

The rise and fall of a discourse marker: The case of *kisil* in Korean

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Abstract

The Korean discourse marker kisil(un) presents an interesting grammaticalisation scenario. It began its life as a borrowing from Chinese, a syntactic construction to mean 'that/its fruit' in Middle Korean, and developed into a single lexeme with more abstract meanings, e.g., 'essence, reality, fact, truth' and further grammaticalised into a discourse marker signalling the speaker's diverse stances in discourse contexts. As it was a borrowing from Chinese, its initial uses carried pedanticism and became officially banned in Modern Korean as part of efforts for 'language purism'. The journey of kisil(un) exhibits subjectification in meaning and intersubjectification in function. In particular, speakers use it to invite the interlocutor to some common ground. In discourse it also signals assertiveness and thus rarely co-occurs with hesitance markers. Unlike most discourse markers, kisil(un) does not have much positional freedom but occurs mostly between the subject and the predicate, bridging two contrasting propositions.

KEYWORDS: DISCOURSE MARKER, GRAMMATICALISATION, (INTER)SUBJECTIFICATION, PERIPHERY, BORROWING

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1. Introduction

Discourse markers (DMs) develop from various sources and carry diverse functions. Some of the Korean DMs developed from lexemes of Chinese origin, i.e., Sino-Korean words, though relatively small in number. An interesting case is *kisil*, a combination of two Chinese lexemes, i.e., *ki* (其) ‘that (its)’ and *sil* (實) ‘fruit, real(ity) true/truth’, thus, ‘its fruit, its true state, its reality’, compositionally. First attested in the early 14th century, the expression was never popular in the history of Korean and its use was largely restricted to classical pedantic writings until it was finally banned by language purists in the late 20th century.

Despite its less than glorious historical path, however, *kisil* has undergone semantic change and grammaticalisation as a DM and thus presents an interesting developmental scenario that bears theoretical significance.¹ The form has never received attention in earnest among linguists, and this research intends to fill the gap. Given the objectives, this article will elaborate semantic shifts and extension of *kisil* at the lexical level and the functional extension as a DM in Section 2. Based on the observed development, we will discuss some issues of theoretical importance, i.e., subjectification, stance-marking, periphery, and source characteristics, in Section 3. Section 4 summarises the discussion and concludes the study.

The data for historical development are largely taken from the 21st-century Sejong Corpus, a 200-million word corpus, developed by the Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism. This corpus encompasses data from the 15th to the early 20th century (1446–1912). The search for Modern Korean data is based on the Drama Corpus, a 24-million word corpus consisting of 7,424 drama, sitcom, and movie scenarios broadcast between 1992 and 2015, compiled by Min Li, and an 8-million word corpus of TV and radio dramas broadcast between 1950 and 2000, compiled by the second author. The concordance program used in the data search is UNICONC, developed by Jinho Park.²

2. Semantic change

2.1 *Kisil* in Middle Korean (918~1600 AD) and Early Modern Korean (1601~1893)

As indicated earlier, the seemingly simple word *kisil* is a noun phrase involving a determiner and a noun, i.e., *ki* (其) ‘that’ and *sil* (實) ‘fruit’, rather than a monolexemic word or a compound noun. Thus, this form is peculiar in that it began its life as a form of phrasal borrowing, with its literal meaning ‘that fruit (the fruit of that)’, ‘the fruit’, ‘its fruit’, as shown in (1):³

(1) 1300, *Yukcopeppotankyeng* #235

如地有種 含藏長養 成熟其實

YE-CI-YU-CONG HAMCANG-CANG-YANG SENGSWUK KI-SIL

like-soil-have-seed store-long-raise mature that-fruit

'Just like tending the seed in the soil, keeping it grow for long, and having its fruit ripen ...'

The lexeme *sil* in (1) denotes 'fruit' in historical times as indicated in the gloss and translation. Since *sil* 'fruit' is often a metaphor for 'reality' for its solid and unchangeable nature, it also had the 'reality' meaning from early uses of the lexeme and engendered diverse 'reality'-denoting words such as *sasil* (事實) 'fact', *sasilsang* (事實上) 'as a matter of fact', *silsang* (實狀) 'truth, reality', and *silcey* (實際) 'reality, fact'. This metaphorical and metonymical extension seems to have occurred early in its lexical history. In fact, the 'reality' usage is attested in the earliest examples of Chinese texts that were introduced to Korea in historical times. Confucius's *Analects*, or *Lunyu* (論語), a famous book of Confucian philosophy, was introduced to Korea as *Non-e*, presumably during the Three Kingdoms Period (1st ~ 7th century), as its reference occurs in writing dated from 642. The book was first printed in 1056 (according to *Kolyesa* (*The History of Koryo*)), and the widely used annotated version was imprinted in 1593. The following excerpt is taken from *Non-e* (= *Lunyu* (論語)), in which *ki-sil* is glossed as 'that essence':

(2) *Non-e*, 1593 imprinting, 3–17

羊存則告朔之名未泯 而其實因可舉

YANG-CON CUK-KOSAK-CI-MYENG-MI-MIN I-KI-SIL-IN-KA-KE

sheep-exist then-ritual-of-name-not-perish and-that-essence-cause-right-raise

'If the sheep offering remains, then the form of the Kosak ritual will remain (also) and its essence can be restored from it.'

The excerpt makes reference to *Kosak*, an ancient ritual performed on the first day of each month, in which people worshipped ancestors by offering a live sheep. By Confucius's time, the ritual had become only nominal, and people no longer placed significance on it, and Zigong, a scholar-bureaucrat, now voiced his opinion that it would be better to abolish the sheep sacrifice altogether, the last surviving element of the dying ceremony. Confucius discouraged him by saying that if the form (i.e., the sheep sacrifice) was spared, the essence (i.e., the worship) could be restored, even though the ritual had become nearly forgotten by everyone. In the line immediately preceding the excerpt, Confucius mentioned *ki-lyey* (其禮) 'that ceremony', which contrasts with *ki-sil* (其實) 'that essence' in the excerpt. Confucius's point was that the form had to be maintained because it could help revive the essence and that, if the form was lost, the essence could never be restored.

Another early attestation with a similar meaning is dated back to 1381 in a collection of Buddhist principles of disciplining entitled *Sencong Yengkacip* (*A Col-*

lection of Master Yengka's Dhyana Disciplines), as exemplified in (3), in which *ki-sil* is glossed as 'that essence':

(3) 1381, *Sencongyengkacip* #144

妄生言語。詐爲親友。其實怨妒。

MANG-SAYNG-ENE SA-WI-CHIN-WU *KI-SIL*-WEN-THWU

absurd-make-language deceit-make-close-friend that-essence-resentment-jealousy

'(Our body) fakes absurd words and deceives (us) as if it were (our) close friends, but the essence of that (all) is that (our body) is of resentment and jealousy.'

The excerpt makes reference to the corrupt, untrustworthy, and deceitful nature of our body (from the religious viewpoint). In the context, *ki-sil* means 'that essence' of our body which is at the foundation of diverse manifestations of deceit in reality as if it were our close friend. Its conclusion, led by the expression *ki-sil*, is that our body is filled with resentment and jealousy.⁴ An instance of a similar usage is also found in the 15th-century data, as exemplified in (4):

(4) 15th c. impression, *Myopepyenhwakyeng* vol.2, Piyuphwum 3 #1243

但離虛妄 名爲解脫 其實 未得 一切解脫

TAN-I-HEMANG MYENG-WI-HAYTHAL *KI-SIL* MI-TUK

only-depart-falsity name-regard-deliverance that-essence not-acquire

ILCHEY-HAYTHAL

all-deliverance

'[For people of little knowledge,] only departing from falsity may be deliverance (from worldly passions) by name, but the essence is that they are not obtaining complete deliverance (that way).

Example (4) is taken from the 15th-century text of the Buddhist scripture *The Lotus Sutra*, in which *ki-sil* means 'that essence' or 'that reality'. Even though the text is dated from the 15th century, considering *The Lotus Sutra* has been in wide circulation since the introduction of Buddhism to Korea as early as the 4th century, with the oldest extant text produced during the Koguryo Dynasty times (dated between 427 and 668), the text is likely to retain much earlier forms. The excerpt is an explanation about the people who have little knowledge but strive to attain *haythal*, enlightenment and deliverance. For these people, the excerpt states, the only way to it is to depart from falsity, but even though such avoidance can be regarded as deliverance in appearance (or by name), it is far from deliverance in a true sense. The 'essence' (*sil*) of 'that' (*ki*) is in contrast with the 'name' (*myeng*).

From the excerpts above, it is apparent that the morpheme *sil* implied some form of contrast with the surface manifestations. From around the 16th century,

kisil came to be used as a topic-marked noun phrase, *kisil-un*, ‘its reality is ...’ with the topic particle *un*, as exemplified in (5):

(5) 1500, *Kaykan Pephwakyeng* #234

未來世 諸佛이 비록 百千億 無數 諸法門을 닐어 其實은 一乘을 爲호미라

MIRAY-SEY-yey-s CEYPWUL-i pilok PAYKCHENEK MWUSWU

future-world-at-GEN all.Buddha-NOM even.though hundred.trillion innumerable

CEY-PEPMWUN-ul nil-e KI-SIL-un IL-SUNG-ul WIho-m-i-la

all-scripture-ACC say-CONN that-essence-TOP one-conveyance-ACC for-NMLZ-be-DEC

‘Even though all Buddhas in the worlds to come will speak about innumerable, hundred trillion teachings, the essence (of all the teachings) is to help people to go to the Heavens.’

In Excerpt (5), *kisil-un* is used to contrast the innumerable Buddhist teachings and the one true and fundamental purpose, i.e., deliverance or reaching Nirvana. Interestingly, *kisil-un* can be syntactically interpreted in two different ways. In one interpretation, the phrase can be analysed as replacing the sentential subject, i.e., in place of the nominative-marked *kisil* as *kisil-i* [*kisil*-NOM] ‘its essence is’, which is natural since nominative and topic are often interchangeable in Korean. In the other interpretation, *kisil-un* can also be syntactically interpreted as a parenthetically inserted phrase to mean ‘as a matter of fact’ or ‘in reality’. The possibility of this dual interpretation could have been the ‘bridging context’ (Heine, 2002) for its development into a DM, because the second interpretation would free the phrase from syntactic binding. This usage is observed in historical data from the 16th century onward, often better interpreted as a ‘parenthetical’ (Thompson & Mulac, 1991; Brinton, 2008) as illustrated in the following, in which *kisil* is treated as a single word to mean ‘the reality’ and *kisil-un* as a parenthetical ‘in reality’, ‘the reality is’, ‘as a matter of fact’, etc.:⁵

(6) 1765–1766, *Ulpengyenhaynglok* 3 #507

제 말은 비록 불도랄 엄히 배척하나 기실은 불도와 다라미 업더라.

cey mal-un pilok pwulto-lal emhi paychekha-na kisil-un

his word-TOP even.though Buddhism-ACC strictly reject-but the.reality-TOP

pwulto-wa talAm-i ep-te-la

Buddhist-with difference-NOM not.exist-RETRO-END

‘I recall that even though he said he strongly rejects Buddhism, but, in reality, (he) was not different from a Buddhist.’

(7) 1895, *Thyenlolyektyeng* #1314

성중 사람들이 말하대 순도난 성도 | 라 하되 기실은 마귀라.

syengcyung salam-tul-i malha-tay syunto-nan syengto-i-la ha-toy
 inside.castle person-PL-NOM say-COMP [name]-TOP saint-be-DEC say-but

kisil-un makwi-ø-la
 the.reality-TOP devil-be-DEC

'The residents of the castle city say, 'Sundo says he is a Christian, but, in reality, (he) is a devil.'

(8) 1896, *Sincengsimsangsohak* 3:35a

地球는 靜하야 조금도 動치 아니한란 듯하나 其實은 暫時도 쉬지 아니하고 回轉한란 거시오
 이다

CIKWU-nan CENGha-ya cocom-to TONG-chi.aniha-nan tusha-na
 earth-TOP stationary-CONN a.little-even move-NEG-ADN seem-but

KISIL-un CAMSI-to swi-ci.aniha-ko HOYCENha-nan kes-i-oita
 the.reality-TOP moment-even rest-NEG-and revolve-ADN NMLZ-be-DEC

'The earth seems to be stationary and not moving at all, but, in reality, (it) revolves without stopping even for a moment.'

Example (6) is taken from the diary of a Joseon Dynasty envoy visiting Ching China from 1765 to 1766 and describes his visit to a wealthy Chinese man. The man claimed that he followed Christianity and adamantly rejected then-dominant Buddhism. The writer is evaluating his words and behaviour and concludes that, despite his strong verbal claim of rejection of Buddhism, what he did was not at all different from what Buddhists do. The writer contrasts the words and deeds in the excerpt. Example (7) is taken from a Korean translation of John Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress* by James Gale, a Canadian missionary. The excerpt describes a hypocritical Christian Soondo (lit. 'lip-principle'), who disguised himself as a sincere Christian in words but is, in fact, as vicious as a devil. The writer makes a contrast between appearance and truth (see below for more discussion on the contrast effect of the topic marker). Example (8) is taken from one of the earliest modern textbooks for Korean elementary students. It describes the constant movement of the earth despite its apparent stationary state. Examples (6) to (8) show that *kisil-un* functions as either a sentential argument or a non-argument; i.e., it is used to mean 'the reality is' as the clausal subject (or topic) or 'as it were; in fact' as a 'parenthetical' (Thompson & Mulac, 1991; Brinton, 2008) or 'comment clause' (Brinton, 2008).

Despite this innovative usage of *kisil(-un)*, the traditional use of *kisil*, i.e., one without the case marker and with the strong demonstrative meaning of *ki* 'that', still survived in the form of set phrases, known as *sa-ca-seng-e* (four-charac-

ter-construction-word), or four-character idioms, often as an encapsulation of a time-honoured wisdom or maxim, typically with a historical episode associated with it. Some of the idioms involving *kisil* are shown below:

(9) 1790, *Inetaypang* #343

[His name is great but his act falls short of it,]

아마 大名之下的 其實難保란 말이 만당한 말이올쇠

ama TAY-MYENG-CI-HA-uy KI-SIL-NAN-PO-la-n

perhaps great-name-of-below-GEN that-substance-difficult-ensure-COMP-ADN

mal-i mattangha-n mal-i-olsoy

saying-NOM be.appropriate-ADN word-be-END

‘perhaps, the expression *taymyengciha kisilnanpo* (despite the great name, its substance hardly guaranteed) suits the situation.’

(10) 1841/1850, *Yanghyenmwuncikcelki* 2, #17

사람이 너모 虛譽隆洽 하오면 또한 言過其實 하오미 업지 아니 하온지라

salam-i nemo HE-YEY-YUNG-HUP-ha-omyen stohan

person-NOM too.much empty-honour-rise-mix-do-COND also

EN-KWA-KI-SIL-ha-om-i ep-ci aniha-oncila

word-surpass-that-substance-do-NMLZ-NOM not.exist-COMP not.be-as

‘As it is the case that if someone’s empty fame rises and mixes (with reality) there also occurs the word surpassing the substance ...’

In (9) and (10) the four-character idioms are *kisilnanpo* ‘the substance is questionable; doubtful quality’ and *enkwakisil* ‘words surpass the substance; empty exaggeration’. Incidentally, fluent use of four-character idioms was the hallmark of the literati, as a clear sign of knowledge of Chinese classical literature, such as Confucian scriptures and commentaries. Such practice still survives in flowery speech or writing in formal settings.

As alluded to in (6) to (8) above, it is noteworthy in this context that the Korean topic marker (*n*)*un* not only marks the topic but also adds the nuance of contrast, especially when a thus-marked noun phrase occurs at a non-initial position of a sentence, as exemplified below with constructed examples:

(11)a

Con-un hakkyo-ey iss-e

John-top school-at exist-END

‘John is at school.’

(11)b

hakkyo-ey Con-un iss-e

school-at John-TOP exist-END

'John is at school. (I don't know about others but John is at school.)'

Example (11b), unlike (11a), strongly contrasts John (*Con*) with others by virtue of the structural characteristic of *Con-un* occurring at a non-initial position. With the inherent contrast between the true reality and the appearance signalled by *kisil*, which was reinforced by the contrastive topic marker *-un*, the phrase *kisilun* came to be a popular DM signalling the contrast, from the 19th century (its occurrences are only sporadic in the 16th to 18th centuries). We turn to the discussion of the change of *kisil(un)* in Modern Korean in the following.

2.2 *Kisil(un)* in Modern Korean (1894~Present)

As illustrated above, the phrasal *kisil* from its early history signalled the contrast between 'real' and 'non-real' as denoted by *sil* 'substance, reality, fact', and the contrast effect became even stronger with the topic marker *un* joining the phrase. From around the turn of the 20th century, the use of *kisilun* became popular.

There are three major venues in which it is productively found. The first is the classical novels, variously known as *kososel* ('old novels'), *kocensosel* ('classical novels'), *phaysel* ('popular stories, lit. 'wild-rice story'), *kotam* ('old stories'), etc., which were produced during the Joseon Dynasty times (1392–1910), but most of whom came into print at a large scale through the modern movable-type printing technology from around the 19th century. Many of these novels were written in Chinese characters or in Korean-Chinese mixed writing. For this reason, many words and expressions used in them were not popular in the everyday language of the people but sounded like the language of the educated class. *Kisil(un)* was one of such high-register expressions. The second venue is the modern novels, known as *sinsosel* 'new novel', which used the colloquial language and with the westernisation and industrialisation ideology. Even though the language of *sinso-sel* is close to the colloquial variety, it also contains much Chinese-influenced language when the character in the novel is an educated person. Therefore, *kisil(un)* occurs frequently in the speech of nobleman characters in *sinsosel*. The third is the newspapers and circulars of some leading associations formed by visionaries, such as Taycosen Tokliphephoy (Korean Independence Association) and Hyepsenghoy (Cooperative Construction Association). Since the members were intellectuals, their language, especially in writing, was characterised by frequent use of Sino-Korean words and even purely Chinese words and phrases, many of which were incomprehensible to the general public.

In these venues, *kisilun* is productively used in order to impress the readership that the writing is the work of leading intellectuals with a high educational background. In such writings, *kisilun* also serves as the signal of counter expectation, i.e., the information that follows contrasts with the preceding statement and thus should be taken as the correct interpretation of events or states of affairs. The sudden increase in the productivity of *kisilun* at around the turn of the 20th century is noteworthy because, as indicated earlier, its occurrences are only sporadic in the 16th to 18th centuries. *Kisilun* at the beginning of Modern Korean is a powerful rhetorical device, i.e., a DM, to signal the noteworthiness of the information to follow and to indicate the authority of the writer or speaker. Such instances are exemplified below:

(12) Kososel *Mygncwupowelping* 13

yetung-i pulhaynggay-e hyungtyek-uy kenali-n pa-y
 you.PL-NOM be.unfortunate-CONN enemy-GEN control-ADN NMLZ-NOM
 toyye-s-ina kisilun namto payksyeng-i-ni wuli syengcyu-uy
 become-PST-CONN DM southern.province citizen-be-CONN our governor-GEN
 sinca-y-la
 subject-be-DEC

‘Even though you became subjects of the enemy because of bad luck, DM (what’s true is that), you are the citizens of the southern provinces and the subjects of our governor.’

Excerpt (12) is taken from a *kososel* novel written with Song Dynasty China (960~1279) as its setting. The speaker is exonerating a gang of insurgents who were misled by a leading traitor. He is contrasting their joining the treacherous group (punishable by death) and their lawful citizenship (entitled to protection and happy life) and uses *kisilun* before pronouncing the pardon. A more complex structure involving the DM *kisilun* is as follows, illustrated in the translation of a newspaper article:

(13) 1898, *Hyepsenghoypo* #502

- a. Recently, as the price of rice is skyrocketing, everyone is complaining that they cannot live in such a condition,
- b. and what is the cause of this?
- c. Some say that it’s because the government did not release its grain stock,
- d. some say that it’s because of the bad crop this year,
- e. some say that it’s because farmers are reluctant to sell rice in the market, as they hear of impending war and are acting like the greatly frightened people who shudder at the rustling of breeze or a cry of a crane, but

- f. [*kisilun*] ‘in fact (its reality is)’
- g. it’s because there was a recent change in the system,
- h. but the government did not fully implement it,
- i. and the government just assume that the local magistrates would not extort money from the people using the old tricks,
- j. and thus the local magistrates, who cannot be satisfied with the salary only, decide to fill their greed by issuing a decree prohibiting rice sale to wholesalers from other localities, with the pretext that it is for the protection of the farmers,
- k. and farmers, who can purchase necessities by selling rice, go to the market to sell their rice but there is no one to buy it,
- l. thus, the rice price naturally goes down,
- m. and so the magistrates make their close subjects buy rice with the government money,
- n. and sell the rice as the rice price goes up,
- o. and this rice does not reach the capital but gets sold to foreign merchants at the ports,
- p. which is truly lamentable.

Example (13) is taken from a text from a weekly newspaper published by Hyeps-enghoy, a patriotic association of secondary-level students. Surprisingly, it consists of only two sentences, one consisting of (a) and (b), which is the topic sentence, and the other, (c) to (p), consisting of a number of coordinated and subordinated clauses. The second sentence can be broken down into two groups, (c) to (e) and (g) to (p), separated by the DM *kisilun* at (f). The discursive function of *kisilun* is to delineate the two conceptual groups, the first group being diverse conjectures about the causes of the price hike of rice, and the second group revealing the true cause. The function of *kisilun* is a preface to noteworthy information. This type of DM usage is frequently found in literature dating from around the turn of the 20th century.

2.3 *Kisil(un)* in Present-Day Korean

As indicated in the preceding exposition, the use of *kisilun* as a DM is productive at the turn of the 20th century. However, its use rapidly declines, and their occurrences in the 20th-century data are extremely rare (only four in 1950–2000 TV and radio drama corpus sources). In 1996 the Korean government issued a recommendation that the word be not used and be replaced by *sasilun* (事實-*un*; 事實-TOP) ‘the fact is’ for the phrasal use and *silcey saceng* (實際實情) ‘true circumstance’ for the nominal use, as part of an effort for ‘language purification’ (see 3.4 below for more discussion). The rationale seems to be due to its non-authentic Korean word-formation pattern, i.e., involving the use of the Chinese word-for-

mation pattern with the determiner *ki* ‘that’. Even though its use is discouraged, it did occur in Modern Korean, albeit at a very low frequency. For instance, even though its occurrence in the spoken-data corpus (e.g., TV and radio drama scripts) is nearly absent, it is occasionally attested in literary works, as exemplified in the following:

(14) 1984, Yi Mun-yol, *Yengwungsitay*

cikum-ey wa-se-nun tocehi hwahapha-l.swu.eps-nun kes-chelem poi-nun
 now-at come-then-TOP never harmonise-cannot-ADN thing-like seem-ADN
panmok-kwa taylip-i-la-nun kes-to kisilun ku isang-uy
 antagonism-and opposition-be-COMP-ADN thing-also DM that ideal-GEN
silhyen-ul wiha-n pangan-ul.twuko sayngky-ena-n sasoha-n
 realisation-ACC for-ADN way-over arise-COMP-ADN be.trivial-ADN
uykyen chai-eyse pilostway-ss-ta
 opinion difference-from originate-PST-DEC

‘Even what we call antagonism and hostility that do not seem to be reconcilable by any means now is, DM (in fact; its reality is), one that originates from the trivial differences in opinion about the ways to realise the (same) ideal.’

In the excerpt, the function of *kisilun* is obvious. It is contrasting the seemingly irreconcilable hostility at the moment and the extremely trivial difference at its origin. There is an interesting aspect of the use of the DM *kisil(un)*, i.e., the interpretive nature of the DM (see 3.1 below and Rhee, 2021).

3. Discussion

The life of *kisil* in Korean from its birth originating from Chinese and its official demise due to its being of Chinese-style word-formation shows a number of interesting implications with respect to DM use and textual genres.

3.1 (Inter)subjectification

Among a number of intriguing aspects, ‘subjectification’ (Traugott, 1982, 1995; Traugott & König, 1991) of the semantics of the lexeme *sil* of *kisil* is prominent. We already noted that *sil* denoted ‘fruit’ at the earliest times of history. The lexeme, combined with the demonstrative *ki* ‘that’, first occurred in the 14th-century data with the phrasal meaning ‘that fruit’. However, it is also in these Early Middle Korean times that *sil* of *kisil* also meant ‘essence’. The semantic extension is an instance of abstraction via metaphorisation, whereby the significance of the fruit of a tree is mapped onto the significance of an event or state of affairs. In other words, the meaning of culmination (i.e., fruition) in the plant domain is

likened to the meaning of the most steadfast and meaningful part (i.e., essence) in the event domain, a transfer from the first-order entity (individuals, things, and places) to the second-order entity (actions, processes, and states).

It is to be noted that whereas the lexeme *sasil* (事實) ‘fact, reality’, involving *sil* (實) as *kisil* (其實), shifted from the abstract to the concrete, i.e., from the religious truths to the mundane, real-world meaning (see Rhee, 2021), *kisil* does not display any change comparable to its semantic and formal relative. However, similar to *sasil(sang)* (事實(上)), *kisil* also focuses the ‘firmness’ or ‘steadfastness’ aspect of reality, even though the physical reality has many other aspects, e.g., fluidity, temporariness, contingency, source of joy or pain, etc. The meaning of *kisil* has consistently been related to the essence, an instance of selective and subjective attention to only the few attributes of reality out of a full range of attributes. Furthermore, the essence is always used in contrastive meaning, i.e., in contrast with the appearance from which the truth is hidden, constituting a good instance of subjectification.

Another notable aspect is the interpretive nature of *kisil(un)*. In other words, when the DM *kisil(un)* is used, what is following, i.e., ‘reality’, is in fact not the physical reality but an alleged, interpretive reality, which, as the speaker claims, is hidden from the non-professional observers, such as the more complex and deeper level of understanding of the states of affairs, e.g., the cause of the price hike of rice in (13), or the provenance of serious hostility in (14), etc. This is an excellent instance of subjectification as well.

The development of the DM *kisil(un)* also exhibits intersubjectification. Very similar to the DM *sasilsang* (Rhee, 2021), *kisil* also signals an element of surprise, interpretable as ‘What’s following is surprising’ and further, interactionally, as ‘This may surprise you ...’. By using the DM *kisil(un)* as a signal of surprise, the speaker is requesting the addressee to prepare their mind for noteworthy information and at the same time inviting the addressee to share the evaluation. For its interactional significance, this development can be viewed as intersubjectification.⁶ Fundamentally, a DM, by virtue of being situated in a discourse, is inherently interactive in the sense that the speaker or writer has the audience, visible or not, in mind in their performance of speech acts. Thus, intersubjectivity exists by nature in a typical discourse situation as discourse entails communicating with others (cf. Traugott, 2010, p. 2). Since interactivity is also closely related to intersubjectivity, i.e., the concern of the interlocutor, the development of a DM is an exemplary instance of intersubjectification.

3.2 Stance-marking

One important aspect of intersubjectivity discussed above is that the speakers, while showing concern about the interlocutor, signal their stance as well. In other words, intersubjectivity naturally involves consideration of the addressee,

but it also often involves the speaker's stance. Therefore, DMs often serve as stance markers. For instance, when the speaker uses *kisil(un)*, as noted above, the speaker is presenting his or her interpretation of reality.

Even though *kisil(un)* shares its origin with *sasilsang* for the core lexeme *sil* as well as the functions in part, *kisil(un)* is very different from *sasilsang* in one significant aspect, i.e., the absence of the pause-filling function, and thus the absence of the strategic hesitation marking for the sake of politeness (cf. Rhee, 2021). It is rather in a sharp contrast with *sasilsang* in that, unlike the latter, it signals assertiveness. The assertive overtone may be associated with its origin, i.e., the pedanticism. In other words, *sasil(sang)* is a common lexical borrowing, whereas *kisil* is a rare phrasal borrowing involving a demonstrative and a noun, which could be found only in high-register texts.

3.3 Periphery

Recent literature addresses the potential peripheral asymmetry with respect to the semantics or functions of a form. For instance, Adamson (2000), Onodera (2007), Degand (2014), Traugott (2014), Beeching and Detges (2014) discuss the issue in detail (see also the articles in the 2016 special issue of *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 17.1). In such discussion, many researchers hypothesise that the left-periphery (LP) functions are associated with dialogual and subjective functions, whereas right-periphery (RP) is associated with dialogic and intersubjective functions. Since periphery is a theoretically important issue in DM studies, a brief discussion is in order.

We noted above that *kisil(un)* carries both subjective and intersubjective functions. In terms of its positionality, however, *kisil(un)* has limited syntagmatic freedom across LP, medial, and RP positions. It does occur at LP, but such occurrences are rare. Rather, *kisil(un)* nearly always occurs at the sentence-medial post-topic position or at the sentence-medial and clausal-LP position. In other words, it occurs after the topic-marked sentential subject in a monoclausal structure or between clauses in a multi-clausal structure. The latter case involves a coordinate sentence with the adversative coordinator *na*, *ciman*, *eto*, etc., or a subordinate sentence with the concessive subordinator *eto*, *lcilato*, etc., and occurs at the beginning of the second clause (cf. Higashiizumi & Takahashi 2021, for Japanese). Thus, its structure is schematically $[P_1\text{-but, } kisil(un), P_2]$ or $[P_1\text{-even.though, } kisil(un), P_2]$. In this structure P_1 and P_2 may involve multiple clauses, as exemplified in (13) above. Therefore, from the perspective of positionality, it can be said that *kisil* is not a typical member of DMs (for the lack of positional freedom). More importantly, the significance with respect to periphery is that, despite its positional fixedness, *kisil* carries both the subjective and intersubjective functions, and thus the hypothesis for LP vs RP and subjective vs intersubjective correlation is not supported by the development of *kisil*.

3.4 Source characteristics

Chinese heavily influenced Korean vocabulary from its supposed introduction in the second century BCE. Identifiably Korean texts written in Chinese characters date back to the 5th century CE (Nam, 2012; Whitman, 2015; Narrog, Rhee, & Whitman, 2018, among others). In the authoritative dictionary *Phyocwun Kwuke Taysacen* (1992) by the National Institute of the Korean Language, 57.3% of its headwords are of Chinese origin (Lee, 2002). In everyday language, the use of Sino-Korean words is considerably lower, and their use only becomes prominent in technical texts (see Rhee, 2021 for more discussion on Sino-Korean words). The proportion of DMs derived from Sino-Korean words is very low, i.e., 14.4% (27 out of about 188), even though the exact number of DMs is not conclusive.

It is widely known that DMs, though universal across languages (Fraser, 2006), flourish typically in oral, informal registers (Östman, 1982a, b; Watts, 1989; Fraser, 1990). Thus, as noted in Rhee (2020) in his discussion of the development of the Sino-Korean lexeme *kyelkwa* ‘result’, the predominance of native Korean words in everyday colloquial language seems to explain the low percentage of Sino-Korean words in the DM inventory. Considering that DMs develop from frequent uses in discourse, the development of a DM from a Sino-Korean phrasal expression is peculiar (see, however, Rhee, 2020, 2021 for Korean, and Shibasaki, 2021, Higashiizumi & Takahashi, 2021, for Japanese). Therefore, it can be assumed that this DM developed in high-register, literary texts, such as philosophical, religious, legal, and scientific texts. Indeed, the corpus search clearly shows that the attestations of *kisil* are largely restricted to such formal texts.

Restrictive distribution and peculiar source characteristics of *kisil* led to its official demise. In a government decree of language policy (#1996–13, p. 111), dated 23 March 1996, *kisil* is in effect banned and is recommended to be replaced by *sasilun* ‘the fact is’, for its adverbial use, and by *silcey saceng* ‘real situation’, for its nominal use. This presents an intriguing issue with respect to the perception about borrowing. As indicated, Korean vocabulary has a high proportion of Sino-Korean words. *Kisil*, as well noted before, is of Chinese origin and so are *sasil* (事實) (of *sasilun*) and *silcey saceng* (實際 事情) (a compound consisting of *silcey* (實際) and *saceng* (事情)), as shown in (15) (note that Chinese characters have a large number of denotations, and the translations given below constitute only a small part of them):

(15)

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| a. <i>ki-sil</i> | 其 ‘that’ - 實 ‘fruit, essence’ | ‘the reality of that; that reality’ |
| b. <i>sa-sil</i> | 事 ‘matter, affair’ - 實 ‘fruit, essence’ | ‘reality’ |
| c. <i>sil-cey</i> | 實 ‘fruit, essence’ - 際 ‘interval, time’ | ‘reality’ |

- d. *sa-ceng* 事 ‘matter, affair’ - 情 ‘emotion, nature’ ‘condition, circumstance’
 e. *sil-cey sa-ceng* (實際 事情; see (c) and (d) above) ‘real circumstance’

As shown in (15), the only factor that makes *kisil* stand out from the group is the inclusion of the demonstrative, i.e., *ki*, which belongs to the grammatical category, whereas all other Sino-Korean morphemes belong to the lexical category, i.e., nouns and possibly adjectives (note: Chinese characters may be flexibly interpreted with respect to the parts of speech depending on the context). This situation can be interpreted as follows: *kisil* is an instance of phrasal borrowing, whereas *sasil*, *silcey*, and *saceng* are instances of lexical borrowing and *silcey saceng* is a nominal compound. From the viewpoint of language purists, lexical borrowing is a matter of the lexicon and is relatively tolerable (especially when it has a long history as Sino-Korean words and has nearly blended into the native vocabulary), but phrasal borrowing is a matter of the grammar and is something to be avoided.⁷ Incidentally, one word involving the demonstrative *ki* that survived the purge in Modern Korean is *kitha* (其他) (< *ki* (其) ‘that’ + *tha* (他) ‘other’) ‘and others’, equivalent to the English *etc.* A few others that involved *ki*, e.g., *kikan* (其間) ‘during that time’, *kicwung* (其中) ‘among them’, *kihwi* (其後) ‘afterwards’, etc., (Paek 2012. p. 180) have become obsolete and been replaced by more common expressions involving replacement of the Sino-Korean demonstrative *ki* ‘that’ with the native Korean demonstrative *ku* ‘that’.⁸

This is a good example of the involvement of diverse factors in language change, which clearly shows that language change is not always evolutive but may be influenced by external factors such as language policy. The use of the expression *kisil* had never been highly productive in history, largely restricted to the texts written either entirely in Chinese or predominantly Chinese mixed writing. In the late 19th century, it became popular for its high-register flavour in the writings of the literati class but fell into near disuse in the latter half of the 20th century. Even though it sometimes occurs in writings of archaic flavour, its official demise was announced by the language policy that discouraged its use (and banned in official documents), in 1996.

4. Conclusion

This article has analysed the developmental paths taken by the phrasal expression *kisil*, which originated from Chinese. The expression consists of the demonstrative *ki* ‘that’ and the noun *sil* ‘fruit’. The core lexeme *sil* underwent semantic extension via metaphor to ‘essence’, ‘reality’ and further to ‘fact’, ‘truth’, etc. via metonymy. The lexeme implied contrast of reality with non-reality or non-truth that appearance misguidedly presents. The contrast meaning was reinforced by

the topic-marker *un*, which appeared in Chinese-Korean mixed writings from around the 16th century. The expression was also used in four-character idioms. Towards the end of the 19th century, i.e., the beginning of the Modern Korean period, literary works written in classical styles and the new literary genre *sinsosel*, as well as the newspapers and other periodicals, used *kisilun* productively since it conveyed the flavour of pedanticism and evoked the sense of respectable writing. However, it fell into disuse in Modern Korean, presumably due to the rejection of the pedantic style in Modern Korean, and eventually became officially banned towards the end of the 20th century.

In terms of semantic change, *kisil(un)* exhibits subjectification, i.e., from *sil* 'fruit' to 'essence', a selective focusing on the 'truth' aspect in contrast with appearance, and from the 'physical reality' to the 'interpreted reality'. It also exhibits intersubjectification in that the surprise element of *kisilun* is a signal that the speaker is requesting the addressee to prepare his or her mind for noteworthy information and is inviting the addressee to share the evaluation. Furthermore, *kisilun* signals assertiveness and thus is rarely used with pauses, hedges, etc., the common devices to signal hesitance. The assertiveness signal is a good instance of stance-marking.

DMs are often discussed with respect to their occurrence positions, i.e., LP, RP, and medial positions. It has been observed that, as a DM, *kisilun* does not enjoy the positional freedom as many other DMs do. It occurs between the sentential subject/topic and the predicate, but, more frequently, it occurs medially between two propositions, i.e., one expressing the appearance and the other the interpretive reality. The DM *kisilun* bridges the two contrasting propositions.

DMs seem to rarely develop from borrowed lexemes, which is confirmed by the relatively low proportion of Sino-Korean DMs in Korean. The Sino-Korean origin is also responsible for the restricted occurrence of *kisil(un)* in highly pedantic texts. That the expression has a Sino-Korean origin and further that the borrowing involved is not at the lexical level but the syntactic level are also responsible for its demise in Present-Day Korean. This is a good instance of language change involving diverse factors such as external intervention by language purism.

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Notes

1. An anonymous reviewer raises a terminological issue about whether naming the development of a discourse marker as an instance of grammaticalisation is appropriate. The issue has been a topic of scholarly debate (Erman & Kotsinas, 1993, Aijmer, 1997; Frank-Job 2006, Degand & Evers-Vermeul, 2012, Diewald, 2006, 2011, Heine, 2013, Heine, Kaltenböck, Kuteva, & Long, 2021, among many others) and is largely due to different conceptualisation of grammar, the emergence of which, by definition, is grammaticalisation. Following Traugott (1995), Diewald (2006, 2011), Dostie (2004), Wischer (2000) and Rhee (2014), among others, we regard the development of discourse markers as instances of grammaticalisation, since the discourse-organising functions are essentially grammatical.
2. Special thanks go to the developers of the corpora and the search program for their generosity in granting their use for academic research.
3. The Extended Yale Romanization System (Rhee, 1996) is used for transliteration of Korean texts in historical times, and following the general convention of Korean historical linguistics, the Chinese characters in the source texts are written in upper-case in Modern Korean pronunciation. Also note that periphrastic forms are written with a period which indicates the word boundary. When two or more English words in the gloss correspond to a single morpheme in examples, the words are written with a period between them. The following abbreviations are used for glossing: ACC: accusative; ADN: adnominal; COMP: complementiser; COND: conditional; CONN: connective; DEC: declarative; DM: discourse marker; END: sentence-ender; GEN: genitive; NEG: negative; NOM: nominative; NMLZ: nominaliser; PL: plural; PST: past; RETRO: retrospective; TOP: topic.

4. The interpretation of the text was aided by Han (2016, pp. 149–150).
5. The dual interpretability is further promoted by the Korean syntactic idiosyncrasy of relatively free particle deletion. In Examples (8) to (10), the typographically unavailable characters in old Korean texts are presented in simplified notation. Thus, their transliteration prevails over such simplified notation.
6. The notions of stance and intersubjectification, as an anonymous reviewer points out, are not monolithic. Intersubjectification is inseparable from a discourse scene in which interlocutors interact. Thus, displaying the speaker's viewpoint ('stance-taking'; Englebretson, 2007) and paying attention to the needs of the interlocutor ('intersubjectivity'; Traugott, 2003, Traugott & Dasher, 2002) often occur simultaneously. Traugott (2003) aptly notes that intersubjectivity is a general characteristic of all language use.
7. The target items for language 'purification' are (i) difficult and outdated Sino-Korean words, (ii) Japanese-style words, (iii) borrowings from Western and other foreign languages, and (iv) widely circulated Sino-Korean words that have Korean counterparts. Kisil evidently falls into (i) by virtue of involving 'difficult and outdated' syntactic, phrasal borrowing. For diverse issues involving Korean language purification, see NIKL, 2019.
8. It is interesting to note in this context that *sonojitsu* (其实、其の实) in Japanese of the same etymon as *kisil* in Korean uses the meaning-based *sono* (instead of the sound-based alternatives **ki-no* or **gi-no* reflecting directness of borrowing), in which the demonstrative is rendered into the native Japanese lexeme *so* (see Higashiizumi & Takahashi, 2021; thanks go to Kyoung Jin Ji for consultation).

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