Korean EFL and American KFL Learners: Some Reflections

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Introduction

- Motivation
  - Observe, Describe, and Explain Common Problems
  - Provide Practical Advice
  - Improve Cross-Cultural Communication
  - Raise the Level of Proficiency & Professionalism

- Observations on Korean EFL Writers
  - high level learners

- Observations of English KFL Learners
  - low level learners

- Anecdotal Orientation
  - Qualitative reports of personally observed behaviors

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Korean EFL Writers

- Who am I talking about?
  - Highly educated NS of Korean writing in English

- What is my experience?
  - 12 years of teaching non-English speaking graduate Students (including thesis/dissertation supervision)
  - Workshop and Course Development (LSA, UTA)

- What sorts of errors are most common?
  - lexical choice
    - content words & function words
  - overgeneralized right-headedness
  - stylistic issues

- “Error Gravity”: meaning > form
Content Word Choices

#1: Too colloquial

- In this paper, we will find out a solution for the problem.
- In this paper, we will determine a solution for the problem.
- This paper will present the solution to the problem.

‘find out’ + abstract object → discern, determine

- We found out 50 speakers to be subjects for this study.
- We found 50 speakers to be subjects for this study.
- Fifty native speakers were interviewed for this study.

‘find out’ + concrete object → found, discovered

Content Word Choices (2)

#2: Awkward Presentational Forms

- The relevant data are as following: ...
- The relevant data are the following:
- The relevant data are as follows:

- Following are some suggestions.
- The following are some suggestions.
- Some suggestions follow.

- Smith 2004 shows the following examples
- Smith 2004 {presents, provides, offers} ...
Content Word Choices (3)

#3: Mass vs. Count Nouns

- *Many researches* have been done on this topic.
- *Much research* has been done on this topic.
- *Many studies* have been done on this topic.

- Thank you for sending me a mail.
- Thank you for sending me mail.
- Thank you for sending me a message.
  
  {an e-mail message}

- “work” can function as either count or mass noun.

Content Word Choices (4)

#4: Miscellaneous Content Words

- So far, I have shown that ...
- *Thus far, ...*  
  <if there’s more to show>
- *In this paper, ...*  
  <if you are concluding>

- Do you want to have a speech next week?
- Do you want to give / make a speech...

- Failure to play the "Dictionary Game":
  - Always check both directions.
Function Words

#5: Prepositions and Collocations
- I wanted to reflect my experience.
- I wanted to reflect on my experience.

#6: Determiners
- In those rules presented earlier, ...
- In the rules presented earlier, ... (or “above”)

#7: Modals
- Before continuing, we should examine...
- Before continuing, we must examine... / let us ...
- In Korean, word-initial [f] must not be allowed.
- In Korean, word-initial [f] is not allowed.

#8: Pronouns
- Arabs already established centers for research during the 5th century, before the Europeans did it in the Middle Ages.

* <A student is introducing a friend to a Korean professor; the student says...>
- Professor Kim, he is my classmate, John.
- Professor Kim, this is my classmate, John.
#9: Excessive Right Headed Structures

- The Korean speakers’ obligatory 으 insertion process has been attested by ...
- The obligatory insertion of 으 by Korean speakers has been attested by ...
- The obligatory process of inserting 으 has been attested by ...

- The subjects’ inappropriate using “the” instead of “a” frequency decreased sharply.
- The frequency with which subjects inappropriately used “the” instead of “a” decreased sharply.

In Korean, many verbal roots have complex codas (e.g., 발 - /palp- 'to tread (on)', 읽 - /ilk- 'to read'). When these roots are followed by a consonant-initial verbal morpheme, the pronunciation is variable. For the form 발다 /palp+ta/, some speakers say 발따 [palt’a] or 발다 [palda], others say 밥따 [papt’a], while still others say 발따 [palpt’a]. The first three pronunciations are acceptable. However, ...
Right-Headed Structures (2)

- Both segments pronunciation is considered to be ungrammatical.
- The pronunciation of both segments is considered (to be) ungrammatical.

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NP
  SPEC
   N
       N'

양분절의 발음 모두 비문법적으로 간주된다.
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Right-Headed Structures (3)

- 비상시 문여는 방법 ← Strictly Right Headed
- English allows two options
  - The “Germanic” Option: Right Headed
    - “Emergency Door Opening Procedures”
    - Often used in isolation (e.g. for a title)
  - The “Romance” Option: Left-“ish” Headed (requires prepositions)
    - “Emergency procedures for opening the doors.”
    - Often used as part of a larger sentence
- Both Options are Grammatical
- Not equally acceptable in all contexts
Other Stylistic Issues

#10: Sentence-initial Connectors
- 그리고 → “And ...”
- In addition, ...; Moreover, ...; Further(more), ...
- 그러나 → “But ...”
- However, ...; Conversely, ...; On the other hand, ...

Solution: Subordination!
- Most of the students passed the exam. But, 5% of them failed.
- While 5% of the students failed the exam, most passed.
- While most of the students passed the exam, 5% failed.

Other Stylistic Issues

#11: Inappropriate passives
- Modern English tail is originated from OE taegl.
- Modern English tail originates/derives from OE taegl.

- My wife’s grandfather was dead.
- My wife’s grandfather died.
Korean EFL Generalizations

- L1 Interference
- Avoidance
- Fossilization
- Over-reliance on Technology
- Lack of Authentic Modeling

- Grammatical ≠ rhetorically preferable

American KFL Learners

- Who am I talking about?
  - Low-level KFL students (first / second level)

- What is my experience?
  - 12+ years of Korean Language Examining (low levels)

- What sorts of errors arise?
  - commonly discussed (-이다 vs. 있다; ㄱ/ㄲ/ㅋ; particles)
  - difficulties marking asymmetric social marking (honorifics)
  - overuse/misuse of topics (-은 / -는)
Socio-Grammatical Asymmetry

#12: Q-A Pairs
- Q: 시간이 있으세요?
- A: 예, 시간이 있으세요.

- Q: 어디서 오셨어요?
- A: 저는 미국에서 오셨어요.

Socio-Grammatical Asymmetry

#13: V-V Constructions
- 가게에서 물건을 살때:
  - 이것을 싸 드릴까요?
    (*If spoken by the customer)
  - 이것 좀 싸 주세요.
#14: Too Many Topics

- Q: 어디서 오셨어요?
  - A: 저는 택사스주에서 왔어요.
- Q: 거기서 뭐 하세요?
  - A: 저는 생화학을 공부해요.
- Q: 어느 대학교에서요?
  - A: 저는 Texas Tech에서 공부해요.

#15: Awkward Use of Topics

- Q: 음식은 맛이 있어요?
  - A: 예. 김치는 맛이 있어요.
- 수미, 오늘은 예뻐요.

L1 interference: Obligatory subjects.
Overgeneralization: | Noun-○ | Noun-○ | Verb.
| topic | subject | predicate |
#14-revisted: Too Many Topics?

Q: 마리 씨는 어디에서 오셨어요?
A: 저는 프랑스에서 왔어요.

Q: 언제 한국에 오셨어요?
A: 저는 2월 26일에 왔어요.

Q: 한국어 공부가 재미있어요?
A: 네, 재미있지만 어려워요.

## English KFL Generalizations

- L1 Interference
  - grammatical
  - social
- Avoidance
- Fossilization ➔ Overgeneralization
- Over-reliance on Technology
- Lack of Authentic Modeling
Closing Remarks

- Personal Reflection: Changed Social Position
- Language Choice among American Korean-English Bilingual Speakers
- Common Themes:
  - L1 / L2 Relations: Contrastive Analysis
  - Increasing Authenticity