Abstract

Literacy studies within both "autonomous" and "ideological" traditions, to use Street's (1984) terminology, have tended to focus on Western alphabet using societies and assume that literacy, however defined, is an all or nothing matter. Societies in which varieties and degrees of literacy are possible (indeed ordinary) have hitherto largely been ignored. Japan and South Korea are such cases, with separate but functionally interrelated writing systems, used for communicatively disparate purposes, differential mastery of which, consequently, has social and economic repercussions. In these and perhaps similar cases, literacy is, rather than discrete and unitary, always multiplicitous and variable. Different "literacies" entail different social and, some would argue (Unger, 1984 and 1987) cognitive consequences.

국제회의 전 빠른 독고 관광/ 전세계적으로 빠른 독고 있으며, 특히 최근들어서는 있는 있으며, 특히 제최되고 있는 서 휴양을 경해 개최되고 있는 서 제주지역은 회의 개최지로 어서 제주지역은 갖고 있다고 분석을

### Literacy Assessments in Polyscriptal Societies: Chinese Character Literacy in Korea and Japan R.A. Brown

Higher levels of literacy are generally thought to be, if not prerequisites to national development, at least positively correlated with it. Since national development is assumed to be a good thing, many people, it appears, deduce from this that literacy qua literacy is invariably and necessarily good, and therefore that more literacy is better than less. High literacy levels become, in and of themselves, objects of national pride and sources of national prestige.<sup>1</sup>

Japan, for example, is frequently praised for its ninety-nine percent literacy rate, which, if accurate, is indeed impressive, given the notoriously labyrinthine writing system used in that country. Not wishing to be outdone by their archnemeses, Koreans are increasingly claiming that they too, have equally, or almost equally, impressive levels of literacy.

The problem is that there are no reliable figures on literacy levels in either Japan or Korea. The ninety-nine percent literacy figure so often and guilelessly quoted (see for example Vogel, 1979:161) is provided by the Japanese Ministry of Education and represents nothing more than elementary school enrollments. But being enrolled in an elementary school is not the same as learning 1,500 to 3,200 *kanji*. The Ministry assumes that all who are enrolled will eventually go on to learn what they are supposed to. This, as Rohlen (1983) shows, does not always happen.

It is highly improbable that elementary school enrollments can serve as a valid measure of literacy in Japan. Incipient acquisition of literacy (literacy being defined minimally as the ability to read a newspaper with comprehension) begins at that time but is not complete until at least the ninth, but more probably, the twelveth grade (see below). Equating elementary school enrollment with literacy presupposes that: those who are enrolled actually attend, those who attend actually learn what they are taught and those who learn what they are taught retain what they have learned. It is far from obvious

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that all three conditions are met in fact, as DeFrancis, (1984:217) points out.

Korean literacy rates are frequently cited as ninety-eight percent Korea Herald (April 26, 1988); Time magazine (August, 1988); Yearn (1987:325); or even higher (Choi, 1989). These, following the Japanese example, probably also represent elementary school (kukminhakyo) enrollments (at best; however, the three concerned departments within the Korean Ministry of Education (Daehakhaegongkwa, Changhakshil and Chundungkyoyukkwa) all deny having any information on the subject (personal correspondence, June 13, 1989).

However, even if those levels could be reliably ascertained, little could be inferred from them because both literacy (what skills are required in order to be, or to be called, literate) and (what might be termed) "metaliteracy" (what one can do with those skills) are very different in Japan and Korea. "Korean literacy," however defined, is incommensurable with anything found in Japan, because, *inter alia*, the Korean and Japanese orthographic systems, though superficially similar, are used in very different ways.<sup>2</sup> Comparison are consequentally nugatory.

It should be noted that the notion of literacy itself (the ability to read and write) as commonly used in relation to Korean and especially Japanese, is unclear since "reading" and "writing" involve different kinds of skills and levels of capability in those countries, where "knowing" a character is a matter of degree. Writing a character (being able to reproduce it manually), pronouncing it, knowing the "meaning" it is likely to contribute to a novel word-formation and knowing the actual words it is in fact used to write, are different and independent abilities.

The concept of literacy is especially nebulous in Japan, where two distinct but intertwined writing systems are concomitantly used, actually two coextensive but functionally differentiated scripts, i.e., *hiragana* and *katakana*<sup>3</sup> (Backhouse, 1984; Miller, 1967), along with morphosyllabic *kanji* (DeFrancis, 1984). One may be "literate" in one, two or all three scripts. One may be able to read and write, or merely read. In the case of *kanji*, where characters generally represent several morphemes, one may be familiar with all or merely some of them. Indeed, the Education Ministry counts as literate anyone who is able to handle in the most minimal sense any of the three

scripts<sup>4</sup> (Sakamoto and Makita, 1973:444). Since virtually nothing is written in just one script, one could, by government criteria at least, be "literate," yet be able to read almost nothing.

Measuring Korean literacy is considerably less problematic,<sup>5</sup> primarily because hanja (Chinese characters) are no longer extensively used in mass communication print media. Moreover, even when they are used, they are used in a less integrated ("mixed"), and more consistent, hence more predictable fashion: only nouns are written in hanja, and nouns of a limited sort, under certain conditions; with few exceptions, each graph has exactly one pronunciation (see Kim[a], 1987:334-6; Kim [b], 1987:334-5; Grant, 1982:338 for lists of these exceptions). Hanja and hangul are not combined within the same lexical unit, as kanji and kana are in Japanese, to distinguish different words. In contrast, Japanese kanji are used to write most verb and adjective stems, most nouns and many adverbs. In addition, most kanji have multiple pronunciations and meanings, many of them completely arbitrary (Horodeck, 1987:81; Paradis et al, 1984:1-18). (Sixty percent of the jooyoo kanji have both Sino-Japanese and native Japanese readings; thirty-eight percent have monosyllabic Chinese based on-readings only; two percent have native Japanese kun-readings only: see Backhouse, 1984:223.) Unlike Japanese kanji, individual hanja do not represent different morphemes.

### **Uses of Literacy**

In Japan, reading material and documents of the most mundane sort, such as bank books, rail pass applications, registration forms (of which there are many), menus, racing forms, scandal sheets, flyers promoting illicit services, comic books, sports news, movie subtitles, not to mention magazines and newspapers (see figures 1, 3, 5 and 7), all contain kanji, varying only, across vocabulary items, by the estimated age of the target readership. All presuppose a recognition knowledge of, if not the 1.945 jooyoo and 166 supplemental "name" kanji, much less the 3,213 that actually occur in print (Horodeck, 1987:76), at least 1,500 of them (which suffice to read almost anything that will ever appear in Japanese print). With the exception of telegrams, no variety of text is systematically written in other than the normal kanji kanamajiribun style, with kanji, hirgana and katakana each performing their usual grammatical and lexical function (see Backhouse, 1984:219-228 for a brief introduction).

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Figure 1. Page from the Tokyo telephone directory. Every listing is comprised of Chinese characters (kanji).



Figure 2.
Page from the Seoul telephone directory. No listing comprises Chinese characters (hanja).

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Figure 3.
Japanese pay statement.
With the exception of two words ("code" and the name of the company which has been eliminated), every word is written with kanji. No word is written in kana, and only one kana actually appears.



Figure 5.
Japanese saving account passbook. *Kanji* are copiously used, in the normal mixed fashion.

### 定期預金記帳方法のご案内

この通帳への記帳は次により行ないます。おわかりにくい点は当店窓口へご照会ください。

- ・この通帳にお預りした定期預金には、それぞれ「お預り番号」を表示して記帳します。 お支払いのさいは、その預金の「お預り番号」を表示して記帳します。
- ・ご継続の場合は、ご継続前の定期預金の「お預り番号」を引続き表示してご継続後の定期 預金のみを記帳します。
- ・2年定期預金の中間払利息で作成する中間利息定期預金は、もとの2年定期預金と同じ「お 預り番号」を表示して記帳します。
- ・2 年定期預金と中間利息定期預金を自動的にご継続する場合は、それぞれのお利息を含めた合計金額により記帳します。
  - また、両方の定期預金を同時にお支払いする場合は、元金の合計金額により記帳します。
- ・ご継続(お支払い)の場合、ご継続前(お支払前)の定期預金には、ご継続済(お支払済)の表示は行ないません。

Figure 4.
Korean pay statement.
Every word is written in hangul. No hanja are used.

※급

호: 조교수 A

13-2

<b>*</b> 9	입금계좌빈	호:				1990. 7
	급	01	직 위 급 여	직무수당	초과감의료	연구비
지	409	950	74500	0	0	795400
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LH	50	000	0			1329850
역	정근수당(	1 %	상 어_			송 개
			484450			1814300

	갑 근 세	재항출연금	주 민 세	방위세	교(이) 현대
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LH	0	43270	93480	0	14120
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	0	0		231860	1582440

Figure 6.
Korean saving account passbook. No hanja are used.

### 자유저축예금약관

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開する。 に掲載さ. である。 新聞の解説記事そ して紹介して 八は今こう 今週から好評であっ の連載 考 た世論調査の える」 いとうというも のまま 韓国の新 はまに翻訳 日の結果を は国の新聞 た「韓国 0

る。 話アンケー 州島を除く全国一六〇〇名の電 付けに提載された世論調査(洛 かを見てい 今回は 「東亜日報」五月 ただきたい の結果を紹介す 八日

びとが今、

激動する

何をどう考えている韓国の中で韓国のよ

3

かった。 たほどである 難局」と表現せざるをえな 悉大統領はそ 時局収拾の 民自党の発足後も不動産の暴 労使紛争の頻発と盧泰愚政 そ ところはまっ せざるをえなかっの事態を「総体的 前日に行 たくな で わ れた か 慮泰

えても九%に満たな やっている方だ」とい 百人に一人でしかなく、 領が「とてもよく とみる人はわずか 詳しくは今 ただきたいが、 与野党三党が連合して たいが、 盧泰愚大統 一つ後の調査結果を見 96 P って 人を加 つまり 「よく いる

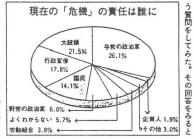
党のそれぞ 議席も三分の二以上を占めるに 「民自党」を発足させ、 う何とも惨憺たる結果となっ の支持率が たっているにもかかわらず、 は党首の去っ れよりも低い 野党の平民党、 わず た仮称・民主 = 数字と 国会の 九% あ

力の支持率もけっして高くはなだからといってそうした野党軸面していることを伺わせるが、 党である民自党が大きな壁に直 したことは発足早 もけっして高くはなってそうした野党勢 A.

> めて不安な状況に置か中で頼るべき物(者) ようである。

亜日報」の解説記事をできる阴 (編集部

う質問をしてみた。その回答をみるとなったその責任が主に誰にあるかとい 3 今回の世論調査ではまず 「総体的難局」に直面するように回の世論調査ではまず韓国がいわ 的難局の責任は



年齢が高くなれど %、五○代が一四・八光)にその責任 「与党の政治家」(二○代が三一・六 その一方、若い層であればあるほど があると答えて ○%)の責任を多く指摘している。 いる。八分) ばなるほど「大 ・四%、二〇代が二〇 、統領」

大統領特別談話の効果はあるかった統領特別談話の対況がうまく収拾されるである「総体的難局」と指摘された国家の危機的状況がうまく収拾されるである「総体的難局」と指摘された国家を 大統領特別談話の効果はあるか

びとは 「総体的危機」 れてい 極 3 0

離局を収拾できる 25.3%

\*よくわからない 8.5%

虚大統領の特別談話の効果

離局収拾は難しい

66.2%

以下の文章は例によって

が四八 一般的に既得権層と 七%) から 一〇代四 が五九・ うと 三〇代が 七%、 五〇八が六 6 à

らない」という意見がもっとも多かって政府が強力に法を執行しなければなてのような難局に対処するためには 析している。 の難局の収拾が非常に困難で 名中の七名以上がや る経営管理専門職の従事者までも一 と答えており (七三・ (七三・四%)、そやはり時局収拾は難 あると分

た(四 望む国民の声であるとみると 生治安体制の確立、 ・1%)が、 法の厳正な執行を これは 政府の民

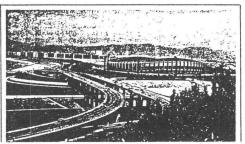


Figure throughout). Japanese newspaper (kanji Typical magazine style

top

Charles .

top

# 済州, 会議 - 세미나 開催地로 각광

올들어 전국규모이상 각종회의 134차례

제주지역에서는 피서철을 맞아 전국 규모의 회의,세미나동 각종 행사가 잇따라 열려 국내와 국제회의 개최지로서 밝은 천망을 보여주고 있다. 판면업계에 따르면 최근 몇년사이이지역에서 각종 국내외회의가 계속 열려 회의 개최지로서의 자제역을 방

휘하고 있다는 것이다.

7월들어 이지역에서 계획되고 있 거나 이미 개최된 천국 규모 이상의 회의를 보면 한국공업표준협회(회장 집선종)가 지난 24일부터 27일까지 서开포 프립스호텔에서 조순 천부총 리, 박용도 공업천홍청장동이 참석한 가운데 제 9 회 하게최고경영자세이 나들 열었고, 같은 기간에 한국능를 협회(회장 송인상)도 제주신라호텔에 서 집영상 민자당대표최고위원등 저 업인사를 특별강연연사로 초청, 제16 차 하계최고경영자 세미나를 열었다.

또 전국경제인연합회(회장 유창순) 도 지난 25일부터 28일까지 서귀포 KAL호텔에서 제4회 최고경영자세 미나를 개최한 바 있으며, 한국개발 연구원(KID, 회장 박용준)도 오는 8 월 1일부터 4일까지 제주신라호텔에 서 KID 하계최고경영자심포지엄을 계 확하고 있다.

또 한국인간개발연구원(원장 장만기)이 지난 21일 계주호텔신라에서 제 11차 언간개발전에자세이나를 개최 24일까지 강연동 각종 행사를 했으 대 태항상공회의소(회장 김상하)도 지난 19일부터 22일까지 서귀포

휴양지로 각광을 받고 있는데다 회의 시설도 훌륭해 전국 규모나 국제회의 를 치르는데 불편이 없기 때문이다.

제주도내에는 현재 30개 판광숙박 업소 가운데 25개소가 각종 회의를 열수 있는 큰 회의실을 갖추고 있고



제추그랜드관광호텔, 하얏트호텔, 제수 신라호텔등은 국제회의를 열수 있는 5개 국어 동시통역시설과 세계규모 외 회의실을 갖추고 있다.

한편 제주도는 이 지역을 국제회의 산업의 충심지로 육성키로 하고, 수 용태세확립에 주력하고 있는데 최근 몇년사이 각종 회의가 잇따라 열려 잠재력이 있음을 실충해 주고 있다.

지난해 상반기에는 1백1차례의 각종 회의가 유치돼 9천3백28명의 인 인사가 제주를 찾았고 울들어도 상반 기증에 1백34차례에 걸쳐 세미나동 각종 행사가 열려 9천8백8명이 제 주를 다녀갔다.

# NEWS FLASH

◆한국관광공시는 지난 24일 상오 11시 16층 소회의실에서 미주지역 취급여행사와 특급호텔 관계자들이참 석한 가운데 업계간당회를 개최.

한편 판광공사는 지난 21일부터 24 일까지 미국 뉴율리언스에서 개최된 '90세계국제회의협회(IACVB) 연차 총회에도 참가한데 이어 7.28~8.6일 까지 하와이 호놀률루에서 열리는 하 와이 한국특산품전에 부스를 설치하 고 한국관광을 홍보

◆대한항공은 사탈린에 전세기를 한항, 지난 26일 상으 10시 사탈린 동포 위문단등 60여명을 태우고 김 포를 출발, 소련 유즈노 사탈린스크공 항에 하오 3시30분 도착.

이 공연단은 사할린에 머물며 위문 공연을 한후 다시 전세기편을 이용해 8월1일 7시 서울로 돌아온다. ◇제주新羅가 신혼부부들을 대상으

토 허니운 패키지프로그램을 개발 오는 8월 21일부터 내년 3월까지 판매, 사파이어, 에메랄드, 루비, 다이아몬 드A, 다이아몬드B등 5종류의 허니 문패키지는 각각 아침이나 저녁식사 를 포함하고 있으며, 1박2일에 10 만8천원부터 3박4일까지 최고 68 만5천원으로 다양한데, 그급승용차 서비스, 샴페인 및 와인 무료서비스 등이 따른다

◆미국의 3大항공사인 아메리칸, 유나이티드 델타 항공사가 89년도 미국 항공여객의 43%를 수송

이들 3 대사는 2000년대까지 미국 전체여객의 50%까지 수송할 것으로 항공업계에서는 전망하고 있는데, 그 것은 현재 미국 전체항공사들이 새로 주문한 2 천 1백51대의 최신 제트여 객기의 60%가 이들 3 사에서 차지 하고 있기 때문.

◆中国 水中오락공원이 8월2일 북경북동부 교외에 오픈된다고。

중국 최초의 이 수중 용궁은 길이 1백48째,록 11째,높이 6.5째의 터 널과 약 2천대의 중으로 돼있다는 것, 따라서 이 수중공원은 중국인은 물 은 의국인판광객의 주요 판광지가 될 것이라고 중국정부는 보고 있다고.

## 台湾, 対外 항공연계 망 확충 강화 2년내 国際航空社 4개사로 늘려

(台北 CNA=關合) 대만 정부가 최 단들이 보다 용통성있는 항문정책을 추진, 많은 나라들과의 항공연계 망을 확충하는데 적극적으로 나섬에 따라 알으로 수년뒤에는 대만의 하늘이 지 금보다도 더욱 복잡해질 것으로 건당 이처럼 대폭적인 노선 확장이 가시 화되고 있는 것은 대만 정부가 현재 항공협정을 맺고 있는 국가들과 상호 간에 복수의 항공사를 취항할 수 있 도록 허용하는 방향으로 협정을 대체 하려는 노력을 강화하고 있는 때목이

Kana alone may be used when the intended readers are too young to have learned the kanji that would ordinarily be used. For example, in some train stations there are signs saying yameyoo senro asobi (don't play on the tracks), with all characters written in hiragana (i.e., やめようせんろあそび). Normally, this would be written using four kanji, with kana for the suffixes, since the character for aso-bi (i.e., 遊び) is taught in the third grade, the characters for senro (i.e., 線 and 路) in the fourth grade. Thus, anyone who has made it that far will know, or at least be expected to know, these characters. Yet the sign is written entirely in hiragana. Apparently, the railway authorities feel that those who are most likely to be tempted to play on train tracks are just those people who, by reason of youth, have not yet made it past the third grade.

Nevertheless, children are introduced to *kanji* as soon as they are able to read *hiragana*, sometimes sooner (Sakamoto, 1975:243-244). *Manga* (comics) serve this purpose well.<sup>6</sup> *Furigana* are invariably appended, thereby redeeming the material as "educational" rather than merely entertaining. Sakamoto and Makita (1973:446-447) cite one study, done as early as 1954, to the effect that "children" (the number was not specified) could "read" (what that meant was not operationalized), even before their first year of elementary school, on average: 30 *hiragana*, 5.8 *katakana*, 5.4 *kanji* and 7.9 Arabic numerals. They conclude (somewhat redundantly) that "family concern for the reading of children greatly affects their reading ability at this stage."

In Korea, *hanja* are not widely used (see figures 2, 4, 6 and 8). This was not always so. According to Kim (1970:79): "... more than half the entire population today cannot manage more than the bare minimum number, say a thousand, of Chinese characters, while nearly all the significant reading material including newspapers and periodicals . . . . is packed with what in the old days passed as 'real letters' or 'true scripts.'" Between 1957 and 1964 and again between 1970 and 1972 *hanja* were banned by government decree (Kim, 1978:247). Instruction in public schools was not resumed until 1974. *Hanja* have been taught as a required subject for middle and high school students since that time (see Brown, 1990).

Hanja appear without annotation in college textbooks and scholarly treatises, on the writer's assumption that potential

readers are or should be able to decipher them. But the great majority of mass circulation publications contain no, or very few, hanja. Magazines, as a rule, contain none. With one exception, newspapers use hanja, but relatively few, limited to names of well-known places, people, political groups or government agencies, and certain topical politico-economic and sociological concepts, such as t'ongil (unification) and t'ugi (land speculation). The proportion of hanja to total nouns varies according to subject, but is more or less consistent across papers. Hanja are used to underscore the importance of the topic under discussion; articles about more important topics contain more hanja, and the presence of more hanja implies that the topic is more important. Hanja are also used much more copiously when the topic is "traditional," or "cultural," as opposed to contemporary or popular (in roughly the way kanji and katakana are used in Japan to establish product images).

A typical newspaper article on a subject of moderate gravity will contain 260-340 monomorpheme noun tokens; of these, fifteen to twenty percent will be printed in hanja. The following articles concerning a proposal to develop two small cities on the outskirts of Seoul, appeared in the May 28, 1989 editions of all of the major Korean daily newspapers and they are typical in their character usage. One article, in the Chosun Ilbo, contains 262 single morpheme noun tokens of which thirty-eight (14.5 percent) are expressed in hanja, 44 percent occuring more than once; of the 106 multimorpheme nominal expressions, sixteen (15 percent) are written in hanja. Another, in the Segye Ilbo, contain 335 single morpheme noun tokens of which seventy (21 percent) are expressed in hanja, 43 percent occuring more than once; of the eighty-six multimorpheme nominal expressions, thirty (35 percent) are written in hanja. Those that appear most frequently, in both articles, represent the names of the two cities whose development is under consideration. Other newspapers (such as Kukmin Ilbo, Seoul Shinmun and Hankuk Ilbo) tend to more closely resemble the Segve Ilbo. (Table 1 contains a summary.)

Table 1	Hanja Use	in Korean	Newspapers

oun Token Totals		of <i>Hanja</i>	Noun Token Totals	
62	14.5% (38)	44%	106	15% (16)
35	21.0% (70)	43%	86	35% (30)
663	52	14.5% (38)	14.5% (38) 44%	14.5% (38) 44% 106

Even relatively uneducated people (those with nine or fewer years of schooling; as of 1985, 39.5 percent of the population, Korean Educational Development Institute, 1987:23), can read most of these hanja, since all that is required is an ability to recognize a few recurring characters in narrowly circumscribed topical domains. Since the graphs usually occur in combinations of two, three or four (individually representing morphemes, together forming a word), recognizing just one is frequently sufficient to identify the intended word, in turn making it possible to surmise the other characters. In the Chosun Ilbo article mentioned above, there are only two single-graph tokens, that is, two occurences of ( 虛 ) (pronounced 'no'), the family name of the present president of South Korea, along with two occurences of his full name, (盧泰恩), each time accompanied by daetongnyong (대통령) 'president,' written in hangul. The Segye Ilbo article contains four occurences of the same graph, in addition to one occurrence of (校) (kw), three occurrences of (市) (shi) and (洞) (tong) and two occurrences of  $(\mathbb{R})(kun)$  and  $(\mathbb{E})(up)$ , all, in effect, bound morphemes. It might further be assumed that readers of particular articles will have suitable lexical resources on hand. For example, anyone interested enough in the problem of real estate speculation to read an article about it would certainly be familiar with the word "t'ugi." It also seems likely that they will be able to recognize two hanja—in that unique combination—used to write it, particularly when it is used in the context of a report on that very matter.

This conjecture can be tested rather simply by giving readers a hanja close test,8 deleting the relevant hanja, and asking the reader to supply an appropriate replacement word. And in fact, the results of just such an experiment conducted by this writer indicate that readers can often infer the missing words or adequate equivalents. To spell it out, hanja-illiterate readers are generally able to read with little loss of comprehension materials (newspapers, at least) that contain the customary number of ordinarily used hanja (see note 13). Table 2 shows the results of such a test using an article on the subject of education, containing fifteen deletions (two or more hanja forming a single word are counted as a single deletion). Thirty-six percent of the missing characters, or semantic equivalents, were correctly supplied by the test group as a whole (i.e., 51 subjects x 15 items; 275 correct out of 765 possible responses).

T	a	h	le	2
	а	N	10	_

## Percentage of deleted characters inferred in cloze test with Chinese characters.

		А	Gloss	В	С	D	Е	F
	1	學位	diploma	90%	0%	8%	2%	90%
		大學						
	2		university	61	20	18	2	81
	3	履修	finish course	65	29	4	2	94
	4	歷史	history	0	0	65	35	0
	5	言語學	linguistics	0	0	59	41	0
	6	哲學	philosophy	2	0	49	49	2
	7	文學史	literary history	16	71	12	2	87
	8	語	language	67	4	22	8	71
A = target character(s)	9	帝國	empire	27	0	69	4	27
B = exact character(s) C = semantically equivalent characters	10	自由人	liberal person	14	0	84	2	14
D = incorrect characters	11	大學	university	9	0	71	17	9
E = no response F = total of B + C	12	物理學	physics	22	0	49	29	22
(See endnote 14 for remarks on	13	大學	university	22	0	51	27	22
category D.)	14	理學士	scientist	22	2	59	18	24
Subjects numbered fifty-one.	15	農學	agricultural science	0	0	41	59	0

A second similar but shorter test using a book review concerning the origins of the Korean War, containing nine deletions, is confirmatory (table 3). Here, sixty-eight percent of the deleted or equivalent characters (as above) were correctly supplied by the test group (54 subjects x 9 items; 329 correct out of 486 possible responses).

A third test concerning automobile exports yielded similar results: slightly more than fifty-two percent of the deleted or equivalent characters were correctly supplied (74 subjects x 24

Table 3	Percentage of deleted characters inferred in cloze test with Chinese characters.									
		А	Gloss	В	С	D	Е	F		
	1	冷戰	cold war	67%	0%	26%	7%	67%		
	2	韓半島	Korean Peninsula	29	44	33	2	73		
	3	要因	cause	50	39	9	2	89		
A = target character(s)	4	代價	cost	61	2	31	6	68		
B = exact character(s)	5	韓半島	Korean Peninsula	30	6	48	17	36		
C = semantically equivalent characters	6	南侵	invasion south	78	11	6	6	89		
D = incorrect characters E = no response	7	南韓	South Korea	76	2	18	4	78		
F = total of B + C	8	要因	cause	56	17	18	9	73		
Subjects numbered fifty-four.	9	韓半島	Korean Peninsula	17	41	31	11	58		

items; out of 1,767 possible responses; 958 (54.2 percent) were correct (see table 4).

This leaves open the further possibility that even with major portions of the text missing, a good deal of "comprehension" can occur, based on inferences from real-world knowledge and "commonsense." Extracting (or constructing) meaning from texts is not, after all, algorithmic.<sup>9</sup>

(Precisely the same test could be done using Japanese subjects and texts; since this has not been done, we say nothing about the capacity of *kanji*-illiterate Japanese readers to read normal Japanese texts.)<sup>10</sup>

Table 4	Percentage of deleted characters inferred in cloze test with Chinese characters.								
		А	Gloss	В	С	D	Е	F	
	1	現代	hyundai	24%	0%	72%	1%	24%	
	2	現代	hyundai	66	0	31	3	66	
	3	韓國	Korea	80	0	16	4	80	
	4	現代	hyundai	92	0	8	0	92	
	5	現代	hyundai	96	0	4	0	96	
	6	自動車	car	7	91	3	0	7	
	7	立志	determination	40	0	35	25	40	
	8	現代	hyundai	96	1	3	0	97	
	9	説	public opinion	51	21	26	3	69	
	10	現代	hyundai	59	11	25	5	70	
	11	自動車	car	76	3	6	14	79	
	12	位相	status	16	0	69	16	16	
	13	現代	hyundai	85	3	8	4	88	
	14	自動車	car	75	1	12	11	76	
	15	精工	microengineering	76	4	9	11	80	
	16	北韓	North Korea	30	0	63	7	30	
	17	分架作業	subcontractor	8	1	82	8	8	
	18	現代	hyundai	97	0	0	3	97	
	19	現代	hyundai	93	1	3	3	94	
A = target character(s)	20	自動車	car	74	4	12	10	78	
B = exact character(s) C = semantically equivalent characters	21	美國市場	US market	26	4	40	30	30	
D = incorrect characters E = no response	22	苦戰	hard struggle	24	0	32	43	24	
F = total of B + C	23	後繼	succession	0	54	18	28	54	
Subjects numbered seventy-four.	24	内紛	internal trouble	0	23	49	29	23	

Even when *hanja* are not used within the text itself, they are often found in headlines, not, as is the case in Japan, because they save space (one *hangul* syllable group occupies the same space as one *hanja*), but (more probably) because they are visually "grabby" to borrow Mehrabian's (1976:250) apt expression (see figure 8).

It is also widely believed, not entirely erroneously, that elided expressions are less ambiguous when written in Chinese characters. In Korea, as in Japan, multisyllabic compounds of both Sinic and Western origin are frequently clipped, by omitting certain segments. Thus, in Japanese, tokubetsu koogekitai (special attack group) becomes tokkotai, mass communication becomes masukomi, personal computer becomes pasokon, word processor becomes wapuro. In Korean, motsaenggigeetaionani (ugly person) becomes motnani, personal computer becomes poskow, mass communication becomes meskom (actually via Japanese), Iwha voja taehakkvo (Ewha Women's University) becomes Idae. This sort of process may in fact create homonyms which the Chinese characters can differentiate not (as most Japanese and many Korean appear to believe) because they are inherently meaningful, but simply because they are graphically distinct. In the same way, prior to 1946, kana spellings were used to distinguish homonyms (Horodeck, 1987:60). But the decision to do this is not obligatory. The newspaper articles mentioned above contain essentially the same vocabulary, a good deal of it Sinic, hence potentially able to be written in hanja. In one, the Hankyore Shinmun, as a matter of editorial policy, no hanja are used.11 Essentially the same vocabulary set is involved. The existence of such a paper is a telling argument against the indispensability of hanja. It would be highly farfetched to claim that publishers print and readers buy newspapers that can not be read, in the ordinary sense of that word.12

Impressionistically, such homonyms seem to create fewer cases of ambiguity in Korea than in Japan, perhaps because the less frequent, less variegated, and more structurally restricted use of *hanja* in Korea inhibits the proliferation of contextually undisambiguable homonyms. It may also be that these homonyms are less prevalent than is generally supposed. While there may be genuine cases of homonymic confusion, as Martin (1972:99) says, it is also true that they can be rather simply circumvented, given the lexical and syntactic resources any native or otherwise capable speaker will by definition have.

It is also worth remarking that, up until the relatively recent inundation of English into Japanese and especially Korean, these truncated expressions arose in connection with the Chinese characters, having invariably been constructed out of Chinese morphemes which were borrowed into Japanese (and Korean) along with the graphs used to write them. It was not the case that the characters were necessary to distinguish homonymic expressions, but rather that the characters allowed these particular juxtapositions of morphemes to serve any potentially communicative purpose in the first place. This may of course change in the future as greater numbers of English loans find their lexical niches in both countries, perhaps supplanting Chinese as major lexical donor (see Ishiwata, 1989:17-21). The same clipping processes occur with English loan compounds, sometimes with consequent homonymization, but without, obviously, kanji to disambiguate.

### Conclusion

Proportionally fewer people in Korea than in Japan are Chinese character-literate, due to: different school enrollment rates and the different grade levels at which those characters are taught (for details, see Brown, 1990a). At the same time, Chinese characters are less necessary for reading in Korea than in Japan, but more necessary for demonstrating minimal levels of education in Japan than in Korea. In Korea, but not in Japan, full, meaningful and successful participation in society does not require Chinese character-literacy. Upward mobility may be associated with a knowledge of hanja, but only because that knowledge is a by-product of education, which is the sine qua non for social (and as a rule) economic advancement and, Koreans believe, for happiness as well (Shin, 1986). It is not a prerequisite to that education and advancement. Unlike Japan, admission to a good university does not hinge on knowing many Chinese characters; in Japan all of the questions about every subject, and the test instructions themselves, are written in the standard kanji and kana mixed style (kanji kanamajiribun); in Korea, hanja are essentially limited to a brief section specifically about hannun (Chinese literature), and even here, they are multiple choice questions requiring only recognition; it is not required that anything be written in hanja. One can in principle enter the most prestigious Korean universities without being able to read or write a single Chinese character. 13 This would be impossible in Japan.

Like speech varieties, at least partially overlapping writing systems may coexist within the same sociolinguistic community. Japan and South Korea are two such cases. Measurements and assessments of literacy and generalizations therefrom that fail to take this into account will at best be dimly illuminating.

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#### Endnotes

- 1 See Cook-Gumperz (1986) and Street (1984) for discussion and criticism of the assumption that literacy equals progress.
- 2 In Korea, morphophonemic *hangul* are used, sometimes but not always in combination with 'Chinese characters,' collectively and individually referred to as *hanja*; in Japan, syllabic (actually, moraic—*kana* represent morae rather than syllables (Horodeck, 1987:29) *kana* are used in elaborate combination with the same Chinese characters, referred to, as above, as *kanji*.
- 3 Korean and Japanese do not have obligatory number marking on nouns. Therefore, we will throughout this paper use the following to denote both singular and plural, and on occasion, indeterminate forms; *kanji, kana, katakana, hiragana, furigana, okurigana, kanbun, hanja, hangul, hanmun.*
- 4 According to Sakamoto and Mikita "[in 1964] the Ministry of Education of Japan reported that the problem of illiteracy had been completely solved. By definition, an illiterate person in Japan is one who cannot read or write *kanji*, *hiragana* and *katakana* at all." Obviously, no one who has attended even one year of elementary school is illiterate by this definition. In fact, according to one study, reported in Sakamoto (1975:240-241), ninety-one percent of four-year-old preschoolers are literate, in the sense that they could read at least a few characters (the average child could read fifty-three percent of the forty-six basic *hiragana*).
- 5 Assuming that elementary school enrollment correlates perfectly with literacy is patently implausible in Japan but less so in Korea because hanja are not widely used: it is more reasonable to suppose that children who are enrolled in (and attending) elementary school will soon be able to read and write anything that normal people of a given age are expected to be able to (or, to read anything that they can understand spoken and to write anything they can say). The reason is that the hangul system, while not as regular as most Koreans apparently believe, is nevertheless extremely easy to learn. (At least from the adult foreigner's point of view, hangul is far easier to learn and retain than Japanese kana; whether, or in what sense, hangul are easier for Korean children is a different question. An analysis of spelling errors made by matched samples of young Japanese and Korean school children would yield interesting data.) Of course, there are many more kana than hangul. There are forty-six basic hiragana and forty-six corresponding katakana graphs, plus two diacritics (daku-on/ten), and several basic spelling conventions (choo-on, soku-on and yoo-on). These form two structurally equivalent but functionally differentiated systems, each of which suffices to write all of the 102 morae of Japanese. In the hangul system, there are forty characters, twenty-one for vowels and nineteen for consonants. All were reputedly designed to be maximally memorable (see for example Yi, 1983:49), who says the hangul graphs are 'based on the appearance of the respective organs of speech involved in their articulations'). Whether or not this is historically correct, articulatorily related consonants are represented with visually related graphs, which serves a mnemonic purpose; in a lenis/ fortis constrastive pair (of which there are five), for example, the first is taken as primary, the second written with the same graph doubled and halved in size (see Lukoff, 1982:xv-xxx). Note however, that these are not germinates. Thus, only nine graphs and two writing conventions serve to write the Korean consonants. Vowels and dipthongs are somewhat less transparent.

- 6 For example, two pages from a children's comic, (called Nazo Nazo Champion Book), contain the following characters:
- 食 ta (eat); + juu (ten); 年 nen (year); 前 mae (before); 作 tsuku (make); 化 ka (change); 石 seki (rock); 大 oo (large); 気 ki (spirit); 二 ni (two); 回 kai (times); 分 bun (part). All are among the 416 taught during the first three years of schooling; (according to Henshall, 1988, the 996 kyooiku kanji are taught in the following sequence: 76 in the first grade, 145 in the second grade, 195 per year in grades 3 through 5, and 190 in grade 6).
- 7 For instance, one market researcher with many years experience in Japan observes: '... the use of *katakana* or *kanji* instantly tells the Japanese consumer the nature of the product. Thus the drug may serve exactly the same symptoms—and at times even be constituted similarly—but if the name is in *katakana*, it originated from Western style laboratories. If the name is *kanji*, then it is a herbal remedy based on thousands of years of Oriental wisdom. The images generated for the two drugs are vastly different' (Fields. 1985:85).
- 8 'Cloze test' is actually a class of procedures for constructing tests through systematic deletions. See Williams (1970) or Cohen (1980) for nontechnical introductions.
- 9 Winograd and Flores (1986) offer a provocative view of textual meaning that draws heavily on the hermeneutic theory of Gadamer, Habermas and Haiderger
- 10 A more comprehensive project concerning the readability of mixed script texts in Japanese and Korean, using cloze procedures, is currently in progress.
- 11 Han Kyore ambiguously means 'Korean people' and 'one people,' referring to Koreans on both sides of the Demilitarized Zone. In North Korea, of course, hanja have not been used since 1946 (see Brown, 1988).
- 12 It is possible, however, that some individuals may do precisely this, in order to keep up literate appearances. This is what Unger (1987:200), claims happened in Japan following the war.
- 13 The hanmun section of Korean college entrance examinations contain thirty-nine multiple choice questions and seven brief response questions. With infrequent exceptions, no hanja need be written. (For example, the 1988 examination includes one item requiring that a four morpheme phrase be written in hanja; the 1989 and 1990 examinations include none.) The latter seven are called "subjective" (chugwanshik), but in fact only one is, in the ordinary sense (the final question in the hanmun section of the 1990 entrance examination presents a five clause Chinese poem of thirty-one characters and asks the student to explain the underlined portion (of six characters) in Korean, i.e., hangul (taum manjang ui mit'chul ch'inbubun ul urimal haesok hasio).
- 14 Deletions 4, 5, 6 and 15, which no subject correctly inferred, respectively denote "history, linguistics, philosophy" and "agricultural science." In the text, these are simply listed as examples of academic disciplines; all subjects who ventured to do so, made plausible guesses, viz., of other academic disciplines such as sociology, English, home economics, physics, etc.

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