Korean Pronunciation & Accents
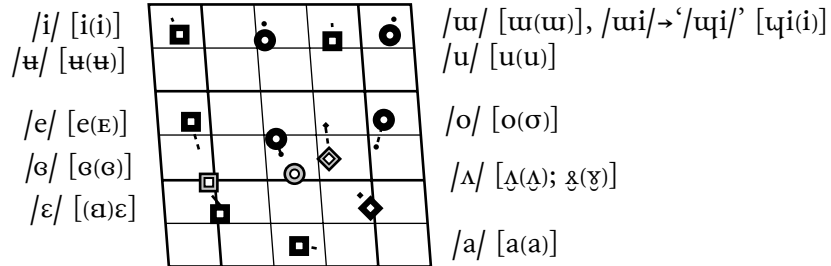
Luciano Canepari & Marco Cerini (2024²)

1. The *traditional neutral* accent may have a length opposition for its vowels (but only on the very first –or only– syllable of words, and not distinguished in writing), realized as more or less narrow diphthongs, as, for instance: *mal* [ˈmɐlˬ] 'horse', *mal* [ˈmaˑʌlˬ] 'speech' (in unstressed syllables, simply [aʌ] &c).

However, in *modern neutral* accent (and in the *mediatic* accent, too) this very limited length opposition is no longer distinctive. In fact, such lengthenings can freely occur, sometimes for expressive reasons, with no actual semantic value at all, nowadays.
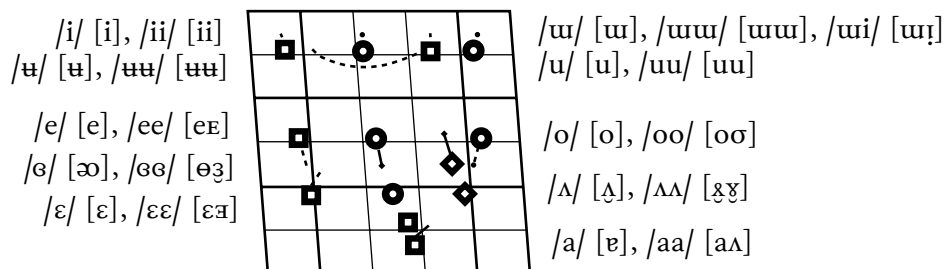
Except for the *traditional* accent, all the other ones have short vocoids in unstressed syllables, either light or heavy (/˳$/ [˳V, ˳VC]), and in stressed heavy ones (/ˈ$/ [ˈVC]). In stressed checked syllables, we generally find short vocoids ([ˈV]); but, in stressed free syllables, we have [ˈVVⁿ] in tunes, but [ˈVⁿ] in protunes. We present three main vocograms: for the three general accents.

Thus, modern Korean has 10 phonemically short *V*, while traditional Korean has ten both short and long *V*. Here are some traditional examples to illustrate the difference between short and 'long' vowels: /kil/ [ˈk̬ɦɻilˬ] 'street', /kiil/ [ˈk̬ɦɻiilˬ] 'quality', /pam/ [ˈp̬ɦamˬ] 'night', /paam/ [ˈp̬ɦaʌmˬ] 'chestnut', /pʌl/ [ˈp̬ɦʌlˬ] 'punishment',

Modern neutral	/i/ [i(i)] /ʉ/ [ʉ(ʉ)]	/ɯ/ [ɯ(ɯ)], /ɯi/→ˈ/ɥi/ˈ [ɥi(i)] /u/ [u(u)]
	/e/ [e(ɛ)] /ɵ/ [ɵ(ɵ)] /ɛ/ [(ɑ)ɛ]	/o/ [o(ʊ)] /ʌ/ [ʌ(ʌ); ɤ(ɣ)] /a/ [a(a)]
Traditional neutral	/i/ [i], /ii/ [ii] /ʉ/ [ʉ], /ʉʉ/ [ʉʉ]	/ɯ/ [ɯ], /ɯɯ/ [ɯɯ], /ɯi/ [ɯi̯] /u/ [u], /uu/ [uu]
	/e/ [e], /ee/ [eɛ] /ɵ/ [ɶ], /ɵɵ/ [ɵɜ] /ɛ/ [ɛ], /ɛɛ/ [ɛɜ]	/o/ [o], /oo/ [oʊ] /ʌ/ [ʌ], /ʌʌ/ [ɤɣ] /a/ [ɐ], /aa/ [aʌ]
Mediatic	/i/ [i(i)] /ʉ/→ˈ/wi/ˈ [ɥi(i), ↓ɯi(i)]	/ɯ/ [ɨ(ɯ)], /ɯi/→ˈ/ɨ/ˈ [ɨ(ɪ)] /u/ [μ(u)]
	/ɵ/→ˈ/we/ˈ [ɯɛ(e)] /e/ [ɪ(e), ˳eⁿ] /ɛ/ [ɪ(e), ↑ɪ(ɛ), ˳eⁿ]	/o/ [o(o)] /ʌ/→ˈ/ɔ/ˈ [ɐ(ɔ)]
	/a/ [a(a)]	
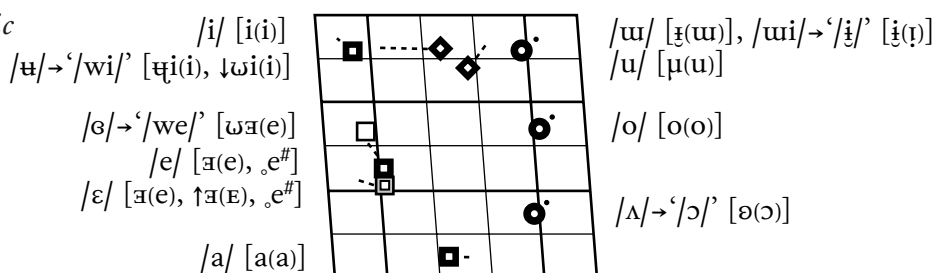
/pʌʌl/ [ˈp̥ɦ̬ʌ̯ɣl̩˺] 'bee', /nun/ [ˈnunˀ] 'eye', /nuun/ [ˈnuunˀ] 'snow', /katʃaŋ/ [k̥ɦ̯ɐˈdʒ̊ɦ̯ɐŋˀ] 'family', /kaatʃaŋ/ [ˈk̥ɦ̯aˑʌdʒ̊ɦ̯ɐŋˀ, k̥ɦ̯aʌˈdʒ̊ɦ̯ɐŋˀ] 'supposition'.

Regionally, /e, ɛ/ can merge into [ᴇ] (or [ᴈ], in the mediatic accent). So, mediatic Korean has just seven 'short' *V*, as the central rounded phonemes, /ꟺ, ɵ/, are, generally, substituted with /wi, we/, as shown in the vocogram (where also /ɰi/ appears). The phoneme /ʌ/ varies a lot, as can be seen from the vocograms: traditional [ʌ̞], modern [ʌ̞(ʌ); ɤ̞(ɤ)], mediatic [ɘ(ɔ)].

2. We also give five other vocograms: for the *northwestern* and *northeastern* accents, with six vowel phonemes (or eight or nine, due to two possible broad ones, shown in brackets); for the *central* accents, with seven vowels; and for the *southern*

Northwestern accent

/i/ [ɪ(i)]   /u/ [ʊ(u)]
/ꟺ/→ˈ/wi/ˀ [ωɪ(i)]   /ɯ/ [ɨ(ɨ)]
(/ɛ/ [↓ɘ(ə)])   /ɰi/→ˈ/ɥi/ˀ [ɥɨ(ɨ)]
/e, ɛ/ [ᴈ(ə)]   (/ʌ/ [↓ɵ(ʊ̈)])
/ɵ/→/we/ [ωᴈ(ə)]   /o, ʌ/ [ɤ(ʊ̈)]

                                /a/ [a(ʌ)]

Northeastern accent

/i/ [i(i)]   /u/ [u(u)]
/ꟺ/→ˈ/wi/ˀ [ωi(i)]   /ɯ/ [ɯ(ɯ)]
(/ɛ/ [↓ɘ(ə)])   /ɰi/→ˈ/ɥi/ˀ [ɥɨ(ɨ)]
/e, ɛ/ [ᴈ(ᴈ)]   (/ʌ/ [↓ɒ(σ)])
/ɵ/→/we/ [ωᴈ(ᴈ)]   /o, ʌ/ [ɔ(σ)]

                                /a/ [a(ɐ)]

Central accent

/i/ [ɪ(i)]   /ɯ/ [ɨ(ɨ)], /ɰi/→ˈ/ɥi/ˀ [ɥɪ(i)]
/ꟺ/→ˈ/wi/ˀ [ɥɪ(i), ↓ωɪ(i)]   /u/ [μ(u)]
                      /o/ [o(ʊ)]
/ɵ/→ˈ/we/ˀ [ωᴈ(ᴇ)]
/e, ɛ/ [ᴈ(ᴇ)]   /ʌ/→[ɤ̞(ɤ̞)]

/a/ [a(a)]

Southern accent

/i/ [ɪ(i)]   /u/ [u(u)]
/ꟺ/→ˈ/wi/ˀ   /ɰi/→ˈ/ɥi/ˀ [ɥi(i)]
[ɥɪ(i), ↓ωɪ(i)]   /ɯ, ʌ/ [ɤ(ə)]
/e, ɛ, -jʌ/ [ᴇ(ᴈ)]   /o/ [σ(ɒ)]
/ɵ/→/we/ [ωᴇ(ᴈ)]

                            /a/ [a(ʌ)]
                        (*SW* /m-p(h/ʔ)a/ → /-o/ ↓[-σ(ɒ)])

Insular accent

/i/ [i(i)]   /u/ [u(u)]
/ꟺ/→ˈ/wi/ˀ [ɥi(i)]   /ɰi/→ˈ/ɥi/ˀ [ɥi(i)]
                    /ɯ, ʌ/ [ɤ(ɯ)] (/ʌ/ [ʌ(ɤ)])
/e, ɛ/ [ᴇ(e)]   /o/ [σ(o)]
/ɵ/→/we/ [ωᴇ(e)]

                                /a/ [a(ɐ)]

accents, with six vowels (or seven for the insular one).

In addition, there are six /jV/ sequences: /je, jɛ, ja, jʌ, jo, ju/ [ɟ-]; and 4 /wV/ sequences /we, wɛ, wa, wʌ/ [ɰ-]. The diphthong /ɰi/ is very peculiar, because it generally corresponds to traditional [ɰi] (sometimes [ɰˈi]), modern [ɥi(i)] '/ɥi/', and mediatic [ɨ(ɪ)] '/ɨ/'.

There follow four sets of Korean vowel orograms (and labiograms), shown in a scientifically-sound way. The reader should carefully inspect them.
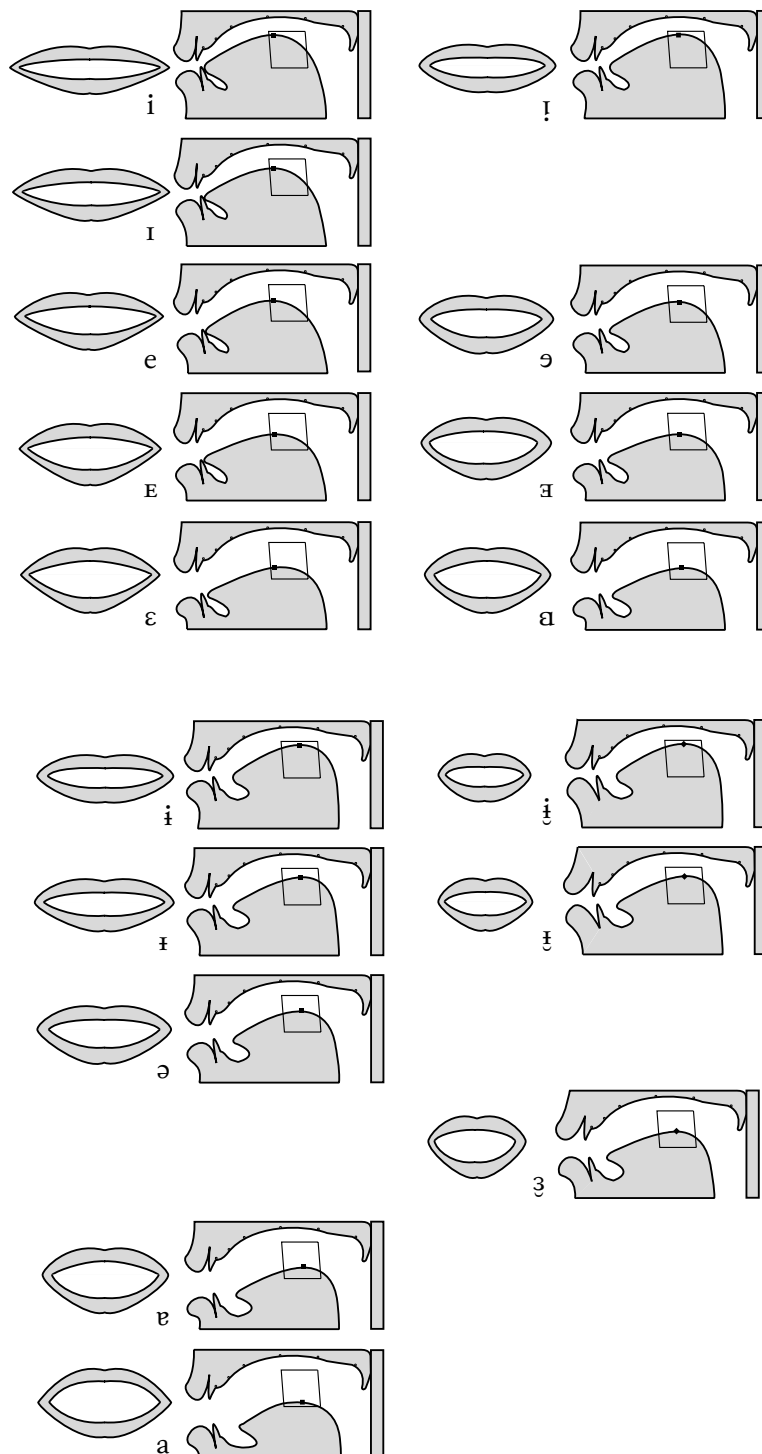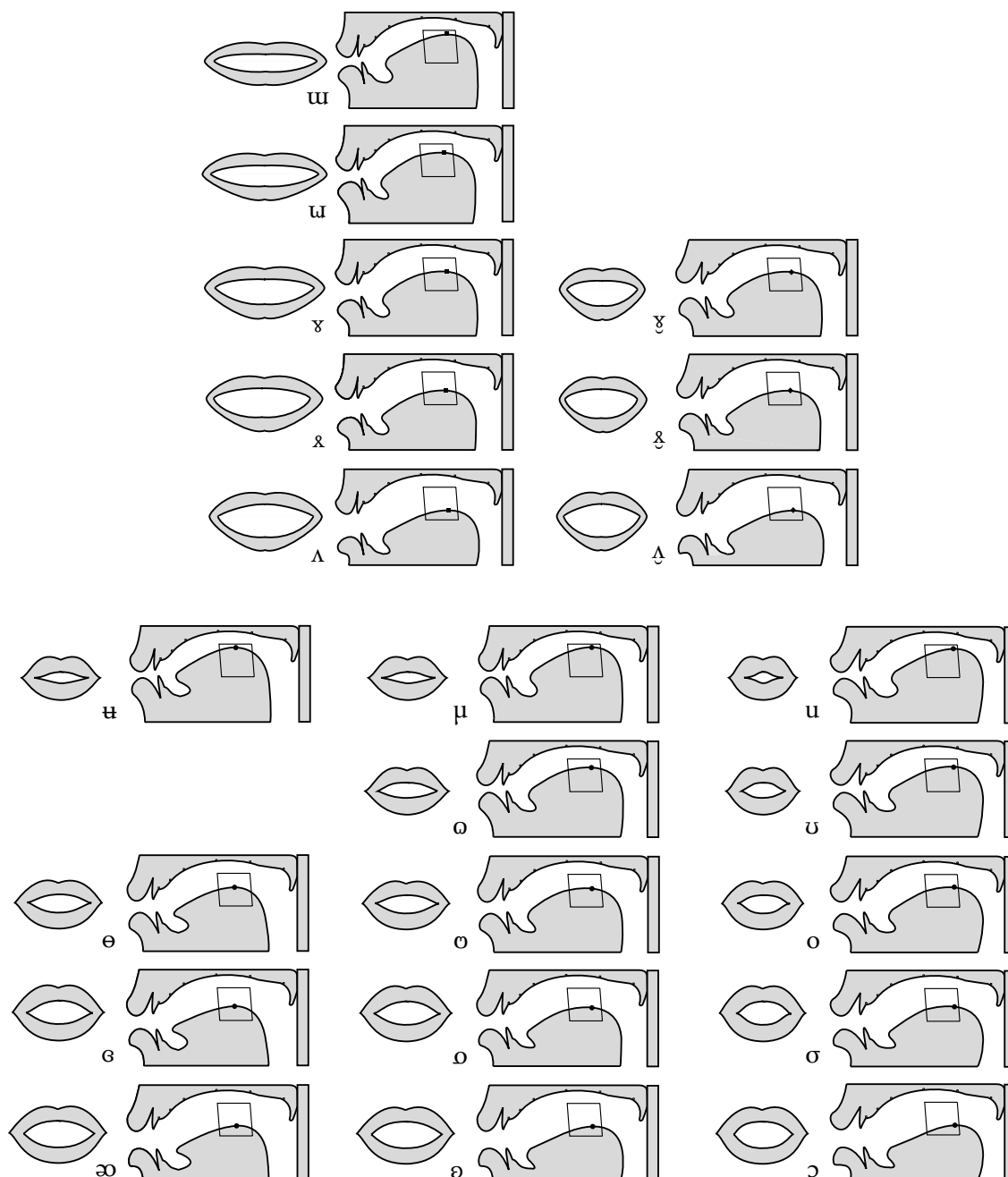
3. Here we prefer to show a more 'natural' phonemic structure for Korean (with /p, t, k; tʃ/ employed in two further series of clusters with /h/ and /ː/: /Ch/ and /Cː/ (but, for the last one, in traditional pronunciation, /Cʔ/ is more realistic), as we will see.

m	[ɱ]	n		[ɲ]		[ŋ̟]	ŋ
p(ːh)[b]	t(ːh)[d]				[k(ːh) g] k(ːh)[g]		(ʔ)
[ts(ːh) dz]		/tʃ(ːh)/ [tʃ dʒ] [tʂ]ᵐ					
s z		[ʃ]	[ʒ]				
	[ʐ]		[ɕ ʑ] /j/		[ɧ ɦ][ɧ ɦ][ʍ ʋ]/w/ h [ɦ]		
			ɟ [ɥ]ᵐ		[ɰ]ᵗ ɯ		
	[ɾ]						
[ɭ] l [ɫ] [ɫ]			[ɭ]				

Thus, we have the phonemes /p, t, k; tʃ/, [p, t, k; tʃ] as in final position (unreleased [p̚, t̚, k̚], the last one for both /k/ and /tʃ/). They constitute the 'plain' (or normal) series, with different taxophones, including –as just seen– the two sequential series: an 'aspirated' one, /C/+/h/: /ph, th, kh; tʃh/, and a 'lengthened' one, /C/+/ː/, /pː, tː, kː; tʃː/ (or the traditional 'glottalized' one, /C/+/ʔ/: /pʔ, tʔ, kʔ; tʃʔ/), with their own taxophones (see below). Before /j/ [j], or front(-central) V, /k/ is prevelar [ḵ, ɡ̟].

The *plain* series is realized as voiced, in voiced contexts, /V-V, Ç-V/: [b, d, ɡ; ʤ] (but as half-voiced in a slower, or more careful, speech style, [b̥, d̥, ɡ̊; ʥ̊]), followed by a voiced laryngeal semi-approximant, [Çɦ, C̥ɦ].

On the contrary, the whole series is realized as lenis voiceless word-initially (in every case, not only after silence or pauses; and also word-internally, if at the start of a lexeme in compounds), [#p̥, #t̥, #k̥; #tʃ̥] (with voiced laryngeal 'semi-aspiration', [#p̥ɦ, #t̥ɦ, #k̥ɦ; #tʃ̥ɦ], but *not* including coarticulated [ɦ, ɧ, ɦʷ], plus different V, so that they are more different from real /C/+/h/ (see below). However, [ɦ] may not be present, especially in quicker speech.

But we will use [ɦ] in our transcriptions. Mainly regional speakers may use (more or less systematically) one of the possibilities seen above.

In the *mediatic* accent, /tʃ/ has rather a prepalatal articulation [tᶕ], with all necessary taxophones (while, in northern accents we may hear [ts]). Notice that /tʃ, ʤ, ʃ/ have spread lips: [tʃ͍, ʤ͍, ʃ͍].

The *'aspirated'* sequences, /ph, th, kh; tʃh/, are realized as 'aspirated' voiceless, [ph, th, kh; tʃh], as tautosyllabic /Ch/, with their 'aspiration' having a *palatal* color before /i, j/, [pç, tç, kç; tʃç], a *velar rounded* color before /o, u, w/, [pʋ, tʋ, kʋ; tʃʋ], and a *velar* one before /a, ʌ, ɯ/, [px, tx, kx; tʃx]. In slower or more careful speech, [Ch] may appear in all cases.

The same holds for /h/ in the same contexts, *eg him* /ˈhim/ [ˈçim̚], *hïm* /ˈhɯm/ [ˈxɯm̚], *huchu* /huˈtʃhu/ [hʋuˈtʃʋuu]; in voiced contexts (between either V or sonants and V), /h/ is [ɦ] (or even [∅]), including its possible coarticulatory taxophones: [ʝ, ɧ, ɦʷ], but word-initially (also in compounds and phrases) we have [h, ç, x, ʋ].

Mainly before a word-initial V, especially if stressed, we may find [ʔ], which is also used as a sequential phoneme /ʔ/, in the *traditional* glottalized sequences /Cʔ/: /pʔ, tʔ, kʔ; tʃʔ/, as already seen. In the traditional accent, they are generally realized with simultaneous glottalization and lengthening, [pˀː, tˀː, kˀː; tʃˀː], while, in the modern accent, usually they are simply [pː, tː, kː; tʃː], generally followed by the laryngealization of tautosyllabic subsequent vocalic elements: [V̰] (they are also possible, but not systematically, with /Cʔ/ [Cˀː]).

4. /z/ is [z̥ɦ], either word-initial or word-internal (but *not* with coarticulatory taxophones [ʝ, ɧ, ɦʷ] before V); between V, it generally becomes [zɦ] (but simple [z̥] is also possible in any case, also when preceded by either voiceless or voiced C). As a phoneme, /z/ is better than a simple /s/.

Notice that we also have the (lengthened) phonemic sequence, /s/+/ː/, /sː/, which is realized as [sː] in any position (tautosyllabic with a following V, which may become [V̰]. Before /i/ or /j/, we find [ʃ, ᶕ̥, ʑ]. The cluster /sːz/ is [sːz̥].

In southern accents (or quite often, for many younger speakers in general, and in the mediatic accent) /z, sː/ tend not to be differentiated.

The phoneme /l/ has the following taxophones [ɾV, ʐV, lV] (but let us clearly notice [l̡i, l̡j]), [lC, l̡C, lC] (with dental [l̪] before dental contoids), [l#, l̡#, l#]; /ll/ is [ll]. Also notice [ɲi, ɲj]. As a rule, final C are inaudibly released, because they are unexploded: [C̚] (including sonants, generally).
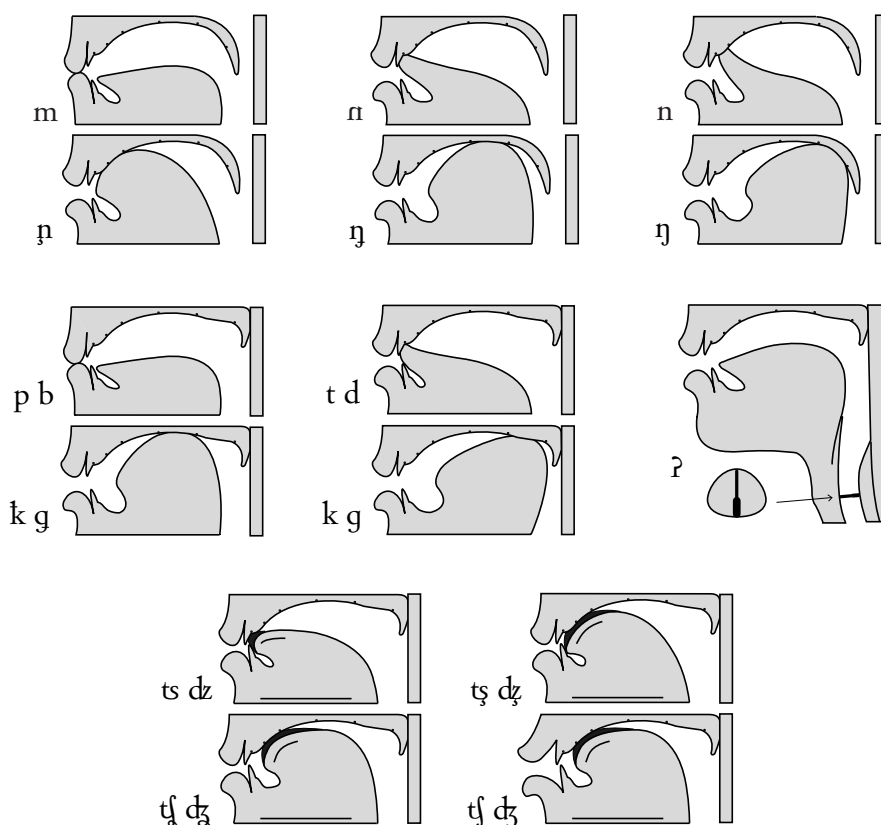
It is important to know that in word-final position, before a pause or a C, only /p, t, k; m, n, ŋ; l/ may occur (with their unreleased taxophones [p̚, t̚, k̚; m̚, n̚, ŋ̚; l̚] (or [l̚, l̚]). However, in word formation, /m, n/ followed by a V are resyllabified, becoming syllable-initial, including /lV/ [ɾV, ʐV, lV].
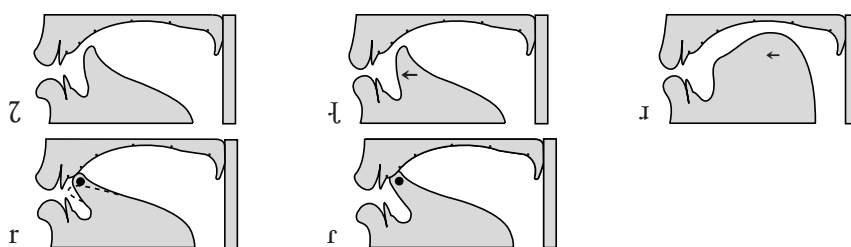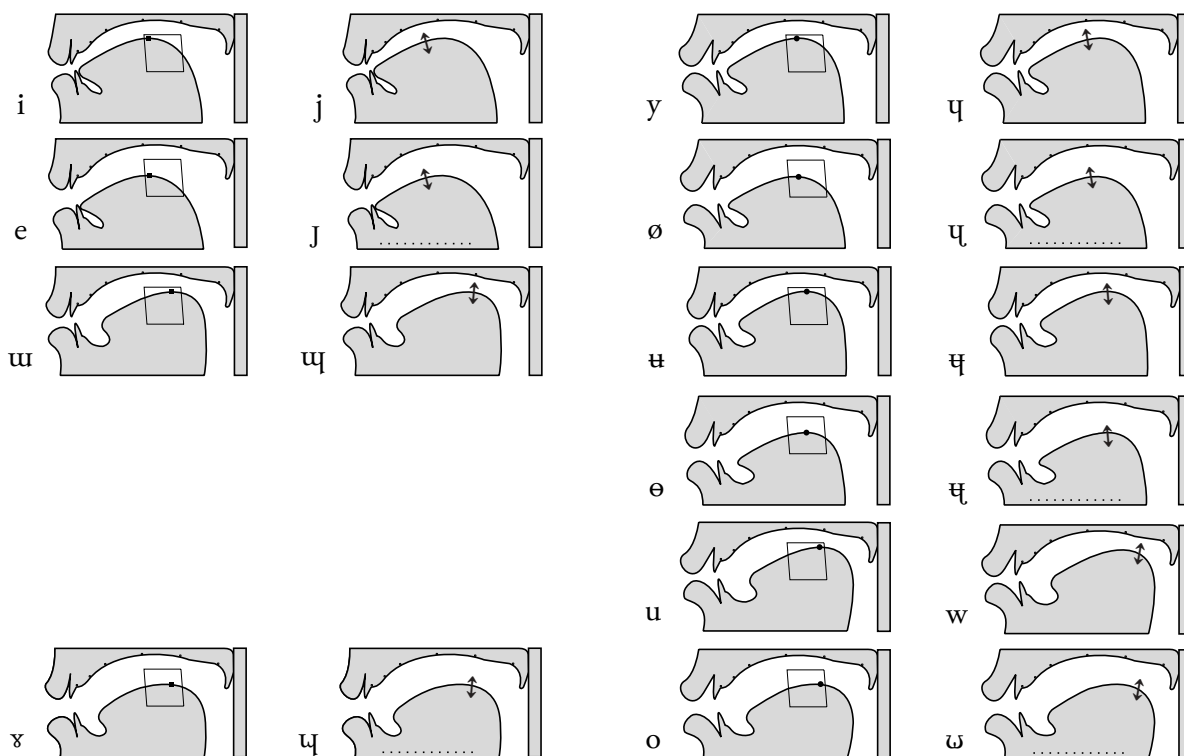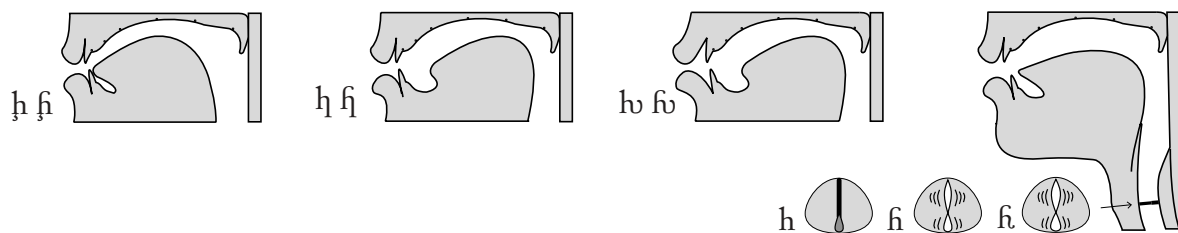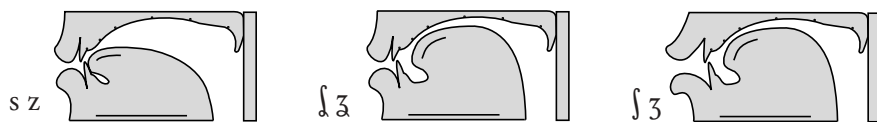
/p, t, k; tʃ/, preceded by themselves or by /m, n, ŋ; l/ or by a V, have their three weaker ('plain') taxophones [p, t, k] (the last one for both /k, tʃ/). /p, t, k/ followed by /m, n/ become [m, n, ŋ], while /tp, tk, ts/ sequences become [pː, kː, sː] (or, traditionally, [p̚ː, k̚ː, sː]).

As partially shown here, Korean is particularly known for its typical use of consonant sequences, that undergo several assimilations, simplifications and elisions, which are generally extensively described and exemplified in general books on the Korean language, because they are a major problem between spelling and pronunciation.

Notice that, generally, /n, l/ become [n̪, l̪] when followed by dental C; in other C clusters with more extensive articulations differences, [m, ɲ, l̡, ɳ, ŋ] are excluded except possibly in quicker speech.

5. A few examples follow (for the three momentaneous sequences, here illustrated for '/p/'): *pul* /ˈpul/ [ˈpʰul̚] 'fire', *p'ul* /ˈpʰul/ [ˈpʰʊl̚] 'grass', *ppul* /ˈpːul/ [ˈpːɥl̚] 'horn'; *ipul* /iˈpul/ [iˈbɦul̚, iˈb̥ɦul̚] 'this fire', *ip'ul* /iˈpʰul/ [iˈpʰʊl̚] 'this grass', *ippul* /iˈpːul/ [iˈpːɥl̚] 'this horn'.

s z   ʃ ʒ   ɕ ʑ

ɦ̪ ɧ   ɧ ɥ   ɦ̫ ɥ

h   ɦ   ɧ

i   j   y   ɥ

e   ɟ   ø   ɥ

ɯ   ɰ   ɤ   ɣ

ɘ   ɥ

u   w

ɤ   ɥ   o   ɯ

ʌ   ɥ

ɿ   ɭ   ɹ

r   ɾ

l   ɫ   ɫ   ɭ

ɺ   ɭ̝   ɭ̝   ʎ
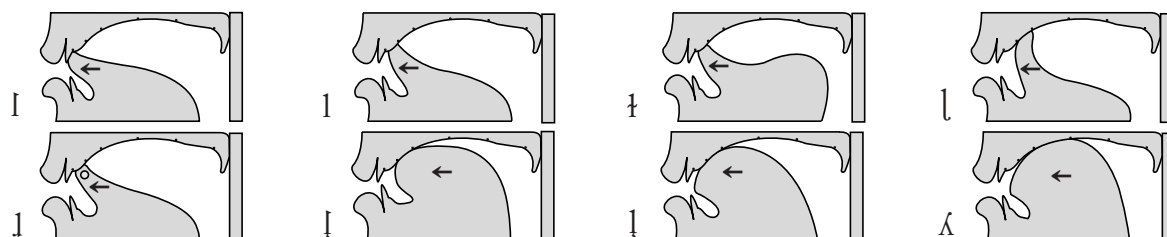
6. Here, we present the kind of *transliteration* that we would use in dealing with modern Korean (adding the variants we frequently happen to find in other works, including some less useful or less justifiable ones, given in brackets). However, for the city names we will use the more usual transliteration found in the West, including some 'official' ones devised in the two Koreas mainly for foreigners, although certainly not the best ones (and with some unfriendly differences)! For instance, a widespread 'official' spelling disguises the southern capital *Sëul* /zʌul/ [z̥ɦ̩ˌʌˈuˑlˑ; ˈz̥ɦ̩ˌʌuˑlˑ], as *Seoul* (which, in the West, might seem to be French *Séoul*).

Unfortunately, there is a really meaningless jumble of unsystematic and different kinds of transliterations. The more 'official' one simply replicates the semi-phonetic and somehow pseudo-phonetic situation poorly devised initially, by simply repeating in Latin characters those unsatisfactory 'devices'.

Frankly, and to put it bluntly, the following graphic pairs (given in brackets) are certainly not intuitive, at all: *e* /e/ (*ey*), *ä* /ɛ/ (*ae, ay*), *u* /u/ (*wu*), *ë* /ʌ/ (*eo, ŏ*), *ï* /ɯ/ (*eu*), *ö* /ɤ/ (*oe, oy*), *ü* /ʉ/ (*wi*), *ïi* (*uy*) /ɯi/. We will also indicate some other 'inventions', here, that complicate undeniably the quite intricate situation of transliterations for Korean.

Vowels: *i* /i/, *e* /e/ (*ey*), *ä* /ɛ/ (*ae, ay, æ*), *a* /a/, *o* /o/, *u* /u/ (*wu*), *ë* /ʌ/ (*eo, ŏ*), *ï* /ɯ/ (*eu, ŭ, u, ı*), *ö* /ɤ/ (*oe, oy, œ*), *ü* /ʉ/ (*wi*). The false 'diphthongs' are really verging on the ridiculous (although easier to type and derived from its original questionable spelling).

They may be preceded by *y/w* /j, w/, forming /CV/ sequences, unscientifically called 'diphthongs' (even written *i/u* /j, w/, incredibly). But there is a diphthong, *ïi* (*uy, ıi*) /ɯi/, realized as traditional [ɯi], and mediatic [ɨ(ɪ)], or modern (/CV/ sequence) '/ɥi/' [ɥi]. Other real diphthongs exist, too, in some words, like *kwai* /ˈkwa(a)i/. In French books, we happen to find even: /e/ *é*, /ɛ/ *ai*, /o/ *ô*, /u/ *ou* (the last one also for /w/)!

Consonants: *m n ng* /m, n, ŋ/, *p t k c* /p, t, k, tʃ/ (*b d g j*), *p' t' k' c'* /ph, th, kh, tʃh/ (*ph th kh ch*, which might risk suggesting '[f, θ, x]' and simple '[tʃ]'), *pp tt kk cc* /pː, tː, kː, tʃː/ (*p t k c/tch*), *s ss* /z, sː/ (*s ss*), *h y w l* /h, j, w, l/.

There follow some sets containing the C of Korean, including some 'corresponding' phones belonging to other (well-known) languages, but not fit for Korean, as accurate comparisons will clearly show. We also add useful orograms for comparing vocoids and 'corresponding' approximants and semi-approximants.

7. In Korean, *stress* does not differentiate meanings, so it is not distinctive, and it may change rather freely, with no clear rule, even for the same speaker. And, of course, in sentences, it greatly helps to indicate emphasis or contrast (also with greater length).

Also in current words, it generally has a similar function, especially in lexical compounds, highlighting their components: /paˈlaŋ ˈsɛ/ 'blue bird', /ˈtɛna ˈmu/ 'bamboo tree', /ˈtoŋmul ˈsuŋpɛ, toŋˈmul/ 'animal cult'.

However, although it generally falls on 'heavier' syllables with /VC/ (or, for some speakers, as in traditional Korean, for '/Vː/', actually /VV/ [ˈVˑVꟷ, ˈVVCꟷ]), it often falls on a final syllable, especially if with postpositions or common endings.

But, on the whole, the following patterns are often found (also independently from syllable heaviness): [($)ˌ$($)ˈ$($), ˌ$($)ˈ$($)ˌ$]. However, most words (of different length) are stressed on their last syllable, either in isolation and phrases, or in sentences, mainly as [ˈ$], or [ˌ$], with other possibilities, too (including frequent oscillations, as already said).

8.1. Modern Korean spelling is still based on that developed almost six centuries ago, only without a few dismissed elements, but with problems concerning its correspondence with actual sounds, although it was originally based on some broad phonetic principles, although appearing as charcoal drawings, and then as tiny 'stamps'. The real problem, today, is that the language has changed, but spelling has not properly kept up with it. Instead, ten centuries before that time, Panini (*Pāṇini* ['paaɳˌnɪ]) elaborated for Sanskrit a spelling based on really phonetic principles: it is only a question of skill and ability.

Thus, the morphological way of forming its words is complicated by a considerable amount of written consonantal sequences, which do not correspond much to actual modern sounds. Indeed, even in simpler words, many contractions, assimilations, and changes occur, complicating a more natural way of dealing with these two different aspects of the language.

For this reason, we mainly concentrate on actually describing all possible Korean phones, so that our readers may really profit in obtaining a good pronunciation. This will facilitate an effective learning of the language, with all other necessary parts. However, a very good pronouncing dictionary will be necessary to solve any 'mysterious' doubts on pronunciation, given the many differences between current (morphological) spelling and actual sounds.

8.2. Of course, the social and geographical differences between the accents that we present, further complicate the intricate situation of the language. Here, we will show some examples for less problematic structures. As the collocation of stress in Korean words is very 'free' and does not modify meaning, we will show what different native speakers have produced. Certainly, further native speakers might add some more differences, as well.

We have to present general phonemic transcriptions followed by their necessary phonetic realizations, otherwise our work would be useless. For the *neutralization* of final C: /puʌkh/ ['pɦuˌʌkˀ, pɦuˈʌkˀ]; *simplification*: /zalm/ [ˈz̥ɦamˀ]; *nasalization*: /papmat/ [ˈpɦammatˀ, pɦamˈmatˀ] and: /kɯmli/ [ˈk̥ɦɯmɲi; k̥ɦɯmˈɲii]; *lateralization*: /kjʌulnal/ [k̥ɦjʌulˈlalˀ, k̥ɦjʌˈullalˀ]; *labialization*: /zinmun/ [z̥ɦimˈmunˀ; ˈz̥ɦimmunˀ]; *velarization*: /kamki/ [ˈk̥ɦaŋɦi, k̥ɦaŋˈɦii]; *'aspiration'*: /nohta/ [ˈnoʊˌtɦa; noˈtɦaa] and: /tok-hak/ [t̥ɦoˈkɦakˀ]; *reduction*: /oztʃaŋ, ottʃaŋ/ [oˈtʃːaŋˀ]; *deletion*: /tʃjʌsʌ/ [ˈtʃɦʌʌzɦʌ; tʃɦʌˈzɦʌʌ] and: /tɛhak/ [t̥ɦɛˈakˀ]; *strength*: /mʌkta/ [ˈmʌk̚ˌt̥a].

For the *reduction* of consonant clusters in (syllable-/word-)final position: /kaps/ [ˈk̥ɦapˀ], /moks/ [ˈmokˀ], /wɛkols/ [ωɛˈgɦolˀ], /antʃ-ta/ [ˈantˌt̥a], /anhnɛ/ [ˈannɛ], /nʌlp-ta/ [ˈnʌltˌt̥a], /pʌlp-ta/ [ˈpɦʌpˀˌt̥a], /hʌlth-ta/ [ˈh̥ʌltˌt̥a], /hɯlk/ [ˈh̥ɯkˀ], /zalm/ [ˈz̥ɦamˀ], /ɯlphta/ [ˈɯpˀˌt̥a], /tːulh-nɯn/ [ˈtːullɯnˀ, tˌyllˈlɯnˀ].

8.3. As anticipated, when lexical morphemes combine, to form words, there are practically no safe and sure rules. For instance, we find: /non-li/ [ˈnolli; nolˈlii], and /phan-tan-ljʌk/ [pɦaɳdɦanˈɲjʌkˀ, pɦaɳˈdɦanɲjʌkˀ, ˈpɦaɳdɦanˌɲjʌkˀ].

But also: /ɯm-un-lon/ [ˌɯmunˈnon, ɯˈmunnon], and /kwaŋ-han-lu/ [k̥ɦωanˈɦalˌlu, ˈk̥ɦωanɦalˌlu, k̥ɦωanɦalˈluu].

We also find: /pom-t-pi/ [pɦomˈpːiˌi, ˈpɦompːi] and /nun-pi/ [ˈnunbɦi, nunˈbɦii]; /tol-t-tʌŋʌli/ [t̥ɦolˈtːʌ̥ŋʌˌli, ˌt̥ɦoltːʌ̥ŋʌˈlii]; but /tol-kituŋ/ [ˌt̥ɦolgɦuŋˀ, ˈt̥ɦol-

gɦiˌdɦuŋˀ, t̪ɦolˈk̪ɦiidɦuŋˀ]); /sːal-t-kakɛ/ [ˌsːalgɦaˈgɦaɛ, ˈsːalgɦaˌgɦɛ]); /sːal-pap/ [ˈsːal-ˌbɦapˀ, ˌsːalˈbɦapˀ]); /kaŋ-t-patak/ [ˌk̪ɦaŋpːa̪ˈdɦakˀ, k̪ɦaŋˈpːa̪dɦakˀ, ˈk̪ɦaŋpːa̪ˌdɦakˀ]); /kol-patak/ [ˌk̪ɦolbɦaˈdɦakˀ, ˈk̪ɦolbɦaˌdɦakˀ, k̪ɦolˈbɦaadɦakˀ]); /mul-t-sːɛ/ [mulˈsːaɛ, ˈmul-sːɛ]); /phalaŋ-zɛ/ [ˌp̪ɦaraŋˈzɦaɛ, p̪ɦaˈraŋzɦɛ].

Further differences are common: /zom-n-ipul/ [ˌz̪ɦompɲiˈbɦulˀ, ˈz̪ɦompɲiˌbɦulˀ]); /tɯl-n-il/ [ˈt̪ɦɯllilˀ, t̪ɦɯlˈlilˀ]); /nɯtʃ-n-jʌlum/ [ˌnɯnɲɟʌˈrɯm, nɯnˈɲɟʌʌrɯm, ˈnɯn-ɲɟʌˌrɯm]); /kjʌp-n-ipul/ [ˌk̪ɦjʌmɲiˈbɦulˀ, ˈk̪ɦjʌmɲiˌbɦulˀ]); /mak-n-il/ [maŋˈɲilˀ, ˈmaŋ- ɲilˀ]. Also: /path-i/ [p̪ɦaˈtʃɦii]; however: /path-ilaŋ/ [ˌp̪ɦatʃɦiˈraŋˀ, p̪ɦanɲiˈraŋˀ]. In addition: /zalm-ko/ [ˈz̪ɦamkːo̪, z̪ɦamˈkːoo̯]; /zalm-ta/ [ˈz̪ɦamtːa, z̪ɦamˈtːaa]; /zalm-so/ [ˈz̪ɦamsːo, z̪ɦamˈsːoo̯]; /zalm-tʃa/ [ˈz̪ɦamtʃːa̪, z̪ɦamˈtʃːa̪a̪].

And: /ki-ʌzʌ/ [ˈk̪ɦjʌʌ-zɦʌ, k̪ɦjʌˈzɦʌʌ]); /o-azʌ/ [ˈɯaa-zɦʌ]; /milu-ʌzʌ/ [milˈɯʌʌ-zɦʌ]; /zil-hʌzʌ/ [z̪ɦiˈrʌʌ-zɦʌ]; /khatɯ-ɛ/ [ˌk̪ɦadɦɯˈaɛ]; /ka-azʌ/ [ˈkaa-zɦʌ]; /pɛ-ʌzʌ/ [ˈp̪ɦaɛ-zɦʌ]; /lak-wʌn/ [naˈgɦɯʌnˀ] (but in northern accents: [laˈgɦɯʌnˀ]); /khwɛlak/ [k̪ɦʊɯɛˈrakˀ]; /njʌ-tʃa/ [ɲʌˈʤɦaa] (but in northern accents: [ɲɲʌˈʤɦaa]); /man-jʌ/ [ˈmaɲ-ɟʌ]; /li-ju/ [ɲiˈɟuu, iˈɟuu].

9. It is very important not to confuse the descriptions of Korean *dialects* (also having different words and grammars) with Korean *accents*, which influence the pronunciation of Korean native speakers.

In addition to NEUTRAL *modern* and *traditional* pronunciation (including its *mediatic* variant), we will present the regional accents of modern Korean, by means of five additional vocograms and some observations about consonants.

In north-western accents /tʃ, tʃh, tʃː/ may become [t̺ʂ, t̺ʂh, t̺ʂː; ts, tsh, tsː]. In south--eastern accents /sː/ may become [s]; /j, w/ after consonants are weaker than [ɟ, ɯ] and may be dropped completely, mainly in broad central accents.

South-eastern accents also have a peculiar slow tempo of speech. In central accents, word-initial /p, t, k, tʃ/ may become /pː, tː, kː, tʃː/, while, in the insular accents of Jeju, they may become /ph, th, kh, tʃh/.

North-western and south-western (and southern central) accents may keep the traditional 'long' vowels (actually diphthongized).

10. Indeed, while other regional accents add a tonetic peculiarity after the intonation patterns presented for neutral Korean, the north-eastern and south-eastern accents have that same peculiarity, but even more evident. Such speakers may sound 'aggressive' to other native speakers.

The tonetic movements of protunes (shown in the tonogram), in local accents, are modified by the fact that each phonetic phrase, that form current sentences, may add some of the following changes.

The tonetic height is lowered on the first or first two syllables while it is raised on a following syllable, but lowered again on another syllable, including the last one of that phonetic phrase, which receives a secondary stress depending on the structure of the tunes used. All this happens even with no pause at all.

/ / [··ˈ··ˈ·ˌ·]   /./ [·ˈ·ˌ]   /?/ [·ˈ·ˀ]   /;/ [·_ˌ·]   /,/ [·ˈ··]
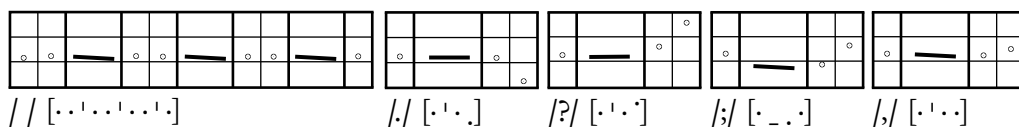
11. Such (secondary) stress, combining with the four Korean tunes, is: low with the conclusive one /./, but middle with the continuative /,/ or suspensive /,/ tunes, but higher with the interrogative one /?/. There follow some sentences illustrating the Korean intonation patterns. They are transliterated following the unfortunate more 'official' system.

Hangugmal jal haess-eumyeon johgesseoyo.
[ˌɦɑŋɦuk̚ˈmal ˈʧɦal ɦɛsːɯˈmjʌn ʧɦo(ɦʋ)gɦɛsːʌˈjooˑ.]
I'd like to speak Korean well.

Museun mal-inji al-ayo
[muˈzɦɯn marinˈʤɦia raˈjooˑ.]
We know what you mean.

Jeongmal gamsahamnida
[ʧɦʌŋˈmal k̚ɦamˌzɦa(ɦ)amɲiˈdɦaˑ.]
Thank you very much.

Igeon eottaeyo?
[¿iˈgɦʌ nʌtːɛˈjooˑ.]
What do you think about it?

Oneul-eun mom-i eottaeyo?
[¿ˌonɯˈrɯn moˈmiʌ tːɛˈjooˑ.]
How are you feeling today?

Uli eodi galkkayo?
[¿uˈriʌ ˈdɦi k̚ɦalkːʌˈjooˑ.]
Where are we going?

Hangug-eo haeyo?
[¿hanˈgɦugɦʌ ɦɛˈjooˑ˙]
Can you speak Korean?

Dongsaeng-i (hangug-eo) hal su isseoyo?
[¿ˌt̚ɦoŋzɦɛˈɲi ɦanˈgɦugɦʌ(ɦ)al ˈzɦuisːʌ ˈjooˑ˙]
Does your brother understand it?

Geu salam-i naeil onayo?
[¿k̚ɦɯzɦaraˈmi nɛiˌronaˈjooˑ˙]
Is he coming tomorrow?

Toyoil mot omyeon, uli gollanhaejyeoyo.
[ˌt̚ʋojoˈil motʋo‿mjʌn.| uˈri k̚ɦolˌlan(ɦ)ɛʤʌˈjooˑ.]
If you can't come on Saturday, we'll be in trouble.

Toyoil-e mot odeolado gwaenchanh-ayo.
[ˌt̚ʋojoiˈre moˌt̚ʋodɦʌraˈdɦooˑ˙¦ k̚ʋɛnˈʧɦan (ɦ)aˈjooˑ.]
If you can't come on Saturday, there's no problem.

Yeog-e dochaghaess-eul ttae, gichaneun imi tteonago eobs-eoss-eoyo.
[ɹʌˈgɦe t̚ɦoˈʧɦak̚ˑɦɛsːɯl ‿tːaɛ.| ˌk̚ɦitʃɦaˈnɯ niˈmiiˑ˙¦ ˌtːʌnaˈgɦoʌ sːʌsːʌˈjooˑ.]
When I arrived at the station, the train had gone.

Beoseulo galkkayo, animyeon geol-eoseo galkkayo?
[¿ᵖɦʌsɯˈro k̬ɦalk꞉a̰‿ɟoɤ꞉| ˌani̯ˈmɟʌn k̬ɦʌɾʌˈzɦʌ k̬ɦalk꞉a̰ˈɟoɤ꞉]
Shall we go by bus, or on foot?

Beoseu, gicha, animyeon chalo galkkayo?
[¿ᵖɦʌˈzɦɯɯ꞉| k̬ɦiˈt͡ʃɦaa꞉| ˌani̯ˈmɟʌn t͡ʃɦa‿roɤ꞉| k̬ɦalk꞉a̰ˈɟoɤ꞉]
Are you going by bus, by train, or by car?

Hana, dul, ses, nes, daseot gaega iss-eoyo.
[ha‿naa꞉ ˈt̬ɦul꞉| ˈz̥ɦez̥ɦ꞉| ˈnez̥ɦ꞉| t̬ɦa‿zɦʌt̚꞉| k̬ɦɛˈɡɦai s꞉ʌˈɟoɤ꞉]
There are: one, two, three, four, five.

Hana, dul, ses, nes, daseot gaega iss-eoyo…
[ha‿naa꞉ ˈt̬ɦul꞉| ˈz̥ɦez̥ɦ꞉| ˈnez̥ɦ꞉| t̬ɦaˈzɦʌt̚꞉| k̬ɦɛˈɡɦai s꞉ʌˈɟoɤ꞉]
There are: one, two, three, four, five…

I sajeon-eun maeu yuyonghaeyo.
[i‿zɦad͡ʒɦʌˈnɯn mɛˈuu꞉| ɟu̯ˌɟoŋɦɛˈɟoɤ꞉]
This is a very useful dictionary.

Igeos-iyamallo, maeu yuyonghan sajeon-ieyo.
[iⁿɡɦʌ zɦi̯ˌɟamalˈloɤ꞉| mɛˈu ɟu̯ɟoŋˈhan zɦaˌd͡ʒɦʌɲieˈɟoɤ꞉]
Tʜɪs is a very useful dictionary.

I sajeon-iyamallo, maeu yuyonghaeyo.
[iˈzɦad͡ʒɦʌ ɲi̯ɟamalˈloɤ꞉| mɛ‿uu꞉| ɟu̯ˌɟoŋɦɛˈɟoɤ꞉]
This is a ᴠᴇʀʏ useful dictionary.

I sajeon-eun jeongmal daedanhi yuyonghaeyo.
[i‿zɦad͡ʒɦʌˈnɯn t͡ʃɦʌŋˈmal t̬ɦɛdɦanˈɦii꞉| ɟu̯ˌɟoŋɦɛⁿˈɟoɤ꞉]
This is a very ᴜsᴇғᴜʟ dictionary.

Daedanhi yuyonghajyo. I sajeon-i.
[ˌt̬ɦɛdɦanˈɦi ɟu̯ˌɟoŋɦaˈd͡ʒɟoɤ꞉| i‿zɦad͡ʒɦʌⁿˈɲii꞉]
This is a very useful ᴅɪᴄᴛɪᴏɴᴀʀʏ.

Ani, an haetdago malhaess-eoyo.
[aˈɲii꞉| anˌɦɛt꞉a̰ˈɡɦo maˌɾɛs꞉ʌˈɟoɤ꞉]
No, he said, I haven't done it.

Dang-yeonhaji, jagiya.
[t̬ɦaŋˌɟʌnɦaˈd͡ʒɦii꞉| ˌᵤt͡ʃɦaɡɦiˈɟaa꞉ˌ]
Of course, my dear.

Dang-yeonhaji, jagiya. Naeil seonmul julge.
[t̬ɦaŋˌɟʌnɦaˈd͡ʒɦii꞉| ˌᵤt͡ʃɦaɡɦiˈɟaa꞉| ˌnɛilzɦʌnˈmul t͡ʃɦulˈɡɦɛɛ꞉]
Of course, my dear. You'll have it tomorrow.

Dang-yeonhaji, jagiya, naeil seonmul julge.
[t̬ɦaŋˌɟʌnɦaˈd͡ʒɦii꞉| ˌᵤt͡ʃɦaɡɦiˈɟaa꞉ˌ| ˌnɛilzɦʌnˈmul t͡ʃɦulˈɡɦɛɛ꞉]
Of course, my dear, you'll have it tomorrow.

Sil-eun, geuleohge hwagsilhan geo anya, lago malhaess-eoyo.
[ʒ̊ɦiˈrɯn꞉| k̬ɦɯrʌˈɡɦe ʜʋak̚ˈzɦiˈran k̬ɦaɲˈɟaa꞉| ˌraˈɡɦo maˌɾɛs꞉ʌˈɟoɤ꞉ˌ]
As a matter of fact, he said, I'm not at all sure.

Jagi, jinan ju uli i yeonghwa bwanneunde gieog an na?
[ʨɦa'gɦii··┆ ʨɦi'nan ʨɦuu'rii··┆ i'jʌŋ(ɦʋ)ɯa p̊ɦɯannɯn'dɦɛ k̊ɦiˌʌgɦan'naa·]
Don't you remember, dear, we saw that movie last week?

Let us also add the phonotonetic transcription of the well-known story *The North Wind and the Sun*, which does not need a literal or free translation.

Bug-pung-gwa haes-nim-i seo-lo him-i deo se-da-go da-tu-go iss-eul ttae, han na-geu-ne-ga tta-tteus-han oe-tuleul ib-go geol-eo-wass-seub-ni-da. Geu-deul-eun nu-gu-deun-ji na-geu-ne-ui oe-tu-leul meon-jeo beos-gi-neun i-ga him-i deo se-da-go ha-gilo gyeol-jeong-haess-seub-ni-da.

Bug-pung-eun him-kkeos bul-eoss-eu-na, bul-myeon bul-su-log na-geu-ne-neun oe-tu-leul dan-dan-hi yeomyeoss-seub-ni-da. Geu-ttae-e Haes-nim-i tteu-geo-un haesbich-eulga-man-hi nae-lyeo jjoe-ni, na-geu-ne-neun oe-tu-leul eol-leun beos-eoss-seub-ni-da. I-li-ha-yeo Bug-pung-eun hae-nim-i dul-junge him-i deo se-da-go in-jeong-ha-ji anh-eul su eobs-eoss-seub-nida.
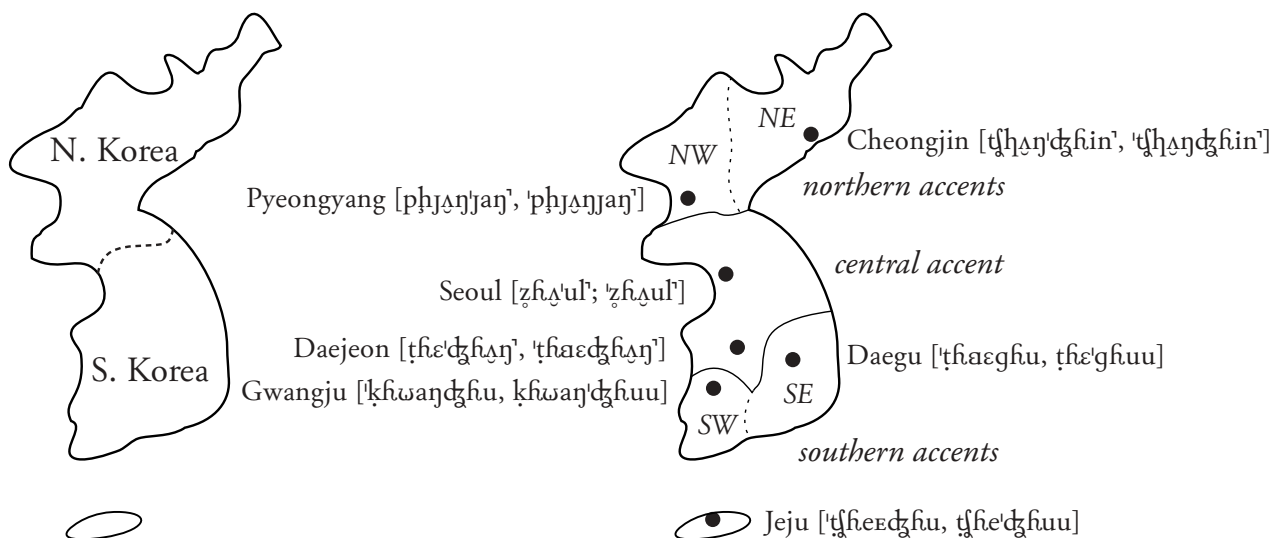
Dang-sin-e-ge i i-ya-gi-ga ma-eum-e deusyeoss-na-yo? Da-si-han-beon deud-gi-leul won-ha-si-na-yo?

[ˌp̊ɦukʼpɦʋuŋ'gɦɯa ɦɛʐɲi'mii··┆ ʐɦʌ'ro ɦimi'dɦʌ ʐɦedɦa'gɦoσ··┆ ˌʈʰatɦʋ'gɦoi sːɯl-
ˌtːɑɛˌ┆ ɦanˌnagɦɯne'gɦaa··┆ ˌtːɑtːʏ'tɦa nσtɦʋ'rɯ ripʼk̊ɦoσ··┆ k̊ɦʌ'rʌɯas: ʐɯmʼɲi'dɦaa·‖
ˌk̊ɦɯdɦɯ'rɯn nuˌgɦudɦɯn'ʤɦi nagɦɯ'neʉσ 'tɦʋurɯl mʌn'ʤɦʌʌ··┆ p̊ɦʌʐ'gɦinɯ ɲi-
'gɦaa··┆ ˌɦimi'dɦʌ ʐɦedɦa'gɦo ɦagɦi'ro k̊ɦjʌl'ʤɦʌŋɦɛs: ʐɯmʼɲi'dɦaa·‖

ˌp̊ɦukʼpɦʋ'ŋɯn ɦim'kːʌtʼ p̊ɦurʌsːɯ‿naa·┆ p̊ɦul'mjʌn pɦulʐɦu'rokʼ nagɦɯne'nɯn··┆
ˌσtɦʋ'rɯl ʈɦaɯdɦan'ɦi jʌ'mjʌs: ʐɯmʼɲi'dɦaa·┆ k̊ɦɯ'tːɛ ɦɛʐɲi'mii··┆ tːʏ'gɦʌun ɦɛzbɦi-
'ʤɦɯl k̊ɦaman'ɦi nɛ'ljʌ ʧːɕ‿ɲiiˌ┆ ˌnagɦɯne'nɯ nσtɦʋ'rɯlˌ··┆ ʌl'lɯn pɦʌ'ʐɦʌs: ʐɯmʼ-
ɲi'dɦaa·┆ iˌlißa'jʌʌ··┆ p̊ɦukʼpɦʋ'ŋɯn··┆ ˌɦɛɲi'mii··┆ ˌtɦʋulʤɦʋ'ŋe ɦi'mi ˌtʰʌʐɦedɦa'gɦoin
ʤɦʌŋɦa'ʤɦian ɦɯlʼʐɦuʌpʼ ʐɦʌs: ʐɯmʼɲi'dɦaa·‖

¿tɦaŋʐɦine'gɦɛɛ··┆ ¿iijagɦi'gɦaa··┆ ¿maɯ'me ʈɦɯʐˌjʌsːna'joσ·‖ ¿ˌtɦaʐɦi(ɦ)am'bɦʌn··┆
¿ˌtɦɯkʼgɦi'rɯl ɯonˌɦazɦina'joσ·].

The extension of each phrase depends on the number of syllables each word has in it. Let us show a typical structure: [ˌ$(·$)'$(ˌ$)ˌ$]. Another frequent pattern is ['$·$(ˌ$)(ˌ$)ˌ$]. Their broader versions are: [ˌ$(ˌ$)⁻$(ˌ$)ˌ$], [⁻$·$(ˌ$)(ˌ$)ˌ$].

N. Korea

S. Korea

NE

NW

Cheongjin [ʨɦʌŋ'ʤɦinʼ, 'ʧɦʌŋʤɦinʼ]
northern accents

Pyeongyang [pɦjʌŋ'jaŋʼ, 'pɦjʌŋjaŋʼ]

central accent

Seoul [ʐɦʌ'ulʼ; 'ʐɦʌulʼ]

Daejeon [ʈɦɛ'ʤɦʌŋʼ, 'tɦɛɛʤɦʌŋʼ]
Gwangju ['k̊ɦɯaŋʤɦu, k̊ɦɯaŋ'ʤɦuu]

Daegu ['ʈɦɛgɦu, ʈɦɛ'gɦuu]

SW   SE

southern accents

Jeju ['ʨɦɛɛʤɦu, ʨɦɛ'ʤɦuu]

North-eastern and south-eastern accents may keep traces of their dialectal (distinctive) tonemes, and they are more likely to use the broader versions just seen. However, neutral accents should not have such tonetic modifications (more or less possible in the mediatic accent). See (above) the administrative and accent maps of Korea.

Some examples of single words are taken from the book *The Sounds of Korean* (2012, CUP), but transcribed following our own method.