

PROCESSES OF INTERACTION BETWEEN THE STANDARD LANGUAGE AND DIALECTS

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Abstract: *This study examines the influence of the standard language on regional dialects and the ways in which dialects, in turn, affect the standard language.*

Keywords: *standard language, dialects, popularization, social media, culture.*

Today, the standard language is widely used, and the influence of mass media, especially television, has gradually promoted the use of the standard language. As a result, linguistic differences between generations have become increasingly evident. The difference in speech between individuals who have received modern education and those who have not is clearly noticeable. Thus, due to standard language education and the influence of mass media, dialects are gradually being replaced by the standard language. At the same time, nouns may be the linguistic category that has undergone the most rapid changes. For example, the standard Korean word *buchu* (부추, chives) is traditionally called *sol* (솔) in the Jeolla dialect. However, today, women in their fifties from the Jeolla region still know the meaning of *sol*, but they generally prefer to use *buchu* instead. In contrast, most people in their twenties and thirties in the Jeolla region do not even recognize what *sol* refers to. While people aged sixty and above continue to use only the word *sol*, women in their fifties tend to use *buchu* despite understanding the dialectal term. Younger generations in their twenties and thirties often do not know the meaning of *sol* at all. The interaction between Standard Korean (표준어) and regional dialects (사투리) is currently a highly active and complex process. This phenomenon can be clearly observed through various forms of mass media, cultural products, and social platforms. The following examples illustrate these processes through films, dramas, news programs, and digital media.

1. Popularization of Dialects in Films and Television Dramas. Example: *Reply 1988* (응답하라 1988). Although this drama is set in the Dobong district of Seoul, it includes characters who speak the Gyeongsang and Jeolla dialects. The Gyeongsang dialect (particularly the Busan accent) is often associated with strong and distinctive characters. In this context, dialect functions as an indicator of character identity and personality. Example: *Our Blues* (우리들의 블루스). This drama contains scenes spoken entirely in the Jeju dialect. Some viewers find these scenes difficult to understand without subtitles, which has been highly appreciated as a realistic portrayal of local language use. Through such dramas, dialects are presented not as alternatives to the standard language but as enriching linguistic and cultural elements.

2. News Broadcasts and Interviews. Example: JTBC Interview Segments.

- In certain interviews, particularly those related to natural disasters or rural life, local residents naturally speak in their regional dialects.

- Journalists often provide subtitles or translations for dialectal speech, thereby reinforcing the presence of dialects within formal media contexts.

Whereas dialects were once regarded as rough, unsophisticated, or inferior forms of speech, they are now increasingly portrayed as a natural part of everyday life.

3. YouTube and Social Media.

Examples: “사투리로 말해요” (“Let’s Speak in Dialect”) and videos such as “전라도/경상도/제주도 사투리 강의” (“Lessons on Jeolla, Gyeongsang, and Jeju Dialects”)

- Numerous content creators and linguists promote dialects as sources of humor, education, and cultural interest.

- Speaking in dialect is often perceived as charming, friendly, and distinctive. Through social media, dialects are becoming an important component of public and regional identity.

4. Popular Culture and K-pop

- Some K-pop artists deliberately use their regional dialects during interviews or stage performances. For example, Suga, a member of BTS, occasionally uses the Daegu variety of the Gyeongsang dialect.

- By doing so, they express their regional identity and establish a more personal and authentic connection with their fans.

The use of dialects in films and television dramas as markers of character identity and realism demonstrates that they are increasingly viewed as complementary elements rather than competitors to the standard language. In news programs, the inclusion of dialect-speaking interviewees, whether accompanied by subtitles or not, contributes to the perception of dialect use as a natural and acceptable phenomenon among the public. Likewise, the representation of dialects on YouTube and other social media platforms as sources of humor and cultural expression may lead audiences to conclude that dialects can produce content that feels more engaging, enjoyable, and authentic than content delivered solely in the standard language.

The standard language (표준어) also exerts a significant influence on regional dialects (방언), and this process has intensified considerably in contemporary society. The following section explains how this influence is manifested.

1. Standardization Through Education and Mass Media

- Schools, universities, textbooks, and national examinations are all conducted on the basis of Standard Korean (표준어).

- Television news broadcasts, official interviews, most films, and radio programs are also delivered in the standard language.

These circumstances compel even dialect speakers to adapt to the standard language. As a result, people who speak regional dialects gradually learn to use Standard Korean in formal situations.

2. Pressure on the Vocabulary and Grammar of Dialects

- Certain dialectal words and expressions are gradually disappearing because younger generations often regard them as outdated.

- For example, the Jeolla dialect word “**너**” (meaning “you”) is now used less frequently among young people, who increasingly prefer the standard Korean form “**너.**”

3. Changes in Positive and Negative Perceptions

- In the past, speaking in a dialect was often viewed as a sign of limited education or low social status.

- Today, however, dialects are being re-evaluated and appreciated through popular culture, including K-dramas and YouTube content, although Standard Korean still maintains its dominant position.

In conclusion, as long as social media continues to exist and expand, dialects will inevitably continue to influence the standard language. Measures that can be taken to address and manage this influence will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections.



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