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The Korean language and the effects of its honorifics system in advertising: deferential vs. informal speech as regulatory prime on persuasive impact

Jin K. Han · Yong Seok Sohn · Kun Woo Yoo

Abstract A very prominent feature of the Korean language is its extensive honorifics system. Korean speakers are obliged to adopt a level of speech (deferential vs. informal) befitting the status of the target audience. As the context of deferential (informal) speech parallels the setting for a prevention (promotion) focus, we examine whether the Korean honorifics system itself functions as a natural prime for regulatory orientation. In study 1, we find that the deferential (informal) speech style activates a prevention (promotion) focus in the addressee. Accordingly, we show that ad copies written in the deferential (informal) speech style lead to regulatory fit with utilitarian (hedonic) products. In study 2, we test for construal fit when deferential (informal) speech style is matched with a lower (higher) level of abstraction. Finally, we provide a discussion on the findings and theoretical contributions of this study, followed by managerial implications and directions for future research.

Keywords Honorifics · Regulatory fit · Utilitarian · Hedonic · Construal

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Korean Air had more plane crashes than almost any other airline in the world for a period at the end of the 1990s... What they were struggling with was a cultural legacy, that Korean culture is hierarchical. You are obliged to be deferential toward your elders and superiors in a way that would be unimaginable in the U.S... I use the case study of a very famous plane crash in Guam of Korean Air. They're flying along, and they run into a little bit of trouble, the weather's bad. The pilot makes an error, and the co-pilot doesn't correct him. But once Korean Air figured out that their problem was cultural, they fixed it (Malcolm Gladwell (2008), *Fortune*).

The "fix" adopted by Korean Air was a language-based solution: an English-only policy for all communications in the cockpit—as they deemed English to be fairly "neutral," unlike the Korean language. Because the English language is relatively free of power-distance underpinnings, Korean Air speculated that co-pilots feel less inhibited about speaking up in the event of a pilot error. Following the adoption of the new language policy, the Korean airline's safety record improved dramatically. From this example, we can conclude that the honorifics system—intrinsic to the Korean language—evidently promotes a predisposition consistent with regulatory orientation. Motivated by a high concern for "face," the co-pilot's unwillingness to take any corrective action regarding his superior's error is highly illustrative of a prevention focus.

As demonstrated by the Korean Air case study, the Korean language has evolved to mirror its hierarchical society and culture. This fact is most obviously manifested in the language's extensive honorifics system. There are six possible politeness/formality levels in the Korean language; these styles can be broadly classified as either deferential (*jon-dae-mal*) or informal (*ban-mal*). Moreover, the choice of a deferential vs. informal speech style is largely based on an interplay of factors related to the status differential and familiarity between the conversers. Accordingly, for firms communicating with Korean audience(s) in their native language, the honorifics system inherently poses an added level of complexity as compared to communications in a more neutral language (e.g., English).

Although anecdotal evidence is available from the industry on managing regulatory focus through language selection, academic research is lagging behind the curve, as seen from the lack of extant work on the topic. To this end, the goal of this study is to go beyond anecdotes to improve our conceptual understanding of how the Korean language and its honorifics system may shape regulatory focus. Motivated by past research on self-regulation and its sensitivity to contextual features (Higgins 2000), we contend that language, as an influential contextual foundation, plays a key role in shaping regulatory focus.

While the cross-cultural literature is replete with research on language effects (e.g., pronoun choices and cultural orientations (Na and Choi 2009), language scripts and processing loops (Tavassoli and Han 2001)), this study is the first to introduce language issues in the context of theory of self-regulation. Specifically, we investigate whether deferential vs. informal speech induces prevention vs. promotion focus, respectively, in individuals. Also, we scrutinize the regulatory fit between the honorifics system and product types, postulating that deferential (informal) speech is a better fit for utilitarian (hedonic) product types. Lastly, we examine the link between honorifics and construal levels, positing that the deferential (informal) speech style matches best with a low (high) level of construal.

1 Background

1.1 Korean honorifics system

For a native English speaker, the notion of honorifics may be a very foreign concept, as the English language is relatively free of hierarchical connotations in most daily encounters. English does have its examples, however; for instance, adding the words “sir” and “madam” may increase the level of deference in certain contexts, and injecting titles as “buddy,” “dude,” “man,” or “mate” may establish a sense of familiarity or camaraderie in the English language (Leech 2007). While honorifics are found widely in a number of human languages, Korean and Japanese languages have what Leech (2007) describes as “particularly rich and complex honorifics systems.” Especially in the Korean language, the honorifics system is “more explicit and more specific” than in other languages (Yoon 2004). The Korean language has six possible levels of honorifics, which can be broadly classified into two categories: *deferential* vs. *informal*. The Korean language mandates the speaker to choose a particular level of speech for each encounter, selecting either deferential or informal speech depending on the context. Deferential speech is used when the addressee’s social status is higher than that of the speaker (e.g., parent, elder, teacher, employer) or when the speaker perceives a substantial psychological distance between him/herself and the addressee (e.g., stranger, acquaintance rather than friend). Conversely, informal speech is used when the addressee’s social status is on par with/lower than that of the speaker and they are very familiar with each other (e.g., son/daughter, child, student, employee, friend of equal or lower age). All speakers of Korean must take these relations into account.

To improve our understanding of the principles underlying the honorifics system in the Korean language, we must consider the Korean view on society (Yoon 2004). According to Yoon (2004), Koreans hold a strong hierarchical and vertical outlook on the society and the groups they belong to—family or any social groups, large or small, for that matter—which scholars trace back to the caste system. Regardless of the social situation, Koreans establish who is a superior (*wui saram*, literal meaning: the person above) or a subordinate (*arae saram*, literal meaning: the person below) in any interaction. Accordingly, “to interact with one group requires honorifics while to interact with the other does not” (Yoon 2004).

An important implication of this dyadic distinction (superior vs. subordinate) is its corresponding behavior. For a Korean person, when interacting with a superior (or even a psychologically distant person), the choice of a deferential speech style is consistent with taking “extra caution” (Yoon 2004). In other words, the Asian concept of *face* comes into play (Brown 2010; Kim and Nam 1998; Leech 2007; Yoon 2004). *Face* is the notion of self-image that one manages as an estimate of what others see of oneself (Leech 2007), and this factor has been shown to robustly impact much of the social interactions in Asian countries—with Korea being no exception (Bond and Lee 1981; Kim and Nam 1998; Markus and Kitayama 1991). Hence, when interacting with a person of superior status or a stranger, Koreans are very face-conscious; their goal is not to lose face but to establish and maintain harmonious interpersonal communications or relationships (Yum 2012). By using the deferential style in their speech, which may be characterized as very matter-of-fact and devoid of emotions, Korean speakers have de facto chosen to err on the safe side to ensure that the superior or stranger being

addressed will not be offended, thus maintaining the speaker's face. To this end, consistent with the theory of goal orientation (Higgins 1997, 2000), we posit an association between the deferential style of Korean speech and a prevention orientation—that is, a concern for responsibility, vigilance, and duty:

H1a: The deferential style of speech in the Korean language will encourage a prevention orientation in individual speakers.

On the other hand, a Korean speaker interacting with a subordinate or a friend is likely to choose the informal style of speech. This decision is also consistent with the face principle because the speaker is less likely to be burdened by concerns related to face. In fact, adopting a deferential style in this situation may be construed as an unwarranted signal of psychological distance, hence creating an awkward interaction. Conversations in informal speech are often much more frank and richer with emotions.

In Korea, there is a game called “*ya-ja* time” (*ya*, literal meaning: “hey, you”; *ja* is a suffix utilized in one form of informal speech). *Ya-ja* time is a role-reversal game in which the subordinate acts as superior and vice-versa. The subordinate, now playing the role of the superior, gets to use informal speech, which gives him or her a chance to express frank opinions and release suppressed emotions to his/her superior. Unique to the Korean culture, this game is seemingly an insightful reflection of likely regulatory orientation issues brought on by the honorifics system. Accordingly, we posit that the informal style of Korean speech, devoid of inhibitions, to foster a promotion focus in individuals:

H1b: The informal style of speech in the Korean language will encourage a promotion orientation in individual speakers.

We next discuss regulatory fit in the context of the Korean honorifics system, seeking to match the level of speech (goal orientation) with the product type (means).

1.2 Regulatory fit

Regulatory fit is a robust theory related to goal orientation and the means of achieving goals (Avnet and Higgins 2003; Cesario et al. 2007; Higgins 2000; Higgins et al. 2003). While regulatory focus theory describes how goal orientation guides decision-making and behavior in the process of goal pursuit (Crowe and Higgins 1997; Higgins 1997, 2000), regulatory fit theory underscores the *value* derived from a match between goal orientation and the means used to pursue a goal (Higgins 2000). To elaborate, a prevention-focused individual will derive greater value from the adoption of a vigilance (avoidance) means, which accords with the safety and responsibility concerns associated with a prevention goal, whereas a promotion-focused individual will derive greater value from the adoption of an eagerness (approach) means, which matches the achievement and advancement associated with a promotion goal (Higgins 2000). Moreover, this derived value may be in the form of the object's worth (Avnet and Higgins 2003; Higgins et al. 2003), interest in task engagement (Higgins 2000), persuasion (Cesario et al. 2007), or job satisfaction (Kruglanski et al. 2007).

With respect to the *means* involved in regulatory fit theory in the marketing literature, the utilitarian vs. hedonic product/benefit stands out as a popular choice (Chernev 2004; Chitturi et al. 2007, 2008) for a couple of reasons. Foremost, utilitarian benefits/products are functional, instrumental, or practical, whereas hedonic ones are aesthetic, experiential, or pleasure-oriented; therefore, there is naturally a high correspondence, respectively, with prevention goals (“needs” or “ought” concepts) and promotion goals (“wants” or “aspire” concepts). Chernev (2004) showed that individuals with a prevention (promotion) focus tend to overweigh utilitarian (hedonic) dimensions—e.g., for lunch, preferring shorter walking distance (superior dessert menu). Secondly, product-/benefit-related means undoubtedly carry important implications in marketing.

Based on a similar line of reasoning, we also set out to investigate the Korean honorifics system in the context of utilitarian/hedonic means. Specifically, we expect the deferential speech level to be a preferred style in utilitarian product/benefit cases. The rationale is that, as we expect deferential speech to trigger a prevention focus (H1a), a goal orientation associated with safety, security, and responsibility (e.g., ought) concerns will match better with utilitarian means. In fact, Brown (2010) and Eun and Strauss (2004) noted in an anecdote that the Korean deferential speech style is often used to communicate new factual information. However, for the informal speech style in Korean, we expect to find a regulatory fit with hedonic product/benefits. If the informal speech style fosters a promotion focus (H1b), we expect to find an association between a goal orientation with an emphasis on achievement and advancement (e.g., aspire) and hedonic means. Stating this formally:

H2a: There will be a regulatory fit between the deferential style of speech in the Korean language and utilitarian product/benefit.

H2b: There will be a regulatory fit between the informal style of speech in the Korean language and hedonic product/benefit.

1.3 Construal fit

Following our reasoning on speech styles as a prime for regulatory focus, we next examine how speech styles as primes may ultimately affect the construal fit. In designing persuasive messages, there is a growing body of research which highlights the need to pay attention to the target audiences’ regulatory focus and the message style that matches it—namely, in terms of construal fit (Lee and Aaker 2004; Lee et al. 2010). Construal level theory states that any given action can be perceived at different levels in the cognitive hierarchy depending on the focus (i.e., either on the goal or the means of the action) (Liberman and Trope 1998; Trope and Liberman 2003). At a higher-level construal, individuals tend to focus on desirability issues (e.g., on the “why” questions), and the descriptions are more abstract. In contrast, at a lower-level construal, the focus shifts to feasibility issues (e.g., on the “how” questions), and the descriptions are more concrete.

Liberman et al. (1999) first postulated in their work on construal fit theory that “a prevention focus encourages the representation in a more concrete and detailed form because every component of the task can potentially thwart the goal of safety and

security. In contrast, a promotion focus might encourage a more abstract and general representation of a task because the goals of advancement and growth depend on finding multiple means of making progress.” As a follow-up, Lee et al. (2010) demonstrated that individuals indeed show more favorable attitudes when a construal fit is present: those who were primed into a prevention (promotion) focus mind-set showed a more favorable brand attitude when presented with an ad featuring a low (high)-level construal headline. In the work of Lee et al. (2010), as with the majority of studies on regulatory fit, the regulatory focus was *a priori* primed in individuals. We contend that in the Korean language, the honorifics system itself is a natural, contextual prime for regulatory focus. To this end, we expect the deferential speech style (as a prime for a prevention focus) to fit with low-level construals, whereas the informal speech style (as a prime for a promotion focus) will fit with high-level construals.

H3a: There will be a fit between the deferential style of speech in the Korean language and low-level construals.

H3b: There will be a fit between the informal style of speech in the Korean language and high-level construals.

2 Study 1

The goal of study 1 was to investigate the Korean honorifics system and its impact on regulatory fit with product types. We predicted individuals to evaluate goal-compatible products more favorably when matched with the activated regulatory focus. Specifically, deferential speech should prime prevention orientation, while informal speech should make promotion orientation more salient. To this end, individuals should seek appropriate means to achieve regulatory goals, and Chitturi et al. (2008) have shown utilitarian (hedonic) products to serve this particular function. Therefore, we expect individuals to experience regulatory fit contingent upon the match between the honorific style and the product type.

2.1 Method

Forty-seven students in a Korean university were recruited to assess the honorifics' impact on regulatory focus. Based on Chitturi (2009) and Higgins (2000), we used six items—responsibility, vigilance, and duty for prevention focus (Cronbach's $\alpha=.822$) and cheerfulness, excitement, and delight for promotion focus (Cronbach's $\alpha=.964$). Participants were instructed to view an ad for a pair of sneakers written in either deferential style or informal style, and they then were asked to rate the six items on a 7-point Likert scale. The ad featured a pair of sneakers, and the ad copy read, “Isn't it time to upgrade to the newest model?” The results revealed that participants in the deferential condition focused more on prevention compared to those in the informal condition ($M_{\text{deferential}}=5.15$, $M_{\text{informal}}=2.58$; $t=9.51$, $p<.01$). Also as predicted, participants in the informal condition focused more on promotion compared to those in the deferential condition ($M_{\text{deferential}}=2.65$, $M_{\text{informal}}=4.59$; $t=-5.09$, $p<.01$). Accordingly, H1a and H1b were corroborated.

For H2a and H2b, we conducted a pretest with a sample of 25 participants to select products for utilitarian/hedonic categories to be used as the stimuli in the main experiment. Participants were given information about the product, and then they were asked to make utilitarian/hedonic product judgment as follows: (1) a utilitarian product, (2) a hedonic product, (3) both, or (4) neither (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Leclerc et al. 1994; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998). Participants identified gasoline as a utilitarian product (25 of 25 respondents), but a smartphone as both utilitarian and hedonic (22 of 25 subjects, $\chi^2=14.44, p<.01$). On the other hand, beer was perceived as a hedonic product (24 of 25 subjects, $\chi^2=21.16, p<.01$), but perfume was not (10 of 25 subjects, $\chi^2=1.00, p>.10$). Thus, we proceed with gasoline (utilitarian) and beer (hedonic) in the ensuing experiment.

One hundred twenty students from a Korean university were recruited in exchange for partial course credit. A 2 (speech style: deferential vs. informal) \times 2 (product type: utilitarian vs. hedonic) between-subjects design was used. Participants were asked to imagine that they would be making a gasoline (beer) purchase in the near future and were provided with a print ad on gasoline (beer) for 30 s (Appendix 1). The contents of the advertisements were identical for the same product type—except for the speech styles used; one message was written using deferential speech and the other informal speech. For the utilitarian product, the copy read, “Fill it with quality gasoline: superior and reliable, sourced from first-rate petroleum using the latest refinery technology.” For the hedonic product, the copy read, “Enjoy refreshing beer and excitement with frozen froth.”

To test the regulatory fit between the honorifics system and product types, participants were then asked to answer a series of questions on the speech style of the advertising message (1=informal speech, 7=deferential speech) and attitude toward the product (1=bad, 7=good; 1=dislikable, 7=likable; 1=unfavorable, 7=favorable).

2.2 Results and discussion

Manipulation checks showed that deferential (informal) speech style of ad copy was indeed perceived by the participants as deferential (informal) in gasoline and beer ads ($M_{\text{deferential}}=6.13, M_{\text{informal}}=1.33; t=20.00, p<.01$ for gasoline ad; $M_{\text{deferential}}=6.43, M_{\text{informal}}=1.30; t=27.80, p<.01$ for beer ad).

The results indicate that for the utilitarian product, product attitude was higher after respondents read the message written in a deferential style ($M=4.91$) than in an informal one ($M=3.89; t=4.55, p<.01$). On the other hand, for the hedonic product, product attitude was higher after they read the message written in an informal style ($M=5.38$) than in a deferential one ($M=4.76; t=2.34, p<.05$). We may, therefore, conclude that individuals with a prevention focus considering a utilitarian product would be better approached through advertising messages written in a deferential style than in an informal one, and that those with a promotion focus considering a hedonic product would respond better to advertising messages written in an informal style than in a deferential one (Fig. 1).

3 Study 2

In study 1, we explored self-regulation issues, which varied depending on the speech style and the product type. Extending the investigation to the construal level theory, the

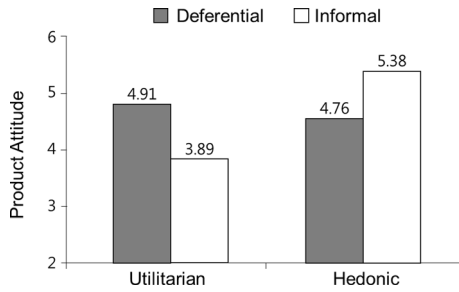


Fig. 1 Study 1: product attitude: speech style and product type

purpose of study 2 is to investigate whether individuals with a prevention (promotion) focus would be more likely to construe information at a concrete (an abstract) level.

3.1 Method

In study 2, we select smartphone for the main stimulus—as the pretest revealed that this product category was both utilitarian and hedonic. A total of 119 university students participated in study 2 for partial course credit. A 2 (speech level: deferential vs. informal) \times 2 (construal level: concrete vs. abstract) between-subjects design was used. All stimuli were identical in terms of the content but varied only in speech styles and construal levels (Appendix 2). The participants first were instructed to imagine a situation in which they were purchasing a smartphone, and then they were presented with a print ad for a smartphone for 30 s. The ad copy read, “Lx-pro, SMART PARTNER in my hand.” The additional message at the abstract level was “Revel in the rich sound anytime, anywhere. Enjoy happy memories live and real in 3D,” whereas, at the concrete level, it was “Listen to powerful sound by the 1W speaker using the latest acoustic technology. Have a high-quality picture taken with the 3D camera equipped by two rear view cameras.” Each message was written in both the deferential and informal speech styles.

In the test of hypotheses 3a and 3b, respondents answered a series of questions on the advertising message (1=informal speech, 7=deferential speech), construal level of product information (1=concrete, 7=abstract), and attitude toward the product (1=bad, 7=good; 1=dislikable, 7=likable; 1=unfavorable, 7=favorable).

3.2 Results and discussion

Manipulation checks showed that deferential (informal) speech style of ad copy was indeed perceived by the participants as deferential (informal) ($M_{\text{deferential}}=6.64$, $M_{\text{informal}}=1.33$; $t=38.90$, $p<.01$) and high (low) construal descriptions were indeed perceived as abstract (concrete) ($M_{\text{abstract}}=6.02$, $M_{\text{concrete}}=1.75$; $t=30.08$, $p<.01$).

We found that product attitude was higher when the message was written on a concrete level as compared to the abstract level in deferential speech ($M_{\text{abstract}}=4.41$, $M_{\text{concrete}}=5.47$; $t=-6.79$, $p<.01$). On the other hand, participants evaluated the product more favorably when the message was written on an abstract level rather than on a concrete level in informal speech ($M_{\text{abstract}}=5.41$, $M_{\text{concrete}}=4.38$; $t=5.80$, $p<.01$). Altogether, when the honorifics system triggers a particular self-regulatory goal, the

findings underscore the potential implications for paying attention to details of the ad copy—namely, the level of abstraction in the product appeals for maximal persuasive impact (Fig. 2).

4 Study 3

While we found robust effects of fit for both product type and construal level on product attitude, it could very well be due to processing fluency effects. That is, past research has shown that “(m)essages that fit with the recipients’ orientation are easier to process” (Lee et al. 2010). As noted by Brown (2010) and Eun and Strauss (2004) on the frequent usage of the Korean deferential speech style in communicating new factual information, it is quite possible that individuals may experience perceptual fluency when encountering a utilitarian-product ad copy in a deferential speech style. To this end, we ran additional analyses to test for processing fluency mediation with respect to product type fit and also of construal fit on product attitude.

First, to test mediation of processing fluency for product type fit on product attitude, we ran a study similar to study 1 with 160 Korean university students, but this time including processing fluency measures. Processing fluency was measured by asking participants to indicate how they processed the target advertisement on a four-item, 7-point scale (1=difficult to process, 7=easy to process; 1=difficult to understand, 7=easy to understand; 1=not at all eye-catching, 7=very eye-catching; 1=not at all attractive, 7=very attractive) (Labroo and Lee 2006; Lee et al. 2010). The four items of processing fluency were averaged (Cronbach’s $\alpha=.742$). The results of a 2 (speech style) \times 2 (product type) ANOVA on the processing fluency indicated that the speech style \times product type interaction was significant ($F(1, 156)=7.03, p<.01$). Moreover, participants in the utilitarian condition perceived deferential speech ($M_{\text{deferential}}=4.23$) to be marginally easier to process than informal speech ($M_{\text{informal}}=3.80; t(74)=1.64, p=.10$), whereas, those in the hedonic condition perceived the informal speech ($M=4.92$) to be easier to process than the deferential speech ($M=4.51; t(82)=2.20, p<.05$).

A series of regression analyses were conducted to examine the mediating effect for processing fluency (Baron and Kenny 1986). The results of the first regression analysis indicated that the speech style \times product type interaction had a significant effect on product attitude ($\beta=.45, t=4.87, p<.01$). A second regression analysis showed that the speech style \times product type interaction on processing fluency was also significant ($\beta=.23, t=2.78, p<.01$). A final regression analysis with processing fluency included

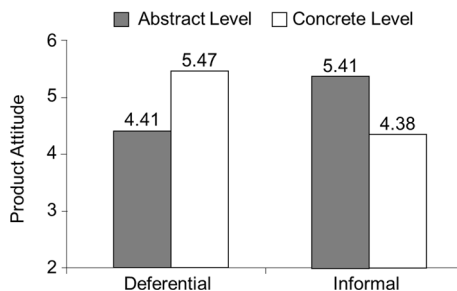


Fig. 2 Study 2: product attitude: speech style and construal level

in the model as a predictor of product attitude indicated that the processing fluency was significant ($\beta=.42, t=5.19, p<.01$), and the speech style \times product type interaction was also significant ($\beta=.35, t=4.01, p<.01$). A Sobel (1982) test revealed that the mediating effect of processing fluency on product attitude was significant ($z=2.44, p<.05$). Hence, processing fluency partially mediated the speech style \times product type interaction and product attitude.

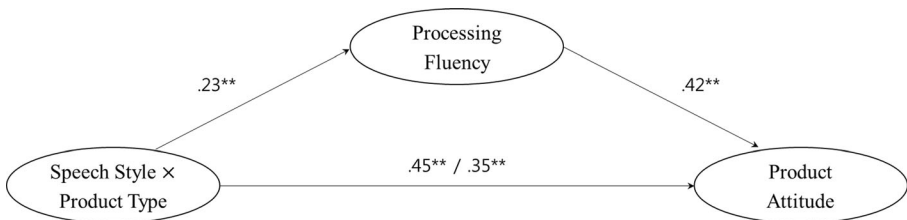
In sum, while processing fluency does partially account for the findings on H2a/b, the match between honorifics system and product type still plays a key role in driving the results. Similarly, we ran another mediation analysis for processing fluency with respect to the match between honorifics system and construal level on product attitude. We found a similar pattern of results where processing fluency partially mediated the findings on H3a/b (Fig. 3).

5 General discussion

In this research, we set out to improve our understanding of the Korean honorifics system beyond its traditional role as a cultural communication protocol. We adopted a social psychological perspective, viewing the latent impact of this linguistic legacy as a natural, contextual prime for regulatory focus in Korean-speaking individuals. The study’s key finding is that the dyadic distinction of deferential vs. informal speech style fosters preventive vs. promotion orientations, respectively, in Korean speakers.

While regulatory focus has been thoroughly researched across a multitude of contexts in psychology and marketing, this study is the first to examine the influence of a linguistic convention on regulatory focus. The linguistic void in the extant research may be traced to the dominance of studies with a Western-centric focus. Due to the “neutral” nature of the English language, the notion of linguistics as a potential regulatory prime remained unexplored until now. Korean, a systematically distinct language with an honorifics system, was considered in this study.

In the process of testing the linguistic boundaries of the regulatory focus theory, we identified some managerial implications for the Korean market. First, our findings on regulatory fit suggest that ad sponsors need to be cognizant of the fit of the style of speech with their product offerings. If the product is of the utilitarian (hedonic) type, then the deferential (informal) style will be more effective in marketing communications. Secondly, our findings on construal fit suggest that ad sponsors must also pay careful attention to the wording of the ad copy in terms of the construal level: if the ad



* significant at $p < .05$
 ** significant at $p < .01$

Fig. 3 The mediating role of processing fluency on product attitude

copy is worded in a deferential (informal) style, then the persuasive argument should focus on the concrete (abstract) aspects of the product.





6 Limitations and future research

As the Korean honorifics system is rooted in a face-conscious Confucian culture, the independent effect of the honorifics system is yet to be explored. That is, the research participants were all native Koreans acculturated in a Confucian society. Hence, for fluent Korean speakers of Western upbringing, whether the honorifics system represents a mere linguistic protocol or a regulatory prime would be worth exploring.

Secondly, as our research platform was a one-way communication medium, the attention was on the honorifics cueing the regulatory focus of the message recipient. Evidently, Guus Hiddink (a Dutch-born head coach of the Korean national soccer team, who took the squad to the final four in the 2002 World Cup Finals for the first time in the team’s history) held a strong belief that honorifics would also affect the message originator. Reflecting his philosophy that everyone was equal on the pitch, his players were instructed to communicate with each other in informal speech style during play—which was a radical departure from the norm. While the local press has highlighted this practice as one of the contributing factors for the team’s success, a closer look at the honorifics’ impact on the regulatory focus of both the message originator and the recipient would be worthwhile, which we leave for future research.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Experimental stimuli for study 1

| Utilitarian Product: Gasoline | |
|---|--|
| <p>Deferential</p>  <p>업선된 원유와 정제기술로 더욱 강력하고 안전한 휘발유를 사용하십시오</p> | <p>Informal</p>  <p>업선된 원유와 정제기술로 더욱 강력하고 안전한 휘발유를 사용하라</p> |
| Hedonic Product: Beer | |
| <p>Deferential</p>  <p>살짝 얼린 맥주거품으로 더 시원하고 짜릿하게 즐기십시오</p> | <p>Informal</p>  <p>살짝 얼린 맥주거품으로 더 시원하고 짜릿하게 즐겨라</p> |

Appendix 2: Experimental stimuli for study 2

| Deferential and high construal level | Deferential and low construal level |
|---|--|
|  <p data-bbox="355 455 529 500">내 손안의 SMART PARTNER 'Lx-pro'와 함께 하십시오</p> <p data-bbox="331 515 557 553">더욱 풍성한 사운드로 언제 어디서나 감동을 느껴십시오 행복한 추억들을 3D로 더욱 생생하고 실감나게 즐기십시오</p> |  <p data-bbox="649 455 823 500">내 손안의 SMART PARTNER 'Lx-pro'와 함께 하십시오</p> <p data-bbox="602 515 867 553">1W 스피커와 최신 음향 기술로 더욱 강력해진 사운드를 들으십시오 후면 카메라가 2개 탑재된 3D 카메라로 고화질의 사진을 찍으십시오</p> |
| Informal and high construal level | Informal and low construal level |
|  <p data-bbox="355 797 529 843">내 손안의 SMART PARTNER 'Lx-pro'와 함께 하라</p> <p data-bbox="331 857 557 896">더욱 풍성한 사운드로 언제 어디서나 감동을 느껴라 행복한 추억들을 3D로 더욱 생생하고 실감나게 즐겨라</p> |  <p data-bbox="649 797 823 843">내 손안의 SMART PARTNER 'Lx-pro'와 함께 하라</p> <p data-bbox="602 857 867 896">1W 스피커와 최신 음향 기술로 더욱 강력해진 사운드를 들어라 후면 카메라가 2개 탑재된 3D 카메라로 고화질의 사진을 찍어라</p> |

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