

# Implicatures of the Adjective *Chakhata*\*

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**Joh, Yoon-kyoung & Choi, Youngju. (2017). Implicatures of the adjective *chakhata*** *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 25(2), 43-60. Over two decades, the meaning of the adjective *chakhata* has been extended to the extent that it is compatible with inanimate objects, which was not imaginable before 1990. The phenomenon attracted many researchers' attention including Kim (2009), Cho (2012), Kim (2012, 2013) and Lim (2014). Their main contribution is the identification and categorization of the new nominal collocates of *chakhata*. They also reveal that the original meaning of *chakhata*, 'good' has extended to various meanings through metaphor. In doing so, Lim (2014) observes two more meanings than previous researchers, which are 'superior or great' and 'not excellent or not great.' He deals with them as basic meanings, along with the other meanings. However, we claim that the two meanings come from implicatures. The purpose of the paper is to show how an implicature-based account is better suited for strongly positive and negative meanings of the scalar words such as *chakhata*. (Mokpo National University and Chosun University).

**Key Words:** denotation, Q-implicatures, R-implicatures, metonymy, semantic extension

## 1. Introduction

Over two decades, the Korean word *chakhata* has achieved various meanings besides its basic meaning, 'good.' *Chakhata* used to be only compatible with a noun denoting a person or his attribute, as shown in (1).

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- (1) a. chakhan salam  
       good person 'a good person'  
       b. chakhan simseng  
       good heart 'a good heart,'

However, the expressions such as *yehayng* 'journey' *kiep* 'business' and *sopi* 'expense' have started collocating with *chakhata* since around 1995 (Lim 2014: 972), as shown in (2). In the examples in (2), it is shown that *chakhata* achieves new meanings with those collocates.

- (2) a. chakhan yehayng  
       good trip 'eco-friendly trip'  
       b. chakhan kiek  
       good enterprise 'social enterprise'  
       c. chakhan sopi  
       good expense 'an expense which is good for others'

The meaning extensions of *chakhata* have drawn the attention of several researchers, such as Kim (2009), Cho (2012), Kim (2012, 2013) and Lim (2014). They have focused on the recent meaning extensions of *chakhata* and concluded that the word was originally paired with a noun denoting people and attributes of people and, over two decades, it gradually extended its collocates to inanimate objects and their attributes, achieving diverse meanings such as 'eco-friendly' as in (2a) and 'fair-trading' as in (2b) and 'morally good' as in (2c).

Lim (2014) explores how *chakhata* extends its meanings from the perspective of cognitive semantics and comes to the conclusion that the meaning of *chakhata* extends from its original meaning 'good' to various positive meanings, which then extend to the strengthened meaning 'superior or great.' This strengthened meaning later is extended to the negative meaning, 'not excellent or not great.' He deals with these meanings as basic meanings, giving them equal status.

However, the strengthened and the negative meanings of *chakhata* should be treated differently from its other meaning extensions. The purpose of this paper is to show that an implicature-based account better explains these meanings. Before demonstrating how those meanings arise based on implicatures, previous

research will be reviewed in the next section.

## 2. Previous Research

Kim (2009) is known as the first to attempt to observe the meaning extensions of *chakhata*. What he observes is that the adjective *chakhata*, whose original collocates are [+human] and [+attribute related to human], can recently be used with [+inanimate objects] and [+attribute related to inanimate objects]. Following his lead, Kim (2012) examines the newly added collocates in further detail using the corpus of four daily newspapers. Categorizing the collocating nominals based on Wordnet categories reveals that *chakhata* shows a strong semantic preference with nominals belonging to the hyperonyms in PERSON (57%), ACT (11%), ATTRIBUTE (11%). It also prefers to be used with the nominals belonging to the hyperonyms, COMMUNICATION (5.3%), GROUP (3.3%), and COGNITION (2.7%), as in *chakhan tayskul* 'good comment,' *chakhan kiep* 'good company,' and *chakhan kyengceyhak* 'good economics,' respectively. The examples *chakhan monite* 'good monitor,' *chakhan kwaca* 'good snack,' and *chakhan kasum* 'good breast,' also show that it is used with nominals belonging to hyperonyms of ARTIFACT, FOOD, and BODY, respectively.

Based on his previous observation, Kim (2013) concludes that the collocates of *chakhata* become more and more diverse as a result of the metaphorical extension. The examples shown in (3) exploit the metaphor CAPITALISM IS A HUMAN BEING. The nominals *kakyek* 'price,' *kiswul* 'technology,' and *sengcang* 'growth' are words in the conceptual domain of capitalism, and through metaphorical extension they are interpreted as human beings.

- (3) a. chakhan kakyek  
       good price 'customer-friendly price'
- b. chakhan kiswul  
       good technology 'appropriate technology'
- c. chakhan sengcang  
       good growth 'sustainable growth' (Lim 2013: 99)

On the other hand, the examples in (4) are not treated as metaphorical extensions in Kim (2013). He suggests that these expressions do not include any conceptual metaphor, even though they are not interpreted literally.

- (4) a. **chakhan** tulama  
 good drama  
 'soap operas that do not contain scenes of violence, sex, or immorality'
- b. **chakhan** songnyenhoy  
 good year-end party  
 'year-end party where there is no binge-drinking'
- c. **chakhan** am  
 good cancer  
 'cancer that does not inflict much pain to patients'
- d. **chakhan** mommay  
 good figure  
 'well-proportioned or attractive figure' (Lim 2013: 101)

However, Lim (2014) suggests that the meanings of *chakhata* in various examples, including those in (4), are interconnected to the original meaning, based on the radial network model of cognitive semantics shown in <figure 1>. In the radial network model, the connection between new meanings with its original meaning is achieved mainly through metaphor and metonymy. Therefore, even though Lim (2014) does not explicitly specify the metaphor (or metonymy) in the examples of (4), he assumes that they include metaphors. For example, *chakhata* in *chakhan tulama* 'good drama' of (4a) and *chakhan songnyenhoy* 'good year-end party' of (4b) are interpreted as being moral and ethical. The interpretation is possible through the metaphor MORAL AND ETHICAL IS GOOD-HEARTED in Lim's account.



On the contrary, in (6), *chakhata* is used with a negative meaning. In (6a), the fact that Korean stock market follows American stock market trends is expressed in a derogative way. In (6b), *chakhan namca* ‘good guys’ is understood as ‘guys whose only merit is having a good personality.’ The phrase suggests women choose ‘bad guys’ with charisma and other redeeming qualities over these ‘good guys.’ In (6c), a *chakhan yenghwa* ‘good movie,’ is a movie with no violence, sex, or immorality, but also no ability to move the viewers.

- (6) a. hankwuk, micungsiuy      **chakhan**      tongsayng  
 Korea      American      good      younger.brother  
 ‘Korean stock market (is) America’s follower’
- b. **chakhan**      namca      potanun      nappun      namca  
 good      man      than      bad      man  
 ‘(women’s preference of) bad guys to good ones’
- c. wulimi      epsnun      **chakhan**      yenghwa  
 touching.element      lacking      good      movie  
 ‘movie that is just okay without having touching elements’
- (Lim 2014: 981-2)

In Lim (2014), the meanings ‘excellent or great’ and ‘not excellent or not great’ are treated as having the same status as the other meanings, having been metaphorically extended from the original meaning of ‘good.’ However, in this paper, it will be argued that there is another way to get to these interpretations, namely through implicatures. We believe that this implicature-based account is better suited to explain the strengthened and negative meanings of the scalar word *chakhata*.

### 3. Implicatures of *Chakhata*

As discussed in the previous section, the meanings of *chakhata* are diverse. It can be used in its basic sense ‘good.’ Yet, it was observed that its meanings are being extended toward two opposite directions. For instance, it can be extended to the meaning ‘excellent or superior’ in the positive realm. Furthermore, it is

interesting to be noted that it can also have a negative meaning 'not excellent or not great.' Lim (2014) lists the two opposite meanings on an equal basis with the basic meaning 'good.' However, this paper claims that the extended meanings of *chakhata* into the negative realm and the positive realm must be distinguished from its basic meaning 'good.' To be more specific, this paper claims that both the strengthened meaning 'excellent, superior, or great' and the negative meaning 'not excellent or not great' are implicatures. To claim so, let us first examine what implicatures are and how they are generated briefly.

Reducing four maxims of conversation suggested by Grice (1975), Horn (1984) proposes two dividing principles. That is, Horn (1984) believes that communicational interchanges are controlled by the two opposing forces, which he characterizes as the Q principle and the R principle, as below.

(7) a. The Q Principle (Hearer-based)

Make your contribution sufficient (cf. Quantity 1)

Say as much as you can (given R)

Lower-bounding principle, inducing upper-bounding implicata

b. The R Principle (Speaker-based)

Make your contribution necessary (cf. Relation, Quantity 2, Manner)

Say no more than you must (given Q)

Upper-bounding principle, inducing lower-bounding implicata

Carston (1998) illustrates the implicatures produced by Horn's principles. First, the implicatures generated by the Q principle (henceforth, Q-implicatures) are shown in (b) sentences from (8) to (10). The Q principle dictates the speaker to say as much he or she can. This means, when a certain form is selected, the stronger form must not be meant by the speaker. In this way, in Q-implicatures, the meaning of negation is often involved.

(8) a. Bill has got some of Chomsky's papers.

b. Bill hasn't got all of Chomsky's papers.

- (9) a. There will be five of us for dinner tonight.  
 b. There won't be six/seven... of us for dinner.
- (10) a. A: I like Mary. She's intelligent and good-hearted.  
 B: She's intelligent.  
 b. She's not good-hearted.

Carston (1998) also presents implicatures generated by the R principle (henceforth, R-implicatures) as below. Since the R principle makes the speaker say no more than he or she must, what he or she said is taken minimally to the effect of generating the implicatures that he or she means more than being literally said. Thus, as shown in the following examples, the R principle strengthens the literal meaning, yielding R-implicatures in (b) on the basis of a stereotypical relation.

- (11) a. He drank a bottle of vodka and fell into a stupor.  
 b. His falling into a stupor was a result of his drinking a bottle of vodka.
- (12) a. Sam and Mike moved the piano.  
 b. Sam and Mike moved the piano together.
- (13) a. If you finish your thesis by September you'll be eligible for the job.  
 b. You will be eligible for the job if and only if you finish your thesis by September.

Gawron (2016) illustrates Horn's two principles with examples which are minimally contrasted. For instance, the sentence in (14a) Q-implicates that the machine was stopped in a non-typical way such as pulling the plug. Yet, the sentence in (14b) R-implicates that the effect was achieved in a typical way such as flipping the switch. Also, the sentence in (15a) Q-implicates a non-typical relation such as a stepmother but the sentence in (15b) R-implicates a typical relation such as a biological mother to the speaker. Furthermore, the sentence in (16a) Q-implicates a non-stereotypical connection such as the motion towards the named institutions while the sentence in (16b) without a determiner R-implicates a typical relation with the listed institutions.



- (14) a. He got the machine to stop.  
       b. He stopped the machine.
- (15) a. That's my father's wife.  
       b. That's my mother.
- (16) a. My brother went to the church, the jail, the school.  
       b. My brother went to church, jail, school.

In the examples above, the typical situation expresses a strengthened meaning in the relevant circumstance so that R-implicatures indicates the most typical way that can be supposed in the context while Q-implicatures indicate the negation of the typical situation.

As discussed above, in natural languages, two informativeness principles are in operation, pulling toward opposite directions. One principle that dictates maximality generates the implicatures often involving the negation of a stronger form while the other principle that enjoins minimality generates the implicatures intensifying what is literally said (Carston, 1998). We believe that the data that the two opposing principles apply can vary as long as we get the effects of strengthening the basic meaning, on one direction, and of negating the stronger scale, in the other.

Thus, under the two principles, we claim that we can explain the extended meanings of *chakhata* which are also being pulled in the opposite directions. The 'excellent or great' meaning of *chakhata* repeated in (17) is an R-implicature which is intensified from the literal meaning 'good.' When the R principle requires the speaker to say no more than he or she must say, the speaker wants to say only minimally, producing understatements. Thus, when we actually interpret his or her utterances, we tend to draw a more strengthened meaning than the literal meaning as an implicature. Thus, based on the R principle, we derive the intensified meaning of 'excellent or great' from the basic meaning which is merely 'good.'

- (17) a. **chakhan**   yenpi  
       good       fuel. efficiency  
       'great fuel efficiency'

- b. **chakhan** kul hankul  
 good writing.system Korean.writing.system  
 'great writing system, Korean writing system'
- c. **chakhan** yoli sillyek  
 good cooking skill  
 'great cooking skill'

An extension also occurs in the opposite direction as the repeated examples in (18) show. In the examples in (18), the meaning of *chakhata* is negative, deviated from its basic meaning 'good' which forms a scale. This time, we can explain this negative realm of the semantics of *chakhata* by the Q principle. The Q principle dictates the speaker to say as much as he or she can. In terms of this principle, we can generally draw the Q-implicature that the speaker might not have meant a stronger form. Thus, we tend to receive the implicature which negates the stronger form of 'good' as in 'not excellent or not great.' In a word, we claim that the 'not excellent' meaning of *chakhata* is a Q-implicature which results from the negation of a stronger scale of 'good.'

- (18) a. hankwuk, micungsiuy **chakhan** tongsayng  
 Korea American good younger.brother  
 'Korean stock market (is) America's follower'
- b. **chakhan** namca potanun nappun namca  
 good man than bad man  
 '(women's preference of) bad guys to good ones'
- c. wulimi epsnun **chakhan** yenghwa  
 touching.element lacking good movie  
 'movie that is just okay without having touching elements'

Since it has been claimed that implicatures can be detected more clearly in assertions, putting them in full asserting sentences as below might give us a better idea about their status as implicatures. Examining them, we judge that the examples in (19) still maintain the "not great" Q-implicature and the "great" R-implicature.

- (19) a. *nayka*      *ecey*      *pon*      *yenghwanun*      *hanmatilo*  
 I            yesterday watch      movie                      in.a.word  
*malhayse* 'wulim                      epsnun      *chakhan*      *yenghwa'*  
 say            touching.element      lacking      mediocre      movie  
*cengtoya*  
 level  
 'The movie I watched yesterday was a movie of a mediocre level  
 lacking touching elements.'
- b. *Paykongwonssinun*      *cippapey*                      *kwanhanhan*  
 Mr. Paykongwon      house.meals                      about  
 'chackha-n      *yoli*      *silyek'ul* *gaciko*      *issta*  
 great                      cooking ability      have      be  
 'Mr. Paykongwon has a great cooking ability concerning house  
 meals.'

Developing the ideas of Grice (1975), Blome-Tillmann (2008) suggests the cancellability test for implicatures as in (20). According to him, there are two types of cancellability principles: the principle of explicit cancellability in (20a) and the principle of contextual cancellability in (20b). Both of them can give us an idea about whether a certain sense is an implicature or not, even though, as Blome-Tillmann (2008) argues, there are implicatures that do not pass the tests.

- (20) a. If an utterance of P conversationally implicates q in C, then utterances of "P, but not Q" or "P, but I don't mean to imply that Q" are admissible in C and they cancel the speaker's commitment to q.
- b. If an utterance of P conversationally implicates q in C, then there is a context in which utterances of P do not commit the speaker to q.

With the tests proposed above, we can check the implicature-hood of the senses we are dealing with. First, we can think about the cases of implicit cancellability very easily since the implicatures of the adjective *chakhata* fluctuate depending on the surrounding context all the time. Suppose that the utterance in (19a) was used in a context where an objective documentary movie without touching elements has to be made. Then, the implicature can be

cancelled. Also, the implicature in (19b) can be canceled, if the context where the utterance was made was about denouncing cooks who use too much sugar.

Furthermore, we can apply the principle of explicit cancellability in the examples discussed above. In the following examples, we can see that the Q-implicature in (21a) and the R-implicature in (21b) are explicitly cancelled without causing contradictions.

- (21) a.    *nayka*      *ecey*      *pon*      *yenghwanun*   *hanmatilo*  
           I           yesterday watch      movie          in.a.word  
           *malhayse*   *'wulim*                    *epsnun*      *chakhan yenghwa'*  
           say          touching.element      lacking      mediocre movie  
           *cengtoya*   *haciman*   *hwulyunghaci*      *anhun*  
           level       but           great                   not  
           *yenghwalanun*      *kesun*                    *aniya*  
           movie                    thing                    not  
           'The movie I watched yesterday was at a mediocre level lacking touching  
           elements but I do not mean to say (imply) that it was not great.'
- b.    *Paykcongwonssinun*   *cippapey*                    *kwanhanhan*  
       Mr. Paykcongwon   house.meals-Loc          about  
       *chackhan*   *yoli*          *silyekul gaciko*      *iss-ta*  
       great          cooking   ability   have      be  
       *haciman*   *taytanhi*   *hwulyunghan*      *silyekuy*  
       but           very          great                    ability  
       *poyucalanun*   *kesun*    *anita*  
       possessor    thing      not  
       'Mr. Paykcongwon has a great cooking ability concerning house  
       meals but I do not mean to say (imply) that he is a possessor of a  
       great cooking ability.'

Since we think that the two opposing senses of the adjective *chakhata* pass the cancellability tests, we claim that they should be distinguished from other denotations and be treated at a pragmatic level. Yet, we would like to note that failing to pass the cancellability test does not mean that the senses are not implicatures in case there are speakers who do not share the same judgments

with us. It has been noted that there are many implicatures which are not cancellable. Yet, if certain senses can be cancelled, then they are highly likely to be implicatures.

#### 4. Extension

Related to the claim made in the previous section, there is a further application that we can make. Previously, Voßhagen (1999) conducted an interesting study on words with opposite meanings. He exemplifies the following words or phrases which are apparently used in opposite meanings from their basic meaning.

- (22) bad
  - a. 'eminently suitable or appropriate; excellent; wonderful'
  - b. 'a simple reversal of the white standard, the very best'
  - c. 'good. originally from the terminology of the poorest black Americans, either as simple irony or based on the assumption that what is bad in the eyes of the white establishment is good for them.'
- (23) wicked
  - 'excellent in any way; potent; strong; capable'
- (24) pretty ear
  - 'an ear deformed from being hit repeatedly; a cauliflower ear'
- (25) nasty
  - 'excellent; wicked'
- (26) mean
  - 'psychologically exciting, satisfying, and exhaustive; the best, the greatest'
- (27) evil
  - 'wonderful; specifically, thrilling, very satisfying.'
- (28) big deal
  - 'anything important, satisfying, exciting, interesting, lavish'
  - 'Sarcastically, anything or anyone believed to be unimportant, uninteresting, or unimpressive.'
- (29) big idea
  - 'an unwelcome suggestion, proposal, or action'

- (30) fat  
 'poor, slight, slim; usu. in "a fat chance" = little or no chance'
- (31) mad  
 'exciting; remarkable, pleasing, excellent'
- (32) frantic  
 'exciting; satisfying; wonderful; cool'
- (33) scare  
 'a pleasant surprise'
- (34) panicky  
 'extreme pleasure or excitement'; 'excellent, very satisfying or exciting'
- (35) terrible  
 'wonderful; great; the best; the most'

Voßhagen (1999) argues that opposition within words can be viewed as a conceptual metonymic relation which Lakoff (1987) defines as in (36) below. That is, Voßhagen (1999) insists that opposites constitute one conceptual domain and the relation between the opposites is made based on close mental contiguity.

- (36) a. There is a great concept A to be understood for some purpose in some context.  
 b. There is a conceptual structure containing both A and another concept B.  
 c. B is either part of A or closely associated with it in that conceptual structure. Typically, a choice of B will uniquely determine A, within that conceptual structure.  
 d. Compared to A, B is either easier to understand, easier to remember, easier to recognize, or more immediately useful for the given purpose in the given context.

Yet, this paper would like to claim that the implicature-based account for *chakhata* can also explain the words with opposite meanings that Voßhagen (1999) dealt with. The commonality of the words listed above is that they are all scalar. Our account do not miss this important characteristic in that forming a scale is one of the basic conditions of generating Q-implicatures that negate the

stronger form and thus derive an opposite meaning.

In other words, extending the account for *chakhata*, this paper claims that the implicature account can explain the words with opposite meanings. If the basic meaning of a word is neutral, the opposition can be operated in both the negative direction and the positive direction as in *chakata*, based on both the Q principle and the R principle. Yet, when the basic meaning of a word is already placed in an extreme position such as the word *crazy*, the strengthened meaning based on the R principle seems to be missing and only the negation based on the Q principle suffices to produce opposite meanings within a word. Thus, basically the Q principle can explain scalar words with opposite meanings.

In claiming so, we would also like to point out some limitations of Voßhagen (1999). First of all, Voßhagen (1999) claims that opposition is absolute rather than being scalar. What he believes is that human beings tend to process concepts in black and white, not in shades of gray. In claiming so, he distinguishes the semantic realm and the conceptual realm. He acknowledges that there is a neutral and middle ground when we deal with opposites for gradable terms semantically. However, he argues that, at the conceptual level, only two opposite terms may involve, revealing two-valued orientation.

However, as discussed for the case of *chakhata*, words with opposite meanings are not at all two-value oriented but can employ the neutral ground extensively as repeatedly shown in the examples in (37). Furthermore, it seems that there is little ground to believe that the neutral area only exists in the semantic domain, not in the conceptual domain, in terms of the view that meanings amount to concepts.

- (37) a. **chakhan** salam  
           good        person     'a good-natured person'  
       b. **chakhan** simseng  
           good        heart       'a good-natured heart,'

There is another problem observed with respect to the metonymy account. In a word, the metonymy account is too powerful. The account's basic position is that opposites can belong to one conceptual domain but, if this is so, then any relation can. What we mean by this is that constituting one conceptual domain

can characterize not only words with opposite meanings but also words with related meanings, words with similar meanings, words with relations of inclusion, words with part-whole relations, etc. since all the relations mentioned can belong to one conceptual domain. Then, the metonymy account can explain almost every word in similar ways.

By having this problem of being too broadly conceptualized, the metonymy account has the problem of not being able to explain why only the limited number of words have opposite meanings. In other words, the metonymy account has few restrictions so that it hardly has a way to account for the non-occurrence of opposition within words. Yet, this problem of the metonymy account is in contrast with the current proposal based on implicatures since it has been much discussed that there are several constraints placed on the production of Q-implicatures.

Matsumoto (1995) summarizes the restrictions operating on Q-implicatures by the overarching condition in (38). According to him, Q-implicatures evoking the meaning of negation are not generated if the general condition in (38) is violated. In terms of the condition we can understand that Q-implicatures are not licensed if it is possible that there are some other reasons for not using S. To put it differently, if the reason that the S form is not selected can be attributed to the speaker's observance of other rules of conversation such as the Maxim of Quantity 2, the Maxim of Relation, and the Maxim of Obscurity Avoidance, Q-implicatures can naturally be blocked.

- (38) Conversational Condition: The choice of W instead of S must not be attributed to the observance of any information-selecting Maxim of Conversation other than the Quality Maxims and the Quantity-1 Maxim (i.e., the Maxims of Quantity-2, Relation, and Obscurity Avoidance, etc.)

Since there are ways to constrain Q-implicatures, under our account based on implicatures, there are also ways to explain why there are only the limited number of words with opposite meanings, well acknowledging the non-occurrence of opposite meanings in many words. Q-implicatures are automatic but are not always processed at the presence of constraints that can block them. In this aspect, the implicature account we propose can be better suited for explaining words with



opposite interpretations, including the case of *chakhata* even though we admit that the metonymy-based account also has many merits.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on previous observations that the adjective *chakahta* can have both the positively-intensified meaning of 'great or excellent' and the negative meaning of 'not great or not excellent,' this paper has provided a new account: the positively strengthened meaning of *chakhata* is an R-implicature while the meaning extended into the negative realm is a Q-implicature. It might be a delicate matter to distinguish implicatures from other extended meanings. Yet, we believe that they must be distinguished since we can easily draw the implicatures not only with the basic meanings but also with the extended meanings. Extending the account for *chakhata*, this paper has also claimed that scalar words with opposite meanings in general can also be explained based on implicatures. We believe that this new approach can overcome the limitations of a previous study which is based on metonymy. The metonymy account incorrectly argues for two-value orientation of the words with opposite meanings and is also problematic due to its unconstrained nature. Not encountering these problems, the implicature-based explanation can naturally address why some words have opposite meanings within themselves.

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