Korean heritage language education in the United States: The current state, opportunities, and possibilities

Jin Sook Lee, University of California, Santa Barbara, and Sarah J. Shin, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Introduction

The idea for this special issue of the Heritage Language Journal on Korean grew out of a symposium on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the Korean American Community at the 2005 International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) conference in Wisconsin, Madison organized by Jin Sook Lee and Adrienne Lo. The broad participation and interest in the symposium made it clear that there was a need to bring together some of the current works that address heritage language education specifically for Korean Americans. The goal of this special issue is to showcase emerging scholarship on Korean heritage language maintenance and education. In this introductory paper, we survey the field for studies that are particularly relevant to our discussion and highlight areas that require further investigation. We begin by examining the term ‘heritage language learner’.

Korean Heritage Language Learners

There is much debate over what characteristics constitute a heritage language learner (Wiley & Valdés, 2000). In the U.S., the term ‘heritage language’ has been used to refer to an immigrant, indigenous, or ancestral language that a speaker has a personal relevance and desire to (re)connect with (Wiley, 2005). According to Cummins (2005, p. 586), “in principle this refers to all languages including English, but in practice it refers to all languages except English” in the North American context. The term ‘heritage language’ has been used synonymously with ‘community language,’ ‘native language,’ and ‘mother tongue’ to refer to a language other than English used by immigrants and possibly their children. In addition, heritage language students have been referred to as ‘native speakers,’ ‘quasi-native speakers,’ ‘residual speakers,’ ‘bilingual speakers,’ and ‘home-background speakers’ (Valdés, 1997). The range of terms reflects the diversity in proficiency and linguistic status among heritage language speakers.

It is not clear “whether it is the affiliation with an ethnolinguistic group or the proficiency in the language that is more salient in determining who a heritage language learner is” (Wiley 2001, 30). Van Deusen-Scholl (2003, 221) characterizes heritage language learners as “a heterogeneous group ranging from fluent native speakers to non-speakers who may be generations removed, but who may feel culturally connected to a language”. She distinguishes heritage learners from learners with a heritage motivation. The former are those who have achieved some degree of proficiency in the home language and/or have been raised with strong cultural connections, while the latter are “those that seek to reconnect with their family’s heritage through language, even though the linguistic evidence of that connection may have been lost for generations” (Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003, 222). Although this distinction may help clarify our understanding of what it means to be a heritage language learner, the relationship of ethnolinguistic affiliation and prior linguistic proficiency on students’ instructional needs and their acquisition is a question that awaits research.

For pedagogical purposes, Valdés (2001, p. 38) defines a heritage language speaker as “someone who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken and who speaks or at least understands the language and is to some degree bilingual in the home...
language and in English." The majority of Korean learners in the U.S. fit this definition. They are children of first-generation Korean immigrants who grow up hearing and speaking Korean to varying degrees in the home and community. As young children, they are often bilingual in Korean and English although many become English-dominant once they begin school (Shin & Milroy, 1999). In the majority of cases, while their parents speak almost exclusively Korean (Hing & Lee, 1996; Min, 2000; Shin, 2005), second-generation Korean Americans communicate predominantly in English. An overwhelming 77% of the second-generation Korean Americans in Min's (2000) study report speaking only or mostly English to their parents after the age of five.

Aside from permanent immigrants, however, there has been an increase in the number of temporary residents from Korea in recent years. Almost 94,000 foreign students and temporary exchange visitors from Korea were admitted to the U.S. in 2002 (BCIS Statistical Yearbook cited in Jachimowicz, 2003), including “goose families” (koryo kajok), where the father stays behind in Korea to support his wife and children who go overseas for the children’s education (Digital Chosunilbo, 2006). The children of these temporary residents clearly have different motivations for studying Korean since they expect to return to Korea after completing their college education in the United States. This social phenomenon is likely to change the characteristics of the growing pool of Korean heritage language speakers as they will have had more exposure, interactions, and ties with Korean culture than the current population of Korean heritage speakers.

Furthermore, an increasing number of Korean language learners come from homes where Korean is not spoken on a day-to-day basis. Included in this group are children who are adopted into American families, children of mixed heritage, and third or fourth-generation Korean Americans who grow up hearing and speaking predominantly English at home. They are learning Korean to reconnect to their heritage, as well as to define their ethnic and cultural identity (Cho, Cho, & Tse, 1997; He, 2006; Hinton, 1999; Kondo-Brown, 2003; Lee, 2002). These heritage learners clearly have socio-psychological needs that are different from those who are learning Korean as a foreign language (Cho, Cho, & Tse, 1997; Kondo-Brown, 2003; Lee, 2002, 2005b; Peyton, Ranard, & McGinnis, 2001; Valdés, 1997; Wiley, 2001). As Korean is increasingly learned by individuals with little or no direct access to daily interactions in the language, a definition of the Korean heritage language learner must be sufficiently broad to include a variety of life circumstances, histories, and language learning motivations. Based on the definitions proposed by Valdés (2001) and Van Deusen-Scholl (2003), we define Korean heritage language learners as those who have an ethnolinguistic affiliation to the Korean heritage, but may have a broad range of proficiency from high to none in Korean oral or literacy skills.

Koreans in America

Koreans are a visible and significant part of American society. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are over 1 million Koreans living in the U.S., of whom 30% are U.S.-born (U.S. Census, 2000). Korean immigrants are geographically more dispersed than other recent Asian immigrants, but a substantial majority of them are concentrated in large metropolitan areas, such as Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Washington, DC. Large-scale movement of Korean immigrants began only after the passage of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, which abolished the national origins quota system. The majority of the immigrants who arrived in the U.S. in the 1970s and 80s were college-educated professionals from Korea’s urban middle class who came seeking economic advancement or political freedom from the military-controlled Korean government.

In recent years, however, the desire for better education for children has become one of the chief reasons for pursuing the immigration route among Korean nationals. While English has traditionally been the most popular foreign language in Korea, there has been an intense renewed interest in learning English in recent years, as is the case in practically every corner of the world. In addition, dissatisfied with the Korean educational system (which emphasizes rote learning and extreme competition for admission to the top universities), more Koreans are opting to educate their children outside of Korea. For many Korean parents, American education presents more opportunities for their children to study at top-tier universities, and to gain access to curriculum and instruction geared for developing children’s creativity and problem solving skills, which are increasingly valued in today’s job markets (see also, Shin, 2006). Hence, it is understandable that the primary focus among Korean parents is on English language acquisition, which explains their diminishing efforts and investments in their children’s heritage language maintenance (Lee, 2002; Shin, 2005).

A Brief Review of the Korean Language

With King Sejong’s publication of the Korean phonetic alphabet, hangul, in 1446, writing became accessible to all citizens of Korea regardless of their social class. Each of the twenty-four letters in modern hangul represents a single consonant or vowel (see Table 1). Today, in Korea, a selected number of Chinese characters are still used in conjunction with the hangul alphabet, since many Chinese words have become an integral part of the Korean vocabulary (Hurh, 1998).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hangul (Hangul)</th>
<th>Syllable structure: CVC + CVC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ㅏ ㅐ ㅑ ㅒ ㅓ ㅔ ㅕ ㅖ ㅗ ㅘ ㅙ ㅚ ㅛ ㅜ ㅝ ㅞ ㅟ ㅠ ㅡ ㅢ ㅣ</td>
<td>14 consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ㅏ ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅜ ㅠ</td>
<td>10 vowels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: i-oe</td>
<td>Han-gul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Korean is an agglutinative language whereby affixes are added to the root to form new words. Example (1) below illustrates how tense is indicated through the addition of suffixes to the Korean root 'hata' (do):

1. ha.ta—do(es) |
   hat.ss.ta—did |
   hay.wass.ta—have done |
   ha.ko.iss.ta—am doing (now)

Korean is a typologically Subject-Object-Verb language with relative freedom of word order (Martin, 1992; O'Grady, 1991; Kim, 1997). This freedom is possible in Korean because the grammatical roles of each constituent in a sentence are marked by postpositional
case markers/particles, as shown in example (2). Subjects in Korean take the nominative marker, -ka (following a vowel) or -i (following a consonant), while direct objects in Korean are followed by the accusative marker, -(l)ul. Indirect objects in Korean take a dative marker, -hanthey, or -eykey, while the topic marker, -(n)un, topicalizes nominative and accusative nouns by replacing their respective case markers, as shown in example (3). In addition, a class of particles called 'delimiters' conveys information carried in other languages by articles, adverbs, prosodic elements, or word order. Delimiters carry quantificational information and do not make the structural distinctions typically associated with case (O'Grady, 1991). In fact, as examples (4) and (5) show, the same delimiter used with a dative particle can appear with a subject in lieu of the nominative marker, -i.

John-NOM Sue-DAT ball-ACC give-PAST-DECL
'John gave a ball to Sue.'

(3) John-un Sue-hanthey kong-ul cwu-n-ta.
John-TOP Sue-DAT ball-ACC give-PRES-DECL
'As for John, he gives the ball to Sue.'

(4) John-i Sue-hanthey-man kong-ul
John-NOM Sue-DAT-DEL ('only') ball-ACC
cwu-n-ta.
give-PRES-DECL
'John gives the ball only to Sue.'

John-DEL ('only') Sue-DAT ball-ACC give-PRES-DECL
'Only John gives the ball to Sue.'

Korean is also a null-subject language. However, not only the subject of the sentence but also any or all of the nominal arguments of a predicate (i.e., verbs, adjectives, and the copula), case markers attached to argument noun phrases, and even the predicate itself, can be dropped in Korean. A dropped argument or predicate is presumably "old information" that the speaker thinks the listener will be able to recover from the context. In colloquial speech, any of the three nouns in example (2) can be omitted when it represents old information. Furthermore, case particles can also be omitted; for example, accusative markers are dropped quite frequently as well as nominative markers, which are deleted less frequently.

The Korean language has one of the most complex honorific systems in the world, which reflects the highly rigid and stratified Korean social structure with associated codes of etiquette to guide interpersonal behavior (Jo, 2001). To use honorifics in Korean, a speaker must make a decision about the social relationship with the addressee, as well as the subject and context of the talk (Kim, 1997). The speaker then makes a host of lexical and grammatical choices depending on his/her decision. For example, if the subject of the talk occupies a higher status (by age, family relationship, or social status) the subject honorific morpheme -si is attached to the end of the verb root 'cwu' ('give') as in example (6).

(6) apeci-ka na-hanthey kong-ul cwu-si-ess-ta.
apeci-NOM I-DAT ball-ACC give:HON:PAST-DECL
'Father gave (HON) me a ball.'

To increase the degree of deference, the honorific nominative marker kkeyse may replace the nominative marker -ka in the above example. Korean grammar also features non-subject honorification, which replaces the verb with a suppletive form if the referent of a non-subject has a higher social status than that of the subject. This is shown by the suppletive verb 'tuli' (give) in example (7):

(7) nay-ka apeci-kkey kong-ul tuli-ess-ta.
I-NOM apeci-HON:DAT ball-ACC give:HON-PAST-DECL
'I (humbly) gave a ball to father.'

To pay respect to the addressee, or when speaking in a formal situation, a suffix indicating politeness -upni is added, as illustrated in example (8).

(8) apeci-kkeyse o-si-ess-upni-kka?
apeci-HON:NOM come-HON-PAST-FORMAL-INT
'Did father come (HON)-opacity?'

Here, as in example (6), the subject honorific morpheme -si is used since the subject ‘father’ is the target of the speaker’s deference.

Students of Korean experience a great deal of difficulty learning the honorific system, which is one of the most important sociolinguistic skills to master in Korean. For students who are accustomed to English as their main language, learning to use honorific endings properly can be exceedingly difficult (Jo, 2001). Although some basic rules systemize the various styles of honorific verb endings (e.g., relative ages of the speakers), conversational contexts and relationships between speakers complicate the 'appropriate' choice of honorifics. To illustrate this complexity, Jo (2001) presents an erroneous sentence produced by a heritage speaker of Korean in a Korean language class at an American university:

(9) *Hyeng kkeyse nun
Responsibility for maintenance and development of the native language is usually left to the family, and public school support for the parents, and cultural isolation (Rumbaut, 2000; Tse, 1998, 2001). The rate of heritage language attrition among second generation time, rejection of the home language is accompanied by feelings of embarrassment, frustration over the widening cultural gap with parents, and children living the same household do not understand each other.

Observations of different communities that come into contact with a majority language have shown that there is almost always a source of frustration among second generation Korean Americans who are trying to learn the language well enough to be accepted by the Korean-speaking community.

In sum, the intricate honorific system in Korean makes the language especially difficult for those who are trying to learn it. On the one hand, students who are not familiar with the subtle differences in the degree of formality and respect represented by the various lexical and grammatical choices, like the student in example (9), may err on the side of being more cautious and sound overly formal and respectful. At the same time, speakers who do not use proper forms of honorifics may come across as rude. For heritage learners of Korean, the use of honorifics poses special problems because Koreans are naturally less forgiving of language mistakes made by Korean Americans than they are of non-Koreans learning Korean. Because honorific use is such an integral part of the Korean language and culture, those who ‘break the rules’ are likely to be regarded as not genuinely Korean. This sort of sentiment is a major source of frustration among second generation Korean Americans who are trying to learn the language well enough to be accepted by the Korean-speaking community.

Because most Korean heritage speakers are bilingual, it is quite possible that their Korean language development and use may differ from those of monolingual Korean speakers (Cook, 1991). Studies on the pragmatic functions of bilingual language mixing provide some insights into the differences in values, meanings, and stylistic roles that bilingual speakers assign to each of their languages (Arnfast & Jorgensen, 2003; Dolitsky & Bensimon-Choukroun, 2000; Fallis-Valdés, 1976; Jisa, 2000; Gumperz,1982, Lee, 2005a; Nwoye, 1993; Romaine, 1989; Shin & Milroy, 2000; Tay, 1989), but we do not completely understand the full range of communicative loads carried by students across different contexts, or the level of proficiency in each language they need to fulfill such demands. Linguistic and cultural identity, language attitudes, and language learning opportunities undoubtedly play a significant role in determining how competent children become in the heritage language and their purposes for using the language (Wiley & Valdés, 2000). Further research is needed to account for the processes by which language attitudes are formed, identities shift, and learning opportunities are taken up, to achieve better heritage language development outcomes.

**Facets of Language Loss or Maintenance**

Observations of different communities that come into contact with a majority language have shown that there is almost always a complete shift in language use within three generations (Fishman, 1989). In the typical scenario, the first generation speaks the native language, while the second generation is bilingual to some degree followed by the majority-language-speaking third generation. However, recently, an increasing number of language-minority communities are undergoing a complete language shift within two generations with no intervening bilingual generation (Wiley, 2001). This accelerated shift creates major communication problems, as parents and children living the same household do not understand each other.

For many immigrant students, home language attrition begins as soon as they enter kindergarten (Shin, 2002; Wong Fillmore, 1991, 2000), but the steepest decline is observed in early adolescence, ages 8-14 (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Rumbaut, 2007). During this time, rejection of the home language is accompanied by feelings of embarrassment, frustration over the widening cultural gap with parents, and cultural isolation (Rumbaut, 2000; Tse, 1998, 2001). The rate of heritage language attrition among second generation Koreans is one of the highest among Asian Americans. Lopez (1996) showed that in Los Angeles, only 4% of parents reportedly spoke English at home while 78% of American-born ethnic Koreans reported speaking English at home.

Responsibility for maintenance and development of the native language is usually left to the family, and public school support for the development of Korean (as for other less commonly taught languages) at the K-12 level is still rare. Unlike Spanish, which has
traditionally been offered in bilingual education programs in elementary school and as a foreign language subject in high schools in the U.S., Korean is typically offered formally for the first time at the university level. (Most major U.S. universities now offer courses in Korean as a foreign language.) Brod and Welles (2000) report a 34% increase in enrollment in Korean language programs in the U.S. (from 1995 to 1998), making it the third largest growth area in foreign language instruction. This growth was largely attributed to increasing numbers of heritage language learners voluntarily seeking opportunities to (re)gain fluency in their heritage language through foreign language courses (Hinton, 1999). In fact, heritage learners comprise about 30% of the enrollment in college-level Korean language courses. A similar pattern is observed in other less commonly taught languages (Gambhir, 2001; King, 1998). The expansion of Korean language programs in U.S. universities coincided with a rapid increase in the number of second-generation Korean American students entering college (You, 2001), leading some programs to establish separate tracks for Korean heritage learners. UCLA, for example, introduced its first Korean heritage language track in 1996. Various curricular approaches and methods, such as a focus on basic literacy skills (Sohn, 1997), topics-based instruction (Shin & Kim, 2000), and skills-based approaches (You, 2001), have been implemented with differing degrees of success.

Although heritage language maintenance is a challenge for families, there is ample evidence of its benefits. Research has shown that heritage language maintenance is associated with positive outcomes for immigrant children across different communities. For example, compared with their English monolingual counterparts, bilingual students have been reported to achieve significantly higher grades (Bankanston & Zhou, 1995; Dolson, 1985; García-Vázquez, Vázquez, López, & Ward, 1997; Hao & Bonstead-Stead, 1998; S. Lee, 2002; Portes & Schauffler, 1995; Rumberger & Larson, 1998), higher standardized test scores (S. Lee, 2002), lower drop-out rates (Rumberger, 1998); greater educational and occupational aspirations (Portes & Schauffler, 1995; Stanton-Salaza & Dornbusch, 1995; Suarez, 2002), and greater cognitive flexibility (Cummins, 1981; Hakuta, 1986; Peal & Lambert, 1962). Furthermore, children of immigrants who have strong competence in the home language have higher self-esteem (Phinney et al., 2001; Stallikas & Gavaki, 1995), a greater sense of belonging (Cho, 2000; Imbens-Bailey, 1996), greater ability to seek support (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995) and a stronger sense of linguistic and cultural identity (Feuerverger, 1991; Imbens-Bailey, 1996; Laroche, Kim, Hui, & Tomiu, 1998; Lee, 2002; Okeiani, 1997; Pigott & Keroche, 2005). In addition, heritage language development helps ensure strong parent-child communication and improved family relationships (Fuligni, 1999; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Rumbaut, 2000; Tseng & Fuligni, 2000; Wong Fillmore, 2000).

A major challenge facing language minority communities is ensuring intergenerational transmission of the heritage language. To better understand how intergenerational transmission can be achieved, Campbell & Christian (2003) discuss the need for more research into the role of school systems, social institutions, and historical experiences of particular language communities, as well as language ideologies, proficiency assessment that is suitable for heritage speakers, and literacy development. Moreover, previous work has suggested a range of variables that may influence language maintenance, including political, social and demographic factors such as number of speakers, proximity to homeland, and ethnolinguistic vitality; cultural factors such as heritage language schools, attitudes, ethnic identity, and family ties; and linguistic factors such as linguistic practices and the status of the language (Baker, 2006; Cronklin & Lourie, 1983; Fishman, 1991; Veltman, 1983). However, the relative importance of these factors in the process of language maintenance is unclear and debatable (Baker, 2006; Lee & Suarez, 2007). We currently know relatively little about why and how some children become bilingual while others do not (Shin, 2005). Much more research would be required of different groups of children who take different routes to bilingualism in childhood as well as how their bilingualism is perceived and valued to fully understand heritage language maintenance processes. Such studies are needed in classrooms, homes, and communities (including online communities) that strongly influence children’s communication and socialization patterns.

The State of Korean Heritage Language Education

Korean American children have limited opportunities to develop bilingualism in the current U.S. educational system. Heritage language education has existed in the form of weekend schools, which are community-based programs that offer language/culture instruction for a few hours per week. According to the U.S. Korean Embassy, there are approximately 1,200 Korean community language schools in the U.S. with a total student enrollment of about 60,000. Approximately 260 of these schools are in the Los Angeles area alone and 210 in the New York area. The majority of Korean community schools are operated by Korean Christian churches and are staffed by volunteers from the community. Ready access to existing space and resources makes Korean churches a prime location for holding heritage language classes. An interesting topic that has received little attention is the role of religious institutions on Korean heritage language teaching. This area requires further investigation (see Pak, 2003). In addition to language classes, Korean community schools may offer cultural activities such as Korean dance, music, art, and Tae Kwon Do. National organizations such as the National Association for Korean Schools (NAKS) and the Korean School Association of America (KSAA) support community language schools by publishing professional journals, newsletters, and instructional materials, and by organizing annual conferences and workshops for teachers.

Despite their established existence, community language programs in general have had little prestige and visibility in the broader community (Tse, 2001). They suffer from lack of recognition by public education systems, which generally view work done in heritage schools as extraneous and unrelated to mainstream education. Furthermore, heritage language schools are plagued with internal problems and challenges. For example, studies have shown a weak correlation between heritage language school attendance and proficiency in the language in question (Cho, 2000; Lee 2002). Teaching techniques that poorly address the learning styles of Korean American youths, lack of motivation by students who resent having to go to school on weekends, and lack of professional development of teachers all contribute to low success rates (Lee, 2002). In addition, students are often discouraged by teaching materials that have direct relevance to their lives. For instance, in some heritage programs, Korean history texts have been used to teach grammar, but with little or no background knowledge of Korean history, many heritage learners find this sort of language instruction tedious. A better learning outcome may be achieved with texts that have direct significance to heritage learners such as essays about Korean American life experiences.

It is becoming evident that maintenance efforts of families and ethnic communities alone are insufficient to overturn the shift to English monolingualism. Proficiency in the heritage language should not only be important for heritage students and families, but also be valued by non-heritage language users in the community. There is a critical need to raise awareness of public school teachers and
administrators of the need for heritage language education and maintenance (Compton, 2001). One way to do this might be for heritage language communities to collaborate with public school systems to offer introductory language and culture classes for public school teachers as part of their professional development (Shin, 2006). In addition, public school teachers and administrators have to be informed about the critical importance of heritage languages in the lives of immigrant students, particularly the devastating effect on family relationships when parents and children cannot communicate with one another due to a language barrier (Fishman, 1991; Shin, 2005; Wong Fillmore, 2000).

Other possibilities may include integrating the heritage language in the school curriculum by offering it as a foreign-language subject and awarding foreign language academic credit for work done in community heritage schools. Chen (1996) reports that enrollment in Chinese language schools in southern California increased once students could receive foreign language credit from their local public schools for studying Chinese at community schools. Similarly, since the Educational Testing Service offered Korean as the ninth foreign language for its SAT II testing program in 1997 (Foundation for SAT II Korean, n.d.; Min, 2000) there has been a slight increase in student enrollment including both non-heritage learners and heritage language learners (Kim, 2003) and a steady rise in students electing to take the SAT II in Korean. Thus, including Korean as a subject for standardized tests and the awarding of foreign language credit for work done in community heritage schools may help students to see their heritage language as a legitimate and valued entity, and hence motivate them to maintain their languages (Lee, 2002).

Apart from offering Korean as a foreign-language subject, a more effective solution for maintaining Korean may be to integrate it more fully into the regular school-day curriculum (see also, Feuerverger, 1989; Tse 2001b). Examples of this integration can be found in dual immersion programs that follow an enrichment bilingual educational model. The first Korean/English dual language program started in Los Angeles in 1992 at Cahuenga School, and expanded to Denker Avenue School and Wilton Place Schools in 1993. These programs have been recognized by the California Department of Education for excellence, and their students, many of whom are Korean heritage learners, have consistently outperformed their monolingual peers on national standardized tests (Merrill, 2002).

Other opportunities to develop proficiency in the heritage language can also be pursued. For example, there is a great deal of interest in what the Internet can offer immigrants in keeping connected with people and current events in the heritage country as well as in heritage language exposure and practice (Lee, 2006). Further research on the role of technology and the Internet in heritage language education and maintenance is greatly needed. In addition, more heritage speakers are taking advantage of opportunities available through study abroad programs to (re)gain proficiency in their heritage language. In fact, the majority of the participants in study abroad programs in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are heritage language learners (Rubin, 2004). The University of California Education Abroad Program reported that three quarters of the 252 applications for 2005-2006 came from heritage speakers (personal communication, March 6, 2008). The effect of study abroad programs on heritage language learning is another topic that needs further study especially in light of the growing number of institutions’ emphasis on global education.

The Articles in This Issue

The current issue presents three research articles based on recent doctoral dissertations and a commentary on the future direction of Korean heritage language education.

In the first article, Eunjin Park investigates how parents and grandparents in three-generational Korean American households socialize young children through their use of a particular linguistic feature in Korean, the verb-suffix –ta. By examining over 70 hours of spontaneous talk-in-interaction in the family setting, Park shows that utterances ending in –ta are used mostly by Korean adults to socialize children into culturally-expected behavior and to warn them of the negative consequences of undesirable behavior, thus reinforcing culturally asymmetrical power relationships among members of different generations in Korean American families. Park argues that learning the socially appropriate uses of linguistic markers such as –ta is made possible largely through sustained family interaction and highlights the importance of observational opportunities and a community of practice in children’s acquisition of the rules of polite speech. The study also stresses the value of three-generational households, where children can observe or participate in interactions among interlocutors of different status. In other words, children can learn how to speak with someone older by observing how their parents speak with their grandparents. Although heritage language classrooms can and do teach the pragmatics of the various linguistic markers in Korean, Park argues that it is mainly through meaningful and sustained interaction with Korean-speaking family members that children learn to master socially appropriate speech.

The fundamental assumption underlying the second article is that language maintenance is profoundly connected to speakers’ attitudes and values. In her article “Korean Heritage Language Maintenance and Language Ideology,” Mihyon Jeon explores ways in which language ideology is linked to the maintenance of Korean. In a three-year, multi-site ethnographic study, she examines the range of language ideologies espoused by individuals in different phases of life. As a long-term participant observer in three separate venues—a university Korean language class of mostly heritage Korean speakers, a community-based ESL program for Korean American senior citizens, and the home of a recent Korean immigrant family with teenage children—Jeon provides a lens into the complex range of language ideologies held by first- and second-generation Korean immigrants. She cross-analyzes the language attitudes of the mostly Korean-speaking elders in the community with respect to those held by the largely English-speaking second generation (i.e., the university students) as well as those of a recently emigrated father who insists that his children speak only English. Jeon concludes that language ideologies can be placed on a continuum ranging from assimilationist on the one end to pluralist on the other. She argues that language ideologies are continuously shaped by changing life circumstances and that promoting bilingualism at the societal level is a critical requirement in any language maintenance effort.

Turning the focus from the family and the importance of cross-generational transmission of the heritage language, the third article, by Youngjoo Yi, investigates the significance of peer networks particularly as they relate to literacy development. She presents her findings from a case study of the voluntary writing practices of two transnational Korean American adolescents with active ties to Korea. The two students are highly literate in both Korean and English and are technologically savvy. They participated actively in instant messaging, online community posting, note-exchanging, and online diary-writing to pursue personal interests and maintain ties to Korea. These activities also involved close interactions with ethnic peers who shared similar life experiences as well as literacy...
abilities in both Korean and English. Writing in Korean was meaningful and enjoyable for these youths because it was done for social and communicative purposes. Yi argues that for adolescents, heritage language literacy and the development of personal interests should go hand in hand. She discusses ways in which her findings can inform heritage language literacy instruction.

The aim of this issue is to promote research on Korean heritage language development and increase awareness and support for Korean and other heritage languages. We hope that the articles from these young scholars will inspire motivation and creativity among educators, researchers, and heritage language speakers, their families, communities, and the broader society to engage collectively in the vital task of preserving our national linguistic resources.

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References


American Association of Teachers of Korean.


When passing through the composition, and in the US the education is paid. Russia: to enter a university, you should pass the Unified State Examination and score the required number of points or pass entrance exams. Education in the United States is free and compulsory for 10 years, starting at age 6 and culminating at age 16. Educational programs are guided by standards set at both the national and state levels, and implemented at the local level. Foreign languages, which formerly were taught solely at high schools, are now being introduced during the last few years of elementary school in some areas, although in the majority of cities, schools still do not offer any foreign language instruction. Tertiary Education in the United States. Troy University Following secondary school, students who wish to earn a degree, vocational diploma or trade certificate are afforded many options through which they can continue their education. The United States’ education rankings have been falling by international standards over the past three decades, as the government has decreased education funding by 3%. Still, other countries have increased their education funding. Countries with well-developed education systems also have some of the best high schools in the world, which prepare students for college or university. The United States’ education ranking is enhanced by high schools like the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. The United Kingdom has Eton College, along with Westminster.

Notes

1. We use the Yale system of romanization. back

Download file: L+S HLJ 6+2.pdf

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