Self-addressed Questions and Indexicality: 
The Case of Korean

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Korean self-addressed questions


1. Mary-ka o-ass ni?
   Mary-NOM come-PAST HAQ
   ‘Has Mary come?’

2. Mary-ka o-ass na?
   Mary-NOM exist-HAQ
   ‘Where are the keys?’

SAQ-particles interact with second person pronouns (ne) and honorifics (upni):

3. ne-ka chency-i-ka?
   you-NOM genius-be-PRS SAQ
   ‘Are you a genius, I wonder.’

4. *ne-ka chency-i-ka?
   you-NOM genius-be-PRS SAQ
   unavailable: ‘Are you a genius, I wonder.’

5. *Mary-ka o-ass-upni ka?
   Mary-NOM exist-HAQ
   ‘Am I a genius, I wonder.’

New data: there are contexts where second person pronouns are felicitous:

6. Context: A studies a picture of his new PhD student B that was sent to him.
   (7) ne-ka chency-i-ka?
   you-NOM genius-be-PRS SAQ
   ‘Are you a genius, I wonder.’

Idea: Korean speakers can distinguish between ‘you’ as the addressee and ‘you’ as a referent but not the addressee

Analysis

The speaker decides the context.
Assume that A and B want to enter A’s office; A is searching the key. If A believes that B can not possibly know the location of the key, A will ask B and should know where the key is, A is more likely to ask the (8)b.

(8) a. eyelsoy-ka eti(ye-ye) iss-na?
   key-NOM where-LOC exist-SAQ
   ‘Where are the keys?’

b. eyelsoy-ka eti(ye) iss-na?
   key-NOM where-LOC exist-HAQ
   ‘Where are the keys?’

Denotation
- utterance contexts c are mapped to their parameters by functions sp, ad, etc. (Kaplan 1989)

9. meaning of SAQ-particles ka/na
   adefined iff sp(c)=ad(c)
   biff defined, [na]=λ.p.p

10. meaning of HAQ-particle ni
   adefined iff sp(c)=ad(c)
    biff defined, [ni]=λ.p.p

11. meaning of honorific upni
    adefined iff sp(c) strictly inferior to ad(c)
    biff defined, [upni]$\triangleright$ = [sp(c)]$\triangleright$

Condition (11)a entails sp(c)/ad(c)

Deictic vs. indexical ‘you’

In (6), A is aware of two contexts:
- c: sp(c)=A, ad(c)=B
- c': sp(c)=A, ad(c)=A

Deciding on c’ triggers the interpretation of ne ‘you’ as [ne accus] = B = ad(c), picking out B as a referent by coercion. Coercion facilitated by:
- past tense
- modality
- non-speaking referent

Honorific upni requires speaking referent and blocks coercion.

Addressing yourself

Consider a speaker A talking to themselves:

(12)a Ney yelsoy-ka eyelsoy-ka
   your key-NOM where-LOC exist-SAQ
   unavailable: ‘Where is your key?’

b. Ney yelsoy-ka eyelsoy-ka
   your key-NOM where-LOC exist-HAQ
   ‘Where is your key?’

Blocked coercion (12)a

Coercion would require two contexts
- actual utterance context c: sp(c)=A, ad(c)=A
  that licenses the SAQ-particle
- coerced context c': sp(c)=A, ad(c)=A that maps ney ‘your’ to A
  → non-distinct contexts!

HAQ in soliloquy (12)b

Enriched context c: sp(c)/ad(c), but ney ‘your’ refers back to A. This shows that the speaker can address themselves as a distinct entity.

→ alter ego analysis as in monologue, free indirect speech or erlebte Rede