



On an emerging paradigm of sentence-final particles of discontent: a grammaticalization perspective



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ABSTRACT

Korean has an impressive inventory of sentence-final particles (SFPs) that appear as clusters of verbal morphology. The last slot of the SFP cluster is for sentence type indicators, such as declarative, interrogative, imperative, and hortative. However, a new paradigm of SFPs is emerging in contemporary Korean, those that mark the speaker's discontent. This interesting phenomenon has not received any attention in earnest to date. The new SFPs of discontent (SFPDs) are *-tam*, *-lam*, *-kam*, and *-nam*, developed through different paths of grammaticalization, but commonly involving an interrogative marking. One of the sources involves the fusion of a discourse marker originated from an interrogative pronoun. The fusion of a formerly free-standing discourse marker into the verbal morphology is an instance of grammaticalization rarely attested across languages. This paper argues that the emergence of the discontent meaning in SFPDs is directly attributable to the sources, i.e., interrogative words and constructions used in the contexts of challenge. Another noteworthy aspect is that the SFPD paradigm is still defective in that not all sentence-type indicators have the SFPD counterparts, i.e., it excludes true interrogatives and hortatives. This suggests that SFPDs, which should be highly intersubjective due to the defining characteristic of the SFP category in Korean, take the form of highly subjective and non-interactive clause types such as the 'audience-blind' styles, and feign non-intersubjectivity. The use of feigned non-intersubjectivity is a discourse strategy for indirectness, which is intricately interlaced with the speaker's attitudinal stance-marking. The indirectness further expands to counter-expectation, thus bringing forth the mirativity and exclamative functions.

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1. Introduction

An agglutinating verb-final language, Korean has an impressive inventory of sentence-final particles (SFPs) that appear as clusters of verbal morphology. Markers of diverse grammatical notions commonly associated with the verbal morphology – such as tense, aspect, mood, and modality – occur here. The last slot of the SFP cluster is for sentence type indicators, such as declarative, imperative, interrogative and hortative, whose representative forms, among numerous forms modulated by the styles, are *-ta*, *-la*, *-nya*, and *-ca*, respectively.

Abbreviations: ACC, accusative; ADN, adnominal; BEN, benefactive; COMP, complementizer; COND, conditional; COP, copula; CR, current-relevance; DEC, declarative; DESID, desiderative; DM, discourse marker; EXCL, exclamatory; FORM, formal; GEN, genitive; HON, honorific; HORT, hortative; IMP, imperative; IND, indirect; INST, instrumental; LOC, locative; NF, non-finite; NOM, nominative; NOMZ, nominalizer; PRES, present; PROG, progressive; PROS, prospective; PST, past; PURP, purposive; Q, interrogative; QUOT, quotative; RETRO, retrospective; SFP, sentence-final particle; SFPD, sentence-final particle of discontent; SIM, simultaneous; TOP, topic.

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The paradigm of sentence-final markers is among those that underwent frequent innovation, whereby many forms fall into disuse and are either partially or entirely replaced by competing forms. A noteworthy state of affairs in contemporary Korean is that a new paradigm of SFPs is emerging whose function, curiously enough, is to mark the speaker's discontent. This intriguing phenomenon of the emergence of the sentence-final particles of discontent (SFPDs) has not yet received any attention in earnest to date, except for a very brief treatment of *-nuntam* in Han (2003, pp. 470–472). This paper intends to fill the gap.

This paper has four major objectives: to show how grammaticalization paths of SFPDs from different sources converge in form and function; to show how grammaticalization of SFPDs brings forth stance-marking and mirative-marking functions; to show how analogy motivates grammaticalization of other SFPs; and to show how grammaticalization of SFPDs triggers changes in other aspects of grammar.

Section 2 presents examples of the phenomenon under focus and provides a brief introduction to the system of sentence-type markers in Korean. After illustrating the grammaticalization processes of SFPDs in Section 3, Section 4 discusses diverse issues involved in the grammaticalization, such as morpho-syntactic reduction and formal convergence, emergence of attitudinal stance of discontent, emergence of a paradigm of SFPDs, all at a local level. The discussion is further extended to a more global level of grammar to address the issues that go beyond marking of discontent, e.g. of dialectal fixation, analogical spread, and emergence of mirative function. Section 5 summarizes and concludes the discussion.

2. Preliminaries

2.1. Expressions under focus

The types of sentential endings under present focus are *-tam*, *-lam*, *-kam*, and *-nam* which appear in the following examples marking the speaker's discontent toward the discourse participant or about the speech situation in general.

- (1) a. (by someone who is embarrassed)
seysang-ey *ile-lswukaiss-tam.*^a
 world-at be.like.this-can-SFPD
 'How can this be possible?' [This is by no means acceptable!]

^a The modal of possibility *-lswukaiss-* can be further analyzed as *-l swu-ka iss-* [PROS.ADN way-NOM exist], but since their morphosyntactic compacting has proceeded considerably, and the internal source structure does not affect the present analysis, it is glossed as a single grammatical morpheme for convenience.

- b. (by someone whose companion is complaining about a boring show)
nwuka *ttalao-lam.*
 who (NOM) follow-SFPD
 'Who told you to follow (me)?' [I didn't ask you to come with me! Stop complaining!]

- c. (by someone who was not aware of the passing of time)
sikan-i *way* *ilehkey* *ppalli* *ka-nun-kam*^b
 time-NOM why like.this fast go-PRES-SFPD
 'How fast is time passing?' [Oh, no! It's getting late!]

^b The morphemic analysis in glossing *-nunkam* may be controversial between *-nu-nkam* [CR-SFPD] and *-nun-kam* [PRES-SFPD] (momentarily disregarding the analyzability of the interrogative *-ka* and the discontent marker *-m*). The first analysis is motivated by the fact that synchronically *-kam* is always accompanied by *-n-* and that *-nu-* is an erstwhile marker of current relevance (CR), thus supporting the monomorphemic analysis of *-nkam*. The latter analysis, on the other hand, is motivated by the fact that the sentential ending *-nka* (the source of *-nkam*) can be historically analyzed as a combination of the tense marker *-n-* and the interrogative ending *-ka* (Kim, 1983, pp. 281–282; Yang, 2009, p. 119). This indeterminacy is a synchronic consequence of the diachronic process whereby the sentential ending paradigms emerged. The present analysis does not favor one over the other, but for ease of exposition, the latter analysis is adopted here.

- d. (by a parent whose child is not serious about studying)
paywu-ese *nam-ø* *cwu-nam*
 learn-and others-(ACC) give-SFPD
 '(Do you think) studying will benefit others?' [No! It will benefit YOU!]

As shown in the translations and annotations, these sentences all carry the speaker's discontent about the speech situation, unlike the meaning which would be conveyed if the same sentences were not marked with SFPDs. As shall be made clear in the subsequent discussion, these sentences reflect their association with the interrogative mood even though in their actual use the speakers are not soliciting the addressee's answer, and thus may be followed by a period, a question mark, an exclamation mark, or more commonly, a question mark and an exclamation mark together in writing.

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