A sociopragmatic analysis of selected Korean hedges in spoken discourse

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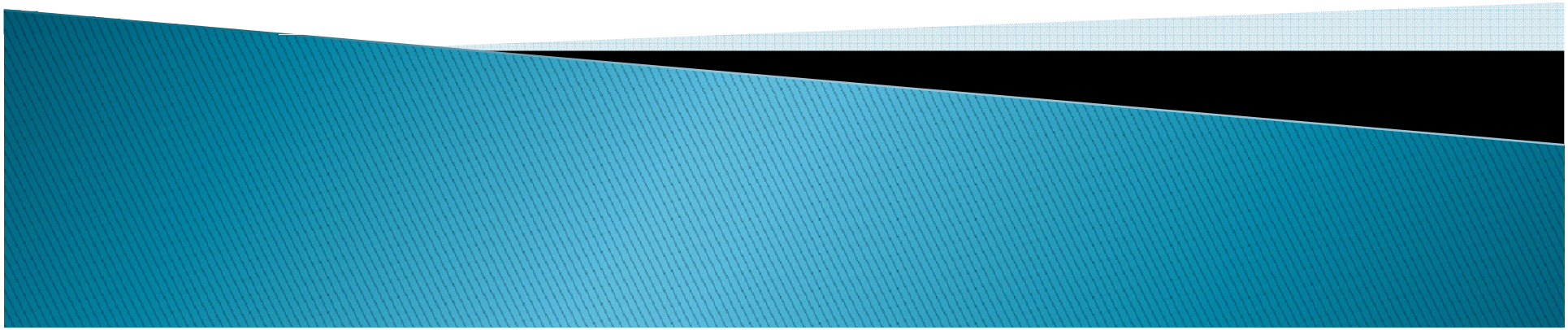
15th AATK Annual Conference



What is *hedge*?

- the concept of hedge evolved from its origins and been adopted by pragmatics and discourse analysis since 1980's.

- related to pragmatic strategies such as 'politeness', 'indirectness' & 'mitigation'.

Views on hedges (1)

- R. Lakoff (1975): hedges as one of the typical features of women's speech, as one way of indexing their position in society. ("Women's language")

- Brown and Levinson (1978): hedge as a strategy/expression of "negative politeness" for avoiding threats to the "face" of the participants.

- B. Fraser (1980): from the point of view of mitigation.

Views on hedges (2)

- J. Holmes (1990): hedges as an interactional/communicative strategy

  (i.e. as "positive politeness" devices signaling solidarity with the addressee rather than as devices expressing tentativeness or uncertainty).

- H-m. Sohn (1993): Korean hedge as various linguistic device to tone down the illocutionary force of a direct way of saying in terms of "strategic politeness."

Views on hedges (3)

- G. Clemen (1997): speakers/writers use lexical and/or syntactic devices such as modal auxiliaries (e.g., can/could; may/might; shall/should; will/would; must/ ought to, etc.), hedged performatives (e.g., have to admit; wish to invite; can promise, etc.), impersonal structures (one suggests), conditionals (if this were… one would…) to mitigate the strength of claims, statements and utterances while tending to face-save to achieve broader acceptance from the recipient as well as to evade possible criticism.

Views on hedges (4)

- Schröder & Zimmer (1997):
  - hedge as one/more lexico-syntactical elements used to modify a proposition
  - The term 'hedge' is used to refer to the textual strategies of using linguistic means in a certain context for specific communicative purposes.

Why "*hedge*"?

- *Hedge* as a conventionalized illocution-mitigating device in terms of politeness is an effective and crucial communicative resource in Korean spoken discourse.

- **[Definition of Hedge in the current study]**
  - a linguistic device that softens & mitigates the illocutionary force of proposition ("negative politeness")
  - as an interactional strategy in communication ("positive politeness")
    - to facilitate the success of interactions between interlocutors
    - to enhance interpersonal rapport
    - to establish solidarity

Purpose of study

- To investigate the frequency of selected lexical hedges (7 interactive sentence enders, ISEs) in Korean spoken discourse.

- To analyze ISEs empirically in terms of sociopragmatics using statistical methods.

Research Questions

- How "social structural factors" (such as gender, gender combination, age, occupation, and region) affect hedge use in Korean spoken discourse?

- How "social situational factors" (such as number of speakers, topic, social power relations, and social distance relations) affect hedge use in Korean spoken discourse?

ISEs as hedge in spoken discourse

- Seven ISEs (Interactive sentence enders)
  - *-canha(yo)*
  - *-ketun(yo)*
  - *-nuntey(yo)*
  - *-telako(yo)*
  - *-ci(yo)*
  - *-ney(yo)*
  - *-tay(yo)*

- Characteristics of Korean ISEs:
  - pervasive in spoken discourse.
  - Have a special pragmatic function (i.e., conventionalized illocution-mitigating devices)
  - Interestingly, these occur in only two speech levels, polite (marked) and intimate (unmarked)

Sociopragmatic variables

- **Social structural factors**: gender, gender combination, age, occupation, region
- **Social situational factors**: number of speakers, topic, power relations, distance relations

Social Structural Factors	Social Situational Factors
Gender	Formality of situation
Age	Solidarity/Distance relations between interlocutors
Social class (education/ occupation)	Power relations between interlocutors
Region	Function/ ends of utterance
Ethnicity/ nationality	Topic of conversations

Data Collection

- unplanned, spontaneous, and naturally occurring conversations
- all informal, face to face and two party (one to one) or multiple party (three or four) conversations
- 219 participants, all native Korean
- A total of 1000 minute (approximately 17 hours) recorded data

Methodology

- Frequency of 7 ISEs: using the search engine *hamalu* of *Secong* Corpus

- Statistical analysis: t-test, ANOVA, post-hoc test

ISE(1)–*canha (yo)*

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Structural Factors	**Gender**	F	112	3.92	439	3.542	(t) 1.348	**0.179**
		M	107	3.30	353	3.257		
	Gender Combination	FF	58	4.33	251	3.526	(F) 0.780	**0.460**
		MF	58	3.79	220	3.365		
		MM	58	3.57	207	3.179		
	Age	10s	24	3.54	85	3.217	(F) 0.031	**0.970**
		20s-30s	158	3.65	577	3.198		
		Over 40s	37	3.51	130	4.388		
	Occupation	Housewife	17	4.18	71	4.433	(F) 0.254	**0.776**
		office worker	30	3.50	105	4.092		
		Student	172	3.58	616	3.182		
	Region	Metropolitan	122	3.94	481	3.635	(t) 1.623	**0.106**
		Non-metropolitan	97	3.21	311	3.079		

Finding: None

ISE(1)–*canha (yo)* (cont'd)

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Situational Factors	**Number of Speakers**	1:1	174	3.90	678	3.356	(t) 2.415	**0.017**
		Multi	45	2.53	114	3.448		
	Topic	Impersonal	219	0.12	27	0.823	(t)-14.173	**0.000**
		Personal		3.49	765	3.367		
	Power	-	79	3.92	310	3.226	(t) 1.002	**0.317**
		+	140	3.44	482	3.512		
	Distance	-	174	3.66	636	3.216	(t) -0.330	**0.742**
		+	45	3.47	156	4.121		

Findings 01 : [Number of Speakers] 1:1 > Multi

Findings 02 : [Topic] personal > impersonal

ISE(2) –*nuntey (yo)*

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Structural Factors	**Gender**	F	112	4.31	483	3.227	(t) 0.174	**0.862**
		M	107	4.23	453	3.487		
	Gender Combination	FF	58	5.24	304	3.624	(F) 3.020	**0.051**
		MF	58	3.83	222	2.811		
		MM	58	5.14	298	3.841		
	Age	10s	24	4.13	99	3.591	(F) 4.644	**0.011**
		20s-30s	158	4.64	733	3.470		
		Over 40s	37	2.81	104	2.093		
	Occupation	housewife	17	2.65	45	2.206	(F) 3.879	**0.022**
		office worker	30	3.40	102	2.527		
		student	172	4.59	789	3.502		
	Region	Metropolitan	122	4.52	552	3.589	(t) 1.243	**0.215**
		Non-metropolitan	97	3.96	384	3.010		

Finding 03: [Age] 20s-30s > 40s

Finding 04: [Occupation] Student > housewife

Post-hoc Analysis of 'age' in use of *-nuntey (yo)*

	I	J	I-J	Std. Error	P-Value
Dunnet T3	10s	20s-30s	-0.514	0.783	0.883
		Over 40s old	1.314	0.810	0.299
	20s-30s	10s	0.514	0.783	0.883
		Over 40s old	1.828*	0.441	0.000
	Over 40s old	10s	-1.314	0.810	0.299
		20s-30s	-1.828*	0.441	0.000

[Age] 20s-30s > 40s

Post-hoc Analysis of 'occupation' in use of *-nuntey (yo)*

	I	J	I-J	Std. Error	P-Value
Dunnet T3	housewife	office worker	-0.753	0.707	0.641
		student	-1.940*	0.598	0.010
	office worker	housewife	0.753	0.707	0.641
		student	-1.187	0.533	0.088
	student	housewife	1.940*	0.598	0.010
		office worker	1.187	0.533	0.088

[Occupation] Student > housewife

ISE(2)–*nuntey (yo)* (cont'd)

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Situational Factors	**Number of Speakers**	1:1	174	4.74	824	3.494	(t) 5.849	**0.000**
		Multi	45	2.49	112	1.866		
	Topic	Impersonal	219	0.05	12	0.247	(t) -18.345	**0.000**
		Personal		4.22	924	3.345		
	Power	-	79	5.01	396	3.543	(t) 2.481	**0.014**
		+	140	3.86	540	3.173		
	Distance	-	174	4.38	762	3.320	(t) 0.915	**0.361**
		+	45	3.87	174	3.468		

Finding 05: [Number of Speakers] 1:1 > Multi
Finding 06: [Topic] Personal > Impersonal
Finding 07: [Power] Power relation - > +

ISE(3)–*ketun (yo)*

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Structural Factors	**Gender**	F	112	1.01	113	2.133	1.260	**0.210**
		M	107	0.72	77	1.139		
	Gender Combination	FF	58	1.24	72	2.536	1.141	**0.322**
		MF	58	1.05	61	1.711		
		MM	58	0.72	42	1.039		
	Age	10s	24	0.83	20	1.404	0.106	**0.899**
		20s-30s	158	0.90	142	1.883		
		Over 40s	37	0.76	28	1.116		
	Occupation	housewife	17	0.94	16	1.197	0.170	**0.844**
		office worker	30	0.70	21	1.236		
		student	172	0.89	153	1.840		
	Region	Metropolitan	122	1.09	133	1.933	2.245	**0.026**
		Non-metro	97	0.59	57	1.375		

Finding 08 : [Region] Metropolitan area> Non-metropolitan area

ISE(3) – *ketun* (*yo*) (cont'd)

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Situational Factors	**Number of Speakers**	1:1	174	1.01	175	1.867	3.637	**0.000**
		Multi	45	0.33	15	0.798		
	Topic	Impersonal	219	0.00	1	0.068	-7.376	**0.000**
		Personal		0.86	189	1.721		
	Power	-	79	0.91	72	2.027	0.282	**0.778**
		+	140	0.84	118	1.533		
	Distance	-	174	0.85	148	1.486	-0.287	**0.775**
		+	45	0.93	42	2.453		

Finding 09 : [Number of speakers] 1:1 > Multi

Finding 10: [Topic] Personal > Impersonal

ISE(4) –*telako(yo)*

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Structural Factors	**Gender**	F	112	.35	39	1.327	1.266	**0.207**
		M	107	.18	19	0.511		
	Gender Combination	FF	58	0.26	15	0.890	0.870	**0.421**
		MF	58	0.45	26	1.602		
		MM	58	0.19	11	0.476		
	Age	10s	24	0.08	2	0.408	2.561	**0.080**
		20s-30s	158	0.22	34	0.717		
		Over 40s	37	0.59	22	1.936		
	Occupation	housewife	17	0.12	2	0.332	5.046	**0.007**
		office worker	30	0.80	24	2.219		
		student	172	0.19	32	0.640		
	Region	Metropolitan	122	0.31	38	1.220	0.762	**0.447**
		Non-metro	97	0.21	20	0.676		

Finding 11: [Occupation] office worker > student=housewife

ISE(4) – *telako(yo)* (cont'd)

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Situational Factors	**Number of Speakers**	1:1	174	0.30	52	1.092	0.975	**0.331**
		Multi	45	0.13	6	0.625		
	Topic	Impersonal	219	0.01	3	0.117	-3.566	**0.000**
		Personal		0.25	55	0.994		
	Power	-	79	0.19	15	0.681	-0.820	**0.413**
		+	140	0.31	43	1.162		
	Distance	-	174	0.25	44	1.028	-0.342	**0.732**
		+	45	0.31	14	0.973		

Finding 12 : [Topic] Personal > Impersonal

ISE(5)-*ci(yo)*

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Structural Factors	**Gender**	F	112	4.64	520	4.080	-0.224	**0.823**
		M	107	4.77	510	4.081		
	Gender Combination	FF	58	4.57	265	3.681	0.452	**0.637**
		MF	58	5.16	299	4.384		
		MM	58	5.22	303	4.138		
	Age	10s	24	3.67	88	3.332	3.388	**0.036**
		20s-30s	158	4.52	714	3.827		
		Over 40s	37	6.16	228	5.134		
	Occupation	housewife	17	7.53	128	5.789	6.879	**0.001**
		office worker	30	5.87	176	4.524		
		student	172	4.22	726	3.642		
	Region	Metropolitan	122	4.83	589	4.250	0.507	**0.612**
		Non-metro	97	4.55	441	3.851		

Finding 13 : [Age] 40s > 20-30s = 10s

Finding 14 : [Occupation] Housewife = Office worker > Student

ISE(5)– *ci(yo)* (cont'd)

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Situational Factors	**Number of Speakers**	1:1	174	4.98	867	4.065	2.012	**0.045**
		Multi	45	3.62	163	3.956		
	Topic	Impersonal	219	0.15	32	0.695	-16.034	**0.000**
		Personal		4.56	998	4.011		
	Power	-	79	4.87	385	3.364	0.500	**0.618**
		+	140	4.61	645	4.430		
	Distance	-	174	5.07	882	4.140	2.650	**0.009**
		+	45	3.29	148	3.488		

Finding 15 : [Number of Speakers] 1:1 > Multi
Finding 16 : [Topic] Personal > Impersonal
Finding 17 : [Distance] Distance relations – > +

ISE(6)–*ney(yo)*

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Structural Factors	**Gender**	F	112	0.93	104	1.299	-0.665	**0.507**
		M	107	1.06	113	1.535		
	Gender Combination	FF	58	0.88	51	1.093	0.633	**0.532**
		MF	58	1.10	64	1.619		
		MM	58	1.16	67	1.449		
	Age	10s	24	0.58	14	0.830	1.469	**0.232**
		20s-30s	158	1.00	158	1.476		
		Over 40s	37	1.22	45	1.436		
	Occupation	housewife	17	1.53	26	1.875	1.620	**0.200**
		office worker	30	0.77	23	0.858		
		student	172	0.98	168	1.439		
	Region	Metropolitan	122	1.08	132	1.541	1.067	**0.287**
		Non-metro	97	0.88	85	1.244		

Finding : None

ISE(6) – *ney(yo)* (cont'd)

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Situational Factors	**Number of Speakers**	1:1	174	1.05	182	1.401	1.132	**0.259**
		Multi	45	0.78	35	1.475		
	Topic	Impersonal	219	0.00	1	0.068	-10.204	**0.000**
		Personal		0.99	216	1.419		
	Power	-	79	0.95	75	1.250	-0.325	**0.746**
		+	140	1.01	142	1.508		
	Distance	-	174	1.07	186	1.484	1.609	**0.109**
		+	45	0.69	31	1.083		

Finding 18 : [Topic] Personal > Impersonal

ISE(7)-tay(yo)

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Structural Factors	Gender	F	112	1.38	155	2.145	3.309	**0.001**
		M	107	0.63	67	1.103		
	Gender Combination	FF	58	1.57	91	2.333	3.759	**0.025**
		MF	58	1.17	68	1.808		
		MM	58	0.64	37	1.180		
	Age	10s	24	1.04	25	2.074	0.074	**0.929**
		20s-30s	158	0.99	156	1.700		
		Over 40s	37	1.11	41	1.807		
	Occupation	housewife	17	0.71	12	1.312	2.827	**0.061**
		office worker	30	1.70	51	2.184		
		student	172	0.92	159	1.689		
	Region	Metropolitan	122	1.08	132	1.892	0.645	**0.520**
		Non-metro	97	0.93	90	1.570		

Finding 19 : [Gender] Female > Male

Finding 20 : [Gender Combination] FF > MM

ISE(7) – *tay(yo)* (cont'd)

Factors		Group	N	Mean	Frequency	Std. (Error) Deviation	t (or F)-Value	P-Value
Social Situational Factors	**Number of Speakers**	1:1	174	1.13	196	1.864	2.460	**0.015**
		Multi	45	0.58	26	1.158		
	Topic	Impersonal	219	0.07	15	0.371	-8.069	**0.000**
		Personal-		0.95	207	1.641		
	Power	-	79	1.25	99	1.945	1.522	**0.129**
		+	140	0.88	123	1.629		
	Distance	-	174	1.10	191	1.820	1.396	**0.164**
		+	45	0.69	31	1.443		

Finding 21 : [Number of Speakers] 1:1 > Multi

Finding 22 : [Topic] Personal > Impersonal

Summary of Findings

	Social Structural Factors					Social Situational Factors			
	Gender	Gender Combi.	Age	Occupation	Region	Num. of Speakers	Topic	Power Relations	Distance Relations
ISE(1) *-canha(yo)*						1:1 > Multi	Personal		
ISE(2) *-nuntey(yo)*			20-30s > 40s	Student > housewife		1:1 > Multi	Personal	- > +	
ISE(3) *-ketun(yo)*					Metro> Non-metro	1:1 > Multi	Personal		
ISE(4) *-telako(yo)*				office worker > student= housewife			Personal		
ISE(5) *-ci(yo)*			40s > 20-30s =10s	housewife= office worker> student		1:1 > Multi	Personal		- > +
ISE(6) *-ney(yo)*							Personal		
ISE(7) *-tay(yo)*	F>M	FF>MM				1:1 > Multi	Personal		

Major Findings

- [Hypothesis 1] Number of Speakers in Conversations 1:1 > Multi.
  - "More hedges are used in two party conversations than in multiple party conversations in Korean spoken discourse."

- [Hypothesis 2] Topic in Conversations
  Personal topic> Impersonal topic
  - "More hedges are used in conversations with personal topics than with impersonal topics in Korean spoken discourse."

Conclusion

- The analysis of the current study shows that the previous views on the correlation between hedge use and a social structural factor such as gender (e.g. hedge as a women-specific linguistic form/powerless language) are overgeneralized. It is necessary to micro-analyze by each hedge item.

- The analysis of the current study proposes the importance of social situational factors(e.g. number of speakers, topic of conversation) in sociopragmatic analysis.

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감사합니다.