

# Self-addressed questions and indexicality — The case of Korean

Regine ECKARDT – *Konstanz*

Gisela DISSELKAMP – *Konstanz*

**Abstract.** Korean questions are marked as true questions (with final particle *ni*) or self-addressed questions SAQ (with final *na/ka*). SAQ are characterized as “uttered in the absence of addressee” in the literature. We argue in favour of a more detailed pragmatic profile, as SAQ can be uttered in the presence of other persons and can contain second person pronouns ‘you’ that refer to these. SAQ in Korean are however incompatible with the performative honorific *upni* (Jang & Kim 1998). We propose that Korean refers to contexts with *bystanders* in addition to *speaker* and *addressee*. SAQ require that  $sp(c)=ad(c)$ , and prohibit *upni* because the speaker can not honorify herself. Second person ‘you’ refers to the most salient bystander, which can differ from *ad(c)* in SAQ. The account extends to theme-setting questions and other data.

**Keywords:** honorifics, second person pronouns, theme-setting questions, context, indexicals

## 1. Introduction

What is a self-addressed question? While *any* question can be self-addressed if the speaker utters it in the absence of other persons, many languages offer special lexical means to indicate that a question is self-addressed. Self-addressed questions do not request an answer from anyone, the speaker seems to deliberate rather than ask, or the speaker asks herself rather than others. Case studies in the literature include SAQ in Salish languages (Littell et al. 2010, calling them *conjectural questions*), German questions with verb-end syntax and particle *wohl* (Thurmair 1989, Truckenbrodt 2006, Zimmermann 2008, 2013), Italian questions in the evidential future (Mari 2010, Eckardt and Beltrama t.a.), Japanese *daroo* questions (Hara 2018) and more (see SanRoque et al. 2017). The present paper investigates SAQ in Korean. Korean questions are marked as true questions with the particle *-ni*. Question particles are obligatory in polar questions but can sometimes be omitted in *wh*-questions. We will systematically use question particles in our data. (1) is a true question.

- (1) *Mary-ka o-ass ni?*  
Mary-Nom come-Past trueQ  
“Has Mary come?”

Questions can alternatively be marked as self-addressed questions with the particles *na* or *ka*. While these are not freely interchangeable, speakers report that their pragmatic impact is the same. Example (2) shows a SAQ with the particle *-na*.

- (2) *Mary-ka o-ass na?*  
Mary-Nom come-Past SAQ  
“Has Mary come, I wonder”

The observation was first discussed in (Jang + Kim 1998, Jang 1999) on basis of (1), (2) and similar examples. They describe questions with *na/ka* as “usually used in a monologue” or “in absence of an interlocutor”. While we agree that SAQ questions can be used under these

circumstances we argue in favour of a more differentiated pragmatic profile. The present paper is structured as follows. Section 2 surveys data discussed by Jang and Kim, in particular the interaction of SAQ markers and the performative honorific *upni* in Korean. We criticize Jang and Kim’s prediction that second person pronouns are degraded in SAQ. New data in section 3 illustrate the use of SAQ *na* in contexts where other speakers are present, and its interaction with honorifics and the use of second person pronouns. Section 4 presents our formal account for Korean SAQ. In essence we propose that utterance contexts *c* in Korean define not only the usual parameters *speaker*, *addressee*, *time*, *place* and *world* but in addition the set of *bystanders*. SAQ markers and honorifics impose restrictions on context. The account can successfully explain the data, as we survey in 5.1. It is further corroborated by theme-setting questions (5.2) and true questions asked to self (5.3). Section 6 lists earlier analyses of SAQ in other languages, specifically Speas and Tenny (2003), Truckenbrodt (2006), Littell et al. (2010), Farkas & Bruce (2010) and Farkas (2018) as well as Eckardt & Beltrama (2018/t.a.). We argue that they can not easily account for honorifics in true questions vs. SAQ in Korean whereas our Neo-Kaplanian analysis offers a better starting point to understand the case.

## 2. Korean SAQ and trueQ

Korean questions are marked as true questions or self-addressed questions (SAQ) by different question particles, as shown in (1), (2) above.<sup>1</sup> Korean also uses honorific markers and Jang and Kim report that SAQ interact with honorification in an interesting way (Jang and Kim 1998, Jang 1999). The bound honorific morpheme *upni* must be used in an utterance when the speaker is socially lower than the addressee. Example (3) shows a question addressed to a socially higher person. As (4) shows the use of *upni* is blocked in SAQ questions with *na/ka*.

(3) *Mary-ka o -ass -upni -kka?*  
 Mary-Nom come -PAST -HON -true Q  
 “Has Mary come?” (addressing a higher person)

(4) \**Mary-ka o -ass -upni -ka/na?*  
 Mary-Nom come -PAST -HON -SAQ  
 unavailable: “Has Mary come I wonder”  
 (Jang + Kim 1998:195)

According to the authors’ intuition, *-ka/-na* indicates that the question is asked in the absence of an interlocutor. They propose that in SAQ, the speaker addressess himself and hence *sp(c)* = *ad(c)*. Given that the speaker is not socially higher than himself, this can explain the prohibition against *upni* in SAQ.

Jang and Kim point out that the proposal is supported by the *Genius* examples in (5)/(6) where SAQ markers interact with the use of second person *ne(-ka)* ‘you’ (Jang + Kim

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<sup>1</sup> Speakers prefer *na* or *ka* in different examples. The choice seems to rest on morpho-phonological factors and we do not aim to capture these preferences. We double-checked all uses of particles and the glossing as SAQ marker vs. trueQ marker with native informants.

1998:195f). Speaker A can ask (5) addressing self. In contrast, A can not ask (6) in the presence of a second person B.

(5) *The Genius example* (first person)  
*nay-ka chencay -i -n -ka?*  
 I-Nom genius -be -present -SAQ  
 “Am I a genius, I wonder”

(6) *The Genius example* (second person)  
 \**ne-ka chencay -i -n -ka?*  
 you-Nom genius -be -present -SAQ  
 unavailable: “Are you a genius, I wonder”

Jang and Kim thus take (6) as further evidence in favour of the assumption that SAQ contexts are contexts where  $sp(c) = ad(c)$ . While speaker-addressee-identity is unproblematic for the first person pronoun *nay* it interferes with the interpretation of second person *ne*: Second person pronouns denote the addressee. If we furthermore presuppose that the referent of second person *ne* must differ from the speaker we predict that (6) imposes inconsistent requirements on the context where  $sp(c) = ad(c)$ .

However, as Jang and Kim point out, their diagnosis is challenged by the following observation.

(7) *The Genius example* (past)  
 (?) *ne-ka chencay -i -ess -ten -ka?*  
 you-Nom genius -be -PAST -Recoll -SAQ  
 “Were you a genius? (conjecture)”  
 (Jang + Kim 1998: 197)

While (7) is still slightly marked the authors report that the change from present to past tense significantly improves the example. This effect is unexpected, as the change in tense does not have any influence on the protagonists in context. Jang and Kim tentatively suggest that past tense allows to dissociate the present addressee  $B_{\text{now}}$  from its younger self  $B_{\text{past}}$ . This, they propose, allows to dissociate the referent of ‘you’ from the addressee and hence allows *ne* to refer to  $B_{\text{past}}$  while the context remains one where  $sp(c) = ad(c)$ .

We argue that their account of (7) is inadequate as the proposed distinction of  $B_{\text{now}} / B_{\text{past}}$  does not resolve the puzzle posed by (7). They assume that (7) has a self-addressing context  $c$  where  $sp(c) = ad(c)$ . The real physical situation includes A (speaker) and B (other person). If we follow Kaplan’s classical analysis of indexicals, the second person pronoun *ne-* should refer to  $ad(c)$  (Kaplan 1989). Hence (7) should be tantamount to the question “Is A a genius?”. This prediction is simply false, and the steps in the analysis are not affected by the fact that B has two identities  $B_{\text{now}}$  vs.  $B_{\text{past}}$ . The puzzle remains. If Jang and Kim want to claim that *ne* ‘you’ can possibly refer to an individual who is not the addressee in  $c$ —*pace* traditional Kaplan—it is unclear why this should be facilitated by the fact that the referent of *ne* is coming in two different identities  $B_{\text{now}}$  and  $B_{\text{past}}$ .

We hence conclude that Jang and Kim’s tentative remarks are insufficient to solve the puzzle posed by (7). In the next section we survey more examples in order to see how the referent of *ne* (‘you’) and  $ad(c)$  are related.

### 3. More evidence on Korean SAQ

Jang and Kim describe *na* as a question particle indicating that Q is asked in the absence of an interlocutor. A closer look reveals that this description is too simple. Imagine a situation where A and B are standing in front of A's house. A is searching bags and pockets for the key. According to our informants, A can utter either the true question (8a) or the SAQ (8b) in the given situation.

- (8) *The Key example*
- a. *yelsoy-ka eti(-ey) iss -ni?*  
key-Nom where(-Loc) exist -trueQ?
- b. *yelsoy-ka eti(-ey) iss -na?*  
key-Nom where(-Loc) exist -SAQ?

A will preferably utter (8a) iff A believes that B might know the answer. A will preferably utter (8b) iff A doesn't believe that B can provide the answer and does not request B to answer. Yet, A may intend B to hear the utterance; for instance to inform B why the door is still locked.

We must hence distinguish between the presence/absence of a second person and the fact whether the second person is addressed in the sense relevant for true questions. The presence of second persons becomes linguistically relevant when A uses a second person pronoun *ne*. Consider the following situation: A is visiting B at her home. They watch a van from the local flower shop arriving in front of B's house. B is surprised. A comments:

- (9) *The Fleurop example*
- ne-ka kkochtapal-ul pat -ullye -na?*  
you-NOM flowers-ACC receive-MOD.POSS -SAQ?  
"Will you perhaps get flowers, I wonder"

Like in (8b) A doesn't believe that B can answer and does not request B to answer. Nevertheless A can use a second person pronoun *ne* to refer to B. Our informants report that (9) sounds conjectural, but we will leave this nuance aside. The use of honorific *upni* is still unacceptable in (9). This judgement was not influenced by the social ranking between A and B. The *Fleurop* example challenges simple conclusions that we might draw from the *Genius* example in (6). Example (6) doesn't show that second person pronouns in SAQ are generally unacceptable. If that were the case, (9) should likewise be unacceptable, which it is not. Further probing of the *Genius* example revealed that it improves in situations where the referent of *ne* 'you' can not possibly answer the question. Imagine that A studies the foto picture of a PhD applicant. The person is not present and thus can not possibly answer A's question.

- (10) *The Foto example*
- (?) *ne-ka chencay -i -n -ka?*  
you-Nom genius -be -PRES -SAQ  
"Are you a genius I wonder"

(10) was judged to be slightly marked but overall acceptable. Similar situations were likewise classed as marked but acceptable, for instance if A is looking at a trained (but non-speaking) dog, or if A is looking at a baby—the offspring of two nobel prize winners—who can not speak yet. In summary, second person pronouns in SAQ are permitted when *ne* (‘you’) refers to a non-speaking entity or a human who is not able to answer and hence not requested to answer.

We conclude that the *Genius* question (6) in the given situation must violate more subtle restrictions imposed by SAQ and will return to the example in Section 5.1 after having presented our analysis.

#### 4. Analysis

Section 4 introduces the elements of our analysis. In 4.1 and 4.2 we argue that Korean utterance contexts make use of the parameter of *bystanders* and show how the addressee of a question can be dissociated from the referent of second person *ne* ‘you’. In 4.3 we refine Jang and Kim’s semantics of the SAQ markers *na* and *ka*. 4.4 treats honorific *upni*.

##### 4.1. Korean context

Following (Kaplan 1989), utterance situations in the real world are modelled by contexts *c*. These are mapped to speaker, addressee, time, place etc. by functions *sp*, *ad*, *time*, *place* and thus provide the persons and parameters necessary to determine the meaning of indexicals. Korean examples like the *Key* example, repeated below, show that contexts are not fully determined by the real-world utterance situation. Context *c* also depends on the speaker’s intentions. Whether a bystander B is conceived as addressee or not depends on the intentions of speaker A. Hence the same physical situation allows for both the SAQ and trueQ version of (11).

- (11) A and B in front of A’s house, A searching for key.  
*yelsoy-ka eti(-ey) iss-na?/ ni?*  
 key-Nom where(-Loc) exist-SAQ? / -trueQ?

When asking the *-ni* question A intends that  $ad(c) = B$ . By attributing the rôle of addressee to B, A signals ‘I want B to answer the question’ and ‘I believe that B might know the answer’.<sup>2</sup> In this context B is requested to react by answering. When asking the *-na* question in (11), A construes a context where  $ad(c) = sp(c)$  (see 4.3.). Other persons B may be present but A does not pose any requests to B. We leave it open whether A requests A to do anything; to our intuition this is not the case.

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<sup>2</sup> A tempting default for contexts *c* could be:  $sp(c) \neq ad(c)$  and the speaker requests the addressee to react in standard ways to major speech acts: *update belief* in reaction to assertions; *answer* to questions and *obey* to imperatives. In view of the many counterexamples in the literature we refrain from this strong assumption. More research would be needed to understand how the default can be overwritten.

For Korean, we model the *bystanders* in context with a function  $by: c \rightarrow X$  where  $X$  is a set of persons who count as bystanders in  $c$ .<sup>3</sup> Example (8b), for instance, includes B as a bystander; B is physically close to the speaker and able to hear the utterance. Bystanders who are not the addressee  $ad(c)$  do not undertake the obligations of the addressee; specifically they do not have to answer to questions.

Finally we propose that one of the bystanders can be identified as the most salient bystander by the speaker. Addressee and bystanders are related in the following ways:

- (12) a. The speaker  $sp(c)$  is never a bystander:  $sp(c) \notin by(c)$ .  
 b. If possible,  $ad(c) \in by(c)$ .  
 c. If  $ad(c) \in by(c)$  then  $ad(c)$  counts as the most salient bystander.

These assumptions will allow us to give a uniform semantics for the Korean second person pronoun *ne* in section 4.2.

While it is normally assumed that the utterance context is more or less determined by the physical situation of utterance, our proposal is not the first one to give up this assumption. Von Stechow and Gillies (2010) point out the possibility to construe different sets of persons as ‘the speaker(s) in  $c$ ’ in their analysis of English epistemic *might*. In a similar vein, the present study probes the relation between physical utterance situation and the addressee parameter of context.

#### 4.2. Second person *ne-ka* ‘you.NOM’

We turn to the interpretation of *ne* ‘you’. Kaplan’s (1989) interpretation of indexicals would predict that Korean second person  $[[ ne ]]^c = ad(c)$ . The data suggest that we have to modify this analysis. We propose that the referent of *ne* is the most salient bystander B in  $by(c)$ .

- (13)  $[[ ne ]]^c = B$  for the most salient bystander B in  $by(c)$ .

This definition interacts with the assumptions in 4.1. as follows. If  $sp(c) \neq ad(c)$ , then  $ad(c) \in by(c)$  and  $ad(c)$  counts as the most salient bystander. Assumptions (12b,c) hence entail that *ne* in the normal case refers to  $ad(c)$ , like Kaplan’s analysis would have it. If however  $sp(c) = ad(c)$ , the addressee is not in  $by(c)$  due to assumption (12a). In this case, *ne* refers to the most salient bystander and this referent does not count as the addressee in  $c$ . Example (8b) can serve as a first illustration of a context  $c$  where B is a bystander but not the addressee. Note that assumption (12a) generalizes Kaplan’s presupposition that second person pronouns never refer to the speaker (Schlenker 2018). The analysis dissociates the referent of *ne* ‘you’ and the addressee  $ad(c)$  and thus allows us to deal with the data in section 2 and 3.

#### 4.3. *ka/na* and context

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<sup>3</sup>  $by(c) = \emptyset$  is possible.

We assume that the self-addressed question particle *na/ka* in Korean questions imposes a restriction on the context of utterance. Jang and Kim’s core idea remains one prominent factor of its meaning.

- (14)  $[[ -na/ka ]]^c$  is defined in context  $c$  iff  $sp(c) = ad(c)$   
 If  $by(c) \neq \emptyset$  then *na/ka* presupposes that
1. Ignorance/Inability:  $sp(c)$  believes that no  $x$  in  $by(c)$  can answer  $Q$ .
  2. Release:  $sp(c)$  does not request any  $B \in by(c)$  to answer  $Q$ .
- If defined,  $[[ -na/ka ]]^c = \lambda Q_{\langle s, t \rangle, t} . Q$

As a first consequence, *-na/ka* allows questions in situations where no other person is present and the speaker is practically forced to adopt  $sp(c) = ad(c)$ . The definition accounts for the intuition voiced by Jang and Kim that the speaker seems to talk to herself. Under which additional circumstances are *-na/ka* questions possible in the presence of other persons  $B$ ? (14) limits such questions to contexts where the speaker doesn’t think that  $B$  can answer the question and doesn’t request that  $B$  should answer. These specific restrictions serve to distinguish SAQ from certain true questions (see 5.1) and are necessary to explain the *Genius* example in (6).

#### 4.4. Honorific *upni*

Let again be  $c$  the utterance context,  $sp(c)$  the speaker in  $c$ ,  $ad(c)$  the addressee in  $c$ . For the sake of simplicity we will assume that the honorific morpheme *upni* takes scope over the entire sentence. The use of *upni* in sentence  $S$  limits the contexts  $c$  in which *upni*  $S$  can be uttered.

- (15)  $[[ upni S ]]^c = [[ S ]]^c$  iff  $sp(c)$  is strictly socially inferior to  $ad(c)$   
 $[[ upni S ]]^c = *$  undefined otherwise.

We acknowledge that this proposal does not attempt to do justice to the factors that determine social hierarchy. In many cultures “socially inferior” is a multi-factorial concept and the simplifying assumption that individuals are linearly ordered in social strata is not justified (see e.g. McCready 2014 on Thai). We disregard the cultural issue whether *upni* defines a partial linear order on any given group of speakers. We assume however that “strictly socially inferior” is not a reflexive relation and that, consequently, no individual  $a$  can be strictly socially inferior to  $a$ . This is consistent with the analysis of *upni* as a performative honorific in Korean (Kim and Sells 2007) and echoes the proposal in (Jang and Kim 1998).

## 5. Predictions and further corroborating evidence

### 5.1. Predictions

Before looking into the data we would like to clarify our aims. We are only interested in those aspects of meaning that determine whether a question is a true question or SAQ. We ignore further semantic contributions of question particles, such as turning a denotation of

type <s,t> (declarative) into type <<s,t>,t> (question). We likewise leave it open how and why question particles are restricted to questions.<sup>4</sup> This having been said, we will now return to our examples.

Examples (1) and (2) illustrate the basic distinction between true questions and self-addressed questions. According to our analysis, *na* in (2) restricts the possible uses of (2) to contexts *c* where  $sp(c) = ad(c)$ , thus suspending all possible requests by the speaker to others. Likewise the speaker does not request herself to answer. Whether  $sp(c)$  expects other reactions of bystanders or not will be determined by context, see 5.2. The denotation of *na* in (14) rests on the assumption that the semantic argument is already a question (type <<s,t>,t>). We thus dissociate question formation from *na* as pragmatic marker. Our meaning component can be combined with other possible semantic effects of *na*, for instance turning a proposition into a polar question. These may be shared by the complementary trueQ particle *ni* and its allomorphes. TrueQ marking *ni* does not pose restrictions on *c*. We assume that contexts of communication have distinct speaker and addressee by default. The speech act of (canonical) questioning where  $sp(c) \neq ad(c)$  conveys that the speaker requests the addressee to answer. Cases like exam questions or questions to the culprit in (16) show that the speaker does not always expect that the addressee can answer, so this should not be a requirement of *ni*.

- (16) B took the key yesterday night; today it is missing.  
 A interrogates B, suspecting that B lost it and has no idea where it is.  
*yelsoy-ka eti(-ey) iss-ni?*  
 key-Nom where(-Loc) exist-trueQ?  
 “Where is the key?”

We leave it open whether all questions are united by the speaker’s desire that the CG be updated by the answer (Truckenbrodt 2006). Again, such proposals are compatible with the present account but require further testing.

The account can successfully predict the conflict between SAQ *na* and honorific *upni* in (3)/(4), repeated below.

- (3) *Mary-ka o -ass -upni -kka?*  
 Mary-Nom come -PAST -HON -true Q  
 “Has Mary come?” (addressing a higher person)
- (4) *\*Mary-ka o -ass -upni -ka/na?*  
 Mary-Nom come -PAST -HON -SAQ  
 unavailable: “Has Mary come I wonder”

The performative honorific *upni S* restricts the possible utterance contexts *c* to those where the speaker is strictly socially inferior to the addressee. SAQ questions *ka/na Q* are only defined in *c* if  $sp(c) = ad(c)$ . Given that no person *x* can be strictly superior to *x* themselves,

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<sup>4</sup> See Jang and Kim (1998) for the interaction of particles and indefinites / question pronouns in Korean.



there is no possible context  $c$  in which (4) can felicitously be uttered. Interestingly, the pragmatic contradiction translates into native speakers' judgement that (4) is ungrammatical.<sup>5</sup> The *Key example* in (8a,b) is likewise accounted for by the present analysis. Korean contexts are sufficiently rich to allow for a bystander B who is not the addressee. In the trueQ (8a) the speaker construes the physical situation as a context where B is the addressee:  $A \neq ad(c) = B$ . A therefore requests B to answer the question; in the given situation we may infer further beliefs of A like, A believes that B might know where the key is. Examples like (16) show that this is not necessarily part of the meaning of the question. In the SAQ (8b) the speaker construes the situation as one where A is also the addressee and B is thus under no obligations. We propose that B figures as a bystander in (8b) even though the sentence itself does not include any items that refer to B.

Matters are different in this respect in examples *Fleurop* (9) and *Foto talk* (10). The questions are marked with *na* and thus require a context  $c$  where  $sp(c) = ad(c)$ . According to 4.2 we have  $ad(c) \notin by(c)$ . The pronoun *ne* 'you' in this context refers to the most prominent *bystander* and we may assume that B figures as the most salient bystander. Yet B is not the addressee and therefore does not adopt the obligations of addressee in a true question. In other words, B is not requested or expected to answer. This is what characterizes the *Fleurop* example as well as the acceptable versions of the *Genius* example.

Finally turn to Jang and Kim's original *Genius* example repeated below.

- (6) *The Genius example* (second person)  
 \**ne-ka chencay -i -n -ka?*  
 you-Nom genius -be -present -SAQ  
 unavailable: "Are you a genius, I wonder?"

We suspect that Jang and Kim rated the example as "ungrammatical" because they found it difficult to conceive of a context  $c$  where  $A = sp(c)$  encounters bystander B and believes that B is not able to answer this particular question. Our analysis assumes that using *ka*, the speaker believes that no bystander can answer the question. We therefore predict that A can not construe B as a bystander and the utterance in (6) causes a clash.

We can also host Jang and Kim's intuition that the past tense version of (6) is more acceptable. Imagine that A and B consider B's past self, wondering whether strange habits might in fact have been early signals of genius. In this situation A can grant B ignorance about his former self, which echoes Jang and Kim's intuition that the distinction between  $B_{now}$  and  $B_{past}$  is crucial for the case. While the observation made no sense in their original analysis it can explain the effect in the present account.<sup>6</sup> Our account allows A to construe B as a *bystander* who can be addressed with *ne* in a SAQ.

The following data supports our proposal that SAQ can only be asked when A believes that B does not know the answer. According to our informants (17) is only possibly if A deliberately and almost offensively ignores B.

<sup>5</sup> The case resembles pragmatic accounts of unlicensed use of NPIs. (Krifka 1995, Kadmon and Landman 1995) make a similar case for ungrammatical NPIs due to contradictory pragmatic content.

<sup>6</sup> We are aware of the paradox inherent in the *Genius* examples: While A can be unaware of his own genius in (5) he presupposes B's full knowledge in (6). We leave these tangles of human modesty and self-awareness unexplored.

(17) *The Quiz Game example*

*A and B take part in a quiz game where A has to guess B's fake personality. B impersonates Einstein and has already given A some clues. A, talking to himself:*

#*ne-ka*    *mwullihakca*    *-i*    *-n*    *-ka?*

you-Nom    physicist    -be -present    -SAQ

unavailable/offensive: "Are you a physicist, I ask myself-but-not-you"

This shows that the SAQ marker *ka* does more than release B from the obligation to answer. It also requires a context where A believes that B cannot answer Q, be it due to ignorance, be it for other reasons.

## 5.2. Further corroboration: Theme-setting questions

While our analysis primarily aimed at self-addressing questions, it can account for more questions that match the criteria in (14). Consider a context where speaker A opens a lecture on astronomy with a theme-setting question: "How does a solar eclipse arise?". Obviously A does not request the audience to answer and neither believes that the audience can answer. And indeed, theme-setting questions in Korean are marked with *na*.

- (18)    *ilsik-un*                      *ettehkey sayngki -na?*  
solar.eclipse-TOP    how    arise    -SAQ  
'How does an eclipse arise?' (theme-setting question)

According to our account, [[ *na* ]] imposes the following restrictions on context *c*.

- (14)    [[ *-na/ka* ]]<sup>c</sup> is defined in context *c* iff  $sp(c) = ad(c)$   
If  $by(c) \neq \emptyset$  then *na/ka* presupposes that
1. Ignorance/inability:  $sp(c)$  believes that no *x* in  $by(c)$  can answer Q.
  2. Release:  $sp(c)$  does not request any  $B \in by(c)$  to answer Q.

We propose that the speaker in (18) construes context *c* with the audience as bystanders and himself the addressee. The speaker does not expect the audience to be able to answer and does not request the audience to answer. Our analysis predicts that *na* is allowed in this context.

We moreover predict that second person pronouns can be used in theme-setting questions like *How do you become a millionaire in 5 years?* and refer to the audience. This prediction is difficult to test as Korean has subject and object pro-drop (Kwon et al. 2006) and questions like the *millionaire* example are realized with non-overt second person pronouns *pro*. In order to extend our analysis to these we'd have to spell out a semantic treatment of *pro* in Korean, which is beyond the range of the present study. We therefore confine ourselves to the observation that reference to the audience is possible in theme-setting questions; our account is tailored to account for this constellation.

Informants report that the trueQ particle *ni* is not used in theme-setting questions. We assume that this is due to Maximize Presupposition, which forces the speaker to use the more contentful form *na* if possible. The full range of use of trueQ *ni* is still open and we are thus

unable to say whether *ni* by necessity expresses a request to some addressee. If this is the case, it offers a further reason why *ni* is inappropriate in theme-setting questions.

### 5.3. Real self-talk

Finally we found that speakers can not address *themselves* with *ne* ‘you’ in Korean SAQ questions. When speaker A is talking to herself using a second person pronoun, as in (19), the question is only acceptable as a true question (*ni*). Imagine that A, alone and in search of her key, wants to ask herself a question like English “Now, where is your key...”.

- (19) a. *Ney yelsoy-ka eti(-ey) iss- ni?*  
 Your key-Nom where(-Loc) exist -trueQ  
 b. \**Ney yelsoy-ka eti(-ey) iss- -na?*  
 Your key-Nom where(-Loc) exist -SAQ

While the true question (19a) can be used under these circumstances, the SAQ (19b) is not an option. Our analysis makes correct predictions for (19b), as shown in (20).

- (20)  $[[na]]^c$  requires that  $sp(c) = ad(c)$ .  
 There are no further bystanders. Hence  $by(c) = \emptyset$ .  
 $[[ne-]]^c$  must refer to the most salient bystander (= (13))  
 Hence *ne* can not refer. The utterance is ill-formed.

It is less clear why (19a) is an acceptable way of self-talk. We see at least two possible explanations. One explanation—less attractive to our mind—could stipulate that trueQ *ni* in (19a) also allows contexts where  $sp(c) = ad(c)$ . This assumption, in turn, requires a special semantics for *ne* in (19a) to allow for  $[[ne]]^c = sp(c)$ . We do not see how this special treatment of *ne* fits the overall picture and how it can be restricted to “self-talk in true questions” in a nonstipulative manner. It also violates (21), to our mind a reasonable universal requirement on second person pronouns.

- (21) Second person pronouns *pro* require  $[[pro]]^c \neq sp(c)$

While we did not explicitly adopt (21) as a presupposition of *ne* (‘you’) it effectively follows from our analysis. It seems desirable to maintain this prediction.

Avoiding these complications, an alternative explanation of (19a) could rest on play-acting in self-addressed talk. We see (19a) as evidence in favour of the idea that self-talk can address the speaker’s *alter ego* (Socka 2004), an imaginary second interlocutor A’ distinct from A. This assumption allows us to integrate (19a) into the present proposal as follows.

- $[[ni]]^c =$  allows for  $sp(c) \neq ad(c)$   
 speaker A appears in *c* as two different entities: A-as-speaker  $\neq$  A-as-addressee.  
 A-as-addressee is an imaginary interlocutor  
 A-as-addressee  $\in by(c)$  is the most salient bystander  
 $[[ney]]^c =$  A-as-addressee

Obviously this preliminary proposal comes with its own stipulations and we do not aim to settle the case as part of the present paper. Yet, Korean allows us to probe the ontology and pragmatics of self-addressing in more detail than the traditional range of European languages and offers an excellent testing ground for future studies on self-talk and soliloqui.

## 6. Alternative accounts

Our Neo-Kaplanian analysis builds on Jang and Kim's work and extends their proposal in a conservative fashion. The present section reviews alternative analyses of SAQ in other languages and argues that they do not offer a better basis for our data.

### 6.1. Speas & Tenny (2003), Oguro (2017)

Speas and Tenny claim that root clauses contain a level of speech act phrase (SAP) that includes a SpeakerP, a HearerP and potentially other phrases that serve to represent perspectival and epistemic centers in syntax. While their original proposal is programmatic rather than designed for particular data it was adopted to analyse honorific marking in Japanese (Myiagawa 2012) and extended to self-addressed questions in Japanese in Oguro (2017). While Oguro's restrictions on the syntax of SAP seems to successfully predict the possible and impossible co-occurrences of honorifics and various question particles in Japanese the putative mapping between SAP and pragmatics remains unclear. We are particularly worried that basic semantic facts of the account, such as the logical type of possible denotata of SpeakerP and HearerP are left open. While the syntactic operations proposed—for instance, binding of pronouns—strongly suggest denotations of type  $e$ , the paraphrases of pragmatic effects of SpeakerP and HearerP point more in the direction of propositional denotata, that is type  $\langle s, t \rangle$ . A further semantically unexplained element in Oguro (2017) is the *point-of-view* head (POV) which is crucial to distinguish SAQ from true questions. According to Oguro the presence of POV is only mandatory in self-addressed questions and, if bound by the SpeakerP, ensures that the question is intended as a SAQ. Finally, the predictions entailed by Speas and Tenny, and Oguro about the use of questions and SAQ in inappropriate contexts are unclear. Are sentences, uttered in an inappropriate context, syntactically ill-formed or does syntax code a different kind of markedness, such as pragmatic incoherence (#), presupposition failure or even simply false utterances? The present analysis has the advantage that pragmatic factors are coded in pragmatics and make predictions about appropriate and inappropriate uses that can be directly tested in a well-understood interface between grammar and meaning.

### 6.2. Truckenbrodt (2006)

German shows a close correlation between word order and speech act type (Lohnstein 2007) and it is thus attractive to spell out a link between syntax and pragmatics. Truckenbrodt proposes that C-features in German can capture this correlation. The idea is that features code pragmatic restrictions on utterance context  $c$  which, in turn, guide the possible interpretations of sentences. The feature  $\langle \text{epist} \rangle$  contributes that  $sp(c)$  desires a CG update and

<**deont(sp)(ad)**> contributes that *sp(c)* requests *ad(c)* to effect a CG update.<sup>7</sup> The **deont** feature can however lack the **ad** argument, in which case no request to the addressee is issued. This, Truckenbrodt argues, codes the pragmatic profile of self-addressed questions and SAQ thus carry the feature <**deont(sp), epist**>.

If we grant that a proper syntax-pragmatics interface can be spelled out and that the truth conditions of **deont** and **epist** can be made sufficiently precise to demarcate the correct contexts, we could propose to code SAQ in Korean as <**deont(sp), epist**> as well. This however covers only part of the pragmatic restrictions imposed by SAQ markers. For one, *na/ka* convey the ignorance/inability condition (see (14)) which would have to be added. Besides, Truckenbrodt's account is not designed to capture the incompatibility between honorific *upni* and SAQ. The features do not code the identity or non-identity of speaker and addressee; likewise the absence of an **ad** feature does not make predictions about the absence/presence of an interlocutor or bystander. The account can thus at best provide a partial basis to explain Korean. The major benefit of syntactic features in the analysis of German—where speech act type and word order correlate—does not play out in Korean where the basic word order remains the same for all speech act types.

### 6.3. Conversational scoreboard theories

Recent models for question-answer dialogue provide useful tools to investigate discourse. We base our discussion on the table theory (Farkas and Bruce 2010) but believe that the observations generalize to other models. The table theory codes questions and assertions as moves in a conversational game that allow the interlocutor various moves in reaction. Farkas & Roelofson (2015), Farkas (2018) demonstrate for the SAQ marker *oare* in Romanian how the model can account for questions that do not request an answer from the addressee. Their analysis builds on Farkas and Bruce's (2010) observation that silence in reaction to assertions is usually interpreted as tacit consent (whereby the model refines Stalnaker's (2002) view that assertion effects a common ground update). SAQ, according to Farkas (2018), are questions where remaining silent is simply a normal reaction for the addressee. In other words, SAQ do not request an answer.

The case of Korean poses a challenge for the table model which endorses a realistic notion of context. The interlocutors as given by the real-world utterance situation are represented as interlocutors at the table, and in the simplest case there are two individuals that alternately adopt the role of speaker and addressee. While intentional elements are proposed in some applications (e.g., "attributive" commitments in Malamut and Stevenson 2015, Poschmann 2008) the model assumes an overall fixed range of interlocutors. The model thus offers no natural starting point to code the difference between a person figuring as addressee or bystander, and it therefore will also have problems in accounting for the interplay between honorification and SAQ in Korean. If we adopt Farkas' (2018) semantic analysis of *oare* for Korean *na/ka* we can not explain why the speaker may not use honorific *upni* as soon as s/he offers the addressee "silence" as a further permissible reaction to a question. In their present form, table theories cannot downgrade interlocutors to bystanders and cannot code that speakers construe a situation as one of addressing self.

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<sup>7</sup> In declarative sentences *ad(c)* is requested to believe the content of the declarative; in questions *ad(c)* is requested to answer.

#### 6.4. Truth conditional accounts of self-addressed questions

Finally we want to relate our model to approaches that seek to derive the pragmatics of SAQ from the semantic denotation of the questions posed. These accounts assume that questions with additional elements (here: evidential markers) are somehow too demanding and the speaker can not rationally expect that the addressee will provide an answer. As an escape interpretation, authors argue, the addressee is permitted to remain silent (going with Farkas 2018) and/or invited to join speculative discourse with the speaker. Several studies in different languages observe that SAQ are used as conversation starters or topic setters rather than just serving as statement of ignorance.

The idea is spelled out in Littell et al. (2010)'s analysis of Salish questions with inferential evidential markers that, according to the authors, are interpreted as *conjectural questions*. A similar road is taken in Eckardt & Beltrama (2018/subm.) who investigate German SAQ in verb-end syntax and marked with evidential *wohl*. Adding *wohl* and the effect of verb-end syntax to question Q, they derive a denotation that can be paraphrased as: 'Which of the answers to Q can be inferred if we two pool our relevant knowledge?'. Again, addressee B can not (usually) straightforwardly answer this question and instead has to remain silent or enter joint speculative discourse.

Like the table models in 5.3, such accounts are not prepared to cover the different rôles of a second person B in dialogue, and hence make wrong (or no) predictions about the use of honorifics. Both Littell et al. and Eckardt/Beltrama view the addressee of an SAQ as a full-fledged participant in context and do not propose that  $sp(c)=ad(c)$ . It will hence be difficult to explain why a full-fledged addressee can no longer be addressed with honorific *upni* if he figures in a SAQ. The link between honorification and SAQ in Korean needs a more differentiated notion of interlocutors, as provided by our Neo-Kaplanian analysis.

#### Summary

We investigated Korean questions marked as self-addressed questions with *na/ka*. We started from data in Jang and Kim (1998), Jang (1999) who suggest that SAQ questions are asked in a context  $c$  where speaker and addressee are identical. While the assumption can also explain why honorific *upni* is prohibited in SAQ, it is challenged by observations about second person *ne* 'you'. Second person pronouns can be used to refer to other persons even in SAQ. These persons must however be unable to answer the question and the speaker does not request an answer. We derived these pragmatic requirements on basis of systematically elicited examples. Our analysis rests on (a) bystanders as an additional parameter of Korean utterance contexts and (b) a generalized analysis of second person pronouns as 'the most salient bystander'. We propose the following pragmatic requirements of *na/ka*: The speaker and addressee in  $c$  are identical, and *if* there are bystanders in  $c$ , the speaker does not request them to answer and does not believe that they can answer the question. The latter requirement captures the fact that Korean speakers can not use SAQ if they simply want to release the second person from giving an answer (the *Quiz Game* example).

The analysis can successfully account for the full range of SAQ examples: the *Key*, *Genius* (first person), *Genius* (second person), *Genius* (second person, past), *Fleurop* and *Foto talk*. It extends to theme-setting questions in Korean. Finally, it correctly predicts that the speaker

can not address to herself with *ne* ‘you’ in SAQ in Korean. The language thus differs from SAQ questions in other, notably European languages, and offers a new way to probe soliloqui and imaginary *alter ego*. To round out the picture it will be interesting to test further types of non-canonical question, such as rhetorical questions and exam questions, as well as the interaction of questions with other pragmatic markers like evidential *-te* (Lim 2011). We leave these for future study.

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