

**Grammar, grammaticalization, and discourse:
The development of sentence-final suffixes in Korean**

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While studies on grammaticalization provide a broader view of linguistic change, it remains largely unclear as to what motivates the process of grammaticalization. This study explores the mechanism and motivation for the grammaticalization process by examining the diachronic and synchronic development of the Korean quotative particle *-ko*, which derived from the lexical verb *ha-* ‘say’ and the connective suffix *-ko* ‘and’. From a diachronic perspective, the development of this quotative suffix illustrates key features of grammaticalization, such as extension, semantic bleaching, decategorization, and erosion (phonetic reduction) (Heine and Kuteva 2007). Its development also demonstrates the role of frequency in language change.

From a synchronic perspective, however, quotative *-ko* exhibits a puzzling pattern: unlike a typical quotative particle that connects a quotation and the ‘say’ verb, *-ko* is used in sentence-final position without a main predicate of ‘saying’, particularly in spoken discourse. The path of change that *-ko* underwent to become a sentence-final suffix is quite similar to that of clause connectives (e.g., *-nikka*, *-ketun*, and *-nuntey*). As in the case of other clause connectives, sentence-final *-ko* involves a syntactic reanalysis, starting out as a marker linking clauses and evolving into a sentence-final suffix used to tie segments of discourse.

Furthermore, an examination of spoken discourse reveals that sentence-final *-ko*, by displaying the speaker’s stance in an implicit way, invites the recipient to make an inference about the displayed stance. Similarly, the aforementioned clause connectives, which fulfill frequent discourse functions (e.g., account-giving, elaboration, clarifying), invite inference when deployed in sentence-final position. I argue that the frequent discourse functions associated with these forms, including *-ko*, lead the addressee(s) to make an inference. The invited inference then becomes semanticized through increased frequency, leading to the grammaticalization of sentence-final suffixes. These findings suggest that the development of sentence-final suffixes is driven by interactional motivation, and that grammaticalization intersects with discourse and typological characteristics.