

**LANGUAGE, PARALANGUAGE AND KINESICS IN KOREAN
COMMUNICATION: A TRIPARTITE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana bahasa, parabahasa (*paralanguage*), dan kinesik (*kinesics*) bekerja secara bersama dalam komunikasi masyarakat Korea. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa makna dalam komunikasi sering kali bersifat tidak langsung dan bergantung pada konteks situasi. Kerangka tripartit Ferdinand Poyatos yang mencakup bahasa, parabahasa, dan kinesik digunakan untuk menganalisis interaksi dalam komunikasi Korea. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif untuk mengkaji bagaimana berbagai isyarat komunikasi tersebut berfungsi dalam beragam situasi sosial dan budaya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa makna dalam komunikasi Korea tidak hanya dibentuk oleh unsur bahasa, tetapi juga oleh perpaduan antara unsur verbal dan nonverbal. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa bahasa dan tanda-tanda nonlinguistik saling melengkapi dalam komunikasi Korea, sehingga membentuk suatu sistem komunikasi multimodal yang berakar kuat pada budaya dan tidak dapat dipelajari secara terpisah.

Kata kunci: komunikasi Korea, komunikasi nonverbal, parabahasa, kinesik, komunikasi multimodal.

ABSTRACT

This study looks at how language, paralanguage and kinesics work together in Korean communication. It shows that meaning is often indirect and depends on the situation. Ferdinand Poyatos' tripartite framework of language, paralanguage and kinesics is used to evaluate Korean interactions. This study uses a qualitative technique to examine how these communication cues function in many social and cultural situations. The results suggest that meaning in Korean communication is not only derived from language but also from the combination of verbal and nonverbal cues. The study concludes that language and non-linguistic signs work together in Korean communication, which is a multimodal and culturally ingrained system that should not be studied separately.

Keywords: Korean communication, nonverbal communication, paralanguage, kinesics, multimodal communication

A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate how meaning in South Korean communication is shaped by the interaction of verbal, paralinguistic and kinesic components. Second, this study aims to show how context and culture influence how these multimodal cues are interpreted. Using Poyatos' tripartite framework emphasizes how interconnected Korean communicative practices are and offers a methodical way to analyse meaning through both verbal and nonverbal means. More importantly, this work adds to a more complex understanding of multimodal interaction and cross-cultural communication in Korean conversational contexts.

Communication is the spoken or nonverbal exchange of information and emotions between members of a speech community. Effective communication requires the use of paralinguistic and kinesic signals, such as voice pitch, tone, gesture and posture. Each of these contributes to altering spoken messages' meaning. According to Bacon (1605), a person's disposition may be deduced from their facial expressions and body language. This demonstrates the importance of both verbal and nonverbal elements in producing meaning. In South Korea, meaning is communicated using a mix of verbal and nonverbal culturally ingrained cues. Because of this, communication in this setting is frequently described as expressive but indirect. Korean speakers often use posture, gestures, spatial orientation, silence and paralinguistic variants to supplement spoken words in both formal and informal contexts. Research that methodically investigates how linguistic, paralinguistic and kinesic components interact to form meaning in Korean conversational contexts is still lacking, despite growing interest in cross-cultural communication. This study uses Ferdinand Poyatos' (1993, 1997) tripartite framework of language, paralanguage and kinesics to analyse Korean communication behaviour. Multimodal studies (Norris, 2020; Jewitt et al, 2021) support this viewpoint of an integrated system containing both verbal and nonverbal components. According to Spencer-Oatey & Franklin (2009), it is still applicable to pragmatic and intercultural research. From the forgoing, in order to account for culturally entrenched meanings, especially those associated with hierarchy and indirectness in Korean communication, this study incorporates concepts from intercultural pragmatics. To guarantee proper interpretation, contextual elements such as participant roles and setting are also taken into account. There is little research that systematically applies Poyatos' tripartite model to Korean communicative behaviour, despite the existence of studies on Korean pragmatics, politeness and nonverbal communication (see Brown & Whitman, 2015; Ide, 1989 and Lee, 2010). The majority of research tends to focus on language and nonverbal aspects separately, such as indirectness or politeness techniques (see Merkin, 2009). This has made it difficult to understand how these modalities work together as a cohesive whole. In order to close this gap, this study uses a multi-layered framework to examine how language, paralanguage and kinesics interact together to create meaning in both formal and informal Korean communication.

According to Poyatos (1997), nonverbal cues including posture, eye contact, gestures and facial expressions work in tandem with spoken words to convey attitudes and feelings. Psychomuscular body movements that support speech, such

as body alignment and self-adaptors are referred to as kinesics (Harrigan et al., 2008; Ekman & Friesen, 1969). Pitch, loudness and tempo are examples of paralanguage or vocalic behaviour. Stutters, lip/tongue smacks, sighs and pauses are additional non-linguistic sounds that might affect how well-spoken messages are understood (Trager, 1958; Poyatos, 1993; Harrigan et al., 2008).

Pragmatics, politeness, multimodality and nonverbal behaviour are the main topics of recent empirical research on Korean communication. They look into how social interactions and interactional rules in Korean speech shape meaning. For example, Lee (2010) highlight indirectness and context-dependence in Korean communication, claiming that implicit meaning and indirect speech techniques are still essential to Korean discourse practices. Similarly, Choi & Kim (2006) argues that rather than using explicit verbalisation, speakers frequently rely on common knowledge. Shailaja (2022) emphasises the importance of nonverbal and paralinguistic characteristics, positing that they convey emotional states and are frequently more effective than words alone. Nonverbal communication is a universal and culturally distinct way to communicate feelings. In a similar vein, Evason (2016) submits that silence in particular, is frequently used as a nonverbal cue to convey politeness and respect. Indeed, all kinds of communication, with the exception of those codified in words, are non-verbal. These modes of communication include eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, interpersonal distance and communicative meanings like yes/no, positive/negative and successful/unsuccessful that are conveyed through body language and gestures (Jung & Yu, 2016). The results of these investigations support the idea that communication in daily interactions goes beyond spoken language. Recent research has also examined the impact of sociocultural norms, namely those related to hierarchy and manners. According to Cho & Kim (2017), age and status influence communicative choices, which in turn affect how speakers regulate their faces and uphold social peace. These studies provide information about how Koreans communicate. They affirm the significance of nonverbal clues and indirectness, including some cultural conventions. The majority of this research, however, handle these multimodal aspects separately.

Linguistic, paralinguistic and kinesic components are rarely analysed collectively within a single analytical framework. Consequently, there is a dearth of research that takes a multimodal, fully integrated approach to Korean communication. Specifically, there are not many research that methodically examine the interactions between verbal and nonverbal resources in real-time speech. By using an integrated analytical approach to investigate Korean communication, this study fills this gap. It focuses on the interactions between linguistic, paralinguistic and kinesic components in context. Accordingly, a detailed explanation of meaning-making in Korean communication practice is provided by this description.

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Poyatos' (1993, 1997) multilateral model of communication serves as the foundation for this investigation. It views discourse as a cohesive system made up of kinesics, paralanguage and language. According to this paradigm, meaning is

created through the interaction of verbal and nonverbal components rather than just words. This makes communication multimodal (the use of several forms of expression) and depend on the situation. Poyatos (1983) developed this idea because earlier ways of studying communication focused too much on words alone. He built on previous work by Trager (1958) and Ekman and Friesen (1969, 1977), who had earlier looked at voice and body behaviour. According to Poyatos, communication has three main parts that always work together: kinesics, that is, body movements (such as gestures and facial expressions); paralanguage, that is, voice features (such as pitch, tone, tempo and pauses) and language, which is meaningful words (Poyatos, 1993). By functioning concurrently and interdependently, these elements create a continuum that is used to interpret meaning. Poyatos says that spoken language is not independent and that body language and accompanying verbal cues are necessary for understanding it. Nonverbal activities often “accompany or fill pauses and brief speech gaps in natural conversational contexts” (Poyatos, 1983: 124–128). When it comes to conveying the full idea, verbal communication alone is insufficient. The triple structure of language, paralanguage and kinesics therefore serves as a kind of communication economy and adds levels of meaning to face-to-face interaction. Interlocutors can effectively communicate complicated objectives as a result. Thus, paralinguistic and kinesic cues can coexist alongside spoken language and can function independently of speech or as syntactic complements. Indeed, these multimodal tools emphasise the “interconnected and interrelated character of human contact, this tripartite model provides a strong framework for examining communication behaviour” (Poyatos, 1983: 124-128).

Table 1: Poyatos, F. (1993) *Paralanguage: A Linguistic and Interdisciplinary Approach to Interactive Speech and Sounds*

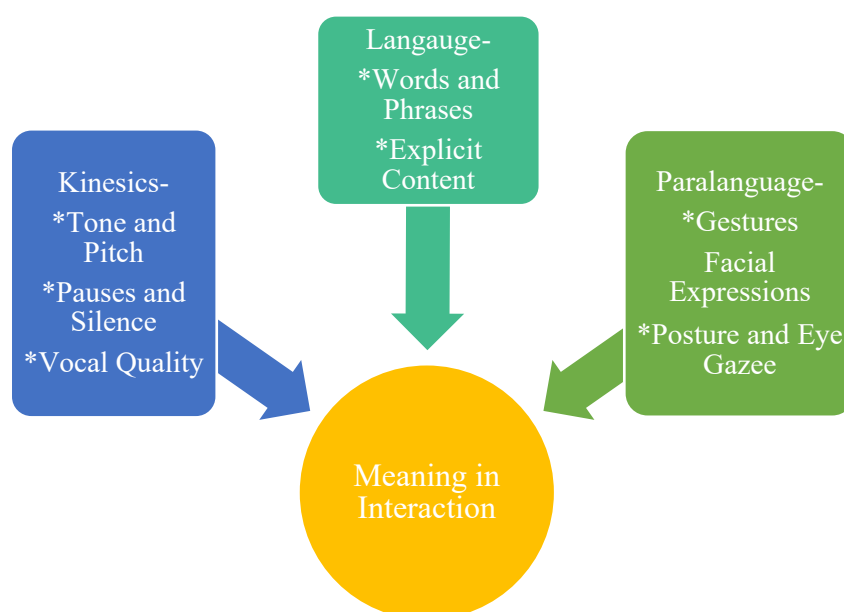
Language	Paralanguage	Kinesics
<i>Tz'</i>	Opening apico-alveolar click + pharyngeal ingression	Brows begin to rise, direct eye-contact
<i>Weeell,</i>	High volume, drawl, comma for falling junction and tone-group pause	Raised brows, then facial stillness
<i>what did</i>	Lower and pitch and volume Same	Lowering brows Same
<i>You</i>	Higher volume and pitch	Slightly knit brows + narrow-angle-head nod, deictic + gazing at co-interactants
<i>think of</i>	Lower volume and pitch same	Same Same
<i>That</i>	Same volume, higher pitch + tone-group falling terminal junction	Lat. head tilt Deictic; stillness + final lingering smile

Table 1 above shows that a simple sentence like “well, what you did you think of that?” does not rely on words alone. Its full meaning also depends on body

movements, such as raising the eyebrows, nodding or looking at someone and on voice features like changes in pitch or pauses. Communication is therefore effective when words, voice and body signals. In other words, voice and body (paralinguistic and kinesic) signals help fill in what words alone may not fully express. South Korean communication is multi-modal and context sensitive in nature, where words, paralanguage and kinesic features are often used simultaneously. This is why this approach is suitable for analysing the study's data. Furthermore, indirectness and shared contextual knowledge are frequently used in Korean encounters, particularly when meaning is inferred from situational and relational clues rather than overtly stated (Brown et al, 2025; Merkin, 2009). Culturally ingrained conventions are linked to this propensity for indirect communication. In everyday interactions, these Korean norms help keep peace and avoid conflict. This present study emphasises this idea that people pay close attention to social rank and relationships when they communicate. Yum (1988) and Sohn, H. (1999) explain that these norms come from Confucian values, which stress respect and proper behaviour. Data from this investigation aims towards justifying the belief that Koreans do not often say everything directly; some meaning is understood even without words. Hence, this study's analysis is significant as it looks at how language, paralanguage and kinesics work together to create meaning in Korean communication.

In this study, Poyatos' model allows us to examine how language, paralanguage and kinesics work together in different situations. Applying this framework confirms that communication is an integrated system containing both verbal and nonverbal components.

Figure 1: Tripartite Model of Communication illustrating the integrated relationship between verbal and nonverbal components in meaning-making.



According to Poyatos (1997) and Knapp & Hall (2013), nonverbal communication includes the use of gestures, facial expressions, body movements, posture, spatial orientation and other extra-linguistic clues that supplement or alter spoken messages. These cues are known to intentionally or unintentionally provide details about an interlocutor's true intentions or emotional state. Nonverbal cues help people take turns when interacting with one another. As stated by Knapp & Hall (2013), these indicators can improve mutual understanding and control the flow of discourse, particularly when interlocutors have similar cultural norms. Nonverbal communication is crucial in both formal and casual encounters in the Korean environment. In order to convey concerns about etiquette or agreement versus disagreement, gestures, eye contact, posture and facial expressions often complement spoken information. Spatial distance and silence can also serve as communication techniques that offer deeper levels of meaning than spoken words. These multimodal signals, which are culturally encoded, are often necessary for precise interpretation. These interpretations take into account both contextual appropriateness and social hierarchy.

Kinesics is a subcategory of nonverbal communication that includes meaning-conveying psychomuscular body motions that may be conscious or unconscious (Poyatos, 1993; Harrigan et al., 2008). The three categories of kinesic behaviour are self-adaptors, body positions and body activities. Movements of the head, hands, shoulders and feet, such as nodding, gesturing, pointing and waving are examples of body activities that can either totally replace or highlight spoken words (Ekman & Friesen, 1969, 1977). These body movements are under the category of "batons," which are motions that highlight spoken words. Second, there are motions that represent shapes, directions and abstract ideas, known as pictographs and ideographs. The third category is deictics, which are motions that point to things or spatial relationships. Kinetographs use motions to depict actions. Body postures also include kinesic motions in addition to body activities. These include configurations and alignments of the torso, arms and legs that convey submission, authority, defensiveness and openness (Harrigan et al., 2008). Lastly, the self-adaptors show self-directed motions including head touches and hand-to-hand massages. According to Harrigan et al. (2008), these motions could control feelings and ease stress. In Korean communication, kinesic cues frequently follow cultural patterns. For example, in formal settings, bowing, nuanced hand gestures and body alignment convey respect and social hierarchy. Bowing is core in Korean society. It is deeply tied to respect and hierarchy. When greeting casually, there is the slight bow (10-15°). The standard polite bow (30°) is used in everyday interaction. There is also the deep respectful bow (45°) often used during formal and serious situations. In informal settings, gestures may be more expressive but still context-sensitive. There is a need for an understanding of all these movements in order to grasp the significance of verbal exchanges.

Paralanguage is also referred to as vocalics. Non-linguistic vocal characteristics that follow speech and affect meaning are included within this category (Trager, 1958; Poyatos, 1993; Harrigan et al., 2008). Pitch, loudness, speed, timbre and breathiness are some of these characteristics of the voice, while intonation and

stress changes are the modifiers. There are also non-linguistic sounds like throat clearing, sighs, pauses, stutters and repetitions. In actual fact, verbal communications can be supported or refuted by these paralinguistic signals. This influences how listeners understand the content of spoken words. Subtle changes in tone or pitch are used to express courtesy in Korean communication, which may imply reluctance or consent. In addition, silence or pauses may indicate respect or reflection. We must understand that the proper usage and interpretation of these signals are governed by cultural norms. Because of this, paralanguage is essential to good communication (Abercrombie, 1968; Poyatos 1993).

Korean interlocutors accomplish multimodal meaning-making, in which the importance of a speech arises from the interaction of many communicative channels rather than just words. They often do this by integrating verbal, kinesic and paralinguistic cues. Poyatos' three-way method offers an in-depth framework for examining communication behaviour in the sociocultural setting of Korea.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

Multimodal discourse analysis serves as the foundation for this study's qualitative research design. This method is suitable since it looks at how body language, tone and language interact to produce meaning in everyday communication. Additionally, it presents a systematic analysis of communication in relation to its social and cultural context. The data is drawn from a sample of eight K-dramas produced between 2020 and 2025 and are available on streaming and downloading sites such as Netflix, Nkiri and MovieBox. While six of them are modern Korean dramas, two are historical K-Dramas used to demonstrate deeply embedded hierarchical communicative patterns that still exist in modern interaction. The year period; 2020-2025 was chosen since globalisation peaked after 2020 and communication strategies are current and relevant. The dramas include spoken and unspoken communication in context, as well as audio-visual elements that can be used to research actual encounters (Bateman, 2014). K-dramas are appropriate for this study's aim because they portray deeply rooted Korean social practices and communication patterns.

In selecting scenes that depict face-to-face interaction in both professional and casual situations, we employed purposive sampling. Qualitative research looks at how people interpret their own concrete, real-life experiences in their own words and in their own minds and then analyses these interpretations in the context of behavioural science (Cropley, 2022). K-dramas selected met the inclusive criteria of containing clear face-to-face interactions, where verbal language, voice and body movements could easily be observed and were available with official English subtitles. Also, selected dramas met the criteria of having both formal and informal communication settings and displaying observable Korean cultural practices. Contemporary dramas in the study's corpus include *Lovely Runner*, *King the Land*, *Something in the Rain*, *Love to Hate You*, *It's Okay to Not Be Okay*, and *Extraordinary Attorney Woo*.

In order to shed light on deeply rooted hierarchical rules that still shape modern Korean communicative behaviour, a few historical K-dramas are carefully chosen. Among these are *Crowned Clown* and *Forbidden Marriage*. They reflect

Confucian hierarchy, show honorifics, deference, ritual politeness and provide clear kinesic behaviour (bowing and gaze). All eight films are purposively chosen to represent a wide range of genres and interactions. Selection is also based on observable multimodal indicators and differences in social relationships. In terms of exclusion criteria during the selection process, dramas with limited interpersonal interaction, where multimodal communication could not be examined were excluded. Also, dramas without reliable English subtitles, where accurate interpretation of the spoken language could not be ensured were excluded. Finally, scenes dominated by too much action, fantasy effects and lengthy monologues with minimal interaction were also excluded due to the fact that they did not readily provide enough evidence for analysing the relationship between language, paralanguage and kinesics.

Language (lexical and syntactic structures), paralanguage (pitch, tone, pauses and silence) and kinesics (facial expression, posture, and gaze) are all included in the study's analytical framework. This is consistent with multimodal frameworks that emphasise the integration of semiotic resources in meaning-making (Jewitt et al., 2021; O'Halloran, 2011). This categorisation supports systematic analysis and helps in analytical clarity in multimodal studies (Norris, 2020). The study utilises a qualitative multimodal tabular coding process, where the verbal and nonverbal aspects of a few selected scenes are captured in the transcription and are later coded in tables. Baldry & Thibault (2006) posit that multimodal transcription is crucial for capturing the interplay of semiotic modes in conversation.

The analytical procedure involves three stages. First, linguistic, paralinguistic and kinesic features are identified in the identification stage. Second, features are coded using the triple-way model in the categorisation stage. In the third stage, the interaction of these features is analysed in relation to context and communication intent, which is the interpretation stage. The study's data are analysed using official English subtitles, which provide accessible representations of verbal content. Some specific expressions are referenced in Hangul alongside English translations so that interpretation can be accurate. At this point, it is appropriate to state that during the investigation, it was observed that subtitles often miss some details in the language. This limitation is however accounted for by paying careful attention to paralinguistic and kinesic cues, as they known to play a central role in meaning-making. Observe that similar coding methodology was used across all data samples in order to be consistent. Recurrent patterns were discovered throughout several exchanges rather than single cases. As mentioned earlier, interpretations are based on contextual meaning and cultural signals. This is critical for ensuring validity in multimodal and intercultural research (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). This makes the findings of this study systematic and contextually relevant. Regarding ethical considerations, the audio-visual elements used are publicly available on online streaming platforms. According to Gibbs (2007), such data is acceptable in discourse and media research, as long as it is used for academic reasons and correctly attributed.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. FINDINGS

This section presents a multimodal analysis of interaction based on Poyatos’ tripartite model and coding tables to analyse the results. The tables therefore give a coding framework for categorising linguistic, paralinguistic and kinesic features in each set of data. The following excerpts show how kinesic, paralinguistic and linguistic resources work together to create meaning in five culturally distinctive **domains**. Accordingly, analysis focuses on how these interactional patterns reflect cultural principles. They include:

- 1. Korean Honorific System- Speech Levels (Formal vs Informal)
- 2. Hoesik (*호/숙*) - Drinking Culture as Social Bonding
- 3. Nunchi (*눈치*) - Social Awareness/Reading the Room
- 4. Chemyeon (*체면*) - Face-Saving
- 5. Jeong (*정*) – Deep Emotional Bond.

Excerpt 1: Hierarchical Professional Interaction

Source: *Extraordinary Attorney Woo*

Episode: Ep. 01

Timestamp: *Prevails almost through the entire drama*

Context:

A junior lawyer (Woo Young-woo) responds to a senior colleague in a formal workplace setting.

Multimodal Transcription

Hangul: “네, 선배님”.

Romanization: “ne, seonbaenim”

English: “Yes, senior”.

(soft tone, slight pause)

(slight nod, upright posture, brief downward gaze)

Table 2: (Honorific Domain) - Multimodal Coding of Communicative Features

Component	Observed Features	Description	Communicative Function
Language (Verbal)	“선배님”-Senior (honorific)	Formal-Official Workplace register	Shows deference and acknowledgement of one's role
Paralanguage (Vocal Features)	Soft tone; regulated tempo	Reduced assertiveness	Conveys politeness and attentiveness
Kinesics	Slight nod; brief gaze lowering	Minimal but respectful gestures	Reinforces acknowledgment of hierarchy

Integrated Interpretation

Institutional hierarchy is reflected in the interaction. Subtle kinesic signals, regulated vocal delivery, and formal linguistic alignment all contribute to the construction of meaning. In a structured work setting, the speaker's reaction demonstrates professionalism and reverence.

Excerpt 2: Performed Kingship and Ritualised Authority

Source: *The Crowned Clown*

Episode: Ep. 02

Timestamp: 00:33:24

Context

In this scene, an allegedly disloyal official is judged by the monarch. He imposes a far lower punishment, which reflects his innately kind nature, in contrast to anticipation of a death sentence, which is characteristic of the actual king's severe authority. The court officials, who are used to harshness, are taken aback by this unexpected leniency. But because of the strict hierarchy and intense respect for royal authority, they suppress their emotions and in spite of their obvious discomfort, answer with polite bowing. This is prevalent in all historical K-Dramas palace scenes; deep 45° bow as also observed in modern day formal contexts.

Multimodal Transcription

Hangul: “...저 자를 가시 울타리로 둘러싸라!”

Romanization: “...Jeo jareul gasi ultarilo dulleossara”!

English: “...and enclose him in a thorn hedge”!

(slight hesitation, facial tension, rigid posture, unfocused gaze)

Table 3: (Honorific Domain) - Multimodal Coding of Communicative Features

Component	Observed Features	Description	Communicative Function
Language (Verbal)	Imperative royal command: “...저 자를 가시 울타리로 둘러싸라!”	The king issues a direct authoritative command using elevated archaic diction that is typical of <i>sageuk</i> royal speech. The referent, (that person-him) “저 자” indicates political condemnation	Establishes a hierarchical authority and performs sovereign power. Also, judicial and disciplinary action is passed
Paralanguage (Vocal Features)	Slight hesitation and controlled but strained tone	The king’s voice does not appear to show authority. There is subtle tension and slight wavering with fluctuating pitch. Also, delivery is slower than the expected confident decree	Signals psychological discomfort beneath institutional power

Kinesics (King)	Facial tension and micro expressions of discomfort (tightened jaw and unfocused gaze)	The king's body contradicts the firmness of his words. His posture is formally upright but his facial cues suggest uncertainty and emotional strain	Conveys weakness, and causes contradiction between role and self
Kinesics (Royal Officials)	Collective bowing of heads and minimal eye contact; restrained movement	Officials physical comply with court protocol despite visible discomfort	Demonstrates enforced loyalty and hides disagreement within ritualized obedience. Displays power asymmetry

Integrated Interpretation

From the above, we see the interaction of multimodal resources. Hesitancy and discomfort on the king's part are signs that the monarch is psychologically conflicted despite the fact that his words show absolute authority. At the same time, the court officials bow in line with the cultural rules. However, their slow and controlled movements show that they are not truly pleased. This creates an underlying message, which is the instability of power and identity in *The Crowned Clown*. Thus, we see how power is shown but not fully felt. Lastly, it is important to state that as observed in all the dramas, bowing is a long-standing part of Korean culture and still shapes how people communicate today. Koreans often bow even without speaking. A deep bow (about 30°-45°) shows strong respect, both in past and present day Korea.

Excerpt 3: Collective Deference in Court Interaction

Source: *The Forbidden Marriage*

Episode: Ep. 01

Timestamp: 00:20:38

Context

In this drama, it is observed that court officials usually greet the king formally during a royal assembly. In this particular scene, a court official makes a presentation and once again, addresses the king formally. The interaction is highly ritualized and reflects institutional hierarchy.

Multimodal Transcription

Hangul: “*존하!*”

Romanization: “jeonha!”

English: “Your Majesty!
(official bows, head lowered, eyes looking away)

Table 4: (Honorific Domain)-Multimodal Coding Communicative Features

Component	Observed Features	Description	Communicative Function
Language (Verbal)	“ <i>존하!</i> ” - “jeonha!” (royal honorific)	Specialized term used exclusively for addressing the king	Encodes hierarchical authority
Paralanguage (Vocal Features)	Loud synchronized vocal delivery	Collective or singular projection of voice in unity	Signals unity, loyalty and formal recognition of power
Kinesics (Royal Official(s))	Deep bow and (or) Kneeling. Lowered head and averted gaze	Full-body gesture of submission. Avoidance of direct eye contact	Embodies respect and reinforces social hierarchy Indicates deference and acknowledgment of superior status

Integrated Interpretation

This is a scene that displays ritualised hierarchy as a way of communicating, which is deeply rooted in culture. In this drama, this form of address is used only for the king and it shows respect and authority and serves as a sign of loyalty through actions. The court officials bow deeply and kneel. These are traditional actions based on Confucian ideas, where respect is shown physically, not just spoken. The officials were avoiding making eye contact with the king, an indication of respect, because looking directly at a superior is considered improper even in modern day Korea. Overall, in this scene, meaning is created through language, paralanguage and kinesics working together at the same time. The lack of lengthy verbal content emphasises how hierarchy is conveyed more through paralinguistic and physical methods than through propositional language. This proves that Korean communication functions as a multimodal, culturally controlled system in line with the tripartite paradigm.

Excerpt 4: Drinking Culture as Social Bonding

Source: *Love to Hate You*

Episode: Ep. 05

Timestamp: 00:39:37-00:39:51

Context:

Characters engage in a drinking session (*bar/soju* setting). One character pours a drink for another, following Korean drinking etiquette.

Multimodal Transcription

Hangul: “*한 잔 받으세요.*”

Romanization: “han jan badeuseyo.”

English: “...have a drink.”

(light, polite tone)

(pours drink with two hands; receiver receives with both hands and turns head slightly while drinking)

Table 5: (*Hoesik* (호식) Domain - Drinking Etiquette) – Multimodal Coding of Communicative Features

Component	Observed Features	Description	Communicative Function
Language (Verbal)	Polite offer “받으세요”	Honorific imperative	Signals respect and social obligation
Paralanguage (Vocal Features)	Light, socially accommodating tone	Relaxed but respectful delivery	Facilitates bonding while maintaining decorum
Kinesics	Pouring with two hands Turning head while drinking	Culturally prescribed gesture Avoiding direct face orientation	Marks deference in hierarchical interaction

Integrated Interpretation

Highly regulated behavioural rules, particularly in hierarchical settings, control Korean drinking culture. While accepting a drink frequently requires body modification (such as gently leaning away) to avoid direct contact with a superior, pouring with both hands is a nonverbal sign of respect. In a structured social performance where respect and rank are negotiated at the same time, the language form, *받으세요* reinforces the interpersonal duty inherent in drinking. More importantly, this interaction shows that social hierarchy is still present even in casual situations. In this scene, when a supporting character pours a drink for the female lead, meaning is shown through his small gestures and the soft tone of his voice.

Excerpt 5: Face-Saving through Indirect Refusal and Emotional Masking

Source: *It's Okay to Not Be Okay*

Episode: Ep. 02

Timestamp: 00:23:49-00:24:43

Context:

In this scene with Ju-ri and Kang-tae at the bus terminal, Ju-ri offers support and emotional closeness to Kang-tae. Kang-tae refuses to avoid embarrassment or emotional discomfort for both of them. This action shows *Chemyeon* (face-saving), where keeping peace and protecting dignity is more important than speaking directly.

Multimodal Transcription

Hangul: “신경 써줘서 고마운데.”

Romanization: “singyeong sseojwoseo gomaunde.”

English: “Thanks for your concern but...”

(soft, controlled tone)

(faint smile, gaze lowered, slight head movement)

Table 6: *Chemyeon* (체면) Domain - Face-Saving Features

Multimodal Coding of Communicative Features

Component	Observed Features	Description	Communicative Function
Language (Verbal)	“ <i>신경 써줘서 고맙는데...</i> ” (thank you for your concern, but...)	Gratitude-prefaced refusal structure	Softens rejection; protects interlocutor's face
Paralanguage (Vocal Features) Kang-tae	Soft, restrained tone	Controlled vocal delivery Delayed verbalization	Minimizes emotional intensity Signals hesitation and careful formulation
Ju-ri	Slight pause before response		
Kinesics Kang-tae	Faint/controlled smile	Emotion masking behaviour	Maintains social harmony despite internal tension
Ju-ri	Lowered gaze and slight withdrawal	Avoidance behaviour	Reduces interpersonal pressure

Integrated Interpretation

This exchange between Ju-ri and Kang-tae shows *Chemyeon* (face-saving). Kang-tae does not directly refuse Ju-ri. Instead, he gives a soft, polite response and expresses gratitude. This allows him to decline while still protecting Ju-ri's feelings and maintaining respect in their relationship. His gentle tone and slow speech make the refusal seem careful rather than harsh. His small smile and averted gaze also help control his emotions and show politeness, even though he may feel inner conflict. Kang-tae's behaviour follows Korean cultural norms, where people try not to embarrass or burden others, even at personal cost. This communicative behaviour is common in Korean society, where keeping social harmony is more important than speaking directly. However, this study's data also shows that *Chemyeon* does not always apply. For instance, in another scene, Ko Moon-young breaks these norms and becomes more emotionally open. Excerpt 6 below shows that while face-saving is common in daily life, it can be set aside in emotionally intense moments.

Excerpt 6: Public Emotional Exposure as Breakdown of Face-Saving

Source: *It's Okay to Not Be Okay*

Episode: Ep. 04

Timestamp: 00:25:03-00:25:44

Context:

In this scene from *It's Okay to Not Be Okay*, Ko Moon-young loudly shouts “I love you” several times to Kang-tae as he walks away, of course, embarrassed. Her confession is very emotional and it happens in a public space. This goes against the usual Korean norms of being reserved and indirect in communication.

Multimodal Transcription

Hangul: “사랑해!”

Romanization: “saranghae!”

English: “I love you!”
(loud, strong voice)
(raised voice, leaning forward, no restraint, strong emotion)

Table 7: Multiple Coding of Instance of Face-Saving Breakdown

Component	Observed Features	Description	Communicative Function
Language (Verbal)	“사랑해” (informal, direct declaration)	Unmitigated emotional expression	Overrides indirectness and politeness
	Absence of honorifics	No relational softening	Signals intimacy but disregards social decorum
Paralanguage (Vocal Features)	Loud emphatic tone	High vocal intensity	Amplifies emotional urgency and disrupts restraint
	Repetition/shouting	Heightened vocal projection	Forces attention and removes ambiguity
Kinesics	Forward body projection	Physical extension towards addressee	Intensifies emotional delivery
	Open, unrestrained facial expression	Lack of emotion masking	Displays raw affect publicly
	Public setting (open road)	Exposure of private emotion	Violates norms of emotional containment

Integrated Interpretation

In this scene, Ko Moon-young breaks *chemyeon* (face-saving), by showing her feelings openly. In Korean culture, romantic feelings are usually hidden or shown indirectly. But she loudly says, “I love you” in public, which can cause embarrassment for both people. She does not use polite or soft language. Another instance of *chemyeon* break down is found in Ep 03, with timestamp 00:46:31, where she boldly asks Kang-tae, “do you want to sleep with me?” in both instances, her loud voice and strong tone show strong emotion instead of control. Her body movements and facial expressions also show intense feelings. Because this happens in a public place, it goes against the usual Korean rule of protecting dignity in front of others. Together, her words, voice and body language all show strong emotion instead of restraint. This is different from the regular Korean behaviour, where people try to stay calm and avoid embarrassment. This scene is important because it shows a change from Kang-tae’s emotional control in Excerpt 5 to Ko Moon-young’s emotional openness, demonstrating that *chemyeon* is usually important in Korean communication but it can be broken in strong emotional moments.

Excerpt 7: Nunchi (눈치) as Silent Social Awareness in Romantic Interaction

Source: *Something in the Rain*

Episode: Ep. 03

Timestamp: 1:23:09 - 1:23:24

Context:

In a public dining room, Yoon Jin-ah and Seo Joon-hee are sitting at a table. Jin-ah does not show her romantic intention openly. Jin-ah secretly puts her hand on Joon-hee's hand under the table while acting normal so no one notices. She keeps a calm face. Joon-hee pauses briefly but then stays calm. They continue drinking with the group as though nothing is happening between them.

Table 8: *Nunchi* (눈치) Social Awareness Domain**Multimodal Coding of Communicative Features**

Component	Observed Features	Description	Communicative Function
Language (Verbal)	Absence of verbal acknowledgment	No linguistic reference to intimate act	Conceals relationship; maintains social appropriateness
	Continued neutral conversation	Engagement in group discourse	Aligns with the expectations of the public
Paralanguage	Steady pacing	No vocal shift despite emotional action	Prevents drawing attention
Kinesics	Under-table hand contact	Hidden tactile gesture	Expresses intimacy while avoid public visibility
	Neutral facial expression	Suppression of affect	Prevents exposure of emotional state
	Minimal gaze shift	Controlled visual behaviour	Avoids signaling relational closeness

Integrated Interpretation

Excerpt 7 explains Jin-ah's action as *Nunchi*, which means being aware of the situation and adjusting your behaviour to fit in. Table 8 codes Jin-ah's action of secretly holding Joon-hui's hand under the table because she understands that showing romantic interest towards the opposite sex in public is not appropriate. Also, from the above table, there is no spoken or visible sign of this action. Her face stays calm and so nothing seems unusual in public. Jin-ah's real emotional state is shown to viewers alone, by her hidden hand movement instead of her words. This indicates the difference between public behaviour and private feelings happening at the same time. This example as displayed in Table 8 is an illustration of Korean communication and its dependence on understanding context of situation before communicating. Thus, we see the use of hidden actions to maintain social harmony.

Excerpt 8: Source: *King the Land*

Episode: Ep. 08

Timestamp: 00:12:39-00:12:44

Context:

Cheon Sa-rang keeps working even though she is clearly very tired. Gu Won quietly arranges for her to rest in a private hotel room without being asked.

Multimodal Transcription

Hangul: “먹고 싶은 거, 꼭 쉬어”

Romanization: “Meokgo sipeun geo da meokgo, puk swieo”

English: “Eat whatever you want, then rest well.”

(Gu Won looks calm, pauses slightly)

Table 9: Jeong (정) – Multimodal Coding of Communicative Features

Deep Emotional Bond Domain

Component	Observed Features	Description	Communicative Function
Language (Verbal)	“꼭 쉬어” (...then rest well)	Directive framed politely	Expresses care through suggestion rather than command
Paralanguage	Calm, controlled tone	Low emotional intensity	Maintains authority without aggression
Kinesics	Composed posture	Controlled presence	Reinforces sincerity and concern

Integrated Interpretation

This situation shows care through actions, not words. A component of relational depth in Korean contact is the capacity to identify hidden needs and respond accordingly, as is demonstrated by Gu Won’s creation of a private area for Sa-rang. From a linguistic perspective, the phrase is a short instruction based on care. Indirect demonstrations of care are common in Korean situations. Thus, we see attention being paid to rest and to fundamental necessities like eating. This is demonstrated by the custom of routinely asking casually, “have you eaten?”

Excerpt 9: Source: *Something in the Rain*

Episode: Ep. 06

Timestamp: 00:16:37- 00:16:38

Context

Soe Joon-hee and his sister are at Jin-ah’s parents place having dinner. During the conversation, Jin-ah’s mother selects food and places it in Joon-hui’s plate assuring him about her concern for him. This act is subtle and it reflects *Jeong* (care) and *Nunchi* (situational awareness)

Multimodal Transcription

Hangul: “그래, 이거 먹어.”

Romanization: “Geurae, igeo meogeo.”

English: “Okay, eat this.”

(Joon-hui reduces gaze, slight smile, continues eating)

Table 10: Multimodal Coding of Jeong (정) + Nunchi (눈치)

Component	Observed Features	Description	Communicative Function
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Language (Verbal)	“그래, 이거 먹어.” (Okay, eat this)	Indirect suggestion	Encourages acceptance with any form of imposition
Paralanguage	Soft, casual tone	Low intensity delivery	Maintains relaxation and ease
Kinesics	Placing food on another's plate Lowered gaze and slight smile Continued eating	Intentional caregiving gesture Minimal affect display Behavioral continuity	Demonstrates relational care Indicates appreciation without exaggeration. Normalizes the act as relational routine

Integrated Interpretation

Through nuanced, food-based connection, this scene demonstrates the interconnected aspects of Korean communication practice; *Jeong* (정) + *Nunchi* (눈치). Placing food on someone else's plate is a nonverbal way to show concern; it is an act of emotional enactment rather than verbal explanation. The phrase, “그래, 이거 먹어”, [Okay, eat this] is a soft way of telling someone to eat without giving a direct command. Joon-hui responds briefly. The act of offering food shows *Nunchi*, as Jin-ah's mother understands his needs without needing him to say anything. At the same time, it symbolises *Jeong*; displaying care and familiarity. Food-sharing customs in Korean culture is significant because apart from providing sustenance, it demonstrates interpersonal connection and emotional expression. Culturally accepted behaviours like putting food on someone else's plate shows interpersonal closeness and attentiveness. This often takes the place of overt vocal displays of concern and is observable in almost all K-Dramas. Using Poyatos' tripartite framework demonstrates how meaning is created by combining deliberate body movement, quite vocal delivery and sparse language. The exchange highlights the multimodal nature of Korean communication by showing how relational depth is ingrained in every day, body actions rather than being articulated clearly. It is important to note that Korean interaction could be in terms of conveying relational meaning through food-sharing and also through its absence. This often signals distance or hierarchy and on some occasions, emotional restraint. Consider Excerpt 10 below:

Excerpt 10: Source: *Something in the Rain*

Episode: Ep. 2:

Timestamp: 00:35:51- 00:36:53 (*workplace meal with Jin-ah's senior colleagues*)

Context

Senior members of staff from Jin-ah's workplace are seated during a meal. The interaction is formal and socially tense. There is no sharing of food and each participant remains focused on their own plate. The atmosphere reflects hierarchical distance and emotional restraint as also observed in several other scenes throughout the entire drama.

Multimodal Transcription

(formal conversation goes on and participants eat individually, no exchange of food)

Table 11: Multimodal Coding of Absence of Jeong (정) + Nunchi (눈치)

Component	Observed Features	Description	Communicative Function
Language (Verbal)	Formal conversation about office affairs	Conventional Politeness	Maintains social decorum without personal engagement
Paralanguage	Low subdued tone of participants	Restricted vocal expression	Reflects distance
Kinesics	No food sharing Focus on individual plates	Absence of caregiving gestures	Indicates lack of relational closeness Reinforces social boundaries

Integrated Interpretation

This scene demonstrates how the lack of food-sharing customs might be seen as a sign of relationship distance and *Jeong* withholding. Although there is courteous verbal communication between the parties, the discussion is nevertheless formal and emotionally disconnected. The verbal discussion is ritualised marked by politeness and upholding social order without expressing personal care. In terms of paralinguistic cues, a controlled and impersonal ambiance is created by the muted tone and lack of voice variety. The lack of shared gestures, especially the sharing of food, becomes extremely significant regarding kinesics. Here, the lack of food emphasises social distance and hierarchy in contrast to culturally appropriate activities that indicate care and attentiveness. By these three communicative channels, meaning is created via what is purposefully omitted and what is present. When verbal, paralinguistic and kinesic alignment are not synchronised, the contact is courteous and emotionally distant. This scene supports the idea that food sharing is a crucial multimodal resource for expressing *Jeong* in Korean communication and that its absence might indicate emotional constraint and hierarchy. Excerpts 9 and 10 show how food-related behaviours serve as important multimodal resources in Korean communication. While sharing food demonstrates embodied care and attention, which indexes *Jeong* and *Nunchi*, its absence denotes formality and relational distance. The multimodal and culturally rooted character of Korean communication is therefore reinforced by the construction of meaning via both the presence and deliberate exclusion of communicative cues.

2. DISCUSSION

The rationale behind this study was to examine how Poyatos’ triad of language, paralanguage and kinesics work together to create meaning in Korean communication and to also show how their culture and the context of situation can affect or influence the interpretation of these communicative resources. The findings show that communication in Korean society cannot be understood by only looking at their spoken language. Meaning is instead created through words, voice and the movement of the body. This finding deals with the aim of this study, which is to investigate how meaning in South Korean communication is shaped by the interaction of verbal, paralinguistic and kinesic components. It thus, supports

Poyatos' framework, which proposes the working of these three communicative channels as an integrated communication system.

In this study, the first objective was to find out how meaning in Korean communication is created through the tripartite framework of verbal, paralanguage and kinesics. The findings from show that every communicative event examined involved the simultaneous use of these three resources. In the hierarchical professional interactions, the royal court scenes showing performed kingship and ritualised authority, *Hoesik*-drinking etiquette, *Chemyeon*-face-saving situations and *Jeong*-expressions of emotional care, only spoken words were not able to convey the complete meaning. Tone, voice, pauses, silence, facial expressions, gaze, posture, bowing and other body movements added important layers of meaning. This particular finding agrees with the studies of Shailaja (2024) and Jung & Yu (2016) and Evason (2016), who reported that nonverbal communication often conveys emotional and interpersonal meanings that spoken words alone are unable to fully express. Also, this present study agrees with their submissions that state that gestures, silence, facial expressions and vocal qualities play significant roles during interaction. However, this study goes a step further than these earlier studies by demonstrating that language, paralanguage and kinesics should not be analysed separately because they often work together to produce meaning. This integrated approach fills the gap identified in the empirical review, where several previous studies only focused on these communicative modes independently.

In handling the study's second objective, to examine how culture and context influence the interpretation of these multimodal resources, the findings reveal that Korean communication is deeply rooted in cultural values. It is important to note that from the analysis of the interactions, participants adjusted their language, tone and body movements according to social status, age and relationship situation. For example, honorific expressions were often accompanied by soft vocal delivery, lowered gaze, respectful posture and deep or slight bowing. In Korean culture, these multimodal behaviours communicate respect, hierarchy and professionalism more than words alone. This finding supports Lee (2020), who posits that Korean communication depends heavily on indirectness and contextual interpretation. It also agrees with Choi & Kim (2006), who observed that Korean speakers frequently depend on shared cultural understanding rather than explicit verbal explanations. Similarly, Cho & Kim (2017) submit that age and social status, to a great extent, influence communicative behaviour. This present study provides additional evidence to these submissions by showing that these cultural principles are expressed simultaneously through language, paralanguage and kinesics rather than only through speech.

From the study's analysis, another finding is that, the use of controlled tone, slower speech, bowing, lowered head position and limited eye contact are communicative behaviours that are embedded in the Korean honorific system. This supports Brown & Whitman (2015), who explain that Korean honorifics are closely connected with politeness and social hierarchy. It also supports Brown et al. (2025), who reported that polite speech in Korean is associated with distinctive prosodic features. This present study extends the findings of these scholars by demonstrating

that polite communication is realised through the combined use of respectful language and vocal control, including the appropriate body behaviour. Thus, hierarchy in Korean communication is expressed as a complete multimodal performance instead of only through grammatical forms.

Findings relating to *Hoesik* (Korean drinking culture) also support the existing literature on Korean communication. This study's analysis shows that simple actions such as pouring drinks with both hands, receiving drinks respectfully and turning one's head while drinking are very strong and powerful communicative acts. These behaviours express respect, social bonding and awareness of hierarchy even in informal settings. Although previous studies have acknowledged this very significant aspect of Korean social (drinking) etiquette, this present study demonstrates more clearly that these everyday cultural practices are themselves multimodal forms of communication where body movement and vocal politeness complement spoken language. Thus, the findings in this study further illustrate that social interaction in Korean culture extends beyond verbal communication.

Findings on *Chemyeon* (face-saving) are also in tandem with previous empirical studies. The analysis reveals that Korean speakers usually avoid direct refusal in order to protect relationships and maintain social harmony. Instead of directly saying "no", they often soften their responses through expressions of gratitude, gentle tone of voice, hesitation, lowered gaze and restrained facial expressions. Lee (2020) and Cho & Kim (2017), who both observed that Korean communication values indirectness and the preservation of interpersonal harmony. However, the present study also shows that face-saving is not absolute. During moments of intense emotions, such as Ko Moon-yong's public declaration of love, these cultural expectations are most likely to be suspended. As observed in the study's analysis, at such moments, direct language, loud voice and expressive body movements replace emotional restraint. This finding suggests that Korean communicative norms remain influential but are flexible and subject to change based on the emotional intensity and the immediate demands of the context of situation.

The findings on *Nunchi* provide additional support for earlier studies that describe Korean communication as highly context-sensitive. The analysis in this study shows that speakers carefully observe situations before deciding how to communicate. Hidden gestures, silence, controlled facial expressions and the absence of explicit verbal statements often communicate more effectively than direct speech. This particular finding agrees with Lee (2010) and Choi & Kim (2016), who argued that Korean speakers depend greatly on contextual knowledge and implicit understanding. Through the application of Poyatos' framework, this present contributes further by illustrating that *Nunchi* is realised through the synchronised use of linguistic, vocal and physical resources working together within some specific contexts. Findings relating to *Jeong* help to strengthen the idea that Korean communication is relationship-oriented Saputra et al. (2025). From this present study's analysis, acts such as quietly arranging a place for someone to rest, placing food on another person's plate or expressing concern through everyday actions all communicate affection more effectively than lengthy verbal expressions. These findings agree with the submissions of previous scholars; Merkin (2009); Min, (2016), that Korean communication values indirect emotional expression and

relational harmony. However, this study expands this existing knowledge by showing that care is often communicated through personified actions rather than explicit emotional language. Equally important is also the finding from this study's analysis that the absence of these caring behaviours, particularly that of food sharing communicates emotional distance; formality and hierarchy. Hence this study submits that meaning in Korean communication is created not only by what people do but also by what they deliberately choose not to do; avoid doing.

So far, the discussion regarding relating the study's findings to the objectives confirm that Korean communication operates as a multimodal and culturally embedded system in which language, paralanguage and kinesics all function together to create meaning in specific contexts. Findings also validate Poyatos' tripartite analytical framework by demonstrating that communication cannot be adequately explained only through verbal communication. More importantly, the study addresses the gap; an integrated explanation of how verbal and non-linguistic resources interact as a cohesive system rather than as separate parts. This contributes to a much clearer understanding of Korean communication and further supports the growing body of multimodal communication research.

E. CONCLUSION

Results of this study show that meaning occurs through the integration of linguistic, paralinguistic and kinesic resources. This is an indication that Korean communicative behaviour is essentially multimodal. Communicative meaning is frequently co-constructed through tone, silence, gesture and embodied movement rather than being encoded in language alone across the selected scenes from *Crowned Clown*, *Forbidden Marriage*, *Love to Hate You*, *Extraordinary Attorney Woo*, *Lovely Runner*, *King the Land*, *Something in the Rain* and *It's Okay to Not Be Okay*. This confirms the connection of verbal, paralinguistic and kinesic modalities in natural contact, offering empirical support for Ferdinand Poyatos' tripartite paradigm. The predominance of action-based communication is a significant trend found across the data. Actions that serve as major bearers of meaning, such as setting up a place to relax, putting food on someone else's plate or physically acting to stop injury, frequently surpass verbal representation. All of these nonverbal cues are present in almost all the dramas. The majority of communication labour is done by kinesic signals (e.g. gaze, posture, gesture) and paralinguistic constraints (e.g. soft tone, pauses). Linguistic aspects are often subtle and indirect. This reinforces the idea that Korean interaction favours embodied and situationally grounded meaning-making.

The study also shows that four selected fundamental cultural notions are enacted through multimodal actions rather than being abstract ideas, namely, Honorifics, *Hoesik*, *Chemyeon*, *Nunchi* and *Jeong*. Honorifics refers to the Korean Honorific system of speech levels. *Hoesik* refers to Korean drinking culture and etiquette, *Chemyeon* is achieved by indirectness and social face management; *Jeong* is realised through persistent, frequently unsaid gestures of care and *Nunchi* is realised through the capacity to foresee needs and understand contextual signs. The fact that these notions often co-occur is significant. For example, sharing food

reflects both *Jeong* (care) and *Nunchi* (attentiveness) at the same time, but the lack of such activities indicates increased formality and relationship distance. The fact that meaning is created through both presence and absence is another important discovery. Emotional distance and hierarchy are indicated by the absence of food sharing, decreased eye contact or restricted voice variety.

Through the application of Poyatos' framework, the study also emphasises how common cultural practice, especially those pertaining to food and care, can serve as important hubs for communication. Expressions like making sure you get enough sleep or asking about meals are examples of a larger cultural perspective where fundamental needs are used as a means of expressing relationships. These activities show that communication include habitual and embodied behaviours with culturally defined meanings in addition to words. This study advances multimodal and pragmatic research by applying Poyatos' framework to Korean data and demonstrating that the tripartite model is especially useful for examining context-sensitive and culturally integrated communication systems. By offering an integrated explanation of how language and non-linguistic resources interact as a cohesive system rather than as separate parts, it further closes an existing gap. The findings therefore suggest that Korean communication is best viewed as dynamic and multimodal. Relational meaning is created through the interplay of language, voice and body. This process is influenced by Korean cultural norms. The selection of K-drama excerpts used in this study may not accurately reflect all real-life communicative circumstances, even though they are representative of cultural practices. Furthermore, the analysis's qualitative character can restrict its generalisability. To further confirm and extend the results, future study may broaden the dataset to include natural contacts, other media formats or comparative cross-cultural studies.

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