Negation Variation in Spoken Korean: from the 17th century to the 2010s

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1 Introduction

In Korean, there are two forms of negation – a short-negation and a long-negation (henceforth S-Neg and L-Neg, respectively), which are claimed to have different syntactic structures but an equivalent meaning in most cases (Hagstrom, 2000; Kim, 1977). As in (1), a negative sentence in English can be translated to Korean in two ways.

- (1) Negations in Korean
- 'Donald did not eat an orange'
- a. Short-negation (S-Neg)

Donald-ka orenji-lul an(i) muk-et-ta.

Donald-NOM orange-ACC NEG eat-PAST-Decl

b. Long-negation (L-Neg)

Donald-ka orenji-lul muk-ci(-lul) ani ha(y)-et-ta Donald-NOM orange-ACC eat-ci(-ACC) NEG do PAST-

Decl

Japanese/Korean Linguistics 27 Michael Barrie (ed.) Copyright © 2020, CSLI Publications. In S-Neg, the negative word an(i) immediately precedes the main verb. In L-Neg, the main verb is followed by -ci, and a negative word ani links them to a light verb ha 'do', which is inflected for tense¹. The morpheme -ci is analyzed as a nominalizer as it can be followed by a case marker and shares many properties in common with another nominalizer, -ki (Hagstrom, 2000).

As the two sentences are mutually exchangeable in most contexts, there has been a variation of the two negation forms in Korean. How the relative dominance of one form over the other has changed across time can be an interesting topic in two aspects. First, the change shows a process distinctive from diachronic changes of negation system in many European languages, which have been widely studied as the Jespersen's cycle (Dahl, 2001; Jespersen, 1917); In the cycle, a new word, usually originated from an intensifier, gradually takes the place of an old negative word (e.g. *ne* and *pas* in French) (Schwegler 1988; Geurts, 2000; Kiparski & Condoravdi, 2006, but see e.g. Zeijlstra, 2004 and Labelle, 2019 for more complex views). In the Korean diachronic change, on the other hand, it is negation systems rather than negative words that have competed for relative dominance. Thus, the change may show more broadly how a change in one system could affect use of the other system.

Second, the change in Korean negation is less likely unidirectional, unlike common diachronic changes directly triggered by grammaticalization of lexemes. When lexemes turn into grammatical formatives, the frequency tends to increase as their use has changed from optional to obligatory (Givón, 1979; Lehmann, 1985). In Korean negation, on the other hand, a grammaticalization of a lexeme in one negation system directly affects only the negation system itself and it is a different question whether the change would lead to expansion or decline of the negation system in relation to the other competing negation system.

Thus, to delve into the interesting case of language change, I built a corpus consisting of negative sentences from the 17th to early 20th century oral literature in Seoul and southern dialects and from drama scripts between the 1940s and the 2010s and investigated how variation between the two negation forms has changed in Spoken Korean. The data showed a dialectal variation as the newer form, L-Neg had spread widely only in the Seoul dialect while it has been used very limitedly in the southern dialects. In the Seoul dialect in which the two negation forms varied, there was also a diachronic change. L-Neg had prevailed in the 17th century, comprising

¹ Ani ha(y)-et-ta in 1b has changed to an(h)-at-ta in contemporary Korean as ani and the light verb ha in L-Neg were conjugated as an(h). (at is an allomorph of the past marker et.)

over 90% of negative sentences, but it has gradually declined until the 2010s, dropping to 17%.

I explain the results based on a syntactic change in S-Neg of the Seoul dialect: L-Neg was introduced due to a syntactic constraint of S-Neg in negating complex predicates (Park, H., 2005, 2011; Park, S., 2011), but as the structure of S-Neg had changed, the constraint had disappeared and use of S-Neg has expanded. In Section 2, I will summarize the previous studies that have investigated negation variation in written contexts and explain the process in which L-Neg had been introduced to the Seoul dialect. Based on the findings, I will analyze my corpus data in Section 3 and propose a syntactic change concerning S-Neg in Section 4. Finally, in Section 5, I will suggest sociolinguistic factors that can account for spread of S-Neg when both negation forms became available.

2 Introduction of Long-Negation

According to Kim (1977), S-Neg is an older construction than L-Neg. Supporting the claim, only S-Neg was found in the 4th – 6th century folk songs while L-Neg became widely spread only since the 16th century. Park, H. (2005, 2011) also shows that the proportion of L-Neg increased greatly in the 16th century. Figure 1 is a graphic summary of the proportions of L-Neg among all the negative sentences in 23 documents. It shows that L-Neg was greatly preferred over S-Neg in these writings. The preference had intensified throughout the 16th century and lasted until the 18th century.

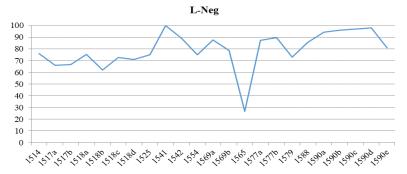


Figure 1. Proportion of L-Neg in the 16th century writings (Park, H., 2005)

This shift in negation variation was also manifest in a translation of a Chinese book on Confucian discipline, *Sohak*. The book was translated into Korean once in the early 16th century and again in the late 16th century. In the former edition, the proportion of L-Neg was 76.8% but it increased to 88.7% in the latter edition. Interestingly, when the negative sentences

changed from S-Neg to L-Neg, the negated predicates often changed as well – from a native predicate to a synonymous Sino-predicate that consisted of a Chinese-stemmed root and a light verb *hata* 'do'.

Based on this evidence, Park, H. (2005) claims that L-Neg was introduced into Korean to negate predicates imported from Chinese. As a support, he pointed out that the period of the 16th century, when the L-Neg started to prevail in written Korean, coincided with the time that Chinese words were massively imported into Korean.

According to Park, S. (2011), the Sino-words themselves were usually adapted as nouns at first, but they started to be adapted as predicates by conjoining with a light verb *hata*. These predicates can be referred as denominal predicates since they derived from nominal stems (Yang, 1999). If the stem is an action noun, the verb *hata* is equivalent to *do*, and if the stem is a descriptive noun, it is equivalent to *be* in English. Accordingly, the denominal predicates derived from action nouns were action verbs and those from descriptive nouns were adjectival predicates. (Kim-Renaud, 2009).

For example, the Chinese word 運動 [undong] was imported as an action noun, meaning 'exercise', and when conjoined to the light verb *hata* 'do', it formed the predicate *undonghata* 'to exercise'. The Chinese word 便利 [pyonli], on the other hand, was imported as a descriptive noun meaning 'convenience', and conjoined to the light verb *hata* 'be' to derive the adjectival predicate pyonlihata 'to be convenient'.

Park, H. (2005) suggests, however, that the origin of L-Neg was a restriction on S-Neg when negating the denominal predicates in the order of 'stem-ani-hata' (e.g. *ihae ani hata, *pyonli ani hata), given that the sequence was rarely found in Middle Korean. Thus, he proposes that L-Neg was introduced to avoid a violation of a morphological constraint (e.g. ihaeha-ci ani-hata; pyonliha-ci ani-hata). Park, S. (2011), on the other hand, claims that the constraint was syntactic; as the negative word *ani* in S-Neg could not negate a whole denominal predicate, which was phrasal.

Their claims that introduction of L-Neg was relevant to Sino denominal predicates can also be supported by the proportions of denominal predicates among all the negated predicates in the 16th century writings, as in Figure 2.

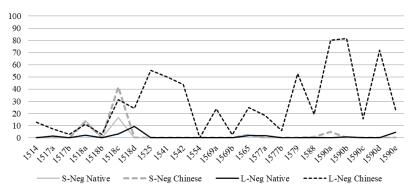


Figure 2. Negation variation of denominal predicates in the 16th century writings (Park, H., 2005)

The grey and black dashed lines respectively represent proportions of native denominal predicates in S-Neg and in L-Neg. They show that very few denominal predicates were derived from native stems. The grey and black solid lines, on the other hand, respectively represent Sino denominal predicates in S-Neg and L-Neg. They show that the proportion of Sino denominal predicates was high among all the predicates in the 16th-17th centuries and when they were negated, L-Neg was much preferred to S-Neg.

It is noteworthy, however, that the negation variation could be contingent upon whether the mode was written or oral. In Park, H. (2005, 2011), the proportion of L-Neg tended to be much lower in writings that feature oral properties, such as letters and narrative historic records. The difference suggests that it is necessary to compare negation variation depending on language modes and examine if a close relationship between L-Neg and Sino denominal predicates can also be supported by oral data, as well.

3 Negation variations in spoken Korean

In order to answer whether Sino denominal predicates preferred L-Neg in oral contexts, as well as in written contexts, and more importantly, to examine how negation variation has changed over time in oral Korean, I collected 1,894 clauses in which the main predicate was negated. Then I categorized them into five groups according to the dialect and era that the data represent and the genre that they were written in – Middle Korean, Modern Korean, 1910s novels, 1940s-1990s drama scripts, and Southern dialect. To make sure the data represent as much as possible the oral mode, they were collected either from dialogues among characters or narrations of the authors/speakers directly addressing to the audience.

Middle Korean data were from three novels written by gentry in the 17th-18th centuries – Honggildong-con, Kwuunmong, and Sassinamjungki. They were known as the earliest novels written in the Korean orthography, Hanguel, and thus regarded as the earliest data that can show relatively clearly how people spoke in the past. Modern Korean data were from five folk stories. Although they were published in the 1910s – 1930s by publishers in Seoul, the editors had very conservatively copied them from their older versions so they are highly likely to reflect the language spoken in the 18th-19th centuries. The 1910s novels were from two original novels written by writers born and raised in Seoul and published in the 1910s. The 1940s-2010s Korean data, on the other hand, were from plays and drama scripts written by writers born and raised in Seoul. In addition to the four groups in the Seoul dialect, there were also southern dialect data collected from eight pieces of Pansori, a traditional oral performance. They were transcribed in the 1900s and seem to reflect the Cheolla-Kyeongsang dialects spoken in the 18th-19th centuries. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the data and the number of negative clauses collected for each group.

Table 1. Summary of the oral Korean corpus

	Dialect	Time	Genre	N of Neg
Middle Korean		17-18 th C	Gentry novel	198
Modern Korean		18-19 th C	Folk story	530
1910s Novels	Seoul	1910s	Original novel	332
1940s-2010s		1940s-2010s	Play/drama scripts	569
Southern dialect	Cheolla- Kyeongsang	18-19 th C	Pansori	265

Figure 3 shows overall proportions of L-Neg in the Seoul dialect from the 17th century to the 2010s. Subtracting the values from 100% returns proportions of S-Neg. Just as the proportion of L-Neg was high in the 17th-18th centuries in written contexts (Park, H., 2005, 2011), we find that until the 19th century, L-Neg was also used in over 80% of negative clauses in oral contexts. The proportion, however, has gradually decreased since then and it reached below 20% in 1990s and 2010s.

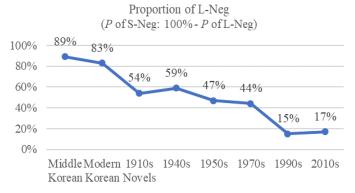


Figure 3. Proportion of L-Neg from the 17th century to the 2010s

In the southern dialects (Pansori), on the other hand, L-Neg was used in only 9% of negative clauses in the 18th century. I also analyzed negation variation in 2010s drama scripts in the Kyeongsang dialect, although the data were not included in the corpus, and found that L-Neg was also rarely used in the contemporary data. Considering that the southern dialect is known to be conservative, being the only dialectal variant that preserves a pitch-accent system (Lee, 2008) and distinctive sentential-final particles between yes/no- and wh- questions (Suh, 1987), the limited use of L-Neg in the 18th-19th century and in the 2010s suggests that L-Neg has never spread widely in the oral contexts of the southern dialects. In other words, S-Neg has been the only negation available in these dialects and thus, discussion on negation variation should be limited to the Seoul dialect in this study.

In the Seoul dialect in which two negation forms can vary, on the other hand, a close relationship between L-Neg and Sino denominal predicates was supported. Figure 4 shows proportions of L-Neg for Sino and native denominal predicates across time. Native denominal predicates consist of a native nominal stem and a light verb hata (e.g. mal 'speech' + $hata \rightarrow malhata$ 'to speak'; pulssang 'pity' + $hata \rightarrow pulssanghata$ 'to be pitiful') and Sino denominal predicates consist of a Sino nominal stem and a light verb (e.g. 討論[thoron] 'discussion' + $hata \rightarrow thoronhata$ 'to discuss'; 冤痛[wontong] 'resentment' + $hata \rightarrow wontonghata$ 'to be resentful').

In the figure, the proportion of L-Neg for Sino denominal predicates has gradually declined but it had been higher than the overall rate until the 1990s. The proportion of L-Neg for native denominal predicates, on the other hand, had been much lower than the overall rate from the 17th-18th centuries. These results indicate that among denominal predicates, only Sino predicates had been associated strongly with L-Neg while the associ-

ation between L-Neg and native denominal predicates had weakened earlier.

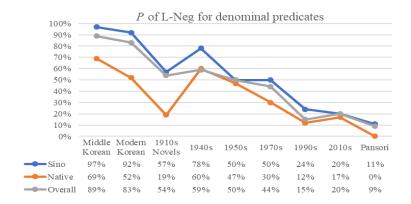


Figure 4. Proportion of L-Neg for denominal predicates

As both native and Sino denominal predicates seem to have a similar morphological and syntactic structure, the different degree of association depending on the origin of the stem needs to be explained. A closer examination of the data reveals that native denominal predicates were used in small variety with less frequency – among a small number of native denominal predicates collected for each group, more than half of them were *malhata* 'to speak'. Thus, to interpret the results more precisely, the high frequency verb *malhata* had switched its negation variation pattern exceptionally earlier compared to the other denominal predicates but it is questionable wither the weakened association with L-Neg can be generalized to other native denominal predicates.

Given that L-Neg had been introduced as S-Neg was not allowed for denominal predicates, the gradual decline of L-Neg (or spread of S-Neg) in oral contexts indicates that the S-Neg constraint was lost in contemporary Korean. A question then is how the S-Neg constraint could be lost. To answer the question, I also analyzed negation variation of other phrasal predicates that are subject to further separation – compound predicates and idiomatic predicates. Compound predicates were derived by combining more than two predicates. For example, *tolapota* 'to look back' was derived from the two predicates *tol(ta)* 'to turn' and *pota* 'to see'. Idiomatic predicates, on the other hand, were derived by combining more than two phrases and they have a meaning different from the literal meaning composed directly from the meaning of each phrase. For example, *sijipkata* was derived by combining the two phrases *sijip* '(women's) in-law's

house' and *kata* 'go' and it means '(for a women) to get married'. Figure 5 shows proportions of L-Neg for these predicates.

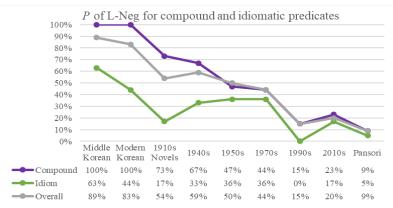


Figure 5. Proportion of L-Neg for compound and idiomatic predicates

The graph shows that the proportion of L-Neg for these phrasal predicates has also decreased, following the overall pattern. The decline of L-Neg for idiomatic predicates, however, had started much earlier while the proportion of L-Neg for compound predicates had been higher than the overall rate and that of Sino denominal predicates until the 1940s.

To summarize the results in Figure 4 and 5, among phrasal predicates, the degree of association with L-Neg was the strongest for compound predicates, followed by (Sino) denominal predicates and idiomatic predicates. In other words, the more they were likely to be separated, the more vulnerable they seemed to the decline of L-Neg. In addition, it is noteworthy that as these predicates started to be negated in S-Neg, the position in which the negative word *ani* was placed has changed from '*ani* XP-hata' to 'XP *ani* hata'.

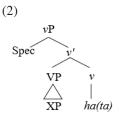
These findings suggest that the separation of the complex predicates is highly relevant to a syntactic change in S-Neg. Although it is difficult to figure out if there is any causal relationship between the separation of predicates and loss of a S-Neg constraint, it can be more plausible that the latter caused the former; as it seems that S-Neg had started to be allowed for the complex predicates that had not yet been separated². With the as-

² In my corpus, especially in the Middle and Modern Korean data, a space or a particle rarely intervened between the stems and light verbs of Sino denominal predicates in positive declarative clauses (with few exceptional cases in which the stems were modified by an adjective, as in (a)). In other words, during these times, separation of Sino denominal predicates tended to be restricted to negative (declarative) clauses.

sumption, I propose a syntactic change in S-Neg that could expand the range of predicates that S-Neg was applicable.

4 Syntactic changes in Short-Negation

Before proposing a syntactic change in S-Neg, a syntactic structure of denominal predicates needs to be discussed first as my proposal is built on this syntactic model of denominal predicates. The figure in (2) shows a syntactic structure of denominal predicates, modified from Kim-Renaund (2003) and Diesing (1997). As the nominal stem was adapted within a predicate, the stem is in VP and the light verb ha(ta) governs it in v.



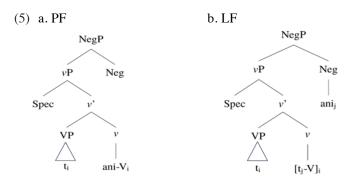
Diesing (1997), however, proposes that there can be a variation concerning overt incorporation of the stem into the light verb. For example, in Yiddish, there is a dialectal variation in the word order of a light verb construction *a kuk gegebn* 'give a look' and the auxiliary *hob* 'have' depending on whether the stem overtly incorporates into the light verb or not. As the unmarked order in Yiddish is OV, in Dialect A in which the stem overtly incorporates into the light verb, the light verb always moves with the stem in the [[stem] light verb] order (e.g. *a kuk gegebn*) and the constituent cannot be intervened or separated, as in (3). In Dialect B, on the other hand, the stem does not incorporate into the light verb overtly, and thus, only the light verb *gegebn* can raise to the right of the auxiliary *hob*, leaving the stem *a kuk* in VP at the sentential-final position, as in (4).

- (3) Dialect A preferred orders: a+stem+gebn
 - a. *?Ikh hob gegebn a kuk.
 - I have given a look
 - b. Ikh hob a kuk gegebn.
- I have a look given

- (4) Dialect B preferred orders: gebn+a+stem
 - a. Ikh hob gegebn a kuk.
 - I have given a look
 - b. *?Ikh hob a kuk gegebn.
 - I have a look given

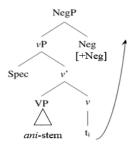
I will assume that Korean denominal predicates used to be similar to the light verb construction in Dialect B in the example above and ascribe the S-Neg constraint in Middle Korean to the absence of overt stem incorporation into the light verb *hata* 'do'. Under this view, it is only the light verb that could move out of v, and the stem VP had to remain below vP.

This structure could be problematic when these predicates were negated in S-Neg. Typologically, it is common for negators to immediately precede the negated word, which is the verb in many cases (Horn, 2010; Dryer, 1988). As the negative word *ani* in S-Neg had also immediately preceded the verb until the 19th century, it seems that *ani* adjoined directly to V, instead of VP. When simplex predicates were negated in S-Neg, verbs generated in V raised to v to assign a theta role to the external argument in [Spec, vP]. That is, *ani* affixed to the simplex verb and the *ani*-V constituent raised to v at PF, as in (5a). *Ani* could also move further to Neg at LF, as in (5b), when negation took a wide scope over the quantifier of the external argument.



When denominal predicates were negated, on the other hand, *ani* adjoined to the stem in V, but only the light verb ha(ta) could move further, as the stem did not incorporate into the light verb overtly. This resulted in *ani* remaining below VP with the stem, failing to check [+Neg] in NegP, as illustrated in (6). Such a violation could explain why the *ani* XP-*hata* order had been restricted and why a new sentential negation, L-Neg had to be introduced in Middle Korean.

(6)



The S-Neg constraint for denominal predicates, however, had gradually been lost as the negative word *ani* immediately preceded the light verb, instead of the stem, as in (7).

(7) cunpi ani ha-myon preparation NEG do-if 'if *e* does not prepare'

This finding suggests that ani had started to adjoin directly to v, as well as V. If ani adjoined to v, it could check [+Neg] while raising with the light verb ha(ta), and thus, S-Neg was no longer restricted against denominal predicates.

Supporting the claim that there had been a change in the position that ani could be generated in, only after the 16^{th} century were cases also found in which ani immediately preceded the light verb ha in diverse constructions, such as evidential and causative constructions, as in (8).

(8) Namui atal-lul pur-e ani ha-tera others' son-ACC envious NEG do-Particle 'e seemed not to feel envious about others' sons'

The intervention of *ani* between stems and light verbs seemed to facilitate the reanalysis of the predicates into an independent NP and a heavy verb *hata* 'do', especially when the stems were verbal. Supporting the morphological change, in contemporary Korean, the stems of denominal predicates are often followed by a case marker, as in (9), suggesting that the stems have become nouns that need to be case-marked.

(9) Na-nun untong-ul an ha-nta I-TOP exercise-ACC NEG do-PRES 'I don't do exercise' The new pattern could also facilitate the separation of idiomatic predicates into independent nouns and verbs. As these verbs had never been light, unlike *hata* in denominal predicates, the rate of separation could be faster and the proportion of S-Neg for these predicates could also increase more rapidly. Compound predicates, on the other hand, are less likely to be separated into two independent words as *ani* intervening between the two can easily be interpreted as scoping only over the latter component (e.g. *tola ani pota* 'to turn and not see'. Thus, they were the last type that allowed S-Neg among the complex predicates under discussion.

The S-Neg gradually allowed for compound predicates since the 20th century, however, suggests further changes in S-Neg as ani usually precedes the whole compound predicates, unlike the S-Neg for denominal or idiomatic predicates in which ani intervenes between a stem and a verb. A possible explanation could be that there has been a further expansion in the position that ani can be generated in, such as NegP, in addition to v and V.

Supporting this view, in contemporary Korean, there have also been changes in the position of ani in relation to light verb constructions. As in (10), the negative word an, contracted from ani, usually precedes both the compliment AP and the light verb in evidential constructions. Then the meaning can be ambiguous, and importantly, negation can take a wider scope over the evidential morpheme -e ha, as in the second interpretation.

- (10) Namui atul-ul an pere-we ha-nta others son-ACC NEG envious-evidential-PRES
 - 'i) e behaves as though e does not feel envious about others' sons
 - ii) e does not behave as though e feels envious about others' sons'

The ambiguous interpretation can be explained if assumed that there is more than one position in which an can be generated. If it adjoins directly to the lower predicates, it takes a lower scope and if it adjoins to NegP, it takes a wider scope over the evidential meaning. Based on these changes, I claim that the negative word an(i) has gradually been incorporated into NegP and started to be generated in [Spec, NegP] in contemporary Korean. As the interpretation is still ambiguous, allowing negation to adjoin to the lower predicate, however, it seems that the new structure has not completely substituted for the older structure and both structures seem to coexist in a transitional stage.

5 Sociolinguistic accounts on the spread of Short-Negation

In the previous section, I claimed that the negative word *ani* in S-Neg used to adjoin directly to V, which resulted in a syntactic violation when it adjoined to denominal predicates. As it adjoined to the stem, which did not incorporate into the light verb, it could not move out of VP and failed to check [+Neg] in NegP. The negative word, however, had started to adjoin to v, as well as V. This could be manifest in the order 'stem-*ani-hata*' and immediate precedence of *ani* to other light verbs. As *ani* was placed in the middle of complex predicates, it facilitated separation of those predicates into two independent words. Moreover, there has been a further expansion in contemporary Korean in the range of positions *ani* can adjoin to in S-Neg. Precedence of *an(i)* to compound predicates or whole light verb constructions suggests that the negative word has gradually been grammaticalized and started to be generated in [Spec, NegP].

These accounts can explain how S-Neg has become available for a wider range of environments. To explain why S-Neg has become preferred over L-Neg in oral contexts, on the other hand, I focus on a sociolinguistic factor – increased contact with other dialect varieties.

In my corpus data, the proportion of L-Neg greatly dropped once in the early 1900s and steadily dropped rapidly since the 1950s. Coincidently, during these times, the interactions among dialect varieties greatly increased due to development of transportation networks, colonization of Japan (1910-1945), and centralization of industry in Seoul after the Korean War (1950-1953). Many people from local provinces moved to Seoul and settled down, including those from the southern provinces. As S-Neg has been the only negation in these dialects in oral contexts, the exposure to these dialects could lead to more frequent use of S-Neg.

In addition, the provincial dialects had been stigmatized until a dictator from the Kyeongsang province came to power in the 1960s (Jeon, 2013). Using a local dialect had been prohibited in the media in the early 20th century, but after the coup of the dictator Park, the Kyeonsang dialect has earned a favoritism in politics (Sonn, 2003). Now the Kyeonsang dialect even gained prestige among some people, especially politicians, as well as others who found the dialect interesting or appealing. The increasing contacts among dialectal varieties and the destigmatization of local dialects created a context in which some features of these dialects could be incorporated into the Seoul dialect. According to this reasoning, one of the elements that the Seoul dialect has accepted could be productive application of S-Neg to a wider range of predicates.

Despite a limited amount of oral data documented, the findings of this study were robust. There were salient distinctions between the Seoul dialect and the southern dialects – the new negation system, L-Neg could spread only in the former. The proportion of L-Neg in the Seoul dialect has also changed rapidly across time. This result is especially interesting as the new system has not only failed to substitute for the previous one but has also declined rapidly, forming a U-shaped spread pattern. I tried to explain the drive and process of the changes with syntactic and sociolinguistic accounts but they will need to be examined further with more data, if available, as there is a potential danger of overgeneralization and undergeneralization due to skewed sampling. On the other hand, it will be also meaningful to compare the findings with other studies that investigate diachronic changes in the alternation of two competing forms in other languages; as this may contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that affect language changes in different ways.

6 References

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