

Allocutive imposters in the form of referent honorification

Miok Pak*

Abstract. A special class of honorific constructions in Korean, dubbed as *allocutive imposters* in this paper, has the form of referent honorifics but expresses respect to the addressee. Allocutive imposters have unique properties that distinguish them from the well-known honorific constructions, referent honorifics and addressee honorifics. Furthermore, they are uniquely sales speech register. To provide a theoretical description of their marked pragmatic function of being used mainly in sales discourse, this paper makes two claims: First, the [status] and [formal] features in the cP domain in the left periphery (Portner, Pak and Zanuttini 2019, 2022) can be utilized to encode the markedness of the allocutive imposters since they encode the hierarchical and source social relation between the speaker and addressee. Second, allocutive imposters have a clausal structure with multiple subject positions, and the higher subject position is occupied by a null DP with 2nd person features that require checking by the Addressee in the left periphery. The proposed analysis provides an account for the unique properties of allocutive imposters without invoking any special morpho-syntactic role in syntax and semantics for *-si*, a traditional verbal suffix for subject honorification.

Keywords. allocutive; honorifics; imposters; Korean; multiple subjects

1. Introduction. The literature on honorifics in languages such as Korean and Japanese clearly distinguishes two types of honorific constructions: Referent honorifics and addressee honorifics (Comrie 1976). In the former, a.k.a. ‘propositional honorifics’ (Harada 1976), the referent of the argument(s) such as subjects, direct and indirect objects of the clause, is honorified by the speaker. (1) exemplifies a subject honorific construction in Korean.

- (1) *Subject honorifics*¹
 sensayngnim-**kkeyse** cip-ey o-**si**-ess-ta.
 teacher-NOM.HON home-to come-HON-PST-DECL.PLAIN
 ‘The teacher came to the house.’

In (1), the speaker expresses their respect towards the referent of the subject *teacher* and it is marked by two grammatical elements, the honorific nominative case marker *-kkeyse* and the honorific verbal suffix *-si*, which agrees with the subject for the honorificity.

On the other hand, addressee honorific constructions, a.k.a. ‘performative honorifics’ (Harada 1976) and often dubbed as ‘allocutivity’ in languages like Basque (Ohycabal 1998, Antonov 2015, Haddican 2018, a.o.), express the speaker’s respect and politeness toward the addressee of the utterance. This is illustrated in (2):

* I am grateful for the valuable comments provided by the participants at the LSA 2022 Annual meeting. Miok Pak, The George Washington University (pakm@gwu.edu).

¹ Throughout the paper, the Yale Romanization is used for glossing the data with the following abbreviations: ACC = accusative case marker, DECL = declarative particle, DEFERENTIAL = deferential speech style particle, HON = honorific marker, INTIMATE = intimate speech style particle, NMF = noun modifying form, NOM = nominative case marker, PST = past tense marker, PLAIN = plain speech style particle, and POLITE = polite speech style particle.

- (2) *Addressee honorifics*
 pi-ka o-ass-eyo.
 rain- NOM come-HON-PST-DECL.POLITE
 ‘It rained.’

The speaker’s politeness toward the addressee is expressed by the polite speech style particle *-eyo* which occurs at the end of the sentence. Note that there is no subject honorification in (2) as the subject is an inanimate noun *rain*.

There is another class of honorific constructions that have come into use in relatively recent years. This class belongs to neither the subject honorifics nor the addressee honorifics discussed above. They have the form of subject honorifics but have the function of expressing respect to the addressee. This type of honorific sentences is commonly used by sales clerks when addressing their customers. I refer to this type of honorific constructions ‘allocutive imposters’ throughout this paper. (3) illustrates an example of allocutive imposters.

- (3) *Allocutive imposters*
khephi nao-si-ess-eyo.
 coffee come.out-HON-PST-DECL.POLITE
 ‘(lit.) The coffee came out. (Your coffee is ready.)’

Note that grammatically it is the subject *coffee* that is honorified by the honorific verbal suffix *-si*; however, pragmatically it is the customer who is intended to be honorified by the speaker. What is surprising about (3) is the mismatch between the inanimate noun subject, i.e., *coffee*, and the honorific predicate. From the view point of the traditional grammar, they are expected to be deviant; thus, they have received much criticism from the very outset of their emergence in late 1990s. However, they have continued to be used in sales discourse robustly.

While there are a number of questions concerning allocutive imposters, the most obvious one being aforementioned mismatch, in this paper I focus on the pragmatic function of these constructions. To formalize the discourse context for sales speech register, I follow Portner, Pak and Zanuttini (2019, 2022) in arguing that there is a functional projection *cP* in the left periphery of the clausal structure. The *c* head has the relational features such as [Status] and [Formal] and takes the speaker and addressee as its arguments in the specifier positions. I further argue that allocutive imposter constructions have multiple subject positions, one of which is occupied by a null DP with 2nd person features. The person features are checked by the Addressee argument in the left periphery by being bound and agreeing with it. We will see that this claim is supported by number of properties that allocutive imposters share with multiple subject constructions. Along these lines, we can maintain the traditional morpho-syntactic function of the honorific verbal suffix *-si* as the marker of subject honorification as opposed to addressee honorific or allocutive marker (cf. Lee 2010, Kim 2019, Park 2019).

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 discusses in detail the unique properties of allocutive imposters. In section 3, I present a new account of allocutive imposter constructions, and how it can account for their properties discussed in section 2. Lastly, section 4 evaluates the current proposal in comparison to previous analyses and the similarities it bears with multiple subject constructions.

2. Details of allocutive imposters. Allocutive imposters are also known as *department honorifics*, as they have emerged in the midst of competitive rivalries between department stores for customer satisfaction, which placed a strong demand and high standard for sales clerks. Allocutive imposters came about in such endeavors on the part of service providers. By using the

honorific suffix *-si* regardless of the grammatical subject, service providers have attempted to show their politeness toward the patrons in order to guarantee happy and satisfied customers. Because of this pragmatic background, allocutive imposters have thrived to have their place in sales discourse despite the criticism of being ungrammatical.

Allocutive imposters differ from traditional honorific constructions in number of ways. Let us discuss these properties in detail in what follows.

2.1. SUBJECT AND VERB MISMATCH IN HONORIFICITY. As introduced in the previous section, the most noteworthy characteristic of allocutive imposters is the mismatch of the honorificity. The traditional subject honorific constructions are characterized by the subject and the verb agreeing in the honorific value. Compare (4a) with (4b). An honorific subject noun phrase with the honorific nominative case particle triggers the honorific suffix *-si* on the verb in (4a) whereas a non-honorific subject does not, as shown in (4b). If the values of the honorificity do not match, as shown in (4c), the sentence is ungrammatical.

- (4) a. *sensayngnim-kkeyse* *cip-ey* *o-si-ess-ta*.
 teacher-NOM.HON home-to come-HON-PST-DECL.PLAIN
 ‘The teacher came to the house.’
- b. *chinkwu-ka* *cip-ey* *o-ass-ta*.
 friend-NOM home-to come-PST-DECL.PLAIN
 ‘A friend came to my house.’
- c. * *pi-ka* *o-si-ess-ta*.
 rain-NOM come-HON-PST-DECL.PLAIN
 ‘It rained. (Intended meaning)’

What is interesting about allocutive imposters is that they exhibit a mismatch of the honorific values between the subject and the predicate. Subjects are non-honorific inanimate objects/abstract nouns such as *kakyek* ‘price’ in (5a), *khephi* ‘coffee’ in (5b) and *kanungseng* ‘possibility’ in (5c). However, the predicates occur with the honorific suffix *-si*. As mentioned above, despite this mismatch, they are robustly used and are considered acceptable.

- (5) a. *kakyek-i* 13,000 *wen-i-si-eyo*.
 price-NOM 13,000 won-COP-HON-DECL.POLITE
 ‘The price is 13,000 won.’
- b. *khephi-nun* 2000 *wen-i-si-pnita*.
 coffee-TOP 2000 won-COP-HON-DECL.DEFERENTIAL
 ‘The coffee is 2000 won.’
- c. *lagi-nun* *an mac-ul* *kanungseng-i* *khu-si-eyo*.
 Large- TOP Neg fit-NMF possibility-NOM big-HON-DECL.POLITE
 ‘There is a big change that large will not fit.’

2.2. NO HONORIFIC NOMINATIVE CASE MARKER. As illustrated above in (4a), subject honorific constructions are characterized by the co-occurrence of the honorific nominative case particle *-kkeyse* and the honorific verbal suffix *-si*, showing agreement in the honorificity value. However, as noted by Kim (2019), allocutive imposters do not allow *-kkeyse*. This is illustrated in (6a,b).

- (6) a. * *khephi-kkeyse* *nao-si-ess-eyo*.
 coffee NOM.HON come.out-HON-PST-DECL.POLITE
 ‘The coffee came out. (Your coffee is ready.)’ (Intended meaning)

- b. * **kakyek-kkeyse** 13,000 wen-i-**si**-eyo.
 price- **NOM.HON** 13,000 won-COP-**HON**-DECL.POLITE
 ‘The price is 13,000 won.’ (Intended meaning)
- c. **khephi-ka** 2000 wen-i-**si**-pnita.
 coffee-**NOM** 2000 won-COP-**HON**-DECL.DEFERENTIAL
 ‘The coffee is 2000 won.’

Although the honorific verbal suffix *-si* is present, which in its usual grammatical function, marks honorific meaning of the subject, the honorific nominative case marker is not allowed with the subject. Only a regular nominative case marker *-ka* can be used, as illustrated in (6c).

2.3. RESTRICTIONS ON THE SPEECH STYLE PARTICLES. Another interesting property of allocutive imposters is that they require honorific speech style particles, such as *polite* and *deferential* particles. As already introduced, speech style particles express addressee honorifics. More explicitly, they indicate the relation between the speaker and addressee. The literature recognizes at least six speech styles, *deferential*, *semiformal*, *familiar*, *polite*, *intimate*, and *plain* (Martin 1992, Sohn 1999, Pak 2008, Brown 2011, among others).² The speech style particles express not only the hierarchical relation between the discourse participants but also (in)formality of conversational contexts.³ *Deferential speech style*, for example, indicates that the speaker is lower than (or equal to) the addressee and that the conversational context is formal. Among the six speech styles, only the deferential and polite speech styles are honorific particles, hence they are usually employed by lower (or equal) speakers to address social superiors to express politeness and respect. The table below shows a classification of honorific and non-honorific speech styles, setting aside the semiformal and familiar speech styles, which are not very commonly used in Modern Korean.

	Honorific	Non-honorific
SSPs	Deferential Polite	Intimate Plain

Table 1. Speech style particles

The canonical subject honorific constructions can occur with any of the speech style in Table 1, depending on who the addressee is. (7) shows the honorific subjects, *professor*, *grandmother*, and *teacher*, occurring with honorific deferential speech style particle (7a) and polite particle (7b), as well as the non-honorific particles, i.e., intimate particle (7c) and plain particle (7d).

- (7) a. a student talking to a professor
 Kim kyoswunim-**kkeyse** kyosil-ey o-**si**-ess-**supnita**.
 Kim professor-**NOM.HON** classroom-to come-**HON**-PST-DECL.**DEFERENTIAL**
 ‘Prof. Kim came to the classroom.’

² In this paper, we do not discuss the speech styles in depth but only note that among them, only deferential and polite speech style are honorific particles, used by a lower speaker to a higher addressee in some hierarchical scale, such as age, rank, etc. See Pak 2008, for example, for an extensive discussion of speech style particles in Korean.

³ The speech style particles are actually portmanteau morphemes; in addition to expressing the hierarchical relation between the discourse participants and the conversational context, they also mark clause type. In this paper, we do not discuss their clause typing role and focus only on the allocutive function.

- b. a daughter talking to mother
emma, halmeni-**kkeyse** o-**si-ess-eyo**.
mom, grandmother-NOM.HON come-HON-PST-DECL.POLITE
'Mom, grandmother came.'
- c. a friend talking to a friend
sensayngnim-**kkeyse** wuli cip-ey o-**si-ess-e**.
teacher-NOM.HON our home-to come-HON-PST-DECL.INTIMATE
'The teacher came to my house.'
- d. an older sibling talking to a younger sibling
halmeni-**kkeyse** o-**si-ess-ta**.
grandmother-NOM.HON come-HON-PST-DECL.PLAIN
'Grandmother came.'

The intimate particle (a.k.a. half-talk particle) is usually used between friends and family members. It conveys closeness (e.g., solidarity) but no honorific meaning. The plain style is commonly used between friends and also by a higher speaker to a lower addressee. Hence, it too is a non-honorific particle.

Allocutive imposters, however, can only occur with the honorific speech style particles, i.e., deferential and polite (8a, b). The intimate and plain styles are not allowed, as shown in (8c, d).⁴

- (8) a. khephi-ka nao-**si-ess-supnita**.
coffee- NOM come.out-HON-PST-DECL.DEFERENTIAL
'The coffee came out. (Your coffee is ready.)'
- b. khephi-ka nao-**si-ess-eyo**.
coffee-NOM come.out-HON-PST-DECL.POLITE
- c. * khephi-ka nao-**si-ess-e**.
coffee- NOM come.out-HON-PST-DECL.INTIMATE
- d. * khephi-ka nao-**si-ess-ta**.
coffee- NOM come.out-HON-PST-DECL.PLAIN

As already mentioned, the pragmatic function of allocutive imposters is to express politeness to the addressee. Hence, it makes sense that only deferential and polite speech styles are allowed, as the other two, intimate and plain, are not honorific speech style particles.

2.4. NO MULTIPLE HONORIFIC VERBAL SUFFIX *-si*. The occurrence of *-si* suffix in allocutive imposters poses a dilemma, regardless of whether we take it to be a marker of subject honorificity or the addressee honorificity. In canonical and traditional subject honorific constructions, *-si* is a subject honorific marker and occurs in concord with the honorific subject. We saw above that this view of *-si* suffix in allocutive imposters is problematic as it creates a mismatch with the subject. On the other hand, if we take the *-si* suffix to be a marker of addressee honorificity, then we are forced to assume that there are two honorific suffixes, one that occurs with honorific subjects and the other that indicates honorific addressees. If this is the case, one may expect a sentence like (9) to be grammatical, where these two homophonous suffixes, the subject

⁴ Kim (2019) observes that formal speech style particle does not freely occur as the polite speech style particle in allocutive imposters. It is not clear if this is accurate as one can witness formal speech style also being used commonly in sales discourse, though it may be true that they do not occur as frequently as the polite speech style particle.

honorific *-si* and the addressee honorific *-si*, co-occur. Contrary to one’s expectation, however, this sentence is not allowed, as noted by Park (2019).

- (9) * apeci, halmeni-kkeyse o-si-si-ess-eyo. (Park 2019, (15))
 father, grandmother-NOM.HON come-HON-HON-PST-DECL.POLITE
 ‘Father, grandmother came. (Intended meaning)’

The fact that (9) is ungrammatical suggests that the assumption that there are two homophonous honorific verbal suffix *-si* is not correct.

2.5. NO SUPPLETIVE HONORIFIC PREDICATES. There are a number of suppletive honorific predicates in Korean. When such suppletive forms are available, they are used instead of the regular conjugated honorific form with the suffix *-si*.

- (10) a. halmeni-kkeyse cemsim-ul **tusi-ess-ta.** (suppletive verb)
 grandmother-NOM.HON lunch- ACC **eat.HON-PST-DECL.PLAIN**
 ‘The grandmother ate lunch.’
 b. * halmeni-kkeyse cemsim-ul **mek-usi-ess-ta.** (plain verb + *-si*)
 grandmother-NOM.HON lunch- ACC **eat-HON-PST-DECL.PLAIN**
 c. halmeni-kkeyse **tolakasi-ess-ta.** (suppletive verb)
 grandmother-NOM.HON **pass.HON -PAST-DEC.PLAIN**
 ‘The grandmother passed.’
 d. * halmeni-kkeyse **cwuk-usi-ess-ta.** (plain verb + *-si*)
 grandmother-NOM.HON **pass-HON-PAST-DEC.PLAIN**
 e. halmeni-kkeyse tayk-ey **kyeysi-ess-ta.** (suppletive verb)
 grandmother-NOM.HON home.HON-at **exist.HON-PST-DECL.PLAIN**
 ‘The grandmother was at home.’
 f. * halmeni-kkeyse tayk-ey **iss-usi-ess-ta.** (plain verb + *-si*)
 grandmother-NOM.HON home.HON-at **exist-HON-PST-DECL.PLAIN**

Note that the honorific suppletive forms *tusi-* (eat), *tolakasi-* (die) and *kyeysi-* (exist) cannot be replaced with the plain form of the verbs with the honorific suffix *-si*, as shown in (10b,d,f).

Allocutive imposters, however, does not allow honorific suppletive verbs:⁵

- (11) a. hwacangsil-i 5 chung-ey **iss-usi-eyo.** (plain verb + *-si*)
 restroom-NOM 5 floor-LOC **exist-HON-DEC.POLITE**
 ‘The restrooms are on the 5th floor.’

⁵ The verb *iss-* has possessive meaning as well:

- (i) a. halmeni-kkeyse ton-i manhi **iss-usi-ta.**
 grandmother-NOM.HON money-NOM much exist-HON-PAST-DEC.PLAIN
 ‘My grandmother has lots of money.’
 b. apeci-kkeyse chwimi-ka yele kay **iss-usi-ta.**
 father-NOM.HON hobby-NOM many counter exist-HON-PAST-DEC.PLAIN
 ‘My father has many hobbies.’

In (i) the honorific form of the possessive verb *iss-* is the verb stem *iss-* followed by the honorific suffix *-si*. This contrasts with the honorific form of the existential *iss-*, which is not *iss + si* but the suppletive *kyeysi-*, as exemplified in (10e, f). Interestingly, however, in allocutive imposter sentences, *iss + si* is used with the existential meaning, not the possessive meaning. We will see an account for this meaning change later.

- b. * hwacangsil-i 5 chung-ey **kyeysi-eyo.** (suppletive verb)
 restroom-NOM 5 floor-LOC **exist.HON-DECL.POLITE**
 ‘The restrooms are on the 5th floor.’ (Intended meaning)

2.6. USED MOSTLY IN SALES DISCOURSE. Allocutive imposters emerged in sales discourse out of politeness strategies promoted by department stores in late 1990s. As such, sales clerks are the primary users of allocutive imposters. Let us reconsider the allocutive imposter sentences discussed above in (5), repeated here in (13).

- (13) a. kakyek-i 13,000 wen-i-**si**-eyo.
 price-NOM 13,000 won-COP-**HON**-DECL.POLITE
 ‘The price is 13,000 won.’
 b. khephi-nun 2000 wen-i-**si**-pnita.
 coffee-TOP 2000 won-COP-**HON**-DECL.DEFERENTIAL
 ‘The coffee is 2000 won.’
 c. lagi-nun an mac-ul kanungseng-i khu-**si**-eyo.
 Large- TOP Neg fit-NMF possibility-NOM big-**HON**-DECL.POLITE
 ‘There is a big change that large will not fit.’

These sentences are acceptable as utterances spoken by sales clerks to address customers. (13c), for example, can be said by a service provider in the context of making suggestions to a customer about the right size for clothes. Another allocutive imposter construction (11a) discussed above can be an answer to a customer asking for a direction to the restrooms. However, outside the sales discourse, they are awkward and unacceptable. That is, (11a) is illicit as an answer to the question ‘Where is the restroom?’ outside the sales discourse context. This is shown in a conversation between a social superior A and an inferior B at work:

- (14) A: i kenmwul-ey-nun hwacangsil-i eti iss-eyo?
 this building-at-TOP restroom-NOM where exist-DECL.POLITE
 ‘Where is the restroom in this building?’
 B: hwacangsil-i 5 chung-ey iss-(***usi**)-supnita.
 restroom-NOM 5 floor-LOC exist-**HON**-DECL.DEFERENTIAL
 ‘The restrooms are on the 5th floor.’

As shown in (14), B uses the deferential speech style to address A, clearly marking the inferior status of the speaker. In this situation, however, the subject of the sentence *restroom* does not trigger the honorific suffix *-si* on the verb, in contrast to the allocutive imposter sentence (11a). Hence, it is clear from the discussion so far that allocutive imposters are restricted to a very specific conversational context, i.e., sales discourse.⁶ In the next section, I present a theoretical account of allocutive imposters.

⁶ There are some allocutive imposter like expressions that have become widely acceptable outside the sales discourse. They are mostly greeting expressions, such as ‘Have a good weekend, and ‘Have a good night’:

- (i) coh-un cwumal toy-**si**-eyo.
 good- NMF weekend become-**HON**-DECL.POLITE
 ‘Have a good weekend. (LIT. Good weekend becomes.)’

Much of these expressions are viewed ungrammatical and are discouraged from using. Another example of ungrammatical sentence that is commonly used by many speakers is (ii):

- (ii) nay-ka a-**si**-nun pwun
 I-NOM know-**HON**-NMF person.HON
 ‘the person that I know’

3. Proposal. My proposal on allocutive imposters is grounded on the fact that they are marked discourse. To encode the markedness, I build on Portner, Pak and Zanuttini (2019, 2022) in proposing that the hierarchical relation between speaker and addressee and the source of their social relation are encoded in the functional head *c* with [Status] and [Formal] features in the left periphery. I further argue that this marked sales discourse has multiple subject clausal structure. The higher subject position is occupied by a null DP with the 2nd person features and is bound by the Addressee argument in the left periphery. As an argument of the *c* head in the specifier position, Addressee shares the values of [Status] and [Formal] in *c* and these features are transferred to the null subject DP in the Spec, TP via binding. Having the right features for honorification, it is this null subject DP that agrees with *-si*.

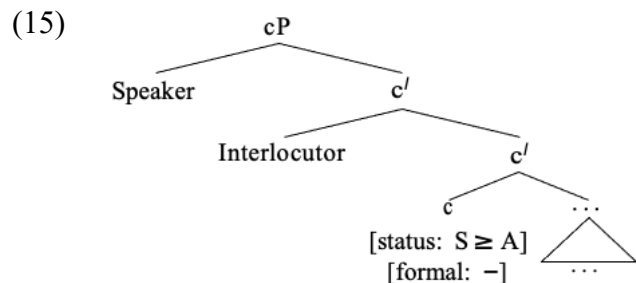
Before I present this new account of allocutive imposters, let us discuss Portner et al. (2019) and (2022) in more depth in what follows.

3.1. RELATIONAL ANALYSIS: PORTNER, PAK, AND ZANUTTINI 2019, 2022. With the revival of performative hypothesis (Katz and Postal 1964, Ross 1970), a number of recent works in the literature proposed a syntactic representation of the speaker/addressee (Speas and Tenny 2003, Sigurðsson 2004, Bianchi 2006, Miyagawa 2012, Zanuttini, Pak and Portner 2012, Haegeman 2014, Haegeman and Hill 2013, Hill 2014, Alok and Baker 2018, 2019, Portner, Pak, and Zanuttini 2019, Alok 2021 among others). Portner et al. (2019), in particular, argues that there is a functional phrase *cP* in the left periphery and that its head *c* encodes the relation between the speaker and addressee, with the discourse participants as its arguments. The empirical domain of their study is utterance-oriented markers of politeness such as allocutive markers in Basque, politeness marker *-mas* in Japanese, and speech style particles in Korean. To provide a syntactic and semantic account of these politeness markers, focusing on the speech style particles in Korean in particular, they claim that not only the discourse participants are represented in the *cP* domain, but also the hierarchical relation between them is syntactically encoded in the *c* head via [Status] feature. The values of [Status] such as <, >, =, ≤, and/or ≥, are responsible for the relational semantics of the hierarchical relation between the speaker and addressee. The tree in (15) represents the proposed clausal structure:^{7,8}

Note that it is the first person that is honorified as *nay*, the speaker, is the experiencer of the verb ‘know’ and this is not grammatically acceptable. However, by using the honorific suffix *-si*, the intention of the speaker is to honorify the person of their acquaintance and this is in alignment with the honorific noun form of *pwun* ‘person’ (which contrast with the regular form *salam*). Despite constant criticism of the ungrammaticality of (i) and (ii), they are constantly used these days. It may very well be that speakers are not aware of the ungrammaticality so much and simply add the honorific suffix *-si* whenever possible to convey respect to either the addressee or the referent. These are, however, outside the concern of this paper and I limit the discussion to allocutive imposters used in sales discourse only.

⁷ Portner et al. (2019) uses ‘Interlocutor’ instead of ‘Addressee’.

⁸ Whereas Portner et al. (2019) does not discuss the [formal] feature on *c*, mainly focusing on the role of [status] in encoding the hierarchical relation between the speaker and addressee, an in-depth account of the role and meaning of [formal] is provide in Portner et al. (2022).



Extending this approach, Portner et al. (2022) provides a semantic/pragmatic account of [formal] feature, another dimension of meaning expressed by the speech style particles in Korean. While [Status] describes the hierarchical relation between the speaker and addressee along some social scales (e.g., age, ranks at an organization, etc.), [formal] can be roughly thought of as having to do with the nature of the conversational context, the core of which is provided by the source of the social relation between the speaker and addressee. [status] and [formal] are closely related. For example, two friends who happen to work together as a boss and an assistant can employ two different speech styles, an intimate speech style when they are outside the work sphere and deferential or polite speech style when they are at work. As friends with same age, they are hierarchically equal, but as co-workers, one is hierarchically higher than the other. The conversational situations determine which relation is salient and as a result, prescribes which speech style to be adopted. In this way of thinking, [formal] can be thought of as the *source social relation* R that determines the hierarchical relation, to be more accurate, the value of [Status] in this system.

While [status] and [formal] are closely related, they can be distinct and be independent of each other as well. This can be illustrated by how a child addresses the parents. A child can use intimate speech style to the parents at home but when they are at a public place with other people around, s/he is likely to adopt a polite or deferential speech style to address their parents, especially if the conversational situation is formal, where displaying a proper etiquette might be considered important. Hence, while the hierarchical relation stays the same, parents higher than a child, in different conversational situations different speech style can be adopted.

According to Portner et al., in syntax [formal] feature has the values either + or -, + expressing a formal relation and - value indicating an informal relation between the speaker and addressee. The semantics of these features provide a specific type of relations, formal being *WORK* relation and informal being *FRIEND* relation, for example. To illustrate with the two friends above, when they are outside the work space, the source social relation R is that of friends. Then the hierarchy between the two is equal. This can be represented as [status: S=A], [formal: - (friends)].⁹ On the other hand, when they are at work, the source social relation R between the two is Boss-Subordinate relation at Work. The hierarchical relation is higher or lower depending on who the speaker is between the two. This can be represented as [status: S<A], [formal: + (Boss-Subordinate)] when the speaker is the assistant. The table below is from Portner et al. (2022), showing the examples of formal and informal social relations in Korea (Table 1 in Portner et al. 2022, p. 15):

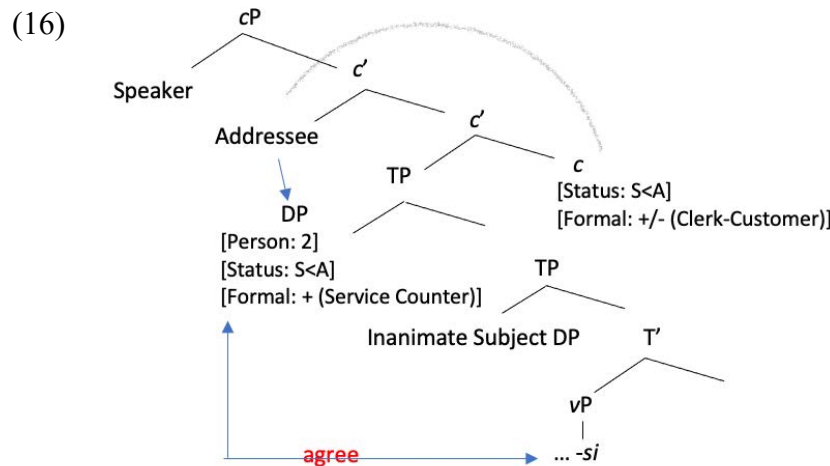
⁹ For convenience, the social relation ‘friends’ is specified as part of the [Formal] feature description in c but as discussed in the main text, in principle the specific type of social relations would be provided by semantics. The tree below also shows the social relation as part of the [Formal] feature specification for convenience.

Formal Relations	Informal Relations
Boss-Subordinate	Family
Older male friends	Friends
Parents-in-law – Son-in-law	Peers of a similar age in school/office
Soldiers of different ranks	Strangers of similar age
Students in different grade	

Table 2. Examples of formal and informal social relations in Korean

In sum, the [status] and [formal] determine which speech style can be used in a given situation. The deferential speech style *-(su)pnita*, for example, is a speech style that is normally used by a social inferior to a social superior in a formal context. Hence, it is appropriate when the functional head *c* has something like the following specifications; [Status: S < A] and [Formal: +] with the *source social relation R* being one of the formal relations listed in the Table 2. Let us now see how we can extend this analysis to account for allocutive imposters in Korean.

3.2. PROPOSAL FOR ALLOCUTIVE IMPOSTERS. Following Portner et al. (2019, 2022), I propose that the functional head *c* has [status] and [formal], encoding the values for the hierarchical relations and the source of the social relation between the speaker and addressee. I further argue that the semantics and pragmatics provide ‘Clerk-Customer’ relation for the source social relation *R* for allocutive imposters and that this belongs to both formal and informal relations. In addition, I claim that this particular social relation is associated with multiple subject clausal structure in which the higher subject position is occupied by a null DP with the 2nd person features and this DP is bound by the Addressee argument in the left periphery. The inanimate subject DP is in the lower subject position. The addressee argument has the same features as those on the *c* head via Spec-head relation. Hence, when it binds the null subject, the same features are shared by the null subject DP. This is illustrated in (16).



Specifically, the tree for allocutive imposters in (16) provides the following information:

- *c* has the features [Status: S < A] and [Formal: +] or [Formal: -].
- The semantics and pragmatics provide the source social relation *R* ‘Clerk-Customer’ for the speaker and addressee relation.
- There are multiple Specs of TP and the higher Spec is occupied by a null DP with [Person:2] feature.

- The Addressee argument in the left periphery shares the features in the *c* head and it binds and agrees with the higher null subject DP. This results in the person features on the null subject DP being checked and the subject DP sharing the features of *c*.
- This higher subject DP agrees with the honorific verbal suffix *-si* in the verbal domain.
- The features on the *c* head spells out as the appropriate speech style particles (à la Portner et al. 2019). Specifically, [Status: S<A], [Formal: -] spells out as the polite speech style particle *-eyo* and [Status: S<A], [Formal: +] as the deferential speech style particle *-(su)pnita*.

Regarding the last bullet point, the traditional view is that the polite style is informal while the deferential style is formal (Martin 1992, Suh 1996, Sohn 1999, Pak 2008, and Brown 2011, among others). Sales clerks can choose to use the polite speech style to appeal to solidarity to establish a more close and intimate relationship with the customer while not sounding rude or impolite by using the honorific verbal suffix *-si*. Adopting the formal deferential particle would allow sales clerks to express more courtesy, more formality, and also politeness by using *-si*. Hence, different politeness strategies would lead to employing different speech styles.

Let us now see how the proposed account can explain the unique properties of allocutive imposters discussed in section 2. First, the mismatch between the inanimate subject and the honorific verbal suffix *-si* is only deceiving; it is the higher null subject DP with [Status: S<A] feature that agrees with *-si*. Hence, there is no real mismatch in allocutive imposter sentences.

Second, the honorific nominative case marker *-kkeyse* cannot occur with the inanimate subject in allocutive imposter constructions because it does not have the [Status: S<A] feature; it is the null subject DP in the higher Spec that has the necessary honorific value (by being bound by the Addressee) to allow the occurrence of *-kkeyse*.

Third, under the current account, speech style particles are the spell outs of the features on *c*. Therefore, only those speech style particles that are compatible with [Status: S<A] and [Formal: +/-], will be allowed in allocutive imposter constructions, i.e., deferential and polite speech style particles.¹⁰ As presented in Table 1, the intimate and plain speech styles are non-honorific speech style particles, and are generally used by a higher or equal speakers. Hence, they are not compatible with the feature combinations of *c* in allocutive imposter constructions.

Fourth, recall that allocutive imposters do not allow multiple honorific suffix *-si*, as illustrated in (9), repeated in (17) for convenience:

- (17) * *apeci, halmeni-kkeyse o-si-si-ess-eyo.*
 father, grandmother-NOM.HON come-HON-HON-PST-DECL.POLITE
 ‘Father, grandmother came. (Intended meaning)’

The question raised was, if the suffix *-si* were taken to mark addressee honorification, why it cannot co-occur with the subject honorific *-si* verbal suffix. In the current proposal, this is straightforward as *-si* is the subject honorific marker - it agrees with the null subject DP in the higher Spec which has the relevant honorific features. Therefore, there is no addressee honorific *-si* and no direct relation between *-si* and the addressee (contra Kim 2019).¹¹

¹⁰ In modern days, speakers often alternate between the polite and deferential speech styles in the same conversation. It has been argued that on top of (in)formality, factors such as ‘solidarity’ or ‘information status’ may be relevant to such code switching. See Chang (2014) and Eun & Strauss (2004), among others, for related discussions.

¹¹ Kim (2019) claims that the honorific verbal suffix *-si* agrees with the Addressee in the left periphery and not with the grammatical subject. See section 4 for brief descriptions of previous accounts of allocutive imposters.

The fifth property discussed above is that allocutive imposters do not allow honorific suppletive forms, such as *tusi-* ‘to eat’, *tolakasi-* ‘to die’ and *kyeysi-* ‘to exist.’ In sentences with regular honorific subjects such as *grandmother*, for example, the honorific suppletive verbs are required. This was illustrated in (10), contrary to the allocutive imposters in (11). This, however, is not a unique property of allocutive imposter constructions; it is a typical characteristic of multiple subject constructions in Korean (James Yoon 2007 and Jeong-Me Yoon 2018, among others). The literature discusses various restrictions on multiple subject constructions (such as Characteristic Property Condition, Subject Preference Condition), and the Stative Predicate Condition is one of them. That is, typically well-formed multiple subject constructions allow stative predicates only (J.M. Yoon 2018, non-activity condition in Suh 2003).¹² Hence, the fact that allocutive imposters do not allow suppletive honorific verbs which are all action verbs follows from the general restrictions on multiple subject constructions, and this supports the current analysis that allocutive imposters involve a multiple subject structure.

An interesting consequence of this restriction is the semantic change of the ‘*iss-* + *-(u)si*’ sequence in allocutive imposter constructions. As discussed in footnote 5, the predicate *iss-* has existential and possessive meaning. The honorific form of the existential *iss-* is the suppletive *kyeysi-* and that of the possessive *iss-* is *iss-* + *-(u)si*. In allocutive imposter sentence such as (11a), repeated here, it seems that the *iss-* + *-(u)si* sequence does not have the possessive meaning but rather has taken on the new stative meaning of ‘to exist’ in conformity to the stative predicate restrictions on multiple subject constructions.¹³

- (11) a. hwacangsil-i 5 chung-ey **iss-usi-eyo.** (plain verb + *-si*)
 restroom-NOM 5 floor-LOC **exist-HON-DEC.POLITE**
 ‘The restrooms are on the 5th floor.’

Lastly, the fact that allocutive imposters are restricted to sales discourse is captured in this account with the [Status: S<A] and [Formal: +/- (Clerk and Customer)] features that specify that the speaker is lower than the addressee and the source social relation *R* is that of clerk and customer. Any other values and social relations of the [Status] and [Formal] features will not have the kind of clausal structure as the tree in (16). Hence, (11a) is not acceptable outside the sale discourse. For example, the features [Status: S<A], [Formal: +] and the source social relation *R* ‘Boss-subordinate’ relation at *work* (not ‘Clerk and Customer’) is not associated with a multiple subject structure, and as such, there is no null DP with the 2nd person features. Consequently, the suffix *-si* cannot be licensed.

4. Conclusion and theoretical implications. The proposed analysis shares with previous accounts of allocutive imposters, the core intuition and idea that the addressee is the target of honorification. A number of ways to grammatically encode this intuition have been proposed (Lee 2006, 2010, Kim 2019, and Park 2019, among others). Lee (2006, 2010), for example, argues that the addressee is the situational subject, and it is grammatically represented as a null vocative DP in syntax. While Lee does not provide details of the syntactic agreement, we can expect the vocative addressee to be responsible for agreeing with the honorific suffix *-si* and not allowing the honorific nominative case marker *-kkeyse* on the inanimate subject DP. Kim (2019)

¹² Besides the stative predicate condition, another predicate related restriction for multiple subject constructions is the individual-level predicate, as opposed to stage-level predicate.

¹³ I take *kyeysi-* to be a non-stative verb in Korean, as can be verified by the possibility of the noun modifying form *kyeysi-nun* which is a non-stative form as opposed to the stative form *kyeysi-n*.

also claims that *-si* agrees with the addressee (*hearer* in Kim 2019) and this is achieved by the inanimate subject DP failing to trigger an agreement with it. According to Kim, the features probed at T for honorification agreement in Korean are the following (Kim 2019, (27)):

- (18) a. [+human, +hon]: honored human
 b. [+human, -hon]: non-honored human
 c. [-human]: not eligible as the controller

As an inanimate subject DP is [-human], it is not eligible to serve as the goal for the agreement with *-si*. As a result, an expansion of the agreement cycle takes place à la Béjar and Rezac (2009). This allows the addressee with the appropriate features in the left periphery to be eligible for agreement. Consequently, Kim claims that both the subject honorification and allocutive agreement are probed at T in Korean, the latter as a result of cyclic Agree through the expansion of the agreement cycle. Finally, Park (2019) argues that the honorific suffix *-si* is the head of Empathy Phrase (EmP) whose specifier is occupied by an Implicit Argument (IMP). This IMP is versatile in being optionally coreferential with the grammatical subject, the topic or the addressee (*Interlocutor* in Park 2019). Whichever IMP is coreferential with, it will agree with the head which is occupied by *-si*. Allocutive imposter constructions are derived when the addressee is co-referential with IMP.

Leaving aside the issues with the technical details in these analyses, for example, how the co-reference is established in Park (2019), what is crucially lacking is the fact that allocutive imposters are restricted to a specific kind of discourse context, i.e., sale discourse, and the primary users are sales clerks. Following the relational analysis proposed in Portner et al. (2019) and (2022), in this paper I argue that discourse elements, such as speaker, addressee, as well as the hierarchical relation between the discourse participants, and the source social relation of that hierarchy are grammatically represented. The proposed analysis provides appropriate theoretical descriptions of the pragmatic functions of allocutive imposters, capturing the fact that allocutive imposters arise in a particular relation between the speaker and addressee.

As hinted at various points throughout the paper, allocutive imposters share with multiple subject constructions number of properties. In particular, they resemble ‘inalienable possession constructions.’ As shown in (19), in inalienable possession constructions both the possessor and possessum are the subjects of the sentence; they are both marked by the nominative case particles.¹⁴

- (19) a. halmeni-**kkeyse** yensey-**ka** manh-usi-ta.
 grandmother-NOM.HON age(HON)-NOM many-HON-DECL.PLAIN
 ‘Grandmother is old.’ (Lit. ‘Grandmother’s age is many.’)
 b. apeci-**kkeyse** son-**i** khu-si-ta.
 father-NOM.HON hand-NOM big-HON-DECL.PLAIN
 ‘Father’s hand is big.’

Inalienable possession constructions do not allow the honorific nominative case marker *-kkeyse* on the possessum DP.

- (20) * apeci(-kkeyse) son-**kkeyse** khu-si-ta.
 father(-NOM.HON) hand-NOM.HON big-HON-DECL.PLAIN
 ‘Father’s hand is big.’ (Intended meaning)

¹⁴ There are two phonologically conditioned allomorphs for plain nominative case particle, *-ka* and *-i*.

Also, as mentioned above, these multiple subject constructions allow only stative predicates. The difference is that while both subjects may be overt in multiple subject inalienable possession constructions, in allocutive imposters the higher subject DP is always null and has 2nd person features, bound by the Addressee argument. In other words, there is no person restrictions on the higher subject in sentences in inalienable possession constructions; however, in allocutive imposters it must be the 2nd person, i.e., the addressee who is the customer.

What remains to be explored is how much of these allocutive imposters are being spoken outside the sales discourse. While they originated as a special sales register in specific discourse contexts, fueled by the politeness strategies for over-politeness, the use of the honorific suffix *-si* with inanimate grammatical subjects as those mentioned in footnote 6 seem to be increasing, even in ordinary register. Whether the grammatical rules of honorification is changing to accommodate allocutive imposters and whether they are on their way for a grammaticalization process is something to keep an eye on and continue to investigate.

References

- Alok, Deepak. 2021. The morphosyntax of Magahi addressee agreement. *Syntax* 24(3). 263–296. <https://doi.org/10.1111/synt.12213>.
- Alok, Deepak & Mark Baker. 2018. On the mechanics (syntax) of indexical shift: Evidence from allocutive agreement in Magahi. Manuscript, Rutgers University.
- Alok, Deepak & Mark Baker. 2019. On the syntax of addressee agreement and indexical shift in Magahi. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America.
- Béjar, Susana & Milan Rezac. 2009. Cyclic Agree. *Linguistic Inquiry* 40(1). 35–73. <https://doi.org/10.1162/ling.2009.40.1.35>.
- Bianchi, Valentina. 2006. On the syntax of personal arguments. *Lingua* 116(12). 2023–2067.
- Brown, Lucien. 2011. *Korean honorifics and politeness in second language learning*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Chang, Sumi. 2014. *Korean honorific speech style shift: Intra-speaker variables and context*. Mānoa: University of Hawai'i dissertation.
- Comrie, Bernard. 1976. Linguistic politeness axes: Speaker-addressee, speaker-referent, speaker-bystander. *Pragmatics Microfiche* 1(7). A3-B1.
- Eun, Jong Oh & Susan Strauss. 2004. The primacy of information status in the alternation between deferential and polite forms in Korean public discourse. *Language Sciences* 26(3). 251–272.
- Haegeman, Lilian. 2014. West Flemish verb-based discourse markers and the articulation of the speech act layer. *Studia Linguistica* 68(1). 116–139. <https://doi.org/10.1111/stul.12023>.
- Haegeman, Lilian & Virginia Hill. 2013. The syntacticization of discourse. In Raffaella Folli, Christina Sevdali & Robert Truswell (eds.), *Syntax and its limits*, 370–390. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harada, Shin-Ichi. 1976. Honorifics. In Masayoshi Shibatani (ed.), *Japanese generative grammar* (Syntax and Semantics 5), 499–561, New York: Academic Press.
- Hill, Virginia. 2014. *Vocatives: How syntax meets with pragmatics*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Katz, Jerold J. & Paul M. Postal. 1964. *An Integrated theory of linguistic descriptions*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kim, Sanghee. 2019. Allocutive agreement in Korean under cyclic Agree. *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America (PLSA)* 4(56). 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3765/plsa.v4i1.4543>.

- Kim-Renaud, Young-Key & Miok Pak. 2006. Agreement in Korean syntax: A case of sentence final particles. In Susumo Kuno et al. (eds.), *Harvard International Symposium on Korean Linguistics XI*, 548–561. Seoul: Hanshin.
- Lee, Jeong-Bok. 2006. Sociolinguistic approach to Korean honorification [in Korean]. *Kwuke: The Society of Korean Linguistics* 7. 407–448.
- Lee, Jeong-Bok. 2010. The diffusion of honorific encoding ‘-si’ for the situation subject and its backgrounds [In Korean]. *Journal of Linguistic Science* 55. 217–246.
- Martin, Samuel. 1992. *A reference grammar of Korean: A complete guide to the grammar and history of the Korean language*. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle.
- Miyagawa, Shigeru. 2012. Agreements that occur mainly in the main clause. In Lobke Aelbrecht, Lilian Haegeman & Rachel Nye (eds.), *Main clause phenomena: New horizons*, 79–112. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Oyharçabal, Bernard. 1993. Verb agreement with non-arguments: On allocutive agreement. In José Ignacio Hualde & Jon Ortiz de Urbina (eds.), *Generative studies in Basque linguistics*, 89–114. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Pak, Miok. 2008. Types of clauses and sentence end particles in Korean. *Korean Linguistics* 14. 113–155.
- Park, Sang Do. 2019. The Korean honorific marker *-si* as the head of the empathy phrase. *The Journal of Linguistic Science* 90. 93–112. <https://doi.org/10.21296/jls.2019.9.90.93>.
- Portner, Paul, Miok Pak & Raffaella Zanuttini. 2019. The speaker-addressee relation at the syntax-semantics interface. *Language* 95(1). 1–36. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2019.0008>.
- Portner, Paul, Miok Pak & Raffaella Zanuttini. 2022. Dimensions of honorific meaning in Korean speech style particles. Manuscript.
- Ross, John R. 1970. On declarative sentences. In Roderick A. Jacobs & Peter S. Rosenbaum (eds.), *Readings in English transformational grammar*, 222–272. Waltham, MA: Ginn and Company.
- Sigurðsson, Halldór Ármann. 2004. The syntax of person, tense and speech features. *Journal of Italian Linguistics/Rivista di Linguistica* 16(1). 219–251.
- Sohn, Ho-Min. 1999. *The Korean language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Speas, Margaret & Carol L. Tenny. 2003. Configurational properties of point of view roles. In Anna Maria Di Sciullo (ed.), *Asymmetry in grammar*, 315–344. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Suh, Cheong-Soo. 1996. *Korean grammar*. Seoul: Hanyang University Press.
- Suh, Sungki. 2003. The distribution of multiple subject constructions in Korean. *Language Research* 20. 839–858.
- Yoon, James. 2007. Raising of major arguments in Korean and Japanese. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 25. 615–653. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11049-007-9020-2>.
- Yoon, Jeong-Me. 2018. On the nature of the restrictions for multiple subject constructions in Korean. *Linguistic Research* 35(3). 415–447. <https://doi.org/10.17250/khisli.35.3.201812.001>.
- Zanuttini, Raffaella, Miok Pak & Paul Portner. 2012. A syntactic analysis of interpretive restrictions on imperative, promissive and exhortative subjects. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 30(4). 1231–1274. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11049-012-9176-2>.