

## A Contrastive Study of Chinese and Korean Honorifics

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### Abstract

**With the continuous development of internationalization, the communication between China and Korea is increasing. Since ancient times, both China and Korea have attached great importance to etiquette culture, especially the use of honorifics in daily communication. Chinese and Korean are two 'beautiful flowers' in the world's language. They are worth appreciating by us. Therefore, through the comparative study of honorifics between China and Korea, this paper classifies the two languages and enriches the expression of the article by giving examples. The whole article is divided into seven parts. The first part is a brief introduction to the study of honorifics between China and Korea; the second part is the reasons for the comparative study of honorifics between the two countries; the third part is the methods used in the study; the fourth part is an example analysis of the comparative study; the fifth part is a concrete comparative analysis of the use of honorifics between China and Korea; the sixth part is the significance of the study and the last part are deficiencies and prospects of this paper.**

### Keywords

**Contrastive study; Honorifics; Chinese and Korean languages; Etiquette culture.**

### 1. Introduction

As we all know, honorifics is one of the most important things when we have a communication with other people, and it is related to our daily lives. With the increasing communication happening all over the world, we can form a awareness that a polite way of expressions was definitely an important part.

In this case, I have a research in the differences between 'Chinese way of polite language' and 'Korean way of polite language'.

Although China and Korean are both 'the state of ceremonies', Because of various factors such as history, culture and all, Chinese and Korean seem belong to two different types of language. And at the same time, the two countries' polite ways of expressions are also very different.

### 2. Why Do I Have This Research?

China and Korea have a long history of cultural exchanges and the two countries have close relations. Both of them have common historical and cultural background. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the cooperation between them have made remarkable achievements.

At the same time, honorifics, as a medium of communication and cooperation, also plays an increasingly important role. Polite language helps the people of China and South Korean to establish and maintain good interpersonal relations. It is the lubricant for harmonious communication between the two countries' people. Politeness is an appropriate language, and it transcends international boundaries, cultural and racial divides. It is also essentially a manifestation of human self-esteem and respect for others.

Nowadays, language and cultural exchanges between China and Korea are increasingly frequent, and more and more foreign students are learning the two languages. Among them, the proportion of the Chinese students who are studying Korean and the Korean students who are studying Chinese is the largest.

The study of Chinese and Korean politeness terms will help me better understand the differences between China and Korea. Polite expression is often used in our daily life and communication. It is closely related to our life. Therefore, the study of politeness terms in China and Korea is of great significance not only to sociolinguistics but also to social education.

Through analysis of data, I found that at present, the research on the honorifics of China and South Korea is not a lot. So I hope that through our investigation and research, I can enrich the knowledge in this field.

### 3. What Methods Do I Use to Carry Out Such Research?

Honorifics, as an integral part of linguistic norms and moral norms, has always been valued by people all over the world, especially in China and Korea. In this study, from the perspective of comparative analysis, I will make a comparative analysis of the content and classification of polite language in the two countries, and draw some conclusions.

### 4. Examples of honorific expressions in China and Korea

I still remember the Korean TV series ——"The descendants of the sun", which was very popular a long time ago. The performances of the actors Song Zhongji and Song Huiqiao are really excellent. In the drama, the girl called Jiang Muyan is only 2 years older than the girl called Yin Mingzhu, but Yin Mingzhu should call Jiang Muyan "predecessor". This is an incredible thing in Chinese culture. In China, only when people who are over 10 years older or have a lot more academic qualifications than others can they be called predecessors. Otherwise, the person being addressed will feel a little unhappy.

Lieutenant Liu is an officer of Sergeant Xu, but Sergeant Xu is older than Lieutenant Liu. so when they greet with each other, they both use honorific words, although obviously they are very close friends. So we can see from this that Korean people attach great importance to the use of honorifics when speaking.

In China, the usage of honorifics is not paid special attention in daily life. But on important occasions, people pay special attention to the polite words.

There is a legend circulated in China until today called 'Tian Xian Pei'. The selection of Huangmei Opera is based on the story. Dong Yong, in Tian Xian Pei, is a gentle and elegant man, who pays great attention to his words and deeds. When Dong Yong went to visit the high-ranking prime minister, what he said was, "Hello, long time to look up to you." It means 'long-awaited'(久仰). When Dong Yong was at home waiting for his father-in-law to arrive, at the time he saw his father-in-law, what he said was, "I'm looking forward to seeing you." The sentence is used when Chinese people wait for guests, it means 'respectful'(恭候).

### 5. Classification of Honorifics

#### 5.1. For Chinese

Chinese honorifics are mainly divided into two categories: honorifics of appellation and honorifics of expression.

Honorifics of appellation can be divided into personal honorifics, kinship honorifics, age honorifics, professional honorifics and diplomatic honorifics.

Honorifics of expression can be divided into certain honorifics vocabulary and honorifics phrases containing a certain honorifics morpheme.

## 5.2. For Korean

Korean mainly expresses the speaker's respect through the change of linguistic elements such as vocabulary, auxiliary words, respectful ending, and sometimes through self-modesty and euphemism. It can be divided into three categories: subject honorifics, object honorifics and listener honorifics.

When it refers to which way can be decided to express respect, it according to the participants in the respectful communication activities or the tasks mentioned by the speaker.

Next, I'll give a detailed description of these three types.

The first one is 'subject honorifics'. Subject honorifics is the expression of respect for the subject of a sentence. The second one is 'object honorifics'. Object honorifics refers to the subject expressing respect for the object, that is, the subject expressing respect or politeness to the recipient of his action. The last one is 'listener honorifics'. Listener honorifics, which is also known as relative honorifics. It mainly refers to the speaker who chooses the corresponding form of termination according to 'the age, the degree of familiarity and alienation, status and other factors'.

'listener honorifics' differs from the first two forms of honorifics in that the object respected by subject honorifics and object honorifics can be present or absent.

## 5.3. A Contrast of polite language between Chinese and Korean

Chinese honorifics are mainly divided from the perspective of linguistic acceptance, while Korean is mainly divided from respected objects. There are no classifications of Chinese polite terms such as subject honorifics, object honorifics and listening honorifics in Korean. Chinese honorifics have not formed a systematic and mature system of polite language. On the contrary, Korean honorifics system is more developed, with various and complex forms to express different degrees of politeness.

## 6. The Meanings of the Study of Honorifics Words in Chinese and Korean

Through this research, we can improve our awareness of politeness. We need to constantly learn polite language to improve our quality and cultivate ourselves. We can also show foreigners our Chinese etiquette culture.

Cultivating our 'Intercultural Communication Thoughts'. On the premise of learning our mother tongue well, we can expand some other countries' simple polite sentence, which will enable us to better understand the cultural diversity, understand the culture of other nationalities, and go to the world.

It can help Korean or Chinese learners to have new inspiration while learning the language, help them understand that the rules of using the language are varied, and sometimes the ways of expression can be different.

Both China and Korea are "countries of etiquette" and are deeply influenced by Confucianism. Through this analysis and research, readers can know that the etiquette culture of the two countries are different, and there are also differences in expression. In this way, Chinese or Korean learners can avoid errors while learning or using them.

## 7. Deficiencies in This Study

In this study, due to the limitation of language ability, it is impossible to study Korean in depth, so it is possible that the study of Korean honorifics in the process of analysis is not deep enough and not comprehensive enough.

The study of honorifics in China and Korea mostly focuses on the analysis of sentence structure and object of language expression, but there are other aspects that are not involved.

The scope of the study is not broad enough, and it has not been further analyzed from the age, occupation and other levels.

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