

## The Variable Acquisition of Discourse Marker Use in Korean American Speakers of English

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This study is a preliminary investigation of the nature of discourse marker acquisition in Korean American speakers of English. Discourse markers are of interest because they are not an aspect of language taught through formal instruction either to native or non-native speakers. Therefore, discourse marker use serves as indirect evidence of face-to-face interaction with native speakers and an indicator of integration. In this light, the present study examines the presence of discourse markers in Korean Americans. The markers chosen for analysis were you know, like, and I mean. The data consist of spontaneous speech elicited from interviews. Sociolinguistic variables such as age, sex, and generation (i.e., 1<sup>st</sup>, 1.5, 2<sup>nd</sup>) were examined. Results show that there appears to be interaction between the variables and discourse marker use. While all speakers showed variable acquisition of markers, younger, female, and 1.5 generation speakers were found to use discourse markers more than other speakers. Although discourse marker use is optional and thus not a linguistic feature that must be necessarily acquired, it is clear that use is pervasive and acquired differentially by English speakers irrespective of whether they are native or not.

[English/discourse markers/acquisition/Korean Americans]

### I. INTRODUCTION

Discourse markers have been referred to by several different terms which reflect the different ways they are used (Fraser, 1999, p. 932). Brinton (1996, p. 32) lists 34 items, which she refers to as "pragmatic markers" but these include

non-lexical items such as 'ah' and 'oh.' Such non-lexical utterances are usually defined as fillers or punctors and are seen as signs of hesitation (Vincent & Sankoff, 1992, p. 205). Here, the term 'discourse marker' is adopted because it is neutral and does not imply a particular function as seen in the terms 'hesitation' or 'filler.' Crystal (1997, p. 119) defines discourse markers as "sequentially dependent elements, which demarcate units of speech, such as *oh, well, I mean.*" This definition stems from Schiffrin who posited discourse markers as being "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 31). Fraser (1999, p. 950) defines discourse markers as a "pragmatic class, lexical expressions drawn from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbials, and prepositional phrases...They have a core meaning which is procedural, not conceptual, and their more specific interpretation is 'negotiated' by the context, both linguistic and conceptual." Sankoff et al. (1997, p. 195-196) provides a comprehensive view of discourse markers, which is more relevant to the purposes of this study.

#### (1) Properties of discourse markers

1. They do not enter into construction syntactically with other elements of the sentence.
2. The propositional meaning of the sentence does not depend on their presence.
3. They are subject to semantic bleaching as compared with their source forms.
4. They undergo greater phonological reduction than their source forms.
5. They are articulated as part of smoothly flowing speech production. This criterion excludes the hesitation forms 'uh'... that generally signal word searches.

Studies of native English speakers have shown that the use of discourse markers is a pervasive feature of colloquial English (Jucker, 1993; Miller & Weinert, 1995; Schiffrin, 1982, 1985; Watts, 1989). Discourse markers are found in languages such as English, German, Japanese, and Korean (Jucker & Ziv, 1998; Park, 1998). French appears to have almost identical discourse markers as found in English. The most frequently used discourse markers in Anglophone Montreal French speakers are *tu sais* 'you know,' *alors* 'so,' and *comme* 'like' (Sankoff et al., 1997, p. 191).

Discourse markers are often 'semantically bleached' or 'desemanticized' (Vincent & Sankoff, 1992, p. 206; Sankoff et al., 1997, p. 196). This implies that the semantics of the word has been completely erased so that the word is devoid of any meaning it originally possessed and does not acquire another meaning (Sankoff et al., 1997, p. 197). Therefore, it is often difficult to locate equivalent lexical items or translate discourse markers into another language (Brinton, 1996, p. 34). This is seen in French *la* 'there' and *bon* 'good' which do not have counterparts in English discourse marker use (Sankoff et al., 1997, p. 191). The lack of translation equivalents may present acquisitional difficulties to the non-native speaker who encounters them because s/he may become confused and not realize that they do not affect the overall meaning of the utterance they are located in.

Previous studies have also examined the syntactic distribution of discourse markers and their multi-functions (Schiffrin, 1987 among others). Discourse markers are considered "independent of syntactic organization (i.e., they are not attached to sentences)" (Gramley & Paxtold, 1992, p. 236). Therefore, markers such as *you know* and *like* can occur freely within a sentence at boundaries, which are difficult to identify (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 32). Concerning the function of discourse markers, they are often regarded as having a verbal filler function, which provides the speaker with linguistic planning time.<sup>1)</sup> Some other functions of discourse markers are to serve as a boundary in discourse or to denote new or old information (Brinton, 1996, p. 37-38). As for particular use of markers, *like* is considered "particularly suited to conversation," *you know* "can appear so frequently in conversation that its use by some speakers is apt to be stigmatized but those who do not use it at all are uncommon," and *I mean* is "useful in repair situations" (Schourup, 1985, p. 61, p. 94).

The effects of social variables and social evaluations have also been a focus in discourse marker studies. Holmes (1986) examined the functions of *you know* and sex differences. She found that although linguistic hedging devices are regarded as a women's language form, in the case of *you know* no significant differences were found (Holmes, 1986, p. 14). It was negative stereotypes of women, which fueled perceptions that women use discourse markers more than men. To add to our understanding of the negative stereotyping of discourse marker use, Watts

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<sup>1)</sup> It seems that there is ceaseless debate about what the exact functions of discourse markers are. Positions in discourse analysis/pragmatics studies differ considerably from those of computational linguistic approaches (Gregory Ward p.c.; Kim, 2004).

(1989) surveyed perceptions of discourse marker use. He found that discourse marker use was viewed negatively but that the speakers were unaware that they themselves used discourse markers (Watts, 1989, p. 203). In this light, discourse markers are stigmatized and even regarded as a sign of dysfluency (Schourup, 1985, p. 94).

One of the first studies of the acquisition of discourse markers in bilingual speakers is Sankoff et al. (1997). Discourse marker use in 17 French-English bilinguals was analyzed by examining the rate of use, patterning, and choice of markers. The study found that there was a considerable amount of variation in individual repertoires and frequency of use in both languages. Discourse marker use was considered indirect evidence of face-to-face interaction with native speakers and indicators of integration. According to Sankoff et al. (1997, p. 193):

Discourse markers are of particular interest because they constitute an aspect of the language not taught in school. Because they are not subject to explicit instruction, they are likely to be an accurate indicator of the extent to which a speaker is integrated into the local speech community. That is, only L2 speakers with a high degree of contact with native speakers will master the use of discourse markers.

The use of discourse markers is entirely optional and is not a linguistic feature that must necessarily be acquired. However, a higher frequency of discourse marker use is an indicator of fluency in a speaker (Sankoff et al., 1997, p. 191).

With the implications of Sankoff et al. (1997) taken into consideration, the present study examines discourse marker use in Koreans acquiring English as a second language as well as ethnic Koreans who are native English speakers. In particular, the study is concerned with the use of discourse markers as characteristic of smoothly flowing speech production. The issues at hand are 1) whether the use of discourse markers is an indicator of native-like fluency, and 2) whether there are different patterns of use in the speakers depending on their degree of English nativeness.

## II. THE PRESENT STUDY

### 1. Subjects

The subjects in the study are 101 Korean Americans residing in Philadelphia and its vicinity. The subjects were stratified according to age of arrival in the U.S., age, and sex. Table 1 shows demographic information regarding the speakers. The first row indicates the age of arrival in the U.S. for the subjects. An 'x' indicates cells which could not be filled due to lack of access to subjects and due to Korean immigration history patterns.<sup>2)</sup>

**TABLE 1**  
**Demographics of subjects**

Age	Sex	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-25	26-40	41+
18-30m	3	3	3	3	3	3	x	
	f	3	3	3	3	3	3	x
31-50m	3	3	3	3	6	5	x	
	f	3	3	3	3	5	5	2
51-61+	m	x	x	x	x	4	5	3
	f	x	x	x	x	1	3	2
Total	101	12	12	12	12	22	24	7

Biological age categories were proposed based on the fact that the majority of Korean immigrants are adults. The first age group of 18-30 represents entry to adulthood, the 31-50 category represents the full-fledged working years, and the 51-61+ category the stable years of adulthood. The age of arrival groups were formulated according to sensitive periods of acquisition. However, after the age of 25, the intervals were broadly divided. In further discussions of the age of arrival groups, the groups will be assigned numbers for convenience's sake so that: G1=0, G2=1-5 years, G3=6-10 years, G4=11-15 years, G5=16-25 years, G6=26-40 years, G7=41+ years.

Korean Americans classify themselves into generations for social purposes. There is even a folk term *ilcemosey* '1.5 generation' referring to those immigrants

<sup>2)</sup> Korean immigration to the U.S. increased dramatically with the Immigration Act of 1965 and the Immigration and Nationality Act amendments of 1976 (Kim & Yu, 1996, p. 377). Korean immigrants are mainly adults and it is only recently that second and third generations have emerged.

who came to the U.S. as children. This category is adopted here as well as other generational terms. The following categories were considered in relation to the age of arrival in the U.S. category.

(2) Generational classification of subjects

1<sup>st</sup> generation

Born in Korea and arrived in the U.S. after the age of 16.<sup>3)</sup>

1.5 generation

Born in Korea and arrived in the U.S. between the ages of 6-15 years.

2<sup>nd</sup> generation

Born in the U.S. of ethnic Koreans or born in Korea and arrived in the U.S. before the age of 5.

According to the above categories: 1<sup>st</sup> generation=G1-2 (n=24), 1.5 generation=G3-4 (n=24), and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation=G5-7 (n=53).

Thus, in order to provide a holistic picture of Korean immigrants, a stratified sampling of subjects was utilized.

## 2. Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected through 30-40 minute face-to-face or telephone interviews with the subjects.<sup>4)</sup> The subjects were directly informed that the interview would be a candid recording and that their anonymity would be protected and ensured. Several conversational modules were chosen to elicit spontaneous speech in the interview (Labov, 1984, p. 33-34). The topics of family, general immigrant life, and socializing were uniformly used so the flow of topics was relatively similar across all of the subjects. The interviews with the subjects were transcribed in their entirety.

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<sup>3)</sup> The age of 16 was chosen as a cut off line because this is an age, which can be considered the end of the critical age period of language acquisition (Johnson & Newport, 1989).

<sup>4)</sup> Data was initially collected in order to analyze other linguistic variables and reanalyzed here to examine discourse marker use.

### 3. Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis here focuses on the three discourse markers of *you know*, *like*, and *I mean* because of their dominance in speech. Although the analysis of discourse markers is limited to frequency analyses and not distribution, the functions of the three markers are assumed to be as follows according to Schourup (1985).

#### (3) Discourse marker functions

##### *like*

when speakers frequently find themselves in the position of having to formulate what they have to say without time for the considered eloquence possible (p. 61)

##### *you know*

checks with a positive expectation on the correspondence between what the speaker intends to convey and what the addressee can grasp in regard to what the speaker has just said or is about to say (p. 141)

##### *I mean*

used to indicate that what the speaker has said and what the speaker has in mind to express are not well indicated (p. 147)

The presence of discourse markers was marked and tallied across the subjects. The frequency rate of discourse marker use was measured by taking the total number of words uttered by each speaker and dividing it by the number of particular utterances of each particular discourse marker or the total number of tokens for all three discourse markers. Word count was used as a measure due to the difficulty of normalizing a time period across the speakers.<sup>5)</sup> Thus, descriptive statistics are provided for this initial analysis of discourse marker presence in the subjects.

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<sup>5)</sup> Length of time was not considered an appropriate measure because of the difference in the speed of speech of native vs. non-native speakers.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 1. Overall Discourse Marker Use

Although not all of the subjects (e.g., older 1<sup>st</sup> generation speakers) displayed discourse marker use, the majority was found to use discourse markers. The following examples taken from the subjects show the pervasive use of the three discourse markers.

#### (4) Examples from subjects

##### you know

And so, and, **you know, you know**, people saying, **you know**, just, **you know**, you are Korean, but you can't even speak Korean, and **you know**, what is that? And like, **you know**, just general negative attitude... [2<sup>nd</sup> generation speaker]

##### like

But for her, she wants to go to **like** a loud bar where there's **like** a lot of young kind of **like** you know like a frat party like atmosphere you know. [1.5 generation speaker]

##### I mean

I vividly remember **I mean** my grandfather. He was very kind but anyway he passed away and I I I just **I mean** reminded **I mean I mean** the death reminded me the the **I mean** the life, what is the life? [1<sup>st</sup> generation speaker]

General use is first shown according to age of arrival in the U.S. Table 2 shows the results of the analysis of the use of the three markers.

**TABLE 2**  
**Overall discourse marker use**

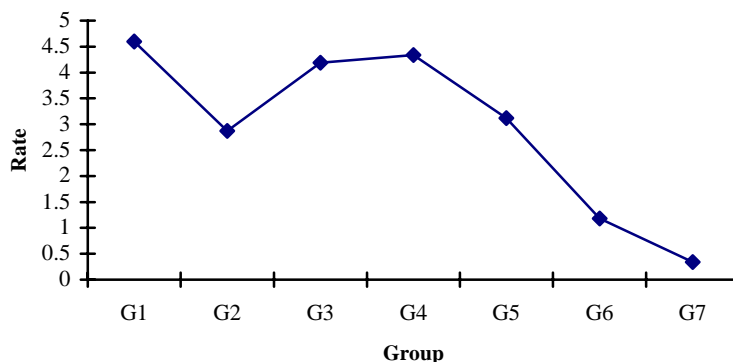
Group	Words	you know	like	I mean	Total
G1	54693	408	1996	112	2516
%		16.21	79.33	4.45	4.6
G2	52668	463	202	115	1513
%		30.6	61.79	7.6	2.87
G3	37107	448	971	138	1557
%		28.77	62.36	8.86	4.19
G4	31640	455	792	128	1375
%		33.09	57.6	9.3	4.34



G5	57769	661	933	213	1808
%		36.55	51.6	11.78	3.12
G6	52316	303	110	208	621
%		48.79	17.71	33.49	1.18
G7	8064	27	0	1	28
%		96.42	0	3.57	0.34
Total	294257	2765	5004	915	9418

The use of discourse markers is relatively low across all of the groups. This appears to be due to the method of measurement used here, which utilized the number of words uttered. Despite the low frequency rates, a pattern can be seen across the groups. This pattern is more clearly seen in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1**  
Overall discourse marker use



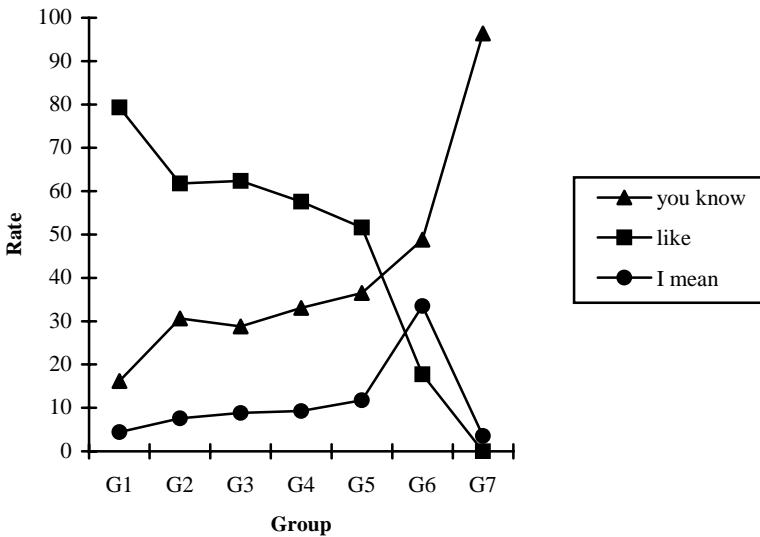
With the exception of G2, there is a steady decrease in the use of discourse markers as the age of arrival increases. The G7 group shows the lowest use while G1 shows the highest. The G2 group may be aware that discourse marker use is negatively stigmatized and may avoid such use. Looking at individuals, the G2 group has speakers who are more educated in terms of post-graduate schooling and thus has more speakers who are professionals as opposed to the G1 group.<sup>6)</sup> Therefore, education and occupation could perhaps have an effect on use in these

<sup>6)</sup> The subjects were asked about their educational background and occupational history in the interviews.

two groups, which are considered to be at the native end of the nativeness continuum.

Next, a general analysis of particular discourse marker use was conducted in order to determine patterns in particular discourse markers. Figure 2 shows overall use in each of the three particular markers.

**FIGURE 2**  
Overall discourse marker use according to particular marker



The use of a particular discourse marker shows interesting results. *I mean* is the least used of the three markers, with *you know* and *like* following respectively. *Like* appears to be favored by the early age of arrival groups as opposed to *you know* in the later groups. The groups which comprise the 1.5 generation (G3, G4) show steady rates of use of all three discourse markers.

## 2. Interaction of Variables and Particular Discourse Marker Use

Social variables were analyzed in accordance with particular discourse marker use. The variables were generation, sex, and age. These three variables are speculated to show effects on particular discourse marker use as seen in the overall analysis.

### 1) Generation

Generational differences are examined in the particular use of each marker and the total of all three markers. Table 3 shows a comparison of the three generations.

**TABLE 3**  
**Overall discourse marker use according to generation**

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Words</b>	<b>you know</b>	<b>like</b>	<b>I mean</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>2nd Gen.</b>	107361	871	2931	227	4029	3.75
<b>1.5 Gen.</b>	68747	903	1763	266	2932	4.26
<b>1st Gen.</b>	118149	991	1043	422	2457	2.07
<b>Total</b>	294257	2765	5737	915	9418	3.20
<b>%</b>		0.93	1.94	0.31		

An intra-generational analysis shows that G1 and G2 are similar but differ significantly in the use of *like*. The high rate of *like* in the G1 group renders this discourse marker as having the highest rate in use in the 2nd generation. Overall, discourse marker use is 3.75%. Surprisingly, the 1.5 generation shows a higher overall rate than the 2nd generation at 4.26%. Similar to the 2nd generation, *like* is the discourse marker used the most.

As can be seen, the 1st generation shows the lowest rate of discourse marker use at 2.07%. Here, *like* is again the discourse marker that is used the most. The 1.5 generation shows the highest rate of use with the 2nd generation and the 1st generation following respectively. While *like* is used the most in all three generations, *I mean* is used the least. In addition, the rates of *you know* and *I mean* show relatively steady rates across the generations as opposed to the use of *like*. The 1.5 generation may be attempting to use discourse markers as a device to indicate that they are fluent in English, while the 1<sup>st</sup> generation may not have fully acquired the use of or do not perceive a communicational need for discourse markers. The 2<sup>nd</sup> generation speakers may be aware that discourse marker use is perceived negatively.

### 2) Sex

Sex is examined in order to determine whether the speakers show any differences in use. A comparison of males and females is shown in Table 4.

**TABLE 4**  
Overall discourse marker use according to sex

Sex	Words	you know	like	I mean	Total	%
Male	146890	1400	2521	495	4457	3.03
Female	147367	1365	3175	420	4961	3.36
<b>Total</b>	294257	2765	5696	915	9418	3.20

Sex differences do not seem to be apparent in terms of particular use. Males and females show similar rates in the use of *you know* and *I mean* but females show a slightly higher rate of use in *like*. The use of discourse markers may be perceived to be a women's language form since they are considered in a negative light coupled with the fact that people regard them as hesitation markers. However, in this study, there were no evident differences between the sexes. Therefore, in general, sex does not seem to influence discourse marker use.

### 3) Age

Age is examined in this section. Table 5 offers a comparison of all three biological age groups.

**TABLE 5**  
Overall discourse marker use according to age

Age	Words	you know	Like	I mean	Total	%
<b>18-30</b>	116084	1080	3102	367	4549	3.91
<b>31-50</b>	147182	1532	2635	512	4679	3.17
<b>51-61+</b>	30991	153	0	36	189	0.60
<b>Total</b>	294257	2765	5737	915	9417	3.20

The 18-30 age range shows the highest rate of use with a decrease in rate as age increases. The 51-61+ age group shows a significantly low rate of use. As aforementioned, the older subjects may not have acquired discourse marker use when acquiring English. Overall, *like* shows the largest envelope of variation in use while *you know* and *I mean* show similar rates across the groups. The use of *like* is somewhat ambiguous compared to *you know* and *I mean* which retain a

portion of their literal meaning. This may serve as a plausible explanation for the absence of this particular marker use in the 51-61+ age group.

#### 4) Interaction of variables

Further effects of the interaction of variables were analyzed. While the previous section presented analyses of the individual variables, interaction is examined in order to provide a more micro-picture of the nature of use.

##### (1) Generation and Sex

First, the interaction between the variables of generation and sex is examined. Table 6 shows the results.

**TABLE 6**  
**Interaction of generation and sex**

<b>Gen.</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Words</b>	<b>you know</b>	<b>like</b>	<b>I mean</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>2nd</b>	<b>M</b>	58564	582	1629	83	2294	3.91
	<b>F</b>	48797	289	1302	117	1708	3.5
<b>1.5</b>	<b>M</b>	29418	397	469	84	950	3.22
	<b>F</b>	39329	506	1294	182	1982	5.03
<b>1st</b>	<b>M</b>	58908	421	464	301	1186	2.01
	<b>F</b>	59241	570	579	121	1271	2.14

1.5 generation females use discourse markers the most and 1st generation males show the least use. In addition, while males show a steady decrease in use according to generation, females do not.

##### (2) Generation and Age

The interaction between generation and age is examined. Table 7 shows the results of the analysis.

**TABLE 7**  
**Interaction of generation and age**

<b>Gen.</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Words</b>	<b>you know</b>	<b>like</b>	<b>I mean</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>2nd</b>	<b>18-30</b>	52468	450	1351	106	1907	3.63
	<b>31-50</b>	54893	421	1580	94	2095	3.81
<b>1.5</b>	<b>18-30</b>	36075	475	1199	169	1843	5.10
	<b>31-50</b>	32672	428	564	97	1089	3.33

<b>1st</b>	<b>18-30</b>	27541	155	552	92	799	2.90
	<b>31-50</b>	59617	683	491	294	1469	2.46
	<b>51-61+</b>	30991	153	0	36	189	0.60

In each generation age groups appear to show different results. For the 1.5 and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, the younger age groups show a slightly higher use of discourse markers. The oldest group of 51-61+ yrs., which is only found in the 1<sup>st</sup> generation shows the lowest usage rate. This result is consistent with the previous analyses of this particular age group and its characteristics. Another previously observed consistency is found with the 18-30 years, 1.5 generation age group in that their high rate of use seems to be an indirect marker that the subjects may be overarching to sound native-like.

### (3) Sex and Age

Lastly, the interaction of sex and age is examined. Table 8 shows the results.

**TABLE 8**  
Interaction of sex and age

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Words</b>	<b>you know</b>	<b>like</b>	<b>I mean</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>M</b>	18-30	59466	548	1093	182	1825	3.06
<b>F</b>	18-30	56618	530	2009	185	2724	4.81
<b>M</b>	31-50	65990	740	1469	257	2466	3.73
<b>F</b>	31-50	81192	792	1166	228	2187	3.69
<b>M</b>	51-61+	21434	110	0	29	139	0.64
<b>F</b>	51-61+	9557	43	0	7	50	0.52

In terms of interaction between sex and age, several patterns emerge. Overall, females showed a somewhat steady decrease in discourse marker use as age increased. Females in the 18-30 age range showed the highest rate of use. However, males did not show such a pattern. Surprisingly, males in the age group of 31-50 years showed the highest rate of use. This result is somewhat inconsistent with the general results obtained for discourse marker use in that it was previously found that the younger speakers showed the highest rates of use.

## IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of the present study appear to shed light on the nature of discourse marker use in a particular ethnic group (i.e., Korean Americans) consisting of speakers who have acquired English differentially. Both native and non-native

Korean American speakers of English in the study displayed variable acquisition of discourse marker use. Thus, it appears that the use of discourse markers is acquired by all of the speakers to a certain extent. The use of discourse markers was also found to be dictated by various social factors.

In general, the speakers showed a relatively low frequency rate in the use of the three discourse markers of *like*, *you know*, and *I mean*. Of the three discourse markers of *you know*, *like*, and *I mean*, *you know* and *like* were used considerably more than *I mean*. The classification of the speakers according to age of arrival showed that the age of arrival group of 1-5 years used discourse markers the most. In terms of generation, the 1.5 generation showed the highest rate. Contrary to some studies as well as general impressions, there were no differences in sex. The particular marker of *like* which is highly stigmatized to be a women's language form was used equally among the males and females. However, age seemed to have more effect on discourse marker use with the younger speakers showing a higher rate than the older ones. The use of *like* was also significantly higher in younger speakers as well. The interaction of social factors showed that 1.5 generation females, and 1.5 generation speakers 18-30 years, and females 18-30 years showed the highest use of discourse markers.

Discourse marker use is difficult to describe in pedagogical terms because there are extremely few instructional materials that refer to them. An informal survey of an English conversation text used to teach English conversation to non-native speakers shows no reference at all to discourse markers regardless of proficiency level.<sup>7)</sup> Returning to the issue of stigmatization of discourse marker use as seen in Watts (1989), negative stereotypes do seem to be generated and fostered due to absence of instructional focus. However, for non-native learners of English, the function of discourse markers must be taken into consideration in regard to communicative competence (Lee & Lee, 2002). A question that can be raised is: Are discourse markers just another colloquial aspect of speech or do they serve a particular function for non-native speakers, which differs from that of native speakers?

Perception-wise, it is clear that to a beginner learner of English, discourse markers can impede listening comprehension. Discourse markers such as *you know* are relatively opaque in meaning compared to *like* which is relatively

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<sup>7)</sup> The English conversation text was randomly chosen and examined. The text examined was *Let's Talk* levels 1-3. Clearly, a more thorough investigation is necessary to make a broader generalization concerning the lack of instruction of discourse markers.

transparent. English learners may become confused at the use of *like* as a discourse marker, which does not contribute to the overall meaning of the utterance it is in. In addition, the rise of *like* as a quotative indicator among young people may also cause confusion on the part of the English learner. Therefore, the use of *like* and the semantic bleaching it has undergone should be taught through instruction because of its everyday functions regardless of whether discourse markers are prescriptively sanctioned or not.

The present study served as a preliminary investigation of discourse marker use in Korean American speakers of English. Although it has been seen that Korean Americans variably acquire discourse markers, clearly further research warrants attention. Future directions could examine the contexts where discourse markers are used and what functions they serve. At first glance, it does appear to be clear that non-native speakers of English are aware of native features that are not taught through formal instruction, such as discourse markers, and thus acquire them through interaction with native speakers.

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**Examples in: English**

**Applicable Languages: English**

**Applicable Levels: Tertiary, Adult**

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