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## The way of *truth*: The case of the Korean discourse marker *cincca* in comparison with Chinese *zhenshi* and *zhende*

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### Abstract

Korean has a number of discourse markers (DMs) of Chinese origin, which carry similar and different functions as compared to Chinese source lexemes. Despite their significance, they have not received much attention, hence the rationale of the present study. The goal of the study is to compare DMs of the same origin in Korean and Chinese to identify similarities and differences, based on the data taken from historical and contemporary sources. The Korean DM *cincca* ‘a true thing’, composed of *cin* ‘tru(th)’ and the nominalizer *cca* ‘thing, person’, presents an interesting grammaticalization scenario into diverse discourse functions. The findings demonstrate that in addition to its original nominal function, the DM also carries an adjectival function of adding genuineness or excellence in quality to a modified noun or an adverbial function of adding emphasis to an adjective or a predicate. From this intensifying function there arise diverse DM functions through the interaction of the source meaning of ‘truthfulness’ and diverse inferences from the discourse contexts. The Chinese DMs involving the same etymon are *zhende* (from *zhen* ‘true’ and *de* ‘NOMINALIZER’) and *zhenshi* (from *zhen* ‘true’ and *shi* ‘be so’). The functions of these two DMs are similar to those of the Korean *cincca*, but the Chinese DM *zhenshi* is negatively-biased by marking the speaker’s negative evaluation of the referenced person or event. An exploration on grammaticalization processes and functions in the two languages reveals much commonality but some differences in terms of functional distribution, prosody, and the extent of desemantization.

**Keywords:** *grammaticalization, discourse marker, truth, Chinese, Korean*

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## Путь *ИСТИНЫ*: корейский дискурсивный маркер *cincca* в сравнении с китайскими *zhenshi* и *zhende*

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### Аннотация

В корейском языке есть ряд дискурсивных маркеров (ДМ) китайского происхождения, которые выполняют как схожие, так и различные функции по сравнению с исходными китайскими лексемами. Несмотря на свою значимость, им не уделялось особого внимания в литературе. Цель данной статьи – сравнить дискурсивные маркеры одного и того же происхождения в корейском и китайском языках для выявления их сходств и различий. Исследование проведено на основе данных, взятых из исторических и современных источников. В центре внимания – корейский ДМ *cincca* ‘истинная вещь’, состоящий из *cin* ‘истина’ и номинализатора *cca* ‘вещь, человек’, который представляет интересный случай грамматикализации и приобретения способности выполнять различные функции в дискурсе. Результаты исследования демонстрируют, что в дополнение к первоначальной номинальной функции этот ДМ также выполняет адъективную функцию, добавляя модифицированному существительному значение подлинности или качества, также адвербиальную функцию добавления акцента к прилагательному или сказуемому, усиливая прилагательное или сказуемое. Из этой усиливающей функции возникли различные функции ДМ посредством взаимодействия исходного значения правдивости и значений, выводимых из различных контекстов. Китайские ДМ, включающие тот же этимон, – *zhende* (от *zhen* ‘истинный’ и *de* ‘НОМИНАЛИЗАТОР’) и *zhenshi* (от *zhen* ‘истинный’ и *shi* ‘быть должным’). Функции этих двух китайских ДМ схожи с функциями корейского *cincca*, но китайский ДМ *zhenshi* имеет отрицательную коннотацию, то есть содержит отрицательную оценку говорящим упомянутого человека или события. Исследование процессов и функций грамматикализации в двух языках выявляет много общего, а также выделяет некоторые различия в плане функционального распределения, просодии и степени десемантизации.

**Ключевые слова:** грамматикализация, дискурсивный маркер, истина, китайский язык, корейский язык

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## 1. Introduction

Lexemes denoting ‘truth, right’ seem to be among the common sources of discourse markers (DMs). In an extensive lexicon of grammaticalization, Kuteva et al. (2019: 374) exemplify the grammaticalization of DMs that originated from the lexemes denoting ‘right, true, correct’, e.g., English *right*, German *richtig* ‘right’, Hebrew *naxon* ‘right’, Turkish *doğru* ‘right’, etc. The lexicon also lists intensive

markers developed from the lexemes denoting ‘true, real’, e.g., Archaic Chinese *qing* ‘truth’, Early Modern Chinese *zhen* ‘true’, Old French *verai* ‘tru(ly), truthful(ly)’ (borrowed into Middle English *verray*, Modern English *very*), Hungarian *igaz* ‘true’, *igaz-án* ‘really’, Baka *ko* ‘truly, really, completely’, and American Sign Language TRUE (see individual references cited in the lexicon). Since the intensive markers, also commonly called as ‘intensifiers’, closely resemble and are often treated as DMs, the list suggests a widespread grammaticalization of DMs from the lexemes meaning ‘right, real, true, correct’.

Many Asian states have been influenced by China for millennia, due to China’s ‘cultural prestige or attractivity’ (Bisang 2006: 89), and this influence is often clearly visible in language, which is particularly true with Korean. For instance, even though the exact time is unknown, Koreans used Chinese characters or their modified versions to suit Korean, taking the character’s meaning (semantogram) or sound (phonogram), prior to the invention of the Korean script *Hangeul* (= *Hangul*, *Hankul*) in 1443. Identifiably Korean texts written in Chinese characters date back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE (Whitman 2015). Chinese characters are no longer in common use in Korea, but the Korean lexicon has a large proportion of Sino-Korean words. In *Phyocwun Kwuke Taysacen* (1999), an authoritative dictionary containing 364,000 head words, 53.2 per cent of the entry is of Chinese origin, mostly nouns. Some of these Sino-Korean words grammaticalized into DMs after they were borrowed into Korean. The morpheme *cin* ‘tru(th)’ is one such borrowed word, from which the DM *cincca* was formed in Modern Korean.

Despite its recency in development, the Korean DM *cincca* presents an interesting grammaticalization scenario. It is a hybrid form consisting of the Sino-Korean bound morpheme *cin* ‘truth’ and the nominalizer *cca* ‘thing, person’, thus denoting ‘a true thing’ (see 4.1 for more). A noun phrase in form, *cincca*, from the early days of its appearance, carries an adjectival function of adding genuineness or excellence in quality to a modified noun (e.g., *cincca yayki* ‘a true story’, *cincca pomwul* ‘a genuine treasure’) or of an adverbial function of adding emphasis to an adjective or a predicate (e.g., *cincca aphu-* ‘be truly painful’, *cincca hayngwuni-* ‘be truly fortunate’). In Modern Korean *cincca* displays a wide range of discourse functions. The DM *cincca* has been studied by Kim and Jeong (2012) and Rhee (2021), but since it was analyzed along with other DMs involving various ‘truth’-related DMs, the analyses were necessarily brief.

Chinese has two DMs that developed from the same etymon *zhen* (真) (note the notational variation in *zhen* and *cin*), i.e., *zhende* and *zhenshi*. These DMs have received attention in a number of studies, e.g., Li (2003), Yan (2006), Chen (2010), Fang (2012), Han (2016), Liu (2021) for *zhende* and Zhang (2004), Dong (2005), Wang (2010), Li (2011), Guo (2015), Li (2015) for *zhenshi*. These studies have addressed each DM largely with respect to syntactic and semantic features, not involving comparative or crosslinguistic perspectives. A historical investigation shows that the development of these two DMs is rather recent, i.e., from around the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and that their functions have substantial commonalities as well as

relatively minor differences with the Korean counterpart (henceforth all these DMs are collectively called ‘the TRUTH-DMs’). This state of affairs presents theoretically significant implications in grammaticalization studies but there has been no research comparing and contrasting these DMs to date. Given this background, this research intends to fill the gap. It aims to compare them and answer the following research questions:

- (i) how did the truth-DMs in Korean and Chinese develop?
- (ii) what are the similarities and differences between their functions in the two languages?
- (iii) what are the major changes that occurred in the development of these DMs?

The organization of the paper is as follows. Section 2 briefly presents a theoretical background; section 3 explains research methods; section 4 presents discourse functions of Korean DM *cincca* (in 4.1) and Chinese DMs *zhende* and *zhenshi* (in 4.2 and 4.3); section 5 discusses a few issues of theoretical importance, i.e., notable changes (in 5.1), and commonalities and differences (in 5.2); and section 6 summarizes the major findings and concludes the paper.

## 2. Theoretical background

Languages come into contact with other languages for diverse reasons, and such contact often leads to change. Grammaticalization is a ubiquitous process in the scenes of language contact, which may affect any part of language structure (Heine & Kuteva 2011: 291). In recent linguistic research traditions, the role of language contact in grammaticalization, and, more generally, language change, has attracted the attention of researchers, notably Heine and Kuteva (2005), Adamou and Matras (2020) and Grant (2020). Notable contributions of these studies include identifying the influence of the donor language with respect to the borrowed lexemes’ original semantics, the language’s typological profile, and the limits of the transfer, i.e., borrowability. Furthermore, by comparing the donor and recipient language situations, a better understanding about the contact-induced and evolutive (i.e., language-internal) grammaticalization has been made possible.

## 3. Data and research methods

DMs arise from an interaction, either real or imagined, in discourse and their functions are highly variable depending on the context they occur in. Therefore, authentic discourse data are of crucial importance in DM research. Also, it is important to have historical data in order to trace the change of the DMs and their earlier forms. For this reason, Korean data are taken from various historical and contemporary resources, including the Sejong Historical Corpus for diachronic investigation, and the Drama Corpus for investigation of contemporary usage. The Sejong Historical Corpus is a 15-million-word, historical section of the Sejong Corpus, developed as part of the government-led 21st Century Sejong Project

(1998–2006). The texts in the historical section date from 1446 through 1913. The Drama Corpus is a 24-million-word contemporary corpus, a collection of 7,454 scenarios of dramas and movies dating from 1992 through 2015, compiled by Min Li while she was at Seoul National University (currently at Tsinghua University). UNICONC, a concordance program developed by Jinho Park, was used as a data search engine. The data for analyses of Chinese DMs is taken from the CCL (The Center for Chinese Linguistics at Peking University) online corpus, consisting of 581,794,456 characters, without word segmentation or POS tagging.<sup>1</sup> The data obtained from corpus search are hand screened for identification of their grammatical status and function.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Korean *cincca*

Korean has a number of TRUTH-related adverbs involving the Sino-Korean morpheme *cin* ‘tru(th), e.g., *cinsillo*, *cintis* (obsolete), *cinceng*, *cincengulo*, *cincengkho*, and *cincca*. Of these, only *cincca* functions as a full-fledged TRUTH-DM in contemporary Korean, in view of syntactic behavior and discourse functions, whereas others either carry lexical meanings or are of marginal distribution (cf. Kim & Jeong 2012, Rhee 2021). The meaning of *cin* has been extended over time to a great extent, e.g., ‘(religious) truth’ (15<sup>th</sup> c.), ‘substance, genuineness, reality (counter-expectation), factuality, extraordinariness’ (15<sup>th</sup> c.), ‘sincerity’ (16<sup>th</sup> c.), ‘depth, strength, truthfulness, true identity’ (19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> c.), etc. (Rhee 2021: 468–469).

The word *cincca* first occurs as *cincca* in a Korean-English bilingual dictionary *Hanyengcacen* (1897), but dictionaries (e.g., *Wulimalsaym* and *Koesacen*) indicate that it is a modern form of the earlier forms, *cintis* (15<sup>th</sup> c. –19<sup>th</sup> c.), *cincis* (15<sup>th</sup> c. –20<sup>th</sup> c.), *cincit* (18<sup>th</sup> c.).<sup>2</sup> It is not clear, however, how the modern *cincca* and the earlier forms *cintis/cincis/cincit* are related, especially phonologically. The modern form, *cincca*, is likely to have developed from a Sino-Korean morphological derivation of *cin* ‘true’ and *ca* ‘thing’, of which the last consonant /c/ became tensed to /cc/ for emphasis (see Koo 2009 for discussion of force-dynamic representation of tensed and aspirated sounds).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Special thanks go to the developers of these corpora and search programs for generously granting their use for our research.

<sup>2</sup> Two Chinese-Korean historical dictionaries (*Yekeyuhaypo* 1775 & *Pangenyusek* 1778) show that Chinese *zhen* and *zhende* are equal to *cincis* in Korean. Even though *cincca* is first attested in 1923, the DM function is first observed in a 1964 drama, *Culkewun wulicip* [Our sweet home].

<sup>3</sup> If *cca* is indeed related to the Sino-Korean morpheme *ca* (子; ‘son, thing, or a NOMINALIZER’ or 者 ‘person, thing, or a NOMINALIZER’), it is a fully Koreanized morpheme in contemporary Korean, as found in *kacca* ‘a fake thing’, *chocca* ‘a novice’, *kongcca* ‘something free of charge’, *sayngcca* ‘uncooked food; an unexperienced person’, and many other similarly formed words. *Hanyengcacen* (1897) indicates *zhende* (真的) as its Chinese counterpart, with the meaning in English ‘what is real, genuine quality, a sincere person’.

The predecessor forms *cintis/cincis/cincit* had adjectival, adverbial, and nominal functions. They had such meanings as ‘pure’ (e.g., pure gold); ‘truthful’ (e.g., truthful principle); ‘genuine’ (e.g., genuine sap), in the 15<sup>th</sup> c. data; ‘truly’ (e.g., truly resembling an army general) in the 17<sup>th</sup> c. data; and ‘very’ (e.g., very rich), ‘truth’ (e.g., truth and falsity) in the 18<sup>th</sup> c. data. The modern form *cincca* is a noun phrase in form but from the early days of its appearance, it carried an adjectival function of adding genuineness or excellence in quality to a modified noun (e.g., ‘a true story’, ‘a genuine treasure’), or an adverbial function of adding emphasis to an adjective or a predicate (e.g., ‘truly fortunate’, ‘truly painful’). The modern form, *cincca*, inherited the semantic features from its predecessors, and from the emphatic adverbial function there arose diverse DM functions through the interaction of the source meaning of truthfulness and diverse inferences from the discourse contexts.

#### 4.1.1. Emphasis (*cincca*)

Among the primary, and presumably first, DM function is the emphatic function, paraphrasable as ‘I am serious/What I say is true!’, modifying a proposition, whereby the propositional content can carry stronger, emphatic force. The emergence of this function from a lexeme denoting ‘true’ is conceptually straightforward. This usage is exemplified in the following excerpt:<sup>4</sup>

(1) [Hearing knocks on the 2nd floor window, C is scared and tries to stay in the arms of his father. His older siblings A and B look at him pathetically.]

A: [You are in your father’s arms because you don’t want to study (in your room).]

B: [No doubt. I, too, used to say I had stomachache to avoid studying when I was young.]

C: 아니라니깐요! 진짜 누가 창문을 두드렸다구요!

*ani-lanikkan-yo! cincca nwuka changmwun-ul twutuly-ess-takwu-yo!*

be.not-END -POL DM someone:NOM window-ACC knock-PST-END-POL

‘No! **DM (= I’m serious!)** Someone knocked at the window (and that’s why I am so scared!)’

(2008, Sitcom *Khokkili* Episode #116)

One interesting aspect of this development is that the ‘truth’ is conceptualized as opposed to non-truth in (deceptive) appearance, whereby the addressee is not yet cognizant of the ‘truth’ and thus the speaker is about to reveal. In other words, in a situation as in (1), the speaker is claiming that the truth (that someone knocked on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor window) is in opposition to the appearance (that such an event is impossible). In this line of thought, the ‘truth’ is often considered as hidden or at least not easily accessible, whose manifestation is considered extraordinary. In the development of the emphasis function, it can be said that the intensifying a property

<sup>4</sup> In examples, the lines that do not require morphemic glosses are given in English translation within square brackets and supplementary information not present in the original text but is helpful for understanding the meaning is given in parenthesis in translation.

of an entity (as a quality/degree modifying adjective or adverb) in the subjective world has carried over to emphasizing the value of a proposition in the interactional/intersubjective world. From a crosslinguistic perspective, the development of a ‘truth’ lexeme into a pause-filling DM is analogous to the development of the ‘certainty’ lexemes (e.g. *actually, really, no doubt, indeed*, etc.) into the DMs for pause-filling, as well as uncertainty and mitigation (Aijmer 1986, Čapková 2015).

#### 4.1.2. Discontent (*cincca*)

The DM *cincca* has further acquired the emotive function of marking discontent, frustration or even annoyance. This function can be paraphrased as ‘I am unhappy with the situation’ or ‘It’s so frustrating’. The DM used in this function typically occurs stand-alone and often precedes or follows ellipsis. This seems to be closely related to the emphatic function elaborated above since such an utterance is often necessitated by someone or a situation not compatible with the speaker’s ‘true’ intention or desire. However, the DM in this function tends to be not other-directed and thus to occur typically in monologues, i.e., the speaker contains the discontented feelings to themselves. This function is illustrated in the following:

(2) Frustration *cincca* (Modern Korean)

[The speaker runs after his girlfriend, who saw him with a woman. His girlfriend gets in a taxi and goes away before he can stop her.]

A: 선주씨이이 아 진짜...!  
*senwu-ssiii* (taxi drives away; A watches it blankly) a *cincca...!*  
 [name]-HON INTJ DM...  
 ‘Sunjoo~! Alas, **DM (= it’s so frustrating!)**.’

(2007, Drama *Talcauy pom* Episode #8)

The relationship between ‘truth’ and discontent is rather subtle. The claimed truth is that what the speaker says or feels is ‘truthful’.

#### 4.1.3. Challenge (*cincca*)

Closely related to the discontent function exemplified above is that of marking challenge, paraphrasable as ‘I am challenging you’, also often occurring in elliptical contexts. Obviously, this is a stronger form of negative emotion than discontent, and its major difference from discontent is that it is other-directed, and thus interactional. As the DM is directed toward the addressee, it is typically spoken in a louder voice than the discontent DM. This function is illustrated by the following excerpt:

(3) Challenge *cincca* (Modern Korean)

(A and B are traveling companions without mutual acquaintance. A says he is indebted to B, because B helped him get released from the prison. A wants to be of B’s help in return, but B is a royal envoy incognito, who does not want A to follow him.)

A: [Even beasts know how to pay back for the favor. They pluck their own hair to make warm clothes for their owner.]

B: [(plucking hair from his nostril,) Here's one. Make a fur jacket with it.]

A: 이 양반이 진짜 보자 보자 하니까...

(in fury) *i yangpan-i cincca po-ca po-ca ha-nikka...*  
 this fellow-NOM DM see-HORT see-HORT say-CONN

‘(Look at) this fellow **DM (= I’m challenging you!)** I’ve been patiently swallowing insult but...’ (Lit. ‘This fellow, while (I’ve) been saying to myself, ‘let’s wait, let’s wait’,...’)

B: 뭐? 이 양반? 이게 죽을라구 진짜...

(in fury) *mwe? i yangpan? ike-y cwuk-ullakwu cincca...*  
 what? this fellow? this.thing-NOM die-PURP DM

‘What? This fellow? (Look at) this damn fella. (He’s) begging to die, **DM (= I’m challenging you!).**’

(2011, Movie *Cosen myengthamceng*)

In (3) the DM *cincca* in the challenge function occurs twice. It signals that their offended feeling or their intention of performing a punitive action is ‘true’ and strong.

#### 4.1.4. Surprise (*cincca*)

The DM *cincca* has also acquired a neutral or positive function as an interjection-like marker of surprise, paraphrasable as ‘I am surprised’. Unlike the negative functions of discontent and challenge, shown in 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 above, the surprise marked by *cincca* can be neutral, positive, or negative in nature. The positive and negative surprise is exemplified in the following examples:

(4) a. Positive surprise *cincca* (Modern Korean)

(The speaker is impressed by the luxury of the house in which his friend used to live.)

[Is this the house you used to live?]

와~ 너 진짜 좋은 데 살았구나.

*wa~ ne cincca coh-un tey sal-ass-kwuna*  
 INTJ you DM be.good-ADN place live-PST-EXCL

‘Wow... you **DM (= what a surprise!)** lived in a wonderful place!’

(2010, Drama *Kutay, wuseyo* Episode #6)

b. Negative surprise *cincca* (Modern Korean)

(A, while interrogating a witness-suspect, coaxes him to confess, promising that he will be protected by the witness protection laws and that his charges would be exonerated, a promise that he cannot guarantee. A’s supervisor (B) stops him and reprimands him for his reckless promises.)

B: [(How can you act so arbitrarily?) A witness protection might be alright, but do you think exoneration is what you can do?]

A: [What’s important is to make him talk no matter what. Why should I keep my promises?]



B: (dumbstruck) 강민기... 너 진짜...

*kangminki... ne cincca...*

[name] you DM

‘Kang Minki... you **DM (= How surprising! How can you say that?)**’

(2007, Drama *Kaywa nuktayuy sikan* Episode #10)

The DM carrying the interjective surprise function also tends to occur in elliptical structures, often involving elongated trailing of the last syllable. The ellipsis strongly suggests that the speaker is emotionally overwhelmed and is unable to complete the utterance.

#### 4.1.5. Sudden remembrance (*cincca*)

Still another function is to mark sudden remembrance or realization, which can be paraphrased as ‘Oh, I almost forgot’ or ‘Oh, that reminds me’. The DM in this function occurs at the left-periphery, and thus prefaces a statement or question that has been nearly forgotten. This is exemplified in the following example:

(5) Sudden remembrance *cincca* (Modern Korean)

A: [Why are you so down? What’s the matter?]

B: [No, nothing.]

A: [Tell me. What is it? You look so down. Did he cause trouble?]

B: 아니에요. 진짜... 저기요

*ani-ey-yo. cincca... ceki-yo*

be.not-END-POL DM DM-POL

‘No. **DM (= Oh, that reminds me)**... well..’

A: [Yes. What is it?]

B: [If a man does not come when a woman’s family invites him, it means that he is not serious about the woman, right?]

(2016, Drama *1%-uy etten kes* Episode #8)

The surprise function elaborated above (in 4.1.4) is closely related to this sudden remembrance function, because remembering or realizing forgotten ‘truth’ is typically instantaneous and often leads to surprise. For this reason, DMs used for these two functions resemble interjections.

#### 4.1.6. Pause-filling (*cincca*)

The last function to be elaborated is that of filling a pause. Pause-filling, in general, may be necessitated by the speaker’s need for word search to earn time for formulation of an utterance, which the speaker may either succeed or fail, or by the speaker’s desire to signal that the situation is such that any suitable utterance cannot be found. Thus, the DM *cincca* carrying the pause-filling function can be paraphrased as ‘I am not yet finished’, or ‘I am speechless’ or rhetorically ‘What can I say?!’ The acquisition of the filler function suggests that the ‘truth’ meaning originally associated with the source lexeme has become significantly bleached, with no discernible semantic vestige in the form. This state of affairs is similar to

the English TRUTH-DM *actually* carrying the filler function (cf. Aijmer 1986). This function of *cincca* is illustrated in the following:

(6) Pause-filling *cincca* (Modern Korean)

a. (A learns that his girlfriend's (B's) father remarried. Now in reference to B's younger stepsister he met the other day:)

B: [So, I live with my stepmother's daughter, and the girl you met the other day is...]

A: [Aha, I got it. She is the collaborative production of my would-be father-in-law and his new wife!]

B: 아... 진짜...

(siling)	<i>aa...</i>	<i>cincca...</i>
	INTJ	DM

'Oh, DM (= Well, I don't know what to say...?!)'

A: 진짜 뭐요?

<i>cincca</i>	<i>mwe-yo?</i>
real	what-POL

'Real what?'

(2009, Drama *Chenmanpen salanghay* Episode #22)

b. (Mother (A) is trying to win sympathy from her daughter (B) and son (C) by refusing to eat and feigning to be sick in order to get money from them. B and C know that A is not really sick.)

C: [Mom... (handing A an envelope with money).. Mom... this much is all I can do for you.]

A: (Her eyes twinkling all of a sudden) [uh..?]

C: [My wife does not know this. Just keep that in mind.]

A: (pretending to be struggling to sit up) [I understand... thank you... I will surely pay it back to you...]

C: [Now come out of the room ... Eat with us... (and exits the room)]

A: [... OK... I should try to eat for you guys even if I've lost appetite...]

B: ...아우 우리 엄마 진짜...

...	<i>awu</i>	<i>wuli</i>	<i>emma</i>	<i>cincca...</i>
	INTJ	our	mother	DM

'Oh! Our mother (is) DM (= what can I say?!)'

A: [Me? Me, what?]

(2011, Drama *Naysalang naykyethey* Episode #3)

Note that in (6a) B uses *cincca* as a DM with vacuous semantic content and A (tauntingly) copies the utterance and uses it as a lexical modifier, a commonly observed pun based on lexical and grammatical meanings of *cincca*. In (6b), A (the mother) knows that *cincca* used by B (her daughter) was a pause-filler indicating that she was speechless because of her senseless, childish behavior, but she twists it by pretending that her daughter was looking for words to describe her mother and that she wants to know what they were.

## 4.2. Chinese *zhende*

The modern Chinese lexeme *zhen* (真, simplified 真) ‘tru(th)’ is of a long history, found as early as in Archaic Chinese (also known as Old Chinese, 8<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BCE) (see Long et al. 2012). The word is found in a number of TRUTH-adverbs, e.g., *zhen* ‘tru(th)’, *zhende* ‘true PTCL, truth of’, *zhenshi* ‘tru(ly) so’, *zhenshide* ‘tru(ly) so PTCL, true correctness of’, *zhenxin* ‘sincere heart’, *zhenxinde* ‘sincere heart PTCL, sincere heart of’, *zhenzheng* ‘sincerity’, etc., in which *de* is a nominalizer.<sup>5</sup> Of these, *zhende* and *zhenshi* (and its variant *zhenshide*) function as DMs.

The ‘tru(th)’ meaning seems to have been extended to various semantic fields and notably to religious idea of truth or truthfulness. For instance, in one of the oldest dictionaries, *Shuowen Jiezi* of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the meaning of *zhen* is given with the following explanation, strongly suggesting that *zhen* was related to religious idea of ‘true person’, ‘fairy’, ‘un-worldly man’, ‘hermit’, etc.

- (7) (真) 僊人變形而登天也。此真之本義也。  
 (Zhēn) xiān rén biànxíng ér dēngtiān yě.  
 (zhen) true person transform and ascend.to.heaven PTCL  
 Cǐ zhēn zhī běnyì yě.  
 this zhen of original.meaning PTCL  
 ‘(Zhen) True persons (= immortals) transform into heavens. This is the original meaning of ‘zhen’ .’

Despite the long history of *zhen*, the occurrence of *zhen-de*, involving *zhen* ‘tru(th)’, is very rare in old texts: before the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), it occurs only five times in the CCL corpus, with only two of them clearly meaning ‘true’, ‘genuine’. During the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) and the Qing dynasty (1644–1912), *zhen-de* occurs as a well-established syntactic construction, meaning ‘true’, ‘genuine’, ‘real’. It is only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that *zhende* begins to occur as a unverbated adverb denoting ‘in reality’, ‘truly’. *Zhende* thus diverges into the original lexical use as a noun and the grammaticalized use as a DM. In the latter use, it is now not part of an argument (i.e., of a noun phrase) or a predicate (i.e., of a verb), and thus it is omissible. The following excerpt from the 19<sup>th</sup> century exemplifies the adverbial use of *zhende*.

- (8) Adverbial *zhende* ‘truly’ (19c)  
 [My younger brother aspires to study benevolence, righteousness, morality, and self-cultivation. I was very pleased when I read his letter...]  
 弟弟真的有此志向，要熟读《小学》及《五种遗规》两书。  
 dìdì zhēnde yǒu cǐ zhìxiàng, yào shúdú shúdú  
 younger.brother truly have this aspiration need peruse

<sup>5</sup> *De* in Modern Chinese is a multifunctional morpheme, e.g., markers of genitive (‘of’), relativization (‘that/which’), nominalization, affirmativity, among others.

“xiǎoxué”            jí            “wǔzhǒng yígūi” liǎng shū  
 [book.title]            and            [book.title]            two book  
 ‘If he **truly** has such aspirations, he should diligently study the books *Xiaoxue* and *Five Kinds of Yigui*.’

(19c. Zeng Guofan's family letter)

The development into an adverb, notably a sentential adverb, paves a way to the development of DMs (Traugott & Dasher 2002). This is evident in that many DMs across languages carry the dual function of adverbs and DMs, and that DMs, by virtue of not constituting a word class in their own right in traditional grammar, are typically categorized under adverbs. From the adverbial stage, *zhende* acquires diverse discursive functions.

#### 4.2.1. Emphasis (*zhende*)

The DM use of *zhende* is first attested in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, often standing alone by gaining positional freedom. Paraphrasable as ‘I’m serious/That’s true!’, the DM *zhende* emphasizes the content of the foregoing statement, i.e., it is an anaphoric emphasizer. This usage is illustrated in the following excerpts taken from Modern Chinese.

##### (9) Emphasis *zhende* (Modern Chinese)

a. [Li Qin, let me first express my gratitude for your criticism.]

真的！我从报上见到你的文章后，剪了下来，            夹于一本书中，予以保留。

*Lǐqín, ràng wǒ yě shǒuxiān duì nǐ de pīpíng biǎoshì gǎnxiè.*

**Zhēnde!**    Wǒ    cóng    bào-shàng    jiàn-dào    nǐ-de    wénzhāng hòu,

DM            I            from    newspaper-on see-RC    you-GEN article after

*jiǎn-le    xiàlái, jiā-yú    yì.běn    shū    zhōng, yǔ    yǐ    bǎoliú.*

cut-PERF    down place-in one-CLSF    book in            give to keep

‘**DM (= Really!)** After I saw your article in the newspaper, I cut it out and kept it in a book for safekeeping.’

(1996, *Writer digest*, Newspapers)

b. 她马上回答：“我不会介意的，真的。”

*Tā    mǎshàng    huídá: “Wǒ búhuì    jièyì-de    zhēnde.”*

she immediately answer I will.not mind-ptcl            DM

‘She immediately responded, “I won’t mind, **DM (= really).**”’

(1995, Novel, *Hóng Píngguǒ, Love of the Red Apple* by Yu Qing.)

c. Yang Lan: [But actually, when a person reaches their forties, they start to think about what they really want in life. In the past two years, have you experienced any changes in your mindset?]

刘德华:            变化了很多年，真的。需要一个自己的家。

*Liúdéhuá: Biànhuà-le hěnduō nián, zhēnde. Xūyào yí-gè zìjǐ-de jiā.*

change-PERF very.many year DM            need one-CLSF own-GEN home

Andy Lau: ‘There have been many changes over the years, **DM (= really).** I realized the need for a family of my own.’

(21c. *Yang Lan's Conversation with Prominent Figures: Yang Lan's Interview Record II*, Informal Dialogue)

#### 4.2.2. Preface to noteworthy information (*zhende*)

The next function, preface to noteworthy information, is similar to emphasis, in that both highlights the importance of the information in the discourse. As the name suggests, however, the function of preface to noteworthy information makes reference to what is to follow, i.e., cataphoric, in contrast with the emphasis function with the anaphoric reference. Thus, the DM in this function can be paraphrased as ‘Let me tell you this’, ‘Listen up’, ‘This is important’, etc. This function is exemplified in the following excerpts.

##### (10) Preface to noteworthy information *zhende* (Modern Chinese)

- a. [Liu Zhaohua shook the empty cup in his hand. At that moment, Ah Guang and the others were busy taking notes, and no one noticed that he needed water. I got up to pour him some water, and he thanked me.]

然后他不忘推销他的方剂说：“真的，你不信，我在桂林的研制的保健品都是天然的中药配方，倘若你服用之后，你这个人就像是换了一个人。”

*Ránhòu tā búwàng tuīxiāo tāde fāngjì shuō:*

“**Zhēnde**, nǐ búxìn, wǒ zài guǐlín-de yánzhì-de bǎojiànpǐn  
DM you not.believe I in [place.name]-GEN develop-ADN health.product  
*dōu shì tiānrán-de zhōngyào pèifāng, tǎngruò nǐ fúyòng zhīhòu,*  
all be natural-ADN Chinese.medicine formula if you take after  
*nǐ zhège rén jùxiàng shì huàn-le yí-gèrén.*”  
you this person just.like be change-PERF one-CLSF person

‘Then, he didn’t forget to promote his herbal medicine, saying, “**Really (Let me tell you this)**, it may be hard for you to believe me, but the health products I’ve developed in Guilin are all made from natural traditional Chinese medicine formulas. Once you take them, you’ll feel like a completely different person.”’

(20c. *Female Journalist’s Face-to-Face Conversation with Notorious Drug Lord Liu Zhaohua*, Informal Dialogue)

- b. [The conversation between Song Ailing and Kong Xiangxi did not know where it started, and gradually focused on their views on money. When it comes to money, both of them are very excited, and their faces are red with wine and blood.]

宋蔼龄先说道：“真的，我从小就有这种感觉，钱这个东西非常奇怪，非常神秘……”

*Sòngǎilíng xiān shuōdao: “Zhēnde, wǒ cóngxiǎo jiù yǒu zhèzhǒng ǎnjué,*  
[name] first say DM I from.young just have this.kind feeling  
*qián zhège dōngxī fēicháng qíguài, fēicháng shénmì...”*  
money this thing very strange very mysterious

‘Song Ailing first said: “**DM (= Really)**, I have had this feeling since I was a child. Money is very strange and mysterious...”’

(1998, *Complete Biography of the Song Family* by Cheng Guang and Ye Si.)

In the excerpts above, the speaker uses the DM *zhende* to signal that some important information is about to be revealed. To ensure the addressee’s attention, the DM is usually followed by a pause.

### 4.2.3. Surprise (*zhende*)

The next function is to mark the speaker’s surprise, and the DM can be paraphrased as ‘I’m surprised!’ Surprise signaled by *zhende* is value-neutral, thus for both good and bad in nature.<sup>6</sup> This function is exemplified in the following excerpt:

(11) Positive surprise *zhende* (Modern Chinese)

(Song has been distressed because her husband, President of the Republic of China, Chiang Kai-shek, has been very ill, which made her worry that he would die soon. Now, the doctor says he will not die so soon.)

[“Madam, please don’t worry. The President’s immune system can last at least six months without any issues,” the doctor reassured Soong Mei-ling.]

“真的！如果是这样，我太谢谢你了。”

“**Zhēnde!** Rúguǒ shì zhèyàng, wǒ tài xièxiè nǐ le.”

DM if be this I great thank you PTCL

“**Really!** If that’s the case, I am so grateful to you.”

(1998, *Complete Biography of the Song Family*  
by Cheng Guang and Ye Si.)

In the excerpt, the speaker, happily surprised by the relieving remarks by the doctor, uses the DM *zhende* at the receipt of the information. This function is similar to the Korean DM *cincca* with the function of marking positive surprise in (4a).

(12) Negative surprise *zhende* (Modern Chinese)

“真的，无语了，这些人的脑子得坏成什么样才能搞出这么个玩意儿来啊！”

“**Zhēnde,** wúyǔ le, zhèxiē rén-de nǎozi dǎi huài-chéng

DM no.word PTCL these person-GEN brain have bad-RC

shénme yàng cái-néng gāo-chū zhème-gè wányìr lái a!”

what form then-can bring-RC such-CLSF stuff come PTCL

‘DM (= Really), I’m speechless. How messed up do these people’s brains have to be to come up with something like this!’

(2010s\201x\Internet corpus\Weibo\weibo\_004)

In (12), similar to (11) above, the DM *zhende* signals surprise of the speaker, with the notable difference that the signaled surprise is negative in nature.

### 4.2.4. Preface to upcoming disalignment (*zhende*)

The last functional category of *zhende* is to preface an upcoming disalignment, paraphrasable as ‘Well, but...’, which is often used with *danshi* or *keshi* (both meaning ‘but’). In other words, the DM signals that the speaker has information that does not align with the interlocutor’s prior statement or expectation. In its

<sup>6</sup> As Haiping Long (p.c.) points out, *zhende* in this function tends to occur with a rising tone. As is the case with the Thai ‘truth’-based DM (Khammee 2024), which utilizes the appeal contour for certain functions, tonal or suprasegmental differentiations may be associated with particular discourse functions.

discourse function and its lexical semantics, this DM is similar to the English DM *actually*, which carries the function of prefacing upcoming disalignment. One major difference is that *actually* itself marks the shift (thus, does not usually occur with *but*) but the Chinese *zhende* is normally accompanied by the adversative connective ‘but’. This usage is exemplified below:

- (13) Preface to upcoming disalignment *zhende* (Modern Chinese)  
 [“Well,” said Jessop, “now you understand the method of suicide I propose to you. I propose that Mrs. Betterton should go on traveling. And you should be Mrs. Betterton.”]  
 “但是，真的，”希拉里说，“那将很难做到。...”  
 “*Dànshì, zhēnde,*” *xīlālǐ shuō,* “*nà jiāng hěnnán zuò-dào...*  
 but DM [name] say that will very.hard do-RC  
 “But, **DM (= actually; well, but),**” Hilary said, “that’s going to be hard to do. [I mean, they’re going to recognize right away that I’m not Mrs. Betterton.]”  
 (c. 1998, Novel *Mùdìdì Bùmíng*,  
 trans. of Agatha Christie’s *Destination Unknown*)

In the excerpt above, the speaker uses the DM *zhende* to signal that some disalignment (i.e., the speaker’s reluctance to accept the proposal) is to follow.

### 4.3. Chinese *zhenshi*

The Chinese expression *zhen-shi*, literally ‘be truly/correctly so’ (*zhen* ‘true’ + *shi* ‘be so’), denotes truthfulness of the described entity, either a choice of expression or the content of a statement. In the historical record, the expression first occurs from the Warring States period (475–221 BCE), as a syntactic construction, not univerbated, thus having a compositional meaning of ‘be truly (so)’. It continues to be used as a syntactic construction until the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127). In the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the internal cohesion increases and the syntactic construction (*zhen-shi*) becomes a univerbated word (*zhenshi*) carrying the adverbial function. In this word, the semantic focus is on *zhen* while *shi* is peripheral (thus, departing from the predicative use (‘(X) is truly so’)). In this period, however, the adverbial usage of *zhenshi* ‘truly’ is numerically insignificant. One such example is shown in the following excerpts:

- (14) Adverbial *zhenshi* (Ming dynasty)  
 [Just now, the mother’s worries turned into joy, and she smiled brightly, saying.]  
 “亏得儿子峥嵘有日，奋发有时，真是谢天谢地！”  
 “*Kuīdé érzi zhēngróng-yǒu-rì, fēnfā-yǒu-shí, zhēnshi xiètiānxièdì!*  
 fortunately son prominent-have-day strive-have-time truly thank.heaven.thank.earth  
 “Fortunately, son is extraordinary, and sometimes he works hard; **truly**, thank God.”

(Ming dynasty, 17c. *Jīn Gǔ Qíguān*,  
*Miracles of the Past and Present* by Bao Weng Lao Ren)

At a later time, in the Qing dynasty (1636–1912), the adverbial usage increases. As was the case with *zhende* in the previous section, *zhenshi* also begins to develop into a DM. With the persisting semantics of the source, its primary function is to affirm what is said (e.g., ‘That is true and correct’), but in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has acquired diverse discourse functions with the influence of the context and conceptual extension.

#### 4.3.1. Discontent (*zhenshi*)

The first, and most frequent function of the DM *zhenshi* is to signal negative stance of the speaker, such as discontented emotion or critical attitude, paraphrasable as ‘I’m not happy with you/that...’. The discontent is generally a mild one, typically with respect to the situation, or someone indicated in the discourse, or the interlocutor, but it can be a stronger as in blaming someone for misconduct. The negative attitude signaled by *zhenshi*, however, is not as strong as challenge indicated by the Korean DM *cincca* (see 4.1.3 above). What the speaker is unhappy with may be expressed before or after the DM, as shown in the following excerpts, taken from Early Modern Chinese and Modern Chinese data:<sup>7</sup>

(15) Discontent *zhenshi* (Early Modern Chinese and Modern Chinese)

- a. 这个人一想，再要是孩子凑多了，更不好办了。真是！

*Zhègè rén yì-xiǎng, zài yàoshi háizi còu duō le,*  
this person once-think again if child gather more PTCL  
*gèng bùhǎo bàn le. Zhēnshi!*  
further not.good handle PTCL DM

‘This person thought that if there were even more children, it would be even more difficult to handle. **DM (= Indeed!)**’

(Qing dynasty, 1890, *Xiǎo Wǔ Yì, The Five Little Moralities*)

- b. 秀芬急得说：“真是！凤姐怎么还不来？”

*Xiùfēn jíde shuō: “Zhēnshi! Fèngjiě zěnmē hái bù lái?”*  
[name] anxiously say DM [name] how still.not come

‘Xiu Fen anxiously exclaimed, “**DM (= Indeed!)** Why hasn’t Feng Jie arrived yet?”’

(Modern Chinese, 1964, *Zhàndòu de Qīngchūn, Fighting Youth*)

- c. [Anyway, it’s not something honorable or prestigious,]

何必问来问去，自寻烦恼？真是！

*hébi wèn lái wèn qù, zì-xún fǎnnǎo? Zhēnshi!*  
why ask.come ask.go self-seek trouble DM

‘Why bother asking around and causing unnecessary trouble? **DM (= Indeed!)**’

(1947, *Wéi Chéng, Siege* by Qian Zhongshu)

<sup>7</sup> According to the generally accepted periodization of the Chinese language, the Qing dynasty times (1636–1912) belong to Early Modern Chinese (1271–1912), encompassing the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties for over six centuries. The language of the Early Modern Chinese records dating from the late Qing dynasty times, especially those written around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, are similar to that of Modern Chinese.



d. A: [Is it the Li family again?]

B: “那还不是。那个男人啊，真是！丢了事，天天喝酒，越没有钱越喝酒。”

*Nà hái búshì. Nàgè nánrén a, zhēnshì!*

that still not that man ah DM

*Diū-le shì, tiāntiān hējiǔ, yuè méi-yǒu qiányuè hējiǔ.*

lose-PERF job everyday drink.liquor more not-have money more drink.liquor  
‘That’s right. That man, **DM (= really; how dreadful he is)!** He never goes to work but drinks every day. The less money he has, the more he drinks.’

(Modern Chinese, 20th c. *Bēi Gē, Elegy* by Zeng Zhuo)

In the examples above, *zhenshi* signals that the speaker (in (15a), the person being quoted, not the narrator) is unhappy with a hypothetical situation of having too many children to take care of; in (15b) the speaker is unhappy with the tardy person Feng Jie or with the delay being caused by him; in (15c) the speaker is annoyed by the repeated occurrence of an undesirable event or action; and in (15d) the speaker is expressing his disapproval toward the man with a blameworthy lifestyle. It is interesting to note that early instances of *zhenshi* nearly always occur as an affirmation/confirmation (‘That’s right’) of something negative (‘That’s right – it’s bad’), unlike its formal relative *zhende*, which does not show such propensity in evaluative polarity.

#### 4.3.2 Sudden remembrance (*zhenshi*)

The next function of *zhenshi* is to signal sudden remembrance or realization, paraphrasable as ‘Oh, I forgot’, ‘Oh, that reminds me!’ Since people utter this DM normally spontaneously at the moment of remembrance, it is said before the content of the remembrance is presented. This is illustrated in the following excerpt<sup>8</sup>:

- (16) Sudden remembrance *zhenshi* (Early Modern Chinese and Modern Chinese)  
[‘Zheng Xiong said, “Brother Yang, what do you three usually do for a living?”  
Yang Ming replied, “We work as bodyguards outside. May I know your honorable surname?”]  
马俊说：“真是，我也忘了，这是我拜兄，他姓郑名雄，名号人称铁面天王。”  
*Mǎjùn shuō: “Zhēnshì, wǒ yě wàng-le, zhè shì wǒ bàixiōng,*  
[name] say DM I also forget-PERF this be I sworn.brother  
*tā xìng zhèng míng xióng, míngào*  
he surname [name] first.name [name] name.and.alias  
*rénchēng tiěmiàn tiānwáng.”*  
person.call iron.face heavenly.king  
‘Ma Jun said, “**Indeed (= oh, I forgot!),** I forgot to introduce. This is my sworn brother. His surname is Zheng, and his name is Xiong. He is widely known as the Iron-faced Heavenly King.”’

(Qing dynasty, *Jigōng Quánzhuán, The Complete Biography of Jigong*)

<sup>8</sup> The exact year of publication of *Jigōng quán chuán* is unknown, but is generally believed to be around the turn of the century, i.e., between 1875–1908, during the reign of Emperor Guangxu of the Qing dynasty.

Since sudden remembrance or realization normally involves the speaker's memory lapse, this type of affirmation ('you are right') marked by the TRUTH-DM normally involves speaker's self-reproachment about the lapse, thus, indicating the general negative-bias of *zhenshi*, as shown in the example above.

## 5. Discussion

In the foregoing sections, we have looked into diverse functions of TRUTH-DMs in Korean and Chinese with examples taken from historical and contemporary corpora. Now we turn to a discussion of some issues of theoretical importance, i.e., notable changes at various levels of grammar and commonalities and differences between Korean and Chinese.

### 5.1. Notable changes at various levels of grammar

DM development in general involves change at multiple levels of grammar. Among the most prominent changes is the semantic change. For instance, the meaning changes from the sentential meaning to the sentence-external meaning (Heine et al. 2020, Heine et al. 2021). The original 'tru(th)' meaning of TRUTH-DMs has undergone dessemanticization, i.e., loss of meaning, in most usages of the TRUTH-DMs. Korean TRUTH-DM *cincca* used as a pause-filler is among the clearest instances of extensive dessemanticization. In DM uses, the original content meaning of 'true' has become a speech-act unit (cf. Sweetser 1990) or of procedural function (Hansen 1997, Schourup 1999, Wilson 2011). For instance, usages with the content meaning, e.g., 'true love', 'truly happy' make a good contrast with the procedural meaning, e.g., 'what I'm saying truthfully is that...' or 'what you truly need to pay attention to is that...' As shown in these paraphrases, despite the dessemanticization that has occurred to a variable extent, the functions of the TRUTH-DMs are directly or indirectly, related to 'truthfulness'.

It is generally accepted that DMs lose their ability to make propositional contributions, i.e., they do not contribute to the truth conditions (cf. Hansen 1997, Schourup 1999, Haselow 2017) and so they may be truth-conditionally optional (Jucker 2002). As illustrated in the foregoing exposition, the TRUTH-DMs are often positionally detached from the clause and thus its direct semantic link to the proposition is lost. The loss of propositional meaning is obvious in the contrast between 'a true story' (*cincca yayki*) and 'Look at this guy, truly!' (*i yangpani cincca*; in (3) above). This is in line with the observation that DM development may involve functional change from sentence-structuring function to metatextual function (Heine et al. 2020, 2021).

It has also been widely observed that DMs carry diverse functions (Jucker 2002, Rhee & Koo 2021). Indeed, the TRUTH-DMs in Korean and Chinese are particularly multifunctional. A brief mention of classification is in order in this context. An interesting aspect is that, as Rhee and Koo (2021: 77) note, the functions of de-contextualized DMs are hard to identify but those of the

contextualized DMs are largely unambiguous because diverse interpretive cues are available in the context, even though it is often difficult to name the function explicitly. The functions of DMs are subtle, and their classification largely depends on granularity of analyses. For instance, the discontent function and the challenge function of the Korean DM *cincca* (in 4.1.2 and 4.1.3, respectively), may be collapsed into one for their conceptual similarity of negative emotions, which, however, were separately named for their differences in directedness, i.e., self-directed discontent and other-directed challenge, as well as their differences in illocutionary force. Conversely, the discontent function in (15a) through (15c) and the reproaching function in (15d) of the Chinese DM *zhenshi* may be separated by the perceived differences in strength, i.e., mild discontent and strong reproach, which, however, were treated under a single function for greater similarity than differences.

Another notable aspect of DM development is the change in prosody. It has been observed that DMs tend to be set off prosodically or ‘less integrated’ (Heine et al. 2021: 48), and further that, as a result of erosion, a common concomitant of grammaticalization, DMs tend to be phonologically short (Brinton 2017, Heine et al. 2020, 2021). The TRUTH-DMs tend to have a pause before and/or after them, more rigidly so with Chinese DMs. In this context it is notable that Korean DMs occurring at the right-periphery position tend to be fully integrated with the preceding word (Koo & Rhee 2013, Kim & Sohn 2015), a tendency also observed in other languages (Mulder and Thompson 2008, among others). As for the length, the TRUTH-DMs in Korean and Chinese are indeed phonologically short, but they have not undergone phonological erosion to a meaningful level, largely due to the fact that the source constructions were already short from the beginning (note that all of them were bi-syllabic), not having enough phonological substance to be subjected to erosion.

The last point relates to positionality. As a result of grammaticalization of DMs, the forms change from positionally constrained placement to less constrained placement (Heine et al. 2021: 48). This is also the case with the TRUTH-DMs in Korean and Chinese: they are no longer in the modifier position as an adjective or adverb, or in the argument position as a noun. They typically occur at the left-periphery or right-periphery position, whereby their semantic-pragmatic scope is wider than before.

As shown above, a comparative investigation of the TRUTH-DMs in Korean and Chinese reveals a number of interesting commonalities, despite minor variations, with respect to meaning, function, prosody, and placement, among others (cf. Brinton 2017, Heine et al. 2014, 2020, 2021, Traugott 2022). However, there are differences in the two languages, to which we turn.

## 5.2. Korean and Chinese TRUTH-DMs compared

There are a few areas where the development of the TRUTH-DMs in Korean and Chinese diverge. Among the most prominent differences is that Chinese TRUTH-

DMs show different specialization between the two TRUTH-DMs, i.e., *zhenshi* being negatively-biased and *zhende* not being polarity-specific. Unlike *zhende*, *zhenshi* from the incipient stage frequently occurs in negative contexts, mostly marking discontent and sudden remembrance (affirmation of negative evaluation, self-reproach, etc.). In Modern Chinese, the negativity associated with *zhenshi* tends to be more stable and stronger than it was in the earlier times, i.e., it is used nearly always in negative contexts and the degree of negativity is stronger as in reproach and annoyance. This polarization strongly suggests contextual influences in functional development, similar to the notion of ‘absorption’ (Bybee et al. 1994). The other TRUTH-DM *zhende* does not exhibit such bias. The divergent development of Chinese TRUTH-DMs stands in sharp contrast to that of the Korean TRUTH-DM *cincca*, which emerges only a century ago, with a nominal or an adjectival use, and becomes a DM used in positive, negative, or neutral contexts.

Another difference between Korean and Chinese TRUTH-DMs lies in the different levels of semantic bleaching, as briefly indicated in 5.1 above. The Korean TRUTH-DM *cincca* can carry the function of pause-filling. Pause-fillers do not have any semantic content at a meaningful level: they are uttered just to fill the gap caused by the inability to produce unbroken utterance for various reasons, e.g., failure to find a proper word spontaneously (cf. ‘delay device’, Svartvik 1980), strategic display of hesitance for politeness (Rhee & Koo 2021), etc. The extreme level of semantic bleaching is easily observable with the English pause fillers *uh*, *um*, *y’know*, *well*, etc. (Östman 1981, Jucker 2015, Müller 2004), of which lexical meanings are either completely absent or not easily discernible. The pause-filling function is not found with the Chinese TRUTH-DMs *zhende* and *zhenshi*, which suggests that semantic bleaching is more extensive with the Korean *cincca*. The ‘truth’ meaning is relatively more strongly preserved in Chinese TRUTH-DMs (cf. ‘persistence’, Hopper 1991).

Still another difference is observed with respect to prosody. Prosody is often different depending on the function (Hancil 2013, Rhee 2020, Rhee & Koo 2021). Among prosodic features, the utterance length (i.e., speed) is particularly strongly correlated with the functions. For instance, Korean TRUTH-DM *cincca* is spoken fast when it carries the emphasis, surprise, and sudden remembrance functions, and it is spoken slowly when it carries the discontent and pause-filling functions. In the latter case, the DM occurs at the right-periphery with a trailing intonation, signaling inability to complete the utterance due to the difficulties in lexical search or due to overwhelming emotions in the contexts of irritation, frustration, etc. It is interesting to note that the TRUTH-DMs in Chinese, especially the negatively-biased *zhenshi*, do not exhibit trailing intonation pattern.

The results of comparison of the TRUTH-DM in Korean and Chinese with respect to their functions and notable features are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Korean and Chinese TRUTH-DMs

Functions and features	Korean <i>cincca</i>	Chinese <i>zhende</i>	Chinese <i>zhenshi</i>
Emphasis	✓	✓	
Discontent	✓		✓
Challenge	✓		
Surprise	✓	✓	
Sudden remembrance	✓		✓
Pause-filling	✓		
Noteworthiness		✓	
Disalignment		✓	
Trailing intonation	✓		
Positional freedom	✓	✓	✓
Metatextuality	✓	✓	✓
Desemanticization	more extensive	less extensive	less extensive
Evaluative bias			Negative

## 6. Summary and conclusion

This paper investigated the grammaticalized functions of TRUTH-DM in Korean and compared them with two Chinese TRUTH-DMs. The Korean lexeme *cincca* (in the form of *cinsca*) first occurs around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and its grammaticalized form, the DM *cincca*, emerges in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, inheriting much of the ‘truth’ semantics from its predecessor forms. Korean *cincca* carries the functions of marking emphasis, discontent, challenge, surprise, sudden remembrance/realization, and pause-filling.

Chinese TRUTH-DMs *zhende* and *zhenshi* became unverbated as adverbs and then developed into DMs around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Chinese *zhende* carries the functions of marking emphasis, preface to noteworthy information, surprise, and preface to upcoming disalignment, whereas *zhenshi* carries the functions of marking discontent and sudden remembrance, the latter with a strong overtone of self-reproach. *Zhenshi* signals negative stance, revealing the influence of the context at the incipient stage. Thus, Chinese TRUTH-DMs show divergence in marking evaluative-emotional polarity, e.g., *zhenshi* is generally negatively-biased, whereas *zhende* is not.

The developments of TRUTH-DMs in Korean and Chinese share much in common, corroborating the thesis that grammatical functions largely depend on the semantics of the source lexeme (Heine et al. 1991, Heine 1997, Bybee et al. 2024). The conceptual motivation of the emergence of TRUTH-DMs in Korean and Chinese seems to be based on the conceptualization of ‘truth’ as being not easily accessible or hidden, thus its manifestation being extraordinary and its realization inducing surprise (cf. Rhee 2022). All DM functions are directly or indirectly related to the notion of ‘truth’, but semantic bleaching is extensive with the pause-filler function. Korean and Chinese TRUTH-DMs exhibit features typical of grammaticalization in terms of their meaning, function, placement, etc., but phonological erosion is not prominent.

## Abbreviations

ACC: accusative; ADN: adnominalizer; CLSF: classifier; CONN: connective; DM: discourse marker; END: sentence-ender; EXCL: exclamative; GEN: genitive; HON: honorific; HORT: hortative; INTJ: interjective; NOM: nominative; PERF: perfective; POL: polite; PST: past; PTCL: particle; PURP: purposive; RC: resultative complementizer

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