

# **Semantic and Pragmatic Characteristics of Korean Honorific Pronouns**

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\*Based on Choe (2011) of the same title, but slightly revised.

# Table of contents

1. Introduction
2. Extracting target lemmas from a dictionary
3. Semantic/Pragmatic analysis
4. Referential dimension
5. Further discussion
6. Conclusion

# 1. Introduction

- Two types of Honorification in Korean
- Grammatical honorification (cf. Lim 2000)
  - *sensaeng-nim-i*      *o-si-ess-ta*
  - teacher-HON-NOM    come-HOM-PAST-DEC
  - “Teacher came.”
- Lexical honorification
  - Honorific pronouns
  - Honorific suffixes
  - Honorific nouns and verbs

- From Wikipedia

	Singular	Plural
First person	저 ( <i>jeo</i> ), 나 ( <i>na</i> )	저희 ( <i>jeohui</i> ), 우리 ( <i>uri</i> )
Second person	당신 ( <i>dangsin</i> ), 너 ( <i>neo</i> )	당신들 ( <i>dangsindeul</i> ), 너희 ( <i>neohui</i> )
Third person	그, 그녀(f) ( <i>geu/geunyeo</i> )	그들, 그녀들 (f) ( <i>geudeul/geunyeodeul</i> )

# Honorific pronouns (Chang 2010)

● Person	categories	types	examples
1 <sup>st</sup>	underestimating/ self-effacing	91	기말1, 무사8, 불녕, 불효자, 사제9 등
2 <sup>nd</sup>	honorific	29	경자5, 군4, 귀공2, 귀관3, 귀군 등
	slang	6	거기1, 네년, 네놈, 당신2, 이년, 이놈1
	underestimating	1	이녁1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	honorific	10	그분, 그이1, 당신2, 씨7, 옹4 등
	slang	28	게네, 고것, 고놈, 쫄남, 쫄녀 등
	underestimating	2	이손1, 저손1
demonstrative	slang	7	고따위, 쫄물, 그따위, 요따위 등

## 2. Extracting target lemmas

- **Source: The Unabridged Standard Dictionary of the Korean Language(SDK).**
  - [http://stdweb2.korean.go.kr/search/List\\_dic.jsp](http://stdweb2.korean.go.kr/search/List_dic.jsp)
  - One of the most comprehensive dictionaries of Korean covering over half a million words
  - Compiled by the National Institute of the Korean Language (國立國語院)

# Extracting target lemmas

- **Lexical entry example**
- **귀하(貴下)[귀:-] [Π] 「대명사」** 듣는 이를 **높**  
**여 이르는** 이인칭 대명사. ≒ 존하(尊下).
- ***kwiha*(貴下)[kwi:-] [Π] 「pronoun」** 2<sup>nd</sup> person  
pronoun used to **address the hearer**  
**honorifically** ≒ *conha*(尊下).

## 2.1 Extraction method

- Method I: extract pronouns if their meaning descriptions contain one of the following expressions
  - “높여 이르(address honorifically)” (39)
  - “낮추어 이르 (address underestimatingly)”(102), “낮잡아 이르(address underestimatingly)”(34), “낮잡는(underestimate)”(7), “낮춤말 (underestimating terms)”(1)



# Extracting target lemmas

- Method II: extract pronouns if their meaning descriptions refer to a lemma extracted through Method I
  - synonyms(22); ex: “*conha--=kwiha*[II]”
  - **spoken or written forms(12)**; ex: “*ke2*—a spoken term for ‘*keki1*’”
  - dialects(33); ex: “*kutui1*—Jeju dialect for ‘*keki1*’”
  - slangs(5); ex: “*konom*—a vulgar term for ‘*kokes*’”
  - archaic forms(6); ex: “*kutui2*—an archaic term for ‘*kutay*’”
  - contractions(6); ex: “*key3*—a contracted form for ‘*keki1*’”

# Results of initial extraction

●	Honorific pronouns	Target pronouns	Remarks
Method I	183	<b>159</b>	Archaic, North Korean terms excluded
Method II	84	<b>10</b>	Only spoken and written variations included
Sum	267	<b>169</b>	

## 2.2 ‘Sense’-based extraction

- *tangsin2*(當身) 「pronoun」
  - 「1」2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun referring to the hearer.  
Used in contexts to somewhat honor the hearer.
  - 「2」2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun to address the hearer honorifically, between man and his wife.
  - 「3」2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun to address the hearer underestimatingly when people quarrel with each other.
  - 「4」 same as ‘caki3[ Π ]’, but a way to address the person (3<sup>rd</sup>) very honorifically

- *i-nyen* 「pronoun」
  - 「1」3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun, a vulgar slang term, referring to a woman near the speaker or that the speaker has in mind.
  - 「2」1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun that a woman uses to address herself underestimatingly when talking to someone higher in status.
  - 「3」2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun , a vulgar slang term, for a female hearer

## 2.3 List of (anti-)honorific pronouns

- 169 lemma
- 180 senses
  - Examples: *tangsin2[1]*, *tangsin2[2]*, *i-nyen[2]*

- Distribution of the pronouns

person	+hon	+und	demonstrative
1	0	83	-
2	34	9	-
3	9	35	10
sum	43	127	10

<p>+hon, +2nd prsn (34)</p>	<p>kyengca5(卿子5), kwun4(君4), kwikong2(貴公2), kwikwan3[1](貴官3[1]), kwikwan3[2](貴官3[2]), kwikwun(貴君), kwi nye2(貴女2), kwisung(貴僧), kwiha(貴下), kwihyeng2(貴兄2), kutay[1](그대[1]), nohyeng[1](老兄[1]), nohyeng[2](老兄[2]), tangsin2[1](當身2[1]), tangsin2[2](當身2[2]), tayh yeng1(大兄1), tayk1(宅1), ahyeng3(雅兄3), ye12(汝12), yel epwun(여러분), ii1[3](이/이/1[3]), incey3(仁弟3), inhyeng2(仁兄2), imca3[1](임자3[1]), ca12(子12), caney1(자네1), c eykwun2(諸君2), ceywi4(諸位4), ceyhyeng4(諸兄4), conhye ng(尊兄), cipsal(執事1), hyen7(賢7), hyengssi(兄氏), hyen gcang1(兄丈1)</p>
<p>+hon, +3rd prsn (9)</p>	<p>kupwun(그분), kui1[1](그O/1[1]), tangsin2[4](當身2[4]), ong4(翁4), ipwun1(O/분1), iii[1](O/O/1[1]), cakya(자갸), cepwun1(저분1), cei1[1](저O/1[1])</p>

+und,  
+1st  
prsn  
(83)

kyocey2(教弟2), kwenhasayng(眷下生), kimal1(記末1), napca(衲子),  
noka1(奴家1), nonap(老衲), nomwul2(老物2), nopwu1(老夫1), nosayn  
g(老生), nosin1(老身1), nocay1(奴才1), mansayng1(晚生1), mwusa8(  
無似8), minap2(迷衲2), misin7(微臣7), pepwu1(法友1), pyengnap(病  
衲), pwulnyeng(不佞), pwulchonye(不肖女), pwulchoson(不肖孫), pwu  
lchoca(不肖子), pwulhyoca(不孝子), pikwan1(卑官1), piin5(鄙人5), pi  
nto1(貧道1), sacey9(查弟9), sansung3(山僧3), sayng3(生3), sokwan1(  
小官1), sonye1(小女1), somay3(小妹3), somayng(小盲), sopyeng1(小  
兵1), sosa1(小士1), sosa7(小師7), sosung2(小僧2), soca2[1](小子  
2[1]), socey1(小弟1), socil1(小姪1), soncey(損弟), soynney(손네), sisa  
yng1(侍生1), yanap(野衲), yasayng2(野生2), yasung2(野僧2), yonyen  
1[3](요년1[3]), yokwu(辱友), yokci(辱知), wutok(愚禿), wumacwu(牛  
馬走), wusayng4(愚生4), wuswu6(優秀6), wuswuk2(愚叔2), wusung4(  
愚僧4), wusin5(愚臣5), wusin6(愚身6), wucey2(愚弟2), wuhyeng(愚  
兄), yuwu2(幽愚2), inyen[2](이년[2]), inom1[2](이놈1[2]), incey5(姻  
弟5), ce3[1](저3[1]), cesan(樗散), cehuy1[1](저희1[1]), cehuy1[2](저  
희1[2]), cey5(弟5), colnap(拙衲), collo2(拙老2), colpwu1(拙夫1), colc  
a3(卒者3), colche(拙妻), conghasayng(宗下生), coycey(罪弟), chekma  
l(戚末), chensayng2(賤生2), chensin3(賤臣3), chenchep3(賤妾3), cho  
mowusin(草茅愚臣), chwusayng2(鰈生2), hasayng4[1](下生4[1]), has  
in1(下臣1), hansayng2(寒生2)



+und, +2nd prsn (9)	<i>ke2</i> ( 거2), <i>keki1[4]</i> ( 거기1[4]), <i>neynyen</i> ( 네년), <i>neynom</i> ( 네놈), <i>tangsin2[3]</i> ( 當身2[3]), <i>yonyen1[2]</i> ( 요년1[2]), <i>yonom[2]</i> ( 요놈[2]), <i>inyek1</i> ( 이/년1), <i>inom1[3]</i> ( 이/놈1[3])
+und, +3rd prsn (35)	<i>keyney</i> ( 게네), <i>koke1</i> ( 고거1), <i>kokes[3]</i> ( 고것[3]), <i>konyen1[1]</i> ( 고년 1[1]), <i>konyen1[2]</i> ( 고년1[2]), <i>konom[1]</i> ( 고놈[1]), <i>konom[2]</i> ( 고놈 [2]), <i>konom[4]</i> ( 고놈[4]), <i>kwelca1</i> ( 厥者1), <i>kuke</i> ( 그거), <i>kukes[3]</i> ( 그것[3]), <i>kuca2</i> ( 그자2), <i>kuchi</i> ( 그치), <i>yoke1</i> ( 여거1), <i>yokes[2]</i> ( 요것[2]), <i>yonyen1[1]</i> ( 요년1[1]), <i>yonom[1]</i> ( 요놈[1]), <i>ike1</i> ( 이거1), <i>ikes[3]</i> ( 이것[3]), <i>ison1</i> ( 이손1), <i>ica2</i> ( 이자2), <i>ichi1</i> ( 이 차1), <i>ce3[2]</i> ( 저3[2]), <i>ceke1</i> ( 저거1), <i>cekes[2]</i> ( 저것[2]), <i>ceson1</i> ( 자 손1), <i>ceca2</i> ( 저자2), <i>cechi1</i> ( 저치1), <i>coke1</i> ( 조거1), <i>cokes1[2]</i> ( 조것 1[2]), <i>conyen1[1]</i> ( 조년1[1]), <i>conyen1[2]</i> ( 조년1[2]), <i>conom[1]</i> ( 조 놈[1]), <i>conom[2]</i> ( 조놈[2]), <i>conom[4]</i> ( 조놈[4])
+demonstrat ive (10)	<i>kokes[1]</i> ( 고것[1]), <i>kokes[2]</i> ( 고것[2]), <i>kottawi</i> ( 고따위), <i>kuttawi</i> ( 그따위), <i>yokes[1]</i> ( 요것[1]), <i>yottawi</i> ( 요따위), <i>ittawi</i> ( 이/따 위), <i>cettawi</i> ( 저따위), <i>cokes1[1]</i> ( 조것1[1]), <i>cottawi</i> ( 조따위)

### 3. Semantic/Pragmatic analysis

- **Semantic/Pragmatic analysis based on meaning descriptions in the dictionary**
- “*kwiha*(貴下)[kwi:-] [ Π ] 「pronoun」 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun used to **address the hearer honorifically**”
- Typical analysis: [+2<sup>nd</sup> person], [+honorific]

# 3.1 predicate logic

- *pwulcho-nye* “1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun used by Daughter to address herself underestimatingly when talking to her parents”
  - Multiple participants in the definition
  - Limits of the componential analysis

## 3.2 expressives

- Potts (2005), Potts & Kawahara (2004)
- *Bob brought his damn dog with him.*
  - Assertion: Bob brought his dog with him.
  - Implicature: Speaker has a negative attitude toward the dog, or toward Bob's bringing the dog with him.
  - Expressive content vs. at-issue content
- Japanese honorification

## 3.2 expressives

- *incay3* “2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun used by a person of higher status to address one of a lower status honorifically.”
- Descriptions like “to address honorifically” or “to address underestimatingly” are about the way to address someone, separate from whether he/she is higher or lower in status.

- Different dimensions of meaning
- **conhyeng** “2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun to address the hearer honorifically among the peers.”
- **ceyhyeng4**[ ㅍ ] “2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun to address the (collective) hearers honorifically among the peers.”

- *incay3* “2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun used by a person of higher status to address one of a lower status honorifically.”
- *incay3*: higher(S,H,kinship); EXP = honor(S,H)

## 3.3 degree of honorification

- ***i-i1*[1]** “3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun to address ‘*i saram*(this person)’ slightly honorifically”
  - *i-i1*[1]: near(R,S); EXP = weakly(honor(S, R))
- ***i-pwun1*** “3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun to address ‘*i saram*(this person)’ very honorifically”
  - *i-pwun1*: near(R,S); EXP = strongly(honor(S, R))
- ***keki1*[4]** “2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun to address the hearer slightly underestimatingly”



## 3.4 Genre

- ***taehyeng1*** “2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun used to address the hearer honorifically between friends, in letters”
- ***pwulhyo-ca*** “1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun used to address oneself underestimatingly to his/her parents, mostly in letters”
- ***kyengca5*** “2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun used to address the hearer honorifically, in written communication”
- ***ke2*** “same as ‘*keki1*’, used in spoken communication”
- ***napca*** “1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun used by a monk to address oneself underestimatingly. It literally means ‘patched-up clothing’”

- 14 cases used in letters.
- 7 cases used in written communication
- 7 cases used in spoken communication
- 8 cases related to a religion(Buddhism)

- *taehyeng1* “2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun used to address the hearer honorifically between friends, in letters”
- *taehyeng1*: peer(S,H); EXP = honor(S,H); GEN=letter
- Format
  - Lemma: Referential dimension; Expressive dimension; Genre dimension

## 3.5 morphological analysis

- **wusin5** “1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun used by a subject to address himself underestimatingly talking to his king, meaning ‘an ignorant subject’”
- **pinto1** “1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun used by a monk or an ascetic to address himself underestimatingly, meaning ‘a man of little virtue’”
- The meaning of its constitutive morphemes may not be relevant.

## 4. Referential dimension

- *sonye1* “1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun used by an unmarried woman to address herself when talking to someone higher in status”
- *sonye1*:  $\sim$ married(S), female(S), higher(H,S,status)
- What kinds of predicates are needed to describe all the 180 (anti-)honorific pronouns?

Predicates used	freq	classification	Examples (description)
~ near	35	index	”that”
higher	34	hierarchy	”older and”
male	22	sex	”man”
peer	15	solidarity	”friend”
female	14	sex	”woman”
monk	14	occupation	”monk”
near	14	index	”this”
old	8	etc	”old”
plural	7	plurality	”everybody”

higher	S,H,status	11
	H,S,rank	9
	H,S,status	7
	H,S,age	3
	H,S,classyear	1
	S,H,age	1
	S,H,kinship	1
	S,H,rank	1
	SUM	35

similar	H,S,age	2
	S,H,rank	1
	S,H,status	1

~near	R,S	19
	R,H	16

- arguments of the predicate ‘higher’ and related meaning description
  - (S,H,status)/11, (H,S,status)/7: “to someone lower in status than the speaker”, “to someone higher”, etc
  - (H,S,rank)/9, (S,H,rank)/1: “to a person higher in the official/governmental rank”, “to a king by his subject”, etc
  - (H,S,age)/3, (S,H,age)/1: “to an old (and higher ranked) person”, “to a person taken as if an elder brother”, etc
  - (H,S,classyear)/1: “to a senior”
  - (S,H,kinship)/1: “an older relative to a younger relative”



- Rough generalization of the predicates (total 222 tokens)
  - index/49:  $\sim$  near/35, near/14
  - hierarchy/37: higher/34, higher\*/1, middle\*/1, noble/1
  - sex/36: male/22, female/14
  - occupation/30: monk/14, king/6, official/5, scholar/2,  $\sim$  occupation/1, priest/1, soldier/1
  - solidarity/27: peer/15,  $\sim$  well\_acquainted/4, acquainted/1, communion/1, equal/2, similar/4

- kinship/19: couple/5, in\_law/2, son/2, nephew/2, ~ married/1, ~ shared\_last\_name/1, daughter/1, grandchild/1, grandson/1, kinship/1, parent/1, sibling/1
- plurality/7: plural/7
- etc/17: old/8, quarrelling/3, kid/2, blind/1, fromCountryside/1, mourning/1, recommended\_by/1

# 5. Further discussion

- **5.1 The issue of frequency**
- Many of the 169/180 target pronouns sound rather archaic and unfamiliar to the ears of the contemporary Korean speakers.
- How to handle the frequency issue?
- The issue of language change

# Current usage (subjective judgement)

		all	C	C/K	K
+hon	1	0	0	0	0
	2	34	12	17	5
	3	9	0	3	6
	sum	43	12	20	11
+und	1	83	69	7	7
	2	9	0	0	9
	3	35	1	0	34
	sum	127	70	7	50
demonstrative	3	10	0	0	10

# Corpus analysis (11 mil. corpus)

morpheme	rom	char.	freq	morpheme	rom	char	freq
나__03	na	1p	76506	자네__01	caney	2p, hon	1546
우리__03	wuli	1p, pl	42505	너희	nehui	2p, pl, und	1089
이__05	i	3p, demon	28010	아무개	amwukay	3p, anony	864
그녀	kunye	3p, fem	24064	여러분	yelepwwun	2p, pl	821
내__04	nay	1p	15647	니__05	ni	2p, und	763
자기__04	caki	1p, refl	11726	저희__01	cehui	1p, pl, und	691
저__03	ce	1p, und	8690	그대	kutay	2p, hon	657
너__01	ne	2p	8407	이놈__01	inom	1p or 2p, und	639
당신__02	tangsin	2p, hon	5491	그분	kupwwun	3p, hon	488
제__01	cey	1p, und	2008	그놈	kunom	3p, und	484
네__01	ney	2p	1690	그이__01	kui	3p, hon	433

## 5.2 The issue of ‘markedness’

- Contrastiveness requirements: Only those honorific terms that have an ordinary non-honorific counterpart term should be included as ‘honorific’. (cf. Lim, H.B. 1990/1998, Cho, N.H. 2006).
- *chwunpwucang* “an honorific term for the hearer’s father” vs. *apeci* “(speaker’s) father”

- *apeci* “(speaker’s) father”
  - male(R), parent(R,S)
- *chwunpwucang* “an honorific term for the hearer’s father”
  - male(R), parent(R,H); honor(S,R)

# Conclusion

- Are Korean pronouns are really pronouns?
- Heavy context dependency of the Korean pronominal system is shown in its diversity which can be described using three dimensions: referential dimension, expressive dimension, and genre dimension.
- Hierarchical nature of the society is reflected well in the Korean pronominal system.
- A clear language change has happened or is happening in the system, notably a drastic reduction in the use of anti-honorific or underestimating terms for the speaker.



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