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MADE ITS ENGLISH-KOREAN DICTIONARY**

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How North Korea made its English-Korean Dictionary

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Before I called its name it remained just a gesture
When I called its name it came to me as a flower.
from “Flower” by Kim Ch’unsu

1. Introduction

When North Korean lexicographers compiled the *Yŏngjo taesajŏn*¹, their first unabridged English-Korean dictionary, their work was based on Kenkyusha’s *New English-Japanese Dictionary*, one of the most established English-Japanese dictionaries. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that the *Yŏngjo taesajŏn* is none other than a North Korean edition of the *New English-Japanese Dictionary*: it translates every single word in it without omission. South Korean lexicographers, on the other hand, historically show a similarly heavy dependence on Japanese lexicography during its early stage of English-Korean dictionary making, after liberation from Japanese rule. Later, however, their dictionaries became much more diverse and sophisticated than what we can find in North Korea.

The Northern *Yŏngjo taesajŏn* shows one significant difference from Southern dictionaries. South Korean lexicographers, despite their efforts to filter out expressions with strong Japanese flavour, stay reliant on Chinese characters as the traditional lingua franca in East Asia. As a consequence, their Korean translations for English entries are predominantly based on the Korean phonetic readings of the Chinese characters in the Japanese entry. In contrast, North Korean lexicographers try to replace difficult words based on Chinese characters with indigenous words or established Sino-Korean words that do not sound alien to native Korean speakers.

North Korea’s English-Korean lexicographers had already acquired the essential skills for changing and replacing difficult and obscure Sino-Korean words as a result of their language reform movement with its emphasis on the ‘refinement’ of the Korean lexicon. For that matter, Japanese lexicographers drew on their long tradition of Dutch translation when they began to compile English-Japanese dictionaries in the nineteenth century. This tradition still allows every

¹ In this paper I have used the following transcription convention: Korean lexical items and quotations from the dictionaries investigated are transcribed according to the principles of the Yale romanisation method. Terms, proper names and book titles, on the other hand, are rendered either in their customary form (e.g. *Juche*, Kim Il Sung) or in the McCune-Reischauer romanisation method, conforming to the cataloging style used by the US Library of Congress.

new *NEJ* edition to be more upgraded and informative. South Korean lexicographers, on the other hand, have failed to build their own tradition, at least in the compilation of English–Korean dictionaries, because they have been content to adopt new terms coined by Japanese lexicographers, relying on the shared background of Chinese character usage.

North Korean lexicographers demonstrate another possibility in English–Korean lexicography: they do not hesitate to create their own new translation equivalents. Drawing on their strong tradition of word creation and replacement for the purpose of lexical language engineering, North Korea has shown a strong resistance to the uncritical acceptance of a foreign model, thereby increasing its chances to succeed in the creation of its own tradition.

2. A Unique Tradition

From the start, the North Korean leadership emphasised the role of language as a weapon for achieving their dream of communist revolution. Thus, they conducted an intensive literacy campaign between 1946 and 1949, which is claimed to have reduced the number of illiterate people by about three million. Also, as part of their efforts at eradicating illiteracy they banned Chinese characters in every official document from 1949. In reality, however, the abolition of Chinese characters as such did not constitute a full solution to the problem posed by the Sino–Korean tradition: as long as the words themselves remained as phonetic transcriptions of the original Chinese characters (*Hancha*) into Korean script (*Hangŭl*), there were still many obscure and unintelligible words in use.

As a consequence, government officials encountered difficulties in disseminating important decisions and even in communicating among themselves without distortions or misunderstandings, a formidable obstacle to progress for a fledgling republic. After the completion of the first comprehensive Korean monolingual dictionary (*K'un sajŏn*, ‘Big Dictionary’), published between 1948 and 1957 in South Korea, North Korea followed with the *Chosŏnmal sajŏn* (‘Dictionary of Korean’), their own version of an unabridged monolingual dictionary in 1962. The two dictionaries did not drastically differ except on a few marginal points. Thus, similarly to the Southern *K'un Sajŏn*, the Northern *Chosŏnmal sajŏn* listed most of the *Hanchamal*, the Sino–Korean words that originated from ancient China and modern Japan, but in *Hangŭl* transcription. Despite incessant struggles to refine the Korean language under the initiative of a few journals of linguistics including *Chosŏn ōhak* (‘Korean Linguistics’) and *Chosŏn ōmunhak* (‘Korean Language and Literature’), enigmatic words still dominated in both industry and academia.

The impetus to intensify the movement at the national level came after the appearance of an article with the title “*A few ideas on improving the Korean language*”. It summarised instructions delivered to North Korean linguists in January 1964 by Kim Il Sung. In these, Kim set out some basic principles: You do not need the complicated expression system comprised of the two separate layers of *Hanchamal* (Sino–Korean words) and *Koyuŏ* (Home-Grown Korean words). Though you have to be careful not to overuse *Hanchamal*, you should not discard established words. But, you had better replace redundant *Hanchamal* with equivalents in *Koyuŏ*.

Two years later, in May 1966, issuing similar instructions about language, under the title “*On rescuing and enhancing the national character of the Korean language*”, Kim reaffirmed the importance of solidifying the status of *Munhwaŏ*, the ‘cultured’ standard language based on the dialect of P’yŏngyang. To put into practice his demands, the North Korean government launched a serious attempt to eliminate difficult *Hanchamal* and replace them with transparent *Koyuŏs*, and this effort, two years later, led to the appearance of *Munhwaŏ haksŭp* (‘Learning Cultured Language’), a linguistic quarterly dedicated to serving the movement and still in existence. The ‘refined’ words were compiled in 1969 into a new, small dictionary (*Hyŏndae chosŏnmal sajŏn*, ‘Modern Korean Dictionary’) with 50,000 entries, and this was later issued in an enlarged version (*Chosŏn munhwaŏ sajŏn*, ‘Dictionary of Cultured Korean Language’) in 1973.

These dictionaries compiled according to Kim Il Sung’s direction have a common feature: they were not descriptive dictionaries that reflected and recorded actual words spoken and written by people, but prescriptive dictionaries with entries mainly chosen for their easiness and simplicity. In particular, many Sino-Korean words that had originally been based on Chinese characters — for example *sek.kyo*, *sangcen*, and *hapok* (for ‘stone bridge’, ‘mulberry field’ and ‘summer clothes’) — were replaced by more indigenous counterparts — here *toltali*, *ppongpath*, and *yelum.os*. This compilation had limited usefulness as a dictionary because most of its entries were new coinages that did not reflect the real expressions in use. Kim Il Sung pointed out these shortcomings and urged the inclusion of *Hanchamal* in the next generation of dictionaries. The revised and enlarged edition of the *Hyŏndae Chosŏnmal sajŏn* published in 1981 contained over 130,000 entries and the *Chosŏnmal taesajŏn* (‘Grand Korean Dictionary’), the most comprehensive Korean dictionary ever published in North Korea, boasted 330,000 entries that include difficult *Hanchamal*, which are listed together with their Chinese characters at the end of each entry. However, the prescriptive tradition of monolingual North Korean dictionaries was upheld: every word deemed undesirable was clearly marked and accompanied by a recommended ‘cultured’ word. Since the mid-1960s over fifty thousand Korean words have been ‘refined’ through reinvention or modification. They were gathered in a booklet titled *Tatumŭn mal* (‘Refined Words’). This guidebook for the correct use of language was regularly updated and distributed to every part of the country.

A significant number of the ‘refined’ words entered into North Korean English-Korean dictionaries as well. Traditionally, of course, the most important foreign language in North Korea was not English but Russian. A small Russian-Korean dictionary appeared as early as 1948 and Russian was adopted by Kim Il Sung University, the most prestigious university in the country, as the compulsory foreign language exam in place of English. North Korea imported advanced science and technology predominantly from Russia. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, English has rapidly replaced Russian on the North Korean foreign language scene from the early 1990s. The first North Korean English–Korean dictionary (*Yŏngjo sajŏn*) appeared in 1961. It was small in size and in 1973 was followed by a medium size volume with the same title. *Yŏngjo taesajŏn* (the ‘Grand English-Korean Dictionary’, abbreviated hereafter as *YT*), the first unabridged English-Korean dictionary in North Korea, was published in 1992.

3. North Korean borrowings

The *YT*, with over 340,000 entries, is based on the fifth edition of Kenkyusha's *New English–Japanese Dictionary* (*NEJ* hereafter), published in 1980. The *NEJ*, since its first appearance in 1926, has been regarded as one of the most reliable and authoritative of its kind in Japan. The latest and sixth edition came out in 2002. The *YT* is none other than a North Korean edition of the *NEJ*: it translates every single word in the *NEJ* without omission. North Korea, with little experience of making English–Korean dictionaries, must have seen strong merit in translating one of the most established English–Japanese dictionaries as a way to rapidly absorb the achievements of modern English bilingual lexicography. South Korea, although it had a much earlier start in this area and a more diverse collection of English–Korean dictionaries, failed to attract the attention of the North-Korean lexicographers, in spite of the fact that North and South use what is practically the same language².

Furthermore, however, most English–Korean dictionaries produced in South Korea were themselves dependent upon English–Japanese dictionaries. A case in point is the *Kūmsōng yōnghān taesajōn* (*Kūmsōng English–Korean Dictionary*, *KYT* hereafter), published in the same year 1992 as the *YT*, and itself a close translation of the same fifth edition of the *NEJ* published in 1980. And, this is not an isolated case. For example, the *Sisayōngōsa/Random House Unabridged English–Korean Dictionary* did not translate from the original American work but re-translated the *Shogakukan Random House English–Japanese Dictionary* published in 1973. In this article, I will focus on comparing the *YT* and the *KYT* to reveal the different approaches of the two Koreas, differences that are the more revealing for the fact that they they started from the same original.

North Korean lexicographers must have concluded it would be much more beneficial to translate from the original Japanese work than to rely on a Korean works that were more or less translated copies of Japanese works. However, national lexicographers have rarely started from scratch when they venture to compile at least more than a medium-size dictionary. And indeed, it is clear that English–Japanese dictionaries were themselves hugely influenced by English–Chinese dictionaries³. The shared use of Chinese characters was, of course, the major impetus that brought Japanese lexicographers' attention to English–Chinese dictionaries.

So, Japan sought inspiration from China, and North Korea relied on Japan. Japan lacked

² Kim Il Sung condemned South Koreans for their indiscriminate use of foreign words: "The moment you read a South Korean newspaper you realize that South Korean journalists not only overuse English and Japanese words in their writing but also insert in their sentences archaic Chinese characters that even Chinese people themselves do not use nowadays. When you remove Chinese, Japanese, and English words from the South Korean lexicon, you get only a few particles like *ul* or *tul*. Language is one of the essential traits of a people. But the language used in South Korea does not sound like Korean and is rapidly losing its national character. It makes me worry. If you leave it like that, our national language may be doomed to disappear." Derision does not predispose one to imitation.

³ The crucial English–Chinese dictionary here is that completed by the German missionary Lobscheid in 1869, and it was translated into Japanese in 1879 by Tsuda Sen *et al* and proofed by Nakamura Masanao, whose translation of *Self-help* by Samuel Smiles (*Saigoku risshi hen*) had been a bestseller since first published in 1871. The second Japanese version of Lobscheid's dictionary appeared a few years later in 1884. Inoue Tetsujiro, its translator, revised and enlarged the original Chinese edition by incorporating Chinese definitions found in the *English and Chinese Dictionary*, another major English–Chinese dictionary that had been completed over three decades earlier by W. H. Medhurst in 1847–48. Inoue was, by the way, also a famous book translator.

traditional expressions equivalent to many English words and tried to fill the gap by directly adopting succinct Chinese characters or modifying them slightly to suit Japanese sensibilities. North Korea found itself the inheritor of a huge number of modern Sino-Japanese words, which had been incorporated into modern Korean from the early twentieth century, which seems to be the main reason why it ventured to translate an English-Japanese dictionary in order to create its own English-Korean dictionary.

On the other hand, however, the lexicographical situation in North Korea and Japan was somewhat different. Japan had too small a number of pertinent indigenous words to match English expressions and solved the problem by either importing Chinese words or inventing new words with Chinese characters. On the other hand, North Korea had too many words consisting of Chinese characters that have their roots in ancient China or are products of modern Japan, and these had displaced quite a few still useful indigenous expressions. In other words, what Japanese lexicographers used to make new words was not *kana*, the traditional alphabet, with a tendency to require many syllables to form a word, but Chinese characters, with their unparalleled potential to produce short and succinct expressions. On the other hand, North Korean lexicographers, while translating the *NEJ* with its dominance of Sino-Japanese words, tried to replace difficult words based on Chinese characters with indigenous words or established Sino-Korean words that do not sound alien to native Korean speakers.

4. A *Juche* dictionary

One of the few differences between the *YT* and the *NEJ* is the choice of English orthography. Thus, both in the South and in Japan, American English has gradually gained the status of ‘Standard’ English⁴. By the 1970s most English–Japanese dictionaries presented entry words according to American English spellings and meanings. The *NEJ* itself decided to adopt American variants as entry words from its fifth edition onwards. In North Korea, however, the *YT* did not adopt this line, presumably because North Korean lexicographers may have felt some resistance to accepting American hegemony. Another small difference is the fact that the *YT* added more illustrations than the *NEJ*, mostly in entries about science and technology. Terms like ‘open hearth (furnace)’, ‘shock absorber’, and ‘jet engine’ are accompanied by clear visual information with component illustration.

North Korean lexicographers’ willingness to be independent is revealed in their policy of presenting Native Korean words rather than Sino-Korean words as an equivalent to the corresponding English entry. For example, the Northern *YT* translated ‘Adam’s apple’ as

⁴ The hegemony struggle between American English and British English has a complex historical background. The first proper English–Japanese dictionary compiled by a Japanese lexicographer (Hori Tatsunosuke) was based on a monolingual English dictionary produced in Britain by a lexicographer named John Ogilvie. But the British English lexicography with its strong tradition of acting as a literary dictionary did not satisfy the Japanese who were desperately in need of encyclopaedic bilingual dictionaries to translate English books. Webster’s English dictionaries produced in America fulfilled the Japanese thirst for a huge list of lexical entries. Naturally, American orthography began to prevail. But from the early twentieth century, with the completion of the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the appearance in Britain of a new line of English dictionaries with extensive grammatical explanations and many idioms, many Japanese students were attracted back to the British style of English. See Isamu Hayakawa, *Methods of Plagiarism*, Jiyusha, Tokyo, 2001, p. 164-70.

wulqtayppye (Native Korean words are marked in bold type hereafter) whereas the Southern *Kūmsōng yōnghān taesajōn* (English–Korean Dictionary, *KYT* hereafter) relied on the Sino-Korean *kyelhwu*, or *hwukol*. ‘Shrub’ was defined as *ttelki namu* in the Northern *YT* instead of *kwanmok* in the Southern *KYT*. When there were competing terms for a concept, the Northern *YT* placed Native Korean words ahead of Sino-Korean counterparts: ‘tide’ became *miseyki* or *coswu* (*KYT*: *coswu* or *cosek*); ‘intestine’ became *payl* or *cang* (*KYT*: *cang*). However, if a Sino-Korean word sounds more established, the Native Korean equivalent was presented behind it: ‘tideland’ became *kansেকci* or *kayphel* (*KYT*: *kansেকci*). Finally, in cases where the Japanese *NEJ* failed to provide a lexical word form equivalent and instead gave only an explanation, and the Southern *KYT* followed the same line, the *YT* tried to define it as a Native Korean word. For example, ‘thatch’ became *ieng*, whereas in the *KYT* we find a literal translation of a phrasal definition from the *NEJ*⁵.

Along with these traditional Native Korean words, the Northern *YT* made use of another kind of lexicographical category: *Munhwaō* or ‘Cultured Words’. Thus, where the Southern *KYT* matched English entries with their Sino-Korean counterparts, the *YT* added newly coined words that are largely based on Native Korean morphemes: ‘syllable’ became *solli mati* or *umcel*; ‘prime number’ became *ssiswu* or *soswu*; ‘buoyancy’ became *ttulhim* or *pulyek*; ‘wig’ became *tesmeli* or *kapal*; ‘ecliptic’ became *haykil* or *hwangto*. However, North Korean lexicographers were not obsessed with using only Native Korean morphemes. ‘Indefinite article’, which is defined as *pu-cengkwan* in the Southern *KYT*, is defined as *mi-cengkwan* in the Northern *YT*. Presumably, the Northern *YT* chose to replace the prefix *pu*, with its strong evocation of negativity, in favour of the less strongly negative *mi* (literally ‘not yet’), thereby not avoiding Sino-Korean but attempting to create a clearer alternative.

Lexicographers, however, do also face situations where there is no ready equivalent for a foreign word. Thus, in her study of loan words and hybrid words in modern Chinese, Zdenka Novotná distinguishes the following six types of induced innovation to find equivalents⁶:

1. Phonemic loans (loan-words). For example, Chinese *luoji* (逻辑) for English ‘logic’.
2. Graphic loans. This type of loan only exists between languages that use the Chinese writing system, such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese. For example, Korean *hyekmyeng* for the Chinese *geming* or the Japanese *kakumei* (革命).

⁵ The *KYT* entry for ‘thatch’ gives (*ciph, say, kaltay, cong.lye.ip tung-uy*) *cipung inun caylyo*. Interestingly enough, *ieng* appears as the Korean equivalent for thatch as early as the 1890s in the first edition of Underwood’s *English-Korean Dictionary* (1890) and in Scott’s *English-Corean Dictionary* (1891), and as late as the 1960s in the second edition of Lee and Kwun’s *Pocket English-Korean Dictionary* (1961) and in Samhwa’s *Standard English-Korean Dictionary* (1968). The next generations of English-Korean dictionaries, without exception, fail to present this established native Korean word. One of the possible explanations for this unusual phenomenon is that later generations of lexicographers, who were not as fluent in Japanese as their seniors, ended up being more dependent on Japanese-Korean dictionaries and found it harder to transcend the Japanese explanations and reach the pertinent native Korean equivalent. That this may indeed be the case is corroborated by the fact that English-Korean dictionaries compiled in South Korea have until recently invariably failed to list *oppa* (the term for a female’s older brother) as a Korean equivalent for ‘brother’. The fact that Japanese, unlike Korean, does not distinguish between a male’s and a female’s older brother, and uses the same words and Chinese character for what are the two different Korean terms *hyeng* and *oppa*, can be given as a possible explanation for this consistent failure. Note that the *YT* included *oppa* as one of several Korean terms for brother.

⁶ See Koos Kuiper, “Dutch Loan-words and Loan-translations in Modern Chinese: an Example of Successful Sinitification by Way of Japan”, in Lloyd Haft (ed.) *Words from the West*, Centre of Non-Western Studies, Leiden, 1993, p. 117-8.

3. Hybrid words. These are new compounds consisting of a loan-word and a native word. For example, Chinese *pijiu* (啤酒) or *pi-wine* for ‘beer’.
4. Loan-translations (calques). For example, Japanese *shokuminchi* (植民地) for Dutch *volksplanting* or “colony” (literally ‘plant’ + ‘people’ + ‘land’).
5. Semantic loans. In this case an existing native word is accorded the meaning of a foreign word. For example, Japanese *kakumei* (革命) for English ‘revolution’⁷.
6. Induced new creations. These are newly coined words, mostly of a descriptive nature, without any morphemic correspondence with a foreign model. For example, Japanese *sen’i* (纖維, literally ‘delicate’ + ‘cord’) for the Dutch *vezel* or the English ‘fibre’.

Put in these terms, the major difference between the Southern *KYT* and the Northern *YT* is that the *KYT*’s favourite method of finding equivalents was the graphic loan, but the *YT* often goes one step further and resorts to loan-translation. Thus, for example, the Japanese *NEJ* translated ‘sabre-toothed tiger’ as 劍齒虎, a coinage that combines the Chinese characters for ‘-sword’, ‘tooth’ and ‘tiger’. The Southern *KYT* resorted to the easy method of graphic loan and just gave the Korean phonetic reading of the Sino-Japanese word, which is *kemchiho*. But the Northern *YT* translated the Japanese 劍齒虎 as the Native Korean *khal.i.pem*, combining the native Korean words for the three meaning components.

Here it should be noted that loan-translation was actually the favoured method used by Japanese lexicographers as a means of producing pertinent equivalents for unfamiliar Western words. And indeed, the Japanese 劍齒虎 itself is a loan-translation for ‘sabre-toothed tiger’ although into Sino-Japanese. And the Southern *KYT* is not without similar attempts. Thus, for instance, it translated a bird named ‘roadrunner’ as *kil.talliki* (presumably as the loan-translation of Japanese *michibashiri* in the *NEJ*, meaning “road-running”, rather than of ‘roadrunner’, the original English entry). But this particular loan-translation has a weakness: the Korean term *kil.talliki* sounds like the noun form of a verb rather than the name of a bird. The Northern *YT* translated ‘roadrunner’ as *kil.palpali* (*palpali* is a small dog and evokes a sense of quickness in Korean), which has a higher potential to be used in real situations.

5. Domesticating English

The different approaches of the two Koreas in contriving equivalents in English-Korean dictionaries are reflected also in their different styles of translation in general. In a sense, North Korean lexicographers’ efforts to find or coin alternatives that are more natural and less obscure than existing Sino-Korean words amounted to nothing less than translation activity, not conducted between two languages but within one and the same language. In the process North Korea has developed diverse theoretical tools that could be used to grasp the gist of the meaning of a word and find a pertinent equivalent. The outstanding translations of English proverbs in

⁷The original meaning of 革命 in Chinese classical texts is the overthrow of a dynasty by a virtuous leader, mostly outside the royal family, that is, with a different family name. In many cases, it remains just the transfer of power among the same ruling class and is not accompanied by the drastic transformation of social, economical structures found in Western revolutions.

the Northern *YT* prove this. The Southern *KYT* translated ‘No mill, no meal’ with a long explanation of its etymological origin, as “수고하지 않고는 먹을 수 없다 *Swukohaci anh.konun mek.ul swu eps.ta.* = If you do not work hard, you are not entitled to eat.” The *NEJ*’s original Japanese translation was little different from this prosaic version. The Northern *YT*, however, matched it with a Korean proverb: “부뚜막의 소금도 집어넣어야 짜다 *Puttwumak-uy sokum-to cip.e.neh.eya ccata.* = Salt, even on the table, has to be added to give its flavour” Or, to give another example, the Southern *KYT* translated ‘Fine words butter no parsnips’ as “입으로만 번지르르하게 지꺼려도 아무 소용이 없다 *Ip-ulo.man penciluluhakey cikkelyeto amu soyong-i eps.ta* = Smooth talk on its own is of no use” and the *NEJ*’s version has roughly the same meaning. The Northern *YT* instead gave another Korean proverb: “말 단 집에 장 단 집 없다 *Mal tan cip-e cang tan cip eps.ta.* = No house with a sweet mouth has a sweet sauce.” When Japanese lexicographers started to compile English-Japanese dictionaries, they drew on their long tradition of Dutch translation. Likewise, North Korean lexicographers, when they engaged in the task of creating the *YT*, drew upon the translation skills that had accumulated due to the North Korean history of ‘refinement’ and nativisation efforts. What they pursued unwittingly was the policy of domesticating foreign languages in the sense that much more emphasis was put on the logic of Korean, the target language, than on the logic of English, the source language.

By contrast, the South Korean custom of translation has been much closer to the ‘foreignisation’ approach of trying to stay faithful to the foreign original⁸. South Korean translators have shown a strong tendency to stick to the source language, be it Chinese, French or English. When encountering some ambiguities or uncertainties with regard to the choice of a Korean word, they do not hesitate to insert the original English word in a bracket expecting readers to grasp the true meaning. Sometimes, this helps readers understand the delicate meaning of the original text. But in many cases, this method is so overused that readers are unlikely to comprehend the translated text without already having a considerable knowledge of the original English vocabulary in their heads.

A translation, however, that relies too heavily upon the preliminary knowledge of readers about the source language cannot be called a translation in the strict sense of the word. Many Southern translations of Korean classics, originally written in Classical Chinese, also clearly show this trend: often, the reader cannot comprehend the translated text without a profound knowledge of at Chinese characters and their original meanings. In other words, with such translations the reader has to be equipped with a high degree of knowledge about the source text

⁸ Foreignization in translation is an approach trying to be faithful to the structure and logic of the original text or source language, while domestication is an attitude putting emphasis on the fluency and naturalness of the translated text or target language. Neither foreignization nor domestication in its respective extreme form can be regarded as an ideal approach to translation. Lawrence Venuti criticizes Anglo-American culture that has long been dominated by domesticating theories that recommend fluent translation, and urges English translators to adopt foreignizing translation as “a form of resistance against ethnocentricism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism, in the interests of democratic geopolitical relations.” (Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*, Routledge, London and New York, 1995, p. 20-21.) Unlike Anglo-American translators, the traditional norm of translation in South Korea has been much closer to foreignization in the sense of struggling to preserve in the translation every trivial linguistic and cultural element of the source-language text, including many that are alien to Korean readers, with little consideration for the naturalness of the translation as a Korean text. One can even say South Korean translators need to make more efforts to satisfy the visible Korean reader even at the risk of being less loyal to the invisible author.

before he can remotely begin to understand the translated work. Here again, we see a clear difference in the Southern and Northern translation approaches, as evident in the different translations of the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok*, or Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty. Thus, in the Southern translation Classical Chinese terms such as 雇工, 舊章, 歲星, 除拜 simply reappear with their phonetic values written in Korean script (고공, 구장, 세성, 제배 *kokong, kwucang, seyseng, ceypay*), followed by the Chinese characters in brackets: 고공(雇工), 구장(舊章) etc. In other words, just as South Korean lexicographers rely on Chinese characters and thereby remain on the outermost surface layer of English–Japanese dictionaries, South Korean translators of works from Classical Chinese to modern Korean rely on the superficial graphic familiarity of Chinese characters. The North Korean translators, on the other hand, translate 雇工, 舊章, 歲星, 除拜 with common modern Korean words like *mesum* ‘servant’, *yeytpep* ‘old law’, *mokseng* ‘Jupiter’, *immyeng* ‘appointment’.

Similarly, South Korean lexicographers did not show enough willingness to delve into the core of a concept and express it with their own style. They expected others, mostly Japanese lexicographers, to do the sophisticated work in advance while they just absorbed the fruit. Therefore, they could not fully develop their own tradition of English lexicography. To give but one example, Sisayŏngŏsa is one of the most prestigious English dictionary makers in South Korea and made a breakthrough in English dictionary lexicography in South Korea in 1973 by completing the *New World Comprehensive English-Korean Dictionary*. However, two decades later, in its new dictionary, it chose again to copy the Japanese version of the *Random House Unabridged English Dictionary* rather than improve its own old English-Korean dictionary. This was done despite the assertion that it had compiled the Korean edition of *Random House Dictionary* independently. On the contrary, as long as they are created on the basis of Chinese characters, South Korean lexicographers have been content with simply adopting new terms coined by Japanese lexicographers⁹.

6. Will a *Juche* dictionary create a tradition?

Differently from their South Korean counterparts, North Korean lexicographers have shown another possible methodology in English–Korean lexicography. They do not hesitate to forge new words with their own hands. The Northern translation equivalent for the English word ‘raccoon’ is a case in point. The Japanese *NEJ* translates this word as *araiguma*, whose literal meaning is ‘washing bear’. In older English–Japanese dictionaries it appears written as 浣熊 or 洗熊, a Chinese character writing that is used to represent not Sino-Japanese sounds but the same Native Japanese *araiguma*. The Southern *KYT* does not give a lexical translation equivalent but resorts to a phrasal explanation: “나무 위에서 삼여 야간에 활동하는 북미산의 포유 동물 *Namu wi-eyse salmye yakan-ey hwaltonghanun pukmi-san-uy phoyu tongmul*. = A

⁹ Unsatisfied with the way in which the use of the Korean script *Hangŭl* to write their phonetic values masks the Sino-Korean origins of many contemporary Korean words, Ch’oe Inhun, the renowned Korean writer, has rewritten his novel *Kwangjang* or ‘The Square’, several times. He tried to replace Sino-Korean words with native Korean words, not to purify the Korean language but to overcome what he called the hypocrisy of alleged pure *Hangŭl* writing.

North American mammal living on trees and with nocturnal habits”. Most medium-size English–Korean dictionaries compiled in South Korea define this animal as “*mikwuk nekwuli*, *wanwung* (浣熊)” (10th edition of Minjung’s *Essence*, 2005), “*mikwuk nekwuli*” (3rd edition of Kūmsōng’s *New-Ace*, 2004), “*mikwuk-nekwuli*” (5th edition of Dong’a’s *Prime*, 2004)”. Of the two, *mikwuk nekwuli* has the literal meaning of ‘American raccoon dog’ and *wanwung* is the Korean phonetic value of the Chinese characters 浣熊 that were originally used to represent the Native Japanese *araiguma*.

The Japanese lexicographers, however, did not translate ‘raccoon’ in this way. *Araiguma* appears so early in English–Japanese dictionaries that one can find it in most of the modern Japanese monolingual dictionaries. The Korean lexicographers that introduced *mikwuk neguli* may have done so because the Korean loan-translation of Japanese *araikuma* would sound like a phrase rather than a word to Korean ears (*ssisnun kom* meaning ‘washing bear’). Instead, they chose to coin a new word according to the customary formula of ‘Place Name + Existing Animal Name’, a customary naming method that requires a low degree of abstraction and analysis. North Korean lexicographers, however, termed ‘raccoon’ *kaykom* (‘dog-bear’). In doing so, they seem to have coined the new word based on the fact that a raccoon resembles both dogs and bears.

The best test for a new coinage is how frequently it is used in other contexts. *Mikwuk nekwuli* first appeared in South Korean English dictionaries no later than in the early 1970s. But for over thirty-five years no Korean monolingual dictionary has incorporated it as an entry. On the contrary, *araiguma*, its Japanese equivalent, now appears in most of the contemporary modern Japanese monolingual dictionaries. Good naming enhances the social function of a newly coined word. *Kaykom* is not to be found in North Korean monolingual dictionaries because it must have been coined during the recent compilation of the *YT*. However, unlike the Southern coinage *mikwuk nekwuli*, which appears in English–Korean dictionaries but is nowhere to be found in the Korean–English dictionaries of the very same publishers, *kaykom* has been selected as an entry in the Korean–English dictionaries of North Korea.¹⁰ Once a new term has entered into dictionaries, its social function drastically increases. A slight difference in naming makes a big difference. Whereas *mikwuk nekwuli* will probably be confined to English–Korean dictionaries in the foreseeable future, *kaykom* is likely to move freely in much wider contexts. As long as ‘raccoon’ was called *mikwuk nekwuli* it remained just as a gesture; when it was called *kaykom* it became a flower.

The historical use of Chinese characters has been both a benefit and trap for the Korean language. Koreans have been able to catch up with the advanced Western civilization rapidly thanks to the use of numerous modern terms that were mostly coined by the Japanese, from the late nineteenth century onwards. And, in addition, sharing the same Chinese character tradition will be beneficial to the East-Asian region over the long term. On the other hand, however, one of the main reasons why South Korea has repeatedly failed to create and preserve its own tradition in English–Korean lexicography is that it failed to resist the temptation of relying on

¹⁰ It appears both in *Choyōng sajōn*, a medium-sized North Korean Korean–English dictionary published in 1987 and *Choyōng taesajōn*, a grand Korean–English dictionary published in 2002.

Japanese lexicography and its shared use of Chinese characters. North Korea, on the other hand, copied Japan as well. But, with its strong tradition word creation and replacement in the name of ‘refining’ the lexicon, North Korea has shown a strong resistance to uncritical acceptance of a foreign model, increasing the probability that it will create its own tradition. Will North Korea succeed in making its own tradition in English-Korean lexicography? It depends on how North Korean lexicographers will appreciate the two faces of the Chinese character: its potential utility to compress complex concepts and its destructive power to frustrate latecomers’ struggles to build their own traditions.

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