

The AI Era: Hangeul is the answer

Hangeul, the perfect language for the digital age;
King Sejong's great legacy

On the 579th anniversary of Hangeul Day, I state this with conviction: Hangeul is the language best suited for the age of artificial intelligence.

The core of AI lies in precise communication between humans and machines. English contains many phonemes prone to pronunciation confusion, like Z and S, or L and R. Hangeul is different. It possesses a structure where one sound corresponds precisely to one character. This becomes a decisive advantage in communicating with AI. This is why Hangeul is the most suitable language for voice recognition systems, AI commands and language-based platforms.

Analyzing the principles of vocalization and descriptions of the articulatory organs contained in the Hunminjeongeum Haerye clearly reveals how scientifically King Sejong designed the script. As an ENT physician and phonetician, I understand this better than anyone. Next year, I plan to publish "The Phonetics of Hunminjeongeum," based on MRI analysis, aiming to demonstrate the scientific nature of Hangeul to the world's younger generation.

The person whom my grandfather, the scholar Choi Hyeon-bae, held in the highest regard was King Sejong the Great. Carrying on that spirit, I have led the King Sejong the Great Memorial Foundation since 2015, dedicating myself to elucidating the scientific nature of the Hunminjeongeum Jaehaehae.

Hangeul is a scientific writing system for the following reasons. First, the phonological knowledge of its creator. King Sejong designed it optimally based on his extensive knowledge of articulatory phonetics. Second, its systematic principles. Hangeul possesses a consistent system where pictographs serve as the primary principle, supplemented by the principles of adding strokes and combining characters.

Third is its phoneme-based structure. Syllables are formed by combining initial, medial and final consonants -- a structure optimized for the digital age. Fourth is its classification by place of articulation. It employs a scientific classification based on the anatomical location of the vocal organs. Finally, it accurately reflects the shape of the resonator cavity. It visually represents the actual form of the resonator cavity during vowel articulation.

There is one thing I want to make clear. The Hunminjeongeum was not a collaborative effort with the scholars of the Jiphyeonjeon.



Choi Hong-sik, chairman of the King Sejong Memorial Foundation, professor emeritus at the Yonsei University College of Medicine

It was completed solely by King Sejong. Examining the Hunminjeongeum Haerye reveals this was not the kind of work that could be created through discussion. King Sejong sent Shin Suk-ju and Seong Sam-mun to Liaodong 13 times to consult with the Chinese phonologist Huang Chan for verification. This demonstrates that King Sejong personally led the creation process while satisfying his own scholarly curiosity.

Yet today, we neglect this great legacy. Britain and France proudly teach their own scripts -- What about us? We tend to underestimate Hangeul's value precisely because it is easy to learn. Korean language education in schools must properly teach the Hunminjeongeum and King Sejong's spirit of love for his people.

The bigger problem is the indiscriminate use of English. English is being overused everywhere -- on signs, in company names and in administrative markings -- undermining the status of our own language. This is not merely a linguistic issue but a matter of identity. A national language policy and a shift in awareness among society's leaders are urgently needed.

Hangeul will develop dramatically in the future. Its potential as a digital language is limitless. We must turn this potential into reality.

On the 579th Hangeul Day, I hope we all reflect once more on the scientific nature and excellence of Hangeul. Moreover, I earnestly ask for your participation in sharing this with the world. Let us not forget the spirit of Hangeul, created by King Sejong out of love for his people. 장