

TEACHING KONGLISH VOCABULARY IN KOREAN LANGUAGE EDUCATION: LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR UZBEK LEARNERS

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Abstract

As globalization intensifies intercultural communication, English-derived vocabulary has become an integral component of contemporary Korean. One of the most distinctive manifestations of language contact in Korea is Konglish, a hybrid linguistic phenomenon formed through the adaptation of English lexical items into Korean phonological, morphological, and semantic systems. Despite its widespread use in Korean society, Konglish remains a challenging area for foreign learners of Korean, particularly those whose first language is neither Korean nor English. This study investigates the linguistic characteristics of Konglish vocabulary and examines its pedagogical significance in Korean language education. Drawing upon previous studies on Konglish and data collected from Uzbek learners of Korean both in Uzbekistan and South Korea, the research analyzes learners' awareness of Konglish, their perceptions regarding its importance, and the difficulties they encounter when interpreting Konglish expressions. The findings indicate that familiarity with Konglish positively contributes to vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation accuracy, listening comprehension, and communicative competence. Furthermore, the study proposes practical teaching strategies utilizing digital learning platforms and communicative approaches to facilitate the effective acquisition of Konglish vocabulary. The results highlight the necessity of incorporating Konglish instruction into Korean language curricula, especially at the beginner level.

Keywords: Konglish, Korean language education, vocabulary acquisition, language contact, communicative competence, Korean as a foreign language

1. Introduction

In recent decades, the status of the Korean language has expanded significantly beyond the Korean Peninsula due to the rapid spread of Korean popular culture, economic cooperation, and educational exchange. Consequently, the number of learners studying Korean as a foreign language has increased worldwide, including in Uzbekistan. Alongside the growing demand for Korean language education, researchers and educators have become increasingly interested in linguistic phenomena that affect language acquisition and intercultural communication.

One such phenomenon is Konglish, a term referring to English-derived lexical items that have been adapted into Korean linguistic structures. Konglish is formed through the interaction between Korean and English and reflects both linguistic and sociocultural processes. Although many Konglish words originate from English, their pronunciation, spelling, and meaning frequently differ from their original forms. Therefore, foreign learners often experience difficulties in understanding and using such expressions appropriately.

The importance of Konglish in Korean society cannot be underestimated. Konglish expressions appear extensively in everyday communication, media discourse, advertising, business

environments, and educational settings. Consequently, learners who possess a strong command of standard Korean grammar and vocabulary may still face communicative barriers if they are unfamiliar with commonly used Konglish expressions.

Previous studies have primarily focused on the linguistic classification of Konglish and its sociolinguistic functions within Korean society. However, relatively few studies have examined Konglish from the perspective of Korean language pedagogy, particularly in relation to learners from Central Asian linguistic backgrounds. This gap highlights the need for research investigating how Konglish can be systematically incorporated into Korean language instruction.

The present study aims to analyze the linguistic characteristics of Konglish vocabulary and explore effective pedagogical approaches for teaching Konglish to Uzbek learners of Korean.

The concept of Konglish has attracted considerable attention among Korean linguists and language educators. Cho (2008) defines Konglish as a linguistic phenomenon resulting from the interaction between English and Korean within educational and social contexts. According to the author, Konglish reflects both linguistic adaptation and sociocultural identity among Korean speakers.

Nam (2002) approaches Konglish from an interlanguage perspective and argues that Konglish emerges as a consequence of language contact during second-language acquisition. The study emphasizes that Konglish serves as a unique linguistic system that reflects Korean speakers' interpretation of English lexical items.

In contrast, Lawrence (2012) rejects the notion that Konglish should be considered merely incorrect English. Instead, he argues that Konglish represents a legitimate regional variety influenced by local cultural and communicative needs. This perspective highlights the dynamic nature of language evolution in multilingual environments.

Kent (2006) categorizes Konglish expressions into several groups, including phonologically modified loanwords, hybrid compounds, abbreviated forms, semantic shifts, and pseudo-loanwords. Similarly, Kim Hae-yeon (2007) investigates semantic transformations in Konglish and demonstrates that many borrowed lexical items undergo processes of meaning extension, narrowing, or reinterpretation after entering Korean.

Although these studies contribute significantly to understanding Konglish as a linguistic phenomenon, research focusing on pedagogical applications remains limited. Therefore, this study attempts to bridge the gap between linguistic analysis and foreign language teaching practices.

3. Methodology

This study employs a mixed-method research design combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data were collected through a questionnaire administered to Uzbek learners of Korean residing in South Korea and Uzbekistan.

The participants consisted of 31 learners aged between 20 and 30 years. Four survey questions were designed to examine learners' awareness of Konglish, perceptions of its importance, and its impact on language learning.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. In addition, linguistic examples from Korean textbooks, media resources, and previous scholarly studies were examined to identify common phonological, morphological, and semantic patterns within Konglish vocabulary.

4. Results and Discussion

The survey results revealed a high level of awareness among learners residing in South Korea. Approximately 85.7% of respondents indicated familiarity with the concept of Konglish, while all participants acknowledged its importance in Korean language learning.

The findings also demonstrated that learners with prior knowledge of English could recognize and interpret Konglish expressions more effectively than those without English language

experience. Participants reported that Konglish knowledge was particularly beneficial for listening and speaking skills due to its frequent occurrence in everyday communication.

From a linguistic perspective, the analysis identified three major characteristics of Konglish vocabulary:

First, phonological adaptation occurs when English sounds absent from Korean are replaced with the closest Korean equivalents. Examples include 커피 (coffee), 버스 (bus), and 텔레비전 (television).

Second, morphological adaptation often results in abbreviated forms such as 리모컨 (remote control) and 에어컨 (air conditioner).

Third, semantic transformation frequently occurs, causing borrowed words to acquire meanings different from their original English counterparts. Examples include 서비스, which commonly denotes a complimentary item rather than service in the conventional English sense.

These findings suggest that Konglish should not be viewed solely as a linguistic anomaly but rather as an important component of Korean communicative competence.

5. Conclusion

The present study examined the linguistic characteristics and pedagogical significance of Konglish vocabulary in Korean language education. The findings indicate that Konglish constitutes a unique linguistic phenomenon resulting from sustained contact between Korean and English.

For Uzbek learners of Korean, familiarity with Konglish contributes positively to vocabulary development, pronunciation skills, listening comprehension, and communicative competence. Therefore, Korean language instructors should incorporate Konglish systematically into instructional materials and classroom activities.

Future research should expand the participant pool and investigate the effectiveness of technology-enhanced Konglish instruction in diverse educational contexts.

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