Morpho-Phonological Patterns of Recent Korean Neologisms

Sang-Cheol Ahn, Kyunney Egorova*

* North-Eastern Federal University named after M.K. Ammosov, Yakutsk, Russia
* Corresponding author. Email: kiounnei1@yandex.ru

ABSTRACT
This paper analyzes the morpho-phonological patterns of recent Korean neologisms used in SNS text messages. To this end, we use the data appearing in recent newspapers and online dictionaries showing the most recent usages since 2017. During the discussion, we categorize the data into several groups and show the statistical distribution, demonstrating the dominant preference of the acronyms. We also argue that the acronyms can be coined, based not only on syllables but also on consonants including the so-called “zero” consonant <o>. We claim that this unique consonantal acronym is possible due to the unique Korean writing system which goes back to the 15th century. Furthermore, the unique graphic characteristics of the Korean writing system is reflected in a new trendy neologism, so called “Yaminjeongeum”, creating those words whose orthographic forms look similar to the original words only in shape, without carrying any meaning. Finally, we conclude the paper by claiming that the main tendencies in recent neologisms can be defined as a new bilingualism as the youngsters occasionally code-switch between standard usages and neologisms. This new trend is basically initiated by the school children and teenagers. They enjoy using the newly coined words to highlight homogeneity, i.e., for sense of closeness within a peer group. In some cases, moreover, they also enjoy the vulgarity of slang.

Keywords: neologism, coinage, acronym, code-switching, SNS, Yaminjeongeum, Korean writing system

1. INTRODUCTION

Neologisms are very common in every language all over the world as they represent the communication trends of the young generation, highlighting homogeneity [1]. Just like the cases of other languages, a lot of new coinages have been made in Modern Korean although they often become the targets of criticism for corrupting the grammatical structure. As claimed in Crystal [1], however, the usages (especially the spelling deformation) do not affect the grammatical structure or communication in the standard language. [Spelling deformation was quantitatively studied in the earlier researches (Grinterand Eldridge [2], Härdf af Segerstag [3], Kasesniemi and Rautianen [4], Thurlow and Brown [5], Faulkne and Culwin [6], Tagg [7] etc.)] Therefore, many studies try to account for the new coinages, taking them as a new linguistic trend for the young generation [8-10].

2. METHODOLOGY

Investigating the overall structure of the Korean neologisms is, however, not an easy task as the new coined words keep emerging from the daily communication of the young people. Moreover, depending on the duration of the time period, the coinage pattern may become different. Considering these factors, we thoroughly analyze the patterns of the Korean neologisms which have been used in SNS text messages in recent years since 2017. During the discussion, we show how the newly coined words reflect the current trends of language usage among the younger generation. To this end, we categorize the data into several groups and discuss how they represent the current sociolinguistic trends of the young generation. We also show various cases of typical new coinages which reflect the unique Korean writing system, Hangeul.

3. TRENDS IN NEW COINAGE

The patterns of language usage among the young people are not only different from those of the older generation, but also quite unique, especially in the area of neologisms. A survey conducted in 2017 by Joongang Ilbo (one of the top 3 newspapers in Korea [11]), for example, made reference to a ‘dictionary of 2017 neologisms’ which contains 16 newly coined words. These words first appeared in a chatting group, Naver Band, then became

Copyright © 2021 The Authors. Published by Atlantis Press SARL.
This is an open access article distributed under the CC BY-NC 4.0 license -http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/.
widespread in social media such as Facebook and Twitter (Joongang Ilbo February 8, 2017 [11]). Shown below are the examples written in Korean. (The Romanized representations shown below each example indicate the Korean pronunciations.)

(1) Representative examples of neologisms in 2017

영고, 팬아저, 취춘, 외우내, 마상, 아야, 최애
yeong go, paen a jeo, chwi jon, wa u nae, ma sang a a, choe ae

합말하듯, 사바사, 오, 비담, 인구론,
hal mal ha ahn, sa bas a, in jeong, bi dam, in gu ron,
세절예, 시강, 커엽, 깃말삭
se jel ye, si gang, keo yeup, kas tting jak

At glance, especially for the older generation or even those in their 30’s, these new coinages look quite messy and distracting due to the spelling deformation (i.e., more than simple non-standard spellings) or excessive clipping. With a closer look, however, we can categorize them into several types.

3.1. Syllabic acronyms

First of all, the most common type is an acronym in which the initial syllable of each word group is picked up. (We use the official Romanization system imposed by the Korean ministry of culture in 2010.)

(2) 영고 yeong go
영원히 고통받는 사람
yeongwoni ‘forever’ gotong-batneun ‘pain’
(saram)

취춘 chwi jon
취향 존중
chwihyang ‘taste’ jonnang ‘respect’

마상 ma sang
마음의 상처
maeumny ‘heart’ sangcheo ‘wound’

합말하듯 hal mal ha anh
합 말은 많지만 하지
hal malaeun ‘things to say’ manhijiman
‘much’ haji ‘do’ anhgesta ‘not’

최애 choe ae
최고 에(愛, 사랑)
choege ‘best’ ae ‘love’

인구론 인문계
인문계
‘No jobs for 90 % of the

in gu ron 구십퍼센트(90%)가

Humans major graduates’

‘immune ‘humanities’
guisip-percent-ga
‘90%’ noda ‘without

job’

세절예 se jel ye ‘the prettiest’
세상에서 철(철일)

 예쁜
sesang ‘world’ jel
‘most’ yeppyeun
‘pretty’

시간 si gang ‘attracting
시간 감탈
attention’
sixon jalal

gangtal ‘snatch’

Moreover, acronyms can be made by combing English and Korean words as shown in the following examples.

(3) 팬아저 paen a jeo
팬이 아니라도

저장 paen-i ‘fan’
‘not’
‘fan’

anideorado
‘though not’

jeojang ‘save’

비담 bi dam
비주얼 담당

bijueol ‘visual’
damdang ‘in

charge’

사바사 sa ba sa
사람 by 사람

=saramda)
saram ‘person’ bai
‘by’ saram ‘person’

Furthermore, only English words can be used to make a “Korean” acronym.

(4) 아이야 aiseu ‘ice’ amerikano
아이예 애매릭아노

‘American’

Similar examples also appeared in this period (Weekly Chosun, September 19, 2017). Many of them are acronyms in which only the initial syllable is picked up from each word block. (The dots indicate syllable boundaries).

(6) More syllabic acronyms

길거리倍배

길 끝 혼로 배질 때

‘Join when to

join, but quit

when to quit’

ppa

ppa

when to join, join’

when to quit, quit’

타타

tae ppa, jyeo ra

‘when to join, join’

when to quit, quit’

표시 절반

복사 불어날기가 절반

‘half of them

are made by

63
Many of the acronyms are even simpler, picking up only the initial consonant. The following examples indicate that only the initial consonants can be made an acronym.

(9) ㅇㅈ 인정 ‘approved’

3.2. Consonantal acronyms

Many of the acronyms are even simpler, picking up only the initial consonant. The following examples indicate that only the initial consonants can be made an acronym.

(9) ㅇㅈ 인정 ‘approved’

The consonantal acronym can consist of the initial ‘zero’ consonant which is written as “о” having no phonetic value as this zero consonant is only orthographic.

The initial sound of each example is in fact a vowel, but the Korean writing system requires the initial position of syllable should be filled with a consonant orthographically including the zero consonant “о”. This tradition goes back
As Modern Korean specifies only the initial zero symbol with a circle, the onset zero symbol is spelled like the coda /ŋ/. The following example shows the identical transcription of both the onset zero and the final /ŋ/. As the single use of a zero symbol could be confusing in a short, i.e., mono-syllabic word, both circles are used to indicate the zero onset and the nasal coda respectively. That is the “o” acronym shows that the first “o” indicates a zero consonant, while the second “o” represents /ŋ/ as they are identical orthographically.

(12) ㅇㅇ.STARTO unicode

The coinage by consonantal acronym is extended to those commonly used Romanized expressions. For examples, as both ㅇㅇ (오케이 ‘Ok’) and Ok are commonly used, the youngsters often use the following Romanized acronyms.

(13) ㅇㅇ.TMI.RSTARTO unicode

3.3. Showbiz words, sound symbolic neologisms

As the influence of the TV show programs is getting stronger for the young generation, a popular expression can be used for new coinage. For example, an entertainer (Park Junhyeong who grew up in the US) with poor Korean proficiency often used “Wow” in a show program, and thus a newly coined word is often used among the young people. The second examples reflects the modern vowel change by which the two front vowels /e/ || and /ɛ/ || have been being merged. These two vowels are pronounced the same in Modern Korean, especially in the speech of the young people.

(14) 와우내 Wow + 내 (misspelled for 네) ‘It is amazing’

On the other hand, just like in the past, some newly-coined expressions are based on the names of the characters in TV advertisements. For example, changryeol-hada ‘not worthy or tasty’ and hyeja-seu.reop.da ‘it is worthy’.

(15) New coinage with proper names (originated from TV shows)

 changryeol-hada ‘not tasty, not worthy’ (Changryeo ‘a proper name’)
hyeja-seu.reop.da ‘tasty, worthy’ (Hyjea ‘a proper name’)

The first expression was named after an entertainer who made a lunch box sold at convenience stores but it was not very tasty. Then, by analogy, the opposite expression was made in reference to another entertainer. These examples, in fact, originated from the satiric political expressions made in the period of the late Korean president Noh Mu-Hyeon. Early on in his presidency, he had a hot debate with the prosecutors regarding the limit of their powers. As a consequence, the following expressions were made, reflecting the socio-political situation at that period. Similar examples can be made, employing proper names or the names of certain specific professions.

(16) nom.hyeon.seu.reop.da ‘He/she behaves like the president Noh.’ Noh Mu-Hyeon ‘seem to be’ (Nom.hyeon is a contacted form of Noh Mu-Hyeon)

3.4. Methodology of analysis: a statistical analysis

The biggest Korean online dictionary, Naver open dictionary, posted the 30 most commonly used examples of neologisms in 2019 (Naver open dictionary 2020 [14]). The data collection was based on messages sent on mobile phones and personal computers. Shown below are the 30 examples of new coinages. (The dots indicate syllable boundaries in writing.)
### Table 1 Types (A: acronym, F: foreign loanword, S: sound mimicry, T: trendy expression)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. F</td>
<td>인플루언서 (in.pul.lu.uen.seo)</td>
<td>‘Influencer’, ‘person having many followers at SNS’ on social networks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A</td>
<td>자연추 (ja.yeun.seo.reo.un man.nam.chu.gu)</td>
<td>‘seeking unaffected meeting’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. F</td>
<td>플렉스 (peul.lek.seu)</td>
<td>‘Flex, purse person showing off his/her wealth’ (often used in rap music)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A/F</td>
<td>편스토랑 (peyon.seu.to.rang)</td>
<td>편익점 + 레스토랑 → Pyeon.eui.jeom ‘convenience store’ + re.seu.to.rang ‘restaurant’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. F</td>
<td>무스비 (mu.seu.bi)</td>
<td>From the popular expression in a Japanese animation, ‘무스비(結び. musubi) meaning ‘destiny’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. F</td>
<td>번아웃 증후군 (beon.aut jeung.hu.gun)</td>
<td>‘Burnout’ + jeung.hu.gun ‘syndrome’ → ‘Burnout Syndrome’ (exhausted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. S</td>
<td>비억 (beo.eok)</td>
<td>‘ideophonic rejoinder which reflects the sound before eating’ (e.g., beo.eok, gimchi.jjige ‘kimchi stew’ beo.eok, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. S/F</td>
<td>티키타카 (ti.ki.ta.ka)</td>
<td>From Spanish tiqui-taca meaning a strategy of a football game using quick short passes (Now, it is also used for a situation for amicable quick conversation.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. A</td>
<td>소떡소떡 (so.tteok.so.tteok)</td>
<td>소시지 + 떡 so.si.ji tteok ‘sausage’ ‘rice cake’ so.tteok.so.tteok ‘sausage+rice cake’ (reduplication)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. A</td>
<td>처돌이 (cheo.dol.i)</td>
<td>cheo-dol.da ‘get crazy’ + i ‘person’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Originated from a mascot of chicken café, it often means a person having a mania for something, e.g., Johnwick.cheo.dol.i ‘John Wick mania’ or do.thi.cheo.dol.i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. A/F</td>
<td>스포 (seu.po)</td>
<td>Acronym of the game ‘Special force’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g., seu.po haja ‘Let’s play the game special force.’) Acronym of ‘(movie) spoiler’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Example</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. A</td>
<td><code>열죽아</code> (eol.juk.a) - Don’t tell the overall story of a movie in advance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. F</td>
<td><code>까멜리아</code> (kkamellia) - Name of a store on a KBS drama, i.e., 'camellia' meaning 'waiting, ardent love'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. S</td>
<td><code>쓰앵님</code> (sseu.aeng.nim) - Ideophonic coinage, reflecting seon.saeng.nim (선생님) 'Mr. Sir'. The popularity came from a drama in which seon.saeng.nim was pronounced as sseu.aeng.nim.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. A</td>
<td><code>등드름</code> (deung.deu.reum) - <code>등</code> + <code>드름</code> - <code>pimple</code> on one’s back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. F</td>
<td><code>밈</code> (mim) - 'meme'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. A</td>
<td><code>파이어족</code> (pa.i.eo.jok) - 'Fi (Financial Independence)' + 'Retire Early' + jok 'tribe' - People in the 30's or 40's who take early retirement after achieving financial independence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. A</td>
<td><code>꾸안꾸</code> (kku.an.kku) - <code>꾸</code> + <code>민</code> <code>골</code> + <code>꾸</code> + <code>민</code> - unclear if makeup is put on or not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. A</td>
<td><code>만반잘부</code> (mam.man.jal.bu) - <code>만나서</code> <code>반가워</code> <code>잘</code> <code>부탁해</code> - Nice to meet you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. T</td>
<td><code>나만없어고양이</code> (na.mam.eop.seo go.yang.i) - Everybody has a cat, except me. It represents a person who is envious of those who have cats.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. A/F</td>
<td><code>유하</code> (yu.ha) - Youtube + hi (It is often used in one-person mass media, e.g., Youtube-gam.i.da 'worth being put on 'Youtbe'.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. A</td>
<td><code>학종</code> (hak.jong) - <code>school report</code> 'comprehensive' 'assessment' - a qualitative assessment report for student’s overall performance. It is used as an essential evaluation basis for college entrance exam.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 23. F | 유니콘기업 | yu.ni.kon + gi.eop  
'unicorn' 'company'
→ an unlisted start-up company of which the enterprise value exceeds one billion dollars. |
| 24. A | 존맛탱 | jon.mas.taeng  
'good' 'taste' 'thing' → 'very tasty'
(A similar example is 졸귀탱 jol.gwi.taeng 'very cute'.)  
It is also often used as a Romanized acronym, i.e., JMT. |
| 25. S | 라떼는 말이야 | la.tte.neun mal.i.ya  
It is a satirical expression of na.ttae.neun mal.i.ya 'when I was (somebody important)', from which the first part, na.ttae, is changed to la.tte '(café) latte' due to the similarity in sounds. (An initial liquid is realized as [n] in Korean, so /l/ and /n/ are pronounced the same. v [This process discouraging initial liquids in Korean is called “Initial avoidance”[15]]. The younger generation even go further, making 'Latte is horse', as the Korean word mal 'a story or situation' and the English word horse are homophonous in Korean. |
| 26. T | 몸신 | mon.sin  
It means somebody who has succeeded in making a healthy body. (It is quite similar to 몸장 mom.jjang 'a muscle-bound person.') |
| 27. A | 오늘아놈 | o.u nol jul a.neun nom.in.ga  
'Oh' 'able to play' 'guy'
'Somebody who knows how to play well' |
| 28. A | 인만추 | in.man.chu  
'man-made' 'meeting' 'seek'
It means 'seeking for a meeting which is planned by a third party'. |
| 29. T | 수능금지곡 | su.neung.ryeok.si.heom geum.ji.gok  
'Scholastic aptitude test’ ‘forbidden song’
It means those songs which linger in the head, distracting students’ attention while they are preparing for the SAT or taking an examination. |
| 30. T/F? | 세포마켓 | se.po ma.ket  
It indicates a 'cell market', i.e., a type of marketing which makes use of online marketing. |
As we have already assumed, the most dominant pattern of new coinage is an acronym in which only a part of each word (or phrase) is picked up for combination. In most cases, the initial syllable is chosen for combination.  

(17) a. 내리마니라떼는 인편
  *la.te.neun na.m.i.ya ‘When I was someone…’
  It is a satirical expression of na.ttae.neun ma.i.ya ‘when I was (somebody important)’ which is frequently used by the older generation. It literally means ‘(When I was young or somebody important), my situation was…. ’ The first part, na.ttae, is changed to la.te which sounds like the popular drink ‘(café) latte’. (An initial liquid is realized as /n/ in Korean, so /l/ and /n/ are pronounced the same. [This process discouraging initial liquids in Korean is called “Initial avoidance”(Ahn 2010).]) This type of pun even produces the expression, ‘Latte is horse’ as the Korean word mal ‘a story or situation’ and the English word horse are homophonous in Korean. The final type of new coinage is the use of trendy expressions, mostly from TV programs, e.g., dramas or talk shows. The following example, for example, became famous, representing a person who is envious of those who have cats. It reflects the current social trend in Korea where a lot of people have pet cats (or dogs).

(19) 라떼는 말이야
la.te.neun ma.i.ya ‘When I was someone…’

b. 면역검사 만남 축구
  *na.man.chu ha.da.ta ‘a person who manages pet store’<
  *na.mam.chu ‘cell market’ (<

There are many cases of new coinages making use of foreign loanwords. The popularity of foreign (especially English) words can be observed even in sound mimicry.

(20) 나만 없어요양이
na.mam.eop.so go.yang.i ‘Everybody has a cat, except me.’

We can also find certain expression reflecting the hot issues the youngsters have to face. For examples, the following case means “earworms”, those songs which linger in the head, distracting students’ attention while they are preparing SAT or taking examination.

(21) 수학능력시험
su.hak.uneung.ryeok.si.heom
geum.ji.gok ‘Scholastic aptitude test’

The following table shows the categorical distribution of the newly coined expressions, along with the overlapping pattern.

Table 2 Categorical distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Total (30)</th>
<th>Overlap with acronym</th>
<th>Overlap with Foreign word</th>
<th>Overlap with sound mimicry</th>
<th>Overlap with trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign word</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound mimic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trendy expression</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among the 30 most representative examples of new coinage, we can notice that acronyms make up half of the new coinages, while all the patterns overlap with the new coinage with foreign words. So, taking the overlapping examples into account, we can show the distributional pattern of the new coined expressions as follows, in which the most dominant pattern is the acronym which is followed by the new coinage with foreign words.

Figure 1 Distributional pattern

The overlapping pattern of each category can be better shown in the following diagram which shows that the 15 acronyms are the most dominant pattern making up 50 %, followed by the 12 coinages with foreign words. Although all four categories overlap with other areas, the usage of foreign words (marked in orange) is observed in all categories, which reflects the preference of the foreign words in the speech of the younger generation.

4. ILARITY: YAMINJEONGUM

The final two examples in (22) show a very interesting type which is now called Yaminjeongum (야민정음 and 雅民正音 in Korean and Chinese letters). It indicates a writing method used in internet chatting in which a certain syllable is written as a different but a similar looking one. For example, 귀엽 (gwi yeop) ‘cute’ looks similar to the meaningless 커엽 (keo yeop) and 명작 (myeong jak) ‘masterpiece’ can be misread as 명작 (ting jak) orthographically. This (humorous) misreading can lead to the acronym to which an English word can be added. (This peculiar process is called Yaminjeongum which will be shown again later.)

(22) 커엽 귀엽 ‘cute’
keo yeop gwi yeop
것님작 God+명작 (=명작) ‘divine’
gat ting masterpiece’
jak gat ‘god’ ttingjak (=myeong jak) ‘masterpiece’

In addition to these new neologisms in 2017, the following examples are often used as well.
a. 유쾌 ‘gaiety’ ➔ 웃쾌
명언 ‘maxim’ ➔ 명언 [16]
명명이 ‘doggy’ ➔ 명덩이 [14]

A very popular examples is the ‘meaningless’ name of a noodle product. The ‘meaningless’ name <괄도 네념닌 gwaldo nenemtin> humorously indicates <괄도 비빔면 paldo bibimmyeon ‘spicy mixed noodle> based on Yaminjeongum since the orthographic shapes of the former look like the latter in Korean alphabet. [The name of the new word-formation process Yaminjeongum (야민정음) was made by changing the initial word of Hunminjeongum (훈민정음). The Hunminjeongum ‘correct sound for teaching people’ is a document describing an entirely new and native script for the Korean language. It was made and promulgated to the public by King Sejong the Great in the 15th century.]

b. 괄도 비빔면 ➔ 괄도 냉면
pal.do bi.bim.myeon gwal.do. ne.nem.ttin
‘8 provinces’ ‘spicy noodles’ ? ?

This orthographic similarity/(possible) misreading made this product more popular, so that the company is now using the (meaningless) name (네념닌) as a new noodle brand (괄도 냉면) as shown in the following illustration.

(25) a. b.
(26) New brand from orthographic similarities

Palindrome vs. New brand

A similar example is the (humorous) RTA noodle as the Korean writing looks like RTA when we look at it upside down.

When the product is put upside down, the name ‘racon’ shows like · which looks like the Roman letters RTA. Due to this humorous reading, many young people call it RTA noodle and the company has filed an official application for a new brand name (Hyundai Economics Newspaper, August 28, 2019).

The following drink product (in fact, a hangover helper) is also well-known as IdH, as this drink product is made of ground pear which is written as StdString which can be misread as IdH. This mispronounced name was also officially licensed as IdH and Idh in 2018 (Hyundai Economics Newspaper, August 28, 2019).

As English expressions or Roman letters are commonly used in Korea, this type of neologism can be very popular, especially among young people. Also, the neologism in the area of food and drink is very productive as shown in J-S. Lee [8], taking 7.1 % in 2002-2006 and 5.3 % in 2012-2016.

5. CONCLUSITON AND FURTHER EXTENSION

So far, we have discussed the patterns of new neologisms in Korean, based on the recent data collected since 2017. We first categorized the data into several groups in which the acronym is the most preferred type for new coinages. Then, displaying the statistical distribution of the major types of new coinage, we argued for the young people’s dominant preference of the acronyms. We also showed that the acronyms can be coined, based not only on syllables but also on consonants including the so-called “zero” consonant <o>. We claimed that this unique consonantal acronym is possible due to the unique Korean writing system which goes back to the King Sejong period in the 15th century, requiring all the three CVC slots to be filled in orthographically to form a complete syllable in that period. Furthermore, the unique graphic characteristics of the Korean writing system is reflected in a new trendy neologism, so called “Yaminjeongeum”, creating those words whose orthographic forms look similar to the original words only in shape, without carrying any meaning.

The main tendencies in recent neologisms can be defined as a new bilingualism as the young people occasionally code-switch between the standard usages and neologisms. This new trend is basically initiated by the younger generation, e.g., school children and teen agers. They enjoy using the newly coined words to highlight homonemty, i.e., for sense of closeness within a peer group. In some cases, moreover, they also enjoy the vulgarity of slangs.

(29) 네넴띤 (literal meaning ‘prostitute’)
In these examples, the literal meaning of 네넴띤 is changed to ‘a head’, while the second example 옥수수 ‘corns’ is also metaphorically used as ‘teeth’.

This vulgarity has been developed further to the “verbal violence”, so-called 페어드림 pae.deu.rip, which represents an expression to imply parents, grandparents, or teachers in a non-ethical way as <pae> is a contracted form of <pae.ryun> ‘immorality’. So, it is a hybrid clipping of Korean + English words, meaning ‘non-ethical ad-lip’.

Below are some examples of verbal violence.

As this verbal violence mostly employs those words indicating “mother”, it is often called “a maternal insult” (also referred to as “yo mama” joke). Insults can be based on any negative impression, such as obesity, height, age, race, poverty, stupidity, unattractiveness, etc. It is a common type of offensive expression, as compared toother types of insults, “your mother” insults are especially likely to incite violence [17].

The usage of verbal violence is now widespread in Korean politics since the current ruling party seized the power in 2017.

(31) 대빠귀 dae.kae.mun ‘blind followers of Mun.jae.in (current Korean president)’

(32) 달창 dal chang ‘blind followers of the president and the ruling party’

(33) 놈그마 neu.geum.ma ‘your mother’

As this verbal violence mostly employs those words indicating “mother”, it is often called “a maternal insult” (also referred to as “yo mama” joke). Insults can be based on any negative impression, such as obesity, height, age, race, poverty, stupidity, unattractiveness, etc. It is a common type of offensive expression, as compared to other types of insults, “your mother” insults are especially likely to incite violence [17].
teul.ttak '(hateful) anti-government old activists' 'dentures' 'rattling sound'
(literal meaning 'rattling sound of dentures, i.e., oldperson'

Due to the political controversies, these expressions are not listed even in the open dictionary, yet. Nonetheless, the tendency for these political verbal violence is on the rise as the whole society is being divided into two opposing political areas. Being based on the younger generations’ innovative coinages, the usage of these expressions are now widespread and are certain to continue for a certain period of time.

REFERENCES

[1] Crystal David, Txtng, the gr8 db8, Oxford University Press, 2008.


