

## Multilingual Landscape of Contemporary Korea: Ideologies, Identities, and Practices

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Coinciding with Sociolinguistic Symposium's first appearance in Asia, this panel explores "unsettling" confluences of language ideologies and practices in contemporary South Korea. Since the publication of Park and Lo (2012), the phenomenon of translanguaging and multilingualism in transnational spaces of South Korea has been investigated in such settings as media (Lo and Choi 2017), policy discourses (Yoon 2016), families, and educational contexts. While much of the previous literature has focused on transmigrant Koreans (e.g., Kang 2012, Shin 2012, Song 2012), highlighting the centrality of language identity that accompanies the outmigration of Koreans, this panel directs its attention to the multilingual practices within the bounds of Korea, be they in-person or digital. This focus brings to the forefront the contemporary linguistic landscape of Korea as a site of globalization.

The contributions to this panel approach transnational linguistic practices from multiple angles, including media subtitling practices regarding language mixing (H. Lee) and television subtitles of foreigners' use of Korean (J. Lee), language ideologies among marriage migrants in Korea (Sohn), Korean native speakers' perception of loanwords from various linguistic origins (Park), chronotopic images and language ideologies in online space (Song), and monolingual ideologies seen in Korean proficiency tests (Shin). These studies thus investigate the issues related to multilingualism of Korea in various social contexts including media, families, online space, and education. Methodologically and analytically, the panel consists of studies from a variety of approaches including virtual ethnography, discourse analysis, document analysis, online survey questionnaires, and face-to-face interviews.

Overall, this panel challenges critical issues on language and culture faced in fast changing Korean society and presents a snapshot of multilingual landscape of contemporary Korea and its relation to language ideologies, practices, and identities in diverse social contexts.

**Keywords:** South Korea, translanguaging, multilingualism, linguistic practices, language ideologies

# 1. Language and testing requirements for monolingual ideologies in Korea: Issues and future directions in test development and validation

Dr. Dongil Shin  
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*Language proficiency tests have been used to control immigrants' flows, to legitimize their access to academic and work settings, and to determine their rights to residency and citizenship (Blackledge, 2009; Extra, Spotti, & Van Avermaet, 2009; Hogan-Brun, Mar-Molinero, & Stevenson, 2009; McNamara & Roever, 2006). They privilege certain forms and proficiency levels of hegemonic (national or standard) languages, and perpetuate language homogeneity (Shohamy, 2006, 2009). Little research, however, has taken place in the area of immigrants' language practice, ideologies, (language) testing requirements in Korean contexts. Any empirical studies have not been reported to investigate if the conventional requirements inadequately assess their linguistic repertoires or academic capacities.*

*In this study, I will examine how the language ideologies of 'Koreanness' inhabit the discourses in Korean proficiency testing, such as TOPIK (Test of Proficiency in Korean), EPS (Employment Permit System) TOPIK, KINAT (Korea Immigration and Naturalization Aptitude Test), and KIPRT (Korea Immigration and Permanent Residence Aptitude Test), as policy tools for immigrants. The data for the analysis will come from the texts of test-driven (test development) policy document pertaining to the policy implementation, test requirements, and testing rubrics, but also from the related newspaper accounts.*

*It will be discussed that such tests do not assess linguistic and sociocultural knowledge required for meaning-making practices to the diverse semiotic resources, and that they contribute to sustaining assimilative agendas in Korea. The fallacies of one-nation/one-language are taken for granted in the current stages of test development and validation studies. The monolingual ideologies in Korean proficiency and testing requirements stand in stark contrast to the immigrants' multilingual/dynamic identities (Norton, 2001; May, 2014) and translingual practices (Canagarajah, 2013) discussed in L2 socialization and sociolinguistics. Different rubrics for further testing are suggested to fit more closely the reality of language interactions taking place in diverse contexts.*

**Keywords:** *Korean proficiency testing; language requirements for immigration and integration; monolingual ideologies; test validation*

## 2. “My Kid Speaks Better Korean than I Do”: Becoming the New Wise Mother Good Wife in South Korea

Dr. Bong-gi Sohn  
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As globalization and migration push the boundaries of modern nation-states, there is increasing discussion of how languages of migrants are perceived in their new countries. Family language policy (King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008) is crucial for many nation-states, as the family is considered a fundamental unit of society, particularly when there are new types of families facilitated by globalization. The South Korean government (henceforth Korea) has enthusiastically developed a bilingual family language policy for a new type of intercultural/interethnic *damunhwa* (multicultural) family consisting of Korean men married to foreign women. Through its state-driven policy, the government attempts to transform foreign wives into a new type of ‘wise mother good wife’ in the globalized, multilingual world (Sohn, 2018). As part of a larger ethnographic study which investigated multilingual socialization (Duff & Talmy, 2011) of foreign wives in Korea, this study presents how four focal mothers – from Japan, China, Vietnam, and Kyrgyzstan – respond to their roles designed by the Korean government. I analyzed child rearing stories taken from 85 hours of interviews conducted in rural Korea, which showed challenges in the lives of *damunhwa* mothers that were predominantly managed in Korean. Although the mothers made tremendous efforts to adapt to Korean society, their stories showed unsettled mother identities and questioning of their ability to raise their children based on the putative deficiencies caused by their lack of Korean language and culture. Their stories also tell how the *damunhwa* mothers became illegitimate Korean mothers, thus impacting the mother–child relationship. Additionally, their stories illuminated how they constructed bad father identities for their indifferent Korean husbands. Through these findings, I explain how the state-driven feminized family language policy has encouraged *damunhwa* mothers to construct new mother identities in an extremely challenging manner and call for more reflective, equitable, and gender-sensitive family language policy.

**Keywords:** *family language policy, marriage migrant family, gender ideology, wise mother good wife, feminized family language socialization*

### 3. “Lost in Konglish”: An investigation of subtitles in trending media of multilingual Korea

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This is a linguistic landscape study that investigates the language use in Korean media including TV shows, internet broadcast, and social network service. The use of English in Korea is related to neoliberal ideologies and market-driven discursive practices of a new globalized economy. I examine the reflexive way that the symbolic use of English is commoditized through media subtitles. Though the field of linguistic landscape studies is rapidly expanding, few studies have explored language in media (Hiippala, 2019). Moreover, despite its pervasive use, *Konglish*, referring to the L2 production of English in Korea (Lee, 2006), has not yet widely been discussed in the study of linguistic landscape. *Konglish* is often related to general incompetence and lack of sophistication, but this sub-variety of Korean-English is widely used as a form of bilingual creativity.

Taking a social-constructivist perspective that views language ideologies as interpretive frames and posits that language ideologies are multiple (Ricento, 2000; Kroskrity, 2004), this study examines the social functions of subtitles as well as their symbolic meanings by looking at the visual and discursive resources of *Konglish*. I investigated mixed forms of codes in addition to images acting as a semiotic landscape in the subtitles and text balloons. 56 *Konglish* examples from talk shows aired from August 2017 to January 2019 as well as *Konglish* from social media are the subject of analysis.

The findings show that English mixing in a linguistic landscape is not limited to forming meaning or conveying information; rather, it is used to accomplish a range of indexical and discursive functions. This study also presents subtitles as the contexts where language ideologies are appropriated and reproduced. Creative tactics and language plays promote multilingual repertoires and identities. The forces of globalization confer new meanings to multilingual practices in media, exemplifying the linguistic landscape of multilingual Korea.

**Keywords:** *linguistic landscape, ideologies, Konglish, multilingualism, subtitles*

#### **4. Subtitles as Textual Authority in the Representations of Migrant Speech in South Korean Television**

*Dr. Janie Lee  
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This paper examines the representation of migrant speech in a South Korean television show where migrants take on the role of Korean language experts. With a rapid growth of foreign-born population and, more importantly, the increasing frequency of their media representation, migrants' linguistic skills are of much interest to television viewers and producers alike. While the linguistic and cultural expertise of these migrants are continuously commended, I show the ways in which it is constantly subject to the ears of native 'listening subject' (Inoue 2006, Flores and Rosa 2015) and how that reinforces the ideology of monolingual and monocultural nationalism.

Data comes from a television program called Korean Foreigners (2017-present), in which migrants from various countries and varying levels of Korean proficiency play word games and other games that require cultural knowledge against a team of native Korean celebrities. While the migrants are touted as linguistic and cultural experts and often receive praises to the extent of incredulity, they are always targets of native gaze that instantly endows itself the ultimate linguistic authority. This is certainly shown in the metalinguistic comments of Koreans in the show, but in this analysis, I focus on the role of subtitles. When the migrants' speech is subtitled, it is often done in nonstandard orthography that attempts to represent the phonology that is evaluated to be nonnative. This layer of textual authority as created by the show's producers and the institution of mass media at large ends up erasing the linguistic expertise of migrants, depicting it as an inauthentic one.

**Keywords:** *South Korea, media, subtitles, raciolinguistics, migration*