

# How To Be Impolite

Pragmatics

Comparing politeness in German and Korean

Presentation held by Bryan Hogan as part of the Korean Linguistics class by  
Prof. 안희영 at University of Seoul (서울시립대학교) during fall semester 2023

# Table of Contents

1. What Is Politeness?
2. Speech Levels
3. Saying “You”
4. When To Use What

# Politeness

In both the German and Korean languages, the choice of informal or formal address is a crucial aspect of politeness.

# Levels

German: 2

Korean: 7

# Korean Speech Levels

Speech level	Declarative	Interrogative	Imperative	Propositive
Deferential	-습니다 -습니다	-습니까 -습니까	-(으)십시오	-(으)십시오
Polite	-어요/-아요	-어요/-아요	-어요/-아요	-어요/-아요
Blunt	-(으)오	-(으)오		
Familiar	-네	-냐/-는가	-게	-세
Intimate	-어/-아	-어/-아	-어/-아	-어/-아
Plain	-(느)다	-(으)냐/-냐	-어라/-아라	-자

# How are you?

존댓말 (Formal Politeness):

- 어떻게 지내십니까? / 어떻게 지내세요?

해요체 (Polite But Less Formal):

- 어떻게 지내요?

반말 (Informal/Casual):

- 어떻게 지내?

# Saying “You” in German

In German there are two ways to say you:

- “Du” (informal)
- “Sie” (formal)

Example: Can you do this?

- Kannst du dies machen?
- Können sie dies machen?

# Saying “You” in Korean

- It's easy, just “당신”



# ~~Saying “You” in Korean~~

~~—It’s easy, just “당신”~~

This is wrong!

# How to say “You” in Korean?

More complex

- Just don't, omit the “you”
- Use titles instead (선생님, 사장님)
- Use 언니, 오빠, 누나 or 형 (older friend)
- 그쪽 (stranger momentarily)
- Name + 씨
- 당신 (spouse, start a fight, songs/speeches)
- 너 (most impolite)

# German

“Sie” (Formal):

- In professional settings, such as at the workplace or business meetings.
- When addressing superiors, supervisors, or employers.
- When interacting with elderly individuals.
- In official or formal correspondence, including letters and emails.

Use “Du” (informal) everywhere else.

# Korean

"존댓말":

- When speaking to elders or individuals of higher social status.
- In professional and workplace settings when addressing superiors or clients.
- During formal events, ceremonies, and official interactions.
- In public and customer service interactions, like in stores or restaurants.
- When showing respect to strangers or individuals you've just met.

"하오체": ...

"반말":

- Among close friends and peers of the same age or social status.
- In relaxed, casual, and private settings like at home or with close acquaintances.
- When talking to family members or siblings.
- When addressing children or younger individuals.
- In situations where there is mutual agreement to use "반말" due to a close relationship.

# Example situation in Germany

- High school teacher
- Stranger outside
- Uni prof.

# Sources

- <https://kimchicloud.com/how-to-say-you-in-korean/>
- <https://funkorean4u.wordpress.com/2014/07/13/beginner-how-to-say-you-in-korean/>
- [https://youtu.be/VwJQuBBvilY?list=PLbFrQnW0BNMUkAFj4MjYauXBPtO3I9O\\_k](https://youtu.be/VwJQuBBvilY?list=PLbFrQnW0BNMUkAFj4MjYauXBPtO3I9O_k)
- <https://blog.lingodeer.com/korean-speech-levels/>
- <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Teaching-the-polite-and-the-deferential-speech-KFL-Byon/3c6752625d711e1e57d89c54e2e5a1b2a68ee1c7>
- <https://www.90daykorean.com/korean-conjugation/>
- <https://gogohanguk.com/en/blog/korean-levels-of-speech/>