

Hybidity of Subjectivity in Korean with Reference to English and Japanese

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Subjectivity

Examining subjectivity, I will argue that Korean sits just between Japanese and English for its features of politeness strategies. Subjectivity is the representation of a speaker's viewpoint in discourse (Finegan 1995). It is called with many terms, such as *empathy* (Kuno 1973), *vantage point* (Langacker 1990), and *viewpoint space* (Fauconnier 1994). Agentivity and empathy are the key notions of the subjectivity used in this study. I will show speakers of Korean, Japanese, and English manipulate these cognitive tools for their politeness strategies. But, also, they appreciate a particular element of this cognitive notion as a primary tool with sociolinguistic rules peculiar to each language.

Universality and Diversity

It is well known by now that universality in politeness lies in the use of languages of the world (Brown and Levinson 1987). However, with close examination of speaker cognition, we can find diversity for politeness strategies among the languages as well.

Empathy

A description of an event that involves beneficial condition is necessarily created with help of a donatory verb (Niyeckawa 1991) in Japanese (1.b) and Korean (1.c), but not in English.

(1)

- a. *You showed me the way.*
- b. *Anata ga watasi ni miti o [??osieta / osiete-kureta].*
you N I D way A taught / teaching-gave
- c. *Dafsin fi na feigei gir feur*
you N I D way A
[??gareucyessda / gareucye-jufessda].
taught teaching-gave

These donatory verbs indicate speaker's empathy and the use is required sociolinguistically in Japanese and Korean for utterances to sound not rude.

Agentivity

However, agentivity is realized in a different way among the three languages. Consider examples utterances for a speech act of requests in (2):

(2)

- a. *Could you pass me the salt?*
- b. *Sio o totte- [?]kure / morae] -masen-ka?*
salt A taking give / receive Pol/Neg/Prs-Q
- c. *Sogeum feur nemgye-*
salt A taking
[juji / *badgo] -fangeiss-sefyo?
give / *receive Pol/Neg/Prs-Q

The agent is a benefactor in both English and Korean, while it is appreciated if an agent of the main clause is a beneficiary in Japanese.

Further Implications

Cognitive tools Korean speakers use for politeness strategies are partially the same as that of English speakers use and partially Japanese speakers do. It can be supported by close examination of more examples with consideration to peculiar sociolinguistic rules to each of the three languages.

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