

A Comparative Study of Japanese and Korean Honorific Speech
in relation to Confucianism and Common Altaic Origins

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Presupposition

In this paper I will be exploring the common linguistic and sociocultural effect that the Sino-Confucian ideals have had upon Japanese and Korean. I will be making a case that the common difficulty of these languages has to do with the fact that they are both part of the agglutinative Altaic language family, and that the diversity of potential affixes and word forms has increased immensely due to the honorific system. I will be surmising to what extent the use of such forms is indicative of these two languages being closely related, and to what extent it is simply the result of a common “meme” or cultural trend in the Far East. A meme is here defined as the cultural counterpart of a “gene.” Merriam-Webster defines this term as “an idea, behavior, style, or usage that spreads from person to person within a culture.” I will look at various respect forms and where they are used, indicating to what extent words with Chinese etymology are used as “higher forms,” and in what cases Chinese characters are still used in both cultures. I will observe the evolving role of gender in both cultures, especially paying close attention to the “women’s language” of Japan.

It is my strongly held belief that what a culture holds as its core value system will affect every aspect of that culture’s manner of thinking and speech. Unlike Sapir and Whorf, I believe that thinking is *not* limited by speech, but that both are “limited or set free” by the patterns of thinking which are defined by their Weltanschauung. In analyzing Korean and Japanese, I am convinced that many linguists have failed to take this into account, perhaps feeling that such details are “non-linguistic,” and/or finding the effects of a given country’s belief system to be negligible or else completely impotent. The implication that certain belief systems could influence a culture’s thought, in turn, might cause some to believe that a certain mode of thinking, speaking, and even certain cultures, might be correspondingly beneficial or detrimental to the users, speakers, and members of different cultures, or simply affect their worldview in strikingly different ways.

Whether or not there is such thing as better or worse cultures is not the topic of my paper, but I strongly believe that any system of faith which holds sway in a given ethnolinguistic group will naturally affect every aspect of the group members’ lives in a profound way. Because of this, I would like to take into account the linguistic shift brought about by Confucianism. With this in mind, it becomes more obvious to me that language change can sometimes seem to be completely arbitrary, depending on what memes, or ideologies, hold sway in a country at a given time. One main point from all this is that if we take away Confucian honorifics from Korean and Japanese and observe their older forms, the similarities to each other and to other Altaic languages become much more obvious.

The Linguistic Influence of Confucianism

Origins in China

Kong Fuzi (later Latinized in the West as Confucius) is believed to have lived and taught from 551 BC- 479BC . Whether or not this was an individual or merely a personification of immense ancient ideas is a topic of debate, but one thing is for sure: his teachings have influenced many of the world’s largest and greatest societies in an extremely detailed and

integral manner. An amalgamation of Confucian values with the memes of Buddhism, Zen, and traditional Eastern teachings from men such as Shang Yang (Legalism) and Lao-tze (Taoism) all had an important role in the formation of Neo-Confucianism. These ideals, in turn, joined with the pre-existing worldviews and identities of the Koreans and Japanese to transform language and culture into what it is today. To begin, it is necessary to pinpoint some of the key values of Confucianism to more fully understand their effect.

Ideals of Confucianism

The most essential of the teachings of Confucius have to do with authoritarian relations as the core of societal harmony and function. Like the five pillars of Islam, these five categories are basic in the structure of their appertaining cultures.

The Confucian ideal of Filial Piety (Chinese 孝 xiào) is divided into five key respect relationships: Ruler to ruled, Father to Son, Husband to Wife, Elder Brother to Younger Brother, and Friend to Friend. It emphasizes unquestioning respect on the part of the subordinate subject, and condescension and benevolence on the part of the superior. This ultimately served to reinforce the Divine Right of Kings, which secured moral power and responsibility for the ruling elite. However, the mandate of heaven could be shown to be lacking in a ruler if he failed to show Confucian morals. A core value of this system was, as in most cultures, the Golden Rule. This rule was given in a different logical format than that which we in the West are used to hearing.

The Reverse Golden Rule.

Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself.

— Confucius, Analects XV.24 (tr. David Hinton)

The Golden rule shows up in the foundational literature of virtually every known literate culture. The difference between the common Golden rule and the Golden rule of Jesus Christ is that it is usually the vice-versa of the positive “Do unto others as you would have them do unto yourself.” The ideal in Confucianism has had a profound impact on the cultures it influences, bruited the “noblesse oblige” meme in places which had no contact with the “enlightened” Anglo-Saxon or Norman culture which would claim it as her own. The profound and obvious effects of this rule are most easily broached in an instance where it is breached, as in the case of communist and anti-Confucian Mao Tse-Tung:

Mao illustration

“Peng [conservative Marshal Peng De-huai] had often voiced independent, unorthodox [to communism] views. He openly admired concepts of 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,' which Mao denounced as 'Anti-Marxist.' Peng also advocated observing traditional Chinese ethical codes like 'A prince and the man in the street are equal before the law' and 'Do not do to others what you don't want done to yourself.' My 'principle,' Mao said, 'is exactly the opposite: Do to others precisely what I don't want done to myself.'”

(Mao, the unknown story, Jung Chang, Globalflair Ltd., 2006)

Foundational values have been overturned by communism to a larger extent in China than in Korea and Japan, but the results of Westernization are a double-edged sword in all modern countries. A similarity in the roots of fundamental Eastern and Western teachings are mixed with divergent directions in more recent branches of study, and continued variations and mixings of an understanding of the world have resulted in the current, ever-changing and ever-nuanced sociolinguistic milieu of East Asia. Regardless of all this change, Confucianism still comprises a formidable basis for the worldview of billions in the East, much as Judeo-Christian values do for the West.

The timeline below documents the progression of Confucian ideals from China to Korea and Vietnam. Note of interest: a syncretism between Confucianism and Catholicism was suggested by Jesuit missionaries. A sense of moral responsibility is a key axiom which has enabled the East to match (and, at times, outmatch) the West in terms of keeping a strong society together.

Time periods and map of Confucianism in 2nd century

551-478 B.C.	Lifetime of Confucius
478 B.C.	Shrine built in Qufu, China, dedicated to Confucius (Qufu, Shandong Province)
372-289 B.C.	Lifetime of Mencius
213 B.C.	China, Qin Dynasty: Emperor Shi Huang Di ordered all Confucian books except for the I Ching to be burned
206 B.C. - . 220 A.D.	China, Han Dynasty: Order to burn Confucian books repealed (191 B.C.); Confucian civil examination system introduced
618-906	China :Tang Dynasty; Confucian civil examination system reformed
1075	Vietnam introduced Confucian civil examination system
1130-1200	China, Southern Sung Dynasty: Lifetime of Zhu Xi, regarded the founder of Neo-Confucianism
1204	
1368	Korea, Koryo Dynasty: National Confucian Academy (Song Kyun Kwan) established at the capital Kaesong
1392	China :Yuan Dynasty ousted, Ming Dynasty founded; Neoconfucianism introduced as state philosophy
1398	Korea :Koryo Dynasty ousted, Yi Dynasty founded; Neoconfucianism introduced as state philosophy
1582-1610	Korea, Yi Dynasty: National Confucian Academy (Song Kyun Kwan) established at the capital Seoul
1704, 1715	Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci in Ming Dynasty China; he translated the Confucian Classics into Latin; attempted to convert Chinese to christianity by making it appear like Confucianism
1841-1897	Pope Clement XI. decided against Jesuit suggestion of treating Confucianism as a form of Christianity, forbade practicing Catholic mass in Chinese language
1887	British Sinologist James Legge translated the Chinese Classics into English Vietnam integrated into French Indochina; Confucian civil examinations continued (a late one recorded in 1905), but no longer promised career in civil administration

- 1905 China : the Empress Dowager abolished the Confucian civil examination system
 1966-1969 China : Cultural Revolution, remaining Confucian shrines closed down

(<http://www.zum.de/whkmla/timelines/wh/tlconfucianism.html>)



(taken from jspivey.wikispaces.com/Confucianism+Lynn+and+Yena)

It seems that, whereas Chinese ideas and writings were introduced very early on in the histories of both Korea and Japan (8th century), Confucian ideals didn't come to hold a very powerful sway until a millennium later. By that time, however, they had come to permeate the culture on an ubiquitous level, influencing nearly every aspect of the two languages.

The Confucian Influence upon Korea and Japan

The ideas of Confucius spread to China's neighbors such as Vietnam, Korea, and Japan. Confucianism was dominant over the Korean peninsula by the 15th century. The influence of Chinese vocabulary is a distinctive mark of Middle Korean, which was spoken from the 10th-16th centuries.

Spread to Korea

Confucianism was adopted as a national system after the Joseon (or Choson) dynasty repelled Mongol dominance (1392 AD) and promoted Chinese studies. After the Joseon Dynasty and repeated Manchu invasions, Korea became a vassal of China's Qing dynasty.

The influence of Confucianism continued to spread, to the point until it enabled a sort of "social ladder" to those who had the wherewithal and perseverance to pursue a deeper understanding and application of its core values, along with memorization of various key works of literature in their native language (Chinese). Trickling down from the upper class, the memes of Confucianism waxed to deluge the entirety of Korean culture.

Expansion of Confucianism in Korea

“a great Confucian scholar of the Silla period, Choi Chi-won (858-951), to say that Korean native religion was a composite of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism (Baw, 1982: 37). Taking its lead from Tang China, the Koryo Dynasty (918-1392) established the Kwako (Civil Service Examination System), and the Kukjakam (in Chinese guozhi jian, the National University). During the reign of King Munjong (1047-82) private Confucian schools (sowon, in Chinese shuyuan) flourished...”

“Even though Confucian scholars had been active in government, education and academic learning since the beginning of the Koryo Dynasty, Confucianism was not yet the dominant force in Korean culture. Buddhism rather than Confucianism was considered to be the state religion.”

(An introduction to Confucianism By Xinzhong Yao)

A structure of exams came to distinguish different members of Confucian cultures and provided a rigid motivation for upward mobility, as entire cultures progressed as a whole in a “survival of the fittest” in terms of Confucian ideals and understanding of necessary cultural values of respect.

How Korea became Thoroughly Confucianized

“With the demise of Ming China, without an older brother, and with the court of China Proper in the hands of barbarians, Korea felt the impetus to step up and become the standard-bearer of Confucianism in the world. Korea’s identity, based on such a strong Confucian view of the world, left it with no choice but to become the standard of orthodoxy. These factors all came together to make the late Joseon the most ideal Confucian society ever to exist at any time or in any place on this planet. It became much more orthodox than China had been at any point in its history. Perhaps it was a function of scale. China was so large that there was always room for differing belief systems. Korea was a perfect size, smaller than China, to become thoroughly orthodox and thoroughly committed to the Confucian ideal.”

(The history of Korea By Chun-gil Kim, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005)

Such a focused and homogenous peninsular world allowed for a quicker spread and implementation of ideals, and to a certain extent, Korea “beat China at its own game.” This pattern of learning new ideas followed by applying and outmatching the sources of such ideas is a pattern which repeats itself throughout the history of Korea, and- to an even larger extent- the history of Japan.

Confucian Worldview in Korea

The question now arises: “how much of a difference did confucianism really make?” I will start by showing an example of the most basic differences in Eastern and Western understanding.

Value Orientations and Honorific System

“value orientations

centralize society and ultimately turn the culture into a much more powerful force, capable of making incursions into Europe and repelling repeated European invasions in the Crusades.



The Joseon Dynasty, which determined the modern boundaries of Cultural Korea. To this day, North Korea's autonym is 조선 (Joseon).

Confucianism spreads from Korea to Japan

The Korean Neo-Confucian scholar T'oegye (born Yi Hwang) was a native of Northern Korea lived from 1501-1570, and is thought to have had a profound impact on the belief system of Japan in the sixteenth century. He was active during the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897), which had played a key role in engraving Neo-Confucian values into the peninsula of Korea. The idea of Japan as grandson is a powerful one in East Asia, and added insult to injury when the Japanese had the “audacity” to become overlords of their two “parent” nations.

However, while China and Korea would view the Japanese as a grandchildren, it is not surprising to learn that the Japanese have no such view of themselves. Most maps and cultural analyses of Japan evaluate its belief system as a distinct syncretism of various ideologies pulled from many sources. Some include this under the category of Neo-Confucianism, while others list it as Zen Buddhism. All this goes to show that the Japanese themselves are of a more insular nature when it comes to credo, much like their British neighbors on the Western side of the Eurasian land mass.

Japanese Confucianism

Due to lack of a written tradition, the early religious history of Japan is shady at best, but from what records we have it appears that they held to a quasi-animistic worship of nature and the dead. Eastern ideals began to permeate the society through the repeated efforts of Chinese and Korean “missionaries” and teachers.

Early Religious History of Japan

Japan's original religion was Shintoism, which was animistic, much like most of the less civilized societies of the East. The advent of Chinese ideals allowed for a unique blend of Japanese Shintoism, Japanese insular pride, and new additions. Unlike Korea, Japan refused to simply accept the teachings it received in their native form, but adapted and molded them over time into something unique which Japan could truly call her own.

Both Buddhism and Confucianism have contributed largely to the civilization of Japan... In the reign of Emperor Keitai (507-531), Danyoji, a doctor of five classical books, came to Japan, and in the tenth year (516) Dr. Koammo came from Korea. In the fifteenth year of the Emperor Kimmei (554), Dr. Odoryo, a scholar of Chinese philosophy and divination, along with Ohoson, a physician, a musician, and several other scholars of Chinese learning, came from China...In the twelfth year of Empress Suiko (604), Shotoku issued seventeen laws, basing them mostly on Buddhism and Confucianism... In the reign of Emperor Koken (749-758), an edict was issued ordering every house to provide itself with a copy of the Chinese classic on “Filial Piety”. The government encouraged men to cultivate filial piety, and women to cultivate chastity, by offering prizes to those who excelled in these virtues. Such methods would naturally influence people who had not yet acquired the power of keen introspection.” (Light from the East: Studies in Japanese Confucianism, 1914)

In speaking of the Tokugawa Shogunate, which began in 1600, Beasley notes:

Although one of the original purposes of Confucianism was the betterment of society, it evolved along with Zen, Buddhism, and other Eastern teachings to a newer form which was moulded to be strictly pragmatic and particular to Japanese society. For the feudal Japanese, it was necessary to reign in philosophical and moral ideals and make them ever more conducive to a strong society with a rigid structure.

(The Japanese experience: a short history of Japan By W. G. Beasley, University of California Press, 2000)

The Introduction of Neo-Confucianism in Japan

In time, Buddhism began to take a back seat to Confucianism for the sake of pragmatic methods for Daimyo rule over a weakened peasant class. The moral basis for a *noblesse oblige* condescension was conveniently eliminated.

“During the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, Buddhism had been a dominant influence on Japanese religion and culture. Amidist sects spread the faith to the greater part of

the population; the great Buddhist houses accumulated lands, which gave them a quasi-feudal power; Zen played a major part in bringing to Japan the civilization of China under the Sung and Ming. Medieval Japan was therefore in many respects a Buddhist society. By the time the Tokugawa were Shogun, some of this ground had been lost. Armed force, used against the most popular sects by Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, had weakened the religion's political independence, making it little more than an instrument of feudal government. True, Buddhism was still part of the fabric of daily life... this gave it no more than a residual prestige. There was no doctrinal or social innovation to impart fresh vigour, no new sects, no charismatic Buddhist figures of the caliber of Honen and Shinran...Against this background, Japanese turned increasingly to the less other-worldly beliefs of Confucianism, a philosophy that addressed the social dimensions of human life. It had a number of 'schools'...One...envisaged a cultivation of the moral self as the primary duty of the individual, designed to reinforce a code of behavior towards one's fellow members of society in accordance with justice and benevolence. Another, which was central to what became known as Neo-Confucianism, as developed by the Sung scholar Chu His...emphasized its 'state-ordering' role: that is, creating and preserving a well-ordered society."

(The Japanese experience: a short history of Japan By W. G. Beasley, University of California Press, 2000)

According to a friend of mine who has grown up in both cultures, the Japanese are more time and group oriented, whereas Koreans and Chinese are more similar to each other than to the Japanese in their event-orientation. The Koreans lived under Chinese rule and were more heavily influenced by China and at an earlier stage.

My own observations yield that Japan was never under Chinese rule, but has always appreciated new ideas from abroad, a trend that seems to be common among island-nations, i.e. Britain. The Japanese are rated much higher on a cultural scale of "masculinity."

So why did the influence of Confucianism have a varying effect on Japan? The reasons listed could be endless and minute, but possibly the largest one has to do with its geography, homogenous ethnic character, and view of the outside world. Although Korea went through a long period of isolation as well, it was nevertheless still a peninsula and more vulnerable and accessible than Japan. Some emphasis has been made on the striking Japanese similarities with the other great island nation of Great Britain, which refused to simply accept common ideas of the continent (such as Catholicism or Lutheranism), but molded them into its own:

War of the World by Niall Ferguson 285:

"Japan had much in common with Great Britain, besides high population density. An archipelago of islands located not far from a well-developed continent with a longer-established civilization, Japan had emerged from an era of civil war to embrace constitutional monarchy. Japan was Asia's first industrial nation, just as Britain was Europe's. Both rose to economic power by manufacturing cloth and selling it to foreigners. Victorian Britain was famous for its stuffy social hierarchy; so too was Meiji Japan. The English had their state religion, propounded

by the Church of England; the Japanese had theirs, known as Shiinto. Both cultures engaged in what looked to outside eyes like emperor- (or empress-) worship. Both cultures venerated and romanticized the chivalric codes of a partly imagined feudal past. The enduring power of Second World War propaganda still makes it hard for Western observers to acknowledge these similarities; we prefer to accentuate the 'otherness' of inter-war Japan. To ignore them, however, is to miss the essential legitimacy of the basic Japanese objective after 1905: to be treated as an equal by the Western powers.

Linguistic Outworkings of Confucianism

The societal restructuring which came about as a result of Confucianism naturally had a strong influence on speech patterns and thinking. The social stratification of these two nations was easily transmitted to an agglutinative language system, where affixes and particles were carefully added and prescribed for the sake of both respect and flattery.

Assymetry in communicative uses of honorifics is indicative of the value of relative hierarchism, which Koreans still cherish. Compared to Korean, English has hardly any hierarchical honorific forms. There is no asymmetrical use of pronouns. Pairs like 'dine' versus 'eat,' 'care for' versus 'like,' and 'Good Morning' versus 'Hi' may be viewed more as a matter of formality than of hierarchy. At most, we can observe an asymmetrical use of title and last name (e.g. Mr. Smith) and the first name (e.g. John). Even here, the asymmetry tends to lead easily to mutual use of the first name as the relation becomes closer. Thus, a strong value orientation of Americans is egalitarian, which is manifest not only in communicative patterns but also in all aspects of social life.

...

There are many indications in communicative patterns that Koreans are relatively collectivistic compared to Americans. For instance, as mentioned above, only two or three years of age difference between in-group members may be significant enough to call for asymmetrical address terms and speech levels, which is not the case with out-group members. Many verbal expressions are allowed only to in-group members (e.g., the address term *sonbae* 'senior') and kinship terms are extensively used to non-kin in Korean (terms like 'grandfather,' 'grandmother,' 'uncle,' 'aunt,' 'older sister,' 'older brother'). The extensive and obligatory use of "I" in English and the extensive omission of "I" in Korean suggests that I exists independently of others in American culture but is not outstanding in Korean communication. Koreans usually use a plural possessive form (neutral *uri* or humble *chohui* 'our'), where English speakers would use a singular form (*my*), as in *uri nara* 'our country' vs. 'my country'; *chohui chip* 'our house' vs. 'my house'; and *uri tongsaeng* 'our younger sibling' vs. 'my younger sibling.'

(Korean language in culture and society By Ho-min Sohn University of Hawaii Press, 2006)

Understanding the common Korean/ Japanese/ and Chinese "bluntness" of asking about age, marital status, income, etc. upon initial encounter is often difficult for Westerners who usually begin conversations with unfamiliar by using "small talk" or comfort-raising fillers. Ironically, in high-context Confucian cultures such as Japanese and Korean culture, these initial

blunt questions are essential in order to determine how much respect is to be used in language forms when addressing new acquaintances. It is helpful to recognize that the majority of cultural misunderstandings encountered by outsiders interacting with Far Eastern cultures can be easily solved by recognizing the core Confucian beliefs which govern and influence patterns of thinking, society, and language in the East, much as the Judeo-Christian core affects every aspect of Western society, especially in the US.

Confucianism had such a profound impact on the complex linguistic structure of these two languages that it becomes necessary to ask why. If Korean and Japanese languages were profoundly affected by Confucian thinking, what of the other languages where Confucian ideals were transmitted? Was it simply a matter of Japan and Korea's seeming devoutness? To understand the answer to these questions, we turn to the original language of Confucianism.

Old Chinese Honorific Speech

In modern Chinese, the honorific system is much simpler than it is in Agglutinative Korean and Japanese, primarily because Chinese is an isolating languages and technically does not combine morphemes. Modern Chinese honorifics are even more simple than they used to be, with the prominence of Communism and the decline of Confucianism in the modern day. What is left: one will still refer to the second person singular as either *nǐ* (你) or *nín* (您), which is for elders. Chinese honorifics were primarily pronouns, which is the most salient trend which carried over into Japanese and Korean. Titular honorifics such as 先生 (*xiānshēng*) (Seonsaeng in Korean, Sensei in Japanese) seem to have made a significant impact on second person pronouns.

While honorific particles were used in Chinese, and slightly different verb forms can be used based on respect, the degree to which Confucianism caused the language to evolve is quite limited in comparison to Korean and Japanese. This is due in part because of the lack of synonymous words from different sources. In Korean and Japanese, respectful forms are often from Chinese and casual forms are native. Another reason is that there is relatively little lengthening of utterances in Chinese.

When a synthetic language (such as Altaic and Indo-European languages) seeks to show respect, this is usually incorporated by lengthening the sentence via adding words and morphemes to increase the amount of time and effort it takes to make the utterance. For example, in English we often consider a longer word to be more prestigious, and this is based primarily on the fact that Latin has historically been seen to be an church/ high-class language that was only learnt by the elite, but also on the fact that longer words generally take more effort to understand and to put forward. Another example to support this is the fact that many German words of higher learning are combinations of native German words to create more complex ideas. Either by association with prestige or by consideration of the relative effort it takes to produce them, long words and long sentences are considered more polite and respectful. Even in Chinese, older pronoun fillers which were a couple of words put together to be used as a pronoun were considered respectful.

There is also the possibility that a longer and more respectful grammatical form is a preservation of the older form, and is considered to be more respectful, since respect often correlates to age, and the older a person is, the more likely they are to have settled in to the dialect of their early adulthood. Words such as “thee” “hence” and “thus” in English have this prestige, with respect implicit, but also with the potential to be stodgy and sarcastic. Japanese and Korean, however, with their Confucian tradition and complete lack of sarcastic humor, would have no such implications in these words.

Respect rules

In Japanese and Korean, the lengthening rule holds true for honorific forms. It takes more effort and time the more respectful a form is. In both languages, simply using the stem form is rare, awkward, and usually used only with intimates in intimate contexts. When used otherwise, it is considered rude and insulting.

Honorific forms

An obsolete honorific speech form for addressing royalty exists in Korean. The Korean form was Hasoseoche ([하소서체](#)), which is still used in the Bible and historical dramas. This form involves inserting three syllables after a verb stem: *-naida*.

In Japanese there is no such speech form for royalty, but titles and honorifics were used to convey respect. *-dono* and *-sama*, were used as post-titular honorific suffixes when addressing royalty.

Two Honorific Dimensions in Korean

“It is important to note that honorifics in Korean involve two dimensions: the dimension of addressee-honorifics (speaker-addressee perspective) and that of referent-honorifics (speaker-referent perspective). Addressee-honorifics express the speaker’s regard for the addressee in a speech situation, which is reflected in the choice of a sentence ending and different speech styles (or levels). In declarative sentences, for instance, the sentence endings *-(s)eumnida* and *-eoyo/-ayo* mark honorific styles, while *-eo/-a* and *-([neu]n)da* signal non-honorific styles. Referent-honorifics reflect the speaker’s regard for a referent, which is indicated by the absence or presence of the verbal suffix *-(eu)si*.

These two dimensions are similar in the sense that they both convey ‘respect,’ but they are distinct in being controlled by different factors, as we will see shortly. The two must therefore be clearly distinguished in terms of conditioning factors, but at the same time they need to be considered simultaneously in order to ensure that an utterance is felicitous. For instance, if one is speaking about one’s grandfather to one’s teacher (for example, “my grandfather is coming”), one need both an honorific sentence ending (for the teacher, who is the addressee) and the honorific verbal suffix *-(eu)si* (for the grandfather, who is the referent)—*harabeoji-ga o-seyo/o-simnida*. On the other hand, if one is uttering the sentence to one’s younger sibling, one will need to choose a non-honorific sentence ending (for the younger sibling, who is the addressee), but still the honorific suffix *-(eu)si* (for the grandfather, who is the referent)—*harabeoji-ga o-*

syeo/o-sinda. And if one is speaking about one's younger sibling to one's close friend, one will need neither an honorific ending, since the addressee is one's close friend, nor the honorific suffix -(eu)si, since the referent is one's younger brother—tongsaeng-I w-a/o-nda. But if one is uttering the sentence to one's teacher, one will need to choose an honorific sentence ending (for the teacher, who is the addressee), but -(eu)si is not needed (for the younger sibling, who is the referent)—tongsaeng-I w-ayo/o-mnida.”

(Korean language in culture and society By Ho-min Sohn)

Simplified Diagram of Korean Honorific Speech:

(in this instance, vowel harmony is shown in the alternation of *-si-* and *-sseu-* as referent honorific.)

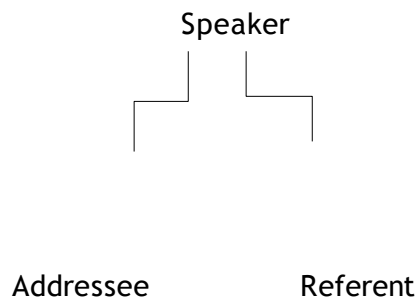
Speaker	Referent	Grandpa	Child
Addressee	<i>hada</i> (to do)		
Grandpa		Ha-sseu-mnida	Ha-mnida
Child		Ha-si-seo	Ha-seo

Honorific Axes of Japanese and Korean

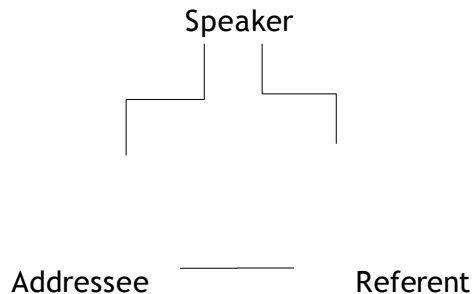
For all their similarities, the Japanese and Korean honorific systems have some differences which make the Japanese system more complex and variable. This difference has to do with careful speech alteration depending on the relationship of the addressee and the referent, and is not “set in stone” like the more conservative Confucian Korean system.

Contrasting the honorific axes of Japanese and Korean

“In Korean honorifics, the two axial dimensions of speaker-addressee and speaker-referent are active. These active axes are indicated by connecting lines in the diagram:



In Japanese honorifics, an additional communicative axis is active - that between addressee and referent:



Hence, the model of honorific axes brings to attention a fundamental difference between the Korean and Japanese systems: Japanese honorific usage considers the relationship between addressee and referent, where Korean does not. That is, in Japanese society, GROUP MEMBERSHIP (whether the addressee or the referent belongs to the speaker's IN-GROUP or not) determines honorific usage, particularly the choice of speech level and terms of address and of reference.”

(Japanese/Korean linguistics, Volume 1 By Hajime Hoji, Stanford Linguistics Association, Center for the Study of Language and Information (U.S.))

One example of this is the case in which a worker will show respect for his boss when speaking to other workers of the same company, but will refer to him in terms of humility when speaking to a worker of a different company. The difference here is that the Korean language does not alternate by In-Group, Out-Group orientation, but has more integrity in its form.

The relative fluidity of Japanese respect can be both a boon and a blessing. I have also heard it said that the Korean soccer team encountered difficulties because the ball was usually passed to the most respected or oldest member of the team, regardless of his ability. Japan did not struggle with this problem to the same extent, and hence won more matches. Korea was able to overcome this tendency and has been doing better than Japan since.

The Zero Pronoun

Japanese and Korean both have the option of omitting the subject of a sentence. This could provide for some confusion were it not for the implications of honorific speech as applied to all persons except for the speaker. There is an indirect understanding that the verb is referring to the speaker when the honorific is omitted out of humility. This lack of pronoun and pronoun flexibility causes one to wonder why pronouns are and are not used in certain languages, and the answer is that they are easily dropped: 1- in the case where verbs are conjugated for person, or 2- when a culture is self-effacing and omits honorifics in the first person. Confucianism leaves room for a great deal of second person honor and first person deprecation. The question, however, is to what extent honoring extends to the third person in his or her absence:

Japanese Cultural note and the concept of Self

“Many westerners see Japanese as aloof, shy, and always walking on eggshells. There is a lot of truth in that -- Japanese are extremely sensitive to what others might think of them (or worse -- what they say behind their backs, and Japanese really do engage in gossip) and are very hesitant to do something new, different, or independent. Being ostracized is one of the worst things that can happen to a Japanese, who is raised to be part of a group and depend on others. Therefore, when making requests, it often takes more time since the person asked usually consults others in the group to reach a consensus. It also might interfere with what your goals are -- when teaching an English class a teacher gave some subjects for the students to debate. Of course the goal was for the students to use as much English as possible and improve their abilities. But what happened was the students reverted to their old habits and tried to compromise and reach a consensus -- in which case, the debate promptly ended. In short, however, while the westerner starts so many sentences with "I", the Japanese "I" usually means "with the approval of the group". This is not to pass judgement on this trait, as in many things there are both positive and negative aspects. For the westerner, it can be good in that you are often not subject to what sometimes becomes excessive, even oppressive methodologies. On the negative side, even if you do find a group or niche that you want to be in, you may be frozen out or the last one to find out about many decisions that profoundly affect your schedule and work.” (<http://www.thejapanfaq.com/FAQ-Primer.html>)

The intense focus on face and group can fly in the face of a western sense of independence and initiative, but provides us with an important example of why an understanding of this society could complement our own self-reflection very well.

Women’s Speech in Japanese

Pronouns differ greatly depending on the gender of the speaker. The following diagram is an attempt to copy the diagram from “The languages of Japan By Masayoshi Shibatani” detailing pronominal use based on the factors of gender and formality:

		Formal	_____	_____	Informal
1st Person					
	Male speaker	<i>watakusi</i>	<i>watasi</i>		<i>boku</i> <i>ore</i>
	Female speaker	<i>watakusi</i>		<i>watasi</i>	<i>atasi</i>
2nd Person					
	Male speaker	<i>anata</i>		<i>kimi anta</i>	<i>omae</i>
	Female speaker	<i>anata</i>			<i>anta</i>
3rd Person					
			<i>kare</i> 'he'		
			<i>kanozyo</i>		
			'she'		

The usage of a distinct feminine third person singular in both Japanese and Korean *kanojo* (*kanozyo* in diagram, using older phonetic forms), and *geunyeo*, respectively, is a recent phenomenon brought on by influence of the European usage of the same. Originally, one would basically just say “this person,” (*kare*, *geuga*) “that person,” etc. to indicate the third person pronoun.

In Japanese society many ideals which we in the West may find archaic and reeking of male chauvinism are still alive and well. There was little or no feminist revolution in Japan, and there has been little change in the differentiation between the amount of respect a woman is expected to show and that of a man. The following example illustrates just one out of a myriad of forms which distinguish male and female speech.

Interesting is the exclusive possession by female speakers of a syntactic rule which is triggered by the presence of the final particle *yo*. This rule deletes the copula *da* when it is followed by the final particle *yo*, but it is operative only in women’s speech. Thus, where men would say (190), women would say (191), the forms lacking the copula.

(190) a. *Kirei da yo.*

pretty COP FP

‘It’s pretty.’

b. *kare wa isya da yo.*

He TOP doctor COP FP

‘He is a doctor.’

(191) a. *Kirei yo.*

Pretty FP

‘It’s pretty.’

b. *Kare wa isya yo.*

He TOP doctor FP

‘He is a doctor.’

When women use the (190)-type form, it sounds rather blunt and masculine. But that the copula is included underlyingly in all these expressions is indicated by the fact that they surface in the polite forms, such as *Kirei desu yo* ‘it’s pretty’ and *Kaer wa isya desu yo* ‘he is a doctor’, both of which can be used by both sexes.

This is also present in English to a certain extent. I have never heard my Dad yell “yippee!” when I’ve finished mowing the lawn, or my Mom tell me “good job, son.” My mother would also never appear disgruntled or curmudgeonly.

There are grammatical as well as general conversational rules which govern sexual image and self-perception in Japan. Women will generally follow a pattern of “chatting” or speaking with other women to a superfluous extent while men will sometimes become taciturn when a seemingly feminine subject is broached, as the following humorous example testifies:

“As an example of women’s speech in Japan today, Miller (1967) provides the following sample dialogue:

Female Version

Ma, go-rippa na o-niwa de gozaimasu wa ne. Shibafu ga hirobiro to shite ite, kekko de gozamasu wa ne.

‘My what a splendid garden you have here—the lawn is so nice and big, it’s certainly wonderful, isn’t it!’

lie, nan desu ka, chitto mo teire ga yukitodokimasen mono de gozaimasu kara, mo nakanaka itsumo kirei ni shite oku wake ni wa marimasen no de gozamasu yo.

‘Oh no, not at all, we don’t take care of it any more, so it simply doesn’t look as nice as we would like it to.’

A, sai de gozaimasho ne. Kore dake o-hiroin de gozamasu kara, hitotori o-teire asobasu no ni date taihen de gozaimasho ne. Demo ma, sore de mo itsumo yoku o-teire ga yukitodoite irasshaimasu wa. Itsumo honto ni o-kirei de kekko de gozamasu wa.

‘Oh, I don’t think so at all-but since it’s such a big garden, of course it must be quite a tremendous task to take care of it all by yourself; but even so, you certainly do manage to make it look nice all the time; it certainly is nice and pretty any time one sees it.’

lie, chittomo sonna koto gozamasen wa.

‘No, I’m afraid not, not at all.’

Male Version

li niwa da naa?

‘It’s a nice garden, isn’t it?’

Un.

‘Un.’ [a positive grunt]

(Japanese Women’s Language by Janet Shibamoto)

Age Honorifics in Korea vs. Japan

A segment of culture which slightly divides Japan and Korea is due to the fact that many of the Confucian ideals are seemingly more flexible in Japan and can change depending on context.

Power, Age, Sex, and Status

“Power sensitive honorific variables consist of those related to ascribed power, such as kinship, age, and sex, and others reflecting achieved power, such as occupational rank and social status.

Current research suggests that the three most influential variables related to ascribed power are age, sex, and kinship. Age is a less significant factor in Japanese than in Korean.

In Korea, finer age gradings are distinguished by in-group members; address terms may ‘be downgraded among in-group members, either mutually or unilaterally; intimate and familiar levels of speech are more frequently used among in-group members.

Recent sociolinguistic studies still give evidence that sex remains power-laden in both Japan and Korea, particularly with older generations. But only Japanese has a distinct honorific usage depending on one’s sex. For example, a Japanese female does not use the low-level, power-laden personal pronouns *boku*, *ore* (‘I’) or *omae*, *kisama*, *temee* (‘you’) restricted to male speakers. Furthermore, the pronouns *watakushi*, *watasi*, and *atasi* (‘I’) are deferential when used by a male and less so when used by a female (Ide 1982). Thus, while female speech is differentiated honorifically from male speech in Japanese, there is no such Korean counterpart. This shows the greater importance of the sex variable for Japanese than for Korean honorific usage (Hijirida and Sohn 1983: 153).”

(Japanese/Korean linguistics, Volume 1 By Hajime Hoji, Stanford Linguistics Association, Center for the Study of Language and Information (U.S.))

Comparison with Global Respect Forms

The Indo-European family has respect forms such as “Usted/ Tu” as used in Spanish, but is usually confined to pronominal forms of address and sometimes “propriety” in word choice, such as English usage of French vs. Anglo-Saxon terms. But in these two languages (what languages?), the extent of the honorific system is nearly all-encompassing, affecting the verb system most of all. Why is it that respect had such a far reaching effect? In agglutinative languages, speakers are very used to adding a great variety of nuanced affixes to words, and such a switch to multiple forms would not be as difficult for them as for a speaker of an Indo-European language. The question follows: what legitimacy do I have in seeking to claim that Confucianism is the main source of such diversity? Would the Judeo-Christian and/or Aryan caste system have a similar effect? What follows such a question, necessarily, is a look at other agglutinative languages in the Altaic language family, which are not effected by Confucian

values, an inquiry into the linguistic effect of the caste system on agglutinative Dravidian languages.

First: Altaic languages seem to be confined to sparse titular honorifics (Turkish, Mongolian), and are therefore no different than surrounding languages. The case for Altaic relation with Korean and Japanese cannot use honorification as a basis. Secondly: Dravidian (Telugu) abounds in Pronominal honorifics but does not have a complex system of verbal honorifics. This is likely due to the fact that castes do not interact as often as people of different status do in Confucian cultures, and also, more generally, to the fact that Korean and Japanese simply do not inflect for person (except insofar that more humble forms are used for self), and therefore there is room for more variance. If a language were to both inflect for person and contain various dimensions inflections for both honorifics and tense, such a language could be rightly called the most difficult on earth.

II- Cultural Nuances in Interpersonal Relationships and Self-Perception

In understanding these cultures, a solid view of Communication Theory is necessary, with East and West often forming the two ends of a given spectrum. Most of these differences have to do with group mentality vs. western individualism.

Solidarity/Power, Face Saving, and High-Context Uncertainty Avoidance

The illustrations below serve to provide a visual aid to the differences in relationships in high-context and low-context cultures, with the former being conducive to tight-knit lifelong groupings and admitting relatively few close outside friendships, and the latter admitting of something of a free-for-all in the ballgame of who is and isn't "in."

Clime of High and Low Context

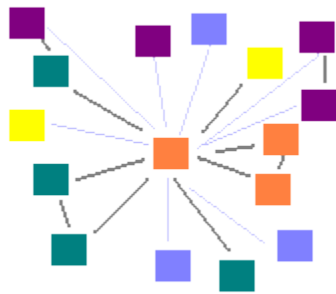


High Context

- Less verbally explicit communication, less written/formal information
 - More internalized understandings of what is communicated
 - Multiple cross-cutting ties and intersections with others
 - Long term relationships
- Strong boundaries- who is accepted as belonging vs who is considered an "outsider"
 - Knowledge is situational, relational.
 - Decisions and activities focus around personal face-to-face relationships, often around a central person who has authority.

Examples:

Small religious congregations, a party with friends, family gatherings, expensive gourmet restaurants and neighborhood restaurants with a regular clientele, undergraduate on-campus friendships, regular pick-up games, hosting a friend in your home overnight.



Low Context

- Rule oriented, people play by external rules
 - More knowledge is codified, public, external, and accessible.
 - Sequencing, separation--of time, of space, of activities, of relationships
- More interpersonal connections of shorter duration
 - Knowledge is more often transferable
 - Task-centered. Decisions and activities focus around what needs to be done, division of responsibilities.

Examples:

large US airports, a chain supermarket, a cafeteria, a convenience store, sports where rules are clearly laid out, a motel.

While these terms are sometimes useful in describing some aspects of a culture, one can never say a culture is "high" or "low" because societies all contain both modes. "High" and "low" are therefore less relevant as a description of a whole people, and more useful to describe and understand particular situations and environments.

(taken from <http://www.culture-at-work.com/highlow.html>)

When I see a group of Korean friends gathering at school, they pretty much form a circle and speak their language quietly in a coherent, unified whole. When I try to penetrate this circle (which I have) the group feels awkward and inclined to include me but unable to know how to properly do so. It is important that I first form a tight relationship with a few members of the group first before I try to enter, or I will risk dispersing the group simply by my presence. The fact that I can understand much of what is being said also adds to the difficulty of privacy. On the other hand, joining an American group is much easier. Groups can easily come and go and there is relative openness to different ideas as people agree to disagree and can form friendships based on select mutual interests.

Our American culture is very low context compared to Japanese and Korean cultures, and hence we have fewer cultural norms. Our country is immensely more diverse than theirs, and hence we learn to feel more comfortable with change.

We are also fiercely individualistic, employing negative face to keep safe from vulnerability. Negative face means that there is a tendency to avoid putting one's reputation or credentials on the line, hence a more aloof and less vulnerable approach to relationships.

Negative face is here introduced in relation to apology:

“Having defined apologies as speech acts restoring the speaker's positive face, I would like to turn to the speaker's negative face needs, specifically the want “that his actions be unimpeded by others” (Brown & Levinson 1987:62 - my emphasis). What is problematic about this definition is that it applies to speech acts which are performed by one person and threaten the face of another. When apologizing, however, the speaker is the one who performs the speech act and simultaneously the one whose face is threatened.

Apologies have been described as humiliating (Olshtain 1989:156) and as a “painful experience” (Norrick 1978:284), and some even regard the suffering of the offender as an important contribution to the healing process (Lazare 2004:19), which shows why we are reluctant to apologize. The only way of explaining this reluctance in terms of Brown and Levinson's conceptualization of face seems to be that by performing an act which is humiliating and unpleasant to them, apologizers restrict their own freedom of action, i.e. threaten their negative face. Unless other human needs, not included in Brown and Levinson's model, are used to explain why people are reluctant to apologize, one could argue that since they are certainly not worried that the apology will make them less likeable, which is what threat to positive face would imply, the threat involved in apologising must concern their negative face. Damage to positive face has already been caused by the offence and will be even greater if no apology takes place. We do not risk our positive face when apologising but attempt to restore it, which is why apologies are oriented towards satisfying S's positive face needs at the expense of S's negative face.”

(On Apologising in Negative and Positive Politeness Cultures By Eva Ogiemann)

The following example indicates the great rift in the Western and Eastern concepts of face, with a seeming (to a westerner) lack of respect of privacy inherent in a universal expectation of group reciprocity:

Face Saving and Confrontation Avoidance

“Cultures differ in the extent to which they are geared toward verbal confrontation, in that some cultures are “extremely averse to such conflicts and prefer silence to a heated, tendentially interesting (but also potentially face-damaging) conversation (Mey 2001: 270). In the literature on conflict management, such sociocultural factors as individualism-collectivism, societal values of harmony, “face” and the loss of “face”, and power distance have been attributed to orientations to conflict and conflict management (Yuen 1992). According to Yuen, Asian societies stress collectivism, face and harmony; and the “preferred conflict-resolution styles are likely to be compromising (the middle ground, with neither side having to suffer a loss of ‘face’), avoiding (not address the conflict, a strategy used to avoid a possible loss of ‘face’), or collaborating (satisfy the concerns of both parties)” (Yuen 1992:376). Kirkbride et al. (1991)

investigated the conflict styles of 981 Chinese respondents in Hong Kong. The findings conform to the researchers' predictions based on Chinese cultural values. The conflict management styles of the Chinese in Hong Kong are, in order of preference: compromising, avoiding, accommodating (satisfy the other party's demands even at the expense of his/her personal concerns), collaborating, and competing (pursue his/her own concerns at the expense of the other party). In contrast, Western cultures do not avoid conflict or confrontation, but when disagreeing, a speaker is expected to employ negative politeness as redress action..."

(Intercultural conversation By Winnie Cheng)

Unlike most Western Cultures (e.g. Italian or Irish culture), any form of conflict can risk splitting old friends. Italians may value personal opinions and many in the west may see conflict as necessary to a strong and flourishing relationship, but the East sees it as a negative thing and a damage to communal solidarity. Conflict flies in the face of Confucianist values, and there is little to no room for a redemptive Judeo-Christian viewpoint concerning reconciliation.

In understanding differences between Western and Eastern patterns of politeness, it is important to note that the Confucian ideal of mutuality and "us"-ness in a society is the defining difference for us, coming from a very individualistic culture. A strictly polarizing view is not possible, as the variance is measured on a scale of self-perception. The in-group is vital, and compared to them we are notably flexible in our ability to adapt to varying friendships over time and have much lower communal expectations of people whom we would call "close" to us.

Paralinguistic and Non-linguistic Cultural Messages

Not surprisingly, the Japanese/Korean cultural family employs many means of communication besides linguistic gestures in showing respect. In business practice (especially in Japan) the kowtowing of business partners and mutual deal makers is vital, a facet that has caused much difficulty among American businesspeople trying to make deals in Japan. The punctiliousness of Japanese business practice goes well beyond the limits of the most detail-oriented American practices. The following has to do with one of a myriad of nonlinguistic or paralinguistic shows of respect, called "business card etiquette."

Business Card Etiquette

The exchange of business cards, *meishi*, is an essential part of Japanese business etiquette. After a person has introduced him/herself and bowed, the business card ceremony begins. You should be aware of Japanese Business Card Etiquette.

Offer the card with the Japanese side facing upwards toward the recipient. Offering the card with both hands will demonstrate greater respect. If there are several Japanese, you will find that cards are presented according to rank, with the highest ranking individual presenting his card last.

The Japanese expect you to take the time to carefully read and memorize all pertinent information. Business cards are considered an extension of the individual - not just a tool to help you find somebody after you have met them.”

(<http://www.linguist.com/services-japanese-card.htm>)

Synonymous Words used in different Social Contexts

A natural corollary of Chinese influence in these two cultures has been a large number of synonyms from Chinese. During the time when Chinese characters dominated Korean writing before the advent of the Hangeul phonetic writing system, both traditional Chinese and native Korean pronunciations were used. Today, Japanese still makes heavy use of Chinese characters (Kanji) whereas Korean does not, but both have retained the usage of synonymous terms which are interchangeable depending on context.

Korean and Sino Korean words

“Due to the influx of Chinese borrowings and coinage of new character words, the phenomenon of synonyms is widespread, especially in non-scientific and non-academic areas, as illustrated in (12).

(12)	Native	Sino-Korean	
	Anay, manwula	che, pu-in	‘wife’
	Apeci	pu0chin	‘father’
	chan-mul	nayng-swu	‘cold water’
	kelum	pi-lo	‘fertilizer’
	[...]		

he two members of each doublet set may not mean exactly the same thing and frequently have different syntactic or pragmatic usages. Even when they share the same meaning, SK words tend to be more formal and abstract (being detached from vivid reality), and thus occasionally sound more prestigious and sometimes even pedantic. Native words generally belong to more colloquial speech, while their SK counterparts tend to be found in the literary language, academic vocabulary, and formal speech. For instance, the native word nala ‘country’ manifests more emotional attachment than its SK counterpart kwuk-ka (country-house). Thus, wuli nala, not wuli kwuk-ka, is used to refer to ‘our country’. The native word il-cali (lit. ‘work-place’) refers usually to a low-waged job such as blue-collar work, whereas cik-cang (job-place) implies a white-collar job. Similarly, kakey (derived from SK ka-ka (false-house)) usually refers to a small store and sang-cem (business-shop) to a larger one. SK counterparts are also frequently used for deferential objects, as observed in the following pairs.

(13)

	Native (plain)	Sino-Korean (deferential)
wife	anay	pu-in
mother	emeni	mo-chin
house	cip	tayk
tooth	l	chi-a
age	nai	yen-sey
name	ilum	seng-ham

As already indicated, many native words have ceased to survive the doublet status, being either completely wiped out by SK words or passed into obsolete status at best. “

(Sohn, 107-108)

Onyomi and Kunyomi

Japanese has four systems of writing which it may use in the same sentence. Three of these (Hiragana, Katakana, and Romaji) are phonetic. Unlike Korean, Japanese continues to use Chinese-based characters, called Kanji, which are the most difficult form to speak audibly and require rote memorization of multiple pronunciations. In Japanese the two pronunciations of a given Kanji (Chinese-based character) are onyomi and kunyomi. Onyomi is the Sino-Japanese pronunciation and Kunyomi is the native Japanese. A comparable example would be if we used the below symbol as an acceptable symbol of writing and put it into a context surrounded by two other writing systems:

“**Jonas** †ed the river.”

Here, I have used bold typing for a name and a symbol for the verb “to cross.” In a casual context I may read this as “Jonas crossed the river.” If I were in a more formal setting I would read it as “Jonas traversed the river,” using the Latin-based verb instead of the Germanic root “cross.” One key difference is that Chinese cognates are normally shorter than native ones.

“On’yomi primarily occur in multi-kanji compound words (熟語 jukugo), many of which are the result of the adoption, along with the kanji themselves, of Chinese words for concepts that either did not exist in Japanese or could not be articulated as elegantly using native words. This borrowing process is often compared to the English borrowings from Latin, Greek, and Norman French, since Chinese-borrowed terms are often more specialized, or considered to sound more erudite or formal, than their native counterparts. The major exception to this rule is family names, in which the native kun’yomi reading is usually used (though on’yomi are found in many personal names, especially men’s names).”

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanji#Readings>)

Here we see that in both Japanese and Korean, Chinese words are considered to be more refined. A single Japanese character can have varying pronunciations based on context and respect.

“Deciding which reading is meant depends on context, intended meaning, use in compounds, and even location in the sentence. Some common kanji have ten or more possible readings. These readings are normally categorized as either on'yomi (literally, sound reading) or kun'yomi (literally, meaning reading).”

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanji>)

Measure Words and Numbers

Japanese and Korean use measure words, just as Chinese does, but unlike Chinese, Korean and Japanese place the number and measure word after the thing they are measuring in quantity. Here are a few comparable measure words in a grid of the three:

	Chinese	Korean	Japanese
used for People/ general classifier	個 (ge)	개(gae)	個(ko)
small flat things	枚 (méi)		枚(mai)
scrolls/ books/ cylindrical objects	本(běn)	권(gweon)	本 (bon)
trees	株 (zhū)	그루(geuru)	株(kabu)
used for Honorable People	名(míng)	명(myeong)	名 (mei)
bottles	瓶(píng)	병(byeong)	
cups	杯(bēi)	잔(jan)	杯(hai)
stories (floors)	層(céng)	층(cheung)	階(kai)
lessons	課(kè)	과(gwa)	課(ka)

Chinese	Sino-Kor.	Sino-Jap.	Korean	Japanese
1 一 yī	il	ichi	hana	hito
2 二 èr	i	ni	tul	futa
3 三 sān	sam	san	set	mi
4 四 sì	sa	shi	net	yon
5 五 wǔ	o	go	taseot	itsu
6 六 liù	yuk	roku	yeosot	mu
7 七 qī	chil	shichi	ilgop	nana
8 八 bā	pal	hachi	yeodol	ya
9 九 jiǔ	gu	kyu	ahop	kokono
10 十 shí	ship	ju	yeol	to
20 二十 èrshí	iship	ni-ju	seumul	hata
100 百 bǎi	baek	hyaku	on	momo
1000 千 qiān	cheon	sen	jeumeun	chi

In all three languages, measure words evolve from and into nouns over time. In Korean especially, there is great ambiguity as to what is used as a measure word and what is used as a noun. Also, some measure words are like our “herd,” “flock,” etc., in that they denote a group of objects.

There are striking similarities among Japanese and Korean which set them in a class of their own. Those we have seen so far include:

Confucianism (which is shared with many nations bordering on China and China itself)

Agglutination of Altaic descent

Complex Honorific Speech

Community-related Cultural orientations

With all of these commonalities setting Korea and Japan apart from the rest of the world as a seemingly distinct sociocultural entity, the question which naturally ensues is “to what extent to Japanese and Koreans recognize their ostensible sisterhood?” The answer to this question relates directly to perception which has been shaped by both a blatantly scarring history and mutual vituperation which might seem to outsiders to be squabbling over small and unimportant details.

Dravidian Influence

Dravidian is a non-Altaic agglutinative language with a considerable number of cognates in Korean. The list is not as considerable as the Altaic cognate list and relates for the most part to body, herbs, and fluids, suggesting the possibility of Dravidian doctors in Korea. Here is an example of potential Dravidian cognates:

(9) Korean (early forms) Dravidia

Al 'grain'	ari 'grain'
Ama-, əm ə- 'mother'	amma 'mother'
ənni 'older sibling'	anni 'older brother, female'
cəc 'breasts'	caci 'breasts'
kal- 'plow, cultivate'	*kar- 'dig'
kalaj 'phlegm'	karaja 'phlegm'
kalichi- 'teach'	*kalc- 'teach'
kalɔl 'foot,leg'	karal 'foot'
kolim 'pus'	kollum 'pus'
kuntunji 'buttocks'	kunti 'buttocks'
kjəɔbj 'kindred relations'	*kelai 'kindred relations'
kili- 'draw'	*kiru- 'draw, scratch'
mancanji 'big boat'	manic 'cargo boat'
mo 'seedling'	mola 'seedling'
mok 'neck'	mak 'neck'
məl 'urine, feces'	mollu 'urine'
[...]	

As for syntactic similarities, Clippinger points out that in both Korean and Dravidian, there are two main word classes (nouns and verbs); nominal particles and verbal suffixes specify syntactic and other relations; particles are postpositional; modifiers always precede the modified words; word-formation is agglutinative; the basic word-order is SOV; nominal and adjectival phrases are formed in similar ways; etc. Clippinger also presents some similar phonological patterns. Despite arguments to the contrary (e.g., Murayama 1982), the Dravidian hypothesis deserves further investigation in view of the large number of lexical look-alikes and many interesting typological similarities.”

(The Korean Language By Ho-Min Sohn)

Whereas Korean seems to have been influenced by some Dravidian cognates, theories have also been drawn up about an Austronesian influence on Japanese. Despite these theories and ostensible cognates, these languages are so near each other and share a large number of mutual cognates which all but dwarf the supposed cognates (which could be mere coincidence) from other faraway languages. The question arises again: “why would Korean and Japanese

scholars be so eager to seek an alternative language family?” What follows is the seemingly painful truth.

Altaic

One of the primary theories put forward in this paper is that both Japanese and Korean are a part of the Altaic language family. This relationship is based on a number of mutual cognates in various related central Asian agglutinative languages, with extensive evidence of similar grammar, semantics, and phonetic evolution to support the hypothesis.

Timeline of Korean Evolution

“Although linguists do not agree on the details, the widely accepted chronological divisions of the Korean language are based on certain historical events relevant to the language...significant events also include the creation of the Korean alphabet (1446), the Japanese invasion (1592-8), and the appearance of various significant books...The following periodization of the developmental stages of Korean is based on K.M. Lee (1976) and I.S. Lee, et. Al. (1997).

(2) a. Prehistoric Korean: proto-Altaic to the Pu.ye-Han period (until around the beginning of the Christian era)

b. Old Korean: the Three Kingdoms period to the end of the Unified Sinla dynasty (from around the beginning of the Christian era until early tenth century)

c. Middle Korean (tenth century-sixteenth century) which ranges over the Kolye dynasty period (tenth-century-fourteenth century) and the first 200 years of the Cosen [Joseon] dynasty, i.e., until the Japanese invasion in 1592 (fifteenth century-sixteenth century)

d. Modern Korean (seventeenth century-nineteenth century) which ranges over the period after the Japanese Invasion to the end of the nineteenth century

e. Contemporary Korean (twentieth century)

Some of the established linguistic characteristics of each stage of development are presented below.”

(The Korean Language By Ho-Min Sohn)

There is substantial evidence which indicates that Japanese split from a Proto-Japanese-Korean or Buyeo language some time during the reign of the Goguryeo dynasty, which would range from 37BC-668AD. The considerable ambiguity concerning the relationship between these two languages is reinforced by the disgust with which both people groups view a potential genetic/cultural/linguistic relationship. I will explore this mutual chagrin further below. Suffice it to say that there is compendious evidence for a Proto-Japanese-Korean language, some of which is mentioned here:

Proto-Korean-Japanese and Diagrams

“A genetic link, however remote, between Korean and Japanese (including the Ryukyu dialect) is widely accepted. Notwithstanding skepticism...a sizable number of shared cognates, partially attested phonological correspondences, and some already obvious uniquely shared morphological, syntactic, and semantic characteristics support the existence of a genetic relationship. Some Korean linguists offer arguments in favour of the supposition that Korean may be more closely related to Altaic languages than to Japanese, but available evidence appears to indicate that the two languages are closer to one another than to any other language.”

[what follows is a list of common cognates from “proto-Korean-Japanese,” many of which are seldom used or interchangeable, due to newer forms descended from Chinese. Although there are plenty of such forms which are similar between these two languages, for obvious reasons, researchers have been sure to compare original native forms] The following are some examples from *The Korean Language* By Ho-Min Sohn:

“The most significant breakthrough is no doubt the work of Martin (1966) who systematically compares 320 sets of seeming cognates, reconstructs their hypothetical protoforms, establishes the proto-Korean-Japanese (*KJ) phonemic system, includes suprasegmental features (pitch accents), and provides phonological rules of correspondences. Let us observe some of Martin’s consonant correspondences below, with irrelevant information omitted and Korean phonemic transcriptions slightly modified to conform to the IPA system adopted in this book. In Middle Korean (MK), prime (‘), and double prime (’’) indicate high and low-rising pitch accents, respectively, while in Modern Korean, double prime indicates vowel length. The Japanese and proto-Korean-Japanese pitch accents are marked on the vowels concerned. While the Korean words used are modern and available Middle (15th century) Korean forms, most of the Japanese words used are modern or slightly antiquated forms, where, for instance, the modern h is written as the old p(>hw>h).

[I have chosen to omit most of the cognates, in reality, there are many more than the following]

*KJ	K:J	*KJ	K	J
*p...	p:p	*pal(j)i'bee'	"pəl, MK pəli	pati
		*pjal 'fire'	pul<MK 'pīl-	pí
*...b(...)	p:b	*tabal 'bunch'	tapal	tába
*...				
mp(...)	p:m	*txumpje 'claw'	MK thop	tume
		*pɔlmp- 'tread'	palp- MK "pɔlp	pum-

*m...	m:m	*mjom 'body'	mom<MK 'mom	mi
		*mats(a)- 'correct'	mac-<MK mac-	masa
*v...	p:#	*vazji 'foot'	pal<MK 'pal	así
		*vák(a) 'red'	pulk- <MK pɔlk-	aka-
*k...	k:k	*kuma 'bear'	"kom< MK "kom	kumá
		*kwat(a)- 'hard'	kut-	kata-
		*kes 'thing'	kəs< MK kəs	kotó
		*kura 'valley'	kol<MK "kol	kura
*...γ...	h:g	*tsáyats- 'look for'	chac-<MK 'chɔc-	sagas-
*Cx	Ch:C	*sjibxa 'brushwood'	səph, MK səp	siba
		*bxɔr- 'sell'	phal- <MK 'phəl-	(w)ur-
*t...	t:t	*tɔrj- 'accompany'	tali-<MK t'li-	tur(e)-
		tɔx- 'arrive'	"tah,MK tah-	túk-
		*taxje- 'bamboo'	tɛ<MK 'taj	take
		*törkji 'chicken'	talk<MK tɔlk	tori
		*tɔlyji 'moon'	tal<MK 'tɔl	tuki
*n	n:n	nöz 'carry'	nali< nɔb-	nos(e)-
*d...	t:j	*djar- 'enter'	tíl-<MK 'tíl-	jir-
		*dar- 'give'	"tal-	jar-
*ts...	c:s	*tsuldji 'line'	cul	súdi
		*tsáyats- 'look for'	chac-<MK 'chɔc-	sagas-
*j...	c:j	*jipje 'house'	cip<MK cip	jipê
		*jörökeb- 'enjoy'	cilkəp-	jorokób-
*r...	l:r	*bar(j)- 'splie open'	pali-<'pɔli-	war-

		*erj(o)- 'stupid'	əli-<MK ə'li-	óro-ka
*...l...	l:t	*pal(j)i 'bee'	"pəl, MK pəli	pati
		*palál 'sea'	MK pabl	OJ wata
*...ly...	l:k	*swalyje 'liquor'	sul<MK suil	sake
		*kwalyji 'oyster'	kul<MK 'kul	kaki
*...l(...)	l:j	*keɹ 'fertile'	kəl-	kój(e)-
*s...	s:s	*(a-)sam 'hemp'	sam<MK sam	asa
		*sJjima 'island'	"səm<MK "sjəm	sima
		*sJebxa 'side'	jəph<*sjəph	sóba
*z...	l:s	nöz 'carry'	nali< nɔɓ-	nos(e)-
		*mazu 'measure'	mal<MK 'mal	masú
		*pJəzji	"pjəl	posi

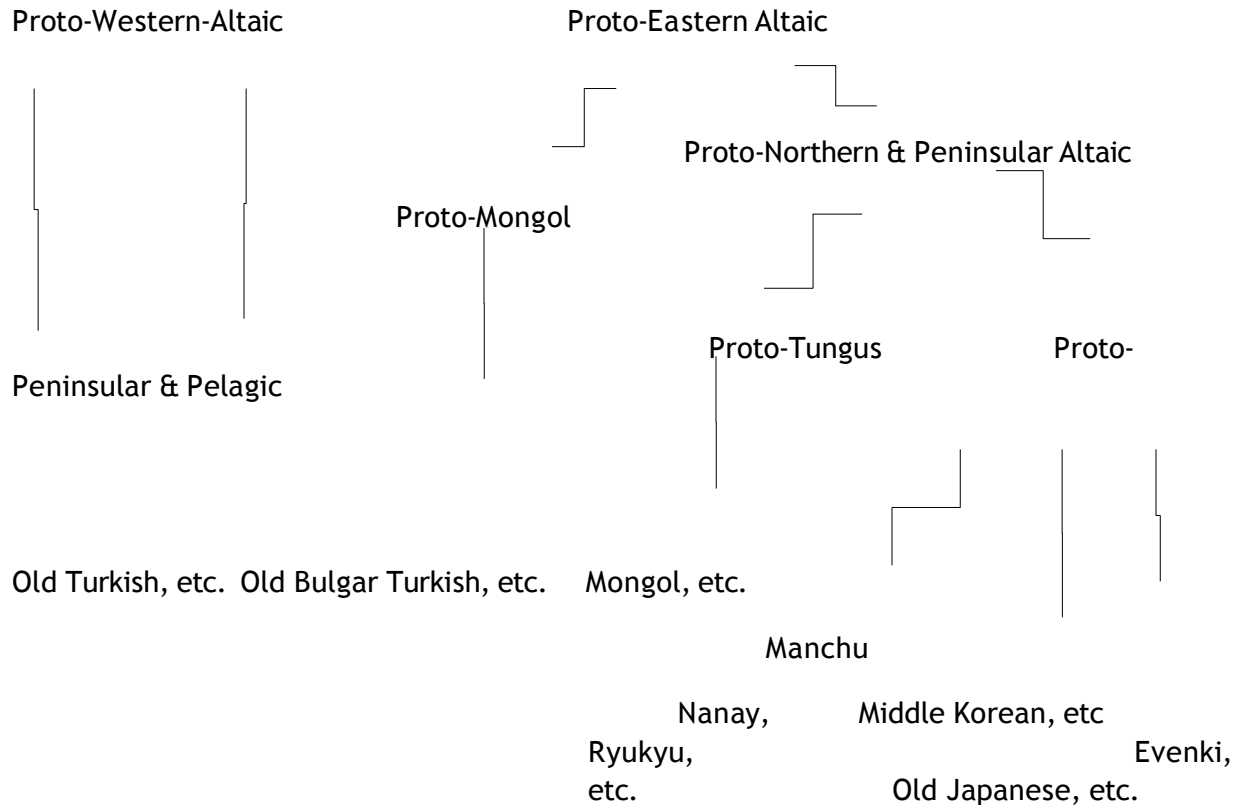
(taken from The Korean Language By Ho-Min Sohn)

Scholars (many of whom are Japanese or Korean) would hold onto a continued skepticism concerning including Japanese and Korean in the Altaic language family. Cognates and grammatical structures in terms of affix cognates strongly suggest the following “family tree” of Altaic, which is markedly more difficult to construct when compared with Indo-European languages due to the comparatively fluid nature of agglutinative languages as well as its speakers' lack of mutual interest in being seen as a coherent whole. Evidence nevertheless speaks loudly.

Here is a tree of Altaic languages as put forward by Miller (1971:44-6), who was inspired by Martin's cautious work (1966). (Miller, R.A. 1971. Japanese and other Altaic Languages. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.) (Martin, S.E. 1966. Lexical evidence relating Korean to Japanese. Language 42:185-251)

Proto-Altaic





(Taken from *The Korean Language* by Ho-Minh Sohn)

Vowel Harmony

The distinguishing feature of the proposed Ural-Altaic Family was the shared vowel harmony and agglutination that exists among all of them. This was shown to be insufficient, due to a lack of feasible cognates, and the modern Altaic family is based on cognates rather than phonetics. Using cognates as a basis for eligibility in a language family (versus vowel harmony, as formerly employed) makes the likelihood of Korean and Japanese being Altaic that much more plausible. Korean uses a differing vowel harmony system (as well as relics of a time when Korean was tonal) and Japanese has no apparent vowel harmony at all; but both have ample cognates to support their eligibility for inclusion in the Altaic group. There is evidence, however, that at one point Japanese could have had vowel harmony.

Old Japanese Vowel Harmony

The Japanese acquired the complicated writing system of the Chinese along with many of their ideas, and this was helpful and effective in recording information from an early era, but unfortunately allows for little or no knowledge of Old Japanese phonology, and whether or not there would have been vowel harmony in the pronunciation. It is possible that such a transmission of Chinese ideals of disciplinarian rigidity (including Legalism) were taken to an

extreme in the use of proper phonology. Such idealistic expectations could have led the educated shapers of language to view vowel harmony as archaic and do away with it completely in society, as the super-competitive Japanese vied for class distinction in a land that thrived on war. A comparison could be made to the shift in English pronunciation after the Normans to a French dropping of final 'r', although in this instance, Old English pronunciation wasn't completely eradicated. Arisaka Hideyo put proposed the possibility of vowel harmony in Old Japanese. Why didn't such a change take place in Korea? Most likely because of orthography.

Modern Japanese is strict in pronunciation and contains only five vowel pronunciations, with alternations in time duration of pronunciation. For instance *ou* would not be a diphthong, but a lengthened utterance of the standard pronunciation of *o*. A brief quote indicating the character-based propagation of the possibility that these five vowels came from a wider range of vowel sounds is what follows:

Potential case for Japanese Vowel Harmony

“There is...a possibility that the basic five-vowel system itself evolved from something else. One indication of such a possibility goes back to the discovery that certain syllables that are now pronounced identically were given systematic distinctions in terms of different characters in the Nara period. For example, the syllable *ki* in certain words was written with the character 仅 and in some other words with the character 杞. Thus the first syllable in *kimi* 'emperor' was written with the first character as 仅美 (*ki-mi*), but the second syllable in the word *tuki* 'moon' was written with the second character as 都杞 (*tu-ki*).”

(taken from *The Korean Language* By Ho-Min Sohn)

Such an hypothesis makes it necessary to include more than one vowel under a set which is represented by the modern vowel form. Such a set was bruited in Japanese by Hideyo.

Japanese vowel harmony proof

“In 1934, Arisaka Hideyo [a Japanese specialist in Historical linguistics of his native tongue and Chinese whose works apparently remain unpublished] proposed a set of phonological restrictions permitted in a single morpheme. These are known as the "Arisaka Laws".

- -o1 and -o2 do not co-exist
- -u and -o2 generally do not co-exist
- -a and -o2 generally do not co-exist

These rules suggest two groups of vowels: /-a, -u, -o1/ and /o2/. Vowels from either group do not mix with each other; -i1 and -i2 can co-exist with either group. Some take this phenomenon as evidence that Old Japanese had vowel harmony as found in Altaic languages.”

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Japanese)

Such strange forms with a subset number are necessary when the phonetic value of a given kanji symbol is indecipherable.

“Whereas the existence of vowel harmony in Old Japanese would be quite encouraging for those who are inclined to group Japanese in the Altaic family, Hattori points out that the situation in Old Japanese is characteristically different from the vowel harmony phenomena of Korean and Altaic languages. That is, the vowel harmony phenomena in Altaic languages in general are in terms of the backness and/or roundness (Turkish, Mongol), or in terms of the narrowness (Middle Korean, Literary Manchu), but in the case of the Old Japanese pattern, as shown in Table 6.10, there is no such clear phonetic motivation. Also, true vowel harmony takes place across morpheme boundaries, rather than being confined to stems. Despite these differences, Hattori allows the possibility that the Old Japanese co-occurrence pattern could be a remnant of vowel harmony. Thus, the problem here too is unresolved (see the parallel discussion on the possibility of vowel harmony in Ainu in Part 1).”

(The languages of Japan By Masayoshi Shibatani)

History of Korean and Japanese Relations- A Sad but Necessary Addendum

For all their similarities, there is even more tension and inherited hostility of these two cultures toward each other. National disputes in Europe and the US are one thing; with French and English having a general disdain for each other; but in Asia these strains are much more ancient and bitter, with Arab/Jewish relations being perhaps a better parallel, since they speak very similar languages, hold to relatively similar belief systems, but have developed a long-lived and bitter enmity. The same could be said of Irish Catholics and Scotch-Irish, the Tz'utujil and the Kaqchikel, Hutu and Tutsi, Walloons and Flemings, Hatfields and McCoys, Kyrgyz and Uzbek, and countless others that would cover pages to write. The truth of the matter is that ethnic groups, and people down to the smallest families, find reasons to hold bitter rivalries that range on a scale from somewhat justifiable bitterness to completely arbitrary massacre. Most often familial and/or worldview similarities are in no way indicative of the likelihood of two people groups to live in harmony.

Where there are few noticeable differences between two neighbor cultures, those cultures will find even arbitrary differences to create.

In the Korean and Sinocentric view, China was the cultural parent, passing on its ideals to its nearest neighbor Korea. Korea in turn sees itself as the middle generation, learning from China and passing on ideas to Japan. When the cultural grandson and “youngest” civilization usurped China and Korea, gaining military victory (especially against Korea) and imposing a sense of Yamato supremacy (the name for their own “pure” race), it opened up a bitter societal wound in China and Korea, and will likely endure as long as Japanese cultural pride does (which is central to their identity). This dilemma can tend to leave Westerners confused about

why people who seem so similar, with so much in common culturally, linguistically, and in terms of appearance; are so unwilling to recognize their common roots. The same question could be raised, however, regarding numerous conflicts worldwide and in the West, and the answer put simply, is that people form groups based on nationalistic allegiances and not other alleged similarities. A townsman is perhaps much more prone to be open to new relationships with a man from a different neighborhood than with a person from the family next door with which he may have a rough history. In the same way, a Korean person might get along with a culturally different person such as a Norwegian, for example, much better than with a Japanese person, simply because Korea and Japan are neighbors and have spent ages in bitter fighting and cultural rivalry.

Conclusion

In closing, I would like to reiterate my idea that historical linguistics is intricately connected to the worldview of a culture. Although many environmental /scientific/and extracultural factors can factor into the evolution of both language and culture, I believe that the ultimate underlying factor lies in eliminating the intimidating mystery by grasping the symbiotic relation between the worldview and the speech of a people. Japanese and Korean are case in point: both are derived from similar linguistic systems incorporating various new agglutinations to suit the incorporation of various new Confucian cultural forms.

After asserting that a culture's essential beliefs pervade every aspect of it and shape exactly what it is, I have looked at the outworkings of such a central worldview in Japan and Korea. I have taken into account the linguistic aspects which are unique to both languages, observing what effect Confucianism has had in deepening complexity, and have made a case for their ancestral relationship. Gender, age, and social position all have been affected.

There is no realm of human thought and action which goes untouched by what people believe. It starts wars, sends people willingly to their death, and governs steadfast and consistent labor for millions of people over the course of millions of days, in the recurring system of birth, travail, and death. I have no doubt that a proper understanding of the zeitgeist of a given group of people in any given locale of space and time will enhance a proper relationship with said people by any attempting to make inroads thence. To grasp the importance of the core is fundamental and necessary to any mission, and is the only analgesic alternative to war, which requires relatively little thought and little time.

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