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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
Department of East Asian Studies

Han'gŭl for the Nation, The Nation for Han'gŭl:

The Korean Language Movement 1894-1945

By

Daniel Oliver Pieper

A thesis presented to the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
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Introduction

On September 11, 2009 *The New York Times* reported that the robust South Korean economy would be adding another commodity to its export roster: the Korean alphabet. A retired South Korean millionaire real estate magnate by the name of Lee Ki-nam, under the banner of her self-created Hunminchōngŭm Society, led a delegation to the remote town of Baubau on Boton Island, Indonesia in July 2008 with the expressed purpose of “doing for the world’s non-written languages what Doctor’s Without Borders is doing in medicine.”¹ Kim Chu-wōn, linguist at Seoul National University and President of the Hunminchōngŭm Society, summarizes their mission as one to save unwritten languages from extinction and thus “ensure mankind’s linguistic and cultural diversity.”² Following a meeting with tribal chieftains of the Cia-Cia people—a minority of 60,000 people in Indonesia—an agreement was brokered including a plan for the creation of a writing system and Han’gŭl-based textbooks so that the Cia-Cia people could teach their children their own language in school.³ Lee Ki-nam also offered to build a \$500,000 Korean cultural center and promote economic development. Though the initial establishment of this program was among a modest-sized group of 50 children, Lee Ki-nam made clear her ambitions to spread the Korean script to all of the world’s non-written languages, citing an almost sacred motivation to fulfill the will of her direct ancestor and creator of *Han’gŭl*, King Sejong.⁴

As the Hunminchōngŭm Society was announcing its first successes in promoting global cultural diversity and linguistic ecology amid domestic praise and support, these same actions were raising concerns among certain other groups for a variety of reasons. A number of Muslim countries had been raising alarms in connection with South Korea’s

zeal in promoting Christianity, and Lee Ki-nam's past associations with missionary groups in her failed attempts to spread *Han'gŭl* among minorities in Nepal, Mongolia, Vietnam, and China did little to allay these fears.⁵ The Indonesian government for its part viewed the adoption of *Han'gŭl* or any other script as a potential threat to its policy of promoting a "language of unity" (meaning Bahasa Indonesian in the Roman script) to encourage effective communication among various ethnic groups. It feared that the official adoption of *Han'gŭl* by minority ethnic groups would not only further isolate the Cia-Cia people from the Indonesian state, but might also trigger a "messy" situation in which other minority groups would be encouraged to invite their own foreign countries for linguistic assistance.⁶ The Indonesian government's tepid response to the program compounded by the complex legal issues surrounding *Han'gŭl*'s official adoption by even a relatively small minority group foreshadowed the uphill battle that Lee Ki-nam and her Society could face in their mission to reach thousands of geographically, economically, and religiously disparate, pre-literate populations.⁷ Furthermore, though Hunminchŏngŭm Society president Kim Chu-wŏn made a clear distinction between the refuted exportation and globalization of *Han'gŭl* and the Korean language and the Society's professed goal of preservation of indigenous languages, some critics nevertheless suspected a form of linguistic imperialism.⁸

To some observers, this was a banal affair, a mildly amusing footnote to increasingly commonplace instances of globalization and cross-cultural interaction involving distant, obscure actors. However, considering the tumultuous modern history of the Korean language and the pressing issue of language extinction, this event is striking in illustrating just how far the Korean language has come. In addition, this story illuminates the

particular Korean experience with language in the twentieth century, providing an intriguing insight into the enduring effects of religion, Confucian tradition, theories of modernization, and nationalism on the development, character, and perception of the Korean language. Furthermore, this case effectively encapsulates several contentious issues in recent socio-linguistic inquiry, including script nationalism, language policy, linguistic ideology, and linguistic imperialism.

The Korean language today boasts over 70 million speakers, ranking thirteenth in the world above the number of Italian and even French first-language speakers.⁹ The illiteracy rate in South Korea is among the lowest in the world—effectively zero—and the position and status of the language among peninsular Koreans is considered by linguists to be secure and in negligible threat of extinction or even considerable diminution.¹⁰ Koreans display a patriotism and pride, almost a reverence toward their language seldomly exhibited by other language speakers. Countless language-related organizations exist on the Korean peninsula and among Korean communities across the world, groups variously focusing on the codification, purification, protection, and promotion of the Korean language.¹¹ However, the linguistic situation on the Korean peninsula at the turn of the twentieth century was fundamentally different. Indeed, as of the 1890's it was not at all clear whether the Korean script (*Han'gŭl*) would even be accorded any kind of official status or important role in the emerging modern state. In the midst of Japanese total war of the mid-1940's, oppressive assimilation policies threatened the very existence of the Korean language and identity itself. Since liberation however, the Korean language has been revived through its status as language of instruction in universal education, and South Korea has witnessed a fitful yet pronounced

decline in the use of Chinese characters in favor of native *Han'gŭl*, while the North has done away with Chinese characters in education and official publications completely.¹² And far from fighting for survival, the Korean script is now on the verge of international export. What happened, then, to resurrect *Han'gŭl* from the realm of obscurity and the depths of mockery? How was this reviled tool of Buddhists and women revived and elevated to a symbol of the independent Korean nation? How did a downgraded, subordinated, out-lawed language eventually come to inspire a millionaire real estate mogul to exhaust personal resources in a nationalistic quest for Korean promotion?

Lee Ki-nam and the Hunimnchŏngŭm Society expressed clearly their intentions in the internationalization of *Han'gŭl*, that is the conservation of linguistic and cultural diversity through the provision of a script to contain a spoken language.¹³ This innocuous, even altruistic goal to preserve traditional languages threatened by modern forces through the provision of a 'modern' phonetic writing system nevertheless embodies several recurring themes in the modern Korean language experience, some of which bear a slightly disturbing resemblance to Japanese colonial discourse and may indeed represent a sort of post-colonial consciousness. Hunminchŏngŭm Society president Kim Chu-wŏn has conflated the goals of his group with the actions undertaken globally by (largely faith-based) linguists to preserve non-written language through Roman script provision, while Lee Ki-nam's association with missionary groups in previous campaigns further invokes a religious tone to the program and parallels remarkably the strong influence of Christianity in the development of modern Korean. Lee's allusion to King Sejong as a source of pride and an inspiration in her quest similarly harkens back to analogous entreaties in the popular press during the early period of *Han'gŭl* promotion. Employing

a common rhetorical device of the time, reform-minded nationalists would invoke traditional Confucian notions of piety toward the King in order to promote a forward-looking nationalist agenda, in this case questioning how a loyal Confucian subject could refuse the sincere gift of his master. While the official line from President Kim has been one of humanitarianism disconnected from nationalist interests, effusive press reaction and statements from Lee elsewhere have suggested a more nationalistic intention.¹⁴ The promise to construct a \$500,000 Korean language and culture center, Lee's professed goal of bringing *Han'gŭl* to all the world's non-written languages, and a political party's claims that Lee's efforts were "a heroic first step towards globalizing Han'gŭl" have infused a supposedly humanitarian endeavor with nationalistic fervor, again recalling similar nationalistic motivations for *Han'gŭl* promotion from the early twentieth century and reproducing a form of Japanese colonial discourse on language internationalization.¹⁵ By promoting the international diffusion of a language or a script based on conscious nationalistic pride but more significantly on the belief of a superior/inferior dichotomy between languages—in this case written and non-written languages—the Society's actions run the risk of replicating a form of cultural and linguistic imperialism. However altruistic the stated goals of the Hunminchōngŭm Society, language exportation conceived in a crucible of intense linguistic nationalism and perceived superiority/inferiority peppered with the familiar 'civilizing mission' rhetoric bent on saving imperiled cultures is pervaded by a somewhat troubling discursive strand from recent Korean history.

Part 1. Theorizing the Linguistic: A Reconceived View of Language in the Korean Context

1.1 Language and Power

Integration into a single ‘linguistic community’, which is a product of the political domination that is endlessly reproduced by institutions capable of imposing universal recognition of the dominant language, is the condition for the establishment of relations of linguistic domination.¹⁶

Few concepts are as fundamentally intrinsic to the fabric of the human experience and yet as poorly understood as the concept of language. While providing the foundation of human culture and thought, the formal study of language as a legitimate academic field dates back only to the late 19th century, with the seeds of more rigorous socio-linguistic inquiry being planted even more recently. Language is at once everything and nothing—the very foundation of our human existence by virtue of its virtual universality, while often overlooked or simply forgotten due to this same universality. In the words of Auguste Comte, “Language forms a kind of wealth, which all can make use of at once without causing any diminution of the store, and which thus admits a complete community of enjoyment; for all, freely participating in the general treasure, unconsciously aid in its preservation.”¹⁷ This conception of language as a ‘communal treasure’, however, fails to recognize two important points: there is more than one treasure, and each treasure is not created equally. Though universal, languages are assigned disproportionate values in social contexts based on their relations to (or hierarchical distance from) socially legitimized, official languages. In a society divided

into classes, this value is distributed unequally among various usages of a single language, whereas in a bi/multi-lingual situation, one language is favored over others as the sole, 'official language.' In a colonial context, exaggerated inequality reinforced through distorted social hierarchy and the imposition of biased language policies exacerbates linguistic domination and leads to pronounced disenfranchisement and dispossession. From a critical socio-linguistic perspective, a portion of this research aims to investigate and demonstrate the importance of language in terms of linguistic domination, modernization, and symbolic power within the context of early 20th century Korea.¹⁸

The examination of language within this particular Korean context is especially intriguing for several reasons. First, the Korean language's variable statuses as a minor, subjugated, suppressed, and even banned language during various periods of its existence create not only a complex, engaging field of inquiry but also confer upon the language a sense of indispensability and relevance to the Korean experience, a sense which is often muted in the historical circumstances of major languages such as English. Populous, influential countries speaking well-established languages lacking a history of threat of linguistic annihilation can easily overlook the role of language in historical national development due to its perceived innocuousness or banality. The ongoing debates over language purification and the oscillating government *hanja* policies in post-liberation North and South Korea, as well as violent clashes over language policy in India and certain post-colonial African nations further demonstrate the possible intensifying effects of colonialism on the language situation.¹⁹ This is not to suggest that the issue of language is absent from historiography, nor that Korea is a completely unique linguistic

case.²⁰ The issue of language has been receiving more attention in scholarship on Korea, but this is a recent phenomenon. When language is considered, it is usually accorded a minor role in history, most often being discussed in conjunction with education or literacy. However, what this research intends to do is demonstrate the primacy of language in developing and symbolizing modern Korea, a country that, while not *unique* in its linguistic history, nevertheless represents a counterexample to countries with widely-spoken languages, as well as a rare post-colonial success story in native language retention throughout society.²¹

A second reason that I call attention to the language issue in modern Korean history is due to the specific conditions under which modern Korean came to be developed and standardized. Relatively speaking, the reform and standardization of Korean into the form that is known today was a quite recent phenomenon, born out of a sense of necessity. The contemporary shape of the Korean language is the direct result of concerted, conscious efforts on the part of a broad swath of Korean society, including nationalists, communists, Japanese government officials, linguists, grammarians, and teachers, over a mere handful of decades. Much like that of Japanese, Korean language reform and promotion—periodically more or less mutually reinforcing phenomena—resulted from perceived domestic and foreign threats to the integrity and the future of the language, the nation, and the nation embodied in and symbolized by the language. To a higher degree than that of many languages, the modern history of the Korean language bears the marks of intense, conscious public and private intervention, and the language's experience with such hyper-intervention during an extremely compressed period—a period marked by an uncharacteristically rapid influx of new and competing ideologies—

creates a sort of microcosm of history in which both the role of language in society and the effects of these competing ideologies on language were greatly amplified.

A third reason for my decision to examine language in modern Korean history is due to the peculiar linguistic situation in East Asia and the crisis of modernity that it engendered. With the intensification of Euro-American influence in East Asia in the 19th century came new conceptions of knowledge and in effect a shift in the perceived language of legitimacy. Countries within the Chinese character sphere of influence—including of course China as well as Japan and Korea—were faced with the pressing matter of linguistic reform intrinsically tied to the nature of knowledge itself, specifically the question of which knowledge was relevant to the ‘modern’ state as exemplified by the European model. Chinese characters were traditionally viewed as the direct link to ‘true’ knowledge of the sages, but this knowledge itself was increasingly coming under attack as irrelevant and indeed antithetical to the formation of the modern nation. As a country which had for centuries been dominated intellectually by a tiny elite literati steeped in the Chinese classics alone with very high illiteracy ruled by pronounced, entrenched hierarchical reproduction reinforced by limited mobility and access to power determined almost exclusively by language (classical Chinese) ability, the situation for Korea was especially acute. This severe case of linguistic diglossia heightened the sense of urgency among many early Korean reformers, a situation complicated by the later advent of colonialism when the traditionalists’ previous promotion of Chinese characters (*hanja*) as the source of Confucian truth took on a collaborationist connotation when viewed against the backdrop of the now forceful imposition of Japanese and its prominent utilization of Chinese characters.²² Therefore, Korea’s abrupt encounter with modernization, its

position between two empires utilizing numerically widespread yet epistemologically threatened languages, and its extreme diglossic condition exacerbated by low literacy and relative dissimilarity between the dichotomous linguistic elements (Chinese writing and spoken Korean) combined to create a linguistic scenario uncharacteristic of many other nations. Again, this is not an argument for Korean exceptionalism based on a singular linguistic experience, as all language groups have undergone some form of turmoil related to language, especially during the modernization process. However, the conditions noted above coupled with the sheer *speed* of the language reform process combined to produce a linguistic history that was *atypical*, if not rare. Though Romance languages may trace their origins to Latin or Greek much the way East Asian languages do to Classical Chinese, none have experienced such a dramatic collision with practically forced language reform, nor do these languages exhibit the extreme grammatical and graphical dissimilarities that exist between Classical Chinese, Korean, and the Korean indigenous script (*Han 'gŭl*).

Though I emphasize the relevance and immediacy of the Korean language in early modern Korea due to the above historical circumstances, Korean nevertheless shares a common bond with all modes of communication, and that is its intimate relationship with power. In a bi/multi-lingual situation, one language is favored over others as the sole *legitimate language*, or, a language which Pierre Bourdieu defines as having “benefited from the institutional conditions necessary for its generalized codification and imposition,” which is “known and recognized more or less completely throughout the whole jurisdiction of a certain political authority.”²³ These “institutional conditions” refer to the generally unconscious collusion of various actors in the language

legitimation process, actors that include but are by no means limited to dictionary compilers, grammarians, politicians, the media, and teachers. In particular, the dialectical relationship between the unification of the educational (and linguistic) market, linked to the introduction of educational qualifications as a precondition for upward mobility in the job market succeeds in monopolizing access to the labor market and cementing the status of the legitimate language. Therefore, the educational system plays a decisive role in legitimation of a single language while simultaneously inducing minority language users to “collaborate in the destruction of their instruments of expression.”²⁴ Bourdieu writes the following on the centrality of the educational system in language legitimization: “The position which the educational system gives to the different languages (or the different cultural contents) is such an important issue only because this institution has the monopoly in the large-scale production of producers/consumers, and therefore in the reproduction of the market without which the social value of the linguistic competence, its capacity to function as linguistic capital, would cease to exist.”²⁵

The dominant role of education both in the discourse on Korean language and as the site of market monopolization and subsequent social reproduction is critical in understanding the Korean situation. As is the case with every society, though various actors exerted influence in the legitimization of a certain language at different times, the *theme of education* was most prominent in the explicit discourses on language/Korean script promotion, while the *educational system* in Korea was fundamental in maintaining centuries of elite inculcation in the Chinese Classics, contributing to the reproduction of a system granting the elite near-exclusive power via its monopolization of government authority connected to the government service examination (based on knowledge of the

legitimate language). During the colonial period, the educational system endeavored to indoctrinate the population in the Japanese language reinforced by a labor market increasingly requiring educational qualifications earned from Japanese schools in the legitimized and newly state-sanctioned official language, Japanese. In this way, education was the self-reinforcing linchpin of Korean social reproduction; it monopolized the large-scale production of producers/consumers who drove the market without which the linguistic competence it was predicated upon would cease to exist. As we shall see, in the early 20th century, classical Chinese lost its position as the legitimate language in Korea precisely because its monopolization of the market through large-scale production of producers/consumers was compromised. In its place, certain reformers promoted vernacular Korean language utilizing *Han 'gŭl*, justifying its usage through recourse to the shifting *knowledge market*, embodied in modern education. Finally, though Japanese was designated the official (state) language not through the educational system *per se* but through a top-down edict issued by the Governor General, the crucial component to the *mass legitimization* of Japanese was again the educational system by virtue of its monopolization of the labor market.²⁶ Though coercive means (of varying intensities during different periods of colonial rule) were employed by the Japanese authority to forcefully impose the Japanese language, I argue that a much more effective method of control lie in the *habitus* among Koreans engendered by Japanese's control of the labor market.²⁷ This theme of language and power functions as an ongoing theoretical thread, a sort of philosophical undergirding to the linguistic history of Korea from 1894-1945.

1.2. Defining the Terminology: Han'gŭl, Ŏnmun, Kukŏ and Kokugo

From the beginning of the campaign to propagate Han'gŭl internationally, Hunmin chŏngŭm President Kim Chu-wŏn reiterated the humanitarian nature of the organization's goals by drawing a clear distinction between Han'gŭl and the Korean language. He claimed that Han'gŭl and the Korean language were separate, and that the organization's intent to provide a way to contain a pre-literate language were commensurate with King Sejong's original invention of the script and were in no way connected to the Korean spoken language.²⁸ Kim's distinction between Korean language and script seems to be a natural, logical separation, not even warranting comment. To take Romance languages as an example, dozens of languages can be counted as "sharing" the Roman alphabet with no one language claiming any privileged status or unique bond to the script, while several languages have adopted the Roman script in a context relatively divorced from nationalistic affinity to the West.²⁹ However, a closer examination of the particular historical relationship between the Korean language and the Korean script complicates Kim's statements by revealing several important contrasts between Korean and many other languages as well as an exceptional nationalistic tone throughout. President Kim's repeated attempts in the press to justify the righteousness of the Society's mission by reiterating a language/script dichotomy further suggest a growing perception that possibly widespread nationalistic undertones surrounding the issue needed to be downplayed. Furthermore, a brief inquiry into the modern history of the Korean language will help to explain the intimate linguistic-nationalism connection within the East-Asia language and cultural sphere.

The history of the Korean language since the turn of the 20th century has been a history characterized by precarious and fluctuating Korean statuses, standardization during a highly compressed and complex period, and a particularly intense level of linguistic influence from neighboring languages. Whereas these particular circumstances have combined to produce a considerable historical complexity, they have also resulted in a bewildering jumble of linguistic terminologies, meanings, connotations and nuances. Below I briefly explore the relevant connections between the Korean script and language, introduce the philosophy of ‘national language’ and its discursive evolution between Japan and Korea, and delineate and define the various linguistic terminologies as they are to be employed in the remainder of the paper.

A short sample of the wide range of extant terminologies relating to the Korean language will suffice to convey a sense of the degree of complexity involved. The following is a non-exhaustive list of various terms which have come to denote the *Korean script* (Han’gŭl) since its inception:

		Original name upon promulgation, <i>correct sounds for instruction of the people</i>
-Hunminchōngŭm (訓民正音)		<i>Correct sounds</i>
-Chōngŭm (正音)		Vulgar language/writing
-Ōnmun (諺文)		Female script
-Amkŭl		One’s writing
-Ponmun (本文)		Our writing
-Amun (我文)		National writing
-Kukmun (國文)		Our script
-Urikul		Chosŏn script
-Chosŏn kul		Korea script
-Hankuk kul		Korea characters
-Hanja (韓字)		‘A-B-C’ script
-Kakya kul		Chosŏn writing
-Chosŏn mun (朝鮮文)		Morning script ³⁰
-Ach’im kul		

This dizzying array of names for a single script suggests not so much a lack of agreement over which term would be used, but rather reflects the tone of discourse on *Han'gŭl*, both positive and negative. As may be inferred from some of the above terms, a battle was waged over the future of *Han'gŭl*. The positive connotations conveyed by some of the terms above—*correct sounds* invoking loyalty to King Sejong or the aggrandizing *great script*—signify conscious efforts to promote *Han'gŭl*, while the negative implications conveyed by the terms *ŏnmun*, *amkŭl* (referring to the script's perceived concentration among women) and *ach'im kul* (due to its ease of learning) reflect attempts to disparage the script in favor of classical Chinese and in turn vested interests. In the popular press, the choice as to which term would be employed was an overtly political one; certain of the terms could signify quite clearly the ideological leanings of the author. Moreover, the general shift over time from the use of overwhelmingly hostile terms to a gradually more laudatory tone paralleled a popular attitude change toward *Han'gŭl* and revealed a growing trend of anti-conservatism, at least among literate commentators featured in the print press. This is not to suggest, however, that a clear historical progression unfolded, each period being clearly delineated by a single in-vogue term. Several different names for *Han'gŭl* were commonly used during any one period, and many authors actually referred to *Han'gŭl* by disparate names within a single piece. The terminology employed more often reflected the author's position within the debate rather than the date of authorship.

Here, the generally accepted term *Han'gŭl* is used in reference to the Korean script alone, as well as in reference to the script *and* vernacular Korean as the two are so

intimately connected. On the other hand, the usage of the contemporary term ‘Korean’ (*hankugŏ/ hankukmal*) may refer to any one of the historical manifestations of the Korean language in both spoken and written form, including pre-standardized pure *Han ’gŭl*, Sino-Korean mixed script, and virtually desinified contemporary Korean.³² ‘Korean’ will additionally encompass the Korean script, except where explicit delineation is required. Finally, a special effort is needed to extract the terms ‘state language’ and ‘state writing’ (*kugŏ* and *kukmun*) from the terminology jumble and treat them in an individual fashion due to their ideological implications, an issue taken up below.

The State, Language, and the Case of ‘Round Trip Terms’

The concept of national languages is an issue garnering increased attention in the field of socio-linguistics. This is a subject with a wide array of theoretical implications, including conceptions of modernity, language and power, and language ideology. Due to the politically charged nature of this phenomenon as well as the somewhat confusing and convoluted evolution of the idea in Korea, the terminology surrounding ‘national language’ in the East Asian context requires clarification. In her nuanced work on the Japanese language question entitled “The Ideology of Kokugo,” Lee Yŏn suk claims that, although existing before the Meiji Era, “*kokugo* (*kugŏ*) with a modern connotation, used in opposition to *kango* (Chinese) in its modern sense, was a child of modernity born out of the intense determination of Meiji Japan.”³³ The term with its altered connotations was then re-circulated through East Asia and adapted to local conditions. In this way, *kugŏ* and other modern reformulations of Chinese-derived base concepts can be theorized as ‘round-trip terms,’ beginning as certain classical Chinese character with prescribed,

codified usages, mixing first in Japan with Western conceptions of modernity before finally returning to their origin in China with new meanings affixed, their recent origins obscured by the ancient component parts (國語). Andre Schmid detects a similar pattern in the development of the term *minjok* (民族), a term whose component parts were used separately for centuries but were never specifically combined until late 19th century Japan.³⁴ Schmid writes that “two venerable characters traditionally used to denote various types of social groups...served to blur the term’s recent origins, suggesting an etymology that, like the claims being made for the nation, stretched into the distant past.”³⁵ The ancient origin of the characters constituting *kugō* similarly lent an air of historical legitimacy to the term, though the concept of this particular *kuk* (國) was a reconceived, Western conception of the nation as it related to language. Schmid further notes that the neologism *minjok* continued to shift its meaning through discursive interaction in East Asia, first being used in Korean print in conjunction with “eastern” (*tongbang*) and “white” (*baegin*) to describe a social-Darwinian scheme of competing races before losing all Pan-Asian implications and coming to refer only to Korean people.³⁶ In a similar fashion, after its initial semantic reconfiguration in Japan, the term *kugō* continued to transform and evolve throughout East Asia over time, eventually taking on controversial political and ideological dimensions during colonial Korea as the meaning of the term became contested terrain.

From the second half of the 19th century up until the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910, the term *kugō*—with its newly-affixed connotation of one nation’s language in opposition to others—was increasingly being employed in Japan and Korea to refer to the respective languages. However, with the advent of colonialism and the restructuring of

language policy on the Korean peninsula, the understanding of *kugō/kokugo* was problematized. In fact, the very definition of the term was contested along nationalistic lines, with the ideology of *kugō* as conceived in the minds of the various actors coming to symbolize competing versions of nation. In 1911, Japanese was declared the national language (*kugō*) of Korea, indicating that on the most obvious level government administration and Japanese education would be conducted in Japanese (*kokugo*). This conceals, however, the wide-ranging, long-term implications for the whole of Korean society due to the intimate relationship between official language competency and the labor market. With this proclamation, the *kokugo* which had previously referred only to the indigenous national language of Japan was now transplanted semantically intact (國語) to a foreign country, while the *kugō* status of Korean was now demoted to that of “Chōsen-go” (朝鮮語).³⁷ What complicated matters even further was that language reform had been proceeding in a parallel fashion in Japan and Korea both before and after annexation, and that Japan was far from settling its own complex linguistic situation—both technically and philosophically—upon annexation and implementation of *kokugo* policies in Korea. This meant that the ideological connotations associated with *kokugo/kugō* and hence the future meaning of the word continued to evolve and transform in each of the countries, existing in a dynamic of mutual influence and reconfiguration. In this way, the evolving definition and ideological implications of *kokugo/kugō* were the results of a dialectical Japan-Korea relationship. Though many scholars have claimed a leadership role for Japan in colonial modernization projects due to the country’s relatively advanced state in East Asia, I argue that the more or less parallel standardization and modernization of Japanese and Korean provided a

particularly noteworthy basis for an interactive, cross-penetrating dialectic, with neither country taking the definitive lead despite Japan's de facto advantage due to its colonial governing apparatus and virtual labor market monopolization. Importantly, the Japanese language (*kokugo*) was never conferred widespread legitimacy as the official language by many Korean nationalist reformers, due in part to the perceived progress being made in Korean language standardization and thanks to increasingly nationalistic *kugō* connotations resulting paradoxically from *kukogo* ideological influence. Despite the *perceived* illegitimacy of Japanese as *kokugo*, the ultimate dislodging of Japanese could not occur until the colonial system perpetuating its superior status through connection to social mobility was removed.

The various terminologies denoting Korean script and language in the early 20th century were far from merely semantic labels. They were contested terrains, sites of discursive warfare in which competing future versions of the Korean nation embodied in language battled for ascendancy. Just as competing discourses on *Han'gŭl* employing positive and negative terminologies reflected the attitudes toward the script while simultaneously defining its continuing development and role in the nation, evolving and competing conceptions of national language helped to define not only which language would occupy this position but the nature of this position and its role in the future of the nation. The reader should keep in mind the significance of these terminologies in the following sections, where I explore shifting discourses on Korean and *Han'gŭl* in the popular press. I now turn my attention to a brief overview of some specific theorizations of language in the early Korean Enlightenment period.

1.3. Language, Civilization and Enlightenment

At the turn of the 20th century, the watchwords of the new Korean intellectual were undoubtedly *munmyǒng kaehwa* (civilization and enlightenment). This new intellectual class spearheaded a nationalist movement that championed the vanguard Western modernist epistemology as the driving force for the emerging Korean ‘nation.’ As Andre Schmid points out, “the power and seductiveness of *munmyǒng kaehwa* lay in its ability to link seamlessly the individual, nation, and globe into a historical and spatial unity.”³⁸ Schmid writes the following on the universality and revolutionary nature of *munmyǒng kaehwa*: “As a modern discourse par excellence, *munmyǒng kaehwa* offered a conceptual framework in which various groups could come to terms with their recent integration into the global capitalist system. At the same time, its underlying drive for change served to deepen that participation....nationalism was the vehicle for accelerating the peninsula’s inclusion in the global capitalist order, and these globalizing forces—in particular what was called ‘new knowledge’ (*sinhak*)—stimulated a radical rethinking of the nation and its identity.”³⁹

At the heart of this discourse on “new knowledge” lay the issue of language, in particular the debate over script. This discussion—played out in the pages of the newly emerging popular press—concerned not merely issues of orthography and grammar, but the very conception of modern, legitimate knowledge itself. On either side of the debate were the traditional Confucian *yangban* elite and their supporters and a new breed of educated nationalist reformers.⁴⁰ Defending Korea’s tradition of reverence for the classics of Chinese literature and their own class’s continued inculcation in such knowledge, the *yangban* argued for the continued usage of Chinese characters while disparaging so-called *ǒnmun* (vulgar script). These traditionalists claimed that Chinese writing (*Hanmun*)

was the ‘true script’ (*chinmun*) that granted exclusive access to true knowledge, whereas *Han’gŭl* could claim no such special access to truth. On the other side of the debate, nationalist reformers attacked Chinese writing on several fronts; they argued that its level of difficulty precluded the lower classes from attaining it, they disparaged the language as a foreign element in their attempts to promote all things Korean, and they pointed out the poor fit between Chinese and Korean grammar and syntax. However, their most revolutionary and persuasive argument attacked *hanmun*’s claim to sole legitimacy in the conveyance of knowledge. In effect, these reformers were questioning the entire epistemological structure of East Asia from the platform of *munmyŏng kaehwa* based on a universalized Western conception of modernization. The speed with which the tide turned in favor of the reformers was remarkable. After centuries of classical Chinese education of a restrictive nature in the hands of a tiny literati, the debate on Korean script had placed *hanmun* advocates on the defensive within a single generation. Whereas in the early 1890’s promoting the abolition of *hanmun* and the exclusive usage of *Han’gŭl* would have been met by derision, laughter, or worse, by the first decade of the 20th century the discourse had shifted to the point where the most conservative elements were arguing only for the usage of mixed Sino-Korean script (*kukhanmun*), while progressive reformers called for the complete abolition of *hanmun*.⁴¹ *Han’gŭl* thus solidified its position in the modern Korean nation.

How did a previously disparaged script gain such prominence within such a short period of time? How did reformers succeed in elevating the status of *Han’gŭl* to a nationally recognized, legitimate script when *hanmun* had occupied the position of legitimate language and contributed to centuries of social reproduction through

monopolization of the feudal administrative power structure? Although the particular make-up of late-Chosŏn society was ripe for reform, nationalist reformers adroitly exploited this opportunity by successfully critiquing, reconceptualizing, and reforming traditional knowledge through recourse to *munmyŏng kaehwa*. In promoting *Han 'gŭl* for the nation, reformers connected Korea to the globalizing forces engendered in *munmyŏng kaehwa* by intimately linking the Korean script to “new knowledge.” Below, I analyze the ideology of *munmyŏng kaehwa* and its utilization in editorials of the popular press, paying close attention to the connection between *Han 'gŭl* and conceptions of “new knowledge.” *Munmyŏng kaehwa* provided the earliest theoretical underpinnings of a modernizing Korean state, a sort of nationalist philosophical base for the transition from the Chosŏn Dynasty through the Great Han Empire period up until the colonial period. After this time, the discourse on *munmyŏng kaehwa* in the popular press gradually transformed while a more mature, focused discourse on specific avenues of language reform—including reorganization, standardization, and dictionary compilation—began to take shape. This discourse was often framed as an appeal for modern, vernacular education, not as a path toward *munmyŏng kaehwa* per se, but as a nationalistic response to the colonial modernity paradigm. It was this nationalistic discourse that succeeded *munmyŏng kaehwa* in defining the course of the Korean nation in relation to the Korean language during the colonial period, and it is where we now turn in our discussion.

1.4 Language and Nationalism

The concept of national language emerged some centuries ago, yet its received meaning and significance has begun to be questioned in the field of socio-linguistics only since the

late 20th century. Following Emerson, Florian Coulmas outlines nationalism as it relates to language in a technical sense by which it is often understood today, describing it as a force that “created unity across societal strata whose coming into existence was thus intimately related to the transformation of feudal into bourgeois societies which, in turn, depended on the expansion of secular education in the vernacular languages.”⁴² This generated the idea of “a natural unity of nation, state, and language,” an idea which is often conceived as an outgrowth of the French Revolution, as the full vigor of the nation state was only realized after this event.⁴³ Therefore, in this conception of nationalism, unity across social strata was dependent upon vernacular education, placing the school and specifically language at the center of the emerging nation-state philosophy. Indeed, the modern (European) nation could not have existed without a preceding language to which a majority adhered and recognized as its own.

How, then, did languages come to command this adherence and recognition? Does the vernacular education system completely explain the proliferation of a standardized language and a population’s eventual acceptance of it as the national language? Benedict Anderson has famously postulated the centrality not of vernacular education, but rather print capitalism in the creation of so-called “imagined communities.”⁴⁴ According to Anderson, “the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation.”⁴⁵ The possibility of imagining the nation only arose historically when several “fundamental cultural conceptions...lost their axiomatic grip on men’s minds.”⁴⁶ The first conception, and the one of relevance to our discussion here, was the idea that “a particular script-language offered privileged

access to ontological truth, precisely because it was an inseparable part of that truth.”⁴⁷

Therefore, a loosening of the ties binding script, language and truth across vast populations in part gave way to new possibilities for imagining communities along reconceived linguistic lines. Awareness of these linguistic connections and subsequent coalescence around them as recognized national languages was precipitated by the spread of print capitalism.

In the case of Korea, while print capitalism did contribute to the possibility of a new form of imagined community through the dissemination of vernacular press, it is not clear whether print capitalism was the decisive factor in legitimizing and promulgating Korean as national language, or whether vernacular print media even preceded chronologically the imagined community in Korea. Several interrelated factors contributed to the legitimization of Korean as national language, including vernacular education, Korean’s position vis-à-vis the labor market, *and* print capitalism, while Korean historical circumstances complicate Anderson’s basically Euro-centric claim that language popularization preceded imagination which then begot the nation state in a neat chronological progression.

Anderson correctly argues that a major precursor to the rise of nationalism was the demotion of certain script-languages, such as Latin, Arabic, and Chinese, from arbiter of absolute truth to irrelevant or unnecessary language. This is precisely what nationalist reformers attempted and largely succeeded in doing through the Korean print press and other outlets. These reformers did not attack the claim that Chinese symbols enjoyed an exclusive link to true knowledge per se, but rather questioned the relevance of this ‘truth’ to the modern nation. Significantly, however, the popular press in which these arguments

were made appeared only after or roughly in tandem with the first stirrings of modern nationalism (imagined community sentiment?), and even then the press was circulated only among a tiny coterie of literate intellectuals. Korea's highly concentrated classical (Chinese) education coupled with widespread illiteracy at the end of the 19th century therefore precluded a European-style progression from print capitalism to imagined community to nation, while the roughly simultaneous emergence of the accouterments of modernity (vernacular press, modern education, national consciousness) in a compressed period created an environment of parallel development, interconnectivity, and mutual influence. Vernacular Korean disseminated through print culture did not actualize an imagined community which provided the foundation for the nation-state in a systematic, orderly fashion. Rather, the Korean language was constantly evolving both linguistically and hierarchically in relation to other languages, the press, nationalism, and the education system, which affected the trajectory of the Korean nation. Chinese characters exerted a powerful influence on the Korean language in the early 20th century, which in turn affected the readership and content of the popular press, as well as its impact on shaping national consciousness. During the colonial period, another sort of exclusivity and hierarchical social reproduction was extended through legitimization of the Japanese press and limiting, censoring or banning the Korean press, further affecting the Korean language and script and their impact on developing imagined community potentiality. Finally, the Korean language and the emerging education system existed in a dialectical relationship, where each actor was both influencing and influenced by each other through constant evolution and interaction with a broader social complexity.

In this complex social environment of multilingualism, contested modernity, and epistemological compression, it is difficult to determine exactly what factor contributed most substantially to the establishment of a national language in Korea and what this meant in turn for the Korean nation. Indeed, the very concept of national language in Korea was a contested terrain, where classical Chinese, Japanese, and Korean periodically vied for supremacy. It seems clear, however, that we are not dealing with a clean cause and effect relationship between language, print capitalism, the imagined community, and education. Although all of these factors inevitably influenced the shape and character of language and its relationship to the Korean nation in the first half of the 20th century, this was not a simple linear process. Korean linguistic history and the nature of language itself resist such simplistic characterization, while the nebulous nature of nationalism further complicates a comfortable narrativization. Special attention needs to be paid to the interconnected nature of nationalism, colonialism, the popular press, and education in any attempt to tease out the particularities of language in relation to the Korean nation.

Part 2. Han'gŭl for the Nation: Munmyŏng Kaehwa and the Roots of Modern Korean

2.1. Viewing Korea's Language Reform from a Socio-Linguistic Perspective

Much Korean language research on twentieth century Korean linguistics since the 1970's has approached the issue from an institutional or organizational theoretical perspective, alternately focusing on the well-known pioneers of the Korean language movement working within various indigenous language organizations or the enforcement and effects of Japanese Government general language policies. Much of this research is characterized by detailed historical documentation and phonetic and morphological linguistic theory, yet few insights into the meaning of the Korean language, *Han'gŭl*, and the language reform movement in the broader historical context. In other words, this research addresses the question of *who* and *how*, but not sufficiently the question of *why*. For example, *A 50-year History of the Han'gŭl Society (Han'gŭl Hakhoe 50Nyŏn-sa)*—the definitive history of this most important of Korean language organizations—provides a detailed, comprehensive look at the efforts of the club to compile a dictionary, reform Korean spelling, and promulgate Han'gŭl in Korean schools often against the resistance of colonial authority, but the book fails to situate the language movement within the context of the broader ideological transformations taking shape in Korea during the time.¹ In his article *The Independent and Han'gŭl Culture*, Yi Ki-mun stresses the heretofore underestimated role of Sŏ Chae p'il in Han'gŭl pioneering while showing the significance of *The Independent* newspaper in elevating the Korean script and demonstrating Han'gŭl's potential.² However, this work, too, falls short of addressing

the central meaning of *Han'gŭl* to the emerging Korean nation in terms of modernist discourses like *munmyŏng kaehwa*. Other works by authors such as Kim Sŏk-tŭk, Ko Yŏng-gŭn and Yi Ŭng-ho provide detailed accounts of the specific linguistic proposals and accomplishments of early language reformers like Chu Si-kyŏng as well as the contributions of various other actors—such as the National Script Research Institute, the National Script Tongsik Hoe and the Catholic Church—to the language reform movement.³ While these are invaluable sources for chronological information on the purely linguistic aspects of the Korean language in the 20th century, they are of little relevance to the theoretical thrust of this paper. Rather than focusing on the nuts and bolts of language reform in Korea through organizational deliberations and Governor General language policy, this current study situates language within the theoretical constructs of power, civilization and enlightenment, and nationalism. In other words, how have the issues surrounding Korean language since the late 19th century reflected class/colonial power relations, the modernizing discourse of *munmyŏng kaehwa*, and nationalism, especially under colonial rule.

In focusing on the role of script, language, and education in *munmyŏng kaehwa* of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this paper follows the theoretical lead of recent works on the Korean Enlightenment Period by scholars such as Andre Schmid, Shin Ki-wook, Im Hyŏng Taek and Yi Hye-ryŏng which have moved past the organizational and institutional linguistic history characteristic of the research mentioned above to a more socio-linguistic conceptualization of Korean based on language and modernization, specifically the discourse on *munmyŏng kaehwa*. In *Korea Between Empires*, Andre Schmid demonstrates the centrality of the *epistemological shift* from classical Confucian

education to modern, Western education related directly to language and script, a philosophical lead I pursue in this section. In a related theoretical thread, Yi Hye-ryōng stresses the importance of “hanja perception” in late Chosŏn and how this shifting perception both reflected the changing relationship between Korea and China and in turn influenced further discussion on the topic in the popular press.⁴ More importantly, she states, “the transformation in *hanja/hanmun* perception represented a fundamental turn in the entire East Asian episteme.”⁵ In the book *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, Shin Ki-wook similarly emphasizes the critical role of new modernizing ideologies in shaping the emerging Korean nation. Shin designates pan-Asianists and nationalists as the dominant forces during the Enlightenment period, and characterizes both of these groups as influenced by *munmyōng kaehwa* ideology yet divergent as to the specific path toward modernization: “whereas pan-Asianists advocated a broad, regional identity and solidarity, nationalists regarded nation, not race or region, as the basis for a new, modern Korean identity.”⁶ Despite these variances, each group was guided by the concept of international competition couched in a social-Darwinist framework, whether it be competition between regions/races (pan-Asianists) or nations (nationalists). The most effective approach to this competition was the modernization and refinement of education in the vernacular language. Im Hyōng taek also mentions the unassailable connection between modern education and the new Korean nation, stating simply that “the modern nation was the foundation of the people, and the establishment of national education was considered a fundamental theme of that modern nation.”⁷

This theoretical approach to Korean language focusing on the East Asian episteme shift engendered by modernist discourses such as *munmyōng kaehwa* provides a fresh

alternative to other forms of linguistic history. By focusing on the historical reasons behind script reform, (rather than the chronology and methodology of implementation), this approach reveals the macro-level interconnectedness of the nation, modernization, education, and language. As I will demonstrate, the influence of *munmyǒng kaehwa* was profoundly felt by the first generation of reform intellectuals, whether pan-Asianists or nationalists. If *munmyǒng kaehwa* offered a conceptual framework in which various groups could come to terms with their recent integration into the global capitalist system, then the most influential blueprint for successful participation in this system was illustrated by the ideology of social-Darwinism. According to this perception of the world, Korea could no longer be content riding on the coattails of a larger power (China), but would have to instead develop its institutions and culture. In this system of intense competition, unlike in the violent realm of lower animals, human beings' best chance for ascendancy to 'enlightened' status was through improvement in education. The 'new learning' (*sinhak*) accompanying *munmyǒng kaehwa* was to replace Confucian education, which had become all but obsolete. Not only was the underlying education (moral lessons for yangban officials through Chinese literature) called into question, but the very script with which it was written. Korea was facing an existential crisis and had not the time to waste on years of difficult writing; this *sinhak* had to be imported, absorbed, and instituted quickly. The race between nations was on, and Japan was waiting in the wings to pounce should Korea falter. In this way, *Han'gŭl* became the new *raison d'être* for the Korean nation within the *munmyǒng kaehwa* formulation. *Han'gŭl*-vernacular promotion would make rapid, mass education possible, in turn elevating the global competitive potential of Korea in the race between nations (social-Darwinism) and

allowing a successful integration into the global capitalist system (*munmyŏng kaewha*). This theoretical perspective demonstrates the centrality of language and script in the Korean experience and contributes to a growing body of critical socio-linguistic research on Korea.

At the close of the 19th century, Korea found itself at a historical crossroads. A dynasty that had existed for over half a millennium suddenly faced an existential dilemma. The Chosŏn Dynasty, which had enjoyed a stable existence since the late 14th century based upon a neo-Confucian state ideology and essentially Sino-centric epistemology, became inundated with a multiplicity of radical, revolutionary new ideas. These ideas competed for the hearts and minds of the Korean people and the future direction of the Korean nation, in the process generating new dialogue among the educated elite and engendering drastic transformations. One influential ideology that captured the imagination of many educated Koreans was the idea of *munmyŏng kaehwa*. *Munmyŏng kaehwa* had a certain universal appeal as it sought to provide a conceptual framework for the integration of the Korean nation into the global capitalist order, based in part on the promotion of new knowledge (*sinhak*) and a radical rethinking of the nation and its identity. At the root of this new knowledge promotion was a reconceptualization of the role of language in general and a reevaluation of linguistic hierarchy on the Korean peninsula in particular. The centuries-old monopoly on knowledge and social advancement held by classical Chinese was questioned and then attacked, while the growing importance attached to the rapid acquisition of new knowledge raised doubts as to the efficacy of continued Chinese character utilization. Korean reformers began to question Chinese characters' claim of exclusivity in the acquisition of 'true' knowledge

and for the first time (in increasingly nationalistic tones) emphasized the foreignness of the script while promoting the usage of *Han 'gŭl*.⁸ The movement to promote *Han 'gŭl* usage and standardization quickly gained momentum, with the press gradually following suit in its publications. In a single generation, *Han 'gŭl* had gone from a marginalized, denigrated, even vilified script, to a valued, lionized asset for the Korean nation. To understand the significance of this transformation, a short history of the script's promulgation, reception, and usage during the Chosŏn Dynasty is in order.

2.2. A Seed Sewn on Barren Soil: The Promulgation of Hunminchŏngŭm in a Hostile Climate

The speech sounds of our nation are different from those of China and are not confluent in writing. Thus, there are many among the ignorant peasants who, when they have something they wish to say, are ultimately unable to express their meanings. Taking pity on this, I have newly created twenty-eight letters, and simply wish for any and all to learn them with ease and use them at their convenience in daily life.⁹

Such were the words of King Sejong the Great, written over 550 years ago. These now well-known, oft-quoted lines first appeared in the preface to the 1446 *Hunminchŏngŭm*. Attached to this was a document written by a number of scholars working under King Sejong entitled *Hunminchŏngŭm haerye* (訓民正音解例), a sort of handbook explaining the various sounds and usages of the new, indigenous Korean script, *Han 'gŭl*. This pragmatic approach to language would be echoed half a millennia later by nationalist reformers emphasizing the possible role of *Han 'gŭl* in mass education, while the benevolent, populist tone of King Sejong in promoting *Han 'gŭl* would be invoked by

these same reformers in calling on the nation to respect the gift of their generous benefactor. However, much like the reformers of the early 20th century, King Sejong met with bitter resistance from the only group in any position to argue, the *yangban* elite. Having received an exclusive education in Chinese literature based upon gender and noble pedigree, the *yangban* class had little incentive to accept this new script, at best a simple, vulgar form of writing, at worst a fundamental threat to their social position and way of life. Indeed, the royal provenance of *Han'gŭl* was most likely the saving grace of the script, though even this did not guarantee *Han'gŭl*'s survival. Had *Han'gŭl* been invented by a commoner or even by a respected member of the *yangban*, it is doubtful whether it would have survived the close-minded, hostile intellectual climate of the Chosŏn period.

The opening salvo of attacks was publicly issued in 1444, just months after the invention of *Han'gŭl* in the twelfth month of 1443. King Sejong had gathered together and nurtured a number of scholars in what was called *Chiphyŏnjŏn*—an official academic research institution—and a number of dissident scholars from this group banded together to submit a memorial to King Sejong opposing the creation of the new script.¹⁰ The most representative member of this group was a scholar by the name of Ch'oe Man-ri. In his now well-known six-point argument against the adoption of the new script, Ch'oe invoked allegiance to inherited knowledge and reaffirmed the exclusive link between Chinese characters and this knowledge. Specifically, Ch'oe characterized the creation of a phonetic script separate from Chinese characters as a shameful act vis-à-vis China, in light of centuries of “emulation” and “servitude” (*pokjong*).¹¹ In addition, Ch'oe drew a linkage between Chosŏn and other peoples in Asia using indigenous, non-Chinese scripts,

claiming that the adoption of the new script would demote Chosŏn to the level of these other “barbarians” (*orangk’ae*).¹² Ch’oe further complained that the new script, being “so very simple” and “even more base than idu” would “alienate [Chosŏn] from high Chinese culture...and thus downgrade [Chosŏn’s] cultural level.”¹³ Finally Ch’oe, from a political standpoint, suggested subjecting the matter to “repeated inquiry and consideration” as the project was “being expedited without the benefit of any such prudence by a small number of people in a rash fashion.”¹⁴

King Sejong, in a strongly worded response, attacked the basic assumptions of Ch’oe’s criticisms while questioning his and other scholars’ knowledge of linguistic matters. Sejong likened the invention of *Han’gŭl* to that of *idu*, stating that, like Sŏl Ch’ong before him, he was merely attempting to assist the commoners with their written language in order to make life easier.¹⁵ Finally, replying to those scholars who questioned the Crown Prince’s involvement in the *Han’gŭl* project, King Sejong defended his son’s involvement, claiming that the project was no mere novelty, but an important matter of state.¹⁶ However, King Sejong did not directly address the core issues relating to *Han’gŭl*’s invention. That is, Sejong did not mention the link between knowledge and Chinese characters nor did he challenge the notion that utilization of these characters determined the level of a country’s civilization and enlightenment. Rather, he emphasized the practical application of *Han’gŭl* for the common people. It must be observed that Sejong was not attempting to *replace* Chinese writing, only confer upon commoners a sort of communicative ability while *supplementing* the Korean language as it was employed by the *yangban* with a kind of pronunciation aide for Chinese writing. Sejong’s attitude toward *Han’gŭl* invention and propagation may be

viewed as a kind of political maneuvering, a deft tactical decision evincing foresight and an awareness of the Chosŏn intellectual climate. Even if King Sejong was a highly enlightened individual indeed and anticipated the importance that a simplified, popularized script would play in the ‘modern’ state in terms of education, the Sino-centric Confucian epistemology of his day was simply too psychologically comprehensive and all-encompassing to allow any significant threat to its core tenets. Observing the entrenched links between classical Chinese education and elite social status while perceiving minimal potential for acquisition among commoners, Sejong likely chose to promote *Han’gŭl* on the basis of mass practicality in utilization. Predicting *Han’gŭl*’s probable rejection by the *yangban*, Sejong targeted the commoner in promoting and defending *Han’gŭl* as this group would be most receptive to and aided by the script. Thanks to Sejong’s tireless efforts—as well as the ingeniousness of design and royal origin—*Han’gŭl* survived through the centuries despite efforts by critics like Ch’oi Man-ri.

The objections to *Han’gŭl* raised by certain *yangban* scholars are understandable and must have been easy to predict for King Sejong. After all, mass literacy might have posed a threat to the privileged position of the *yangban* elite, though a phonetic script alone would have provided little utility in understanding classical texts, as it were. The very idea of a competing mode of knowledge, however, especially one so easily mastered, would have been an affront to the elite’s position, an affront to what Pierre Bourdieu has termed “distinction.”¹⁷ Distinction, used here in a very specific linguistic sense, refers to the competence necessary in order to speak (and use) the legitimate language in a society. According to Bourdieu, what is rare is of course not the capacity

to speak, but competence in the legitimate language, which “re-translates social distinctions into the specifically symbolic knowledge of differential deviations, or, in short, distinctions.”¹⁸ In the linguistic market where legitimate languages and other languages compete, legitimate competence can translate into “linguistic capital,” producing a “profit of distinction.”¹⁹ In the case of Korea, the *yangban* may have perceived the introduction of *Han’gŭl* and the concomitant promotion of the vernacular language as an assault on their profit of distinction derived from competence in the legitimate language, classical Chinese. Naturally, the class possessing the most linguistic capital would have the most to lose from mass literacization as a competing language would potentially diminish the margin of profit of distinction the class enjoyed. From this perspective, the objections of elite scholars educated in Chinese literature are understandable and in fact characteristic of most linguistic communities.²⁰ However, what does not seem representative of most linguistic situations is the fact that one member of this dominant class—the most powerful member—chose to promote a script which offered no personal gain in linguistic capital and actually threatened his own class’ profit of distinction. Bourdieu may again offer an explanation to this apparent contradiction.

In promoting a script suitable for the vernacular language and directed not at the literate *yangban* alone but crafted also for the uneducated masses, King Sejong exhibited behavior uncharacteristic of a dominant social class. However, this behavior may be partially explained by what Bourdieu has termed *strategies of condescension*.²¹ Through this strategy, individuals with socially recognized proficiency in the dominant, legitimate language (such as King Sejong) derive profit from the symbolic negation of the linguistic

hierarchy of a society. This profit exists because, according to critical linguistic theory, languages receive value only in relation to the market of languages, a value in turn depending on “the relation of power that is concretely established between the speakers’ linguistic competences.”²² Therefore, being guaranteed wide recognition of participation in the dominant language by virtue of his inculcation in classical Chinese literature, Sejong symbolically negated the hierarchy between classical Chinese, *Han’gŭl* and vernacular Korean and in turn combined the “profits linked to the undiminished hierarchy with those derived from the distinctly symbolic negation of the hierarchy.”²³ Sejong could ‘afford’ to do so due to his widely recognized proficiency in the dominant language.

This extraction of profit through symbolic negation does not suggest, however, a cold, calculating decision, a kind of cynical attempt at personal gain disguised as altruism. Rather, this negation represents a successful assessment by King Sejong of the price formation of his particular linguistic market, while the clear acquisition of profit, in the form of praise and support from Koreans lacking competence in the dominant language—both then and today—was made possible due to a well-defined, widely acknowledged hierarchical distinction between the dominant classical Chinese and subordinate *Han’gŭl*/vernacular. Sejong’s strategy of condescension, then, was not a calculating business decision based on profit gain, but a (largely unconscious) value judgment reflecting a keen awareness and innate understanding of the linguistic market of the day. Importantly, the next generation of *Han’gŭl*/vernacular promoters over four hundred years later would be men from comparable (though not royal) educational backgrounds: men of elite status, their competence in the dominant language (classical Chinese)

beyond reproach. Though *Han'gŭl* eventually established a foothold among the commoners—aided by its more successful adoption by certain subgroups and the significant boost it enjoyed in connection with mid-19th-century Christianity—the script never seriously vied for dominant-language status until the condescension strategies of late 19th and early 20th century intellectuals symbolically traversed the linguistic hierarchy once again to bring *Han'gŭl* into the light.²⁴ Below, I will briefly chronicle the path of *Han'gŭl* through the Chosŏn Dynasty, foreshadowing its eventual resurrection and renewed promotion during the Enlightenment period. A look at *Han'gŭl* during the Chosŏn Dynasty will reveal the roots of the modern Korean language and illustrate its intimate relationship with modernist ideologies like civilization and enlightenment and nationalism.

2.3. The Status of 'Ŏnmun' During the Chosŏn Dynasty

The story of *Han'gŭl*'s dogged perseverance from the time of initial promulgation to its 'reemergence' in the late 19th century is a well-known narrative in modern South Korea.²⁵ According to this grand narrative, *Han'gŭl* was the ingenious invention of a benevolent king, a truly singular script in world history uniquely adapted to the Korean language. However, having been rejected and abused by the selfish, ungrateful *yangban*, *Han'gŭl* survived in the shadows, protected by Buddhists, women, and children until the 1890's *Kabo* reforms, when the intellectual class saw the error of its ways and resurrected *Han'gŭl* for a new, modern era. Though overly simplified, this narrative reflects many common assumptions about *Han'gŭl* during the Chosŏn Dynasty and echoes much of the Korean and English language research on the subject. In particular, *Han'gŭl*'s supposed

‘protection’ by women and Buddhists is a point repeated in a variety of works, often with little or any supporting evidence.²⁶ While evidence does exist suggesting *Han’gŭl*’s widespread usage in Buddhist canon, most research that I am aware of fails to cite specific examples of this phenomenon, instead merely parroting this ‘fact’ as if it were accepted dogma. As for the even more widely accepted idea that *Han’gŭl* usage was more prevalent among women than men, even less evidence is provided.²⁷ It seems that the more often this ‘truth’ is repeated, the more readily it is believed without a demand for evidence. In contrast to the widely held belief that *Han’gŭl* usage was largely limited to Buddhist sutras and internal correspondence among women, *Han’gŭl* was adapted to a variety of genres and formats, and was likely utilized more broadly among lower class and even upper class men than is often understood.

In *Writing Women in Korea*, Theresa Hyun enumerates several areas of literature affected by the introduction of *Han’gŭl*, including the Buddhist canon, the Chinese classics, poetry, didactic texts aimed at women, and the annotation system for Chinese literature.²⁸ Vernacular translations of Buddhist scriptures began under King Sejong and continued under the direction of his successors. Just as the translation of Buddhist literature from *Sanskrit* or *Pali* into Chinese contributed to the expression of abstract concepts in the language, so too did the translation of the Chinese versions into *chŏngŭm* expand the Korean philosophical vocabulary.²⁹ Ross King writes of *Han’gŭl* that “its ease of use made it especially attractive to Buddhists, who found in the Korean script a useful tool for evangelization and the propagation of Buddhist doctrine.”³⁰ Another major contribution of *Han’gŭl* to Chosŏn literary life was the translation of classical Chinese texts using the *ŏnhae* method.³¹ According to Theresa Hyun, writing on translation in

Chosŏn Korea, “from the late 15th to the late 16th centuries translation activities focused on Chinese classics, works dealing with Confucian ethics, literary works, and texts on medicine and agriculture.”³² *Ŏnhae* versions of the works of Tang poet *Tu Fu* also appeared in 1481 shortly after *Han ’gŭl*’s promulgation, showing the ability of the new script to cross genres with ease. *Han ’gŭl* soon came to be adopted as the exclusive genre for lyrical poetry, and much 16th century *Han ’gŭl* literature has been passed down in the form of *Akjang kasa*, the *Sinyong hyangakbo*, and the *sijo* and *kasa* preserved in the collected works of Chŏng Ch’ŏl (1536-93).³³ As early as the 17th century, *Han ’gŭl* literature was developed and diversified into various forms, including verse, fictional historical narratives, and diaries, a trend which intensified after the 18th century.³⁴ Furthermore, as works written in Chinese characters dwarfed the amount of literature penned in *Han ’gŭl* alone, translation employing first the *ŏnhae* method and later more colloquial Korean continued during the Chosŏn Dynasty among not only upper and lower class men but also some women. As this research demonstrates, *Han ’gŭl* gradually gained a foothold in a myriad of literary genres and was utilized by diverse groups in Chosŏn society, though its status never rivaled that of Chinese writing in the eyes of the *yangban* elite nor was it ever targeted for promotion by lower classes.

Although women are often cited as primary users of *Han ’gŭl* during the Chosŏn Dynasty, some evidence suggests not only that *Han ’gŭl* utilization may have been comparable or even more widespread among men, but also that a greater number of women than is often believed may have been educated in Chinese literature. Writing on readership during the late Chosŏn Dynasty, Ji-Eun Lee questions the widely accepted script-gender dichotomy that has been advanced in much Korean scholarship on the

period, citing a problematic lack of evidence. Lee claims that, due to this dearth of archival evidence on size and location of readership, the assumption that men read the true script (*chinmun*) and women read *Han'gŭl* becomes “default practice,”³⁵ and the conjecture is repeated with little or no supporting evidence, simply because it is the most likely scenario. However, Lee contends that “no single group can be shown, by their demonstrated readership practices, to represent only one kind of script; social or gender category does not, in practice, map well onto genre of writing.”³⁶ Rather than a correspondence between *Han'gŭl* and the female gender, Lee argues persuasively for a stronger connection between men and *Han'gŭl* by pointing out that men had more access not only to vernacular literature but also literature in general, and that a vast majority of women were illiterate while a majority of men were literate.³⁷ This would suggest that, among literate women, even if a greater number were literate in *Han'gŭl* than in *hanmun* (which was likely due to the vast amount of time needed for literacy in the latter and the insufficient time that would have been afforded to women for such an endeavor), because of the overwhelming discrepancy in literacy rates between the sexes, male usage of *Han'gŭl* would still have been considerably higher. Lee also notes a number of Chosŏn women who wrote letters, philosophical debates, and poetry in *hanmun*, defying the conventions of their time and making a gender distinction based on script even more untenable.³⁸

Why, then, did vernacular writing come to be associated with women and other ‘inferior’ groups? It seems that, even though the usage of *Han'gŭl* was most definitely not limited to these groups, the important thing was the maintenance of at least the semblance of social hierarchy based on educational attainment. Certain *yangban* men

may have dabbled in vernacular novels when no one was looking, and exceptional women may have strived for a proscribed education in classical Chinese. However, as long as the fundamental basis of knowledge and tradition upon which Chosŏn society was founded remained unchallenged—a political elite determined by rarified knowledge of classical Chinese and a largely uneducated female gender relegated to the inner quarters—minor transgressions could be affectively ignored while general assumptions could be successfully perpetuated. It was in the waning years of the Chosŏn Dynasty, though, that this fundamental basis began to erode under various competing forces. Ideologies such as civilization and enlightenment challenged the foundations of Confucian knowledge and suggested new directions for a modern nation. At the center of this modernist discourse was the debate over language or, more fundamentally, the definition of relevant knowledge in the new world order.

2.4. Reassessing Knowledge and Resurrection of ‘The Great Script’

In the closing years of the 19th century, two revolutionary events occurred which signaled the winds of modernization and change sweeping through East Asia. These events, though limited in immediate influence, would prove to be bellwethers of eventual change in Chosŏn society. The first event was the Kabo Reforms of 1894-1895, “a sweeping set of changes in government structure, fiscal organization, methods of government recruitment, and traditional social norms” spearheaded by the Japanese during their brief occupation of Seoul during the Sino-Japanese War.³⁹ The second event occurred the following year with the publishing of Korea’s first pure-Han’gŭl daily newspaper, *The*

Independent (Tongnip Sinmun). These were significant events in Korea's modern history for several reasons. First, they represent the two important forms of change in late Chosŏn as well as colonial Korean society. The Kabo Reforms, much like later colonial policies, were initiated at the behest of the Japanese government and represent coercive reform from the top down. On the other hand, the publishing of *The Independent* was an example of a relatively more populist type of reform led by what Michael Robinson has termed "transitional intellectuals," those trained "in the 1880's in traditional Confucian studies, but increasingly interested in the new Western learning that emerged after the abolition of the traditional examination system."⁴⁰ These reform-minded intellectuals continued to play an important role during the colonial period, as well. Second, each of these events directly affected and reflected the linguistic situation in Korea and East Asia at that time. The designation of vernacular writing in *Han'gŭl* as the national language (*kugŏ*) of Korea through the Kabo Reforms was undoubtedly influenced by Japan's own recent language reforms, while *The Independent's* utilization of pure *Han'gŭl* (and word spacing) reflected the Western education of the newspaper editors and contributors and encouraged other publications to follow suit. Finally, these two events were heavily influenced by Western or Japanese-mediated modern ideologies, especially civilization and enlightenment (*munmyŏng kaehwa*, 文明開化). The Korean press played an instrumental role in disseminating information and shaping opinion, specifically on the role of vernacular Korean/*Han'gŭl* in modernization couched in the *munmyŏng kaehwa* paradigm. An analysis of specific newspaper articles from this period will demonstrate this role.

The Kabo Reforms of 1894-1895 were a revolutionary set of reforms for their time,

dealing with all manner of Korean life, from government organization, royal status and financial management to government recruitment, marriage practice and even dress code. The reforms relevant to my discussion here, however, were those pertaining to education and language. The Kabo Reforms abolished the traditional government examination system based on Confucian studies while simultaneously creating a recommendation system that privileged the new skills learned in the growing number of schools that emphasized Western curricula, such as foreign languages, Western history and politics, commerce and science.⁴¹ Though there was a considerable lag between proclamation and implementation of many social reforms such as the approval of remarriage for widows and the abolition of slavery, the abolition of the traditional government examination had an immediate impact on an entire generation of scholars in the midst of their test preparation. The switch in credentialing systems for government service from Confucian studies to new Western-influenced curricula engendered a shift in academic interest among many of the educated elite and signaled the beginnings of an epistemological shift in Korea. Modern schools teaching a Western curriculum continued to spread, spearheaded first by Western missionaries and later strengthened by government credentialing. In addition to these educational issues, the Kabo Reforms directly addressed the matter of national language and script. Below is article 14 of King Kojong's 1894 royal decree to the Korean people, issued in the Government Gazette (Kwanbo):

(4) 法律勅令總以國文爲本漢文附譯或混用國漢文⁴²

“Legislation and Royal ordinances take the national script (*kungmun*) as their basis; a *hanmun* translation may be attached, or else they shall be written in a mixed Sino-Korean script.”⁴³

This brief footnote is significant for several reasons. On the one hand, this proclamation was the first instance that *Han 'gŭl* was officially designated as national script (*kukmun*), showing a crystallization of nation-language association and suggesting perhaps a streak of Japanese language ideological influence. On the other hand, this designation as national script vaulted *Han 'gŭl* to a renewed position of prestige. In the blink of an eye, *Han 'gŭl* had been officially promoted from ‘female script’ (*amgŭl*) and ‘vulgar script’ (*ŏnmun*) to foremost representative of the Korean nation. *Han 'gŭl*, a script whose very appearance in official government documents would have been previously unthinkable, now was not only included in these documents but was to become the very basis of them. The usage of *Han 'gŭl* also promoted more inclusivity among Koreans from a variety of classes and backgrounds; legislation and Royal ordinances written in the vernacular could reach a larger audience and engage them in affairs of state. Interestingly, however, this statute also foreshadowed the actual direction the Korean language would take among elite circles, namely the ascendance of *kukhanmun*. As Ko Yŏng jin demonstrates in an article on Korean language modernization, despite the announcement of this statute promoting *Han 'gŭl* on paper, it was generally not followed by government officials, aside from some special decrees directed to the commoners.⁴⁴ One reason for the failure to follow through on this particular statute was due simply to a lack of preparatory conditions for implementation.⁴⁵ Being government ministers with similar educational backgrounds, the drafters of any official documents would have been well-versed in Chinese writing but not necessarily in *Han 'gŭl*, still considered vulgar if not superfluous script. *Han 'gŭl*'s lack of unified orthographical and grammatical conventions further complicated an effective implementation in government bureaucracy. Furthermore, the

influence of Japan, who had initially promoted the reforms, was fleeting, and the Korean progressives championing script reform whom Japan had supported during its temporary spike in influence still constituted a minority in the conservative Chosŏn government. For all of these reasons, *Han'gŭl* became not the basis of government documents but rather a supplementation to the necessary *hanmun*, while *kukhanmun* began its gradual ascendancy among certain reform-minded intellectuals. It would take a more radical movement outside the government to champion the promotion of pure *Han'gŭl*, a movement spearheaded more than anything by the 1896 inauguration of *The Independent*.

The Independent and the Roots of the Korean Language Movement

It was the spring of 1896, and on the Korean peninsula there prevailed a tumultuous atmosphere of excitement and uncertainty punctuated by the circulation of revolutionary new ideas. Just two years earlier, responding to an armed uprising in Korea's southwest triggered by corruption but fueled by ideological grievances, China and Japan had simultaneously dispatched troops to Korea, resulting in the Sino-Japanese War.⁴⁶ Japan's victory led to a temporary surge in influence on the peninsula, culminating in the progressive Kabo Reforms of 1894. Queen Min—symbolic leader of the anti-Japanese faction in the Chosŏn bureaucracy—had just been assassinated in 1895, and King Kojong was now in hiding at the Russian embassy for fear of his life. It was during this period, on April 7, 1896, that the first peoples' newspaper written in the vernacular language—*The Independent*—was inaugurated. *The Independent* was the mouthpiece of The Independence Club (*Tongnip hyŏphoe*), an organization founded by the American-

educated and naturalized Philip Jaesohn (Sō Chae p'il, 1864-1951). Representative of the reform spirit of the day, The Independence Club “was a private organization where officials and private citizens gathered to discuss policy issues and reform proposals,”⁴⁷ in effect breaking the monopoly on political discussion held by the *yangban* elite. The three principle goals of the Independence Club were “to strengthen Korean independence, promote national self-strengthening, and advocate democratic participation in government decisions.”⁴⁸ Importantly, the club “chartered a course for a movement that encompassed public education, the creation of a national newspaper (*The Independent*), and the beginning of language reform, all projects that anticipated the gradual emergence of a new public sphere in Korea.”⁴⁹

In support of The Independence Club reform agenda, *The Independent* newspaper editorialized on a wide variety of national affairs. One issue that appeared with frequency in the pages of *The Independent* was language and script reform. Since the choice to publish in Han'gŭl-only was such a trailblazing effort, far ahead of public sentiment or any organic trend, the choice should be viewed as a very deliberate statement about national unity and modernization, and so the prevalence of editorials on script and language is to be expected. Indeed, the inaugural issue itself began with a lengthy treatise on the importance of script choice by the founder of The Independence Club, Sō Chae p'il. An excerpt of this well-known editorial is as follows:

Our newspaper is written not in *hanmun* but exclusively in the national script (*kukmun*) so all people high and low (*sang ha kui ch'ōn*) may see it. Also, we have introduced word spacing to the national script for ease of reading so that all may examine the newspaper contents in detail. In every country (*kakkuk*), regardless of gender (*namnyō mullonhago*) it is natural that people first learn and master the *kukmun* before learning foreign writing. However, in Chosŏn, because we study only *hanmun* without even knowing *kukmun*, it is rare to come across one who knows *kukmun* well. Comparing

kukmun to *hanmun*, the first reason that *kukmun* is so superior is due to its ease of learning. The second reason is that, being the writing of Chosŏn, the people of Chosŏn know *kukmun*, and so writing in it instead of in *hanmun* allows all people great and small to read with ease. Since our people (Chosŏn *inmin*) have developed the habit of learning only *hanmun* while discarding *kukmun*, they have become proficient in *hanmun* and remain unfamiliar with *kukmun*, a truly lamentable condition.⁵⁰

This editorial is significant for several reasons. It is one of the first publications written by a member of the intellectual class to publicly advocate *Han'gŭl*. Not since the 15th century had such a person openly promoted Korea's indigenous script, and much like centuries ago, the support came not from the lower classes who most utilized the script, but from the intellectual class. Even more striking, the author was not merely advocating the incorporation of *Han'gŭl* in creating Sino-Korean mixed script or promoting a special sphere of usage for *Han'gŭl*, but attacking the very source of knowledge at that time, *hanmun*. Indeed, later in the essay, the author audaciously claims that, “not knowing *hanmun* does not make one ignorant. Rather, when a person knows only *kukmun* along with other knowledge and worldly matters, that person is more lofty and intelligent than the man who knows only *hanmun*.”⁵¹ With one fell swoop, Sŏ attacks the fundamental epistemology of East Asia, the basis of knowledge which had undergirded elite Korean society for centuries. The author was in effect upending the hierarchy of knowledge by promoting the *Han'gŭl* script above *hanmun* in new knowledge attainment. This statement also hinted at the superior efficacy of phonetic alphabets in gaining “other knowledge” and becoming aware of “worldly matters.”⁵² Another interesting aspect of this essay is the repeated usage (seven times) of the term *sang ha kui ch'ŏn* (上下貴賤). This term evokes the universality and populist appeal of the indigenous script, and foreshadows the eventual direction of the newspaper itself in the coming years. As Sŏ writes in another part of the editorial, a major aim of the paper would be to report

government operations and new legislation to the people to keep them informed and engaged in politics. This represented a ground-breaking endeavor, the birth of a forum in which, for the first time, members of disparate classes were simultaneously engaged in the same political process, breaking the monopoly of the *yangban* on political affairs. An additional feature of this essay I should point out is the copious (indeed exclusive) use of the term *kukmun* for *Han'gŭl*.⁵³ This constitutes a decided break with the epithets of old and represents a conscious effort on the part of the author to connect language with the Korean nation in a way that was gaining momentum among the educated class but had not yet supplanted other terminologies. Though the term *kukmun* had been used before this publication—it was the term employed in the Kabo Reforms to refer to *Han'gŭl*—a consensus had yet to emerge around the national language (*kukmun*) status of *Han'gŭl*. I argue that the usage of the term *kukmun* and the implementation of word spacing (a pioneering feat) also reflected the academic background and intellectual disposition of the author. His time spent in Japan shortly after the discursive and political solidification of the country-language (國 - 文) connection probably informed his ideology in writing this editorial, while his experience with the English language would have opened his eyes to the possibilities of word spacing.

A final common element throughout this piece is the repeated appeal to *Han'gŭl*'s ease of learning. This is a point that was repeated by subsequent reform-minded intellectuals as evidence of *Han'gŭl*'s superiority in comparison to *hanmun*. One early Korean language scholar who often employed this argument in his tireless promotion of *Han'gŭl* was a man by the name of Chu Si-kyŏng.⁵⁴ Known as the father of modern Korean linguistics and often referred to as 'Teacher Chu Si-kyŏng' out of respect for his

pedagogical pedigree, Chu Si-kyōng began his career as an editor at *The Independent*, assisting Sō Chae-p'il in publication of the paper, while employing some of his own linguistic theories first-hand and contributing a number of his own editorials to the paper. Though many Korean linguists have focused on his later accomplishments in the purely linguistic field, his early essays in *The Independent* helped to shape the nascent debate on language reform and reveal the influence of new modernizing ideologies like *munmyōng kaehwa*. Some of his earliest writings appeared as a three part series entitled *Kukmunron* (國文論) in *The Independent* during April and September of 1897. These writings represent an informed approach to the Korean language and reflect not only his own linguistic prowess but the gradual maturation and refinement of the linguistic field in Korea. Observing Chu Si-kyōng's meticulous attention to the details of language and his incredible insight into the possibilities and future applications of the Korean language, it is easy to understand why contemporary Korean linguists point to Chu's career as the birth of modern Korean language research.

Instead of simply designating *kukmun* as Korean and *hanmun* as foreign and lamenting Korea's ignorance and neglect of its own language as Sō Chae p'il had before him, Chu Si-kyōng promoted the use of *Han'gŭl* from a universalizing linguistic perspective by appealing to the readers' sense of practicality. First, he divided the world's languages into two broad groups: pictographs, or "writing that depicts shapes," (*kŭryō nohŭn kŭrim*) and "writing that depicts sounds" (*marŭl p'yohanŭn kŭl*).⁵⁵ The most relevant example of the former was of course Chinese writing, while Chu mentioned the invention of the Phoenician alphabet, modern European languages, Japanese *kana* and *kukmun* as examples of the latter mode of writing.⁵⁶ Besides the

different manners of depiction, Chu claimed that the greatest and most significant difference between the two was the ease of learning; while writing that depicted sound (phonetic script), especially *Han'gŭl*, could be learned by even the most foolish of people within a single day, pictographic writing systems like *hanmun* consumed dozens of years on the path toward mastery.⁵⁷ Importantly, Chu considered this time spent learning *hanmun* utterly wasted, arguing that during that same time people could learn a trade or study to become “politicians, diplomats... or lawyers.”⁵⁸ In effect, Chu was advocating a division of labor based on new forms of knowledge acquired through modern education, an education which could be most efficaciously instilled through an ideographic writing system (*Han'gŭl*). For Chu, reading and writing was not an end in itself but rather a vehicle for acquiring every means of disparate knowledge, knowledge for which China was no longer the primary or even significant source. Writing systems were to be judged on their communicative ability and pedagogical potential, and to these ends Chu proposed a full-scale *Han'gŭl* research project for the standardization of the language. He argued that, to maximize the latent potential of *Han'gŭl* and to ensure the successful propagation among the next generation, *Han'gŭl* must be adjusted to conform to colloquial speech (*ŏnmun ilch'i*, 言文一致), after which time the Korean language could be successfully implemented into the growing modern educational curriculum. Finally, Chu stressed the importance of translation of foreign texts into *kukmun* in order to introduce more Koreans to outside literature and ideas, a sentiment that reveals his keen insight and forward-thinking nature.

In additional texts entitled “The Need for National Language and Script,” (*Kugŏ wa kukmun ũi p'iryŏ*), and “The Need to Respect One’s National Script and Language”

(*P'il sang chakuk munŏn*), Chu expounded on his linguistic ideology.⁵⁹ In this first essay, Chu presented the pictographic/phonetic language dichotomy along an epistemological divide, noting that, while more uncivilized ages (未開時代) were characterized by pictographic writing systems, ideographic languages like English, Japanese *kana* and *chŏngŭm* were representative of a more civilized era (開化時代).⁶⁰ Through this stark distinction between civilized and uncivilized periods, Chu drew a clear connection between language and modernization. In the ten years since his first publications, Chu had extended his linguistic ideology to include not only practical matters such as ease of learning but also the role of language in determining civilizational progress. Whereas 450 years earlier Ch'oe Man-ri had claimed that indigenous ideographic writing systems separate from Chinese characterized 'barbaric' cultures, Chu had now turned this argument on its head by asserting that phonetic scripts were actually the mark of enlightenment. The reason was clear; what constituted relevant knowledge in the modern world had changed, and Korea would have to evolve to keep up in the competition among races.

In a second article that year featured in the *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, Chu expanded on this concept of 'racial competition,' displaying a social-Darwinist ideological bent influential among Korean intellectuals of the time. In a familiar allusion to survival of the fittest mentality, Chu placed humans squarely within the biological spectrum along with all other animals, and claimed that, like these base creatures, humans must compete for survival. Humans he characterized as weak in physical constitution yet highly intelligent, making them the strongest of the animals and necessitating a more refined form of competition.⁶¹ Rather than attributing this human superiority to military might or

knowledge per se, Chu makes the crucial connection between language and power, claiming that language is the basis of all knowledge and the fundamental catalyst driving success in the global competition among races. Chu states that, “those races who do not develop their language and literature to learn the skills and techniques of other races will go into decline under the oppression of other more prosperous races.”⁶² To support this point, Chu makes a salient observation which would be echoed decades later in social-linguistic theory dealing with linguistic imperialism; not every language and script is inherently ‘equal’ as they both influence the intellectual attainment of a race and reflect the power wielded by it. Chu cited as examples of oppressed races “African tribes” under colonialism, “Native Americans” and “Australian Aborigines,” groups who were “deprived of land and had their numbers decimated” because they were not able to cultivate their language and learning.⁶³ Finally, Chu ingeniously linked the racial affinities and allegiances embedded in social-Darwinist ideology to Confucian piety by evoking *Han ’gŭl*’s benevolent inventor, King Sejong. In this way, Chu naturalized the links between language, power, race and state in a compelling argument for promotion of *Han ’gŭl*. To abandon or forget Korea’s script and to continue in a state of subservience and toadyism to things Chinese would be to share the fate of decimated indigenous populations the world over. With this argument, Chu had raised the stakes on language and *Han ’gŭl*; the failure to adopt and refine a phonetic script was not only impractical and inefficient, but a threat to the very existence of Korea.

Another prominent intellectual of the Enlightenment period inculcated in social-Darwinist thought was Yu Kil-chun.⁶⁴ Much like Chu Si-kyōng and other reformist intellectuals of the day, Yu divided nations of the world according to their level of

enlightenment.⁶⁵ His well-known work “Theory of Competition” (*Kyōngjaengnon*) reflected Japanese social-Darwinist thought of the time and influenced the first generation of Korean reformers.⁶⁶ Defining the nation as a social organism at various levels of enlightenment (enlightened, semi-enlightened and unenlightened), nations struggled for survival much as other biological organisms did and, through competition, these nations could progress to higher levels of civilization and enlightenment.⁶⁷ In the modern age, nations enhanced their competitive edge through modern education, which could be most effectively propagated through mass literacy in the national language and script. In his most famous work *Sōyu Kyōnmun* (*Things Seen and Heard in the West*), Yu stressed the importance of education and warned of the dangers of ignorance: “Those who grow up ignorant and uneducated commit rash acts with no regard for those around them, breaking laws and causing injury to the righteous, law abiding people of the world...However, through the successful provision of an education system, a nation can instill goodness and teach morals, fostering a respectable, virtuous population.”⁶⁸ His desire to inculcate the Korean population in the modern knowledge he attained abroad is reflected in his choice of script. In the preface of *Sōyu kyōnmun*, Yu explains to a friend why he chose to compose his work in a Sino-Korean mixed script (*kukhanmun*), even though the conventions of his day would have dictated pure *hanmun* for such an academic piece, stating that “my principle aim was to convey the meaning plainly in spoken style so that even a barely literate individual would be able to understand the book material easily.”⁶⁹ Yu goes on to explain the crucial role of concise, understandable language and script in conveying knowledge to a wide array of peoples:

Our country's script was created by our King Sejong The Great, while Chinese characters we use along with China, but actually I find it dissatisfying that we cannot use purely Korean characters. Having already established diplomatic relations with various foreign countries (people), it will not do if the real circumstances of all these people—old and young, rich and poor—remain unknown to us. So rather than getting our signals crossed communicating our situation through awkward, course Chinese writing, I think it more proper to express our true selves the way we are through fluent writing and familiar speech.⁷⁰

Here, Yu echoes the sentiments of *The Independent's* Sō Chae p'il and other reformers of the time with a universalist tone, calling on the popularization of knowledge about the “old and young, rich and poor” of the countries just entering Korea's expanding orbit. Yu's words represent the *munmyōng kaehwa* spirit of the era, a desire to integrate a competitive Korean nation into the larger global order (evidenced by the establishment of diplomatic relations) through mass education and heightened awareness of the international system and its peoples. The best way to ensure this education and awareness was through increased (preferably exclusive) usage of *Han'gŭl*. Interestingly, Yu's statement about wanting but not being able to write only in *Han'gŭl* was a common predicament during his time, reflecting the haphazard and negligent policy toward *Han'gŭl* and partially explaining the failure of the script to make a clean break from Chinese writing. Most of the editorials championing a pure-*Han'gŭl* Korean peninsula were actually written in *kukhanmun* or *hanmun* because the majority of highly literate people had not been educated in *Han'gŭl* but *hanmun*, and the script was in such disrepair and in such need of standardization that even those with some fluency in it were not sure how to employ it in academic writing. Simply put, there were no conventions for academic *Han'gŭl* because it was never used in that realm. Nevertheless, pioneers such as Yu Kil-jun paved the way for the intermediary *kukhanmun* by

publishing academic works in this style, while trailblazing efforts by *The Independent* and other periodicals showed the potential of *Han'gŭl* to accommodate academic writing and reach the masses in the process.

In response to this chaotic language situation at the turn of the century, a number of reformist intellectuals increasingly called for concrete steps in *Han'gŭl* standardization and implementation in schools. Whereas early essays from the first generation of reformers such as Yu Kil-chun, Sŏ Chae-p'il and Chu Si-kyŏng included comparatively vague arguments for *Han'gŭl* usage based on ease of learning, efficacy in popular education and potential in enlightening the people, the number of articles in the popular press advancing specific writing and language reform theories began to increase in the early 20th century. After an initial surge of discussion on writing reform at the close of the 19th century, there followed a period of near silence from 1899 to 1905 before the debate again heated up during the years leading up to Korea's annexation.⁷¹ In a 1910 article appearing in the *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, Yi Kwang-su, one of the most prominent Korean intellectuals of the period, repeats the earlier predicament of Yu Kil-jun while calling for action on the language reform front:

So what style are we to use? Pure *kukmun* or *kukhanmun*? If it were up to me I would want to write in pure *kukmun*, and I know that if I did so, it would work. However, I also know that it would be very difficult, and therefore, it is impossible for me to advocate this position. Being so difficult, I think that the only way to achieve this is through long-term, decisive action.⁷²

One early example of “decisive action” in language reform was a 1905 piece written by Chi Sŏg-yŏng entitled “*Sinjŏng kukmun*” (Newly Fixed Korean Script) appearing in the July 25 issue of the *Kwanbo*.⁷³ As this two-page work was featured in the government

gazette, they were promulgated as official government policy and represent Korea's first official attempt at language planning.⁷⁴ Though Chi's various proposals relating to Korean spelling, the introduction of a new graph, tense, unaspirated sounds, etc.—technically official government policy as late as 1910—seem to have been ignored, they nevertheless helped spark discussion on *Han'gŭl* reform and eventually led in 1907 to the establishment of the Kukmun yŏn'guso (National Script Research Institute), the first official research institution and government language-planning body.⁷⁵ Also, there were several calls for the compilation of a standardized Korean dictionary to serve as the basis for children's education.

Though the language debate had evolved and become more refined since the early days of The Independent, generally, the debate during this period still focused on the central macro-issue of script choice, namely, would *hanmun*, *kukhanmun*, or pure *kukmun* be used. Articles supporting *kukhanmun* writing style were most prominent even up until the 1910 annexation, a trend reinforced by the majority of periodicals still being published in this style. Even the occasional article championing pure-Han'gŭl was more often than not published in the *kukhanmun* style, owing to the lack of a clear, enforced standard of *Han'gŭl*. However, the major arguments used in support of these respective scripts (*kukmun* and *kukhanmun*) were fundamentally the same. Though Japan was cited in general terms by those advocating *kukhanmun* (e.g. Yi Nŭng-hwa, Yu Kil-jun, Han Hŭng-gyo, Yi Po-gyŏng) as an example of a nation which had successfully blended Chinese characters with its own indigenous script, other aspects of their arguments coincided with the *Han'gŭl* proponents in several ways.⁷⁶ Because the *kukhanmun* faction supported the incorporation of some *Han'gŭl*, they did not

fundamentally oppose the very idea of the script as the *hanmun* proponents did. Rather, the divergence of these groups was more a matter of timing and method than ideology. Like the *kukmun* proponents, those supporting *kukhanmun* repeated common themes such as ease of learning and its economical implications, loyalty and piety to King Sejong, independence, and national pride. However, where mixed-script reformers perceived a gradual reduction in Chinese characters over time coupled with careful *Han'gŭl* standardization, *kukmun* supporters called for the immediate expulsion of Chinese characters from the Korean language. One pro-*kukmun* reformer even recommended that Korea “consider any learner of a foreign language a non-citizen...prohibit study abroad,” and “restrict access to foreigners and foreign languages within Korea,”⁷⁷ showing the ultra-nationalistic tendencies of certain *kukmun*-only proponents.

If these reform-minded camps agreed on the basic objectives of the Korean language reform movement—*Han'gŭl* promotion and standardization and *hanmun* minimization—what were the views of the classical Chinese supporters? The public response from *hanmun* supporters during this period (1895-1910) was conspicuously muted. In fact, both Ross King and Andre Schmid mention the same solitary essay in their discussions of the language debate, a short, untitled piece by a virtually unknown educator appearing in the conservative periodical *Taedong hakhoe wŏlbo* (Monthly of the Great Eastern Educational Association) in 1908.⁷⁸ As Schmid points out, the author Yŏ Kyu-hyang defended the use of Chinese characters based not on “claims about the special relationship between characters and knowledge” or on “the special transnational status of characters,” but rather based on their Korean origins.⁷⁹ Yŏ dismissed the assertion that characters had “invaded” from abroad and instead claimed that they had been in Korea all

along, since the time of *Tan'gun* and *Kija*. According to Schmid, this essay shows “how deeply the logic of nationalizing culture had penetrated intellectual circles by the early twentieth century....Even the embattled defenders of characters sought to frame their arguments in terms of nation and geographic origin.”⁸⁰ However, I question whether the ideological leanings of the entire yangban class during a fifteen-year period (1895-1910) can be accurately judged based on a single essay. I argue that the silence of the classically-educated literati speaks louder than a single, obscure editorial. The absence of a concerted, public defense of the status quo (classical Chinese usage among the literati) reflects the apathetic attitude of this group to the language question. Most of those fluent in *hanmun* would have been satisfied with its usage and felt little if any need to engage in the discourse on language reform. The overwhelming majority of academic materials were still being published in classical Chinese or *kukhanmun*, while vernacular publications like *The Independent* and the *Cheguk sinmun* (Imperial Post, 1898-1910) were simply ignored or not taken as seriously by the ‘sophisticated’ scholar.⁸¹ Though Schmid and others have demonstrated that these and other vernacular publications may have enjoyed a wider readership than their circulation numbers suggest due to the practice of public reading, all those who *understood* the article did not necessarily possess the desire or literary ability to contribute a written response.⁸² Furthermore, the popular press was still a new phenomenon, and, much like any new technology, the newspaper may have simply escaped the notice of the older, more conservative *yangban* members. The *Han'gŭl* movement also exploded so suddenly and with support from such a narrow segment of young, elite reformers that no one likely predicted that Chinese characters were in any imminent danger of extinction in Korea. For all of these reasons,

defenders of the old Chosŏn vestige of pure *hanmun* were all but silent in the popular press, while reform-minded proponents of *kukhanmun* and *kukmun* continued their attempts at shaping the discourse on the language question up until the Japanese annexation in 1910.

Part 3. The Nation for Han'gŭl: National Consciousness

When Marquee Ito previously visited Korea, our foolish people said to each other: 'Ito Hirobumi is a man who wishes to mediate a peaceful triangular relationship in East Asia, so surely this time he will present a plan for insuring the foundation of our country's independence.' And so ministers and commoners from high and low lined up from the port of Inch'ŏn all the way to Seoul to welcome him. However, some things in this world are difficult to comprehend. What was the motive behind this unexpected fifth stipulation (五條件, Protectorate Treaty)? This treaty signifies not only a schism between our two countries but the dissolution of East Asian unity....Alas! What a regretful, sorrowful day! Twenty million of our countrymen becoming the slaves of another—is this living or dying? Four thousand years of national spirit from the time of *Tangun* and *Kija*, all destroyed over night. Oh, my countrymen, what lament! What lament!¹

This essay appeared in the pages of the *Hwangsŏng Sinmun* (*Capitol Gazette*) on November 20, 1905. Just three days earlier, the Protectorate Treaty between Japan and Korea had been finalized, effectively ending Korea's full autonomy by removing its diplomatic authority and placing it under Japanese control. This piece reveals the sense of betrayal felt by many Korean reformers upon hearing news of the Protectorate Treaty. The *Hwangsŏng Sinmun*, a moderate newspaper published in mixed Sino-Korean script and read mainly by the intellectual class, was committed to moderate causes and championed a gradual brand of reform in Korea. Unlike the more radical nationalist tendencies of periodicals like *Tongnip sinmun*, the ideology of *Hwangsŏng sinmun* was pan-Asianist, and up until 1905, the authors of many editorials used Japan as a model in the promotion of causes like military, education, and language reform. This ideology of pan-Asianism promoted a common Eastern cultural heritage and a new understanding of the Western notion of civilization and enlightenment, with Japan increasingly taking the lead role in the years after its defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War. However, with the signing of this treaty any illusions of a "peaceful triangular relationship in East Asia"

were dispelled. The pan-Asianist/nationalist debate, which had defined the parameters of the discourse on the emergent Korean nation in the enlightenment period, had been fundamentally altered. As subsequent Japanese rhetoric would demonstrate, Japan had appropriated the ideology of *munmyōng kaehwa* for its own modernizing agenda on the Korean peninsula, throwing the Korean reform movement into a state of ambiguity. By 1907, King Kojong had been forced to abdicate his throne and Japan was ruling directly through its newly established Residency General in Korea.² The remaining Korean army was disbanded, the press was brought under stricter control, and regulations requiring the introduction of pro-Japanese texts and curriculum into government and private schools were enforced.³ On August 16, 1910, Korea's remaining autonomy was forfeited as King Sunjong was forced to affix his seal to a treaty of annexation. A dynasty lasting more than half a millennia had come to a close.

3.1. The Quiet Before the Storm, 1910-1919

The Japanese take over of 1910 brought about drastic changes in nearly every aspect of Korean life, from education and language to economic and land reforms. Never before had government authority penetrated Korean society so thoroughly. In the process of establishing and solidifying the Government General of Korea (GGK), as the new colonial state came to be known, Japan managed in some way to anger or alienate virtually every segment of Korean society due to the oppressive nature of rule. The period from 1910 to 1919 was defined by a heavy-handed *bundan seiji* (military rule). The most visible component of this *bundan seiji* were the feared military police, an

ubiquitous force on the streets of the colony responsible not only for regular police duties but also determination of punishment, covert surveillance, and torture. A short list of grievances voiced by demonstrators under interrogation after participation in the March 1919 Independence Movement will illustrate the nature of colonial rule during this first decade.

There is discrimination between Korean and Japanese officials.
The Japanese despise Koreans.
The Japanese tend to strike Koreans, regardless of cause.
There is no special treatment of the *yangban* and literati.
Government employment opportunity is limited to the extreme degree.
No Korean holds an important position in government.
Only Koreans are whipped (in legal cases).
Laws are too frequently issued and do not suit the standard of the people.
The encouragement of industry is mostly against the will of the people, and the methods used are coercive.
There is too heavy a load of forced labor.
As the Japanese increase in Korea, land and other properties are going into their hands.⁴

Two of the changes most relevant to the Korean language situation were the transformations in the publishing industry and educational system. Beginning in 1905, the Residency General tightened its grip on publication content on the peninsula until the press was completely coopted or disbanded by the GGK by 1910.⁵ All privately owned newspapers were shut down, and the widely circulated *Korea Daily News* (*Taehan maeil sinbo*), until that time able to publish anti-Japanese articles due to its foreign ownership, was purchased in a forced sale and turned into an organ paper for the GGK.⁶ The crackdown on the Korean press had a dramatic impact on the burgeoning publishing industry. Lee Chong-sik claims that, “before annexation there were one or two newspapers in most of the cities, but all the Korean publishers were ordered to close their shops, and finally only one Japanese newspaper was allowed in each city. These and any

remaining periodicals were forbidden to report matters relating to politics.”⁷ Many newspapers printed in Japan were also prohibited from being imported in Korea. As a result of this blackout, there is a dearth of Korean-language writing during this period, especially that of a political nature. Not only did this sever the growing discussion on the future of the nation in the popular press, but it silenced a forum which served as a laboratory for *Han’gŭl* refinement and standardization as well as a tool of literacization and *Han’gŭl* popularization. Many progressive reformers also resigned in protest from their posts at these publications, forfeiting their voice in the reform movement. Some periodicals did survive the crackdown, such as Ch’oe Nam-sŏn’s *Youth* (*Ch’ŏngch’un*, 1914-1918), a magazine that attempted to pioneer new style vernacular prose and poetry. This periodical, however, was the exception, and this virtual black hole in the history of Korean literature is deserving of its moniker “dark period” (*amhŭkki*).

Another area undergoing drastic transformations and directly related to the Korean language question was education. Since the 1894 Kabo Reforms, the Chosŏn government had been slowly laying the foundation for a modern educational system, directing “the publishing of new textbooks and training for elementary school teachers and arranging the schooling structure in terms of elementary-secondary-higher education”⁸ However, the government was hampered by a lack of revenue and political will, and so the most significant growth in modern education during this period occurred under the auspices of Western missionaries and private Korean citizens. By some estimates there were about 2,000 such schools at the time of annexation, servicing approximately 200,000 students.⁹ The Education Ordinance of 1911 placed a number of regulations on these private schools and mandated the use of GGK-approved textbooks.

Many of the schools did not survive the new stipulations and pressure to close. By 1920, the number of private, non-Japanese institutions dropped to 661, and their numbers continued to decrease until, in 1942, only 252 remained.¹⁰ At the same time, Japanese colonial schools for Koreans increased at an impressive rate initially, as many private schools unable or unwilling to conform to GGK standards were converted and immediately brought on line. As of 1912 there were around 400 Japanese schools, both public and private. By 1920 this number had climbed to over 800, and by 1942 all Japanese schools combined numbered just under 4,000.¹¹

Despite this increase in modern schools, the demand for education among Koreans always outstripped supply, a situation exacerbated by the transformed nature of the Korean job market. With the Education Ordinance of 1911, the national language of Korea became Japanese, while the Korean language was demoted to “indigenous language” or *Chōsen-go*. This meant that all Japanese school curricula were to be taught in the national language, with *Chōsen-go* being reserved only for the initially compulsory but later optional Korean language class. As the number of Japanese schools increased and private schools were closed or co-opted, the growing Korean hunger for modern education had fewer and fewer alternatives. Added to this was the strengthened relationship between modern education and employment. A growing swath of the colonial economy became predicated upon graduation from an accredited institution, ensuring that the demand for this modern education would continue to rise. However, the Japanese public school system was segregated and unequal according to race; Koreans were provided a separate curriculum which stressed a moral and ‘practical’ education, while their Japanese counterparts were trained for higher schooling and/or top-level

jobs.¹² Furthermore, the truncated Korean system (starting later and finishing earlier) and unbalanced emphasis on language education put those Koreans wishing to pursue higher education at a disadvantage, as they would be required to take additional schooling before being considered for admission. This institutional structure contributed to the legitimization of Japanese as the national language while demoting Korean to a subordinate status reinforced by the habitus of ‘modernized’ Koreans. The educational system also retarded the progress of nascent *Han’gŭl* popularization through the substitution of the disproportionately supported, legitimized language, Japanese.

Those Japanese involved in colonial policy justified these measures through recourse to *munmyōng kaehwa* ideology, the same rhetoric that Korean reformers had utilized prior to annexation. Terauchi Masatake, Korea’s last resident general, said the following of Korean civilization and its potential for assimilation to Japanese prior to annexation:

Koreans are on a different level from the Japanese and thus it is difficult to put them under the same [educational] system right away. After they learn the conditions, customs, and mannerisms of the Japanese, after the welfare of the people is secured through improvements in their level of culture, and after they develop the required knowledge, gradually they can be assimilated as Japanese.¹³

Just ten years prior, the early Korean Enlightenment thinker Yu Kil-jun had expressed similar sentiments in his influential travelogue/didactic tract, *Things Seen and Heard in the West* (*Sōyu Kyōnmun*, 1895). Yu wrote the following on the extent of a society’s enlightenment:

The enlightened individual investigates and manages countless matters (*samul*), striving daily for new knowledge. For this reason, he possesses a refined and progressive nature void of pettiness and indolence, and when meeting others he speaks courteously and conducts himself with propriety. He imitates the skillful while pitying the incompetent, yet

never does he exhibit vulgarity or display disparagement...The nation (*kukmin*) is a group of these individuals working together to advance the cause of enlightenment.¹⁴

Terauchi and Yu each describe their perception of an enlightened and civilized society, with particular attention being paid to mannerisms, behavior, and cultural level. While Yu specifies the negative characteristics in conjunction with the positive, the negative traits of the unenlightened can be inferred through Terauchi's speech, negative traits attributed to the not yet enlightened Koreans. Both pieces stress the need for advancement of culture through exposure to and cultivation of civilized and enlightened behavior, but the difference between the audience and tone of each argument is significant. Written at a time when Korea was just beginning to become exposed to foreign ideas, and when none had traveled extensively or studied abroad, *Sōyu kyōnmun* was a didactic work aimed at enlightening the Korean people and opening their eyes to the world around them. Using a common technique of reform-intellectuals of the time, Yu describes a negative model in contrast to the ideal, insinuating that many Koreans still resemble this unenlightened model and therefore require cultural refinement. Terauchi uses a similar technique, but rather than fixing 'the Other' as the positive model for change, he concludes that his own nation has already reached this level and therefore qualifies for this civilizing project. More importantly, whereas Yu calls on "the nation" (*kukmin*) to work together to raise the level of Korean culture and "advance the cause of enlightenment," Terauchi appropriates this same discourse not in the self-strengthening tone of Yu but as justification for colonization and assimilation. Speaking on the Korean educational system, Terauchi's calls on Koreans to "improve their level of culture" and "develop the required knowledge," had clear implications for language; if Koreans wished to reach the cultural enlightenment of Japan, they had to learn the language of

Japan. The distortion of this ideology for purposes of colonization and segregation revealed to many the double-edged sword that was *munmyōng kaehwa* and prompted Korean reformers to rearticulate the ideological foundations of the nation and the role that language would play in it. Japan's colonial policies during the first decade of rule go far in explaining the direction and shape of the Korean nation in the 1920's and its relationship vis-à-vis Korean language.

3.2. A New Direction? The Korean Language after March First

Japanese policy in Korea during the first decade of colonial rule penetrated much more deeply into Korean society than the Chosŏn government ever had, affecting the lives of nearly every Korean in some way. The increased contact with the colonial modernization paradigm in the form of mobilization, modern education, and circulation of new ideologies stimulated the intellectual class and engendered political consciousness. At the same time, strict press control and limited or segregated education denied outlets of expression and stifled the urban intellectual elite. Prohibition of assembly and intense surveillance also contributed to an atmosphere of animosity and tension in urban areas. However, Japan's policies also affected the lower classes in new ways throughout the country. The GGK's cadastral survey and mass land reform, though beneficial to certain landlords, dispossessed many peasants of their livelihood and placed crushing burdens on the remaining tenants in the form of heavy taxation, debt, and the effects of volatile markets. The violent Japanese pacification of peasant guerrilla bands, known as *Ŭibyōng* (Righteous Armies), in 1905 and again from 1907 through 1911 further

awakened the lower classes to the brutality of Japanese rule. Without a release valve, the pressure continued to build on the Korean peninsula until, in 1919, the release finally came in the form of mass demonstrations. This mass movement, known as the *3.1 Undong* (The March First Movement), would have massive reverberations throughout the system and would compel the GGK to change course in its administration of the colony.

Most research on the *3.1 Undong* characterizes the event as a mass nationalist movement organized mainly by moderate religious leadership (Christian, *Ch'öndogyo*, and Buddhist), broadly supported among diverse classes and women, and inspired by the Wilsonian ideal of self-determination.¹⁵ As the details of the *3.1 Undong* have been well documented elsewhere, here I wish only to mention two points that relate to the Korean language and *Han'gŭl*. First, the broad scope of the demonstrations signified the maturation of the Korean nationalist movement and reflected the influence of educational institutes, especially Christian, in spreading nationalist sentiment through vernacular education. Since the 19th century, Protestantism had stood as a pillar of *Han'gŭl* support in Korea, beginning with mass bible distribution campaigns and continuing through a legacy of private, vernacular education.¹⁶ Schools such as these were instrumental in amassing large groups of young people and organizing the *3.1 Undong* thanks to the relative autonomy granted to religious organizations. These Christian missionary schools possessed more curricular latitude than Korean private schools, and many school leaders were sympathetic to the nationalist cause. Coupled with the accessibility and mass appeal of *Han'gŭl*/vernacular education, these institutions proved to be potent champions of independence among Korean youth. The national consciousness bred in these schools represented the reconceived response to the colonial-

modernization paradigm, and presaged the approach to language and *Han'gŭl* in the years to come.

Secondly, the *3.1 Undong* caused the GGK to rethink its policy in Korea, bringing about a new type of colonial administration that came to be known as *bunka seiji* (cultural policy). One aspect of this cultural policy was a suspension of the media blackout and an expansion of the vernacular press. The permit system which had been in place since 1910 was relaxed, and from 1920 to 1925 the number of permits issued tripled from 409 to 1,240.¹⁷ Two Korean vernacular newspapers—the *Tonga ilbo* (*East Asia Daily*) and the *Chosŏn ilbo* (*Korea Daily*)—were also issued permits in 1920 and, along with six magazines, were allowed to print material related to politics, social problems, and international events. Although the most inflammatory material was censored, a flourishing of intellectual discourse erupted in the popular press during the 1920's. These periodicals attracted many of the best and brightest young intellectuals, making the new vernacular press the center of Korean political and social life. The growth in readership during the 1920's was also impressive. Unlike their pre-colonial predecessors *The Independent* and the *Korea Daily News*, whose circulation never surpassed a few thousand, combined circulation of the vernacular press reached 103,027 by 1929.¹⁸ *Han'gŭl*, which had been virtually eliminated from public life during the previous decade, made a strong recovery through renewed circulation in the press and a broader base of support among more diverse groups of Koreans. Literary journals continued the legacy of the recently defunct periodical *Ch'ŏng Ch'un* (*Youth*) by experimenting with new genres of vernacular literature, refining the language and exploring the parameters of *Han'gŭl* usage.

Two issues that garnered significant attention amid the ‘press renaissance’ of the 1920’s were education and language reform. These issues came to be more intimately connected than during the pre-annexation debate, and opinions on the matter were voiced by a broader segment of Korean society. The *3.1 Undong* had demonstrated that Japanese influence would not be removed for the foreseeable future, at least not by force. Koreans would instead have to work within the colonial-modernization paradigm to improve their condition. The primary means of self-improvement was education. The previous decade had revealed the importance of modern education to social advancement, especially to ambitious Koreans who suddenly realized the necessity of accredited education (preferably Japanese) as they searched for work in the expanding colonial economy. Though modern schools of all stripes were perpetually in demand, a Korean family theoretically had several educational options. One option was missionary schools. However, these schools were almost always filled to capacity, and they operated under constant threat of being shuttered by the colonial authorities. According to Michael Robinson, in the end, “mission schools continued to act principally as preparatory schools, and their graduates continued to seek admission to Japanese universities for higher level training.”¹⁹ Private Korean schools were another option, but they suffered from many of the same setbacks as missionary schools. Though these schools were permitted to offer more upper level courses and professional degrees, competing with the lure of more prestigious Japanese schools or study in the metropole was difficult. The area of expanding educational opportunity and accessibility was therefore the Japanese public school. However, students attending these schools would encounter several deleterious effects, namely Japanese acculturation and indoctrination, native language loss,

simplified curricula, and segregation. Because the vernacular press was not authorized to print articles on some of the more contentious above issues, many Korean reformers writing in these periodicals set their sights on language reform and public education, issues that gained widespread support across class, gender, and ideological predisposition, as well as initial tacit support from the GGK.²⁰

Calls for Korean language reform escalated from the whispers of linguists and intellectuals from 1895-1910 to the shouts of the nation during the 1920's.²¹ One of the most effective and enduring vehicles for *Han'gŭl* promotion and reform was The Han'gŭl Society (*Han'gŭl hakhoe*), whose stated purpose was to “research the precise laws and principles of the Korean language.”²² Founded in 1921 by students of Chu Si-kyŏng, this organization worked diligently to form a modern Korean orthography, compile a Comprehensive Korean dictionary (*K'ŭn sajŏn*), and lay the foundations of a modern, standardized Korean language. Over a decade of efforts bore fruit in 1933 when the Unified Orthography (*Match'umbŏp t'ongil'an*) was published, the first appearance of an indigenous orthography. In order to propagate their work, the organization worked closely with Korean publishers and newspapers, and urged Japanese education officials “to accept changes in Korean-language texts and to upgrade Korean language instruction in private and colonial schools,” with mixed results.²³ Because the GGK passed its own ‘official’ Korean orthographies (in 1912, 1921, and 1930) for use in Japanese public schools, the extent of influence exerted by the Han'gŭl Society on actual Japanese practice is not clear.²⁴ However, the organization was clearly involved in grass-roots movements and enjoyed the support of various segments of Korean society. According to Michael Robinson, in addition to the activities listed above, the Han'gŭl Society

“staged a series of training institutes for Korean instructors to elevate their teaching techniques...provided language instruction material to the growing student population of Christian schools...and began a successful series of circuit lectures in which members traveled to the provinces to report on research results and to promote the literacy movement.”²⁵

While the Han’gul Society was attending to the linguistic research behind the language movement, as well as the legwork related to *Han’gŭl*/vernacular promotion, writers in the popular press were expressing their positions on the language question as well as their general feelings toward Korean. An examination of these opinion pieces in academic journals and newspapers of the time may shed some light on the discourse surrounding the language movement and reveal more populist views on the matter. One educator during the 1920’s by the name of Ryang Myŏng decried the state of Korean by pointing out some of the misconceptions held by foreigners:

For the past four years I have been fielding some rather unpleasant questions from foreigners about the state of our language. The first distressing question was, “Does Korea have its own writing (*munja*)? Would communication in this writing be possible without the support (*him*) of Chinese writing?” They even inquired, “Is the Korean language really different from Japanese? Is not Japanese the current language of Korea?”²⁶

Ryang attributed these misconceptions to Koreans’ own “contemptuous treatment” (*ch’ŏn dae* 賤待) of Korean writing.²⁷ Specifically, he claimed that, “under the tyranny of Chinese writing, King Sejong’s *chŏngŭm* has suffered oppression worse than that of black slaves before the American Civil War.”²⁸ For Ryang, a fundamental reform of Korean literature and writing was necessary to regain the heart and spirit of the Korean nation. To that end, he proposed the following six goals:

1. Write in the language of today. (*hyŏnjae uri mal*)
2. Limit Chinese characters.
3. Fix grammar rules.
4. Utilize punctuation and symbols.
5. Do not just write for writing's sake.
6. Translations are *translations*; Original works should be *original*.²⁹

Ryang's first proposition represents a current in the Korean language movement which had been gaining traction since the late 19th century but received increasing attention with the demotion of classical Chinese and ascension of *Han'gŭl*, namely the unification of written and spoken language (*ŏnmun ilch'i*). Early Korean reformers who had studied in Japan, such as *The Independent* founder Sŏ Chae P'il, were influenced by the Meiji-era *ŏnmun ilch'i* debates and carried the impetus for reform into the pages of the Korean press. Though Ryang did not mention Japanese language reform, he did cite the Chinese New Literature Movement (新文學運動) as a model for reform and a reason why Korea should follow suit in limiting or reforming so-called "dead writing" (*samunja*, 死文字) in favor of producing "living literature" (*hwalmunhak*, 活文學).³⁰ The Han'gŭl hakhoe also promoted *ŏnmun ilch'i* for the sake of effective vernacular education and promulgated its usage in publications such as the Classified Compendium of Standard Korean in 1936. The second proposition was an ongoing discursive thread throughout the language movement since the late 19th century, a discussion that continued through the 1920's and up until the present day. In the debate over the use of Chinese characters (*hanja*), one extreme argued for the exclusive usage of *Han'gŭl* and the abolition of *hanmun*, while the other extreme revered pure *hanmun* and still denigrated *Han'gŭl*. By the 1920's, vocal support of the latter position had waned considerably, and *Han'gŭl* continued its ascendancy in terms of proportion to *hanmun* and increased utilization in previously off-

limit academic writing. However, most reformers conceded that pure-Han'gŭl usage was not yet feasible without script reform and *ŏnmun ilch'i*, so the above argument by Yang represented a majority consensus at the time. Propositions four and five represent more practical steps toward linguistic refinement. In his article, Ryang argued that such developments in language reform should not be confined to the “grammarians” (*munbŏp chŏnmunka*), but should be promulgated throughout “the general population” (*ilban minjung*), meaning most significantly Korean students through standardized vernacular education.³¹ Finally, proposition five urged writers to write not just for leisure, but with purpose and emotion, while point six referred to the apparent tendency among Korean writers to alter translations and plagiarize ostensibly ‘original’ work.

Many writing on the language issue after 1920 repeated the arguments of the first generation of language reformers from the 1890's. One article appearing in the academic journal *Tongkwang* (*Eastern Light*) criticized the names that had designated *Han'gŭl* in the past (vulgar script, *ŏnmun*) and proposed the fixing of a more venerable appellation.³² Another contributor writing in 1935 reflected on the contempt that the *Han'gŭl* pioneer Chu Si-kyŏng must have endured from his peers for focusing on such a previously denigrated pursuit, then praised the work of Chu and stressed the significance of his research to the contemporary language movement.³³ Other writers continued to reiterate the ease of learning *Han'gŭl* and the potential of practical application, as well as invoke Confucian reverence for the script inventor, King Sejong. However, unlike the generalized, theoretical arguments for *Han'gŭl* usage based on civilization and enlightenment that characterized earlier discourse, authors increasingly proposed specific avenues for language/script reform and linked this issue to the improvement of modern

institutions such as public education. In an article tellingly entitled “Decisive Action for Chǒngŭm Grammar: from Random Thoughts to a Solid Proposal,” a writer by the name of Yi Chu-man explained the crucial importance of language reform to Korean education and knowledge development through an interesting analogy:

The purpose of a wind or water mill is to make white rice suitable for everyone’s comfortable living. The purpose of compiling and unifying the knowledge of various academic subjects is to similarly bring happiness from the individual to the whole society. Therefore, we cannot forget the relationship between the individual and society, for if we disregard this indispensable connection, all the knowledge we take such pains to acquire will have no meaning. We express our thoughts and feelings through forms called letters, namely, through writing. This writing becomes the foundation of countless academic subjects and the seed of human culture. Other than written language (*sǒngmun*, 成文) there is spoken language, but this language varies over time and space and so is not as effective (in conveying knowledge). Even with great knowledge, if speech and codified writing abilities are lacking, it is no different than strolling around at night in embroidered robes (*ŭi su ya haeng*, 衣繡夜行). Therefore, Korean students have an undeniable duty to their country, a destiny (*inyŏn*). If we forsake *Han’gŭl* writing (*chosŏnmun*) and avoid researching it, we forget our destiny and our duty toward Korea, and we become like a mill that has lost all purpose.³⁴

In this article, Yi stresses the crucial role of language in diffusing education to the entire society, creating a happy and comfortable lifestyle. Unlike earlier calls for *Han’gŭl* promulgation based on advancing the *concept* of civilization, Yi points out the need for codified *written* language to unite the disparate areas of academic knowledge for the betterment of society. Yi specifically targets Korean students, calling on them to perform their “duty” for the nation and fulfill their destiny. Civilized and uncivilized races are not compared in a social-Darwinist framework that characterized so much previous discourse on the language question. Rather, in a more refined tone the author calls for the unification of existing knowledge through vernacular education. There is no need to attack traditional Confucian education while promoting modern education. By this point,

the *nature* of relevant knowledge (Chinese literature or ‘Western’ knowledge) is no longer the central topic of discourse, while the *mode* of knowledge attainment (*hanmun* or *Han’gŭl*) has decreased in importance from the previous generation. Rather, the author calls for the “compiling and unifying” of all knowledge through a popularized, written Korean language for the betterment of society. An explanation of who is meant by “students” would be superfluous; the author’s reference to “all kinds of academic subjects” and “written Korean” precludes traditional, Confucian education and students and clearly describes the next generation of students studying a ‘modern’ curriculum.

In their promotion of language standardization and literacy, a number of authors also conveyed a defensive tone. As if feeling their culture under threat by outside forces, these authors expressed a sense of urgency in furthering the language movement. Though most articles do not explicitly mention Japan, reading between the lines belies the presence of ‘the other’ in opposition to the reform movement. One magazine contributor named Pak P’al-yang writes the following on the unfortunate state of Korean culture in comparison to other nations:

What does our country (Chosŏn) have to be proud of globally? When considering this question, we cannot help but feel distressed. Today, having fallen behind others in every respect, do we have anything to be proud of? The honest answer may well be, “Nothing at all.” However...I think that we should be proud of our writing (*kŭl*)... As we all know, *Han’gŭl* has been accorded an important status by scholars among world languages. This gives us pride in the wisdom of our *Han’gŭl* inventors. But instead of merely boasting of our ancestors’ accomplishments while failing to develop our own, we must work continually to establish our literature and culture and proudly show it to the world.³⁵

This excerpt reveals a self-conscious attitude toward the progress of Korean cultural development. Having “fallen behind others in every respect,” Pak believes that Korea

must search for indigenous accomplishments to cultivate pride. Furthermore, Koreans must not be content in resting on their laurels, but must “work continually to establish” Korean literature and culture and “show it to the world.” Significantly, Pak does not limit his focus to promoting or even protecting writing and culture within Korea, but stresses presenting Korean culture proudly to the world. This attempt to resurrect and promote indigenous cultural aspects was a common discursive method employed by Korean nationalist reformers representing a calculated response to the perceived threat of colonial cultural domination. When Pak claimed that today (*onŭlnal*) Korean had fallen behind others in every respect, and that, considering this, “we cannot help but feel distressed,” this was a clear reference to the state of subjugation in which Korean found itself. Many other authors during the 1920’s employed a similar rhetorical device. Among four articles with similar themes of expressing pride in things Korean, all four featured *Han’gŭl* prominently in their discussions. The usage of the term ‘pride’ (*charang*) in and of itself reflects the defensive nature of this discourse. A secure, entrenched cultural asset would not have required explicit reference and calls for support, but would have rather prevailed without thought due to its unthreatened predominance. This is how Japanese was able to ascend to legitimate language without defensive rhetoric while Korean was allowed to continue as an academic subject. By virtue of its near monopoly on labor market advancement backed by the colonial power structure, Japanese did not require or receive the explicit defense that Korean did, and its usage was not more forcefully implemented until Japan itself was threatened in the outbreak of World War II.

A prospectus issued by the *Han’gŭl* Society on the occasion of the 1929 Korean

Dictionary Compilation Conference (Chosŏnŏ sajŏn p'yŏnch'an hoe ūi) expresses a similar sense of urgency relating to Korea's position in world culture:

Human happiness is promoted through the advancement of culture, and the development of culture is accelerated thanks to the rational reorganization and unification of language and writing.....Every nation with any significant cultural development has long ago attended to speech and language reorganization and unification in an urgent manner. Every civilized nation (*munmyŏng minjok*) in the past settled on standard spoken and written forms in order to establish a standardized overall language, and at the same time devised spoken/written unification through compilation of a standard dictionary..... Today, the shortcut to global rejuvenation for our straggling Korean nation is the urgent elevation and dissemination of our culture. For expedient cultural promotion, we must rapidly plan the reorganization and unification of the foundation of culture, language.³⁶

Here, the Han'gŭl hakhoe echoes the sentiments of earlier Korean language pioneers.

Language is linked to the cultural progress of a country, and the authors urge Korea to take immediate steps to advance the status of language, "the foundation of culture."

However, there are perceptible differences between this and earlier discourses on language. Much like the article by Yi Chu-man cited above, the focal point for reform is no longer the demotion of classical Chinese and the promotion of pure *Han'gŭl* or even *kukhanmun*. With the ascendancy of *Han'gŭl* and the dissipation in the importance of Chinese Confucian education a foregone conclusion, the focus has now shifted to the nuts and bolts of language reform: reorganization (*chŏngni*), unification (*t'ong'il*), and dictionary compilation. The authors also stress the unification of language and writing, an issue that gained more attention as reform initiatives like this drew closer to specific policy action. Furthermore, much like Pak's article expressing pride in *Han'gŭl*, this prospectus conveys a sense of urgency in the language reform movement. Again, though the colonial rulers are not explicitly cited, the intimation does not go without notice. The authors repeatedly stress the speed or urgency of language reform, and the references to

the “stragglng Korean nation” requiring a “shortcut to global rejuvenation” seem to describe a physical contest. The standardization and unification of the Korean language was a race against time, and failure would mean irreparable damage to Korean culture and the nation.

Other writing on language during the 1920’s was not as cryptic on the issue of Japan. One article in the *Tonga Ilbo* (*East Asia Daily*) printed on the 481st anniversary of *Han’gŭl*’s promulgation entitled “The Meaning and Mission of the Han’gŭl Movement” drew a direct connection between the status of Japanese and the future of *Han’gŭl*, infusing the movement with a political immediacy. The author claims that the advent of the “tenacious enemy” Japanese had made many “pessimistic about the future of the Korean language.”³⁷ However, rather than feeling intimidated or pessimistic, this “struggle for existence” (*saengjon kyŏngjaeng*) between the languages would bring out *Han’gŭl*’s “innate ability” (*naejajŏk yŏkryang*) and show people the political significance of the Han’gŭl Movement. What was at stake in the “reorganization and propagation” of *Han’gŭl* was no less than “state authority” (*kukkajŏk kwŏllyŏk*).³⁸ A more explicit argument for the importance of language in the cultural movement would probably not have even been published. Here, the impetus for language reform originates not from appeals to civilization and enlightenment or efficacious modern education, but to nationalist struggle against the “tenacious enemy” embodied in a foreign, imposed language. The tone of this article reflects a shift in the discourse on language reform among certain intellectual circles, from a reform movement for modernization against traditionalism, to a movement *for survival against Japanese*. Had the press enjoyed more publishing freedom, more articles expressing similar sentiments would have undoubtedly

been written. Today, we can only attempt to decipher veiled allusions and simply guess what lay behind the black marks of the censor.

One group in colonial Korea that received heightened attention after 1920 and who often bore the brunt of GGK censorship and harassment were the Socialists. Following the Russian Revolution of 1919, Marxist ideology gained increasing currency among Korean intellectuals. Michael Robinson has argued that the Korean language movement had mass appeal among these more radical elements due to the potential of mass literacization through *Han'gŭl* to create mass culture and class-consciousness. One heavily censored article appearing in the journal *Creation (Kaebyŏk)* in 1924 expressed plainly the significance of language and education to the nation in Socialist terms:

We ask that the intellectual class (*chisik kyekŭp*) take on the task of educating the peasantry (*nongmin*). Whatever urgent business there might be, the most pressing issue is the farmer education movement (*nongmin kyoyuk undong*). Language, writing, folk tales, expressions—in every manner, they must be civilized and educated (*kyohwa*). The most critical matter is the awakening of class-consciousness (*kyekŭp ūisik kaksŏng*), followed by the propagation of national writing (*kukmun*).³⁹

The article went on to criticize Japanese education and literature for indoctrinating Korean youth and fostering a “bourgeois society.”⁴⁰ In order to educate the youth and working classes and roll back the influence of Japanese indoctrination, Socialists, along with some Christian and nationalist groups, supported summer literacy campaigns staged by university students with the cooperation of major nationalist papers beginning in 1926.⁴¹ According to Robinson, this populist movement (*pŭnarŏdŭ*, Russ.: *v narod* [to the people]) was an attempt to involve directly the masses in nationalist consciousness raising and mass education.⁴² By Robinson’s account, the movement was relatively

successful due to the common bond of language that united the otherwise antagonistic cultural nationalist and Socialist camps. While moderate elements emphasized the need for developing Korean culture to a higher level before the nation would be prepared for self-governance, more radical leftists argued for immediate independence through class-consciousness and overthrow of the imperialist order. However, each group happened to agree on the best means to achieve each end: education. The most effective way to provide this education, regardless of content, was through vernacular Korean and *Han'gŭl*.

By the 1920's, various segments of Korean society came to support the language movement for very specific reasons, and they couched their arguments in increasingly sophisticated terms. A central goal in supporting language reform was the improvement and effective dissemination of modern education. While many reformers reiterated the arguments of early *Han'gŭl* promoters (allegiance to king, ease of learning, civilization and enlightenment), the tone of the arguments and the methods invoked had changed since the 1890's. Although some repeated the *munmyŏng kaehwa*-phonetic script linkage, much discourse on language had shifted toward the promotion of more concrete proposals on language standardization, codification, and dictionary compilation. Organizations such as the Han'gŭl Society led such efforts on hard linguistic research and reform. Other reformers writing in the popular press showed a protective nature toward *Han'gŭl* and Korean culture in general. By resurrecting and protecting what they perceived to be genuinely Korean cultural assets, in thinly-veiled allusions to Japanese domination these writers attempted to counteract the degradation of current Korean culture that was "stragglings," and had "fallen behind others" and may well have "nothing

at all” to be proud of.⁴³ Other more daring writers directly implicated the Japanese language and colonial policy in “indoctrinating” the youth and threatening the “future of *Han’gŭl*” and the Korean language. Across the ideological divide, cultural nationalists and leftists alike agreed on the need for language reform, literacization and education for the future of a strong nation. Despite the variation in tactics and tone, by the 1920’s *Han’gŭl* and vernacular education had amassed a broad coalition across gender, class, and ideology, and considerable gains were made in the language movement thanks to this consensus. The language movement even enjoyed tacit approval from the colonial authorities. However, this ‘approval’ turned out to be more tenuous than many had imagined.

3.3. A Marriage of Convenience: The Language Movement and The Government General of Korea

The post-Independence Movement world witnessed the emergence of a broad coalition supporting language reform, including educators, grammarians, linguists, and reformers, both radical and moderate. The movement was also buttressed by the institutional authority of the GGK, a source of support at once disconcerting to many yet crucial to the cause of language reform. Many of the most significant breakthroughs in Korean/*Han’gŭl* reorganization and standardization, though initiated through grassroots efforts, actually came to be institutionalized by virtue of the GGK’s ultimate political authority. Although language organizations like the *Han’gŭl* Society worked tirelessly to fix standard orthography and compile a dictionary, it was actually the GGK that published the first modern orthographies of native Korean (in 1912, 1921, and 1930), as well as the

first standardized dictionary (1920).⁴⁵ Because these publications were used in the predominant and constantly expanding Japanese educational system before indigenous standardization publications had been finalized, their influence on the linguistic inculcation of young Koreans was largely unchallenged. This influence was more than just orthographical; the authority to write and promulgate a dictionary was an immense source of power. As Ross King writes, according to Yi Ki-mun, in the unpublished proofs to the Japanese-published Korean dictionary, “all entries for Sino-Korean vocabulary that also existed as Sino-*Japanese* lexical items, but had meanings or usages different from those in Japanese, were systematically marked for exclusion in the final, published version of the dictionary.”⁴⁶ Thus, even during the relatively supportive era of GGK research and publication and tacit support of Han’gŭl Society activities, there was an underlying current of discursive control and manipulation.

Though English language research on the history of Korean is limited, Korean language scholarship is plentiful. This Korean language research has approached the relationship between the indigenous language reform movement and colonial authority in a variety of ways. The original theoretical thread in Korean language history has characterized this relationship as one of antagonism, dominance, or outright violent suppression, a position dictated until the 1990’s by a South Korean intellectual environment of anti-Japanese sentiment, and in North Korea by a more blatant official state line pervading all research which continues to this day. The official publication of the history of the Han’gŭl Society (*Han’gŭl hakhoe 50nyŏnſa*) for example focuses almost exclusively on the linguistic research of the organization, presenting these efforts as if they occurred almost in a vacuum. This record does note the relatively freer

atmosphere that prevailed following the *3.1 Undong*, but does not mention any sort of collaborative tendencies between the Han'gŭl Society and the GGK.⁴⁷ On the contrary, a detailed treatment of Japanese influence in the language movement appears only in reference to the violent crackdown and subsequent trial in what came to be known as the Han'gŭl Society Incident (*Chosŏnŏ hakhoe sunan sakŏn*) of 1942.⁴⁸ In a more recent work (1985) by Kim Yun-kyŏng, organization-based efforts in the language movement by groups such as the Han'gŭl Society are again accorded preeminent status, while effects of Japanese policy are cited only in connection to either increased freedom during *bunka seiji* or the draconian cultural obliteration (*munhwa malsal*) and forced assimilation of the *total-war* period.⁵⁰ Therefore, these and other earlier works on the language question have characterized GGK authority in two very general ways: passive authority, in which a sort of tacit consent allows certain activities to proceed within limits, and active authority, in which undesirable projects are actively suppressed. Other authors have acknowledged a more active role for the colonial authority in language reform, but have problematized the cultural nationalist response to these GGK overtures and negatively characterized the nature of this colonial intervention. For example, Kim Ch'ŏl (2004) claims that GGK intervention into the language movement (in the form of orthography and dictionary publication) was a means of dividing (*bunjŏl*) and coopting the influential Han'gŭl Society, while 'collaboration' by certain cultural nationalists compromised the nationalistic credentials of the Han'gŭl Society and necessitated the mythicization of the resistance movement in post-colonial Korea.⁵¹

According to the above research, the GGK made few if any positive contributions to the Korean language movement, and the intervention that did take place was of a rather

cynical nature, designed to “divide and coopt.” On the other extreme of the ideological spectrum, a number of Japanese so-called ‘historical revisionists’ have attempted to reinterpret the Japanese intervention into Korean language in a more positive light. One author, ignoring the efforts of countless Korean reformers working in a constrained environment, wonders “if contemporary Koreans realize that the *Ilbon ch’ongdokbu* (GGK) was the first to propagate *Han’gŭl* and introduce it into elementary schools.”⁵² Another author argues that “*Han’gŭl* was taught to the whole Korean nation (*on kukmin*) only after annexation,” and that, “because *Han’gŭl* orthography was so convoluted and had not been systematized throughout history, from 1911 the GGK assembled a joint Korea-Japan conference of scholars to advance research and promulgation [of *Han’gŭl*]⁵³ These descriptions of the Japanese role in the Korean language movement contain glaring omissions and make gross generalizations about GGK intent and the extent and nature of colonial education. A nascent public school system was being established prior to annexation, and *Han’gŭl* (though not yet standardized) was being instituted in these schools. Religious schools further employed *Han’gŭl* prior to Japanese arrival, bolstered by the propagative force of the vernacular bible. Furthermore, the GGK was not responsible for teaching “the whole Korean nation” (*on kukmin*) *Han’gŭl*. The primary means of disseminating *Han’gŭl*—the school—was still restricted to a minority of Koreans, and the *Han’gŭl* that was taught was limited to two hours a week through the unbalanced educational system that the GGK itself instituted. Finally, the Spoken Language Orthography Conference (*Ŏnmun ch’ŏljabŏp yŏnguhoe*) organized by the GGK was hardly inclusive, and it is not clear whether the conference’s intentions were all that constructive. Between passive authority, active authority, and spurious historical

revisionism, there must be an alternative approach to the language movement-colonial authority dynamic.

Some recent scholarship on the colonial-era Korean language movement has presented a nuanced perception of this dynamic. For example, Yi Hye-ryŏng contends that “the relationship between colonial authority (GGK) and the Han’gŭl Movement was not always characterized by hostility. Rather, “the absolute administrative power of the GGK demonstrated by the Korean Orthography Reform Law (*Ŏnmun ch’ŏljabŏp ũi kaejŏng*) upon which every level of school textbook was based justified the actual authority of the GGK as a reference in the (subsequent) unification of Korean (*Chosŏnŏmun t’ong’il*).”⁵⁴ This sort of deference to the linguistic authority of the GGK was not necessarily “pro-Japanese” (*ch’iniljŏk*) or some type of “illicit union” (*yahap*).⁵⁵ More precisely, the Han’gŭl movement members and other cultural nationalists to some degree approved of “*the modern nation-state system*,” that Japan represented, but wanted to direct their own course as to the “what and how” of the system.⁵⁶ The so-called ‘collaboration’ with the GGK through reference to existing language policy reflected a desire to control to some extent the means of modernization (in this case language reform) while working within the overall, generally accepted nation-state paradigm. Takashi Matsui takes a similar approach to the language movement-GGK relationship, describing it as more interactive and periodically collaborative. Takashi claims that the GGK attempted to harness the societal and pedagogical influence of the Han’gŭl Society to further its own policy of Japan-Korea Harmonization (Naesŏn yunghwa, 内鮮融和).⁵⁷ An example of such an overture to the cultural nationalist camp can be found in the following speech by Department of Education superintendent Matsura (Massŭura, 마쓰우라) during

deliberations for spelling reform publication. In order to receive input from Korean language experts prior to the publication of the 1930 orthography, the GGK had convened this discussion:

It goes without saying that, as a nation's culture progresses its language also changes, and so orthography must be improved to reflect this. Therefore, in this civilized empire (*munmyōng cheguk*) we shall meet the demands of changing times and scientific principles to improve Korean's orthographic expressions to conform to the application of the people (*kukmin*)..... I believe that appropriately adjusting and standardizing *ōnmun* spelling under these circumstances, in terms of *ōnmun* propagation, development, and Korean cultural representation, is of momentous importance.....I anticipate that the public will find this to be an appropriate orthographical proposal, that it will become common use, and that it will have a reformative affect on the present condition of Korean writing.⁵⁸

The convening of these deliberations demonstrates that the GGK paid at least lip service to the idea of inclusion and Japan-Korea harmony. This speech also illustrates that Japan realized the need for language reform as well as its importance to the modernizing state. Furthermore, Matsura expresses a desire on behalf of the GGK to not only “adjust and standardize” the Korean language, but to “propagate and develop” Korean for the sake of “cultural representation.” Matsura’s rhetoric represents a strong mandate for Korean standardization and propagation, originating from an unlikely source which has often been disparaged or ignored in past scholarship. Yi and Takashi’s approaches to colonial language reform open new avenues in evaluating the cultural-nationalist/GGK relationship from a more interactionist perspective. However, a number of questions remain. What were the actual motivations of the colonial authority in promoting Korean language reform? To what extent were GGK language policies successful in promoting either Korean or Japanese goals? What would happen when tacit or active support of the language movement shifted to active suppression?

3.4. Habitus and the Power of Legitimized Languages

Though the approaches of Yi and Takashi are helpful in understanding the complex relationship between cultural nationalist reformers and colonial authority, they do not tell the whole story. Evidence suggests that there did exist an overlapping area of positive, albeit uneasy cooperation between these two groups. However, based on the overall system of control enacted by the colonial authority, we must question the underlying intentions of GGK intervention in the language movement. A cynical analysis may reveal that a systematized, standardized Korean language would make the task of press censorship more manageable, while controlling manner of speech/writing unification in the public schools would allow Japan to manage the indoctrinated youth on its own terms. The manipulation of dictionary compilation cited above also reveals more sinister assimilationist objectives. The fact that Korean language as a school subject was instituted from elementary school and gradually phased out before being completely dropped from the system in 1939 suggests that Korean was merely a stop gap measure to smooth the transition between illiteracy and Japanese acculturation. What is clear is that the GGK support of Korean in Japanese public schools was never enthusiastic. The following quote from an educator at Kyōngsōng High School illustrates the frustration with schizophrenic Japanese education policy related to Korean language education:

Here is something that I find difficult to understand. Why is it that the educational authorities (*hakmu tangkuk*) treat the only compulsory subject—Korean language—as they would an unwanted stepchild, or else with an ambivalent attitude.....If they essentially disavow the need for the Korean language then they should say so, but because they have publicly acknowledged the necessity of Korean and have invested so much time by instituting it as a compulsory subject, then they must direct its development and work to satisfy the expectations surrounding it.⁵⁹

This rhetorical divide between official GGK policy and actual implementation characterized much Japanese colonial discourse and resulted in a fitful approach to assimilation in schools and language policy in general. However, on a deeper level, we must question the fundamental nature of the so-called assimilationist policy and the overall colonial education system. Was the Japanese objective really to assimilate Korea as part of the Japanese empire, or rather, did the system operate through processes of social reproduction naturally enforced through underlying control of the legitimate language? Much research has focused on the ‘failure’ of assimilationist policy due to rhetorical/implementational divide cited above as if the ‘success’ of such a policy was a desirable outcome. Though this divide was apparent, I argue that the intrinsic goal of the system was never actually assimilation, but instead the pacification and control of the colony by any means necessary. It happened that the most effective means of control were imbedded in the largely subconscious process of social reproduction through acculturation in Japanese schools. Because these schools held a virtual monopoly on the labor market of the colonial economy, the GGK did not need to implement draconian policies of forced linguistic and cultural assimilation. Rather, the system itself represented a self-reinforcing mode of power; upwardly mobile Koreans would naturally learn the legitimate language (Japanese) to function in the restricted labor market, being compelled by the forces of *habitus*. The gradual *deculturation* of these same individuals in Korean language and culture was precipitated by the relative lack of reinforcing Korean language materials and the gradual diminution of missionary schools and Korean private schools. Being an inculcated force acquired early in life, young Korean students were especially susceptible to the effects of *habitus*. Those Koreans not attending

Japanese public schools had little chance of linguistic capital acquisition and social advancement, and therefore could do little to advance the language movement cause. The early reformers in the language movement were not the product of Japanese education but were instead inculcated in the legitimate language of classical Chinese and recognized as such. It was through this acknowledged mastery of the legitimate language that these reformers gained the linguistic capital to be able to enact reform through strategies of condescension. Looking at post-liberation South Korea, the fact that a majority of the leadership class retained had been expected of some form of Japanese collaboration illustrates the extent to which Japanese acculturation reinforced by *habitus* had reached. A suitable class of Koreans understanding modern state-craft simply could not be found among a generation brought up in the restricted labor market connected to limited legitimized-language proficiency.

This is not to argue that the Korean language movement and *Han'gŭl* promotion by cultural nationalists was completely unsuccessful. As I have demonstrated, the language movement realized significant gains during the colonial period thanks to the coalescing of a broad coalition of educators, linguists, Christians, cultural nationalists, and Socialists. However, we must question the meaning of the word 'success.' Can a language ever really be 'successful' in a system that delegitimizes it? Can this lack of legitimacy ever be overcome when social reproduction of classes is predicated upon the preeminence and continued promotion of an opposing language? The security of the Korean language and *Han'gŭl* was never really assured, and the eventual suspension of Korean usage in bureaucracy (1937), schools (1938) and the press (1939) attest to this fact.⁶⁰ However, I argue that, from a policy perspective, this forced assimilation of the late 1930's was not

only unnecessary, but may have actually been counterproductive. Today, it is these harsh years of ‘total war’ that are most often cited as examples of Japanese cruelty and are most deeply etched in the collective Korean psyche. They engendered *han* among many Koreans, a latent form of resentment, bitterness, and unresolved animosity which erupted in the post-liberation generation and continues in many respects today. One example of resolved *han* took the form of mass *Han’gŭl* literacization in post-liberation North and South Korea. What had not been realized for five hundred years of *Han’gŭl* history was achieved in North Korea in just a few years, while the South, though lagging in this respect, closed the literacy gap in a fraction of time compared with the gains of the colonial period.⁶¹ Therefore, despite the broad coalition supporting language reform, it was not until the *systemic habitus* inculcated through colonial education and reinforced through social reproduction caused by legitimate language ability was eliminated that the Korean language truly regained its security and legitimacy and can be said to have ‘succeeded.’ Had Japan not initiated its so-called ‘cultural obliteration’ policies, it is unlikely that Koreans today would be quite so nationalistic about their language, though the language would have eventually ascended to legitimate status due to its post-liberation implementation in universal education and in turn labor market ascendancy. On the other hand, had Japan emerged victorious in World War II, although the colony would have eventually come to an end much as European African colonies did, I believe that the Korean language situation would more closely resemble the tenuous position of other post-colonial languages, where the colonial language (i.e. English) retains a position of legitimacy in official functions while the indigenous language is reserved for private usage.

Conclusion

Though one of the newest scripts in the global linguistic canon, *Han'gŭl* has experienced a long, tumultuous journey to the present day. Throughout its history, the script has been variably promoted and oppressed, championed and disparaged for countless reasons, based on a variety of ideologies. Upon promulgation of the script, *Han'gŭl* inventor King Sejong expressed his desire to help the illiterate people by providing a means of communication and expression. Late 19th and early 20th century progressive intellectuals would invoke the benevolence of the King in their own promotion of the script, based on a neo-Confucian deference to authority. More importantly, these reformers questioned the existence of an exclusive link between Chinese literature and relevant knowledge, and in so doing problematized the foundation of the pre-modern, East Asian epistemology. These calls for script reform were couched in the modern ideology of *munmyŏng kaehwa*, where the use of phonetic script was associated with higher levels of enlightenment and promoted as the panacea for effective new knowledge (*sinhak*) acquisition. The Japanese colonial paradigm engendered a shift in the discourse on Korean and caused a transformation in tactics of reform. While most Korean intellectuals acknowledged the need for modern education, the expansion of colonial education coupled with the diminution of more autonomous indigenous alternatives pressured many reformers to adapt their reform strategies to negotiate within the colonial system. Discussion on the language issue shifted from questions of epistemology (traditional vs. modern) to more concrete issues such as language standardization and promulgation in the press and in schools. The presence of colonial authority was enigmatic; while its early influence in language policy (published orthographies and dictionaries) and ultimate institutional

authority represented a model for reform and possible cooperation, its unbalanced education policies and perceived status as enemy precluded more fruitful collaboration with many Korean reformers. Authors in the popular press responded to colonial policy with a sense of urgency relating to the language question. While some encouraged pride in indigenous cultural assets and the rapid reform of Korean for the sake of “a straggling nation,” other reformers made more explicit references to Korean in opposition to the “tenacious enemy” from without, Japanese. Liberation in 1945 freed the nation to follow its own approach to the language question, this time in an atmosphere very different from the pre-colonial environment.

The Korean language movement, though not successful in securing the ultimate liberation of Korean/Han’gŭl, did succeed in *protecting* the language from obliteration. Beginning with the benevolence of a king, the Korean script was utilized to varying degrees by certain groups of Koreans and played a part in the enjoyment of poetry and other literature for centuries until its utility and beauty were recognized in the modern era. A new generation of reformers protected *Han’gŭl* from the degradation of the *yangban* and the tyranny of the legitimized classical Chinese by promoting its usage for the acquisition of new knowledge beneficial to the establishment of a modern state. With the commencement of colonialism, a reconceived language movement promoted the language and script, this time in opposition to the influence of the newly legitimized language, Japanese. In all cases, reform-minded individuals were able to protect Korean, but the real influence of the language could not be realized until the system that perpetuated its inferiority was fundamentally altered. While many Chosŏn authors used *Han’gŭl* for centuries in various literary genres, the script did not gain any official recognition or

traction among intellectuals until the time was right for the supplanting of classical Chinese as legitimized language in the early 20th century. Similarly, though the colonial language movement defended Han'gŭl/Korean and made important strides in standardization and promulgation, only after regaining sovereignty could Korean realize full legitimacy and a secure future.

The story, of course, does not end there. The Koreas today face new challenges related to the language question. The use of Chinese characters in Korean education, though greatly reduced since 1945, remains a contentious issue among South Korean education policy makers, and the rising influence of China has renewed interest in the Chinese language. While North Korea has suspended all usage of characters according to official policy, other linguistic measures have drastically altered the nature of Northern language in other ways that may drive a growing wedge between the two countries that does not bode well for the future of unification.⁶² Furthermore, the battle between legitimate and subordinate languages rages on in South Korea, perhaps with more dire consequences than during the colonial period. The spread of globalization has heralded the dawn of global languages, and so the new legitimate language in opposition to Korean is increasingly perceived as English. Much like Japanese during colonialism, English proficiency has become the gatekeeper to social advancement in the job market. Families pay exorbitant amounts of money to ensure this proficiency for their children, and those unable to do so are increasingly limited in job opportunities. In this way, social classes are reproduced from generation to generation, a situation all the more insidious because people believe that to learn or disregard English is a free choice. As Bourdieu would say, the most effective form of power is that which people do not realize they are subject.

NOTES Part 1

1. Hunminchōngŭm (訓民正音) was the original name given to the Korean script upon promulgation in the mid 15th century by King Sejong of the Chosŏn Dynasty. It can be roughly translated as ‘Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People.’ Following its promulgation, the script was often referred to by a shortened term, ‘correct sounds’ (chōngŭm), though today it is almost universally known as ‘Han’gŭl.’
“South Korea’s Latest Export: Its Alphabet.” *The New York Times*. September 11, 2009.
2. “South Korea’s Latest Export: Its Alphabet.” *The New York Times*. September 11, 2009.
3. As noted above, ‘Han’gŭl’ is the contemporary (South Korean) term used to refer to the indigenous Korean script, coined sometime in the 1910’s. The various terminologies related to the Korean language will be explained in greater detail in section 1.2.
4. King Sejong the Great, Sejong Taewang (世宗大王) (1397-1450) was fourth king of the Chosŏn Dynasty. It has been convincingly argued that he invented Han’gŭl virtually singlehandedly in 1443 C.E. See for example: Yi, Ki-mun. “The Inventor of the Korean Alphabet.” In *The Korean Alphabet: It’s History and Structure*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997, pp. 11-31.
“South Korea’s Latest Export: Its Alphabet.” *The New York Times*. September 11, 2009.
5. “South Korea’s Latest Export: It’s Alphabet.” *The New York Times*. September 11, 2009.
6. “Quest to Globalize ‘Hangeul’ Raises Questions.” *The Korea Times (Hankuk ilbo)*, Jan. 27, 2010.
“South Korea’s Latest Export: Its Alphabet.” *The New York Times*. September 11, 2009.
7. “Quest to Globalize ‘Hangeul’ Raises Questions.” *The Korea Times (Hankuk ilbo)*, Jan. 27, 2010.
8. Kim, Chu-wŏn. “Protecting Culture, Not Stroking Egos.” *Korea Joongang Daily (Joongang ilbo)*, Oct. 20, 2009.
9. Ethnologue, 2005. www.vistawide.com/languages
10. Sohn, Ho-min. *Korean Language in Culture and Society*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006.
Lee, Iksop & Ramsey, Robert S. *The Korean Language*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.
11. For example, The Korean Language Society (*Han’gŭl Hakhoe*), The Hunminchōngŭm Society, The American Association of Teachers of Korean, The Academy of Korean Studies, and The Korea Foundation.
12. King, Ross. “Language and National Identity in the Koreas.” In *Language and National Identity in Asia*. Andrew Simpson, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 200-235.
13. Kim Chu-wŏn. “Protecting Cultures, Not Stroking Egos.” *Korea Joongang Daily (Joongang ilbo)*, Oct. 20, 2009.

14. See for example his expressed desire to spread Han'gŭl because, in the long run, it will help "enhance Korea's economy as it will activate exchanges with societies that use the language. Kim, Chu-wŏn. (LEAD) "Indonesian Tribe Picks Korean Alphabet as Official Writing System." Yŏnhap News Agency. english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national Aug. 6, 2009.
15. "South Korea's Latest Export: Its Alphabet." *The New York Times*, Sept. 11, 2009.
16. Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 46.
17. Quoted in: Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 43.
18. Pierre Bourdieu defines symbolic power as "that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it. Symbolic power "is a transformed, i.e. misrecognizable, transfigured and legitimated form of the other forms of power." Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991, pps 164, 170.
19. Hanja are Chinese characters as they are used in grammatically and syntactically Korean writing. I distinguish between Chinese characters (*hanja*) and Chinese writing/literary Chinese (*hanmun*) because an effectively Korean sentence may still employ *hanja* (as in Sino-Korean mixed script), while *hanmun* relates to standard, classical Chinese as it was used in Korea, having very little resemblance to the actual structure of Korean colloquial speech. For a lucid discussion of this topic, see Lee, Iksop & Ramsey, S. Robert. *The Korean Language*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.
Schiffman, Harold. "Language Policy and Linguistic Culture." In *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*. Ed. Thomas Ricento. Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
Coulmas, Florian. *With Forked Tongues: What are National Languages Good For?* Singapore: Karoma Publishers, 1988.
Thomas, George. *Linguistic Purism*. London and New York: Longman Group U.K. Ltd, 1991.
20. Benedict Anderson's influential *Imagined Communities*, for example, hinges almost entirely on the issues of language and script. However, the increasing focus on language is a relatively recent trend, and it has still not received the sort of attention that other factors (such as state power) have.
21. For example, Florian Coulmas notes that "the cases where the colonial language was effectively replaced by a home-grown language after independence are very rare indeed." Coulmas, Florian. *With Forked Tongues: What are National Languages Good For?* Singapore: Karoma Publishers, 1988, p. 16.
22. Ferguson (1959) first described diglossia as "the employment of language varieties side by side in a complimentary set of socio-communicative functions." Quoted in: Thomas, George. *Linguistic Purism*. New York: Longman Group U.K., Ltd, 1991. In the case of Korea, diglossia refers initially to the side by side employment of literary Chinese (*hanmun*) and colloquial Korean and later to *hanmun* and colloquial Korean coupled with *Han'gŭl*. This diglossia often forms

along socio-economic division lines, as evidenced by the exclusive elite usage of literary Chinese versus popular usage of colloquial language/*Han'gŭl*.

This “prominent usage” of Chinese characters is in comparison to pure *Han'gŭl*, using of course no Chinese characters.

23. Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 45.
24. Ibid, pp. 6-7
25. Ibid, p. 55
26. The 1911 (Meiji 44) Korean Education Rescript proclaimed the national language (*kokugo*) of Korea to be Japanese.
27. Following Thompson’s summation of Bourdieu, ‘habitus’ is defined as “a set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions, and attitudes that are ‘regular’ without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any rule. The dispositions which constitute the habitus are inculcated, structured, durable, generative, and transposable.” For a detailed discussion of linguistic habitus, see: Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 12. This concept will be revisited later in this paper.
28. Kim, Chu-wŏn. “Protecting Culture, Not Stroking Egos.” *Korea Joongang Daily (Joongang ilbo)*, Oct. 20, 2009.
29. For example, Vietnamese and Bhasa Indonesian have adopted the Roman script, and China has granted *pinyin* official language status.
30. Morning script, used as an epithet, refers to the ease of learning *Han'gŭl*. As the saying went, *Han'gŭl* was so easy that a clever person could learn it in a single morning. Reformers would later use this same criticism as an argument in favor of its usage.
31. Yi, Ŭng-ho. *Kaehwa-gi ũi han'gŭl undong-sa*. Seoul: Sŏngch'ŏng-sa, 1975, p. 8.
32. An example of this type of Korean writing may be found in the first pure-Han'gŭl publication, *The Independent (Tongnip sinmun)*. Sino-Korean script, known as *kukhanmun* (國漢文) in Korean, was a type of writing which gained prominence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its usage has decreased precipitously since the 1980's. This writing is syntactically Korean but employs Chinese characters to varying degrees. Desinified contemporary Korean refers simply to the gradual diminution of Chinese characters in Korean writing in the 20th century which has resulted in contemporary Korean's relative scarcity of Chinese characters.
33. Lee, Yŏn-suk. *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan*. Trans. Maki Hirano Hubbard. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010, p. 54.
34. Schmid, Andre. *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 173.
35. Ibid. pp. 172-173.
36. Ibid. pp. 173-174.
37. King, Ross. “Language and National Identity in the Koreas.” In *Language and National Identity in Asia*. Andrew Simpson, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 200-235.

38. Schmid, Andre. *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 32.
39. Ibid. pp. 32-33
40. *Yangban* (兩班) literally means “two orders” or “groups,” referring to two kinds of bureaucrats: the *munban* (文班) or literary and scholarly rank, and the martial rank, known as *muban* (武班). The *yangban* (whether civilian or military) was essentially a literati, expected to hold public office, follow the Confucian doctrine through study and self-cultivation, and help cultivate the moral standards of Chosŏn society. The *yangban* dedicated years to the study of Chinese classical literature upon which examinations for government bureaucratic positions were based, and any sort of manual labor was considered inappropriate for their status.
41. Schmid, Andre. *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, pp. 69-70.
42. Coulmas, Flourian. *With Forked Tongues: What are National Languages Good For?* Singapore: Karoma Publishers, 1988, p. 3.
43. Ibid. p. 2.
44. Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. London, New York: Verso, 1983.
45. Ibid. p. 46.
46. Ibid. p. 36.
47. Ibid.

Notes Part 2

1. Han’gŭl hakhoe, ed. *Han’gŭl hakhoe 50nyŏnsa*. Seoul: Han’gŭl hakhoe, 1971.
2. Yi, Ki-mun. “Tongnip sinmun kwa han’gŭl munhwa.” In *Hangugŏ ūi palchŏn panghyang*. ed. Yi Ki-mun, Sim Jae-gi, Yi Chŏng-min, & So Hŭng-nyŏl. Seoul: Minŭm-sa, 1990, pp. 23-42.
3. Kim, Sŏk-tŭk. “Kŭndaehwa-gi ūi yŏngu” *Hanguk chŏngsin munhwa yŏngu wŏn, Han’guk kŭndae munhwa-e kwanhan kongdong yŏngu 3, Han’guk sahak 2*, 1980, pp. 114-137.
Ko, Yŏng-gŭn. *Kugŏhak yŏn’gu-sa: hŭrŭm kwa tonghyang*. Seoul: Hagyŏnsa, 1985.
Yi Ũng-ho. *Kaehwa-gi ūi han’gŭl undong-sa*. Seoul: Sŏngch’ŏng-sa, 1975.
4. Yi, Hye-ryŏng. “Hanja insik kwa kŭndae ūi naeshŏnŏlti.” Seoul: Minjok munhak sahakhoe, 2005, pp. 210-242.
5. Ibid. p. 212.
6. Sin, Ki-wook. *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006, p. 35.
7. Im Hyŏng-taek. “20 Segi chŏn-hu han’guk-e issŏsŏ munmyŏng kaenyŏm.” In *Hŭndŭllinŭn ŏnŏdŭl: ŏnŏ ūi kŭndae wa kukmin kukka*. Ed. Im Hyŏng taek, Han Ki-hyŏng, Ryu Chun-p’il & Yi Hye-ryŏng. Seoul: Sŏnggyunkwan Daehakkyo Press, 2008, p. 10.
8. Schmid, Andre. *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 69.

9. This translation of the preface from Sejong's Hunminchōngŭm is taken from Kim, Jeongsu. *The History and Future of Hangeul, Korea's Indigenous Script*. Trans. Ross King. London: Global Oriental, 2005. p. 17. There are a number of other translations containing slight but semantically insignificant variations.
10. Kim, Jeongsu. *The History and Future of Hangeul, Korea's Indigenous Script*. Trans. Ross King. London: Global Oriental, 2005. pp. 14-15.
11. Kim, Jeongsu. *The History and Future of Hangeul, Korea's Indigenous Script*. Trans. Ross King. London: Global Oriental, 2005.
Kim, Yun-kyōng. *Han'gŭl undong kŭ pakk*. Seoul: Yonsei University, 1985, p. 116.
12. The other "barbarians" Ch'oe referred to include "the Mongols, the Xiaxia, the Jurchens, the Japanese, and the Tibetans."
Kim, Jeongsu. *The History and Future of Hangeul, Korea's Indigenous Script*. Trans. Ross King. London: Global Oriental, 2005.
Kim, Yun-kyōng. *Han'gŭl undong kŭ pakk*. Seoul: Yonsei University, 1985.
13. *Idu* (吏讀), often translated as 'clerk reading,' was a method of transcribing the Korean language with Chinese characters whose invention was attributed to the famous 7th century monk Sōl Ch'ong. As its name suggests, it is thought to have been utilized mainly by lower-level government officials. By the 11th century it had been refined, and its usage continued until the late 19th century. For a detailed discussion of *idu* and its relation to other Chinese transcription methods, see: Lee, Iksop & Ramsey, Robert S. *The Korean Language*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, pp. 53-55.
Kim, Jeongsu. *The History and Future of Hangeul, Korea's Indigenous Script*. Trans. Ross King. London: Global Oriental, 2005, p. 15.
14. The complete memorial to King Sejong is reproduced in: Kim, Jeongsu. *The History and Future of Hangeul, Korea's Indigenous Script*. Trans. Ross King. London: Global Oriental, 2005, pp. 14-15.
15. Though the invention of *idu* is attributed to the monk Sōl ch'ong, this seems to be only legend as some textual examples of the writing predate him. It seems this legend arose due to the influence of his work on subsequent generations. See: Lee, Iksop & Ramsey, Robert S. *The Korean Language*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 53.
Kim, Yun-kyōng. *Han'gŭl undong kŭ pakk*. Seoul: Yonsei University, 1985, p. 119.
16. Kim, Yun-kyōng. *Han'gŭl undong kŭ pakk*. Seoul: Yonsei University, 1985
17. Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 55.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. See for example: Thomas, George. *Linguistic Purism*. London and New York: Longman Group U.K. Ltd, 1991.
21. In explaining strategies of condescension, Bourdieu uses the example of a mayor from the southwest French region of Bearn who, in the course of a ceremony honoring a *Bearnais* poet, addressed the audience in "good quality *Bearnais*," a "thoughtful gesture" which reportedly had "greatly moved" the audience. How is it that an audience of people whose mother tongue is *Bearnais* should be 'greatly

- moved' by being addressed in their own language by a *Bernais* mayor on the occasion of honoring a *Bernais* poet? According to Bourdieu, the audience (or any group of people) must first “tacitly recognize the unwritten law which prescribes French (or any dominant language) as the only acceptable language for formal speeches in formal situations.” Based on this criteria, because the *Bernais* mayor is sufficiently inculcated in the dominant language (French) by virtue of his elite education and since this objective disparity is sufficiently known and recognized by the persons involved, the mayor may derive profit from the objective relation of power by symbolically negating that very relationship. In short, this mayor and any other person competent in a dominant language can derive this profit because they can *afford* to by virtue of their indisputable participation in the superior language. It is highly doubtful that such *patois* would be praised as a “good quality *Bearnais*” coming from the mouth of a *Bearnais* peasant ignorant of legitimized French. See Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 68.
22. Ibid, p. 67.
 23. Ibid. p. 68.
 24. Buddhists often used *Han'gŭl* for annotations of sutras for popular evangelization. It has also been widely postulated that *Han'gŭl* usage was predominant among Chosŏn women, though concrete evidence is limited due to a dearth of scholarship on Chosŏn readership. This issue will be taken up in detail below. It has been demonstrated that Western Protestant missionaries made significant contributions to *Han'gŭl* popularization, literacy, and Korean language modernization through education promotion and vernacular bible distribution. See for example: King, Ross. “Western Protestant Missionaries and the Origins of Korean Language Modernization.” In *Journal of International and Area Studies*. Vol. 11, No. 3 Special Issue, 2004, pp. 7-38.
 25. My use of reemergence here does not suggest that it had been completely abandoned or forgotten by history and was suddenly rediscovered. What actually ‘reemerged’ was not the script itself, but rather its official recognition and praiseworthy status among intellectuals.
 26. See for example: *The History and Future of Han'gŭl* by Kim Jeongsu, *Korean Language in Culture and Society* edited by Sohn Ho-min, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea* by Shin Gi-wook, *The Emergence of Korean Script as a Symbol of Korean Identity* by Harald Haarman, and Lee, Peter H. Trans. *The Record of the Black Dragon Year*, Honolulu: Center for Korean Studies, 2000, p.7.
 27. Lee, Ji-Eun. *A New Pedigree: Women and Women's Reading in Korea, 1896-1934*. Doctoral Dissertation. Cambridge: Harvard University, 2006.
 28. Hyun, Theresa. *Writing Women in Korea*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005, pp. 6-7.
 29. However, the extent of state influence in Buddhism was limited by Chosŏn's reduced patronage of the religion.
 30. King, Ross. “Language and National Identity in the Koreas.” In *Language and National Identity in Asia*. Andrew Simpson, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 204.

31. The ōnhae (annotation) method began shortly after *Han'gŭl* promulgation with the literal translation of Chinese texts. In other words, *Han'gŭl* worked more as a pronunciation guide, and original Chinese texts were left grammatically identical. However, over time translations began to evolve into closer reproductions of Korean vernacular language as Korean particles, connectives, and suffixes were added. See: Hyun, Theresa. *Writing Women in Korea*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005, pp. 5-8.
32. Hyun, Theresa. *Writing Women in Korea*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005, p. 7.
33. Sijo (時調) is a Korean lyrical poetic form consisting of three lines and generally composed in *Han'gŭl* after its promulgation. Developing about the same time as the *sijo*, the *kasa* is a form of verse, longer than the *sijo* and employing more variable themes.
34. For titles of early works in *Han'gŭl*, see: Kim, Jeongsu. *The History and Future of Hangeul, Korea's Indigenous Script*. Trans. Ross King. London: Global Oriental, 2005, p. 34.
Haarman, Harald. "The Emergence of the Korean Script as a Symbol of Korean Identity." In Joshua A. Fishman, ed., *The Earliest Stage of Language Planning: The "First Congress" Phenomenon*, Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993, pp. 143-157.
35. Lee, Ji-Eun. *A New Pedigree: Women and Women's Reading in Korea, 1896-1934*. Doctoral Dissertation. Cambridge: Harvard University, 2006, p.22.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid. p. 21.
38. Ibid. p. 47.
39. Robinson, Michael E. *Korea's Twentieth Century Odyssey*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, p. 18.
40. Ibid. p. 11
41. Ibid. p. 19.
42. Ko, Yōng-chin. "Hankugō kŭndae hwa yōngu sōsōl: ōnmunesō kungmunŭro." 2008, p. 30.
43. My English translation is based on the following Korean translation appearing in Ko Yōng chin's article "Hankugō kŭndae hwa yōngu sōsōl: ōnmunesō kungmunŭro.": "법률과 칙령은 국문으로써 본을 삼고, 한문역을 첨부하며 혹은 국한문을 혼용한다." An alternative translation might read: "법률과 칙령은 국문으로써 본을 삼되, 한문역을 첨부하거나 혹은 국한문을 혼용한다." This slight variation may suggest that the policy writers assumed *Han'gŭl* alone was not yet sufficient for all written communication. My thanks to Professor Lee Ji-Eun for pointing this out.
44. Ko, Yōng-chin. "Hangugō kŭndae hwa yōngu sōsōl: ōnmunesō kukmunŭro." 2008, p. 31.
See also: Yi, Ki-mun. "Tongnip sinmun kwa han'gŭl munhwa." In *Hangugō ūi paltchōn panghyang*, ed. Yi Ki-mun, Sim Jae-gi, Yi Chōng-min, & So Hŭng-nyōl, pp. 23-42. Seoul: Minŭm-sa, 1990, p. 25.
45. Ko, Yōng-chin. "Hangugō kŭndae hwa yōngu sōsōl: ōnmunesō kukmunŭro." 2008, p. 31.

46. This 1894 event (Tonghak Uprising), led by Chŏn Pongjun, was triggered by a water dispute between peasants and their corrupt local magistrate in the southwest Korean province of Chŏllado. The dispute soon turned into outright armed revolt which the government troops were unable to suppress, necessitating Qing intervention and leading eventually to the Sino-Japanese War. The revolt is often referred to as the ‘Tonghak Uprising’ due to the affiliation of many of the peasant leaders with the upstart *Tonghak* (Eastern Learning) religion, a syncretic religion advocating social equality and challenging the state’s Confucian orthodoxy. Events such as this reflected the simmering animosity and ideological tension at the turn of the century. See: Schmid, Andre. *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
47. Robinson, Michael E. *Korea’s Twentieth Century Odyssey*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, p. 23.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Sŏ, Chae-p’il. “Nonsŏl.” *Tongnip sinmun*. Inaugural Issue, April 4, 1896. My translation.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. The word *Han’gŭl* was actually not coined until the 1910’s by the Korean language scholar Chu Si-kyŏng (more on him below). Prior to the institutionalization of the term, *Han’gŭl* had been referred to by a variety of names (see section 1.2), including the most common, somewhat disparaging term: *ŏnmun*, vernacular or ‘vulgar’ writing. In proposing the new name, Chu explained that, “it was composed of the archaic Korean word *han*, which meant ‘big, great’, and *kŭl*, the native word for ‘writing’. However, Chu also knew that *han* would be understood by its more widely-used homonym ‘Korea’, and this meaning (Korean writing) is the interpretation which has prevailed among a majority of South Korean citizens. In North Korea, where references to the South are purposefully avoided, the script is referred to as *Chosŏn kŭl* (Chosŏn writing). See: Lee, Iksop & Ramsey, Robert S. *The Korean Language*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 13.
54. Chu Si-kyŏng (Hanhinsaem Chu Si-kyŏng, 1876-1914) received traditional training in *hanmun* before turning his attention toward *Han’gŭl* promotion, codification, and standardization. He wrote a number of ground-breaking works on the Korean language including *Kugŏ munbŏb* (A Grammar of the National Language, 1898), *Kugŏ munjŏn ŭmhak* (A Study of the Grammar and Phonology of the National Language, 1908), *Mal ũi sori* (The Sounds of Language), as well as several newspaper editorials that will be examined below. He is considered the father of modern Korean linguistics, and many of his theories are still studied today.
55. Though Chinese contains both pictographic and phonetic elements, Chu Si-kyŏng seems to highlight only the hieroglyphic aspects of Chinese writing in this work. Chu, Si-kyŏng. “Kukmunron.” *Tongnip sinmun*. April 22, 1897. In Kim Min-su, Ha Tong-ho, & Ko Yŏng-gŭn, eds. *Kungmun-non chipsŏng*. Part 3, vol. 3 of *Yŏktae han’guk munpŏp taegye*. Seoul: Ch’ulpan-sa, 1985, p. 9. My translation.

- Chu, Si-kyöng. “Kukö wa kukmun üi p’iryo.” *Söu*. Issue No. 2, Jan. 1, 1907, pp. 31-34. My translation.
56. Chu, Si-kyöng. “Kukmunron.” *Tongnip sinmun*. April 22, 1897. In Kim Min-su, Ha Tong-ho, & Ko Yöng-gün, eds. *Kungmun-non chipsöng*. Part 3, vol. 3 of *Yöktae han’guk munpöp taegye*. Seoul: Ch’ulpan-sa, 1985. My translation.
57. Ibid. My translation.
58. Chu, Si-kyöng. “Kukmunron.” *Tongnip sinmun*. April 24, 1897. In Kim Min-su, Ha Tong-ho, & Ko Yöng-gün, eds. *Kungmun-non chipsöng*. Part 3, vol. 3 of *Yöktae han’guk munpöp taegye*. Seoul: Tower Press, 1985, p. 13.
59. Chu, Si-kyöng. “Kukö wa kukmun üi p’iryo.” *Söu*. Issue No. 2, Jan. 1, 1907, pp. 31-34.
Chu, Si-kyöng. “P’il sang chakuk munön.” *Hwangsöng sinmun*. Issues 2442-2447, April 1-April 6, 1907.
60. Chu, Si-kyöng. “Kugö wa kungmun üi p’iryo.” *Söu*. Issue No. 2, Jan. 1, 1907, In “Chu Si-kyöng kugö wa kukmun üi p’iryo ~ p’il sang chakuk munön yökju” *Chu Si-kyöng Hakpo* 4: 251-256. My translation.
61. Chu, Si-kyöng. “P’il sang chakuk munön.” *Hwangsöng sinmun*. Issues 2442-2447, April 1-April 6, 1907, p. 254. In “Chu Si-kyöng kugö wa kungmun üi p’iryo ~ p’il sang chakuk munön yökju” *Chu Si-kyöng hakpo* 4: 251-256. My translation.
62. Ibid. p. 255. My translation.
63. Ibid. p. 258. My translation.
64. Yu Kil-jun (1856-1914) wrote the first introductory book on Western culture *Söyu kyönmun* (*Things Seen and Heard in the West*) in 1895. This work was very influential among early modern Korean intellectuals. Yu was the first Korean student to study in Japan, studying history, law, economics, and geography at Keio University. Yu later traveled to the United States as a diplomat in 1883, a member of the first Chosön delegation ever. He continued his studies at the Dummer Academy in Salem, Massachusetts before returning to Korea.
65. Sin, Ki-wook. *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006, p. 30.
66. Ibid. 29-30.
67. Ibid. p. 30.
68. Yu, Kil-jun. *Söyukyönmun*. [*Things Seen and Heard in the West*]. 1895, p. 121. Trans into modern Korean with introduction by Hō Kyöng-jin. Seoul: Söhae munjib, 2004. My English translation.
69. Ibid. p. 26. My translation.
70. Ibid. My translation.
71. King, Ross. “Nationalism and Language Reform in Korea: The *Questione della Lingua* in Precolonial Korea.” In *Nationalism and the Construction of Korea Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Center for Korean Studies, 1998, p. 54.
72. Yi, Kwang-su. “Kümila hanyongmun e daehaya.” In Kim Min-su, Ha Tong-ho, & Ko Yöng-gün, eds. *Kungmun-non chipsöng*. Part 3, vol. 3 of *Yöktae han’guk munpöp taegye*. Seoul: Ch’ulpan-sa, 1985, p. 190. My translation.
73. King, Ross. “Nationalism and Language Reform in Korea: The *Questione della*

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74. Ibid.
75. Ibid. pp. 54-55.
76. Ibid. p. 62.
77. Quoted in King, Ross. “Nationalism and Language Reform in Korea: The *Questione della Lingua* in Precolonial Korea.” In *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Center for Korean Studies, 1998, p. 57.
78. See: Ibid. p. 59 and Schmid, Andre. *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 71.
Yō Kyu-hyang. (untitled) *Taedong hakhoe wōlbo*. 25 February, 1908, p. 52-53.
79. Schmid, Andre. *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 70.
80. Ibid.
81. *The Independent* lasted for a mere four years and did not have time to build up its readership (2,000-3,000) to a significant level. Furthermore, the vernacular *Imperial Post* was said by Schmid to have the widest circulation among women and the uneducated. See: Schmid, Andre. *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 48.
82. See for example: Schmid, Andre. *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 52.
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Notes Part 3

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2. Robinson, Michael. E. *Korea’s Twentieth Century Odyssey*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, p. 19.
3. Ibid.
4. Headquarters of the Japanese Korean Gendarmerie, *Taishō hachinen Chōsen sojō jiken jōkyō* [The Condition of the 1919 Uprisings in Korea] Seoul, 1919, pp. 383-384. Quoted in Lee, Chong-sik. *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963.
5. Robinson, Michael. E. *Korea’s Twentieth Century Odyssey*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, p. 41.
6. Ibid.
7. Lee, Chong-sik. *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963.
8. Kim, Ki-sōk & Oh, Sōng-ch’ōl. “Japanese Colonial Education as Contested Terrain: What Did Koreans Do in the Expansion of Elementary Schooling?” In

- Asia Pacific Education Review*. Vol. 1 No. 1 2000, pp. 75-89.
9. Lee, Chong-sik. *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963.
Kim Ki-sök and Oh Söng-ch'öl place the number of private schools (both religious and non-religious) at 1,323 in 1912, while Michael Robinson cites the more modest figure of 1,200 in 1910.
 10. Kim, Ki-sök & Oh, Söng-ch'öl. "Japanese Colonial Education as Contested Terrain: What Did Koreans Do in the Expansion of Elementary Schooling?" In *Asia Pacific Education Review*. Vol. 1 No. 1 2000, p. 77.
 11. Ibid.
 12. Caprio, Mark E. *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009.
 13. Terauchi, Masatake. *Terauchi Masatake monjo*, Reel 32 (Terauchi Masatake Papers) (Japanese Diet Library), 74-85. Quoted in Caprio, Mark E. *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009, p. 94. Caprio does not give an exact date for this quotation, but because Terauchi is speaking of incorporating Koreans into a Japanese administered education system, it can be inferred that the speech took place after 1905. Caprio places the date prior to annexation. (1905-1910)
 14. Yu, Kil-jun. *Söyu Kyönmun [Things Seen and Heard in the West]*. 1895. Trans. into modern Korean with introduction by Hō Kyōng-jin. Seoul: Söhae munjib, 2004. My English translation.
 15. See for example: Baldwin, Frank. "Participatory Anti-Imperialism: The 1919 Independence Movement." In *The Journal of Korean Studies* 1, 1979, pp. 123-162. and Ku, Dae-yöl. *Korea Under Colonialism: The March First Movement and Anglo-Japanese Relations*. Royal Asiatic Society, 1985.
Robinson, Michael E. *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1988.
 16. For example, Ch'oe Hyön-bae, a student of Chu Si-kyöng and giant of 20th century Korean language research, lists the following contributions of Protestantism to Han'göl: 1) it propagated Han'göl among the masses; 2) it helped Koreans learn to read and write Han'göl; 3) it promoted respect for Han'göl and fostered a spirit of protecting Han'göl; 4) it recognized the scientific value of Han'göl; 5) it propagated the "Paedal" language and writing to the world; and 6) it fostered an atmosphere conducive to Han'göl-only orthography. Quoted in King, Ross. "Western Protestant Missionaries and the Origins of Korean Language Modernization." In *Journal of International and Area Studies*. Vol. 11, No. 3 Special Issue, 2004, pp. 9-10.
 17. Robinson, Michael E. *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1988, p. 51.
 18. Ibid.
 19. Ibid. p. 83.
 20. See for example: Robinson, Michael E. *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1988.
 21. Here, 'language reform' is used in a very broad sense meaning the standardization, codification, protection, and promotion of Han'göl/vernacular

- Korean.
22. This organization was originally named The Chosŏn Language Research Society (*Chosŏnŏ yŏnguhoe*). In 1931 the name became The Chosŏn Language Society (*Chosŏnŏ hakhoe*), and in 1949 the name was again changed to The Han'gŭl Society (*Han'gŭl hakhoe*). In this paper, I use the current designation Han'gŭl Society. *Han'gŭl hakhoe. Han'gŭl hakhoe 50nyŏnsa*. Seoul: Han'gŭl hakhoe, 1971. My translation.
 23. Robinson, Michael E. *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1988, p. 90.
 24. For compelling evidence of GGK and Han'gŭl hakhoe interaction and collaboration, see: Takashi, Mitsui. "Singminji ki chosŏnesŏ ũi han'gŭl undong e kwanhan yŏngu tonghyang kwa kŭ pip'anjŏk kŏmt'o," In *Ŏnŏ munhwa* 11-1: 2008, pp. 55-83.
 25. Robinson, Michael E. *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1988, p. 91.
 26. Ryang, Myŏng. "Sinmunhak kŏnsŏl kwa han'gŭl chŏngri." In *Kaebŏk*, Issue 38, August 1, 1923. My translation.
 27. Ibid. My translation.
 28. Ibid. My translation.
 29. Ibid. My translation. Emphasis mine.
 30. Ibid. My translation.
 31. Ibid. My translation.
 32. Chŏng, Mok. "Chosŏn munjarŭl ponmun irahara, ŏjji ch'am'a [ŏnmun] iran yokmyŏngŭl sŭsŭro ssŭlkka [chŏngŭm] iran kŏtdo ksilŭn hangnijŏk myŏngch'ingin kŏt." In *Tonggwang* Issue No. 7. No date provided. My translation.
 33. Yi, Yun-jae. "Han'gŭl undong ũi sŏn'guja Chu Si-kyŏng sŏnsaeng." In *Samch'ŏlli* Vol. 7 Issue No. 9, October 1, 1935. My translation.
 34. Yi, Chu-man. "Tanhaenggi e limhan chŏngŭm munbŏp, sukam ũro put'ŏ cheŭi e kkaji." [Decisive Action for Chŏngŭm Grammar: from Random Thoughts to a Solid Proposal] In *Tonggwang* Issue No. 5. September 1, 1926. My translation.
 35. Pak, P'al-yang. "Naega charanghago sipŭn chosŏn kŏt—uridŭl ũi munja." In *Pyŏlkŏnkon*, Issue Nos. 12 and 13, May 1, 1928. My translation.
 36. Han'gŭl hakhoe 50dol kinyŏm saŏphoe, 1929. In *Han'gŭl hakhoe. Han'gŭl hakhoe 50nyŏnsa*. Seoul: Han'gŭl hakhoe, 1971. My translation.
 37. "Han'gŭl undong ũi ũi ũi wa samyŏng: chŏngch'i, kyoyang, munhwasang ũro." In *Tonga Ilbo*, Oct. 27, 1927. My translation.
 38. Ibid.
 39. P'al Bong San in. "Chibae kyekŭp p'i chibae kyekŭp" In *Kaebŏk*. Issue No. 43, Jan 1, 1924. My translation.
 40. Ibid. My translation.
 41. Robinson, Michael E. *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1988.
 42. Ibid.
 43. "Han'gŭl undong ũi ũi ũi wa samyŏng: chŏngch'i, kyoyang, munhwasang

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44. P'al Bong San in. “Chibae kyekŭp p'i chibae kyekŭp” In *Kaebiyŏk*. Issue No. 43, Jan 1, 1924. My translation.
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45. King, Ross. “Language and National Identity in the Koreas.” In *Language and National Identity in Asia*. Andrew Simpson, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
46. *Ibid.* p. 207.
47. In *Han'gŭl hakhoe. han'gŭl hakhoe 50nyŏnsa*. Seoul: Han'gŭl hakhoe, 1971.
48. The Korean Language Society (Han'gŭl hakhoe) Incident occurred in 1942, when fourteen members of the organization working secretly on the dictionary compilation project were arrested for violation of the security law. The participants were jailed, and the final report of the subsequent trial accused the remaining members of having worked “to ensure the future independence of Korea by reviving the national spirit and fostering national strength through a cultural movement.” For a detailed treatment of this incident, see: Yi, Hi-sŭng. “Recollections of the Korean Language Society Incident,” In Marshall Pihl, ed., *Listening to Korea*. New York: Praeger, 1973.
49. Kim, Yun-kyŏng. *Han'gŭl undong kŭ pakk*. Seoul: Yonsei University, 1985.
50. *Ibid.*
51. Kim, Ch'ŏl. “Kaengsaeng ūi do, hogŭn miro: Ch'oi Hyun-bae ūi [Chosŏn minjok kaengsaeng ūi do] rŭl chungsim ūro.” In *Minjok munhaksa yŏngu*. Issue No. 28, 2005. My translation.
52. Quoted in Takashi, Matsui. “Sikminjiki chosŏn esŏ ūi han'gŭl undong e kwanhan yŏngu tonghyang kwa kŭ pip'anjŏk kŏmt'o.” In *Ŏnŏ munhwa* 11-1: 2008, pp. 55-83. p. 68. My translation.
53. *Ibid.* p. 68. My translation.
54. Yi, Hye-ryŏng. “Han'gŭl Undong kwa kŭndae midiŏ.” In *Taedong munhwa yŏngu*, Issue No. 47, 2004, p. 252. My translation.
55. *Ibid.* pp. 252-253.
56. *Ibid.* p. 253.
57. Quoted in: Takashi, Matsui. “Sikminjiki chosŏn esŏ ūi han'gŭl undong e kwanhan yŏngu tonghyang kwa kŭ pip'anjŏk kŏmt'o.” In *Ŏnŏ munhwa* 11-1: 2008, pp. 55-83. p. 64. My translation.
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59. Quoted in Takashi, Matsui. “Sikminjiki chosŏn esŏ ūi han'gŭl undong e kwanhan yŏngu tonghyang kwa kŭ Pip'anjŏk kŏmt'o.” In *Ŏnŏ munhwa* 11-1: 2008, pp. 55-83. p. 62. My translation.
60. Robinson, Michael E. *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1988, p. 92.
61. King, Ross. “Language and National Identity in the Koreas.” In *Language and*

- National Identity in Asia*. Andrew Simpson, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 200-235. P. 210-211.
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