



여기까지: Korean as a foreign language learning fossilization among adult Filipinos

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ABSTRACT

Language fossilization happens when learners do not progress anymore in certain features of the target language, especially in interlanguage learning context. This investigation sought to answer the following research questions: (a) What are the linguistic features in Korean language that the KFL Filipino learner participants are fossilized in? (b) Why do they arrive at such state of fossilization? The qualitative study used narrative approach to identify the linguistic features that the KFL Filipino learner participants are fossilized in, and the reasons behind such language phenomenon, based on their learning narratives. There were twelve (12) KFL Filipino learners who participated in the study. Their narratives on KFL learning were analyzed, coded, and arranged to identify these fossilizations and the reasons behind. Findings reveal that the KFL (a) fossilizations are in sound-character correspondence, orthographical-phonological metamorphosis, language syntax, verb conjugation and suffixation in context, and vocabulary difficulty and (b) the reasons of fossilization are weak memory, language disorder, Hangeul character resemblance and subtle differences, differences of L1 and L2 sentence patterns to Korean language syntax, lack of interest on sources of language exposure, discourse opportunities with Korean language speakers, and fear of language use due to uncertainty. These results contribute to improvement of foreign language instruction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fossilization in interlanguage learning happens when a non-native language learner (NNLL) reaches a certain proficiency in using a lexicogrammatical feature of a target language and cannot improve further in applying such both in speech and writing (Fidler, 2006; as explained by Yule in the book entitled *The study of language* in 2010; Zhang & Xie, 2014). In other words, this is a plateau state in learning a non-first language (NL1). As learners explore a target language and use it to some extent, the language is simultaneously learned, but there may come a point that learning a certain linguistic feature becomes stagnant for some reasons. This hampers language learning progress leading to close native speaker-like fluency and accuracy. Nonetheless, this linguistic phenomenon in the learning process must be addressed in the instruction as soon as possible because when fossilization becomes severe, no amount of pedagogical remediation can be applied to solve such perplexity (as explained by Fromkin et al. in the book entitled *An introduction to language, International student ed* in 2011; Han, 2013).

There are different language layers to acquire and learn, such as phonetic and phonological, morphological, syntactical, semantical, and pragmatical features that must also be considered in understanding interlanguage and fossilization (as explained by Mellow in the research entitled Book review: ZhaoHong Han and Terence Odlin, editors, 2006: *Studies of fossilization in second language acquisition*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2008). These features appear to be numerous, but in the absence of mental and articulatory defect, these are easily and naturally learned by native speakers of a language. However, it is the opposite in interlanguage learning especially in foreign language since more often than not, it is artificially learned through the discourse simulation and grammar lectures done in classes, focusing on the mentioned linguistic features. Studying these features may lead to learning bombardment, entailing language indigestion that can result in language fossilization (Wei, 2008).

Phonetics and phonology are indeed the foundations of spoken language as one cannot produce any meaningful grammatical utterances in a given oral discourse without phonemes (as explained by Yule in the book entitled *The study of language* in 2010). In learning NL1, the two are essential as the former allows articulatory exercise, patterned on the native speakers' pronunciation habits and the latter highlights the regularities and irregularities of a language's sound system. The same as other language features are, some sounds of different languages are almost the same, giving learners an opportunity to learn those easily; however, there are also phonemes that are dissimilar to what is used in NNLLs' first language (L1) and this gives hard time for the learners (Nakai, et al., 2014). As an example, in Filipino language, there are only five (5) vowel sounds (patinig) such as 'a, e, i, o, and u' or /a, e, I, o, u/ and none of them are similar to the Korean vowel sound (모음/ mo-eum) 'ㅏ' or / ㅏ / (as explained by Lee & Moon in the book entitled *Madaling pag-aaral ng wikang Pilipino (Tagalog)* in 2008; as explained by Trombley et al. in the book entitled *Korean from zero* in 2015). Hence, Filipino learners may find pronouncing such Korean vowel difficult and almost unattainable especially when pronunciation habits are already established in L1. They may end up altering it with phonemes available in their mother tongue (Forrest & Daniel, 2000). This may result to language learning progress impediment in terms of its spoken form.

Another concern is the morphological nature of a language. Affixation is indeed the primary agent of this lexical transformation and the epitome of such change may happen when expressing levels of emotions (as explained by Fromkin, et al. in the book entitled *An introduction to language, International student ed* in 2011). In Korean language, the difference of emotion

emphasis level is shown through the suffixes ‘-ㄴ다고 (-ndago)’ and ‘-ㄴ다니까 (-ndanikka)’ (as explained by Ahn et al. in the book entitled *Korean grammar in use: Beginning to early intermediate* in 2011; as explained by Min & Ahn in the book entitled *Korean grammar in use: Intermediate* in 2011). When an individual expresses ‘a person in the state of sleeping’, he or she may say ‘여동생은 자고 있어 (yeodongsaeng-eun jago isseo)’, but when he or she is still asked even when he or she has already responded and likes to emphasize what has just been said, he or she may say ‘잔다고 (jandago)’ or on a higher level, ‘잔다니까 (jandanikka)’. This morphological change is obviously not evident in Filipino language. Though such expressions may be produced with the aid of additional lexemes as in ‘nagtutulong nga ang kapatid ko’ (I said my sister is sleeping) and ‘sinabi ko nang natutulog nga ang kapatid ko’ (I already told you my sister is sleeping). The lack of parallelism in the morphological features and processes of the two languages, may become a point of fossilization for NNLLs as they learn Korean language.

Even the syntactical features of the Filipino and Korean languages are not the same. While Filipino sentences have the usual patterns ‘subject-verb-object’ as in ‘siya (he) ay kumain (ate) ng mansanas (apple)’ and ‘verb-subject-object’ as in ‘kumain (ate) siya (he) ng mansanas (apple)’, Korean sentences have ‘subject-object-verb’ syntax as in ‘김씨는 (Kim Ssi/ Mr. Kim) 사과를 (sagwa-reul/ apple) 먹었어요 (meogeosseoyo/ ate)’ (as explained by Ahn, et al. in the book *Korean grammar in use: Beginning to early intermediate* in 2011). The pattern difference entails learning challenge. As in linguistic classic belief, syntax is intertwined with cognitive flux since one says sentences as ideas in sequence naturally appear in his or her head (Vigliocco & Hartsuiker, 2002). If the NNLLs are used to the syntactic-cognitive habits of their L1, learning the target foreign language (TFL) becomes a problem.

Semantical features may also be challenging. Since there is always a possibility that L1’s lexicon is way different from the TFL; hence, learning the meaning of words is heavily dependent on memorization and familiarization (Ancho, 2019; Gablasova, 2014; Khamees, 2016). This is evident in learning polysemous words. In Korean, the examples are ‘말’ (mal/ language; horse), ‘개’ (gae/ dog; object counter), ‘차’ (cha/ car; tea), 사과 (sagwa/ apple; apology) etc (as explained by Jones & Rhie in the book entitled *NTC’s Korean and English dictionary* in 1995). Due to this semantic nature of the words, learning dilemma may take place. Nonetheless, the clear fixation of correct and discerning word-meaning correspondence can only be attained if such words are always used and/or the NNLLs are exposed to discourses in which these are used (Thordardottir, 2011).

The last concern is pragmatical nature. Spoken Korean language may appear to be tricky to NNLLs as the use of elliptical lexemes are often evident in it. The omission of subjective and objective particles and sentence subject itself is part of everyday Korean language experience (Rhee, 2015). In the sentence ‘남자 빵 먹었어 (namja ppang meogeosseo)’ or ‘the man ate the bread’, it is understood that it is the man who ate the bread and not the other way around. Unless this expression appears in fairy tales in which such absurd happening may occur, having the bread as the actor in the sentence is illogical. Furthermore, one may say ‘이거 먹어 (igeo megeo)’ when he or she wants to ask a person to eat food, but the same expression may mean ‘I eat this’. Register also counts in Korean language. The use of suffixes and higher word forms explicitly express the level of formality. For example, ‘to speak’ in ‘말씀을 하시다 (malsseum-eul hasida)’ in 존댓말 (jondaemal) or formal language, but 말해요 (malhaeyo) in 반말 (banmal) or informal language. In this TFL, age, social hierarchy, and context are of importance (as explained by Ahn, et al. in the book *Korean grammar in use: Beginning to early intermediate* in 2011).

Hence, the NNLLs must be adept in discourses and language context like these (Takkaç Tular, 2016). Failure to do so may lead to misunderstanding and when this happens repeatedly such act will turn into an unalterable set of habits, leading to fossilization.

Furthermore, there are studies on language fossilization conducted and published in many different countries. In a Chinese study, some strategies to prevent fossilization in second language acquisition in English language were identified based on the causes of such linguistic phenomenon. The results were taken from the English language instruction in China (Qian & Xiao, 2010). In another Chinese study, Huang (2009) focused on physiological, psychological, cognitive manner and emotion, and cultural difference facets as fossilization in foreign language teaching was dealt with. In a Sri Lankan empirical investigation, the reasons of fossilization phonological errors were identified. Specifically, the study found out that the main reasons of such fossilization were lack of awareness and enough guidance from the instructors and learners (Premarathne, 2018). Another study on pronunciation fossilization in English language among Bechari learners. The established native language habits and lack of professional instructional were found to be the reasons behind (Yakout & Amel, 2019). Furthermore, in an Iranian study, the reasons for pragmatic fossilization among Persian English language learners were identified. It was highlighted that the non-authentic and poor input in the instruction led to the learners failure to improve pragmatic habits in learning the target language (Tajeddin, et al., 2017).

Though there are studies on language fossilization made, there is no research conducted that highlights the fossilization among KFL Filipino learners. This study was conducted to identify the linguistic features that the KFL Filipino learner participants are fossilized in, and the reasons behind such language phenomenon, based on their learning narratives. Thus, this investigation sought to answer the following research questions: (a) What are the linguistic features in Korean language that the KFL Filipino learner participants are fossilized in? (b) Why do they arrive at such state of fossilization? The results of the study are beneficial to the improvement of both self-study and classroom instruction for KFL learning since the reasons provide inputs to the prevention of fossilization in the different features of the TFL.

2. METHOD

This qualitative study used narrative approach to retell and highlight the participants' special events in learning Korean as foreign language (KFL) specifically the linguistic features in which they are fossilized in and the reasons for such happening (as explained by Creswell in the book entitled *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* in 2012). The investigation used purposive sampling since there was a qualification that must be satisfied selection (as explained by Fraenkel, & Wallen in the book entitled *How to design and evaluate research in education* in 2009). The participants must be Filipino learners who have already taken formal Korean as foreign language class and experienced fossilization in the language. Eventually, consent forms were given to these prospect participants and all of them agreed to take part in the study. In the end, there were three (3) exchange students in South Korea, two (2) graduate students, three (3) language training center students, and four (4) undergraduate students or twelve (12) KFL Filipino learner participants ages 22 to 33 who willingly shared their life episodes of learning fossilization and the reasons behind it.

The narrative data were gathered online following the strict protocols of Inter-Agency Task Force (IAFT) in preventing the pandemic's further permeation. Upon gathering, they were analyzed, coded, and arranged into themes. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify and clearly

present the emerging concepts from the responses of the participants. As the themes emerged, the fossilized language features and the reasons for such phenomenon were identified. The results serve as inputs to the improvement of learning KFL by oneself and/or in class.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the different forms of fossilization in Korean language learning among Filipinos as well as the reasons behind were derived from the narratives of the KFL Filipino learner participants. The themes highlight the varied fossilizations and their reasons that have emerged from data gathered.

3.1 Korean Language Fossilization 1: Sound-Character Correspondence and Orthographical-Phonological Metamorphosis

The same as learning other foreign languages, learning Korean language means learning new set of phonemes. In most cases, there are similar to identical sounds when L1 and TFL are compared, but as mentioned in the earlier discussions, there are also sounds that are alien to the ears of the NNLLs because there is no parallel sound used in their own mother tongue. This is true in all other language features and this makes language learning even harder (Hayakawa, et al., 2020). As these are incomprehensible and foreign to them, this may entail that they also find it hard to produce the sounds even in speech defect absence as language output is derived from language input. In other words, the concern is language reception and production. When correct language is learned, the probability of correct language production is high. However, the challenge happens in the bridging process— language learning. This is confirmed by the participants as they experience difficulty in learning the Hangeul characters and their corresponding sounds.

It is surprising that among the participants, altering sounds available in L1, though common, does not emerge as phonetic and phonological fossilization, but sound-character correspondence does. As learners study the Hangeul chart in their classes, the correspondence of sound and character, being a pre-requisite to further learning the TFL, is usually highlighted and intensively studied. When the correspondence is not appropriately established, persisting mispronunciation occurs (Saito, 2017). This is possible especially when they have disorder in processing language, such as dyslexia.

Participant 1 confirmed:

The first feature of Korean language I am stuck is its characters. I have difficulty memorizing the characters and its corresponding sounds because I am dyslexic. Most of the time I tend to interchange the characters and their corresponding sounds. Say for example, I often pronounce the character ㅏ as “a” instead of “eo.” Also, I often read ㅓ as “s” instead of “r/l” because it looks like the letter “s” (Excerpt 1).

In most cases, learning pronunciation is done through careful oral reading with the aid of pronunciation guides as they mean to establish stable sound-character correspondence. Commonly, the Romanized pronunciation guide is provided in the instruction to aid the learners in studying Hangeul. However, when this becomes a classroom and/or self-studying habit, NNLLs may become too dependent of the Romanized guide. This ends up with failing to see the

subtle differences in the original Hangeul characters. Having this blind spot, similar characters may cause confusion to the learners. This is derived from Participant 5's narration.

Participant 5 narrated:

From the beginning until the end of my KFL journey, I am always stuck on identifying vowel sounds. There are vowels that can be recognized easily except for those complicated forms where they seem to resemble each other. I used to go back to the hangul notes to clarify the sounds. These vowels include the sounds of ae, e, yae, ye, wae, woe, we, and ui. (Excerpt 2).

Furthermore, Participant 8 also shared that she is confused when to pronounce vowel sounds properly. She said that she is unaware when to enunciate them longer or shorter. This is because they appear to be different in orthography, but almost the same in pronunciation. She said, "I had no problem with the alphabet but there were times that I got confused with the usage of short and long vowels, in which it actually sounds the same, but spells differently (Excerpt 3)." Along with vowel sounds is the difficulty in consonant sound recognition as identified by Participant 11. She said, "The second feature of the Korean language that I'm stuck with sometimes is proper pronunciations of consonants when it comes to speaking the Korean language (Excerpt 4)." This is when familiarity comes in. It is indeed indispensable in language learning. Learners are discouraged to utter sounds or words when they are not sure of how they really sound. When they fail to establish character-sound correspondence in the process of reception, they cannot eventually recognize them. Hence, the probability of using them is very low since the correspondence is weak.

Nonetheless, the Hangeul chart is not the sole source of language familiarity and learning; mass media such as the news, the Internet, dramas etc. also are. Though learners may find some sounds or words familiar since they may be exposed to any forms of media in which the TFL is used, there may still be sounds that are incomprehensible and/or unknown to these individuals. Hence, these pronunciation blind spot hampers language learning progress. This is what Participant 6 told.

Participant 6 stated:

I cannot remember the Hangeul letters (consonants and vowels) that is why I am having a difficulty reading them and putting them to words. I am searching for mnemonics in doing so for me to remember these letters. But for the familiarity of the words (spoken) I could say that I can remember the most used ones because of the Korean songs and movies that I've watched and is currently watching. I find some words difficult to pronounce. (Excerpt 4).

As the sound-character correspondence learning progresses, the NNLLs encounter the regularities and irregularities in orthographical and phonological metamorphosis. Naturally in spoken language, a phoneme is affected by the others. However, the phonemes may change, but the spelling remains, as in a South Korean province '전라북도 (Jeollabuk-do)' where its 'ㄴ' is spelled the same, but pronounced as /l/ (Trombley et al., 2015). The confusion leading to learning impediment begins when this complexity is unknown to the learners. Rules in pronunciation count a lot to achieve the fluency and accuracy in the TFL. This is highlighted by Participant 10.

Participant 6 narrated:

I had hard time remembering the correct rules on pronouncing a word or its final sound. I wasn't able to fully understand which letters will change in sound when it is followed by a certain letter (i.e. ㄴ / ㄹ). I also sometimes get confused with the pronunciations of other vowels (Excerpt 5).

3.2 Fossilization Reasons 1: Weak Memory, Language Disorder, and Hangeul Character Resemblance and Subtle Differences

In the absence of the L1-L2 lexical parallelism, there is no other way to enrich one's spoken language reservoir, but memorization (Ancho, 2019). However, language progress is not possible when the NNLLs' memory is weak especially when they have challenging cognitive-linguistic condition. This is what Participant narrated. She said, "I have difficulty memorizing the characters and its corresponding sounds because I am dyslexic (Excerpt 6)." As the process of language happens, the next challenge is remembering what have been memorized. Hence, sharp memory is vital in foreign language instruction. If the learners struggle in remembering the nature of the phonemes, this also causes language learning fossilization. In fact, Participant 10 said, "I had hard time remembering the correct rules on pronouncing a word or its final sound (Excerpt 7)."

Leading to another level of impediment, if remembering these features fails, reading and combining sounds to form words become impossible as Participant 6 shared in his narrative. She said, "I cannot remember the Hangeul letters and sounds (consonants and vowels) that is why I am having a difficulty reading them and putting them to words (Excerpt 8)." Furthermore, as mentioned in the previous discussions, the subtle differences of the Hangeul characters are a point of challenge for the learners especially when they are not yet adept with the language. Another concern is the lack of conversation moments in which the TFL is used. Using the language is not learning the language, but doing so keeps the learners' language proficiency optimal. This is derived from Participant 5's confirmation. He said, "Aside from the resemblance of the characters, maybe one of the reasons is the lack of practice (Excerpt 9)."

3.3 Korean Language Fossilization 2: Language Syntax

People think in different sequences and it is reflected in the way they construct sentences. The order of words is delivered as they appear in one's mind, producing regularities in syntax. Connected with this word order notion is what as explained by Halliday in the book entitled *An introduction to functional grammar* in 1994 claimed that an utterance has theme and rheme. The former is the sentence's point of take-off and the latter elaborates what has been initially exposed. Different languages may come in different ways of thinking, entailing that people produce variety of word orders in their languages. This becomes a hindrance for interlanguage learners such as among the KFL learners. Filipinos are both used to the sentence patterns verb-subject-object (karaniwang ayos) as it is Filipino language syntax and subject-verb-object as it is used both in Filipino and English language syntaxes.

Hence, it is quite overwhelming and confusing for Filipinos to learn the Korean language syntax subject-object-verb or object-subject-verb. This makes them struggle to achieve language

progress and this is true among the participants. In fact Participant 4 narrated, “In English, a sentence is usually constructed as subject-verb-object. That is why when I started learning Korean language, I struggled in forming sentences because the sentence order in Korean is usually subject-object-verb (Excerpt 10).” Furthermore, Participant 11 compared learning Korean vocabulary and Hangeul from learning its syntax. She pointed out that in her case, recalling words and Hangeul is easier than constructing sentences.

Participant 11 shared:

When it comes to the Korean language, the part that confuses me the most is how to construct sentences properly. It’s because they have different subject verb agreements. Koreans have a different sentence patterns so sometimes it gets tricky. It’s easy to recall vocabulary and memorize the alphabet but the way sentence is constructed is difficult (Excerpt 11).

Participant 12 also struggles a lot in constructing sentences. She emphasized that placing subject and predicate in the right position is her challenge. She even used translation in her sentence construction technique; however, this is too gradual for an examination and/or even in a daily conversation in which words are spontaneous and instantaneous.

Participant 12 said:

The second feature of Korean language I am stuck with is the structure of sentences particularly the placement of subject and predicate. Its placement/arrangement is different from the English language. I remember my early days of studying the Korean language, I will be translating it from English to Korean as is before I rearrange the placement of the subject and the predicate. This is one of my main struggles in learning the Korean language (Excerpt 12).

Language habits extend in syntax. Altering or modifying such habit to accommodate another language’s syntax nature is indeed a challenge. It requires versatility and adaptability of the mind. It cannot also be denied that sentence structure is omnipresent in both receptive and productive language skills. Hence, learning or fossilizing in this language feature impacts on the four macro skills. It can be considered as one of the hardest feature to learn. Participant 2 even mentioned, “I used to be an exchange student and we had different classes in Korean namely Writing, Listening, Reading, and Grammar. Among these, I find Grammar very hard given that structure of sentences is different from those that I’m used to (Excerpt 13).” As language features are interconnected, they must be learned simultaneously. Participant 1 expressed her struggle as she said that learning Korean language sound-character correspondence and vocabularies is harder, but learning them along with syntax is even harder.

Participant 1 stated:

The third feature of the Korean language I am stuck is the sentence construction. With the difficulty memorizing the characters and their corresponding sounds coupled with the lack of vocabularies resulted to a heightened difficulty in sentence construction. The sentence pattern/syntax is also different from what we are used to.

3.4 Fossilization Reasons 2: Differences of L1 and L2 Sentence Patterns to Korean Language Syntax

In terms of syntax, the learned language affects the target language (Akan, 2021). The participants affirm that they cannot learn fully the Korean language syntax because of its unfamiliarity. They cannot help, but compare and contrast it with the learned that they have already learned. In fact, Participant 2 said, “Among these, I find Grammar very hard given that structure of sentences is different from those that I’m used to (Excerpt 15).” Participant 3 also agreed when she said, “I struggled in forming sentences because the sentence order in Korean is usually subject-object-verb (Excerpt 16).” Participant 7 even explained that she is stuck with Korean syntax because it is different from what her L1 and L2 have. She shared, “I found it hard at first because both my first and second language has its subject first and then the verb, example: She is washing the dishes (Excerpt 17).

This contrast is also what Participant 12 narrated. She said, “The second feature of Korean language I was stuck with is the structure of sentences particularly the placement of subject and predicate. Its placement/arrangement is different from the English language (Excerpt 18).” This different sentence harmony appears to cause dilemma to learners. Participant 11 mentioned, “It’s because they have different subject verb agreements. Koreans have a different sentence patterns so sometimes it gets tricky (Excerpt 19).” This fossilization is most likely to happen especially this language feature is learned with other features. As Participant 1 said, this increases the difficulty in learning the TFL as whole. She said, “With the difficulty memorizing the characters and their corresponding sounds coupled with the lack of vocabularies resulted to a heightened difficulty in sentence construction (Excerpt 20).”

3.5 Korean Language Fossilization 3: Verb Conjugation and Suffixation in Context, and Vocabulary Difficulty

Not limited to Korean language, verb conjugation is intertwined with morphology. Verb is indeed vital to make a specific utterance complete. It holds the state and/or act a particular object and/or individual has or does; thus, learning its finite mechanism is indispensable. However, in a foreign language like Korean, Filipinos find it difficult to learn those as its affixation is not close to their L1 or even L2. This is what Participant 10 confirmed. She said, “ I also had a hard time learning the correct rules or process of conjugation on my own (Excerpt 21).”

Furthermore, the use of suffixes is elemental in expressing tense in Korean sentences as in, ‘-아요’ (-ayo/ present) in ‘가요(gayo/ go)’, ‘-았어요’ (-asseoyo/ past) in ‘갔어요 (gasseoyo/ went)’, and ‘-ㄹ 거예요’ (-lkoyeyo/ future) in ‘갈 거예요 (kal koyeyo/ will go)’ (as explained by Ahn, et al. in the book entitled *Korean grammar in use: Beginning to early intermediate* in 2011). In other words, there are new affixes to explore and remember, doubling the difficulty in learning or even making learning progress too gradual or even stagnant. This is agreed upon by Participant 9.

Participant 9 claimed:

Like in any other language, at least for me, I am stuck with the verb tenses. Aside from familiarizing all the verbs which becomes the essence of each sentence, I was fossilized with it. I am aware that I have to know all the verbs to make sense in a

conversation, but I have this fear of choosing the wrong tense and make the sentence worse (Excerpt 22).

Suffixes in Korean language is also intertwined with formality and feeling. For instance, in using verb forms of 'to know', the endings '-아 (-ah)' in '알아 (arah)' and '-다 (-da)' in '알다 (alda)' connote informality and '-는데 (-neunde)' in '아는데 (aneunde)' may connote interjectional expression which are challenging to Filipino learners (as explained by Min & Ahn in the book entitled *Korean grammar in use: Intermediate* in 2011). In fact, Participant 11 said, "The third feature is when times I get confused in identifying the formality degrees of verbs in Korean and how to use them properly (Excerpt 23)." This is another facet to deal with and as agreed upon by Participant 3, this is a state of uncertainty for her. She said, "I'm still not sure when I should use *알아*, *알다*, or *아는데*. Still something I would've easily learned had I practiced properly with Koreans (Excerpt 24)." Participant 2 also added, "Written and spoken [Korean] are different. While studying written Korean, whenever you try to practice it, people will tell you you're too formal. It makes the language twice as hard to assimilate with. Also, they're mostly not lectured on (Excerpt 25)." Moreover, this feature is more complex than Filipino language honorific marker 'po'. This is highlighted by Participant 4.

Participant 4 narrated:

There are different levels of respect incorporated into the Korean language as compared to Filipino where we only use the word "po". I had to memorize the verb endings which depends on the relationship I had with the person I am talking to (Excerpt 26).

Aside from formality, the endings may also show level of intimacy that Filipinos may perceive as too complex. In fact, Participant 12 narrated, "The first feature of Korean language I was stuck with is the level of formality that their language follows. You need to consider your relationship or level of intimacy with that person to know which level you will be using (Excerpt 27).

Another challenge, which has also been discussed in the previous sections, is vocabulary. Since Filipino is a Malayo-Polynesian language and English is a Germanic in nature, Korean vocabulary is apparently unfamiliar to Filipino learners (Jubilado, 2014; as explained by Kottak in the book entitled *The exploration of human diversity* in 2002; as explained by Lee & Ramsey in the book entitled *A history of Korean language* in 2011). This becomes a struggle for them since it is a must to build a handful of lexemes to compose a sentence. This is confirmed by Participant 2, when he said, "Vocabulary because you need to know a lot of words in just a small amount of time. We just easily learn those words that are being used conversationally (Excerpt 28)." Language exposure is essential to have wide range of lexicon. It is when a learner is immersed in the TFL that he or she gains lexemes. When there are no sufficient language opportunities, progress is hampered. This is shared by Participant 1.

Participant 1 shared:

The second feature of Korean language I am stuck is the vocabularies. Since I don't have any Korean friends or friends who speak the language, my Korean vocabulary is limited. Mostly the terms or words I know are those I commonly hear

from Korean dramas and KPOP songs. I am also not well versed with the basic words such as counting numbers, days in a week, colors, shapes. With this lack of vocabulary I can't hardly compose a single proper sentence (Excerpt 29).

3.6 Fossilization Reasons 3: Lack of Interest on Sources of Language Exposure, Discourse Opportunities with Korean Language Speakers, and Fear of Language Use due to Uncertainty

Interest in learning language is the best motivation that a learner can have (Meyerhöffer, & Dreesmann, 2019). However, it is much better that he or she is also interested in the different sources of language exposure such as dramas and music as the words are uttered in such discourse realm. In other words, such exposure builds vocabulary. However, if there is no interest in such sources, the learner misses opportunities to establish better lexicon. This is also what Participant 8 thinks. She said, "Maybe it was also because I am not fond of watching Korean novelas or KPOP. I am not familiar with their vocabulary (Excerpt 30). Furthermore, it is also better if NNLLs can speak with a native speaker and/or a model speaker as it promotes language practice, learning, and acquisition. However, if there is no opportunity, this may make the language learning progress gradual. In fact, Participant 1 narrated, "Since I don't have any Korean friends or friends who speak the language, my Korean vocabulary is limited (Excerpt 31)." In other words, such lack of interest and conversation opportunity may contribute to language fossilization.

Another reason of fossilization is fear of using language. Anxiety hampers language learning (Halder, (2018); Toyama & Yamazaki, 2019). A person who is not sure of the words he or she is about to share will be definitely hesitant to use such in a conversation or to even indulge himself or herself in the whole discourse. This is true in using verb tense in Korean that Participant 9 narrated. She said, "I am aware that I have to know all the verbs to make sense in a conversation, but I have this fear of choosing the wrong tense and make the sentence worse (Excerpt 32). If the learner fails to acquire such language feature, he or she shall remain uncertain and unconfident of those. Hence, this leads to language learning plateau.

3.7 Research Synthesis

Out of the themes, the study has developed a Korean as a foreign language learning diagrammatical framework that explains the relationship between the identified reasons and the forms of fossilization that have been captured in the study at hand (see Fig. 1).

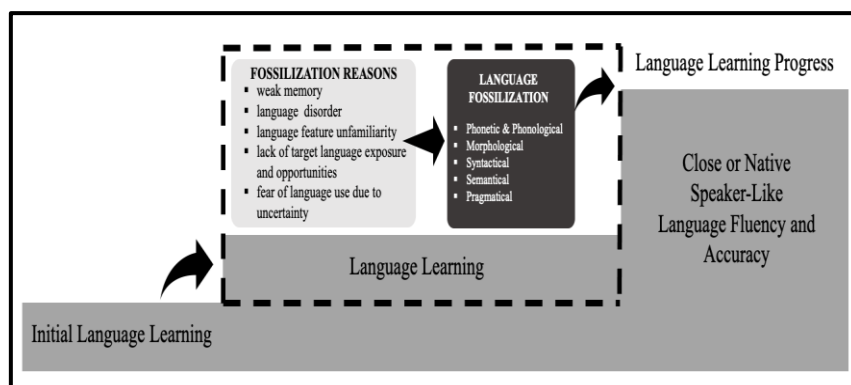


Fig. 1 - Korean as Foreign Language Learning Fossilization

The framework elucidates that from initial language learning, one cannot move forward to language learning progress if one has weak memory, language disorder, language unfamiliarity, lack of target language exposure and opportunities, and fear of language use due to uncertainty. If one cannot overcome these, one cannot progress or achieve close or native speaker-like fluency and accuracy in Korean language. Hence, one remains in the area of language fossilization. In other words, both teachers and learners must address these to attain the aims of foreign language instruction. Though this is derived from KFL learning, this framework can be used as guide in developing and evaluating a foreign language instruction similar to such class.

4. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to identify the linguistic features that the KFL Filipino learner participants are fossilized in, and the reasons behind such language phenomenon, based on their learning narratives. Upon the analysis of data gathered, the study confirms that among the Korean as foreign language Filipino learner participants the language fossilizations are in sound-character correspondence and orthographical-phonological metamorphosis, language syntax, and verb conjugation and suffixation in context, and vocabulary difficulty. Furthermore, as the narratives are explored, the reasons of fossilization is also identified. They are weak memory, language disorder, Hangeul character resemblance and subtle differences of L1 and L2 sentence patterns to Korean language syntax, lack of interest on sources of language exposure, discourse opportunities with Korean language speakers, and fear of language use due to uncertainty.

The identification of these forms of fossilization and their reasons are meaningful inputs in the improvement of Korean as a foreign language instruction both in self-studying and in formal language classes. This can also be beneficial to other foreign language classes with similar language learning concerns. Moreover, this also adds to the reservoir of knowledge in Korean Applied Linguistics specifically in understanding the nature of Korean language and its learners. The new body of knowledge contributes to the existing and future researches related to this area of specialization.

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