

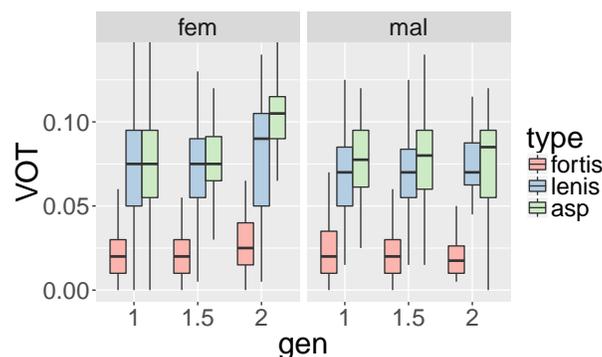
Title: “Heritage Korean and Ethnic Identity in California”

Current research on Seoul Korean has identified a tonogenetic phenomenon whereby word-initial lenis and aspirated stops and affricates are merging in VOT and simultaneously developing a pitch contrast in the f0 of the following vowel. This contrast affects production and perception of Korean and is mediated by linguistic and social factors, including age, gender, L2 proficiency (of English) (Silva, 2006a,b; Kang and Guion, 2008; Oh, 2011; Kim, 2013, a.o.), and word frequency (Bang et al., 2015). Less is known about diasporic Korean, namely, if the sound change has survived a generational and geographic leap to become manifested in the speech of young Korean Americans, who learned the language from the generation that vanguarded the change, but in a very different environment.

This study examines whether the VOT merger and emerging pitch contrast can be found in heritage speakers of Korean who grew up or spent formative years in California but learned Korean from their (Seoul-born) parents, taking into account speaker age, gender, strength of input, and parental information (age and age of immigration). Speakers (n=30, 18-31yo) were categorized as G1 (native speakers from Seoul), G1.5 (Koreans who had immigrated from Seoul between 6 and 15), or G2 (heritage speakers) and read minimal triplets in carrier sentences, focusing on word-initial stops and affricates (*pul* ‘fire’, *p^hul* ‘grass’, *p’ul* ‘horn’).

Results show a significant effect of generation on VOT of aspirated stops ($F(2, 608)=4.538$, $p=0.0213$) as well as of age of immigration ($F(1, 585)=6.325$, $p=0.0182$), but there was no significant difference in lenis VOT between the three groups. Significant effects of generation were found for aspirated f0 ($F(2, 242)=6.756$, $p=0.005$) but not lenis f0. G1 and G1.5 speakers behaved more like each other than like G2. A comparison of G1 and G1.5 female speakers showed no significant difference along any dimension aside from aspirated f0 ($p=0.007$), whereas all G2 speakers differed from the other groups in VOT and f0 ($p<0.0001$).

While G1 and G1.5 females showed complete VOT merger for lenis and aspirated stops, their male counterparts did not, and neither did G2 females. G2 females, in fact, clearly rely on VOT as their primary means of contrast, since the f0 measurements of G2 female lenis and aspirated stops were not significantly different from one another ($p=0.51$), in contrast with G1 female lenis and aspirated stops ($p<0.0001$) This only partially corroborates the findings of Kang and Nagy (2016). Thus, heritage speakers are employing radically different strategies from the two other groups in the production of lenis and aspirated stops and their participation in the Seoul-based tonogenetic change does not match that of their peers who immigrated recently.



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