KOREAN HONORIFIC MARKERS WITH RESPECT TO SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS

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Introduction

Korean is characterized by a highly complex and elaborate system of honorifics. Korean honorifics are mainly represented by adding honorific markers at the end of verbs. Brown and Levinson (1987:179) defined honorifics as direct grammatical encodings of relative social status between participants, or between participants and persons or things referred to in the communicative event. Also, Levinson (1983:89-91) identifies honorifics as a form of social deixis which is decided by reference to the social properties of participants in an event. As the most evident characteristic of Korean politeness, honorification represents the linguistic expression of the speaker's deference to the referent (Silverstein, 1976). According to Lakoff (1972), an honorific is defined as a form which can be used to convey the idea that the speaker is being polite to the hearer.

In terms of its manifestation in the grammar of Korean, honorification can be marked in the subject Noun Phrase, the non-subject NPs (indirect NPs) and the predicate. Honorification encoded in the NPs reflects difference according to the entities referred to by the NPs. In this case, it is called referent honorification. Referent honorification is divided into two categories: subject honorification and object honorification. Honorific marking in the predicate consists of the honorific infix ㅀ, the terminal suffixes called verbal endings, and honorific variants of verbs. There is also an infix which is a part of subject honorification. It co-occurs with the honorific marker in the subject NP.

The relations between participants and the setting are encoded in language along four different axes. They are (1) speaker-referent relation (referent honorifics), (2) speaker-addressee relation (addressee honorifics), (3) speaker-bystander relation (bystander honorifics), and (4) speaker-setting relation (formality levels). Among four types of relation, types 1, 2, and 4 are relevant to Korean honorifics (Lee, 1996).

In order to be civilized participants in a community, people should use appropriate honorific expressions. When people do not choose appropriate honorific expressions in various situations, they can adversely affect the relationship between the addressee and the addressee.

There are a variety of factors which make Korean honorifics complicated. Among these factors, the social and cultural factors are very powerful and influential. Since the beginning of civilization, higher and lower classes have been established. In the Yi-Dynasty (14-19 Century), the disparity in social status between the office-holding aristocrats (yangpan) and the peasants (sangmun) was so great that sangmun were required to be polite to yangpan (Lee, 1991). Furthermore, through the influence of Confucianism, Korean value systems were greatly changed, and deference to age, social status, and kinship relations were also required. However, nowadays, among the younger generations, the observation of honorific systems has gradually diminished.

In this paper, I will analyze Korean addressee honorifics. Using dialogue from popular Korean...
TV programs, the use of honorifics between family members (husband and wife, parents and children) will be investigated. In particular, I will examine dialogue focusing on the sentence ending marker yo. In particular, the data will be investigated with respect to social-cultural aspects.

I The Korean Honorifics System

As revealed above, there are several types of honorifics, including referent and addressee honorifics, and subject and object honorifics.

1 1 Referent Honorifics

Referent honorifics occur when a noun phrase of a sentence refers to someone the speaker gives respect to. Referent honorifics can be divided into two types: subject honorifics and object honorifics (terminology by Harada 1976). Of the two honorifics, object honorifics are generally considered insignificant (Sohn, 1983).

1 1 1 Subject Honorifics

Subject honorifics are used when the subject is a person to whom the speaker wishes to show respect. The most frequently used subject honorific marker is kkeyse. For example:

(1) halapeči -kkeyse o-si-nta
grandfather SM (H) come-H-[T]
'Grandfather comes'

Interestingly, if the subject marker denotes an honorific, the predicate should take an honorific form.

1 1 2 Object Honorifics

Object honorifics are represented by the honorific indirect object marker kkey. For example,

(2) atul-i emen-kkey ton -ul tuli- nta
son SM mother-I O(H) money D O give (Hum)
'Son give mother money'

1 2 Addresssee Honorifics

Addressee honorifics are used when the speaker shows deference or respect to the addressee. For example,

(3) Chelswu-ka ka-pnuta (formal)
SM go HON
'There goes Chelswu'
(4) Chelswu-ka ka-yo (Informal)
   SM go HON
   'There goes Chelswu'

In (3), with the deferential sentence ending pmita, the speaker expresses his respect to the addressee in a formal situation. Meanwhile, (4) represents his respect with the sentence ending yo in an informal situation. These sentences might be said when the speaker talks with a senior such as his parents, grandparents or someone who is socially superior to him such as his teacher or boss, etc. Another strategy of honorificitation is to use the humble form of verbs. In (2), the speaker uses the humble form, tulita give instead of the non-humble form cwhuta give. For example, if the giver is the son of the recipient, the humble form, tulita rather than cwhuta should be used, since the recipient is superior to the giver in terms of age.

II Methodology

2.1 Data

The data used in the present analysis come mainly from Korean TV dramas. Two different TV programs were screened for their desirability as data. A total of eight dialogues were used to analyze the honorifics among Korean family members. The use of this broadcast data was necessary, because my access to a large family situation in America was very limited. Though I was unable to interview the participants in this project, comments from non-participants with regard to their own interpretation strengthened the analysis.

2.2 Transcription

In transcribing Korean data in English, I used the Yale transcription system. Following Ochs' (1979) recommendation, I selected transcriptions geared to the analytical goals of this study. Also, the following abbreviations have been used to label grammatical morphemes in the gloss below Korean example dialogues.

ACC Accusative ending
DEC Declarative ending
HON Honorific marker
IMP Imperative ending
LOC Locative marker
NOM Nominative Case Marker
PAST Past-Tense Verb Infix
PRO Progressive Marker
Q'SFM Interrogative Sentence-Final Marker
SFM Sentence Final Marker
2.3 Research Questions

Hypotheses

H1 Following traditional Korean culture, a wife in a family tends to follow the pattern of using honorifics to her husband

H2 Following the trend of weakening the use of honorifics, sons and daughters in a Korean family do not follow the pattern of using honorifics to their parents

III Results and Discussion

The dramas investigated here were broadcast on SBS (Seoul Broadcasting System) TV in Korea in the fall of 1996. As mentioned earlier in this paper, there were two categories of dialogues between spouses including grandparents, and between parents and married and unmarried children

3.1. Dialogue Between Spouses

(Dialogue 1)

Dialogues between grandparents in mokyoktanchup saramtul (People in the Public Bath House)

Lee Grandfather
Kang Grandmother

K1 oksusu sa-si-ess-yo?
corn buy-HON-PAST-Q'SFM (HON)
'Did you buy some corn?'

L1 eung, chaloksusu-ia sichang-esser saki-chune mat-boatt-sser
yes genuine corn-SFM market-LOC buy-before taste-test-SFM
'Yes, this is genuine corn I tasted boiled corn before I bought it in the market'

K2 chederona sa-si-etss-nunchi morkketne-yo
proper buy-HON-PAST-if not sure-SFM(HON)
'I'm not sure if you bought proper ones'
L2 mat-boko sa-ess-tanika mokyoktang saramdul nanner-choo-era
taste-test buy-PAST-SFM public bathhouse people distribute-give-SFM
'I bought corn after I had tasted it Distribute these to our bathhouse people'

K3 to nakka si yo?
again go out -HON-Q'SFM(HON)
'Do you go out again?'

L3 bohl iss ssse
something have SFM
'I have something to do'

The elderly couple (L & K) in this scene are the owners of changsu tang (the public bathhouse), which is unique in Korea and leading the big family in this drama. Three generations of a big family live in a three-story building together. Traditionally, in Korean society, the eldest son should take care of both his parents and his grandparents in his house. The authority of the grandfather is so powerful that other family members obey him in any situation. Interestingly, although the grandmother is in a higher position in the family hierarchy and is respected by other family members, she has to obey her husband unconditionally. As the above dialogue shows, grandmother K always used the honorific suffix yo at the end of her utterances. For example, in K1, K2, and K3, she continued to use honorifics in each utterance. In contrast, grandfather L always used banmal2 ("half talk") to his wife in the dialogue. Although the dialogue does not describe any family feuds, grandfather L's way of talking was blunt and combative. For example, when grandmother K asked a question to grandfather politely, he answered bluntly in L3.

(Dialogue 2)

Middle-aged couple

C Chang (Male)
K Ko (Female)

C1 yeobol Mrs Ko, chip-e watser!
honey Mrs Ko, home-LOC-come-SFM(DEC)
'Honey! Mrs Ko, I am home!'

K2 eser wa yo
right -come-SFM(HON)
'Come right in!'

C2 muer hakko onul chne-ssse?
what do-PRO today spend-Q'SFM
'What have you been doing today?'

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2 In Korean, Banmal is used by the deletion of a sentence-final marker when the speaker has the social power over the interlocutor or when the former maintains a close relationship with the latter.
K 2 pyungsocherum chnetchi-yo
As usual been doing- SFM(HON)
'I have been doing as usual'

C3 kodeunghakko-sichule saki-ess-dun namcha mannat-so?
highschool-days date-PAST-used to guy meet-Q'SFM(DEC)
'Haven't you met the guy you dated when you were in high school?'

The middle-aged couple in their fifties in the above dialogues represents a typical middle-class Korean couple. Their three daughters are already married. Their only son remains in the couple's house, along with the husband's parents. This middle-aged couple has also served their parents for thirty years in their house. According to the drama, the wife has never complained about the fact that she has served her parents-in-law for a long period of time. As a traditional daughter-in-law in a Korean big family, she gave up her professional job to take care of her family and parents-in-law. In the above dialogue, like his father, husband C continued to use banmal half-talk/speech' when he talked to his wife. In contrast, wife K always used the honorific suffix yo at the sentence ending.

(Dialogue 3)

The second son couple

N second son
Y wife

N1 amerm abercha azoo chulkerwoo-si-er
mother father very happy-HON-SFM
'It seems that mother and father are very happy'

Y1 we-yo?
Why-Q'SFM(HON)
'Why?'

N2 erumma-ka aberchu-rul kanchrum pi-si-na-bwa
Mother-NOM father-ACC tickle do-HON-may-SFM(DEC)
'Mother seems to tickle father'

Y2 ahu, ku yunse-etto sero kanchrum-piu-si-kohal-kka
Oh, such an age-even each other tickle -do-HON-do-Q'SFM
'Oh! At such an age, how can they tickle each other?'

N 3 dari chumuler chul kke
leg massage do -SFM
'Let me massage your leg'
Y 3 neka ertka apa-chi?
1Per (SM) where sore-Q'SFM
'Where was I sore?'

mai-e musan yunghwa-ka itta-ko
at this age which glory -SM enjoy-SFM
'Which glorious life can I expect to enjoy at this age?'

N 4 kuredo, kobi-lul chal numki-kottun-te muer chalmot tae-ess-seo?
anyhow, ordeal-ACC well overcome-PRO-SFM what wrong be-PAST-Q'SFM
'Anyhow, you have overcome this ordeal well What's wrong with you?

In the above scene, the second son's wife is pregnant in her forties although she already has a
grandchild Thus, she is ashamed of the fact that she got pregnant at this age Then, her parents-in-law
temporarily moved to her house from the eldest son's house The second son's wife isn't happy with her
parents-in-law's presence in her house in the above dialogue, the second son continued to use banmal
half-talk/speech' to his wife In contrast, as revealed in Y 1, she used the honorific marker-yo whenever
talking to her husband as well as to her parents-in-law

(Dialogue 4)

The second daughter couple

E second daughter
B husband

E 1 chuwer-chu-mun momul-to kutrye-yo
cold get-if noodle-even can't eat anymore -SFM(HON)
'If it gets cold outside, you cannot eat this noodles'

anza-yo wae kuroko ser ister-yo
sit -HON why such as stand be -SFM(HON)
'Sit down, please Why do you stand over there?'

B 1 ike chernekiye-yo?
'Is this dinner?'

E 2 muer-ka chalmot-twe-esser-yo?
What-Nom wrong -do -PAST-SFM(HON)
'What's wrong with it?'

B 2 kalbichom mukup-si-da
rib eat -HON-SFM
'Why don't we try some nbs?'

nakaser sikdang-esser kalbichom-mukup-si-da
Go out restaurant-LOC rib eat -HON-SFM
'Let's go out to eat nbs in a restaurant'
E 3 wun sikdang-esser kalb muk-ul don upser yo

We restaurant-LOC ribs eat-ACC money don't SFM(HON)
'Ve don't have enough money to eat ribs in a restaurant'

B 3 sanghwalbt lul bulsser ta katta ser ser yo?
living expenses ACC already all take spend Q'SFM(HON)
'Did you spend all our household expense money already?'

In this dialogue, the husband is a competent man working for a trading company. After marriage, the daughter quit her job and has taken care of the household all day long. Interestingly, unlike other younger couples in their age group, they both used honorifics to each other. Therefore, in the above dialogue, it seems that husband B broke the common traditional rule that a husband usually uses *banmal* half-talk/speech* to his wife. In the drama, the couple's ages are 30 and 32, respectively. Considering their ages, the couple does not belong to the older generation. Anyhow, the couple's mutual use of honorifics is very rare and is in contrast to that of today's younger couples. The above dialogue also tells the fact that the husband's authority has begun to weaken in the current Korean society.

(Dialogue 5)

**Last daughter couple**

S last daughter
M husband

M 1 Sukyung! Sukyung!

S 1 na puruchi-ma! wun kut-lya
me call -not we end-DEC
'Don't call me! Let's break off our relationship!'

nan ore salko shup-tako
I longer live want-SFM
'I want to live a longer life'

M 2 nan ehkumkachi hanbundo sakoto upanmali-ya
I until now once accident don't-SFM
'I have never had a car accident until now'

S 2 ni cha-e olatamun baksalna chookulker-ya
your car-LOC get on crashed kill -SFM
'If I get in your car, I will crash and be killed on the spot'

M 3 ne-ka kesok sungkaskekel-mun nan accelerator-lul palke-twe
you-Non consistently nagging do-if INom accelerator-ACC push-SFM
'If you consistently nag me, I will push the accelerator pedal!'

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In this dialogue, whenever they addressed each other, they both used *banmal* 'half-talk/speech'. According to the drama, the couple met when they were freshmen at the same university. Therefore, at first, as classmates, they did not need to use honorifics to each other, and continued to use *banmal* 'half-talk/speech' even after marriage. Thus, they both chose the suffix marker -*ya* rather than the honorific one -*yo*. The fact that they are now a married couple did not change their use of language in representing politeness. In general, even if a couple did not use honorifics to each other in the early stages of their relationship, once they marry, a wife almost always uses honorifics to her husband regardless of age difference.

(Dialogue 6)

A young couple from the drama A Salted Mackerel

M husband  
F wife

M 1 dangshin1 serduler neut-ess-ser  
'honey hurry up late -PAST-SFM
'Honey! Hurry up! It's too late!'

F 1 Sangwoo kuyocha ttemun-e nakankert-katte - yo  
'Sangwoo may have run away from home because of her'

M 2 am1 kuakasi hangbang-ul amuto morunta-mer  
'Oh! her whereabouts-ACC anybody don't know-it seems'

F 2 kutul-1 molre mannanun-chi moruchi-yo  
'We don't know if they have met each other secretly'

M 3 kukut-ul mtulsu-ka upsser  
'that -Acc believe-Nom can't-SFM
'I can't believe that he did it'

F 3 kurerchu-anumun, kue-lul chaturur nasersum-t tulimupser-yo  
'Otherwise, it must be true that he ran away to find her'

che-ka Sangwoo-lul shimbake daehet-ess-yo  
'I treated Sangwoo too harshly'

In this dialogue, the wife is a middle-school teacher and the husband an employee of a medium-sized company. As the couple does not have enough money to buy a house, the couple rent a room in the wife's parental home. They are a newly married couple. The wife is in her late twenties and the
husband in his late thirties, an age difference of about 10 years. Before they married, the husband always used banmal half-talk/speech' to his wife. Even after marriage, the husband continued to use banmal half-talk/speech' to his wife. As shown in M 3, the husband used banmal -ser which deleted a sentence-final marker. In contrast, whenever talking to her husband, the wife constantly used the honorific -yo as a sentence-final marker.

3.2 Dialogues Between Parents and Daughter as well as Between Parents and Son

In this section, unlike the previous section, dialogue between parents and daughter as well as between parents and son will be investigated, focusing on the usage of honorifics.

(Dialogue 7)
Dialogue between daughter and parents

D Daughter
F Father
M Mother

D umma, kusaram doldaekun-kaba-yo
mother, he stone head -seem-SFM(HON)
'Mom, he seems to be a stone head.'

F nur, kyulhon kwunteke dlerkan-ni?
you, marriage the state of ennui in married life get into-Q'SFM
'Do you find married life boring?'

M muert-i munche-ni?
what-Nom problem-Q'SFM
'What's wrong with you?'

D ku-wa tonghachi-ana-yo
he-Nom communicate-not-SFM(HON)
'I can't communicate with him anymore.'

In this dialogue, after a dispute with her husband, the younger daughter of the family came to her parents' home to complain about her husband. In this dialogue, she chose honorifics rather than banmal half-talk/speech' in talking to her parents. Interestingly, before she married, she had always used banmal half-talk/speech' to her parents. Therefore, marriage seems to have played a role in the switching of her code from banmal half-talk/speech' to honorific talk. In this drama, the younger daughter has lived in her parent-in-law's house, and her attitude toward her parents may be somewhat changed. According to traditional Korean culture, when a woman marries, she should dedicate herself to taking care of her husband's family. It seems that she intentionally maintains social distance between her and her parents to imply that she is a member of her husband's family.
(Dialogue 8)

Dialogue between son and parents

S Son
F Father
M Mother

S1 eummal
'Mom'

'krundae, ikut muerye-yo?'
then, this what -Q'SFM(HON)
'Then, what is this?'

F1 ni-ka ikerse taehe muet-ul alki-lul won-he?
You-NOM this about what -ACC know-ACC want-Q'SFM
'What do you want to know about this?'

S2 oksusu-wa wuyu hancup chu - si -ketser-yo?
corns -and milk a cup give-HON- do -SFM(HON)
'Would you give me corn and a cup of milk?'

M2 ne-ka ichung-e olerda-chul-kke
I-Nom second floor-Loc bring up-give-SFM
'I'll bring it up to the second floor.'

In this dialogue, the son is very busy preparing for a college entrance examination. Thus, he usually studies in his room upstairs. When coming down to eat a snack, he found a package on the kitchen table. As revealed in dialogue (8), the son always used honorific markers at the sentence endings whenever he asked or answered a question. The reason why he always used honorifics can be explained as even though he has not yet gotten married, his desire to be recognized as a grown-up adult in the family. In general, most young unmarried men living at home usually use banmal 'half-talk/speech' to their parents because they are heavily dependent on parents mentally.

Discussion

In the previous section, it is hypothesized that in Korean society a wife in a family always uses honorific forms to her husband. As I predicted in hypothesis 1, in the cases of dialogues 1, 2, 3, and 6, wives used honorifics to their husbands. In contrast, most husbands used banmal 'half-talk/speech' to their wives. There was an exceptional case. That is, in Dialogue 5, the wife used banmal 'half-talk/speech' instead of honorifics to her husband. Of course, her husband used banmal 'half-talk/speech' to his wife, too. Interestingly, in dialogues 4, 5, and 6, although all the couples are newly married, their usage of honorifics are vastly different from each other. The couple in Dialogue 4 both used honorifics to each other. This couple had a marriage arranged by a matchmaker after a short period of dating. Although they got married after dating, they could not speak more informally after marriage.
In dialogue 5, the couple met each other as classmates on a college campus and dated for several years before marriage. Since they used *banmal* half-talk/speech' to each other when they met, even after marriage, they have continued to use *banmal* half-talk/speech' to each other. The couple in Dialogue 6, like the couple in Dialogue 4, had a marriage arranged by a matchmaker. Unlike the couple in Dialogue 4, they dated for four years before marriage. As the husband is ten years older than the wife, even at the beginning of dating, the husband used *banmal* half-talk/speech' to his wife. The wife, of course, used honorifics to her husband. As we have seen so far, in general, wives in older and middle-aged couples use honorifics to their husbands in Korean society. However, nowadays, young wives are inclined not to use honorifics to their husbands. There are a variety of variables to determine the use of honorifics. For example, like the couple in Dialogue 6, if a husband is much older than his wife, the wife usually uses honorifics to her husband. As shown in Dialogue 5, since the couple met each other as classmates, they could easily use *banmal* half-talk/speech' to each other without any difficulty. In Korea, due to Western cultural influence, the style of marriage has gradually changed from arranged-marriages to love-marriages. Consequently, the period of dating is longer than it used to be. Therefore, married couples tended to use *banmal* half-talk/speech' to each other.

According to Ide (1982), as familiarity increases with the duration of acquaintance, politeness seems to decline. However, in the parent-child relationships, although the daughter and her parents are very closely, the daughter in Dialogue 7 used honorifics to her parents instead of *banmal* half-talk/speech'. It is evident that the daughter and the parents had a close relationship before. But after marrying into another family, the daughter seems to be less familiar with her parents.

As I mentioned earlier, in Korean, the nature of relationship between the speaker and the addressee or the referent determines the usage of honorifics. In particular, as Hwang (1990) mentioned, in Korean society, peoples' relative positions in various hierarchical social dimensions are highly recognized, and its members are identified more readily by their relative positions in the social structure than by their individuality. In addition, Korean culture has been greatly influenced by Confucianism and much of Korean philosophy stems from it. The five cardinal rules dominating basic human relationships in a Confucian society are as follows (Kim-Renaud 1986):

- a. Righteousness and loyalty between ruler and ruled,
- b. Closeness and love between father and son,
- c. Sense of propriety between husband and wife,
- d. Proper order between older and younger,
- e. Fidelity between friends.

The above rules reveal the hierarchy among people in Korean society. The first four are related to power, and the first three are related to social status. In the old days, most people's status was decided into *yangban* or *sangmin* families when they were born. The third rule regulates the role of gender: a male takes the role of superriority over a female. The fourth concerns the factor of age, whereby the old are of higher status than the young. Rule five relates to the concept of solidarity among equals. In particular, among the rules above, age is the most important factor in Confucianism. Rule four states that there should be proper order between the old and the young. Therefore, language use cannot be an exception to this rule. Younger people have to use polite language to older people. This is the starting point in maintaining the relationship between the two. In the old days, the rule was obeyed strictly, but nowadays strictness has been somewhat relaxed.

Nowadays, although Western cultural influence has greatly weakened the use of honorifics to
elders and husbands, the honorific rules, which are influenced by Confucianism, are strictly observed in relation to grandparents in Korean society. The fact reflects that power variables such as age have played a great role in the use of honorifics.

Limitations of this study is that in eliciting data, I mainly relied on the restricted data and content of the scenes of TV dramas. As dramas are performed by actors or actresses, I cannot deny that there include some exaggerated factors in their speech. Therefore, in order to elicit more reliable data, it might be meaningful to use casual speech in real situations. In conducting further study, quantitative methods help to increase reliability of this study.

Conclusion

In the earlier section, hypothesis 1 was stated as follows. Following traditional Korean culture, a wife in a family tends to follow the pattern of using honorifics to her husband. But as we have seen so far, Hypothesis 1 was only partially verified by the dialogues. As for the grandparents, the wife always used the honorific marker yo to her husband. In the first and second son couples, the wives also used honorifics to their husbands. However, in the youngest daughter couple, the wife never used honorifics to her husband. Interestingly, unlike other husbands in his family, only the second daughter's husband always used honorifics to his wife. It is a very rare for a young husband to use honorifics to his wife.

Hypothesis 2 was not verified in this study. Hypothesis 2 was as follows. Following the trend of weakening the use of honorifics, sons and daughters in a Korean family do not follow the pattern of using honorifics to their parents. That is, a son and daughter will use banmal/half-talk/speech to their parents. However, contrary to hypothesis 2, both son and daughter used honorifics to their parents.

Nowadays, although Western cultural influence has greatly weakened the use of honorifics to elders and husbands, the honorific rules, which are influenced by Confucianism, are strictly observed in relation to grandparents in Korean society. This fact reflects that power variables such as age have played a great role in the use of honorifics.

The limitations of this study are that in eliciting data, I mainly relied on the restricted data and content of the scenes of TV dramas. When these dramas are performed by actors or actresses, for a popular audience, I cannot deny that there may be some exaggerated factors in their speech. Therefore, in order to elicit more reliable data, one may have to use casual speech in real situations. In conducting further study, quantitative methods should help to increase the reliability of the conclusions of this study.

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