

A Discourse-Pragmatic Study of *com* in Korean*

Kyungja Ahn
(Seoul National University)

Ahn, Kyungja. (2009). A Discourse-Pragmatic Study of *com* in Korean. *Language Research* 45.2, 257-281.

This study examines the pragmatic functions of *com* through an analysis of a Korean database of scripted, spontaneous spoken, and internet data. The findings revealed that *com* is used more frequently as a discourse marker than as a quantifier, indicating that although *com* retains the conceptual and etymological meaning of smallness, its situational and contextual meanings have evolved. Concerning *com* as a quantifier, this study found that whereas *com* usually means 'a little', there are instances when it acts as an intensifier meaning 'very' or 'really'. In addition, it was found that while *com* as a discourse marker frequently functions as a mitigator, it sometimes serves as an intensification marker; depending on the context, *com* can weaken or strengthen the force of face-threatening acts (FTAs) such as requests and negative evaluations. Both as a mitigator and as an intensification marker, *com* at times helps to focus on its antecedent or reveals a speaker's stance. In particular, *com* as an intensification marker is used to indicate that a speaker's expectation has not been met. The findings from this study have important pedagogical implications for teaching and learning Korean as a foreign/second language, specifically for raising Korean language learners' pragmatic awareness regarding *com*.

Keywords: *com*, Korean, quantifier, discourse marker, politeness, face-threatening acts, pragmatic function, pragmatic awareness

1. Introduction

Com is used very frequently in Korean discourse and typically has been classified as an adverb meaning 'a little'. Previous research on *com* has indicated that *com* is a shortened form of the adverb *cokum* 'a little', and it not only maintains its etymological meaning but also works to minimize the burden of utterances such as requests to the hearer, thus conveying politeness (K-h Joo 2000, H-g Lee 1991, Y-j Lim 1995, S-M-D Son 1988). More recent studies have shown that *com* should be classified as belonging to grammatical categories such as pragmatic morphemes (H-g Lee 1991) and determiners (J-s Mok 2001) and that the major functions of *com* include emphasis, negation (S-M-D

* I am grateful to three anonymous reviewers for their insightful and helpful comments on the earlier draft of this paper. However, I alone am responsible for any errors.

Son 1988), focus (H-g Lee 1991, J-s Mok 2001), and introducing a new entity (J-s Mok 2001).

Although insights have been gained from the prior studies on *com*, most of this research used decontextualized and invented sentences in which *com* could be included. Thus, analysis of discourse including the use of *com* is essential for a more comprehensive understanding of the function of *com*. Also, little research has been done on the frequency of various functions of *com* in Korean discourse. Thus, it is necessary to investigate how often *com* is used for specific functions using a discourse database containing *com*. Therefore, this study analyzes major functions of *com* as they are used within context and their frequencies by using Korean spontaneous and scripted discourse from movies, television dramas, and the internet.

Based on the discourse database constructed for this study, findings reveal that *com* is used as a quantifier and/or a discourse marker. Interestingly, whereas *com* as a quantifier usually means ‘a little’, it sometimes works as an intensifier that means ‘many’ or ‘very’. Also, while *com* as a discourse marker often mitigates the impact of face-threatening acts (FTAs), it frequently reinforces them. Thus, the findings indicate that depending on the context, *com* can weaken or strengthen the effect of speech acts while saving or threatening the face of the listener or the third person in question. This study focuses on how and how often these contradictory functions of *com* as a mitigation or intensification marker¹ emerge in actual specific contexts. As a result, the findings provide important pedagogical implications for raising pragmatic awareness related to *com*, which frequently appears in Korean discourse.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Previous Studies on *com*

Research on *com* has previously focused on the relationship of *cokum* and *com* and the grammatical category to which *com* belongs. Studies on the functions of *com* have also been conducted including on the mitigation of the force of requests, emphasis, focus, negation, and introduction of an entity.

Y-j Lim (1995) and K-h Joo (2000) proposed that although *com* has a shared function with its etymological source, *cokum* ‘a small amount’, *com* has experienced transformation in meaning and function, which makes the two now non-interchangeable. Since the two studies mainly focused on the differences

¹ In response to one reviewer’s comment on the possible confusion that could arise from using the term ‘intensifier’ to indicate *com*’s intensification function as a discourse marker, the term ‘intensification maker’ has been utilized in this paper. In other words, this term was used to differentiate from ‘intensifier’ referring to *com* as a quantifier.

between the two elements, they did not specifically analyze the various functions of *com* within actual contexts.

Two major Korean dictionaries, *Yonsei Korean Dictionary* (1998) and *Standard Korean Dictionary* (1999), classify *com* as an adverb, abbreviated from the adverb, *cohum*. These dictionaries consider other various functions of *com* as special ones within the category of adverbs. S-M-D Son (1988), Y-j Lim (1995), and K-h Joo (2000) also proposed that *com* functions only as an adverb.

However, H-g Lee (1991) and J-s Mok (2001) pointed out limitations when *com* is considered only as an adverb and suggested other categories for *com*: pragmatic morphemes and *hanceng cosa* ‘determiners’ respectively. H-g Lee (1991) asserted that as a pragmatic morpheme, *com* is a bound one, closely related to words preceding it (e.g., NP, VP, PP, AdvP, and S). J-s Mok (2001) proposed that *com* belongs to the category of *hanceng cosa* ‘determiners’² and draws attention to its antecedent or introduces new information. These two studies made an important contribution by discovering *com*’s grammatical categories and providing valuable perspectives regarding the relationship of *com* with its antecedent.

As for the main pragmatic function of *com*, research has shown that *com* primarily conveys politeness (Y-j Lim 1995; S-M-D Son 1988). For instance, S-M-D Son (1988) explained that politeness is the basic situational function of *com* which is used in strategic consideration of the hearer by minimizing imposition or decreasing opportunity for trouble between speaker and hearer. Related research on politeness has been conducted by H-g Lee (1991) who asserted that the pragmatic morpheme *com* is used to satisfy the Gricean cooperative principle (Grice 1975)³ and the requirements of politeness (Brown & Levinson 1987). In this analysis, a speaker lessens the strength of FTAs such as requests or commands in order to enlist the hearer’s cooperation. On the other hand, H-g Lee (1991) claimed that on occasion utterances with *com* sound rude and coercive as the speaker threatens the hearer’s face or intends to insult the hearer by belittling the hearer’s ability. Although this contradictory perspective of *com* was evident in H-g Lee’s (1991) study, the latter function of being coercive was only mentioned as peripheral to the major function of decreasing the force of FTAs. Also, H-g Lee (1991) used his own invented sentences containing *com*, and thus the relative frequency of these functions in Korean discourse was not examined.

² “Determiners” as used by J-s Mok (2001) appear similar in definition to “focus delimiters” (H-M Sohn 1994) such as *-to* ‘also’, *-nun/un* ‘Topic/Focus’, *-man* ‘only’, *-lato* ‘even’ in that they delimit the meaning of the co-occurring element (e.g., noun, verb, adverb, and complementizer).

³ Grice (1975) proposed that successful talk exchanges need cooperative efforts from both the speaker and the hearer. Gricean cooperative principle is defined as follows: “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the state at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.” (Grice 1975: 45)

More recently, pragmatic functions of *com* besides politeness have been proposed. S-M-D Son (1988) suggested two additional functions of *com*, emphasis and negation: While sometimes *com* can emphasize a preceding constituent that has been moved from its normal position, at other times it delivers negative meanings in a milder way. However, S-M-D Son (1988) himself pointed out that these two functions can be also attributed to consideration for the hearer, and Y-j Lim (1995) maintained that these two functions of emphasis and negation are closely related to politeness. Another function of *com* that has been suggested is conveying requests rather than politeness (J-s Mok 2001). Moreover, J-s Mok (2001) proposed that *com* is utilized to reveal presuppositions of the speaker that the hearer has not done what the speaker wanted him/her to do.

Based on the analysis of an actual database, the present study classifies *com* as a quantifier (i.e., a modifier that expresses a quantity) and a discourse marker (see the next section). In order to explain the functions of *com* as a discourse marker, more specifically, as a mitigation or intensification marker, this study adopts politeness theory (Brown & Levinson 1987). It also examines how understanding other pragmatic functions of *com* such as indicating the presence of the speaker's expectations and focusing on its antecedent is useful for understanding *com* as a mitigation or intensification marker.

2.2. Discourse Markers

Discourse markers are described as “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk” (Schiffrin 1987: 31) and as “propos[ing] the contextual coordinates within which an utterance is produced and designed to be interpreted” (Schiffrin 1987: 315). Similarly, Fraser (1996: 186) defined a discourse marker as “an expression which signals the relationship of the basic message to the foregoing discourse.” Therefore, discourse markers are closely related to the preceding or subsequent text and are contextually bound.

Schiffrin (1987: 49) also mentioned that “the analysis of discourse markers is part of the more general analysis of discourse coherence—how speakers and hearers jointly integrate forms, meaning, and actions to make overall sense out of what is said.” Thus, investigation of discourse markers helps to reveal the organization and structure of the interaction between interlocutors.

Schiffrin (1987) analyzed discourse markers in English such as *oh*, *well*, *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*, *because*, *now*, *then*, *I mean*, and *y'know* by showing how those markers shape and consolidate conversational interaction. While utterances can occur without discourse markers, the interpretation of the speaker's intention may change slightly (Fujita 2001). Although a discourse marker does not change the truth value of an utterance, it reveals the speaker's aims, attitudes, and thoughts (Fraser 1996).

This study found that *com* serves as a discourse marker because it is closely connected to discourse contexts, indicating the orientation of the conversation. In addition, although it does not influence the truth-conditional meaning of the sentences wherein it is used, *com* indicates the stance and/or intention of the speaker towards the hearer.

2.3. Politeness Theory

This study employs politeness theory (Brown & Levinson 1987) in order to address the function of *com* as a discourse marker. Brown and Levinson (1987) introduced the concept of ‘face’ to illustrate their theory of politeness. They argue that all interactants desire to maintain two types of ‘face’ during interaction: positive face and negative face. Positive face is defined as the positive image people have of themselves and their desire for approval, while negative face is a “basic claim of territories, personal preserves, and rights to non-distraction” (Brown & Levinson 1987: 61).

Brown and Levinson (1987) further maintained that there are acts that intrinsically threaten face, appropriately referred to as face-threatening acts (FTAs). For example, orders, requests, and advice are FTAs to the hearer’s negative face, while disapproval, disagreements, and complaints are FTAs to the hearer’s positive face. Among strategies for managing FTAs, either positive or negative politeness, which includes redressive action, can be chosen to minimize the loss of face. Positive politeness is demonstrated by satisfying positive face, by showing commonalities among interactants, or by indicating an acknowledgement of the addressee’s self-image. In contrast, negative politeness can be expressed through satisfying negative face by showing respect for the interlocutor’s right not to be imposed upon and by saving the interlocutor’s face by mitigating the effect of FTAs.

Previous studies on *com* mostly focused on the function of relieving the burden of requests, a type of negative FTA, on the hearer. However, this study found that *com* can also be used to minimize positive FTAs such as criticism or negative evaluations. Therefore, *com* can be considered as a redressive marker to mitigate the effect of negative FTAs (requests) and positive FTAs (disapproval). Moreover, the current study supports the idea that at times *com* as an intensification marker strengthens the strength of FTAs. Although this point was briefly mentioned in H-g Lee (1991), this study investigates when, how, and how often this function of intensification occurs in actual discourse contexts in Korean language.

3. Methodology

The data for this study consist of approximately twelve hours (740 minutes) of scripted and spontaneous discourse produced by native speakers of Korean. Scripted data include five Korean movie scripts (*yepkicekin kunye* 'My Sassy Girl', *tongkapnayki kwaoyhaki* 'My Tutor Friend', *JSA, shiri*, and *chinkwu* 'Friend'), two Korean television drama scripts (*nolan sonswuken* 'Yellow Handkerchief' and *honca issnun kin halwu* 'A Long and Lonely Day') and a script translated into Korean of an American movie (*Notting Hill*). Spontaneous data include one television talk show (*achimmatang* 'Morning Yard') on the topic of searching for family members. Movies, television talk shows, and television dramas may not be naturally occurring discourse in that they are scripted by their writers and/or the discourse can be influenced by being broadcast. However, the data of this study, which are mostly scripted, are useful for demonstrating examples of the major functions of *com* situated in somewhat dramatic discourse contexts.⁴ Furthermore, because these kinds of data from movies and television shows have been used in several linguistic studies (E J Oh & Strauss 2004; Matsumoto 1985; Strauss, J Lee & K Ahn 2006), it shows that they have been accepted as a valid data source. Table 1 presents the frequency of *com* in each dataset.

Although this analysis focused more on spoken data, written descriptions within the scripts for the scene background and actors' actions were also examined.⁵ Furthermore, data from several internet websites were used for the analysis of more diverse contexts where *com* is located, particularly because the language of the internet is known for its mixture of the styles of spoken and written language (Crystal 2001).

Overall, 217 instances of *com* usage (161 spoken and 56 written) were collected from the scripted and spontaneous datasets for this study and analyzed from a discourse-functional perspective. Additionally, five tokens of *com* from internet websites were used for this study in order to demonstrate appropriate examples for the functions of *com*.

⁴ While two of the reviewers pointed out that the data were not naturally occurring, one reviewer commented on the usefulness of these scripted data because their dramatic situations provide numerous utterances containing *com*.

⁵ According to Table 1, *chinkwu* 'Friend' has 48 written tokens of *com*, comprising 85.7% of the total (65) because the script has detailed descriptions for the background and actions in comparison to other scripts.

Table 1. Descriptions of Datasets and Frequency of *com*

	Datasets	Minutes	Tokens of <i>com</i>			
			Spoken	Written	Total	
Scripted Speech	<i>yepkicekin kurye</i> (Movie) 'My Sassy Girl'	100	18	3	21	
	<i>tongkapnayki kwaoyhaki</i> (Movie) 'My Tutor Friend'	100	40	4	44	
	<i>JSA</i> (Movie)	100	17	0	17	
	<i>chinkwu</i> 'Friend' (Movie)	100	17	48	65	
	<i>shiri</i> (Movie)	100	6	0	6	
	<i>Notting Hill</i> (Movie)	100	8	0	8	
	<i>nolan sonswuken</i> (TV drama) 'Yellow Handkerchief'	30	11	1	12	
	<i>honca issnun kin halwu</i> (TV drama) 'A Long And Lonely Day'	50	13	0	13	
	Spontaneous Speech	<i>achimmatang</i> (TV talk show) 'Morning Yard'	60	31	0	31
		Total	740	161	56	217

4. Findings

4.1. Overview of the Findings

Across the datasets, two uses of *com* were primarily observed: as a quantifier and as a discourse marker. While examining the data, specifically those related to *com* functioning as a discourse marker (both as a mitigator and as an intensification marker), requests and negative evaluations were the most frequently found speech acts in the utterances containing *com*.

In this study, a request is defined as an utterance that “expresses a desire for the addressee to do a certain thing and normally aims for the addressee to intend to and, indeed, actually do that thing” (Bach 1998: 84). Negative evaluation means either assessing negative aspects of those involved in a particular discourse context (e.g., the speaker, the hearer, the third person in question) or assessing aspects of the participants negatively. In the case of *com* as a mitigator, other speech acts (31 instances total) include commenting (8), asking questions (7), making statements (7; plans 4, wishes 3), describing (6), and excusing (3). On the other hand, *com* as an intensification marker was found in other speech acts (6 instances total) of asking questions (3), advising (2), and ordering (1). Table 2 shows the frequency of each function in the datasets.

Table 2. Frequency of *com* as a Quantifier and as a Discourse Marker in the Data

Type	Dataset***	QN*	Discourse Marker Type*								Total	Total
			Mitigation marker				Intensification marker					
			Req	Eval	Other	Total	Req	Eval	Other	Total		
Scripted Speech	<i>yepkicekin</i> <i>kurye</i> 'My Sassy Girl'	3/0 **	3	1	2	6	6		3	9	15	18
	<i>tongkapnayki</i> <i>kwaoyhaki</i> 'My Tutor Friend'	5/0	3	3	3	9	22	3	1	26	35	40
	<i>JSA</i>	1/1	5		4	9	4	1		5	14	16
	<i>chinkwu</i> 'Friend'	5/0	5		4	9	2		1	3	12	17
	<i>shiri</i>	0/0	3		2	5	1			1	6	6
	<i>Notting Hill</i>	3/0		1	3	4	1			1	5	8
	<i>nolan sonswuken</i> 'Yellow Handkerchief'	1/0	3		2	5	5			5	10	11
	<i>honca issnun kin</i> <i>hahwu</i> 'A Long & Lonely Day'	2/0	2		0	2	8		1	9	11	13
Subtotal (%)	20/1 16%	24	5	20	49 45%	49	4	6	59 55%	108 84%	129	
Sponta- neous Speech	<i>achimmatang</i> 'Morning Yard' (%)	5/0 16%	7	2	12	21 81%	5		5 19%	26 84%	31	
Total (%)		25/1 16%	32 (46%)	7 (10%)	31 (44%)	70 52%	54 (84%)	4 (6%)	6 (10%)	64 48%	134 84%	160

* QN=Quantifier; Req=Request; Eval=Evaluation; Other=Other Speech Acts

** 3 (instances of 'a little')/0 (instances of 'very'; intensifier)

*** The internet data (5): quantifier (3; 'a little' 1, intensifier 2), intensification marker in requests (2)

Overall, the frequency of the function of discourse marker (84%) is higher than that of quantifier (16%), and *com* specifically as a mitigator (52%) is slightly more frequent than *com* as an intensification marker (48%). Although *com* has been traditionally considered a mitigator, its contradictory function as an intensification marker commonly occurs throughout the data.

Of the tokens of *com* as a mitigator, minimizing requests (46%) and diminishing the strength of other speech acts (44%) comprise the majority. The function of softening negative evaluations (10%) is also shown in the data. As for *com* as an intensification marker, reinforcing requests covers 84% of this function, while strengthening the force of negative evaluations and other speech acts make up 6% and 10% respectively. Throughout the data, the function of

com is closely related to requests, whether it weakens or strengthens them.

When scripted and spontaneous speech were compared, *com* in the spontaneous data serves as a mitigator (81%) four times more frequently than it is used as an intensification marker (19%). Conversely, in the scripted speech, the function of intensification marker (55%) is more frequent than that of mitigator (45%). As television drama/movie scripts tend to involve exaggerated or dramatic contexts to try to elicit an emotional response from the audience, *com* may be used more frequently as an intensification marker, in comparison to its common use as a mitigator in spontaneous speech.

Table 3 demonstrates the frequency of occurrences of *com* in two speech levels. The mitigator *com* occurs more frequently with polite forms, whereas the intensification marker *com* is more often used with plain forms. Because polite forms themselves intrinsically represent more politeness than plain forms, *com* diminishes the effect of speech acts more frequently with the polite speech level than with the plain speech.

Table 3. Frequency of *com* in Speech Levels

Speech Level	Mitigation Marker	Intensification Marker	Total
Polite	35 (75%)	12 (25%)	47
Plain	35 (40%)	52 (60%)	87
Total	70 (52%)	64 (48%)	134

4.2. *Com* as a Quantifier

Com as a quantifier means ‘a little’ and is frequently interchangeable with *co-kum* as in (1) and (2).

- (1) TV Talk Show — *achimmatang* ‘Morning Yard’
 ((On TV, a picture of yeongkwang, a 26-month-old boy, is shown.))⁶

yeongkwang-i-to 26 *kaywel-ey* *piha-myen* *com* *khun*
 Yeongkwang-SM-also 26-month-LOC compared-if **COM** tall

phyen-ipnita.
 somewhat-COP-DEF⁷

⁶ In (()), various contextual events are noted, usually only when they affect comprehension of the surrounding discourse. The Yale system was used for Korean Romanization except for Korean people’s names which follow the system that has been recommended by the Korean government since 2000.

⁷ Abbreviations used in the examples are as follows: ATTR (Attributive), COMM (Committal), CONC (Concessive), CONN (Connective), COP (Copula), DEF (Deferential), DIR (Directive), FUT (Future), GEN (Genitive), HON (Honorific), IMP (Imperative), INT (Interruptive), INTEND (Intend), IPR (Inclusive Imperative), LOC (Locative), OM (Object marker), PL (Plu-

‘Yeongkwang is **a little taller** than other kids of his age, that is, 26 months.’

(2) Movie — *chinkwu* ‘Friend’

((The protagonists in this movie, four high school students, are standing in front of a movie theater. Other high school students are entering to watch the movie as a group. The four teenagers want to see the movie.))

tanche-y haksayng-tul-uy cwul-kwa com keli-lul twu-ko
group student-PL-GEN queue-from **COM distance-OM** keep-CONN

kilkeliey ney nyeseke se issnun key pointa.

‘Four guys are seen standing, keeping **a little distance** from the queue of a group of students.’

In (1), *com* modifies *khun* ‘tall’ and represents how tall Yeongkwang is. *Com* as a quantifier is often utilized in written discourse as shown in (2). *Com* in the written discourse in this study predominantly functions as a quantifier. Particularly, *com* frequently co-occurs with *te* ‘more’ as *com te* ‘a little bit more’ in both written and spoken discourse in general as well as in nine instances in the data of this study.

In contrast, *com* is sometimes utilized as an intensifier meaning ‘very’ or ‘many’. Whereas *com* in (3a) means ‘a little’, *com* in (3b) means ‘very’.

(3) Internet

(a) *pakkath nalssi-ka com chwuwe-ya wuntong-uy*
Outside weather-SM **COM cold-have to** exercise-GEN

hyokwa-ka iss-nuntey,
effect-SM exist-CONN

‘Doing exercise may be more effective when the weather outside is **a little cold**,’

yocumuy nalssika nemwu ttattushata.

‘but these days [early February] the weather is too warm (compared with other years).’

(b) *panghak ttaymyen cwupwunimtul...cipeyman isscani taptaphako,*
‘During the (winter) vacation, mothers... the house might seem stuffy if you only stay at home,’

ral), PLN (Plain), POL (Polite), PST (Past), Q (Question), QT (Quotative), RSN (Reason), SM (Subject marker), TM (Topic marker).

eti teyli-ko naka-ca-ni yocum nalssi-ka
 where take-CONN go out-IPR-RSN nowadays weather-SM

com chwuwe-ya mal-i-cyo.
COM cold-CONN word-COP- POL

'but when you think about going somewhere, the weather is **very cold**.'

Like in (3b), in the rhetorical question of example (4), *com* intensifies 'many'. Moreover, the writer shows his sympathy for the President by stressing that so many things have changed against his wishes.

(4) Internet

((A doctor is explaining how to manage anger.))

taythonglyengkkeyseto sangsangkehentey mwuchek hwaka na keyeysin kesulo cimcaki toynta.

'(I) suppose that the President would also be very upset.'

halwu-ey-to ponin-uy ttus-kwa-nun cengpantay-lo
 A day-LOC-also self-GEN will-with-TM opposite-DIR

twiciphi-nun il-tul-i com manh-keyss-nun-ka?
 be reversed-ATTR thing-PL-SM **COM** many-FUT-PLN-Q

'Even in just one day, how **many** things go against (his) will?'

This study's analysis indicates that *com* as a quantifier originally meant 'a little' and generally continues to have this meaning. However, as a quantifier, it was also found to function as an intensifier, meaning 'very', 'really', and 'utterly'.

4.3. *Com* as a Mitigation Marker

In the data, *com* is used to decrease the strength of FTAs such as requests and negative evaluations. Also, *com* mitigates the effect of speech acts such as describing and excusing. This section demonstrates how this function is realized in discourse containing *com*.

4.3.1. Mitigating Requests

Com is frequently used to soften the effect of requests, a type of negative FTA, when the speaker asks for something for him/herself from the addressee. In these cases, *com* usually co-occurs with *cwuta* 'give', an auxiliary verb, which means "the subject does something for the sake of someone else consciously and intentionally" (K Lee 1993: 124). The following excerpt shows this func-

tion of *com*:

- (5) TV Drama — *nolan sonswuken* ‘Yellow Handkerchief’
 ((A taxi arrives in front of a hospital. Taeyeong pays the taxi fare.))

taeyeong: *yengswucung-com ttey cwu-sey-yo.*
 Receipt -**COM** split give-HON-POL
 ‘**Would** (you) **please** give (me) a **receipt**?’

((The driver expresses his reluctance but issues the receipt to Taeyeong.))

The speaker is asking the taxi driver to issue a receipt for his taxi fare, which is an unusual request in Korea. He is doing this because he needs to submit the receipt to request reimbursement from his company. Thus, he intends to make his request carefully in order to achieve his goal of getting the receipt from the driver. Clearly, the sentence with *com* above sounds more polite than the same one without *com* (*yengswucung ttey cwuseyyo* ‘Give me a receipt’).

Like (5), in the excerpt below, Jeongwon is politely asking the team leader for specific information. Compared with the utterance without *com* (*CTXey tayhay yayki haycwusicyo* ‘Tell me about the CTX’), the one using *com* lessens the impact of requesting.

- (6) Movie — *shiri*

((At the Agency for Defense Development (ADD), Jeongwon, a secret agent of the National Intelligence Service, is talking with the leader of the team in charge of the development of a new weapon, referred to as the CTX. Jeongwon and his partner have been investigating an important case related to national security.))

Team Leader: *wuli thimun caknyenpwuthe sinmwuki kaypal kyeyhoykuy ilhwanulo CTX yenkwuey chakswuhaysseyo. manyak mwuki milmayccokkwa kim dongseok yenkwuweni moconguy kelayka issestamyen CTXwa yenkwon kanungsengi nophtako pwayakeysscyo.*

‘As a part of a new weapons system, our team launched the CTX project last year. If the researcher Dongseok Kim was doing some business with illegal dealers of weapons, chances are very high that it was related to the CTX.’

Jeongwon: *CTX-ey tayhay yayki-com hay-cwu-si-cyo.*
 CTX-LOC about **tell-COM** do-give-HON-COMM-POL
 ‘**Please tell** (us) about the CTX.’

In the two examples, *com* is located directly next to *yenswucung* ‘receipt’ and *yayki* ‘talk’, which are the foci of the two utterances. Thus, *com* here plays a mitigating role in requesting by having the listener attend to the newly-introduced focus of each FTA. Since the focal element of requesting can place a burden on the listeners, using *com* may provide the listeners with an impression of ‘smallness’ of the request as well as time to recognize the point of the request.

4.3.2. Mitigating Negative Evaluations

From the data in the database, *com* has been found to mitigate expressions related to negative evaluations. In some cases, a speaker may not want to express negative evaluations explicitly or directly, since this is most likely to threaten the positive face of the addressee or the person whom the speaker is commenting on. In these situations, *com* can be used to decrease the impact of the FTAs. The following excerpt shows how Jihun’s mother softens the effect of her evaluation of her son who often fights with others:

- (7) Movie — *tongkapnayki kwaoyhaki* ‘My Tutor Friend’
 ((Jihun’s mother and Suwan’s mother, who are close friends, are sitting around a table.))

Jihun’s mother: ((sheds tears)) *jihunito wenlaypwuthe kulayssten ken aniya.*
 ‘By nature Jihun was not as (bad) as he appears now.’

ssawum-un com ha-ko tany-ess-e-to
 Fight-TM COM do-CONN go-PST-CONC

chakha-n ay-yess-nuntey.
 nice-ATTR boy-PST-CONN

‘Although he **often had fights**, he was a nice boy.’

mence sipi kenun pepun epsessketun celtay.

‘He never provoked a quarrel first.’

((Continues to talk about how Jihun’s behavior has become worse due to his failure in studying abroad. She says that she insisted that he study in the U.S., which she thought might be useful for him.))

Although the speaker is concerned about her son’s misbehavior, she does not want to talk about her son too negatively in the presence of her friend, that is, she does not want her son to lose face. She wants to emphasize that her son is good by nature in spite of his misconduct, which has gotten worse after he failed in studying abroad. She feels deep regret because she was the one who

strongly recommended that he should be sent to the U.S. to study. Thus, by using *com*, she expresses her sympathy with her son and intends to minimize his negative traits.

In the next example, the speaker (Suwan's mother) softens the negative assessment of Jihun's academic achievement and emphasizes his good characteristics. She would like to convince her university-student daughter Suwan (the listener) to tutor Jihun and therefore is trying to keep the conversation sounding positive. Although Jihun is the same age as Suwan, he is still a high school student due to his unsuccessful studying abroad and low academic achievement.

- (8) Movie — *tongkapnayki kwaoyhaki* 'My Tutor Friend'
 ((Suwan visits her tutee, Jihun's house for the first time. In the living room, she meets Jihun's younger brother who looks like a nice boy. She mistakes him for Jihun, recalling what her mother said about Jihun.))

Suwan's mother: *kongpwu-ka com kulayse kuleh-ci*
 study-SM COM so that-COMM
yay-nun chakha-tayn-ta.
 boy-TM nice-QT-PLN

'I heard that **(his) academic achievement is kind of mediocre**, but he is a nice boy.'

Here, the speaker shows sympathy with Jihun. She uses *com* to mitigate the negative evaluation of Jihun's positive face. This function is also upheld by using *kulayse kulehci* '(be) so, but', which indirectly indicates 'low' or 'mediocre', instead of explicitly utilizing negative word(s). *com kulehta* 'be kind of so-so' was found several times in the database,⁸ mostly softening the force of FTAs of negative assessment.

Overall, since the evaluation of Jihun in terms of his relationship with other students and academic achievement might sound harsh, the speakers in the two examples lessen the force of the FTAs by using *com*. This mitigating effect of using *com* is evident in comparison to the utterances without *com* (*ssawumun hako tanyesseto* 'he had fights', *kongpwuka kulayse kulehci* 'his academic achievement is (low)'). This use of *com* is connected with the notion of smallness that is related to the original meaning of *com*; the speaker intends to provide the

⁸ One reviewer pointed out that the function of *com* in *com kulayse (com kulehta)* has been fossilized and sometimes *com* here can be interpreted as 'a little'. Replacing *com* with *cokum* may be possible here, but the resulting meaning may be slightly different. Rather than indicating that Jihun has actually somewhat low academic achievement (*com* as a quantifier), this utterance would mean that his achievement may have been very low, but Suwan's mother wants to save his face by decreasing the face-threatening effect of telling the truth.

impression that Jihun has had only a few fights and has somewhat low academic achievement, despite his frequent aggressive behavior and obvious lack of academic success. On the other hand, using *com* next to *ssawumun* ‘fights’ and *kongpwuka* ‘study’ enables the speaker to recognize both ‘*ssawumun com*’ and ‘*kongpwuka com*’ as one unit each, to focus on important new entities to be discussed, and to decrease the impact of the negativity of the foci.

4.3.3. Mitigating Other Speech Acts

Com is also used to diminish the strength of speech acts other than requests and negative evaluations. In (9), the speaker, Gunja, uses *com* to relieve the effect of describing a tragic story about her family, as this may threaten her family’s face. She is willing to reveal such a personal story to the public because she is looking for her younger sister, who could watch the program and contact her family if she found some consistency between her recollections and Gunja’s description of their family.

(9) TV Talk Show — *achimmatang* ‘Morning Yard’⁹

((Gunja is telling a sad story about her family on a TV show about family searches. She wants to find her younger sister. Beomsu is one of the two hosts of the show.))

Gunja: *nanun icciki Busanulo sicipwa peliko.*
‘I got married early and went down to Busan.’

Beomsu: *yey.*
‘Yes.’

Gunja: *kulenchae y inca appa-ka co::m emma-hako mwe*
meanwhile then dad-SM COM mom-with um
tathwuta-ka cip-ul naka-si-ess-e-yo.
argue-CONN home-OM go out-HON-PST-POL.

‘In the meantime, then, after (my) father, well, um, argued with (my) mother, (he) left the house.’

In this excerpt, the speaker is rather hesitant to continue telling her family story, more specifically, to tell about her parents’ arguments and discordant relationship, as indicated by the sound stretch (*co::m*) and using of the hedges *inca* (‘then’ or ‘now’) and *mwe* (‘well’). Also, by introducing and focusing on her father with *com* (i.e., *appaka com*), the speaker prepares the audience for the topic of her father, lessening the load of listening to a depressing story about him. Here, by the use of *com*, besides saving the speaker’s face, she also intends

⁹ In the excerpts, : indicates a sound stretch and :: a longer sound stretch.

to relieve the listeners from the burden of hearing her sad family history.

A similar case is found in example (10), Jihun is about to go out with his friends against the wishes of his tutor and his parents. However, when he suddenly encounters his father in the living room, in order to save his face and defend himself, he makes an excuse and says that he has just returned from the store.

(10) Movie — *tongkapnayki kwaoyhaki* ‘My Tutor Friend’

((Jihun is about to leave his house in the middle of a tutoring session after receiving a phone call from his friends and deciding to join them. However, in the living room, he encounters his father, who has just arrived home.))

Father: *eti ka?*

‘Are you going somewhere?’

Jihun: ((steps backward)) *ani, ceki tuleonun kilintey.*

‘No, um, (I) just came in.’

Father: ((looks at his watch))

Jihun: *kongpwu-hata-ka kakey com ka-ss-ta on-u-lako.*

study-do-CONN **store COM** go-PST-INT come-CONN

‘(I) **just** went to **the store** (to buy something) during the tutoring break.’

Father: *sensayngnimhanthey cenyek tusiko kasilako hayla. ilpwule ilccik tulewassta.*

‘Tell (your) teacher to have dinner (with us). That’s why (I) came (home) early (today).’

In this excerpt, Jihun’s use of *com* may mean that he considers his going to the store a very small thing, nothing in particular, and more importantly he has not broken the rule mandated by his parents (e.g., by doing something else during the tutoring session) so his father does not need to pay attention to his behavior. Moreover, by using *com* next to *kakey* ‘store’ (i.e., *kakey com*), he is introducing the store as the focus to make an excuse for his being in the living room as well as to relieve his father of the burden of listening to the new information related to his being out of his study room during the tutoring session.

As evidenced in the two examples above, using *com* can have the effect of saving the speaker’s face in speech acts such as describing and making an excuse. In addition, the meaning of smallness and the function of focusing play important roles in *com*’s function as a mitigator. Overall, *com* as a redressive marker minimizes the force of negative or positive FTAs of the speaker (or the third person) to the hearer.

4.4. *Com* as an Intensification Marker

Besides acting as a mitigator, *com* is also used to reinforce the strength of FTAs such as requests and negative evaluations. Within broader contexts involving conversations between speaker and hearer, the way in which *com* acts as an intensification marker is discussed below.

4.4.1. Intensifying Requests

Com is often used in order to strengthen the effect of requests (a type of FTA) when the speaker does not attempt to lessen the force of her utterances. The following excerpt shows how *com* is used to increase the strength of a request:

(11) Movie — *yepkicekin kunye* ‘My Sassy Girl’

((Gyeonwu is drinking with his friends in a bar. Gyeonwu is about to go out to ask a pretty woman who is passing by on the street to hang around with him. Then, he receives a phone call from his mother.))

Gyeonwu: *yeposeyyo, nwukwunya?*
‘Hello? Who is this?’

Gyeonwu’s Mother: *ni emmata! ne komoney kantateni cikum mwehako issnun keya?*
‘This is your mother! You said that you are going to your aunt’s, but what are you doing now?’

Gyeonwu: *kot kal kenteyyo.*
‘(I) am leaving soon.’

Gyeonwu’s Mother: *onul-un **kkok** **com** ka-ss-ta*
Today-TM **certainly** **COM** go-PST-INT
wa-la ung?
come-IMP huh

‘You **better make sure** (you) pay (her) a visit today, okay?’

komo pon ci il nyento nemessci?

‘It’s been over a year since (you) saw her, hasn’t it?’

In the excerpt above, the speaker (Gyeonwu’s mother) urges the hearer (Gyeonwu) to go to his aunt’s home. Gyeonwu’s mother does not try to avoid being coercive, focusing on and emphasizing *kkok* ‘surely’ by locating *com* next to it (i.e., *kkok com*). Moreover, she stresses the request again by using *ung*,

meaning ‘okay?’ or ‘do you understand?’. Also, to further convince her son that he needs to obey her, the speaker adds the fact that he has not seen his aunt for more than a year and she strongly expects him to visit his aunt. This sentence indicates that the speaker is very displeased that he has been delaying visiting her aunt’s house. Moreover, her anger is evidenced by her annoyed tone of voice. Therefore, this utterance places more burden on the hearer and does not avoid threatening the hearer’s face.

In example (12), Hyesuk desperately asks the TV audience to help to send her son back to her. Using *com*, she emphasizes the need for her son to be returned to her. By being located next to *com*, *ceypal* ‘please’ is given focus and stressed; thus, she expresses her request very desperately and strongly, which is shown in her pleading tone. Clearly, using *com* intensifies the effect of her request, compared with the utterance without *com* (*ceypal ponay cwusipsiyo* ‘please send him back’).

(12) TV Talk Show — *achimmatang* ‘Morning Yard’

((Hyesuk is talking about her missing son, Yeongkwang, on a TV show about family searches. She desperately wants to find her son.))

Hyesuk: *ai hana epsecinkey han kacenguy mwunceyka anila, halmeni halapeci chinchektul nemwunato manhi poko siphehako himtule hako sikumul cenphyeyhasiko,*

‘Losing a child is really difficult even for those not in the immediate family. Grandmother, Grandfather, and many relatives are having a hard time and want to see (him) so badly. (Some of them) can’t even eat or drink anything.’

ceypal nwukwun-ka pohoha-ko kyeycita-myen
 please someone-SM protect-CONN keep-HON-if
 ‘If somebody is taking care of him,’

pwumo-phwum-ulo ceypal com ponay cwu-si-p-si-o.
 parent-breast-DIR please COM send aux-HON-DEF-IMP
 ‘Please please send (him) back to (his) parents.’

The following two sets of examples show how *com* is additionally used to strengthen a speaker’s request. In (13a), without *com*, *kongpwuhayla* is a neutral utterance telling the hearer to study. However, in (13b), by drawing attention to *kongpwu* by following it with *com*, the speaker more strongly requests the hearer to study than the one without *com* does. Since the speaker expects the listener to study and thinks the speaker has wasted time for a while, s/he urges the hearer to study.

(13) Internet

- (a) “*kongpwu-hay-la*” *lako ha-nun swunkan pelsse ai-nun*
study-do-PLN-IMPQT do-ATTR moment already child-TM

kipwun nappu-pnita.
 feeling bad-DEF

‘Once (your) child hears (you) say “**study**,” (s/he) will already feel bad.’

- (b) *nol mankhum nol-ass-uni icey kongpwu-com hay-la.*
 play enough play- PST-RSN now **study-COM** do-PLN-IMP
 ‘Because (you) have played around so long already, **please study**
 (from now on).’

A similar case is shown in (14). *kongpwuhaca* in (14a) means ‘Let’s study’ in a neutral way. However, with *com* in (14b), *kongpwu* ‘studying’ is focused on as opposed to watching TV. Also, *com* indexes the speaker’s unfulfilled expectations (about the listener’s studying).¹⁰ Therefore, the utterance with *com* indicates that the speaker more strongly requests the hearer to study than the one without *com* does (*kongpwuhaca* ‘Let’s study’).

(14) Internet

- (a) *wuli hamkkey kongpwu- ha-ca.*
 we together **study-** do-PLN-IPR
 ‘**Let’s study** together.’

- (b) *TV kuman po-ko kongpwu com ha-ca.*
 TV no more watch-CONN **study COM** do-PLN-IPR
 ‘Let’s stop watching TV and **can we please study?**’

4.4.2. Intensifying Negative Evaluations

Com, at times, intensifies negative evaluations of the hearer (or the third person), which is contradictory to the use of *com* as a mitigator. In the following excerpt, Lieutenant Choi assesses Gyeongpil negatively because Choi thinks that Gyeongpil brags about having been abroad and ignores his responsibilities in the army. The lieutenant feels hostile toward Gyeongpil and does not attempt to lessen the force of his utterance. Instead, he strengthens his negative assessment of Gyeongpil, revealing his annoyance with the soldier, specifically by using *com*.

¹⁰ The wording of this function of *com*, to “index unfulfilled expectations,” was suggested by one reviewer.

(15) Movie — *JSA*

((North Korean soldiers, Gyeongpil and Ujin, are hanging around with a South Korean soldier, Suhyeok, and looking at magazines in the basement of the post. When Gyeongpil and Ujin hear someone (Lieut. Choi) come, they run out of the basement. Lieut. Choi is very upset to see that they have not kept to their assigned post.))

Lieut. Choi: *cali an cikhikwu nawase mwehanun keya?*

‘What are (you) doing here away from (your) post?’

oykwuk com tolatani-ess-ta-kwu nan chek
foreign country COM travel-PST-PLN-QT brag

ha-nun ke-ya mwe-ya?
 do-ATTR thing-PLN-Q what-PLN-Q.

‘Do (you) think (you) are something just because (you) **have been abroad?**’

In the excerpt above, *com* is used to focus on the topic of foreign countries (the antecedent of *com*) and to downgrade the hearer’s pride in his experience of having been abroad. This use is connected with the notion of smallness of the original meaning of *com*, indicating Lieut. Choi’s thoughts that Gyeongpil’s travels abroad are an insignificant experience. Using *com* here reinforces the threat to the positive face of the listener.

Similarly, in example (16), Changhi complains that his friends Jihun and Hokyong are very rich and enjoy buying expensive things but are quite difficult to please. Changhi is very angry with them, and by using *com* he reinforces his negative evaluation of his friends as being wealthy but irresponsible.

(16) Movie — *tongkapnayki kwaoyhaki* ‘My Tutor Friend’

((Jihun suddenly left the café and hopped on a motorcycle, leaving his friends behind. His girlfriend, Hokyong, runs out to catch him. Changhi and Hyeokjae are embarrassed about seeing what happened.))

Changehi: *mweya? way celay?*

‘What are (they) doing? Why?’

Hyeokjae: *ai... onul naithe kantako uysangto macchwe ipessnuntey...*

‘Oh, well... (I) got all dressed up to go out to a nightclub today.’

Changhi: *a. hayethun com issnun kes-tul*
 Oh anyway **COM have-ATTR** guy-PL

piwimacchwu-l-lye-myen tele-we-se.
 please-IRR-INTEND-if disgusting-CONN

‘Oh well. Anyway, it is really disgusting trying to please people who are **rich**.’

Here, by using *com*, the speaker is playing down the economic status of the families of Jihun and Hokyeong. Although the speaker knows that their families are very wealthy, he shows his anger by stating that both families have only a certain amount of wealth. By using *com*, the speaker does not avoid damaging the positive face of Jihun.

4.4.3. Intensifying Other Speech Acts

Com can intensify the effect of other FTAs besides requests and negative evaluations. In (17a) without *com*, the sentence with *kongpwuhanya* ‘do you study?’ is a neutral question to ask how to study the related subject.

(17) (a) Internet

a-nun salam-hanthey ettehkey kongpwu-ha-nya mwul-e
 know-ATTR person-to how **study**-do-Q ask-CONN
pwa-to kunyang chayk-po-myen toyn-ta-ko ha-ko.
 see-also just book-see-if become-PLN-QT do-CONN

‘When (I) also asked (my) acquaintances how (I) could **study** (that matter), (they) just said that all (I) have to do is just look at books.’

(b) TV Drama — *honca issnun kin halwu* ‘A Long and Lonely Day’

Daehyeon’s Mother: *daehyeon-i ne hakkyo ka-ss-ta*
 daehyeon-SM you school go-PST-INT

wa-se kongpwu com ha-nya?
 come-and **study COM** do-Q

‘Daehyeon, do you **ever study** after school?’

Daehyeon: *ney.*
 ‘Yes.’

Daehyeon’s Mother: *ne onulpwuthe hakwen tanyela.*
 ‘Starting today, you will go to a private institute.’

Daehyeon: *alasseyo.*
 ‘(I) will.’

In contrast, in (17b), the speaker (Daehyeon's mother) asks a question with a doubtful and irritated tone to the hearer, her son, about whether he studies after school. *Com* here focuses on its antecedent, *kongpwu* 'studying', and indicates that the speaker's expectation (that he study) has not been met. Also, the speaker's use of *com* is not to avoid threatening the hearer's positive face, as demonstrated by her denial that her son is telling the truth as well as her rejection of his affirmative response to her question about his studying hard.

As shown in the previous examples so far, in the case of *com* as an intensification marker, it is common for speakers to deliver their feelings such as anger, desperation, annoyance, irritation, and sarcasm toward the addressee.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined how *com* functions as well as in which contexts and how frequently each function appears. The current study analyzed actual scripted and spoken datasets containing *com*, in contrast with previous studies that used invented, decontextualized sentences. Important findings are as follows:

First, *com* is sometimes used as a quantifier, and as previous studies have indicated, it is frequently interchangeable with *cokum* (K-h Joo 2000, Y-j Lim 1995). Interestingly, however, *com* also acts as an intensifier meaning 'very' or 'very many/much' in certain contexts (e.g., rhetorical questions) as opposed to its etymological meaning of smallness.

Secondly, it was found that *com* is used more often as a discourse marker than as a quantifier. Also, the function of the discourse marker *com* has been demonstrated to mitigate or intensify the strength of speech acts.¹¹ Although previous studies on *com* focused on the FTA of requests (e.g., H-g Lee 1991), this study found that the effects of negative evaluations and other speech acts (e.g., asking questions, commenting, making statements, describing, excusing) are also either diminished or reinforced by the use of *com*. In particular, the findings of the current study indicate that while *com* is often used as a mitigator, it frequently appears as an intensification marker. It was additionally observed that the discourse context and prosodic features such as tone of voice play important roles in the contradictory functions of *com*. *Com* is often found to draw attention to its antecedent and contribute to revealing the speaker's emotional stance or attitudes. Moreover, when *com* functions as an intensification marker, it is sometimes used to indicate the presence of the speaker's unfulfilled expect-

¹¹ The contradictory functions that *com* exhibits when used as a quantifier and as a discourse marker (i.e., the functions of mitigation versus intensification) have also been found in other languages such as with *chotto* in Japanese (Matsumoto 1985).

tations about the listener.

While the previous literature provides useful insights into functions of *com*, these studies did not discover the close connection between its important functions. However, this study revealed that the original meaning of *com* (smallness) and the function of focusing also contribute to the role of *com* as a discourse marker. The present study found that the location of *com* is important in that, if needed, *com* helps the listener focus on its antecedent and serves as a mitigation or intensification marker. Based on the findings of this study, it could be suggested that whereas the major pragmatic function of *com* is mitigation, its functions have expanded to intensification and focus as well.

This study on the functions of *com* in actual discourse is helpful to learners of Korean as a second/foreign language because it can enhance their pragmatic awareness and competence with respect to *com*. Developing learners' pragmatic awareness of *com* is especially important because the conflicting functions of *com* may be difficult for them to fully acquire. Although learners of Korean may use *com* to express politeness, without a more complete understanding about *com*'s functions of intensification and displaying stance or expectations, utterances containing it may cause miscommunication and misunderstanding.

This study used data from several datasets which were useful for demonstrating actual contexts involving *com*. However, for future study, it would be helpful to analyze at a deeper level with more data how *com* acts differently in scripted and spontaneous speech. The spontaneous data examined in this study are limited in terms of the number of datasets and tokens of *com* in comparison to the scripted data. Analysis of more spontaneous datasets is therefore necessary for more accurate comparison, and naturally occurring face-to-face conversations in particular need to be included in the spontaneous data. Additionally, since the data for written discourse for this study were only from the descriptions in movie/television drama scripts, various other types of written data are needed for a more precise analysis of the use of *com* in written discourse. Moreover, corpus-based research on *com* would reveal more generalizable findings.

For pedagogical purposes, more comprehensive studies on *com* using various datasets would contribute to a deeper understanding of the usage of this word. These findings could be applied to the teaching of *com* in order to help further improve pragmatic awareness among learners of Korean.

Internet Sources

- (3a) http://cafe.naver.com/docheon28.cafe?iframe_url=/ArticleRead.nhn%3Farticleid=56
- (3b) <http://www.obsmetroi.co.kr/ictravel/38769>
- (4) <http://www.kyeongin.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=241554>
- (13a) http://morph.kaist.ac.kr/~morph/oldDoc/korean_grammar_theory
- (13b) <http://comsec.chongju-e.ac.kr/~inara/7/5/kor/11310/main.htm>
- (14a) <http://comsec.chongju-e.ac.kr/~inara/7/5/kor/11310/main.htm>
- (14b) http://www.counpia.com/edu/EduCommServ?cmd=VIW_COMM_BOARD&tbl=1159334211072&code=1169629995941&page=782&scale=20&array=REGISTER&sort=DESC
- (17a) http://korea.internet.com/etc/talkback/talkback_content.asp?id=1916&cid=189&nid=12582

References

- Bach, Kent. (1998). Speech act. In Edward Craig, ed. *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 7, 81-86. Routledge. Retrieved November 1, 2008, from <http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~kbach/spchacts.html>
- Brown, Penelope and Stephen C. Levinson. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, David. (2001). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fraser, Bruce. (1996). Pragmatic markers. *Pragmatics* 6, 167-190.
- Fujita, Yasuko. (2001). *Functions of Discourse Markers ano and sono in Written Dialogue*. Paper presented at the Texas Foreign Language Education Conference, Austin, Texas.
- Grice, Paul. H. (1975). Logic and conversation. In Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan, eds, *Syntax and semantics 3: Speech acts* 41-48. Academic Press.
- Institute of Language and Information Studies, ed. (1998). *Yonsei hankwuke sacen* [Yonsei Korean Dictionary]. Doosan Donga.
- Joo, Kyung-hee. (2000). *com kwa cokum* [com and cokum]. *kwukehak* [Korean Linguistics] 36, 379-399.
- Lee, Han-gyu. (1991). The pragmatics of the pragmatic morpheme *com* 'a little' in Korean. *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences* 21.2, 143-166.
- Lee, Keedong. (1993). *A Korean Grammar on Semantic-pragmatic Principles*. hankwuk mwunhwasa.
- Lim, Yoo-jong. (1995). *com/cokumey tayhaye*. [On *com/cokum*]. *hanyang emwun yenkwu* [Hanyang Studies on Language and Literature] 13, 1081-1101.
- Matsumoto, Yoshiko. (1985). A sort of speech act qualification in Japanese: *chotto*. *Journal of Asian Culture* 4, 143-159.

- Mok, Jung-soo. (2001). *comuy kinungkwa mwunpephwa* [The function of *com* and its grammaticalization]. *yenehak [Linguistics]* 28, 77-100.
- Schiffrin, Deborah. (1987). *Discourse Markers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sohn, Ho-Min. (1994). *Korean*. Routledge.
- Son, Se-Mo-Dol. (1988). *comuy sanghwangcek uymi* [The contextual meaning of *com*]. *hankwukhak nonchong [Collected Treatise on Korean Studies]* 14, 477-508.
- Strauss, Susan, Jihye Lee, and Kyungja Ahn. (2006). Applying conceptual grammar to advanced-level language teaching: The case of two completive constructions in Korean. *Modern Language Journal* 90.2, 185-209.
- Oh, Eun Jong and Susan Strauss. (2004). The primacy of information status in the alternation between deferential and polite forms in Korean public discourse. *Language Sciences* 26, 251-272.
- The National Academy for the Korean Language, ed. (1999). *phyocwun kwuke taysacen* [Standard Korean dictionary]. Doosan Donga.

Kyungja Ahn
Department of English Education
Seoul National University
599 Gwanak-ro, Gwanak-gu
Seoul, 151-748, Korea
E-mail: kjahn21@gmail.com

Received: March 15, 2009

Revised version received: November 9, 2009

Accepted: November 20, 2009