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A Contextual Approach to the Convergence and Divergence of Korean and Japanese[1)]

by
Juha Janhunen
University of Helsinki

Abstract.

While there is no question about the fact that Korean and Japanese share a large number of structural as well as a substantial number of material parallels, the explanation of the linguistic and extralinguistic background of these parallels is still disputed. The present paper defends the view that the parallels were formed as a result of areal interaction under concretely identifiable historical and protohistorical conditions. An overall understanding of the underlying extralinguistic circumstances is a prerequisite for the correct interpretation of the linguistic and philological corpus upon which comparisons between the two languages are based. When correctly understood, the comparative material suggests that Korean and Japanese have undergone a process of convergence, followed by gradual divergence continuing up to the present day.

1. The ethnohistorical background

It would be impossible to approach the question concerning the linguistic parallels between Korean and Japanese without recognizing a number of ethnohistorical circumstances connected with the early

location and expansion of languages and speech communities in Korea and Japan. It happens that many of the basic facts of Korean and Japanese ethnic history are still widely rejected by both historians and linguists working on the issue, perhaps due to scholarly stagnation, but also because of political bias. In the present paper it is nevertheless assumed without further argumentation that the following premises (discussed in more detail in Janhunen 1996. 196–210) hold true and represent an adequate description of the formation of the Korean and Japanese speech communities:

(i) The linear ancestor of the Japanese language was once spoken in the southern and southwestern parts of the Korean Peninsula, the region of the historical Paekche and Kaya political entities, from where the language spread to the Japanese Islands, including the Ryukyu Islands, in a wave of ethnic and cultural expansion that can be dated to the Yayoi period of Japanese archaeology. The modern descendant languages of this expansion may be termed Japanic, a genetic entity that is safest to define as a small (2+ languages) and relatively shallow (ca. 2 ky) language family.

(ii) The ancestral stages of Japanic may be divided into Proto-Japanic and Pre-Proto-Japanic. While Proto-Japanic was already an insular entity, Pre-Proto-Japanic was still spoken on the Korean Peninsula. However, even after the appearance of Japanese in its present location, a related idiom, or related idioms, continued to be spoken in Korea. These remnant forms of Japanese-related speech are fragmentarily documented in Korean historical sources (notably *Samguk Sagi*) and may be collectively identified as Para-Japanic. Para-Japanic (peninsular) and Proto-Japanic (insular) may be regarded as two collateral and approximately contemporaneous branches descending from Pre-Proto-Japanic.

(iii) The linear ancestor of the Korean language was originally spoken in the southeastern part of the Korean Peninsula, the region of the Shilla

Kingdom, from where it spread to the other parts of Korea extinguishing on its way Para-Japanic by a process of linguistic assimilation. There may also have been other languages spoken in some parts of Korea, especially in the territory of the northern kingdom of Koguryo. The ultimate result of the Shilla expansion was the monolingual population of the modern Koreans, whose language may be genetically classified as Koreanic. Compared with Japanic, Koreanic is an even smaller (1+ language) and shallower (ca.1 ky) language family.

(iv) The direct ancestral form of Koreanic may be identified as Proto-Koreanic, preceded by Pre-Proto-Koreanic. It is possible that the lineage leading to Proto-Koreanic was once accompanied by one or more parallel branches, or Para-Koreanic. However, unlike Para-Japanic, Para-Koreanic remains historically undocumented. The only two actually known linguistic entities of protohistorical Korea are therefore Proto-Koreanic and Para-Japanic, or, at an earlier stage, Pre-Proto-Koreanic and Pre-Proto-Japanic, respectively.

Any successful work on the linguistic prehistory of Korea and Japan presupposes a recognition of these basic premises. However, even these premises allow a variety of explanations to be attempted concerning the relationship between Koreanic and Japanic. Although most explanations proposed so far have been based on the assumption of an ultimate genetic affinity between the two language families, it appears entirely possible, and, indeed, more reasonable, to operate with a strictly areal model. This model says nothing about the origin of the languages concerned, but it explains the similarities shared by them as the result of contacts between the corresponding speech communities in the past.

2. The stages of interaction

When we now consider the chronological background of the contacts between Koreanic and Japanic, we can see that they must have begun on the Korean Peninsula during the late prehistorical or early protohistorical period. Moreover, the earliest contacts, preceding any preserved written documents, seem to have been of the greatest consequence from the areal linguistic point of view. There have been later periods of interaction between the two language families, but the more recent the period, the less significant its linguistic impact seems to have been. Going backwards in time we can distinguish between five stages of changing historical circumstances:

(i) At the recent end of the time scale, some limited linguistic interaction has accompanied the contacts between the modern Korean and Japanese nations (20th c.). Since these contacts culminated in the period of Japanese colonial rule over Korea (1910-1945), we may assume that it is mainly a question of a Japanese superstate in Korean. However, in spite of the political and military impact involved, and the widespread bilingualism in Japanese among the prewar Korean generation, the traces of actual linguistic interaction from this period are surprisingly scarce. The only major section of the Korean language into which Japanese influences penetrated was apparently the Sino-Korean lexicon, which was enriched by a layer of Sino-Japanese innovations. Other modern loan words from Japanese into Korean seem to be very rare (an example is provided by *kutu* 'shoe', as discussed by Vovin 1994. 243-245, cf. Martin 1996. 81). Convincing evidence of grammatical interference remains to be shown.

(ii) The modern period was preceded by perhaps a millennium of historical evolution (10th to 19th cc.), during which the speakers of Korean and Japanese were, in spite of their geographical adjacency, only in occasional contact. Apart from brief episodes of more intensive interaction, like the invasion of Korea by Japanese troops under Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1592-

1598), the two languages seem to have developed almost independently of each other. Whatever linguistic contacts may have taken place, they are best characterized as adstrate influences, whose impact on both sides was minimal. This was certainly not a period that would have substantially increased the similarities between Korean and Japanese.

(iii) During the early centuries of its existence (5th to 10th cc.), the Japanese state seems to have been much more dependant than later on the cultural innovations that arrived from the continent through the Korean Peninsula. It is very likely, though difficult to quantify, that the cultural flow was accompanied by considerable numbers of Korean-speaking visitors and immigrants, who may well have had a linguistic impact on Japanese. This impact may be characterized as a Korean superstrate in Japanese. Since this superstrate influence may have been strongest in the centuries preceding the earliest Korean and Japanese written documents, its dimensions are impossible to estimate. Even so, one would be tempted to think that this was a relatively marginal phenomenon, which did not cause fundamental changes in the typologies of the two languages, but only strengthened the already extant parallels.

(iv) By contrast, the contemporaneous process of Koreanic expansion on the Korean Peninsula (5th to 10th cc.), during which the speakers of Para-Japanic were absorbed by speakers of Pre-Proto-Koreanic, must have been accompanied by significant structural interference. Since it was Koreanic that expanded into Para-Japanic territory, we may characterize the situation as the incorporation of a Para-Japanic substrate into Koreanic. We have no information on the exact size of this substrate, but it may well have been substantial, since the cultural and demographic base of Para-Japanic (Paekche and Kaya) seems to have been fully comparable with that of Pre-Proto-Koreanic (Shilla). The linguistic Koreanization of the Korean Peninsula was apparently not triggered by demographic factors, but by the new political situation.

(v) The assimilation of the Para-Japanic population must have been preceded by a period during which Pre-Proto-Koreanic and either Para-Japanic or Pre-Proto-Japanic simply coexisted on the Korean Peninsula. Since it is well known from historical sources that the political interaction, both friendly and hostile, between the Three Kingdoms of Korea, and their predecessors, was both prolonged and profound, linguistic contacts in a framework of widespread adstrate influences must also have taken place. We do not know when this period of early interaction between the two language families had begun, but, in any case, it must have continued through the entire millennium between the beginning of the Yayoi expansion and the unification of Korea (ca. 4th c. BZ to 7th c. AZ).

It may be noted that the above chronological scheme has no direct implications to the problem concerning the genetic affinity of Koreanic and Japanic. However, the adstrate, substrate and superstrate phenomena involved are perfectly sufficient to explain any structural and material parallels shared by Koreanic and Japanic. In particular, the early period of interaction on the Korean Peninsula (4th c. BZ or earlier to perhaps 10th c. AZ) was long enough to form the foundation of what may best be called a *sprachbund* between Koreanic and Japanic. From this point of view there is no necessity to postulate any original similarity, not to speak of a genetic affinity, between the two language families.

3. From convergence to divergence

Indeed, irrespective of whether they were originally related or not, the protohistorical forms of Koreanic and Japanic must have been two completely distinct languages. We do not know how similar or dissimilar they originally were, but it may be taken for certain that their similarities increased in the course of their areal interaction. This process of

convergence apparently culminated in the absorption of the Para-Japanic substrate by Pre-Proto-Koreanic. After this, with the geographical separation of Koreanic (peninsular) and Japanic (insular) completed, a new period of *divergence* began. Modern Korean and Japanese are therefore likely to be more different from each other than their direct ancestors were at the time of the maximum impact of their sprachbund.

As to the question how dissimilar Pre-Proto-Koreanic and Pre-Proto-Japanic may originally have been, some clues are given by internal reconstruction. Although the interpretation of the facts remains disputed, there seems to be a consensus on that Pre-Proto-Koreanic was a language of the Altaic type, similar in most structural details to its northern neighbours, of which Tungusic and Mongolic are two concretely documented examples. The Altaic features of Korean are most often (as in Lee 1977. 00-00) explained in terms of the Altaic Hypothesis, which presupposes an underlying genetic affinity between the languages concerned. However, there is no linguistic problem involved in explaining Altaic typology as an areal phenomenon. We may therefore say that Korean is an Altaic language because its neighbours are. Of course, the ancestors of Korean need not always have been typologically Altaic, but at least the evidence from internal reconstruction does not seem to reveal traces of any other typology in the language.

It is a different matter with Japanese. In both its modern and historically documented forms Japanese is also undisputably an Altaic language in the typological sense. However, there are indications, such as the details of the Japanese root structure (Janhunen 1997), which suggest that Pre-Proto-Japanic once represented a fundamentally different typology, which would apparently best be characterized as Sinitic. If this is so, the situation can be correlated with the general areal picture of East Asia, where the two typologies, Altaic and Sinitic, have coexisted during several millennia. Pre-Proto-Japanic may well have been the northernmost language of the Sinitic type, suggesting that it was intrusive in its Altaic surroundings. In any case, it seems to have undergone a typological transformation that may be termed Altaicization.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to specify to what extent the Altaicization of Pre-Proto-Japanic took place under the impact of Pre-Proto-Koreanic, as opposed to the other languages of the Altaic type in the region.

Operating with this framework, we may now assume that the convergence of Koreanic and Japanic began at the time when Pre-Proto-Japanic, quite possibly expanding along the East Asian coast from the south, entered the Altaic typological sphere, in which Pre-Proto-Koreanic was already located. A less likely scheme would be that Korea was primarily occupied by languages of the Sinitic type, including Pre-Proto-Japanic, and that Pre-Proto-Koreanic, intruding from the north, secondarily brought Altaic typology to the peninsula. However this may have been, the first contact between Koreanic and Japanic could have taken place at any time prior to the beginning of the Yayoi expansion (4th c. BZ).

During the period of convergence, any structural innovations on either the Koreanic or the Japanic side are likely to have reached the other member of the sprachbund also. As always in a sprachbund, it is in most cases impossible to tell in which linguistic sphere any given innovation shared by Koreanic and Japanic primarily occurred. When, however, the period of divergence began, new innovations tended to affect only one language at a time, leading to the increasing differentiation of their structural properties and material resources. In this framework, it is particularly tempting to approach the question as to what the features affected by the convergent and divergent trends of linguistic evolution actually were.

4. The manifestations of convergence

When speaking of the convergence of Koreanic and Japanic, it is useful to make a distinction between two kinds of parallels. At the more general level there are the structural properties shared not only by Koreanic and Japanic, but also by the other languages of the Altaic (or

even Ural-Altaic) type. These features are connected with the general parameters of syntax, morphosyntax, and morphology, such as basic word order (SOV) and methods of syntactic alignment (case suffixes, postpositions, gerunds). Many of these parameters are apparently interrelated, and some might be due to universal tendencies independent of any areal contacts. Most of them are, however, likely to reflect an ancient areal network in which the Altaic (or Ural-Altaic) language type was formed.

At the more specific level there are the properties that link only Koreanic and Japanic with each other. These are certainly properties that can best be explained by assuming a direct areal contact between early stages of the two language families. It must be noted, however, that the presuppositions of many of the relevant phenomena seem to have a more general East Asian background. This is, in particular, true of many syntactic and morphosyntactic features, such as topic marking and numeral classifiers, which are generally untypical of the other languages of the Altaic type, but well attested in the languages of East Asia (including, for some features, Ghilyak). We might say that Korean and Japanese are languages which combine Altaic typology with East Asian categories, a conclusion that is hardly surprising from the geographical point of view.

There is no doubt that morphosyntax is the part of linguistic structure that links Koreanic and Japanic most intimately with each other. It is well known that even the modern forms of Korean and Japanese are morphosyntactically so similar that a morpheme-by-morpheme translation from the one language into the other is, as a rule, possible (as discussed by, e.g., Fabre 1982). In this respect, the other languages of the Altaic type, not to speak of the languages of the Sinitic type, stand clearly further apart. This seems to correspond well to what is known of sprachbunds elsewhere in the world (for instance, in the Balkan region, and in Western Europe), where both syntax, in general, and

morphosyntax, in particular, are typical manifestations of strong areal bonds between languages of diverse origins.

The fact that Koreanic and Japanic also share lexical items is, of course, congruent with their sprachbund relationship. At the present level of knowledge it is still too early to estimate how large the corpus of shared lexicon is, but it may be considerably smaller than is commonly assumed, since most of the sound laws that have been proposed (as in Martin 1966, Whitman 1990, Vovin 1993) can hardly survive the scrutiny of critical research. The relatively small number of verifiable loan words between Koreanic and Japanic, when viewed against the large number of structural parallels, is not incompatible with the assumption of a sprachbund, rather to the contrary. The situation may, however, be indicative of the external conditions under which the sprachbund was formed.

While there is little uncontroversial evidence of shared basic vocabulary between Koreanic and Japanic, the actual lexical parallels point to cultural contacts and geographical overlapping. The most likely historical context for most of these parallels is offered by the Para-Japanic substrate in Koreanic. In other words, Pre-Proto-Koreanic seems to have absorbed regional vocabulary from the language into whose territory it was expanding. It is probably no accident that some of the lexical items concerned have a plausible internal etymology on the Japanic side, when examined in the framework of the typological transformation of Pre-Proto-Japanic (as in the type *si+ma* 'island', originally a compound word from two primary monosyllables). We may assume that the bulk of all old (non-Chinese) lexical parallels between Koreanic and Japanic are Para-Japanic borrowings in Korean.

Against this background one should not expect to find too many material similarities in the grammatical elements of Korean and Japanese. Although attempts have been made (as in Martin 1990, Frellesvig,

forthcoming) to explain the functional parallels exhibited by selected morphological markers on the basis of common material protoforms, the results remain questionable. Even if generally acceptable parallels were to be found, they would most naturally be explained in the areal framework. The borrowing of grammatical elements, including suffixes, is commonly observed between languages of the Altaic type, both ancient and modern. This may, indeed, be the explanation behind some conspicuous look-alikes in the Korean and Japanese systems of grammatical markers (like the interrogative particles *-kka/-ka*).

There is, however, one section of linguistic structure that is problematic in the context of the sprachbund between Koreanic and Japanic. This section is phonology. As far as is known from other comparable cases of intensive areal interaction between two or more languages, phonology, like morphosyntax, is an area in which structural parallelism develops easily and systematically. As a point of comparison, we may quote the example of the Volga sprachbund, which comprises several distinct languages of the Altaic (Ural-Altaic) type. There are, in particular, two languages, Chuvash (Turkic) and Mari (Uralic) that have evolved towards a structural uniformity without losing their material distinctness. Their uniformity is most typically manifested in *both* morphosyntax (morpheme-by-morpheme translatability) *and* phonology. The phonological systems are not completely identical, but they are nevertheless intimately linked by shared diachronic developments involving paradigmatic, syntagmatic, and prosodic properties.

It is therefore curious that the phonological systems of Korean and Japanese are conspicuously different, even when viewed in their documented earlier shapes. This must have an explanation, if the assumption of a sprachbund between the two languages is to be held. The only plausible explanation seems to be that the two languages did actually develop towards convergent phonological patterns. The

subsequent period of divergence has, however, already erased most of the similarities that once existed.

5. The phonological convergence

It goes without saying that the shallow depth of both Proto-Koreanic and Proto-Japanic implies that the corresponding pre-protolanguage-level stages recoverable by the method of internal reconstruction are also relatively recent. Without internal reconstruction, however, we have no information concerning the prehistorical typology of the two languages, and without such information we cannot specify what particular shared properties derive from primary similarities and what are due to secondary convergence.

In spite of such inevitable limitations in our knowledge we can, nevertheless, identify at least two important phonological developments that can best be explained in terms of the assumption of a prehistorical convergence:

(i) Morpheme structure. As was already indicated above, there are good reasons to claim that Pre-Proto-Japanic was once a language of the Sinitic type. From the point of view of morpheme structure this means that the Pre-Proto-Japanic lexicon is likely to have been dominated by monosyllables, which had a strictly regulated segmental composition with open (CV) and closed (CVC) syllable types. Ultimately, only open syllables remained, though root-final consonants were preserved in verbs, which had developed a suffixal morphology (CV.C-V(-)). The reduction of syntagmatic distinctions in non-verbal roots necessitated new methods of word formation, including reduplication (CV&CV), compounding (CV+CV). and suffixation (CV-CV). As a result, Pre-Proto-Japanic acquired a morpheme structure dominated by bisyllables, very much as was the case in its Altaic

neighbours. This process was very probably stimulated by Pre-Proto-Koreanic, though the influence of the other Altaic neighbours of Pre-Proto-Japanic cannot be ruled out.

(ii) Tones. Another development triggered by the simplication of the Pre-Proto-Japanic morpheme structure was the emergence of tones, originally two (in syllables of the type CVC), then four (with the development CVC > CV). Since tones are a typical Sinitic feature in East Asia, they were probably present in Pre-Proto-Japanic already when it entered the Altaic typological sphere. However, unlike other non-Altaic features, tones were not eliminated, possibly because they had acquired a crucial role in the language. The role of tones was gradually reduced by the polysyllabification of the lexicon, but it continued to be so strong that the phenomenon was borrowed by Pre-Proto-Koreanic. There seems to be a consensus on that the tones, or "accents", of Korean and Japanese are structurally very similar (Ramsey 1987), and there is no way to explain this similarity except by assuming an areal influence from Japanic to Koreanic. In this context, it is irrelevant what the exact segmental background of the Korean tones is, but a connection with lost syllabic distinctions appears possible (Ramsey 1991, Martin 1996. 40-48).

Of the two convergence phenomena discussed above, the former, involving the transformation of the Pre-Proto-Japanic morpheme structure, is clearly chronologically more ancient and must have begun well before the Japanic expansion to the Japanese Islands. The latter phenomenon, involving the origin of tones in Korean, may, however, be considerably more recent and need not date further back in time than the period of the Para-Japanic substrate. Even so, tones were formed during the Pre-Proto-Koreanic stage, from which they were inherited into Proto-Koreanic, the ancestral form of the modern Korean dialects.

6. Non-convergent features

In spite of their evolution towards convergence, the phonologies of Pre-Proto-Koreanic and Pre-Proto-Japanic apparently never became completely identical. The clearest evidence of this comes from the vowel systems of the two languages, which point to differences of both paradigmatic and syntagmatic character:

(i) Vowel distinctions. Although we have no direct information on the vowel systems of Pre-Proto-Koreanic and Pre-Proto-Japanic, it is reasonable to assume that the historically recorded forms of the two languages preserve significant features inherited from a more remote past. These features suggest that the two vowel systems were originally very different, and remained so, a circumstance which should be considered when working on the lexical borrowings between the two languages. The basic difference seems to have been that the Japanic vowel system was of the triangular type, comprising probably five basic vowels (**a *e *i *o *u*) and a central vowel (traditionally written as **ŏ*), while Koreanic points to a typical Altaic quadrangular system, comprising eight vowels (**a *e *ï *i *o *ö *u *ü*), distinguished symmetrically according to tongue height (high vs. low), tongue position (front vs. back), and lip rounding (rounded vs. unrounded).

(ii) Vowel harmony. The eight vowels of Pre-Proto-Koreanic were organized into four harmonic pairs, which were distributed according to the rules of a progressive palato-velar vowel harmony, as also attested in the other languages of the Altaic (Ural-Altaic) type with the exception of Japanic. There has been an attempt to explain the Korean vowel harmony as a very recent secondary phenomenon (Martin forthcoming 1-23), but the evidence, based on philological materials, is hardly conclusive. The same can be said of the to attempt to reanalyze the Tungusic vowel harmony as a set of combination rules independent of the palato-velar correlation (Starostin 1991. 22-24). The fact is that both the vowel systems and the harmonic

rules determining the distribution of vowels are virtually identical in the earliest recoverable (though not necessarily synchronous) forms of not only Koreanic and Tungusic, but also Mongolic and Turkic. This suggests that the Altaic vowel harmony was a major areal innovation which only recently has receded in Korean. Japanic, on the other hand, seems never to have been encompassed by this innovation.

There may well have been other phonological features that resisted the pressure of convergent evolution, though they are less obvious. The consonant systems, for instance, which show a number of significant differences in the historically documented forms of Korean and Japanese, may have been more similar in the pre-protoforms of the two languages (cf. Martin forthcoming 61). The original consonant system of both languages seems to have been very simple, comprising perhaps only one series of stops (*p *t *k, possibly also palatal *c), a parallel or somewhat smaller subset of nasals (*m *n *ng, possibly also palatal *n), one sibilant fricative (*s), one liquid (*r), and two glides (*w *y). The rules of consonant phonotax need not have been identical, but they are likely to have involved parallels, such as the details of liquid distribution (non-occurrence of the liquid consonant in initial position), which has a wider areal background in the languages of the Altaic type.

7. The phonological divergence

We may, consequently, assume that many of the phonological differences observed between the modern forms of Korean and Japanese, and also between their historically documented ancestors, are due to secondary divergent developments. It is not difficult to identify several such developments on the basis of written documents, external comparisons, and internal reconstruction:

(i) Vowel elision. The most important phenomenon affecting the Koreanic syllable structure before the period of Proto-Koreanic was vowel elision, which involved the loss of vowel segments under circumstances that remain to be specified. Most probably, elision was conditioned by a combination of segmental and positional factors, though in some positions, notably word-finally, it seems to have affected all vowels (the type **kuma* 'bear' > *kom*). Vowel elision had multiple consequences to Koreanic phonology, in that it created new syllable-final consonants as well as new consonant clusters. Some of the new clusters later yielded monophonemic aspirated and glottalized, or "reinforced", consonants.

(ii) Vowel rotation. The Koreanic vowel qualities were affected by the so-called rotation, also known as the Korean vowel shift, in which the original palato-velar pairs of vowels were velarized and rotated to pairs of differing tongue height. At the same time, new palatal vowels were formed through the monophonemization of sequences ending in a palatal glide. Also, vowel harmony was reoriented from horizontal (front vs. back) to vertical (higher vs. lower). Some of the effects of rotation can be observed in loanwords, including Sino-Korean elements, which were borrowed at a time when the process was still going on (Pulleyblank forthcoming). Even more importantly, rotation is clearly an areal innovation, which has to a varying extent affected also the Altaic neighbours of Korean, including both Tungusic and Mongolic (Janhunen 1981). The most likely center of this innovation was in Southern Manchuria and Northern Korea, where the process may have started in late Koguryo times, spreading to the south (Korean) and the north (Manchu). Against this background it is somewhat surprising to see the phenomenon of rotation being denied (Martin forthcoming 23-29) in the same framework which also rejects the conception of a primary vowel harmony in Korean. There is not much that can be said of such proposals: the facts should speak for themselves.

(iii) Consonant lenition. Although the details may still require additional elaboration, the evidence is strong that the Pre-Proto-Koreanic obstruents **p *t *s *k* underwent a positional, perhaps simply intervocalic, lenition to yield the corresponding weak obstruents **b *d *z *g,* of which **d* merged with the liquid **r* (Martin 1996). For various reasons (discussed in Martin 1996. 49-57), the weak obstruents **b *z *g* developed into independent phonemes, which could contrast with the corresponding strong segments, adding to the complexity of the Korean consonant system. It is true, the full system of four different obstruent series (normal vs. weak vs. aspirated vs. glottalized) did not survive long in Korean, as the segments of the weak series were subsequently lost.

None of the above phenomena has direct parallels in the history of Japanese, which retains a considerably simpler segmental structure and phonotax than Korean. Of course, Japanese has also been affected by phonological innovations, and these have mainly increased the differences with regard to Korean. A case in point is the development of the syllabic consonants (nasal and stop) as independent phonemes. As is well known, Japanese also has a series of weak (voiced) obstruents (*b d z g*), which in some respects resemble the Korean segments resulting from the process of lenition. However, the basic background of the Japanese weak series seems to be very different, being apparently connected with prenasalization. Unfortunately, although much has been written on this issue, there is still no satisfactory conclusion in sight.

A development in Japanic which should perhaps be understood as a case of initial convergence with Koreanic, followed by divergence, is involved in the emergence of the Old Japanese vowels **ë* and **ï* from Pre-Proto-Japanic diphthongoid sequences (**ai* resp. **öi*). It goes without saying that there cannot have been any connection between this monophonemization development and the analogous process in

premodern Korean a millenium later. However, the very fact that Old Japanese had a system of eight vowels made it for some time structurally close to the contemporary forms of Korean (philologically Old Korean, but linguistically Pre-Proto-Koreanic). This closeness was lost when Japanese subsequently resumed a system based on the five-vowel triangle.

8. Convergence in divergence

It has already been implied that certain phonological developments, although chronologically and areally separate, have created similar results in Koreanic and Japanic. In these cases, it is often very difficult to assess the exact role of the areal factor. We may take two particularly intricate examples:

(i) Laryngeals. Both Korean and Japanese possess in their modern forms a consonant that is realized as a laryngeal spirant and often classified as such (written as h). From the point of view of the consonant paradigm this segment is better to be analyzed as a velar fricative (therefore perhaps more properly rendered as x). Diachronically, such "laryngeals" are typically not stable features, but represent the residual traces of any of several kinds of segments on their way towards complete disappearance (cf. Janhunen 1999). Moreover, their origination is often connected with areal patterns. In the Altaic sphere it is particularly common for the basic labial stop (**p*) to undergo spirantization, as has happened in Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic, and a number of adjacent "non-Altaic" languages. Japanese (but not Ryukyu) also belongs to this complex, and it would be a serious mistake to ignore the areal implication. It is, however, considerably more difficult to identify the source of the Korean "laryngeal". Both a dental fricative (**s*) and a velar stop (**k*) have been proposed, but

conclusive evidence from either internal reconstruction or external comparisons has never been presented. The velar stop alternative is supported by the parallel offered by Manchu (Vovin 1997), with which Korean shares many phonological features on an areal basis. However this may be, from the point of view of the areal comparisons with Japanic it is important to note that the origin of the Korean "laryngeal" is different from that of its Japanese counterpart. Nevertheless, the two segments are structurally comparable, and an areal parallelism cannot be ruled out.

(ii) Vowel length. Both Korean and Japanese have in their modern forms a correlation between short (normal or single) and long (or double) vowels. Since quantitative correlation is not a universal feature, its presence in two adjacent languages always suggests the possibility of a structural borrowing. However, although there are similarities in the history of the long vowels in Korean and Japanese, there are also major differences. The Japanese long vowels are basically contractive in origin, while their Korean counterparts are more intimately linked with tonal distinctions In both languages, vowel length is a relatively recent innovation, though in some varieties of Korean it has already been lost. Altogether, it is unclear whether there is any connection between the quantitative structures of the two languages, but the structural parallelism remains a fact which cannot be ignored in an areal framework.

The list of secondary structural similarities in the phonologies of Korean and Japanese could be increased. Some of the features concerned are ultimately connected with the influence of Chinese (Sino-Korean and Sino-Japanese). Chinese has, for instance, greatly increased the use of medial glides (*w y*) as members of the syllable structure of both Korean and Japanese, though both languages also show an inherent tendency of vowel breaking (for Korean cf. Martin forthcoming 38-44). Though strictly taken not based on shared innovations, such

features have without doubt moderated the impact of the on-going trend of divergence.

9. Conclusion

We may conclude that the structural (as well as, apparently, material) similarities shared by Korean and Japanese, or Koreanic and Japanic, reflect an intimate areal relationship between the two languages and their ancestral, or ancient collateral, forms. The point of maximum structural parallelism was apparently passed already before either language was recorded in written form. However, even after the loosening of the areal bond, occasional parallel innovations have continued to contribute to the overall similarity of the two languages. At the same time, divergent developments have tended to distance them from each other.

The divergence of Korean and Japanese falls mainly within the time span covered by the historically documented forms of both languages, starting with Old Korean and Old Japanese. However, the actual diachronic processes that have affected the two languages are not easy to identify in the earliest documents, which are complicated by notational inadequacies and interpretational problems. Internal reconstruction and external comparisons, including comparisons between Korean and Japanese, therefore remain the main tools for recovering the divergent history and earlier convergent evolution of the two languages.

Although the divergence of Korean and Japanese, as compared with their Pre-Proto-Koreanic and Pre-Proto-Japanic ancestors, resembles the divergence of two genetically related languages, the areal model of explanation does not necessitate the postulation of a genetic affinity. Indeed, nothing in the phonological phenomena discussed above points to the presence of a genetic link between the two language families. The

absence of such a link should, however, not obscure the fact that Korean and Japanese remain the most important clues to each other's history. For Korean, there is no other external point of comparison and source of diachronic information comparable with Japanese, and vice versa.

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