

## Intonation of Kyongsang Korean

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### <Abstract>

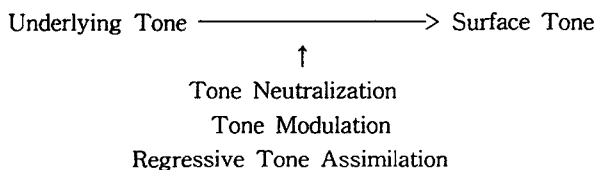
Intensive studies on Kyongsang Korean tone and tone related processes have been carried out by many scholars. But intonation of this dialect has never been investigated. In this paper, I discuss the relationship between tone and intonation and describe phrasal tones and nuclear tones in Kyongsang Korean.

### 1. Introduction

Kyongsang Korean is a tone language which has three contrastive tones — low, mid, and high tones.<sup>1)</sup> Hence three different meanings of the word /mál/ are distinguished by the tones assigned to this word.

- (1) a. /màl/ (low tone): 'language'  
 b. /māl/ (mid tone): 'Korean unit of volume'  
 c. /mál/ (high tone): 'horse'

An underlying tone, assigned to each syllable of a word, may be changed to a different surface tone due to tone neutralization, tone modulation, and/or regressive tone assimilation processes.



Intensive studies on Kyongsang Korean tone and the above-mentioned phonological processes have been carried out by Huh (1954), Kim (1980, 1988, 1993), and others. But intonation of this dialect has never been investigated. In this paper, therefore, I will discuss the relationship between tone and intonation in Kyongsang Korean and describe Kyongsang Korean intonation.

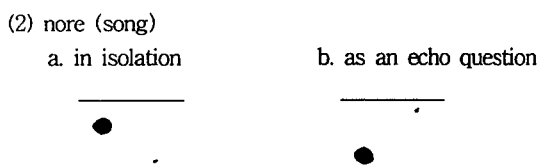
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1) The dialects in the southeast and northeast parts, and the eastern coast of Korean peninsula are tone languages whereas those in the rest of Korean peninsula, including Standard Korean (Seoul dialect), are intonation languages. In this paper, Kyongsang Korean refers to the dialect spoken in Pusan city, which is located in the southeastern coast of Korea.

2. The Relationship between Tone and Intonation

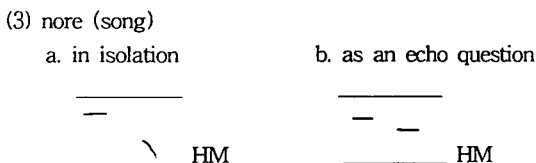
In Standard Korean, the pitch of the individual syllables of a sentence is determined by intonation on the phonetic level and the pitch relationship between adjacent syllables is easily changed by intonation (Lee 1993).

For example, when the word 'nore (song)' is said in isolation, the second syllable is usually pronounced lower than the first one. But when this word is uttered as an echo question, the second syllable is pronounced higher than the first one.



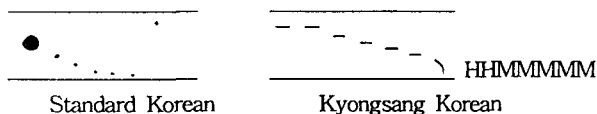
In Kyongsang Korean, however, the intonation pattern of a sentence is largely determined by the surface tones assigned to the individual syllables of the sentence.<sup>2)</sup> Hence the pitch relationship between adjacent syllables cannot be easily changed by intonation (Lee 1993).

For example, whether the word 'nore' is uttered in isolation or as an echo question, the second syllable is always pronounced lower than the first one because the high tone is assigned to the first syllable and the mid tone on the second syllable.

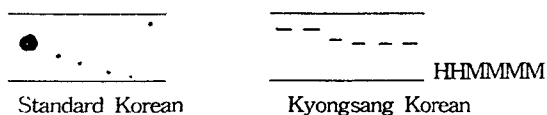


In Standard Korean, yes-no questions or echo questions tend to be spoken with a rising intonation as in other intonation languages. On the contrary, rising intonation can hardly occur in Kyongsang Korean because of the tones assigned to the individual syllables of a sentence.

(4) a. Hakkyoe kattawanna? (Have you been to school?)



b. Hakkyoe kandagu? (Did you say you are going to school?)



2) A similar phenomenon also occurs in Mandarin Chinese (Shen 1990).

## 3. Phrasal Tones in Kyongsang Korean

In Kyongsang Korean, a sentence may be pronounced with more than one intonation group, and an intonation group with more than one rhythm unit as in Standard Korean. The intonation pattern of the intonation group is called 'tune', and that of the rhythm unit 'phrasal tone' (Lee 1990).

The intonation pattern of the phrasal tone is determined by the surface tones assigned to the individual syllables of the rhythm unit. Hence the phrasal tone may consist of LM<sub>0</sub> (one mid tone followed by zero or more mid tones), M(M) (one or two mid tones), or H(H)M<sub>0</sub> (one or two high tones followed by zero or more mid tones).

The actual pitch of each surface tone is determined by **downdrift**. When a sentence is uttered with more than one rhythm unit, the same tone is pronounced lower in the following rhythm unit than in the preceding one.

- (5) a. Sarami turida.  
(There are two men.)
- b. Ch'olsunun pegop'uda.  
(Ch'olsu is hungry.)
- 
- LMM | LMM                      HHM | HHMM

Downdrift also occurs when mid tones appear successively in the sentence final rhythm unit. Each of these mid tones is pronounced progressively lower than the preceding one.

- (6) a. Kogume.  
((This is) a sweet potato.)
- b. Kich'arul t'assumnida.  
((I) took the train.)
- 
- LMM                                      MHMMMM

But the downdrift of successive mid tones does not occur in echo questions, nor in a sentence internal rhythm unit.

- (7) a. Hakkyoe kandagu?  
(Did you say you were going to school?)
- 
- HHMMMM
- cf.) Hakkyoe gatta.  
(I) went to school.)
- Hakkyoe ganna?  
(Have you gone to school?)
- 
- HHMMMM                                      HHMMMM

b. Sarami turida.

(There are two men.)

\_\_\_\_\_

— — — —

— — — — \ LMM | LMM

Downdrift does not take place when high tones appear consecutively. When two high tones appear between mid tones, the second high tone is sometimes pronounced higher than the first tone.

(8) a. pulkkonnori  
(fire work)

b. poriisak  
(ear of barley)

c. Samch'onnonida.  
(It is three thousand years.)

\_\_\_\_\_

— — — — \ HHMM

\_\_\_\_\_

— — — — \ MHHH

\_\_\_\_\_

— — — — \ MHMM

#### 4. Nuclear Tones in Kyongsang Korean

Although the overall intonation pattern of an intonation group is largely determined by the surface tones assigned to the individual syllables of the intonation group as mentioned above, the surface tone of the intonation group final syllable may be realized as various pitch patterns depending on illocution and the speaker's emotion and attitude. The pitch pattern of the intonation group final syllable is called 'nuclear tone'.<sup>3)</sup> Hence a tune is composed of one nuclear tone and zero or more phrasal tones.

There are five nuclear tones — falling, level, rising, fall-rise, and rise-fall nuclear tones — in Kyongsang Korean.

The falling nuclear tone is used in a simple statement as in (5) and (6), in a simple question as in (4a), or in a simple order as in (9) below.

(9) Hakkyoe kara. (Go to the school.)

\_\_\_\_\_

— — — — \ HHMMM

The level nuclear tone is often used in echo questions as in (7a). This tone can also be used when the speaker states something and expects the hearer's response as in (10).

(10) Ne kandai. (I'm going. So keep on working without me.)

\_\_\_\_\_

— — — —

\_\_\_\_\_

3) Nuclear tone is also imposed on the last syllable of an intonation group in Standard Korean (Lee 1996). I used to call this tone 'boundary tone' in Lee (1990) in that it appears in an intonation group or sentence boundary. The Korean nuclear tone corresponds to the English nuclear tone. But the former is usually imposed on an unaccented syllable.

The low tone in a monosyllabic word is realized as the rising nuclear tone when said in isolation as in (11a). But this tone is realized as a level tone in a rhythm unit composed of more than one syllable as in (11b).

- (11) a. Se (bird)                      b. Saram (men)



The rising nuclear tone is also used when the speaker expresses his hostile feeling against the hearer's behavior as in (12b).

- (12) a. Tteritche?  
(You hit me, didn't you?)              b. Tteritche?  
(You hit me. I won't forgive you.)



The fall-rise nuclear tone is often used in echo questions like the level tone. But the fall-rise tone is often used when the speaker is irritated by the hearer's rude expression.

- (13) Kanda. (You said "Kanda."? How dare you use such a rude expression?)



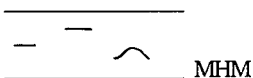
The fall-rise nuclear tone is also used when the speaker states something and expects the hearer's strong response.

- (14) Ne kandai. (I'm going. So stop working now.)



The rise-fall nuclear tone is used when the speaker is annoyed by the hearer's repeated question.

- (15) Poribap. (Boiled barley. I am annoyed by your repeated question.)



## 5. Conclusion

So far, I have discussed the relationship between tone and intonation in Kyongsang Korean and described Kyongsang Korean phrasal tones and nuclear tones.

It is noted that the intonation pattern of a sentence is largely determined by the tones assigned to the individual syllables of the sentence and the pitch relationship between adjacent syllables cannot be easily changed by intonation.

It is argued that the tune (the intonation pattern of an intonation group) consists of one nuclear tone (the pitch pattern of the intonation group final syllable) and zero or more phrasal tones (the intonation pattern of the rhythm unit).

It is noted that the phrasal tone is determined by the surface tones assigned to the individual syllables of the rhythm unit and the actual pitch of the surface tones is determined by downdrift. Downdrift occurring in Kyongsang Korean is briefly discussed.

It is also noted that the surface tone of the intonation group final syllable is realized as various pitch patterns depending on illocution and the speaker's emotion and attitude. Five nuclear tones are established and described.

\* I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. C.G. Gim for his invaluable comments on Kyongsang Korean intonation.

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