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Introduction

1.1 The Distribution of Korean

Korean is the language of all native-born inhabitants of the Korean peninsula. There are no varieties or dialects of this language so different they cannot be understood by all. The Korean people are fond of saying that they are a unified nation speaking one language, and linguistically it is clearly true. Korea itself may still be politically divided, but the people on both sides of the border speak one and the same language.

The Korean language has a relatively large number of speakers. Counting the 46.4 million people in South Korea and the 21.4 million in North Korea, the population of Korea today is almost 70 million, a number greater than the population of England or France. About the same number of people speak Korean as Italian. The size of the territory on which Korean is spoken may not be large, but in terms of the number of speakers, it ranks twelfth in the world.¹

Korean is also spoken in overseas Korean communities, especially in China, North America, Japan, and the former Soviet Union. Today there are 1,460,000 people of Korean extraction in the United States, and another 730,000 in Japan. There are about 1,760,000 people belonging to the Korean nationality in China, and 500,000 in Russia and the former Soviet Union. In the larger communities in all of these places the Korean language maintains an existence. Korean-speaking populations are conspicuously active in New York and Los Angeles, where, among other things, Korean signs line the streets of "Korea Town," often as far as the eye can see. Korean-language newspapers, many of them printed locally, circulate widely. But even in smaller metropolitan areas across the length and breadth of the United States, Korean writing on signs, especially church signs, has become commonplace. In the former Soviet Union, language maintenance in Korean communities is reported to be higher than is the case with almost all other ethnic minorities.

Koreans in Japan, with large concentrations in the area around Osaka, are the only significant minority in that country; although 75 percent are Japanese-born, most remain legally aliens, a status that keeps them apart from the mainstream of Japanese society and fosters the maintenance of the Korean language. But the largest and most vigorous Korean-speaking

population anywhere in the world outside of Korea can be found in China. In the northeast, in the area centered around the Yanbian Autonomous Region, complete Korean institutions remain in place, including Korean-language schools up to the university level. In China, Korean is officially classified as a “major” minority language.

Elsewhere, outside of these larger concentrations of overseas Koreans, Korean-speaking communities are distributed worldwide, especially in South America. With the growing economic and political importance of Korea on the world scene, Korean has also become widely taught as a second language.

1.2 Korean Writing

The Korean alphabet is used by Koreans only, and only for writing the Korean language. As will be explained in chapter 2, it is unlike any other writing system in the world. It is also the only alphabet of any kind completely native to East Asia.

In South Korea, this national alphabet is called Hangŭl, which in popular usage can also mean ‘the Korean language’. As a result, in overseas Korean communities settled by South Koreans, Korean schools are popularly referred to “Hangŭl schools.” In North Korea, however, the name of the language, *Chosŏn-mal*, can in informal, unguarded speech serve as the name of the alphabet. The two usages may seem to be mirror images of each other, but they share the perception that the national writing system is the Korean language itself.

For Koreans, especially in the South, the alphabet is a powerful cultural icon. It is the very symbol of nation and national culture. Each year, 9 October is celebrated as “Alphabet Day,” and King Sejong, the inventor of the alphabet, is honored in countless ways—his likeness appears on money and stamps; institutions, societies, streets, and the like carry his name. Much as American schoolchildren read Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, Korean schoolchildren read Sejong’s essay on the alphabet. That this writing system is completely and uniquely Korean is enough to swell the pride of the nation. But that it is also one of the most remarkable writing systems ever invented² makes it fully deserving of attention in the wider world.

Thus, the Korean alphabet has unchallenged respect among Koreans as their native writing system. From the time they enter elementary school until they graduate college, Koreans study from books written in Hangŭl. Newspapers and magazines, fiction and poetry, books and journals in every professional field, government documents and legal codes—all are written in Hangŭl.

And yet, Koreans still sometimes write their language by mixing Chinese characters into the Hangŭl text. This mixed style of writing may seem

curious, considering the pride that Koreans take in their alphabet. But the use of Chinese characters follows a long and earlier tradition. Even after the invention of the alphabet, and until the end of the nineteenth century, most government documents and professional writings continued to be written entirely in Literary Chinese. Then, around the beginning of the twentieth century, writing reforms inspired by modernization and nationalism produced a true written Korean, and the form this style of writing took was one in which the alphabet was mixed with Chinese characters. The reasons for preserving this mixture were largely cultural because knowledge of Chinese writing was still seen as a measure of intellectual achievement and level of education. But the rationale given was often different. An enormous number of Sinitic morphemes had been borrowed into the Korean vocabulary, and writing them in Chinese rather than Hangŭl was believed to show meanings and etymologies more clearly.

Over the years, the arguments for and against Chinese characters have been repeated, attacked, and defended countless times, often with great passion. But, with the passing of time, the issue has become largely academic. For the use of Chinese characters, in mixed script or otherwise, has slowly, and naturally, waned. In North Korea, Chinese characters have been banned from use since 1949. In South Korea, too, the frequency with which Chinese characters appear has decreased dramatically in recent years. Newspapers and most professional writings still contain a mixture of Chinese characters, but the relative number of magazines and educational materials (even at the college level) that contain almost no Chinese characters has grown considerably. The proportion of books using Chinese characters is far smaller than that of books using only Hangŭl. Signs in Chinese, once common on stores almost everywhere in Seoul, are now largely restricted to Chinese restaurants and herbal medicine shops. This trend away from the use of Chinese characters is probably an indication that the number of people familiar with them has become smaller. It might also be part of the cause. In any case, Chinese characters are rapidly becoming as unfamiliar to Koreans as Greek letters are now to Americans.

In contrast, the use of Roman letters in Korea has increased in recent years. Such abbreviations and acronyms as FM, CD, VTR (Video Tape Recorder), KBS (Korean Broadcasting System), and MBC (Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation) have become commonplace in Korean publications. Koreans give only the Roman letters for these forms, which has resulted in a new kind of mixed script. English and pseudo-English can be found liberally sprinkled on shop signs (Donky Chicken) and billboards (Galloper Life, Wide Bongo) throughout Seoul and even smaller cities. But this trend, though driven by the movements of a larger world culture, in no way threatens the native writing system. No one would seriously advocate replacing Hangŭl with romanization.

The written history of Korean, in the most literal sense, is five and a half centuries old. The Korean alphabet, which has been in existence since

1443,³ is the medium for unusually extensive and detailed phonological records of the language.

But even before the invention of the alphabet, Korea was a literate society. Chinese characters and Chinese writing had been imported from China at least by the early centuries of the Christian era, and Koreans very early on learned to write in Literary Chinese. At first, such things as record keeping may well have required the assistance of Chinese immigrants, but native specialists soon mastered the art. Literary Chinese may have been far removed from any variety of spoken Korean, but Koreans lived active and literate lives for many centuries with it as the written medium.

Koreans were more than simply users of this language. They were innovative and creative in what they did with it. It is known, for example, that Koreans were the first people in the world to use metal movable type. Records show that Koreans were using metal type to print books by A.D. 1234, and a copy of such a text from 1377 is preserved today in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Both dates are much earlier than Gutenberg's famous "invention" of around 1440. But the kind of East Asian printing that parallels what Gutenberg did is far older still. Xylography, the printing of a written text by means of wood blocks, was developed at least by the eighth century and became the common means of producing books in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The result was an expansion of knowledge in East Asia much like that caused by the European innovation—except that it occurred about half a millennium earlier. The oldest known sample of printing in the world, dating back at least to 751, has been found in Korea.

Literary activity on so many levels, even through the medium of Chinese characters, naturally involved the recording of the native, spoken language. In the Three Kingdoms period, Koreans developed the device of borrowing either the reading or the meaning of Chinese characters to record the names of local people and places. And in the Silla period, complete poems known as *hyangga* were written down using this method (cf. chapter 2). If these kinds of transcriptions are taken into consideration, Korean can be said to have been transcribed perhaps as early as the fifth century.

Transcriptions of Korean from this early period are rare, however. As time passed, Koreans must have begun to compose with more confidence in Literary Chinese, and attempts to represent the local language in writing occurred with less and less frequency. Only twenty-five *hyangga* still exist, and they are all extremely difficult to interpret. Other early attempts to write Korean are little more than fragments. The transcriptions in Chinese characters hint and tantalize, but they do not provide much concrete information about the sounds of earlier Korean. The first systematic records of the Korean language come only with the invention of the alphabet in the middle of the fifteenth century. It is from the texts of that period that the history of the Korean language, in its truest sense, begins.

1.3 The Origins of Korean

Where does the Korean language come from? Like the ancestry of the Korean people themselves, the origins of the Korean language have never been definitively established. But there are two widely accepted and interconnected theories about its genetic affinities. The first is that Korean is related to Japanese. The second, which perhaps subsumes the first, is that Korean is related to Altaic—Turkic, Mongolian, and Manchu-Tungus.

For a long time now—at least since their liberation from Japan—most Koreans have preferred to consider the latter relationship. Western writers have tended to compare Korean first with Japanese, but Korean scholars have tended to play down that possible relationship. In any case, consideration of the Japanese connection is unavoidable since in its larger formulation—“Macro-Altaic”—the Altaic family would include both Japanese and Korean.

The hypothesis that Korean is related to Altaic reinforces, and for the most part underlies, the widespread belief that the Korean people originated in central Asia. Many writers have described the ancestors of the Koreans as nomads living somewhere around Mongolia who subsequently migrated east and south into their final homeland on the Korean peninsula. Partly based on earlier linguistic scholarship and partly based on imagination, this version of Korean prehistory has given Koreans a feeling of kinship with horse-riding peoples of central Asia such as the Mongols.

Doubts about the relationship between Korean and Altaic seem to have grown recently in the West, to the point where many linguistic dictionaries and introductory texts now describe Korean as “a language whose genetic affinity is unknown.” In his best-selling book *The Mother Tongue* (1990), Bill Bryson states this negative view even more strongly. In a general discussion of language origins, he asserts bluntly that, like Basque, Korean is “quite unrelated to any other known language” (p. 24). In Korea itself, however, the situation is completely different. There, most experts continue to believe strongly in an Altaic connection. It is obvious that Korean is similar in structure to Manchu, Mongolian, and other such northern languages, and when the great comparativist G. J. Ramstedt put forward the hypothesis that Korean had sprung from the same source as these other, Altaic languages, he found a sympathetic and responsive audience in Korea.⁴ Even today, his publications (especially 1928, 1952, 1957) are among the works most frequently cited by Korean linguists.

The picture of this relationship painted by Koreans follows fairly closely that sketched by Ramstedt and, later, Poppe (1960). They reason that, although not as closely related to Turkic, Mongol, and (Manchu-)Tungus as these three branches are to each other, Korean nevertheless forms a larger language family with them and that, of the three, Korean has the closest relationship to the Tungusic branch of the family.

It has often been pointed out—by observers even before Ramstedt—

that the many resemblances between Korean and Altaic could hardly be accidental. There is first of all the overall, general structure. Like the Altaic languages, Korean is agglutinative, forming words by adding inflectional endings to the end of a stem. Then there is the matter of “vowel harmony”; Korean, especially in its older recorded stages, shows in the vocalism of endings combining with stems the kind of vowel concord typical of Altaic. Just as is true in Altaic, the liquid *l* (including [r]) cannot begin a word. There are no relative pronouns or conjunctions, verb endings performing the functions that those words usually do in Indo-European languages. All of these grammatical features characterize both Korean and Altaic.

But what is more important are the results obtained by comparing concrete lexical items and grammatical forms.⁵ For example, it can be seen in comparisons such as that shown in (1) that Old Korean **a* corresponds to proto-Altaic **a*:

(1) Middle Korean *alay* ‘below’ (< **al*), Evenki *alas* ‘foot’, Mongolian *ala* ‘crotch’, Old Turkic *al* ‘downward’, Middle Turkic *altin* ‘below’

In the lexical items shown in (2), Korean *p* corresponds to proto-Altaic **p* or **b*.⁶

(2) Middle Korean *puz-* ‘pour’, Manchu *fusu-* ‘sprinkle water’, Mongolian *üsür-* ‘sprinkle, spill’, Monguor *fusuru-* ‘pour’, Turkic *üskür-* ‘spray with the mouth’.

In grammatical forms as well, some extremely suggestive correspondences have been found. For example, the Korean locative particle *lo*, which indicates directionality, can be compared to Old Turkic *rü* and Mongolian *ru*, for which proto-Altaic **ru/rü* has been reconstructed. More striking still are the correspondences of the verbal noun endings *-*r*, *-*m*, and *-*n* with virtually identical endings in Korean. These point strongly to a genetic affinity between Korean and the Altaic languages.

In general, Korean scholars attribute more significance to these resemblances than do their Western colleagues. Even though Korean researchers are fully aware of the limitations caused by the lack of ancient records, they nevertheless believe strongly that, in all probability, Korean belongs to the Altaic family. They tend not to consider the possibility that it is related to some other language family besides Altaic. The conclusion reached by Lee Ki-Moon (1972a) is that, if Korean did not branch off from proto-Altaic, then, at the very least, both Korean and Altaic sprang from some common source. In Korean scholarly circles, it is this view that has prevailed.

In considering the relationships between the languages of East Asia, it is important to remember that Korean is not genetically related to Chinese. From very early on, Koreans used Chinese writing and consequently borrowed an enormous amount of vocabulary from Literary Chinese (cf. chapter 4), but this borrowing did not change where the language had come from. From the point of view of linguistic origin and genetic affinity, Korean is completely separate from Chinese. Chinese is believed to form a branch of what is known as the Sino-Tibetan family of languages, and no

one has ever seriously proposed that Korean could belong to that particular family.

With Japanese, however, the situation is different. As was mentioned above, the general structural characteristics of Japanese are almost identical to those of Korean. Concrete lexical and grammatical correspondences may be thin compared to this strikingly close structural resemblance, but there continues to be optimism about the possibility that the two languages might share a common genetic origin. Of course, it is considered even more difficult to establish the genealogy of Japanese than that of Korean. The probability that Japanese belongs to the Altaic family is believed to be somewhat less than that of Korean. Even G. J. Ramstedt and N. Poppe, who were enthusiastic advocates of a genetic relationship between Korean and Altaic, hesitated when it came to placing Japanese in the Altaic family. Moreover, there are also those who advocate a relationship with Austronesian for Japanese—a “southern hypothesis” as it were. However, it is still true that, among Japanese scholars, support is greatest for the hypothesis that Japanese belongs to the Altaic family and, at the same time, that it is most closely related to Korean.

1.4 The Structural Characteristics of Korean

Korean contrasts structurally with European languages such as English in a number of ways. First of all, in languages like English, the basic syntactic structure is SVO (subject-verb-object), while in Korean it is SOV (subject-object-verb). In other words, Korean is a verb-final language, a language in which the verb always comes at the end of the sentence.

As has already been mentioned, Korean is an agglutinative language. The function a noun has in a sentence is made overt by attaching one or more particles to it, as illustrated in (1), below. Since Korean particles are attached at the end of the noun, these grammatical elements are also known as “postpositions”; their functions often mirror those of English prepositions.

- (1) a. Kangaci *ka* kwiyep̄ta.
puppy SUBJ. cute
“The puppy is cute.”
- b. Kangaci *lul* cal tolpoala.
puppy OBJECT well look after
“Look after the puppy carefully.”
- c. Kangaci *eykey* mul *ul* cwuela.
puppy to water OBJ. give
“Give (to) the puppy (some) water.”

Verbs, too, are formed through agglutination—that is, by attaching various

endings to the stem. For example, endings such as those in (2) show the tense of the verb. In (3), the endings show whether the sentence is a question, a statement, or a command. Other endings, as will be discussed later, are indicators of the style chosen to fit the situation and the person being addressed—in other words, they determine the speech level in the so-called honorific system. To a nonnative speaker the sheer number of verb endings can seem astonishing, and their functional load is great. It is sometimes said that what is important in English is expressed near the beginning of the sentence, while what is important in Korean is expressed at the end. Though somewhat of an oversimplification, there is still a measure of truth in that characterization. The complexity of the verb phrase gives Korean much of its expressive power.

- (2) a. *Kkoch i encey phi-ni?*
 flower SUBJ. when bloom?
 “When do the flowers bloom?”
 b. *Kkoch i encey phi-ess-ni?*
 PAST?
 “When did the flowers bloom?”
- (3) a. *Minho ka chayk ul ilk-nunta.*
 Minho SUBJ. book OBJ. read ing.
 “Minho is reading a book.”
 b. *Minho ka chayk ul ilk-ni?*
 ?
 “Is Minho reading a book?”
 c. *Minho ya chayk ul ilk-ela.*
 !
 “Minho! Read the book!”

In Korean, adjectives are a subcategory of verbs. Sometimes called “descriptive verbs,” they are composed of stem plus one or more endings, just as verbs are. In this way, Korean adjectives are completely different from English adjectives, which require a form of the verb “to be” to function as predicates.

- (4) a. *Matang i nelp-ta.*
 yard SUBJ. broad.
 “The yard is big.”
 b. *Matang i nelp-ess-ta.*
 PAST.
 “The yard was big.”
 c. *Matang i nelp-ess-ni?*
 PAST?
 “Was the yard big?”

- (5) a. Tongsayng un khi ka khu-*ta*.
 sibling TOPIC height big.
 “The younger sibling is tall.”
 b. Apeci nun khi ka khu-*si-ta*.
 father TOPIC HONORIFIC.
 “Father is tall.”

There are well over four hundred verb endings in modern Korean,⁷ and their functions range far beyond the marking of predication at the end of the sentence. As can be seen in the following simple examples, an ending can be used to express a variety of connective functions.

- (6) a. Hanul un phulu-*ko* kwulum un huy-*ta*.
 sky blue AND cloud white.
 “The sky is blue, and the clouds are white.”
 b. Pi ka o-*myen* sophung ul yenki-*haca*.
 rain come IF picnic put off-let’s
 “If it rains, let’s put off the picnic.”
 c. Kiwun i eps-*uni* swiese kaca.
 strength isn’t BECAUSE resting go-let’s
 “Because I’m out of strength, let’s rest before we go.”
- (7) a. nay ka cikum ilk-*nun* chayk
 I now read ing book
 “the book I’m reading now”
 b. nay ka nayil ilk-*ul* chayk
 tomorrow FUTURE
 “the book I’m going to read tomorrow”
 c. nay ka ecey ilk-*un* chayk
 yesterday PAST
 “the book I read yesterday”

The topic of the Korean verb ending will be treated in more detail later, in chapter 5; for now, one more example will be given to illustrate some of the functional diversity and complexity of these grammatical elements. In (8), all of the sentences can be translated into English as “How fast is (the speed of) light?” But even within virtually the same context, the sentences all have slightly different nuances of meaning; for in each, the ending placed on the verb indicates a different mood, or a different relationship between speaker and listener in a given social situation. Korean is a language in which the verb ending is extremely complex.

- (8) a. Pich un elmana ppalu-*ni?*
 light how-much fast
 “How fast is light?”
 [question to an intimate]

- b. Pich un elmana ppalu-*nya*?
[didactic question to a subordinate]
- c. Pich un elmana ppalu-*ci*?
[self-questioning, wondering, to an equal or subordinate]
- d. Pich un elmana ppalu-*lka*?
[wondering, marveling, to equal or subordinate, or to oneself]
- e. Pich un elmana ppalu-*nka*?
[formal, distancing, to equal or subordinate, wondering to oneself]

In Korean, modifiers always precede what they modify. A modifying adjective comes in front of the noun, and an adverb comes before the verb. A modifying clause is put before the head noun.

This kind of syntactic order contrasts with that of languages like Thai or French, where most adjectives follow what they modify (*idée fixe*; *bête noire*; etc.). In English, some modifiers precede and some follow (*life's* secrets, the secrets *of life*), and the rules governing this syntactic ordering can often be complex. But in Korean the order modifier-modified is invariant. In English, a modifying clause ordinarily follows the head noun (“the book *that I read*”), but in Korean the clause always precedes (*nay ka ilkun chayk*). As mentioned above, the Korean morphemes corresponding to English prepositions are postpositions. Thus, if English can be called a “prepositional language,” then Korean is a “postpositional language.” English is often said to be “right branching” because modifying clauses follow the head noun (“branching” to the right as they are customarily written); Korean, in contrast, is consistently “left branching.”

A well-known and special characteristic of the Korean language is its so-called honorific system, something that has also, and more appropriately, been termed “speech protocol.”⁸ In Korean, for example, it would be unthinkable to use the same pronoun in the meaning of ‘you’ when talking to one’s friend, parent, or teacher, and the matter is not just one of a choice like that of French *tu/vous* or German *du/Sie*. In Korean, using any pronoun at all to address one’s father or teacher is taboo, strictly out of the question; in such cases, an appropriate title is used instead of a pronoun if the deictic cannot be completely omitted. Also, depending on the speaker’s relationship to the subject of the sentence, the verb form in the predicate will change, as in (9). Still more basic is the speaker’s relationship to the person being addressed, and the verb endings used in the conversation will change to conform with the social protocol. In (10) we see how a simple sentence like ‘The bus is coming’ can be expressed in four different ways; in other situations, as many as six relationships can be differentiated.

- (9) a. Ai ka ttwi-nta.
child run ing
“The child is running.”
- b. Apeci ka ttwi-*si*-nta.
father
“Father’s running.”

(10)a. Pesu ka o-*nta*.

bus come

“The bus is coming.”

[a college professor to his children, a young person, or an old, close friend]

b. Pesu ka o-*ney*.

“The bus is coming.”

[a college professor to his graduate students]

c. Pesu ka *wayo* [= o-*ayol*].

“The bus is coming.”

[a college professor to his wife or a young stranger]

d. Pesu ka o-*pnita*.

“The bus is coming.”

[a college professor to his father, his old teacher, or an older stranger]

Moreover, if it were one’s father, a teacher, the company president, or an older person who was coming instead of the bus, the honorific morpheme *-si-* would have to be inserted after the verb stem: *o-si-nta*, *o-si-ney*, etc.

In many cases, depending on the level of formality, special polite vocabulary will replace the usual lexical items. For example, what children and friends eat is *pap* ‘(cooked) rice’; what parents, teachers, and so on eat is *cinci*. The plain way to talk about the act of eating is (*pap ul*) *meknunnta*, while the formal way is (*cinci lul*) *capswusinta*, replacing both noun and verb.

For anyone not native to the culture, the proper usage of such speech protocol is one of the most difficult aspects of the language to master. It is not simply a matter of choosing “polite” language, or “honorifics,” but rather a matter of choosing a style that is appropriate. The style used must certainly be “polite” enough not to give offense, but using language appropriate to someone of a much higher rank than the person being addressed does not make the speaker seem more polite; rather, it might seem bumblingly laughable, or even insulting. At the very least, it would make the listener feel uncomfortable. The style of language chosen must be appropriate to the person spoken to, the person spoken about, and the situation. Koreans themselves worry constantly about such speech protocol, and many books continue to be sold, and lessons given, on the etiquette of speech. The situation is similar to that of Japanese, but of course the systems of the two languages differ from each other because of underlying sociolinguistic and cultural factors.

In the phonology of Korean, too, there are a number of salient characteristics worth noting from the perspective of the English speaker. We will mention a few of them here, and talk about the phonology in more detail in chapter 3. For example, we might quickly note that in the inventory of Korean consonants there are no labio-dentals like *f* or *v* or interdentals such as *θ* or *ð* (both written “th” in modern English).

There are no voicing distinctions in the Korean consonants. In other

words, there is no contrast between *p* and *b*, *t* and *d*, *k* and *g*, and so on. The uninitiated English speaker can see indirect evidence of that fact in the variant romanized spellings of Korean names. For example, the common surname usually spelled “Park” is sometimes spelled “Bark” instead. The choice of *p* or *b* to write the name is simply a matter of personal choice since there is no difference in Korean pronunciation for it to reflect. Similarly, *Paik* is the same name as *Baik*, *Pang* is the same name as *Bang*, *Kang* is the same as *Gang*, *Ku* is the same name as *Gu*, and so on.

Instead of voicing, Korean has a more unusual manner distinction in its obstruent system, a three-way contrast among lax (or “plain”), fortis (or “reinforced”), and aspirated. Koreans distinguish, for example, the three words *tal* ‘moon’, *ttal* ‘daughter’, and *thal* ‘mask’ by the quality of the initial consonant: The initial consonant of *tal* ‘moon’ is weakly articulated and released with a slight puff of air; the initial reinforced consonant of *ttal* ‘daughter’ is pronounced with great muscular tension throughout the vocal tract; and the aspirated initial of *thal* ‘mask’ is followed by very heavy aspiration before the voicing of the vowel begins. This three-way distinction, which over the past several decades has been the subject of numerous linguistic and acoustic studies, is probably the best-known feature of the Korean phonological system.

The consonants of Korean are never released in final position. For this reason, Koreans sometimes pronounce English words such as “hat” and “help” with a final, minimal vowel, *haythu* and *heylphu*, since it is only when a vowel follows the consonant that the consonant can be released. The extra vowel and syllable is the way to make the very audible, final or postconsonantal English consonant clear when loanwords like *kaympu* ‘camp’ and *peylthu* ‘belt’ are accommodated into Korean.