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A corpus study of the use of English loan words in Korean: the case of noksaek, grin and green

This paper is part of a larger study of the use of English loan words in Korean language. While there are loan words which have no Korean equivalent such as Internet, smartphone, twitter, and therefore are phonetically translated into Korean, increasingly, loan words which do have Korean equivalents are phonetically translated into Korean, entering everyday language use. These English loan words co-exist along with their Korean counterparts. The issue of what motivates people to use loan words over their mother tongue counterparts may traditionally be a sociolinguistic inquiry. One much discussed motivating factor is the status of English as a privileged language; the use of English is seen as a status symbol. What is aimed in this study is to take a quantitative, bottom-up approach in investigating what other factors may be involved in when phonetically translated English loan words are preferred over their Korean equivalents. The investigation will involve three way analysis of the use of a phonetically translated English loan word, its Korean equivalent, and its English counterpart, for example, grin, noksaek, and green, whose results are presented in this paper. The analysis will focus on the use of the words in the environmental context. We hope that the use of corpus data and methods can shed light on the following questions:

1. Are there any collocational patterns associated uniquely with the phonetically translated English loan word (grin) and its Korean counterpart (noksaek)?
2. Are there any contextual patterns associated uniquely with the phonetically translated English loan word (grin) and its Korean counterpart (noksaek)?
3. Is there any kind of transfer from English to Korean in the use of the phonetically translated English loan word (grin) and its Korean counterpart (noksaek)?

The study will be expanded on three other sets of words: mihonmo/ single mom, jigoochon(yi)/ global, kekuhada/ clean. Asking these questions may provide an answer to in what context phonetically translated loan words are preferred over their Korean equivalents and what motivation lies in the preference. Furthermore, it will be interesting to see how much fine-tuned textual evidence can be obtained through the use of corpus methods. For analysis, a corpus of Korean newspapers collected from the KINDS, a Korean newspaper database and various texts collected from the three popular Korean search engines Naver, Nate, and Daum is used. The Bank of English corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English are consulted for comparison.