

15th Century Korean Agricultural Vocabulary

Ian Joo

Topics at the Grammar-Discourse
Interface



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Joo, Ian. 2020. *15th Century Korean Agricultural Vocabulary* (Topics at the Grammar-Discourse Interface). Berlin: Language Science Press.

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ISBN: no digital ISBN

no print ISBNs!

ISSN: 2567-3335

no DOI

ID not assigned!

Cover and concept of design: Ulrike Harbort

Fonts: Libertinus, Arimo, DejaVu Sans Mono

Typesetting software: Xe_{La}TeX

Language Science Press

Unter den Linden 6

10099 Berlin, Germany

langsci-press.org

Storage and cataloguing done by FU Berlin

Freie Universität



Berlin

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Preface

This book is a collection of agriculture-related words found in the Korean language of the 15th century, the time when the language was first written in the Hangul alphabet invented by King Sejong in 1443. Korean records in this period are the earliest reliable written sources of the Korean language, as pre-Hangul Korean records (written in Chinese characters) are scarce, fragmentary, and phonetically unexplained. Korean in this period is classified as the stage of Middle Korean, which lasted from the 10th to the 16th century.

The 15th century is special in the history of Korean language not only because it is the beginning period of Hangul, but also because it is the last stage of the Middle Korean tones. By the 16th century, tone transcriptions in Middle Korean began to grow inconsistent, and by the end of the century, tones ceased to be transcribed. Thus, the 15th century is a helpful time frame if we want reliable and consistent data on Middle Korean tonology.

As Korea was an agricultural society for millennia, agriculture has been a fundamental part of the Korean culture. Since a language carries the culture of its speakers, the agricultural vocabulary in the earliest reliably written form of Korean may provide us with valuable insight to the Korean cultural history. When analyzed in comparison to the agricultural vocabulary of other languages that neighbor Korean, this data may also provide clues on who may have had contact with the Korean people and influenced (or have been influenced by) their agricultural lifestyle.

The 312 entries compiled in this monograph consist not only of terms directly related to agriculture, such as crops, farming areas, farming tools, or farming techniques, but also those that point to the common characters of an agricultural society, such as those related to husbandry, textile, cereal-based cooking, fishing, vehicles, architecture, iron manufacture, and the like. Each entry is accompanied by an interlinear-glossed example phrase from a 15th century Korean source. The sources are thematically diverse, ranging from Buddhist scripts to medical books. As this book is, to my knowledge, the first to present a sizable corpus of interlinear-glossed Middle Korean sentences, it will also be of interest to English-speaking scholars less familiar with Middle Korean but would like to

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access Middle Korean texts nevertheless.

Although rather modest in size, this book contributes to a small growth of bibliography on Middle Korean for the English-speaking audience, which has been limited compared to the vast amount of Middle Korean bibliography written in Korean. It will hopefully help fulfill the needs of the non-Korean-speaking readers interested in the Middle Korean language and the historical traces it has left.

Acknowledgments

The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 646612) granted to Martine Robbeets.

Abbreviations

1	1st person	INTENT	intensive
2	2nd person	IRR	irrealis
ABL	ablative	JUS	jussive
ACC	accusative	LOC	locative
ADJ	adjective	NEG	negative
ADV	adverb(ial)	NMLZ	nominalizer
CAUS	causative	NOM	nominative
COM	comitative	ORD	ordinal
COP	copula	PASS	passive
DAT	dative	PL	plural
DECL	declarative	POT	potential
DES	desiderative	PRES	present
DET	determiner	PRF	perfect
DIM	diminutive	PST	past
EMPH	emphatic	Q	question
FOC	focus	QUOT	quotative
GEN	genitive	RET	retrospective
IMP	imperative	SG	singular
IND	indicative	TOP	topic
INF	ininitive	VOC	vocative
INS	instrumental	VOL	volitive

1 Introduction

1.1 Selection

In this book, definition and example text are provided for Middle Korean words of the 15th Century that are broadly related to agricultural life, such as those related to farming, husbandry, textile, metallurgy, and architecture. The selected words are mostly monomorphemic, and I have only selected a polymorphemic word only when a morpheme in that word is not attested as an unbound morpheme in 15th century sources. I excluded Sinitic loanwords that are immediately recognizable as loanwords and thus not sufficiently assimilated into Korean vocabulary.

1.2 Sources

The sources of the words and their examples are Korean texts from the 15th century. Table 1.1 shows the list of sources used and the genre each source belongs to.

I have given my own English definition to each Middle Korean word, with the help of existing (Middle-to-contemporary Korean) dictionaries such as Lee [이 et al. \(2015\)](#) and Park [박 et al. \(2016\)](#).

1.3 Transcription

I used Yale romanization of Korean to transcribe Middle Korean. I marked the high tone with a acute accent (*á*), the rising tone with a caron (*ǎ*), and left the low tone unmarked. As the Yale romanization does not specify how some of the characters only used in Middle Korean Hangul should be transcribed, I have transcribed them as shown in Table 1.2.

The transcription is orthography-based with inter-morphemic boundaries. For example, the word *·낫는* *násnon* ‘where [it] is growing’ is transcribed orthographically with inter-morphemic boundaries, *ná-0-s-no-n* (grow-INF-CONT-PRES-DET), the *0* meaning that the infinitive suffix is not orthographically represented. Only

Table 1.1: List of sources

Abbreviation	Title	Genre
Kumsam	Kumkangkyeong Samkahay 금강경삼가해	Buddhist
Kwukan	Kwukup Kanipang Enhay 구급간이방언해	Medical
Kwupang	Kwukupang Enhay 구급방언해	Medical
Mwongsan	Mwongsan Pepe Enhay 몽산법어언해	Buddhist
Nammyeng	Nammyengcip Enhay 남명집언해	Buddhist
Nayhwun	Nayhwun 내훈	Education
Nungem	Nungemkyeng Enhay 능엄경언해	Buddhist
Pephwa	Pephwakyeng Enhay 법화경언해	Buddhist
Samhayng	Samkang Hayngsiltwo 삼강행실도	Education
Sekpwo	Sekpwo Sangcel 석보상절	Buddhist
Twusi	Twusi Enhay 두시언해	Poetry
Welin	Welin Chenkang Ci Kwok 월인천강지곡	Poetry
Welsek	Welin Sekpwo 월인석보	Buddhist
Wenkak	Wenkakkyeng Enhay 원각경언해	Buddhist
Yengka	Sencwong Yengkacip Enhay 선종영가집언해	Buddhist
Yongka	Yongpiecenka 용비어천가	Poetry

Table 1.2: Transcription of unspecified Middle Korean Hangul characters.

ㅃ	ㅅ	ㅈ	ㅊ	ㅌ	ㅍ
<i>f</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>hh</i>	<i>yuy</i>	<i>yve</i>	<i>yvey</i>

when it is impossible to make inter-morphemic boundaries within an orthography-based transcription have I transcribed the orthographic form within square brackets that is different from the morphemic form. For example, the word :도터라 *työthela* ‘[it] was good’ is morphemically *työh-te-la* (good-RET-DECL), where the final *h* of the root merges with the initial *t* of the retrospective suffix *te* into *th*. In this case, I transcribed this word as *työh-te-la*[*työthela*].

1.4 Translation

Middle Korean sentences tend to be longer than contemporary English or Korean sentences, often continuing the utterance with conjunctions meaning ‘and’,

‘thus’, ‘then’, or ‘but’ instead of finishing the sentence and starting a new one. For this reason, I have not necessarily listed full sentences as examples but very often incomplete segments of them. In such cases, I have not translated the final conjunction’s meaning. For example, the translation of the example sentence for the entry *cás* ·갓 ‘n. Castle’ is ‘[We will] widely spread this sutra in any village, castle, town, country, or empty forest.’ But since the original Middle Korean text ends in the conjunction *-myé* -며 ‘and’, a stricter translation would be ‘... empty forest, **and** ...’. I have omitted the final conjunction’s meaning in the translation, however.

2 Vocabulary

ahwók 아·혹 ‘n. Mallow (*Malva verticillata*).’

- (1) 아·혹을 ·부유틸 소놀 노·티 :말라
ahwók-ol pwi-utoy swon-wol nwoh-tí[nwothí] mál-la
 mallow-ACC cut-but hand-ACC release-NEG do.not-IMP
 ‘Cut the mallow, but do not let go of your hold.’ (Twusi 8:32b)

cás ·жат ‘n. Castle.’

- (2) :아무·란 므술·히어·나 ·자·시어·나 ㄱ울·히어·나 나·라·히어·나
ámolá-n mozolh-í-Gená cáś-í-Gená kowolh-í-Gená naláh-í-Gená
 any-DET village-COP-or castle-COP-or town-COP-or country-COP-or
 :빈 수·프·리어·나 ·이 經經·을 너·비 퍼·며
pwĩ-n swuphúl-í-Gená í kyeng-úl nep-í phye-myé
 empty-DET forest-COP-or this sutra-ACC wide-ADV spread-and
 ‘[We will] widely spread this sutra in any village, castle, town, country, or empty forest.’ (Sekpwo 9:40a)

căś :жат ‘n. Korean pine.’

- (3) :жат 기·름을 이·베 녀·히 모·괴 ·들면 ·곧
căś kilúm-ul ip-éy nyeh-é mwok-úy túl-myen kwót
 korean.pine oil-ACC mouth-LOC put.into-INF throat-LOC enter-if soon
 :살리·라
săl-li-lá
 live-POT-DECL

‘Pour korean pine oil into [the patient’s] mouth, and when it enters the throat, [the patient] will soon come into life.’ (Kwukan 1:62a)

cés ·젓 ‘n. Salted seafood.’

- (4) 어·루 고·깃 汁·집·과 脯·봉肉·숙·과 ·젓과
elwú kwokí-s cíp-kwá pwũ-zyúk-kwá cés-kwá
 well meat-GEN juice-COM dried.meat-meat-COM salted.seafood-COM

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시·혹 고·기 아·니 하·니로 ·써 그 滋·중·味·밍·를
sihwók kwókí aní ha-n-í-lwó ps-é ku co-mí-lól
 or meat not much-DET-thing-INS use-INF that taste-taste-ACC
 도·올·디언·텅
twow-ól-t-í-entyéng
 help-DET.IRR-thing-COP-even.if

‘You can well use meat juice, dried meat, salted seafood, or a little bit of meat to add to the taste [of your plain meal].’ (Nayhwun 1:70a)

cés-namwo ·젓·나·모 ‘n. Fir.’ [?-tree]

- (5) ·힌 죠·히·와 ·젓·나·못 :·널·로 브·터 믹·라
hóy-n cyohóy-Gwá cés-namwo-s něl-lwó puth-y-é moy-lá
 white-DET paper-COM ?-tree-GEN plank-INS attach-CAUS-INF bind-IMP
 ‘Attach white paper with fir [on your wound] and bind it together.’
 (Kwupang 2:35a)

cháy ·채 ‘n. Whip.’

- (6) 너·를 秦·人·의 ·채·를 ·주·노·니 머·에
ne-lúl cin-in-úy cháy-lol cwú-n-wo-ní mengey
 2SG-ACC Qin-person-GEN whip-ACC give-PRES-VOL-thus yoke
 아·렛 무·야·지·를 ·티·디 :·말·라
alay-s mo-yaci-lol thí-ti mǎl-la
 under-GEN horse-DIM-ACC hit-NEG do.not-IMP
 ‘I give you the whip of the Qin people, but don’t whip the foal under the yoke.’ (Twusi 23:36b)

chól- ·출- ‘pre. Glutinous.’

- (7) 늘 ·출·박·를 ·긋·라 ·뿌·레 ·빠 마·시·라
nol chól-psól-ol kól-a pskwúl-ey pthá-0 masí-la
 raw glutinous-grain-ACC grind-INF honey-LOC mix-INF drink-IMP
 ‘Grind raw glutinous rice, mix it into honey and drink it.’ (Kwukan 2:73a)

chóm-kilúm ·참·기·름 ‘n. Sesame oil.’ [?-oil]

- (8) 브·름 맛·거·든 ·참·기·르·미·어·나 싱·양·즙·이·어·나 이·베
polom mas-ketún chóm-kilúm-i-Gená soyngang-cúp-íGena ip-éy
 wind be.hit-if ?-oil-COP-or ginger-juice-COP-or mouth-LOC

브·셔 ·토·호·면 ·즉·재 ·썩리·라
puz-é thwó-ho-myén cúkcáy skóy-li-lá
 pour-and vomit-do-if immediately awaken-POT-DECL

‘If [the patient] is palsied, pour sesame oil or ginger juice into their mouth, and if they vomit, they will immediately awaken.’ (Kwukan 1:9a)

chóswoy ·츄쇠 ‘n. Shiso.’

- (9) ·츄기·르메 ·츄쇠·를 뎀·가 두·고셔 브르·라
chóm-kilúm-ey chóswoy-lól tomk-á twu-kwósye polo-lá
 ?-oil-LOC shiso-ACC steep-INF leave-and.then put.on-IMP

‘Steep shiso in sesame oil, leave it [for a while] and then put it on.’
 (Kwukan 6:58b)

chúlk ·츄 ‘n. Kudzu.’

- (10) ·곤 ·츄근 브르·물 머·거 보·드랍·고 ·꽃다·온
kóno-n chúl-k-un polom-ól mek-é pwotólap-kwó kwós-taw-ón
 thin-DET kudzu-TOP wind-ACC eat-INF soft-and flower-be.like-DET
 노·논疊疊흔 :누니 가·빅야 ·온
nwo-nón thyep-thyep-ho-n nwŭn-i kapóy-ya wó-n
 silk.gauze-TOP layer-layer-ADJ-DET SNOW-NOM soft-ADV come-DET
 ·돏도·다
tós-two-tá
 as.if-MIR-DECL

‘The thin kudzu is soft by having absorbed wind. The flowery silk gauze is like covered by layers of lightly fallen snow.’ (Twusi 11:23a)

cíci :지지 ‘n. Gardenia.’

- (11) :지지 ·씨를 ·그라 ·뿌레 무·라 ·혀 우·희
cíci psí-lol kól-a pskwúl-ey mol-á hyé wuh-úy
 gardenia seed-ACC grind-INF honey-LOC put.into-INF tongue up-LOC
 불·라 토·호·면 :도·호·리라
pol-lá thwo-ho-myén työ-h-olí-la
 spread-and vomit-do-if good-POT-DECL

‘Grind cape jasmine seeds and put it into honey. Spread it on [the patient’s] tongue. If [the patient] vomits, then they will get better.’
 (Kwukan 2:2b)

cílsam ·질삼 ‘n. Weaving.’

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- (12) ·질삼·애 ·막·숨·몰 專一·힘히 ·호야 노·릇·과
cílsam-áy mómomm-ól chyeyen-qílq-hi hó-ya nwol-ós-kwá
 weaving-LOC mind-ACC specific-one-ADV do-INF play-NMLZ-COM
 우·수·물 ·즐기·디 아·니·호·며 술·와 ·밥과·를
wuz-wú-m-ul cúlki-tí aní-ho-myé swul-Gwá páp-kwa-lól
 laugh-VOL-NMLZ-ACC enjoy-NEG not-do-and alcohol-COM meal-COM-ACC
 ·조히 ·호야 손·을 이·바·도·미 ·이 날·온
cwóh-i hó-ya swon-ól ipät-wó-m-i í nil-wó-n
 clean-ADV do-and guest-ACC serve-VOL-NMLZ-NOM this say-VOL-DET
 :겨지·브 功·공·아·라
kyě-cip-úy kwong-í-lá
 stay-house-GEN deed-COP-DECL

‘Focusing on weaving, not enjoying playing or laughing, and serving guests well with good drinks and meals, these are the so-called deeds of a woman.’ (Nayhwun 1:15a)

cítwolí ·지도·리 ‘n. Hinge.’

- (13) 眞·眞·實·쌔·로 ·지도·릿 조각·을 삼·가·디 아·니·호·면
cin-ssílq-lwó cítwolí-s cwokak-úl samká-ti aní-ho-myén
 true-real-INS hinge-GEN piece-ACC be.careful.of-NEG not-do-if
 災·정·害·행·르·원 厄·익·이 ·아·를·브·터 비·롯·느·니
coy-hhăy-lowoy-n óyk-í í-lól-puthé pilus-no-ní
 disaster-damage-ADJ-DET bad.luck-NOM this-ACC-ABL arise-PRES-DECL
 ‘Truly, if you do not mind the hinge [the important thing, i. e. words],
 that will be the source of all disasters and bad luck.’ (Nayhwun 1:12a)

cumkéy 즈·게 ‘n. Big tree.’

- (14) 또 北·북·門·문 밖·기 나·가·샤 말 브려 즈·게
stwo puk-mwon pask-úy na-ká-sy-a mol puly-e cumkéy
 again north-gate outside-LOC exit-go-HON-INF horse handle-and big.tree
 마·티 쉬·시·며 뉘·스·분 사·람 물·리·시·고
mith-úy swi-si-mye mwoyzof-on sal-om mul-li-si-kwó
 below-LOC rest-HON-while serve-DET live-NMLZ go.back-CAUS-HON-and
 호·오·샤 기·픈 道·도·理·리 ·스·랑·호·더·시·니
howoza kiph-un ttwov-li sólang-hó-té-si-ni
 alone deep-DET way-principle thought-do-RET-HON-thus
 ‘Again, [the prince] exited the north gate on his horse, took a rest below a
 big tree, returned his servant [to his castle], and reflected the deep ways