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LP and RP in the development of discourse markers from “what” in Korean

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This paper describes the development of two different DMs that emerged from the interrogative pronoun *mwe* (literally ‘what’). Both DMs acquired discursive functions as their source structures were used rhetorically (i.e., not to solicit an answer but to elicit attention). The DM *mwe* shifted from its original argument position to non-argument positions including LP, and then later to RP. On the other hand, the DM *mwenyamyen* (literally, ‘if (you) ask (me) what (it) is’), which originated from a subordinate clause, now invariably occurs at LP as a DM. From analyses with respect to (inter)subjectification, and exchange and action structures, I argue that even though peripheries are associated with (inter) subjectivity, the hypothesized correlation between LP versus RP and subjectivity versus intersubjectivity (Beeching and Detges 2014a) is not supported. Nor is the hypothesis supported that subjectified linguistic elements will shift their positions leftward in OV languages (Traugott 2010).

Keywords: action structure, discourse markers, exchange structure (inter) subjectivity, left/right periphery, rhetorical question

1. Introduction

It has been found across languages that questions are sometimes presented not to solicit an answer but to increase the illocutionary force of the proposition, a strategy known as rhetorical questioning (see Zillman 1972; Wales 2001: 346; Kim 2011). According to Keith and Lundberg (2008:66), a rhetorical question either invites the audience to fill in an obvious answer or provokes thought. The latter is the type of the function of the forms addressed in this paper. Routinization of such uses is often responsible for the emergence of grammatical forms in Korean. For instance, in a relatively straightforward manner, certain one-word questions that do not solicit direct answers from the addressee developed into ‘discourse

markers' (DMs) — that is to say, *eti* ('where'), *mwe* ('what'), *way* ('why'), *ettehkey* ('how'), etc. Among such forms is the interrogative pronoun *mwe* ('what'), the DM use of which is illustrated in Example 1.¹

- (1)
- A: [Anyway, congratulations!]
B: [On what?]
A: [On you falling in love (with her)!]
B: [What? Ah, yes...]
A: *coh-nya?*
be.good-Q
[Do (you) feel good?]
→ B: *mwe* *kunyang* *kuleh-ci* *mwe...*
DM just be.SO-END DM
[Well (DM: “what”), it’s just so so... it’s just (DM: “what”)...]
(2004, Drama, *Nanglang 18-sev*, Episode 12)

In the dialogue, A and B are close friends and B has just fallen in love with a girl: for this, A congratulates B. Speaker B tries to hide his excitement by responding with a feigned, lukewarm attitude. In the final utterance by B, the DM *mwe* occurs twice, utterance-initially and utterance-finally. It is notable that the meaning of the DM cannot be faithfully represented in English translation. With *mwe*, Speaker B signals reluctance and hesitation to admit his happiness with the development of an amorous relationship (see Sections 3.3 and 4.3 for discussion of the discursive functions of *mwe*).

In a less obvious way, more complex forms involving interrogative pronouns developed into DMs. Such constructions form a template in the shape of *X-nyamyen*, in which *X* is an interrogative pronoun, literally rendered as ‘if (you) ask (me) what/who/when... (it) is’. Among such forms is *mwe-nyamyen* (‘if (you) ask (me) what (it) is’) that functions as a DM of topic presentation. As a DM, *mwe-nyamyen* is commonly used to preface an elaboration about what has just been introduced. For instance, the following elaboration may be on “what” the newly introduced entity or concept is. However, “what” it is may often be unclear. In other words, semantic bleaching has progressed to such an extent that the expression may only be a semantically vacuous precursory signal of the speaker’s intent

1. The following abbreviations are used in the glossing: ACC=accusative; ADN=adnominal; BEN=benefactive; COMP=complementizer; COND=conditional; CONN=connective; COP=copula; CR=current relevance; DEC=declarative; DM=discourse marker; FOC=focus; FUT=future; HON=honorific; INST=instrumental; INTENT=intentional; LP=left-periphery; NEG=negative; NF=non-finite; NOM=nominative; POL=polite; PST=past; Q=question; RETRO=retrospective; RP=right-periphery; SEL=selective; SFP=sentence-final particle; TENT=tentative; and TOP=topic.

to continue to hold the floor, as shown in Example 2, in which *mwenyamyen* may be an elaboration of ‘what’ the favor is, or simply a signal of turn continuation.

(2)

A: [I miss you, too.]

B: [I’m excited that you miss me. I’m so happy. By the way, Min, I have something to ask for your favor.]

→ *mwenyamyen* *cikum emma-ka cham manhi himtul-ko*
 DM now mom-NOM very much be.difficult-and
oylop-ko kuleh-ketun [...] *ppoppoha-e.cwu-myen tw-ay*
 be.lonely-and be.so-SFP kiss-BEN-if be.good-SFP
 [(DM: if you ask what it is), (your) mommy is going through difficult times, being lonely, and things like that.]

(2004, Drama, *Kkochpota alumtawe*, Episode 20)

The dialogue in Example 2 is a telephone conversation between a boy named Min, A, and a college professor, B. Speaker A’s mother and Speaker B have tender feelings toward each other, and A’s mother is experiencing difficult times. In order to help her, B is asking A to be nice to his mother. As is shown above, B speaks of a favor to ask, and without A’s questioning, he continues his turn to explain what the favor is about (his kissing mommy), prefacing his intention of elaboration with the DM, *mwenyamyen*.

Both DMs, *mwe* and *mwenyamyen*, are interesting in that both involve the interrogative pronoun *mwe* (‘what’) as their sources and that both originated from rhetorical questions in the sense that no answers are being solicited. One crucial difference between *mwe* and *mwenyamyen* is their relationship between their functions and syntagmatic positions. For instance, *mwe* as a regular question word occupies the argument position, whereas *mwe* as a DM occurs either at the left periphery (LP) or the right periphery (RP). On the other hand, *mwenyamyen* as a subordinate clause occupies the position of a protasis (as Clause₁ in the Clause₁–Clause₂ configuration), and *mwenyamyen* as a DM occurs invariably at the LP. The commonalities and differences between the two forms provide an opportunity to investigate the DMs built on the same original expression (i.e., the interrogative pronoun *mwe* [‘what’]) with respect to the potential asymmetry of LP and RP, the issue that is the focus of this volume.

This paper is organized in the following manner. Sections 2 and 3 describe the development of the DMs *mwe* and *mwenyamyen*, respectively, tracing their sources, functional change and subjectification in their development. Section 4 addresses various issues with reference to peripheries and functions, raising the issues involving identification of target items and peripheries, hypothesized asymmetries by the periphery, action and exchange structures, and typological issues. Section 5 summarizes the discussion and concludes the paper.

2. The DM *mwe*

The pronoun *mwe* is multifunctional in modern Korean as an interrogative pronoun meaning ‘what’, an indefinite pronoun meaning ‘something’ and a DM with diverse functions. We will now look at the formal and semantic change, and inter-subjectification that occurred in the course of the development of *mwe* into a DM.

2.1 Development in form

In contemporary Korean, the ‘standard’ (i.e., conservative) form of the interrogative pronoun *mwe* (‘what’) is *mwues*. An historical survey shows that the interrogative *mwe* (‘what’) took the form of *musum* (and its numerous spelling variants: *mwusAm*, *musAm*, *mwusuk*, *mwusum*, *musuk*, etc.) as a pronoun. The form was in the relation of ‘heterosemy’ (Lichtenberk 1991) with *mwusAm* (and its variant, *musAm*) as a modifier (i.e., as an adjective).² For instance, the first attestation of the pronoun in the oldest extant data in Late Middle Korean (fifteenth century) has *musum*, and the modern form *mwues* first occurs in the sixteenth century data. Its reduced forms, *mwes* and *mwue*, are first attested around the turn of the twentieth century, and the most reduced form, *mwe*, only occurs in the twentieth century, as illustrated in Example 3.³

2. “Heterosemy” refers to cases where two or more meanings or functions that are historically related belong in different morphosyntactic categories (Lichtenberk 1991:476).

3. Two corpora are used as data sources. The Korean Historical Corpus is a 15-million word corpus that is largely based on the 21st Century Sejong Corpus, a 200-million word corpus, developed by the Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism. This corpus encompasses the data from the fifteenth century to the early twentieth century (1446–1912). The data source for Modern Korean is the KORTERM Corpus (1970–1997), consisting of 15 million tagged words and 70 million un-tagged words from written sources, developed by the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST). However, in general, the source and the date of the data retrievable from the KORTERM cannot be identified by end-users.

(3)

- a) *tve namk-i ep-keni na-i sal-a musum hA-ly-o*
 that tree-NOM not.exist-as I-NOM live-NF what do-FUT-Q
 [As my (cherished) tree disappeared what would I do remaining
 alive?]

(1447, *Sekposangcel* 6:24)

- b) *kveycip-i hAnah-AI cosch-a cyongsinhA-l.kes.i-ni*
 wife-NOM one-ACC follow-NF die-FUT-CONN
ani cwuk-ese mwues hA-ly-o
 not die-and what do-FUT-Q
 [A wife is supposed to die following one (man) and what would I do
 remaining not dead.]

(1581, *Soksamkanghayngsilto*, *Yel* 28a)

- c) *wustyen-i ani-si-myen wuli-key mwues-i is-sao-lko*
 queen-NOM not.be-HON-COND we-to what-NOM exist-HON-Q
 [Except for the queen, what would we have? (Lit. If it were not for
 the queen, what would exist for us?)]

(16XX, *Kveychwukilki I*: 11a)

- d) *is-te-n mwupi-to ta epsAy-ko mwes-ul hA-ly-e*
 exist-RETRO-ADN arms-too all destroy-and what-ACC do-FUT-SFP
 [What is (the government) going to do, after destroying all the
 weapons?]

(1904, *Tayhanmayilsinpo* 17272)

- e) *inmin-un mwue-i-nci nimkwun-un mwukwu-ø-si-nci*
 people-TOP what-be-COMP king-TOP who-be-HON-COMP
molo-ketun
 not.know-CONN
 [Since (people) are ignorant of what people are and who the king is,
 ...]

(1903, *Sinhakwelpo* 3: 338)

- f) *mwe ha-lyekwu-yo*
 what do-INTEN-POL
 [What do (you) want to do (by looking at the corpse again)?]
 (1994, KORTERM doc. 123)

From the historical data it can be hypothesized that the modern-day interrogative (and later DM) *mwe* is an outcome of a long reductive process of *musum/mwu-sum* > *mwues* > *mwes/mwue* > *mwe*. The appended sentence-final *mwe* came to be further reduced to *-m* in certain contexts. For instance, some of the sentence-final particles that signal interrogative sentence type — that is to say, *-na* and *-ka*, came

to become *-nam* and *-kam*, through a fusional process with the following DM *mwe* (Koo and Rhee 2012).

The DM *mwe* has positional freedom and, thus, can occur at initial, medial or final positions of an utterance. Thus, the following examples show the positional flexibility of *mwe*, even though they may carry subtle differences in meaning (see the discussion in Section 2.2 for functional differences of *mwe* at different positions).

(4)

A: [Why isn't he coming?]

B: a) *mwe* *kitali-myen* *o-keyss-ci* (initial)

DM wait-COND come-FUT-SFP

b) *kitali-myen* *mwe* *o-keyss-ci* (medial)

wait-COND DM come-FUT-SFP

c) *kitali-myen* *o-keyss-ci* *mwe* (final)

wait-COND come-FUT-SFP DM

a/b/c: [I guess (he) will come, if we wait.]

The DM *mwe* has been formally fossilized, as is evidenced by the fact that *mwe* cannot be followed by the politeness marker *-yo*, or the formality marker, *pnikka*, etc., even when the discourse partner is socially superior.

From a syntactic point of view, one of the consequences of the development of the DM *mwe* is that the interrogative pronoun that used to occupy a verbal argument position became no longer subject to such syntactic restrictions. Such autonomy, or detachment from the propositional content, is a typical characteristic of DMs ('positional mobility' Brinton 2008: 8; 'syntagmatic variability' Lehmann 2002 [1982]: 110; and see also Bolinger 1989: 186).

2.2 Development in function

In the preceding section I have shown that the DM *mwe* is a product of a long series of changes, in terms of its form, from the earliest extant form *musum/mwu-sum*. The concomitant functional change does not seem to have occurred in exact parallel, but there is an observable change, from the fully interrogative function to a more discursive function. For example, all instances given in Example 3 involve the interrogative pronoun used either as the subject (as in Example 3c) or the argument of the verb (as a theme in Examples 3a,b,d,f) and a copulative complement (in Example 3e). When the form is used as a DM, however, it carries diverse pragmatic functions. This development may be labeled as 'pragmaticalization' (Erman and Kotsinas 1993; Aijmer 1997; Frank-Job 2006; Brinton 2008). Thus, as in the instances in Example 4, *mwe* as a DM carries the general function of marking the speaker's uncertainty with diverse shades of meaning that become prominent

under the influence of the context. Furthermore, when the DM *mwe* is used as a pause-filler as the speaker is looking for an appropriate word, it can occur anywhere since such a word search may be necessitated regardless of the sentential position.

Even though the DM *mwe* has the general function of marking uncertainty, its detailed functions are many and varied (Lee 1999; Koo 2000; Kim 2002; Nam and Cha 2010; Song 2013; and numerous others). From a quantitative analysis of present-day Korean corpora, there emerge certain patterns depending on the location of the DM *mwe*. For instance, when the DM *mwe* is used utterance-initially, it tends to signal challenge or surprise, perspective shift, elaboration, tentative example, a disparaging or deprecating attitude, resignation or submission, etc., as the following examples partly illustrate:

(5)

- a) challenge/surprise (context: the speaker is having a tantrum in a restaurant)

mwe ile-n tey-ka ta iss-e
 DM this.kind-and place-NOM all exist-SFP
 [What kind of place is this?]

(KORTERM doc#120)

- b) perspective shift (context: with regards to someone suffering from loss of a loved one)

mwe san salam-iya ettehkeytun salaka-ci.anh-keyss-e-yo
 DM living person-FOC whatever.way keep.living-NEG-FUT-SFP-POL
 [Well, a living person will keep living somehow, wouldn't he?]

(KORTERM doc#79)

- c) resignation/submission (context: the speaker having been humiliated and wronged)

mwe kulen kes-un amwulayto coh-ta
 DM such thing-TOP in.any.way be.good-DEC
 [Well, that's OK. (= I don't care.)]

(KORTERM doc#119)

On the other hand, when the DM *mwe* is used utterance-medially, it tends to carry the function of a pause-filler, particularly when the speaker is experiencing difficulty finding an appropriate expression, as shown in Example 6, even though the filler function is largely not position-specific. The speaker may feign such difficulty for strategic reasons, in which case the DM takes on a hesitation-marking function, often for the sake of politeness. This function, which is closely related to the pause-filling function, is not position-specific, either.

(6)

(context: a sergeant making a visit to inspect a sentinel post only to find inattentive guards)

ike-n mwe ta theleka-to molu-keyss-kwuman

this-TOP DM all steal-even not.know-FUT-SFP

[This is like... no one would know even if (a thief) steals away everything.]

(KORTERM doc#77)

One particular function of the DM *mwe* is when it is used utterance-finally at RP. In RP positions, the DM *mwe* tends to carry the function of marking a common-ground. By adding the seemingly vacuous *mwe*, often without phonological prominence, to a sentence that is technically completed (i.e., already marked with a sentence-final particle), the speaker signals his or her intent to seek a common-ground — epistemic, emotional or otherwise — with the interlocutor. The speaker may do this by presenting an example in support of the interlocutor's previous claims, thus creating solidarity, as in Example 7a; or a tentative conclusion, signaling that its validity requires the interlocutor's confirmation, as in Example 7b; or a piece of vindicating evidence that awaits the interlocutor's approval, as in Example 7c, etc. The common-ground being sought may be more information-based (i.e., epistemic) as in Example 7a, or more emotion-based, as in Examples 7b and 7c, even though this distinction may not be clear-cut.

(7)

- a) (in response to the interlocutor's conclusion that A's financial situation is not bad)

kulem-yo khunttal-un thayksi-man thakotani-te-ntev-yo mwe

of.course-POL big.daughter-TOP taxi-only ride-RETRO-SFP-POL DM

[Of course. A's first daughter rides taxis only (instead of buses, subways, etc.)]

(KORTERM doc#117)

- b) (in response to the interlocutor's worry about airplanes being grounded)

ha-l.swu.eps-ci mwe

do-cannot-SFP DM

[There is nothing we can do (about it).]

(KORTERM doc#114)

- c) (in response to an offer of a soft-drink for her help, but declining)

mokmalu-l.mankhum taytanha-n kes-to ani-nkel-yo mwe

be.thirsty-as.much be.big-and thing-even be.not-SFP-POL DM

[(No, thank you.) It was not so difficult a job as to make me thirsty anyway.]

(KORTERM doc#116)

An interesting aspect is that this common-ground seeking function may also signal the speaker’s minor discontent or mild protest. For instance, in Example 8a, the speaker, a landlord, exhibits his discontent toward an old tenant’s request for use of a room with a young woman, and, in the course of describing the talk with him in the past, rhetorically asks the interlocutor whether he (the landlord) is like a brothel-owner renting out his rooms for prostitution. The tone is of discontentment but the speaker is seeking the interlocutor’s confirmation that he is not a brothel-owner. Likewise, in Example 8b, the speaker registers a mild protest toward the interlocutor about the situation in which the speaker may lose her face. This function of mild challenge or protest seems to be the trace of its earlier function at LP, shown in Example 5a, above.

- (8)
- a) *na-ka... pang-ina pillyecwu-nun salam-i-nka mwe*
 I-NOM room-SEL rent.out-ADN person-be-Q DM
 [Am I someone who just rents out a room (for prostitution)?]
 (KORTERM doc#38)
- b) *na-n caconsim-to eps-na mwe*
 I-TOP self-esteem-also not.exist-Q DM
 [(Do you think that) I don’t have a sense of self-esteem?]
 (Koo and Rhee 2012: 77)

In addition to the function as a marker of attitudinal stance as illustrated here, the DM *mwe* has the function of eliciting the hearer’s redressive action with turn-shift (“action structure” and “exchange structure”; Schiffrin 1987) (and see Section 4.4 for further discussion).

2.3 Intersubjectification

The DM *mwe* at RP shows intersubjectivity in the sense that the speaker is actively seeking common ground (epistemic, emotional or otherwise) with the interlocutor. In this respect, it is noteworthy that the DM *mwe* at RP tends to follow certain sentence-final particles, the primary function of which is to mark tentativeness (e.g., *-na*, *-ka*, *-ntey* and *-ci*).⁴ Furthermore, in the sense that the DM *mwe* is, at

4. The function of the SFP *-ci* is ambivalent between the two seemingly contradictory functions (i.e., determinative and tentative). Even though *-ci* is primarily a determinative ending, in the course of its grammaticalization, it underwent a stage of being a negative complementizer. As a negative complementizer it commonly occurred with *anh-* (‘be not’), *molu-* (‘not know’), *kwungkumha-* (‘wonder’), etc. The tentative meaning is a semantic vestige of the negative complementizer.

least in form, an interrogative pronoun that can function as a full-fledged question (“What?”), it has a high level of interactivity. This interactivity, however, does not entail the occurrence of question-answer adjacency pairs, because the question employed in this context is a rhetorical question and, thus, the speaker is not soliciting a direct answer. In that sense, rhetoricality is a pronounced characteristic of the DM *mwe*. In terms of the exchange-structure functions, the DM *mwe* at RP has, albeit weakly, a turn-triggering function, because the speaker is seeking shared ground and the utterance tends to trail off (see Section 4.4 for more discussion).

3. The DM *mwenyamyen*

The DM *mwenyamyen*, as alluded to in the introductory section, developed from a complex construction, largely through syntagmatic reduction in terms of form and through rhetorical manipulation of an embedded question in meaning. We now look at the formal and semantic change, and intersubjectification that occurred in the course of the development of *mwenyamyen* into a DM.

3.1 Development in form

Historically, the DM *mwenyamyen* originated from a regular syntactic structure of a conditional clause, fully equipped with a subject nominal. The developmental path is complex because it is intertwined with the development of the complementizers. Disregarding such complexity, the path of development from a hypothetical conditional construction into a DM may be divided into five hypothetical stages as summarized in Example 9:⁵

5. There are two nominative case markers, *-i* and *-ka*, in an allomorphy relation, the former after a closed syllable and the latter after an open syllable. In the template, *-i* is used as the representative form. The symbol *ø* denotes the copula *i-* which is deleted by the post-vocalic vowel deletion rule.

(9)

- Stage 1: *X-i mwe-ø-nya ha-myen* [“if (one) says, ‘What is X?’”]
 X-NOM what-COP-Q say-COND
- Stage 2: *X-i mwe-ø-nyamyen* [“if (one) asks what X is”]
 X-NOM what-COP-COMP
- Stage 3: *kuke(s)-i mwe-ø-nyamyen* [“if (one) asks what it is”]
 that-NOM what-COP-COMP
- Stage 4: *ku mwe-ø-nyamyen* [“if (one) asks what it is”]
 that what-COP-COMP
- Stage 5: *mwenyamyen* [“micro-topic presentation”]
 DM

The example for Stage 1 is first attested in 1912. The proposed five stages are not based on datable texts, but are hypothesized based on gradual reduction commonly assumed in grammaticalization research. The relevant data cannot be dated in a streamlined fashion, partly because there is a gap in the source data for the period between 1913 and 1970 in the two corpora, and partly because all the forms of the five stages occur, though at varying frequencies, in contemporary Korean. The use of *mwenyamyen* as a DM (Stage 5) is very frequent in present-day Korean (Rhee 2014). The most prominent aspects of the development of the DM *mwenyamyen*, as illustrated in Example 9, are that the DM emerged from a conditional protasis and that the conditional clause has an interrogative sentence within it. One of the earliest attestations of the source construction is found in a 1912 novel, shown in Example 10, in which a rhetorical question (marked with *-nya*), followed by a quotative verb (i.e., *ha-* [‘say’]), is embedded in a conditional clause (marked with *-myen*), which includes the *wh*-word *mwusun* (‘what kind’).

(10)

(context: the interlocutors discussing how to prove innocence of a falsely accused girl)

mwusun syu-lo palmyeng-ul ha-nu-nya-ha-myen
 what.kind way-INST explain-ACC say-CR-Q-say-COND
ecyey cyemyek ahop-si hwu-ey lisil-ul li-chamsye-cip
 yesterday evening 9-o'clock after-at [name]-ACC [name]-[title]-house
twimvun-pakk-ulo pwulnenay-ye livakiha-n salam-un na-ø-olsita
 backdoor-outside-to call.out-and talk-ADN person-TOP I-be-SFP
 [There is a way to prove (the innocence of Lisil), because it was I who asked her to come out through the backdoor of Mr. Li’s house to see me after 9 p.m. last night.’ << (Literally: “If (you) ask me in what way (I) can explain (the situation), it was I who asked...”)]

(1912, *Caypongchwon* 729)

In contemporary Korean, *kukey mwenyamyen* (= *kukei mwenyamyen*, Stage 3 in Example 9), *ku mwenyamyen* (Stage 4), and *mwenyamyen* (Stage 5), all at varying degrees of reduction, occur as DMs. Those forms are used to preface the elaboration about something immediately mentioned, as for example, “X is very interesting. If you ask what it is, it is...” This is demonstrated in Example 11.

(11)

- A: [So you are saying that you’ve come to this hotel for some business?]
 B: [O, it’s nothing of the kind (you are imagining...) It was because of a seminar.]
caphvey incepcek siki-eytavhan simlihak seymina-ka iss-nuntey
 autism proximal period-about psychology seminar-NOM exist-CONN
kukey mwenyamyen caa-wa seysang-ul acik kwupwun
 DM self-and world-ACC yet distinction
mos-ha-nun yuaki-uy...
 not-do-ADN infancy-GEN
 [There is a psychology seminar about the autism-proximal period.
 (DM: “If (you) ask (me) what it is,”) it’s about (infancy when) infants
 cannot distinguish between their self and the world (around them)...’]
 (2006, Drama, Yenavsitay Episode 9)

The above dialogue occurs when a female health-trainer at a swimming facility, A, and a male psychology professor, B, ran into each other at a hotel. The woman is suspicious as to why B, toward whom she has some amorous feelings, came to the hotel. The man, rather shy before her, says that there is a psychology seminar about the autism-proximal period for him to attend. Since the seminar title contains terminologies that are hard to understand for a non-professional, he is trying to explain what it is, prefacing his intent for elaboration using the DM *kukey mwenyamyen* (literally meaning, ‘if you ask (me) what it is’).

Incidentally, as can be expected from its source construction *X-i mwe-ø-nya ha-myen* (‘if (you) ask (me) what X is’), the DM *mwenyamyen* has a few other counterparts that share the constructional frame but vary in the interrogative pronoun slot (i.e., “why”, “where”, “when”, “who” and “how”, instead of “what”). These forms involving the *wh*-pronouns are labeled RQ-TPs (Topic Presenters from Rhetorical Questions) and are analyzed as a paradigm of topic presenters in Rhee (2014). Unlike these other forms, *mwenyamyen* occurs at the highest frequency followed by *waynyamyen* (‘if (you) ask (me) why it is’). The use of *mwenyamyen* is entrenched to such an extent that it is usually taken as an unanalyzable whole, and, thus, the compositional meaning (i.e., ‘if (you) ask (me) what (it) is’) is often not available in normal discourses.

The development of the DM *mwenyamyen*, much in common with the DM *mwe*, bears certain prominent characteristics. First of all, the DM *mwenyamyen* is phonologically disjunct from the following clause, resembling “comment clauses” in English (Brinton 2008). Bolinger (1989: 186, cited by Brinton 2008: 8) presents three prosodic characteristics that reflect syntactic and semantic qualities: (i) lower pitch (denoting their incidentalness), (ii) being set off by pauses (denoting their separation), and (iii) rising terminal (denoting their link-up with the anchor). The DM *mwenyamyen* carries all of these properties, suggesting its loose connection in syntagma. Strictly speaking, in terms of syntax, *mwenyamyen*, which may be analyzed as *mwe-ø-nya-myen* (‘what-be-Q-if’) is syntactically defective, lacking the subject of the predicate ‘be what’ (see Stage 1: *X-i mwe-ø-nya ha-myen* [‘if (one) asks what X is’] in Example 9). In other words, *mwenyamyen* has a structure that necessarily has to be locked between its subject (i.e., *X-i*) preceding it and the main clause following it. However, *mwenyamyen* attains positional freedom by recruiting a near-expletive subject argument by using the distal demonstrative (i.e., *kuke(s)-i* [‘it is’]; see Stage 3 in Example 9). By being assigned the status of a conditional protasis, *kuke(s)-i mwenyamen* is no longer locked between the subject argument and the apodosis. Interestingly, the expletive subject *kuke(s)-i* is also omitted later, eventually leaving only *mwenyamyen* behind (see Stage 5 in Example 9). This detachment effect is even greater when the entire string loses referential values and acquires more discursive meanings. At this stage of morphosyntactic opacity and semantic non-compositionality, *mwenyamyen* can be said to have become a full-fledged DM, which occurs at LP.

3.2 Development in function

As indicated in the previous section, the DM *mwenyamyen* originated from a hypothetical conditional construction, whose semantic content has been bleached. In tandem with semantic bleaching, this DM’s function has also changed. In other words, there is no real question or genuinely hypothesized condition surviving from the source structure.

Despite semantic bleaching, however, the DM *mwenyamyen* carries a function related, albeit very weakly, to the source characteristic. This is the function of topic presentation at the micro-level.⁶ For instance, as illustrated in Example 11, *mwenyamyen* bridges the preceding remark “There is a psychology seminar about the autism-proximal period” and the following remark “It’s about (infancy when) infants cannot distinguish between their self and the world (around them). . . .” The speaker uses the DM *mwenyamyen* before the elaboration of the concept of the autism-proximal period (i.e., “what” the autism-proximal period is). In other words, the speaker uses *mwenyamyen* to signal that one particular aspect of the preceding remark (the “what” aspect) is picked as a micro-topic of the remark that follows. As the bleaching proceeds, the use of the DM *mwenyamyen* becomes freer from the restriction of prefacing the “what” aspect, and the scope of the topic is not necessarily a micro-topic. In other words, it may serve as a precursory signal of the speaker’s intent for continued floor-holding. In such cases, quite frequently in actual utterances, *mwenyamyen* does not bear phonological prominence and is usually spoken very quickly and is usually followed by a short pause.

The development of the DM *mwenyamyen* from a rhetorical use of questions is directly reminiscent of “thematizing rhetorical questions” in Tamil, as analyzed by Herring (1991), the primary function of which is to draw sufficient attention of the addressee. This seems to be due to the fact that the illocutionary effect of engagement that is associated with a question creates a perfect condition for these constructions to develop into topic or theme presenters.

3.3 Intersubjectification

As is the case with the DM *mwe*, the DM *mwenyamyen* also displays interactivity in its development. The speaker expresses the desire for the addressee’s active engagement (see “involvement”; Goodwin 1981; Tannen 1989; Lee 2001: 254). The question originates from the speaker but it is presented as if it had been spoken by the discourse partner (like “if you ask me”) or a third party (like “if one asks me”) and is being presented as reported speech. In this sense, the use of a question is feigned interactivity (see the “through a borrowed mouth” strategy; Rhee 2009).

6. According to Rhee (2014:5), topic presenters in Korean vary according to their levels of scopes. The macro-scope topic presenters (e.g., *X-i issessnuntey* [‘there was once X’], *X-i salassnuntey* [‘there once lived X’], *X-isscanha* [‘you know X’], the medial-scope topic presenter is *-(n)un* (‘speaking of; as for’), and the micro-scope topic presenter (*kukey*) *X-nyamyen* (‘speaking of its X’ [X=identity, time, etc.]). Unlike the other topic presenters of larger scopes, the micro-scope topic presenters only bring in one particular aspect of an already referenced topic, such as identity “what/who”, time “when”, place “when”, etc., depending on the interrogative pronoun in the construction.

The rhetorical strategy involved here is that even though the speaker is ostensibly posing a question, what the speaker pursues from the addressee is not a verbal response (i.e., a reply) but a cognitive response (i.e., attention).

The development also involves intersubjectification. The use of a hypothetical conditional as its source is like “reading the addressee’s mind” (i.e., asking on behalf of the addressee), and thus a gesture of foreseeing and taking due consideration of the addressee’s anticipated curiosity. By using the rhetorical question-based DM *mwenyamyen*, the speaker is saying in effect, “I know you’re wondering what it is, so I will ask it to myself on your behalf and answer it for you”. By this strategic “kind” act of the speaker the addressee is relieved of asking a question, or can avoid exposing his or her inattentiveness. It can be hypothesized, therefore, that the friendliness created by the use of the hypothetical conditional promotes a sense of solidarity between the interlocutors.

In the same vein, one of the most prominent aspects of the development of the DM *mwenyamyen*, as noted earlier, is the involvement of rhetoricality. The speaker using the rhetorical structure of the DM *mwenyamyen* attempts to accomplish two potentially contradictory goals — that is to say, (i) the use of a politeness strategy, by not demanding verbal responses (i.e., reply) by virtue of its being a rhetorical question; and (ii) the use of an impositive strategy demanding a cognitive response (i.e., attention) by virtue of its containing an imperative sentence, though embedded. It can be said, in sum, that the use of the DM *mwenyamyen* not only exhibits the speaker’s politeness toward the addressee, but also imposes a demand for attention, the desired effect of using a question rhetorically.

4. Discussion

We have seen the development of the DM *mwe* at RP (and elsewhere) and that of the DM *mwenyamyen* at LP. We now turn to a discussion of various issues, such as identification of target items and peripheries, functional asymmetries, action and exchange structures, and typological issues.

4.1 Identification of target items

Identifying the DM *mwe* is straightforward because it is a mono-lexemic interrogative pronoun employed for a non-interrogative use. However, establishing the DM status for *mwenyamyen* is more complex. As alluded to in Section 3.1, its developmental path extends from a fully syntactic construction (i.e., a hypothetical conditional clause) to a univerbated formant. The DM function gradually emerged as the hypothetical conditional clause gradually acquired the discursive function

Table 1. Some notable studies.

Phrase	Adamson (2000), Narrog (2007, 2010)
Clause	Austin et al. (2004), Degand and Fagard (2011), Suzuki (2007, 2011), Traugott (2014a)
Argument structure	Degand and Traugott (2013), Traugott (2014b)
Sentence	Ernst (2004), Blakemore (2005), Shinzato (2007), Bestgen (2009)
Utterance	Park (1999), Onodera (2007, 2014), Haugh (2008), Onodera and Suzuki (2007), Kim and Jahnke (2010), Haselow (2011, 2012), Beeching (2011), Degand (2014), Higashiizumi and Onodera (2013)
Turn	Sohn and Kim (2014), Haselow (2012)
Prosody	Haselow (2012), Degand et al. (2014), Degand and Simon (2009, 2014)

of presenting a micro-topic. Therefore, DM status may be attributed to as early a stage as when the syntactic composition was still interpretable. In other words, we cannot straightforwardly determine at what point DM status can be accorded along the path of development, from *kuke(s)i mwenyamyen*, to *ku mwenyamyen* and to *mwenyamyen* (Stages 3 to 5 in Example 9). For this reason, Rhee (2014) analyzes the entire set of the earlier constructions with the variable interrogative pronoun as a sub-paradigm of topic presenters (i.e., *kukei X-nyamyen*) labeling them as RQ-TPs. These types of issues may be equally applicable to the univerbated DMs developing from complex syntactic structures (see the English multi-lexemic DMs, *you know, I mean, you know what, the fact is, you see*, etc.).⁷

4.2 Identification of peripheries

One of the most difficult tasks with respect to periphery issues is to define the notion of peripheries. In the literature, scholars take different stances as to this issue, and determine the periphery with reference to diverse levels such as interactional structure (e.g., turn, utterance), syntactic structure (e.g., phrase, clause, sentence, argument), prosodic structure (e.g., intonation contour, prosodic boundary), etc. (for discussion, see Beeching and Detges 2014a: 1–4). Some of the notable studies

7. As Elizabeth Traugott (p.c.) points out, Korean RQ-TPs are different from other multi-lexemic DMs in that the former DMs have the slot X while the latter do not. For discussion of syntagmatic variability of the English *The fact is that* to *Fact*, see Kim (2003).

in this regard are as listed in Table 1, even though the levels are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and some studies make reference to more than one level.⁸

A comprehensive model is found in Degand (2014: 155), which collapses diverse levels into a linear structure as: Turn Initial — Utterance Initial — Utterance Medial — Utterance Final — Turn Final. Utterance Medial consists of Clause Initial — Clause Medial — Clause Final. However, even this comprehensive model does not fully solve the problem. In bi-clausal structures, for instance, connectives in verb-final languages like Korean and Japanese, occupy clause-final positions which are sentence-medial. This is problematic in these languages because connectives, such as complementizers and subordinators, are among the common sources of DMs (see Park 1999; Rhee 2002, 2012; Onodera 2007, 2014; Haugh 2008; Sohn and Kim 2014). The source position of these DMs may be regarded either as a RP (of a clause) or a medial position (of a sentence).⁹ Furthermore, when an entire clause develops into a DM from a bi-clausal structure, as is the case with *mwenyamyen*, the positional status with reference to peripheries cannot be easily assigned.

Not only are the referenced levels diverse but also there exists ambiguity on RP/LP, as is noted well by Traugott (2011), who states, “In English, expressions at right periphery (RP) (i.e., after the argument structure) are often disjunct and form a separate intonation unit. Therefore it may not be clear whether the intonation unit is at RP of prior discourse, or at LP (i.e., before the verb and arguments) of upcoming discourse (Lenk 1998)...”

Despite the absence of consensus as to the definition of peripheries, there are different kinds of benefits depending on these differential standards. For instance, by using the utterance as the referenced scope we can observe the uses of DMs in turn management, whereas, by using the sentence as the referenced scope, we can see how a linguistic formant changes its functions by losing the defining characteristics of the category it belongs to and become a non-argument element like a DM.

This study follows the model suggested in Traugott (2014b: 73) which can be schematically presented as: (X) LP Argument.Structure RP (Y), but the analysis is

8. For instance, Degand and her colleagues make reference to the “basic discourse unit (BDU)”, a multi-dimensional unit defined by prosodic and syntactic features, in determining peripheries (Degand and Simon 2009, 2014; and Degand et al. 2014).

9. As an anonymous reviewer pointed out that in a bi-clausal configuration, a DM that is clause₁-final and a DM that is clause₂-initial would be clause-medial according to the Degand’s model since the model is not restricted to mono-clausal structures only. In such configurations, the DM would occur between two clauses. The reviewer also brought to my attention the use of a main clause element as a subordinator (e.g., *by that cause* > *because*) and the use of a subordinator as a main clause marker (e.g., *as if*; Brinton 2014).

largely compatible with different definitions of peripheries. The source of the DM *mwe* is the interrogative pronoun *mwe*, whose typical syntactic position is inside an argument structure. When it develops into a DM it loses the ability to serve as an argument and may occur in non-argument positions, either clause-initially or clause-medially. In these positions, *mwe* may be ambiguous as to its status (i.e., whether it is an entirely superfluous element with respect to argument structure as a DM) or as a redundant pronoun, since *mwe* is categorially ambiguous between standing as an interrogative pronoun (“what”) and as an indefinite pronoun (“something”). However, when it occurs sentence-finally, it is unequivocally a DM, since it stands outside the sentential boundary marked by verbal inflections. In this case the DM’s position is RP with respect to argument structure, sentence, utterance, and, in most cases, turn, as well.

The situation is a little more complex in the case of the DM *mwenyamyen*. It is noteworthy that the last two elements are typical clause-final elements (i.e., *-nya* is a clause-type marker and *-myen* is a conditional connective), but since *mwe* is a pronoun and there is the invisible copula *i-* which is deleted by the vowel deletion rule (see Example 9), the whole string *mwe-ø-nya-myen* is in fact a full clause minus a clausal subject. Even though the subject argument is missing, argument omission is perfectly acceptable in Korean, so long as it is contextually inferable. Therefore, we can conclude that *mwenyamyen* originated from a conditional clause and was itself a clause. The clause preceded the apodosis and after it developed into a DM it occurs at LP with respect to argument structure, clause, sentence and utterance, but is unlikely to be LP of a turn.

4.3 Functional (a)symmetry and peripheries

A large body of literature addresses functional asymmetries at LP and RP (notably Adamson 2000; Onodera 2007; Degand 2014; Traugott 2014a,b; Beeching and Detges 2014a and works therein, among others). In particular, LP is hypothesized to be related to turn- or topic-management functions, such as turn-taking, self-selection, response-marking, topic shift, topic resumption, anchoring with previous discourse, mental space set-up, discourse-coherence marking, etc. In addition, LP is thought to be dialogual and subjective, whereas RP is thought to be dialogic and intersubjective, in addition to having turn-management functions such as confirmation request, turn-transition, turn-invitation, etc.

However, there are studies that show cases that do not exhibit peripheral asymmetries by default, especially with reference to subjectivity versus intersubjectivity. For instance, Degand (2014) on *donc* and *alors* in spoken French, and Traugott (2014a) on English *no doubt* and *surely*, show that such DMs do not support the

hypothesis that expressions at LP are likely to be subjective whereas those at RP are intersubjective, as suggested by Beeching and Detges (2014a).

This study shows that the DM *mwe* has diverse LP and RP functions that may be listed as follows, even though the distinctions are not clear-cut:

At LP: Challenge or surprise, perspective shift, elaboration, tentative example, disparaging or deprecating attitude, submission or resignation, pause-filler, hesitation.

At RP: Common-ground (support-giving, confirmation-seeking, approval-seeking), disparaging or deprecating attitude, mitigation.

From this list, it is clear that LP has both subjective and intersubjective functions. Some functions that can be attributed to the self-same instance may be either subjective or intersubjective (e.g., challenge or surprise), and submission or resignation. Similarly, pause-filler and hesitation cannot be effectively differentiated on the part of the observer, since the distinction lies in the intention of the speaker. On the other hand, RP is markedly more intersubjective, in that the speaker solicits solidarity (common-ground) or exhibits attitudinal stance by means of the DM *mwe*.

The DM *mwenyamyen* occurs invariably at LP and therefore its functions cannot be compared with respect to the LP/RP distinction. The functions of the DM *mwenyamyen* are as follows:

- a. Topic presentation, upcoming clarification;
- b. Attention-attraction, politeness, (feigned) interactivity / intersubjectivity, friendliness; and,
- c. (Preemptive) floor-continuation.

From this list, it seems that the DM *mwenyamyen* carries subjective functions such as topic presentation and clarification.¹⁰ It also has some interactive or intersubjective function by virtue of the hypothetical conditional clause at its source. However, its functions have more to do with exchange and action structures, a topic addressed in the following section.

10. As Traugott (p.c.) points out, what kind of functions constitutes subjectivity depends on how subjectivity is defined and its definitions are variable to a great extent. The notions of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, when applied to spoken interaction, cannot be clearly separated because “conversation is, by definition, both subjective and intersubjective” (Beeching and Detges 2014a: 8).

4.4 Exchange and action structures

The discourse model of Schiffrin (1987) suggests that discourse consists of five different structures: ideational structure, action structure, exchange structure, participation framework and information state. Of particular interest in this volume are exchange structure and action structure. Exchange structure involves turn management and interaction (e.g., turn-taking, adjacency pair, alternating sequential roles) and action structure involves speech acts encompassing a wide variety of actions in discourse (e.g., clarification, question, answer, acknowledgment, request, challenge, claim and opinion giving).

The DM *mwe* at LP carries, though weakly, an exchange-related function. As Onodera (p.c.) points out, if *mwe* is used utterance-initially by a new speaker, then it can be considered to have initiated a new turn. Such a type of turn-initiation with *mwe* is likely to occur when the speaker is cautiously (or reluctantly) presenting his or her opinion since the DM *mwe* generally marks uncertainty (see Section 2.2). In terms of action structure the DM *mwe* does have functions relating to speech acts, such as elaboration or clarification.

The DM *mwe* at RP tends to carry the exchange-related function in that it often signals the end of the utterance encouraging the discourse partner to pick the turn, especially with an expectation that the interlocutor would respond to the speaker's attitude or emotion. This turn-giving function has to do with the manner in which it is used. In other words, the DM *mwe* at RP typically is spoken with a falling intonation and the utterance gradually trails off, which, incidentally, is responsible for further reduction into *-m* with certain sentential endings (see Section 2.3). By signaling minor discontent, uncertainty, or deprecating attitude with such prosodic characteristics, the speaker seeks common-ground with the interlocutor and anticipates a redressive action. In this respect, the DM *mwe* at RP performs speech-act functions of action structure. The speaker solicits the interlocutor by means of the DM to enter the common ground by presenting an answer, opinion, claim or request.

The DM *mwenyamyen* also carries an exchange-related function in the sense that the speaker usually uses this DM to signal his or her intent to continue the turn.¹¹ When the DM signals an introduction of a micro-topic, focusing on the “what”-aspect of the preceding remarks, there is no turn change involved. In this case, the DM *mwenyamyen* has a topic management function, related to the action structure. When the DM does not signal an upcoming micro-topic, on the other hand, it tends to merely signal the speaker's intent to hold the floor — another

11. Onodera (p.c.) brought Schiffrin's notion of ‘continuer’ (for the English *and*) to the author's attention.

action- and exchange-related function. Further, the DM *mwenyamyen* carries another function related to action structure, signaling “upcoming clarification” (Schiffrin 1987) after rhetorically raising a question. The question in the source of the DM *mwenyamyen* (i.e., a question embedded in a hypothetical conditional clause) becomes a self-directed question, conveniently posed for the sake of upcoming elaboration. Its function is similar to that of “Audience-Blind” constructions (Koo and Rhee 2012), which are used to direct the utterance not to a particular discourse partner but to “the people in general out there”. In the case of the DM *mwenyamyen*, the audience-blindness roughly translates to “if someone would ask me”.

The foregoing discussion can be summarized as in Table 2.

Table 2. Functions of *mwe* and *mwenyamyen* by Periphery.

DM	Periphery	Subjectivity	Intersubjectivity	Exchange Structure	Action Structure
<i>Mwe</i>	LP	Surprise, Resignation	Disparaging at- titude, Submission, Hesitation	Turn-initiating	Perspective shift, Challenge, Elaboration, Clarification, Tentative example
	RP		Common ground, Disparaging at- titude, Mitigation	Turn-yielding	Seeking confirmation and redressive action
<i>Mwenyamyen</i>	LP	Upcoming clarification, Topic pre- sentation	Politeness, Friendliness	Turn-continuation	Upcoming clarifica- tion, Attention attraction, Topic presentation, Floor continuation

4.5 Typological issues

The final issue relates to typology. It has been hypothesized that peripheral phenomena may have to do with language typology. For instance, Traugott (2010: 60) notes, “A growing number of studies have suggested that as they are subjectified linguistic elements are used in increasingly peripheral positions. Typically the shift is leftward in VO languages, and rightward in OV languages”. Likewise, Adamson (2000) and Ghesquière (2010) propose “the leftward hypothesis”, which says that increasing subjectification goes together with structural movement to increasingly peripheral positions — namely, towards the LP in a language such as English. Not only the subjective elements but also the intersubjective elements seem to

be associated with the peripheral positions. For instance, it is hypothesized that intersubjective elements are likely to occur at RP (Beeching and Detges 2014a,b).

This study, however, shows that LP and RP are not uniquely correlated with subjectivity and intersubjectivity, and that the movement to peripheral positions is not associated with the increase or decrease of (inter)subjectivity. As shown in the preceding discussion, the development of the DM *mwe* involves a rightward movement. As the interrogative pronoun *mwe* in the argument position loses the argument-marking function and acquires the DM function at LP, it does seem to acquire subjective meanings, but it also acquires intersubjective meanings. When the DM moved to the RP position, the acquired meanings are predominantly intersubjective, but increase or decrease of intersubjectivity cannot be determined. Therefore, there is no generalizability as to the positional movement to peripheries and (inter)subjectification.

It is indeed true that in such verb-final languages as Korean and Japanese, subjective and intersubjective elements occur at peripheral positions as is well illustrated by Shinzato's (2007) and Onodera's (2014) "layered structure model of utterance". However, it is not clear, at least at the current state of understanding, whether there is a robust and unique correlation between LP/RP and (inter)subjectification. It is perhaps likely that, as Traugott (2014b) shows, (inter)subjectivity is related to the original semantics of the forms involved to a greater extent than to LP/RP positions.

5. Summary and conclusion

This paper looked at two different DMs developed from the interrogative pronoun *mwe* ('what'). Both of them acquired the DM function as the source structures lost their original interrogative meaning in the course of being used rhetorically (i.e., not to solicit an answer but to elicit attention).

The DM *mwe* shifted from its original argument position to non-argument positions, including LP and then later to RP. At LP, the DM takes on varying functions of subjective and intersubjective meanings, as well as various action- and exchange-related functions. At RP, on the other hand, the DM does not have subjective functions (unlike at LP), and is instead largely associated with intersubjective functions of marking common ground. Furthermore, the DM *mwe* at RP has an exchange-related function as well as action-related functions.

The development of the DM *mwenyamyen* does not involve movement of position. It originates from a subordinate clause, and when it becomes a DM it invariably occurs at LP. The DM carries subjective and intersubjective functions as well as action-related and exchange-related functions.

This paper also shows that, even though peripheries are associated with (inter) subjective elements in language, the hypothesized correlation between LP versus RP, on the one hand, and subjectification versus intersubjectification, on the other, is not supported. Nor is the hypothesis supported that subjectified linguistic elements will shift their positions leftward in OV languages — or, at least, it cannot be conclusively determined by means of the investigation carried out in this paper.

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