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Korean Rōmaniz'atiōn: Is It Finally Time for The Library Of Congress to Stop Promoting Mccune-Reischauer and Adopt the Revised Romanization Scheme?

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According to the Korean Tourism Organization (KTO homepage) in 2012, 11.1 million foreign tourists visited South Korea, making it the 20th most visited country in the world. In addition to the fact that as of 2013, 1.5 million foreigners also lived in Korea (Yonghap News, 2013) it is no secret that the Korean government has done all it can to Romanize and standardize *hangeul* (Korean language). With *hallyu* (Korean wave) taking off, the Korean Government is riding this wave by promoting Korea through the use of English. In order to do this, they have tried to standardize place names, people's names and local food. This has been a laborious project because *hangeul* is not easy to Romanize. As Horace G. Underwood, former director of the Yonsei University Library, pointed out back in 1972: "The scale of vowel sounds does not really fit any Roman system, and the basic structure of the consonants, with aspirate-non aspirate, and without voiced-unvoiced phonemes, cannot readily be represented in an alphabet that recognizes voiced-unvoiced but not aspirate-non-aspirate distinctions."

Because of the aforementioned problems, Korea now has two main Romanization systems; the Library of Congress (LC) promotes the phonetically based McCune-Reischauer (MR) to Romanize Korean words, whereas the Korean Government supports its own form of Romanization, otherwise known as the Revised Romanization (RR) scheme¹. As a result, Korean words are often Romanized using various methods. Most of the world and general knowledge books about Korea generally follow the RR method while Korean language learners and academic journals tend to still follow MR. This is a problem because information becomes discombobulated. In order to do a thorough search on a topic one needs to not only know both forms of Korean Romanization, but also advanced search techniques. This causes information retrieval and storage about Korea to be both time consuming and inefficient. The table below shows the MR² and RR³ scheme side by side with the differences in bold. As you can see, the majority of the variances are due to the reliance on diacritics when using McCune-Reischauer (as you can see with the vowels **ㅏ, ㅑ, ㅓ, ㅕ, ㅗ, ㅛ** and the consonants

¹ This paper will use the RR method when Romanizing Korean words unless otherwise noted.

² To view the more complete Library of Congress version of the McCune-Reischauer system please refer to <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsd/romanization/korean.pdf>

³ To see a complete RR table please refer to http://www.korean.go.kr/front_eng/roman/roman_01.do

ㅈ, ㅋ, ㅌ, ㅍ). Some of the secondary differences can be attributed to pronunciation (as is the case with ㄱ, ㄴ, ㄷ, ㅂ, ㅍ).

Vowels	McCune-Reischauer	Revised Romanization	Consonants	McCune-Reischauer		Revised Romanization	
				Initial	Final	Initial	Final
-	-	-	-				
ㅏ	a	a	ㄱ	k	k	g	k
ㅑ	ae	ae	ㄲ	kk	k	kk	k
ㅓ	ya	ya	ㄴ	n	n	n	n
ㅕ	yae	yae	ㄷ	t	t	d	t
ㅗ	ǒ	eo	ㄸ	tt	-	tt	-
ㅛ	e ë after ㅏ and ㅑ	e	ㄹ	r	l	r	l
ㅜ	yǒ	yeo	ㅁ	m	m	m	m
ㅠ	ye	ye	ㅂ	p	p	b	p
ㅡ	o	o	ㅃ	pp	-	pp	-
ㅜ	wa	wa	ㅅ	s	t	s	t
ㅟ	wae	wae	ㅆ	ss	t	ss	t
ㅝ	oe	oe	ㅇ	-	ng	-	ng
ㅠ	yo	yo	ㅈ	ch	t	j	t
ㅢ	u	u	ㅉ	tch	-	jj	-
ㅝ	wǒ	wo	ㅊ	ch'	t	ch	t
ㅞ	we	we	ㅋ	k'	k	k	k
ㅟ	wi	wi	ㅌ	t'	t	t	t
ㅠ	yu	yu	ㅍ	p'	p	p	p
ㅡ	ǔ	eu	ㅎ	h		h	
ㅢ	ǔi	ui					
ㅣ	i	i					

“In North America, the ALA-LC Romanization Tables are an established standard for library cataloging, but libraries elsewhere in the world are more likely to use the various ISO Romanization standards or a national standard. Often, different standards result in very different Romanized strings that may, at best, look strange (and, at worst, not be recognizable) to a user accustomed to what is done in another country. They can also wreak havoc with attempts to match records. And MARC 21, unlike UNIMARC, has no way of indicating in the bibliographic record which Romanization practice has been applied” (ALA,

2009). This excerpt from the American Library Association (ALA) not only reiterates the problems multiple Romanization methods cause for users, librarians and catalogers, but it also shows that ALA and the Library of Congress often like to do things their own way. Why can't ALA and the Library of Congress be like the rest of the world and adopt the national standard? This paper intends to question whether ALA and the Library of Congress should be so cavalier in their desire to continue the use of their sometimes outdated ALA-LC Romanization Table, in this case MR, and examine whether a shift away from MR would benefit users, librarians and catalogers.

An outright shift overnight is impractical, but more research should be done to see if a gradual shift is feasible and necessary. It appears as if the contributors to the most up-to-date ALA-LC Romanization Table were aware that this day would come. In their online PowerPoint that was used as an introduction to the revised guidelines for the 2009 edition of Korean Romanization they included a slide entitled "In The Future" in which they added: "If, in the future, a strong consensus of Library users form around another specific Romanization system or set of practices, Library of Congress would be most willing to revisit and reconsider these MCR Romanization and word division guidelines" (Y. Lee, 2009). In addition to this, there have been papers in the past that have also pointed out the confusion caused because of the two systems. The reason it should be examined again is because more people are becoming interested in studying and learning about Korea. In the past, in America, it was mainly scholars or Korean immigrants who were searching for information about Korea. Most Korean scholars are not only familiar with MR, but are also fluent in Korean and would easily overlook the problems that are prevalent on a basic level. Many of these scholars have gone on to work for ALA, the Library of Congress or are now in charge of the Korean Studies section of a library. Using *hangeul* or MR is second nature by now. But since we have such an influx of new people interested in Korea, wouldn't it behoove us to ensure that information is as readily available as possible? Shouldn't we remove as many roadblocks as possible? Shouldn't we make sure that Korean Romanization is easy enough for non-Korean specialist librarians to properly help a patron in need of information about Korea? Studies should be done to see if information about Korea is easily attainable, or whether a convoluted Romanization scheme inhibits this search.

This paper will examine the benefits of a potential change from MR to RR. This will be done in four ways. First, this paper will look at what Romanization is, why having multiple systems causes confusion and errors, why Romanization methods are not archaic and why it's still relevant to users, librarians and catalogers in modern time, especially when using Korean. Second, prove that MR is antiquated and inefficient. Third, show that RR is more effective than MR and is also not only a short term solution, but a long term answer. Lastly, show how a similar transition in the past has proven to be successful.

Romanization

Romanization is “the process of writing or transliterating a non-Latin character into a Latin character” (Tull 2003, 442). This is done for a variety of reasons. It can be for writing academic papers, explaining current events in newspapers, or it can be a simple restaurant review. The need for Romanization is clear; it is not practical for anybody to learn every single language. Instead there needs to be a common or standard way to transcribe something in a non-Latin language into a Latin or Roman alphabet in order for there to be a universal way of phonetically reading these words. Although there are many countries in the world that face this issue, especially in Asia, a lot of focus has been placed on China, Japan and Korea. In fact in 1957, Preliminary Rules and Manual for Cataloging Chinese, Japanese and Korean Materials was published following the need for standardization of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean (CJK) materials (Cheng, 2000). The strong need for this was due to more people wanting information on Asia, specifically China, Japan and Korea. More and more libraries were housing Asian works and standardization was needed. Although libraries and other information agencies recognize the need for standardization, it was not and continues to not be an easy process. This is because, “it is complex work to create a transliterating or Romanizing standard because the pronunciation and morphology of East Asian languages are extremely different from languages that use the Roman alphabet” (Kim, 2006, 58).

In an effort to standardize the way non-Latin script data is cataloged, since the 1980's, LC has distributed MARC records that include non-Latin script data in bibliographic records and in references in authority records. Starting with Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, LC now includes support for many of the languages that use the Cyrillic, Greek, Hebrew, and Perso-Arabic scripts. To do this, LC has implemented automatic transliteration capabilities known as “Transliterator” (LC, 2011).

Brief history of Korean Romanization methods

The McCune-Reischauer system (MR) was devised by G. M. McCune and E. O. Reischauer in consultation with Korean linguists. It was first published through the Korean Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1939. The MR system has been widely used for historical, literary, political, and military purposes and in the general presentation of Korean proper names in a Romanized form (Kim, 2006). As the original innovators of MR contend, MR is heralded for its: “scientific accuracy and practical simplicity” (McCune, 1939). Because it is still the Romanization system favored by LC, it is still the preferred form of Romanization in most academic journals, specifically Korean Studies and East Asian Studies journals.

Although MR is used by LC and is still widely used overseas from Korea, it is not the official Romanization system used by the Korean government. On July 4, 2001 the Ministry of Culture and Tourism introduced its new Romanization system (RR). All geographical names now follow this system without exception. In addition to this, as of February 28, 2002 all textbooks now use this system and as of December 31, 2005 all road signs were changed

over. One of the exceptions was previously used Romanization of personal and company names. This is fortunate for Samsung because under the new translation rules the company name would be changed to *Samseong*. This new system was needed in Korea because native Korean speakers, in particular, have more difficulty than others in understanding the MR system, because it was devised for non-native speakers (Kim, 2006, 59). In addition, as mentioned above, the breves and apostrophes caused confusion. The new government system eliminated these confusions.

Complications due to dual Romanization systems

Having multiple Romanization systems that are supported by various institutions can cause a bevy of problems. To illustrate the complications of having two Romanization systems, a simple search query was performed using common Korean words that were Romanized into RR and MR. The terms were input into a search engine (Google) and also into an online catalog (WorldCat). The first subject entered was the *Joseon* Dynasty (조선시대), which was the last of the Korean dynasties, lasting from 1392 until 1897. To begin, Joseon Dynasty (RR) was entered into Google and the first 20 retrievals were recorded. The same procedure was repeated, this time using Chosŏn Dynasty (MR). The results can be seen in Appendix A. Retrievals that appear on both lists have been put in bold. As you can see, only eight of the twenty retrievals were on both lists. In order to get a complete and full understanding of the *Joseon* Dynasty, you would need to not only know both the RR and the MR Romanization system, but you would have to do two separate searches or do an advanced search that includes the terms *Joseon* and *Chosŏn*. It is also interesting to note that only one of the links retrieved (the very last one in fact) has *Chosŏn* with a breve, which is the correct and official Romanization style of MR and the Library of Congress.

The same experiment was conducted again, this time into OCLC's (Online Computer Library Center) WorldCat, the world's largest library catalog. The difference between *Joseon* Dynasty and *Chosŏn* Dynasty when retrieving information is even more evident when using these terms in WorldCat (see Appendix B for the results). As you can see, this time there was only one similarity out of twenty. WorldCat is used by a variety of people, organizations and libraries to retrieve resources on a subject matter. If a user was familiar with only one of the Korean Romanization methods, then the user would severely handicap their potential to fully research a topic.

Once again, the experiment was repeated, this time using Seoul (RR) (서울) and Sŏul (MR), the capital of South Korea. Because this is the exact same place, it should be expected that all twenty retrievals are the same. However, the opposite proves to be true. From the information gathered in Appendix C, only one of the twenty retrievals in Google was on both lists. The list that was compiled using "Seoul", which is the Korean Government's way of Romanizing the capital city, has many more relevant searches in regards to the city itself. The list with "Sŏul" has less to do with the actual city and more to do with history or specific

venues. Once again, the difference between the two Romanization retrievals is magnified when examining the search results in WorldCat (Appendix D). WorldCat does not recognize diacritics. As a result, it thinks of Sŏul as a soul, like the soul of a human. This leads to zero matches from the list and if you were looking for information about capital of Korea and you typed in Sŏul you would not retrieve any relevant results.

This experiment shows that a single search query retrieves extremely variant search results depending on which Romanization method you use. This problem is compounded if one is searching using WorldCat, which is supposed to aid patrons who want to take advantage of services that a library provides. Because LC promotes a Korean Romanization system that uses diacritics, which is something the world's largest library catalog does not recognize, a user can be left with very low precision and may not retrieve any pertinent information at all.

Why Romanization is still necessary

In 2008, James Agenbroad published a paper entitled *Romanization is not Enough* in which he argues that “for finding non-Roman script library materials, catalogs with Romanized access points alone are inadequate because they are un-familiar to those who seek these materials.” Although Romanization is not a simple task and it can cause information retrieval problems if there are multiple systems in use, it is necessary. *The ALCTS Non-English Access Working Group on Romanization Report* (ALA, 2009) and the Library of Congress' *Romanization Landscape* (LC, 2011) do a great job of explaining why Romanization is still relevant, especially for libraries. This paper will highlight a few of those reasons and explain why they are specifically important in regards to Korean Romanization.

Agenbroad builds his argument around the premise that “in America many public and academic libraries acquire, organize, house, and provide resources that use non-Roman script for immigrants from and students of places that use these scripts.” But that's just not true. As LC points out, “Romanization is primarily for LC staff and staff at other libraries without language expertise working in Circulation, Acquisitions, Serials check-in, Shelflisting, Shelving, and Reference. Romanization is also for systems that cannot use non-Latin forms, have support for only some scripts, or require Romanized fields for indexing and sorting purposes.” (LC 2011) Romanization is for patrons AND library staff who cannot read non-Roman script who work with library materials in these scripts for various purposes (acquisitions, ILL requests, storage retrieval requests, assembling bibliographies). Many public libraries collect material in a wide variety of languages to serve linguistically diverse user communities, but are unable to employ specialists in all these languages. Even large research libraries are unlikely to have staff in every department who is able to interpret all the scripts used in the material they need to process.” (ALA, 2009) Although Korean Studies is becoming more prevalent, many libraries do not have a full time Korean Studies librarian so Romanization is needed to perform basic library staff duties if Korean resources are present at a library.

Romanization is also necessary in regards to technical services. Romanization allows the staff to easily reproduce in writing and pronounce unfamiliar words when communicating with patrons about recalled items or fines or in phone conversations with vendors. This might be otherwise impossible in Korean. Romanization also helps library patrons. Patrons often search library catalogs based on people and places mentioned in Roman-script newspapers and other publications. (ALA, 2009) Especially in Korean the original-script form cannot be easily determined. Having Romanized data indexing in the catalog makes it easier to search. This is another reason why the Library of Congress should consider adopting RR over MR. All of the Korean newspapers that publish in English and many Roman-Script newspapers use RR. In addition to this, the world recognizes the RR spelling of cities not MR (as evidenced in the prior research of Seoul vrs. Sŏul). People who want more information about the Korean capital and have read the word Seoul in a newspaper or see it printed on a CNN telecast would likely not know how to do a search using 서울 (*Seoul*) (nor would they know how to read the corresponding results) so Romanization is necessary. Also they are probably not familiar with the variant spelling Sŏul either.

Another advantage is that Romanization provides collocation when the same word can be written in different ways in the original script. Many historical Korean texts are written in both Korean and Chinese. For example Hanguksa ("History of Korea") can be written 韓國史 in Chinese and 한국사 in Korean. A search for the Romanized form retrieves all these variants. Romanization provides collocation when the same word can be written in different ways in the original script. Many systems are not sophisticated enough to treat these original-script forms as equivalent in their indexing but Romanization allows this (ALA, 2009).

Another reason that Romanization is still necessary is in regards to sorting. Doing a browse search for Romanized text gives an alphabetical list. In CJK sorting by code point is inadequate and is not easy to alphabetize. Romanization allows Asian scripts to be listed alphabetically which is universally known and recognized. This type of sorting also helps librarians who themselves are searching or the users they are assisting in finding Korean materials. In fact, according to a survey done by Jeong (2009), 79% of librarians searching for Korean Materials in an OPAC prefer Romanization over Korean scripts.

Lastly, Romanization is helpful because it provides pronunciation-based access points. This is beneficial for users who know the basics of a language but are not fully proficient in the original script. This is especially useful for undergraduates, beginners, or researchers who are not yet experts in these languages (ALA, 2009). In regards to Korea, since 2010 Korean as a second language has risen 62% (Chosun Ilbo, 2015). In addition to this, the number of Korean Studies departments and majors is on the rise. More Korean resources are needed for non-native speakers and Romanization certainly adds pronunciation based access points.

McCune-Reischauer is Antiquated and Inefficient

One of the most appealing aspects of the MR model of Romanization is also its biggest roadblock. The MR system aims at representing the pronunciation and not the spelling of Korean words. This is good if you are learning the language but it can be problematic if you are trying to retrieve information using Romanized Korean words. It is not a method of transcribing Korea script letter by letter into the Latin alphabet, but instead, it takes full account of euphonic changes in the pronunciation of Korean letters (Royal Asiatic Society, 1961). As a result of this, the MR system is full of breves and apostrophes. However, quite often the breve and apostrophe are omitted when writing. The breve is not a standard key on a keyboard and many non-native Korean speakers do not feel the need to add apostrophes (National Academy of the Korean Language, 2001). Research by Jeong (1998) and Kim (2006) also conclude that many users don't use diacritics. Omitting diacritics can cause an extreme amount of confusion. Take for example *Shinch' ŏn* (신천) and *Shinch'on* (신촌). Not only are both of these places in Seoul, but at one time they were both on subway line 2 (the circle line). They are on opposite ends from each other. If you leave out the breves and apostrophes, they are both spelt *Shinchon*. If you looked up information for a restaurant and the information told you to go to *Shinchon* Station exit 4, you could have ended up going to the wrong subway station on the wrong side of Seoul. This caused a lot of confusion and inevitably *Shinch' ŏn* (신천) station was renamed *Jamsilsaenae*.

MR's reliance on diacritics also causes a problem when searching for Korean titles when using an ILS (Integrated Library System) which is more often referred to as a library's online catalog. Some of the more popular ILS that are being used by academic and public libraries that were included in ALA's *Library System Report 2017* in no particular order include: Innovative Interfaces Polaris and Sierra, Apollo, Horizon, Koha, WorldShare, and for good measure I have included EBSCOhost which is mainly used for academic journals. I found a library using each of these ILS platforms. Polaris-Davenport Public Library, Sierra-Santa Clara University, Apollo-Georgetown Public Library, Horizon-Jessamine Public Library and Stanford University, Koha-Carnegie Stout Public Library, WorldShare-University of Dubuque, and EBSCOhost-University of Dubuque. In each of these ILS I entered the word Sŏul. In Polaris, Apollo, the standard version of Horizon that Jessamine Public Library uses, Koha, WorldShare and EBSCOhost the same occurrence that happened in WorldCat happened again, the diacritic was dropped and all of the results were focused on a human soul, or soul music, etc. and not the capital of South Korea. Sierra is an upscale and more expensive version of Polaris and was able to recognize that Sŏul was the capital of South Korea and half of the results that were retrieved were about souls, but half of the results were about the capital of Korea. However, the retrieved results mainly included the RR version of "Seoul" and not the MR Sŏul. In addition to this, SirsiDynix, the producer of Horizon, worked with Stanford University to support Asian and other multi-byte character sets. As a result, the Stanford ILS was also able to retrieve results centered on Sŏul; however,

just like with Sierra, half of the retrievals revolved around other types of souls. So in conclusion, the basic ILS that the majority of public and academic libraries possess will not recognize Korean diacritics. Advanced and thus more expensive ILS will recognize Korean diacritics, but are far from perfect and the retrievals are not as accurate as they are if the user is using RR (I did the same search in each ILS and entered “Seoul” into the search bar and 100% of the retrievals in each ILS was about the Korean capital).

The Library of Congress guide to *Searching/Displaying Non-Roman Characters* (2017) points out that “most marks of punctuation in your search query are converted to spaces. Some punctuation and diacritic marks are removed.” They also go on to explain this in their *Search/Browse Help-Searching in Korean* (2017). Since MR relies on apostrophes, this will become problematic when a space is being added instead. This causes incorrect divisions and spaces in words. One last problem related to MR’s use of diacritics is that LC warns those who submit guidelines for Romanization Tables (2010) to avoid modifier characters whose positioning over or under a Latin script base letter may interfere with printing and/or display of that letter.

Another problem with the current MR ALA-LC Romanization Table that has been pointed out by both Jeong (1998) and Kim (2006) is the problem of word division. As Kim (2006, 63-64) points out: “According to ALA-LC Romanization Tables, space should be used to separate each word or lexical unit (including noun particles) from all other words or lexical units. But this rule is contrary to Korean conventional practice which always joins particles to the nouns they modify, and often omits spaces between nouns. For instance, the title “노인 과 바다” (“The old man and the sea”) should be written as “Noin kwa pada” (“noin” = “the old man”; “kwa” = “and”) according to the ALA-LC rule. Yet Koreans usually write the title as “Noinkwa pada,” with no space between Noin and kwa. The principle of word division may create a heavy burden for Korean users in their searching processes as it is not natural. The Library of Congress and other libraries have created many faulty bibliographical records, due to incoherent and arbitrary word division.” This problem was pointed out in 2006 and when the ALA-LC Korean Romanization was updated in 2009 not only did they not feel the need to correct this confusion, they even used “Noin kwa pada” as an example under their guidelines for Section 6: Particles (조사), in which they reiterate that one must “separate a particle from other parts of speech” (2009, p. 29). Problems like this explain why Koreans users, according to a study done by Jeong (1998), were the most dissatisfied amongst CJK countries in terms of Roman Title Phrase searches. Ultimately both Koreans and non-Koreans struggle with the diacritics and word divisions of the current ALA-LC Korean Romanization Table and as a result, information is being lost or mislabeled.

Revised Romanization Method is more effective than McCune-Reischauer

The strengths and weaknesses of the RR Method stand in stark contrast with MR. The MR is based on phonetics, thus is great for pronouncing Korean words, the RR is not. However, the MR is full of diacritics and the RR is not, thus it is easier for information

retrieval. RR was devised in 2001 mainly because the general public never fully accepted MR. As noted above, MR liberally uses two diacritic marks: the apostrophe and the breve which made spelling inconvenient, not least because the breve cannot be reproduced on most computers. A common compromise was to ignore the diacritic marks -- a practice that often defeats the purpose of the MR system. Before the advent of RR the truth was that many people simply followed a system that existed only inside their heads (Suh, 2000). As a result the Ministry of Culture proposed a new Romanization scheme that would alleviate these problems. The new RR system was devised as a compromise between the needs of Koreans and foreigners and because it was devised with both needs in question, it is a better universal system (National Academy of the Korean Language, 2001).

Although the intentions of the new system were good, it caught the Korean public off guard, mainly because the public opinion was not taken into account. Many articles from around that time were very negative toward the new system, as was Sangwon Suh who wrote for *Asiaweek* (2000). In his article entitled "You Say Bulgogee, I Say Pulgogi" he wrote: "The country's two leading English-language dailies, The Korea Herald and The Korea Times, are already refusing to adopt the new format. Whatever difficulties the authorities may have had in coming up with a new system, it looks like getting the public to accept it will be the biggest challenge of all." However, it appears that the "authorities" have done a good job getting the public to accept the new system. Both the Korea Herald along with the Korea Times and the other Korean English-language dailies now publish their papers using the new system.

Although the RR system has become more steadily accepted and it is more convenient to retrieve information, it still has its critics. One of the main concerns is that RR is not as accurate as MR in terms of pronunciation. One such scholar who is not in favor of RR due to its pronunciation limitations is leading Korean Studies scholar Dr. James Grayson. In his essay entitled: *The new government Romanization system: why was it necessary?* (2006), he argues that RR is not better, if not weaker than MR. He cites examples of student's poor Korean pronunciation when reading RR. He points to examples such as "eo" and "eu" vowel combinations used in RR which are not natural to European or American English speakers and thus confusing when trying to pronounce Korean language.

Although Romanization is important when trying to master a new language, it should not play a big role in which Romanization Table the Library of Congress chooses. Pronunciation does not play a pivotal role in information retrieval and storage. Perhaps a non-Korean person may need to read Korean script aloud in a library setting but they are not required to have perfect pronunciation. The RR system is more than adequate for pronunciation. In fact, even the MR system is not a perfect pronunciation Romanization system. "The MR system is an inconsistent scheme for bibliographic records because Korean has several local dialects, and there are unique pronunciations in each local dialect. In other words, phonetic-based Romanization in bibliographic records might be different according to different catalogers" (Kim, 2006).

In regards to Romanization and pronunciation in general the Library of Congress now admits that "Any future ALA/LC Romanization Tables should be transliteration schemes rather than schemes to replicate pronunciation or guides to pronunciation. Pronunciation is variable around the world" (Library of Congress, 2010). As a result, pronunciation should not play any type or role when selecting an official Romanization scheme for a library.

Other people have argued that RR is not fully consistent yet and the system is still kind of new. In response to these opinions, the Ministry of Culture and the Korean Government are doing what they can to standardize Romanization both in Korea and abroad. One such way is the standardization of Korean food. The Ministry of Culture worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to produce a draft that includes the Romanization as well as suitable translations of about 200 different Korean dishes into English. Both ministries are pushing for Korean restaurants in Korea and abroad to use the standardized terms proposed in the draft which follows the RR method (with the exception of kimchi which is already too well and entrenched in dictionaries to change, under RR it should be spelt gimchi), instead of using their own methods of Romanization and translation. What is notable about the draft is that alongside bulgogi, kimchi and bibimbap, dishes that appear in the dictionary in their Romanized form, the Romanized "gimbap" as opposed to "kimpab" (MR), will be included in the Oxford dictionary (Cha, 2013).

Another reason that people are slow to fully endorse the RR system has to do with personal names. This has always been a problem and still is, as Jaeyeong Woo (2014) shows in his article *Koreans await Kim Yu-na, or is it Yuna Kim?* published in the Wall Street Journal. The current official system of Romanization adopted by the Ministry of Culture in 2000 states that "surnames are not required to follow the new system." This has created a situation in which long used popular forms, the current RR system, and the MR system are all being used for surnames based on individual preference (S. Lee, 2013). As a result Korean people usually Romanize their surnames following the most popular Romanized spelling, and their given names according to personal preference. For example, ninety-five percent of all people with the surname "ㅇ|" write their surnames as "Lee." Yet according to the RR system, "ㅇ|" should be Romanized as "l" and "Yi" in MR (Kim, 2006). The RR system is more open by allowing Koreans to choose for themselves and as a result one specific variation can be established. MR on the other hand claims a person's given name should be transcribed according to the system's rules, and not in the way that he or she prefers to spell his or her name. As Sun Kyung Kim in her article "Romanization in Cataloging of Korean Materials" (2006) points out: "despite the rigidity of these rules, looking through the RLIN and the Library of Congress authority files and bibliographic records, it can be seen that even catalogers make mistakes when Romanizing Korean names. Many records in RLIN and the Library of Congress have inaccurately spelled names." Kim goes on to use Lee, Duhyun, a famous Korean author, as an example. Lee, Duhyun, should be Romanized as "Yi, Tu-hyon," according to the MR system. In the UCLA catalog, however, the user can find three items under "Yi, Tu-hyon," and fourteen entries can be found under "Lee, Duhyun." The authorized

form of this name in LC/NACO Name Authority File (NAF) is also “Lee, Duhyun, 1924-.” These results show that the MR system is inconsistently applied when catalogers create bibliographic records.

The Library of Congress supports MR, which has a stringent standard that confuses catalogers. Because RR is not as strict, it allows catalogers to follow cataloging rule AACR2 22.3C2 (Names written in a non-Roman script) which surmises that you should “choose the Romanized form of name that has become well-established in English language reference sources for a person entered under surname whose name is in a language written in a non-Roman script” (ALA, 2002). As a result, a cataloger can easily use VIAF (Virtual International Authority File) or *Academic American Encyclopedia* to establish the commonly recognized form of the name, thus further standardizing CJK cataloging.

In 2003 the Korean Government sanctioned Seoul National University to gather opinions and conduct research on the issue with the aim of creating a reasonable system for Romanizing Korean surnames. The findings, as reported by Sang-Oak (Timothy) Lee, showed that approximately 72% of the participants of the survey indicated opposition to the use of diacritics. In respects to what system Koreans favored, the study showed that regarding the degrees of preference for the four different forms of Romanization (RR, MR, MY [Martin Yale], grafts of RR and MR together) the 2001 proposal of the National Institute of the Korean Language (RR) received the highest degree of support, more than for any of the other proposals. The study also showed RR has the highest degree of recognition amongst the four Romanization forms.

Lastly, leaving the spelling of Korean names up to themselves is not such a far-fetched idea. In America there is no standardized way of spelling a name. In fact, Fetzer (2013) shows that amongst the Social Security Administration’s top 1,000 baby names there are seven different spellings for Cameron (Camren, Camron, Camryn, Kameron, Kamron and Kamryn) and 9 different spellings for Kayln (Cailyn, Kaelyn, Kaelynn, Kailyn, Kailynn, Kaylen, Kaylyn, Kaylynn). These are just two of many examples. Americans also choose various spellings for personal names. In the end, the RR system of Romanization is more flexible than MR and follows more in line with the rest of the world.

A Similar Transition has Proven to be Successful in the Past

The Library of Congress shifting from a pronunciation based Romanization scheme to a more user-friendly scheme is not unheard of, it has happened in the past, most recently in 1997, in regards to Chinese Romanization. As Arsenault (2002) explained that prior to 1997 two romanization systems for Chinese data were currently in use in most libraries in the Western World: the Wade-Giles (WG) system, mainly used in North American libraries, and pinyin--called Hanyu pinyin but simply referred to as pinyin--mainly used in European and Australian libraries. Which is similar to the case of Korean Romanization whereas America relies on MR whereas the rest of the Western World uses RR. There was a consortial effort between LC, Research Library Groups (RLG) and OCLC to determine if there was not

only a legitimate need to switch Romanization schemes but whether this was economically feasible. A lot of research was conducted to find the best solution.

Some history on WG and pinyin; before the late 20th century, the most widespread Romanization scheme in China was the WG, which was adopted by the Library of Congress to Romanize Chinese-language materials. WG was created in 1859 by Sir Francis Wade (1845-1935) and revised by Herbert Allen Giles (1845-1935), his successor in 1892. WG was the first standard for the Romanization of Chinese (Perkins, 2013). However, in 1958 the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) approved pinyin as the new Romanization system for Mandarin, yet the Library of Congress continued to use WG. "The Library of Congress, in 1979 and 1980, recommended that the library community undertake conversion from Wade-Giles to pinyin for the Romanization of Chinese. It was anticipated that "more and more people will, in the future, approach Chinese through pinyin Romanization..."; "... fewer and fewer library users will have a working knowledge of Wade-Giles." The library community, however, voted to retain Wade-Giles" (Lu, 1995). In this case, the Library of Congress recognized the need for transition but libraries opposed this transition because it would be difficult, time consuming and expensive. Research was continuously undertaken to determine the feasibility of a switch. By 1997, pinyin was already the standard of the West including the US government for two decades and the United Nations. Libraries were virtually the only institute in America still using WG (Melzer, 1997). The Library of Congress and the libraries stood apart from the rest of the world.

In 1997 the Library of Congress announced that "in order to provide better service to library users, the Library of Congress is moving to adopt the pinyin system of Romanization of Chinese" (Library of Congress, 1998). One of the main reasons for this was because already at that time most users of American libraries were more familiar with the pinyin Romanization of Chinese names and places, providing access to the Chinese language with that system would make it easier for them to locate material. The use of pinyin Romanization by libraries was expected to facilitate the exchange of data with foreign libraries (Library of Congress, 2007). The same can be said about Korea. Most users of American libraries are more familiar with the RR of Korean names and places and by switching to RR, it should be easier to facilitate the exchange of data with foreign libraries.

The decision to adopt pinyin over WG did not happen overnight, even when it became apparent that pinyin was more convenient. Neither did the transition from WG to pinyin as the official the Library of Congress Romanization happen overnight. They followed these steps:

1. LC conversion of Chinese authorities by OCLC
2. Conversion of LC bibliographic records (bibliographic records) by Research Library Groups (RLG)
3. Bibliographic records conversion by OCLC and RLG of their respective union catalogs
4. Conversion by OCLC of the non-Chinese records containing Chinese text, and later by RLG of similar records in their databases

5. Conversion efforts by OCLC and RLG of records of institutions from WG to Pinyin (Thornburg, 2002). It was a process but one that has proven to be successful and can happen in regards to Korean Romanization too.

Another reason many people wanted to switch from WG to pinyin mirrors the reason that the Library of Congress should consider switching from MR to RR; namely a change would make information retrieval easier. Already in 1980, scholars were requesting a change. "Pinyin is a much more practical system than Wade-Giles, the most commonly-used transcription system in the West. It was designed with minimum recourse to the use of diacritics, eliminating the use of hyphens between syllables and apostrophes after certain consonants as well as the raised tone numbers of the Wade-Giles system...These features make it not only eminently suitable for printing and typewriting purposes, but also very easy to write cursively and to read" (Chappel, 1980, 112). Just like MR, WG uses diacritics which cause confusion and errors so pinyin was created and began to curry favor amongst information professionals. And as was pointed out earlier, omitting diacritics causes great errors in retrieval in regards to information retrieval when using MR. The same can be said about using WG. As Arsenault (1998) pointed out; previous analysis revealed that, in indexing, due to systematic removal of diacritics and punctuation, two hundred of the 410 WG base syllables (or toneless syllables) are collapsed into one hundred syllables. For example, pa and p'a are both searched with the string "pa." This represents a loss of one hundred syllables. Furthermore, twelve base syllables are collapsed into three syllables--chu, ch'u, chu, and ch'u are all indexed as "chu"; the same for chun and chuan--which represents an additional loss of nine base syllables, for a total of 109 syllables lost. The remaining 198 syllables remain unaffected. These indexing problems are also prevalent when using MR.

Results of a survey of East Asian Studies institutions done in 1997 by Amy Tsiang, then Head Librarian of UCLA's Richard C. Rudolph East Asian Library, showed that 84% agreed that Wade-Giles Romanization should be converted to pinyin. It was research like this that finally convinced the Library of Congress to finally adopt pinyin as the official Romanization scheme of the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress commenced the Pinyin Conversion Project in which they would slowly (1997-2001) implement the changes. Already, research from 2002 (Arsenault) showed that the transition to pinyin was working and was necessary. The research showed that based on high success rates measured for retrieval tasks "indicate that Romanization is, in most cases, a fairly effective means for retrieval of Chinese language titles" the research further indicated that the use of wrong Romanization only occurred in the group using Wade-Giles. In addition to this, the adoption of the pinyin system contributed to improving bibliographic access (Kim, 2006, 71).

One last example to show how even scholars can become confused when two separate Romanization schemes are being promoted; Dr. George J. Leonard, Professor of Interdisciplinary Humanities at the University of San Francisco, shared a story where a

respected English professor once confidently remarked to an audience that he had been reading Qing Dynasty poetry. He pronounced it, Kwing. Presumably he thought the Qing Dynasty and the Ch'ing Dynasty were two different dynasties. They are not; they are both, simply, Ch'ing. He also points out that the "Zhou" and "Chou" is the same dynasty as well (Leonard 2011). Just like in Korea, having a state sponsored Romanization scheme that differs from the Library of Congress causes a lot of confusion for many people, scholars included.

Although RR is not used as universally as pinyin was at the time of transition, and the RR does not have the longevity of pinyin, there are similarities between RR and pinyin. MR follows the old Wade-Giles systems of Chinese in that the criterion for the phonetic values of the letters of the Latin alphabet is the vowels as in Italian and the consonants as in English (Royal Asiatic Society 1961). As a result, just like with pinyin, RR was needed to simplify Romanization. Just like in China, Korea learned that diacritics in Romanization are not effective. Just like in China, the Library of Congress should consider a transition from a phonetically based Romanization scheme full of diacritics to one that is more user-friendly, convenient and easier to use in regards to information retrieval. At the time when LC adopted WG over pinyin, most users were familiar with pinyin due to it being the international standard and it was also used in publications such as dictionaries and maps, and sometimes for book and periodical titles. It was widely seen in public places such as building names; street, highway, and railway signboards; and on product labels (DeFrancis, 1990). The same can easily be said about Korea. Most people see RR being used in dictionaries, maps, streets, product labels, etc. Romanization remains a fairly effective means for retrieving Asian language titles, but it only effective if the system is free from diacritics and is one that is recognized by the majority of the population.

Conclusion

The research for this paper shows how difficult search retrieval using Romanized Korean words can be due to variant official Romanization schemes (the Korean government officially recognizes their own Revised Romanization method while the Library of Congress supports McCune-Reischauer). Somebody retrieving information using Romanized Korean words would need to be familiar with both Romanization schemes and would need to know how to use Advanced Search options in order to retrieve precise results. The question then is how can this be fixed? The ALCTS Non-English Access Working Group on Romanization Report (2009) shows why Romanization is still necessary in libraries so eliminating Romanization completely is not a viable option yet. One possible solution is for the Korean Government and the Library of Congress to agree on one standard Romanization scheme. Jeong (1998) and Kim (2006) along with other studies have shown that the use of diacritics in MR causes confusion and irritation. As a result, RR is a more convenient method for information retrieval. China experienced a similar situation in regard to Chinese Romanization. Their old system of Romanization, Wade-Giles, also used diacritics and was

replaced by pinyin, which was more convenient for users retrieving information using Romanized Chinese words. But this process took a long time and was costly. So ultimately the lingering question is whether the Library of Congress needs to formally recognize RR as the official the Library of Congress method of Korean Romanization. As of right now, there has not been enough research done to warrant a decision either way. Just like the Library of Congress did in regard to the conversion from WG to pinyin, they should support active research into whether a transition from McCune-Reischauer to the Korean Revised Romanization method is necessary.

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Appendix A: Joseon Dynasty and Chosŏn Dynasty in Google
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