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문학석사학위논문

Korean College EFL Students'  
Use of English Discourse Markers

2014 년 8 월

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# Korean College EFL Students' Use of English Discourse Markers

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이 논문을 문학석사 학위논문으로 제출함

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of English discourse markers by Korean college EFL students from a discourse-pragmatic perspective. A good command of employing discourse markers is one of the key features of spoken English, and therefore very important to be learned for non-native speakers to speak English fluently. However, the study of the use of English discourse markers by non-native speakers is relatively unexplored as of yet in pragmatic research compared to those by native speakers. Thus, the main focus of the study is on analyzing the use of discourse markers by Korean college EFL students to see how often they use discourse markers and within which functions they use them in English discussions.

The data for this study come from two sources. The data for non-native speakers consist of audio-recordings of Korean college EFL class finals, where each pair of students in intermediate level had discussions on a given topic for five minutes. Next, to compare the use of discourse markers by Korean students, the data for native speakers, adopted from MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English), are also used. Here, the data come from a class discussion by 18 native college students. All these data are transcribed following the Conversation Analysis conventions.

For the analysis, first, 17 discourse markers *well, I mean, you know, now, kind of, like, but, and, so, or, oh, then, yeah, also, because, I think* and *actually* were selected from the transcribed data,

and their distribution was examined. Then, the discourse markers were divided into three groups based on their frequency. The first group is for the markers that are used substantially more by native speakers. The markers *well, I mean, you know, now, kind of* and *like* belong to this group. Considering that these are the typical discourse markers that native speakers frequently use in their everyday conversation, the underuse pattern of these markers by Korean students may reflect their lack of exposure to naturally occurring spoken discourse. Among these, the functions of *well, you know* and *like* are analyzed in detail. The second group includes the markers that show relatively similar frequency between native speakers and Korean students. The markers *but, and, so, or, oh* and *then* are in this group. Most of these markers are conjunctions or words that Korean students are familiar with, and this may cause the similar frequency between them. In this group, the functions of *so* are analyzed in detail. The last group is for the markers that are used substantially more by Korean students. The markers *yeah, also, because, I think* and *actually* are in this group. Most of these markers are also familiar lexical items for Korean students, and it can be assumed that they may replace these familiar markers with the appropriate markers which they are not familiar with, so the overuse pattern of these markers by Korean students may reflect their lack of the management skills of using these markers properly. Several functions of *yeah, I think* and *actually* are analyzed in detail. What is particularly noticeable in the analysis of the study is that except for the marker

*actually*, Korean EFL students used all these discourse markers as the function of a hesitation marker.

It is hoped that this study will make a contribution to the study of English discourse markers used by non-native speakers. The results of the analysis may contribute to understanding why some of the discourse markers are substantially underused or overused by Korean students. This study also offers some pedagogical implications by suggesting that the Korean EFL students need to be taught English in a more spontaneous setting where all the aspects of spoken English features including proper ways of using discourse markers are naturally displayed in order to improve their communicative competence in English.

**Keywords:** discourse marker functions, Korean college EFL students, English discussions, hesitation markers, discourse-pragmatic perspective

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background and Motivation

Over the last thirty years, the research of English discourse markers has become one of the main studies in the field of pragmatics (Levinson, 1983; Schiffrin, 1987; Fraser, 1990; Blakemore, 1992; Müller, 2005), and many researchers have much studied them under different terms, such as discourse particles (Schourup, 1985; Aijmer, 2002), discourse connectives (Blakemore, 1987, 1992), pragmatic markers (Fraser, 1988, 1990, 1996, 1998), pragmatic operators (Ariel, 1994, 1998), and so on. It is not only the terms, but also the definitions and functions of discourse markers that are varied for different groups of researchers. Most authors of discourse marker analyses, however, have agreed that they contribute to the pragmatic meaning of utterances and therefore play an important role in the pragmatic competence of the speaker.

Perhaps, one of the general definitions could be as follows: “The term ‘discourse marker’ refers to a word or phrase that is relatively syntax-independent and does not change the truth conditional meaning of the sentence, and has a somewhat empty meaning” (Moder & Martinovic-Zic, 2004: 117).

A good command of employing discourse markers is one of the key features of spoken English, and therefore very important to be learned for EFL learners to speak English smoothly and naturally as

native speakers.

Crystal (1988) mentions that the pragmatic expressions such as *you know* are comparable to the oil which helps us perform the complex task of spontaneous speech production and interaction smoothly and efficiently in our everyday conversation, and Svartvik (1980: 171) points out that “[i]f a foreign language learner says *five sheeps* or *he goed*, he can be corrected by practically every native speaker. If, on the other hand, he omits a *well*, the likely reaction will be that he is dogmatic, impolite, boring, awkward to talk to etc, but a native speaker cannot pinpoint an ‘error’.” which clearly shows how important it is for non-native speakers to learn and use discourse markers properly in English conversations.

In Stenström’s (1990) study, the occurrences of discourse markers are more than ten times as frequent in dialogues as in monologues. She points out that in conversations, lack of discourse markers makes speech dull and in monologues, it makes it unappealing to listeners. In this regard, when having a conversation in English with native speakers, it is essential for EFL learners to be able to interpret the use of discourse markers by native speakers, and to use them in appropriate contexts, since the misuse or non-use of discourse markers would possibly be interpreted wrongly by native speakers and lead to a weak interaction between speakers (Huang, 2011).

Discourse markers as a subject of study were probably first mentioned by Levinson (1983). In his book, he suggests that there are many words and phrases in English that indicate the relationship

between an utterance and the prior discourse. What they seem to do is to indicate how an utterance that contains them is a response to, or a continuation of the prior discourse portion. Although he did not give these words and phrases an exact name, his study became the first step to consider discourse markers as a class worthy of study on its own merits.

For native speakers of English, it is natural to employ discourse markers properly in their everyday conversation as they acquire this pragmatic competence in their childhood naturally since English is their mother tongue. Consequently, most researchers of discourse markers mentioned above have studied them based on the data which are from native speakers. While many studies have been done in exploring the acquisition of English morphology, syntax and phonology by non-native speakers of English, there is a paucity of research on the acquisition of English discourse markers by EFL learners as Warsi (2001) points out. That is to say, the study of discourse markers used by non-native speakers is relatively unexplored as of yet in pragmatic research compared to those by native speakers.

For non-native speakers, when and how to employ discourse markers properly and effectively is not an easy task when speaking in English since they could not get a chance to acquire this pragmatic competence in their childhood. However, if they want to avoid being treated as a person who is dogmatic, impolite, boring, or awkward to talk to (Svartvik, 1980), they must learn how to use discourse markers properly and effectively. In order to teach EFL learners the

negative effect of lacking discourse markers, and proper ways of using them, we first need to know how they understand the use of discourse markers, and which markers they underuse, overuse, or misuse in their English conversation.

The main focus of this study, therefore, is to investigate and analyze the use of discourse markers by Korean college EFL students to see how often they use discourse markers and within which functions they use them in English discussions. The study will first present the overall distribution of various discourse markers, and based on the distribution, several discourse markers will be selected from the groups of discourse markers that were underused and overused by non-native speakers, and that showed relatively similar frequency between native and non-native speakers. Then, the functions of these selected discourse markers will be analyzed in detail from discourse-pragmatic perspectives.

## 1.2. Organization of this Study

This study consists of five chapters. In Chapter one, the background and motivation for the study are explained with the brief introduction of the English discourse markers. In Chapter two, the theoretical background of the study is summarized with the description and categorization of discourse markers from the major researchers of the field. In the following chapter, the spoken data of non-native speakers the researcher collected for the study are introduced with the comparative data of native speakers. In Chapter 4, the distribution of

several discourse markers based on their frequency, and the analysis of the selected discourse markers used by non-native speakers are presented with the thorough description of functions of each selected marker. Finally, Chapter 5 summarizes the findings of the study and discusses the pedagogical implications, and then concludes the section with the limitations of the study.

## Chapter 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1. What Are Discourse Markers?

According to Fung and Carter (2007), discourse markers play a fundamental role in spoken interaction (Carter & McCarthy, 2006), and in most studies of discourse markers, they are defined as intra-sentential and supra-sentential linguistic units which fulfill a largely non-propositional and connective function at the level of discourse, and they also signal transitions in the evolving process of the conversation, index the relation of an utterance to the preceding context and indicate an interactive relationship between speaker, hearer, and message.

Schiffrin (1987: 31) defines discourse markers as ‘sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk’. She points out that discourse markers usually do not change the truth conditional meaning of the sentence, and markers themselves do not convey social and/or expressive meanings. Rather, markers are situated in very different discourse slots, and it is the utterance within that discourse slot which is interpreted for social and/or expressive meaning: *but*, for example, does not itself mean ‘challenge’—although the utterance which it precedes may certainly be interpreted as a challenge. Schiffrin includes 11 particles for the study of the discourse markers: *well, so, and, but, or, because, then, you know, I mean, now* and *oh*.

According to Jucker and Ziv (1998b), there is no general

agreement upon the definition of the term ‘discourse marker’. A variety of terms are used to refer to these elements. Among them are discourse markers by Schiffrin (1987), pragmatic markers by Fraser (1996), discourse particles by Schourup (1985), pragmatic particles by Östman (1989), pragmatic expressions by Erman (1987), or connectives by Blakemore (1987). The diversity of the terms reflects both a wide range of linguistic approaches that have been employed for their study, and the multiplicity of functions which these elements are said to fulfill. These functions include discourse connectors, turn-takers, confirmation-seekers, intimacy signals, topic-switchers, hesitation markers, boundary markers, fillers, prompters, repair markers, attitude markers and hedging devices (Jucker & Ziv, 1998b). I chose the term “discourse markers” following Schiffrin (1987), Jucker and Ziv (1998b) and Müller (2005) for this study since it’s a convenient cover term. Compared with other terms, it seems to be the one with the widest currency and with the least restricted range of application; one that enables us to include a broad variety of elements under a single conceptual umbrella as Jucker and Ziv (1998b) point out.

## 2.2. Discourse Markers in the Past Literature

The early research of discourse markers probably started with the article *Questionable answers and answerable questions* by Robin Lakoff (1973). In this article, she observes that *why* and *well* at the beginning of answers can be used only under certain conditions. This might be the meaningful comment for the study of discourse markers,

but the topic accounted for only a little in her article.

Another early research of discourse markers was done by Labov and Fanshel (1977). They deal with the word *well* in their book, and they state that *well* refers backwards to the topic that is already shared knowledge among participants.

There were a few other studies on discourse markers as a linguistic entity after them, but discourse markers were not considered as one class which is worthy enough for study on its own features and values until early 1980s. Researchers like Levinson (1983) and Zwicky (1985) are the ones who start to put an interest in discourse markers and consider them as one class. Levinson (1983) mentions that there are certain words that indicate the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse. The examples of such words he suggests are *but, well, so, therefore, still, however, anyway, besides, actually*, and so on, which are used in the utterance-initial position. He points out that what these words do is to indicate how the utterance that contains them is a response to, or a continuation of, some portion of the prior discourse.

Zwicky (1985) mentions that discourse markers must be treated separately from other function words, for they often occur at the beginning of sentences to continue the conversation. They are also prosodically independent, being both accented and prosodically separated from their surrounding context by pauses, intonation breaks, or both. He also suggests that discourse markers are usually monomorphemic but can be morphologically complex, and are syntactically insulated

from the rest of the sentence in which they occur and form no sort of unit with adjacent words.

Schourup (1985) is also one of the researchers who put an interest in studying discourse markers. He presents a long list of various uses of *like*, *well*, *y'know*, and stressed their similarity in function as markers of non-equivalence between a statement and what the speaker has in mind. He notes that *like* often occurs clause-initially after some prefatory material, and suggests that it is used as a pausal interjection because this is a position where hesitation elements occur frequently and indeed *like* often co-occurs with filled or unfilled pauses in these contexts.

It was in the mid-1980s that the thorough research effort for discourse markers began, with an increasing interest in what they are, what they mean, what functions they demonstrate, and how individual discourse markers pattern. Schiffrin (1987) is ranked as one of the first and most important researchers who put the detailed effort for the study of discourse markers. She analyzes 11 English particles *and*, *because*, *but*, *I mean*, *now*, *oh*, *or*, *so*, *then*, *well* and *y'know* in detail as they occur in unstructured interview conversations, and labels them 'discourse markers'. Her model of five planes of talk has been applied by many other studies afterwards (e.g. Salmons, 1990; Hays, 1992; Demirci & Kleiner, 1997; Kyratzis & Ervin-Tripp, 1999; Fung & Carter, 2007).

In her book, Schiffrin claims that it is not easy to put discourse markers into one linguistic class, and she even suggests

that paralinguistic features and non-verbal gestures can be classified as discourse markers. In this regard, Schiffrin (1987: 328) maintains that we should try to find common characteristics of these items to delimit what linguistic conditions allow an expression to be used as a marker. But such an approach would require not only discovery of the shared characteristics of an extremely diversified set of expressions in English, but also analysis across a wide body of typologically diverse language to discover what other linguistic resources are drawn upon for use as markers.

She then makes some suggestions on what comprises a marker as below (ibid.):

It has to be syntactically detachable from a sentence.

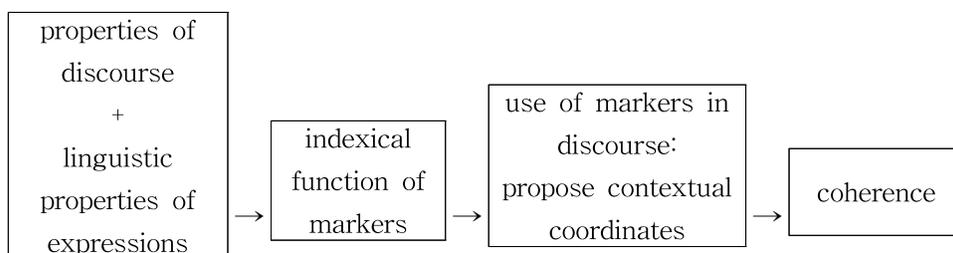
It has to be commonly used in initial position of an utterance.

It has to have a range of prosodic contours.

It has to be able to operate at both local and global levels of discourse, and on different planes of discourse.

Schiffrin points out that all the markers she has described have their own meanings except for *oh* and *well*, and suggests that each discourse marker has a core meaning. She realizes that her focus on those 11 discourse markers can be quite narrow and then suggests some other expressions which can also be treated as discourse markers like perception verbs such as *see*, *look* and *listen*, deictics such as *here* and *there*, interjections such as *gosh* and *boy*, meta-talk such as *this is the point* and *what I mean is*, and quantifier phrases such

as *anyway*, *anyhow* and *whatever*.



< Figure 1. *why use discourse markers?* (Schiffrin, 1987: 315) >

According to Schiffrin, as Figure 1 suggests, it is the properties of discourse together with the linguistic properties of the expression (meaning and/or grammatical properties) which provide markers with their indexical functions: markers index the location of an utterance within its emerging local contexts. It is the indexical function of markers which is the key to understanding why they are used: markers propose the contextual coordinates within which an utterance is produced and designed to be interpreted. That is to say, discourse markers serve an integrative function in discourse and thus contribute to discourse coherence.

Fraser (1988, 1990, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999) is another well-known researcher who puts the detailed effort for the study of discourse markers. In his study, Fraser (1999) characterizes a discourse marker as a linguistic expression only which has a core meaning that can be enriched by the context, and signals the relationship that the speaker intends between the utterance the discourse marker introduces and

the foregoing utterance. According to him, discourse markers are lexical expressions such as those shown in bold in the following examples:

- (1-a) We were late in leaving home. ***Nevertheless***, we arrived on time.
- (1-b) It should fly. ***After all***, we followed directions.
- (1-c) It's been a lousy day. The rain spoiled our picnic. ***Moreover***, John didn't come.
- (1-d) A: I like him. B: ***So***, you think you'll ask him out?
- (1-e) We ought to speak to Harry about that point. ***Incidentally***, where is he today? (Fraser, 1997)

Fraser (1997) defines a discourse marker as a lexical expression which signals the relationship between the discourse segment of which it is a part, S2, and the foregoing segment, S1. Each discourse marker has a core meaning, but the meaning is not conceptual, such as is the case for the noun *girl* which denotes a young, female human, but rather procedural, where the discourse marker signals how S2 is to be interpreted, given S1. For example, in (1-a) above, where the S2 is "we arrived on time." and the S1 is "We were late in leaving home.", the discourse marker *nevertheless* signals that we should interpret S2 as being in contrast with an expected implication of S1, in this case that we would be late in arriving. According to Fraser's definition, the main role of a discourse marker is to establish a contrastive relationship between the two sequences, S1 and S2, which it connects.

### 2.3. Discourse Marker Use in Native and Non-native English

So far, I have introduced the general definitions and functions of discourse markers from the past literature. As mentioned earlier, most of the researchers have used the spoken data by native speakers of English for their studies of discourse markers. However, if discourse markers have certain roles and functions in communication, then it is obvious that they are also quite important elements to be learned by EFL learners as well. Unfortunately, most researchers paid little attention to the spoken data by non-native speakers for their studies until the late 1980s, and relatively limited research has been undertaken on the range and variety of discourse markers used by non-native speakers in spoken English. Comparative usage between native and non-native speakers and the pedagogical significance they have in an ESL/EFL classroom have been studied even less (Fung & Carter, 2007).

One of the first attempts to investigate the use of discourse markers by non-native speakers came from Germany in 1989, with Russian as a foreign language. Rathmayr (1989) deals with how foreign language learners acquire the pragmatic competence with the use of certain discourse markers. She tries to identify means by which students would comprehend how to use discourse markers. In order to do so, she analyzes spoken texts as to the frequency of discourse markers and compares texts with and without the markers to sensitize students for their function. She also discusses the use of discourse markers as mitigators on various face-threatening speech acts to help the students understand discourse marker functions by

conducting role plays and discussions of real situations in which a discourse marker was or could have been employed as a means of developing active marker use.

The book *Discourse Markers in Native and Non-native English Discourse* by Simone Müller (2005) is well-known for the discourse marker research which deals with foreign language learners. In the book, Müller first provides a thorough review of the literature in discourse markers, and then discusses the properties of the functions of discourse markers and how they fit into the study of second language acquisition and applied linguistics. She then focuses on an in-depth analysis of the use of four selected discourse markers *so*, *well*, *you know* and *like* by native speakers and non-native learners of English.

The data for her study were collected in an experimental situation. Students from the University of Giessen in Germany and California State University at Long Beach in the USA participated in the experiment. Two students were assigned roles and put in a room to watch a silent movie. After the first part of the movie, student A was asked to come out and retell the first part of the movie to other students outside, while student B watched the second part. Student B then retold the second part to student A, and then the two students were asked to discuss the movie, with a list of questions.

The functions of four selected discourse markers *so*, *well*, *you know* and *like* used by American and German students are thoroughly analyzed in the book. For the functions of the first marker *so*, Müller identifies a total of nine discourse marker functions of it, and these

functions are divided into those working at the textual level and those working at the interactional level. Table 1 below shows the list of those nine discourse marker functions of *so*.

Table 1 Discourse marker functions of *so* identified by Müller (2005: 68)

Textual Level	Interactional Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>marking results or consequence</u></li> <li>- main idea unit marker</li> <li>- <u>summarizing/rewording/giving an example</u></li> <li>- <u>sequential so</u></li> <li>- boundary marker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- speech act marker - question or request</li> <li>- speech act marker - opinion</li> <li>- marking implied result</li> <li>- marker of a transition relevance place</li> </ul>

The discourse marker *so* performs nine different discourse functions as above, and the three most common functions in the data, which are underlined in the table, are used more by American students at statistically significant levels. German students who had higher levels of contact to native speakers of English also used the marker *so* more in these functions than the Germans who had little contact with native English speakers.

Next, to describe functions of the marker *well*, Müller identifies a total of twelve discourse marker functions of it, and these functions, once again, are divided into those working at the textual level and those working at the interactional level. The next table shows the list of the twelve discourse marker functions of *well*.

Table 2 Discourse marker functions of *well* identified by Müller (ibid.: 107)

Textual Level	Interactional Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>searching for the right phrase</u></li> <li>- rephrasing/correcting</li> <li>- quotative <i>well</i></li> <li>- move to the main story</li> <li>- introducing the next scene</li> <li>- <u>conclusive <i>well</i></u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>indirect answer</u></li> <li>- direct answer</li> <li>- response to self-raised expectations</li> <li>- contributing an opinion</li> <li>- <u>continuing an opinion/answer</u></li> <li>- evaluating a previous statement</li> </ul>

(Four underlined functions in the table are the ones that German students use significantly more often than American students in her data.)

The results for the discourse marker functions of *well* show that German non-native speakers use this discourse marker more often than native speakers, at least for certain functions. Use of *well* when searching for the right word and in indirect answer were much more frequent among German students, and there were also two certain functions, conclusive *well* and continuing an opinion/answer, which were only used by some German students but none of the Americans.

Next, to describe the functions of the marker *you know*, Müller identifies ten discourse marker functions of it into two levels. The next table shows the list of those ten functions of the marker *you know*.

Table 3 Discourse marker functions of *you know* identified by Müller (ibid.: 157)

Textual Level	Interactional Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- marking lexical or content search</li> <li>- marking false start and repair</li> <li>- marking approximation</li> <li>- introducing an explanation</li> <li>- quotative <i>you know</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “imagine the scene”</li> <li>- <b><u>“see the implication”</u></b></li> <li>- reference to shared knowledge</li> <li>- <b><u>appeal for understanding</u></b></li> <li>- acknowledge that the speaker is right</li> </ul>

The results for the discourse marker functions of *you know* also show the pattern of American students using this discourse marker at much higher rates than Germans, just like discourse marker *so* but with stronger results than for *so*. That is, except for two underlined, all functions of *you know* in the table show statistically significant differences in rates of use between groups.

The last selected discourse marker is *like*, which has the relatively fewer functions than other selected markers. Müller identifies only four discourse marker functions of *like*, and they are (ibid.: 204):

- searching for the appropriate expression
- marking an approximate number or quantity
- introducing an example
- marking lexical focus

Finally, her study is concluded with the discussion of how discourse markers are presented in several leading English textbooks

and some discussions of how this might have influenced the use of discourse markers in the non-native speakers' data.

Zhao (2013) also conducts an investigation on discourse markers *well*, *I mean* and *you know* in speech used by Chinese students who are learning English as their second language, and the result of the frequency of three selected markers shows that the marker *well* is the only one that is used more frequently both by high-level and intermediate-level English learners compared with English native speakers. He simply explains the result by claiming that it does not mean that Chinese students have a good command of the discourse marker *well*. On the contrary, they may only notice certain function of *well*, but not to understand its proper usage, which as a result leads to overproduction. His analysis will be discussed more in the following section.

There are also other studies which explore the use of certain discourse markers by non-native speakers. The use of the marker *yeah* has been studied by many researchers (Yngve, 1970; Duncan & Fiske, 1977; Schegloff, 1982; Jefferson, 1985, 1993; Drummond & Hopper, 1993c; Gardner, 2001), but most of these studies are based on the data from native speakers, and they mainly focus on how the marker *yeah* is used to establish reciprocity in turn-initial position. Those researchers above have observed the marker *yeah* under the notions of back-channel cue (Yngve, 1970), acknowledgement token (Jefferson, 1993; Drummond & Hopper, 1993a, 1993b), continuer (Schegloff, 1982), speaker incipiency (Drummond & Hopper, 1993b)

and agreement token (Schegloff, 1982).

The studies of the use of the marker *yeah* by Wong (2000) and Y. Park (2004), however, are different from those above since they are based on the data from non-native speakers, and they observe *yeah* in other positions with different functions.

First, Wong's (2000) study is concerned with the marker *yeah* observed in the speech of non-native speakers of English whose native language is Mandarin. She observes the marker *yeah* in a new position which is not previously studied in the past literature. She focuses on the use of the marker *yeah* by Mandarin speakers in turn-medial position and not turn-initial position. Furthermore, the function of the marker *yeah* in her study is clearly not that of continuer. Wong (ibid.: 58) discovers that the non-native speaker does not produce a freestanding acknowledgment token (e.g. *yeah*); talk both precedes and follows the marker *yeah*. However, the talk that follows the marker *yeah* is not done as a mechanism for gaining speakership from a position of passive reciprocity, and the marker *yeah* is not employed in the service of agreement with prior talk from another speaker.

In her study, Wong (ibid.: 59) analyzes the use of the marker *yeah* by non-native speakers in detail. The first finding that she mentions is that non-native speaker produces disfluencies (cut-offs, sound stretches, *uh*, etc.) that are followed by the marker *yeah*. The repair initiated leads to successful resolution of the trouble source, which gets the speaker to the end of the turn. The repairs are in the

nature of replacement, insertion and deletion. These are forms of self-initiated repair, among others, observed in native-speaker English conversation, moreover, forms equivalent to native-speaker practice especially if the marker *yeah* were omitted from the repair segment.

The next finding in her study is that non-native speakers display that they also achieve self-initiated repair as native speakers of English conversation do by relying on the practice of disfluency, pause and repair. In other words, they display that they also produce same-turn repairs, which do not make use of the marker *yeah* in the repair segment.

Finally, she finds out that non-native speakers produce repair-initiation signals (cut-offs, sound stretch, etc.) followed by the marker *yeah*, but no actual repair occurs except a partial recycling of talk that had preceded the marker *yeah*.

Y. Park (2004) also explores the marker *yeah* used by non-native speakers. She focuses on the use of the marker *yeah* by Korean students which follows the native speaker's continuer such as *uh huh*. In her study, Y. Park (ibid.: 101) analyzes the use of *yeah* in four different interactional contexts, and the analysis of the marker *yeah* in this study is based on her first and last contexts observed. The first one observed involves the use of the freestanding *yeah* after the non-native speaker completes the prior turn with continuing intonation. After the native speaker provides a continuer, the non-native speaker ends the turn with *yeah*, marking the prior turn to be complete and existing the turn.

Unlike the first one, the last context examined involves the non-native speaker's continuation of his/her turn after producing *yeah*, and it is related to repair sequences. After the native speaker either initiates a repair or a correction and the non-native speaker responds to the repair initiation, the native speaker provides a continuer, bringing the repair sequence to a closure and allows the non-native speaker to continue. Then, the non-native speaker, before returning to the previous sequence in pursuit, provides *yeah*.

There are more recent studies which examine the Korean students' use of certain discourse markers by comparing with native speakers' use. First, Y. Kim (2006) investigates Korean students' interactional use of the marker *actually*. She examines the functions of *actually* in non-native speakers' conversation as compared with native speakers' data. She demonstrates in detail the interactional functions of *actually* in non-native speakers' spoken discourse. As for the distribution of *actually* in her study, most tokens of *actually* are placed in TCU-initial, and TCU-final *actually* is rarely used though most of the major functions of *actually* in native speakers' data appear in non-native speakers' discourse. According to Y. Kim, non-native speakers do not frequently use *actually* in their spoken discourse and do not demonstrate different interactional use of *actually* at different TCU positions as native speakers do.

Another study on the use of the certain discourse marker by Korean students is focused on the marker *but*. S. Kim (2006) investigates the use of the discourse marker *but* in non-native

speakers' conversation data which shows the different functions of the target form that are mainly resorted to by non-native speakers with two different levels of English proficiency. The results of her study show that the discourse marker *but* occurs at turn-initial positions in the following four sequential environments: in direct disagreement, in topic resumption, in topic shift and in sequence-closing sequences. The turn-medial *but* serves four other interactional functions: connecting a preliminary sequence to the main action, marking the place where the punch line of a story starts, allowing the speaker to self-return after self-interruption or self-repairs and marking a self-repair. In her study, Korean EFL students in the intermediate level make frequent use of *but* in the context of marking a punch line and a speaker return, and make comparatively infrequent use of the form in direct disagreement and topic management. This pattern reflects their general passive participation in conversations.

So far, I have summarized the description and categorization of the English discourse markers in the past literature, and then reviewed the studies of discourse markers used by non-native speakers of English. In the following chapters, I will examine the distribution of selected discourse markers used by Korean college EFL students, and analyze the certain functions for which they use those discourse markers.

## Chapter 3. Data

The data for this study come from two sources. The first data come from Korean college students at the intermediate level of English. The data consist of audio-recordings of the final exams of 4 EFL classes taught in a university in Seoul, Korea. The title of the course is “College English 2: Speaking”, which is the mandatory course for students who have the intermediate English level with TEPS (Test of English Proficiency developed by Seoul National University) score between 700 to 799, or who took the prerequisite course called “College English 1”. Each class is comprised of 20 to 24 students, and the recorded data are the final exam for which two students have English discussions on a given topic for 5 minutes. Each pair randomly picks one topic from the list as below:

- What examples of the invasion of personal space can you think of in modern society? What do you do when you feel your personal space has been invaded?
- “When in Korea, do as the Koreans do.” What does a foreigner coming to live and work in your country need to know about Korean culture?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in a large city like Seoul?
- What factors might play a significant role in how Koreans achieve financial success?
- What are some of the positive and negative aspects of both central economic planning and market capitalism in your opinion?

- What are some solutions to the problem of poverty in a wealthy country such as Korea?
- What do you understand by the terms *poverty* and *wealth*? Is the gap between the two growing in your country? If so, why?

These topics are not provided to the students until the day for the final exam, so they can not practice the discussion with their partners in advance. After picking up one of the topics, the native instructor gives a pair 2 minutes to think about the topic, and then they start to talk about it freely for 5 minutes without any intervention from the instructor. From the audio-recordings of 40 pairs' discussions, I first chose 16 pairs, and then transcribed 80 minutes of recordings and a total of 10,560 words.

Next, to compare the use of discourse markers by Korean students, the data for native speakers, adopted from MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English), are also used. Here, the data come from a class discussion by 18 native college students, and the topic for the discussion is American cultures and politics. The data is 55 minutes of recordings and a total of 7,220 words.

All these data were transcribed following the transcription conventions of Conversation Analysis.

## Chapter 4. Analysis

As mentioned earlier, the main focus of the study is to investigate and analyze the use of discourse markers by non-native speakers. To conduct the study, I will first examine the distribution of several discourse markers used by Korean EFL students from my data, and by native speakers from MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English). The thorough analysis of the functions for selected discourse markers will be followed.

### 4.1. Distribution of the Selected Discourse Markers

I first selected 17 discourse markers *well, I mean, you know, now, kind of, like, but, and, so, or, oh, then, yeah, also, because, I think* and *actually* from the data which are studied as the typical discourse markers in the past literature (Schourup, 1985; Schiffrin, 1987; Fraser, 1997; Müller, 2005, just to name a few). I then counted all these selected markers from the transcribed data to make the distribution chart showing the frequency of them. The total results of the data are shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4 The frequency of the selected discourse markers

Discourse markers (Alphabetical order)	Native speakers (Total of 7,220 words)	Non-native speakers (Total of 10,560 words)
<i>actually</i>	1 0.1/1,000	10 0.9/1,000

<i>also</i>	3 0.4/1,000	52 4.9/1,000
<i>and</i>	172 23.8/1,000	252 23.8/1,000
<i>because</i>	18 2.4/1,000	71 6.7/1,000
<i>but</i>	42 5.8/1,000	89 8.4/1,000
<i>I mean</i>	19 2.6/1,000	8 0.7/1,000
<i>I think</i>	16 2.2/1,000	95 8.9/1,000
<i>kind of</i> (= <i>kinda</i> )	11 1.5/1,000	5 0.4/1,000
<i>like</i>	128 17.7/1,000	32 3/1,000
<i>now</i>	11 1.5/1,000	8 0.7/1,000
<i>oh</i>	8 1.1/1,000	21 1.9/1,000
<i>or</i>	35 4.8/1,000	38 3.5/1,000
<i>so</i>	89 12.3/1,000	162 15.3/1,000
<i>then</i>	23 3.1/1,000	38 3.5/1,000
<i>well</i>	25 3.4/1,000	3 0.2/1,000
<i>yeah</i> (= <i>yah/yeh</i> )	52 7.2/1,000	348 32.9/1,000
<i>you know</i>	21 2.9/1,000	6 0.5/1,000

(The number on the first line of each cells is the raw number of the occurrences, and the second line shows the occurrences per 1,000 word tokens.)

All of those words in Table 4 can be used with both discourse marker and non-discourse marker functions, so the number of each marker with non-discourse marker functions such as the collocation of the word *well* as an adverb (e.g. *well done*) is excluded from the results for the study.

The results of Table 4 can be divided into three groups based on their frequency as shown in Table 5 below:

Table 5 The categorization of discourse markers based on their frequency

Category	Discourse markers in point
Substantially underused by non-native speakers	<i>well, I mean, you know, now, kind of, like</i>
Similar frequency between native and non-native speakers	<i>but, and, so, or, oh, then</i>
Substantially overused by non-native speakers	<i>yeah, also, because, I think, actually</i>

The first group is for the markers that are used substantially more by native speakers. The markers *well, I mean, you know, now, kind of* and *like* belong to this group. Considering that these are the typical discourse markers that native speakers frequently use in their everyday conversation, the underuse pattern of these markers by Korean students may reflect their lack of exposure to naturally occurring spoken discourse. Particularly, the marker *well* is more than 17 times as frequent (3.4 vs. 0.2 tokens per 1,000 words) in

native speakers' data as in the Korean students' data.

The second group includes the markers that show relatively similar frequency between native speakers and Korean students. The markers *but*, *and*, *so*, *or*, *oh* and *then* are in this group. Most of these markers are conjunctions or words that Korean students are familiar with, and this may cause the similar frequency between them. Even though the frequency of these markers is similar, it does not mean that the distributions of these markers in functions between them are also similar.

The last group is for the markers that are used substantially more by Korean students. The markers *yeah*, *also*, *because*, *I think* and *actually* are in this group. Most of these markers are also familiar lexical items for Korean students, and it can be assumed that they may replace these familiar markers with the appropriate markers which they are not familiar with, so the overuse pattern of these markers by Korean students may reflect their lack of the management skills of using these markers properly. Particularly, the marker *also* is more than 12 times as frequent (0.4 vs. 4.9 tokens per 1,000 words) in the Korean students' data as in the native speakers' data.

## 4.2. The Use of Selected Discourse Markers

To find differences in how native and non-native speakers use selected discourse markers in three groups, the typical discourse markers from each group are chosen to analyze their functions. First of all, several functions of the markers *well*, *you know* and *like* from the

first group are analyzed in detail to see why they are substantially underused by Korean students, and then from the second group, the functions of *so* are analyzed in detail since the marker *so* is one of the most frequently used markers both by native speakers and Korean students with various functions. Finally, the functions of *yeah*, *actually* and *I think* from the last group are analyzed in detail to see why they are substantially overused by Korean students in this section.

The first group of the markers to be examined in detail is the markers *well*, *you know* and *like* which are used substantially more often by native speakers. Most functions that are analyzed in the following sections are mainly based on the framework of Müller's (2005) study mentioned earlier.

#### 4.2.1. Discourse Marker Functions of *Well*

In this section, several functions of the marker *well* used by Korean students will be analyzed in detail to see why it is substantially underused by them. According to Müller (2005), the marker *well* can be used as a delay device or to mark that what has been said is insufficient for some reasons. The discourse marker *well* is widely known as one having the function to signal and mitigate some sort of confrontation. Watts (1986, 1989) also explains *well* as a move minimizing the face threat in a face-threatening act.

##### 4.2.1.1. Searching for the Right Phrase

The first function of the marker *well* to be examined is when it is

used to indicate that the speaker is searching for the right phrase. According to the Cobuild dictionary (1987), the discourse marker *well* can be used “just before or after you pause, especially to give yourself time to think about what you are going to say next”. Biber et al. (1999) also state that “*well* can also occur in the middle of an utterance as a signal of self-correction or deliberation over the choice of expression”. The marker *well* used by Korean students in the data also shows this tendency as below:

(1) K & S

02 K.H: so what do you think the:: import- the most important thing to  
 03 succeed do succeed in Korean financial (0.5) success=  
 04 -> S.H: =yeah (0.3) **well** uh: (0.3) I wa- I want to start from my  
 05 uh::: in the earlier nineteen fifties  
 06 K.H: yes=  
 07 S.H: =yah because at that time our uh economics was very (0.3)  
 08 terrible. [uh:: because of the (0.5) war=  
 09 K.H: [yes  
 10 S.H: =yah [so at that time  
 11 K.H: [yes °after world war two°

In extract (1), S.H discusses with K.H the factors that play a significant role in financial success of Korea. S.H uses *well* right after *yeah* with 0.3 second pause and before the marker *uh* at the beginning of her turn in line 4. It seems that She uses this *well* to delay her turn and get more time to think about what she is going to say next

since she has trouble finding the right phrase at the moment. The marker *well* here is surrounded by pauses, the marker *uh* and truncation (I wa- I want to). According to Müller's (2005) study, truncation and multiple pauses around *well* in this function are frequent, particularly in the non-native speakers' speech.

(2) K & S

- 30 S.H: tried to be like them so we also (0.3) we try to  
31 persivi- °uh: (0.5) (persivian) uh: yeah° also have  
32 a perseverance to go ahead to make our economic  
33 situation more good (.) better market and the  
34 situation.  
35 K.H: yes  
36 → S.H: yes so (0.3) **well** uh:: (0.2) so how about your opinion that  
37 how, what can we do in this situation?  
38 K.H: oh really=  
39 S.H: =yah

With the multiple pauses, the marker *uh* and repetition of 'so', S.H once again uses the marker *well* in line 36 as a delay device with the function of searching for the right phrase to say next. Multiple pauses, truncated words and repetitions with the markers *uh* and *uhm* are typical signs that are found before and after hesitation markers (Müller, 2005), so it can also be explained that S.H uses the marker *well* as the function of a hesitation marker.

#### 4.2.1.2. Mitigator of Face-threatening Acts

According to Svartvik (1980), a mitigator of some sort of confrontation is one of the generally acknowledged functions of the marker *well*, and Nikula (1996) calls *well* the pragmatic force modifier, which can intensify or decrease the force of an utterance. The marker *well* in this function makes the utterance less face-threatening as a mitigating face. The marker *well* in my data is also used for this function in the following extract:

#### (3) C & E

- 15 E.J: and I love the Pohang in like small city because it's really  
16 clear atmosphere and in my house the cl- have a clear view  
17 (win wheat) large lawn and just have uh: one elementary  
18 school for view and it's really ahm clear and uh really nice  
19 so I think environment is VERY important for me to live=  
20 C.M: =eu-hm  
21 E.J: so it's uh:: I prefer to live in small city.  
22 C.M: oh, so you love to live in the small city not living in the  
23 big city?  
24 E.J: eu-hm  
25 -> C.M: yeah (0.3) **well** but uh: (0.5) in my opinion I love the dynamic  
26 life in a big city and uh I have visited New York and Japan  
27 >ah Tokyo in Japan but< both uh cities were very big cities  
28 and l'd love to go there also Seoul is very good so uh: I  
29 want to live in a big city in outside Korea in the future

At the beginning of extract (3), E.J's utterance shows that she prefers to live in a small city rather than a big crowded city like Seoul. Then, C.M starts her utterance with "*yeah well but uh*" with 0.3 and 0.5 second pauses in line 25. The first word *yeah* can be described as a phrase of agreement. In a discussion, directly disagreeing with the counterpart can be viewed as a little too confrontational and rude. Therefore, C.M softens her disagreement by beginning with a phrase of agreement *yeah* first, and then uses a contrasting word *but*. The hesitation device *uh* after *but* can also be noted to be used to avoid direct disagreement. Since she disagrees with E.J's opinion, C.M's turn in line 25 is dispreferred one in the situation which can be face-threatening to E.J. The discourse marker *well* here is used as a mitigating face device of an upcoming disagreement. By 'dispreferred', Pomerantz (1984a, 1984b) and other conversation analysts mean that an utterance is marked or notable within the unfolding course of action. As such, speakers often mark the production of their dispreferred responses with a slight delay (e.g. 0.3 second pause in line 25) preceding the utterance or a hedging discourse marker like *well*.

(4) *well* [from Schiffrin, 1987: 109]

- 1 Debby : Do you ever go down in the winter?  
2 -> Zelda : No:. **Well** we go down but our house is closed.

The marker *well* has been noted to be used as a preface to mark a dispreferred response (Pomerantz, 1984a, 1984b; Sacks, 1987), that is

to say, a response that a next speaker uses to deflect what has just been said. Often, this response is a disagreement. In extract (4), Zelda uses the marker *well* in line 2 as prefacing an account for the original negative response.

Let us now turn to the frequency of the marker *well* used by Korean students. In Müller's (2005) data, the German students as non-native speakers use the discourse marker *well* more than twice as frequently as the American students. German students particularly seem to favor using *well* in her study. The result of Zhao's (2013) study also shows that Chinese students use the discourse marker *well* more frequently than native speakers. He simply explains the result by claiming that it means that Chinese students may only notice certain function of *well*, but not to understand its proper usage, which as a result leads to overproduction.

The result of my data for the marker *well*, however, shows the noticeable difference with the ones of Müller (2005) and Zhao's (2013) studies. As we saw in Table 4, Korean students used *well* only for three times which is extremely rare compared with the frequency of native speakers. It can easily be considered that Korean students with intermediate level of English do not attain a native-like competence and the management skills for using the marker *well* properly. My assumption is, however, a little more complicated than this simple consideration. As mentioned earlier, most of *well*'s uttered by native speakers are used under the functions of hesitation markers or mitigating face (Sacks, 1987; Schiffrin, 1987). The reason why Korean students used

the marker *well* so little in the data can be explained by following assumptions: First, it can be assumed that those Korean students with intermediate level simply do not understand the common functions of *well*, and therefore, do not know when and how to use the marker *well* properly with the appropriate functions in their speech. Second, on the other hand, it can be assumed that they actually do know and understand the common functions of *well* and have a good command of employing this marker, but they choose not to use it intentionally because of the test-based setting they are in. The purpose of their discussions is for the final exam which evaluates how they speak English fluently and smoothly. In this case, even though they know how to use *well* as a hesitation marker, they may think it is not profitable to use the marker with this function because using the hesitation markers may display their disfluency in spoken English. Furthermore, in a class discussion for American students, participants usually agree or disagree with others to express their opinions, and the marker *well* is frequently used as a mitigating face when they need to disagree with others' ideas. In discussions for Korean students, however, they usually speak their opinions each other about the given topic for the exam rather than actually agree or disagree with each other. Their goal of the discussion is to display their fluency in spoken English by enumerating their opinions. In this regard, they do not have many opportunities to use the marker *well* as a mitigating face, and this may cause the rare use of the marker *well* by Korean students in the study.

## 4.2.2. Discourse Marker Functions of *You know*

In this section, two discourse marker functions of *you know* will be analyzed in detail. First, we can find the general definition of the expression *you know* from the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (COED) in the 1976 edition. It says that *you know* is a colloquial expression reminding the hearer “that he knows or should know a thing” or serving “as a mere gap-filler in conversation”. In this sense, the discourse marker *you know* can also be used as an expression when the speaker is thinking what to say next for his/her turn in the conversation.

According to Schourup (1985), the marker *you know* assumes certain kind of common ground between speakers and hearers, and it also expresses uncertainty about this common ground at the same time. So the speaker may use *you know* to clarify the words he/she pronounces have been understood, or to ask the hearer whether he/she is familiar with what the speaker talks about.

### 4.2.2.1. Making Lexical or Content Search

As illustrated above, the speakers can use the marker *you know* as to fill a gap in a conversation when they are uncertain about what they are saying or what they are going to say next (Collins Cobuild Dictionary, 1987). When using the discourse marker *you know*, pauses also play a role for indicating search. Östman (1989) distinguishes between lexical search, in which case *you know* is being followed by a pause, and content search, in which case *you know* is potentially

preceded by a pause. The marker *you know* used by Korean students for this function of making lexical or content search can be found in the following extract:

(5) D & G

- 30 D.K: that's what I mean so they have to I think governments has  
31 duty to protect the human rights
- 32 G.M: eu-mm=  
33 D.K: =of their people
- 34 G.M: yeah the:: (0.3) the aspect of your si- I agree with a little  
35 your opinion and I think yeah you are right I I have to I think  
36 the government have to how how to they use some skills not uh:  
37 not uhm money, not just give money
- 38 D.K: yes [yes
- 39 -> G.M: [yes so I I I think govern- (0.3) **you know**? (0.5) uh::  
40 -> the fish story. hhh **you know** yeah, yeah FISH story?=  
41 D.K: =hhh yeah I know the fish story hhh
- 42 G.M: the government have to teaching how to they get a fish yeah  
43 this in what eu-mm this is how what I think and the other, yes

G.M is trying to explain his opinion that the government should not just give money to people, but teach them to earn money for themselves, with the fish story as a metaphor. It seems that he uses *you know* in line 39 to get some time to think about the words he is trying to say. We can see the pauses before and after *you know* as signs that show the marker is used for the function of making lexical or

content search. In this regard, repetition, multiple pauses, truncated word ‘govern-’ and the marker *uh* represent that *you know* in line 39 is used for the function of a hesitation marker, as we saw in the analysis of the marker *well*.

In line 40, we can see another use of the marker *you know*, but with the different function. G.M uses *you know* this time to clarify the words, fish story, that he said have been understood, or to ask the hearer whether he is familiar with what he said. Müller (2005) classifies this function as ‘reference to shared knowledge’ in the list of discourse marker functions of *you know* in Table 3.

#### 4.2.2.2. Reference to Shared Knowledge

In the data of Müller’s study, the marker *you know* was frequently used to focus the hearer on information which was actually shared, and it means that the both participants understand the information of the reference, and so the speakers always know that the hearer has this relevant knowledge. There is also *you know* used by Korean students with this function as below:

##### (6) B & S

- 07 B.N: because in Korea uh in early nineteen fifties; [there is no  
08 S.H: [eu-hm::  
09 B.N: resources and there's no people [who has a high knowledge about  
10 S.H: [yah  
11 S.H: yah=  
12 B.N: =technic things?

13 S.H: yah

14 B.N: and there's no machinery so uh: (0.3) we just start little

15 eu-mm:: simple=

16 S.H: =eu-hm=

17 B.N: =business then we make money and we put this money to our

18 children [to uh:: take education

19 S.H: [eu-mm:

20 S.H: yah

21 B.N: so we can be rich like this because [they can learn the high

22 S.H: [eu-mm:

23 B.N: technology [then we made the=

24 S.H: [eu-mm:

25 S.H: =yah=

26 B.N: =black i-phone [things, yes hhh

27 S.H: [hahaha

28 B.N: what do you think about [this?

29 S.H: [uh: I want to point it out thee

30 -> government led, government led economic like **you know?**

31 that Park Jung-hee regime in nineteen sixties make a lot of

32 five year plan, and they the: (0.3) the government decided

33 which area they should give resources [to like

34 B.N: [eu-hmm, yeah

In line 30, S.H refers to the Park Jung-hee regime in the nineteen sixties in order to explain the time when the economic system was mainly led by the government in Korea. The speaker seems to be sure that the interlocutor also understands this reference and knows

the background information on it as he says it without any hesitation markers such as pauses or truncation. The use of *you know* with this function is also found in the following extract:

(7) D & S

- 59 S.A: =because in Western culture I think they really think privacy  
60 really important [so they have to knock the door before they  
61 D.Y: [ ° yeah right °  
62 S.A: coming inside the someone's office or someone's room but  
63 actually Korean people like especially when we are with family  
64 member, we don't really care about their privacy.  
65 D.Y: yeah  
66 S.A: so I think that can be another example and another differences  
67 they, foreign people have to know about.  
68 D.Y: yeah I think it's uh: an effect of Westernization  
69 S.A: yeah=  
70 D.Y: =because our parents didn't, didn't live in Westernized society  
71 S.A: eu-hmm  
72 D.Y: because there was a Korean society Korean style society but we  
73 are living in uh Westernized society, so [we have different manner  
(lines omitted)  
80 D.Y: =yeah of course we couldn't understand them too yeah.  
81 S.A: yeah true and also for the housing system as well when we see  
82 the traditional Korean housing we don't really have THICK walls  
83 -> between people, **you know**?  
84 D.Y: yeah

In line 83, S.A uses the marker *you know* at the end of his utterance, assuming that the interlocutor already knows what he is trying to say about the traditional Korean housing system. No hesitation markers such as truncation, repetition, self-repair, or pauses before and after *you know* can be the evidence that the reference is the shared knowledge at the moment. The discourse marker *you know* in this case is, once again, employed when the interlocutor simply has to be reminded or asked to access the shared knowledge at the point. This becomes clear with the interlocutor's response '*yeah*' in line 84, which means that the speaker can go ahead with his utterance, building on this understanding.

So far, we have looked at the functions of the discourse marker *you know* used by Korean students. The first function is to make lexical or content search when the speaker gives up searching for an expression or does not know what to say next about the topic at the moment. The speaker may use *you know* to appeal to the interlocutor for understanding in spite of the lack of mutual understanding. Signs such as repetition, truncation and multiple pauses found before and after *you know* explain that the marker is also used as a hesitation marker. The second function, however, is to refer to shared knowledge, and the speaker, this time, is certain about what he/she is talking about and also sure that the interlocutor already understands the reference with the background information of it. No hesitation markers are found in this function.

### 4.2.3. Discourse Marker Functions of *Like*

There are four discourse marker functions of *like* identified by Müller (2005), which are: ‘searching for the appropriate expression’, ‘marking an approximate number or quantity’, ‘introducing an example’ and ‘marking lexical focus’. Among these, two functions of the marker *like* used by Korean students in the data will be thoroughly analyzed in this section.

#### 4.2.3.1. Searching for the Appropriate Expression

The first function of the discourse marker *like* is searching for the appropriate expression, of which the marker *well* and *you know* also have the similar function. In this function, the speakers use *like* when they are not sure what to say next or to get some time to think about what they are trying to say. The following extract shows how Korean students use the discourse marker *like* within this function.

#### (8) D & M-3

39 D.M: =yeah the economy is controlled by the only few people like  
40 -> government officers uh (0.3) uhm:: **like** (0.3) very uh:: (0.5)  
41 elite, many [elite=  
42 M.N: [eu-hm  
43 D.M: =people so it can be uh: it can be uh it is controlled by  
44 them, so they have power to control all over the country=  
45 M.N: =eu-hm, yes

In extract (8), D.M tries to explain how socialism system can be corrupted when it is controlled by only a few officers in the high positions of the government. First of all, the word *like* in line 39 is used as the preposition. The preposition *like* compares two elements expressed in a noun phrase, such as Jane and an angel in the sentence “Jane is *like* an angel”. In line 39, two elements to be compared are the only few people and government officers. The preposition *like*, however, does not belong to the discourse marker functions to be examined. After D.M says the words ‘government officers’, it seems that he may feel that it is not good enough to explain the term ‘the officers in the high position’, so he tries to explain more about the term by adding the word ‘elite’. Before he says the word, he uses the marker *like* in line 40 to get some time to think about what to say next with multiple pauses before and after the marker, with some hesitation words such as *uh* and *uhm*. So it can be explained that *Like* in line 40 is used as a discourse marker with the function of searching for the appropriate expression, and all the hesitation devices around the marker are used as the signs that the speaker is trying to say something, but he/she does not know how to say it, so needs some moments to search that word. Let us take a look at another case of this function in the following extract:

(9) D & M-3

59 M.N: so that's the probl[em

60 D.M: [it if you want to realize that ideals of  
61 socialism everyone, everyone should be very uh very kind and  
62 good [and, yeahs  
63 M.N: [yeah  
64 D.M: [not, °not a good system°  
65 M.N: [in in reality is yeah reality is different [and  
66 D.M: [yeah is it  
67 -> that's it's seems to uh: (0.3) **like** this uhm: (0.5) mark- (0.3)  
68 MARKET capitalism is uh::: more realistic right.  
69 M.N: yeahs, so that's right almost every country they are following  
70 that system=  
71 D.M: =eu-hmj yeah right.

D.M in extract (9) tries to explain that the socialism is too ideal, and the market capitalism is more realistic in the present world. He, once again, uses the discourse marker *like* in line 67 with multiple pauses, and this means that he needs more time to search for the appropriate expression to say next. There are also the hesitation devices such as the markers *uh* and *uhm*, multiple pauses and a cut-off 'mark-' found before and after the marker *like*. Not only D.M, but also other Korean students in the data use the marker *like* mostly with this function. It can be explained that Korean students understand the function of searching for the appropriate expression that the discourse marker *like* has, and know how to use it at the appropriate place for this function.

#### 4.2.3.2. Introducing an Example

One of the main functions of the preposition *like* is to introduce a particular example of the word preceding it. For example, in the sentence “Now we have a world-widely known singer *like* PSY in Korea.”, *like* is syntactically immobile and can not be omitted without rendering the sentence ungrammatical. Furthermore, the preposition *like* is not the element to be examined in this study as I described in the preceding section. The marker *Like*, however, also can be used to introduce examples as a discourse marker function as in the following extract:

(10) D & S

- 72 D.Y: because there was a Korean society Korean style society but we  
73 are living in uh Westernized society, so [we have different manner  
(lines omitted)
- 80 D.Y: =yeah of course we couldn't understand them too yeah.  
81 S.A: yeah true and also for the housing system as well when we see  
82 the traditional Korean housing we don't really have THICK walls  
83 between people, you know?
- 84 D.Y: yeah  
85 S.A: but actually Western peo- Westernized housing like apartment  
86 -> these days we have **like** thick wa- thick walls between the  
87 -> rooms [and we have **like** really big partitions we can see visually  
88 D.Y: [eu-hmm;

S.A tries to explain that the Korean housing system has been Westernized

and it has no characteristics of the traditional Korean housing any more. *Like* in line 85 shows the typical features of the preposition *like*: it is syntactically immobile and can not be omitted without rendering the sentence ungrammatical. The marker *Like* in lines 86 and 87, however, is somewhat different. In order to explain how the Korean housing system has been Westernized, S.A uses the examples, ‘*we have like thick walls* and *like really big partitions*’, rather than describing all the changes for the structures and designs in the Westernized housing system. In lines 86 and 87, the marker *like* is used as the discourse marker with the function of introducing an example since it is grammatically optional, and the sentence would still be well-formed without the marker.

So far, we have looked at the two functions of the discourse marker *like* used by Korean students. The first one is the use of the marker *like* when the speaker is searching for the appropriate expression, or needs some time to think about what to say next. The hesitation devices such as multiple pauses, repetition, truncation and words like *uh* and *uhm* are found before and after the marker *like* within this function. In this regard, the marker *like* can be replaced with other discourse markers with the similar function such as the marker *well* and *you know* as illustrated earlier. The second function is that *like* can be used to introduce an example. This is different with the preposition *like* since it can be omitted without rendering the sentence ungrammatical.

#### 4.2.4. Discourse Marker Functions of *So*

In this section, several functions of the discourse marker *so* from the second group in Table 5, which includes the markers that show relatively similar frequency between native and non-native speakers, are analyzed in detail since it is one of the most frequently used markers both by native speakers and Korean students.

Among those nine discourse marker functions of *so* identified by Müller (2005) in Table 1, three functions of the marker *so* used by Korean students will be analyzed in detail, and another function which is not included in the list of nine functions of *so* will also be analyzed.

##### 4.2.4.1. Marking Results or Consequence

The first function of the marker *so* used by Korean students is 'marking results or consequence'. This is one of the main functions of the discourse marker *so* described in the past studies. According to Schiffrin (1987) and Blakemore (1988), the relationship expressed by *so* between the propositions before and after it is one of the interpretative options the hearer has anyway, and it makes *so* in this function not only syntactically optional but also semantically optional. Müller (2005) states that the task of *so* consists in facilitating the hearer's task by selecting one of these interpretative options.

The following extract shows 'marking results or consequence' function of the marker *so* used by Korean students:

(11) C & E

- 30 E.J: uh but and what is the advantage of living in large cities  
31 see the other advantages  
32 C.M: uh:: I think the convenient transportation.  
33 E.J: eu-hm;  
(lines omitted)  
43 E.J: but uh:: the hmm the crowded people and the [crowded  
44 C.M: [um  
45 E.J: anno- atmosphere and environment is very uh: nervous, nervous  
46 to me because I, I hate °I (hatz) the invasi- invasion° of  
47 >invasion of my privacy and< I want my elbow room to  
48 move easily so [but  
49 C.M: [yeah  
50 E.J: in large city and the especially in transportation I don't  
51 have any elbow room and my privacy the people really nervous  
52 -> me and it's, it's is a BIG deal for me **so** it's really big  
53 -> disadvantages of living in a large cit- city I think **so** I  
54 want, I want to live in a small city hhh

The marker *so* in line 52 marks *it's really big disadvantage of living in a large city* as a consequence of the speaker's dislike of not having any elbow room in the transportation and invasion of her privacy in a crowded big city. The marker *so* in line 53 also marks *I want to live in a small city* as a consequence of the speaker's dislike of living in a crowded big city. Since our world knowledge includes the fact that a person would want to live in a small city if he/she hates the invasion of privacy in a crowded big city, we can infer a

resultative relationship between “person hates the invasion of privacy in a crowded big city” and “person wants to live in a small city” even without the marker *so*. Therefore *so* in lines 52 and 53 which has the function of the marking of result or consequence can be omitted since it is both syntactically and semantically optional.

#### 4.2.4.2. Summarizing/Rewording/Giving an Example

The discourse marker *so* also can be used to summarize what the speaker had said before, to put it in different words, or to give an example for it. Within this function, the utterance following *so* expresses the same propositional idea as a previous utterance. Korean students in the data also use the marker *so* to summarize what they had said before, or to put it in different words as in the following extract:

#### (12) D & M-1

- 20 M.H: yeah okay uh:: uh theoretically uhm uh the socialism is very  
21 well-organized system uh based on uh all people  
22 D.S: yeah  
23 M.H: uh on the society so euhm the positive aspect is uh they uhm  
24 -> there is NO there, there is no unemployment [**so** everyone can  
25 D.S: [eu-hm  
26 M.H: work at any uh:: workplace  
27 D.S: yeah, right

D.S and M.H in extract (12) are talking about the positive aspects of

the socialism system. In lines 23 and 24, M.H states that the advantage of the socialism is that there is no unemployment. He, then, rewords his statement by saying “everyone can work at any workplace” after the marker *so*. The utterance after this *so* expresses the same propositional idea as a previous utterance in different words, so it can be explained that the marker *so* in line 24 is used for the function of summarizing or rewording.

#### 4.2.4.3. Boundary Marker

According to Müller’s (2005) study, the discourse marker *so* is often used as a boundary marker between the instructor’s sign and the beginning of the talk. Korean students in the data also use the marker *so* as a boundary marker when they start their discussions after the native instructor’s sign. There are 16 pairs of Korean students in the transcribed data for the study, and 7 pairs out of them start their discussions either with the marker *so* as the first word, or with the marker *okay* as some kind of acknowledgement, and then use the marker *so* as in the following extracts:

(13) K & S

01 T : okay please start now.  
 02 -> K.H: **so** what do you think the:: import- the most important thing to  
 03 succeed do succeed in Korean financial (0.5) success=  
 04 S.H: =yeah (0.3) well uh: (0.3) I wa- I want to start from my  
 05 uh::: in the earlier nineteen fifties  
 06 K.H: yes=

(14) D & J

01 T : okay please start now.  
02 -> D.Y: **so** ((cough)) eum:: I'll start with my experience=  
03 J.W: =eu-hmm  
04 D.Y: yes uh: uhm I always ride a (0.5) I use always a bus  
05 J.W: eu-hmm right  
06 D.Y: oh on my I'm going to school hhh

(15) C & J

01 T : you can start now.  
02 -> C.Y: **so** (0.3) .hhh let me ask you first  
03 J.H: yes  
04 C.Y: what do you think, what factors might play a significant role  
05 in how Koreans achieve financial success?=  
06

(16) D & M-1

01 T : okay please start now.  
02 -> M.H: **okay so** let me start with this subject uhm now we are living in  
03 uh market capitalism society [uh Korea but .hhh uh: we also  
04 D.S: [yeahs  
05 M.H: have different system uh yes central economic planning,  
06 planning [system uhmç  
07 D.S: [yeahs it's ah: it's something like socialism

In extracts (13), (14), (15) and (16), the first speaker of each discussion starts his/her turn with the marker *so* or *okay so* as

a boundary marker following the professor's sign to start the discussion. The markers *okay* and *so* are used as the global boundary markers in the situation of the story retelling in Kyratzis and Ervin-Tripp's (1999) study, which investigates the development of acquisition of three discourse markers *okay*, *now* and *so*.

Müller (2005) points out that, unlike other functions mentioned earlier, the discourse marker *so* in this function does not relate propositional ideas as resultative, main versus subordinate, summary or sequential.

#### 4.2.4.4. Hesitation Marker

The last function of the marker *so* is when it is used as a hesitation marker. As mentioned earlier, multiple pauses, truncated words and repetitions are signs of hesitation markers, and they are used when the speakers don't know what to say, or when they need to get some time to think about what to say next (Cobuild, 1987, 1995). The markers *well*, *you know* and *like* in the previous sections are used for the function of a hesitation marker. When the marker *well* is used for the function of 'searching for the right phrase', the marker *you know* for 'marking lexical or content search', and the marker *like* for 'searching for the appropriate expression', they are all used as hesitation markers with signs such as multiple pauses, truncation and repetitions before and after them.

The marker *so*, on the other hand, is not classified as the hesitation marker in the list of nine discourse marker functions of *so*

identified by Müller (2005). There's no result from her data that *so* is used as the hesitation marker either by native or non-native speakers. Korean students in the data, however, use the marker *so* as the hesitation marker as in the following extract:

(17) D & M-2

- 10 M.J: I uh:: every morning, I commute from my house in [Incheon=  
11 D.I: [uh-huhǃ  
12 M.J: =to SNU  
13 D.I: eu-mmm  
14 M.J: uh:: by subway  
15 D.I: yeah  
16 M.J: uh: I transfer, >I transfer the subway< on the Sindorim station  
17 D.I: YEAH=  
18 M.J: =Sindorim station is uh: is filled with by many people who want  
19 to transfer another line.  
20 D.I: yeah  
21 -> M.J: **so** (0.5) uhm there are uh:: many people **so** (0.3) uh:  
22 D.I: so you felt uneasy [and unpleasantǃ  
23 M.J: [YEAH I felt uncomfortable and  
24 uh: unpleasant.  
25 D.I: oh so you wanted to escape from that place [as fast=  
26 M.J: [yeah  
27 D.I: =as possible

M.J tries to explain that she does not like to live in a big city because she has to use the subway that is usually very crowded. In

line 21, she starts her turn with the marker *so* to conclude her opinion, but she seems to have trouble finding appropriate expression to finish her turn. 0.5 second pause, the markers *uhm* and *uh* and the repetition of words '*many people*' from line 18 are hesitation devices after the marker *so*. She, then, says *so* again right before 0.3 second pause and the marker *uh*. The interlocutor, D.I, takes this second use of the marker *so* as a hint that M.J is having trouble finding the right expression to say next, so he helps her by saying '*so you felt uneasy and unpleasant*' in line 22. M.J now can conclude her opinion by saying '*yeah I felt uncomfortable and unpleasant*' right after his turn.

As we can see in extract (17), Korean students use the discourse marker *so* for the function of a hesitation marker when they have trouble finding appropriate words or expressions to say next.

In the next section, the functions of three discourse markers *yeah*, *I think* and *actually*, which are used substantially more by Korean students, will be analyzed in detail in order to find out why they are substantially overused by Korean students.

#### 4.2.5. Discourse Marker Functions of *Yeah*

Native speakers usually use the marker *yeah* in turn-initial position (Yngve, 1970; Duncan & Fiske, 1977; Schegloff, 1982; Jefferson, 1985, 1993; Drummond & Hopper, 1993c; Gardner, 2001), and *yeah* used by them mostly functions as back-channel cue, acknowledgement token, continuer, speaker incipency and agreement token as mentioned in

Chapter 2. According to my data, almost 90% (312 out of 348) of the use of the marker *yeah* by Korean students also occurred in turn-initial position with the same kinds of the functions that native speakers use. The marker *yeah* in this position and functions, however, is not the focus of my analysis since the general analysis of *yeah* used both by native and non-native speakers in the same position and functions cannot explain the result of Korean students' substantial overuse of the marker *yeah*. Therefore, only the marker *yeah* with the particular non-native-like functions will be analyzed in this section.

#### 4.2.5.1. Hesitation Marker before the Self-initiated Repair

As described earlier, the function of a hesitation marker is one of the Korean students' favorite functions of selected discourse markers that are examined in the study. The marker *yeah* is also used as the hesitation marker, and it is used before the self-initiated repair as in the following extract:

(18) K & S

30 S.H: tried to be like them so we also (0.3) we try to  
31 -> persivi- °uh: (0.5) (persivian) uh: **yeah** ° also have  
32 a perseverance to go ahead to make our economic  
33 situation more good (.) better market and the  
34 situation.  
35 K.H: yes

S.H explains that diligent and persevering workers in Korea lead the financial success. In line 31, unlike typical *yeah*'s by native speakers, *yeah* occupies turn-medial position. Moreover, this *yeah* does not function as back-channel cue, acknowledgement token, continuer, speaker incipency, or agreement token. Notice that the marker *yeah* in line 31 functions as a hesitation marker which occurs in a same-turn repair segment. A cut-off of the word '*persivi-*' with the marker *uh* and 0.3 and 0.5 second pauses before *yeah*, and the repetition of the word '*also*' right after *yeah* not only prove that *yeah* functions as a hesitation marker, but also signal that something in her utterance is troublesome or problematic. What follows the marker *yeah* in line 31 is a self-initiated repair. S.H replaces the uncertain utterance '*persivian*', which is troublesome, with the appropriate word '*perseverance*' after the marker *yeah*. The talk coming after *yeah* now is trouble free and fluent, and no hesitation devices such as a pause, a cut-off, or the marker *uh* are found in the talk afterward.

#### 4.2.5.2. Freestanding *Yeah* as a "Turn-exit" Device

According to Y. Park's (2004: 91) study, it is often observed that non-native speakers have difficulty exiting their turn, even when they actually complete their turn grammatically. What seems to be problematic here has to do with their use of prosody. That is, non-native speakers often end their grammatically complete unit with continuing intonation, rising intonation, or simply non-ending

intonation, and thereby, not properly ending their turn intonation-wise. As a result, they get interlocutors' continuer and miss an opportunity to leave their turn properly. They then need to use some extra markers or devices to show their interlocutors that they are actually finished and need to leave their turn explicitly. The freestanding *yeah* can be used as a "turn-exit" device in this situation. Korean students in the data also use the marker *yeah* as a "turn-exit" device as we can see in the following extract:

(19) D & S

- 111 S.A: at first [I think they never start talking to  
112 D.Y: [uh-huh  
113 S.A: strangers at first (.) because they do care about  
114 what they are gonna think about me because I wanna  
115 be polite to them so:: I think they always care  
116 about how other people are gonna see me?=  
117 D.Y: =uh-huh¿  
118 -> S.A: **yeah.**  
119 D.Y: oh yeah, you're right I think.

S.A explains that most Korean people do not usually say hello or start talking to strangers because they don't want to be seen as impolite. He starts his turn in line 111, and actually finishes the turn grammatically in line 116, but the interlocutor treats it as not intonationally complete because of the rising intonation at the end of the line 116. D.Y, then, provides a continuer *uh-huh* in line 117 since

he takes S.A's turn to be continuous. However, S.A says the freestanding *yeah* in line 118 which shows that his prior turn was actually complete, and he tries to exit his turn by saying the marker *yeah* alone. The interlocutor now understands that S.A's turn is complete, and close the sequence in line 119.

So far, we have analyzed the functions of the marker *yeah* used by Korean students. While native speakers usually use the marker *yeah* in turn-initial position with the functions as back-channel cue, acknowledgement token, continuer, speaker incipency and agreement token, the results of the analysis show that Korean students can also use the marker *yeah* as a hesitation marker in turn-medial position before the self-initiated repair, and as freestanding *yeah* as a "turn-exit" device. It can be assumed that the Korean students' use of *yeah* in different positions and functions compared with native speakers may be caused by their lack of communicative competence in spoken English, and this may explain the overuse of the marker *yeah* by Korean students. Whenever they face the trouble finding the appropriate words to say next, or replacing the problematic utterance with the right one in English conversation, they tend to use the marker *yeah* as an extra marker or a device to get away from that emergency situation.

#### 4.2.6. Discourse Marker Functions of *I think*

Among 17 discourse markers in Table 4, the discourse marker *I think* ranked as one of the most frequently used markers by Korean students,

and it belongs to the last group of the markers that are used substantially more by Korean students compared with native speakers. It is more than four times as frequent (2.2 vs. 8.9 tokens per 1,000 words) in the Korean students' data as in the native speakers' data.

It is difficult to distinguish *I think* between non-discourse use and discourse use since it is commonly used with a *that*-clause (with or without *that*) in conversations. Huang (2011) mentions that the omission and retention of *that* are an important reference for determining whether *I think* is a main clause as non-discourse use or not. In terms of syntactical structure, *I think* is usually followed by a *that*-clause as direct object, and retention of *that* obviously determines the instance as non-discourse use. When *that* is omitted, however, it is ambiguous to determine whether it is used as a discourse marker or not. For the data of this study, *I think* in clause-initial position that is used as a hedge to avoid the direct disagreement or to express doubt, and *I think* that occurs in clause-medial and clause-final positions are only included as discourse marker functions in the data.

There are two most common functions that are found in the use of the marker *I think* by Korean students in the data. These two functions are analyzed in detail in this section.

#### 4.2.6.1. Hesitation Marker

The most common function of the marker *I think* in the data is when it is used as a hesitation marker. Korean students used *I think*

as a hesitation marker for 38 times out of 95 which accounts for 40% of total, while native speakers used it as a hesitation marker for only two times out of 16 which accounts for 12.5% of total in the data.

(20) D & M-3

26 M.N: uh: even though uh they can not choose the work  
27 they want they are just uh receive the uh:: (0.3)  
28 allocation but uhm so uh they, they can also have  
29 uh::: uh predictable wage wages eu-hmç  
30 D.M: so uh: they, >they can have very< fair distribution  
31 right fair wage and predi- stable wage ye right=  
32 M.N: =yeah fair, fair distribution [and  
33 D.M: [but but I guess  
34 there there are also negative aspects as well such as  
35 -> uh (0.3) **I think** uh such as (0.5) in socialism system  
36 there is government corruption, right [it's  
37 M.N: [eu-hmç

In extract (20), D.M tries to explain that the government can get corrupted in the socialism system. We can see that he uses the marker *I think* in line 35 as a hesitation marker. *I think* co-occurring with 0.3 and 0.5 second pauses, the repetition of the words 'such as', and the marker *uh* are the signs of a hesitation marker, and that the speaker is searching for the appropriate lexical expressions to say. It seems that D.M uses *I think* as a filler while formulating what to say next. In this regard, it is obvious that Korean students use the

marker *I think* as a hesitation marker much more frequently than native speakers since they need more time to express their meaning in a foreign language, and this may explain the substantial overuse of the marker *I think* by Korean students.

#### 4.2.6.2. Hedge

Hedges can be used to mitigate voicing a direct disagreement or raising a criticism. They soften criticism or disagreement by adding uncertainty or inexactitude. Lexical expressions such as *it seems that*, *kind of*, *sort of*, *probably* and *maybe* are the examples of hedges, and the marker *I think* can also be used as one of them as in the following extract:

#### (21) D & S

95 S.A: eum ah:: maybe I think Korean people are (0.3)they  
96 are like close-minded compare to Western people  
97 D.Y: yeah  
98 S.A: so they never smile to the strangers on street=  
99 D.Y: =yeah maybe but uh:: that's because they are just  
100 -> shy, **I think**  
101 S.A: uh-huh;

In extract (21), D.Y seems to disagree with S.A's opinion that Korean people are culturally closed-minded and that is why they never smile to the strangers on the streets. The marker *I think*, which co-occurs with a disagreement in line 100, is used as a hedge. It can be

inferred that D.Y uses *I think* to reduce the impact of direct disagreement or negative evaluation against the interlocutor. The word *maybe* in line 99 is also used as a hedge in this situation.

Korean students used the marker *I think* as a hedge for 11 times out of 95 which only accounts for 11% of total, while native speakers used it as a hedge for 7 times out of 16 which accounts for 43% of total in the data. As mentioned earlier, Korean students speak their opinions each other about the given topic for the exam rather than actually agree or disagree with each other as their goal of the discussion is to display their fluency in spoken English by enumerating their opinions. In this regard, the low rate of the use of *I think* as a hedge by Korean students can be explained since the hedge *I think* is used as a face-saving device (Brown & Levinson, 1987) in case of criticism, negative evaluation, or disagreement.

So far, we have analyzed the functions of the marker *I think* used by Korean EFL students. The result of the analysis shows that Korean students often use the marker *I think* as a hesitation marker. They usually use the hesitation markers when they face the trouble finding the appropriate words to say next due to their lack of communicative competence in spoken English. Like the overuse pattern of the marker *yeah* in the previous section, this may be the main cause of the result that Korean students use the marker *I think* substantially more often than native speakers. They also use *I think* as a hedge to mitigate voicing a direct disagreement or raising a criticism, and the low rate of the use of the marker *I think* as

a hedge by Korean students is caused by the characteristics of the data which are based on the test-based setting.

#### 4.2.7. Discourse Marker Functions of *Actually*

Among 17 discourse markers in Table 4, the discourse marker *actually* ranked as the least frequently used marker by native speakers. They used it only once throughout the whole data, and this is why the marker *actually* belongs to the last group of the markers that are used substantially more by Korean students compared with native speakers. It is nine times as frequent (0.1 vs. 0.9 tokens per 1,000 words) in the Korean students' data as in the native speakers' data. Now let us examine the functions of the marker *actually* used by Korean students in this section.

##### 4.2.7.1. Simple Informings

Informings, one of the major functions of the marker *actually* mentioned in the Clift's (2001) study, are a way of delivering the speaker's information. The sole case of the use of *actually* by native speakers in the data shows the function of informings as in the following extract:

(22) S1 & S7

188 S7: I feel like the way we are internally is different  
189 than the way we I do feel I- do you know what I  
190 mean? [like

191 S1: [mhm  
 192 S7: when internally like I happen to not agree with  
 193 you like while it's a nice thought to say that  
 194 the majority of the co- country's open-minded like  
 195 I rea- I don't think they are you know like  
 196 -> I **actually** used to but I don't as much anymore.

A group of native speakers in extract (22) discuss the Americans' reaction to immigrants from other countries. S7 uses the marker *actually* in line 196 as informing his opinion that in the past he believed a majority of Americans are open-minded to the immigrants, but he does not think as it anymore.

The use of the marker *actually* that functions as simple informings can also be found in the Korean students' data.

(23) S & S

01 T : now please.  
 02 -> S.J: uh:: **actually** I don't really get the meaning of  
 03 personal space, especially in modern society?  
 04 S.B: yes I (0.3) I really didn't understand about this,  
 05 it means the personal (cheri-) territory?  
 06 S.J: oh: what is the meaning of personal territory?  
 07 S.B: like my uh:: eu-mm (0.5) like my surroundings  
 08 S.J: ah-ha, your mean some- something like boundaries  
 09 around you.  
 10 S.B: yes

The topic of the discussion for the pair in extract (23) is the invasion of personal space in modern society. It seems that both S.J and S.B have trouble understanding the notion of personal space in the topic. S.J uses the marker *actually* in line 2 with the hesitation device *uh* to inform the interlocutor that he cannot understand what the topic is about.

The analysis of extracts (22) and (23) shows that both native and non-native speakers can use the marker *actually* as a way of delivering their information. The next function of *actually* to be examined is counterinformings.

#### 4.2.7.2. Counterinformings

Non-native speakers tend to use the marker *actually* not only to deliver their information, but also to oppose interlocutors' opinion or their own prior talk. According to Y. Kim (2006), non-native speakers only use TCU (Turn Constructional Unit)-initial *actually* as a counterinforming marker, while native speakers tend to delay *actually* to the TCU-final position when they object to other speakers' prior talk with other-directed attitudes.

(24) D & S

- 59 S.A: =because in Western culture I think they really think privacy  
60 really important [so they have to knock the door before they  
61 D.Y: [ °yeah right °  
62 S.A: coming inside the someone's office or someone's room but

63 ->           **actually** Korean people like especially when we are with family  
64           member, we don't really care about their privacy.  
65       D.Y:    yeah

S.A discusses with D.Y the invasion of privacy in Korea. In line 59, S.A explains that people in Western culture think of other's privacy importantly, and knocking the door before entering someone's room is one example of caring about other's privacy. S.A continues to talk about the privacy in Korea. She claims that unlike Western people, Koreans do not care about other's privacy that much. S.A's prior opinion about Western people counters the following opinion about Koreans, so his prior talk is now rejected, and he uses the marker *actually* in line 63 to revise his own prior talk. An opposing conjunction *but* in line 62 and prefacing *actually* in line 63 are used to show that the speaker's prior talk is countered and revised in the same turn.

So far, we have analyzed the functions of the marker *actually* used by native speakers and Korean EFL students. The analysis shows that the marker *actually* can be used when the speaker delivers his/her information, and when countering interlocutors' opinion or his/her own prior talk.

## Chapter 5. Conclusion

This thesis explored the English discourse markers employed by Korean EFL learners to see how often they use these discourse markers and within which functions they use them. A total of 17 discourse markers were selected to see the overall distribution of them. Then, several functions of seven selected discourse markers *well, you know, like, so, yeah, I think* and *actually* were further examined, following the framework of the Müller's (2005) and many other researchers' studies.

Based on the distribution, the 17 selected discourse markers are divided into three groups; The first group is for the markers that are used substantially more often by native speakers. The markers *well, I mean, you know, now, kind of* and *like* belong to this group, and among them, several functions of *well, you know* and *like* are analyzed in detail to see why they are substantially underused by Korean students. Considering that these are the typical discourse markers that native speakers frequently use in their everyday conversation, the underuse pattern of these markers by Korean students may reflect their lack of exposure to naturally occurring spoken discourse. The second group includes the markers that show relatively similar frequency between native speakers and Korean students. The markers *but, and, so, or, oh* and *then* are in this group. Most of these markers are conjunctions or words that Korean students are familiar with, and this may cause the similar frequency between

native speakers and Korean students. Even though the frequency of these markers is similar, it does not mean that the distributions of these markers in functions between them are also similar. Among those markers in the second group, the functions of the marker *so* are analyzed in detail since it is one of the most frequently used markers both by native speakers and Korean students. The last group includes the markers that are used substantially more often by Korean students. The markers *yeah, also, because, I think* and *actually* belong to this group. Since most of these markers are also familiar lexical items for Korean students, it can be assumed that they may replace these familiar markers with the appropriate markers they are not familiar with. Thus, the overuse pattern of these markers by non-native speakers may reflect their lack of the management skills of using discourse markers properly. Among them, the functions of *yeah, I think* and *actually* are analyzed in detail to see why they are substantially overused by Korean students.

What is particularly noticeable in the analysis of the functions of seven selected discourse markers is that except for the marker *actually*, Korean EFL students used all these markers as the function of a hesitation marker. It can be explained that Korean students at the intermediate level of English often face the trouble finding the appropriate words or expressions to say next, and several kinds of hesitation markers are what they need in the emergency situation. For native speakers, this kind of emergency situation is taken place much less than Korean students.

It is hoped that this study will make a contribution to the area of the study of English discourse markers used by non-native speakers. The results of the analysis may contribute to understanding why some of the discourse markers are substantially underused or overused by Korean students, and finding a way to attain a satisfactory level of communicative competence by teaching them how to use discourse markers properly. In this regard, this study offers some pedagogical implications by suggesting that the Korean EFL students need to be taught English in a more spontaneous setting where all the aspects of spoken English features including the proper ways of using discourse markers are naturally displayed as Y. Park (2003) pointed out, since the substantial underuse and overuse patterns of the certain discourse markers by Korean students seem to be caused by their lack of exposure to naturally occurring spoken discourse and lack of the management skills of using discourse markers properly and effectively.

In spite of the possible contributions above, the study also has some limitations. First, being a native or non-native speakers is not the only factor which might influence the frequency and the pattern of using discourse markers. According to Müller's (2005) study, there are also non-linguistic factors such as gender, age, social class, ethnicity and the relationship between partners. In her study, for example, one notable finding for the discourse marker *like* is from the relationship between speakers. The result shows that the relationship between speakers affected the distribution of *like* more

among the German students than among the American students, even though in all cases the marker *like* was more frequent between friends than between strangers. The results of the frequency and the pattern of using discourse markers in my data also may differ by the gender, age, social class and the relationship between partners. In addition, the different levels of English speaking skill among Korean students can also be the factor that may affect the results of the study. Even though they are in the same range of TEPS score (700~799), they may have different levels of speaking skill since the test only evaluates the test-takers' listening and reading comprehension skills.

Finally, the characteristics of the data for Korean students in this study can also be the limitation since they are somewhat different with the data of discussions by native speakers which they actually agree or disagree with other participants' ideas to express their opinions. It is because the Korean students' data are based on the test-based setting, and their goal of the discussion is to display their fluency of English by enumerating their opinions each other.

The study may shed some light on the education of improving Korean EFL students' communicative competence in spoken English by teaching them the negative effect of lacking discourse markers and how to use them properly and effectively in order to attain a native-like competence.

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# Appendix

## Transcription Conventions

- [ Overlapping or simultaneous talk
- = A “latch” sign is used when the second speaker follows the first with no discernible silence between them. It can also be used to link different parts of a single speaker’s utterance when those parts constitute a continuous flow of speech that has been carried over to another line to accommodate an intervening interruption.
- : Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound. Multiple colons indicate a more prolonged sound.
- a Underscoring indicates some form of stress, via pitch and/or amplitude.
- A Capital letters indicate louder voice than the surrounding talk.
- (0.5) Length of pause
- (.) Micropause
- ◦ Degree signs are used to indicate a passage of talk which is quieter than the surrounding talk.
- . A stopping fall in tone, not necessarily the end of a sentence
- , A continuing intonation
- ? A rising intonation, not necessarily a question
- ¿ A slightly rising intonation
- A cut-off or self-interruption
- > < “More than” and “less than” signs indicate that the talk in-between

was produced quicker than the surrounding talk.

hhh Hearable aspiration: It may represent breathing, laughter, etc.

.hhh Hearable inhalations

(( )) Transcriber's descriptions of events

( ) Uncertainty on the transcriber's part

(guess) Transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance

## 국문초록

본 연구는 한국 대학생들의 영어 담화표지 (English discourse markers) 사용을 담화 화용적 관점에서 살펴보고자 한다. 담화표지를 적절하게 구사하는 것은 구어 영어 (spoken English)의 주요한 요소 중 하나이며, 비원어민들 (non-native speakers)이 영어를 유창하게 말하기 위해 배워야 할 매우 중요한 요소이다. 그러나 화용론적 연구 분야에서 비원어민들의 영어 담화표지 사용에 관한 연구는 원어민들 (native speakers)의 그것에 비해 비교적 연구가 덜 이루어진 것이 사실이다. 따라서 본 연구의 목적은 비원어민인 한국 대학생들이 영어 토론 중 얼마나 자주 담화표지를 사용하고 어떠한 기능으로 그들을 사용하는지 살펴보는 것이다.

본 연구를 위한 자료는 두 가지 출처에서 비롯된다. 첫 번째 자료는 비원어민인 한국 대학생들이 수강하는 교양영어 수업의 기말시험을 음성 녹음한 자료이다. 각 수업은 TEPS 시험 성적 700점에서 799점 사이의 중급 영어 수준의 한국 학생들로 이루어졌으며, 녹음된 자료는 두 명의 학생들이 주어진 주제에 관해 5분간 영어로 토론을 진행하는 기말고사를 녹음한 것이다. 한국 학생들 자료와의 비교를 위해 MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English)에서 차용된 원어민 자료를 사용하였으며, 이 자료는 18명의 원어민 대학생들의 수업 토론을 녹음한 것이다. 녹음된 두 자료는 모두 대화분석 (Conversation Analysis)의 전사 방법에 따라 전사되었다.

우선 17개의 담화표지들 (*well, I mean, you know, now, kind of like, but, and, so, or, oh, then, yeah, also, because, I think, actually*)을 선택한 후 그들의 빈도를 살펴보았다. 선택된 담화표지들은 빈도수에 따라 세 그룹으로 나뉘어졌는데, 이 가운데 첫 번째 그룹은 해당 담화

표지들 중 한국 학생들에 비해 원어민들이 훨씬 더 빈번하게 사용한 표지들을 포함한다. 담화표지 *well, I mean, you know, now, kind of, like*가 이 그룹에 속한다. 이 그룹의 표지들이 원어민들의 일상 대화에서 자주 사용되는 전형적인 담화표지들이라는 점을 고려해 볼 때 한국 학생들이 해당 표지들을 훨씬 덜 빈번하게 사용한다는 것은 이들이 원어민들의 자연스러운 구어 담화 (spoken discourse)로부터 노출이 부족했다는 점을 반영한다. 이 그룹에서 *well, you know, like*를 선택하여 이 표지들의 몇몇 기능들을 자세하게 분석하였다. 두 번째 그룹은 원어민들과 한국 학생들이 빈도수에 있어서 비교적 비슷하게 사용한 담화표지들을 포함한다. 담화표지 *but, and, so, or, oh, then*이 이 그룹에 속하는데, 해당 표지들은 대부분 접속사들 (conjunctions)이거나 한국 학생들에게 익숙한 단어들이다. 이것이 원어민들과 한국 학생들의 해당 표지들 사용 빈도수가 비슷한 원인으로 추정된다. 이 그룹의 표지들 중 *so*의 몇몇 기능들을 자세하게 분석하였다. 마지막 그룹은 원어민들에 비해 한국 학생들이 훨씬 더 빈번하게 사용한 표지들을 포함한다. 담화표지 *yeah, also, because, I think, actually*가 이 그룹에 속하는데, 해당 표지들 역시 한국 학생들에게 친숙한 단어들이다. 한국 학생들이 이 친숙한 단어들을 익숙하지 않은 다른 적절한 표지들을 대신하여 사용한다고 추정해 볼 때, 한국 학생들이 해당 표지들을 훨씬 더 빈번하게 사용하는 경향은 이들이 해당 담화표지들을 적절하게 사용할 줄 아는 관리 능력이 부족하다는 점을 반영한다. 이 그룹에서 *yeah, I think, actually*를 선택하여 이 표지들의 몇몇 기능들을 자세하게 분석하였다. 본 연구의 분석을 통해 발견한 흥미로운 사실은 한국 학생들이 *actually*를 제외한 모든 해당 담화표지들을 망설임 표지 (hesitation marker) 기능으로써 사용했다는 점이다.

이상과 같이 살펴본 본 논문은 비원어민들의 영어 담화표지 사용에

대해 살펴봄으로써 한국 학생들이 특정한 담화표지들을 어떠한 이유에서 원어민들보다 훨씬 덜, 혹은 더 빈번하게 사용하는지에 대한 이해를 돕고자 한다. 또한 본 연구는 한국 학생들이 그들의 영어 의사소통 능력 향상을 위해 담화표지를 적절하게 사용하는 방법을 포함하는 구어 영어의 모든 요소들을 자연스럽게 보여주는 보다 자발적인 환경에서 영어를 배워야 한다는 교육적 함의를 갖는다.

주요어: 담화표지 기능, 한국 대학생, 영어 토론, 망설임 표지, 담화 화용적 관점

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