

AGENCY AT PLAY  
IMPOLITENESS AND KOREAN LANGUAGE IN ONLINE INTERACTIONS

by

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## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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(Im)politeness research has often focused on either the importance of social norms or on the intentions of the speaker, overlooking the active role played by the recipient(s) in assigning social meaning. This limitation pertains particularly to so-called “discernment languages” such as Korean and Japanese. This work addresses this gap by focusing on recipient agency in interpretations/evaluations of impoliteness. Two sets of data are drawn from the naturally occurring computer-mediated communications that appeared in two popular internet portal sites in South Korea. Both sets of data contain metapragmatic discussions of impoliteness that involve recipient evaluation of a speaker’s actions and language use as offensive or not. I focus on how the recipients in the data agentively evaluate the language used by speakers, including inconsistent evaluations of non-honorific language, or *panmal*. The results show that variability in the interpretation of (im)politeness cannot be explained solely by social norms or intentions, and must also include the socially-mediated agency of the recipient(s).

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*For their endless love*



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Overview

Communication is integral to the lives of people everywhere. Individuals in various social settings regularly encode and decode messages conveyed. This means they do not uniformly construct their thoughts into a string of linguistic forms merely to exchange factual information. Rather, individuals choose different speech styles or registers that are ‘appropriate’ (i.e., socially and culturally expected norms) to their addressees in particular social situations in order to achieve desired interpersonal relationships. In other words, individuals engage in *negotiating relationships* or “relational work” with each other in the course of communicative (both verbal and non-verbal) interaction (Locher & Watts, 2005, p. 10). This implies (as negotiation connotes) that there will always be a ‘conflict’ or an ‘evaluative moment’ (Eelen, 2001) according to individual participants’ perceptions of norms, expectations, values and so forth, which may ultimately manifest in their judgement vis-à-vis interpretation of one’s verbal and non-verbal behaviors as broadly impolite, polite, over-polite and so on (Locher & Watts, 2005).

This work sets out to investigate how impoliteness is perceived and evaluated by the recipients during sequential interactions. Specifically, through the analysis of data drawn from naturally occurring computer-mediated communication (CMC) in Korean, this work addresses gaps in existing literature by focusing not only on variability in the evaluations of particular Korean linguistic forms and nonlinguistic forms by the recipients

but also by examining the role of agency in the recipients' interpretations of the speaker's particular language use as offensive or not during online interactions.

Agency in this study is treated as a socially-mediated actor(s) which is defined through an activity theoretic perspective (Leont'ev, 1978; Engeström, 1987). Activity theory provides the theoretical framework that directs the attention to view “both individual (agentive) and social dimensions of the self in a non-dichotomizing ways” (Stetsenko & Arieviditch, 2004, p. 476). Activity theory does not support the study of individuals and their surrounding environments as isolated entities, but rather considers them “a single interactive unit of analysis via the identification of activity system” (Etengoff & Daiute, 2015, p. 288) or the intertwining of people, tools (e.g., writing, online technologies) and objectives. In other words, variability in the evaluation of impoliteness observed in this study can be viewed as ongoing, dynamic outcomes of object-oriented individual participants acting together as a collective unit with shared tools.

### 1.1.1 Problem statement

In a recent study conducted by Mitchell and Haugh (2015), the authors observe that, in the main, current theories of impoliteness place the recipient in a passive role despite wide recognition in the discursive approach of the importance of the recipient in evaluations of impoliteness. The authors (2015) note that recipients are often viewed as “perceivers of speaker intentions and/or interpreters of presumed...social norms” (p. 209). However, they argue that the (presumed) *agency* of the recipient should also be considered when conceptualizing impoliteness. The argument stems broadly from the idea that variability in the evaluations of impoliteness is not only predicated on situational social



norms, or the intentions of the speaker, but can also be seen to display the recipient's own agency in choosing to hold the speaker accountable (or not) for the action that the recipient construed as a particular kind of social actions in relation to particular dimensions of the moral order. Agency in this context is defined as "socio-culturally mediated capacity to act [or not act]" (Ahearn, 2001 – cited in Mitchell & Haugh, 2015, p. 211). More detailed explanations of agency and how it is defined in the current study are discussed in Chapter 2.

Continuing with Mitchell and Haugh (2015), the authors sought empirical support for their argument through close analysis of initial interactions between Americans and Australians followed by face-to-face follow-up interviews with each participant. Through this, the authors found that instances of potentially impolite actions were not always taken as offensive. Rather, the recipients were found to exercise agency in deciding whether or not to hold the speakers accountable for causing offence by "depersonalizing" (i.e., deciding not to define or perceive themselves as the target criticism) and "normalizing" (i.e., defining or construing the utterance as common opinion and not directed criticism from the speaker) instances of potential offense (p. 230). For instance, when a Taiwanese-Australian participant interacts with an American participant and through the interaction criticizes Americans for being arrogant and ignorant, the American depersonalizes and normalizes the encounter. The American participant responds during the exchange that "typical Americans" are obnoxious (depersonalization), and later reflects in a follow-up interview that criticism of the US was something that she's "heard before" and was "expecting" (normalization). During later interviews with researchers, the American participant explained she was actually offended by the anti-American comments but that

she made a conscious effort not to be (“I try not to be”). This was taken as evidence the participant “explicitly orients to the matter of taking offense as one of personal agency” (Mitchell & Haugh, 2015, p. 223). A demonstration of how individuals exercise agency by choosing to not take offense in a bid to promote comity and foster the perception the individual does not take themselves too seriously. This occurs despite the hearer having perceived the speaker as having impolite intentions and/or as having transgressed social norms. In light of these findings, the authors conclude that in theorizing impoliteness, account must be taken of socially-mediated agency of the recipient, in addition to the perceived social norms and the intentions of the speaker.

This study aims to answer the call to move the discussion forward, and beyond, the ongoing norms versus intentions debate in impoliteness research by testing the claims of Mitchell and Haugh (2015) concerning the role of recipient agency in the evaluation of impoliteness. In addition, and in line with the work of Haugh (2013), the recipient in this study is defined as a participant who is involved in a communicative activity.

### 1.1.2 Aims

The first aim of this study is to contribute to the body of knowledge in (im)politeness research by moving the debate beyond “norms versus intentions” to a more thorough investigation of the role of recipient agency in the evaluation of impoliteness. In order to look at the role of recipient agency, this study adopts an integrative pragmatic framework that includes agency as defined through an activity theoretic perspective. The integrative pragmatics approach was developed by Culpeper and Haugh (2014) as a way to “respect[ing] both user and observer perspectives” when studying (im)politeness

specifically and pragmatic phenomena generally (p. 11). A key weakness of integrative pragmatics is that it does not provide a defined space for accounting for agency and its interconnectedness with surrounding environments in creating (im)politeness phenomena. Therefore, the activity theoretic perspective more broadly defined is combined with integrative pragmatics in order to view agency and its particular, situated context as an interconnected unit of analysis. More detailed discussions are presented in Chapter 2.

Second, this work strives to address a key knowledge gap in the field of (im)politeness research in CMC. To date, extant studies of impoliteness in CMC have dealt mainly with speaker-initiated emotionally charged hostile communication (e.g., Dynel, 2012; Angouri & Tseliga, 2010; Harrison, 2007) or discursivity in the evaluations of impoliteness with an emphasis on social norms or intentions coupled with participant identities observed to be mediated by the unique characteristics of CMC (e.g., Graham, 2007; Haugh, 2010; Haugh, Wei-Lin, & Kádár, 2015; Sifianou, 2012; Upadhyay, 2010). In contrast, this work focuses on the role that recipient agency plays in the evaluation of impoliteness in asynchronous online interactions. This work pays particular attention to ways in which recipient agency is mediated (and constrained) by social, technological, and contextual factors in the evaluation of impoliteness in CMC.

Third, this work endeavors to contribute to a better understanding of impoliteness across different linguistic contexts. Specifically, this study sets out to investigate how the agency of the recipient manifests in a language characterized by a complex system of grammaticalized honorifics such as Korean. This is an especially important dimension of this study. Indeed, Korean, alongside Japanese, has become an important language at the heart of politeness research due to its highly developed honorific systems. However, much

of the extant studies of Korean and also Japanese honorific systems have focused on speaker productions, with the emphasis of the social norms and intentions (e.g., Brown, 2013a, 2015a for Korean, Cook, 2011, 2013; Dunn, 2005 for Japanese). In contrast, this study differs from previous studies in this vein due to its deliberate focus on the agency of addressee by testing the claims of Mitchell and Haugh (2015). This is especially important at a time when extant research has not ventured far beyond the “norms versus intentions” debate.

### 1.1.3 Outline of the study

Along with presenting the subject matter including the current research problem and the aims of the study, Chapter one also includes a discussion of the current debates around the definition of impoliteness in the extant literature (Section 1.2), as well as a brief discussion of impoliteness studies in CMC contexts (Section 1.3). In closing, chapter one also includes justification and the rationale for the CMC data chosen for analysis (Section 1.4). These crucial components provide the information analyzed and discussed in subsequent chapters.

Chapter two sets the ground work for the analysis of the role that the recipients’ agency plays in the evaluation of impoliteness. First, it discusses the ‘three waves of thought’ in (im)politeness research. Central themes that are important in this chapter include the division between the first order and second order analysis of politeness which prompted my focus on interaction analysis, theoretically grounded in the integrative pragmatics approach to (im)politeness. Following on, the chapter closes with a discussion of the rationale for incorporating agency, defined through an activity theoretic perspective,

into an integrative pragmatics model for analysis.

Chapter three explores (im)politeness in the Korean context and outlines three areas of (im)politeness in the Korean language: (1) the distinction between honorific and non-honorific speech; (2) address and reference terms; and, (3) the metalanguage of Korean (im)politeness. This chapter presents Korean (im)politeness as closely linked to the intricate honorific systems embedded in the language, including address and reference terms. Moreover, this chapter includes discussion of how Korean impoliteness is conceptualized through the metaphorical concept of *wui* ‘above’ and *alay* ‘below’ in social relations.

Chapter four provides an overview and discussion of the type of CMC data used and the ethical concerns around collecting CMC materials as a data source. As well, the techniques of analysis (i.e., narrative and conversation analysis) are discussed. These are used to unpack the ways in which agency manifests in creating impoliteness phenomena.

Chapters five and six contain analysis of two distinct datasets. The data are extracted from naturally occurring materials that appeared on a personal blog and a discussion board featured on two South Korea based internet portal services. Each chapter focuses on how recipients agentively evaluate the actions and particular language use, of the speaker including the use of non-honorific language.

Finally, chapter seven provides concluding remarks that reflect on the main findings of the study. Key findings include that recipients are active and exercise individual socially-mediated agency in creating variation in impoliteness phenomena. The socio-material conditions of the CMC medium and the online community play an important role in shaping recipient’ evaluation of a speakers’ social actions, including particular language

use.

## 1.2 Definition of impoliteness

So far in this work, “impoliteness” has been offered without a rigorous explanation as to what impoliteness is. Over the last twenty years the very question of what impoliteness means has been rigorously contested. However, and despite a decades long discussion, no unified definition of what impoliteness is has emerged uncontested (Bousfield & Locher, 2008). Despite the lack of agreement among academics and researchers as to a unified, definitive definition Dynel (2015) distills the arguments of a number of scholars (e.g., Culpeper, 2005; Culpeper, Bousfield, & Wichmann, 2003; Bousfield, 2008a, Bousfield, 2010) when she notes, “the notion of intention lies at the heart of the prevailing definitions of impoliteness” (p. 330). For example,

Impoliteness constitutes the communication of intentionally gratuitous and conflictive verbal face-threatening acts (FTAs) which are purposefully delivered (Bousfield, 2008a, p. 72).

Impoliteness occurs when the expression used is not conventionalized relative to the context of occurrence; it threatens the addressee’s face but no face-threatening intention is attributed to the speaker by the hearer (Terkourafi, 2008, p. 70).

Impoliteness, as I would define it, involves communicative behavior intending to cause the “face loss” of a target or perceived by the target to be so. (Culpeper, 2008, p. 36).

Bousfield and Locher (2008) explains the key difference between the extant definitions of impoliteness is “in the role assigned to the recognition of intentions in the understanding of impoliteness”, which encourages further disagreement in solidifying the basic terminology (p. 3).

Over the period of protracted debate, a significant amount of disagreement has emerged from efforts to find a broadly accepted and potential universal term for describing intentionally performed face-threatening acts (Dynel, 2015). More specifically, the discussion involves the distinction between ‘impoliteness’ and ‘rudeness’. While the label ‘impoliteness’ is used in reference to the hearer’s recognition of speaker intention (Bousfield, 2008a, 2010; Culpeper, 2008; Culpeper *et al.*, 2003), Terkourafi (2008) asserts that ‘rudeness’ is the appropriate term for the phenomena. ‘Impoliteness’, on the other hand, constitutes unintentional face-threats, an act without intention. Moreover, some researchers (e.g., Watts, 2008) prefer to use ‘rudeness’ over ‘impoliteness’ as it is the term that lay language users would most likely use (first order concept = emic perspectives). Meanwhile, Kienpointner (2008) chooses to use both terms synonymously as a theoretical, second order concept (= etic perspectives). As to role of the term impoliteness, Dynel (2015) offers the view that “impoliteness” as a term continues to prevail in the literature given its position as the natural counterpart to “politeness”; the author argues “rudeness” is best used to describe unintended face-threatening behavior” (p. 331).

Continuing in the theme of intentionality a further issue is the perhaps obvious question of what constitutes impoliteness; the speaker’s intention and/or the hearer’s recognition of it. The view developed through earlier works is that it is the speaker’s intention that is pivotal to something being defined as impoliteness. For example, Culpeper,

Bousfield, and Wichmann (2003) see impoliteness as an aggressive act that occurs when a speaker intentionally communicates to attack the hearer's face. However, some others have felt this view is too narrow and have sought to broaden the definition (e.g., Locher, 2004; Mills, 2005; Watts, 2005). These researchers place emphasis on the hearer's evaluations or the hearer's perceptions of the speaker's intention when conceptualizing impoliteness. The core motivation for this view is drawn from Eelen's (2001) seminal work that asserts (im)politeness is a phenomenon that occurs through evaluation rather than a representation of linguistic or non-linguistic behavior (Haugh, 2013, p. 52). Eelen (2001) explains,

In everyday practice (im)politeness occurs not so much when the speaker produces behavior but rather when the hearer *evaluates* that behavior...Whether it involves hearers evaluating speakers, speakers evaluating themselves, or informants evaluating hypothetical speakers or utterances, the *evaluative* moment is always present. Indeed, in practice it proves to be the only way in which (im)politeness can be studied (Eelen, 2001, p. 109: original emphasis).

Likewise, Locher and Watts (2008) assert that the determinants of impoliteness do not rely only on the intentions of the speaker, but is also contingent upon judgments made by the interactant during the course of the interaction in a particular setting (p. 78). Mills (2009) notes that judgements as to intentions are made within an environment of overlapping structures of social norms and value systems, and that these are key aspects crucial to the evaluation of impoliteness. What is impolite will be determined in light of expectations, beliefs or desires which are constructed by social norms and value systems within a



particular community, and, more broadly, across society as a whole (Mills 2005).

Culpeper (2005) argues for the importance of both speaker and hearer intention, noting that impoliteness occurs when either condition (i.e., the speaker's intention or the hearer's perception of it) comes into play (Dynel, 2015, p. 332). However, Culpeper (2011a) further refines this definition by placing greater emphasis on the hearer's perspective of impoliteness, claiming "situated behaviors are viewed negatively – considered 'impolite' – when they conflict with how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be" (p. 254). The view that emerges from this still contested area of research is that neither party is solely accountable for creating impoliteness. Instead, impoliteness is the outcome of jointly constructed communicative practice between the speaker and the hearer(s).

The emphasis on intentions and social norms in the conceptualization of impoliteness was challenged in a recent study by Mitchell and Haugh (2015). As explained in the problem statement preceding this (Section 1.1), the authors argue that intentions and social norms are not the only variables in accounting for variability in evaluations of impoliteness. Rather, the agency exercised by recipients (and speakers) also "offers an additional theoretically motivated source for the inevitable variability in the evaluations of impoliteness" (Mitchell & Haugh, 2015, p. 231). The authors explain that just as the speaker chooses to perform certain social actions, and be held accountable for implementing those actions, so too can the recipient through exercising agency make a decision to hold the speaker accountable or not for particular kinds of social actions.

Pulling these ideas together, it is apparent that the concept of impoliteness is multidimensional and complex. It is possible that a neat conceptualization of impoliteness

may never be possible as it incorporates all the complex and dynamic phenomena of human social interactions. However, past research in this area suggests that incorporating different theoretical ideas will help to broaden and deepen our understanding of various shades of impoliteness. In this vein, the current study is important as it intersects with broader theoretical challenges that are central to linguistic politeness as a research field. Previous research that concerns variation in (im)politeness usually focuses on speaker intentions, coupled with the role played by social norms. In contrast, this study focuses on variation in the way that (im)politeness is perceived and evaluated. This marks a critical theoretical shift at a time when (im)politeness research is working towards more holistic descriptions of how (im)politeness is negotiated in linguistic interaction, going beyond speaker intentions or social norms to embrace the agency of recipients.

## 1.2 Impoliteness in CMC

Inspired by the pioneering work of Herring (1994), the bulk of previous research concerning online impoliteness largely involved the study of instances of flaming or personal verbal use (e.g., Herring, 1994; Danet, 1998, 2013; Harrison, 2004; 2007; Maricic, 2004; Graham, 2008; Nishimura, 2008; Dynel, 2012; Hardaker, 2010, 2013; among others). Flaming is defined in the literature as “a sequence of typed, synchronous or asynchronous, online exchanges involving sudden, intense conflict” (Danet, 2013, p.639). At a time when the research interests were focused on descriptive linguistic accounts of CMC (such as “Netspeak” and emoticons), Herring’s (1994) study introduced a new approach to looking at instances of impoliteness (i.e., hostile communication) (Nishimura, 2010, p. 36). The author incorporated the ideas of pragmatics, precisely Brown and

Levinson's (1987 [1978]) politeness theory and applied this to an analysis of discussion list messages in order to explore for different internet behaviors between women and men. The messages at the center of the study were coded into two categories based on whether they violated negative or positive politeness. The author found that men are more likely to flame, an action she defines as the most obvious instance of violating positive politeness (Herring, 1994, p. 279).

However, critics of the study (e.g., Danet, 1998) claim that the characterization of flaming applied by the author is too narrow as the activity can contain elements of entertainment (p. 39), and "can sometimes express solidarity, not hostility, or even both simultaneously" (Danet, 2013, p. 640). Furthermore, Nishmura (2010) argues the criticism of Brown and Levinson (1987 [1978]) is equally applicable to Herring's work in that differentiating between whose face is threatened and whose face is enhanced is not simple. Indeed, one can imagine the effects a single message can have by, on the one hand, providing the poster a large audience and as a consequence enhancing face while at same time aggravating the recipient's face with the same message (p. 36). Putting these reasonable criticisms aside, the contributions of Herring's (1994) study have been immense in terms of providing a new, and enduring, focus on online interactions in the field of both politeness and impoliteness research.

It is clearly the case that (im)politeness research in CMC has developed substantially since Herring's (1994) seminal work. The various strands of research have moved from the predominant adaptation of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory in the context of investigations of face-threatening instances in online environments, to a richer array of ideas that include relational/interpersonal aspects of language practices (i.e.,

discursive approach) in computer-mediated settings (see Locher, Bolander, & Höhn, 2015). A shift has occurred as research that follows a discursive approach (see Locher, 2010) that views (im)politeness as emergent meanings. In other words, (im)politeness is a phenomenon that is situationally and interactionally co-constructed and open to negotiation rather than fixed *a priori* knowledge. Therefore, the focus of analysis lies at the level of first-order interpretations of what is polite or impolite (i.e., emic perspectives) instead of scientific understandings (or second-order) of (im)politeness (i.e., etic perspectives) (Watts, Ide, & Ehlich, 1992; Eelen, 2001).

Building upon this premise, many recent impoliteness studies involving CMC have drawn attention to the importance of negotiation or emergence of norms or intentions, coupled with identity construction in relation to (im)politeness in different online settings or environments (e.g., Angouri & Tseliga, 2010; Graham, 2007, 2008; Haugh, 2010; Neurater-Kessels, 2013; Nishimura, 2010; Upadhyay, 2010; among others). For example, Graham (2007, 2008) explores how differing expectations and norms result in conflict in an email community showing that through conflict group members actively re-negotiate group identity. In a similar vein, Nishimura (2010) examines how impoliteness or intentional face-attack manifests in two different communities on a Japanese bulletin board system. The author reveals that variation in impoliteness phenomena depends largely on different implicit norms underlying these two communities. Meanwhile, Haugh (2010) focuses on a meta-discussion featured in New Zealand media and found that the different perceptions of norms influence the level of perceived offensiveness which in turn creates ‘variability’ and ‘argumentativity’ (Eelen, 2001) of impoliteness. Of equal importance is the situational and technological characteristics of CMC as well as the identities of participants as these have

also found to be influential factors in the interpretation of offensiveness (p. 26). Angouri and Tseliga (2010) make a similar observation, noting the effect of medium clearly plays a role in the choices of participants' language use while engaged in (intentional) "impolite talk". Moreover, perceptions of a participants' identity (age, core/periphery member), as well as the semantic content and subject of the particular conversation influences the ways in which the interactions are managed and perceived by the participants (p. 77).

A common, underlying assumption of these works is that membership in a social group does not necessarily translate into similar views or norms vis-à-vis (im)politeness. Nor is it the case that individuals will maintain the same evaluation over time as perceptions are contingent upon expectations, beliefs, and/or situated identity, which are negotiated and contested through technological, social and contextual factors in particular online interactions (Locher, Bolander, & Höhn, 2015). Consistent with these observations, the analysis presented in this work will be sharply focused on the ways in which social, technological, and contextual factors intertwine with recipient agency with respect to the evaluation of impoliteness in CMC.

#### 1.4 Rationale for choosing CMC data

The rationale for choosing CMC as a data source is that it offers highly interactive conversational functions, regardless of temporal structure (i.e., a/synchronicity) (Herring, 2010). Furthermore, it has received rapid recognition for providing potential sites for observing interpersonal and relational practices of language use including (im)politeness (Haugh, Chang, & Kádár, 2015, p. 73). This is largely due to the development of computer technologies that have ushered new ways for individuals to communicate and maintain

relationships. Indeed, any individual with access to the technology is able (or is potentially able) to use various interactive CMC mediums, and various types/modes of social media in order to maintain interpersonal relationships with specific individuals, or to reach out to new networks of people through the sharing of one's opinions, knowledge and/or ideas (Thimm, 2008). To put this in perspective, according to analysis by the Pew Research Center of social media usage in 2015, 65%, or nearly two-thirds, of American adults use social networking sites and this represents a tenfold increase in ten years (Perrin, 2015). In the case of South Korea, analysis by KISA (Korea Internet Security Agency) in 2015 finds that 91.4% of people aged 3-65 use the Internet (e-mail, social networking sites, chatting, Internet phone, etc.) for communication purposes (Kim, Cho, Jang, & Youn, 2015). Changes in the ways individuals communicate have certainly influenced the shift in the research focus around CMC. While earlier work centered on medium-related phenomena (i.e., descriptive language use of CMC such as emoticons), the focus has now moved on to user-related linguistics accounts of CMC (i.e., social and contextual communicative practices) (Androutsopoulos, 2006). The fast growing volume of (im)politeness research in CMC is proof of this.

## CHAPTER II

### APPROACHES TO IMPOLITENESS

The central aim of this chapter is to establish the framework of the study. In order to look at the role of agency in Korean CMC interactions, this study follows the integrative pragmatics model as developed by Culpeper and Haugh (2014). As was briefly discussed in the previous chapter, integrative pragmatics is proposed in response to shortcomings in both the top-down paradigm offered by Brown and Levinson (1987 [1978]) and the discursive approach, by seeking “a middle ground...that not only respects both user [or first order] and observer [or second order] perspectives...but also bridge them” (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, p. 11). One limitation, however, of following the path set down by the integrative pragmatics model is there is no specific space for agency and the role it plays in enriching (im)politeness pragmatic phenomena. In response, this study builds on what has come before by incorporating agency as defined from an activity theoretical perspective.

Before proceeding to the in-depth discussion of my rationale for coupling integrative pragmatics and the perspectives of activity theory in the treatment of agency, I will first overview the three major approaches, so-called “three major ‘waves’ of thought” (Grainger, 2011, p. 168), to (im)politeness research. The primary reason for reviewing three different theoretical traditions in (im)politeness research is to provide an historical overview of paradigm shifts in politeness research which together prompted the development of the integrative pragmatics approach to the study of (im)politeness. This will illuminate the role played by integrative pragmatics in bridging first and second order traditions in (im)politeness research.

In the passages following, I will first review the first wave, or the so-called classic approach to (im)politeness (Section 2.1). This is followed by the second wave that is influenced by the social constructionist paradigm (Haugh, 2010) commonly known as the discursive approaches to (im)politeness (Section 2.2). Next, the work moves on to discuss the integrative pragmatics approach considered the third wave of thought (Section 2.3). In Section 2.3, I further explain my rationale for using the integrative pragmatics approach as the framework for the study, and provide further discussion around the incorporation of the activity theoretic perspective in the treatment of agency.

## 2.1 Classic approaches to (im)politeness

Grounded in J. L. Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory and Paul H. Grice's (1975) four maxims of Cooperative Principle, the first wave approach to politeness is shaped by the seminal work of Lakoff (1973, 1989), Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) and Leech (1983) (see Grainger, 2011). While there are differences in their explanations of politeness, these scholars form the basis of their theories on the idea that human linguistic behavior is geared towards promoting or maintaining social harmony. They view politeness as something akin to "formal diplomatic protocol" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 1) or "designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation" (Lakoff, 1990, p. 34).

Indeed, building upon the premise of politeness as conflict avoidance, the surge of the first wave of politeness research primarily focused on the individual speaker's strategic action in performing politeness. Specifically, the bulk of the work has been based on Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness (1987 [1978]). In effect, Brown and Levinson's



work is the best known among early research in the field of politeness (Culpeper, 2011, p. 396). Coupland, Grainger and Coupland (1988) describe how their work “transformed politeness from an apparently peripheral sociolinguistic concern into a distinctive theory of social interaction” (p. 253). According to Grainger (2011), the reason why the Brown and Levinson’s model of politeness gained the most currency is likely due to the fact that only their model of politeness provides comprehensive explanations as to why speakers make particular lexical and syntactic choices in particular occasions (Grainger, 2011, p. 168). However, the dominance of Brown and Levinson’s work on politeness has not only received acclaim but has also attracted the most criticism. Most especially, a coherent challenge to the status of Brown and Levinson’s theory has come from the researchers who view politeness as a discursive concept (e.g., Eelen, 2001; Mills, 2003; Locher, 2004, 2006; Locher & Watts, 2005; Watts, 2003, 2005). Before addressing this in Section 2.2, I will first provide an overview of Brown and Levinson’s framework of politeness in the following section (Section 2.1.1).

### 2.1.1 Brown and Levinson’s theory of politeness

In their universal politeness theory, Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that the speaker (or “Model Person”) makes rational choices of politeness strategies to avoid conflict and to preserve the hearer’s (and/or the speaker’s) *face*. Face is defined as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). Taken from Goffman’s (1967) conception of face, Brown and Levinson (1987) divide face into two aspects; *Negative face* (the desire to be unimpeded by others) and *Positive face* (the desire to be approved of by others), which are claimed to be

universally valid social needs. In interaction, face is inevitably threatened, to varying degrees, by the need to perform “face-threatening acts” (FTAs); these are speech acts such as requests, offers, accusations, etc. that can adversely affect the speaker’s and/or hearer’s positive or negative face. Brown and Levinson (1987) postulate that when a speaker wishes to perform a FTA which potentially causes the loss of face of those involved, the speaker will strategically choose to use five possible superstrategies of politeness in order to minimize the risk. The five superstrategies from least face threatening to the most are as follows: (1) bald-on-record, (2) positive politeness, (3) negative politeness, (4) off-record, (5) don’t do the FTA.

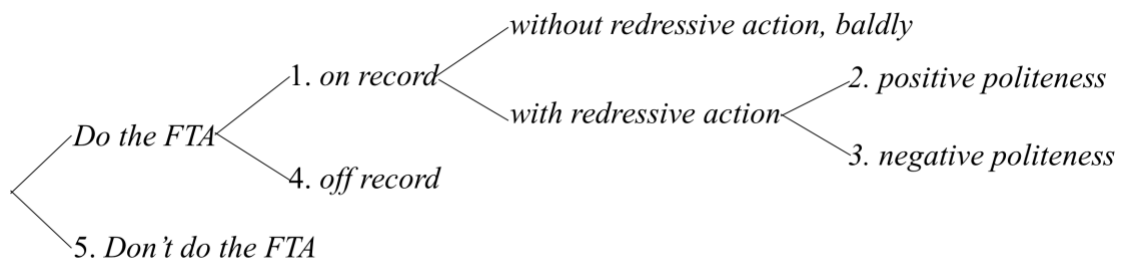


Figure 1. Possible strategies for doing FTAs (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69)

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), to determine a rational strategy involves carefully calculating the weightiness of FTAs. This is done by assessing the variables in three sociological factors:

- 1) the ‘social distance’ (D) of S [the speaker] and H [the hearer] (a symmetric relation) [For example, with a friend there is not a great social distance; however, there is much greater distance with a stranger.]
- 2) the relative ‘power’ (P) of S and H (an asymmetric relation) [For example, a friend does not hold the same position of power as does the President.]

- 3) the absolute ranking (R) of the imposition in the particular culture [For example, asking someone to borrow a quarter would not be as great an imposition as asking that person to borrow one hundred dollars.]

(Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 79)

They suggest that each of these variables can be measured in numerical values, and that an act's weightiness ( $W_x$ ) can be summed up in accordance with the following formula:  $W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$  (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 76). To give an example, the less powerful [-power or =power] and distance [-distance] between the speaker and the hearer, the less the imposition of the act involved, the more the speaker will choose to use a lower-numbered strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61).

As to calculating face threat, according to Brown and Levinson, also involves deciding on a kind of redressive action that needs to be taken to counterbalance the disruptive effect of FTAs on negative and positive face. Such redressive action can involve both verbal and non-verbal communication. Although Brown and Levinson (1987) include non-verbal communication as a part of redressive action, much of their work is dedicated to the linguistic realizations of speech acts for positive and negative politeness, and that they provide detailed output strategies that are a means of satisfying the strategic ends of face wants (Culpeper, 2011b, p. 400). The following Tables 1 and 2 show the output strategies specified by Brown and Levinson (1987), each with an example extracted from one of their own (p. 101-211).

Table 1. Positive politeness output strategies

Strategies	Examples
Notice, attend to Hearer (H)	“Goodness, you cut your hair!”
Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)	“What a fantastic garden you have!”
Intensify interest to H	“I come down the stairs, and what do I see? – a huge mess all over the place.”
Use in-group identity markers	“Help me with this bag, will you, luv?”
Seek agreement	“Isn’t your new car a beautiful color!”
Avoid disagreement	“It’s really beautiful, in a way.”
Presuppose/raise/assert common ground	“I really had a hard time learning to drive, you know.”
Joke	“How about lending me this old heap of junk?” (H’s new Cadillac)
Assert or presuppose S’s knowledge of and concern for H’s wants	“I know you love roses but the florist didn’t have any more, so I brought you geranium instead.” (offer + apology)
Offer, promise	“I’ll drop by sometime next week.”
Be optimistic	“I’ll just help myself to a cookie then – thanks!”
Include both S and H in the activity	“Let’s stop for a bite.”
Give (or ask for) reasons	“Why don’t we go to the seashore!”
Assume or assert reciprocity	“I’ll clean the house if you wash the dishes.”
Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)	“I’ve recommended you to the professor for the research position.”

Table 2. Negative politeness output strategies

Strategies	Examples
Be conventionally indirect	“Can you please pass the salt?”
Question, hedge	“I wondered, if you know whether John went out.”
Be pessimistic	“I don’t suppose there’d be any chance of a cup of coffee?”
Minimize the imposition	“Could I have a taste of that cake?”
Give deference	“Excuse me, sir, but would you mind if I close the window?”
Apologize	“I don’t want to bother you, but...”
Impersonalize S and H: Avoid the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘you’	“If it is possible, the letter must be typed immediately.”
State the FTA as a general rule	“Late comers cannot be seated till the next interval.”
Nominalize	“Your good performance on the examination made a favorable impression on us.”
Go on-record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting H	“I’d be eternally grateful if you would help me moving.”

Clearly, the core premise of Brown and Levinson’s (1987 [1978]) model is built on the notion of politeness as strategic conflict avoidance, or the maintenance of social equilibrium, in that the main concern at its core is the speaker performing politeness. As a consequence, impoliteness or as Brown and Levinson (1987) put it “rudeness” is viewed with little concern. Although Brown and Levinson (1987) did not explicitly discuss impoliteness, a FTA without redressive action can be taken as impoliteness. In other words, not attempting to mitigate a face threat by applying politeness rules is considered as a non-act or an absence of politeness from the Brown and Levinson theoretical perspective (see Eelen, 2001 for a comprehensive understanding). This ‘non-act’ is viewed as

uncharacteristic by Brown and Levinson and thus unworthy of consideration as it deviates from what are standard expectations of harmonious behavior. Seeing impoliteness as aberrant and anomalous is, in fact, pervasive among the classic politeness theories. Indeed, Leech (1983) asserts simply that “conflictive illocutions tend, thankfully, to be rather marginal to human linguistic behavior in normal circumstances” (p. 105).

### 2.1.2 Rise of impoliteness

The study of impoliteness came to light partly as a reaction to the impression (i.e., impoliteness is aberrant and marginal behaviors) (Culpeper, 2011) or what Eelen (2001) calls the “conceptual bias” to politeness (Bousfield, 2008, p. 1). Initially, a small number of scholars (e.g., Lachenicht, 1980; Craig, Karen, & Frances, 1986; Austin, 1990; Penman, 1990; Culpeper, 1996) addressed the concept of face-attack/aggravation refuting the claim that impoliteness (face-attack or face-aggravating strategies precisely) is a marginal activity. Rather, they note that it plays a key role in various discourse types and argue that politeness theory is in need of an adequate framework that takes account of the dynamic nature of interpersonal communication strategies (i.e., cooperative as well as hostile communication) (Culpeper, 1996). Notably, Culpeper’s (1996) study is specifically designed to take account of face-attack strategies with a framework that mirrors Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory of politeness (Culpeper, 2011). Craig *et al.* (1986), Lachenicht (1980), and Austin (1987, 1990) also proposed an impoliteness model inspired by Brown and Levinson’s (1987 [1978]) framework; nevertheless, Culpeper’s (1996) study was at the forefront in developing impoliteness into an independent field of investigation within the broader area of politeness research (Dyrel, 2015).

Culpeper (1996) characterizes impoliteness as “very much the parasite of politeness” (p. 350) and proposes a model that encompasses the five super-strategies “parallel[ed] but opposite” to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness framework (p. 349). Specifically, the model is designed to account for communicative strategies that are oriented towards attacking face rather than mitigation, viz. (1) bald on record impoliteness, (2) positive impoliteness, (3) negative impoliteness, (4) sarcasm or mock impoliteness, (5) withhold politeness. By exploring activity types that involve a high level of “conflictive talk” such as army training and literary drama, Culpeper (1996) demonstrates that in some contexts impoliteness is not “a haphazard product of, say, a heated argument, but is deployed [by the participants] in a systematic way as part of what they perceive to be their job” (p. 359).

A consequence of constructing the framework that closely corresponds to Brown and Levinson (1987) is that it suffers from the same limitations that Brown and Levinson (1987) has been criticized for. A major weakness of Culpeper’s (1996) study, similar to that leveled at Brown and Levinson (1987 [1978]), is its over-emphasis on isolated lexically or grammatically determined impoliteness strategies (Culpeper *et al.*, 2003). Culpeper *et al.* (2003) address these weaknesses by examining how impoliteness such as repeat or combination face-aggravating strategies are used in extended discourse. Moreover, the authors broaden the scope of study in this area by including prosodic cues and the discursive context in order to better understand speaker intention in conveying impoliteness. Developing these ideas further, Culpeper (2005) embraces a more culturally and contextually sensitive model of face by incorporating Spencer-Oatey’s (2002) rapport management approach (Bousfield, 2008b). However, and despite the evolutionary steps

made by Culpeper (1996, 2005) and Culpeper *et al.* (2003), other researchers working within the discursive approach to (im)politeness (e.g., Mills, 2003; Locher & Watts, 2008; Watts, 2003, 2008 and among others) argue that viewing (im)politeness as a second-order concept, i.e., “how the lay person’s discourse fits a conception devised by academics” is problematic as, “the very concept of (im)politeness itself and its definition are subject to discursive struggle” (Culpeper, 2011, p. 7).

## 2.2 The “Discursive Turn” in (im)politeness research

### 2.2.1 Rejection

Informed by post-modernism (Haugh, 2007), researchers (e.g., Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003, 2005; Locher, 2004, 2006; Locher & Watts, 2005, 2008; Mills, 2003, 2005) pursuing research consistent with the discursive approach argue for moving away from the Brown and Levinson’s (1987 [1978]) deterministic, analyst’s oriented approach, and urge analysis that pays greater attention to the participants’ perspective in studying (im)politeness. They point to a number of shortcomings in the model of Brown and Levinson’s (1987 [1978]) politeness theory in the analysis of (im)politeness. First, Brown and Levinson’s politeness model assumes that politeness is *a priori* knowledge in all human societies. Specifically, the individualistic concept of face – which Brown and Levinson (1987) define as face wants that “every person knows every other person has, and knows are in his best interest to, at least partially, satisfy” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 67) - is asserted to be a universally valid social need. In so doing, Brown and Levinson (1987) failed to account for cultural differences, especially among non-Western cultures such as those found in East Asian countries where the cultural focus may be more inclined to collectivism over



individualism (Kasper, 1990) (This point is further discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3). Second, politeness is mainly characterized as the inherent linguistic devices for mitigating FTAs based on the notion of facework (van der Bom & Mills, 2015). As such, it does not allow for a broad range of linguistic realizations (Mills, 2011). Indeed, Locher and Bousfield (2008) observe that the common way in which Brown and Levinson (1987 [1978]) has come to be understood has encouraged a sharp bifurcation between polite and impolite behavior. Moreover, extant analysis tends to focus on politeness, while impoliteness is treated simply as the opposite of politeness. In contrast, theorists in the discursive traditions view impoliteness “as one of the choices which could be taken at any particular juncture of the conversation” (Mills, 2011, p. 40). Third, what constitutes politeness in the Brown and Levinson (1987) model is defined entirely by speaker intentions and the production of language. This approach ignores the perspective of hearer(s), despite that the interpretation of something as polite or impolite is co-constructed in the interaction between speaker and hearer (Culpeper, 2011; Mills, 2011; van der Bom & Mills, 2015).

Indeed, speech act theory that forms the undergirding framework of Brown and Levinson (1987 [1978]) politeness (speaker-centered, decontextualized sentence-focused model of communication) assumes that speech acts (e.g., apologies, requests, compliments, etc.) have single functions and are mutually agreed upon by hearers (van der Bom & Mills, 2015, p. 183). However, van der Bom and Mills (2015) observe that though speech acts such as apologies (e.g., ‘I am sorry’ or ‘I am afraid’) may fall into common patterns it does not necessarily follow that the utterances are always recognized as apologies. The speaker may intend other purposes, and/or the utterances may be understood differently, in different

contexts, by the hearer. For instance, Robinson's (2004) analysis of explicit apologies in naturally occurring English notes that "I must apologize" is "an apology-prefaced *declination*, not an apology to be responded to in its own right" (original emphasis) (p. 298). van der Bom and Mills (2015) further note that apologies cannot simply be analyzed as explicit redressive action for FTAs. Rather, apologies are more accurately viewed as complex negotiations between interactants. This is, indeed, the case for all speech acts (p. 183).

The essence of the discursive approach is that it abandons the pursuit of constructing an overarching universal, cross-culturally valid theory of politeness, in the same way as Brown and Levinson (1987 [1978]) attempted to do (Haugh, 2007; van der Bom & Mills, 2015). This is because the Brown and Levinson (1987 [1978]) approach results in theories which are precise and concrete, but do not capture the full range of complexities involved in making sense of interaction (Haugh, 2007). Instead, the discursive approach emphasizes forms of analysis that are interactive and context focused. Particularly, the primary concern within this theoretical frame is the perceptions of the individual in terms of what is perceived to be polite and impolite during the course of interaction in particular situated contexts. Thus, it rejects, or at least weakened the role of intention in communication (Culpeper, 2011b, p. 409), while it centers on participants judgement and interpretation which underscores "a more contextualized, localized interpretation and a more socially focused approach" (van der Bom & Mills, 2015, p. 187). Because the discursive approach primarily focuses on process rather than product (i.e., politeness is situated amid emergent meanings, rather than assuming that it contains pre-defined meanings) it rejects the isolated, decontextualized sentences for analysis. Rather, it

chooses longer stretches of talks for observing how certain utterances lead in to politeness and impoliteness during on-going interactions.

### 2.2.2 First-order politeness vs. second-order politeness

The emphasis on participant perception of (im)politeness motivated discursive researchers to distinguish between two different perspectives on politeness, first-order politeness (Politeness<sub>1</sub>) and second-order politeness (Politeness<sub>2</sub>) (Grainger, 2011; Kádár & Haugh, 2013). Politeness<sub>1</sub> entails the lay language users' understanding of practice. More specifically, Watts *et al.* (1992) defined it as “the various ways in which polite behavior is perceived and talked about by members of sociocultural groups” (p. 3). Eelen (2001) further expands this definition, providing more detailed conceptualization of politeness<sub>1</sub>. In doing so, he identifies three different kinds of politeness<sub>1</sub>: expressive, classificatory and metapragmatic. Expressive politeness<sub>1</sub> refers to “politeness encoded in speech, to instances where the speaker aims at ‘polite’ behavior” (Eelen, 2001, p. 35). Classificatory politeness<sub>1</sub> is defined as “politeness used as a categorizational tool: it covers hearers’ judgements (in actual interaction) of other people’s interactional behavior as ‘polite’ or ‘impolite’” (Eelen, 2001, p. 35). Finally, metapragmatic politeness<sub>1</sub> stands for “instances of talk about politeness as a concept, about what people perceive politeness to be all about” (Eelen, 2001, p. 35). While politeness<sub>1</sub> centers on the emic perspectives of politeness, politeness<sub>2</sub>, on the other hand, refers to a more abstract, technical idea which is defined and conceptualized by analysts (Watts *et al.*, 1992; Eelen, 2001). Watts *et al.* (1992) explains this as “a term within a theory of social behavior and language usage” (p. 3).

From the standpoint of the discursive approach, theorists argue politeness<sub>1</sub> is the

only logical option to the study of (im)politeness given it is defined as a *discursive concept*. That is, the belief that “meaning is fluid, negotiable between participants and as such cannot reside in the minds of speakers in the form of ‘intention’” (Grainger, 2011, p. 170). Locher and Watts (2005) further note, intentions and norms are co-constructed through interaction rather than through pre-existing social frames or expectations. Thus, an individual’s reactions to rude, impolite, polite or over-polite behavior may vary in particular contexts. As a consequence, no words or expressions are inherently polite or impolite, rather the perceptions or evaluations of linguistic forms as polite or impolite (among many other labels) are contested and negotiated during an ongoing interaction played out in a particular setting (Locher & Watts, 2008). Within this frame, the discursive approach to (im)politeness advocates for investigations of (im)politeness that are centered on “how participants in social interaction perceive politeness, and how people use the terms that are available to them in their own languages and...the discursive struggle over those terms” (Watts, 2005, p. xxii).

### 2.2.3 Criticisms of the discursive approaches to (im)politeness

In recent years, the position of politeness<sub>1</sub> as the most legitimate focus of politeness research has come under scrutiny (e.g., Glick, 2006; Haugh, 2007, 2010a; Terkourafi, 2005a; Vilkki, 2006; Xie, He, & Lin, 2005). Scholars argue that it is difficult to remove the second-order interpretations of the researcher from the study of politeness (Haugh, 2007), and that it would be undesirable to do so since this would potentially place limits on researchers’ ability to study (im)politeness phenomena (Terkourafi, 2005a). Holmes (2005) notes, “[...] if everything is relative, [and] the analyst cannot legitimately attribute meaning,

one wonders what, then, does constitute a legitimate role for the analyst” (p. 115).

Terkourafi (2005a) also expresses the concern that a truly discursive approach to politeness may descend into simple description of politeness phenomena, or mere exercises in finding the lexical semantics of politeness (p. 242). The author explains, “what we are then left with are minute descriptions of individual encounters, but these do not in any way add up to an explanatory theory of the phenomena under study” (Terkourafi, 2005a, p. 245).

Moreover, Xie *et al.* (2005) have raised questions as to how exactly to draw the line between the layperson and the expert as formulated in the Politeness<sub>1</sub> and Politeness<sub>2</sub> dichotomy (p. 449). Meanwhile, Haugh (2012) contends that rather than treating the distinction between Politeness<sub>1</sub> and Politeness<sub>2</sub> as a simple dichotomy, it is much more productive to use the multiple loci of the two perspectives in explaining the various (im)politeness phenomena (p. 114).

## 2.3 Integrative pragmatics approaches to (im)politeness

### 2.3.1 Bridging the gap

Integrative pragmatics, the so-called third wave of thought, is proposed by Culpeper and Haugh (2014) as an alternative approach, an effort to establish a middle ground and to integrate the stark dichotomies of Politeness<sub>1</sub> vs. Politeness<sub>2</sub>. It embraces both the classic and the discursive approaches in the analysis of (im)politeness as it is designed not only to respect user and observer perspectives, but also to bridge them by focusing on how meanings arise from interactional/relational practices (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, p. 11).

It is important to note that integrative pragmatics is not the only alternative model purposefully developed to provide a more productive framework for politeness research.

Alternative approaches include:

- A frame-based approach to politeness (Terkourafi, 2005a, 2005b):  
This approach adopts the concept of frame which emphasizes the historical and cognitive dimension of social interaction. That is, the model is drawn from a belief that our previous experience of how interactants express themselves influences a set of expectations of how it is possible to interact in the present (Mills, 2011). The salient characteristics of this approach is that it focuses on politeness<sub>2</sub>, which maintains the speech act focus of Brown and Levinson, but with the key difference that it rejects the existence of norms *a priori*. Rather, it stresses the participants' "own observable responses that guide the classification of any particular utterance as realizing a particular type of act" (Terkourafi, 2005a, p. 248 – cited in Mills, 2011, p. 33). The aim of the frame-based view is to establish empirical "regularities of co-occurrence between linguistic expressions and their extra-linguistic context of use" (Terkourafi, 2005a, p. 247) in a bottom-up fashion through the adoption of a quantitative methodology.
- A neo-Brown and Levinson approach to politeness (Holmes *et al.*, 2012; Grainger, 2018):  
A neo-Brown and Levinson approach to politeness is proposed as an attempt to provide a more dynamic, context sensitive and discourse - oriented framework (Holmes *et al.*, 2012). It recognizes the importance of

the role of the analyst in the study of politeness, at the same time it acknowledges the concept of politeness as a social practice (i.e., dynamic and interactive). In other words, it retains the positive-negative face(work) continuum as an empirical tool from Brown and Levison, “while recognizing that facework strategies may be operating within a hierarchy of roles (individual, institutional, societal etc.) and that roles are negotiated as part of a dynamic process of communication” (Grainger, 2018, p. 23).

- Conjoint Co-constituting Model of Communication (Arundale, 1999, 2005):

Conjoint Co-constituting Model, which is also referred to as Face Constituting Theory (FCT) views communication as collaborative and non-summative, in which meanings and actions are conjointly co-constituted by interactants in talk-in-interaction. In this model, face and facework is conceptualized as the *relationship* two or more persons create with one another in interaction, rather than a perception of *person-centered attributes* (e.g., Brown and Levinson’s theory of politeness) (Arundale, 2010, p. 2080: original emphasis). Using conversation analysis, Conjoint Co-constituting Model provides guidelines that addresses the dynamic process of achieving meanings and actions in interaction. This is a sharp contrast to the traditional politeness theories based in encoding/decoding models of communication that pays most attention to the “unilateral effects of one person’s utterance on another person” (Arundale, 2010, p. 2085).

The common ground these alternative approaches, including integrative pragmatics, share is that they adopt a bottom-up approach (i.e., seeing politeness as dynamic and contextual) to the analysis of (im)politeness. However, the subtle difference between integrative pragmatics and the first two approaches discussed above (i.e., a frame-based and a neo-Brown and Levinson approach) is that the former claims to treat emic (Politeness<sub>1</sub>) and etic (Politeness<sub>2</sub>) perspectives of politeness as equally important<sup>1</sup> (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, p. 229). Whereas, the latter embraces Politeness<sub>2</sub> as a basis of the empirical frame. These approaches maintain the speech act focus of Brown and Levinson (a frame-based approach to politeness – see Terkourafi, 2005a) or retains the positive-negative face(work) continuum as an empirical tool (a neo-Brown and Levinson approach to politeness – see Holmes *et al.*, 2012). Meanwhile, the approach advocated in Conjoint Co-constituting Model of Communication (Arundale, 1999, 2005) retains a defined role for the analyst while at the same time focuses on the perceptions and understandings of participants which is similar to the integrative pragmatics approach. However, the model does not explicitly define how the treatment of (im)politeness occurs within the theory (Haugh, 2007, p. 309) which differs from the integrative pragmatics model proposed by Culpeper and Haugh (2014) (see Section 2.3.3.3).

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<sup>1</sup> Interpersonal pragmatics (see Blitvich, 2013; Locher & Graham, 2010; Locher, 2013, 2015; Haugh, Kádár, & Mills, 2013) is another alternative theoretical approach to (im)politeness that allows for a combination of first and second order insights. The main area of focus in the interpersonal pragmatics is, naturally, interpersonal relationship that shape and form in situ (Locher & Graham, 2010, p. 1). The reason why it is excluded in the main text is that the interests and analytical foci of interpersonal pragmatics significantly overlap with those of Interpersonal Communication (Haugh, Kádár, & Mills, 2013, p. 2), and that it requires an extensive discussion in a separate section. This is outside the scope of the current study which limits discussion to the three waves of thought in politeness research.



Following on, similar to the discursive approaches integrative pragmatics also emphasizes particular meanings, actions and evaluations that are interactionally achieved through constructed sequences of recurrent and recognizable utterances in locally situated contexts. Moreover, it focuses on an entire continuum of relational phenomena (i.e., impoliteness, politeness, over-politeness and so on) by analyzing longer stretches of authentic discourse (Haugh, Wei-Lin, & Kádár, 2015). However, the difference between the discursive approaches and integrative pragmatics is that while the discursive approaches only focus on first-order politeness, integrative pragmatics facilitates attempts to “reach theoretical second-order conclusion by means of analysis of data that are consonant with participants understandings displayed in the course of a particular interaction” (Haugh, Wei-Lin, & Kádár, 2015, p. 77).

Furthermore, another important difference between the two approaches is that the discursive approach focuses solely on how participants evaluate particular actions within a conversation, whereas the integrative pragmatics approach is interested in analysis beyond the conversation itself. More specifically, the discursive tradition tends to heavily rely on conversation analysis, wherein the sole focus is on the investigation of the participant’s judgement of particular actions as polite, impolite or over-polite and so on within a conversation. On the other hand, the third wave, such as the integrative pragmatics approach, is not limited to analysis of (im)politeness only at a conversational level. Rather, it also focuses on metapragmatics of (im)politeness or (im)politeness phenomena on a societal level.

The interest in pursuing the investigation of a metapragmatic perspective of language use and communication stems from the idea that social practice lies at the heart of

understandings of (im)politeness. Kádár and Haugh (2013) note that evaluations of (im)politeness do not arise in isolation. Rather, they occur through the practices “by which social actions and meanings are recognisable as ‘familiar scenes of everyday affairs’, and are thus open, because of this, to moral evaluation” (p. 183). Therefore, any discussion of (im)politeness is not sufficient without also investigating the ways in which the social actors conceptualize their own actions. Hence, investigating the metalanguage of (im)politeness across different relational networks is imperative. In so doing, researchers can unravel the emic perspectives that underpin (im)politeness metalanguage.

### 2.3.2 The rationale

The rationale for using integrative pragmatics as the framework for this study is that it provides a platform to treat first (politeness<sub>1</sub>) and second-order (politeness<sub>2</sub>) perspective as equally important (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, p. 229). Indeed, the advantage of using the integrative pragmatics model is the fact that it allows for the combining of insights from both user and observer perspectives in the analysis of data in an attempt “to reach theoretical second-order conclusions” (Kádár & Mills, 2011, p. 8). Haugh *et al.* (2015) explain that in order to be successful in drawing insights from both user and observer perspectives, tying in second-order conclusions, the analyst is required to focus not only on the ways in which participants engage in achieving meanings or evaluation (participant orientations), but also to understand that the achievement of these meanings and evaluations is result of the sequential organization of subsequent turns (procedural consequentiality) (p. 77). In doing so, the validity of politeness<sub>1</sub> becomes more relevant as participant’s interpretations and evaluation are cross-checked through the analysis of a

researcher (Shum & Lee, 2013).

With the way that it embraces both user and observer perspectives, integrative pragmatics offers a multi-dimensional approach to the study of (im)politeness that is well-suited to the current study. However, one gap in the integrative pragmatics framework is that, similar to other politeness frameworks, it does not specifically provide a space for agency. In order to overcome this weakness, I incorporate agency as defined broadly through the concept of activity system grounded in activity theory (see Section 2.3.3 for a detailed discussion of activity theory).

### 2.3.3 Incorporating agency

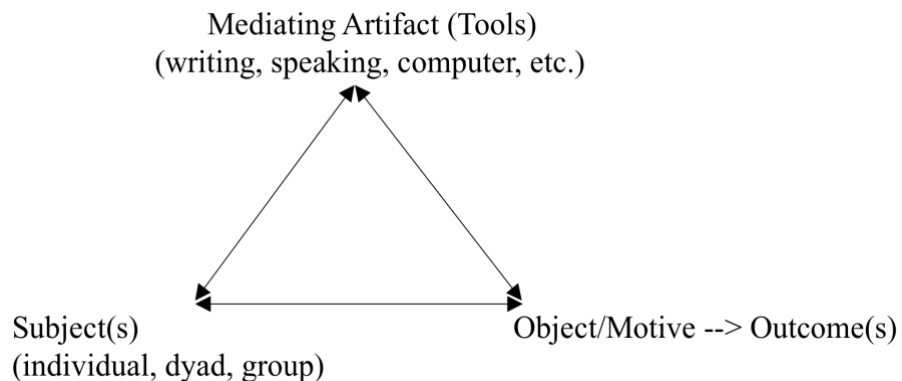
Agency in this study is broadly defined as a capacity to act (Ahearn, 2001; Mitchell & Haugh, 2015) that is mediated by a given sociocultural environment. In order to understand what is meant by viewing agency as a mediated action, a brief overview of activity system as formulated through activity theory is necessary. Thus, I first outline what activity theory is in Section 2.3.3.1 before moving on to provide an in-depth discussion of how agency is used (Section 2.3.3.2) and incorporated into the framework of integrative pragmatics (Section 2.3.3.3). Also, it is important to note that incorporating agency in this way is new in the field of politeness theory (with the exception of Mitchell and Haugh, 2015), and this helps provide a richer understanding of politeness phenomenon.

#### 2.3.3.1 Activity theory

Activity theory is a conceptual framework that has evolved from ideas first posited by Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky in the 1920s and early 1930s. These ideas were later

developed by Vygotsky's colleague and disciple Alexei Leont'ev (1978, 1981) (Engeström, 2001).

The basic tenet of activity theory is that it views human actions and social levels as an interlinked unit. In other words, all human actions are mediated by social relationships and culturally created artifacts (i.e., physical and symbolic tools) such as signs, language, gesture, architecture, music, machines, etc. (Lantolf & Genung, 2002). Therefore, meaningful context must be integrated into the basic units of analysis since human actions are always situated in context (Kuutti, 1995, p. 23). This unit is commonly referred to as an activity system composed of subject, object, and mediating artifacts in its very basic foundation, or the so-called the first generation (Figure 2).

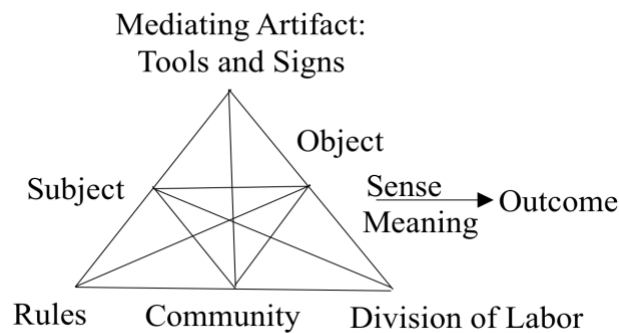


*Figure 2: Mediated relationship at individual level*

What this triangle or activity system represents is that mediating artifacts, as described, are integral and inseparable components of all human activities (Engeström, 1999). Engeström (2001) noted that the idea of cultural mediation of actions, initially created by Lev Vygotsky a leading thinker who revolutionized the dichotomized view of the individual and societal structure. By conflating cultural artifacts with human actions,

“the individual could no longer be understood without his or her cultural means; and the society could no longer be understood without the agency of individuals who use and produce artifacts” (Engeström, 2001, p. 134). However, the limitation of the first generation of activity system is that “the unit of analysis remained individually focused” (Engeström, 2001, p. 134).

Based on Leont’ev’s (1981) idea of a collective activity system, Engeström (1987) graphically expanded the first generation of activity system to include the element of community, rules and division of labor, which is referred to as the second generation of the activity system (Figure 3).



*Figure 3: The structure of a human activity system (Engeström, 1987, p. 78)*

Through the addition of the social/collective elements in an activity system, Engeström (1999) pushed the paradigm beyond a micro level concentration on the individual actor operating with tools in order to enable focus on the “complex interrelations between the individual subject and his or her community” (Engeström, 2001, p. 134). This systemic model (Figure 3) assumes that all elements have a relationship to other elements (Kuutti, 1995). In this model, the focus of the study of mediation lies not only on the inseparable

connection between artifacts and human actions, but also on the relationship with the social and collective elements of an activity system in order to capture the conflictual nature of social practice. However, a crucial shortcoming of the second generation is that it is not equipped to deal with cultural diversity. This prompted the development of the third generation that joins two or more activity systems in order to understand dialogue between different traditions, perspectives, and networks (Engeström, 2001, p. 135). Further discussion of the third generation of activity system will not be pursued here as the main purpose of the current section is to briefly overview the underlying principle of activity theory. That is, at the heart of activity theory resides the concept of *mediation*, in which all human actions are mediated by a given environment.

#### 2.3.3.2 Agency

Individual agency is one of the central components in activity theory as it helps us understand why and how people act as they do. In contrast to popular conceptions of agency as free will, agency in activity theory is never an ‘inherent possession’ of a particular individual (Brown, 2014). Indeed, it is understood as the human capacity to act to regulate one’s own actions with the help of mediating means (Ahearn, 2001). In other words, agency is habitually socially mediated, in that an action that the individuals perform is not purely governed by personal agency. Rather, it is an action that is contextually enacted in a particular sociocultural environment. The capacity to act is not shaped in a vacuum; rather, it is invariably motivated and constrained by the ‘options’ an individual has in a given sociocultural interactive moment (Mitchell & Haugh, 2015).

Within the activity theoretical perspective, “actions are goal-directed processes that

must be undertaken to fulfill the object”, and different actions may be chosen to meet the same anticipated outcome (Nardi, 1996, p. 37). It is agency that links motivation to undertake a particular action in a particular, situated context. In this regard, agency is seen as being on a continuum with a specific sociocultural environment the individuals are engaged in.

In parallel, Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) as well as Brown (2014) describe agency as “being a ‘relationship’ that the [individuals] have with those around them, society as whole, and even with imagined communities.” (Brown, 2014, p. 2). The view of agency as relationally constructed is based on the underlying notion of activity theory that “an individual is mediated not only by materials and symbolic tools, but also always by social formations such as immediate communities of practice...as well as distant or even ‘imagined’ communities” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 239). The focus of the relational formulation of agency is that people are not just performing or doing; rather, they also actively engage in constructing the terms and conditions of the ‘relationships’ with a given environment, and assigning significance and relevance, or meanings to things and events that matter to them (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Brown (2014) provides an interesting example of this through a narrative account of a lesbian second language learner of Korean residing in Seoul, who defined the “hostile looks” from the locals people as prompted by her “androgynous” appearance. The author explains the subject sought to mediate her relationship with an imagined Korean society hostile to homosexuality by altering her appearance and wearing fashions she believed to be more feminine. This is an example of the strategies employed by social actors to assign context-specific meanings to social practices. For example, what was construed as a “hostile look” may be interpreted in a

multitude of ways by different participants. In this way, agency is “a relationship that is constantly co-constructed and renegotiated with those around the individual and with the society at large” (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001, p 148).

The characterization of agency as being co-constructed and renegotiated is reminiscent of Duranti’s (2004) notion of agency. That is, agency is reflexive and bidirectional in on-going interactions (Mitchell & Haugh, 2015). The author (2004) notes, agency encompasses three entities:

- i) to have some degree of control over ones’ own behavior,
- ii) whose actions in the world affect other entities (and sometimes their own),
- iii) whose actions are the object of evaluation (e.g., in terms of their responsibility for a given outcome) (Duranti, 2004, p. 453).

Relating Duranti’s view of agency to impoliteness then, just as a speaker chooses to perform certain social actions, and be held accountable for implementing those actions, in a parallel way so too can the recipient exercise agency in choosing to hold the speaker accountable (or not) for a particular kind of social action with respect to particular dimension(s) of moral orders (Mitchell & Haugh, 2015, p. 207). Here, moral orders refer to commonly shared norms regarding “what social actions and social meanings members think are appropriate/inappropriate, good/bad, polite/impolite and so on” (Kádár & Haugh 2013, p. 67). A key claim supporting impoliteness as being inter-related with the moral order is the fact that it is “what grounds our evaluations of social actions and meanings as... “polite”, “impolite”, “over-polite” and so on” (Haugh, 2015, p. 173). Moral standards and norms, of course, exist at the local, community or societal levels. However, what is



assigned to be relevant or meaningful, or whether (or not) to hold a speaker accountable for a particular social action, are constantly negotiated during communicative events.

Drawn from these views, agency in this study is deemed as involving two interrelated processes. First, the capacity to define relationships with other social actors and to derive and assign meaning to social actions. The second relates to an individual's capacity to hold a social actor accountable for social meanings and actions the participant has identified. Here, the capacity to act is, of course, constantly negotiated during the particulars of the locally situated interaction, the on-going relationships between the participants, the specific activity type, and among various other factors.

### 2.3.3.3 A modified integrative pragmatics model

The following modified integrative pragmatics model (Figure 1) has been created that incorporates socially-mediated agency, a pivotal precondition to the inevitable variability in impoliteness phenomena observed in the current study.

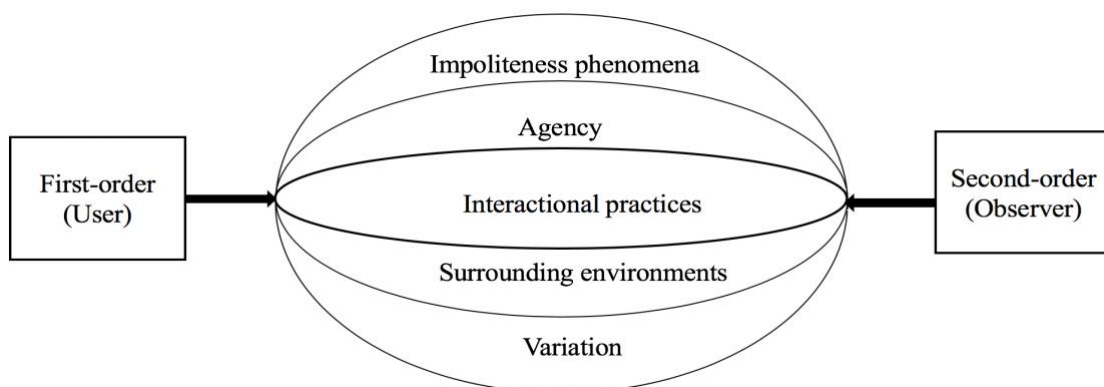


Figure 4: Modified integrative pragmatics model (Adapted from Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, p. 267)

At the center of impoliteness phenomena lies interactional practices. Culpeper and Haugh (2014) explain that interactional practices constitute pragmatic forms, pragmatic functions and pragmatic contexts, in which interactional meanings arise from (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, p. 267). Pragmatic forms, pragmatic functions and pragmatic contexts are defined as:

- (1) pragmatic forms are any linguistic or non-linguistic unit that can be connected to a pragmatic function;
  - (2) pragmatic function is a purpose or activity into which the form is employed;
  - (3) pragmatic contexts are the relationship between pragmatic forms and functions that are mediated through pragmatic contexts, and which are connected to the real world.
- Pragmatic contexts help us to understand interactional meanings arising through interactional practices.

Furthermore, interactional practices, in my account, are also in line with Haugh *et. al's* (2015) view that “presupposes interaction between two or more people, even if imagined rather than actually occurring. [This is] because without interaction there are no grounds on which evaluations of persons or relationships can arise or be displayed” (p. 74).

In this sense, interactional practices are discursive in that particular meanings, actions and evaluations are interactionally achieved through constructed sequences of recurrent and recognizable utterances in locally situated contexts. It is agency that links motivation to achieve these particular outcomes (i.e., meanings, actions, stances or evaluations), and in turn creates inevitable variability in impoliteness, and broadly pragmatic phenomena.

In short, based on a modified integrative pragmatics model, the ultimate goal of this study is to “reach theoretical second-order conclusions” (Kádár & Mills, 2011, p. 8), in this case regarding the role of agency in impoliteness. This is accomplished by observing how participants achieve interactional meaning, action or evaluation during the course of particular interactions. In order to contextualize the data analysis that follows, the following chapter provides important background information about (im)politeness in Korean.

## CHAPTER III

### (IM)POLITENESS IN KOREAN

The extant research on Korean (im)politeness tends to focus on speaker strategy in the use of honorific and other related linguistic forms, while paying little attention to hearer perception of the forms used. This chapter reveals gaps in the previous treatment of (im)politeness in Korean and also highlights the importance of the current study in filling these gaps in the literature.

The following sections are divided into three important areas of (im)politeness in Korean language. The first section (Section 3.1) deals with the distinction between honorific and non-honorific speech, which is an essential first step to show how (im)politeness is closely intertwined with the honorific systems in Korean. The second part of the section (Section 3.2) discusses address and reference terms. Discussing Korean (im)politeness without mentioning the variety of types of terms of address is not possible as, for example, the application of a particular address term can mark a serious offense when used outside of normative contexts. The final section of this chapter (Section 3.3) introduces Korean (im)politeness metalanguage. This section provides an insight into how Koreans perceive (im)politeness, and what it means to them.

#### 3.1 Honorific versus non-honorific speech

Korean is well known for embodying an intricate system of honorifics, the exploration of which has dominated many studies of Korean politeness (e.g. Brown, 2011, 2015a; Byon, 2006; Hwang, 1990; Yoon, 2015, among others). The honorifics system is

composed of as many as six speech styles. These involve verb endings that primarily index the speaker’s social position in relation to the hearer, as well as various other grammatical and lexical forms (see Lee & Ramsey, 2000, Chapter 7; Brown, 2011, Chapter 2).

Although the honorific system allows for the marking of various levels the most basic distinction is between two general registers of speech: *contaymal* and *panmal* (Brown, 2013a).

*Contaymal* (lit: ‘respect speech’) refers to honorific speech and primarily involves the use of speech style verb endings such as *-yo* and *-(su)pnita*:

- (1) a. *(ce-nun pap-ul) mek-eyo* “polite” *-(e/a)yo* style  
 b. *(ce-nun pap-ul) mek-supnita* “deferential” *-(su)pnita* style  
 ‘(I am) eating (the meal)’

*Contaymal* is distinct from the non-honorific speech – or *panmal* (lit: ‘half-speech’), which uses endings such as *-e* and *-(un/nun)ta*:

- (2) a. *(ppang-i) masiss-ta* “plain” *-ta* style  
 b. *(ppang-i) masiss-e* “intimate” *-e* style  
 ‘(The bread is) delicious’

*Contaymal* and *panmal* are used prototypically to index distance or proximity in social relationships. *Contaymal* is used in “distant” relationships, such as when interacting with elders, status superiors and non-intimates. *Panmal*, on the other hand, is used when interacting with intimates of equal or inferior age or rank. Although *panmal* between

friends is the unmarked norm for those who do not share a relationship since childhood mutual agreement between interlocutors is required to avoid possible offence (Choo, 2006, p. 135).

Despite the strong underlying social norms surrounding *contaymal* and *panmal* usage, a number of studies (e.g., Kim-Renaud, 1990; Lee, 1999, 2001; Brown, 2011, 2013a) have demonstrated that the functions of the forms go beyond marking static age-rank or solidarity variables and have more malleable social meanings (Brown, 2015b, p. 43). Indeed, these forms are now considered as indexical signs (see Brown, 2015b). Depending on the particular context (i.e., participants' situated identities and activity type) these forms may express multiple social meanings including mitigating face-threat (Brown, 2011), asserting power (Lee, 2001), anger (Lee, 1999), and sarcasm (Brown, 2013a). These findings stand in contrast to traditional views of honorific use in Korean, and also Japanese, which the following section (3.1.1) addresses.

### 3.1.1 Traditional views

Traditionally, honorifics are always associated with positive values such as 'respect' 'deference', 'polite', and so on. In line with this view, Brown and Levinson (1987) posited that honorifics are an intentional strategy for negative politeness ("giving deference"), which are "typically *strategically* used to soften FTAs" (p. 178-187). However, Japanese linguists (e.g., Matsumoto, 1989) note this view does not explain the use of honorifics in non-FTA utterances. As well, Ide (1989) challenged the idea of honorifics as a volitional act claiming instead that Japanese speakers use honorifics according to social norms called *wakimae* or 'discernment' rather than intentional strategy.

A key pillar of this view is that honorifics are “socio-pragmatically and grammatically obligatory” (Ide, 1989, p. 227), which is unlike the view espoused by Brown and Levinson who define politeness strategies as dependent on individual speaker volition. Ide’s view quickly became influential in the conceptualization of politeness, manifesting in broad, general acceptance of the idea that maintaining social norms is of primary concern during social interaction in “discernment cultures” such as Japan and Korea (Watts, 1989, p. 132-133).

### 3.1.2 “New wave”

While research began to see that honorific use is more obligatory than what was previously assumed based on research into Western languages (i.e., English) a new wave of research employing conversational data (e.g. Cook, 2011, 2013; Dunn, 2005; Strauss & Oh, 2005; Brown, 2013a, 2015) started to emerge showing the use of honorifics involves much more than uniformly following social norms (Brown, 2015). In fact, Korean and Japanese speakers dynamically switch between different levels of honorifics for various reasons. For instance, in Brown’s (2013a) analysis of honorifics use in Korean television dramas, the author shows how honorifics are used to communicate sarcasm. The study found that the sarcastic application of honorifics are more salient between intimates though it is not limited to friendly social contexts. In fact, honorifics are used sarcastically between adult strangers. In these cases, honorific use alongside non-honorific speech and marked impoliteness, the positive social meanings (such as “deference”) normally associated with these forms, cease and the usage becomes open for interpretation as “insincere” (p. 177 – 179). This new wave of studies has focussed on conversational goals and how speakers can

use honorifics intentionally to achieve these goals.

However, given the common focus on speaker strategy, recipient responses are usually not subject to extensive analysis, or any analysis at all. For example, in Cook (2011), analysing honorific use among seven Japanese in a meeting setting, the author observes that male speakers occupying senior positions were more likely to use honorifics in order to index their institutional, or “on-stage”, voices (p. 3666). The study does not reference recipient response beyond a brief reference to how speakers may repeat the words of others during “off-stage” talk as a marker of solidarity, the remainder of the analysis focuses only on the speaker. Research must now look at the role of the recipient in co-constructing the contextualized meanings of honorifics in language such as Japanese and Korean. Indeed, the current study seeks to fill this gap through an investigation of the Korean language.

In addition, another significant issue often overlooked in previous studies is that certain utterances can be ambiguous as to whether they represent *contaymal* or *panmal*. This is particularly so in those cases when the utterances do not contain a sentence-final verb, and so no mandatory positions for honorific marking. For instance, it is common for speakers of Korean to produce utterances that consist only of a dependent clause ending in a clausal connective ending such as *-ese* ‘so’, *-ko* ‘and’ *-myen* ‘if’. While the honorific *-yo* ending can be added after some of these connective endings, this is optional and this introduces considerable variation in its usage.

In the CMC context, the use of dependent clauses and other incomplete sentences is particularly widespread (Lee, 2009). For instance,



...이쁜 백일홍은 보인는 것 같은데...[sic.]  
 ippun paykilhong-un po-i-nun kes kathuntey  
 beautiful zinnia-TOP see-COP-MOD seem  
 '(it) looks like (I) can see the zinnia'

(the example extracted from Lee, 2009, p. 116)

The utterance above is a dependent clause without a main clause. The connective ending -*untey* primarily provides background information to help the hearer understand the situation presented in the second clause. Although -*untey* works as a sentence connector, it frequently appears in a sentence-final position as well, such as in this example. In this instance, the polite speech style -*yo* may be tacked on to the end in order to make the utterance polite: -*kathunteyyo* '(it) seems'. Lee (2009) notes a reason why this type of utterances is prevalent in online environments is a consequence of speaker strategies designed to avoid choosing between *contaymal* and *panmal* where relative social position is underdetermined (p. 117). Lee (2009), consistent with other studies noted, does not mention recipient responses at all. The current study will argue that whether these kinds of utterances constitute *panmal* or *contaymal* may ultimately rely on the contextualized interpretations of the recipient(s).

### 3.2 Address and reference terms

Korean also contains an intricate system of address and reference terms that index distance and proximity in social relations, working alongside honorific *contaymal* and non-honorific *panmal*. The types of address terms include pronouns and nominal forms such as personal names, kinship terms and other titles. Firstly, there are as many as five second-

person pronouns (*ne*, *caney*, *tangsin*, *kutay* and *caki*) in Korean. However, the use of these terms is very limited. For example, *ne* ‘you’ is used to address children as well as those of equal or inferior age, *caney* is used in some limited contexts by elder adults toward status inferiors. Meanwhile, *Tangsin* and *caki* are used mostly between older and younger couples, respectively, and *kutay* is an obsolete form typically only appearing in literary works such as novels and poems. Usage of these pronouns outside of social norms can introduce significant unease and confrontation.

The use of personal names is another form of address that is heavily restricted. Name-calling is only typically permitted when interacting with intimates of the same age or younger. Used outside of normative situations in which it is permitted, it can mark a serious affront or insult to the receiver. Alternatively, various professional titles (e.g., *kwacang-nim* ‘esteemed Section Chief’) are used to index distance in various professional contexts. Elsewhere, extensively diversified kinship terms are used not only within family, but also between non-kin relations. For instance, elders are commonly referred to as *halapeci* ‘grandfather’ or *halmeni* ‘grandmother’, which are precisely the terms used one would use to address one’s own grandparents. Likewise, addressing a fairly close friend who is marginally older as *enni* (older sister (of a woman)), *nwuna* (older sister (of a man)), *oppa* (older brother (of a woman)) or *hyeng* (older brother (of a man)) is a common social practice in Korean. For example, from the data explored in this study we will see a service person (business owner) referring to a female customer who is married with a child as *emenim* ‘esteemed mother’.

The Korean preference for kinship terms is steeped in culture-specific social meanings, and the hierarchical usage patterns within these terms reflect traditional neo-

Confucian social values. In particular, the use of kinship terms to address non-kin derives from a view of society as analogous to a large extended family (see Park, 1975). Kim and Brown (2014) note that the fictive family structures emphasize one's position or role rather than individual identity and thus reinforces collective patterns of Korean social interactions. In this overarching make-up of the society, various kinship terms are used to establish hierarchical role relations in interaction, which "inhabit[s] kin-like" relations involving both intimacy and status differentiation (Agha, 2015, p. 402). Indeed, to address someone as *enni* or *oppa* not only directly indexes the age and gender of both the speaker and/or the referent, but it also points to the degree of intimacy in addition to certain culture-specific expectations. That is, the younger members of (fictive) "family" show respect towards the senior members and acquiesce to their counsel. In return, the senior members look after the younger (fictive) "siblings" (Brown, 2013b, p. 4).

However, the traditional status-marking kinship terms are being challenged and renegotiated in contemporary Korean society. For example, fictive kinship terms are being viewed as symbolizing a lack of social maturity by some younger Christians (see Harkness, 2015), and are used to express sexual desire among adherents to Korean popular culture (see Brown, 2017). These studies show that kinship terms are not used merely as a device for establishing (uncontestable) hierarchical kin-like relations in interactions. Instead, they "play a role in negotiating the balance between modernity and tradition[al] [social structures in Korean society]" (Brown, 2017, p. 8).

In the case of third person referents, the use of pronouns and personal names is also restricted. Instead, titles and kinship terms are frequently used to refer to a third person. Furthermore, the third person singular pronouns, *ku* and *kunye*, the closest equivalent to he

and she in English, are also seldom used in everyday talk. In fact, these forms only appear in certain types of writing. In place of *ku* and *kunye* in speech, speakers can use what Oh (2007, 2010) refers to as “quasi-pronouns”. The quasi-pronoun forms are composed of a demonstrative (*i* ‘this’, *ku* ‘that’, and *ce* ‘that over there’) followed by a noun referring to a human referent, such as *salam* ‘person’, *pwun* ‘esteemed person’ or *ai* ‘child, thus creating the meaning of ‘that/this/that over there person/child.

These quasi-pronoun forms can be used to index distance according to two dimensions. First, the choice of noun in the construction of quasi-pronoun allows the speaker to mark the relative social hierarchy. For example, the speaker can choose either the non-honorific noun *salam* ‘person’ or the honorific equivalent *pwun* ‘esteemed person’ to display relative distance (i.e., hierarchy). Second, the choice of demonstrative form indicates the degree of physical spatial distance between the speaker and/or addressee and the third-person referent. In literal terms, *i-pwun* ‘this esteemed person’ indicates that the person is located proximal to the speaker, while *ku-pwun* ‘that esteemed person’ is proximal to the addressee. *Ce-pwun* ‘that over there esteemed person’ specifies that the person is distal from both the speaker and the addressee. However, Oh’s (2007, 2010) studies demonstrate that the actual physical distance becomes less important when the forms are used to endow the referent with a different category membership. Oh (2010) found that a distal demonstrative *ce* (that)-based quasi-pronoun is used instead of a proximal *i* (this)-based one when the speaker tries to denote a different category membership to a co-present party regardless of the close physical proximity (p. 1219). For instance, the author provides the example of a husband who is sitting next to his wife but referring to her as *ce-salam* ‘that person over there’ during a discussion over the air

conditioning. This example is used to demonstrate that though his wife is one of the people who feels cold, he does not. Oh (2007) further shows how *i-salam* ‘this person’ in third person narration is used for discourse prominence (i.e., to show that a person is a main character in a story). Meanwhile, *Ku-salam* ‘that person’, is typically deployed for background characters, or in those instances when the speaker does not have epistemic authority (p. 223).

### 3.3 The metalanguage of Korean (im)politeness

The purpose of this section is to unpack the emic perspectives of (im)politeness in Korean by exploring metalinguistic representations comprised of politeness-related terms and expressions. This is important as “we cannot understand the social practices by which [im]politeness arises without investigating [the metalanguage used by members to conceptualize their own behavior]” (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 183).

The notion of (im)politeness in Korean is often conceptualized through the complex and richly textured honorific system embedded in the language. As the honorific system encode one’s politeness or deference towards the interlocutor(s), the ordinary speakers of Korean commonly associate the concept of politeness with the appropriate use of honorifics, known as *contay(mal)* in folk discourse (Kim, 2011). ‘Doing *contay* well’ towards elders/superiors will be judged socially as *kongson-han* ‘to be reverent’ or *yeyuy pa-lun* ‘lit. to upright courtesy’. Whereas, failure to ‘exhibit *contay*’ will typically be evaluated as *pwul(kong)son-han* ‘lit. absence of humility’ or *mwulyey-han* ‘lacking courtesy’.

Also noteworthy, the terms, *pwul(kong)son* and *mwulyey* are not limited to

describing impolite behaviors in a vertical relationship. Rather, the terms can also be used between status equals (Kim, 2012); however, the relational direction matters when these terms are used in vertical relationships. That is, while *pwul(kong)son* is unidirectional as it is used only to describe the impolite behaviors of age/rank subordinates towards superiors, *mwulyey* can be used bi-directionally (a subordinate to a superior or vice versa). It is important to note that although *pwl(kong)son* is frequently defined as the term for ‘(im)politeness’ in previous studies of Korean (im)politeness metalanguage, usage of the term is, in fact, quite infrequent in ordinary conversation (Brown, 2013a). *Mwulyey*, on the other hand, is more frequently heard though Korean speakers tend to opt for other widely used expressions such as *pelus eps-nun* ‘lit. lacking [correct] habit’ or *mos paywu-n* ‘uneducated’ (Yoon, 2004).

The tendency to depict a person, especially when violating the rules of using honorifics, in terms of ‘lacking habit’ or ‘lacking education’ is based on the emphasis in the Korean society that the correct use of honorifics must be learned from an early age. Thus, it is expected that by the time one becomes an adult she/he should be fully competent in the appropriate use of honorifics in both spoken and written communication. Failure to uphold the social rule is perceived as an example of poor education and the result of improper upbringing (Brown, 2013a; Yoon, 2004).

Although Korean (im)politeness is closely linked to linguistic honorifics (*contay*) it also represents behavior that involves demonstrating *conkyeng* ‘reverence’. Specifically, the dictionary definition of *contay* ‘respect’ includes *conkyengha-nun malthwu-lo tayham* ‘talking to someone with reverence’. The word ‘reverence’ (*conkyeng*) here is defined in turn as giving priority to other people’s characters (*inkyek*), ideologies (*sasang*) and actions

(*hayngwi*) by “lifting up” the other person higher than oneself (*pattule kongkyengha-nun*)<sup>2</sup>. The principle idea of displaying respect by considering others first stems from a deep-rooted hierarchical and vertical model of society and social relations in Korean. Yoon (2004) notes, Koreans do not believe that people are equal in status. Instead, the general Korean view of social relationship is broadly based on the distinction between two groups: people who are “above” (*wui salam*) and people who are “below” (*alay salam*). The use of honorifics is required to interact with the former, but not with the latter (p. 194). How this relates to (im)politeness in Korean is that the underlying suppositions of (im)politeness are not concerned so much with mutual respect; rather, the emphasis is on respecting superiors.

Consequently, discussions of how to be polite or respectful tend to focus on the behaviors of young people and subordinates. Social juniors are expected to demonstrate respect not only through the appropriate use of honorifics, but also through a wide range of respectful comportments. These include bowing deeply, sitting upright with both hands placed on the lap in an obedient manner among other conventions. Indeed, Brown and Winter’s (forthcoming) analysis of Korean nonverbal behaviors in connection to (im)politeness show that the participants in the study were less likely to slouch (i.e., sitting or standing with hunched shoulders and/or with a bent or leaning posture) when interacting with a superior than with an intimate. Moreover, sitting or standing with the knees together (a marker of a compact body position) was adopted as a form of showing respect toward a superior interlocutor. Maintaining gaze on the line of sight (i.e., made or sought eye contact) was also found to be associated with expressing respect (p. 7-9) (see Brown &

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<sup>2</sup> The definitions here are from the Naver online dictionary:  
<https://ko.dict.naver.com/search.nhn?query=%EC%A1%B4%EB%8C%80&kind=all>

Winter forthcoming for a more comprehensive discussion).

Similarly, a recent study conducted by Lo (2009) finds that the demeanor of children at a Korean American heritage school in California (e.g., belated, half-hearted compliance, failure to engage in eye gaze, walking slovenly) was “naturalized as indexical of children’s deliberate communication of disrespect” (to hurt teachers’ feelings and mood), while accommodating their use of non-honorific forms in situations where South Korean children would normally be expected to use honorifics as “a group characteristic and circumstantial byproduct of growing up in the US” (p. 222). The author further observes that the “well-mannered child” is described as a person who possesses the “technique” to improve on the other person’s feelings (*maum*) and mood (*kipwun*). The task is accomplished by prioritizing (or awareness of) the other person’s emotional states over his or her own feelings by displaying well-mannered behavior (p. 222). Lo (2009) further notes that there is an “asymmetrical distribution of consideration”, in that respect for a teacher’s feelings was weighted more important (or given greater priority) than respect for a child’s feelings. The author (2009) notes further that this kind of affective consideration of another’s emotional state (especially of social superiors) is metapragmatically recognized as a form of politeness (p. 222-223).

Although the concept of *wui* ‘above’ and *alay* ‘below’ applies primarily to superior-inferior relationships, it can also be applied more broadly to social relationships in general. Due to the hierarchical, relational and competitive nature of Korean society, establishing position relative to others is of paramount importance to native Korean speakers. Thus, Koreans are quite concerned with whether their position is acknowledged as being of (at least) a certain minimum level of rank or social standing in society. Therefore, if one feels



or perceives their position is not being properly acknowledged, or worse yet they are being looked down on (*mwusiha-nun* or *kkalpo-nun*), this would be construed as being akin to being treated as *alay salam* ‘person below’. Also noteworthy, the term, *mwusiha-ta* (or *kkalpo-ta*) ‘to look down on (someone)’ is defined in Korean dictionaries as an antonym of *conkyengha-ta* ‘to respect by elevating (someone)’<sup>3</sup>. From this, it can be restated that an act of looking down on someone is to treat the person “lower” in order to be disrespectful. This connection can also be seen in the common expression *alayssalam-chelem mwusiha-ta* (or *kkalpo-ta*) ‘lit. to look down on someone *like they are a person below*’.

In addition, the act of acknowledging or not the position of others as an (im)politeness-related social practice in Korean parallels somewhat with the analysis of the “place” in Haugh’s (2005, 2007) study of Japanese (im)politeness. Haugh (2005) notes, the concept of *place* plays a pivotal role in the achievement of ‘(im)politeness’ and ‘face’ in Japanese. Place encompasses two domains, the ‘place one belongs’ and the ‘place one stands’. The place one belongs (*uchi*) relates to the group-based relationships of belonging which accompanies the obligations (*gimu*) and dependencies (*amae*). The place one stands (*tachiba*), on the other hand, refers not only to one’s rank or circumstances, but also one’s public persona or social standing. What underlies (im)politeness in Japanese, in this regard, is of inclusion (acknowledging someone as part of a particular group) and distinction (acknowledging someone’s rank/position or circumstances as distinct from others) (p. 47). Haugh (2005) explains that “what others show they think of us in regard to being part of (or not) of a group (inclusion), and what they show they think of us in relation to being

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<sup>3</sup> See the Naver online dictionary:  
<https://ko.dict.naver.com/search.nhn?query=%EC%A1%B4%EB%8C%80&kind=all>

different (or not) from others (distinction) are important in giving rise to politeness” (p. 49). The author (2005) further elaborates on this point with an example of a secretary who often uses “humble forms” (*kenjoo-go*) when referring to his/her boss when someone from outside the company calls to speak to the boss. In this case, the secretary’s use of “humble forms” gives rise to politeness not because it indexes the addressee is outside the secretary’s group (exclusion), but because it shows the secretary as a representative of the people in that company (including his/her boss) occupies a different position (i.e., taking a lower position) from that of the addressee (distinction) (p. 49).

Haugh’s description of place in Japanese (im)politeness can certainly be related to my previous discussion of the emic notion of Korean (im)politeness above. For example, the metaphorical distinction between *wui* ‘above’ and *alay* ‘below’ is reminiscent of *tachiba* (the place one stands) in Japanese. Future studies could explore further how (im)politeness is grounded in the concept of “place” in order to buttress our understanding of (im)politeness phenomena in Korean.

The preceding discussion provides important insights into the ways in which Korean speakers conceptualize (im)politeness by exploring metalanguage constituted through politeness-related verbal and non-verbal expressions. This section showed that the sets of expectancies that constitute moral evaluations (i.e., polite/impolite, good/bad, appropriate/inappropriate and so on) are shaped through concepts of *wui* ‘above’ and *alay* ‘below’ that underpin Korean social models.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA AND METHOD

The previous chapters discussed the surrounding theoretical construction of (im)politeness and provided a review of three important areas of (im)politeness in Korean. As was discussed, recipients are not just simply perceivers of speaker intentions and/or interpreters of presumed social norms, but may also exercise their own contextually and socially mediated agency in evaluating a speaker's talk or conduct as polite or impolite. Furthermore, the inevitable variability in the evaluations of impoliteness is tied to agency, and thus agency needs to be included in accounting for such phenomena. It is also discussed that Korean honorifics and speech styles have their own contextual social meanings. Speakers switch dynamically between different levels of honorifics for a variety of pragmatic effects. However, the role of the recipient has been reduced to a background figure, despite the hearer plays an important role in co-constructing contextual meanings of honorifics and other related linguistic forms in interaction. Investigating recipient agency helps to highlight the ways in which a particular linguistic form is taken to mean in a given sociocultural interactive moment, providing a complete picture of how particular meanings of Korean honorifics and other linguistics forms are co-constructed and negotiated.

This chapter describes the type of data collected, ethical considerations and the analysis tools that help to explain the role of agency observed in the study. In the first section (Section 4.1), I describe the origins of data (where they were collected from), along with the importance of using naturally occurring CMC materials as a data source. Then, I move on to discuss the ethical concerns around collecting data from/through social media

including blogs and discussion forums. In Section 4.2, the two sets of data explored and analyzed in this study are introduced. Finally, Section 4.3 discusses the analysis techniques that are used to observe the ways in which recipients agency plays a role in creating variability in evaluations of impoliteness.

#### 4.1 Collected data types

In order to explore the interconnectedness of impoliteness and recipient agency, I draw data from two different, naturally occurring interactions that appeared in two popular portal sites in South Korea. The first data sample is collected from a personal blog featured on Naver<sup>4</sup>. The sample was identified through an online search using key words such as “impolite” and “rude” to find blog posts that feature metapragmatic discussions of (im)politeness. Data was further filtered for further analysis based on the presence of rich and explicit metapragmatic comments as well as insights into the situational context and the role played by agency in assigning something as offensive or not in a particular online context. Furthermore, the data contained in the blog was preserved through screen shots and later converted to hard copy for analysis.

Subsequently, in order to explore the roles agency plays in the evaluation of impoliteness in diverse social environments the decision was made to collect the second data. Following the method used by Nishimura (2008), the data was captured from a discussion board titled Thok Thok (the Korean rendition of Talk Talk in English), which is

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<sup>4</sup> Naver is a major Internet company in South Korea that hosts a number of blog services and provides the fifth most used search engine in the world.

a sub-forum of Natepann<sup>5</sup>. Two factors were considered in choosing the data from Thok Thok. First, the comparability of two websites (i.e., Naver and Nate) was taken into a consideration. Both websites appeared in the top 10 of the most used Internet sites in Korea according to a web information company Rankey dot com. The second consideration concerned the metapragmatic discussions of impoliteness. More specifically, and similar to the first set of data, the second data chosen for the study also contains the recipients' evaluations of a speakers' particular actions and language use as offensive or not. In addition, the second set of data was also preserved through screen shots and later converted to hard copy for analysis.

#### 4.1.1 Strengths of using naturally occurring CMC data

All data obtained in the study represent naturally occurring events that appeared in public CMC materials, and were not elicited by the researcher. Since the data is naturally-occurring, it allows examination of how impoliteness is evaluated by the recipient free of researcher interventions (Pomerantz, 2012). Indeed, the organic nature of the data is of particular importance to impoliteness research as it provides “untamed” access in order to observe the emergence of recipient agency in the evaluation of impoliteness during a specific interaction. Although Mitchell and Haugh (2015) offers many useful meta-pragmatic insights by focusing on the role of recipient agency in theorizing impoliteness, it is possible participant's recollections may be influenced by the presence and actions of the researchers conducting the study as well as the surrounding

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<sup>5</sup> Natepann is a discussion board hosted by a major search engine, Nate in South Korea. It is currently one of the four most used websites in South Korea.

environment created during interviews (Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Terkourafi, 2001). In contrast, the CMC data consulted for this study allows me to look at how impoliteness is perceived and evaluated by the recipients, free of any interventions that might influence the outcomes of the study (Pomerantz, 2012).

#### 4.1.2 Limitations of using small data samples

This study uses two small data samples and qualitative approaches to analysis. The justification for taking a qualitative approach is that the sample is small, which is common in many studies that use qualitative methodology (see Peräkylä, 2011). Moreover, the qualitative method is better suited to satisfy the aims of the study as it provides space for a semiotic perspective. That is, the semiotic perspective directs the researcher to engage in the immediate, local meanings of actions, as defined from the actors' point of view (see Davis, 1995 p. 432). This study sets out to describe the effects of recipient agency in impoliteness phenomena by studying the perspective of the user-participant (i.e., first-order perspectives), rather than to count or quantify the findings, and this makes the qualitative approach especially well suited for the study. The approaches taken may be a concern in terms of the generalizability of findings across linguistic and cultural boundaries; however, given the aims of the study (i.e., testing the claims of Mitchell and Haugh (2015) concerning the role of recipient agency in the evaluation of impoliteness), drawing generalizable conclusion from the study is still possible. For example, Peräkylä (2011) notes that even if social practices in question are not actualized in similar ways across different settings there remain generalizable dimensions (p. 375). Indeed, in terms of this study, while the specific use of agency is

situated in a particular environment and culture, descriptions of the role of recipient agency in the evaluation of impoliteness may be generalizable.

The following section will discuss differences in how these two online communities are set up; differences which may play an important role in influencing the way agency is exercised by the recipients.

#### 4.2 Differences in website formations

While both portal sites (Naver and Natepenn) are asynchronous, open access, online spaces designed for use by the general public as a forum to interact, share and exchange information, there are subtle differences in management control, user representations and technological settings that may influence the rules and norms of practices in these particular online communities.

First, there is a difference in the ways in which the websites are managed. Naver offers a user-regulated system whereby a blog owner is given authority to maintain all the materials posted on his/her blog pages. In contrast, Thok Thok is a more centrally controlled discussion board wherein the management has the right to delete and regulate inappropriate contents without prior notice. In the former case, explicit (and implicit) rules and/or norms of practice are set by an owner(s) (or group) of each blog, besides the general guidelines provided by the management of Naver. In the latter case, the overall rules and the terms of use are specified by Thok Thok administrators, users of Thok Thok are expected to be aware of these policies.

Second, there is a difference in user representation and the level of anonymity available to participants, and this is embedded in the website architecture. Before

discussing differences in the ways user identities are disclosed on these forums, it is important to note that complete anonymity is not possible in either forum as each participant must be registered as a user of the either two parent sites Naver and Nate, respectively. When signing up to open an account on either website users are required to provide personal details. According to a strict “real identity” policy on Korean internet portals, users are compelled to provide the real name, birthday, gender and contact information to the administrators of Naver and Nate allowing the ISPs access to the personal details of each user. Due to this reality, there is the lack of anonymity as compared to Internet users in the United States, for example.

Continuing in the theme of anonymity, there are also differences in the way user identities are self-managed throughout their interactions on the different forums. On Naver, users’ registered user names appear in every post or comment across different conversation threads. In contrast, Thok Thok users are able to create any user name for themselves they like every time they start a thread or leave a comment. These usernames are often a random combination of Korean consonants or vowels (e.g., ㅇㅇ ‘ng ng’, ㄱㄴ ‘k n’, ㅍㅍ ‘wu wu’). Another feature of Thok Thok that the Naver blogs do not share is the appearance of user gender; for example, if a male user posts or leaves a comment on categories designated for “girls’ only” (*yecatulkkiliman*) a symbol denoting the male gender is automatically presented next to the username. Although the gender of the users in this case can be known the ‘true’ identity of the users is still veiled (self declared). In fact, all users of Thok Thok are anonymous to each other by design as the site technology encourages fluid, ever changing identities which is understood by the users of the site. This design appears to offer a (at least to some degree) flexibility so the users are not completely



bounded by pre-existing social norms. In this way, the structure of the relationships among users in Thok Thok are not based on a hierarchical order (i.e., age, status) and/or degree of closeness. Rather, the starting point of their relationship begins from a horizontal line. In contrast, Naver offers a platform to create a tight in-group community, and this is facilitated by a system that links user blogs together which promotes a higher level of transparency. Moreover, the options of ‘follower’ and ‘following’ on Naver blogs further helps to consolidate close-knit communities with like-minded users who share similar interests. The differences between the two websites enable insight into the ways in which individuals in different online communities position themselves vis-à-vis the evaluation of impoliteness, in turn creating variation in impoliteness phenomena. Before introducing the actual data extracted from the websites, I will discuss ethical considerations germane to the data used; this is an important aspect of research practice using CMC materials.

#### 4.3 Ethical considerations

There is a growing body of literature discussing the ethical concerns in relation to the data collection from online social media including social networking services (e.g., facebook), microblogs (e.g., Twitter), video sharing (e.g., You Tube), etc. (Henderson & Johnson, 2013). One of the key debates in the literature is the issue around whether the online texts such as posts to forums or blogs, You Tube videos, etc. should be treated as data from human subjects with corresponding ethical concerns of consent and privacy, or should the texts be considered open for public use (Henderson & Johnson, 2013, p. 2).

The question of what falls into the private and public domains has been a recurring theme in Internet research ethic. The question appears to be straightforward, but different

viewpoints among researchers indicate otherwise (e.g., Bromseth, 2002; Mann, 2003; Sveningsson, 2009). The challenge is that the boundaries between the two realms are becoming increasingly blurred in online environments which makes it difficult for researchers to determine when informed consent is required. The general consensus is that the texts found online are considered public if the materials are publicly accessible or perceived as public by participants (Rosenberg, 2010, p. 24). However, Rosenberg (2010) also urges cautions in treating the private/public as a simple dichotomy for “such reductions tend to obscure the depth and breadth of the very everyday life practices that weave the private and public together” (p. 27). The author (2010) goes on to explain the private/public status of particular spaces change depending on the events and activities. For instance, a living room becomes more public when it is used for a party than used for chilling out with our intimate partner on the couch. Relations between individuals and the type of activity engaged in will have a strong influence on individual perceptions as to whether a particular space, in a certain culture, at a certain time is perceived as more public or more private (p 27).

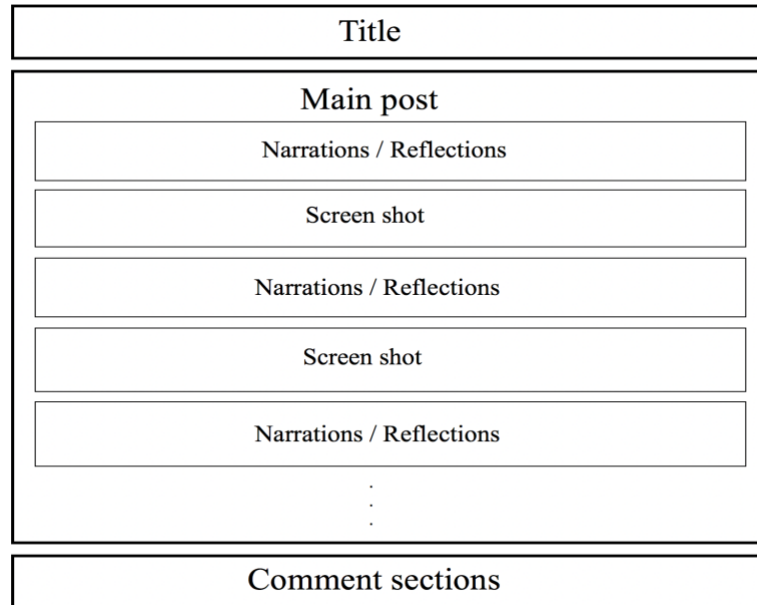
Taking these points into consideration, I treat the CMC data collected for the current study as public domain data. All CMC materials used for the analysis are open to public, but more importantly, the ethical decision was made based on the systems that facilitate user autonomy. Specifically, users on Naver have an option to make their contents either private or public. The private setting function is available for the users who do not wish to display the contents of their posts to the public, and in this case signing into an account is required to view. The extracted data from the Naver blog in this study, therefore, includes only publicly displayed materials. In the context of Thok Thok there is no such

option available. However, the ability to use multiple identities and change identities allows users to communicate unfettered, without being afraid of privacy concerns. Thok Thok users are not required to display their personal profiles or maintain a permanent log-in username that normally appears every time a user leaves posts or comments, making it difficult to trace or contact an individual user. The system certainly helps to ensure user privacy. Moreover, Thok Thok states that its target audience is the general public. This means that the users who engage in any activity on Thok Thok are more aware of the public nature of their online activities. For these reasons, I have determined the data explored in this study is of the public domain and as such there are no particular ethical concerns to using it here. However, I still took extra steps to protect any personal data such as addresses and banking information of the users shown on the data by redacting this information.

#### 4.4 Data sets

Before presenting the two data sets extracted from the websites I will briefly explain how the format in which information is shown on the Naver blog and the Thok Thok post. This will provide a clear understanding of the structure of the data displayed on these websites. The data on the Naver blog and the Thok Thok forum follow a standard format common to interactive comment sites. The title of the post appears on the header, followed by the main content (post). Beneath the main content is the comment section. As mentioned, the contents of each dataset contain metapragmatic discussions of impoliteness. Specifically, both data comprise screen shots of the text message interactions. These text message interactions are interspersed with the main posters' reflections (i.e., the blog

owner in the case of the first data and the poster who initiated the thread in the case of the second data). The following diagram shows the structure of the data.



*Diagram 1: The structure of the data displayed on the Naver blog and the Thok Thok post*

#### 4.4.1 Data set one: Naver blog post

The first set of data was extracted from a business/personal blog called Willie’s Table which is featured on Naver. Willie’s Table is operated by a business man who specializes in *panchan* ‘side dishes’ for young children, providing a delivery service to private homes and pre-schools. His user name on the blog is Appason ‘dad’s hand’ (Appason hereafter), which connotes a Confucian patriarchal image of father being responsible for and protective over his family, or in this case of his customers and their children. More than a commercial website, Willie’s Table functions as a place where Appason fosters close relationships with existing and prospective customers by sharing anecdotes and photos of his personal and business life.

In this study, I focus on one of the posts on Willie's Table titled *Mwulyeyhamilan* 'what rudeness is'. This particular post was chosen for further analysis as it contains rich and explicit metapragmatic comments, which display variability in the way agency affects the interpretation of potentially impolite linguistic behavior. The data contained in the blog was preserved through screen shots and then transcribed for analysis.

Under this title, Appason posted his experience with one of his customers who he found troublesome. There are no details about the customer, other than that she is female and has one or more young children. The post specifically consists of four screen shots of separate text message interactions that Appason exchanged with his customer; he refers to the woman as Emeni 'mother' in the messages. These interactions took place over six days from March 29 to April 3. The text messages are interspersed with Appason's reflections on these interactions with Emeni and comprise his metapragmatic evaluation of her behavior, including his commentary on her use of non-honorific *panmal* speech. Furthermore, the data also includes twenty-two comments provided by twelve readers of the blog who appear to be established customers of Appason's business, and are also mothers of young children. They provide their own evaluations of Emeni's behavior based on Appason's narration of it. As a result, the data contains three layers of politeness metapragmatics: (1) metapragmatic comments contained in the actual text messages themselves, (2) metapragmatic comments on the text messages contained in Appason's reflections and (3) metapragmatic comments on the text messages and Appason's reflections of them provided by other readers. While the second and third layers represent classificatory politeness<sub>1</sub> (p. 35), the first layer corresponds with what Eelen (2001) refers to as metapragmatic politeness<sub>1</sub>.

#### 4.4.2 Data set two: a Thok Thok post

The second set of data was collected from a discussion board called Thok Thok, a sub forum of Natepann (Nate discussion board). It is important to note that the purpose of investigating a second set of data is not to pursue a comparative study of two different online environments *per se*, but rather to explore expansively the interconnectedness of impoliteness with agency in locally situated online communities (Graham, 2007). Thok Thok is divided into six thematic categories involving school, love, work, life, marriage, and etc. As such, most posts on Thok Thok contain stories that involve personal experiences or issues and feature people that are looking for advice from fellow readers. Unlike personal blogs like Willie's Table, the Thok Thok community is more fluid and porous and there appears to be no obvious formation of (organized and fixed) communities stemming from user's specific interests. Rather, a cluster of groups will form and dissolve around particular 'most liked' stories (posts). This is also encouraged by the internal design of the messaging and communication systems in Thok Thok which includes a function for users to recommend a post that they feel most deserving. Posts that receive the most votes get featured on *Peysuthuthok* 'Best Talk' or *Thokhetuluy senthayk* 'Talker's Choice' on the main home page. The particular post I focus on in this study is from among the top forty most recommended talks featured on Talker's Choice at the time of collection. It was chosen for the study because it also contains explicit and detailed metapragmatic comments, similar to the Appason's post '*Mwulyeyhamilan* 'what rudeness is'.

The post, titled *Alpapilul ancwesstako sinkohantaneyyo* '(I am) told that (I) will be sued due to the un-paid part-time wages' was initiated by the username ㅍㅍ 'wu wu' (the Korean vowel used as an emoticon that depicts tears) (Wu Wu hereafter). As Thok Thok

user profiles are not public, Wu Wu's gender cannot be known. However, for the purposes of this study Wu Wu is referred to arbitrarily as she. Wu Wu's post consists of her narrating an exchange that her mother had with a former, male part-time employee at her mother's beer house, similar to the layout of Appason's post of '*Mwulyeyhamilan* 'what rudeness is'. It is noteworthy that unlike the case of the Appason interaction in Chapter 5, Wu Wu is not a direct recipient of the text message interactions, her mother is. However, Wu Wu is considered as a recipient in this study since she actively participates in the communicative event between her mother and Alpa as an evaluator of Alpa's behaviors as offensive (or not). We will see in the data that Wu Wu's involvement in this way is possible because Wu Wu was made privy to her mother's interactions with Alpa through her mother's text messages.

Continuing with the post, there are seven screen shots of separate text message interactions that her mother exchanged with the employee whom Wu Wu refers to in her narrations as Alpa<sup>6</sup> 'part-time employee'. Based on Wu Wu's narrations and the actual text message interactions between Wu Wu's mother and Alpa, it is clear that Alpa is a twenty-year old male who does not have a work experience, prior to being employed by Wu Wu's mother. These seven interactions took place from the day Alpa was hired to long after Alpa stopped coming to work. However, it is not clear the exact duration of the event and exchange since some of the dates on the screen shots of the text messages are missing. Similar to the Appason's post, these text message interactions are also accompanied by Wu Wu's reflections on the interactions between her mother and Alpa. Her reflections are

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<sup>6</sup> Alpa is a shortened form of *alupaithu* 'part-time work', which is a Korean rendition of Arbeit in German. *Alpasayng*, which is abbreviation for *alupaithu haksayng* 'lit. part time work student' is the usual address term for college age adolescents who work part-time.

comprised of metapragmatic evaluation of Alpa's behavior towards her mother including her commentary on his use of non-honorific *panmal* speech with her mother. Moreover, the data contains two hundred thirty-four comments from readers of the exchange, and this provides insight into how the commenters position themselves vis-à-vis the evaluation of Alpa's behavior based on Wu Wu's narration of it. In summary, the data contains what Eelen (2001) refers to as classificatory politeness<sup>1</sup>. That is, it is comprised of (1) metapragmatic comments on the text messages contained in Wu Wu's reflections; and, (2) metapragmatic comments on the text messages and Wu Wu's reflections of them provided by other readers.

#### 4.5 Approaches to analysis

##### 4.5.1 Analytical framework

To explore the ways in which the role of recipient agency influences variation in impoliteness phenomena, I employ a modified integrative pragmatics model discussed in Section 2.3.3.3 (Chapter 2). In so doing, the analysis that follows (Chapter 5 and 6) combines first and second order perspectives to study the role played by recipient agency in shaping impoliteness phenomena. In the analysis, I examine interactional practices i.e. the normative functions of the pragmatic forms, including the use of honorifics during the text message interactions from the second order perspective. In other words, second order analysis involves examining the usage of pragmatic forms, including honorifics, and comparing these with their normative pragmatic functions. This is combined with first-order understanding in which the users themselves (i.e., Appason, Wu Wu as well as the readers of the blog and the discussion forum) assign interactional meanings to the usage of



these forms. Furthermore, during analysis of how the participants assign meaning, the focus centers on how Appason and Wu Wu (as well as other commenters) exercise agency. By focusing on agency, it is possible to explicate how the achievement of the meanings that create variations in impoliteness phenomena is consequential to evaluating something as offensive or not, in particular, situated sequential interactions.

As discussed (Section 2.3.3.2), agency in this analysis is treated as involving two interrelated processes. First, the general capacity to assign meaning and relevance to social actions, and to define relationships with other social actors (see Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001). The second refers to the more specific capacity to hold another social actor accountable for perceived impolite or offensive social meanings and actions (see Mitchell & Haugh, 2015). Drawn from this, the overarching focus of the analysis in Chapter 5 and 6 is three fold:

- (1) Appason and Wu Wu's general capacity to assign meaning and relevance to other social actors' actions (i.e., Emeni's actions in the former case, and Alpa's actions in the latter).
- (2) Appason and Wu Wu's (and her mother's) capacity to hold the speakers (i.e., Emeni and Alpa) accountable for perceived impolite or offensive social meanings and actions.
- (3) The comments provided by the readers of Appason's blog and Wu Wu's Thok Thok post are examined to see how they in turn exercise agency in positioning themselves in the evaluation of impoliteness.

Throughout the analysis, special attention is paid to the surrounding environment,

especially particular characteristics of the CMC medium that mediate and constrain the ways that the recipients (Appason, Wu Wu - including Wu Wu's mother - as well as the commenters) exercise agency.

#### 4.5.2 Analytical tools

The techniques that are employed for analysis in this study are approaches of narrative and conversation. These analytical tools are suitable for explicating from the current data the ways in which variability in impoliteness phenomena is linked to socially and contextually mediated agency in assigning something as offensive or not.

Following Narrative Analysis, the investigation of the data closely follows the narrations and the meta-comments of the incidents (i.e., the sequence of text message interactions) provided by Appason and Wu Wu. As these materials “provide specific elements pointing to meaning outside the narrative as well as within it” (Daiute, 2014, p. 23), it is possible to gain insight into the ways in which socially-mediated agency affects the evaluation of impoliteness. Daiute (2014) notes that in the act of narrating, people make a conscious choice as to what to say (or what not to say) and how to say and this is affected by expectations of actual (or imagined) audiences (p. 21). In other words, meaning does not arise solely from how words are placed, but it is agency that motivates certain things and events to be significant in particular contexts. From the data analyzed, we will see that (near) identical *panmal* speech is evaluated differently at different points during the interaction. The narrations provided by Appason and Wu Wu “give an account of a certain landmark or key event or experience that is considered to be pivotal [in assigning different interactional meanings to the same form]” (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p. 236).

The investigation includes a deep analysis of the text message interactions, drawn from the approach grounded in Conversation Analysis (CA). CA is suitable for analyzing CMC interactions such as email discussions (Harrison, 2007), online discussion forums (Stommel, 2008; Haugh *et al.*, 2015), and in the case of the current data, text message interactions since the talk found in these mediums is sequentially organized to create an interaction where the participants accomplish actions and display their understanding of one another's conduct (Harrison, 2007). Indeed, the text message interactions in the data provide insights into how the participants engage in achieving meanings and actions in sequential organization of subsequent turns, and how they accomplish particular social actions.

While the text message interactions “inform what actions are being done and what sort of social scene is being constituted” (Schegloff, 1999, p. 109) Appason and Wu Wu's narrations point to perception, expression, and interpretation of the events, in ways that animate why the particular events or social actions matter to them (Daiute, 2014, p. 4). The current data, therefore, are naturally structured for bridging the observer (second-order) and the user (first-order) perspectives together, defined in the framework of integrative pragmatics discussed above (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014).

The next two chapters (Chapter 5 and 6) present the analysis. In Chapter 5, Appason's post on his Naver blog is investigated, followed by analysis of Wu Wu's Thok Thok post in Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER V

### DATA 1: APPASON'S NAVER BLOG POST

This chapter investigates the first data set drawn from a business/personal blog featured on the Korean Internet Service Provider (ISP) Naver. The analysis is centered on one of the posts that the blog owner, Appason 'dad's hand' shared with his customers (the users) of his blog. A particular feature to note about this data is the type of community from which it was drawn. The customers (the users of his blog) and the business/blog owner (Appason) appear to be a very close-knit community. This appears to be due to the unique business service (i.e., providing side dishes for children's meals) he offers as well as the type CMC medium itself. Naver only permits those who are signed in to comment on blogs and the technology also allows Appason to track visitors to his blog and link back to their respective blogs. As is clarified during the analysis, the type of community the recipient(s) occupies in a particular online environment modulate recipient agency when assigning social meanings and when deciding to hold others accountable for their actions.

The analysis that follows is guided by Appason's narrations, interspersed with four text message interactions in chronological sequence which I refer to as Interaction 1-4. These interactions span six days from March 29 to April 3. As discussed, under the post *Mwuleyhamilan* 'what rudeness is' are four screenshots of text message interactions between Appason and Emeni, accompanied by Appason's reflections and evaluations of Emeni's behavior. In the following analysis, I devote one subsection to each of these four interactions and the reflections that accompany them. Interaction 1 (Section 5.1.1) features Emeni placing an order for side dishes with Appason, but the

subsequent non-delivery of the side dishes leads to a dispute found in Interaction 2 (Section 5.1.2). In Interaction 3 (Section 5.1.3), Appason invites Emeni to place another order, which she accepts. However, Emeni's second order also runs into difficulties which become the focus of Interaction 4 (Section 5.1.4). Following on, I analyze comments from readers of the blog and the four interactions in a separate section (Section 5.2).

It is important to note that according to Appason's reflections, he and Emeni appear to have had conversations prior to these four interactions. One way in which Appason exerts his agency is in selecting which interactions (or parts of interactions) to post to the blog. By choosing and filtering which interactions to post, he is clearly assigning significance to them as key, fundamental examples of Emeni having transgressed social norms.

## 5.1 Interactional practices

### 5.1.1 Interaction one

Interaction 1 begins with Appason's requesting Emeni choose three dishes from the menu to complete her order (Interaction 1, lines 1-3). He further asked for fast payment as same day orders are not typically accepted (lines 4-6). Emeni replied with her order and an explanation that as she had just come home from work and she would make the payment after she put her children to bed (lines 7-9). The times at which the text messages were sent are shown in parentheses.

Interaction 1 (Saturday, 29 March)

- (1) A: (17:01) 어머니  
emeni  
mother  
'ma'am(POL)'
- (2) 미니팩은 메뉴를 정하시고  
miniphayk-un meynyu-lul cengha-si-ko  
minipack-TOP menu-OBJ select after  
'after (you have) selected from the mini pack menu'
- (3) 말씀 주셔야해요. [sic]  
malssum cwu-sye-ya-hay-yo  
tell-HON please-HON-POL  
'(you) have to tell me'
- (4) 육류 2종, 육류 외 1종  
yuklyu 2chong, yuklyu oy 1cong  
meat 2 type meat outside one type  
'two types of meat and one non meat dish'
- (5) 선택하시면 됩니다.  
senthaykha-si-myen toy-pnita  
select-HON-DEF  
'(you) select'
- (6) 그리고 아직 입금 확인이 안되어서요. [sic]  
kuliko acik ipkum hwakin-i an-toy-es-eyo  
and yet payment confirmation-NOM not-POL  
'and the payment has not been confirmed yet'
- (7) 말씀드렸듯이 원래 당일 주문이  
malssum-tuly-ess-tusi wenlay tangil cwumwun-i  
told-HON(you) originally the day order-NOM  
'as (I) already told (you) an order on the day originally'
- (8) 불가능해요.  
pwulkaha-ntey-yo  
not possible-POL  
'is not possible'

- (9) 빠른 입금처리 부탁드립니다.  
ppalun ipkum-cheli pwuthaktuli-pnita  
fast payment handling request-DEF  
'(I) request prompt payment'
- (10) E: (17:28) 고등어 오븐조림 쇠고기 동그랑땡  
kotunge opuncolim soykoki tongkulangttayng  
mackerel oven bake beef meatball  
'oven baked mackerel, beef meatballs'
- (11) 감자불고기요.  
kamcapwnlkoki-yo  
potato barbequed beef-POL  
'potato barbequed beef'
- (12) 입금은 애기들 재워놓고 할게요. [sic]  
ipkum-un ayki-tul caywe-noh-ko ha-lkey-yo  
payment-TOP babies put to sleep after do-POL  
'(I) will make the payment after putting (my) babies to bed'
- (13) 이제퇴근해서와서요 하고 문자드릴게요. [sic]  
incey thoykunha-yse-wa-se-yo hako mwunca-tuli-lkey-yo  
now get off work come-POL and text give will-POL  
'(I) came home from work just now, and (I) will text (you)  
(after I make the payment)'

The interaction shows both Emeni and Appason following socially normative linguistic conventions. They use *contaymal* 'respect speech' forms to each other, with Emeni using *-yo* speech style endings and Appason mixing *-yo* and *-supnita*. Moreover, Appason also uses the honorific support verb *tuli-* in the expressions *malssum-tuli-ess-tusi* 'as I already told you' (line 7) and *pwuthaktuli-pnita* 'I request' (line 9), as well as an indirect request pattern *myen toy-* 'if you..., it would be good' (line 5) and other indirect language such as saying that the payment has not been 'confirmed' rather than not 'received' (line 6).

However, immediately below the screenshot of Interaction 1, Appason wrote that

he had to cancel the order as the payment did not arrive to his bank account in time. He went on to describe how he went the extra mile to serve Emeni by accepting her order after the regular cut-off time due, he said, to Emeni expressing a strong desire to feed his food to her children. This particular conversation was not included in Interaction 1; it is assumed that it comes from previous correspondence not included in the public posting. To satisfy Emeni's request, Appason explains he became "determined to give up" the dishes he was preparing for his own son and the children at *Ayteynwen* (a local charity organization for children in need). In his reflections, Appason mentioned what he did for Emeni "works against equity" (*hyengphyengseng-i ekusnanun il*), and that Emeni should have been more considerate. In fact, Appason pointed this out to Emeni by letting her know that the late orders are "originally" (*wenlay*) unaccepted (line 7). The term, *wenlay* in line 7 which translates to originally or naturally invokes a moral order whereby customers using the online site have to follow certain rules, one being that they have to order 24 hours in advance. By using the term *wenlay*, Appason clearly signals to Emeni that it is an exceptional case, thus Emeni should also treat it as such by making the payment promptly. However, as he narrates, with no funds arriving he had to cancel the order, and not deliver the side dishes.

#### 5.1.2 Interaction two

On the following day, Appason received a rapid succession of messages from Emeni (Interaction 2), which he refers to using the English term "message rush". Emeni's first message (13:54) in Interaction 2 begins with confirmation of payment though later than agreed, she concedes. Approximately 2 hours later, Emeni sent the second message (16:06) to confirm the delivery. A third message (16:07), sent a minute or less after the



second, informed Appason that she is unable to reach him. Finally, a fourth message sent at 16:08 (a minute or less after the third) instructs Appason that if the order is not to be delivered he should have notified her of the change. This interaction, as presented on the Willie’s Table blog, does not feature any input from Appason. It is presumed from subsequent interactions that Appason did indeed reply to Emeni and explain to her why the order was not fulfilled, but Appason choose not to include this in his blog post.

Interaction 2 (Sunday, 30 March)

- |              |   |   |
|--------------|---|---|
| (14) (13:54) | 입금했습니다<br>ipkumha-yss-supnita<br>(I) transferred money-DEF<br>‘(I) made the payment.’ | 늦었네요.<br>nuc-ess-ney-yo<br>(it is) late-POL<br>(I) made the payment. It is late’      |
| (15) (16:06) | 배송이<br>paysong-i<br>delivery-NOM  | 안된건가요?<br>an-toy-n-ke-nka-yo<br>not made-POL<br>‘has the delivery not been made?’     |
| (16) (16:07) | 전화<br>cenhwa<br>phone   | 연락도 안되고<br>yenlak-to antoy-ko<br>contact also not be<br>‘(I) can’t get hold of (you)’ |
| (17) (16:08) | 안보내주실거면<br>an-ponay-cwusil-ke-myen<br>(you) not send if                               | 안보낸다고<br>an-ponay-ntako<br>not send<br>‘if (you) are not delivering (my order)’       |
| (18)         | 연락을<br>yenlak-ul<br>contact-OBJ   | 주셔야지요.<br>cwu-sy-eya-ci-yo<br>give-POL<br>‘(you) should contact me to let me know’    |

Emeni’s messages are in the *-yo* and *-supnita contaymal* speech styles, except potentially line 16 which is a dependent clause not containing a speech style ending. The

honorific status of this message is ambiguous, but certainly open to interpretation as non-honorific *panmal* (see below). In line 14, Emeni makes reference to the moral order by which she should have made the payment more promptly; however, she stops short of apologizing for failing to pay promptly. Instead, lines 16 and 17-18 appeal to competing moral orders regarding appropriate behavior in the service industry. More specifically, that service providers should contact customers if they are unable to fulfill an order and that service providers should be contactable during normal working hours. The feeling that a moral order is being evoked is sharpened by the use of the verb endings *-eya* followed by *-ci*, with the former marking obligation (similar to 'should' in English) and the latter marking strong speaker commitment to the truth value of the sentence and an expectation that the hearer will agree (Yeon & Brown, 2011, p. 379).

In his accompanying reflections, Appason reveals that he took offense to Emeni's messages; he described his feeling upon reading the messages as "someone just dumped cold water on me". His reflections reveal that he perceives Emeni's actions, specifically breaking his rules of conduct, as offensive. Appason explained that he disagreed with Emeni's claim that he should have been contactable, pointing out that it was Sunday and that it was not "*cengsang*" 'lit. correctly honorable' to send him frequent messages on a day on which his business is normally closed. He further pointed out that according to the rules he had established for users of his site, the proper procedure is to post an issue on the message board and wait for his answer which Emeni apparently did not do.

(Excerpts from Appason’s reflections)

문제가	있으면	인터넷	게시판에	글을	올리고
mwuncey-ka	iss-umyen	intheneys	keysiphan-ey	kul-ul	olli-ko
issue-NOM	is-if	internet	message board-LOC	writing-OBJ	post-and

답변을	기다리는게	정상아닌가.[sic]
tappyen-ul	kitali-nun-key	cengsang-aninka
response-OBJ	wait	correctly honorable-DUB

‘(isn’t it) correctly honorable to write a post on the message board if (there) is an issue and wait for the response?’

Appason interprets Emeni’s behavior and her negligence of his business’s rules as evidence that she is “treating Willie’s table as a laughable hole-in-the-wall store” (*willsutheyipul-ul wusuwun kwumengkakey chwikupha-*). In other words, he sees her as not recognizing (respecting) the status of his business. She is treating his business as being ‘below’ (*alay*) her, and therefore she is looking down (*mwusihanun* or *kkalponun*) on Willie’s Table and Appason.

In his narrations, Appason highlighted that, unlike other customers who tried to contact him on the Sunday, Emeni did not preface her texts with apologies. When describing Emeni’s behavior, Appason refers to her using the plain form *i-salam* ‘this person’, whereas he refers to other customers with *ku pwun-tul* ‘those esteemed people.’ *Pwun* ‘esteemed person’ represents the conventional way a service provider would refer to a client, whereas *salam* marks a lack of respect and, seemingly, reflects the fact that Appason has taken offense. It is also interesting that Appason uses different demonstrative forms: *i* ‘this’ for Emeni in *i-salam* and *ku* ‘that/those’ for clients in *ku pwun-tul*. This contrast defines in sharp relief *Emeni* as distinct from his typical client, who are polite to him (see Oh, 2010). It furthermore positions Appason as being in a position of epistemic

authority from which he has direct access to her (impolite) intentions (see Oh, 2007).

There is clear evidence through this interaction of Appason exerting agency in the ways that he responds to Emeni's behavior, and he presents his responses and interpretations on his blog. First of all, consistent with the findings of Mitchell and Haugh (2015), it is clear that although Appason visibly finds Emeni's behavior offensive, he apparently made an agentive choice not to show offence at Emeni directly (i.e., at the metapragmatic politeness<sub>1</sub> level – Eelen, 2001). An important caveat is that Appason may have shown offense in text messages that he chose to keep private and not display on the blog, but this seems unlikely given the content of subsequent messages (see Interaction 3 below).

In his reflections accompanying the text messages (i.e., at the classificatory politeness<sub>1</sub> level – Eelen, 2001), Appason exercises agency in construing Emeni's behavior as a particular kind of social action, namely, the act of looking down on his business. In order to do this, he assigns special significance (c.f. Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001) to certain aspects of Emeni's communications, such as the frequency of messages and the lack of explicit apologies, which he uses as evidence that Emeni is taking such a stance. It should be pointed out that there are no explicit signals that Emeni is indeed looking down on his business (and her initial sentence in line 14 could even be read as an implicit apology for sending the payment late). Furthermore, in order to present Emeni's action as dismissive of his business, Appason agentively makes links between Emeni's behavior and that of other customers, and this defines the type of relationships (cf. Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001) that he expects to have with his customer base. Throughout this exchange I can see that Appason evaluates Emeni's behavior against a set of interactional norms and an associated moral

order that he created for his online business. For example, his expectation that customers should leave questions on the message board rather than contact him directly is not a norm of interaction shared by all small businesses in Korea.

Interestingly, it is rather surprising that Appason did not make any reference to her potential use of *panmal* in line 16 (*cenhwa yenlakto antoyko* ‘(I) can’t get hold of you’), given the active and detailed way that he analyzes and interprets Emeni’s four short text messages. *-ko* is a conjunctive verb ending that prototypically links two clauses together, similar to usage of ‘and’ in English. However, it is often used at the end of an utterance, such as in this example, where it alludes to additional, unspoken information to what has already been said (Yeon & Brown, 2011, p. 287). In such cases, speakers may add the honorific verb ending *-yo* after *-ko* to mark the utterance as *contaymal*, although such inclusion of *-yo* is not as obligatory as it is with more prototypical sentence-final contexts. Without *-yo*, the utterance is open to being interpreted as *panmal*. Nevertheless, Appason expresses no annoyance or discomfort at Emeni’s use of bare *-ko* and does not seem to hold Emeni accountable for it.

### 5.1.3 Interaction three

Appason’s narrations go on to explain that despite the conflict with Emeni he decided to reconcile their relationship by providing her with his “attentively made baby side dishes” that were scheduled to go out for delivery the following Wednesday. In the spirit of reconciliation, on the Monday he replied to Emeni asking her to choose her side dishes from a menu of items for the Wednesday delivery, as presented below.

Interaction 3 (Monday, 31 March)

- (19) A: (10:25) 어머니, 4/2. 메뉴 중에 골라주세요.  
emeni, 4/2. meynyu cwung-ey kola-cwu-sey-yo.  
mother, April 2 menu among select please-POL  
'ma'am, please select (dishes) on the menu for April 2'
- (20) 감사합니다.  
kamsaha-pnita  
thank (you)-DEF  
'thank you'
- (21) E: (10:27) 쇠고기동그랑땡 쇠고기찜  
soykokitongkulangttayng soykokiccim  
beef meatballs beef steamed  
'beef meatballs, steamed beef'
- (22) 연어조림이요 ~~  
yenecolim-yo ((friendly voice))  
salmon soy sauce-POL  
'soy sauce salmon please ((friendly voice))'
- (23) 연어오븐구이네요^^  
yeneopunkwuiney-yo ((smiley eyes expressing happiness))  
salmon oven baked-POL  
'(it is) oven-baked salmon ((smiley eyes expressing happiness))'
- (24) A: (10:28) 네. 어머니, 점심 먹이실 수 있도록  
ney. emeni, cemsim meki-si-l-swu iss-tolok  
yes. ma'am lunch eat can in order to  
'yes. ma'am, in order for you to feed (your children) for lunch'
- (25) 빠른 배송해드릴게요!  
ppalun paysonghay-tu-li-lkkey-yo  
fast delivery provide-POL  
'(I) will provide a fast delivery'
- (26) 감사합니다~ ^\_\_^ ♥  
kamsaha-pnita ((friendly voice, happy face, love))  
thank (you)-DEF  
'thank (you) ((friendly voice, happy face, love))'

Appason did not make any further comment on this interaction. However, in the text I observe an interesting and notable difference in this interaction compared with Interaction 1 and 2. It features the use of CMC cues (emoticons and punctuations in this context) in addition to the use of socially normative *contaymal* between Appason and Emeni. Clearly, adding the cues helps express different affectual meanings distinct to the previous interactions. Emeni initiates the use of CMC cues when replying to Appason in lines 22 and 23; there are then reciprocated by Appason in lines 25 and 26. In lines 22 and 23, Emeni completes her thoughts by adding double tildes (~~) and smiley eyes (^ ^). The use of tilde depicts an elongated, friendly voice (Chun, 2014), which is commonly used as a nonverbal cue in textual interactions in East Asian countries such as Japan (Pasfield-Neofitou, 2007). Furthermore, it mirrors the use of elongation in spoken Korean for positive affect, friendliness / playfulness, and displays of femininity, or cuteness. Elongation is often used by young women in situations when their intention is to secure the attention and approval of men (Brown, 2013b). Appason's response contains an exclamation mark (line 25), and three emoticons following the expression of thanks in line 26: a tilde (~), a big smiley face (^\_\_^), and a heart (♥). The use of multiple emoticons can be viewed, "as a way to create or enhance the relationship between the interactional partners" (Androutsopoulos, 2000, p. 515), that creates an informal communicative environment, intimacy and collegiality (Darics, 2013, p. 12). Noteworthy is the lack of comments by Appason concerning Emeni's use of such face-enhancing behavior, in sharp contrast with the way he analyzed her perceived impolite behavior in Interaction 2 and subsequently in Interaction 4 (see below). It suggests he assigns less significance to her polite behavior than he does to her impolite behavior, presumably since he sees the polite

as diminished by the juxtaposition with the impolite interactions and his stated focus on Emeni's rudeness.

Despite the negative interaction the previous day (Interaction 2) that left Appason feeling highly offended, Interaction 3 confirms that Appason has made an agentive choice not to display offence to her directly. Indeed, on the contrary, he joins Emeni in engaging in face-enhancing behavior, mediated through the use of the CMC cues analyzed and discussed above. Interaction 3 underscores that social actors can exercise agency in deciding whether to hold others accountable for their perceived impolite behavior. Moreover, in business/sales-related interactions, service providers may often choose not to hold customers accountable for their actions, and this is true of Appason, at least to this point.

#### 5.1.4 Interaction four

Despite the efforts at rapprochement in Interaction 3, Appason quickly becomes frustrated once more at Emeni's behavior. Appason received the message detailed in Interaction 4 on Thursday, the day after the delivery on Wednesday. In these messages, Emeni asks Appason why the baby food that was supposed to be a part of the pack she ordered was not delivered with the Wednesday order. According to Appason's version of events (see below), baby food was only included on weekend orders and was never supposed to be part of this delivery.



Interaction 4 (Thursday, April 3)

- (27) (23:30) 근데요 왜 이유식은 안오나요?  
 kuntey-yo way iyusik-un an-ona-yo  
 by the way-POL why weaning food-TOP not come-POL  
 ‘by the way, why (is) the baby food not delivered?’
- (28) 아기 반찬뿐이던데요  
 aki panchan-ppwun-i-te-ntey-yo  
 baby side dishes only-POL  
 ‘it is only baby side dishes’
- (29) 다 입금했는데요.  
 ta ipkumha-yss-nuntey-yo  
 all deposited-PAST-POL  
 ‘(I) sent the payment in full’
- (30) (23:32) 그냥 환불부탁드립니다. [sic]  
 kunyang hwanpwul-pwuthak-tuli-pnita  
 just refund payment give please-DEF  
 ‘(I) request that (you) just refund (me)’
- (31) 한번도 아니고 두번씩 입금이 늦다고  
 hanpen-to an-iko twu-pen-ssik ipkum-i nuc-tako  
 once-only not-and twice-even deposit-NOM late  
 ‘not once, (but) twice (because) the payment was late’
- (32) 배송안해주시더니 이유식은 같이  
 paysong-an-hay-cwu-si-teni iyusik-un kathi  
 delivery not provide baby food-TOP together  
 ‘(you) did not deliver (my order). the baby food together’
- (33) 묶음배송이라하셔서 기다렸더니  
 mwukkum-paysong-i-la-ha-sy-ese kitaly-ess-teni  
 bundle delivery waited but  
 ‘(you) said it was a bundle delivery, so I waited but’
- (34) 실망입니다  
 silmang-i-pnita  
 disappoint-DEF  
 ‘(I) am disappointed’

- (35) (23:33)           xx 은행 xxxxxx 으로 환불처리해주세요.  
 xx unhayng-ulo        hwanpwul-cheli-hay-cwu-sey-yo  
 xx bank xxxxxx to     refund payment give please-POL  
 ‘please refund the payment to (my) bank (account) xxx at  
 xxx bank’
- (36)                   문자로든       전화로든  
 mwunca-lo-tun    cenhwa-lo-tun  
 text by            phone by  
 ‘either by text or phone’
- (37)                   빠른답변       부탁드리구요  
 ppalun-tappyen   pwu-thak-tu-li-kwu-yo  
 fast answer        give please-POL  
 ‘(I) request a fast reply’
- (38) (23:35)         아이가         잘안먹어서  
 ai-ka             cal an-mek-ese  
 baby-NOM        well not eat so  
 ‘(my) baby is finicky’
- (39)                   조금이라도   먹이고   싶은   마음에  
 cokum-i-la-to   mek-i-ko   siph-un   maum-ey  
 little at least   feed     want-MOD heart  
 ‘so from the bottom of (my) heart (I) wanted to feed it a  
 little’
- (40)                   기다리고   기다렸는데  
 kitali-ko        kitaly-ess-nuntay  
 waited-and   waited-PAST-but  
 ‘so (I) waited and waited, but’
- (41)                   너무   기다리게 하시네요.  
 nemwu kitali-key ha-si-ney-yo  
 too     wait-keep do-HON-POL  
 ‘(you) have kept (me) waiting too long’
- (42)                   가지러오는것도       안된다                   그리고  
 kacile-o-nun-kes-to   an-toy-n-ta            kule-ko  
 collect-come-MOD-also not-DEC            even  
 ‘collecting (in person) isn’t even permitted’

As in the previous message interactions, Emeni used socially normative *contaymal*

–*yo* and –(*su*)*pnita*, alongside other honorific forms such as the support verb *tuli-* (lines 30, 37) and the subject honorific *-si-* (lines 32, 33, 35, 41). The exception is found in the last line (42), which is another instance of an ambiguous sentence open to interpretation as non-honorific *panmal* (see below).

Despite maintaining the honorific protocol, Emeni clearly signals that she has taken offense. She explicitly holds Appason accountable for failing to deliver all of the food that she had ordered (lines 27, 32-34). She also challenges the rules that Appason has created for customer interactions by demanding that Appason reply to her promptly by telephone (cf. Interaction 2) and questioning why she cannot pick up the order in person (line 41). The use of the *-ko* ending in line 41 marks the utterance as adding additional information to what was said previously, thereby implying that the incident occurred due to his unwillingness to accommodate her request (i.e., picking up her own order). Through these messages, Emeni appeals to moral orders regarding what customers can expect from service providers, including that they should provide the service that has been paid for, that they should be quick and contact promptly, and that customers should have options as to how they receive the service. Notably, in holding Appason accountable, she makes reference to her own negative emotions, including her feeling of disappointment (*silman*) (line 34), and his inconsideration of her *maum* ‘hope, feelings’ (lit. heart) to feed her children with his side dishes (lines 38-39). By referencing her emotions, she invokes an important Korean metadiscourse in which impoliteness is conceptualized as occurring when social actors fail to “demonstrate concern towards the [other party’s] feeling by displaying that [they are] thinking about how [their] own actions might impact the psychological states of those around [them]” (Lo, 2007, p. 222).

Like Interaction 2, Interaction 4 does not include any text message from Appason. If indeed he replied to Emeni’s messages, he chose not to share his responses with the readers of the blog. In his reflections that appear below the screenshot of Interaction 4, however, he is candid about how offended he was by Emeni’s messages. In these reflections, he extracted certain expressions from her text messages and assigned particular significance to them as being offensive and highlighted these in bold red letters before commenting on them. In the following extracts from Appason’s commentary, the words or phrases in (a) are those that Appason extracted from Emeni’s original text messages, whereas those in (b) are Appason’s comments on those words or phrases.

(43) (a) [Emeni in line 31-32]

입금이 늦었다고 배송 안해주시고  
 ipkum-i nuc-ess-ta-ko paysong-an-hay-cwu-si-ko  
 deposit-SUB late-PAST-and delivery –not-do-provide-HON-and  
 ‘(you) didn’t deliver (my order) because the payment was late’

(b) [Appason’s comment]

당연한 일에 왜 기분이 상한건가.  
 tangyenhan il-ey way kipwun-i sanghan-ke-nka  
 fundamentally correct job-to why feeling-SUB upset-DUB  
 ‘(I) wonder why (she) is upset with what is fundamentally correct’

(44) (a) [Emeni in line 34]

실망  
 silmang  
 lost hope (or expectation)  
 ‘disappointment’

(b) [Appason's comment]

이 사람의 무례함과 꾀변에  
i salam-uy mwulyeyham-kwa kweypyen-ey  
this person-POSS rudeness and deceiving speech-DAT  
'to (her) rudeness and sophistry'

나는 경악을 금치 못했는데.  
nan-un kyengak-ul kumchi mos-ha-yss-nuntey  
I-TOP shock-ACC cannot contain  
'(I) couldn't repress (my) astonishment'

(45) (a) [Emeni in line 37]

빠른 답변  
ppalun tappyen  
fast answer words  
'fast reply'

(b) [Appason's comment]

내가 이 사람만 상대하고 앉아있다.  
nayka i salam-man sangtayha-ko anca-iss-na  
I-SUB this person only face each other-and sitting  
'(does she think) she is the only person I am dealing with'

(46) (a) [Emeni in line 41]

가지러오는것도 안된다고 그리고  
kaci-le-o-nun-kes-to an-toy-nta-ko kule-ko  
come for also not even and  
'pick-up isn't even permitted also'

(b) [Appason's comment]

원래 픽업은 안되는건데 뭐가 문제인건지,  
wenlay phikep-un antoy-nun-ken-tey mwe-ka mwuncey-in-ke-nci,  
originally pick-up-TOP not-so what-SUB problem-since

왜 반말을 하는건지.  
way panmal-ul ha-nun-ke-nci  
why panmal-ACC do-since  
'originally pick-up is not (permitted); what is the problem, why  
does (she) speak *panmal* (to me)?'

The comments show that initially Appason assigns significance to the lexical terms used by Emeni to describe her negative emotions, particularly the word *silmang* ‘disappointment’ in (34) about which he devotes a whole line. In (43), his use of the expression *kipwun-i sangha-* ‘lit. feeling/mood has gone bad’ shows that he understands how Emeni feels. However, far from accommodating Emeni’s negative feelings, he determines her act of expressing her negative emotions as an act of rudeness and sophistry (44) since, in his view, Emeni has no reason to be upset. He observes that the reason her initial order was not delivered is due to her late payment, a situation that Appason describes as *tangyengan il* ‘lit. fundamentally correct job’ (line 43). In this sentence, his use of the dubitative question ending *-nka* similar to the English ‘I wonder ...’ (Yeon & Brown, 2011) frames Emeni’s claims to be offended as doubtful and dubious, and also seeks confirmation from his readers that Emeni is in the wrong for not paying for her order on time (Yeon & Brown, 2011). Later in the post, he clarifies that the baby food Emeni talks about is only for the Saturday orders which is why it was not delivered.

Related to this, Appason also assigns significance to Emeni’s attempts to invoke moral orders regarding customer service and to challenge the rules of his online business. In response to her claims for prompt contact, he states that he is dealing with many customers at the same time, thereby invoking a competing moral order that service providers should deal with all customers equally and not give preferential treatment. As for Emeni’s claim that customers should be able to pick up orders in person, Appason simply invokes the rules of his online business, saying that this is ‘originally’ (*wenlay*) not permitted (line 46). In this comment, Appason’s usage of the *-(n)ci* oblique question ending (Yeon & Brown, 2011, p. 305-307) again seeks confirmation from his readers that

Emeni has no justifiable reason to be upset. In this way, he positions Emeni as a difficult customer whose behavior is disrespectful towards him, and inconsiderate towards other customers.<sup>7</sup>

Of most interest to me here, Appason assigns significance to Emeni's usage of language open to interpretation as *panmal*, whereas previously in Interaction 2 he had not done so. In (46), Appason holds Emeni accountable for using the *-ko* ending by asking why she is using *panmal*; in contrast, the same use of *-ko* in Interaction 2 drew no comment from Appason. In line 46, Appason again employs the *-(n)ci* oblique question ending, which seeks confirmation from his readers that Emeni's use of *panmal* is inappropriate. What is clear is that Appason uses agency to weigh and interpret the same speech styles differently during the two exchanges.

The variation in how Appason assigns different social meanings to the same ambiguous pragmatic form across these two interactions are no doubt mediated by changes in the context. At the micro level (i.e., within each individual interaction), the position of the ambiguous utterance within the interaction appears to mediate the interpretations. Whereas in Interaction 2 it is positioned between other text messages, the ambiguous utterance in Interaction 4 appears at the end of Emeni's text messages, which renders it more salient. At the macro level (i.e. across the interactions as a whole), Emeni's messages in Interaction 4 constitute a larger threat to Appason's professional abilities/standing and

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<sup>7</sup> Coincidentally, some food service businesses have recently pledged not to serve customers who do not treat their employees with respect. This has become a hot topic in major news outlets (e.g., Seoul Newspaper, The Korea Herald, MK News) as it challenges the belief of *sonnimum wangita* (lit: the customer is king), which has become a popular slogan across service sectors for many years in Korea.

his feeling that Emeni is looking down (*mwusi*) on him has now greatly increased. The way that he selects words and phrases from her messages and comments on them in turn shows that he is now more sensitive to any language use that belittles him and his business. In this context, use of *-ko* without adding the polite *-yo* at the end of her text messages confirms his perception of being ‘looked down upon’ by Emeni.

In his commentary, Appason furthermore notes that Emeni’s text messages in Interaction 4 are impolite due to their directness. He observes that Emeni’s messages lack “buffering words” (*wanchwung-ekwu*), and also comments that speakers need to exercise increased care when writing text messages due to the lack of facial expression and tone of voice in CMC communications. It is noteworthy that in the preceding Interaction 3, Emeni had initiated the usage of multiple CMC cues (often seen as the CMC equivalent of facial expression and tone of voice), which played a prominent role in reestablishing their relationship. In contrast, in Interaction 4, Emeni drops CMC cues from the outset. This sudden dropping of CMC cues is another contextual factor through which Appason’s interpretations of Emeni’s behavior, including her use of *-ko*, are mediated.

To summarize, although there is no evidence as to whether Appason directly held Emeni accountable for her perceived impoliteness in Interaction 4 at the metapragmatic politeness level, it is clear that he does so at the level of classificatory politeness. In his commentary, he agentively assigns impolite meanings to her use of affective vocabulary, her invocation of moral orders against him, and her use of language open to interpretation as non-honorific *panmal*. Appason’s ability and capacity to evaluate Emeni’s behavior in this way is evidently mediated through his position as the business owner who is able to dictate the rules of interaction, and also as the blog owner who has a forum for commenting



on customer behavior. Although he pushes back at the suggestion he should be treated as ‘beneath’ his clients, he ultimately has the tools available to push back any challenges to the rules of interaction that he has established.

## 5.2 Comments

Directly below Appason’s description of the incident with Emeni, twelve readers of the blog left comments on the episode. Based on the comments, almost all of the readers are established customers of Appason and mothers of young children, with user names strongly suggesting their identities as mothers (e.g. *Twuatul mami* ‘two sons’ mommy’, *Toto kongcwumam* ‘Princess Toto’s mom’, *Emmato salam* ‘a mother is also a human’). Analysis of their comments show how they in turn agentively evaluate Emeni and Appason’s interaction, and shed light on the powerful position of Appason within the community.

In almost all cases, the blog readers choose to show alignment for Appason in their comments. They offer encouragement for Appason with expressions such as *himnayseyyo* ‘cheer up’ (Twuatulmami ‘Two sons’ mommy’), and sympathize with his feelings with comments such as *maum manhi sanghasyesskeysseyo* ‘lit. your heart must have gone bad (Chaywenmamhyencengi ‘Chaywon’s mom Hyungjung’). Moreover, they perform alignment by invoking similar moral orders to those references by Appason, including that customers need to make payment on time in order to receive service (something that Appason himself had described as ‘fundamentally correct’), such as in this comment from Twuatul mami ‘Two son’s mother’:

Username Twuatul mami:

어떤 물건이든      결제안됨      배송      아예      안되는  
etten mwulken-itun    kyelcey-antoym    paysong    ayey    an-toy-nun  
any things-whatever    pay-not      delivery    definitely    not-PASS-MOD

기본적인 사실도      모르나      봅니다~  
kiponcekin sasil-to    moluna    popnita ((friendly voice))  
basic      fact-even    not know    do-DEF

‘(she) doesn’t even seem to know the basic fact that whatever the thing is, (if) the payment is not made it will definitely not be delivered.’

The readers also aligned with Appason’s evaluation of Emeni’s language use. In addition to confirming Appason’s evaluation that Emeni had used *panmal*, they also echoed his analysis that she needed to preface her requests with apologies, such as in this comment from Yeceli:

Username Yeceli:

헉... 늦은      시간에      죄송하다는      말도      없고 [sic]  
hek...    nuc-un    sikan-ey    coysong-hata-nun    mal-to    eops-ko  
gasp...    late-MOD    time-DAT    sorry-DEC-MOD    words-even    not-and

자기하고      싶은      말만      반말로      딱딱..[sic]  
cakiha-ko    siph-un    mal-man    panmal-lo    ttikttik..  
oneself-and    want-MOD    words-only    half speech-INST

진짜 무슨      요즘      학생들      보는것      같아요 [sic]  
cincca mwusun    yocum    haksayng-tul    po-nun-key    katha-yo  
really what      these days    student-PL    see-MOD-thing    like-POL

ㅋㅋㅋ      어이가      없어요. [sic.]  
ㅋㅋㅋ      ei-ka      epse-yo  
((laughing emoticon))    surprise-NOM      not-POL

‘oh my, (she called you) at late night without apologies and only talked about things (she) wanted to with (the use of) *panmal*...(I) feel like (I’m) dealing with school kids these days, sound of laughing, (I am) speechless.’

From the passages above, in the expression *panmal-lo ttikttik*, *ttikttik* is a mimetic word typically used in negative contexts which emphasizes that *panmal* is being used repetitively and brazenly in a context where it is inappropriate. The reference to ‘school kids’ appeals to the metaconcept that adults should be competent in the use of honorifics, and that failing to use language appropriately is evidence of being *mos papaywu-n* ‘uneducated’ (Yoon, 2004).

Some of the supportive messages do however contain segments that are open for evaluation as veiled criticism. Emmato salam ‘a mother is also a human’ pointed out that she may also have called Appason “at night, at dawn, and during the weekend” while encouraging Appason to feel better. Similarly, the user Myengcinpalakimam ‘Myengcinpalaki mom’ commented that she is reviewing her own behavior in light of Appason’s post about Emeni. Although these posters do not dispute Appason’s claims that Emeni has transgressed social norms, by positioning themselves as customers who have committed some of the same wrongdoings as Emeni they become fellow recipients of Appason’s criticism, and implicitly align themselves with Emeni. It is also clear that they look to the blog post as providing general information about acceptable customer behavior when interacting with Appason.

While analysis of the reader comments suggests that Appason has a loyal customer base who feel solidarity and empathy with him, the veiled nature of the criticisms noted above may also indicate constraints on reader agency to openly criticize Appason. The Naver portal site only permits those who are signed in to comment on blogs, and also allows Appason as the blog owner to track visitors and link back to their respective blogs. This environment ensures commenters are not anonymous to Appason,

creating an environment for him to exert greater control over the discourse between himself and Emeni, and the rest of the members of his blog. Therefore, the characteristics of the CMC medium impacts and constrains the way speakers construct and express their opinions (Haugh, 2010; Bolander, 2012).

### 5.3 Discussion

The analysis shows that the Appason, in the role of recipient, exerts agency in the way that he interprets and assigns meaning and relevance to Emeni's actions. From what was apparently a longer set of CMC interactions, he selected certain segments to display on his blog, therefore assigning significance to these specific parts of the ongoing social encounter (cf. Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001). He then evaluated these segments as having certain social meanings, namely *mwulyeham* 'rudeness', and constituting a negatively valenced form of social action, namely treating his business like a 'laughable hole-in-the-wall store' and therefore looking down on him as 'someone below'. As pointed out in the analysis, these interpretations of Emeni's behavior are not necessarily present in the linguistic forms themselves, which could be open to different interpretations. Indeed, Emeni also engages in face-enhancing behavior in Interaction 3, which Appason chooses not to comment on.

The fact that variation is possible in the way that Appason assigns social meanings to Emeni's actions is reinforced by the inconsistent ways that Appason himself interprets utterances of ambiguous honorific status. Whereas in Interaction 4 he interprets an ambiguous utterance as non-honorific *panmal* and thus as highly offensive, he tacitly accepts a near identical utterance in Interaction 2. Although these different interpretations

are no doubt mediated by various contextual factors, the incident illustrates that the social meanings of honorifics are not fixed, and that recipients can exercise agency in interpreting whether a sentence is of an appropriate level of honorifics or not. Whereas recent studies on honorifics have focused on the role of speaker choice and manipulation in the use of honorifics, the current study enriches findings that have come before by showing that recipients also play an active role in the dynamic social meanings arising from the use of honorifics. The fact that speakers from so-called “discernment cultures” (Watts, 1989) can actively interpret the use of honorifics (i.e. pragmatic forms traditionally assumed to be used obligatorily according to social convention) provides strong proof for the importance of recipient agency in (im)politeness research.

Claiming that recipients have agency in the way that they interpret (im)politeness does not necessarily mean that recipients can assign social meanings in a free or random manner. Rather, the findings of the current study support the claim that agency is a capacity to act that is socio-culturally mediated (Ahearn, 2001; Mitchell & Haugh, 2015). First of all, the social meanings that recipients assign to pragmatic forms are constrained to those that are recognizable (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 184) to at least some other participants. In the case of Appason’s evaluation of Emeni using *panmal*, the data show that this evaluation is reflexively recognized by at least one of the blog readers. In addition, the current paper underlines that the capacity to assign social meanings and hold other’s accountable for their behavior is constrained by social position, power, and (perhaps) gender. In his role as blog author, Appason has the capacity to comment relatively openly on Emeni’s behavior at the classificatory politeness<sub>1</sub> level, whereas the capacity for his readers (and potentially for Emeni) to respond is relatively constrained by

the conditions of the online environment. The study illustrates the importance of considering the “rules of interaction” in online communities when looking at agency in CMC interactions (see Herring, 2007).

Beside the conditions of the online environment that facilitates power, gender may be another key element that influences the recipient’s capacity to evaluate or comment as to whether a social actors’ behaviors are offensive or not. Although the current data does not provide enough evidence regarding the role of gender when exercising agency, what is clear is that all participants in the data are explicit about their gender. This infers that their capacity to evaluate or to comment may be modulated by gender difference.

Furthermore, although Appason may appear to be in a position of power, his agency is more restricted at the metapragmatic politeness<sub>1</sub> level (i.e. within the interaction with Emeni itself). Appason is explicit in the blog that he was offended by Emeni’s behaviour, but there is no evidence that he actually went as far as directly holding Emeni accountable for her actions by communicating this to her directly. To the contrary, I see in Interaction 3 that he made efforts to repair his relationship with Emeni, despite that he was deeply offended by the preceding Interaction 2. The finding that participants may agentively choose not to hold participants directly accountable for their actions is consistent with the findings of Mitchell and Haugh (2015), where some participants only revealed the fact that they had been offended during subsequent retrospective interviews. The difference in the current chapter is that I present authentic data (i.e., Appason’s blog) showing that Appason made his own decision to communicate his offense in a semi-public space. Although his motivations for doing this are unclear, one interpretation is that it is an attempt to reinforce the rules of interaction of his online business and enforce

a code of conduct on his customers. Certainly, some of the readers look to the post in this way as found in their comments that they have also infringed Appason's rules.

In the chapter that follows I turn to look at the data extracted from Thok Thok (i.e., Wu Wu's post). The salient difference in this data from Appason's post on his blog on the Naver platform is the level of anonymity promoted by the Thok Thok's parent site (i.e., Nate). Unlike the commenters of Appason's post, in the passages and analysis that follow will show that the readers who left comments on Wu Wu's post feel free to openly disagree with her evaluation of Alpa's behavior.

## CHAPTER VI

### DATA 2: WU WU'S THOK THOK POST

The findings from the data compiled from Appason's post demonstrate that agency is the capacity to act, arising from an on-going interaction that creates variation in impoliteness phenomena. Variability in the evaluation of impoliteness is, evidently, consequential to the assignment of social meanings and in the decision to hold other's accountable for their behavior through recipients exercising agency. From the data I note that a key factor influencing recipient capacity to act is found in the socio-material conditions of the online environment. Specifically, a recipient's capacity to openly evaluate something as offensive or not is mediated and constrained by the type of community the recipient occupies, and is further affected by the core design features of the web based platform they are communicate through. In an online environment where a close-knit community is established within a platform that promotes transparency and not privacy, as is the case with Appason's blog on Naver and the tracking systems available to him as a blog owner – there is significant evidence of (underlying social) pressure in the way of participants position themselves during the evaluation of impoliteness. The data shows that most commenters opt to align themselves with the blog owner (Appason), while at the same time they are constrained to openly and directly criticize him. What this ultimately indicates is that maintaining solidarity by converging to dominant values, rules or norms, created within the particular close-knit online community may be more important than expressing individuality.

This chapter will show that the readers of Wu Wu's post demonstrate far more



liberty in expressing their ‘true’ opinions about her evaluation of a part-time employee’s (Alpa) behavior, including his use of *panmal* speech with her mother. The anonymity promoted by the website (in this case, Thok Thok’s parent site is Nate) is a major feature that influences the position the readers take in assigning social action to Wu Wu and Alpa, and also affects the relationships developed between all members of the forum. However, this is not to say that the property of computer technology is the sole deterministic factor in determining variability in the evaluation of impoliteness in different online community. The relevant situational communicative events (e.g., activity, norms/rules, purpose, etc.), of course, “creates an emergent context for the participant[s’ capacity to act]” (Georgakopoulou, 2011, p. 18), and in turn generates variation in impoliteness phenomena. Though rejecting technological determinism in CMC, it is still evident that the medium feature of anonymity plays an important role in affecting the evaluation of impoliteness in this particular community. This is an especially interesting feature of the communicative environment as knowing social status (i.e., age and rank) relative to others is of paramount importance to Koreans when establishing relationships. The primary reason for this is that grammatical and lexical politeness is embedded in the language. Thus, it is customary for Koreans to, for example, first inquire as to each other’s age when meeting for the first time. With this in mind, throughout the analysis special attention is paid to how Wu Wu and the readers of her post position themselves and others in performing social actions in an online community where social status are undefined.

## 6.1 Taking offence to text message interactions

What follows is the analysis of five chronological and textual sequence of

interactions between Wu Wu’s mother and Alpa as well as accompanying commentary provided by Wu Wu. Although there are seven separate screenshots of text message interactions Wu Wu combined the last three of them as one long communication in her commentary. Thus, the analysis is divided into five sections which I refer to as Interaction 1 to 5 in the analysis that follows. Interaction 1 (Section 6.1.1) features Alpa accepting employment by Wu Wu’s mother. However, soon after his employment Alpa stops coming to work ostensibly due to his mother’s poor health which is discussed in Interaction 2 (Section 6.1.2). During Interaction 3 (Section 6.1.3), Alpa resigns and requests payment for the work he completed before his absence. This subsequently prompts disputes found in Interaction 4 (Section 6.1.4) and Interaction 5 (Section 6.1.5).

Before proceeding with the analysis of the actual text message interactions (1-5) and Wu Wu’s commentary about them I pause to look at the background information provided by Wu Wu. This segment provides insight into how Wu Wu applies her agency in choosing certain information as the most important to highlight Alpa’s behaviours she constructs as offensive, as well as showing the ways in which she positions her mother and herself in relation to Alpa in the evaluation of his (impolite) behavior (cf. Haugh, 2010; Upadhyay, 2010).

Wu Wu shared the post under one of Thok Thok’s designated categories, called *kaynyem sangsilhan salamtul* ‘people who lost common sense’. As denoted in its classification, Wu Wu begins her narrations by explaining that her mother “has seen all kinds of kids with and without common sense” (*kaynyem aitulpwuthe mwukaynyem aitulkkaci tayanghakey pwaosyesseyo*) through her business. She said that her mother has owned a “beer house” (*hophuchip*) for 10 years, and during this time her mother has dealt

with “dozens” (*swusipmyeng*) of *alpasayng* (lit. a part-time employee student) in their 20s. After providing this information about her mother, Wu Wu then dives into an explanation and discussion of the actual incident which occurred between her mother and Alpa. By structuring her post in this way, Wu Wu places herself as a person with insider knowledge which leads the readers to view the event and interpret the interaction in a certain way. Indeed, she gives the impression that the *alpasayng* (lit. a part-time employee student) in the story she is about to tell is someone extraordinary, even to her mother who has a lot of experiences dealing with all kinds of *aitul* ‘kids’. *Ai*, the English equivalent of ‘kid’, is an address term that is frequently used to refer to (young) adults. The term can be used to express affection as well as recognition of relative age. However, it can also be a term of immaturity in particular contexts such as is the case in this data. Continuing with her narrations, Wu Wu juxtaposes her mother and Alpa by framing her mother as a levelheaded adult with abundant experiences while depicting Alpa as a kid with no common sense.

#### 6.1.1 Interaction one

The message begins with Alpa introducing himself for the position advertised on an online job site called Albamon (*albamon dot com*) (Interaction 1, line 1). He identifies himself as a 20-year-old male with no previous work experience as a part-time worker (lines 2-5). Despite his lack of experience, he commits to working hard if he is given a chance (line 6). Later that day, he sends another text message to Wu Wu’s mother asking if he has been successful in getting the job (line 7). Soon after this message, Wu Wu’s mother replied with the news he has been hired (line 8). The times at which the text messages were sent are shown in parentheses.

Interaction 1 (Saturday, 2 July)

- (1) A: (09:35)           알바몬 보고 연락 드립니다  
 Albamon poko       yenlak tui-pni-ta  
 Albamon see and    contact give-DEF  
 ‘(I am) calling (about the job) (I) saw on Albamon’
- (2)                        나이는 20 입니다  
 nai-nun 20-i-pni-ta  
 age-TOP 20-COP-DEF  
 ‘(I) am 20 years old’
- (3)                        사는곳은        xxxx 근처에        삽니다  
 sanun-kos-un    xxxx    kunche-ey sa-pni-ta  
 live-place-TOP   xxxx    near-LOC   live-DEF  
 ‘(I) live near xxxx’
- (4)                        성별은           남자입니다  
 sengpyel-un     namca-i-pni-ta  
 gender-TOP     male-COP-DEF  
 ‘(I) am male’
- (5)                        알바를        해본적은        없지만  
 alpa-lul    hay-pon-cek-un    eps-ciman  
 alpa-ACC   do-try out-TOP   not-but  
 ‘(I) have not tried part-time work, but’
- (6)                        키셔주시면 [= 시켜주시면] 열심히 하겠습니다 [sic]  
 si-khye-cwu-si-myen                    yelsimhi ha-keyss-supnita  
 let-give-HON-if                        hard       do-FUT-DEF  
 ‘if (you) let (me) (I) will work hard.’
- (7) A: (22:53)           저        합격인가요        불합격인가용 ~  
 ce       hapkyek-i-n-ka-yo   pwul-hapkyek-i-n-ka-yo-ng  
 I (Hon) accept-POL           not-accept-POL ((friendliness))  
 ‘am I hired or not hired ((friendliness))?’
- (8) M: (23:19)           합격이용  
 hapkyek-i-yo-ng  
 accept-COP-POL ((friendliness))  
 ‘(you) are hired ((friendliness))’

(9) A: (--:--)  
 감사합니다 열심히 하겠습니다 [= 하겠습니다] [sic]  
 kamsaha-pnita yelsimhi ha-keyss-supnita  
 be grateful-DEF hard do-FUT-DEF  
 ‘thank you. (I) will work hard’

The interaction appears by all accounts to be polite and friendly. Alpa is (as expected) deferential towards Wu Wu’s mother (his prospective employer), with the socially normative deferential *-(su)pnita* form being used throughout the conversations, except line 7. Alpa attaches *-ng* to the sentence final ending polite *-yo* form in *-pwl-hapkyek-in-ka-yo-ng* ‘lit. not successful (in getting the job)’ in line 7. By using the sonorant consonant *-ng*, Alpa expresses his playfulness (Lee, 2010), and mitigates his potentially face-threatening act created by his blunt yes/no question about his employment. This is further softened by adding a tilde symbol (~) to complete his utterance. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the tilde symbol is commonly used to express congeniality as it depicts an elongated, friendly voice (Chun, 2014). By using these CMC cues, Alpa mitigates potential face-threat by not being too direct, while at the same time expressing his desire for approval (i.e., positive face) from Wu Wu’s mother. In response, Wu Wu’s mother reciprocates with the same speech style as exemplified by the *-yong* ending in line 8 which indicates that she interprets Alpa’s directness and his use of CMC cues as playful.

As Wu Wu’s narration continues, it becomes clear that Alpa did not turn up for work after “just 2 or 3 days on the job”. She explains that Alpa had offered only a brief reason for his absence and did not turn up for work (see Interaction 2).

### 6.1.2 Interaction two

At 5: 38 pm, Alpa sent a short message (lines 10-12) to Wu Wu’s mother

explaining that his mother was scheduled to undergo surgery and so he cannot come for work.

Interaction 2 (Thursday, 7 July)

(10)A: (17:38) 사장님 오늘 어머니  
sacang-nim onul emeni  
chief-HON today mother  
'boss, my mother today'

(11) 수술해야 갠다고 [= 된다고] 해서 [sic]  
swuswul-hay-ya kay-n-ta-ko hay-se  
surgery-only if AUX-and do-so  
'has to go in for surgery, so'

(12) 오늘은 못갈거 같아여 프..프 [sic]  
onul-un mos-kal-ke katha-ye 프..프  
today-TOP not-go-FUT like ((a face about to cry))  
'it seems that (I) can't come to work today ((sad))'

Alpa's messages in this interaction are somewhat ambiguous as to whether the speech style he used can be interpreted as *contaymal* or *panmal*. The sentence final ending *-ye* form in line 12 is widely used Internet language and is often used instead of the polite *-yo* when trying to convey cuteness (Lee, 2010). However, it seems that there is a discursive dispute as to whether *-ye* should be interpreted as *contaymal* or not. Some meta-comments found in several Internet forums suggest that some internet users perceive it as *panmal*, or as representing speech somewhere between *panmal* (intimate speech) and *contaymal* (honorific speech). Thus, it is considered inappropriate when used between acquaintances in CMC environments. The example is found on a blog featured on Naver Café<sup>8</sup>. The blogger requests his blog users to refrain from using ambiguous Internet speech styles that

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<sup>8</sup> The example is found on <https://cafe.naver.com/nickanimations/5972>.

are “not either *contaymal* or *panmal*”, including *cho-seng-chey*, *ha-sam-chey*, *hay-ye-chey*. S/he explains that *panmal* is used between friends of the same age or towards *oppa* ‘older brother’ and *nuna* ‘older sister’ who share intimacy. Thus, it is inappropriate to use *panmal* with an acquaintance unless mutual agreement is reached in advance. While using *-ye*, Alpa deploys the vague expression modifier + *kes kat-* ‘it seems that’ or a more idiomatic English translation ‘I think’ in *moskalke katha-ye* ‘it seems that (I) can’t come’ (line 12). By using *-ket kat-*, he expresses that the circumstances preventing him from work are beyond his control. This is further indexed through an emoticon (ㄷ..ㄷ) that depicts a face about to cry (line 12), which may convey a feeling of distress, or someone on the verge of tears/powerlessness. The use of this vague expression and the presence of the CMC cue make it unlikely that Alpa is using *-ye* form in order to be deliberately rude.

In Wu Wu’s narrations regarding Alpa’s messages above, she reveals that she is skeptical regarding the genuineness of these messages. She describes that she is incredulous that Alpa’s mother’s surgery occurs about an hour and a half before his scheduled shift at 7 pm:

(Excerpts from Wu Wu’s reflections)

어머니 수술이 5 시 40 분에  
 emeni swuswul-i 5si 40pwun-ey  
 mother surgery-SUB 5 hour 40 minute-DAT

당장 정해지나보네요  
 tangcang ceng-hay-ci-na-po-ney-yo  
 right away decide-able to-POL

출근은 7 시인데. [sic]  
 chwulkun-un 7si-in-tey  
 work shift-TOP 7 o’clock-but

‘(his) shift starts at 7 o’clock; (his) mother’s surgery is decided to be proceeded at 5:40 on the spot’

The connective ending - *ntey* in *7si-in-tey* ‘7 o’clock but’ gives rise to certain inferences on the part of the hearer. In other words, it provides background information that is useful to the hearer in understanding the situation (Yeon & Brown, 2011, p. 298). In the current case, the *-ntey* clause provides background information as to why she feels skeptical about Alpa’s reason for the absence (i.e., his mother’s surgery is arranged at 5: 40 pm). By providing the background information of his work schedule, in which he starts his shift at 7 pm, Wu Wu wants to make it clear to readers why she has a hard time believing what he says is true (Yeon & Brown, 2011, p. 298). In so doing, she implies that the time at which Alpa started his shift is not far from the time at which he contacted her mother suggesting this was a last minute excuse he concocted.

Wu Wu continues explaining that her and her younger sibling had to cancel their own plans in order to cover his shift even though the business is not hers (*cey saepto anintey*). Despite this, they “put off all their engagements” (*cey yaksokil ta milwuko*) and helped her mother as they could not bear to see their “50 year old unhealthy mother, who is the esteemed chief (of the bar)” (*sacangnimin emenika...sipnyen ilhasyese momi manhi ancohusin sangthayla*) “running around and serving tables” (*50 tay emenika twietanimye seping polswuto epsnun nulusiko...*). The purpose of hiring Alpa is, she said, for this very reason. By making a specific reference to her mother’s position (i.e., esteemed chief) (cf. Haugh, 2010), Wu Wu clearly marks the fact that her mother is *wui salam* ‘person above’ and that it is inappropriate for a person with her status doing a job that is supposed to be reserved for *alay salam* ‘person below’. Furthermore, Wu Wu also appeals to competing moral orders; specifically, that her mother too has poor health and that Alpa should have considered this as he does for his own mother by notifying her of the absence in advance.



In these reflections (i.e., at the classificatory politeness<sub>1</sub> level – Eelen, 2001), it is also clear that Wu Wu exercises agency in construing Alpa’s behavior as a particular kind of social action, explicitly the act of causing a lot of *phihay* ‘damage’ (i.e., they have to cancel their own plans) and “stress” (...*suthulaysu cangnananiko*). In doing so, she assigns special significance (cf. Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001) to a certain aspect of Alpa’s communications, such as the short notice, which led to the interruption of plans made by her and her younger sibling. Wu Wu evaluates this particular behavior of Alpa as action that makes her “want to hurl cursing (at him)” (*yokphecwuko sipheyo*). Although Wu Wu is clearly offended by his action, her capacity to act to hold Alpa accountable for his transgression (i.e., at the metapragmatic politeness<sub>1</sub> level – Eelen, 2001) appears to be constrained by the particular circumstance she is in. That is, she is not the primary business owner, and as such is not directly involved in the dispute.

This interaction, as presented on the forum, does not feature any input from Wu Wu’s mother. However, it is presumed from Wu Wu’s subsequent narrations about Interaction 3 that her mother did not try to contact Alpa during this time. The reason for not returning his message is not clear, and is not disclosed by Wu Wu. As is discussed in Chapter 5, one way in which a social actor exerts his or her agency is by selecting which interactions (or extracts thereof) to post to the website. By choosing not to unveil the reason why her mother did not return his message, Wu Wu assigns less significance to her mother’s potentially negligent behavior than she does to Alpa’s impolite behavior. Presumably, she sees the status of her mother’s (potentially) inattentive action as being diminished by juxtaposing this with Alpa’s impolite messages.

### 6.1.3 Interaction three

After sending the messages in Interaction 2, Wu Wu narrates that there was no contact from Alpa for five days until he sent the messages found in Interaction 3. She describes his absence using the Korean idiom *camswuthata* (roughly equivalent to “taking a submarine ride” in English) (*mokyoiley camswuthako hwayoil* ‘lit. taking a submarine ride on Thursday and (resurfacing) on Tuesday’). Alpa’s first message (12:59) in Interaction 3 begins with the announcement of his resignation as he claims to now have to look after his parents; approximately 9 hours later Alpa sent a second message (21:40) to inquire about his unpaid wages.

#### Interaction 3 (Tuesday, 12 July)

- (13) A: (12:59) 사장님 일 못할거 같아여  
sacang-nim il mos-ha-lke katha-ye  
chief-HON work not-do-FUT like-POL  
‘boss, it seems that (I) can’t work’
- (14) 부모님 간병 해야 델거  
pwumo-nim kanpyeng hayya tay-lke  
parents-HON look after do must-FUT  
‘(I) have to look after (my) parents’
- (15) 같아서 ㅠ..ㅠ [sic.]  
kathase ((tears streaming down))  
seem ((tears streaming down))  
‘(I) think ((sad))’
- (16) A: (21:40) 저기 사장님 그동안 시급은  
ceki sacang-nim kutongan sikup-un  
there boss-Hon so far hourly wage-Top  
‘well, boss, is the hourly wage for (the work I did)’
- (17) 날아가는 건가용 ㅠ..ㅠ?  
nalaka-nun ke-nka-yo-ng  
fly-Mod thing-POL ((friendliness)) ((tears streaming down))  
‘far gone ((friendliness)) ((sad))?’

Similar to Interaction 2, the honorific status of this message is ambiguous, but certainly open to being interpreted as non-honorific *panmal*. Alpa's continuous use of *-ye* form rather than the polite ending *-yo* (line 12) can be, as discussed in Interaction 2, evaluated as an inappropriate speech style due to the opaque honorific level. Moreover, the causal connective ending *-ase* in *-kathase* '(it) seems that' in line 15 is also open to interpretation as *panmal*. Like the conjunctive verb ending *-ko* featured in Appason's data (Chapter 5), a causal connective *-(a/e)se* is also often used to end a sentence when the second clause has previously been expressed or is omitted (Yeon & Brown, 2011, p. 263). In such circumstances, the honorific verb ending *-yo* could be attached after *-(a/e)se* to mark the utterance as *contaymal*, thus *-kathaseyo* rather than *-kathase* in the current example. Without *-yo*, the utterance can be interpreted as *panmal*; however, Wu Wu did not assign it as inappropriate or impolite. Indeed, she did not mention it at all, suggesting tacit acceptance of its appropriateness.

Despite the ambiguous status of honorific level of the message, it is clear that Alpa made an effort to convey that the circumstances he finds himself in are beyond his control. Evidence of this can be found in his utterances, specifically in using vague expressions such as *-il mos-ha-lke kath-* 'it seems like (I) can't work' (line 13) and *-hayya toy-lke kathase* 'it seems like (I) have to do' (lines 14-15). Moreover, the negative form *mos* 'cannot' in line 13 signals lack of ability on his part (i.e., the situation is outside his control). In this expression, Alpa could have chosen to use another short negative form *an* 'is/does not' instead of *mos* to express his deliberate decision of not performing the actions noted (Yeon & Brown, 2011, p. 164). To the contrary, he continues to convey his lack of ability to control the situation by deploying another vague form, modifier + *ke(s) kath-* 'it

seems like’ (lines 13, 14-15). By using forms that express lack of control and vagueness, Alpa attempts not to be held as the one who broke the contract. In other words, by using an off-record politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987), he attempts to circumvent any potential blame from Wu Wu’s mother for his action (i.e., breaking the contract). He further indexes an emotive stance of sadness through the use of a crying emoticon (ㄸ..ㄸ) at the end of utterance (line 15), thereby displaying sincerity in proclaiming his innocence, while increasing illocutionary force (Dresner & Herring, 2010).

In his second message (lines 16-17), Alpa once again endeavored to use indirect language as a mitigation strategy. In line 17, he ends with the sonorant consonant *-ng* in *ke-nka-yong* ‘gone’ to soften the directness of his inquiry regarding payments for hours worked. This is followed by the same crying emoticon (ㄸ..ㄸ) he used in line 15 to index sadness or hurtful feelings, which further moderates the directness of his inquiry.

Additionally, the times at which the messages were sent (approximately 9 hours between the first and the second messages) may also convey an intended meaning (Walther & Tidwell, 1995). Alpa waited 9 hours to send the second message which may have been a strategy to soften or mitigate any perceived impoliteness when demanding his wages.

However, from Wu Wu’s commentaries it is clear that she evaluated the messages in Interaction 3 as markedly offensive. She points out that Alpa did not “once make an apology” (*coysonghatan mal hanpen epsiyo*), though he made an inquiry about the payment “straight away” (*palo*):

(Excerpts from Wu Wu’s reflections)

5 일 동안 연락	없다...	바로	일한	시급
5-il-tongan yenlak	eps-ta(ka)	palo	ilha-n	sikup
5-days-for contact	not exist	straight away	work-MOD	pay

어떻게 되는거나 묻더라고요  
 ettehkey toy-nun-ke-nya mwutte-la-ko-yo  
 what about become ask-POL

죄송하단말 한번 없어요  
 coysongha-ta-n-mal hanpen epsi-yo  
 sorry-DEC-MOD-word once without-POL

‘no contact for 5 days...immediately asked what happen to the payment. Not once saying sorry’

It is worth noting that the ways in which Wu Wu used *palo* ‘straight away or immediate’ here suggest two possible interpretations. The first interpretation is that she perceives the time gap between the first and the second message as too short, and thus offensive. The second possibility is that she is offended by Alpa inquiring about the payment straight away without any accompanying apologies. Despite the ambiguity, Wu Wu clearly found Alpa’s inquiry surprising and suspicious, which is confirmed by the form *-nya(ko)* in *palo ilha-n sikup ettehkey toy-nun-ke-nya...* ‘immediately asked what would happen to the payment’ (line 19) (Yeon & Brown, 2011, p. 395).

As in the previous interaction (Interaction 2), there are no messages in response from Wu Wu’s mother. Wu Wu made it clear that her mother sent him text message(s) requesting a phone call. However, she chooses not to include these communications in her forum post, providing another example of agency.

#### 6.1.4 Interaction four

Wu Wu’s narrations go on to explain that Alpa resurfaced 3 days after sending the messages found in Interaction 3. Instead of calling Wu Wu’s mother, Alpa sent another text message asking again about the payment, as shown in Interaction 4 below. The first

message (lines 18-19) begins with Alpa inquiring about payment for the work he completed before his abrupt resignation. Rather than answering his request directly, Wu Wu's mother replied with a pointed question asking how he would handle this situation if he were the owner (line 20). In response, Alpa stated that in such a scenario he would make the payment at the rate promised (lines 21-22). Her mother replied with a request for a phone call to discuss the matter sometime two days hence (line 23).

Interaction 4 (Friday, 22 July)

- (18) A: (15:30) 그동안 일했던거 [=일했던 거]  
 kutongan ilhay-ss-ten-ke  
 during work-PAST-MOD  
 ‘for the work (I) have done’
- (19) 어떻게 돼는거에여? [= 되는 거예요]  
 ettehkey toy-nun-ke-e-ye  
 what about become  
 ‘what happen to the payment?’
- (20) M: (23:37)너가 [= 네가] 주인 이라면 어떻게 처리 하겠니?  
 ne-ka cwuin ilamyen ettehkey cheliha-keyss-ni  
 you-NOM owner if how handle-PAST-Q  
 ‘if you were an owner how do you handle it?’
- (21) A: (23:47)제가 주인이면 그때동안 일했던 [=일했던]  
 ceyka cwuin-imyen kuttay-tongan ilha-yss-ten  
 I(HON) owner-if during that time work-PAST-MOD  
 ‘if I were an owner for the work completed’
- (22) 시급은 줄거 같은데...  
 sikup-un cwu-l-ke kath-untey  
 payment-TOP give-FUT think  
 ‘(I) think (I) would give the payment’

(Sunday, 31 July)

(23) M: (11:58) 전화가 안되는구나 전화해라  
cenhwa-ka an-toy-nun-kwu-na cenhwaha-y-la  
call-NOM not be call  
'(I) can't reach you. Call (me)'

The tone of the messages expresses greater distance overall as compared to previous interactions 1, 2, and 3. An immediately noticeable change in this interaction is the lack of emoticons deployed to mitigate the face-threatening act of requesting payment. Indeed, unlike in Interaction 3 where Alpa made an effort to soften the directness of the question about the payment by using CMC cues such as crying face, there are no such attempts made in this interaction. Instead, in lines 18 and 19, Alpa inquires bluntly about the status of the payment while again deploying an ambiguous level of honorific speech style *-ye* in *-ettehkey toy-nun-ke-e-ye* 'what happens (with my pay)' (line 19). Moreover, Alpa did not follow honorific protocol in the use of socially normative *contaymal -yo* or *-(su)pnita*, except where he uses the humble (self-lowering form) *ce* 'I' in line 21. Given his age and rank, the use of *ce* is not unexpected in the interaction with Wu Wu's mother. However, what may be considered abnormal is his use of a (potentially) *panmal* speech when speaking to the mother (line 22). The form *-untey* in line 22 is a connective ending that links two clauses together, which is similar in usage to 'and', 'so' and 'but' in English. However, just as with the conjunctive verb ending *-ko* in Appason's data (Chapter 5) and a causal connective ending *-(a/e)se* in Interaction 3 in the current chapter, it can also be used at the end of an utterance, when providing a negative response to a question (Yeon & Brown, 2011, p. 301). In such cases, similar to *-ko* and *-(a/e)se* discussed previously, speakers may add the honorific verb ending *-yo* after *-untey* to mark the utterance as

*contaymal*. Without *-yo*, the utterance is open to being interpreted as *panmal*, and thus potentially offensive in this context given the clear difference in social status (i.e., age, rank) between Alpa and Wu Wu's mother.

It is not only Alpa who is conveying distance, Wu Wu's mother also appears to share this sentiment. Like Alpa, she did not use any emoticons to mark her utterances as soft and friendly. This is a sharp contrast to her initial interaction with Alpa (Interaction 1) wherein she reciprocated friendliness by the use of the same playful speech style that Alpa had used. On the contrary, this time she joins Alpa in engaging in face-aggravating behavior, mediated through the non-use of CMC cues. This is further intensified through the use of second person pronoun *ne* 'you' (line 20), along with the use of an imperative form *-(a/e)la* in *cenhwa-hay-la* 'call (me)' in line 25. Usage of these forms evidently indicate how offended the mother is with Alpa. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the pronoun *ne* 'you' is very limited in its usage. More importantly, due to its directness Korean speakers are often careful to avoid using the form even when speaking in *panmal* to social juniors. Moreover, the mother also uses the plain form *-(a/e)la* in her utterance (line 23). The plain form *-(a/e)la* is recognized as the lowest speech level, and the use of this style is determined based on familiarity and the age gap between the interlocutors. Generally, the form is used with intimate friends or "by an older speaker to a child of up to high school age" (Lee & Ramsey, 2000, p. 253). If it is used outside these normative situations, it can be interpreted as harsh and conveys rudeness. Instead of using *-(a/e)la*, Wu Wu's mother could have used other forms of *panmal* speech, such as *cenhwa-hay* 'call (me)' or *contaymal* (*cenhwa-(hay)-cwe-yo*) to him as she used in the first interaction, which notably is the only communication previous to this one that features the mother's words. In effect,



the combination of *ne* with the plain speech style *-(a/e)la* really denotes the lowest form of speech style and by using these forms Wu Wu's mother clearly signals that she has taken offense to Alpa's continued demands for payment and, perhaps, his use of *panmal* in line 22.

Through jointly engaging in face-aggravating behavior during this interaction, both Alpa and Wu Wu's mother also attempt to appeal to competing moral orders regarding the un-paid wages. In response to Alpa's bluntly stated question about the status of the payment (lines 18-19), the mother introduces an argument by asking how he would handle the situation if he were the owner (line 20). The suggestion being that he would have done the same (i.e., not paying him) as her if he were in the same position. Through this, she evokes a moral order that a good employee should have given her much more time to come up with a plan to cover for his absence, and that it is justifiable that payment has not been made since he is not a good employee. Alpa pushes back against the mother's implicit suggestion of his wrongdoing, which is conveyed by the use of the connective ending *nuntey* to mark his disagreement (line 22). Indeed, he replies that had the situation been reversed he would pay for the hours worked. By appealing to a competing moral order he asserts that her action is not justifiable and that paying him is right thing to do.

In Wu Wu's reflections accompanying the text messages, she aligns herself with her mother by also referencing a moral order. She specifically points out that Alpa's "lack of responsibility and the time commitment" (*chaykimkam pwucokkwa sikan yaksokulo*) has caused much "damage" (*phihay*) (to the business and to their plans), suggesting that employees should keep their commitments and be responsible if they wish to get paid. She also assigns significance to Alpa's repeated demands for payment but without providing his

bank account information. She construes this particular action as a ploy to put the onus on them to ask his bank account information “voluntarily” (*alase*), which she views as evidence of his apathy concerning how his actions affected her, her younger sibling and her mother’s lives. She concludes that even if they wanted to send him his wages it is not possible without him first providing the necessary information.

(Excerpts from Wu Wu’s commentary)

계좌번호도	안말하면서
keyycwa-penho-to	an-mal-ha-myen-se
bank account-number-also	not-tell-since

뭔	돈을	어떻게	보내요
mwen	ton-ul	ettehkey	ponay-yo
what	money-ACC	how	send-POL

‘since (he) doesn’t provide (his) bank account number how can (my mother) send the money’

From the passages above, the short negative form *an* in *an-mal-ha-myen-se* ‘since not telling (her)’ signals intentionality. In other words, Wu Wu perceives Alpa’s action as a deliberate choice to not provide his banking information (Yeon & Brown, 2011, p. 237). In the next line she inquires as to how it is possible for her mother to send the money without him first sending his banking information. By saying it this way, she insinuates that her mother’s objective is to pay Alps if only she had the information. It should be pointed out that no other signals are provided that suggest her mother shares the same sentiment in Interaction 4. In fact, her mother’s message in line 20 conveys a quite different nuance, as previously discussed. In order to align their views, Wu Wu positions herself as an insider who has knowledge of how her mother normally handles payments. In doing this, Wu Wu

explains that not only has her mother has “not once” (*tan-han-pen-to*) delayed paying her employees since she opened her beer house 10 years ago, but she is also reported to be very generous towards them. Evidence of this is that she apparently always rounds their wage payments up. Wu Wu also mentions that when an employee fails to turn up for work, her mother insists they come to the bar to collect their paycheck as a way of “making them apologize face to face” (*nay elkwul poko sakwa-ha-ko*) and to “make them feel guilty” (*coychaykkam-i-lato kaci-la-nun*) for the transgression. Wu Wu seems to allude that this is why her mother keeps requesting a phone call from Alpa as she wishes to meet with him in person. It is noteworthy that in explaining her mother’s true intention, Wu Wu did not comment on the face-aggravating behavior exhibited by her mother to Alpa and focused instead only on Alpa’s *mwukaynyemhan* ‘lit. lacking of common thought’ behavior.

#### 6.1.5 Interaction five

Wu Wu describes how Alpa stopped communicating with her mother after Interaction 4, but re-emerged after a long silence and sent “a string of text messages as below” (*mwuncaka yelekay opnita alaychlemyo*) to her mother (Interaction 5). Her narrations indicate that she interpreted Alpa’s messages in Interaction 5 as the most provocative and offensive of all the Interactions. She makes specific reference to Alpa’s behavior towards his superior as well as his choice of particular language use (see below).

Interaction 5 contains three separate screen shots of communications that took place over a period of three days based on the time stamps found on the messages between Wu Wu’s mother and Alpa. Wu Wu treated these as one long interaction. The following interactions between Wu Wu’s mother and Alpa include some heated discussion

concerning whether the Department of Labor she be involved in the dispute between them.

Given the length of the interaction, only some of the messages are shown here (see

Appendix A for the full transcript).

#### Interaction 5

(Date unknown)

...

(24) A: (---) 알바 어머님이 아프셔서  
alpa eme-nim-i aphu-sye-se  
part-time worker mother-HON-SUB ill-HON-so  
'Alpa's mother is sick, so'

(25) 입원했는데도 [= 입원했는데도] 빵구가 문제인거져  
ipwenha-yss-nuntey-to ppangkwa-ka mwuncey-in-ke-cye  
hospitalized-Past-but-even hole [=absence]-SUB problem-COP  
'(she is) in hospital, but not coming to work is the problem, is it?'

(Date unknown)

(26) M: (14:35) 너가 [네가] 무책임하게 빵구내고  
ne-ka mwu-chayk-im-ha-key ppang-kwu-nay-ko  
you-NOM irresponsible hole-and  
'you (were) absent irresponsibly'

...

(27) 내가 안준다고 했니?  
nay-ka an-cwu-n-ta-ko hayss-ni  
I-Sub not-give-PRE-DEC-and do-PAST-Q  
'did I say I won't pay (you)?'

(28) 문자도 몇번하고 전화도 했것만 [= 했건만]  
mwun-ca-to myech-pen-ha-ko cenhwa-to ha-yss-kes-man  
text-also several-do-and call-also do-PAST-even  
'(I) called and sent you several text messages, but'

(29) 연락도 없었고 신고해라... 연락하지마라  
 yenlak-to eps-ess-ko sinko-hay-la yen-lak-ha-ci-ma-la  
 contact-also not-PAST-and report-do contact-do-not  
 ‘there were no contacts (from you). Report and don’t contact (me)’

...

(30) A: (14:37) 제가 분명히 문자로  
 cey-ka pwun-myeng-hi mwun-ca-lo  
 I (HON)-NOM clearly text-INST  
 ‘I clearly said in (my) text messages’

(31) 어머님 간병해야 댈거같아서 [=될 거 같아서]  
 eme-nim kan-pyeng-hay-ya tay-l-ke-kathase  
 mother-HON look after-must be-FUT-like  
 ‘it looks like (I) have to care for (my) mother’

(32) 일못할거 같다고 한거 같은데  
 il-mos-ha-l-ke kathta-ko hanke kath-untey  
 work-not-do-FUT seem-and do seem-so  
 ‘therefore, (I) won’t be able to work’

...

(Date unknown)

(33) ...친구 말대로 신고해서  
 chinkwu mal-tay-lo sinko-hayse  
 friend word as report-and  
 ‘as (my) friend said by reporting’

(34) 받아낼수 [= 받아낼 수] 밖에 없어여  
 pata-nay-l-swu pakk-ey eps-e-ye  
 get out of-FUT-able except for not exist  
 ‘(I) will have to get (the payment) out of (you)’

(35) M: (14:25)...건방지구나 전화는 왜 안받니?  
 ken-pang-ci-kwu-na cenhwa-nun way an-pat-ni  
 impudent call-TOP why no answer-Q  
 ‘(you are) arrogant. Why (are you) not answering the phone?’

...

- (36) A: (14:39) 솔직히 어머니 아프데 그망 [= 그냥] 간병안하고  
 solcikhi eme-nim aphunte kunyang kanpyeng-an-ha-ko  
 honestly mother-HON ill-so just look after-not-do-and  
 ‘honestly, not taking care of my (my) ill mother’
- (37) ...일한다는건 말이 안돼죠 [= 안되죠]  
 Il-han-ta-nun-ken mal-i an-tway-cyo  
 work-do-MOD word-SUB not-be-POL  
 ‘and work instead does not make sense, does it’
- (38) A: (14:39) 이런거 다말하면 사장님 영업정지 먹어여  
 ilen-ke ta-mal-ha-myen sacang-nim yengep-cengci meke-ye  
 this thing all-word-do-if boss-HON business-stop have  
 ‘if (I) report all of this your business will be suspended’
- (39) A: (14:40) 어머니 아프셔서 못갔는데 [= 못 갔는데]  
 eme-nim-i aphu-sye-se mos-kass-nuntey  
 mother-HON-NOM ill-HON-so not-go-PAST-but  
 ‘(I) couldn’t work because (my) mother is ill’
- (40) ...이러시면 안돼죠 [= 안되죠]  
 ile-si-myen an-tway-cyo  
 this-Hon-like not-be-POL  
 ‘(you) shouldn’t (say) it like that, should you’
- (41) M: (14:40) 영업정지머어도 [= 영업 정지 먹어도] 괜찮아요  
 yengep-cengci meke-to kwayn-chan-a-yo  
 business stop eat-even fine-POL  
 ‘(it is) okay to have (my) business suspended’
- ...
- (42) 나에게 전화를 하던지...신고하세요  
 na-eykey cenhwa-lul hatenci sinkoha-sey-yo  
 I-Dat call-ACC do or report-HON-POL  
 ‘call (me) or report’
- (43) A: (14:41) 네  
 ney  
 okay  
 ‘okay’

(44) A: (14:43) 블로그에다가 올릴게여 ^^  
 pul-lo-ku-eytaka ol-lil-keyye  
 blog-LOC post-FUT-POL ((smiley face))  
 “(I) will post (it) on the blog ((smiley face)).”

(45) A: (14:47) 술집 이름이 뭐였죠 [= 뭐였죠]  
 swulcip ilum-i mwe-yess-cyo  
 bar name-NOM What-PAST-POL  
 “what is the name of (your) bar?”

...

(46) A: (14:58) 불편하게 신고 이런거 말고  
 pwul-phyen-ha-key sinko ilenke mal-ko  
 inconveniently report this thing AUX-and  
 ‘don’t do inconvenient thing like reporting’

(47) 그냥 계좌로 보내세요  
 kunyang kyeycwa-lo po-nay-sey-yo  
 just account-to send-HON-POL  
 ‘just send (the payment) to (my) bank account’

...

(48) M: (14:59) 전화해라  
 cenhwa-hay-la  
 call  
 ‘call (me)’

Interaction 5 certainly contains a higher level of face threat than the previous interactions. Overall, their discussion regarding whether to involve the Department of Labor in their dispute clearly exacerbates and intensifies the situation. As well, Interaction 5 shows that this is a manifestation of something deeper; Alpa and Wu Wu’s mother took offense to each other’s inability to reflect (or empathize) with each other’s position. It is clear that what Alpa wants from Wu Wu’s mother is sympathy and understanding regarding his mother’s health and his commitment to her as well as to ultimately be paid for the work he did. Meanwhile, Wu Wu’s mother expects Alpa to feel remorse for his

actions (i.e., not coming to work), to recognize her status and to offer her an apology.

Apparent tension between the two is clearly reflected in their choice of the speech styles. Indeed, the speech styles that they employ are mostly casual and highly confrontational. For instance, Alpa frequently adopted casual speech styles in which the referent honorific *-(u)si-* is hardly used at all with the exception of two occasions (lines 24 and 39). Moreover, just a small number of conventional honorific forms appear – the *-yo* is used in lines 40, 45, 47. The rest represent ambiguous levels of honorific speech styles as found in lines 25, 34, 44 where he uses the ambiguous status of honorific speech *-ye* instead of *-yo*. As well, he again omitted the polite ending *-yo* and finished the sentence with the bare *-untey* (... *il-mos-hal-ke kath-ta-ko hanke kath-untey* ‘(I think) I said that I won’t be able to work’) (line 32). As mentioned in Interaction 4, when *-untey* comes at the end of the sentence, *-yo* may be attached after *-untey* as in *-untey-yo*. Without *-yo*, it is open to being interpreted as *panmal*, which is not a socially normative convention of speech style for Alpa to use with Wu Wu’s mother given the difference in their status and age. Indeed, Wu Wu assigned this meaning in her commentary of the interaction, unlike in the previous cases (see below). Furthermore, some words that Alpa used, such as *pata-nay-ta* ‘squeeze something out of/from somebody’ (34), *cengci mek-ta* ‘to be suspended’ (38), *sinkoha-ta* ‘to report’ (33) have negative connotations and are likely to be perceived as aggressive in this context.

Besides the use of casual speech styles, the underlying meanings of certain linguistic forms can also be evaluated as provocative. For example, Alpa repeatedly conveys that Wu Wu’s mother is at fault through his multiple use of the one-shape ending *-ci* (e.g., ...*ile-si-myen an-tway-c(i)yo* ‘(you) shouldn’t say it like this, should you?’ (line 40



and see Appendix A for more examples). One of the primary functions of *-ci* is similar to a tag-question (e.g., ‘don’t you’, ‘isn’t it’) in English and it is typically used when the speaker is confident in the veracity of what they are saying and as such expects the hearer to agree with them (Yeon & Brown, 2011). In an oral conversation, intonation of the sentence with *-ci* also plays an important role in changing the meaning of the sentence. While a sentence with a rising intonation can be perceived as a question (i.e., inviting the hearer’s confirmation) a falling intonation is more likely to express a statement, and thus more forceful or impolite in certain contexts. In written communications such as in this case, distinctive usage of punctuation (e.g., question mark or period) or an emoticon may help to signal the intended meaning of the form. However, in Interaction 5 Alpa did not deploy any of these devices. Responses provided by Wu Wu’s mother provide clear signals that she has interpreted the highlighted utterances as accusatorial.

The messages between Wu Wu’s mother and Alpa leave no doubt that she disagrees with his criticisms of the actions she has taken. In response to the accusations made regarding un-paid wages and perceived lack of sympathy toward his mother, she counters stating pointedly she did not say she would not pay him (line 27). Furthermore, she holds him accountable for the situation asserting it is him who did not respond to her calls and texts (lines 28-29). In a subsequent conversation, the refusal of Alpa to engage with her on the phone is once again criticized by the mother. In line 35, she describes it as a “*kenpangcin*” (presumptuous) behavior. The term *kenpangcin* appeals to the metaconcept that there is a social protocol for social juniors when they interact with people superior to them (see Lo, 2009). That is, the proper attitude for Alpa is to display respect by obeying the orders of his employer and being available on the phone.

The speech styles she chose also indexes her social position as superior to Alpa. She communicated with him employing a commanding tone of *panmal* (i.e., half speech) throughout the conversations, with the exception of one interaction in lines 41-42 (see below). For example, she repeatedly used the imperative final ending *-(a/e)la* such as *sinko-hay-la* ‘do report’ (line 29), *yenlak-haci-ma-la* ‘do not contact’, *cenhwa-hay-la* ‘do call’ (line 46) etc. As discussed during the analysis of Interaction 4, *-(a/e)la* is considered as the lowest speech style and is used when commanding a child or adolescent hearer to do something. Although her *panmal* usage is open to interpretation as normal in the situational context given the difference in age and status, she had options available to construct her utterances with a less authoritarian tone. By employing forceful language, she clearly marked that she has taken offense to what she perceived as a lack of respect shown by Alpa.

Interestingly, Wu Wu’s mother used *contaymal* (i.e., honorific speech) with Alpa on one occasion as seen in lines 41 to 42. In this instance, *contaymal* was used to respond to potentially intimidating messages sent by Alpa, soon after the exchange he was referred to as *kenpangcin* ‘presumptuous’ by Wu Wu’s mother. Soon after the reprimand, Alpa sent several threatening texts to Wu Wu’s mother one after another in quick succession (line 36 – 38 and see Appendix A). He begins with a warning message saying that he will contact the Department of Labor if she refuses to pay him (see Appendix A). Next, he counters that it is she who is at fault, and he calls out her indifference and lack of empathy when suggesting he should have come to work rather than attend to his mother sick in bed (lines 36, 37). In line 36, the term *solcikhi* which translates to ‘honestly’ or ‘plainly’ acts to invoke a moral order by signaling that showing care and devotion to one’s mother should

take priority over work, and suggests it is morally wrong to suggest otherwise.

Subsequently, he ratchets up the threatening tone by telling her that he can have her business suspended (closed) if he were to “tell all this” to the Department of Labor (line 38). By sending this kind of intimidating messages, Alpa signals that he has some power and leverage over Wu Wu’s mother, and so there is no need for him to obey her orders. In response, Wu Wu’s mother ‘politely’ instructed him to contact the department as it is “okay to be suspended” and asked him to stop texting her, but to call. As shown in lines 41 to 42, she communicated with Alpa in a very polite manner shown in her use of the referent honorific *-(u)si-* (...*sinkoha-se-yo* ‘please report’) and the polite ending *-yo* (...*kwayn-chan-a-yo* ‘(it is) okay’). However, the honorific elements are not being employed for politeness; rather, they are deployed sarcastically as devices to undermine Alpa’s position (see Brown, 2013). The feeling that Wu Wu’s mother is being sarcastic and offensive is confirmed by the reaction of Alpa in line 44. He replied that he will also post the incident on the blog and finished his utterance with a smiley face (^~^) that depicts happiness. It is important to note that this is the only emoticon to appear in Interaction 5. The happiness expressed by the smiley face juxtaposes Alpa’s true feelings of frustration, which is revealed through the multiple messages he sent to Wu Wu’s mother afterwards (see Appendix A). Indeed, the smiley face in this context is used as a device to potentially provoke Wu Wu’s mother’s anger still further by meeting sarcasm with sarcasm.

In Wu Wu’s accompanying commentary, she reveals that Alpa’s messages in Interaction 5 made her “burst into a fit of rage” (*wulhwathong-na-yo*). Not only does she highlight the fact that Alpa stopped communicating with her mother before sending Interaction 5, but she further extracts certain expressions from the text messages Alpa sent

and assigned particular significance to them as signifying *mwu-kay-nyem-han* ‘lit. lacking of common thought’. The following phrases are those that Wu Wu extracted from Alpa’s messages.

(Extracted from Wu Wu’s commentary)

일번거롭게      하지말고      계좌로      돈      보내세요  
 il-pen-ke-lop-key    ha-ci-mal-ko    kyey-cwa-lo    ton    po-nay-sey-yo  
 job cumbersome    do-not-and    bank account-to money    send-HON-POL  
 ‘(let’s) not make the issue cubmersome and please send the payment to  
 (my) bank account’

엄마를      간병해야하는데      어떻게      나가요  
 emma-lul      kan-pyeng-hay-ya-ha-nuntey    ettehkey    naka-yo  
 mommy-ACC    take care-must-but      how      go out-POL  
 ‘how (can I) go for work since (I) have to take care of (my) mommy’

간병      안하고      알바      나가는건      말도      안되죠  
 kanpyeng    anha-ko    alpa      naka-nun-ken    mal-to    antoy-cyo  
 taking care not and    part time work    go out      word-even not-POL  
 ‘it’s ridiculous that I don’t take care of (my mother) and go to work, isn’t  
 it?’

사장님은      간병보다      빵구가      더      중요한가보죠  
 sacang-nim-un    kanpyeng-pota    ppangkwa-ka    te    cwungyo-han-ka-po-cyo  
 boss-HON      taking care-than hole-NOM    more important-POL  
 ‘being absence from work is more important than taking care (of my  
 mother) to (you) boss, isn’t it?’

Beneath these phrases, Wu Wu countered with the argument that her mother has never said she would not pay him. In her commentary, Wu Wu clearly took offense to Alpa’s questioning of her mother’s integrity. However, her ability to hold him accountable for his action appears to be constrained by her arm’s length relationship with Alpa. She expressed frustration that she feels there is little she can do to help her mother, and concern about potential damage caused by future part time employees who may behave like Alpa.

Despite the offensiveness of Alpa's actions, Wu Wu continued to affirm that paying him is "right thing to do" (*tangyenhi cweya-*). She explained that the issue for her is not his absence from work, per se, but rather his attitude towards her mother when handling the situation. In describing his attitude, she pointedly asserts he shows no remorse for his wrongdoing, and fails to offer any apology. Instead, he "uncourteously (*yeyuyepsi*) makes *otha* (typing errors), uses *cwulimmal* (abbreviated speech), and borrows friend's words (*chinkwuka kulenuntey*) (concerning reporting the business to the Department of Labor) when interacting with (my mother) who is an *elun* (adult) and an *koyongcwu* (employer)".

This commentary is particularly interesting on three accounts: (1) commenting on Alpa's typing errors as well as his language use, unlike in the previous interactions; (2) remarking on Alpa's lack of dedication to his commitments; and, (3) making reference to her mother's age/rank social status in explaining the offensiveness of Alpa's behaviour. First, Wu Wu interprets Alpa's typing errors as offensive. She views them as explicit representations of his lacksidical, uncaring attitude towards her mother. As was discussed in Chapter 3, demeanor (e.g., sitting/standing position, eye gaze, prompting compliance etc.) of social juniors is metapragmatically recognized as a form of politeness in Korean. Similarly, in an online environment where there is a lack of physical presence, other features such as emoticons, punctuation, typing errors, etc. that I observe in this data can play an important role in multimodal perception of (im)politeness.

Second, Wu Wu evaluates Alpa's usage of language something she had not done previously. More specifically, Alpa's use of the bare *-untey* ending (32) is interpreted as *cwulimmal* (abbreviated speech); in contrast, to the other ambiguous form *-se* (Interaction 3) and the same *-untey* form (Interaction 4) drew no comment in previous interactions. The

variation in how Wu Wu agentively assigns social meanings to these ambiguous pragmatic forms during the course of interactions is in parallel with findings from the Appason case and his evaluation of Emeni's use of *-ko* ending (see Chapter 5). Indeed, Wu Wu's interpretation is certainly mediated by changes in the context. In the case of *-ko* in the Appason case the position of the form (i.e., position between other text messages or position at the end of text messages) within the interaction appears to be significant to the evaluation of offensiveness of the form. In this case, regardless of the position (all three forms come between other text messages) all are weighed differently. At the micro level, the use of emoticons and punctuations seems to mediate the interpretations of the ambiguous utterances. In Interaction 3 and 4, the crying face emoticon (ㅠㅠ) after *-se* ending and the elipsis (...) after *-untey* ending respectively are observed. Meanwhile, in Interaction 5 the bare *-untey* comes solely at the end of utterance, which appears to make the form more salient. Taken together (i.e., across the interactions as a whole), Alpa's messages in Interaction 5 represent a direct challenge to Wu Wu's mother's integrity, and call into question her propriety in dealing with employee wages. The expressions Wu Wu selects for discussion and critique, including the specific point regarding her mother's willingness to pay Alpa, demonstrates how Wu Wu has become more sensitive to language that challenges her mother's morality.

Additionally, it is unclear why Wu Wu classified the bare *-untey* ending as *cwulimmal* 'abbreviated speech' instead of *panmal* 'intimate speech'. However, it appears that there is a discursive dispute concerning the honorific level of *cwulimmal*. Some meta-comments on Internet forums suggest that some users consider *cwulimmal* as being *panmal* speech. For instance, a user found on Naver *Cisikin* 'intellectual' mentioned that his or her

use of an abbreviated Internet language ○ ○ (means *nay/ung* honorific/non-honorific ‘yes’) offended a person during online gaming session as the person took it as *panmal* use<sup>9</sup> despite that it was used only for convenience. The difference between the bare *-untey* use and the abbreviated yes form, however, is that the former is not a shortened word while the latter is considered to be so on the Internet. Perhaps describing *-untey* as *cwulimmal* is not to be literally defined as a shortened word. It may be used as a figure of speech to mean the utterance is short, which is a commonly used expression when scolding a person for speaking *panmal* when they should not. A post found on Naver Café (a forum provided by the ISP Naver), titled *mal ccalpun aytul manhneyyo* ‘there are many kids whose speech is short’, provides some interesting contemporary examples. The creator of the Café described *panmal* usage by a teenager when they asked for a straw (*ppaltay* ‘straw’ instead of *ppaltay cwuseyyo* ‘please give (me) a straw’) as the utterance is *ccalpun* ‘short’<sup>10</sup>. Wu Wu’s evaluation of *-untey* without *-yo* as *cwulimmal* may be construed as expressing a similar sentiment to this.

Third, Wu Wu also appears to take offence to Alpa’s inability to take an ownership of his actions. Expressions of Alpa such as *chinkwuka taysin...* ‘(my) friend (will report you) on behalf of (me)’ (Appendix A) and *chinkwu maltaylo...* ‘as (my) friend said’ (line 33) were taken to mean he is hiding behind a situation he created and positioning himself as an innocent party so as to avoid admitting his misconduct. She interprets Alpa’s lack of empathy and sense of responsibility as “a behavior that does not possess common sense”

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<sup>9</sup>[https://kin.naver.com/qna/detail.nhn?d1id=11&dirId=110201&docId=298492051&qb=7KSE7J6E66eQIOusuO2Z1A==&enc=utf8&section=kin&rank=1&search\\_sort=0&spq=0&pid=T8YT9lpVuFKssb7B2hGsssstid449155&sid=o/58jUZgQONjyj0zT4YaFw%3D%3D](https://kin.naver.com/qna/detail.nhn?d1id=11&dirId=110201&docId=298492051&qb=7KSE7J6E66eQIOusuO2Z1A==&enc=utf8&section=kin&rank=1&search_sort=0&spq=0&pid=T8YT9lpVuFKssb7B2hGsssstid449155&sid=o/58jUZgQONjyj0zT4YaFw%3D%3D)

<sup>10</sup> <https://cafe.naver.com/starkakao/211255>

(*celehkey mwu-kaynyem-sik-ulo*).

Finally, while assigning significance to the perceived offensive behaviors of Alpa, Wu Wu explicitly references her mother as an *elun* (adult) and a *koyongcwu* (employer) while, on the other hand, she describes Alpa as an “*ay*” ‘kid’. As mentioned in Section 6.1 of this chapter, *ay* is a commonly used address term when referring to (young) adults. Depending on the context, the term can express affection, as well as recognition of relative age or immaturity. Alpa is not a child, and is clearly of an age necessary to work in a bar. Therefore, referring him as *ay* should not be taken literally. Moreover, given the situation, it is certainly not used to express affection, but rather to connote immaturity. Indeed, by positioning him as *ay* Wu Wu not only undermines his position in society and the veracity of his demands, but also contextualizes the offensiveness in terms of being a gross affront to a person (her mother) who occupies a higher position on the social totem. What Wu Wu seems to imply is the appropriate way to interact with a person who has a station similar to that of her mother (age/rank superior) is to display proper respect through showing *conkyeng* (i.e., lifting up her mother higher than himself), in this case, apologizing first and accepting fault, being careful in his typed communications, and taking sole responsibility for his actions. Moreover, in her commentary (i.e., at the classificatory politeness<sub>1</sub> level), while referencing her mother’s social status Wu Wu defines Alpa’s (offensive) behaviors as “*mwusikhan*” ‘lit. lacking knowledge’. In doing so, she further disparages him as an uneducated person which appeals to the metaconcept that an adult who does not know how to uphold social rule by showing respect towards his/her superior has poor upbringing. Furthermore, while describing Alpa as *mwusikhan* ‘lit. lacking knowledge’ Wu Wu refers to him using the demonstrative *i* ‘this’ in *i mwusikhan ay* ‘this uneducated child’. The use of *i*



*mwusikhan ay* not only constructs Alpa as immature and socially inferior, but also situates Wu Wu in a position of epistemic authority from which she has direct access to his educational background (see Oh, 2007).

To summarize, Wu Wu's commentary shows that her capacity to hold Alpa accountable for his perceived impoliteness in Interaction 5 is constrained due to the nature of her relationship with him. However, it is clear that she agentively assigns impolite meanings to his typing errors, his use of ambiguous pragmatic forms open to interpretation as non-honorific *cwulimmal*, and what she defines as his inability to take ownership of his actions. Wu Wu's agency to evaluate Alpa's behavior in this way is mediated through her position as an insider who possesses better knowledge of how her mother handles employee wages and her approach to business generally. Although she laments how little she can do, she agentively chose to post certain elements of the dispute and makes those public on a forum where she may have hoped Alpa would find them.

## 6.2 Comments

Unlike the comments on Appason's blog where each commenter aligns themselves with Appason's evaluations of Emeni, I observe a variety of views expressed in the comments posted by readers of Wu Wu's thread on Thok Thok. In this section, these evaluations are explored in detail to investigate the ways in which the commenters exercise agency in assigning social action to Wu Wu, Wu Wu's mother and Alpa, and also in defining their relationship with one another. Furthermore, analysis of the comments will help shed light on how discursivity in the evaluation of impoliteness is closely linked to ways identities are constructed in the anonymous CMC environment where the community

communicates.

Directly below Wu Wu's descriptions of the interactions between her mother and Alpa, two hundred and thirty four readers have left comments and observations of the episode. Before discussing the comments in detail, I will first define in some detail three key features that separate Appason's blog on Naver, from the environment in which this case occurs. First, the usernames of the commenters are observed to be mostly random words or collections of Korean consonants or vowels such as ㅇㅇ 'ng ng', ㅎㅎ 'h h', ㅇㄷ 'ng l', ㄸㄸ 'wu wu' etc. Interestingly, there appears to be no originality in creating usernames as the same consonant or vowel combinations appear on a number of (on the surface) distinctive comments. Second, 'like' and 'dislike' buttons are available to upvote or downvote each comment. The first three comments on the top of the page on the comment section are those that have received the highest number of 'likes' and they are regarded as *payphul* (베플: *payphul* is a shorten word of 배(스트) (리)플 which is Korean rendition of the English words best reply). Third, the gender of the commenters is veiled and unlike the usernames on Appason's post (e.g., *emma to salam* 'mother is also a human') few of the usernames found in this case provide any clues as to commenter identity, including gender.

On closer analysis, it becomes apparent that there is a link between discursivity in the evaluations of impoliteness and the ways in which the commenters construct identities of Wu Wu's mother and Alpa. Those commenters who tend to disagree with the Wu Wu's evaluations of Alpa's behavior construct the mother as being a cruel employer. Some expressions include statement such as *choyce sikupey cwumyense...* 'paying the lowest wage and...', *alpalul noyeylo samulyenun simil* 'the mentality to treat Alpa as a slave',

*celamyen emeni kwaynchanhusinya...alpapi cwukeyssta hayssultheynytheyyo* ‘if I were (you) (I) would have asked about (his) mother’s health and have told (him) I will pay (him)’, etc. Meanwhile, those who agree with Wu Wu tend to position Alpa as immature by using words and expressions such as *elinkey* ‘young thing’, *koting kathuntey* ‘like a high school (kid)’, *chel epsnun* ‘childlike’, etc. It is also noteworthy that several comments were neither supporters or detractors of Wu Wu’s assessment of Alpa’s behavior, and instead maintained neutrality on the matter.

The majority of commenters provided opinions supporting Wu Wu and her evaluations of Alpa’s utterances. However, the criticisms from those who do not agree with her position were most blunt and pointed in their criticisms, in sharp contrast to the content of comments found in the Appason case (Chapter 5). Indeed, analysis found those commenters who disagreed with Wu Wu’s assessment of Alpa’s actions positioned themselves as individuals who care about working conditions and empathize with the working class, while simultaneously framing Wu Wu’s mother as a greedy, heartless employer. The excerpt that follows comes from a comment left by the username 하 ‘Ha’, who demands that Wu Wu’s mother raise her worker’s wages before complaining about Alpa’s attitude. S/he goes on to criticize the mother’s use of *panmal* to Alpa as detailed below.

Username Ha:

최저시급에	사장님마인드처럼	부러먹을라면 [sic.]
choyce-sikup-ey	sacang-nim maintu-che-lem	pwu-lye-mek-ul-la-myen
the lowest wages at	boss-HON mind-like	work (a person) hard if
‘if (you) work (your employee) hard at a lowest wage like (your) mind’		

제발 좀 시급 더 올리고 말씀하세요  
 ceypal com sikip te olliko mal-ssum-ha-sey-yo  
 please little wages more raise and speak-HON-do-HON-POL  
 ‘please talk after raising the wages’

그만두는 이유가 거짓이던 뭐던...  
 kuman-twu-nun iyu-ka kecis-i-ten mwe-ten  
 stop-MOD reason-NOM false-COP whatever  
 ‘whether the reason is falsified or not’

왜 태도를 운운합니까?...  
 way thayto-lul wunwun-ha-pni-kka  
 why attitude-ACC criticize-do-HON-Q  
 ‘why (are you) criticizing (his) attitude?’

그리고 문자 전화받아라 반말하시던데 [sic.]  
 kuliko mwunca cenhwa-pat-ala panmal-ha-si-tentey  
 and text message phone receive half speech-do-HON-but  
 ‘and (you) used *panmal* (when requesting) to receive texts and calls’

나이가 어린던 많던 존중은 기본 아닌가요? [sic.]  
 nai-ka eli-ten manh-ten concwung-un kipun anin-ka-yo  
 age-NOM young many respect-TOP basic not-Q-POL  
 ‘whether (he) is young or old isn’t (showing) respect standard?’

In contrast to the analysis made of the reader comments in the Appason case wherein reader agency is constrained and open criticism of Appason is absent in the exchange, Ha holds Wu Wu’s mother and Wu Wu accountable for maintaining difficult working conditions and for working Alpa hard for low wages while at the same time complaining about his attitude. S/he also assigns significance to the mother’s use of *panmal* as a particular kind of social action; namely, the act of showing disrespect. Ha appeals to a moral order that regardless of one’s age showing respect is good practice.

This view is directly responded to in the comments by 알바생인가 ‘Alpasaynginka’ (is it Alpasayng?). Alpasaynginka takes aim at Ha suggesting “*nantokcung*” (dyslexia), which implies that Ha must suffer from a reading disorder and

this is the cause of his or her ill-considered defense of Alpa. As well, the username Alpasaynginka is a further shot at Ha, suggesting the comment s/he left must have actually been written by Alpa; the obvious implication being no ‘right thinking’ person could support Alpa’s behavior. Alpasaynginka furthermore criticizes Ha for portraying Alpa as a victim. S/he counters that no one has “pleaded” (*saceng saceng*) or demanded Alpa work for the wages he agreed to, and notes that it is Alpa who ultimately made the decision to accept the terms of employment.

As with Alpasaynginka, there are many more readers who support Wu Wu and her mother than those who disagree with them. The commenters tend to align with Wu Wu’s evaluation of Alpa’s behavior by co-constructing him as an immature person. They also echoed Wu Wu’s analysis that Alpa is lacking common sense, such as in this comment from 흙 ‘Hum’. Hum’s comment was upvoted as one of the three *peyphul* ‘lit. best reply’, which had received one hundred and eighty three ‘likes’ and two ‘dislikes’ at the time of collection.

Username Hum:

진짜 개념없네요...            아이고 철없다 [sic.]  
 cincca kay-nyem-eps-ney-yo    aiko    che-leps-ta  
 really common thought not-POL oh my childish-DEC  
 ‘(he) really doesn’t have a common sense. oh my, (he is) childish’

어린게    못된것만            배웠네요... [sic.]  
 elin-key    mos-toyn-kes-man    pay-wess-ney-yo  
 young thing-Nom bad thing only    learn-POL  
 ‘little one has learned only bad things’

Meanwhile, some other supporters chose to show alignment with Wu Wu by criticizing Alpa’s lack of spelling competence, which is construed as a poor upbringing, such as is

found in the following excerpt from 나 ‘Na’.

Username Na:

맞춤법           ㅅㅅ           못배운티           풀풀           풍기네... [sic.]  
mac-chwum-pep ((swearing)) mos-pay-wun-thi phwulphwul phwungkiney  
spelling system ((swearing)) not learn hint ((sound of smell)) smell  
‘(his) spelling competence ((swearing)) gives off the smell of lack of  
education’

Although there is clear division between those who are for or against Wu Wu and her mother’s position concerning Alpa some commenters took the role of neutral evaluators, providing criticism of both parties. For instance, ㅇ ‘Ng’ in the following excerpt criticizes Wu Wu’s mother for being slow in her responses to Alpa. However, s/he agrees with Wu Wu’s evaluation of Alpa’s actions, suggesting deficiencies in his personality are the reason he is still a part time worker.

Username Ng:

그러니까   알바죠...  
ku-le-ni-kka alpa-cyo  
so           alpa isn’t it-POL  
‘that’s why (he) is part time worker, isn’t he?’

문자   시간을   보면...  
mwunca sikan-ul pomyen  
text   time-ACC see if   you(HON) too  
‘when looking at the time stamps on (your) text messages’

넌도...           시간   질질   끄는거   있네요...  
sikan           sikan cilcil kkununke iss-ney-yo  
esteemed too   time   drag   pull           exist-POL  
‘(you) also drag time (to reply)’

Also noteworthy, Wu Wu posted a response to those who have criticized her and her mother on the same thread a day after she put up her main post. She argued that the commenters who do not agree with her have not understood the content of her argument about Alpa. She pointed out that the real issue is not whether or not they have to pay Alpa since he is going to be paid. Rather, the issues at play revolve around “resentment” (*pwunno*) towards Alpa due to “non-appearance without notice” and a “lack of respect”. She further expressed that she has taken offense to those who suggested that her mother treated Alpa like a “slave” (*noyey chwikup*) and questioned how they can support the “kid” who avoided her mother’s request for a phone call when the intention was to talk to him on the phone and facilitate payment of his wages.

To summarize, analysis of the reader comments suggests that the anonymous environment plays a role in reader agency and willingness to openly criticize not only Alpa, but also Wu Wu and her mother. This is in contrast to findings from the Appason case (Chapter 5). Indeed, comments by the twelve readers of Appason’s blog suggest that their capacity to evaluate his assessment of Emeni’s offensiveness is constrained by the close-knit blog environment wherein Appason is able to exert greater control over the discourse between himself and Emeni as well as the rest of the members of his blog. Conversely, the complete anonymity promoted by Nate, the parent site of Thok Thok, provides an environment in which all participants are on equal footings with no obvious markers of social status. In other words, agency exercised by Wu Wu and the readers of her post is emboldened by the liberty encouraged through anonymity. Their capacity to perform social actions with one another is much freer, as they are not bound by asymmetrical power relations based on age, status, degree of closeness in this particular CMC environment.

Furthermore, analysis of reader responses has shown that identity can be co-constructed in an environment where there is a lack of physical presence, and this plays a key role in creating the discursivity in evaluations of impoliteness (cf. Haugh, 2010; Upadhyay, 2010).

### 6.3 Discussion

This chapter explored the ways in which recipient agency manifests in the evaluation of impoliteness in an anonymous online community; a CMC environment quite different from the one found in the Appason case (Chapter 5).

The analysis of current data strongly supports the notion that recipients are not merely background figures but instead exercise agency in the evaluation of impoliteness, and in turn create variation in impoliteness phenomena. Parallel to findings in Chapter 5, the analysis of Wu Wu commentary about the incident between her mother and Alpa shows that variation in impoliteness phenomena is an outcome of the inconsistent ways that Wu Wu interprets utterances of ambiguous honorific status. For example, while in Interaction 5 she interprets an ambiguous utterance as an abbreviated speech style *cwulimmal* and thus as offensive, she tacitly accepts similar utterances in Interaction 3 and 4. These different interpretations are, as shown in the analysis above, consequential to agency exercised by Wu Wu in interpreting whether a sentence is of an appropriate level of honorifics or not. This finding once again confirms that the dynamic social meanings of honorifics are co-constructed by the speaker and the recipient. In other words, just as the speaker chooses to use particular honorific forms for variety pragmatic effects, so too can the recipient by exercising agency assign different meanings to those forms, thus creating various pragmatic phenomena including impoliteness.



Continuing with the role of recipient agency, it is clear that Wu Wu employs agency in the ways that she assigns meaning and relevance to Alpa's actions. What is apparent from the data is that Wu Wu is not directly involved in the altercation with Alpa. However, she positions herself as an insider with specific knowledge by intimating certain background information. Through this, she legitimizes her actions by constructing the identity of Alpa as an *ay* 'child' juxtaposing this to her mother who is an *elun* 'adult' and a *koyongcwu* 'employer' with abundant experience. She then selected certain aspects of Alpa's actions as significant and relevant (cf. Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001) to her evaluations of his offensiveness as *mwukaynyemhan ay* 'a child with lacking common thought' and *mwusikhan ay* 'a child with lacking knowledge'. This is construed as constituting a negatively valenced form of social action, namely failing to display an appropriate respect towards her mother who is an age/rank superior. Meanwhile, Wu Wu chooses not to comment on her mother's behavior that may be open to being interpreted as impolite. Indeed, Wu Wu's mother also engaged in face-aggravating behavior in Interaction 4 and 5 though Wu Wu did not mention it at all.

Similar to Haugh's (2010) observation, the current analysis further revealed that the discursivity of evaluations of impoliteness arises from how identities are discursively co-constructed in these evaluations (p. 7). In the comment sections, the commenters who align with Wu Wu's evaluation of Alpa's behavior also constructed Alpa's identity as young and immature (*elin, chel epsnun*) and echoed her analysis that Alpa is *mwukaynyemhan* 'lit. lacking common thought' and *mospaywun* 'uneducated'. In contrast, others who disagreed with Wu Wu constructed her mother as an employer who is greedy and cruel. This shows that the variability and argumentativity apparent across commenters' evaluations of Wu

Wu's commentary on the episode reflect not only underlying differences in perceptions of moral norms of appropriateness and ideas of respect, etc. in the text message interactions between Wu Wu's mother and Alpa, but also differences in the identities (i.e., generation gap) of the mother and Alpa discursively constructed through the discourse (Haugh, 2010).

Furthermore, and in line with findings presented in Chapter 5, the analysis in the current chapter also showed that recipient agency is mediated by the particular characteristic of CMC environment. In the current data, the anonymity of the platform and the liberty promoted by the lack of physical presence or known identity plays a role in influencing recipient agency in the evaluation of impoliteness. The reader responses indicate that when there is less of power asymmetry due to the lack of physical presence one's capacity to perform social actions to one another is less constrained by the existing social norms. Furthermore, the way the commenters constructed and expressed their opinions about the altercations between Wu Wu's mother and Alpa based on Wu Wu's narration of it suggests that anonymity promotes individuality or lack of solidarity among the readers and Wu Wu. This creates an environment whereby an individual who participates in the activity can exert greater power to communicate disagreement and argue directly against a person who expresses different views, evaluations, and stances. Moreover, it also appears to affect language choices as the commenters were found to use blatant face-aggravating speech.

The current study has again demonstrated that variation in the evaluation of impoliteness is consequential to the emergence of socio-culturally mediated agency. This provides important insight into the role of the agency of the recipient as a catalyst to variation in impoliteness, supporting Mitchell and Haugh's (2015) argument that "agency

exercised by recipients (and indeed speakers) offers an additional theoretically motivated source for the inevitable variability in the evaluations of impoliteness across participants” (p. 231).

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

#### 7.1 Summary of the study

This study makes an important contribution to current research on impoliteness. Seeking to “move beyond the ongoing norms versus intentions debate in impoliteness research” (Mitchell & Haugh, 2015, p. 231), the aim of the study is to test the claims of Mitchell and Haugh (2015) concerning the ways in which recipient agency affects the evaluation of impoliteness. To satisfy this aim, the integrative pragmatics model is adopted as the framework for the study. Since the integrative pragmatics model does not explicitly define agency, the study incorporates agency as developed through activity theory in order to overcome this weakness. Through this approach, agency is viewed as a unit interlinked with its surrounding environment. In other words, agency as viewed in this study is broadly seen as an individual’s capacity to act that is invariably motivated and constrained by the ‘options’ an individual has in a given sociocultural interactive moment (Mitchell & Haugh, 2015). By incorporating agency into the integrative pragmatics model, not only is this study able to bridge both first order politeness (i.e., emic perspective) and second order politeness (i.e., etic perspective) perspectives, it also provides a platform in which to reach second order conclusions regarding the role of recipient agency in the evaluation of impoliteness.

To meet the objectives of the study, two data sets are extracted from naturally occurring materials that appeared on a personal blog and a discussion board featured on two South Korea based internet portal services. As discussed, the strength of using

authentic CMC data is that it provides rich resources that are free of any interventions that might influence the outcomes of the study. Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter 4, although Mitchell and Haugh (2015) offer useful meta-pragmatic insights it is possible that the outcomes of their study may have been influenced by the experimental designs of the study (i.e., retrospect interviews with the participants). Using CMC data allows the researcher to avoid this weakness in study design. This is especially important when the goal is to investigate the effects of recipient agency on variations in impoliteness phenomena as mediated and constrained by specific interactive contexts without any interventions that might influence the outcomes of the study. Furthermore, it is important to note that this study shows that it is not necessary to design a study experimentally as there is abundant metapragmatic comments available in CMC, and this is especially true in Korean CMC contexts. In summary, by using authentic CMC data this study provides insights into the role of recipient agency as a catalyst to variation in impoliteness phenomena.

## 7.2 Discussion of findings

The study finds that recipients are active and exercise individual socially-mediated agency in enriching interactional meanings arising from interactional practices creating variation in impoliteness phenomena. What Appason and Wu Wu's reflections show is that recipient agency that creates variation in impoliteness phenomena is not enacted in the same way throughout an on-going interaction. Rather, variation occurs due to the ways that the subjects assign social meanings to the other social actor's actions. Moreover, the research finds that variations in impoliteness phenomena are reinforced by the inconsistent ways that the social actors themselves interpret the particular utterances of ambiguous

honorific status. However, this does not, of course, mean that social actors can assign social meanings in a random manner. Rather, that the social meanings that recipients assign to a particular pragmatic form are constrained to those that are recognizable. In other words, the use of *panmal* by Emeni and Alpa is counted as impolite because it is recognizable to Appason and Wu Wu as impolite. It is recognizable to these actors as impolite because this evaluation is reflexively recognized by at least some readers of the Appason's blog and Wu Wu's Thok Thok post (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 184).

The study also explores how the capacity to assign social meaning and hold others accountable for their behavior is constrained and empowered by the ways in which the social actors are positioned. In Appason's case, his role as blog author facilitates his capacity to comment relatively openly on Emeni's behavior at the classificatory politeness<sub>1</sub> level. Meanwhile his agency is more restricted at the metapragmatic politeness<sub>1</sub> level (i.e., within the interaction with Emeni) due to the particular interactions he has with Emeni (i.e., sales-related interactions). In the context of Wu Wu, her position as an insider with specific knowledge provides a platform to criticize Alpa's behavior openly in a public space at the classificatory politeness<sub>1</sub> level. However, at the metapragmatic politeness<sub>1</sub> level her capacity to hold Alpa accountable for his actions is constrained by her indirect involvement with the altercation with Alpa.

Likewise, comments found in the data further support the finding that agency is a mediated action. The difference between the comments from the users of Appason's blog and the readers of Wu Wu's post show that when there is less power asymmetry, due to the anonymity promoted by the particular CMC platform, one feels more liberty to criticize other's actions freely. Specifically, the commenters of Appason's blog feel solidarity and

empathy with him; however, their agency to openly criticize Appason is constrained by the lack of anonymity promoted by the website tracking technologies available to the blog owner. This is a sharp contrast to the comments provided by the readers of Wu Wu's post where we see that the perceived freedom facilitated by anonymity in the forum equates to less constraint on their capacity to disapprove of Wu Wu's evaluation of Alpa's behavior.

### 7.3 Limitations of the study

Notwithstanding these contributions, the study is limited by the small sample of text data available. As well, it was only possible to analyze Appason and Wu Wu's reflections with no recourse to the story of Emeni, Wu Wu's mother nor Alpa. Future studies in this vein could examine agency as exercised by both the speaker and the recipient(s) in order to gain a deeper (and fuller) understanding of the role that agency plays in promoting variation in the evaluation of impoliteness. A further limitation of the data is that there is lack of sequential turns between the main posters and the commenters as well as between the commenters. This presents a bit of a drawback as agency is something that manifests overtime. Thus, it was not possible to observe how Appason, Wu Wu and the commenters exert agency in assigning social actions to each other and hold each other accountable for making a particular comment. In addition, not be able to determine with absolute certainty the true gender, age, social status of the users on these forums also presents some disadvantages in terms of observing the role these qualities may (or may not) play in influencing agency in the evaluation of impoliteness.

#### 7.4 Implications for future research

These shortcomings notwithstanding, the findings of the study have a number of implications for future research. Consistent with Mitchell and Haugh (2015), variability in the evaluation of impoliteness cannot be explained solely by ‘social norms’ or ‘intentions’ as defined in current theories of impoliteness. Rather, agency is exercised by recipient(s) (as well as speakers) and this is a fundamental resource in theorizing impoliteness.

Therefore, it is important to account for agency of participants as key variables when studying (im)politeness phenomena.

This study also demonstrates that the “rule of interaction” (Herring, 2007) affects recipient agency and the ways recipients exert agency in assigning social meaning and in holding other’s accountable for their behavior. As well, the level of anonymity promoted in CMC environments plays an important role in how recipients position themselves vis-à-vis in their evaluations of impoliteness. In addition, CMC cues are also an important factor modulating agency in online interactions. A potential vein for future research is to focus on a wider variety of contexts in order to fully explore the roles played by CMC environments.

Moreover, this study also calls into question certain constructs, such as “recipient”. The data in Chapter 6 shows that the category “recipient” in CMC environments is somewhat different from face-to-face interactions where there is a clearer demarcation between the speaker and the recipient (or hearer). In CMC environments there might be multiple recipients, and recipients can in turn become “producers”. Indeed, despite the fact that Wu Wu is not the direct recipient of the text messages from Alpa, she behaves as one who feels entitled to interpret Alpa’s verbal and non-verbal behaviors. Moreover, she acted not only as “recipient” but became a “producer” posting the incident between her mother



and Alpa on the Internet and actively sharing her reflections on Alpa's actions. Future studies should carefully consider the dynamic nature of "recipient" and "producer" in CMC contexts.

It is also important to note the implications for future research on honorifics. As mentioned, recent studies of honorifics have focused on the role of speaker choice and manipulation in the use of honorifics forms. In contrast, this study focuses on the agency of recipient and shows that recipients also play an active role in the dynamic social meanings arising from the use of honorifics. For example, the research reveals that near identical utterances of non-honorific *panmal* speech are interpreted differently over the course of an interaction. As detailed in the study, just as a speaker may choose to switch between two or more honorific levels for a desired pragmatic effect, the recipient(s) by exercising agency may interpret a particular speech style as of appropriate level of honorifics or not. This means that the research on honorifics should look at the role of the recipient in co-constructing the contextualized meanings of honorifics and other related linguistic forms in language in order to fully understand the dynamic social meanings found in the use of honorifics.

Finally, CMC is rich ground for teaching and learning the pragmatics of Korean honorific speech styles. The data analysis shows that social meanings of honorifics are not fixed. Despite that honorific forms express various meanings; their dynamic nature is not typically found in classroom instruction. The representation of *contaymal* and *panmal* speech styles are often taught as two opposite ends of the spectrum. The former has fixed social meanings such as "respect" and "distance" while the latter expresses "rudeness" and "intimacy". But these results and other studies demonstrate that this is a rather simplified

exemplification, and that this can create confusion when L2 learners of Korean face real-world situations. This is not to suggest that *contaymal* and *panmal* do not have the pre-defined norms of use. However, L2 learners of Korean should be aware of the fact that the level of politeness inferred by a particular use of *contaymal* and *panmal* can be negotiated and co-constructed at any particular juncture of the conversation. In this regard, CMC is an excellent resource that provides authentic teaching and learning materials. It is clear that CMC can become a platform for L2 learners to progress from “language learners” to “language users” as it allows learners to move beyond what they acquire through classroom interactions and onto real-world situations (Kim & Brown, 2014, p. 279)

APPENDIX A

INTERACTION 5

Interaction 5

(date unknown)

A: (14:26) 노동부이 [= 노동부에] 전화 [= 전화]  
notongpwu-ey cenhwa  
Department of Labor-DAT call

어제 해봤는데 [= 해 봤는데]  
ecey hay-pwa-ss-nuntey  
yesterday do-see-PAST-and

받을수 잇다네여 [= 잇다네요]  
pat-ul-swu iss-ta-ney-ye  
receive-able be-DEC-POL

‘(I) called the Department of Labor yesterday and (they said) (I) can get paid’

A: (--:--)  
친구들이 뽁세계 신고하면 [sic.]  
chinkwu-tul-i ppak-sey-key sinko-ha-myen  
friend-PL-NOM hard-DAT report-if

영업 정지 만들고 시급  
yengep cengci mantul-ko sikup  
business stop make and part time wage

못받은거 받을수 잇다고도 [= 잇다고도] 하네요  
mos-pat-un-ke pat-ul-swu iss-ta-ko-to haney-yo  
not receive receive able be and also do-POL

“(my) friends told (me) that (I) will be able to get (my) wage if (I) make (your) business suspended by reporting (you to the Department of Labor)”

제친구가 자기 일하믄 [= 일하는]  
cey-chinkwu-ka caki il-ha-nun  
I(HON) friend-NOM oneself work do-MOD

곳에서 시급달라고 하니깐 [sic.]  
kos-eyse sikum-tal-la-ko ha-ni-kkan  
place-LOC wage-give do-so-MOD

사장님이랑 똑같이 거기 [sic.]  
sacang-nim-i-lang ttok-kath-i keki  
boss-HON-NOM and same there

사장님이 시급늘 안주셔서 [sic.]  
sacang-nim-i sikup-nul an-cwu-sye-se  
boss-HON-NOM wage not give-HON-so

친구가 신고 뻥세계 넣겠다고 [= 넣겠다고]  
chinkwu-ka sinko ppak-sey-key neh-keyss-ta-ko  
friend-NOM report hard put in and

노동부쪽에 전화해서  
notongpwu-ccok-ey cenhwa-hay-se  
department of labor-LOC call-do-and

영업정지 시키고 시급  
yengep-ceng-ci si-khi-ko sikup  
business stop make wage

받았던애인데 [= 받았던 애인데] 사장님이  
pat-assten-ay-in-tey sacang-nim-i  
receive child-MOD boss-HON-NOM

안주시고 신고 해라 이러시면  
an-cwu-si-ko sinko hay-la i-le-si-myen  
not give and report do then

친구가 대신 노동부에 신고  
chinkwu-ka taysin notongpwu-ey sinko  
friend-NOM instead department of labor-LOC report

해준다고 했으니깐 [= 했으니깐] 시급  
hay-cwun-ta-ko hayss-u-ni-kkan sikup  
do-MOD and do-PAST so wage

못받으면 어쩔수 없습니다 [sic.]  
mos-pat-u-myen e-ccel-swu eps-sup-ni-ta  
not receive if help able not be-DEF

‘my friend asked for (his/her) wage from (his/her) boss and the boss

didn't pay (him/her) like (you) do, so my friend (told the boss) (he/she) called and reported (the boss) to the Department of Labor and got (his/her) paycheck. If (you) boss tell (me) to report then (my) friend will report (you) (to the Department of Labor) on behalf of (me). If (I) don't get (my) paycheck (I) can't help but (reporting you)'

M: (14:48) 목요일에 연락주고 화요일에 연락해서  
 mokyoil-ey yenlak-cwu-ko hwayoil-ey yenlakha-y-se  
 thursday-DAT contact-give-and tuesday-DAT contact-and

너가 [= 네가] 말없이 빵구낸 시간에  
 ne-ka mal-epsi ppang-kwu-nay-n sikan-ey  
 you-NOM word-not hole-MOD time-DAT

내가 얼마나 고생한줄 아니?  
 nay-ka elmana kosayngha-n-cwu-l a-ni  
 I-NOM how much suffer-since-ACC know-Q

사과도 없이 너  
 sakwa-to epsi ne  
 apologies-too not you

돈받는것만 [= 돈 받는것만] 중요하니?  
 ton-pat-nun-kes-man cwungyoha-ni  
 money-receive-MOD-thing-only important-Q

신고하거라  
 sinkoha-ke-la  
 report

'(you) contacted (me) on Thursday, then Tuesday. Do you know how difficult it was for me when you were absent without any notification? Do you only care about getting paid while no apologies? Report (to the Department of Labor)'

A: (--:--)  
 그러면 빵구낸게 사장님은  
 kulemyen ppangk-wu-nayn-key sacang-nim-un  
 then hole-MOD-DAT boss-HON-TOP

중요한가보죠  
 cwungyo-han-ka-po-cyo  
 important-MOD-see-don't you-POL

알바                      어머니                      아프셔서  
 alpa                      eme-nim-i                      aphu-sye-se  
 part-time worker    mother-HON-NOM    ill-HON-so

입원했는데도 [= 입원했는데도]    빵구가  
 ipwenha-yss-nuntey-to                      ppangkwa-ka  
 hospitalized-PAST-but-even                      hole- NOM

문제인거져  
 mwuncey-i-n-ke-cye  
 problem-COP-MOD-thing-is it-POL

‘then, you think that missing work is (more) important (to you), don’t you? The mother of (your) part-time worker is hospitalized due to (her) illness, but missing work is problem (for you) isn’t it’

(Date unknown)

M: (14:35)    너가 [네가]    무책임하게                      빵구내고  
 ne-ka                      mwu-chayk-im-ha-key    ppang-kwu-nay-ko  
 you-NOM    irresponsible                      hole-and

통화도                      없이    한것은                      생각안해봤니?  
 thonghwa-to    epsi    han-kes-un    sayngkak-anhay-pwa-ss-ni  
 call-also    no    do-thing-TOP    think-not-see-Past-Q

내가    안준다고                      했니?  
 nay-ka    an-cwu-n-ta-ko                      hayss-ni  
 I-NOM    not-give-PRE-DEC-and    do-PAST-Q

문자도                      몇번하고                      전화도    했것만 [= 했건만]  
 mwun-ca-to    myech-pen-ha-ko    cenhwa-to    ha-yss-kes-man  
 text-also    several-do-and    call-also    do-PAST-even

연락도                      없었고                      신고해라  
 yenlak-to    eps-ess-ko    sinko-hay-la  
 contact-also    not-PAST-and report-do

신고하고    연락하지마라  
 sinko-ha-ko    yen-lak-ha-ci-ma-la  
 report-do-and contact-do-not

노동부	통해서	받도록해라
no-tong-pwu	thong-hay-se	pattolok-hay-la
Department of Labor	through	receive-do

‘haven’t you thought about what you did? You missed work irresponsibly and there was no contact (from you). Have I said (I) won’t pay you? (I) texted and called you several times, but (you) didn’t get back to (me). Report. Report and stop contacting (me). Get the payment through the Department of Labor’

A: (14:37)

제가	분명히	문자로
cey-ka	pwun-myeng-hi	mwun-ca-lo
I (Hon)-NOM	clearly	text-INST

어머님	간병해야	덜거같아서 [=될 거 같아서]
eme-nim	kan-pyeng-hay-ya	tay-l-ke-kathase
mother-HON	look after-must	be-FUT-like

일못할거	같다고	한거	같은데
il-mos-ha-l-ke	kathta-ko	hanke	kath-untay
work-not-do-FUT	seem-and	do	seem-so

빵구를	넌게	아니라
ppangkwi-lul	naynkey	anila
hold [= absence]-ACC	make	not

어머님이	아프시다는데
emenim-i	aphu-si-ta-nuntay
mother-NOM	ill-HON-DEC-so

어떻게	일하러	가여
ettehkey	ilhale	kaye
how	work	go

옆에서	간병을	해야	하는데
yepheyse	kanpyeng-ul	hayya	hanuntay
next-LOC	look after-ACC	do	must

‘I clearly told (you) by text messages that (I) think (I) must take care of (my) mother. (I) wasn’t absent from work. How could (I) go to work since (my) mother is ill and (I) needed to look after (her)’

(Date unknown)

- A: (14:12) 빼고하면 [= 빼고나면] 124000 원 이에여  
ppayko-hamyen 124000 wen-i-ey-ye  
subtract after 124000 won-COP-POL
- 내일 모래까지 입금 안대면 [= 안되면]  
nayil molay-kkaci ipkum an-tay-myen  
tomorrow the day after-until deposit not if
- 친구 말대로 신고해서  
chinkwu mal-tay-lo sinko-hayse  
friend word as report-so
- 받아낼수 [= 받아낼 수] 밖에 없어여  
pata-nay-l-swu pakk-ey eps-e-ye  
get out of-FUT-able except for not exist

‘after the deductions, it is 124000 won. If it is not deposited by the day after tomorrow (I) will have to get it (from you) by reporting (to the Department of Labor) as my friend has advised’

- M: (14:18) 전화해라  
cenhwa-hay-la  
call  
‘call (me)’
- M: (14:25) 전화안받는구나 신고해라  
cenhwa an-pat-nun-kwu-na sinko-hay-la  
phone not-receive report

‘(you) don’t pick up (your) phone. Report (to the Department of Labor)’

- M: (14:26) 아니면 전화를 하던지  
ani-myen cenhwa-lul hatenci  
not if call-ACC do or
- 건방지구나 전화는 왜 안받니?  
ken-pang-ci-kwu-na cenhwa-nun way an-pat-ni  
impudent call-Top why no answer-Q

‘if not then, call. (You are) arrogant. Why (are you) not answering the phone?’



A: (14:38) 사장님에 [= 사장님이] 안주신다면  
 sacang-nim-i an-cwu-sin-ta-myen  
 boss-HON-NOM not give-HON-if

신고 할거에여 [할 거예요]  
 sinko ha-l-ke-ey-ye  
 report do-FUT-POL

노동부이 [= 노동부에] 전화 [= 전화]  
 notongpw-ey cenhwa  
 Department of Labor-DAT call

어제 해봤는데 [= 해 봤는데] 받을수  
 ecey hay-pwass-nuntey pat-ul-swu  
 yesterday do-see-PAST-and receive-able

잇다네여 [= 잇다네요]  
 iss-ta-ney-ye  
 be-POL

‘if you, the boss don’t pay (me) (I) will report (to the Department of Labor). (I) called the Department of Labor yesterday, and (they told me) it is payable’

A: (14:39) 솔직히 어머니 아프데 그망 [= 그냥]  
 solcikhi eme-nim aphuntey kunyang  
 honestly mother-HON ill-so just

간병안하고 내비두고 [= 내머려 두고 ]  
 kan-pyeng-an-ha-ko nay-pi-twu-ko  
 look after-not-do-and leave-and

일한다는건 말이 안돼죠 [= 안되죠]  
 Il-han-ta-nun-ken mal-i an-tway-cyo  
 work-do-MOD word-NOM not-be-POL

‘honestly, it doesn’t make sense to work instead of taking care of my (my) ill mother, does it?’

A: (14:39) 이런거 다말하면 사장님 영업정지 먹어여  
 ilen-ke ta-mal-ha-myen sacang-nim yengep-cengci meke-ye  
 this thing all-word-do-if boss-HON business-stop have-POL

‘if (I) report all of this your business will be suspended’

A: (14:40) 어머니 아프셔서 못갔는데 [= 못 갔는데]  
 eme-nim-i aphu-sye-se mos-kass-nuntey  
 mother-HON-NOM ill-Hon-so not-go-PAST-but

빵구넛다고 [= 빵구 냈다고] 주겠니 [= 주겠니]  
 ppangkwu-nayss-ta-ko cwu-keyss-ni  
 hole-make-DEC-and give-Fut-Q

이러시면 안돼죠 [= 안되죠]  
 ile-si-myen an-tway-cyo  
 this-HON-like not-be-POL

‘I couldn’t go (to work) because (my) mother is ill, but (you say) that (I) can’t pay (you) because (you) missed (the work). (You) shouldn’t (say) it like that, should you’

M: (14:40) 영업정지먹어도 [= 영업 정지 먹어도] 괜찮아요  
 yengep-cengci meke-to kwayn-chan-a-yo  
 business stop eat-even fine-POL

신고하세요  
 sinkoha-sey-yo  
 report-HON-POL

나에게 전화를 하던지  
 na-eykey cenhwa-lul hatenci  
 I-DAT call-ACC do or

문자주지말고 신고하세요  
 mwunca-cwu-ci-mal-ko sinkoha-sey-yo  
 text-give-not-AUX-and report-HON-POL

‘it is okay to have (my) business suspended. Report (to the Department of Labor). Don’t text me; call me or report’

A: (14:41) 네  
 ney  
 okay  
 ‘okay’

A: (14:43) 블로그에다가 올릴게여 ^^  
 pul-lo-ku-eytaka ol-lil-keyye  
 blog-LOC post-FUT-POL ((smiley face))  
 ‘(I) will post (it) on the blog ((smiley face))’

A: (14:47) 술집 이름이 뭐였죠 [= 뭐였죠]  
swulcip ilum-i mwe-yess-cyo  
bar name-NOM What-PAST-POL

호프 폴리스였나 [= 폴리스였나]  
hophu phollisu-yess-na  
hof police-Past-Q

‘what is the name of (your) bar? Is it Hof Police?’

A: (14:48) 블로그에 올린 다음에  
pulloku-ey ollin taumey  
blog-LOC post next

노동부에 신고 해드릴게여  
notongpwu-ey sinko hay-tu-lil-key-ye  
Department of Labor-LOC report do-give-PASS-FUT-POL

술집이름이 뭐였죠?  
swulcip-ilum-i mwe-yess-cyo?  
bar name-NOM what-PAST-Q

신고해도 댄다면서여 [= 된다면서요]  
sinko-hay-to tayn-ta-myen-se-ye  
report do even AUX-

이름 알려주세여  
ilum allyecwuseyye  
name tell (me) please

‘after posting on the blog, (I) will have it reported. What is the name of (your) bar? (You) told (me) (it is) okay to report. Please tell (me) the name please’

A: (14:52) 거기 술집 이름을  
keki swulcip ilum-ul  
there bar name-ACC

알려주야 [= 알려줘야] 신고하죠  
al-lye-cwu-ya sinko-ha-cyo  
tell only of report-do-POL

‘(I) can report only if (you) tell (me) the name of the bar there’

A: (14:58) 불편하게 신고 이런거 말고  
pwul-phyen-ha-key sinko ilenke mal-ko  
inconveniently report this thing AUX-and

그냥 계좌로 보내세요  
kunyang kyeycwa-lo po-nay-sey-yo  
just account-to send-HON-POL

번거로운일 만들기 싫어서  
pen-ke-low-un-il mantulki silhese  
inconvenient-work make not want

신한은행 xxxxxx  
sinhan-unhayng xxxxxx  
'sinhan bank xxxxxx'

여기로 보내주세요  
yekilo po-nay-cwu-sey-yo  
here-to send-give-HON-POL

번거로운일 하기 싫네여  
pen-ke-lo-wn-il haki silhneyye  
inconvenient-work do not want

'(this will cause you) inconvenience, so instead of being reported just send (my pay) to (my) bank account please. (I) don't want to cause hassle, so send the payment to Sinhan bank (xxxxx) here please. (I) don't want trouble'

M: (14:59) 전화해라  
cenhwa-hay-la  
call  
'call (me)'

## APPENDIX B

### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Accusative
AUX	Auxiliary verb
COP	Copula
DAT	Dative
DEF	Deference
FUT	Future
HON	Honorific
INST	Instrumental
LOC	Locative
NOM	Nominative
OBJ	Object
PAST	Past
POL	Polite
POSS	Possessive
TOP	Topic
Q	Interrogative particle

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