Discourse Marker *mwe* in the Interlanguage of Chinese Learners of Korean*

Hyeson Park

(Keimyung University)

Park, Hyeson. 2012. Discourse Marker *mwe* in the Interlanguage of Chinese Learners of Korean. *Linguistic Research* 29(1), 235-260. This study explores the development and use of *mwe*, a multi-functional discourse marker, in the interlanguage of Chinese learners of L2 Korean. Oral production data elicited from 28 Chinese migrant workers at three proficiency levels and five advanced Chinese students were analyzed focusing on the distribution of *mwe* in three functional domains, which consist of nine subcategories. A native corpus of about 56,000 words compiled from the Sejong Corpus served as the native baseline. The data analysis revealed the following: 1) Few tokens of *mwe* were produced by the migrant workers until they reached the advanced level. 2) The nine functions of *mwe* were used by the advanced learners, mostly as a filler, an uncertainty marker, and an exemplifier. 3) The Chinese students with about half the length of residence of the workers exhibited as diverse uses of *mwe* as the workers, implying the facilitative role of formal instruction in the acquisition of discourse markers. **(Keimyung University)**

Keywords   discourse marker, *mwe*, acquisition of Korean as L2, multi-functionality, learning contexts

1. Introduction

This study examines the use and development of the discourse marker *mwe* in the interlanguage of Chinese migrant workers who learned Korean in naturalistic contexts through interaction with Korean native speakers with little exposure to formal instruction.

Discourse markers (DMs henceforth), a set of linguistic devices involved mainly with 'how to say' rather than 'what is said', have drawn researchers' attention in such diverse fields as discourse analysis, pragmatics, grammaticalization, language acquisition, and language pedagogy (Brinton, 1996; Fischer, 2006; Fraser, 1999;

Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999). Though research on DMs in second language acquisition (SLA) has seen gradual expansion along with a growing emphasis on second language (L2) learners' communicative competence over formal linguistic knowledge (Fuller, 2003; Fung & Carter, 2007; Hellermann & Vergun, 2007; Lam, 2009; Liao, 2009; Müller, 2005), the majority of DM studies conducted so far have mainly concentrated on analyses of DMs in written learner corpora collected from learners of L2 English in formal instructional settings (Müller, 2005). Such a gravitation of focus toward DMs in written L2 English has resulted in a dearth of research which examines DMs in spoken corpora of L2s other than English.

This study aims to fill such a gap by examining the use and distribution of *mwe*, one of the multi-functional Korean DMs, in the spoken interlanguage of Chinese migrant workers at three different proficiency levels. The observation of DM use in a less studied language will contribute to complementing the findings in English. Further, the analysis of *mwe* across different levels of ability will help observe developmental patterns of *mwe*, shedding some light on the issues of developmental pragmatics in L2.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a review of research on DMs in SLA as well as a brief description of characteristics of DMs. In section 3, the functions of *mwe* discussed by previous studies will be reviewed, generating a list of functions on which our analysis of *mwe* will be based. Section 4 presents research methods, followed by results of data analysis, and discussions of relevant issues in section 5. A brief summary in section 6 concludes the paper.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Characteristics of Discourse Markers

Descriptors frequently used to characterize DMs include lexical heterogeneity, connectivity, non-truth conditionality, multi-functionality, optionality, orality, and utterance initiality (Brinton, 1996; Fischer, 2006; Fraser, 1999; Maschler 1994, 2009; Müller, 2005; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999). Of these, 'connectivity' stands out as the most representative feature of a DM (Schourup, 1999), though the domain and range the concept of connectivity applies to vary across different studies and

scholars.

Fraser's (1999, 2006) understanding of connectivity is rather narrow, who proposed that DMs function as a connector between two utterances, S_1 and S_2, relating the message conveyed by S_2 to that of the preceding S_1. Conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs (e.g. and, but, anyway, however, by the way etc.) appearing in the utterance initial position belong to the category of DM in Fraser's approach.

Though they did not explicitly refer to DMs in their work on cohesion in English, Halliday and Hasan's (1976) discussion of cohesive devices is compatible with approaches to DMs (Schiffrin, 2001); their main interest was the cohesion or connectivity of discourse at the text level, a domain broader than the sentence level Fraser (1999, 2006) was concerned with.

Schiffrin (1987, 2006) expanded the domain in which the concept of connectivity was relevant, encompassing both the textual and interactional domain. She regarded the major function of DMs as indexical, that is, anchoring an utterance to a given discourse context, which comprises of participants (i.e. speaker and hearer) and texts; DMs connect texts with participants.

Building upon previous approaches, Maschler (1994, 2009) defined the functions of DMs in three domains: textual, interpersonal, and cognitive. The inclusion of the cognitive domain is claimed by Maschler to be what makes his approach to DMs more comprehensive than previous ones. In the textual domain, according to Maschler, DMs play a role in anchoring an utterance to a prior utterance or to a part of previous discourse, deriving such meaning relations as causality, consequence, contrast, and condition, etc. The interpersonal domain is where DMs contribute as a facilitator of the interaction between the speaker and the hearer, signalling the hearer's reaction or attitude toward interlocutors' utterances (e.g. agreement, confirmation, refutation, or politeness, etc.). The cognitive domain involves anchoring cognitive processes of the speaker to an on-going discourse, exhibiting the speaker's effort to organize her discourse by employing such tools as fillers, hedges, and self-repair or uncertainty markers.

The workings of DMs in the three domains--textual, interpersonal, and cognitive--point to another distinctive feature of DMs, i.e. multi- or poly-functionality: A DM may be associated with more than one domain with a number of different, recognizable interpretations (Erman, 2001; Fischer, 2006).

Together with connectivity and multi-functionality, non-truth conditionality and

optionality are two other features of DMs which help identify them as an independent linguistic category. Despite the important role DMs play in a discourse as a glue connecting discourse participants, they do not contribute to the truth conditions of a proposition, which means they can be deleted without affecting a grammatical or semantic well-formedness of an utterance. DMs are visible at the pragmatic level, providing a clue to the interpretation of an utterance in a given context. In other words, DMs illustrate "the ways in which linguistic forms may contribute to the inferential process involved in utterance understanding: they encode procedural meaning" (Blakemore 2002: 185).

The Korean expression *mwe*, the target of the current research, displays all the characteristics of DMs discussed above, indicating that it is a typical DM in Korean (Kim, 2005; Lee, 1999; Suh, 2007). Before proceeding to the analysis of the use and development of the DM *mwe* in the L2 learners' corpus, let us review previous research on DMs in L2 Korean.

2.2 Discourse Markers in L2 Korean

Most of the studies examining DMs in spoken L2 Korean have focused on the distribution of DMs in tutored learners' corpora in comparison with that in native data. Lee (2003) analyzed *kule-* type DMs in the informal conversation data elicited from advanced learners and native Korean speakers, revealing that the native speakers produced more tokens of *kule-* type expressions functioning as DMs than the L2 learners, who used the target items as adverbial conjunctions, a usage more common in written style, possibly due to the influence of the formal instruction they were exposed to.

Han's (2005) investigation of the distribution of DMs in the narrative data of 20 advanced English learners of Korean showed that the L2 learners exceeded the native speakers in the quantity of the DMs produced, but were significantly limited in the range of the functions of the DMs, with 78% of the total being used as fillers, a strategic function employed to gain time to prepare upcoming utterances. Han (2005) did not include interpersonal functions in her analysis, probably due to the nature of the narrative data which minimizes interaction between interlocutors, and this points to the importance of speech contexts and types of interaction as variables to consider in conducting research on DMs. Paek (2011) also observed a higher frequency of

DMs in advanced Chinese learners' data as opposed to a native baseline in informal conversation contexts. DMs exploited as fillers were common in the learners' production while topic shift markers were the native speakers' favorite.

A study on untutored learners' use of DM was conducted by Park (2011), which focused on the development and use of *com*, a multi-functional Korean DM. The data analysis showed that the DM *com* did not emerge in the learner data until they reached the advanced level. The untutored learners' use of *com* was restricted in the range of functions compared to that of tutored learners and native speakers, which rendered the researcher to suggest positive effects of formal instruction in enhancing pragmatic competence of L2 learners.

A similar suggestion for the advantage of formal instruction in improving pragmatic knowledge is found in Min (2011), which is the only study so far that examined L2 learners' awareness of the multiple functions of *mwe*. A multiple choice questionnaire consisting of 14 items was administered to 43 Chinese and 37 Japanese students with two proficiency levels to measure their understanding of 14 different functions of *mwe*. The findings demonstrated that the L2 learners' comprehension of the multiple functions of *mwe* was not as good as that of the native speakers, language proficiency being a major variable affecting the learners' performance.

Acknowledging the contribution of Min (2011) in enhancing our understanding of L2 learners' knowledge of the DM *mwe,* a limitation of the study should be pointed out. An example of the items Min used in her questionnaire is shown in (1).

(1) A: ne   I   mwuncey phwul swu   issni?[1]
        you this problem   solve can   be-Q
        'Can you solve this problem?'
    B: ikeya mwe il-cho   maney phwul-kess-ta
        this   mwe one second   within solve-may-SE
        'I can solve this problem in a second.'

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[1] The Korean data are transcribed using the Yale romanization system (Martin, 1992). Detailed morphemic analyses non-essential for the purpose of the study were not provided. The abbreviations used are:

AC: accusative case	CON: conjunction	MD: pre-nominal modifier suffix
NM: nominative case	PST: past tense	Q: question
SE: sentence ender	TP: topic marker	

After listening to the above dialogue, the learner was to choose the meaning of *mwe* in the given utterance out of four options provided. A weakness of this type of elicitation method is that the selection of the correct answer by the learner (for (1), "②Namca-nun mwuncey-lul cal phwul swu iss-tako sayngkak-hayssta 'The man thought that he could solve the problem well') does not prove that the learner understands the meaning of *mwe*; the learner might have easily chosen the same answer even with *mwe* omitted due to the non-truth conditionality and optionality of *mwe* as a DM. Thus, L2 learners' knowledge of DMs may best be measured through analyses of production data, which the current study is aiming at.

3. Discourse Marker *mwe*

It has been proposed that the DM *mwe* developed from the interrogative pronoun *mwe* through grammaticalization, and the core meaning of the former is closely related to the referential meaning of the latter: that is, 'something is not certain to the speaker' (Kim, 2005; Lee, 1999; Suh, 2007). The various meanings and functions of the DM *mwe* derived from the core meaning include signalling a speaker's uncertainty of or lack of commitment to the truth of a proposition, conveying a speaker's discontent with or rebuttal of an interlocutor's utterance, marking a speaker's hesitation or self-repair (Chung, 2006; Jung, 2005; Kim, 1995; Kim, 2005; Ku, 2000; Lee, H-K, 1999; Lee, J-A, 1999, 2002; Suh, 2007). These multiple functions of *mwe* are classified along the three domains proposed by Maschler (1994, 2009)--cognitive, interpersonal, and textual--and their characteristics are briefly described below.[2]

3.1 Cognitive Domain

The core meaning of the DM *mwe*, 'something is not certain to the speaker', is reflected in the *mwe* used to convey the speaker's lack of commitment to the truth

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[2] It should be noted that no agreement is found regarding the classification scheme of the DMs. For example, Erman (2001) puts the approximator and hedge function in the textual domain, while Maschler (1994, 2009) places the same functions in the cognitive domain arguing they function as a connector between the speaker and the text/discourse.

of a stated proposition, as shown in the examples below.

(2) a. Younghee-ka   mwe   kyelsek-ul   hay-sstay-yo
       Younghee-NM   mwe   absence-AC do-PST-SE
       'I was told that Younghee was absent.'
   b. A: Younga   cal   cinay-cyo?
          Younga   well do-Q
       Younga is doing well, isn't she?'
   B:Mwe, cal   cinaypni-ta.
       mwe   well do-SE
       'Well, she is doing well.'   (Lee, H-K, 1999: 146)

In (2a-b), the speaker intends, through the insertion of *mwe*, to convey her uncertainty of the truth of the propositions, "Younghee is absent" and "Younga is doing well." (Lee, H-K, 1999). DMs concerned with the speaker's judgments on the degree of certainty of a proposition play a role in facilitating interaction between the speaker and the text she constructs, justifying their classification as a DM in the cognitive domain.

The speaker's lack of committment to the truth of a proposition may lead her to employ *mwe* as a hedge, which allows the speaker to avoid explicit or direct responses in certain circumstances.

(3) A: ayki-lul com hayss-umyon coh-kess-nuntey, kaynchanusi-kess-eyo?
       talk-AC a bit do-if   like-may-CON   good-may-Q?
       'I'd like to have a talk with you. Would that be ok?'
   B: kulssey, mwe... alasssupnita
       Well,   understand
       'Well, that would be ok.'   (Lee, H-K, 1999: 147)

In the conversation in (3), B accepts A's request with some reservation, indicated by *kulssey,* followed by *mwe*, a strategy to avoid articulating the reasons for her reservation.

The speaker's effort to have control over the discourse during on-line processing renders her to employ *mwe* as a filler (4a) or a device for self-repair (4b).

(4) a. icey mwe kunyang mwe ce kyesicyo mwe
     now mwe just   mwe ce exist-SE mwe
     '(He) is not doing anything special.'

  b. mwun-ul yel-ko,   mwe mwun-to ep-sunikka   kunyang
     door-AC open-and mwe door-also not exist-because just
     tuleka-ss-cyo
     enter-PST-SE
     '(I) opened the door, since there was no door, I just entered'

3.2 Interpersonal Domain

The DM *mwe* indicating the speaker's lack of confidence in a stated proposition may involve politeness in some circumstances (Lee, H-K, 1999; Lee, J-A, 1999; Suh, 2007), an example of which is shown below.

(5) A:ne   ipeney   cengmal swuko   manh-ass-ta
     you this time really   hard work a lot-PST-SE
     'You did a good job this time.'
   B:cey-ka mwe thukpyelhi han il-i   issnayo mwe?
     I-NM mwe special   do work-NM be-Q   mwe
     'Well, I didn't do much'   (Suh, 2007: 98)

To A's appreciation of her hard work, B responds with a rhetorical question, "Did I do anything special?" as a way to express her humbleness. The two tokens of *mwe* have the effect of adding the sense of modesty to the utterance.

As opposed to the implication of politeness, the addition of *mwe* to an utterance can express the speaker's discontent with or rebuttal of a statement by an interlocutor.

(6) a. A: onul-un   Younghee-ka   an   ontay
         today-TP Younghee-NM not come
         'I was told that Younghee is not coming today.'
   B: ceki o-ney   mwe
       there come-SE   mwe

        'She's coming there.'

b. A: ne-to   meli yemsayk ha-lke-nya?

      you-too hair dye   do-will-Q

      'Are you going to dye your hair, too?'

  B: mwe na-nun yemsayk ha-myen an twayyo?

      mwe I-TP   dye   do-if   not allow-Q

      'Am I not allowed to dye?'   (Ku, 2000: 17)

In (6a), when Younghee shows up right after A states, "I heard that Younghee is not coming today.", B reacts saying "There she comes." with an addition of *mwe*, which emphasizes B's disagreement with A's utterance. In (6b), B senses A's disapproval of dyeing hair when asked "Are you going to dye your hair, too?", and responds with a negative question "Am I not allowed to dye?". The utterance initial *mwe* amplifies B's discontent with A's unfavorable attitude toward dyeing hair. Nam and Cha (2010) observed that *mwe* utilized to signal the speaker's discontent with an interlocutor's statement frequently collocates with such sentence enders as *-ci, -ne*, or *-nuntey*.

The last function of the DM *mwe* in the interpersonal domain is shown in (7), in which the *mwe* at the end places an emphasis on the preceding utterance; what the speaker wants to say first and foremost to his son is that he missed him so much (Ku, 2000).

(7) A: atunim-ul manna-myon kachang hako siphun malssum-i

     son-AC   meet-if   most   do   want word -NM

     mwe-yeoyo?

     what-be-Q?

     'What do you want to say to your son when you meet him?'

  B: poko sipess-tanun mal-ici   mwe

     see   want-CON   word-SE mwe

     'I want to say I missed you.'   (Ku, 2000: 24)

3.3 Textual Domain

The DM *mwe* used to help organize discourse structure is found in the examples

in (8), where they function as an exemplifier (8a) and approximator (8b).

(8) a. wenlay   cengsangcekin incey wichiey tuleka issnun icey
       originally normal   now   location ener   be   now
       cwusangpokhapkenmwul-ilamyen i   chungey tulekal
       residential-commercial building-if second floor   enter
       swu iss-nun epcong-i   mwe coffee cenmwuncep-ilatunka
       can be-MD business-NM mwe coffee shop   or
       tto phipwu piman kwanlisil-ilatunka tto ilpan   miyongsil-ina
       also skin   obesity clinic   or   also regular hairshop   or
       epcong-i manh-ketunyo.
       business-NM many-SE
       'If the residential-commercial building is located in a usual place,
       a lot of businesses can be possible options for that place such as a
       coffee shop, a skin-obesity clinic, or a regular hair shop.'

                                                          (Lee, H-K, 1999: 151)

    b. Thatcher swusang-i   ku   ce interview-lul ha-nuntey
       Thatcher prime minister-NM DM DM interview-AC do-CON
       kunkka gender-hako conversation-hako ettetkey cakyong-i
       so   gender-and   conversation-and   how   interaction-NM
       ilenanunya mwe kulen-key iss-eyo. kulayse yeca-nun   mwe
       work   mwe that-thing be-SE and   woman-TP mwe
       ettetku ilen key   nao-nuntey
       what   this thing come-CON
       'When the Prime Minister Thatcher was interviewed, (they analyzed)
       how conversation is interacting with gender something like that. So
       women tend to do such and such.'   (Suh, 2007: 87)

The *mwe* in (8a) precedes a list of business options the speaker presents as possible. According to Nam and Cha (2010), the *mwe* with the exemplifier function often co-occurs with suffixes of listing such as -*ina*, -*tunci*, -*lang*, or -*kena*. It appears that *mwe* in conjunction with these suffixes works to elaborate on detailed examples.

As opposed to the examplifer *mwe*, the approximator function of *mwe* in (8b) is

used when the speaker intends to avoid providing specifics of any category for the purpose of constructing a simplified text. That is, it allows the speaker to give 'a rough but sufficiently exact idea about a certain state of affairs for the general purpose of the conversation'3 (Erman, 2001: 1341). The approximator *mwe* is usually accompanied by set marking expressions such as *ilen* or *kulen* 'stuff like that' (Suh, 2007).

The functions of *mwe* discussed above are summarized as follows:

a. The cognitive domain: filler, hedge, self-repair marker, uncertainty marker
b. The interpersonal domain: discontent/rebuttal marker, politeness marker, emphasizer
c. The textual domain: exemplifier, approximator

We now proceed to the analysis of the development and use of these multiple functions of *mwe* by Chinese learners of L2 Korean.

4. Methods

The main data of the study consists of spoken L2 Korean collected from 28 Chinese migrant workers (NNS-w henceforth) and five Chinese students (NNS-s henceforth) residing in the Daegu area. The subjects were interviewed individually for 60-80 minutes by the researcher. The interview started with an informal conversation eliciting the participants' demographic information such as age, educational background, experience of learning Korean, length of residence in Korea, expected duration of residence, and the subjects' understanding of the Korean culture, etc. Following the 30-minute informal conversation, the participants performed three tasks; picture description, narrative story telling, and speech acts of apology, request and compliment. The picture description task involved describing 12 pictures illustrating an episode that happens to a man and woman who meet for a blind date (Kim, 1996). For the narrative story telling task, a wordless picture book, *Frog*

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3 Examples of approximators in English include *or something*, *and all this*, *and everything*, *and all that* (Erman, 2001: 1341).

where are you? (Mayer, 1969), was used. The participants were first asked to look at all the pictures silently, and then to tell the story in Korean. In the speech acts task, the participants were presented with 24 situations in which they were to role play along with the researcher or research assistants. When a participant's Korean proficiency was too limited to perform the role plays, an easier picture description task was administered in lieu of the role play.

The interviews were recorded using two voice recorders with permission of the participants. The recordings were transcribed by the research assistants. After the initial transcription, 80% of the transcribed data were transcribed again by other transcribers, checking and correcting errors to ensure the reliability of transcription.

The participants' Korean proficiency was measured by calculating Mean Length of Communication-units in morphemes (MLC-m) (Craig, Washington, & Thompson-Porter, 1998; Sin, Park, Lee, & Pae, 2007). MLC-m, a method frequently used to measure the developmental stages of school age children, is obtained by taking the total number of morphemes and dividing it by the total number of communication units[4]. Subjects whose MLC-m was below 6.0 were placed to the low level, between 6.1-8.0 to the intermediate level, and above 8.1-10.6 to the high level[5]. Five Chinese students whose MLC-m was above 8 and were producing DMs productively were chosen as a comparison group. The average length of residence and average MLC-m for each level are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Average length of residence and MLC−m

	Length of Residence (months)	MLC-m
NNS-w: beginning (12)	38	5.3
NNS-w: intermediate (11)	53	6.9
NNS-w: advanced (5)	82	9.6
NNS-s: advanced (5)	42	10.7

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[4] In identifying a C-unit, we followed the following guideline by Shin et al. (2007): 1) A C-unit is the main clause and one or more clauses subordinate to it. 2) When two clauses are conjoined by a coordinating conjunction, each clause counts as one C-unit.

[5] The MLC-m of Korean elementary school children in Shin et al. is the following: grade1:(9.99), grade 2 (11.22), and grade 3 (11.4).

As a baseline data, Korean native speakers' corpus of 56,685 words was compiled from the Sejong Corpus. The corpus consists of two types of texts: everyday conversation (28,707 words, NS-d, henceforth) and monologue narrative (27,978 words, NS-m henceforth). The number of words for each data set is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of words for each data set

	words	words/person
NS-d	28707	
NS-m	27978	
NNS-s : advanced	15003	3001
NNS-w: advanced	14756	2951
NNS-w: intermediate	28253	2256
NNS-w: beginning	19524	1627

The tokens of *mwe* in the data set were searched manually, their functions being interpreted in light of contexts and coded into one of the nine categories discussed in the previous section.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Use of *mwe* by Chinese Migrant Workers

A total of 504 tokens of *mwe* were found in the data set of the NNS-w, of which 339 instances were used as DMs (67.3%). The ratio of the DM *mwe* increased as the workers' Korean proficiency improved: 7% of the total *mwe* at the beginning level, 66.9% at the intermediate level, and 91.9% at the advanced level. The distribution of the DM *mwe* across the three proficiency groups is summarized in Table 3, with the functions classified according to the three domains and the nine functional categories.

Only five tokens of the DM *mwe* were found at the beginning level, produced by three learners--four fillers and one marker of uncertainty. All of the 12 learners at this level used *mwe* as an interrogative pronoun between 2 and 14 times per

individual, totaling 66 tokens. No instance of the indefinite pronoun *mwe,* however, was found. The beginning learners appear to be still at the stage where they were constrained by 'the one-form one-function principle' (Andersen, 1984), with *mwe* registered in their mental lexicon only as an interrogative pronoun. The finding that the earliest instances of DM *mwe* functioned as fillers is not incompatible with the observation that *mwe* is a speaker-oriented DM (Kim, 2005; Suh, 2007), which speakers turn to in their efforts to have control over a discourse.

The number of the DM *mwe* in the intermediate NNS-w data is 119, a significant improvement from the beginning level. However, this improvement is more apparent than real since 103 of the 119 tokens were produced by three learners, indicating that only three of the 11 learners in this group reached the level at which they were able to employ *mwe* as the DM as well as the interrogative pronoun.

Table 3. Distribution of *mwe* in the NNS−w

		H	M	L
Interpersonal	politeness	6		
	discontent	8	1	
	emphasizer	8		
textual	exemplifier	39	14	
	approximator	8	1	
cognitive	filler	92	74	4
	uncertainty	42	27	1
	hedge	5	1	
	self-repair	7	1	
	DM total	215 (91.9%)	119 (66.9%)	5 (7%)
	inter-pro	8	46	66
	indef-pro	11	13	0
	total	234	178	71

The most frequent function of the DM *mwe* was the filler, comprising 62% (74

tokens) of the total, followed by the uncertainty marker (27 tokens/ 22.7%). Examples of *mwe* as the filler and uncertainty marker are shown below.

    (9) a. cikum *mwe* nay-ka ilehkey   *mwe* ilehkey   chasse
         now   mwe I-NM   like this mwe like this look for
         ttan   tey   il-i-ka   ilehkey nay-ka il   ani-ko
         different place work-NM-NM like this I-NM   work   not-and
         kunyang cemumey wa-ss-unikka   ettehkey hay
         just   at first   come-PST-since how   do
         'I look for work in some other places. I came (to Korea) without a job at first.' (Pan, level 2)
      b. yeca   hwana-ss-e   nay-ka kunyang taum pen   tto
         woman   angry-PST-SE I-NM   just   next time again
         chass-ko   wa-ss-e   kunyang *mwe* ko   cwu-ko,
         search-CON come-PST-SE just   mwe flower give-CON
         matceyyo?
         right
         'The woman is angry. I(=he) came and give some flowers, right?'
                                  (Chu, level 2)

    The two instances of *mwe* in (9a) allowed the speaker time to search for appropriate expressions while constructing an utterance. The *mwe* in (9b) signals that the speaker was not certain of the correctness of the expression she selected, '*ko*(=*kkot*)' (flower). The speaker's lack of confidence is further indicated by the tag question '*matceyyo*?' (Is it right?) added at the end of the utterance.

    The exemplifier *mwe*, utilized when examples or possible options are enumerated, first appeared at the intermediate level (14 tokens/ 11.8%). In (10), the learner inserted multiple tokens of *mwe* when she presented examples of the Chinese words which her Korean husband had learned.

    (10) mwe annyenghaseyo? mwe ni hao ilen ke   cokum paywe-ss-e
         mwe how are you   mwe ni hao this thing a bit   learn-PST-SE
         mwe cwungkwuk emma-ka   ettetkey pwull-e mamma ppappa
         mwe China   mother-NM how   call-Q   mamma ppappa

mwe   annyenghi   kaseyo.
mwe   well   go
'I learned such expressions as 'how are you?' 'ni hao'. And how
do you call mother in China? mamma, ppappa, bye.'   (Pan, level 2)

Except for the filler, uncertainty marker, and exemplifier, the other functions of the DM *mwe* barely emerged at this level, suggesting that 53 months' residence in Korea might not be a sufficient time for the learners to acquire the various functions of *mwe* without the assistance of formal instruction.

A total of 215 tokens of *mwe* were found in the data set of the advanced NNS-w, with all of the nine functions present. However, individual variation was noticeable in that only three of the five participants exhibited a productive use of *mwe*, with the other two relying on different kinds of DMs.

The three functions dominant at the intermediate level continued to be preferred by the learners at this level, comprising 83.2% of the total: the filler (92/ 42.8%), uncertainty marker (48/ 22.3%), and exemplifier (39/ 18.1%). Though still the highest in frequency, the proportion of the filler decreased from 62% to 43% of the total, due to an increase in the production of the other functions.

In the cognitive domain, in addition to the filler and uncertainty marker, the use of *mwe* as a marker of self-repair and hedge became more visible, though still relatively rare.

(11)   a. Ah, ike nay hyutayphon, nay phon-ka   kocangna-ss-e.
          ah   this my cell-phone my phone-NM out of order-PST-SE
          Eh, ku   hyutayphon com mwe cenhwa, cenwhaki com pillye
            the   cell-phone a bit mwe telephone telephone a bit lend
          cwullay-yo? cenhwaki com ssul-lay.
          give-Q   telephone a bit use-will
          'My cell-phone is out of order. May I borrow your cell-phone?
          I will use your telephone.'   (Cho, level 3)
      b. cokum   tachin ke-ci   mwe .... kunyang
          a little hurt   thing-SE mwe   just
          'I just got a little bit hurt....'   (Yu, level 3)

The *mwe* in (11a) is part of a self-repair strategy utilized when the speaker corrected her expression from *hyutayphon* (cell-phone) to *cenhwa* (telephone); in (11b), the speaker equivocated with '*mwe kunyang'* trying to avoid elaborating on the details of the circumstances of his injury.

The instances of *mwe* employed to emphasize a proposition (12a), to signal the speaker's discontent or rebuttal of a stated proposition (12b), and to express politeness (12c) were observed.

(12) a. kekise na-nun keuy   ta mek-cyo mwe
          there   I-NM   almost all eat-SE
          'I eat almost everything.'   (Yu, level 3)

      b. A: Ah, kulayyo? kumyen, hoysa kasil ttay   hoysa chwulkun
                   is that-Q then   office go   when office go
               ha-nun ke-lang   toykunhanun ke-lang   mwe ettetkey
               do-MD thing-and leave office   thing-and mwe how
               hasey-yo?
               do-Q
               'Is that so? Then how do you commute to work?'

         B: kunyang hay-yo, mwe ecaphi ku hoysa-eyse salko
               just   do-SE mwe anyhow   company-at live
               issnuntey
               be-CON
               'Well, I am living in the company (dorm).'   (Chong, level 3)

      c. A: meli cham yeppuney-yo
               hair   very   pretty-SE
               'Your hair is very pretty.'

         B: mwe-l-yo
               mwe-AC-SE
               'No, it's not'   (Cho, level 3)

In (12a) the DM *mwe* at the end conveys the emphasis the speaker put on the fact that he ate almost any Korean food after having lived in Korea over 10 years. The worker in (12b) found the interviewer's question--"*how do you commute to work?"*-- redundant since he already had told the interviewer that he lived in the

company dorm. The DM *mwe* together with *echaphi* (anyway) appears to convey the worker's uneasiness with the interviewer's question. (12c) is an utterance produced during the speech acts task. The learner responded with *mwelyo*[6], an idiomatic expression of modesty, in response to a compliment on her hair style.

The DM *mwe* as an approximator presented generalizations rather than specific details, usually accompanied by a set designator such as *ilen* or *kulen* in the learner data, a pattern consistent with what was observed by Nam and Cha (2010) in a native corpus.

(13) cheum-ey   ku   sam, kunyang palum   kulen   ke
      first-at   DM three just   pronunciation such   thing
      sangkiek mwe   kulen   ke   manhi paywe-ss-ciman
      sangkiek   such   thing   many learn-PST-though
      'At first 'three', just such thing as pronunciation, 'ssangkiek', though I
      learned a lot of such things'   (Wang, level 3)

In this utterance, instead of presenting a long list of what he had learned in Korean classes, the learner abridged the list with *mwe* and the set designator *kulen*.

To summarize the findings from the advanced NNS-w data, the DM *mwe* was in the productive lexicon of three of the five learners. The other two learners who did not exhibit an active use of *mwe*, however, exploited *kunyang* and *ike* as their favorite DMs, indicating individual variations in the preferred forms of DMs. The filler and uncertainty marker accounted for 62.3% of the total, which suggests that the use of *mwe* did not diversify even at the advanced level, still confined to the cognitive domain.

Overall, the development of the DM *mwe* was slow and gradual; the NNS-w started employing *mwe* as an interrogative pronoun, the DM function barely emerging at the beginning level. The instances of *mwe* as the filler, uncertainty marker, and exemplifier were available at the intermediate level, followed by the discontent marker, emphasizer, approximator, and hedge at the advanced level. The development of the functions in the cognitive domain preceded those in the textual and interpersonal domain, supporting the observation that *mwe* is a speaker-oriented

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6 *Mwelyo* is the contract form of 'mwe + ul (accusative particle)+ yo (sentence ender)

DM (Kim, 2005; Suh, 2007).

In the next section, the use of *mwe* by the advanced NNS-w is compared with that of NNS-s of comparable Korean proficiency to observe the role of learning environments in the acquisition of the DM *mwe*. The usage pattern of native Korean speakers serves as a control.

5.2 Use of *mwe* by the Advanced NNS-w, NNS-s, and Korean Native Speakers

Of the 20 NNS-s who were interviewed, five learners whose MLC-m was comparable to that of the five advanced NNS-w were chosen to compare the usage pattern of *mwe*. The NNS-w and NNS-s, albeit with similar MLC-ms, differ in their language learning experiences; the NNS-w had a longer length of residence in Korea than the NNS-s (82 vs. 42 months), with little or no exposure to formal instruction, while the NNS-s benefited from both formal instruction and interaction with native speakers in academic settings. The use of *mwe* by these two groups was analyzed and compared with that of native speakers in two different speech contexts, everyday conversation (NS-d) and monologue (NS-m).

The frequency of the DM *mwe* for each of the data sets is shown in Table 4. The two learner groups produced higher number of *mwe* per 100 words than the native speakers, concurring with the observations of previous research on DMs in L2 Korean (Han, 2005; Paek, 2011; Park, 2011).

Table 4. Frequency of *mwe* for each data set

	total words	# of mwe	# per 100 words
NS total	56685	676	1.19
NS-m	27978	306	1.1
NS-d	28707	371	1.29
NNS-s	15003	210	1.39
NNS-w	14756	215	1.46

The number of *mwe* per 100 words is higher in the NS-d than in the NS-m, though the gap is not significantly big (1.1 vs. 1.29 per 100 words), possibly due to

the different types of interaction between the casual conversation and monologue, the former involving more active engagements among interlocutors. In order to examine a possible role of speech contexts in the production of *mwe* in L2 Korean, the frequencies of the DM *mwe* elicited through the narrative tasks (picture description and story telling) were counted separately from those in the rest of the data set, the result of which is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Frequency of *mwe:* conversation vs. narrative

	narrative		conversation	
	# of words	# of mwe	# of words	# of mwe
worker	2298	19/0.83	12458	196/1.57
student	2761	22/0.80	12242	188/1.53

Both the NNS-w and NNS-s produced almost twice as many tokens of *mwe* per 100 words in the conversation as in the narrative context, supporting Fuller (2003), which discussed several factors influencing variable use of DM, including speech contexts, types of interaction, the level of familiarity among interlocutors, functions of DMs, and in the case of L2 learners, L2 proficiency. The small size of the narrative data in the current study, however, urges caution in interpreting the result.

The various functions of *mwe* observed in the four data sets are summarized in Table 6. As shown, the frequency of the DM *mwe* is the highest in the cognitive domain across the four data sets, with the filler and uncertainty marker exhibiting the most productive use. The types of interaction may be relevant in explaining the relatively low number of the filler *mwe* in the NS-d, in which interpersonal DMs may have a more active role to play.

The DMs in the textual domain, the exemplifier and the approximator, are the highest in the NS-m, followed by the NNS-s. The NS used the exemplifier and the approximator *mwe* more or less evenly, while the NNS-s heavily relied on the exemplifier with very few tokens of the approximator, possibly constrained by their limited language proficiency.

Table 6. Distribution of *mwe*: NNS—w, NNS—s & NS

		NNS-w	NNS-s	NS-m	NS-d
Inter	politeness	6/2.8	6/2.9	0/0	1/0.3
	discontent	8/3.7	4/1.9	12/3.9	71/19.1
	emphasizer	8/3.7	0/0	1/0.3	17/4.6
		22/10.2*	**10/4.8**	**13/4.2**	**89/24**
text	exemplifier	39/18.1	53/25.2	55/18	51/13.7
	approximator	8/ 3.7	8/3.8	46/15.1	18/4.9
		47/21.9	**61/29**	**101/33.1**	**69/18.6**
cog	filler	92/42.8	83/39.5	125/41	114/30.7
	uncertainty	42/19.5	49/23.3	50/16.4	81/21.8
	hedge	5/2.3	2/0.9	9/3	6/1.6
	self-repair	7/3.3	5/2.4	7/2.3	12/3.2
		146/67.9	**139/66.2**	**191/62.6**	**213/57.4**
	sub total	**215**	**210**	**305**	**371**
	inter. pro	8/3.4	36/14.4	20/5.7	34/8
	indef. pro	11/4.7	4/1.6	25/7.1	20/4.7
	total	**234**	**250**	**350**	**425**

*raw number/percentage

   Most of the DMs in the interpersonal domain are low in frequency except for the discontent marker in the NS-d, a pattern resulting from the interaction of the speech contexts and the level of familiarity among the interlocutors. The interaction in the NS-d was among close friends or colleagues of similar age in casual conversation contexts, which allowed relatively free expressions of discontent with a rare demand for politeness markers.

   A difference between the NNS-w and NNS-s in their use of *mwe* is that the former group shows a higher frequency in the interpersonal domain (10.2 vs. 4.8%), while the latter in the textual domain (21.9 vs. 29%). An explanation for this gap may be sought in the difference in learning contexts between the two groups: frequent casual interactions with NS in work place vs. experiences with formal instruction and interactions with NS in academic settings.

The two NNS groups, however, share more similarities than differences. The fact that the NNS-s, whose length of residence in Korea was less than half that of the NNS-w, produced almost the same number of *mwe* and similar types of functions should be attributed to the formal instruction they received as well as interactions with NS speakers out of classroom, a result supporting the positive effect of formal instruction in facilitating the development of pragmatic competence.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the development and use of *mwe*, a multi-functional DM, by Chinese learners of L2 Korean. Oral production data elicited from 28 NNS-w at three proficiency levels and five advanced NNS-s were analyzed focusing on the distribution of *mwe* in three functional domains with nine subcategories: the interactional domain (a marker of politeness and discontent, and the emphasizer), the textual domain (the exemplifier and approximator), and the cognitive domain (the filler, the hedge, and a marker of uncertainty and self-repair). As a native baseline, a corpus of about 56,000 words consisting of two different types of texts--monologue and dialogue--was compiled from the Sejong Corpus.

A total of 71 tokens of *mwe* were produced by the beginning NNS-w, 66 of which were used as the interrogative pronoun, indicating that the learners at this level were still governed by the 'one-form one-function principle' (Andersen, 1984). The intermediate NNS-w produced 119 tokens of the DM *mwe*, a significant improvement from the beginning level. However, 103 instances were used by three learners, mostly as the filler, uncertainty marker, and exemplifier, suggesting that 53 months of residence in Korea might not be a sufficient time for the NNS-w to acquire the various functions of the DM *mwe*.

All the nine functions of the DM *mwe* occurred in the advanced NNS-w data, with the filler and uncertainty marker accounting for about two thirds of the total (62.3%), a little higher than that of the NS (54.5%). Two of the five workers produced very few instances of *mwe*; instead, they opted for *kunyang* and *ike* as their favorite DMs, demonstrating individual variations in the choice of DMs.

Overall, the emergence of the DM *mwe* in the developing grammars of the NNS-w was slow and gradual; the productive use of the multiple functions of *mwe*

was attained only by a limited number of the advanced NNS-w. The development of the functions in the cognitive domain preceded those in the textual and interpersonal domain, a pattern probably related to the nature of *mwe* as a speaker-oriented DM (Kim, 2005; Suh, 2007).

The advanced NNS-w and NNS-s shared more similarities than differences in their use of *mwe*; the NNS-d's shorter length of residence appears to have been counterbalanced by the formal instruction they received, which curtailed by half the long and painstaking process of the acquisition of the multiple functions of *mwe*. This result supports provision of Korean instruction for migrant workers to help enhance their communicative competence.

It is possible that the usage pattern of *mwe* observed might be a by-product of the data collection method of semi-structured interviews. Future research on L2 learners' DM use in casual conversation is needed to complement the findings of the current study.

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Hyeson Park
Department of English Language & Literature
Keimyung University
1095 Dalgubeoldaero, Dalseo-gu
Daegu 704-701, Korea
E-mail: parkhy@kmu.ac.kr