

A LINGUOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF ADDRESS TERMS IN “SAMGUK YUSA” AND “QUTADGHU BILIG”

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Abstract: This article provides a comparative linguocultural analysis of address terms used in the Korean historical and literary monument Samguk Yusa and the Turkic didactic work Qutadghu Bilig. The study considers address terms not merely as linguistic means of referring to an interlocutor, but as culturally significant units associated with historical period, social status, religious belief, moral values, power relations, and speech etiquette. In Samguk Yusa, such units as 왕 (king), 임금 (ruler), 왕이 말하기를 (the king said), 임금의 교시 (the ruler's command), 공 (lord, nobleman), 비천한 승 (humble monk), 혜숙 스님 (Monk Hyesuk), and 어머니 (mother) reflect royal authority, Buddhist reverence, social distance, and family respect in Korean historical and cultural consciousness. In Qutadghu Bilig, address forms such as ey elig, ey beg, ey dono, ey oqil, ey o'g'il, Iloho, and ey qodir Xudo convey ideas related to state governance, moral instruction, wisdom, ethical education, and religious supplication. The analysis shows that in both works address terms function as important linguistic and cultural markers that define social order, reinforce moral norms, and express national-cultural worldviews through literary discourse.

Keywords: Samguk Yusa, Qutadghu Bilig, address terms, linguocultural analysis, Korean literature, Turkic literature, speech etiquette, category of respect, social status, religious thought, state governance.

Introduction

Address terms are among the most important linguopragmatic means of language. In communication, they serve to identify the interlocutor, draw attention, or involve the addressee in a particular speech situation. However, their function is not limited to calling or naming. Address terms also express the speaker's attitude toward the listener, the degree of respect, social distance, psychological closeness, religious views, and culturally established norms of politeness. Therefore, a linguocultural study of address terms makes it possible to gain a deeper understanding of a people's speech culture and social worldview.

In historical and literary sources, address terms acquire even greater significance. In such texts, they are not simply elements of characters' speech, but also serve as indicators of the social structure of the period, relations between authority and the people, religious beliefs, moral values, and aesthetic views. From this perspective, the Korean historical and literary monument Samguk Yusa and the Turkic didactic work Qutadghu Bilig provide valuable material for a comparative study of address terms.

Samguk Yusa is a work that embodies ancient Korean historical memory, legendary thinking, and Buddhist culture. It includes narratives about kings, monks, officials, parents, women, common people, and supernatural forces. The address terms used in these narratives reveal the social hierarchy, court etiquette, religious reverence, and family respect characteristic of Korean society. Qutadghu Bilig, written by Yusuf Khasn Hajib, is a Turkic didactic work that discusses state governance, justice, wisdom, happiness, contentment, morality, and human perfection. Its address terms are directed toward rulers, wise people, the younger generation, and God, and they function as important expressions of Turkic-Islamic ethical thought.

Theoretical Interpretation of Address Terms

In linguistics, address terms are understood as lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic units used by a speaker to address a listener directly or indirectly. They may appear in the form of personal names, titles, official positions, kinship terms, religious designations, honorific expressions, exclamations, or figurative forms. For example, a royal title used for a ruler, a religious address used for a monk, a kinship term used for parents, or a prayerful address directed to God is not merely a word, but a unit carrying a particular social and cultural meaning.

From a linguocultural point of view, address terms are regarded as signs that reflect a nation's worldview and social values. In every society, the question of how one should address another person is regulated by cultural norms. The fact that a ruler is not addressed by an ordinary personal name, that a monk or teacher is addressed with respect, that parents are spoken to with reverence, or that the younger generation is addressed in an instructive tone demonstrates the close connection between language and culture.

For this reason, address terms in *Samguk Yusa* and *Qutadghu Bilig* should be studied precisely from this perspective. In both works, address forms are not only linguistic units, but also reveal the moral rules, social order, and spiritual ideals of the society in which they were formed.

Address Terms Related to Rulers in “Samguk Yusa”

In *Samguk Yusa*, address terms related to rulers are among the important means that reveal the historical and cultural layers of the work. In modern Korean translations and interpretations of the text, such units as 왕 (king), 임금 (ruler), 왕이 말하기를 (the king said), and 임금의 교시 (the ruler's command) are frequently encountered. These units do not merely name a person; they point to the ruler's social status, political authority, and the commanding force of royal speech.

For example, in the narrative “Dohwa-nyeo and Biheong-rang,” the expression 왕이 말하기를 emphasizes the elevated status of the king's speech. Here, the king is not identified by personal name, but by rank and social position. This usage shows that in Korean historical consciousness, the ruler's function within the state and his symbolic authority are foregrounded more strongly than his individual personality. The king's words are therefore interpreted not as ordinary speech, but as a speech act possessing social power.

The expression 임금의 교시 is also linguoculturally significant. The word 교시 means instruction, order, or command. In this expression, the ruler's speech is presented as a socio-political directive that must be obeyed. Through this unit, one can observe how royal authority, court etiquette, and the culture of obedience were expressed through language in ancient Korean society.

Thus, the units 왕 and 임금 in *Samguk Yusa* do not simply refer to historical figures. They also embody cultural notions of rulership, political order, social distance, and state authority.

Buddhist Address Terms and Religious Reverence in “Samguk Yusa”

One of the distinctive features of *Samguk Yusa* is its extensive presentation of Buddhist narratives and the lives of monks. For this reason, address terms denoting religious status occupy an important place in the work. In the narrative about Hyesuk, units such as 혜숙 스님 (Monk Hyesuk), 비천한 승 (humble monk), 공 (lord, nobleman), and 구참공 (Lord Gucham) are used.

In the expression 혜숙 스님, the word 스님 is a respectful Korean term used for a Buddhist monk. It carries a broader cultural meaning than a simple occupational designation. Through this term, the monk's religious status, spiritual purity, moral authority, and ethical role in society are expressed. In the figure of Hyesuk, the monk appears not only as a religious person, but also as a symbol of moral instruction, compassion, and spiritual awareness.

Hyesuk's use of the expression 비천한 승 in reference to himself is also significant. This self-designation reflects humility, politeness toward the interlocutor, and adherence to the Buddhist

principle of modesty. In this case, the form does not simply replace a first-person pronoun. Rather, it reveals the speaker's spiritual position. By calling himself 비천한 승, Hyesuk acknowledges his religious identity, but expresses it through humility rather than pride.

The form 구참공 is also noteworthy. Here, 공 indicates a person of respected or noble status. Through the expression 구참공, the person is referred to not merely by name, but through a form that conveys respect and rank. This suggests that titles and honorific address terms played an important role in marking social position in ancient Korean society.

In the speech relationship between Hyesuk and Gucham, religious morality and worldly status come into contact. Gucham, as a socially high-ranking person, is referred to with the title 공, while Hyesuk presents himself as 비천한 승. Yet the semantic center of the narrative is Hyesuk's moral superiority. This shows that address terms in Samguk Yusa do not only indicate hierarchy; they also reveal the spiritual qualities of the characters.

Family Address and Filial Respect in "Samguk Yusa"

Address terms expressing family relations also occupy an important place in Samguk Yusa. The unit 어머니 (mother) is one of the central forms used in relation to the image of the mother. In Korean culture, the mother is associated with affection, upbringing, protection, filial duty, and family ethics. Therefore, 어머니 is not simply a kinship term, but a culturally loaded expression.

In the narratives about Hyegong, the central position of the mother figure is not accidental. In the communication between child and mother, 어머니 expresses family closeness, the child's trust in the mother, and the bond between generations. Through this address term, Korean cultural values such as filial respect, reverence for parents, and the role of the family as a moral center are clearly revealed.

From this point of view, the address terms in Samguk Yusa reflect three main cultural layers: political authority through 왕 and 임금, religious reverence through 스님 and 승, and family respect and filial duty through 어머니.

The Didactic Function of Address Terms in "Qutadghu Bilig"

In Qutadghu Bilig, address terms are one of the main devices that strengthen the didactic tone of the work. They are often directed toward the listener and serve to emphasize moral ideas. Forms such as ey o'g'il, ey dono, ey oqil, ey elig, ey beg, Iloho, and ey qodir Xudo shape the instructive and ethical character of the text.

The address ey o'g'il is an important expression of intergenerational advice. Here, the word o'g'il does not refer only to a biological son. It represents the younger generation, a student, a person receiving moral instruction, or someone in need of life experience. Through the form ey o'g'il, the author directs his advice to the young generation. This type of address is characteristic of the Turkic didactic tradition, in which an older, experienced, and wise person gives life lessons to the younger generation.

The address forms ey dono and ey oqil express the ideas of knowledge, reason, and moral maturity. Dono refers to a person who is wise, experienced, and able to draw conclusions from life, while oqil denotes a person who acts with reason and can control anger and desire. Through these forms, the author treats the reader not as a passive listener, but as a morally responsible person who should understand, accept, and apply ethical ideas in life.

The forms ey elig and ey beg are associated with state governance and political culture. These units are directed toward a ruler or a person of high social status. Through them, the work advances ideas of just rule, responsibility toward the people, political wisdom, and moral accountability. One of the main aims of Qutadghu Bilig is to present the image of the ideal ruler and the principles of just governance. Therefore, address forms directed toward rulers express not only respect, but also the ethical responsibility placed upon them.

Divine Address Terms in “Qutadghu Bilig”

Address terms directed to God also occupy an important place in the work. Forms such as Iloho and ey qodir Xudo express religious faith, humility before God, and the human need for divine mercy. Through these address forms, the speaker acknowledges human weakness, God's power, and the need for spiritual support.

The form Iloho has the tone of prayer and supplication. It conveys appeal, humility, and spiritual need. In the expression ey qodir Xudo, the emphasis falls on God's power and omnipotence. These forms reveal the Islamic spiritual atmosphere of Qutadghu Bilig. In the work, moral perfection, just governance, and truthful speech are interpreted in relation to divine criteria.

A comparison with Samguk Yusa reveals an important difference. In Samguk Yusa, religious reverence is mainly connected with Buddhist monks, saints, and sacred events. In Qutadghu Bilig, however, religious address is directed directly to God. Thus, although the form and direction of religious address differ in the two works, both of them express the human spiritual world, moral purification, and the aspiration toward a higher value.

Comparative Analysis

Although the address terms in Samguk Yusa and Qutadghu Bilig were formed in different historical and cultural contexts, their main function is to express social and spiritual order. In Samguk Yusa, units such as 왕, 임금, 임금의 교시, 혜숙 스님, 비천한 승, 공, and 어머니 reflect royal authority, Buddhist reverence, social status, and family respect in Korean society. In Qutadghu Bilig, forms such as ey o'g'il, ey dono, ey oqil, ey elig, ey beg, Iloho, and ey qodir Xudo are used in connection with moral instruction, state governance, wisdom, religious supplication, and ethical education.

In both works, address terms mark social status. In Samguk Yusa, terms related to the king express royal authority; terms related to monks express religious status; and terms connected with the mother express family respect. In Qutadghu Bilig, forms addressed to rulers express political responsibility; forms addressed to wise and intelligent people express moral maturity; and forms addressed to the son express an educational relationship.

The difference is that address terms in Samguk Yusa function mainly within narratives, legends, historical events, and Buddhist culture. The relationships between characters are revealed through the events of the narrative. In Qutadghu Bilig, by contrast, address terms are direct components of didactic speech. They serve to offer moral advice to the reader, call the ruler to justice, and guide human beings toward spiritual perfection.

In other words, address terms in Samguk Yusa mainly serve to represent historical and cultural reality, while those in Qutadghu Bilig directly convey moral and philosophical ideas. Therefore, in the first work, address terms acquire linguocultural meaning through characters and events, whereas in the second work they acquire such meaning through advice, counsel, and supplication.

The Artistic and Pragmatic Functions of Address Terms

In both works, address terms also perform important artistic and pragmatic functions. In Samguk Yusa, the expression 왕이 말하기를 gives the text an official and historical tone. The phrase 임금의 교시 emphasizes the obligatory force of royal speech. The units 혜숙 스님 and 비천한 승 express Buddhist humility and religious reverence. The address 어머니 strengthens the sense of family intimacy and filial respect within the narrative.

In Qutadghu Bilig, forms such as ey o'g'il, ey dono, and ey oqil enliven the didactic tone of the text. They make the reader feel as if they are being addressed directly by the author. The forms Iloho and ey qodir Xudo introduce the tone of prayer, humility, and spirituality into the work. In this respect, address terms in both texts enhance artistic expressiveness, clarify relationships between characters or speaker and addressee, and strengthen the main ideas of the works.

Conclusion

In *Samguk Yusa* and *Qutadghu Bilig*, address terms appear as important linguocultural units that reflect the historical and cultural consciousness of their peoples. In *Samguk Yusa*, units such as 왕, 임금, 왕이 말하기를, 임금의 교시, 혜숙 스님, 비천한 승, 구참공, and 어머니 express political hierarchy, Buddhist reverence, social status, and family values in Korean society. In *Qutadghu Bilig*, forms such as ey o'g'il, ey dono, ey oqil, ey elig, ey beg, Iloho, and ey qodir Xudo reveal Turkic-Islamic ethical thought, the culture of state governance, wisdom, and spiritual education.

The comparative analysis shows that in both works address terms are not ordinary speech units, but artistic and pragmatic means of expressing social order, respect, religious worldview, and moral standards. In *Samguk Yusa*, they mainly serve to create a historical-narrative and religious-cultural atmosphere, while in *Qutadghu Bilig*, they strengthen moral instruction, political didacticism, and ethical education. Therefore, a linguocultural study of address terms in these works contributes to a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and spiritual foundations of Korean and Turkic literary heritage.

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