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# From Rhetoric to Grammar: Grammaticalization of Rhetorical Strategies in Korean

SEONGHA RHEE

Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies · Stanford Univ.

## 1. Introduction

In grammaticalization studies there is a general agreement that discourse is where grammaticalization is triggered, or that discourse and grammar are in mutual feeding relationship in their formation (Givón 1979a&b, Lichtenberk 1991, Heine et al. 1991, inter alia). There is even a view that there is no *a priori* grammar: the so-called grammar is nothing but a constant movement in discourse toward a structure, hence the notion, 'the emergent grammar'. Referring to the process whereby previously discourse pragmatic elements become syntactic elements, Sankoff (1977) and Givón (1979b) use the term syntacticization, which may be regarded as a subset of grammaticalization.

If we thus acknowledge the prominent role of discourse in grammar formation and the fact that discourse is the locus of active meaning negotiation filled with various kinds of discourse strategies to fulfill intended persuasion, then we would expect rhetorical strategies to surface as one of the most researched subjects of grammaticalization. However, this type of in-

vestigation into the dynamics of linguistic manipulations which gradually become elements of grammar has been largely underrepresented.

The term ‘rhetoric’ has been used in various senses in different disciplines. Following Leech (1983) and Leith & Myerson (1989), among others, we use the term from a broad pragmatic perspective, i.e. a means of persuasion, producing a social discourse with affective meaning, or a perlocutionary effect on the addressee (Wales 2001). Assuming such a perspective, rhetorical strategies such as rhetorical questions and rhetorical negations, which will be addressed in this paper, are defined as strategic uses of questions, negations, and negative questions just for discourse effect, without soliciting answers or negating certain lexical content of a linguistic form.

There has been some insightful research that illustrated that certain grammatical markers have discourse-pragmatic origins, e.g. Givón (1979) for clause subordinators, and Hopper (1982) and Herring (1988) for perfective aspect markers. Of special importance is Herring (1991), who illustrated that Tamil rhetorical questions grammaticalized into markers of clausal subordination.

This paper focuses on various rhetorical structures that have been grammaticalized, or are grammaticalizing, into various markers of grammatical functions. It deals with question expressions, including interrogative sentential endings and interrogative pronouns; and negation expressions, including negation marker *an* ‘not’,<sup>1</sup> and some words lexically, i.e. inherently and non-derivationally, marked with the semantics of negation,<sup>2</sup> such as *anita* ‘not.be’, *anihata* ‘not.do’, *moluta* ‘not.know’, *malta* ‘not.continue’, and *epsta* ‘not.exist’.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Discourse Markers

The most prominent domain of grammatical functions into which rhetorical strategies are grammaticalized is that of discourse markers including its many subcategories, as shown in (1).

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<sup>1</sup> This *an* is related to *anita*. Another negation marker *mos* ‘cannot’, for unknown reasons, does not display comparable roles in forming grammaticalizing constructions as *an* does.

<sup>2</sup> The notion of lexical negation is hard to define as evidenced by the fact that all the marked items in polar antonymy, as e.g. ‘die’ (vs. unmarked ‘live’), ‘absent’ (vs. unmarked ‘present’), etc., may also qualify as lexical negations at a certain conceptual level, making the selection of these items rather arbitrary. However, these are non-derived lexical items intuitively perceived as prominent negation exemplars in Korean.

<sup>3</sup> The verbal ending *-ta* is the lexicographic device used to indicate that the verb is in its dictionary entry form. Therefore, verb forms may appear in inflected forms of *ani-*, *aniha-*, etc. Abbreviations used here are: Adn: adnominal, Caus: causative; Fut: future, Int: interrogative sentential ending, N: noun, Q: interrogative pronoun, and V: verb.

(1)

Function	Form	Source Meaning
Discourse Initiators	issci isscanha	Exist? Not exist?
Topic Presenters	kukey Q-nyamyen Proposition-nyamyen way N-isscanha	If (you) ask what/why...it is If you ask whether Proposition Why, does N not exist?
Pause Fillers	mwelalkka ku Q-nya ku Q-latela	What should (I) say? What/why...is it? What/who...did (they) say?
Mitigators	Q-lalkka eti mwe ettehkey moluci	Shall I say what/who...? Where? What? How? (I) don't know
Attention Attractors	ettay N-inka? N-itenka? N-ilkka? way ani	How is it? Is it N? Was it N? Will it be N? Why? No. / Not so.
Emphaticals	way? eti? kulehkomalko kuletamata way anikyesse	Why? Where? So and not so. So. Not so. Why will it not be?

As seen in the above table, many of these discourse markers have complex internal structures, sometimes containing multiple sentences (see e.g. emphatical *kuletamata*). Synchronically, however, many or most Korean speakers write those multiple word-group items without spacing which deviates from the National Standard Orthographic Regulation, and reflects the Korean speakers' perception of these units as single items.

Most of these discourse makers make use of rhetorical questions for source constructions, presumably because questions, in general, make strong engaging forces on the addressee. Sometimes questions are used to engage the speaker himself or herself in monologue style in the case of pause fillers and some mitigators. Discourse initiators and topic presenters carry similar functions but they are dissimilar in that the former is usually used to begin an interaction while the latter leads into a smaller-scale thematic unit.

It is interesting to note that some of these forms are not fully unitized as a single word unit but are templates containing a slot as indicated by Q (interrogative pronoun) or N (noun) that allows for insertion of a range of items in the same paradigm. For this reason, the items dealt with here are unlike those addressed in traditional grammaticalization research where highly unitized forms like words or morphemes rather than constructions have been the primary focus.

Some of these discourse markers are formally identical with interrogative pronouns or pronoun-only interrogative sentences. However, these forms are entirely deviant in semantics from the pronominal sources, as e.g., mitigators ‘where’, ‘what’, and ‘how’ do not make reference to a space, an entity, or a manner, but instead take the entire proposition as their scope and tone down the assertiveness of the proposition. Likewise, emphatical ‘why’ and ‘where’ can also mean ‘Absolutely!’ and ‘Absolutely not!’, respectively, instead of their pronominal meanings.

### 3. Auxiliaries

The next category of grammaticalized function is the auxiliaries as in (2).

(2)

Function	Form	Source Meaning
Attenuative	V-lkkahata V-nahata V-kahata	(I'm) doing '[Question]' " "
Prohibitive	V-ci malta A-e malta	Not continue V-ing Not continue being A
Determinative	V-ko malta V-koya malta	V and then not continue Only after V-ing and then not continue
Completive	V-ko malta V-koya malta	V and then not continue Only after V-ing and then not continue
Cessative	V-ta malta V-taka malta	Approach V and not continue "

Attenuative auxiliaries invariably contain embedded interrogative clauses. The attenuative illocutionary force comes from the strategy that the speaker's opinion is given as if it is not final and still in the examining or questioning process. The verb *malta* is frequently used for auxiliary formation, where the participating particles, *-ci*, *-e*, *-ko*, and *-koya*, play a crucial role



- b. 30 acre-toy-l-kka-ma-l-kka-ha-nun swuph  
 30 acre-become-Fut-Q-not.continue-Fut-Q-say-Adn forest  
 ‘a forest that is about 30 acres’

The literal meaning of (4a) is ‘an island that says, ‘Shall I be seen or shall I not continue (to be seen)?’’, where the island is conceived of as one that is speaking to itself whether it should be seen or not, thus due to this insular ‘indecision’ the island is barely visible. Likewise, the approximate nature of the figure in (4b) is also described as if the forest is in indeterminacy as to its intention of assuming a certain size. These are paradigm examples of personification and also instances of subjectification in the sense that the speaker construes the objective reality with more subjective attitude toward the physical world (Traugott & Dasher 2002, Traugott 2003).

Another important aspect of these derivational morphemes is that the two subcategories are intimately related as some of their forms suggest. When some adverbializers are combined with the verb *hata* ‘do/say’, they become adjectivizers, which is tantamount to saying that adverbializers are adjectivizers minus their predicating capacity.

## 5. Connectives

The verb *malta* sometimes develops into connectives with some particles in source construction, as shown in (5).

(5)

Function	Form	Source Meaning
Cessative	V-tamalko V-takamalko	Not continue to V, and ”
Protinative	V-camaca	At the moment of V-ing and stopping V-ing
Depreciative	V-kenmalken V-kenamalkena	Whether V or not V ”
Exclusive	N-malko	Not continue with N, and

As shown above, four major categories of the connectives are Cessative, meaning ceasing an activity; Protinative, resembling English connective ‘as soon as’; Depreciative, signaling that the connected item is of no significance; and Exclusive, meaning that the connected item is to be excluded from consideration. In the case of Cessative, the two forms *-tamalko* and *-takamalko* are synonymous, the only difference being that the former is the

more phonologically eroded form of the latter; which is also the case with the two forms of Depreciative connectives.

## 6. Sentential Endings

The next category is a number of sentential endings including Exclamative, Emphatic, and Mitigative endings, as shown below.

(6)

Function	Form	Source Meaning
Exclamative	N-icanha? N-anya?	Is it not N? Is it not N?
Emphatic	Proposition-i anil swu epsta  Proposition-ilako haci anhul swu epsta Proposition-ka aniko mwuesikeyssnunka Proposition-aninka Proposition-anikeyssna	There is no way of Proposition not being the case. There is no way of not saying Proposition. Proposition is not the case and what will it be? Is Proposition not the case? Will Proposition not be the case?
Mitigative	Proposition-i aninka sayngkakhata Proposition-i aninka siphta  Proposition-i anhulkka siphta	(I) think 'Is Proposition not the case?' It seems 'Is Proposition not the case?' It seems 'Will Proposition be not the case?'

Most of these forms make use of questions and negations at the same time, and they are all sentence-completing constructions, thus fitting the label 'sentential endings'. When *-anya* is used as a regular negative predicate, the preceding noun normally accompanies a nominative case marker. In case of Exclamative *-anya*, however, the eroded form is so much fossilized that such a case marker is not allowed to be attached.

These endings comprise highly complex source constructions which are still transparent because they are in the early stage of becoming fixed constructions and have undergone less phonological erosion. This trait is also revealed in the fact that these sentential endings are still subject to further inflection for formality and politeness agreements. It is noteworthy that the emphatic illocutionary force is derived from circumlocution, sometimes

involving multiple negations. Rhetorical maneuvers allow even more complex source constructions making use of more negations.

## 7. Pronouns and Adverbs

The last category of our discussion is a non-homogeneous group of pronouns and adverbs. The first set of pronouns and adverbs are those developed from question pronouns as in (7).

(7)

Function	Form	Source Meaning	New Meaning
Indefinite Pronouns	nwukwu	who	someone
	nwuka	Who is/does?	someone
	nwukwunka	Who is it?	someone
	nwukwunci	who it is	someone
	nwukwulato	whoever it is	anyone
	mwe	what	something
	mwenka	What is it?	something
	mwenci	what it is	something
	mwelato	whatever it is	anything
	Indefinite Adverbs	encey	when
enceynka		When is it?	some time
eti		where	somewhere
etinka		Where is it?	somewhere
etilonka		To where is it?	to somewhere
ettehkey		how	somehow
ettekkey ettehkey		how how	somehow
waynka		Why is it?	for some reason
waynci		Why is it?	for some reason

Interrogative pronouns denoting ‘who’ and ‘what’ develop into indefinite pronouns; whereas ‘when’, ‘where’, and ‘how’ develop into indefinite adverbs. Furthermore, certain constructions containing ‘who’ and ‘what’ develop into indefinite pronouns, whereas those with ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘how’, and ‘why’ develop into indefinite adverbs. The processes involved in the formation of these two categories are nearly identical. The only difference seems to be the different interrogative pronouns being used.

It is precisely for this reason that this is the area where the boundary of lexicalization and grammaticalization becomes unclear. The items in the single grammatical domain, i.e. interrogative pronouns, undergo seemingly identical processes but produce different end-results in terms of the grammatical categories. In the case of indefinite adverbs, since the source items, i.e. interrogative pronouns, are more grammatical than the target items, the

development in this direction is clearly a lexicalization process. In the case of indefinite pronouns, however, the relative degrees of grammaticality between the two categories, i.e. interrogative pronouns and indefinite pronouns, cannot be unequivocally determined. Since the final product belongs to the grammatical category the process may qualify for grammaticalization. However, from a different perspective stressing that the indefinite pronoun is less abstract than the interrogative pronoun, this process may be argued as an instance of lexicalization. From still another perspective, if the relative degrees of grammaticality of the two categories are thought to be undeterminable, this process may have to remain undefined.

There is another group of adverbs that are developed from the rhetorical constructions as shown in (8).

(8)

Form	Source Meaning	New Meaning
macimoshay	being unable not to continue	unwillingly
aninkekey anila	it is not the case that it is not	truly
kuleci anhato	even if you don't do so	in a timely manner
molukin molato	even if I don't know what I don't know	supposedly
molukin hayto	even if I don't know	supposedly
mwenka molukey	not knowing 'What is it?'	somehow
mwenci molukey	not knowing what it is	somehow
etinci molukey	not knowing where	somehow
etinka molukey	not knowing 'where is it?'	somehow
waynci molukey	not knowing why it is	for some reason
waynka molukey	not knowing 'Why is it?'	for some reason
nammolay	so that others wouldn't know	secretly
halswuepsi	there being no way of doing	helplessly
mwenimwenihayto	even though they say what is, what is	after all

Even though these adverbs look complex in terms of internal structure, they are mostly perceived as single units: many speakers of Korean tend to write them without internal spaces, even though the orthographic regulations require them; and most of these forms are fossilized to such an extent that they are opaque to most morpho-syntactic operations (cf. 'univerbation' Lehmann 1995[1982]). For example, these forms resist lexical substitutions, and, therefore, we cannot replace the lexical negation word in the construction, such as *moluta* 'not know' and *epsta* 'not exist', with affirmative counterparts, *alta* 'know' and *issta* 'exist', in order to derive expressions of opposite meaning.

The adverbs presented in (8) above show how complex the source structures can be for apparently simple units in synchronic grammar. This compacting process is largely due to frequent uses whereby forms become entrenched. A linguistic form needs to contain a certain amount of novelty to create salience and impose forces on the addressee, but these highly entrenched forms no longer produce such effects. In this sense, these forms may be called dead rhetorical forms.

## **8. Discussions and Conclusions**

The grammaticalization phenomena dealt with here raise some intriguing issues. The first of these involves intersubjectification. Crosslinguistically, there is a strong tendency for words, particularly in grammaticalization, to acquire subjective, and further intersubjective, meanings over time. Intersubjectivity is closely related to 'face' and 'image needs' and may be most prominently displayed by honorification systems (Traugott & Dasher 2002, Traugott 2003). Korean is a language in which honorification is rigidly grammaticalized, and all sentences or fragments of sentences constituting an utterance must be properly marked according to honorification levels. Rhetorical structures are no exceptions. However, some of these, especially rhetorical questions, appear to be directed to the addressee in form, which, however, are in monologue styles that are marked with [-honorific]. In these cases fully grammaticalized intersubjectivity markers are losing their intersubjective force in the course of grammaticalization, a case of development in the direction opposite to that of wide crosslinguistic attestation.

The second issue concerns the grammar-lexicon continuum. The phenomena illustrated here suggest that grammar and lexicon do not have a distinct boundary between them. A linguistic form fully compositional on the surface may function as a single grammatical item. Furthermore, due to variations among individual speakers, some may use certain emerging forms as grammatical markers while others may consider them still combinatory strings of lexical items. Since rhetorical questions and rhetorical negations are fundamentally discursive and involve large chunks of linguistic strings rather than single words, their grammaticalization phenomena are unavoidably unclear in certain aspects. But at the same time, they effectively show that grammar and lexicon form a continuum rather than exist as two separate entities. Similarly, grammaticalization and lexicalization are not always distinct processes but may be identical in certain cases.

Drawing on exemplars in rhetorical strategies, this paper tried to show how large chunks of discourse materials can gradually move toward grammar, and thus blur the grammar-lexicon distinction. In addition, in cases in which an identical process involving items in the same category may pro-

duce items that belong to different categories, we tried to show that the two notions that are traditionally conceived of not only as distinct but sometimes opposite processes, i.e. grammaticalization and lexicalization, may be in fact indistinguishable at least in certain cases.

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