The Korean Language

Structure, use and context

Jae Jung Song

THE KOREAN LANGUAGE

The Korean language is ranked eleventh amongst the languages of the world in terms of numbers of speakers. Korean is now studied as an important foreign language in an increasing number of countries. This book provides a good overview of the language, written in a readable way without neglecting any major structural aspects of the language. Furthermore, the book explains the geographical, historical, social and cultural context of the language.

The Korean Language is designed to be accessible to English-speaking learners of Korean and scholars working in disciplines other than linguistics, as well as serving as a useful introduction for general linguists. The book complements Korean language textbooks used in the classroom and will be welcomed not only by readers with a wider interest in Korean studies, but also by Asian specialists in general.

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For Kee-Ho, Peter, Taeyeon, James, Julia, Rochelle
and Michelle, who unwittingly motivated me to write
this book

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PREFACE

Books like this one are notoriously difficult to write because the target readership cannot be expected to be *au fait* with the author's own discipline. Fortunately, this difficulty is compensated for by the prospect of capturing readers whom one normally would not dream of reaching. This book, while providing a largely linguistic introduction to the Korean language, has been written primarily for readers with no background in linguistics. Every effort has thus been made to avoid technical linguistic terms, and, where their use is unavoidable, such terms have been explained in a readable, non-technical manner. Moreover, throughout the book emphasis has been placed on providing a descriptive overview of the salient features, rather than a detailed theoretical or esoteric exposition, of the Korean language. In these respects, it differs from other books on the Korean language, written with linguists and students of (Korean) linguistics in mind.

Readers for whom this book is designed fall into four main groups. First, Korean scholars specializing in areas other than (Korean) linguistics may wish to learn about the Korean language and its historical and socio-cultural contexts – whether in connection with their own research or out of curiosity – but find it rather daunting, if not impossible, to sift through an enormous amount of technical details in grammatical descriptions in order to arrive at a general understanding of the Korean language. (To the surprise of some readers, there are Korean specialists who may not be able to understand Korean (well)!) This book is thus written in a way in which specialists in one discipline would talk about their work to specialists in another discipline. Second, English-speaking learners of Korean with little or no prior exposure to (Korean) linguistics will benefit from the book. Such learners may wish to read it initially for a general orientation to the Korean language and later go back to specific sections or chapters as their learning progresses. For the benefit of this particular group of readers, special attention has been paid to potential areas of difficulty from the perspective of English-speaking learners. Thus the book complements language textbooks used for self-study or in the classroom. In this sense, it will also be of much interest to teachers of

Korean. Third, ethnic Koreans are beginning to realize the importance of their linguistic and cultural heritage but many of them, because of their inability to speak it (well enough), may already be (at risk of) failing to transmit the language to their offspring. Far more frequently than not, many such ethnic Koreans may have an incomplete or inadequate understanding of Korean culture. Indeed, they would have to embark on the study of Korean language and culture almost from scratch. This is most clearly demonstrated by increasing numbers of ethnic Koreans enrolling in Korean courses at universities around the world. Thus this book is intended to be accessible to such ethnic Koreans. I hope that they will have a good understanding of their heritage by the time they have reached the last page of the book. Finally, large numbers of native English speakers, particularly from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA, go to South Korea to work for extended periods (e.g. teaching English, working for international corporations). They may not necessarily choose to stay there long enough to learn Korean, let alone become fluent in it. None the less, such long-term visitors could do well with a general introduction to the language, culture and history of their host country. This book will help them to understand why Koreans speak and behave in the way they do and thus avoid misunderstanding or miscommunication.

The writing of this book benefited from the assistance and generosity of many people. In particular, I am indebted to Alan Hyun-Oak Kim (Southern Illinois University), Sang Hwan Seong (University of Bonn) and Kyu Suk Shin (Curtin University of Technology), who, despite their own busy schedules, read and commented on the whole draft of the book. Their comments, especially from the perspective of teaching Korean as a foreign language (or TKFL), contributed to the quality of the book, although, needless to say, none of the remaining shortcomings should be attributed to them. I am grateful to Jaehoon Yeon (University of London) and Gi-Hyun Shin (University of New South Wales) for unwittingly serving as a sounding board for some of my ideas contained in the book and also helping me to track down obscure references. The influence on the writing of this book of A. E. Backhouse's *The Japanese Language: An Introduction* (Melbourne, 1993) – in terms of orientation, presentation and structure – must also be acknowledged here. Last but not least, special thanks must go to Fran Hackshaw, who offered valuable comments from the perspective of a prospective English-speaking learner of Korean, and to Les O'Neill, who most kindly prepared the maps for me.

I formed the idea of writing this book on one hot summer afternoon in Leipzig, Germany, where I spent three months as Visiting Scientist in the Department of Linguistics, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. It is somewhat difficult to explain why it happened there and then, but it (and other exciting ideas) must have been owing to the intellectual

milieu and the warm hospitality provided by the Institute, for which I would like to record here my gratitude to Bernard Comrie, Martin Haspelmath, Julia Cissewski and Claudia Büchel.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC   accusative
C   command
GEN   genitive
HON   honorific
LK   linker
NOM   nominative
NR   nominalizer
P   proposal
PFV   perfective
PL   plural
PST   past
Q   question
REL   relative (or adnominal ending)
S   statement
TOP   topic/contrast

A NOTE ON ROMANIZATION AND KOREAN PERSONAL NAMES

Unless indicated otherwise, the Yale Romanization System is used throughout the book, except for proper names which are well established in other romanization systems (e.g. King Sejong, Yi Choson, Kim Tae-Jung, Kim Il Sung, Seoul, Pyongyang). In Korean, surnames precede given names, and this is the practice adopted in this book (with the exception of the present author's own name). For example, in Kim Tae-Jung, Kim is a surname and Tae-Jung a given name. Moreover, some Korean given names are romanized with a hyphen between their component syllables (e.g. Kim Tae-Jung), and others with or without a space (e.g. Kim Il Sung or Kim Shinwoong).

RUSSIA

CHINA

NORTH
KOREA

Sea of Japan

● Pyongyang

● Seoul

SOUTH
KOREA

Yellow Sea

N

Korea Strait

0   100   200 km
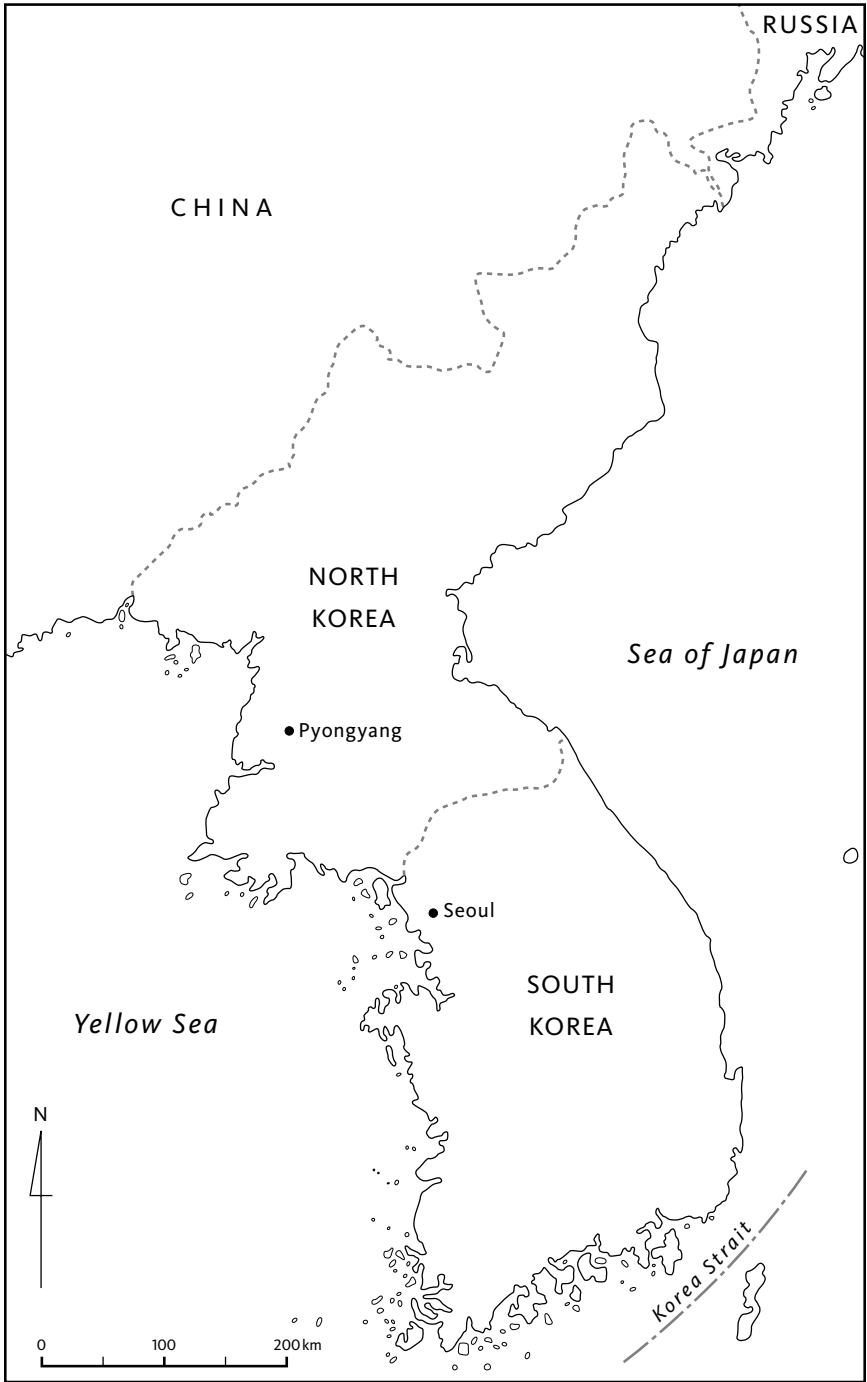
Map 1 North and South Korea
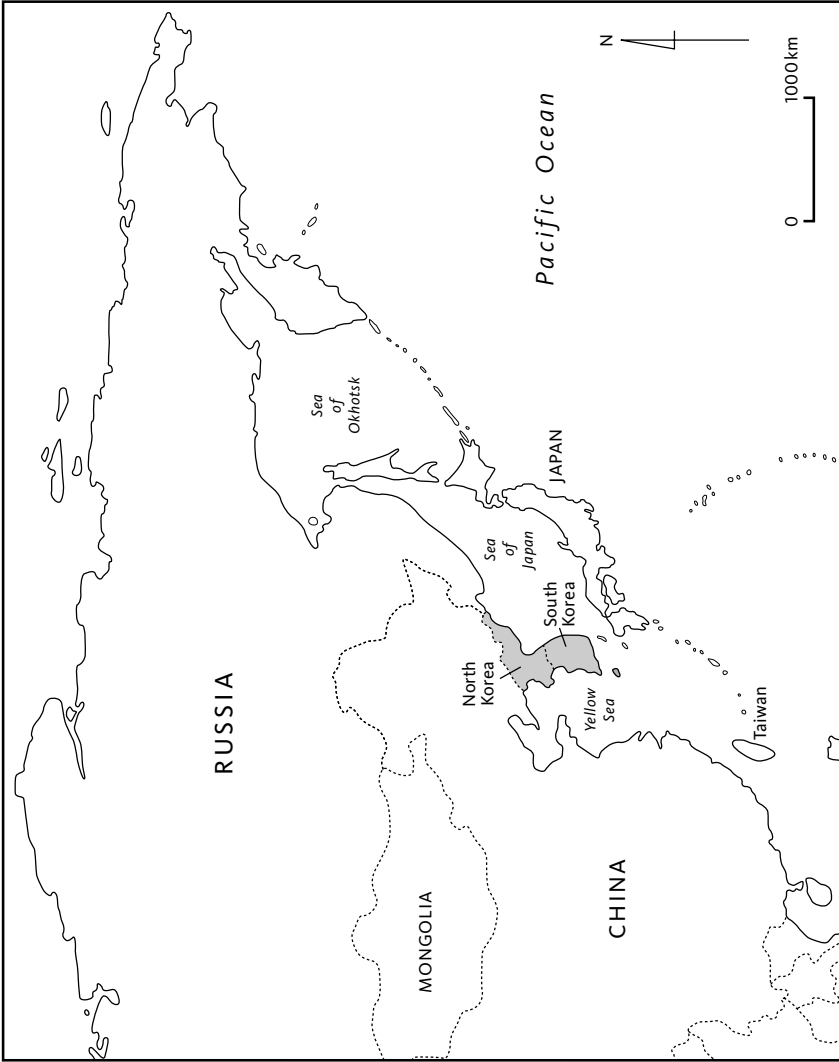
Map 2 Korea and the region

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KOREA

History, culture and language

This book is an invitation to the Korean language (known as Hankwukmal in South Korea and Cosenmal in North Korea). The bulk of the book is devoted to the description of the structure and use of the language, i.e. sound patterns, vocabulary, word and sentence structure, discourse and writing systems. That description is also situated in the historical, socio-cultural context in which the Korean language has 'evolved' into what it is today, because no languages develop or exist in a socio-cultural vacuum. The shape and form of a given language are inevitably the outcome of its historical origins, developments and changes. To fail to understand this fundamental fact is to fail to understand where languages have come from or how and why they have become what they are. Moreover, although some linguists may choose to regard them merely as a collection of linguistic rules, languages are influenced by the need to communicate in socio-cultural contexts. In other words, language use is, more often than not, dictated by socio-cultural conventions, values and expectations. As a consequence, languages reflect various socio-cultural factors within their structural properties, including not only vocabulary but also grammatical rules. (Needless to say, some languages are more likely to do so than others.) This is particularly true of Korean, as is amply attested in the rest of the book. More to the point, discussion of the historical, socio-cultural context of the Korean language is indispensable in a book like the present one because the majority of readers are likely to come from a Western cultural background – very different indeed from Korean culture – or to have little prior knowledge of Korean culture and society. Thus the first chapter of this book is designed to provide an informative account of the geographical, historical and socio-cultural context of the Korean language and its speakers.

Geography: land and population

Korea is a peninsular country bounded in the north by China and Russia, in the south by the Korea Strait, in the east by the Sea of Japan (or Tonghay, 'the East Sea', as Koreans prefer to call it) and in the west by the Yellow Sea

(or Hwanghay 'the Yellow Sea' in Korean) (see Maps 1 and 2). The shape of the Korean peninsula reminds Koreans of that of a rabbit standing on its hind legs. Korea and eastern China (i.e. the Shandong Peninsula) are separated by 200 kilometres, and the shortest distance between Korea and Japan across the Korea Strait is also 200 kilometres. The northern boundary with China and Russia is clearly demarcated by the Yalu River (or Amnokkang in Korean) and the Tumen River (or Tumankang in Korean). The whole peninsula, together with its islands, lies between the 33° 06′ 40″ N and 43° 00′ 39″ N parallels and 124° 11′ 00″ E and 131° 52′ 42″ E meridians. Longitudinally, Korea is situated near the Philippines or central Australia, while the latitudinal location of the Korean peninsula is similar to that of the Iberian peninsula and Greece to the west and the state of California to the east.

There are about 3,000 islands within Korea's territory, the majority of which are located around the Yellow Sea. The largest, Cheju Island, lies 145 kilometres off the south-west corner of the peninsula. The total area of the territory, inclusive of the islands, is 221,154 square kilometres. About 45 per cent of this area is occupied by South Korea, and the rest by North Korea. The combined area of North and South Korea is about the size of Britain or Guyana, with South Korea about the size of Hungary or Jordan. Nearly 70 per cent of the Korean peninsula is made up of mountains and hills. Mt Paektu (or Paektusan) (2,744 metres), the highest mountain in Korea (and indeed throughout Manchuria as well), is located at the North Korea – China border, and this is the source of the Yalu and Tumen Rivers. The highest mountain in South Korea, Mt Halla (or Hallasan) (1,950 metres), is located on Cheju Island. The preponderance of mountains and hills in the Korean peninsula means that only about 20 per cent of the land can be cultivated for agricultural purposes. The arable area is confined largely to plains in the west and south. These plains, however, do not compare in size with those in China or Japan.

Unlike its southern neighbour Japan, Korea is a stable landmass with no active volcanoes and rare earthquakes. The two best known mountains in the Korean peninsula, Mt Paektu and Mt Halla, have volcanic origins. It is said, however, that in terms of seismic activities the Korean peninsula is more stable than Japan but less stable than Manchuria, and South Korea in turn is seismically less stable than North Korea.

Most of Korea's major rivers flow into the Yellow Sea or the Korea Strait, except for the Tumen River, which empties into the Sea of Japan. The longest river is the Yalu River (790 kilometres), with the Nakdong River (525 kilometres) the second longest. Like elsewhere in the world, Korea's principal rivers support arable plains and major cities by providing irrigation and hydroelectric power. Seoul, the capital of South Korea, is situated near the mouth of the Han River, and the Taedong River flows through Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea. The Taedong River also

provides water for the single large plain in North Korea, the Pyongyang – Chaeryong plain. In South Korea, on the other hand, the fertile plains are supported by three major rivers, the Kum, Yengsan and Nakdong.

The Korean peninsula has a coastline of about 8,700 kilometres. There is a distinct topographical contrast between the coastline in the east and those in the west and south. The eastern coastline is relatively smooth, with few islands offshore, whereas the west and south coasts are characterized as irregular, with indentations or protrusions, bays and offshore islands in great numbers. This irregularity is more conspicuous on the south coast than on the west coast.

South Korea (48 million) has more than twice as many people as North Korea (22 million). South Korea is, in fact, regarded as one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with 440 people per square kilometre. North Korea, on the other hand, has 181 people per square kilometre. The population density of South Korea exceeds those of most Asian countries including China and India. In South Korea, however, most people are concentrated in major cities such as Seoul (almost 11 million) and Pusan (over 4 million). Other major cities, including Taegu, Inchon, Kwangju, Taejon and Ulsan, have over 1 million people each. This urbanization of the population, triggered and fuelled by South Korea's industrialization in the 1960s and 1970s, means that over 85 per cent of South Korea's population now live in these major cities. North Korea, on the other hand, was about 60 per cent urban as of 1987, with its capital Pyongyang being the only city with more than one million residents. The next biggest city is Hamhung, with a population of slightly over 700,000. More than half of North Korea's population live in cities with fewer than 100,000 people. This is probably due not as much to North Korea's slow urbanization as to the North Korean government's restrictions on people's migration or movement, very much as was the case in China until the late 1980s or the early 1990s.

History

The history of Korea can be best understood in terms of the way Koreans have interacted with their neighbours in the north (i.e. China, Manchuria and, more recently, Russia) and in the south and the east across the Korean Strait and the Sea of Japan (i.e. Japan and, more recently, the USA). The geographical position of the Korean peninsula between China, Manchuria and Russia on the one hand and Japan on the other has no doubt had a significant bearing on the history of Korea.

The origins of the Korean people are far from clear. This hardly comes as a surprise. The origins of many other peoples in the world are equally unclear. Scholars, however, generally agree that the Korean peninsula was settled by humans migrating from the north, not from the south. The Late

Pleistocene, which began between 130,000 and 75,000 years ago, witnessed the appearance of modern humans in East Asia. During subsequent cold phases, sea levels in East Asia were much lower, transforming the Sea of Japan into a huge lake that drained through what is the Korea Strait today. This must have resulted in increased land areas, allowing people to move among parts of East Asia. These prehistoric humans, however, may not be directly related to modern Koreans. Archaeological evidence suggests that humans, probably Palaeosiberians, also reached the Korean peninsula over 30,000 years ago. About 4,000–5,000 years ago, a different race started to migrate from the north – probably north-eastern Siberia, Mongolia, Manchuria and northern China – towards the Korean peninsula. It is believed that these people were ancient Koreans or progenitors of Koreans. But, of course, it cannot be ruled out that they may have exchanged their genes with the 'older' inhabitants, although the majority of the latter may probably have migrated further or have been driven into other areas outside the Korean peninsula, i.e. north-eastern Manchuria and Japan. It thus seems safe to conclude, contrary to what many Koreans would like to believe, that the Korean people may be not racially completely homogeneous but descendants of the various waves of migration from the north.

Some ancient Koreans settled in Manchuria and northern Korea, while others ventured further down to southern Korea, and probably also across the Korea Strait into Japan. (There is archaeological and linguistic evidence for the continuity between Korea and Japan.) This domination by Koreans of southern Manchuria and the Korean peninsula (then known as Chaoxian in Chinese) was punctuated by Han China, which in an effort to assert its power in these areas established four colonies (or commanderies) in northern Korea and southern Manchuria. This period (108 BCE to 313 CE) must have been when Chinese culture, including the use of Chinese characters and the emerging iron industry, started to make a real impact on the Korean tribal states and their inhabitants, not to mention a certain amount of racial intermingling between Koreans and Chinese. Following the demise of the Chinese colonies, southern Manchuria and northern Korea were once again left wide open for other ethnic groups (e.g. Korean and Tungusic) to dominate.

By the fourth century CE, there had emerged a number of tribal states in these areas, the most prominent ones being Kokuryo in southern Manchuria (or the Liaodong region) and northern Korea, and Paekche and Shilla in southern Korea. The territorial ambition and rivalry of these three kingdoms led inevitably to a series of wars, and Shilla, albeit with aid from Tang China, gained the upper hand and eventually 'unified' the three kingdoms in 668. Strictly speaking, however, this was not a complete unification, because, although Paekche was fully incorporated into the Unified Shilla Kingdom, most of Kokuryo's territory was not. Only less than one-half of the combined territories of the three kingdoms came under the control of Unified Shilla.

In fact, Kokuryo subsequently transformed itself into a new state, Parhae (or Bohai in Chinese) (698–926). This does not come as a total surprise when one considers the fact that Kokuryo occupied not only the northern part of Korea but also southern Manchuria, which was home to other ethnic groups, Tungusic people in particular. This suggests that Kokuryo may have been ethnically more heterogeneous than Shilla or even Paekche, although its ruling class may indeed have been made up of Koreans. Parhae was subsequently overthrown by the Khitan, who had formed the Liao Empire in Manchuria and northern China.

The Unified Shilla Kingdom (668–892) is said to have achieved political unity on the Korean peninsula. This may have been possible owing to non-Koreans (i.e. Tungusic people) moving out of the territory now lost to Shilla into the north, and then into Parhae, which was probably ethnically dominated by Tungusic people. This political unity witnessed an increased cultural influence from China. After all, Shilla defeated Kokuryo and Paekche with help from Tang China. Buddhism came to the fore in Unified Shilla society, although later Confucianism emerged as a competing system of thought. Towards the end of the eighth century, the Unified Shilla Kingdom started to decline in the midst of disputes among nobles and power struggles among aristocrats.

This weakening of Unified Shilla gave rise to a number of insurgent groups, out of which one powerful kingdom emerged as the new ruler of the Korean peninsula. This kingdom, claiming to be the legitimate successor of Kokuryo, called itself Koryo (918–1392). (This name gave rise to the English name, Korea.) The Chinese influence intensified as Koryo imported more ideas, policies and systems from China. Buddhism had now firmly established itself not only as the state religion but also as the dominant system of thought, especially within the royal house. Its predominant status could not be better illustrated than by the carving of the Chinese-based Buddhist scripture Tripitaka in some 8,300 wooden blocks in the midst of the Mongol invasion in 1251. While the Unified Shilla Kingdom was responsible for achieving the political unity of (most of) the Korean peninsula, the Koryo Dynasty can be said to have brought the process of ethnic homogenization to its conclusion. The rise of Koryo was soon followed by the collapse of Parhae, from where ethnic Koreans migrated south to join the new state on the Korean peninsula. Moreover, the ruling class of Unified Shilla was embraced or absorbed by that of Koryo. This process of ethnic homogenization, however, was marred by incessant conflicts with its neighbours, i.e. the Khitan (Liao Empire), the Jurchen-based Jin Empire (Yecincok in Korean) and then Japanese marauders and pirates. However, the Mongol invasion and domination (i.e. the Yuan Dynasty), which began in 1231 and lasted for over 100 years, were really the last nail in the Koryo Dynasty's coffin. The pillaging of Koryo by the Mongols, together with internal problems, e.g. the animosity between Buddhists and Confucian

scholars within and outside the court even during the Mongol invasion, was too much for the dynasty to bear. Koryo met its fate in 1388 when the general who was sent to assist the Mongols against Ming China turned around his troops near the Yalu River to seize power (in a military *coup d'état*).

The last dynasty on the Korean peninsula, Yi Choson, or Cosen Wangco as some Koreans prefer to call it (1392–1910), coincided with the rise of Ming China, the last Chinese-led dynasty. During this dynasty the northern boundaries of Korea were clearly demarcated along the Yalu and Tumen Rivers (i.e. the present North Korea – China border). The Yi Choson Dynasty's capital was moved from Songhak (now Kaesong) to Hanyang (now Seoul). The animosity between Buddhists and Confucian scholars that had plagued Koryo was dealt with once and for all when Buddhism was discarded as the state creed or ideology in favour of Confucianism. As will be seen, Confucianism would make a lasting impact on society not only in Yi Choson but also in present day Korea. Early political instability within the royal house notwithstanding, the first two hundred years of Yi Choson can be characterized as relatively peaceful and orderly, and indeed many notable cultural and scientific achievements were made during this period, especially during the reign of King Sejong (1417–50), the most remarkable by world standards being the development of a highly sophisticated but simple writing system called Hankul (see Chapter 3 for further discussion).

Confucianism, which emphasized rigid social relations – loyalty between the ruler and the ruled, filial piety between father and son, the wife's obedience to the husband, the order of seniority between the old and the young etc. – may indeed have played a crucial role in this period of relative peace, but ironically contributed to the demise of Yi Choson in the end. Loyalty led to power struggles between different groups, especially between the monarchy and Confucian scholars on the one hand and between orthodox Confucian and neo-Confucian scholars on the other, while the demand for absolute obedience gave rise to resentment and revolt among the masses. In the midst of this brewing social upheaval came Japanese invasion in 1592 and again in 1597. This had a grave impact on the country, not only economically but also culturally, socially and psychologically. (In fact, the Japanese invasions contributed to the demise in 1644 of Ming China, which, having come to Yi Choson's rescue, collapsed under the Manchus.) For instance, one third of Yi Choson's arable land was destroyed. Many skilled artisans or workers were taken to Japan as prisoners of war. Many bonded slaves ran away. More importantly, the people's confidence in the ruling class eroded in view of the latter's ongoing squabble and inability to protect them from the Japanese invaders. The social order based on Confucianism was dealt an almost deadly blow, and would never recover. To make things worse, the Manchus invaded Yi Choson in 1627 and 1636. Yi Choson initially decided to side with Ming China and resisted the invaders, but was eventually forced

to switch its allegiance to the Manchus (or Qing China). The humiliating experiences with the Japanese and Manchu invaders – whom Yi Choson Koreans regarded as barbarians – led young Confucian scholars to discard the tenets of orthodox Confucianism in favour of 'practical solutions to existing problems'. This naturally led to a power struggle between old Confucian scholars and young Confucian reformers. Some young scholars were exposed to Western ideas through Qing China and went as far as to embrace Catholicism. However, the old Confucian scholars gained the upper hand, and Yi Choson managed to close its doors to Westerners and their influences altogether for a while (in so doing, Yi Choson earned the infamous label 'The Hermit Kingdom'). Against this backdrop, Yi Choson was thrown right into the nineteenth century of imperialism.

East Asia in the nineteenth century was one of the major theatres for a number of imperial powers, namely Japan, Russia, the USA, Britain, France and Germany. Qing China, however powerful it may have seemed to Yi Choson, also fell prey to the British Empire and other Western powers in a series of events, the most notable being the Opium War (1839–42). This was most unfortunate for Yi Choson, because Qing China was unable to provide the protection that it had hoped for. Yi Choson, after centuries of foreign invasion, the breakdown of social order and constant power struggle within the ruling class, was completely unprepared for what was about to descend upon it. With the USA, Britain, France and Germany bogged down in problems in their colonies elsewhere, however, it was left to Japan, Russia and Qing China to decide on Yi Choson's fate. Qing China wanted to play its role by default – after all, Yi Choson was one of the vassal states on its doorstep. Russia was driven by its ambition to expand into Manchuria, which naturally extends into the Korean peninsula (and also China proper). Japan was as much in fear of the others' territorial ambitions as in need of Yi Choson's natural resources, including abundant rice: the Korean peninsula naturally extends into Manchuria, which was also within the scope of Japan's territorial ambition. These conflicting interests came to a head when Japan and Qing China, and Japan and Russia went to war in 1894 and 1904, respectively. Japan came out as the victor in both wars and was now ready to take over Yi Choson. Between these two wars, Yi Choson changed its name to Tayhan Ceykwuk, 'the Great Han Empire', which was ironic in that the country was on the verge of being absorbed into the Japanese Empire, and that the dire situation which it found itself in was about to change for the worse.

Japan wasted little time in setting in motion its plans to force the Korean Emperor to abdicate his throne and to annex Korea in 1910. The Japanese Empire would occupy and administer Korea as a colony for the next 35 years. For example, all but one governor-general were military generals, and Japan relied heavily on its imperial army, military police and then military-like civil police in order to control Koreans and even their thoughts. Korea

was to be converted into a major logistical base for Japan's imperial expansion in East Asia and beyond. This was indeed the Dark Ages for Korean culture and society, as, for instance, the Korean language was completely banned from schools and then from public arenas, and Koreans were even forced to change their names to Japanese ones (although their ethnic origins were kept in their records). Koreans were driven out of their land into Manchuria and elsewhere, as more and more Japanese started to migrate to Korea in search of economic opportunities and privileges. The Japanese civilian population in Korea stood at 171,000 in 1910 but had increased to 750,000 by 1945, when Japan surrendered to the Allied forces. Some of the displaced Koreans fought the Japanese army in Manchuria and elsewhere, but many of those who remained were conscripted into Japan's army or war factories. The Japanese occupation lasted only 35 years but the extent of cultural, social and economic destruction is hardly paralleled in Korea's entire history.

When the Second World War ended in 1945, Korea gained independence from Japan, but it was immediately divided into North Korea and South Korea at the thirty-eighth northern parallel of latitude, with the former under Soviet influence and the latter under US influence. Subsequently, South Korea became the Republic of Korea, and North Korea the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Interestingly enough, both North and South Korea retained Seoul as their capital, although North Korea chose Pyongyang as its temporary capital until 1972 when it proclaimed Pyongyang as its own capital. Relations between North Korea and South Korea rapidly deteriorated, resulting in frequent border conflicts and then, at North Korea's instigation, the Korean War (1950–3). It goes without saying what adverse impact this civil war had on Korea and Koreans, e.g. over two million people killed, wounded, missing or displaced. There had hardly been any time for Korea to recover from the ravages of Japanese imperialism. Since the armistice in 1953, virtually no communication between the two has been possible, except for intermittent high-level governmental dialogues (which only began in 1971 and then again in 1990).

Initially, North Korea, with its relatively abundant natural resources and generous aid from the USSR, China and other communist countries, was rapidly becoming industrialized, with South Korea lagging behind. But as the financial support from the USSR and China started to dwindle in the mid-1960s, North Korea's economy began to stall. In 1990, North Korea started to record a negative growth in GNP and is now reported to be experiencing a very serious economic crisis. South Korea, on the other hand, underwent a series of successful economic development plans and achieved what South Koreans proudly call the Miracle on the Han River (by analogy with the Miracle on the Rhine River in post-war West Germany). It is now regarded as a relatively affluent country by the world's standards. Some of South Korea's manufactured goods, including automobiles, TVs, domestic

appliances and computers, now compete in the world market with those from the USA, Japan and developed European countries. International recognition of South Korea's economic success came with its hosting of the 1988 Summer Olympics.

North Korea is probably the most closed, controlled society that the world has ever witnessed – with strict restrictions on movement in and out of the country. Virtually no contact is permitted between North Koreans and the few foreigners allowed into the country. North Koreans have no access to even basic information about the rest of the world, let alone alternative political views or ideologies. This totally controlled monolithic society is managed in the way it is in order to legitimize, propagate and maintain the personality cult of the (now deceased) leader Kim Il Sung and his family members, notably his eldest son, Kim Jong Il. This home-grown cult-based ideology is called Cwuchey or 'self-reliance'. Contrary to what its name suggests, however, the ideology is based crucially on the idolization of Kim Il Sung as the Great Leader. North Koreans have been indoctrinated – literally from the minute they were born – with the belief that, thanks to the virtue and benevolence of their Great Leader, they are the wealthiest and happiest people in the world. To outsiders, this may seem almost impossible to believe, let alone comprehend, but this is what has kept North Korea intact despite the collapse of many other communist countries, including the USSR. North Korea is also an anomaly in modern world history in the sense that Kim Il Sung's absolute control of the country, following his death in 1994, has now been passed on to his eldest son.

Despite its initial enthusiasm for democracy, South Korea got off to a bad start. The first democratically elected South Korean president and his political party, in an attempt to prolong their grip on power, used illegal methods to rig the subsequent elections, which led to a popular uprising and ultimately to their demise in 1960. The next democratically elected government was short-lived and overthrown in a military *coup d'état* in 1961. The country was placed under the firm control of a military junta and subsequently of a succession of three generals turned presidents. During this period – albeit marked by the assassination of the first general turned president, another military *coup d'état* in 1979 and many other tumultuous events – South Korea achieved enormously in economic terms, and South Koreans enjoyed a much higher degree of personal and political freedom than their northern brethren. None the less, it is not inaccurate to comment that the whole country had been managed and controlled in a military-like fashion, with people's personal and political freedom curtailed or violated by the government's draconian measures. This sorry state of affairs in South Korea was not to change until 1992, when a president with no military background was elected for the first time since 1960. President Kim Young Sam was to be succeeded by two democratically elected presidents. At long last, South Korea seems to be at least on its way to democracy.

The biggest task facing North and South Korea in the twenty-first century is their reunification. This, however, is more complicated than ever before by a number of issues, including the rapidly widening economic disparity between them (South Korea is one of the economic powerhouses in the region and North Korea is on the verge of bankruptcy), North Korea's nuclear weapons programme and, more importantly, their mutual distrust (which is half-jokingly said to date back to the time of Unified Shilla in the mid-seventh century). Although a unified Korean state will undoubtedly bring considerable economic power and prosperity to the Korean peninsula, South Korea will remain cautious about the economic and social implications of reunification in the light of Germany's recent experience, whereas North Korea will be unwilling to run the risk of jeopardizing its carefully constructed system of control and power, and the Kim family's dynastic rule. None the less, there have been some positive signs of a rapprochement between the two Koreas and genuine efforts towards reunification: joint commercial ventures, small-scale family reunions and the South Korean president's visit to Pyongyang among other things.

Culture and society: age, gender and *chwulsin*

Confucianism, once introduced into Korea, underwent considerable reinterpretation and adaptation, especially in Yi Choson. Having replaced Buddhism, it rapidly became the state creed or ideology of the Yi Choson Dynasty. Though it began to lose its predominant status in late Yi Choson, it certainly left its indelible mark on Korean society as a whole. To the surprise of many, including Koreans themselves, Confucianism is reflected not only in the way Koreans think and behave but also in the way the Korean language works in terms of both vocabulary and grammar (see Chapters 4 and 5 for detailed discussion of how social relations based on age and social status are still reflected in vocabulary and grammatical rules in present day Korean).

The conceptual basis of Confucianism is nature's organization, which must be mirrored by society's organization among other things. In a society organized in this way, social relationships cannot but be rigid and fixed. It is assumed that people are not (created) equal, just as things in nature are not. Social harmony, it is maintained in Confucianism, can be achieved by stable social relationships. Knowing one's place in social groupings is, therefore, crucial for social harmony and stability. This view is most clearly reflected in the way age, gender and social affiliation (or *chwulsin* in Korean) are regarded and represented in Korean society. (What follows applies mainly to South Korea or to pre-independence Korea, although more or less the same may still be said of North Korea as well; see Chapter 7 for detailed discussion of North Korea.)

One of the most important Confucian precepts of social relations is age or seniority. The young are always expected to respect the old as they respect their own parents. People showing disrespect to the old are generally looked down on as having had a bad upbringing. In Korea, respect demands strict obedience and acceptance of authority. For instance, it is not uncommon for Koreans to avoid expressing disagreement or discontent to the old, e.g. their parents, teachers or village elders, even when the latter are clearly in the wrong. Age is a relative thing. Thus old people themselves are also expected to be respectful to those who are older than they are. This is deeply entrenched in the manner in which Koreans address or refer to older people. For instance, Koreans do not call other people by individual names unless they are addressing younger siblings, friends or other younger people they know. Otherwise, they would be regarded as rude or lacking in 'culture' or 'proper education'. Koreans are known to get into an altercation over what may seem to Westerners to be a trivial matter, i.e. being called by individual names. It is thus totally out of the question to call older people, biologically related or not, by individual names. (This is why Koreans may initially find it very difficult to call older Westerners by individual names even when the latter encourage the former to do so, and why Koreans cannot understand why in some Western countries children are allowed to call adults, including their own parents, by individual names.) Kinship terms such as *halapeci* 'grandfather', *halmeni* 'grandmother', *acessi* 'uncle' or *acwumeni* 'aunt' are instead used to address old people who are not necessarily related to speakers. The use of titles, sometimes in conjunction with surnames, will be required as an indication of respect or deference to people in higher social positions. It can thus be very important for the order of seniority to be established as quickly as possible among strangers. (Koreans' respect for the old is not confined to the living but also extends to their ancestors; as a matter of fact, it is regarded as an important duty to pay regular homage to ancestors, usually at their grave sites.)

Confucianism-based social relations encompass the distinction between men and women. In Confucian thinking, men are likened to heaven, and women to the earth. The (Confucian) law of nature being that the earth follows heaven, women are expected to be subservient to men. Indeed, it is commented that Korea is a male-dominant society. This can be a bit of overgeneralization in present day Korea in view of the substantial advancement in recent years of women's social status or position – it is no longer uncommon to have female bosses or supervisors at work, for example. None the less, the fact that the comment is very often made by Koreans and foreigners alike suggests that there is still truth in it. The inequality between men and women is perhaps best reflected by the relationship between husband and wife. Koreans do not speak of men marrying into their wives' families; women are said to marry into their husbands' families. This inequality in

gender is reflected in kinship terms. In English, the kinship terms *grandfather* and *grandmother* can be either paternal or maternal. In Korean, on the other hand, the kinship terms *halapeci* 'grandfather' and *halmeni* 'grandmother' – unless they are used to refer to very old people who are biologically unrelated to the speaker – normally refer to paternal, not maternal, grandparents. To indicate that someone is a maternal grandfather or grandmother, one needs to attach the Chinese-based element *oy* to *halapeci* or *halmeni*, i.e. *oy-halapeci* or *oy-halmeni*. This Chinese element literally means 'outside'. Maternal grandparents are outside one's family! Korean women, especially under the increasing influence of Western culture, have raised their social status to a considerable extent over the decades. The wife's subservience to the husband, for example, may be a thing of the past. None the less, some (even university-educated) Korean women who have an equal or even dominant relationship with their husbands may still choose (or pretend) to act like subservient wives in the presence of other people. In Korea, challenging authority is interpreted as an indication of bad upbringing, not of independence; acceptance of authority is to be encouraged in an ideal Confucian society. Whether this is a good or bad thing in this day and age is not the point, but the fact that married women's 'public self', in conformity with the centuries-old Confucian thinking, continues to be projected in present day Korea is worth noting.

Just as things have their place in nature, people have their place in society. In a highly organized or hierarchical society like Korea, everyone belongs to a number of social groups: family, school, work, home town and the like. People's perception of their position in such groups is ultimately their group identity. Koreans have a very strong sense of group identity. In fact, there is a Korean word that is rather difficult to translate into English, *chwulsin*, which literally means 'the origin of body or self'. The English word that comes closest to this Korean word may be 'origin' or 'background'. It is extremely important to identify one's *chwulsin* in Korea. When having a conversation with strangers, Koreans may often ask questions such as *eti chwulsin i-sipnikka?* 'Where are you from?' or 'What province or town are you from?' or *enu tayhak chwulsin i-sipnikka?* 'Which university did you go to (or graduate from)?' When introducing their friends to others, Koreans may say things like *i salam-un kathun tayhak chwulsin i-pnita* 'This person graduated from the same university as I did' or *i salam-un kathun kohyang chwulsin i-pnita* 'This person is from the same town or village as I am.' *Chwulsin* is truly an important marker of one's group identity in Korean society.

Once their *chwulsin*, be it based on school, university or place of birth, has been identified, Koreans know whether or not they have something in common with one another. The more in common they have, the more likely they are to fraternize with one another. This may not seem to be too bad a thing. It can be a very effective way for strangers to break the ice or to work

together in a team or group. In Korea, total strangers can immediately strike up a friendship because they went to the same school or originate from the same province. This kind of fraternization, of course, is also true of Western culture to a certain extent, but it is much more prevalent and robust in Korean culture. Unfortunately, it does not confine itself to casual fraternization. When employers hire people, they may tend to prefer applicants with the same *chwulsin*, be it based on university or place of birth, to the extent that, more often than not, people may not be hired on the basis of their ability, achievement or potential alone. It is not difficult to imagine what adverse impact this must have had on individuals and on society as a whole.

Chwulsin can be good or bad. Thus Koreans positively describe someone as *i salam-un chwulsin-i acwu coh-supnita* 'This person's *chwulsin* is very good'. One cannot choose to be born in one place as opposed to another. Nor can one choose to be born into a 'good' family. However, one can work hard to get into a good school or university or even marry into a 'good' family (by having graduated from a good university, for example). It thus comes as no surprise that many Korean parents will go to considerable lengths in order to send their children to good schools or universities (or even to help their daughters to marry into 'good' families). It is not uncommon for Korean parents to move house or even migrate to other countries for the sake of their children's education. This could perhaps be positively interpreted as Korean parents' total commitment to their children's education. But in reality it may have more to do with their wish to improve or maintain their offspring's *chwulsin* and indirectly their own than with their wish to give them good education. Needless to say, this attitude to *chwulsin* has led to a number of serious social problems, e.g. rampant private tuition outside school hours, cut-throat competition in university entrance exams, the hiring of people on the basis of their *chwulsin* rather than ability.

Once common *chwulsin* has been recognized, Koreans will then proceed to establish the hierarchical ranking within a given social group. This is where age or social status will have a bearing upon who will be placed at the top, in the middle or at the bottom. For example, once common university *chwulsin* has been established in a group of Koreans, it is not uncommon for them to ask one another in what year they started university (i.e. Hakpen, the first two digits of one's student ID number, which correspond to the first year of enrolment, e.g. 83 for 1983). Finding out in what year other people started university education would usually give one a fairly good idea of where one stands in that social group.

Korean: the language and its wider relations

Korean is currently spoken by about 70 million people in the Korean peninsula (48 million in South Korea and 22 million in North Korea) and

also by a sizeable number of Korean migrants and their descendants living in countries such as China (2 million), the USA (1.9 million), Japan (700,000), the former USSR (500,000), and, more recently, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. In terms of number of speakers, it is ranked eleventh or twelfth among the languages of the world. Korean is truly one of the major languages of the world.

Korean, as a foreign language, is not as popular as other well known Asian languages (e.g. Japanese and Chinese), but it has over the past few decades been adopted as a subject by a steadily growing number of schools and universities around the world. There are at least 41 countries where Korean is taught at tertiary level (Korea Foundation, www.kofo.or.kr (accessed 2003)). Needless to say, this is due largely to the prominent position that Korea – more accurately South Korea – has in recent years assumed in the world's economy. The presence of Korean migrants in many countries must also have contributed to the general awareness in those countries of Korean as an important community language.

By the world's standards, the correlation between Koreans and the Korean language is almost perfect. Said differently, (North or South) Korean nationals speak Korean, and most speakers of Korean are (North or South) Korean nationals. This is in contrast with other major languages of the world, e.g. English, Spanish and even Chinese. English, in its many varieties, is the national or official language of many different countries, and is also spoken by many non-native speakers as the lingua franca of the world. Similarly, there are more than fifty languages spoken in China, which means that not all Chinese nationals speak Chinese as their first language.

The Korean language in time and space

Korean has regional dialectal differences. However, speakers from different regions are able to understand one another without much difficulty. Standard South Korean (based on the Seoul dialect) and Standard North Korean (based on the Pyongyang dialect), for instance, are not mutually unintelligible. Seven different dialectal zones have been recognized on the basis of sound and word differences, and also on the basis of historical relatedness to Middle Korean (tenth to sixteenth centuries) – the oldest form of Korean for which there is a sufficient number of reliable written records or documents. The cause of this dialectal situation is said to be historical and political as well as geographical. For instance, the Cheju dialect, spoken on the southernmost island, formed largely because of its geographical isolation from the mainland. The Kyengsang and Cenla dialects, on the other hand, may have come into existence because of the absence of a major transport route between the two zones in the past as well as the fact that the areas was under the control of two different kingdoms until the mid-seventh century. More recently, the geopolitical division between North and South Korea – coupled with the

emergence of Standard North Korean and Standard South Korean – has given rise to further differences between the northern and southern dialectal zones (see Chapter 7 for further discussion). These dialectal differences notwithstanding, Korea is one of the most linguistically homogeneous countries in the world – in fact, even more so than Japan. This does not necessarily mean that Korean may lack possible relations (i.e. genetically related languages) outside the Korean peninsula.

Historical linguists draw on a powerful, well tested method in order to establish genetic or historical relationships among the world's languages. This is known as the 'comparative method', the conceptual basis of which is what historical linguists call regular sound correspondences (i.e. sound X in language A corresponding to sound Y in language B on such a regular and systematic basis that this and other similar correspondences must be imputed to common genetic inheritance, not to chance). When historical linguists say that languages are genetically related to one another, what this means is that they derived historically from a single ancestral language. For example, Irish, English, Italian, Greek, Russian and Hindi are all said to have descended from a (now extinct) common language. Historical linguists were able to establish their common origin by using the comparative method.

Different hypotheses have been put forward about the genetic affiliation of the Korean language. The most persuasive one is the Altaic hypothesis, first proposed in a systematic manner by the Finnish linguist Gustaf John Ramstedt (1873–1959). The Altaic family has three branches: Turkic, Mongolian and Tungusic. Korean is claimed to be closer to Tungusic than to Mongolian or to Turkic. However, the Altaic hypothesis has not been universally accepted due largely to the lack of regular sound correspondences between Korean and Altaic languages, although similarities between Korean and Altaic languages and Proto-Altaic (the extinct or reconstructed ancestral language of Altaic languages) are so strong that they simply cannot be brushed aside as being due to chance or contact alone. Attempts have also been made to relate Korean to other language families, such as Austronesian, Dravidian and Indo-European. But these views suffer from a much greater lack of evidence. Thus it is not unfair to say that the Altaic hypothesis is accepted by more scholars than the other views (put together). Unless more evidence than hitherto available is produced, however, the genetic affiliation of Korean will remain far from settled or universally accepted. Unfortunately, the comparative method can take us only so far back into the past; it is unlikely that new evidence will be forthcoming. This is why many linguists choose to regard Korean as a language isolate or a language with no known relatives. (Incidentally, the genetic affiliation of Japanese is no less controversial than that of Korean; Japanese is also often regarded as a language isolate.)

Not surprisingly, little can be said about the language or languages spoken by the prehistoric people who first reached the Korean peninsula. When

new waves of migration arrived from the north – with better technology and social organization – between 4,000 and 5,000 years ago, they must have added to the ethnic and linguistic diversity already in place. It is not difficult to imagine that the Korean peninsula had always been inhabited by more than one ethnic group – and hence had more than one language spoken – in the past. Even today, the neighbouring countries, i.e. Russia, China, Mongolia and Japan, are not free from ethnic and linguistic diversity. Thus the Korean peninsula would not have been any different, especially in the distant past. It is implausible to think that the Korean peninsula was always monolingual as it is today.

Korea was not at all linguistically homogeneous as late as in the mid-seventh century, when the three kingdoms were 'unified' by Shilla. It is generally accepted that 'Ancient Korean' had two distinct varieties, one spoken in Manchuria and northern Korea, and the other spoken in southern Korea. These two may have been different from, albeit probably genetically related to, each other. Moreover, it is possible to say – on the basis of extant Chinese sources – that more than one language were spoken on the Korean peninsula before and at the time of the unification; it cannot be ruled out that there may have been other languages spoken in the areas in question, i.e. Tungusic and possibly Japanic languages (Japanic in the sense that they eventually contributed to the formation of Japanese). As noted in the section on history, Kokuryo did not disappear into oblivion, but evolved into the powerful state of Parhae, whose territory included not only south-eastern Manchuria but also northern Korea. It is not implausible to think, especially in view of this fact, that Kokuryo – and Parhae for that matter – may not have been ethnically dominated by Korean-speaking people. Large numbers of Kokuryo and Parhae people may possibly have been speakers of Tungusic languages. Moreover, there is evidence for linguistic continuity between Korea (Kokuryo and Paekche in particular) and Japan. This suggests that before Shilla's unification there may also have been some Japanic elements present on the Korean peninsula. Japan's coming to Paekche's assistance when the latter came under Shilla's attack could be better understood in this light.

The language of Shilla, however, became dominant over the enlarged territory of Unified Shilla on the Korean peninsula – the territory of Paekche was completely absorbed into Unified Shilla. The language of Shilla is regarded as Old Korean. Whether non-Korean speakers remaining in Unified Shilla shifted to Korean or there was a (prolonged) period of bilingualism, at least in some parts of Unified Shilla, is not clear. It is also quite possible that most non-Korean speakers may have migrated north across the Taedong River (which runs through Pyongyang, the present capital of North Korea) or south to Japan to escape from Shilla's control. None the less, Shilla's territorial expansion and political domination must have contributed considerably to the linguistic homogenization of the Korean peninsula south of the Taedong River. The Korean peninsula has since then been

monolingual, except for a brief period of forced bilingualism during Japanese colonial rule (1910–45).

The capital was moved from Kyongju to Songhak (now Kaesong) in the Koryo Dynasty in the tenth century and then from Songhak to Hanyang (now Seoul) in the Yi Choson Dynasty in the fourteenth century. The move from Kyongju to Songhak represented a considerable change in terms of what was to be accepted as the language of the new kingdom. But this had little or no real effect on the language of Shilla continuing as the language of Koryo and Yi Choson (i.e. Middle and Modern Korean). By the time when Koryo overthrew Unified Shilla and established its capital in Songhak, the linguistic homogenization of the Korean peninsula had been completed. The dialect of Songhak – or subsequently the dialect of Hanyang for that matter – was simply just that, a different dialect of the same language. Thus there is a continuity between the language of Shilla and present day Korean as spoken in North and South Korea.

Relationships or contact between Korean, Japanese, Chinese and English

There is one language that must be discussed in the context of the history of Korean, namely Japanese. It is almost universally accepted that there is a strong genetic relationship between Korean and Japanese, however remote that may be. Substantial work, albeit with methodological and other unresolved problems, has been carried out in order to demonstrate this relationship. Linguists have discovered a respectable number of shared words and regular sound correspondences that point to the genetic linkage between the two languages. Moreover, it is impossible to lose sight of many structural parallels between Korean and Japanese. None the less, linguists generally agree that there is still a need to strengthen empirical support for their genetic relationship. The most significant problem is probably the phonological disparity between Korean and Japanese. Korean allows syllables to end with a range of consonants, e.g. *kkoch.cip* 'flower shop' (with the dot representing a syllable boundary). Japanese, on the other hand, has a 'simple' consonant–vowel syllable structure, e.g. *sa.ku.ra* 'cherry'. To make matters worse, the vowel system of Korean is much more complex than that of Japanese. One suggestion that has been made in order to understand these and other differences is that perhaps the linguistic homogenization of the Korean peninsula took place in continuous contact with Tungusic languages in the north (i.e. Manchuria), and that of Japan in the midst of Ainu and other indigenous languages that had previously migrated from the south (perhaps Austronesian languages). In this context, the geographical discontinuity between Korea and Japan (i.e. the Korea Strait and the Sea of Japan) must have contributed to Korean and Japanese remaining in, or coming into, contact with structurally and genetically different languages. Whatever the real linguistic history of Korean and Japanese may have been,

however, there is no denying the evidence in support of the two languages being (genetically) closer to each other than to any other known language(s) in the world.

One of the popular misconceptions about Korean – probably engendered by Korea's geographical and cultural propinquity to China, not to mention physical similarities between Koreans and Chinese – is that it is genetically related to Chinese. There is no evidence whatsoever in support of this. Chinese is a member of the Sino-Tibetan family, which not only Chinese languages but also other languages such as Burmese, Tibetan and Newari belong to. (One can also deduce from the earlier discussion that Japanese is genetically unrelated to Chinese.) Learners of Korean and Chinese, however, will no doubt notice many Korean and Chinese words that sound similar to one another, e.g. *san* 'mountain', *cha* 'car', *mikwuk* 'the USA' and *hanca* 'Chinese characters' in Korean and *shān* 'mountain', *chē* ' car', *měiguó* 'the USA' and *hànzì* 'Chinese characters' in Chinese. There is a good reason for this apparent similarity.

Chinese influence on almost every aspect of Korea is enormous and pervasive, as described in the section on history, and it is no less strongly felt or reflected in the language than anywhere else. Korean has borrowed a huge number of Chinese characters and words through its long contact with Chinese. It is not just the case that Chinese characters and words were borrowed. New words, independently of Chinese, have been created on the basis of borrowed Chinese characters (incidentally, Japanese is no different from Korean in this respect). The importing into Korean of Chinese characters and words really began on a large scale during the Unified Shilla period. Even native place names were converted into two-Chinese-character ones. (This is why most place names in North and South Korea are based on the two-syllable structure, e.g. Pu.san, In.chon, Tae.jon, Pyong.yang, Won.san) Not surprisingly, this practice was continued on an even larger scale in Yi Choson, which wholeheartedly embraced Confucianism, another major cultural import from China. The *Comprehensive Dictionary of Korean* (published in 1991 in South Korea), for instance, indicates that 52.1 per cent of the total of 164,125 entries are Sino-Korean words (or Korean words built on Chinese characters or elements) as opposed to pure Korean words (45.5 per cent) and other loanwords (2.4 per cent) (see Chapter 7 for North Korea's nativization of Sino-Korean words). Thus the resemblance between Korean and Chinese words is due to borrowing, not common genetic inheritance. It is akin to English containing a large number of words based on Latin- or Greek-derived elements. This, however, does not make English (which is a Germanic language) a Romance language (e.g. Latin) or a Hellenic language (e.g. Greek).

Since the end of the Second World War, however, the main source of borrowing in South Korea has been English. English was introduced into Korea around 1882, when Korea signed a treaty of amity with the USA.

For the next eighty years or so, English had little influence on Korean. But there was indirect contact between Korean and English, with English words imported into Korean through Japanese as an intermediary, i.e. Japanized English loanwords. Since the liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, South Koreans' efforts to purge their language of Japanese elements have been extended to the nativizing of Japanized English loanwords or to the replacing of Japanized English loanwords with direct English ones, although Japanized English words persist in Korean, often in hybrid form, i.e. exhibiting both English and Japanese features (see Chapters 4 and 7 for further discussion).

In the mid-1960s, English began to rise to prominence as the most dominant foreign language in South Korea (and also in North Korea by 1980); it is now regarded as the most important foreign language, to be learned at all costs. One corollary of this is an influx of English words into Korean. By one count, almost 90 per cent of loanwords used in South Korea originate from English. Many of these English loanwords, however, are what are infamously referred to as *Kacca Yenge* or 'fake English' (i.e. English words not found in 'native' varieties of English; see Chapter 4 for further discussion). There are Koreans who lament over or complain about fake English, but they do not take account of one important thing. Many Sino-Korean words, albeit based on Chinese characters, are not found in Chinese, and no one seems to be perturbed by their lack of authenticity! One should instead be appreciative of the linguistic creativity reflected in *Kacca Yenge*.

Suffice it here to note that the situation in North Korea is very different from what has been described here about English in South Korea (see Chapter 7 for the situation in North Korea, in particular its nativization of English and other loanwords). In North Korea, English is confined largely to English-language classrooms and has actually been exploited as one of the many conduits for inculcating the Cwuchey ideology in the minds of students. Despite its politico-ideological aversion to English, North Korea has in recent years taken some special measures to recognize its status as the lingua franca of the world. None the less, it remains to be seen whether practical, instead of ideology-laden, English will be taught in North Korea.

The structure of the Korean language: a snapshot

The bulk of this book is about the Korean language. There is no need to go into detail about the language in the present chapter. However, a brief profile of the language will not come amiss as a prelude to what follows. Readers need not worry if they are unfamiliar with some of the technical terms used in the rest of this section, for they will be clearly explained in appropriate places in the book. However, those who do not wish to confront such unfamiliar terms at this early stage of the book are well advised to skip over the rest of this chapter.

The sound system in Korean comprises nineteen consonants, ten vowels and two semivowels. The syllable structure in Korean is defined by one obligatory vowel, supported by one optional consonant and one optional semivowel before the vowel, and one optional consonant after the vowel. Clusters of two consonants occur in the medial position of words, e.g. /ks/ in *kwukswu* 'noodle'. They never occur in the initial position of words, but they may do so in the final position of words, e.g. /ps/ in *kaps* 'price'. In word-final positions, however, only one of the two consonants is actually pronounced, with the other omitted unless followed by a vowel (see Chapter 2 for further discussion). Korean is characterized as a typical agglutinative language (very much like Turkish). Thus words are built by the process of adding elements with constant form and meaning to other elements. For instance, in the single word *mek-i-si-ess-keyss-supnita* '(a respectable person) may have made (X) eat', the verb *mek-* 'eat' is followed by the causative ending -*i*, the subject honorific ending -*si*, the past tense ending -*ess*, the conjectural modal ending -*keyss* and the deferential speech level (statement) ending -*supnita* (which in turn can be further analysed into the hearer or addressee honorific ending -*sup*, the indicative mood ending -*ni* and finally the declarative ending -*ta*). The basic word order in Korean sentences is subject, object and verb in that order (e.g. *kiho-ka* [subject] *sakwa-lul* [object] *mek-ess-ta* [verb] 'Keeho ate an apple'). For emphatic or pragmatic purposes, however, the subject and object – and other elements for that matter – may change their positions as long as the verb stays in the final position of a sentence. Role-marking or delimiting particles such as -*i*/-*ka* (nominative), -*(l)ul* (accusative) and -*(n)un* (topic/contrast) are used to indicate grammatical or discourse functions of noun phrases, i.e. who does what to whom, who is being talked about and the like. Modifying elements (in bold face) appear before what they modify, e.g. ***i** salam* (this man) 'this man', ***ku** salam-uy* cha (that man-GEN car) 'the man's car', ***yeyppu-n** kkoch* (pretty-REL flower) 'pretty flowers' and ***ku** salam-i phal-a-peli-n* cha (that man-NOM sell-LK-PFV-REL car) 'the car that the man has sold'. (See Chapters 4 and 5 for further discussion.)

The use of the subject honorific ending -*si* mentioned in the preceding paragraph merits a little more discussion, especially in view of the earlier discussion about age and *chwulsin*. This ending is part of the so-called honorific system in Korean. It is used to express the speaker's respect towards the referent of the subject noun phrase (e.g. *halapeci* 'grandfather' in *halapeci-kkeyse o-si-ess-ta* 'Grandfather came or arrived (here)'). Whether the referent of the subject noun phrase deserves the speaker's respect depends on the speaker's position *vis-à-vis* the referent of the subject noun phrase in terms of age and social status (see Chapter 5 for further discussion). The neutral–honorific distinction is also found in nouns, e.g. *nai* (neutral) versus *yensey* (honorific) 'age', verbs, e.g. *mek-ta* (neutral) versus *tusi-ta* (honorific) 'eat', and the encoding of the subject noun phrase or the nominative particle, e.g.

-il-ka (neutral) versus *-kkeyse* (honorific). Furthermore, there is a neutral–humble distinction in pronouns, e.g. *na* (neutral) versus *ce* (humble) 'I', nouns, e.g. *emeni* (neutral) versus *eymi* (humble) 'mother', and verbs, e.g. *cwu-ta* (neutral) versus *tuli-ta* (humble) 'give' (see Chapter 4 for further discussion). Moreover, so-called sentence enders (i.e. elements used to end sentences) must also change, depending on the speech level determined by the difference in age or social status between the speaker and the hearer. There are as many as six different speech levels: deferential, polite, semi-formal, familiar, intimate and plain (see Chapter 5 for detailed discussion). The six sentences in (1) all have the same meaning *Keeho went home* but differ in terms of speech level.

(1)

a. kiho-ka   cip-ey   ka-ss-supnita
    Keeho-NOM   home-to   go-PST-DEFERENTIAL.S

b. kiho-ka   cip-ey   ka-ss-eyo
    Keeho-NOM   home-to   go-PST-POLITE.S

c. kiho-ka   cip-ey   ka-ss-o
    Keeho-NOM   home-to   go-PST-SEMI-FORMAL.S

d. kiho-ka   cip-ey   ka-ss-ney
    Keeho-NOM   home-to   go-PST-FAMILIAR.S

e. kiho-ka   cip-ey   ka-ss-e
    Keeho-NOM   home-to   go-PST-INTIMATE.S

f. kiho-ka   cip-ey   ka-ss-ta
    Keeho-NOM   home-to   go-PST-PLAIN.S

It is totally unacceptable to say (1c), (1d), (1e) or (1f) to someone older or to people in higher social positions; (1a) or (1b) must instead be used, depending on the speaker's familiarity with the hearer or on the formality of situations. Conversely, Koreans will never say (1a) or (1b) to someone younger or to people in lower social positions. In this case, (1c), (1d), (1e) or (1f) will be chosen, depending on the relative difference in age or social status between the speaker and the hearer, and the speaker's familiarity with the hearer, for example.

2

SOUNDS AND THEIR PATTERNS
Phonology

Learning to speak a foreign language involves much more than learning to pronounce words in that language as well as its native speakers. As every student of a foreign language will attest, however, a native-like or at least near native-like accent is one of the first things that all foreign language learners wish to acquire. Indeed, language teachers never tire of telling their students how important it is to speak a foreign language with a native-like accent. Unfortunately, only a small number of learners, even after years of hard work, will ever manage to acquire a near native-like, let alone native-like, accent. This can prove to be frustrating for adult learners, because young children learn to sound like native speakers in a very short period of time and with little effort or no formal instruction. There may be a number of reasons for this apparent 'inequality'. For example, young children are less inhibited than adults are, and tend to regard learning foreign languages as some kind of fun game or play. Thus children are less anxious about making mistakes than adults are. (Perhaps adult learners have a lot to learn from children, when it comes to learning foreign languages.) Children are also said to have more neuro-muscular 'flexibility' than adults, which may perhaps explain their seemingly effortless acquisition of a native-like accent.

There is no denying how important it is to achieve a native-like or at least near native-like pronunciation of a foreign language. However, it is equally important to realize that speaking a foreign language with a non-native accent is not really something to be ashamed of. (Unfortunately, many foreign language learners tend to feel bad about their non-native accents.) German or Indian speakers, for instance, speak English with distinct non-native accents. This is why we can easily identify the origin of these non-native speakers without even asking them. One might argue that speaking English with a distinct non-native accent is part and parcel of German or Indian identity. After all, native speakers of English have a wide range of accents, too. For example, Canadians speak English quite differently from Australians or New Zealanders. (Native speakers of different varieties of English may not always understand one another although they speak the same language.) Thus it is possible to identify the origin of native speakers

of English on the basis of their accents alone. There is also variation within each variety of English, be it North American or British. Thus all speakers of English, native or non-native, do speak with one accent or another. It is in this sense that it is not a bad or shameful thing to have a non-native accent. This having been said, however, it cannot be emphasized strongly enough how important it is to master a (reasonably) good pronunciation of a foreign language, not least because mispronunciation can sometimes cause misunderstanding or miscommunication. Needless to say, the ability to pronounce words correctly goes hand in hand with the ability to hear words correctly. No doubt all foreign language learners have their fair share of embarrassing moments caused by mispronunciation or miscomprehension. (One of the most unfortunate instances of such miscomprehension is one Japanese visitor to the United States who was fatally shot because he misunderstood a policeman's command 'Freeze' as 'Please' and moved forwards.)

This chapter looks at individual sounds in Korean and how they can be put together into larger sound units such as syllables. Particular attention is paid to the way individual sounds may adjust themselves, depending on their position, for example, within the syllable structure (this kind of study is technically known as phonology). In addition, similarities and differences in sounds and sound patterns between Korean and English are highlighted with a view to helping English-speaking learners to achieve a good pronunciation of Korean. No doubt some sounds are easier to pronounce than others in Korean because they happen to be identical or similar to those found in English. None the less, there are certain sound distinctions that are meaningful in the one language but not in the other. As a consequence, English-speaking learners of Korean may sometimes be found to emphasize sound distinctions that are not made in Korean – often to the 'amusement' of native Korean speakers. The reverse situation can, of course, be observed without much difficulty: Korean-speaking learners of English failing to make important sound distinctions in English. Moreover, non-native speakers are known to substitute sounds in their native languages for those which are used in a foreign language but are absent in their own. This is, in fact, why non-native speakers tend to have a non-native accent.

While this chapter draws particular attention to potential problems in the foreign language acquisition of Korean sounds and related sound patterns, readers should never be under the impression that it is somehow possible to master the pronunciation of Korean – or of any foreign language for that matter – by simply reading about it in a book! It goes without saying that, in order to acquire a good pronunciation of Korean, one should not only give oneself sufficient exposure to natural speech – live or recorded – but also have the determination to imitate native speakers' speech in an uninhibited (or child-like) manner. In other words, nothing can ever replace hard work and practice. The most this chapter can do is to contribute to

English-speaking learners' awareness and understanding of potential areas of difficulty in acquiring a good pronunciation of Korean.

Standard South Korean: Phyocwune

Before we proceed further, a few words are in order as to exactly which variety of Korean is discussed in this and other chapters. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are as many as seven regional dialects in Korea, and, although learners of Korean are advised eventually to learn to recognize, if not speak, some of these dialects, it is Standard South Korean (or Phyocwune) that learners are most likely to come in contact with and thus need to acquire in preference to the other dialects. For this reason alone, the present book is concerned largely with Standard South Korean.

Standard South Korean has been widely spread through education and, recently and increasingly, through mass communication in Korea – hereafter, Korea means South Korea, unless indicated otherwise – and it is not uncommon to hear non-Seoulites speaking (something close to) Standard South Korean in formal domains such as work but switching to their own regional dialects in informal domains such as home. Standard South Korean was originally defined in 1936 as the dialect of the educated middle class in Seoul and redefined in 1988 as based on the modern Seoul dialect commonly used by educated people in and around the metropolitan area of Seoul. It has since been codified in such domains as education (e.g. school textbooks), government (e.g. official documents) and the mass media (e.g. newspapers and national broadcasting). But the problem with such codification is that probably few Seoulites actually speak Standard South Korean as preserved and promoted by the Korean government (e.g. the Ministry of Education) and the mass media. This is not difficult to understand. Languages do not remain unchanged over time, but constantly undergo changes. Korean is no exception to this. Most of these changes, however, take a very long time, if they are accepted, to become codified in, or to find their way into, Standard South Korean. Hence there are differences between Standard South Korean and the Seoul dialect, which the former is supposed to be based on.

Moreover, the migration over decades into Seoul from the rest of Korea (including North Korea during the Korean War) has contributed considerably to the dialect of Seoul. Thus Standard South Korean, albeit claimed to be based on the dialect of Seoul, may exist largely in written form, and, in its spoken use, is probably confined to news broadcasting. This point must be borne in mind.

Sounds in Korean: consonants, vowels and semivowels

Korean has nineteen consonants, ten vowels and two semivowels. These speech sounds are discussed here in particular comparison with English
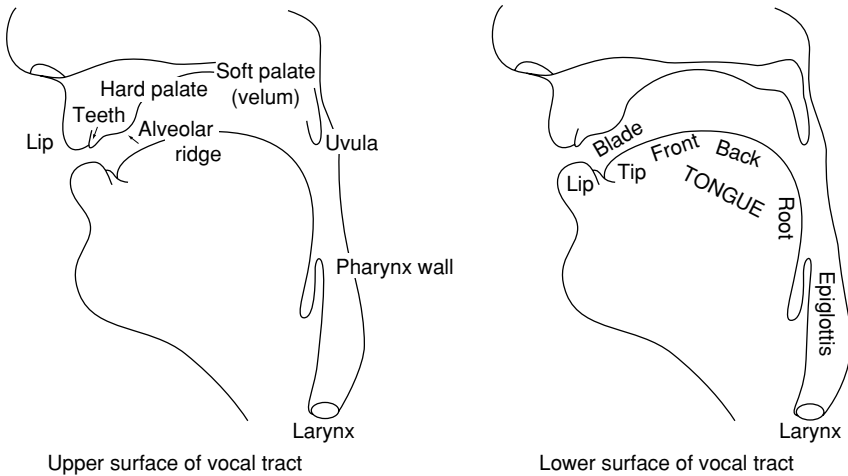
Figure 2.1 The vocal tract.

counterparts, where possible. Consonants are speech sounds produced with some constriction or impedance of the airstream, while vowels are speech sounds produced without a constriction of the air flowing out through the mouth. Semivowels can be said to lie somewhere between consonants and vowels. They are vowel-like in that they involve little or no constriction of the airstream but they are also consonant-like in that they need to be supported by vowels. Consonants are described in terms of the manner in which the impedance of the airstream is carried out (e.g. **t**ip versus **s**ip) and also in terms of the place where the constriction or impedance of airstream occurs (e.g. **p**ip versus **t**ip). Consonants may be either voiceless (e.g. **p**it) or voiced (e.g. **b**it), depending on whether the vocal cords in the larynx vibrate while they are being produced: voiceless when pronounced without vibrations of the vocal cords and voiced when the vocal cords are vibrating during pronunciation. (See Figure 2.1 for different parts of the vocal tract.) Vowels are described in terms of the highest point of the tongue, which is manipulated to modify the airstream flowing out through the mouth (e.g. h**i**t versus h**a**t), in terms of which part of the tongue is raised (e.g. p**i**t versus p**u**t) and in terms of the presence or absence of lip rounding (e.g. p**o**t versus p**e**t).

Consonants

When it is said that Korean has nineteen consonants, it means that there are nineteen sound units that contrast with one another so as to contribute to meaning. For example, in English /t/ and /s/ are such sound units, because *tip* and *sip* have two different meanings, and this meaning difference is attributed directly to the contrast between /t/ and /s/. Note that this contrastive

Table 2.1 Consonants in Korean

	Stop	Fricative	Nasal	Lateral
Bilabial	p, pp, ph		m	
Dental	t, tt, th	s, ss	n	l
Palatal	c, cc, ch			
Velar	k, kk, kh		ŋ	
Glottal		h		

status of sound units is indicated by the fact that they are enclosed in slanting slashes. When sound units are realized in actual pronunciation, their pronunciation status is marked by enclosing square brackets, e.g. [t] and [s]. (Symbols used between slanting slashes or square brackets in this book are borrowed from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA); the details of the IPA symbols are found in introductory linguistics or phonetics textbooks such as those listed in references and further reading, and can also be retrieved from http://www.shef.ac.uk/ipa/.) The nineteen consonants in Korean are displayed in Table 2.1 according to their places (i.e. bilabial, dental etc.) and manners (i.e. stop, fricative etc.) of articulation.

Bilabials are produced by bringing both lips together (e.g. the initial consonant of the English word *pit*). Dentals are produced by putting the tip or blade of the tongue against the upper front teeth. Palatals include sounds produced by raising the front part of the tongue to the hard palate (the initial consonant of the English word *ship*; note that the two letters *sh* here represent a single sound). Velars are produced by raising the back of the tongue to the soft palate or velum (the final consonant of the English word *sing*; again the two letters *ng* here represent a single sound). Glottals are sounds produced by involving the vocal cords in the larynx, with no modification of the airstream in the mouth. The vocal cords or glottis can be either open or tightly closed when glottals are produced, e.g. the initial consonant of the English word *hip* or the sound replacing the middle consonant of the English word *matter* in Cockney English, respectively.

Stops (e.g. the initial consonant of the English word *tip*) are produced by completely blocking the airstream in the mouth. It is only when the blocked airstream is released in order to move on to a following sound that they can actually be heard. In the case of the initial consonant of the English word *tip*, the airstream is blocked by raising the tip or blade of the tongue to the bony ridge behind the upper front teeth (known as the alveolar ridge). Fricatives are produced by obstructing but not completely blocking the airstream inside the mouth, e.g. the initial consonant of the English word *fit*. This is why one can literally hear the friction or turbulence of the air passing through a narrow passage in the mouth. Nasals are produced by letting the air pass out through the nasal cavity, not through the mouth, e.g. the initial

consonant of the English word *map*. This is achieved by lowering the soft palate. Laterals are produced by lowering the sides of the tongue, while keeping the front of the tongue in contact with the alveolar ridge or the back of the upper front teeth, e.g. the initial consonant of the English word *lip*. The air escapes through the gaps created by the lowering of the sides of the tongue.

As can be seen in Table 2.1, the Korean stops are unusually complicated, with three different series. The first column contains lax or plain stops, the second tensed stops and the third aspirated stops. In other words, the stops in Korean have a three-way distinction. The lax stops, /p/, /t/, /c/ and /k/, are similar to the English counterparts with the exception of the palatal /c/, which does not exist in English. These lax stops are voiceless and pronounced with a puff of air or aspiration when appearing in initial position, e.g. *tal* [tal] 'moon'. However, their aspiration is not as strong as that which normally accompanies the release of English voiceless stops, e.g. the initial consonant of the English word *tie*. The lax palatal stop /c/ is produced in the same way as the other lax stops, the difference being that the complete impedance of the airstream occurs between the front part of the tongue and the hard palate (or somewhere between the alveolar ridge and the hard palate). These lax stops, when appearing between voiced sounds, become lightly voiced, and in fact so lightly voiced that it is not easy for an untrained ear to detect the difference from when they appear in initial position. The lax stops, when appearing in final position, are pronounced the same way as they are in initial position, with the exception of the lax palatal stop, which is pronounced the same way as /t/ (unless followed by a vowel-initial word or role-marking particle), e.g. *nac* /nac/ 'daytime' pronounced as [nat] (see the next section for further discussion of this kind of adjustment). In English, words ending in stops can be pronounced optionally in conjunction with the release of the blocked airstream. For example, the English word *hat* can be pronounced either as [hæt˥] or [hætʰ], where the symbols ˥ and ʰ represent unreleased airstream and a strong puff of air, respectively. In Korean, on the other hand, no stops in final position can be accompanied by the release of the blocked airstream. In other words, the impedance of the airstream must be strictly maintained, with no air escaping from the mouth.

The tensed stops /pp/, /tt/, /cc/ and /kk/ in Korean – especially /cc/ – are not easy for English speakers to pronounce. (These tensed stops are written as /p′/, /t′/, /c′/ and /k′/ in IPA transcription but the common convention in Korean linguistics of repeating the lax stop symbol instead of using the apostrophe is adopted in this book.) English-speaking learners often mistake them for voiced stops in English, e.g. [b], [d] and [g] as in *bat*, *dip* and *get*, respectively. But the tensed stops in Korean are never voiced, but are always voiceless. This point must be borne in mind when trying to learn to produce these tensed stops. It is often said that they are similar to the voiceless stops in French or Spanish, i.e. voiceless stops without a puff of air or aspiration.

But they are qualitatively different from the French or Spanish voiceless stops. When the tensed stops are produced in Korean, the airstream is blocked not only at the respective place of articulation, e.g. [pp] at the lips, but also at the vocal cords. Learners can try to produce [pp] by bringing the lips together and by closing off the vocal cords at the same time. The tensed palatal stop [cc] is produced in exactly the same way as the lax palatal stop [c], but the airstream is blocked at the vocal cords as well. These tensed stops do not appear in final position, with the exception of /kk/, which is realized as [k] in pronunciation.

The aspirated stops, /ph/, /th/, /ch/ and /kh/, are realized in pronunciation much like the voiceless stops in initial position in English, e.g. *pit*, *tip* and *kip*, i.e. with aspiration or a strong puff of air. These aspirated stops are never voiced, however. This makes sense because the strong puff of air is mediated by the opening of the vocal cords (so that the air can pass out unobstructed once released). As readers can also recall, the Korean stops in final position are never released. This means that the aspirated stops /ph/, /th/, and /kh/, when appearing in final position, are all realized as [p], [t] and [k] in pronunciation. The remaining aspirated stop /ch/ is pronounced as [t], just as its lax counterpart /c/ is.

The three-way distinction in the Korean stops can be illustrated by triplets such as: *tal* /tal/ 'moon', *ttal* /ttal/ 'daughter' and *thal* /thal/ 'mask' or *pul* /pul/ 'fire', *ppul* /ppul/ 'horn' and *phul* /phul/ 'grass'. The existence of triplets such as these demonstrates the need for learners to be able to distinguish these three different types of stop in both production and comprehension.

The three fricatives, /s/, /ss/ and /h/, can also be problematic for English-speaking learners. There is only a slight aspiration with /s/, which thus sounds very much like /s/ in the English word *spring*. The tensed fricative /ss/ is produced with a much stronger force or with a constriction of airstream near the upper front teeth and also at the vocal cords. This tensed fricative sound is very much like /s/ in the English word *singer*. Again, the difference between the lax /s/ and tensed /ss/ is contrastive, as exemplified by the meaning difference between *sal* /sal/ 'flesh' and *ssal* /ssal/ '(husked but uncooked) rice'. Like stops, the fricatives, /s/ and /ss/, when appearing in final position, must be pronounced as [t], e.g. *nas* /nas/ 'sickle' realized as [nat] in pronunciation. Unlike the lax stops, however, neither /s/ or /ss/ becomes voiced between voiced sounds. Thus [z] does not exist in Korean (nor does [zz]). This explains why Koreans find it difficult to pronounce English words containing this voiced fricative, e.g. *zero*, *zealous* or *zoo*.

The glottal fricative, /h/, is also different from the English counterpart in that it tends to resemble other fricatives, depending on the following vowel. For example, /h/, when immediately followed by a vowel /i/ (e.g. *him* 'strength'), tends to be realized in pronunciation very much like a palatal fricative /ç/, which is found in the final consonant of the German word *ich*. When followed by a vowel /u/ (e.g. *hwusey* 'posterity'), however, it tends to

resemble a bilabial fricative /ɸ/, which is attested in the initial consonant of the Japanese word *h**uton*.

The nasals, /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/, are very much like their English counterparts (e.g. *m**outh*, *n**et* and ki*ng*, respectively). The major difference between the first two nasals and the last is that the latter does not occur in word-initial position in Korean. This is also true of English. This is why Korean speakers, like English speakers, have much trouble in pronouncing Māori tribal names such as *Ngāi Tahu*, for example.

The lateral in Korean, /l/, can be tricky for English-speaking learners, because it is pronounced in two different ways, depending on where it appears within words. It can be produced by tapping the tongue against the back of the upper front teeth or the alveolar ridge, very much like the so-called flap [ɾ] in Spanish (e.g. *feroz* 'fierce') or in the middle consonant of the English word *butter* in North American or Australian English; it can also be produced by keeping the front of the tongue in contact with the alveolar ridge or the back of the upper front teeth while lowering the sides of the tongue at the same time. The latter pronunciation, as found also in the first consonant of the English word *l**ip*, is known as clear *l*. In Korean, the clear *l* is expected if the lateral appears in word-final position or before consonants, e.g. *sal* /sal/ 'flesh' realized as [sal] in pronunciation, with the flap used in other positions, namely between vowels or between a vowel and a semivowel, e.g. *nala* /nala/ 'nation' realized as [naɾa] in pronunciation. It needs to be reiterated that in Korean the lateral /l/, when appearing word-finally or before other consonants, is always realized as a clear *l*. The situation is very different in English, where the lateral /l/ in words such as *hi**ll* or *si**lk* is pronounced as a dark *l* or as [ɫ] by raising the back of the tongue, somewhat like the vowel in English words such as *b**oot*. (In fact, some native English speakers go so far as to pronounce words like *silk* as [sɪʊk] instead of [sɪɫk]!) Not surprisingly, English-speaking learners of Korean tend to pronounce the Korean lateral in word-final position or before consonants in this manner. For example, the Korean word *kalpi* /kalpi/ 'spare ribs' is pronounced as [kaɫbi] or even [khaɫbi] by English speakers with a less than adequate command of Korean sounds. This word has to be pronounced as [kalbi], with a clear *l* as in the English word *l**ip*; that is [l]. Incidentally, note that the lax stop /p/ becomes voiced (i.e. [b]) between voiced sounds in the word in question.

The lateral normally does not appear in word-initial position in Korean. (incidentally, this is thought to be characteristic of so-called Altaic languages – see Chapter 1). This restriction, however, is relaxed in the case of loanwords, e.g. *latio* 'radio'.

Vowels

There are ten vowels in Korean, and the major difference between Korean and English is that the vowels in Korean are pure and invariable. This

Table 2.2 Vowels in Korean

	Front	*Back*
High	i, y	ɨ, u
Mid	e, ø	ə, o
Low	ɛ	a

means that the vowels in Korean do not change in sound quality while being produced. Therefore, the position of the tongue remains unchanged during the pronunciation of the Korean vowels, whereas in English this is not the case. The vowels in English words such as *read*, *fool* and *play* undergo (subtle) changes in sound quality. As noted above, the ten vowels can be described in terms of the highest point of the tongue and also the raised part of the tongue. They can be displayed as in Table 2.2.

The high front and mid front vowels and the high back and mid back vowels are either unrounded or rounded. Rounded vowels (e.g. /u/, /o/, /y/ and /ø/ in Table 2.2), as opposed to unrounded vowels (e.g. the remaining six vowels in Table 2.2), are produced with the lips rounded but the lip-rounding involved in Korean is less prominent than in the rounded vowels in English. Although it is said that there are ten vowels in Korean, this may not really be true of many Korean speakers. It is more likely that Korean has only seven or eight vowels, as explained below.

The high front unrounded vowel /i/, as in *him* /him/ 'strength', is similar to the vowel in the English word *sea*, but the sound quality is maintained consistently throughout the pronunciation. Moreover, the vowel /i/ in Korean is much shorter than the vowel in the English word *sea* is. (Australian and North American learners may have to pronounce this vowel slightly lower and higher, respectively, than they pronounce the high front vowel /i/ in English.) The mid front unrounded vowel /e/ is reasonably similar in quality to /e/ in the English word *pet*, but it should be pronounced a bit more tense and longer. The low front vowel /ɛ/ lies somewhere between /e/ and /æ/, as in the English words *pet* and *cat*, respectively. Again, this vowel is pronounced with slight tenseness. For many Korean speakers, however, /e/ and /ɛ/ have merged. There is no real distinction between *key* /ke/ 'crab' and *kay* /kɛ/ 'dog' for these speakers, both coming out as [ke]. Mergers like this are very common in languages. For example, the distinction between /e/ and /æ/ has disappeared – especially before /l/ – for some Australian and New Zealand English speakers. Thus, for these speakers, *telly* and *tally*, or *Ellen* and *Allen* are pronounced the same way. A more dramatic example of such a vowel merger can be taken from New Zealand English. For some New Zealand speakers, especially young people, *hare*, *hair*, *hear* and *here* all come out identically as [heə].

The high front rounded vowel, /y/ as in *wicang* /ycaŋ/ 'camouflage', is similar to the vowel in the German word *Mütter* 'mothers', and the mid front rounded vowel, /ø/ as in *oykwukin* /økukin/ 'foreigner', to the vowel in the German word *Götter* 'gods'. These vowels do not exist in English. Fortunately, they are less frequently used than one might expect. In fact, it is not inaccurate to say that /y/ and /ø/ are being replaced by /wi/ and /we/, respectively, in Korean.

The high back rounded vowel, /u/ as in *kwukswu* /kuksu/ 'noodle', is produced in a similar way to the vowel in the English word *fool*, but with a slightly higher degree of tenseness and with a shorter duration. The mid back rounded vowel, /o/ as in *kong* /koŋ/ 'ball', is similar to the vowel in the word *fox* as pronounced in Australian, not American, English, but is produced with the position of the tongue slightly higher than is the case of the English vowel.

The low back vowel, /a/ as in *tal* /tal/ 'moon', is produced in a similar way the same vowel in the English word *father* or *car* is pronounced. However, this vowel is produced further forward in the mouth in Korean than in North American English. The best target position for this vowel is provided by the counterpart in Australian English, where it is similarly produced towards the front part of the mouth.

The remaining two vowels /ɨ/ and /ə/, as in *umsik* /ɨmsik/ 'food' and *ecey* /əce/ 'yesterday', demand some careful attention from learners in that the former is unattested in English and the latter very different from its counterpart in English. The high back unrounded vowel is produced like /u/ minus lip-rounding, with the tongue more forward in the mouth. This requires some practice, needless to say, because English-speaking learners will find it difficult to pronounce without rounding the lips at the same time. The other back unrounded vowel /ə/ is often likened to the initial vowel in the English word ***about***. This, however, is not a good comparison, due largely to the difference in stress between the two languages (see below for discussion of stress). The initial vowel in the English word ***about*** is technically known as a schwa (i.e. a vowel used in a weak, unstressed position). This is qualitatively different from the Korean /ə/, which is not a weakened vowel at all. If anything, it needs to be produced as a tense vowel, very much like other vowels.

Vowel length is claimed to be distinctive in Korean; it contributes to a difference in meaning. For example, *pam* /pam/ 'night' means something different from *pam* /pa:m/ 'chestnut'. (The colon symbol, /:/, represents vowel length; note, however, that there is no distinction in writing.) The duration of /a:/ is slightly greater than that of /a/. Further standard examples can be listed, e.g. *nwun* /nun/ 'eye' versus *nwun* /nu:n/ 'snow', *kil* /kil/ 'road' versus *kil* /ki:l/ 'long' and *mal* /mal/ 'horse' versus *mal* /ma:l/ 'speech' or 'language'. School children are often taught to memorize pairs like these, and they may be tested at school, even though they do not make this distinction in their

own speech. Not many adult Korean speakers actually make the distinction either. It is often said in the literature that older speakers (over fifty years of age) maintain this vowel length distinction but this does not seem to be borne out by recent studies, which have revealed that even older speakers fail to make the distinction on a consistent basis. Moreover, dictionaries do not always agree with one another in their specification of vowel length. This suggests that vowel length in Korean is or has become largely artificial. Vowel length can thus be safely said to be on its way out in Korean, perhaps more so than prescriptivists may like to admit. One of the reasons why the loss of vowel length is not felt as a loss is that the function of vowel length can easily be made redundant by the context of situation. Thus someone who utters [pam] instead of [pa:m] while pointing to chestnuts will not be misunderstood to mean 'night'.

Semivowels

There are two semivowels, namely /w/ and /j/ (as in the initial sounds of *wicked* and *yes*, respectively). As noted above, semivowels are consonant-like in that they need to be supported by vowels, although they, like vowels, are produced without blocking or obstructing the airstream as in the production of consonants. In Korean, these two semivowels always precede vowels, but never follow them (with one possible exception; see below). The semivowels combine with most of the ten vowels. For example, /w/ combines with /i/, /e/, /ɛ/, /ə/ and /a/, and /j/ with /e/, /ɛ/, /ə/, /a/, /u/ and /o/. Words containing these combinations include: *yelum* /jəlɨm/ 'summer', *yaswu* /jasu/ 'wild beast', *kwail* /kwail/ 'fruit' and *wenchik* /wənchik/ 'principle'. The semivowel /j/ can be preceded by the vowel /ɨ/, as in *uysa* /ɨjsa/, *huymang* /hɨjmaŋ/ 'hope' or *-uy* /-ɨj/ 'genitive or possessive suffix'. This combination, however, is pronounced as [ɨ], [i] or [e], the latter only in the case of the genitive suffix. Thus /ɨjsa/, /hɨjmaŋ/ and /-ɨj/ are realized as [isa], [çimaŋ] and [-e], respectively, in pronunciation. The semivowel, in pronunciation, does not follow vowels at all. However, some Korean speakers, especially young ones, may pronounce /ɨjsa/ and /-ɨj/ as [ɨjsa] and [-ɨj], respectively (although they will not pronounce /hɨjmaŋ/ as [hɨjmaŋ]). This is known as spelling pronunciation, whereby speakers pronounce words as they are spelt. A comparable example from English is the way words like *often* are pronounced by some native English speakers, i.e. [ɒftən] instead of [ɒfən], because *often* is spelt with the letter *t*.

Sounds in combination: syllables and sound adjustment

Sounds do not occur in isolation, but they combine with one another. There are certain constraints on how sounds can be put together into larger sound units technically known as syllables. Syllables are made up of one vowel and

one or more optional non-vowel sounds, i.e. consonants and semivowels. The vowel can be said to be the carrier of the syllable in that it supports other sounds that may co-occur with it. Thus syllables may also consist of a vowel and nothing else, e.g. *I* /aɪ/ in English. Consonants may occur before or after a vowel or even on both sides of a vowel to form a syllable, e.g. *tie* /taɪ/, *on* /ɒn/ or *keen* /kin/ in English. More than one consonant can appear before and after a vowel in English. For instance, *splints* /splɪnts/ has three consonants before and also after the vowel /ɪ/. When two or more consonants occur together before or after a vowel within a syllable, they are referred to technically as a consonant cluster. Because of the presence of such consonant clusters, the English syllable structure is relatively complicated. Words may be made up of one or more syllables, e.g. monosyllabic *splints* /splɪnts/, disyllabic *singing* /sɪŋ.ɪŋ/ and polysyllabic *phonological* /fɒ.nə.lɒ.dʒɪ.kəl/. (Note that dots are used here in order to indicate syllable boundaries.)

The syllable structure in Korean is much less complicated than that in English, mainly because of the lack of consonant clusters. Unfortunately, this does not mean that it will be easy for English speakers to learn how to pronounce Korean words or sounds in combination. Like other languages, Korean has certain ways of adjusting sounds, depending on the nature of neighbouring sounds. Native speakers adjust the pronunciation of sounds without thinking about it (i.e. unconsciously), but learners will have to learn relevant rules by practice and imitation until they are able to do so by habit.

In Korean, syllables can consist of a vowel alone, e.g. *i* /i/ 'louse', but normally consonants precede or follow a vowel within syllables, e.g. *na* /na/ 'I' or *os* /os/ 'clothes'. They can also appear on both sides of a vowel, e.g. *sal* /sal/ 'flesh' or *tap* /tap/ 'answer'. Each of the 19 consonants (Table 2.1) occurs in syllable-initial position, i.e. before a vowel. In syllable-final position or after a vowel, on the other hand, the situation is complicated. All the consonants, except for /pp/, /tt/ and /cc/, can occur in syllable-final position. But some of these 'acceptable' consonants merge with others to the effect that syllables end with one of seven consonants in actual pronunciation, namely [p], [t], [k], [m], [n], [ŋ] and [l]. For example, *ciph* /ciph/ 'straw', when uttered in isolation or followed by a word boundary or a consonant-beginning particle, is realized as [cip] in pronunciation, just as *cip* /cip/ 'house' is; *os* /os/ 'clothes' is realized as [ot] in pronunciation, just as *kot* /kot/ 'soon' is realized as [kot] in pronunciation. In other words, /ph/ and /s/, when appearing in syllable-final position, merge with /p/ and /t/, respectively, in pronunciation. (This is why each of the seven consonants in question is enclosed in square brackets above.) When followed by vowel-initial role-marking particles, however, these consonants must be pronounced as they are. For example, words such as *ciph* /ciph/ 'straw' and *os* /os/ 'clothes', when followed by the nominative particle *-i* or /-i/, are pronounced as [ci.phi] and [o.si], respectively. Note, however, that the final consonant of *ciph* or *os* is reassigned or recognized as the initial consonant of the following syllable or the nominative

particle in this case (so that /ph/ and /s/ are never actually realized as they are when appearing in syllable-final position).

Unlike in English, no consonant clusters are permitted in syllable-initial position in Korean. But consonants can combine with semivowels in syllable-initial position, e.g. *kwail* /kwa.il/ 'fruit' or *phyenci* /phjən.ci/ 'letter'. Consonant clusters are permitted in syllable-final position, but they cannot be realized as such in pronunciation unless they are followed by vowel-initial role-marking particles. Even in this case, as has already been exemplified, one member of the consonant cluster must be reassigned to the syllable structure of what follows. Which member of the consonant cluster is to be reassigned to the following syllable, however, is something that learners must, more frequently than not, memorize, unfortunately. For example, *moks* /moks/ 'share' and *kaps* /kaps/ 'price' are pronounced as [mok] and [kap], respectively, in isolation or when followed by a word boundary or a consonant-initial role-marking particle, e.g. [mok.kwa] 'share and', [mok.to] 'share also', [kap.kwa] 'price and' and [kap.to] 'price also'. However, when these syllable-final consonant clusters are followed by vowel-initial role-marking particles such as the nominative particle /-i/, /moks/ and /kaps/ will be realized as [mok.ssi] and [kap.ssi], respectively, in pronunciation (see below as to why /s/ changes to tensed [ss]). In other words, the second member of consonant clusters is reassigned to the following syllable. While the exact details are too complicated to be provided in a book like this one, the general rule to remember is that the second member of syllable-final consonant clusters is to be omitted unless they are followed by a vowel-initial role-marking particle.

There are exceptions when the first member of the consonant cluster is /l/. For instance, words such as *talk* /talk/ 'chicken' are pronounced with the first member of the syllable-final consonant cluster omitted, that is as [tak]. It is also the first member of the consonant cluster /lm/ that must be dropped, e.g. *salm* /salm/ 'life', pronounced as [sam]. If this is not complicated enough, there is sometimes even variation among native Korean speakers, e.g. *ilk-* /ilk-/ 'to read' realized either as [ik-] or as [il-] in pronunciation. Some young Korean speakers are reported to realize in their speech consonant clusters such as /lp/ in words such as *palp-ta* /palp.ta/ 'to step on (something)', i.e. [palp.ta] instead of the expected form [pap.ta]. Learners will have to be mindful of exceptions like these and also familiarize themselves with the variation among native Korean speakers, just as non-native speakers of English must realize that native English speakers pronounce the English word *often* in two different ways ([ɒfən] or [ɒftən]) but do not pronounce the English word *soften* in a similar fashion (i.e. as [sɒfən], but not as [sɒftən]).

Although all consonants can appear in syllable-initial position, it turns out to be a slightly different story when /l/ and /n/ appear in a syllable-initial position that also happens to be word-initial. Basically, these two consonants are to be deleted before the vowel /i/ or the semivowel /j/, if and when they

appear in such a position. For example, *sayngnyen* /sɛŋ.njən/ 'birth year' and *yenmal* /jən.mal/ 'year end' are compound expressions, both containing the word *nyen* 'year'. In the first compound expression, the word in question does not appear in word-initial position; the initial consonant /n/ is thus retained. In the second compound expression, on the other hand, it appears without /n/, because it appears in word-initial position and before the semivowel /j/. Moreover, word-initial /l/ changes to [n] before vowels other than /i/ or /j/. For example, *kelay* /kə.lɛ/ 'transaction' and *nayil* /nɛ.il/ 'tomorrow' both contain the word /lɛ/ 'to come' or 'coming'. In *kelay*, /l/ does not appear in word-initial position, hence no change. In *nayil*, on the other hand, /l/ is used in word-initial position and before the vowel /ɛ/, and must thus be changed to [n] for purposes of pronunciation. These constraints do not apply in the case of loanwords, however. For instance, as mentioned earlier in the section on consonants, the English word *radio* is rendered into *latio* /la.ti.o/ (or [ɾa.di.o] in actual pronunciation). The English word *news* has been accommodated into Korean as *nyusu* /nju.sɨ/ (or [nju.sɨ]), where the word-initial /n/ is retained even though it is followed by the semivowel /j/. (See below and Chapter 4 for further discussion of loanwords.)

When syllables (or words for that matter) consisting of only vowels appear back to back in Korean, they should not be 'bundled' together into diphthongs or triphthongs as used in English words such as *buy* /baɪ/ or *tower* /tauə/. Diphthongs or triphthongs are vowels which change in sound quality within a single syllable. Korean phrases such as *i ai* /i.a.i/ 'this child' (where *i* means 'this' and *ai* 'child'), on the other hand, are to be pronounced as a sequence of three separate syllables, i.e. [i.a.i]. English learners must be careful not to pronounce /i.a.i/ as a triphthong [iai] or even as a combination of a monophthong and a diphthong, i.e. [i.ai]. One way to pronounce this phrase correctly is to take a more or less equal amount of time or duration for each syllable.

There are constraints not only on which sounds can combine with which sounds in order to form syllables, but also on how sounds are realized in actual pronunciation, depending on adjacent sounds. This has already been briefly exemplified. Thus *ciph* /ciph/ 'straw', when uttered in isolation, must be realized in pronunciation the same way as *cip* /cip/ 'house' is, both as [cip]. In other words, /ph/ merges with /p/ under certain circumstances. Sound adjustment like this is prevalent in Korean speech (as in other languages). This can be one of the most difficult areas of Korean for learners to master. Unfortunately, such sound adjustment is not reflected or represented in Korean writing, because Korean words are written in their 'original' forms (see Chapter 3 for further discussion of Korean writing). For example, *ciph* /ciph/ is written as *ciph*, irrespective of whether it is realized as [ciph] or [cip] in pronunciation. The reason for this is that sound adjustment like this is largely predictable or 'natural' (if you happen to be a native Korean speaker or if you know the rules). The word *ciph* and the conjunction word *kwa*

'and' are written together (with no space in between) as *ciphkwa*, and the word *ciph* and the nominative particle *-i* as *ciphi*, although the first combination is pronounced as [cip.kwa] and the second as [ci.phi]. Thus Korean writing is, as rather regretfully noted by some Korean linguists, easy to read only for people who know the language. (In fairness, however, it must be stressed that writing in other languages can be as complicated or difficult as that in Korean.) There is no space here for an exhaustive listing of such sound adjustments but an attempt will be made to discuss some of the most important or salient ones.

Sounds tend to become similar in quality to neighbouring sounds. For example, try to say 'Make me do it'. If this is said slowly and carefully, each sound will come out as it is, i.e. [meɪk.mi.du.ɪt]. But if it is said reasonably fast and casually, it will come out as something like [meɪŋ.mi.du.ɪt]. The final sound of the word *make* /k/ and its actual realization [ŋ] are both velar consonants but the former is a stop consonant, while the latter is a nasal consonant. In other words, the final consonant /k/ in *make* takes on the nasal quality of the immediately following sound /m/ in *me*, while retaining its place of articulation. Examples like this are prevalent in English speech. Another example comes from 'Can't you do it?' In slow speech, it will be pronounced as [kant.ju.du.ɪt], while in normal speech it will be rendered into [kan.tʃu.du.ɪt]. The alveolar sound /t/ is adjusted into a palatal sound [tʃ] before the semivowel /j/, which is produced near the hard palate.

Stops in Korean, when occurring before nasals, tend to be changed into nasals, just as in the case of the English example 'Make me do it'. For instance, *puekhmun* /pu.əkh.mun/ 'kitchen door' can be realized as [pu.əŋ.mun] in casual speech (cf. [pu.əg.mun] in careful speech). The aspirated velar stop /kh/ takes on the nasal quality of the immediately following /m/ and turns itself into a velar nasal sound. The South Korean name for the Korean language is Hankwukmal /han.kuk.mal/ 'the Korean language'. This can be pronounced as [haŋ.guŋ.mal] in casual speech (cf. [han.gug.mal] in careful speech). The final consonant of the first syllable /n/ is already a nasal sound but it adjusts its place of articulation in line with the following velar stop /k/, and the final stop of the second syllable /k/ also changes to a nasal /ŋ/ in anticipation of the immediately following nasal sound /m/. Note that the first consonant of the second syllable /k/ is changed to a corresponding voiced consonant [g] between voiced sounds.

Stop consonants such as /t/ or /th/, when used before /i/ or /j/, are adjusted into palatal consonants, just as in the case of the English example 'Can't you do it?' For instance, *kathi* /kath.i/ 'together' must always be realized as [ka.chi] in pronunciation. A similar example is *puthita* /puth.i.ta/ 'to post (letters)'. This must be pronounced as [pu.chi.ta]. Unlike the nasal adjustment discussed earlier, however, these changes must be obligatorily made in pronunciation, even when they are uttered slowly and carefully. Otherwise, the pronunciation, even if understood, will indeed sound very foreign or

'unnatural'. Another example of this kind of palatal adjustment is the way /s/ and /ss/ are pronounced before /i/ or /y/. For example, the word *sinmun* /sin.mun/ 'newspaper' must be realized as [ʃim.mun]. The sound value of [ʃ] is much like that of the initial palatal consonant in the English word *she*, although it is produced slightly forward in the mouth in Korean than in English. (Note that the final consonant of the first syllable, /n/, is modified into [m] in line with the first consonant of the second syllable, /m/.) Compare this with the word *somang* /so.maŋ/ 'wish', which is pronounced without palatal adjustment as [so.maŋ].

There is also a constraint against /l/ and /n/ appearing next to each other within words. For example, Shilla, one of the three major kingdoms in Old Korea (see Chapter 1), is written as *sinla* /sin.la/ in Korean but it is pronounced as [ʃil.la]. The dental fricative /s/, before /i/, is adjusted to [ʃ], and the final nasal of the first syllable is changed into a lateral [l] before the initial lateral sound of the second syllable. The received romanization of *sinla* as Shilla reflects these sound adjustments. Sometimes a lateral may precede a nasal, as in *selnal* /səl.nal/ 'New Year's Day, which is realized as [səl.lal] in pronunciation. This, however, is not a water-tight constraint, for *ipwenlyo* /ip.wən.ljo/ 'hospital admission charges', *kayngsinlyo* /kɛŋ.sin.ljo/ 'renewal fee' and *sayngsanlyek* /sɛŋ.san.ljək/ 'production capacity' are pronounced as [ib.wən.njo], [kɛŋ.ʃin.njo] and [sɛŋ.san.njək], respectively. In other words, the lateral /l/, when occurring after /n/, is sometimes realized as [n]. Moreover, the lateral /l/ is changed into [n] within words, if it follows consonants other than /l/ or /n/. For example, the famous historic stone gate in Seoul is called *toklipmun* /tok.lip.mun/ 'The Independence Gate'. This is realized as [toŋ.nim.mun] in pronunciation. There are at least three different changes involved here. First, the lateral in the second syllable is changed into [n] because it appears after a consonant other than /l/ or /n/. Then, the final consonant of the first syllable /k/ is adjusted into a nasal, [ŋ] in this case, in anticipation of the following lateral turned nasal. Lastly, the final consonant of the second syllable /p/ is modified into a nasal [m] in line with the first consonant of the last syllable, thereby giving rise to the overall pronunciation of [toŋ.nim.mun]. The same kind of change is involved in such expressions as *ipcanglyo* /ip.caŋ.ljo/ 'entrance fee', *sakkamlyang* /sak.kam.ljaŋ/ 'reduced amount' and Chongro /coŋlo/ (one of the main streets in downtown Seoul); these expressions are realized as [ip.caŋ.njo], [sak.kam.njaŋ] and [coŋno], respectively, in pronunciation.

The lax consonants are changed into the corresponding tensed consonants when they follow [p], [t] or [k]. For example, *kwukswu* /kuk.su/ 'noodle' is realized as [kuk.ssu] in pronunciation. The lax fricative /s/ of the second syllable is adjusted into the tensed fricative [ss], as it is preceded by [k]. (This is also why *kaps* /kaps/ 'price' and *moks* /moks/ 'share', when followed by a vowel-initial role-marking particle, e.g. nominative *-i* /-i/, are pronounced as [kap.ssi] and [mok.ssi], respectively.) Recall that the final fricative /s/ of

words such as *os* /os/ 'clothes' is pronounced as [t]. Thus, when words like *os* precede other words beginning with a lax consonant, that lax consonant also becomes tensed. For example, *oskam* /os.kam/ 'cloth' or 'material for making clothes' consists of two words, *os* 'clothes' and *kam* 'material'. Note that the final consonant of the first word /s/ is followed by a word boundary (i.e. another word). This means that /s/ is realized in pronunciation as [t], which in turn triggers the tensing of the following lax stop /k/. Thus /os.kam/ is pronounced as [ot.kkam].

Finally, arguably the most difficult kind of sound adjustment in Korean is the tensing of lax consonants, different from the kind that has been described in the previous paragraph. This adjustment is difficult for learners of Korean in the sense that it is not as predictable as those that have so far been examined in this chapter. That is to say, as long as they know the general rules relating to the predictable type of sound adjustment, all that learners will need to do is to apply them in order to arrive at the correct pronunciation. What we are discussing here is not like that. It involves the use of the so-called intervening /s/. Unfortunately, this is not completely predictable, and, to make matters worse, the helpful clue or the letter *s* is not always present in writing. In the absence of this clue or the letter *s*, one needs to learn by heart when relevant sound adjustment must occur.

First, let's look at examples where Korean writing specifies the presence of the adjustment by means of the letter *s*. These examples can be related to the combination of two words linked by the so-called genitive marking, e.g. *of* in English expressions such as *a letter of complaint* or *the front of the house*. The Korean compound expression *kososcang* /ko.sos.caŋ/ 'letter of complaint' consists of two words, *koso* 'complaint' and *cang* 'letter', and these two words are linked by means of the archaic genitive marker /s/, which is explicitly written as part of the first word. This 'genitive' marking of /s/ is then adjusted into [t] (as earlier explained), which in turn gives rise to the tensing of the first lax consonant of the second word, i.e. /c/ to [cc]. Thus /ko.sos.caŋ/ is realized as [ko.sot.ccaŋ] in pronunciation. In examples like this, the presence of /s/ is indicated in writing (to the convenience of learners). However, in *phatosoli* /pha.to.so.li/ 'sound of waves', which also consists of two words, *phato* 'wave' and *soli* 'sound', the first consonant of the second word becomes tensed so that the compound expression as a whole is pronounced as [pha.do.sso.ri]. The presence of the intervening /s/, which is responsible for the tensing of the first consonant of the second word, is not indicated in writing, although the first word ends with the same vowel as *koso* 'complaint' in the earlier example.

When the first member of compound expressions ends with a consonant, no helpful clue is provided in Korean writing. For instance, *kimpap* /kim.pap/ 'Korean sushi' (*kim* 'seaweed' and *pap* 'cooked rice') is realized as [kim.ppap] in pronunciation. There is no reason why the first consonant of the second word *pap* has to be tensed, because it does not follow [p], [t] or [k]. (The

expected – but incorrect – pronunciation would be [kim.bap].) This is said to be caused by the 'understood' genitive marker /s/ in between the two words. But it is not indicated at all in writing. One can perhaps make an educated guess and insert an intervening /s/ between the two words because *kimpap* means 'rice of seaweed'. But this kind of guessing can only go so far. For example, consider *pampap* /pam.pap/ 'chestnut rice'. This expression could also be conceptually based on the 'genitive' relation between the two words, i.e. 'rice of chestnut', by analogy with *kimpap* 'rice of seaweed'. However, this expression is realized as [pam.bap], not as [pam.ppap], in pronunciation! Note that the first words of the two compound expressions end with the same nasal sound, i.e. /m/. Thus, between *kimpap* and *pampap*, learners will just have to memorize which compound expression occurs with the intervening /s/ and which without, and adjust the initial lax consonant of the second word accordingly.

This type of sound adjustment can be important because it distinguishes words that are written identically but have different meanings (technically known as homographs). For instance, the written word *camcali* has two meanings, depending on whether the intervening /s/ is used in pronunciation or not. (Note that the intervening /s/ is not represented in writing for *camcali*, irrespective of meaning.) Without an intervening /s/, it means 'dragonfly', and is pronounced as [cam.ɟa.ɾi] (where [ɟ] is the voiced palatal stop or the voiced counterpart of [c], i.e. the voicing of /c/ between voiced sounds). With an intervening /s/, it means 'bedding' or literally 'place for sleeping'. The written word *camcali*, with this second meaning, is realized as [cam.cca.ɾi] in pronunciation. Another example of this kind is the written phrase *phalto*, where *phal* means either 'eight' or 'arm'. Thus the phrase has two meanings: 'eight provinces or degrees', or 'arm also'. For the former meaning, the written phrase has to be pronounced as [phal.tto], and for the latter meaning as [phal.to]. In other words, the first meaning involves an intervening /s/ and the second does not.

Needless to say, the foregoing is intended not to provide a complete exposition of the intervening /s/, but instead to alert learners of Korean to its existence and its potential difficulty (and confusion), primarily because the presence of the intervening /s/ is not always predictable and indicated in Korean writing.

Beyond sounds: stress, intonation and connected speech

Stress is something that is superimposed on sounds. It is characterized by the use of extra respiratory energy during the production of a syllable. In terms of perception, this is greater loudness and/or higher pitch. In English, the word *export* can be stressed in two different ways. If the stress falls on the first syllable (i.e. **EX**port), it means 'the business of exporting' or 'something exported' (hereafter, stressed syllables are in bold upper case). If,

however, the stress falls on the second syllable (i.e. *exPORT*), it means 'to send (something) out of a country for sale'. The meaning of words changes depending on where the stress falls. In other words, stress makes a meaningful difference in English. This is not the case in Korean, however; word stress is not meaningful in Korean. Whether the word *kalpi* 'spare ribs' is pronounced as *KAL.pi* or *kal.PI*, it does not give rise to meaning differentiation as observed in English. Learners must also bear in mind that the stress in Korean, unlike that in English, may involve not so much loudness as pitch. This difference is not easy to explain in words, and learners must try to master Korean-style stress by carefully listening to and imitating native Korean speakers. They should avoid importing the louder or heavier English-style stress into their Korean speech.

This comment, however, is not intended to mean two things. First, it does not mean that there is no basic rule in Korean stress placement. There is. The basic rule is to stress the initial syllable if there is more than one syllable. Thus *kalpi* 'spare ribs' is to be pronounced as *KAL.pi*, rather than *kal.PI*. If the initial syllable consists of only one vowel and the second syllable begins with a consonant, it is the second syllable that carries a stress. For example, *achim* 'morning' is pronounced as *a.CHIM*, not *A.chim*. If, however, the first and second syllables are both made up of vowels only, then it is the first syllable that bears a stress, e.g. *O.i.ci* 'pickled cucumber', not *o.I.ci* or *o.i.CI*. Second, the comment does not mean that stress cannot be 'manipulated' for emphasis or contrast. Thus where to place a stress in a given word depends also on what part of that word the speaker wishes to draw the hearer's attention to. For example, suppose someone said *KAL.chi* 'scabbard fish' but the hearer misheard it as *KAL.pi* 'spare ribs'. The speaker may then correct the hearer's misunderstanding by saying something like 'I said *kal.CHI*, not *kal.PI*'. Note, however, that this does not change the meaning of the words. This type of stress adjustment is, of course, possible in English, too (e.g. 'I said *fifTEEN*, not *fifTY*').

Intonation, which is the pattern of pitch changes made typically over sentences, is basically used to indicate whether a sentence is a statement or a question, very much as in English (e.g. *He is gone* ↘ versus *Is he gone* ↗). There are two main intonation patterns in Korean: falling (↘) and rising (↗). The falling intonation pattern is commonly associated with making statements or asking so-called focus questions (i.e. the use of question words, e.g. *What would you like to eat?*). The rising intonation pattern, on the other hand, is utilized in asking so-called yes–no questions (i.e. questions which are expected to be answered by *yes* or *no*, e.g. *Do you study Korean?*). Although these two basic intonation patterns may not seem very different from those found in English, learners must bear in mind that the intonation in Korean is far less dramatic or prominent than that in English. Thus native Koreans speaking English without complete mastery of English intonation may strike native English speakers as 'flat' or even as detached or indifferent. (Conversely,

native English speakers using Korean without complete mastery of Korean intonation may sound to native Korean speakers as if they were 'exaggerating' or 'overdoing' what native Korean speakers would do in a 'subtle' manner.) This is probably because Korean intonation is 'driven' by the way words are stressed. Recall that Korean stress is not heavy or loud as in English. In Korean, intonation can also be used to reflect the speaker's intention, attitudes and the like (e.g. *kulay* ↗ 'Is that so? (a true question)', *kulay* ↑ 'Is that so?' (sharp-rising intonation; a question asked in surprise or disbelief), *kulay* ↗ → 'Is that so?' (rising followed by levelling out; a question of sarcasm or doubt)). Overall, intonation plays a far less significant role in Korean than in English in the sense that Korean is 'richer' in grammatical elements expressing the speaker's intention, attitudes and the like than is English. Thus what can be achieved by means of intonation in English may need to be indicated by means of grammatical elements in Korean (see Chapter 5).

Words are not uttered one by one in natural speech but are all strung together. Thus what has so far been described in terms of sound adjustment needs to be put together with correct stress and intonation patterns in order to produce natural connected speech. Sentences can be uttered in single breaths, but, more frequently than not, speakers may also pause in between groups of words known as phrases, for example, in search of thoughts or right words. Where such pauses can be made is important for learners for at least two reasons. Learners should always try to speak Korean as naturally as native Korean speakers do. But learners, especially those who are not competent enough in speaking Korean, will need to hesitate in their speech. Knowing where to hesitate can be very useful. Phrases tend to represent chunks of information in sentences. Thus it is important to pause or hesitate between, not within, phrases. In Korean, phrases may typically consist of a noun and a role-marking particle or a verb and related grammatical elements. Although the description of nouns and verbs has to be deferred to Chapters 4 and 5, this can be illustrated by the way the following sentence can be naturally uttered, with pauses or hesitations in the right places.

(1) kiho-nun   hakkyo-lul   ka-ss-ta
     Keeho-TOP   school-ACC   go-PST-PLAIN.S
     'Keeho went to school.'

The sentence can be said to consist of three phrases: *kiho-nun*, *hakkyo-lul* and *ka-ss-ta*. If pauses (represented by #) are going to be made, it will be between these three phrases, i.e. *kiho-nun#hakkyo-lul#ka-ss-ta*. Note that each of the two nouns is pronounced together with its role-marking particle, *-nun* or *-lul*, as a single unit. The verb, on the other hand, is pronounced, as a single unit, together with the two related grammatical elements, *-ss* and *-ta*. Alternatively, it could be: *kiho-nun#hakkyo-lul ka-ss-ta*. However, it may sound somewhat odd or unnatural if the pause boundary is placed

between *kiho-nun hakkyo-lul* and *ka-ss-ta* (unless the speaker is distracted by someone or something). What should never be attempted, however, is to place a pause within phrases. For instance *kiho#nun hakkyo#lul ka-ss#ta* will be totally unnatural. It will be akin to uttering something like this in English: *The boy from the#city is sing#ing a song*. Thus learning to pause or hesitate 'correctly' in speech is part of learning a foreign language; learning to pronounce words in a correct manner is not sufficient.

Pronunciation of loanwords

One useful way to understand the sounds and sound patterns in a foreign language is to look at the way words from one's native language are handled in that foreign language. English-speaking students of foreign languages are in luck in this regard because many languages, including Korean, borrow English words and make them their own. In this section, how English loanwords and also loanwords from other languages such as Japanese, German, Italian and French have been accommodated into Korean in terms of pronunciation is discussed. Emphasis is placed on English loanwords, because over 90 per cent of loanwords used in Korean derive, directly or indirectly, from English and because this book is intended primarily for English-speaking learners.

The target accent for English loanwords (codified) in Korean is more likely to be the British accent than the North American accent. This is somewhat surprising or even odd in view of the fact that it is North American English that is taught and promoted in Korean schools and universities. The British accent provides the basis for the loanword pronunciation of English words such as *block*, *boxing*, *butter*, *chocolate*, *complex*, *knock-out*, *motto*, *rock'n'roll*, *shock*, *shopping* and *top*. For example, the English words *shopping* and *top* are rendered into *syophing* /sjo.phiŋ/ and *thop* /thop/, respectively. The North American accent, on the other hand, provides the basis for the pronunciation of English loanwords such as *cocktail* and *hockey*. For example, the English loanword *hockey* is rendered into *hakhi* /ha.khi/ in Korean. Interestingly enough, some loanwords are based partly on the British accent and partly on the North American accent! For example, the loanword *has chokhollis* /has.cho.khol.lis/ is based on the North American pronunciation of *hot* and the British pronunciation of *chocolate*. This is realized as [hat.cho.khol.lit] in pronunciation.

In loanwords in Korean, foreign sounds that are absent are replaced by native sounds that are the closest possible in terms of quality (i.e. place and manner of articulation and voicing). For instance, Korean is not as rich in fricative sounds as English. Korean has only three, namely /s/, /ss/ and /h/. English, on the other hand, has as many as nine fricatives. The highlighted consonants of the following English words are all fricatives: *fig* /**f**ɪg/, *vine* /**v**aɪn/, *thing* /**θ**ɪŋ/, *that* /**ð**æt/, *soul* /**s**oʊl/, *zoo* /**z**u/, *ship* /**ʃ**ɪp/, *rouge* /ru**ʒ**/ and

hip /**h**ɪp/. Moreover, English has two affricates, which can be viewed as combinations of stops and fricatives, as in *teach* /tit͡ʃ/ and *judge* /d͡ʒʌd͡ʒ/. These fricatives and affricates are replaced by labial or dental stops, or dental or glottal fricatives. For example, the English word *jam* /d͡ʒæm/ is rendered into *caym* /cɛm/. The voiceless fricative /d͡ʒ/ is changed into a lax stop /c/. The vowel /æ/, which is the low front vowel in English, is replaced by the low front vowel in Korean, /ɛ/. The voiceless aspirated alveolar stop in English is replaced by the corresponding aspirated dental stop in Korean. For example, the English word *tie* /taɪ/ is rendered into *thai* /tha.i/ in Korean, since the word *tie* is realized as [tʰaɪ] in English. Note that the diphthong /aɪ/ in English is converted into two separate vowels (i.e. two syllables) in Korean. The voiced stops in English, on the other hand, are replaced by the lax stops in Korean. For example, the English word *bag* /bæg/ is rendered into *payk* /pɛk/.

As readers will recall, Korean does not permit consonant clusters in syllable-initial position and also in syllable-final position unless consonant clusters are followed by a vowel-initial syllable. English, on the other hand, permits consonant clusters on either or both sides of the syllable, e.g. *splints*. Korean deals with English words containing such consonant clusters by inserting a vowel between consonants (this is similar to the way such loanwords are handled in Japanese). For example, the English word *strike* (as in baseball and also in labour disputes) has been borrowed by Korean. This word has three consonants in syllable-initial position, and the syllable-final consonant can potentially be released with a puff of air in English. In the corresponding loanword in Korean, the consonant cluster is broken up by an intervening vowel /ɨ/ and the release of the syllable-final consonant is dealt with by a vowel being added to the end of it to the effect that the English word in question is rendered into *suthulaikhu* /sɨ.thɨ.la.i.khɨ/ or [sɨ.thɨ.ɾa.i.khɨ]. Thus what is a monosyllabic word in English (i.e. /straɪk/) is transformed into a word with five syllables in Korean! Native speakers of English would find it very difficult, if not impossible, to relate *suthulaikhu* to *strike*. This is also why Korean-speaking learners, without an adequate command of English, are often understood to have uttered *polite* instead of *plight*, for example. (This happens to be one of the most common 'complaints' that native English teachers make about Korean learners of English.) The syllable-initial consonant cluster of *plight* /plaɪt/ is broken up by an intervening vowel /ɨ/ to the effect that the word is pronounced as [pɨlaɪt] or, even worse, as [pɨ.la(.)i.tɨ].

There is a variation on how the release of stops in English (or other foreign languages for that matter) is dealt with in Korean. If loanwords end with /t/ in the language of origin, then it is to be rendered into /s/. For example, the English word *rocket* /rɒkət/ is rendered into *lokheys* /lo.khes/ or [ɾo.khet]. (The reason why the syllable-final /s/ is changed into [t] is that in Korean, as already explained, syllables can end only with one of the seven

consonants [p], [t], [k], [m], [n], [ŋ] and [l] in actual pronunciation.) However, some Korean speakers may opt for *lokheythu* /lo.khe.thɨ/ or [ɾo.khe.thɨ]. Hence there is variation between *lokheys-i* and *lokheythu-ka* 'rocket-NOM', where either of the two alternative forms of the nominative particle is used (i.e. *-i* after a consonant or *-ka* after a vowel). The first alternative form /lo.khe.si/ is pronounced as [ɾo.khe.si], and the second /lo.khe.thɨ.ka/ as [ɾo.khe.thɨ.ka].

Moreover, when the final consonant of foreign words has a palatal quality, this must be followed by /i/, not /ɨ/ as in the case of the English loanword *suthulaikhu*. For example, the English word *massage* /məsaːʒ/ is rendered into *masaci* /ma.sa.ci/ (i.e. [ma.sa.ɟi]) instead of /ma.sa.cɨ/ (i.e. [ma.sa.ɟɨ]).

Lastly, when pronouncing loanwords originating from English, English-speaking learners need to be careful not to place a stress where it falls in English. For example, the English word *container* has been borrowed by Korean as *khentheyine* /khən.the.i.nə/ 'container' (a very large metal box loaded on to ships or road vehicles). In English, the stress falls on the second syllable of the word, but, as explained in the previous section, the basic rule in Korean is to stress the initial syllable. Thus the first syllable of the loanword in question must be stressed, i.e. ***KHEN**.they.i.ne*, not *khen.**THEY**.i.ne*.

Further discussion of loanwords in other respects is provided in Chapter 4. In the meantime, some more loanwords commonly used in Korean are listed below, with their original forms and source languages identified as well.

(2) *losyen* /lo.sjən/ [ɾo.ʃjən] ← *lotion* (English)
   kulwup /kɨ.lup/ [kɨ.ɾup] ← *group* (English)
   sulil /sɨ.lil/ [sɨ.ɾil] ← *thrill* (English)
   phaysyen /phɛ.sjən/ [phɛ.ʃjən] ← *fashion* (English)
   kapang /ka.paŋ/ [ka.baŋ] ← *kaban* 'bag' (Japanese)
   yoci /jo.ci/ [jo.ɟi] ← *yooji* 'toothpick' (Japanese)
   alupaithu /a.lɨ.pa.i.thɨ/ [a.ɾɨ.ba.i.thɨ] ← *Arbeit* 'work' (German)
   theyma /the.ma/ [the.ma] ← *Thema* 'theme' (German)
   suphakeythi /sɨ.pha.ke.thi/ [sɨ.pha.ge.thi] ← *spaghetti* (Italian)
   sophulano /so.phɨ.la.no/ [so.phɨ.ra.no] ← *soprano* (Italian)
   pakhangsu /pa.khaŋ.sɨ/ [pa.khaŋ.sɨ] ← *vacance* 'vacation' (French)
   khongkhwulu /khoŋ.khu.lɨ/ [khoŋ.khu.ɾɨ] ← *concours* 'music contest'
      (French)

3

WRITING SYSTEMS
Hankul and Hanca

Koreans have their own writing system called Hankul (referred to as Cosenkul in North Korea). The name Hankul was created in 1912 to replace the original name of the writing system, Enmun 'Vulgar Writing'. The first part of the new name, *han*, is an archaic word meaning 'great' and the second part, *kul*, a native Korean word meaning 'writing'. Thus the original meaning of Hankul is 'Great Writing'. The meaning of the first word, however, has been lost to most Koreans and, with *han* being homophonous with another word associated with Korea or Koreans, as in Hankwuk 'Korea', the name Hankul is now generally understood to mean 'Korean Writing'.

South Korea is most probably the only country in the world where the invention of its indigenous writing system was a good enough cause for having a public holiday. On 9 October between 1960 and 1991, South Koreans took a day off and celebrated the birth of Hankul (the invention of Hankul is still commemorated on the same day every year). To outsiders, this may perhaps seem somewhat self-congratulatory or even self-indulgent. There is, however, reason and justification for it.

Hankul is such a cultural icon to Koreans that negative comments on it will not go down well with them. Koreans take great pride in Hankul in a number of respects. First, they are happy to highlight the philanthropic attitude of its inventor, King Sejong (1417–50). Hankul was created specifically for the benefit of illiterate 'common' Koreans in the fifteenth-century Yi Choson Dynasty. As readers may recall from Chapter 1, the dominant writing system in the Yi Choson Dynasty was Chinese characters, as it had been since the fourth or fifth century. The king, who was educated in Chinese writing and classics, was so concerned about the lack of an easy writing system for ordinary Koreans that one day he decided to invent one (there were many other things that he did for his people). This is something extraordinary, never recorded elsewhere in the world.

Moreover, writing systems are not invented overnight, so to speak. Major writing systems evolved over a very long period of time, and in fact over such a long time that it is generally not known who 'invented' them. But how do we know that King Sejong decided to invent Hankul for the benefit

of his illiterate people? We know it because the documents explaining the justification of the invention of Hankul and the exposition of the writing system have survived for verification. Thus King Sejong himself made a remarkable statement in the preface to the book entitled *The Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People* (9 October 1446):

> The [sounds] of our country's language are different from those of the Middle Kingdom [China] and are not confluent with [the sounds of Chinese] characters. Therefore, among the [ignorant] people, there have been many who, having something to put into words, have in the end been unable to express their feelings. I have been distressed because of this, and have newly designed twenty eight letters, which I wish to have everyone practice at their ease and make convenient for their daily use. (Translated by Ledyard 1966)

Second, Koreans are quick to point out that Hankul has only 24 letters (reduced from the original 28 letters), fewer than English, which has 26. This, however, needs to be put into perspective, as explained below.

Third, Koreans claim that Hankul is so simple that everyone can master it in a matter of days, if not a day. One of the fifteenth-century Korean scholars involved in the subsequent development of Hankul was moved to write that a wise man could acquaint himself with Hankul before the morning is over and that an ignorant man could learn it in ten days. This, however, should be taken with a grain of salt. Hankul is without doubt a very simple writing system to learn, especially when compared with many other writing systems in the world, but it is certainly not that case that one can master it in a matter of a day. It certainly takes more time, effort and practice. Needless to say, to learn Hankul is never going to be any easier or simpler for learners of Korean as a foreign language. Readers will recall from Chapter 2 Korean specialists' warning that Korean writing is easy to read only for those who know the language.

Readers will have noticed that the title of the present chapter is 'Writing systems', not 'Writing system'. Their immense pride in Hankul notwithstanding, Koreans also rely on two other writing systems, Chinese characters and the Roman/English alphabet. The use of the Roman/English alphabet is very limited or restricted to certain domains. In fact, it is essentially a foreign transcription of the language, and Koreans use it mainly in the context of certain abbreviations, loanwords, brand names, advertising and public signage for foreigners (e.g. road signs). Chinese characters, on the other hand, are used in a much wider range of contexts. This does not come as a surprise in that it was Chinese characters that Koreans had to depend on in recording their language before the advent of Hankul.

In this chapter, the historical and conceptual background of Hankul is first provided as a prelude to the discussion of how the Hankul letters are

put together to represent the Korean language, especially in relation to actual pronunciation (as described in some detail in Chapter 2). This is followed by a discussion of the use of Chinese characters in Korea (and South Korea after the Korean War). The chapter then closes with a brief description of three romanization systems currently in use.

Hankul: historical and conceptual background

As discussed in Chapter 1, Chinese influence on almost every aspect of Korean society for the past 2,000 years has been enormous and pervasive. Writing is one of the many examples of Chinese influence on Korea. Korea had no script of its own until the fifteenth century when King Sejong invented Hankul. In order to write Korean (e.g. to record their own history), Koreans had to draw upon Chinese characters imported from China, the centre of civilization in the region at the time. Although there had been a few attempts – reasonably successful – to adapt Chinese characters to meet the needs of Korean (as the Japanese had done with their Hiragana and Katakana systems), the dominant writing system in pre-Modern Korea – until the end of the nineteenth century – was undoubtedly Chinese.

It must be borne in mind, however, that Koreans who were able to read and write Chinese were unable to speak Chinese or understand spoken Chinese. It was somewhat akin to English-speaking scholars being able to read and write (academic) German without really being able to speak it. (The difference here is, of course, that prior to the advent of Hankul Koreans had no writing system other than Chinese to record their thoughts, ideas, events, etc.) In other words, Chinese was merely a written language in old Korea. Moreover, Chinese characters were (and are) not read in the same way they were (and are) in Chinese. Koreans have always had their own way of pronouncing Chinese characters (just as the Japanese have, albeit in a more complicated manner). Chinese characters were initially pronounced in a Koreanized approximation of Chinese at the time of borrowing. This Koreanized approximation of Chinese then formed the basis of the present day Korean pronunciation of Chinese characters. However, Chinese has since undergone sound changes, thereby 'deviating' even more from the Koreanized approximation of Chinese, not to mention the fact that the latter has also been affected by some of the sound changes that have since occurred in Korean. None the less, the present day Korean pronunciation of Chinese characters is said to be similar to Middle Chinese. (A similar comment can be made of the Japanese pronunciation of Chinese characters; as a consequence, Chinese characters are pronounced differently in Korean, Chinese and Japanese.)

The ability to write in Chinese characters was regarded as a true reflection of one's social status and erudition, and was largely the 'property' of the ruling class. The majority of Koreans before the twentieth century were

illiterate. What was most saddening in this context was that it was an alien writing system that Koreans were either literate or illiterate in. Chinese characters were an alien method of putting Korean into writing. For one thing, as discussed in Chapter 1, Korean and Chinese are not genetically or structurally related to each other. None the less, Chinese literacy was one of the things that did separate the ruling class and the masses. For this reason alone, it is not difficult to imagine, the ruling class would steadfastly hold on to Chinese characters even after the invention of Hankul. It was a symbol of social status (and still is to an extent in present day Korea). Monarchs who contemplated any deviation or departure from the norms of the ruling class would be seen to jeopardize the very foundation of that ruling class and ultimately of the monarchy itself. Against this cultural and social backdrop, King Sejong's bold initiative in inventing the Hankul writing system must be understood and appraised.

King Sejong was an exceptional scholar as well as a benevolent king. There is now ample evidence that Hankul was his own invention, not the outcome of his collaboration with other scholars, as is commonly believed, although he must have consulted leading scholars. He had a deep understanding of the Korean and Chinese sound systems and of other writing systems in the region. This is most clearly manifested in the way that he designed the Hankul writing system, as explained below. He also used his royal authority and power to put his invention through against the strong opposition of the ruling class. The struggle between them is legendary and well documented. Given the deeply ingrained position of Chinese characters in Yi Choson society, the opposition to Hankul from the ruling class must have been almost insurmountable. In the end (after the passing of King Sejong), Hankul was relegated to the status of a 'vulgar' writing system, used mainly by women and commoners – which is why Hankul was known as Enmun 'Vulgar Writing' until 1912 – and this situation would not change until the rise of Korean nationalism in the late nineteenth century. It is often claimed that Hankul would not have achieved its status as the dominant writing system in present day Korea had it not become a symbol of Korean nationalism and resistance against Japanese colonial domination in the first half of the twentieth century. There may be some truth in this claim but because of its simple but elegant structure Hankul could eventually have assumed the position that it has today with or without the rise of Korean nationalism or Japanese colonial rule.

When the invention of the Hankul writing system was announced in 1443–4, there were 28 letters, four more than in present day Hankul. Four original letters dropped out of use due to subsequent changes in the Korean sound system. The 24 letters used in present day Hankul are listed in Table 3.1.

The 14 consonant letters in Table 3.1 correspond to the following sound values on a one-to-one basis in the order given, with each sound value written in IPA transcription: /k/, /n/, /t/, /l/, /m/, /p/, /s/, /Ø or ŋ/, /c/, /ch/,

Table 3.1 The Hankul letters: the basic set

Consonants

ㄱ ㄴ ㄷ ㄹ ㅁ ㅂ ㅅ ㅇ ㅈ ㅊ ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ ㅎ

Vowels

ㅏ ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅜ ㅠ ㅡ ㅣ

/kh/, /th/, /ph/ and /h/. The ten vowel letters in Table 3.1 correspond to the following sound values on a one-to-one basis in the order given, again each sound value written in IPA transcription: /a/, /ja/, /ə/, /jə/, /o/, /jo/, /u/, /ju/, /ɨ/ and /i/. The eighth consonant letter symbol in Table 3.1, i.e. ㅇ, represents a 'zero' sound value when followed by a vowel letter in a syllable or the nasal sound unit /ŋ/ when preceded by a vowel letter in a syllable.

The most remarkable aspect of Hankul is its conceptual basis, as explained in the book *Explanations and Examples of the Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People*, published in 1446. There are three important things to note about the conceptual basis of Hankul.

First, some of the letters, particularly consonant letters, have a strong articulatory basis in their formal design. For example, take the letter symbols for /k/ and /n/. In order to produce /k/, the back of the tongue must be raised so that it comes into contact with the soft palate or velum. The outline of the tongue in that position resembles the shape of the letter ㄱ. The sound unit of /n/, on the other hand, is produced by putting the tip or blade of the tongue against the upper front teeth. The outline of the tongue in that position is similar to the shape of the letter ㄴ. All this is clearly explained in the book in question. For instance, it is stated in the book that the letter symbol ㄱ is designed in such a way that it depicts the outline of the root of the tongue blocking the throat.

Second, this articulatory orientation is further augmented by the way some of the 'complex' consonant and vowel letters were designed on the basis of 'simple' letters. Common phonetic properties are consistently indicated by strokes added to basic letters. For instance, the phonetic difference between the lax and aspirated stops in Korean (/p, t, c, k/ versus /ph, th, ch, kh/) is aspiration or a strong puff of air. The lax stops don't have this property, while the aspirated stops do. What is ingenious about the design of Hankul is that the presence of aspiration is marked by the addition of the same vertical stroke to the letter symbols for the lax stops. The letter symbols for /t/ and /k/ are ㄷ and ㄱ, respectively, and those for /th/ and /kh/, ㅌ and ㅋ, respectively, are based on the former with the addition of one and the same horizontal stroke in the appropriate place. A similar comment can be made of the use of an additional stroke to represent the presence of

the semivowel /j/. The letter symbols for /ja/, /jə/, /jo/ and /ju/ are based on the letter symbols for /a/, /ə/, /o/ and /u/, respectively. The presence of the semivowel /j/ is indicated by an additional (shorter) stroke. For example, the letter symbols for /a/ and /u/ are ㅏ and ㅜ, respectively. The addition to these letter symbols of a shorter stroke then produces the letter symbols for /ja/ and /ju/, ㅑ and ㅠ, respectively. Readers are invited to work this out for the remaining pairs.

The third point to be made about the conceptual basis of Hankul concerns the fact that the same consonant letters were used regardless of whether they appear in syllable-initial or syllable-final positions. For example, the same letter symbol ㄱ is used whether it begins or ends a syllable (e.g. *ka.pang* 'bag' versus *pak.swu* 'applause'). This may sound like an obvious point, but this seemingly simple fact was not recognized at all in the received Chinese scholarly view of sound systems prior to and at the time of the invention of Hankul. Thus it must be regarded as an insightful discovery on the part of the inventor himself.

Although Hankul is said to have only 24 letters (14 consonant letters and ten vowel letters, as listed in Table 3.1), there are in reality far more letters involved. In fact, it is correct to say that there are as many as 40 letters in all. Readers will also recall from Chapter 2 that Korean has 19 consonants, ten vowels and two semivowels. From this alone, they can easily calculate that more than the 24 letters must be involved in Hankul. But the popular claim that Hankul has only 24 letters has some truth in it, in that the additional 16 letters are produced not *ex nihilo* but on the basis of the 'basic' letters in Table 3.1. The design of some of the additional letters has a good basis in phonetics, as has already been alluded to. The letters for the tensed stops and tensed fricative are another case in point. When the tensed stops are produced in Korean, the airstream is blocked not only at the respective place of articulation, e.g. [pp] at the lips, but also at the vocal cords in the larynx. To put it differently, the airstream is doubly blocked, so that the air pressure is built up to a greater extent than in the case of the lax stops (hence *tensed* stops). This phonetic property of the tensed stops is represented in Hankul by 'doubling' on the lax stop letters. For example, the symbol for /pp/ is designed by the juxtaposition of two instances of the symbol for /p/, i.e. ㅃ versus ㅂ. The same doubling can be easily worked out for the remaining tensed stops, /tt/, /cc/ and /kk/, and also for the tensed fricative /ss/: ㄸ versus ㄷ, ㅉ versus ㅈ and the like.

Complex vowel letters are also built on basic vowel letters. For example, the vowel letters for /e/ and /ɛ/ are ㅔ and ㅐ, respectively. These symbols use the vowel letter for /i/ or ㅣ as their common base. In other words, ㅔ is a combination of ㅓ and ㅣ, whereas ㅐ is a combination of ㅏ and ㅣ. Readers must, however, bear in mind that the distinction between basic and non-basic here is purely in terms of graphic representation, not in terms of sound value. The vowel sounds /e/ and /ɛ/ are as basic as the vowel sounds

Table 3.2 The Hankul letters: the complete set

Consonants

ㄱ ㄲ ㄴ ㄷ ㄸ ㄹ ㅁ ㅂ ㅃ ㅅ ㅆ ㅇ ㅈ ㅉ ㅊ ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ ㅎ

Vowels

ㅏ ㅐ ㅑ ㅒ ㅓ ㅔ ㅕ ㅖ ㅗ ㅘ ㅙ ㅚ ㅛ ㅜ ㅝ ㅞ ㅟ ㅠ ㅡ ㅢ ㅣ

---

represented by the six vowel letters without the stroke for the semivowel /j/, although their letter symbols are not. In fact, the vowel sounds /e/ and /ɛ/ are basic, whereas the vowel sounds represented by the vowel letters plus the additional stroke for the semivowel /j/ are not. The vowel letter symbol ㅑ, for example, represents a combination of two sound units, i.e. /j/ and /a/. What this means is that what is regarded as basic in terms of the sound system is not necessarily basic in terms of writing.

The 40 letters – 19 consonant letters and 21 vowel letters – are presented in Table 3.2, as ordered in most Korean dictionaries. Note that the vowel letters are presented without the 'zero' consonant symbol ㅇ.

Finally, mention must be made of what may perhaps be called 'the Block Principle' in Hankul. As discussed in Chapter 2, sounds do not occur in isolation, but combine with one another to form larger sound units known as syllables. Syllables are made up of one vowel and one or more optional non-vowel sounds, i.e. consonants and semivowels. The concept of syllable plays an important role in Hankul. Instead of appearing one by one in a linear fashion, Hankul consonant and vowel letters are put together into graphic blocks. For example, take the word *tal* 'moon'. This word is monosyllabic, which is to say that it consists of one syllable. The syllable in turn consists of one syllable-initial consonant, one vowel and one syllable-final consonant. Instead of arranging the letters for /t/, /a/ and /l/ in a linear manner as in the romanized rendition *tal*, the Block Principle ensures that these letters are all represented in a single graphic block. In other words, the word *tal* is written as in (1), not (2).

(1) 달
(2) ㄷ ㅏ ㄹ

Readers will also notice that, graphically speaking, there are two major groups of vowel letters in Table 3.1. The stroke (or the longer stroke if more than one) is vertical in five of the vowel letters. In the remaining five, it is horizontally positioned. The optimal manner of 'squeezing' these vowel symbols and accompanying consonant symbols into graphic blocks is to place syllable-initial and syllable-final consonant letters above and below

the horizontal stroke, respectively. This is exemplified in (3), where the word *kul* 'writing' is represented in Hankul.

(3) 글

In the case of the vertical stroke, the convention is to place syllable-initial and syllable-final consonant letters to the left of, and below, the stroke, respectively, as already exemplified in (1). Note that syllable-final consonant letters are placed under vowel letters, irrespective of whether the latter are represented by a vertical or horizontal stroke.

The Block Principle has a number of implications for practical writing. First, the consonant and vowel letters must be adjusted or adapted in terms of length of strokes and sharpness of angles, depending on where they occur in graphic blocks and also on what other letters they co-occur with. For example, the letter symbol for /a/ is ㅏ. This is the shape when it occurs without a syllable-final consonant. But when it occurs with a syllable-final consonant, as in (1), the vowel letter is shortened, as it were, so as to accommodate the syllable-final consonant within a graphic block. Similar comments can be made of the consonant letters. Syllable-initial consonant letters are larger when occurring in 'open' syllables (i.e. without syllable-final consonants) than when occurring in 'closed' syllables (i.e. with syllable-final consonants). Students must thus learn to adjust the length, size and even shape of the letters accordingly so that graphic blocks can be of more or less the same size. Use of the Block Principle as a mental guide will facilitate the learning of Hankul penmanship.

The Block Principle is so deeply ingrained in Hankul that even when syllables begin without consonants, e.g. *a.i* 'child', the 'zero' consonant letter, which also happens to represent the nasal /ŋ/ in syllable-final position, must be used in order to 'use up' the otherwise empty part of a graphic block. Thus the vowel-only disyllabic word *a.i* is represented in Hankul as in (4).

(4) 아이

Note that this 'zero' consonant letter is never misinterpreted as representing the nasal sound /ŋ/ in (4), because in Korean, as explained in Chapter 2, the nasal sound in question never occurs in syllable-initial position.

The Block Principle in Hankul makes sense when one considers the fact that, when Hankul was invented, the predominant writing system was that of Chinese characters. As anyone familiar with them knows, Chinese characters are written in graphic blocks. When Hankul began to be used, it was initially used in conjunction with Chinese characters, which, as King Sejong was to find out, Yi Choson Koreans would never throw out the window (and which Koreans still use today, albeit on a much smaller scale). Thus it was somewhat inevitable for the Hankul letters to be written in

graphic blocks in line with Chinese characters. Otherwise, the visual congruence between Hankul and Chinese characters, when appearing next to one another in the same written text, would have been lost.

The Block Principle is so important in the graphic representation of Korean that when they write in longhand (reports, essays etc.), Koreans sometimes use specially designed sheets of paper, which may look like (5) with empty equally sized graphic blocks. (This specially designed paper is called *wenkoci*, literally meaning 'drafting paper'.)

(5)
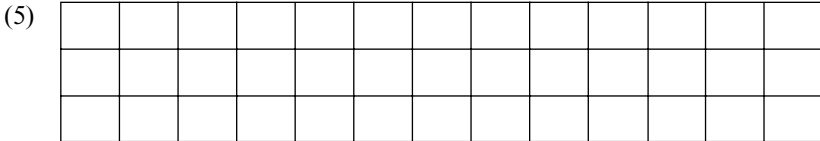
Origins of Hankul: a controversy?

There is no doubt that King Sejong and his trusted circle of scholars were proficient in Korean and Chinese sound systems. This is transparent from the way the Hankul system was designed. What is not as clear, however, is whether King Sejong designed the shapes of Hankul letter symbols out of thin air or modified symbols borrowed from other writing systems, including Chinese characters, available at the time of his invention. Some modern scholars point to certain striking physical similarities between some of the Hankul letter symbols and those in the Mongolian 'Phags-pa script, which was developed on the basis of the Tibetan alphabet by the Buddhist priest 'Phags-pa Lama at the behest of Khubilai Khan (Yuan Dynasty) in the thirteenth century. The claim is that King Sejong borrowed some of the 'Phags-pa symbols and simplified or reduced them geometrically. One needs to consider this possibility given the apparent physical similarities between the two systems. Other scholars draw attention to the Block Principle in Hankul as conclusive evidence for the influence on Hankul of the Chinese writing system, and also to some physical similarities between Hankul letter symbols and some basic Chinese characters or even part thereof (e.g. the Hankul letter symbol ㅁ and the Chinese character for 'mouth', 口).

There are two comments to be made on these views. First, something like a writing system cannot be designed in a total cultural and intellectual vacuum. King Sejong was educated in Chinese classics and characters. The Chinese writing system was the dominant system that was available to the king and the ruling class. For this reason alone, it would be naive to suggest that he was not influenced by the way Chinese characters are written in graphic blocks. More to the point, he would have had to find a practical way to write both Hankul letters and Chinese characters in one and the same line. The obvious thing to do was to write Hankul in graphic blocks,

too. Moreover, he may have been inspired by some Chinese characters in the design of some of the Hankul letter symbols. The same comment can be made about the influence of the 'Phags-pa script on the design of Hankul letter symbols. The Mongolian writing system was widely used – especially in formal edicts, seals and monumental inscriptions – until the demise of the Yuan Dynasty. In view of the vassal status of Koryo *vis-à-vis* Yuan China, the existence of the 'Phags-pa script must have been known to Yi Choson. It is difficult to imagine that King Sejong did not study this alien script in his pursuit of a Korean writing system. Thus that King Sejong might have been inspired by the Mongolian script in the design of some of the Hankul letter symbols is within the realm of possibilities. (He is also known to have sent his proxies to leading Chinese scholars for their advice.)

Second, it must also be emphasized that there are physical limitations on the design of writing symbols. These limitations are caused by the fact that there is a limited number of basic shapes used in writing systems in the world. The basic symbols include a straight line, a circle and a dot. By combining straight lines in certain ways, one can create non-basic symbols, e.g. a square or a triangle. A straight line can be geometrically modified to create a long or short line or even a curved line. Using dots in certain ways can also result in further non-basic symbols. (In fact, the short stroke used in most of the Hankul vowel letters, e.g. ㅑ, was a dot at the time of invention.) A glance at diverse (unrelated) writing systems in the world can easily reinforce this point. Therefore, some fortuitous similarities between writing systems cannot be completely avoided or are bound to emerge.

What is really important when discussing Hankul is not whether King Sejong borrowed some letter symbols from other writing systems but his scientific, conceptual basis of the Hankul system, as discussed above: the way the letter symbols – borrowed or not – were phonetically motivated and developed into a coherent writing system. Moreover, one should not lose sight of the fact that King Sejong invented Hankul with his illiterate people's needs in mind; the ruling class of Yi Choson already had access to a writing system, i.e. Chinese characters. This is something that makes him stand out from most of the kings and queens that the world has ever known.

Writing conventions: the Original Form Principle

Readers will recall from Chapter 2 how the reassignment of syllable-final consonants and sound adjustment are carried out in Korean pronunciation. In that chapter, it was also emphasized that Korean writing does not reflect such changes, and some examples have been given. In Hankul, therefore, words are generally written in their 'original' forms. This can be called 'the Original Form Principle'. (This would be similar to writing the English word *evasion* as *evad(e)ion* in order to preserve the original form of the first part of *evasion*, i.e. *evade*.) In words such as *ciph* /ciph/ 'straw' or *os* /os/

'clothes', when followed by the vowel-initial nominative particle *-i* or /-i/, the final consonant of *ciph* or *os* is reassigned or recognized as the initial consonant of the following syllable or the nominative particle. Thus *ciph-i* and *os-i* are realized as [ci.phi] and [o.si], respectively, in pronunciation. (In this book, however, a hyphen has been used deliberately between words and grammatical elements so that the grammatical boundary between them can be clearly recognized. This does not mean that there should be such a hyphen in actual Hankul writing; there is also no orthographic space used between words and role-marking particles.) In Hankul, however, these words are written so that the reassignment of their final consonants is not reflected at all, as can be seen in (6).

(6)
a.   *ciph-i* [ci.phi] meaning 'straw-nominative particle'
    짚이

b.   *os-i* [o.si] meaning 'clothes-nominative particle'
    옷이

In (6a), the word *ciph* as a whole is contained in the first graphic block, and the nominative particle in the second; in (6b) as well, the word *os* in full is represented as the first graphic block, and the nominative particle as the second.

    Moreover, sounds are modified, depending on the phonetic nature of neighbouring words. Thus the final consonant of one and the same word can be pronounced in different ways, depending on whether it is followed by a consonant- or a vowel-initial element. For example, when the word *ciph* is followed by a consonant-initial element, its final consonant is realized as [p] in pronunciation, as in *ciph-kwa* 'straw and' or [cip.kwa]. This is indistinguishable from the way the word *cip* 'house' is pronounced. As explained in Chapter 2, this is due to the fact that the final consonant of *ciph* in *ciph-kwa* cannot be reassigned as the initial consonant of the following syllable *-kwa*, which already has one, and that in Korean pronunciation only seven consonants, including [p] but excluding [ph], can appear in syllable-final position. In Hankul, however, *ciph* and *cip* are written differently, as can be seen in (7), despite the fact that they are identically pronounced when followed by *-kwa*.

(7)
a.   *ciph-kwa* [cip.kwa] meaning 'straw and'
    짚과

b.   *cip-kwa* [cip.kwa] meaning 'house and'
    집과

Other sound modifications are also subject to the Original Form Principle when it comes to Hankul. The name of the Korean writing system, Hankul /han.kɨl/, is realized as [haŋ.gɨl] in pronunciation. But it is written in its original form, as in (8).

(8)   *han.kul* [haŋ.gɨl] meaning 'Korean writing'
      한글

Readers are also advised to revisit the discussion in Chapter 2 concerning the use of the so-called intervening /s/ or ㅅ. When this intervening element is or is not represented in Hankul was discussed there in detail and is not repeated in this chapter.

The preceding discussion may suggest that Hankul is not a good guide to Korean pronunciation. This is true but is not unique to Hankul. The underlined parts of the English words in (9a) all have the same pronunciation, i.e. [u:], whereas the underlined parts of the English words in (9b), although all written with the same single letter *a*, have different pronunciations. English writing is not a good guide to pronunciation, either. Writing is a visual system of conventions and should be treated or acquired as such.

(9)
a.   t<u>o</u>, t<u>oo</u>, tw<u>o</u>, thr<u>ough</u>, thr<u>ew</u>, cl<u>ue</u>, sh<u>oe</u>

b.   d<u>a</u>me, d<u>a</u>d, f<u>a</u>ther, c<u>a</u>ll, vill<u>a</u>ge, m<u>a</u>ny

The Original Form Principle can be seen to facilitate reading to a great extent. If writing is intended for people to read (by recognizing written words), this principle is not a bad thing at all. Reading words could well be nothing more or less than recognizing visual symbols or images. (In fact, the ability to recognize visual symbols in writing is 'exploited' in text messages, where words tend not to be spelt in full.) Moreover, writing depends much less on the context of situation than does speaking. Thus contextual clues readily available in speech situations – especially information about the physical environment – may not always be present in writing. For example, one can say 'This is very expensive' by simply pointing to an object and without actually saying what 'this' is. This is not possible in writing without explicitly describing in the first place what the demonstrative expression 'this' refers to. Writing words in their original form, rather than the way they are actually pronounced, contributes to understanding in the absence of such contextual clues, especially when they are identically pronounced. Take the two written words in (7): *ciph-kwa* and *cip-kwa*. If these words were written identically in Hankul, based on their actual pronunciation, readers would have to rely more on contextual clues to figure out what is meant (i.e. does the writer mean 'straw' or 'house', especially when writing

about thatched houses, which are found in rural Korea?). After all, writing is designed to convey what the writer intends to mean or refers to, not how words should be pronounced. Thus it is not surprising to realize that language may be processed differently, depending on the medium used (i.e. speaking versus writing).

The Original Form Principle applies to Hankul most of the time. But there are some exceptions. For instance, *wu.sup.ta* /u.sɨp.ta/ 'funny' is not written in accordance with the Original Form Principle, although it is based on the word *wus-* /us-/ 'to laugh'. Thus, strictly speaking, it should be written as *wus.up.ta* /us.ɨp.ta/, as in (10a), even though it has to be pronounced as [u.sɨp.ta] due to the reassignment of the final consonant of the first syllable to the second syllable. The accepted written form, reflecting the actual pronunciation, is given in (10b).

(10)
a.   *wus.up.ta*
  옷읍다

b.   *wu.sup.ta*
  우습다

Another example of deviation from the Original Form Principle is the way *pakk* /pakk/ 'outside' is written, depending on what expressions it combines with. When this word is combined with the locative particle, *-ey* /-e/, it is, in compliance with the Original Form Principle, written as *pakk.ey* /pakk.e/, as in (11a). When, however, the same word is put together with *-ath* /-ath/ to create a related compound expression meaning 'the outside', it is written as *pa.kkath* /pa.kkath/, as in (11b). Note that *pakk.ey* and *pa.kkath* are realized as [pa.kke] and [pa.kkat], respectively, in pronunciation.

(11)
a.   *pakk.ey* or [pa.kke]
  밖에

b.   *pa.kkath* or [pa.kkat]
  바깥

These and other similar examples, however, are limited in number and should be looked upon not as exceptions but as 'natural' consequences of a writing system that has over a long period of time evolved into a system of conventions. In this respect, Hankul is not different from other writing systems in the world, and occasional 'inconsistencies' are not totally unexpected. (Why is the English word *liquefy* spelt as it is, although it is related to *liquid*, when *solidify* is spelt as it is because it is related to *solid*?)

Other conventions: spacing, punctuation and direction

The basic spacing convention in Hankul is to group together words and their associated grammatical elements without any space between them. There is no space to be placed between words and role-marking particles, e.g. the nominative particle -*i*. Another spacing convention is to leave no space between words in compound expressions such as *hay.tot.i* /hɛ.tot.i/ 'sunrise' or *cam.swu.ham* /cam.su.ham/ 'submarine'. This is exemplified in (12).

(12) 기호가   해돋이를   보았다
       kiho-ka   haytoti-lul   po-ass-ta
       Keeho-NOM   sunrise-ACC see-PST-PLAIN.S
       /ki.ho.ka.hɛ.tot.i.lɨl.po.ass.ta/
       [ki.ho.ga.hɛ.do.ɟi.lɨl.po.a.tta] or
       [ki.ho.ga.hɛ.do.ɟi.lɨl.pwa.tta]
       'Keeho saw the sunrise.'

In (12), the nominative and accusative particles, -*i* and -*lul*, are not separated from their respective 'host' words by a space, whereas the two host words grouped together with their own particles are separated from each other by a space. The verb *po-* 'to see' and its related grammatical elements -*ass* and -*ta* are also written back to back without an intervening space, while these three elements together are set apart from the preceding expression by a space.

Personal names are written together without a space between the family name and given name, e.g. *song.ki.ho* instead of *song ki.ho*. The same convention applies to names of cities, mountains and rivers, e.g. *pu.san.si* 'Pusan City' instead of *pu.san si*. However, a space needs to be placed between foreign cities, mountains, rivers etc. and Korean generic words meaning cities, mountains, rivers etc., which tend to accompany such foreign names. For example, *al.phu.su san* 'the Alps' must have a space written in between *al.phu.su* 'Alps' and *san* 'mountains'.

The punctuation symbols used in Hankul – the full stop (.), the comma (,), the question mark (?), the exclamation mark (!) and the quotation marks ("...") – are not different in shape and use from those found in English writing. In older publications, however, the punctuation symbols that are still in use in China and Japan are also attested, e.g. the full stop symbol (◦) and the quotation marks (『 . . . 』 or 「 . . . 」). These old punctuation symbols are no longer commonly used and most Koreans are unfamiliar with them.

The direction of writing in Hankul is horizontal like that in English: writing each line from left to right and then proceeding in lines from top to bottom. This contrasts with the perpendicular direction of writing, still widely practised in China and Japan, whereby each line is written from top to

(a) Horizontal writing

X X X X X X X X X X X X X

X X X X X X X X X X X X X

X X X X X X X X X X X X X

X X X X X X X X X X X X X

X X X X X X

(b) Perpendicular writing

X X X X X X X
X X X X X X X
X X X X X X X
X X X X X X X
X X X X X X X
X X X X X X X
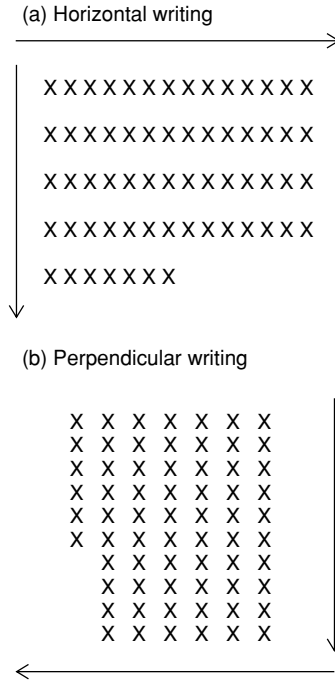　X X X X X X
　X X X X X X
　X X X X X X
　X X X X X X

Figure 3.1 Two directions of writing in Korean (→, direction; X, graphic block)

bottom and lines are produced from right to left. These two directions of writing are schematized in Figure 3.1.

Traditionally, the perpendicular direction of writing was the norm, which is not surprising in view of the fact that the first writing system available in Korea was that of Chinese characters. In older publications, for example, the perpendicular direction of writing was always used, but it is now found only in select publications, e.g. some periodicals of current affairs and classic literary texts. Books printed in the perpendicular format have to be read from back to front by Western standards, whereas books printed in the horizontal format are read from front to back as English books are. Nowadays even conservative newspapers have abandoned the perpendicular direction (although they do still print classified ads in the perpendicular format). It can be safely predicted that the perpendicular direction of writing will soon be a thing of the past. There is, however, one place where the perpendicular direction of writing will be retained in preference to the horizontal direction of writing: the spine of books. Books printed in English have their titles horizontally printed on the spine. Thus people have to tilt

their heads to read the title on the spine of an English book vertically placed on a shelf. This 'inconvenience' never arises for Korean books.

Chinese characters in present day Korea: Hanca

It may strike readers as unexpected or even odd to discover that, while they have such an ingenious writing system as Hankul, Koreans still use Chinese characters (known as Hanca /han.ca/ and pronounced as [han.cca], with an intervening /s/, in Korean; literally meaning 'Chinese characters'). The use of Hanca in what is otherwise a Hankul text is illustrated in (13). Compare this with the exclusive use of Hankul in (14). Due to the reduced use of Hanca in recent years, however, Chinese characters, if written at all, tend to be presented in parentheses immediately after words written in Hankul. This is illustrated in (15).

(13)   오늘날 우리가 말하고 있는 國語의 先祖는 어떤 言語였던가.

(14)   오늘날 우리가 말하고 있는 국어의 선조는 어떤 언어였던가.

(15)   오늘날 우리가 말하고 있는 국어(國語)의 선조(先祖)는 어떤 언어(言語)였던가.

There have been several attempts to adopt the Hankul-only policy (as illustrated in (14)) in Korea but none has so far succeeded completely, as discussed in Chapter 7 together with the situation in North Korea (hereafter, Korea means South Korea, unless indicated otherwise). This is a puzzle to many, including Koreans themselves. One can perhaps point to the long history of cultural contact between Koreans and Chinese, as documented in Chapter 1. Some things are not easy to give up for emotional, sentimental, historical or even aesthetic reasons. Hanca has been with Koreans for thousands of years, and perhaps it is not easy to get rid of something that has been around for that long. What makes it even more difficult to lose Hanca is that a good understanding of Hanca has always been associated with erudition and education in Korea. It is, one may say, an important status symbol. For example, it is very common for Korean professionals (university professors, business people etc.) to have their names, titles and academic qualifications on their business cards printed in Chinese characters, even when most publications including newspapers tend to minimize the use of Hanca. Status symbols are always sought after not just in Korea but elsewhere. The ability to use Hanca happens to be one of them in Korea.

There have been numerous arguments in support of the parallel use of Hankul and Hanca in Korea. For instance, the use of Hanca is said to contribute to the disambiguation of homonyms in Korean. This and other arguments notwithstanding, it is not incorrect to say that Hanca is well on

its way out, for the simple reason that learning Chinese characters takes too much time and effort by today's standards. Moreover, Hanca as a status symbol has already begun to lose ground to English and English writing, especially among the young (see below). A comparison of newspapers – which have been traditionally regarded as primary users/proponents of Hanca – in different times indicates that there has been a huge reduction in the use of Hanca (having too many Chinese characters in newspapers has been known to affect their sales adversely). Readers would be surprised to see how infrequently Hanca is used in newspapers printed in the twenty-first century in comparison with those printed decades earlier. The days of Chinese characters, one may venture, are numbered.

None the less, it is worth noting that the use of Hanca will probably not disappear completely and there is every likelihood that it will even be promoted in Korea, as China is rapidly gaining political and economic prominence in the region and the world (this is probably one of the main reasons why politicians are now promoting Mandarin Chinese in Singapore after decades of promoting English). Moreover, Hanca is likely to continue to be used in a limited number of domains. One such domain is proper names. Almost all Koreans name their offspring on the basis of Hanca. There are certainly Koreans who insist on using native Korean words when naming their children, but they are the exception rather than the norm. Moreover, Hanca-based personal names – at least names given to male children – tend to be chosen in such a way that they reveal the intergenerational order within families (e.g. > grandfather > father > self > son >) and between relatives (e.g. > uncle > self > nephew >). This is culturally important in Korean society, as are many other things based on age (see Chapter 1). More often than not, children's names are also selected on the basis of the meanings of Chinese characters, which are thought to capture parents' aspirations for their children, e.g. health, wealth, happiness, intelligence, talent or even fertility. Similarly, Chinese characters tend to be chosen for the names of organizations (companies, schools etc.) so that the meanings of the chosen Chinese characters can be seen to reflect their missions or objectives in a succinct, elegant manner.

Finally, readers must bear in mind that the Chinese characters used in Korea are the traditional 'full' characters used in Taiwan and post-colonial as well as colonial Hong Kong. Thus Koreans who can read traditional Chinese characters will have difficulty in understanding the simplified ones used in mainland China and Singapore.

How to find words in Hankul and Hanca dictionaries

Like learners of any other languages, learners of Korean must be able to look up words in Korean dictionaries. Entries in Korean dictionaries are listed according to the left-to-right order of the consonant letters in

Table 3.2, and then according to the left-to-right order of the vowel letters in Table 3.2 under each consonant letter. This may not look different from the alphabetical listing order used in English dictionaries. There is, however, one major difference between Korean and English dictionaries. The Block Principle discussed above has an implication for the way words are to be looked up in Korean dictionaries. While listed in an alphabetical order in Korean dictionaries, words must also be looked up with graphic blocks, not individual letters, as basic units of order. This means that words cannot be 'rearranged' straight into a linear ordering of individual letters, but must first be set into a linear ordering of graphic blocks. For example, the word *na.la* 'country' appears before the word *nak.ci* 'octopus' in Korean dictionaries. If only the linear ordering of individual letters were the basis for listing dictionary entries, that is *n-a-l-a* versus *n-a-k-c-i*, the latter word would be listed before the former (the letter for /k/ comes before the letter for /l/ in Table 3.2). However, the first graphic block of the word *na.la* does not have a syllable-final consonant, whereas that of the word *nak.ci* does so. This means that the first graphic block of *na.la* is simpler than that of *nak.ci*. This is why *na.la* is listed prior to *nak.ci* in Korean dictionaries (zero coming before *k*, as it were). Learners of Korean will also notice some inconsistencies among Korean dictionaries, e.g. the ordering of the tensed stop letters relative to the lax stop letters, and even native Korean speakers find these inconsistencies frustrating, not to mention inconvenient and confusing. Unfortunately, this is something that learners will just have to put up with, and once becoming accustomed to a particular ordering convention used in their own dictionaries, they will no longer find it inconvenient.

Learners of Korean will also sometimes need to recognize basic Chinese characters commonly used in Korea, even if they are not able to write them. This may sound unreasonable, especially when Koreans themselves seem to be abandoning Hanca. However, at least passive knowledge of basic Hanca can come in handy, especially when one intends to read old books or manuscripts. On a more practical level as well, the ability to recognize basic Chinese characters and their meanings can be very useful. Recall that most Korean names are built on Chinese characters. Koreans treat their own names with respect as something given to them by the older generation. Being able to understand the meaning of personal names is always a good way of getting to know Koreans that one meets, works with or makes friends with. Thus a brief description of how to look up Chinese characters in Chinese–Korean dictionaries will not come amiss.

Chinese–Korean dictionaries printed in Korea are traditionally referred to as *okphyen*, literally meaning 'the gem book'. Finding Chinese characters in such dictionaries is very similar to finding them in Chinese dictionaries used in China. Each Chinese character contains what is known as a radical or a 'meaning' component. Once the radical of a given character is identified,

the number of strokes used in the radical is counted. This will enable the user to locate where the characters under that radical are listed in the dictionary. Then the number of strokes used in the remainder of the character or the 'sound' component, which is related to the pronunciation of the character, is counted. Characters with fewer strokes in the sound component will be listed earlier under the same radical category than those with more strokes in the sound component. Of course, how to identify what is the radical component of an unfamiliar character is a tricky task in itself. Chinese–Korean dictionaries contain a useful index of radicals, which are arranged in ascending order of the number of strokes involved. The process of trial and error will eventually lead to the correct identification of radicals. Moreover, it is important to know how to write basic strokes in Chinese characters correctly. Otherwise, it will not be easy to figure out how many strokes are used in a given radical.

Romanization systems: which system to use

It may strike some readers as even more unusual or strange that Koreans see the need to use the Roman/English alphabet to write Korean, especially when they have access to such a good writing system as Hankul (again, what follows applies to South Korea only). As already pointed out, however, romanization is essentially a foreign transcription of the language, and Koreans do not use the Roman/English alphabet in everyday affairs, with the exception of abbreviations (e.g. *MC* [master of ceremonies], *WC* [toilet, from water closet]), metric symbols (*kg*, *mg*, *cm*, *km*, *cc* etc.), names of globally known Korean companies (e.g. *Hyundai*, *Samsung*, *LG*), brand names and advertising for local people and public signs for the benefit of foreign visitors (e.g. major street signs in cities or signs on motorways). However, readers may still wonder why Koreans use the Roman/English alphabet even for local consumption. The use of the Roman/English alphabet in advertising in particular (i.e. brand names and company names) can be regarded as appealing to Koreans' emotions rather than to their English proficiency, just as the Roman/English alphabet and English words are frequently used in many non-English speaking countries in order to create or reinforce people's positive feelings towards modernity, sophistication, internationalization etc., and not for practical communication. Abbreviations and acronyms are also written in the Roman/English alphabet, probably because it is impractical, if not impossible, to write them in Hankul and they have never been written in Hankul. For example, *KBS* is used for the 'Korea Broadcasting System', and *PC* for personal (desktop) computers, as in *PC pang* 'internet cafés' or 'internet lounges' (or literally 'PC rooms').

By one informal count, over twenty romanization systems have appeared for Korean. There is no space to discuss each one of them. But reference

needs to be made to the three most popular romanization systems: the McCune–Reischauer System, the Yale System and the Revised Romanization System, the last promulgated in 2000 by South Korea's Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Some romanization systems are more predisposed towards the pronunciation of the Korean language than others. Conversely, some romanization systems are closer to the way Hankul is written than others. Awareness of this major difference will at least help to avoid the mispronunciation of Korean words written in the Roman/English alphabet. This having been said, it needs to be noted that there is a great deal of variation in the way Koreans romanize personal names in particular. People are basically left to their own devices when it comes to romanizing their and other people's names, and names of organizations (the present writer's romanized name is no exception). For instance, it is nearly impossible for native speakers of English to pronounce correctly the well known Korean corporation's name *Hyundai* [hjən.dɛ] on the basis of its romanization. Something like [haɪjundaɪ] is not infrequently heard. But then names are private, and one could say that people are entitled to romanize their names as they see fit. Once they have been romanized and accepted, however, it is rather difficult to change personal names, because they have somehow become personalized identity markers. It may thus be useful to ask Koreans to provide their names in Hankul as well, even if they insist on writing their names in English only (and some Koreans may go even further and pronounce their romanized names in an Anglicized manner for the benefit of English speakers). This *laissez-faire* practice in romanizing personal names should not be frowned upon, however. Native English speakers do more or less the same thing. Common personal names like *Rebecca* can be very differently spelt in English (e.g. *Rebekha*, *Rebekah*, *Rebecka* or *Rebeka*).

Readers are advised to familiarize themselves with at least the three most popular romanization systems: the McCune–Reischauer System, the Yale System and the Revised Romanization System. These romanization systems tend to be used in different domains. One difference between the McCune–Reischauer and Yale systems is that the former makes use of two special additional symbols known as diacritics (the breve and the apostrophe), whereas the latter does not. But the real difference is that the McCune–Reischauer System approximates better to the pronunciation of the Korean language than the Yale System. Hence the former is commonly used not only by tourists, visitors and beginning students of Korean as a foreign language but also by scholars in many academic disciplines. Indeed, the use of the McCune–Reischauer System is very common outside Korea, especially in maps, books and encyclopaedias. The Yale System, on the other hand, is better suited to the representation of Hankul writing (this is perhaps why the Yale System tends to be used in linguistics publications, because of the Original Form Principle). Many sound adjustments, which are not represented

in Hankul, are clearly reflected in the McCune–Reischauer System, whereas they are not represented at all in the Yale System. For example, the lax stops in Korean become voiced, i.e. /k/ → [g], when they are placed in between voiced sounds. The expression Hankul is, therefore, realized as [haŋ.gɨl] in casual pronunciation. This is spelt as 'Hangŭl' in the McCune–Reischauer System (note the breve placed above the letter *u* in the second syllable of the word). The same expression is spelt as 'Hankul' in the Yale System. The McCune–Reischauer System can thus be said to be closer to the pronunciation of Hankul than the Yale System, although neither system captures the change undergone by the nasal sound of the first syllable of Hankul. However, it is not always the case that the McCune–Reischauer System fails to represent the adjustment of nasal sounds. In some cases, it does represent such a nasal adjustment. For example, the word *aph.ma.dang* 'front yard' is pronounced as [am.ma.daŋ]. This nasal adjustment is reflected in the McCune–Reischauer rendition of the word as *ammadang* – as opposed to *aphmadang* in the Yale System.

The 2000 Revised Romanization System can be characterized as an attempt to move the McCune–Reischauer System slightly closer to the Yale System for the sake of simplicity and consistency. First, the diacritic symbols used in the McCune–Reischauer System are abandoned in the 2000 Revised Romanization System. Some sound adjustments reflected in the McCune–Reischauer System are no longer indicated in the Revised Romanization System. For example, the lax stops are consistently represented when appearing before vowels. However, in contrast to the Yale System, voiced stop symbols, not voiceless ones, are adopted. Thus the sound unit /k/ is to be represented by the letter *g* when it appears before vowels. However, complete consistency cannot be said to have been achieved in the Revised Romanization System, because the sound unit /k/ is still spelt as *k* when followed by a consonant or appearing in word-final position. The adjustment of nasal sounds, on the other hand, is reflected in the Revised Romanization System, e.g. *aphmadang* written as *ammadang*, as in the McCune–Reischauer System. The letter symbols for the aspirated stops in the McCune–Reischauer System are those for the lax stops, followed by the apostrophe symbol, e.g. *k'* for /kh/. In the Revised Romanization System, on the other hand, these symbols are replaced by the symbols for the lax stops in the McCune–Reischauer System, e.g. *k* for /kh/. Finally, the vowel letters that are used in conjunction with the breve symbol (˘) are replaced by compound vowel letters. For example, *ŏ* and *ŭ* in the McCune–Reischauer System (representing the sound units /ə/ and /ɨ/, respectively) are written as *eo* and *eu* in the Revised Romanization System. For most of the vowel letters, however, there is little difference between the McCune–Reischauer and the Revised Romanization System. In Table 3.3, the relevant Roman/English letters are differently ordered for sound units such as /k/ in the McCune–Reischauer

Table 3.3 Romanization systems in Korea

Hankul letter	Sound unit in IPA	Pronunciation in IPA	M–R	Yale	2000 Revised
ㄱ	/k/	[k, g]	k, g	k	g, k
ㄲ	/kk/	[kk]	kk	kk	kk
ㄴ	/n/	[n]	n	n	n
ㄷ	/t/	[t, d]	t, d	t	d, t
ㄸ	/tt/	[tt]	tt	tt	tt
ㄹ	/l/	[l, ɾ]	l, r	l	r, l
ㅁ	/m/	[m]	m	m	m
ㅂ	/p/	[p, b]	p, b	p	b, p
ㅃ	/pp/	[pp]	pp	pp	pp
ㅅ	/s/	[s, ʃ]	s	s	s
ㅆ	/ss/	[ss]	ss	ss	ss
ㅇ	/ŋ, Ø/	[ŋ, Ø]	ng, Ø	ng, Ø	ng, Ø
ㅈ	/c/	[c, ɟ]	ch, j	c	j
ㅉ	/cc/	[cc]	tch	cc	jj
ㅊ	/ch/	[ch]	ch'	ch	ch
ㅋ	/kh/	[kh]	k'	kh	k
ㅌ	/th/	[th]	t'	th	t
ㅍ	/ph/	[ph]	p'	ph	p
ㅎ	/h/	[h]	h	h	h
ㅏ	/a/	[a]	a	a	a
ㅐ	/ɛ/	[ɛ]	ae	ay	ae
ㅑ	/ja/	[ja]	ya	ya	ya
ㅒ	/jɛ/	[jɛ]	yae	yay	yae
ㅓ	/ə/	[ə]	ŏ	e	eo
ㅔ	/e/	[e]	e	ey	e
ㅕ	/jə/	[jə]	yŏ	ye	yeo
ㅖ	/je/	[je]	ye	yey	ye
ㅗ	/o/	[o]	o	o	o
ㅘ	/wa/	[wa]	wa	wa	wa
ㅙ	/we/	[we]	wae	way	wae
ㅚ	/ø, we/	[ø, we]	oe	oy	oe
ㅛ	/jo/	[jo]	yo	yo	yo
ㅜ	/u/	[u]	u	wu	u
ㅝ	/wə/	[wə]	wŏ	we	wo
ㅞ	/we/	[we]	we	wey	we
ㅟ	/y, wi/	[y, wi]	wi	wi	wi
ㅠ	/ju/	[ju]	yu	yu	yu
ㅡ	/ɨ/	[ɨ]	ŭ	u	eu
ㅢ	/ɨj/	[ɨ(j), i, e]	ŭi	uy	ui
ㅣ	/i/	[i]	i	i	i

(M–R) and the Revised Romanization System (2000 Revised); the first member of the pair is meant to be 'basic' or 'unmarked'. (As explained in Chapter 2, the tensed stops are written as /p'/, /t'/, /c'/ and /k'/ in IPA transcription but the common Korean convention of repeating the lax stop symbol instead of using the apostrophe is adopted here.)

4

WORDS AND FIXED EXPRESSIONS

Vocabulary

Words in a language are generally referred to collectively as vocabulary. Probably vocabulary learning is the most time-consuming part of learning a foreign language. It can be time-consuming, because people – not only learners but also native speakers – never cease to learn words. For instance, new words are continually being added to languages. New words have to be created and learned in order to describe new experiences or phenomena or to refer to new artefacts or concepts (e.g. *biodegradable*, *spamstering*, *spin-doctor(ing)*, *downloading*, *DVD*, *cyberspace*). For this reason, vocabulary building is perhaps a more appropriate description than vocabulary learning. People with a high school education are said to know, on average, about 60,000 words, and children as young as six may know over 10,000 words. Those with higher education or in professional occupations probably know more than 60,000 words. When learning a foreign language, students aim to acquire the control of an equal number of 'new' words. The sheer number of words to be learned – usually in a short period of time – suggests that this involves much more than just practice or hard work. It also requires a remarkable feat of memory.

Vocabulary learning or building can also be difficult and laborious, because there is no natural or inherent relationship between words and their meanings. This is true of all languages to a large extent. For instance, there is no natural or logical reason why what you now hold in your hands should be called *book* in English (or *chayk* in Korean or *libro* in Spanish). It just happens to be named that way. One simple thought experiment will more clearly show this to be the case. Imagine that two English speakers come to an agreement that they will use the word *book* to refer to a car, and the word *car* to refer to a book. As long as they adhere to this agreement, there will be no miscommunication between them (although there will be with other English speakers). This is possible because there is nothing inherent in the words *book* and *car* that 'gives away' what they mean. This is, in fact, one of the things that bilingual speakers, unlike monolingual speakers, realize about language early in their life. The task of learning such an arbitrary

relationship between word and meaning tends to be even more difficult when foreign languages are genetically unrelated to learners' native languages. For example, German is genetically related to English (both being Germanic languages), and the German word for 'book' is *Buch*, which is very similar to the English counterpart *book*. The German word *Buch* will be much easier for native English speakers to learn and remember than the Korean word *chayk* is.

Young children almost effortlessly acquire the arbitrary relationship between words and their meanings in their native languages. But it is a totally different story when it comes to learning the vocabulary of a foreign language as an adult or even as an adolescent. The arbitrary relationship between words and their meanings in foreign languages must be learned 'the hard way' or with a great deal of effort. Learners of foreign languages must literally build their vocabulary through hard work and good memory.

It must also be borne in mind that there is much more to the arbitrary relationship between words and their meanings in vocabulary learning. Students, when learning words in foreign languages, must learn more than just the connection between their forms and meanings. The vocabulary of a language is a good reflection of the historical, cultural and geographical context in which the language is spoken. Thus the cultural values or social norms that Koreans adhere to in their daily life are naturally reflected in the Korean vocabulary. Words can never be fully learned out of this context. Take the Korean word *sensayng* 'teacher', for instance. What native Korean speakers understand by the word *sensayng* is very different from what native English speakers understand by the word *teacher*. To begin with, Koreans will not hesitate to add the honorific element *-nim* to the end of the word, i.e. *sensayng-nim* 'honourable teacher', especially when they refer to or address their own or their children's teachers. Teachers in Korea are respected almost as much as parents, and one's status as a teacher is always recognized and admired even outside the classroom. Teachers are expected not only to impart knowledge to students but also to provide guidance in life. In Korea, teaching can be more than teaching school subjects, be they physics and music. This is why Koreans often ask their former teachers to officiate at their weddings. Koreans are expected to refer to their teachers as *sensayng-nim* even after they are no longer students (and in fact even if they have become parents or even teachers themselves). Thus how Koreans understand the word *sensayng* is qualitatively different from how native English speakers understand the word *teacher*. Learners must thus make every effort to understand cultural assumptions or values that are embodied in words. They are advised to understand fully the meanings of words as used in their cultural and social context. It is not sufficient to look up the meanings of words in a dictionary.

Moreover, words do not occur in isolation. They co-occur with other words, and this is one of the topics dealt with in some detail in Chapter 5.

But, in the meantime, it must be stressed that students can benefit much from learning words in linguistic context as well. Frequently, words that a given word 'habitually' co-occurs with will help to delimit the meaning of that word. Thus students must always try to learn new words as used in actual sentences. For instance, take *nayngswu* 'cold water' (a Sino-Korean expression). One can say (1), but not (2), in Korean. (Hereafter, the asterisk symbol * indicates ungrammaticality.)

(1) na-nun   nayngswu-lul   masi-ess-ta
    I-TOP   cold.water-ACC   drink-PST-PLAIN.S
    'I drank cold water.'

(2) *na-nun   nayngswu-lo   ppallay-lul   ha-yss-ta
     I-TOP   cold.water-with   washing-ACC   do-PST-PLAIN.S
     'I washed clothes with cold water.'

The reason why (2) is ungrammatical is that *nayngswu*, although it may be translated into English as cold water, has an additional meaningful or contextual component: (to be) used for drinking. Therefore, it does not fit in well with the expression *ppallay-lul ha-yss-ta* 'washed clothes'. Examples like (1) and (2) will much better enable learners to become familiar with the precise meaning of *nayngswu*, as it is delimited by the linguistic context in which it can or cannot appear. Conversely, *chanmul* 'cold water' (a native Korean expression) can occur in lieu of *nayngswu* in both (1) and (2). This suggests that the meaning of *chanmul* is much 'wider' than that of *nayngswu*. By looking at the linguistic context in which these two words occur, learners will be able to delimit their meanings more precisely. Words must be learned not as isolated vocabulary items, but in relation to other words in the language.

Moreover, although *nayngswu* and *chanmul* both mean 'cold water', there is also a subtle socio-cultural dimension to their use. For instance, if the drinker is someone who deserves the speaker's respect, it may be preferable to use *nayngswu* instead of *chanmul*, as in (3).

(3) halapeci-kkeyse   nayngswu-lul   chac-usi-ess-ta
    grandfather-HON.NOM   cold.water-ACC   seek-HON-PST-PLAIN.S
    'The grandfather was looking (or asking) for cold water.'

It is possible to substitute *chanmul* for *nayngswu* in (3) with no loss of meaning, but it is somewhat socio-culturally inappropriate to use *chanmul* in conjunction with the drinker who is worthy of the speaker's respect. This kind of subtle difference in use is not learned from simply reading about the meanings of words in a dictionary (see below for more on this kind of subtle difference in use).

In this chapter, major types of words or major word classes in Korean are identified, with a brief discussion of the properties of each word class, with particular attention to the word classes of nouns, verbs and adjectives. This is followed by a discussion of the multiple origins of words in Korean. There are three major stocks of words, as it were: native Korean words, Sino-Korean words and loanwords, the last most notably from English. Different ways of forming words in Korean are then examined with a view to describing how new words may come into existence in Korean. Semantic differences between Korean words and English equivalents (e.g. *nayngswu* and *cold water*) are also exemplified, for these are often a major source of learners' errors in using Korean. In other words, English words cannot always be equated with Korean words on a one-to-one basis. Finally, some words are discussed to illustrate how different words or expressions must be chosen to express respect on the basis of the age and social position of the hearer or the referent. Respect can be expressed in language by using either honorific or self-deprecating words and expressions. In view of the important role that seniority (age and social status) plays in Korean culture and society, it does not come as a total surprise that there are sophisticated ways of linguistically expressing respect in Korean. What may come as a surprise is the prevalence of such expressions in the language.

Word classes: parts of speech

Words can be categorized into different word classes, or parts of speech as traditionally known. It is convenient to have word classes, because they make it easy to make useful statements about the grammatical behaviour of words. For instance, one can make general statements like 'word class X appears before word class Y' instead of repeating what is essentially the same statement for every word belonging to word class X (or to word class Y for that matter), e.g. 'word *a* appears before word *x*,' 'word *b* appears before word *x*', 'word *c* appears before word *x*', or 'word *x* appears after word *a*', 'word *x* appears after word *b*', 'word *x* appears after word *c*', and so on. The number of word classes in Korean, however, is not an easy matter to decide upon, because different linguists recognize different numbers of word classes. Just as in the case of many other things to do with language, some linguists are 'lumpers' and others 'splitters' when it comes to recognizing word classes. In other words, some linguists prefer to have as few word classes as possible, and others as many as possible. None the less, there are two major word classes that linguists all agree upon, nouns and verbs, and these two appear to be universal (i.e. found in all human languages). Suffice it to mention here two or more commonly used criteria for dividing words into word classes.

Words can be categorized according to the linguistic context in which they appear. To put it differently, words belonging to the same word class

will appear in the same set of positions within sentences. Words in one word class may precede or follow words in another word class. This is to say that words in one word class 'habitually' co-occur with words in another word class in a particular order. For example, native speakers of English know that words like *big* and *small* can potentially fill in the blank position in the sentence *The very ___ dog barked*, because they appear after words like *very* and before words like *dog*. (They also know that words like *from* and *fiercely* cannot appear in the position in question.) Thus the words *big* and *small* belong to the same word class in English.

Words in a given word class may also host certain grammatical elements (tense marking, number marking etc.; see Chapter 5). For example, the English past tense ending *-ed* can attach to words in the verb class: *kissed*, *begged*, *heated* and the like. Moreover, words can be characterized as belonging to word classes depending on their meanings. For instance, nouns are defined as names of people, places or things, while verbs are said to refer to actions or activities. This meaning-based criterion, however, is, much more often than not, an unreliable method of determining the word-class membership of words, and can only be used in conjunction with the other criteria. Words like *earthquake* refer to activities but they behave grammatically like nouns such as *politician*, *school* and *apple*. For instance, all these words appear in the blank position in *The ___ was bad.*

In this section, the focus is on five word classes, nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, although verbs and adjectives are taken together for reasons to be explained in the relevant subsection.

Nouns

Words belonging to the noun class are followed by role-marking particles such as *-i/-ka*, *-(l)ul*, *-eykey* and the like in sentences (for discussion of these role-marking particles, see Chapter 5). For instance, the word *ai* is identified as belonging to the noun class on the basis of the fact that role-marking particles appear immediately after it, e.g. **ai-ka** *wul-ess-ta* 'The child cried' or *kiho-ka* **ai-lul** *wul-i-ess-ta* 'Keeho made the child cry'. Moreover, modifying words or expressions appear before nouns. For example, the word *ai* is categorized as a noun because it is preceded by demonstrative words or modifying expressions like *i* 'this', *ku* 'that', *ce* 'that over there' *yeyppu-n* 'pretty' or *wul-ko iss-nun* 'who is crying', as in *ku ai* 'that child', *yeyppu-n ai* '[a/the] pretty child' or *wul-ko iss-nun ai* '[a/the] child who is crying'.

Nouns in Korean are normally not marked for number (i.e. singular or plural). The plural marking *-tul* is said to occur mainly with human nouns, less frequently with non-human animate nouns and far less frequently with inanimate nouns. However, plural marking is not commonly used even with human nouns, and, in fact, it is usually left out. For example, the same form *salam* can indicate one person or two or more persons, although *salam-tul*

is also possible. In other words, plural marking in Korean is generally not required. In English, on the other hand, it is absolutely necessary to mark nouns for number, if and when they are countable. Thus one has to indicate explicitly (that is, by means of -*s* or -*es*) whether one is talking about one person, or two or more person**s**, one box, or two or more box**es**, and so on. When nouns in Korean are preceded by plural numerals such as *seys* 'three' or plural quantifiers such as *yeles* 'several', plural marking is regarded as completely redundant and not used at all. The circumstances under which plural marking -*tul* must be used involve either second-person pronouns (see below) or the use of nouns in conjunction with the demonstrative words, *i* 'this', *ku* 'that' or *ce* 'that (over there)', e.g. *ku salam* 'that person' versus *ku salam-tul* 'those persons'. The expression *ku salam* means not 'those persons' but 'that person', whereas *salam* alone can mean either 'person' or 'persons'.

Korean does not have grammatical gender as some languages do. For example, the Korean word *ai* can be either a male or female child. In some European languages (e.g. Spanish), on the other hand, this is not grammatically possible. In these languages, one has to indicate whether a child is a male or female by changing the ending of the word (e.g. *niño* 'male child' versus *niña* 'female child') and also of modifying adjectives that accompany it (e.g. *niño pequeño* 'small male child' versus *niña pequeña* 'small female child'). Gender marking in Spanish is actually more complicated in that words referring to inanimate objects or concepts also have gender. For example, *libro* 'book' is masculine, whereas *paz* 'peace' is feminine; this dictates, for example, the choice between different 'forms' of the so-called definite article 'the', i.e. *el* (masculine) versus *la* (feminine), as in *el libro* versus *la paz* (and also the ending of modifying adjectives that go with them). In this respect, Korean is much easier to learn than Spanish, and is akin to English in lacking 'grammatical gender' completely. This does not mean that it is impossible to distinguish a male from a female child in Korean. What Korean does is to use a modifying expression before the noun *ai*, i.e. *namca ai* 'male child' versus *yeca ai* 'female child'. But the use of such modifying expressions is not grammatically required in Korean, whereas in Spanish one must always choose between *niño* and *niña* when one refers to a child. Failing to do so in Spanish will be tantamount to saying something like *The lady has three cat* instead of *The lady has three cats* in English, where plural marking is grammatically required.

In Korean, there is also an abundance of nouns that do not stand on their own. These nouns can appear only if they are modified in one way or another. Not surprisingly, they are often referred to as bound or defective nouns. There are two different types of bound noun. First, there is a set of classifiers or counters that must be used in conjunction with numerals (*one*, *two*, *three* etc. in English) or quantifiers (*several*, *some* etc. in English). In English, numerals or quantifiers are freely used in conjunction with nouns alone to indicate the number or amount of entities being spoken of. For

example, one can say *two books* or *several books*. In Korean, one must say *chayk twu kwen* 'book two volume' or 'two books', or *chayk yele kwen* 'book several volume' or 'several books'. The classifier *kwen* must thus always be used in order to express that what is being counted is characterized as bound volumes such as books or dictionaries. (Note that there are full nouns that also serve as classifiers, e.g. *salam* 'person', as in *na-nun ilkkwun yel salam-i philyo-ha-ta* 'I need ten labourers', where the noun *ilkkwun* 'labourers' is followed by the numeral *yel* 'ten' and the classifier *salam*.) This kind of classifier construction is present to a certain extent in English. For instance, one can say something like *I need two **sheets** of paper to wrap your fish and chips* or *I would like two **cans** of white paint* in English. However, the difference between Korean and English is that in Korean nouns must always co-occur with appropriate classifiers for purposes of counting, whereas in English the use of classifiers is required if nouns cannot normally bear plural marking directly (e.g. **I need two papers to wrap your fish and chips* or *I would like two white paints*).

There are a fair number of classifiers in Korean. This means that learners must be aware which classifier goes with which noun. It is true that some of the classifiers have fallen out of use (e.g. *niph* for coins, now replaced by *kay*) and that Korean native speakers may not be familiar with all of them. None the less, it is important to learn at least widely used classifiers such as *myeng* (for humans), *mali* (for animals), *tay* (for vehicles), *cang* (for sheets of paper or blankets), *pel* (for pieces of clothing), *sal* or *sey* (for age) and *kay* (for various inanimate things like fruits, rooms and chairs), and to use them with appropriate nouns. For example, it is totally ungrammatical to combine *myeng* with non-human animate nouns such as cats (even if the speaker may treat cats like humans), e.g. *na-nun koyangi-ka twu **mali**-ka iss-ta* versus **na-nun koyangi-ka twu **myeng**-i iss-ta* 'I have two cats'.

The other type of bound noun in Korean includes nouns such as *i* 'person', *pun* 'respected person', *kes* 'thing', *kos* 'place', *ttay* 'time' and the like. These nouns must always be augmented by demonstrative words or modifying expressions. For instance, *kos* 'place' combines with the demonstrative words, *i* 'this', *ku* 'that' and *ce* 'that over there' to produce general locative expressions like *i-kos* 'here', *ku-kos* 'there' and *ce-kos* 'over there'. More examples of this type of bound noun are discussed in the next subsection.

Pronouns

Pronouns are very much like nouns in terms of the linguistic context in which they occur. They are followed by role-marking particles. For this reason, pronouns can be grouped together with nouns in the same word class. However, unlike nouns, they generally are not modified by other expressions. This is understandable because pronouns refer to the speaker (i.e. *I* or *we* in English) or the hearer (i.e. *you* in English) or already identified

referents (*she* standing for *the woman* in *The woman came back yesterday and she asked for a refund*). In fact, *pro* in the word *pronoun* itself comes from Latin *pro*, meaning 'for'. For such words, there is no need for modifying expressions.

Pronouns in Korean are unusual from the perspective of English in that they are not as limited in number as in English. Third-person pronouns in particular are akin to ordinary noun phrases. They are made up of demonstrative words and either bound or ordinary nouns. For example, the demonstrative words *i* 'this', *ku* 'that' and *ce* 'that (over there)' can combine with bound nouns such as *i* 'person', *pun* 'respected person', *nom* 'bastard', *nyen* 'girl (vulgar)' or ordinary nouns such as *salam* 'person', *chinkwu* 'bloke', *yeca* 'woman' and the like in order to form third-person pronouns. Because ordinary nouns are involved in this process, it can be said of Korean that at least third-person pronouns are not limited in number as those in English (i.e. *he*, *she*, *it* and *they*) are. To wit, Korean pronouns are comparatively open-ended. Note that the bound noun *pun*, as opposed to the bound noun *i*, is reserved for respected referents. Vulgar nouns such as *nom* or *nyen* are also used in producing third-person pronouns. This means that personal pronouns in Korean can be divided into honorific, neutral and vulgar subclasses.

It is often said that the demonstrative words *ku* 'he' or 'she' and *ku-tul* 'they' can be used as third-person (human) pronouns. This, however, seems to be a relatively recent innovation brought about probably under the influence of English, and their use seems to be generally confined to writing such as modern novels or translated texts.

The age and social position of the speaker with respect to those of the hearer or other referents play a crucial role in the use of second-person pronouns. There are said to be several second-person pronouns in Korean: *ne*, *caney*, *caki*, *tangsin*, *tayk* and *elusin(-ney)*. The social rules for using these second-person pronouns, with the exception of *ne*, are, to say the least, tricky. The second-person pronoun *ne* is generally used to address friends, unmarried offspring and young children. The second-person pronoun *elusin(-ney)* is almost archaic and highly deferential and used only for people who are very advanced in age (70+). The second-person pronoun *tayk* is a pronoun of politeness and formality and is thus used between middle-aged or older adult strangers. The second-person pronoun *caney* is also restricted in use; it is very likely to be used by adult speakers to address other adults who are much younger than, and well known to, them. For example, the school teacher may use *ne* to his or her students, but once the latter have become adults, the former is likely to use *caney* instead of *ne*. The second-person pronoun *tangsin* is generally used by old married couples to address one another; young married couples use *caki* instead. The second-person pronoun *tangsin* is also used impersonally, especially in commercials or advertisements (e.g. *tangshin-eykey-nun mes-to mas i-pnita*, literally meaning

'To you, style is also taste', taken from a newspaper advertisement on a household refrigerator). This impersonal aspect may be the reason why *tangsin* can sometimes be used to express disrespect in face-to-face communication. It is probably the trickiest second-person pronoun, and should thus be avoided in all other circumstances.

What the foregoing suggests is that Korean lacks a general or neutral second-person pronoun that can be used without reference to the hearer's seniority. More frequently than not, it is not easy to determine one's social status relative to other people's in real-life situations. Thus, instead of taking the risk of using a wrong second-person pronoun (and thus offending the hearer), Koreans tend to avoid second-person pronouns altogether, and instead use kin terms or titles, which can be used to address or refer to those who are not necessarily their relatives or those who do not necessarily hold such titles. Therefore, Koreans are more likely to say (4) to an adult stranger (about the same age or older) than (5), although there is no knowing whether that stranger is a teacher or not (and even when they know that he is not).

(4) i   cha-ka   sensayng-nim-uy   cha-nkayo?
     this   car-NOM   teacher-HON-GEN   car-POLITE.Q
     'Is this your car?'

(5) i   cha-ka   tayk-uy   cha-nkayo?
     this   car-NOM   you-GEN   car-POLITE.Q
     'Is this your car?'

The fact that there is no neutral second-person pronoun could potentially be a problem for young people, because there is none that they can use when addressing adults. The second-person pronoun *ne* is the only one that young people can use but only to their friends or siblings younger or possibly not much older than themselves. This is why they always use kin terms such as *acessi* 'uncle', *acwumeni* 'aunt', *halapeci* 'grandfather' or *halmeni* 'grandmother' in lieu of second-person pronouns as long as the hearer is about the same age as the relative to whom they apply one of these kin terms.

Unlike the second- and third-person pronouns, there is no honorific first-person pronoun. Instead, there are neutral (singular *na* and plural *wuli(-tul)*) and humble (singular *ce* and *ce-huy(-tul)*) forms. It makes sense that there is no honorific first-person pronoun. People do not pay respect to themselves! The neutral first-person pronoun *na* (or *wuli(-tul)*) is used with someone equal or inferior to the speaker in terms of age and/or social position. The humble form *ce* (or plural *ce-huy(-tul)*) is called for when the speaker refers to himself or herself in the presence of the hearer who is older and/or higher in social standing. One thing that learners must be careful of in using these first-person pronouns is that, when persons or things close to the speaker – family members, households and schools or other entities that

evoke a sense of belonging, e.g. country, neighbourhood and workplace –
are being referred to, the plural instead of singular first-person pronoun
must be used. Thus in English it is appropriate to say things like 'my mother',
'my family', 'my school', 'my teacher', 'my neighbourhood' or 'my country'.
In Korean, on the other hand, such expressions are not acceptable. It is
not appropriate to say *nay emeni* 'my mother' (where *nay* is short for *na-uy*
'I-GEN'), even if the speaker is the referent's only son or daughter. One
must instead say *wuli emeni*, literally meaning 'our mother'.

Finally, it must be reiterated that, just as the second-person pronouns
tend to be avoided in favour of kin terms or titles, third-person pronouns
are completely avoided, or personal names, kin terms or titles instead are
used. Thus it is not incorrect to say that Korean is a language that makes
little use of personal pronouns. For instance, reference is 'tracked' in discourse
without the use of explicit personal pronouns; contextual information is
relied upon heavily in order to track referents in discourse (see also Chap-
ter 6). If required at all, however, personal names, kin terms or titles are
employed, and they, once chosen, are rarely replaced by pronouns but persist
throughout the text. These points are illustrated in (6) and (7).

(6) wuli   ttal-ai-nun   maum-i   acwu ttattus-hata
    our   daughter-child-TOP   heart-NOM   very   warm-is

    Ø nam-ul   hangsang sayngkakha-ko   il-ul   hanta
    Ø others-ACC always   considering-and work-ACC   do

    ettehkey ha-myen Ø nam-eykey   towum-i   toylkka
    how   do-if   Ø others-to   help-NOM   become

    Ø nul   sayngkak-hanta
    Ø always   thinking-do

    'My daughter has a warm heart. She always does things in
    consideration of other people. She always thinks what she can do
    to help other people.'

(7) kiho-nun   sukheyithu-lul memchwu-lyeta twilo   nemecyessta
    Keeho-TOP   skate-ACC   stop-while   backwards fell.over

    kiho-nun   swum-ul   cwuki-ko   salphyessta
    Keeho-TOP   breath-ACC   killed-and looked.around

    kiho-uy   kasum-i   ttwikisicakhayssta
    Keeho-GEN   chest-NOM   started.to.jump

    'Keeho fell over backwards while trying to stop on his skates. He
    held his breath and looked around. His heart started to throb.'

In (6), the symbol Ø represents a place where the third-person pronoun would potentially have to be used if the text were written in English. In (6), no third-person pronouns are used at all. The original noun *wuli ttal-ai* is not repeated, either. The referent, however, is easily and correctly tracked because the whole text is about the daughter, what she is like and what she does. In (7), on the other hand, the personal name *Keeho* is consistently used instead of a third-person pronoun, which is exactly what would be expected if (7) were an English text (as is the case in the English translation provided). What these two brief examples demonstrate for the use of personal pronouns in Korean is that learners must know when to use personal pronouns or, more correctly, when not to use them. This can prove to be very difficult for English-speaking learners in view of the prevalent use of pronouns in English. The general rule is: avoid using third-person pronouns if their referents are easily understood from context but, if and when in doubt, try to use personal names, kin terms or titles instead, even if this sounds plainly redundant, repetitive or inappropriate in English.

Verbs and adjectives

Verbs and adjectives are both used to ascribe properties to noun phrases in the situations that they describe. For example, the verb *kicked* in *The boy kicked the ball* attributes the roles of the 'kicker' and the 'kickee' to the noun phrases *the boy* and *the ball*, respectively. In the sentence *The girl was pretty*, the adjective *pretty* attributes the property of prettiness to the noun phrase *the girl*. None the less, in English verbs and adjectives do differ from each other. For example, verbs must carry the past tense marking directly, as in *kicked* (as opposed to *kicks*). Adjectives, on the other hand, cannot carry such grammatical marking: an extra word or what is technically known as the copula, i.e. *was* (as opposed to *is*), is called upon; the adjective word *pretty* cannot carry the past tense marking directly, as in **prettied*. Thus verbs and adjectives are recognized as constituting separate word classes in English.

In Korean, however, it is somewhat contentious to claim that verbs and adjectives form separate word classes, because they, unlike their counterparts in English, are very similar to each other in terms of grammatical behaviour. This is why they are treated together here. In Korean, verbs and adjectives host more or less the same set of grammatical endings, i.e. tense, honorific, speech style and sentence type (see Chapter 5 for discussion of these grammatical endings). Thus the past tense ending (and the speech level ending) appears directly on verbs and adjectives alike, e.g. *mek-ess-ta* 'eat-PST-PLAIN.S' versus *yeypp(u)-ess-ta* 'pretty-PST-PLAIN.S'. Moreover, when they modify nouns, both verbs and adjectives must make use of a special ending (e.g. *-nun* for verbs and *-n* for adjectives), as in *wu-nun ai* 'a child who is crying' or *yeyppu-n ai* 'a pretty child'. In other words, adjectives, just like

verbs, cannot be directly used to modify nouns without this special ending (for further discussion, see 'Modification of noun phrases' in Chapter 5). This is very different from English adjective words, e.g. *pretty*, as in *a pretty girl*, where *pretty* is not supported by a special ending or anything else in order to modify *girl* (cf. *The girl is pretty*). The similarity of adjectives to verbs is further substantiated by the fact that in Korean many adjectives are created by nouns in combination with verbs, such as *ha-ta* 'to do', *iss-ta* 'to exist', *eps-ta* 'to not exist' and *toy-ta* 'to become'. In other words, many adjectives in Korean are built directly on verbs. For example, the noun *kenkang* 'health' combines with the verb *ha-ta* to derive the adjective word *kenkang-ha-ta* 'to be healthy'.

There are certainly (minor) grammatical differences between verbs and adjectives in Korean, but these differences have more to do with differences in meaning between verbs and adjectives than anything else. Verbs typically denote actions (e.g. *to eat*, *to jump*, *to kill*) or processes (e.g. *to think*, *to modernize*), while adjectives typically express properties or qualities such as shape (e.g. *round*, *long*), taste (e.g. *sweet*, *bitter*), size (e.g. *big*, *small*), height (e.g. *tall*, *short*) or characteristic (e.g. *good*, *bad*). One can talk about eating as an ongoing activity (e.g. *The boy is eating (a meal)*), while one normally cannot talk about the property of prettiness in a similar manner (e.g. **The girl is being pretty*). Similarly, in Korean it is possible to say *ku ai-ka pap-ul mek-nun-ta* 'The child is eating a meal' but impossible to say **ku ai-ka yeyppu-n-ta* '*The child is being pretty'.

There are three important things to remember about verbs and adjectives in Korean. First, the copula (*be* and its variants, i.e. *is*, *are*, *was* and *were* in English) is not used in Korean. In English, one cannot leave out the copula *is* and say *The child pretty* to mean 'The child is pretty'. In Korean, this is exactly what one says: *The child pretty*, as in (8).

(8) ku   ai-ka   yeyppu-ta
     that child-NOM pretty-PLAIN.S
     'The child is pretty.'

This does not mean that Korean lacks a copula completely. Arguably, it has a copula, *i-*, but uses it only when a noun phrase is chosen to attribute a property to another noun phrase in the sentence, e.g. *ku ai-ka haksayng i-ta* 'The child is a student' (see Chapter 5 for further discussion of this copula). Second, there are certain adjectives that can be used only with respect to the speaker if the sentence is a statement or with respect to the hearer if the sentence is a question. These adjectives are referred to as subjective or experiential adjectives and they describe internal states or conditions experienced by individual human beings (body temperature, emotions and the like). For example, *chwup-ta* 'to be cold' is a subjective adjective. In Korean, *na-nun chwup-ta* 'I am cold' is grammatical but neither *ne-nun*

chwup-ta 'You are cold' nor *ku ai-nun chwup-ta* 'The child is cold' is. Being cold is something that one cannot experience on behalf of or in place of other people. In the same place and at the same time I may feel cold, but others may not. Thus it makes sense that one cannot use subjective adjectives to describe internal states experienced by other people. It is, however, possible to use subjective adjectives with respect to the hearer in the context of asking questions, because the hearer is available there and then, as it were, to answer questions about themselves. Thus it is grammatical to say *ne-nun chwup-ni?* 'Are you cold?' However, subjective adjectives are never directly used with respect to third persons, unless they are augmented by the general verb *ha-ta*. Thus it is grammatical to say *ku ai-nun chwuwe-ha-n-ta* 'The child is feeling cold'. It is also possible to use subjective adjectives directly by quoting third persons, as in *ku ai-nun chwup-ta-ko ha-n-ta* 'The child says "I am cold"'. Subjective adjectives include *tep-ta* 'to be warm', *sulphu-ta* 'to be sad', *musep-ta* 'to be in fear', *kippu-ta* 'to be glad', *coh-ta* 'to be fond of', *pulep-ta* 'to be envious' and the like. Third, some verbs in Korean express highly grammatical meanings different from what they mean when used alone. This is similar to what has happened to the verb *go* in English, as in *I am going to see the reporter tonight*. The meaning of *going* here is different from what it means when it is used as a sole verb in *I am going home tonight*. The word *going* in the first sentence has more or less lost the (original) meaning of 'to move' or 'to travel' (for example, the reporter may be the one who will travel to where the speaker is located). It instead has the meaning of 'intending to do something'. It can thus be used in the context of actions that involve no moving or travelling at all. In Korean, verbs like *peli-ta* 'to throw (away)' and *po-ta* 'to see' are used in conjunction with other verbs in this manner. When so used, *peli-ta* means the completion of an action or activity, and *po-ta* 'to try to do something'. For instance, consider *ku salam-un ton-ul ta sse-peli-ess-ta* 'The man spent all the money', or *i chicu com mek-e po-a-la* 'Try (to eat) a bit of this cheese'. (See 'Expression of aspect and other meaning distinctions' in Chapter 5 for further discussion.)

Adverbs

The adverb class consists of words that modify verbs, adjectives or other adverbs. Adverbs describe the manner, time or place of an action or indicate the degree of properties expressed by adjectives or adverbs. Adverbs typically precede what they modify, whatever it may be. Manner adverbs such as *ppalli* 'quickly', *chenchenhi* 'slowly', *yongkamhakey* 'bravely' and the like appear before verbs, as in *ku ai-ka pap-ul ppalli mek-nun-ta* 'The child is eating (a meal) quickly'. Many manner adverbs end in *-i*, *-hi* or *-key*. Time and place adverbs such as *cikum* 'now', *ecey* 'yesterday', *cuksi* 'immediately', *melli* 'far away', *kakkai* or *kakkapkey* 'near' and the like also tend to appear before verbs that they modify, as in *ku ai-ka kong-ul melli tenci-ess-ta* 'The

child threw the ball far away'. Manner, time and place adverbs, however, can be optionally moved to elsewhere in the sentence, as in *ku ai-ka ppalli pap-ul mek-nun-ta* or *ku ai-ka melli kong-ul tenci-ess-ta*. They may also appear at the beginning of the sentence, as in *ppalli ku ai-ka pap-ul mek-nun-ta* or *melli ku ai-ka kong-ul tenci-ess-ta*. Time and place adverbs are in fact more likely to appear at the beginning of the sentence than manner adverbs, as the former tend to be used to describe the setting (i.e. the time and the place of an event), as in *ecey ku ai-ka pap-ul ppalli mek-ess-ta* 'Yesterday the child ate (a meal) quickly'. Degree adverbs such as *acwu* 'very', *mopsi* 'extremely', *cokum* 'little', *yakkan* 'slightly' and the like are always placed immediately before what they modify.

Finally, attention must be drawn to the abundance in Korean of onomatopoeic or mimetic expressions (e.g. mimicking natural sounds, or manners of action or movement). These expressions, functioning basically as manner adverbs, tend to be produced by means of reduplication: repetition of identical or near-identical syllables. For example, *acang-acang* is such an adverb. Note that the same form *acang* is repeated; *acang* cannot stand on its own. This adverb is used to describe the manner in which small children who have just learned to walk toddle about, e.g. *eli-n ai-ka acang-acang kel-e-ka-n-ta* 'The young child is toddling away'. There is an interesting variation on reduplication to produce onomatopoeic or mimetic adverbs. For instance, *acang-acang* can also be modified into *eceng-eceng* 'toddlingly'. The change in vowel quality (/a/ → /ə/), however, expresses that the manner of walking is not that of young children but that of older children or even adults. The general rule is that the vowels /a/, /ɛ/, /o/ tend to express brightness, lightness, quickness and the like, whereas the vowels /e/, /u/ and /ə/ tend to signal darkness, heaviness, slowness and the like. Younger children walk 'lightly' (i.e. *acang-acang*) and older children 'heavily' (i.e. *eceng-eceng*) because of their weight difference among other things. Similarly, *pokul-pokul* describes the sound and manner of bubbling liquid when simmered. In contrast, *pukul-pukul* imitates the sound and manner of bubbling liquid when boiled. For example, liquid being heated *pukul-pukul* is more likely to overflow than liquid being heated *pokul-pokul*. Consonants are also used to express a similar kind of subtle meaning difference. Lax consonants can be turned into aspirated or tensed ones to express a higher degree of a given quality. For example, *congal-congal* describes the manner of talking volubly and noisily. When the initial consonant is changed into a corresponding tensed one, as in *ccongal-ccongal*, there is a sense of increase in intensity (e.g. higher noise level). For instance, one is likely to find people talking *ccongal-ccongal* to be more distracting or irritating than people talking *congal-congal*. (A further, albeit slightly more complicated, variation on *congal-congal/ccongal-ccongal* is *cwungel-cwungel/ccwungel-ccwungel*, describing the manner of murmuring, the latter more audibly than the former.) Undoubtedly, the widespread use of onomatopoeic or mimetic expressions in Korean is one of the most difficult

things for students to acquire. None the less, it is an important aspect of Korean that students will need to learn, as these expressions will no doubt add richness, vividness and even 'authenticity' to their Korean.

Other word classes: numerals, determiners and particles

Numerals in Korean can be somewhat difficult to learn because students will have to be familiar with two different sets of numerals, native Korean and Sino-Korean, and also to know when to use the one set as opposed to the other. More general discussion of Sino-Korean words is provided in the next section, but, in view of Korea's long association with China, it does not come as a total surprise that many Sino-Korean words including numerals are firmly established in Korean. Native Korean numerals run from one to 99, whereas Sino-Korean numerals start from one and go all the way to *payk-man* (1,000,000), to *chen-man* (10,000,000), to *ek* (100,000,000) and to *co* (1,000,000,000,000). The native Korean numerals and corresponding Sino-Korean numerals, including the Sino-Korean word for hundred, are presented in Table 4.1. The basic method of forming higher numbers, as can be inferred from Table 4.1, could not be easier and more straightforward (eleven = ten one, twelve = ten two etc.). For example, 88 will be *yetun yetel* in native Korean numerals or *phal-sip phal* in Sino-Korean numerals, both literally meaning 'eighty eight'.

Note that the numerical unit for 10,000 does not have an English equivalent. Learners, however, should be familiar with this numerical unit, because it is used as the base for higher numerals, e.g. 20,000 (*i-man*), 30,000 (*sam-man*), 100,000 (*(il-)sip-man*), 200,000 (*i-sip-man*), 300,000 (*sam-sip-man*), 1,000,000 (*payk-man*), *chen-man* (10,000,000). For such higher numerals, the numerical unit *thousand* or *million* is used as the base in English, e.g. *twenty thousand, thirty thousand, one hundred thousand, two hundred thousand, three hundred thousand, one million, ten million*. Korean numerals based on 10,000 or *man* in particular are very frequently used in referring to prices in Korean won (there are not many things one can buy with under 10,000 won).

There are restrictions or considerations to bear in mind when choosing between native Korean and Sino-Korean numerals, although a rule of thumb is to use native numerals for low numbers and Sino-Korean numerals for high numbers. For instance, Sino-Korean numerals must always be used to express dates, e.g. *chen kwu payk kwu sip kwu nyen sam wel sip il* '10 March 1999' or literally 'thousand nine hundred ninety nine year three month ten day' (note that year comes before month and month before day in an opposite way to how dates are expressed in (British) English). When one is expressing the time, however, hours must be in native numerals, with minutes and seconds in Sino-Korean numerals, e.g. *yel si sam-sip-il pun o cho* '10 hours 31 minutes 5 seconds'. Koreans prefer native Korean to Sino-Korean numerals when telling their own or other people's age, although the

Table 4.1 Native Korean and Sino-Korean numerals

	Native Korean	Sino-Korean
1	hana	il
2	twul	i
3	seys	sam
4	neys	sa
5	tases	o
6	yeses	yuk
7	ilkop	chil
8	yetel	phal
9	ahop	kwu
10	yel	sip
11	yel-hana	sip-il
12	yel-twul	sip-i
13	yel-seys	sip-sam
14	yel-neys	sip-sa
15	yel-tases	sip-o
16	yel-yeses	sip-yuk
17	yel-ilkop	sip-chil
18	yel-yetel	sip-phal
19	yel-ahop	sip-kwu
20	sumul	i-sip
30	selhun	sam-sip
40	mahun	sa-sip
50	swin	o-sip
60	yeyswun	yuk-sip
70	ilhun	chil-sip
80	yetun	phal-sip
90	ahun	kwu-sip
100	–	payk
1,000	–	chen
10,000	–	man

Note: the native Korean numerals *hana*, *twul*, *seys*, *neys* and *sumul* must be reduced to *han*, *twu*, *sey*, *ney* and *sumu*, respectively, when they are followed by classifiers.

alternation between the two is acceptable. Note that the native age classifier *sal* must be used with native Korean numerals and the Sino-Korean age classifier *sey* with Sino-Korean numerals, e.g. *kiho-nun sumul-han sal i-ta* 'Keeho is 21 years old' or *ku salam-un sam-sip-o sey i-ta* 'The man is 35 years old'.

The determiner class contains the demonstrative words that have previously been introduced in connection with bound nouns, i.e. *i* 'this', *ku* 'that' and *ce* 'that (over there)' (as opposed to the two-way distinction between *this* and *that* in English), and other modifying words such as *say* 'new', *yeys* 'archaic' and the like. In reference to what is not physically present, the demonstrative *ku* is the usual choice, e.g. *ku chayk(-i) eti ka-ss-nya?* 'Where

is that book?' or 'Where has the book gone?' This may explain why the demonstrative word *ku* is often equated with the definite article *the* in English, although Korean lacks a definite article. The modifying words are, to all intents and purposes, adjectives, but they are not grouped together with adjectives in one word class. The main reason for this decision is that the modifying words, unlike adjectives, do not bear a special ending when appearing before what they modify, e.g. *say cip* 'new house' as opposed to *khu-n cip* 'big house', where the adjective *khu-ta* 'big' must carry a special ending *-n*.

Finally, there is the particle class, which includes various role-marking particles, e.g. *-i/-ka* and *-(l)ul* as in *ku ai-ka kong-ul tenci-ess-ta* 'The child threw the ball'. Role-marking particles indicate the roles of noun phrases with respect to the event described by the verb or the state of condition expressed by the adjective. Discussion of these particles will be deferred to Chapter 5.

Origins: native words, Sino-Korean words and loanwords

In view of the prolonged contact between Korea and China, it will hardly surprise readers that Korean borrowed words from Chinese. What is surprising is, however, the extent and the manner of such borrowing. Slightly over 52 per cent of Korean words are said to be of Sino-Korean stock, while over 45 per cent of Korean words are of native stock (the remainder are loanwords, most notably from English). Learners may be quick to point out that Sino-Korean words are also loanwords, because they originate from Chinese, but this is not entirely correct. Many of these Sino-Korean words were either coined on the basis of Koreanized Chinese characters or created in Japan from Chinese characters and then borrowed into Korean. Japanese, like Korean, has relied heavily on Chinese characters for over 1,500 years. More importantly, Sino-Korean words have been part of Korean for so long that Koreans do not regard them as loanwords. This is why some native Korean speakers (and learners as well) are under the erroneous impression that Korean and Chinese are genetically related to each other (see Chapter 1 for their different affiliations). In fact, many Koreans are not always able to tell whether a given word is of native Korean or Sino-Korean origin. Arguing that Sino-Korean words are loanwords is like arguing that English words based on Latin and Greek elements are loanwords. Native English speakers, unless they are etymologists or have specialist knowledge, don't realize the Latin or Greek origin of words like *client*, *library*, *essence*, *dissolve*, *idiosyncrasy*, *democracy* and *history*; even if they were aware of their origins, they would hesitate to call them loanwords, simply because they have been part of the English vocabulary for so long, and thus entrenched so firmly in the English language that it will be purely academic whether to call them loanwords or not. Similarly, Sino-Korean words are so

firmly established in Korean that it may not be appropriate to view them as loanwords, albeit based on Chinese characters.

When it comes to borrowings from Japanese, it is rather a different story, although Korea has also been in close contact with Japan for many centuries. Readers may be surprised to learn that there are not many words borrowed from Japanese. There are two reasons for this lack. First, although the direction of cultural influence, including loanwords, until the late nineteenth century was from China to Korea to Japan, Japan opened its door to the industrialized West well before Korea and China did. Japan, unlike Korea and China, began to develop into a modern industrial nation by the late nineteenth century, and the latter two had to borrow new words from Japan when importing new technology, concepts and artefacts. However, Japanese also relied on Chinese characters to coin new words to express new concepts and things from the West. It was these Sino-Japanese words that eventually found their way into Korean (and also into Chinese). Thus the Sino-Korean vocabulary contains a fair number of Sino-Japanese words, but, since the latter are also based on Chinese, albeit Japanized, characters, they are usually regarded as Sino-Korean words. Moreover, these Sino-Japanese words were borrowed in their written, not spoken, form. Thus they are pronounced as Chinese characters are pronounced in Korean, not in Japanese or, more accurately, in a Koreanized, not Japanized, approximation of Chinese (see Chapter 3 as to why identical Chinese characters are pronounced differently in Korean, Chinese and Japanese). Second, the Japanese colonial power made a serious attempt to obliterate Korean culture and language. Thus during Japanese rule the Korean language was not allowed to be taught in schools, and Koreans were forced to abandon their Korean personal names in favour of Japanese ones. Given this traumatic – still unforgettable to most Koreans – history, it is understandable that, once liberated from Japan, Koreans could not have been quicker to get rid of Japanese words borrowed into Korean, especially during the Japanese occupation, and remain resistant to new loanwords from Japanese. For example, the almost universally accepted Japanese word *karaoke* is not the expected *kalaokkey* but *nolaypang* 'song-room' in Korean. None the less, this does not mean that Korean completely lacks Japanese loanwords, e.g. *kapang* 'bag', *kwutwu* 'leather shoes', *kamani* 'straw bags (used for storing husked rice)', *wutong* 'Japanese-style thick noodle' and *wailo* 'bribe'. Moreover, although Koreans have a strong aversion to borrowing native Japanese words, they have – wittingly or unwittingly – imported many Japanese words borrowed from English or coined on the basis of English words. Many Koreans continue to use such English loanwords without realizing their immediate origins in Japanese.

By one recent count, there are over 20,000 loanwords in Korean, and over 90 per cent of them are said to be of English stock. This is, again, hardly unexpected in view of the intimate contact between South Korea and the United States, especially after the Korean War. It is not unlikely that their

number will increase in years to come, given the status of English as the global lingua franca and the rise of the United States as the world's sole superpower. As has already been noted, however, a fair number of English loanwords are actually indirect ones borrowed from English with Japanese as an intermediary. This is further discussed below, because some of these indirect English loanwords do not exist in English. This can potentially be perplexing or misleading to learners even if they recognize the Englishness of such loanwords. (See Chapter 7 for the status of loanwords in North Korea.)

Native Korean words

Basic human actions and activities, physiological and psychological states, body parts, kin terms and natural objects such as celestial bodies tend to be expressed by using native Korean words. There is nothing surprising about this, because words are unlikely to be borrowed from other languages to express what all humans possess or experience wherever in the world they may be or whoever they may be. Thus native Korean words occur in all word classes. In particular, they predominate within the particle class, whose members indicate grammatical functions or roles. Again, this is not unexpected, because languages are less likely to borrow grammatical expressions than lexical ones (nouns, verbs etc.). Native Korean words also play a prominent role in onomatopoeic or mimetic expressions, as has already been described. Moreover, learners must bear in mind that there are many Sino-Korean words that native Koreans, unable to identify them as such without specialist knowledge, take to be native Korean words. For example, the national dish of Korea, *kimchi* 'pickled cabbage', is based on two Chinese characters, *tim* and *chay*, but many Koreans may not be aware of this.

Sino-Korean words

Chinese characters and words are thought to have been introduced into Korean as early as 108 BCE, when Han China took control of most of the Korean Peninsula (see Chapter 1). But it was not until the eighth century, when personal names of the ruling class and placenames were converted into Sino-Korean, that Chinese characters really began to take root in Korean. As has been pointed out on more than one occasion, Sino-Korean words are not regarded as loanwords. Indeed, in Korean Sino-Korean words are referred to as Hancae 'Chinese words', as distinct from Oylaye 'foreign words', meaning loanwords from English, Japanese and other languages such as Dutch, French, German and Italian. (See Chapter 7 for North Korea's nativization drive.)

There are basically three different types of Sino-Korean word. First, there are words borrowed directly from Chinese sources. These are words that

were introduced mainly from Chinese classical texts and literary writings, and also possibly through direct contact, e.g. *hyoca* 'filial son' and *hakkyo* 'school'. There are also Chinese words borrowed from Japanese, i.e. Sino-Japanese words or Japanized Chinese words, such as *chelto* 'railroad' and *pupu* 'husband and wife'. Sino-Korean words such as these are used in Korea and Japan but not in China. Second, there are Sino-Korean words that originated from Japanese but are attested in both Korean and Chinese, e.g. *sahoy* (Korean) and *shèhuì* (Chinese) 'society' from Sino-Japanese *shakai*. Third, there are Sino-Korean words that were coined in Korea on the basis of Chinese characters, e.g. *chongkak* 'bachelor' and *sikkwu* 'family members (to feed or support)'.

One of the defining characteristics of Sino-Korean words is that virtually all of them consist of two Chinese characters. In other words, the basic Sino-Korean word template is disyllabic. There are, of course, exceptions such as *mun* 'door' and *chayk* 'book'. Most of the Sino-Korean words also belong to the noun class. The few exceptions include Sino-Korean adverbs such as *cuksi* 'immediately'. Thus, when Sino-Korean words are used as verbs, adjectives or adverbs, they need to be augmented by native Korean elements. For instance, Sino-Korean nouns can combine with the native Korean general verb *ha-ta* 'do' in order to function as verbs, e.g. *kongpu* 'studying' → *kongpu-ha-ta* 'to study'. They can also combine with native Korean general verbs *ha-ta* 'to do' or *i-ta* 'to be' in order to serve as adjectives, e.g. *hayngpok* 'happiness' → *hayngpok-ha-ta* 'to be happy', *tahayng* 'much luck' → *tahayng-i-ta* 'to be lucky'. Sino-Korean nouns can also be turned into adverbs by means of native Korean grammatical elements such as *-lo*, e.g. *cinsil* 'truth' → *cinsil-lo* 'truly'. Note that these devices for forming words are not confined to Sino-Korean words but are productively used for native Korean words as well. More discussion of word formation is provided later in this chapter.

Loanwords

Loanwords come mainly from English, as has already been pointed out. Korean is more like Japanese than Chinese in that it prefers borrowing words from other languages to coining words on the basis of existing words (but see Chapter 7 for a different situation in North Korea). Loanwords have already been briefly discussed in terms of pronunciation in Chapter 2. English loanwords are relatively recent arrivals. Thus they tend to come from the domains of science, technology (especially computer technology), pop culture, politics, economics, sports and Western lifestyle. As in many parts of the world, English is regarded as the language of the 'Global Village', and is learned avidly by many Koreans, especially young ones.

It would, however, be naive to expect English loanwords to be identical to their source words in English. Nothing could be further from the truth.

There are a number of reasons. First, as already described in Chapter 2, the pronunciation of English loanwords is generally modified to fit in with the sound patterns of Korean. The absence of English-style stress makes things even more difficult for learners. Native English learners may not recognize many English loanwords in Korean, e.g. *sepisu* /sə.pi.sɨ/ 'service' and *phillum* /phil.lɨm/ 'film'. Second, words are borrowed in highly limited contexts. Thus the meaning of loanwords tends to be narrow. What this means is that, when English words enter Korean, they do not retain all their meanings. Their meanings are invariably narrowed down to one meaning relevant to the specific context in which they were borrowed from English. For example, the word *extra* in English functions as an adjective ('additional', e.g. *extra money in my pocket*), as an adverb ('additionally', e.g. *I need to work extra hard*) and also as a noun ('something added, usually free of charge', e.g. *A hot drink is an extra* or 'a movie actor with a very small part', e.g. *Peter Jackson needed two thousand extras for the battle scene*). This word is pronounced as *eyksuthula* or [ek.sɨ.thɨ.ra] in Korean, and it can only mean 'a movie actor with a very small part'. The other meanings do not exist for the loanword in question. Third, the meaning of loanwords sometimes shifts. A good example of this is *khenning*, which comes from the English word *cunning*. The loanword *khenning*, used as a noun, means 'cheating in an exam'. One can barely make the connection between being cunning and cheating in an exam. A similar example is the loanword *phulenthu* (from English *front*). This loanword can only mean the reception area of a Western-style hotel. Frequently, learners will be unable to work out the meaning of English loanwords, even if they can manage to relate them to English words, e.g. *kaykumayn* (from non-existent English *gag man*), meaning 'comedian'. Such English loanwords, lamented by some Koreans, are generally referred to as Kacca Yenge 'fake English'. There is even a dictionary of such fake English words and expressions, designed to help Koreans to avoid or lose them. Fourth, English words tend to be shortened or truncated when introduced into Korean. This is often the case with long or polysyllabic words (as is the case in English itself, e.g. *omnibus* → *bus*, *public house* → *pub*). For example, the English word *apartment* is borrowed into Korean as *aphathu*. The word *supermarket* is shortened to *swuphe*, which cannot be equated with the English word *super*. One unfortunate outcome of this process for learners is that different English words can all be reduced to the same form. For example, *phulo* is such a loanword, meaning 'professional', 'programme' or even 'proletariat'. The truncated word *pro* in English, on the other hand, only has the meaning of 'professional'. Fifth, more frequently than not, new words are created on the basis of English words, very often in an opaque or ingenious manner. For example, *senthing* in Korean means 'tinting of car windows'. This word does not look much like a loanword, but it is made up of English loanwords, albeit in a very round-about manner. It consists of *sen* (from *sun*) and *thing* (short for *coating*). Finally, English

phrases are abbreviated in such a way that the resulting acronyms hardly make sense to native English speakers. For example, *phiti* (or *PD* in writing) stands for 'television **p**ro**d**ucer', *oeyl* (or *OL* in writing) for '**o**ffice **l**ady', meaning 'a female office clerk' or 'a girl Friday', and *tiphii* (or *DPE* in writing) for '**d**evelopment, **p**rinting and **e**nlargement' (i.e. photo-processing).

   Many of the English loanwords in popular use in Korea have actually been borrowed into Korean through Japanese, no matter how firmly some Koreans may deny this. Many Koreans are very resistant to borrowing words from Japanese to the effect that indirect English loanwords from Japanese have been 'treated' so that they lose Japaneseness. However, the treatment is not always successful or complete. Thus there are English loanwords that have Japanese as well as English properties. Surprisingly, these 'hybrid' loanwords are rather numerous, although many Koreans are unaware of this. For instance, the English word *inflation* is borrowed into Korean through Japanese. The Korean loanword is *inphulley*, whereas the Japanese loanword is *infure*. The truncation of the word *inflation* is distinctly Japanese and adopted into Korean, but the Korean loanword, unlike the Japanese one, has retained [l] in approximation to the English pronunciation of the word. English loanwords such as *ssenkulasu* and *ppansu* illustrate an additional case of English words imported into Korean through Japanese. When English nouns used exclusively (or mostly) in the plural were borrowed into Japanese, some retained the plural marking *-s* or *-es*, whereas others lost it; the word *pantsu* (from *pants* meaning 'panties' or 'underpants', not 'trousers') is an example of the former, whereas the word *sangurasu* (from *sunglasses*) is an example of the latter. The presence or absence of the plural marking in these and other English loanwords in Japanese finds an exact parallelism in Korean. The English plural marking is retained in the word *ppansu*, and lost in *ssenkulasu*. There are certainly many words that have been borrowed directly from English into Korean, e.g. *simeynthu* 'cement' and *mithing* (from *meeting*) 'blind date'. None the less, Japanized English words are in active use in Korean and will continue to be introduced into Korean, because science, technology or objects of modernization may still be imported from or through Japan.

Native words, Sino-Korean words and loanwords in coexistence or competition?

As has been shown, there are three sources of Korean words: native Korean words, Sino-Korean words and loanwords. It is not incorrect to say that many native Korean words – no one knows how many – have disappeared under the influence of Sino-Korean words and, more recently, loanwords, most notably from English. For example, *ay* 'intestine' and *yang* 'stomach' have been completely lost to most Koreans in favour of the Sino-Korean *cang* and *wi*, respectively, while *muth* 'land' has almost fallen out of use in

favour of Sino-Korean *yukci*. The native Korean words *ay* and *yang* are now limited to idiomatic or fixed expressions, e.g. *ay-ka tha-n-ta* 'to be consumed with anxiety or worry' (literally 'the intestine is burning') and *yangkopchang* 'charcoal-grilled cow stomach and small intestines' (a delicacy in Korea). Some Sino-Korean words in turn are already beginning to lose ground to English loanwords. For example, *sunggangki* 'lift' or literally 'up and down machine' has now been almost replaced by *eyllipeyithe* (from American English *elevator*), and *cengkwu* 'tennis' has completely lost to *theynisu*.

Far more frequently than not, however, native Korean words, Sino-Korean words and loanwords continue to coexist in harmony. Thus it is not uncommon to find doublets or even triplets for same concepts or things in Korean. For example, *ilcali* (native Korean) and *cikcang* (Sino-Korean) refer to paid work, but, while *ilcali* can be used to refer to paid work of any kind, *cikcang* can only be used to mean white-collar or office work and never refers to manual or menial work. The triplet *calu-ta* (native Korean) *celtan-hata* (Sino-Korean) and *khethu-hata* (from English *cut*), all meaning 'to cut', is another interesting example. The Sino-Korean word is used typically in the context of industrial work or technical operation, as in cutting a sheet of steel, whereas the English loanword tends to be used in the context of film editing (i.e. scenes cut out of a film) or sport (i.e. a player cut off from the ball). The native Korean word is used for other general types of cutting. For example, one can use neither *celtan-hata* nor *khethu-hata* in connection with body parts, flowers, trees or even cakes. The native Korean word alone is acceptable in these cases.

Sometimes, the choice between native Korean, Sino-Korean words and loanwords depends on stylistic or sociolinguistic variables. For example, *chwungko* (Sino-Korean) and *etupaisu* (from English *advice*) are not used interchangeably. Which of the two should be used is determined by who gives advice to whom about what. If advice is given by an old person (e.g. mother) to a young person (e.g. daughter), the Sino-Korean word is preferable to the loanword. If, on the other hand, advice is given by a young person to a friend, then *etupaisu* is preferable to *chwungko*. It also depends on what the advice is about. If it concerns a long-term relationship between man and woman (e.g. marriage), *chwungko* may be preferable, while *etupaisu* may be appropriate if it has to do with 'birth control'. Moreover, Sino-Korean words tend to be used in formal contexts, while native Korean words are preferred in colloquial or informal speech. Sino-Korean words, in comparison with native Korean words, are generally regarded as 'learned' or even pedantic. Thus, in formal situations, one may prefer to use Sino-Korean *swucok* 'arms and legs', *sillyey* 'example', *kumnyen* 'this year' and *hapok* 'summer clothes' instead of native Korean *phaltali*, *poki*, *olhay* and *yelumos*, respectively. This is also true of English: Latin- or Greek-derived words are used in formal situations, as opposed to other English words used in informal

situations, e.g. *puerile* versus *childish*, *cardiac disease* versus *heart disease* or *psychiatrist* versus *shrink*.

This division of labour between native Korean, Sino-Korean and English loanwords is not unexpected because languages do not tolerate two or more words with identical meanings (that is, complete synonyms). Indeed, doublets and triplets tend to develop their own usage or context of use. Learners must be aware of this contextual dimension to the choice between native Korean words, Sino-Korean words and loanwords. This is why learners must make every effort to learn words in their use or context, not merely from a dictionary. Unfortunately (and understandably), dictionaries do not always provide this kind of information.

Word formation: how words are created in Korean

How do words come into a language? There are basically three ways in which words come into being: borrowing, compounding and derivation. Borrowing has already been amply demonstrated. Words can also be created or coined by using resources that already exist in the language. For example, pre-existing words can be juxtaposed to express new concepts or things. This process is technically known as compounding. For example, *taxi* and *driver* are two different words and they can be put together to form a 'new' (compound) word *taxi driver*. Another example is *drink drive*. The two verbs *drink* and *drive* are put together to express an action to be avoided by all drivers. Korean relies heavily on this type of word formation – more than on the other strategies. As has been pointed out, the majority of Sino-Korean words are made up of two Chinese characters. Chinese characters have a meaning each, regardless of whether or not they are used on their own. For example, the Sino-Korean word *haksayng* 'student' consists of *hak* 'studying' and *sayng* 'person'. The same word *hak* then combines with *kyo* 'teaching', *nyen* 'year' and *kwun* 'zone' to create *hakkyo* 'school', *haknyen* 'school year' and *hakkwun* 'school zone', respectively. Thus Sino-Korean words can be said to have been created by this simple process of compounding. Native Korean words can be similarly compounded to create words. For example, *mul* 'water' and *kay* 'dog' are put together to create the word *mulkay* 'seal'. The word *kay* in turn combines with *cip* 'house' and *pap* 'meal' to create *kaycip* 'kennel' and *kaypap* 'dog food', respectively. The verbs *tol-ta* 'to turn' and *ka-ta* 'to go' are joined together to produce the word *tol-a-ka-ta* 'to return'. In English, there is some confusion as to whether to write compound words with a space or a hyphen between the component parts (e.g. *archenemy*, *arch-enemy* or even *arch enemy*). In Korean, compound words are written without a space or a hyphen between the component parts.

The rule of thumb in Korean compounding is that, although there are exceptions, native Korean and Sino-Korean words are generally put together

with native Korean and Sino-Korean words, respectively. Interestingly enough, loanwords can also be compounded to the effect that resulting words can be perplexing to native English speakers. For example, the English words *back* (English loanword *payk*) and *mirror* (English loanword *mile*) are juxtaposed to form the word *paykmile*, meaning 'rear-view mirror (of a car)'. The English words *eye* (English loanword *ai*) and *shopping* (English loanword *syophing*) are joined together to create an ingenious word *aisyophing*, meaning 'window-shopping' or literally 'shopping done with eyes'.

The second most common way to create words is to attach elements smaller than words to pre-existing words. This process of word formation is technically known as derivation. The smaller-than-word elements are technically known as affixes; they cannot stand on their own but must attach to words. Affixes can be attached to the beginning or end of words to form new or additional words. For instance, affixes such as *mayn-* 'bare', *tes-* 'additional' and the like can be added to the beginning of words to derive words such as *mayn-son* 'bare hands' (*son* 'hand'), *mayn-pal* 'barefoot' (*pal* 'foot'), *mayn-pap* 'plain cooked rice (eaten with no side dishes)' (*pap* 'cooked rice'), *tes-sin* 'overshoes' (*sin* 'shoes'), *tes-mun* 'outer door' (*mun* 'door'), *tes-na-ta* 'to flare up (as in rash)' (*na-ta* 'to appear'), *tes-seym* 'arithmetic addition' (*seym* 'arithmetic') and the like. In Korean, there are more affixes that attach to the end than to the beginning of words. For example, *-cil* 'activity (often derogative)', *-kkwun* 'doer' and the like attach to the end of words, as in *mangchi-cil* 'hammering' (*mangchi* 'hammer'), *yok-cil* 'swearing' (*yok* 'obscenity'), *kyeycip-cil* 'extramarital affairs with women' (*kyeycip* 'young woman'), *il-kkwun* 'labourer' (*il* 'labour'), *nolum-kkwun* 'gambler' (*nolum* 'gambling'), *cangsa-kkwun* 'merchant' (*cangsa* 'trade') and the like. Affixes can be similarly used to derive verbs and adjectives. One of the best known examples is the so-called causative affix, which is used to derive verbs from verbs or adjectives. For instance, the verb *wul-(ta)* 'to cry' and the adjective *noph-(ta)* 'to be high' can be converted into *wul-i-(ta)* 'to make (someone) cry' and *noph-i-(ta)* 'to make (something) high' or 'to heighten', respectively. Adjectives and adverbs can also be similarly derived by means of affixes, e.g. *-lop* as in *hyangki* 'fragrance' → *hyangki-lop-(ta)* 'to be fragrant' and *-i* as in *pappu-* 'to be busy' → *papp-i* 'busily'. There are not only native Korean but also Sino-Korean affixes that can attach to pre-existing words to derive new or additional words, although, admittedly, it is not always possible to distinguish the derivation from compounding, especially in the case of Sino-Korean affixes. There are, however, no loan affixes or elements used for purposes of derivation.

Finally, there is a minor but productive manner of word formation in Korean: abbreviation. Long phrases can be abbreviated, and after a period of coexistence abbreviated expressions may take over from their source phrases. For example, *nosa* originated from **no**tongca **sa**yongca 'employee and employer', and *ipsi* from **ip**hak **si**hem 'university entrance examination'.

While *iphak sihem* is still in use along with *ipsi*, *notongca sayongca* has completely fallen out of use in favour of *nosa*. Other abbreviations that are used concurrently with their source phrases include: **tok**ile and *toke* for the German language, **il**pon**sik** and *ilsik* for Japanese-style (food), and **ko**tunghak**kyo** and *kokyo* for high school. Abbreviations involving loanwords have already been illustrated above.

Networks of meaning: semantics

It was pointed out earlier in this chapter that the meaning of loanwords cannot be expected to be identical to that of their source words in English. This comment must actually be extended to the rest of the vocabulary. Despite what dictionaries may tell learners, Korean words do not always correspond to English words on a one-to-one basis in terms of meaning. Meaning is differently divided up, as it were, in different languages. It is naive to think that it is just a matter of replacing words in one language with seemingly equivalent words in another. Moreover, what is expressed by one language with a single word may have to be expressed by another with a phrase or even a sentence. Learners must always bear this in mind when learning words in Korean, or in any foreign language for that matter. This is why it is very important to learn words in the context in which they are used, not as isolated items as listed in a dictionary. The example of Korean *chanmul* and *nayngswu* as opposed to English *cold water* has been illustrated with this very point in mind. These two Korean words occur in different social as well as linguistic contexts. Many similar examples can be readily offered but suffice it here to mention one more. In English, the verb *wear* can be used in relation to various items, including clothes, hats, gloves, shoes, pistols, rings, watches and nametags (and even facial expressions). This single verb is used irrespective of different parts of the body that come into contact with the things that are worn. In Korean, on the other hand, different verbs must be selected, depending upon which part of the body is involved. Thus *ip-ta* is used for clothes (body and limbs), *ssu-ta* for hats and glasses (head and face), *kki-ta* for gloves and rings (hands and fingers), *cha-ta* for pistols and watches (waist and wrist), *may-ta* for ties (neck), *sin-ta* for shoes and socks (feet) and *tal-ta* for brooches and nametags (chest). Things could work in the opposite manner – to the convenience of learners. For example, the verb *mek-ta* 'to eat' in Korean can be used not only with solid food but also with drinks or medicine, although there is a specific verb each for drinking and taking medicine (*masi-ta* and *pokyong-ha-ta*, respectively). However, learners can use the general alimentary verb *mek-ta* for all kinds of thing that people take through their mouth (even the water that one accidentally takes in while swimming).

The ideal way to learn the multiple verbs of wearing in Korean is, therefore, to learn them in relation to the words that go with them. This method can

be further extended in a general fashion to vocabulary learning. For instance, when one learns the word *cha* 'car', one can also try to learn verbs that co-occur with it or verbs that describe the things that people typically do with cars. Learning to use the word *cha* with verbs such as *mol-ta* 'to drive', *seywu-ta* 'to stop', *ttakk-ta* 'to wash', *sa-ta* 'to buy', *phal-ta* 'to sell', *pilli-ta* 'to borrow' and *imtay-ha-ta* 'to rent' can go a long way towards acquiring the correct use and understanding of the simple word *cha*. Conversely, each of these verbs can in turn be studied in terms of what other nouns it can co-occur with. For instance, it is possible to stop machines or bleeding in English, but such nouns cannot be used with the Korean verb *seywu-ta* 'to stop'. The Korean verb *memchwu-ta* 'to stop' must instead be used.

Moreover, words can be learned in groups. For example, students can learn the names of body parts together under one word group, e.g. *meli* 'head', *mok* 'neck', *phal* 'arm', *son* 'hand', *pal* 'foot' and the like. From each of these body part words, students can go into further groups, e.g. *son mok* 'wrist', *son kalak* 'finger', *son thop* 'finger nail', *pal mok* 'ankle', *pal kalak* 'toe' and *pal thop* 'toe nail'. Colour terms and kin terms can be learned in a similar fashion.

Words can also be learned in opposite pairs. For example, *coh-ta* 'to be good' can be learned together with *nappu-ta* 'to be bad', and so on. The point being repeated here is that learners should avoid learning words in isolation. They must instead make every effort to learn them as members of word groups. The importance of learning words in groups is nicely illustrated by the way deference is expressed in Korean, as demonstrated below.

Deference in Korean: respect and self-deprecation

It is perfectly possible to express deference in English and in any language for that matter. For example, it is not difficult to see which café attendant, A or B, is (or is not) expressing respect to the customer when talking about what the latter has ordered.

(9) A: The lady at table 3 would like to have one Greek salad.
     B: Table 3 wants one Greek salad.

People say *His grandfather **passed away** two years ago* instead of *His grandfather **died** two years ago* when they wish to pay respect to the dead person. In Korean, however, the expression of deference is prevalent and must be systematically (and carefully) used. Languages that have something close to the Korean system of deference in terms of complexity and sophistication are Japanese and possibly Javanese. This system of deference is often cited as one of the most difficult areas of Korean to learn and, not surprisingly, it is a common source of learners' errors, often to the

embarrassment or amusement of both learners and their Korean interlocutors. It is not uncommon for highly advanced learners to make errors in this area, but readers will be relieved to learn that even adult Koreans make such errors. It is not incorrect to say that it is one of the aspects of Korean that native Korean children acquire last. For learners, it is not merely a matter of memorizing expressions of deference. This is the easy part. They must also know when to use these expressions and to whom. The same person may be treated differently in terms of deference, depending on who else is present or even within earshot. For example, a woman who speaks to her husband as an equal when they are alone may be expected or required to speak deferentially to him in the presence of her or his parents. Generally speaking, age and social status (including gender) are the most important factors in determining whether someone deserves respect in one's speech. But, unfortunately, the complexity of this system cannot be captured in a matter of a few pages. Even native Koreans sometimes get into trouble for failing to use appropriate expressions of deference or for using inappropriate ones. This certainly is not something to be learned completely from a book alone. None the less, a brief description of the system is essential in a book like the present one (see Chapter 5 for further discussion).

There are two ways of expressing respect (in language). If X is a respected person, and Y is socially expected or in some cases required to express deference towards X in Y's speech, Y can either pay respect to X or 'humble' himself or herself (or someone else) with respect to X. Most of the major word classes in Korean contain honorific or humble expressions. Honorific and humble personal pronouns have already been discussed in this chapter. In the present section, nouns and verbs are examined in terms of deference. Discussion as to how deference is grammatically, as opposed to lexically, expressed is deferred to Chapter 5.

Learners must be aware of doublets (neutral versus honorific) in the case of certain nouns in Korean. The neutral member of each doublet is for general use, whereas the honorific member is reserved for respected persons. For example, a child eats *pap* 'meal' but a respected person eats *cinci* 'meal'. Note that there is no formal similarity between *pap* and *cinci*. A similar difference between *chanmul* and *nayngswu* 'cold water' has been discussed in some detail. Some other noun doublets are presented in Table 4.2.

Moreover, it is important to choose the right member of verb doublets. For example, the verb *mek-ta* 'to eat' is used for a child or a social equal or inferior, but the honorific verb *capswu-si-ta* must be employed for a respected person. Other verb doublets are presented in Table 4.3. As shown in Chapter 5, neutral verbs without honorific counterparts can also carry the expression of deference, but in this case the honorific affix *-si* is productively attached to the end of neutral verbs to produce honorific verbs. (Note that the honorific suffix is additionally used for the honorific verbs in Table 4.3.)

Table 4.2 Neutral and honorific nouns

Neutral	Honorific	Meaning
mal	malssum	words
ilum	sengham	name
nai	yensey	age
ai-tul	caceypun	offspring
cip	tayk	house
pyeng	pyenghwan	illness
sayngil	sayngsin	birthday

Table 4.3 Neutral and honorific verbs

Neutral	Honorific	Meaning
ca-ta	cwumu-si-ta	to sleep
masi-ta	tu-si-ta	to drink or to eat
cwuk-ta	tol-a-ka-si-ta	to die
wumcik-i-ta	ketong-ha-si-ta	to move
iss-ta	kyey-si-ta	to be or to stay

Table 4.4 Neutral and humble verbs

Neutral	Humble	Meaning
po-ta	poyp-ta	to see (a person)
mut-ta	yeccwu-ta	to ask
alli-ta	aloy-ta	to inform
teyli-ta	mosi-ta	to accompany

When an action is done for or to a respected person, humble instead of neutral verbs are expected to be used. For example, if X gives something to Y, and if Y, in the eyes of the speaker (who can also happen to be X), deserves respect, then the speaker is expected to use the humble verb *tuli-ta* instead of the neutral verb *cwu-ta*. It is not the case that every neutral verb has a corresponding humble counterpart. But there are a few of them, as listed in Table 4.4.

Fixed expressions: idioms

Students must learn not only individual words but also so-called idioms. Idioms can be broadly defined as fixed expressions that consist of multiple words but whose meanings are different from or unrelated to the meanings of the component words. Strictly speaking, they are not part of the vocabulary

because they are made up of multiple words. However, they are briefly discussed here because they tend to be used as if they were single words (i.e. with consistent meanings), and their correct meanings cannot be mechanically computed from the meanings of their component words. For instance, the English expression *throw the baby out with the bath water* can mean exactly that: 'throw an infant out with the water that has been used to bathe it'. But it also has an idiomatic – and much more likely – interpretation: 'to lose the most important part of something when getting rid of the bad or unwanted part thereof'. There are thousands of such fixed expressions in English, and Korean is no different. For example, the Korean expression *yakpang-uy kamcho* literally means 'liquorice root in a herbal medicine shop' (as opposed to liquorice root in a kitchen, for example). But it also has an idiomatic reading: 'someone or something indispensable'. Probably this idiomatic expression originates from the ubiquitous presence of liquorice root in oriental herbal medicine (or *hanyak*). This is not the place to list such fixed expressions in great numbers, but it cannot be overemphasized how important it is for learners to be familiar with them. Fixed expressions embody culture, society and ways of thinking and doing things much more than individual words. For example, consider the Korean fixed expression *wis-mul-i malk-aya alays-mul-to malk-ta*, meaning 'the water downstream can be clear only if the water upstream is clear'. This expression explains how people with seniority must behave ethically so that they can set an example to the young or to those who are in lower social positions. Otherwise, the latter may find it difficult to respect the former. (Unfortunately, the reality does not always reflect the spirit of this expression.) The 'meaning' of this particular fixed expression cannot be fully appreciated without an understanding of the hierarchical structure of Korean society, based crucially on seniority. Needless to say, some fixed expressions are more opaque or less transparent – in other words, more culture-specific – than others. For instance, learners may be able to work out the meaning of the fixed expression *pul-na-n cip-ey puchay-cil ha-ta* 'to do something bad – usually out of spite but also inadvertently – to someone or something that is already in a bad enough situation'. This fixed expression literally means 'to fan a house on fire'. Learners can without much difficulty approximate to its idiomatic meaning, because a house on fire (i.e. an already bad situation) will burn faster or more easily if air (i.e. something bad) is deliberately or inadvertently 'blown' on to it in order to fan the fire. On the other hand, the idiomatic meaning of *os-ul pes-ta* 'to step down from an official position' may not be easily inferable from the expression itself, because its literal meaning is 'take off clothes (e.g. in order to take a shower)'; in fact, it is possible for learners to infer a rather interesting or awkward meaning (e.g. performing a strip tease). The idiomatic meaning may be related to the fact that in bygone days court officials changed from their official to civilian clothes immediately after tendering their resignations or being dismissed from their positions. This practice may still

apply in present day Korea, where people dress themselves according to their relative social positions to a much greater extent than in the West.

Knowledge of Korean fixed expressions is a true reflection of learners' understanding of Korean culture, society and people. More generally, learning a foreign language is learning a foreign culture. Learners must thus make every effort to learn as many fixed expressions as possible. It is undoubtedly one of the best ways to learn a foreign culture, and the ability to use such fixed expressions often distinguishes advanced learners from beginners.

5

SENTENCES AND THEIR STRUCTURE
Grammar

Learning a language involves much more than knowing how to refer to people, things, concepts, qualities, actions and the like (i.e. words or vocabulary items). Learners must also know how to put words together in order to produce grammatical and meaningful sentences. In Chapter 4, it was pointed out that words co-occur with one another. For instance, words in word class X (e.g. *that* or *my*) co-occur with words in word class Y (e.g. *woman* or *sister*). Words do not co-occur in a random order; they co-occur in a particular order (this order is, not surprisingly, known as word order). For instance, words in word class X precede words in word class Y or, conversely, words in word class Y follow words in word class X (e.g. *That woman is my sister* versus **Woman that is sister my*). There may also be words or grammatical elements that 'connect' words or phrases within sentences. For example, the word *on* in *The cat slept on the sofa* is used to relate *the sofa* to *slept* in a meaningful way. It describes the connection between the cat's sleeping and the sofa by identifying the latter as the location of the former. Words such as *on* are then said to have the function of connecting words or phrases in sentences. This kind of function, depending on languages, can also be performed by elements smaller than words; such elements may be part of words or attach directly to words. In languages like Turkish, for example, words bear different endings, depending on their roles within a sentence (e.g. *adam-ı* 'man' if occurring in sentences like *Ali adam-ı öl-dür-dü* 'Ali killed the man' but *adam-a*, if occurring in sentences like *Mehmet adam-a elma-lar-ı ver-di* 'Mehmet gave the apples to the man').

In English, word order is relatively fixed, with the effect that the roles of noun phrases such as *the boy* and *the girl* depend crucially on where they appear within sentences. Compare *The girl loves the boy* and *The boy loves the girl*. In the first sentence, *the girl* is the 'lover' and *the boy* the 'lovee', whereas in the second sentence, the roles of the noun phrases, dictated by their positions in the sentence, are reversed. In Korean, on the other hand, word order – at least at the sentence level – is relatively free or flexible, as long as the verb is placed at the end of the sentence. In other words, the

roles of noun phrases are largely not indicated by their positions within sentences. For example, the 'lovee' noun phrase *yeca ai* 'the girl' can appear after or before the 'lover' noun phrase *namca ai* 'the boy', as in *namca ai-ka yeca-ai-lul salang-ha-nta* versus *yeca ai-lul namca ai-ka salang-ha-nta*. These two sentences mean the same thing, their different word orders notwithstanding: 'The boy [*namca ai-ka*] loves the girl [*yeca ai-lul*]'. This, however, does not mean that Korean lacks a basic word order at the sentence level. In fact, the sentence with the 'lover' noun phrase placed before the 'lovee' noun phrase, i.e. *namca ai-ka yeca ai-lul salang-ha-nta*, does exemplify the basic word order at the sentence level in Korean.

Readers will no doubt have noted that the noun phrases *namca ai* 'the boy' and *yeca ai* 'the girl' in the above Korean sentences are marked by *-ka* and *-lul*, respectively. It is precisely these elements or role-marking particles that identify *namca ai* as the lover and *yeca ai* as the lovee in the sentences in question. Because of the presence of these particles, *namca ai* and *yeca ai*, unlike their English counterparts, do not have to appear in fixed positions within the sentence (insofar as they are both placed before the verb). This does not mean that English lacks role-marking completely. English does rely on role-marking words, as can be seen in the case of *on* in the above-mentioned sentence *The cat slept on the sofa*. In English, role-marking words (or prepositions) such as *on* come before, not after, their relevant noun phrases – unlike role-marking particles in Korean, which appear after their relevant noun phrases. But, more importantly, the use of role-marking particles in Korean extends to noun phrases, the roles of which would be indicated by means of word order alone in English, e.g. the 'lover' and 'lovee' noun phrases in *The girl loves the boy* or *The boy loves the girl*. This, however, should not be interpreted to mean that Korean does not have fixed word order at all. It certainly does, albeit at other levels. For example, just as in English demonstrative words such as *that* must precede nouns such as *book* (e.g. *that book* versus **book that*), demonstrative words such as *ku* 'that' must also precede nouns such as *chayk* 'book' in Korean (e.g. *ku chayk* versus **chayk ku* 'that book').

In English, the speaker can describe an event in which his teacher met his girlfriend by simply saying *My teacher met my girlfriend*. The speaker can utter this sentence, irrespective of whether he pays respect to the teacher in his speech or not. Moreover, the speaker can use the same sentence *My teacher met my girlfriend*, regardless of whom he is talking to, e.g. siblings, friends, parents, grandparents, supervisors or strangers sitting next to him on the bus. In Korean, on the other hand, the speaker is required to express his deference to the teacher by adding an honorific ending *-nim* to the noun *sensayng* 'teacher' and another honorific ending *-si* to the verb *manna-* 'to meet'. An honorific role-marking particle *-kkeyse*, instead of the neutral role-marking particle *-i*, must also be chosen for the 'already honorific' noun phrase *sensayng-nim* 'teacher'. To make things more complicated, the

speaker must also indicate his social position relative to the hearer's by attaching a so-called speech-level ending to the verb *manna-si-*. Koreans will never use the speech-level ending suitable for their friends when speaking to their bosses, for example (otherwise, heads will roll). Thus Koreans do not merely express what happens (or happened) or who does (or did) what to whom but, where required, must also express deference not only to the person(s) involved in the event described but also to the person(s) whom they are talking to. In other words, Korean sentences do not merely describe events or situations but are also embellished with various expressions of social or interpersonal relationships between the speaker and others, including the hearer.

In Korean, the verb is the most important component of the sentence, for it is loaded not only with honorific and speech-level endings but also with other grammatical endings that indicate the time of a given event (with respect to the time of speaking or some other time, e.g. *Nicola works at this hospital* versus *Nicola worked at this hospital*) or describe how the action expressed by the verb takes (or took) place in time (e.g. *Nicola is writing a report* versus *Nicola has written a report*). (Note that this is also more or less true of so-called predicative adjectives, e.g. *rich* in *The man is rich*, as opposed to *rich* in *the rich man*. In Korean, thus, predicative adjectives carry honorific, speech-level and other grammatical endings, just as verbs do.) The verb (or the predicative adjective) in Korean can be further 'adjusted' in a number of different ways whereby the speaker's belief or attitude towards the content of the sentence is indicated. Of course, this is possible in English too. But in English it is achieved in a rather roundabout manner. For instance, in order to reiterate or reinforce their intention to do something in view of the hearer's doubt, the speaker can add another more or less full sentence *I told you* to the sentence *I will do it* (i.e. *I told you I will do it*). In Korean, on the other hand, this can be achieved by attaching a special 'intention' ending directly to the verb (e.g. *nay-ka ha-keyss-ta* 'I will do it' versus *nay-ka ha-keyss-ta-nikka* 'I told you I will do it!'). Despite the presence of this and other endings, the verb is still a single word. There are other such speaker-oriented endings that attach directly to the verb (or the predicative adjective).

Moreover, various expressions, when they can be inferred from the context, are frequently omitted, with the effect that a sentence may end up with a single verb alone, albeit replete with diverse endings, e.g. *ka-si-keyss-supnikka?* as opposed to *sensayng-nim-kkeyse moim-ey ka-si-keyss-supnikka?* '(Honourable sir, do you) intend to go (to the meeting)?'. The verb (or the predicative adjective) can thus be said to be the nucleus of the sentence in Korean. To English-speaking learners, the verb (or the predicative adjective) in Korean, with a series of grammatical and other endings, can be extremely complicated and lengthy in comparison with its counterpart in English. Needless to say, competent control of these endings is essential to the production and comprehension of Korean. Imagine a situation where learners

fail to use or understand such endings and therefore let their meanings go unexpressed or unnoticed, not to mention a situation where deference to the hearer and to a participant in the event described is not properly expressed. Miscommunication, misunderstanding or even loss of face is bound to occur.

In this chapter, word order at various levels is first examined with a view to highlighting the major differences between Korean and English. Also discussed is how flexible word order in Korean, as opposed to that in English, can be under certain circumstances. Adjustment of verbs and noun phrases, depending on linguistic or social contexts, is examined, with emphasis on the honorific and speech-level endings. Moreover, more than one verb can be put together in simple sentences or in what may be called multiple-verb constructions. For example, what is perceived as a single action in English is 'unpacked', as it were, into a series of actions in Korean. The corollary of this is that what is dealt with by a single verb in English will have to be expressed by multiple verbs in Korean. Finally, how simple sentences can be put together to form complex sentences is discussed: in particular, how a sentence itself can be used to modify a noun phrase or even another sentence, and can also function in lieu of a noun phrase within another sentence.

Readers must bear in mind that what is discussed in the remainder of this chapter is merely a small fraction of Korean grammar – the English expression 'the tip of the iceberg' comes to mind – although some of its most significant or prominent properties have been selected with a view to presenting a reasonably adequate profile of the Korean language from the perspective of English-speaking learners.

Word order: sentences and phrases

The basic or neutral word order at the sentence level in English is said to be subject–verb–object. The subject refers to the entity that is most relevant to the success of the action or to the unfolding of the event. The object refers to the entity at which the action is directed or to the entity with which the referent of the subject interacts most directly in the unfolding of the event. The verb denotes the action or the event itself. For example, consider the English sentence *The girl kissed the boy*. The noun phrase, *the girl*, is most relevant to the success of the action of kissing. But for the girl, the kissing will not have taken place. Thus *the girl* is the subject of the sentence. The noun phrase *the boy* is the entity that the action in question was directed at; it is the object. The word *kissed*, describing the action itself, is the verb.

Word order at the sentence level

The basic word order at the sentence level in Korean, on the other hand, is said to be subject–object–verb, as exemplified in *namca ai-ka yeca ai-lul*

salang-ha-nta 'The boy [*namca ai-ka*] loves [*salangha-nta*] the girl [*yeca ai-lul*]'. Unlike English, however, Korean allows the subject and object noun phrases to trade their places with no change in meaning. Thus it is perfectly grammatical and acceptable to reorder the noun phrases in the sentence to *yeca ai-lul namca ai-ka salang-ha-nta*. This is, as has already been pointed out, due to the noun phrases bearing their own role-marking particles. But it is important to remember that the verb must be placed at the end of the sentence. It is true that one may occasionally hear sentences like (1), where the verb appears at the beginning of the sentence.

(1) ka-ss-ta   ku   malssengkkwuleki-ka
     go-PST-PLAIN.S   that naughty.child-NOM
     'The naughty child has left' or 'He has left, the naughty child'.

The sentence in (1) is highly marked in that there is a pause between the verb *ka-ss-ta* and the noun phrase *ku malssengkkwuleki-ka*. The verb is meant to stand alone, with the subject noun phrase understood (as noun phrases and other phrases are frequently left out in Korean speech). However, the noun phrase *ku malssengkkwuleki-ka*, as suggested by the preceding pause, is added as an afterthought or for purposes of clarification or reinforcement. For instance, the speaker initially utters the verb-only sentence, i.e. *ka-ss-ta*, and then, realizing that the hearer may not have understood or inferred who has left, supplies the 'missing' noun phrase as an afterthought.

In English too the basic word order can be manipulated. For instance, given the basic sentence *The girl kissed the boy*, one can prepose the object noun phrase to the beginning of the sentence, as in (2).

(2)   The boy, the girl kissed.

The sentence in (2) exhibits the object–subject–verb order, but this is not taken to be basic word order. For instance, there is a pause between the fronted object noun phrase *the boy* and the rest of the sentence *the girl kissed*, and the sentence can be used only under limited circumstances (when the referent of the noun phrase, *the boy*, needs to be contrasted with, for example, someone that the girl didn't kiss, e.g. *The girl didn't kiss her mother, but the boy, she kissed*). Moreover, the word order in (2) is far less frequently used than the subject–verb–object order. For this reason, the object–subject–verb order, as illustrated in (2), is not taken to be basic in English.

There is further evidence that the basic word order at the sentence level in Korean is subject–object–verb. Role-marking particles can potentially be omitted. When both the subject and object noun phrases 'lose' their role-marking particles in this manner, the first noun phrase must be interpreted as the subject and the second noun phrase as the object, as in (3).

(3) kiho   ku   yeca   manna-ss-ta
     Keeho   that   woman   meet-PST-PLAIN.S
     'Keeho met the woman.'

The sentence in (3) is never understood to mean: 'The woman met Keeho'. In the absence of role-marking particles, the basic word order of subject–object–verb must be appealed to (see Chapter 6 for further discussion of omission).

While there is a great deal of word order flexibility at the sentence level in Korean, there are some 'exceptions' where fixed word order is always required at that level. For instance, when it involves copulas *i-ta* 'to be' (4a) or *toy-ta* 'to become' (4b), or so-called double-nominative constructions (4c), the sentence must always be subject-initial.

(4)
a.   kiho-ka   haksayng   i-ta
     Keeho-NOM   student   is-PLAIN.S
     'Keeho is a student'

b.   yenghi-ka   uysa-ka   toy-ess-ta
     Yonghee-NOM   doctor-NOM   become-PST-PLAIN.S
     'Yonghee became a doctor.'

c.   sensayng-i   cokyo-ka   philyoha-ta
     teacher-NOM   teaching.assistant-NOM need-PLAIN.S
     'The teacher needs a teaching assistant.'

The word order in the sentences in (4) cannot be changed without rendering them odd (as indicated below by the question mark) or ungrammatical, as can be seen in (5).

(5)
a.   ?haksayng-i kiho i-ta
     '?A student is Keeho.'

b.   ?uysa-ka yenghi-ka toy-ess-ta
     '?A doctor became Yonghee.'

c.   *cokyo-ka sensayng-i philyoha-ta

Note that (5c) is grammatical only in the sense that the teaching assistant needs a teacher, not the other way round. This makes sense because the two noun phrases are identically marked by the nominative particle. The basic word order thus has to be called upon in order to distinguish one noun phrase from the other in terms of role.

There are other phrases that can co-occur with the subject and object noun phrases and the verb in the sentence. For example, temporal (or time) and locative (or place) phrases (in italics) tend to be placed at the beginning of the sentence, as illustrated in (6a). The sentence-initial position of temporal and locative phrases makes sense because they are typically used to situate events in terms of time and space. For this reason, they are often referred to as setting expressions. Temporal and locative expressions can also appear between the subject noun phrase and the object noun phrase, as in (6b).

(6)
a. *ecey*   *hakkyo-eyse* kiho-ka   yenghi-lul   manna-ss-ta
    yesterday school-at   Keeho-NOM Yonghee-ACC meet-PST-PLAIN.S
    'Yesterday Keeho met Yonghee at school.'

b. kiho-ka   *ecey*   *hakkyo-eyse* yenghi-lul   manna-ss-ta
    Keeho-NOM yesterday school-at   Yonghee-ACC meet-PST-PLAIN.S
    'Keeho met Yonghee at school yesterday.'

Other phrases (in italics), such as co-participation, means, source and destination, tend to be placed between the subject and object noun phrases, as demonstrated by (7).

(7) kiho-ka   *yenghi-wa*   *cha-lo sewul-eyse   pusan-ulo*
     Keeho-NOM   Yonghee-with   car-by Seoul-from Pusan-to
     yehayng-ul   ha-yss-ta
     trip-ACC   do-PST-PLAIN.S
     'Keeho took a trip with Yonghee by car from Seoul to Pusan.'

Beneficiary or recipient phrases (in italics) tend to appear between the subject noun phrase and the object noun phrase, as can be seen in (8).

(8) kiho-ka   *yenghi-eykey* chayk-ul   cwu-ess-ta
     Keeho-NOM Yonghee-to   book-ACC   give-PST-PLAIN.S
     'Keeho gave a book to Yonghee.'

Again, note that these additional phrases, clearly indicated by their role-marking particles, can optionally appear elsewhere in the sentence as long as they are placed before the verb, e.g. *yenghi-eykey* at the beginning of (8) or *yenghi-eykey kiho-ka chayk-ul cwu-ess-ta* (see the section on variation on word order).

Word order within phrases

The word order within phrases is firmly fixed and undergoes no permutation or manipulation. In Korean, modifying expressions precede modified ones.

Expressions such as demonstrative words (9), adjectives (10), adverbs (11, 12) and other modifying phrases (13) or sentences (14) all precede modified expressions. This is a consistent property of Korean word order (modifying expressions in italics and modified ones in boldface below):

(9)   *ku*   **ai-ka**   wul-ess-ta
      that   child-NOM   cry-PST-PLAIN.S
      '*The* **child** cried.'

(10)   *chakha-n*   **salam-i**   pok-ul   pat-nunta
      kind.hearted-REL   person-NOM   good.fortune-ACC   receive-PLAIN.S
      '*Kind-hearted* **people** receive good fortune.'

(11)   ku   ai-ka   *acwu*   **yeyppu**-ta
      that   child-NOM   very   pretty-PLAIN.S
      'The child is *very* **pretty**.'

(12)   i   ai-ka   *acwu*   **ppalli**   talli-nta
      this   child-NOM   *very*   **fast**   run-PLAIN.S
      'This child runs *very* **fast**.'

(13)   *nyucillayndu-uy*   **hoswu-ka**   alumtap-ta
      New Zealand-GEN   lake-NOM   beautiful-PLAIN.S
      '**The lakes** of *New Zealand* are beautiful.'

(14)   *kongpu-lul yelsimhi ha-nun*   **haksayng-i**   sengkong-ha-nta
      study-ACC   hard   do-REL   student-NOM   success-do-PLAIN.S
      '**Students** *who study hard* will succeed.'

As can be seen in the translations of the preceding examples, English is not completely consistent in terms of the ordering of modifying and modified expressions. In particular, modifying noun phrases (13) and sentences (14), unlike the other modifying expressions, appear after, not before, what they modify. It is worth noting that these two modifying expressions tend to be structurally more complex or heavier than the other modifying expressions that appear before modified expressions (see the discussion below as to how heavy expressions also tend to be shifted to the right or to the end of the sentence in English).

Other word order patterns

Another word order pattern that is absolutely fixed in Korean is the placement of sentences that modify other sentences in terms of time, place, purpose, reason and the like. This is different from English, in which such modifying

sentences (in italics) can optionally appear before modified sentences. For example, one can say either (15a) or (15b) in English.

(15)

a. Nicola went home early *because her flatmates were having a party*.

b. *Because her flatmates were having a party*, Nicola went home early.

In Korean, on the other hand, such modifying sentences (in italics) must always be placed before modified sentences, as can be seen in (16).

(16)

a. *nwun-i   o-nikka*   cha-tul-i   chenchenhi   talli-nta
    snow-NOM come-because car-PL-NOM slowly   run-PLAIN.S
    'Cars are travelling slowly because it is snowing.'

b. *cha-tul-i chenchenhi talli-nta *nwun-i o-nikka*

The ungrammatical sentence in (16b) can be rendered acceptable only if a distinct pause is inserted between the two sentences; that is, only if the modifying sentence is 'thrown in' as an afterthought or as a clarifying remark.

Role-marking and other grammatical particles must be positioned to the right of relevant phrases in Korean. (This is why these role-marking particles are sometimes referred to as **post**positions, as opposed to **pre**positions, e.g. *on* in English *on the sofa*.) Thus role-marking particles such as *-il-ka* (nominative) and *-(l)ul* (accusative) attach to the end of their associated phrases. For example, in (7), repeated here, each of the six role-marking particles (in italics) is positioned immediately to the right of its associated phrase (in bold face).

(7) **kiho**-*ka*   **yenghi**-*wa*   **cha**-*lo*   **sewul**-*eyse*   **pusan**-*ulo*
     Keeho-NOM Yonghee-with car-by Seoul-from Pusan-to
     yehayng-*ul*   ha-yss-ta
     trip-ACC   do-PST-PLAIN.S
     'Keeho took a trip with Yonghee by car from Seoul to Pusan.'

Grammatical endings that attach to verbs and predicative adjectives are also positioned immediately after the latter. For example, in (14), repeated here, the speech-level ending (-*nta*) attaches to the end of the verb *sengkong-ha-* 'to succeed'. There is no flexibility with grammatical endings in terms of ordering, just as the word order within phrases is firmly fixed.

(14) kongpu-lul yelsimhi ha-nun haksayng-i   sengkong-ha-nta
      study-ACC   hard   do-REL   student-NOM success-do-PLAIN.S
      'Students who study hard will succeed.'

Variation on word order

As has already been pointed out, word order at the sentence level in Korean is relatively flexible, except that the verb is placed at the end of the sentence. This does not mean random variation on basic word order in Korean. There are multiple factors that have a bearing on word order variation at the sentence level in Korean. Three such factors must be discussed here: topicality, emphasis and complexity. First, what has been mentioned in the previous text or discourse tends to be placed at the beginning of the sentence. For example, compare (17) with (18):

(17) ponsa-ey-nun   yenghi-ka   kiho-wa   ka-ss-ta
      head.office-to-TOP   Yonghee-NOM   Keeho-with   go-PST-PLAIN.S
      'To the head office, Yonghee went with Keeho.'

(18) yenghi-ka   kiho-wa   ponsa-ey   ka-ss-ta
      Yonghee-NOM   Keeho-with   head.office-to   go-PST-PLAIN.S
      'Yonghee went to the head office with Keeho.'

The sentence in (17) is likely to be used if and when the head office or *ponsa* has previously been mentioned, e.g. in the context of a question as to who went to the head office (i.e. *Who went to the head office?*). Being topical, then, the locative expression is placed at the beginning of (17). In fact, it is accordingly marked by the so-called topic particle *-nun* (see Chapter 6 for discussion of the topic particle). In contrast, the sentence in (18) is likely to be used when no previous mention of, or reference to, the head office has been made.

Moreover, what is to be emphasized can be shifted to the beginning of the sentence. In English, what is to be emphasized could be uttered with a higher degree of loudness (i.e. stress, e.g. *The dog chased the **PIG*** versus *The **DOG** chased the pig* versus *The dog **CHASED** the pig*) – although it can also be moved to the beginning of the sentence, e.g. *Chillies, I like* versus *I like chillies*. But in Korean stress is usually not exploited for purposes of emphasis in normal speech (see Chapter 2). Thus (19) can be said to be neutral, as opposed to (20), in which the directional phrase is placed at the beginning of the sentence.

(19) kiho-ka   hakkyo-ey   ka-ss-ta
      Keeho-NOM   school-to   go-PST-PLAIN.S
      'Keeho went to school.'

(20) hakkyo-ey   kiho-ka   ka-ss-ta
      school-to   Keeho-NOM   go-PST-PLAIN.S
      'To school, Keeho went' or 'It was to school that Keeho went.'

The speaker is more likely to utter (20) than (19), for instance, if it needs to be emphasized that it was to school, and not somewhere else, that Keeho went.

Lastly, structural complexity may also dictate word order variation. For instance, the structural complexity of noun phrases can be characterized by the presence of a modifying sentence within a noun phrase, e.g. *the girl* versus *the girl **who won the prize***. In English, such complex or heavy phrases tend to be moved to the right or to the end of the sentence. The basic word order in English is exemplified in (21).

(21)   Michelle donated the book to the school.

The noun phrase *the book* cannot be moved to the right of the phrase *to the school* or to the end of the sentence, as in (22).

(22)   *Michelle donated to the school the book.

If, however, the noun phrase *the book* contains a heavy modifying sentence (in italics), it is possible – in fact preferable – to move it to the end of the sentence or to the right of the phrase *to the school*, as in (23).

(23)   Michelle donated to the school the book *that she had purchased when visiting her twin sister Rochelle in Auckland.*

In fact, the heavy noun phrase, if retained in its original position, will give rise to unacceptability or even ungrammaticality, as in (24).

(24)   ??/*Michelle donated the book *that she had purchased when visiting her twin sister Rochelle in Auckland* to the school.

Thus in English heavy noun phrases are moved to the right or to the end of the sentence.

In Korean, on the other hand, it is to the left or the beginning of the sentence that heavy noun phrases are shifted. For example, consider (25).

(25)   kiho-ka   yenghi-eykey chayk-ul   cwu-ess-ta
       Keeho-NOM Yonghee-to   book-ACC   give-PST-PLAIN.S
       'Keeho gave the book to Yonghee.'

The word order exemplified in (25) is basic or neutral. If, however, the object noun phrase *chayk-ul* is preceded by a heavy modifying sentence (in italics), the basic word order in (25) will be somewhat unacceptable, as shown in (26).

(26) ?kiho-ka   yenghi-eykey *sewul-ey chinkwu-lul po-le*
       Keeho-NOM   Yonghee-to   Seoul-to   friend-ACC   see-in.order.to
       ka-ss-ulttay   sa-n   chayk-ul cwu-ess-ta
       go-PST-when   buy-REL   book-ACC give-PST-PLAIN.S
       'Keeho gave Yonghee the book that he had purchased when he
       went to Seoul to see his friend.'

It is, in fact, preferable to move the whole noun phrase to the beginning of
the sentence, as in (27).

(27) *sewul-ey chinkwu-lul po-le ka-ss-ul-ttay sa-n* chayk-ul kiho-ka
       yenghi-eykey cwu-ess-ta

Thus Korean deals with structural complexity in the opposite direction to
English: in Korean, heavy noun phrases are moved to the beginning, not the
end, of the sentence.

Noun phrases: role-marking particles

In Korean, noun phrases in a sentence are marked by role-marking particles
so that their roles in that sentence can be clearly identified. For example, the
nominative or accusative particle can attach to noun phrases, depending on
the latter's role in the sentence (i.e. subject or object, respectively). As has
been demonstrated, word order does not play a crucial role at the sentence
level, except in the absence of role-marking particles. There are a number
of role-marking particles available in Korean. These particles, not being
separate words, attach directly to the end of preceding noun phrases – albeit
some more tightly than others (cf. role-marking words or so-called pre-
positions in English). The most important ones, with their technical names
in parentheses, are: *-i/-ka* (nominative), *-(l)ul* (accusative), *-ey/-eykey/-hanthey*
(locative), *-(u)lo* (instrumental and directional), *-(k)wa/-lang/-hako* (com-
itative) and *-uy* (genitive). Moreover, there are two honorific role-marking
particles: *-kkeyse* (nominative) and *-kkey* (locative). The honorific particles
are used when the referent of a given noun phrase is a respected or honour-
able person. With the exception of the nominative and accusative particles,
the names of these role-marking particles are self-explanatory, although
their scope may be greater than their names imply (e.g. the locative particle
encoding not only location but also benefaction).

Nominative particle: -i *or* -ka

The nominative particle *-i* (for nouns ending in a consonant) or *-ka* (for
nouns ending in a vowel) is used basically for the marking of the subject
noun phrase, e.g. *yenghi-ka michi-n kay-lul cap-ess-ta* 'Yonghee [*yenghi-ka*]
caught the mad dog'. However, there are cases where the nominative particle

-i or -ka can be used for something other than the subject noun phrase. For instance, the non-subject noun phrase that must co-occur with the subject noun phrase in sentences with the copula *toy-ta* 'to become' or the negative copula *an-i-ta* 'not to be' (as opposed to the positive copula *i-ta* 'to be') is also marked by the nominative particle, as in (28), with the effect that one simple sentence contains two nominative-marked noun phrases.

(28)
a. yenghi-ka   kanhowen-i   toy-ess-ta
    Yonghee-NOM   nurse-NOM   become-PST-PLAIN.S
    'Yonghee became a nurse.'

b. kiho-ka   kanhowen-i   an-i-ta
    Keeho-NOM   nurse-NOM   not-be-PLAIN.S
    'Keeho is not a nurse.'

Moreover, the noun phrase that must co-occur with the subject noun phrase in sentences built on certain subjective adjectives (discussed in Chapter 4) bears the nominative particle, as in (29).

(29) nay-ka   kiho-ka   pulep-ta
      I-NOM   Keeho-NOM   envious-PLAIN.S
      'I am envious of Keeho.'

In (29), the source or cause of the subject's (or the speaker's in this case) envy is also marked by the nominative particle. Note, however, that the honorific nominative particle can never be used to encode the non-subject noun phrase in sentences like (28) and (29), e.g. *nay-ka halapeci-kkeyse pulep-ta* but *nay-ka halapeci-ka pulep-ta* 'I am envious of Grandfather'.

The sentences in (28) and (29) illustrate the existence in Korean of so-called multiple-nominative constructions, where a single, simple sentence may contain more than one nominative-marked noun phrase. This is a peculiar phenomenon, probably attested only in Korean and one other language in the world, namely Japanese. For this reason alone, it is worth dwelling on here for a moment. Multiple-nominative constructions typically have the structural form schematized in (30).

(30) [X-NOM [Y-NOM [Z-NOM [ADJECTIVE-*ta* or NOUN PHRASE *i-ta*]]]]

The right-hand sequence [Z-NOM [ADJECTIVE-*ta* or NOUN PHRASE *i-ta*]] is a complete sentence on its own, as illustrated in (31).

(31) soncapi-ka   kkaykkus-ha-ta
      handle-NOM   clean-be-PLAIN.S
      'The handle is clean'.

The state of affairs expressed by (31) can in turn be attributed to another nominative-marked noun phrase to the left, i.e. Y-NOM, as in (32).

(32)   mun-i   soncapi-ka   kkaykkus-ha-ta
        door-NOM handle-NOM clean-be-PLAIN.S
        'The handle on the door is clean.'

The whole state of affairs encoded by the sentence in (32) can be used to describe a further nominative-marked noun phrase to the left, i.e. X-NOM, as in (33).

(33)   catongcha-ka mun-i   soncapi-ka   kkaykkus-ha-ta
        car-NOM   door-NOM handle-NOM clean-be-PLAIN.S
        'The handle on the door of the car is clean.'

The situation expressed by the sentence in (33) can be attributed to yet another nominative noun phrase, as in (34). (This process can potentially be repeated further, although more than three or four nominative-marked noun phrases in a single, simple sentence may sound contrived or unnatural.)

(34)   kiho-ka   catongcha-ka mun-i   soncapi-ka kkaykkus-ha-ta
        Keeho-NOM car-NOM   door-NOM handle-NOM clean-be-PLAIN.S
        'The handle on the door of Keeho's car is clean.'

Note that all the four nominative-marked noun phrases in (34) are closely connected to one another in a hierarchical manner. The handle is part of the door, which is part of the car, which is owned by Keeho. The entities mentioned (or the noun phrases) can thus be said to form a hierarchy, with the sentence in (34) beginning with the highest entity (i.e. Keeho) and ending with the lowest (i.e. the handle). The sentence in (34) is all about Keeho, with the rest of the sentence used to say something about him. The English translation, on the other hand, is all about the handle, the lowest entity in the hierarchy. That is, all the other (higher) entities are mentioned in order to 'zero in' on the identity of the handle (e.g. the door handle of Keeho's car, as opposed to the handle of the chisel in Yonghee's tool box). There is thus a clear difference in perspective between Korean and English. In Korean, the cleanness of the handle is something that can be used to talk about the door, the car and, ultimately, Keeho (the owner), whereas in English, Keeho (the owner) is one of the entities that are mentioned to talk about (the cleanness of) the handle. Similarly, an idiomatic Korean translation of the English sentence *Mary's son is a soldier* will be (35a), although it is also possible to mark the noun phrase *meyli* 'Mary' with the genitive or possessive particle *-uy*, as in (36b) (see below for discussion of the genitive particle).

(35)

a. meyli-ka   atul-i   kwunin   i-ta
    Mary-NOM   son-NOM   soldier   is-PLAIN.S
    'Mary's son is a soldier.'

b. meyli-uy   atul-i   kwunin   i-ta
    Mary-GEN   son-NOM   soldier   is-PLAIN.S
    'Mary's son is a soldier.'

Finally, the nominative particle is also used to introduce the subject noun phrase as a new piece of information. This is clearly demonstrated by the following question and answer pair:

(36)

a. nwu-ka   ku   kos-ey   ka-ss-nya?
    who-NOM   that   place-to   go-PST-PLAIN.Q
    'Who went there?'

b. kiho-ka   ka-ss-ta
    Keeho-NOM   go-PST-PLAIN.S
    'Keeho went (there).'

In (36b), the nominative particle can be neither dropped nor replaced by the topic particle -*nun* (see Chapter 6 for the topic particle), because the subject noun phrase *kiho* represents information newly introduced into the discourse, in the context of the preceding question. When used in this way, the nominative particle creates the sense of exclusivity. Thus (36b) can mean something like 'It was Keeho that went' or 'Keeho, not anyone else, went'.

Accusative particle: **-(l)ul**

The accusative marker -*lul* (for nouns ending in a vowel) or -*ul* (for nouns ending in a consonant) is generally used for the object noun phrase, e.g. *yenghi-ka michi-n kay-lul cap-ess-ta* 'Yonghee caught the mad dog [*michi-n kay-lul*]'. However, it can also be used for what seems to be something other than the object noun phrase. For example, the destination of movement (37a), the duration (37b) or distance (37c) of an action and institutionalized activities that people go somewhere to engage in, e.g. swimming, movie-going, fishing and strolling (37d), appear with the accusative particle even in the context of verbs that would not call for the presence of the object noun phrase in English.

(37)

a. caknyen-ey   yenghi-ka   nyucillayndu-lul   ka-ss-ta
    last.year-in Yonghee-NOM   New Zealand-ACC   go-PST-PLAIN.S
    'Last year Yonghee went to New Zealand.'

b. ecey   kiho-ka   tases si-kan-ul   kongpu-ha-yss-ta
   yesterday Keeho-NOM five hour-unit-ACC study-do-PST-PLAIN.S
   'Keeho studied for five hours yesterday.'

c. yenghi-ka   mayil   sip   kilo-lul   ttwi-nta
   Yonghee-NOM   every.day ten kilometres-ACC   run-PLAIN.S
   'Yonghee runs (for) ten miles every day.'

d. kiho-ka   yenghi-wa   nakksi-lul   ka-ss-ta
   Keeho-NOM   Yonghee-with   fishing-ACC   go-PST-PLAIN.S
   'Keeho went for fishing with Yonghee.'

The accusative particle can also optionally attach to the modifying possessor phrase within the object noun phrase or to the noun component of compound verbs built on the general verb *ha-* 'to do'. This phenomenon, illustrated in (38b) and (38d), is referred to, not surprisingly, as multiple-accusative constructions (cf. multiple-nominative constructions).

(38)

a. kiho-ka   yenghi-uy   son-ul   cap-ass-ta
   Keeho-NOM   Yonghee-GEN   hand-ACC   hold-PST-PLAIN.S
   'Keeho held Yonghee's hand.'

b. kiho-ka   yenghi-lul   son-ul   cap-ass-ta
   Keeho-NOM   Yonghee-ACC   hand-ACC   hold-PST-PLAIN.S
   'Keeho held Yonghee by the hand.'

c. yenghi-ka   sayngil   phathi-lul   khaynsul-ha-yss-ta
   Yonghee-NOM   birthday party-ACC   cancellation-do-PST-PLAIN.S
   'Yonghee cancelled the birthday party.'

d. yenghi-ka   sayngil   phathi-lul   khaynsul-ul
   Yonghee-NOM   birthday party-ACC   cancellation-ACC
   ha-yss-ta
   do-PST-PLAIN.S
   'Yonghee cancelled the birthday party.'

In (38a), the modifier possessor noun phrase *yenghi-uy* is part of the object noun phrase, and in (38b) this modifier appears together with the accusative particle, with the remainder of the 'original' object noun phrase also marked by the accusative particle. There is, however, a subtle meaning difference between these two sentences, as implied in the English translations. In (38b), emphasis is placed on Yonghee as someone affected by Keeho's action of holding her hand, whereas in (38a) emphasis is clearly on Yonghee's hand alone. In (38a), therefore, it may or may not be the case that Yonghee (i.e. the possessor) was affected by Keeho's action, while in (38b), it is clearly the case. Thus if Yonghee had been in a coma when the event in question

happened, (38b) would not be appropriate; (38a) would be likely to be used. In (38d), the loanword *khaynsul* (from English *cancel*) can be detached, as it were, from the general verb *ha-* and then marked by the accusative particle, just as is the 'original' object noun phrase *sayngil phathi* 'birthday party'. The meaning difference between (38c) and (38d) is so subtle that it may be difficult to characterize, although it can be said that in (38d) cancelling in itself is emphasized as an act to carry out. In (38c), on the other hand, there is no such implication; what is stated is merely the fact that Yonghee cancelled the party. Thus if there had been some difficulty in cancelling the party, the use of (38d), not (38c), would be more appropriate.

Locative particles: **-ey(se)***,* **-eykey***,* **-hanthey** *and* **-kkey**

The locative particle *-ey* is used to express location (39a), direction and time (39b).

(39)

a. situni-ey hankwuk salam-i   manhi sa-nta
Sydney-in Korean   person-NOM many   live-PLAIN.S
'There are many Koreans living in Sydney.'

b. yenghi-ka   mayil   yel-si-ey   sicang-ey   ka-nta
Yonghee-NOM every.day ten-hour-at market-to go-PLAIN.S
'Yonghee goes to the market at 10 o'clock every day.'

Inanimate beneficiary or recipient phrases are also marked by the same locative particle *-ey*, as in (40).

(40) yenghi-ka   hakkyo-ey   chayk-ul   kicung-ha-yss-ta
Yonghee-NOM school-to book-ACC donation-do-PST-PLAIN.S
'Yonghee donated books to the school.'

When, however, beneficiary or recipient phrases are human or animate, the locative particle *-eykey* or *-hanthey* must be used, as in (41). The difference between these two is that the former is neutral, whereas the latter is colloquial.

(41) kiho-ka   yenghi-eykey/-hanthey senmul-ul ponay-ss-ta
Keeho-NOM Yonghee-to/-to   gift-ACC send-PST-PLAIN.S
'Keeho sent a gift to Yonghee.'

Note that, when the beneficiary or recipient is a respected person, the honorific locative particle *-kkey* must instead be chosen, as in *kiho-ka halapeci-kkey* [grandfather-to] *senmul-ul ponay-ss-ta* 'Keeho sent a gift to Grandfather'.

When the location of an activity or action is expressed, the locative particle *-ey* must carry an additional element *-se*, as in (42). In this case, the use of the locative particle *-ey* alone will be ungrammatical. The use of the complex

locative particle -*eyse* indicates that Keeho and Yonghee's singing practice took place in the room.

(42) kiho-ka   yenghi-wa   kongpu   pang-eyse   nolay
Keeho-NOM   Yonghee-with   study   room-in   singing
yensup-ul   ha-yss-ta
practice-ACC   do-PST-PLAIN.S
'Keeho practised singing with Yonghee in the study room.'

One most peculiar thing about this complex locative particle -*eyse* is that it can be used, in lieu of the nominative particle -*il/-ka*, to mark subject noun phrases when the latter refer to organizations or documents, as in (43). This most unusual phenomenon seems to be attested in no other known languages.

(43)
a.   uyhoy-eyse   kyengcey   kyeyhoyk-ul
parliament-at   economy   plan-ACC
palphyo-ha-yss-ta
announcement-do-PST-PLAIN.S
'The Parliament announced the economy plan.'

b.   pokose-eyse   ku   muncey-lul   cicek-ha-yss-ta
report-in   that   problem-ACC   pointing.out-do-PST-PLAIN.S
'The report pointed out the problem.'

Comitative particle: -(k)wa, -lang and -hako

The use of the comitative particle -*wa* (for nouns ending in a vowel but -*kwa* for nouns ending in a consonant) has been exemplified in (42) above. The other comitative particles -*lang* and -*hako* are generally regarded as colloquial or tend to be used to or by children. One important thing to bear in mind about these particles is that a comitative phrase may sometimes have to be used in Korean where an object noun phrase is called for in English. For example, it is correct to say in English *The woman left her boy friend* or *The man married a New Zealander*. In Korean, on the other hand, *her boy friend* and *a New Zealander* must be marked by the comitative particle, e.g. *ku yeca-nun **namca chinkwu-wa*** [her boy friend-with] *heyyeci-ess-ta* or *ku salam-un **nyucillayndu salam-kwa*** [a New Zealander-with] *kyelhonha-yss-ess-ta*. English speakers can understand why Koreans are often heard to produce incorrect English sentences like *The man married with a New Zealander*.

Instrumental or directional particle: -(u)lo

The instrumental or directional particle -*ulo* (for nouns ending in a consonant) or -*lo* (for nouns ending in a vowel or in /l/) is used to express the instrument or means of an action (44a) or the direction of movement (44b).

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(44)

a.   kiho-ka   kicha-lo pusan-ey ka-ss-ta
     Keeho-NOM train-by Pusan-to go-PST-PLAIN.S
     'Keeho went to Pusan by train.'

b.   yenghi-ka   hocwu-lo   yuhak-ul   ttena-ss-ta
     Yonghee-NOM Australia-to overseas.study-ACC leave-PST-PLAIN.S
     'Yonghee left for Australia to (do overseas) study.'

Moreover, the instrumental particle in Korean is used to express the material out of which something is produced (i.e. source), as in (45).

(45)   toyncang-un   khong-ulo   mantu-nta
      soya bean.paste-TOP soya bean-with make-PLAIN.S
      'Toyncang [i.e. fermented soya bean paste, an important ingredient in Korean cooking] is made out of soya beans' or 'They make Toyncang out of soya beans.'

Genitive particle: -uy

Finally, the genitive particle -uy is said to express possession, as in (46).

(46)   kiho-ka   yenghi-uy   chayk-ul   phal-ass-ta
      Keeho-NOM Yonghee-GEN book-ACC sell-PST-PLAIN.S
      'Keeho sold Yonghee's book.'

Possession, however, is only one of the roles that the genitive particle encodes. The range of roles or meanings that the genitive particle covers is, in fact, so wide that it is not incorrect to say that the function of the genitive particle is to mark the modifier–modified relationship between two noun phrases, the exact nature of which is to be determined in the light of the context of use or the general knowledge of the world. Moreover, it is not uncommon to leave out the genitive particle and rely on the simple juxtaposition of two noun phrases. Examples of the (optional) use of the genitive particle are:

(47)

a.   i-sip   nyen   cen(-uy)   sewul-i   coh-ass-ta
     two-ten year   ago(-GEN) Seoul-NOM good-PST-PLAIN.S
     'Seoul was good twenty years ago.'

b.   i-sip   il   seyki-nun   seykyeyhwa(-uy)   sitay-ta
     two-ten one century-TOP internationalization(-GEN) era-PLAIN.S
     'The twenty-first century is an era of internationalization.'

c.   ku   cakka-nun nohwu(-uy)   saynghwal-ul culki-ess-ta
       that writer-TOP later.life(-GEN) living-ACC   enjoy-PST-PLAIN.S
       'The writer enjoyed living the later part of his life (i.e. his years in
       retirement).'

Note that the genitive particle in (47) can be easily removed without any
loss of meaning.

Verbs: grammatical and speech-level endings

The most important component of the Korean sentence is the verb. (What is
discussed here also applies to the predicative adjective.) Indeed, the verb
does a substantial amount of work in Korean. It not only expresses various
grammatical distinctions, but also carries honorific and speech-level endings.
This renders the verb complicated and lengthy. For instance, consider:

(48)   ttena-si-keyss-supnikka?
       leave-HON-intend-DEFERENTIAL.Q
       '(Honourable sir, do you) intend to leave?'

The sentence in (48) consists of only one word or one verb, albeit loaded
with at least three different endings. Note that the subject noun phrase of
this sentence is the hearer, which is understood and thus unexpressed. The
single verb, however, says much about the social status of the speaker relative
to those of the hearer and the referent of the subject noun phrase (who
happen to be the same person), and also whether the sentence is a statement,
question, command or proposal (a question in this case). The verb carries
the honorific ending -*si*, which indicates that the speaker is respectful to the
referent of the subject noun phrase (or the hearer in this case). It also
contains -*keyss*, which expresses the intention of the referent of the subject
noun phrase, while this meaning would need to be expressed by a separate
verb in English (i.e. *intend*). Finally, the whole sentence (or the verb in this
case) is 'rounded off' by a question ending at the deferential speech-level,
-*supnikka*, which could not be more appropriate in view of the speaker's
respect towards the hearer. Note that this kind of question ending is very
different from the question formation in English, which may involve the use
of an extra word *do* (and also the inversion of it and the subject noun
phrase) (e.g. *You (do) intend to leave* versus *Do you intend to leave?*). Also
note that all these endings must also occur in a particular, not random, order.

    Learners may be happy to learn the various grammatical distinctions
(after all, English has similar distinctions) but they may find it a daunting
task to learn how to use honorific or speech-level endings correctly and
appropriately. This will no doubt put a heavy burden on learners. (It is
already difficult enough to learn to use the correct grammatical endings in a

correct order.) However, it cannot be overemphasized that all these additional intricacies must be acquired. This is the way Koreans establish, maintain and reinforce social or interpersonal relationships among themselves whenever they speak to other people (and even to themselves about other people). Needless to say, learners who fail to appreciate this important social dimension to the Korean language will run the risk of being unable to understand Korean people, culture and society properly or fully.

Grammatical endings: tense, modality and subject honorification

There are a good number of grammatical endings that go together with the verb. Not all of them can be dealt with in this book due to space and scope limitations, but a few important ones, i.e. tense, modality and subject honorification, need to be discussed with a view to providing readers with a reasonably adequate account of the verbal system in Korean.

Temporal reference: tense

There is a difference in terms of temporal reference between (49a) and (49b).

(49)
a. Nicola plays netball.

b. Nicola played netball.

The narrated state of affairs in (49a) holds at the time of speaking, which is situated in the present. In (49b), on the other hand, the state of affairs held in the past or prior to the time of speaking. In English, the past time reference or the past tense is marked by the verb ending *-(e)d*, whereas the present time reference or the present tense is indicated by either *-(e)s* in the case of a third person singular subject noun phrase, e.g. (49a), or zero, e.g. *Nicola's colleagues play netball*. The present tense in English does not always deal with present time, e.g. *The new bakery opens next week* (future time) or *Humans breathe air* (timeless). However, the present tense is generally used to express present time.

In Korean, the present time reference is expressed by zero marking, whereas the past time reference is indicated by the verb ending *-ess/-ass* (the latter when the last vowel of the verb is either /o/ or /a/ and the former elsewhere, with the exception of the verb *ha-* 'to do', for which *-y(e)ss* must be used). This is illustrated in (50).

(50)
a. yenghi-ka   sicang-ey   ka-nta
    Yonghee-NOM   market-to   go-PLAIN.S
    'Yonghee goes to the market' or 'Yonghee is on her way to the market.'

b.   kiho-ka   cha-lul   phal-ass-ta
       Keeho-NOM   car-ACC   sell-PST-PLAIN.S
       'Keeho sold the car.'

Moreover, the zero tense marking in Korean can be used to express future time, as is demonstrated in (51). This is why the zero tense marking is sometimes referred to as non-past, as opposed to past, tense marking.

(51) yenghi-ka   taum   tal-ey   tokil-lo   ttena-nta
       Yonghee-NOM next   month-in Germany-to leave-PLAIN.S
       'Yonghee leaves for Germany next month.'

Although the main function of the verb ending -*ess*/-*ass* is to express past time, it is also used to report a present situation that is the direct result or consequence of a prior action. There are thus a number of verbs for which the past tense ending must have this interpretation. For example, verbs like *ip-ta* 'to wear', *talm-ta* 'to resemble' and *kyelhon-ha-ta* 'to marry', when encoding situations that hold in the present, not in the past, must bear the past tense ending, as exemplified in (52).

(52)
a.   yenghi-ka   phalan chima-lul ip-ess-ta
       Yonghee-NOM blue   skirt-ACC   wear-PST-PLAIN.S
       'Yonghee is wearing a blue skirt.'

b.   yenghi-ka   emeni-lul   manhi   talm-ass-ta
       Yonghee-NOM mother-ACC   much   resemble-PST-PLAIN.S
       'Yonghee resembles Mother much.'

If the past situation is to be reported for these verbs, the past tense ending must be 'repeated', as shown in (53). (Note that this verb ending is sometimes analysed as distinct tense marking, not as the doubling of the past tense ending.)

(53)
a.   yenghi-ka   phalan chima-lul ip-ess-ess-ta
       Yonghee-NOM blue   skirt-ACC   wear-PST-PST-PLAIN.S
       'Yonghee wore a blue skirt.'

b.   yenghi-ka   emeni-lul   manhi   talm-ass-ess-ta
       Yonghee-NOM mother-ACC   much   resemble-PST-PST-PLAIN.S
       'Yonghee resembled Mother much.'

Moreover, the verb ending -*ess*/-*ass* can be used to express a prior situation or event that has relevance at the time of reference (or the time of speaking in the case below), as exemplified in (54).

(54) kiho-ka   w-ass-ta
     Keeho-NOM   come-PST-PLAIN.S
     'Keeho came (and he is still here)'

The sentence in (54) can certainly be interpreted to describe an event that took place in the past (i.e. Keeho came and then he went away), but can also be readily understood to mean that this prior event has relevance to the present time: Keeho came and he is still where the speaker and the hearer are.

Modality

The single-verb sentence in (48) above contains the ending *-keyss*, which expresses the hearer's intention (or the speaker's intention in statements). It can also express judgement, as in (55). (These kinds of meaning are known as modality.)

(55)
a.   i   chip-un   kyewul-ey supki-ka   manh-keyss-ta
     this house-TOP winter-in moisture-NOM much-JUDGEMENT-PLAIN.S
     '(I think) this house will be very damp in winter.'

b.   pi-ka   o-keyss-ta
     rain-NOM   come-JUDGEMENT-PLAIN.S
     '(I think) it will rain.'

There are other 'unusual' or 'exotic' verb endings, one of which is *-te*. This particular verb ending is used to indicate that the narrated event or situation is something that the speaker (or the hearer in the case of questions), based on previous perception or experience, has first-hand knowledge of (hence *-te* known as 'retrospective'). In English, if someone says 'Megan cried', it is 'ambiguous' in terms of whether the reported event is based on the speaker's own perception or on hearsay. It is, of course, possible to make the distinction between one's own perception and hearsay in English by prefacing the sentence with another sentence, as in *I saw Megan cry*. In Korean, however, this is done by attaching *-te* directly to the verb. Note that this is not something that the speaker must always do, but a grammatical option. For example, in (56a) the speaker is indicating by means of *-te* that she herself witnessed Yonghee's crying, whereas in (56b) the speaker is asking whether the hearer personally witnessed Yonghee's crying. (Note that in (56a) the speech-level ending *-ta* is adjusted to *-la*, when appearing after *-te*.)

(56)
a.   yenghi-ka   wul-te-la
     Yonghee-NOM   cry-RETROSPECTIVE-PLAIN.S
     '(I saw/heard) Yonghee cried.'

b. yenghi-ka   wul-te-nya
    Yonghee-NOM   cry-RETROSPECTIVE-PLAIN.Q
    'Did (you see/hear) Yonghee cry?'

Subject honorification

The honorific ending -*si* (after a vowel) or -*usi* (after a consonant), when used, must appear before the other verb endings so far discussed. This honorific ending is used to indicate the speaker's deference to the referent of the subject noun phrase. This has already been illustrated but another example will not come amiss.

(57) halapeci-kkeyse   ecey   pusan-ulo
      Grandfather-HON.NOM   yesterday   Pusan-to
      nayly-e-ka-si-ess-ta
      descend-LK-go-HON-PST-PLAIN.S
      'Grandfather went down to Pusan yesterday.'

The referent of the subject noun phrase in (57) is high in seniority (i.e. age) and thus deserves the speaker's deference. This is indicated by the honorific ending -*si* on the verb. Attention must also be drawn to the honorific nominative particle -*kkeyse* used in lieu of the neutral nominative particle -*ka*. It is possible to employ the neutral nominative particle, as in (58), although this may be regarded as less deferential than when the honorific nominative particle is chosen. The honorific ending on the verb is essential here, however.

(58) halapeci-ka   ecey   pusan-ulo
      Grandfather-NOM   yesterday   Pusan-to
      nayly-e-ka-si-ess-ta
      descend-LK-go-HON-PST-PLAIN.S
      'Grandfather went down to Pusan yesterday.'

Learners must also be mindful of the use of honorific, as opposed to neutral, verbs (listed in Table 4.3 in Chapter 4), and careful to use correct honorific verbs – if and when available. For example, the sentence in (59a) is worse than infelicitous (as indicated by the preceding asterisk, i.e. ungrammatical) even though the verb carries the subject honorific ending. The sentence in (59b), with the honorific verb *tolaka-si-*, is the correct one to use. Note that the choice between the neutral verb *cwuk-* and honorific verb *tolaka-si-* is qualitatively different from that between *die* and *pass away* in English. In point of fact, the choice in English is more euphemistic (i.e. avoidance of the mention of unpleasant or sad things) than socio-cultural (i.e. seniority).

(59)

a.   *halapeci-kkeyse   cwuk-usi-ess-ta
     grandfather-HON.NOM   die-HON-PST-PLAIN.S
     'Grandfather died.'

b.   halapeci-kkeyse   tolaka-si-ess-ta
    grandfather-HON.NOM   pass.away-HON-PST-PLAIN.S
    'Grandfather passed away.'

Finally, if the modifying expression within the subject noun phrase refers to someone who deserves the speaker's deference, the honorific ending can also be used on the verb, although it alone is not the subject noun phrase *per se*. In (60), for example, the modifying phrase within the subject noun phrase is *halapeci-uy*, and this alone triggers the appearance of the honorific ending on the verb, although the referent of the subject noun phrase is Grandfather's left hand, not Grandfather himself.

(60)   halapeci-uy   oyn son-i   pulphyen-ha-si-ta
      grandfather-GEN left hand-NOM discomfort-be-HON-PLAIN.S
      'Grandfather's left hand is "uncomfortable" (i.e. disabled).'

Readers will recall that the modifying expression *halapeci* in (60) can also be marked by the nominative particle (or, to be precise, the honorific nominative particle in the present case; cf. (35) above), as demonstrated in (61) (i.e. the multiple-nominative construction). Note that the honorific ending *-si* must be used in this case as well.

(61)   halapeci-kkeyse   oyn son-i   pulphyen-ha-si-ta
      grandfather-HON.NOM left hand-NOM discomfort-be-HON-PLAIN.S
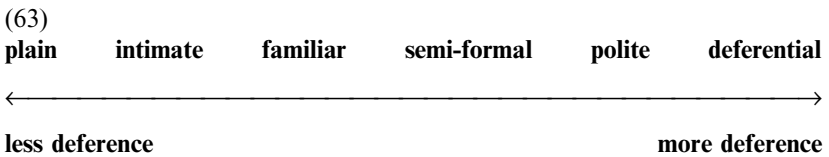   'Grandfather's left hand is "uncomfortable" (i.e. disabled).'

The relationship between the modifying expression and the remainder of the subject noun phrase must be 'intimate' if the honorific ending *-si* is to be used for the former. Such intimate relationships typically concern body parts, kinship, personal belongings etc. but do not include work relationships, pets etc., as illustrated in (62).

(62)

a.   ce   pun-uy/-i   pise-ka   elkwul-i
     that honourable.person-GEN/-NOM secretary-NOM face-NOM
     yeyppu-ta
     pretty-PLAIN.S
     'That (honourable) person's secretary has a pretty face.'

b.   *ce   pun-uy/-i   pise-ka   elkwul-i

        that honourable.person-GEN/-NOM   secretary-NOM face-NOM

        yeypp-usi-ta

        pretty-HON-PLAIN.S

        'That (honourable) person's secretary has a pretty face.'

Speech-level endings: who is speaking to whom

The verb endings discussed in the previous subsection must in turn be followed by a speech-level ending. Every sentence in Korean must close with one speech-level ending. For this reason, speech-level endings are also known as sentence enders. There are said to be at least six speech levels in Korean: plain, intimate, familiar, semi-formal, polite and deferential (some linguists have proposed more than six). Moreover, each of these speech-level endings is intertwined with various sentence types, the most important of which are: statements (e.g. *Nicola plays netball*), questions (e.g. *Does Nicola play netball?*), commands (e.g. *Play netball!*) and proposals (e.g. *Let's play netball*). Even if other minor sentence types are ignored, what this means is that there are, theoretically speaking, at least 24 different speech-level endings to choose from ($6 \times 4 = 24$). No language in the world is known to surpass Korean in this regard.

    Which of the six speech levels is to be used depends on who is speaking to whom (and also, more frequently than not, in the presence of whom). For example, the speech level used for speaking to children is different from that used with adults. The speech level that the adult speaker uses in deference to older adults is also different from the one used with adult friends or siblings. Learners will find the acquisition of the speech level system most difficult not only because there are as many as six speech levels (or 24 endings) but also because it is not always easy to determine how or where they stand *vis-à-vis* other people in terms of social status. To make things worse, the relationship between two people may not always be static but can potentially change from occasion to occasion, from place to place or even from topic to topic (but see below). Even in one's own culture, social status is not always easy to ascertain. One can imagine how much more difficult it will be to assess one's social status in a culture or society very remote from one's own. The speech-level system is one of the most difficult things to become fluent in – not just for learners, as readers will be heartened to be told. It is not uncommon for Korean children to be corrected or even admonished by parents and teachers. It is also not unheard-of for Korean adults to get into trouble for using an inappropriate or wrong speech level. As is well known, people make slips of the tongue. Such 'performance errors' usually lead to amusement or embarrassment, if not to miscommunication, and can be readily accepted as such by the hearer and, if realized, easily repaired by the

speaker. When, however, it comes to speech-level endings in Korean, one may wish to make no slips of the tongue, because they can potentially have adverse consequences for, and even damage, (future) interpersonal relationships (e.g. *Did you hear how the new guy talked to me? I think he deliberately used the intimate speech level. Who does he think he is?*). More often than not, in order to avoid embarrassment or confrontation, or to save face (all around), Koreans may choose not to ask their interlocutors to choose the appropriate speech level or to adjust their speech level no matter how upset they may be. Needless to say, this will not help the situation and can easily lead to serious interpersonal problems.

The six speech levels can be placed on a continuum of deference (i.e. from less to more deference), as in (63).

(63)

plain   intimate   familiar   semi-formal   polite   deferential

←--→

less deference   **more deference**

Two of the speech levels, namely familiar and semi-formal, are not used as frequently as the other four and the semi-formal level, in fact, has almost fallen out of use and can perhaps be regarded as old-fashioned or even archaic. Learners thus need to concentrate on the plain, intimate, polite and deferential levels. These four speech levels can also be ranked in terms of formality. The intimate and polite levels are regarded as informal, whereas the plain and deferential levels are taken to be formal; the latter, not the former, are widely attested in writing as well. The plain level is used in writing for a general audience, e.g. textbooks, newspaper reports, academic publications, technical manuals and the like. When the deferential level is used in writing, however, it is usually attested in commercial advertising, public notices, signs and the like. Thus the four major speech levels can be rearranged in terms of both deference and formality, as in Figure 5.1. Before we discuss who uses which speech level to whom, a brief look at the actual endings is needed. They are listed in Table 5.1.

Readers will have realized that it is the plain speech level that has so far been used in this chapter. This is because it is similar in form to the citation ending with which verbs (e.g. *ka-ta* 'to go') and adjectives (e.g. *yeyppu-ta*) are listed in a dictionary, and because this speech level is, as has already been noted, widely used in textbooks, newspaper reports and the like.

The meaning 'Keeho [*kiho-ka*] runs/is running [*talli-*] in the playground [*nolithe-eyse*]' is expressed below on the six different speech levels. The same can be done for each of the other sentence types, i.e. questions, commands and proposals.

MORE DEFERENCE

polite   deferential

INFORMAL ←→ FORMAL

intimate   plain

LESS DEFERENCE
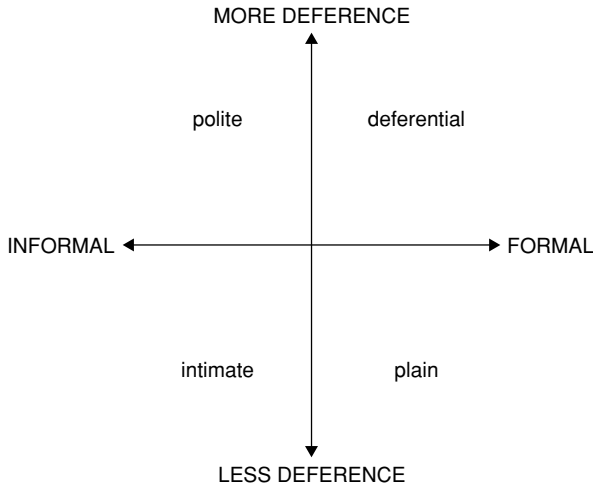
Figure 5.1 The four major speech levels.

Table 5.1 Speech levels for major sentence types

	Statements	*Questions*	*Commands*	*Proposals*
Plain	-(n)ta	-ni/-(nu)nya	-ela/-ala*	-ca
Intimate	-e/-a*	-e/-a*	-e/-a*	-e/-a*
Familiar	-ney	-na/-nunka	-key	-sey
Semi-formal	-o	-o	-(u)o	-(u)psita
Polite	-eyo/-ayo*	-eyo/-ayo*	-eyo/-ayo*	-eyo/-ayo*
Deferential	-(su)pnita	-(su)pnikka	-(u)sipsio	-(u)sipsita

* -*a* (after /a/ or /o/ in the preceding syllable) and -*e* (after other vowels in the preceding syllable).

(64)

a.   plain speech level
kiho-ka nolithe-eyse talli-nta

b.   intimate speech level
kiho-ka nolithe-eyse talli-e [→ tally-e *in casual speech*]

c.   familiar speech level
kiho-ka nolithe-eyse talli-ney

d.   semi-formal speech level
kiho-ka nolithe-eyse talli-o

e.   polite speech level
kiho-ka nolithe-eyse talli-eyo [→ tally-eyo *in casual speech*]

    f.   deferential speech level
          kiho-ka nolithe-eyse talli-pnita

Readers will have noticed from Table 5.1 that the intimate and polite endings are invariable through the four sentence types, i.e. *-el-a* and *-eyol -ayo*, respectively. For these speech levels, the sentence types are distinguished not only by means of context, but also by intonation. Thus a falling intonation (↘) is typically superimposed on statements, while a rising intonation (↗) goes together with questions. A sharply falling intonation (↓) is associated with commands, and a falling and levelling out intonation (↘ →) tends to go with proposals.

The plain speech style is used between friends or siblings whose age difference is not substantial (perhaps a one or two year age gap; in Korean culture, a three or more year age difference is regarded as substantial), or by old speakers (e.g. parents or teachers) to young children. This speech level is not to be used to people over high school age; in fact, it may be unwise to use it to high school students in their final year. If it were ever used to adults, it would be regarded as rude, offensive or condescending. (In other words, it could potentially be used to offend people deliberately.) Although it is used between close friends or siblings, this speech level may no longer be appropriate once they have become middle-aged. They will probably need to shift to a more reserved or courteous speech level, i.e. the polite speech level, especially in the presence of others, including their own offspring.

The intimate speech level is referred to as *panmal* 'half-talk' in Korean. This level is similar to the plain level in that it is used between close friends and siblings (both before middle age), by young school children to adult family members (especially their (grand)mother but probably not their (grand)father) or by a man to his (younger) wife. In the last case, the wife may not be able to talk back to her husband using the same level (but have to use the polite level instead) if their age difference is substantial (perhaps two or more years). Even if she can talk to her husband at the intimate level in private, the wife is required to adopt the polite or deferential level in the presence of their parents or outside their home. Similarly, although this speech level may be used between close adult friends, it may need to be raised to a reserved speech level, i.e. the polite level, in the presence of their children or other people who are not their mutual friends.

The familiar speech level is used to someone who has lower social status than the speaker. When this level is chosen, however, the speaker is signalling a reasonable amount of courtesy to the hearer. Indeed, the familiar speech level is more to the right of the deference continuum in (63) than are the plain and intimate levels. This particular speech level is, however, almost never used by female speakers (but see below); it is typically used by male adults to younger male adults who are probably under the former's influence (e.g. protégés or former students), or to their sons-in-law. The speaker,

however, may have to be fifty or more years old to be able to use this particular speech level without inhibition or awkwardness. In other words, it is never used by younger people. Should younger male adults use it, they will be regarded as pretentious or as acting (or speaking) older than their age. One curious thing about the familiar speech style in statements and questions (but not in commands and proposals) is that it is sometimes used by adults, typically female adults, to very young children who have not yet learned to speak (e.g. *wuli aki os cham yeyppu-ney* 'Your (i.e. my baby's) dress is really pretty' or *wuli aki pap ta mek-ess-nal-nunka?* 'Have you (i.e. my baby) finished eating?', uttered by a mother to her infant).

The semi-formal speech level, as has already been pointed out, has almost completely fallen into disuse and may indeed sound old-fashioned to young people's ears. It is definitely a speech level associated with the older generation. If used, however, it is to someone with lower social status than the speaker and it is regarded as a slightly more courteous speech level than the familiar speech level. It can even be said that, by using this speech level, the speaker is paying respect to the hearer, not because of the latter's social position, but because of the latter's status as an adult. The archaic status of this particular speech level is demonstrated by its tendency to be heard largely in the domain of historical TV dramas or movies. Therefore, it is a speech level that learners do not need to concern themselves much with.

The polite speech level, together with the intimate speech level, is the most commonly used speech level, but, unlike the intimate speech level – which is emblematic of intimacy, familiarity or friendliness – it is used when politeness or courtesy is called for, regardless of the social status of the hearer, as long as they are old enough (i.e. university students and older). Senior high school students would thus be delighted to be spoken to by adult strangers at this speech level, because it could be regarded as a kind of recognition of their 'coming of age' or maturity. This is also the speech level almost always used by female adults, when speaking to other adults, regardless of the latter's gender. Readers will have noticed from Table 5.1 that the polite speech level endings are built upon the intimate speech level endings with the addition of -*yo*. Moreover, the actual endings of these two speech levels, unlike in the case of the other speech levels, are invariable throughout the four sentence types (i.e. statements, questions, commands and proposals). Perhaps this simplicity or regularity may have been motivated by the communicative load that they have assumed in terms of speech level: the intimate and polite levels are the two most commonly used speech levels.

Finally, the deferential speech level is the highest form of deference to the hearer. This speech level is thus used to people with unquestionable seniority. It is never used to someone with equal or inferior social status. As has already been explained, the courteous speech level used to a social equal or inferior is the polite speech level. However, because the polite speech level is also used to someone in a higher social position, the deferential speech level

is regarded as formal. This means that, depending on the circumstances, topics or even overhearers, the speaker may shift between these two speech levels when talking to someone with higher social status. For example, a boss may sometimes be spoken to by a personal assistant at the polite speech level when they are alone, but the latter may have to shift to the deferential speech level in the presence of other staff members or within the earshot of the latter. Moreover, this particular speech level is the one predominantly chosen in TV/radio news and weather reports, and also commonly used to a large audience (public lectures, public/TV/radio shows, sermons and the like). Recent research has revealed that the speaker, when talking to a large audience, tends to alternate between the polite and deferential speech levels, depending of the status of the information being communicated: the deferential speech level tends to be selected in order to give the hearer new information, while the polite speech level is likely to be chosen in order to signal shared or common-sense information, which, none the less, needs to be repeated or reiterated. This suggests that the choice between the deferential and polite speech levels may be dictated not only by social status but also by information status.

It is not incorrect to say that Koreans shift upwards but rarely downwards – from plain or intimate to polite or deferential but not other way round – in their interaction with other people and, of course, under normal circumstances. (In serious altercations, Koreans do deliberately shift downwards – which is captured by the idiomatic expression, *mal-ul mak noh-ta* literally meaning 'to put down speech recklessly' – with their damaged relationships consequently becoming irreparable; changing to a lower or less courteous speech level is indeed one of the most effective ways in Korean to offend people or to challenge people's authority.) Take two school friends, for example. They may start using either the plain or intimate speech level between themselves. But as they marry and have children and as their children grow up, they may need to raise their speech level to the polite level. Siblings, once they have their own families, may also need to change their plain or intimate level to a more reserved, courteous speech level. They are no longer able to talk to each other as their own children do. However, while they may be able to alternate between the deferential and polite levels in view of their developing relationship with superiors, social inferiors can never drop the speech level to the intimate level. This will be totally unacceptable no matter how collegial, friendly or even personal their working relationship with superiors may have become over time. As noted in Chapter 1, Koreans never call people with higher social status by given names no matter how close they may have become, and indeed abhor the Western tendency to call superiors, teachers, mentors and even (grand)parents by given names. By the same token, speech levels may have to be raised to more reserved, polite levels but they cannot be lowered to intimate or friendly levels, no matter how close people have become to each other. Thus where there is disparity

in social status, it is impossible to move down to intimate or less courteous speech levels. But between social equals, of course, the speech level can potentially be lowered from polite to intimate, once their relationship or friendship has matured (i.e. from strangers to friends or partners). Even in this case, however, they may need to shift back to a more polite or courteous speech level in the presence of other people, e.g. their social superiors or children.

As has been amply demonstrated, the hearer's seniority (or lack thereof) plays a crucial role in the speaker's choice of speech levels. Seniority in Korean culture means two things: age and socio-economic status. These two variables can sometimes come into conflict, however. In cases like this, there is a delicate balance to be struck between them. Suppose the boss is in his forties but one of his employees is in his fifties (with the rest of his employees younger than the boss). When there is such a conflict, socio-economic status overrides age. However, age cannot be completely ignored here. The boss will have to treat his older employee with a reasonable amount of courtesy in contrast to his younger employees. Thus the boss may choose to speak to the other employees at the intimate speech level, while he may be wise enough to use the polite level to the older employee. Of course, the boss may disregard the older employee's age and speak to him at the intimate level, too. But then he may well run the risk of losing respect among his employees. All in all, even though socio-economic status takes priority over age in the workplace, the latter still has a bearing on the speaker's choice of speech levels. In the not too distant past, age and socio-economic status went hand in hand (i.e. one's superiors tended to be older, and one's inferiors younger). It wasn't until very recently that Koreans began to be promoted at work as much on the basis of their merit and ability as on the basis of their age. None the less, age plays an enduring role in Korean culture, society and language. Socio-economic status cannot be upheld at the total expense of age.

Finally, it must be noted that gender plays an important role in the availability of speech levels. It is clear from the foregoing discussion that female speakers have fewer options than their male counterparts. For example, the familiar speech level does not seem to be an option for Korean women. Moreover, female speakers may not be able to use speech levels as unconstrainedly as their male counterparts. For example, as has been pointed out, the husband and wife may use the intimate level to each other in private, but the latter, not the former, will have to adopt the polite or even deferential level, especially in public or outside the family.

Compound verbs: multiple-verb constructions

Another interesting grammatical property of Korean is the way verbs are put together in single, simple sentences (as opposed to complex sentences,

described in the next section). Broadly speaking, there are three different ways in which verbs are compounded in such multiple-verb constructions in Korean. First, one of the verbs is used to indicate, for instance, whether an action or event is gradually unfolding or has just come to completion (this is technically known as aspect). Second, what is expressed in English by means of a single verb may need to be expressed by means of multiple verbs in Korean. Finally, a secondary participant in an event (i.e. the beneficiary phrase, as opposed to the subject and object noun phrases, which represent primary participants) needs to be supported by means of an additional verb in a given sentence so as to 'reinforce' its participation in the event described. Each of these three different types of verb compounding is discussed below.

Expression of aspect and other meaning distinctions

English exploits the ambulatory verb *go* in order to indicate that an action or an event is about to take place, as in (65a).

(65)
a.   I am going to buy Carluccio's new cookbook.

b.   I am going to the bookshop to buy Carluccio's new cookbook.

The sentence in (65a) means that the speaker is about to perform the act of buying a specific cookbook (even when buying it through the Internet instead of going to a bookshop). In fact, this 'new' meaning, as opposed to the 'original' meaning expressed in (65b), is so firmly entrenched that the verb *going* can optionally be fused with the following grammatical element *to*, as in (66a), but not in (66b).

(66)
a.   I am gonna buy Carluccio's new cookbook.

b.   *I am gonna the bookshop to buy Carluccio's new cookbook.

In Korean, this kind of exploitation of verbs is prevalent to the extent that a good number of verbs participate in the expression of similar grammatical and semantic distinctions. It must be borne in mind that the verbs used in this type of multiple-verb construction tend to have meanings remote from their 'original' meanings. For example, verbs (i) *peli-ta* 'to throw away' (67a and 68b), (ii) *ka-ta* 'to go' (69b), (iii) *po-ta* 'to see' (70a) and (iv) *twu-ta* 'to keep or to place' (71b), when used in multiple-verb constructions, indicate (i′) that an action or an event occurs either to the point of completion (67a) or unexpectedly (68a), (ii′) that an event unfolds gradually (69a), (iii′) that an action is attempted or experienced (70a), and (iv′) that an action is carried

out with some anticipated eventuality in mind (71a). In (67)–(71), the (a) sentences illustrate these 'new' meanings in multiple-verb constructions, and the (b) sentences the 'original' meanings that the verbs in question have when used on their own. (Note that in multiple-verb constructions verbs are strung together by means of the linker -el/-a, the choice between which, again, depends on the vowel of the preceding syllable.)

(67)
a. yenghi-nun   il   nyen-man-ey   pic-ul   ta
    Yonghee-TOP   one   year-only-in debt-ACC   all
    kaph-a-peli-ess-e
    pay.back-LK-throw-PST-INTIMATE.S
    'Yonghee (completely) paid back all her debt in only one year.'

b. yenghi-nun   hyucithong-ey   ssuleyki-lul   peli-ess-e
    Yonghee-TOP   rubbish.bin-in rubbish-ACC   throw-PST-INTIMATE.S
    'Yonghee threw the rubbish into the rubbish bin.'

(68)
a. ku   nyesek-i   cwuk-e-peli-ess-e
    that bugger-NOM   die-LK-throw-PST-INTIMATE.S
    'The bugger died (unexpectedly).'

b. yenghi-ka   changmun pakk-ulo   mek-ten sakwa-lul
    Yonghee-NOM   window   outside-to   eat-REL apple-ACC
    peli-ess-e
    throw-PST-INTIMATE.S
    'Yonghee threw the apple that she was eating out the window.'

(69)
a. i   ccok pyek-i   ssek-e-ka-pnita
    this side wall-NOM   rot-LK-go-DEFERENTIAL.S
    'This side of the wall is rotting gradually.'

b. kiho-nun   hakkyo-ey   ka-ss-supnita
    Keeho-TOP   school-to   go-PST-DEFERENTIAL.S
    'Keeho went to school.'

(70)
a. na-nun   ku   chicu-lul   mek-e-po-ass-e
    I-TOP   that cheese-ACC   eat-LK-see-PST-INTIMATE.S
    'I tried and ate the cheese.'

b. na-nun   ku   yenghwa-lul   po-ass-e
    I-TOP   that movie-ACC   see-PST-INTIMATE.S
    'I saw the movie.'

(71)

a. kiho-nun   caknyen-ey   ku   hoysa   cungkwen-ul
    Keeho-TOP   last.year-in that company   shares-ACC
    sa-a-twu-ess-e
    buy-LK-place-PST-INTIMATE.S
    'Keeho bought the company's shares last year (e.g. in anticipation
    of their increase in market value).'

b. kiho-nun   samusil-ey   pise-lul   twu   myeng-ul
    Keeho-TOP   office-in   secretary-ACC   two   person-ACC
    twu-ess-e
    keep-PST-INTIMATE.S
    'Keeho hired two secretaries in the office.'

Learners must be able to interpret these and other similar verbs correctly,
depending on whether they are used on their own or in the context of
multiple-verb constructions.

Multiple actions in a single event

The English sentence in (72) contains one verb to express an event about
the kite.

(72) The kite flew away.

The action is described by the verb *flew*, while the orientation of that action
(with respect to the speaker) is expressed by the adverb *away*. The sentence
in (72) involves a single action (i.e. flying). The corresponding Korean
sentence, however, must contain two verbs: one expressing the action (i.e.
flying) and the other describing the orientation of that action, as in (73).
Note that the two verbs are combined by means of the linker -*a*.

(73) yen-i   nal-a-ka-ss-e
      kite-NOM   fly-LK-go-PST-INTIMATE.S
      'The kite flew away' or literally 'The kite flew and went.'

In (73), there is one single event, but there are two separate actions described.
The referent of the subject noun phrase is seen to have carried out not only
the action of flying but also the action of going (away). In other words, a
single event with a single action in (72) corresponds to a single event with
two actions in (73). As a further example, consider (74), in which there is
again one verb.

(74) Bees fly in through the window.

The prepositions *in* and *through* denote the orientation and the path of bees' flight, respectively. When translated into Korean, the sentence ends up with three separate verbs, as in (75).

(75)   pel-i   changmun-ulo   nal-a-tul-e-w-ayo
       bee-NOM   window-through   fly-LK-enter-LK-come-POLITE.S
       'Bees fly in through the window.'

The orientation and path of bees' flight, which are expressed by the prepositions *in* and *through*, respectively, in the English sentence, are 'reconceptualized' into two separate actions, coming and entering, respectively, in Korean (the use of the role-marking particle *-ulo* notwithstanding). Note that the verb of coming *w-* (or originally *o-*), not the verb of going *ka-*, is used in (75), because the speaker is inside, not outside, the room. In other words, if the speaker were outside the room, observing bees fly in through the window, the verb compound would be *nal-a-tul-e-ka-yo*, with the verb of going *ka-* expressing the orientation of bees' movement. This is not clear from the English sentence; the same sentence, i.e. (74), can be used, irrespective of whether the speaker is located inside or outside the room.

   The question of how verbs in this type of multiple-verb construction should be ordered arises. A rule of thumb is to place verbs that describe the manner of the action or movement before verbs that describe the action or movement. Thus in (73) flying can be said to be the manner of the kite's movement, and in (75) flying can be thought to be the manner of bees' movement. Thus the verb *nal-* appears as the first member of the verb compound in both sentences. In (75), however, there are still two other verbs. In a case like this, the verb of path comes before the verb of orientation (i.e. going versus coming). The verb *tul-* 'to enter' and the verb *w-* 'to come' describe the path (i.e. from outside to inside) and the orientation of bees' movement (i.e. coming towards the speaker), respectively. Thus the former verb is placed before the latter. The sentence in (76) further illustrates this ordering convention (three verbs, *ttwi-* 'to run', *olu-* 'to ascend' and *ka-* 'to go' in Korean versus one verb *ran* in English). (Readers are invited to think about where the speaker was when Keeho ran up the hill, at the top or bottom of the hill.)

(76)   kiho-ka   tanswum-ey   entek-ul
       Keeho-NOM   one.breath-in   hill-ACC
       ttwi-e-ol-a-ka-ss-eyo
       run-LK-ascend-LK-go-PST-POLITE.S
       'Keeho ran up the hill in a flash.'

Expression of secondary participants

The beneficiary phrase in Korean sometimes needs to be supported by the verb *cwu-* 'to give' to the effect that multiple verbs are used in a single or

simple sentence. In English, on the other hand, the preposition *for* is used to encode the beneficiary phrase (e.g. *Michelle* in (77)).

(77)   Rochelle opened the door for Michelle.

In Korean, the verb *yel-* 'to open' is not sufficient when there is a beneficiary phrase to be expressed in the sentence. It needs to be augmented by the verb *cwu-* so that the sense of benefaction can be clearly brought out, as in (78a), as opposed to (78b).

(78)
a.   yenghi-ka   kiho-eykey mun-ul   yel-e-cwu-ess-e
     Yonghee-NOM Keeho-for door-ACC open-LK-give-PST-INTIMATE.S
     'Yonghee opened the door for Keeho.'

b.   yenghi-ka   mun-ul   yel-ess-e
     Yonghee-NOM   door-ACC   open-PST-INTIMATE.S
     'Yonghee opened the door.'

It is not impossible to use the verb *yel-* 'to open' alone, but in this case a different complex role-marking particle, *-(l)ul-uyhay(se)*, must be chosen.

(79)   yenghi-ka   kiho-lul-uyhay(se) mun-ul   yel-ess-e
       Yonghee-NOM Keeho-for   door-ACC open-PST-INTIMATE.S
       'Yonghee opened the door for (the sake of) Keeho.'

The sentence in (79), however, is ambiguous, in that the door may not necessarily have been opened for Keeho to enter or exit the room. For instance, Yonghee could have opened the door for someone else (e.g. a customer) when Keeho could also have done so. In other words, someone other than Keeho could have been the direct beneficiary of Yonghee's action, and Keeho the indirect beneficiary. When, however, the verb *cwu-* is used in conjunction with the verb *yel-*, Keeho's benefiting directly from Yonghee's action is clearly expressed; that is, Yonghee opening the door for Keeho to go through it.

The verb *cwu-* 'to give' can co-occur with more than one verb, as in (80), where three verbs are strung together by the linker *-el-a* in one and the same sentence.

(80)   yenghi-ka   kiho-eykey   mun   kkoli-lul
       Yonghee-NOM   Keeho-for   door   handle-ACC
       cap-a-tangki-e-cwu-ess-e
       hold-LK-pull-LK-give-PST-INTIMATE.S
       'Yonghee pulled the door handle for Keeho.'

Finally, when the beneficiary is an honourable person, the humble verb *tuli-* 'to give' must be used (see Table 4.4) and the beneficiary phrase must in turn be marked by the honorific locative particle *-kkey* instead of the neutral particle *-eykey*, as in (81).

(81) kiho-ka   halapeci-kkey mun-ul   yel-e-tuli-ess-e
      Keeho-NOM grandfather-for door-ACC open-LK-give-PST-INTIMATE.S
      'Keeho opened the door for Grandfather.'

Complex sentences: sentences within sentences

So far, the focus has been on simple sentences. Sentences, however, can combine with other sentences to form complex sentences: sentences within sentences. There are basically four different types of complex sentence. Sentences can be juxtaposed by means of so-called conjunctions (e.g. *Nicola works at the hospital **and** Jessica teaches at school*). Sentences can be used to modify noun phrases (e.g. *Jessica knows a woman **who worked in Seoul***). Sentences can be added to other sentences to express meanings such as time, reason and purpose for the latter (*Nicola met the woman **when she was visiting her family in Gore***). Finally, sentences can function as or in lieu of noun phrases within other sentences (*Jessica knows **that the woman worked in Seoul*** versus *Jessica knows **the story***).

Juxtaposition of sentences

First, sentences can be simply put together by means of separate words such as *kuliko* 'and' or *kulena* 'but', as in (82), although this may sound rather formal.

(82)
a. yenghi-nun   hakkyo-lul   ka-ss-ta   kuliko kiho-nun
    Yonghee-TOP   school-ACC   go-PST-PLAIN.S   and   Keeho-TOP
    cip-eyse   il-ul   ha-yss-ta
    home-at   work-ACC   do-PST-PLAIN.S
    'Yonghee went to school and Keeho worked at home.'

b. yenghi-nun   hakkyo-lul   ka-ss-ta   kulena kiho-nun
    Yonghee-TOP   school-ACC   go-PST-PLAIN.S   but   Keeho-TOP
    cip-eyse   il-ul   ha-yss-ta
    home-at   work-ACC   do-PST-PLAIN.S
    'Yonghee went to school but Keeho worked at home.'

More likely to be used are endings that attach directly to the end of the verb of the non-final sentence, such as *-ko* 'and', *-ciman* 'but' and the like.

(83)

a.   yenghi-nun   hakkyo-lul   ka-ss-ko   kiho-nun   cip-eyse
Yonghee-TOP   school-ACC   go-PST-and   Keeho-TOP   home-at
il-ul   ha-yss-e
work-ACC   do-PST-INTIMATE.S
'Yonghee went to school and Keeho worked at home.'

b.   yenghi-nun   hakkyo-lul   ka-ss-ciman   kiho-nun   cip-eyse
Yonghee-TOP   school-ACC   go-PST-but   Keeho-TOP   home-at
il-ul   ha-yss-e
work-ACC   do-PST-INTIMATE.S
'Yonghee went to school but Keeho worked at home.'

Note that the juxtaposed sentences in (83), unlike those in (82), must make do with a single instance of the speech level ending (see also below).

Modification of noun phrases: relative clauses

Sentences can also modify noun phrases. Such sentences are technically known as relative clauses. In English, relative clauses follow noun phrases that they modify and also contain so-called relative pronouns – *who(m)*, *which* and the like – though relative pronouns can be optionally omitted under certain circumstances. For example, in *Jessica is talking to the student who won the prize*, the modifying relative clause *who won the prize* follows the modified noun phrase *the student*. Moreover, the relative pronoun *who* is used to link the noun phrase and the relative clause. The use of relative pronouns, however, is optional in such sentences as *Jessica is talking to the student she met at the party* (cf. *Jessica is talking to the student who(m) she met at the party*). In Korean, on the other hand, no such relative pronouns exist. In Korean, as mentioned earlier, relative clauses precede noun phrases that they modify. Moreover, the verb or predicative adjective in the relative clause must be given a special ending (technically known as an adnominal ending), the function of which is to link the relative clause to the modified noun phrase. Such adnominal endings are organized on the distinction between verbs and adjectives. Thus the adnominal ending for the verb makes a tense distinction between present -*nun* and past -*(u)n*, while the adjective has an adnominal ending only for present, i.e. -*(u)n*. (Incidentally, this is one of the few differences between verbs and adjectives in Korean.) These points are exemplified in (84).

(84)

a.   yenghi-ka   ilk-nun   chayk-un   acwu   elyew-e
Yonghee-NOM   read-REL   book-TOP   very   difficult-INTIMATE.S
'The book that Yonghee reads (or is reading) is very difficult.'

b.   yenghi-ka   ilk-un   chayk-un   acwu elyew-e
    Yonghee-NOM read-REL book-TOP very   difficult-INTIMATE.S
    'The book that Yonghee read is very difficult.'

c.   kiho-ka   acwu yeyppu-n yeca   ai-lang   chwum-ul
    Keeho-NOM   very   pretty-REL female child-with dance-ACC
    chwu-eyo
    dance-POLITE.S
    'Keeho is dancing with a girl who is very pretty.'

Since there is no adnominal ending in the past tense for adjectives, readers
may wonder how to say something like *a girl who **was** pretty* in Korean. In
this case, the past tense ending *-ess/-ass* and the retrospective ending *-te*
must be combined with the adnominal ending *-n*, as in (85).

(85)   ely-ess-ulttay   yeypp-ess-te-n   yeca-tul-i
      young-PST-when   pretty-PST-RETROSPECTIVE-REL   woman-PL-NOM
      khe-se   hyunghay-ci-te-la
      grow.up-when   ugly-become-RETROSPECTIVE-PLAIN.S
      'Women who were pretty when young become ugly when they
      grow up (I think).'

Readers may also wonder how to say something like *the book that Yonghee
will read* (i.e. future tense) in Korean. In this case, the verbal ending *-(u)l*,
which is normally used to express events that are likely or expected to take
place, is exploited as an adnominal ending in relative clauses, as in (86).

(86)   yenghi-ka   ilk-ul   chayk-un   acwu elyew-e
      Yonghee-NOM read-REL book-TOP very   difficult-INTIMATE.S
      'The book that Yonghee will (or is likely to) read is very difficult.'

In English, adjectives (e.g. *pretty*) can be used as they are, regardless of
whether they modify nouns (e.g. *cat*) directly as in *a pretty cat* or indirectly
(i.e. as part of relative clauses) as in *a cat that is pretty*. In Korean, on the
other hand, this is not possible, because adjectives can never modify nouns
directly. They must bear an adnominal ending (but there are a handful of
determiner-class modifiers (e.g. *say* 'new'), which can be directly linked with
nouns, as in English; see Chapter 4). For example, the adjective *yeyppu-*
'pretty', as it is, cannot modify the noun *koyangi* 'cat', i.e. **yeyppu koyangi*,
but must instead be augmented by an adnominal ending *-n*, i.e. *yeyppu-n
koyangi*. In Korean, adjectives are allowed to modify nouns only if they first
function as predicative adjectives within relative clauses. Strictly speaking,
therefore, it is not possible to render *a pretty cat* directly into Korean; it
must be rendered into something equivalent to *a cat that is pretty*.

One intriguing property of relative clauses in Korean is that it is sometimes possible to have inside the relative clause a pronoun that refers to the modified noun phrase. This is also attested in non-standard English under certain circumstances (e.g. *This is the road I know where it leads*, where the pronoun *it* refers to the modified noun phrase *the road*). This phenomenon is illustrated for Korean in (87).

(87) wuli pan-ey caki(-uy) pumo-nim-i
     our class-in self(-GEN) parents-HON-NOM
     tolaka-si-n haksayng-i manh-ayo
     pass.away-HON-REL student-NOM many-POLITE.S
     'Our/My class has many students whose parents passed away.'

In (87), the pronoun *caki* refers to the modified noun phrase *haksayng-i*. Incidentally, the use of such pronouns in relative clauses is said to be attested in languages in which the relative clause follows the modified noun phrase. Korean and Mandarin Chinese are the only known exceptions to this generalization: the relative clause precedes the modified noun phrase but a pronoun, referring to the modified noun phrase, can appear inside the relative clause.

The modified noun phrase has a role in both the overall sentence and the relative clause. In (84a), for example, the modified noun phrase *chayk* is not only the subject noun phrase of the overall sentence(i.e. *The book is very difficult*) but also the object noun phrase of the relative clause (i.e. *Yonghee reads the book*). Not surprisingly, this is also the case in English. In (88), the modified noun phrase *the dog* is not only the object noun phrase of the overall sentence (i.e. *Peter kicked the dog*), but also plays the role of the subject noun phrase within the relative clause (*The dog chased James*).

(88) Peter kicked the dog that chased James.

In Korean, however, modified noun phrases frequently have no obvious role in relative clauses. Consider (89).

(89) nwu-ka pakk-eyse mun ye-nun soli-ka
     someone-NOM outside-at door open-REL sound-NOM
     na-a
     occur-INTIMATE.S
     'There is a sound of someone opening the door from outside' or
     'There is a sound that someone is [making by] opening the door from outside.'

The modified noun phrase *soli* 'sound' has no role within the relative clause in (89), although it is the subject of the overall sentence (i.e. *The sound is*

'*occurring*'). Nevertheless, the verb of the relative clause contains an appropriate adnominal ending -*nun*.

What makes (89) and other similar sentences possible and grammatical in Korean is that the knowledge of the world is drawn upon in order to produce and understand them. When a door is opened, a certain sound is made. This is what makes it possible to have a modified noun phrase with no role in the relative clause. To put it differently, the relationship between the opening of the door and the resulting sound is so obvious and natural that the connection between the modified noun phrase and the relative clause does not need to be 'grammatically' present in Korean. This type of phenomenon is possible in non-standard English to a marginal extent (e.g. *I haven't been to a party yet that I haven't got home the same night*). The difference, however, is that it is much more widely attested in Korean than in English. (Incidentally, Japanese is very similar to Korean in this respect.) Another example of this kind is given in (90).

(90) kiwun-i   sos-a-na-nun   umsik   com   mek-ko
     energy-NOM   soar-LK-occur-REL   food   a.little   eat-NR
     siph-e
     like-INTIMATE.S
     '(I) would like to eat a little bit of food (by eating) which one's energy will soar.'

Modification of sentences: adverbial use of sentences

Sentences can also be used to indicate time (e.g. *when*, *while*), reason (e.g. *because*, *since*), condition (e.g. *if*), purpose (e.g. *so that* or *in order that*) and the like for other sentences. In other words, sentences can modify other sentences (or verbs in other sentences as the case may be) by providing additional information about the latter. This can be described broadly as the adverbial use of sentences. Examples of this type of complex sentence are provided in (91).

(91)
a.   ai-tul-i   nemu   ttetu-nikka   cengsin-ul
      child-PL-NOM   much   get.rowdy-because   concentration-ACC
      mos   chali-keyss-e
      unable   obtain-JUDGEMENT-INTIMATE.S
      '(I) can't concentrate because the children are getting so rowdy.'

b.   kiho-nun   nolay-lul   tul-umyense   kongpu-lul   ha-yss-eyo
      Keeho-TOP   music-ACC   listen-while   study-ACC   do-POLITE.S
      'Keeho studied while (he was) listening to music.'

In (91a), for example, the first sentence can be said to modify the second sentence by providing the reason why the situation described by the latter holds. Note that endings such as -*nikka* 'because' and -*umyense* 'while' attach directly to the end of the modifying sentence (or, more accurately, to the end of the verb or predicative adjective in the modifying sentence).

One important thing to bear in mind when learning this type of complex sentence is that, unlike in English, the modifying sentence cannot follow the modified sentence. In English, it is possible to say either (92a) or (92b).

(92)
a.   Julia took a nap because she was very tired.

b.   Because she was very tired, Julia took a nap.

In Korean, it is not possible to place the modified sentence before the modifying sentence, as in (93), unless there is a significant pause between the two so that the second sentence is identified as an afterthought or as a clarification.

(93)   *cengsin-ul   mos   chali-keyss-e
        concentration-ACC   unable   obtain-JUDGEMENT-POLITE.S
        ai-tul-i   nemu   ttetu-nikka
        child-PL-NOM   much   get.rowdy-because
        'Because the children are getting so rowdy, (I) can't concentrate.'

Korean has a comparatively wide range of endings used in the adverbial use of sentences, some of which seem to have identical meanings, at least in English translation. Learners must make an attempt to be mindful of these diverse endings and their subtle differences in meaning. For instance, (91a) can be uttered with a different ending that has the broad meaning of reason, as in (94).

(94)   ai-tul-i   nemu   ttetul-ese   cengsin-ul
        child-PL-NOM   much   get.rowdy-because   concentration-ACC
        mos   chali-keyss-e
        unable   obtain-JUDGEMENT-POLITE.S
        '(I) can't concentrate because the children are getting so rowdy.'

The difference between -*nikka* and -*ese* is very subtle indeed: (91a) can be uttered with the implication that the speaker is putting the blame for the loss of concentration on the children, who, in the speaker's judgement, may be deliberately getting rowdy, whereas there is no such implication in (94). The children may not be aware of the distress that they are causing to the speaker or of the speaker's loss of concentration; the speaker is not necessarily putting the blame on the children, either.

Sentences as noun phrases: nominalization

Sentences can also be used in lieu of noun phrases. For instance, in (95) *i il-i* 'this job' is the subject noun phrase of the sentence.

(95) i   il-i   nemu elyew-e
      this job-NOM very   difficult-INTIMATE.S
      'This job is very difficult.'

The subject noun phrase can be replaced by a sentence, although the latter is adjusted by a special ending *-ki* (technically known as a nominalizer), as in (96).

(96) yocum-un   ton-ul   pel-ki-ka   nemu elyew-e
      nowadays-TOP money-ACC earn-NR-NOM very   difficult-INTIMATE.S
      'Nowadays, it is very difficult to make money.'

Such noun-phrase-like or nominalized sentences can occur in other positions in the sentence (i.e. with different roles), as in (97), where the nominalized sentence as a whole is marked by the locative particle *-ey*.

(97) yenghi-ka   cip-eyse   il-ul   ha-ki-ey   kiho-nun
      Yonghee-NOM   home-at   work-ACC do-NR-at   Keeho-TOP
      tosekwan-ulo   ka-ss-eyo
      library-to   go-PST-POLITE.S
      'As Yonghee was working at home, Keeho went to the library.'

There are other nominalizing endings in use, e.g. *-(u)m* as in (98), although *-ki* is the most commonly used.

(98) hoysa-eyse   ku   saep-ul   phoki-ha-yss-um-i
      company-at   that   project-ACC abandoning-do-PST-NR-NOM
      hwaksil-ha-pnita
      certainty-be-DEFERENTIAL.S
      'It is certain that the company has abandoned the project.'

Tense marking in complex sentences

Finally, learners need to take note of the fact that in sentences like (91b) the tense marking in the first sentence is not indicated at all, and its time of occurrence is interpreted to be equivalent to that of the second or final sentence. In (83a), on the other hand, the past tense marking in the first sentence can be left out optionally, as in (99).

(99) yenghi-nun   hakkyo-lul   ka-ko   kiho-nun   cip-eyse
      Yonghee-TOP   school-ACC   go-and   Keeho-TOP   home-at
      il-ul   ha-yss-e
      work-ACC   do-PST-INTIMATE.S
      'Yonghee went to school and Keeho worked at home.'

6

BEYOND SENTENCES
Discourse

People, when talking to each other, do not merely utter sentence after sentence, no matter how meaningful each individual sentence may be. They instead put sentences together into a coherent, meaningful discourse or text. In order to indicate the connection or cohesion between sentences, they are likely to make use of textual devices or connectors (e.g. *and*, *but*, *so*, *therefore*, *however*). Moreover, they tend to 'lubricate' their discourse with responders (e.g. *right*, *really*, *I see*) and fillers (e.g. *um*, *ah*, *you know*). In the absence of responders, for example, the speaker may come to think that the hearer may have lost interest in what is being said. The speaker may also take advantage of fillers in order to look for right words or expressions or to think about what to say next. There may also be pauses or hesitations – planned or unplanned – within or between sentences. Language, especially spoken language, without connectors, lubricators (i.e. fillers and responders), pauses and hesitations will be hard to come by and will be very unusual, if not unnatural (unless a well practised text is being read).

Not surprisingly, Korean is not short of such useful connectors and lubricators. Moreover, Koreans, as discussed in Chapter 5, choose their speech level according to the hearer's social status relative to their own. This adds complications to the use of lubricators, because some of these lubricators also need to be 'adjusted' in view of the hearer's social status. It is necessary to acquire good control of connectors and lubricators. It is also important to learn where to pause or hesitate, because it would be extremely odd – and it would indeed sound highly incompetent – to pause at the wrong place, e.g. between noun phrases and role-marking particles.

One of the first and most frustrating things that learners of foreign languages will experience in a native speaking environment may be the difference between what they have been taught in the classroom and what native speakers actually do. There may be a number of reasons for this unfortunate situation. First, it may be the case that native speakers use non-standard, regional varieties of the language, while learners have been exposed – understandably – to the standard variety only. (Imagine the enormous difficulty that learners of (standard) English have in understanding the

varieties of English often used in one and the same British TV drama.) This, however, is the reality of language learning. Little can be done about it and learners will just have to get used to it. To give students exposure to all varieties of the language in the context of the classroom is neither feasible nor economical, even though it would be ideal. Given time and exposure, however, most learners will eventually overcome this (initial) difficulty. Second, native speakers may speak differently from the way learners have been taught in the classroom, because they, far more frequently than not, contract or omit certain expressions. Understandably, learners are normally not taught to omit or contract expressions, if ever, until they have in the first place mastered full expressions. Most contractions or omissions tend to occur in highly casual speech, which learners may – at least initially – have little exposure to. Nevertheless, it is important to learn how to contract or omit expressions when possible or even necessary.

Language is spoken in social and cultural contexts. It is the major medium through which social interaction is carried out. Regardless of what language is spoken and what culture or society that language is spoken in, there are certain conventions that need to be followed in the conduct of social interaction. Such social and cultural conventions in turn find their way into language, particularly in the form of social formulaic expressions. Social formulaic expressions are typically associated with routine or recurrent social activities such as meeting, leave-taking, offering, thanking, apologizing, requesting and the like. In English, for instance, expressions such as *How are you?*, *How's it going?*, *Thank you*, *Goodbye*, *See you later* and the like belong to this class of expressions. That these are social formulaic expressions is illustrated, for example, by *See you later*, which can be used even when people know that they will never see each other again or by *How are you?*, which is used even when the speaker is not particularly interested in the hearer's well-being. Thus the social formulaic expression *See you later* is meant not necessarily to express the speaker's intention to see the hearer in the future but to bring to a close a social encounter between the speaker and the hearer. Learners of Korean must thus make a serious attempt to learn social formulaic expressions as early as possible. Control of these expressions may enable learners to interact successfully with native Korean speakers, even if their level of competence in Korean is not high. Native speakers expect learners of their language to be able to produce and understand at least basic social formulaic expressions, regardless of the latter's proficiency. (Seasoned travellers in foreign countries know very well the importance of basic social formulaic expressions in local languages.) A command of language etiquette and protocol will be readily accepted as a command of social etiquette and protocol. In Korean society, one's upbringing is also often measured by one's language etiquette and protocol; incompetence in these areas reflects badly not only on individuals but also on their parents and teachers. (Thus it may not come as a surprise that books and newspaper

columns have been written for Koreans themselves about correct language etiquette and protocol.)

Finally, in addition to role-marking particles, which express the roles of noun phrases within sentences, Korean has so-called 'delimiting' particles, the use of which depends on the discourse context in which sentences are used. In other words, just as they are 'adjusted' by role-marking particles according to their roles within sentences, noun phrases are also 'adjusted' by delimiting particles according to the discourse context in which sentences are embedded. For instance, the use of delimiting particles may presuppose something beyond or in addition to what is being explicitly expressed by the immediate sentence containing such delimiting particles.

In this chapter, the function of delimiting particles is discussed with special reference to the so-called topic particle -(n)un. As demonstrated below, this particle does much more than its technical name may suggest, i.e. topic-marking. Properties of the informal, casual style, i.e. omission and contraction, are then identified and discussed, and also explained are some of the factors that may contribute to the choice between the formal and informal styles: the medium of language (i.e. spoken versus written) and the formality of situations. Lubricators are also dealt with under the three categories of responders, fillers and connectors. Finally, social formulaic expressions are discussed with particular reference to the discrepancy in nature and use between Korean and English.

Delimiting particles: topic/constrast particle -(n)un

One of the most difficult problems experienced by English-speaking learners of Korean involves the use of the so-called topic particle -(n)un. (Japanese has a similar topic particle, -wa, which causes an equal amount of difficulty for English-speaking learners.) There are two main reasons for this situation. First, English lacks this kind of particle or even something remotely akin to it. English-speaking learners thus tend to have much difficulty in coming to grips with its nature and use. Second, and more importantly, linguists haven't arrived at a complete understanding of the particle in question. (One prominent Korean linguist went as far as to claim that solving the problem of the topic particle would mean understanding half of Korean grammar; this, of course, is an exaggeration.) Needless to say, it is not easy to teach students about something that specialists themselves are not completely clear about. The difficulty with the particle lies partly in the fact that it has more than one function, although it is generally well understood to have a topic-marking function. But in reality this topic-marking function alone does not explain everything it does in natural discourse. This section, therefore, describes its main functions in the simplest possible language.

First, it is important to find out where the delimiting particle -(n)un appears, in structural terms, within sentences. The particle can attach to

noun phrases and other phrases – *-nun* for phrases ending in a vowel, and *-un* for phrases ending in a consonant. When attaching to noun phrases, it 'replaces' the nominative and accusative particles and also optionally the locative particle, i.e. *kiho-nun* 'Keeho-TOP' versus **kiho-ka-nun*, **kiho-nun-i*, **kiho-lul-un*, **kiho-nun-ul*, but *kiho-(eykey)-nun*. In the case of the other role-marking particles, it attaches to their end, e.g. *kiho-lang-un* 'Keeho-with-TOP', *kiho-hantheyse-nun* 'Keeho-from-TOP' and the like. It can also attach to other types of word or phrase, e.g. *kiho-ka chakha-ki-nun ha-yyo* [Keeho-NOM good.natured-NR-TOP do-POLITE.S] 'Keeho is good-natured' and *yenghi-ka ppalli-nun talli-ess-eyo* [Yonghee-NOM quickly-TOP run-PST-POLITE.S] 'Yonghee ran quickly'.

The topic particle *-(n)un* indeed encodes the topic of a given sentence, as is suggested by its technical name. This is illustrated in (1).

(1)

a. ecey   yenghi-ka   etten   kaswu-lul   manna-ss-eyo
    yesterday Yonghee-NOM   certain   singer-ACC   meet-PST-POLITE.S
    'Yesterday Yonghee met a certain singer.'

b. ku kaswu-nun ye-haksayng-tul-i   acwu coh-a-ha-yyo
    the singer-TOP female-student-PL-NOM much good-LK-do-POLITE.S
    'Female students like the singer a lot.'

In (1a), the noun phrase *etten kaswu* 'a certain singer' is introduced into the discourse for the first time (i.e. a new piece of information), and this is picked up as the topic and accordingly marked by the topic particle *-nun* in (1b). Recall that topic-marked expressions tend to be placed at the beginning of the sentence (see Chapter 5), as is the case in (1b), where it is grammatically the object noun phrase (cf. *ye-haksayng-tul-i ku kaswu-lul* [that singer-ACC] *acwu coh-a-ha-yyo*).

This topic-marking nature also explains why the particle *-(n)un* is never used with question words, as is demonstrated in (2). In (2a), the question word *mues* is used to seek (new) information. The question word cannot represent an old or topical piece of information. Otherwise, it would not have been asked about in the first place. Thus the question word cannot be marked by the topic particle, as in (2b).

(2)

a. mues-ul   ha-ni? [becomes *mwe-l ha-ni?* in casual speech]
    what-ACC   do-PLAIN.Q
    'What are (you) doing?'

b. *mues-un   ha-ni?
     what-TOP   do-PLAIN.Q
     'What are (you) doing?'

By the same token, the answer in (3b) must represent a new piece of information that is non-topical in the context of the question in (3a). Thus the noun phrase that is provided in response to the question in (3a) cannot be marked by the topic particle, either. It must instead be marked by a role-marking particle or the nominative particle -*ka* in the present case, as in (3c).

(3)

a. nwu-ka   w-ass-e?
   who-NOM   come-PST-INTIMATE.Q
   'Who came?'

b. *kiho-nun   w-ass-e
    Keeho-TOP   come-PST-INTIMATE.S
    'Keeho came.'

c. kiho-ka   w-ass-e
   Keeho-NOM   come-PST-INTIMATE.S
   'Keeho came.'

The topic-marking function can thus be paraphrased as 'Talking about X, I can say Y' or 'Let me tell you Y about X', where X is the noun phrase occurring with the topic particle and Y is the rest of the sentence. In (1b), what the speaker is saying is: 'Talking about the singer, I can say that female students like him a lot'.

This does not mean, however, that noun phrases must always have prior mention in order to be marked by the topic particle. In fact, the concept of topic, in the context of the topic particle -*(n)un*, must be understood to subsume not merely topical information but also shared or background information. This is clearly demonstrated in (4).

(4) kolay-nun   phoyutongmul   i-ta
    whale-TOP   mammal   is-PLAIN.S
    'The whale is a mammal' or 'Talking about the whale, it is a mammal.'

In (4), where a generic definition of the whale is provided, the noun phrase *kolay* is marked by the topic particle -*nun*. The speaker can reasonably assume that the hearer knows something about the whale (what it looks like, where it lives, etc.), although not everyone may know that the whale is a mammal (hence the point of the generic definition in (4)). The speaker is providing a new piece of information about the whale, which is part of shared or background information. In other words, the speaker is saying here: 'Let me tell you something about the whale; it is a mammal'.

This concept of shared or background information can also explain why the first and second person pronouns typically co-occur with the topic particle

in Korean. The first person pronoun (*I* and *we* in English) refers to the speaker and the second person pronoun (*you* in English) to the hearer. In speech situations, there are always going to be the speaker and the hearer (the so-called speech dyad). This very fact – however obvious it may be – is shared or background information that is accessible to the speaker and the hearer. Thus the first and second pronouns tend to appear with the topic particle in Korean, as in (5).

(5) ce-nun   hocwu-lo   imin-ul   ka-pnita
I.HUMBLE-TOP Australia-to migration-ACC go-DEFERENTIAL.S
'I am going to migrate to Australia.'

If, however, *kolay* in (4) and *ce* in (5) were marked by the nominative particle, as in (6), these noun phrases would no longer be presented or understood as such shared or background information. In fact, they would instead represent new information.

(6)
a. kolay-ka   phoyutongmul   i-ta
whale-NOM   mammal   is-PLAIN.S
'The whale is a mammal' or 'It is the whale that is a mammal.'

b. cey-ka   hocwu-lo   imin-ul   ka-pnita
I.HUMBLE-NOM Australia-to migration-ACC go-DEFERENTIAL.S
'I am going to migrate to Australia.' or 'It is I that is going to migrate to Australia.'

In order to do so, they would need a certain discourse context. This is why (6a) or (6b) could easily be preceded by (7a) or (7b), respectively.

(7)
a. kolay   wa   sange-cwung   etten   tongmul-i   phoyutongmul
whale   and   shark-between   which   animal-NOM   mammal
i-nya
is-PLAIN.Q
'Which is a mammal, the whale or the shark?'

b. nehuy-tul-cwung-ey   nwu-ka   hocwu-lo   imin-ul
you-PL-among-in   who-NOM Australia-to migration-ACC
ka-nya
go-PLAIN.Q
'Which of you people is going to migrate to Australia?'

The question in (7b) is focused on the (unknown) identity of the person who is going to migrate to Australia. The nominative-marked noun phrase

cey-ka in (6b), representing new information, serves as a possible answer to (7b). Thus the noun phrase in question cannot be marked by the topic particle, although it refers to the speaker.

The other main function of the topic particle *-(n)un* is to express contrast. This contrastive function can be paraphrased as 'I don't know about other people, things or places, but in the case of X, I can say Y', where X is the noun phrase occurring with the topic particle, and Y is the rest of the sentence. For this reason, the particle *-(n)un* should really be referred to as the topic/contrast particle, as it is hereafter (although, for the sake of simplicity, the abbreviation TOP is retained in glossing). In (8), therefore, the speaker is indicating: 'I don't know what else Keeho did (tidying up his room, mowing the lawn etc.), but I can say that he did his homework'.

> (8) kiho-ka   swukcey-nun   ha-yss-e
>   Keeho-NOM   homework-TOP   do-PST-INTIMATE.S
>   'Keeho did his homework' or 'I don't know what else Keeho did,
>   but I can say that he did his homework.'

Noun phrases with this kind of contrastive interpretation tend to appear in non-initial positions. This makes sense because, as has already been pointed out, topical noun phrases tend to be positioned at the beginning of sentences (e.g. (1b)). Should a noun phrase with a contrastive interpretation appear in the sentence-initial position, it would no longer have a contrastive interpretation but would receive a topical interpretation. When, however, noun phrases in contrast appear side by side in the same sentence, as in (9) (that is, when what is to be contrasted is explicitly mentioned, not merely implied, as in (8)), they may be placed in the sentence-initial position.

> (9) yenghi-nun   swukcey-lul   ha-yss-ko
>   Yonghee-TOP   homework-ACC   do-PST-and
>   kiho-nun   chengso-lul   ha-yss-eyo
>   Keeho-TOP   cleaning-ACC   do-PST-POLITE.S
>   'Yonghee did her homework whereas Keeho did the cleaning.'

In (9), the speaker is contrasting Yonghee and Keeho in terms of tasks performed. These two noun phrases, each with the topic/contrast particle, appear in the sentence-initial position, because they are explicitly contrasted with each other. Compare (9) with (10).

> (10) yenghi-ka   swukcey-nun   ha-yss-ciman chengso-nun
>   Yonghee-NOM   homework-TOP   do-PST-but   cleaning-TOP
>   an   ha-yss-eyo
>   not   do-PST-POLITE.S
>   'Yonghee did her homework but she did not do the cleaning.'

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Unlike in (9), in (10) the two object noun phrases – which would otherwise have been marked by the accusative particle -*lul* – are marked by the topic/contrast particle. The speaker is thus contrasting homework with cleaning in terms of completion.

The topic-marking and contrasting functions of the particle -*(n)un* can also be attested in the same sentence, as illustrated in (11).

(11) nyucillayndu(-ey)-nun pi-nun   manhi o-ciman   nwun-un
      New Zealand(-in)-TOP   rain-TOP much   come-but snow-TOP
      cekkey   w-ayo
      little   come-POLITE.S
      'In New Zealand, it rains a lot but it snows a little.'

The sentence in (11) can be paraphrased into English: 'Let me tell you something about New Zealand; it rains a lot but it snows a little there'. The noun phrase *nyucillayndu* 'New Zealand' is marked as shared or background information, whereas the noun phrases *pi* 'rain' and *nwun* 'snow' are contrasted in terms of precipitation. These two different functions are carried out by the same particle -*(n)un*.

There are many other delimiting particles such as -*to* 'also', -*man* 'only' and the like, as in (12). These, however, are not as difficult to understand as the topic/contrast particle.

(12)
a.   yenghi-to   w-ass-e
      Yonghee-also   come-PST-INTIMATE.S
      'Yonghee also came.'

b.   kiho-man   w-ass-e
      Keeho-only   come-PST-INTIMATE.S
      'Only Keeho came.'

In (12a), the speaker is making a statement with the understanding that a person or persons besides Yonghee came. This understanding (or presupposition) is clearly indicated by means of the delimiting particle -*to*, which attaches directly to the end of the noun phrase *yenghi*. In (10b), the speaker understands that no one except Keeho came. This motivates the use of the delimiting particle -*man*, which attaches directly to the end of the noun phrase *kiho*.

Formal versus informal style: omission and contraction

As discussed in Chapter 5 (Figure 5.1), which speech level is to be chosen depends not only on the hearer's social status relative to the speaker's, but

also on the medium of language (spoken versus written) and the formality of speech situations (formal versus informal). Thus the deferential and plain speech levels tend to be used in formal writing. The choice in writing between these two levels may in turn have to do with the distinction between personal and impersonal. The deferential speech level is the highest level of deference, and the plain speech level the lowest (see the continuum in (63) in Chapter 5). The plain speech level tends to be attested in textbooks, newspaper reports, academic publications and the like, where information is communicated to the reader in a most objective manner. Thus the plain speech level, when used in writing, is indicative of the writer's impersonal approach to communication. The deferential speech level, on the other hand, tends to be used in public notices, signs and advertising, which seek the reader's cooperation or attention. Thus a personal approach to communication will be called for in such situations. It is, therefore, common to find both the deferential and plain speech levels in newspapers, the former used in advertisements and the latter in the remainder.

In personal or informal writing (e.g. letters to siblings or friends), on the other hand, the polite or intimate speech level is used. Needless to say, formality would be highly marked in this kind of writing. Any indication of formality would be interpreted to signal (deliberate) distance between the writer and the reader. Depending on the writer's social status relative to the reader's, the choice between the polite and intimate speech levels may need to be made along the lines discussed in Chapter 5.

In public speech situations (TV news, public lectures and ceremonies and the like), the deferential speech level is predominantly chosen over the other speech levels, as alluded to in Chapter 5 (but as mentioned in that chapter, the alternation between the deferential and polite levels in public speech may be dictated by information status as well). In these situations, the speaker is not addressing individual hearers but talking to the audience as a whole. Thus the speaker's wish to hold the audience's attention, not the social distance between them, may play a more important role in the selection of the speech level. The speaker has no way of ascertaining the social status of every individual in the audience, anyway; some people in the audience may have higher or lower social status than, and other people equal social status to, the speaker. In such unclear or ambiguous situations, it may be safe or wise to adopt the highest speech level. Hearers with higher social status will be happy with the speaker's choice of the correct speech level, whereas hearers with equal or lower social status will be 'flattered' by being spoken to at the highest speech level. Moreover, the situation will probably be best served by the deferential speech level, because the speaker is literally out-numbered by the audience, the possible disparity in social status between them notwithstanding.

As alluded to in Chapter 4, it is not just the speech level that is dictated by the medium of language and the formality of situations. The choice of words

may also depend on these two factors. For instance, Sino-Korean words tend to be used in formal situations while native Korean words are preferred in informal situations. Sino-Korean words, in comparison with native Korean ones, are often regarded as 'learned' or even pedantic. For example, in formal situations, the Sino-Korean words *swucok* 'arms and legs', *sillyey* 'example', *kumnyen* 'this year' and *tongpok* 'winter clothes' may be used in lieu of the native Korean words *phaltali*, *poki*, *olhay* and *kyewulos*, respectively.

As opposed to writing, spoken language – typically in the informal style – tends to be characterized by certain linguistic properties, i.e. omission and contraction in particular. In Chapter 5, it was mentioned that role-marking particles can potentially be omitted, as in (13).

(13) kiho   swukcey   ha-yss-e?
      Keeho   homework   do-PST-INTIMATE.Q
      'Did Keeho do his homework?'

In (13), the subject noun phrase and the object noun phrase appear without their role-marking particles, i.e. nominative *-ka* and accusative *-lul*, respectively (cf. *kiho-ka swukcey-lul ha-yss-e?*). There are two important factors that contribute to the correct understanding of (13), even without the role-marking particles. First, the verb *ha-* in (13) expresses a situation where someone did something (i.e. two participants). Thus the roles of the noun phrases can easily be inferred from the meaning of the verb alone. Second, there is a difference in 'animacy' between the two noun phrases (i.e. human versus inanimate). The general knowledge of the world can thus tell the hearer which of the two noun phrases refers to the doer or to what was done. People do homework, not the other way round. Thus the natural interpretation should be that Keeho was the doer and homework was what was done. Readers will recall from Chapter 5 that the basic subject–object–verb word order is relied upon in sentences produced without the use of role-marking particles. In (13), however, because of the obvious difference in animacy between the two noun phrases (i.e. Keeho versus homework), it may be possible to use an object–subject–verb order, as in *swukcey kiho ha-yss-e?*, the absence of the role-marking particles notwithstanding.

Moreover, in Korean, whatever can be understood from context can also be omitted. Thus, far more frequently than not, sentences may end up with verbs and nothing else, as exemplified in the short dialogue in (14).

(14)
Speaker A: kiho-ka   ssu-te-n   khomphyuthe-ka
              Keeho-NOM   use-RETROSPECTIVE-REL   computer-NOM
              eti   ka-ss-e?
              where   go-PST-INTIMATE.Q
              'Where is the computer that Keeho used?'

Speaker B:　pely-ess-eyo
　　　　　　throw-PST-POLITE.S
　　　　　　'(I) threw (it) away.'

Speaker B's response consists of a single verb alone. This is made possible by the following factors. First, Speaker A's question concerns the location of the computer that Keeho used previously; in replying to Speaker A's question, therefore, Speaker B does not have to say explicitly what it was that was thrown away (i.e. omission of the object noun phrase). Second, Speaker B does not have to say explicitly who threw it away either (i.e. omission of the subject noun phrase), because it cannot be Speaker A. If Speaker A had done so, Speaker A would not have asked the question in the first place. Speaker A can also understand correctly from Speaker B's answer that it was Speaker B, not anyone else, who threw the computer away, because Speaker B would otherwise have said explicitly who it was that did so (e.g. if Keeho had thrown it away, Speaker B would have replied: *kiho-ka pely-ess-eyo* 'Keeho threw (it) away').

　Although expressions can be freely omitted in Korean (informal) speech, verbs tend not to be omitted (although they can be under highly limited circumstances). Instead they are almost always retained, to the effect that many sentences may consist of verbs only. There are two good reasons for this. First, as discussed with respect to (13), the verb describes the relationship between the participants in the event or situation. Thus it is crucial for the purpose of determining the relationship between omitted noun phrases, for example. If noun phrases instead were retained, it would be impossible to ascertain their relationship. For example, if only two noun phrases, *the boy* and *the dog* were given, one would not be able to determine the relationship between them. If, on the other hand, the verb *hit* were given, one could infer that there are two participants in the event described and also their relationship, i.e. the hitter and the hittee. Moreover, if these two participants are understood from context, which is often the case, which was the hitter or the hittee can also be inferred, i.e. the boy as the hitter and the dog as the hittee. (If, however, the verb *bit* were given, the roles would be reversed, the dog as the biter and the boy as the bitee.) Second, the verb carries the speaker's level of deference towards the hearer, among other things. For example, in Speaker B's reply in (14), the verb is marked by the polite speech level ending. If the verb were omitted, there would be no way to indicate the speaker's level of deference towards the hearer. In Korean, this is unthinkable. For this reason, the verb is rarely deleted. This is further demonstrated in (15).

(15)
Speaker A:　sensayng-nim　mosi-ko　　　　　　　　w-ass-ni?
　　　　　　　teacher-HON　accompany.HUMBLE-and　come-PST-PLAIN.Q
　　　　　　　'(Did you) accompany the teacher (here)?'

Speaker B: mosi-ko   w-ass-supnita
             accompany.HUMBLE-and   come-PST-DEFERENTIAL.S
             '(I) accompanied (him here).'

In (15), Speaker A has not at all expressed the role of the noun phrase
sensayng-nim 'the (honourable) teacher' (that is, the absence of the accusative
particle *-ul*). None the less, Speaker B understands this 'bare' noun phrase
to be the object noun phrase of Speaker A's sentence because the verb used
in that sentence is the humble verb *mosi-* 'to accompany', which must be
used in conjunction with object noun phrases referring to respected or
honourable persons. Moreover, although Speaker A is saying nothing about
who accompanied the teacher, Speaker B infers that Speaker A is asking
whether Speaker B did so, because Speaker A would otherwise have men-
tioned the identity of the doer explicitly (e.g. someone other than Speaker B),
and because, if Speaker A had done so, Speaker A would not have asked the
question in the first place. In Speaker B's reply, the verb carries important
information about Speaker B's social status relative to the teacher's and
also Speaker A's. As has already been pointed out, Speaker B uses the
humble verb *mosi-* instead of the neutral verb *teyli-* (see Table 4.4). This
is indicative of Speaker B's deference towards the teacher mentioned in
Speaker A's question. Moreover, Speaker B adopts the deferential speech
level, which is intended to express Speaker B's deference towards Speaker A
(or the hearer), who uses the plain speech level. (Thus Speaker B could be a
young student and Speaker A a parent.) It makes a lot of sense that verbs,
unlike other expressions, are almost always retained in Korean speech. Refer-
ence to social or interpersonal relationships would have been largely lost in
Speaker B's reply if it had contained a simple *ney* 'yes' instead of the verb.
    Another type of omission frequently encountered in informal speech is
the apparent use of incomplete sentences, as exemplified in (16).

(16)   na-nun   cikum   sikan-i   eps-nuntey
       I-TOP   now   time-NOM   not.exist-since
       'Since I don't have time.'

Normally, (16) is followed by another sentence, as in (17).

(17)   ettehkey   yenghwakwukyeng-ul   ka-keyss-e?
       how   movie.going-ACC   go-JUDGEMENT-INTIMATE.Q
       'How (can I possibly) go to the movies?'

The incomplete sentence in (16) could be used in response to the invitation
to go to the movies together with the hearer or someone else. Since the
content of the invitation is readily available from the discourse context, the
speaker in (16) can leave the rest of the sentence (i.e. (17)) unexpressed. Also

exploited here is the general knowledge of the world: lack of time is a common reason for declining an invitation. Thus, although the speaker has said as much or little as (16), the hearer can easily infer the speaker's inability to accept the invitation. This kind of omission is typically found in social formulaic expressions, as in (18) (see below for detailed discussion of social formulaic expressions).

(18) sillyey   ha-pnita-man
      excuse   do-DEFERENTIAL.S-but
      'Excuse me (sir) but . . .'

The incomplete sentence in (18) is routinely used when the speaker is imposing on other people, e.g. interrupting someone's work by stepping into the latter's office. What could have followed the expression in (18) is readily recoverable from the immediate context (e.g. the speaker is interrupting the hearer's work).

Informal speech is also characterized by contractions or contracted expressions. It is not possible to discuss every type of contraction here. Generally, however, it can be said that grammatical expressions tend to be contracted in informal speech. For instance, the topic/contrast particle -*(n)un* is frequently reduced to a single consonant -*n* after the first and second person pronouns, e.g. *na-nun* 'I-TOP' → *na-n*, *ce-nun* 'I.HUMBLE-TOP' → *ce-n* (e.g. (5)), *ne-nun* 'you-TOP' → *ne-n*. Role-marking particles can be similarly reduced, e.g. *nwukwu-lul* 'who-ACC' → *nwukwu-l*, *mues-ul* 'what-ACC' → *mwe-l* (e.g. (2)), and *hakkyo-eyse* 'school-at' → *hakkyo-se*, and *kiho-hantheyse* 'Keeho-from' → *kiho-hanthey*. More examples of contraction, which involve the nominative particle, are: *i kes-i* 'this thing-NOM' → *i key*, *ku kes-i* 'that thing-NOM' → *ku key*, and *ce kes-i* 'that.over.there thing-NOM' → *ce key*, e.g. *i kes-i mues i-ya* → *i key mwe-ya* 'What is this (thing)?' The negative expression *ani ha-ta* is usually shortened to *anh-ta*, as in *kiho-ka ka-ci ani ha-yss-e* 'Keeho did not go' → *kiho-ka ka-ci anh-ass-e*. Students are advised to learn full expressions before starting to learn and use contracted ones. Fortunately, native Koreans, if considerate, are likely to avoid using contracted expressions to learners of Korean.

Lubricators: fillers, responders and connectors

In common with speakers of other languages, Koreans pause and hesitate while speaking. When this happens, the speaker may be looking for right or appropriate words or expressions or trying to think what to say next. This is in a way fortunate for learners, especially beginners, who may be struggling or taking time to remember words or expressions. However, it is important to know where to pause or hesitate. It is not correct to do so, for example, between noun phrases and associated role-marking particles or between verbs

and honorific, tense and speech-level endings (e.g. *haksayng-i # w-ass-e* versus *??haksayng # -i w-ass-e* 'The student has come', where # represents a pause). Silence may appear at points of pause or hesitation, but, more frequently than not, what may be aptly called fillers tend to be used. Simple *ah* and *um* could be used, just as in English, but there are other useful fillers that learners can take advantage of, e.g. *mwe-la ha-l-kka* 'what shall I say?', *kamanhi iss-e-po-ca* 'let's see' or literally 'let's try to be still', *kulsey* 'well'. Learners should, however, bear in mind that some of these fillers may require an appropriate speech-level ending, e.g. *mwe-la ha-l-kka-yo* [polite] and *kulsey-yo* [polite]. Fillers, however, may not be appropriate for the deferential speech level, in which case simple pauses can do a better job.

The hearer is normally also expected to signal that what the speaker is saying is being followed or understood. This can be done in a number of ways, but the most common is to make use of so-called responders. There are a good number of useful responders in Korean, e.g. *ung* [intimate] or *yey/ney* [polite] 'yes', *ani/ani-ya* [intimate], *ani-yo/ani-eyyo* [polite] or *ani-pnita* [deferential] 'no', *kulay/kulem* [intimate], *kulay-yo* [polite] or *kuleh-supnita* [deferential] 'right', *cengmal?* [intimate], *cengmal-yo?* [polite] or *cengmal i-pnikka?* [deferential] 'really?' and *mwe-lako* [intimate] or *mwe-lako-yo* [polite] 'what (did you say)?' Learners must again bear in mind that variants, where available, need to be selected, depending on the correct or appropriate speech level. Where no variants at the right speech level – typically the deferential speech level – exist, circumlocutions may have to be drawn upon, e.g. *tasi hanpen malssum ha-y-cwu-si-keyss-supnikka?* [again once words.HON say-LK-give-HON-INTEND-DEFERENTIAL.Q] 'Could you please say it again?' for *mwe-lako* [intimate] and *mwe-lako-yo* [polite] 'what (did you say)?'. The latter responders will be totally unacceptable for the deferential speech level.

Finally, sentences can be linked by means of connectors. Such linking can be made by one and the same speaker or by a different speaker. In the latter case, one sentence can be uttered by Speaker A and another by Speaker B, and the two sentences are linked to each other by means of Speaker B's connector or *kulemyen* (or *kulem* for short) 'in that case' in (19).

(19)
Speaker A: nayil   pi-ka   o-keyss-eyo
             tomorrow   rain-NOM   come-JUDGEMENT-POLITE.S
             '(I think) it is going to rain tomorrow.'
Speaker B: kulemyen   sopung-ul   chwiso-ha-ci-yo
             in.that.case   picnic-ACC   cancellation-do-become-POLITE.P
             'In that case, let's cancel the picnic.'

If Speaker B had uttered the second sentence without the connector *kulemyen*, the transition between the two sentences would have been rather abrupt or

less than smooth. In fact, Speaker B would have sounded curt or impolite. In (19), Speaker B is 'cooperating' with Speaker A by accepting what Speaker A implies as a good reason for the cancellation of the picnic, which Speaker B proceeds to suggest. Other connectors include: *kuliko(-tto)* 'and (also)', *kulayse* 'and so' and *ku(le)ntey* 'but' or 'however'. Because their function is to link sentences, connectors do not occur at the beginning of a discourse but tend to occur at the beginning of a sentence.

Social formulaic expressions: nature and use

When people learn foreign languages, one of the first things that they are exposed to (and acquire) is social formulaic expressions routinely used in recurrent social situations such as greetings, farewells, thanking, apologizing, inviting, requesting and the like. Social formulaic expressions are at the core of language etiquette and protocol, without which smooth social interaction will be difficult to achieve. Language etiquette and protocol assume a very important role in Korean society, as readers can appreciate from previous chapters. Korean grammar, as has previously been demonstrated, has an abundance of devices or strategies to indicate social status or interpersonal relationships. Thus it hardly comes as a surprise that Koreans establish, maintain and reinforce their social status and social obligations by means of social formulaic expressions.

Social formulaic expressions come in more or less fixed form. Learners tend to memorize them *in toto* as if they were words or fixed expressions. In this respect, they are not very difficult to acquire. Unfortunately, however, social formulaic expressions in one language will not always coincide in terms of nature and use with those in another language. Depending on languages, there are different rules to follow and learners must not only memorize social formulaic expressions but also be able to use them in appropriate situations. To make matters worse, certain social formulaic expressions in Korean may not have their counterparts in English or vice versa.

Moreover, because social formulaic expressions are exchanged in pairs, learners must be able to respond in kind, i.e. to use appropriate social formulaic expressions in response to other people's social formulaic expressions (e.g. A: *How are you?* B: *Thank you. And you?*, but compare A: *See you later* B: !*When (will you see me again)?*, where ! indicates inappropriateness). Social formulaic expressions used in some of the recurrent social situations are discussed in this section, with reference to seeming equivalents in English, if available. (Emphasis is placed on the deferential speech level, because the use of social formulaic expressions is most prominent or elaborate at this particular speech level, although variants at other speech levels are also discussed.)

Koreans meeting for the first time use expressions such as *manna poy-se pankap-supnita* 'I am delighted to meet you', or *cheum poyp-keyss-supnita*

'I am meeting you for the first time'. When seeing again someone whom they have already met, Koreans may refer to the previous encounter by using an expression of pleasure, *cinan-pen manna poy-se pankaw-ass-supnita* 'I was delighted to meet you last time', or an apologetic expression, *cinan-pen phyey-ka manh-ass-supnita* 'I caused you much inconvenience last time'. The apologetic expression, *cinan-pen phyey-ka manh-ass-supnita*, may sound out of place in the social situation in question. Issuing an apology instead of expressing pleasure about previous encounters will indeed seem very odd to English-speaking learners, especially when no inconvenience was previously caused by the speaker. However, this is just the way Koreans conduct themselves in terms of language etiquette and protocol. (See below for further discussion of apologetic expressions in other social situations.)

There is one useful, widely used greeting expression *annyengha-si-pnikka* [deferential] or *annyengha-s-eyo* [polite] 'How are you?' This can be used at any time of the day or night upon meeting or seeing people. There is nothing equivalent to the distinction, as in English, between *Good morning*, *Good day*, *Good afternoon*, *Good evening* and *Good night* (but see below). Because of recent Western influence, Korean translations (or, technically speaking, calques) of the English expressions (e.g. *coh-un achim i-pnita* literally 'It is a good morning' for *Good morning*) may be heard, but they are unnatural or even contrived. Note, however, that Koreans do not use these greeting expressions to the extent that English speakers use *Good morning* etc. For instance, Koreans do not say the greeting expressions to those whom they see (almost) everyday (e.g. family members and work colleagues). When Koreans see their family members in the morning, they tend to say *annyenghi cwumusi-ess-supnikka?* [deferential] 'Did you sleep in peace?' to (grand)parents or *cal ca-ss-e?* [intimate]/*cal ca-ss-ni?* [plain] 'Did you sleep well?' to children or siblings. As might be expected, Koreans say to their family members before going to sleep *annyenghi cwumusi-psio* [deferential] 'Please sleep in peace' or *cal ca* [intimate]/*cal ca-la* [plain] 'Sleep well'. These 'good morning/ night' expressions tend to be used only to those who sleep (or slept) under the same roof. For example, a visitor who stays overnight can use them to the host family or vice versa.

Commonly used as a greeting expression among acquaintances or friends running into each other on the street is *eti ka-si-pnikka?* [deferential], *eti ka-s-eyo?* [polite], *eti ka(-a)?* [intimate], *eti ka-ni?* [plain] 'Where are you going?' This may perhaps seem to English-speaking learners to border on an invasion of privacy. This, however, is one of the most common ways of greeting one's acquaintances or friends on the street. Koreans can be even heard to say *pap mek-ess-e?* 'Did you eat?' to each other. This expression, of course, needs to be upgraded to *cinci tusi-ess-supnikka?* 'Did you eat (sir)?', when used to a respected person, e.g. a grandparent. When seeing an acquaintance whom they have not seen for an extended period of time, Koreans are likely to say *cal cinay-si-ess-supnikka?* 'Have you been well?' The standard response is

tekpun-ey cal cinay-ss-supnita 'Because of you, I have been well' (even when the hearer is not at all responsible for the speaker's well-being) or simply *cal cinay-ss-supnita* 'I have been well'. The expression, when used to friends, can be 'downgraded' to *cal cinay-ss-e?* [intimate] or *cal cinay-ss-ni?* [plain].

Leave-taking or farewell expressions include *annyenghi ka-sipsio* 'Please go in peace' and *annyenghi kyey-sipsio* 'Please stay in peace'. As the English translations suggest, the first is used to, and the second by, someone who is taking leave. However, when going out for a short period of time (e.g. going to the market, going on errands and the like), Koreans use expressions such as *tany-e o-keyss-supnita* [deferential] 'I will go and come back'. They may also specify where they are going by adding a locative phrase to this expression, as in *hakkyo(-ey) tany-e o-keyss-supnita* 'I will go to school and come back'. Upon return, Koreans tend to repeat the same expression but in the past tense, as in *tany-e w-ass-supnita* 'I went and came back'. Variants on the other speech levels include *ka-ss-ta o-lkkey* [intimate] and *ka-ss-ta o-lkkey-yo* [polite] 'I will go and come back'. Note the use of the verb *o-* 'to come (back)' in these expressions (and the absence of the verb *come* in similar English expressions, e.g. *I am going out tonight for a drink* versus *!I am going out tonight for a drink and coming back*).

It is not the case that one can use an expression of thanks in Korean whenever *Thank you* and other similar expressions (e.g. *Thanks*, *Cheers*) are used in English. As a matter of fact, learners of Korean will be surprised to realize how infrequently Koreans, in comparison with English speakers, say *kamsaha-pnita* or *komap-supnita* 'Thank you'. This, of course, does not mean that Koreans do not have a sense of gratitude or know how to express gratitude. In routine social situations where English speakers normally say *Thank you* or *Thanks* (e.g. shops, libraries, public places), Koreans say little, let alone *kamsaha-pnita* or *komap-supnita*, especially when paying for goods and services. Learners of Korean should not expect to hear an expression of thanks even when letting Koreans through the door before them (although they will probably use body language, e.g. slight bowing). Nor should they really expect to say an expression of thanks to shop assistants who have just passed them their orders (although the latter may themselves say an expression of thanks). Many Koreans may in fact believe that English speakers express gratitude so frequently that English expressions of thanks have lost their true meaning. More importantly, when gratitude really needs to be expressed, Koreans tend to use pardon-seeking or apologetic expressions instead. For example, to someone who is doing a favour or offering assistance, Koreans would say *coysongha-pnita* 'I am sorry' or *phyey-ka manh-supnita* 'I am causing much inconvenience'. The natural way to say thanks in Korean is to say how sorry one is for imposing on other people. To these pardon-seeking or apologetic expressions of gratitude, one would be expected to respond by saying formulaic expressions such as *chenman-ey-yo* [polite] 'not at all' *musun malssum-ul* (*kuleh-key ha-si-pnikka*) [deferential] 'nonsense' or

literally 'what words (are you saying?)'. The question, of course, arises as to whether Koreans ever say *Thank you*. They no doubt do so, but usually in conjunction with the pardon-seeking or apologetic expressions. Thus it is possible but not necessary to add an expression of thanks to an apologetic expression. Koreans may also be more likely to use an expression of thanks to their friends or when there is no substantial difference in social status between the speaker and the hearer, i.e. *komaw-e* [intimate] or *komaw-eyo* [polite] 'Thanks' or 'Thank you'.

The apologetic expression *phyey-ka manh-supnita* 'I am causing much inconvenience' can also be used in a situation where native English speakers would thank the host at the beginning of a meal, for example. Equally frequently used in this particular social situation are formulaic expressions such as *cal mek-keyss-supnita* 'I will eat well' or *mas-iss-key mek-keyss-supnita* 'I will eat with gusto'. Expressions of thanks would not be entirely inappropriate, however, because Koreans have in recent times begun to use expressions of thanks, owing mainly to Western influence, but still not as frequently to give thanks for a free meal as in English. To most Koreans, the use of expressions of thanks in this situation would be, to put it mildly, too 'innovative'. The expressions of enjoyment or apology are still the norm.

Pardon-seeking or apologetic expressions are used in genuine situations where social obligations to seek pardon or to apologize need to be expressed. Expressions such as *sillyey ha-pnita* 'Excuse me', *coysong ha-pnita* 'I am sorry' and *phyey-ka manh-supnita* 'I am causing a lot of inconvenience' are used. But learners must be warned that they should not always expect to hear these expressions in situations where the English equivalents are used. Someone who may have to walk through a group of people congregated in a corridor is expected to say 'Excuse me' in English before passing through them. Koreans, on the other hand, may not always say *sillyey ha-pnita* 'Excuse me' but may walk right through without uttering a single word of pardon-seeking (especially when the people blocking the passage are younger than the person walking through). This may seem very rude or even arrogant to English-speaking learners, but Koreans are more likely to express their apology by means of body language (e.g. bowing or hand movement) than to say something like *sillyey ha-pnita*. (In fact, if this expression were used in the situation under discussion, it would probably be interpreted to mean that the speaker has something to say or to ask for, e.g. direction.)

Korean social formulaic expressions could not be more different from their English 'counterparts' when it comes to so-called expressions of modesty. A typical example of this comes from social formulaic expressions that Koreans use when giving a gift to someone or inviting guests to help themselves to food. When giving a gift to someone, Koreans tend to say *pyel kes ani-ciman pat-a-cwu-sipsio* 'Please accept this (for me) although it is nothing special' (note the use of the verb *cwu-* here; see Chapter 5 and

below). This expression will be used even when an expensive item is being given. (Incidentally, people receiving a gift, if wrapped, are not expected to open it there and then. This is probably intended to prevent the giver from losing face when it turns out that the recipient does not like it. The recipient can thus open the gift and then like or hate it in private.) When invited to a meal, learners should expect to hear expressions such as *chali-n kes-un eps-ciman manhi tusi-psio* literally 'Please eat much although I (or we) have prepared so little' or *mas-un eps-ciman mas iss-key tusi-psio* literally 'Please eat with gusto although it is not delicious'. These expressions will be used even when there is a surfeit of food or when the food is delicious. To English-speaking learners, they may all sound insincere, disingenuous or even condescending. However, this is not the correct way to look at these expressions. Getting a free meal or receiving a gift is a social imposition on the people who have prepared the meal or bought the gift (meals have to be cooked or gifts have to be paid for). Koreans use the expressions of modesty in order to help to prevent recipients or beneficiaries from feeling that they are imposing on other people. It is, therefore, out of consideration for recipients or beneficiaries that Koreans use these expressions of modesty. They are not meant – and should never be understood – to be insincere, disingenuous or condescending. In response to these expressions of modesty, one is expected to use appropriate social formulaic expressions in return. Thus having heard *pyel kes ani-ciman pat-a-cwu-sipsio* 'Please accept this although it is nothing special', Koreans are expected to respond: *ilehkey coh-un kes-ul way cwu-si-pnikka?* 'Why are you giving (me) something as good as this?' or *ilehkey coh-un kes-ul way kaci-ko o-si-ess-pnikka?* 'Why have you brought (me) something as good as this?' These expressions are designed to imply that the recipient is not deserving of the gift, and that, because of this, the recipient is even more grateful to the giver. Moreover, the recipient tends to repeat an expression of refusal two or three times before finally accepting the gift, e.g. *nemu coh-ase/pissa-se ettehkey (cey-ka) pat-keyss-supnikka?* 'How can (I) accept this because it is so good/expensive?' (in fact, accepting a gift without uttering such an expression of refusal more than once will be looked down upon as inconsiderate, thoughtless or even ungrateful). This should never be understood to mean that the recipient is hesitating to accept or refusing the gift. Having heard *chali-n kes-un eps-ciman manhi tusi-psio* 'Please eat much although I (or we) have prepared so little' or *mas-un eps-ciman mas iss-key tusi-psio* 'Please eat with gusto although it is not delicious', Koreans are expected to respond: *cal mek-keyss-supnita* 'I will eat well' or *mas-iss-key mek-keyss-supnita* 'I will eat with gusto'. Once having finished the meal, the same expressions will be used, albeit in the past tense: *cal mek-ess-supnita* 'I ate well' or *mas-iss-key mek-ess-supnita* 'I ate with gusto'. When leaving the host's home, Koreans may use a variation on the same theme, as in *cal mek-ko ka-pnita* 'Having eaten well, I am leaving' or *mas-iss-key mek-ko ka-pnita* 'Having eaten with gusto, I am leaving'.

Expressions of modesty are not confined to gift-giving, invitation or other similar social situations. When expressing their opinions, especially to, or in the presence of, someone with higher social status, Koreans need to preface them with the expression *ce-nun cal molu-ciman* 'I don't know (it) well but' or *ce-nun a-nun kes-i eps-ciman* 'I know little but'. These may be akin to the English expressions of modesty *I could be wrong but . . .* , *in my humble opinion* and *with due respect* (in case of disagreement), but these expressions are relatively marked in English – so much so that they could potentially be interpreted to be disingenuous or even cynical – but the Korean expressions are not marked at all and never interpreted to be so. One is socially required to use such an expressions of modesty before sharing one's opinions with one's boss, teacher, (grand)parents or other people with higher social status.

When making requests, Koreans tend to use the multiple-verb construction based on the verb *cwu-ta* 'to give' (as discussed in Chapter 5), e.g. *sacen com pilly-e-cwu-si-keyss-supnikka?* [deferential question] 'Could you please lend (me) the dictionary?'; *sacen com pilly-e-cwu-keyss-eyo(?)* [polite question or command] 'Can you please lend (me) the dictionary?' or 'Please lend (me) the dictionary'; *sacen com pilly-e-cwu-keyss-e(?)* [intimate question or command] 'Can you lend (me) the dictionary?' or 'Lend (me) the dictionary, will you?; or *sacen com pilly-e-cw(u)-ela* [plain command] 'Lend (me) the dictionary'. The use of the verb *cwu-ta* 'to give' is the conventional method of making requests in Korean, as it clearly indicates that someone other than the hearer will benefit from the hearer's compliance or cooperation. The use of questions instead of commands is, incidentally, an almost universally attested strategy of making polite requests; questions are more appropriate than commands when making polite requests, because the former explicitly give the hearer the option of turning requests down (e.g. A: *Can you please lend me your dictionary?* B: *No, I can't because I have left it at home*). This is clearly evident from the above Korean examples drawn from the different speech levels.

This section has made a selective survey of social formulaic expressions in Korean. It cannot be overemphasized how important these and other social formulaic expressions are in learning Korean if learners wish to interact successfully or smoothly with Koreans. A good command of social formulaic expressions will certainly open doors for learners, as it were, whether they are seeking a personal or business relationship with Koreans. In Korea, as mentioned earlier, people's upbringing is, far more frequently than not, measured by, among other things, their command of social formulaic expressions. When learners show a good understanding of social formulaic expressions in their interaction, their Korean friends or colleagues will be more than impressed, and they will be more readily welcomed or accepted into Korean society.

7

NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA
Language policy and planning

When the Second World War ended in 1945, Korea gained independence from Japan, but it was immediately divided into North Korea and South Korea – the former under Soviet influence and the latter under US influence – as part of a global polarization into capitalism and communism (see Chapter 1). Relations between the two Koreas rapidly grew tense and hostile, resulting in border conflicts and subsequently in the Korean War (1950–3). Since then, virtually no communication between North and South Korea has been possible, except for intermittent high-level government dialogues (which only began in 1971 and then again in 1990). For this reason alone, the current language situation in Korea is highly unusual, if not unique. The situation in North and South Korea is often likened to that which existed in the former East and West Germany. This, however, is not a fair comparison since, even before the Berlin wall was torn down, East and West Germans knew about each other's life and society, e.g. from television, radio and other sources. By contrast, North Koreans cannot watch South Korean television, and few dare to tune in to South Korean radio stations (at the risk of their lives). Neither do South Koreans have access to North Korean television, although they can nowadays view (edited) North Korean TV news programmes for an hour per week.

There had certainly been pre-1945 differences between the Seoul dialect (i.e. Standard South Korean or Phyocwune 'Standard Language') and the Pyongyang dialect (i.e. Standard North Korean or Munhwae 'Cultured Language'). These two dialects – unlike Chinese dialects (e.g. Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese) – were and are mutually intelligible, however. The sixty-year long separation has no doubt accentuated or exacerbated the pre-existing differences. That alone, however, is not able to explain all the differences that are now attested between the two dialects.

The politico-ideological schism between North and South Korea has had an indelible impact on Standard North Korean and Standard South Korean. In particular, some of the language policy or planning measures taken by North Korea have a strong politico-ideological orientation, no matter what their real motives may be. The single most important consequence of North

Korea's politico-ideological position on language policy and planning was the emergence in 1966 of the Pyongyang dialect as Standard North Korean. Until then, the Seoul dialect had been the standard dialect for both North and South Korea. Moreover, as discussed below, in North Korea language policy and planning have been monopolized by Kim Il Sung (1912–94) as head of state (i.e. highly centralized planning and policy-making), whereas in South Korea they have always been in a state of flux, owing largely to a lack of initiative by the government and a lack of consensus among various interest groups (i.e. 'free market forces'). This difference has had a significant bearing on how the two Koreas have dealt with various language issues over the decades.

Discussion of language policy and planning in North and South Korea is not inappropriate in a book like the present one because it will enable readers to contextualize the widening gap between Standard North Korean and Standard South Korean in terms of political ideology. Furthermore, it will be interesting to find out how the different approaches to language policy and planning may have borne upon the two politico-ideologically opposed states that emerged from what had for more than twelve centuries been a culturally, linguistically and politically homogenous country.

In this chapter, historical information concerning language policy and planning in pre- and post-colonial Korea is first provided as a background to the subsequent discussion of the divergence between Standard South Korean and Standard North Korean. Language issues or problems that are bound to rear their heads in the event of reunification are also addressed, albeit briefly.

Language policy and planning: historical background

Probably the first language planning activity – even in the modern sense of this term – recorded in Korean history is that of King Sejong (1417–50), who invented a writing system for the masses, who were illiterate in Chinese characters (see Chapter 3). However, this new writing system or Hankul was looked down upon as 'vulgar' by the ruling elite, who had for centuries embraced Chinese characters as their sole writing system, although most of them could not speak Chinese themselves (refer to Chapter 3 for further discussion). Thus Hankul came to be used only by women and commoners. This state of affairs changed little until the end of the nineteenth century, which briefly witnessed the rise of nationalism in Korea in response to aggression by colonial powers, including Japan and Russia among others. In 1921 a group of Korean scholars formed the Cosene Hakhoy 'Korean Language Society' (later Hankul Hakhoy). The Korean Language Society was now striving in earnest to promote the exclusive use of Hankul by raising the public awareness of, and endeavouring to standardize, Hankul. However, this movement was short-lived, and the Society was soon put

down by the Japanese colonial government (1910–45), which made a very serious attempt to abolish the Korean language and eventually to annihilate the whole indigenous culture. Japanese was taught from 1911, one year after the annexation of Korea. Until the conclusion of the Second World War, the Japanese language accounted for as much as 40 per cent of all school hours in primary school. In 1938, the study or use of Korean became 'voluntary' in schools. By 1941, Korean had been completely removed from the education system. The ban on Korean was later enforced to the extent that Japanese was promoted in all areas of daily life to the exclusion of Korean. In 1940, Koreans were even forced to japanize their names. (For example, the most common Korean surname *Kim* 'gold' was converted into *Kaneoka* 'gold hill'), although their Korean names still had to be identified in official documents.

South Korea: 1945 to the present

In South Korea, the language issues that have since independence attracted most attention from both the government and interest groups are the use of Chinese characters or Hanca, the elimination of Sino-Japanese words and the revision of the Hankul writing system. Which dialect is to be selected as standard has never been an issue for South Korea, since the dialect of Seoul has been regarded as the standard dialect by default since the end of the fourteenth century, when the Yi Choson Dynasty (1392–1910) chose the place as its capital.

Following post-Second World War independence from Japan, purists in South Korea, under the aegis of the now resurrected Korean Language Society, pushed ahead with the exclusive use of Hankul. It was as if they wanted to celebrate the independence of the nation by adopting the Hankul-only policy. Moreover, the decades of Japanese rule drove home to Koreans, more than anything else, that their language and culture should never be taken for granted, and that alien languages and cultures could be imposed against their will with their own taken away. In particular, they were acutely aware of the presence of many Sino-Japanese words in Korean, and very much wanted to get rid of them. As early as the mid-nineteenth century words denoting Western objects and concepts began to be borrowed into Korean from Japanese, which in turn relied on Chinese characters to create them (but not necessarily mimicking Chinese expressions) (see Chapter 4). This trend increasingly persisted, with some Sino-Japanese words replacing Sino-Korean ones (e.g. *chello* 'railroad' and *nayoy* 'husband and wife' becoming *chelto* and *pupu*, respectively). This kind of replacement, together with a number of native Japanese words (e.g. *kapang* 'bag' and *kwutwu* 'leather shoes'), made so great an impact on Korean, especially during the Japanese occupation, that some Sino-Japanese words are still being used without most Koreans realizing their Japanese origins (e.g. *ocen* 'morning'

and *sahoy* 'society'). But, perhaps more importantly, the purists came to the realization that Koreans also needed to untangle themselves from Hanca, which had for the past two millennia permeated or dominated the Korean language (and culture). Not surprisingly, their strategy was to raise the status of Hankul as much as possible, i.e. to the eventual exclusion of Hanca. After all, Hankul was created by a Korean for the benefit of all Koreans.

Thus the Korean Language Society declared war on Hanca. However, a conservative government did not immediately go along with the purists' demand but allowed the 'parallel' use of Hankul and Hanca for a decade. It was not until 1957 that the cabinet passed a resolution in favour of the exclusive use of Hankul and banned the use of Hanca. (The government's determination was so strong that at one stage the police were called on to remove every shop sign written in Chinese characters from the street.) This outraged both the media and the educated section of society. They voiced the opinion that the elimination of Hanca would not only deprive Koreans of their own cultural heritage but also cut them off from the so-called Asian cultural block, to which Korea, China and Japan all belonged (the use of Chinese characters in these countries being one of the binding factors).

In 1964, the government gave in and drew up a list of 1,300 Chinese characters to be introduced progressively in primary and secondary schools. The purists, however, stuck to their guns and claimed, among other things, that the exclusive use of Hankul, not the use of Hanca, would enhance Korea's cultural independence and enable Koreans to gain cultural self-esteem. In addition, practical factors were put forward for consideration, e.g. the efficiency of Hankul in terms of learning and printing, the positive effect of Hankul on the elimination of illiteracy, Hankul as the popular medium of mass education and the susceptibility of Hankul to mechanization (i.e. the use of typewriters at the time).

In 1968, the government was persuaded to announce a five-year plan for the abolition of Hanca, which was later in the same year reduced to a two-year plan. The policy of the exclusive use of Hankul was brought right back in 1970. This again immediately provoked criticism from the media that high school graduates could not read newspapers, in which Chinese characters were still commonly used for Sino-Korean words. This time, however, the conservatives were better prepared. The Hankwuk Emun Kyoyukhoy 'Research Institute of Education in Korean Language and Writing' was inaugurated in 1969 with a view to promoting, and lobbying for, Hanca education and the use of Hanca. In particular, they pointed to the fact that the earlier Hankul-only policy had failed because outside the government and school people had continued to mix Hankul and Hanca, while schools were churning out graduates who were functionally illiterate in Hanca. Their other arguments ranged from reasonable to ludicrous ones, e.g. Hanca as an

effective means of visual communication and lack of Hanca education giving rise to teenage delinquency. In 1972, the government again changed its mind and came up with a new list of 1,800 basic Chinese characters to be taught in secondary schools. High school graduates are now expected to have mastered these 1,800 Chinese characters. (Note that there was no change of government, with the same president wielding almost absolute power, between 1964 and 1972.)

Some of those who were in favour of Hankul advocated nativization of Sino-Korean words as well. A large number of native words were, in fact, coined with a view to replacing Sino-Korean words. As a direct result, five volumes of these native words were published. The majority of these native words, however, were never taken up by the general public, and the nativization movement was soon discontinued. As critics pointed out repeatedly and correctly, it is extremely difficult and, in fact, naive to expect the public to accept and use artificially coined words in place of such basic or common Sino-Korean words as *tongmul* 'animal' and *cenhwa* 'telephone' (but see the next section on North Korea's successful nativization movement).

There now seems to be a growing political backlash against the Hankul-only position in South Korea. This trend was confirmed and reinforced by the government's announcement in February 1999 of a plan to reintroduce the parallel use of Hankul and Hanca even in official documents and public (road) signs – prompted by President Kim Tae-Jung on the grounds of internationalization and cultural heritage. Nowadays, it is not uncommon to read public and road signs in three different scripts, i.e. Hankul, Hanca and romanization. This is a most remarkable turn of events, especially in view of the growing tendency to use only Hankul in private or commercial signs and notices, and also to minimize the use of Chinese characters even in newspapers, which had traditionally been staunch advocates of Hanca. (Apparently, the use of Hanca turned out to have an adverse effect on the sale of newspapers, especially in competition with tabloids that avoided using Hanca.) Needless to say, Hankul-only proponents have already staged fierce public protests against the government's initiative. Another round in the tug of war between the two opposing camps has just commenced.

Another area in which the government in South Korea has displayed a lack of leadership, if not of initiative, is the issue of Hankul orthography. In 1933, the Korean Language Society proposed a so-called Hankul Macchwumpep Thongilan 'Unified Hankul Orthography'. While the Korean language had changed over the previous five centuries, the Hankul writing system had undergone no revision or standardization, with its users being left more or less to their own devices. Naturally, the Korean Language Society conceived of the revision or standardization of the Hankul system as one of its primary tasks (another being publication of a comprehensive

Korean dictionary). The Unified Hankul Orthography, however, could not be adopted then, because Korea was still under Japanese rule. After independence in 1945, it was accepted by the government without hesitation.

It was gradually realized, however, that the Unified Hankul Orthography was arbitrary, far from consistent and thus in great need of improvement. It also contained obsolete or redundant spelling rules. In 1970, the government set up a special committee to look into the matter of amending the Hankul system. The committee carried out a survey for three years (1972–4). In 1978, a Revised Hankul Orthography was drafted. However, it subsequently had to undergo a series of revisions, being evaluated by different review committees. One prominent Korean linguist reported that the atmosphere of these committees was not always cooperative and collegial; more often than not, it was hostile and antagonistic, with reformists and conservatives opposing each other. This is hardly surprising, because discussions about the reform of established written norms are widely known to resemble a religious war more than a rational discourse.

The Revised Hankul Orthography was at long last announced officially in January 1988 with the effect that it be put into practice from 1 March 1989 (which, incidentally, marked the seventieth anniversary of Korea's 1919 uprising against Japanese colonial rule). Although it took the government more than a decade to adopt it, however, the Revised Hankul Orthography is reported to bear much resemblance to the original Unified Hankul Orthography, the drastic changes of the 1978 draft having been abandoned in what one Korean linguist referred to aptly as a victory of conservatives over reformists.

The attitude of South Korea's government towards language issues and problems, particularly the status of Hanca and the dilatory adoption of the (not as much revised) Revised Hankul Orthography, can only be described as indecisive. There may have been a number of reasons for this state of affairs but the main one seems to be that there has been no single governmental or government-appointed organization to deal with language issues and problems, although there are a number of private organizations with divergent agendas. The government has long depended on these private organizations for advice and policy-making, favouring different organizations at different times, and it is highly unlikely to abandon its reliance on 'free market forces' in language planning and policy. Consequently, it has, far more frequently than not, been trapped in the wrangle between purists and conservatives or between reformists and conservatives. This could not be more evident than in the government's position on Hanca. In particular, the Korean Language Society and its rival, the Research Institute of Education in Korean Language and Writing, have for decades been at loggerheads with each other over the use of Hanca and other related issues, and the government has – wittingly or unwittingly – been caught in the crossfire of the two.

North Korea: 1945 to the present

Soon after the Second World War, North Korea's government recognized widespread illiteracy as worthy of top priority in its language policy. There were 2.3 million illiterates in North Korea alone, almost one-quarter of the total population. The Hankul-only policy was adopted as a matter of course, since, in compliance with the ethos of communism, the use of Chinese characters was regarded as feudalistic. On a more pragmatic level, however, the government must have realized that the use of Chinese characters could only delay or complicate its plan to eliminate the illiteracy problem. Illiteracy would have been an enormous hindrance to the speedy diffusion of communism and of the North Korean leader Kim Il Sung's personality cult. The issue of the standard dialect did not arise at all, for, as already pointed out, the Seoul dialect was initially retained as the standard dialect for North Korea as well.

In 1946, North Korea started to run 'adult schools' and Korean language schools in every village. It is claimed that by the end of 1948 illiteracy had completely disappeared. This is a singular achievement, especially when South Korea had more than 3.1 million illiterates (one-tenth of its population) as late as in 1954. (The rate of illiteracy in South Korea in 1975 was reported to be down to 0.5 per cent of the total population.)

The elimination of Chinese characters naturally went hand in hand with the nativization of Korean. This should not come as a surprise, because there is a lot of evidence that language in totalitarian states tends to be more puristic than in more democratic ones. Thus not only Sino-Korean words but also recent loanwords form Japanese, Russian and English were either discarded or translated into pure Korean. Even extinct words were resurrected from oblivion for the purpose. New words were created on the basis of existing ones. Needless to say, those relating to the personal titles of the aristocratic family or to the feudal society were eliminated from the language. Loanwords that defied nativization were replaced by Sino-Korean words.

The nativization movement must have been an important part of North Korea's Cwuchey 'self-reliance' policy, which, when declared in 1955, embraced political, social, economic and ideological independence. It was given further ammunition by Kim Il Sung in a dialogue with linguists in 1964. He suggested that linguists work towards the refinement of Korean. In other words, they should investigate the use and proportion of Sino-Korean words, and decide which Sino-Korean words should be replaced by native Korean ones and which should be retained. In his second dialogue with linguists in 1966, Kim Il Sung reinforced his views by suggesting that even children and villages be named by using native Korean words. He also called for a dictionary that could incorporate native Korean words. As a direct result of his initiative, a modern dictionary of Korean was published in 1968.

In 1966, Kim Il Sung put forth Munhwae 'Cultured Language' as the name of North Korea's standard dialect, which was based on the dialect of Pyongyang, then the *de facto* capital of North Korea (it was not until 1972 that Pyongyang was proclaimed as the capital of North Korea). He had a very clear politico-ideological motivation for this move, as is clearly manifested in his May 1966 speech:

> In order to develop our language, we must prepare its foundation well. We must preserve the national character of the language and develop it based on the dialect of Pyongyang. . . . But the word Phyocwune must be changed to another word, for it may be understood to refer to the dialect of Seoul, and therefore we need not use it. It is appropriate to call it by a different name; after all, it is based on the dialect of Pyongyang, the capital of revolution, and it is being developed by us, the builders of socialism.
>
> (Based on translation by Kim 1991)

Although North Korea initially used the Unified Hankul Orthography, a revised writing system (Cosene Chelcapep) was introduced in 1954. The revised writing system gave rise to a number of differences between North and South Korea, a few of which are discussed in the next section. However, in 1964 Kim Il Sung halted a further attempt to revise Cosenkul, as Hankul is known in North Korea. His reason was that, even if some revision was necessary and justifiable, it should be postponed until the unification of the two Koreas. When a collection of prescriptions was published in 1966, old conventions were reintroduced.

Kim Il Sung went as far as to declare that Chinese characters should also be retained in the light of the fact that they were very much in use in South Korea, and with a view to maintaining mutual intelligibility in writing in the event of reunification. This immediately led to public education in Chinese characters. Since 1966, 3,000 Chinese characters have been taught in North Korea in non-primary schools, with 1,500 characters in six years of secondary school, 500 additional characters in two years of technical school and 1,000 additional characters in four years of university. In reality, however, no Chinese characters are used in books, magazines, newspapers and other publications in North Korea. Therefore, although North Koreans in general learn more Chinese characters than South Koreans, the former may not be as proficient in them as the latter.

No substantial changes in North Korea's position seem to have taken place recently, except that the language policy has been exploited as a major vehicle for promoting and maintaining Kim Il Sung's personality cult, his isolationist Cwuchey policy and his family's dynastic rule. For instance, a special honorific system is reported to have been developed to refer to or address Kim Il Sung and his family members; 19 out of 40 chapters of the

fourth grade Korean language textbook (1984–) are concerned with the praise or idolization of Kim Il Sung or his family, for example.

Differences between Phyocwune and Munhwae

As described in the previous section, there are clear differences in the language policies of North and South Korea. North Korea has replaced many Sino-Korean words and loanwords with native Korean words, and also adopted the Hankul-only policy, whereas South Korea has retained many Sino-Korean words and loanwords and chosen, at least at the policy level, to use Hanca in conjunction with Hankul, and continues to embrace loanwords, especially from English (see Chapter 4). Moreover, North Korea's language policy and planning have been directed or implemented more or less under the sole tutelage of Kim Il Sung – notwithstanding his death, it may be added, for his successor and eldest son Kim Jong Il does not seem to be particularly interested in such matters – whereas the government in South Korea has over the decades been susceptible to the influence of private organizations or interest groups. This difference is most clearly demonstrated by the fact that almost all the language measures that North Korea has taken over the decades stemmed directly from Kim Il Sung's dialogues with North Korean linguists in 1964 and 1966, whereas in South Korea the adoption in 1988 of the Revised Hankul Orthography was regarded by many as one of the few government-directed language measures.

In this section, some of the most prominent differences between Standard South Korean and Standard North Korean are discussed. These differences range from sound patterns and words to writing, although different words for the same objects or concepts prove to be the most problematic for communication between North and South Koreans. North Korea's nativization policy has brought into being a huge number of words that may not be (easily) understood by South Koreans. Conversely, many Sino-Korean words and (English) loanwords commonly used by South Koreans may not be intelligible to North Koreans.

The most striking difference in terms of pronunciation is the retention in Standard North Korean of word-initial /l/ or /n/ in Sino-Korean words. As readers will recall from Chapter 2, in Standard South Korean, when /l/ and /n/ appear in word-initial position and before either the vowel /i/ or the semivowel /j/, these consonants are to be deleted. Moreover, word-initial /l/ changes to [n] before vowels other than /i/ or /j/. For example, *sayngnyen* 'birth year' and *yenmal* 'year end' are compound expressions, both containing the word *(n)yen* 'year'. In the first compound expression, the word in question does not appear in word-initial position; the initial consonant /n/ is thus retained. In the second compound expression, on the other hand, it occurs without the initial /n/, because it appears in word-initial position and before the semivowel /j/. Moreover, *kelay* 'transaction' and *nayil* 'tomorrow' both

contain the word *lay* 'to come' or 'coming'. In *kelay*, /l/ does not appear in word-initial position, and there is no change. In *nayil*, on the other hand, /l/ appears in word-initial position (and before the vowel /ɛ/), and must thus be changed to [n] for purposes of pronunciation. In Standard North Korean, on the other hand, these word-initial consonants must be pronounced without adjustment as a prescriptive rule (i.e. a linguistic rule imposed on the public, similar to, but far much stronger than, the prescriptive rule in English not to split the infinitive, e.g. *The editor asked the writers always to submit their stories on time* versus *The editor asked the writers to always submit their stories on time*). Examples of these differences include (Standard South Korean preceding Standard North Korean): *i* versus *ni* 'tooth', *ilon* versus *lilon* 'theory', *yemwen* versus *nyemwen* 'wish', *yeseng* versus *nyeseng* 'female', *yenlyeng* versus *nyenlyeng* 'age', *naypang* versus *laypang* 'visit' and *nodong* versus *lodong* 'labour'.

Another area in which Standard South Korean and Standard North Korean deviate considerably from each other concerns loanwords. North Korean loanwords (that is, those which have survived North Korea's nativization drive) tend to reflect Russian or Japanese influence and South Korean loanwords English influence, e.g. (Standard South Korean preceding Standard North Korean) *khep* versus *koppu* 'cup', *thayngkhu* versus *ttangkhu* 'tank' and *paylensu* versus *palansu* 'balance'. Foreign place names, on the other hand, are much closer to their original pronunciations in Standard North Korean than in Standard South Korean, which prefers English or Anglicized pronunciations (Standard South Korean preceding Standard North Korean), e.g. *pukkyeng* versus *peyicing* 'Beijing', *pathikhan* versus *pattikkano* 'Vatican', *hengkali* versus *weyngkulia* 'Hungary' and *phollayndu* versus *ppolsukka* 'Poland'. None the less, recent research indicates that there are more English loanwords in Standard North Korean than Russian or other loanwords.

Generally speaking, Standard North Korean prefers native Korean words to Sino-Korean words to loanwords, as expected in view of North Korea's nativization movement. By one count, as many as 50,000 native Korean words were created in Standard North Korean to replace Sino-Korean words or loanwords, e.g. Sino-Korean word *kwancel* 'bone joint' → *ppyemati* [literally 'bone joint'], Sino-Korean word *tayyang* 'ocean' → *hanpata* [literally 'big sea'], Sino-Korean word *hongswu* 'flood' → *khunmul* [literally 'big water'], Sino-Korean word *salkyun* 'sterilization' → *kyuncwukiki* [literally 'germ killing'], Sino-Korean word *manwen* 'packed to full capacity' → *caliepsum* [literally 'no empty seats'], Japanese loanword *zubong* → *paci* 'trousers', Russian loanword *ssabakha* → *kay* 'dog', English loanword *phama* 'permanent wave' → *pokkum meli* [literally 'fried hair'] and English loanword *taiethu* 'diet' → *salkkakkki* [literally 'the cutting off of flesh']. Sometimes, extinct words were rescued from oblivion for the purpose, e.g. *minchwum-ha-ta* 'to be foolish and immature'. Scientific and technical terminologies

were also subject to similar treatments, e.g. *swusike* → *chilyeymal* 'modifier'. Although about half of these newly created native Korean words are reported to have subsequently reverted to Sino-Korean words or loanwords, North Korea's nativization movement has undoubtedly been far more successful than South Korea's.

As pointed out earlier, words relating to the personal titles of aristocratic families or to feudal society were eliminated from the language, e.g. *akassi* 'feudal lord's unmarried daughter', *taykam* 'feudal lord' and *manim* 'feudal lord's wife', although in Standard South Korean, these words, with the exception of *akassi* – which now means 'a young unmarried woman' – are used only in a historical context, e.g. historical novels or dramas.

Some loanwords that defied nativization were replaced by Sino-Korean words, e.g. Russian loanwords *kkamppaniya* 'campaign' → *cipcwung saep* [literally 'focus project'] and *ppioneylu* 'boy scout' → *sonyentan* [literally 'boys' club'], and English loanwords *heyllikhopthe* 'helicopter' → *ciksung pihayngki* [literally 'vertically rising plane'] and *ssinalio* 'scenario' → *yenghwamunhak* [literally 'film literature'].

One consequence of the emergence of Standard North Korean, especially in conjunction with North Korea's nativization movement, is that different native or Sino-Korean words are used in Standard South Korean and Standard North Korean. For example, South Korean *sangchi* 'lettuce', *chayso* 'vegetable', *tosilak* 'lunchbox', *palo* 'straight away', *kwukmin* 'people' and *chinkwu* 'friend' correspond to North Korean *pulwu*, *namsay*, *papkwak*, *incha*, *inmin* and *tongmu*, respectively. This kind of discrepancy, unfortunately, extends to the word meaning 'Korea' itself: the Standard North Korean word for Korea is Cosen (cf. Cosenkul), as opposed to the Standard South Korean word Hankwuk. It is somewhat ironic that communist North Korea should have retained the name of Korea's last royal dynasty, i.e. Yi Choson [I Cosen].

Moreover, some Standard North Korean words have changed their meanings, largely because of North Korea's politico-ideological orientation. For example, the Standard South Korean word *nodong* 'labour' refers to physical or manual work only, but in Standard North Korean, any work, whether physical or political, that is useful for the state is referred to as *lodong* (see above for the retention of /l/ in word-initial position in Standard North Korean). Another example is the Standard South Korean word *kwungcen* '(royal) palace', which in Standard North Korean means a huge palace-like building or edifice used for social and political activities. Interestingly enough, the Korean word *epei* 'father or parent' has been reserved in Standard North Korean to refer to North Korea's (deceased) leader Kim Il Sung only.

Moreover, Standard North Korean is reported to make heavier use of derivation in creating new words than Standard South Korean (see Chapter 4 for derivation). This may not come as a surprise in view of North

Korea's nativization drive: using pre-existing native devices or strategies in word formation instead of relying on Sino-Korean words or loanwords. Various affixes are thus said to have a much wider scope of application in Standard North Korean than in Standard South Korean.

It has been observed that the plural marking -*tul* is more frequently used in Standard North Korean than in Standard South Korean to the extent that North Korean sentences containing this plural marking may sound very odd to South Koreans, e.g. *manhun hakkyo-tul-eyse* 'in many schools' as opposed to *manhun hakkyo-eyse* in Standard South Korean (see Chapter 5). Other notable grammatical differences include Standard North Korean -*(u)l tey tayhaye* versus Standard South Korean -*nun kes-ey tayhaye* ('concerning' or 'with respect to') and Standard North Korean -*(u)l taysin-ey* versus Standard South Korean -*nun taysin-ey* ('instead of' or 'in lieu of').

Standard North Korean is also said to have reduced the number of speech levels to three: polite, equal and low (communist states are supposed to be classless, after all). In reality, however, the polite speech level in Standard North Korean subsumes both the deferential and polite speech levels in Standard South Korean, and the equal level in Standard North Korean both the intimate and semi-formal speech levels in Standard South Korean. Thus, if it is a reduction at all, it is only a nominal, not substantial, one. Few other grammatical changes are reported to have taken place between Standard South Korean and Standard North Korean, although, admittedly, careful large-scale research remains to be undertaken.

There are also a few striking differences between Standard North Korean and Standard South Korean in terms of writing. It has already been mentioned that in Standard South Korean word-initial /l/ or /n/ is to be deleted before the vowel /i/ or the semivowel /j/, and that word-initial /l/ changes to [n] before vowels other than /i/ or /j/. In Standard North Korean, on the other hand, these word-initial consonants must be written as they are actually pronounced, e.g. Standard South Korean *ilon* or 이론 versus Standard North Korean *lilon* or 리론 for 'theory', and Standard South Korean *yeseng* or 여성 versus Standard North Korean *nyeseng* or 녀성 for 'female'.

In Standard North Korean, the so-called intervening /s/ (Chapter 2) is not represented in writing – except for words containing determiner-type modifying expressions, e.g. *say* 'new' (Chapter 4) – as in Standard South Korean *kis.pal* or 깃발 versus Standard North Korean *ki.pal* or 기발 'flag' but *says.pyel* or 샛별 'the morning star' in both Standard South Korean and Standard North Korean. Incidentally, in North Korea the orthographic convention of representing the intervening /s/ between 1954 and 1966 was an apostrophe instead of the letter for /s/ or ㅅ, e.g. *say'.pyel* or 새′별 instead of *says.pyel* or 샛별. The apostrophe was used even where the intervening /s/ was not represented in writing in Standard South Korean (i.e. when the relevant syllable ends in a consonant), e.g. *kimpap* or 김밥 written as *kim'pap*

or 김ʼ밥 'sushi'. This apostrophe convention seems to have been abandoned at the behest of Kim Il Sung (see above for his concern about the emerging divergence between the two standard dialects).

Moreover, there are words that are simply spelt differently in Standard North Korean and Standard South Korean. For example, the word meaning 'wife' is spelt as *a.nay* or 아내 and *an.hay* or 안해 in Standard South Korean and Standard North Korean, respectively. Common South Korean words such as *tal.kyal* or 달걀 'egg' and *soy.ko.ki* or 쇠고기 'beef' are spelt as *talk.al* or 닭알 and *so.ko.ki* or 소고기, respectively, in Standard North Korean (although some South Koreans do write *so.ko.ki* instead of *soy.ko.ki*).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the consonant and vowel letters are differently ordered in North Korean dictionaries from the way they are in South Korean dictionaries (see Table 3.2 in Chapter 3). For instance, in South Korean dictionaries the letter for each tensed stop, e.g. /kk/ or ㄲ, is placed immediately after the letter for the corresponding lax stop, e.g. /k/ or ㄱ. In North Korean dictionaries, the letters for the tensed stops are listed en mass after the letter for /h/ or ㅎ, i.e. /kk/ or ㄲ, /tt/ or ㄸ, /pp/ or ㅃ, /ss/ or ㅆ and /cc/ or ㅉ in that order. The vowel letters are also ordered differently in North Korean dictionaries: generally, visually simpler ones are listed before visually more complex ones.

Looking forward: unified nation and unified language?

The language policies of North and South Korea differ from each other in a number of respects, the most significant outcome of which is the emergence of Standard North Korean and Standard South Korean. Such differences notwithstanding, there also seems to be a common attitude in North and South Korea towards language policy and planning: awareness of each other's policies and also of their implications in the event of reunification. It would be injudicious to implement drastic or radical policies that might further help to widen the linguistic chasm between the two Koreas. Recall that the Revised Hankul Orthography in South Korea turned out not to be drastically different from the original Unified Hankul Orthography. Moreover, scholars and academic organizations in South Korea have recently called upon the government to take an active role in thwarting or at least arresting the widening linguistic divergence between North and South Korea. Similarly, North Korea made a conscious effort to minimize the revision of the Cosenkul (or Hankul) script (i.e. Kim Il Sung's objection to the proposed orthographic reform in 1964). Moreover, despite its politico-ideological aversion to Hanca, North Korea decided to retain some Chinese characters (actually more than South Korea), not to mention quite a few Sino-Korean words and loanwords.

The major issue that is bound to arise in the event of reunification – when that will happen is anyone's guess but it will eventually happen, I hope, in a peaceful manner as in the case of East and West Germany – concerns the

coexistence of Standard North Korean and Standard South Korean. Once North and South Korea are reunited with each other, a decision on the two standard dialects will have to be made and what is known as 'language replanning' or 'undoing/redoing of language planning' will be called for. For example, which of the two standard dialects will be chosen as the standard dialect for a unified Korea, or will the status quo be maintained? Which of Hankul or Cosenkul is to be adopted? Will native Korean words used in Standard North Korean be retained in preference to Sino-Korean words or loanwords used in South Korea or vice versa? These and other related issues will have to be addressed. Tough decisions will have to be made and will in fact prove to be costly, not least in emotional and economic terms, and also unpopular among many Koreans. None the less, they will capture the imagination and attention of North and South Koreans alike, for it will eventually be agreed by all Koreans that a unified Korea demands one standard dialect.

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The following is a selective list of references organized according to the major themes of this book. Interested readers are encouraged to read not just the reference materials collected here but also other relevant references mentioned or cited there. Also included here are some of the most widely used Korean language textbooks for English-speaking learners.

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