

# Standard language ideology

September 26, 2016

# Review

- Last week we learned that the popular definitions of language varieties are determined by social and political factors more than linguistic/scientific factors.
- Linguists, as opposed to laypeople, use the term **variety** to refer to any linguistic distinction. When two varieties are **mutually unintelligible**, linguists typically call them separate **languages**.

# Who speaks correctly?

- Another issue related to everything we discussed last week is the question of which of all these varieties is *correct*.
- Some questions to consider:
  - How do you know whether the language you use is correct?
  - What makes something correct or incorrect?
  - Can incorrect language ever become correct? Or vice versa? How?


# Standard language

- Standard Korean is called **pyojuneo** / 표준어
  - An official definition is provided by the National Institute of Korean Language (NIKL; 국립국어원)
  - “교양 있는 사람들이 두루 쓰는 현대 서울말로 정함을 원칙으로 한다” / The speech generally used by educated or cultured people in Seoul
- What is the justification for pyojuneo? Why do we need it?
- “The idea of a standard language is constructed and re-constructed on an on-going basis by those who have a vested interest in the concept.” (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 56)

# Historical considerations

- All language, including standard language, is a corruption of the language of a previous generation.
- Changes in standard language are *never initiated* by governing institutions or dictionaries
  - Dictionary pronunciations are chosen based on popular usage – they are not handed down from heaven – even when the dictionary is the ostensible authority.
  - Institutes (e.g. NIKL/국립국어원) make rules based on the speech of educated folks, which has already incorporated changes and outside influences

# What is pyojuneo?

- Pyojuneo is currently regulated by four sets of rules, collectively known as the Eomun Gyujeong (어문 규정):
    - Rules of Hangeul Spelling (한글 맞춤법)
    - Rules of Standard Korean (표준어 규정)
    - Rules for Writing Loanwords (외래어 표기법)
    - Rules for Romanizing Korean (국어의 로마자 표기법)
  - Principles for defining pyojuneo (표준어 사정(査定) 원칙)
  - Rules for standard pronunciation (표준 발음법)
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# Sec. 1: Digging into the definition

- The 1933 Unified Draft of Korean Spelling Conventions (한글 맞춤법 통일안) issued by the Chosun Language Society (조선어학회) defined it as: “표준말은 대체로 **현재 중류 사회**에서 쓰는 서울말로 한다.”
  - Changed “middle class” (중류) to “educated/elite class” (교양)
- According to NIKL itself, this change was *intended* to emphasize the fact that you cannot be educated/elite if you cannot speak pyojuneo. (“이렇게 정함으로써 앞으로는 표준어를 못하면 교양 없는 사람이 된다는 점을 강조하기 위함이다”)
- Furthermore, it is explicitly stated that learning pyojuneo is not just a prerequisite to being educated, but is actually *your duty* as a citizen. (“표준어는 교양의 수준을 넘어 국민이 갖추어야 할 의무 요건(義務要件)이라 하겠다”)

## Sec. 2: How is pyojuneo pronounced?

- The pronunciation of pyojuneo is defined separately, as follows: “The rules for standard pronunciation will follow the actual pronunciation of pyojuneo, but in consideration of **tradition** and **rationality**.” (표준 발음법은 표준어의 실제 발음을 따르되, 국어의 전통성과 합리성을 고려하여 정함을 원칙으로 한다)



# The two guiding principles

- Tradition (전통성) = Don't pronounce things differently from how they've always been pronounced.
  - Vowel length contrast (night 밤 vs. chestnut 밤:)
  - This is the kind of rule I think we expect from NIKL
- Rationality (합리성) = Don't break conventions
  - Monosyllabic verb roots that contain a long vowel should be pronounced with a short vowel when followed by a vowel-initial verb ending (e.g. 신:다 but 신어).
  - But there are exceptions (e.g. 썰:다 and 썰:어), because this is how people\* pronounce them...
- How to pronounce 맛있다 vs. 맛없다?

# To summarize...

- You should pronounce things the way they've always been pronounced, unless educated people (??) pronounce it differently, in which case their pronunciation is fine too.
- I personally find it hard to justify the use of taxpayer money to further this endeavor (but that's just me!)

# Language and power

- Standard language is defined by whoever is in control in society. Its rules are arbitrary.
  - For more discussion of this issue, please read “English with an Accent” by Rosina Lippi-Green (ch. 3-4 on Blackboard).
- The enforcement of standard language demonstrates how the evaluation of language is intimately tied to the evaluation of the person speaking it.
  - Pyojuneo is correct because educated people speak it. Satori is incorrect because uneducated and boorish people speak it. And part of why they are viewed as uneducated and boorish is because they can’t speak pyojuneo.
  - ... you see how this works?

# Lastly: Kids these days

- Human civilization has a rich tradition of bemoaning “kids these days”, and one of its many faces is griping about language.
  - First recorded complaint of “kids these days” can be found in Sumerian clay tablets from almost 2000 BC.
  - “The total neglect of this art [speaking] has been productive of the worst consequences... if something is not done to stop this growing evil... English is likely to become a mere jargon, which every one may pronounce as he pleases.” – Thomas Sheridan, *A General Dictionary of the English Language*, 1780

# Lastly: Kids these days

- “Many children today are greatly to be pitied because too much is done for them and dictated to them and they are deprived of the learning processes. We seem to have dropped into an age of entertaining, a breathless going from one sensation to another, whether it be mechanical toys for the five-year-old or moving-picture plays for the sixteen-year-old. It not only destroys their power to think, but also makes happiness, contentment, and resourcefulness impossible.” (Harrison, 1915).
- Young people have been maligned throughout history, and so it is no surprise that their linguistic innovations have been as well (until older and more educated people subsequently adopt them).

# Next time

- We will start talking about perceptual dialectology.
- Please read Meyerhoff Ch. 4.
  - Focus on pp. 58-59 (Introduction), 64-66 (Linguistic relativism), 69-73 (Perceptual dialectology), 75-82 (Accommodation theory, convergence, divergence).
  - I know it's more than usual, but this chapter contains a lot of important (and interesting!) topics.
- Send me an email ASAP to let me know what your group preferences are for the course project.
  - I have not heard from the following students: 진희, 기현, 민석, 사홍, 종문, 찬희, 성수, 승명, 다원, 종호, Kathy, and Joe