Part I

Korean Overview
Chapter 1

Introduction

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Korean has emerged as an important world language both for an expanding constituency of learners and teachers of Korean as a foreign/second language, as well as for scholars and students of general and Korean linguistics. Thousands of heritage schools, elementary, intermediate and high schools, colleges and universities, private institutes and government agencies around the world offer Korean language instruction at a range of levels. The number of institutions offering Korean and, consequently, the number of students learning Korean is constantly on the increase in Australia, Europe, China, Japan, New Zealand, the former Soviet Union, and the United States. An ever-growing number of general and Korean linguists, linguistics students, and language educators are interested in the structure and use of Korean and its universal and typological features from diachronic, synchronic, and dynamic perspectives.

This edited volume, the *Cambridge Handbook of Korean Linguistics*, meets the immediate needs of a very broad audience, ranging from linguists working on linguistic universals and typology to students interested specifically in the structure of Korean, to teachers and learners of the language focused on practical matters of pedagogy. The volume is designed for an audience of readers who desire to learn about Korean language and linguistics as professionals (graduate students and instructors) as well as upper level undergraduates who have had a basic linguistics course.

Two features of the book distinguish it from previous linguistic overviews of Korean. First, in almost all cases we have presented contemporary Korean linguistic data in Korean script, *Hangul*, as well as in romanization. Learners of Korean as well as native speakers agree that *Hangul* is easier to learn and recognize than the various systems of romanization. We hope that presenting Korean data in *Hangul* will make the discussion more user-friendly to them. Second, wherever possible, we have introduced cross-linguistic data that either contrasts with or is similar to the facts of Korean...
under discussion. This is part of our effort to place Korean in a broader context, both among the world’s languages and within the Northeast Asian region where Korean is a central presence.


Part I includes six chapters that provide a general understanding of Korean, beginning with Chapter 1, this introduction. Chapter 2, “Phonology: An Overview”, by a longtime leader in the field, discusses some of the most salient and yet persistently controversial and significant phenomena in Korean phonology: lenis obstruent voicing, stop neutralization, consonant cluster simplification, consonant assimilation, consonantal fortition, Saissot, vowel deletion and insertion, vowel devoicing and assimilation, monophthongization, vowel harmony, and sound symbolism. The chapter focuses on the Seoul Standard Dialect. One salient and recurrent theme is the theoretical issue of the relative strength of each sound, both inherent and in its environment. Some sounds are held to be “stronger” than others; we see that these sounds are exploited not only in sound symbolism but also in the application or non-application of certain rules. Likewise, some positions are held to be phonologically strong: for example, the initial syllable as a whole is high on the hierarchy of relative strength in Korean. A related fact is that weak sounds in a weak environment are lowest in the hierarchy of strength and more prone to change. Boundaries play a significant role in Korean phonology and are analyzed as prosodic units in contemporary analyses. The Korean-specific basis of articulation, particularly obligatory unreleasing, results in many interesting weakening effects, including consonant cluster simplification, various assimilatory phenomena, and various consonant and vowel insertions by backward generalizations.

Chapter 3 presents an overview of issues in Korean syntax. The specific chapters on syntax address topics that have received attention in both traditional and contemporary investigations of Korean (morpho)syntax, such as anaphora (Han) and nominalizations (Yoon), as well as some that have not previously been investigated in depth, such as Sino-Korean person-denoting nominals (Kim and Sells). The chapter on Right Dislocation (Ko) deals with a construction that received relatively little discussion in traditional or early generative analyses but has emerged as a central testing ground for contemporary debates on movement, ellipsis, and related issues. Although the contribution by Han engages the familiar topic of anaphora, it highlights the benefits of the recent turn toward experimental investigations of syntactic phenomena. Finally, Kwon’s contribution deals with real-time processing of syntactic dependencies, which traditionally falls within the field of psycholinguistics.
Nevertheless, with the increasing adoption of psycholinguistic methodologies in the investigation of syntactic issues (see Han’s contribution), the findings discussed in the chapter are also relevant to questions debated in syntax proper, such as the possible unification of different types of syntactic dependencies. While the chapters by Ko, Han, and Kwon are surveys, those by Kim and Sells, and Yoon are not, although the latter tries to situate the proposed analysis against the backdrop of longstanding debates in the analysis of lexical nominalizations in generative grammar. Overall, the collection of chapters strikes a balance between familiar topics and newer, lesser-known, topics. The collection represents the state of the art in research methodologies employed in the investigation of syntax and related domains.

Chapter 4, “On the Centrality of Korean in Language Contacts in North-East Asia”, demonstrates that Korean has deeply influenced its immediate language neighbors: Japanese and Jurchen-Manchu. The time frame for the language contacts between Korean and its neighbors resulting in the absorption of a number of lexical and even grammatical loans can probably be defined as the fourth to eighth centuries for the Korean-Japanese interactions discussed in the chapter, and up to the seventeenth century for Korean and Jurchen-Manchu, with the upper time limit remaining unknown at this moment. The Japanese-Korean parallels discussed here have often been presented as proof of their genetic relationship. However, the chapter argues that the overwhelming majority of these parallels are found only in Central Japanese, the Japonic language with which Korean was in immediate and direct contact. On the other hand, most of the Korean-Jurchen/Manchu comparisons dealt with in this chapter have not previously been discussed. With few exceptions, they are found only in Jurchen and Manchu but not in other Tungusic languages. These exceptions are easily explained as loans from Jurchen or Manchu into the neighboring Southern or Northern Tungusic languages; they are never found in those Northern Tungusic languages such as Ewenki and Ewen that are located outside of the area. This chapter is important in advancing our understanding of Northeast Asia as a linguistic area, and the central role of Korean in it, resulting from the geographic location of Korean, as well as the historic cultural, political, and economic importance of its speakers.

Chapter 5, “Politeness Strategies in Korean”, describes the four chief domains of linguistic politeness in Korean: speech style, honorifics, terms of address, and gendered language. Based on characteristics of those four areas, the chapter proposes different variables governing when and how to use different components of polite language, in addition to two exceptional subcases of honorifics. The term “politeness” is used in this chapter in a broad sense to denote any linguistic expression that shows respect. Honorifics are a major component of linguistic politeness in this sense, but far from the only one.
Chapter 6, “Korean Kugyŏl”, focuses on loan character transcription systems. The background for this chapter is the fact that Chinese writing has been read and understood on the Korean peninsula for a long time, and in many regards the long history of writing on the peninsula has been the story of adapting the strengths and weaknesses of Chinese writing to the distinctive features of the Korean language. Loan character transcription systems for Korean started with the transcribing of proper names. The next step involved the practice of interpreting or reading Chinese characters in the vernacular; finally, methods were developed for writing sentences in the vernacular using Chinese characters. These practices represent a widespread phenomenon, found in many nations and periods of history, whereby a foreign writing system is used to write a local vernacular, beginning with the simple practice of reading the foreign writing in that vernacular, a practice which has been called “vernacular reading”. In Korea, the initial stage of sentence-unit transcriptions involved simply transposing Chinese character (sinograph) texts from Chinese word order into Korean; this evolved to a stage where grammatical particles and endings, so-called t’o in the Korean writing tradition, were inserted into the text. Korean kugyŏl developed as a method of facilitating the vernacular reading of Chinese texts in Korean as they are read. Kugyŏl appears to date from the Silla period.

Part II, on phonetics and phonology, contains five chapters covering the Korean sound system and its structure. Chapter 7, “Vowel Harmony”, deals with a longstanding controversy from both historical and theoretical linguistic perspectives. The chapter provides a description of Korean vowel harmony beginning with an overview of its historical and theoretical linguistic background. Middle Korean displays relatively rigorous patterns of vowel harmony; contemporary varieties show reduced but still complicated patterns that are confined to certain morphological contexts, as a result of historical changes. The description of Korean vowel harmony in this chapter is divided mainly into two parts: the relatively complete vowel harmony system in Middle Korean, and vowel harmony in contemporary (Chiefly Seoul) Korean. The former provides an historical and typological overview of the productive MK patterns, while the latter focuses on the exceptions and variations of the remnant harmony patterns in ideophones and verbal inflections. The remainder of the chapter introduces a number of theoretical approaches, from early generative treatments to more recent Optimality Theoretic analyses.

Chapter 8, “The Phonology and Phonetics of Korean Stop Laryngeal Contrasts”, examines the typologically rare three-way laryngeal contrast found in Korean. As also noted in Chapter 2, the manner contrasts in the Korean obstruent inventory have been the point of departure for many descriptive and theoretical contributions to the typology of laryngeal contrasts and related issues, such as feature theory. More recently, a diachronic change characterized by the redistribution of cue weights
from the consonantal to the vocalic portion of the signal, mirroring the common historical process of tonogenesis, has sparked renewed interest in the Korean laryngeal contrasts. The opportunity to observe such a change in vivo, and to compare its progression across different dialects, provides an ideal testing ground for theories of sound change. This chapter provides a review of the literature on the phonetic and phonological characterizations of the stop-laryngeal contrast, as well as a survey of dialectal and diachronic variation in its phonetic realization. The chapter closes with an apparent-time study documenting dialectal variation and change in the use of three acoustic cues to the contrast (VOT, f0, and H1-H2) in three dialects of Korean.

Chapter 9, “The Phonetics-Prosody Interface and Prosodic Strengthening in Korean”, takes up another topic introduced in Chapter 2: prosodic structure as an integral component of linguistic structure. Prosodic structure specifies how phonological constituents are to be grouped to form larger units within a given utterance; this is known as its delimitative function. Prosodic structure also helps determine which of the phonological constituents are produced with prominence relative to the other constituents; this is known as its culminative function. These functions entail strengthening of segmental realization (prosodic strengthening), often leading to linguistic enhancement of syntactic and paradigmatic contrast. Theories of the phonetics-prosody interface assume that phonetic realization of the spoken utterance is fine-tuned according to prosodic structure. In turn, crucial aspects of phonetic realization signal higher-order prosodic structure for listeners. This chapter reviews various features of the phonetics-prosody interface in Korean with a focus on prosodic strengthening. It begins by examining general theoretical issues bearing on the phonetics-prosody interface and prosodic strengthening, then goes on to introduce specific cases in Korean in conjunction with the intonational system and phonological processes.

Chapter 10, “Constituent Structure and Sentence Phonology of Korean”, continues with the discussion of prosodic phonology, but shifts the focus to the issue of how prosody relates to constituent structure in Korean. Korean is interesting because various segmental alternations are sensitive to different prosodic levels, thus providing a test case for prosodic phonology. Lenis stop voicing is a segmental alternation that correlates with the presence of a phonological phrase (Silva, 1988; Cho, 1990; inter alia). Moreover, intonation patterns coupled with segmental alternations supplant additional data for understanding prosodic structure in Korean. In Seoul Korean, an accentual phrase has been argued to have an LHLH accent; this unit also correlates with segmental alternations such as lenis stop voicing (Jun, 1993). The sentence phonology of Korean offers insights into the general issue of the prosody-syntax interface and provides many kinds of evidence on how constituent structure affects the organization of sentence phonology. The chapter first reviews earlier research, then proposes a revised version of the general theory of the prosody-syntax interface.
Chapter 11, “Effects of Linguistic Experience on the Perception of Korean Stops”, shows how linguistic experience plays a vital role in the perception and production of L2 speech sounds. In general, heritage language (HL) learners have a phonological advantage over non-heritage language (non-HL) learners. Previous research on the perception of Korean stops by beginning HL and non-HL learners of Korean has demonstrated the positive role of early exposure to the HL, and the result that HL learners perform more similarly to native speakers than do L2 learners. However, research on the perception of Korean stops by advanced learners of Korean is scarce. The study presented in this chapter examines the differences between advanced English-speaking HL and non-HL learners of Korean by looking at their cross-linguistic categorization patterns and their degree of accuracy in identifying Korean stops. As predicted, based on the speech learning model (SLM), HL learners’ performance was more similar to the Korean native speakers than was non-HL learners’ performance. The results suggest that early exposure to the HL does indeed give an advantage to HL learners over their advanced non-HL counterparts, and that longer exposure to the target language for non-HL learners has a positive but limited role in obtaining a native-like perception of the three-way contrasts in Korean stops.

Part III covers morphology and syntax. Chapter 12, “Right-Dislocation in Korean: An Overview”, analyzes the phenomenon whereby various types of elements may appear in postverbal position in Korean: arguments such as the subject, the object, the indirect object, and clausal complements may be dislocated to the right. Moreover, a variety of non-argument projections such as adverbials, prepositional phrases, relative clauses, and small clause predicates may also appear in a postverbal position. The chapter focuses on two basic issues on Right Dislocation Constructions (RDCs): (i) whether the RDC involves a mono-clausal or bi-clausal structure and (ii) whether postverbal elements undergo movement or are base-generated. The chapter also looks into differences among sub-varieties of RDCs in Korean, as classified by the grammatical and semantic function of the Right-Dislocated material, the type of the correlate in the main clause, and the number of dislocated items. Cross-linguistic implications of the Korean data for the current research on RDCs in other languages such as English, Dutch, German, and Bangla are also discussed.

Chapter 13, “Experimental Insights on the Grammar of Korean Anaphors”, introduces many recent studies on Korean anaphors using both off-line and on-line experimental methods to test structural and non-structural constraints on their interpretation and usage. The questions addressed include whether the anaphor is interpreted via binding or co-reference, whether and how much logophoricity or empathy determines the antecedent potential of the anaphor, the locality of the dependency between the anaphor and its antecedent, and the quantificational bind-ability of the anaphor. The chapter presents a synthesis of these
experimental studies on various types of Korean anaphoric forms, caki, casin, caki-casin and 3rd person pronouns.

Chapter 14, “Person-Denoting Nominals: Interpretations and Structures”, examines several sets of person-denoting nominals that show interesting patterns in terms of how they participate in compounding and how they take arguments and modifiers in the syntax. Using a few key exemplar nominals such as “writer”, “author”, and “passenger”, the chapter argues that the different structures in which the nominals appear relate to whether the denotation of a given use of the nominal is fundamentally dispositional, relating to a long-term property, or fundamentally episodic, relating to a particular event or situation. It illustrates several morphological and syntactic differences which it then accounts for in terms of these semantic properties. The last part of the chapter examines NP-internal syntax and develops an account for structures involving modifiers that are marked with genitive case, and those that lack genitive marking.

Chapter 15, “Lexical Nominalizations in Korean”, investigates the feasibility of an all-syntax approach to lexical nominalizations in Korean. In addition to productive syntactic nominalizations, Korean possesses a rich inventory of deverbal, i.e., lexical, nominalizations. The consensus in the field since the advent of the Lexicalist Hypothesis (Chomsky, 1970) that syntactic and lexical nominalizations are formed in different grammatical components has been questioned in recent approaches that advocate a unified syntactic analysis of all nominalizations. The investigation reveals that while there are lexical nominalizations that are argument-bearing, previous arguments purporting to support the separation of complex event nominals from simple event, or result, nominals, ultimately do not go through in Korean. Examination of a class of lexical nominalizations that bear some hallmarks of syntactic derivation leads to the same conclusion. Thus, deverbal lexical nominalizations in Korean do not support the kind of unified syntactic analysis of nominalizations that is currently dominant in the literature.

Chapter 16, “The Processing of Long-Distance Dependencies in Korean: An Overview”, examines the processing of three types of long-distance dependencies: a forward syntactic dependency, a backward syntactic dependency, and a backward referential dependency. First, despite differences in surface word order (forward vs. backward dependency) and optionality in dependency formation (syntactic vs. referential dependency), backward syntactic and referential dependencies show a processing asymmetry of subject/object gap sentences similar to that seen in forward syntactic dependencies, and they all elicit similar brain responses (Kwon, 2008; Kwon et al., 2010, 2013), despite occasional claims to the contrary in the human natural language processing literature. However, given that views among some typologists that backward dependencies are much more limited in distribution (Dryer, 1992) and subject to more linguistic constraints (Lakoff, 1968; Kuno, 1972;
Mittwoch, 1983) than forward dependencies, processing of a backward dependency may be more difficult or less efficient (cf. Hawkins, 1994, 1999, 2004). Likewise, although dependency formation is active and immediate in both syntactic and referential dependencies (Kazanina et al., 2007; van Gompel & Liversedge, 2003), the parser is “more cautious” in the processing of referential dependencies (Kwon & Sturt, 2014). Finally, dependency formation may be affected by the relative importance of linguistic cues in a given language. In Korean, dependency formation is more strongly motivated by discourse context than in English (Kwon & Sturt, 2013).

Part IV covers semantics and pragmatics. Chapter 17, “Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity in Korean Grammar”, aims to give an integrated account of how subjectivity and intersubjectivity are coded in Korean sentence endings, how such suffixes are diachronically derived from their source constructions, and what typological and socio-cultural factors motivate the emergence and proliferation of such suffixes. Korean has a rich inventory of sentence endings that perform various grammatical and discourse functions, including tense/aspect, subject/addressee honorification, modality, evidentiality, and performativity. All these functions are coded as inflectional suffixes. The chapter surveys how these suffixes index the speaker or both the speaker and addressee as an integral component in their semantic structure. It then examines how such (inter)subjective inflectional suffixes have diachronically been grammaticalized from non-subjective source constructions. It demonstrates that the genesis of such suffixes from morphemes, words, or larger constructions obeys universal patterns, including unidirectional grammaticalization principles, and conforms to generally unidirectional semantic shifts, including (inter)subjectification. The chapter shows that in Korean and in other languages, subjectification tends to lead to intersubjectification and not vice versa. Finally, the chapter argues that the relatively extensive diversity of inflectional suffixes in Korean, especially intersubjective suffixes, is due to two facts. First, typologically, in contrast to languages such as English, Korean has a typical SOV, head-final syntax and a typical agglutinative morphology. These syntactic and morphological properties have contributed to the genesis of a large set of sentence endings with highly diverse grammatical functions. They constitute the territory of the speaker’s various modalities, attitudes, and viewpoints vis-à-vis the propositional content on the one hand and the addressee in pragmatic context on the other. Second, the time-honored cultural values of hierarchism and collectivism as well as recent dynamic socio-economic mobilities in Korean society and culture are responsible for the genesis of both fossilized and emergent suffixes in sentence endings.

Chapter 18, “Discourse Studies in Korean”, surveys research over the last few decades on discourse analysis in Korean linguistics. Since the 1980s, a number of Korean linguists, inspired by research adopting functional
approaches to language broadly construed, have explored the relationship between discourse and grammar, dealing with topics such as information flow, choice of NPs in discourse, word order variability, case markers, pragmatic functions of clausal connectives and sentence-enders, grammaticalization, cohesion and coherence, text structures, and so on. In the 1990s and 2000s, discourse analysts have explored the relationship between conversation, social action, and grammar, introducing the assumptions and methodology of conversational analysis into discourse analysis. The chapter provides a brief overview of major findings and research topics in analyses of conversational data in Korean linguistics in terms of (i) turn-taking, turn-constructional units, and turn increments; (ii) interactional functions of some clausal connectives and sentence-ending suffixes; and (iii) other interaction-based studies of topics such as repair, demonstratives, reported speech, and so on. It also discusses discourse studies carried out from the perspectives of sociolinguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The chapter concludes with a survey of issues and future topics for further research, and related research areas such as corpus linguistics.

Chapter 19, "Metaphoric and Metonymic Patterns with Body-Part Term", investigates the conceptual mappings of conventional figurative expressions, specifically idioms and collocations containing the body-part term nwun "eye(s)" in Korean. Working within the framework of conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), the study explores the types of conceptual shift that give rise to extended meanings and discusses how extension mechanisms draw on shared features between source and target domains. Common Korean expressions involving the eyes relate to vision, persons, time, events/processes, perception (e.g., attention, attraction, interest, judgment), mind activities (e.g., thinking, knowing, understanding), and emotions (e.g., anger, avarice, surprise). These figurative expressions are motivated by the basic experiences of eye behavior, eye appearance, and vision, as well as by our interactions with people and environments. The findings of this study contribute to our understanding of the influence of embodiment in language in general and in Korean in particular.

Chapter 20, "Wh-indefinites", investigates the longstanding and controversial topic of the indefinite reading of so-called wh-words in Korean. The chapter reviews arguments regarding their historical development, typological observation, grammatical properties, and processing strategies.

Chapter 21, "Expletive Negation in Korean", provides a unified analysis of the phenomena known as expletive negation (EN), focusing on Korean data. Contrary to the traditional term "expletive negation", the chapter proposes that the particular type of negation in a variety of contexts has semantic content that can be analyzed on two dimensions: (i) in terms of licensing, there is a crucial semantic dependency on nonveridicality, involving, e.g., polarity items; (ii) in terms of semantico-pragmatic factors, there