# Pragmatics and the Invisible Language of Relationships: The Case of Korean and KFL Learners

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**Abstract**

This thesis finds itself at the intersection of two fast-moving global trends in linguistics research: first, the swiftly growing interest in pragmatics as a field in need of further development, definition, and delineation between global languages with vastly differing sociocultural patterns of behavior, including politeness (Kiaer (2020b), Taguchi (2019)); and second, unprecedented international attention on the Korean peninsula, leading to a wave of Korean language study by learners of Korean as a foreign language (KFL learners), with steadily increasing enrollment numbers continuing to outperform other languages (Pickles, 2018). These two phenomena have created a specific set of circumstances in which the study of Korean pragmatics and Korean pragmatics education has become extremely relevant. This thesis seeks to address that set of circumstances by setting out, through a variety of ethnographic methodologies, to understand how native Korean speakers perceive their own pragmatic experiences. It then compares Korean speakers' pragmatic experiences with those of Chinese and Japanese speakers, in order to identify the unique pragmatic features of Korean. Finally, this thesis explores the KFL classroom and examines how KFL learners are currently being exposed to Korean pragmatics in their studies. Through the methodologies pursued here, this thesis finds that Korean speakers are uniquely required by their linguistic circumstances to constantly engage with pragmatic skills, including speech styles and address terms, in order to engage in culturally required relational dynamics, and that KFL learners are being underprepared by current KFL curricula to engage in Korean relational dynamics using those pragmatic skills.

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## Chapter One

### *Introduction*

*The Setting*

A young Korean man in his late twenties recently shared the following reflection with me:

> "Well, I was just sitting there on the subway, and this elderly man told me to get out of the way, like "Give me your seat!" but he was speaking informally. I think it felt worse that he was talking informally at the first meeting than that he was just telling me what to do. These days, times have changed. In the past, it was common to speak informally for an old person, but since a few years ago now, if you speak informally at a first meeting, regardless of your age difference, people call you out of touch. I also had some experiences like that when I was working different jobs part-time. It was okay if my manager spoke informally to me after we got more comfortable with each other—from talking and such—but it felt offensive to be talked to informally just because I was a part-timer. On the other hand, I also think it felt burdensome if a person who was much older than me or my boss kept using overly formal honorifics. I was working at a bank once, and a man who was in a much higher position than me was very kind, and he always used extremely high honorifics to me. After a while, I felt a lot of pressure, that there was really no need for him to be doing this."

### Section One: Korean Pragmatics

This man's experience opens a window into a unique part of Korean life: honorifics and their effect on relationships. He reflects on a dual experience—being treated impolitely and feeling offended not only because of the nature of that interaction, but also because of the way it happened *linguistically*. On the other hand, he shares how it can also feel equally uncomfortable to be addressed in a way that is too honorific. The complexities of this man's experience are hard for an English speaker unfamiliar to the Korean language to immediately grasp. What exactly is at stake here? Is it respect being sought, or the lack thereof? And how does one determine where he or she should fit in that spectrum, or how to linguistically navigate it?

Kim-Renaud (1986) comments as follows:

> "The single most important aspect of a traditional Confucian society probably is the emphasis on interpersonal relationships. A person must be constantly aware of his place in relation to others in any given situation. This awareness is an essential part of linguistic competence for the speakers of many Asian languages, Japanese and Korean in particular. In these languages, finely-defined human relationships are linguistically coded. Every utterance has to be marked by specific forms denoting concrete

> degrees of deference and intimacy, expressing the speaker's attitude toward the addressee and the referent" (Kim-Renaud, 1986: 153).

This diagnosis by Kim-Renaud may sound extreme to certain ears—the idea of marking *every* utterance to denote information about relationships is certainly not familiar to English speakers or speakers of many languages, and coding that information in accordance to deference and intimacy sounds overwhelming for all involved. However, that is exactly the endeavor which all native speakers of Korean, and by extension, all learners of Korean as a foreign language, find themselves committed to.

Consider the following excerpt from a popular Korean reality dating show[1], available for streaming on Netflix, where contestants navigate their relationships via the terrain of honorific language. Remember that all dialogue in this program is unscripted and completely impromptu. Below, you see the Korean script, the romanization, and my English translation[2].

*Change Days Scene One:*

Male: 너무 어색해보이는데. 저희 빨리 친해질까요?

ne-mwu e-sayk-hay-po-i-nun-tey. ce-huy ppal-li chin-hay-cil-kka-yo?

You look so awkward. Should we get close quickly? (formal)

Female: 음?

um?

Huh?

Male: 말 편하게 할까요?

mal phyen-ha-key hal-kka-yo?

Should we speak comfortably? (formal)

Female: 그래.

ku-lay.

Okay. (informal)

Male: 말 놓은 거예요?

mal noh-un ke-yey-yo?

[1] Daum Kakao TV (2022) *Change Days Season 2* [TV series]. Netflix

[2] Here and elsewhere in this paper, where Korean script is included, the romanization that follows is the Yale romanization form; the only exception is for popular Korean words in English, where the popular English spelling is used.

Did you lower your speech? (formal)

Female: 네

ney

Yes. (formal)

Male: 그래

ku-lay

Okay. (informal)

Female: 계속 존댓말 하면 절대 가까워질 수 없을 것 같아가지고.

kyey-sok con-tays-mal ha-myen cel-tay ka-kka-we-cil swu eps-ul kes kath-a-ka-ci-ko.

If we keep speaking formally, I think we'll never be able to get close, so. (informal)

Male: 금방 가까워지지.

kum-pang ka-kka-we-ci-ci.

We'll get close right away, now. (informal)

Female: 네 이상형은 뭔데?

ney i-sang-hyeng-un mwen-tey?

What's your ideal type? (informal)

Male: 나는 좀 밝은 사람?

na-nun com palk-un sa-lam?

For me, hmm, a bright person? (informal)

Here, the male contestant's proposal that the two try to get close is not followed with a typical approach—in the Western sense—of get-to-know-you questions or humorous interchange, but rather with a linguistically actionable change in honorific usage. The change in formality is presumed by both interlocutors to have a predictable outcome: increased closeness.

A comparable scene pops up later in the same reality show, this time in a conversation between two rival male contestants. Consider the following:

*Change Days Scene Two:*

Male 1: 근데 효기 씨랑은 대화를 처음 하는 것 같아가지고 저희 말 편하게 할까요?

kun-tey hyo-ki ssi-lang-un tay-hwa-lul che-um ha-nun kes kath-a-ka-ci-ko ce-huy mal phyen-ha-key hal-kka-yo?

So, Hyogi, this is our first time having a proper conversation. Should we speak comfortably? (formal)

Male 2: 아 네 말 편하게 하세요.

a ney mal phyen-ha-key ha-sey-yo.

Oh, yeah, go ahead and speak comfortably. (formal)

Male 1: 어 말 편하게 … 어 친해지면 좋으니까

e mal phyen-ha-key ss e chin-hay-ci-myen coh-u-ni-kka

Yeah, comfortably… yeah, because it's good to get close, so… (informal)

Male 2: 네

ney

Yes. (formal)

Male 1: 말 편하게 할게

mal phyen-ha-key hal-key

I'll speak comfortably. (informal)

Male 1: 네

ney

Yes. (formal)

In direct contrast with the first scene, here the first male proposes that, in order to become closer, the two engage in informal speech. The second male tells him, continuing to use formal speech, that he should go ahead and use informal speech. Somewhat bewildered, the first male proceeds to use informal speech, only for the second male to continue to use formal speech.

At first glance, this interaction may appear confusing. Formal speech, often also labeled as 'respectful speech', or 'honorific speech', is ostensibly polite, so surely the first male should be happy when the second continues to speak to him politely. By that logic, though, in the first scene, the mutual decision to be 'impolite' shouldn't lead to increased intimacy, either. Here, in Scene 2, the second male's refusal to reciprocate informal speech can only be seen as a rejection of friendship. Indeed, a native Korean viewer of the program would see it as such, though only the politest of exchanges was made. As Kim-Renaud (1986) pointed out, the interlocutors' understanding of their relationship makes its way into *every one* of their utterances, and a person not privy to that understanding may be left in the dark.

Even an utterance that isn't related to a complex dating situation cannot escape Kim-Renaud's categorization. Kiaer (2020a) imagines a small child answering the door to an unknown guest. When calling out "Who is it?", the child will be unable to complete the sentence without first knowing if the visitor is a friend, to whom an informal verb ending should be used, or perhaps an adult neighbor, to whom a formal verb ending should be used (Kiaer, 2020a: 5). To take the theoretical scenario further, even if an adult were to have a conversation with an unknown visitor through the door—to ask them, for instance, not to leave a flier or advertisement—they would have to be sure the visitor was indeed a stranger before a single sentence could be uttered properly, at risk of embarrassment.

Kiaer (2020b) states that "these aspects of Asian languages have been something of a sticking point in contemporary linguistics. This is because contemporary linguistics and its empirical foundations are mostly based on Western European languages; hence, many of the core characteristics of Asian languages have been understood as exceptional, at best. Even highly advanced theoretical investigations could not explicate the aforementioned characteristics in simple and sensible terms" (Kiaer, 2020b: 211).

## Section Two: Purpose of Thesis

I have thus noted the extreme importance of these features of Korean and similar Asian languages, which not only help their speakers to situate themselves within the complex relational dynamics of their societies, but are in fact essential to any linguistic interaction, because of the relationship-oriented nature of these sociocultural settings. With this understanding, any serious effort to understand Korean linguistics must include a proper investigation of honorifics. Much work has been done up to this point to build an understanding of the Korean language, including a thorough study of the honorific system and all that it entails. This thesis recognizes the extensive work which has been done to understand the Korean honorific system, pragmatics, and the intersection of pragmatics and Korean honorifics, and seeks to build on that work.

### *Threefold Purpose*

Specifically, the purpose of this thesis is threefold:

1. First, to investigate the following research question: How do native speakers of Korean understand their usage of pragmatic skills in sending and receiving information about relational dynamics in their linguistic interactions?
2. Second, to find out what makes Korean pragmatics unique, especially when compared to other, similar languages.
3. Third, to see if learners of Korean as a foreign language are i) currently being given tools to, and ii) are able to use pragmatic skills to understand Korean relational dynamics.

*Purpose One*

The first purpose of this thesis will primarily be examined in chapters three, four, and five, where I will review the literature on Korean speech style and terms of address, and present research results from studies designed to investigate this research question—which deals primarily with Korean speakers' understanding of their own language usage.

*Purpose Two*

The second purpose of this thesis will be looked at in chapters three and six, where I will present research results from studies designed to look at native speakers of Japanese, Chinese, and English, and compare their results with native speakers of Korean.

*Purpose Three*

The third purpose of this thesis will primarily be examined in chapters five and seven, where I will present the research results from a study about address term use with foreigners, and an activity designed to get an intimate look at advanced learners of Korean as a foreign language and their usage of pragmatic skills. However, it is also important to note that all other research embarked upon in this thesis has with this final point in mind; the understandings gained in the first and second purposes of the thesis help to achieve this third purpose. The three purposes should not, therefore, be seen as completely separate from each other.

**Section Three: Methodologies**

This thesis was begun prior to the start of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore the methodologies I undertook in its completion underwent many interruptions, changes, and redesigns throughout the research process. Because of these interruptions, rather than completing a single, ongoing research process through fieldwork, as initially envisioned, I chose to string together a variety of smaller, qualitative studies (some of which have been published), using many methodologies, and to use their results to form a well-rounded answer to the questions with which I began my project. In the following, I briefly discuss the advantages of the most common methodologies which can be found herein.

*Questionnaires*

Iwaniec (2019) points out that "the biggest draw of questionnaires is their versatility and the fact that they enable researchers to measure abstract constructs that could not be otherwise measured" and that this versatility has led many of the most high-profile applied linguistics studies in recent years to choose this methodology for their projects (Iwaniec, 2019: 326). I also felt that, given the extremely detailed nature of my research topics, this versatility made questionnaires an effective means of collecting information. The reader will see throughout that where I chose to

use questionnaires, the specificity of questions and answer options made their usage advantageous. However, the use of questionnaires also calls for caution, because of its tendency to elicit certain answers and erase nuance. I was careful to use questionnaires where I felt it was safe to do so.

*Focus Groups*

Focus groups were one of the main methodologies I relied on in this thesis. Galloway (2019) points out that they can allow participants to feel more relaxed than a normal interview (Galloway, 2019: 293), but my choice to use focus groups was more complex than this. I also hoped that by interacting with native speakers in a group setting, I could gain some access to their way of thinking about their own language use. In the first purpose of my thesis, I mentioned that I hoped to understand more about how Korean speakers understand their own language usage. Galloway (2019) also points out that focus groups "offer a means to examine how attitudes, beliefs, thoughts and experiences about a topic are co-constructed, silenced and sometimes modified in the social interactions between people during a focus group discussion" (Galloway, 2019: 294). This group sense-making is exactly what I wanted to see as I understood the way Koreans—and users of other languages—made sense of their usage of pragmatic skills.

*Interviews*

Because not all information could be obtained in group settings, I also performed individual interviews. Like focus groups, I felt that interviews would give me access to the way that individuals felt about their own language use, or their "self-reports of behaviours, including language practices", the measurement of which has been considered the best time to use this methodology (Rolland et al, 2019: 279). Even more importantly, as Braun and Clarke (2013) emphasize, for studies where individuals' *beliefs* around specific phenomena are important, interviews are an effective methodology.

*TV and Other Content Analysis*

To assist in this thesis, I chose to analyze segments from reality TV programs, scripted TV dramas, or films. The justification for this methodology—particularly the scripted variety—will be further explained when we arrive at that portion of analysis. This and other types of analysis are sometimes referred to as qualitative content analysis, or QCA.

Selvi (2019) explains that "QCA…can be best understood in a context-dependent fashion" (Selvi, 2019: 442), and that is why my analysis of television content will be shown in context—with full scenes picked apart for understanding, in contrast to a quantitative study, where simple words or phrases are being counted and used as data points.

Indeed, Selvi continues, "quantitative approaches to content analysis treat data (and its analysis) as a stepping stone for subsequent statistical analysis, whereas qualitative approaches are more concerned with the data per se and its interpretation" (Selvi, 2019: 442). When I use QCA, because I have looked at contents in their original context, I can compare and contrast them with other content and with real-life scenarios, rather than plugging them into some kind of quantitative statistical analysis—with the goal being to better understand the way the viewer (in this case, usually the native speaker) understands and relates to the content, and in turn, how the content reflects the lived reality of the viewer.

### *Other Methodologies*

In the course of this thesis, I also use a few other methodologies, including a classroom exercise, some textbook reviews, etc. These have each been selected based on availability, with the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic as a major factor, but also to shed light on a variety of issues, each of which will be explained in due course.

## Section Four: This Thesis as an Ethnographic Study

I have indicated that Korean honorifics, and pragmatics in general, have been the subject of intense research and discussion, and that I intended not to reframe that discussion or to modify it, but to build upon it. As I carried out my research, it became clear that one of the most interesting, and perhaps important, areas of investigation to be conducted was the question of how Korean speakers themselves understand their pragmatic skills. As I carried out questionnaires and focus groups and interviews, I quickly discovered that Korean speakers engage with these pragmatic features of their language daily, and therefore, they have a lot to say about them. They become more aware of this linguistic feature than speakers of other languages are of their own languages, by sheer necessity.

Because of this, I leaned into the ethnographic side of my study as I sought to understand this aspect of the research better.

### *Linguistic Ethnography*

Of linguistic ethnography, Copland (2015) says, "linguistic ethnography is an interpretive approach which studies the local and immediate actions of actors from their point of view and considers how these interactions are embedded in wider social contexts and structures" (Copland, 2015: 2).

The key point here is that an ethnographic study focuses on the actors' point of view, rather than seeking to understand just the issue at hand. This was my intention with speakers of Korean; I wanted to know what they thought of their pragmatic behaviors, rather than to simply examine Korean pragmatics, as many previous studies have done.

Copland (2015) describes further of ethnography that "its empirical nature and bottom-up orientation to data, require working from evidence towards theory. This means linguistic ethnography is well placed to produce critical, systematic, and rigorous scholarship. Linguistic ethnography links the micro to the macro, the small to the large, the varied to the routine, the individual to the social, the creative to the constraining, and the historical to the present and to the future (Copland, 2015: 17).

The logical question, then, is how one goes about acquiring this small evidence, from which larger theories can grow. Copland (2015) continues,

> "Linguistic ethnography…looks at how language is used by people and what this can tell us about wider social constraints, structures and ideologies… [and] linguistic ethnographers are keen to understand how it is interpreted within its social context. Through rich description, the use of audio and video transcripts, a range of interview techniques and other textual documents, the researcher attempts to appreciate the relevance of [linguistic] signs in ongoing communicative activity and situated social action" (Copland, 2015: 18).

This approach to gathering evidence about language use in daily life through audio and video, interview techniques, and other methods closely mirrors my own methodologies.

The question of why I might be interested in looking at my research questions ethnographically can be answered by Heller (2008), who explains the following:

> "Ethnographies allow us to get at things we would otherwise never be able to discover. They allow us to see how language practices are connected to the very real conditions of people's lives, to discover how and why language matters to people in their own terms, and to watch processes unfold over time. They allow us to see complexity and connections…They allow us to tell a story…a story which illuminates social processes and generates explanations for why people do and think the things they do (Heller, 2008: 250).

The story Heller speaks of here is the one I hoped to gain access to through my research, and with that in mind I designed methodologies that allowed me to focus on the experiences of the people I worked with, their beliefs around language, and the way their experiences and beliefs shaped their social processes.

*Moving Forward*

Before I move forward in this thesis, I hope to make it clear what exactly my research does and does not seek to accomplish. As I have explained up to this point, my main concern is the extremely relational nature of the Korean language. Heller (1984) posed the question, "what is it about the way we use language that has an impact on social processes? What is it about social

processes that influences linguistic ones?" (Heller, 1984: 54). I suggest that this question is particularly relevant in the case of Korean, where social processes—and more specifically, those dealing with relationships—and linguistic processes are literally inseparable.

Because of the importance of this question, I will seek to answer the three research purposes I presented earlier in this chapter. I will do so by taking an ethnographic approach—one that is primarily concerned with the beliefs and experiences of the people who use language—rather than one which looks at language as the research subject itself.

For that reason, it is essential to denote that the research presented here does not attempt to statistically analyze or quantify the data I have collected. There will not be quantitative, statistical analyses presented in these pages. Rather, data collected directly from individuals, as part of an ethnographic approach and through a variety of methods, will be treated as an addition—in and of itself—to the body of evidence currently in existence about Korean pragmatics, and specifically about the way that Korean speakers understand their experience with pragmatics. Many interviews, excerpts from focus groups, and quotes from television programs will be left in whole, and examined as holistic contributions, rather than submitted as data points or new entries to a corpus.

This thesis does not seek to produce any new definitions or theories regarding the meaning of pragmatics or the function of Korean honorifics. This thesis also does not attempt to prescribe a new course of action for learners of Korean to better learn Korean pragmatic skills. Those topics *will be better understood and more easily approached* as a result of the research done here, but they are not the purpose of my study. Rather, this thesis seeks to answer core questions regarding the understanding of Korean speakers themselves about their usage of pragmatics, to see if that understanding is truly unique, and to see if it can be extended to learners of Korean as a foreign language.

**Conclusion**

The research presented in this thesis will be of interest to both general linguists and Korean specialists alike. General linguists will find value in discussions of pragmatics and honorifics which extend beyond the typical Western-centered ideologies primarily in circulation today, and will be particularly able to use the ethnographic approach taken here as a starting point for understanding the way non-Western language speakers think about their pragmatic experiences. This will be essential as a starting point for thinking of a more well-rounded, inclusive definition of pragmatics, which can be applied to both Western and Eastern languages. Korean specialists will find that the variety of methodologies used here exposes a depth of discussion around Korean pragmatics which has rarely been undertaken, and which sheds light on the truly unique nature of the Korean honorific system. Both groups will be able to use the qualitative research done here as a starting point to design more quantitative, data-driven research about pragmatics in the future.

## Chapter Two

### *Pragmatics and Politeness: Existing Theories*

### Section One: Pragmatics

This dissertation requires first, of course, that I look at the definition of pragmatics, which have been examined for decades. It is not my purpose here to argue about the meaning of pragmatics, but it is important to establish a working definition by discussing some of the common ideas which have been put forth in the past. In the following section, I will summarize some of these ideas.

Barron (2003) agrees with Crystal (1985), who states that pragmatics can be defined as "the study of language from the point of view of the users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on the other participants in an act of communication" (Crystal, 1985: 240).

This definition is quite broad, and might reasonably be countered with the questions of 'what choices', 'what constraints', and 'what effects'? After all, language includes all sorts of choices, constraints, and effects. The key to Crystal's definition is the context in which he sets it: the social interaction. This theme, the context in which language is used, and therefore the setting in which language's choices, constraints, and effects take place, is found in other definitions of pragmatics.

In Levinson (1983), he explains that "…just as, traditionally, syntax is taken to be the study of the combinatorial properties of words and their parts, and semantics to be the study of meaning, so pragmatics is the study of language usage" (Levinson, 1983: 5). He further distinguishes between the "sentences" examined in other areas of linguistics, and the "utterances" examined in pragmatics, with the chief difference being that "…an utterance is the issuance of a sentence, a sentence…in an actual context" (Levinson, 1983: 18).

Leech (1983) helps to define this issue of context when he decides to consider it as "…any background knowledge assumed to be shared by *s* [speaker] and *h* [hearer] and which contributes to *h'*s interpretation of what *s* means by a given utterance" (Leech, 1983: 13). This background knowledge could refer to a number of things, including shared experiences or mutual persons of acquaintance, but it could also be the background knowledge which comes from existing in the same physical setting (i.e., knowing the physical temperature or the surroundings). Perhaps more importantly, it could be the background knowledge which comes from being a part of the same culture, and thus knowing the same norms of behavior or social expectations (for instance, at the most basic level, that a nod of the head means 'yes', and a shake of the head means 'no'.)

Of course, a shared context does not mean that the speaker's and hearer's understood meanings are the same. Leech (2014) explains, citing earlier definitions from Grice (1957):

> "The foundation stone of modern pragmatics is arguably Grice's definition (1957) of nonnatural meaning… or "speaker's meaning," as distinct from sentence meaning. (Alternatively the former can be labeled "pragmatic meaning" to distinguish it from "semantic meaning,"…) Grice's formulation was as follows:
>
> "A meant… something by *x"* is roughly equivalent to "A uttered *x* with the intention of inducing a belief by means of the recognition of this intention" (Grice, 1957: 219).
>
> "This can be considered a formulaic encapsulation of person-to-person communication by means of language. Two key points are first that pragmatic meaning resides in the communicative intention of *S,* and second that the interpretation of this meaning depends on the recognition (by *H* or some third party) of the intention" (Leech, 2014: 56).

So we see in these definitions that pragmatics, at its core, recognizes that there is more in practice to language than semantic meaning at the sentential level: the intended meaning of the speaker, the understood meaning of the hearer, and the context in which the utterance is made must be taken into account in order for meaning to really be communicated.

*Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics*

Often, discussions around pragmatics divide it into two distinct areas: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Barron (2003) says "[Pragmalinguistics] refers to the range of resources from which speakers of a language have to choose when using that language. Such resources include pragmatic strategies (e.g., directness and indirectness), pragmatic routines and modification devices" (Barron, 2003: 7-8). In other words, when a speaker or hearer is creating or understanding meaning in context, as described above, pragmalinguistics describes how they use their language to do that. "Sociopragmatics, on the other hand… addresses the effect of such constraints as social status, social distance and degree of imposition on the choice of linguistic realisation of a particular illocution" (Barron, 2003: 7-8). So sociopragmatics are the way that, when a speaker and hearer engage in a language interaction, the social aspects of their context inform intended and understood meanings.

Both pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics are important parts of our understanding of pragmatics, and neither can be fully understood in isolation.

**Section Two: Politeness**

For the sake of the current study, an essential area of pragmatics to understand is politeness. As mentioned above, pragmatics includes any features of context which add aspects of meaning not included in the sentence itself, including social dynamics, and it is regarding these social dynamics that politeness must be considered. When bringing up politeness, because words like ‘manners’ and ‘etiquette’ are often used, sometimes ‘formality is also brought to mind. While on a colloquial level, the word ‘politeness’ is at times used interchangeably with ‘formality’, this may lead to misconstrual or mixing of definitions in our discussion. Atkinson (1982) clarified that ‘formality’ usually refers to a “non-conversational” (Atkinson, 1982: 88) feeling, and that usually “…the distinction between 'formality' and 'informality' is used evaluatively, with 'formality' a source of nervousness and something to be avoided, and 'informality' being equated with a 'relaxed atmosphere' in which there need be few inhibitions about speaking” (Atkinson, 1982: 95). This would suggest that, most often, discussions around formality are not strictly defined, and have less to do with social dynamics than they do with the environment or atmosphere in which a given utterance is made. This, of course, would still be part of pragmatics, but should be considered separately from politeness.

Brown (2001) indicates, “Politeness is essentially a matter of taking into account the feelings of others as to how they should be interactionally treated, including behaving in a manner that demonstrates appropriate concern for interactors’ social status and their social relationship” (Brown, 2001: 11620). If this is the case, politeness is central to pragmatic behavior. Brown (2001) continues to suggest that there are three ways to approach politeness in language. The first, she says, is “politeness as social rules” (Brown, 2001: 11620-11621), and includes the behaviors and grammatical rules which are mandated in a given society as proper or improper.

The second is “politeness as adherence to Politeness Maxims” (Brown, 2001: 11620-11621). This second point refers to a set of rules which have been put forth over time as governing pragmatic principles, including Grice’s Maxims, outlined in Grice (1979) as the maxims of quantity (that interlocutors should only contribute appropriate amounts in conversation), quality (that interlocutors should be truthful), relation (that interlocutors should contribute in a relevant way), and manner (that interlocutors should contribute to conversation with clarity).

Brown (2001)’s final suggested way for approaching politeness in language is “politeness as face management” (Brown, 2001: 11620-11621), a term which originates with Goffman (1967).

Goffman (1967) explains: “The term face may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (Goffman, 1967: 5). Furthermore, the ‘line’ mentioned here is defined as “…a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which [a person] expresses his view of [a] situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself” (Goffman, 1967: 5). So, in simpler terms, face is a person’s image, as perceived by self and others, shown through “approved social attributes” (Goffman, 1967: 5).

About this subject of ‘face’, Bargiela-Chiappini (2003) expands as follows:

> “The important corollaries of (a) co-existing multiple social identities and (b) the clash between the rights and duties of these different identities (ibid.)

> afford a multi-layered and dynamic conceptualisation of social identities acting within a moral order that is partly interactionally-constructed and partly regulated by mutually agreed norms and conventions. Accordingly, 'polite behaviour' is a multifacetted social phenomenon that originates within the moral order" (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003: 1465).

So, if polite behavior is social behavior, and originates from the same moral order as a person's face, what is and isn't 'polite' should be determinable *by* this issue of face. This same conclusion was drawn by Brown and Levinson (1987), when they foundationally theorized that politeness is basically transactional, and that "…the nature of the transaction being conducted in a verbal interchange is often evident as much in the manner in which it is done as in any overt performative acts" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: Ch. 1.2). This nature will either be imposing, in that it makes the hearer's sense of self—face—feel threatened, or unimposing, in that it doesn't. Imposing behaviors were labeled "face-threatening acts" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: Ch. 2.00). Polite behavior, then, would be behavior designed to mitigate the harmful effects of these face-threatening acts.

Brown and Levinson (1987) identify two major branches of politeness: positive politeness, and negative politeness. Positive politeness "…is redress directed to the addressee's… perennial desire that his wants…should be thought of as desirable. Redress consists in partially satisfying that desire by communicating that one's own wants…are…similar to the addressee's wants" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: Ch. 5.3). Negative politeness, they explain on the other hand, is "…addressed to the addressee's…want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded. It is the heart of respect behaviour…" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: Ch. 5.4).

In more recent years, though, this breakdown has received criticism for its assumption that "…however culturally variable the kinds of social relationship and kinds of face threat might be, underlying them are pan-cultural social dimensions… which universally go into the reckoning… of politeness strategies…" (Brown, 2001: 11621). The social dimensions referred to here which Brown and Levinson assumed to be shared by all cultures include both relative power and social distance (Brown, 2001: 11621), because "…wants for freedom from imposition [in particular] appears entirely too embedded in Western individualism to sit well with conceptions of face in some other (e.g., Asian) cultures" (Brown, 2001: 11622).

Some do recommend ways of directly dealing with these limitations, however, including new ways of understanding face. For example, Arundale (2006) suggests that "Conceptualizing face as relational…provides an alternative conceptualization of positive and negative face that addresses concerns with the cultural generality of Brown and Levinson's formulation" (Arundale, 2006: 194).

So it is by further entrenching face in a relational context that we overcome cultural boundaries, according to Arundale. But Kasper and Schmidt (1996) point out that social context will differ by culture, asking, "What are the strategies and linguistic means by which particular speech acts are realized? Are such strategies universally available? What are the contextual factors that

determine speakers' choices from speech act sets? What is the contextual distribution of realization patterns? How does contextual variation differ cross-culturally?" (Kasper and Schmidt, 1996: 150). All of these must be considered when deciding if politeness, both of the positive and negative varieties, is the same cross-culturally.

*Asian Politeness*

It is in this vein of thought that we begin to examine Asian politeness. As Matsumoto (1988) puts it, "Since politeness phenomena are socially motivated, it is plausible to consider that one must know the socio-cultural patterns to successfully produce polite behavior… People in a culture choose strategies of politeness according to the cultural expectation and requirement." (Matsumoto, 1988: 421, 423). With this in mind, Matsumoto (1988) goes on to examine some key features of Japanese culture in particular, which influence these socio-cultural patterns to which they refer: "In the Japanese culture, as we have seen, people are expected to act properly according to their relative position or rank with regard to other members of the group, and it is that relative position that they want to maintain when they employ politeness strategies" (Matsumoto, 1988: 423).

With this understanding of Japanese social motivations, the fundamental understanding of face naturally shifts as well. Matsumoto (1988) goes on, importantly, as follows:

> "What is of paramount concern to a Japanese is not his/her own territory, but the position in relation to the others in the group and his/her acceptance' by those others. Loss of face is associated with the perception by others that one has not comprehended and acknowledged the structure and hierarchy of the group. The Japanese concepts of face, then, are qualitatively different from those defined as universals by Brown and Levinson" (Matsumoto, 1988: 405).

Here we see that the concept of imposition may differ from that suggested in previous research, where politeness strategies are used to avoid encroaching on a person's self-image, because here it is not the image of self that is important, but the position of self in relation to others. Because of this fundamentally different approach to politeness, some studies have sought to create culture-specific systems to understand how it works. Hill et al (1986) somewhat famously establishes a Japanese-specific idea of *wakimae*, or discernment: "A capsule definition would be 'conforming to the expected norm'…In this aspect of politeness…the speaker can be considered to submit passively to the requirements of the system. That is, once certain factors of addressee and situation are noted, the selection of an appropriate linguistic form and/or appropriate behavior is essentially automatic" (Hill et al, 1986: 347, 348).

This indicates that some politeness behavior in the Japanese socio-cultural context is less of a strategic decision and more of an automatic selection based on context. Another question, then, would be that of what kinds of automatic selections are made in these discernment-type situations. Watts (2005) suggests that they are, in Japanese and other Asian contexts, often pragmalinguistic in nature:

> "The honorific forms which are so ubiquitous in Japanese and other Asian languages (cf. Koshal 1987) are lexicalised and grammaticalised to such a high degree precisely because their use depends crucially on ego's perception of the total set of features in the social activity which are relevant to the speech events of that activity, as well as to the set of referents encoded in the speech events. As Matsumoto (1989) points out, '[...] no utterance in Japanese can be neutral with respect to the social context' (Watts, 2005: 52)."

The honorific forms mentioned here will be central to this paper moving forward in the way they capture the discernment element of politeness, as it allows the speaker to encode politeness at a grammaticalized level, but also because, as noted above, they are inescapable for speakers of languages where they are embedded in every utterance. Of course, I am less concerned with reframing the definition of politeness, or supporting one definition over another, than I am with further understanding how native speakers of Korean and other languages perceive their own daily pragmatic interactions, including politeness, in the context of their relationships.

*Power and Distance*

One of the elements of the model initially proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) which has continually been called into question in later studies is the joint aspect of power and distance, which they claimed to be central to determining the seriousness of a face-threatening act. Brown and Levinson (1987) specify that it is not the power or social distance as would be measured by a sociologist that matter, but that are perceived by interlocutors themselves which are important in a given situation (Brown and Levinson, 1987: Ch. 3.4.2).

Power, as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987), refers to "…the degree to which H can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of S's plans and self-evaluation…" and "…may be authorized or unauthorized…" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: Ch. 3.4.2). Distance is defined as "…a symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference within which S and H stand…" and "…it is based on an assessment of the frequency of interaction and the kinds of material or non-material goods (including face) exchanged between S and H…" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: Ch. 3.4.2).

These definitions of power and distance, while broad, do not lend a huge sense of clarity to their subjects, and are limited in their cross-cultural applicability. Some studies have commented on the difficulty in measuring or even identifying them. Spencer-Oatley (1996) concludes that "With regard to distance, there is no consensus at present…as to reliable ways of distinguishing close and distant relationships… With regard to power, once again few linguists explicitly discuss the conceptual nature of this parameter… [and] cultures may vary in their attitudes towards power" (Spencer-Oatley: 1996, 21-22).

**Conclusion**

Because of the social nature of pragmatics and specifically politeness, and the difference between social contexts in various cultures, it becomes essential to examine pragmatics and politeness according to unique cultural setting, taking into consideration socio-cultural expectations of normal behavior. As I move forward in this paper, I will examine pragmatic features which are unique to Korean (and other languages) and must be examined as such. This will require me to examine some pragmalinguistic elements of Korean which come into play as Korean speakers make discernment-type decisions like those discussed above, as a sort of automatic selection. These often include honorifics. This investigation of Korean politeness will also have much to do with power and distance, but the power and distance examined here may look different from that examined by Brown and Levinson and other studies—again, because these sociopragmatic features are entirely related and linked to the cultural context in which they are found. Most importantly, I will look to native speakers to see how they understand this relationship between power and distance, and whether there even is such a measurable distinction for them.

## Chapter Three

***Pragmatics of Korean: A Window to Relationships***

## Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a sense of how native speakers of Korean use specific pragmatic skills to convey information about the level of intimacy or distance in a given relationship. Up to this point, I have explored pragmatics and politeness theory in detail. This chapter examines some of the commonly discussed pragmatic features of Korean, including speech styles and terms of address. First, I summarize previous literature about speech styles and terms of address in Korean. Subsequently, I present examples of how speech styles and address terms are used in two popular Korean television dramas. Finally, I present the results of a Discourse Completion Test focus group and survey study about pragmatic strategies employed by speakers of Korean, along with results of the same study about pragmatic strategies of speakers of Japanese, Chinese, and English.

This chapter seeks first and foremost to understand and describe what linguistic tools Koreans use to define and express relationship quality, in terms of intimacy and distance, and to show this in comparison with the pragmatic strategies used by speakers of other languages. In this chapter, I do not analyze my findings or interpret their meanings. I seek simply to present a picture of what pragmatics in Korean look like. I will embark upon more detailed analysis and interpretation in later chapters.

## Section One: Speech Styles and Address Terms in Korean

### *Speech Styles in Korean*

There has been much research done on the complex honorific system and speech styles of the Korean language. The honorific system refers to the "…differences in speech that depend upon relative social rank" (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 224). Of the Korean system it has been said that "…it may well be that no language on earth has a more finely differentiated system of honorifics" (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 224).

### *Explanation of Korean Honorifics*

Before examining speech styles in any detail, a brief explanation of the Korean honorific system is called for. Though linguists explain Korean speech levels in varying ways, the basic ideas are straightforward.

The honorific system refers to "differences in speech that depend upon relative social rank" (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 224). Depending on the social status, age, and relationships of interlocutors,

as well as the age and social status of the people they are conversing about, different words and grammar are employed, creating different speech 'levels', or styles. Yeon and Brown say that honorifics in Korean consist of hearer honorifics, in which the speaker must "calculate [the] relationship with the person [they] are talking to" (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 170), and referent honorifics, in which the speaker must "calculate [the] relationship with the person [they] are talking about" (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 171). One key factor which is present in both referent honorifics and hearer honorifics is the address term, a strict system of pronouns and titles for people based on age, kinship, position, and other factors (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 238). The address term will be examined in greater detail later in this paper.

Referent honorifics consist of subject honorification, where the subject of the sentence is referred to respectfully, and object exaltation, where the object of the sentence is referred to respectfully (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 239). This type of honorific is accomplished by attaching special particles to nouns, and by adding pre-final endings to verbs.

Hearer honorifics are expressed mostly through special verb and sentence endings. These sentence endings combine to create different speech levels or styles. "The 'style' expresses linguistically the relative social rank of the person to whom the speaker is talking…[and is] determined by something outside the sentence, namely, the rank of the listener" (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 239). Later, I will discuss how this style expresses not only relative social rank, but also level of intimacy in a given relationship. Though they are referred to interchangeably in most literature as both speech levels and speech styles, I will generally use the term 'speech styles' in this paper, simply for the sake of consistency.

Though there are some disputes, it is generally agreed that there are six speech styles in Korean (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 17; Brown, 2013: 45; Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 250).

1. formal style/ *hapsyo-chey*
2. polite style/*hayyo-chey*
3. semiformal style/*hao-chey*
4. familiar style/ *hakey-chey*
5. half-talk or intimate style/*panmal/hay-chey*
6. plain style/ *hayla-chey*

The formal style is used in settings where humility, respect, and decorum are important. It can often be heard in public speeches, on the news, and in other such settings. It will also be used to individuals who are much older than or very senior to the speaker, and it is the representative speech style used in the military. The polite style is still respectful, but is used as the more common respectful speech style in daily life. It can be used to seniors or juniors who are not intimate, and maintains humility and deference. Some words are almost always used in the formal style rather than in the polite style, such as words for offering thanks and apologies. The semiformal style and the familiar style are both used by adult seniors to adult juniors, with the

latter being frequently used between intimates within, for instance, an in-law relationship. Half-talk and plain style are both used to children and intimate equals, juniors, or subordinates. Of course, these lines are often blurred, and multiple speech styles can at times be employed in a single utterance, depending on pragmatic factors at play.

The six-style system is complex, but the actual usage of speech styles in modern Korean society is more simplistic. Lee and Ramsey explain that "Today…when Koreans talk about speech styles, the most common…contrast is between *panmal* , 'informal, intimate speech' and *contaysmal* , which, roughly translated means 'polite speech'" (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 251). In this simplification of six systems into two, *panmal* refers to plain style and half-talk style, and *contaysmal* refers to polite style and formal style. Familiar style and semiformal style are increasingly rarely used in modern spoken Korean. Usually the representative *contaysmal* form is the polite style, also referred to as the *–yo* form. Thus, the informal half-talk (I will refer to this style as '*panmal*' and 'half-talk' interchangeably) and polite *–yo* form "have come to be the twin pillars of the speech-style system of modern Korean" (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 260). This binary distinction between half-talk and *–yo* form (*contaysmal* ) is the one I will primarily focus on in this paper; formal speech and informal speech as I refer to them will represent not the specific linguistic categories, but the two-way distinction more commonly referred to by Korean speakers. Again, I will refer typically to speech styles, not levels, and tend to use the terms formal and informal speech, form, or style. I will also use the Korean terms *contaysmal* and *panmal*, because I will be actively discussing Korean speakers' ideations behind these concepts. The reader should be prepared to encounter either 'formal/informal speech' or '*contaysmal/panmal*' in this paper.

*Speech style shift: A complex and multifaceted phenomenon*

With so many styles of speech, speech style shift, or deciding when to use which speech style, is not as straightforward as the prescriptive descriptions in textbooks, and is a complex matter for native Korean speakers. According to Yeon and Brown, in Korean honorifics the speaker must "calculate [their] relationship with the person they are talking to" (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 171). Lee and Ramsey, among others, regard age and social hierarchy or rank as defining factors in this calculation (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 224).

Other scholars agree that speech styles are a function of power. Lee Jeongbok shows in his research that power is the "primary factor" in determining speech style, and that power in Korean society is "…represented by age, status, social class, etc." (Lee, 2012: 272). This is the view that is widely accepted by scholars.

However, the actual usage of speech styles is much more complex than these descriptions, and often contradicts views like Lee's.

For instance, grandchildren use half-talk with their grandmothers and other elderly family members, who are obviously much older and more senior. Likewise, even adults often continue to use half-talk to their mothers (and often their fathers) in their private conversations. Yet, when speaking to their parents in the presence of others, often they change to the more polite *–yo* form. In these instances, half-talk seems to be used more freely than a prescriptive approach to speech

styles would suggest. On the other hand, we often find in the South Korean media that the inappropriate usage of half-talk can cause offence, conflicts and disputes.

Various researchers present differing ideas to explain the complex usage of speech styles. Eun and Strauss, for instance, focus just on formal styles, exploring the difference in the polite - *yo* ending and the deferential - *supnita* ending, and challenging the traditional notion that these forms have a purely hierarchical function. They claim that "…rather than relating to social status and hierarchy, honorific speech level choice is actually motivated quite strongly by information status with respect to both speaker and interlocutor" (Eun and Strauss, 2004: 271). Information status refers to the difference between the sharing of information that was previously unknown and the sharing of information that was already known. A later study on the *–yo* and *–supnita* forms by the same authors finds another basis for speech style choice. They claim that "…the phenomenon of honorific speech level alternation in Korean relates more, if not entirely, to…exclusion and inclusion…than it does to actual social factors such as age, profession, and status…" (Strauss and Eun, 2005: 645-646).

Brown examines these two speech styles (- *supnita* and *–yo* ) in further depth. He disagrees with Strauss and Eun, claiming that actually, "The difference between - *y*o and - *supnita* is that the former lacks the presentational qualities of the latter…" (Brown, 2015: 57). The presentational quality refers to utterances made in a specific role versus those made outside of that role. These different perspectives on the usage of speech styles challenge the prevalent conception that speech styles are used purely to demarcate relative social status, and reveal that speech styles have a wider, more complex set of functions.

Many Korean speakers offhandedly identify politeness as the main role of their honorific system (Kim, 2011: 177). As discussed earlier in this paper, Brown and Levinson (1987) propose three variables – distance, power and imposition – in order to explain politeness. The contrast between the distance and power variables is one which is often discussed in relation to half-talk. Lee Jeongbok describes the concept of distance, or intimacy, as a "secondary factor" (Lee, 2012: 272) in Korean honorifics, admitting that "Even when there is a great difference in level of power, it is possible for people who are intimate or close to [not use honorifics]" (Lee, 2012: 319). Lee's discussion of 'distance' is determined by "gender and familiarity…" and "…can be divided into 'physical distance' and 'psychological distance'" (Lee, 2012: 272). He goes further to illustrate how physical distance includes both "time distance and space distance" (Lee, 2012: 298). When a speaker is referring to even a very high-ranking figure from history, because of the time distance, honorific speech is unlikely to be used, he explains (Lee, 2012: 298). Similarly, when referring to a high-ranking figure in another country, honorific language is rarely used because of the space distance (Lee, 2012: 298). When this distance is present, "even in relation to someone whom, under the power factor, should be treated honorifically, people do not do so" (Lee, 2012: 298). These examples as pointed out by Lee refer mainly to referent honorifics. Lee does mention intimacy in terms of relationships as well, but gives very few or no examples of how speech styles change in an intimate relationship. Rather, he continues to point to examples of space and referent honorifics as previously mentioned (Lee, 2012: 331). Lee goes on to compare the intimacy factor to the role of power. He quotes Pak Yeongsun (1995, 566-567) as follows: "Unlike English and other Western languages, where [honorifics] and address terms are distinguished according to the level of intimacy, in Korean…honorifics continue to be used in

accordance with the degree of… power… regardless of intimacy level (Lee, 2012: 321). Lee goes on to clarify that sometimes the interplay will become more complicated depending on the levels of intimacy and power, explaining that "In situations where the two factors collide, one factor does not take precedence over the other, but rather, according to conversation or linguistic usage context, and… relationship, the [impact] of the two factors will be different" (Lee, 2012: 332).

Other researchers have gone to further lengths to prove the importance of intimacy as a function of the half-talk shift (shifting from a higher form to half-talk), showing how it is often more important than the power variable. Park (2017), for example, uses reality TV shows to show that shifting to half-talk is a way to establish an intimate relationship. More specifically, she observes the closeness of couples by examining their usage of half-talk. Alan Hyun-Oak Kim agrees; after describing the relationship in which a person uses a higher speech style as an 'H-field,' he states, "…when two people become intimate, their H-field dissolves" (Kim, 2011: 194-195). Kim elaborates on the idea that speech style could be more related to intimacy than hierarchical power, explaining that the H-field is often used to display being a part of the same group, or to show that groups are different (Kim, 2011: 195). He even comments that the use of honorific language in the wrong setting may cause "serious offence" (Kim, 2011: 195), as it indicates a feeling of disconnection or separation. Furthermore, the lowering of speech into non-honorific styles will often be seen by the subordinate as a sign of intimacy or closeness, rather than disrespect, he explains (Kim, 2011: 197).

While research tends to agree that speech styles and honorifics have many diverse, complex functions, the idea that intimacy is as important a factor in determining speech style as power seems to be a relatively new one among scholars. However, the average Korean speaker seems to know this implicitly; usually the act of shifting from *contaysmal* to *panmal* is referred to as "speaking comfortably", and if a Korean speaker overhears a friend speaking *panmal* with a third party, the initial assumption is often expressed in a statement like, "Wow, I didn't know you were so close!"

*The Address Term*

In addition to honorifics and styles of speech, there is one other aspect of the Korean language which influences politeness, power, and intimacy. This is the address term. In Korean, address terms are varied and complicated, and their implications are many. Without the usage of proper address terms, speech styles are incomplete and meaningless—even if a speaker uses the most deferential form of speech in accordance with all rules of honorifics, if he or she uses the wrong address term or pronoun, the listener will feel uncomfortable, and will often be offended. The address term in Korean will be covered in more detail in chapter five. As I also note in chapter five, some of my research on address terms is also presented in a published study, Kiaer, Driggs, et al (2022). Where wording is similar in this section to that published study, I will cite it as such.

Here I will summarize the basic rules of address terms in Korean. For the purposes of this chapter, second-person pronouns and all terms with a vocative function will be considered address terms, including names, titles, and kinship terms.

The first category to discuss is the second-person pronoun, the equivalent of the English 'you'. Korean, unlike English, does not have a universally acceptable second-person pronoun (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 76). Archaically, English included other second-person pronouns as well, which indicated varying levels of formality as well as the plural and singular, which have at times been compared to Korean pronouns (Chae, 2007: 457). The second-person pronouns in Korean, like speech styles, serve mainly to denote levels of intimacy and power. Which pronoun is used depends on the speech style being used (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 225). Second-person pronouns can be generally divided into the same categories as the speech styles summarized previously:

| Speech Style | Correlating Second-person Pronoun |
|---|---|
| 1. formal style/ *hapsyo-chey* | None/title |
| 2. polite style/*hayyo-chey* | None/title |
| 3. semiformal style/*hao-chey* | *tangsin* (당신) |
| 4. familiar style/*hakey-chey* | *cane* (자네) |
| 5. half-talk or intimate style/*panmal/hay-chey* | *ne* (너)/name+vocative particle (*a/*아, *ya/*야, *i/*이) |
| 6. plain style/ *hayla-chey* | *ne* (너)/name+vocative particle (*a/*아, *ya/*야, *i/*이) |

Table 1

As shown above, more formal styles of speech do not allow for the usage of any second-person pronouns; titles are used instead (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 78). This seems to indicate a feeling that in Korean, referring directly to the person one is talking to is very personal and intimate, and is therefore reserved for situations where such an interaction is socially appropriate.

There are other second-person pronouns used within the speech styles which are perhaps less common, or used with more specificity. For example, the term *elusin* (어르신) may be used with respect and deference as a second-person pronoun, or as a title, when addressing a person who is older than around 60. Sometimes, adults will use the honorific term *tayk* (댁) to refer to unknown adults who appear to be of similar age or status. In similar circumstances where deference is not required, the term *kuccok* (그쪽) will be used (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 77). Husbands and

wives use the endearing term *caki* (자기) with each other. Also, the archaic term *kutay* (그대) is often used in poetry or popular music to refer to a love interest (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 77). Often, when the speaker is unsure what second-person pronoun to use, or when no second-person pronoun is available, titles are used in their place (Kiaer, Driggs, et al, 2022).

In English, the most commonly used vocative address term is the personal name. Koreans do not use names nearly as liberally as English speakers. Koreans, like English speakers, have family names and given names. A typical Korean name is made up of monosyllabic components structured as follows (F=family name, G=given name):

FGG

The one syllable of the family name and the two syllables of the given name are traditionally derived from Chinese characters, though given names are now often made from pure Korean words. Though the two characters used in the given name are distinct and separate, they combine into a single name, which is used as a single word. Rarely, only one character will be used for a given name, and even less frequently three characters may also be used. In extremely rare cases, a family name may be comprised of two characters (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 33). The following are examples of common male and female Korean names (marked respectively), with the family name bolded and the given name set a space apart (in actuality all three syllables would be written together with no spacing in between the family and given names). Romanizations shown are commonly used spellings for names (Kiaer, Driggs, et al, 2022).

**김** 철수 *(male)* (*kim cheolsu)*

**박** 민희, *female* (*pak minhui*)

**이** 재현, *male* (*i cayhyen*)

**조** 지연, *female* (*co ciyen*)

**신** 정우, *male* (*sin cengwu*)

**정** 혜림, *female* (*ceng hyeylim*)

Family and given names are used with similar connotations as in English, but with more limitations. People use their names for official documents and business, and simply to identify and differentiate themselves in group settings, but it is rare to hear a full name used on its own in daily conversation. This is, of course, rare in English as well. Unlike in English, however, it is also rare to hear a given name used in conversation. Only close friends born in the same year and intimate superiors use a person's given name on its own. In other contexts, names are almost always accompanied with or replaced by various titles or kinship terms (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 34). This being the case, middle-aged and older Koreans, who naturally spend less time with parents and intimate superiors, often report that they rarely hear their own given names used at all (Kiaer, Driggs, et al, 2022).

Titles are also used as address terms in the vocative sense. These titles can include occupational titles, such as *kyoswunim* (professor, 교수님), *kisanim* (driver, 기사님), or *moksanim* (preacher, 목사님), but titles are extended to use outside of occupation as well. For example, the respectful word for teacher, *sensayngnim* (선생님), can be used to strangers of social prestige, as can the term for manager, or *sacangnim* (사장님). Sometimes the title will accompany the name itself (Kim Cheolsu *kyoswunim*/Kim *kyoswunim* (김철수 교수님/김 교수님)), but the most polite way to use a title is to drop the name altogether. Almost every title also includes the *nim* (님) honorific suffix, used deferentially to superiors or strangers[3]. To people of similar or lower social position, the suffix *ssi* (씨)—similar to Mr. or Ms. in English—can be added to the full, family, or given name; each combination expresses a different level of respect (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 230-238). Native speakers of Korean often report struggling to know which titles to use when addressing strangers, so sometimes they avoid titles altogether—this is made possible in Korean because the subject can be dropped (Kiaer, Driggs, et al, 2022).

Within families, a strict and complicated system of kinship terms is used. Like in English, fathers and mothers are referred to as such, but each other family member has an assigned title as well. Family members only use the names of those in the family they are older than. Such kinship terms depend on age and gender (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 36). The following table shows the kinship terms used by males and females respectively with their immediate family members:

| | Father | Mother | Older Brother | Older Sister | Younger Brother | Younger Sister |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | *apeci,* 아버지 (or *appa,* 아빠) | *emeni,* 어머니 (or *emma,* 엄마) | *hyeng,* 형 | *nwuna,* 누나 | Name + *a/ya/i,* 아/야/이 | Name + *a/ya/i,* 아/야/이 |
| Female | *apeci,* 아버지 (or *appa,* 아빠) | *emeni,* 어머니 (or *emma,* 엄마) | *oppa*, 오빠 | *enni,* 언니 | Name + *a/ya/i,* 아/야/이 | Name + *a/ya/i,* 아/야/이 |

Table 2

[3] The suffix *nim* (님) is, in modern usage, being extended to take on more of a neutral meaning, and can often be heard in the workplace or online as a sort of generic, respectful suffix for people of any position.

Often, the kinship terms for older siblings are used along with names. For example, a younger brother may say, "Cheolsu *hyeng* (철수 형)," or "Minhui *nwuna* (민희 누나)." When parents or older siblings call the names of their children or younger siblings, they almost always add the vocative particles *a, ya,* or *i* (아/야/이) after the name, depending on whether the name ends with a consonant or a vowel and what the context is. Even twins address each other with these kinship terms, depending on who was born first (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 38-39), (Kiaer, Driggs, et al, 2022).

The mother and father call all of their children by name, but they never use each other's names. Rather, they use endearing terms like *yepo* (여보), or *caki* (자기), and the second-person pronoun *tangsin* (당신), which takes on an affectionate, respectful feeling in this context. Sometimes they will call each other using their children's names (Cheolsu *appa/*Cheolsu *emma* (철수 아빠/철수 엄마)). This practice is shifting in some modern couples (Kim, J., 2003), who choose to maintain the terms of address they used during courtship rather than terms more common to married couples.

An extremely complicated set of kinship terms is also used in the extended family; I have heard some Koreans comment that they avoid addressing anyone directly at large family gatherings for fear of using kinship terms incorrectly.

Kinship terms are hugely important in Korean society; they are extended for use outside the family as well. Again, given names are only used mutually by close friends born in the same year, or to close friends who are younger. When names are used in this way, the vocative particles mentioned above are almost always added as suffixes. To friends who are even just one year older, kinship terms are used, just as with older siblings. For example, if Kim Cheolsu (김철수) was born in 1993 and was very close to Shin Jeongu (신정우), who was born in 1992, he would call him *hyeng* (형) or Jeongu *hyeng* (정우 형). This would be the case even if the two were close enough to use the most informal of speech styles; the younger party would never call the older directly by name. Terms of address for other genders are applied in the same way in friendships. The term *oppa* (오빠) is unique in that it often has a connotation of romantic interest or flirtatiousness when used by a younger female to an older male. Girlfriends often call their boyfriends *oppa* (오빠). However, just because a female friend uses the term *oppa* (오빠) to a close male friend, one cannot assume the two have a romantic relationship; the term can be used platonically as well. Other kinship terms, like uncle (*acessi,* 아저씨) and aunt (*imo*, 이모) are extended to adults who are not family as well. These adults can range from servers in restaurants to adult intimates (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 39). The usage of kinship terms creates a feeling of belonging, differentiates between in-groups and out-groups, and increases feelings of intimacy (Kiaer, Driggs, et al, 2022).

From what previous research has said about speech style and terms of address, it seems clear that usage of both conveys a rich amount of information about the relationship of the people involved in a given linguistic interaction. Much can be assumed about a relationship based on the speech styles used by two parties, and the terms they use to address each other. It seems natural that Korean speakers would become adept at interpreting signals sent by subtle shifts in speech style and terms of address as they navigate different relationships.

## Section Two: Examples from Korean Drama

In an attempt to more fully understand how these speech styles and address terms appear in daily use among people in different relationships and in different settings, I have pulled examples from two popular Korean television dramas. Some appropriately suggest that the scripted dialogues of television are not the same thing as authentic, spontaneous language production, and therefore cannot be used to accurately depict language use. While I recognize that television is not the same as spontaneous language, I agree with Koh (2002), Lakoff (1973: 46) and Salmon (1987: 265), who each argue that either written drama or popular drama and television tend to follow sociolinguistic (and particularly pragmatic) norms—if they didn't, audiences would likely not find them convincing or relatable. The purpose of television and other media is to produce an empathetic response in the audience, and in order to do this, the pragmatic norms of the audience must be honored. While I do not attempt to claim that the following television examples are the same as organically captured linguistic interactions, they can be very useful in helping us understand what Korean speakers see as pragmatically normal and acceptable. Of course, these media examples should not be taken as universally or perfectly representative; I use them instead as an important point of reference. Meanings and Korean spellings of address terms (particularly kinships terms) referenced here can be seen in the section on address terms above.

### *The case of "Sky Castle"*[4]

The drama "Sky Castle[5]" aired from 2018 to 2019 in Korea, and achieved one of the highest viewership ratings of all time[6]. This drama consists of 20 episodes, each around an hours long, and portrays several families living in the same neighborhoods. It includes relationships of varying levels of intimacy between children and adults. Because of this, many variations of speech style and address terms are shown. In the following, I examine some of the iterations of speech style and address term usage portrayed in this drama. I categorize these by relationship type.

[4] Pictures in this section were sourced from https://www.dramabeans.com/2019/02/sky-castle-series-review/

[5] Yoo, H. (Writer), & Jo, H. (Director) (2018-2019). Kim, J., Moon, B., Park, J. (Executive Producers), *Sky Castle*. HB Entertainment, Drama House, JTBC.

[6] Nielsen Korea (2018). AGB Nielsen Media Research.

*Within families*

In the families of "Sky Castle", different patterns of speech style usage exist. Sometimes, spouses use formal speech with each other, and sometimes they use informal speech with each other. Sometimes, children use formal speech to their parents, and sometimes they use informal speech. Parents always use informal speech to their children, and children always use informal speech to each other. One of the families in *Sky Castle* consists of a father, Kang Junsang, a mother, Han Seojin, an older daughter, Kang Yeseo, and a younger daughter, Kang Yebin. Throughout the drama, Kang Junsang uses *panmal* to his wife and to his daughters. Han Seojin uses *condaysmal* to her husband, and *panmal* to her daughters. Both Kang Yeseo and Kang Yebin use *panmal* to each other, and *panmal* to both their father and mother. Kang Junsang and Han Seojin both use the terms *yepo* (honey) and *tangsin* (second-person pronoun) to each other. They call their daughters by name. Kang Yeseo calls Kang Yebin by her name, and Kang Yebin calls Kang Yeseo by *enni*. Both daughters use the terms *appa* and *emma* to address their parents.

Another family in the series consists of a father, Hwang Chiyoung; his wife, Im Suim; and a son, Hwang Uju. Hwang Chiyoung and his wife, Im Suim, both use *panmal* to each other and to their son. Hwang Uju uses *condaysmal* to both of his parents. Hwang Chiyoung and Im Suim both use the terms *yepo* and *tangsin* to address each other, and call their son by name. Hwang Uju uses *appa* and *emma* for his parents.

Several other families are portrayed throughout the drama. The key takeaway here is that different families operate differently in terms of what speech styles they use, but address terms are used fairly consistently in the family setting. Some of the couples are portrayed as using *panmal* to each other, and in some of the couples only the husband uses *panmal.* In some families, children are shown using *condaysmal* to their parents, and in some families they are shown using *panmal*. Interestingly, other than momentary shifts, even though the show has diversity in how families are portrayed as speaking to each other, each family stays consistent throughout all 20 episodes in speech style and address term choice.




Image 1

*Between adults*

This drama focuses heavily on the relationships between several adult women and several adult men. Typically, there is not a large amount of cross-gender interaction portrayed. There are five women in particular, including Lee Myungju, Han Seojin, Im Suim, No Seunghye, and Jin Jinhee. Lee Myungju is the oldest, and all of the younger women who interact with her use *condaysmal* to her and call her *enni*. She uses *panmal* to them, and refers to them by name or as *caki* (dear). Jin Jinhee, who is the youngest, consistently uses *panmal* with Han Seojin, who is older than her, and calls her *enni*. Han Seojin calls Jin Jinhee by name, or as *caki*. Han Seojin and Im Suim, who went to school together and are the same age, use *panmal* with each other, and call each other by name, also using the second-person pronoun *ne*. The other women typically use a combination of *condaysmal* and *panmal,* and refer to each other as either 'first name + *ssi'* or 'oldest child's name + *emma*'. Interestingly, Jin Jinhee starts out by addressing Im Suim as *Uju emma* (Uju's mom), but at one point decides to try to build a closer relationship with her and begins calling her *enni*. At that point, Im Suim continues to call Jin Jinhee as *Suhan emma* (Suhan's mom).

The men in the drama interact less often than the women, and almost without exception they use *condaysmal* and refer to each other by professional title (i.e., *kyoswu* (professor)). One difference can be seen in the relationship between Park Suchang and Kang Junsang. Park Suchang uses *panmal* to Kang Junsang and calls him by name or as *ne*, while Kang Junsang uses *panmal* to Park Suchang and calls him *hyeng.* Another exception is the relationship between Kang Junsang and Wu Yangu, who work together. Kang Junsang, a work superior, speaks *panmal* to Wu Yangu and calls him the second-person pronoun *ne*, and Wu Yangu uses *condaysmal* to Kang Junsang, and calls him by his title, *kwacangnim* (section chief).

Here, it seems to be a clear pattern that where there is a close relationship and age difference, the elder adult uses *panmal* and the younger adult uses *condaysmal*. Kinship terms are also clearly used to increase intimacy. An interesting deviation from this rule is the case of Kang Junsang and Park Suchang, who both use *panmal* to each other.

*Between children*

Each of the families has one to three children, many of whom have grown up together. Interestingly, regardless of age (from elementary school to college), all of the unrelated children use *panmal* to each other. Without exception, children of the same age call each other and those younger than them by name and use the second-person pronoun *ne*, while younger children refer to older children using kinship terms *hyeng, oppa, enni,* and *nwuna*. At one point, a high school student who did not grow up with the other children, Kim Hyena, is introduced to them as she moves into the neighborhood. The children begin to use *panmal* and kinship terms with her, as well.

*Between children and adults*

There are many interactions between unrelated adults and children shown throughout the drama. For example, when the child Kang Yebin speaks with adult Im Suim, Kang Yebin uses *condaysmal* and Im Suim uses *panmal*. Im Suim calls Kang Yebin by name, and Kang Yebin calls Im Suim *acwumma* (‘aunt’ or ‘lady’), and her husband Hwang Chiyoung *acessi* (‘uncle’ or ‘mister’). The other children and adults in the show follow the same pattern throughout.




Image 2

*The Case of "Melo is my Nature"*[7]

The drama "Melo is my Nature[8]", which aired in 2019, is different from "Sky Castle", because instead of depicting a set of families in a neighborhood it follows a group of young adult friends and their coworkers. This provides a different backdrop for common pragmatic strategies. This drama was not particularly highly viewed during its televised broadcast, but it was immensely popular on platforms like Netflix and YouTube[9]. In the following, we examine the speech styles and address terms used by characters. Because characters don't fit into specific families or groups, rather than organizing this section by character type, I will categorize character relationships by different speech styles first, and then by different address terms. This drama has 16 episodes, each around one hour long. The main cast of characters includes three main female characters, some friends and family members, several male love interests, and their coworkers.

*Informal style*

The three main characters, all females and 30 years old, use the informal stye with each other. They also use the informal style with members of their families. Additionally, occasionally old

[7] Pictures in this section were sourced from https://www.dramabeans.com/2019/08/be-melodramatic-episode-1/

[8] Ham, Y. (Executive Producer). (2019). *Melo is my Nature.* [TV Series]. Samhwa Networks. JTBC.
[9] See https://namu.wiki/w/%EB%A9%9C%EB%A1%9C%EA%B0%80%20%EC%B2%B4%EC%A7%88.

friends from their college class are introduced. The three main characters are no longer in frequent contact with these old friends, but they use the informal style together.

The boyfriend of one of the main characters, Beomsoo, uses the informal style with his younger subordinate, as do many other superiors in the workplace.

One of the main female characters, Eunjung, uses the informal style with her boyfriend of several years before he passes away. Eunjung's later love interest uses the informal style with her from their meeting onward, at first out of disrespect and later out of fondness. The other main female character, Hanjoo, uses the informal style with her previous boyfriend, who is older than her and whom she left on bad terms.




Image 3

*Formal style*

Jinjoo and her boyfriend Beomsoo use the formal style together, from the start of their relationship to later on. Eunjung uses the formal style to her later love interest, who speaks informally to her. Hanjoo uses the formal style with her love interest, who is younger than her and her junior in the office, and he uses the formal style with her as well.

Characters throughout the drama use formal style when they first meet each other. Also, Jinjoo and Hanjoo, who are best friends and typically use informal speech with each other, occasionally use formal speech when they are interacting in a work setting, as they sometimes work together. This is the case whether people are looking on or not.




Image 4

*First name and second-person pronoun* ne

The characters in the show who are friends of the same age, such as the three main female characters, all call each other by first name and refer to each other with the second-person pronoun *ne*. Superiors in the workplace also use this pattern to their inferiors, as do older friends of younger individuals.

*Kinship terms*

Outside of families, several of the characters use kinship terms with other characters. Hanjoo refers to her first older boyfriend as *oppa*, before and after they break up. Hyobong, a younger male character, refers to Hanjoo and Jinjoo, friends of his older sister, as *nwuna*. A younger friend and coworker of Jinjoo refers to her as *enni*.

*Name* + ssi *or title*

Throughout the show, titles are often used in the workplace, even between people with close relationships. Hanjoo's love interest refers to her by her work title. Beomsoo's friend and inferior at work refers to him as "director". Beomsoo, even after dating Jinjoo for quite some time, refers to her as Jinjoo *ssi*.

These dramas show that although speech styles and terms of address are never used in exactly the same way, they do consistently convey information about relationships. At times these

speech styles and address terms are imposed upon people in a specific setting (such as classmates at a school or children of parents). In other cases, these speech styles and address terms would appear to be mutually decided upon by interlocutors as they define the quality of relationship they hope to maintain. The pragmatic elements examined in these two dramas here will be analyzed further later in this thesis.

## Section Three: Multilingual DCT Focus Group and Survey Study

### *Methodology*

After establishing norms of Korean pragmatics through previous literature and examples from media, the next step was to ask Korean speakers how they feel about their own language use. In order to better understand how native speakers of Korean use pragmatic tools to portray different levels of intimacy in relationships, I executed a study designed to investigate how native speakers of Korean believe language should be used differently in relationships of varying degrees of intimacy. These perceptions are compared with those expressed during similar studies by native speakers of Japanese, Chinese, and English. The study sought to understand Koreans' mindset about how language should be used, and what meaning they derived from specific kinds of language use, rather than to capture real-life linguistic interactions. Though there are many ways in which this information could have been collected, I agreed with the precedent set in Litosseliti (2003), which claims that focus group research is particularly effective in "examining participants' shared understanding of everyday life, and the everyday use of language and culture of particular groups" (Litosseliti, 2003: 18). A focus group was planned, but COVID related restrictions prompted a switch to an online, survey-based 'focus group'. This online focus group will be distinguished from other, live focus groups moving forward by being referred to as the DCT focus group, because the format of the online assessment was a type of Discourse Completion Task. Discourse Completion Tasks, or DCTs, typically ask participants to supply dialogue for a set of open scenarios. There is much precedent for using these types of tasks in studies related to politeness (see Kiaer et al, 2021; Brown, 2011; Byon, 2006). I recognize valid concerns that a fill-in-the-blanks type survey, along with pre-written focus group questions, cannot fully capture a realistic or completely descriptive sample of language in use. However, I also put forward that the beliefs of Korean speakers surrounding how language should be used in given scenarios, along with the reflections that participants provided about their understanding of language use, cast accurate and important light upon what these speakers would believe about the same language in a real-life scenario—whether they were using it or it was being used to them. Other studies have similarly discussed the contributions Discourse Completion Tasks can make in understanding pragmatic features of language (see Golato, 2003; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Kiaer et al, 2021).

The design of the assessment was simple. I created a small comic with six squares or scenes. The comic depicted two characters. In order to control for multiple factors, one character was described as a 27-year old male, and one was described as a 26-year old male. This allowed me to avoid the problem posed by the fact that, often, Korean speakers immediately select to use informal speech styles with people born in the same year, partly because of traditions connected to class in school. It also allowed me to compare not only intimacy dynamics, but also politeness

dynamics between interlocutors of differing age. In the comic, the two characters are part of the same club or organization. They meet at a bus stop, from which they are both planning to leave for a club meeting. It begins to rain and the bus doesn't show up. The two characters agree to walk to a nearby café, where they will join the club meeting via conference calling. There is no dialogue shown in the comic, but there are empty speech bubbles provided in each scene. Participants were asked to create dialogue for three different versions of the comic. Each version showed exactly the same images and was exactly the same, except for different descriptions of the relationships between the two characters depicted. The relationship descriptions were provided as follows:

1. *When the two characters are very close*
2. *When the two characters don't know each other very well but would like to become friendly*
3. *When the two characters don't know each other very well but would like to keep their distance*

Participants were then asked to participate in a discussion through a series of questions about how they chose to portray the different kinds of relationships through the language they used in the comics, and how they felt this was similar to or different from the way language is used by, to, and around them in their daily lives. I performed this study four times, once with native speakers of Korean, once with native speakers of Japanese, once with native speakers of Chinese, and once with native speakers of English.

The results of this study should not be seen as quantitative or statistically representative in any way. I intentionally selected small groups to obtain qualitative information about how Korean speakers and speakers of other languages use and understand pragmatic skills. In this chapter, I do not attempt to interpret or analyze the results of these studies. Rather, I present them to complete the picture I have drawn of the usage of pragmatic strategies among speakers of Korean. I present the results of the surveys of speakers of other languages to provide context and comparison. In later chapters, I will investigate further about the meanings of these findings when compared with each other and in context of the other data I have presented in this chapter.

*Results*

*Korean DCT Study*

Participants were students at Korea University, all in their 20s. Gender was not reported. There were 33 participants. Results of the assessment varied, but some commonalities were present. Below, I describe some of the commonly occurring themes for each type of relationship.

*Scenarios*

1. When very close:

When the older character spoke to the younger character, all 33 respondents indicated that *panmal*, the informal speech style, would be used. All 33 respondents also showed the older character calling the younger character directly by name. Most respondents indicated that a

vocative particle should be attached to the name (for example, *a* or *i*), and that the vocative *ya* and the second-person pronoun *ne* would be used.

When the younger character spoke to the older character, 32 of the 33 respondents showed *panmal* being used. 25 out of the 33 respondents said the younger character would use the kinship term *hyeng* to address the older character. Often, this was used in combination with the first name (i.e., Hyeonsu *hyeng*). The remaining respondents indicated that the first name by itself would be used, along with the vocative *ya* and the second-person pronoun *ne*.

In the dialogues between these close characters, several of the respondents included humor, slang, or swearing in their dialogues. Only one of the respondents used politeness strategies, like fervent expressions of thanks.

2. When the two characters don't know each other well but would like to become friendly:

When the older character was speaking to the younger character, 28 out of 33 respondents indicated that formal speech, or *condaysmal*, would be used. Among the seven exceptions to this, five showed the older character using informal speech to the younger unilaterally (the younger character responded in formal speech) and two showed that the older character would use informal speech with the younger character mutually. 27 of the 33 respondents depicted the older character addressing the younger character as 'name + *ssi*' or 'name + *nim*' (often suggesting both terms as possibilities). One of the respondents suggested that the older character would call the younger '[club] member + *nim*'. The remaining five respondents suggested the use of first name with a vocative particle such as *a* or *i*.

When the younger character was speaking to the older character, 31 out of 33 respondents showed formal speech, or *condaysmal*, being used. The two exceptions to this both showed mutual usage of informal speech between the characters. Also, 20 of the 33 respondents suggested that the younger character should address the older character as 'name + *ssi*' or 'name + *nim*'. 12 respondents showed that the title *hyeng* or *hyengnim* would be used, sometimes in combination with the first name. One respondent suggested using the first name without a vocative particle.

In the dialogue between these characters, honorific particles like *-si* are used throughout, and names or titles are used more frequently within the dialogues themselves. There is more negotiation about who should pay for the coffee, and discussion about future meetings and interactions. Usage of address terms seems strategic at times, like when discussing payment. In one instance negotiation of address terms—specifically, whether family address terms should be used—is brought up by the characters. In this version of the comic, there seems to be a general feeling of shifting dynamics as address terms fluctuate and speech styles change.

3. When the two characters don't know each other very well but would like to keep their distance:

In this scenario, when the older character was speaking to the younger character, 29 respondents indicated that formal language, or *condaysmal*, would be used. In the remaining instances, informal language was used mutually between the two characters. 27 of the 33 respondents showed the older character addressing the younger character as 'name + *ssi*' or 'name + *nim*'. In three instances, respondents indicated that the older character should call the younger character

as ‘first name + vocative particle’. In two instances, it was suggested that address terms would be completely avoided and the term *ceki*, or ‘over there’, would be used instead. In one instance, the term ‘member + *nim*’ was used.

When the younger character spoke to the older character, 30 of the participants depicted formal speech being used. In the remaining 3 instances, informal speech was used. In 27 instances, it was suggested that the younger character would use ‘name + *ssi*’ or ‘name + *nim*’ to address the older character. In two instances, address terms were avoided and again, the term *ceki*, or ‘over there’ was used, and in one instance the term ‘member + *nim*’ was used. In one instance it was suggested that the family term *hyeng* would be used, and in one instance it was suggested that first name alone would be used.

In this scenario, honorifics and expressions of politeness were often used. Statements were mostly short and impersonal, and self-talk[10] appeared frequently.

*Discussion Questions*

After filling in the comics, participants were asked to answer a series of discussion questions, originally intended for the focus group, but shifted to an online format. Responses shed light on common ideas about the function of language in creating intimacy. Below, I share common responses and insightful comments about these questions.

> Question One: How did you reflect in each scenario that a different type of relationship was being depicted?

27 of the 33 participants cited speech style and address terms as the aspects which showed that the relationships depicted were of varying quality, or varying levels of intimacy.

One participant described at length the complexity of this subject, as follows (*translated by myself*):

*“When the characters were in a very close relationship, I thought they would say whatever came to mind without hesitation, and with complete straightforwardness. I created one scene where one character lightly commented one the other person's faults, half playfully, and on the other hand, another where the other character playfully defended himself.*

*When the characters didn’t know each other well, I thought they would be more polite in the way they spoke to each other. I tried to avoid any statements that could be seen as offensive or harsh, even jokes, and instead of using straightforward requests, I tried to write questions. But when characters hoped to become close eventually, I felt that it was fairly likely that they would propose lowering their speech, [or using panmal], fairly soon in their relationship, so I wrote their dialogue in panmal.*

[10] Self-talk refers simply to the action of talking to one’s self, and while it certainly has interesting pragmatic implications—if a Korean person is unsure which speech style to use, they can speak a thought out loud, as if to themselves, and hope their intended audience will hear without taking offence. Sometimes referred to as ‘soliloquy’, this feature is much more common in Japanese (Hasegawa, 2017: 289), and did appear with frequency in Japanese results later on. However, this area of research is too broad to investigate in much more depth in this thesis.

*In the relationship where the characters were trying to keep their distance, I had the dialogue take place in formal style, because I felt that a suggestion to lower speech, [or use panmal], is used as a sign of wanting to become close. In a way, I felt that in this relationship, characters wouldn't feel much of a desire to express their thoughts or feelings to each other, so I only wrote the most basic dialogue for them."*

This participant differed from the majority of participants in that he or she chose to use *panmal* for the second scenario (where the characters didn't know each other well but wanted to develop a closer relationship). However, he or she did express a common thought process surrounding the decision to "lower" speech; it seems that many participants felt this would eventually happen in the second scenario.

> Question Two: What part of the dialogues changed the relationship the most when adjusted?

Most of the respondents described formal and informal speech, along with address terms, as the elements of conversation which they change to show different types of relationships. One respondent said about speech styles:

"*I felt that in a relationship that wasn't close, formal speech would be used, and in a relationship where closeness was desired, the characters would want to eventually lower their speech.*"

Another respondent said, "*I think the biggest difference is whether* panmal *or* condaysmal *is used. When you use* panmal, *you feel a little less distance, and you feel more like you are becoming close with the other person.*"

Another described address terms in addition to speech styles, saying: "*When you use* panmal*, more intimate conversation can be had, and with address terms, when the younger person uses family words like* enni *or* oppa*, and the older person uses the younger person's name, the two can feel closer to each other. In the case where two people become extremely close, it is possible that the younger person might call the older person by name, as well."*

Many respondents focused more on the actual contents of dialogue—even when they changed speech styles and address terms in each of the situations to reflect different relationships, they didn't mention these factors. These individuals talked about the length of conversation and the effort put in by the conversants to understand each other. One said the following:

"*When you change the richness of the dialogue, the quality of the relationship changes. In the circumstance where two people want to keep their distance from each other, they tend to only say needed things. When the two want to become close, they try to speak more, and consider each other's perspectives with what they say. Also, if two people are very close, they may not need to say much to reflect the way they think about each other."*

> Question Three: In your real life, what do you think is the biggest difference between the way you speak with people you are close with and people you aren't close with?

Again, people tended to focus their responses around speech style and address terms, like the following respondent:

*"With people I am close with, I comfortably use* panmal*, and I use intimate terms of address too, but with people I am trying to keep distance from we use* condaysmal*."*

Others spoke about the type of contents their conversations tend to have:

"*The less close I am with a person, the more I think about and choose carefully what I say to them. We usually don't speak at all, or we talk euphemistically.*"

Another frequently mentioned variable was slang or vulgar language:

*"I feel the difference when I don't use much vulgar language or slang, such as "freaking" or "crazy" and use formal language instead."*

> Question Four: How do you think the conversation with the characters who are hoping to become close and the characters who are hoping to maintain distance are different?

In this section, more than speech stye and address terms, respondents focused on the way that people engaged in conversation. For example, one participant said:

*"I think the difference can be felt in the degree of activeness with which a person suggests doing something together (the difference in how much one involves one's self in another person's decisions or opinions). With characters who are trying to maintain distance, when it starts to rain and one thinks it would be better to go to a café, they might say "I think it might be better to [go to a café] and attend via Zoom", rather than "Do you want to [go to a café] and attend via Zoom together?" The other character would then respond with "I think that's a good idea too." In this way, characters don't suggest doing something together, but rather explain that "I am going to do this," without inserting themselves in each other's decision making process. This seems to be the biggest difference."*

Another pointed out a person's intonation and what they choose to talk about are important:

*"I think the difference in intonation and accent is important, and in the scenario of people that want to get close, the people will typically try to focus their conversation on each other, but with the scenario of people trying to maintain distance, they wouldn't do so."*

Of course, speech style was still mentioned as an important feature in response to this question by many participants. One said, "*I think the biggest difference is that you will want to lower your speech with a person you are trying to be close with, while with a person you are trying to maintain distance with you will use a somehow less kind way of speaking."*

It is worth noting here that participants were not told to focus on speech style or address term, or that these were factors being studied. They were only informed that they should focus on intimacy level. Still, speech style and address term were mentioned again and again, by almost every respondent.

*Japanese Study*

I performed a similar focus group and survey study of native speakers of Japanese, which I will later compare with what was gleaned from the study of Korean speakers. There were 16 Japanese participants, mostly in their 20s and 30s. Some were students and others were professionals, and they came from several different regions. Again, results varied, but here I will present some of the most commonly occurring themes.

*Scenarios*

1. When very close:

When the older character spoke to the younger character, all 16 respondents indicated that the informal speech style would be used. Respondents varied significantly in the way they said the older character would address the younger character. Eight suggested that he would call him by first name alone, and four suggested that the last name would be used alone. One said that either the first or last name could be used alone. One said that 'first name + *kun'* would be used. Two suggested that 'part of the last name + *chan'* should be used as a nickname. Two of these respondents also said that another nickname could be created.

When the younger character spoke to the older character, again all 16 of the respondents showed informal style being used. When the younger character addressed the older character, 11 out of 16 indicated that the first name alone would be used. Three said that the last name alone would be used, and one said that either the first or last would be used. One respondent said that 'first name + *kun'* would be used, and one respondent said that 'part of the first name + *kun'* would be used, as a nickname. One said that 'last name + *kun'* would be used. Finally, one respondent said that 'part of the last name + *san'* would be used, as a nickname. Two of these respondents also said that another nickname could be created.

In the dialogues between these characters, it was fairly common for them to use humor and slang with each other, regardless of age.

2. When the two characters don't know each other well but would like to become friendly:

When the older character spoke to the younger character, 11 respondents indicated that the formal speech style would be used and five respondents indicated that the informal speech style would be used. Respondents varied significantly in the way they said the older character would address the younger character. Five suggested that he would call him by 'last name + *san'*. Five suggested using 'last name + *kun'*, three suggested using 'first name + *kun',* and one said either of these combinations was acceptable.

When the younger character spoke to the older character, 13 of the respondents tended to show formal style being used, and three showed formal style being used. When the younger character was shown addressing the older character, eight respondents thought 'last name + *san'* should be used, one used 'first name + *san'*, six used 'last name + *kun',* two chose 'first name + *kun'*, and one suggested using either these options or 'first name + *senpai'* or 'last name + *senpai'*.

In the dialogues between these characters, slang and humor were uncommon, and politeness strategies were used throughout.

3. When the two characters don't know each other very well but would like to keep their distance:

When the older character spoke to the younger character, five of the respondents indicated that the informal speech style would be used and 11 respondents indicated that the formal speech style would be used. When the older character spoke to the younger character, 13 of the respondents said she would address him as 'last name + *san'*. One respondent said he would use

'first name + *kun'*, one said he would use 'last name + *kun'*, and one said he would use the last name alone.

When the younger character spoke to the older character, 14 of the respondents tended to show formal style being used, and two showed informal style being used. When the younger character was shown addressing the older character, 14 respondents thought 'last name + *san'* should be used, one thought 'first name + *san'* would be used, and one thought 'last name + *kun'* would be used.

In these dialogues, self-talk was used consistently.

*Discussion Questions*

> Question One: How did you reflect in each scenario that a different type of relationship was being depicted?

Eight of the 16 respondents mentioned formal versus informal speech as the aspects which showed different kinds of relationships. Many other respondents chose to focus on length of dialogue or level of interest shown to each other. Some simply referenced the "way of speaking." Only one of the respondents said that they used terms of address to represent different kinds of relationships. One respondent answered as follows (translated by the author):

"*[To reflect differences in relationships] I used honorific or respectful language, or used dialogue that allowed the time together to end as quickly as possible."*

> Question Two: What part of the dialogues changed the relationship the most when adjusted?

Six of the respondents mentioned formal and informal speech as the factors that had the greatest affect on relationships. Others focused again on the length of utterances and the level of interest expressed in the other person. This time, respondents also frequently mentioned address terms. One said, "*I think that through changing the way you address someone, it becomes easier to become close with them.*"

Another respondent focused more on the contents of dialogue, saying the following:

"*Whether in writing or spoken language, I think the relationship changes depending on whether a person thinks of the other before speaking, and whether they express a desire to spend more time together in the future.*"

> Question Three: In your real life, what do you think is the biggest difference between the way you speak with people you are close with and people you aren't close with?

The Japanese focus group didn't answer this question.

> Question Four: How do you think the conversation with the characters who are hoping to become close and the characters who are hoping to maintain distance are different?

In this section, respondents tended to focus on the attitude conversants display to each other throughout a conversation. One said the following:

"*[The difference is] the level of understanding and interest showed to the other person. With someone who is close [or you want to be close with], you know their personality and their*

*preferences, and you are interested in them. For a person with whom you are trying to maintain distance, you don't know them and don't particularly want to. You try not to talk about things that aren't necessary, and you don't ask questions about the other person or react specifically to them."*

Others emphasized the fact that a person can be more transparent with those they want to be close with:

*"With people you are close with or want to be close with, you can show your real self. This is because when you become friends with someone you are aware of their positive and negative traits. With people you aren't close with, you usually try not to show your true self to them. Even if you do, you only show part of yourself. You try to minimize showing joy and sorrow."*

One of the most frequent responses brought up by respondents had to do with attitudes about the future:

*"With someone you want to be close with, you suggest things you want to do or could do together in the future. With someone you want to maintain distance with, you say, 'I'm going to do such and such, what about you? And decide what to do separately…"*

Respect and formality were mentioned by several respondents here as well:

*"With a person I am not close with, I would be careful when speaking with them to not say anything impolite or offensive."*

*Chinese Study*

For the Chinese version of the study, there were 13 participants. Most of them were in their 20s and 30s, and all were native speakers of Mandarin. The results presented here shed light on Chinese pragmatic norms, and will be compared to the Korean results in later chapters.

*Scenarios*

1. When very close:

When the older character spoke to the younger character, most of the 13 respondents showed him using a lot of emotion and being quite expressive with feelings. There was also a large amount of humor used. When the older character addressed the younger character, most of the respondents suggested that some kind of nickname would be used, using the word "little" in combination with part of the first name, or just part of the first name. Some of the respondents suggested using the whole first name.

When the younger character was shown speaking to the older character, the 13 respondents still used a lot of expressions of emotion, such as frustration or concern. They also showed the character making a lot of jokes and laughing frequently. When the younger character was shown addressing the older character, almost all of the respondents thought that he would call him by either a nickname based on part of the first name, attached to a kinship term (such as "brother"), or to another word, like "little."

2. When the two characters don't know each other well but would like to become friendly:

When the older character spoke to the younger character, the 13 respondents didn't express much emotion or humor, but they did show him asking questions and showing interest, as well as making kind offers and invitations for the future. Five of the respondents thought that the older respondent would address the younger respondent by first name alone. The others typically suggested using either the full name, or the first name with a kinship term or title, like "mister".

When the younger character was shown conversing with the older character, respondents continued to show little emotion or humor, but did use a lot of kind language, such as expressions of concern or invitations for future meetings. When the younger character addressed the older character, responses were quite varied, with some suggesting using the full first name and some suggesting using the first or last name attached to the kinship term "older brother".

3. When the two characters don't know each other very well but would like to keep their distance:

When the older character spoke to the younger character in this scenario, none of the respondents showed emotional language, humor, or slang being used, and they also didn't include invitations for the future. Most were quite brief, but still polite. When they showed the older character addressing the younger character, the respondents, several of the respondents suggested using a formal kinship term for "brother", several suggested using the last name with a title, like "classmate," and several suggested avoiding using any name at all. Only one respondent felt that the first name would be used alone.

When the younger character was shown speaking to the older character, the respondents again avoided using emotion or humor, and were brief and polite in their comments. Most of the respondents thought that either the formal term for "brother", or the last name with a title, would be used, or that the character would avoid using any title at all.

*Discussion Questions*

The Chinese speaking participants answered the same questions as the other groups, with varying responses.

> Question One: How did you reflect in each scenario that a different type of relationship was being depicted?

Many of the respondents focused on the level of politeness present in each kind of relationship. Three of the responses are listed as follows (translated by myself):

*"The first is the formality of the dialogue. Dialogues between acquaintances are more casual, and sometimes they don't pay much attention to politeness. People who are unfamiliar will pay attention to the choice of words to prevent offending others. The second is to look at the content of the dialogue. If you want to talk to the other party, the conversation will be more enthusiastic and will take the initiative to open up the topic; otherwise, it will be colder and the content will be shorter."*

*"Good friends talk about everything, and don't need to pay attention to politeness. [Those who] want to be good friends pay attention to politeness and talk about other topics as appropriate. [Those who have] no plans to become closer pay attention to politeness and only talk about…related matters."*

*"First, good friends talk about everything without too many worries. For example, the two good friends above will joke with each other. Second, ordinary friends or friends who are getting acquainted with each other will care about what the other person thinks of themselves and try to show their good side as much as possible. For example, in the above, friends show a gentlemanly demeanor and leave a good impression on each other. Third, friends who are in general or who do not intend to develop will be more self-considered and not very concerned about the other party. For example, the two above are relatively perfunctory to each other."*

> Question Two: What part of the dialogues changed the relationship the most when adjusted?

Many of the respondents focused on the quality of the conversation itself, and what traits were presented by the characters. For example, one said that, "*Familiarity, trust, common vision, recognition time, etc."* would change the relationship the most.

Another gave a similar answer, saying, *"Does the other party make you happy in the conversation and want to get in touch further?"*

A third participant also focused on quality of conversation:

*"Does [the character] listen to the other party's demands carefully and provide timely feedback? If these two points can be continuously and well balanced, the interpersonal relationship should not be too bad."*

> Question Three: In your real life, what do you think is the biggest difference between the way you speak with people you are close with and people you aren't close with?

The Chinese focus group answered this question and the next question together; answers refer to both questions.

> Question Four: How do you think the conversation with the characters who are hoping to become close and the characters who are hoping to maintain distance are different?

Many of the respondents said that the main difference between conversations between people of differing levels of intimacy are the topics covered. One respondent said the following:

*"When comparing conversations between people who want to know the other party better and those who want to maintain a distance with the other party, the difference is that the former will talk about some other topics and increase the sense of familiarity with each other. The latter's conversation topics are limited to a specific area."*

Other respondents described the level of politeness used as a key difference between conversations of people in different kinds of relationships. One explained, *"If you want to maintain a distance, you will be more polite and polite than if you want to know the other party more."*

Another said simply, *"If you want to maintain a distance, stay polite."*

Some of the other respondents focused on showing interest in the other party as the key difference. One described the following:

*"If the character wants to get to know the other party, they will ask the other party many other questions, such as where they live, how long they have been in the club, and perhaps make an appointment to go to the next meeting together. If they don't want to know the other party, they will only ask the other party about the current situation, such as about the content of the club meeting, and they are not interested in other things about the other party."*

*English Study*

For the English round of the focus group and survey study, there were a total of 15 respondents, mostly in their 20s, who were all native speakers of American or British English. There were many common thoughts and feelings expressed here, summarized below. The results will be compared with the Korean results in later chapters.

1. When very close:

When the older character spoke to the younger character, most of the 15 respondents indicated that some kind of slang or humor would be used. There was a very high amount of variety in the suggestions respondents made for what the older character would call the younger character. These included first name, last name alone, dude or man, or some kind of nickname, such as a shortening of the first name.

When the younger character spoke to the older character, again most of the 15 respondents made an effort to show humor or slang being used. When the younger character addressed the older character, again a variety of suggestions were made, including first name, last name, 'dude' or 'man', and a variety of nicknames based on the first name.

2. When the two characters don't know each other well but would like to become friendly:

When the older character spoke to the younger character, the 15 respondents used very little humor and slang, but did express frequent emotion, such as frustration or disappointment. They also tended to ask personal questions, such as about college major or names. Ten of the respondents said that when the older respondent addressed the younger respondent, he would call him by full first name. The rest suggested using a shortened nick name, or a filler word.

When the younger character spoke to the older character, respondents still avoided too much humor or slang, and asked questions about the other character. When the younger character addressed the older character, 12 of the respondents suggested using the full first name, with the rest using shortened names or words like 'dude' or 'man'.

3. When the two characters don't know each other very well but would like to keep their distance:

When the older character spoke to the younger character, some of the 15 respondents made a point to show him using short, curt language, while some had him be extra polite. Humor and slang were not used. When the older character addressed the younger character, all of the respondents said that the first name would be used or using the name would be avoided.

When the younger character spoke to the older character, again some of the respondents showed rude language being used and some showed polite language. Humor and slang were avoided again. All of the respondents suggested that the younger character would call the older character by first name or avoid using a name.

*Discussion Questions*

English speaking focus-group participants were also asked to provide answers to the same series of discussion questions as the Japanese and Korean speakers.

> Question One: How did you reflect in each scenario that a different type of relationship was being depicted?

Some of the respondents talked about general tone of voice, the depth of the conversation, or humor usage. Several of the respondents focused on an assumption that the characters would be doing things together. One said, "*As the conversation progressed from most to least friendly, the characters stopped using 'we' and making assumptions about what to do next.*"

Another said, similarly, "*With close friends, you are automatically a pair, with a person you want to get close to you try and encourage a pairing, and with someone you have no interest in being close to you don't try to encourage a pairing.*"

> Question Two: What part of the dialogues changed the relationship the most when adjusted?

Responses to this question varied among the 15 respondents, but several mentioned the length of utterances as important in indicating the quality of a relationship. Several also pointed out, again, the importance of assuming the two would act as a pair. One said, "*Mostly length of response. Also the pronouns. Like when they were friends they said, "maybe WE should do this" but when they were not friends it was "I" like an individual decision."*

Another gave a similar answer:

*"Formality and never assuming you're welcome to join in on plans with out asking or inviting - if they are not close. Over-sharing and side observations - friends make small chat."*

> Question Three: In your real life, what do you think is the biggest difference between the way you speak with people you are close with and people you aren't close with?

The English focus group answered this question and the next question together; answers refer to both questions.

> Question Four: How do you think the conversation with the characters who are hoping to become close and the characters who are hoping to maintain distance are different?

Here, again, respondents focused heavily on the length of conversation and assumptions about doing things together. They also mentioned humor. Some of the responses were as follows:

*"Close friends will be more comfortable and familiar in their conversation. And not close friends will be more formal but ask leading questions or set up the expectation that they wish to continue being in their company. If you want to distance yourself, you'd take opportunities to go separate*

*ways as soon as it comes up. Or make closed conversation that does not ask or want the other's opinion. Like preemptively saying good bye."*

*"Close conversations hold a lot of warmth and kindness, as well as easy offerings and gratitude, because you love the other person and want to help them, while distanced conversations feel more curt, quiet, or polite, and offers of help are made more out of "it's the right thing to do" or begrudgingly, or because they know the right thing is expected from others and they don't want to disappoint others who may find out and think they are less kind for not offering it, even if they don't like the person. Friends don't do it out of obligation, but actual love and the desire to help and be there for their friends."*

*"I'm much less polite with close friends and much less reserved. When I want to be close to someone I ask them a lot of questions and when I want to distance myself from someone I sound kind of like I have better things to do."*

*"With close friends you are more likely to make group decisions quickly and operate as a cohesive unit. With someone you want to be close with you will attempt to use collective pronouns (unlike a 'distancing yourself' situation), but still ask a lot of questions (similar to a 'distancing yourself' situation)."*

*"The tone of the conversation (how formal/personal) and whether the back and forth stimulates further conversation. If I am not trying to be close to someone, I keep the conversation short and not personal."*

There were some other opinions and viewpoints presented in this focus group, but for the most part responses reflected the ones shown above.

*Initial Takeaways*

In this chapter, I do not attempt to analyze or interpret the results of any of these studies in detail; this will happen in later chapters. However, there are a few takeaways which are immediately apparent from the results of these studies. The first is that there are key differences between pragmatic strategies employed by speakers of languages like Korean and Japanese, which include codified honorifics, and languages like Chinese and English, which do not. While all respondents seemed to see a link between speaking more or less formally and the overall intimacy in a relationship, the Korean and Japanese speakers referred frequently to *panmal* or *condaysmal* and their equivalents, and to the action of "lowering" or "raising" speech style. Additionally, terms of address were important to speakers of all of the languages in displaying information about a relationship, but the terms chosen for each level of intimacy, as well as for different ages of speakers, were by far the most consistent for Korean speakers—they almost always used specific, preset terms of address, rather than the nicknames and various titles chosen by the speakers of all other languages. I will explore this in later chapters, but the first finding of this study seems to be that speakers of languages like Japanese and Korean are linguistically bound to use certain pragmatic tools to display information about relational dynamics, unlike speakers of other languages, and speakers of Korean in particular follow uniquely Korean patterns in their selection of styles of speech and terms of address when doing so.

## Conclusion

Previous literature has discussed Korean speech styles and terms of address in depth. This chapter summarized much of this research, and confirmed the relevance of speech styles and terms of address in conveying information about different relationships by examining the use of both in popular dramas. It also presented the results of a detailed, multilingual study of speakers of Korean and other languages. These results showed that while speakers of many languages use pragmatic strategies related to formality and politeness to convey information about relationships, speakers of Korean and Japanese find speech styles to be essential parts of this pragmatic strategizing. In addition, speakers of Korean are particularly sensitive to using specific types of address terms in different kinds of relationships.

This chapter confirms that speech styles and address terms are essential parts of any conversation about pragmatics in the Korean language, specifically when determining types of relationships in terms of intimacy level. Later chapters will seek to understand exactly how Koreans speakers use speech styles and address terms with other pragmatic skills, and how these skills function in creating in-groups and out-groups.

## Chapter Four

***Pragmatics of Korean: An Analysis of Speech Style and Relationships***

## Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze the results of the information presented from Korean dramas in the previous chapter as they relate to speech styles and relationship type. I then analyze the results of the multilingual DCT focus group and survey presented in the previous chapter, as they relate to speech style, and compare the different ways speech style is used by Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and English speakers. I determine that speech style is seen as essential to establishing relational dynamics, in terms of intimacy and distance, by speakers of Korean, more so than by speakers of other languages. I also use these results to show that speech style in Korean is more related to intimacy dynamics than it is to age dynamics, when other power factors are not at play. I include excerpts from a second, live focus group interview with native Korean speakers about the way they use speech styles to show feelings about relationships.

Secondly, I discuss the results of a published study about the intersection of conflicting power dynamics as they relate to speech styles selected for use in the Korean workplace, and how the results of this study affect the way we should understand the role of intimacy in determining speech style selection. Specifically, I show how factors such as gender, setting, and social position completely change the game in terms of how pragmatic skills should be used and interpreted. I also use examples from the popular Korean film *Parasite* to show how these factors often materialize in daily life.

## Section One: TV Analysis Results for Speech Style

### *Speech Style in "Sky Castle"*

My analysis of the drama "Sky Castle" revealed first and foremost that the use of speech styles in Korean is anything but straightforward. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I broke down the use of speech styles by relationships portrayed in the drama. This breakdown revealed a few common patterns. Again, when looking at television programs, clear conclusions about actual language use cannot be made. However, it can be assumed that language used in the programs is seen as pragmatically acceptable and normal to its viewers. "Sky Castle" shows that people in different roles have several different options in the way they choose to use speech styles.

First, the drama shows clearly that, at least in the same in-group (a classroom, neighborhood, or other organization), children use *panmal* to children. There aren't cases in this drama where children use formal speech to each other. Even between older and younger children in the groups portrayed in this drama, *panmal* is used. This may be due to the neighborhood setting of the show, but even when a new girl moves in to the neighborhood, previously unknown to some of

the other, younger children, they continue to speak *panmal* with her. It seems that the assumption is that *panmal* is appropriate when used between children. Of course, this may change in hierarchical relationships (such as upper and lower classmen in a high school, as school dynamics can be particularly complicated) but in the relationships portrayed here, we see that *panmal* use by children is normal.

Likewise, when adults speak to children in the drama *panmal* is always used. Even among the new move-ins, no adults speak in formal style to the children, whether they are in elementary or high school. This is portrayed as an automatic, normal decision, and doesn't seem largely dependent on in-groups. If "Sky Castle" is to be believed as a model for normalcy in speech style selection, using *panmal* to children of all ages is very natural for adults.

When children speak to adults, however, the drama's portrayal isn't so straightforward. To adults outside of their families, children are always portrayed as using formal speech styles. However, within their families, different patterns seem to be followed. In some families, children use *panmal* when speaking to their parents. In others, formal speech is used. While there is no straightforward description of how these patterns are determined, a simplifying feature of television programs is that often personalities are written to be viewed in a certain light. In "Sky Castle," child characters which are portrayed as more kind and respectful are shown using formal speech to their parent figures, while child characters who are written as either less respectful or less responsible are shown using *panmal* to their parents. Of course, it would be possible to draw conclusions from these portrayals about why the writers of the show chose the speech styles they did, but these conclusions couldn't be verified without further research. What is solidly concludable from this analysis is that it is normal for children in different families to follow different patterns in their usage of speech styles to adults in their families, and that the "norm" differs by family.

Another type of relationship in which speech styles are portrayed being used differently by different people in "Sky Castle" is the spousal relationship. In this drama, only heterosexual, middle-aged couples are shown. In some of these couples, both parties use formal speech to each other. In some, one party (the husband) uses *panmal* while the wife uses formal speech. In some, both parties use *panmal* to each other. Again, it isn't entirely possible to draw conclusions about why these patterns are followed, but what can be easily determined is that it is normal to Korean audiences that different married couples would use speech styles differently with each other. It is possible that elements of closeness or conservativeness in relationships come into play in setting these patterns, but those elements are not immediately apparent in the drama. Certainly, one couple that is portrayed as being very close and having a healthy relationship uses *panmal* exclusively. In another couple, which is portrayed as tense and fraught with problems, the husband consistently uses *panmal* while the wife uses formal speech. As with other relationships, the names of these characters can be seen in the previous chapter.[11]

[11] Interestingly, a wife is never shown exclusively using *panmal* to a husband who speaks formally back to her, a practice which can trace its roots to Confucianism, and is beyond the scope of this paper.

Among adults who are not spouses or family, different patterns can be found in speech styles in "Sky Castle" as well. Sometimes, two adults both use formal speech to each other. In this drama, this is the case when two adults don't have a longstanding close relationship or a superior/inferior relationship working relationship. Even when the adults see each other on a daily basis, often formal forms are maintained. In other adult to adult relationships in the drama, one adult uses *panmal* and one uses formal speech. This is particularly true in workplace relationships, where one adult is a superior to the other. For instance, some of the professors at the hospital use *panmal* to their adult students, who use formal speech to them. At other times, however, people in similar relationships maintain formal speech. Outside of the workplace this also happens. Among adults who have close relationships, where one is older, often one of the adults in the show continues to use *panmal* and one of the adults continues to use formal speech. In these relationship, it seems that age is always a factor. Finally, in some adult to adult relationships, both parties use *panmal.* This is the case in two kinds of scenarios: one, where both adults are the same age and grew up together; and two, where the adults are different ages but are extremely close and have known each other for many years.

The variety of patterns of speech style used in the drama "Sky Castle" makes two things very clear. First of all, there are general patterns—or norms—which are expected to be followed when selecting speech styles. These are often based on age and closeness. However, the second point this drama emphasizes is that these patterns are dynamic and can be influenced by many different factors, making them differ between different family groups—even those who live next door to each other. It is difficult to guess what those factors may be, but it is extremely important to recognize that they do exist. Speech style is patterned in its selection and use but not an automatic selection. "Sky Castle" does a particularly good job of illustrating this, because its characters take so many roles based on age group and family dynamic.

*Speech Style in "Melo is my Nature"*

The drama "Melo is my Nature" is another important window into speech style usage in Korean, but it shows different patterns than "Sky Castle" because of the types of characters portrayed. Unlike "Sky Castle," "Melo is my Nature" tends to portray characters who do not belong to pre-formed in groups, such as families or neighborhoods, and do not fit easily distinguishable age groups or demographics. Instead, its characters are largely similar in age, and often meet organically, either as friends or coworkers, or in dating situations. These relational dynamics shed light on some other aspects of speech style usage in Korean. As with "Sky Castle," my analysis of this drama assumes that Korean viewers of the drama felt it was realistic in its portrayal of language use, so while I cannot conclude that it is representative of real spoken Korean, I do consider the language use portrayed in this drama to be believable and normal for native Korean speakers.

In "Melo is My Nature," the informal style is shown being used primarily among characters who are similar in age and have been friends for years. These friends have known each other at least since university, where they became close, and have continued to be parts of each other's life.

They also use *panmal* with a younger male friend who is a brother to one of them. Informal style is also used by people in the workplace to their inferiors, though sometimes formal style is chosen instead by certain individuals. In these relationships, there is not a particularly close bond. In romantic relationships, informal style is typically used when the relationship was formed in university or another similar setting. When the relationship is new or is being formed in a work setting, formal style tends to be used. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are a few instances where formal style shifts to informal style, but in large part this does not happen. Even in romantic relationships without a significant age difference, where the two individuals become very close, it seems difficult for the shift to occur. Casual form is also shown being used by older characters with a close relationship.

This drama's portrayal of speech styles reveals that, even in a certain type of relationship, like a romantic one, there is not one appropriate way to select a speech style to use. Many factors play into what styles are chosen, including the personalities of interlocutors, the duration of their relationship, age, gender, and where that relationship was formed. This would suggest that speech style is not formulaic in its usage, but is selected for differently in different scenarios. Both dramas, however, make it clear that the informal speech style is used by characters who have either a strongly defined hierarchical relationship or a deeply intimate relationship. In the two shows, the informal is never used among adults when these factors are not at play. However, as mentioned, intimacy does not always require *panmal* usage, and neither does hierarchy.

**Section Two: DCT Focus Group and Survey Study Results**

The DCT study reveals significant differences in the ways relationship quality affects language used by speakers of Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and English. Specifically, it shows that Korean speakers have firm expectations about the way speech styles should be used in relation to intimacy in relationships. Koreans reference speech style as a key feature to be considered when making decisions about language use. This is unique; even in Japanese, where speech styles are also important, there is less direct discussion of styles and more variety in how they are used in different types of relationships. In Chinese and English, this aspect of language is not taken into consideration, but the other kinds of pragmatic strategies discussed by Korean and Japanese speakers are all referenced.

The focus group study described in the previous chapter takes away many outside factors and focuses in on intimacy, revealing interesting connections between perceived intimacy in a relationship and speech style. By examining Korean speakers alongside speakers of other languages, the study also identifies some aspects of Korean speech style usage which are truly unique. Overall, the study finds that Korean speakers unanimously feel that *panmal* will be used in relationships where closeness already exists. Where closeness does not yet exist but is desired, *panmal* is not typically selected, but is consistently mentioned as a goal or desired outcome in the relationship. Where closeness does not exist and is not desired, formal speech is typically selected to be maintained. These results seem to indicate that when other varying factors are

eliminated, closeness and informal speech come hand in hand—but are not necessarily an automatic pairing. It seems that the process of switching from formal to informal speech is seen as a barrier to be worked around in the process of creating more closeness in a relationship.

In Japanese, speakers selected for formal and informal speech in very similar ways to Korean speakers, but with slightly more variation. When discussing their ideas about language and closeness, Japanese speakers were much less likely to explicitly mention speech style than Korean speakers, who consistently brought it up as a kind of tool for creating or showing intimacy. Japanese speakers referenced strategic politeness strategies more often.

Chinese and English speakers both had no concept of speech style, and the focus groups they participated in show that in these languages speakers talk more about strategies for creating closeness or keeping distance than they do about types of language that can be used.

The study shows that all speakers are aware of specific strategies they can use to navigate differing levels of intimacy in relationships, but Korean speakers are by far the most likely to mention speech styles as a conscious part of their dialogue choices when showing intimacy or the lack thereof in a relationship. It seems that more than the other languages represented in this study, Korean depends on speech style to send messages regarding intimacy. Additionally, Koreans are more likely to mention "dropping language", or switching from a formal style to an informal style, as a necessary step in the process of creating intimacy.

**Section Three: Live Focus Group**

To further explore the phenomenon of speech style selection, I held separate live focus groups with small groups of Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and English speakers. In these live focus groups, I asked specifically about speech styles and the way speakers felt they should be used. Again, a similar pattern was discovered: Speech styles do not operate by set rules, but they are inextricably linked to the way interlocutors feel about relationships. Korean and Japanese speakers are consciously aware of how they use speech style to send messages about intimacy, while Chinese and English speakers appear to be limited to strategic social skills. In the following, I will share examples from the Korean live focus group.

*Korean Live Focus Group*

In this focus group, five native Korean speakers who attended high school in Korea, including three females and two males, all in their twenties, participated in a discussion about how they use language to communicate information about intimacy in relationships. I led their conversation, which began with discussion of politeness strategies. Participants' names have been somewhat

modified in order to preserve their privacy. Relevant parts of their discussion are shown below (responses have been translated from Korean by myself):

*Jo Suhyeon: I think the tone is the biggest difference. If you aren't close … you try not to make mistakes. You speak in a calm tone.*

*Park Jinyeong: When your friend makes a joke, if you aren't close you laugh for them. The more close you are, the more mean you can act. You can speak more comfortably.*

*Jo Suhyeon: If you aren't close, you run a simulation of the conversation in your mind so you know, "Ah, this will be okay to say here." And if you aren't close, you pay more attention to using proper grammar.*

*Park Jinyeong: If you aren't close you try to say what the person wants to hear. You might give [superficial] comfort or encouragement. If you are close, you can be more real. If you aren't close, you try to keep the conversation going even if you have to force it. We don't want to be mean. We don't want the other people to think we are mean, so even if we turn them down we do it in a way that won't offend them. I think that's Asian culture.*

Focus group participants then discussed the idea of overhearing an unknown pair of interlocutors at a café. They answered the question of whether they felt they would be able to discern the level of intimacy in a given relationship without knowing the exact content or context of the conversation. Most participants said they could tell based on some contextual clues, not related to grammar.

*Jo Suhyeon: You could tell, I think. You could tell from their reactions… They might not laugh as loud.*

Then, participants talked about the difference between conversing with people they desired intimacy with and people they did not.

*Park Jinyeong: I will make an effort to keep the conversation going with someone I want to be close with. With someone I don't want to be close with, it will end at greetings.*

*Kim Subin: I wouldn't talk very much about myself or my private life if I didn't want to be close with them. It's different if you want to avoid the person.*

*Kwak Minjin: I would ask their name, and ask their age. And then usually I would, for example if it's the same class, I would ask them about homework from the class. And if it's someone I don't know well, I would put a lot of thought into my answer.*

*Kim Subin: You would want to leave a good image of yourself.*

*Jo Suhyeon: The big difference is in the level of activeness or passiveness in creating conversation.*

Up to this point in the focus group conversation, none of the participants had mentioned speech style as a tool for showing intimacy levels in a relationship. I asked the participants directly if they felt that speech style was an important part of sending and receiving cues about intimacy.

Immediately, participants responded that of course, it was. The following shows some of their unprompted discussion about speech style.

*Jo Suhyeon: With a person you are meeting for the first time, you will always use formal speech.*

*Cha Juyong: Even if you are close, if they are older than you, you have to use formal speech.*

*Jo Suhyeon: But this* hyung *and I used* panmal *from the first day we met.*

*Cha Juyong: That's true. It would be awkward if we used formal speech.*

*Jo Suhyeon: Once you have a discussion and an agreement together to use* panmal *then you can. Not if you are the same age, but if they are older than you, definitely.*

*Kim Subin: But if you are talking and you want them to feel comfortable, you can tell them.*

*Jo Suhyeon: But sometimes it just happens naturally. For me, I sometimes start to slowly mix in* panmal *to our speech.*

I then asked participants, "Do you think it's important to use *panmal* in a relationship you want to last?"

*Jo Suhyeon: I think it's important. It's like a first step in creating a close relationship. There are exceptions, but for me it usually happens by starting with lowering the speech.*

*Kwak Minjin: If you use formal speech, it feels like there is a wall there. It changes the way you feel psychologically.*

*Kim Subin: I don't think it's a bad thing to keep using formal speech though.*

*Jo Suhyeon: Isn't it true that keeping using formal language means you are being cautious?*

*Park Jinyeong: It depends on the situation. Sometimes it is more because of respect. It's not because I am being careful, it's because I respect them. And I want to express that. I want to respect them by using formal speech, but if they keep using formal speech it is less comfortable. That means they are keeping a line in the relationship. If they are older it is more comfortable for them to use* panmal*. That's more comfortable.*

*Cha Juyong: But sometimes people just use* panmal *because they think it's their right as an older person. They still have to use the* panmal *in a respectful way.*

*Kim Subin: If both people are using formal speech, they only want to be friends to a point. It might be a business relationship or have some other kind of limit.*

The conversation quickly turned to the question of whether closeness is even possible without the use of *panmal*.

*Kwak Minjin: You can be somewhat close without using* panmal *but it's hard to be very close.*

*Park Jinyeong: But some people are good at speaking in a fun, interesting way even in formal speech. Some people use it in a more comfortable way.*

*Kim Subin: There is formal speech and then there is more formal speech. If you don't want to be close with them in the future, you just keep using formal speech. It's almost like a sign about a deal for the future relationship.*

*Cha Juyong: In my major right now, there are some people that I have worked with for a long time, but the relationship still feels a bit awkward, so we all just use formal speech.*

*Kwak Minjin: Sometimes you just meet someone for a short time, like at an event, and you know you won't see them again. Then you might just use* panmal *to make things comfortable for the moment.*

*Park Jinyeong: Sometimes before you meet them you have to think about how you will use speech style before you meet them so you don't have to worry about it in the moment.*

I asked the participants how they feel when an older person they don't know well asks to use informal speech with them.

*Kwak Minjin: It feels obvious, like of course! It feels like they are trying to become more close with you.*

*Park Jinyeong: You feel good when they ask you too. You want them to be comfortable. It's easy to accept that kind of proposal.*

*Cha Juyong: If they do it in a respectful way it's nice but if they are acting rude then it makes you angry.*

Interestingly, participants also seemed to assume that speech style decisions included more than just two interlocutors in a conversation, and that it might also involve other individuals in a given situation.

*Park Jinyeong: I have to feel out the vibes in the room and act appropriately to that. If someone else there is already using* panmal *with the other person it's easy for me to join in and use* panmal *there. If everyone else is using formal speech, it feels really socially awkward to just start using* panmal *to someone.*

*Jo Suhyeon: Sometimes you switch to* panmal *and then it's awkward, so the next day you end up using formal speech again.*

*Kwak Minjin: In those cases, it seems like you formally became "close" but your heart wasn't there yet. You weren't actually as close as you thought.*

Participants seemed to conclude that switching to lower language does not necessarily precede or determine closeness in a relationship, and that the reverse is also true. However, they were clear that they felt the speech style selected was directly related to the perceived intimacy in a relationship.

*Jo Suhyeon: They come at the same time. You have to get close to use informal speech, but then you reach a point where to get closer you have to switch to informal speech first.*

*Kwak Minjin: It's definitely case by case.*

*Park Jinyeong: Right, it's definitely case by case.*

All of the investigation previously discussed has revealed that speech style is used universally by Korean speakers to communicate information about intimacy in relationships, though the way in which this should be done is not strictly formulaic. Korean speakers have to maintain a keen awareness of the way speech style is being used in a given interaction in order to make the appropriate judgments regarding the level of intimacy existing therein. Certainly, this is anything but straightforward; what in one family is a relationship where *panmal* conveys a sense of closeness, in another family it may indicate a lack of respect. Varying factors in every situation must be taken into consideration in order for the speaker to use speech style correctly.

## Section Four: Film Analysis Study

The studies and research discussed up to this point show that speech style is very linked to intimacy in relationships, along with traditional power and hierarchical structures. However, it can also be shown in the interviews and other data discussed here that decisions about speech style are anything but black and white, and that these decisions are almost always affected by various factors, and will therefore be different in each scenario.

Here I will present several examples of complex decisions about speech style, based on factors more complex than intimacy and power, as depicted in a very popular film. Then, in the following section, I will present the findings of a previously published study which shows research I performed and published with coauthors, to show how some of these factors can be seen in data from real Korean speakers.

### *Parasite Analysis: Speech Style*

The acclaimed, Academy Award winning film *Parasite*[12] takes on themes related to wealth inequality and social hierarchy[13], and also portrays relationships between characters of varying ages and genders, both related and unrelated. It is therefore an interesting media example to examine in its portrayal of natural speech—and particularly, decisions about speech style. In the following I will break down several scenes from the film in their portrayal of speech style.

#### *Scene One: Family and Friends*

From its opening scene, *Parasite* depicts a family living in poverty, consisting of a married father and mother and two adult children—one male and one female. In this scene, the family is

[12] Bong, J. (Director). (2019). *Parasite*. Barunson E&A.
[13] https://www.forbes.com/sites/danidiplacido/2020/02/12/what-is-parasite-really-about/?sh=3ce1bc52394f

shown talking to each other. In typical fashion, the parents are shown using informal speech to each other and their children, while the children are shown using informal speech to each other and formal speech to their parents. The following is an example of dialogue in the scene:

*Dialogue*

Ki-woo: 야 기정아!

ya kicenga!

Hey, Ki-jeong! *(informal)*

Ki-jeong: 응?

*ung?*

What? *(informal)*

Ki-woo: 윗집 아주머니 iptime 와이파이 암호 거셨다 드디어.

*wis-cip a-cwu-me-ni iptime wa-i-pha-i am-ho ke-syess-ta tu-ti-e.*

The lady upstairs finally put a password on the iptime Wifi. *(informal)*

Ki-jeong: 아. 일에서 구까지 눌러봤어?

*a. il-ey-se kwu-kka-ci nwul-le-pwass-e?*

Oh. Did you try one to nine? *(informal)*

Ki-woo: 응. 안돼.

*ung. an-tway.*

Yeah. It doesn't work. *(informal)*

Ki-jeong: 반대 순서도 해봐.

*pan-tay swun-se-to hay-pwa.*

Try the other way around. *(informal)*

Ki-woo: 안된다니까.

*an-toyn-ta-ni-kka.*

It doesn't work. *(informal)*

Mom: 아씨 뭐야 그럼. 그 문자 하고 카톡 하고 다 안되는 거야? 야 김기택. 씨발 자는 척 하지 말고. 어떻게 생각하셔? 핸드폰도 다 끊기고. 와이파이도 다 끊기고. 응? 계획이 뭐야?

*a-ssi mwe-ya ku-lem. ku mwun-ca ha-ko kha-thok ha-ko ta an-toy-nun ke-ya? ya kim-ki-thayk. ssi-pal ca-nun chek ha-ci mal-ko. e-tteh-key sayng-kak-ha-sye? hayn-tu-phon-to ta kkunh-ki-ko. wa-i-pha-i-to ta kkunh-ki-ko. ung? kyey-hoyk-i mwe-ya?*

Damn, what then? Does texting and Kakaotalk not work? Hey, Kim Ki-taek. (Expletive) don't pretend to sleep. What do you think? The phones are all not working. The Wifi isn't either. Huh? What's your plan? *(informal)*

Dad: 기우야.

*ki-wu-ya.*

Ki-woo. *(informal)*

Ki-woo: 예 아버지?

*yey a-pe-ci?*

Yes father? *(formal)*

Dad: 와이파이. 높게 들어야 돼 높게… 구석 구석… 샅샅이… 그치 이렇게 해야 돼.

*wa-i-pha-i. noph-key tul-e-ya tway noph-key… kwu-sek kwu-sek… sath-sath-i… ku-chi i-leh-key hay-ya tway.*

The Wifi, you have to hold it up high. All the corners, thoroughly. That's right, you need to do it that way. *(informal)*

Ki-woo: 잡힌다!

*cap-hin-ta!*

I got it! *(informal)*

Ki-jeong: 진짜? 잡혔어?

*cin-cca? cap-hyess-e?*

Really? Did it connect? *(informal)*

Ki-woo: 응. 잡히지. 일러와봐…

*ung. cap-hi-ci. il-le-wa-pwa…*

Yeah, it did. Come here. *(informal)*

Mom: 얘들아. 되는 거야?

*yay-tul-a. toy-nun ke-ya?*

Kids, is it working? *(informal)*

Ki-woo: 응. 돼.

*ung. tway.*

Yeah, it is. *(informal)*

Mom: 그러면은 카톡 한번 확인해봐. 피자 시대 연락 준다고 그랬거든.

*ku-le-myen-un kha-thok han-pen hwak-in-hay-pwa. phi-ca si-tay yen-lak cwun-ta-ko ku-layss-ke-tun.*

Then check Kakaotalk. Pizza Generation said they would contact us. *(informal)*

Ki-woo: 잠깐만. 응 여기네. 피자 시대.

*cam-kkan-man. ung ye-ki-ney. phi-ca si-tay.*

One second. Yep it's here. Pizza Generation. *(informal)*

The viewer instantly becomes aware that this family follows a fairly typical pattern in their choices of speech style. The parents use informal speech with each other and with the children, and the children speak informally to each other. Interestingly, but also not unusually, the children use formal speech to their father, but informal speech to their mother.

When a close friend of Ki-woo, the son, is introduced to the scene, another interesting dynamic is shown as the friend uses informal speech with the children and formal speech with the parents, who in turn speak in *panmal* to him. Min-hyeok, the friend, first addresses a stranger outside the house who is clearly intoxicated, using informal speech to him as well, despite an obvious age difference.

*Dialogue*

Min-hyeok: 아저씨 왜 그래, 그거 화장실 아니야

*a-ce-ssi way ku-lay, ku-ke hwa-cang-sil a-ni-ya.*

Mister, why are you doing that? That's not a bathroom. *(informal)*

Man: 야 임마!

*ya im-ma!*

Hey punk! *(informal)*

Min-hyeok: 뭘 잘 했다고 쳐다봐? 정신 차려 정신!

*mwel cal hayss-ta-ko chye-ta-pwa? ceng-sin cha-lye ceng-sin!*

What are you looking at? Get it together! *(informal)*

Min-hyeok: 아버님 안녕하세요

*a-pe-nim an-nyeng-ha-sey-yo.*

Father, Hello. *(formal)*

Dad: 어 그럼.

*e ku-lem.*

Yeah, yeah. *(informal)*

Ki-woo: 야 너 여기 왠 일이야?

*ya ne ye-ki wayn il-i-ya?*

What are you doing here? *(informal)*

Min-hyeok: 문자 보냈잖아 못 봤어? 아 죄송합니다 식사 중에

*mwun-ca po-nayss-canh-a mos pwass-e? a coy-song-hap-ni-ta sik-sa cwung-ey.*

Didn't you see my text? Ah, sorry, in the middle of your meal. *(informal)*

Dad: 아니야 밥 먹는 거 아니야

*a-ni-ya pap mek-nun ke a-ni-ya.*

No, no we're not eating. *(informal)*

Min-hyeok: 기정인 잘 지냈어?

*ki-ceng-in cal ci-nayss-e?*

Ki-jeong, how have you been? *(informal)*

Ki-jeong*:* 응 오빠도?

*ung o-ppa-to?*

Good, you? *(informal)*

Ki-woo: 야 밖에서 먹지 왜 여기까지 찾아왔어?

*ya pakk-ey-se mek-ci way ye-ki-kka-ci chac-a-wass-e?*

Hey, why didn't we just meet to eat outside, you didn't need to come all the way here. *(informal)*

Min-hyeok's choices about speech style reflect intimacy with his friend, respect for friends' parents, and a lack of both with the stranger he addressed. His uses of formal and informal speech cannot automatically be coded as having the same meanings in each situation.

*Scene Two: The Pizza Shop*

In this scene, an interesting power dynamic is added as a variable in decisions about speech style as a young manager of a pizza shop speaks with members of the family, who may be older than her. The following is an example of dialogue from this scene:

*Dialogue*

Mom: 구체적으로 뭐가 문제예요?

*kwu-chey-cek-u-lo mwe-ka mwun-cey-yey-yo?*

What exactly is the problem? *(formal)*

Pizza worker: 아니 예를 들면 여기 한번 봐요. 응? 라인이 아주 더럽게 접혔죠? 이거 왜 접혀 있는 건데? 응? 왜 틔어나와요? 이거 접다 만 거잖아요 지금? 아까 전체 다 보니까 박스 네 개에 한 개 꼴 이런 상태야. 넷중 하나가 불량인 거지.

*a-ni yey-lul tul-myen ye-ki han-pen pwa-yo. Ung? La-in-I a-cwu te-lep-key cep-hyess-cyo? I-ke way cep-hye iss-nun ken-tey? Ung? Way thuy-e-na-wa-yo? I-ke cep-ta man ke-canh-a-yo ci-kum? A-kka cen-chey ta po-ni-kka pak-su ney kay-ey han kay kkol i-len sang-thay-ya. Neys-cwung ha-na-ka pwul-lyang-in ke-ci.*

I mean, for example, look here. Huh? The line is so sloppy, isn't it? Why is it folded like this? Huh? Why does it stick out? You quit halfway through, didn't you? Looking at all of them, one of four of them is like this. That's one defective box out of every four! *(informal)*

Mom: 그래서. 정말 돈 10 프로 떼서 주겠다는 거예요 지금?

*ku-lay-se. ceng-mal ton 10phu-lo ttey-se cwu-keyss-ta-nun ke-yey-yo ci-kum?*

So you're really going to take off ten percent of our fee? *(formal)*

Pizza worker: 불량률에 비하면 페널티가 적은 거지 안그래요?

*pwul-lyang-lyul-ey pi-ha-myen phey-nel-thi-ka cek-un ke-ci an-ku-lay-yo?*

Compared to how many are defective that's a small amount, isn't it? *(formal)*

Mom: …너무한 거 아니예요?

*ne-mwu-han ke a-ni-yey-yo?*

Isn't that too harsh? *(formal)*

Pizza worker: 이 봐요. 이게 그렇게 간단한 문제가 아니야. 이런 불량 박스 하나하나가 얼마나 큰 데미지 주는 줄 알아요? 우리 브랜드 이미지에?

*I pwa-yo. I-key ku-leh-key kan-tan-han mwun-cey-ka a-ni-ya. I-len pwul-lyang pak-su ha-na-ha-na-ka el-ma-na khun tey-mi-ci cwu-nun cwul al-a-yo? Wu-li pu-layn-tu i-mi-ci-ey?*

Look here. It's not that simple. Do you know how much damage one of those defective boxes does to us? To our brand image? *(formal)*

Mom: 브랜드… 박스 접을 사람 하나 없는 것들이…

*pu-layn-tu… pak-su cep-ul sa-lam ha-na eps-nun kes-tul-i…*

Brand? A company that doesn't even have anyone to fold its boxes… *(informal)*

Pizza worker: 뭐라고?

*mwe-la-ko?*

What did you say? *(informal)*

Here we see that the pizza shop manager is in a position of power relative to the poor family she is speaking with, and her use of informal speech may be influenced by that. Certainly there is no intimacy to be seen between interlocutors here, and typical seniority patterns of age or rank in a company are also nonexistent. The older mother uses formal speech to the manager, even though she is questioning her decisions. Whether the manager's choice to use informal speech comes from her status as the hirer or from her perception of the mother's socioeconomic status is unclear, but both factors are certainly possible.

*Scene Three: The Maid*

In this scene, we see interactions with the maid of the rich family in the film and other characters. There is a clear hierarchy, as the family employs the maid, and there is also an age difference, as she is significantly older than both the parents in the rich family and their children. The following is an example of dialogue from this scene:

*Dialogue*

Maid: 사모님

*sa-mo-nim*

Ma'am? *(formal)*

Madam: 네?

*ney?*

Yes? *(formal)*

Maid: 매실청 드실래요? 꿀까지 풀어가지고 긴장 확 풀리게

*may-sil-cheng tu-sil-lay-yo? Kkwul-kka-ci phwul-e-ka-ci-ko kin-cang 71awk phwul-li-key.*

Would you like some plum tea? With some honey, to help ease your nerves. *(formal)*

Madam: 어어 네. 너무 좋아요. 저기요. 매실청 두개 타서 다송이 방으로 갖고 올라가세요. 언니는 학부모가 아니니까 들어가도 되는 거지.

*e-e ney. ne-mwu coh-a-yo. ce-ki-yo. may-sil-cheng twu-kay tha-se ta-song-i pang-u-lo kac-ko ol-la-ka-sey-yo. en-ni-nun hak-pwu-mo-ka a-ni-ni-kka tul-e-ka-to toy-nun ke-ci.*

Yes, yes. That's great. Oh! Get two of them and bring one upstairs. You're not a parent, so you're allowed in the room. *(informal)*

Maid: 어 그러네. 그럼 내가 보고 얘기해줄게요.

*e ku-le-ney. ku-lem nay-ka po-ko yay-ki-hay-cwul-key-yo.*

That's right. Then I'll check it out and let you know. *(formal)*

The maid has clearly been working with the rich wife for some time, and a level of intimacy exists between them. Both can be seen switching between formal and informal forms, but ultimately the maid employs more respectful endings than the rich wife. Both age-related hierarchy and positional hierarchy are at play here, and so is intimacy. The speech styles change accordingly.

*Scene Four: The Driver*

At one point in the film the father of the poor family becomes employed as the rich family's new driver. The scene shown here has him speaking with the rich wife and the rich husband, separately. He, like the family's maid, is older than both the husband and the wife, but he is their employee.

*Dialogue*

Boss: 제가 너무 답답해서 나왔습니다. 하루 종일.

*cey-ka ne-mwu tap-tap-hay-se na-wass-sup-ni-ta. ha-lwu cong-il.*

I was so frustrated, so I came out. All day…*(formal)*

Driver: 네 이해합니다. 와글와글 사람들 한테 시달이시는데. 차에서라도 고요하게.

*ney i-hay-hap-ni-ta. wa-kul-wa-kul sa-lam-tul han-they si-tal-i-si-nun-tey. cha-ey-se-la-to ko-yo-ha-key.*

I understand. You have to attend to people all day. You can rest, if only in the car. *(formal)*

Boss: 감사합니다. 길을 워낙 잘 아시나봐요.

*kam-sa-hap-ni-ta. kil-ul we-nak cal a-si-na-pwa-yo.*

Thank you. You really must know the roads well. *(formal)*

Driver: 삼팔선 밑으로는 골목까지 환합니다…

*sam-phal-sen mith-u-lo-nun kol-mok-kka-ci hwan-hap-ni-ta.*

I know even the alleyways in South Korea. *(formal)*

Boss: 저도 한가지 일을 오래하신 분 존경합니다…역시 코너링이 훌륭하시네요.

*ce-to han-ka-ci il-ul o-lay-ha-sin pwun con-kyeng-hap-ni-ta…yek-si kho-ne-ling-I hwul-lyung-ha-si-ney-yo.*

I respect people who do one job for a long time. Your turns are really smooth. *(formal)*

Driver: 사모님 제 뒤에 보이는 이분 혹시…

*sa-mo-nim cey twi-ey po-i-nun i-pwun hok-si.*

Ma'am, is the person behind me…? *(formal)*

Madam: 어머. 우리 아줌마네요.

*e-me. wu-li a-cwum-ma-ney-yo.*

Oh, that's our maid! *(formal)*

Driver: 아 … 맞구나 이거… 어떡하지 이거… 나이분 얼굴이… 긴가 민가 해가지구요… 제가 며칠전에 건강검진 받으러 병원에 갔다가요… 집 사람 한테 카톡 보내려고 셀카 찍는데 이분이 뒤에 보이더란 말입니다.

*a mac-kwu-na i-ke… e-ttek-ha-ci i-ke… na-i-pwun el-kwul-i… kin-ka min-ka hay-ka-ci-kwu-yo… cey-ka mye-chil-cen-ey ken-kang-kem-cin pat-u-le pyeng-wen-ey kass-ta-ka-yo… cip sa-lam han-they kha-thok po-nay-lye-ko seyl-kha ccik-nun-tey i-pwun-i twi-ey po-i-te-lan mal-ip-ni-ta.*

Ah, that's right… What to do…. I know her face… I wasn't sure though. A few days ago I went to the hospital for a check-up... I was trying to send a message to my wife with a selfie, but this person was behind me. *(formal)*

Madam: 응. 어디 통화하고 있는 거네 지금.

*ung. e-ti thong-hwa-ha-ko iss-nun ke-ney ci-kum.*

Ah. She's on the phone, right? *(informal)*

Driver: …본의 아니게 아주머니께서… 굉장히 목소리가 크시더라구요.

*pon-uy a-ni-key a-cwu-me-ni-kkey-se… koyng-cang-hi mok-so-li-ka khu-si-te-la-kwu-yo.*

Yeah, I didn't intend to but …. Her voice is really loud. *(formal)*

Madam: 아니 그러니까 괜찮아 말해봐. 응? 결액? 아 설마.

*a-ni ku-le-ni-kka kwayn-chanh-a mal-hay-pwa. ung? kyel-ayk? a sel-ma.*

No, it's okay, tell me. Huh? What? Tuberculosis? No way. *(informal)*

Driver: 진짜. 활동성 결액 판단 받았다고…검색해보세요…

*cin-cca. hwal-tong-seng kyel-ayk phan-tan pat-ass-ta-ko… kem-sayk-hay-po-sey-yo…*

Really. She said she was diagnosed with active tuberculosis. *(formal)*

Boss: 김 기사님. 갈비찜 잘 하는 데 혹시 좀 아세요? 너무 멀리 말고 이 근처에?

*kim ki-sa-nim. kal-pi-ccim cal ha-nun tey hok-si com a-sey-yo? ne-mwu mel-li mal-ko i kun-che-ey?*

Mr. Kim, Do you know anywhere that has braised ribs? Not too far away, in this area? *(formal)*

Driver: 네. 그럼 저녁 밖에서 드시고 들어가시는…

*ney. ku-lem ce-nyek pakk-ey-se tu-si-ko tul-e-ka-si-nun.*

Yes, I see, so you are eating outside then? *(formal)*

Boss: 글쎄요. 아 오늘 따라 왜 이렇게 갈비찜 먹고 싶은 거냐… 원래 우리 그 아주머니가 갈비찜 진짜 잘 하셨거든.

*kul-ssyey-yo. a o-nul tta-la way i-leh-key kal-pi-ccim mek-ko siph-un ke-nya… wen-lay wu-li ku a-cwu-me-ni-ka kal-pi-ccim cin-cca cal ha-syess-ke-tun.*

I suppose. Why am I craving braised ribs so much today? Our old maid was really good at making them. *(informal)*

Driver: 아 저기. 그제 관두신…?

*a ce-ki. ku-cey kwan-twu-sin.*

Ah, the one that quit the other day? *(formal)*

Boss: 네…. 그래도 여러모로 아쉽죠. 상당히 괜찮은 아줌마였거든 그 양반이. 집안 구석구석 관리도 잘 하고. .. 내가 원래 선을 못 지키는 사람이 제일 싫은데.

*Ney…. Ku-lay-to ye-le-mo-lo a-swip-cyo. Sang-tang-hi kwayn-chanh-un a-cwum-ma-yess-ke-tun ku yang-pan-i. cip-an kwu-sek-kwu-sek kwan-li-to cal ha-ko... nay-ka wen-lay sen-ul mos ci-khi-nun sa-lam-I cey-il silh-un-tey.*

Yes. It’s too bad. She was a great maid, that person. She managed every corner of the house. But I don’t like people who cross the line. *(formal)*

Driver: 그러면은 사모님이 빨리 구하셔야 되겠네요. 새로 집안 일을 하실 분.

*ku-le-myen-un sa-mo-nim-I ppal-li kwu-ha-sye-ya toy-keyss-ney-yo. Say-lo cip-an il-ul ha-sil pwun.*

Then you will need to hire a new maid quickly. Someone to do the housework. *(informal)*

Boss: 이제 큰 일 났죠. 그 아줌마 없이 우리 일주일만 지나봐. 집안이 완전 쓰레기통 되지…

*i-cey khun il nass-cyo. Ku a-cwum-ma eps-I wu-li il-cwu-il-man ci-na-pwa. Cip-an-I wan-cen ssu-ley-ki-thong toy-ci.*

It's a big deal. Without her see if we last a week. The house will turn into a trash can. *(informal)*

Driver: 그래도 사랑하시죠?

*ku-lay-to sa-lang-ha-si-cyo?*

But you still love her right? *(formal)*

Boss: 그럼요. 사랑하죠. 사랑이라고 봐야지… 뭐지 이게?

*ku-lem-yo. sa-lang-ha-cyo. sa-lang-i-la-ko pwa-ya-ci… mwe-ci i-key?*

Of course. I love her. I'd have to call it love, right? What's this? *(informal)*

Driver: 예 저도 최근에 알게된 업첸데… 멤버쉽 위주로만 운영이 되구요….

*yey ce-to choy-kun-ey al-key-toyn ep-cheyn-tey… meym-pe-swip wi-cwu-lo-man wun-yeng-i toy-kwu-yo.*

Yes, I found out about it recently as well… It operates on a membership basis. *(formal)*

Boss: 명함만 봐도 고급스럽네 진짜. 디자인도 그렇고. 근데 김 기사님은 어떻게 알게 된 거지 이 업체는?

*myeng-ham-man pwa-to ko-kup-su-lep-ney cin-cca. ti-ca-in-to ku-leh-ko. kun-tey kim ki-sa-nim-un e-tteh-key al-key toyn ke-ci i ep-chey-nun?*

Even looking at the business card I can tell it's high class. The design, too. But how did you find out about it? *(informal)*

Driver: 아 저 한테도 연락이 왔었죠.

*a ce han-they-to yen-lak-i wass-ess-cyo.*

Oh, they contacted me, too. *(formal)*

In this scene, the viewer watches as the driver continues to speak formally and the boss slips into informal styles here and there, when asking questions and making requests. The two have no previous relationship, so intimacy is not a factor, and the age difference is obvious. The boss makes a decision to stick mainly to formal styles while also inserting informal expressions, indicating his power in the situation, while the driver continues to use mainly formal styles.

*Scene Five: The Student*

Later in the film, Ki-woo (the son of the poor family) becomes a tutor to the rich family's older daughter, who is in high school. He is technically working for her family, but he is her teacher. His status as a poor person is not known to the family, who believe he is a reputable teacher.

*Dialogue*

Ki-woo: 24 번 답 확실해? 흠. 다혜 너 방금 뒷 문제들 한참 풀다가 지금 24 번으로 또 다시 돌아왔어. 그랬지?

*24pen tap hwak-sil-hay? hum. ta-hyey ne pang-kum twis mwun-cey-tul han-cham phwul-ta-ka ci-kum 24pen-u-lo tto ta-si tol-a-wass-e. ku-layss-ci?*

Are you sure on number 24? Hmm. You solved all the problems in the back and then came back to 24. Right? *(informal)*

Da-hye: 네

*ney*

Yes. *(formal)*

Ki-woo: 만약 지금 실전 수능 첫 문제였으면 너 첫 문제부터 완전 얽힌 거야… 심장이 거짓말을 못 해.

*man-yak ci-kum sil-cen swu-nung ches mwun-cey-yess-u-myen ne ches mwun-cey-pwu-the wan-cen elk-hin ke-ya-ss sim-cang-i ke-cis-mal-ul mos hay.*

If this was the real test you failed from problem one. The heart doesn't lie. *(informal)*

In this scene, Ki-woo chooses to continue to use informal speech styles, while Da-hye, his student, speaks to him in formal styles. As there is no previously established intimacy to speak of, this decision may be largely rooted in the teacher to student relationship, but Ki-woo may also be choosing to do this with future intimacy in mind. He and Da-hye, who are just a few years apart in age, begin a romantic relationship later in the film.

*Scene Six: Confrontation*

In this scene, the poor family, who are employed by the rich family, confront the previous maid of the rich family and her husband, who are also poor. Their confrontation introduces new factors to decisions about speech style. The dialogue shown here is between the mother of the poor family and the maid.

*Dialogue*

Maid: 이거 같이 좀 밀어봐요!

*i-ke kath-i com mil-e-pwa-yo!*

Help me push this! *(formal)*

Mom: 이게 다 뭐야?

*i-key ta mwe-ya?*

What is all this? *(informal)*

Maid: 압니다. 황당하신 거. 저기 저라도 황당할 것 같아요. 근데 같은 일을 하는 사람끼리… 그쵸 충숙이 언니?

*ap-ni-ta. hwang-tang-ha-sin ke. ce-ki ce-la-to hwang-tang-hal kes kath-a-yo. kun-tey kath-un il-ul ha-nun sa-lam-kki-li… ku-chyo chwung-swuk-i en-ni?*

I know. It's overwhelming. I would be overwhelmed, too. But as people who do the same line of work… right, Chungsook? *(formal)*

Mom: 내 이름은 어떻게 알아?

*nay i-lum-un e-tteh-key al-a?*

How do you know my name? *(informal)*

Maid: 사실 막내 다송이 하고는 아직도 문자 하거든요. 식구들 캠핑 가는 것 알고서 지금 온 거예요. 언니랑 단둘이 얘기 좀 하고 싶어서. 걱정 마세요 충숙이 언니….

*sa-sil mak-nay ta-song-i ha-ko-nun a-cik-to mwun-ca ha-ke-tun-yo. sik-kwu-tul khaym-phing ka-nun kes al-ko-se ci-kum on ke-yey-yo. en-ni-lang tan-twul-i yay-ki com ha-ko siph-e-se. kek-ceng ma-sey-yo chwung-swuk-i en-ni.*

Actually I still stay in touch with the youngest, Dasong, by text. So I heard the family was going camping, and that's why I came today. I wanted to talk with you, just the two of us. Don't worry Chungsook. *(formal)*

Mom: 말끝마다 언니… 언제 봤다고…

*mal-kkuth-ma-ta en-ni… en-cey pwass-ta-ko.*

Why do you keep calling me that? We don't know each other. *(informal)*

Maid: 언니 저는 문광이라고 해요…

*en-ni ce-nun mwun-kwang-i-la-ko hay-yo.*

My name is Mungwang. *(formal)*

Mom: 그니까…그 부엌에서 일하면서 먹은 거 맨날 빼돌려가지고 남편 맥였구나… 아 근데 도대체 언제부터 여기 산거야 남편이? 그렇게 됐다 이거지… 나는 전화를 할 수 밖에 없어 경찰 한테.

*ku-ni-kka… ku pwu-ekh-ey-se il-ha-myen-se mek-un ke mayn-nal ppay-tol-lye-ka-ci-ko nam-phyen mayk-yess-kwu-na… a kun-tey to-tay-chey en-cey-pwu-the ye-ki san-ke-ya nam-phyen-i? ku-leh-key twayss-ta i-ke-ci… na-nun cen-hwa-lul hal swu pakk-ey eps-e kyeng-chal han-they.*

So… The stuff you ate working in the kitchen, you would steal it and bring it to your husband… But when in the world did he start living here? So that's what happened… I have no choice but to call them, the police. *(informal)*

Maid: 아니… 어쩐지… 윤 기사 갑자기 짤릴 때부터 이상하더라니. 야 니네 뭐. 어? 일 가족 사기단 뭐 이런 거냐?

*a-ni… e-ccen-ci… yun ki-sa kap-ca-ki ccal-lil ttay-pwu-the i-sang-ha-te-la-ni. ya ni-ney mwe. e? il ka-cok sa-ki-tan mwe i-len ke-nya?*

No… No wonder. Ever since Driver Yoon suddenly got fired I felt strange. What are you all? Huh? A one family scam group? Is that what you are? *(informal)*

Mom: 저기 동생.

*ce-ki tong-sayng.*

Hey, sis. *(formal)*

Maid: 동생 [이라고 부르지마] 이 쌍년아.

*tong-sayng [i-la-ko pwu-lu-ci-ma] i ssang-nyen-a.*

Don't call me sis, [expletive]. *(informal)*

During this scene, an interesting change in power dynamics takes place as the mother of the poor family discovers the maid's wrongdoing, the maid implores her help and understanding, and then the maid finds out about the poor family's own misdemeanors. As the power dynamic shifts, so do decisions about speech style; the mom continually uses informal speech styles to the maid, who uses formal speech styles in reply, until the power shift happens. After this, the mom begins to speak formally and the maid shifts to informal speech.

*Summary of Film Analysis*

In these scenes, each character makes individual choices regarding which speech styles to use in each circumstance. In some scenes, these choices seem fairly straightforward, as family members and friends speak to each other in combinations of intimate and respectful ways. In other scenes, decisions are clearly made based off of an established power dynamic, such as that between a student and teacher. In other scenes there are multiple kinds of hierarchy at play, as some characters with a higher level of power may be younger than the person with whom they are speaking. Choices about speech style are made with these complex dynamics in mind, and rarely is just one speech style used in these interactions. Often, characters are seen switching between formal and informal styles. In other scenes, decisions about speech style seem to be influenced by underlying demographic issues, such as socioeconomic or employment status.

This film illustrates that each interlocutor is constantly required to make active decisions regarding which speech styles to utilize in a given interaction, and that these decisions are influenced by a huge variety of factors, none of which can be applied universally without specific consideration to details.

**Section Five: Native Korean Speakers' Perceptions of Half-talk**

In order to understand more about speech styles in Korean, and more particularly, the way that Korean speakers decide how to shift between those speech styles, we must first understand the prevailing attitudes of native Korean speakers regarding these speech styles. In the following, I will discuss the results of a previously published study, including a series of interviews, an online analysis study, a newspaper analysis study, and a questionnaire study. The results of this study have been published separately, and should therefore *not* be seen as a new contribution of this thesis; rather, they should be viewed in concert with the other methodologies undertaken here. Previously published charts and other graphics can be found in Kiaer, Park, Choi, and Driggs (2019). Where wording is similar to the published study, it will be cited accordingly as Kiaer et al (2019).

In this section, unlike in other places in the thesis, I will refer mostly to one specific speech style: the informal form, which I will refer to here as half-talk, to match the Korean *panmal*. I will also refer to *condaysmal* at times as the -yo form, to correspond with the way Korean respondents referred to it. This should not be a source of confusion to the reader, as the use of this term here has been selected to match the published study.

*Interview: How do Koreans use and feel about half-talk?*

I set out to collect qualitative information from people in various sociological groups. The main goal of this exercise was to find out about the difference of half-talk usage among different gender and age groups. It is certainly possible that people of different ages will use half-talk differently; younger people may shift to half-talk more readily than older people. This would fit with previous writing on the subject which says that "…the absolute ages of the speaker and the listener also exert an important influence on language use. As both speaker and listener grow older, their titles and the way they are addressed change" (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 268). I therefore designed and conducted an online interview, which asked its respondents several questions. Respondents were asked to identify five individuals with whom they have a relationship they consider 'close', and five individuals with whom they have a relationship they do not consider 'close', but still meet with frequently. However, the close individuals could not include family members, and all individuals had to be people with whom the respondents interact with often. Then, respondents were asked to describe how they tend to communicate with each of the individuals listed—specifically, whether half-talk is used or not used by one or both parties. There were four groups of people interviewed: men in their 20s, women in their 20s, men in their 40s or older, and women in their 40s or older. The results of these interviews should not be seen as statistically representative of the population as a whole, as the sample size was very small, but rather should be seen as reflective of some of the opinions and experiences of people in these different demographics.

There were ten men in their 20s interviewed. When asked about people with whom they have a 'close' relationship, these respondents tended to use words like friend, *hyeng* (형; kinship term

used for older male friends), or *nwuna* (누나; kinship term used for older female friends), and often described people they knew from school. In 100 percent of 'close' relationships described, half-talk was reported to be used by one or more parties. When asked about people they see on a day to day basis but do not feel particularly 'close' with, respondents tended to use words like coworker. In 68 percent of these relationships, half-talk was reported to be used by one or more parties.

There were ten women in their 20s interviewed. When asked about people with whom they have a 'close' relationship, these respondents tended to use words like friend or *enni* (언니; kinship term used for older female friends). In 94 percent of 'close' relationships described, half-talk was reported to be used by one or more parties. When asked about people they see on a day to day basis but do not feel particularly 'close' with, respondents tended to describe coworkers, teachers, friends from school or friends from church. In 66 percent of these relationships, half-talk was reported to be used by one or more parties.

There were 15 women in their 40s or older interviewed. When asked about people with whom they have a 'close' relationship, these respondents tended to use words like friend, *enni* (언니), coworker, neighbor, or parent of a child's friend. In 69.3 percent of 'close' relationships described, half-talk was reported to be used by one or more parties. When asked about people they see frequently but do not feel particularly 'close' with, respondents tended to use words like friend, coworker, or *senpay* (선배; senior from school or another setting). In 42.7 percent of these relationships, half-talk was reported to be used by one or more parties.

There were ten men in their 40s or older interviewed. When asked about people with whom they have a 'close' relationship, these respondents tended to use words such as friend, *tongsayng* (동생; kinship term used for younger friends), or coworker. In 80 percent of 'close' relationships described, half-talk was reported to be used by one or more parties. When asked about people they see frequently but do not feel particularly 'close' with, respondents tended to use words like coworker. In 22 percent of these relationships, half-talk was reported to be used by one or more parties.

The judgment of respondents of their relationships as either close or not close cannot be used as an objective variable in statistical sense; it is very possible that even though the respondent feels their coworker is not close with them, the coworker feels differently. This may explain why half-talk was used so frequently in relationships that weren't described as 'close' (though it was used much more frequently in 'close' relationships).

The interview results suggest that the appropriateness of half-talk is not based entirely on age; older men and women interviewed tended to use half-talk in their close relationships just like younger ones. This contradicts earlier descriptions of the role of absolute age, suggesting that all age groups use half-talk more consistently in relationships they consider intimate.

Overall, the results of this first set of interview questions suggest that half-talk is indeed used more often with those who are seen as close. This supports the view that a primary role of half-talk is one of intimacy.

Following these interview questions, two more simple questions were asked. First, interviewees were asked whether they felt positively or negatively about half-talk as a feature of their language. Then, they were asked to explain their answers. Here again, the results of these interviews should not be seen as statistically representative of the population as a whole, as the sample size was very small, but they do shed light on some of the prevalent attitudes of native speakers about half-talk and its role (Kiaer et al, 2019).

The following are several examples of interview responses from each demographic[14]:

Male, age 24, positive: *"Wherever you go, and whomever you meet, if you are the same age or one of you is younger, by communicating with panmal, you can develop a bond of sympathy very quickly.*

Male, age 25, negative: *"Because we have panmal and contaysmal, in cases where contaysmal must be used, I feel like there are many times when you cannot express your opinion sufficiently or you feel uncomfortable."*

Female, age 22, positive: *"When you use panmal, you can break down walls and become close. With people with whom you use contaysmal, no matter how close you say you are, there is always a feeling of a barrier there."*

Female, age 21, negative: *"It's true that [panmal makes it] is easier to become close with someone, but it also [makes it] easier to look down on or disregard other people."*

Male, age 63, positive: *"When panmal is used without reservation and not in a condescending way, with a close friend or in a trusting subordinate relationship, it creates a feeling of extreme closeness (or intimacy), without any mental barriers, so I think it is [positive]."*

Male, age 41, negative: *"Determining rank by age is not right in a post-hierarchical generation."*

Female, age 41, positive: *"It is a mark of intimacy, and evidence that you have become close with someone."*

Female, age 60, negative: *"[Using panmal] comes off as condescending towards the other person."*

Other interviewees tended to express similar sentiments about half-talk; those who viewed it positively felt it allows for closer, more comfortable relationships, and those who viewed it negatively felt it creates inequality and perpetuates an old-fashioned class system. As shown by interview excerpts above, usage of half-talk with intimates was fairly universal, and opinions on half-talk and its role often crossed demographic boundaries. While researchers' views on half-talk

[14] I have translated responses into English.

are often black and white (some view it as an important part of power and intimacy, but some even suggest the removal of aspects of half-talk from Korean as part of a 'democratization' process (www.urimal.org)), actual Korean speakers' opinions are much more multi-dimensional. Though the opinions expressed in these interviews cannot be generalized (the sample-size is too small), they do point to the divisive and complex nature of half-talk in Korean (Kiaer et al, 2019).

*Views of Half-talk Online*

As an extension of the interview process, in addition to the qualitative information provided by interviewees, quantitative information about Korean speakers' feelings about half-talk was also sought. With big data methodology adopted by Daumsoft Socialmetrics™, Kiaer et al (2019) searched for the term '*panmal*' as used in Korean social media, and whether it was used with positive or negative connotations. Specifically, usage of the term *panmal* was on Twitter and in the blogosphere during the three month period of October 28, 2017 to January 28, 2018 was examined.

Using the software, a total of 264,750 distinct mentions of the term *panmal* were examined. The following table shows how often the term was used positively and negatively, based on the context and surrounding words with which it was used, and can also be found in Kiaer et al (2019).

*Positive/negative connotations of panmal in Twitter and blogs:*

| | Positive connotation | Negative connotation | Neutral connotation | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Distinct instances | 95,514 | 132,241 | 34,004 | 2,991 | 264,750 |
| Percent of total | 36.08% | 49.96% | 12.84% | 1.09 % | 100% |

Table 3

The results of this analysis, like those of the interviews, show that feelings towards *panmal* and its usage are varied. It is evident that online, *panmal* is referred to in a negative sense more often than in a positive one. However, positive references are also common. Clearly, there are some negative predispositions towards the idea of using half-talk in some circumstances (Kiaer et al, 2019).

*Newspaper Analysis*

The interviews conducted and the analysis of online references to half-talk show mixed views about this speech form. After conducting these interviews, I wanted to know more about the commonly expressed negative feelings towards half-talk. I was especially interested in determining whether negative inclinations to or experiences with half-talk differ depending on gender, age, and setting. In Kiaer et al (2019), we used the Bigkinds search engine to search major news sources from January 1, 2008 through November 2, 2017 for keywords related to half-talk and conflict.[15-16]

Results in which the subject of the article or news report was ambiguous or the usage of half-talk was not the actual reason for the start of the conflict were ignored. The details of the 102 reports examined, including the genders and ages of both people involved in the half-talk related conflict, are listed in the table below[17]:

[15] Key words included '*panmal sipi*' (half-talk disagreement), '*panmal phokhayng*' (half-talk violence), '*panmal kaltung*' (half-talk conflict), and '*panmal pwuncayng*' (half-talk dispute).

[16] Newspaper Analysis Sources: We searched the following news sources for articles from January 1st, 2008 to the present on the 'bigkinds' website:

Metropolitan Newspapers: *Kyenghyang sinmwun. Kwukminilpo. Nayilsinmwun. Mwunhwa ilpo. Sewul sinmwun. Seygyey ilpo. Hankyeley. Hankwuk ilpo;*

Economic Newspapers: *Mayil kyengcay. Sewul kyengcey. Phainaynsyel nywusu. Hankwuk kyengcey. Heyleltu kyengcey;*

Local Integrated Newspapers: *Kangwento ilpo, kyengki ilpo, kyengnamto ilpo, kyengnam sinmwun, kyengsang ilpo*, and others (total 25); Broadcasting: MBC OBS SBS YTN;

Professional Articles: *Ticitel taimsu, cenca sinmwun.*

The 'bigkinds' search engine excludes *'cosen ilpo', cwungang ilpo',* and *tonga ilpo',* so in the case of these three sources we included results of a search through each of their home websites.

[17] Table was provided by Professor Naya Choi of Seoul National University, and is the same as the table presented in Kaier, Park, Choi & Driggs, 2019: p. 288

*Gender and age of the half-talk conflict cases reported in the newspapers (N = 102)*

| Gender | | *n* (%) | Speaker's age | | Hearer's age | | age gap between speaker and hearer | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Speaker | hearer | | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| M | M | 81 (79.4) | 40.65 | 1.58 | 43.91 | 1.60 | -3.96 | 1.50 |
| F | F | 3 (2.9) | 30.33 | 7.83 | 33.67 | 8.06 | -3.33 | 7.39 |
| M | F | 3 (2.9) | 55.00 | 7.83 | 46.00 | 8.06 | 9.00 | 7.39 |
| F | M | 8 (7.8) | 37.86 | 5.13 | 43.13 | 4.94 | -6.14 | 4.84 |
| unspecified | | 7 (7.0) | | | | - | | |
| total | | 102 (100.0) | 40.13 | 13.91 | 43.57 | 13.42 | -3.99 | 12.87 |

Table 4

Results were divided into several groups, including male (speaker)-male (hearer), female (speaker)-female (hearer), male (speaker)-female (hearer), and female (speaker)-male (hearer) groups. The respective ages of the people involved in the incidents were examined as well, with the focus being on two categories: below 40 years old, and above 40 years old (inclusive).

The result shows that the male (speaker)-male (hearer) group (conflict between two men), averaging above 40 years old, comprised 79.4 percent of the half-talk conflict cases in newspaper articles—a sheer majority of cases. Half-talk based conflicts between other types of interlocutors, of other ages and genders, were comparatively very uncommon. The female (speaker)-female (hearer) group comprised only 2.9 percent of incidents, and averaged below 40 years of age; the same goes for the male (speaker)-female (hearer) group (though the average age was higher than 40). The female (speaker)-male (hearer) group comprised 7.8 percent of incidents, and the average age landed somewhere between the lower than 40 and above 40 groups.

This study is interesting in that it reveals a definite trend: Serious half-talk related issues are much more likely to occur between men in their 40s. However, this result cannot be interpreted as representative of daily life for most Koreans; these issues were obviously big enough to make it into the news and therefore were very much abnormal. Though perhaps not representative, the results of this corpus study are telling in that they show that more serious problems are associated with half-talk for men in their 40s than with other demographics. This information lines up with the responses to interviews detailed earlier in this paper; men in their 40s were less likely than other groups to use half-talk with their non-intimate acquaintances in that interview, as well.

It is also interesting to ponder on the effects of so much negative publicity about half-talk in the news. In the 'male (speaker)-male (hearer)' group, a majority of cases (77 of the 81 cases/95.1%) involved serious violence, which includes anything from physical attack ranging even to murder. With a majority of half-talk related conflicts in the news resulting in such severe violence, it is not surprising that much of the internet seems to view half-talk more negatively than positively, and that some Koreans and Korean linguists promote reforming away from using half-talk at all (Kiaer et al, 2019).

*Half-talk Shift Questionnaire: How do Koreans use half-talk in different settings?*

*Design*

The interviews conducted and the analysis of online mentions of half-talk showed that feelings on half-talk among Korean speakers are mixed. The newspaper analysis study revealed a possible origin of negative perceptions of half-talk, and suggested that older men may have more conflicts because of half-talk than other demographics. My research up to this point also suggested that one of half-talk's main functions is that of intimacy.

I next sought to examine actual usage of half-talk, rather than opinion and rhetoric about it, through a large-scale survey. A main goal of this survey was to find out conclusively whether people of different ages and genders would use half-talk differently. Another goal of the survey was to determine whether setting (workplace versus school) would make a difference in half-talk usage. A final goal was to learn more about the role of negotiation in the half-talk shift.

The investigation of the usage of half-talk and the *–yo* form calls for examination of real-life scenarios; when asked about usage, Korean speakers may be influenced by what they think they should say or by predispositions towards certain speech styles rather than providing an accurate portrayal. Considering these factors, I carefully designed a survey. This survey presented 30 scenarios, each of which involved two people who were meeting each other for the first time. The survey asked in each scenario about half-talk shift between the two interlocutors: "In the future, in order to maintain a close relationship, how should they speak to each other in private, pressure-

free spaces?" Ten of the scenarios involved relationships formed in a work setting, and ten of the scenarios involved relationships formed in a school setting. In both sets of ten questions, five questions involved individuals who had conflicting age and social status (e.g., young boss, younger senior at school/university—this situation is not uncommon in contemporary South Korea), and five questions involved individuals who did not have conflicting age and social status. I aimed to investigate whether people would want to choose half-talk even though there was conflict and if so, what the motivation was for this choice. All of these scenarios involved two interlocutors of the same gender. Ten filler questions were also included, which brought in multiple variables, including varied gender, larger age gaps, romantic interest, military life, and people of the same age. These filler questions made it difficult to identify the purpose of the survey, increasing accuracy.

Each scenario presented five multiple choice options. Option *a* suggested that the interlocutors should negotiate by asking a question (e.g., would you mind using half-talk?) and then one of them should shift to half-talk. Option *b* suggested that the older individual should shift to half-talk without negotiation (regardless of social status). Option *c* suggested that the younger individual should shift to half-talk without negotiation (in situations with conflict, the person of higher social status). Option *d* suggested that both interlocutors should shift to half-talk after negotiation. Option *e* suggested that neither person would make the half-talk shift, and that both would continue to use the *–yo* form (Kiaer et al, 2019).

*Results*

279 Korean adults participated in the survey. Names were not reported but gender and age both were recorded. Participants were divided into two groups based on age. The average age of each group was, respectively, 24.07 and 50.94 (I will refer to the second group as '40 and older' because some participants were in their 40s.). 118 participants were university students in Seoul and most of the 161 participants who belonged to the '40 and older' group were their parents. The survey was distributed as a Google form, which the students were able to send to their parents using their smartphones. Charts and graphs were provided by Professor Naya Choi of Seoul National University.

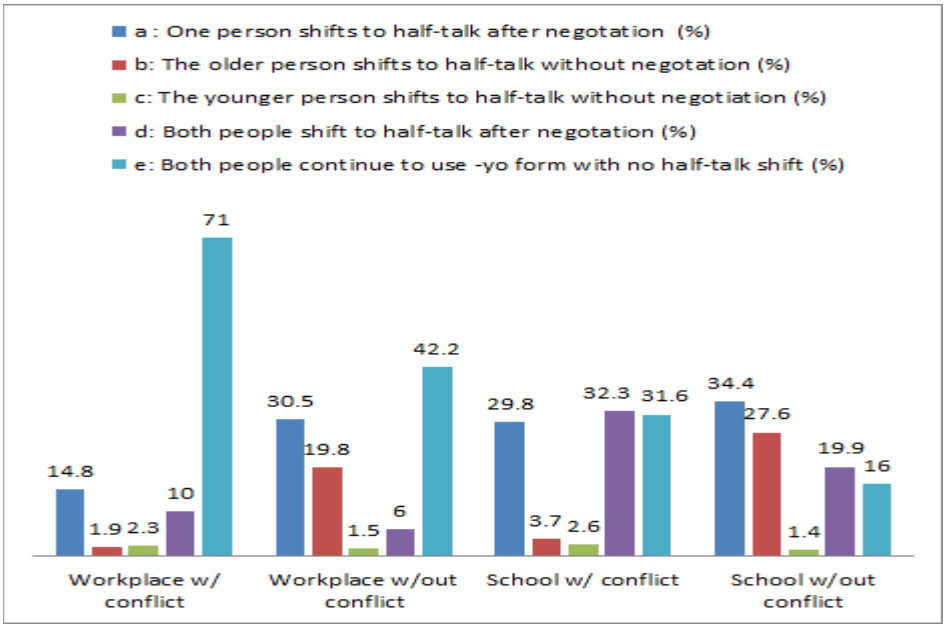
*Overall distribution of survey participants*

| Age/Gender | Male (n/%) | Female (n/%) | total (n/%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20s (n/%) | 42 (15.1) | 76 (27.2) | 118 (42.3) |
| Over 40s (n/%) | 64 (22.9) | 97 (34.8) | 161 (57.7) |
| total (n/%) | 106 (38.0) | 173 (62.0) | 279 (100) |

Table 5

Figure 4.1 (below) shows the participants' overall responses.

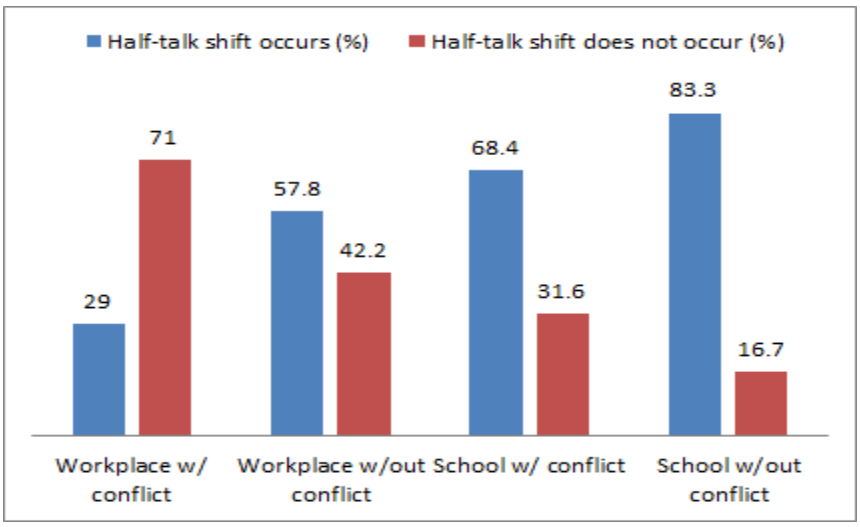
*Figure 4.1 Overall survey responses*




The options a,b,c and d can be summed up as situations where half-talk shift occurs, whereas the option e refers to situations where *-yo* form is used throughout with no half-talk shift.

The overall result in Figure 4.2 (below) shows that participants strongly prefer to use *-yo* when there is a conflict in the workplace, though these results decrease by half in the school setting. When there is no conflict, both in the workplace and school setting, half-talk is preferred, although the preference for half-talk shift is much more prevalent in the school setting.

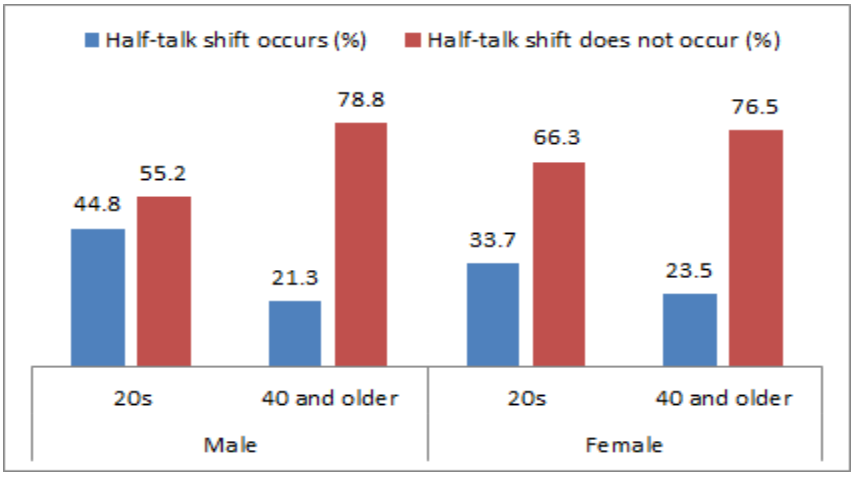
*Figure 4.2 Overall distribution of half-talk shift in workplace vs. school*




In each case, further study was carried out in order to determine whether any statistically significant difference would be found in four groups: males in their 20s, females in their 20s, males 40 and over, and females 40 and over. In every case, except one mentioned below, the difference found was statistically significant.

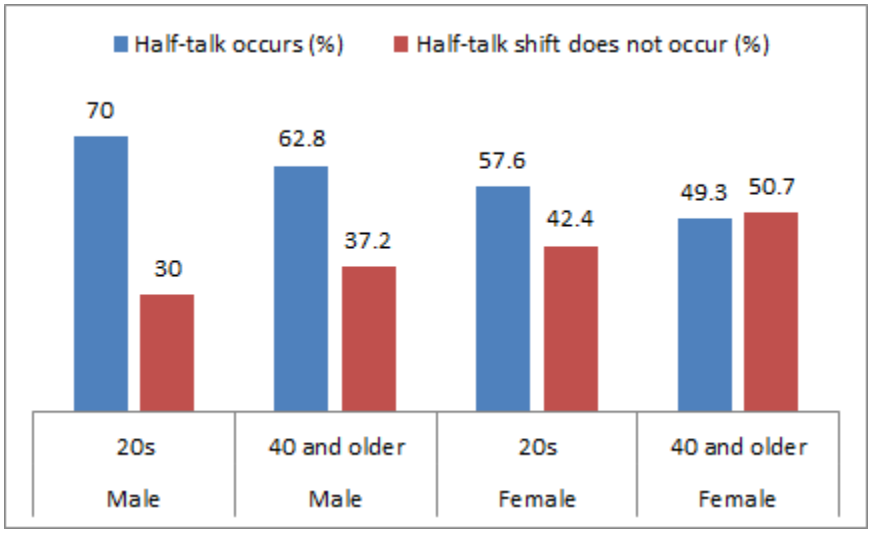
As shown in Figure 4.3 (below), when there was conflict in the workplace, all four groups preferred to use *-yo* form and not to use half-talk.

*Figure 4.3 Workplace with conflict*



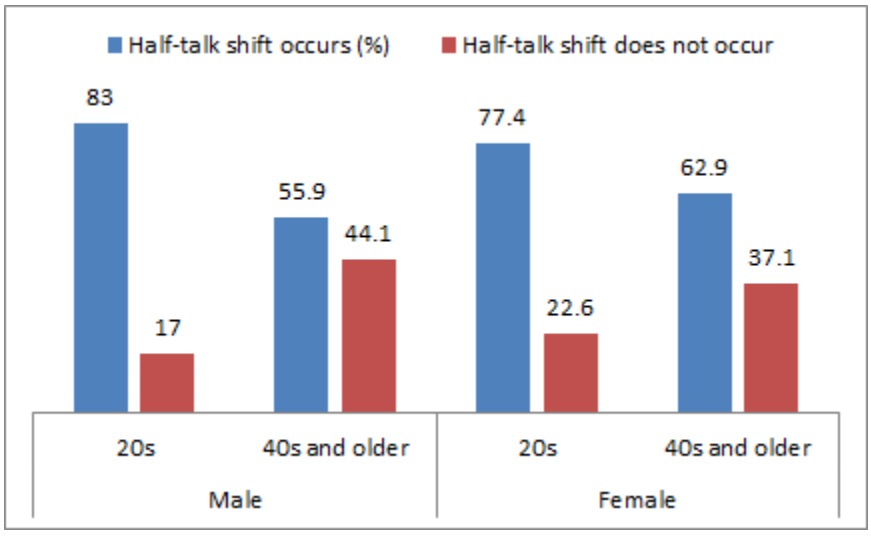

As shown in Figure 4.4 (below), when there was no conflict in the workplace, men preferred to shift into half-talk but women did not necessarily prefer to shift into half-talk. This was particularly interesting. Specifically, women aged 40 and older preferred to use *-yo* form, despite the lack of conflict.

*Figure 4.4 Workplace without conflict*



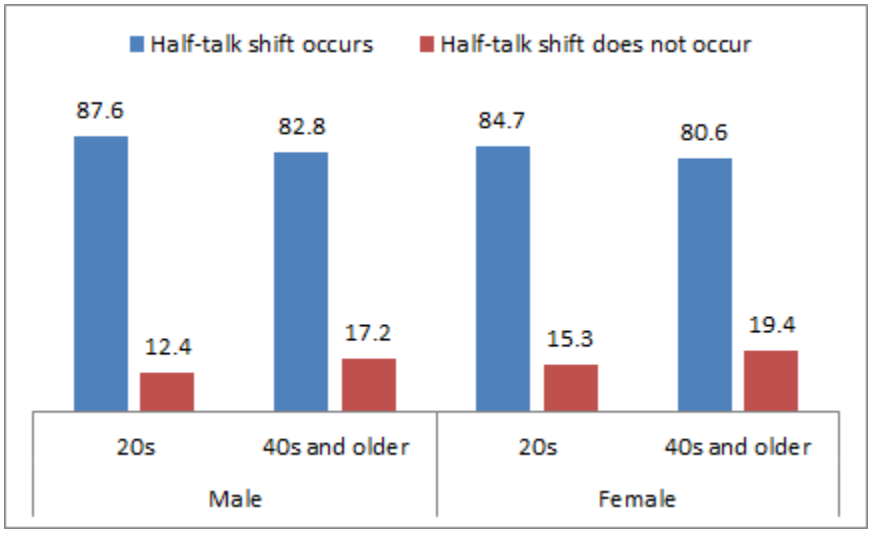

As can be seen in Figure 4.5 (below), in scenarios at school with conflict, all four groups tended to use half-talk, and males and females in their 20s especially were much more likely than the 40 and older group to use half-talk than to use the *-yo* form.

*Figure 4.5 School with conflict*




As can be seen in Figure 4.6 (below), the school setting with no conflict was the only setting in which there was not a statistically significant difference between the groups. All four groups' tendency to choose half-talk in this situation is so high that there seems to be no difference.

*Figure 4.6 School without conflict*




The results of this survey indicate that there is a difference in the usage of half-talk among native Korean speakers of different demographics and in different settings. When there is a conflict between age and status in any setting, there is usually no shift made by any group, but when a shift *is* made, all groups are careful to negotiate first. When there is no conflict in the workplace, men tend to prefer shifting to half-talk, while women tend to prefer the maintenance of the *-yo* form. Compared to the workplace, at school, all demographics lean towards shifting to half-talk after negotiation (even when there is conflict), though younger people are even more keen to do this than those over 40 years old. In school-based settings without conflict, all demographics much prefer a shift to half-talk (Kiaer et al, 2019).

*Analysis*

Linguists agree that speech styles are largely determined by age and social status. However, the idea that expression of power within that hierarchy must be identified as the main function of the speech levels is, according to the results of this survey, inaccurate. Whatever the motivation behind using them, as speech styles are certainly based on hierarchy, it is typically a reasonable assumption that in the workplace, half-talk will be used by the higher-ranking party. It was unsurprising, therefore, that in scenarios in the workplace where there was no conflict between status and age, respondents tended to prefer the use of half-talk by the older and higher-ranking party. It was equally predictable that in every workplace scenario where there was conflict between age and status, most respondents preferred the use of *–yo*. This is the logical choice—hierarchical lines are blurred, and therefore, speech level rules become vague (This result contradicts earlier observations that "In the workplace, when there is conflict between age and occupational position, the occupational position seems to exert greater power" (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 269).). However, the school-based scenarios shed light on a deeper function of half-talk shift—that of intimacy. In

school settings without conflict between status and age, of course, respondents preferred half-talk to be used. But interestingly, even when status and age were in conflict in the school setting, every time the majority of respondents in every age and gender group preferred the use of half-talk.

Lee and Ramsey describe the honorific system in the school setting as rigidly structured, particularly between seniors and juniors within the same college department (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 268). However, when these lines were blurred and hierarchy could not be identified as easily, rather than using *–yo* as they would in the workplace, respondents still found a way to shift to half-talk—sometimes with the older student lowering the speech level to the senior (but younger) student, and sometimes with both students lowering speech to each other.

This, again, seems to show that intimacy is a central part, and perhaps the most important part, of the mindset of native speakers towards using half-talk. Because the school setting calls for a degree of closeness and intimacy, respondents felt that half-talk must be used even when hierarchically inappropriate. In the workplace, however, where intimacy is not as expected, respondents followed traditional honorific practices. This suggests that, though speech levels are based on hierarchy, their main function is not to wield power within the hierarchy, but rather to create intimate relationships within the hierarchy. These results show that most people feel half-talk is necessary in creating close relationships.

A particularly intriguing case was that of women 40 years of age or older, who preferred not to shift into half-talk when they were speaking to their junior women in the workplace even when there was no conflict. This was surprising, and differed from the preferences of every other demographic examined. This difference could be reflective of South Korean women's attitude towards the workplace. As half-talk and comfort level appear to be related, the fact that these women do not feel comfortable enough to speak in half-talk with their juniors in the workplace may mean that they feel less comfortable in that setting than men do. If comfort level is as significant of a driving factor as this implies, it might be the case that even in close relationships, in less-than-comfortable settings, the half-talk shift will not occur. It will be useful to do further study concerning women's speech styles in settings where they feel more comfortable (Kiaer et al, 2019).

*Discussion*

It has been observed that half-talk shift is not a straightforward issue in Korean. Views on half-talk also vary. Age and social status play an important role, yet even when the calculation of relationship which decides a senior-junior relationship is clear, half-talk shift after the first encounter is not guaranteed. After investigating more about Koreans' feelings towards half-talk through interviews, an online analysis study and a newspaper analysis study, in the large-scale survey, I sought to understand the usage of half-talk by native Korean speakers of different demographics. I focused on interlocutors of the same gender, who desired to maintain a close relationship in the future and who communicated in a burden-free, private space. I compared situations with conflicting age and social status with situations with no conflict.

The results of this study shed further light on the attitudes of Korean people towards speech levels, particularly concerning half-talk. Studies by Koreans and non-Koreans alike have, in the past, acknowledged the role of intimacy in determining speech style, but almost always in juxtaposition to the greater role of power. This viewpoint is summed up by Lee and Ramsey, who say that "The influence of power far surpasses that of solidarity" (Lee and Ramsey, 2000: 271). The results of the survey directed at native Korean speakers indicate that, to the contrary, the function of half-talk may be more closely linked to intimacy than it is to power. The interviews, newspaper review, and survey also found that proper negotiation when shifting to half-talk is essential, and when it does not occur more conflicts arise. This study suggests that half-talk is viewed by Koreans as a very important part of creating intimate relationships.

Kiaer argues there are three motivations that drive language: efficiency, expressivity, and empathy (Kiaer, 2020b). Some studies suggest speech styles in Korean are a tool of pragmatic efficiency (they delineate between social levels and thus streamline social interaction). However, the results of this and other recent studies suggest an additional expressive meaning and empathetic meaning of speech styles in Korean. For example, using half-talk with a coworker after proper negotiation seems to indicate a desire to develop a closer relationship, or an opinion that the relationship has become intimate. Similarly, a choice to continue using *contaysmal* with a coworker, as many of the older men interviewed claimed to do, expresses the feeling that a relationship is not intimate and should not become so. The empathetic aspect of speech styles can be seen in the act of negotiating before shifting; speakers seem to want to make sure their intent is clearly one of intimacy and not one that is power-driven. Further research is required to find out how these different motivations play into the half-talk shift in different social settings.

Along with the role of intimacy, another finding of this study was the importance of setting. When intimacy is not the main goal of an interaction, such as in the workplace, it becomes more of a hierarchical tool. In such settings, the results of the survey indicate that a certain level of comfort is necessary for any given group of people to shift to half-talk. In other words, settings where people are comfortable tend to promote the usage of half-talk. The tendency of women over 40 to not use half-talk in the workplace indicates a lack of comfort among Korean women in the workplace. Truly understanding this issue will require investigating whether women are more likely to use half-talk than men in situations where they traditionally feel more comfortable.

## Conclusion

The different methodologies explored in this chapter have shown the intricacy of the speech style system in Korean. By looking at the results of the TV analysis and the DCT focus group study, I have shown how Korean speakers themselves see speech style as essential to communicating information about relational dynamics. Additionally, through a thorough, play-by-play analysis of several scenes from the popular film *Squid Games,* I have shown just how finely tuned a Korean speaker's awareness of those relational dynamics has to be, as he or she makes

judgments about hierarchy and closeness in ever-changing scenarios, where every utterance must end with formal or informal verb endings to indicate pragmatic feelings. This analysis showed how many variables can come into play at once for a Korean speaker. Finally, by presenting the results of the research I carried out and published with my colleagues in Kiaer, Park, Choi, and Driggs (2019), I showed again how sensitive of an issue speech style can be, as native Korean speakers weigh the decision of switching from formal form to informal form, or half-talk, and judge the implications that come along with that. I showed that among so many factors, intimacy plays a huge role in the judgments Korean speakers make about their decisions about these speech style shifts.

## Chapter 5

***Pragmatics of Korean: An Analysis of Address Terms and Relationships***

## Introduction

At this point in the paper, it becomes necessary to examine address terms in more detail.

As part of a complex pragmatic social structure, terms of address are a crucial part of forming Korean in-groups and out-groups. Indeed, Kim (2015) notes that "Address terms serve as an excellent *indexical* device...which Korean speakers use to define and negotiate their relationship with their hearers in the given interaction" (Kim, 2015: 552).

Similarly, Cho (2018) comments that address terms express societal relationships, reflecting the speaker's attitude and emotions toward the listener. Accordingly, Yu and Kang (2017) point out that failure to use an appropriate address term has the potential to impede relationship development or create purposeless misunderstandings.

According to Brown and Kim (2014), the Korean phenomenon of applying kinship terms to non-kin "embodies an ideology of viewing society as similar to a large extended family" (Brown and Kim, 2014: 267). Brown and Kim also cite Park (1975), who says that Koreans "seem to have the tendency to regard almost any organized social institution as a type of family structure" (Park, 1975: 5). Both studies comment on how such family structures are organized, with certain responsibilities falling to older and younger members respectively (Brown, Kim, 2014: 267; Kiaer, Driggs, et al, 2022).

## Part One: Korean Age

As discussed above, key to decisions about address terms is the calculation of age, both of oneself and relative to others in a given group. It is key to remember, though, that age is calculated slightly differently in Korea than in much of the rest of the world; as the BBC put it recently, "In South Korea, when a baby is born they are considered a year old. Come New Year's Day, they gain another year. This means a baby born in December would be considered to be two years old in just a few weeks" (Jeong, 2022). The same article continues by quoting Professor Shin Ji-young, of Korea University, that ""To South Koreans, figuring out if someone is older than them or not is more important than finding out somebody's name in a social context. It is essential in choosing how to address that person and the honorific or title which is required", and also by pointing out the current trend towards possibly abolishing the current age system at a legal level (Jeong, 2022).

A recently uploaded video on YouTube[18] by the channel Asian Boss showed more interesting insights into Koreans' feelings about age and kinship terms. The subject of the video was a recently proposed change in national policy that would make 'Korean age' obsolete, and instead require Koreans to use international age in school and other formal settings. Many of the individuals interviewed in this video referenced their fear for how this would complicate the use of address terms.

When asked how they felt about the policy change to national age appraisal, the following were some of the responses depicted from native Korean speakers, translated from Korean by myself:

1. *Because my girlfriend was born in 2003 and I was born in 2002, but our birth months are January and December, respectively. She calls me oppa now, but when the age system changes she doesn't have to since we would be friends by age. So I think there will be some issues like that.*

2. *There was a guy who I called* oppa *because he was older, but he kept telling me to call him by his name. Because he's the same age as me in international age. He told me to lose the* oppa *and call him by his name. But I'm a polite person, so I was conflicted at times. There were a lot of times like that.*

3. *But we use honorifics in Korea, and with the respectful cultures that come with age difference I think it's not going to be that easy.*

4. *Personally I think it's a bit tricky. The international age system counts your birthdays. I want our age to be counted by years like 2002, 2003, 2004, and so on. International age could be more confusing. Also other countries don't really put importance on age, but Korea does.*

5. *In Korea we address others by titles like older brother, younger brother, older sister, younger sister, and so on in Korean. Almost like ranks, I guess. We have specific titles by age.*

6. *Since our ages will change based on our birthdays, I think it'll be confusing as to how we should call each other. For example, if I was born in the same year as my friend both of us will be the same age regardless of our birthdays. But with the new system, if tomorrow is my friend's birthday, she suddenly becomes a year older than me. Do I have to call her* enni *all the sudden?*

[18] *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=*kqhFkcOQz1k

7. *In other countries, they don't put much importance on gaps in ages up to like five years, but Korea has a strict age-title system. So if we have to ask, "When's your birthday?" It would be so inconvenient.*

These responses seem to indicate, if nothing else, just how engrained the system of addressing others using kinship terms, based upon relative age, is in Korean society. This is not a system which can go away with the passing of a policy or the changing of a political administration. On a day-to-day level, Korean speakers use relative age to determine how they will refer to and address each other.

**Part Two: TV Analysis Results for Address Terms**

*Address terms in Sky Castle*

In the drama "Sky Castle", the address terms used by characters are reflective of several normal patterns in Korean. Firstly, families always use kinship terms with each other, and don't break from this pattern. Outside of families, however, there are more factors that go into address term usage than just age and relationship. As discussed in the previous chapter, the children in the neighborhood all use kinship terms with each other automatically, without any serious negotiation or consideration of outside factors. Children address older children using kinship terms for older brother or older sister, even though they are not related. They also use generic address terms to address unrelated adults, such as *acwumma* or *acessi* (words for 'aunt' and 'uncle'). The assumption seems to be that, as members of a tight-knit community, kinship terms are a natural choice.

Adults in the community also use kinship terms with each other, but there seem to be more factors involved. The first factor which shows up in this drama is that of closeness, or intimacy level; some of the adult women refer to older women friends as *enni*, or 'sister', while some of them simply use the *-ssi* form of address. Interestingly, the older women who use informal speech with close younger women typically address them with the second-person pronoun *caki,* rather than *ne*. This shows a feeling of closeness without imposing a feeling of dominance or hierarchical differentiation as would be the case with *ne* (though they do tend to use just the first name when calling directly, rather than attaching *-ssi*). The second-person address term *ne* is used mutually by two women who knew each other as young girls of the same age, reunited as adults. Here, the two are not friendly and actually have an antagonistic relationship, but they continue to use first name and *ne* to each other due to the history of their relationship.

The men depicted in the show also vary in the way they use address terms. In the workplace, men who have a strictly professional relationship are shown using, respectively, professional title and the term *ne*. The hierarchically lower individual does not use a kinship term when speaking to the superior. In other male to male relationships, different terms are chosen. For example, in

the relationship where two men knew each other at university, the older individual uses the term *ne* and the younger individual uses the kinship term *hyeng.*

In addition to these address terms, some characters navigate through various terms depending on the circumstances—most notably choosing to use kinship terms in moments when they want to emphasize closeness or appeal to the intimacy in a given relationship.

*Address Terms in "Melo is my Nature"*

In "Melo is my Nature", we see more navigation with regards to selecting address terms as characters become acquainted for the first time and actively form new relationships. Perhaps the most noticeable feature of address term usage in this show is the difficulty in changing terms of address; even when characters become very close and form more intimate relationships, they seem to struggle to change how they address each other.

The representation of address terms in these shows suggests that using kinship terms is an important part of the language of relationships in Korean, and that different circumstances call for different applications of the same set of kinship terms. Perhaps because of the difficulty of changing address terms later in a relationship, people seem to be more comfortable using intimate kinship terms with people they have met earlier in life, such as during childhood or in a university setting. Particularly those shown meeting in work settings, even once they have become close and start to use more informal speech, tend to avoid using more intimate terms of address. We can safely assume from the examples shown in these dramas that speakers of Korean are very mindful of the terms of address they use in their relationships, and that these terms send a huge amount of information about the quality of these relationships and perhaps the nature of their initial forming.

**Part Four: Focus Groups**

In the DCT focus group study described in chapter four, Koreans were very consistent in the way they felt address terms should be used in different kinds of relationships. Firstly, Korean DCT participants always felt that in a close relationship, kinship terms and names would be used, with the older person using a name and vocative particle and the younger person using the name with a kinship term. When closeness wasn't apparent, they started by using the respectful/neutral *-ssi* suffix, and then showed a desire to switch at some point to using kinship terms. In relationships with no closeness present or desired, they continued to use *-ssi*. It seems clear from the results of this particular study that Korean speakers see intimacy in relationships as very linked to address term usage, in a predictable, systematic way. Far more than the Japanese, Chinese, and English speakers interviewed in this study, the Korean speakers moved monolithically towards a single way of using address terms. When the level of intimacy desired in a relationship didn't match the

address terms being used, Koreans spoke as though achieving a shift or change in that dynamic was their goal.

This finding from the DCT focus group stands in contrast to that presented by speakers of other languages, simply because of its lack of variance. Other language speakers came up with creative ways to use address terms, coming up with nicknames based on part of a name or using certain suffixes or kinship terms in varying combination with names to express closeness. In relationships where distance was preserved, these nicknames and varying terms were not typically used, but titles were used with more consistency.

It appears, then, that the greatest difference between Korean speakers' usage of address terms and that of other language speakers is that Koreans have a fairly uniform way of expressing intimacy through address term usage.

*Korean Live Focus Group*

In order to further explore this phenomenon, as part of the live focus group discussed in chapter four, after our discussion of speech style I asked Korean speakers to reflect specifically on their usage of address terms. In the following, I record some of their more relevant answers.

In this group interview, native Korean speakers who attended high school in Korea were asked questions about their usage of address terms. Discussion focused mainly on kinship terms like *hyeng*, *enni*, *nuna*, and *oppa*. Some of the respondents' answers and thoughts are shown below, translated to English by myself.

First, the group discussed the question of how address terms are decided upon.

*Jo Suhyeon: The person who is doing the addressing decides.*

*Park Jinyeong: Sometimes you have to ask first.*

*Kwak Minjin: I don't know if I've ever asked first. I think I just naturally call them* oppa *without thinking about it. But if it's someone I met at work and was used to calling them by a work title, and then I met them outside, I would ask, "Can I call you* oppa*?"*

I posed the question of how the respondents would feel if, conversely, they were directly asked to use a specific kinship term to someone.

*Jo Suhyeon: If the older person comes to you first and asks you to call them by a kinship term first, you might feel good but you might feel weird.*

*Kwak Minjin: There is influence from how other people in the group call the person.*

Respondents agreed that they would pay attention to the group dynamic and see how others referred to the person in question. They also pointed out an important clarification:

*Park Jinyeong: It's different in a situation where the person is the opposite sex. It might feel awkward if a man tells you to call him* oppa*. It feels like they are being braggy or flirting.*

*Kim Subin: Guys like to be called* oppa*.*

I followed up by asking a question about an inverse situation: if a younger man dates an older woman, will he defer to calling her *nwuna*, and will it feel the same as *oppa*?

*Park Jinyeong: It depends on the case. But if the guy is older they always call him* oppa*.*

*Kwak Minjin: Yes, that's true actually.*

I also asked the respondents if there were ever situations where they didn't yet use a kinship term with an older person, but hoped to start using one.

*Jo Suhyeon: A superior at work of mine is like that. I still can't call her* nwuna*. I call her professor, but she always calls me TA. It feels a little bit… I don't know. I can't call her* nwuna*. I want to call her* nwuna *because she isn't too much older than me, so that feels more comfortable. She is friends with some of my friends. My friends call her* nwuna *but I'm the only one calling her professor.*

Respondents also discussed whether kinship terms were used more often in their 20s than they might be later I life.

*Cha Juyong: I think the twenties are the time when you get the most new relationships that you use kinship terms in.*

*Kwak Minjin: I actually think when I'm older I will need more people who I can get advice from, so I will meet more older people and call more people* enni*.*

*Jo Suhyeon: For men, the older you get and the more social situations you encounter there are more people who you call* hyeng *or* hyengnim[19] *but it's just a formality and you don't really think of them that way.*

I asked about that sentiment—what it means to feel sincere with kinship terms.

*Cha Juyong: If I meet a guy who is younger than me and he immediately starts calling me* hyeng *and treats me like a* hyeng *I will be really impressed and feel good about him, but if he avoids contact and doesn't really treat me like a* hyeng *I will feel like he is being cold.*

*Kim Subin: I think a lot of it depends on the person's personality. Some people feel comfortable with things that others don't.*

The overall consensus seemed to be that address terms were an important part of relationships, but that in each situation, depending on personality and other group dynamics, people would make different decisions about kinship terms. It was clear from respondents' discussion, however, that it was difficult to feel close with someone of a different age without using kinship

[19] The difference between *hyeng* and *hyengnim* was brought up in several of the different methodologies I used, with interesting ideas brought forward about relationship dynamics where each term was used, but that level of nuance is beyond the scope of this dissertation and serves as a potential topic for future research.

terms, and that kinship terms with someone who they didn't feel close with felt empty or somehow *fake*.

Respondents also shared that it felt quite natural for them to immediately refer to an older individual in a casual setting—perhaps where other friends were present—by a kinship term, but if they met that individual under formal circumstances, such as at work, it would be much more difficult to do so. When asked why they might choose to do so despite difficulty, respondents shared that this was an important way to become close.

**Part Five: New TV Analysis Study**

*Address Terms in Squid Games*

Recently, the Netflix show "Squid Games" garnered international attention as it rose to the top of viewing charts worldwide[20]. The show features many different characters of varying demographics, all forced into a giant arena where they are essentially equals in their struggle to live or die. Characters are forced to wear the same simple uniforms, and don't have personal belongings to differentiate status. However, hierarchical terms of address are still used. In the following I will briefly show examples of how address terms are used between characters in the series.

The characters I look at here come from different social and demographic backgrounds, and some of their address term choices are more unexpected than others.

The first duo to examine is that of the main character and his childhood friend, who meet each other again as adults. The childhood friend has gone to a good university and had a respected career, unlike the main character, who has struggled to find work, but he is a year younger than the main character and they continue to use address terms they would have used as children. Below is an example of their dialogue[21], with address terms bolded in the Korean and the glossing:

Gihun: **야**, **상우야**! **야 너** 어떻게 된 거야?"

***ya, sang-wu-ya! ya ne*** *e-tteh-key toyn ke-ya?*

Hey, Sangwoo, what happened to you?

Sangwoo: **형**, 다음에 얘기해.

***hyeng****, ta-um-ey yay-ki-hay*

Let's talk later.

[20]See the following article: https://www.forbes.com/sites/paultassi/2021/10/13/squid-game-is-now-netflixs-most-popular-show-ever-and-its-not-even-close/?sh=40d1889e6c42

[21] Hwang, Dong-hyuk. (2021). *Squid Games*. Siren Pictures, Inc. *Netflix,* www.netflix.com

Here Gihun, who is a year older, uses Sangwoo's given name along with the vocative *ya.* He also uses the second-person pronoun *ne*. Sangwoo responds using the kinship term *hyeng,* even though both are speaking informally. Due to the age difference, Sangwoo doesn't use the second-person pronoun. This address term selection is fairly normal and to be expected among childhood friends of different ages. It is interesting that the setting in which the address terms were first selected (childhood) remains more important than the respective social classes and experiences of the interlocutors. The interaction is not shown in a strange light; Korean speaking audiences wouldn't register the interaction, as it is incredibly natural.

The next pairing is the main character and a young woman, probably in her twenties. The main character is between ten and twenty years older than her, and their first encounter is fairly belligerent. Upon meeting again, the following pieces of dialogue show the address terms each character selects for.

Gihun: 그래, **너**부터 빨리 입어.

*ku-lay,* ***ne****-pwu-the ppal-li ip-e.*

Okay, you get dressed first.

Saebyeok: **아저씨** 엄만 참 불쌍하다.

***a-ce-ssi*** *em-man cham pwul-ssang-ha-ta.*

Mister, you really are pitiful.

Gihun uses the informal second-person pronoun *ne*, and probably doesn't know the girl's name. His informality may be explained by the adversarial nature of their first meeting. Saebyeok uses the kinship term *acessi*, commonly used towards unknown older men. Though the two start out as unfriendly, they become closer as the show progresses.

The next pairing shows a middle-aged woman speaking with a middle-aged man. She is clearly trying to win his affection and he is in the position of power as he decides whether to offer her help or not.

Minyeo: 이 **오빠** 잘 생겼네. **오빠** 나도 좀 껴주라.

*i o-ppa cal sayng-kyess-ney. o-ppa na-to com kkye-cwu-la.*

This guy is good looking. Let me join, too.

Deoksu: **아줌마** 뭐 잘 하는데?

***a-cwum-ma*** *mwe cal ha-nun-tey?*

What are you good at, lady?

The two have not met in the past, but the middle-aged woman uses the kinship term *oppa*. It is clear to the audience that she is trying to evoke a sense of familiarity or even flirting. The middle-aged man, Deoksu, responds with a less familiar, more typical address term for an unknown woman of her age, and certainly one which is not used romantically: *acwumma*. This appears to squash hopes for romance, and the man still uses informal speech, showing a lack of respect or regard.

The character Deoksu is also shown interacting with the girl in her twenties. The following shows their dialogue, infused with mutual dislike.

Deoksu: [expletive]… **야**, **널** 여기서 다 만나네.

***ya, nel*** *ye-ki-se ta man-na-ney.*

Imagine seeing you here."

Saebyeok: **너** 한테 빚 진 것 보다 갖다 바친 게 더 많아.

***ne*** *han-they pic cin kes po-ta kac-ta pa-chin key te manh-a.*

I gave up way more to you than I indebted myself.

Deoksu, who is significantly older, uses the second-person pronoun *ne* along with his informal speech style. Saebyeok also uses the second-person pronoun *ne,* though Deoksu is far older, showing how little she respects him. This stands in contrast to her use of *acessi* to Gihun; their relationship was also rocky but there appeared to be more mutual respect between them, thus the relative selection in address terms.

In another, quite normal pairing, the main character becomes acquainted with a very elderly man. The following are examples of their dialogue:

Gihun: **영감님**, 이번엔 구슬치기인가 봐요. 구슬 치기 해보셨죠?

***yeng-kam-nim****, i-pen-eyn kwu-sul-chi-ki-in-ka pwa-yo. kwu-sul chi-ki hay-po-syess-cyo?*

Sir, I think it must be marbles this time. You've played marbles before, right?

Ilnam: 윗 옷이 없으면은 사람들이 **자네**를 우습게 볼 거야.

*wis os-i eps-u-myen-un sa-lam-tul-i* ***ca-ney****-lul wu-sup-key pol ke-ya.*

If you don't have your jacket people won't take you seriously.

Gihun uses the formal address term *yengkamnim*, reserved for elderly men and translated in the English subtitle as "sir". He also opts to drop the subject of his sentence rather than use a second-person pronoun, but adds honorific particle *-si* to the verb to make it clear he is addressing the old man. The old man addresses Gihun in turn as *caney*, the second-person pronoun used by

older men to younger adults. He speaks to him informally, and there is a sense of camaraderie present between the two.

Perhaps the most interesting pairing shown in this program was the relationship between Ali, a South Asian migrant worker, and Sangwoo, an adult Korean male. In their early interactions, Ali uses the address term *sacangnim*, typically directed to work superiors. Sangwoo, who isn't aware of Ali's age when they first meet, quickly begins using the second-person pronoun *ne*. He doesn't follow this pattern with other contestants he meets, who are Korean.

Ali: 사장님 여기 어디예요?

***sa-cang-nim*** *ye-ki e-ti-yey-yo?*

Sir, where are we?

Sangwoo: **너** 먹어. 나 원래 아침 안먹어.

***ne*** *mek-e. na wen-lay a-chim an-mek-e.*

You eat this. I don't eat breakfast.

This choice is necessarily meant as disrespectful—the two become close later—but it is interesting that it is not depicted as bold for Sangwoo to use this term with a foreigner at such an early stage, when the relationship is quite neutral (and not contentious, like that of Gihun and Saebyeok). Later, as the two become closer, Sangwoo instructs Ali to call him *hyeng,* and begins calling Ali by name:

Sangwoo: **알리**, 나랑 같이 하자….**너**랑 나랑 같이 하면 왠만한 사람들 다 이길 수 있어.

***al-li****, na-lang kath-i ha-ca….****ne****-lang na-lang kath-i ha-myen oyn-man-han sa-lam-tul ta i-kil swu iss-e.*

Ali, you should join me…If we team up, we'll be able to beat most people.

Ali: 그럼 **형**이랑 나랑 한명 죽어요.

*ku-lem* ***hyeng****-i-lang na-lang han-myeng cwuk-e-yo.*

But then one of use will die.

Interestingly, there is no vocative particle used with Ali's name, unlike with the other characters addressed by their given name in the show.

**Part Six: A Study on Address Terms in a Globalizing Korea**

Some of the research reported in this chapter, and this section particularly, has been published separately in a study by myself and colleagues in 2022, and will be cited as Kiaer, Driggs, et al (2022). Most language has been changed from the original study, but where language and research findings are similar, please see the original publication. Like the published section reported on in chapter four, this section should not be seen as a new contribution from this thesis, but should rather be viewed as just one member of the research offerings being presented here.

Korea has traditionally been a largely homogeneous society, with relatively few residents of foreign background and very few non-Koreans learning the Korean language. However, the number of people of foreign background living in Korea is now rapidly growing. As of 2018, five percent of children born in Korea were multi-ethnic. By 2030, it is predicted that ten percent of the population will be either foreign-born or multi-ethnic (Larmer, 2018). Though still a minority of the overall population, this number is vastly different from previous demographic statistics. As more people of various cultural and linguistic backgrounds become a part of Korean society, it becomes important to consider how they will integrate rather than existing separately from "native" Koreans. A significant part of this integration will come through the Korean language. People around the world are increasingly learning Korean as a second language: despite overall decreases in enrollment in second language classes, the number of students enrolled in Korean classes in the US rose by 14% in 2013-16. This trend is continuing as K-pop and other Korean media increases in popularity (Pickles, 2018). Such a sharp increase in foreign interest and residence in Korea changes the traditionally monocultural, monoethnic image of Korean society.

For the first time in this thesis, I now begin to look more closely at the interaction of Korean pragmatic skills with people not of Korean heritage. On account of the significant cultural role of address terms, which I have clearly shown thus far in this chapter, it is important to examine how they are being taught and used by Koreans to people of non-Korean origin. Since address term usage defines relationships in Korean culture, there is a risk that the failure to use traditional address terms will inhibit foreigners from joining societal in-groups and thus make cultural integration difficult. According to Brown (2013), current L2 pedagogy tends to neglect casual or informal speech in favor of more formal speech. In the same study by Brown, three textbook series published in Korea were examined to assess the language they prioritized in their teaching. Ultimately, it was found that, in these textbooks, dialogues used formal language a vast majority of the time, with very few examples of informal language usage. It was also determined that address terms are used very rarely in textbook dialogues. It therefore seemed likely that despite their central cultural role, address terms, and particularly kinship terms, are not currently prioritized in most Korean as a Foreign Language (KFL) curricula.

Considering the increasing foreign presence and interest in Korea, along with the societal importance of address terms, I sought in this small-scale study to answer three questions:

*Study Questions*

1) Do Korean language curricula tend to ignore address terms used to create relationships within the social hierarchy?

2) Do Korean people tend to use address terms differently with foreigners than with Koreans? Is there a difference in how they use address terms with foreigners of different backgrounds?

3) Do foreigners learning Korean feel comfortable using address terms in a Korean context?

*Textbook Review*

In order to understand more about what KFL learners are actually being taught about address terms, I reviewed twenty textbooks in four different series. The textbook series are published by four different Korean universities and are all designed specifically for foreign students studying in Korea[22]. The textbooks use a combination of conversation, grammar, and vocabulary memorization to help students, who range from beginners to advanced speakers, to learn to speak Korean.

All of the textbooks examined, 20 total, included several fictional people living in Korea. The textbook chapters typically start with a dialogue section, featuring two of the fictional characters. Some of these characters are KFL learners and some are native Koreans. In the rare case that a chapter does not include dialogue, it instead shows a fictional journal entry or a similar piece of text. The 20 textbooks have a total of 425 unique chapters and nearly that many dialogues. A review of all 425 chapters, with a focus on the dialogues, allowed for an investigation of the following research question: Do Korean language curricula tend to ignore address terms? (Kiaer, Driggs, et al, 2022).

*Questionnaire*

In order to better understand how native Korean speakers use address terms toward foreigners, a questionnaire was distributed to 142 individuals. The sample was made up primarily of Korean

[22] Textbooks used were from the following four series':

1) Yonsei University: 3주완성 연세 한국어 1-8: 연세대학교 한국어학당 교재편찬위원회 (*3 cwu wanseng yensey hankwuke Volumes 1-8. Yenseytayhakkyo hankwuke haktang kyocay phyenchan wiwenhoi*)
2) Ewha University: 이화 한국어 1-1, 1-2, 2-1, 2-2 (*ihwa hankwuke 1-1, 1-2, 2-1, 2-2*) (English versions)
3) Hankuk University of Foreign Studies: 외국인을 위한 한국어 1-4 (w*oykwukinul wihan hankwuke* 1-4)
4) Seoul National University: 한국어 1-4 (*hankwuke 1-4*)

university students. The survey put forward 18 different scenarios and asked those responding what address terms they thought would be used in each scenario. Each scenario depicted a native Korean speaker and another individual with whom he or she is close. Respondents were then asked how they thought the Korean speaker would address the other individual. There were five options offered:

1. Calling him/her by name with nothing attached (very unusual for Koreans)
2. Calling him/her by name+*ssi/*씨 (neutral, polite title used for acquaintances but rarely used for intimates)
3. Calling him/her by name+*a/*아, *ya/*야 (vocative particle used to address intimate friends of the same age or younger intimates)
4. Calling him/her by name+*hyeng/*형, *enni/*언니 (kinship terms used with older intimates) or *tongsayng*/동생 (a term used for younger intimates but rarely used as an address term)
5. Avoiding any address terms

The aim of the survey was to understand whether Korean people use address terms differently toward Korean people and non-Korean people. Another aim was to find out whether country of origin would affect the address terms used. Six different types of scenarios were presented, and each was repeated three times with slight variations. Again, all scenarios dealt with one native Korean and one other individual, who was described as someone who speaks Korean well. Scenario types used are listed as follows:

1. Native Korean addressing older, non-Korean Asian (including people from Japan and China)
2. Native Korean addressing younger, non-Korean Asian (including people from Japan and China)
3. Native Korean addressing older native Korean
4. Native Korean addressing younger native Korean
5. Native Korean addressing older Westerner (including people from the UK, the USA, and Australia)
6. Native Korean addressing younger Westerner (including people from the UK, the USA, and Australia)

Through analyzing the questionnaire responses, the second research question was addressed: do Korean people tend to use address terms differently with foreigners than with Koreans and does the foreigners' background matter?

*Interviews*

Following the survey, I additionally conducted interviews with native Korean speakers. In the interviews, I asked participants how they would address a close friend who was a foreigner and

one year older than them, requesting that they explain their responses. Through this interview process, I further clarified whether there is a difference in how Korean people use address terms with other Koreans and with foreigners.

Later, before the publication of Kiaer, Driggs et al (2022), I conducted further interviews with advanced foreign learners of Korean about their experiences with address terms. For these interviews, I selected nine people of around university age who had lived in Korea for one to two years, and who self-reported conversational fluency in Korean. Through these interviews with Korean learners, I investigated the third research question: do foreigners learning Korean feel comfortable using address terms?

*Findings*

*Textbook review findings*

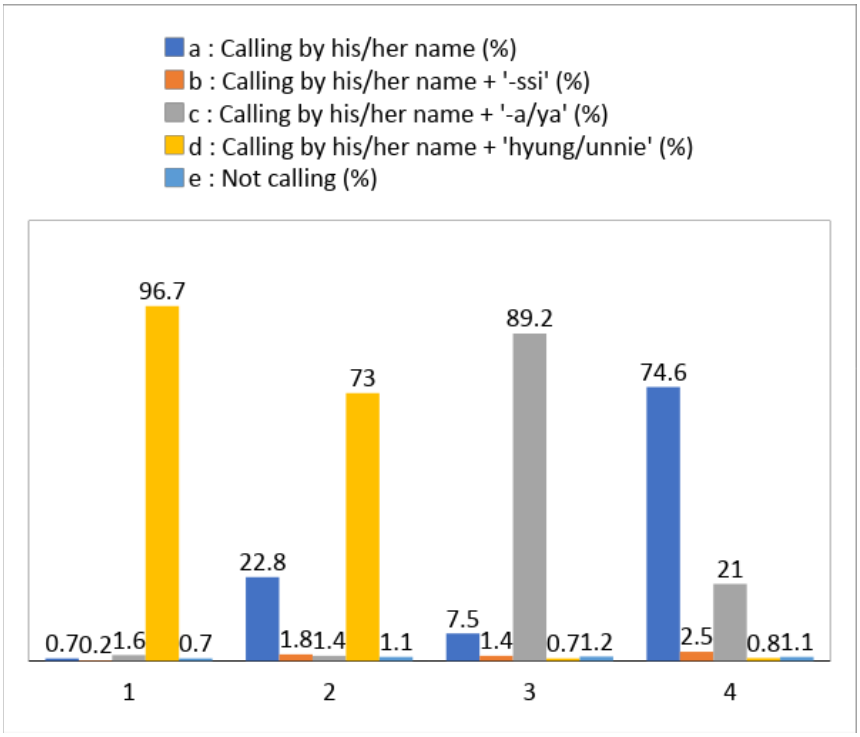
Based on our review of textbooks for learning Korean, it appears dialogues lean towards using formal language during early levels. This holds true even when the dialogue depicts conversations between friends. As subject matter becomes more advanced, informal language is introduced and used more frequently. Although various titles are used, not a single kinship term is used as an address term between friends in all 425 chapters. When friends do use informal language to each other, they use each other's names or the *ne* (너) pronoun. This form of address indicates that, by normal Korean rules of discourse, all of the speakers must be the exact same age as each other. When names are used in this manner, vocative particles *a* (아) and *ya* (야) are only attached when the interlocutors have Korean-sounding names. For example, *yengcwu* (영주) and *ywumi* (유미) use vocative particles with each other, but not when addressing speakers with names like Michael (마이컬). Most frequently, friends use formal language and refer to each other using the *ssi* (씨) suffix in the textbooks, showing a casual level of respect and distance. In actual conversation between friends in a Korean context, this kind of address term would almost never be used. Kinship terms as used between friends are mentioned only very briefly as a cultural note and never put into practice. These findings suggest that Korean language curricula indeed tend to ignore address terms.

*Survey Findings*

The questionnaire results showed a statistically significant difference in the way that Koreans feel address terms should be applied to Koreans and to foreigners (see Figure 5.1). In the case of addressing close Korean people who are older, respondents answered 96.7 percent of the time that kinship terms (*hyeng/*형, *enni/*언니) should be used. When addressing close foreigners who are older, they responded only 73 percent of the time that kinship terms should be used. The key difference here is that with older foreigners, respondents felt that the name should be used

without any address term 22.8 percent of the time, as opposed to 0.7 percent of the time with Korean older people. The difference here was statistically significant ($\chi 2 = 115.198$(df =4), $p < .001$) (Kiaer, Driggs et al, 2022).

Figure 5.1. Do Koreans use address terms differently toward other Koreans and toward foreigners?



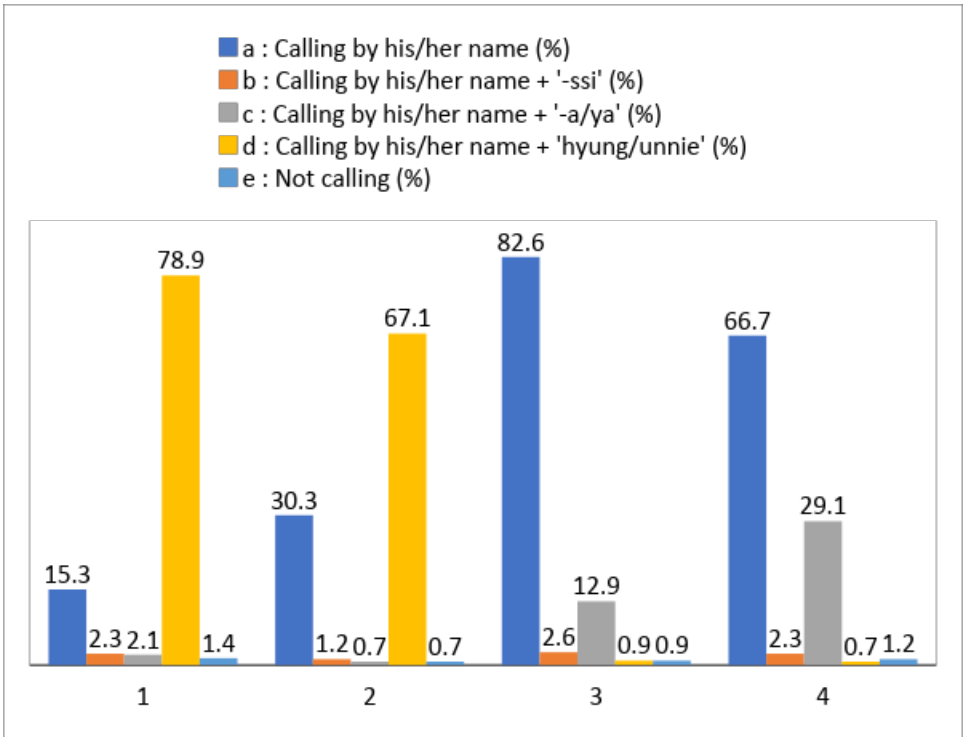

1: *older Koreans* 2: *older foreigners* 3: *younger Koreans* 4: *younger foreigners*

In the case of close individuals who are younger, an even greater difference was apparent. When addressing Koreans, respondents felt 89.2 percent of the time that the name with the vocative particles *a* (아) or *ya* (야) should be used, but only 7.5 percent of the time that just the name should be used. In contrast, when addressing foreigners, 21 percent of responses suggested vocative particles should be used, with 74.6 percent indicating just the name should be used. This difference was statistically significant ($\chi 2 = 548.417$(df =4), $p < .001$).

In order to investigate some of the causes of different usage of address terms, the survey also compared address term usage to Asians and to Westerners (see Figure 5.2). There was a statistically significant difference in the way that Koreans feel address terms should be used to Asians (from China and Japan) and to Westerners (from the UK, USA, and Australia). To close Asian people who were older, 78.9 percent of the time kinship terms were predicted to be used and 15.3 percent of the time names were predicted to be used. To close Westerners who were

older, 67.1 percent of the time kinship terms were selected and 30.3 percent of the time names were predicted to be used ($\chi 2 = 30.799(df = 4)$, $p < .001$) (Kiaer, Driggs et al, 2022).

Figure 5.2. Do Koreans use address terms differently toward Asians and toward Westerners?

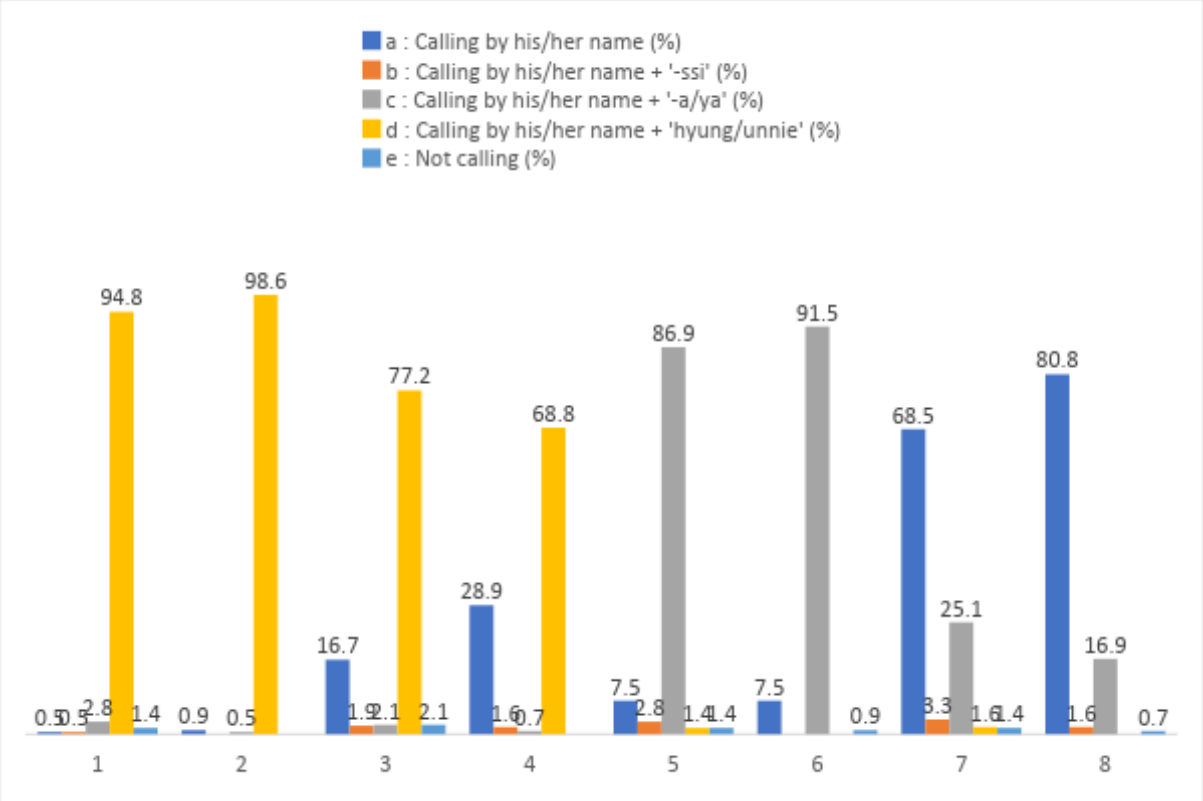



1: *older Asians* 2: *older Westerners* 3: *younger Asians* 4: *younger Westerners*

The opposite was true when addressing younger people; for close Asian people, 82.6 percent of the time just names were predicted to be used, and 12.9 percent of the time the vocative particles *a*/아 and *ya*/야 were chosen. For close Westerners who were younger, the respective figures were 66.7 percent and 29.1 percent. This result will be discussed later in this paper.

The survey additionally sought to determine whether participants' level of English proficiency influenced their use of address terms (see Figure 5.3). There was a statistically significant difference in usage between respondents who claimed to be good at English and respondents who claimed not to be good at English: the former showed a greater tendency to use foreigners' names with no address terms or vocative particles attached, as they might in English (Kiaer, Driggs et al, 2022).

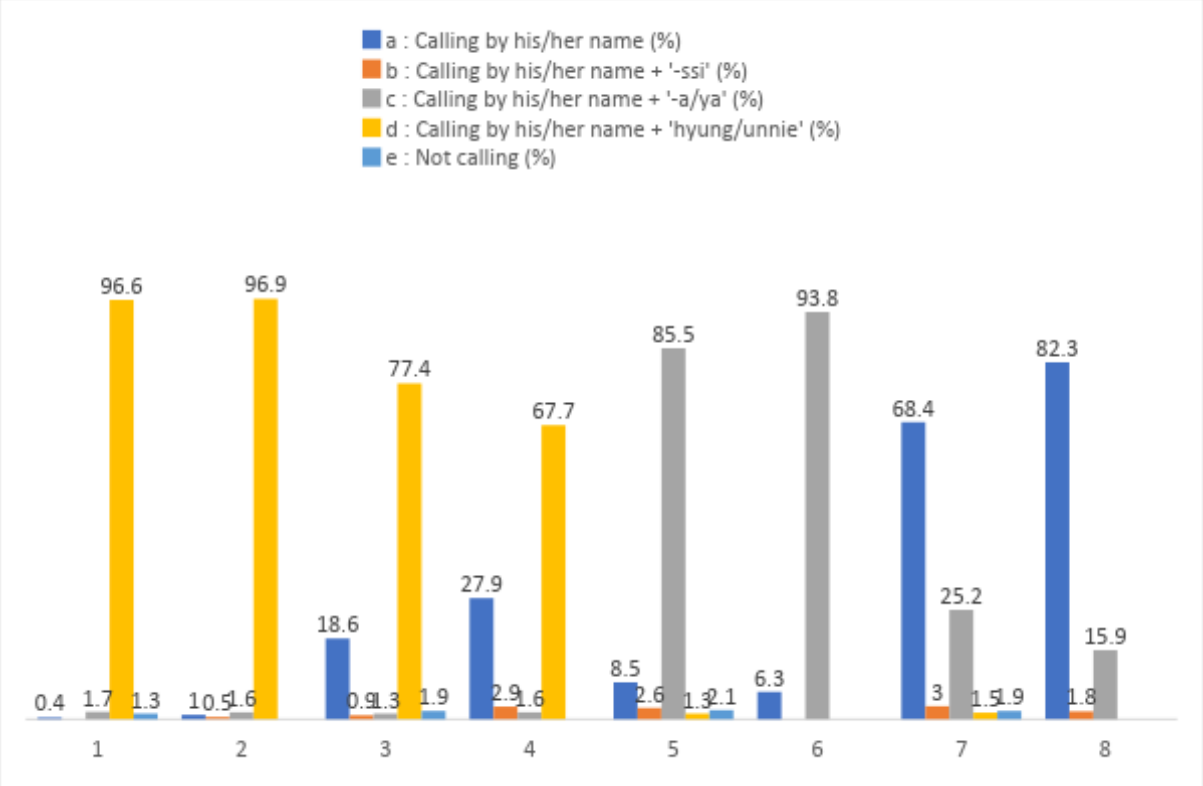
Figure 5.3. Does English proficiency play a role in address term usage?




1: *good English speakers to older Koreans* 2: *poor English speakers to older Koreans* 3: *good English speakers to older foreigners* 4: *poor English speakers to older foreigners* 5: *good English speakers to younger Koreans* 6: *poor English speakers to younger Koreans* 7: *good English speakers to younger foreigners* 8: *poor English speakers to younger foreigners*

In addition to English ability, having foreign friends also had a slight influence on the use of address terms with foreigners (Figure 5.4). Specifically, those who reported having foreign friends used kinship terms and vocative particles marginally more than those who did not report to have foreign friends (Kiaer, Driggs et al, 2022).

Figure 5.4. Does having foreign friends affect address term usage?




1: *w/ foreign friends to older Koreans* 2: *w/o foreign friends to older Koreans* 3: *w/ foreign friends to older foreigners* 4: *w/o foreign friends to older foreigners* 5: *w/ foreign friends to younger Koreans* 6: *w/o foreign friends to younger Koreans* 7: *w/ foreign friends to younger foreigners* 8: *w/o foreign friends to younger foreigners*

Examining the survey results as a whole, it is apparent that Koreans do use address terms differently toward Koreans and toward foreigners. Also, foreigners from neighboring Asian countries are referred to with kinship terms more often than foreigners from Western countries. Whether this is based on appearance or on cultural or linguistic assumptions is unclear. Also, it seems that Koreans who claim to be good at English also seem to try to use English-style address terms—names—with foreigners more often than those who are not confident using English. On the other hand, those Koreans who report having foreign friends seem to be more comfortable using Korean address terms in practice (Kiaer, Driggs et al, 2022).

One interesting result from this study was that Koreans used vocative particles more frequently with younger Western friends than they did with younger Asian friends. An examination of individual survey questions reveals a possible reason for this seemingly incongruous result. Question number 18 asked how a Korean person might address a younger Australian friend named Mimi. The response to this question was very different from others in the same category

(Western, younger addressee). Whereas other questions in the category showed a strong tendency to use the first name with no vocative particle, 43 percent of respondents chose to use the vocative particle with Mimi's name. This one scenario was the reason the overall majority in this category showed a preference for using vocative particles toward younger Western friends. The fact that Korean people were so much more willing to use vocative particles with the name Mimi than they were, for example, with the names Derek (19.7 percent used a vocative particle) and Benny (24.6 percent used a vocative particle) suggests that the name itself makes a difference. Perhaps the name Mimi feels more Korean, or is in some other way more compatible with the vocative particle than other names. The relationship between type of name and usage of address terms is one which will require further investigation in the future (Kiaer, Driggs et al, 2022).

Overall, the results of the large-scale survey made it clear that Koreans tend to use address terms differently with foreigners. This finding informed the conducting of interviews with native Korean speakers, the results of which I will outline below.

*Interview Findings*

*Interviews with native Koreans*

When asked how they would address a close foreign friend who was a year older than them and why, the native Korean respondents gave varying answers and explanations. Some of the responses are recorded as follows, translated to English by myself. Names have been withheld for the privacy of interview subjects.

Respondent 1*: "For me, if it was a [Korean American] who speaks good Korean, I think I would call them* enni *or* oppa*. For foreigners, or white people, I just use their names."*

Respondent 2*: "I think I would just call her [by name]. For me… using* enni *or* oppa *to a foreigner just feels awkward. Something about using address terms to foreigners is… I don't know, I'm just not used to it."*

Respondent 3*: "I just call them by name. I used to use words like* hyeng *or* nwuna*, but now I only do that if I'm joking around. Calling them by name is much more natural…because Americans all use each other's names, so I don't feel a need to call them* hyeng *or* nwuna*…"*

Respondent 4*: "If they are good at Korean, I would call them* hyeng*. But there are a lot of Koreans…who don't like it when Americans call them* oppa*,* hyeng*, or* nwuna*… They say it's strange."*

Respondent 5*: "If they are very good at Korean, I would call them* enni*. If they are good at Korean, they are probably going to know the culture, so in that case I would use address terms. But I don't think I would just say* enni*. [If her name was Isabella] I would probably say Isabella* enni *with the name attached… Actually, maybe Isabella* enni *would be too long."*

Respondent 6*: "…I would call him/her by name, and not treat them as hyeng or tongsayng… If that person treats other Korean people like hyeng or tongsayng, [and has a lot of Korean friends,] then I would probably call him hyeng, but if not, I would just treat him as if he were my same age…"*

Respondent 7*: "I would just call him [by name]…because he's a foreigner… Polite speech and informal speech only exist in Korea. Foreigners don't pay attention to things like that."*

Though some respondents indicated they would use regular Korean address terms, most felt more comfortable using names with foreigners. Some felt that address terms should be used only if the foreign person had other Korean friends, or was already part of an in-group hierarchy. Others felt that address terms would be unnecessary to a foreigner (even when speaking Korean) because they do not exist in English—of course, all of the foreigners discussed in this study were from predominantly English-speaking countries. Still others focused on the name and the length of the name, or simply described a feeling of "weirdness" or "awkwardness" they associated with using address terms with foreigners. Those who said they would use normal address terms with foreigners tended to qualify their statements, saying that would only be the case if the foreigner were exceptionally good at Korean—as if they had yet to see many such foreigners. These interviews show a certain level of incredulity at the thought of meeting a foreigner good enough at Korean to understand or want to use address terms. They also show an innate negative feeling associated with using address terms with certain types of people, though most respondents seem unable to identify the source of that feeling (Kiaer, Driggs et al, 2022).

*Interviews with foreign learners of Korean*

In the following I provide summaries and examples of some of the questions asked and answers received during interviews with foreign learners of Korean:

*Question*: Have you ever been formally taught about address (kinship) terms and how to use them in Korean?

To this question, most of the respondents explained that they were never taught how to use kinship terms in a formal setting. Though some of them felt they picked up on the skill on their own while in Korea, many expressed a lack of understanding or experience in using those terms. For example, one of the respondents said, "I feel I saw and heard it a lot. I have a decent understanding, but I was never taught. I wouldn't feel comfortable using it well."

*Question*: Do you use address terms with your Korean friends?

To this question, respondents described both a lack of understanding as well as a lack of opportunity to use kinship terms with their friends. They often didn't know how address terms should be used in a socially appropriate way, and felt that they didn't have Korean friends with whom they were close enough to use them. For example, one respondent said, "I usually just use names. I'm not close enough to anyone to call them *hyeng*."

Another said, "I don't really know when it is ok to say…*hyeng* or when that is too casual."

Others described that, because of their own cultural background, using kinship terms with friends was uncomfortable and unfamiliar, so they just avoided it all together.

*Question*: Do your Korean friends use kinship terms when speaking to you?

As with the previous question, most of the students shared that they didn't have close enough Korean friends to justify the use of kinship terms. They also said Korean people tended to assume they would be more comfortable with using Western forms of address because of their own cultures. For example, one respondent said, "They just use my name I think, I don't really have close Korean friends."

Another shared that, "They mostly say my…name, I think because I was a foreigner."

*Question*: Do you think it is important for foreigners learning Korean to learn how to use address terms?

Interestingly, even though the answers to the previous question showed a lack of familiarity with or use of kinship terms, all of the respondents agreed that learning kinship terms is important. Most commonly, they expressed that certain kinds of relationships or connections can only be

formed by addressing people or defining relationships in culturally appropriate ways. For example, one respondent said that learning and using kinship terms, "…has strong personal meanings" and that "it shows a certain connection."

Another said, "Yes! Using [address terms] like a Korean can make a relationship deeper...But it is different for everybody! It depends on the relationship."

While not all interview responses reflected the same opinions as the ones shown here, the main themes of the interviews are captured above. Most respondents reported a lack of experience in learning about address terms. They also shared a level of discomfort in using address terms, explaining that they either did not know how to socially navigate them, or that they didn't have "close" enough relationships with Koreans to use them. In addition, respondents reported that most Koreans also did not use address terms to them, preferring instead to use English-style names.

Although respondents consistently reported little use of address terms in their own relationships, they all suggested that address terms should be taught in Korean language classrooms. They most commonly expressed that using address terms could deepen relationships and was an important part of understanding Korean culture (Kiaer, Driggs et al, 2022).

*Discussion*

The findings of the textbook review indicate that Korean language curricula tend to neglect the teaching of address terms to foreign learners. Resources focused heavily on formal language and use of the *ssi* (씨) suffix with names. When friends in a dialogue used informal language to each other, they used each other's names or the *ne* (너) pronoun, which implies the speakers were the exact same age as each other. This approach ignores any situation in which a non-Korean person could be close enough to a Korean of a different age to engage in typical informal conversation. Kinship terms were not used at all in the textbook dialogues. It is possible the neglecting of kinship terms originates with Korean textbook writers' assumption that foreigners do not need to use kinship terms. Indeed, Brown (2013) has commented on the tendency of some textbook writers to claim that foreigners will rarely be in social situations which require the use of intimate language (Brown, 2013: 5). It is also possible that textbook writers assume foreigners should fall outside of Korean hierarchical norms. The exact motivations for textbook writers to neglect address terms is a topic that will require further research (Kiaer, Driggs et al, 2022).

A close examination of Koreans' usage of address terms, enabled through a survey and interview study, revealed that traditional kinship terms are used much less when speaking with foreigners. Instead, names are often used in the same way as in English. Though some Koreans say they would use kinship terms toward foreigners, the number is not nearly as high as those who say

they would use them with other Koreans. The use of names, rather than traditional address terms, seems to happen naturally and without much thought on the part of native speakers. It is less likely to occur with speakers who are from other East Asian countries; whether this is because of physical appearance or perceived cultural similarities is unclear, but it seems accurate to say that ethnicity influences address term usage[23]. It also seems that certain names are used with Korean address terms more than others. Another reason for the difference seems to be an understanding on the speakers' part of English and its lack of formal address or kinship terms. Whatever the reasons, there is a clear difference in addressing native Koreans and foreigners. This results in, and is probably partially caused by, a tendency to ignore address terms when teaching Korean as a foreign language. The innate expectation seems to be that foreigners will not be addressed in or use address terms in the same way as Koreans, even when speaking Korean. There may additionally be a belief that such intricate aspects of the language are too difficult for foreigners to learn (Brown: 2013, 5).

In interviews, KFL learners revealed that they felt uncomfortable using address terms. Reasons for the discomfort were that they: i) had never been properly taught about them; ii) didn't feel comfortable navigating Korean social structures; or iii) didn't feel they were close enough with Korean friends to justify their use. The same respondents reported that learning address terms is essential to forming deep connections and understanding Korean culture. It is reasonable to question, then, whether respondents who felt unable to use this aspect of the language felt they had been able to fully connect with others in a cultural context.

Many of the methodologies used in this chapter are bound by certain limitations. Among the most important of those is the focus I have placed on a younger generation of Korean speakers. It is likely that older Koreans will be more hesitant to use kinship terms with people they have not known for many years. More research will be needed to fully understand the difference between usage of kinship terms by Koreans of different ages and generations, and then to explore how that might affect the study of KFL learners.

As foreign interest in Korea increases, realizing how Koreans use address terms with foreigners is important for further development of Korean as a Foreign Language (KFL) teaching techniques. If KFL speakers hope for integration, it is important that they learn to use address terms that represent intimacy and inclusion. They should understand that address terms may be used differently toward them, and know how to successfully navigate using kinship terms with native Koreans. Under current educational practices, KFL learners may be deprived of opportunities to join Korean in-groups. This could serve to create division between Koreans and the growing foreign population in Korea. Further study will be necessary to understand how

[23] It has been noted that kinship terms are often applied differently to people of different ethnicities; specifically, black people in Korea are often referred to as "흑형 (*huk hyeng*)" or "흑누나 (*huk nwuna*)", phrases which play on dark skin color and use the terms for older brother and older sister, regardless of their actual age in relation to the speaker. Opinions are mixed as to what sentiment this reflects. Some of these attitudes are reflected in this video: https://youtu.be/4kqDCrObl44

Koreans respond when foreign speakers successfully use kinship and other address terms. Also, further research is required to understand the best ways of teaching address terms.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented research digging more deeply into the Korean address term, in order to identify the feelings Korean speakers have around their usage of this pragmatic tool. Analysis of TV drama and focus group research reported here showed that Korean speakers are extremely sensitive to how they use address terms, and that—as with speech styles—they calculate a wide array of factors when choosing what address terms to use in a given linguistic interaction. The analysis of the film *Squid Games* showed a wider array of factors, in context, that Korean speakers might consider in their selections of address terms. One factor highlighted in the film was the relationship between the foreigner Ali, and his Korean acquaintance, who easily made the choice to call him *ne* when he wouldn't have done the same to native Koreans. This difference in the way address terms are used with foreigners pointed to interesting research questions, which I pointed out in the previously published study reported on in this chapter. Additionally, through the same study, I highlighted the importance of the address term in KFL curricula. Based on these results, it appears foreigners are at somewhat of a disadvantage in navigating relational dynamics, because they lack linguistic tools to do so. Refocusing KFL curricula on pragmatically important address terms will help the growing foreign population to join Korean in-groups and successfully achieve integration. Further research should focus on how such curricula can effectively be developed and on the social impacts of foreigners using kinship terms accurately with native Korean speakers. I will look more at the relationship between Korean pragmatic skills and KFL learning in chapter seven.

## Chapter Six

### *A Look at Pragmatics for Chinese and Japanese Speakers*

### Introduction

As I mentioned during my examination of the results from the DCT focus group in chapter four, "In Japanese, speakers selected for formal and informal speech in very similar ways to Korean speakers, but with slightly more variation. When discussing their ideas about language and closeness, Japanese speakers were much less likely to explicitly mention speech style than Korean speakers, who consistently brought it up as a kind of tool for creating or showing intimacy. Japanese speakers referenced strategic politeness strategies more often.

Chinese and English speakers both had no concept of speech style, and the focus groups they participated in show that in these languages speakers talk more about strategies for creating closeness or keeping distance than they do about types of language that can be used."

In this chapter, I will further examine Chinese and Japanese pragmatics, with a specific focus on understanding how Chinese and Japanese speakers use pragmatic skills to communicate information about intimacy in relationships. By better understanding Chinese and Japanese pragmatics in this way, I aim to come away with a clearer picture of the unique features of the Korean pragmatics system, particularly in the way Korean speakers use it to determine information about intimacy in their relationships.

To better contextualize the information I collected during the DCT study in chapter three, I decided to hold live focus groups with Chinese and Japanese native speakers, respectively, during which I asked them questions about their usage of speech style and address terms.

### Section One: Chinese

Discussions around pragmatics in Chinese are varied in topic, but Su (2017) reports that they often center around speech acts, including requests and refusals (Su, 2017: 27). For example, Li (2007) shows that Chinese speakers are influenced in the directness of their refusals by power dynamics between themselves and their hearers more than closeness dynamics, and Yang (2008) finds that depending on the type of refusal being made, Chinese speakers are likely to use different types of explanations to make their refusals socially acceptable. Gu (1990) looks at cultural expectations around initially refusing offers and insisting after such initial refusals.

Such pragmatic behavior would be classified as sociopragmatic, not pragmalinguistic, because it does not depend upon specific grammatical features of Chinese, and the fact that the literature does not discuss pragmalinguistic aspects aligns with what Chinese survey respondents shared in the study in chapter three.

*Chinese Speakers*

In order to better understand the results of the DCT survey from chapter three, I held a live focus group with native Chinese speakers. All participants in the focus group were in their 20s. There were two male participants and three female participants. All five were currently attending university, and all five had attended high school in China. The following is a transcript of excerpts from the focus group conversation about pragmatics and politeness. Answers given in Chinese have been translated to English by myself with the help of one of the focus group members, and the names of the participants have been somewhat modified in order to preserve the privacy of the participants.

*Chinese Live Focus Group*

*Question: How do you think it differs when you speak to someone you are trying to be polite to, and someone you are not trying to be polite to?*

*Chen Xinli:* If I talk to a professor, it's… a little bit more gentle, less casual. There's not much of a language difference. Just a little bit more… slow, I guess.

*Wang Mei*: Here's a cultural thing…If you didn't use [the respectful second-person pronoun] *nin* that is disrespectful… but sometimes I feel weird using it to a friend.

*Chen Xinli:* We speak really fast, so you can't really tell often [if you use *nin* or the casual second-person pronoun *ni*].

*Wang Mei*: Personally, I feel I speak pretty much the same how I speak to my grandparents and others. They aren't so traditional.

*Zhang Yichen:* I feel it's really about education level, or how you pay attention to that within the family. I will always use *nin* or [the word for 'please'] *qing*, going to school growing up or including family… in some big families… they would still educate about those cultural terms. That could be a little different by region… nowadays the younger generation don't get educated a lot about that.

*Ye Jiayi*: In Beijing, *ni* is very common. The thing is *nin* could also be very sarcastic, generalized. In Beijing if I respect someone, I call them appropriately as a generation higher than me, even if they are the same generation as me, [with special family terms]. But nowadays Beijing is like… full of people from other provinces. But local Beijing people still do that.

*Zhang Yichen:* There are some special words… For visitors, you use special terms. For leaders you use a special word. When you say welcome to them, you say something different.

*Wang Mei*: It also depends on how you define daily conversation. If it's more professional, there are different levels of respect you would show.

*Zhang Yichen:* There were a lot of terms for things in ancient times that were just normal terms then, but are more lofty-sounding now. Like when asking, How old are you, or Where do you work?

*Question: If you don't use these terms, will they be offended?*

*Wang Mei*: People will be able to tell you are higher class by the way you are speaking but they won't be offended.

*Chen Xinli:* You might think they aren't well educated [if they don't use those terms], but it isn't always seen as looking down [to not use them].

*Zhang Yichen:* If you are talking about yourself, there isn't a way to make it more humble. You might talk down about yourself in order to show respect, because that activity is being initiated by you. You wouldn't say, "Oh I am going to buy this Steinway" and brag about how good it is, but you might talk about it as a minor matter, like saying it's just so-so. You might talk it down.

*Question: If you are making a general statement to someone like a teacher, versus a good friend, will you say it differently?*

*Huang Wei*: I don't think there is much difference. But when you have something you have to ask someone to do, or ask for help, you probably will say it differently.

*Chen Xinli:* Borrowing money from a friend or from a boss. That feels way different.

*Huang Wei:* In a normal case, without request or anything, I think the tone of voice will be different.

*Wang Mei*: I would speak more slowly. With a friend I would talk a lot faster, a lot more casually.

*Chen Xinli:* With a teacher or the principal, if they ask, "How are you," you would just say, "I'm good," but with a friend you would tell them how you actually are.

*Wang Mei*: Even if there is hierarchy but you had already bonded in a close way, it would be more casual.

*Chen Xinli:* When I was in middle school in China, we called our teacher their nickname and they were happy about it. They were fine with it. It also depends on the school.

*Question: What kinds of people would you be particularly mindful of speaking politely to?*

*Ye Jiayi*: To me, I would speak to people that are older than me respectfully, when it's just a stranger.

*Chen Xinli:* Someone who doesn't directly manage you but maybe manages someone who manages you.

*Ye Jiayi*: When I think of my "elders" I think of an older person, with white hair.

*Huang Wei:* Once you are an adult, and you meet someone even ten years older than you, you might call them brother, instead of something more formal.

*Wang Mei*: In China, a few years is not that big of a deal. It's insignificant.

*Ye Jiayi*: My boss is near my age. At work, I speak a bit more respectfully, but outside of work we talk casually.

*Question: If you were to witness a conversation taking place at a café without knowing the participants or the exact contents of their conversation, what clues would you use to judge the quality of their relationship?*

*Wang Mei*: If you can't hear their conversation, you would watch their body language.

*Huang Wei:* From the intensity, the tone, you can tell how engaged they are in the conversation but as far as how close they are, it is really hard to tell. It could be an argument, it could be for business. It's very hard to know their relationship.

*Question: What is your experience with using names and address terms?*

*Zhang Yichen:* All my high school friends called me a nickname. I have a neutral one. My friends from the soccer team and my classmates call me number seven. They never used my name. There was one class where even my teacher called me number seven. If they called my name that would be weird, like maybe a prank. When my parents called me, they use a nickname they gave me when I was a baby.

*Wang Mei*: We rarely use real names.

*Chen Xinli:* Not the full name. If someone calls me a full name, I know I'm in trouble.

*Wang Mei*: In Chinese, you often use a prefix like [one meaning small], *xiao*.

*Chen Xinli:* That depends on the region. I feel like in Guangzhao we double the name. We take the last syllable and double it, like in my case *li li*.

*Zhang Yichen:* It depends on the region. In my province they just call by family name.

*Wang Mei*: If you call a given name alone, it could be in a romantic way or in a pretty respectful way, within the same generation.

*Chen Xinli:* If I introduced myself to someone new, I wouldn't say my last name. I would just say my given name. If that's what a person introduced himself as, that's what I would say.

*Wang Mei*: Usually I never call out my friend's names, I just say hey. I only use the name if it's necessary.

*Chen Xinli:* With a stranger that you don't know you just say the given name, the last name would sound really weird.

*Zhang Yichen:* Or you could use [the word for classmate] *tongxue*, or [mister] *xiansheng* or something.

*Ye Jiayi*: If they are a few years older than you, it doesn't change, unless they are much older by like twenty years.

*Huang Wei:* We also use the character [brother] *ge,* or [sister] *jie* for seniors at school. We don't call their names. That's for the same school. But even outside of the school setting we sometimes use those for older people.

*Zhang Yichen:* But if a younger person didn't use the *ge*, and just said my name, I wouldn't be offended at all. It depends on the person.

*Ye Jiayi*: Actually, sometimes even if you don't know their age but you want to show respect you might add the *ge* character.

*Zhang Yichen:* Once you graduate and you are working it really doesn't matter how old you are. In our father's generation it's more strict. In our generation it's much more relaxed. If you use those terms, it might feel distancing.

*Wang Mei*: You definitely can't really tell how close people are by them using *ge* or *jie*. You can just tell who is younger.

*Zhang Yichen:* Usually if you are hearing the word *jie* or *ge* there is some level of closeness. If you were definitely not close, you might hear the name by itself, or maybe mister or miss. But using *jie* or *ge* is either out of politeness, or if you are building a connection.

*Wang Mei*: It all depends on the person—how I call them. It also works differently if they have a two-character name or three-character name. I call people different things depending on what sounds better. There is no set rule for which syllable or which term.

*Chen Xinli:* True. When you have a three-character name it is rarer to call the full name.

*Ye Jiayi*: If you want to keep distance, you don't want to use any name. You would avoid using their name or you would call them mister. If you want to be really close, no names either. To directly call their nickname or name it could be a risk. So it's better to start without that.

*Analysis*

*Speech Style*

The native Chinese participants in this focus group were obviously sensitive about the way they spoke to others in terms of what they thought of as politeness and respect, and they mentioned those things more than they seemed to mention intimacy. However, they did not have an idea of speech style which they brought up in this conversation. Instead, they discussed the words they chose to use, the speed with which they spoke, their phrasing, and the way they would choose to act in a given interaction, none of which were codified into Chinese grammar in the way speech style is a part of Korean grammar. When speaking about their concept of respect and politeness, the participants frequently mentioned age. They seemed to think of age much more in terms of

generation than in small year differences, though—elders may be thought of as persons of great age rather than persons of a couple of years higher in age.

*Address Terms*

Native Chinese participants in this focus group had a lot to say about terms of address, and each had varying expectations around how they should be used. It was clear that participants thought nicknames were common and would be used by intimates in varying ways, rather than full given names. It was also clear that kinship terms could be used with intimates of greater age but were not necessarily expected to always be used. Participants also seemed to expect that certain regional differences would exist in how kinship terms might be employed.

Participants explained that in previous generations there might have been stricter rules in place about using kinship terms to people who were older, but now there aren't necessarily strict expectations about using kinship terms to people who were higher in age. In fact, calling someone '*ge*', or older brother, may not even indicate an age difference—it may just be a polite way to refer to a stranger, according to one of the participants. However, as they explained, other terms like mister or miss would nearly always be used to show some kind of distance in a relationship.

*Comparison with DCT results*

In the DCT study discussed in chapter three, Chinese respondents showed in their dialogues little uniformity in their use of address terms when it came to younger people addressing older people, or older people addressing younger people, regardless of intimacy. Here, too, it seems that live focus group participants felt that mode of address could vary case by case. In some cases in the survey, respondents used words like "little" to show affection, and in some they used kinship terms like "brother". In non-intimate scenarios, they used varying titles, like "mister" or a different, formal form of "brother" (*xiongdi)*. Similar options were discussed by focus group participants.

In terms of speech style, both DCT respondents and live focus group participants felt that such a thing grammatically did not exist, and that instead interlocutors would change the way they spoke in terms of tone of voice, speed, slang, and subject matter.

It would seem, then, that the survey and focus group were in agreement that in Chinese, address terms are used with some variety to show intimacy, and can include various nicknames and kinship terms, without strict rules surrounding age, and that speech style does not exist as a grammatical aspect of language.

**Section Two: Japanese**

Hasegawa (2015) reviews several studies about Japanese speech styles, summarized here, which add to the following basic summation: "…Interlocutors who are unfamiliar with each other begin their conversation with the polite style, and, as they become familiar, switch to the plain style. Conversely, familiar interlocutors habitually use the plain style, but when the conversational topic becomes grave (e.g. a serious disputes, a death), they may switch to the polite style" (Hasegawa, 2015: 282).

Other various studies are summarized as follows:

Ikuta (1983) says that the polite style is used to create emotional distance, and is therefore employed when discussing emotionally sensitive matters (such as marital history), while the plain style may be employed to reflect the speaker's empathy with the addressee at a given moment (such as in a moment of strong agreement). It can therefore be expected that speech style will switch back and forth throughout a given conversation.

Okamoto (1997) explores the use of the polite and plain style in connection with social roles, specifically looking at a third-grade classroom. Here, a teacher employs the polite form when addressing the whole class (in her role of teacher) despite her obvious age difference, and then when speaking to children privately or individually uses the plain form. Cook (2008) shows how parents may use the polite form when engaging in teaching specific behaviors to their children, as opposed to their normal usage of plain form to their children.

Maynard (1991) describes how the plain form is often used in self-talk, and therefore when used during conversation shows "low awareness" of the addressee, reflecting a certain comfort level with the other interlocutor. The polite form, on the other hand, shows intentionality in addressing the other interlocutor, showing high awareness and a lack of that comfort level. Hasegawa (2015) refers to this self-talk as soliloquy, with similar implications (Hasegawa, 2015: 289).

Japanese includes a variety of address terms and kinship terms, like Korean and Chinese, but it also includes a uniquely wide array of potential first-person pronouns (Yee and Wong, 2021), chosen based on gender and other factors, and second-person pronouns as well (Sturtzsreetharan, 2009). Perhaps most importantly, the first-person pronoun is typically chosen from the following, though there are other, more nuanced options available (Hasegawa, 2017: 68):

*watashi:* (*humble male* OR *generic female*)

*boku*: (*casual male*)

*ore*: (*intimate/vulgar male*)

Japanese also includes several vocative suffixes, which can be attached to the name to indicate respect or intimacy. These include the formal *-san*, or the diminutive *-kun* or *-chan*. The reader will notice many combinations of these pronouns and vocative suffixes mentioned by Japanese speakers interviewed in this thesis.

*Japanese Speakers*

As with Chinese speakers, in order to further understand the results I received during the DCT survey, I held a live focus group with native Japanese speakers, during which we discussed speech styles and address terms specifically. There were three native Japanese speakers, all male, who were of university age and attended high school in Japan. The transcript of the focus group is below. Names of participants have been modified to preserve privacy.

*Japanese Live Focus Group 1*

*Question: When you're talking at home, for example with your parents, what kind of pronoun do you usually use to refer to yourself?*

*Yuichi:* For mom, I say *boku*, but with friends I say *ore*. I don't know, because my mom taught me to say *boku*. I don't know, so like *ore* is like more like, I don't know, kind of rough. Inside of my family, I usually say *boku* about myself.

*Shin:* I say *boku* to my mom and I think dad too. With my friends I will say *ore*, because like everyone says *ore* mostly, so I use *ore*. Outside of home, every one of my friends say *ore*. I think they will say *boku* to their parents, or maybe they don't call themselves anything.

*Yuichi*: If you say *boku* it's like, it's kind of weird because if you say *boku*, it's kind of… it feels like weak or strange. With friends I say *ore* or *boku*. First, I used *boku* a lot, but talking to my friends a lot, I started to use *ore* a lot as I got older.

*Question: Imagine if you got a part time job, and you met a coworker, and they were the same age, and you became friends, what first-person pronoun would you use?*

*Yuichi*: I think I would use *boku* first, but if I became close friends with them I would use *ore*. [If I was a girl] I would say *watashi*. Sometimes they say *uchi*.

*Shin*: Same for me. I would start out saying *boku* and when we get closer, I say *ore*.

*Kei:* Same for me.

*Question: Even if a girl uses formal or informal speech, they always use* watashi*, but what would it sound like to you if a boy used* watashi *with informal speech?*

*Yuichi*: I think that would sound a little bit feminine. It's getting more common for a girl to say *boku*.

*Kei:* If a guy uses *watashi*, it's always really formal, I think.

*Question: What about the word for 'you,' if you are with a group of friends and you need to address one specifically, how will you do that?*

*Yuichi*: I usually call the name. I don't use *kimi* or *anata* or *omae*. I don't use *omae* that much. If we are laughing, and the friend did something stupid, I might say *omae*, but the name is the normal way.

*Shin*: Me too.

*Kei:* I feel like *kimi* and *omae* are both condescending.

*Yuichi*: It depends on how you say it. For the word 'you,' people care about what others call them, so everyone is careful about how they say that. People avoid saying anything.

*Kei:* Using *anata* can happen in professional settings, maybe in a meeting.

*Yuichi*: Some people don't like being called *omae*, so it depends on the relationship. It's like, yo bro.

*Kei:* Yeah, and I think a lot of close friends have nicknames. Or at least, short ways to call them.

*Question: How do you decide what ways to call them?*

*Yuichi*: That's pretty hard.

*Shin*: I have an elementary school friend, and we were so young, and we called each other by first name every day, and so now we still call each other by first name. And I played basketball in elementary school, and my teacher said my first name, but in junior high they said my last name. One teacher said my last name and one teacher said my first name. In high school my teacher said my last name.

*Question: If you talk to an older friend in college, maybe two years older than you, but you are close, will you use formal speech? Or will you start to use informal?*

*Yuichi*: I will still use formal, but it depends on timing and what you are talking about. I played games with a senior in college who was two years older, and when I was playing games, I sometimes used informal language, but I usually use formal language. Because they are older is the biggest reason, because if I start using informal words maybe they'll get angry, and I don't want them to get angry.

*Question: Will they use informal language with you?*

*Yuichi*: Yes. I usually speak to older people in a formal way, but I don't mind a younger person speaking informally to me.

*Shin*: I don't care either. I start out polite with older people.

*Kei:* I would still speak formally, but you would try to jokingly use, kind of in a laughing situation, you would try to use a little more informal language here and there, to stay that "We're close," so they know we're close, but normally I would use formal day to day.

*Question: Would it affect the way friends talk if they are all different ages, even if they are close?*

*Yuichi*: Yeah, but if an older person lets me talk informally, I think I would get used to it easily.

*Question: What if you are talking to your teacher, you always use formal, and you call them teacher, and they call your name? Or will they use a word for you?*

*Yuichi*: I was always called by name.

*Question: So, when you have a friend and you have been hanging out a little more and you want to show that you are close with them, how do you send that signal?*

*Kei:* I think it's a little different with older people. If you meet this friend at a professional setting, it takes more time to go to informal speech.

*Shin*: If it's a teammate, I think we are teammates, so I think we wouldn't use the formal. But I would say their last name. If it's a coworker, I don't think I would use informal language. I will use formal language if I want to keep distance. The job is not an everyday thing, and you don't meet every day, so I can use formal language and I will say last name and [a suffix], *san* or *kun*.

*Analysis*

*Speech Style*

The participants in this focus group point out that they are hesitant to use informal language with people who are older than them, and that they expect people who are older than them to speak informally. There was a sense that there was little flexibility in shifting speech on the part of the younger person.

*Address Terms*

The participants here are clear that there are many options for both second-person pronouns and address terms, and first-person pronouns that a person can select for when speaking with someone else. They discuss the way that a person can feel when addressed a certain way, and how someone should select for pronouns based on setting, gender, age, and other factors.

The focus group here was small enough that certain factors felt unclear. Specifically, I was unsure how important age was in comparison with closeness when selecting for speech style and address terms. To understand better, I organized a second focus group with seven more native Japanese speakers. The second group was also comprised of university aged speakers, all of whom attended high school in Japan. The transcript of the group is below. Names have been modified to preserve the privacy of group participants.

*Japanese Live Focus Group 2*

*Question: What do you think is the main difference between the language you use when you talk with someone you are close with and someone you don't know well?*

*Mei:* With people that I'm close with I speak a little faster, but with people that I'm not close with, I speak slowly.

*Hiroshi:* With people I'm close to I don't use honorifics. With ones I don't know well it's a little more formal. Not honorifics but just formally. You're reading their thoughts as you're talking with them.

*Akiko:* I look at their faces while they're talking and think about what I can say and can't say while we speak. With people I'm close with I don't need to think about all of that because they already know me very well.

*Hana:* For me, with people I'm close with my dialect comes out. If not, I use standard language.

*Question: Is there a difference between the language you use with someone you don't know well but like, and someone you don't know well and don't like?*

*Rin:* Probably if I wanted to get to know this person better, I would ask questions about them. About their families and hobbies, and if I wasn't interested, they'd just talk to me and I'd just passively listen and then it would just be done. I wouldn't ask any questions from my end.

*Question: What if you are talking to someone already and you lose interest, how would you change the way you talk?*

*Sachi:* If I was interested in them, I would still be nervous.

*Akiko:* If I was interested in getting to know them, I would ask questions about getting to know them and then continue the conversation a little longer and then if I wasn't interested, I would just react like, Oh, oh really.

*Kiyoshi:* If I'm not interested in getting to know them, I would come up with excuses to leave the conversation. Like, I need to go. Like I would say a white lie.

*Akiko:* But you don't want to come across as impolite. Even if I'm just a little meh about the person, I would still want to consider not being impolite. I'll try to a certain point to be polite. I'll try for about five minutes.

*Hana:* I'll use casual speech if I wanted to get close. If I didn't want to get close with them, I would make it very clear by using formal language.

*Mei:* For me, the speech style doesn't make a difference.

*Hiroshi:* For people I'm not interested in getting to know, I'll just kind of blow it off, I'm not really going to engage with them.

*Hana:* If I wanted to be close with them, I will use the casual form so that the other person can feel more comfortable about being close. I'll use honorifics to draw a line with people.

*Kiyoshi:* If you start to feel closer with a person you'll naturally gravitate to using casual form with that person.

*Question: What factors do you think about when you're deciding what kind of language to use with a person (age, sex, relationship, etc.)?*

*Mei:* Gender, age. If it's my older sister's friend, or if your parents are really close, but you don't know them, so if you have connections like that, even before you start talking to them, those are things to also consider.

*Hiroshi:* It's also important to consider how many times you've seen this person.

*Kiyoshi:* How much you know them is obviously important. It might just be me but what they wear, if they were a businessman, I'd be like, wow, and use formal language, so appearance is important.

*Question: Do you notice if other people use formal or informal form with you? And what does it make you feel or think?*

*Rin:* If they use honorifics or formal language to talk to me, I'll also feel respect from them, and if they use casual form, it will feel casual.

*Hana:* It depends on their age. If they're younger that doesn't feel good, it really depends on the person.

*Akiko:* Even when you're the younger person, if you are using formal language with them and the other person is speaking to you in very casual form than you might feel like, what? What?

*Kiyoshi:* In Japan, there's a culture to talk to each other in formal form when it's your first time meeting them.

*Mei:* It might change from the second word you speak, so that you can understand each other during the conversation, in terms of where you stand. At the beginning of the conversation, I might say "It's nice to meet you" in formal form, but then if the young person is the one to switch it up and start using casual it might feel a little awkward.

*Akiko:* Even if you become really close, if the person is old enough, if you feel that they are quite a bit older than you, you won't start speaking casually and you will stick with the formal form. But in some settings, you can use casual form for people that are higher if you've known them for a long time.

*Hana:* Yeah, like when you knew them since you were young. But not at the workplace.

*Hiroshi:* At work, it's really not an option, it's definitely not something I could imagine doing.

*Question: Do you ever use formal form with people you are close to?*

*Kiyoshi:* No, not if you're close.

*Hana:* No.

*Akiko:* Well, it's like this group: even if we're close, if we're involving other people in the conversation, in work or in a group like this, we might use formal forms in certain parts of that conversation. But in a conversation with just the two of us again, we would just use informal form again. Because we don't want to show that we aren't taking things seriously, because if we

use casual language in front of the boss with our friends it might look like the two of us are slacking.

*Rin:* But just the two of us, if I used formal form, I would feel distance.

*Hiroshi:* If you need to ask a favor you might use formal language.

*Akiko:* There are situations where you want to mix it up a little and use honorifics in a joking way.

*Question: What about if you develop a close relationship with a person who is ten years older than you? Would you use informal language with them? Would you wait for them to tell you to lower your speech?*

*Kiyoshi:* It would happen naturally.

*Akiko:* They'll just usually be like, it's fine, it's fine.

*Hiroshi:* If it mattered to them, they would have already told you.

*Mei:* I've never had a situation where they asked me to switch back to formal once I was using informal.

*Hiroshi:* Well, I might start speaking a little more formally if I realized their age later.

*Mei:* If they wanted you to use formal, they probably would have told you beforehand.

*Question: If you're using formal language and you're about to switch to casual, who initiates that switch?*

*Akiko:* Oh, the person who is older, of course. They would say, you don't have to use formal language, just talk casually.

*Hiroshi:* Well, I just go for it. If I'm the younger person, even if I know they're older, I would still just go for it and start talking casually. But that's only for really close friends that are older, if not it would be awkward.

*Question: If someone who is much older than you but not close uses informal speech to you how do you feel?*

*Akiko:* Feels normal.

*Hana:* Feels natural.

*Kiyoshi:* Of course.

*Question: If you are speaking to another adult who is much younger than you, but you are not close, will you use formal or informal?*

*Kiyoshi:* Formal at first, switch to informal.

*Akiko:* Same.

*Hiroshi:* Informal.

*Question: How do you decide what first-person pronoun to use?*

*Mei:* For women, we always use *watashi*. If you need to go really formal you can use *watakushi*, but it's really rare.

*Akiko:* For me at home, I will use *watashi*, but in some situations when you are trying to refer to yourself in a group of people you just use your own name to refer to yourself.

*Rin:* I always say *watashi*.

*Hana:* When I was in middle school, I said *uchi*. Then my sister told me to stop using *uchi*.

*Akiko:* We use *watashi* in formal form and in informal form, no matter what.

*Hiroshi:* For men, for close friends we say *ore*.

*Kiyoshi:* We could say *boku* informally or formally. Informal is *ore*.

*Akiko:* We also say [self] *jibun* in a lot of situations, you can use it to refer to yourself or in replacement of the pronoun 'you', if you point to the other person.

*Kiyoshi:* When I was in high school, I used *ore* with my friends. And then sometimes I used *boku* as well. But to my boss I just used *watashi*, and then sometimes I used *boku* as well, just depending. Well, I guess I do use *watashi* quite a lot in formal settings, like in business.

*Question: How do you decide what to call other people (name, last name, title, nickname, second-person pronoun, etc.)?*

*Kiyoshi: anata, anta, omae, teme, kimi, sojji,* etc.

*Mei:* Just the name is most used.

*Akiko:* With really close friends you can use *anta*, which is a fast way of saying *anata*.

*Hana: Jibun* is also used in my area.

*Akiko:* For the most part it's either nicknames or just the name.

*Kiyoshi: Ome* is also used with really close friends. Actually, *omae* is only used with really close friends of the same gender.

*Hana:* I use it to guys too though.

*Akiko:* Not in a joking setting, I feel like I hear guys use it to each other a lot.

*Kiyoshi:* Isn't that just when you're mad at them or when you're joking?

*Rin:* I don't think so, I personally think it's used normally. It depends on the relationship, but younger guys do use it normally. I've heard girls use it, but it's definitely more the guys.

*Question: How do you use names?*

*Mei:* Even if it's the first time I meet someone, if other people are already calling her with [suffix] *chan* at the end, then I would use *chan* at the end. For boys, I usually just put [suffix] *kun* at the end. Yeah, I say Hiroshi-*kun* or Kiyoshi-*kun* to these guys.

*Akiko:* It depends on what other people are already calling them. If your name is only two syllables, isn't it more common to attach the ending to it? Like, two letters plus *chan*? The longer ones might not, like my name has three syllables and people might just use my name by itself.

*Hiroshi:* If a person is older, I will put *kun* and *chan*.

*Mei:* Yeah, my name is Mei, and it's too short so in middle school sometimes people called me *Meimei* for a nickname.

*Akiko:* It really depends on the person's vibe, for sure. Some people, it's easier to just call them by their name, some people it's harder.

*Rin:* In one setting, everyone would use the same name towards me.

*Akiko:* At home, they usually call my name, but sometimes Aki-*chan*.

*Sachi:* Just my name at home.

*Hiroshi:* They just call me part of my name, Hiro.

*Sachi:* Just my mom calls me Sa-*chan*.

*Analysis*

*Speech Style*

The participants in this second focus group clarified that for them, speech style was less cemented in age dynamic and more a matter of closeness; they felt that it should be used between people who were close. Different participants had slightly different approaches, but this seemed to be the general consensus. With people who were not close, formal styles would be maintained. However, they also agreed with the previous group that regardless of relationship, much older individuals would be expected and allowed to use informal speech when addressing much younger individuals without offense being taken. This clarification explained the difference between the approaches taken by the two groups.

*Address Terms*

For address terms, the two groups seemed to have the same idea. There was no set approach for how pronouns should be used or what address terms should be used. Rather, different nicknames were selected and used for people in every relationship they found themselves in. These nicknames could include parts or all of the family name or the given name, along with different selections of suffixes. They could be employed by older individuals or younger individuals, and

they were typically used to show closeness. Second-person pronouns were used very carefully, and first-person pronouns were very influenced by gender.

*Comparison with DCT Study Results*

Responses in the DCT study and in the live focus group about speech style were consistent with each other. In both settings, participants felt that speech style was indicative first and foremost of level of closeness in a relationship, and that in close relationships, regardless of age, an informal speech style would be preferred or sought after. Participants also shared that using a formal style of speech would create a feeling of distance in a relationship, and that for that reason it would be difficult to move forward in terms of closeness where such a style was being used.

In the DCT survey results discussed in chapter three, Japanese respondents discussed how their address term usage changed based on age and intimacy to use more polite suffixes such as *-san* as distance increased, but that there was a lot of variance with what kinds of nicknames (including given names, family names, and different suffixes) were used with intimates. The same thing was reflected in the focus group, where participants made it clear that in different settings, with different intimates, they used and were called by different terms of address. The focus group also explored in more detail how Japanese speakers put extra thought into first-person pronouns, showing extreme variation in their choices of *ore*, *boku*, *watashi*, and others.

One key difference between the DCT result and the focus group responses was that in the DCT results, Japanese respondents focused slightly less on pragmalinguistic elements like speech style and address terms and a little bit more on politeness strategies like those mentioned by Chinese and English speakers, including length of responses, tone of voice, and subject matter. In the focus group, I asked specifically about speech style and address term, and this seemed to prompt them to talk more about it. In the DCT, their responses showed that they certainly employed these pragmalinguistic elements, but they seemed more likely to actually bring them up metalinguistically when asked during the live focus group.

**Section Three: Japanese Reality TV Analysis Study**

Because my live focus group with Japanese speakers found that, like Korean speakers, Japanese speakers can be so metalinguistically aware of their usage of speech style and address terms to determine intimacy in relationships, I wanted to explore a little bit more about how Japanese speakers might do this. I decided to collect qualitative linguistic data from a Japanese reality show.

The recent Netflix reality show, Love is Blind Japan[24], depicts Japanese individuals of opposite genders meeting and courting each other, going from strangers who have never seen one another

[24]Coelen, Chris. (2022). *Love is Blind: Japan* [TV series]. TV Man Union; Netflix. https://www.netflix.com/

to serious dating partners. I felt this program would be an excellent option, through which I could observe how Japanese speakers naturally choose to use speech styles and address terms. In the following, I have selected several scenes from the program in which interesting decisions around speech style were made, which I will show and discuss here. The interactions depicted are between the men and women who selected each other as romantic partners, resulting in the added variable of gender and romantic interests at play. The following transcripts contain my own translations.

*Love is Blind: Japan*

*Example Scene One*[25]

Man = Shuntaro (56)

Woman = Ayano (30)

Shuntaro： ちゃんと言うことね。言わないと。自分が勇気を持って言わないとさ。

chanto iu kotone. iwanaito. jibun ga yūki o motte iwanaitosa.

That's right. You have to say it. You have to have the courage to say it. (informal)

Ayano： ありがとうございます。

arigatō gozaimasu.

Thank you. (formal)

Ayano： じゃ、シュンタロウさんの部屋は空いてますか？今。

ja , shuntarō san no heya wa aitemasu ka？ ima.

So, is Shuntaro's room available now? (formal)

Here, Shuntaro, who is much older than Ayano, speaks to her in informal form, and she replies in a formal style. This seems to be the natural decision for both of them, as this is early in their relationship and before they have even met in person (they are speaking through a wall at this point). Shuntaro defaults to using informal style and Ayano defaults to using formal style. Of course, there may be other factors at play, too, like gender, but it seems that the age difference

[25] "The Cohabitation Test," Episode 7. Love is Blind: Japan [TV series]. TV Man Union; Netflix. https://www.netflix.com/

between the two of them plays the greatest role. Ayano uses the polite suffix -*san* when addressing Shuntaro, along with his first name.

*Example Scene Two*[26]

Man = Shuntaro (56)

Woman = Ayano (30)

Ayano: うれしい。そう。やめた。

ureshī. sō. yameta.

I'm happy. So yes, I quit. (informal)

Shuntaro: うん

un.

Yeah? (informal)

Ayano： やめたことがあるんだけど、気づいた?

yameta koto ga arun dakedo, kizuita ?

There's something I quit. Did you notice? (informal)

Shuntaro： 敬語？

keigo ?

Honorifics? (informal)

Ayano： そう！敬語やめてみた。。。週間です。

[26] "Once More on Bended Knee," Episode 8. Love is Blind: Japan [TV series]. TV Man Union; Netflix. https://www.netflix.com/

sō！ keigo yametemita . . . shūkandesu. (formal)

That's right! I stopped using honorifics... It's the week for it.

Shuntaro： はい

hai.

Yes. (formal)

Ayano： 今敬語だけど

kon keigodakedo.

I’m using polite expression right now. (formal)

Shuntaro： ほら

hora.

See? (informal)

Ayano： アハハハ。敬語やめてみた。おいしい。

ahahaha. keigo yametemita. oishī.

Hahaha. I tried not to use honorifics. Delicious. (informal)

Shuntaro： 大丈夫？

daijōbu？

Is it okay? (informal)

Ayano： アンチョビが。。。おいしいね。

anchobi ga . . . oishīne.

Anchovy... It's delicious. (informal)

Ayano： このチーズがやば

kono chīzu ga yaba.

This cheese is nice. (informal)

Shuntaro： よかった。

yokatta.

That's good. (informal)

Here, Ayano, who is far junior in age to Shuntaro, points out to him that she has stopped using formal form when speaking to him. Instead, she is now using the informal form when addressing him. He doesn't verbally acknowledge this, but acts pleased, and Ayano emphasizes the intentional nature of her decision. This seems to support that idea that speaking informally is a step in creating intimacy in their relationship. Despite the age difference between the two, there is no indication that Shuntaro feels this is particularly rude or unexpected. However, Ayano does not seem to be able to naturally make the shift. Perhaps this is because of the very short amount of time she has known Shuntaro. No pronouns are used in this conversation.

*Example Scene Three*[27]

Man = Mizuki (29)

Woman = Priya (27)

Mizuki： 棲に対して。。。まぁそうだな。あんまないな、プリ。その都度思ったら言う。

dōsei nitaishite . . . mā sōdana. anma naina, puri. sono tsudo omottara iu.

Living together... Well, that's right. I'm sorry, Pri. I'll tell you every time I think about it. (informal)

Priya： その都度思ったら言ってくれたらいいけど。

sono tsudo omottara ittekuretara īkedo.

I wish you'd tell me every time you think about it. (informal)

[27] "The Cohabitation Test," Episode 7. Love is Blind: Japan [TV series]. TV Man Union; Netflix. https://www.netflix.com/

Priya： なんか私さ、同棲に対する不安っていうよりかは人間性じゃないけどさ、そっちの方が気になるの。

nanka watashisa, dōsei nitaisuru fuan tte iu yori ka wa ningensei janaikedosa, socchi no hō ga ki ni naruno.
I'm more concerned about living together than I am about human nature, but I'm more concerned about that. (informal)

Mizuki： あーそうかそうか

ā sō ka sō ka

Oh, I see. (informal)

Priya： 何を目指してるんだろうとか、どういう未来像を描いているんだろうっていう方がさ。

nani o mezashiteru ndarō toka, dōiu miraizō o egaiteiru ndarō tte iu hō gasa.

I wonder what they're aiming for and what kind of future they're drawing. (informal)

Priya： 自分の未来像があるじゃん。

jibun no miraizō ga arujan.

You have a vision of your future. (informal)

Priya： だから、この日常の不安はあんまりないんだけど、

dakara, kono nichijō no fuan wa anmari nai ndakedo,

So I don't have much anxiety in my daily life. (informal)

Mizuki： なるほどね、そっちね。

naruhodone, socchine.

I see, that's it. (informal)

。。。

Mizuki: 別に飲食店自体で開所を大きくして行きたいってそこまで思ってるわけでもなくて、

betsu ni inshokuten jitai de kaisho o ōkiku shiteikitai tte soko made omotteru wake de mo nakute,
The restaurant itself doesn't want to make the opening bigger. (informal)

Mizuki： 別事業もあるじゃん、農業とかさ。

betsu jigyō mo arujan, nōgyō tokasa. (informal)
There's another business, like farming.

。。。

Here, Mizuki and Priya both consistently use informal style with each other. The two of them have not spent a huge amount of time together, are not getting along particularly well, and are two years apart in age. In this conversation, they are discovering some of their differences in values, which will eventually become major roadblocks in their relationship. However, they continue to use the informal form throughout the conversation, equally, without one showing a tendency to speak more formally than the other. No pronouns are used here.

*Example Scene Four*[28]

Man = Misaki (31)

Woman = Kaoru (31)

Misaki： うん。あの。カオルちゃんが作っとうな歌何か。

un. ano. kaoru chan ga tsukut tōna uta nani ka.

Yeah. What kind of songs are you making? (informal)

Kaoru： じゃあね、二人っていう曲があるんだけど。歌おっかな。

jāne, ni nin tteiu kyoku ga aru ndakedo. uta ok kana.

Well, there's a song called Two. Should I sing? (informal)

[28] "Endings and Beginnings," Episode 6. Love is Blind: Japan [TV series]. TV Man Union; Netflix. https://www.netflix.com/

Here, Misaki and Kaoru share a conversation in the informal style. The two are the same age and have been getting along well, and their informal conversation feels natural and unforced. He addresses her using her name and the suffix *-chan,* rather than a second-person pronoun.

*Example Scene Five*[29]

Man = Ryotaro (32)

Woman = Motomi (27)

Ryotaro： 今日あっという間に一日終わったね

kyō attoiumani ichi nichi owattane.

Today was over in no time. (informal)

Motomi： 早かったね

hayakattane.

You were quick. (informal)

Ryotaro： うん。

un.

Yeah. (informal)

Motomi： うんほんと心地いい。

un honto kokochi ī.

Yeah, it's really comfortable. (informal)

Ryotaro and Motomi are also shown here continuing to speak in the informal form, despite the relatively short time they have known each other and the five-year age difference that exists between them. There doesn't appear to be a difference in the way they speak or select for speech style. No pronouns are used.

[29] "Endings and Beginnings," Episode 6. Love is Blind: Japan [TV series]. TV Man Union; Netflix. https://www.netflix.com/

*Example Scene Six*[30]

Man = Odachi (31)

Woman = Nanako (35)

Odachi： 今言った言葉とか、気持ちっていうのは、その時にちゃんと表現してほしかったし、

ima itta kotoba toka , kimochi tteiu no wa , sono toki ni chanto hyōgen shite hosh ikattashi,

I wanted you to express what you just said and how you felt at that time. (informal)

Odachi： だから、ここに一緒にいてご飯食べてる時とかも、思ってることを言わないっていう感じじゃないと俺は思ってたから、今それを初めて知ったし、申し訳ないなと思ったし

dakara , koko ni issho ni ite gohan tabeteru toki toka mo , omotteru koto o iwanai tteiu kanji janaito ore wa omottetakara , ima sore o hajimete shittashi , mōshiwake naina to omottashi
So when we were eating together, I thought it wasn't like I wasn't going to say what I thought, so I just found out for the first time and I felt sorry. (informal)

Nanako： まあ、ついた瞬間も、まあもちろん私が後だったからパソコンしててそれは全然いいんだけど、車乗ってからもすぐパソコン開いて、私がオダッチじゃなかったというか。

mā , tsuita shunkan mo , mā mochiron watashi ga godattakara pasokon shitete sor e wa zenzen ī ndakedo , kuruma notte kara mo sugu pasokon hiraite , watashi ga o dacchi janakatta to iu ka.

Well, the moment I got there, of course, it's good to use the computer because I was later, but I opened it right after I got in the car, so I wasn't an otaku. (informal)

[30] "Endings and Beginnings," Episode 6. Love is Blind: Japan [TV series]. TV Man Union; Netflix. https://www.netflix.com/

Nanako： 現実が何か全然違う人っていうか、重なっていかない。

genjitsu ga nani ka zenzen chigau hito tteiu ka, kasanatteikanai .

The reality is something completely different, but it doesn't overlap. (informal)

Nanako and Odachi are confronting each other about something serious that has been on their minds, but the two of them have previously lowered their speech to an informal form. In this scene, despite the serious nature of their conversation, the two use completely informal form. Their speech style doesn't change because of the new mood of their relationship and conversation. Also, in this conversation Odachi uses the first-person pronoun *ore* to refer to himself and Nanako uses the first-person pronoun *watashi* to refer to herself. Nanako also uses Odachi's given name, without any suffixes, to refer to him.

*Example Scene Seven*[31]

Man = Wataru (38)

Woman = Midori (30)

Midori： 島らっきょファンになりそう、この旅で。

shimarakki yo fan ni nari sō, kono tabi de.

I'm going to be a fan of Rakkyo Island on this trip. (informal)

Wataru： これもうちょっとかけてあげたら。

kore mō chotto kaketeagetara.

Why don't you put this on a little more? (informal)

Midori： ワタルさんはずっと日本にいたいなって感じ？

wataru san wa zutto nippon ni itai natte kanji ?

Wataru, do you feel like you want to stay in Japan? (informal)

[31] "Endings and Beginnings," Episode 6. Love is Blind: Japan [TV series]. TV Man Union; Netflix. https://www.netflix.com/

Wataru： 別に何か場所は。場所はそんなにこだわってるわけじゃないよ。

betsuni nani ka basho wa. basho wa sonnani kodawatteru wake janaiyo.

I don't really care about places. I don't care about places. (informal)

Though Wataru is eight years Midori's elder, in this conversation, neither Midori or Wataru use formal forms, and they only use informal endings. The two of them also don't use first-person pronouns. However, Midori does use a formal suffix, -*san*, when addressing Wataru by name, maintaining a slight feeling of formality.

*Example Scene Eight*[32]

Man = Mori (37)

Woman = Minami (26)

Minami： それは家族も連れて？

sore wa kazoku mo tsurete？

Is that with your family? (informal)

Mori： いや別に日本と行き来すればいい話だから。どっちでもいいんじゃないかな

iyabetsu ni nippon to ikiki sureba ī hanashidakara. docchi demo ī n janai kana

No, it's good to go back and forth with Japan. I think it doesn't matter which way. (informal)

Mori： 何かその時に好む方向性で。

nani ka sono toki ni konomu hōkōsei de.

In the direction you like at that time. (informal)

Minami： そうなんだ。

sōnanda.

[32] "Endings and Beginnings," Episode 6. Love is Blind: Japan [TV series]. TV Man Union; Netflix. https://www.netflix.com/

I see. (informal)

Here, Mori is 11 years older than Minami, but the two of them both use informal language, despite not knowing each other for an extended period of time. Neither acts uncomfortable with this arrangement, nor makes moves to shift. There are no pronouns used by either party.

*Example Scene Nine*[33]

Man = Yudai (23)

Woman = Nana (31)

Nana： ナナ、今年３２になるから、後二年以内にはほしいかも、って思った。

nana, kotoshi san ni ni narukara, kō ni nen inai ni wa hoshī kamo, tte omotta.

Nana, I'm turning 32 this year, so I thought I might want it within two years. (informal)

Yudai： いや、何だろう、今すぐは、果たしていけるのかっていう不安もちょっとはあったりする。

iya, nanidarō, ima sugu wa, hatashiteikeru no ka tteiu fuan mo chotto wa at tari su ru.

No, I'm a little worried about what it is and whether I can do it right now. (informal)

Yudai： 子供を産んだ時に育てられる環境づくりが本当にできてるのかとか。。。

kodomo o unda toki ni sodaterareru kankyōzukuri ga hontōni dekiteru no ka to ka . . .

I wonder if the environment where I can raise my child is really created... (informal)

Though Nana is eight years older than Yudai, the two of them continue to use informal language with each other, not using any formal speech. They are discussing a serious topic but make no move to switch to formal language. The two have known each other for only a few weeks at this

[33] "Endings and Beginnings," Episode 6. Love is Blind: Japan [TV series]. TV Man Union; Netflix. https://www.netflix.com/

point, but have become close and have an intimate relationship. The only pronoun usage occurs when Nana refers to herself by her own given name in place of a first-person pronoun.

*Summary*

The most interesting part of my observations from this Japanese reality TV show was the absolute prevalence of the informal speech style between all participants, regardless of gender and large age differences, and, perhaps most importantly, regardless of the level of intimacy that seemed to exist in each relationship. Some of the relationships were on the verge of ending, and some were in strong stages. Some of the conversations featured in this section were actually addressing the weaknesses in the relationships, and yet informal form is still predominant. The only exception to the use of informal form highlighted here is that shown in the relationship of Ayano and Shuntaro. The difference between their relationship and that of others shown in the program is not one of intimacy, but of age difference; Ayano is 26 years younger than Shuntaro. It isn't the existence of an age difference itself that makes this unique; there are other age differences among the couples on the show. Rather, it is the sheer size of this age difference that seems to make it unique. However, even here, another scene shows Ayano trying to lower her speech to an informal speech style, to the general approval of Shuntaro. Other age differences do exist, even large ones; these ones, however, all seem to make little difference in terms of speech style selection.

Terms of address were more varied in this study. Some of the couples addressed each other using given names alone, others assigned each other nicknames, and others used suffixes, ranging from diminuitives like *-chan* to more formal suffixes like *-san.* This allowed for a more nuanced look at the personalities and the individualized dynamics of each relationship, while the informal speech style used by every party did not allow for any comparison.

## Conclusion

In addition to collecting DCT survey results, holding live focus groups with Chinese speakers and Japanese speakers and conducting a study of a Japanese reality TV program allowed me to observe the following main points about Chinese and Japanese pragmatics, summarized from above:

1. Chinese speakers don't rely on linguistic tools like speech styles to send or understand information about intimacy in relationships; rather, they use politeness strategies like asking questions or avoiding further conversation to communicate this information. Korean clearly differs from Chinese here because of its huge reliance on speech style (particularly when speakers seek to understand relationship dynamics), discussed in detail in chapter four.

2. Japanese speakers feel that speech style is an important indicator of closeness in relationships, without too much regard for age and power dynamics. The informal speech style is widely used in relationships that have a more casual dynamic, even when age gaps are present. When particularly large age gaps are present, the senior party uses informal speech and the junior party uses formal speech, with possibility for the junior party to lower speech with increased intimacy. However, outside of these extremely large gaps in age, even in duos with relatively large age differences, discomfort is not felt in both parties selecting informal speech styles. Korean is similar to Japanese in an aspect; both languages rely on speech style to communicate information about intimacy. However, as the DCT survey in chapter three and the live focus group in chapter four showed, Korean speakers have stricter feelings around when speech can be lowered, and who can initiate that lowering. Additionally, Korean speakers put more emphasis on age than Japanese speakers, with more Koreans indicating that even in close relationships the older individual has more control over the nature of speech styles used. Also, Koreans seem to feel more strongly about the level of intimacy or desired intimacy required for shifting to lower speech styles.

3. Chinese speakers and Japanese speakers have a large variety of potential address terms to choose from when addressing intimates and non-intimates. They choose from various combinations of family and given name, kinship terms, and nicknames. These address terms are assigned on a case-to-case basis and will differ by relationship, and therefore aren't predictable. This is a point of major differentiation from Korean pragmatics when it comes to relationship dynamics. Korean speakers in the DCT survey and in the focus groups in chapter five reporting about address term usage mentioned specific expectations around how kinship terms would be used in certain types of relationships—when a younger person was closer to an older person, they would always address them using a kinship term, etc. The variability seen in Chinese and Japanese was not present, meaning address terms could be used in Korean as a constant signifier of relationship status in a way they could not in Chinese and Japanese.

## Chapter Seven

***Korean Pragmatics: The Case of the KFL Learner***

## Introduction

The previous chapters have illustrated that Korean speakers are unique in the way they employ pragmatic features of their language to send and receive messages about relational dynamics, and that Korean pragmatic skills are not exactly the same as those found in English, Chinese, or Japanese. This chapter carries on the discussion begun in chapter five by examining the burden that KFL learners take on when seeking to understand how to use these pragmatic skills in Korean. In this chapter, first I will show that there are indeed serious pitfalls to KFL learners understanding pragmatic skills in Korean and using them appropriately. Secondly, I will show that current KFL curricula don't often address the skills that would be essential for pragmatic competency, therefore leaving these pitfalls undealt with. Finally, I will examine how current language assessment measures don't include appropriate methodology for assessing pragmatic skills in KFL learners or learners of other similar Asian languages.

## Section One: A KFL Classroom Activity

### *Pragmatically Rich Drama Clips*

First, in order to better understand some of the pitfalls which might be presented to KFL learners in their efforts to understand the pragmatic features of Korean discussed up to this point, I designed a classroom activity for use in the university KFL classroom. This activity required the use of several clips from modern Korean television dramas, each featuring the use of pragmatic features. The following are eight Korean television drama scenes, each of which I selected for their portrayal of Korean speakers using linguistic pragmatic features to communicate information about the relational dynamics displayed in the scene. A screenshot and the dialogue from the scene, along with an explanation of the pragmatic features of the scene selected, are shown below.

*Scene One*

Jechan (left) and Wutak (right) recently met through their mutual friend (a girl they both have feelings for). After bumping into each other for the second time, they decide to grab dinner together. On the way there, they have the following conversation[34]:




Image 5[35]

Wutak: 난 용띠인데.
nan yong-tti-in-tey.

I was born in the year of the dragon.

Jechan: 아이구 갑이네요?
a-i-kwu kap-i-ney-yo?
Wow, we're the same age.

Wutak: 오~ 진짜? 그럼 우리 말 놓을까?
o cin-cca? ku-lem wu-li mal noh-ul-kka?

Oh really? Then should we lower our speech?

Jechan: 싫습니다.
silh-sup-ni-ta.

I don't want to.

[34] Jung, H., Hwang, K., (Producers). (2017). *While You Were Sleeping.* [TV Series]. SidiusHQ, SBS.

[35] Image sourced from https://blog.naver.com/PostView.nhn?blogId=ys_js1115&logNo=221111118975&parentCategoryNo=&categoryNo=41&viewDate=&isShowPopularPosts=true&from=search

Jechan: 아...
a …
ah ….

In the context of the drama, Jechan and Wutak are the same age, which allows them, by rules of Korean culture, to lower their speech upon negotiation (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 176; Brown, 2011). The two have not had frequent interaction in the past, so they are shown in this scene negotiating the terms of their relationship moving forward. One of them is amiable, wanting to use their shared age as a means to drop speech, and hopefully become closer. One of them declines, not desiring a closer relationship. In the larger context of the show, this may be explained by the fact that the two of them have feelings for the same woman. Obviously, this scene does not make those extraneous details apparent. However, to the casual Korean viewer, the dialogue here would make it obvious that a drop in speech level is being proposed (*mal noh-ul-kka?*) and that the basis of this is the previous discovery that both interlocutors are born in the year of the dragon. Such a proposal would not be seen as unusual or inappropriate, and Jechan's refusal would be seen as a matter of personal taste.

*Scene Two*

Nam Hongju (left) recently met Han Wutak (right). This is their second encounter[36].



Image 6[37]

Wutak: 와 이런 우연이! 이렇게 또 만나네요!

wa i-len wu-yen-i! i-leh-key tto man-na-ney-yo!

Wow, what a coincidence! We meet again!

Hongju: 그러게요!

ku-le-key-yo!

Would you look at that.

Wutak: 근데 이름 안물어보고 되게 후회했는데. 이름이…?

kun-tey i-lum an-mwul-e-po-ko toy-key hwu-hoy-hayss-nun-tey. i-lum-i?

But I regretted not asking your name last time. Your name is…?

Hongju: 남홍주입니다.

[36] Jung, H., Hwang, K., (Producers). (2017). *While You Were Sleeping.* [TV Series]. SidiusHQ, SBS.

[37] Image sourced from http://enews.imbc.com/News/RetrieveNewsInfo/217741

nam-hong-cwu-ip-ni-ta.

My name is Nam Hongju.

Wutak: 한우탁입니다. 88 용띠.

han-wu-thak-ip-ni-ta. 88 yong-tti.

I'm Han Wutak. I was born in the year of the dragon, 1988.

Hongju: 어! 나도 88 용띤데.

e! na-to 88 yong-ttin-tey.

Oh, I'm the year of the dragon, 1988 too!

Wutak: 그럼 우린 그냥… 말 놓을까?

ku-lem wu-lin ku-nyang mal noh-ul-kka?

Then should we just drop our speech?

Hongju: 좋지!

coh-ci!

Sounds great!

This scene is similar to the previous, and comes from the same drama. Here, Wutak meets another character, Hongju. The two discover that they are also the same age. Upon discovering this, Wutak suggests that they drop their speech, and Hongju immediately appears amenable to the idea. She responds in the affirmative, using informal style right away. Unlike Jechan in the scene preceding, she apparently has no reason to turn down the suggestion. The average Korean viewer would, again, probably take no issue here, as it is completely normal for a person to lower speech with another person of the same age with whom they hope to have a closer relationship.

*Scene Three*

Ye Jewuk (left) is the senior doctor and supervisor to the younger Namwu (right). They haven't worked together long. Namwu drops by Dr. Ye's office, and they have the following conversation[38]:




Image 7[39]

Namwu: 조금 늦으신답니다.

co-kum nuc-u-sin-tap-ni-ta.

They say they're a little late.

Jewuk: 예 알겠습니다. 아, 김남우 선생님? 이것 좀… 실장님께 전해드리겠습니까?

yey al-keyss-sup-ni-ta. a, kim-nam-wu sen-sayng-nim? i-kes com sil-cang-nim-kkey cen-hay-tu-li-keyss-sup-ni-kka?

Okay, I see. Oh, Dr. Kim? Would you mind passing this to the team lead?

Namwu: 네! (He pauses.) 예 선생님? 저 한테 말씀 편하게 해주시면 안될까요?

ney! yey sen-sayng-nim? ce han-they mal-ssum phyen-ha-key hay-cwu-si-myen an-toyl-kka-yo?

[38] Han, S., (Director). (2018). *A Poem a Day.* [TV Series]. tvN.

[39] Image sourced from https://m.blog.naver.com/PostView.nhn?blogId=fjakgh&logNo=221277340816&proxyReferer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

Okay! Dr. Ye? Would it be okay if you spoke comfortably to me?

Jewuk: 예?

yey?

What?

Namwu: 그냥 남우라고 부르고 말씀 놓으세요.

ku-nyang nam-wu-la-ko pwu-lu-ko mal-ssum noh-u-sey-yo.

Just call me Namwu and lower your speech.

Jewuk: 아…직장에서 만난 공적인 자리에서 말 놓기는 좀…

a cik-cang-ey-se man-nan kong-cek-in ca-li-ey-se mal noh-ki-nun com

Ah… At work, in public places, lowering speech is a little…

Namwu: 아 다른 선생님들은 진작에 말씀 놓으셨는데요 뭐… 그냥 편하게 이름 부르시고 말씀 놓아주세요. (He smiles, bows and leaves.)

a ta-lun sen-sayng-nim-tul-un cin-cak-ey mal-ssum noh-u-syess-nun-tey-yo mwe ku-nyang phyen-ha-key i-lum pwu-lu-si-ko mal-ssum noh-a-cwu-sey-yo.

Oh, the other senior doctors lowered their speech earlier, you know… Just call me by name comfortably and lower your speech.

In this drama, Namwu is a young doctor who has recently been working with Jewuk, an older and higher-ranking doctor at the same hospital. In this dialogue, the two of them have a work-related conversation, with no indication of an outside relationship, and no discussion of personal matters. To the average Korean listener, Namwu's usage of the *-supnita* form would sound appropriately formal (Yeon and Brown, 2011/2019: 258), considering his position in relation to that of Jewuk. However, Jewuk's response to him in the same *-supnita* form might be somewhat jarring. That considered, it may not be surprising to the Korean viewer that Namwu would ask Jewuk to speak more comfortably. Namwu's suggestion that other doctors have already lowered their speech may be seen as encouragement—fear around *gapjil* culture, where those with senior rank abuse their power, prevents some superiors from lowering speech in the workplace. Korean viewers would probably recognize that Namwu would feel less comfortable hearing deferential speech from a superior than the traditional lower forms, but they might also empathize with Jewuk's statement about not wanting to use lower forms in the workplace—sometimes dropping speech is accompanied by the responsibility of an 'older brother' figure that Jewuk may want to avoid. All of this information would be gleaned only from the dialogue in this scene and the cultural knowledge of the Korean viewer. This scene does not indicate whether there are other factors in play in either of the characters' personal lives, but the dialogue makes these cultural influences apparent.

*Scene Four*

Kwon Jeongrok (left) has been dating his former secretary, Oh Jinsim (right), for several weeks when they have the following conversation[40]:



Image 8[41]

Jinsim: 99 점짜리 남자친구예요.

99cem-cca-li nam-ca-chin-kwu-yey-yo.

You're a 99-point boyfriend.

Jeongrok: 그런데 1 점은 왜 감점된 겁니까?

ku-len-tey 1cem-un way kam-cem-toyn kep-ni-kka?

But why was one point deducted?

Jinsim: 그 말투 때문에요! 오…그 사무적인 말투만 고치면 100 점 맞을 수 있었는데. 예를 들어 좀 더 편하게 얘기 하시면 안돼요? 나 부를 때도 꼭 "오진심 씨" 이거 말고 뭐… 진심 씨? 아니야. 진심아?

ku mal-thwu ttay-mwun-ey-yo! o ku sa-mwu-cek-in mal-thwu-man ko-chi-myen 100cem mac-ul swu iss-ess-nun-tey. yey-lul tul-e com te phyen-ha-key yay-ki ha-si-myen an-tway-yo? na pwu-lul ttay-to kkok ey-o-cin-sim ssi-ey i-ke mal-ko mwe cin-sim ssi? a-ni-ya. cin-sim-a?

Because of that way of speaking! Oh… that business-like way of speaking, if you just fixed it, you could have had 100 points. For example, if you spoke more comfortably, wouldn't that be okay? When you call me, do you have to say, Miss Oh Jinsim? Or couldn't you say, Miss Jinsim… or, no, Jinsim?

[40] Jang, J., Lee, J., Han, S. (Executive Producer). (2019). *Touch Your Heart.* [TV Series]. Mega Monster, Zium Content, tvN.
[41] Image sourced from http://news.mtn.co.kr/v/2019020709214174140

Jeongrok: (Looking awkward.) 아…그게 무슨….

a ku-key mwu-sun.

Ah…but that's…

Jinsim: 왜요? 친구 분들 대할 때 처럼 편하게 하면 좋잖아요.

way-yo? chin-kwu pwun-tul tay-hal ttay che-lem phyen-ha-key ha-myen coh-canh-a-yo.

Why? Wouldn't it be nice if you spoke comfortably like when you called your friends?

Jeongrok: 그건 세월이 쌓아여서 자연스럽게 그렇게 된 거고… 갑자기 말투 바꾸라는 거면… 제가 너무 난감하지 않겠습니까? (He blushes.)

ku-ken sey-wel-i ssah-a-ye-se ca-yen-su-lep-key ku-leh-key toyn ke-ko kap-ca-ki mal-thwu pa-kkwu-la-nun ke-myen cey-ka ne-mwu nan-kam-ha-ci anh-keyss-sup-ni-kka?

That's become that way naturally as time has gone on… if you're asking me to just suddenly change the way I speak… wouldn't that be too difficult for me?

Without context a Korean speaker would probably assume that Jeongrok and Jinsim are a fairly new couple, because the fact that they still speak formally with each other suggests that they did not meet as friends. Jinsim's frustration at Jeongrok's inability to transition to a more casual speech style might be relatable; Koreans often feel it is difficult to feel close to someone they still speak formally with (Choo, 2006: 134), but she may feel it is too forward for her to drop her speech first as the woman or as the younger party. However, the viewer may also relate with the awkwardness Jeongrok feels in being asked to just switch his speech style; many Korean speakers feel a barrier in their ability to switch on demand (Choo, 2006: 135). None of these observations would require outside context to gather. The greater context of the show reveals that Jinsim used to work for Jeongrok as his secretary, creating an even more awkward dynamic—they are transitioning from a very formal relationship to a casual one. However, this context is not necessarily vital to understanding the dialogue presented here.

*Scene Five*

Eun Bonghee (left) and Noh Jiwuk (right) worked together very closely two years ago, when he was her supervisor. In this scene, they have recently been reunited for the first time[42]:




Image 9[43]

Bonghee: 근데… 노 변호사님 하고 저… 되게 오랜만에 보는 거죠?

kun-tey no pyen-ho-sa-nim ha-ko ce toy-key o-layn-man-ey po-nun ke-cyo?

But… Lawyer No, you and I… this is the first time we've seen each other in a long while, isn't it?

Jiwuk: 되게 오랜만은 아니구요. 아마 재판정에서 봉희씨가 '유죄를 주장합니다' 하던 날에 봤었죠.

toy-key o-layn-man-un a-ni-kwu-yo. a-ma cay-phan-ceng-ey-se pong-huy-ssi-ka yu-coy-lul cwu-cang-hap-ni-ta- ha-ten nal-ey pwass-ess-cyo.

Not that long. The last time would have been when you said, 'We plead not guilty!' in court, wouldn't it?

Bonghee: 아… 보셨었구나… 근데 왜 존댓말 쓰세요? 원랜 저 한테 "야", "너", "은봉희", 막 대하셨었는데.

[42] Park, Y. (Executive Producer). (2017). *Suspicious Partners.* [TV Series]. The Story Works, SBS.

[43] Image sourced from http://m.theceluv.com/article.php?aid=1495064944142913002#_enliple

a po-syess-ess-kwu-na kun-tey way con-tays-mal ssu-sey-yo? wen-layn ce han-they ey-ya-ey, ey-ne-ey, ey-un-pong-huy-ey, mak tay-ha-syess-ess nun-tey.

Oh, so you saw me that day… But why are you speaking formally? You used to speak informally and call me by my fall name, and treat me without much thought.

Jiwuk: 그땐 내 사람이었으니까. 근데 그 기간은 딱 2 개월, 안본지는 2 년. 그저 그 2 개월 짜리 인연으로 말을 계속 놓는다는 게 더 이상한 것 같은데요. (봉희 looks hurt.)

ku-ttayn nay sa-lam-i-ess-u-ni-kka. kun-tey ku ki-kan-un ttak 2kay-wel, an-pon-ci-nun 2nyen. ku-ce ku 2kay-wel cca-li in-yen-u-lo mal-ul kyey-sok noh-nun-ta-nun key te i-sang-han kes kath-un-tey-yo.

Back then, you were one of my people. But that was a two-month time period. We haven't seen each other for two years. Dropping our speech still because of that two-month period of time seems more strange to me.

It's difficult for the viewer to tell just from the context of this scene exactly what factors are at play here, but the dialogue makes it obvious that Jiwuk used to use *panmal* to Bonghee, and that she is surprised by his use of formal language. His explanation that she used to be one of 'his people'—presumably his employee—may be accepted at face value by the viewer, and it may not; the fact is that in the greater context of the show the two have a much more complicated relationship. Bonghee's surprise is probably reflected by many viewers because of the fact that, though changing speech styles can be awkward at first, once speech is dropped by a party consistently, it usually does not change back to another style again. Viewers may come to their own conclusion based on this scene alone about what other relationship factors may be at play here.

*Scene Six*

An Minhyeok (left) is the boss of Doh Bongsun (right), and they recently started dating. An Minhyeok has been telling her he is a few years older[44]:




Image 10[45]

Bongsun: 동갑인 거 제가 다 알거든요?

tong-kap-in ke cey-ka ta al-ke-tun-yo?

I already know we are the same age, you know?

Minhyeok: 야 너 그것 어떻게…

ya ne ku-kes e-tteh-key

Hey, how do you…

Bongsun: 우와 대박! 진짜! 나 그냥 찍었는데… 동갑이구나! 아하!

wu-wa tay-pak! cin-cca! na ku-nyang ccik-ess-nun-tey tong-kap-i-kwu-na! a-ha!

[44] Song, W., Park, I. (Executive Producers). (2017). *Strong Girl Do Bong-soon.* [TV Series]. Drama House, JS Pictures, JTBC.

[45] Image sourced from https://m.blog.naver.com/PostView.nhn?blogId=nsangahn&logNo=220978738663&proxyReferer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

Wow, amazing! Seriously! I just guessed… We are the same age! Aha!

Minhyeok: (Looking flustered.) 그래도 오빠야! 너보다 모든 면에서 성숙해. 어?

(Looking flustered.) ku-lay-to o-ppa-ya! ne-po-ta mo-tun myen-ey-se seng-swuk-hay. e?

I'm still older! I'm more mature than you in every way, okay?

Bongsun: (Smirking.) 대표님. 저 말 놔도 돼요? 우리 말 놓을까요? 그러자! 친군데! 어?

tay-phyo-nim. ce mal nwa-to tway-yo? wu-li mal noh-ul-kka-yo? ku-le-ca! chin-kwun-tey! e?

CEO, May I lower my speech? Should we lower our speech? Let's do it! We're friends! Huh?

Minhyeok: (Blushes.) 어이가 없네. 해볼 테면 해봐 어디!

(Blushes.) e-i-ka eps-ney. hay-pol they-myen hay-pwa e-ti!

This is ridiculous. Well, give it a try if you want.

Bongsun: 야 안민혁! 민혁아!

ya an-min-hyek! min-hyek-a!
Hey, An Minhyeok! Minhyeok!

Here again, the most relevant factor presented by the scene is the age of Bongsun and Minhyeok. Korean viewers know that culturally two people of the same age—especially in their twenties—are likely to feel comfortable speaking in casual language together if they have a close relationship. The scene seems to establish both of these facts, and therefore it is unsurprising that the shift is made. The scene also establishes that there is a hierarchical relationship between the two at work, but as the conversation seems to take place outside of the workplace, an average viewer would likely find nothing alarming about the dynamic presented here. In the greater context of the show, the two have an intimate relationship, which makes the shift even more natural, however the viewer doesn't need to know that to gather from this scene that there is intimacy in the relationship here.

*Scene Seven*

Im Donggyu (left) is a professional baseball player on a team managed by Baek Seungsu (right). They have recently had a disagreement regarding trading Im to another team. Im is waiting for Baek after work in the parking lot. He hits a baseball in Baek's direction to get his attention[46]:



Image 11[47]

Seungsu: 임동규 씨!

Im-tong-kyu ssi!

Mr. Im Donggyu!

Donggyu: 왜?

way?

What?

Seungsu: 왜??

way??

[46] Hong S., Park, M. (Executive Producers). (2019-2020). *Hot Stove League.* [TV Series]. Gill Pictures, SBS.

[47] Image sourced from http://www.dizzotv.com/site/data/html_dir/2020/01/31/2020013180408.html

'What?'

Donggyu: 너도 반말 해! (He hits another baseball.) 여기가 내 집이야. 이 팀이 내 집이라고. 12 년 동안 내가 여기서 한 게 엄청 많아. 단장님 단장님 하니까 본인이 진짜 위치를 헷갈렸나보다. 야. 너는 네 가정부가 집 나가라면 나가냐?

ne-to pan-mal hay! ye-ki-ka nay cip-i-ya. i thim-i nay cip-i-la-ko. 12nyen tong-an nay-ka ye-ki-se han key em-cheng manh-a. tan-cang-nim tan-cang-nim ha-ni-kka pon-in-i cin-cca wi-chi-lul heys-kal-lyess-na-po-ta. ya. ne-nun ney ka-ceng-pwu-ka cip na-ka-la-myen na-ka-nya?

You use low-form, too! This is my house. I said, this team is my house. For twelve years, I've done so many things here. I guess you've mixed up your place because everyone calls you manager, manager. Hey. If your maid told you to leave your house, would you leave?

Seungsu: 난 가정부 없는데. 임동규 씨. 임동규 선수는 홈런 치고 안타 치고 그러는 사람이고, 나는 트레이드 하고 그런 거 하는 사람입니다. 그거 위치가 다른 겁니까? 포지션 자체가 다른 겁니다.

nan ka-ceng-pwu eps-nun-tey. im-tong-kyu ssi. im-tong-kyu sen-swu-nun hom-len chi-ko an-tha chi-ko ku-le-nun sa-lam-i-ko, na-nun thu-ley-i-tu ha-ko ku-len ke ha-nun sa-lam-ip-ni-ta. ku-ke wi-chi-ka ta-lun kep-ni-kka? po-ci-syen ca-chey-ka ta-lun kep-ni-ta.

I don't have a maid. Mr. Im Donggyu. You are a person who hits home runs and base hits, and I'm a person who makes trades and does things like that. Are those different levels? Those are completely different positions.

This scene may be more confusing initially for the viewer who does not have context, because they may assume there is some background which justifies Donggyu's use of *panmal.* In the greater context of the show, Donggyu and Seungsu do not have a personal relationship. Also, the position of team manager traditionally directs the players, who speak respectfully to the manager in turn. So, without context the viewer may not realize that Donggyu's decision to use informal speech to Seungsu is possibly disrespectful. However, the intensity of Donggyu's usage of informal speech, including his use of the second-person pronoun *ne*, would likely tip off the viewer that he is in fact using *panmal* in an entirely confrontational way, just to show anger. This would clue in the viewer to the level of emotion in the situation—confronting someone with this pronoun and in this speech style without the appropriate intimacy or power dynamic is an extreme in Korean.

*Scene Eight*

Kim Hyejin (left) has recently met her older coworker, Kim Shinhyeok (right). He has been joking around with her a lot and trying to make friends with her. He meets her in the hall and jumps out, startling her. He pulls out a sausage, holding it out to her[48]:




Image 12[49]

Shinhyeok: 소세지?

so-sey-ci?

Sausage?

Hyejin: 안먹어요!

an-mek-e-yo!

I won't eat one!

Shinhyeok: (Laughing.) 까달라고! 주는 줄 안 거야? 와… 꿈도 야무져라 내가 이걸 얼마나 아끼는 건데! (He laughs, enjoying the joke.)

kka-tal-la-ko! cwu-nun cwul an ke-ya? wa kkwum-to ya-mwu-cye-la nay-ka i-kel el-ma-na a-kki-nun ken-tey!

[48] Han, H. (Executive Producer). (2015). *She Was Pretty.* [TV Series]. Bon Factory Worldwide, Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation.

[49] Image sourced from http://news.tf.co.kr/read/entertain/1592838.htm

No, I mean peel it for me! You thought I was giving it to you? Wow… you dream big. I really value these, you know.

Hyejin: (Looking annoyed, then mad.) 근데 왜 갑자기 반말하세요???

kun-tey way kap-ca-ki pan-mal-ha-sey-yo???

But why are you suddenly using low-form to me?

Here, Hyejin is visibly annoyed at Shinhyeok's usage of informal speech to her. As the viewer, it is not apparent what kind of relationship the two have, but it can be assumed that Hyejin wouldn't have expected Shinhyeok to use informal speech to her before this scene—as she used the word "suddenly" to describe his usage of low-form. It is clear in the scene that Shinhyeok is teasing Hyejin, presumably in a friendly way; it doesn't seem he is being malicious. So, the viewer may assume he is being flirtatious. However, it doesn't seem his advances or his friendliness are being accepted or seen as particularly desirable or appropriate by Hyejin, who doesn't think he should be using informal speech. Perhaps he is not older than her, or they have not known each other long, or perhaps there has never been a discussion surrounding speech style. The Korean viewer may assume that a negotiation will now take place, or that this will cement the continued usage of formal speech in this relationship. In the larger context of the show, the two are coworkers and Shinhyeok wants to develop a personal friendship, so he does begin using informal style with Hyejin outside of work, but that information is not obvious from this scene.

*Scene Selection*

After examining these eight scenes, I chose five of them in which a Korean viewer might particularly need to use pragmatic features of Korean to understand aspects of relationships or relational dynamics that may be hard to pick up on without other factors or features being made available. I have chosen to leave the eight scenes originally selected, along with their descriptions, in this thesis, because the dialogues they portray add to this paper's corpus of pragmatic data. Specifically, I decided to use scenes one, three, five, six, and seven from above. Here, I will briefly summarize some of the relational dynamics described above for each of these scenes, which contributed to my decision to use them.

Scene One (Jechan and Wutak)

- same age, Wutak desired increased intimacy, Jechan declined

Scene Three (Jewuk and Namwu)

- Namwu hoped for decreased formality from his senior, Jewuk felt pressure from the idea of increased intimacy in their relationship

Scene Five (Jiwuk and Bonghee)

- Bonghee was confused at the change in her realtionship dynamic with Jiwuk and his shift to formal language. Jiwuk felt that their relationship had shifted, and informal language was no longer appropriate—reasons unclear

Scene Six (Minhyeok and Bongsun)

- same age, intimate relationship, both desire increased intimacy through lowered speech outside the workplace

Scene Seven (Donggyu and Seungsu)

- Donggyu uses informal form to express anger and show conflict in a non-intimate, hierarchically inappropriate setting

*Native Korean Sample Group*

Next, before showing these scenes to KFL learners, I gathered a group of eight native Korean speaking students (as with previous focus groups, the criteria being that they attended high school in Korea) in their 20s at Brigham Young University. The Korean students were shown the selected still images from dramas along with the written selections from dialogue between the characters. They were then asked a series of questions about the relationships between the

characters without any other context about the dramas. The assumption was that the students would discern information about the characters' relationships based on the pragmatic cues they saw in the dialogues. The purpose of this sample group was to glean how much the native Korean speakers understood about the relational dynamics of the characters based on the pragmatic cues in the dramas, without other information about the plot or characters.

Quotes from the Korean students are broken into two different groups based on the questions in relation to the scenes. The two questions posed to the group for discussion were the following:

Question One: "What do you think was the motivation of the character in suggesting a switch in speech style?"

Question Two: "What do you think was the feeling of the other character when a switch in speech style was suggested?"

The concept of speech styles was also explained to the Korean students prior to the activity, in case they were not familiar with the term.

The following are some selected quotes, translated to English by myself, from the Korean students about the relationships between the characters shown in these scenes in response to the questions listed. I have listed the quotes from the native Korean speakers without other context from the discussion, because the purpose here is just to show how the understanding of Korean speakers basically aligns with the breakdown previously given in this chapter. Students in this sample group did not agree to provide their names, and answers that did not show significant new insight were not included here.

*Korean Speaker Answers*

*Question One (Motivation):*

Scene One

"He wants to be comfortable in how they treat each other, and since they're the same age, there's a justification to speak casually."

"He wants to develop their relationship with the other person or create a good relationship."

"When you want to get closer, you usually suggest dropping the language level. It feels more comfortable when you speak informally."

"Wutak wants to have a comfortable relationship with the other person"

"The one who made the suggestion felt they were the same age and had similar social status."

"Because they're the same age."

Scene Three

“Namwu hoped for a more intimate relationship.”

“I think Namwu told him to speak informally because he was his teacher/higher rank”

“If the relationship is stiff at work, it is awkward and not fun, so he wanted to be closer.”

“Namwu wanted to develop a closer relationship with the other person”

“When you speak formally, it seems like you’re distancing yourself and you feel like you’re not friendly, so you ask to speak casually/lower the speech level. Namwu seems to feel uncomfortable hearing honorifics from people older than him. I think Namwu wants the older doctor to be friendly to him.”

“Namwu wanted to personally get to know him. He wants to be friends, not just coworkers.”

“Namwu looks younger. Namwu suggested that the older doctor talk casually first and tried to approach Jewuk more comfortably.”

Scene Five

“Bonghee thought they were close, but she felt like they had grown far apart because of the high-form.”

“She’s asking because she feels sad that the distance between them seems to have grown, and she feels regrets about the two months they spent working together, and the use of high-form makes her feel that distance.”

“They used to speak informally, but he suddenly spoke formally, so I think she asked because she felt awkward. Normally, when one decides to speak casually, they keep speaking informally.”

“Someone who didn’t use to use high form to her suddenly is, so maybe something happened to their relationship, so she is just checking.”

“Because they knew each other and they were friendly in the past. They may have felt close in the past.”

Scene Six

“Because Bongsun wants to tease him? Or she wants to [be able to] call him by name.”

“Even if Minhyeok is the CEO, they are the same age and lovers, so she suggested lowering speech. I don't think the place they are talking is the workplace. If they're at work, they might not want to talk informally.”

“Bongsun is wanting to joke around. She looks like she wants Minhyeok to feel flustered. And more personal? Wanting to get closer using age as the excuse?”

“Because they're the same age.  We don't usually speak formally with people the same age as us. They're lovers and the same age, so there is no need to speak formally.”

“She is teasing him.”

“The girlfriend seems to like her boyfriend a lot. She seems to be asking to speak informally because of that.”

“They're the same age, so she sees them as being on the same level.”

“Even if Minhyeok is officially higher in rank, they're lovers and the same age.”

Scene Seven

“I think it is a way to express a belligerent attitude because Donggyu wants to disrespect the other person.”

“Donggyu is so angry that he wants to give up respect for the other person and say what he has to say. An intentional willingness to be rude.”

“Rather than trying to intentionally make a [permanent] shift in speech style, I think Donggyu spoke this way in anger during a quarrel.”

“It's not a logical shift in speech style, but Donggyu is [acting this way because he is] emotionally angry.”

*Question Two (Feelings of the other person):*

Scene One

“Jechan is not the type to be too comfortable with others just because they're the same age.”

“He didn't like the offer to lower their speech. He didn't think it was polite to talk informally when they're not close. Or didn’t want to lower speech because they met each other in business.”

“Jechan still wants to keep some distance from the other guy, so the higher form could be comfortable when meeting for the first time.”

“Jechan didn't seem pleased.”

“Jechan still wants to draw a line with the person who asked the question.”

“Jechan doesn't want to get close with the person who wants to talk informally.”

“Jechan doesn't want to have that relationship, he doesn't want to get close.”

“Jechan refused because he thought they weren't that close.”

Scene Three

“Since it's a public setting, Jewuk thinks they should use formal language.”

“Since they met in public and at work, Jewuk thinks they should treat each other in a business-like manner.”

“Jewuk doesn't want to be friends, but to remain as a coworker. It's because he wants to be given space for his private life and doesn't want [any obligation] to spend time with the other person.”

“Jewuk wants to be polite even if he is older and doesn't want to talk down because their relationship is public, not a private relationship.”

“Jewuk knows the person who asked the question wants to be close, but he wants to keep distance from each other in public places. I think he has a very strict personality.”

“He thinks the other person will have to be polite at work to get things done better. He’s worried that he won't do his job properly if they get close.”

“He thinks of him as a colleague, not as a student or junior, so he is uncomfortable.”

“He thinks lowering speech in a public place is unprofessional.”

Scene Five

“Jiwuk doesn't think it's right to think that the other person is below him just because she was under him for a while.”

“Jiwuk feels sad about the time they spent apart, and he wants to draw a line between himself and Bonghee to hurt her feelings because of his own regret.”

“Rather than feeling uncomfortable, he seems to be dumbfounded and think her attitude is distasteful.”

“Jiwuk felt like they should just keep their distance. I think he thought about leaving their good memories as a memory.”

“It's been a while since they've seen each other, so I think they spoke formally because their relationship was awkward.”

“Jiwuk thought they should talk differently because their relationship was different from the relationship they had two years ago.”

Scene Six

“Minhyeok acts like he hates it but he likes it inside.”

“Korean men are.... They think they're in a higher position, that they're higher and more mature. And they want to be called oppa.”

“I think he thought the woman was cute, even though he spoke bluntly.”

“I think he just wants to be called oppa. I don't understand, but I've heard that men like to hear that sometimes.”

“He thinks it's absurd, but isn’t upset about it. He probably thinks it’s cute.”

“Minhyeok says he wants to be called oppa but he dares her to speak informally, to try it.”

“He gives no strong rejection.”

Scene Seven

“They have business relationships with each other. Seungsu thinks that the positions themselves are different, not top-down relationships.”

“It feels like Donggyu is looking down on Seungsu; on the other hand, Seungsu seems to be looking at Donggyu as someone he is merely connected to for work.”

“I think he must have been offended. However, he feels using honorifics in this situation is the more mature choice.”

“Seungsu seems to think that this relationship should be an equal one rather than a hierarchal relationship.”

“The words Donggyu says while speaking informally are quite psychologically upsetting, but Seungsu decides to respond with calmness. He doesn't want it to escalate into a bigger fight, because speaking informally can be both irrational and wild.”

“As the leader, Seungsu hopes to be respected and treated with formality.”

“Seungsu is feeling that the other person is ignoring his position and looking down on him.”

“Seungsu doesn’t lower his speech, in order to avoid creating problems or drama between them.”

*Classroom Activity*

After completing the focus group with native Korean speakers, I moved on to KFL learners. In order to explore how KFL learners understood these pragmatic skills and interactions, specifically as used to make shifts and statements in relationships, I selected the same five scenes from dramas which highlighted various kinds of pragmatic factors, including power imbalances,

age and gender differences, intimacy levels, etcetera, listed again below (by number and appearing characters):

- Scene One (Jechan and Wutak)
- Scene Three (Namwu and Jewuk)
- Scene Five (Bonghee and Jiwuk)
- Scene Six (Bongsun and Minhyeok)
- Scene Seven (Donggyu and Seungsu)

I performed this activity with several groups of advanced learners of Korean as a foreign language, most of whom had enrolled in 300 level (third year) Korean classes at Brigham Young University and had spent one to two years living in Korea. I did not perform any additional measurement of these students' Korean level, and instead relied on their self-reported level (all self-reported as "advanced") and the university's class placement. A total of fifty students participated in the activity.

First, I reviewed with students about speech style and address terms and what it means to shift speech style. Then, students were given the scenes shown above with a picture of the selected scene, a brief description of character names and background, and a written copy of the dialogue from the scene. Any unknown vocabulary or grammar forms were supplied on site by myself, as the purpose of this activity was not to test Korean knowledge. Then, students filled out a paper asking questions about certain pragmatic aspects of each of the scenes. I collected these and used them afterwards to glean information about KFL students' understanding of pragmatic skills. Students were asked the following questions:

1. Who proposed the shift in speech level?

2. What was the motivation in proposing the shift?

3. How did the other party feel about the proposed shift in speech level?

4. Based on this scene, describe the relationship of the two parties as you perceive it.

After collecting student responses, I lead a classroom discussion with the students about each of the scenes and we found examples together of how pragmatic skills were being used in each circumstance.

*Student Responses*

Here, I will list broadly how most students interpreted the pragmatic exchanges taking place in each scenario, based on their answers to questions one through four from above.

*Scene One*

*Questions One to Three*

Here, all of the students recognized that Wutak proposed the shift in speech level. 26 of the 50 respondents said the motivation for Wutak's proposal was that the two were the same age. 16 said the motivation was to get close. There were a variety of other responses, including to feel more comfortable, to fake friendliness, to be less formal, and to decrease awkwardness.

When asked how the other party felt about this, 17 students said that Jechan refused because the two were not close enough. The rest of the students had varied responses, including to avoid intimacy or create distance, because he disliked him, or because of discomfort. Some students even posited that the two had a professional relationship or were joking around.

*Question Four: Relationship*

Students were then asked to describe the relationship between the two individuals portrayed in this scene. Without context from the rest of the drama, students had to use the cues provided in the lines shown. The following are some of the quotes students gave describing the relationship between Jechan and Wutak. Some descriptions with the same general feeling have been omitted.

"Jealous of each other, rivals."

"Acquaintances, not friends. Strained."

"Awkward stage of becoming friends."

"Tense and awkward."

"Tense and competitive."

"One wants to be friends but one of them is still awkward."

"They have a professional/formal relationship."

"Strained, forced."

"Friendly."

"Wutak wants to be friendly but Jechan doesn't want to."

"New/Not very strong."

"Rivals who will fake friends for the girl."

"Wutak would like to make things less awkward but the other is making it worse."

"They still don't know each other well."

"They seem to be recently introduced to each other."

"It's competitive and slightly awkward."

"A bit restricted, not super close."

"Basically strangers, recently met."

*Results*

As can be seen from the responses summarized above, most of the KFL learners felt that this interaction was pragmatically motivated by hierarchy, first—the age dynamic of the interlocutors, and that the hesitancy was caused by a lack of preexisting intimacy. This was different from the way the Korean sample group interpreted the situation; they felt that age was more of a justification for a lowering of speech motivated by a desire for intimacy, and that rather than hesitancy being caused by a lack of intimacy, hesitancy was caused by a lack of *desire* for intimacy. The difference is between the statements 'I don't think we are close enough', and 'I don't want to be closer'—one which may not seem significant at first, but which, in social interaction, is certainly different. As seen here, KFL learners who understood the content of the dialogue interpreted the type of relationship in a variety of ways.

*Scene Three*

*Questions One to Three*

For this scene, a vast majority of the students (all but five) commented that Namwu proposed the shift in speech level. When asked about his motivation for wanting to make the change, 20 of the students said something similar to "because others were doing it" (speaking in informal form), and 17 said it was to help him "feel more comfortable". 10 students thought he was trying to "get close to his superior." The rest of the students' responses were varied, including the idea that he wanted to make it less formal or that he proposed lowering speech simply because he was younger.

When describing the other party's feelings, the students were mostly in agreement, with 45 of the 50 saying something to the effect that he refused out of an effort to "keep it professional" or because they were "in the workplace". Five others said he wanted to "avoid discomfort".

*Question Four: Relationship*

The following are quotes from students describing how they perceived the relationship between Namwu and Jewuk. Some descriptions with the same general feeling have been omitted.

"Namwu wants to feel more comfortable at work, but Jewuk wants to keep their relationship professional."

"Somewhat friends?"

"Coworkers."

"Professional, coworkers, not too close."

“Professional, terse.”

“Miscommunicating coworkers.”

“Not very close.”

“Professional.”

“Namwu wants to be closer but they’re still not yet.”

“Formal, awkward.”

“Strictly professional.”

“Coworkers figuring out comfort and professionalism.”

“Starting out.”

“Their relationship is kind of tense, a little awkward.”

“Jewuk is awkward and Namwu is friendly.”

“Like coworkers, not very close.”

“They came to a soft agreement, awkward at first, now close/family.”

“Acquaintances, but not close.”

“Just met, polite. Both have good intentions.”

“Just getting to know each other, a bit awkward.”

“Not close, Boss/subordinate.”

*Results*

Unlike the Korean sample group, who agreed that Namwu was seeking increased closeness in his relationship with his senior, the KFL learners here showed a tendency to believe that his proposal for lowering speech was more about a desire to fit in or his comfort level, perhaps a desire to be more casual, with only a small number reflecting the intimacy factor in their answers. Their understanding of the superior’s desire to keep things professional matched the Korean group’s answer better, though the KFL learners didn’t pick up on the desire of the superior to limit intimacy, just his desire to maintain formality. Here, again, the descriptions of the relationship show a far greater variety in interpretation than would be present among native Korean speakers.

*Scene Five*

*Questions One to Three*

For this scene, again, most students recognized Bonghee as the proposer of the shift, with only five going in the other direction. In terms of motivation for proposing a shift, 27 students simply

said variations of it being "because they used to" speak in a lower form. Nine students said it was "to reconnect," four students said it was to get closer, and three students said it was to end some kind of "discomfort" she was feeling.

In terms of the other party's reaction, 26 students felt that he refused because the two were "not friends anymore," and another 17 said that they were simply not close. The remaining students said either that he felt awkward, distant, or that he felt it would be unprofessional.

*Question Four: Relationship*

The following are students' descriptions of the relationship between Bonghee and Jiwuk, based off the dialogue they were provided with. Some descriptions with the same general feeling have been omitted.

"Awkward—they don't know how they should treat each other anymore."

"Awkward now because they haven't seen each other in a long time."

"Old coworkers."

"Not tight. More professional now."

"Burned-over."

"Broken up friends."

"Not friends but know each other."

"Bonghee wants to be less formal but the guy wants to keep his space."

"Awkward."

"Distant, but potential for intimacy."

"Jiwuk feels like they are more like strangers, Bonghee feels more like they are old coworkers."

"Distant, not close."

"Distant, unfamiliar."

"Old friends, the guy distanced himself with time."

"Jiwuk is cold and distant, Bonghee is tentatively friendly."

"Well acquainted but not recently close."

"They became awkward, after time has passed (something's happened since then).

"Tense/old feelings for each other being suppressed."

"Used to be friends. Not close anymore."

*Results*

Here, KFL learners picked up on the awkwardness that came from the shift from a relationship where the interlocutors used to use casual style and are now using formal style. Like the Korean sample group, the KFL learners largely answered that Jiwuk no longer felt intimacy with Bonghee, and therefore did not want to use casual style. However, KFL learners were not typically able to specify the reasons for Bonghee's discomfort. In their descriptions of the relationship of the interlocutors the respondents understood that there was an awkward dynamic, but perhaps misinterpreted Bonghee's attempt at lowering speech style as friendliness.

Scene Six

*Questions One to Three*

In this scene, 47 students recognized Bongsun as the proposer of the shift in speech style, and three thought Minhyeok made the proposal. When it came to the motivation behind the proposal of shift, 39 simply thought that it came down to the two being the "same age." 11 thought it was an attempt from Bongsun to "increase intimacy," with six adding additionally that it was flirtatious in nature.

About the other party's reaction to the proposal, 21 students felt that he also wanted increased intimacy, with 13 claiming he had romantic feelings for her. However, eight students felt that he was indifferent, and seven felt he was focused on hierarchy or age.

*Question Four: Relationship*

The following are quotes from students describing how they perceived Bongsun and Minhyeok's relationship, based on the dialogue they were provided with. Some descriptions with the same general feeling have been omitted.

"Changing from a professional relationship to a more casual relationship."

"Teasing."

"Dating (newly dating)."

"Close. Even if he's the boss."

"Cute-sweet."

"Dating."

"Good."

"Initially distant but becoming closer (and romantic)."

"They are friendly, chill."

"They like each other."

"Close friends."

“Adorable, close.”

“Dating, falling in love, close.”

“Bongsun is teasing, the man is flustered but happy.”

“Intimate, friendly, loving.”

“They have a connection/love.”

“Recent friends. They like each other.”

*Results*

Here, KFL learners were much more likely to grab on to the variable of age than other variables as motivation for Bongsun’s proposal for lowering speech style, while Korean sample group members were more likely to include intimacy as a key variable. They did, however, recognize intimacy as part of Minhyeok’s motivation for accepting her proposal. In their descriptions of the relationship, they generally recognized the interlocutors’ dynamic as intimate and flirtatious in nature.

*Scene Seven*

*Questions One to Three*

In this scene, 45 of the 50 students recognized Donggyu as making the proposal of the shift. Ideas about Donggyu’s motivation here were very mixed. 11 students felt that Donggyu was trying to show authority. 11 thought he was trying to fight. Six students thought he was trying to get on equal ground with Seungsu, and six thought he was trying to communicate frankly or sincerely. Five students thought he was trying to show disrespect, and four students thought he was motivated by intimacy or closeness.

In response to the question about the other party’s response, 12 students answered that Seungsu’s refusal was motivated by offense or a feeling that Donggyu is rude, and nine felt that he was acting out of authority or hierarchy. Eight thought he was acting out of intimacy or closeness, and eight thought he was acting out of a lack of intimacy. Six thought he was trying to “avoid escalation” or “stay professional”, and five thought he was angry.

*Question Four: Relationship*

Below are some quotes from students describing how they perceive the relationship between Seungsu and Donggyu, based on the dialogue provided. Some descriptions with the same general feeling have been omitted.

“The baseball player wants to have a closer relationship and the team manager wants to keep it professional.”

“Strained.”

“Manager and player.”

“Formal, not really friends.”

“Close.”

“On the rocks.”

“Rocky.”

“Unfriendly.”

“Strained because of their differences.”

“Formal, unsure, confusing.”

“Professional, but also a little friendly. They’ve had experiences together.”

“Friends but a little awkward.”

“A parent and a rebellious child.”

“Close, but ‘distant’ because of manager-player relationship.”

“Professionally well-acquainted people who were close but are arguing now.”

“Friendly and teasing, close.”

“Distant, but cordial.”

“Hateful, disrespectful.”

“Close workers.”

“Tension, jealousy.”

“Professional, but Donggyu wants less formal relationship too.”

“Know each other well, but not close friends.”

*Results*

Perhaps more than any other scene, this one seemed to confuse the KFL learners. Unlike the Korean sample group respondents, who recognized Donggyu’s behavior as emotional and based in anger, KFL learners labeled his motivation as coming from intimacy, hierarchy, or even attempts at sincere communication. They thought that Seungsu’s decision to continue using formal speech reflected a disagreement about hierarchy rather than an emotionally cool or appropriate response. In their descriptions of the relationship, they also varied extremely widely, perceiving the relationship as friendly, professional, teasing, close, cordial, or several other things. Again, though KFL learners could understand the vocabulary and grammar used in the dialogue itself, their ability to interpret the pragmatic cues varied to a wide degree.

*Summary of KFL Learners' Responses*

Through this classroom activity study, I found that in most cases, the 50 advanced KFL learners I worked with, who could understand (with some on-site help) the vocabulary and grammar used in the dialogues they were being shown, were able to identify which interlocutor was proposing a shift in speech style. However, when asked to identify why the shift was being proposed, their ability to do so was sometimes comparable to native Korean speakers, sometimes lacked nuance, and sometimes was simply far off base. Additionally, when asked to make qualitative judgments about relationship dynamics simply by observing pragmatic cues, sometimes KFL learners made similar judgments to a sample native Korean group, but sometimes their judgments were very different to an almost unrecognizable degree. Clearly, pragmatic fluency does not always accompany linguistic fluency for KFL learners.

An important limitation of the scenes I selected is that none of them depicted a set of older characters. It is likely that an older generation of native Korean speakers will have different pragmatic norms, and may use different patterns of speech styles or kinship terms. Because this activity was centered on university aged students, I chose younger characters, but in the future it may be important to carry out research using older characters.

## Section Two: Pragmatic Skills in Korean Language Curricula

Though of course it is not true that what KFL learners are taught in the classroom is limited to only what is included in their textbooks, the textbook would be a good place to start to analyze the curriculum in general. Having now shown that even advanced KFL learners have difficulty understanding and explaining pragmatic skills when communicating about relational dynamics, the next step was to examine how KFL learners were being taught about these pragmatic skills from the beginning of their language education. Some of the points made in this section can also be found in Kiaer, Shin, and Driggs (2022), and are cited accordingly.

Brown notes that "L2 pedagogy has a tendency to ignore a sizeable area of language use, not just verbal strategies that are deliberately rude, but also language that is simply casual and informal or even just intimate and affectionate" (Brown: 2013, 2). I predicted that some of the pragmatic skills we have examined up to this point, like speech style and address terms, would not be prioritized in most Korean as a Foreign Language (KFL) curricula. This would follow a common trend, wherein lower speech styles in general are ignored in favor of formal speech styles in KFL education (Brown: 2013). Brown (2013) examined three Korean textbooks, and found that their dialogues used *contaysmal* almost exclusively, with very few examples of using informal speech style (Brown: 2010), (Kiaer, Shin, Driggs, 2022).

In order to understand more about what KFL learners are actually being taught about address terms and other pragmatic functions, I reviewed a series of textbooks published by Yonsei

University, entitled the "3 Week English Mastery" textbook course[50]. These textbooks serve as a resource for a popular three week-long summer Korean learning program run by Yonsei University each year. The textbook series includes eight books, which use a combination of conversation, grammar, and vocabulary memorization to help learners, who range from beginners to advanced speakers, learn to speak Korean.

Each of the eight textbooks features five foreign friends who are living in Korea. Each book has 15 chapters, with each chapter devoting its contents to different tasks that might befall a person living in Korea. Each of the 15 chapters opens with a dialogue between various combinations of the five foreign friends. There are some other dialogues included within the chapters, but the 15 dialogues at the head of each chapter serve as the main example of what Korean conversation should look like. I examined each of these 15 dialogues in all eight textbooks.

Of 120 dialogues in the textbook series, only 21 include examples of the friends using informal speech to each other. The rest show the friends using formal language. Even the dialogues which occur between two of the friends, with no older or superior individuals involved, are written in formal language, apart from those 21. There is no explanation provided for why the friends use formal or informal language in each dialogue.

There are various titles used, but not a single kinship term is used as an address term in any of the 120 dialogues. When the friends do use informal speech to each other, they use each other's names, along with the *ne* (너) pronoun. This indicates that, by normal Korean rules of discourse, all of the friends must be the exact same age as each other. When names are used in this manner, vocative particles *-a* (아) and *-ya* (야) are only attached when the interlocutors have Korean-sounding names; Yengcwu (영주) and Ywumi (유미) use the vocative particles to each other, but not to speakers with names like Michael (마이컬). Most frequently, the friends use formal language and refer to each other using the *-ssi* (씨) suffix, showing a casual level of respect and distance. In actual conversation between friends in a Korean context, this kind of address term would almost never be used.

[50] 3 주완성 연세 한국어 1-8: 연세대학교 한국어학당 교재편찬위원회 (*3 cwu wanseng yensey hankwuke Volumes 1-8. Yenseytayhakkyo hankwuke haktang kyocay phyenchan wiwenhoi*)

I also examined 12 other textbooks from Ewha University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, and Seoul National University, revealing similar results[51].

The KLEAR Textbook Integrated Korean Series is an example of a textbook series which is more inclusive of informal language which would indicate intimacy in relationships, along with instruction about the use of this language grammatically. The KLEAR Textbook Series, used in many university classrooms in the United States, is comprised of two beginning textbooks, two intermediate textbooks, two high intermediate textbooks, and two advanced textbooks. Each textbook has six to nine chapters. The beginning, intermediate, and high intermediate textbooks feature two conversations, or dialogues, per chapter, along with vocabulary and grammar from each dialogue, and other exercises. The advanced textbooks are based on reading and therefore do not include conversation or dialogue, and thus were not examined here. Like some other textbook series, these textbooks series also feature fictional characters, both foreign and Korean, like Michael, Minji, and Yumi.

My review of the series revealed that, of the 90 dialogues in the series, 14 included one or more of the characters using *panmal* to the other. *Panmal* was introduced as early as chapter 5 of the Intermediate 1 book, along with grammatical instructions about how to use it. When second-person pronouns were used with the *panmal*, names with vocative particle *-a* (아) or the pronoun *ne* (너) were always used. Kinship terms were never used outside of a family setting, and the term *seonbae,* meaning senior in school, was used in two instances when the younger character used formal speech and the older character used informal speech.[52]

While these textbooks are more frequent in their portrayal of characters using informal form than some other textbook series, and they do teach students how to conjugate verbs in the informal form, there is little discussion of when this form should be used in a pragmatic sense, or why the characters are using it when they are. Conversations begin without context about the relationships between the characters—which seem to shift between the chapters, with no real story being told.

A basic review of Korean textbooks produced in Korea and in the United States reveals quickly that the primary pitfalls of learning pragmatics in Korean—that KFL learners simply don't know when to employ pragmatic skills, not that they don't know how—are going virtually unaddressed.

Clearly, pragmatic aspects of Korean, including speech styles and address terms, are not being treated as a priority in Korean as a Foreign Language education. It is unclear whether this originates with Korean textbook writers' assumption that foreigners do not need to use kinship

[51] Ewha University: 이화 한국어 1-1, 1-2, 2-1, 2-2 (*ihwa hankwuke 1-1, 1-2, 2-1, 2-2*) (English versions); Hankuk University of Foreign Studies: 외국인을 위한 한국어 1-4 (*woykwukinul wihan hankwuke* 1-4); Seoul National University: 한국어 1-4 (*hankwuke 1-4*)

[52] Cho, Young-mee Yu, Lee, Hyo Sang, Schulz, Carol, Sohn, Ho-min, & Sohn, Sung-Ock S. (2019). Integrated Korean. Beginning-Advanced (Third ed., KLEAR textbooks in Korean language). Honolulu.

terms (This may be the case; Brown comments on the tendency of some textbook writers to claim that foreigners will rarely be in social situations which require the use of intimate language (Brown, 2013: 5)), or whether it comes from the foreigners' exclusion of themselves from in-groups where such language would be necessary. This will require further research to understand better.

**Section Three: Assessment of Pragmatic Skills**

A central part of language curriculum is assessment, and proper methods of assessing pragmatic skills have been explored for years. Tsutagawa (2015) describes how most pragmatic assessments focus on "polite and impolite speech, complimenting, use of discourse markers" (Tsutagawa, 2015: 1), and other similar skills, but this kind of blanket description cannot possibly capture the specific types of pragmatic skills required to navigate relational dynamics specific to East Asian cultures, and more importantly, the pragmatic functionality required to navigate the Korean honorific system (Kiaer, Shin, Driggs, 2022).

To illuminate how pragmatic skills are currently being assessed, specifically for KFL learners, I examined in detail the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) and ACTFL (American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages) measures of language proficiency, which list their respective ideals in terms of pragmatic competency for language learners. I also looked at the TOPIK (Test for Proficiency in Korean) to see its more Korean-specific measures for pragmatic proficiency.

A brief study of the CEFR, ACTFL, and TOPIK measures of language proficiency revealed that even though pragmatic skills were identified as an important part of fluency, the criteria currently being examined by these prominent measures are not equipped to measure the pragmatic skills specific to Korean, so vital to pragmatic competency, which we have been discussing (Kiaer, Shin, Driggs, 2022).

First I examined the 260 page document published by the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference), which lays out the framework of the levels of proficiency in a whole array of linguistic competencies, and the indicators which are to be used to assess proficiency in those various areas of competency. A thorough examination revealed that these levels include prescriptions for pragmatic skills labeled as flexibility, turn-taking, coherence, and propositional precision. Under a section for "sociolinguistic" skills, learners are expected to be able to navigate "idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning" and understand "the sociolinguistic and sociocultural implications of language used by native speakers" (CEFR: 2001). Of all of the many competencies outlined, these are the only ones which are pragmatic in nature. Up to this point in this body of work, I have shown that Korean speakers need to be able to use speech styles and address terms effectively in order to navigate relationships and appropriately modify speech to express deference, intimacy, and power. The

pragmatic competencies described in the CEFR are either unrelated to these skills or not detailed enough to assess them properly (Kiaer, Shin, Driggs, 2022). In this section it is unimportant to relate the many existing competencies outlined in the CEFR framework; I merely report here that anything related to pragmatics is extremely limited.

The ACTFL (American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages) levels similarly prescribe many different types of linguistic competencies that can be assessed in language learners. After looking through ACTFL's official 24 page document outlining their scale for assessing proficiency in foreign languages. Like the CEFR, the ACTFL scale seeks to assess proficiency in a variety of competencies. I specifically searched for assessments of skills related to pragmatics. For a speaker of any language at the highest level of proficiency (distinguished), ACTFL states that the ability to "tailor language to a variety of audiences by adapting...speech and register in ways that are culturally authentic" (ACTFL: 2012) will be present. Though adapting speech and register in culturally appropriate ways would certainly include honorifics, this pragmatic competency is not only a very broad definition, but it can only be found at this highest level of the ACTFL scale. As discussed previously, no single utterance in Korean can be made without proper use of speech style, so pragmatic competency shouldn't be assessed as a sort of final finishing step of the learning process. This is the only indicator described in ACTFL's scales which applies to the pragmatic skills which are clearly so important to languages like Korean. Clearly, the ACTFL scale is also ill-equipped for assessing pragmatic competency for KFL learners (Kiaer, Shin, Driggs, 2022).

The TOPIK (Test for Proficiency in Korean) levels are designed to measure competency in Korean specifically, but are not necessarily created as a measure for pragmatics. TOPIK states that a speaker at the second highest level (5) will be "able to use the expressions properly, depending on formal, informal, spoken/written context," and a speaker at the highest level (6) will "experience no difficulty in performing the functions or conveying the meaning" (Won: 2016). There is no specific mentioned anywhere in the TOPIK level descriptions, which describe the abilities of a person being rated at each level, of speech style or address terms, and the mention of informal and formal contexts does not refer to honorifics but to setting (a high form can be used in an informal setting, and vice versa, such as when meeting a social superior on the street or at a friend's home). Even in this Korean-specific assessment measure, no assessment has been designed for the kinds of pragmatic competencies that would allow a KFL learner to navigate social dynamics or understand relationships in the way that native Korean speakers feel is necessary in day-to-day language interactions (Kiaer, Shin, Driggs, 2022).

## Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the ways KFL learners interact with pragmatic skills unique to Korean as they learn how to apply them to understanding relational dynamics appropriately. Through the classroom activity designed and conducted in this section, I discovered that although KFL learners have a natural grasp of certain relational dynamics Korean speakers navigate using pragmatic features of Korean, they struggle to grasp the nuances expressed through those pragmatic features in the same way that native speakers do. This is true even of high-level Korean learners.

Though these pragmatic features and their usage are truly unique to Korean and very complex, my examination of current Korean curricula revealed that most existing Korean textbooks avoid discussion of these issues, and even when they depict usage of certain pragmatic features, they do not instruct learners in how they should be appropriately used. The reasoning behind this hole in KFL curricula is unclear and merits further investigation.

Finally, a brief review of the most commonly accepted assessment standards reveals that there are no standards in place for measuring competency in pragmatic skills in Korean or other languages like it.

## Chapter 8

### *Implications and Conclusion*

### Section One: Research Outcomes

The various methods of research pursued in this thesis allowed me to gain a uniquely close, ethnographic perspective on pragmatics as the invisible language of relationships in Korean. In this final section I will succinctly review how these methodologies have fulfilled each of my research purposes, and what results they obtained. I will then review how those results point to new conclusions or important gaps that highlight a need for future research in the area of pragmatics, and Korean pragmatics specifically.

#### *Purpose One*

The first purpose I pursued in this thesis was an ethnographic one in nature, because it dealt specifically with the beliefs and perceptions of Korean speakers themselves as the primary data set to examine qualitatively, more than it dealt with Koreans' usage of pragmatic skills as a set of data to be analyzed statistically. The purpose as initially stated reads as follows:

1. First, to investigate the following research question: How do native speakers of Korean understand their usage of pragmatic skills in sending and receiving information about relational dynamics in their linguistic interactions?

The methodologies carried out in chapters three, four, and five shed light on revealing patterns in the way Korean speakers think about speech styles and address terms. Firstly, my analyses of popular TV dramas and film, introduced first in chapter three and more in chapters four and five, showed how Korean speakers follow a consistent pattern in using speech styles and kinship terms to establish in-groups and out-groups, within family and neighborhood-based communities, workplaces, and long-lasting groups of friends. These dramas show how the connection between speech style, kinship terms, and age is predictably connected, and though different families vary in their cultures around using speech styles and kinship terms, these features always require a balance of closeness and the proper power dynamic in relationships. These analyses also revealed other power dynamics besides age which play a role in pragmatic decision making, such as position at work and even socioeconomic status. More than anything, the analysis of TV dramas showed how present these features are in *every* Korean relationship, how unavoidable they are in *every* linguistic interaction, and how they bring relational dynamics to the forefront of each utterance.

It is important to emphasize here, again, that by focusing on relational dynamics, I do not presume to emphasize intimacy over power, or power over intimacy. It is clear even from the TV

analyses that both of these dynamics are always at play, weaving in and out of each other, with dual influence.

Moving on, the Discourse Completion Test focus group and survey with Korean speakers, introduced in chapter three, showed how Korean speakers approach navigating different relational dynamics, at least in hypothetical situations. Their approaches rotated largely around speech style and address terms, just as previous literature and the TV analyses predicted they would. Even more interestingly, they seemed to see their usage of speech style and address terms as directly proportional to their perception of intimacy in a relationship. They perceived these pragmatic features as tools to be used in creating, maintaining, and showing intimacy or desired intimacy, as well as showing the lack thereof. Again, one reason this study was particularly interesting was not because the DCT results themselves contributed hugely to an existing corpora of Korean language data, but because of how the responses of Korean speakers provide an ethnographic lens to Korean pragmatics. The contributions of Korean speakers show how Koreans feel about their daily pragmatic navigations, and that they are indeed constantly aware of the way they use language to moderate relational dynamics.

My live focus group with Korean speakers of university age continued to expand this ethnographic lens, with data from Korean speakers about their specific thoughts and experiences with pragmatic tools that has heretofore been lacking in the literature. This focus group supported what was found in the other methodologies: that Korean speakers are always aware of relational dynamics, because their linguistic interactions require them to encode pragmatic information into each utterance; and that this very act of encoding creates a domino effect of more heightened awareness. It's no wonder that Koreans speak so often of *nunchi*, the traditional Korean idea of reading the room to understand unspoken messages and react quickly and precisely (Park and Kim, 2008: 48). Those who do this well are described as having 'fast *nunchi*', and those that do not are often seen as social outcasts, unlikely to be successful in business or relationships. The quotes gathered from Korean speakers during these live focus groups now serve as a useful collection of data representing this constant pragmatic awareness.

The questionnaire studies centered on half-talk specifically, and on the way that Korean speakers shift their speech styles, revealed that as Korean speakers constantly moderate relational dynamics, they must in turn constantly be aware of the sensitive line between power and intimacy. Korean speech styles sit on a unique line between these two factors, where power has traditionally been seen as most important, but intimacy plays a key role as well. Gender and other factors, including the setting of the speech style shift, play an important role as well. This indicates that Korean speakers must also be aware of changing variables as they monitor relational dynamics.

*Purpose Two*

Recognizing the way that Korean speakers use pragmatic strategies to monitor and communicate information about relational dynamics, the next purpose of this thesis was comparative in nature. Its initial wording reads as follows:

2. Second, to find out what makes Korean pragmatics unique, especially when compared to other, similar languages.

The methodologies carried out in chapters three and six were instrumental in fulfilling this research purpose. As noted in chapter one, pragmatic aspects of Asian languages in general have rarely been encompassed by theoretical discussions of linguistics, which are often based on Western conceptions of language (Kiaer, 2022b: 211). By looking more closely at other East Asian language users, especially Japanese and Chinese speakers, and comparing them to English speakers, I was able to better understand their conceptions of pragmatics, how they compared to Korean speakers, and what makes Korean pragmatics unique.

As part of the DCT focus groups and surveys I introduced in chapter three, I surveyed Chinese and Japanese speakers, along with English speakers. I found that the Chinese speakers described their pragmatic behaviors very similarly to English speakers. They spoke of strategies they used which had a sociopragmatic nature, including social behaviors like acting friendly or standoffish, speaking slowly or introducing new topics of conversation, or inviting people to do things. These were the participants' ideas of how to express closeness. English speakers were similar. The difference was that Chinese speakers used specific terms of address, including kinship terms and unique nicknames, to label those they grew close with, regardless of age.

The situation changed when I studied Japanese speakers, whose responses to the DCT study showed that they used pragmalinguistic tools to show their feelings about intimacy in relationships. They focused on speech styles, using informal forms with those they had intimacy with and formal forms with those they did not. Like Chinese speakers, they also used kinship terms, special suffixes, and unique nicknames to address people they were close with.

My live focus groups, described in chapter six, did not contradict the information obtained in the DCT study, and only confirmed those findings. Through the live focus groups, I gained more data of an ethnographic nature, which will continue to stand as its own record of the way that Chinese and Japanese speakers feel about their pragmatic experiences. I found that Chinese speakers are strategic with their pragmatic language use—in the sense that they engage in sociopragmatic actions to engage in politeness or face threatening acts—where Japanese speakers are forced to use grammatically embedded pragmatics in the form of speech styles and other honorifics. Because of this, they are more continuously aware of the nature of the relationships they engage in.

To further investigate the nature of Japanese speakers' pragmatic behavior, I performed a TV analysis of a Japanese reality program, where I found that Japanese speakers are very quick to select for informal forms in relationships that exist in a casual setting. This switch felt much more casual than the Korean speech style shift, which, as discussed, pays attention to a huge variety of factors—including factors like age and gender that did not come into play in the Japanese TV program. Also, the general feeling was that Japanese speakers were more quick to determine a relationship deserving of the 'intimacy' required for informal language than Korean speakers. Unlike Korean speakers, their usage of address terms was unique in every relationship portrayed in the TV program.

These studies suggested that English and Chinese speakers follow a similar pattern in their pragmatics usage, but that Japanese speakers, like Korean speakers, exist in a linguistic environment that forces them to be continuously aware of relational dynamics, and to continuously use pragmatic skills to navigate them. However, Japanese speakers seem to be less systematic in the way they use their pragmatic skills, with less rules around how to use speech styles in regard to age, level of intimacy, and other factors. Also, Japanese speakers were less systematic with how they applied address terms than Korean speakers.

*Purpose Three*

The essentiality of pragmatic skill for Korean speakers highlighted in Purpose One, and the unique nature of Korean pragmatics discovered in Purpose Two, predictably suggested that pragmatics should be uniquely approached in Korean education settings. The third purpose of this thesis was put forward as follows:

3. Third, to see if learners of Korean as a foreign language are i) currently being given tools to, and ii) are able to use pragmatic skills to understand Korean relational dynamics.

Through the research on address terms I presented in chapter five, I found that Korean speakers somehow feel unnatural about using kinship terms with foreigners in the same way they use them with other native Korean speakers. Also, textbooks for KFL learners tend to ignore kinship terms completely. In the classroom activity I shared in chapter seven, I found that even advanced KFL learners are unlikely to understand pragmatic skills in the same way as native speakers, which leads to different understandings about relational dynamics. Additionally, textbooks rarely even discuss pragmatic skills like speech style and address terms, which the totality of this thesis has shown are essential for speakers of Korean—to the extent that pragmatic skills are needed in every utterance! Following a similar pattern, my brief examination of current measures of assessment showed that there is absolutely no current standard way for the kinds of pragmatic skills being used by native speakers of Korean to be measured for KFL learners, either in general language measures or in measures specific to Korean.

## Section Two: Implications

*Overall Implications*

Perhaps the greatest implication of this study, overall, is an ethnographic one in nature—in the sense that, as mentioned in chapter one, ethnographic studies "…allow us to tell a story… which illuminates social processes and generates explanations for why people do and think the things they do" (Heller, 2008: 250). The methodologies adopted in this study told a clear, and somewhat circular story, about sociolinguistic Korean circumstances: that native Korean speakers must be constantly aware of relational dynamics in order to complete utterances, and that they must constantly monitor their utterances in accordance with relational dynamics. The story told through this research was also that Korean speakers are very much aware of this

necessity, and that they particularly focus on the importance of speech style and address terms in their daily life. This *metalinguistic* awareness is interesting. Tunmer et al (1988) describes metalinguistic ability as the thing which make a person aware of the different features of their language and allows him or her to manipulate those features. For a Korean person, that awareness of pragmatic skills is essential to every interaction, and by getting Korean speakers talking about their language usage, it was easy to see just how aware they were.

The major implication of this is that for a language like Korean, which this study found to be somewhat unique, but also for similar languages like Japanese, the study of pragmatics may not be separated effectively from other branches of linguistics, as it may be for other languages. Traditionally, pragmatics has been seen as a separate field of study from other fields within linguistics, but if every utterance in these languages must be made with pragmatic elements in mind, with calculations of relational dynamics happening with as much frequency and acuity as any grammatical calculation, this may indicate a need for more integration of the study of pragmatics with other linguistic fields.

### *Implications for Interlanguage Pragmatics and KFL Education*

Bardovi-Harlig (1996) found that most studies on interlanguage pragmatics up to that point failed to include acquisition of pragmatic ability for new language learners and called for the inclusion of new language learners in these studies, and for the teaching of pragmatic skill alongside other language skill. Takimoto (2012) reports that since that time, much progress has been made, and multiple methods of pragmatic education for L2 learners are used. Artoni and Rylova (2021) is just one example of many current studies which are now delving into more specific branches of pragmatics which are being incorporated into L2 curricula for learners of languages. This thesis did not start under the assumption that interlanguage pragmatics was not a growing field. On the contrary, with the growing emphasis on interlanguage pragmatics in the field of applied linguistics, the need for more emphasis in this area in Korean language education has only grown more clear. This study has found with great clarity that no speaker of Korean, native or KFL learner, can have competent linguistic interactions without a proper pragmatic skill set. I have also found through this thesis that currently, published KFL curricula do not offer instruction about crucial pragmatic skills and assessment methods do not effectively measure them.

Because the current climate in studies about interlanguage pragmatics is focusing on the importance of pragmatic education for L2 learners, the timing has never been better for focusing on this element of KFL education. The results of this thesis would indicate—quite emphatically at that—that this type of education should not wait for an advanced level, but should begin at the first step of instruction, because pragmatics exist in every Korean utterance.

This study also indicates that this pragmatic education can begin by focusing on relational dynamics, which can be addressed largely through speech style and address terms, according to the reflections of native Korean speakers.

The invisible language of relationships in Korean is pragmatics, and *no speaker* of Korean can escape the complex relational dynamics of Korean society.

*A Call for Further Study*

The research covered in this thesis has been important and revealing, but its ethnographic nature has left room for much further study, and indeed highlighted the need for richer, more quantitative analysis in several areas.

One of the first gaps this research draws attention to is the severe difference between languages like English, and languages like Japanese and Korean, which are, as proven throughout this thesis, linguistically built around relational dynamics. Because of this difference, it seems difficult to use the blanket term of 'pragmatics' to talk about features of both kinds of languages. This thesis points to the need for linguists to further define pragmatic theories to encapsulate both kinds of languages, and to decide whether they should both be included under the same umbrella or not.

Another gap this thesis has highlighted is the intricate relationship between power and intimacy in Korean relational dynamics. Much of the research on Korean pragmatics up to this point has focused on one of these variables or the other, but there is still a need for more investigation about how the balance between power and intimacy is changing in modern Korea. The university aged Korean speakers I spoke with focused more on intimacy than on power, which stood in contrast to established research about social dynamics in Korea reviewed earlier in this paper. More quantitative research to understand how modern Koreans feel about intimacy and power dynamics would be useful in a changing Korea, especially to build on the ethnographic studies shown here.

Finally, the most important gap left in the research highlighted here lies in KFL education. I have shown the intense need for pragmatic education in the KFL classroom. I have also expressed that this education needs to start at the most basic level. Further research is now needed to better understand what methods are most effective in teaching pragmatic skills like speech styles and address terms in the KFL classrooms, and how those skills can effectively be assessed.

## Conclusion

This thesis has allowed Korean speakers to tell their own story and to represent their experiences with their language in their own words, and in that process has revealed that truly, relationships are central to every aspect of Korean society. A speaker of Korean must focus on relational dynamics in every linguistic interaction, and because of this, pragmatic skills are essential to Korean speakers in ways they may not be for speakers of other languages. These discoveries are exciting for linguists interested in understanding more about the field of pragmatics in general, linguists looking to expand the conversation about pragmatics to include Asian languages like Japanese and Korean, where pragmatic skills are embedded in every utterance, and Korean specialists who want to understand Korean sociolinguistic dynamics better. Finally, this study helps KFL educators to better understand the burden placed on KFL learners in terms of pragmatic skills, if they ever hope to gain true communicative competence in Korean society.

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