

The Adaptation of Contemporary Japanese Loanwords into Korean

Michael Kenstowicz (MIT)

In this collaborative research with Chiyuki Ito we report on an analysis of the sound correspondences in a corpus of Japanese loanwords into Korean collected from c. ten Korean speakers living in Japan. Our goal is to clarify to what extent the adaptations differ from those found in more established (classical) loans borrowed in the first half of the last century, as discussed in Ito et al. (2006), Kim (2008), and Shinohara (2011). Some of our preliminary findings are as follows. The first concerns how the Japanese binary voiced-voiceless distinction is aligned with Korean's ternary lax-tense-aspirated contrast. While Japanese voiced stops continue to be adapted with Korean lax stops, a difference has emerged for voiceless stops. In classical loans voiceless stops map to lax word-initially but intervocally /t/ appears as lax while /k/ is tense. In our corpus the voiced stops continue to map to lax while the adaptation of voiceless stops has become more complex. In word-initial position they are realized as aspirated about 50% (the other half continuing as lax) while in medial position /p/ and /k/ are tense or aspirated and /t/ is evenly split among lax, tense, aspirated. These results suggest that more intimate exposure to the donor language allows the Japanese voiced-voiceless to be better expressed; but there are still intriguing differences in place and manner of articulation as well as position in the word that must be accounted for. A second topic concerns accent. It is well known that the location of English stress is not faithfully reflected in Kyungsang loans. Rather a high pitch is assigned to heavy syllables or to the penult as a default. Lee (2008) finds that Japanese pitch accent is not reflected in his corpus of South Kyungsang loans, which follow a weight-based adaptation strategy similar to English loans. Our results show that both Kyungsang and Yanbian contemporary speakers tend to preserve Japanese accentual distinctions in their Korean loans, at least partially: *śáke* > *śákhe* 'salmon', *naśi* > *naśi* 'pear', *átami* > *áthami* 'placename', *hagaki* (unaccented) 'postcard' > *hakák*í*, *roppongi* (unaccented) 'placename' > *rokp*ónki*. A third topic to be explored are hybrid loans. Many Western (English) borrowings entered Korean through Japanese, as evidenced by particular sound correspondences. For example, 'cup' appeared as *kappu* in Japanese and *kat.p*u* as a classic Korean loan. The current direct adaptation from English to Korean is *khəp*. Kang et al. (2009) showed that many such words have been partially updated to conform to the direct English-Korean correspondences established in the second half of the last century while also retaining some Japanese traits. They found a hierarchy in which laryngeal features were most likely to be updated, followed by epenthetic vowels and liquids; nonepenthetic vowels were most resistant to updating. Our data displays a similar hierarchy. For example, among the variants for 'cup' are *khap*u*, *khaphu*, *khap.phi*, *khaphi*. In no case is the base vowel updated to schwa.

In conclusion, a more intimate contact with the donor language permits a more faithful preservation of contrasts; but they are statistical in nature with intriguing hierarchies as to sound type and context.

Selected References

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