

Workplace Discourse and Expression of Hierarchy in Yoon Tae-ho's Webtoon *Misaeng*

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Abstract

The article provides an in-depth analysis of workplace discourse and hierarchy as depicted in the popular Korean webtoon *Misaeng*. Its story takes place in a large trading company and portrays workers' daily lives, focusing on the work of Sales team 3. Through critical discourse analysis, the research shows how power relations among team members are expressed through language and interactions in a Korean corporate setting. Key events, such as the introductions of new team members, are examined to demonstrate how workplace hierarchy shapes interpersonal communication. The findings provide insights into the portrayal of Korean corporate culture, highlighting the significance of hierarchy in professional relationships and its impact on workplace communication.

Keywords: webtoon, *Misaeng*, workplace discourse, corporate culture, hierarchy

Povzetek

Članek se skozi poglobljeno analizo diskurza na delovnem mestu osredotoča na prikazovanje hierarhije v priljubljenem korejskem internetnem stripu *Misaeng*. Zgodba tega stripa se odvija v velikem trgovskem podjetju in predstavlja vsakdanje življenje delavcev, v ospredje pa postavi delo ekipe prodajnega oddelka 3. S kritično analizo diskurza raziskava pokaže, kako se v korejskem podjetju odnosi moči med člani ekipe izražajo skozi jezik in medosebne interakcije. Še posebej v trenutku, ko se ekipi pridruži nov član, se delavno vzdušje spremeni in se pokaže, kako hierarhija na delovnem mestu oblikuje medosebno komunikacijo. Ugotovitve nudijo vpogled v prikazovanje korejske delavske kulture, poudarjajo pomen hierarhije v poklicnih odnosih in njen vpliv na komunikacijo na delovnem mestu.

Ključne besede: internetni strip, *Misaeng*, diskurz na delovnem mestu, delavska kultura, hierarhija



1 Introduction

Webtoon *Misaeng* 미생 is a story about office workers in a trading company. Written by Yoon Tae-Ho 윤태호, the first season was published between January 17, 2012, and July 19, 2013, on the *Daum* 다음 platform, today known as *Kakao Webtoon* 카카오웹툰. It contained 145 episodes and was also released in physical form by *Wisdom House* in 2013 (Yoon, 2013a; Yoon, 2013b). It was followed by a series with the same title, which aired on *tvN* (cable television) between October 17 and December 20, 2014. It achieved a 10.3% viewership during its live broadcast on television, which is very high considering that the usual ratings for cable TV series fall as low as 1 or 2% (Park, 2022a). The webtoon's second season started on November 10, 2015, and ended on February 12, 2024, with the final, 216th, episode. As of August 4, 2024, *Misaeng* has 1.28 billion views and 305.8 million followers (as seen on the portal *Kakao Webtoon*), which makes it one of the most successful webtoons of the time.

The webtoon *Misaeng* “realistically represents the joys and sorrows of office workers” (No, 2013), which is why it reached many readers and was considered a “business bible” (Seo, 2015, p. 284). The story emphasizes the unique pressures employees of trading companies face, such as the demand for quick decision-making, the need for proficiency in multiple languages, the understanding of clients from different cultural backgrounds, and the willingness to work at unconventional hours to accommodate global markets. Korean trading companies were crucial for the development and economic success of the country and that is why they are known for their intense work culture, international focus, and discipline.

In this research, we will focus on the presentation of the main characters of *Misaeng* and analyze how the hierarchical relationship between them is depicted. Power relations are embedded in the language that can be observed while reading dialogues between the workers, although the reader is usually not conscious of that aspect. Therefore, the analysis of the *verbal* part (characters' speech) of this webtoon will help us understand how the hierarchy is formed among the characters.

The selected approach is critical discourse analysis, which focuses on how language reflects social hierarchies, power relations, and ideologies. It is commonly employed in media content or political speech analyses to reveal the underlying meanings and assumptions embedded within these texts. The press is, nowadays, an important platform for spreading ideological representations in various societies, since the articles, meticulously written by journalists, reflect values, beliefs, and prejudices inherent in the socio-political landscape (Galafa, 2023, p. 48). It is particularly

important that the readers, who are actively engaging with the text published online, can understand the hidden meaning of the text.

Critical discourse analysis is not commonly used in examinations of narrative texts, because these are fictional and did not emerge from real-world situations. However, according to Stephens (1992, p. 2), the discourse of narrative fiction produces not only a story but also significance, and ideology, which can never be separated from discourse (its presence can only be more or less obvious), can be observed in both. Even if the events in the story are wholly or partially fictional and do not exist in reality, the narrative sequences and character relationships will be shaped according to recognizable forms that express ideology. Therefore, "fiction must be regarded as a special site for ideological effect, with a potentially powerful capacity for shaping audience attitudes" (Stephens, 1992, p. 3). This is why some studies adopts critical discourse analysis to examine narrative texts. Among such, recent research focuses on the representation of gender roles in literary text (Abdullah et al., 2020), the depiction of the refugee experience in children's literature (Yetkiner, 2021), the construction of racism in cartoon films (Audah Kadhim & Fadhil Abbas, 2023), etc.

Through critical discourse analysis, we will observe how power and hierarchical relations between workers are shown through dialogues in the webtoon *Misaeng*. For comparison, we will include examples from the webtoons *The Story of Head Manager Kim, Who Lives and Works for a Large Company in Seoul* (*Seoul jagae daegieop danineun Kim bujang iyagi* 서울 자가에 대기업 다니는 김 부장 이야기), and *New Employee, Chairman Kang* (*Sinipsawon Kang hoejang* 신입사원 강 회장). Both webtoons are published on the Naver Webtoon platform and are currently in production. *The Story of Head Manager Kim* started in December 2023, whereas *New Employee, Chairman Kang* was first published as a web novel in 2021, then as a webtoon in September 2023. Like *Misaeng*, these two webtoons depict the lives of employees in various roles within a company, so this comparison aims to provide a deeper understanding of Korean work culture and the hierarchical relationships between employees.

2 Workplace discourse

The workplace is an example of a space only available for research in a limited capacity (Mullany, 2007, p. 49). The main problem is that many companies are reluctant to share information with outsiders, which was also noted by the author Yoon Tae-ho when he wished to learn about the company work and collect sufficient material before writing *Misaeng*:

"It is an impossible mission from the start. In order to gather some resources, I contacted several big trading companies; however, they refused to open their door. Therefore, I had to find someone else who was working at a mid-sized trading company. They provided a lot of necessary information" (Jin, 2019, p. 2226).

Workplace discourse encompasses a variety of interactions in many professional settings – schools, hospitals, factories, offices, etc. There are different expressions for 'workplace discourse', such as 'institutional discourse', 'professional discourse', 'business discourse', etc. (Koester, 2010, p. 5). Drew and Heritage (1992, pp. 22-25) list three criteria that distinguish institutional discourse from ordinary discourse, namely:

- goal orientation (at least one of the participants in the interaction will want to reach some goal, work done through conversation)
- compliance with certain restrictions (participants of the interaction take into account the circumstances and behave accordingly, e.g. formal circumstances, as in the case of a job interview, defense before a judge, etc.),
- the existence of inferential frameworks and procedures that are characteristic of certain institutions and their correct interpretation (e.g. when concluding deals, participants will hide feelings of surprise or they will not show (dis)agreement directly, because this type of interaction is expected).

Interactions in the workplace are often asymmetric, and power is not evenly distributed between participants. Such interactions are observed mainly between experts and amateurs, superiors and subordinates, where an imbalance of knowledge or power between the participants is evident (Koester, 2010, p. 4). Power relations in certain organizations are expressed at different levels. In the workplace, we usually talk about power due to position (legitimate power) but at the same time, we must also consider power due to knowledge and experience (expertise power) (Vine, 2004, p. 1). Power can be realized in different ways, and those in a position of power decide what is appropriate in an interaction (Fairclough, 1989, p. 72).

In addition, Korean society is based on Confucian beliefs. Neo-Confucianism was reinforced on the Korean peninsula during the long era of the Joseon dynasty. Hierarchy in Korean society is based on its ethics, which define interpersonal relationships according to gender, age, and position in such society, following the so-called Five Codes: between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brother, two friends (Cho & Yoon, 2001, p. 78). All relationships, except one among two friends, are supposedly unequal (Cho & Yoon, 2001, p. 78). It is believed

that if everyone performs their role in the above-mentioned relationships, society will be peaceful (Lee & McNulty, 2003, p. 38). Confucianism is not solely to blame for the introduction of hierarchy and authority into the Korean workplace. After the devastating Korean War, the country went through quick development and the economy started to rely heavily on large family-owned business conglomerates called *chaebol* 재벌. Their power, in both the economic and social sense, is so strong that the Korean economy is often identified with them (Cho & Yoon, 2001, p. 75). A key characteristic of *chaebol* is their family-controlled management, which emphasizes family-like relationships among employees and fosters paternalistic and authoritarian leadership, where leaders are seen as symbols of power (Cho & Yoon, 2001, pp. 75-76).

How power relations are reflected in a discourse can be checked through critical discourse analysis. Teun A. van Dijk (1996, p. 84) says that critical analysis should “describe and explain how power abuse is enacted, reproduced or legitimized by the text and talk of dominant groups or institutions.” In this case, power is understood as an asymmetry between participants in discourse and in terms of unequal possibilities of control over how discourse is created, understood, and disseminated in certain sociocultural contexts (Fairclough, 1995, pp. 1-2). Power can also be defined as the control exercised by a certain group or organization over the actions and thinking of another group, thereby limiting its freedom of action, and influencing the knowledge, attitudes, and ideology of the members of the other group (Van Dijk, 1996, p. 84). In other words, the dominant group influences the other group in such a way that the knowledge, attitudes, values, and norms of the other group are in favor of the dominant group (Van Dijk, 1996, p. 85).

Van Dijk also adds that one of the main elements of power manifests itself precisely in access to discourse and communicative events. It is important “who may speak or write to whom, about what, when, and in what context, or who may participate in such communicative events in various recipient roles, for instance as addressees, audience, bystanders and overhearers” (Van Dijk, 1996, p. 86). When we talk about access, we can study how speakers initiate communication, how they respond to it, and how they control various other features of discourse, for example, how they start topics of conversation, how they interrupt a conversation, etc.

Fairclough (2013, pp. 21-22) adopted critical approach to discourse analysis based on three dimensions of discourse: text, interaction, and context.

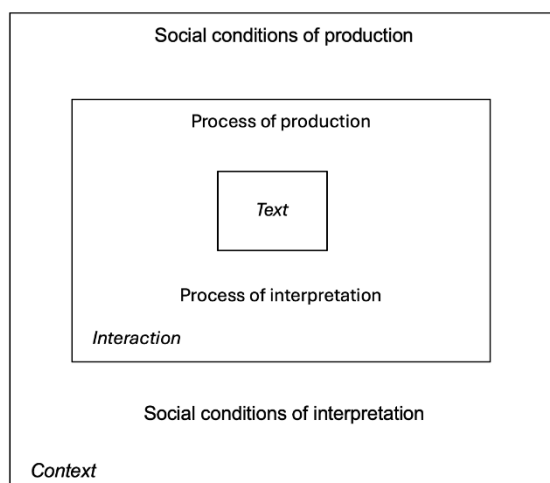


Figure 1: Fairclough's approach to discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2013, p. 21)

To identify hierarchical relations, it is essential to conduct a detailed analysis of the text. This involves systematically examining grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and text structures, as these elements contribute to the construction of meaning. Following this, the text must be analyzed from the point of view of the "process" dimension, which focuses on how text is produced, disseminated, and interpreted. Additionally, intertextual analysis is required to explore the relationships between the text and other texts produced in similar situations. The final dimension is the context, which situates discourse within its broader social and cultural context. This entails analyzing the historical, social, and institutional forces that both shape and are shaped by the discourse.

This approach provides a framework for analyzing the complex relation between language and society. It helps reveal the underlying power dynamics and hierarchical relations embedded in everyday communication.

3 *Misaeng's* story and main characters

The story of *Misaeng* is set in the large trading company called One International. The main narrator, Jang Geu-rae, joins the company as an intern through personal connections and becomes part of Sales team 3, led by Section Chief Oh.

One of the central messages of *Misaeng* is that everyone has a place in society and must fulfill their role accordingly. This is consistent with the previously mentioned Korean Confucian tradition, where place in society

and age play an important role in maintaining social hierarchy. The author introduces this message in the very first episode by comparing the functioning of the social system to two cogwheels (Yoon, 2012a). Each person in society represents one cog of the cogwheel. The machine only works when all the cogs are in place. If a single cog is missing, the machine either stops or breaks down, highlighting the importance of collective spirit within Korean society.¹ Everyone has their own role to play and thereby contribute to the progress of society as a whole. However, it is difficult to replace someone's role with that of another. The cogs of the gear are fixed in place. If we take a closer look at the cogs—representing people—of the two cogwheels, we can see that they are all company workers, as indicated by their formal suits. Through this, the author highlights the importance of hierarchy and a collective mindset in the workplace, emphasizing that company workers cannot easily move or climb up the hierarchy ladder.

The main characters of the webtoon *Misaeng* are members of Sales team 3. Hierarchical relationships between them are established throughout the story. In the beginning, Sales team 3 consists of Section Chief Oh Sang-sik 오상식 과장, Deputy Kim Dong-sik 김동식 대리, and contract worker Jang Geu-rae 장그래. The team is known for their hard work, with members constantly looking for new opportunities and projects—in this case, finding new products to sell. When the team decides on a new project, which is selling used cars from Korea to Jordan, they urgently need an additional team member to help them. Initially, they bring in Section Chief Park Jong-sik 박종식 과장. After a short time working with Park, other members of Sales team 3 discover that he has engaged in corrupt activities and has repeatedly caused financial damage to the company. They expose his dishonest practices and Park must leave the company. Sales team 3 is determined to continue with the project, so they are soon joined by Section Chief Cheon Gwan-ung 천관웅 과장, who later becomes a permanent member. Each member has distinct characteristics that influence the atmosphere within the team.

3.1 Jang Geu-rae 장그래

Jang Geu-rae is the narrator of this webtoon. He grew up in a poor family and showed an interest in playing the board game Go (in Korea known as *baduk* 바둑) from an early age. He wanted to become a professional *baduk*

¹ Beyond the importance of the collective spirit within Korean society, a broader discussion on various aspects of Koreanness is necessary. For an in-depth analysis of how Koreanness is represented (and translated) in literature, see Kang (2025) in the same issue.

player but was unsuccessful. A family friend then recommended him to the company *One International*, where he started as an intern, and later got a two-year contract. Jang Geu-rae understands well that he does not have the proper education for the job but being the sole caretaker of his elderly mother, he is determined to do everything he can in order to fulfill filial piety. By nature, he is quiet and hardworking (he often stays overnight at the company to finish the work) and is ready to dedicate his time to new challenges.

3.2 Section Chief Oh Sang-sik 오상식 과장

The leader of Team 3, Section Chief Oh Sang-sik, is one of the main characters of this webtoon and is present in almost every episode. Deputy Kim Dong-sik and contract worker Jang Geu-rae work under him. In the story, Oh Sang-sik is presented as a workaholic who never refuses any work. He is also a father of three children and has a wife who does not work, which makes him responsible for the well-being of the entire family. Over time, the constant work started showing – a worn-out face and body, red eyes from lack of sleep, and an unshaven beard due to lack of time (Yoon, 2012b). His longer hair is drawn as if fluttering in the wind behind someone who is always in a hurry. The appearance is unusual for a worker in a Korean company, but it fits his character as a devoted worker. He is fair towards his colleagues and subordinates and does not seek to cause unnecessary difficulties or conflicts. It is more important to him to work sincerely rather than opportunistically.

3.3 Deputy Kim Dong-sik 김동식 대리

Visually, Kim Dong-sik is similar in age to Jang Geu-rae. He has a round face and curly hair (Yoon, 2012c). If we compare him to Section Chief Oh, we can see that he is not exhausted from overworking, so we can assume that he has not been employed at this company for very long. Before Jang Geu-rae's arrival, he was the lowest-ranking member of the team, and after Jang Geu-rae's arrival, he was given the more important position of deputy. Therefore, he is quite patronizing towards Jang Geu-rae and wants to teach him, not only teamwork but also manners in the workplace.

3.4 Section Chief Park Jong-sik 박종식 과장

Section Chief Park joined Sales team 3 when they wanted to begin a new project of selling used cars from Korea to Jordan. Since he had previous

experience selling things in Jordan, he seemed to be a suitable candidate. However, there are many rumors about him, especially about his laziness and lack of work ethic. He prefers to spend his working time playing billiards, among other things. He is also adept at communicating amiably with his superiors and pretending to work well. However, soon after he joins, we find out that he has harmed the company due to his corruption, which is revealed to the company seniors by the members of Sales team 3.

3.5 Section Chief Cheon Gwan-ung 천관웅 과장

After Sales team 3's members exposed the corrupt practices of Section Chief Park, several people had to leave the company or, at least accept a change of position. Team 3 found themselves in the position of "the traitors," since they exposed their own colleague who then lost his job "because of them." Hence, Section Chief Cheon, who is assigned to Team 3, does not have an easy job. Despite the fact he had a fair relationship with Section Chief Oh (it seems they are of a similar age), and also holds the same title as Oh, he is now afraid that someone will find something on him, and he will lose his job as well. Although he has no criminal history and is a good worker, from the very beginning he wants to assert his authority and protect himself from any doubts and suspicions.

4 Analysis of the webtoon *Misaeng*

In this article, we will, according to the Fairclough model, analyze the dialogues that take place on two occasions; the first is when Section Chief Park joins Sales team 3, and the second is when Section Chief Cheon joins the same team. Each time a new member joins, the structure of the team changes. Everyone must get used to one another and adapt to a new way of working. At the same time, everyone wants to showcase their strengths (especially the new members) and defend their social position in the team (especially the old members of lower rank), so the expected discourse is that of power and authority. This emphasis on demonstrating strength and authority can lead to conflicts.

The analysis of *Misaeng* employs Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to examine how language reflects and shapes power dynamics in workplace interactions. The model will be applied in textual analysis, as well as in the analysis of interactions and socio-cultural background.

In textual analysis, we will focus on the linguistic features of dialogues, such as the use of honorifics, appropriate verb endings, pronouns and titles, vocabulary, and speech styles. These elements will help us reveal how characters establish or challenge power relations through the linguistic perspective. While analyzing interactions, we will focus on discourse, interpreting how dialogues unfold among team members. We will examine who initiates the conversation, how the participants respond to certain demands, the significance of interruptions during the conversation, etc. Through this, we can explore how power is displayed and how workers without power react. Finally, we will analyze and discuss the socio-cultural background of the webtoon *Misaeng*. This section will include an explanation of the broader cultural and societal context, particularly the Confucian-influenced emphasis on hierarchy and respect in Korean workplaces and workplace interactions.

By integrating these three levels, the analysis will demonstrate how *Misaeng* mirrors the sociocultural norms of Korean corporate life through the linguistic choices and interpersonal dynamics of its characters. This approach underscores how language not only reflects but also reinforces systemic power structures in professional settings.

Although the webtoon consists of both verbal and visual elements, this analysis will focus specifically on the verbal aspect, considering only the characteristics of the Korean language and its related cultural norms. Due to the length of the dialogues included in the analysis, they will be provided as an appendix to the article. The translations of all dialogues have been done by the author of the article, aiming for a literal translation to better demonstrate the linguistic features of the Korean language.

4.1 Power expression: Park joining Team 3

The first dialogue (see Appendix, Table 2), which we will analyze happens when Park joins Team 3, and it is his first day of working with them. The conversation opens up between Park and contract worker Jang Geu-rae. However, we should keep in mind that Korean company workplace is usually an open-air office, so even when someone is addressing only one colleague, others can hear what is going on.

Section Chief Park initiates the conversation by ordering Jang Geu-rae to bring his things from the resource team. Park's command to Jang (1) is informal and direct, lacking polite expressions such as *-si-* *-시-*, a pre-final

ending used for showing respect towards the subject of the sentence,² and *-yo* -요, a verb ending used for showing respect towards the addressee. He addresses Jang with *ibwa* 이봐, a casual term meaning 'Hey (you),' which is an informal address and can only be used with either someone very familiar or a colleague of lower rank in a work environment. With the order of picking his (Park's) things from the resource office, he shows his authority directed at Jang. He considers himself to have more important things to do and does not want to lose time. However, he does not consider that Jang has more important tasks to do.

As a subordinate, Jang must manage tasks from multiple superiors while maintaining respect and seeking guidance to avoid conflicts, which is why he hesitates about Park's request (2). He is in the middle of some other work that was given to him by Section Chief Oh and feels obliged to ask for permission from Oh, because he will conclude the task later than expected (3). Jang uses consistently polite language, incorporating honorific verb endings (such as verb endings *-si-* -시- and *-yo* -요), polite subject particle *kkeseo* 께서 and honorific suffix *nim* 님 added to the official title of both Oh and Park. Jang even uses double honorifics when explaining Park's request to Oh, reflecting his desire to show respect to both superiors (3).

Listening to the conversation, Deputy Kim involves himself in the conversation (4). He is addressing Jang with *ssi* 씨 'sir, Mr.', a suffix added to someone's name to show a formal relationship but is usually used towards someone of a similar or lower position. While Kim does not use polite verb endings, we can understand that he feels entitled to correct Jang's behavior as a slight superior. He critiques Jang's use of honorifics, implying that the language Jang used was inappropriate and that Jang lacks an understanding of proper hierarchical subtleties. This highlights the importance of using proper language in the Korean workplace, and mistakes in language use can be seen as a lack of awareness or professionalism. Jang replies with uncertainty and seeks clarification (5). Kim uses a didactic and corrective tone, pointing out the mistake in the use of double honorifics (6). Double honorifics mean that the subject and the object of the sentence are both "honored" simultaneously and it is typically used in contexts where both the subject and the object are individuals who deserve respect, such as elders or people of higher social status. In a workplace environment, it is advisable to use it when talking about seniors. However, from Kim's perspective, he should not use it because it implies that Section Chief Oh is of the same rank as Section Chief Park. As we can see, both Oh and Park have the same title

² For detailed discussion of contemporary possible uses of *-si-* in Korean daily life, see Yoon (2025) in the same issue.

– Section Chief. However, Kim considers Oh as someone of higher rank than Park, which is probably because Oh has been working in this company for a longer time than Park, but has not yet been promoted. For Kim, Oh is of the highest rank and wants to show Park he ranks below Oh.

Jang accepts the remark made by Kim without resistance (7) and tries to correct himself. He again turns to Oh and asks him for permission to run an errand for Park. However, while addressing Oh with honorific suffix *nim* 님, Jang does not use the same suffix when talking about Park (8). Therefore, Park strongly rebukes Jang for using his name without the honorific suffix *nim* 님 (9). As a superior, Park expects proper forms of address as a sign of deference. He takes it very personally as if he is losing his authority. After that, Park also expresses frustration with Kim, who creates unnecessary tension or conflict (10). He does not use any polite endings while talking to Kim, addressing him as *neo* 너 ‘you,’ which can be used only among close friends or peers and is rude in this context. The attention shifts to the fight between Kim and Park (11, 12). Since Park does not use proper words of politeness when addressing Kim, Kim takes it as a sign of disrespect. Each of them tries to show authority. Kim is of lower rank than Park by the title, but he has been working in this team for a longer time. Park is a higher ranking and is trying to make his position as a leader.

The whole situation is resolved by a simple command uttered by Oh (13): “Stop (*geuman* 그만).” He manages to stop the escalating conflict, using his authority to restore order and prevent further disruption. This reflects the role of higher management in maintaining workplace harmony and the expectation that their directives will be followed without question. He commands Park to pick up his things and explains that Jang has other work to do (15). Park is dissatisfied but he cannot talk back to Oh. Park shows his frustration and dissatisfaction with the hierarchical structure because he feels his authority or actions are not respected or valued (16).

At the end of this conversation, the hierarchy of the team becomes clear; Oh is the highest-ranking and most respected member. Following is Park, who is second highest by title, and Kim, who is second highest by experience. Jang has the lowest position in the team.

4.2 Power expression: Cheon joining Team 3

Soon after, Park’s corruptive behavior is exposed by other members of Team 3, and he has to leave the company. Team 3 feels uncomfortable because everyone is gossiping about them. However, they still want to continue with the project, so Section Chief Cheon joins them. From the story, it is obvious

that Oh and Kim worked with Cheon in the past, because both of them are positive about the new member. However, since Sales team 3 exposed Park's case, Cheon is careful when he starts working with the team and feels the need to show his authority.

The second dialogue, which we will analyze (see Appendix, Table 3), happens when Cheon joins the team for the first time. Cheon initiates the conversation with Jang and establishes a professional yet approachable demeanor, emphasizing collaboration and mutual adaptation (1, 3). He addresses Jang with politeness by using the word *ssi* 씨; he uses polite verb ending *-yo* -요 and formal ending *-eupsida* -읍시다 (when suggesting that they should get along well) but does not lower himself, which can be observed from the use of the pronoun *na* 나, instead of *jeo* 저 (3). This reflects a leadership style that values flexibility and approachability within hierarchical boundaries. However, he quickly changes his way of speaking, uses informal speech, and shifts from work-related to personal topics about Jang's hairstyle, as if he wants to teach Jang about proper professional appearance (5, 7). That reflects cultural norms about maintaining a tidy and professional look in the workplace. The comment is shocking to Jang (6), but he shows readiness to follow Cheon's suggestions (8), because he is his superior.

Kim, listening to the conversation, intervenes. He humorously reminds Cheon of their boss, Section Chief Oh's hairstyle, trying to ease the tension and show familiarity within the team (11). However, Cheon does not take it well; he reasserts authority, shifts the focus back to work, and directs the next task (12).

After that Cheon and Kim go to another office and do the work-related briefing there. A tense conversation between them takes place, showing that Cheon (who knows what happened with Park) is not comfortable working with the team. He harshly reminds Kim that they should keep a formal relationship and that if he (Kim) starts putting his nose into Cheon's work, he (Cheon) will do the same. Kim is shocked by Cheon's attitude but does not want to argue. They both return to the office and meet Section Chief Oh. This is also the last dialogue, which we will analyze in this article (see Appendix, Table 4).

Section Chief Cheon greets Section Chief Oh with deference, using formal polite language, such as verb endings *-si*- -시- and *-seumnikka* -습니까. He is also addressing him as 'team leader' *timjangnim* 팀장님, adding honorific suffix *nim* to the title (1), through which he acknowledges Oh as his superior. That could reflect his respect for his higher rank. But in this situation, the use of respectful language also reflects his fear – fear that Sales team 3 would find some mistakes he might have made in the past, reveal them and

he would lose his job. This is why he is careful while establishing relationships with his new teammates. On the other hand, Oh greets him in an informal way, which shows that he feels comfortable and is on friendly terms with Cheon – he sees him more as a colleague than a subordinate (2). Cheon keeps his polite and formal tone by saying: “*Jal butak deurimnida* 잘 부탁드립니다”, which is usually used when asking for a favor or request, but in this sense, it means ‘please be nice to me’ or ‘please take care of me and guide me well’. Oh is surprised by Cheon’s use of polite language and formality and responds to it in a way that could be interpreted as both teasing and critical of the sudden change and the unexpected behavior (4). Cheon does not reply. They all get back to their work.

Then Cheon requests Kim to check the work progress together in a direct and formal way (5). Cheon and Kim are now in a similar relationship as Kim and Park. Cheon is higher ranking by his title, but Kim has been working as part of Sales team 3 for a longer time. The difference is that Kim had not heard any bad gossip about Cheon before, so he thought they could be good colleagues, but Cheon made it clear, in a private conversation, that they were not as close as Kim imagined, so he answers to Cheon’s request with politeness (6).

While they are checking the work progress report, Cheon uses a direct, informal, and slightly accusatory tone, questioning the responsibility for previous work (7). Finally, Cheon brings up the subject of Jordan’s project and the case of Section Chief Park (9). He connects the current task with a previous incident, indicating a pattern of issues. When Kim tries to provide context or justify the team’s actions regarding Park’s case (10), Cheon interrupts him and sets a clear deadline for the check-up of the previous project (11). He expresses dissatisfaction with the current state of work and emphasizes the need for revision. At that point, Oh involves himself in the conversation with a sharp and authoritative tone (13). He sarcastically says to Cheon: “You are an interesting guy” (15). He criticizes Cheon’s behavior, implying that he is not being productive, and stresses the importance of working diligently. Furthermore, Oh questions Cheon about his actions towards Kim by introducing the analogy of playing games (17). Since Cheon responds with confusion (18), Oh keeps explaining Cheon’s behavior through the analogy and emphasizes the importance of focus (19).

As in the previous case, Oh shows absolute authority, defending the work previously done by his team. He shows that at the workplace, he prioritizes productivity. The superior (Oh) monitors and corrects the employees’ focus and efforts.

5 Discussion

In this section, we will closely examine the previously mentioned situations and analyze them within the broader context of the Korean workplace. For comparison, we will take examples from two other webtoons: *The Story of Head Manager Kim, Who Lives and Works for a Large Company in Seoul*, and *New Employee, Chairman Kang*. Both webtoons are set in a large Korean company where the hierarchy is clearly evident. We will comment on the expression of hierarchy through the use of polite language, the dynamics of requesting and refusing work among employees, and through methods used to resolve conflicts that occur in the workplace.

Language is crucial for expressing hierarchy in the workplace. There are several factors influencing speech styles, such as age, social hierarchy, and position (Kiaer et al., 2019, p. 281). However, deciding on the appropriate use of polite speech is complex, even for native Korean speakers. It can often be observed that avoidance of honorifics on the speaker's part can make the listener feel comfortable, while the use of honorifics can lead to discomfort, which means that the use of appropriate politeness levels is completely strategic (Lee, 2018, p. 62). In our case, we see that Park did not use any polite endings when speaking to contract worker Jang from the very beginning. Moreover, he addressed him with *ibwa* 'hey you' rather than *ssi* 'Mr.', which would have been expected since this was their first encounter. This lack of courtesy made the situation uncomfortable, drawing the attention of Deputy Kim, who intervened in the conversation. Even though it seemed Kim wanted to teach Jang about the correct use of polite speech, his true intention was to let Park know that the most powerful member of the team was Section Chief Oh, who deserved the utmost respect, despite both Park and Oh holding the same title. Furthermore, after that, Kim and Park had a fight precisely due to the inappropriate use of language and titles.

In the second and third dialogues (when Section Chief Cheon joins the team), we continue to observe the importance of using polite speech, but in a different context. Although Cheon speaks politely and formally to Jang, he maintains this level of formality when addressing Section Chief Oh. Oh is surprised: "What's with the way you're talking? It's weird... acting all new." This remark suggests that Oh and Cheon have known each other for a long time and are closer in the organizational hierarchy, so the unexpected use of polite speech makes the situation uncomfortable.

In other webtoons dealing with the lives of company workers, we can similarly observe situations where hierarchy is expressed through language. *The Story of Head Manager Kim* (Song, 2023a) begins with a scene of a

photographer taking a family photo of Head Manager Kim's family. When the photographer addresses him as *seonsaengnim* 선생님, here meaning 'sir', 'mister', Kim frowns at him and insists: "Head Manager! Head Manager Kim," correcting the photographer on the proper title. The episode suggests an ironic theme presented by the author – while high-ranking company workers easily wield their power within the company, they quickly lose that power in the outside world (Lee, 2011, p. 41). People who do not work for the same company as Head Manager Kim fail to recognize the significance of his title and position in the company and therefore do not regard it with the same importance. In later episodes, the author continues to emphasize how important hierarchy and the expression of it through language and titles are for Head Manager Kim. In episode 14 (Song, 2023b), a senior director calls Kim and asks his opinion on companies where workers no longer use different titles but address each other more equally. Kim does not support this idea and replies: "If titles are unified, how will we know who is senior and who is junior?" The author caricatures Head Manager Kim, portraying him as an old-fashioned worker who would mourn the loss of power he derives from the proper use of polite language by others.

The expression of hierarchy through language is also observable in the webtoon *New Employee, Chairman Kang*. In the first episode (Sangyeong, 2023a), an accident occurs when an intern rushes to deliver some documents. From the balcony on the first floor, he notices that the chairman of the company has just entered the building. A document slips from his hands and falls over the balcony. Trying to catch it, the intern falls over the balcony as well, landing directly on top of the chairman. Their souls switch, and the chairman wakes up in the intern's body. Now that the chairman is in the body of an unknown young intern, he loses all his power overnight, dropping from the highest rank of chairman to the lowest rank of intern. There are several situations where he realizes he has lost his former authority when speaking to others. His previous manner of communication (as a chairman) is now inappropriate and not accepted by his interlocutors anymore. For example, in episode 3 (Sangyeong, 2023b), the chairman (now in the body of an intern) arrives at the company and asks the front desk for information without using any honorifics, as if the receptionist were a close friend: "*lbwa, gil jom mureobogenne* 이봐, 길 좀 물어보겠네 'Hey (you), I want to ask for directions.'" The receptionist's reaction takes him aback. If he was in the body of the chairman, nobody would be bothered by his inappropriate language, but now he gets the following answer: "*Jigeum nugusinde banmarieyo?* 지금 누구신데 반말이에요? 'Who are you, using *banmal*?' The receptionist is offended by his lack of formality and politeness and scolds him. After this encounter, he heads to the office where his team works and

gets involved in a conflict with a colleague who actually holds no significant position in the company (just a regular staff member, *sawon* 사원). This colleague, having been employed longer than the intern, expects a certain level of respect. During the argument, both resort to an informal form of speech (*banmal* 반말), and everyone around is surprised by the intern's audacity to confront his senior colleague.

In addition to the strategic use of language when expressing hierarchy, it is important to consider the expectations placed on certain workers by their superiors and how subordinates react to these demands. In *Misaeng*, Park initiated a conversation with Jang asking him to pick up his things from the resource office. Jang hesitated, as he had other, more important work, but he did not directly refuse Park's request. The socio-cultural context plays a significant role in the method of rejection. Many cultures place more importance on *how* someone says 'no' rather than the refusal itself; the speaker must understand the appropriate method of rejection and the intention behind it (Pedrosa García, 2024, p. 97). Instead of outright refusing, Jang asked Oh within Park's earshot whether his current work could wait. This way he avoided the responsibility for not completing the work assigned by Oh on time, while at the same time letting Park know that, despite his lower-ranking position, he also had more pressing tasks.

Similar situations can easily be found in other webtoons. In the first episode of the above-mentioned webtoon *New Employee, Chairman Kang*, we can observe an interaction that takes place before the intern and the chairman switch their souls. The regular staff member, Cha, approaches the intern and the following conversation takes place between them.

Table 1: Dialogue between Cha and an intern (Sangyeong, 2023a)

No.	Conversation
(1)	<p>차 사원: 어이, 인턴. 저기 커피가 다 떨어졌는데? <i>Cha sawon: Eoi, inteon. jeogi keopiga da tteoreojyeonneunde?</i> Cha: Hey, intern. The coffee over there is all gone ...</p>
(2)	<p>인턴: 아, 네, 알겠습니다! 저기, 혹시... 이 작업만 마무리하고 가지러 가도 될까요? 거의 다 끝났거든요. <i>Inteon: A, ne, algetseumnida! Jeogi, hoksi... I jageomman mamurihago gajireo gado doelkkayo? Geoui da kkeunnatgeodeunyo.</i> Intern: Yes, I see! Umm, could I possibly ... finish this task before going to get more coffee? I'm almost done.</p>

No. Conversation

- (3) 차 사원: 잉? 인턴, 너 사회성 겁나 떨어지는구나. 지금 뭐가 더 급한지 몰라? 네 그 별 볼 일 없는 작업 따위보다 내 카페인이가 더 중요하다고. 우리팀 전체가 커피가 없어서 능률이 떨어지고 있어, 지금. 아, 지잡대 출신이라 일의 순서를 모르는 건가?

Cha sawon: Ing? Inteon, neo sahoeseong geomna tteoreojineunguna. jigeum mwoga deo geupanji molla? Ne geu byeol bol il eomneun jageop ttawiboda nae kapeini deo jungyohadago. Uri jeonchega keopiga eopseoseo neungnyuri tteoreojigo isseo, jigeum. a, jijapdae chulsinira irui sunseoreul moreuneun geonda?

Cha: Huh? Intern, you seriously lack social awareness, don't you? Don't you know what's more urgent right now? My caffeine is more important than your insignificant task or whatever. Right now, the whole team's efficiency is dropping because we don't have coffee. Oh, is this because you attended the university outside of a capital that you can't figure out priority tasks?

- (4) 인턴: 알겠습니다. 커피부터 채우고 오겠습니다.

Inteon: Algetseumnida. Keopibuteo chaeugo ogetseumnida.

Intern: All right. I'll refill the coffee first.

It is clear from the dialogue that the intern is hesitant to refuse Cha's request directly but seeks understanding as he is in the middle of another task (2). Unfortunately, Cha took his answer as defiance and rudely told him that coffee was more important than his work (3). He further argued that the coffee is not only for him but for the entire department, with which he emphasized the importance of the collective effort. Moreover, Cha even became insulting, claiming that the intern does not understand what is more urgent because he attended one of the universities outside the capital, which is considered inferior. The tense situation was defused by their section chief, who ordered the intern to immediately take the documents to the Sales department. This 'saved' the intern from further harassment. After the intern left, the section chief reprimanded Cha for harassing junior colleagues, warning him that the company takes bullying seriously and that it will negatively impact his performance evaluation. The section chief resolved the situation, but only after the intern left. Thus, the intern was unaware of the real intentions of his supervisor.

When analyzing the dialogues in *Misaeng*, we can observe that only someone with sufficient authority, like Section Chief Oh, can quickly solve conflicts. The disagreement between Park and Kim is abruptly halted by Oh with a simple 'stop' *geuman* 그만. When Section Chief Cheon later joins the team and tries to provoke a conflict with Kim, Section Chief Oh intervenes, reminding him to focus on work instead of looking for trouble. The role of a supervisor is to maintain harmony in the workplace and to support colleagues in lower positions. By protecting them, the supervisor fosters

loyalty and commitment in return (Cho and Yoon, 2001, p. 79). Section Chief Oh looks after Kim and Jang, and they reciprocate his care with loyalty and diligent work.

6 Conclusion

The webtoon *Misaeng* is a valuable resource for analyzing workplace discourse and hierarchical relationships, as it focuses on office life. Understanding character interactions and hierarchies is crucial to interpreting the story and its outcomes.

Hierarchy is reflected in the linguistic features and interaction dynamics within the context of Korean society. Section Chief Oh wields the most power due to his experience and position; he uses informal language to assert authority and maintain team harmony. In contrast, Section Chiefs Cheon and Park, despite holding the same title, have less power because they have fewer years of experience. Deputy Kim is loyal to Section Chief Oh, supporting his authority when needed. Contract worker Jang, positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy, remains polite and avoids conflicts due to his lack of status and experience.

Through detailed analyses of these two situations, the author's message is clear and easy to understand. When reading in detail, we perceive that the author satirizes Korean society – wondering why Koreans are so sensitive to expressions of hierarchy and authority. He further highlights this point with a situation in which a conflict arises precisely due to improper use of polite speech. While expressions of hierarchy have evolved over the years and with each new generation, they remain a crucial aspect of Korean society, as evidenced by other cultural content.

By including the visual part in the analysis, alongside the verbal part of the webtoon, a more detailed, in-depth study could be done. However, since the verbal part was sufficiently expressive to lead to a detailed conclusion, it was decided that it alone would be used in the present analysis. The selected webtoon proved to be a suitable subject for examination, as it represents a topical text that can help us gain insight into the Korean trading company and the relationships within it.

However, it is important to remember that *Misaeng* gained popularity in the early 2010s. As South Korean society rapidly evolves, the corporate culture and workplace hierarchy are also changing. Over the past decade, CEOs of major South Korean conglomerates, such as SK Group, Samsung, Lotte Group, have strived to encourage a more horizontal corporate culture

by asking employees to address them by English names or initials instead of formal job titles. This trend, initially popular in startups and IT companies like Kakao, is spreading to more traditional corporations. However, skepticism remains. A survey conducted by *Saramin* 사람인 in November 2021 revealed that only 6.3% of workers favor using English names, suggesting that broader structural changes are necessary for genuine cultural reform (Park, 2022b).

In April 2024, Kakao Games CEO Han Sang-woo announced the decision to discontinue using English names for employees, citing confusion among workers. Employees will now address each other by their Korean names, adding the honorific suffix *nim* to their names rather than their titles, showing respect in an egalitarian manner (Lee, 2024).

Such news shows that changing workplace hierarchy and organizational culture cannot happen overnight. Deeply rooted societal and linguistic practices require time, effort, and a genuine willingness to change.

Acknowledgment

This work was supported by the Seed Program for Korean Studies of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the Korean Studies Promotion Service at the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS-2022-INC-2250001).

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Appendix

Table 2: Dialogue Between Members of Team 3 and Park, Episode 61
(Yoon, 2013a, pp. 195-197)

No.	Conversation
(1)	<p>박 과장 (장그래에게): 이봐. 자원팀에 가서 내 물건들 좀 갖다줘. 바로 오느라고 못 챙겼거든.</p> <p><i>Bak gwajang (Janggeuraeege): Ibwa. Jawontime gaseo nae mulgeondeul jom gatdajwo. Baro oneurago mot chaenggyeotgeodeun.</i></p> <p>Park (to Jang): Hey. Go to the resource team and please bring my things. I couldn't bring them because I came here right away.</p>
(2)	<p>장그래: 아...</p> <p><i>Janggeurae: A...</i></p> <p>Jang: Uh ...</p>
(3)	<p>장그래 (오 과장에게): 오 과장님, 박 과장님께서 심부름을 시키셨는데요. 지금 기안 작성하던 중인데, 바로 필요하신가요?</p> <p><i>Janggeurae (O gwajangeege): O gwajangnim, Bak gwajangnimkkeseo simbureumeul sikisyeonneundeyo. Jigeum gian jakseonghadeon junginde, baro piryohasingayo?</i></p> <p>Jang (to Oh): Section Chief, Mr. Oh, Section Chief, Mr. Park, asked me to run an errand. I was just in the middle of making a draft, do you need it right away?</p>
(4)	<p>김 대리 (장그래에게): 장그래 씨, 무슨 존칭이 그래?</p> <p><i>Gim daeri (Janggeuraeege): Janggeurae ssi, museun jonchingi geurae?</i></p> <p>Kim (to Jang): Mr. Jang, what kind of honorifics are you using?</p>
(5)	<p>장그래: 예...?</p> <p><i>Janggeurae: Ye...?</i></p> <p>Jang: Sorry ...?</p>
(6)	<p>김 대리: 오 과장님과 박 과장님, 누가 더 위야? 존칭을 겹으로 쓰는 게 어딴어?</p> <p><i>Gim daeri: O gwajangnimgwa Bak gwajangnim, nuga deo wiya? Jonchingeul gyeobeuro sseuneun ge eodisseo?</i></p> <p>Kim: Who is higher, Section Chief Oh or Section Chief Park? How can you use double honorifics?</p>
(7)	<p>장그래 (김 대리에게): 아... 네... 그렇군요.</p> <p><i>Janggeurae (Gim daeriege): A... Ne... Geureokunyo.</i></p> <p>Jang: Oh ... yes ... right.</p>
(8)	<p>장그래 (오 과장에게): 오 과장님. 박 과장이 심부름을 시켜서 지금 하던 일을 멈춰야 하는데...</p> <p><i>Janggeurae (O gwajangeege): O gwajangnim. Bak gwjangi simbureumeul sikyeoseo jigeum hadeon ireul meomchwoya haneunde...</i></p> <p>Jang (to Oh): Section Chief, Mr. Oh, section chief Park asked me to run an errand. I have to stop what I was doing ...</p>

No. Conversation

- (9) 박 과장 (장그래에게): 야! 내가 니 친구냐? 어따 대고 박 과장이야?
Bak gwajang (Janggeuraeege): Ya! Naega ni chingunya? Eotta daego bak gwajangiya?
 Park (to Jang): HEY! Am I your friend? How dare you call me like that?
- (10) 박 과장 (김 대리에게): 넌 왜 괜한 시비를 만들어?
Bak gwajang (Gim daeriege): Neon wae gwaenhan sibireul mandeureo?
 Park (to Kim): Why are you causing unnecessary trouble?
- (11) 김 대리 (박 과장에게): '넌'이라뇨? '넌'이 뭘니까? 박 과장님!
Gim daeri (Bak gwajangege): 'Neon'iranyo? 'Neon'i mwomnikka? Bak gwajangnim!
 Kim (to Park): Did you say 'you'? What do you mean 'you'? Manager, Mr. Park!
- (12) 박 과장 (김 대리에게): 뭐?
Bak gwajang (Gim daeriege): Mwo?
 Park to Kim: What?
- (13) 오 과장: 그만.
O gwajang: Geuman.
 Oh: Stop.
- (14) 박 과장: 어디 대리가 과장한테...
Bak gwajang: Eodi daeriga gwajanghante...
 Park: How can a deputy talk like that to the section chief ...
- (15) 오 과장: 박 과장. 본인 물건은 직접 챙겨오지. 장그래 씨는 하던 업무가 있었으니까.
O gwajang: Bak gwajang. Bonin mulgeoneun jikjeop chaenggyeooji. Janggeurae ssineun hadeon eommuga isseosseunikka.
 Oh: Section Chief Park. Your own things should be brought by yourself. Mr. Jang was in the middle of his work.
- (16) 박 과장: 아놔~ 이거 희한한 대우 받네~ 미친다, 미쳐.
Bak gwajang: Anwa~ lgeo huihanhan daeu banne~ Michinda, michyeo.
 Park: Wow. What kind of treatment I am getting. Crazy, crazy.

Table 3: Dialogue Between Members of Team 3 and Cheon, Episode 72, first part
 (Yoon, 2013b, pp. 75-77)

No. Conversation

- (1) 천 과장: 장그래 씨.
Cheon gwajang: Janggeurae ssi.
 Cheon: Mr. Jang Geu-rae.
- (2) 장그래: 네, 천 과장님.
Janggeurae: Ne, Cheon gwajangnim.
 Jang: Yes, Section Chief Cheon.

No. Conversation

- (3) 천 과장: 나는 업무적으로 너무 디테일하거나 격식을 따지는 형식주의자가 아니니까 편하게 지내요. 아무래도 내가 가장 많이 업무 지시할 사람은 그래 씨가 될 것 같으니까 서로 스타일은 적절히 맞춰갑시다.

Cheon gwajang: Naneun eommujeogeuro neomu diteilhageona gyeoksigeul ttajineun hyeongsikjuuijaga aninikka pyeonhage jinaeyo. Amuraedo naega gajang mani eommu jisihal saramen Geurae ssiga doel geot gateunikka seoro seutaireun jeokjeolhi matchwogapsida.

Cheon: I'm not someone who's overly detailed or formal when it comes to work, so just be comfortable. It seems like you'll be the one receiving most of my work instructions, so let's adjust our styles to fit each other.

- (4) 장그래: 네, 감사합니다.

Janggeurae: Ne, gamsahamnida.

Jang: Oh, thank you.

- (5) 천 과장: 그리고 ... 그 머리는 어떡할 건가?

Cheon gwajang: Geurigo... geu meorineun eotteokal geonga?

Cheon: And... what are you going to do about that hair?

- (6) 장그래: 네? 머 ... 머리요?

Janggeurae: ne? meo ... meoriyo?

Jang: Sorry? Hai... hair?

- (7) 찬 과장: 음 ... 너무 긴데? 내 생각에 옷깃에 안 닿을 정도로 깎고 구레나룻도 조금 짧았으면 좋겠는데... 앞머리도 그렇고. 본인 생각은 어때?

Chan gwajang: Eum ... Neomu ginde? Nae saenggage otgise an daeul jeongdoro kkakgo gurenarutdo jogeum jjalbasseumyeon jokenneunde... Ammeorido geureoko. Bonin saenggageun eottae?

Cheon: Hmm... It's a bit too long? I think it would be better if you cut it short enough so that it doesn't touch your collar, and maybe trim the sideburns a bit too... and your bangs as well. What do you think?

- (8) 장그래: 아! 단정하게 정리하도록 하겠습니다.

Janggeurae: A! Danjeonghage jeongnihadorok hagetseumnida.

Jang: Oh! I'll make sure to tidy it up properly.

- (9) 천 과장: 깎겠다는 거지?

Cheon gwajang: Kkakgetdaneun geoji?

Cheon: You're going to cut it, right?

- (10) 장그래: 아...

Janggeurae: A...

Jang: Ah...

- (11) 김 대리: 오 팀장님도 뭐, 머리에 있어선 할 말 없으신 팀인데요~

Gim daeri: O timjangnimdo mwo, meorie isseoseon hal mal eopseusin timindeyo~

Kim: Well, Section Chief Oh also doesn't really have much to say about hair ...

No. Conversation

- (12) 천 과장: 자, 김 대리. 업무 브리핑 좀 받으시다.

Cheon gwajang: Ja, Gim daeri. Eommu beuriping jom badeupsida.

Cheon: Alright, Deputy Kim. Let's get a briefing on the work.

Table 4: Dialogue Between Members of Team 3 and Cheon, Episode 72, second part
(Yoon, 2013b, pp. 82-86)

No. Conversation

- (1) 천 과장 (오 과장에게): 팀장님, 오셨습니까.

Cheon gwajang (O gwajangege): Timjangnim, osyeotseumnikka.

Cheon (to Oh): Team Leader, you're here.

- (2) 오 과장: 어~ 천 과장. 우리 팀 발령 받았나?

O gwajang: Eo~ Cheon gwajang. Uri tim ballyeong badanna?

Oh: Oh~ Section Chief Cheon. Have you been assigned to our team?

- (3) 천 과장: 네, 잘 부탁 드립니다.

Cheon gwajang: Ne, jal butak deurimnida.

Cheon: Yes, please guide me well.

- (4) 오 과장: 말투가 그게 뭐야~ 새삼스레. 이상해졌는데?

O gwajang: Maltuga geuge mwoya~ Saesamseure. Isanghaejeonneunde?

Oh: What's with the way you're talking? It's weird... acting all new.

/.../

- (5) 천 과장 (김 대리에게): 업무 진행표 좀 봅시다, 김 대리.

Cheon gwajang (Gim daeriege): Eommu jinhaengpyo jom bopsida, Gim daeri.

Cheon (to Kim): Let's take a look at the work progress report, Deputy Kim.

- (6) 김 대리: 예, 바로 보내드리겠습니다.

Gim daeri: Ye, baro bonaedeurigetseumnida.

Kim: Yes, I'll send it right away.

- (7) 천 과장: 이거 누가 진행했던 거야?

Cheon gwajang: Igeo nuga jinhaenghaetdeon geoya?

Cheon: Who handled this?

- (8) 김 대리: 저희 팀에서...

Gim daeri: Jeohi timeseo...

Kim: Our team ...

- (9) 천 과장: 요르단 건, 이거구만. 박 과장 뒤편 게... 이 계기로,

Cheon gwajang: Yoreudan geon, igeoguman. Bak gwajang dwijin ge... I gyegiro,

Cheon: Jordan case, this is what screwed over Section Chief Park ... because of this,

No. Conversation

- (10) 김 대리: 그게 아니라... 그만한 이유가...

Gim daeri: Geuge anira... Geumanhan iyuga...

Kim: It's not that... the reasons why ...

- (11) 천 과장: 오후까지 자료 다시 봅시다. 이거 안 되겠어.

Cheon gwajang: Ohukkaji jaryo dasi bopsida. Igeo an doegesseo.

Cheon: Let's review the materials again by the afternoon. This won't do.

- (12) 김 대리: 아... 과장님.

Gim daeri: A... Gwajangnim.

Kim: Ah... Section Chief.

- (13) 오 과장: 천 과장!

O gwajang: Cheon gwajang!

Oh: Section Chief Cheon!

- (14) 천 과장: 예?

Cheon gwajang: Ye?

Cheon Section Chief: Yes?

- (15) 오 과장: 재밌는 친구네? 일을 해, 일을. 회사에 나왔으면. 힘 빼지 말고.

O gwajang: Jaeminneun chingune? Ireul hae, ireul. Hoesae nawasseumyeon. Him ppaeji malgo.

Oh: You're an interesting guy, huh? Get to work, get to work, if you already came here ... Don't waste your energy.

- (16) 천 과장: 예...

Cheon gwajang: Ye...

Cheon: Yes...

- (17) 오 과장: 왜 사람들이 질퍽이는 게임에 빠져 허우적거리는 줄 알아?

O gwajang: Wae saramdeuri jilpeogineun geime ppajyeo heoujeokgeorineun jul ara?

Oh: Do you know why people get caught up in messy games?

- (18) 천 과장: 예?

Cheon gwajang: Ye?

Cheon: Sorry?

- (19) 오 과장: 게임을 하니까 빠지는 거야. 일하러 와서 게임이나 하고 있다가, 자네부터 게임에 빠질 거야.

O gwajang: Geimeul hanikka ppajineun geoya. Ilhareo waseo geimina hago itdagan, janebuteo geime ppajil geoya.

Oh: It's because they play them. If you start playing games at work, you'll get caught up in the game.
