

## POLITENESS FORMULAS IN CHINESE AND KOREAN

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This study involved two steps: (1) A contrastive analysis approach was used to identify cases of equivalence, non-equivalence, and partial (or overlapping) equivalence in semantic content, illocutionary force, and rules of use among some common Chinese and Korean politeness formulas for four types of speech acts--greeting, leave taking, apologizing, and thanking. Among other findings, the contrastive analyses demonstrated the major influence of Chinese on Korean politeness formulas. (2) A brief survey, which asked native-speaking Chinese (n=5) and Koreans (n=5) to guess the meanings of politeness formulas written in the other language, was used to investigate how a common knowledge of Chinese characters might help or interfere with the understanding of those formulas. The results of the survey seemed to be largely predictable from the contrastive analyses, supporting the usefulness of the contrastive approach. It is suggested that politeness formulas may be a good starting point for teaching Korean to Chinese or Chinese to Koreans because of the many overlaps that occur, even though the two languages are very different in other respects.

### INTRODUCTION

Chinese, a member of the Sino-Tibetan language family, and Korean, usually considered to be a member of the Altaic family of languages (Pyles & Algeo, 1982), are structurally unrelated. Speakers of these languages, however, have a great deal in common culturally and historically. Moreover, around the seventh century, Koreans adopted Chinese as their written language. Until the nineteenth century, educated Koreans spoke Korean but wrote in classical Chinese (Lukoff, 1982). This unique form of bilingualism naturally resulted in the adoption of a great number of Chinese loanwords. As a result, well over half of all modern Korean vocabulary consists of words borrowed from Chinese (Yi, 1975), and Koreans still use many Chinese characters in writing.

One area where Chinese influence on Korean--both cultural and linguistic--is readily apparent is that of what Ferguson (1976) calls "politeness formulas," that is, those "fixed expressions conventionally used in many societies for such purposes as greeting, taking leave, thanking, apologizing, congratulating, and expressing various kinds of wish" (Davies, 1987, p. 75). In this paper, through a contrastive analysis of some (Taiwanese) Chinese and (south) Korean politeness formulas based on Davies' (1987) model, we attempt to identify similarities and differences in use in the two languages and, especially, investigate patterns of Chinese influence on Korean expressions. We feel that such an analysis will have pedagogical importance in that it will begin to point out ways in which Chinese and Korean speakers can make use of their own language in learning that of a neighbor. In addition, it will begin to point out areas where overlaps in the two languages may cause difficulties: Korean expressions which include Chinese words or characters not used in Chinese expressions with the same illocutionary force, for example.

## A BRIEF COMPARISON OF LINGUISTICS AND POLITENESS PHENOMENA

Despite the geographical proximity of their speakers, Chinese and Korean are very different languages. Most noticeably, Chinese is a (mostly) subject-verb-object language and employs a system of tones, while Korean is a subject-object-verb language and does not have tones, or even a word-stress system. Korean also has postpositional surface case markers which Chinese lacks. In these respects, as it has often been pointed out, Chinese is actually much more similar to English than it is to Korean.

One other major difference that has to be considered is that Korean has a very complicated system of honorifics expressed through grammatical and/or lexical forms. Virtually every Korean utterance requires the speaker to choose from among at least six possible speech levels (Song, 1988) which mark the different degrees of deference the speaker is expected to show to the addressee, based on considerations of age, sex, occupation, social status, degree of closeness, etc. (Hwang, 1990). To a far greater extent than in English and Chinese, therefore, the Korean honorific system is reflected in Korean politeness formulas. In Korean, a speaker must not only know when a particular expression is appropriate, but also must choose the appropriate level of deference. For example, all of the following are formulaic expressions Koreans use to announce that a meal is ready to be served. They all have exactly the same literal meaning and illocutionary force. The only difference is in the level of deference expressed through different linguistic forms:

*Cinci capswusipsio.*                    (Literally, 'Eat food')  
*Cinci capswuseyyo.*  
*Siksahasipsio.*  
*Siksahaseyyo.*  
*Pap mekuseyyo.*  
*Pap mekela.*  
*Pap meke.*

*Cinci* (honorific) and *pap* (plain) are both nouns meaning 'food'. *Capswusi-* (honorific/formal), *siksahasi-* (honorific/informal), and *mek-* (plain/informal) are all verb stems meaning 'eat'. All of the verb endings, *-psio* (honorific/formal), *-seyo* (honorific/informal), and *-la* and *-e* (intimate), indicate that the sentences are imperatives.

As discussed in Gu (1990), speech use was once one way to reflect one's status in the Chinese social hierarchy. For example, a servant had to call himself *nu tz'ai* 'slave', while addressing his master as *da jen* 'great man'. According to Confucius, deviation from this usage would destroy the social order and create social chaos. However, after many centuries of use, and especially after abolishment of the feudal system in China, "a new order of social structure and social relations among people has been introduced" (p. 239), and the function of signalling social hierarchical relations is seldom seen. As reflected in language, some honorifics have become obsolete. What remains, according to Gu, are the essential elements of politeness such as denigration of self and respect for others. However, there is no fixed system of linguistic honorifics like that of Korean in oral Chinese now.

## MODELS FOR ANALYZING AND COMPARING POLITENESS FORMULAS

Ferguson (1976) claims that the use of politeness formulas is a universal phenomenon of human societies, although they are culture specific and influenced by the cultural history of a particular language group. First, he points out that the structure of politeness formulas varies in content and usage in correlation with at least four social dimensions, which he describes as being "likely to be universal in human societies" (p. 145). These are: (1) length of time since last meeting, (2) social distance, (3) number of individuals involved in the communication, and (4)

relative social status. Our analysis will show that, at least, Ferguson's social dimensions (1), (2), and (4) figure prominently in the content and use of the politeness formulas we considered in Chinese and Korean.

In the same article, Ferguson also describes three diachronic characteristics of politeness formulas, all of which are relevant to our current discussion: weakening, archaism, and areal diffusion, that is, "the strong tendency for the structure and use of politeness formulas to diffuse with other elements of culture across language barriers" (p. 148). In particular, archaism and areal diffusion must be considered as at least partial explanations for the use of Chinese words and characters in modern Korean formulas which are not (or perhaps no longer) used in Chinese formulas.

Davies (1987) argues that a thorough knowledge of politeness formulas is vital to the goal of obtaining communicative competence in a language. Misunderstanding and misjudgments often result from a language learner's failure to fully understand the subtle differences in meaning and use between L1 (first language) and L2 (second language) formulas. He begins by suggesting that it may be beneficial for learners, especially at the beginning stages, to gain a knowledge of formulaic politeness expressions, since they can be mastered simply through memorization and can be used immediately in many common situations. In that way, perhaps, politeness formulas can help to provide increased opportunities for interactions with native speakers of the L2 that would otherwise not be available. He also cautions, however, that such memorized routines may cause problems for learners if they give native speakers the impression of fluency which the learner does not possess. Davies suggests that a contrastive analysis of politeness formulas between the students' native language and the target language can help to improve the learners' performance, in both production and reception, as well as help learners develop a deeper understanding of the foreign culture. He presents a framework for analyzing and comparing politeness formulas, much of which we have adopted for our comparison of formulas in Chinese and Korean.

Davies' model suggests that politeness formulas be analyzed at three levels: (1) semantic content, (2) pragmatic function (i.e., illocutionary force), and (3) situations (i.e., the rules and conventions controlling when and how they can be used). In this paper, we consider all of these levels of analysis as well as what Davies calls "cases of non-equivalence" (p. 79), in which one language has a politeness formula for a certain situation but the other language does not, and especially, "cases of partial equivalence" (p. 81) in semantic content, illocutionary force, and rules for use.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

We chose four major speech acts--greeting, leave taking, apologizing, and thanking--to begin our contrastive analysis of Chinese and Korean politeness formulas based on Davies' (1987) model. We used data gathered from informal interviews with several native speakers of Chinese and Korean to categorize representative formulas on charts (see Figures 1-4), with reference to English expressions, in order to compare the semantic content (especially through the Chinese characters used) and the difference in illocutionary potential of Chinese and Korean politeness formulas centered around the four speech acts mentioned above.

We found that there are both many overlaps and many differences in politeness formulas in Chinese and Korean, and that the use of Chinese characters (i.e., "Sino-Korean" words) figure very prominently in Korean politeness formulas. Therefore, in the second stage of the study, we used questionnaires involving some of the expressions on the charts to investigate how a common knowledge of Chinese characters may help or interfere with the understanding of politeness formulas in the other language (see the Appendix). We used two different questionnaires, one for the five Koreans and one for the five Chinese informants. We asked Koreans to look at ten Chinese polite expressions written in Chinese characters and to try to guess their possible Korean and/or English counterparts. Koreans are taught an official list of 1,800 Chinese characters during their six years of middle school and high school, and about

2,000 Chinese characters are commonly used in Korean (Park, 1989). Since all of our Korean informants were at least high school graduates, we felt that we could assume that they would all be able to recognize most of the characters on the questionnaire. (This assumption is discussed in more depth later in the paper.) The questionnaire for our Chinese informants consisted of a list of ten Korean polite expressions, each including one or two Chinese characters followed by Korean elements (usually verbs) written in *hankul* (the Korean alphabet). The informants were asked to try to guess the meanings and write them in Chinese and/or English.

## THE CONTRASTIVE ANALYSES

### Greeting Formulas

Figure 1 shows some of the most typical politeness formulas used as greetings in English, Chinese, and Korean. Like English *Hello*, Chinese and Korean each have one politeness formula used most of the time for greetings: *Ni hao (ma)?* and *Annyenghaseyyo?* respectively. In addition, both languages have special formulas for greeting someone met for the first time corresponding very closely to *I'm happy to meet you*. Chinese *Hsing huei* (often repeated twice: *Hsing huei, hsing huei*) and *Cho yang, cho yang*, however, are very formal expressions used most often in official first meetings (e.g., by politicians, scholars, executives, etc.) or by members of the older generation. Like English, Chinese also has formulas for greeting people in the morning, afternoon, and evening. One major difference is that *Wan an*, literally 'Night peace', can be used not only as a greeting but also as a leave taking expression or to mean 'Sleep well'. Korean, on the other hand, has no greeting formulas used specifically in the afternoon or evening, and *Annyenghi cwumwusyeseyo?* literally 'Did you sleep peacefully?' can only be used to greet someone who has just awakened. Therefore, it would not be an appropriate greeting at an office or school, for instance, as *Good morning* and *Tzao an* would be.

Other Chinese expressions that are not included in Figure 1 but are still heard among the older generation include *Chu pao le mei?* 'Have you eaten yet?' and *Shang na r chu?* 'Where are you going?' The former can be used at any time of the day, however, not just at meal time, and the latter is also just as a way of greeting (Yang, 1987). The hearer is not expected to actually answer with a specific destination.

Figure 1 also clearly shows Chinese influence on Korean greetings. The most common Korean greeting, *Annyeng + verb*, includes a loanword from Chinese. It is interesting that the loanword, 安寧, is commonly used in formal written Chinese meaning 'peace' or 'well-being', but is not part of any Chinese politeness formulas. The individual character 安 'peace', however, is prominent in Chinese greetings.

### Leave Taking Formulas

Figure 2 suggests that, among the speech acts investigated in our study, Chinese and Korean differ most noticeably in politeness formulas used in leave taking. Like English *Good-bye*, Chinese *Tzai chien* is a general expression which can be used at any time of the day and in any situation in which people are parting. In Chinese, however, a distinction is often made in terms of how soon the interlocuters expect to meet again. *Tai huerh chien* is used if they expect to meet again within a very short time (e.g., a few hours). When someone leaves for a long trip, on the other hand, the person staying behind might say *I lu pin an* 'Go all the way in the direction of the wind' or *I lu ping an* 'Go all the way peacefully' to wish the person leaving good luck besides saying good-bye.

In Korean, *Annyeng*, literally 'Peace', can be used as a general term meaning either 'Hello' or 'Good-bye', but only in extremely informal situations--often between children, lovers, or very close female friends of the same age, for instance. Most other Korean leave taking formulas require the speakers to make a distinction between whether one is leaving or staying (e.g., the person staying says *Tanye oseyyo* 'Go and come back', and the person going says *Tanye*

*okeysseyo* 'I will go and come back'). This sometimes causes confusion even for native speakers: Is the person who remains on the bus when her friend gets off staying or going? Korean does have one formula commonly used by either the person staying or going if they probably will not meet again soon, that is, *Tto poypkeysssupnita* 'I will see you again'. The same verb stem, *poyp-*'see' (or its non-honorific counterpart *po-*), is also often used, less formulaically, with a specific time reference as a general good-bye, e.g., *Neyil popsita* 'Let's see each other tomorrow'.

As figure 2 shows, Chinese and Korean both have formulas corresponding partially to English *Good night*, but each differs in its illocutionary potential. Chinese *Wan an* has all of the potential of *Good night*, that is, 'Good-bye' and 'Sleep well', but can also be used as a greeting meaning 'Good evening' (Yang, 1987). Korean *Annyenghi cwumwuseyyo* 'Sleep peacefully', on the other hand, can only be used immediately before the hearer is expected to go to sleep.

### Apologizing Formulas

Chinese influence on Korean apologies is made very obvious from Figure 3; it is virtually impossible for Koreans to apologize to each other without using a word derived from Chinese characters. It is interesting, however, that the combinations of characters used in Korean formulas for apologizing (容恕, 罪悚, and 未安) are seldom, if ever, used in modern Chinese at all. On the other hand, 失禮, a common apology in Taiwanese Chinese, is used in a common Korean expression for getting attention.

Figure 3 also shows that another possible source of problems for learners might be differences in the illocutionary potential of expressions used as attention getters. In Korean, *Yeposeyyo*, literally 'Look here', is used to get someone's attention and to answer the telephone. It cannot be used as an apology as Chinese *Tuei pu chih* 'I've offended (you)' can be, nor can it be used as a greeting as *Hello* can be. Chinese answer the telephone with *Wei*, which has no other illocutionary potential (except that *Wei*, with a stressed tone, can be used to get attention, but only between very close friends or when the speaker is very impatient or angry).

*Tuei pu chih* and *Pao chien* are two expressions used by Chinese to apologize. In Taiwan, *Tuei pu chih* is also being used more and more often as a way of getting attention, but more commonly, the Chinese equivalents of "sir" or "miss" are used. Finally, unlike English *I'm sorry*, Chinese and Korean apologies cannot be used to express sympathy, and Chinese does not have a general formula for this at all. Instead, the way Chinese express sympathy depends on the social relationship of the interlocuters. Koreans often express sympathy by saying *An toysseyo* 'It didn't turn out well'.

### Thanking Formulas

Figure 4 includes the most common thanking formulas used in English, Chinese, and Korean. The most common formula for expressing thanks in Chinese is *Hsieh hsieh*, which is used almost exactly as *Thank you* is used in English. Korean, on the other hand, has two commonly-used formulas for expressing gratitude, both of which have exactly the same literal meaning. The difference lies in the fact that forms of the verb *Komap-* (an indigenous Korean word) can be used in any style from formal-polite to extremely informal/intimate, while forms of the verb *Kamsaha-* (created from two Chinese characters plus the Korean light verb *ha-* 'do') cannot be used in the informal/intimate styles. This pattern applies to many pairs of Chinese-derived/original Korean synonyms. Hwang (1990) explains that, to Koreans, "utterances with at least a few Chinese loanwords sound more polite" (p. 52). In fact, several of our Korean informants judged *Kamsahapnita* to be a more formal and polite word than *Komapsupnita*. One said that she would be more likely to use the former when thanking older relatives or teachers, for example, but might use the latter more often in everyday situations when a high degree of formality is not required. It is interesting to note, however, that many younger Koreans are increasingly choosing to use original Korean words as an expression of nationalist sentiment.

The Korean expression *Cal mekesssupnita* 'I ate well' is used in place of *Thank you* after a meal. The pattern *Cal + verb stem + -esssupnita* is used to express gratitude in many situations,

e.g., *Cal masyesssupnita* 'I drank well' (after being treated to a cup of tea), *Cal ilkesssupnita* 'I read it well' (when returning a borrowed book), etc. *Swukohasyesssupnita* 'You worked hard' can be used in place of *Good-bye* in Korean and also implies an expression of thanks. Its meaning is similar to English *Thank you for your help*, *Thanks for your trouble*, etc.

Figure 1. Greeting Formulas

First meeting	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
ENGLISH:			
Hello/Hi			
How do you do?			
Nice to meet you			
	Good morning		
		Good afternoon	
			Good evening
CHINESE:			
你好嗎 Ni hao (ma)?			
幸會 Hsing huei			
久仰 久仰 Cho yang, cho yang			
	早安 Tzao an		
		午安 Wu an	
			晚安 Wan an
KOREAN:			
안녕하세요? Annyenghaseyyo			
처음 뵈겠습니다 Cheum poypkeyssupnita			
반갑습니다 Pankapsupnita			
	안녕히 주무셨어요? Annyenghi cwumusyesseyo?		
<b>Formula</b>	<b>Literal Translation</b>		
<i>Ni hao (ma)?</i>	Are you well?		
<i>Hsing huei.</i>	Happy meeting.		
<i>Cho yang, cho yang.</i>	I've been admiring you for a long time.		
<i>Tzao an.</i>	Morning peace.		
<i>Wu an.</i>	Afternoon peace.		
<i>Wan an.</i>	Night peace.		

<i>Annyenghaseyyo?</i>	Are you at peace?
<i>Cheum poypkeysssupnita.</i>	I see you for the first time. (honorific verb)
<i>Pankapsupnita.</i>	I am happy.
<i>Annyenghi cwumwuseyyo.</i>	Did you sleep peacefully?

Figure 2. Leave taking formulas

Returning Soon if staying	if leaving	Long Trip/Return if staying	Uncertain if leaving	Before Sleeping
ENGLISH:				
<hr/>				
Good-bye				
<hr/>				
So long. See you again, etc.				
<hr/>				
Have a nice trip				
<hr/>				
				Good night
<hr/>				
CHINESE:				
<hr/>				
再見				
Tzai chien				
<hr/>				
待會見				
Tai huerh chien				
<hr/>				
慢走				
Man tzo				
<hr/>				
一路順風				
I lu shun feng				
<hr/>				
				晚安
				Wan an
<hr/>				
KOREAN:				
<hr/>				
安寧				
Annyeng (extremely informal)				
<hr/>				
安寧히 가세요		安寧히 가세요		
Annyenghi kaseyyo		Annyenghi kaseyyo		
다녀 오세요		다녀 오세요		
Tanye oseyyo		Tanye oseyyo		
<hr/>				
	安寧히 계세요		安寧히 계세요	
	Annyenghi kyeyseyyo		Annyenghi kyeyseyyo	
	다녀 오겠어요		다녀 오겠어요	
	Tanye okeysseyo		Tanye okeysseyo	
<hr/>				
또 뵙겠습니다				
Tto poypkeysssupnita				
<hr/>				
				安寧히 주무세요
				Annyenghi cwu-

<b>Formula</b>	<b>Literal Translation</b>
<i>Tzai chien.</i>	See you again.
<i>Tai huerh chien.</i>	See you later.
<i>Man tzo.</i>	Walk slowly.
<i>I lu shun feng.</i>	Go all the way in the direction of the wind.
<i>Wan an.</i>	Night peace.
<i>Annyeng.</i>	Peace.
<i>Annyenghi kaseyyo.</i>	Go peacefully.
<i>Tanye oseyyo.</i>	Go [travel around] and come back.
<i>Annyenghi kyeyseyyo.</i>	Stay peacefully.
<i>Tanye okeysseyo.</i>	I will go [travel around] and come back.
<i>Tio poypkeysssupnita.</i>	I will see you again. (honorific verb)
<i>Annyenghi cwumuseyyo.</i>	Sleep peacefully.

**Figure 3. Apologizing Strategies**

Greeting	Answering Phone	Getting Attention	Apologizing	Expressing Sympathy
<b>ENGLISH:</b>				
<hr/>				
	Hello		Excuse me/Pardon me	
				I'm sorry
				That's too bad
<hr/>				
<b>CHINESE:</b>				
<hr/>				
				你 好 嗎 Ni hao (ma)?
	喂 Wei			
		對 不 起 Tuei pu chih		
			抱 歉 Pao chien	
<hr/>				
<b>KOREAN:</b>				
<hr/>				
				安寧하세요 Annyenghaseyyo
	여보세요 Yeposeyyo			
		失禮합니다 Sillyeyhapnita		
			容恕하십시오 Yongsehasipsio	
			罪悚합니다 Coysonghapnita	
			未安합니다 Mianhapnita	
				안 됐어요 An toysseyo

<b>Formula</b>	<b>Literal Translation</b>
<i>Ni hao (ma)?</i>	Are you well?
<i>Wei.</i>	Hello.
<i>Tuei pu chih.</i>	I've offended (you).
<i>Pao chien.</i>	I'm sorry.
<i>Annyenghaseyyo?</i>	Are you at peace?
<i>Yeposeyyo.</i>	(Please) look here.
<i>Sillyeyhapnita.</i>	I am impolite.
<i>Yongsehasipsio.</i>	(Please) forgive me.
<i>Coysonghapnita.</i>	I regret [what I did].
<i>Mianhapnita.</i>	I'm sorry.
<i>An toysseyo.</i>	It didn't turn out well.

Figure 4. Thanking formulas

Leave Taking	Thanking	Response to Thanks	Response to Compliment
ENGLISH:			
	Thank you	You're welcome	
		Of course/Sure	
		Not at all/It's nothing	
CHINESE:			
	謝謝		
	Hsieh shieh		
	不好意思		
	Chen pu hao i ssu		
	麻煩您了		
	Ma fan ning le	不客氣	
		Pu k' o ch'i	
		不謝	
		Pu shieh	
			那裏 那裏
			Na li, na li
			沒什麼
			Mei sho ma
KOREAN:			
	手苦하셨습니다		
	Swukohasyesssupnita		
	잘 먹었습니다		
	Cal mekesssupnita		
	感謝합니다		
	Kamsahapnita		
	고맙습니다		
	Komapsupnita		

예/네
Yey/Ney
千萬에요
Chenmaneyyo
別 말씀어요
Pyel malssumulyo

**Formula**

*Hsieh hsieh.*  
*Chen pu hao i ssu.*  
*Ma fan ning le.*  
*Pu k'o ch'i*  
*Pu shieh.*  
*Nali, nali.*  
*Mei sho ma.*

*Swukohasyessupnita.*  
*Cal mekesssupnita.*  
*Kamsahapnita.*  
*Komapsupnita.*  
*Yey/Ney.*  
*Chenmaneyyo.*  
*Pyel malssumulyo.*

**Literal Translation**

Thanks, thanks.  
 I feel ashamed.  
 I've bothered you.  
 Don't be so polite.  
 No thanks. (i.e., You don't have to thank me.)  
 Where, where.  
 [It's] nothing.

You worked hard [for me].  
 I ate well.  
 I thank you.  
 I thank you.  
 Yes (Formal/Informal).  
 It's ten million [words].  
 [You are speaking] special words.

**ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES**

The analysis in this section is based on data elicited from five native speakers of Chinese and five native speakers of Korean using the questionnaires described earlier and included in the appendix. All of the informants were students at the University of Arizona, and none of them had studied the other language. Since all of them were bilingual, proficient in both English and their native language, they were asked to respond to the questionnaire in either their native language or English. A response was coded as correct if the informant was able to write a politeness formula in either language with an illocutionary force equivalent to the formula on the questionnaire. Some of the most common patterns we observed for each group are summarized below. The percentage of correct responses is indicated in parentheses.

**Chinese speakers' responses**

1. 感謝합니다. Thank you. (100%)  
 祝賀합니다. Congratulations. (100%)  
 健康하십시오. Have good health. (80%)

All of these Korean formulas include a combination of characters commonly used in Chinese but not used in Chinese politeness formulas. Still, Chinese respondents were easily able to guess the correct illocutionary force by knowing the meaning of the words.

2. 容恕하십시오. Please forgive me. (80%)

This combination is seldom used in modern Chinese, but the respondents could guess both the meaning and illocutionary force from the semantic content of the individual characters.

3. 罪悚합니다. I am very sorry. (60%)

This combination of characters is never used in Chinese, and in fact seemed very strange to our respondents since the first character (罪) means 'sin' or 'crime', and the second character (悚) refers to something very 'serious' or 'frightening'. It is interesting that 60% guessed correctly, and 40% left the item blank.

4. 失禮합니다. Please excuse me. (20%)

The problem here arises from a different illocutionary force for an expression with basically the same semantic content in the two languages. In Chinese, 失禮 is used as an apology, while in Korean it is an attention-getter. As might be expected, 80% guessed *I'm sorry*.

5. 安寧하십니까? Are you at peace? [greeting] (0%)

The individual character 安 is common in Chinese politeness formulas, but the combination 安寧 'peace' or 'quiet' is not. Chinese respondents could easily guess the semantic content, but the range of possibility for illocutionary force produced a wide range of guesses, including the following: *Did I disturb you? Are you OK? Be quiet, and Be calm.*

6. 千萬의 말씀입니다. It's ten million words. [response to thanks or compliment] (20%)  
 別 말씀을 다 하십니다. You're using all special words. [response to compliment] (0%)

The Chinese characters in these Korean politeness formulas really give no clue to the meaning or the usage since they represent common words in both languages used in many different contexts.

### Korean speakers' responses

The questionnaires completed by Korean speakers produced some similar results. For example, 謝謝 *Thanks* (100%) and 再見 *See you again* (100%) were easy for the Koreans to guess since the individual characters used in these formulas are common in Korean and have the same meaning as in Chinese. Even though these two-character combinations are not used in Korean, they "made sense" to the Koreans. Other combinations of characters not used in Korean, such as 晚安 *Good night* or *Good evening* (60%) and 不謝 *You're welcome* (40%), produced fewer correct responses and a wide range of guesses. Combinations of characters even less transparent to Koreans, such as 不客氣 *Don't be so polite [You're welcome]* (0%), led to some very interesting (and close) guesses but no correct responses.

There was one other interesting phenomenon on the questionnaires filled out by Koreans that we did not anticipate. We found that Koreans were very reluctant to guess when they were unsure of the answers even when they indicated orally that they might have been able to do so. One explanation for this is that educated Koreans are expected to know and use many Chinese characters. Our respondents, therefore, may have felt that the questionnaire was a test of their education and/or intelligence. In any case, the Koreans seemed to face the task of filling out the questionnaires much more seriously (in one case even resorting to a Korean-English dictionary) than did the Chinese, who seemed to find it more interesting and even enjoyable. This factor most probably had a negative influence on the number of correct responses given by Korean informants, and therefore affected the results of the survey.

## CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Through contrastive analysis, we were able to identify cases of equivalence, non-equivalence, and partial (or overlapping) equivalence in semantic content, illocutionary force, and rules for use among some common politeness formulas in Chinese and Korean. Furthermore, our brief survey, in which we asked Chinese and Korean speakers to guess the meanings of politeness formulas in the other language, seems to support the usefulness of the contrastive approach; the patterns that emerged from the survey seemed to be largely predictable from the contrastive analysis. We feel, therefore, that these results might have some useful pedagogical implications. First, it seems obvious that a contrastive analysis approach can help to identify some areas of ease and difficulty in recognizing and learning politeness formulas for Chinese learners of Korean and Korean learners of Chinese. Second, we think that politeness formulas would be a good starting point for teaching Korean to Chinese or Chinese to Koreans because of the many overlaps that do occur, even though the two languages are very different in other areas.

In addition, patterns of equivalence, non-equivalence, and partial equivalence observed in the meaning and usage of the Chinese characters in Chinese and Korean politeness formulas suggest other pedagogical applications. First, even if a politeness formula is not recognizable at first glance, it seems that the presence of familiar characters might still act as a mnemonic device in helping learners to memorize these useful expressions. Second, once a pattern of usage and general meaning in the other language is established for certain words or characters through memorization of a politeness formula, it may be easier to understand (or use) those items when they are encountered (or needed) in other, more general, contexts.

Finally, and somewhat surprisingly, the most common patterns of Korean borrowing we noticed involved combinations of Chinese characters used in Korean politeness formulas which are not used in Chinese politeness formulas. It would be interesting to investigate why this is so: Did Chinese expressions borrowed several centuries ago become fixed in Korean but were replaced in Chinese? Or was it perhaps because most words were borrowed through written Chinese which included fewer formulas and more formal and polite language?

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## APPENDIX

## Politeness Formulas Included on Questionnaires

Korean Formulas (given to Chinese informants)

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. 感謝합니다.       | I thank you.   |
| 2. 千萬의 말씀입니다.   | It's ten million words. (response to thanks)                 |
| 3. 別말씀을 다 하십니다. | You are speaking all special words. (response to compliment) |
| 4. 安寧하십니까?      | Are you at peace? (greeting)                                 |
| 5. 失禮합니다.       | I am impolite. (attention getter/apology)                    |
| 6. 容恕하십시오.      | Please forgive me.   |
| 7. 罪悚합니다.       | I regret [what I did]. (apology)                             |
| 8. 未安합니다.       | I'm sorry.   |
| 9. 健康하십시오.      | Have good health. (leave taking)                             |
| 10. 祝賀합니다.      | Congratulations.   |

Chinese Formulas (given to Korean informants)

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 1. 對不起  | I've offended [you]. (apology)                              |
| 2. 晚安   | Night peace. (greeting/leave taking/saying good night)      |
| 3. 再見   | See you again.  |
| 4. 待會兒見 | See you later.  |
| 5. 慢走   | Walk slowly. (leave taking)                                 |
| 6. 一路順風 | Go all the way in the direction of the wind. (leave taking) |
| 7. 謝謝   | Thanks, thanks.   |
| 8. 不客氣  | Don't be so polite. (response to thanks)                    |
| 9. 不謝   | No thanks. (response to thanks)                             |
| 10. 沒什  | [It's] nothing. (response to compliment)                    |