kileki Mothers is larded with markers of wealth, incorporating visual emblems (automobiles from Mercedes-Benz and Audi), ideological emblems, such as leisure (“golf” on “a weekday morning”) and secrecy (“club”), geographical emblems (Orange County, United States as a foreign locale), and linguistic emblems of affinity (the employees who use Korean to greet the Mothers). These co-occurring signs in conjunction with one another are used to recalibrate the figure of the Kileki Mother as one involved in the reproduction of class overseas (Song 2012). Orange County is chosen as a backdrop for this vignette, traditionally associated with the spendy figure of the *orange-cok*. Compared to other articles that prefer specific location names to add to the authenticity of the story (e.g. In the report of a *kyopho* kileki father who has sent his family to Korea to learn Korean, “Mr. Choi who works in Fort Lee, NJ near Manhattan, NY, USA 미국 뉴욕 맨해튼 인근 뉴저지 포트리에서 일하는 최진수씨,” “Tenafly public school in the US 미국 테너플라이 공립학교” (Kim K.H. 2007)), I suggest that “Orange County” was purposefully used to maximize the image of extravagance,

especially as the author uses “LA (Los Angeles)” as the local location name of choice for the rest of the article.

10A.M. on a weekday, the most luxurious cars from Mercedes-Benz and Audi, etc. come to a stop at a golf club parking lot in Orange County. People stepping out of the cars are all middle-aged Asian women. They carry luxurious golf bags into the club. The golf course employee enthusiastically greets them with a Korean “*annyenghaseyyo* (hello).” That’s right. They are Korean women. But they are not Korean Americans. With the exception of the super successful among Korean Americans, women rarely visit golf courses on weekdays. Of course, it is difficult to see White women seek out golf courses on weekday mornings which are working hours. Even accompanied by male coaches, they happily chatter on as they start their rounds.

평일 오전 10시경, 오렌지카운티의 한 골프클럽 주차장에 벤츠나 아우디 등 최고급 승용차들이 멈춰선다.

차에서 내리는 사람들은 모두 동양계의 중년 여성들. 이들은 호화스러운 골프백을 들고 클럽으로 들어간다.

골프장 직원은 이들은 반갑게 맞으며 한국어로 “안녕하세요”라고 인사를 한다.

맞다. 이들은 한국 여성들이다. 하지만 재미교포들은 아니다.

재미교포 중 아주 성공한 경우가 아니면, 이처럼 평일에 골프장을 찾는 여성은 드물다.

물론 백인여성들도 일과시간인 평일 오전에 골프장을 찾는 모습은 보기 힘들다.

남자 골프코치까지 대동한 이들은 즐겁게 대화를 나누며 라운딩에 나선다.

(<https://www.newdaily.co.kr/news/article.html?no=56964>)

Multiple indices are at work here to construct an *authoritative voice* (Bakhtin 1991). First, the figure of the Kileki Mother is positioned against other women to highlight her non-laboring aspect. To single out the Kileki Mother, the vignette relies on the process of *othering* (Jaffe 2011) so that “Korean American women” and “White women” who play golf are spared from blanket criticism. Weekday mornings are framed as a time conventionally acknowledged as “work hours;” time that is imagined to be spent by other, constructive members of society, unlike the “lazy” and “consuming” Kileki Mothers under fire.

The wastefulness of the Kileki Mother is brought to the fore by the enthusiastic manner in which the employees greet her. Unlike the nonchalant, indifferent servers that frequently appear in traditional tales of foreign travel, the non-Korean, racially foreign employees at the golf club are framed as excited to see the Kileki Mothers, hinting that they are regulars or big spenders at the clubs. Whether they are spending time or money, what is conveyed is the deleterious “spending away” of substance in a foreign land, as

opposed to the father figure's "earning" for the family and contributions to the domestic economy. All too frequently, the father figure is portrayed as an "ATM machine" for the mother, who "uses" the funds for her own pleasure more than she should. Even when the money really is spent on the children's education, the tables are turned upon her with early study abroad labeled as "her choice" rather than a joint decision by the parents in the first place. In this light, the Kileki Mother is socially constructed as a profligate squanderer of national wealth in comparison to the father who dutifully sends his hard earned money abroad.

Scales

I am not arguing that the Kileki Mother figure is a myth, blown out of proportion by the media. Instead, what I wish to point out is that the construction of the Kileki Mother in the media hides the tension of the nation's financial state with its high rate of imports, as her consumption is blamed wholesale for the bulk the national debt while men's labor is exalted for constructive additions to the value of the nation. Here, the scaling (Blommaert 2007) of these two notions results in the construction of symbolic domination (Bourdieu 1991), under which men are conveyed cultural authority to critique women.

Scaling, or more specifically sociolinguistic scaling (Blommaert 2007), is the process of taking two or more seemingly disparate ideas or items and making them commensurable, and comparing one another in reference to a particular dimension of choice (Agha 2011a, Collins et al. 2009, Wortham and Rhodes 2012). Drawing on Silverstein (2003)'s *orders of indexicality*, scaling provides scholars a way to discuss

social and linguistic phenomena beyond that of the micro- and macro-social scope. Language is social in that it is a method of communication that links people to one another, and also in the sense that it is socially constructed during that very process of communication. When analyzing interactions, scholars come to find that people use language not only with the traditional referential and relational meaning (Duranti 1997, Hymes 1964) but discover surprising new meanings within micro-social interactions as they think across scales (Collins 2013).

The project of scaling can be expanded to include what may be a far-fetched generalization in logic, called "upscaling" or "jumping scales." Upscaling occurs when a project with a smaller scope becomes seamlessly scaled with a macro process, with no actual data to support the in-between. The media's identification of the Bean Paste Girl's consumption as the reason for Korea's overall economic downfall described above is one such example. Her expenditure on foreign goods comprises but a small part of the national import, yet by upscaling it to the national level it is imagined and circulated as if it were the "real" reason. Of course, the opposite of this process, called "downscaling," is also possible, though less common. For example, the social construction of the "idealized woman" is brought to light through the examination of how the "New Woman (*sinyeseng*)" impacted individual women scaled against contemporary discourses of motherhood by Shin (2004).

In a way, scaling is similar to the notion of *axis of differentiation* set forth by Gal (2012). The two tools are similar in that they both analyze a particular subject under the influence of another object. However, axis of differentiation differs from scaling in that the objects of comparison come in a binary oppositional relationship. For example, we

can define the persona of a "good student" by juxtaposing it against the image of a "bad student," or that of the Kileki Mother is contrasted against that of the Kileki father. Scaling is useful for researchers as social processes can be placed on any number of different scales and thus be examined from a plethora of different angles (Wortham 2012). The anthropologist Strathern, who offers another definition of scaling as "the organization of perspectives on objects of knowledge and enquiry (Strathern 2004: xvi)," takes this viewpoint further in suggesting that all ethnographical analysis is in essence a scale-making endeavor. Indeed, the media discourse is the product of ideologies and agendas carefully woven together to compose "news" that requires the consumer of the "news" to rescale his/her world to understand the figure promoted as such, whether it be the Bean Paste Girl or the Kileki Mother. While the labor that goes into building scales is shared by all members of the community of practice, with scales being identified as "more or less the stable effect of people's conceptual and practical labor (Carr & Lempert 2016)," there are discourses that are promoted as more "real," "authentic," and "representative" than others, such as printed or published media, which often voices the ideologies and stances of the hegemonic entities of the society who hold power (Woolard 1998). The tension of conflicting ideologies and ideological fractures, represented through the scaling of the "individual" with "society," is weighted with political and ontological commitments (Alexander 1987) as authoritative voice (Bakhtin 1981) is built up.

Drawing upon the ideas of space and scale, Blommaert et al. (2005) offers up an interesting way of looking at multilingualism. Instead of seeing multilingualism as something an individual or speech community has or does not have, they argue that it is a

practice that may be enabled or disabled depending on the environment. Let us take the example of “tradition” and “modernity” and examine it through the lens of axis of differentiation and scale. For something to be considered “traditional,” it must be “traditional” in comparison to something else, hence the two must be packaged within a particular time-space envelope that make the two coherent. Besnier (2011) describes a hybridity of modernity and tradition. According to him, the two stages are not separate stages at linear extremes, where one was in the past and one is in the future, but we are experiencing the combined effects of both in the present. In the same manner, Blommaert et al. (2005) describe of spaces as "ordered and organized in relation to one another, stratified and layered, with processes belonging to one scale entering processed at another scale. (p.203)" Thus, through scaling, it is possible to understand that tradition can be the product of modernity rather than its antecedent (Geschiere 1997), and that the “copy” can exist before the “original” (Inoue 2006).

CHAPTER 5: THE HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF FOREIGNNESS

“Racial and cultural memories are embedded in the language of peoples.”

- Stanley William Rothstein (1993:44)

Scales being defined as semiotized space and time, historical accounts of language used in the same space, and the same language used in different locations by different speakers are keys to my analysis (Blommaert 2007). The process of social identification does not happen in a spontaneous instance; identities are formed over time as an individual's consistent demonstration of a model of identity is interpreted and accepted by others as being equal to the same identity (Wortham 2006). When these speakers use linguistic forms that are indexically saturated, these forms then become attached to specific identities (Eckert 1989). With reference to the historical aspect, specific vowels and consonants then get read as indexical of the backward colonial Japanese past; cool modern transnationalism of the 90s; or as remnants of a time when Korea was subservient to an imperial Chinese power (pre-19th century).

The complex meanings of English in South Korea, as well as the linguistic tension it brings, cannot be teased apart without understanding how specific phonemes get inserted into this timeline of modern Korean history. Foreign languages enter society through vehicles of figures of personhood (Agha 2007b), and come to be chronotopically associated with the particular time periods as well (Agha 2007c, Dick 2010). To understand the language as it is currently being used, we must examine the background of how the language came to exist in its historical and social context. This chapter outlines the history of loanwords and the phoneme-time period linking in Korea, and illuminates

the semiotic process through which /f/ became a marker of English and English competency in Korea.

South Korea steadfastly clings onto its myth of being a monolingual and monoracial society, even in the face of overwhelming evidence of global influences (Chang et al. 2008, Shin 2006). With a rapidly increasing influx of immigrants from all over the world, the number of foreigners living in Korea has surpassed 1.5 million (Statistics Korea 2012). Yet the "one language one nation" model is strong enough to mask over the long-term presence of ethnic groups such as the Chinese-Koreans known as *hwakyo*(華僑), or mail-order brides sought after by rural Korean farmers. The widespread notion that Korea is one nation with one language shared by people of one ethnicity is a popular language ideology carefully constructed by the ruling classes of past Korean dynasties, and one that has been systematically reproduced by modern regimes (Anderson 1985). This "imagined community" of the nation is expected to have a set of shared beliefs and practices (Kanno and Norton 2003), including a shared language.

Ever since Korea opened its doors to the western world in the 19th century, loanwords from English and other foreign languages have infiltrated the Korean language. Modern day Koreans are flooded with English input from all around in their everyday lives; through billboards, magazines, TV programs, and daily language use. Such linguistic borrowing, in addition to the political specters of Japanese colonization and the American military during and after the Korean War, has lead to language purification movements and anti-English sentiments. With the social climate of

nationalism in the air, language purification efforts have been a longstanding platform by Korean scholars and citizens alike, though to varying degrees. Foreign languages have come to be understood as the language of the other, and as a threat to maintaining the purity of the Korean language, a treasure to be passed down to future generations (Pennycook 2003). Because such ideologies linger in contemporary society, it is important to understand multilingualism in Korea within the context of its tumultuous modern history.

Nevertheless the status of English as a global lingua franca has given English the foothold it needed, and nowadays English enjoys a hegemonic status as a prestige language in Korea. Along with the wave of globalization that followed the nation's economic development, a frenzy to learn English has swept across South Korea since the mid-1990s. Due to the prestigious image that English has gained in South Korea, the majority of Korean speakers in South Korea have become accustomed to seeing an increasing number of English words in their daily lives. However, while many loanwords have entered the Korean lexicon over the years, phonological borrowing of phonemes that do not occur in Korean has been kept at a minimal level. Recently, there has been a change in this phenomenon, and foreign phonemes have entered into Korean speech. Such "backdoor phonemes" may be a reflection of modern Korean language ideologies.

Historical periods

The widespread notion of Korea being a single nation held together by a single language (*tanil mincok*) is very strong in the minds of contemporary Koreans. This ideology was born largely as a result of the independence movement in the early 20th

century and the young republic's government to promote the unification of the people in hopes of boosting the weak economy. The mountainous geography of Korea created strong regional dialects, and Korea has never really had just one writing system. It has only been 123 years since Korean characters were formally recognized as the main orthographical vehicle for the Korean language by Emperor Kojong in 1894. Until public education became the norm with the establishment of mandatory public education in 1946 (75% primary schooling rate achieved by 1948), language in Korea took on many shapes and forms, and along with it, a multitude of various linguistic ideologies came into competition.

1. The era of Chinese characters (4c. B.C.-1894)

Chinese characters were Korea's primary method of written communication for the majority of its recorded history. The use of Chinese script meant that scholars had to devote endless hours to learn as well as retain a working knowledge of the characters. The number of characters a Cosen scholar had to know was around 10,000, requiring 20 years of dedicated education to reach comfortable use, compared to the 1800 characters recommended as appropriate for secondary school level acquisition. By monopolizing script, the ruling classes of Korea were able to effectively limit and shape the public's political ideas, and continue their monopoly of power. It also was the basis for Confucian notions of revering one's elders, since knowledge was accumulated in a time-bank fashion that could not possibly be replicated by the younger generations. Due to its long lineage of being associated with scholars and the ruling class that monopolized literacy, Chinese now carries an aura of "educated,"

“authoritative,” and “proud Korean heritage,” in addition to its temporally assigned images of “traditional,” “old-fashioned,” and “authoritarian.”

2. The era of borrowed letters from Chinese characters (*Itwu* 吏讀, *Hyangchal* 鄉札, *Kwu.kyel* 口訣)

While Chinese characters were used as the main writing system, people who were less familiar with the entire logographic inventory of Chinese characters used other systems of Korean writing. Often grouped into a single system, *Itwu*, *Hyangchal*, and *Kwukyel* use Chinese characters to transcribe Korean sounds, where the meanings of Chinese characters are lost. Most often used by regional officials to record local history and reports to the central government, these systems incorporated a separation of the meanings and sounds of Chinese characters, and *Itwu* especially was used alongside Chinese script and *hankul* script until the late Cosen era. Although these writing systems are highly valued for the insight they provide into early and middle Korean phonology and language structure for scholars of Korean, they bear little relevance to today’s linguistic situation, and thus are simply associated with the distant past by most lay people.

3. The era of *Hwunminceongum* and *Enmwun* (1443-1894)

The modern day script used for Korean was proposed and developed by *Ciphyencen* (the Bureau of Standard Sounds) scholars under the instruction of King Sejong the Great (1397-1450) in 1443. It is the source of intense national pride and acts as a symbol of the Korean nation as the only script to have gained wide social

recognition that has a historically recorded birthday, called “perhaps the most scientific system of writing in general use in any country (Reischauer 1960: 435),” and uncontested evaluative beliefs as “the world’s best alphabet (Vos 1964: 31).” Such ratification of Korean by foreign scholars plays an important role in constructing the ideology of Korean as a “superior” language, and this role is evident in the main display leading into the historical Korean wing at the National Hangeul Museum in Seoul. All five quotations scale Korean as a remarkable achievement in the history of mankind, and cite foreign texts and scholars as sources.

Figure 5.1: Quotes display at the National Hangeul Museum



Enmwun (speech script) is the name that was used for Korean script before it was recognized as the national script by Emperor Kojong, the second to last ruler of the Cosen dynasty. The prestige of Chinese script in Korea in times prior to the 20th

century was so great that even with the promulgation of the new Korean script, Chinese retained its hegemonic position as the script for official documents while *hankul* was belittled as the low-status, “unofficial” writing by women. Though there is much evidence that periodically surfaces that it was also used by men and in official documents, the ideology that it was the “lesser” script used by secondary citizens, connected with notions of speech as a fleeting, less complete form of language in comparison with the more permanent and perfectible genre of the written “standard” was spread during the Japanese reign and is still prevalent in public opinion.

4. The era of *Kwukmwun* (1894-1910)

In 1894, King Kojong declared Korean as the official script of the nation, and *Enmwun* was renamed to *Kwukmwun*, which means ‘national script.’ The need for a unified national orthographic system arose amidst turbulent political times prior to the Japanese overtaking of Korea. With social tensions rising, it was during this period that *Kwukmwun* arose as a cultural icon for the Korean people; a beacon of hope and pride as well as a valuable cultural legacy that deserves to be preserved.

5. The era of *Cosenmwun* and Kana (1910-1945)

The Japanese reduced the name *Kwukmwun* to *Cosenmwun*, to mean “the script of (the land of) *Cosen*.” This was a political move to delimit the use and demean the value of Korean, and color the perception of Korean as a subpar dialect narrowly restricted in its use to the geographical area of Korea, associated with qualities such as “primitive,”

“peripheral,” and “deficient” in comparison with the “national” and “standard” language at the time, which was Japanese.

During the Japanese rule over Korea, Koreans were forced to use Japanese characters as part of Japan’s plan to integrate the Korean people into Japanese culture and wipeout that of Korea. Korean language and script were also seen as threats to the Japanese rule due to its ideological power of uniting the Korean people, through the allure of an imagined community (Anderson 1985): a single people deserving of an independent state.

Japanese as a language is tainted with the political stances of the nation during this particular time period. The use of Japanese has come to be considered as "bad" not because of any inherent property of the language itself, but due to the associations of Japanese with the period of colonization, dehumanizing oppression, inhumane violence, and extreme poverty that the Korean people faced during the early 20th century. English-origin loanwords were borrowed through Japanese from 1890 until the end of Japan's colonial reign over Korea (Kang, Stowicz, and Ito 2008). It is through this historical backdrop that Japanese gains its stigma as a “bad” language to use among Koreans. Nowadays, Japanese is recognized for its value in travel and business, and the attitude has thus shifted towards a more positive recognition, however loanwords from Japanese are still heavily stigmatized from the chronotopic association. The change in recommendation from ‘ㅎ/h/’ to ‘ㅍ/p/’ was claimed to unify orthography and provide a better, phonologically more accurate nativization alternate, but also with the agenda of *erasing* (Irvine and Gal 2000) Japanese influence from Korean orthography.

6. The era of Hangul (1945-present day)

The Pure Korean (*Swunwulimal*) movement

Newspapers began to remove Chinese characters. Within the timespan of a single generation, there was a rapid decrease in Chinese character literacy. The purpose of such language planning and language policies was to “restore” Korean as a symbol of liberation and independence after the “tainting” by Japanese influence after the independence from Japan in 1945. However, words of Korean origin such as “*moy* (mountain)” and “*kalam* (river)” have all but disappeared from the Korean lexicon, completely replaced by the Sino-Korean “san” and “kang” as the foreignness of the Sino-Korean was erased, demonstrating the limitations of artificial language planning efforts. Sino-Korean’s erasure of foreignness can also be seen in the name of the movement itself: *Kwuke Swunhwa Wuntong* (Korean Purification Movement) contains Sino-Korean compared to North Korea’s equivalent *Mal Tatumki Wuntong* (Speech Refinement Movement) which uses native Korean words and enforces stricter regulations on Sino-Korean (Sohn 2004).

Under the ideology of externalization (Park J. 2009) English is seen as innately foreign, the opposite of all that is Korean. According to this ideology, the use of phonemes not found in the Korean phonemic inventory was looked down upon not only by language purists, but by the overall population as well, as it was thought to be the mark of a traitor to the nation. This idea, in addition to movements to eradicate remnants of Japanese colonization has motivated the government to actively pursue language

purification measures through mandates issued by the Ministry of Education. Though Trudgill (2000) implies that preserving language “purity” is neither a possibility nor desirable, “purification” in Korea includes the notions of purification, cleansing, and refinement, calling for the ousting of “foreign” remnants in the language, exclusive use of “Korean,” standardization of orthographic conventions, Romanization methods, prescriptive syntax, lexical refinement, and the normalization of such practices. While these are now recommendations, and technically not laws enforceable by the judicial branch since 1975, the message is distributed through various educational outlets including public schools and public television.²

An extended result of this purification is the change of writing direction from top-down to the more familiar left-to-right style following Western norms. Chinese, Korean, and Japanese all share a tradition of writing documents vertically from the top right corner of a piece of paper to the bottom left corner, whereas most, if not all, writing in Korean is done left-to-right from the top left side of the paper to the bottom right side nowadays save for work that wishes to emphasize the artistic and period affect. Top-down writing is only seen in period materials, as an index of the past, and often coupled with old-fashioned typesets. In fact, it has been less than 20 years since the last major

² Pure Korean policies have been notoriously inconsistent, and reflective of the active voicings of both pro-character and pure-Korean scholars within Korea. A slew of legal orders, decrees and announcements were made in the years between 1948 to 1975, to include, exclude, and supplement Chinese characters from Korean writing (Sohn 1999), focusing especially on character education (Song 1999).

newspaper changed their format from the traditional top-down writing to the left-to-right style (Joongang Ilbo on September 1, 1994, and Dong-A Ilbo, on January 2, 1998)³.

In 1988, the Korean Ministry of Education set forth a new mandate in an effort to further standardize the Korean language. The mandate was declared on January 19, 1988, and put into effect beginning March 1, 1989. The Ministry of Education differentiated loan words into two categories: *oykwuke* 외국어 and *oylaye* 외래어. *Oykwuke* literally means “foreign language”, where as *oylaye* means “language from foreign origin (literal translation is language that comes from abroad/outside).” For example, since there is no Korean word for ‘bus,’ Korean has taken on ‘bus 버스 /bʌsi/’ as an example of *oylaye*. The word ‘chicken’ in Korean is ‘닭 /tak/’ but ‘치킨 /tʃikin/’ usually denotes fried chicken only, or at least some form of cooked chicken product. On the other hand, an example of *oykwuke* is ‘cookie 쿠키 /kuki:/’, since there is an existing Korean word, 과자 /gwaca/, to represent the same connotation. There is another term that highlights the singular instance in borrowing called *chayonge* 차용어, or loan word, which does not get much use outside of academic settings. In textbooks, students are asked to refrain from using *oykwuke* on the basis of existing words in Korean which can be easily substituted, whereas *oylaye* use is tolerated since there is no other replacement Korean word that can be used.

In any case, such distinction between Korean and foreign words sparked intense, but

³ The first newspaper to try the left-to-right style was the *Honamsinmwun* on August 15, 1947, and the first “purely Korean (*swunhankul*)” left-to-right newspaper *YonseiChwunchwu* was published by the Korean scholar Choi Hyunbae in January of 1958. However, these attempts were experimental at best, and failed to change mainstream writing culture.

ultimately short-lived in hindsight, Korean-only movements at the time. There were many attempts to revive pure Korean words that were lost, or to create new-fangled vocabulary that could replace foreign words, thereby eliminating them from the Korean lexicon. These guidelines and categories of loan words were established because of efforts to keep Korean clean from outside influence. Nowadays, most Koreans no longer place so much emphasis on distinguishing between *oylaye* and *oykwuke*. The level of borrowings in the lexicon has increased to the point where it is almost impossible to differentiate the two. As the distinction dies, so does the level of awareness for keeping Korean “pure.”

7. The era of Hangeul and mixed foreign script (Early 21c-present day)

A critical question that must be addressed before proceeding further is whether the occurrence of /f/ could be a naturally occurring change within the Korean language itself. I would be inclined to say that the answer is most likely not, because if that were the case the /f/-ing phenomenon would occur with Korean luxury items as well, which it does not. Also, language ideology has been identified as being a stronger motivation for sound change than language proprietary rules (Cho Y.M. 1999), and this effect is most definitely noted in the adoption of foreign phonemes as they are borrowed in a true language catastrophic contact fashion, not following a clear set of defined phonological rules. Therefore, until further evidence emerges, it may be said for now that the language internal development of /f/-ing is highly unlikely.

That said, the government mandate of 1988 does attempt to single out a rather long section especially for prescribing specific rules for transcribing foreign languages into

Korean. This lengthy manuscript is due to the haphazard nature of the borrowings, even when the goal is to streamline the process. For example, when nativizing Romance languages, where /p/, /t/, /k/ are tensed, the corresponding tensed plosives ‘ㅍ,’ ‘ㅌ,’ ‘ㄱ’ are to be used respectively, whereas with Germanic languages such as German or English, ‘ㅍ,’ ‘ㅌ,’ and ‘ㄱ’ are recommended. Interestingly, loan words borrowed through Japanese during the early 20th century that are spelled in Korean with a ‘ㅎ/h/’ but contain /f/ in the original English (or whatever other language it was from) are asked to be spelled with a ‘ㅍ/p/.’ Also notable is that these guidelines fall on deaf ears of the public when it comes to actual use, with many orthographic variations appearing in popular usage, similar to the orthographic free-for-all in the early 20th century when Korean was made the primary script without standardization, or the early Elizabethan age when Shakespeare himself would write the same words using different spelling.

This is of particular interest because Korean has often been boasted as an orthographically superior language that allows for accurate transcription of any language (Harkness 2012).⁴ This belief, called *hankul mannunglon* (Hankul supremacy), is widely prevalent in Korean society. It is crystalized in the lyrics of a song from a popular children’s Korean education TV show called *Hankuli Yaho2* (Hankuli and Yaho 2):

⁴The Indonesian tribe of Cia-Cia announced its plans to educate their people in the Korean script as a tool to write their tribal language in 2009. Although it did not ultimately work out because of Indonesian law prohibiting the use of foreign scripts for regional dialects, this event was widely publicized as a triumphant recognition of the accuracy, ease in learning, and uncomplicated clarity of the script.

한글을 알면 세상의 모든 소리를 다 읽고 쓸 수가 있어

hankulul almyen seysanguy motun solilul ta ilkho ssul swuka isse

Korean-know world-of every sounds all read write can

If you know Korean, you can read and write all the sounds in the world

As can be seen in this resolute song, the belief in the Korean script's ability to transcribe any sound into script is readily manufactured, and disseminated far and wide. It is a sentiment that is echoed in the majority of books on the Korean language and Korean language education (texts written for children, adults, and foreigners alike) that I have personally encountered. This widespread belief, in addition to a steady stream of public messages reminding the public about the importance of correct spelling, is drilled into the minds of Koreans, adding to the Korean people's pride and sensitivity to issues of orthography and standardized spelling.

Through the process of erasure and fractal recursion (Irvine and Gal 2000), Japanese is slowly losing its bad rap as a negative language haunted by images of the past, and a new ideology regarding Japanese is surfacing, involving a new influx of Japanese. Among the younger generation, who are more familiar with Japan through manga, anime, and J-pop, the use of Japanese has become an index of modern coolness alongside English. Through distinction (Bourdieu 1984), French has also become more

noticeable in Korean pop culture as the language of fashion and sophistication, as a way of distancing oneself from the English that "everyone knows."

Phonological Background

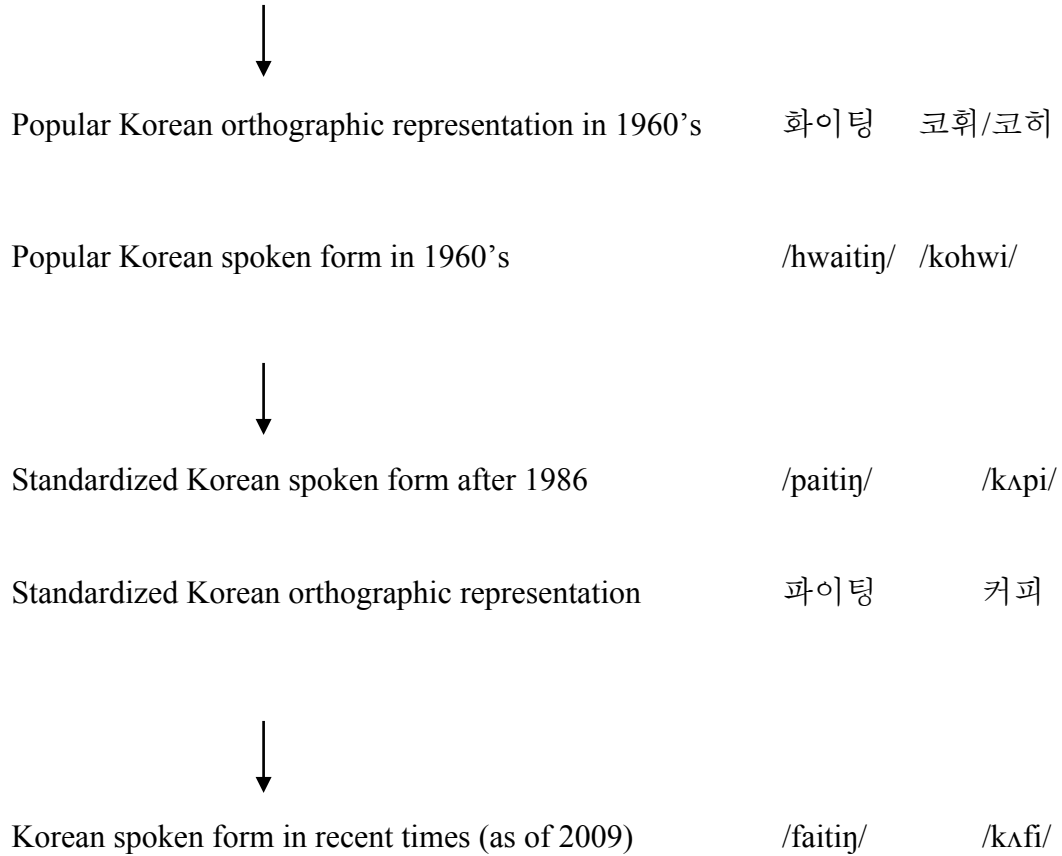
Because the English consonantal inventory does not match up with the Korean phonetic inventory, the abundance of English loan words presents a problem for modern speakers of Korean. The affricates and fricatives /ʃ/, /v/, /f/, /θ/, /ð/, /dʒ/, /z/ and /x/ found in English are not part of the Korean phonemic system, have been reported to be of the more problematic phonemes in English speech produced by Korean bilingual children (Ha et al. 2009).

The phoneme /f/ is of especially high historical and social interest. One of the phonemes that was used to represent it ‘*ㅍ* /h/’ has been stigmatized as a remnant of Japanese as seen above, whose effect on modern Korean history and language is undeniably strong. There are also documents going back to the 16th century that discuss how it should be nativized in Korean, a debate that has been ongoing to this day. This issue, compounded by matters of linguistic economy - the pursuit of efficiency of communication through phonological accuracy - has led to direct borrowings as demonstrated in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2: Phonetic changes in borrowed words “fighting” and “coffee” throughout the 20th century.

| | | |
|--|----------|--------|
| Original English orthographic representation | fighting | coffee |
| Original English spoken form | /faɪrɪŋ/ | /kɔʃi/ |

Figure 5.2: Phonetic changes in borrowed words “fighting” and “coffee” throughout the 20th century. (cont.)



In spite of the various options available at their disposal, it is not difficult to see direct phonological borrowings from English in the media and the speech of younger Korean speakers. In fact, perhaps it would be more accurate to say that /f/ has been the recipient of broad historical interest, as the sheer number of possibilities is a reflection of the discontent due to the increasing phonological distance that is felt by the speakers, who are now opting to solve the problem through direct phonological borrowing.

Figure 5.3: Nativization of foreign phonemes in Korean

| <u>English</u> | | | | | <u>Korean</u> |
|----------------|-----------|---|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| /f/ | golf | → | [p ^h] | /gɔlp ^h i/ | 골프 |
| /v/ | vitamin | → | [b] | /bitamin/ | 비타민 |
| /θ/ | therapy | → | [sʻ] | /sʻerapi/ | 세라피 |
| | | → | [tʻ] | /tʻerapi/ | 떼라피 |
| | | → | [t ^h] | /t ^h erapi/ | 테라피 |
| | Nathaniel | → | [d] | /nadaniel/ | 나다니엘 |
| | Hawthorne | → | [s] | /hoson/ | 호손 |
| /ð/ | the | → | [tʻ] | /tʻʌ/ | 더 |
| /z/ | zebra | → | [c] | /cibira/ | 지브라 |
| /dʒ/ | jungle | → | [c] | /cʌŋgil/ | 정글 |
| /ɹ/ | rocket | → | [r] | /roket/ | 로켓 ⁵ |
| /x/ | X-ray | → | [k] | /eksɾei/ | 엑스레이 |

⁵ It is acceptable to pronounce this word with an [l] as [loket]. Since [l] and [r] are allophones of the Korean ‘ㄹ [r]’, it could be argued that the English /ɹ/ is nativized into two phonemes, but I keep it as one rule here because they are inter-individual variations, and often intra-individual as well.

With the exception of /θ/ and /f/, all consonantal phonemes have a single phonemic counterpart.⁶ While /θ/ and /f/ have their recommended counterpart in Standard Korean as well (‘ㅈ/ㅊ’ and ‘ㅍ/ㅑ’ respectively)⁷, both phonemes are nativized into Korean with various allophonic substitutions other than the recommended characters in popular usage. For example, /f/ in foreign words has been nativized into [p^h], [hw], [pp], and [b], while [s’], [t’], and [t^h] are all commonly used allophones of /θ/. Often, the discrepancy in orthography reflects the period during which a particular lexical item was loaned into Korean.

⁶ Although I say “single phonemic counterpart,” phonemes such as /f/ are created with two orthographic elements: ㅈ and a vowel: 샤, 새, 셔, 세, 쇼, 슈, 시, and so on. Appendix A contains the full description, but to sum it up, the Ministry of Education’s standardization mandate prescribes the following transcription rule:

| Borrowings from English | | Borrowings from French, German, etc. | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| prevocalic | suffix, preconsonantal | prevocalic | suffix, preconsonantal |
| 시 | 슈, 시 | 시 | 슈 |

Even in this case, there is much confusion about “proper” spelling. ‘Flash /flæʃ/’ is frequently written incorrectly as ‘플래쉬’ instead of ‘플래시’. 쉬 is technically /ʃyi/, hence incorrect according to the mandate; however, contemporary pronunciation of the cluster ‘쉬’ in Korean speech itself has shifted to /ʃwi/ and even /ʃi/ with many speakers. See Kim, J. 2015 for more discussion on variations of ‘flash,’ regarding the semantics of ‘후레쉬 /huleʃi/’ and ‘플래쉬/pilleʃi/.’

⁷ Syllable-initial phonemes are transcribed with ‘ㅈ’ & ‘ㅑ,’ whereas an epenthetic vowel [i] is added to make ‘ㅊ’ and ‘ㅑ’ when the foreign phoneme occurs in a syllable-final position.

Figure 5.4: Standard phonetic variations of /f/ in Korean

| <u>English</u> | | | <u>Korean</u> | | |
|----------------|---------------|---|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| /f/ | 1. Filipines | → | /p ^h / | /p ^h ilip ^h in/ | 필리핀 |
| | 2. fighting | → | /h/ | /hwaiting/ | 화이팅 |
| | 3. fuck | → | /pp/ | /ppek/ | 백 |
| | fashion | | | /ppaʃɔŋ/ | 빠쑹 (comic effect) |
| | 4. Philestine | → | /b/ | /billesays/ | 블레섹 |

Among the phonemes that are foreign to Korean, /f/ has become one of the first to be accepted into Korean speech in loan words. As it was mentioned before, /f/ is notorious as a particularly difficult phoneme for speakers of Korean to acquire. Ironically, it was precisely this notoriety as a “difficult” phoneme to acquire that emblemized /f/ as a salient emblem of foreignness in the minds of Korean speakers, coupled with the fact that it appears with the highest frequency, after /ɪ/ (Fry 1964, Saporta 1955), among the phonemes that are not shared by English and Korean. However, compared to other sounds in the list of foreign phonemes that are not found in Korean, /f/ is actually much easier for Koreans to produce accurately compared to other English consonants like /ɪ/ or /ʌ/, or vowels. By incorporating such iconic phonemes into one’s speech, a speaker of Korean is able to project an image of a desirable figure (e.g. the Transnational Elite) at a minimal cost, without becoming involved in the labor of acquiring the neoliberal skill set that is associated with acquisition of English. Hence, these phonemes essentially become a way to buy oneself the image of neoliberal success

on the cheap. But for some speakers, this practice poses more burdens and risks than others.

CHAPTER 6: MEDIATED IDEOLOGIES AND FIGURES OF FOREIGNNESS

This chapter examines mediatized portrayals of figures who align themselves with use displays of foreign phonemes to demonstrate their authenticity as Transnational Elite Koreans. Successful users of foreign pronunciations are often male; even men who hypercorrect are validated as legitimate speakers of the global standard with international currency, whereas women who use /f/ are often presented as cunning opportunists, backward posers or hypersexualized. Tropes of the naïve female student and the suave male teacher are all too frequent. Of course, there are instances of women who successfully use /f/; I examine the intricate pathways (Wortham and Reyes 2015) these women take to ratify their use. By using backdoor phonemes and thus recalling indexical orders, speakers of Korean manage to maintain modesty even as they divulge their neoliberal identities and knowledge of the world, sidestepping age-old moral taboos.

Discourses of Leisure and Mobility, and the Figure of the Transnational Elite

After the IMF financial crisis, another ideology arose in the form of a new lifestyle. Following global trends of well-being and lifestyle management, leisure became a new vein of discourse. Golf became immensely popular as the adult sports activity of choice, and camping, or glamping (portmanteau of ‘glamorous camping’), became trendy. As more women became involved with the workforce, eating out is now the new norm, often accompanied by frenzied picture taking and posting on social media as discussed in Chapter 4. I argue that these seemingly leisurely activities should be seen as an extension of the neoliberalism permeating Korean society, because while there are

intrinsic benefits, a large aspect of why things are done as they are is for public demonstration of leisure. The very act of engaging in these “leisurely activities” construct the individual as someone who takes the time to take care of his/her self, or invest in the “total package” in the neoliberal sense. Regardless of whether the leisure activity was the result of true free time or an investment made to improve one’s image of industriousness and never-ending self-development, the labor dedicated to the social construction of the leisurely image is highlighted. Yet one must take care not to appear too eager to show off, because it would take away an important factor contributing to the process; an air of effortless. It is also in direct contradiction to modesty, another prime Korean ideology (Park 2009). I highlight this dilemma of sprezzatura and argue that it is deeply rooted in developments in modern South Korean history and from the complicated, ambiguous views that South Koreans have towards speakers who stray from the imagined monolingual standard.

The Transnational Elite

The figure of the Transnational Elite is quite literally everything that the modern Korean aspires to be; a paragon of neoliberal success. This elusive figure is more easily “heard about” through the grape vine or the media than spotted in real life, because of its essentially contradictory nature as I will soon demonstrate.

Emblematized by markers of wealth, good upbringing, studiousness, leisure, jet-setting mobility, and linguistic ability to match the persona, the Transnational Elite is imagined to “possess” the full set of these emblems. Stories of the “mother’s friend’s son (MFS hereafter)” that circulated widely in the first decade of the 2000s are typical of this

figure. The MFS starts out as an excellent, diligent student who dutifully stays out of trouble, and eventually reappears with a high-paying job and marries the “right” girl; in other words, he is the perfect son. The figure is usually caricatured as a son, rather than a daughter, although female versions do exist, especially when the listening subject is a daughter herself, showing that the point of this discourse is to spark the desire to emulate the figure.

The following article demonstrates the changing meaning of what it means to be a modern Korean in the global arena through the successful construction of two women as the Transnational Elite. The two golf players that are highlighted in the news article are metapragmatically typified as embodiments of the professional yet relaxed, easy-going attitude and leisurely lifestyle that has come to be desirable among contemporary Koreans.

월드 스펙:

weltu supeyk

“World spec”:

해당 분야의 실력뿐 아니라

haytang pwunyauy sillyukppun anila

not only professional knowledge in the particular field but

영어(외국어), 매너, 패션 감각 등

yenge (oykwuke), mayne, payshen kamkak tung

English (foreign language), manners, fashion sense, etc.

세계무대에서 경쟁할 모든 요소를 다 갖춘 사람을 말한다.

seykyeymwutayeyse kyengcaynghan motun yosolul ta kacchwun salam

someone who is prepared with all these factors to compete in the global arena

어릴 때부터 세계 최고를 겨냥해 공부했고

elil ttaypwute seykyey choykolul kyenyanghay kongpwuhayssko

since their youth, they studied to become the best in the world

글로벌 스탠더드에 맞는 행동을 익히며 자란 젊은이들이다.

kullopel sutaytetuey macnun hayngtongul ikhimye calan celmunitulita

they are youngsters who have been raised accustomed to action befitting global standards
(of carrying oneself)

(<http://news.joins.com/article/5780378>)

As can be seen here, English is not only understood as a solitary linguistic skill, but part of an overall package required to be ratified as a successfully functioning global citizen. Such ease is imagined as coming from the personal background and lifestyle they were raised in, as can be seen in the phrase “raised accustomed to (익히며 자란).” Furthermore, the concept of leisure is gaining recognition as an important feature of the modern Korean, as they strive to enjoy life and be more than the endlessly working

“salary man” of their parents’ generation, not unlike the British gentry distinguishing themselves from the working classes. This can be witnessed in the underlined caption for the picture below, which reads as pragmatically awkward in a Korean news article as it sounds translated into English: “They enjoyed the game.” The caption also notes how “both the defeated Seo [on the right in white] as well as the victor Ryu [on the left in orange] stood out and appeared in bright moods.” The reporter noting that the players stood out from the competition is interesting because in the past, Korean sports figures were framed almost as second-tier players in the game, always on their toes to catch up with the standard set by western competitors. In comparison, when Se-ri Park, the groundbreaking rookie won the LPGA U.S. Open in 1998, the language that was used in many articles were words like “hardworking,” “relentless effort,” and “steadfastness (*kunseng*).” It was representative of a transitional time in Korean history because although she was playing golf, a sport that was largely regarded a high-class sport, she still embodied the hardworking *yelssimi* spirit. Park taking her socks off to slice her ball out of the water hazard was a defining, victorious moment for the Korean people who were feeling the hit of the IMF financial disaster. Her tan skin that was contrasted against her pale feet was a testament of all the hard work that she had put in to become a top player in the global spotlight, and ultimately of the Korean *yelssimi* spirit, which struck a chord with the people. In contrast, by capturing the players in composed and confident poses, the picture and the caption here makes the readers believe that Korean golf players have “arrived” at the top of the game and are in a position to “enjoy” it. As readers, we are to understand that they are no longer awkward players who find themselves in strange waters, desperate for a win, but as calm and collected professionals who have no problem

fitting in smoothly with the world’s best players. As it says in the article, they are imagined to be able to be comfortable not only because they are good players, but also because they were raised with “global standards.” They also do not feel the pressure to be “global ambassadors” as citizens who traveled overseas in the 1990s and 2000s were urged to be, by both the general public and various government agencies who were interested in a nationalistic agenda of promoting a positive image of Korea. This was an attempt to distance Korea from its Third World past. Even just the fact that the players, at least what is visible from the outside, feel more at ease to be true to who they are and enjoy the game instead of being tied to results for national achievement (“*kwuk.wi senyang*”) is a difference in attitudes from decades ago. This kind of social acceptance can also extend to be true of language ideologies.

Figure 6.1: Photo of golfers at the U.S. Women’s Open accompanying the news article



Caption translation: “At the U.S. Women’s Open play off, players So Yeon Ryu and Hee Kyung Seo enjoy a chat. The victor Ryu and the defeated player Seo both stood out and appeared in bright moods. They enjoyed the game. [Colorado Springs AP=Joint Press]”

On a more fundamental level, the reason the golf players above are presented as (or imagined to be) able to be part of the leading pack is their language skills. In this case, their ability to fluently speak the lingua franca of English is what sets them apart from Se-ri Park, in addition to their smooth manners (which are more often than not an extension of language). Here, English is more than a means of communication between Korean golf players and the journalist; it is scaled into an instrument of power that allows both Ryu and Seo to show the world how far Korean golf has progressed.

The article emphasizes their fluent English use several times, through phrases such as “unfaltering English (막힘없는 영어),” “spoke smoothly in English (영어로 술술 말했다),” “flowing English (유창한 영어),” and “said confidently (당당히 말했다).” In spite of their displays of fluent spoken English, foreign geographical positioning, and unconcealed self-satisfaction and pride as winners, the players are not associated with shady, immoral figures of spoken English. What allows these women to be spared from the shadows of the disparaging images of the morally suspect English speaker, and instead celebrated and illustrated as successful Transnational Elite?

The article identifies a trifecta of “ability, English, and manners” as notable characteristics of the new generation of athletes in its title. The women in this article are differentiated from the Bean Paste Girl in that they *have* the ability and professionalism that neoliberalism demands from the modern Korean, whereas the Bean Paste Girl

garnered criticism for her obsession with superficial looks. Their athletic success and quantifiable ratification as some of the world's leading golf players (trumping over foreign players) is scaled into a source of national pride by both the reporter of this article (“Korean players lead the LPGA tour in both quality and quantity. Now they have reached the status where they lead the global standard in golf (한국 선수들은 질과 양면에서 LPGA 투어를 주도하고 있다. 이제는 골프의 글로벌 스탠더드를 주도하는 지위에까지 올랐다.)”), and the live reporters commenting from the golf course, quoted as saying “they hold a powerful reign over the LPGA tour (LPGA 투어를 강력히 지배한다).” Their success is also chronotopically contrasted and scaled against the vulnerable “past,” as seen in the definitive evaluative comment of “complaints blaming Koreans players who couldn’t speak English for ruining the tour are now only in the past (영어를 못하는 한국 선수들 때문에 투어가 망한다는 비난을 들은 것은 이제 과거일 뿐이다).” Their personal victory of trumping over ethnically non-Korean players overseas quenches the anxieties of Korea as eternal second fiddle in the international scene, and is upscaled into a verification of Korea’s position as a global “leader.”

The article also uses many emblems related to successful models of figurehood, embodying luxury, leisure, and capital (a la Bourdieu 1986):

Luxury :

“champagne (샴페인),” “fashion sense (패션 센스),” “financially comfortable household (유복한 집안),” “well-off household (넉넉한 집안)”

Leisure :

“bright expressions (밝은 표정),” “smile (미소)” “live report (from Colorado)
(현지중계),” “golf (골프),” “accolade (호평)”

Capital :

“first and second place (1, 2 위),” “U.S. title (미국 타이틀),” the best among
women’s golf tournaments in tradition, prestige, and prize money “여자 골프 대회 중
전통이나 권위, 상금 면에서 모두 최고다,” world spec “월드 스펙,” competitiveness
“경쟁력,” Daewon Foreign Language High School “대원외고,”⁸ Yonsei University
“연세대,”⁹ study abroad “유학” international sensitivity “국제적인 감각,” local
manners “현지매너,” Korean players, who are strongly sponsored by large corporations,
not only boast competitive power but world top class dress, manner, and even a beautiful
sophistication when meeting with fans “큰 회사의 강력한 지원을 받는 한국의 젊은
선수들은 경기력뿐만 아니라 옷차림과 매너, 팬들을 대할 때의 세련미까지 세계
최고 수준을 자랑한다”

From these linguistic choices, it can be seen that a great deal of effort is spent in
the article on constructing the image of the players as from posh, privileged backgrounds.
However, in a true demonstration of sprezzatura, the article emphasizes the leisurely
aspect of their success, lending a decidedly distinctive tone of describing everything as

⁸ As one of Korea’s best high schools, Daewon boasts sending the largest number of students to Korea’s undisputed top university, Seoul National University, and is indexical of cultural and symbolic capital.

⁹ One of Korea’s top 3 universities, also indexical of cultural and symbolic capital. Both Daewon and Yonsei are private institutions with high tuitions and tight admission standards, hence often associated with private tutoring and a privileged background.

coming “naturally” and “with ease” for the players. Erased from the article is the gritty sweat, effort, and time banked by these athletes in the mastery of their sport, the acquisition of English, and good sportsmanship. They are portrayed as having superior morals (e.g. Seo being a gracious loser), and relaxed enough to enjoy the process of the game (e.g. the players smiling) – when in reality it rained cats and dogs for days on end during the tournament (Associated Press 2011). Even when they are faced with the ultimate test of English, a “sudden (불쑥)” questioning by a foreign journalist, they are able to give a confident answer with a tranquil smile.

Lastly, while the players have competed in the global competition in the U.S. Women’s Open held in Colorado that year¹⁰, they are framed as having a firmly Korean locus of identity. I identify this deictic centering (Koven 2013) in Korea as a necessary emblem (Reyes 2004, 2007) of the figure of the Transnational Korean – the redeeming and authenticating characteristic that distinguishes them as a positive figure and distances them from negative ones. By demonstrating this necessary condition for membership (Putnam 1975), the players are metapragmatically typified as Transnational Korean and escape association with “shady,” “questionable” mediatized figures of spoken English and their damaging negative images, often described as “immoral,” “hypersexual,” “crass” and “immodest.” The new figure of the Transnational Korean appears in many Korean dramas, imagined as having a fluent command of foreign languages due to their mobile backgrounds. Because of the importance of this deictic centering, the figure of the

¹⁰ Note again how this article also pins down the specific location name of Colorado Springs where the golf course is located, not the name of the entire county like the Kileki Mother exposé Orange County article did, adding weight to my suggestion of the latter’s use as a conscious effort.

Transnational Elite should be considered in light of the remainder of the population who either “stayed behind” or “were left behind” depending on the narrative.

Truly, in many narratives, the “return” to Korea from a “stay/visit” abroad is emphasized to distance oneself from the figure of the failed returnee and its indices. For example, in her narrative of experience of raising “successful” early abroad student children, the kileki mother Kim metapragmatically depicts herself as patriotic for having worked hard herself to ensure her child’s success in a foreign school (Kim H. K. 2004). She defends herself against the generalization of Kileki Mothers through the erasure of her femininity, portraying herself as a “regular” mother who is trying to improve her child’s chances of social mobility by choosing to focus only on the difficulties of acquiring English in the memoir (Kang and Abelmann 2013). To add to her voicing of patriotism, the return to Korea is always foregrounded, firmly rooting the family in Korea even as they exploit the foreign locale to the best of their abilities.

We thus come to see that ideologies of space and mobility become important factors in understanding how identities are formulated and located by the self and others. While some agents are enabled as modern and transnational neoliberal success cases through their emblems of mobility, others are recursively positioned as neoliberal failures, as a result of being linked with the enregistered speech of figures who remained in Korea in the midst of the early study abroad exodus (Lo et al. 2016). Multilingualism in Korea is defined not only by the language use that occurs within Korea, but also by Koreans overseas who use English in their everyday lives to negotiate new identities and thus create novel uses and meanings in their endeavors. Song (2009) examines the creative ways Korean-English bilingual children code-switch between Korean and English to

negotiate their status among peers, within the framework of language socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs 1996). She terms the early study abroad participant families in her study "Korean sojourners" as a way of methodically differentiating them from Korean-American immigrants (who have psychologically taken root in the United States) and observing their transnational language practices within the scope of both Korean and American linguascapes.

Mobility, especially in the increasingly obtainable form of international travel as a display of leisure, has become an important and even necessary factor in the formation of the modern neoliberal Korean agent. The tension between the haves and have-nots being divided along family support in education (Byun and Kim 2010; Kim 2010; Lee and Koo 2006) is mapped onto images of the neighborhoods in Seoul of *Kangnam*, the trendy and socially prominent region south of the Han River, and *Kangpwuk* (or just not *Kangnam*), the traditional city center encompassing the historical capital of Seoul north of the River, with those who have capital as supporting their children with maternal showering of interest and care as well as family labor such as rides and tutoring arrangements while those without can “neither support their domestic children nor nurture parallel global dreams (Kang and Abelmann 2013: 4).”

This capitalistic tension and anxiety is what propels the latest fad in Korean analogies of class and social mobility of the “spoon discourse.” In this trope, people are born with “spoons” made of different materials, reminiscent of the Western idiom “born with a silver spoon.” As the discourse spread through the nation, various charts, personal questions, games, and self-diagnostic quizzes could be seen all over the Internet in an attempt to locate oneself in the scale.

Figure 6.2: Images of spoons and descriptions accompanying news article



(<http://news.joins.com/article/18949618>)

This image appeared in the conservative newspaper *JoongAng Ilbo* (JoongAng Daily) in 2015. Taking capitalistic determinism to the extreme, the discourse of the spoons on social media identifies the individual through a material and experiential criteria. The spoons, or categories of class, are gold, silver, bronze, and clay spoons, like Olympic medals. The caption lists the following information for each category: name, occupation, neighborhood, parents’ occupation, capital assets, a month’s average spending money, and preferred brand of dress. The phrase “true case (*silcey keyisu*)” again attempts to relay how “real” and “alive” this discourse is, and is an “accurate” reflection of societal norms. Yet in these discourses, there is no set standard as to how much capital one needs to amass to “qualify” for a particular tier, with purported figures varying widely. But overall, it becomes clear that there is this notion of “the full

package” of identity; it is not a singular criteria that one must meet, but to be considered of belonging to a particular tier, a person must demonstrate a variety of emblems. Not only are the individuals’ income and spending money reported, but the location (and therefore approximate price) of the parents’ house and their occupations (and therefore their approximate income level and purchasing power) is listed, demonstrating how the parents’ economic status has an undeniable effect on one’s upbringing and development of personhood. The golden spoon is said to live in a sprawling mansion in *Kangnam*; the silver spoon in a large apartment in an area of Seoul well known for its pocket of traditionally wealthy and powerful elite in *Kangpwuk*; the bronze spoon in a studio in *Kangpwuk*, and the clay spoon in a tiny rental in Pusan, the second largest city in Seoul which is becoming increasingly metropolitan and modern but still considered as “the rural countryside” by much of the population in Seoul.¹¹ The separation of these people

¹¹ Many an article like this was published in the late 1990s, capturing the different modes of fashion between Kangnam (on the left) and Kangpwuk (on the right). These reports were said to be “observational narratives,” but also received criticism for promoting artificial divisiveness among the people. Whichever is true, the sentiment remains in modern Seoul, providing a backdrop for discourses of class mobility and social reproduction.

Figure 6.3: Kangnam and Kangpwuk fashion



into categories of class based on their experiences and the emblems of wealth that they display can be understood as the manifestation of modern ideologies that imagine the self as a neoliberal product of his environment. By categorizing people, it limits the middle class from even considering the possibility of social mobility.

This sentiment of helplessness and impossible mobility stemming from a deterministic portrayal of figurehood is reflected in the following scene from the drama *Chengtamtong Aylisu*(청담동 엘리스). In fact, this is how one blogger writes out her thoughts on the drama:

In this new drama, there's something (the actress) Mwun Kunyeng says as her mantra. "L'effort est ma force." Instead of the tired English, it's in French, and it means "effort makes me" in Korean. I can empathize with the saying but anyone who has tried will probably think like this: "I try but I'm stuck. I try but nothing gets better. I try but there's no hope (<http://choh.tistory.com/157>)."

Figure 6.4: L'effort est ma force



Let's take a look at the following excerpt from the drama mentioned to see if we can find out the reason for the frustration and despair:

안목이요. 한세경씨는 안목이 후져요.

Your insight. Ms. Han, you have poor insight.

유학을 안 다녀온 게 문제라기보다

The problem is not that you haven't studied abroad

유학을 다녀올 수 없는 처지에서는

it's that if you're in a situation where you can't go abroad

그 정도 안목밖에 안 나온다는 거예요.

only so much insight can come out of that situation.

안목은 한세경씨가 아무리 노력한다고 해도 안 달라져요.

Insight doesn't change, no matter how hard you may try, Ms. Han Seykyeng.

안목이란 건 태어날 때부터 무엇을 보고 듣고 느낀 것에서 결정되거든요.

Insight depends on what you see, hear, and experience from the moment you are born.

이미 정해져있는 거라고요.

It is something that is already decided.

The scene occurs after a long shot (a full minute with no camera movement, fixed on her upper body) of the main character Han Seykyeng making an impassioned speech in French about her mantra of “L’effort est ma force (effort is my strength)” at a job interview. She is supposed to be read as impassioned and confident, proud of her accomplishments and ability to speak French, a foreign language enregistered as going a step above and beyond learning the “normalized” English. The phrase “l’effort est ma force” appears constantly throughout the series, and plays an important part in the construction and portrayal of Seykyeng’s identity as the phrase becomes representative of the Korean spirit of “effort (*velssimi*).” Though this phrase does not appear to be of

French origin, but rather a forced translation from the Korean in both language and spirit, it is imagined to be authentically French and serves as an index of Seykyeng's ambition and determination to succeed.

But at the interview, the mantra and the story of Korean perseverance she presents along with it does her more harm than good. Here, insight is framed as something that cannot be improved through personal effort. People are seemingly placed on a dichotomous plane divided by experience: people who have been abroad (*salta on salam*), and those who remained in Korea. However, when pressed by Ms. Han, whose determination to find out why she wasn't chose for the position, the interviewer reveals the true reason behind the decision. Her mantra of "l'effort est ma force," in combination with the set of emblems she brought to the interview – her dress, her bearing, her attitude – were all used to construct an indexical identity that was rhematized (Gal 2005) and given a subpar evaluation. Usually, insight is something one comes to possess through self-development, constructed into phrases using verbs such as "have" *anmoki issta/epsta* (to have/not have insight), or "improve" *anmokul kiwuta/kiluta* (grow/raise insight), or "acquire" *anmoki sayngkita* (gain insight). Here, the verb "come out" *naonta* 나온다(line 4) is used to convey the harsh evaluative impact of the statement. By using *naonta*, insight is no longer something that can be attained through personal effort, but the inevitable result of one's background that divulges the environment a person grows up in. The effect is crushing because the traditional admiration for study abroad as well as the neoliberal belief in effort are simultaneously obliterated. This moment serves as a glimpse into how strong this ideology can be; we see that her stellar scores on

standardized tests that were good enough to get her the interview, are given less weight than her *imagined* background.

This manufactured typification of the *Kangnam* person as a global cosmopolitan elite possessing the total package of all the right character traits (Kang and Abelmann 2011) is apparent throughout the drama. In another scene, the two main characters, Seykyeng and Jean-Thierry Cha, are again depicted as from opposite personal backgrounds. Seykyeng is a young woman from Seoul; the Cinderella figure the audience is supposed to root for. Jean-Thierry is the rich designer CEO of a fashion brand who left for France and returned with a reinvented French-Korean image; naturally, the prince figure.

As they enter the room, the first thing Jean-Thierry does is launch into an introduction of the dishes to Seykyeng. His introductory statement announcing that he will introduce the dishes assumes that Seykyeng must be unfamiliar with the authentic French cuisine about to be catered to the exclusive Chengtamtong party scene. The exchange double-voices the roles of a teacher and a student as he attempts to educate the ignorant young lady.

Jean-Thierry: 우선 음식 설명부터 할게요

Let's start by introducing the dishes.

Hors d'ouvres, 전채예요. **Consommé, potage**=

(they are) appetizers.

Ms. Han: =**Jambon cuit, terrine, escargots**

책에서 봤어요

I've seen them in books.

Jean-Thierry: 하여간 촌스럽긴. 발음은 좋네. 나보다 나아요

Always so uncouth. But your pronunciation is good. Better than mine.

Ms. Han: 열심히 연습했거든요. 꾸준히, 촌스럽게

Because I practiced very hard. Persistently, uncouthly.

Although the two characters both claim familiarity with the dishes, the way they “know” the dishes is constructed at opposing ends on an axis of differentiation. Jean-Thierry’s knowledge is acquired first hand, through experiencing the French culture as a part of his everyday life in France. Ms. Han, on the other hand, cheekily admits that she knows “about” them from reading about them in books, which Jean-Thierry immediately acknowledges to be uncouth. Ms. Han is aligned with adverbs such as ‘yelssimi,’ ‘persistently,’ and ‘uncouthly,’ which reinforces her Korean image while scaling Jean-Thierry as foreign. Yet since Jean-Thierry is supposed to be a high class ‘gentleman’ with courteous foreign manners, he offers her a compliment on her pronunciation, keeping him in line with Korean standards of modesty. Now this scene is obviously scripted and ridiculously over the top, as is characteristic of Korean dramas, but it still highlights the

metalinguistic awareness that Koreans have regarding ideologies of foreign language pedagogy. Whether or not we choose to believe Jean-Thierry's compliment of "But your pronunciation is good. Better than mine," as genuine or accurate; we see a heightened awareness regarding pronunciation in this scene. First, good pronunciation is *difficult* to acquire, even for those who have been abroad such as Jean-Thierry. Hence a triumphant return as a fluent speaker of English can be heralded and recognized as a meritocratic achievement. Second, good pronunciation is something that requires studious *effort* to learn within the geographical boundaries and linguistically limited Korea, as seen with Ms. Han. Lastly, good pronunciation cannot be *mastered* on native-like levels as a racially non-Korean foreigner (e.g. White person) is able to, as an entity encapsulated in a Korean body.

The ideology that authentic pronunciation is difficult for Koreans is also the theme of this next vignette. The female student - male teacher trope occurs again in this clip as well. The phoneme /f/ is highly salient as representative of English or other foreign languages (such as French) for Korean speakers. In classrooms, it is stressed that /f/ is a difficult phone for Koreans to pronounce, and extra attention is given. As the relationship of teacher and pupil is mapped out onto the characters, the relational power shifts in favor of the male speaker. In the following example, a scene from the Korean movie *Seducing Mr. Perfect* starring the transnational mixed-race Korean-American super star Daniel Henney and the Korean actress Uhm Jung-hwa, we can get a feel for the salience of /f/ and its notoriety in Korean culture. Daniel Henney plays the role of Robin Heiden, a corporate executive who insists on speaking English for the entire duration of the movie, in spite of the story being set in modern day Seoul. The reason for this unusual

practice is given early on in the movie; Uhm's character Mincwun's boss explains that Robin can understand Korean perfectly well, but will speak exclusively in English because he finds it challenging to speak it. This rationale is strangely reminiscent of a widespread ideology for English held by many Koreans, that production is difficult. However, his character has no problem displaying his fluency in Japanese at a company party, through which he demonstrates his advanced language skills and cements his character as a Transnational Elite. As they share a ride coming home after the party, Robin corrects Mincwun's English as she code-switches to English in a frustrated attempt to try to explain a Korean idiom that is too "authentic" for him to know because it is slang.

Mincwun: 백사리 낸 거죠, 뭐.

ppiksali nayn kecyo mwue.

They made a *ppiksali* (= they made a mistake)

Robin: **Ppiksali? What's that?**

Mincwun: 실수 한 거라구요. **Pault.**

silswu han kelakwuyo. Poltu.

They made a mistake. **Pault.**

Robin: **P- Sorry, I still don't...**

Mincwun: **F. A. U. L. T. Fault.**

Robin: **Oh, fault! Fault. F- You have to enunciate that.**

Mincwun: 으이구, 이래서 내가 외국인을 싫어해요.

uikwu, ilayse nayka woykukinul silh-ehayyo.

Eww, this is why I dislike foreigners.

While this string of interaction is admittedly and obviously scripted, it is glaringly indicative of the Korean people's awareness of the notorious issue of Koreans having difficulty with certain English phonemes. In spite of being the one whose linguistic knowledge was insufficient for a seamless conversation, Robin flips the tables of power as he assumes the role of a teacher, making the interaction not about *his* lack of Korean knowledge but *her* lack of English. Not only does he have the audacity to directly correct Mincwun's pronunciation, but goes so far as to giving her direct metalinguistic feedback on how to say the word "properly." Mincwun's ineffective attempts at repair backfire and instead situate her as a flustered, unsure speaker of English who is not comfortable with the language, unlike the golf players Ryu and Seo from the article above. Moreover, she needs to resort to spelling out the target word because her bad pronunciation – bad English – was unable to get her meaning across the first time. Through this series of blunders, Mincwun's figure shifts from the jetsetting, cosmopolitan white-collar career woman to essentially becoming in danger of being called a Bean Paste Girl.

What is even more interesting is the fact that the script itself is flawed. She obviously means "mistake" as that is what the correct translation for "ppiksali" would be. Yet "she" reaches for the word "fault" as "her" lexical choice, to enable the ensuing farce

surrounding English pronunciation. Daniel Henney, a native speaker of English, plays along as he is reading from the Korean-written script as well, and Robin focuses not on her poor lexical choice of “fault” but instead highlights her poor pronunciation. In this way, Mincwun is typified as a Korean speaker whose pronunciation is not good enough for successful communication with a native speaker of English. Media portrayals such as this episode both distribute and reinforce the language ideology that it is difficult for Koreans to attain good English pronunciation, as well as the ideology that the ability to pronounce these “difficult” phonemes cannot be obtained through regular public education. This in turn fuels the private education sector, only to be trumped by studying abroad or other routes of acquiring “better” pronunciation.

While Seykyeng’s character is portrayed linearly as the homey Korean girl learning to acquire the sets of emblems necessary to be identified as a *Kangnam* person in *Chengtamtong Alisu*, Mincwun’s character is subjected to dynamic constructions of identity. At the beginning of the movie, Mincwun declares her love for the glitzy city, and drops all the right typical emblems (Reyes 2004) of the modern cosmopolitan Seoul woman, embodying the figure of the Transnational Elite: organic restaurants, coffee, shopping, entertainment, and international travel. Visually on screen this is translated into images of a glamorous panorama of Seoul, luxury automobiles, designer sunglasses, a fancy cappuccino, and stiletto heels that are also associated with the figure and voicing of the Transnational Elite. The necessary emblem (Reyes 2004), or the clincher in her construction as the Transnational Elite is her use of the English phoneme /f/ when she says “coffee” as a Korean word, basing herself in the framework of Korean thus indexing her Korean-orientation, yet using the foreign phoneme to index foreignness, thus hinting

at the fabulous neoliberal potential she may have access to. She establishes an intimate familiarity with a lifestyle of consumption and international travel – the kind expected of Jean-Thierry, not Seykyeng. But through her linguistic debacle with Robin, she is immediately assessed as morally suspect when he says “the way I see it, you seem to have a special talent for deception,” leaving Mincwun first offended with her high pitched “huh?” then dumbfounded and speechless after he attempts to assuage the situation by adding “that’s a compliment from me,” which cements him as an immoral foreign businessman as well.

Just like the mediatized figures created and distributed by authoritative voices in the media were shown to tread among the overlapping yet contrastively constructed ideologies, these discourses are also taken up by the public in daily interactions. In these ways, modern Korean speakers avoid being labeled a morally lacking returnee, while still displaying desirable modernity. These seemingly disparate notions coexist in the complex linguascape of the English Korean language contact situation.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Through this dissertation, I trace how the Korean people are using phonemic variation as an authenticating tool for identity formation. I examine how the manifestation of foreign influence was transformed from a marker of snobbish, inappropriate flaunting, to a marker of the cool, sophisticated, intellectual global citizen, and is now on its way to becoming unmarked in spoken Korean as direct borrowings from foreign languages are on the rise. In particular, I look into how Koreans re-index certain phonemes and lexical items as old-fashioned, as well as how cosmopolitan identities are constructed against those figures that use (or are imagined to use) this style. I also explore the way Koreans employ the style as a status symbol, effectively “doing being” a modern, global Korean citizen of the world.

The manner in which a speaker produces any given utterance is reflective of his/her own identities as social beings. On a larger scale, it is also indicative of the history of the language that the speaker chooses to use. It may be the result of a conscious choice, or a subconscious move; in either case, the end product is the public demonstration of an alliance with the members of a particular community of practice or language ideology. These choices collectively shape the language that we speak, and provide thrust for language change. No matter what language they “choose” to speak in, the current generation of Korean speakers live in an increasingly neoliberal society in which they must engage in a precarious linguistic balancing act, striving to appear polished and modern, but not overly so. By highlighting how these different personas regiment the interpretation of what it means to be multilingual in South Korea, this

dissertation illustrates the complex politics of language in a globalizing world (Blommaert et al. 2005), and how that highly regarded “global citizen” may in fact be only a mirage.

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