Self-addressed questions and indexicality — The case of Korean

Regine Eckardt, Gisela D Disselkamp
Konstanz

Self-addressed questions

• marked by context (no addressee present, no answer requested)
• marked by grammar
  o Salish languages: evidential markers (Littell et al. 2010)
  o German: verb-end syntax + particle (Zimmermann 2013)
  o Italian: evidential future in questions (Eckardt & Beltrama 2018)
  o Korean: particles to mark “self-addressed questions”

We warmly thank Shin Sook Kim for her patient and precise judgements. Work was funded by the DFG, RU 2111 “Non-canonical questions at the interfaces” which we gratefully acknowledge.
Earlier theories of self-addressed questions

- Speas & Tenny (2003): speech act phrase
- Truckenbrodt (2006): feature-based account (German)
- Littell et al. (2010): semantics of conjectural questions
- Farkas & Bruce (2010): Table theory; Farkas (2017) for conjectural questions in Romanian
- Eckardt & Beltrama (2018): semantics of evidentials and conjectural questions

… to be reviewed later
Korean questions

marked with question particle: *ni* = true question
question particles *na / ka* = “self addressed question”

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

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

(Jang + Kim 1998, Jang 1999): Questions with *na/ka* are described as “monological” and “used in absence of an interlocutor”.

"Self-addressed questions in Korean"
SuB 2018 Barcelona, September 5th, 2018

Regine Eckardt, Gisela Disselkamp
Jang + Kim (1998), Jang (1999): The bound honorific morpheme *upni* must be used in an utterance when the speaker is socially lower than the addressee. The morpheme *upni* is blocked in *na/ka* SAQ questions.

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

(5) *Mary-ka o -ass -upni -ka/na?
    Mary-Nom come -PAST -HON -SAQ
    unavailable: “Has Mary come I wonder”

(Jang + Kim 1998:195)

(5) nay-ka chencay -i  -n    -ka?
    I-Nom genius    -be  -present -SAQ
    “Am I a genius, I wonder”

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

Jang+Kim: In a SAQ, speaker addresses speaker.
   a. speaker is not socially higher than self: *upni
   b. speaker talks to speaker, thus ne-ka can not be a second person, hence (6).
Challenging data (I):

(7) (?) ne-ka chencay -i -ess -ten -ka?
    you-Nom genius -be -PAST-Recoll -SAQ
    “Were you a genius? (conjecture)”

(Jang + Kim 1998: 197)

Explanation (J+K):
• Past tense → two versions of “you” are in the air, you_{now} and you_{past}.
• this helps to dissociate the referent of “you” from the addressee.
• ne-ka can refer to the person and still speaker = addressee.
Challenging data (II):

(8) 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?

Situation: A and B in front of A’s house. A searches bag for key.

A: (8a) ⇔ A believes that B might know the answer.
A: (8b) ⇔ A does not believe that B knows the answer.

Presence of second person ≠ second person is addressed (requested to answer). What counts for SAQ? What counts for HON?
Challenging data (III):

(9) (?)ne-ka chencay -i -n -ka?
    you-Nom genius -be -PRES -SAQ
“Are you a genius I wonder”

(9) is slightly marked but overall acceptable if

   a. uttered addressing the foto of a new student
   b. addressing a trained (but non-speaking) dog
   c. addressing a 2-month old baby

Second person pronouns in SAQ are permitted when ne (‘you’) refers to an entity or human who is not supposed to answer / not able to answer.
Challenging data (IV):

A is visiting B at her home. They see the fleurop van stop in front of the house. B is surprised. A comments

(10) ne-ka kkochtapal-ul pat -ullye -na?
you-NOM flowers-ACC receive -MOD.POSS -SAQ?
“Will you perhaps get flowers, I wonder”

In this situation, A does not expect B to answer.

- (10) is conjectural.
- The use of “you” ne is acceptable.
- The use of HON would still be unacceptable.
Summary:

• bystanders are acceptable when they are not supposed to answer (key-example)
• bystanders are acceptable when they are not able to answer (infants, pictures, animals etc.)
• bystanders are acceptable when they lack knowledge (flowers)

• suspicion: Jang & Kim erroneously class (6) as ungrammatical because they can’t imagine addressee being unable to answer “are you a genius”.
• suspicion: past tense (7) is more open to a situation where addressee could be unaware of her past signs of ingenuity.

⇒ Dissociate addressee (= communicative rôle) from second person (= listening other).
A. Indexical analysis of honorific morpheme

Let \( c \) be the utterance context (Kaplan 1989) of sentence \( S \). Let \( sp(c) \) the speaker in \( c \), \( ad(c) \) the addressee in \( c \).

The use of \( upni \) in sentence \( S \) adds the following pragmatic condition:

\[
\begin{align*}
[[ \upni S ]]^c &= [[ S ]]^c \text{ iff } sp(c) \text{ is strictly socially inferior to } ad(c) \\
[[ \upni S ]]^c &= \text{undefined otherwise.}
\end{align*}
\]

Remark: “socially inferior” can be a multi-factorial concept (e.g. McCready 2017 on Thai). We disregard the cultural issue whether \( upni \) defines a partial linear order on any given group of speakers. (For last-resort conditions see discussion.)
B. Who is the addressee?

Context determined by speaker’s intentions.

(8) "yelsoy-ka eti(-ey) iss-na?/ni?
    key-Nom where(-Loc) exist-SAQ? / -trueQ?

Does A intend to address B?
yes: \(sp(c) = A\) and \(ad(c) = B\)
no: \(sp(c) = A = ad(c)\)

The speaker intends the addressee in \(c\) to act as the dialogue requests: *update* / *object* for assertions; *answer* / *refuse* to questions (conversational scoreboard, e.g. Farkas & Bruce 2010).
In case \(sp(c) = ad(c)\): overt answering is suspended; failure to answer does not cause crisis (to be refined).
C. *ka/na and context*

(11) $[[ -na/ka ]]^c$ is defined in context $c$ iff $sp(c) = ad(c)$
    If defined, $[[ -na/ka ]]^c = \lambda Q.\lls,t>,t>.Q$

- Self-addressed questions in Korean are “the speaker talking to herself”.
- Possible in contexts where no other person is present.
- If other person is present (and even listening), the speaker does not request the person to react to the question.

Consequence: An utterance $S$ with both *upni* and *na/ka* imposes contradictory requirements on context $\Rightarrow$ *unacceptable.*
D. deictic vs. indexical ‘you’

- standard interpretation of second person pronoun $[[ne]]^C = \text{ad(c)}$

Idea:
- Korean allows for indexical and deictic use of $ne$.
- Indexical $ne = \text{standard interpretation}$
- Deictic $ne = \text{refers to the most salient bystander B in c if standard interpretation is blocked}$.

Implementation …
D. Deictic vs. indexical ‘you’

(SPP) \( [[ne]]^c \) presupposes: \( [[ne]]^c \neq sp(c) \)

(second person presupposition)

Every context \( c \) defines the surrounding situation \( sit(c) \) of utterance, potentially including bystanders \( B, B', B'' \).

\( ad(c) \) counts as bystander if different from speaker.

\( [[ne]]^c = B \) for the most salient bystander in \( sit(c) \).

- If \( sp(c) \neq ad(c) \), then \( ad(c) \) counts as the most salient bystander
- If \( sp(c) = ad(c) \), then \( B \) is contextually determined to avoid violation of the second-person requirement.

→ How does this interact with \( ka/na \) and \( upni \)?
Predictions

1. *upni* and *ka/na* can not occur in the same question:
   *upni* S is only defined if $sp(c) < ad(c)$
   *ka/na* S is only defined if $sp(c) = ad(c)$.
   No person can be strictly superior to themselves.

2. *ka/na* and second person PRO$^2$ can only co-occur in a question if the referent of PRO$^2$ is not requested to answer — be it that the speaker believes that PRO$^2$ does not know the answer, be it that the referent PRO$^2$ can not answer for other reasons.

3. If second person PRO$^2$ is used in a question with *ka/na*, it denotes B, the most salient by-stander in c. B is the “hearer” in the intuitive sense but B does not adopt the obligations of addressee.
Further corroboration: Real self-talk

Korean speakers cannot address *themselves* with ‘you’ in a *na/ka* marked question. (12) is only acceptable as a serious question (*ni*).

(12) a. *Ney yelsay-ka eti(-ye) iss- ni?*
    Your key-Nom where(-Loc) exist -trueQ

b. *Ney yelsay-ka eti(-ye) iss- *-na?*
    Your key-Nom where(-Loc) exist *-SAQ

speaker talking to herself: ‘where is your key?’

Incompatible *na/ka*:

\[
[[ na ]]^c : \text{sp}(c) = \text{ad}(c)
\]

presupposition of *ney*: \[[ ney ]]^c \neq \text{sp}(c)

→ normally avoided by interpreting *ney* as the most salient bystander B. But in this case, \( B = \text{sp}(c) \) again.
Further corroboration

Korean speakers cannot address themselves with ‘you’ in a na/ka marked question. (12) is only acceptable as a serious question (ni).

(12) a. *Ney yelsay-ka eti(-ye) iss- ni?  
   Your key-Nom where(-Loc) exist -trueQ

   b. *Ney yelsay-ka eti(-ye) iss- *-na?
      Your key-Nom where(-Loc) exist *-SAQ

   speaker talking to herself: ‘where is your key?’

Compatible ni:

\([ [ ni ] ]^c = \text{allows for } sp(c) \neq ad(c)\)

real speaker $R$ appears in $c$ in two rôles: $R$-as-speaker $\neq R$-as-addressee.

$R$-as-addressee $\approx$ fictuous other, most salient bystander

\([ [ ney ] ]^c = R$-as-addressee (SPP respected)\)
Further corroboration

Korean speakers cannot address *themselves* with ‘you’ in a *na/ka* marked question. (12) is only acceptable as a serious question (*ni*).

(12) a. *Ney yelsay-ka eti(-ye) iss- ni?*  
    Your key-Nom where(-Loc) exist -trueQ  
    b. *Ney yelsay-ka eti(-ye) iss- *-na?*  
    Your key-Nom where(-Loc) exist *-SAQ  
    speaker talking to herself: ‘where is your key?’

Why not allow *na* with  
R-as-speaker = *sp(c)*  
R-as-speaker = *ad(c)*  
R-as-bystander ≠ R-as-speaker  
Assume: Fiction of bystander (and owner of key) less entrenched than -as-hearer, hence unavailable.
Further corroboration: Theme-setting questions

Situation: A opens a talk with a theme-setting question: “How does a solar eclipse arise? (Well, as you know the earth revolves around the sun. The moon, in turn etc etc)”

(13) ilsik-un ettehkey sayngki-na?
solar.eclipse-TOP how arise -SAQ
’How does an eclipse arise?’

The standard question particle *ni* is not used in theme-setting questions.

- \([[\text{na}}]\), presupposes \(sp(c) = ad(c)\)
- SAQ + lacking knowledge: \(sp(c)\) is permitted to say nothing w.o. crisis
- SAQ + possessing knowledge, \(sp(c)\) obliged to answer (theme setting)
Alternative accounts (I)

Truckenbrodt (2006) on German

Sentence type $\Leftrightarrow$ V-to-C movement (verb-second) $\Leftrightarrow$ features

$<$epist$> \approx \text{‘having to do with knowing something’}$

$<$deont$> \approx \text{‘issues a request to addressee’}$

Problem 1: syntax-semantics interface missing; features have no meaning
Since 2010, an interpretation in terms of Farkas & Bruce could be envisaged.

Problem 2: the stipulated correspondence between sentence type and force does not always hold. (V-end repeat questions)
Alternative accounts (II)

Speas & Tenny (2003)

- matrix clause contains speech act phrase
- extended speech act phrase with SpeakerP, HearerP
- presence/absence of HearerP ≈ type of question

Problem 1: syntax-semantics interface missing.
- SpeakerP / HearerP = reference to individuals?
- What if sentence with HearerP is uttered in soliloqui? Does it become ungrammatical? semantically odd?

Problem 2: self-addressed questions can be uttered in presence of hearer (= referent of “you” *ne*). Account does not make any predictions for this case.
Alternative accounts (III)

Table theory (Farkas & Bruce 2010), conversational scoreboard theories. Utterances define a range of possible/necessary reactions for addressee (e.g. believe assertion!, answer question!)

Farkas (2017): Romanian SAQ with oare \(\equiv\) questions that allow for more reactions of addressee, including zero.

Advantage: Analysis includes an addressee. SAQ in many other languages do relate to hearer (second person); e.g. invite joint speculation (Eckardt & Beltrama 2018/subm.), e.g. allow honorifics (Japanese, see Oguro 2017)

Problem: How can the account block honorifics in SAQ in Korean?
Alternative accounts (IV)

Truth conditional accounts of self-addressed questions:

Denotation makes Q un-answerable

Littell et al. (2010): Salish SAQ are marked with inferential evidential markers. Denotation presupposes ‘that for each possible answer q AD has inferential evidence that q’. No interlocutor can commit to this presupposition = no request to answer.

Eckardt & Beltrama (2018/subm.): German SAQ are marked with evidential wohl. Verb-end syntax triggers joint-evidence reading. ‘Which of the answers to Q can we infer from pooled knowledge’ Before answering, Sp and Ad must pool their knowledge. Thus, Q does not issue the request to provide an immediate answer.

Problem: Both analyses assume an addressee. How can the accounts block honorifics in SAQ in Korean?
Summary: The Special Ways of Korean Context

Korean

• SAQ are questions to the speaker
• second person bystander ≠ speaker is not in charge
• you can be deictic (independent of c)
• HONORIFICS rest on context
• SAQ can be theme-setting questions

Romanian, Italian, German, Japanese …

• SAQ have an addressee in c
• you refers to ad(c)
• Japanese: HONORIFICS rest on context c
• SAQ leave addressee more ways to react
• SAQ are not (normally) theme setting questions
References: