ON THE INCANTATORY FEATURES OF KOREAN SHAMANIC LANGUAGE*

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1. Introduction

In Korean shamanic rites, *gut*, shamans use both narratives and songs during the rites of exorcism. Shamans are religious specialists mediating between gods and humans, and their language seems to have its own characteristics as a register, providing one of the social variations. Although there have been substantial discussions on the social, psychological, literal, cultural, and religious facets of the Korean shamanism, its language has rarely been brought to a general attention.

Passages used in shamanic rites manifest some linguistic characteristics that point to their own norms and conventions. These characteristics, quite different from those of the ordinary Korean dialect, have been developed in the stream of their own tradition. They seem to be rooted in the conceptual framework of a religious belief system. As Pandharipande (1999, 275) defines, a religious language is one used in various religious contexts such as rituals, prayers, scriptures, and other means of describing religious experiences. As will be discussed shortly, shamanic languages also exhibit a process of extension and have some mythological features, both being the general characteristics of religious languages.

This paper attempts to show how the linguistic and mythological features of shamanic languages make them enchanting. When we say that something is mythological, we mean to declare that it is undecipherable. Focusing on the estranged linguistic and mythological features, I propose that shamanic languages can be best

interpreted in terms of linguistic *hierarchization*, a notion that has been developed since Roman Jakobson's poetics. Specifically, I will employ the framework of Eisele (1997) that reinterprets Jakobsonian framework into a slightly revised notion of hierarchization on the basis of the degree of *combinatorial freedom* and the degree of *semantic immediacy*. A set of paradigm examples of the parallel structure pervasively found in shamanic languages will be adduced which suggest that the frequent use of lexical parallelism works in the reverse direction of the normal process of interpretation. This reverse process has the effect of heightening the 'enchanting,' or 'estranging,' features of the shamanic language, accentuating its peculiar role as a social register.

2. Linguistic Peculiarity

2.1. Extension

An examination of rites for personal fortune (*jaesu-gut*), for funerals (*jino-gwi*), and for relocation (*sŏngju-maji*) that are performed in the vicinity of Seoul, reveals the following traits of religious languages (cf. Kim 1992): 1) lexical, morphological or analogical extensions which do not conform to the norm of the present Seoul dialect, and 2) a degree of communication blocking due to their being religiously invented in the spiritual realm. Examples abound in the names of gods, fictitious terms and borrowings from foreign religions.

2.1.1. Lexical Extension

Shamans, who experience "possession trance,"[1] seem to have special ability to communicate, or commune, with 'spirits' in the process of *gut*. They use expressions which are extended from existing words.[2]

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1) Possession trances involve alternations or discontinuity in consciousness, awareness or personality or other aspects of psychological functioning which are accounted for by possession. A person is changed in some way through the presence in or on him of a spirit entity or power, other than his own personality, soul or self. (Refer to Hogarth 1998).

2) In transcribing Korean, my chief care has been to render the results easily accessible to the general readers. For this reason, I have tried to represent the sounds as closely to their phonetic values as

(1)   taeyangsŏchon   'a village standing to on the west of the sun'
      chŏngsapsari   'a traditional Korean dog with blue furs'
      jesandongban   'on the east side of a mountain'
      dwijidaewang   'Crown Prince Sado (1735-1762)'

Taeyangsŏchon is a compound of two words, *taeyang* 'the sun' and *sŏchon* 'a village on the west side.' These two words, while perfect in meaning in isolation, sound bizarre in combination. *Chŏngsabsari* literally means a kind of traditional Korean dog *sabsari* with blue furs. But such a dog does not exist, nor does it appear in a normal speech context. *Jesandongban* 'on the east side of a mountain' may be interpreted literally on the basis of the Sino-Korean letters. *Dwijidaewang*, literally meaning 'king the great in a rice-chest,' alludes to Sadoseja (1735-1762), who was put to death in a rice chest by his father King Yŏngjo in 1763. Though this expression has thus originated from a historical personage, it is not a word we hear in ordinary language.

Shamanic language has its own vocabulary that shares no kinship with that of the standard dialect. Its peculiar terms reflect shamans' social isolation from the traditional society. During the Chosun dynasty, shamans were denied the right of participating in official state rituals, and were ostracized as members of the lowest social class. Special taxes were levied on them to discourage their practices. Since then, shamans came to belong to one of the eight lowest classes.[3] Korean shamanism has continued to thrive among the downtrodden masses and among women of all classes, providing cathartic release in a society where overt sex role asymmetry (known as *namjon-yŏbi* 'men honoured, women subservient') prevails. Gradually women took over shamanism as

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possible, instead of adhering to any of the current systems of romanization, none of which seem to me fully satisfactory. (For historical names such as *Chosun*, though, I adopt traditional transliteration.) While I have also kept diacritics to a minimum, some systematization seems inevitable. The following hopes to be self-explanatory.

ㅂ /b	ㅍ /p	ㅃ /p'
ㄷ /d	ㅌ /t	ㄸ /t'
ㄱ /g	ㅋ /k	ㄲ /k'
ㅈ /j	ㅊ /ch	ㅉ /ch'
ㅅ /s		ㅆ /s'
ㅡ /ŭ	ㅓ /ŏ	ㅐ /ae 의/ŭi 외/oi

3) Eight lowest classes are *jinchŏk* 'ferryman,' *yŏkjŏng* 'laborer,' *yangsuchŏk* 'vagabond worker,' *jaein* 'entertainer,' *akgong* 'music man,' *nobi* 'servant,' *mudang* 'shaman,' *baekjŏng* 'butcher.'

men discarded it in favour of the more sophisticated and rational world of religion, and shamans have now become almost exclusively women. Ordinary people have shunned marrying shamans or their kin. Shamans on their part have tended to act on the defensive by keeping their job as mediators, calling themselves *donggwan* 'the same genealogy.' The shamanic society has developed into a community of their own. Once a neophyte becomes a full-fledged shaman, a large number of followers gather around her or him to become shamans. Some of them form a close-knit group, performing *gut* together. Their association often lasts for decades, sometimes for life. Since there are few written documents for teaching neophytes the ritual procedures and performances, they have to learn the necessary skills from their experienced elders. This is why there are so many unfamiliar terms used in their language, such as:

(2)   injŏng   'money for the dead to travel to the other world'
      samang   'fortune'
      jora   'drinks offered to gods, libation'
      gongsu   'oracle'

Injŏng means 'money for the dead to travel to the other world', which is *noja* in the standard dialect. *Samang* is used for the standard *haeng-un*; *jora* for *sul*, and *gongsu* for *ye-ŏn*.

In pronunciation, some vowels or consonants are substituted for, added to, or deleted from the standard dialect, as exemplified below.

(3)   a. Samsan (=Namsan)   'Namsan mountain'
         sŏl (=so)   'cow'
      b. ŏbi (=ŏp)   'what one has to do'
      c. gayatgu (=gayagŭm)   'Korean harp with twelve strings'

In (3a) *Samsan* stands for *Namsan*, and *sŏl* for *so*. There is no phonological reason for the substitution of /s/ for /n/, and /əl/ for /o/. The addition of the final /i/[4] in (3b) defies phonological explanation; so does the substitution of /u/ for /ŭm/ with the medial insertion of /t/ for the *gayatgu* in (3c).

As in some religious expressions, Korean shamanic language often displays archaic terms. When it refers to the place of a rite or personal details of a client, *dan-*

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4) A similar examples are found in the standard dialect in cases like *Sori* for *Sol* 'a bird *Solgae.*'

gol, it does so by using archaic terms, alluding to old administrative systems which are now obsolete. Such archaism partly accounts for the peculiarities of the shamanic language. An example will suffice here:

(4) 해상년 연으루 빙오년 해운이고 해동조선국에 오부장 나라터 사읍는 거주지적
    나라터전에 사읍는데 ...
    (haesangnyŏn yŏnŭru bingonyŏn haeunigo, haedong Chosunguk obujang naratŏ saopnŭn
    kŏjujijŏk naratŏjŏne saopnŭnde)
    'The rite is being held for a client who is living in Seoul, Korea, in the year 1966 ...'
    Cited from Kim (1992, 13)

The shaman is here referring to the place and time of the rite as if in the era of the Chosun dynasty. A client who lives in "Seoul, Korea" is referred to as one who lives in *obujang* 'five districts of Seoul during the Chosun dynasty' of *haedong Chosunguk* 'Chosun dynasty in the east of the sea.'

2.1.2. Analogical Extension

Analogical extension is a grammatical term which refers to a process in which linguistic forms are 'leveled' via a general rule.[5] The shamanic language of Korea, however, does not instantiate a general rule: its word stock is analogically extended by compounding 'base' words with 'host' words. Such extension has an effect of diversification, rather than generalization, of the type witnessed in grammar. In other words, this particular process of analogy produces divergent, rather than convergent, derivatives. Consider the following examples:

(5) a. bukdu-chilsŏng   'the Big Dipper'
       dongdu-chilsŏng   ?
       sŏdu-chilsŏng   ?
    b. saje-samsŏng (=jŏsŭng-saja)   'three messengers from the hell'
       arin-samsŏng   ?
       ssŭrin-samsŏng   ?
       gajigodo pijin-samsŏng ?

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5) More generally, many cases of reanalysis or reinterpretation of expressions involve some analogical pressure which projects a generalization from one set of expressions to another, causing regularity.

c. saje-samsŏng (=jŏsŭng-saja)   'three messengers from the hell'
   nanglang-saje   ?
   moran-saje   ?
   ganglim-saje   ?

Bukduchilsŏng in (5a), may be thought of as a compound of *bukdu* 'the Dipper in the north' and *chilsŏng* 'seven stars.' Actually, however, it is an inseparable proper noun that signifies the dipper-shaped seven stars in the north. And yet the words *dongduchilsŏng* and *sŏduchilsŏng* tell us that *chilsŏng* is used, as an independent word, together with a word denoting direction, *dong* 'the east' or *sŏ* 'the west,' thereby giving rise to the meaning 'the dipper-shaped seven stars in the east' and 'the dipper-shaped seven stars in the west,' as the case may be.[6]

The other cases of extension from *saje-samsŏng* shown in (5b,c) may be explained in a similar way. The two morphemes *saje* 'a messenger from a hell' and *samsŏng* 'three officials' are used as base forms to produce words such as *arin-samsŏng, ssŭrin-samsŏng, gajigodo pijin-samsŏng, nanglang-saje, moran-saje,* and *ganglim-saje.* In fact, they hardly have any meaning: they simply attain rhythmic effects. They all have extended from *saje-samsŏng* by analogy, but none of these extended words are interpretable in an ordinary context.

If the task of analogy is to maintain the sound-meaning link by keeping in line sound structure, grammatical structure and semantic structure, the shamanic way of analogy may not belong under the genuine category of analogy. But if we take analogical extension as a matter of applying a generalized word or morpheme to the base form, shamanic languages may be thought of as using the process in the opposite direction, from generalization to diversification. Such an analogical extension in lexical parallelism is witnessed in the pseudo-analogical compounding process, which marks one of the salient extension processes in shamanic songs and narratives. It involves idiosyncratic combination of words or morphemes, peculiar to morpho-syntactic structures. Some examples of extension by lexical parallelism in *jinogwi* 'rite for funeral' is given below (Kim 1992, 58).

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6) Yu Gam Kim, president of the Association for the Seoul *Saenam-gut,* said at a meeting in June, 1999, that shamans believe in the power of the stars *bukduchilsŏng, dongduchilsŏng* and *sŏduchilsŏng* in practicing their *Saenam-gut.* At the present moment, I am not quite sure what the latter two expressions, and some other expressions in the above data (marked '?'), exactly mean.

(6) a.   ah samsŏng   'oh samsŏng'
          daesin samsŏng   'an official spirit'
          arin samsŏng   'a painful spirit'
          ssŭrin samsŏng   'a sore spirit'
          gajigodo pijin samsŏng   'a spirit grudging in wealth'
          yŏlsiwange saja samsŏng   'a spirit from the ten kings of underworld'
     b.   chŏnchuk saje   'a messenger from heaven'
          jiguk saje   'a messenger from underground'
          madu saje   'a messenger taking horse'
          udu saje   'a messenger taking cow'

Here we see nine phrases showing lexical parallelism resulting from analogical extension from *saje-samsŏng* 'three messengers from underworld', which loses its proper meaning when divided into two morphemes. But the divided morphemes are applied separately to form a parallel lexical structure. In a context other than *gut*, it is virtually impossible for ordinary people to construe the meaning of *saje-samsŏng*. In short, the use of lexical items in (6) does not conform to the norm of the standard dialect.

This type of lexical parallelism is one of the most frequent phenomena in shamanic languages. Of the 2157 lines of the text transcribed from Kim's recording, more than eight hundred lines contain such a parallel structure. In order to form a parallel structure, shamans frequently invent pseudo-analogical compounds from a base form, as shown in (6). This compounding may be a factor that makes the shamanic language indecipherable.

2.1.3. Morphological Extension

Shamanic languages are unique in their use of morphological process of derivation also. In the standard process of word formation, one of the psychological principles generally adopted is the principle of least effort, or the principle of "simplicity." It produces new words for old meanings, and new meanings for old words, by shortening a word or phrase. On the contrary, the main characteristics of the shamanic morpho-logical principle show up by way of 'redundancy,' duplicating words or affixes, or adding forms without a particular meaning. This idiosyncrasy also contributes to the enchanting tone. of shamanic languages.

2.1.3.1. Compounding

As is well known, compounding is a process that puts two independent words together into one word. Typically, the constituent parts are themselves words. There are cases, however, which comprise an element that is neither an independent word (a free morpheme) nor an affix (a bound morpheme)—not affix because it is relatively unproductive, compared to most affixes, and because it has a lexical rather than grammatical meaning. Compounding is one of the richest resources of morphological extension. In shamanic languages, we find compounding of various parts of speech, as is illustrated below:

(7)   haedong Chosunguk   'Korea'
       yangjubuchŏ   'husband and wife'

The Sino-Korean *haedong Chosun-guk* 'Chosŏn dynasty in the east of the sea' and *yangjubuchŏ* 'two house-holders, husband and wife' are the compound types of N+N+N, and N+N, respectively. But the difference is that they are composed of two words of the same meaning. That is, shamans compound two words: *haedong* 'east of the sea', which draws on the location of the Korean peninsula relative to China, and *Chosun* which is another name of Korea until the 19th century. *Yangjubuchŏ* is another case of repeating words of similar meanings, for *yangju* means 'a pair of house-holders (i.e., man and his wife) and *buchŏ* 'husband and wife'. More examples follow:

(8)   nyŏgongju   'princess'
       chilsŏngbyŏl   'the Big Dipper'
       yŏlsiwang   'the Buddhist ten kings of the ten hells of the underworld'

All the examples here, *nyŏgongju* 'female princess,' *chilsŏngbyŏl* 'the Big Dipper stars,' and *yŏlsiwang* 'ten ten-kings,' carry redundancy, as one can easily observe. Redundancy, then, may also be responsible for the enchanting nature of the shamanic language.

2.1.3.2. Derivation by affixation

Alongside redundancy by compounding, there is a curious process of attaching affixes that are not in normal use, a process that makes shamanic chants all the more

indecipherable. Consider the following examples:

(9) a. sana-yo
     b. sana-yo-na
     c. sana-so-na
     d. sana-l-k'a

In (9a), *sana* 'Does he/she/it/ live?' is the base to which *-yo* is suffixed. In (9b), the suffix *-yo* appears as an infix, with *-na* added as a redundant suffix. In (9c) honorific *-so-*[7] is used as an infix. In (9d) the infix *-l-*, which implies uncertainty, is followed by the interrogative *-k'a*. This last example thus amounts to double interrogatives. More examples are given below, which hope to be self-explanatory.

(10) bong-ha(yŏ)-syŏng-ida   'Please appoint him/her to do it.'
      siwi-ha-syŏng-ida   'Please take care of it.'
      gŭri-ha-syŏng-ida   'Please do it as you intended to.'
      batŭ-syŏng-ida   'Please take it.'
      ŏmamama-ro-syŏng-ida   'She is an honored mother.'
      bae-ro-syŏng-ida   'It is a ship.'
      nar-i-ro-syŏng-ira   'It is a day.'
      gongyang-i-ro-syŏng-ida   'This is an offering.'

The nonstandard honorifics *-syŏng-* and *-ro-* as well as the redundant *-i-* make the results quite unfamiliar to the ordinary ear.

2.1.3.3. Derivation by reduplication

Reduplication is a process that copies all or part of the phonetic forms of a stem or an affix. Anderson (1992) and Aronoff (1994) observe that derivational morphology often instantiates such a process. In the shamanic language, reduplication process is used for variation.

(11) a. jae-jae bong-bong   'hills and mountain peaks'

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7) The honorific *so* is also found in the following examples:
    ip-so-wajiyo (= ipyŏyajiyo-HON.)   'must be served'
    hŏ-so-nida (= hada-HON.)   '(he/she) did it'
    sorŏ-so-ida (= sorida-HON.)   '(it's) the sound'

b. ŏlgisŏl-sŏl-i   'roughly'
c. haopsi-si-ni   'do-honorific'
d. jŏngche-che   'sincerely'

In (11a), the repetition of *jae* 'hill' and *bong* 'mountain peak' has the effect of multiplying the number of hills or mountain peaks.[8] In (11b, c, d), some parts of the stems are reduplicated for phonetic variation: *ŏlgisŏl-sŏl-i* (for *ŏlgisŏlgi*), *haopsi-si-ni* (for *haopsini*), and *jŏngche-che* (for *chŏnghi*) are the results of copying adjacent sounds. Even though this reduplication process appears to reflect reduplication in the standard dialect (as in *du-dungsil* 'floating high' and *chŏl-chŏl-i* 'every season') the shamanic instances of reduplication is 'innovative' in that it makes a free use of morphemes which are not included in the standard vocabulary.

2.2. Religious Expressions

A thing can be defined more easily than a person because a thing can fit into an objective category. But by far harder it is to define a god. This is why there are so many terms and expressions about gods and their work. When shamans communicate with their gods, they use a gret deal of names for them.

In the rites of *gangsinmu*, for example, shamans create a language that reflects their views of gods, worlds, soul, etc. In their spiritual realm, various natural elements or phenomena appear as gods. Shamans merge the names of kings and historical heroes and their wives with those of the saints of other religions. The following examples show some historic personages consecrated as gods within honorific expressions.

(12)   Yim janggunnim   'General Yim Kyŏng-ŏp'
        Choi il janggunnim   'General Choi Yŏng'
        Muung   'Great Buddhist Priest Muhak'

General Yim Kyŏng-ŏp (1594-1646) is here referred to as *Yim janggunnim* 'general

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8) Reduplication is also found in the standard dialect as in *myŏngmyŏng baekbaek* 'quite clearly,' *gaga hoho* 'every household,' and *bangbang gokgok* 'in every street and corner.'

Yim-HONORIFIC', and General Choi Yŏng (1316-1388) as *Choi il janggunnim* 'general Choi Il-HONORIFIC.' The Buddhist Priest Muhak (1327-1405: adviser to Yi Sŏng-gye, founder of the Chosun dynasty) is here simply *Muung* 'sir Mu.' Among the Korean folks, the deified heroes, regardless of their personalities, tend to possess some qualities of drawing general sympathy and pathos.

To address the power of gods, shamans focus their attention entirely upon gods and away from themselves. However, they inevitably use human words to communicate with unnatural beings. In the initial ritual, *naerim-gut*, neophytes parade their mystical capacities to show that they are spiritualized by a possession trance and reborn as consecrated shamans. The initial ritual is accompanied by *malmunŭl yŏlda* 'to open the word gate.' A *gut* that is performed by the shamans with such an experience includes divine messages, dances, acrobatic movements, and divination. They sing to call gods, pleasing them and to 'sending them away,' while they narrate *gongsu* to deliver a divine message of the descended god. They are said to adopt an ecstatic state to journey to the realm of god, seeking help as healers or prophets, and gods on their part are said to reveal their intentions by speaking through them and foretelling the future to the clients. The shaman gives gongsu to their clients as a being transformed from human to divine, and from this moment a god or gods talk within or through them.

Generally, eighteen thousand gods are assumed to rule this world. Trying to draw their attention, the shaman communicates freely with them on equal terms, obligating them to reciprocate his wishes by means of various gifts, such as food, drink, drama, and entertainment. Given below are some of the gods' names shamans are often heard to call:

(13)   okhwangsangje   'a heavenly god, the jade emperor'
       obangsinjang   'an earthly god who takes care of better changes in life'
       buri   'an ancestral god honored in the household'
       sŏngju   'a male god who protects the household'
       daegam   'an official god'

Most of these Sino-Korean names are the shaman's own inventions, though *buri* 'root' and *daegam* 'a dignitary' are often used as shamanic words that refer to gods.

Korean shamanism also includes more than one language code for a *gut*. Like so many languages of religion, the Korean shamanic language has adopted expressions

from a variety of religions. With the introduction of Buddhism from China in the 4th century, the traditional shamanism of Korea has survived while undergoing extensive syncretism, giving rise to some words adopted from Buddhism, such as follows:

(14)   bosalbulsa   'Bodhisattva god'
        namuhamitabul   'Buddhist enchanting words'
        jesŏk   'the Buddhist heavenly god'
        jŏngsugyŏng   'a Buddhist scripture'
        yŏmbul   'Buddhist scripture chant'

When the Chosun dynasty adopted Confucianism as a state ideology, shamanic rites had to face full-scale persecution. They had for many centuries been held in disdain by the court and had been denigrated as *ŭmsa* 'something obscene and vulgar.' Since 1474, when a legal code was established to prohibit calling on spirits, shamanic rites were considered something to be avoided. During this period, Confucianism formed the ideological basis of the state and closely regulated virtually every aspect of social behaviour, and social mores had severely suppressed the practice of shamanic rites, viewing them as heterodox deviations from the right path. To survive the crackdown policy during the Chosun dynasty, the shamans had to resort to some of Confucian formalities.

In the course of compromising with the formally approved religions, such as Confucianism, Taoism, and even the recently introduced Christianity, Korean shamanism came to adopt some expressions from those religions, such as:

(15)   sinsŏn   'a Taoist hermit with supernatural powers'
        ġwansŏ   'spirits of Taoist heroes Yu Bi or Jang Bi'
        jongmyosajik   'a Confucianist shrine of the royal family'[9]
        taegŭk   'the great ultimate in Confucian thought'
        hananim   'the Christian God'

The extensive mingling of Korean shamanism with foreign religions make the shamanic language exotic to those who are not familiar with the foreign religions.

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9) *Jongmyosajik* is built under the rule of the *jujagarye* 'Confucian formalities of a family.'

3. Mythological Peculiarity

The earliest form of a religious language has a mystical origin. Cho (1998) goes over the similarities between shamanic languages and mythology on the basis of the Korean shamanic dance, *mu*. The following four sections discuss the Korean shamanic language with special reference to 1) its symbolic features, 2) its content dealing with the essence of human existence, 3) its nature as a spiritual background, and 4) its gods and their roles in the shamanic rite.

3.1. Symbolic Features

Eliade (1971) has pointed out that mythology, as a legacy of the past, influences the thought-forms, ritual and social structures of the people with its suggestive and evocative metaphors. While the mountains, oceans and rivers of the myth may conflict with the actual geographical knowledge, they do have local terrains in the people's mind. As is the case with synecdoche, a part may stand for the whole as a symbol, so that tiny areas in which a ritual is acted out can represent the cosmic magnitude. The following illustrates the way shamans report the time and place of the rite:

> (16) 삼산[南山]은 천년산이요 한강수는 만년수 봉학(鳳鶴)은 억만봉인데
> (samsanŭn chŏnnyŏnsaniyo hangangsunŭn mannyŏnsu bonghakŭn ŏkmanbonginde)
> 'Namsan mountain will be there a thousand years, Han river will run ten thousand years, and there are around billions of mountain tops' Cited from Kim (1992, 32)

Here, *samsan* 'a mountain in the south of Seoul' and *bonghak* 'mountain top' both refer to the place where the client is living. But the client will not even recognize that the shaman is mentioning his abode. The designations are only symbolic and thus are undecipherable without a previous knowledge about these peculiar expressions.

3.2. Shamanic Prayers on Human Existence

A person who possesses a living myth might not be bewildered by the apparent

contingency of events, for he would understand or interpret the mythological context with regard to the gods who he believes are predestinated to lead the fate. Myths tell how things were done in the beginning and how things are always to be done.

Shamans believe that the gods teach men how to be born, to marry and to die. The insights embodied in their rites are especially concerned with those moments in human existence in which man asks to find the meaning of his life. Each of those moments has to be seen in the light of the genesis of all moments.

The myth attempts to portray the essence of human existence and, in so doing, to display a pattern of behaviour that can be constantly rediscovered. Thus, the creation story is told again and again to become the basis for the rites. In this way it is understood that life is not to be lived fortuitously but in a way decreed by the gods (Fawcett 1971, 109).

As myths speak to birth and death, to man's existential anxiety, and attempt to lay bare the meaning of existence, the shamanic language shows these features.

(17) a. 오늘날 정성에 본향 채사를 거드시구, 아무쪼록 정성덕 입히어 점지들 하소사.
(onŭlnal jŏngsŏnge bonhyang chaesarŭl gŏdŭsigu, amuch'orok jŏngsŏngdŏk ipiŏ jŏmjidŭl hasosa)
'With today's rite please bless them to have a baby.'
Cited from Kim (1992, 15)

b. 동자 영산은 오질앞에 싸가지구 인정받구 노자받구 존데루 천도를 허손이다.
(dongja yŏngsanŭn ojirape s'agajigu, injŏngbatgu nojabatgu jonderu chŏndorŭl hŏsonida)
'With this dedicated fare please take the baby death with your garment and lead him to heaven.'
Cited from Kim (18)

c. 이번에 정성을 태산같이 바드시구 줄령거치 받으시구, 집안에 우환두 저쳐가구 가환두 물녀치구 ...
(ibŏne jŏngsŏngŭl taesangati batŭsigu julyŏnggŏchi badŭsigu, jipane uhwandu jŏchyŏgagu gahwandu mulnyŏchigu.)
'With this rite please let them escape a disaster in their household'
Cited from Kim (28)

These examples illustrate how the shaman prays for the client who is anxious about the birth and death of his baby, or about the safety of his household. As the

myth deals with the essence of human existence, so does the language of shamanism.

3.3. Nature as a spiritual source

Myths often begin with a picture of a primordial ocean, or with the idea of the primeval hillock or mound. A great ocean in the myth usually symbolizes a dual nature: a threat and a source of life. To a man who had experienced flood and had almost been ripped off his life in its terrifying force, the image of flooding waters cannot but be destructive. On the other hand, flood can be experienced as the source of life, as everything animate cannot come into being without water. Like the water, the nature is portrayed as releasing both the forces of destruction and creation. A similar thing can be said of shamanism, which is a special—in fact more primitive—form of myth. The following passages illustrate the dual images of nature as envisioned in the shamanic language.

(18) A. Creative Nature

    a. 녹수 청산 나린 줄기 밍줄 복줄을 휘어다가 xx 가중에 남녀자손에 이어주자.
    (noksu chŏngsan narin julgi mingjul bokjurŭl hwiŏdaga xx gajunge namnyŏ jasone iŏjuja)
    'Let the family have children with a strand of life which has been blessed by the blue mountain.'
    Cited from Kim (1992, 37)

    b. 산은 첩첩 물은 잔잔한대 광풍에 건듯부니... 셋 공주를 탄생 바드신 후에 ...
    (sanŭn chŏpchŏp murŭn janjanhande kwangpungi kŏndŭtbuni... ses gongjurŭl tanseng batŭsin hue)
    'In the heart of mountains, and in the quiet streams, three princesses were born after a quick storm ...'
    Cited from Kim (66)

B. Destructive Nature
a. 만경청파에 둥실 빠져 수살 영산이며 ...
(mankyŏngchangpae dungsil p'ajyŏ susal yŏngsanimyŏ)
'The spirit who was killed at the clean and blue water ...'
Cited from Kim (18)
b. 물 아래 상문이구 물 위두 상문이요 ...

(mul arae sangmunigu mul widu sangmuniyo)
'These are killed spirits shown under the water and shown at the surface of the water ...'
Cited from Kim (24)

The creative water is portrayed by *mingjul* 'a strand of life' and *bokjul* 'a strand of blessing,' while the destructive water is alluded to by *dungsil p'ajyŏ* 'drowned,' *susal yŏngsan* 'a ghost drowned to death,' as well as *sangmun* 'a ghost of the killed.'

3.4. Gods as actors

The stories of a myth often make it a rule to foreground shamans as gods. If we are to achieve any real understanding of a myth, we must discover what precisely the shaman that appears in the myth intends when he/she refers to gods and what role he/she assigns to them. The gods of mythology are invariably the result of an animistic attitude that saw everything in the world as imbued with personal life. The following examples show how the names of gods who take their role as actors appear in a shamanic rite.

(19) Yim janggunnim   'a god with the spirit of General Yim Kyŏng-ŏp'
     Choi il janggun nim   'a god with the spirit of General Choi Yŏng'
     Muung   'a god with the spirit of Great Buddhist priest Muhak'
     okhwangsangje   'a heavenly god, the jade emperor'
     obangsinjang   'an earthly god for better changes in life'
     buri   'an ancestral ghost honoured in the household'
     sŏngju   'a male god who protects the household'
     daegam   'an official god'
     bosalbulsa   'Bodhisattva god'
     jesŏk   'the Buddhist heavenly god'
     sinsŏn   'a Taoist god with supernatural powers'
     gwansŏ   'spirits of Taoist heroes Yu Bi or Jang Bi'
     hananim   'the Christian God'

These names of gods, already cited in section 2.2, are mostly shamanic creations from the personages of the Korean history. To invoke gods who are supposed to sway their respective worldly affairs, the shaman calls their names based on the related

worldly facts or historical figures. For example, he calls on gods *buri* 'ancestor' and *daegam* 'a high ranking official' to play their roles implied in their designations. All these mythological factors add to the mystic, esoteric, and incantatory voice of the shamanic language.

4. Jakobson's Approach Revisited

A question that may arise at this point concerns how we can construe the meaning of a shamanic expression. Is there a strategy to decipher shamanic languages? Jakobson (1966) has proposed a structuralist analysis which incorporates the notions of 'combinatorial creativity' and 'semantic immediacy,' and a number of revisions or alternatives have since been suggested by other analysts. In what follows, we review some of these approaches.

Jakobson deals with shamanic languages along the line of his poetics, differentiating between phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic levels of analysis. He first focuses his attention to how basic units of words are combined to form a larger unit, and how this new unit combines with another unit to form a still larger unit, and so on. He then observes that these successive procedures, which projects the "paradigmatic axis" (or axis of selection) onto the "syntagmatic axis" (or axis of combination), point to a *hierarchy of combinatorial creativity*, and that this hierarchy is in turn subject to a series of interpretive procedures that apply to the *hierarchy of semantic immediacy*. The afore-mentioned pseudo-analogical parallelism is particularly at issue here, and the two notions of hierarchy calls for closer scrutiny in this connection.

4.1. Interpretation in Hierarchical levels

There is a spectrum of linguistic clues that help interpret utterances, ranging from the level of the smallest sounds or distinctive phonetic features to the level of utterances as larger lumps. The lowest distinctive features are the "building blocks of language" (Jakobson & Waugh 1987, 2) that combine to construct a phoneme, the minimal unit of sound that differentiates meaning. For the phonemic, phonological,

and morpho-phonological levels, Jakobson assumes that the first two levels have to do with a sense-distinctive function while the morpho-phonological level relates to a sense-determinative function. Distinctive features are in a closer relation to meaning at the morphological level because of its sense-determinative function. Hence morphological information is more relevant to the overall meaning than the phonological information.

Adopting Jakobson's framework, Waugh (1985, 146-9) rephrases the role of lexical paradigms and morphological paradigms in the light of how the various linguistic levels differ according to the extent of their 'combinatorial freedom or creativity.' In a poetic interpretation, a message sign is accomplished by emphasizing the equivalence or similarity between the components at a relevant linguistic level: rhyme is equivalent to syllable, meter is equivalent to stress placement, grammatical parallelism[10] is equivalent to morphology, and so on (Waugh 1985, 154). Ascending combinatorial freedom or creativity, a poetic message can either be generalized or have optional patterns. At the lower phonological and morphological levels, they have a direct form-and-meaning relationship. At the higher syntactic level there are messages combined by words. Their rules of combination are obligatorily codified in phrases, clauses and sentences. Finally at the highest level of pragmatics, the signs are codified only as the generalizable and optional patterns of combination, which may bear a more indirect relation to the code as in discourse and utterances. Therefore, with regard to the relative combinatorial freedom in referential function, the lower levels are more restrictive in their principle of organization than the upper levels. In the properly organized referential features, an utterance will have an appropriate communicative function.

The shamanic language, however, allows considerable freedom to create, recreate, and recombine morphemes. In Jakobsonian terminology, shamans practice great combinatorial freedom of projecting the syntagmatic onto the paradigmatic axis. Notice that in ordinary circumstances, the process is opposite: restricted paradigmatic axis is projected onto the syntagmatic axis. To interpret the meaning of an utterance of the shamanic language and to make up for the lack of sense-determinative functions at the phonemic and morphemic levels, we need to consider another aspect of Jakobson's poetics: semantic immediacy.

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10) Reinterpreting Jakobson (1966), Eisele (1997) argues that an utterance can have a proper meaning when its phonemic, morphemic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels are in parallel structure.

Normally, we expect to find some semantic immediacy from the combinatorial freedom in language creation, since this freedom is closely tied to the manipulation of linguistic forms and processes. In the semantic hierarchy, the components of the first level (i.e. distinctive features), or their combinations, do not carry meaning directly.

In poetic function, however, the lower levels are closer to the meaning because they function as part of the overall meaning of a poem. Thus poetic discourse is marked by a transference of characteristics from a higher level to a lower level of semantic immediacy. In general, when a poet creates a new expression, he hides meaning or 'ambiguates' expressions, increase allusions, and so on (Eisele 1997, 765), and the audience has to rely on syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic features of the language for semantic interpretation.

4.2. Counterevidence to Jakobson's poetics

Eisele (1997) reinterprets Jakobson's theory, factoring the nature of poetic language into three levels. The first, lowest level includes words, morphemes, syllables, phonemes, and distinctive features, which restrictively carry a referential function. The second level covers sentences, clauses, and phrases, in which the rules of combination are obligatorily codified. Finally, at the level of discourse, utterances bear a more indirect relation to the code.

The basic idea of semantic interpretation Jakobson has proposed is that language is a system of signs. From the lowest level of distinctive features to the higher level of utterance, the components of each level are combined to draw the overall meaning of the utterance. In Jakobson's poetics, that is, neither the distinctive features nor their combinations (phonemes, words, or syllables) carry meaning directly. The direct or immediate relation between distinctive features and meaning is developed by the poetic focus on equivalence and on the sign itself, bringing about a closer relationship between sound and meaning. In other words, poetic discourse, being marked by the closer relationship between sound and meaning because of the poetic focus on the sign as sign, is characterized by having items on a lower level take on a characteristic proper to items found on higher levels. This is the subverted characteristic of the referential function of semantic immediacy.

Eisele observes that, in interpreting an artificial word play like *Zahr* in the

Egyptian Arabic narrative ballad, the audience seems to decode it following a reverse pathway of regular processes of hierarchical interpretation. He posits a dichotomy between the linguistically-based formal composition and the contextually-based semantic interpretation of a word play, reinterpreting Jakobson's structural framework.

Zahr is particularly interesting in that it sheds some light on the nature of word plays in general often found the shamanic language, and we now dwell a while on the decoding process involved in this word play.

4.2.1. Zahr

Eisele discusses *Zahr* as a kind of artificial punning, pointing out that this form of word play subverts the expectation of Jakobsonian hierarchization. When a poet creates words, Eisele argues, he extends the freedom of composition at the higher level (syntactic or discourse level) further down into the hierarchy than is generally permitted. As is shown in a word of the *Zahr* pun, however, the poet makes the lower level less constrictive. In the words of Jakobson, the poet projects the greater combinatorial freedom of the syntagmatic axis onto the paradigmatic axis (1997, 763).

The word play found in the Egyptian Arabic narrative ballad is different from typical puns that involve phonetic similarity at the level of word or phrase, usually containing homophonous or polysemous words. It involves phonetic similarity at the level of the morphemic tiers of the consonantal root, which suggests a need of revising some of Jakobson's ideas about the nature of poetic language. Some of the *Zahr* examples discussed by Eisele (752) are cited here.

(20) a. iza kān didd-ak ti-rūh makka lihiggilbeet lahhig lil-beet
    if it-was desire-your you-go Mecca, head for-home
    'If you wish to visit Mecca, head for home.'
  b. taaxud gimaal-ak ribaa l-mawlaa lihiggilbeet luh hagg il-batt
    you-take camels-your boon-of the Master to-him right of-decision
    'To gather your camels, the Master's boon, He has the right to decide'
  c. wi t-šuuf maqaam il-xaliil mabni lihiggilbeet liih higal biid
    and you-see shrine-of the-beloved built to-it canopies white
    'And you shall see the shrine of his intimate, built with white pavilions'

According to Eisele, the surface form *lihiggilbeet* 'to make a pilgrimage to the

Kaaba' in (20) is derived from the following phrases that share the consonantal root.

(21) Base 1:   la   hhi   glil   beet
     Base 2:   lu   hha   ggil   batt
     Base 3:   lii   hhi   gal   biid

The three base forms, *lahhiglilbeet* 'head for home,' *luhhaggilbatt* 'he has the right to decide,' and *liihhigalbiid* 'with white pavilions,' share the consonantal root *l, h, g,* and *b* with the phrases. What this means, Eisele (766) says, is that the surface form *lihiggilbeet* in (20) is rhymed as a pun. there being some information features at each level that help construe the meaning of this type of punning, depending on the proper contexts.

4.2.2. Zahr and the Shamanic Language

The author of *Zahr* purports to create the puns, hiding, estranging, or ambiguating the meaning. As the net effect of *Zahr* is to distance the expression from the intended meaning, the higher level becomes less immediately related to its meaning: whence the transference of the features of less semantic immediacy from the lower to the higher level. This means that the audience, in deciphering such an artificial word play, cannot rely on the normal phonemeic or morphemic features, but on the features from higher levels: syntactic, pragmatic, or discursive.

Similar things can be said of shamanic languages. The idiosyncratic expressions in a shamanic language cause some communicative blocking between the shamans and the audience. But what strategy does the shaman use to encode the expressions, and in which level do the audience try to decode them? Due to their combinatorial freedom at the lower level, the interpretation of meaning has to be considered at the higher level, as is the case with Zahr.

Let us here go back to the passages we examined in (4), repeated below.

(4) 해상년 연으루 빙오년 해운이고 해동조선국에 오부장 나라터 사웁는 거주지적
    나라터전에 사웁는데 ...
    (haesangnyŏn yŏnŭru bingonyŏn haeunigo, haedong Chosunguk obujang naratŏ saopnŭn
    gŏjujijŏk naratŏjŏne saopnŭnde)
    'The rite is held for a client who is living in Seoul, Korea, in 1966'

The expression *haedong Chosunguk*, literally translatable into 'Chosun dynasty in the east of the sea,' actually means 'Korea.' It combines three words: *haedong* 'the east of the sea,' Chosun *'Chosun* dynasty,' and *guk* 'a country.' *Obujang* refers to Seoul as 'five districts (of Seoul during the Chosun dynasty),' where "five districts" means Central, East, West, South, and North (of Seoul).' In the absence of information about such meaning, utterances like (4) do not make sense to the audience. That is, due to the combinatorial freedom at the lower phonemic, morphemic, and morphosyntactic levels, the shamanic language seems to be undecipherable at those levels.

The difficulty of deciphering the results of such a freedom may be resolved in terms of semantic immediacy. As was shown in the previous discussion, the shamanic passages that are at first blush undecipherable can be interpreted in the course of descending application of information from the highest pragmatic to the lower levels.

What about the pseudo-analogical parallel structure shown in e.g., (6a)? The unfamiliar, or 'estranged,' expressions already include, already at the lower levels, idiosyncratic properties cannot be construed in a usual way. Nor do the morphosyntactic features, which may have a sense-determinative function, offer information as to their meaning. Furthermore, their seem to be no syntactic or pragmatic clues at the higher levels. What information, then, can be drawn from the pseudo-analogical expressions? Let us consider, in this connection, the following passages, which include the unfamiliar phrases of (6a).

> (22) 아 삼성, 만신몸주, 대신삼성, 아린삼성, 쓰린 삼성 가지고도 피진 삼성, 업어내
> 구 모셔내다, 열시왕에 사자삼성
> (ah samsŏng / mansin momju / daesin samsŏng / arin samsŏng / sŭrin samsŏng gajigodo
> pijin samsŏng / ŏbŏnaegu mosyŏnaeda / yŏlsiwange saja samsŏng)
> Cited from Kim (1992, 58)

In the absence of a semantic clue about *jinogwi* 'a rite for funeral' at the highest pragmatic level, the word *samsŏng* will be uninterpretable. As a Sino-Korean word, it literally means 'three stars,' but one may fail to interpret as a word derived from the compound *saje-samsŏng* 'three messengers from underworld.' Let us now consider what information is available for (22) at each hierarchical level.

> (23)
> Level 7: Pragmatic Information

Context: scene four of *jinogwi* (a rite for funeral)
Level 6: Syntactic Information
　　lexical parallelism
Level 5: Morphosyntactic Information
　　syntactic compounding:
　　arin-samsŏng (V+N)　　　　'a painful spirit'
　　s'ŭrin-samsŏng (V+N)　　　'a sore spirit'
Level 4: Morphemic information (sense-determinative) compounding:
　　daesin samsŏng 'a dignitary + a messenger from underworld', or 'an official spirit'
Level 3: Phonemic information (sense-discrimitive)
　　phonological rule: p' → pʰ / #___ V in *pijin* (=/p'ijin/ 'sulky')
Level 2: Phonetic information (sense-discriminative)
　　/saje/ (=/saja/) in *saje* 'a messenger'
　　/e/ (=/Λi/) in *yŏlsiwang-e* 'of the ten kings'
Level 1: Distinctive Features (sense-discriminative)
　　/e/: [+voice] [-back] [-high] [-low] [+syllabic]

First of all, the pragmatic information about the context tells us that the rite is being performed for funeral(*jinogwi*). Then the syntactic information alludes to the shamanic use of lexical parallelism, which gives rise, via analogical extension, to *daesin samsŏng* 'an official spirit,' *arin samsŏng* 'a painful spirit,' *s'ŭrin samsŏng* 'a sore spirit,' *gajigodo pijin samsŏng* 'a spirit grudging in wealth,' and *yŏlsiwange saja samsŏng* 'a spirit from the ten kings of underworld.' At the level of morphosyntactic information, the shamanic use of syntactic compounding is further confirmed by the expression *arin-samsŏng* 'a painful spirit,' which is derived from an adjectival use of a verb *arida* 'to feel pain.' The lower morphemic information provides an additional clue to the meaning and grammatical features of a compounding *daesin samsŏng* "an official spirit." And so on. As shown in this course of interpretation, the audience have recourse to information items at the higher levels, applying them from the higher to the lower levels.

A common clue that is left unexplained is 'parallelism,' which may be related to several levels at once. In *samsŏng*, for example, there are a number of parallel associations – morphemic, morphosyntactic, syntactic, pragmatic – between morphemes or words. In this way, as was the case with Zahr, shamanic utterances can be interpreted by checking the semantic immediacy 'from the top downward,' not 'from the bottom upward.' Given such information as (23), the utterance in (22) can

now be interpreted as follows:

> (24) a. Ah samsŏng / mansin momju / daesin samsŏng
>   (EXCLAMATION spirit / mansin spiritual guard / official spirit
>   'oh spirits, *daesin* spirit with a *mansin* spiritual guard'
>   b) arin samsŏng / sŭrin samsŏng gajigodo pijin samsŏng
>   (painful spirit / sore spirit have (rich)-and-although grudge spirit)
>   'spirits who are painful, sore, and grudging in wealth'
>   c) ŏbŏnaegu mosyŏnaeda holding back-and invite-honorific
>   'let's carry them on the back and escort them'
>   d) yŏlsiwange saja samsŏng
>   (of-ten-kings messenger spirit)
>   'messengers who are sent by ten kings of underworld'

So, a 'descending' application of information from the highest, pragmatic level of semantic immediacy down to the level of distinctive features will help construe the meaning of the obscure utterance under consideration. This sharply contrasts with the case of the standard dialect, in which the application would be 'ascending,' from the lowest distinctive features to the highest pragmatic information.

5. Concluding Remarks

The linguistic and mythological characteristics discussed in this study demonstrate that shamanic language is by no means arbitrary or random but has its own structure. Shamans create, modify, and borrow lexical items for their own use, developing them in accordance with their own tradition, often mythological.

I tried to show that some enchanting features of the shamanic language can be accounted for within the framework of Jakobson's poetics, with some qualification however. For one thing, the direction of the transference is the inverse of Jakobsonian hierarchies of combinatorial freedom and semantic immediacy. As a similar case, *Zahr,* a kind of the Egyptian word play, was discussed. The estrangement of the shamanic language as a particular social register is one of the net effects of this inverse process.

Gut is a traditional rite in Korean folk religion, and as such it represents its own

social register in the Korean language. Further study of the shamanic language, especially its idiosyncratic characteristics as a language of religion, may shed light on the process of language change in Korean in general and the nature of the mystical language in particular.

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[국문요약]

한국 무속어의 주술적 특성과 그 해석

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한국 무속어의 주술적 특성은 무당의 신들림(spirit possession), 영혼여행(soul-journey), 대화(facial-dialogue)에서 나타나는 공수나 무가의 언어적 현상이나 신화적 특성에서 찾을 수 있다. 언어가 주술성을 가진다는 것은 종교성을 가진다는 것을 의미한다. 인류 종교사에서 맨 처음 단계에 자리하는 무속(shamanism)은 오늘날에도 인간의 근원적 현실을 다룬다는 측면에서 신화와 유사하다. Eliade (1971)는 신화를 인간의 원초적 세계이며 영원히 회귀하는 원형의 세계라고 규정하고 샤머니즘을 신화의 세계에 이르는 원초적 기술로 보고 있다. 이에 대해 조흥윤(1998)은 한국 샤머니즘을 신화 그 자체로 규정하고 샤머니즘을 신화의 종교로 보고 있다. 무속어는 신화가 가지는 특성인 종교적, 자연적, 현실적 욕구에 부응하는 내용으로 구성되어있다. 본 논문은 서울 지방에서 행하여지는 진오귀, 성주풀이, 재수굿 등에서 나타나는 무속어의 언어적 특성과 신화적 특성을 통하여 그 주술성을 살펴본다. 또한 이러한 주술적 표현은 일반 한국어와 상당한 차이를 보이고 있어 보편적 해석 모형에서는 이해하기 어렵다. 따라서 본 논문은 로만 야콥슨의 구조적 언어계층에서 발전된 해석 체계를 바탕으로 어떠한 해석 방식에 의해 무속어를 쉽게 이해할 수 있는 지 그 해석 모형을 제시한다.

[Abstract]

ON THE INCANTATORY FEATURES OF KOREAN SHAMANIC LANGUAGE

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This paper attempts to demonstrate how the linguistic and mythological features of the shamanic language make it incantatory, or 'enchanting'. Passages used in shamanic rites manifest linguistic characteristics that point to their own norms and conventions, as well as some mythological features that contribute to the undecipherablity of the shamanic language. Focusing on the estranged linguistic and mythological features, I propose that shamanic languages can be best interpreted in terms of the linguistic hierarchization, a notion that has been developed since Roman Jakobson's poetics. The present study adopts Eisele's framework that reinterprets Jakobsonian hierarchization into a slightly revised notion on the basis of the "degree of combinatorial freedom" and the "degree of semantic immediacy", looking into a set of paradigm examples in search of some parallel structures characterizing the shamanic language. The enchanting effect of this peculiar form of language, it is argued, is due mostly to the frequent use of lexical parallelism, which works in the reverse direction of the normal process of interpretation.