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Lonely Negative Words in English and Korean

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Oh, Miran. 2015. Lonely Negative Words in English and Korean. *English Language and Linguistics* 21.2, 83-100. Cross-linguistically, some words are used only in a negative sense. In this paper, these *Lonely Negative Words* (LNWs) in English and Korean are investigated through descriptions of their origins and real usages. As for English, the LNWs with negative affixes do not have positive counterparts (e.g., *disgust*, *disappoint*, *incessant*, etc.). In this case, either the positive forms never existed or vanished gradually. On the other hand, the meanings of Korean LNWs are interpreted as negative regardless of the presence of the negative elements (e.g., *cayswu-eps-ta/kayswu*, *cwuchayk-eps-ta*, etc.). This difference between the use of English and Korean LNW may be due to the syntactic difference of each language's negative elements. The negative affix in English LNWs together with the stem composes one single word, whereas the negative predicate itself in Korean LNWs composes an independent constituent. Therefore, extracting the positive form without negation is more difficult in English. The current paper aims to introduce and compare the LNWs in English and Korean. This research points out an interesting fact that in some existing words, only the negative meanings survive.

Key words: lonely negative words, negation, negative predicates, negative affixes, meaning extension.

1. Introduction

In some words in English, the negative affix in the words cannot be separated

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from its stem. In fact, those words do not have their positive counterparts. Herman (2013) pointed out this issue on *Mental Floss*, naming these anti-positive words *Lonely Negative Words*. The similar phenomenon is also found in Korean word phrases. As for Korean *Lonely Negative Words*, the negative predicate is attached to the word that has a positive meaning, then later on, only the negative meaning is sustained in grammar. Even without the negative predicates, native speakers of Korean frequently infer the meaning as negative.

To compare this similar issue found in English and Korean, the term *Lonely Negative Words* (henceforth LNWs) is borrowed from Herman (2013) and defined as follows:

DEFINITION *Lonely Negative Words*. Words or phrases that are composed of negative elements, but are not free from the negative sense ('No positive counterparts').¹

In both languages' LNWs, only the meanings when the negative element is present survive. That is, positive meanings or words with positive forms are not used anymore. In English, LNWs are never used without a negative element. On the other hand, Korean LNWs can be still used without a negative element while maintaining the words' negative meanings. The current paper will be confined to the investigation of English and Korean words and phrases which originally have positive meanings before undergoing negation.²

The examples of English LNWs is discussed in Section 2. Section 2 is divided into two subsections according to the existence of positive counterparts of LNWs. Section 2.1 examines the LNWs with their positive meanings never existed. The LNWs which lost their positive meanings are dealt with in Section 2.2. Some LNWs in English did have their positive counterparts but they died out as people

¹ In this paper, negative elements refer to all the negation including negative affixes such as *dis-*, *in-*, or *-less* and negative predicates meaning *do not*, *cannot*, or *be absent of*.

² In Korean, there is an expression which originally has a negative meaning without a negative element but is still negative when used with a negative predicate. For example, the word *ancelpwuceŭl* is used to express a state of feeling impatient or restless. Nevertheless, even when a negative predicate *-moshata* (meaning *cannot*) is added (i.e., *ancelpwuceŭl-moshata*) to the stem, the meaning of the word stays negative. That is, the negative predicate does not negate the word that it is attached to. However, these words are irrelevant to our further discussion because it is the case which the word became standard due to a wide usage of it among speakers.

ceased to use them in real conversation. Section 3 looks into Korean LNWs. Korean LNWs discussed in Section 3.1 have both the positive and the negative usage in grammar, but they are only used together with the negative expression. Therefore, the words' positive counterparts are not in use, leaving their negatives lonely. In Section 3.2, the examples of LNWs in Korean which have only negative meanings regardless of the existence of the negative element are presented. The paper goes on to argue in Section 4 that one possible difference found in most LNWs in English and Korean is their difference in the syntactic structure. The concluding remarks are provided in Section 5.

2. English LNWs

The LNWs in English are formulated by the use of the negative affixes. An affix is "a bound (non-word) morpheme that changes the meaning or function of a root or stem to which it is attached" (Harris & Hodges, 1995: 5). Among different kinds and functions of English affixes, the current paper focuses on affixes which alter the meaning of the root, especially in a negative sense.³

2.1. Words that adopted only negated forms: positive forms never existed

Some negative words in English were lonely from the beginning. These words first appeared in English through the introduction of foreign words with negative affixes. In the process, the foreign words with positive forms did not come into the lexicon of English. Only after the negative affixes were attached to the base form, the words became in use by native speakers of English. Therefore, these words are never spoken without the negative elements:

- (1) a. That *disgusts* me.
 b. *That *gusts* me.

The word *disgust* came from Latin negative prefix *dis-* plus middle French

³ In the discussion of English LNWs, affixes that change the function or form of the root or that change the part of speech of the word are not in consideration.

word *goust* or Italian word *gustare/gusto*, which all mean *to taste* (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989; Onions, Friedrichsen, & Burchfield, 1966). It can be inferred from the origin of the word that it first meant to express something that has a bad taste. The modern definition of the verb *disgust* is to provoke intense dislike or disapproval in someone as used in (1a). However, unlike other negated words in English, the positive sense does not appear in grammar. As in (1b), *gust* without the negative prefix *dis-* is never used to show an intense liking or an approval of someone. The combination of the negative prefix and the root as a whole was adopted to English without its positive counterpart.

The following LNW is similar to the aforementioned example:

- (2) a. After a deep sleep, Bob is always *disheveled*
 b. *Susan looked into her mirror and checked if she is *sheveled*

The word *disheveled* is derived from Old French past participle adjective *descheveler* which is derived from the noun *chevel* meaning *hair* (Herman, 2013). When this word first came into use in English, it expressed a situation of *having the hair uncovered*. Later, it is used to describe clothes or hair being untidy or messy as in (2a). However, we never call the tidy and well-streamed hair *sheveled* nor *heveled* as in (2b). The word before the negation, *cheveux*, is preserved in modern French, but the ungrammaticality of the sentence in (2b) reveals that English adopted only the entire negative meaning of hair itself being tangled.

There are a few more examples such as *inscrutable* and *reckless*. *Inscrutable* is the combination of Latin *in-* meaning *not*, also Latin *scrutari* meaning *to examine* or *to search carefully*, and the English adjective-making morpheme *-able* (or the word came from a Latin word *inscrutabilis*). However, the positive counterpart *scrutable* does not exist among the words of English. The negative word *inscrutable* solely made its appearance in English to describe something that is hard to understand or that cannot be found by searching; *inscrutable* is a word which is inscrutable to find its positive counterpart. In addition, the word *reckless* came from an Old English *reccelēas* originated from the Germanic base *reck*; an ancient word for *care* (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989). With the negative suffix *-less* meaning *lacking*, *reckless* describes a person, an action, or behavior being very careless and rash about the consequences. However, a careful action can never

be *reckful* and someone with care is never with *reck*

To sum up, the origins of the LNWs discussed above obviously demonstrate that the LNWs are formed by the negative elements. However, the negation in the word cannot be separated from the root since the whole negated words are borrowed in English. These examples preserve the definition of LNWs in the sense that they stand alone as negative. In other words, positive meanings cannot be extracted from these LNWs. These words are originated from the foreign words which are composed of two morphemes (i.e., an affix and a stem). However, they work as if they are one single morpheme with one root with a negative meaning when it is used in English grammar.

2.2. Words that only negated forms survived: positive forms vanished

This section provides examples of LNWs whose positive meanings once existed in grammar, but only the negative words survived. The words *disappoint* and *appoint* structurally look like antonyms to each other but they each have totally different meanings. *Disappointing* someone is to fail to fulfill the hopes or expectations of someone and *appointing* someone is to give someone a job or a position. Surprisingly, Herman (2013) pointed out that *disappoint* once meant the negative of *appoint*. Back in the 15th century, *disappoint* meant to deprive of an appointment, an office, or a possession. From early in the 16th century, however, the meaning of the word changed to the present meaning. Therefore, this LNW originally had its positive partner, but it lost its partner through the change in meaning, and now it stands alone.

The next LNW to be discussed is *indelible*, which is borrowed from French or from Latin (*Oxford English Dictionary, 1989*):

- (3) a. An *indelible* memory goes on forever.
 b. I spelt a blue ink on my shirt. *Fortunately, it was *delible*

The word *indelible* is composed of the negative affix *in-*, a Latin word *delere* meaning *delete*, and the suffix *-ble* (or from the late 15th century French word *indeleble* or from a Latin word *indelebilis*). The affix *in-* is frequently used to negate the stem in many languages. However, it is not acceptable to take out the

negative affix from the word *indelible*. The word *deleble* without the negation was used until the 18th century, with the meaning *capable of being rubbed out or effaced* as in (3b). In the present, however, when choosing the word to express that something is capable of being removed, *deleble* is not the right candidate. The word *indelible* with the negative meaning *unable to be removed or rubbed out* survived alone as in (3a).

Another example of LNWs from Latin loanwords is given as follows:

(4) Don't be *indolent*, you never make it on time!

When the word first became in use in English, *indolent* meant *causing little or no pain*. This word was formed through the negation of the late Latin word *dolere* meaning *to suffer* or *to give pain*. Later, the original meaning died out and *indolent* began to be used to mean *inactive*. Currently, the word again changed in meaning, and it is used to refer to a person who is lazy or who avoids working and exercising. There once was a word *dolent* meaning *sorrowful* or *grieving*, but it never appeared to be the positive partner of *indolent* in the present day.

The last English LNW to be briefly discussed is *incessant*. *Incessant* became of use in English via a French word *cessant* meaning *ceasing* plus a negative affix *in-* (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989). *Incessant* is normally used to express something unpleasant that goes on without stopping as in *an incessant noise*. The positive partner *cessant* was found in use in the 17th and the 18th century, but it no longer appears in English grammar.

All of the aforementioned examples clearly present the existence of the negative words without positive forms. There are also positive meaning LNWs such as *ineffable*, *impeccable*, and *indefatigable*. These LNWs were omitted from the discussion, but note that they work as same as the negative meaning LNWs examined above. In the LNWs *ineffable*, *impeccable*, and *indefatigable*, the negative element *in-* or *im-* is attached to the root words which have negative meanings. These words possess positive meanings through undergoing negation from their original negative meanings. The negated words have only the positive meanings, lacking the partner which is not negated. Therefore, these three LNWs meaning positive fits well to the definition of the LNWs.

To sum up, the LNWs in English are originated from other languages with

two or more morphemes composed of one or two affixes and a stem. These borrowed foreign words include either the negative prefix or the suffix. These affixes change the meaning of words that they are attached to. As seen in the above example, some foreign words become LNWs immediately when they enter into the English lexicon, and some gradually become English LNWs. In both cases, the LNWs together with an affix work as a root word which is "a single word that cannot be broken into smaller words or word parts (Edwards et al., 2004: 171)". This structure of English LNWs is distinguishable from Korean LNWs to be discussed afterwards. The difference between English and Korean LNWs is presented in the section after the description of Korean LNWs given in the following section.

3. Korean LNWs

The LNWs in Korean are combinations of a word and a negative predicate such as *-eps-ta*, *-ci moshata*, or *-ci anhta*. Korean LNWs can be divided into two categories: one that cannot be used without a negative predicate, and the other that can be also used without a negative predicate. The former cases will be dealt with in the next section (3.1.) and the latter in section 3.2. The examples of LNWs which are only used together with a negative predicate *-eps-ta* are *themwuni-eps-ta*, *echekwuni-eps-ta* and *ei-eps-ta*. The LNWs in Korean such as *cayswu-eps-ta/wang-cayswu*, *chwuchayk-eps-ta/chwuchayk-i-ta*, *pangcengmac-ci-moshata/pangcengmacta*, etc. are used both and without a negative predicate. In both of the cases, Korean LNWs always possess negative meanings.⁴

⁴ The LNWs such as *themwuni-eps-ta*, *echekwuni-eps-ta*, and *ei-eps-ta* all mean groundless and unfounded, and they are used to express a stifling circumstance when something physical that has to be there is suddenly absent. On the other hand, the LNWs being used with and without a negation express more abstract concepts such as personalities or behaviors. This meaning difference may have influenced the differentiation of the two categories of LNWs. There are some assumptions about the origins of the stem-words in LNWs, but none of them are justifiable. It is thus encouraged to investigate the origins of the LNWs in further studies.

3.1. Words that only negated forms survived: positive forms not in use

The examples in this section are only expressed with the negative elements and the forms without them are not in use in actual conversation. These LNWs, unlike English LNWs, clearly have their positive counterparts in their grammar. However, they can still be called as lonely since those positive forms exist but are not used in discourse. Consider the following example:

- (5) 값이 터무니없-이 비싸다.
 kaps-i *themwuni-eps*-i bissata⁵
 price-NOM reasonable-not expensive
 'The price is unreasonably expensive.'

The verb *themwuni-eps-ta* has the negative meaning since the negative predicate *eps-ta* is added to the root noun *themwuni*. The noun itself contains a positive meaning such as a foundation or a just basis or reason. However, when the negative element is attached to the noun, the meaning is negated, and it is used to refer to something groundless, unreasonable, or absurd. In this example, both the positive (*themwuni*) and the negated form (*themwuni-eps-ta*) appear in the Korean grammar, but the speakers of Korean seldom or perhaps never use the positive form of this LNW.

The two following examples of Korean LNWs have synonymous meanings:

- (6) a. 나는 그에게 어처구니없-는 실수를 했다.
 na-nun ku-eykey *echekwuni-eps*-nun silswulul hayssta
 I-NOM he-DAT dumbfounded mistake-ACC make-PAST
 'I made a dumbfounded mistake on him.'
 b. 나는 그에게 어이없-는 실수를 했다.
 na-nun ku-eykey *ei-eps*-nun silswulul hayssta
 I-NOM he-DAT dumbfounded mistake-ACC make-PAST
 'I made a dumbfounded mistake on him.'

The word *echekwuni* in (6a) and *ei* in (6b) both mean positive, which are used to express a person or a thing which are enormously huge beyond imagination.

⁵ In the current paper, the alphabetical realizations of Korean follow Yale Romanization.

The negative predicate *eps-ta* negates the original meaning of the root. Thus, the negated words *echekwuni-eps-ta* and *ei-eps-ta* are used in a dumbfounded or an extravagant situation. Again, these two words with the negative element *eps-ta* can be categorized as the LNWs since their positive forms without *eps-ta* are not used in our discourse.

The negative predicate *eps-ta* adds the meaning *to be absence of* to the stem. The opposite of the predicate *eps-ta* is *iss-ta*, meaning *to be in existence*. Being the LNWs, all of the examples above do not go along with the predicate *iss-ta*. Therefore, **thenwuni-iss-ta*, **echekwuni-iss-ta*, and **ei-iss-ta* are all inappropriate and mismatched. This section examined Korean LNWs whose positive partners exist in grammar but are not in use without the negative elements. The correct usage of these LNWs in discourse is to always express them together with the negative predicate *eps-ta*.

3.2. Words that are always negative: positive forms meaning negative

This section discusses about the meaning extension of the LNWs. Some Korean LNWs always mean negative regardless of the presence of the negative element. These LNWs are different from the aforementioned LNWs in that they are also used in positive forms. These LNWs with dual representation undergo negation by adding a negative predicate to the positive meaning root. Then, the negated meaning is extended to the original positive form. As a result, both the negated and the original form of the word all express a negative sense. This kind of LNWs can be divided into two subcategories, one which is not grammatically acceptable but is used among native speakers and the other which adds the negated meaning to the originally positive root. Therefore, whether the negative element is attached to the stem word or not, these two representations of the LNWs are only used to refer to a negative situation.

3.2.1. Meaning extension in process

The first example of the LNWs with two expressions is the word *cayswu-eps-ta*. The original form of the word without negation, *cayswu*, means luck or fortune. Therefore, the meaning of *cayswu-eps-ta* is *unlucky*, the negative predicate *eps-ta*

reversing the positive form. In addition to the first meaning, there is a second meaning of this LNW also commonly used in our discourse. People use the word *cayswu-eps-ta* when someone makes a boast of himself or herself or when the speaker is envious of someone. In short, it is used to refer to someone who is very annoying.⁶

The interesting point is that even without the negative predicate, *cayswu* still refers to someone who is offending. For example, combined with the intensifier *wang*, we call someone *wang-cayswu* when he or she is good at making people irritated or when the degree of the annoyance caused by him or her is high.

The similar example of *cayswu-eps-ta/cayswu* is presented in the following:

- (8) a. 그는 정말 밥맛없어.
 ku-nun cengmal *papmas-eps-e*
 he-NOM really disgusting
 'He is really disgusting.'
 b. ?그는 정말 밥맛이야.
 ku-nun cengmal *papmas-iya*
 he-NOM really disgusting
 'He is really disgusting.'

The original meaning of the word *papmas* is *appetite* and the negated form *papmas-eps-ta* means *to lose one's appetite*. In addition to the original meaning, *papmas-eps-ta* is mostly used to express the state of being disgusted due to an annoyance. This LNW works the same as *cayswu-eps-ta*. For instance, the root word *papmas* without the negative predicate still means negative; it refers to someone who is annoying or revolting. Both of the words (i.e., *papmas-eps-ta* and *papmas*) can be stated as LNWs because these words fail to express the positive meaning; thus, their negative meanings stand alone in both the negative and the positive form. *Papmas* with the meaning *disgusting* does not appear in our grammar. The common usage of the word *papmas*, however, indicates that the meaning of this word is used as negative.

⁶ *cayswu-eps-ta* is also used to express compliments to a person who is so outstanding, but the meaning includes negative connotations of jealousy or enviousness towards that person (cf. the second meaning of *cayswu-eps-ta* given in the text). Therefore, this term can be categorized as a LNW.

Next, the LNWs with other negative predicates besides *eps-ta* are presented. The negative predicates *-ci anhta* meaning that *it is not the case that ~* and *-ci moshata* meaning that *it cannot be the case that ~* both works as reversing expressions of the positive predicate *chilchilhata*. *Chilchilhata* has a good meaning: to be neat, tidy, and clean. When this positive form meets the negative predicates, the negated form is used to describe a situation when someone or something is disheveled and sloppy.

The following three examples show different usages of *chilchilhata*. In the first two examples, negative predicates (*-ci anhta* and *-ci moshata*, respectively) are attached to the root. The third example preserves the positive form structurally, but it means negative just like the first and the second example.

- (9) a. 그는 생각보다 엉뚱하고 칠칠찮다.
 ku-nun sayngkak-pota engttwungha-ko *chilchilchanhta*
 He-NOM imagine-than extraordinary-and tidy-not
 'He is extraordinary and untidy than imagined.'
- b. 그는 칠칠치못하고 게으르다.
 ku-nun *chilchilchi-mosha*-go key-uluta
 he-NOM tidy-not-and lazy
 'He is untidy and lazy.'
- c. ?그는 식사를 할 때 칠칠맞게 음식을 흘린다.
 ku-nun siksa-lul hal ttay *chilchilmac*-key umsik-ul hullinta
 he-NOM meal-ACC do when slovenly food-ACC drop
 'When he has meals, he slovenly drops food.'

(9a) and (9b) are the examples which correctly used the LNWs *chilchilchanhta* and *chilchilchimoshata*. In (9c), the LNW's positive version is used to mean the same negative meaning as in (9a) and (9b). Grammatically, *chilchilmacta* must have the same positive meaning as *chilchilhata*, which refers to someone or something that is neat and tidy. However, Korean native speakers come up with the negative meaning (e.g., *slovenly*) when they hear or speak the word *chilchilmacta*. Therefore, even though *chilchilmacta* does not contain a negative element, it means something negative.

The examples in this section are the LNWs which are only correct when used together with the negative expression. However, these LNWs are also used

without negative predicates while containing the same negative meanings. That is, a lot of native speakers of Korean mistakenly use the positive forms to express the negative meanings that are grammatically correct only when used with the negative predicates. This common usage indicates that the negative meaning of the LNW seized the positive form of the word. In other words, a negative meaning is extended to the positive root word.

The next section provides a stronger example of LNWs which underwent meaning extension.

3.2.2. Meaning extension fossilized

The negative sense of the LNWs in Korean has stronger influence in the meaning change of the positive counterparts compared to that of English LNWs. The two examples of the LNWs below eventually caused the positive words to have another negative meaning in grammar:

- (10) 그는 *주책없이* 계획을 바꾼다.
 ku-nun *cwuchayk-eps-i* kyeyhoyk-ul pakkwunta.
 he-NOM decisively-not plan-ACC change
 'He changes the plan indecisively.'

The LNW *cwuchayk-eps-ta* in (10) is formed by the negation of the word *cwuchayk*. *Cwuchayk* means a definite view or a fixed opinion. The negative version, *cwuchayk-eps-ta*, is used to describe a person who is indecisive, senseless, and pointless. This negative meaning affected the original word *cwuchayk*. As a result, the new negative definition of *cwuchayk* appeared in the dictionary. The newly appeared meaning for *cwuchayk* is the behavior of acting pointlessly without any sense. In the present, *cwuchayk* has both the positive meaning and the extended negative meaning. Moreover, the negative use of *cwuchayk* freely appears with other expressions besides the negative predicate *-eps-ta*. For example, *cwuchayk-pakaci* and *cwuchayk-tengeli* are the words used to refer to an indecisive person.

The following example does not fit into the definition of the LNWs since the use of the negative element together with the original root word causes

ungrammaticality. However, it is still meaningful to discuss this word because it provides a good example of meaning extension. The following word is not used with the negative predicate, but it is somewhat similar to the LNWs in the sense that it only has the negative meaning while the positive meaning is rarely found in the ordinary discourse:

- (11) 그는 방정맞게 춤을 춘다.
 ku-nun *pangcengmac*-key chwum-ul chwunta
 he-NOM imprudently dance-ACC dance
 'He dances imprudently.'

The primary form of this word *pangcenghata* is a word written in Chinese characters. This word only has a positive meaning which is used to describe someone irreproachable or upright. Possibly with the wide use of the incorrectly negated form *pangcengmac-ci-moshata*, the negative meaning came into use for the root *pangceng*. Thus, the Chinese characters *pangceng* underwent meaning extension, affecting the pure Korean word *pangceng* to express a negative meaning. Therefore, the positive form *pangcengmacta* in (11) describes someone whose behaviour is thoughtless, careless, and rash.

Like all the other words, the positive forms of the LNWs without negation should have a positive meaning based on the definition. However, unlike the positive meaning they have, these words are more likely to be interpreted as having the same negative meaning as the negated words. The positive counterparts of the Korean LNWs survive more easily than the counterparts of the English LNWs in that they are present in discourse. In the next section, the syntactic cue for this difference of LNWs between English and Korean.

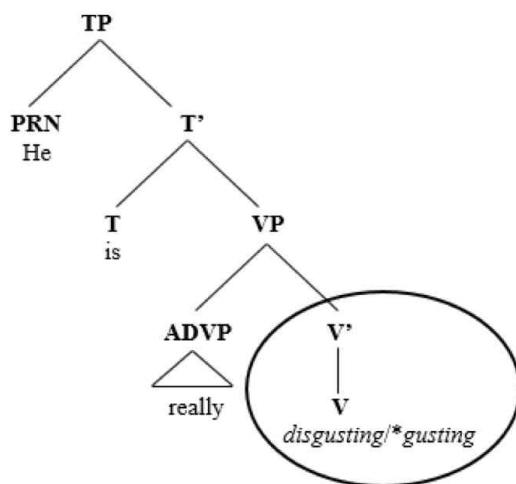
4. Syntactic Analysis of the LNWs

In the LNWs in English and Korean discussed so far, there is a tendency that the positive counterparts of English LNWs are eliminated or not in use while those of Korean LNWs remain in discourse and possess negative meanings. What may be the possible reason for this difference? If we find the syntactic difference

between the two languages concerning the LNWs, it may be available to present a possible explanation about the different patterns of English and Korean LNWs.

The following tree diagrams state the sentence structures of English (13) and Korean LNWs (14 and 15). An independent element composes a single node, and two or more elements that form a constituent are branched into several parts. The LNWs in each sentence are written in italics.

(13) He is really *disgusting*.



As seen in (13), affixes alone cannot form an independent element. In English, LNWs form an independent lexical item together with negative affixes (*dis-*, *in-*, *-less*, etc.). Therefore, if the positive counterpart has not entered into the lexicon or once it disappears from the lexicon, the LNWs without negation cannot be used in English. Therefore, **gusting*, the positive counterpart of *disgusting*, is in nowhere present in English, leaving *disgusting* a lonely word as stated in (1).⁷

Why is the affix *dis-* so difficult to be separated? It is because the affix and the stem have a stronger association to each other than the word and the predicate. Hong (1998) argues that the affixes are a morpheme which composes a single lexical category with another stem. The affix cannot be an independent

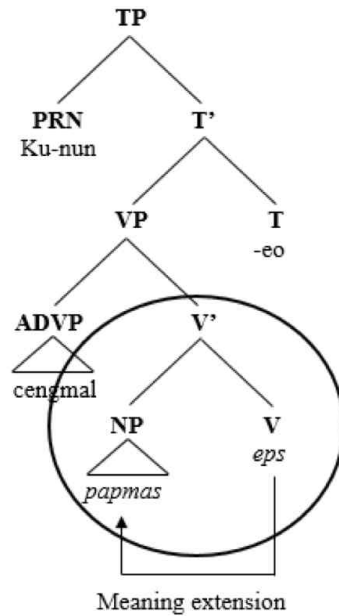
⁷ When asked whether they consider the LNWs as single words or complex words, native speakers of English all indicated them as single words.

constituent, being bound to its stem. As for the negative affixes, the combined word itself becomes a negative predicate only after the affix is attached to the stem. For example, the word *disgust*, *disappoint*, or *reckless* are inherently negative predicates. The native speakers of English regard English LNWs as single words; therefore, it is hard to find their positive counterparts despite the fact that they were originated from the combination of a positive root plus a negative affix.

Unlike affixes, predicates are capable of being an independent lexical category since they can be combined to all of the verbs (Hong, 1998: 27). Therefore, the predicates themselves form their own syntactic unit (Hong, 1998: 28).

The following presents a sentence structure including a Korean LNW *papmas-eps-ta*. This LNWs are formed by the positive meaning root plus a negative predicate *eps-ta*.

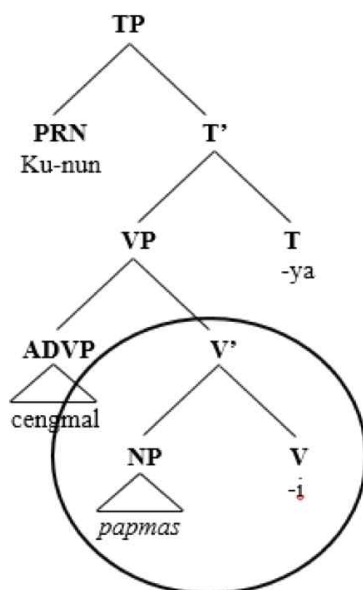
(14=8a) Ku-nun cengmal *papmas-eps-eo* / 'He is really disgusting.'



In Korean, the LNWs are composed of overtly negative predicates such as *-eps-ta*, *-ci anhta*, or *-ci moshata* (Joe & Lee, 2002: 11). Moreover, the negative predicates affect the meaning of the root word in Korean LNWs, resulting in

the negative meaning extension. For example, *papmas* (which originally means *appetite*) in (14) undergoes meaning extension by the negative predicate *-eps-ta*. Therefore, even without the negative predicate, *papmas* alone maintains the negative meaning and is used towards an offending person whose personality is like food with no taste. Even when the negative element is separated, the positive form of the word may possess the negative meaning. Unlike English LNWs, a LNW *papmas* in Korean can be used alone without negation as in the following tree diagram.

(15=8b) Ku-nun cengmal *papmas*-iya / 'He is really offending.'



Together with the verb *-i*, a LNW *papmas* is used in the discourse. However, it is never used in a positive sense, making this word an example of Korean LNWs. *Papmas* can stand alone without a negative predicate because the word itself forms an independent syntactic unit.

This syntactic information explains the negative elements used in the LNWs. English LNWs use negative affixes, and Korean LNWs use the predicates which mean *not*, *cannot*, or *be absence of* for the negative elements. The negative elements

in the LNWs in English cannot form an independent syntactic unit since they are just stem-bound affixes. Once an affix is attached to the stem, it becomes a single word. Furthermore, it is harder to extract the negative element in English LNWs since it has been already fossilized inside a word. However, the negative elements in the LNWs in Korean have independent syntactic units since they are predicates. In Korean LNWs, the word and the predicate are distinct syntactic constituents. In short, English LNWs undergo lexical negation whereas Korean LNWs are formed by syntactic negation (Kim, 2007). The minimal structural differences of English LNWs which are composed of negative affixes and Korean LNWs which uses negative predicates generate distinct patterns of the two different LNWs.

5. Conclusion

In the current paper, the examples of the *Lonely Negative Words* in English and Korean are examined with the explanation of their original meanings and the derived meanings. In English LNWs, the positive forms are not used. In Korean LNWs, the positive forms are negative. This different patterns of the LNWs in English and Korean are generated from the syntactic difference of the negative elements used in the LNWs in each language. To sum up, the goal of this paper is to introduce a unique phenomenon of lonely words with a negative sense, whose patterns work differently between English and Korean. Focusing largely on the semantic information of the LNWs, this paper also gives a clue that semantics is linked to syntax (Watt, 1977). By the analysis of the English and Korean LNWs, it is found that the syntactic information is helpful in explaining the semantic phenomenon or the language difference. As a result, the analysis of the LNWs provides the evidence that the two areas of linguistics are interrelated.

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