

# The Occurrence and Non-occurrence of the Object Marker *lul* in Colloquial Korean\*

Taeho Kim · Han-gyu Lee

(Kyung Hee University)

**Kim, Taeho & Lee, Han-gyu. 2009. The Occurrence and Non-occurrence of the Object Marker *lul* in Colloquial Korean. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*. 17(1). 47-64.** Objects in Korean can be either *lul*-marked or  $\emptyset$ -marked in colloquial Korean; this does not mean that *lul* and  $\emptyset$  are always interchangeable. It seems that the occurrence and non-occurrence of *lul* are rather systematic and predictable in colloquial Korean. Despite many studies on structural properties of *lul*, there have been very few studies discussing its occurrence and non-occurrence from a discourse perspective. This study examines from a discourse perspective when objects are overtly coded with *lul* and when they are not. It will argue that, among other potential factors, processing and discourse-pragmatic factors mainly influence the occurrence and non-occurrence of *lul*. Based on its occurrence and non-occurrence, the discourse-functional properties of *lul* are also captured. A transcript of an informal TV talk show was used for this study, and a total of 307 clauses containing an overt object were analyzed for the discussion of object markings.

**Key Words:** object markings, processing factors, discourse-pragmatic factors, discourse perspective, colloquial Korean

## 1. Introduction

Objects in Korean are marked by the post-nominal particle *lul*.<sup>1)</sup> Yet they,

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especially in colloquial Korean, are not always marked by *lul* (Ko 2000), as shown in (1) and (2). It seems that *lul* is not just optional, but its occurrence and non-occurrence are rather systematic.<sup>2)</sup>

- (1) *Jinho-ka*                      *pakwuni-ey*      *iss-nun*                      *sakwa-lul/ø*  
 Jinho-NOM    basket-(in)to                      be-COMP    apple-ACC  
*mek-ess-ta.*  
 eat-PAST-DEC  
 ‘Jinho ate the apple in the basket.’
- (2) *Jinho-ka*                      *sakwa-lul/ø*      *mek-ess-ta.*  
 Jinho-NOM                      apple-ACC    eat-PAST-DEC  
 ‘Jinho ate an apple.’

Despite many studies about structural properties of *lul* (Mok 1998, Ko 2000, inter alia), there have been very few studies discussing its occurrence and non-occurrence from a discourse perspective (e.g. Lee and Thompson 1989, inter alia).<sup>3)</sup> This study takes a discourse perspective to account for when objects are overtly coded with *lul* and when they are not. It will argue that, among other potential factors, processing factors and discourse-pragmatic factors are what

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1) *lul* and *ul* are allomorphs of the Korean object marker: *lul* is used if the preceding noun ends with a vowel, otherwise *ul*. In this study only *lul* will be taken to refer to the object marker for the sake of convenience.

2) In this study, the following abbreviations are used: ACC (accusative marker), ADN (adnominal), COMP (complementizer), CONN (connective), DEC (declarative marker), FUT (future tense marker), HON (honorific marker), NOM (nominative marker), PAST (past tense marker), PL (plural marker), SEM (sentence ending marker), TOP (topic marker), PROG (progressive).

3) There has been much debate over whether or not *lul* is a case marker. Specifically, Hong (1991) states that *lul* is an accusative case marker, while Ko (2000) argues that it is a delimiter just like to ‘also’ and *man* ‘only.’ This study has no interest in the issue, but in what influences the occurrence of *lul* in colloquial Korean.

Lee and Thompson (1989) also discusses Korean accusative marker from a discourse perspective. However, their study is limited to the simple description of the occurrence and non-occurrence of *lul* based on several discourse-pragmatic notions such as specificity. Furthermore, their study lacks the justification for why *lul*-marking is preferable for some objects and why zero-marking is for other objects.

mainly influence the occurrence and non-occurrence of *lul*: five processing factors and three discourse-pragmatic factors will be discussed one by one to judge which marking, *lul* or  $\emptyset$ , will be preferable for object. Discourse-functional properties of *lul* can also be captured based on its occurrence and non-occurrence.

## 2. Data and Method

A transcript of an informal TV talk show was used for this study, but no actual audio file was available.<sup>4)</sup> There are four people participating in the talk show, but most of the utterances transcribed were made by the two quests while answering questions. During the talk show, the host asked the guests questions, and the guests answered by telling (short) stories. Therefore, there were not as much interaction involved between interlocutors as there would be in pure conversation. In this sense, we would say that the genre of this talk show could be considered between narrative and dialogue.

All the utterances were initially analyzed on a clausal basis, following the coding for clauses which Thompson and Hopper (2001:30-31) proposed. Then only clauses with an overt object were selected for the further analysis of zero-marking or *lul*-marking. This sorting process resulted in a total of 307 clauses containing objects.

## 3. Factors

According to Fujii and Ono (2000), there are many factors affecting object markings in colloquial Japanese. Likewise, there may be a number of factors which potentially influence the choice of object markings, i.e. *lul*-marking and zero-marking, in colloquial Korean. Those factors are broadly classified into two main groups; processing factors and discourse-pragmatic factors. Processing factors are the ones which are closely related to the addressee's processing loads

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4) The transcript of this TV talk show was freely available through the *Sejong Corpus Project's* website (<http://www.sejong.or.kr>).

imposed to interpret the speaker's utterance. As the processing factors which influence the choice of object markings, five factors will be discussed: animacy, word order, adjacency (to the verb), embedding, and the number of modifiers. Discourse-pragmatic factors play a crucial role to determine the interpretation of an utterance. Out of them, specificity, givenness, and persistence will be discussed for the analysis of object markings.

### 3.1. Processing factors

In general, a marked structure is structurally as well as cognitively more complex than an unmarked one (Givón 1995). Hence, it is assumed that a deviation from the norm or the default pattern would indicate additional processing load. Fujii and Ono (2000) also point out that in spoken Japanese objects that demand additional cognitive effort (to process) from the addressee are usually coded with *o*-marking instead of zero-marking. Due to cross-linguistic similarities between Japanese and Korean, the similar tendency may be observed for objects in colloquial Korean; objects are more likely to be *lul*-marked rather than  $\emptyset$ -marked when (increased) processing loads are expected for them. For the discussion of such a tendency, this study proposes five processing factors, animacy, word order, adjacency, embedding, and the number of modifiers, and discusses each factor with relation to the object markings.

#### 3.1.1. Animacy

It is widely accepted that the unmarked animacy of an object referent is 'inanimate', whereas that of a subject referent is 'animate' (Thompson and Hopper 2001). Since the marked animacy is considered a deviation from the norm, additional processing loads are expected for objects whose referents are animate. Due to the increased processing loads, objects are more likely to be *lul*-marked, which could alleviate the processing loads.

For example, in (3), *simhohup* 'deep breath', exemplifies the unmarked animacy of an object, whose referent is inanimate (hereafter, inanimate objects), so that it is  $\emptyset$ -marked. On the other hand, *ce* 'me' in (4) is animate and indicates the marked animacy of an object (hereafter, animate objects) so that it is *lul*-marked.

- (3) *simhohup-ø* *com* *ha-si-ko*  
 deep.breath-(ACC) little do-HON-and  
 ‘Take a deep breath, and...’
- (4) *ku apenim-i kulehkeytwu ce-lul kwiye-weha-nuntey,*  
 the father-NOM so.much I-ACC have.affection-CONN  
 ‘Well, (my) father has a deep affection for me,’

In order to see whether the animacy of an object is closely related to the object markings, all 307 objects were divided into two groups based on their animacy; animate objects and inanimate objects. And these subgrouped objects were examined further with regards to their markings, and Table 1 shows the selection of object markings with relation to the animacy of object referents.

Table 1: Animacy and Object Markings

animacy	object- $\emptyset$	object- <i>lul</i>	total
inanimate object	103 (36%)	180 (64%)	283 (100%)
animate object	4 (17%)	20 (83%)	24 (100%)
total	107 (35%)	200 (65%)	307 (100%)

According to Table 1, the number of inanimate objects (283 tokens, 92%) is far more than that of animate objects (24 tokens, 8%), and it supports the general tendency for object animacy, that is, the default animacy of object referents is inanimate. Table 1 also presents that *lul* is more commonly used for marking animate objects (83%) than it is for inanimate objects (64%) ( $\chi^2=3.79$ ,  $P=0.05$ ). We take this as a supporting evidence for our claim, that is, objects that are regarded as a deviation from the norm are more likely to impose additional processing loads on their identification, so they tend to be marked with *lul*, which could alleviate the additional processing loads.

### 3.1.2. Word order

The (canonical) word order in Korean is S+O+V, and (additional) processing loads are thus assumed for objects that occur in a non-canonical word order. Due to the processing loads, objects in a non-canonical word order are more

likely to be coded with *lul* than those in a canonical word order.

Among 307 objects, those with an overt subject were only 57 in total, and they were examined for the word order. If an object follows a subject, the word order is canonical; if an object precedes its subject, the order is non-canonical. Those objects were divided into two subgroups, canonical and non-canonical. The underlined entity in (5), *mal* ‘words’, exemplifies an object in a canonical word order, namely SOV, and the underlined entities in (6) and (7), *cilmwoun* ‘a question’ and *taypon* ‘a (play) script’, show objects in non-canonical word orders, OSV and SVO respectively.

- (5) *na-n* *thayllenthu-lan* *mal*- $\emptyset$  *silheha-nuntey*,  
 I-TOP talent-COMP word-(ACC) dislike-CONN  
 ‘I don’t like a word like an actor (lit. talent),’
- (6) *yelepwun-tul-kkeyse* *kwungkumhayha-si-l* *manha-n*  
 you-PL-NOM wonder-HON-ADN worth-ADN  
*cilmwoun-ul* *cehuy-ka* *hanassik* *yeccwuepo-l-kkeyyo*.  
 question-ACC we-NOM one-by-one ask-FUT-SEM  
 ‘We will ask such questions that you are curious about one  
 by one.’
- (7) *cey-ka* *cwunpihay-ss-eyo*, *taypon-ul*.  
 I-NOM prepare-PAST-SEM, script-ACC  
 ‘I brought a script.’

The two subgrouped objects were examined further for their markings, and Table 2 shows the object markings with relation to the employed word order.

Table 2: Word Order and Object Markings

word order	object- $\emptyset$	object- <i>lul</i>	total
canonical	18 (36%)	32 (64%)	50 (100%)
non-canonical	0	7 (100%)	7 (100%)
total	18 (32%)	39 (68%)	57 (100%)

According to Table 2, the number of objects in a canonical word order (50

tokens, 88%) outnumbered that of objects in a non-canonical one (7 tokens, 12%). This confirms that the unmarked word order in Korean is S+O+V. Table 2 also shows that *lul* is more commonly used for marking objects in a non-canonical word order (100%) than for those in a canonical word order (64%) ( $\chi^2=3.683$ ,  $P=0.055$ ). In fact, all of the objects in a non-canonical word order were coded with *lul*. This is also in support of our claim that objects in a non-canonical word order are considered deviations from the norm, so that they are more likely to impose additional processing loads and they tend to be *lul*-marked to reduce the increased processing loads imposed on them.

### 3.1.3. Verb Adjacency

There is a general tendency reported in spoken Japanese that zero-marking is commonly used for objects which are immediately adjacent to their predicates (Matsuda 1996, Fujii and Ono 2000). This study speculates the similar tendency to be observed for objects in colloquial Korean. More specifically, objects immediately adjacent to their verb are relatively easy to identify, and they are more likely to occur with zero-marking rather than *lul*-marking. Conversely, objects that are distant from their verb are somewhat (relatively) difficult to identify, and thus they would cause additional processing loads, and they are likely to occur with *lul*-marking, instead of zero-marking, for the alleviation of the (increased) processing loads.

For the purpose of this study, all 307 objects were categorized into three groups based on their distance to the verb. The distance between the verb and the object was measured by how many intervening words are between them, and the three subgroups are 'no (intervening) word,' 'one (intervening) word,' and 'two (intervening) words or more.' For example, (8) exemplifies an object with no intervening word, and (9) an object with two intervening words.

(8) *sokum-ø*                      *ccik-e*                      *mek-ko*                      *iss-taka*,  
 salt-(ACC)                      pick-and                      eat-PROG-while  
 '(We) are eating (something) with salts, and'

(9) *kuntey*    *cey-ka*    *yenghwa-lul*    [*cham manhi*] *po-ass-eyo*.  
 by.the.way I-NOM movie-ACC really much watch-PAST-SEM  
 'Actually, I watched movies very often.'

In (8), the object *sokum* ‘salt’ immediately precedes the verb *ccike mek-* ‘eat with’, so this utterance is counted as an object with no intervening word. In (9), there are two words, which are bracketed, intervening between the object *yenghwa* ‘movie’ and the verb *po-* ‘watch’, and it is thus counted as an object with two intervening words.

All objects categorized in this way were examined further for their markings, and Table 3 presents the choice of object markings in relation to the distance to the verb from an object.

Table 3: Verb adjacency and object markings

intervening words	object- $\emptyset$	object- <i>lul</i>	total
no word	90 (39%)	140 (61%)	230 (100%)
one word	15 (28%)	39 (72%)	54 (100%)
two words or more	2 (9%)	21 (91%)	23 (100%)
total	107 (35%)	200 (65%)	307 (100%)

In Table 3, we find that the more intervening words are between an object and its verb, the more likely the object is to be *lul*-marked; the rate of *lul*-marking occurrences is 61% with no intervening word, but it gets higher to 72% (with one intervening word), and 91% (with two or more intervening words) ( $\chi^2 = 8.370$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). This tendency complies with our claim, in that objects which are away from their verb are considered a deviation from the norm, thus requires additional processing loads, and they tend to be coded with *lul*-marking to reduce the increased processing loads imposed on them.

#### 3.1.4. Embeddedness

In general, embedded clauses are structurally and conceptually more complex than non-embedded clauses, and they are normally considered to be a marked structure. Since they are considered a deviation from the norm, additional processing loads are more likely to be imposed on objects in an embedded clause than on those in a non-embedded clause. We expect objects in an embedded clause to be more likely to be *lul*-marked than those in a non-embedded clause, due to the increased processing loads imposed on them.



In this study, if an object appears in a relative clause or a clausal complement, it is viewed as an instance in an embedded clause; if not, it is regarded as one in a non-embedded clause. For example, in (10), the object *caki kilyang* 'her ability' occurs in a simple clause, and it is thus viewed as an object in a non-embedded clause. In contrast, the object *phyeng* 'review' in (11) appears in a relative clause, which is bracketed, so it is counted as an instance of an object in an embedded clause.

- (10) *kulentey*                      *ttal-un*                                      *maumkkes*                      *caki*  
 however                      daughter-TOP                                      freely                      self  
*kilyang-ø*                                      *palhwiha-ko,*  
 ability-(ACC)                                      show-and  
 'However, a daughter fully shows her ability, and'
- (11) [*hanpen-twu*                                      *ceytaylo*                                      *phyeng-ul*                      *patapo*]-*n*  
 once-even                                      properly                                      review-ACC                      get-REL  
*salam-i*                                      *eps-nuntey,*  
 person-NOM                                      not.exist-SEM  
 'There is no one who got proper reviews,'

For the analysis of this embeddedness, all 307 objects were divided into two groups, objects in embedded clauses and objects in a non-embedded clause. All of the subcategorized objects were examined further for their markings, and Table 4 presents the selection of object markings with relation to the embeddedness.

Table 4: Embeddedness and Object Markings

embeddedness	object-ø	object- <i>lul</i>	total
non-embedded	103 (37%)	178 (63%)	281 (100%)
embedded	4 (15%)	22 (85%)	26 (100%)
total	107 (35%)	200 (65%)	307 (100%)

In Table 4, we find that *lul*-marking is used more commonly to code objects in an embedded clause (85%) than those in a non-embedded clause (63%) ( $\chi^2 = 4.742$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). This tendency attests to our claim, that is, for the sake of alleviating the (increased) processing loads, *lul* tends to mark objects on which

(additional) processing loads are imposed.

### 3.1.5. The Number of Modifiers

In general, modified, thus elaborated, entities contain more information to process than unmodified ones, and, due to the additional information to process, they are considered a deviation from the norm. Hence, additional processing loads are assumed for modified objects than for un-modified ones. We expect modified objects to be commonly *lul*-marked due to the (increased) processing loads. For example, in (12), there is no word modifying the object *taysa* 'script', so this is an instance of an unmodified object. In (13), four words (*ceyka kaciko issnun motun*) modify the object *soyang* 'knowledge', and it is thus counted as an instance of an object with two or more modifiers.

- (12) *nay-ka maynnal taysa-ø oy-nun cwungey,*  
 I-NOM every.day script-(ACC) memorize-REL while  
 'While I was memorizing scripts,'
- (13) *senpay-lose[cey-ka kaci-ko iss-nun motun]*  
 senior-as I-NOM have-and exist-COMP every  
*soyang-ul cakkwu allyecwu-kwu siph-ese,*  
 knowledge-ACC repeatedly teach-want-and  
 'As a senior, (I) want to teach (them) all the knowledge I have,'

For this analysis, all objects were divided into three groups, objects with no modifier, objects with one modifier, and objects with two modifiers or more.<sup>5)</sup> All of the sub-grouped objects were examined further for their markings, and Table 5 shows the selection of object markings with relation to the number of object modifiers.

Table 5: Object Modifiers and Object Markings

object modifiers	object- $\emptyset$	object- <i>lul</i>	total
no modifier	86 (40%)	127 (60%)	213 (100%)
one modifier	19 (33%)	39 (67%)	58 (100%)

5) In this study, the number of modifiers is measured by counting words modifying objects.

two or more modifiers	2 (6%)	34 (94%)	36 (100%)
total	107 (35%)	200 (65%)	307 (100%)

In Table 5, we find that the occurrences of *lul*-marked objects are in proportion to the number of modifiers. More specifically, the percentage of *lul*-marked objects is only 60% when there was no modifier, but it significantly increases up to 67% when there is one modifier, and further up to 94% when there are two or more modifiers. Conversely, the percentage of zero-marked objects is inversely proportional to their number of modifiers. It goes from 40% to 33%, and then to 6% as the number of modifiers increases (no modifier vs. two or more modifiers:  $\chi^2=16.339$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). We attribute this tendency to the increase of processing loads triggered by the increase of modifiers, i.e. the increase of information to process. That is to say, modified objects contain additional information to process, hence would impose (increased) processing loads, and *lul*-marking, instead of zero-marking, tends to be used for coding such objects to alleviate the increased processing loads.

### 3.2 Discourse-pragmatic Factors

According to Fujii and Ono (2000), certain discourse-pragmatic contexts are highly correlated to the selection of object markings in colloquial Japanese. For instance, objects with a non-referential or generic referent most commonly occur with zero-marking (Fujii and Ono 2000). We expect the similar tendency to be observed for objects in colloquial Korean, and propose three discourse-pragmatic factors, *specificity*, *givenness* and *persistence*, for the discussion of object markings. Each factor is discussed with regards to the selection of object markings in this section.

#### 3.2.1 Specificity

Entities with a specific referent are generally assumed to draw more cognitive attention from the addressee than those with a generic one because generic entities do not contain specific information which the addressee would need additional cognitive efforts to identify. In fact, Fujii and Ono (2000) report that in spontaneous spoken Japanese, objects with a specific referent were

commonly marked with *o*, while those with a generic referent predominantly occur with zero-marking. This study expects the similar tendency to be observed for objects in colloquial Korean. More specifically, objects with a specific referent are more likely to be marked with *lul* than those with a generic referent are. In this study, a nominal that refers to a specific entity is viewed as *specific*, and it is *generic* otherwise.

Take (14) and (15) for examples. In (14), the object, *khinitey* (a product name), refers to a specific entity, which both interlocutors can identify, and it is thus counted as an instance of an object with a specific referent. In contrast, the object *mwun* 'door' in (15) does not refer to a specific entity, but it describes, together with the verb *tat-* 'close', the daily activity of closing an establishment such as a store as seen in the given English translation. Therefore, this is viewed as an instance of an object with a generic entity.

- (14) *ku ttay-nun ku khinitey-lul phal-ass-eyo.*  
 that time-TOP the KEYNITE-ACC sell-PAST-SEM  
 'At that time, (they) sell KEYNITE.'
- (15) *mwun-ø tat-ass-eyo?*  
 door-(ACC) close-PAST-Q  
 'Have you closed (the store)?'

Based on this analysis, all 307 objects were divided into two groups, objects with a specific referent and those with a generic referent. And, all of the objects classified in this way were examined further for their markings, and Table 6 shows object markings with relation to the specificity of the object referent.

Table 6: Specificity and Object Markings

specificity	object- $\emptyset$	object- <i>lul</i>	total
specific	15 (16%)	78 (84%)	93 (100%)
generic	92 (43%)	122 (57%)	214 (100%)
total	107 (35%)	200 (65%)	307 (100%)

In Table 6, we find that the use of *lul* is more common for objects with a

specific referent (84%) than for objects with a generic referent (57%) ( $\chi^2=20.601$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). We attribute this tendency to the informational prominence. That is to say, objects with a specific referent contain specific information, hence are informationally prominent, so they tend to draw cognitive attention from the addressee. Due to the informational prominence, they are more likely to occur with *lul*-marking than those with a generic referent.

### 3.2.2 Givenness

According to Mori and Givón (1987), in their study of Japanese, objects with given or old information are likely to receive zero-marking rather than an overt marking. Lee and Thompson (1989) also stated, in their study of Korean, that the greater the sharedness between communicators, the less necessity to specify grammatical relations, i.e. subject and object. Masunaga (1988) also reported that an NP tends to be deemphasized or defocused when the NP represents information shared between interlocutors. Also, entities with given information are generally not in the focus, and they would require less cognitive attention from the addressee. Based on these, we expect the use of zero-marking to be more common for coding objects carrying given information shared between interlocutors, and the use of *lul*-marking to be more common for coding those representing new information which is not shared between interlocutors.

The utterance in (16) exemplifies an object which carries given information. Right before the utterance in (16), the addressee, *ttanim* 'daughter', had talked about her future plan which is to do a musical. Since the object, *myucikhel* 'musical' in (16) was already mentioned in the previous utterances, it carries given information, thus is counted as an object with given information.

- (16) *kulemyen incey ttanim kyeyhoyk-un ku*  
 then now daughter plan-TOP that  
*myucikhel-ø cal ha-si-nun ke hako,*  
 musical-(ACC) welldo-HON-COMP thing and  
 'Then, now your plan is to do that musical well, and ...'

For the discussion of object markings with relation to the givenness of information that objects represent, all 307 objects were classified into two

groups, objects with given information and those with not-given information. All of the 307 objects were examined further for their markings, and Table 7 presents object markings with relation to the givenness of information.

Table 7: Givenness and Object Markings

givenness	object- $\emptyset$	object- <i>lul</i>	total
given	28 (33%)	56 (67%)	84 (27%)
not-given	79 (35%)	144 (65%)	223 (73%)
total	107 (35%)	200 (65%)	307 (100%)

Unlike our initial speculation, according to Table 7, the use of zero-marking was not particularly preferred for objects with given information, and the use of *lul* was predominant in both cases (67% vs. 65%) ( $\chi^2=0.118$ ,  $P>0.05$ ). This suggests that givenness may not be a factor influencing object markings in colloquial Korean, or that there may be other factors more strongly influencing object markings at the same time.

### 3.2.3 Topic Persistence

There are various ways of measuring the importance of information, such as discourse topic, news-worthiness, contrast and repair (Fujii and Ono 2000). In this study, the notion of topic persistence was used to examine the informational importance of objects. More specifically, if some information is considered to be important to achieve the speaker's goal at the uttering moment, the information generally does not disappear, but persists (that is, continues to appear) in the subsequent utterances. Furthermore, the speaker would want the addressee to continue to pay (extra) attention to such persistent, thus important, information. Then, such objects denoting persistent information are more likely to be coded with *lul*-marking.

For example, a series of utterances in (17) exemplify objects which denote important information. The underlined objects *pyek* 'wall' persists in subsequent utterances to be a discourse topic; that is, the speaker of (17) intended the addressee to continue to pay extra attention to it, because it is important for his goal. Furthermore, it is shown that all the occurrences of the object *pyek* 'wall'

are marked with *lul*.

- (17) *ikes-i na-hanthey pyek-ul nemeseya toynuntey,*  
 this-NOM I-DAT wall-ACC jump.over become.but  
*pyek-ul mos nemesekacikwu.*  
 wall-ACC not jump.over.and  
 'This to me, (I) was supposed to overcome obstacles,  
 but (I) couldn't handle those obstacles,'  
*pyek-ey pwutichyekaciko,*  
 wall-to ran.against.and  
 'so (I) ran into the wall,'  
*kuke-l nem-ki wihayse, malhacamun,*  
 that-ACC jump.over-in.order.to so.to.speak  
 'in order to overcome those, you know.'

On the basis of their topic persistence, all 307 objects were divided into two groups, persisted and not persisted objects, and Table 8 shows the relation between the persistence of objects and their markings.

Table 8: Topic Persistence and Object Markings

persistence	object- $\emptyset$	object- <i>lul</i>	total
persisted object	30 (16%)	158 (84%)	188 (61%)
not persisted object	77 (65%)	42 (35%)	119 (39%)
total	107 (35%)	200 (65%)	307 (100%)

In Table 8, we find that persistent objects are predominantly marked with *lul* (84%), whereas not persisted objects are commonly coded with zero-marking (65%) ( $\chi^2=76.269$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). This tendency strongly supports our claim, that is, *lul* is used for marking objects that denote important information.

#### 4. Concluding remarks

This study has found out what factors function to predict which object

marking is preferable in colloquial Korean; *lul*-marking or zero-marking. Two groups of factors, processing and discourse-pragmatic factors, were proposed as what influence the selection of object markings in colloquial Korean. For processing factors, we introduced five notions, i.e. animacy, word order, adjacency, embeddedness and the number of object modifiers, based on the assumption that a deviation from the norm or default pattern would impose additional processing loads on the addressee. As a result, it appears that *lul* tends to mark objects which (additional) processing loads are imposed on. This attests to our claim, that is, when additional processing loads are assumed for objects, *lul*-marking is used for coding them to alleviate the processing loads.

For discourse-pragmatic factors, we introduced three notions, i.e. specificity, givenness and persistence, with such an assumption that *lul* would mark objects which denote important information. Overall, it appeared that *lul*-marking was greater when the objects represented important information than when they did not. Yet, unlike our speculation, there was no difference observed in the use of *lul* between objects denoting given information and those denoting not given information. We take this as an indication that the givenness may not be a factor affecting the selection of object markings in colloquial Korean.

Due to its scope, this study limits its discussion to single factors. Yet it would be worth extending this study to combined factors for the selection of object marking; for example, the number of object modifiers and givenness could work together to make a stronger influence on the selection of object markings. We recognize that the judgment criteria used for processing loads and informational importance in this study may not be solid enough, and they may be defined better in the future studies.

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Taeho Kim

School of English & Center for the Study of Language

Kyung Hee University

1 Hoegi-dong, Dongdaemun-gu, Seoul, 130-701, Korea

Phone: +82-2-961-0211

email: taehokim@khu.ac.kr

Han-gyu Lee

School of English Language & Culture

Kyunghee University Global Campus

1 Seochon-dong, Kihung-gu, Yongin, Kyunggi-do, 446-701, Korea

Phone: +82-31-201-2252

email: hglee@khu.ac.kr

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