The Interjections *Oh* and *Wow* in Listening Scripts of Middle School English Textbooks

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The purpose of this study is to examine the primary interjections *oh* and *wow* which appear in listening scripts of middle school English textbooks. Of the 13 different types of middle school English textbooks written by the 7th National English curriculum, five of the most-preferred middle school English textbooks series were analyzed for this research in order to determine the following: 1) the frequency distribution of *oh* and *wow*, 2) the combination of sentences and expressions in which they occur, and 3) whether the interjections are utilized in manner to improve practical listening skills. The following results were obtained by this study: *Oh* and *wow* are used 330 times in the five textbooks examined: *Oh* is used 271 times (82.12%), while *wow* occurs 59 times (17.88%). They tend to appear at the head of a sentence as primary interjections, and appear principally in declarative sentences, at 201 times (60.91%). Furthermore, it appears as if they are not optimally utilized with a view towards deliberately enhancing students' practical listening skills. It is the hope of this study that text developers and English language educators will consider its implications in selecting interjections for future listening scripts in middle school English textbooks.

I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to analyze the primary interjections *oh* and *wow* in listening scripts which are appendices to middle school English textbooks widely used in Korea. Of the 13 different middle school English textbooks written under the 7th National English Curriculum, five of the most-preferred middle school English textbooks series

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1 Cha (2003) examined what kinds of listening activities are most frequently used in the
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(7th to 9th grades) were selected for analysis in this research.

This study examines two discourse markers, *oh* and *wow*, whose uses are not clearly based on semantic meaning or grammatical status. Beginning this analysis with these markers will pay particularly close attention to the discourse slot itself.

This study uses an open-ended method of investigation, in which *oh* and *wow* are treated as potential interjections based on the classification by Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan (1999) and on studies by Schiffrin (1987). To put it succinctly, the classification is based on corpus findings that determined the most common inserts in AmE and BrE conversation (with occurrences per million words).

However, the data based on their findings fall short in attempting to assess the general tendency to use interjections in listening scripts from all perspectives. To remedy this deficiency, this research will be more focused than before, because any study of listening material must take into account all factors, even interjections, although they may seem trivial. The interjections *oh* and *wow* used in listening scripts are also placed to convey various types of messages: speakers' clarity, familiarity with topic/subject matters, and speakers' intentions, etc.

Biber et al. (1999) comment that the term *interjection* is applied to inserts which have an exclamatory function and are expressive of the speaker's emotions. In the following material this study looks at interjections in their approximate order of frequency, while grouping those occurrences similar in function.

Schiffrin (1987) notes that *oh* focuses on prior text: it manages information that was previously presented. The primary function of *oh* is to mark information state transitions. But *oh* also works in the participation framework (since it displays speakers' and listeners' specific productive and receptive capacities) and in action structures (since it marks certain actions, e.g. clarifications, which are designed to manage information state transitions).

In an attempt to investigate the main aspects of interjections in listening scripts, the great concern is to survey primary interjections from all angles. Thus, in order to achieve the goal of the study, the following research questions are addressed:

1) What is the frequency distributions of interjections?
2) How are sentences or expressions combined with interjections?
3) Are the interjections used in listening scripts aimed at enhancing students' practical listening skills?

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textbooks, and whether they reflect both students' and teachers' preferences including the five middle school English textbooks series analyzed in this study.