

HONORIFICS AND POLITENESS IN ENGLISH AND KOREAN LANGUAGES

Usmonova Dona Sotvoldievna

Senior teacher of English language department Fergana state university

Rustamova Nargiza Akhadjonovna

2nd course master's degree student in English linguistics major Fergana state university<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7394246>

Abstract. This article investigates linguacultural aspects of honorifics and politeness in English and Korean languages. There are given comparative analysis and samples which inform about the ways of expressing politeness in Korean language.

Keywords: linguistics, korean, english, honorifics, politeness, comparative analysis, linguacultural analysis.

ЧЕСТНОСТЬ И ВЕЖЛИВОСТЬ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И КОРЕЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

Аннотация. В данной статье исследуются лингвокультурные аспекты почтительности и вежливости в английском и корейском языках. Дан сравнительный анализ и образцы, информирующие о способах выражения вежливости в корейском языке.

Ключевые слова: лингвистика, корейский язык, английский язык, вежливость, вежливость, сравнительный анализ, лингвокультурологический анализ.

As many aforementioned scholars (Lakoff 1972, Brown & Levinson 1987, Leech 2003, 2005, Shibatani 2006, Kashyap 2008) put it, if Politeness is argued to be universal in every language and Honorifics is a grammatical encoding of Politeness, then how can we capture the relationship between Honorifics and Politeness? Due to the lack of Honorifics in English, theorists have mostly paid attention to theorizing Politeness, leaving Honorifics out when it comes to English pragmatics. For example, Leech (2005) also shows Politeness scale and discusses the Politeness strategy and scale. In order to provide the foundation for the discussion, let us consider what Leech (2005) has proposed. He has actually proposed two types of Politeness: one is an Absolute Politeness Scale (APS) which is Context-free, Utterances on a scale of Politeness out of context. For example, on an absolute scale of Politeness, the examples on the right side of the arrow are more polite than those of the left. Consider the following:

(1) *Help me* → *Help me, will/can you?* → *Can you help me?* → *Could you possibly help me?*

(2) *Thanks* → *Thank you very much*

(3) *Name, please* → *What's your name, please* → *Can you tell me your name please?* → *Could you possibly tell me your name, please?* (→ *I wonder if you could tell me your name.*)

Everything else being equal, the rightmost example is most courteous and polite. The example (2) in particular intensifies an expression of gratitude rather than expressing gratitude in a minimal way. The second type of Politeness is Relative Politeness Scale (RPS), which is Context-sensitive. This type of Politeness is relative to norms in a given society, for a given group, or for a given situation, and is sensitive to context. It is a bi-directional scale. Therefore, for example, if someone say, "Could I possibly interrupt?" could be understood as "too polite", if spoken to family members monopolizing the conversation. Therefore, in RPS, more polite form of an utterance can be interpreted as coldly sarcastic and less courteous. This paper has no particular bearing on the second type of Politeness (RPS) since it is context sensitive and our

theory of Honorifics is to reside within the range of sentential boundary. The APS has a direct bearing on what syntacticians have called the clausal typology and typing. Let us take a closer look at the gradation of Absolute Politeness. Different Degrees of absolute politeness in English are illustrated below (from Leech 2005, for example):

Imperative S's: Stand over there!

Imperatives S's with Tag Q: Stand over there, will you?

Y/N Questions: Will you stand over there?

Y/N Questions with Past Tense: a. Would you stand over there? b. Would you mind standing over there for a second? c. Would you mind standing over there for a second please?

Declarative S: I wonder if you'd mind just standing over there for a second for me please?

It has been argued that the seeming lack of Honorifics in English can be better accounted for if Honorifics are taken as part of a feature checking mechanism. English seems to lack Honorifics, since there is only one locus of grammatical encoding for Politeness. Thus, in English, the entire ForceP (\approx CP) is the functional layer that determines the Types of Clauses and encodes Discourse information as Chomsky (1995, 2001, 2004, 2005) argues. For Korean, on the other hand, there are multiple loci of grammatical encoding for Politeness, which makes the language rich in Honorifics and makes it complex for foreign speakers of Korean to learn. The domains for Korean Politeness, to be exact, are at least three, HonP above DP, vP, and ForceP, respectively. Furthermore, any unchecked Hon feature may percolate up to Pragmatic projection level, PolP. If this happens, the sentence is Polite, but not Honorific.

In conclusion, this paper presents an analysis of feature-based Honorifics and Politeness in the two languages under investigation, based on Adger's feature system and Chomsky's theory of Minimalism. The "meager" Honorific in English does not necessarily mean that the language lacks Politeness, conforming to the pragmatic universal of human languages.

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