Chungnam-Province Residents' Perceptual Dialect Boundaries, Dialect Images, and Recognition of Korean Dialects

There have been relatively few dialect attitude and awareness studies in Korean dialectology. These few studies were conducted mostly focusing on what images people have on Korean dialects on the basis of relatively simple surveys. Long & Yim (2002) was an exception in this regard. They, after gathering maps drawn by college students from various provinces of South Korea, investigated lay people's dialect boundaries and dialect images of Korean dialects using more refined perceptual dialectological methods, i.e., composite map drawing method and refined statistical techniques.

The present research, another perceptual study, is different from Long & Yim (2002) in that the study narrows its focus to one province of Korea (i.e., Chungnam-Province where a nonstandard dialect is spoken), and also in that it uses different methods of investigation.

One longstanding issue in Korean dialectology is which of the two geographically adjacent dialects (i.e., Chungbuk Dialect and Jeonbuk Dialect) Chungnam Dialect should be classified with. Though Chungnam and Chungbuk dialects were commonly thought to be similar and classified together, some dialectologists (e.g., S.H. Do 1997) group Chungnam Dialect with Jeonbuk Dialect. The specific goals of this research are as follows: 1) How is Chungnam Dialect classified by Chungnam residents? Which of the two adjacent dialects is it classified with? 2) What are the images of Korean dialects Chungnam residents have? 3) How accurately do Chungnam residents identify Korean dialects? Especially how well do they distinguish Chungnam Dialect from Chungbuk and Jeonbuk dialects?

Fifteen male and fifteen female Chungnam residents participated in this experimental research as subjects. Four tasks were required: 1. pile-sort (Tamasi 2003: sorting of dialect name cards into piles of linguistically similar dialects), 2. description of dialect piles with evaluative adjective cards), 3. dialect identification experiment (forced choice test using the software Praat). 4. a short interview about their dialect and their experience and opinion about dialect boundary and image).

The results of both pile-sort and dialect identification tasks reveal that Chungnam residents perceive their dialect to be closer to Jeonbuk Dialect than Chungbuk Dialect. More people sorted the two into one group and made more errors aurally distinguishing Chungnam and Jeonbuk dialects. The results of multidimensional scaling (visualization) positioned the two dialects closer to each other than to Chungbuk Dialect. The hierarchical cluster analysis also grouped Chungnam and Jeonbuk dialects into a separate cluster from Chungbuk Dialect.

Like previous dialect identification studies (e.g., William, Garret, & Coupland 1999), the overall accuracy of dialect identification was not high: 38 percent. Kyungsang dialect, a tone language, was most accurately identified (62%), followed by Seoul (standard) Dialect (58%), and Chungnam Dialect (46%). Jeonbuk dialect was most often confused with Chungnam Dialect (22% of the time). This result only partially supports Preston's observation that people are better recognizing their own and adjacent dialects.

Chungnam residents generally had positive evaluations of their dialect. The dialect was evaluated <u>very</u> 'pleasant', 'friendly', 'profound', 'polite', 'trustworthy; <u>moderately</u> 'correct' and 'intelligent'; <u>but</u> 'slow', 'feeble', and 'country-like'. This result can be said to be generally in line with Preston's (1989) finding that speakers of nonstandard dialect tend to evaluate their dialects as 'pleasant' but not 'very correct'.

Korean is a language spoken by about 50 million people in the Korean Peninsular. It is also one of the two official languages in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in China. The language is also spoken by mostly Korean immigrants living in countries like US, Japan, Russia, etc. The number of speakers around the world reaches about 78 million people. The genealogical classification of the Korean language is debated by a small number of linguists. Most classify it as a language isolate while a few consider it to be in the Altaic language family. There are nine major dialects in Korean: Kyunggi, Chungcheong, Jeonla, Gyeonsang, Jeju, Gangweon, Hwanghae, Phyeongan, and Hamgyeong. Chungnam dialect is spoken in the region just south of the Kyunggi Province where Standard (Seoul) Korean is spoken.