Spelling Error Analysis of L2 Korean Learners' Essays

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Introduction

- This study analyzes the spelling errors of heritage learners and foreign learners of Korean across two Korean proficiency levels.
- Few studies have investigated the relationship between two L1 groups and their Korean proficiency in terms of spelling errors in essays.

Background

- Korean language shows one to one correspondence between sound and letters.
- Shin (2007) reported that English learners of Korean frequently confused 'c' with 'ch', 'o' with 'e', and 'e' with 'ae'. He indicated that a three-way distinction of Korean consonants (fortis, aspirated, or tensed) makes it difficult for learners to acquire Korean consonants.
- Yang & Yoon (2008) analyzed spelling errors in dictation by Chinese learners of Korean and suggested that Chinese learners followed Spelling Development Theory.
- Kim (2009) examined the development of spelling by English speakers of Korean in terms of learners' proficiency. She found that as proficiency improved the learner's use of consonants followed the spelling development theory but not the vowels.

Research Questions

1. Do heritage learners and foreign learners of Korean have similar patterns of misspelling in Korean?
2. What error distribution do heritage learners and foreign learners of Korean have according to their Korean proficiency?

Methods

Data

- Used raw L2 corpus, Korean Learners Language Analysis (KoLLA) developed by Lee, Dickinson and Isarael (2012).
- Composed of 100 essays written by L2 learners of Korean with four different groups.

L2 proficiency	Beginners		Intermediate	
Heritage vs. foreign	Foreigner (FB)	Heritage (HB)	Foreigner (FI)	Heritage (HI)
No of subjects	25	25	25	25
No of sentences	360	376	373	297
No of tokens	1,601	2,278	3,483	2,676

(Sun-Hee Lee, Markus Dickinson, and Ross Israel, p. 225, 2016)

Procedure

- 457 misspelling words observed and classified into six categories.
- Addition: addition of unnecessary spelling
- Omission: omission of spelling
- Substitution: substitution with incorrect spelling
- Resyllabification: a letter carried over to the previous or next syllable
- Shortening: shortening of two syllable words to one
- Complex error: more than two error types

| Categorization	Examples	
	source	target
addition	syophinghakko 쇼핑학고	syophinghako 쇼핑하고
omission	kwaynchanayo 괜찬아요	kwaynchanhayo 괜찮아요
substitution	penyokul 변욕을	penyekul 번역을
resyllabification	ttaymw-uney 때무네	ttaymwun-ey 때문에
shortening	tom-i 돔이	towum-i 도움이
complex error	kku-lun 끄른	kkulh-un 끓은

Results

Error rates between L1 groups

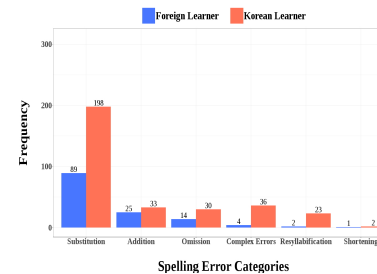- Heritage learners of Korean had more misspelling than foreign learners (6.45% vs. 2.4%).

	FB	HB	FI	HI
Error rate	1.9% (32/1601)	6.4% (146/2278)	2.9% (103/3483)	6.5% (176/2676)

**Figure1. Patterns of misspelling in L2 Korean essays**
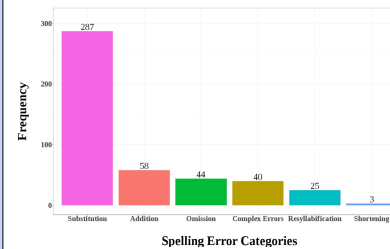
The most common orthographical error was substitution in the six categories.

Figure2. Patterns of misspelling by L1 background

Heritage writers committed more errors than foreign writers, suggesting that heritage learners tend to write as they speak because of their expended exposure to oral discourse.

Figure3. Patterns of misspelling by L2 proficiency
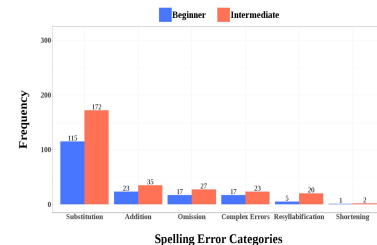
The rate of misspelling increases as L2 proficiency increases.

	addition	omission	substitution	complex
FB	4.48%	10.71%	8.45%	5.98%
FI	41.79%	26.79%	22.89%	11.11%
HB	31.34%	30.36%	32.04%	35.90%
HI	22.39%	32.14%	36.62%	47.01%

Foreign learners committed addition and omission errors commonly whereas heritage learners committed complex errors commonly. Addition and omission errors affect in a syllable of a word, whereas complex errors affect at least two syllables or a whole word.

Conclusions and Discussion

- L2 learners of Korean have around 5% spelling errors in their essays in Korean.
- Many substitution errors indicate that learners are confused with phonetically similar sounds.
- Although heritage learners have an advantage in oral production, their verbal advantage can have a negative influence on their orthography.
- Proficiency levels do not necessarily guarantee decrease of misspelling.

Pedagogical Implications

- Since heritage learners tend to write as the word is pronounced, explicit morpheme or stem-based teaching should be needed.
- Teaching phonological rules of Korean should be repeated in class with similar examples.
- Although spelling should be taught to both L1 groups, heritage leaners need more work on written accuracy.

References

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