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Author

Lee, EunHee

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A Unified Analysis of the Korean Mood Markers as Context Updating Operators

EUNHEE LEE

University at Buffalo, The State University of New York

1 Introduction

Standard semantic theories treat indicative, interrogative, and imperative clauses as belonging to heterogeneous semantic types, excluding their conversational effects from semantic composition. An indicative clause classically denotes a proposition, which is a set of worlds in which the sentence is true. An interrogative clause denotes a set of propositions, which are alternative answers to the question (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984; Hamblin 1973). A popular analysis of an imperative clause argues that it denotes a property that is to be added to the addressee's 'to-do list', a function from individuals to sets of propositions that captures the obligations of participants (Portner 2007; Pak et al. 2008; Zannutini et al. 2012). The uniform morphosyntactic manifestation of clause types in languages like Korean casts doubt to such heterogeneous treatments. (1) illustrates that different clause types, including the unique promissive, are marked by the mood particles participating in the same sentence-final suffixal paradigm in Korean.

(1) Ttena(n)-**ta/nya?/la!/ca!/ma**.

leave-(NPST)-IND/INT/IMP/EXH/PRM¹

¹ The abbreviations in the glosses are as follows. NOM: nominative, ACC: accusative, LOC: locative, DAT: dative, GEN: genitive, RC: relative clause, PST: past, NPST: non-past, IND: indicative, INT: interrogative, IMP: imperative, PRM: promissive, EXH: exhortative.

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‘I am leaving.’/‘Are you leaving?’/‘Leave!’/‘Let’s leave.’/‘I promise to leave.’

The uniform behavior of mood markers is not an idiosyncratic feature of morphologically rich languages like Korean. Even in morphologically impoverished languages like English, different types of clauses can be conjoined, as in (2), or embedded into one another, as in (3), calling for a more integrated approach.

- (2) a. I am going home **and** don’t try to stop me.
 b. Offer kindness to all fellow humans but you should be careful not to be taken advantage of. That drifter may be handsome **but** is he really only taking your car for a short drive? (Murry & Starr 2021)
- (3) a. Bill asked me **who won**.
 b. Who told you that **Jane won**?
 c. Bill asked me **who told you that Jane won**. (Ciardelli et al. 2018)

This paper presents a unified semantic analysis of the Korean mood markers by identifying their meaning with their common conversational function of steering the common ground to preferred alternatives with different levels of authority. Clause types are grammatical encodings of utterance force, which expresses the speaker’s desire/preference and changes her commitment. For example, an indicative clause has the force of assertion, by which the speaker expresses a desire that the addressee believes the asserted proposition and publicly commits to its truth, taking on an obligation to provide evidence if asked. Sentence force also reflects power dynamics between the interlocutors. An imperative clause uttered by a speaker with authority, for instance, is more likely to be taken as an order and followed by the addressee than that of a speaker without it. In fact, the five-way mood distinction in (1) above is possible only for the so-called ‘plain’ speech style, which is a nonpolite register used toward close peers or a socially inferior (e.g., younger) person in conversation, or a neutral form in expository writings. The other speech styles (familiar, polite, deferential) lack a promissive form, as illustrated in (4) for the deferential style.

- (4) Ttena-**pnita**./**pnikka?**/**sipsio!**/**sipsita!**
 leave-IND/INT/IMP/EXH
 ‘I am leaving.’/‘Are you leaving?’/‘Please, leave!’/‘Let’s leave, please!’

The register restriction imposed on the promissive, that is, it can only be uttered by a socially superior person, is conventional, suggesting that social meaning cannot entirely be relegated to pragmatics. In the following sections, I will analyze each clause type in Korean in more detail.

2 Indicatives

The discourse participants typically consider only the relevant possible worlds with respect to a specific conversational or domain goal and discourse topic rather than starting from completely uninformative state of maximum uncertainty (Roberts 2012). Biezma (2020:28) points out that out-of-the-blue assertions are sometimes felicitous and sometimes not, as illustrated in (5).

- (5) Three students are quietly working in their office. The door is open and another student shows up and says:
- a. Hey, good morning! ?My uncle makes cheese in Vermont.
 - b. Hey, good morning! There is a free cake in the common-room.

She argues that an assertion is infelicitous not only when it is incompatible with the common ground, but also when the proposition is not one of the salient contextual alternatives making up the meaning of the Question under Discussion or QUD. This explains the awkwardness of (5a); “What does your uncle do?” is not a salient QUD in the given context. By contrast, (5b) can be easily taken as an answer to the broad QUD, “What’s the case?” or “What are things like?”.

If every assertion invariably presupposes an implicit or explicit QUD, (7) presupposes the QUD “Are you leaving?,” partitioning the worlds in the common ground into those in which the speaker is leaving and those in which she is not. If it is an answer to an explicit question, then the presence of the QUD in the context is unquestionable. Even if it is a discourse initial utterance, I argue that an implicit QUD can be easily accommodated, as long as it aligns with the broad, relevant QUD, e.g., “What is the case?”.

- (6) Ttena-n-ta.
 leave-NPST-IND
 ‘I am leaving.’

This means that the common ground contains only a finite number of propositions pertaining to the topic of interest (Roberts 2004, 2012). I further argue that the contextually salient alternatives making up the answers to the QUD is not a simple list of propositions but structured. Following Starr (2020), I adopt the notion of ‘preference’ to be crucial to structuring the common ground, assuming that the conversational participants always prefers one alternative to another. For example, in (6), the speaker not only provides the information that the actual world must be contained in the worlds in which the proposition is true, but she prefers/desires it to be part of the common ground, steering the common ground towards a state in which it is commonly established that the speaker leaves. The addressee in (6), on the other hand, is interested in resolving the contextually salient QUD, preferring the worlds in which the speaker leaves or those in which she doesn’t to a state where a resolution of the QUD is impossible. If she accepts the proposition as true, it has an effect of reducing the worlds in the preference relations from the common ground. It will be more likely for the addressee to accept the proposition if the speaker has a high authority level for her preference. The plain style in (6) indicates a high level of authority, adding more force to the speaker’s desire or preference for the asserted proposition to be part of the common ground.

I will employ a version of Discourse Representation Theory (DRT, Kamp and Reyle 1993) to model the conventional discourse effects of the Korean mood markers.² Although DRT has proven to be one of the best available theoretical frameworks to model discourse context and inter-clausal

² DRT regards semantic interpretation not as a direct relation between expressions and (a model of) reality, but as mediated by an intermediate level of semantic representation called Discourse Representation Structure (DRS) where the information conveyed by a discourse is stored. Since DRS is taken to be the hearer’s mental representation of the discourse, DRT reconciles the psycho-linguistic or procedural view of meaning, in which the meaning of an expression is to be regarded as an instruction to the hearer to construct a mental representation, and the logico-semantic or declarative view, which equates meaning with denotation conditions (Hamm et al. 2006).

relations, a representation of extralinguistic context is not included in its toolkit. Maier (2009) and Hunter (2013) propose the structured or layered DRT, where the topmost DRS K_0 encodes the utterance context, which contains discourse referents for the speaker s , the speech time t , the speech location l , and the actual world w . The sentence *I am speaking* is represented in the structured DRS in (7). The DRS condition $\text{agent}(s)$ indicates that s is the agent of the utterance context, i.e., the speaker.

$$(7) [_{K_0} s, t, l, w \mid \text{agent}(s), \text{time}(t), \text{location}(l), \text{world}(w) [_{K_1} \mid \text{say}(s)]]$$

These physical features, however, are not the only components of the utterance context. A conversation rarely occurs in an informational vacuum but is supported by various background assumptions and common knowledge and beliefs. I further extend DRT by adding to the context DRS K_0 a discourse referent for the common ground information. Common ground is classically defined as a function from the actual world to the set of propositions assumed to be true by the speaker and the addressee for the purpose of conversation. The context set is the set of worlds not ruled out by these assumptions (Stalnaker 1978, 2014). As conversation proceeds, the set of worlds compatible with the common ground propositions is bound to shrink because those worlds that are not compatible with newly uttered sentences continue to be eliminated, locating more precisely the actual world in the logical space. This process reduces uncertainty, contributing to a fundamental goal of conversation, namely, discovering or settling what the actual world is like. By incorporating two contrasting notions of contexts, namely, Kaplan's (1989) notion of context as a representation of the concrete features of the utterance situation and Stalnaker's (1978) notion of context as shared information in common ground, a single, inclusive representation of meaning can be achieved in a DRT framework.

To incorporate the common ground updating aspect in structured DRT, I introduce a discourse referent c for a set of ordered pairs of propositions standing in a preference relation in the context DRS K_0 . Discourse referents for the time and the location of the utterance context and the actual world will be omitted from now on to save space, and a discourse referent for the addressee will be added as well as the DRS condition about her relation with the speaker. The initial DRS for the indicative clause in (7) above is given in (8).

$$(8) [_{K_0} s, a, c \mid \text{sp}(s), \text{ad}(a), s \geq a, c = \{\langle \{w_L\}, \emptyset \rangle, \langle \{w_1\}, \emptyset \rangle\} [_{K_1} \mid \bullet(\text{leave}(s))]]$$

In a context where the discourse participants are concerned with the question of whether the speaker leaves or not, only two worlds, w_L and w_1 , need to be considered. L stands for *I am leaving*. Capital indicate a world in which it is true and lower case indicate a world in which it is false. The initial context contains no information about the actual world, which can be a world in which the speaker leaves or a world in which she doesn't. Both worlds, however, are still preferred to or ranked over the empty set. If the set of worlds that are considered as a candidate for the actual world is empty, this means that the available information has become inconsistent, and the proposal or inquiry cannot be resolved. The preference relation indicates that rational agents choose possible states of affairs that are consistent with available information over impossible states of affairs (Murry and Starr 2021; Starr 2020). The indicative mood operator $\bullet$ has scope over the proffered content in K_1 . $s \geq a$ means that the speaker has equal or higher level of authority for

her preference than the addressee. If the addressee accepts the indicative (marked with $\checkmark$ in (9)), the acceptance will result in a reduction of c , leaving only those worlds that are compatible with the proposition and constraining subsequent sentences to be consistent with the reduced set. That is, the successful conversational effect of the indicative is to eliminate the world in which the speaker does not leave from the preference relations, as the final DRS in (9) shows. The plain style indicates the speaker's high level of authority, adding more force to the speaker's desire or preference for the asserted proposition to become part of the common ground.

$$(9) [_{K_0} s, a, c \mid \text{sp}(s), \text{ad}(a), s \geq a, c = \{\langle \{w_L\}, \emptyset \rangle\} [_{K_1} \mid \text{leave}(s)^{\checkmark}]]$$

The truth of a DRS is defined in terms of whether the partial information represented in it can be embedded in a complete model.³

3 Interrogatives

The meaning of an interrogative sentence is traditionally taken as a set of possible or true exhaustive answers (Hamblin 1973; Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984). For example, the meaning of the sentence containing a polar interrogative mood suffix in (10) would be {you leave, you don't leave}, partitioning the possible worlds into those in which the addressee leaves and those in which she doesn't, which are the two possible answers to the question.

$$(10) \text{Ttena-nya?} \\ \text{leave-INT} \\ \text{'Are you leaving?'}$$

I propose (11) as the initial DRS for (10). An interrogative mood operator $?$ is introduced into K_1 . The initial context is the set of all worlds preferred to $\emptyset$ because the addressee has not accepted the question.

$$(11) [_{K_0} s, a, c \mid \text{sp}(s), \text{ad}(a), s \geq a, c = \{\langle \{w_L, w_1\}, \emptyset \rangle\} [_{K_1} \mid ?(\text{leave}(a))]]$$

If the question is accepted, it has an effect on c in K_0 , partitioning the worlds into those in which the addressee leaves and those where she does not, and ranking each over the empty set (Murry and Starr 2021; Starr 2020).

$$(12) [_{K_0} s, a, c \mid \text{sp}(s), \text{ad}(a), s \geq a, c = \{\langle \{w_L, w_1\}, \emptyset \rangle, \langle \{w_L\}, \emptyset \rangle, \langle \{w_1\}, \emptyset \rangle\} [_{K_1} \mid ?(\text{leave}(a))]]$$

³ To avoid a potential circularity, I adopt Hunter's (2013) pointed models that single out the actual world in which the utterance event is taking place. The model consists of $\langle D, I, W, w \rangle$, where D is a domain of individuals, I is an interpretation function, W is a set of worlds and $w \in W$ is the actual world. The evaluation of DRS observes the initial information state $\langle w, g_w \rangle$ in which g_w is an anchor function for K_0 , the unique assignment function that satisfies the conditions in K_0 given w , including the common ground condition. In subsequent evaluations of each sub-DRS, all admissible assignment functions must be extensions of the anchor function g_w .

I assume that the speaker's authority over the addressee imposes the partition of the worlds in the common ground, obligating the addressee to answer the question.

A *wh*-interrogative clause in (13), on the other hand, is a proposal to partition the possible worlds in which each alternative answer to the question is true.

- (13) **Eti** ka-**nya**?
 where go-INT
 'Where are you going?'

In uttering (13) the speaker assumes that the addressee is going somewhere and knows her destination. Unlike polar questions, the initial context is not empty since the speaker presupposes that the addressee is going somewhere. In the initial DRS (14), *G* stands for *you are going somewhere*. The speaker prefers the worlds in which the addressee is going somewhere to the worlds in which she doesn't.

- (14) $[_{K_0} s, a, c \mid \text{sp}(s), \text{ad}(a), s \geq a, c = \{\langle \{w_G\}, \{w_g\} \rangle\} [_{K_1} \mid ?(\text{where}(\lambda x. \text{go}(a, x)))]]$

If the question is accepted, it will create a partition and an ordering of the worlds in the context. For simplicity, suppose only two live possibilities exist with respect to the addressee's destination: home or school. *H* stands for *you go home* and *S* stands for *you go to school*. As before, capitals indicate a world in which it is true and lower cases indicate a world in which it is false.

- (15) $[_{K_0} a, c \mid \text{sp}(s), \text{ad}(a), s \geq a, c = \{\langle \{w_G\}, \{w_g\} \rangle, \langle \{w_{Hs}\}, \emptyset \rangle, \langle \{w_{hs}\}, \emptyset \rangle\} [_{K_1} \mid ?(\text{where}(\lambda x. \text{go}(a, x)))]]$

Note that the initial common ground for a *wh*-interrogative already contains the queried eventuality, and when accepted, alternative answers to it partition the common ground in K_0 . This treatment, I argue, is particularly appropriate for Korean, a *wh*-in-situ language. It lacks a movement of *wh*-words in *wh*-questions, as shown in (16). The *wh*-word *nwukwu* 'who' is not fronted but remains in the object complement position of the verb. The status of (16) as an interrogative, instead, is indicated by the question particle *nya* at the end of the sentence.

- (16) Kim-i **nwukwu**-lul manna-ass-**nya**?
 Kim-NOM who-ACC meet-PST-INT
 'Who did Kim meet?'

Wh-in-situ has been analyzed using a covert movement in Logical Form (LF), popular before the 1990s (Aoun et al. 1981; Huang 1982; May 1977), or Feature Strength Parameter under the minimalist framework, which claims that a strong question (Q) feature in the Complementizer head (C) triggers a *wh*-movement (Chomsky 1995). Previous analyses of Korean *wh*-questions also assume LF movements (Beck and Kim 1997; Ko 2005). These accounts have empirical difficulty explaining the lack of islands effects in *wh*-in-situ languages, as shown in (17). The *wh*-word appears inside a relative clause, which is a syntactic island, without rendering the sentence

ungrammatical.⁴ It seems also theoretically unsatisfactory to postulate a movement at different levels of derivation (e.g., LF), or to stipulate the strength of Q in different languages to account for the *wh*-movement without an independent motivation.

- (17) a. Kim-i [Lee-eykey **mwues**-ul cwu-n salam-ul] manna-ass-ni?
 Kim-NOM Lee-DAT what-ACC give-RC person-ACC meet-PST-INT
 ‘*What did Kim meet [a person who gave Lee (what)]?’
 b. Kim-i [Lee-eykey senmwul-ul **ency** cwu-n salam-ul] manna-ass-nya?
 Kim-NOM Lee-DAT present-ACC when give-RC person-ACC meet-PST-INT
 ‘*When did Kim meet [a person who gave Lee a present (when)]?’
 c. Kim-i [Lee-eykey senmwul-ul **etise** cwu-n salam-ul] manna-ass-nya?
 Kim-NOM Lee-DAT present-ACC where give-RC person-ACC meet-PST-INT
 ‘*Where did Kim meet [a person who gave Lee a present (where)]?’

There has been increasing effort to understand the syntactic properties of *wh*-in-situ in terms of semantic/pragmatic principles (Biezma 2016, 2020; Pires and Taylor 2009). These recent proposals begin with the observation that many Romance languages have only an optional *wh*-movement, and even in English, a non-echo *wh*-in-situ question is more frequent than one might expect under certain circumstances, contrary to the common assumption that *wh*-in-situ is only possible in multiple *wh*-questions (e.g., Pesetsky 1987) or in echo questions in English. The distinctive feature of *wh*-in-situ questions, it is often argued, is that they presuppose the existence of questions or answers, thus putting a constraint on the common ground. Pires & Taylor (2009) argue that in certain discourse-pragmatic contexts—for example, requesting more specific information about something just mentioned—both (Brazilian) Portuguese and English frequently allow *wh*-in-situ as non-echo questions, as illustrated in (18) and (19).

- (18) A: I made desserts.
 B: You made **what** kind of dessert?

- (19) A [attorney]: Tell me what happened on January 1st, 2005, at 4.
 B [defendant]: I was driving along Andrews Avenue.
 A [attorney]: And you were driving **which** direction?

They propose that the set of possible answers to *wh*-in-situ questions is already part of the common ground, although it needs not be definite or D-linked in the sense of Pesetsky (1987) (see Gunlogson 2003; Schwarzschild 1999 for similar proposals). Their analysis explains why out of the blue *wh*-in-situ questions like (20) are unacceptable. In this case, the common ground requirement is not met.

- (20) (Speaker A calls a friend and asks)
 A: #You’re watching **what** this week?

⁴ Judgments about more complex cases of island constraints in Korean exhibit a wide individual variation. See Kim and Goodall (2016), Kim et al. (2016), and Lee and Park (2015), among others, for large-scale acceptability judgment experiments in an effort to settle the variability issue.

The context of specification for single *wh*-in-situ in English discussed in Pires and Taylor (2009) is similar to *wh*-in-situ in other languages. For instance, Chang (1997) suggests that *wh*-in-situ questions in French are strongly presuppositional, and these questions seek details on an already established (or presupposed) situation. Biezma (2016) claims that *wh*-in-situ questions in (Castilian) Spanish function as a follow-up inquiry to a preceding assertion in discourse. She argues that they trigger a presupposition about the discourse structure in such a way that the question is part of a strategy to answer the closest unresolved QUD (Roberts 2012). In-situ word order signals that the discourse participants are assumed to have already committed to the ongoing inquiry rather than introducing a new QUD. Unlike canonical *wh*-questions, Biezma (2020) contends, the speaker expects the addressee to know the answer. Examples like (21) presupposes that the addressee has accepted the QUD and possesses the information to resolve it.⁵

- (21) A: He was out all night.
 B: Didn't get in until **when**?

Biezma (2020), on the other hand, treats English *wh*-in-situ (WhDec in her term) as an assertion (not question) that trivially updates the common ground, presupposing the existence of an ongoing QUD with the same content without resolving it. The presupposition, she argues, is often informative, whose accommodation is expected by the speaker. *Wh*-in-situ in English directs the future issue to be addressed, she further argues, reflecting the power dynamics of discourse; it can be naturally uttered only by an authoritative person or in socially familiar relations. *Wh*-in-situ languages, then, are those that inherently have the [+common ground] feature on their question operator. The existence and lack of the feature reflected in syntax comes with a stronger explanatory power than Head Strength Parameter. In line with Biezma's (2020) observation about English *wh*-in-situ, such that it can be naturally uttered only by an authoritative person or in socially familiar relations, I propose that, while English employs a non-canonical word order to signal such a special situation, in Korean, the power dynamics between the discourse participants in conversation is more commonly and widely reflected in its canonical *wh*-in-situ questions.

4 Imperatives, Exhortatives, and Promissives

Pak et al. (2008) and Zannutini et al. (2012) argue that Korean promissive, imperative and exhortative moods belong to a single grammatical category called 'jussives' and propose a uniform syntactic account for them. In their syntactic analysis, a functional head unique to this clause type—the head of the 'Jussive Phrase'— binds the (implicit) subject and agrees with it, as represented in (22). The person feature value α is a second-person in the imperative, an inclusive first-person in the exhortative and an exclusive first-person in the promissive, as each jussive head carries its own person feature that binds and agrees with the null subject.

- (22) [JussiveP [Jussive⁰_{[person: α]]_k [vP pro_k[person: α] [VP ka]]]}

⁵ Another function of in-situ questions in Spanish, which she also subsumes under the follow-up question category, is to request further information regarding the event described by an immediately preceding utterance.

The jussive head is semantically taken as a lambda operator, resulting in a property type with the person restriction as a presupposition, as in (23).

- (23) a. $\llbracket \text{ka-la} \rrbracket = \lambda x: x = \text{addressee}(c).[\lambda w.x \text{ goes in } w)]$.
 b. $\llbracket \text{ka-ca} \rrbracket = \lambda x: x = \text{speaker+addressee}(c).[\lambda w.x \text{ goes in } w)]$.
 c. $\llbracket \text{ka-ma} \rrbracket = \lambda x: x = \text{speaker}(c).[\lambda w.x \text{ goes in } w)]$.

Following Portner (2007), they argue that the illocutionary force of directives adds the required property to the ‘to-do list (TDL)’, which is a function from the relevant interlocutor(s) to sets of propositions that captures their obligations.

This analysis predicts that a person-jussive head mismatch will result in a simple presupposition failure. However, **nay-ka ka-la* [I-NOM leave-IMP] is ungrammatical, not merely lacking an interpretation. It is also questionable whether jussives uniformly have an inherent directive force as their TDL function would mandate. Although the stereotypical use of imperatives are orders that create an obligation for the addressee, they are also used in request, pleas, warnings, etc., as (24) illustrates. Condoravdi and Lauer (2012) observe that order uses simply derive from contexts in which the speaker happens to have authority over the addressee, where the addressee is expected to comply with.

- (24) a. Get well soon! Please, don’t rain! (wish)
 b. Have a cookie(, if you like). (permission/invitation)

Korean imperatives can also be used to make a wish or an offer, as in (25), which do not seem to impose any obligations on the part of the addressee (or even require the presence of an addressee in examples like (25a)).

- (25) a. Ceypal pi-ka o-ci-mal-**la**.
 please rain-NOM come-NEG-IMP
 ‘Please don’t rain!’
 b. Pap com mek-**ela**.
 rice a little eat-IMP
 ‘Please eat some food.’

Their analysis necessitates some non-standard and controversial assumptions, such as viewing indexicals as variables and names as definite descriptions (preceded by an empty D that is bound by the jussive head) when the subject is overt as in (26).

- (26) a. Emma_i-ka **nay_i** chinkwu-lul teyliko o-**ma**.
 mommy-NOM my friend-ACC bring come-PRM
 ‘Mommy will bring my friend.’
 b. Inho_i-ka **ney_i** chinkwu-lul teyliko o-**ala**.
 Inho-NOM your friend-ACC bring come-PRM
 ‘Inho, bring your friend.’

As Zannutini et al. (2012) acknowledge, if jussives only differ in the person features as in (23) above, the promissive is expected to be equally common as the imperative, failing to explain why promissives are so rare crosslinguistically. Under the uniform syntactic analysis, it is also puzzling why the verb *promise* typically selects the indicative, while *order* selects the subjunctive in languages having these mood distinctions (Farkas 1992).

Answers to these questions can be found in the unique properties of promissives that separate them from imperatives and exhortatives in significant ways. First, promissives are awkward with a negative particle *mal*, while others require it, as shown in (27). Unlike promissives, imperatives and exhortatives are incompatible with the canonical negative marker *anh*.

- (27) a. Ttena-ci **mal**/***anh-ala**/ca.
 leave-NEG-IMP/EXH
 ‘Don’t leave.’/‘Let’s not leave.’
 b. Ttena-ci **anh**/*?**mal-uma**.
 leave-NEG-PRM
 ‘I promise not to leave.’

The negative particle *mal* occurs in declaratives and interrogatives only with deontic and bouletic modality, as shown in (28) (Han and Lee 2002; Pak et al. 2008).

- (28) a. Ttena-ci **mal**-aya ha-n-ta/-ki-lul pala-n-ta.
 leave-NEG-MOD-NPST-IND
 ‘I should not leave.’/‘I don’t want you to leave.’
 b. Ttena-ci **ahn**/##**mal**-ass-ta.
 leave-NEG-PST-IND
 ‘I did not leave.’

Deontic modality concerns an obligation or permission imposed by an external source. (28) suggests that, like deontic modality, *mal* encodes a prohibition imposed by an external source. Promissives take the neutral (non-deontic) negative markers *anh* because the speaker’s commitment is imposed internally by the speaker’s own will. Unlike imperatives and exhortatives, where the speaker prefers the described event, it is implied that the addressee prefers the event in promissives, and the speaker takes it upon herself to realize it for the addressee’s sake. Second, while imperatives and exhortatives have polite and deferential forms, promissives are restricted to the nonpolite/plain style, as already observed. That is, only a speaker with a higher social status can utter a promissive sentence. Lastly, unlike imperatives and exhortatives, promissives cannot be embedded, as shown in (29) and (30).⁶

- (29) Ney-ka ka-**la**/ca/***ma**-myen ka-keyss-ta.
 you-Nom go-IMP/EXH/PRM-if go-MOD-IND

⁶ Portner et al. (2019) distinguish between *a/ela* and *ula* and *ni* and *nya*, only the latter of which can occur in an embedded clause, and they argue that *ula* and *nya* simply indicate clause types without requiring a specific addressee. As we saw in (26a) above, it is *a/ela*, rather than *ula*, that is used for a wish without a specific addressee. Promissives lack the ability to merely mark a clause type but invariably require an actual interlocutor.

‘If you order/suggest me/us to go, I will go.’

(30) Ka-**la**/**ca**/***ma**-mye?

go-IMP/EXH/PRM-EVI

‘You ordered/suggested me/us to go, didn’t you?’

The unembeddability suggests that the promissive is an inherent performative, that is, its content becomes part of the common ground by simply uttering it. This also explains the register constraint such that only a socially superior person with authority can use this form. The performative analysis of promissives offers a solution to the puzzle why promissives are so rare crosslinguistically and why the verb *promise* typically selects the indicative, while *order* selects the subjunctive in languages with such mood distinctions (Farkas 1992). Because promissives impose the speaker’s preferred proposition on the common ground without the addressee’s consent, it is a highly marked type of speech act and thus is rare crosslinguistically.

Following Condoravdi and Lauer (2012) and Starr (2020), I will analyze imperatives in Korean as proposing a preference relation between worlds. The imperative mood in the sentence in (31) indicates that the addressee leaving is preferred by the speaker to her not leaving.

(31) Ttena-**la**!

leave-IMP

‘Leave!’

The DRS K_1 (32) contains an imperative mood operator $!$, which indicates that the eventuality in its scope is preferred to its negation, proposing to partition the worlds in c into those in which the event is carried out (w_L), and those in which it is not (w_1) and ordering the former above the latter. The initial context K_0 is not committed to either preference so does not exclude any possible worlds.

(32) $[_{K_0} s, a, c \mid \text{sp}(s), \text{ad}(a), s \geq a, c = \{\langle \{w_L, w_1\}, \emptyset \rangle\} \mid [_{K_1} \mid !(leave(a))]]$

If accepted by the addressee, the imperative becomes part of the common ground, making the preference public.

(33) $[_{K_0} a, c \mid \text{sp}(s), \text{ad}(a), s \geq a, c = \{\langle \{w_L, w_1\}, \emptyset \rangle, \langle \{w_L\}, \{w_1\} \rangle\} \mid [_{K_1} \mid !(leave(a))]]$

The plain style indicates that the speaker has a full authority over the addressee for her preference, and *ttenala*! is taken as an order (cf. the deferential *ttenacwusipsio* is taken as a request or a plea since the speaker has no or low authority for her preference for the alternative).

Exhortatives are similar to imperatives in that they require the addressee’s compliance. The only difference is that the (implicit) subject is both the speaker and the addressee. The exhortative mood suffix *ca* in (34) proposes to order the relevant possible worlds in such a way that the worlds in which both the speaker and the addressee leave is preferred to those worlds in which they don’t.

(34) Ttena-**ca**!

leave-EXH

‘Let’s leave.’

The initial context K_0 is not committed to either preference so does not exclude any possible worlds.

(35) $[_{K_0} s, a, c \mid \text{sp}(s), \text{ad}(a), s \geq a, c = \{\langle \{w_L, w_1\}, \emptyset \rangle\} \mid [_{K_1} \mid \text{!(leave}(s \oplus a))]]]$

The discourse effect of (34) is represented in the final DRS in (36) assuming the exhortative is accepted by the addressee.

(36) $[_{K_0} s, a, c \mid \text{sp}(s), \text{ad}(a), s \geq a, c = \{\langle \{w_L, w_1\}, \emptyset \rangle, \langle \{w_L\}, \{w_1\} \rangle\} \mid [_{K_1} \mid \text{!(leave}(s \oplus a))]]]$

Depending on the speaker authority level, the force of an exhortative utterance will vary, like that of imperatives.

A promissive clause in (37) is different since, as I have argued, it is an inherent performative.

(37) Ttena-**ma**.
 leave-PRM
 ‘I promise to leave.’

The effect of uttering (37) is that the speaker provides the information that the actual world will be contained in the worlds in which she leaves, steering the common ground towards a state in which it is commonly established that she will. To reach such a state, however, it is not necessary for the addressee to comply with the promissive. I argue that the speaker’s commitment instantly becomes part of the shared context, as in (38).

(38) $[_{K_0} s, a, c \mid \text{sp}(s), \text{ad}(a), s \geq a, c = \{\langle \{w_L\}, \{w_1\} \rangle\}, \text{leave}(s) \mid [_{K_1} \mid]]$

The speaker has full authority for her preference, as evinced by its restriction to the plain/non-polite style.

5 Honorifics

I have so far used authority levels for the speaker preferences describe Korean speech styles encoding politeness/honorifics. The full paradigm is presented in (39).

(39) a. *kacwusipsio* [deferential] authority level [zero, low]
 b. *kayo* [polite] authority level [low, moderate]
 c. *ka* [familiar] authority level [moderate, high]
 d. *kala* [plain] authority level [high]

For example, the deferential style indicates that the speaker has zero to low authority toward the addressee with regard to her preferences, whereas the plain style signals that the speaker has full authority. If the authority level is in [moderate, high], I assume, the proposition will normally become part of the common ground (for the purpose of the conversation). If the authority level is in [zero, low], on the other hand, it is up to the addressee whether it will be included in the common ground. To put it somewhat bluntly, using a non-polite form, I contend, boils down to saying “What I say goes.”

My approach to honorifics can be seen as an intermediate position between two influential analyses of honorifics that are available in the literature but is simpler and more flexible than both. Potts and Kawahara (2012) and McCready (2019) view honorification/politeness as expressive meaning and model it as having a value of a real number in the interval $[-1, 1]$. Speech styles, as I have argued, do not seem to simply express respect/positive regard but play a more significant role of steering the common ground to a certain state among possibilities. I also employ levels, rather than a continuous scale. Portner et al. (2019, 2022) employ two binary features, [status: $S \leq$ or $\geq A$] and [formal: $\pm$]. They argue that different combinations of the feature values are morphologically realized in Korean, as in (40).

- (40) a. [status: $S \leq A$], [Formal: +], [s-mood: dec] $\rightarrow$ *supnita* (formal)
 b. [status: $S \leq A$], [Formal: -], [s-mood: dec] $\rightarrow$ *eyo* (polite)
 c. [status: $S \geq A$], [Formal: -], [s-mood: dec] $\rightarrow$ *e* (intimate) ⁷

The two dimensions of politeness, namely, status and formality, while being based on influential classic pragmatic works on power and solidarity/distance (Brown and Gilman 1960; Brown and Levinson 1987), are not always easy to tease apart. Portner et al. (2022) list concrete formal and informal relations to alleviate this concern. For example, a boss-subordinate relation is listed as a formal relation, whereas a peer co-worker relation is listed as an informal relation. Such distinction, however, seems to be equally based on hierarchical status, making it difficult to give a separate definition to formality. There is an additional problem of having to deal with a conflict between the two. Intimate relations, even when there is a big status difference (e.g., parents and children), allow the socially inferior to use the nonpolite, intimate style. Portner et al. (2022) argue that, despite the close connection, formality cannot be reduced to hierarchy. They cite (34) as an example supporting this claim, in which a child uses the polite style at home, but the deferential style at a formal banquet.

- (41) a. [Child arriving at home, to mother]
 emma, ce o-ass-**eyo**.
 mom, I(humble) come-PST-IND(POLITE)
 ‘Mom, I came.’
 b. [Child arriving at a banquet, to mother]
 emeni, ce o-ass-**supnita**.
 mother, I(humble) come-PST-IND(DEFERENTIAL)
 ‘Mother, I came.’ (Portner et al. 2019:14 with glosses changed)

Contrary to this claim, however, a child needs not switch to the polite or deferential style in formal settings, that is, (41b) sounds more polite, but (41a) is by no means unacceptable at a banquet. To avoid these problems, I only use one parameter, the speaker preferences with authority, rather than

⁷ The combination [status: $S \geq A$], [Formal: +] is absent, implying that a socially superior speaker is invariably informal and uses ‘intimate’ style. An almost obsolete ‘blunt’ *ney* style exists, which is still occasionally used by an older male to a younger male, e.g., a father-in-law to a son-in-law. This style can be considered [status: $S \geq A$], [Formal: +] but its distribution is limited.

two, hierarchical status and formality.⁸ As Portner et al. (2019) acknowledge, politeness is highly negotiable, as illustrated in (42).

- (42) Mom: Inho-ya, onul sihem cal poass-**ni**?
 Inho-Voc today test well.done-INT(INTIMATE)
 ‘Inho, Did you do well on the test today?’
 Inho: Ney, emma. 100 cem pat-ass-eyo.
 yes mom 100 point receive-PST-IND(POLITE)
 ‘Yes, mom. I received 100.’
 Mom: Wa! Cengmal? Cham calhayss-**eyo**!
 wow really indeed well.done-IND(POLITE)
 ‘Wow! You did really well!’ (Portner et al. 2019:17 with glosses changed)

Portner et al. (2019:18) argue that the mother’s switch to the polite speech style indicates that “Inho, the interlocutor-addressee, is understood (obviously as a pretense) to be socially equal or superior to his mother and is respected as an individual, which in turn amplifies the effect of the compliment.” My analysis affords an alternative account that does not rely on “pretense.” As I have argued, the socially superior status affords the speaker the choice of exercising her authority or deferring it to the addressee, as in the above example. Continuing to use the intimate style would have maintained the mother’s authority, imposing the proposition “Inho did very well on the test” into the common ground. However, the proposition is already mutually assumed, given Inho’s response “Yes, I did well.” Switching to the polite style relegates the mother’s authority to Inho, acknowledging and highlighting—rather than imposing—the mutually agreed proposition.

6 Conclusion

This paper provided a unified semantic and pragmatic analysis of the sentence mood in Korean in terms of the various updates to the common ground in structured DRT. All clauses have the uniform discourse effect of steering the common ground to a preferred subset of the possible worlds with different levels of authority. Korean is an ideal language to study semantics and pragmatics of speech acts thanks to its overtly grammaticized mood categories. Different logical languages and frameworks have been employed to represent different types of semantic updates (AnderBois et al. 2010; Farkas and Bruce 2010; Murray 2014; a.o.). DRT provides a simple and straightforward representation of the discourse participants shared understanding of the world and visually represents context change and update, capturing the conversational dynamics in an intuitive and simple way. In addition, honorifics were given a novel analysis in terms of the speaker authority for her preferences and conversational negotiations. The proposed theory offered a new perspective to utterance force and social meaning as well as a concrete tool to analyze them.

⁸ In my approach, the ‘distancing’ effect of the polite forms is explained in terms of the speaker’s low authority for her preferences. That is, the speaker indicates her lack of engagement/involvement for the prominent alternative, thus distancing herself from the addressee.

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