

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HONORIFICS IN KOREAN AND UZBEK:
FOCUSING ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND CULTURAL
DIFFERENCES**

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Abstract: This study conducts a comprehensive contrastive analysis of the honorific systems in the Korean and Uzbek languages to identify linguistic mechanisms and cultural factors governing politeness in both societies. While the Korean language features a highly complex, grammatically institutionalized honorific system categorized into subject, object, and hearer honorifics, the Uzbek language primarily utilizes pronominal shifts (the second-person plural pronoun Siz) and corresponding verbal inflections (-siz, -lar) to express sociolinguistic distance and respect. This paper investigates how Confucian hierarchical values in Korea and Islamic principles of mutual respect and familial honor in Uzbekistan have shaped these respective linguistic frameworks. Finally, the study outlines pedagogical strategies aimed at improving Korean language curriculum design for Uzbek native speakers, specifically addressing the acquisition of speech levels.

Key words: primary mechanisms, Korean philology, relative status.

Introduction

Language is inextricably linked with culture, serving as both a reflection of social structures and a tool for navigating interpersonal dynamics. Among various sociolinguistic features, honorifics and politeness formulas represent the primary mechanisms through which speakers establish authority, denote social distance, and display mutual respect. Both South Korea and Uzbekistan possess deeply rooted traditional values that emphasize elder veneration, filial piety, and community solidarity. However, the exact grammatical manifestation of these cultural constructs varies significantly between the two languages.

For Uzbek students pursuing Korean philology, mastering the multi-layered Korean honorific system presents a formidable challenge. Unlike Uzbek, where politeness is heavily driven by context and pragmatic flexibility, Korean honorifics require strict adherence to morphological markers depending on the absolute and relative status of the speaker, subject, and listener. Therefore, this study aims to systematically compare the linguistic components of honorifics in Korean and Uzbek and explore the underlying cultural methodologies to support enhanced cross-cultural communication and improved foreign language instruction.

3. Methodology

This research adopts a contrastive linguistic analysis combined with an extensive qualitative literature review. The structural parameters of Korean honorifics are analyzed based on the definitive guidelines set forth by the National Institute of Korean Language (NIKL). The architectural parameters of Uzbek honorifics are extracted and categorized using normative academic Uzbek grammar texts and modern sociolinguistic publications. Additionally, standard situational paradigms from everyday discourse—such as family environments, corporate hierarchies, and academic interactions—are evaluated to cross-examine how formal and informal registers are operationalized across both languages.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Morphological and Syntactic Structures

The operational differences between Korean and Uzbek honorifics are primarily rooted in their grammatical density:

The Korean System: Korean utilizes a structural grid consisting of Subject Honorifics (marked by the pre-final suffix *-si-* / *-eusi-*), Object Honorifics (manifested through suppletive verbs like *deurida* for 'give', or *moesida* for 'accompany'), and Hearer Honorifics. Hearer honorifics dictate the speech level (e.g., *하십시요체* - formal polite, *해요체* - informal polite, *해라체* - plain formal) used to address the listener directly. Specialized honorific nouns (e.g., *jinji* instead of *bap* for food; *yeonse* instead of *nai* for age) are structurally mandatory. **The Uzbek System:** Uzbek honorifics operate on a more streamlined morphological scale. Respect is systematically anchored by substituting the informal second-person singular pronoun *Sen* (You) with the formal/plural *Siz* (You). Verbs must agree with this shift by adopting the plural suffix *-siz*. To convey a heightened tier of veneration toward senior family members or public figures, speakers apply the third-person plural suffix *-lar* directly to nouns or verbs (e.g., *Dadam keldilar* - "My father [honorable] has arrived").

4.2 Cross-Linguistic Pragmatic Comparison

The following analytical matrix summarizes the primary operational transformations required when mapping honorific contexts between Korean and Uzbek:

Context / Category	Korean Linguistic Marker	Uzbek Linguistic Marker	Sociolinguistic Function
Addressing an Elder	Suffix <i>-시-</i> + Honorific Noun (연세)	Pronoun <i>Siz</i> +	
Standard Noun (Yosh)	Acknowledges generational seniority.		
Corporate/Academic	High Formal Suffix <i>-습니다</i>	Pronoun <i>Siz</i> + Verb Endings <i>-siz</i>	Reinforces institutional hierarchy and distance.
Intimacy + Respect	Informal Polite Suffix <i>-아요/어요</i>	Pronoun <i>Siz</i> + Term of	
Endearment	Balances emotional closeness with social manners.		

4.3 Sociocultural Foundations

The structural disparities observed between the two systems stem from historical and philosophical foundations. Korean honorifics are heavily influenced by Neo-Confucianism,

an ideology that historically institutionalized strict societal orders based on age, gender, and civic rank. Consequently, linguistic choices remain highly calculated and vertically aligned.

Conversely, Uzbek politeness formulas are governed by Central Asian traditions fused with Islamic etiquette (odob). While age and lineage are highly respected, the Uzbek linguistic framework favors horizontal flexibility. The transition from Siz to Sen is heavily dependent on individual intimacy, emotional context, and situational empathy rather than an uncompromising institutional rank.

5. Conclusion

In summary, while both Korean and Uzbek societies share a profound "culture of politeness," their linguistic execution follows divergent pathways. Korean possesses a highly granular, explicitly grammaticalized honorific apparatus that demands rigorous morphological precision from the speaker. Uzbek features a structurally flexible pronominal and inflectional model that relies more deeply on lexical modifiers and emotional context.

For educational institutions like Tashkent Kimyo International University, integrating these contrastive socio-pragmatic nuances into the curriculum is paramount. By understanding the core cultural mechanics behind the Korean speech levels, Uzbek students can avoid common pragmatic errors, thus cultivating a more authentic and professional level of bilingual fluency required for global scholarly pursuits.

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