

# 한국어 외래어에 대한 연구 (Foreign words in Korean)

Rainer Dormels (Koreanologi – University of Warsaw)

## Foreign words in Korean

From which languages came the most foreign words in the Korean language? An answer to this question is of interest, because the unequal distribution of power and prestige in human societies is reflected by the amount of borrowings, which one language gives another language.

**Table: Important origin languages of foreign words in the Korean language**

	<b>Yi Chong-kük (1936)</b> Foreign Words	<b>Tonga (1994)</b> Dictionary	<b>Yu/ Chi (1998)</b> Foreign Words	<b>Pae In-hwan (2000)</b> Foreign Words	<b>Kungnip (2001)</b> Dictionary
<b>English</b>	App. 90%	App. 88%	App 75%	App. 85%	App. 90%
<b>Rest (number)</b>	1.375	988	1.587	2.244	4.143
<b>German</b>	34,7%	24,5%	27,0%	25,3%	30,3%
<b>French</b>	25,4%	21,1%	26,7%	21,1%	18,3%
<b>Italian</b>	5,1%	20,2%	5,8%	10,7%	12,6%
<b>Japanese</b>	1,0% (14)	3,5% (35)	1,1% (21)	23,5% (613) [8,5% (222)]	5,7% (235)

We can see that the English language, even before the occupation of South Korea by US troops in 1945, is by far the dominant donor language.

One special feature of the Korean language is, that many foreign words came from Western languages through Japanese to Korean.

This becomes even more obvious when we think about the so-called "Japanese English" or words, which pronunciation tells that they came through the Japanese language. First, we have a group of words, which were abbreviated within the Japanese language (e.g. T'ellebi, Ot'obai).

The second group consists of words, which were put together within the Japanese language, but doesn't exist in the English language (e.g. Omūraisū, Waisyöch'ū).

Within the third group, there was a chance or narrowing in the meaning, which were adopted into the Korean language. (Sain – sign, meaning: sign; Madam – madame; meaning: female brothel manager;

Arūbait'ŭ – Arbeit, meaning: side job for students).

Within the fourth group, the pronunciation reminds of the "detour" from the Japanese language (Komu, Ppang, Ppangkku).