

- **Korean Language**

- Korean language is one of the eleven most spoken languages in the world, spoken as the first language by more people than French.
- There are about 80 million Korean speakers (49 million in South Korea, 23 million in North Korea, and 7 million expatriates).

- Like Japanese, the Korean language was influenced by the Chinese language in the form of Sino-Korean words.
- Native Korean words account for about 35% of the Korean vocabulary, while about 60% of the Korean vocabulary consists of Sino-Korean words.
- The remaining 5% comes from loan words from other languages, 90% of which are from English.

- ◆ *Hangeul* or the Korean alphabet, is recognized as **one of the simplest and yet most sophisticated language systems in the world:**
- Professor Robert Ramsey of the linguistics department at the University of Maryland declared *hangeul* as “the alphabet for the world.”
  - The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has designated *hangeul* as a world cultural heritage in 1997.
  - UNESCO has also established the “King Sejong Literacy Prize” in 1989 to award the prize annually to an individual or organization in recognition of the effort in lowering illiteracy.

- ◆ That is one of the reasons why Korea enjoys one of the lowest illiteracy rates in the world.
- ◆ On the computer keyboard, *hangeul* is the only language in which all the vowels can be typed from the right side while all the consonants are typed from the left.
- ◆ *Hangeul* is believed to facilitate the maximum use of the limited keyboard capacities of cell phones, thereby making it the most efficient language in sending text messages via cell phones.

- And *Hangeul* is going global.
- In July 2008, a tribe in Indonesia has chosen to use Hangeul as its official writing system, which marks the first time in which the Korean alphabet has been officially adopted outside the Korean Peninsula.
- The tribe, with a population of 60,000, in the city of Bauer and Bauer, was on the verge of losing its native language, "Jjia jjia," as it lacked a proper writing system.
- Textbooks were created with a help from a Korean institute and elementary and high school students began learning their spoken language through the Hangeul writing system.

- Composed of writing, speaking and reading sections, all texts in the book -- explaining the tribe's history, language and culture -- are written in the Korean script. The book also includes a Korean fairy tale.
- The city plans to set up a Korean center next month and to work on spreading the Korean alphabet to other regions by training Korean language teachers.
- Linguists here expressed hope that the case will become a stepping stone to spreading and promoting the Korean alphabet globally.

# III. KOREAN NORMS

- Norms are rules, guides and standards of conduct; they determine acceptable behaviours
- Prescriptive and proscriptive norms.
- Examples of Korean norms:
- Bow to greet each other, except with the same-aged friends.
- Subordinates must greet or bow to superiors first; subordinates have to bow deeper to superiors.
- Use honorific in speaking to strangers, older people, superiors, etc.
- Pass or receive objects with both hands.

- Subordinates must use both hands to shake the hand of superiors.
- Initiation of handshakes is done by an older person or superiors.
- Practically everyone is called by his or her title, including older siblings and cousins, except the same-aged friends.
- Do not use red ink in writing a person's name.
- Don't raise cup higher than that of the superior's when toasting.
- Covering your mouth when yawning or laughing, especially for females.
- Don't blow your nose in the presence of others (out of consideration for others).