

Audience-blind sentence-enders in Korean: A discourse-pragmatic perspective

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Abstract

In Korean the speaker-addressee relationship is reflected in mandatory sentence-final verbal morphology. It indicates, among other things, the speaker's attitudinal, emotional, epistemic, and evidential stance toward the addressee or proposition, including various honorification levels. The so-called 'speech-level' has been grammaticalized to such an extent that any violation of proper honorification would render the utterance not only pragmatically unacceptable but often ungrammatical. There is, however, one distinct style adopting 'audience-blind forms' (ABFs), which are used in sentences intended for unspecified audiences and lack such interpersonal grammatical trappings. This paper addresses strategic uses of ABFs in discourse, especially in audience-sensitive contexts. By strategically employing ABFs, the speaker feigns the utterance as monological, i.e., it is directed to the self, not the addressee. From the viewpoint of discursive strategy, the speaker claims, among others, his/her superiority over the addressee or universal validity of his/her claim. The use of ABFs in audience-sensitive contexts thus shows how language users may opt out of grammatical requirements and strategically employ seemingly inappropriate forms for discursive effect. It is also argued, drawing upon crosslinguistic observations, that audience-blinding is a part of general blinding strategies in language use, which may involve the author and the message as well.

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1. Introduction

Korean is a head-final, agglutinating language with the SOV word order. The sentence-final word is the main-clause verb followed by a constellation of verbal morphology that marks tense, aspect, modality, evidentiality, sentence type, formality, politeness, etc., as illustrated in (1)¹:

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¹ Following abbreviations are used in the gloss: ABF: audience-blind form; ACC: accusative; ADN: adnominal; ANT: anterior; CAUS: causative; CLS: classifier; COMP: complementizer; CONC: concurrent; COND: conditional; CONJEC: conjectural; CONN: connective; CONT: continuative; CR: current-relevance; DEC: declarative; DFR: deferential; END: sentence-ender; EVID: evidential; EXCL: exclamative; FML: formal; GEN: genitive; HON: honorific; HORT: hortative; HUM: humiliating; IMP: imperative; INF: inferential; INST: instrumental; INT: interrogative (= Q); INTM: intimate; NEG: negation; NOM: nominative; NOMZ: nominalizer; PERF: perfective; POL: polite; PRES: present; PROM: promissive; PROP: propositive; PRT: particle; PST: past; PSV: passive; Q: question (= INT); QUOT: quotative; REPT: reportative; RETRO: retrospective; SEL: selective; SIM: simultaneous; SM.FML: semi-formal; STM: stance-marker; TOP: topic; and TRI: trial. Some examples from pre-Modern Korean texts are rendered in simplified orthography.

- (1) 벌써 강의를 끝내버리셨잖더군요.
pelsse kangyu-lul kkuthna-y-e.peli-si-ess-keyss-ta-te-kwun-yo
 already lecture-ACC finish-CAUS-PERF-HON-PST-CONJEC-COMP-RETRO-EVID-POL
 '(I) recall (they told me) that (the professor) seemed to have finished the lecture (by then).'

Korean stands out not only in terms of the extent of agglutination of verbal morphemes as illustrated in (1), but also in terms of the size of the inventory of verbal morphology that occurs sentence-finally. The elaborate system of verbal morphology signals, as noted above, interpersonal features, such as variable levels of honorification (HON), politeness (POL) and formality (FML). Honorific (and non-honorific), polite (and non-polite) and formal (and casual) are features inherently interactional and intersubjective. All sentences need to be marked with some of the sentence-final verbal morphology including these interpersonal features depending on the relationship of the interlocutors. The system of such verbal morphology for sentence-final particles is known as *hwakyey* 'speech level' in Korean linguistics. The speech-level marking is fully grammaticalized as an obligatory category at the sentence level, i.e., if speakers have not yet determined the levels of honorification, politeness and formality, they cannot complete the sentence in their utterance. Similarly, if the levels of such interpersonal features are incongruent, the mismatch would render the utterance not only pragmatically unacceptable but often ungrammatical.

However, Korean has one peculiar class of the sentence-enders, which Koo and Rhee (2013) labeled 'audience-blind form' (ABF). ABFs, by definition, lack interactional and intersubjective features, and are thus normally inadequate for use in interactional contexts, as exemplified by the following examples with the audience-sensitive interrogative ender *-pnikka* (deferential; DEF) and the audience-blind interrogative ender *-na*:

- (2) a. 교수님, 밖에 비가 옵니까?
kyoswu-nim pakk-ey pi-ka o-pnikka?
 professor-HON outside-at rain-NOM come-Q:DEF
 'Is it raining outside, Professor?'
 b. #교수님, 밖에 비가 오나?
kyoswu-nim pakk-ey pi-ka o-na?
 professor-HON outside-at rain-NOM come-Q:ABF
 #'Is it raining outside, Professor?'
 c. 밖에 비가 오나?
pakk-ey pi-ka o-na?
 outside-at rain-NOM come-Q:ABF
 'Is it raining outside?' (monologal utterance)

As shown in the above examples, only audience-sensitive forms (e.g. *-pnikka*) are used as sentence enders in other-directed speech, as in (2a) (note the presence of a vocative), and an audience-blind form (e.g. *-na*) is not acceptable (marked with a '#' in (2b)) in such contexts, which is acceptable in audience-blind contexts such as monologues, as in (2c).

ABFs, however, are often employed strategically in interactional contexts in discourse and narratives. This strategic employment of ABFs constitutes a separate intersubjectivity, i.e., the speaker's diverse stances. This paper addresses such strategic uses of ABFs and their implications on discourse and grammar. Thus, the objective of this paper is threefold: to describe the features of ABFs and their development in history, to analyze the discursive strategies involving audience-blindness, and to argue that strategic 'blinding' is a more widely employed strategy, the application of which is not restricted to audience, but also to the author and message, in language use.

This paper is organized in the following manner: section 2 addresses some of the key notions such as intersubjectivity, honorification, speech levels, and audience-blindness and audience-sensitivity; section 3 presents three major situational types of ABF usage, i.e., dialogues with power asymmetry, feigned monologues, and objective and pseudo-objective textual genres. Section 4 illustrates the grammaticalization of ABFs from major sources, analyzes discursive strategies involving them in Modern Korean, and presents audience-blindness phenomena in other languages. Then, extending the scope of analysis, it further illustrates strategic blinding at other domains of discourse, i.e., the author and the content, in Korean as well as in other languages. In other words, contrary to common wisdom, language users do not always endeavor to present clear messages but often employ vagueness for strategic reasons, a state of affairs attested across languages. Section 5 summarizes the discussions and concludes the paper.

The data are taken from various sources, including the [Sejong Historical Corpus](#) for historical data, and the [Drama and Cinema Corpus](#) for contemporary data.² In addition, some examples are taken from elementary and middle school textbooks and online sources.

2. Preliminaries remarks on key notions

2.1. Intersubjectivity

Since its introduction in linguistic analyses by [Traugott and Dasher \(2002\)](#), the notion of ‘intersubjectivity’ has been widely embraced, especially in grammaticalization studies in the form of intersubjectification, a process of the emergence or increase in degree of intersubjectivity. The notion, largely referring to the speaker's attention to addressee's self-image, stands in contrast with ‘subjectivity’ which indexes the speaker's attitude or viewpoint. [Traugott \(2003:128, 2010:32\)](#) remarks that intersubjectivity is a general characteristic of all language use; that intersubjective speech situations provide the crucial context for invited inferences; and that the speaker's attention to the addressee's ‘self’ may involve both an epistemic sense (paying attention to their presumed attitudes to the content of what is said), and a more social sense (paying attention to their ‘face’ or ‘image needs’ associated with social stance and identity). [Traugott and Dasher \(2002:23\)](#) further note that intersubjective meanings are interpersonal in the sense of [Halliday and Hasan \(1976\)](#) and arise directly from the interaction. Examples of such intersubjective expressions include overt social deixis, hedges, politeness markers, and honorific titles.

What is relevant in Korean is that intersubjectivity marking is not optional but fully grammaticalized. Korean culture is characterized as one in which collectivist solidarity of and reliance on in-group members, the relationship-over-task orientation, and the respect for social hierarchy are of utmost importance, thus a good example of the so-called ‘high context’ culture ([Hall, 1976](#)). This emphasis on interpersonality brought forth linguistic systems, both lexical and grammatical, to encode the speaker-addressee relationship with fine-grained distinction. One of such systems is the honorification system, which is illustrated below.

2.2. Honorification

Honorification encodes ‘deference’ displayed by the speaker toward the addressee. Honorification in Korean, which may be lexically marked, or by case markers and verbal suffixes, is a complex system involving addressee honorification, subject honorification, honorification suppression, and speech level modulation.³

The complexity of the honorification system is among the sources of confusion for the speakers of the language, especially for those learning the language as a non-native language. For instance, honorification suppression is applicable when the addressee is a social superior in relation to the sentential subject, e.g., when a girl speaks to her grandfather about her father, in which case the honorification licensed by the honorifiability of the sentential subject or topic (the father) must be suppressed because the addressee (the grandfather) is higher on the honorification scale. Thus, the girl speaking to her grandfather would describe her father's coming as *o-* ‘come’ instead of HON-marked *o-si-* ‘come-HON’.

Our primary interest is the speech level modulation marked by the verbal morphology functioning as sentence-enders. The speech level system in Korean has six or seven different levels depending on grammarians and linguists.⁴ There is even a great variation in individual intuition. This synchronic instability of the system seems to be largely due to the fact that the system has been undergoing leveling in Modern Korean, whereby some members of the paradigm have become

² The Sejong Historical Corpus is a 15-million word, historical section of the Sejong Corpus, a 200-million word corpus developed as part of the 21st Century Sejong Project by the Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the National Institute of Korean Language (1998–2006). The texts in the historical section date from 1446 through 1913. The Drama and Cinema Corpus is a 24-million word contemporary corpus, a collection of 7,454 scenarios of dramas and cinemas dating from 1992 through 2015, compiled by Min Li of Seoul National University. UNICONC, a concordance program, has been used for data search. Special thanks go to the developers who kindly granted the use of the corpora.

³ In addition to nominal suffixes for honorification (e.g. *sensaying-nim* ‘teacher’ with the HON suffix *-nim*, etc.), case markers (e.g. HON *-kkeyse* instead of *-ka/-i* for nominative, HON *-kkey* instead of *-eykey/-hanthey* for dative, etc.), and verbal suffixes (e.g. *ka-si-* instead of *ka-* ‘go’, etc.), certain items show divergent lexicalization patterns for honorific vs. non-honorific contrast (e.g. HON *cwumwusi-* vs. *ca-* ‘sleep’, HON *capswusi-* vs. *mek-* ‘eat’, HON *cinci* vs. *pap* ‘meal’, etc.).

⁴ Most scholars, e.g., [Lee and Lim \(1998\)](#), [Lee \(2002\)](#), [Han \(2003\)](#), [Nam and Ko \(2006\)](#), [Brown \(2015\)](#), among others, suggest a 6-level system even though there are variations in the membership of the forms. [Sohn \(1999\)](#) suggests a 7-level system, by adding a category labeled as ‘Neutral’, the list which includes some of ABFs. The highest of the speech level is deferential (DFR) which signals [+Formal] and [+Polite] simultaneously.

Table 1
Sentence-enders for speech levels for major sentence types.

	DEC	INT	IMP	PROP
Plain	-(n)ta	-ni/(nu)nya	-ela/ala	-ca
Intimate	-e/a	-e/a	-e/a	-e/a
Familiar	-ney	-na/nunka	-key	-sey
Semi-formal	-o	-o	-(u)o	-(u)psita
Polite	-eyo/ayoy	-eyo/ayoy	-eyo/ayoy	-eyo/ayoy
Deferential	-(su)pnita	-(su)pnikka	-(u)sipsio	-(u)sipsita

increasingly underused to the point of near obsolescence. The speech levels for major sentence types are marked by the sentence-enders, as illustrated in Table 1, adapted from Song (2005:125).

The granularity in the level distinction of the speech level as represented in Table 1 may seem remarkably high to the speakers of other languages, especially of European languages in which honorification is mostly marked by address terms, honorific titles, or honorific pronouns (i.e., the V forms in T-V contrast). However, the complexity is not fully represented in the table since there are many other alternative forms as well as the variants of the forms listed. In addition, there are verbal endings in the sentence types of Apperceptive (similar to Exclamative) and Promissive as well, also variable by the speech level. Since our immediate interest is not the overall honorification system, detailed explication of the system is not pursued here.

2.3. Audience-blindness and audience-sensitivity

Sentence-enders, modulated along the dimensions of politeness and honorification, are interpersonal, and thus audience-sensitive. However, there is a peculiar group of sentence-enders that are audience-blind, i.e., ABFs. Considering that sentence-enders constitute a paradigm inherently audience-sensitive, by virtue of their determining factors being the speaker-addressee relationship, these ABFs are exceptional in that they are audience-blind, i.e., not modulated by the nature of the speaker-addressee relationship. This is exemplified in the following:

(3) a. Audience-sensitive interrogative sentence ender *-pnikka* (deferential = formal, polite)

교수님, 안녕하십니까?

kyoswu-nim, annyengha-si-pnikka?

professor-HON be.peaceful-HON-Q:DEF

'How are you, Professor?'

b. Audience-sensitive general sentence ender *-e* (intimate)⁵

꼬마야, 잘 잤어?

kkoma-ya, cal ca-ss-e?

child-VOC well sleep-PST-END:INTM

'Did you sleep well, Kid?'

c. Audience-blind interrogative sentence ender *-na*

친구가 잘 있나?

chinkwu-ka cal iss-na?

friend-NOM well exist-Q:ABF

'Is (my) friend doing fine?'

Sentences like those in (3) are among the naturally occurring utterances, in which the sentence enders indicate the speech levels, e.g., the deferential level for a student to his/her professor in (3a), the intimate level for an adult to a child in (3b), both marked with audience-sensitive sentence enders. On the other hand, (3c) involves an audience-blind ender in an utterance by someone who is wondering about his/her friend's condition, an instance of self-directed speech. The most typical genres of the audience-blind style may be the language used in personal diary in writing or in monologues in speech. Since these circumstances do not involve addressees, ABFs in these categories are instances of genuine audience-blindness, in contrast with instances when the audience-blindness is feigned and ABFs are strategically recruited in audience-sensitive contexts, which is the focus of the present investigation.

⁵ The general sentence ender *-e* can be used in all sentence types. The function is often differentiated by means of the context or the prosody.

However, it is noteworthy that the notion of audience-blindness as proposed by Koo and Rhee (2013) is not a monolithic one, i.e., audience-blindness is necessarily of variable degrees for a number of reasons.⁶ First of all, most utterances are produced with the addressee in mind, in the sense of which, practically all utterances are audience-sensitive. Certain utterances are unintentionally uttered spontaneously (e.g. monologues, exclamations), thus making certain types of utterances not audience-sensitive, or at least minimally audience-sensitive.⁷ The visibility of the audience may also vary depending on the medium of the message, e.g., vis-à-vis interactions, TV or radio or computer-media, books and reports. Furthermore, speakers sometimes strategically use utterances that are monologues in form but are intended to be heard by the addressee. Therefore, without knowledge of the speaker's intention such utterances are undeterminable with respect to audience-sensitivity from their appearances only. The last category, the strategic use of audience-blind markers in audience-sensitive speech situation, is of utmost importance for our present purposes (see section 4.2 for more discussion).

Some of the ABFs for major sentence types are as shown in (4), and examples of some of the ABFs are given in (5):

(4) ABFs

DEC: *-(n)ta*
 INT: *-na, -nka, -(u)lkka, -(u)lci, -nci*
 IMP: *-(u)la*
 HORT: *-ca*
 EXCL: *-ney, -kwun, -kwuna, -kwumen, -ala, -tota, -lota*
 PROM: (none)

(5) a. Audience-Blind declarative *-(n)ta*

비가 온다.

pi-ka o-nta

rain-NOM come-DEC:ABF

'It is raining.'

b. Audience-Blind interrogative *-nka*

이게 꽃인가?

ike-y kkoch-i-nka?

this-NOM flower-be-Q:ABF

'Is this a flower?'

c. Audience-Blind imperative *-(u)la*

봄날이여 영원하라.

pomnal-iyē yengwenha-la

spring.time-VOC be.everlasting-IMP:ABF

'O, spring, stay forever.'

d. Audience-Blind hortative *-ca*

꺼진 불도 다시 보자.

kkeci-n pwul-to tasi po-ca

extinguish-ADN fire-also again look-HORT:ABF

'Let's look again even at (apparently) extinguished fire.'

e. Audience-Blind exclamative *-ney*

꽃이 너무 예쁘네.

kkoch-i nemwu yeyppu-ney

flower-NOM very.much be.pretty-EXCL:ABF

All examples in (5) make use of ABFs. They have audience-sensitive counterparts that are modulated according to the speech levels depending on the speaker-addressee relationship. For instance, the declarative predicate of (5a), *o-nta* 'is coming', may be changed into the forms with audience-sensitive enders, such as *o-pnita* (DEF), *o-a-yo* (POL), *o-a* (INTM), etc.

⁶ In their discussion of certain sentence-final particles of discontent, Koo and Rhee (2013:81) list the following six characteristics of ABFs: (i) they are a subtype of [+formal, -honorific] register sentence enders, (ii) they are not used in vis-à-vis interaction, (iii) they are typically used in textbook narratives, newspaper articles, etc., (iv) some of them are used in subordinate clauses, (v) they vary depending on sentence types only, and (vi) Hortatives do not have ABF variation. Since no discussion for each characteristic is provided in it, this paper is a follow-up elaboration of the concept with minor modifications, i.e., there are hortative ABFs but no Promissive ABFs (see below for discussion).

⁷ The fact that Exclamatives are not entirely audience-blind is supported by the fact that Korean Exclamatives do have forms marked with politeness (cf. Plain *-kwun* vs. POL *-kwunyo*; Plain *-ney* vs. POL *-neyyo*, etc.).

Likewise, the Interrogative *kkoch-i-nka* 'is a flower?' in (5b) may be changed into *kkoch-i-pnikka* (DEF), *-kkoch-i-ey-yo* (POL), *kkoch-i-ya* (INTM), etc. Example (5c) is an imperative sentence. An audience-blind imperative appears to be self-contradictory since an imperative presupposes the presence of the addressee. An audience-blind imperative is not to issue a direct command to an addressee, but as shown in (5c), its addressee is typically non-human (e.g. spring-time, good old days, youth, pain, love, etc.) often creating poetic flavor. The audience-blind imperative *yengwenha-la* 'be everlasting!' in (5c) needs to be changed in audience-sensitive contexts into *yengwenha-si-psio* (DEF), *yengwenha-sey-yo* (POL), *yengwenha-y* (INTM), *yengwenha-ela* (INTM), etc. In an exact parallel with Imperatives, an audience-blind hortative may be used when the party to whom the proposition is being made is abstract or invisible, e.g., the readers of a fire prevention slogan in (4d). In audience-sensitive contexts, the audience-blind hortative *po-ca* 'let's look' in (4d) would be changed into *po-si-psita* (DEF), *po-psita* (DEF), *po-a-yo* (POL), *po-a* (INTM), etc. The audience-blind exclamative predicate *yeyppu-ney* 'is pretty!' in (4e) has audience-sensitive counterparts, such as *yeyppu-ney-yo* (POL), etc.

In the list of ABFs in (4) are certain issues that need to be addressed. One of the prominent aspects of ABFs is that there are no ABFs in the sentence type of Promissive. The absence of any relevant form in this category is expected since it is difficult to make a promissive statement with total disregard of the presence of the addressee. Nevertheless, Interrogatives, which, by definition, are directed to the addressee, do have ABFs, in fact, many of them. One of the factors playing a decisive role is that interrogative ABFs originated from self-directed questions (see section 4.1). Then, Promissive can be self-directed, i.e., in the form of self-directed resolution or determination. In this case the ABF recruited is the hortative ABF. Similarly, we noted in the preceding discussion that Imperatives and Hortatives, which inherently presuppose the presence of addressee(s), do have ABFs used in certain conditions.

Another aspect with the list is that certain ABFs are identical with audience-sensitive forms, which suggests functional syncretism between the two categories. This is the case with the DEC *-(n)ta* and the HORT *-ca*.⁸ Since the audience-sensitive DEC *-(n)ta* is identical in form with the audience-blind DEC *-(n)ta*, a sentence with the ender *-(n)ta* often carries the nuance of spontaneity, thus resembling an exclamative utterance. Example (5a), for instance, carries some delicate shades of mirativity as 'It's raining! I didn't expect it.' We can say that, at certain conceptual level, declarative sentences are uttered because the speaker thinks that their propositional content is noteworthy. One may utter such remarks spontaneously, i.e. without having the addressee in mind, or intentionally, i.e., with the intention of informing the addressee. The distinction between the two may often be fuzzy since the degree of intentionality is gradient. Furthermore, the notion of 'presence' of an addressee may be fuzzy as well. For instance, the inanimate 'spring time' in (5c) is not a normal addressee, unless in poetic personification, in the sense that it is not a potent agent to perform an action as commanded, and the readers of a publicly posted slogan as in (5d) are not in direct interaction with the author but only imagined by the author. Cases like this, therefore, may be construed as either instances of true ABFs or of strategic ABFs (see section 3.3 for more discussion on textbook styles). We can hypothesize that conceptual fuzziness is correlated with the formal syncretism. It remains open, however, whether such fuzziness, i.e., gradient of intentionality and readership, is indeed the motivation of the double duty of the DEC *-(n)ta* and the HORT *-ca* in audience-sensitive and audience-blind contexts.

Another question that arises in case of functional isomorphism across audience-blindness and audience-sensitivity is how one can tell if the function of a form is one or the other. This kind of ambiguity, however, does not pose a problem in reality because a sentence ending with a form that is ambiguous between the two functions normally occurs in a narrative or discourse in which other sentence types that are marked with non-ambiguous enders also occur. Furthermore, such cues often exist even in lexical choices and grammatical markers in the self-same sentence. Thus, functional disambiguation is a simple task in reality.

It can be stressed once again, however, that all this state of affairs suggests that audience-sensitive vs. audience-blind distinction may not be clearly delineated in certain sentence types when the sentence is taken out of context. Incidentally, irregularities are also observed in the paradigm of speech levels by speech acts, since certain slots in it are occupied by multiple markers, whereas certain slots remain empty altogether.

A point notable in this context is that audience-sensitivity is relevant to the concept of audience design as proposed by Bell (1984, 2007) and incorporated in Coupland's (2007) study on style and identity (see also Giles, 1973; Giles and Powesland, 1975 for 'communication accommodation' and Wardhaugh, 2002 for 'speech repertoire').⁹ According to Bell (1984, 1991, 2007), speakers adjust their speech styles to match the audience. These studies investigate styles that are variable along social dimensions, e.g. diverse linguistic features including pronunciation, use of discourse particles, lexical choice, etc., with reference to the addressee. Linguistic coding of audience sensitivity, and, more generally, of

⁸ As noted above, some Exclamatives are modulated with speech-level distinctions. It is intriguing that exclamations and interjections, which, by definition involve surprise of the perceiver-speaker, can be modulated depending on the addressee. This state of affairs constitutes an interesting research topic, which, however, is not pursued here, mainly because our primary interest lies in intentional disregard of the addressee (ABFs) rather than intentional addition of addressee-oriented features.

⁹ We thank a reviewer who brought our attention to this issue.

speech levels in Korean, are among the variables in the language repertoire for Korean speakers, and the choice is dependent on the audience's relative social hierarchy. Unlike other variables, which are largely more fluid and negotiable, choices in audience-sensitivity is more rigid (see section 4.2, however, for its strategic manipulation).

3. ABFs exemplified: three situational types of audience-blindness

Audience-blindness, though inappropriate in situations where the message is directed to an addressee, is strategically exploited in interactional contexts. We will look at the examples in three major situational types, i.e., power asymmetry in dialogues, feigned monologues, and pseudo-objective texts, and the discursive strategies that motivate the use of ABFs in such situations.

3.1. Type 1: dialogue with power asymmetry

As noted earlier, since Korean has a rigidly grammaticalized system of speech levels, all speakers of Korean are under the pressure of determining their position relative to the addressee in order to select an appropriate level of honorification. The upward or downward direction of the speech level is unilateral, thus interlocutors do not necessarily adopt reciprocal forms. When the speakers determine that the power gap is big, e.g., they are considerably higher in hierarchy than their interlocutors, they may choose to use a form with lower degrees of honorification and politeness, but they may still employ one of the polite forms, especially in the social milieu in which egalitarianism is increasingly gaining ground. However, there are situations in which asymmetrical power display is more readily expected for historical reasons. For instance, the king speaking to his courtiers, or a nobleman speaking to his servants, in the pre-Modern times, or military officers speaking to their men are in the upper position of extreme power asymmetry. In these cases, adoption of ABFs is not only allowed but is expected. Some of examples taken from historical texts are as shown below:

(6) Between a nobleman and a commoner

A: [A nobleman asks a boatman with an ABF *-na*]

가량 배 한 척이면 몇 해나 부리나 적은 배 부리난 사람은 큰 배 부릴수 업나

kalyang pay han chyek-i-myen myes hay-na pwuli-na

if boat one CLS-be-COND how.many year-SEL operate-Q:ABF

cyekun pay pwuli-nun salam-un khun pay pwuli-lswuep-na

small boat operate-ADN person-TOP big boat operate-cannot-Q:ABF

'If one has a boat how many years can he operate it [ABF]? Someone operating a small boat cannot operate a big boat [ABF]?'

B: [The boatman, a commoner, answers with a regular polite form *-ci-yo*]

아니지요 제 밋천이 업서 적은 배 부리지요.

ani-ci-yo cyey mischyen-i eps-ye cyek-un pay pwuli-ci-yo

be.not-END-POL my capital-NOM not.exist-CONN small-ADN boat operate-END-POL

'No, it is not [POL]. I operate a small boat because I don't have enough money [POL].'

(1912, Park Iyang, *Myengwalceng* 376–378)

The dialogue in (6) is taken from a novel dating from 1912. The nobleman, A, is on a boat rowed by the boatman B, and begins asking B a series of questions mixed with intermittent statements. The above example is an exchange of a question and answer but, most critically, the nobleman uses the ABF interrogative sentence-ender *-na*, which is a commonly used monologual sentence-ender (see section 4.1 for more discussion), while the boatman uses sentences with polite ender. Another example from a historical text is shown in (7):

(7) Between a military officer and a man

A: [An officer asks his man with an ABF *-nka*]

리군 부상을 했는가

li-kwun pwusyang-ul hay-s-nu-nka

[name]-Title injury-ACC do-PST-CR-Q:ABF

'Private Lee, did you get hurt [ABF]?'

B: [The private answers with a regular semi-formal form *-o*]

안이오 지금 거긔서 무슨 것이오

ani-o cikum kekuy-sye mwut-un kes-i-o

be.not-END:SM.FML now there-from get-ADN thing-be-END:SM.FML

'No, sir [SM.FML]. (The blood on my pants) is what I got from (handling the wounded man) over there [SM.FML].'

(1913, Sunwoo Il, *Twukyenseng* 1220)

The dialogue in (7) is also taken from a novel around the turn of the twentieth century. The interlocutors are a commanding officer and a man aboard a battleship engaged in a battle. Noticing the blood on B's pants, the officer asks if he was injured, using the ABF interrogative sentence-ender *-nka*. The private answers that the blood is from his comrade who was wounded just moments ago, marking his answers with the audience-sensitive semi-formal endings *-o*.

As shall be discussed more in detail in section 4.1 with reference to the grammaticalization of ABFs, the ABF interrogative endings *-na* in (6) and *-nka* in (7) originated from monologal question endings. The development has been triggered by interesting discourse strategies. For instance, the nobleman and the officer are asking questions to their social inferiors as if they were uttering monologues. With great power asymmetry, the speakers may signal their aloofness from the situation, effectively implying that the person present in the scene is not their social equal.¹⁰ Thus adoption of audience-blind style is tantamount to a claim of superiority.

From a different perspective, however, the speech act can be interpreted as one in which the speaker is presenting a potentially face-threatening act, i.e., asking a question, as if it were not, by presenting it in the form of a monologue. In other words, questions thus asked, strictly speaking, are non-impositive. For instance, the boatman in (6) is not obligated to respond to the nobleman's utterance, which, in appearance, is a monologue, interpretable as "I'm wondering how many years a person can operate a boat when one acquires it . . . I'm wondering if a small boat operator cannot operate a big boat. . ." When a potentially face-threatening speech act is rendered 'safe' by marking it with a non-interactive marker, the intended addressee can show respect to the utterer by responding to it because the response can be interpreted as a kind act of 'reading the utterer's mind' and satisfying the inquisitiveness of the monologal speaker. At the same time, the utterer's face will not be threatened even if the intended addressee does not respond, i.e., the utterer can self-justify the absence of response by saying that it was only a monologue, not a question. This double-facedness of the ABFs, which creates the beneficial effect for the speaker and the addressee, seems to have motivated the emergence and spread of the audience-blind style.¹¹

In Modern Korean, one of the context types in which the interrogative ABF *-na* is productively used is when the speaker is of high social hierarchy, typically old and power-minded, a usage which is a direct remnant of the speech style in power asymmetry, as described above. This is well illustrated in the following examples:

- (8) A: 왜 이렇게 여유자금이 없나?
way ilehkey yeyu cakum-i eps-na?
 why like.this spare fund-NOM not.exist-Q:ABF
 'Why is it that (we) do not have enough fund in spare [ABF]?'
 B: 한센해운에서 돈이 안 들어오고 있습니다.
hanseynhaywun-eyse ton-i an tuleo-koiss-supnita
 [name]-from money-NOM not come.in-PROG-DEC:DEF
 '(It's because) Hansen Maritime Shipping is not paying [DEF].'

(2008, Drama *Nay yeca*, Episode #17)

The scene of (8) is the CEO's office, where the CEO, A, is asking his subject B about the reason that his company's capital is low at the moment. The question is marked with the interrogative ABF *-na*, one that signals the speaker's uncontested power and superiority, originated from the ABF used in extreme power asymmetry, as noted above. His subject B answers that it is due to the delinquent payment by one of their clients. The answer is marked with the deferential (formal and polite) declarative ender, *-supnita*. The power asymmetry is obvious in this interaction from the differential uses of the sentence enders.

3.2. Type 2: feigned monologues

Another type of situation for ABF usage is the feigned monologue, i.e., when the speaker employs ABF-marked monologues in an audience-sensitive context for strategic purposes. Since ABFs, by definition, are non-interactive, their

¹⁰ In an extreme power-asymmetry situation, the powerful speaker may use the forms at the lower end of speech levels toward the power-inferior addressee, in lieu of ABFs. But their propensity to avoid such interaction is manifest in the stylization of 'speaking through a messenger' even when the intended addressee is in presence.

¹¹ As a reviewer points out, from the perspective of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, it is intriguing that socially powerful speaker may adopt ABFs in speech toward a socially-inferior addressee, since adoption of ABFs, for their indirect nature, largely coincide with off-record strategy and socially powerful speakers are generally not inhibited from performing FTAs. Adoption of ABFs seems to be due to the fact that asking is an inherently impositive speech act, and further, that in Korean historical contexts, it was probably the cross-hierarchical interaction itself that the socially superior tried to avoid. They generally avoided not only conversing but also sitting, sleeping, eating, etc. with the socially inferior. In circumstances necessitating interaction, using the forms at the lower end of the speech level was an alternative option.

use in audience-sensitive context is incongruous in appearance. Such utterances are normally interpreted as monologues, but since the person present in the scene hears the utterances, he or she attempts to assess the speaker's intentions in the situation. Since the speaker is aware of the presence of the addressee, and often expects his or her reaction to the message, it is not always clear if a particular instance of such utterances is a true monologue or feigned monologue. Feigned monologues are often observed as exemplified in the following:

(9) A: 돈 급한가요?

ton kupha-nkapw-ayo?

money be.urgent-INF-**END:POL**

'It seems that you need money urgently..[POL]'

B: 네... 실은 엄마가 좀 편찮으셔서요. 아~ 어디 뭐 돈 툭 떨어질 데 없나?

[sheepishly] *ney... sil-un emma-ka com phyenchanh-usy-ese-yo*

yes fact-TOP mother-NOM a.little ill-HON-CAUS-**POL**

a eti mwe ton ttwuk tteci-l tey eps-na?

ah where what money thump fall-ADN place not.exist-**Q:ABF**

'yes... as a matter of fact, because my mother is a little ill [pol]. Ah, isn't there... somewhere... a place where, like, money falls from heaven [ABF]'

(2008, Drama *Pipho & apphuthe senghyengoykwa*, Episode #3)

(10) A: (like a monologue) 병원비는 얼마나 나올래나?

pyengwenpi-nun elmana nao-llay-na?

medical.fee-TOP how.much come-FUT-**Q:ABF**

'(I wonder) how much would the medical expenses be [ABF]'

B: 병원비 걱정은 마세요. 할인도 많이 될 거구요. 저 그 정도 돈은 있어요.

pyengwenpi kekceng-un ma-seyyo halin-to manhi toy-lke-kwu-yo

medical.fee worry-TOP stop-IMP:POL discount-also much become-FUT-**END:POL**

ce ku cengto ton-un iss-eyo

I:HUM that degree money-TOP exist-**END:POL**

'Don't worry about the medical expenses [POL]. I will get a big discount [POL]. I do have that much money [POL].'

(2001, Drama *Metikhal seyenthe*, Episode #25)

The scene of (9) is an office and the exchange is between two workers, A and B. A overhears B's telephone conversation and senses that he urgently needs money. Since she has amorous feelings toward him, she inquires him if it is the case. He reluctantly agrees saying that his mother is ill (implying costly medical attention), marking his utterance with a politeness marker *-yo*. Then he changes his utterance style by marking the next utterance "Wouldn't there be a place where money falls from the sky?" with the ABF *-na*. This question, in appearance, is not directed to B present in the scene. By feigning that the question is self-directed, he implies that he knows it is a silly question, that she does not have to answer the silly question, and that he is in desperate need of money he does not have money. Occurrences of ABFs in audience-sensitive contexts, as exemplified in (9), are frequently observed in Modern Korean (see section 4.2 for more discussion of strategic style shifting).

The dialogue (10) is between the mother, A, and her son, B, in a hospital room. A is concerned with expenses for another son of hers now in the hospital room for treatment, and utters the concern like a monologue in the presence of her son who is a doctor in the hospital. Then, her son responds to her 'feigned' monological utterance saying that she does not have to worry about it because he can pay for his brother. The mother avoids direct, i.e., audience-sensitive, speech, since acknowledging her inability to pay for her son's medical expenses and rejection, though unlikely, of her son's paying for his brother would be threatening her own face as well as her son's. Feigned monologue is a good device of relief in such dilemmatic situations.

From the viewpoint of Bell's audience and reference design, the use of, or shift into, feigned monologue can be interpreted as an instance of referee design, thus an initiative shift, in the sense that the speaker adopts a style that signals exclusion of the 'intended' addressee. According to Bell (1984:160), the roles of parties in a discourse may be hierarchically ordered as 'addressee', 'auditor', 'overhearer', and 'eavesdropper' along the attributes as 'known', 'ratified', and 'addressed.' In this scheme, the speakers of feigned monologues are conducting a delicate manipulation of addressee-ship, i.e., they temporarily push the addressee (known, ratified, and addressed) to the overhearer (known) by virtue of selecting a self-addressed form, but at the same time, they want this 'overhearer' to react to their own self-addressed utterance, thus treat the overhearer as the addressee in terms of their intention.

3.3. Type 3: “objective” and “pseudo-objective” texts

Still another type of the situation that warrants the use of ABFs is in certain textual genres. Young children are not accustomed to the audience-blind styles because they are not exposed to them in their ambient language use. The types of language they are exposed to and replicate for acquisition are invariably audience-sensitive forms. Furthermore, since employment of ABFs requires a form of displacement, i.e., disregarding the speaker-addressee relation that exists in reality, children are not expected to display language command in the use of ABFs. Such ability of abstraction emerges only later together with their cognitive development.

For this reason school textbooks show the variation between audience-blindness and audience-sensitivity by grade levels. The textbooks in the lower division of the elementary school are written in audience-sensitive style, i.e., deferential or polite forms, whereas those in the upper division are written in the audience-blind style, as exemplified below:

(11) Lower grade textbooks (audience-sensitive; deferential ending *-pnita*)

농촌 어촌 산지촌의 사람들은 다양한 산업에 종사합니다.

nongchon echon sancichon-uy salamtul-un tayangha-n
 farming.village fishing.village mountain.village-GEN people-TOP be.various-ADN
sanep-ey congsaha-pnita
 industry-at engage.self-DEC:DFR

‘People in farming, fishing and mountain villages engage themselves in diverse industries [DFR = FML.POL].’

(Ministry of Education, 2014, *Elementary, 3rd/4th grade Social Science*, p. 34)

(12) Higher grade textbooks (ABF ending *-ta*)

사람들은 예로부터 기후와 지형조건이 유리한 곳을 중심으로 마을을 이루고 생활하여 왔다.

salamtul-un yey-lopwuthe kihwu-wa cihyengcoken-i
 people-TOP long.ago-from climate-and topographic.condition-NOM
yulih-n kos-ul cwungsim-ulo mau-ul ilwu-ko
 advantageous-ADN place-ACC center-INST village-ACC form-and
saynghwalha-yw-ass-ta
 live-CONT-PST-DEC:ABF

‘From long time ago, people have formed and lived in villages centering around the places that are advantageous in climate and topography [ABF].’

(Kim, 2013, *Middle school 7th grade Social Science*, p. 32)

Examples (11) and (12) are taken from the same subject, Social Science, for elementary school and middle school, respectively. As shown in the above, the lower grade textbook employs the audience-sensitive style, thus the sentence is marked by the deferential (DFR) ending that signals [+formal] and [+polite], whereas the upper grade textbook adopts the audience-blind styles.¹² When a text employs ABFs, it is regarded as being more objective, thus the information of the text is considered to have more universal validity. This issue will be addressed in section 4.2.

Another textual genre that characteristically employs ABFs is that of interview reports. Interview reports in media typically employ ABFs, even though actual interview discourses involve non-ABFs. It is inconceivable that any actual interview is carried out with ABFs. However, the articles reporting the content of the interview almost invariably adopt the ABF style, as exemplified in the following:

(13) Interview reports (ABF by interviewer and interviewee)

A: 어떤 교육 개혁이 필요한가?

etten kyoyuk kayhyek-i philyoha-nka?
 what.kind education reformation-NOM be.necessary-Q:ABF

‘What kind of educational reformation (do you think) is necessary [ABF]?’

¹² The same point is found in test questions. The directions in the tests for lower grade students employ audience-sensitive polite interrogative or imperative sentence-enders, e.g., *-kkayo?*, *-seyyo*, etc., whereas those for higher grade students employ audience-blind interrogative or imperative sentence-enders, e.g., *-nka?*, *-(u)la*, etc. The division of audience-sensitive and audience-blind styles by the grades is a pattern generally applicable across all textbooks.

B: 인성 교육이다. 교육은 수치나 성과만이 아니라 그 과정과 행복감을 달성했느냐도 중요하다.

inseng kyoyuk-i-ta

character education-be-DEC:ABF

'It's about character building [ABF].'

kyoyuk-un swuchi-na sengkwa-man-i ani-la ku kwaceng-kwa
education-TOP figure-or achievement-only-NOM be.not-CONN that process-and

hayngpokkam-ul talsengha-yss-nu-nya-to cwungyoha-ta

happiness-ACC achieve-PST-CR-Q-also be.important-DEC:ABF

'In education not only statistical figures and achievements but also the processes and happiness obtained (if happiness was felt) are important as well [ABF].'

(The Chosunilbo Daily, Jan. 8, 2015)

Example (13) is an excerpt of an interview between a journalist and the Minister of Education, a high-ranking government official. Undoubtedly the actual interview must have been carried out in a way both parties were using the formal, deferential speech style, but, as shown in the above, the report is marked with ABFs for both parties. Employment of ABFs in interview reports gives the feeling of terseness and authoritativeness of the question of the interviewer and objectivity of the claims and statements of the interviewee. Since the original source texts were interpersonal by virtue of their linguistic marking of audience-sensitive forms, these interview reports are "pseudo-objective" texts.

The nuance of objectivity associated with ABFs is often exploited in manifestos, declarations, rally slogans, narrations in fictions by an omniscient narrator, etc. to claim the universal validity of the statement. Some of such cases are exemplified in the following:

(14) Declarations (declarative ABF -*ta*)

모든 사람은 태어나면서부터 자유롭고, 존엄과 권리에 있어 평등하다. 모든 사람은 이성과 양심을 타고났으며 서로 동포의 정신으로 행동하여야 한다.

motun salam-un thayena-myense-pwuthe cayulop-ko, conem-kwa

all person-TOP be.born-CONC-from be.free-and dignity-and

kwenli-eyisse phyengtungha-ta

right-at be.equal-DEC:ABF

motun salam-un iseng-kwa yangsim-ul thakona-ss-umye

all person-TOP reason-and conscience-ACC be.born.with-PST-CONN

selo tongpho-uy cengsin-ulo hayngtongha-yeyaha-n-ta

each.other brother-GEN spirit-with act-must-PRES-DEC:ABF

'All people are free from birth and equal in dignity and rights [ABF]. All people are born with reason and conscience, and must act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood [ABF].'

(Dec. 10, 1948. Article 1, United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

(15) Rally slogan (imperative ABF -*la*)

살인적 폭력 진압 강신명 경찰청장 즉각 파면하라.

salincek phoklyek cinap kangsinmyeng kyengchalchengcang

murderous violence putdown [name] PCG

cukkak phamyenha-la

immediate discharge-IMP:ABF

'Immediately fire PCG Kang Shinmyung, responsible for murderous violent putdown of protesters! [ABF]'

(Nov. 16, 2015. Protesters' slogan against Police Commissioner General)

Example (14) is the Korean translation of Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly. As noted earlier, when a text employs ABFs, it is regarded as being more objective, thus the information of the text is of universal validity. Therefore, declarations and manifestos typically employ the ABF style.

Example (15) is one of the slogans hoisted in a rally against Police Commissioner General who, allegedly, put down the protesters in a previous rally against the government, in which one of the protesters died. Picket slogans invariably contained ABF Imperatives urging the president to discharge PCG. Similar to the effect of ABF declaratives invoking objective validity, as in (14), Imperatives in ABFs also bring forth the nuance of the absolute necessity, just as, for instance, a command from the absolute being. This objectivity issue will be further discussed in section 4.2.

4. Discussion

We have seen examples of ABFs in verbal interactions and written texts in the preceding section. We now turn to a discussion of the emergence of ABFs, the concepts related to audience-blindness, e.g., objectivity, subjectivity, and allocutivity, and, from a broader context, the use of blinding as a general strategy in language use.

4.1. Grammaticalization

In (4) in section 2.3, we presented a list of ABFs by sentence types. These ABFs may be grouped into three categories according to their source characteristics, as in (16):

- (16) Major source characteristics of ABFs
- a. Withholding the politeness marker: all ABFs
 - b. Spontaneity: exclamative ABFs
 - c. Feigned monologal questions: interrogative ABFs

As shown in (16a), all ABFs have the commonality that they lack the politeness marker, which signals interpersonal relationship. For instance, the exclamative ABFs *-ney*, *-kwun*, and *-kwumen* all lack the polite *-yo* (cf. the polite counterparts, *-neyyo*, *-kwunyo*, *-kwumenyoy*, etc.). Likewise, interrogative ABFs all lack it (cf. the polite counterparts, *-nkayo*, *-nayo*, *-(u)kkayo*, *-(u)lciyo*, *-nciyo*, etc.). The declarative ABF *-(n)ta*, the hortative ABF *-ca*, and the imperative ABF *-(u)la* lack it, and, in fact, affixing a politeness marker to them is blocked by morphological rules.¹³

The forms in the second source category, i.e., Exclamatives, are ABFs by virtue of being utterances produced with spontaneity. The utterers of Exclamatives do not have time to modulate the utterance with the intersubjective parameters. However, as noted in the preceding discussion, there exist speech-level modulated Exclamatives (see section 2.3).

But the most interesting cases for our purposes are the third source category, since their development involves certain discourse-pragmatic strategies of language use, i.e., ‘feigned monologal questions’, a notion presented in Koo and Rhee (2013:81–82). These forms received some attention previously with different labels, e.g., *kancep uymwun* ‘indirect question’ (I. Lee, 1979; H. Lee, 1982), *naycek hwapep* ‘internal speech’ (Lee, 1986), *naycek uymwun* ‘internal question’ (Lee, 1963; Ahn, 1964), among others. As these names suggest, the forms belonging to this category began their life not in matrix clauses (where intersubjectivity marking is mandatory), but in the subordinate clauses (where intersubjectivity is not explicitly marked but inherited from the matrix clause). The development of this category involves strategic manipulation of linguistic forms, thus warrants more discussion for evolution of linguistic forms with innovative functions.

Feigned monologal questions can be characterized with following features.¹⁴ First of all, the speaker asks a question as if it were a self-addressed question (i.e., no intersubjective marking). The clauses headed by such ABFs were often embedded in sentences where the main clause verbs signaled epistemic indeterminacy as is shown in (17):

- (17) The source structure of feigned monologal question enders
- | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Subordinate Clause | + | Main Clause |
| S... O... V-Q:ABF | | (“I”)... V-END |
| non-finite | | finite (V: ‘not know,’ ‘wonder,’ ‘doubt,’ ‘suppose’...) |

As shown in the source structure (17), ABF question ender (Q:ABF) occurs at the clausal boundary, i.e., at the end of the subordinate clause, the meaning of which constitutes the content of the main-clause subject’s (= the speaker’s) cognitive or epistemic indeterminacy, e.g., ‘not knowing,’ ‘wondering,’ etc., analogous to the English expressions, *I wonder if...*, *I am not sure if...*, etc. Therefore, when the ABF question ender occurs utterance-finally, the utterance is interpreted by the interlocutor as an elliptical monologue, expressing the speaker’s inner processes of cogitation. In other words, the development of ABF question forms is an instance of ‘insubordination’ (Evans, 2007, 2009; Evans and Watanabe, 2016). Incidentally, a number of studies explored the grammaticalization processes of clausal connectives into sentence-enders

¹³ Interpersonality may be marked with a subject-honorific marker *-si-* in case of Imperatives. It is intriguing that there is an honorific-marked imperative ABF, i.e., *-(u)sila* (note the honorific marker *-si-* in it), which carries some archaic flavor and is of extremely low frequency. A search with a 24-million word corpus shows 18 such cases, all of which are idiomatic expressions imitating archaic oratorical speech, e.g., *kitayha-sila* ‘Wait with expectation’, *po-sila* ‘Now, look!’, etc., in jocular contexts.

¹⁴ Koo and Rhee (2013:82), in a discussion on the development of certain sentence-final particles of discontent, list five characteristics of feigned monologues: (i) the speaker says something as if it were a monologue, (ii) it may take the form of a question as if it were a self-addressed question, (iii) it does not necessarily obligate the hearer to respond, (iv) a socially-inferior hearer may feel obligated to be responsive to please the socially-superior speaker, and (v) the speaker may show aloofness or gentleness. Among these we focus on some relevant aspects and elaborate them.

in Korean through ellipsis, e.g. through insubordination (Koo and Rhee, 2001; Kim, 2001; Rhee, 2002, 2012; Sohn, 2003) and ‘incoordination’ (Kuteva et al., 2015). One notable aspects in this regard is that since the original location of the ABF endings is the embedded clause, which typically lack most morphological trappings that should appear in finite clauses, ABF forms originating from the embedded clause are bare forms without explicit intersubjectivity marking. The development of ABFs must have been enabled or expedited by the effect they create in discourse. We now turn to a discussion of the strategic uses of ABFs in Modern Korean and investigate their discourse effect.

4.2. Strategic uses of ABFs in Modern Korean

An interesting aspect associated with ABFs, feigned monologal questions, in particular, is that such utterances are ‘feigned’ monologues because the speaker intends to have his or her utterance heard by the discourse participant and the utterance is normally uttered with sufficient audibility for the discourse participant, a delicate double play manipulating the form (i.e., monologue) and the manner of delivery (i.e., interlocutor-orientation). An immediate consequence of this manipulation is that the speaker can benefit regardless of how the hearer reacts to the utterance: if the person who heard it reacts in a preferred way, e.g., answering, agreeing, redressing, etc., the objective has been accomplished, even without directly engaging the partner with a true question; on the other hand, if the person who heard the feigned monologue reacts in a dispreferred way, e.g., reprimanding, challenging, etc., the speaker can protest that it was only a self-talk; and, further, even when the utterance is entirely ignored, the speaker does not have to lose face, because it was only a self-talk, which is true in appearance. It is noteworthy that because of the monologal nature of the utterance, it does not necessarily obligate the hearer to respond. Absence of responsibility of response notwithstanding, a socially-inferior hearer may feel obliged to be responsive to please the socially-superior speaker who utters it (see section 3.1). This is well illustrated with the following examples, which bear the playwright’s instruction to feign the utterances as monologues, i.e., to say the line marked with monologal enders with sufficient audibility:

- (18) A: 한두번도 아니고 이게 뭐야 증말?
hantwu-pen-to ani-ko ike-y mwe-ø-ya cungmal?
 one.two-time-even be.not-CONN this-NOM what-be-**END:INTM** really
 ‘(You did this) more than once or twice; what are you doing, really [INTM]?’
- B: (hurt; like a monologue) 거 참 되게 그러네 진짜...
ke cham toykey kele-ney cincca...
 that truly harshly do.so-**EXCL:ABF** really
 ‘How truly harshly you do so (criticizing) [ABF]! Really!’
- A: (looking at B) 뭐?
mwe?
 what
 ‘What?’
- B: (sighing) 아냐 됐어. 미안하다구!
any-a tway-ss-e mianha-takwu!
 be.not-**END:INTM** be.OK-PST-**END:INTM** be.sorry-**END:INTM**
 ‘No, nothing. I’m sorry.’ (2000, Drama *Swunphwung sanpwiinkwa*, Episode #600)

The situation of (18) is that A is unhappy with his brother B, who repeatedly takes his book to read without his consent, and scolds him. B responds with a complaint marked with an exclamative ABF *-ney* as a monologue. A hears what B says (spoken with sufficient audibility) and charges him asking what he was saying. B now answers in a regular audience-sensitive ender saying it was nothing and that he is sorry. Here, B shows his discontent by using ABF in a monologue style, but when confronted by his brother, he simply backs out saying it was nothing.

Now, the next example illustrates a different kind of strategy.

- (19) A: 세 분은 고향 안 가요?
sey-pwun-un kohyang an ka-yo?
 three-CLS-TOP home not go-**END:POL**
 ‘Aren’t you three going home (to celebrate the Thanksgiving) [POL]?’
- B: (like a monologue) 고향은 빈손으로 가나
kohyang-un pinson-ulo ka-na
 home-TOP empty.hand-with go-**Q:ABF**
 ‘Go home empty-handed (without money) [ABF]?’

- A: 카드 있잖아요
khatu iss-canha-yo
 card exist-EMPH.END-POL
 'You do have the (corporate) card [POL].'

(2007, Drama *Ellengttwungttang hungsinso*, Episode #11)

The scene of (19) involves four people in a car. They sense in the street the festivity of Korean thanksgiving, when most people who have home in the countryside visit their home to celebrate. A, the leader of their project of treasure-hunt, asks about travel plans of her colleagues. B responds in a feigned monologue saying how she can go home without money. Hearing what B says, A suggests that she use the corporate card (because she herself is paying for the card account for her), and in the continuing dialogue she strongly urges her to do so. The feigned monologal utterance of B shows her strategy of bringing A's attention to the fact that she needs money (for the travel and gifts for the family) and as a result she finds a solution. It would have been awkward if B had used an audience-sensitive sentence to disclose her financial dilemma to her colleague.

Now we look at more examples in which the strategic manipulation of audience-blinding is prominent.

- (20) A: [Did you hear about Chef Yi Bongyi marrying Director of Donghae?]

B: [Yes... of course.]

A: 두 사람 결혼하면 조만간 호텔 주방은 이봉이 조리사 손아귀에 들어가게 될 겁니다.

그러니까 그쪽에 힘을 실어주면 안 된다 그 말입니다.

twu salam kyelhonha-myen comankan hotheyl cwupang-un
 two person marry-if soon hotel kitchen-TOP

ipongi colisa sonakwi-ey tuleka-keytoy-lke-pnita
 [name] chef hand-at enter-become-FUT-DEC:DFR

kulenikka kuccok-ey him-ul sil-ecwu-myen antoy-nta
 so that.side-to power-ACC add-ben-if must.not-DEC:ABF

ku mal-i-pnita
 that word-be-DEC:DFR

'When the two marry, this hotel kitchen will come into their control soon [DFR (= FML.POL)]. So, (we) should not give any support to them [ABF]. That is the word (That's what I mean) [DFR (= FML.POL)].'

(2011, Drama *Wusela Tonghayya* Episode #145)

Example (20) is taken from a drama discourse between the Deputy General Manager (A) and the head-chef (B), both of whom are worried about possibly losing the workplace political hegemony to Chef Yi Bongyi (Ipongi) after her marriage to the director of the hotel, Donghae. What is peculiar is that Speaker A mixes the audience-sensitive sentence-enders, i.e., the deferential declarative *-pnita*, and the audience-blind declarative *-nta*. This can constitute a violation of the rule in Korean that rigorously forbids style-mixing. This type of otherwise unacceptable usage is deemed appropriate when the speaker is making a statement as having the universal validity, not as his or her personal opinion. Thus, in (20), Speaker A is effectively proclaiming that 'they should not give support to them' not according to his personal evaluation of the situation but according to the general law or universal wisdom. After the proclamation of the universal validity of what he thinks, he returns to the normal audience-sensitive sentence-ender in the last sentence.¹⁵ This ABF usage is reminiscent of the usage of ABFs in rally slogans and manifestos exemplified in (14) and (15).

As a matter of fact, this type of style-mixing is often utilized in political discourse, by virtue of the emphatic nuance associated with ABFs. When politicians emphasize their claim, they often embed an ABF-marked sentence in an audience-sensitive sentence, as exemplified in (21):

¹⁵ An anonymous reviewer raises an issue that the utterance in question may be a single sentence with a quotative complement, not one of mixed styles, since in speech grammatical markers are often deleted. It is indeed true that the type of style-mix often involves a proposition that may appear to qualify as a subordinate clause. However, there are two relevant aspects. First, when embedding occurs, anaphoric expressions, such as *ku mal* 'that word' (cf. also *kulehkey* 'like that' in (21b)), do not follow the embedded clause. These referring expressions are semantically appositive elements rather than the head modified by the embedded clause. Second, when these propositions are spoken, they occur with a pause, significantly longer than one between a modifier and modified elements. This pause normally creates some dramatic effect, since a stand-alone ABF-marked sentence in audience-sensitive context puts the addressee in momentary tension for style incongruity.

- (21) a. 우리 경제가 앞으로 잘 갈 것인가? 저는 잘 갈 것이라고 생각합니다.
wuli kyengcey-ka aphulo-to cal ka-lkesi-nka?
 our economy-NOM future-also well go-FUT-Q:ABF
ce-nun cal ka-lkesi-lako sayngkakha-pnita
 I:HUM-TOP well go-FUT-COMP think-DEC:DFR
 ‘Will our economy fare well in the future [ABF]? I think it will [DFR (= FML.POL)].’
- b. [When I was a presidential candidate, I once used a term *sincwulyu* ‘new mainstream’ at one of the lectures [DFR (= FML.POL)].말이 쉽지 않고 관심도 별로 없는 어휘라서 주목을 끌지 못했습니다만 저는 우리사회에 신주류가 나타나야 된다, 등장해야 된다, 그 신주류는 시장의 신주류일 것이다 그렇게 생각합니다. 신주류가 새로운 세상을 만들어야 된다....
mal-i swip-cianh-ko kwansim-to pyello eps-nun ehwi-lase cwumok-ul
 word-NOM be.easy-not-and interest-also little not.exist-ADN word-CAUS attention-ACC
kkul-cimoshay-ss-supnita-man ce-nun wulisahoy-ey sincwulyu-ka
 draw-cannot-PST-DEC:DFR-but I:HUM-TOP our.society-at new.mainstream-NOM
nathana-yatoy-nta tungcanha-yyatoy-nta ku sincwulyu-nun sicang-uy
 appear-must-DEC:ABF be.on.stage-must-DEC:ABF that new.mainstream-TOP market-GEN
sincwulyu-i-lkesi-ta kulehkey sayngkakha-pnita. sincwulyu-ka
 new.mainstream-be-FUT-DEC:ABF like.that think-DEC:DEF new.mainstream-NOM
saylow-un seysang-ul mantul-eyatoy-nta. ...
 be.new-ADN world-ACC make-must-DEC:ABF
 ‘The word is not easy and was not very interesting, so it did not draw attention [DFR (= FML.POL)],but for me, a new mainstream must appear [ABF], (it) must go on stage [ABF], that mainstream will be a mainstream of the market (economy) [ABF]. I think like that [DFR (= FML.POL)]. A new mainstream must make a new world [ABF].’
 (Roh, 2016, President’s address, Jun. 2, 2007)

Examples in (21) are excerpts of the address by the late President Roh Moo-hyun at a forum of evaluation of the 3-years of the Roh administration, while he was still in office. In (21a), Roh throws a question marked with an ABF interrogative ender, just like a monologal question, which, in appearance, is inadequate since he is addressing the audience in a forum. This usage carries the overtone of candidness in presenting a sensitive and potentially controversial issue, as if he were saying, ‘I have been asking this question to myself.’ Presenting the question in the ABF style as if it were a universally valid question, Roh goes on to answer in the affirmative to the self-raised question, now marking his answer with an audience-sensitive, deferential declarative marker *-pnita*.

Example (21b), also occurring in the same address, shows the ABF marking the embedded statements effectively saying, ‘a new mainstream should be leading the market economy.’ As is obvious from the gloss, Roh mixes the ABF-marked sentences with sentences marked with an audience-sensitive, deferential declarative marker *-pnita*, along with humiliating self-reference *ce* ‘I’, an audience-sensitive pronoun. He could have simply used a complementizer to embed the statement, but, instead, he broke a natural complex sentence into multiple simplex sentences and mixed the styles of the sentence-enders. By employing the ABF sentence-ender for his statement as a juxtaposed independent declarative sentences, and referring to it with the anaphoric expression *kulehkey* ‘like that’, he is strategically presenting his opinion as if it were not of his own but of universal validity. This excerpt, the last sentence being in ABF, is immediately followed by another sentence marked with an audience-sensitive deferential ender.

Strategic shifts between audience-sensitive and audience-blind styles may occur not only in single-speaker situations as exemplified above but also in the same speaker’s turns in dyadic conversation as in the following example:

- (22) A: [staring at B] 나한테... 다른 할 얘기는 없나?
na-hanthey... talun ha-l yayki-nun eps-na?
 I-to other say-ADN talk-TOP not.exist-Q:ABF
 ‘To me... don’t you have anything other (than that you respect your boss) to tell me [ABF]?’
- B: ...?
- A: 어떤 비밀이든 지켜줄 테니 털어봐 봐요.
etten pimil-itun cikhy-ecwu-lthey-ni thelenw-apw-ayo
 what secret-ever keep-BEN-PROM-CONN confess-TRI-END:POL
 ‘Since I will keep whatever secret (you tell me), just tell me [POL].’
 (2007 *Kaywa nuktayuy sikan*, Episode #10)

The scene of (22) is an interrogation room in which a high-ranking officer, A, is interrogating a murder-suspect, B. In order to intimidate the suspect, the interrogator uses the question ender *-na*, signaling the speaker's claim to power, thus pressing the suspect, who mentioned that he respects his boss, an illicit businessman, to confess his crime. Very interestingly, the interrogator's next utterance is marked with the polite ender *-yo*. The interrogator is suddenly changing his tone from threatening to coaxing, a strategic mixture of rudeness and politeness in interrogation.

As shown in the preceding illustration, ABFs are often strategically employed for diverse discourse effects, e.g., to present mild protest, to display discontent, to prompt the intended addressee to act to bring about a desired result on the part of the speaker, to emphasize the speaker's claim or evaluation as if it has universal validity, among others.

4.3. A crosslinguistic view on audience-blindness

Our discussion in the preceding sections has been based on ABFs in Korean. It is notable, however, that the notion of audience-blindness belongs to a cluster of similar notions such as subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and objectivity, all of which have to do with the addressee and/or the speaker. Audience-blindness may be opposite to intersubjectivity, by virtue of lacking it. However, as has been pointed out in numerous studies (e.g., [Beeching and Detges, 2014](#)), the notion of intersubjectivity whether it is present or absent with reference to real language use cannot be straightforwardly determined because all utterances involve some consideration of the audience in a way or other (the same applies to subjectivity as well). On the surface, audience-blindness may seem similar to objectivity, because both lack intersubjectivity. However, they do have differences. Now we turn to a discussion of audience-blindness in the context of these related concepts, focusing on 'objectivity' and 'allocutivity', the latter closely related to intersubjectivity.

The notion of audience-blindness is directly relevant to the notion of 'objectivity' ([Traugott and Dasher, 2002](#)), as opposed to 'subjectivity' and 'intersubjectivity.' According to [Traugott and Dasher \(2002:22\)](#), objective expressions are declarative, i.e. minimally marked with regard to modality; all participants in an event structure are expressed in surface structure; and lexical items are minimally concerned with the interlocutors' perspective, i.e. minimally deictic. Despite general similarities to 'objective' language, ABFs depart from it in terms of their extent in sentence types (i.e., ABFs can be realized in Interrogative, Imperative, and Hortative as well as Declarative), of their flexibility in syntactic encoding (i.e., it is not necessary for all participants in an event structure to appear, just as is the case with normal sentences in Korean, in which argument omission is relatively free), and of their flexibility in diction (i.e., ABF sentences may freely contain stance-marking lexical items, as shown in the rally slogan in (15)).

Another notion that bears relevance with audience-blindness is 'allocutivity', a term coined by [Bonaparte \(1862:19–21\)](#), as cited in [Antonov, 2013:317–318](#)) and used to describe a phenomenon whereby an addressee who is not an argument of the verb is systematically encoded in all finite verb forms of a (declarative) main clause. [Antonov \(2013\)](#) discusses allocutivity markers in Korean, i.e., those used in addressee-honorifics or polite speech style. Similarly, according to [Hualde and De Urbina \(2003:242\)](#), "Allocutivity refers to the encoding in the conjugated verb form of an addressee that is not an argument of the verb. Allocutivity is obligatory in Basque main clauses when the addressee is given familiar treatment."¹⁶ In this sense, allocutivity is a type of intersubjectivity (or interactivity) marking, and the sentences that lack allocutivity, i.e., those that do not reflect the addressee, can be said to be ABFs. A major difference between Korean and other languages in this context is that 'marking' allocutivity is a rather exceptional phenomenon in language in general, whereas, in Korean, the forms 'lacking' allocutivity marking is an exception. In other words, since Korean sentences are marked with allocutivity by default, ABFs are exceptional in that they are not.

4.4. Blinding in language from a broader perspective

Based on the description of how sentence-enders without intersubjectivity marking, i.e., ABFs, emerged in Korean, we now extend the scope of our observation to other types of blinding. We argue that 'blinding' can be a general discursive strategy which prompted development of diverse grammatical forms in Korean, and suggest that similar strategies are resorted to in other languages as well. At the most basic level of description, linguistic communication may be said to consist of three domains, the speaker, the addressee, and the message. Blinding strategies, as we argue, are generally applicable across all these domains of communication.

4.4.1. Audience-blinding

We have seen in the preceding exposition how audience-blind forms are used depending on the speaker-hearer relationship, such as extreme status asymmetry (e.g., the king with his subjects), textual genres (e.g., newspaper

¹⁶ According to [Hualde and De Urbina \(2003:242–243\)](#), Basque allocutive forms are modulated even by the gender of the addressee.

interview reports), and addressees (e.g., higher-elementary textbooks). We have also seen that speakers often employ ABFs for strategic reasons, such as adding emphasis to their claim or evaluation, or inducing the addressee's action desired by the speakers in an indirect manner.

From a crosslinguistic perspective, it may seem that audience-blinding is not commonly attested across languages, but we argue otherwise. As noted in the preceding discussion, encoding addressee in sentence, e.g., allocutivity marking in Basque languages, is a rare phenomenon across languages. Korean, and to some extent Japanese in which intersubjective grammatical forms are also utilized, seem to stand out in this regard.

However, despite the restricted extent of applicability, there are certain phenomena that are found across languages and bear relevance to the current discussion of audience-blinding. One of them is suppression of the addressee in messages intended to be conveyed. For instance, notices in English can take various forms, among which are as shown in (23) and (24):

- (23) a. You cannot smoke here.
b. Smoking is not allowed here.

- (24) a. You cannot enter during concerts.
b. Late arrivals can be seated during intermission.

As compared with (23a) and (24a), in which the addressee 'you' appears explicitly, the counterpart sentences (23b) and (24b) carry a weaker nuance of direct imposition on the part of the reader. This mitigation effect is derived from the associated meaning of the restriction being universally applicable. Thus, passivization is a common rhetorical strategy to tone down the impositive force on the part of the addressee. As a matter of fact, it is among the common strategies used to mitigate the illocutionary force of the proposition (Macaulay, 2006:102–106). Incidentally, nominalization is another common rhetorical strategy to hide the person involved in the action, typically the potential agent whose action would be prohibited, e.g. *No smoking* (cf. (23)), *No entry*, etc. in English. Korean also has a similar usage of nominals or nominalized phrases for warning, order, or instruction on posted signs (Rhee, 2011). These nominalized forms are not marked with sentence-enders, by virtue of their being non-sentences, and thus they fall under the categories of audience-blind forms marking the speaker's stance.

4.4.2. Author-blinding

As noted above, in addition to audience blinding, strategic blinding may be applicable to the author, i.e., the speaker or writer, or more generally, the source of the message being conveyed. One of the numerous manifestations of strategic author-blinding can be exemplified in the development of a quotative to a reportative and further to a pseudo-reportative stance marker, a path taken by *-tanta* (cf. Rhee, 2016), as exemplified in (25):

- (25) *-tanta*: quotative > reportative > pseudo-reportative stance-marker

- a. QUOT: Author explicitly indicated

어루신내가 골앗단다.

elwusinnay-ka kol-as-tanta

honorable.father-NOM transfer-PST-QUOT

'My father (the local magistrate) says that he was assigned to a different post.'

(19th c., *Namwenkosa* 367, Tonam Collection edition)

- b. REPT: Author implicit or unknown (e.g. hearsay)

뒤시집 김도령이 죽엇단다.

twi-s-cip kim-tolyeng-i cyuk-es-tanta

back-GEN-house [name]-bachelor-NOM die-PST-REPT

'They say that the young bachelor Mr. Kim the neighbor in the back died.'

(Late 19th C., *Akpwu* 1, 565)

- c. Pseudo-REPT Stance-Marker (Author faked or the speaker him/herself)

난 세상에서 말없는 남자가 제일 싫단다.

na-n seysang-eyse maleps-nun namca-ka ceyil silh-tanta

I-TOP world-in be.quiet-ADN man-NOM most dislike-STM

'I dislike a quiet man the most (among all men in the world).'

(2006, Drama *Sowulmeyithu* Episode #5)

Examples in (25) partly illustrate the developmental order of the sentence ender *-tanta*, the origin of which is ultimately traceable to *-tako-ha-nta* [DEC.COMP-say-DEC] translatable as ‘X says that..’. As shown in (25a), *-tanta* marks the host proposition ‘My father was assigned to a different post’ as a quotation. The information source is explicit, i.e., ‘my father’, coinciding analytically with the subject of the verb *ha-* ‘say’ in the source construction *-tako-ha-nta*. The same form *-tanta* develops into a reportative, a marker to host a proposition, the author of which is implicit or unknown, thus typically marking hearsay information, as in (25b).

When the author of the information becomes unclear, the form is strategically employed in discourse, which results in functional shift of the form. Thus, in (25c), even though the author of the information, i.e., the evaluator claiming ‘what I don’t like most is a quiet man’, is undoubtedly the speaker herself, she is presenting her evaluation as if it were from a third party or people in general. The rhetorical effect of this twist is that the validity of the message is made to appear stronger than when it is marked otherwise. For this amplifying effect on the illocutionary force of an utterance, the form is often employed in storytelling for children. In this usage, the author of the information, usually the speaker, becomes hidden by the pseudo-reportative marker, and the message is signaled to be valid beyond the speaker’s personal level.

4.4.3. Content blinding

The last category of blinding involves the message, i.e., content blinding. It is common wisdom that a basic objective of communication is conveying a message as clearly as possible. It is obvious that speakers generally try to convey the message clearly to the addressee, but there are situations when the speakers pursue otherwise for strategic reasons, thus content blinding. Content blinding, however, can be said to be intentional obscurification of a proposition, rather than complete hiding of a message. Obscurification can be achieved in various ways, but among the prominent ways are withholding information, obscuring the agent or other sentential arguments, weakening the strength of a propositional certainty, selecting vague terms in place of more explicit ones. We briefly illustrate some of such strategies, except for withholding information since it is realized by absence of linguistic forms.

Obscuring sentential arguments is typically achieved by suppressing the agent, such as passivization, as is often employed for stance-marking. For instance, the passive marker *-keytoy-*, as exemplified in (26a), is often used in place of its structurally unmarked counterpart (26b):

- (26) a. 교수님 저희 결혼하게 되었습니다.
kyoswu-nim cehi kyelhonha-keytoy-ess-supnita
 professor-HON we.HUM marry-PSV-PST-DEC
 ‘Professor, we will marry.’ (< Lit. ‘Professor, we were made to marry.’)

(Rhee and Koo, 2014:323)

- b. 교수님 저희 결혼하겠습니다.
kyoswu-nim cehi kyelhonha-kyess-supnita
 professor-HON we.HUM marry-FUT-DEC
 ‘Professor, we will marry.’

Example (26a) is said by a couple visiting their professor to inform him of their planned marriage as a preface to request to officiate at their wedding ceremony. Their volitional decision to marry is presented using the passive, as if there were some external force that made them decide on their much desired union. This is one of the most productive ways of announcing news in a polite way (see Rhee and Koo, 2014 for detailed discussion).

Downtoning the epistemic certainty is another common strategy observed in Korean. Its linguistic realization may involve using downtoning or hedging discourse markers, comment clauses, or ‘theticals’ (Kaltenböck et al., 2011; Heine, 2013), functionally equivalent to the English *sort of*, *I guess*, *just*, *perhaps*, etc. For instance, the Korean similiative construction *-keskath-* ‘(it) seems that’ [< *-kes-kath-* NOMZ-be.like] is among the most widely used construction for politeness marking (Koo, 2004), as shown in (27):

- (27) ... 신경 안 쓰셔도 될 것 같아요.
 ... *sinkyeng an ssu-si-etotoy-l-keskath-ay-yo*
 ... concern NEG use-HON-may-PROS.ADN-seem.that-END-POL
 ‘... You don’t have to worry (about it)’ (Lit. It seems that (you) may not worry.)

(adapted from Koo, 2004:12)

In (27) the speaker tones down her statement by using the similiative construction. Its counterpart translatable as ‘You don’t have to worry’, without the similiative, though structurally less marked, would sound too self-assured.

The obscurification may operate within a small scope, such as an argument, i.e., obscuring the entity represented by the linguistic form in a sentence. It has been noted that the utterances containing such obscurity often carry pejorative stance of the speaker (Koo and Rhee, 2016). For instance, the forms pertaining to ‘lack of specification’ develop into pejorative markers, both sortal, enumerative, or extension particles, e.g., *-ttawi* (< ‘becomingly’), *-sekken* (< ‘mix’), *-kkacis* (< ‘of its kind’), etc. (Koo and Rhee, 2016:307–308). An example of the use of the particle *-ttawi* is exemplified in (28):

- (28) 감히 내 앞에서 그 따위 말을 해?
kamhi nay aph-eyse ku-ttawi mal-ul ha-y?
 daringly my front-at that-PRT word-ACC say-END
 ‘How dare you tell me something like that?’ (2006, Drama, *90-il salanghal sikan* Episode #8)

Example (28) involving the particle suggesting lack of specificity carries pejorative nuances. The speaker saying ‘words of that kind’ instead of ‘your words’ displays his disparaging attitude toward ‘you’ and ‘your words’.

Message obscurification may involve a wide scope, e.g. the entire proposition. This is typically done with highly reductive replacive clausal constructions, e.g., *kukey kukeya* ‘So so. < Lit. It is it’, *kekise kekiya* ‘So so. < Lit. It is from there to there’, *kulehko kulay* ‘So so. < Lit. It is so and it is so,’ etc. Koo and Rhee (2016) attribute the development of pejorative meaning from these markers to their semantic association with the ‘lack of noteworthiness’. Indeed, the notion of lack of noteworthiness of something is directly relevant to its lack of importance. Therefore, this line of development is well motivated.

From a crosslinguistic point of view, content-blinding or signaling the lack of specificity is a well-known source of pejoration markers. For instance, the English general extender *and stuff*, semantically equivalent to *-ttawi*, *-kkacis*, etc. (see (28)), acquired the function of marking pejorative attitude from its frequent occurrence in pejorative context in the 17th century (Traugott, 2015). Similarly, Finkbeiner (2016) notes that quoting someone as having said ‘blah blah blah’ (‘bla bla bla’ in German) brings forth a pejorative force; and Wiese and Polat (2016:259) note the relationship between ‘the whatever effect’ and pejoration, by saying “the speaker keeps information vague because s/he does not care about specifics” and thus “the referent is not worth caring about”. Similar observations have been made in Suzuki (1998) on Japanese, in Schroeder (1989, as cited in Wiese and Polat, 2016:247) on Turkish, in Traugott (2015:126–127) on English, in Rhee and Koo (2015) on Korean, in Meibauer (2008) across languages, among many others. To interpret this state of affairs in connection with the present issue, content-blinding, or intentionally obscured messages, can be strategically employed by the speaker to signal his or her stance, largely negative, toward the addressee or the message.

The foregoing discussion points to the fact that language users sometimes employ blinding, either entirely or partially, of the source of the information (the author), the target of the information (the addressee), or the information itself (the message). The desired effect may be multifarious depending on the types and means of blinding operation, but all of them involve discourse-pragmatic strategy, such as claiming authority, strengthening assertiveness through universal validation, politeness or pejoration, a state of affairs also observable in the same or similar fashion across languages.

5. Summary and conclusion

Korean is a language in which the relationship between the speaker and the addressee is reflected in verbal morphology to indicate the speaker’s attitudinal, emotional, epistemic and evidential stance toward the addressee or proposition, involving various levels of honorification. This speech-level has been grammaticalized to such an extent that any violation of proper honorification would render the utterance not only pragmatically unacceptable but often ungrammatical.

There is, however, one distinct style called audience-blind style. Audience-blind forms are those intended for unspecified audiences, lacking any sentence-final grammatical trappings that signal the speaker-addressee relationship (e.g. honorification, politeness, formality, etc.). Since marking these interpersonal relations is fully grammaticalized and thus obligatory in Korean, ABFs constitute a special category in speech/writing styles, making a sharp contrast with the regular audience-sensitive forms.

The development of ABFs involves different paths. The two notable processes among them are stripping of the politeness features and feigned monologal questions, with the origin of the latter traceable to the non-finite clausal enders that occurred in subordinate clauses that were upgraded through the process of insubordination. The development ABFs thus shows how language users may opt out of grammatical requirements as warranted in the given context and strategically employ new forms for discursive effect.

This paper addressed strategic uses of ABFs in discourse, especially in audience-sensitive contexts. By strategically employing ABFs, the speaker is feigning the utterance as monologal, i.e., it is directed to the self, not the addressee. From the viewpoint of discursive strategy, the speaker, especially when the speaker is of substantially higher social hierarchy than the other implicit interlocutor, is showing aloofness that the person present in the scene is not his/her social

equal, thus claiming superiority. This ‘detachment’ can be interpreted as an indication of an opposite goal, i.e., signaling gentleness by not imposing any direct burden of response to the intended addressee, especially when the involved speech act is impositive, e.g., that of a question.

Another desired effect of employing ABFs is the assertion of objective validity, i.e., ABF-marked statements suggest that their validity goes beyond the addressee. In other words, by disengaging the addressee, the speaker is claiming the universal validity of the proposition and thus claiming authority of the information. This strategy is particularly prominent with audience-blind style in writing, e.g., declarations, manifestos, textbooks for older students (upper-division elementary or higher), or newspaper interview reports, or rally slogans, etc.

Based on the audience-blindness elaborated with reference to Korean data, we also expanded the discussion into a wider context, thus, looking at the author-blinding and message-blinding, the latter being better construed as message obscurification. From this wider-perspective discussion, which also included cursory look into other languages, we suggested that blinding is not an isolated, bizarre phenomenon but a strategy often employed for discourse-pragmatic purposes and attested across languages.

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