DAMUNHWA (MULTICULTURALISM) AND SEGYEHWA (GLOBALIZATION) IN SOUTH KOREA: AN UNEQUAL EXCHANGE

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Abstract

This paper attempts to criticize and problematize two terms *Damunhwa* (multiculturalism) and *Segyehwa* (globalization), and what they connote. Under the globalized circumstance, it is hard not to recognize what has been globalized. The two terms *Damunhwa* and *Segyehwa* exist in the daily life of South Koreans, it may even be closer to those who live in its circumstance, without knowing it. However, it is worthwhile to question if the term *Damunhwa* can fit in the reality of South Korea as it literally means, or if it has other connotations. This article tries to prove that the term *Damunhwa* used in public discourses shows that it exists only as a policy of which its otherness has only been highlighted. In such a sense, what and/or who has been defined as *Damunhwa* is a mere receiver of the imposed identity by the majority in the society without much possibility for discourses of their own 'becoming' process. This article investigates both the terms using quantitative methods, specifically using Naver news search to see which vocabulary is often accompanied to understand the meaning of *Damunhwa* and *Segyehwa* in public discourse. With this as a basis, it will analyze what they represent, and in comparison, what they actually are composed of. By doing so, the article presents the ambiguousness of the two terms, and will therefore show the intentions lying behind them.

Keywords: Hybridity, Identity construction, Multiculturalism, Globalization

Introduction

It is often said that the world we live in now is a globalized world, and partly due to that reason, many societies indeed have multicultural characteristics. It is hard not to notice people from other cultures in most societies. The 'globalizing-driven' ways of living, thinking and consuming led to changes in life styles and cannot be an exception in South Korea. However, the multicultural characteristics are often identified in different ways in various countries; especially in South Korea when it comes to the comparison between *Damunhwa* and *Segyehwa*². These two are not easily separable, because they are what globalization itself has brought to the society. In other words, because of the globalizing-oriented policies, the society introduced various spin-offs from different cultures including different peoples, life styles, and with that multinational products too. From such a context, it can be said that the society has multicultural and globalized ways of living. Yet, one can easily notice the subtle insinuations in many slogans, concepts or terms that are normally used in daily life, as *Segyehwa* is in many ways promoting various products, which are closely related to something Korean, whereas *Damunhwa* has its own fixed identity, which will be discussed later.

In this regard, this article teases out the insinuating meaning that the two terms deliver, in terms of their different yet assimilated nature which implies that they are related on the basis of globalization. It questions the constructed identities of *Damunhwa* and *Seguehwa* in South Korean society, especially as to how they are transformed within the notion of globalized Korean society. It becomes clearer when the concepts are utilized with the unchanging 'Korean' concept; that is to say, with all the development that the society went through, something 'Korean' seems to have remained as a solid notion, while *Damunhwa* and *Seguehwa* are formed under the category of globalization. As such, there exist subtle differences that are underlying these two terms. To see the implication of them being tools to emphasize what is Korean, we will first look into the term, Damunhwa, which is used in South Korea in ways unlike the original meaning of the term that originated from western countries. We will also investigate whether or not the South Korean society can be considered a *Damunhwa* society as is the case in other societies, and see if it has a special connotation based on a word co-occurrence analysis of news titles from major South Korean news publishers. Related to this concept, Seguehwa often is accompanied with the features that are globalized as well; however, it tends to connote differently from Damunhwa in ways which can differentiate groups of people in society. To figure out the differences, we will analyze Seguehwa in the same way as Damunhwa using online news titles which will provide us with an understanding of the usage of the two terms in South Korea's public sphere. With the analyses of both the terms, one may notice that what has often come up is usually something 'Korean,' and how this is problematic in the sense that the current South Korean society is highly hybridised. By analysing the way in which the two terms are used, we will be able to see what they are implying and what they end up constructing.

Damunhwa as Hybridity: Globalized South Korean Yet Denied

Damunhwa literally means multiple cultures. It is a noun, but can be used as an adjective that can be followed by other nouns such as 'family,' 'society,' or 'education' (Kim, 2010: 103). While the term is widely known and used in South Korea, 'multiculturalism' in South Korean society includes many problems such as the hierarchy among different peoples in society, gendered citizenship and the victimization of the marriage migrant women (Jo, 2013: 106). What one can notice from these discussions is the fact that Damunhwa in South Korean society has a certain connotation, which may not be the same as that of 'multiculturalism,' as it is understood elsewhere in the world for it is a euphemism intended for low-income foreign labourers or marriage migrants, unlike what its literal meaning may imply. In other words, it does not mean 'multiple cultures' when it comes to the idea of having other cultures in the society, since there are no sizeable groups of immigrants, sub state nationalists, or indigenous people in South Korea. As Jong-Ryul Choi points out in his comparative study of multicultural policies for differentiated groups in Western countries, South Korea is neither a country where people immigrated for the purpose of obtaining citizenship, nor where there is a group of sub state nationalists. None of the South Korean nationals would argue that they are descendants of any indigenous groups. For the immigrants, the people who move to South Korea are those who are marriage immigrants, or labourers whose purpose or goal may not be the same as Koreans who move to, for example, Canada or Australia (Choi, 2010: 243). Thus, there are not enough 'multiple' cultures in the society, and the fact that the term is used to indicate marriage immigrants, foreign labourers, or foreigners in general, becomes problematic. Another issue with it is that the number of *Damunlawa* people in South Korea is not significant either, compared to other multicultural societies. According to Korea Immigration Service Statistics 2014, the total number of foreigners who live in South Korea in 2014 is 1,797,618, which accounts for 3.57% of the population (KIS, 2014: 36). Considering that other multicultural societies have more than 10% of immigrants, constituting multiple racial groups that have significantly different cultures, South Korean society can hardly be seen as a multicultural society in terms of its constituents. For example, Yoon's study shows that the percentage of immigrants has already passed or neared 10% in most multicultural societies. In France it was 10% in 1999, 9.3% in the U.K. in 2004, 12.9% in Germany in 2003, 18.9% in Canada in 2004, and 12.2% in the U.S. in 2004 (Yoon, 2008: 74). One of the most obvious cases is Singapore, which adopted multiculturalism as an official policy, and one can see three different major cultural groups coexisting. Chua explains that the population consists of 75% of ethnic Chinese, 17% ethnic Malays, 7% of ethnic Indian and a small category of 'Others' (Chines, Malay, Indian, Other - CMIO scheme) (Chua, 2003: 60). Whereas South Korean society use the term *Damunhwa* that means 'multiple cultures,' but the statistics on the diversity of cultures points to the other direction that may imply something different. The question then is what *Damunhwa* really stands for in the current South Korean society. As Sang-bok Ha justly points out, it is an 'internalized racism' that may be inherent in the mindset of Koreans, and it can be shown through the benevolent policies and biased perception toward Damunhwa people. This is how the differentiation is made; that is to say, the people need our civilized help because it is based on the premise that they are from inferior circumstances (Ha 2012: 545). It is interesting to note how Damunhwa is identified

from this perspectives – that superior 'we' should help the inferior 'them' in accordance with the hierarchy that can be identified with skin colour-; however, Jin-Gu Kang also points out that the discourse on anti-multiculturalism follows similar line of thoughts; that is to say, anti-multiculturalists also perceive *Damunhwa* in such a dichotomy, which is based on border-line racism and even in xenophobic rhetoric. The difference could be understood in the subjects that are victimized: for the anti-multiculturalists, it is innocent 'us' that is targeted by the dangerous 'others' (Gang 2012: 31).

For this reason, it will be helpful to see with what words the term *Damunhwa* is often accompanied with so as to understand how it is regarded in society; therefore, this article analyses the titles of news articles from major South Korean news sources as indexed on the Naver web portal.

'Damunhwa' on Naver News

The method to analyse the titles that appear on Naver News is to search titles that contain the word *Damunhwa*, and the scope is limited to 11 daily newspapers to avoid repeated titles. To see what words are dominantly used and discussed on the topic in daily life, which can possibly construct certain identity of the term and implant it into the minds of viewers, the keyword is searched in Korean for a year from 5th of May in 2014 to 5th of May in 2015.³ All together 494 news titles that contain the word *Damunhwa* were collected, and the text was then analysed using the KrKwic computer program for Korean text analysis developed by Park and Leydesdorff.⁴ The program allows for the extraction of a word co-occurrence network, in which the words form the network's nodes and co-occurrence relationships of its edges. Pajek was used to generate pictures of the network.⁵

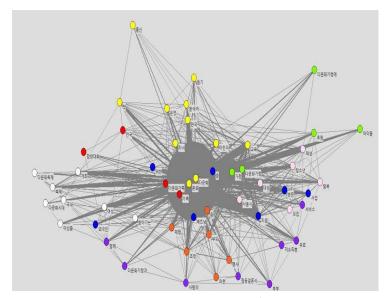


Figure 1: Cluster and word frequency analysis of the keyword Damunhwa

Figure 1 shows the co-occurrence relationships between '다문화' (*damunhwa*) and other words: the thickness of the lines indicates how often the words co-occurred. The words in the centre of the network co-occur very frequently whereas the words toward the edge of the network co-occur less frequently, hence they may be less closely related to *Damunhwa*. Clusters of co-occurrence are indicated by different colour nodes. Together these clusters represent different topics in the discourse as revealed by newspaper headlines. The keyword '다문화' is most closely connected to '다문화가족' (*Damunhwa gajok*: multicultural family) in the red cluster and '다문화가정' (*Damunhwa gajong*: multicultural home) in the yellow cluster. This can be interpreted as how the word *Damunhwa* refers to a certain group of interrelated concepts. It becomes clearer which members in the family are linked with the words in the white cluster such as: '여성' (*yeoseong*: female), which marks the female to be the important factor of *Damunhwa*. With this, the word '축제'

(*chukje*: festival), '개최' (gaechoe: hold) and '다문화시대' (*Damunhwa-sidae*: multicultural era) are often accompanied, and this indicates women of different national backgrounds are often grouped together, ignoring their differences, to enable them to be culturally represented as subjects of the multicultural era. This is interesting in that even though they represent their cultures during such festivities, they also are often subjugated by Korean culture with their assumed responsibilities to pass on Korean heritage: this is shown with the words in the yellow cluster such as: '한국어'(*hangug-eo*: Korean language), '한국'(*hanguk*: South Korea) and '자녀'(*janyeo*: sons and daughters), '어린어'(*eolin-i*: child) are related to the word '교육'(gyoyug: education), '운영'(*un-young*: operation) which may address that *Damunhwa* is often relevant to the idea of assimilating others into the Korean system and culture. Related to the idea of female centered *Daumnhwa*, the words in the red cluster show certain tendencies that are relevant with '다문화가족' (*Damunhwa gajok*: multicultural family) in a sense that the words, such as '부모' (*Bumo*: parents), '초청' (*chocheng*: invitation), '행사' (*haengsa*: event) and '마런' (*malyeon*: arrangement), clearly support the idea of benevolent deeds for the *Damunhwa* females' which may tacitly suggest that they are in need. In other words, these sets of words hint that it is for us to provide the females who live in South Korea with an opportunity to meet their parents in their country of origin. Interestingly, to other members of the society who are foreigners it is not necessarily provided, unless they are in need.

Another case that is interesting in the result, along with the fact that *Damunhwa* often is related to females who are in need, is that it is often pictured as those who are poorer than others. In the purple clusters, the words such as ' $\exists \Delta = \hat{\sigma}$ ' (*jeosodeugcheung*: low-income class), ' $\exists \Xi \exists \Xi \lor$ ' (*habdong-gyeolhonsik*: joint wedding), ' $\exists \Xi$ ' (*mulyo*: free of charge), and ' $\exists \Downarrow = 0$ ' (*seobiseu*: service) indicate that it can be often seen in the media that *Damunhwa* couples are offered free wedding ceremony services due to their economic situations. What is more, *Damunhwa* not only is closely related to the low-income class, but also is co-occurred with the words like ' $\exists \exists \exists U$ ' (*oeguk-in*: foreigner) in the blue cluster, and ' $\exists \exists '$ (*talbuk*: defecting North Korea) in the pink cluster which point to the fact that those who are not regarded as South Koreans are all grouped and put together on the same level as *Damunhwa*, as are foreigners residing in South Korean,' the emphasis on being 'Korean' is even more highly regarded. With this, the result also shows the often-occurred words with *Damunhwa* such as ' $\exists \exists U$ ' (*jiwon*: support), ' $\exists \exists '$ (*dopgi*: to help), and ' $\exists \exists '$ (*huwon*: patronage) throughout the clusters, which suggest that the news about *Damunhwa* most likely deal with the content of them being in need of help.

What is interesting with figure 1 is when *Damunhwa* appears on news pages, it is mostly about the policy enforcement or dispensation for the *Damunhwa*; simply put, those who are not 'us,' to assimilate into South Korean society, but none of these give much hints about the society consisting of 'multiple cultures,' which may indicate that *Damunhwa* does not mean multiculturalism as it is expressed in English in the current South Korean society. The term then becomes a mark as 'something not Korean' as it is shown in the result, which then can be interpreted as a hybrid creature that is in need of help, and is in need of an assimilation process to be 'us'. In other words, with the word frequency and cluster analysis of *Damunhwa*, what is highlighted is the fact that using the term is to classify what is Korean and what is not, and to assimilate the latter into the majority. Until doing so, it stays as *Damunhwa* which is no more than a group of hybridity, which stands out from the monocultural majority. Another interesting term in comparison to *Damunhwa* is *Segyehwa* which often is used to justify the phenomenon of the globalized society. To compare these two terms, the next section will analyse the titles with the keyword 세계화 (*Segyehwa*: globalization).

'Segyewha' on Naver News

With the same method as the previous analysis of *Damunhwa*, a total of 95 news headlines for the same period of time (2014.05.05.-2015.05.05.) were collected. This indicates that there are fewer headlines that contain *Segyehwa* compared to *Damunhwa*, which may be an indication of its level of importance in the current public discourse. But certainly *Segyehwa* still seems to be an issue, and the result of the analysis shows that it is especially so when it comes to words with the prefix '\vert' (*han*: the first letter of *Hanguk*, South Korea).

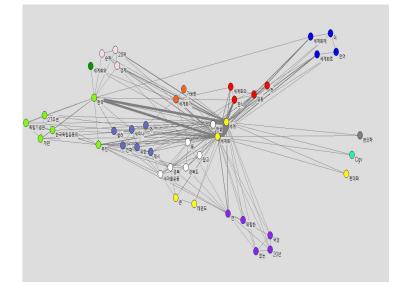


Figure 2: Cluster and word frequency analysis of the keyword Segyehwa

With the keyword *Segyehwa*, it can be noticed with the thickness of the lines that the words '한국' (*hanguk*: South Korea), '한식' (*Hansik*: Korean food), and '한글' (*Hangeul*: Korean language) are closely related to '세계화' (*Segyehwa*: globalization). Also, words like '태권도' (*Taekwondo*: Korean martial art), '한의학' (*han-uihak*: Korean medicine), '한국독립운동' (*hangukdoklip-undong*: Korean Independence movement) and '새마을운동' (*saema-eul-undong*: New Community movement) are co-occurred with *Segyehwa*, which may suggest what implies that globalization is an agenda for 'something Korean' to be promoted on the world stage, rather than introducing something that is 'not Korean' into the society, in which case it would become *Damunhwa*.

The word choices are also interesting to note, since what is often co-occurred with Seguehwa is completely different from Damunhwa. For instance, when it comes to '한식' (Hansik: Korean food) in the red cluster, the words that co-occurred are such as '가능한' (ganeunghan: possible), '첫' (cheot: first) and '걸음' (geol-um: step) which suggest it is a future-oriented, positive thought. With the word '한국독립운동' (hangukdoklip-undong: Korean Independence movement) in the green cluster, the co-occurred words such as '독립기념관' (doklipginyeomgwan: Independence hall), '개관' (gaegwan: opening), and '추진' (chujin: push forward) renders one to assume the celebration of the opening of the Independence Hall to be placed within the globalized world, and therefore it also can be a sign that something Korean has been globalized. As such, other words like '전략' (jeonlyak: strategy), '경제' (gyeongje: economy), and '현대화' (hyeondaehwa: modernization) support the idea of Korean globalization, Seguehwa in a sense that what should be globalized is to take a strategic stance to help the economy, and to be modernized. It is also worth noting that there is 'CGV' which is a big conglomerate in the film business as a co-occurred word with Seguehwa, because it addresses that Korean movies are also connected to Seguehuva. Doobo Shim's explanation of Korean movies and dramas support this idea of the Korean movie industry's effort to be globalized; with the highlighted importance of culture as soft power, the Korean government planned the basis of *Hallyu*, the Korean Wave, to improve the national economy and the country's international standing. According to Shim, the success of the Hollywood movie "Jurassic Park" brought about the raised interest in investment in cultural industries (D Shim, 2008: 17), and with the internationally favourable market conditions and appropriate policies and strategies of popular cultural exports, *Hallyu* has the opportunity to leap in the international market (D Shim, 2008: 25). In this sense, with the co-occurred word 'CGV,' one may also associate the Korean movie industry with Seguehwa, as the effort to globalize Hallyu shows.

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However, it may be necessary to question if these words that contain the prefix 'Han' can necessarily be regarded as something truly 'Korean.' In other words, while Damunhwa in South Korea is considered as a disparate, hybrid concept, one must doubt if what starts with the prefix 'Han' is indisputably 'Korean'. It seems what happened in the process of "cultural hybridization," is the interaction and negotiation between the local cultural agents and actors with global forms (D Shim, 2008: 38), which has been ignored in the South Korean public discourse that steadily focuses on its homogeneity. One specific example could be the worldwide dance movement of PSY's Gangnam Style which clearly shows the cultural hybridization, yet is regarded as highly Korean. With all the excitement brought by the song worldwide, which has the highest amount of views in YouTube history to this day, many South Koreans also joined the waves of the dance; nonetheless, there was a small commotion over the internet because 'Little PSY' has a Vietnamese mother who has been naturalized to be a citizen and a Korean father, and for that reason the family suffered from vicious comments on some online communities, and such comments were passed even at his school.⁶ As Jin-Gu Kang's argued, the sentiment of anti-multiculturalism spots the success of PSY as 'our' festival, and Little PSY as an eyesore because he is a Damunhwa kid, who could potentially snatch the success of other Koreans. When PSY's success worldwide was greatly welcomed, Little PSY's dream was carelessly ignored and the reason was because he is from a 'mixed' Damunhwa family. Although this incident was heavily criticized by the majority, the tendency to differentiate still exist with the simple fact that the word *Damunhwa* is already a tool to discriminate. It shows that the boy's identity has been decided by what is imposed by the society as a Damunhwa kid, not by his own 'becoming' process in his life, or him featuring in a South Korean pop culture phenomenon, which is proudly noted as an example of the industry's *Segyewha* success. In other words, Little PSY as an individual that has been raised by two different sums of experiences cannot develop his transnational identity as PSY experienced two sets of different cultures as he studied in the U.S. and is deemed to be a successful Seguehwa-ed individual with the worldwide hit of his song. It is the attitude toward the term *Damunhwa* that ignores mutual understanding of the transnational identity of *Damunhwa* that has one foot each in two countries, one of which is Korean (Y Shim, 2011: 34).

If one takes it from Stuart Hall's (1997) two forms of globalization, the drive of South Korean's globalization can be placed somewhere in between the old and new forms in that the *Segyehwa* policy of South Korean government can be seen as defensive, building barriers around national-cultural identity such as products or notions related to Korean food, Korean language; at the same time, as:

"A form of the global postmodern that is trying to live with and at the same moment overcome, sublate, get hold of, and incorporate difference" (Hall 1997, 183).

By looking at the result of the analysis, it can be said that while the word *Damunhwa* is a term to distinguish those who are not South Koreans, and by doing so, hybridity is more emphasized with differentiation from what is Korean, *Segyewha* is a term that is often used to promote what is Korean to the world. Eventually, the difference lies in the matter of whether or not one is Korean.

If following Charles Taylor's argument, multiculturalism should be the "politics of recognition" which should not only recognize the different cultures and peoples in society, but also should respect those, and maintain them (Taylor 1994, 36). Unlike in the case of Canada, where Taylor may be able to justly claim its legitimacy, this "politics of recognition" seems to work differently in South Korea. Since it covers different groups under one umbrella, ties them together, and calls them '*Damunhwa*,' the 'recognition' becomes a tool to differentiate the majority South Koreans from *Damunhwa* people, which then becomes the basis for politics of differentiation and not of recognition. The question is, if these peoples are set to be *Damunhwa*, what should be other 'multicultural' aspects of the current South Korean society; that is to say, the other hybrid aspects of what is Korean? When realizing that *Damunhwa* in South Korean society denies its *Damunhwa* elements by strongly emphasizing exclusively South Korean elements. It is as if *Damunhwa* is the only hybrid culture that has been introduced into the society. Other elements, especially if they are connected to the prefix 'Han', they are aspects of 'Korean' culture that can be globally promoted. Furthermore, the *Damunhwa*,' such as on an occasion like '*Damunhwa*' festival. Lowe suggests that:

"Oppositional narratives and practices re-appropriated parts of the festival, exploiting its contradictions. [...], drawing attention to the inequalities between cultural objects by reattaching the objects to contexts of production and reception" (Lowe, 1996: 90).

By allowing them to be '*Damunhwa*' on such an occasion, their whole experience of their own identity building in South Korean society has been denied. In this sense, what the South Korean government sees as 'multiculturalism' can be interpreted as a mere "boutique multiculturalism" that can find itself amongst different countries' restaurants with exotic cultures; however, once it crosses the boundary of what is regarded as Korean, it is no longer tolerated (Fish, 1997: 317).

Conclusion

One fact to note, along with the result of the analysis, is that the images that are associated with the term *Damunhwa* are mostly about females or workers from economically disadvantaged countries, especially from the Southeast Asian region, while images for *Segyehwa* are mostly associated with the people from economically advanced countries. It can be one example of how the society has constructed the two terms' to refer to identities in a hierarchical way.

Although *Damunhwa* and *Segyehwa* may imply two literally different concepts – one that is about multiculturalism and the other that is about globalization – the two are very closely related to each other in the sense that they are both the result of a globalized world, and are highly hybrid due to its characteristics. It is questionable precisely because of this reason: that despite of its hybridity, what the two terms point to is different largely due to the way the two terms are used in public discourses. As has been discussed so far, the analysis of the terms *Damunhwa* and *Segyehwa* along with the other literature studies, the South Korean society distinguishes the two terms distinctively using different words and evoking certain images of them.

If considering identities as something constantly changing, being constructed, and creating differences with each other, there are therefore no unified, settled notions for identities, and if it is a process of 'becoming', one becomes to be oneself, by and within the discourse, as a process of positioning oneself since there is no fixed or guaranteed oneness or cultural belongingness that covers the other superficial differences (Hall, 1996:4). Hall explains that:

"It is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the 'positive' meaning of any term - and thus its 'identity' - can be constructed" (Hall 1996:4).

In the case of *Damunhwa*, the problem comes from the fact that 'they' are not recognized as having separate and unique identities. Instead, 'they' are identified based on the fact that they are 'non-Koreans' who are in the process of adopting Korean-ness, a process which has no clear ending point.

On the other hand, *Segyehwa* views globalization through a one-way lens of spreading Korean-ness to other countries and thus raising the prestige of being Korean in global society. This concept ignores the counter-flow of foreign culture into Korean society and its consequent hybridization, of which multicultural families are but one channel and example.

The disconnect between *Damunhwa* and *Segyehwa*, as well as their selectiveness in describing only a small part of the globalization process, suggests that the globalization discourse in South Korea appears highly questionable. Thus the self-identification of Korean-ness is predicated on casting the Other as a static and shallow entity, denying its depth and dynamism.

This arbitrary identification of oneself does not allow the Other to identify themselves in the same way as 'we' identify ourselves. Thus certain other peoples' identities in South Korea have become a uniform identity which is called '*Damunhwa*' that has been created by their 'Other' (the South Koreans). At the same time the '*Segyehwa*-ed' society, as it is perceived in the public discourse, involves struggle to promote and keep its own identity as separate from the societies from other countries. The *Segyehwa* world view denies the existing cultural hybridity of 'Korean' culture and the transnational cultural exchanges that continuously occur.

Endnotes

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² Da as in 다 (多: multiple), Munhwa as in 문화 (文化: culture). Segyehwa as in 세계화 (世界化: globalization).

- ³ The 11 daily newspapers include *The Kyunghyang Shinmun*, *The Kukmin Ilbo*, *The Naeil Shinmoon*, *The Dong-A Ilbo*, *The Munhwa Ilbo*, *The Seoul Shinmun*, *The Segye Times*, *The Chosun Ilbo*, *The JoongAng Ilbo*, *The Hankyoreh*, *The Hankook Ilbo* at http://news.naver.com/main/search/powersearch.nhn
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