

The phonesthemes in Korean monosyllabic ideophone *ttak*

a.k.a The phonosemantics in Korean monosyllabic ideophone *ttak*

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I. Introduction

- ✓ The Korean language has about **5,500** ideophones (Park 2015).
- ✓ The word *ttak* indicates the highest frequency **in spoken language**.
- ✓ However, it is not on the top 100 words in written language.

(Jung 2014)

I. Introduction

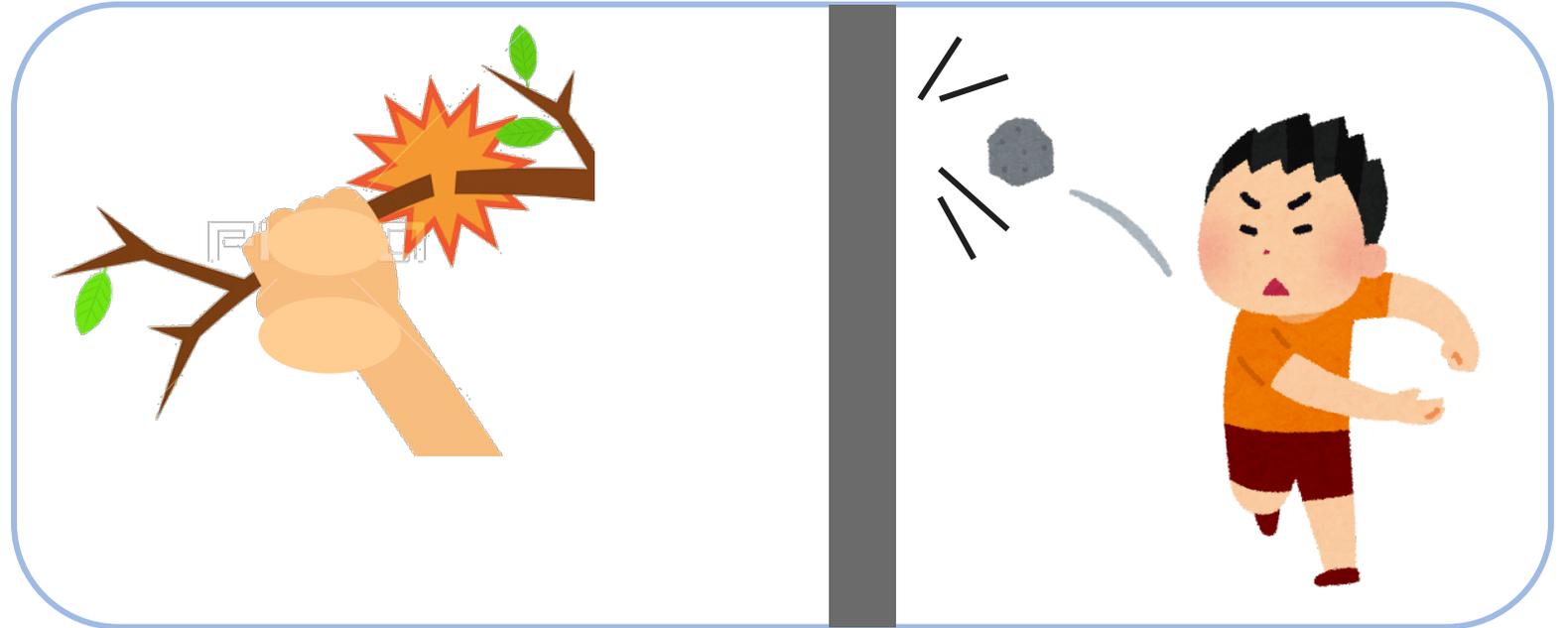
- ✓ The frequency of Korean adverbs in spoken language (in Sejong Corpus)
total 121,971 adverbs (adopted from Jung 2014)

	ideophone	a frequency in spoken		a frequency in written
16th	<i>ttak</i>	1,780	>	600
41th	<i>kkok</i>	418	<	3,119
74th	<i>ccwuk</i>	164	<	195

I. Introduction

✓ The meaning of ***ttak***

a sound of a hard object emitted by hitting/breaking
or a manner of hitting/breaking a hard object



(*Standard Korean Dictionary*, National Institute of Korean Language Republic of Korea)

Youtube video access:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRD7_IMCu9E

the title: [엘리트 핏PL 드라마] 제 3화 딱 맞아! `2016.11.29
[Elite fit PL Drama] Episode 3. **ttak fits!**

‘(The school uniform fits one’s body) **well!**’ ``

the source: myelitemovie, elite: Seoul, Korea.

00:05~

“**ttak!**”

(the school uniform
fits one’s body) **well.**

01:00~

“Nay mom-ey **ttak!**”

(the school uniform
fits) my body **well.**

I. Introduction

- ✓ What is the meaning and function of *ttak* in spoken language?
- ✓ What is the morphosyntactic feature of *ttak* in the sentence?
- ✓ Does it's meaning or function relate to the sound symbolic meaning?

- *ttak* has a function to express **speaker's stance** representing **epistemic modality: certainty**.
- There is a **correlation** between **epistemic marking** of *ttak* and **morphosyntactic integration**.
- The meaning of certainty is based on **the sound symbolic meaning** of each phoneme and **the iconic meaning** of monosyllable.

I. Introduction

✓ **Epistemic modality** is:

the degree of commitment and speaker's belief and attitude lies in the fact.

“evaluation of the chances that a certain hypothetical state of affairs under consideration (or some aspect of it) will occur,

is occurring or has occurred in a possible world”. (Nuyts 2001: 21)

(see also Coates 1987; kärkkäinen 2003; Palmer 1986)

I. Introduction

- ✓ Epistemic modality can be placed along a continuum expressing different **degrees of certainty/doubt** (Hyland & Milton 1997).

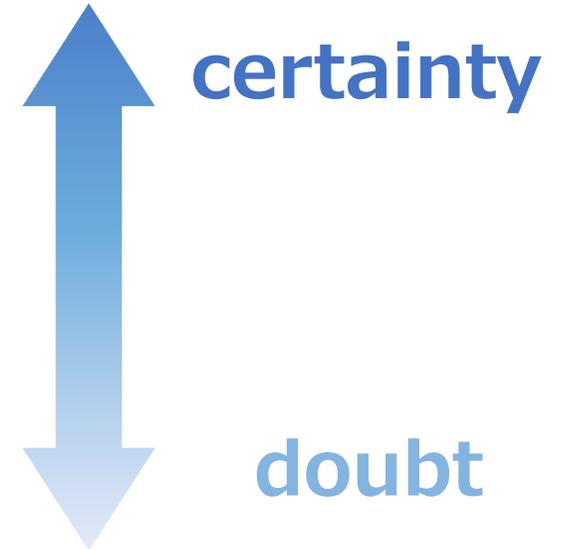
(a) **certainty** (certainly, must will, argue, in fact, etc.)

(b) **probability** (would, seem, probable, believe, etc.)

(c) **possibility** (may, might, perhaps, possible, etc.)

(d) **usuality** (always, often, usually, etc.)

(e) **approximation** (about, approximately, almost, etc.)



I. Introduction

✓ Previous studies

- morphophonological distribution (Lee 2002)
- semantic extension: momentariness, exactness, adjacency, completeness (Kim 2001; Im 2013)
- pragmatics function (discourse marker): exactness, emphatic (Rhee 2018)
- There has been no detailed investigation of the use and function of *ttak* in spoken language.

II. Method

- ✓ **Sejong Corpus** (National Institute of Korean Language Republic of Korea, Seoul)
 - The database of spoken language in modern Korean (2001~2005):
1,375,892 morpheme
443 speakers (10's: 14/ 20's: 342/ 30's: 36/ 40's: 35/ 50's: 6/ 60's~: 5/ ?: 5)
- ✓ **Objects:**
ttak (471 words, 418 sentences), *tta:k* (15 words, 15 sentences)
- ✓ depicting a sound/a manner vs. **representing epistemic stance:**
7 cases vs. 479 cases

III. Analysis

example 1

(S1 is talking about she dozed off in a subway.)

■ depicting a sound/a manner vs. representing epistemic stance

S 1: *Col-taka,*

doze-CONJ

‘[I] dozed off for a few seconds (in a subway)’

Nukkim-i ttak pwuticchi-nun nukkim-i na-yo.

feeling-NOM IDPH hit-ATTR feeling-NOM feel-PL

‘I have a feeling as if I hit something with ***ttak*** sound.’

Kulem yeph-ey yeph-ilatunci aph-ul ttak po-myen mwe-ka pwuticchy-e-yo.

then side-to side-or front-ACC IDPH look-COND something-NOM hit-CONJ-PL

‘Then (I woke up), I was ***really*** looking at my side or the front of (me),
and I did hit something.’



III. Analysis

(S1 is talking about shedozed off in a subway.)

Nukkim-i ttak hako pwuticchi-nun nukkim-i na-yo.

➔ a sound

feeling-NOM IDPH QUOT hit-ATTR feeling-NOM feel-PL

‘I have a feeling as if I hit something with *ttak* sound.’

**Kulem yeph-ey yeph-ilatunci aph-ul ttak hako po-myen mwe-ka pwuticchy-e-yo.*

then side-to side-or front-ACC IDPH QUOT see-COND something-NOM hit-CONJ-PL

‘Then (I woke up), I was looking at my side or the front of (me) with *ttak* sound,
and I did hit something.’

➔ not a sound !
today’s topic

III. Analysis

(S1 is talking about his friend's weight.)

S 1: *Nay-ka han yuksip han i, li naka-ketun-yo.*

I-nom about sixty about one two weight-given.that-pol

`My weight is about sixty-one or sixty-two.'

a. *Ttak nay ttapwul-i-ya, ttapwul.*

IDPH I double-COP-END double

`(His weight is) **exactly** double of my weight.'

➤ *ttak* cannot be collocated with an adverb that expresses ambiguity.

b. *Cenghwakhi ttak nay ttapwul-i-ya, ttapwul.*

precisely exactly I double-COP-END double

`(His weight is) **precisely ttak** double of my weight.'

c. **Taylyak ttak nay ttapwul-i-ya, ttapwul.*

about exactly I double-COP-END double

`(His weight is) **about ttak** double of my weight.'

III. Analysis

(S1 is talking about the line in an amusement park.)

S 1: *Kunkka nanwecy-e iss-e.*

so divide.into-CONJ be-END

‘So, (The line is) divided.’

* *kukey kunkka ikhey taykang ttak nanwecy-e iss-nun ke-n ani-ntey,*

but so like.this roughly IDPH divide.into-CONJ be-PRS thing-ATTR NEG-CIRC

‘but, it is not *precisely ttak* divided like this,

‘but, it is not divided *roughly ttak* like this, ... ’

➤ *ttak* cannot be collocated with an adverb that expresses ambiguity.

III. Analysis

(S1 is talking about the line in an amusement park.)

S 1: **{ttak/*thak/*ttek/*ttok/*ttwuk/*ttang}** *nay ttapwul-i-ya, ttapwul.*

IDPH

I double-COP-END double

`(His weight is **exactly** double of my weight.'

➤ **ttak** cannot be replaced by any other alternative forms.

III. Analysis

(S1 is talking about the position on the desk at work.)

S 1: *Incey il-ha-llyeko ilukhey ttak anc-a iss-nuntey, ...*

then work-do-intend like.this IDPH sit-CONJ being-but

`From now, [I] am sitting **exactly** like this (position) to work.'

➤ If *ttak* is replaced by `ttek'[ttək], the meaning of proposition is changed.

Incey il-ha-llyeko ilukhey ttek anc-a iss-nuntey, ...

then work-do-intend like.this IDPH sit-CONJ being-but

`Then, [I] am sitting **proudly and relaxedly** like this at work.'



III. Analysis

(S1 is talking about the story that she boasted about to her senior.)

✓ collocated with a direct quotation

S 1: *Nwukwu-hanthey calang-hay-ss-ess-ci?*

someone-LOC boast-DO-PST-PERF-Q

`Did I boast to someone?'

E, senpay-hanthey, namca senpay-hanthey nay-ka toykey calang-hay-ss-ta,

EXEL senior-LOC men senior-LOC I-NOM really boast-do-PST-DEC

`Ah, I did boasted to my senior.'

Oppa ike toykey ippu-ci? Ttak ilay-ss-ta, kulayssteni, ...

brother this really pretty-Q IDPH like.this-PST-DEC then

`"Senior, isn't this really pretty?" [I] said **exactly like this**, and then ...'

➤ *ttak* expresses the speaker's confidence or belief of the truth-value of proposition.

III. Analysis

(S2 notice that S3' s clothes are the same as those she wore a few days ago.)

S 2: Ku-nal ike ip-ko wa-ss-e?
that-day this wear-CONJ come-PST-Q

`[You] were wearing this clothes that day, weren't you?'

Na akka sacin po-nikka,

I a.while.ago picture IDPH see-because

`Because, just a while ago [I] saw the picture (of you).'

⋮

predicate

[*ttak-ita*] (*ita`be'*)

ke issci. Sacin-ul pwa-ss-ketun

IDPH-COP-ATTR thing you.know picture-ACC see-PST-given.that

`You know,

[Because I] saw the picture.

i os-i-n ke kathay-se.

IDPH this cloth-COP-ATTR seem-CONJ

`I think (you wore) this clothes,

- If *ttak* is removed from the sentence, the speaker's confidence or belief of the truth-value of proposition cannot be expressed.

III. Analysis

(S2 is talking about the best time to go to the swimming pool.)

S 1: *Swuyengcang way yosay cangma-ci-ki ceney tep-canha,*
 swimming.pool why this.days rainy.season-set.in-before hot-you.know
 `You know, these days, before the rainy season sets in, (the weather) is hot.'

Cikum-hakwu cangma-ci-kwu na-myen
 now-and rainy.season-set.in-CONJ finish-cond
 `Now and after the rainy season is finished,'

ohilye swuyengcang ka-twu pyellwu an siwenha-kwu
 rather swimming.pool go-but particular.y.not NEG cool-CONJ
 `If (you) go to the swimming pool, (the water is not) particularly cool.'

hayspich-man ttakep-kwu ilenikka,
 Sunlight-just hot-CONJ for.this.reason
 `Sunlight is hot,'

Cikum ka-nun key ttak coh-untey.

now go-CONJ thing IDPH good-CIRC

`Now, it is **definitely** a good time for you to go to the swimming pool.'

➤ **ttak** also expresses the speaker's confidence or belief of her/his assessment about a certain situation.

III. Analysis

example

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(S1 is talking about her mood after hearing the talk.)

a. S 1: *Ihay-ka an ka cengmal, i yayki-l tut-nun swunkan ttak kipwun-i napp-aci-nun ke-y-a.*

understanding-NOM NEG go really this talk-ACC hear-ATT moment IDPH mood-NOM bad-become-REL thing-be-END

`I cannot really understand (you)", at the moment of hearing this talk, so **my mood really** became worse.'

➤ **ttak** adds the emphatic meaning to the proposition.

b. *Kipwun-i {acwu/maywu/cengmal} ttak napp-aci-nun ke-y-a.*

mood-NOM very/terribly/really IDPH bad-become-REL thing-be-END

`[My] mood {**very/terribly/really**} **ttak** became worse.'

c. **Kipwun-i {*cokum/*yakkan/*taso} ttak napp-aci-nun ke-y-a.*

mood-NOM a bit/a little/slightly IDPH bad-become-REL thing-be-END

`[My] mood {**a bit/a little/slightly**} **ttak** became worse.'

➤ **ttak** cannot be collocated with adverbs that express **non-emphatic** meanings.

III. Analysis

example

11

(S1 and S2 are talking about the appearance of the actress.)

S 1: *Ceng-i an ka-l cengto-lo cinachi-key ippe-se.*
affection-NOM NEG go-ATT limit-to excess-AFF pretty-CONJ
`The actress is so beautiful, that I don't like her.'

S 2: *A, kuntey ay-ka,*
EXCLAM but this.person-NOM

* *com yakkan ttak , yakkan inhyeng kath-u-nikka com kepwukam-i nukky-ecye.*
a.little a little bit :DPH | a little bit doll like-CONJ-as little repulsion-NOM feel-become
`Ah, but this person, She looks **a little bit ttak a little bit** a doll, so it's repulsive.'

➤ **ttak** is often collocated with the adverbs that express emphatic meanings.

(e.g., **cengmal** `really', **cincca** `really', **nemwu** `much', **toyley** `too, very', **wancenhi** `completely')

III. Analysis

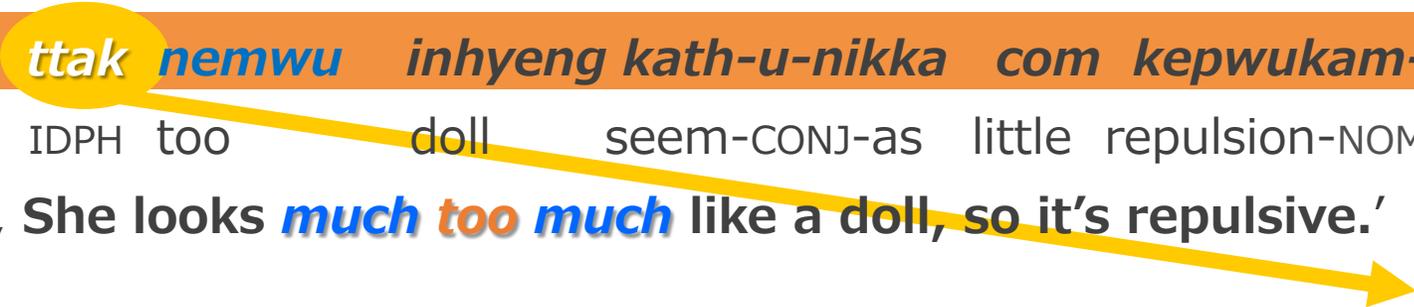
example
12

(S1 and S2 are talking about the appearance of the actress.)

a. S 1: *com nemwu ttak nemwu inhyeng kath-u-nikka com kepwukam-i nukky-ecye.*

a.little too IDPH too doll seem-CONJ-as little repulsion-NOM feel-become

`Ah, but this person, She looks **much too much** like a doll, so it's repulsive.'



b. S 1: *com nemwu nemwu inhyeng kath-u-nikka com kepwukam-i ttak nukky-ecye.*

a.little too too doll seem-CONJ-as little repulsion-NOM IDPH feel-become

`Ah, but this person, She looks **much much** like a doll, so it's **definitely** repulsive.'

➤ If the position of **ttak** is changed in the sentence, the scope of epistemicity is changed too.

III. Analysis

✓ **Summary:** The meaning and function of *ttak* in spoken language

- *ttak* has a function as **an epistemic modality marker** that expresses **certainty**.
- The speaker uses *ttak* when he/she wants to emphasize on **exactness, confidence** and **belief** of the truth-value in the proposition/in the assessments about a certain situation.
SUBJECTIFICATION → trigger a higher frequency in spoken language (González et. al 2017)
- **The scope of epistemicity varies by the position of *ttak* in the sentence.**
- *ttak* is located **directly at the beginning** of the scope when it used as an adverb, and it can also function as **a predicate.** → **MORPHOSYNTACTIC INTEGRATION**

IV. Discussion

- ✓ **The sound symbolic meanings of monosyllabic ideophones in Korean** (Lee 2002: 256)
- **The initial consonant** is the most important factor in determining the meanings of the word.
- **alveolar/velar stop consonant**: it is the sound produced by the tongue hitting the teeth or velum, it represents the meaning related with an **impact**. (Lee 2002: 256)

e.g., *kkwang* [k'wan]: a sound of a heavy, hard object falling or striking the floor.
ttwuk [t'uk]: a sound of a large, hard object breaking suddenly.

IV. Discussion

✓ The sound symbolic meanings of *ttak*

ttak refers to the events of “hitting, breaking”

ㄷ /tt/ the property of object
<smallness, high density, hardness, intensity>

ㅏ /a/ the range of energy, the quality of movement
<narrowness, quickness, sharpness, smallness>

ㄱ /k/ the aspectual meaning, the phase of movement
<abrupt stop, momentary, one-time event>

딱 /ttak/ the aspectual meaning
<momentary, one-time event>

(refers to Garrigues 1995; Fidler 2014: 189; Koo 2009; Lee 1992; Martin 1962; Noma 1990; Park 1997; Shibasaki 2002; Sohn 1999)

IV. Discussion

✓ The sound symbolic meanings of *ttak*

ㄸ /tt/

[the property of object]

a. *Nonggwukong-i nalaka-se pyek-ey {??ttak/thak} pwutichchy-ess-ta.*

basketball-NOM fly-CONJ wall-LOC IDPH hit-PST-DEC

`**The basketball** flew and hit the wall with {??ttak/thak} sound.'

b. *Tolmeyngi-ka nalaka-se pyek-ey {ttak/?thak} pwuticchy-ess-ta.*

stone-NOM fly-CONJ wall-LOC IDPH hit-PST-DEC

`**The stone** flew and hit the wall with {ttak/?thak} sound.'

➤ <smallness, high density, hardness, intensity>

IV. Discussion

✓ The sound symbolic meanings of *ttak*

ʈ/a/

[the range of energy, the quality of movement]

a. *Palam-ey taynamwu-ka {ttak/*ttek} pwulecy-ess-ta.*

wind-by bamboo-NOM IDPH break-PST-DEC

`**The bamboo broke** by the wind with {**ttak**/*ttek} sound.'

b. *Palam-ey nuthinamwu-ka {*ttak/ttek} ssulecy-ess-ta.*

wind-by zelkova.tree-NOM IDPH fall.down-PST-DEC

`**The zelkova tree fell down** with {??**ttak/ttek**} sound.'

➤ <narrowness, quickness, sharpness, smallness>

IV. Discussion

✓ The sound symbolic meanings of *ttak*

ㄱ/k/

[the aspectual meaning, the phase of movement]

a. *Namwuceskalak-ul son-ulo {ttak/*ttang} pwulettuly-ess-ta.*

wooden.chopsticks-ACC hand-with IDPH break-PST-DEC

` [I] **broke the wooden chopsticks** by [my] hands, it sounds {**ttak**/***ttang**}.'

b. *Tulemthong-ul pal-lo {*ttak/ttang} cha-ss-ta.*

drum.can-ACC foot-with IDPH hit-PST-DEC

` [I] **hit the drum can** by [my] foot, it sounds {??**ttak**/**ttang**}.'

➤ **<abrupt stop, momentary, one-time event>**

IV. Discussion

✓ The sound symbolic meanings of *ttak*



[the aspectual meaning]

a. *Sonpatak-ulo chayksang-ul han pen {ttak/*ttakttak} chy-es-sta.*
palm-with desk-ACC one time IDPH hit-PST-DEC
`[I] hit the desk **one time** by [my] palm, it sounds {**ttak**/***ttakttak**}.'

b. *Sonpatak-ulo chayksang-ul swuchalyey {*ttak/ttakttak} chy-es-sta.*
palm-WITH desk-acc several.times IDPH hit-PST-DEC
`[I] hit the desk **several times** by [my] palm, it sounds {***ttak**/**ttakttak**}.'

➤ <momentary, one-time event>

IV. Discussion

✓ The development into epistemic modality marker of *ttak*

<a sound/a manner of breaking/hitting>

<smallness, high density,
hardness, intensity>

<narrowness, quickness,
sharpness, smallness>

<abrupt stop, momentary,
one-time event>

<momentary,

one-time event>

metaphor



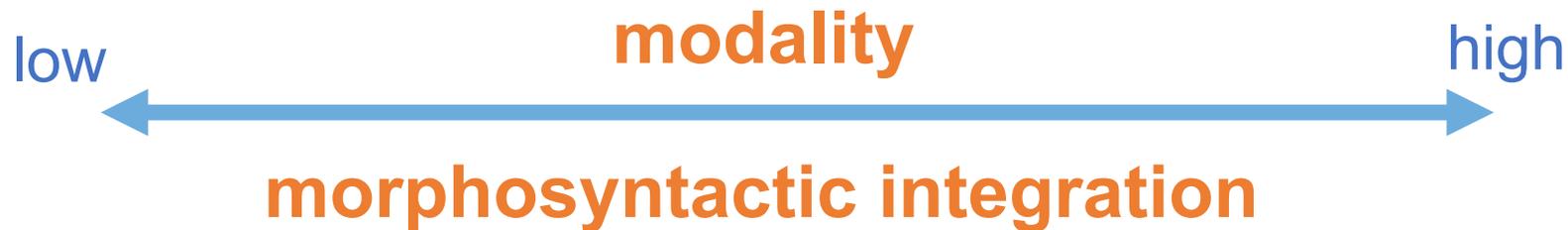
<**certainty**>

(exactness,
confidence, belief)

IV. Discussion

✓ The development into epistemic modality marker of *ttak*

MEANING	a sound/a manner <a sound/a manner of breaking/ hitting>	speaker-perspective, attitude <certainty (exactness, confidence, belief)>
GRAMMATICAL FUNCTION	adverbial (usually in front of a verb, but the position can be changed)	adverbial (directly in front of a verb, a noun, an adjective), predicate



V. Conclusion

- The development of *ttak* as an epistemic modality marker is based on both, **the sound symbolic meaning** of each phoneme and **the iconic meaning** of monosyllable.
- There is a **correlation** between **pragmaticalization (i.e., deideophonization)** of *ttak* and **morphosyntactic integration**.
- The findings reported here shed new light on the use of Korean ideophones **in spoken language**.
- It is already known that epistemic stance can be realized in various ways (Nuyts 2001:29), such as by adverbs, predicative adjectives, verbs and auxiliaries.

This study adds to the growing body of the research of **epistemic modality**.

V. Conclusion

□ Further research

- Are there **differences** between prosaic adverbs epistemic modality marker and *ttak*?
 - Are there ideophones that have similar functions in **other languages**?
 - What particular **types of environments** is *ttak* likely to emerge?
(e.g., sentence type: declarative, imperative/ grammatical environment: tense, etc.
speaker's resources of knowledge (direct evidence?))
 - There is another ideophone that developed into a modality marker: "**Deontic modality**"
kkok (e.g., *Yaksok kkok cikhy-eya-hay.* ` [You] **must** keep [your] word.')
- further research needs a comparative analysis of *ttak* and *kkok*.

a manner of pressing or holding something strongly.

(*ttak* vs. *kkok*: speaker- vs. recipient orientation)

Thanks a lot!



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