

# Functions of the Verbal Affix *-nuntey* in Korean Conversation\*

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This paper discusses the distributional characteristics and discourse functions of the verbal affix *-nuntey* in Korean conversation. Upon the assumption that grammar is shaped through an interaction of speaker and hearer in the process of achieving communicative goals, I characterize the properties of *-nuntey* through an examination of discourse contexts where *-nuntey* is used. The analysis of the present conversational discourse shows that at a macro-level the main function of *-nuntey* is to provide a ground for the discourse that follows the *-nuntey* clause. This research also shows that at a micro-level *-nuntey* has the following four major functions: (i) a background-establishing function, (ii) an introductory function, (iii) an explanatory function, and (iv) a 'speech act' signaling function. When *-nuntey* is used as a turn-terminal affix, one of the main functions of *-nuntey* is to ask the addressee to provide new information or addressee's assessment/opinion about the information provided by the speaker. In this respect, *-nuntey* is one of the most typical markers of cooperation between speaker and hearer. Furthermore, this research shows that *-nuntey* is undergoing a process of grammaticalization in the sense that the clausal connective *-nuntey* is being shaped into a 'sentence-terminal' affix through an interaction of speaker's strategies, communicative goals, and the functional factors involved in the flow of information.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, many discourse-functionalists and conversation analysts (Fox 1987, Ford 1993, Cook 1992, Maynard 1992, Sacks et al. 1974, to

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name a few) have shown that analyses of morphological, syntactic phenomena can be better understood through an analysis of naturally occurring data. They hold the view that grammar is basically shaped by talk-in-interaction. Following their view of grammar, I would like to investigate distributional characteristics and discourse functions of the verbal affix *-nuntey* in Korean conversation.

In characterizing the affix *-nuntey* in terms of talk-in-interaction, I will first review some works that deal with the morphological, syntactic, and semantic properties of *-nuntey*. In prior research, many Korean linguists (Choi 1961, Ko 1976, 1989, Park 1984, among others) have treated *-nuntey* as a clausal connective and have discussed it from the perspective of clause combining. Some other Korean linguists (Park 1984, Han 1991, Choi 1991), on the other hand, have paid attention to the fact that *-nuntey* frequently occurs at a sentence-final position, and have treated it as a sentence-terminal affix. As a preliminary task of characterizing the properties of *-nuntey*, I will first examine the distributional characteristics of *-nuntey*. The examination of the frequency in the present conversational data will show that *-nuntey* is used either as a clausal connective or as a turn-terminal affix. Based on the distributional characteristics, I will investigate the properties of the *-nuntey* to answer the question of whether *-nuntey* is a clausal connective or a sentence-terminal affix. The examination of the contexts where *-nuntey* occurs will show that *-nuntey* is originally and basically a clausal connective, and that the so-called sentence-terminal *-nuntey* is the product of grammaticalization of the clausal connective *-nuntey*. Finally, this research will show that a proper understanding of the characteristics and functions of *-nuntey* can be done through an examination of diverse functional factors that are involved in the interaction between speaker and hearer in discourse.

## 2. Previous Studies of the Verbal Affix *-nuntey*

Korean verbal affixes have been the objects of many studies not only in traditional grammar but also in recent linguistic theories. Many studies on the Korean verbal affixes have dealt with the properties of the verbal affix *-nuntey* (e.g., Choi 1961, Ko 1976, Lee 1979, 1993, Kim 1988, among others). Most of these studies have treated *-nuntey* as a conjunctive morpheme

that is used to combine clauses into a larger unit of grammar.

In prior research, the characterization of the properties of the morpheme *-nuntey* has been controversial. For example, Choi (1961) has termed this morpheme an “explanatory” conjunctive morpheme which has basically two usages: “additive (or elaborative)”, and “converse explanatory (or descriptive)”. According to him, firstly, the affix *-nuntey* is used to indicate that the following clause adds information or “explains” (or describes) the event/action of the preceding clause. Secondly, it is used to indicate that the action/event in the following clause shows a “converse” (i.e., not consistent or opposite) relation to the preceding one.

Lee (1993), while discussing the functions of the affix *-nuntey* as a verbal connective, states that *-nuntey* is used to provide background information. According to him, when the speaker presents the main clause and the *-nuntey* clause, the hearer draws relevant inferences from the two pieces of information. He claims that *-nuntey* has two main functions: introductory and suggestive functions. As examples, he provides (1a) for the introductory function and (1b) for the suggestive function, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. na    nayil            Pwusan-ey    ka-*nuntey*,  
 I    tomorrow    Pusan-to    go-CIRCUM  
 mwue    pwuthakha-l    kes    eps-na?  
 what    ask:for-ATTR    thing    not:be-Q?  
 ‘I am going to Pusan tomorrow, is there anything that you want me to do for you?’

<sup>1</sup> The examples are broadly transcribed but they basically follow the transcription conventions developed by Du Bois et al. (1992, 1994). The transcription of Korean examples follows the conventions of the Yale system of Romanization. In glossing Korean examples, I use the following abbreviations:

ACC:	Accusative	ATTR:	Attributive
CIRCUM:	Circumstantial	COM:	Committal
CONN:	Connective	DECL:	Declarative
DEF:	Deferential	GEN:	Genitive
HON:	Honorific marker	IE:	Informal ending
LOC:	Locative	NEC:	Necessitive
NM:	Nominative marker	NOML:	Nominalizer
PL:	Plural marker	PRESUM:	Presumptive
PST:	Past tense marker	Q:	Question
QUOT:	Quotative	RETROS:	Retrospective
SUPPOS:	Suppositve	TM:	Topic marker

- b. *nay cimcak-i-ntey, nayil pi-ka o-n-ta.*  
 my guess-be-CIRCUM tomorrow rain-NM come-ATTR-DECL  
 'It is my guess: it will rain tomorrow.'

According to Lee (1993), in (1a), the speaker provides something new into the addressee's consciousness by using the *-nuntey* clause. In this respect, he states that the affix *-nuntey* has an introductory function. In (1b), according to him, the *-nuntey* clause provides a basis for the hearer to evaluate the speaker's assertion against the background of the *-nuntey* clause, and it is up to the hearer to decide to what extent he can accept the speaker's assertion. These explanations make sense to a certain degree, but the term *suggestive* is vague and misleading. Kim (1994), on the other hand, discusses properties of a *-nuntey* clause such as in (1b) in terms of an 'speech act' adverbial clause.

Kim (1988), doing a discourse analysis of the verbal affix *-nuntey* in spoken narratives, claims that *-nuntey* has basically two major functions: a background-establishing function and a topic discontinuity marking function. The first function of *-nuntey* is to provide background information for the immediately following discourse. The second function of *-nuntey* is to signal the break point of an information flow while indicating the change of a participant in narrative discourse.

Park (1984), doing a sentence-level analysis and focusing on the clause where the affix *-nuntey* occurs, terms this morpheme an "introductory" non-final ending which is used to introduce a certain fact, character, or event in advance of the sentence which follows. He adds that the equivalent meaning of this morpheme in English is "and", "but", or "so", as can be seen in (2).

- (2) *chinkwu-ka iss-nuntey, cham pwuca-yey-yo.*  
 friend-NM be-CIRCUM very rich:man-be-DEF  
 'I have a friend, and he is very rich.'

In addition to this clausal connective *-nuntey*, Park (1984:225) discusses the property of the 'exclamatory ending' *-(nu)nteyyo* while treating it as a sentence-final ending.

Park's observation that *-nuntey* is used as a non-terminal ending and a terminal ending is worth noting. However, he made some mistakes in treat-

ing the two uses of *-nuntey* as separate categories although it is understandable that such a treatment would be convenient in teaching Korean to foreigners. However, his treatment of the affix *-nuntey* as a sentence-terminal affix is misleading in many ways. First, he does not make it explicit that *-n(un)nunteyyo* is made by combining the affix *-n(un)nuntey* and the deferential affix *-yo*. Second, he ignores the fact that the use of *-nuntey* is not limited to expressing exclamatory feelings, but rather has many diverse meanings and functions, depending on the context where it is used. Finally, he does not consider the fact that the use of *-nuntey* as a sentence-terminal affix is the result of grammaticalization resulting from an interaction between speaker and hearer.

Han (1992:101), in his study of the Korean sentence-terminal affixes, states that *-nuntey* is one of the affixes that is used either as connectives or impolite (*panmal*) terminal affixes. Furthermore, he claims that the terminal suffix *-nuntey* is originally a connective but the elements that followed are often deleted. Consequently *-nuntey* has come to be used as a terminal suffix. His statement implies that the clausal connective *-nuntey* has undergone a process of grammaticalization in becoming a terminal affix.

Ko (1976, 1989), while treating *-nuntey* both as a clausal connective and a sentence-terminal affix, claims that *-nuntey* as a sentence-terminal affix is used in the case when the speaker, while expressing his/her exclamatory feelings, is willing to get the interlocutor's opinion. This claim is too vague when we consider the fact that there are not any pre-determined criteria to determine sentence types of the *-nuntey* clauses. That is to say, the use of the *-nuntey* clauses is not limited to exclamatory sentences but *-nuntey* is also frequently used in declarative and question sentences, depending on contexts.

As we have seen, previous studies of the affix *-nuntey* have dealt with *-nuntey* either as a clausal connective or as a sentence-terminal affix. This fact raises the question of whether the clausal connective *-nuntey* is the same as the sentence-terminal *-nuntey* or not. With respect to this puzzling question, I would like to explore the properties and functions of *-nuntey* in terms of talk-in-interaction. The fact that the so-called sentence-terminal affix *-nuntey* is frequently found in informal conversational discourse but not in written discourse suggests that the properties and functions of *-nuntey* can be properly explained in terms of talk-in-interaction. In spite

of this fact, most of Korean grammarians and linguists have tried to show the properties of *-nuntey* based on the data of isolated made-up sentences. To overcome these problems and weaknesses of the traditional approaches to the analysis of the affix *-nuntey*, I will examine the properties and functions of *-nuntey* in terms of talk-in-interaction through an analysis of conversational data.

### 3. Database and Methods

In exploring the properties and functions of the verbal affix *-nuntey* in Korean conversation, I chose three face-to-face multi-party conversations in Korean.<sup>2</sup> The total length of the three conversational data is about 70 minutes. The data for this research came from conversations between male and female members of a peer group who are graduate students in the same department, knowing each other well. The conversations took place in the department office, the phonetics laboratory, and a cafeteria on campus, and the atmosphere is informal and natural.

In characterizing the functions and properties of the affix *-nuntey* in conversation, I coded some aspects of *-nuntey* through the examination of the contexts where it is used. More specifically, I first examined the positions of *-nuntey*, while examining whether *-nuntey* occurs in an interclausal position as a clausal connective or in a turn-terminal position as a 'sentence-terminal' affix. Second, I examined the functions and properties of clausal connective *-nuntey* and sentence-terminal affix *-nuntey*. Third, I examined the places where *-nuntey* occurs in terms of projectability of transition relevance places (TRPs) in turn-taking. Based on the examination, I will show that the positions where *-nuntey* occurs serves as transition relevance places. In addition, I will show that the so-called sentence-terminal affix *-nuntey* refers to the cases in which *-nuntey* occurs at a transition relevance place. Based on the observation, I will claim that the term sentence-terminal affix is not appropriate but should instead be called a turn-terminal affix *-nuntey*. Furthermore, I will show that the turn-terminal *-nuntey* is undergoing a process of grammaticalization through an interaction of the diverse gram-

<sup>2</sup> The data used in this paper came from S. H. Park (1996), which appeared at the end of her dissertation. I appreciate her for allowing me to use the transcribed data and recorded tapes.

matical, semantic, and pragmatic functions that *-nuntey* performs in discourse.

#### 4. Distributional Characteristics of the Affix *-nuntey* in Conversation

The characterization of the properties and functions of the terminal affix *-nuntey* has been problematic in Korean grammar. As a preliminary task of exploring the meanings and functions of the affix *-nuntey*, I will investigate the distributional characteristics of *-nuntey*. First of all, as we have seen, *-nuntey* occurs either in an interclausal position or in a turn-terminal position, as can be seen in (3):

- (3) J: Kim Chul-Swu *sensayngnim-un cincca*  
 Kim Chul-Soo *professor-TM really*  
*celmu-si-te-ntey* ← A  
*young-HON-RETRO-CIRCUM*  
 ‘As for Professor Kim Chul-soo, he is really young.’  
 김철수 선생님은 진짜 젊으시던데
- moksoli-n Kim Chul-Swu *sensayngnim-pakkey*  
 voice-TM Kim Chul-Soo *professor-except*  
*mos tul-e po-ass-nuntey* ← B  
*not hear-CONN see-PST-CIRCUM*  
 ‘As for the voice, I have heard only that of Professor Kim Chul-Soo.’  
 목소린 김철수 선생님 밖에 못 들어 봤는데
- S: *celm- ikhey com soptha-ci cenhwaha-si-nun*  
*young- like a:bit soft-COM telephone-HON-ATTR*  
*moksoli-ka*  
*voice-NM*  
 ‘young, like, a bit soft, his voice over the phone.’  
 젊- 이게 좀 소프트하지 전화하시는 목소리가

As in (3), *-nuntey* occurs in an interclausal position, as (3A) shows, while performing the function of combining two clauses into a bigger discourse unit. However, the occurrence of *-nuntey* is not limited to an interclausal position. As (3B) shows, *-nuntey* frequently occurs at a terminal position,

particularly in informal, casual conversation. This kind of *-nuntey* does not have the clause-combining function because no clause follows.

As we have already seen in Section 2, Park (1984) and Ko (1989), who analyzed *-nuntey* based on the data of isolated sentences, call a 'sentence-terminal affix' the affix *-nuntey* that occurs at the end of a turn. However, a close examination of the properties of *-nuntey* shows that there is no particular reason to treat *-nuntey* as a sentence-terminal affix. In conversation, there are many examples of utterances that do not carry a sentence-ender with complete tense, aspect, and modality markers. Thus there is no principled way of determining sentence types by simply looking at the end of a turn. In this regard, it is not appropriate to assume that *-nuntey* functions as a sentence-terminal affix based simply on the fact that *-nuntey* occurs at the end of a turn. That is, it is not always true that turn-termination matches the sentence ending. In this respect, I will name the '(turn-) terminal affix *-nuntey*', which lacks clause-combining functions. Here, as a way of characterizing the properties of the affix *-nuntey*, let us examine the frequency of *-nuntey* in the present conversational data.

As a way of investigating the meanings and functions of *-nuntey*, the first step is to examine the frequencies of *-nuntey* used as a clausal connective and *-nuntey* used as a terminal affix. The examination of the data shows the following proportion of the frequency of *-nuntey* in the present data.<sup>3</sup>

Table 1. The Proportion of the Frequency of *-nuntey* in Conversation.

Data	A	B	C	Total
Clausal connective	35	42	35	112 (48.7%)
Turn-terminal	44	29	28	101 (43.9%)
Terminal w/ other elements	4	5	8	17 ( 7.4%)
Total	83	76	71	230 (100%)

The examination of the present data shows that the proportion of the frequency of *-nuntey* that functions as a clausal connective is 48.7% (112 cases) out of the total 230 tokens. On the other hand, the proportion of the frequency of *-nuntey* that occurs at the end of a turn is 43.9% (101 cases).

<sup>3</sup> Park (1996), on her study of *-nuntey*, shows that the frequency of *-nuntey* clauses without main clauses in conversation is 60%.



S: 'well, I don't think so.'

J: 학기 중에는 좀 이렇게 해야했는데 어제 테레비전을 딱 켜는데  
어 머리가 까맣다 막 이려고선 보고 [있는데 --]

S: 어 [아닌데]

In (5), Speaker J talks about the things that happened the day before, and she keeps her turn going. However, Speaker S interrupts her talk by raising a different opinion. At that moment, Speaker S and Speaker J stop talking simultaneously at the point where *-nuntey* occurs. In this case, it is difficult to determine whether *-nuntey* that occurs at the end of Speaker J's turn is used as a clausal connective or as a turn-terminal affix.

When we see that the proportions of the clausal connective *-nuntey* and the turn-terminal affix *-nuntey* do not show any significant difference, we are faced with many questions regarding the status of the affix *-nuntey*. That is, is *-nuntey* a clausal connective or a sentence-terminal affix? Are the clausal connective *-nuntey* and the terminal affix *-nuntey* the same affix or two different ones? Are there any different functions between the clausal connective *-nuntey* and the terminal affix *-nuntey*? Bearing these questions in mind, let us examine the properties and functions of *-nuntey* in more detail.

First of all, when we consider structural aspects of *-nuntey*, one of the prominent properties of *-nuntey* is that it can co-occur relatively freely with tense, aspect, and modality (TAM hereafter) markers. This property is worth noting in the point that the co-occurrence possibility of TAM markers with many other affixes such as *-e*, *-ese*, *-myense* is strictly restricted. As has been discussed, Han (1992:101) observes that the terminal affix *-nuntey* can co-occur with all tense-aspect markers, including the honorific marker *-si*, with a few exceptions. As can be seen in (6), *-nuntey* can co-occur with *-ess* but not with *-keyss* or *-te* in questions.

- (6) a. *sensanyngnim-kkeyse etiey ka-si-nuntey?*  
teacher-HON where go-HON-CIRCUM  
'Where is the teacher going?'
- b. *Chelswu-ka etiey ka-ass-nuntey?*  
Chelsoo-NM where go-PST-CIRCUM?  
'Where did Chelsoo go?'

- c. \*Chelswu-ka etiey ka-keyss-*nuntey*?  
Chelsoo-NM where go-PRESUM-CIRCUM  
'Where (do you suppose) Chelsoo will go?'
- d. \*Chelswu-ka etiey ka-te-*nuntey*?  
Chelsoo-NM where go-RETRO-CIRCUM  
'Where (do you remember) Chelsoo went?'

Furthermore, *-nuntey* frequently occurs with the informal deferential marker *-yo*. This is one of the reasons that makes *-nuntey* seem a sentence-terminal affix.

- (7) J: cengmal-i-e-yo? encey cengnyenha-si-*nuntey-yo*?  
truth-be-IE-HON when retire-HON-CIRCUM-DEF  
'Is that true? When (do you think) he is to retire?'

As can be seen in (7), *-nuntey* is followed by the deferential marker *-yo*. It is well known that *-yo*, which signals the speaker's deferentiality to the addressee, frequently occurs with informal sentence-terminal affixes such as *-e*, *-ci*, and *-kwun*. In this regard, it is understandable that *-nuntey* has often been regarded as a sentence-terminal affix. However, the co-occurrence of *-yo*, as Lee and Park (1991) point out, is not only possible with informal sentence-terminal affixes. Rather, *-yo* can co-occur with any phrasal units that constitute an X" structure (i.e., a phrasal unit).

- (8) S: kunkka mikwuk-eyse pwuchi-ess-*nuntey-yo* ←  
that:is States-from mail-PST-CIRCUM-DEF  
'that is, I mailed it in the States,'  
ohwu-ey pwuchi-ess-*nuntey* ←  
afternoon-LOC mail-PST-CIRCUM  
'mailed it in the afternoon,'  
taum nal achim-ey pa-ass-tako cenhwa-ka  
next day morning-LOC receive-PST-QUOT phone-NM  
o-asse-yo.  
come-PST-DEF  
'next morning I got a phone that said (they) received it.'  
근까 미국에서 부쳤는데요 오후에 부쳤는데  
다음날 아침에 받았다고 전화가 왔어요.

In the first clause in (8), *-nuntey* is used to combine two clauses and there is no pause or a very short one, and thus it functions as a clausal connective, even though it co-occurs with *-yo*. This suggests that the mere fact that *-nuntey* co-occurs with *-yo* does not guarantee that *-nuntey* is a sentence-terminal affix.

Furthermore, Ko (1989) and Park (1984) treat the turn-terminal affix *-nuntey* as an exclamatory sentence-final affix. Park, calling *-nuntey* an 'exclamatory ending', provides an explanation of the functions of the terminal affix *-n(un)teyyo/-nunteyyo* as follows:

The sentence-final ending *-n(un)teyyo/-nunteyyo* may be used with any verb and indicates interest, surprise, delight, astonishment, or wonder, etc. This exclamatory ending is mostly used when the speaker is wondering about the reaction or feelings of the hearer while showing his interest, delight, surprise, astonishment, or wonder about a certain fact, event, or occurrence.

With the above explanation, he illustrates examples of the terminal affix *-nuntey*, as in (9):

- (9) a. ku chayk-i acwu coh-untey-yo!  
       that book-NM very good-CIRCUM-DEF  
       'That book is very good!'  
       b. ku salam-i ten-ass-nunteyyo!  
       that person-NM leave-PST-CIRCUM-DEF  
       'That man has (already) left!'

The examples in (9) shows that there is no reason of why the turn-final *-nuntey* clauses like (9a,b) should be treated as exclamatory sentences. One possible reason might come from the meanings of certain adverbs and descriptive verbs (or adjectives) that are used to assess events, as can be seen in (9a). In general, however, there is no principled way of categorizing *-nuntey* clauses into appropriate sentence types. That is, for example, no one can tell whether a sentence such as in (9b) is a declarative, question, or exclamatory sentence.

One of the criteria that can be used to classify sentence-types is to examine patterns of intonation. In analyzing conversational data, it is useful to examine the patterns of intonation because important information is carried

in the speaker's intonation. In characterizing the properties of *-nuntey*, it would be helpful therefore to record the phonetics of the pitch movement. So, I examined whether the movement of pitch at the end of the point where *-nuntey* occurs is falling, rising, or level. The examination of the present data shows the following frequency of the pitch direction.

Table 2. The Frequency of Pitch Direction.

Data	A	B	C	Total
Rise	4	0	1	5 ( 2.2%)
Level	8	16	19	43 (18.7%)
Fall	71	60	51	182 (79.1%)
Total	83	76	71	230 (100%)

As Table 2 shows, among the total 230 tokens, 79.1% of cases of *-nuntey* show downward movement in the direction of the terminal pitch. This fact suggests that the point where *-nuntey* is used constitutes an intonation unit (Chafe 1994, Du Bois et al. 1992, 1994). On the other hand, the direction of terminal pitch movement of 43 cases (i.e., 18.7%) of *-nuntey* is level. In addition, there are five cases of *-nuntey* that have a rising pitch movement.

When the direction of terminal pitch movement is level, it is most commonly associated with the continuing contour class (43 cases, i.e., 18.7%).<sup>4</sup>

- (10) a. S: mwusun kwamok-i-ntey\_ pi-ka nao-ass-e/ ←  
 What course-be-CIRCUM B-NM get-PST-IE  
 'On what course did you get a B grade?'  
 S: 무슨 과목인데 \_B가 나왔어/  
 b. C: kakkawu-ntey\_ cacwu o-a-yo\ ←  
 close-CIRCUM often come-IE-HON  
 'It's not (that) far, so why don't you come often?'

In (10), the pitch direction of the *-nuntey* clause is level, while there is no noticeable pause after *-nuntey*. In this case, the *-nuntey* clause cannot make an independent intonation unit (Chafe 1994, Du Bois et al. 1992). In other

<sup>4</sup> In marking the direction of the terminal pitch movement, I use a backslash (\) for a falling pitch, a slash (/) for a rising pitch, and underscore (\_) for a level pitch, as suggested in Du Bois et al. (1992, 1994).



So far, we have seen the distributional characteristics of *-nuntey* in conversation. The examination of the frequency shows that *-nuntey* is used in two ways: (i) *-nuntey* as a clausal connective that has the function of combining two clauses into a bigger discourse unit, and (ii) *-nuntey* as a turn-terminal affix that lacks the clause-combining function. We have also seen that *-nuntey* cannot be treated as a sentence-terminal affix, although it may be used in an exclamatory sentence. In the next section, let us discuss the functions of *-nuntey* in more detail.

## 5. Functions of the Clausal Connective *-nuntey* in Conversation

In this section, let us examine the functions of *-nuntey* in conversation. The meanings and functions of *-nuntey* are elusive, and many grammarians and linguists have explained the properties of *-nuntey* in diverse ways. As we have seen in Section 2, Choi (1961) terms the affix *-nuntey* an explanatory connective, and Park (1984) claims that the semantic relations expressed by *-nuntey* are 'and, but, and so', depending on context. Lee (1979, 1993) and Kim (1988), on the other hand, claim that in narrative discourse, *-nuntey* has two main functions: (i) the function of introducing new referents/information into discourse, and (ii) the function of establishing background for the following discourse. Park (1996:145), on the other hand, claims that *-nuntey* clauses used without main clauses in conversation provide common grounds on which the speaker shares his/her stance: an evidential ground, and a factual, or empirical, ground.

In the present study, adopting the explanations proposed by Lee (1993), Kim (1988) and Park (1996), I assume that the main function of *-nuntey* is to provide a ground for the following discourse. More specifically, in narrative, the ground-providing function is essential for a smooth flow of discourse because the narrator normally proceeds with his/her discourse through an interaction of foreground and background information in an alternating way. In conversation, by contrast, the ground-providing function is directly and closely related with the cooperation between speaker and hearer, which is necessary for a smooth flow of conversation. More specifically, *-nuntey* functions as a cooperation marker in the sense that the speaker provides a ground for the addressee to take a next turn. At a micro-level, the functions of *-nuntey* are diverse: (i) an explanatory func-

tion, (ii) showing contrast, (iii) an introductory function, (iv) marking the point where new referents are introduced, among others. Bearing these functions in mind, let us explore the functions of *-nuntey* in conversation more in detail.

First, let us discuss the functions of the clausal connective *-nuntey* in conversation. When the speaker narrates things or events while continuing to maintain his/her turn for a certain period of time, he/she uses *-nuntey* as a clausal connective. In this case, the clausal connective performs many functions. It can be used either to provide background information or to provide a circumstantial background for the discourse that immediately follows *-nuntey*. Consider the following example.

- (12) Y: ... na-nun incey kulen ke-nun emtwu-to  
 I-TM well that thing-TM courage-even  
 mos nay-*nuntey* ←  
 not have-CIRCUM  
 sewullayntu-lul ka-ss-*nuntey* ←  
 Seoul Land-ACC go-PST-CIRCUM  
 kuttay sewullanytu paiking-un eps-ess-ko  
 then Seoul Land Viking-TM not:be-PST-CONN  
 mapep-uy yangthanca-lako iss-ess-e-yo  
 magic-GEN carpet-called be-PST-IE-HON  
 '... I, well, don't have the courage to do that, I went to Seoul  
 Land, but at that time, there was no Viking, but there was a  
 riding thing called the magic carpet.'

Y: ... 나는 인제 그런거는 엄두도 못내는데 서울랜드를 갔는데 그  
 때 서울랜드 바이킹은 없었고 마법의 양탄자라고 있었어요.

In (12), Speaker Y narrates her experience in the past, describing what happened when she visited the Seoul Land Amusement Park. As can be seen in the first line, *-nuntey* here is used to provide background information. The information provided with *-nuntey* is a commentary about her personality, but it has little to do with the main story line.<sup>6</sup> The second case of *-nuntey*, on the other hand, is used to provide a circumstantial background for the following discourse. That is, the description of the Seoul Land

<sup>6</sup> Kim (1994) claims that this kind of *-nuntey* is a 'speech act' adverbial clause in the sense that it is used to express speaker's speech act in communication.

Amusement Park that follows the *-nuntey* clause is possible when it is anchored on the information provided in the *-nuntey* clause.

When we consider the fact that the main function of *-nuntey* is providing a ground for the discourse that follows the *-nuntey* clause, it is understandable that the degree of bondedness between the actions/events in the two clauses combined by *-nuntey* is relatively low because the bondedness need not necessarily be strong, as can be seen in relations such as cause-effect, condition, and dependence. Because of this low degree of bondedness between two actions/events, each clause has its own TAM markers and the meaning relations are diverse. Thus we can find even a contrast relation, as can be seen in (13).

- (13) S: ku ceney-nun tokile-ka elyew-ess-*nuntey*  
 that before-TM German-NM difficult-PST-CIRCUM  
 pwule-ka manhi elyeweci-ess-taymay yosay-nun  
 French-NM much difficult-PST-I:hear nowadays-TM  
 'In the past, German (entrance exam) was difficult, but I heard  
 French (entrance exam) has become much difficult, nowadays.'  
 S: 그 전에는 독일어가 어려웠는데 불어가 많이 어려워졌대매 요새는

So far, we have seen the properties and functions of the clausal connective *-nuntey*. The discussion so far has shown that at the macro-level the representative function of the clausal connective *-nuntey* is to provide a ground for the discourse that follows the *-nuntey* clause. In this role, it has many properties and functions: (i) an introductory function in the sense that *-nuntey* is used when a new participant/referent is introduced in discourse, (ii) a background establishing function in the sense that it provides background information for the discourse that follows the *-nuntey* clause, (iii) an explanatory function in the sense that it signals that the information that follows the *-nuntey* clause adds 'explanatory' information to the *-nuntey* clause, and (iv) a 'speech act' signaling function in the sense that the *-nuntey* clause is used to express speaker's speech act in communication. The above discussion has also shown that the meaning relations expressed in the combination of two clauses are diverse, and that the possibility of co-occurrence of *-nuntey* with other TAM markers are relatively free except for a few cases. These diverse functions and meaning relations result from the property of *-nuntey* that has the function of providing a ground for the dis-

course that follows *-nuntey*.

## 6. Properties and Functions of the Turn-Terminal Affix *-nuntey* in Conversation

In the previous section, we have discussed properties and functions of the clausal connective *-nuntey*. Here, let us discuss the meanings and functions of the turn-terminal affix *-nuntey* in conversation. As we have already raised in Section 4, the question that should be asked is why *-nuntey* frequently occurs at a turn-terminal position in conversation. With respect to this question, the first thing that should be considered is the fact that conversation, unlike other discourse types, is characterized by an interaction between speaker and hearer. Conversation, as a typical mode of talk-in-interaction, is carried out by an orderly turn-taking between speaker and hearer. In understanding properties and functions of *-nuntey* in conversation, we should examine the contexts where *-nuntey* occurs and find out what functions it performs in these contexts.

Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), in their study of conversation, state that the turn-taking system for conversation can be described in terms of two components and a set of rules. The two components are turn-construction component and turn-allocation component. In addition, they propose a basic set of rules that governs turn-taking in conversation.

As a first step to understand the question of why *-nuntey* frequently occurs at the end of a turn is related to the question of what constitutes the turn-constructional component in conversation. As Sacks et al. (1974) point out, there are various unit-types with which a speaker may set out to construct a turn. That is, turn-constructional units (TCUs) can be sentential, clausal, phrasal, or lexical constructions. In fact, many studies so far have shown that sentences are not the only possible TCUs; there are, in fact, many other unit types that construct a turn. Then we can expect to find many instances of clausal units that can construct turns in Korean conversation.<sup>7</sup> If this is true, it will not be accurate labeling *-nuntey* as ex-

<sup>7</sup> With respect to the question of what forms the unit-types have at the end of a turn in Korean conversation, Kim (1996) shows the following proportions of turn-terminal forms: sentential unit 45.7%, clausal unit 11.6%, others (lexical, phrasal, etc.) 29.2%, and non-determinable elements 9.6%, out of total 363 cases. In addition, his study on the frequency of clausal connectives at turn change points shows the following frequency: *-nuntey* 43.0%, *-nikka* 21.4%, *-ko* 21.4%, *-myen* 7.1%, and others 7.1%, out of total 42 cases.

clusively a turn-terminal affix. The question is more precisely to what extent clausal units construct a turn and how frequently the terminal affix *-nuntey* occurs. The fundamental question is actually when *-nuntey* is used as exclusively a turn-terminal affix in conversation, rather than as a clausal connective.

With respect to the question of the frequency of *-nuntey* as a clausal connective and as a turn-terminal affix, we have already seen the frequency in Section 4. Table 1 shows that *-nuntey* is used as a clausal connective with the proportion of 48.7%, as a turn-terminal affix with the proportion of 43.9%, and as a terminal affix that occur with other elements with the proportion of 7.4%, out of the total 230 cases. These figures show that *-nuntey* is one of the representative connectives that occurs at the point where turn-taking takes place. Another study done by Kim (1996) also confirms this fact. With respect to this frequency, the next question that should be asked is why *-nuntey* as a turn-terminal affix shows such a high rate of frequency.

In exploring the characteristics of *-nuntey* as a terminal affix, we should examine the properties of *-nuntey* in conversation, particularly in terms of turn-taking. In a word, the functions of *-nuntey* are closely related to the interaction of speaker and hearer. The question of whether *-nuntey* will be used as a clausal connective or as a turn-terminal affix depends on the factors that are involved in the interaction between speaker and hearer. In narrative, the speaker has the sole responsibility for designing his/her utterances and keeping his/her talk moving forward in accord with his/her communicative goals. In narrative discourse, some parts of the discourse are more relevant to the main story line than others. That part of discourse which supplies the main point of discourse is called foreground. The material that merely assists, amplifies, or comments on the mainline story is called background (Hopper and Thompson 1980). When we adopt the distinction between foreground and background, we can say that *-nuntey* has mostly to do with background. That is, when the speaker uses *-nuntey* as a clausal connective, the speaker him-/herself takes the responsibility of providing the background information for his/her own discourse. In this respect, we can say that one of the major functions of the *-nuntey* clause is providing material that serves as background.

However, in conversation, the responsibility of providing material for foreground or background is not imposed totally upon a particular party.

Rather, both parties (i.e., speaker and hearer both) have the responsibility for the smooth flow of information. In this respect, there is a continuing negotiation between speaker and hearer according to the turn-taking system that operates on a turn-by-turn basis. In this regard, the mechanism that governs turn-taking is often called a local management system. When we try to understand the functions of the terminal affix *-nuntey* in terms of talk-in-interaction, we can say that the speaker uses the strategy of using *-nuntey* as a turn-terminal affix as a way of inviting the addressee onto the floor.

- (14) S: swanpo kaya caymi-iss-*nuntey*\ (1.0) ←  
 Suanpo go-NEC fun-be-CIRCUM  
 'If we go to Suanpo, we'll have fun'  
 Y: swuyengpok  
 swimming suit  
 '(then we have to prepare) a swimming suit'  
 S: kulay swuyeng-to ha-ko nol-ko  
 right swimming-also do-CONN play-CONN  
 'Right, then we can enjoy swimming.'  
 S: 수안보 가야 재미있는데\ (1.0)  
 Y: 수영복  
 S: 그래 수영도 하고 놀고

As we can see in (14), the *-nuntey* clause in the utterance of Speaker S provides a circumstantial background. Anchoring on this circumstantial information, she could have kept her turn going, but there is a slight pause after *-nuntey*. At that moment, Speaker Y takes the turn, as a way of helping Speaker S. Then Speaker S retakes her turn.

As a way of inviting the addressee onto the floor, the speaker can use a question in the *-nuntey* clause.

- (15) J: cengyen-i myec sal-i-nteyyo- kyoswu-tul-un/  
 retirement-NM what age-be-CIRCUM, professor-PL-TM  
 'At what age do they retire, professors?'  
 S: ama hwankap-i elma namci  
 probably sixtieth:birthday-NM much remain  
 [anhe-si-ess-ul kul]  
 not-HON-PST-SUPPOS  
 '(I guess) his sixtieth birthday anniversary is not far away.'

As can be seen in (15), Speaker J invites Speaker S onto the floor by using a question form in the *-nuntey* clause. That is, Speaker J invites Speaker S onto the floor by asking Speaker S to provide new information. By using this strategy of negotiating and cooperating with Speaker S as a way of achieving communicative goals, Speaker J keeps the discourse moving forward.

Here let us examine the place where *-nuntey* occurs in terms of turn-taking. As we have seen, *-nuntey* can occur either in an interclausal position or a turn-final position. This means that the position where *-nuntey* occurs is a transition relevance place (TRP). At a TRP, the rules that govern the transition of speakers can apply, but that does not mean that speaker exchange always takes place at that point, only that it may happen. The evidence that the position where *-nuntey* occurs is a TRP can be shown in two respects: (i) the *-nuntey* position is often marked with the occurrence of backchannels, and (ii) the *-nuntey* position is the beginning or ending point of turn-overlapping.

(16) J: enni hyuka-i-e            kaciko incey cengswu oppa  
           Sister vacation-be-IE so            now Jungsoo Brother  
           poko mwul-e            po-*nuntey* [--]  
           to ask-CONN try-CIRCUM

Y: [ung]

J: cengswu oppa-ka            kelenen ke-i-ya  
           Jungsoo Brother-NM say:so thing-be-IE

‘As you (Sister) were on vacation (at that time), so I asked (Brother) Jungsoo, (Y: uhuh), he told me like that.’

J: 언니 휴가여가지고 인제 정수 오빠 보고 물어 보는데 [--]

Y: [응]

J: 정수 오빠가 그러는 거야 ...

As can be seen in (16), in the turn of Speaker J, she uses the affix *-nuntey* with a slight pause, at that moment, the addressee responds to Speaker J with the backchannel response *ung*, but does not take the turn. Consequently turn-taking does not take place and Speaker J continues her talk.

When overlapping takes place, the place where *-nuntey* is used is a place where a turn is terminated, as can be seen in (17).

- (17) S: ne-n inci kwahak-ccok-ulo ha-ko siph-untey  
 you-TM cognitive science-area-to do-CONN want-CIRCUM  
 'As for you, you would like to study cognitive science,'  
 J: yey?  
 yes?  
 'What?'  
 S: [ne-nun inci kwahakccok-ulo ha-ko siph-untey]  
 you-TM cognitive science-area-to do-CONN want-CIRCUM  
 'As for you, you would like to study cognitive science,'  
 J: [sayngkak-man ha-ko iss-nun ke-ciyo mengchenghakey]  
 thinking-only do-CONN be-ATTR thing-IE foolishly  
 'I am only considering like that, like a fool.'  
 S: 넌 인지 과학쪽으로 하고 싶은데  
 J: 예?  
 S: [너는 인지 과학쪽으로 하고 싶은데]  
 J: [생각만 하고 있는거죠 명칭하게]

When we consider the fact that the point where *-nuntey* occurs is a TRP, the question is whether a pause or silence alone can function as a signal for turn-taking. However, the examination of the data shows that a pause or silence does not play any significant role in turn-taking.

- (18) S: mwuncey-ka manhi iss-*nuntey* (3.5)  
 problem-NM many be-CIRCUM  
 (H: yey)  
 'There are lots of problem (in recording)'  
 S: cihachel-eyse ha-*nuntey* (1.0) an toytela  
 subway-LOC do-CIRCUM not possible  
 soum-i wenak simhaykaci-ko  
 noise-NM too serious-CONN  
 (H: yey)  
 'I was recording in the subway train, but it was not possible because the noise was too serious.'  
 H: yey [mac-a-yo]  
 yes correct-IE-DEF  
 'yes, that's right'

S: [cha soum-i] simyaykaci-ko  
 train noise-NM serious-CONN  
 'as the train noise was too serious,'

S: 문제가 많이 있는데\ (3.5)

(H: 예)

S: 지하철에서 하는데 (1.0) 안 되더라 소음이 워낙 심해가지고

(H: 예)

H: 예 [맞아요]

S: [차 소음이] 심해 가지고 ...

As can be seen in (18), although there is a pause or silence in the turn of Speaker S, turn-taking does not take place, but only she gets a backchannel response from Speaker H. Whether turn-taking takes place or not in the position where *-nuntey* is used seems to be dependent on the turn-taking rules in spite of the fact that the *-nuntey* position is a TRP. That is, according to Sacks et al. (1974), when a current speaker stops speaking, the next party who speaks first takes the turn. But if the next speaker does not take the turn, the current speaker can continue. In this respect, although a pause or silence is a possible signal for yielding the turn, if the next speaker does not take the turn, the current speaker continues his turn. In essence, if the current speaker yields his/her turn at the *-nuntey* position, but the next speaker does not take the turn, *-nuntey* functions as a clausal connective. On the other hand, if the next speaker takes the turn, *-nuntey* functions as a turn-terminal affix.

So far, we have seen the properties and functions of *-nuntey* in conversation. As has been discussed, in conversation, whether *-nuntey* will be used as a clausal connective or as a terminal affix is directly related to the speaker's strategy in turn-taking. That is, when the speaker yields his/her turn to the next speaker at the point where *-nuntey* is used, *-nuntey* behaves as a turn-terminal affix. If not, *-nuntey* is regarded as a clausal connective. When *-nuntey* is used as a turn-terminal affix, the strategy used by the speaker is inviting the addressee onto the floor. In this case, *-nuntey* has the function of soliciting new information or background information from the addressee as a way of achieving the communicative goals of the speaker.

Finally, let us discuss the problem of grammaticalization with respect to

the ambivalent distributional characteristics of *-nuntey*. As we have seen, the affix *-nuntey* is used either as a clausal connective or as a turn-terminal affix. Although *-nuntey* originated from the clausal connective and still functions as a clausal connective, many people have treated it as an informal sentence-terminal affix. As has been discussed earlier, the reasons for treating *-nuntey* as a sentence-terminal affix are diverse. First, *-nuntey* can co-occur relatively freely with TAM markers with only a few exceptions. Second, *-nuntey*, like other informal sentence-terminal affixes such as *-e*, *ci*, *-ney*, and *-kwun*, frequently co-occurs with the deferential marker *-yo* at a turn-final position. Third, the place where *-nuntey* occurs functions as a transition relevance place where turn-taking may take place. Finally, *-nuntey* is used to provide a ground for the discourse that follows the *-nuntey* clause. Consequently the degree of the bondedness between the two clauses combined by *-nuntey* is relatively low.

When we consider the above reasons of why *-nuntey* has been treated as a 'sentence' terminal affix, we can explain such a change in terms of grammaticalization. The study of *-nuntey* in terms of interactional functions naturally leads to the question of how discourse and grammar interact with each other. When language is used in social contexts to achieve certain communicative goals, grammatical change occurs. More specifically, as the communicative needs change, meanings change in such a way that meanings with largely propositional/ideational content gain textual or expressive meanings. According to Traugott & König (1991:189), grammaticalization refers to the dynamic, unidirectional historical process in the course of time. It involves a meaning shift from one functional component to another whereby lexical items acquire a new status as grammatical, morpho-syntactic forms. In this respect, we can say that *-nuntey* is undergoing a process of grammaticalization in the sense that the clausal connective *-nuntey* is changing into a 'sentence-terminal' affix.

## 7. Conclusions

In this paper, I have explored properties and functions of the verbal affix *-nuntey* in terms of talk-in-interaction. Adopting the assumption that grammar is shaped through an interaction between speaker and hearer in the process of achieving communicative goals, this paper tries to character-

ize the properties of *-nuntey* from the interactive perspective of grammar. In this regard, this paper explores the question of what functions *-nuntey* performs in discourse. The analysis of the conversational data shows that at a macro-level the main function of *-nuntey* is to provide a ground for the discourse that follows the *-nuntey* clause. In addition, this research has shown that at a micro-level *-nuntey* has diverse functions: (i) a background-establishing function, (ii) an introductory function, (iii) an explanatory function, and (iv) a 'speech act' signaling function. When *-nuntey* is used as a turn-terminal affix, one of the main functions of *-nuntey* is to invite the addressee onto the floor. In other words, the function of the turn-final *-nuntey* is to ask the addressee to provide new information or addressee's assessment/opinion about the information provided by the speaker. In this respect, *-nuntey* is one of the most typical markers of cooperation between speaker and hearer. Finally, this research has shown that *-nuntey* is undergoing a process of grammaticalization in the sense that the clausal connective *-nuntey* is becoming a 'sentence-terminal' affix through an interaction of speaker's strategies, communicative goals, and interactional factors involved in the flow of information.

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