Integrating Analysis and Pedagogy in the Revitalization of Jejueo*

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1 Introduction

Jejueo, the traditional language of Jeju Island, has long been misclassified as a dialect of Korean, despite important differences in its phonology, vocabulary and verbal morphology. Experimental work has shown that Jejueo is not comprehensible to people who speak only Korean (Yang, O’Grady, et al. 2018), and various international organizations (UNESCO, Ethnologue and the Endangered Language Catalogue) now recognize it as a distinct language.

The purpose of this paper is to consider how the dual challenges of linguistic analysis and language pedagogy come together as part of an ongoing attempt to save Jejueo from extinction. The next section provides a brief review of the improvised shallow orthography that is often employed to write Jejueo. As we show in section 3, this system misrepresents the morphological structure of Jejueo words in ways that are detrimental to linguistic analysis. We then call for the adoption of a more morphophonemic orthography, similar to the one used for Korean, arguing in section 4 that such a system has important pedagogical advantages. We conclude with a brief discussion of parallels between Jejueo and Hawaiian with respect to the issues that lie at the heart of our paper.

2 Jejueo and Its Orthography

Jejueo has no literary tradition, but an orthography has emerged for use in pedagogical materials, in folkloric records and in linguistic work, including dictionaries, grammatical treatises, and the transcription of data from native speakers. There has been virtually unanimous agreement for some time (Hyun, Kim, et al. 2009; Ko, Song, et al. 2013) that Jejueo should be written using a version of Hangeul, the alphabetic orthography employed for Korean.

A key feature of Hangeul orthography is that letters are organized into blocks, as illustrated in (1). (We Romanize our examples with the help of the system recommended by the National Institute of the Korean language for works of linguistic analysis.)

(1) ㄴ = /n/ ㅏ = /a/ ㅁ = /m/ ㅜ = /u/ ㅇ = /ŋ/

나무 ㄴ 우리나라 ㅏ ㅁ 南 nang
\textit{namu} ‘tree’ (Korean)  ‘tree’ (Jejueo)
Although these blocks are often referred to as syllables (*eumjeol*), they also tend to correspond to morphemes in Korean, as the following examples help show. (A list of abbreviations appears at the end of our paper.)

(2) 먹는다 가겠어 웃지마세요  
meog-neun-da ga-gess-eo us-ji-ma-se-yo
‘S/he eats.’ ‘I will go.’ ‘(Please) don’t laugh.’

Moreover, when there is a mismatch between syllable boundaries and morpheme boundaries in Korean, the latter win out. A simple example of this can be seen in the past/perfective form of ‘give,’ which includes the tense/aspect suffix -eoss (엇) and the (declarative) sentence ender -eo (어) in the example below.

(3) 주었어  
ju-eoss-eo [pronunciation: ‘ju.eo.sseo’]
give-PFV-DECL ‘gave’

Although pronounced *ju-eo-sseo*, the word is written as *ju-eoss-eo* (주었어) in order to maintain the integrity of each of its component morphemes. Put simply, morphology takes precedence over phonology.

As illustrated by the preceding example and many others like it, the use of Hangeul presupposes an understanding of a word’s morphological structure, on which its spelling depends. Herein lies the challenge for Jejueo: because its verbal morphology is substantially different from that of Korean and because the language is understudied, it is often unclear where the morpheme boundaries lie.

Because of this problem, most work on Jejueo, including efforts devoted to the preparation of pedagogical material, adopts the default assumption that each phonetic syllable after the root corresponds to a suffix. As we will see next, this opens the door to serious mis-segmentations, with negative consequences both for linguistic analysis and for language teaching.

3 **Segmentation Controversies in Jejueo**

As a first illustration of the problem at hand, we will consider the verb form that makes reference to a currently occurring event in a question such as ‘What is s/he eating?’ The verb in this pattern, pronounced *meogeomsini*, is written as follows by many linguists and teachers, dividing the word into a root and three phonetic syllables.
(4) 무신거 먹 엿 시 나?
musingeo meog.eom.si.ni?
‘What is s/he eating?’

This spelling aligns with a popular analysis of the word’s internal structure, as proposed by Hyun (1976) and Woo (1995:43), among others.

(5) 먹 엿 시 나?
meog.eom.si.ni
eat-NMLZ-be-Q

This analysis has at least two compelling features: (a) the final syllable corresponds to the interrogative suffix -ni, which is also found in Korean, and (b) the second-to-last syllable corresponds to the copula si, which is independently attested in other patterns, such as (6).

(6) 할망 집의 시어? [contracted form = 서]
halmang jib-ui si-eo?
grandmother home-LOC be-Q
‘Is grandmother at home?’

In fact, however, the analysis in (5) turns out to be entirely wrong: the interrogative marker is -i, not -ni, and there is no copula. To see this, we need to consider how Jejueo expresses ongoing events that take place in the past.

The Jejueo past/perfective marker is -eon, whose identity can be established straightforwardly in patterns such as the following, where it is the only suffix.

(7) 먹언
meog-eon.
eat-PFV
‘ate’

Now consider the past/perfective continuative form of the verb eat (i.e., ‘was eating’), which is pronounced meogeomseoni. As we try to make sense of this form, we know in advance that the root is meog and that the past/perfective marker is -eon. This gives us the following partial parse for the verb.

(8) meog-eoms-eon-i?
meogeomseoni-eon-i?
eat -??? -PFV-??

Two important facts now leap out.
First, the sentence-final interrogative suffix is -i, not -ni. Second, there is no si to function as copula; there is just an s, which we take to be part of the preceding morpheme, as depicted in (9).

(9) 먹었어요? meog-eoms-eon-i?
eat   -CONT-PFV-Q

This segmentation is consistent with the emerging view that the continuative aspect is marked in Jejueo by the suffix -eoms. This conclusion has long been resisted because of the unusual coda (ms), for which there is no counterpart in Korean, but the analysis is starting to gain support (e.g., Jee-Hong Kim 2014b:178, 2014c:251, Yang, Yang & O’Grady 2018).

If -eoms is the continuative marker and -i is the interrogative marker, then the non-past continuative form of the verb should be analyzed and written as follows.

(10) 무슨거 먹었어요? musingeo meog-eoms-in-i?
what eat  -CONT-?Q-Q
‘What is [s/he] eating?’

This leaves us with the problem of identifying the -in that shows up between the continuative suffix and the sentence ender. There is good reason to think that it is a non-past marker, creating the following contrast with the past continuative form of the verb that we saw in (9) above.

(11) Present continuative: Past continuative:

비교에서 먹었어요? 먹었어요?
meog-eoms-in-i? meog-eoms-eon-i?
eat   -CONT-NPST-Q eat   -CONT-PFV-Q
‘is eating’ ‘was eating’

Independent evidence suggests that -in is an allomorph of the non-past suffix

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1 This conclusion can be confirmed by various types of independent evidence. For example, like Korean, Jejueo has a non-past marker -(eu)neun, as in Geu chogi meog-neun-ge ‘(People) eat that mushroom.’ Crucially, the question marker in this case too is -i, not -ni.

(i) 먹겠어요? (not *meog-neun-ni)
what eat-NPST-Q
‘What does s/he eat?’
-eun. As the two examples below help illustrate, the default form of the non-past suffix (-eun) gives way to -in after a stem ending in s.

(12) 먹은다.  웃한다.
meog-eun-da    us-in-da
eat-NPST-DECL  smile-NPST-DECL
‘[S/he] eats [something].’  ‘[S/he] smiles.’

4 What Should Jejueo Orthography Represent?

The examples that we have been considering highlight a property of Hangeul that has long been considered to be its most valuable feature: as I. Lee & Ramsey (2000:30) note, Hangeul makes it easy to identify and recognize morphemes.

Let us now think about what this means for pedagogy. In the analysis that we propose, second language learners have to learn the following facts about the verb form used to ask about a currently occurring action.

(13) 무신거 먹 을 인 이?
musingeo meog-eoms-in-i?
‘What is [s/he] eating?’

a. There is a morpheme -eoms that gives a continuative meaning.
   먹 을 인 이?
   meog-eoms-in-i?
   eat -CONT

b. There’s a morpheme -in that gives a non-past meaning (and a mor-
   pheme -eon that gives a past/perfective meaning).
   먹 을 인 이?
   meog-eoms-in-i?
   eat -CONT-NPST

c. There’s a morpheme -i that gives an interrogative meaning.
   먹 을 인 이?
   meog-eoms-in-i?
   eat -CONT-NPST-Q

Notice that each of the three pieces of information needed to interpret the verb is clearly and transparently represented—the very advantage for which Hangeul is known, as Lee & Ramsey note. None of this is possible when the word is spelled in a way that simply captures its syllable structure—since
none of the syllables (other than the root) corresponds to a morpheme.

(14) 먹 엄 시 나?
    meog-eom-si-ni?
    eat -??-??-??

Indeed, as we have seen, this orthographic practice is confusing even to professional linguists.

There are countless other cases that illustrate the same point. Table 1 presents some examples from published pedagogical materials. The original ‘phonetic’ spelling, which obscures the word’s morphological composition is in the left-hand column; the right-hand column contains the amended Hangeul spelling from Yang, Yang & O’Grady (2018), which allows a straightforward morpheme-by-morpheme analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common ‘Phonetic’ Spelling</th>
<th>Proposed Amended Spelling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>어둑엄서 (Kang et al. 2009:45)</td>
<td>어둑없어요. eo.dug-eoms-eo</td>
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<tr>
<td>어둑엄서. ‘It’s getting dark.’</td>
<td>dark-CONT-DECL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>먹어시냐 (Hyun et al. 2009:36)</td>
<td>먹었어요. meog-eos-in-ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meog-eo-si-nya. ‘Have [you] eaten?’</td>
<td>eat-PFV-NPST-Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meog-eom-su-da. ‘[S/he] is eating.’</td>
<td>eat-CONT-AH-DECL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ga-su-da. ‘[S/he] left.’</td>
<td>go-PFV-AH-DECL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haw-yeo-sin-ga? ‘Has [s/he] completed everything?’</td>
<td>do-PFV-NPST-Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>먹엄시라. (Lee 2014:29)</td>
<td>먹없이라. meog-eoms-ila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meog-eom-si-la. ‘Get started eating.’</td>
<td>eat-CONT-IMP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As these and other examples show, there are many cases in which verbal morphology does not align with syllable structure, creating challenges both for linguistic analysis and for pedagogy. Fortunately, this problem can be addressed by combining the right morphological analysis with the spelling made possible by the standard Hangeul orthography.

More is involved here than just a decision to represent suffix boundaries rather than syllable breaks. A second, deeper issue is also at stake—with far-reaching pedagogical implications. Put simply, we need to ask whether an orthography should represent information that does not have to be learned, or information that does have to be learned.

The placement of syllable boundaries is obviously an important part of natural-sounding speech. Fortunately, a simple principle determines the location of syllable breaks.

(15) A CVCV string is pronounced CV.CV

This effect is essentially automatic. A word that is written as ba+da (바다) ‘sea’ will be pronounced the same way as a word written as bad+a (받아) ‘receive.’ No speaker of Jejueo or Korean, literate or illiterate, would ever pronounce bada as b+ad.a, regardless of how it is written. From the point of view of pedagogy, syllable breaks in the orthography have little to offer.

Patterns of verbal suffixation are an entirely different matter. As we have seen, the verbal morphology of Jejueo is largely opaque to Korean speakers—so much so that it is often misanalysed even by trained linguists. The particular suffixal patterns found in Jejueo verbs do not follow from any universal principle, nor can they be deduced from knowledge of Korean. They need to be learned. Fortunately, the Hangeul orthography, which Korean-speaking learners of Jejueo have already mastered in the course of learning their native language, reveals the morphological composition of

2 This principle is a long-recognized universal of language (Jackobsen & Halle 1956, Hayman 2008:113ff): put simply, CV syllables are highly valued.
even the most complex verbal patterns, as illustrated in the examples that we have been considering, including those in Table 1.

In sum, thanks to the character of Hangeul orthography and its commitment to representing morphological structure, the challenges of linguistic analysis and of language pedagogy are almost perfectly aligned in the case of Jejueo. The right analysis of word structure can be transparently represented by the orthography in a manner that facilitates language teaching, allowing the objectives of linguistics and pedagogy to converge in a satisfying and productive way.

5 Concluding Remarks

Native speakers of a language are able to adjust to highly imperfect orthographies. One very good example of this comes from the traditional Hawaiian orthography, developed in the 1820s by English-speaking missionaries.

The missionaries’ orthography suffered from two serious flaws. First, it treated the glottal stop as a prosodic phenomenon rather than as a consonant, spelling makau ‘fishhook’ and maka’u ‘fear’ the same way (as makau). Second, it failed to make a distinction between long and short vowels (as in lolo ‘brain, marrow’ and lōlō ‘dumb, paralyzed’), thereby reducing the number of vowels in Hawaiian from 10 to 5. The end result of these two oversights was an orthography that systematically ignored a third of the language’s consonant and vowel phonemes.

A reformed orthography was officially accepted by the State of Hawai’i in the 1990s (see Schütz 1994 for details). To this day, however, native speakers of Hawaiian still use and prefer the traditional orthography. Indeed, in response to a request from members of the Hawaiian community, the Mayor of Kaua’i, (the county with the largest number of native Hawaiian speakers) issued a proclamation in 2016 ‘recognizing and supporting the traditional writing system.’

A similar attachment to tradition is evident on Jeju Island. In our experience, speakers with some degree of fluency in Jejueo, including teachers, are content with an orthography that represents phonetic syllables, without regard for morphological structure. Like speakers of Hawaiian, they are not looking to the orthography for help in learning the language. They already know the language (based on exposure to it as children) and they have a subconscious grasp of its morphological structure—without the need for orthographic cues.

If Hawaiian and Jejueo were not on the verge of extinction, there would be no need to modify the status quo. But, alas, both languages are highly endangered, and decisions need to be made about the orthography’s ultimate purpose. A recent global survey of language revitalization efforts on five
continents, conducted by the Smithsonian Institution and the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, reveals that the only realistic option for critically endangered languages is to develop school-based programs. In the absence of an opportunity to learn the language at home in the traditional way, schools represent the last hope.

The first requirement of a school-based program is an orthography to support the preparation of written materials. Unfortunately, the orthography preferred by elderly native speakers may not be appropriate for second language learners. In the case of Hawaiian, for example, second language learners cannot easily fill in a missing consonant, or figure out on their own which vowels are long and which are short. Unlike native speakers, they need a writing system that provides that sort of information—which is why only the reformed orthography is used in schools and immersion programs in Hawai‘i.

By the same reasoning, Korean-speaking learners of Jejueo are unlikely to thrive if words are spelled in a way that obscures their internal structure. Not only is such an orthography fundamentally different from the version of Hangeul with which they are familiar, it increases the opacity of Jejueo suffixal morphology, whose substantial differences from Korean already represent a major challenge.

There is an opportunity here that we dare not ignore. The challenges of linguistic analysis and language pedagogy converge in support of the same conclusion: Jejueo must be written in a way that makes its morphological structure as transparent as possible, in accord with the conventions of modern Hangeul. The future of Jejueo may well hang in the balance.

References
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Kim, D. Y. 2017. The Language and Literature of Jeju. (Course reader) Jeju National University.


**Appendix: List of Abbreviations**

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AH</td>
<td>addressee honorific</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMPL</td>
<td>completive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONT</td>
<td>continuative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECL</td>
<td>declarative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP</td>
<td>imperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>locative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMLZ</td>
<td>nominalizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPST</td>
<td>non-past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFV</td>
<td>perfective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROSP</td>
<td>prospective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>question marker</td>
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</tbody>
</table>