The Language of the Web: Mechanisms of Korean Internet Slang

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Abstract

The Internet has undeniably brought over time very many changes, including linguistic ones, leading to the appearance of a new linguistic variety called Netspeak. Even though there are numerous studies regarding the emergence of this linguistic variety within the English speaking world, or deriving from lingua francas, not much has been discussed about its emergence in Asian linguistic communities. This paper will cover the following aspects: the development of the Internet linguistic variety used in South Korea, focusing on the linguistic mechanisms employed in its making. Therefore, it will be revealed that, beside more common ways of forming new words, which are not necessarily particular to just one language, such as abbreviation of a word to component letters, abbreviation to initials, corruption, syncope, apocope, and so on, we will also encounter mechanisms that are particular to the Korean language. This is due to the uniqueness of the Korean writing system. The paper will also explore different restrictions and changes that occur at a syntactic level, and which have become normative for this linguistic variety, as well as changes in grammar and orthography that are particular to the Korean Netspeak.

Keywords: *Internet linguistics, language change, phonological representation, orthographic features, normativit.*

We can certainly say that, in modern times, the Internet has become one of the most, if not the most, influential means of communication. And when we say Internet, we, of course, refer to social media or SNS in all its forms, from websites and forums to mobile applications. Throughout this media of communication's development, different types of social interactions, as well as a new linguistic variety particular to it has developed. Very many studies have dealt with the issue of Internet linguistics, academics having analyzed the changes that appear in very

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many languages over time. Our endeavor in this paper is to bring a newer perspective on language change, regarding the Korean linguistic variety. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to exemplify and describe some of the means of building new words that are prevalent on the Korean Internet.

Previous studies that have dealt with word-formation patterns in Korean Internet Slang have focused mainly on morphological variation and morphological formation by semantic change and neologisms (Shi, 2006, p. 215). In this paper, we will try to list and analyze other word-formation patterns of Korean on the Internet, patterns that can substantiate the popular claim among Internet linguists that Netspeak is spoken language but in written form (Cotoc, 2017; Crystal, 2004). As in a previous study we have discussed the particularities of language used on the Internet, and it being a new linguistic variety, one that blends written and spoken language (Bija, 2019, p. 1036), in this paper we will try to highligh new and unique word-forming mechanisms particular to Korean, along common ones that can be generally encountered in other languages as well, and to highlight other patterns that target spelling and orthography.

Korean is presenting us with a unique writing system, which is called featural, even though it does have a phonologic orthography, and which leads to the use of word-forming devices particular to this language. Geoffrey Sampson analyzes Hangŭl script in "Writing Systems. A Linguistic Introduction" (1990) and "Writing Systems: methods of recording language" (2014). He notices that the symbols do not represent whole phonemes, but rather the features that make up the phonemes, such as voicing or its place of articulation. In Hangŭl, the featural symbols are combined into alphabetic letters, and then the letters are joined into syllabic blocks, so that the system combines three levels of phonological representation.

> *Korean has a three-way "manner" contrast in stop consonants, between lax, tense, and aspirated stops. For a given place of articulation, a simple graphic form represents a continuant made at that place, and stops are written by adding one horizontal and two horizontals for the lax and aspirated stops, respectively, and by doubling the lax symbol for the tense counterpart. Thus .../n t t^h t*/ are respectively* ㄴ ㄷ ㅌ ㄸ; */s ts ts^h ts*/ are* ㅅ ㅈ ㅊ ㅉ... *Among the vowels, front vowels are written by combining the corresponding back vowel symbol with the symbol for /i/.* (Sampson, 2014, p. 8)

The relation between written text and phonological rendition will be in fact one of the biggest influences on word formation, or sentence formation, on the Internet, further supporting, as we will be able to see, the fact that Internet linguistic varieties are spoken language rendered in writing.

Before continuing listing and exemplifying changes in language that appear in Korean Netspeak, we must mention that the corpus used for this study was built through observing and collecting different types of interaction on the Korean Internet, starting from personal messages sent on SNS platforms, to conversations on forums, online games, and so on. As the paper is intended to be an informative and descriptive one, and not an in-depth analysis, the examples presented here are just a small portion of the corpus.

Lexical changes

The following are changes that appear at the level of vocabulary in the case of the Korean Internet linguistic variety. These changes are influenced by the online medium and support the need for speakers, or better said, communicators, since the exchange that takes place on the Internet is mostly in written form, to simplify and make the act of communication quicker.

To form new words, structures, phrases or meanings, languages usually go through a set of changes, which take place in order to shorten words, or to slightly modify their meaning.

The following are phenomena encountered in Korean Netspeak that aid in forming new words and meanings:

1. ABBREVIATION

i. *of a word to component letters*. As Korean forms words by combining syllabic blocks, abbreviation of a word to component letters mostly appears as an abbreviation of a word to the first letter of each syllabic block. This is one of the first particularities of word formation in Korean, one that is worth being noted. We mention that this process is particular to the Internet linguistic variety only.

> ㅅ ㄹ ㅎ < 사랑해 *saranghae*[2], (I love you). The same initials can be used for 싫어해 *sirhŏhae* which means "I hate you"
> ㄱ ㅅ ㄲ < 개새끼 *kaesaekki*, (Son of a gun)
> ㅇㅇ < 응 *ŭng* - *v*ery informal way of saying "yes".
> ㅇㅋ < 오케이 *ok'ei* (OK)
> ㄱ ㅅ < 감사합니다 *kamsahamnida*, (Thank you)
> ㄱㅊ < 괜찮아< 괜찮다 *kwaench'anha< kwaench'ant'a*, (It's ok)
> ㅊ ㅋ < 축하해 < 축하하다 *ch'ukhahae < ch'ukhahada*, (Congratulations)
> ㅎ ㅇ < 하이 *hai*, (Hi)

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[2] The Romanization system used throughout this paper McCune–Reischauers.

- ➢ ㄷ ㅊ< 닥쳐 *takch'yŏ* (Shut up!)
- ➢ ㅈㄹ < 지랄 *chiral*, (Damn)
- ➢ ㅂ ㅅ < 병신 *pyŏngsin*, (Jerk)
- ➢ ㅇㅈ < 인정 *injŏng* (I admit)
- ➢ ㄱㄷ< 기다려주세요 *kidaryŏjuseyo* (Please wait)
- ➢ ㄲ, ㄲㅂ < 아깝다 *akkapta* (Pitty)
- ➢ ㄲㅈ < 꺼져 *kkŏjyŏ* (Get lost)
- ➢ ㅁㅊ< 미친 *mich'in* (crazy)
- ➢ ㅅㄱ < 수고하다 *sugohada* (To work hard)
- ➢ ㅇㄷ< 어디/ 어디 있냐 *ŏdi / ŏdi innya* which means "where". Is used as in the example: "니 ㅇㄷ?" "나 저 뒤편에" *ni ㅇㄷ?" "na chŏ twip'yŏne* (Where are you? I'm behind.)
- ➢ ㅈㅅ< 죄송합니다 *choesonghamnida* (I'm sorry)

ii. *of a word to initials*. As stated in a previous study, in Korean, most of the words that undergo abbreviation to initials are words that have been borrowed, mostly from English (Bija, 2019), as anglicisms are a big part of Korean Internet vocabulary.

- ➢ ㅂㅂ < 바이 바이 *pa-i pa-i*, (Bye bye). 바이 바이 is an English word written using the Korean writing system, that has the same pronunciation and has undergone abbreviation to its initials, namely the first letter of the first syllable in Korean.
- ➢ ㄱㄱ< 고고 *gogo*, (go go). Idem ㅂㅂ
- ➢ ㄴㄴ < 노노 *nono*, (No no). Idem ㅂㅂ
- ➢ CC < campus couple. This is an example of a word that has been borrowed and then reduced to its initials as it is written in its original language.
- ➢ ㅇㄴ< Oh, No! This too is a word that has been borrowed from English and has undergone abbreviation to its initials – the first letters of its syllables (어, 노! *Eoh no*)

iii. *Abbreviation to the first syllable*, a process that is particular to Korean language. Due to the properties of its writing system, we can distinguish this new means of word formation, which is the abbreviation of a word to its first cluster of letters/ to its first syllable. This happens in the case of longer phrases that need to be shortened in order to satisfy the demands of communication via the Internet.

- ➢ 금사빠 < 금방 사랑에 빠지다 - *kŭmsappa < kŭmbang sarange ppajida* (Falling in love with someone very easily). This structure has undergone

abbreviation to the first syllables of the words that form the phase. In this way a whole phrase was reduced to just 3 syllables.

➢ 넌씨눈 < '넌 씨x 눈치도 없냐? - *nŏnssinun < 'nŏn ssi xx nunch'ido ŏmnya?* (Are you XX slow-witted?). In this case too, the words have also been reduced to their first syllables, the only difference is that the verb at the end has been completely omitted.

➢ 알못 < 알지 못하다 - *almot < alji mot'ada* (Not knowing something)

➢ 엄친아 < 엄마 친구 아들 - *ŏmch'ina < ŏmma ch'in'gu adŭl* (The son of my mother's friend) – used to denote a son or daughter who is versatile in everything, who is not only good looking, but also very smart.

➢ 안물 < 안 물어보다 - *anmul < an murŏboda* (I did not ask for your opinion)

➢ 생 축 < 생일 축하 - *saeng ch'uk < saengil ch'ukha* ("Happy Birthday" in intimate style[3])

➢ 넘사벽 < 넘을 수 없는 사차원의 벽 - *nŏmsabyŏk < nŏmŭl su ŏmnŭn sach'awŏnŭi pyŏk* (four-dimensions wall impossible to climb) used to denote something far superior to anything else. In this case, unlike a previously mentioned example, the verb is mentioned (넘다*nŏmda* = to climb, pass), but not the inflection, the construction that denotes impossibility (-수 없다*su ŏpta*).

➢ 강추 < 강력 추천 - *kangch'u < kangnyŏk ch'uch'ŏn* (Highly recommended)

➢ 광클 < 빛의 속력으로 클릭하다 - *kwangk'ŭl < pich'ŭi songnyŏgŭro k'ŭllikhada* (Clicking at the speed of light). This structure is formed by fusing the Hanja word 광 *kwang* (光), a word of Chinese origin whose meaning is "light" and stands for the whole structure "빛의 속력" *pich'ŭi songnyŏg* (Speed of light) and 클 *k'ŭl* which is the first syllable of the word 클릭하다 – *k'ŭllikhada* (To click). It is used when people click on things on the Internet very fast (for example, when they want to buy something they really need or when they play computer games).

➢ 키베 < 키보드 베틀 - *k'ibodŭ pet'ŭl* (keyboard battle).

➢ 몸짱 < 몸매 짱 – *momtchang < mommaetchang* (A great body). 몸매 *mommae* goes through the same process and is left with only its first syllable, to which the word 짱 *tchang* is added, which is used to denote something great, awesome. There are many words in Korean that have

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[3] One of the six speech styles encountered in Korean.

formed this way, for example 얼짱< **얼굴 짱** *ŏltchang< ŏlgultchang* (Great face) – used for someone with a pretty face, 맛짱 *matchang* (Great taste) – used for food.

➢ 배사 < **배경 사**진 - *paesa < paegyŏng sajin* (Profile picture)

➢ 웃프다 < **웃**기면서 슬**프다** *utp'ŭda < utkimyŏnsŏ sŭlp'ŭda*: A combination of the words '웃기다' *utkida* and '아프다' *ap'ŭda,* meaning "Funny and sad at the same time."

➢ 짝남 < **짝**사랑하는 **남자** *tchangnam < tchaksaranghanŭn namja* (The first man I loved/ first love)

➢ 짝녀 < **짝**사랑하는 **여** *tchangnyŏ < tchaksaranghanŭn yŏ* (First love).

➢ 프사 < **프로필 사**진*p'ŭsa < p'ŭrop'il sajin* (Profile picture). In this case, unlike 배사 < **배경 사**진, the word "profile" was borrowed from English, and not translated.

➢ 병머금, 병먹금, ㅂㅁㄱ < **병**신에게 **먹**이를 주지 마시오 *pyŏngmŏgŭm, pyŏngmŏkkŭm,* ㅂㅁㄱ < *pyŏngsinege mŏgirŭl chuji masio* (Do no feed the XX). Its basic meaning is "don't give that person any attention". In this case, however, the last syllable of the abbreviated word is a Sino-Korean character 禁 which means "interdiction", and which has substituted the verb 마시오 (Do not).

➢ 귀척 < **귀**여운 척 *kwich'ŏk: < kwiyŏun ch'ŏk* (To pretend to be cute)

➢ 겨털 < **겨**드랑이 **털** *kyŏt'ŏl < kyŏdŭrangi t'ŏl* (armpit hair). It is used online as well as offline as a shortened form of the phrase.

➢ 깜놀 < **깜**짝 **놀**랐다 *kkamnol < kkamtchak nollatta* (I was surprised, a was scared for a second)

➢ 남친 < **남자 친**구 *namch'in < namja ch'in'gu* (Boyfriend). This structure is not only used on the Internet, but also in day-to-day speech. It has in fact first appeared in day-to-day speech and has been transferred on to Internet also.

➢ 여친 < **여**자 **친**구 *yŏch'in < yŏja ch'in'gu* (Girlfriend)

➢ 내로남불: <'**내**가 하면 **로**맨스 **남**이 하면 **불**륜 *naeronambul: < 'naega hamyŏn romaensŭ nami hamyŏn pullyun* . The interpretation of this is "if I do something, it's right, if you do something, it's wrong"

➢ 미드 < **미**국 **드**라마 *midŭ < miguk tŭrama* (American drama)

➢ 밀당 <**밀**고 **당**기기 *mildang <milgo tanggigi*. (push and pull – play hard to get)

- 반반무, 반반무마니 < '후라이드 치킨 **반** 마리, 양념 치킨 **반** 마리, **무** 많이' *panbanmu, panbanmumani < 'huraidŭ ch'ik'in pan mari, yangnyŏm ch'ik'in pan mari, mu manhi* (Half fried chicken, half seasoned chicken and a lot of raddish.)

- 버정 < **버**스 **정**류장 *pŏjŏng <pŏsŭ chŏngnyujang* (Bus stop)

- 볼매 < **볼**수록 **매**력 *polmae < polssurok maeryŏk*. It basically means "the more I see her, the more attractive she gets".

- 불금 < **불**타는 **금**요일 *pulgŭm< pult'anŭn kŭmyoil* (Burning Friday), it refers to an exciting day.

- 비매 < **비 매**너 *pimae < pimaenŏ* (No manners). It's a fusion between the hanja word 비 *pi* -非 – which means "not to be, not to have "and the first syllable of the borrowed word "manner". It is used when referring to someone with no etiquette

- 새등< **새**벽 **등**교 *saedŭng< saebyŏk tŭnggyo,* which means to study until daybreak

- 생선 < **생**일 **선**물 *saengsŏn < saengil sŏnmul* (Birthday gift)

- 생파< **생**일 **파**티 *saengp'a< saengil p'at'i* (Birthday party)

- 생얼/쌩얼 <'**생 얼**굴/**쌩 얼**굴'의 줄임말. 민낯, 맨 얼굴 *saengŏl/ssaengŏl < saeng ŏlgul/ssaeng ŏlgul'ŭi churimmal. minnach', maen ŏlgul* (face without any makeup – *seng* = raw)

- 셀카 < **셀**프 **카**메라 *selk'a < selp'ŭ k'amera* (Selfie).

- 열공 < **열**심히 **공**부하다 *yŏlgong < yŏlssimhi kongbuhada* (To study hard)

- 오유 <**오**늘의 **유**머 *oyu <onŭrŭi yumŏ* (Joke of the day).

- 존예 < **존**나**예**쁜 사람 *chonye < chonna yeppŭn saram* (a very pretty person)

- 직찍 < **직**접**찍**은 사진 *chiktchik < chikchŏptchigŭn sajin* (Picture taken personally). Can also be abbreviated 직찍사 *chiktchiksa*

- 차도남 < **차**가운 **도**시 **남**자 *ch'adonam < ch'agaun tosi namja* – refers to a man who looks cool/ cold/ sharp/ urban

- 채금< **채**팅 **금**지 *ch'aegŭm< ch'aet'ing kŭmji* (Banned from chatting/ banned from the chat group).

- 캐: < **캐**릭터 *k'ae: < k'aerikt'ŏ* (Character). Borrowed word used in online games.

- 케바케 < **케**이스 **바**이 **케**이스 *k'ebak'e < k'eisŭ pai k'eisŭ* (Case by case). Entered the language via English that has been abbreviated

➢ 흠좀무: < **흠**, 이게 사실이라면 **좀 무**섭군요 *hŭmjommu: < hŭm, ige sasiriramyŏn chom musŏpkunyo* (Hm, if this is true, that it's a bit scary)

➢ 렙업 < **레**벨 **업** *rebŏp < rebel ŏp* (level up): Used in online gaming.

We must specify that, although our list of samples is limited on this occasion, the most common means of forming new words on the Internet is this one. Sometimes abbreviation to syllables could be mistaken with portmanteaux. The difference between them is that in the case of abbreviating words to syllables, the words in a phrase are simply reduced to one syllable, and the phrase to just a few syllables instead of a few words, without changing the meaning. Even though the phrase is reduced, the meaning of the whole structure stays the same. In the case of portmanteaux, the fusion of different morphemes is made with the purpose of creating new meanings. This method of forming new words has been well documented in other studies as well, under the name of "clipping", many studies highlighting the fact that Korean clippings are different in pattern than those in other languages (Kim, 2012, p. 16; Song, 2019, p. 219).

iv. *Alphanumerics* – a mechanism normally based on homophony, but not only. In Korean, numbers that have the same or similar pronunciation as component syllables of other words can replace said syllables altogether.

➢ 고3 < **고**등학교 **3**학년*ko3 < kodŭnghakkyo 3 hangnyŏn* (junior year in high school /eleventh grade). This particular alphanumeric word was formed by fusing the previously contracted word 고등학교*kodŭnghakkyo* with the number 3 which shows the year of study.

➢ 8282 < 빨리 빨리*ppalli ppalli* (quick, quick). This construction in based on the principle of homophony and is composed of the numbers 8 팔 *pal* (not빨*ppal,* but with a similar pronunciation) and 2 (이 *i*), which put together are pronounced in a similar fashion as the word 빨리*ppalli* (quick, fast)

➢ 친9 < 친구*ch'in9 < ch'in'gu* (Friend). In this case too, based on the principle of homophony, the word "friend" was written using its first syllable in Korean 친, and the number nine, which has the same spelling and pronunciation as the second syllable of the word.

➢ 1004 < 천사 *ch'ŏnsa* (Angel). Another example of homophony. In Korean, the word "angel" has the same spelling and pronunciation as the number 1004.

2. CONTRACTION

i. *Syncope*, which consists in the elimination of the middle part of the word (Tataru, 2002, p. 93). In the case of English, in most instances, the missing part of the word is marked by an apostrophe. In Korean, when syncope takes place, the middle part of the word is just erased, there's nothing there to take its place or mark it. In some cases some changes in spelling occur, and that is only to apply the principle of writing a word the way it is pronounced.

➤ 걍 < 그냥 *kyang < kŭnyang* (just)
➤ 어케 < 어떻게 *ŏk'e < ŏttŏk'e* (how)
➤ 낼 < 내일 *nael < naeil* (tomorrow)
➤ 땜에 < 때문에 *ttaem-e < ttaemun-e* (because of)
➤ 셤 < 시험 *syŏm < sihŏm* (exam)
➤ 설 < 서울 *sŏl < sŏul* (Seoul – the capital of South Korea)
➤ 방가 < 반가워요 < 반갑다 *pangga < pan'gawŏyo < pan'gapta* (Nice to meet you)
➤ 맥날 < 맥도날드 *maengnal < maektonaldŭ* (McDonald's). This is a special case in which both a syllable from the middle of the word, as well as its last part, are eliminated.
➤ 강쥐 < 강아지 *kangjwi < kangaji* (Puppy)
➤ 격력 < 기억력 *kyŏngnyŏk < kiŏngnyŏk* (Memory)
➤ 드뎌 < 드디어 *tŭdyŏ < tŭdiŏ* (Finally)

ii. *Apocope*, or the elimination of the last part of the word
➤ 넘 < 너무 *nŏm < nŏmu* (very)
➤ 사생 < 사생활 (private life) + 팬 (fan) *sasaeng < sasaenghwal p'aen.* It refers to the die-hard fans of Korean K-pop singers or actors, who are particularly interested in the private lives of their idols
➤ 스포 < 스포일러 *sŭp'o < sŭp'oillŏ* (spoiler)
➤ 어쩔<어쩔래? *Ŏtchŏl<ŏtchŏllae* (what should I do?)

3. *Corruption*, or words that come from other languages and have had their meaning distorted. Even though, in the case of corruption, most of the words are borrowed from other languages, they cannot be called true borrowings because they are used with a different meaning, and one example of this is the very first word in our list. In German, "Arbeit" means full time work, and in Korean, its meaning has been corrupted, in the sense that it is used in order to denote any type of part-time work.

➤ 알바 *alba* - A term used to denote temporary, part-time work. It has entered the language via the Japanese term *Arubaito*, which in itself is a loanword of German origin, meaning work.

➤ 캐미*k'aemi* for "chemical" or "chemistry". Used when two people get along well. 두 사람 캐미 좋다 *tu saram k'aemi chot'a* (They have good chemistry)

➤ 레알 *real*, the English word "really"

➤ 뉴비 *nyubi*, the English word "newbie", beginner, novice

➤ 루저*rujŏ,* the English word "looser". This word might also refer to a man who is below 180 cm high

➤ 귀차니즘 *kwich'anijŭm,* a combination between the Korean word 귀찮다 *kwich'ant'a* which means to be lazy, or not feel like doing something, and the English suffix *–nism,* which is an abstract noun forming suffix, denoting doctrine, trend of thought (Tataru, 2002)

➤ 노답 < No답 = 답이 없다 *nodap <notap = tabi ŏpta* (No reply). It's the combination of the English word "no" and the Korean word 답 *dab* which means "reply/ answer"

➤ 노잼 < No재미 = 재미가 없다 *nojaem <nochaemi = chaemiga ŏpta* (No fun). Underwent the same process as 노답 *no tab*, in this case the Korean word used being the contracted word 재미있다 *chaemiitta* which means "to have fun"

➤ 마초맨 *mach'omaen* Macho man. Originally used to describe a manly man, in Korean is used to refer to a man who consumes illegal substances, and it has surfaced after a highly mediated scandal in which a very known Korean pop-star was caught smoking cannabis.

➤ 올드비 *oldŭbi* – the opposite of the English newbie; used in gaming to refer to a very good gamer, someone who has played for a long time.

➤ 후새드 <'후, 슬프다.' *husaedŭ < hu, sŭlp'ŭda* (Uh, I'm sad) This structure is made of the Korean onomatopoeic word 후 *hu* and the English word "sad" written in Hangŭl[4].

This is a type of idiomatic variation that appears in conversation as well, and not only on the Internet. It is usually used when we consider that a word of phrase

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[4] The Korean writing system.

from another language can better express what we want to say, and that the words in our own language don't quite have the same nuance.

4. *Portmanteaux / fusion* of morphemes of different words. Portmanteaux are formed by blending 2 words, the first one having undergone apocope and the second one aphaeresis (Tataru, 2002, p. 97).

This phenomenon appears in Korean as a fusion of morphemes of different words. The following are a few examples we have encountered:

> 몽파여< 몽 + 뱀파여 *mongp'ayŏ< mong + pemp'ayŏ*= foolish vampire. 몽 *mong* (蒙 -어두울 몽) is hanja for 어리석다 *ŏrisŏkta* (to be foolish). In this case the morpheme 몽 *mong* and the word 뱀파여 *pemp'ayŏ,* which has undergone aphaeresis, have been fused.

> 메신 *Me.sin*, is a blended word that combines 메시(Messi) with 신 *sin* (God),

> 악플 *akp'ŭl* - Combination of the words 악 *ak* (evil) and 리플 *rip'ŭl* (reply). Literally "evil reply," or malicious comment.

> 멘붕 *menbung* - A compound word that joins 멘탈 *mental* ("mental") and 붕괴 *bunggoe* ("collapse", "implosion") referring to a psychological shock one experiences when encountering an unexpected and shocking event.

> 눈팅 < 눈으로 채팅 *nunt'ing < nunŭro ch'aet'ing.* Not typing, just being in a chatroom

> 딸바보 < 딸 밖에 모르는 바보 *ttalbabo < ttal pakke morŭnŭn pabo* (The idiot who only knows his daughter). Used when referring to a dad who is loves his daughter the most.

> 아몰랑 *amollang* (Whatever, I don't care but I'm right) – used in a dispute. This new word has formed by combining a onomatopoeic word with the Korean word for "I don't know".

Changes in spelling and orthography

Other very frequent phenomena that appear on Korean Internet are perverse spellings, simple spellings and typographical errors. The perverse spellings are deliberate, and they presume spelling of different phrases in a simpler manner. A few examples in English would be: "outta" instead of "out of", "gotta" instead of "got to", "seeya" instead of "see you" and so on. This phenomenon takes place again due to the fact that people need to convey information in a fast way, and expect others to do the same, so they just simply eliminate spaces and even certain letters. This is a good example that holds the idea that Internet language is a

combination between spoken and written language. In spoken language we don't see the pauses between words, therefore in written language, in order to make communication more fluid, we could just elide the spaces.

Non-standard spelling, heavily penalized in traditional writing (at least, since the eighteenth century), is used without sanction in conversational settings. Spelling errors in an e-mail would not be assumed to be an indication of lack of education (though they may be) but purely a function of typing inaccuracy. (Crystal, 2004, p. 88)

Crystal makes reference to the instances in which grammar or spelling mistakes that would appear in an email or in chatrooms had been overlooked and considered merely a slip of key or a typo. Nowadays, however, we could say that non-standard spelling has become, or are is the verge of becoming standard, of becoming the norm, as far as Korean internet communication is concerned, as it is so widespread and widely used. Korean used on the internet puts emphasis on omission of certain consonants, thus making a spelling of a word simpler and basically writing it based on its phonetic construction.

1. *Simplified verb endings*: ㅁ instead of (으)면:
  ➢ 일찍 끝남 전화할게 → 일찍 끝나면전화할게
    iltchik kkŭnnam chŏnhwahalge → iltchik kkŭnnamyŏnjŏnhwahalge
  ➢ 시간 있음 만나자 → 시간 있으면 만나자
    sigan issŭm mannaja → sigan issŭmyŏn mannaja 36

Through this type of intentional perverse spelling users fail to write the whole particle 면, only using its first letter ㅁ.

2. *Eliding consonants or vowels*:
  ➢ 맞아 →마자 *maj-a → maja*
  ➢ 싫어 →시러*sirhŏ →sirŏ*
  ➢ 뭐해? →머해? *mwŏhae? →mŏhae?*

This is also a type of intentional perverse spelling, which also stands for the principle of writing words the way we are hearing them. Thus Internet users find it pointless to use certain letters which might not be voiced, depending on their position in a word. For example, the Korean letter ㅇ is never voiced when it is placed at the beginning of a syllable, therefore 마자 instead of 맞아, as both are pronounced the same. The letter ㅎ is not pronounced in the consonant cluster ㅀ, therefore 시러 instead of 싫어, as, again, both are pronounced in the same manner.

Other such examples are:
  ➢ 갔어 → 가써*kassŏ → kassŏ*

- 좋아 → 조아*choha → choa*
- 아니야 → 아냐*aniya → anya*
- 싫어 → 시러 *sirhŏ → sirŏ*
- 했잖아 → 했자나 *haetchanha → haetchana*
- 착해 → 차캐*ch'akhae → ch'ak'ae*
- 그렇지 → 그러치*kŭrŏch'i → kŭrŏch'i*

In the last 4 examples the consonant ㅎ is ignored, because, due to its placing in the word, it is voiceless.

3. *Using simple vowels instead of double vowels.*

This is based on the same phonetic principles that have been mentioned in this paper, writing a word in a similar way as it is phonologically rendered. All double vowels in Korean have the potential to be reduced to a simple vowel when they are used in certain words, the reason being the fact that the pronunciation of the word written with a double vowel can be similar to the pronunciation of the word written with a simple vowel. In this respect, the following transitions can appear: 와→아 *wa/a*, 왜→애 *wae/ae*, 외→애 *oe/ae*, 워→어 / 오*wŏ/ ŏ,o*, 위→이 *wi/i*, 의→이*ŭi/i*.

- 가 봐 → 가 바*ka pwa → ka pa* (봐 *pwa* gets simplified into 바 *pa*)
- 먹어야돼 → 먹어야대 *mŏgŏyadwae → mŏgŏyadae* (돼 *dwae* becomes 대 *dae*)
- 괜찮아 → 갠찮아*kwaench'anha → kaench'anha* (괘 *gwae* becomes 개 *gae*)
- 귀찮아 → 기차나*kwich'anha → kich'ana* (귀 *gui* becomes기 *gi*)

4. *Interchangeable vowels*

Interchangeable use between 어*ŏ* and 오 *o*; and 에 *e* and 애 *ae* is quite a common phenomenon in Korean Netspeak. This type of perverse spelling can be intentional, but it can be unintentional also.

- 어디야? → 오디야? *ŏdiya? → odiya?*
- 이뻐 → 이쁘*ippŏ → ippo*
- 머 해? →모 해? *mŏ hae? → mo hae?* (머 *mŏ* is originally 뭐 *mwŏ)*
- 시러 → 시로 *sirŏ → siro (*시러 *sirŏ* is originally 싫어*sirhŏ)*
- 가적→가족 *kajŏk→kajok*

5. *Using simple consonants instead of double consonants*, for example ㄱ instead of ㄲ, ㅅinstead of ㅆ, ㅈ instead of ㅉ, ㅂ instead of ㅃand ㄷ instead of ㄸ.

➤ 했어 →햇어 *haessŏ* →*haesŏ*

➤ 먹었어 →먹엇어 *mŏgŏssŏ* →*mŏgŏsŏ*

Apart from these situations of non-standard spelling, there is a trend that has appeared on the Korean Internet, and it is based on an aesthetic principle of making writing cuter. This has appeared as a result of the influence of Korean youth culture, in which *aegyo*, or acting cute, plays quite a big role. Therefore young people in Korea try to rend this in writing as well, using different techniques to decorate the conversation.

6. ㅇ *ng* ending.

A way of decorating the text in Korean (both when speaking, or writing) is adding ㅇ to a word that does not end in it. This typically is not added directly to nouns (although it could sometimes, it is up to the speaker), and is more commonly attached after conjugating a verb or adjective. For example:

➤ 먹었어 ~ 먹었엉 *mŏgŏssŏ ~ mŏgŏssŏng*

➤ 배고파 ~ 배고팡 *paegop'a ~ paegop'ang*

➤ 왜? ~ 왱? *wae? ~ waeng?*

➤ 맞아요 ~ 맞아용 *majayo ~ majayong*

~ㅇ can also be added after formal structures such as 요 *yo* or ~습니다 *sŭmnida* when conjugating a polite verb particle. However, in most situations, using ~ㅇ with formal conjugations would sound ridiculous and the only time this could be done is when using polite speech with friends as a joke.

➤ 내일 맛있는 걸 사 줘용! *naeil masinnŭn kŏl sa chwŏyong!*

➤ 감사합니당! kamsahamnidang!

Similarly to this, people add ㅁ *m* or 음 eum. This is usually added to the final syllable of a word.

➤ 아니야 ~ 아니얌 *aniya~ aniyam*

➤ 괜찮다 ~ 괜찮암 *kwaench'ant'a ~ kwaench'anham*

➤ 알았다 ~ 알았엄 *aratta ~ arassŏm*

➤ 먹었어요 ~ 먹었어욤 *mŏgŏssŏyo ~ mŏgŏssŏyom*

7. Changing the letter ㅡ *eu* to 우 *u*

➤ 이쁘다 → 이뿌다 *ippŭda → ippuda*

➤ 그냥 → 구냥 *kŭnyang → kunyan*

➤ 그래 → 구래 *kŭrae → kurae*

8. Changing 지 *chi* to 쥐 *chwi*

➤ 먹어야지 → 먹어야쥐 *mŏgŏyaji → mŏgŏyajw*i

9. *Substituting simple vowels with their iotized counterparts*. We know that in Korean we have 8 simple vowels, 7 compound vowels and 6 iotized vowels[5], so 6 of the simple vowels have iotized counterparts: 아→야 *a →ya*, 에→예 *e →ye*, 애→얘 *ae →yae*, 오→요 *o →yo*, 우→유 *u →yu*, 어→여 *ŏ→yŏ*.

- 먹자 → 먹쟈 *mŏkcha → mŏkchya*
- 나중에 → 나쥼에 *najunge → najyunge*
- 미안 → 미얀 *mian → miyan*

10. Modification of the consonants – this technique can also be called baby talk:

- 감따<감사 *kamtta<kamsa* (Thank you)
- 고냥이<고양이 *konyangi<koyangi* (Cat)
- 공디<공지 *kongdi<kongji* (Notice)
- 궁대<군대 *kungdae<kundae* (tr.millitary)
- 망두<만두 *mangdu< mandu* (tr.dumpling)

Substitutions can also take place:

11. using 엉 *ŏng*, 웅 *ung*, 앙 *ang*, 잉 *ing* instead of 응 *ŭng* (yes). These forms too are supposed to be more pleasant.

12. using 여 *yŏ,* 용 *yong*, 염 *yeom*, 효 *hyo* as substitutes for 요 *yo* at the end of a sentence.

Concluding remarks

We often tend to think that textual delivery in digital media takes place only within the category of written language, and it would not be wrong to say that since communication via the Internet is based on text. In many cases, however, colloquial considerations differ considerably from written language. The method of conveying tone and mood, that are usually conveyed in spoken conversation to the other person using abbreviations or emoticons, has now become daily occurrence in online communication. So new rules for colloquial text have inevitably appeared. Even though, from a quick glance, online communication seems hectic, we believe that a new linguistic norm in on the way.

The Internet, nowadays, has become an extension of our lives and our environment, a space in which we interact with others in a similar way to real face-to-face interaction, and in this respect, there is always a colloquial aspect to the behavior of Internet language. Thus, communication via social media has laid the

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[5] An iotized vowel is a vowel that is preceded by the palatal glide /j/, thus becoming palatized.

foundation for a new variety of language to appear, one that bears the characteristics of both written and spoken language. And this is not a process that has appeared only as far as Korean language is concerned. However, Korea is one of the best and most connected countries to the Internet, with a large Netizen community, and with possibilities of unraveling new and interesting language forming/ language change mechanisms, as the community continues to grow.

The linguistic mechanisms employed in Korean internet slang, such as abbreviations, contractions, borrowed terms, and alphanumeric expressions, serve to enhance the functional efficiency of online communication in several key ways: 1. Conciseness: by shortening words and phrases to their essential syllables or initials, Korean internet slang allows users to convey ideas more concisely. 2. Expressiveness: the creative use of abbreviations, contractions, and borrowed terms imbues Korean internet slang with a vivid, expressive quality. This enables users to communicate nuanced emotions and attitudes that would be cumbersome to express in formal language. 3. Informality: The pervasive use of simplified spellings, elided consonants and vowels contributes to an informal, casual tone that is well-suited for the social contexts in which internet slang thrives, such as chatrooms, forums and social media. We can say that the linguistic innovations in Korean internet slang, while unconventional from the perspective of formal language, serve important communicative functions by making online interactions more concise, expressive, informal and enjoyable. This underscores the adaptive nature of language in the face of new technological and social contexts.

What we would like to highlight in this paper is the fact that Korean Netspeak, as a newly emerging linguistic variety, does not only presuppose the use of a new vocabulary derived from that of the literary language, but also involves changes in spelling and orthography. Our purpose was to examine some of the characteristics of Korean Cyber language which, due to their uniqueness, we believe are worthy of being researched in more depth. However, since our scope is limited in this paper, this study is intended as an informative and descriptive one.

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