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# Pejoratives in Korean

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This paper analyzes the patterns of pejoration-marking in Korean. The speaker's pejorative attitude is realized as diverse morpho-syntactic devices (Koo 2004). The most common devices of pejoration-marking fall under the following six categories classified according to the semantics of the source lexemes and constructions: (i) topographical periphery, (ii) insignificance, (iii) lack of sophistication, (iv) undesirable events/actions/postures, (v) feigned repetition, and (vi) lack of specification. Grammatical categories of these markers encompass prefixes, suffixes, particles, auxiliary verbs, and discourse markers. Of particular interest is the fact that their grammaticalization processes involved diverse conceptual motivations such as metaphor, discursive strategies such as the use of pseudo-quotatives, and socio-cultural motivation involving different uses of linguistic forms depending on the relative statuses of the discourse participants.

**Keywords:** feigned repetition; insignificance; periphery; sophistication; specification

## 1. Introduction

Korean is an agglutinative language with an SOV word order. Korean has a rich inventory of morphological trappings to signal diverse meanings of intersubjectivity (Koo & Rhee 2013). Pejoration, as defined as an act of showing contempt, is marked by diverse morpho-syntactic devices (Koo 2004). Unlike melioration, a process whereby the meaning of a word undergoes upward change along the politeness continuum (typically by honorification and politeness in Korean), its reverse, pejoration, is not as productive. The linguistic means of marking pejorative attitude, i.e. pejoratives, encompass lexemes, prefixes, suffixes, particles, sentential-endings, auxiliary verbs,

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and discourse markers.<sup>1</sup> The levels of semanticization of pejorative attitude are variable on a continuum from ‘only pragmatically inferable’ to ‘firmly conventionalized,’ and thus their productivity is also variable.

This paper intends to catalogue and classify pejoratives in Korean that are (relatively) grammaticalized and to analyze what motivates such grammaticalization processes.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, this paper does not address the development of individual pejorative lexemes such as slurs, epithets, taboo words, etc. the coinage of which falls outside the realm of grammaticalization research. However, certain forms that resemble discourse markers, despite their syntagmatic independence, are included in the discussion.

This paper is organized in the following manner. Section 2 addresses some preliminary issues in the grammar of Korean including such concepts as honorification, dishonorification, and pejoration. Section 3 presents examples of pejoratives by the semantic types of their source lexemes and illustrates the grammaticalization of pejoratives, Section 4 discusses conceptual mechanisms, cultural aspects, and (inter)subjectification involved in the grammaticalization, and Section 5 summarizes and concludes the discussion.

## 2. Preliminaries

Korean is a language in which markers of honorification are highly grammaticalized (Im 1990; Koo 2004). Since honorification is an important grammatical system in Korean, and honorification is not dichotomous but gradient, there are differing levels of honorification, and inevitably, at the lower end of the honorification continuum is dishonorification. Varying degrees of honorification are realized by means

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1. Foolen (1997:21–22) notes the expressive forms are found on all levels of language description (see also Foolen (in press) for a review of studies on expressives). Since pejoration is a fundamentally pragmatic notion, its development into morphology is an excellent example of grammaticalization of ‘morphopragmatics’ (see Meibauer 2013, 2014 for a discussion of the notion).

2. Semanticization *per se* does not constitute grammaticalization. Only when semanticization involves morphosyntactic change leading to increase in grammaticality of the form involved, e.g. the development of affixes, auxiliaries, and other grammatical constructions, the change is an instance of grammaticalization (cf. Heine et al. 1991; Hopper & Traugott 2003). The development of discourse markers is controversial in this respect, but following Traugott (1995), Wischer (2000), Diewald (2006), and many others, we regard it as an instance of grammaticalization.

of diverse speech levels, sentential endings reflecting speaker's stance, suppression of honorification, etc.

In addition to grammatical devices for marking (dis)honorification, there are a large number of such lexemes for marking (dis)honorification as well, in categories such as titles, address terms, and various terms referring to body-parts, actions, etc. Lexical (dis)honorification is also applicable to non-humans for quality evaluation. (Dis)honorification is also reflected in the pronominal system in a more sophisticated fashion than in most European languages with a two-way T/V distinction (Brown & Gilman 1960; Traugott & Dasher 2002).

Pejorative (term of abuse; derogatory term) is a word or grammatical form of expression that expresses contempt, criticism, hostility, disregard and/or disrespect.

### 3. Typology and development of pejoratives

Korean pejoratives may be classified into six categories according to the semantic characteristics of the source lexemes and constructions, as exemplified in Table 1.

Table 1. Semantic types and source meanings of pejoratives

Semantic Types	Source Meanings
Type 1: Periphery	'corner' 'yard' 'head' 'bit'
Type 2: Insignificance	'baby' 'egg' 'seed' 'worker/hand' 'scab' 'gourd' 'gourd dipper' 'dog' 'wild/wasteland' 'stone' 'moth' 'rat' 'feces' 'extra' 'small'
Type 3: Lack of Sophistication	'eat' 'displace' 'hit' 'enter' 'raw' 'unripe/uncooked' 'green/unripe' 'peel' 'scatter' 'coarse' 'mixed' 'out-of-course' 'vain'
Type 4: Undesirable Events/Postures	'fall into' 'sit' 'fall back' 'throw away' 'exit (v.)'
Type 5: Feigned Repetition	'...that...'(comp) 'even if (I) said x' 'while (I) say x'
Type 6: Lack of Specification	i. 'and the like' 'together with' 'saying x... saying y' 'as saying x... as saying y' ii. 'It is it' 'It is from there to there' 'It is so and it is so' 'It is of that small size and of that small size'

#### 3.1 Periphery

One of the most frequently used pejoratives in Korean is a group of derivative suffixes that originally denoted topographical periphery (e.g. 'corner,' 'bit,' 'head,' 'stem,' etc.). These pejorative suffixes originated from compounding. For instance, the suffixes,

*-kwusek* ‘corner,’ *-matang* ‘yard,’ *-taykali* ‘head,’ *-ccokali* ‘bit,’ etc. add pejorative meaning to the base, as illustrated in (1) and (2):<sup>3</sup>

- (1) a. *pang* ‘room’ + *kwusek* ‘corner’ > *pang-kwusek* ‘room (PJ)’  
 (Lit. ‘corner of a room’)  
 b. *ttek* ‘cake’ + *ccokali* ‘bit’ > *ttek-ccokali* ‘cake (PJ)’ (Lit. ‘bit of cake’)
- (2) *ne-n congil pang-kwusek-ey chyepakhi-eiss-nya*  
 you-TOP all.day room-corner-at get.stuck-RES-Q  
 ‘Why are you staying inside all day long?’ (highly pejorative utterance)

### 3.2 Insignificance

Another group of pejoratives are the derivative affixes whose lexical origin initially had the connotation of insignificance, largely by virtue of being small in size or being non-human (e.g. ‘baby,’ ‘egg,’ ‘animal,’ ‘feces,’ etc.).<sup>4</sup> The added meaning of insignificance from the use of such affixes can be applied to humans, animals, and other natural objects. The notions of insignificance and contemptibility are closely related (see 4.1 for discussion of conceptual motivation).<sup>5</sup>

This group of pejoratives is closely related to diminutives. Diminutives in Korean, originated from *al* ‘egg’ and *aki* ‘baby,’ are fully grammaticalized as derivational morphemes. Rhee (2001) notes that pejoration is often inseparable from the semantics of diminutives, closely related with such senses as offspring, small, female gender, imitation, marginality, and weakness/insignificance, and with the interaction among them. In the light of Korean examples, many diminutive forms that are used to designate animal body-part terms, despite their frequently comparative superior size in comparison to humans, are closely related to the creation of the pejorative forms. For example, if

3. Following abbreviations are used in glossing: ABL: ablative; ACC: accusative; CONN: connective; COP: copula; DECL: declarative; END: sentential-ending; ETC: lack of specificity (< *et cetera*); GEN: genitive; NMLZ: nominalizer; NOM: nominative; PJ: pejorative; PRS: present; PST: past; Q: question particle; RES: resultative; SFP: sentence-final particle; and TOP: topic.

4. *Ttong* ‘feces’ may not seem to fit well in the ‘insignificance’ category for its revolting nature, but, perhaps due to the fact that the secondary meaning of the word is scum in iron-work, dental tartar, etc., it is conveniently placed in the insignificance group. Koo (2004: 108) regards filthiness and being commonly found (thus valueless) as the motivating semantic features in the pejoration process of the word. Similarly, as an anonymous reviewer points out, small-sized objects and non-humans do not form a congruous category, but they are grouped together by virtue of their common feature of insignificance.

5. The human propensity to show pejorative attitude toward something small is, though well motivated (see 4.1.2), not inevitable, since, as an anonymous reviewer points out, what is small can also be the subject of melioration. This shows that human conceptualization is variable.

a diminutive form is used for an animal, the term does not carry any pejorative sense, but it does, if it is affixed to human body-part terms. For this reason animal body-part terms are often used in verbal abuse directed at humans. The relation between pejoration and diminutives is widely attested cross-linguistically. Jurafsky (1988:311) even notes that the link between the central diminutive and contempt is a standard metaphorical one, perhaps a universal one.

The pejorative affixes in this group are realized as prefixes and suffixes and this distinction is lexically controlled, i.e., the choice of an affix is largely determined by the base. The prefixes in this group are as listed in (3), and some of their uses are exemplified in (4).

- (3) a. Prefixes: *kay-* 'dog'; *tul-* 'wild/wasteland'; *tol-* 'stone'; *com-* 'moth'; *cwi-* 'rat'; *ttong-* 'feces'; *kwun-* 'extra'; *can-* 'small'
- b. Suffixes: *-aki* 'baby'; *-aci* (< *aki*) 'baby'; *-al* 'egg'; *-ali* (< *al*) 'egg'; *-ssial* 'egg/seed'; *-kkwun* 'worker/laborer'; *-ttakci* 'scab'; *-ppak* (< *pak*) 'gourd'; *-pakaci* (< *pak*) 'gourd dipper'
- (4) a. *nwun* 'eye' + *al* 'egg' > *nwunkkal* 'eye [PJ]' (Lit. 'egg of an eye')
- b. *mok* 'neck' + *aci* (< *aki*) 'baby' > *mokaci* 'neck [PJ]' (Lit. 'baby of a neck')
- c. *kay* 'dog' + *ttek* 'cake' > *kayttek* 'a bad thing [PJ]' (Lit. 'dog cake')<sup>6</sup>
- d. *ttong* 'feces' + *cha* 'car' > *ttongcha* 'a bad car [PJ]' (Lit. 'feces car')

### 3.3 Lack of sophistication

Another group of pejorative markers developed from the words that signify the lack of sophistication, e.g. 'displace,' 'hit,' 'enter/infringe,' 'eat,' 'peel,' 'scatter,' 'coarsely,' 'mixed,' etc., and, similarly, those that signify immaturity, e.g., 'raw,' 'unripe/uncooked,' 'green/unripe.'<sup>7</sup> Such source lexemes of verbal origin developed into auxiliaries with pejorative meaning, whereas those of adjectival sources developed into pejorative prefixes. The pejoratives in this category are as listed in (5) and some of their uses are exemplified in (6).

- (5) a. Auxiliaries: *-e.mek-* (< *mek-* 'eat'); *-e.chiwu-* (< *chiwu-* 'displace'); *-lye.tul-* (< *tul-* 'enter')

6. *Kayttek*, literally 'a dog cake,' originally referred to a particular kind of rice cake made of rice bran, often mixed with a bitter-tasting wild green, thus only good for people in subsistence. With its semantic generalization it is now used to refer to any object of very low value or quality, thus a general pejorative term of reference.

7. Unlike the corresponding English words *displace* and *hit*, their Korean counterparts (i.e., *chiwu-* and *chi-*) distinctively carry the lack-of-sophistication meaning (see 4.1.3 for more discussion).

- b. Prefixes: *ttaylye-* (< *ttayli-* ‘hit’); *tuli-* (< *tul-* ‘enter’); *tule-* (< *tul-* ‘enter’); *tul-* ‘enter’; *na-* ‘exit’; *nal-* ‘raw’; *sen-* ‘unripe/uncooked’; *phwus-* ‘green/unripe’; *kka-* ‘peel’; *huth-* ‘scatter’; *chi-* ‘hit’; *mak-* ‘coarse’; *cap-* ‘mixed’; *pis-* ‘off course’; *hes-* ‘vain’
- (6) a. *kkay-* ‘break’ + *mek-* ‘eat’ > *kkayemek-* ‘break (P)’ (Lit. ‘break and eat’)
- b. *mek-* ‘eat’ + *chiwu-* ‘displace’ > *mekechiwu-* ‘eat (P)’ (Lit. ‘eat and put away’)
- c. *chi-* ‘hit’ + *mek-* ‘eat’ > *chemek-* ‘eat (P)’ (Lit. ‘hit and eat’)
- d. *tul-* ‘enter’ + *tempi-* ‘charge’ > *tulitempi-* ‘challenge (P)’ (Lit. ‘enter and charge’)

Many instances of grammaticalized force-infliction verbs (e.g., ‘hit,’ ‘peel,’ etc.) and deictic motion verbs (e.g., ‘enter,’ ‘exit’) have acquired the intensifier functions, and Koo (2007), in her analysis of slang, notes that most instances of the intensifier functions are closely related (often inseparably) with the negative viewpoint of the speaker (cf. iconicity of force dynamics). The exceptional speed in force-infliction often implies the lack of time for adjustment when necessary on the part of the inflictor. Therefore, the event of infliction often occurs without elaborateness or sophistication. Rhee (1996:68) claims that the development of strong negative viewpoint marking from the perfective auxiliary *-e chiwu-* (< *chiwu-* ‘put away’) is due to its semantics of ‘lack of aesthetic concerns’ (see 4.1.3 for further discussion).

### 3.4 Undesirable events/postures

Another group of pejoratives consists of those that developed from the source lexemes denoting undesirable events or postures, e.g., ‘fall into,’ ‘fall back,’ ‘throw away,’ ‘sit down,’ ‘exit,’ etc. Since these pejoratives are mostly auxiliary verbs, they are highly productive, i.e., they can be used, in principle, with all verbs. Most of these markers acquired the function of marking tense, aspect and modality as well as the speaker’s stance, i.e., the attitude toward the proposition, discourse situation, or discourse partners. Such pejoratives are as listed in (7), and their uses are exemplified in (8).

- (7) a. Auxiliaries: *-e.ppac-* (< *ppaci-* ‘fall into’); *-ko.ancass-* (< *anc-* ‘sit’); *-ko.cappaci-* (< *cappaci-* ‘fall back’); *-e.peli-* (< *pele-* ‘throw away’)
- b. Prefix: *na-* ‘exit’
- (8) a. *hunha-* ‘be common’ + *ppaci-* ‘fall into’ > *hunhayppaci-* ‘be common (P)’ (Lit. ‘be common and fall’)
- b. *nol-* ‘play’ + *cappaci-* ‘fall back’ > *nolkocappaci-* ‘be ridiculous (P)’ (Lit. ‘play and fall back’)
- c. *na-* ‘exit’ + *tol-* ‘turn’ > *natol-* ‘loiter, flirt (P)’ (Lit. ‘exit and turn’)

### 3.5 Feigned repetition

The next group of pejoratives is the sentence-final particles whose origins can be traced to complementizers. This development is peculiar and thus has received much attention from linguists (Kim 1998; Koo & Rhee 2001; Rhee 2012, among others). Complementizers are typically used to enable a clause to occur as a subordinate clause as a complement of verbs of locution, cognition, etc. Some complementizers became sentential endings through insubordination, or main clause ellipsis. Since complementizers are a basic device for reporting, the trace of the reportative function in the sentential endings gives a sense of irritation as if the speaker's repetition were necessitated by the addressee's inattention. The utterance may be either a truly reported speech or a pseudo-self-report. In the latter case, the speaker is using a rhetorical strategy effectively saying 'I said this earlier and now I'm saying it again,' even though it is in fact a first-time utterance. Therefore, the sentence-final particles that originated from complementizers are markers of feigned repetition. Complementizers that shifted the functions into sentential endings are: *-tako/-lako/-nyako/-cako* '...that (comp)...'; *-tayto/-layto/-nyayto/-cayto* 'even if (I) said x'; *-tanikka/-lanikka/-nyanikka/-canikka* 'while (I) say x,' etc. Some of such uses are exemplified in (9).

- (9) a. *na-to himtul-tako*  
 I-too be.in.difficulty-SFP  
 'I am hard-pressed, too. [Don't ask me to lend you money!]  
 (<< Lit. '(I said that) I am hard-pressed, too.)
- b. *icey kuman ha-cayto*  
 now this.much do-SFP  
 'Now let's stop, OK? [Didn't we have enough of it?!]  
 (<< Lit. '(You do so) even if (I) suggested that we stop here.')
- c. *ne cengmal wuski-n-tanikka*  
 you truly make.laugh-PRS-SFP  
 'You are really funny/ridiculous. [Stop being ridiculous!]  
 (<< Lit. '(You do so) while I say you are really funny.')

### 3.6 Lack of specification

The last category of pejoratives consists of those developed from lexemes that signified lack of specification. To this belong (a) nominal particles and connectives, and (b) highly unitized sentential constructions. Some of such forms in the two subcategories are listed in (10).

- (10) a. Nominal/verbal particles and connectives: *-ttawi* 'and the like'; *-sekken* 'together with'; *-kkacis(kes)* '(things) like that'; *-khenyeng* 'let alone, not to mention'; *-na* 'or'; *X-lanun.twung...* *Y-lanun.twung* 'saying X and saying Y; *X-lanuni...* *Y-lanuni* 'as saying x... as saying y'



- b. Sentential constructions: *kukey.kukeya* ‘It is it’; *kekise.kekiya* ‘It is from there to there’; *kulehko.kulay* ‘It is so and it is so’; *koman.komanhay* ‘It is of that small size and of that small size’

Some particles in this group are in enumerative forms. For instance, *-ttawi*, a postpositional particle originally developed from an adverbial *tahi* ‘becomingly,’ is used to signal that there exist others in its kind, though specifying what they are is not warranted for interest of time or space, or otherwise. A particle semantically very similar to *-ttawi* is *-sekken*, which has an archaic or dialectal flavor. Originating from the verbal source lexeme *sekk-* ‘mix, mingle,’ *-sekken* likewise signals that there are multiple objects that may fall into the same group, as is evident from the source meaning ‘mix, mingle,’ though not specified for one reason or other. Similarly, the particle *-kkacis* (and its variant *kkaciskes* with a defective noun *kes* ‘thing’) originated from *kaci* ‘kind, type,’ with the tensification of the first phoneme due to its preceding genitive marker *-s* (cf. *i-s-kaci* [this-gen-kind] ‘a kind of this; this kind’ in *Sohakenhay* 5:41a (1587)). This particle *kkacis* is exceptionally versatile across such categories as adverbial, nominal, exclamative, derivational suffix, or prenominal modifier.

Another particle in this group is *khenyeng*, a negative polarity particle, roughly translatable as ‘let alone, not to mention.’ Its origin is traceable to *hA-keniwa* ‘do/say-conn’ (Huh 1975; Yu 1980; Martin 1992; Choi 2003) in Middle Korean which usually followed a contrastive topic particle *-(n)un*. Therefore, the development of the pejorative particle comes from a construction with subtle nuance of ‘As for X, you may speak of it, but [I am telling you that even its counterpart Y is not the case, which should surprise you].’ The effect of inferred negativity from contrast and surprise became semanticized in the connective particle, now fully grammaticalized as a pejorative marker.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, a disjunctive particle *-na*, largely equivalent to the English ‘or,’ is often used for enumeration. This particle developed into a marker of tepidity (Koo & Rhee 2015). Tepidity, a notion very closely related to pejoration in the sense that the speaker is belittling the choice of an option, emerged in the following way. The oldest use of postpositional *-na* is the enumerative with multiple items. When the repetitive pattern gradually declined through history and thus a sentence came to contain only a single *-na*-marked constituent, the meaning of *-na* changed into a marker of non-specificity from the implication that there are other options unmentioned, i.e., largely signaling

8. The meaning formerly only inferable in the context (i.e., conversational implicature) becoming a part of the semantics of a surviving form (i.e., conventional implicature) in ellipsis is commonly attested in Korean, especially in the development of sentence-final particles from clausal connectors, as discussed in 3.5. The conventionalization process in such cases relies on pragmatic inferencing (Rhee 2012).

'A, among others.' The notion of non-specificity was further subjectified into 'tepidity,' thus on the part of the speaker the *-na*-marked proposition carries the meaning: 'I am not excited about this, but if I am obliged to make a choice, I might as well choose A.'

These pejoratives are exemplified in (11) (note: all pejoratives of lack of specification are glossed as 'etc' (< *et cetera*), even though some of them still retain more lexical meaning in addition to pejorative meaning).

- (11) a. *ne-ttawi-nun silh-ta*  
 YOU-ETC-TOP dislike-DECL  
 'I don't like you [or any pitiable person like you]!'

 b. *ne-kkacikes kep an na-ø*  
 YOU-ETC fear not come.out-SFP  
 'I'm not afraid you [or anyone of your kind].'
- c. *swusek-khenyeng hapkyek-to mos ha-yss-ta*  
 first.place-ETC passing-even cannot do-PST-DECL  
 'Let alone taking the first place, (I) could not even pass the exam.'
- d. *ne-na cal ha-y*  
 YOU-ETC well do-SFP  
 'You mind your own business [not minding someone else's]!'

Another peculiar group of pejoratives in this subtype comprises the connective constructions. They signal pejorative attitude of the speaker, who enumerates someone else's multiple speech acts in the form of reports. Because of this relation to the formal nature of report, the complementizers, which constitute the ordinary device for marking reportative subordinate clauses, are included in the source structure, though only in trace, i.e., *-ta-* (declarative), *-la-* (imperative), *-nya-* (interrogative), and *-ca-* (hortative).<sup>9</sup> To these connective constructions belong *X-tanun.twung... Y-tanun.twung* 'saying X, saying Y, along with its variants for sentence-type modulation, and *X-tanuni... Y-tanuni* 'as saying X... as saying Y', along with its variants for sentence-type modulation. An aspect common in these connectives used for enumeration is that the enumeration implies that those explicitly mentioned are not exhaustively listed, thus evoking the sense of lack of specificity, which in turn engenders pejoration. These forms are listed in (12) and (13):

- (12) a. *X-tanun.twung... Y-tanun.twung* 'saying X, saying Y' (declarative clauses)  
 b. *X-lanun.twung... Y-lanun.twung* 'ordering X, ordering Y' (imperative clauses)

9. The declarative *-ta-* has its allomorph *-la-* (which is identical with the imperative), but the allomorphy relation is not elaborated here for the sake of simplicity.

- c. *X-nyanun.twung... Y-nyanun.twung* ‘asking X, asking Y’ (interrogative clauses)
- d. *X-canun.twung... Y-canun.twung* ‘suggesting X, suggesting Y’ (hortative clauses)
- (13) a. *X-tanuni... Y-tanuni* ‘as saying X, as saying Y’ (declarative clauses)
- b. *X-lanuni... Y-lanuni* ‘as ordering X, as ordering Y’ (imperative clauses)
- c. *X-nyanuni... Y-nyanuni* ‘as asking X, as asking Y’ (interrogative clauses)
- d. *X-canuni... Y-canuni* ‘as suggesting X, as suggesting Y’ (hortative clauses)

Some of the uses of these pejoratives are exemplified in (14) and (15) (for declarative and imperative cases):

- (14) a. *nal-i chwup-tanun.twung palam-i pwu-n-tanun.twung*  
 weather-NOM be.cold-ETC wind-NOM blow-PRS-ETC  
*pwulphyeng-i manh-ta*  
 complaint-NOM be.many-DECL  
 ‘He complains a lot saying that it’s cold, that it’s windy, ETC. [He is so good at finding faults with anything...]’ (Note that the embedded quotations are declaratives.)
- b. *ppalli ha-lanun.twung ttokpalo ha-lanun.twung*  
 fast do-ETC right do-ETC  
*cansoli-ka simha-ta*  
 nagging-NOM be.excessive-DECL  
 ‘He is nagging too much, ordering to do it fast, to do it right, ETC. [He is nagging just about everything...]’ (Note that the embedded quotations are imperatives.)
- (15) a. *ton-to eps-tanuni mom-to aphu-tanuni icey*  
 money-also not.exist-ETC body-also ache-ETC now  
*na-to cikyep-ta*  
 I-also be.tired-DECL  
 ‘(He) says (he) has no money, (he) is sick... I am tired of him, too, now. [I am tired of listening to his endless bewailing with self-pity...]’ (Note that the embedded quotations are declaratives.)
- b. *ike-l ha-lanuni ceke-l ha-lanuni congil*  
 this-ACC do-ETC that-ACC do-ETC all.day  
*sikhi-ki-man ha-n-ta*  
 order-NMLZ-only do-PRS-DECL  
 ‘(He) only gives me order all day long to do this and to do that. [He knows nothing but commanding others]’ (Note that the embedded quotations are imperatives.)

An interesting aspect in relation to these enumeratives involving quotation is the existence of another pejorative expression *ecceko cecceko* ‘saying this saying that,’ which is an extreme form of underspecification.<sup>10</sup> Reporting someone’s speech with this highly reductive expression invariably reveals pejorative attitude toward the original speaker being quoted (see more discussion in 4.1.6).

The last subgroup of the pejorative type of lack of specification is that of sentential constructions. These sentential constructions are often reduplicative or tautological in form (‘equatives,’ cf. Meibauer 2008). This particular type stands out among the pejoratives in that these pejoratives take the form of a sentence, yet are highly unitized (‘univerbated,’ cf. Lehmann 1995[1982]), and that their formal makeup complies with morpho-syntactic rules, yet their pejorative meaning resides outside their compositional, literal meaning, i.e., interpretable but arbitrarily conventionalized (‘encoding idioms,’ cf. Fillmore et al. 1988). The cohesion among the elements of the entire expressions has become so great that no insertion of modifiers is allowed and the remaining placidity is honorification/politeness modulation, i.e., sentence-final particle replacement. The use of these forms is exemplified in (16), in which the reduplicative forms as a whole are largely functioning as discourse markers that mark the speaker’s belittling stance about the states of affairs.

- (16) a. *ku-ke-i*                    *ku-ke-i-a*  
           that-thing- NOM    that-thing-COP-END  
           ‘It’s not particularly good/interesting [You may have different  
           expectation about that thing, but it is the same as other things...]’  
           (Lit. ‘It’s so so.’)
- b. *keki-se*            *keki-i-a*  
           there-ABL    there-COP-END  
           ‘It’s nothing special [There’s no progress in terms of quality...]’  
           (Lit. ‘It’s from there to there.’)
- c. *kuleh-ko*    *kuleha-e*  
           be.SO-and    be.SO-END  
           ‘It’s so so [It is so, just as we know how it is...]’  
           (Lit. ‘It is so and it is so.’)

10. The expression *ecceko cecceko* may be a rhyming reduplication (as *hungry mungrny*, *hanky panky*, *helter skelter*, *okey dokey*, etc. in English). Unlike *ecceko* which is analyzable as *ecci-ha-ko* ‘something-say-and,’ *cecceko* cannot be meaningfully analyzed. The formation of the latter seems to have been motivated by the demonstrative *ce* ‘that’ to contrast with *e* (in *ecceko*) and the rhyming effect with *ecceko*. This unorthodox way of word formation may also be an indicator of the speaker’s disparaging attitude.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Conceptual Motivation

If we hold that language mirrors human conceptualization (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Heine 1997:16), language change may be attributable to the change in human conceptualization. The development of pejoratives fundamentally involves semantic change, i.e., various meanings in the source domain converging into the pejorative meaning in the target domain, enabled by diverse cognitive mechanisms. For each category of pejoratives illustrated, there are various conceptual mechanisms, to which we now turn.

#### 4.1.1 *Devaluation attached to periphery*

The Type 1 pejoratives, as described in 3.1, are the derivational suffixes originated from the lexemes that denoted ‘corner,’ ‘bit,’ ‘head,’ ‘stem,’ etc.<sup>11</sup> One common semantic aspect of these lexemes is that they all refer to topographical periphery. The propensity for the center vs. periphery distinction and valuing the center seems to be universal, intuitively attributable to human instinct. According to cognitive linguists (Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987; Langacker 1987; Talmy 1983), image schemas are conceptual primitives and the center-periphery schema is one of them.<sup>12</sup> The center-periphery distinction is prominent in language structure. For instance, according to Talmy (2003: 38–39), humans distribute attention with “a center-periphery pattern in which greater attentional strength is placed in a central region and lesser attentional strength is placed in a surrounding region.”

There is no doubt that the center is experientially more important, or, rather, we name what is important as the center, organizing categories in a center-periphery scheme as reflecting the important-unimportant relationship. This seems to be related to the human instinct to focus on the important objects, in which case, the important objects become situated at the center of the visual field of the observer, whereas all other objects in the physical environment will be at the periphery. Therefore, the

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11. As an anonymous reviewer points out, ‘head’ may be conceptualized as central rather than peripheral. This shows that the frame of reference in conceptualization is variable. If we use a corporeal metaphor by using the three major subregions of the human body, i.e., head, trunk, and extremities (cf. Heine 1997:43), the trunk may be conceptualized as central whereas the head is an appendage. The grammaticalization of ‘head’ to ‘up’ or ‘front,’ which is widely attested across languages (Heine 1997:43–47), seems to use the head-as-appendage frame of reference.

12. The center-periphery is also an important concept in psychology and neuroscience with reference to human visual attention (Mandler 1992; Watzl 2011).

statement of physical relationship ‘the important thing is at the center’ seems to be responsible for the metaphorical conceptualization that ‘the periphery is not important, thus ignorable,’ which motivated the development of the pejorative sense from the lexemes denoting topographical periphery.

#### 4.1.2 *Devaluation attached to small-size and non-humans*

Some of the Type 2 pejoratives, as described in 3.2, are the derivational affixes, notably the diminutive suffixes, developed from lexemes denoting insignificance, e.g., ‘baby,’ ‘egg,’ ‘feces,’ etc. As briefly indicated in 3.2, the notions of insignificance and contemptibility are closely related. As closely related to the center-periphery distinction addressed in the previous discussion, the propensity for big-small distinction and for valuing ‘big’ also seems universal. Undoubtedly, the bigger animals tend to be stronger, and the bigger things in general are experientially more useful (cf. the females’ seemingly universal preference for taller males).<sup>13</sup> Thus, as Lakoff & Johnson (1980:22) assert, BIGGER IS BETTER, MORE IS UP, SIGNIFICANT IS BIG, etc. are among the conceptual metaphors “we live by.”<sup>14</sup>

On the opposite side of the pole, the property ‘small’ often engenders the ‘contempt’ meaning across languages. For instance, Jurafsky (1996) analyzes that the development of diminutives from the lexemes denoting small things has been motivated by POWER AND IMPORTANCE IS SIZE. Likewise, Heine et al. (1991:79–97), in their analysis of Ewe *vi* ‘child,’ illustrate that ‘small’ objects may be discriminately regarded as a non-member or at best a marginal member of a category. Similarly, the transfer from physical size to attitude is well manifested in the English word *belittling* (‘making small’) as a synonym of *pejoration*.

Some of the Type 2 pejoratives are derivational suffixes, developed from the lexemes denoting animals such as ‘dog,’ ‘rat,’ ‘moth,’ etc. or inanimate objects such as ‘stone,’ ‘scab,’ ‘gourd,’ etc. The propensity for the human-animal distinction and for valuing humans seems universal. Clearly, ‘human’ and ‘animal’ are separate, basic ontological categories. As humans need to categorize in order to make sense of the world around us, drawing a line between us, the humans, and non-human animals

13. According to evolutionary psychologists, among pair-bonding species like humans, females “prefer to mate with big and tall males because they can provide better physical protection against predators and other males” (Hofstetter 2009:5; see also Graziano et al. 1978, Ellis 1992, Sugiyama 2005, among others). This preference is applicable to not only intersexual but also intrasexual relationship (Sugiyama 2005:316, and references cited therein).

14. Ad Foolen (p.c.) brought our attention to the fact that ‘big is good but too big can be frightening,’ as exemplified in some Dutch constructions, e.g., ‘a hell of a job,’ ‘a devil of a man,’ and similarly with ‘big liar,’ ‘big fat liar,’ etc. in English. It is undoubtedly true that contexts play an important role in positive/negative evaluation of something ‘big.’

is undoubtedly important, since humans are more important to humans (anthropocentricity). This human vs. non-human distinction is also applicable to non-animals, including plants and inanimate objects. The objects represented by the source lexemes in this category are conceptualized largely in contrast with humans, even though some other aspects such as harmful nature (cf. ‘moth,’ ‘rat’) or disgust that the referenced objects arouse (cf. ‘feces,’ ‘scab’) may have provided additional motivation.

#### 4.1.3 *Devaluation attached to lack of sophistication*

The Type 3 pejoratives consist of the prefixes and auxiliaries that developed from lexemes denoting lack of sophistication or being immature. The sophisticated vs. unsophisticated distinction may be linked to the human’s aesthetic appreciation. The English words that connote ‘sophistication,’ e.g., *sophisticated* (< ‘foreign substance added’), *refined* (< ‘intensively made fine’), *delicate* (< ‘feeble, easily broken’), *elegant* (< ‘selected with care’), *polished* (< ‘made smooth, decorated’), *cultivated* (< ‘tilled’), *ornate* (< ‘adorned, decorated’), *exquisite* (< ‘carefully sought out’), etc. all tend to imply ‘additional efforts’ involved in bringing about the states-of-affairs thus described, or ‘complexity’ as an accompanying quality of the object as a result of accumulation of details. Similarly, sophistication-related words in Korean show that the process of sophistication involves increase in complexity or accumulation of details, e.g. *seylyen* ‘refined < lit. well-washed and trained,’ *cengkyo* ‘elaborate < lit. carefully sharpened and skillful,’ *wua* ‘elegant < lit. well-behaved and refined,’ *semsey* ‘delicate < lit. finely-woven and detailed,’ etc.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, sophistication is linked to maturation, which also involves physical growth, functional diversification, and specialization of skills, all being additive processes.<sup>16</sup> The maturation process, according to evolutionary psychologists, is closely tied to the acquisition of diverse skills that will increase the chance of human survival (see Barrett 2005; Duntley 2005 and references cited therein).

Among the auxiliary verbs, the level of pejorative force is greatest when the perfective auxiliary *-e.chiwu-* is used. This auxiliary was grammaticalized from the verb of displacement *chiwu-* ‘throw away, displace.’ The semanticization of the pejorative force is so robust that predicates of positive description are not allowed to co-occur with

15. Korean words exemplified here consist of two syllables, each carrying a meaning. As an anonymous reviewer points out, in the absence of cross-linguistic evidence, the states of affairs in English and Korean may be idiosyncratic and culture-specific.

16. This characterization is applicable to most theories of developmental psychology that hypothesize either stages (e.g. those of Jean Piaget and Alfred Binet) or continuous continuum (e.g. those of Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner). According to evolutionary scientists, this process is also thought to have been involved in human evolution (cf. Sherwood et al. 2008).

this auxiliary, as, for instance, describing completion of an action performed by one's teachers, parents, etc. for whom honorification should be morphologically marked on the verb. Rhee (1996), through a diachronic investigation, argues that the strong pejorative force arose from the fact that the source word *chiwu-* was originally used for describing taking out human waste or animal manure into the field as fertilizer, or removing garbage or dredged silt from wells or sewers. According to Rhee (1996:68), "the defining characteristic of the manner of the actions of garbage or human waste disposal may be the lack of aesthetic concerns [since] such actions are carried out in a speedy manner" (see also Kim 1990:228, who associates the low levels of caution and effort with this auxiliary).

In this context, it is interesting to note that attaching sophistication to high class seems to be due to its detachment from the survival (i.e. basic) level. For instance, Rhee (2003) in his article entitled 'Eating is contemptible: Grammaticalization of ingestion verbs in Korean,' asserts that the development of auxiliaries from ingestion verbs as markers of the speaker's contempt toward the proposition was motivated by Korean culture in which 'eating' was viewed as a non-refined, egoistic, and consequently, contemptible activity. Behind this motivation is the fact that eating is an act of gratifying a basic desire to survive. The fact that in all 'civilized' worlds there is a set of table manners, the function of which is to make the eating activity appear less desire-driven and less crude, suggests that the lexemes denoting ingestion may all have the potential of the development of this kind. Okabayasi (2002), for instance, states that the Japanese verbs for 'swallow' and 'gulp' are used to mean 'understand' with negative connotations.

#### 4.1.4 *Devaluation attached to certain events and postures*

The Type 4 pejoratives are those that developed from the source lexemes denoting undesirable events and postures. Certain events are often metaphorically mapped onto the desirable vs. undesirable distinction. However, when individual lexemes in the distinction are antonyms, the polar opposition does not yield a correspondence between desirable vs. undesirable qualities. For instance, 'exit' is bad, perhaps due to the 'deviation, detachment' meaning inherent in its semantics, but 'enter' is also bad, probably due to the schematic conceptualization of an object 'infringing, intruding' on a territory. Therefore, it seems that each lexeme undergoes individual conceptualization rather than acquiring negativity from an inherent contrast in consideration of its polar opposites.

Likewise, some of the natural postures are often prejudicially linked to the desirable vs. undesirable distinction, e.g., 'sit' is bad; 'fall back' is bad; etc. (cf. Subbarao 1979 and Arun 1992 on Telugu *kurcon* 'sit'; Newman and Schuh 1974 on Kanakuru *dūwò* 'sit'). Rhee (1996:201–202) hypothesizes that the pejorative meaning arose from the lexemes denoting sedentary posture through a series of inferences such as sedentary posture



tending to last longer, often leading to prolonged inactivity, unproductivity, contemptibility, etc.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, the act of throwing away, encoded by the verb *pe-li-*, is viewed with a negative viewpoint, the developmental path of which is marked with such inferences as throwing away > completeness > irretrievability > undesirability > malefaction (Rhee 1996: 63–64). Therefore, a speaker describing an event with a predicate marked by the ‘throw away’ auxiliary is almost certainly viewing the event with a belittling attitude.

#### 4.1.5 *Devaluation attached to repetition*

The Type 5 pejoratives are the sentence-final particles whose origins are traceable to complementizers, and thus to reportative constructions. Ending a sentence with a complementizer signals that the preceding clause marked by the utterance-final complementizer is a report (see 3.5). The strategy behind this development is rhetorical pseudo-report in the sense that the quote has never been uttered by anyone, and the speaker is simply presenting an utterance as if it were a self-report. Therefore, by marking the first-time utterance with the complementizer, the speaker is rhetorically claiming that he or she is repeating what was said before. For instance, the speaker saying “Let’s go eat lunch-comp” is asserting “I already said earlier ‘let’s go eat lunch.’” From this rhetorical use of complementizer as a sentence-final particle, there occurred semanticization of pragmatic inferences, i.e., irritation and contempt. Such a development seems to be well motivated from human experience. In reality, the need for repeating an utterance often causes irritation associated with frustration of the speaker. Feigned repetition, marked by means of a complementizer, inherits the connotation of ‘irritation’ from the repeated speech act. Explicit display of irritation is a manifestation of contempt. The nuance of contempt and pejoration from feigned repetition is found in almost all sentence-final particles developed from complementizers (Rhee 2012).

Another related aspect is that quotation has a distancing effect. In other words, when the end of a sentence is marked with a quotative connective, the speaker is presenting an utterance as if the information were from a source other than himself or herself, and the speaker’s commitment is reduced or disclaimed accordingly. For instance, Suzuki (2007), in her analysis of the constructions involving the Japanese quotative complementizer *-tte*, describes a similar state-of-affairs, where the complementizer occurs sentence-finally. The complementizer-turned sentence-final marker

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17. Anthony Shin (p.c.) also suggests that the English expression ‘sit around’ [and do nothing] shows a parallelism. Rhee (1996: 201), citing Scott DeLancey (p.c.), discusses the viewpoint of contempt associated with the *sit*-related constructions as in “I was *sitting there trying* not to run into Blair” [in play fighting].

carries a distancing effect, thus signaling the unacceptability or inappropriateness of the addressee's preceding utterance (Suzuki 2007: 219).

#### 4.1.6 *Devaluation attached to lack of noteworthiness*

The last type of pejoratives, Type 6, is a group of particles, connectives and sentential constructions which share the characteristics in their origins, i.e., those that signified lack of specification. The conceptual transfer from lack of specification to pejoration seems to be well motivated. In real life, applicability of specifiable vs. unspecifiable distinction depends on the noteworthiness of an object. Thus, no recognition is tantamount to unworthiness and, conversely, recognition to noteworthiness. For this reason, it is customary for a speaker to recognize dignitaries who are present in an event by formally reciting their names and titles individually, for an event organizer to provide separate seating arrangements for distinguished guests, etc.

As was briefly noted in 3.6, quoting someone else's utterance in a form of highly reductive, thus highly unspecified, pseudo-quotation such as *eccekwu ceccekwu* 'saying this saying that' is a flagrant display of pejorative attitude. This state-of-affairs is also observable in other languages. For instance, quoting someone as having said 'blah blah blah' brings forth a pejorative force (see Finkbeiner, this volume, for German). Likewise, Wiese and Polat (this volume), in an analysis of *m*-doublets that connote pejoration (dismissal, devaluation), note that the pejorative attitude is related to 'the whatever effect,' i.e. "the speaker keeps information vague because s/he does not care about specifics" and thus "the referent is not worth caring about". Similarly, lack of specification evoking pejorative connotation is noted in Japanese. Suzuki (1998), in her analysis of the Japanese *nante*, *nanka*, *nado*, *dano*, *toka*, and *tari*, all carrying the meaning of 'the likes of,' also argues that the lack of specification triggered the emergence of pejorative attitude in certain contexts because of the implication that "the speaker is unwilling to be committed to the entity/entities marked by them" (Suzuki 1998: 273).<sup>18</sup> In general, it appears that the lack of specificity triggering the pragmatic inference of pejoration involves the evaluative judgment of 'not deserving fine-tuned attention' and is a crosslinguistically robust phenomenon.

## 4.2 Cultural Motivation

There has been no definite answer to the question to what extent language reflects the ambient culture, as is well illustrated in the ongoing debate of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. The absence of satisfactory answers to the question notwithstanding, it is intuitively reasonable to claim that pejoration and the development of linguistic means

18. Suzuki (1998: 276) also notes that a discourse marker in Modern Hebrew, *kaze* 'like this' has a hedging effect and that "it may be used derogatorily in certain contexts."

of pejoratives have to do with the culture in which the language is spoken, since the use of pejoratives is inevitably situated in verbal, and typically *vis-à-vis*, interaction. Thus a brief discussion of cultural aspects is in order.

Korea had a long noble vs. common distinction in social stratification, which was legally abolished in 1894 as part of modernization efforts.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, even though the number of nuclear families and one-person households is fast increasing recently, Korea long maintained the extended-family lifestyle in the past. In extended families, Koreans kept a very strict domestic hierarchical relationship in Confucianism even to the point of applying strict seniority between twins. Linguistically, particularly important in this context is the speech levels (*hwakye*), at about six or seven different levels (cf. Song 2005; Sohn 1999).<sup>20</sup> The speech levels depending on the relationship between the interlocutors are grammaticalized in formal vs. informal, honorific vs. non-honorific, and polite vs. non-polite markers that occur largely as verbal morphologies. This forced choice in grammar and diction must have created or reinforced the speakers' sensitivity to certain linguistic means such as 'evaluative morphology' (Stump 1993). In other words, the special attention to hierarchy may have helped retain grammatical/lexical coding of (dis)honorification (Koo 2004: 118).

In this respect, there is a state-of-affairs that illustrates something that may be called 'honorification obsession.' For instance, Korean has a large number of 'eat' verbs that show the fastidious level distinctions in lexicalization patterns as illustrated in (17) (Rhee 2003):

- (17) 'eat' verbs and their source meanings (in the order of ascending speech levels)
- |                                        |                                                    |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| a. <i>chemek-</i> 'eat' (PJ)           | b. <i>mek-</i> 'eat'                               |
| c. <i>tul-</i> 'lift'                  | d. <i>tusi-</i> 'lift honorably'                   |
| e. <i>ha-</i> 'do' (in proper context) | f. <i>hasi-</i> 'do honorably' (in proper context) |
| g. <i>ca-</i> (< <i>cwa-</i> ) 'sit'   | h. <i>casi-</i> 'sit honorably'                    |
| i. <i>cwa-</i> 'sit'                   | j. <i>cwasi-</i> 'sit honorably'                   |
| k. <i>capswus-</i> 'perform'           | l. <i>capswusi-</i> 'perform honorably, equip'     |

As shown in the above list, the most prominent strategy is metonymy, whereby a part of an eating event, e.g. lifting, sitting, doing, etc., is recruited to represent the entire

19. Despite the 19th century social change promoting egalitarianism, no substantial comparable change occurred in language to reflect such social change.

20. Basically, honorification, politeness, and formality determine the speech levels, but this part of the grammatical system becomes more complicated by the necessity of using self-humiliatives and of suppressing honorification of the sentential subject who is superior to the speaker but inferior to the addressee.

event. This is in consonance with the general pattern of lexicalization of honorification in Korean as elaborated in Koo (2004).

Another cultural aspect has to do with the fact that there are multiple pejorative devices that originated from the lexemes denoting immaturity, e.g. *sen-* ‘unripe,’ *nal-* ‘raw,’ *phwus-* ‘green.’ Korea today is among the highly industrialized societies with advanced technology, but in traditional Korea, the major industry was agriculture. In agricultural societies, the ripe vs. unripe distinction may have been particularly important. Also relevant, it seems, to this aspect is the development of pejoratives from the lexemes denoting ‘stone,’ ‘wild,’ etc., considering that uncultivated land largely remains so because of having too many rocks and pebbles and that fruits or plants found in such a plot of land tend to be of low quality.

### 4.3 Subjectification and intersubjectification

Semantic change associated with either lexical or grammatical items tends to show directionality. Traugott (1989) notes that semantic-pragmatic change in the initial propositional (ideational) content can gain either textual (cohesion-making) and expressive (interpersonal, and other pragmatic) meanings, or both, as in propositional > ((textual) > (expressive)). Furthermore, semantic change tends to involve ‘subjectification,’ i.e., the tendency for “meanings to become increasingly based in the speaker’s subjective belief state/attitude toward the proposition” (Traugott 1989:35), and ‘intersubjectification,’ i.e., “indexing speaker attitude and belief, and expressing attention to the hearer’s self” (Cuyckens et al. 2010: 1). In the current literature on grammaticalization, (inter) subjectification seems to be a robust phenomenon attested across languages (Stein & Wright 1995; Traugott & Dasher 2002; Davidse et al. 2010 and the works therein).

It is beyond doubt that the development of pejoratives can be characterized by means of subjectification (since subjective evaluation is involved in the process) as noted by Traugott and Dasher (2002: 282), and intersubjectification (since the speaker has an intent of displaying his or her emotional stance toward the addressee and the intent is explicitly marked by linguistic means). However, discussion of intersubjectification in literature is largely restricted to upward-changes (consideration of social need and face), whereas pejoration involves downward-changes. Considering that the force of abusive language is far greater than that of considerate, polite, amicable language, as may be contrasted with, for instance, slurs and politeness formulae, more serious scholastic attention to the pejoratives from the intersubjectification perspective is called for.<sup>21</sup>

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21. This research bias in favor of ‘linguistic politeness’ is also often pointed out by ‘impoliteness’ researchers (Jamet & Jobert 2013, and works therein), and Culpeper (2011, 2013) claims that ‘impoliteness’ is salient in public, much more so than politeness.

It is also noteworthy that a pejorative attitude may be directed at the entity being discussed (object or proposition) or at the discourse partner, even though such addressee-oriented attitudes may be signaled by a marker only attached to a particular form in the sentence. For instance, object-directed pejoratives are typically realized as derivative morphemes, and proposition-directed pejoratives are typically realized as auxiliaries. On the other hand, addressee-directed pejoratives are typically realized as sentential endings in Korean, the distinctions of which, however, may not be always clear.

## 5. Summary and conclusion

Korean has a rich inventory of morphological trappings to signal diverse meanings of intersubjectivity. As a class of grammatical markers, pejoratives are realized as diverse morpho-syntactic devices. Korean pejoratives are largely classifiable into six types depending on their source meanings, i.e., periphery, insignificance, lack of sophistication, undesirable events/postures, feigned repetition, and lack of specification, even though these categorizations are not mutually exclusive.

The development of pejoratives involved diverse conceptual motivations based on the valuation of topography, size, sophistication, events, repetition and specification. In addition to these conceptual motivations, certain aspects of the Korean culture, e.g. androcentrism, Confucianism, orientation to an extended-family lifestyle, that remained dominant for centuries or even millennia in history, seem to have contributed to the development and maintenance of the pejoratives, or more generally, the honorification system in Korean grammar.

It is also suggested that the development of pejorative meanings is an instance of subjectification. Furthermore, since the use of pejoratives often occurs in highly emotional and interactive contexts, their development is highly susceptible to intersubjectification.

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