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Korean speech styles and Finnish terms of address from the perspective of KFL learners

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Korean speech styles (*hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey* in particular) are compared with Finnish terms of address from the perspective of KFL learners, focusing on three variables, namely “power”, “distance”, and “imposition” (Brown and Levinson, 1987). The comparison is based on Peterson (2010), which the current study replicates. The data were collected during a Discourse Completion Task: seventy-eight native speakers of Korean were provided with seven scenarios depicting everyday situations. The results underpin the common belief that *hayyo-chey* is the most common speech style in Korean society. On the pedagogical level, therefore, it should be considered unmarked, meaning that no explication such as “informal polite” is required. However, *hapsyo-chey* should be introduced as a speech style that may be mixed with *hayyo-chey*, but also as the norm exclusively used in some restricted formal and writing contexts. Other speech styles may be explained in a similar manner in the KFL classroom.

Keywords: Korean speech styles, hearer-honorifics, *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey*, Korean as a foreign language (KFL), Finnish terms of address

1. Introduction

Among the most distinctive Korean language-specific elements is the characterization of speech styles by predicate endings, an adequate use of which is crucial both morphologically and pragmatically. However, morphological mistakes are acceptable, or may not be noted, whereas socio-pragmatic mistakes are considered offensive and impolite, even deliberate. As a consequence, teachers of Korean as a foreign language (KFL) should pay attention not only to the morphological accuracy on which learners are focused in general, but also more specifically to predicate endings with regard to the socio-cultural aspects of the language. In par-

ticular, KFL learners tend to find it difficult to make socio-pragmatic distinctions between the hearer-honorifics *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey* from among the several speech styles of Korean. One reason for this may be that they are categorized pedagogically by terms such as “deferential”, “polite”, “formal”, and “informal”.

The aim in this study is to provide novice learners of Korean with further pedagogical explication of these styles by comparing Korean and Finnish hearer-honorifics. The analysis is based on three variables, namely “power”, “distance”, and “imposition”, as defined in Brown and Levinson (1987), even though their universal view of linguistic politeness has been criticized, especially concerning the lack of correlation between politeness and indirectness among various languages including Korean and Japanese. Nevertheless, the present study replicates the experiment of Peterson (2010) based on situational speech act data in Finnish, which entails several social parameters, including variation in power and distance relations between interlocutors, and also in the rate of imposition (see Brown and Levinson, 1987).

The reason for choosing Finnish is its system of hearer-honorifics marked in the verb, as the mirror of a sentential subject. In other words, the Finnish language overtly demonstrates analogous linguistic features such that the demonstrations may be conspicuously compared with Korean on the surface level of syntax. Moreover, Finnish hearer-honorifics may express formality and deference, but do not necessarily mark politeness, and Finnish society is characterized by higher levels of formality and distance (Pettersson and Nurmela, 2007). Nevertheless, there is a difference in language ideology, the details of which are not taken into account in the present study.

2. Descriptive explanations of *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey*

Predicates of the Korean language are heavily inflected, motivated not only by morphological aspects, but also by socio-pragmatic factors that characterize speech styles, which are generally categorized into six types – *hapsyo-chey*, *hayyo-chey*, *hao-chey*, *hakey-chey*, *hay-chey* and *hayla-chey* – in contemporary Korean society (Sohn, 1999; J.-B. Lee, 2012);¹ the equivalent labels in English are “deferential”, “polite”, “blunt/semiformal”, “familiar”, “intimate” and “plain”, respectively (Sohn, 1999; Brown, 2011). On the other hand, Lee and Cho (2015) present five speech styles, excluding “familiar” and preserving “deferential” for *hapsyo-chey*

1. Although diminishing, *hao-chey* and *hakey-chey* are still present in contemporary Korean society, mainly uttered by older generations. Hence, these speech styles are mentioned here but are not discussed with reference to KFL learners.

and “polite” for *hayyo-chey* under the umbrella of addressee honorific verbal suffixes. The seven categories of speech styles in Kim-Renaud (2009) simply include “super-deferential”² appended to the above-mentioned six.

It is clear from a cursory glance at the English terminology that, regardless of the number of speech styles, one is explicitly termed “polite”, whereas the others reflect the presence or absence of connotations of deference and (psychological) distance.³ If these descriptive terms are used in the KFL classroom, learners may be driven to assume that “plain” is devoid of deference and distance, but could shift to another speech style in accordance with the degree of connotation. Concurrently, learners may question whether the other speech styles are perceived as just as polite as the “polite” styles, or whether they lack linguistic politeness.

As Choo (1999) points out, such terminological confusion might cause a conceptual misunderstanding of Korean hearer-honorifics among KFL learners, given the obscure explanation: KFL learning materials introduce the predicate endings for *hapsyo-chey* as the formal polite style, *hayyo-chey* as the informal polite style, *hay-chey* as the impolite/intimate style and *hayla-chey* as the plain style. Therefore, Choo (2006:113) adopted the following terms in his categorization of the four speech styles: “heavily formal”, “gently formal”, “soft casual”, and “non-conversational/plain casual”. It is by no means simplistic to label Korean speech styles with more adequately expressive English terms with KFL learners in mind. Likewise, it is equally or more complex to determine them situationally in social interaction, as the result of discursive social acts. In particular, speech styles couched in honorifics that are introduced at the novice level co-occur ubiquitously, uttered by one speaker within a single (group of) interlocutor(s) in a monotonous context, as well as exclusively in limited contexts. Korean society does maintain the difference between *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey*, resisting colating them despite the mixed usage.

Strauss and Eun (2005) suggest that they differ in terms of the semantic feature +/–BOUNDARY and its attendant indexing of EXCLUSION and INCLUSION within the phenomenon known as honorific speech level alternation, whereas Eun and Strauss (2004) claim that *hapsyo-chey* delivers new non-shared information and *hayyo-chey* shares common-sense-level information. C.-S. Lee (1996), in

2. This style is considered inappropriate in normal interpersonal relationships and is used only in prayers, poetry, and rituals, although it was not infrequent as recently as in the mid-twentieth century. (cited from Kim-Renaud, 2009: 222)

3. Suh (1984) and Sung (1985) use the semantic features [±DEFERENCE] and [±FORMALITY] to distinguish between speech styles. The respective corresponding features used in this study are [+/-HONORIFIC] and [+/-DISTANCE], respectively, although they are not identical.

turn, posits that *hapsyo-chey* cannot occur with epistemic modal endings, being inclined to accompany strong statements of factual new information, whereas *hayyo-chey* is used in connection with common knowledge, conjecture, and personal comments. Moreover, according to Yoon (2014), *hapsyo-chey* connotes ritualized self-presentation compatible with a reserved situation when a speaker delivers information or makes an announcement, and *hayyo-chey* a soft affective stance as used in interactive discourses in which people share with interlocutors affects denoting friendliness, intimacy, interaction, emotions, and personal feelings, for example.

There are numerous other studies investigating this unresolved issue in the fields of both theoretical and applied linguistics, including KFL pedagogy. Among them, Brown (2011) situates it in the dimension of second language acquisition (L2A) among English speakers, whose native language (L1) lacks the syntactic devices to compare it with Korean hearer-honorifics on the surface level. I do not deal with L2A here, but rather consider Korean speech styles via Finnish (no-)address terms, from the perspective of KFL learning/teaching. I expect the replicating comparison to assess the validity of linguistic politeness in *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey*, because ‘polite’ is the descriptive term shared by the hearer-honorifics in the KFL classroom. At this point, I should point out that the current study does not purport to investigate linguistic politeness, the focus being on producing a pedagogical explication of hearer-honorific speech styles for KFL learners.

3. Hearer-honorifics

Hearer-honorifics are consonant with social deixis, reflecting identities and relations among interlocutors in a given context. In English, this is manifest in terms of address such as the titles of authority figures (e.g. *Mr. President*, *Your Majesty*, *Your Excellency*) and professional ranks (e.g. *Professor*, *Reverend*, *General*), as well as in general deferential forms such as *sir* and *madam*, but no other type of hearer-honorific device seems to be available. Within a sentence, the single, uniform second-person pronoun *you* is used as the address term.

Korean hearer-honorifics, on the other hand, manifest in phrasal endings, as well as by means of English-like address terms in place of the second-person pronoun in a sentence. The syntactic constituent of any address term can be normatively omitted in Korean, but hearer-honorific phrasal endings cannot. As for Finnish, the plural form of the second-person pronoun *te* is construed as a hearer-honorific, denoting deference, and the suffix indicating the pronoun may be marked on diverse sentential constituents. No address term is employed as a

tactic in a certain context, hence in this case no suffix is attached to the sentential constituents so as to realize the agreement.

These two language-specific honorifics are briefly examined in this section: phrasal endings for Korean and (no-)address terms for Finnish.

3.1 Speech styles in Korean

Korean speech styles are characterized by their corresponding predicate endings; the relationship between each participant in a given conversation may be associated not only with the scale of distance, but also with a variety of other factors such as age, generation, kinship, occupation, social tie, rank, hometown, and the discourse context. Socio-pragmatic mistakes with respect to honorifics may not be tolerated amongst native Koreans, whereas other grammatical errors are generously accepted. Mistakes, particularly regarding hearer-honorifics, might give an unfavorable impression of the speaker.

Of the six types of Korean speech styles listed in Table 1, the focus in this study is on the hearer-honorific styles *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey*, which are introduced at a very early stage in Korean language courses. In the context of KFL, *hapsyo-chey* is described as formally polite, and is also referred to as “deferential” depending on the learning materials, whereas *hayyo-chey* is usually described as informally polite. Despite the contrast between “formal” and “informal”, the two predicate endings are often mixed within one speech event, except when the given discourse takes place in a strictly controlled setting such as a news program, public speeches and military contexts.

Table 1. Korean speech styles

Korean term	Declarative ending	Honorific category	Formal/Informal	English name
<i>hapsyo-chey</i>	-nita	Honorific	Formal	Deferential
<i>hayyo-chey</i>	-yo		Informal	Polite
<i>hao-chey</i>	-(s)o	Semi-honorific	–	Semiformal
<i>hakey-chey</i>	-ney	Non-honorific	–	Familiar
<i>hay-chey</i>	-a/e	Non-honorific	Informal	Intimate
<i>hayla-chey</i>	-ta		Formal	Plain

Most native Korean speakers consider *hapsyo-chey* more respectful than *hayyo-chey* (Choi, 1977; Suh, 1984). Moreover, *hapsyo-chey* is used exclusively, or predominantly, in more formal contexts such as job interviews, weather broadcasts, business meetings and the like, in addition to the settings mentioned earlier.

In any case, many native Korean speakers would find the obsessive use of *hapsyo-chey* masculine and *hayyo-chey* feminine (see Yeon and Brown, 2011: 174).

E-mail and text messages are indispensable in daily communication nowadays, and *hapsyo-chey* is the norm in many hearer-honorific cases of written discourse in Korean. Even in casual messages it is often exclusively adopted instead of *hayyo-chey*, reflecting the relationship between the sender and the receiver: as Yoon and D.-E. Lee (2011) found in their experiment, *hapsyo-chey* was used more frequently among Korean students asking a professor via e-mail for further time to finish their homework. Moreover, the whole control group of nine Korean students in an experiment conducted by J.-Y. Kim (2016) used *hapsyo-chey* in e-mail messages making an appointment with a professor. However, it is assumed that the same students in both experiments would prefer *hayyo-chey* in face-to-face discussions involving the same content as in the e-mail message delivered to the professor. Regardless of the delivery manner, needless to say, all official, formal and public letters adopt *hapsyo-chey*.

On the other hand, *hayyo-chey* is the most general hearer-honorific predicate ending of the six used in daily spoken discourse. According to Park (1978), most children use intimate and plain speech styles before they start school, adding the polite style during their years at primary school and including the formal style in their spoken discourse at secondary school. Some might only use these four speech styles throughout their entire lives, while others adopt five or six. It could be concluded from her observations that *hayyo-chey* is widely used outside the home in Korean society, and may be used in almost all everyday speech settings except for those involving small children. Resonating with Park's (1978) observation, Sohn (1994) remarks that *hayyo-chey* is the most commonly used speech style of his six categories. According to Lee and Ramsey (2000), it is broadly used in virtually any situation and for all purposes with superiors and inferiors alike. Lukoff (1982) describes *hayyo-chey* as the honorific ordinary style.

The putative concepts of the two hearer-honorific speech styles are roughly summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. The putative concepts of *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey*

Hearer-honorific predicate endings	
<i>hapsyo-chey</i>	<i>hayyo-chey</i>
Formal & Polite	Informal & Polite
Most respectful / deferential	
Masculine; Written discourse	Feminine; Most widely used in spoken discourse in Korean society

In terms of being formal or informal, it is assumed that KFL learners take a straightforward approach to the difference between *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey*; they simply perceive one as formal and the other as informal, as shown in Tables 1 and 2. Thus, it is feasible for learners to make a strict distinction between the two speech styles in accordance with the degree of formality, relying heavily on the predicate endings to express their politeness.

3.2 Finnish (no-)address terms in comparison with Korean

Although Finnish does not possess the same type of hearer-honorific predicate endings as Korean, the sentential verb inflects depending on the subject. If one wishes to compare Korean hearer-honorifics and Finnish (no-)address terms, one needs to look at how the Finnish hearer-honorific pronoun *te* is encoded in the sentential elements. Finnish has two second-person pronouns, the singular form *sinä* and the plural form *te*. The honorific form is the same as the plural form.

Table 3. Second-person pronouns in Finnish

Singular	Plural (formal / honorific)
<i>sinä</i>	<i>te</i>

In Finnish, conforming to the conjugation rules as demonstrated in Table 4, the address is encoded in the verb, and the possessive form as a suffix. The personal pronoun must be marked on the verb in the corresponding suffix form. The subject pronouns presented in brackets are optional, but the predicate suffixes are obligatory, to be specified in agreement with the sentential subject. On the other hand, “possessive” can be realized in the form of either a genitive pronoun or a suffix, the latter being independent of agreement, but it may appear with diverse syntactic constituents. According to Helasvuoto and Laitinen (2006:179), dropping a subject pronoun has a clear social meaning, reflecting the formality of the situation, for instance. It is also possible in Finnish to describe one’s own or someone else’s activity without having an explicit agent in the sentence through the passive, the plural form, or the third-person-singular generic (Muikku-Werner, 1993). The use of agent-free sentences enables the speaker to avoid using any second-person markings. Regarding Finnish politeness, one tactic is to avoid the address term entirely (Yli-Vakkuri, 2005).

The following example of a reminder posted on the door of a changing room indicates that the Finnish *te* in (1b) would seem too formal and artificial. Thus, a term of address is avoided in this context, as is the verb reflecting such a term; yet, in (1a) no term of address is used.

Table 4. Personal pronouns encoded in the verb and the possessive form

	Pronoun	Puhu-a 'speak'	Possessive pronouns	Nimi 'name'
Singular				
1st person	(minä)	puhu-n	(minun)	nime-ni
2nd person	(sinä)	puhu-t	(sinun)	nime-si
3rd person	(hän)	puhu-u	(hänen)	nime-nsä
Plural				
1st person	(me)	puhu-mme	(meidän)	nime-mme
2nd person	(te)	puhu-tte	(teidän)	nime-nne
3rd person	(he)	puhu-vat	(heidän)	nime-nsä
Passive		puhu-taan		

(1) Examples from Yli-Vakkuri (2005: 191)

- a. Unohtu-i-ko jotain?
forgotten-Past-Q something
'Was something forgotten?'
- b. Unohditteko (te) jotain?
forget-Past-Q (you) something
'Did you forget something?'

Likewise, Finnish speakers tend to omit terms of address when they are unsure whether to use the familiar/informal *sinä* or the formal *te*. In other words, they use them when they possess accurate information about each other. Similarly, the formal honorific and the non-honorific styles are employed in Korean when the speaker is confident about the degree of formality and the social deixis of the addressee; otherwise, *haysyo-chey* would be adopted. Hence, in Table 5 I attempt to add Korean speech styles to Yli-Vakkuri's table, which categorizes Finnish terms of address according to the degree of formality. According to Yli-Vakkuri (2005), some Finnish speakers demand the official formal code of politeness be used in the speech setting of (B), whereas others naturally use the familiar/intimate/informal/private mode of address. It may be that neither *te* nor *sinä* is used in this situation, as illustrated in the darkest column in Table 5, when some Korean speakers may similarly demand *haysyo-chey* and others prefer *haysyo-chey*.

By comparison, it is assumed that *haysyo-chey* could be used where a no-address term is adopted in Finnish. Korean speakers would feel free to employ both *haysyo-chey* and *haysyo-chey* within a given discourse setting (B), but KFL leaners would predominantly prefer *haysyo-chey* and wonder about mixing them,

Table 5. Degree of formality in speech situations and corresponding expressions in Finnish and Korean (modified from Yli-Vakkuri (2005:197))

Degree of formality	Finnish address terms	Korean honorifics
(A) Official Formal (ceremonial)	<i>te</i> titles respectful epithets	<i>hapsyo-chey</i>
(B) Unofficial Formal	<i>te</i>	<i>hapsyo-chey</i>
	generic verb forms (ellipsis), no address	<i>hayyo-chey</i>
(C) Familiar Intimate Informal Private	<i>sinä</i>	(<i>hayyo-chey</i>)
	nicknames, pet names, abusive expressions, kinship etc.	<i>hay-chey</i>

even though the two speech styles share the descriptive term “polite” in the majority of KFL learning materials. On the other hand, it is standard practice to use *te* and *hapsyo-chey* in speech setting (A) and *sinä* and a non-honorific speech style in speech setting (C). Even, *hayyo-chey* may be also used in Korean in the context of (C), excluding “abusive”.

4. Data collection

As mentioned above, the current study replicates the experiment conducted in Peterson (2010). I have included information about her experiment in this section to show that the comparison of the results is valid.

4.1 Participants

4.1.1 The Finnish participants

Peterson’s (2010) experiment involved sixty-eight Finnish speakers (twenty-one males and forty-seven females), who were somewhat younger than average in the Finnish population: almost half of them were under the age of thirty. The experiment comprised a Discourse Completion Task in which a questionnaire with seven scenario prompts was distributed to elicit request speech acts. The scenarios were designed with the Helsinki speech community in mind. Each informant was individually interviewed by the researcher for approximately 30–60 minutes. During the interviews the informants could comment on the possible unnaturalness of the prompts, and further explain why they held this opinion.

4.1.2 The Korean participants

The Korean data, in turn, were collected via an online questionnaire distributed through social network services such as Facebook and Kakao during the period from 17 December 2019 to 6 January 2020. There were twenty-one male and fifty-seven female participants. Seventy-eight out of the ninety-one responses were accepted for analysis. The rest had to be discarded because the respondents failed to complete the questionnaire, skipped questions or avoided providing the required personal information. Moreover, some of them were based abroad. Most of the eventual participants were middle-aged, and all were based in Seoul and Gyeonggi Province, where standard Korean is spoken. They were individually invited to join the survey by family members and friends of the author, as well as the author herself. The data are sufficiently traceable to be modestly controlled, although the participants remain anonymous. They were asked at the end of the questionnaire to provide personal information such as sex, age group, occupation and city of residence. Given that the survey was conducted online, no interviews were carried out to discuss the responses in person. Figures 1–3 and Tables 6–8 show the proportions and numbers of participants according to sex, age group and occupation.

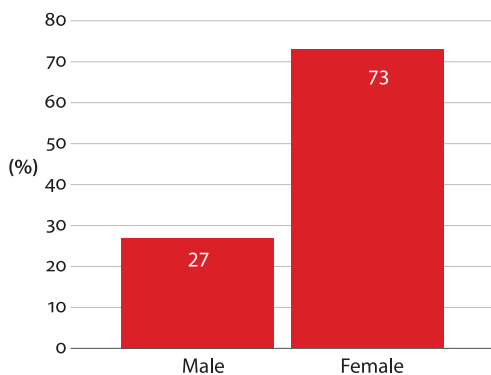


Figure 1. Distribution by sex

Table 6. The Korean participants by sex

Male	21
Female	57
Total	78

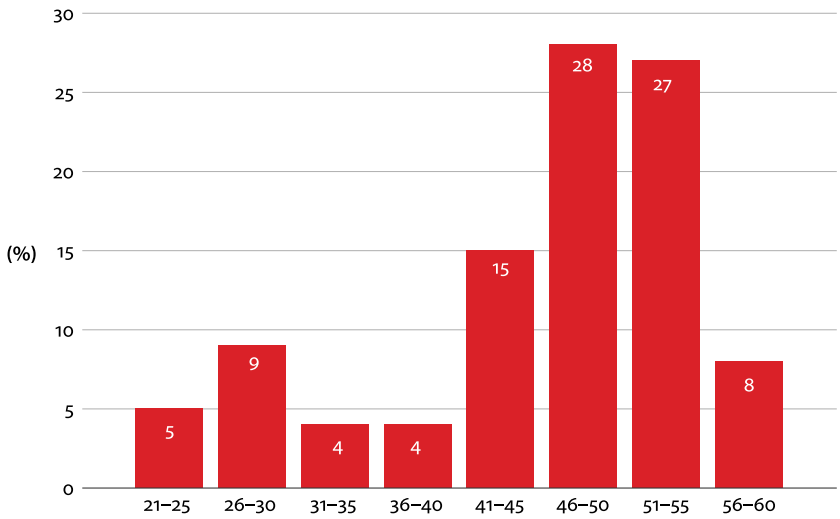


Figure 2. Distribution by age group

Table 7. The Korean participants by age group

Age group	20-25	26-30	32-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	Total
Number of respondents	4	7	3	3	12	22	21	6	78

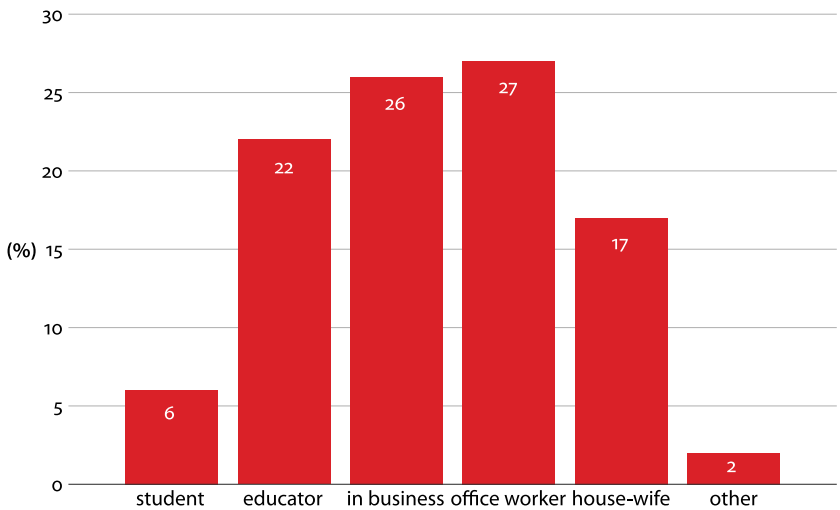


Figure 3. Distribution by occupation

Table 8. The Korean participants by occupation

Occupation	Number of respondents
Student	5
Educator	17
In business	20
Office worker	21
Housewife	13
Other	2
Total	78

4.2 The questionnaire

The scenarios originating from Peterson (2010) depict everyday situations that vary in the level of power, distance, and rate of imposition. The power variable has trinary values, the status of the speaker being higher than [+], lower than [-], or equal to [=] that of the hearer. The distance variable is binary, [+] or [-]; the speaker either is or is not familiar with the hearer. The rate of imposition is also binary, [+] or [-]; in other words, the request is either face-threatening, or it is not. Peterson's seven scenario prompts were translated into Korean, but the Scenario BUS question was modified to make it relevant to contemporary Korean society. The property of each scenario as well as the seven prompts are presented below.

- BOSS (+P, -D, -R)
You work at a telecommunications company. You ask your assistant to take your phone messages while you are in a business meeting. Your assistant has worked in your department for five years.
- LUNCH (-P, +D, +R)
You are a secretary, and you have worked at the company for three weeks. Today you want to meet a friend for lunch, so you ask your supervisor if you can leave early.
- BUS (=P, +D, -R)
You are waiting for a bus in the neighborhood. You don't know the number of the bus that goes to Seoul Railway Station. One of your neighbors is also at the bus stop. You are familiar with the face, but you don't know the person.
- SALT (=P, -D, -R)
You are cooking dinner at home, and your (close relation) is in the kitchen. You need salt, and your hands are oily.
- PHONE (=P, +D, +R)
You are on your way downtown on the bus and battery in your mobile phone is dead. You need to phone your friend to decide where to meet for coffee. The person sitting next to you, who is about the same age, has a mobile phone.

– MOVIE (=P, +D, +R)

You are in the audience at the movies. Two little girls in front of you are talking, and you can't hear the soundtrack. You decide to say something to the girls' mother.

– WATER (+P, +D, -R)

You are in a restaurant. You are already eating your meal, and then you decide you would like to have some water. The waiter comes to the table, and you say:

In order to improve Scenario BUS and to allow optimal comparison of the two languages, bus 'timetable' was replaced with bus 'number' because no bus timetable is available in the Korean capital area. In addition, because some Finnish participants, stimulated by the Finnish term *nainen* 'woman', imagined an elderly lady, it was replaced with *halmeni* 'elderly woman' in Korean. The original scenario was translated with modest modifications to minimize the gap between the two cultures concerning the distance variable.

The contrived Discourse Completion Task in Peterson (2010) inevitably affects the authenticity of the data. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to expect that the data manifests certain types of difference between speech styles in the minds of Korean speakers, and shows the respective tendencies, even if the responses were imaginary and collected in written form.

5. Analysis and discussion

The Korean data are categorized into five groups: '*hapsyo-chey*', '*hayyo-chey*', '*hay-chey*', 'mixed' and 'no response'. The Korean ritual phrases meaning 'How are you?', 'Thank you', 'Excuse me' and 'Sorry' were excluded because it was not clear whether the phrasal ending attached to them was the outcome affected by the variables or whether it was taken as a normative form. The results from the Korean data are presented in Table 9, together with those from the Finnish data.

– BOSS

In this situation, the speaker's status at work is higher in Korean society with its fairly strict "power" hierarchy. However, the boss is requesting something from the assistant, who is familiar. Simply on the basis of formality and politeness, the formal *hapsyo-chey* would not be used because the context is considered informal: the informal *hayyo-chey* speech style must be employed throughout the situation. In fact, *hayyo-chey* was used most frequently, by 70 percent of the respondents, whereas *hapsyo-chey* was used by 12 percent and *hay-chey* by 13 percent. However, the mixed usage of the two styles does not

Table 9. Summarized results from the data (%)

Situation	Variables			Korean					Finnish		
	P	D	R	<i>hapsyo- chey</i>	<i>hayyo- chey</i>	Non- honorific	Mixed	No answer	<i>te</i>	<i>sinä</i>	NA/ plural
BOSS	+	-	-	12	70	13	4	0	1	99	0
LUNCH	-	+	+	36	58	0	6	5	0	4	96
BUS	=	+	-	2	92	0	2	4	33	40	27
SALT	=	-	-	0	14	81	4	1	0	92	8
PHONE	=	+	+	3	95	0	1	1	11	85	4
MOVIE	=	+	+	14	73	4	5	4	8	8	84
WATER	+	+	-	8	90	0	1	1	1	16	83

imply that the speakers perceived the situation as anything other than informal: it should rather be interpreted as signifying different psychological attitudes among the speakers, or the relationships of the interlocutors, given that the situation is the same.

– LUNCH

This situation also represents a work setting, but the speaker has a lower status and is unfamiliar with the boss; thus, the request is considered high in terms of imposition. Reflecting this aspect, five percent of the respondents indicated that it was impossible to make such a request in that situation: in contrast, there were no missing responses in Scenario BOSS. The increased use of *hapsyo-chey* (36%) and the zero use of *hay-chey* also confirm the speaker's attitude of high imposition toward the hearer in this situation. On the other hand, seven percent of the respondents used both *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey*. The 'mixed' figure is close to that of Scenario BOSS, whereas *hayyo-chey* is used far less in this situation. The BOSS and LUNCH scenarios are informal, even though the respective response patterns differ. The usage of *hayyo-chey* (58%) is still the highest among the categorizations, but far lower than that in Scenario BOSS. The speaker's attitude rather than the type of discourse setting, in other words the notion of formality, might explain this phenomenon more efficiently.

– BUS

The power status between the interlocutors is considered equal, and the request is low imposition. Only two percent of the respondents used *hapsyo-chey*, producing statements such as *kathun tongney cwumin-ipnita* 'I am a resident in this neighborhood' and *pangap-supnita* 'Nice to see you'. Another two percent produced sentences with a mixture of *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey*.

No *hay-chey* was produced, whereas 92 percent of the respondents employed *hayyo-chey*. Four percent of them stated that they would use the Google map application.

– SALT

The social variables of this scenario are the same as in Scenario BUS, except that the hearer is familiar with the speaker. The lack of “distance” demonstrates zero *hapsyo-chey*, the highest rate (81%) of *hay-chey* among the speech styles. Four percent of the respondents mixed *hayyo-chey* and *hay-chey* in their requests. Despite the variable [–R], one respondent did not wish to ask for help. It might have been advantageous in this case to interview the person to find out why, but this was considered unnecessary, the assumption being that it could well have been a personal reason rather than related to linguistic behavior. Although appearing as the crucial factor for *hay-chey*, the lack of distance never renders the implication of “impolite”, simply because the style is not described in terms of “polite” or “honorific”. I briefly discuss the issue of politeness in speech styles later in this section.

– PHONE

This is almost identical to Scenario BUS except that the speaker is challenged with a higher level of imposition involving making a request to borrow a mobile phone. The data patterns are similar, however, regardless of the difference in the degree of imposition. Merely three percent of the respondents used *hapsyo-chey*, and one percent used both *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey*. The remaining one percent did not want to risk making such a request. As in Scenario BUS, *hayyo-chey* was used the most, by 95 percent of the respondents, and no *hay-chey* was produced. There was further specification of the interlocutors here, namely *ttolay* ‘about the same age’; however, this did not influence the choice of speech styles and the scores were very similar to those in Scenario BUS.

– MOVIE

This situation is identical to the previous one with respect to the social variables. Despite the fact that both share [=P], [+D] and [+R], however, the data patterns differ, and not only in Korean but also in Finnish. The reason for this is the presence of two girls in the scenario. Thus, the four per cent of *hay-chey* in the Korean data implies the presence of small children. Moreover, possibly reflecting the distance and high imposition of the request, 14 percent of the respondents produced *hapsyo-chey*. The *hayyo-chey* style was used most frequently in this situation, by 73 percent of the respondents, and five percent used a mixture of *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey*. It is noteworthy that Koreans seem to find the request in this scenario more face-threatening than the one in the PHONE scenario, given the higher rate of *hapsyo-chey*. In addition, four

percent of respondents gave a short utterance, such as *ce.../ cekiyo* ‘well...’ and *ehe* implying ‘Be quiet’ instead of constructing a proper request. This could be taken as a polite gesture expressing their discomfort.

– WATER

Each response to this scenario comprised a short, simple sentence. The response pattern was similar to those in the BUS and PHONE scenarios, although the only common value in the three situations is that of “distance” [+D]. The score for *hayyo-chey* (90%) was almost as high as in the BUS (92%) and PHONE (95%) scenarios. Among the many responses was the expression *pwuthak* ‘favor/ humble request’, linked with *halkey-yo* ‘do’ or *tulilkey-yo* literally meaning ‘humbly give’. The remaining eight percent of *hapsyo-chey* responses were in the form of either *mwul com pwuthakhap-nita* or *pwuthak tulip-nita*, which literally translated mean ‘Do me the favor of getting me some water’ or ‘I humbly request a glass of water.’ The translation would remain the same even with the *hayyo-chey* ending. The point here is that a switch of predicate endings would not change anything. It is simply a stylistic choice in daily life.

Furthermore, the figures in Table 10 reflect the prevailing conception that *hapsyo-chey* sounds masculine: the 57 female participants produced only 37 incidences of *hapshyo-chey* whereas the 21 male participants produced 22, a larger number than the population. With regard to the frequencies of ‘mixed’ responses, the female participants produced 16 of the 37 incidences, and the male participants three of the 22. As for the occupation factor (see Table 11), the *hapsyo-chey* speech style was produced more frequently by those whose routine societal setting was [-P], [+D] and [+R]: five times by five students and 22 times by 21 office workers. Conversely, housewives whose routine activities take place mainly at home used *hapsyo-chey* the least: four times among 13 housewives. It thus seems that stylistic choice is influenced by sex and occupation. With regard to age, however, there was no inclination towards a certain group in the use of *hapsyo-chey*, as noted in Table 12. The results of this study are therefore in line with Chang’s (2014: 236) findings after extensively investigating the factors that affect honorific-speech styles in Korean: (i) age did not have a significant effect on the choice of sentence ending; (ii) profession had a significant effect; (iii) gender had a marginal effect.

Given the overall results illustrated in Figure 4, one could surmise that *hayyo-chey* is the default speech style in Korean society, the predicate ending having been described as “the most frequently used form in conversation” among KFL learners (see Cho et al, 2010: 70). In fact, as mentioned earlier in Section 2.1, this empirical supposition has been predicted in statements emanating from previous studies (e.g. Park, 1978; Sohn, 1999; Lee and Ramsey, 2000; Lukoff, 1982). On

Table 10. Occurrences of *hapsho-chey* categorized by sex

	Female (57 respondents)	Male (21 respondents)
BOSS	8	2
LUNCH	17	10
BUS	2	–
SALT	–	–
PHONE	1	1
MOVIE	5	7
WATER	4	2
Total	37	22

Table 11. Occurrences of *hapsyo-chey* categorized by occupation

Occupation	Number of respondents	Occurrences of <i>hapsyo-chey</i>
Student	5	5
Educator	17	11
In Business	20	13
Office worker	21	22
Housewife	13	4
Other	2	4
Total	78	59

Table 12. Occurrences of *hapsyo-chey* categorized by age group

Age group	20–25	26–30	32–35	36–40	41–45	46–50	51–55	56–60	Total
Number of respondents	4	7	3	3	12	22	21	6	78
Occurrences of <i>hapsyo-che</i>	5	6	4	3	9	15	11	6	59

the other hand, other speech styles require specific values among the variables to distinguish them from the default style. The frequency of *hapsyo-chey* drastically increases linked with the variables [–P], [+D] and [+R], according to the results set out in Table 9. Yet, the style appears to be obscure, operated by the limited variables. By implication, it might represent the speaker's individual stylis-

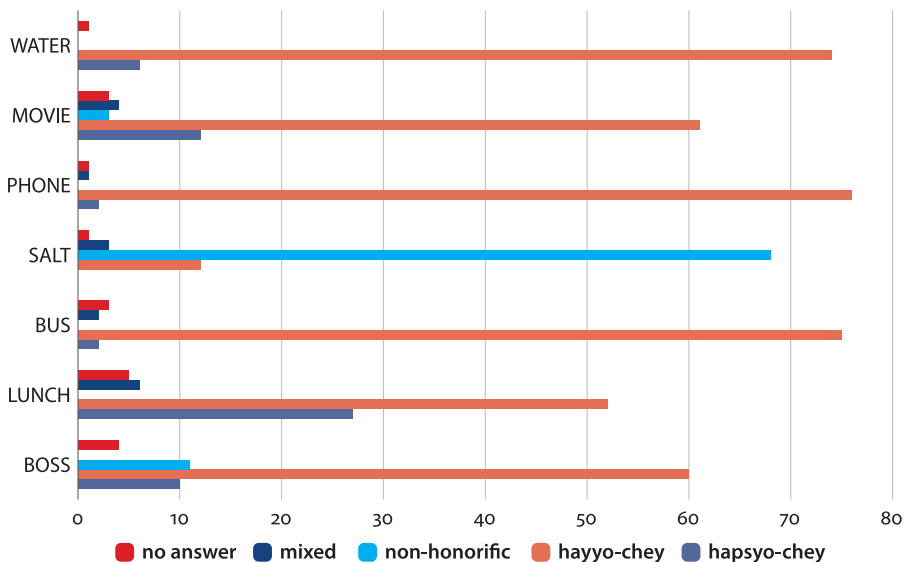


Figure 4. A summary of the results

tic choice to alternate with *hayyo-chey* regardless of the psychological distance, unlike Finnish honorifics that are bound by the context. Nonetheless, *hapsyo-chey* is often exclusively employed when a verbal dialogue is written down. Hence, Brown and Levinson's variables seem to provide neither a meaningful distinction between *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey*, nor a practical explication of their mixture at this stage.

To explain the distinction and the mixture from the perspective of KFL learners, I suggest that the common character of *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey* is simply determined by the [HONORIFIC] category, independently of the term "polite". The *hapsyo-chey* and *hayyo-chey* styles, unless strictly divided by being contextually formal or informal, are intermixed because both endings are hearer-honorific social deixis, referring to the same addressee in accordance with the honorific system in Korean. This phenomenon is concomitant with non-honorific *hay-chey* and *hayla-chey*. However, there is another prototypical type of speech-style mixture: *hayyo-chey* and *hay-chey*. This is consonant with the dynamic variable "distance", crossing the boundary of "honorific" and "non-honorific", and it is also tinged with the factor of age in Korean culture. For example, Scenario BOSS is marked [-D] in Peterson (2010), which deals with Finnish culture, due to the fact that the interlocutors have worked together for five years. However, although in theory the linguistic value depending on "distance" is supposed to alter between [+] and [-], the distance scale spreads along a continuum between the two poles in reality. Therefore, although the Korean data include both honorific and non-

honorific styles, the most frequent neutral default form is *hayyo-chey*. The honorific styles unequivocally pertain to [+D] in the other scenarios.

Korean honorific styles are adopted when two interlocutors meet for the first time: that is, the situation is marked [+D]. As their relationship develops, [+D] moves toward [-D]. There is certainly a specific period when the discourse floats between [+D] and [-D]. If the [D] scale is closer to the positive, the honorific style is more heavily used, otherwise the non-honorific style becomes more dominant as [D] moves in a negative direction. Scenario SALT is therefore dominated by *hay-chey*. The other factor affecting the “honorific” category in Korean culture, namely age (or adulthood), is apparent in Scenario MOVIE. On the assumption that the addressees are small children, the four participants responded in *hay-chey*. Given the societal physical touch pertaining to children in Korean culture (e.g. stroking the head or shoulder of a child, holding a child on the lap, holding a child by the hand, giving a hug),⁴ the feature [-D] is supposed to underlie the choice of speech style to be used with children. Whether or not the age factor affects the variable value of [D], the volatility of distance is displayed in the informal speech styles. However, when certain social roles are distinctively recognized (e.g. between a schoolteacher and a pupil), it does not happen. Similarly, *hapsyo-chey* and *hayla-chey* cannot alter in formal discourse, imposing a vertical relationship: *hapsyo-chey* is maintained by the lower-ranked and *hayla-chey* by the higher-ranked party. Entirely withdrawn from the personal psychological factor between the interlocutors, these speech styles must remain static. In the case of KFL pedagogy, this contextual norm should also be applied to the manner of language use, whether it is spoken or written.

In light of the phenomena discussed above, the following diagram (2) illustrates the four speech styles in contemporary Korean society. Any two adjacent speech styles, except for *hapsyo-chey* and *hayla-chey*, are prototypically intermixed by one speaker addressing the same party in a discourse, unless the context is strictly formal, or the social deixis of the interlocutors is situationally determined.

4. In Korean culture such adult actions are permissible with all children, even at the very first encounter, but forbidden among unacquainted adults.

(2)

		Honorific [+HON]	
		<i>hapsyo-chey</i>	<i>hayyo-chey</i>
Formal speech [+FOR] Written form			Informal speech [-FOR] Spoken form
		<i>hayla-chey</i>	<i>hay-chey</i>
		Non-honorific [-HON]	

Provided the comparison of two typologically different languages, the variables “distance”, “power” and “imposition” must be present in all cultures and therefore universal. Nevertheless, they may be distinctively applied to each language, reflecting its culture: the variable “distance” featured as [+/-D] operates the category of [HONORIFIC] as a feasible feature (not assigning its intrinsic notion) for speech styles in Korean, but not in Finnish.

Korean happens to manifest the scale of the variable more overtly than other languages. Despite my attempt to compare Korean and Finnish and to pinpoint the similarities (see Table 5), the experimental data displayed in Table 9 demonstrate discrepancies in usage of the two language-specific (non-)honorific systems, with respect to a culture-specific situation. For instance, *te* was never employed in Scenario LUNCH: there was either a no-address term or even *sinä*, imposition being so high that some Korean participants stated that they would not dare to make such a request: the imposition is not as high in Finnish society. On the other hand, *sinä* was most frequently employed in Scenario PHONE, with its high imposition but equal power as implied in ‘about the same age’. Similarly in Scenario BUS, in which age was a factor, *te* was used despite the weaker imposition. The non-honorific *sinä* was considered adequate in 99 percent of the responses in Scenario BOSS, which implies that the Finnish hearer-honorific system does not pertain to politeness.

Likewise, Korean hearer-honorific predicate endings should not denote politeness, especially in the context of the KFL classroom. The variety of speech styles in Scenario BOSS does not mean that one style demonstrates the speaker’s polite attitude whereas another does not. Hearer-honorifics in the place of non-honorifics are rather perceived as sarcastic, cynical and impolite (Brown, 2013; Obana, 2016). Politeness may emerge from [HONORIFIC] but is not bound to it: it is as culture-specific as the application of the three variables. Analogously, according to Locher (2006:264), “politeness itself can never be conclusively defined with respect to specific devices.” Referring to L2A with respect to Korean, Song

(2012: 8) notes “the effects of culture differences on politeness expressions and perceptions in L1 and L2 usage.” If necessary, the feature [HONORIFIC] as relevant to social deixis can be linked to politeness only when it is correctly indexed in the culture. The honorific *hayyo-chey* appears as the most appropriate social index in all the scenarios except SALT; accordingly, it is deemed polite in each of the six situations, in contrast to the non-honorific *hay-chey*.

Again comparing Korean and Finnish, [HONORIFIC] in Finnish is marked on the omittable address term that requires syntactic agreement with the verb, and there is a similar phenomenon in Korean. These language-specific hearer-honorific systems display some universality in terms of linguistic structure (Hijirida and Sohn, 1986), which is evident in the subject-verb agreement between second-person pronouns and sentential endings in the examples in (3).

(3) Korean hearer-honorifics (T.-Y. Kim, 2007: 109)

‘When did you come?’

a. *hay-chey*

ne encey wass-**ni**?

you when came-Q?

b. *hakey-chey*

caney encey wass-**nunka**?

you when came-Q?

c. *hao-chey/ hayyo-chey*

tangsin encey wass-**so/** wass-**eyo**?

you when came-SemiHHON/ -HHON?

d. *hapsyo-chey/ hayyo-chey*

elusin-kkeyse encey o-sy-ess-**supni-kka/** o-sy-ess-**eyo**?

you (senior)-SHON when come-RHON-PST-HHON-Q/ -HHON?

The inclusion of address terms in the second-person pronoun position shows which speech style should be employed for the sentential ending. Simultaneously, this approach explains the sample dialogue in (4). According to the English translation, Student 2 could be perceived as polite in an English-speaking culture, even though without the hearer-honorific ending the utterances in Korean are unacceptable to the hearer, who is a teacher. Conversely, the utterances of Student 1 are acceptable and adequate given the hearer-honorific endings, regardless of the degree of politeness expressed in the dialogue.

(4) Adequate and inadequate usage of Korean speech styles

Sensayng: mwe masi-llay-yo?

Teacher: what drink-will-HHON?

Teacher: What would you like to drink?

Haksayng 1: kholla-yo. akka-pwuthe masi-ko siphess-supnita

Student 1: cola-HHON. a while ago-since drink-wanted-HHON

Student 1: Cola. I've been wanting to have a drink for a while.

Haksayng 2: ce-nun kwaynchanha. sensayngnim-un? cey-ka sa-lkey.

Student 2: I (HUM)-TOP fine. teacher-TOP? I (HUM)-SUBJ buy-will.

Student 2: I am fine. How about you, teacher? I will go and get you (drinks).

Grounded on the analysis and the discussion, I would like to point out that Korean hearer-honorific predicate endings depart from the descriptive terminology of “polite” in the KFL classroom, thereby supporting Choo’s (1999: 88) claim that “learners are confused/overwhelmed by obscure explanations”. Yet, politeness in Korean culture should be explained in terms of syntactic expression relevant to linguistic ideology. Let us take as an example a request for age-related information, there being various ways of asking for age, depending on the context. In a first encounter among peer students in a Korean university culture, the utterances in (5a) and (5b) are not socio-pragmatically acceptable, whereas (5c) and (5d) are moderately acceptable. Questions (5a) and (5b) are blunt and sarcastic, respectively, whereas (5c) is neutral and (5d) is deferentially polite.

(5) Linguistic politeness in Korean

a. myech sal-i-sey-yo?

How old-are-RHON-HHON

‘How old are you?’

(blunt/rude/offensive)

b. yense-ka ettehkey toy-se-yo?

age(HON)-SUBJ what is-RHON-HHON?

‘How old are you?’

(sarcastic/rude/offensive)

c. hakpen-i ettehkey toy-se-yo?

student number-SUBJ what is-RHON-HHON

‘What is your student number?’

(literal translation)

‘Which year did you enter the university?’

(normative/neutral)

d. sillyey-ciman hakpen-i ettehkey toy-si-nunci yeccwue

excuse me-but student number-SUBJ what is-RHON-if ask(HUM)

pwa-to toyllkka-yo?

try-even may-HHON

‘Excuse me, but would it be OK to ask you what your student number is?’

(literal translation)

‘May I humbly ask what is your student number?’

(extra polite)

Finally, with regard to practical teaching in the KFL classroom, I suggest that learners should not be given the conventional descriptions of hearer-honorific speech styles. However, they should be taught that such speech styles are concurrently used in the context of *hayyo-chey*, and non-honorific speech styles in the context of *hay-chey*. They should also be given explicit and concrete contexts for *hapsyo-chey* and *hay-chey*, respectively, and made aware of the contextual differences between written and spoken forms. It might be worthwhile mentioning the masculine characteristic of *hapsyo-chey* in the lesson. Nonetheless, learners would notice at a very early stage during the course that *hayyo-chey* is the default speech style in Korean society. As with static Finnish address terms, *hay-chey* can be explained by defining who the hearer is and the relationship among the interlocutors. Explanations of mixed speech styles should refer to the dynamics of the interpersonal relationship.

6. Conclusion

The focus in the present study was on Korean speech styles, the aim being to provide KFL learners with a robust distinction between hearer-honorific styles in Korean compared with Finnish. It could be inferred from the comparative examination that [HONORIFIC] (specifically pertaining to hearer-honorifics in this study) is as universal as social deixis in indicating the scale of “distance”, although not all languages explicitly reflect it in a syntactic form. On the other hand, politeness is exercised via the universal variables “distance”, “power” and “imposition”,⁵ and pertains to linguistic use in the specific linguistic culture (Matsumoto, 1988; Cook, 2011; Obana, 2016) – adopting appropriate lexical items, affixes, mood, and aspect, for example. Nevertheless, the emergence of politeness should not be universally predicted, and therefore cannot be exploited to label a linguistic device, especially for KFL learners. Despite the discrepancies between the languages, however, honorifics and politeness as expressed in the Korean language must be learnable, given the universal features and variables – in the realms of both linguistics and culture.

In the above I have offered some suggestions related to teaching KFL learners various speech styles, focusing on hearer-honorific predicate endings. There is still a need for further research on coping with the issue in comparison with other languages, too. This should result in the development of more economical and

5. Even if there may be other prototypical variables that could be mentioned, this study encompasses only the three on which the experimental data were tested.

informative explication of how Korean speech styles could be developed to be universally applicable to teaching KFL learners from diverse L1 backgrounds.








Glossary

New abbreviations for the glosses in this article are as follows:

HHON	hearer honorific
HUM	humble
RHON	referent honorific
SemiHON	semi honorific
SHON	subject honorific

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	Job	Age groups														Total		
		21-25		26-30		31-35		36-40		41-45		46-50		51-55			56-60	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		M	F
LUNCH	S		2											1			3	
	E						1		1		1		1			1	5	
	B										3	2		2	1		9	
	O				2		1			2		1	1			1	8	
	H									1							1	
	?											1					1	
BUS	S		1														1	
	E															1	1	
	B																0	
	O																0	
	H																0	
?																0		
SALT	S																0	
	E																0	
	B																0	
	O																0	
	H																0	
?																0		
PHONE	S		1														1	
	E						1							2			3	
	B												1				1	
	O			1		1			2						1		5	
	H										1						1	
?												1				1		
MOVIE	S																0	
	E																0	
	B																0	
	O				1				1								2	
	H																0	
?																0		
WATER	S																0	
	E																0	
	B																0	
	O				1		1				1		1				4	
	H									1							1	
?												1				1		
Total		-	5	2	4	-	4	-	3	3	6	6	9	5	6	2	4	59

Abbreviations

S (Student)

E (Educator)

B (Business person)

O (Office worker)

H (Housewife)


? (Other)

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