Distal Demonstratives as Fillers

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The current study has analyzed the interactional use of the Korean distal demonstratives, *ku* and *ce* in spontaneous oral discourse with special reference to their functions as fillers. *Ku* and *ce* as fillers occur at a point in a discourse where the speaker is hesitating temporarily due to a lack of proper formulation. An examination of the data shows that each demonstrative reveals distinct interactional patterns; *ku* as a filler is mainly used to search for a particular word in repair sites, where the hearer’s involvement in searching for the referent is actively solicited. In contrast, *ce* is opted for as a means of recalling relevant information that is demonstrably located beyond the hearer’s domain of knowledge or experience. The *ce*-term is also commonly used in contexts where it prefaces some disjunctive actions such as starting a conversation/new turn, or initiating a new topic, or performing certain kinds of speech acts.

These distinctive interactional patterns are claimed to be compatible with and derived from their meaning; the demonstrative *ku* marks the speaker’s desire to anchor interpersonal involvement between him/herself and the addressee by evoking a prior interactional and discourse history shared between the speaker and the hearer. *Ce* is employed when the speaker asserts his/her own knowledge, which is beyond the hearer’s sphere of information (Suh & Hong 1999).

1. Introduction

This paper analyzes the interactional functions of the Korean demonstratives, *ku* and *ce* in spontaneous oral discourse with special reference to their functions as fillers.¹ These functions of *ku* and *ce* are different from

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¹ Out of several terms such as discourse particle, discourse marker, hesitation marker, and filler, I have chosen ‘filler’ as a convenient cover term for the current analysis because a discourse particle or a discourse marker seems to include too broad ranges of elements under a single term and a hesitation marker seems to have a restricted
their referential functions and textual functions. They can be categorized as discourse particles, discourse markers, hesitation markers or evincives (cf. Schourp 1985); they may carry an interactional meaning corresponding to the English *whatchamacallit*. *Ku* and *ce* as fillers occur at a point in a discourse where the speaker is hesitating and, presumably, planning what to say next.

*Ku* and *ce* in conversation are used to communicate difficulties that the speaker has encountered and is encountering in recalling the appropriate content word or proposition and to announce a delay in the progression of the utterance, with *ku* inviting the hearer to participate in the search for the relevant word while *ce* does not do so (Suh & Hong 1999; Kim & Suh 2000). Often they are flanked by pauses occasioned by the search. In Korean conversation, such interactional use of *ku* and *ce* is not uncommon, but there has been very little research focused on this issue so far.

Such an issue is touched upon in Suh & Hong (1999), where the functions of *ku* and *ce* as fillers are believed to have some bearing on their interpersonal meaning; *ku* 'that' marks the speaker's desire to anchor interpersonal involvement between him/herself and the addressee by evoking a prior interactional and discourse history between the speaker and the addressee. It often actively invites the addressee's voluntary understanding of the target referent. As such, *ku* as a filler is employed to indicate that the speaker is hesitating, and has encountered difficulties in searching for an appropriate word, where the hearer's involvement in searching for the referent is actively solicited. This practice contrasts with *ce* 'that' in that *ce* is opted for as a means of recalling a relevant piece of information that is demonstrably located beyond the hearer's domain of knowledge or experience, where the hearer is positioned as a passive listener. Accordingly, the speaker of *ce* does not actively invite the addressee's involvement in identifying the target referent.

The use of the distal demonstratives as fillers can be observed in other languages as well, which reflects a functional correspondence across range of application; the term 'filler' seems to be the one that enables us to discuss the word-search function of the demonstratives and their action-framing functions as well.

Suh & Hong (1999) claim that the function of demonstratives in oral discourse is usually not limited to the basic referential function of encoding the relative distance from the speaker; demonstratives are pressed into pragmatic service, carrying out textual functions and interpersonal functions.
languages. For instance, in Japanese, the use of the distal demonstrative are shows the speaker's strategy to overcome cognitive difficulties in lexical choice or lexical retrieval, functioning like a filler (Fox, Hayashi, and Jasperson 1996; Kitano 1999). Such a usage is also demonstrated in the English distal deixis that (Cheshire 1996) and the Romani distal deixis kato (Matras 1998). Because of the similarities between Korean, English, Finnish, Romani and Japanese, it appears that the parallel between the Korean ku/ce, English that, Finnish tuo, Romani kato and Japanese are (all being the distal deixis) is not accidental but reflects a functional correspondence. Further research may reveal such a functional correspondence in greater detail (cf. Suh & Hong 1999).3

Data for the analysis are taken from three collections of spoken discourse. The first consists of some informal tape-recorded conversations of graduate students, ranging in age from 26 to 32, conversing with their families; the second consists of an oral narrative where the speaker talks about his experience in the Korean War; the third consists of overheard conversations.4

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents some examples of Korean demonstratives in their referential and textual use. Section 3 presents the interactional functions of ku and ce in the context in which they are used to indicate difficulties encountered by the speaker in finding the appropriate words. Section 3 also describes the type of actions which the ce-terms trigger. Section 4 summarizes the main findings of the analysis and presents their overall implications.

3When demonstratives serve as fillers, the proximal term i 'this' seems to be out while the distal terms ku or ce seem to be the candidates as do the English that, the Finnish tuo, the Japanese are and the Romani kato (cf. Cheshire 1996; Kitano 1999; Matras 1998). Considering that the proximal deixis refers to information which is within the speaker's own domain of knowledge, hence being easily accessible to the speaker, this marker rarely occurs at a point where the speaker fails to find the appropriate word or makes a false start (Suh & Hong 1999).

4The transcription notation used for this paper was adapted from Atkinson and Heritage (1984) and Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) with some modifications:

// Interruption = Contiguous utterance
(0.0) Intervals between utterances -- Cut-off
(.) Micro-pause . Falling intonation
( ) Word unclear , Continuing intonation
(( )) Transcriber's remarks ? Rising intonation
hhh Audible aspiration : Sound stretch
hhh Audible inhalation
2. Referential and Textual Use of the Demonstratives

The system of Korean demonstratives constitutes a tripartite distinction: the basic morphemes are thus three elements; i- 'this', ku- 'that' and ce- 'that'. These three morphemes are combined with various elements, forming tripartite paradigms such as demonstrative adverbs as in ili/yeki 'here', kuli/keki 'there', and celi/ceki 'over there'; demonstrative adjective as in ilen 'this kind of', kulen 'that kind of', and celen 'that kind of'; demonstrative adverbs as in ilehkey 'like this', kulehkey 'like that', and calehkey 'like that'.

When the demonstratives are used as deixis, these markers designate a spatial distance from the speaker and/or the hearer, with i typically denoting some entity that is 'near the speaker', ku an entity that is 'near the hearer', and ce an entity that is 'near neither the speaker nor the hearer'. The choice of one form over the others is, then, determined by the relative distance of an entity vis-à-vis either the speaker and/or the hearer.

The following illustrates straightforward examples where the demonstrative ku and ce function as an indicator of spatial deixis, i.e., as a literal 'pointing' word.

(1) (H points to the book near the hearer)
   H: Jun, ku chayk com cip -e -cwu-llay?
   Jun, that book please take-CONN-give-MOD
   Can you get the book for me, Jun?

(2) (M points to the baseball cap displayed on the wall at the store)
   M: ce moca com poye -cwu-si-keyss-eyo?
   that book please show-give-HONOR-MOD-POL?
   Could you show me the cap over there, please?

In (1), since the book is nearer the addressee than the speaker, the speaker is expected to choose the non-proximal ku. In contrast, the distal term ce is chosen in (2) since the cap is near neither the speaker nor the hearer.

While both ku and ce are used as a deictic demonstrative by way of locating the entity referred to relative to some referential point in the extralinguistic context, only ku to the exclusion of ce serves as an anaphora/textual deixis, pointing to elements of the context, which are either sentences, or parts of the sentences, or else to the mental representation of
states of affairs (Bühler 1934:388-391). The following shows *ku* in its anaphoric use. In (3) *kuke* ‘that thing’ uttered by J refers to ‘super drive’ which is mentioned in the preceding turn.

(3) (buying a computer)

H: kulem super drive la -nun -ke-n mwe-ye-yo?
    by the way super drive QUOT-ATTR-thing-TOP what-COP-POL
    *By the way, what is this so-called ‘super-drive’?*

-> J: *kuke*-nun
    that -TOP
    *As for that,*

Sometimes it is not easy to identify whether *ku* is used as an anaphora or a filler as in (4).

(4) (After Dinner)

->1 S: kuntey uwlipan *ku* (0.8) ilponay yecayae iss-ci,
    by the way our class that Japanese woman exist-COMM
    *By the way, in our class, you know that Japanese woman,*

  2 khikhu-ko metcangi::
    tal 1-and chic
    *the tall and fashionable.*

In the context preceding this segment of talk, four interlocutors are talking about some of their classmates who are very fluent in English despite the fact that English is not their native language. In one instance, S in line 1 mentions one of her classmates who she believes K can identify since they are all taking the same course. Here *ku* can be said to be in a ‘grey area’ between the two functions, i.e., anaphora and filler. It can be anaphoric in the sense that the speaker, by the use of *ku*, expects the addressee to identify the target referent by evoking a prior interactional and discourse history shared between himself/herself and the addressee. At the same time, it can be categorized as a filler by which the speaker indicates that she has difficulty in identifying the name of her classmate referred to. Such a phenomenon suggests that there is some functional correspondence between *ku* as anaphora and filler.

The phenomenon I will be exploring in this paper is different from the typical use of demonstratives; it is neither deictic in the prototypical sense
nor anaphoric. It often occurs when the speaker is hesitating to look for an appropriate item/proposition, and/or to preface some disjunctive actions in spontaneous conversation.

3. *Ku* and *ce* as Fillers

The distal demonstratives *ku* and *ce* as fillers indicate that the speaker is having difficulties producing the next item due. They are often employed as a place holder, in which the speaker is delaying the production of an utterance in order to leave the discussion open to further elaboration or to avoid verbalization. The *ce*-terms, in particular, are employed to frame a pre-sequence, i.e., as a device framing some speech acts, often negative speech acts that are potentially face-threatening to the interlocutors, such as requesting, apologizing, complaining or self-deprecating. Note, however, these aspects are not mutually exclusive and an instance of *ce* may show more than one aspect.

In the next two sections, it will be shown how the interactional functions of *ku* and *ce* follow from the proposed core use of those particles. The functional differences arise when the items are used in particular discourse contexts.

3.1. Searching for a Word or a Proposition

While syntactically representing the missing noun phrase, *ku* is used to communicate difficulties encountered by the speaker in recalling the appropriate word, to announce a delay in the progression of the utterance, and finally to encourage the hearer to participate in the search for the relevant word or name.

(5) (After Dinner)

\[-1\]  C: \textit{ku:* ku -ke iss-cian -ayo. phan/may::: that that-thing exist-ASSERT-POL sales}

\textit{That, You know that thing, The sales//section}

\[2\]  M: ah phanmay ung.

\textit{ah sale yes}

\textit{Oh, the sales section. Right.}
Line 1 shows the use of the demonstrative adjective *ku* we are concerned with in this paper. Speaker C seems to have some cognitive difficulties in lexical choice or lexical retrieval. Here, the speaker’s motivation in using *ku* is to delay the production of the next item due and presumably to buy time for a word search, in which the speaker subsequently comes up with the target word with successful verbalization. Note that *ku* co-occurs with *issciarayo* ‘you know’, which indicates that the speaker presumes addressee-speaker solidarity with respect to part of an utterance or even more than one part. As such, the utterance ‘you know’ appeals to the addressee’s own ability to grasp the intended meaning and confirms a shared ground between interlocutors (Schourup 1985; Holmes 1986; Coates 1986). What is of interest is the response by M. Immediately after C succeeds in recalling the relevant word *phannay* ‘sales section’, M repeats the very word with a change of state token (Heritage 1984) *ah* as in *ah phannay* ‘oh the sales section’ without any gap. Such a response strongly suggests that M is collaborating in the search for the relevant word probably by resorting to the solicitation of background/cultural knowledge.

Example (6) speaks to the same issue:

(6) (After Dinner)

\[->\]

1 R: kuliko kay -nun apple ha-myen -un ccak
   and that child-TOP apple say-COND-TOP right away
2 nao-ntay **ku** (// )
   come out:QUOT that
   *And when one says “apple” to the child, it comes out right away, whatchamacallit*;
3 S: spelling-i=
   spelling-NOM
   *(You mean) its spelling (comes out right away).*
4 R: =spelling-i
   spelling-NOM
   *(Right) Its spelling (comes out right away).*

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5 In this respect, the discourse marker ‘you know’ can be compared with ‘I mean’; ‘you know’ implies that the speaker hopes that the addressee anticipates continued discourse or grasps the point of the unfinished utterance. Use of ‘I mean’ is more likely when the speaker thinks the addressee cannot identify or understand the referent.
In (6) R is talking about the 5-year-old daughter of her acquaintance, describing how well the kid is doing in dictating the spelling. In line 1, the use of *ku* indicates that R has trouble with lexical retrieval. It is at this point that interlocutor S comes in and provides the relevant item. This is affirmed by R in line 4, who repeats the referent latched with S's preceding turn. This is a kind of collaborative completion of the missing item by both speaker and hearer. Such a phenomenon clearly evidences that the speaker employs *ku* as a filler, searching for the relevant word in such a way that the hearer is expected to infer what is meant with sufficient contextual cues or background knowledge. In this regard, *ku* can be paraphrased as "I'm having difficulties producing the next item due but I guess you know what I'm going to talk about and you are able to help me in identifying it."

Such a function of *ku* is compatible with and derived from its meaning signalling 'interpersonal involvement between speaker and hearer' (Suh & Hong 1999). In other words, *ku* is employed to confirm a shared ground between interlocutors. The use of *ku* as a filler, thus, appeals to the addressee's own ability to grasp the intended meaning. The use of *ku* implies that the speaker hopes that the addressee can divine the continuation or grasp the point of the unfinished utterance while the use of *ce* is more likely when the speaker thinks the addressee cannot. Consider the use of the *ce*-term in example (7).

(7) (After Dinner)

~1 R: kuntay cwungangilpo po -myun-yo ( ) ceki
by the way Jungang Daily subscribe-COND-POL there

2 ssangdungi umma-ka kule-nuntay
twins mom-NOM say-CIRCUM

3 congicil -to hweessin cohko=
paper-quality-ADD far good
*By the way, in the Jungang Daily, whatyamacallit the twins' mom says that the quality of the paper is much better.*

4 M: =ung
yes
I see.

In (7), two friends and their families are chatting after dinner; they are talking about the newspaper subscription, comparing two Korean newspapers. Up to line 1, R has listed the two merits of one newspaper (the
Hankuk Daily) over the other (the Jungang Daily). In line 1, R changes her stance and talks about the merit of the other newspaper (the Jungang Daily) by quoting one of her acquaintances ssangdoingi umma, ‘the twins’ mom’. What ceki ‘there’ is doing at this point is to communicate difficulties encountered by the speaker in recalling the relevant word (i.e., the twins’ mom) and/or the relevant proposition (i.e., what the twins’ mom said about the newspaper). Notice, however, that both the item ‘twins’ mom’ and her comment about the newspaper are new information in the given discourse, which the speaker does not expect the hearer to be able to identify. Such an observation in turn leads to the claim that the ce-term is often employed in contexts where the speaker asserts his/her own knowledge in such a way that the hearer is positioned as a passive receiver of the explication to be offered by the speaker without being actively invited into the process of searching for the referent (Kim & Suh 2000). Another relevant example is provided in (8) where celen ‘that kind of’ is used as a filler:

(8) (Campus Chat: searching for a research topic)

1 M: honorific-ul katko-to ha-llka ha-taka
   honorific-ACC take-ADD do-DUB do-TRANS
   (I have been thinking about) trying out a topic on honorifics

   -> 2 H: celen-ke-n celen -ke-n ettelci molu -kyess-eyo
   that kind-thing-TOP that kind-thing-TOP how not know-MOD-IE
   I wonder whether you want to try that kind of. that kind of topic.

3 ye -lul tul-e sahoy-katun-ke-l pol-tyay
   example-ACC take-CONN presiding-like-thing-ACC see-time
   For example, when you take part in a meeting...

In the context preceding this segment of talk, the interlocutors have been talking about M’s research topic, giving suggestions about the possible research topic for M. Since no topic presented so far is of interest, M in line 1 suggests another research topic of her own, i.e., honorifics, as a candidate topic. In line 2, however, H does not show any response and brings up a different candidate topic. Here what H does with the use of celenken celenken ‘as for that kind of thing, as for that kind of thing’ is to grab the interlocutor’s attention by holding the turn and then proceed to elaborate the referent later. The replacement of ce with ku in this context would make the referent sound like something that has already been
mentioned or that is presumed to be within M’s territory of information, 
thus being retrievable by M. Note that the ce-marked utterance is made in 
the context where H as a senior is in a position of giving suggestions to 
M. In other words, this segment of talk can be seen as a kind of discourse 
between an expert and a novice. Accordingly, the suggestion made by H as 
an expert is not formulated as something that is well known to M, a 
novice. In this vein, ce is opted for as a means of recalling relevant 
information that is demonstrably located beyond the hearer’s domain of 
knowledge or experience, with the speaker subsequently providing an 
extended explication of the projected referent.

The preceding discussion of ku and ce functioning as fillers shows that 
they have interactional import not only as filling in for the missing 
word/proposition and helping to convey our utterances smoothly, but also as 
addressing the prior context and organizing subsequent interaction. The use 
of ku solicits interpersonal involvement between speaker and hearer by way 
of evoking prior shared experience, and encourages the hearer to locate the 
missing item. This is in turn manifested in the uptake of the missing item 
by the hearer in the subsequent turn, which is often latched to the 
preceding speaker’s turn. In opposition to this, the ce-terms do not invite 
speaker involvement. It is often employed in the context where the speaker 
asserts his/her knowledge in such a way that the hearer is positioned as a 
passive audience to the explication offered by the speaker. It is not 
surprising that the ce-terms are often found in topic-initial positions where 
an extended explication of the projected referent is provided. Such an aspect 
of ce will be discussed in further detail in the following section.

3.2. Prefacing Some Disjunctive Actions

The ce-terms, ce and ceki in particular, often occur in prefacing some 
disjunctive actions such as starting a conversation/new turn, or initiating a 
new topic, or performing certain kinds of speech acts, e.g., negative speech 
acts (cf. Brown & Levinson 1987). For instance, the ce-term is often found 
when starting a conversation, especially between strangers:

(9) (overheard conversation)
  A: ce... malssum com muwt-keyss-nuntyey-yo
      that talk     a little ask-MOD CIRCUM-POL
  Excuse me, may I ask you a question?
In (9), the speaker uses *ce* for prefacing his upcoming act of asking a question. Here notice that the speech act of asking a question could be face-threatening to the hearer especially when the hearer is a stranger to the speaker. In this respect, such use of *ce* can be viewed as a pre-sequence to some negative speech acts such as requests, complaints, apologies and self-deprecation.

The *ce*-terms are massively used in the context of initiating a new topic, in which the *ce*-term helps the interlocutors prepare for a shift of attention to a new topic; it enables speakers to guide the hearer toward some newsworthy topic which is beyond the hearer’s sphere of information, and to alert the hearer to the upcoming point while holding their turn for introducing a new topic. Example (10) is a case in point. In this conversation, the participants are all TA’s for a Korean department:

(10) (TA meeting)

((H brings up a new topic following a substantial gap.))

\[-→ 1\]

H: *ceki* (.) *ackerman ka-nikka* -n -yo, there *ackerman go-CONN-TOP-POL
ku ot *pha-nun* -tey -yo (.) *ung* (.) *ceki mwe-ya*
that cloth sell-ATTR-place-POL DM there what-COP:IE
sweat shirt *pha-nun* -tey, =
sweat-shirt sell-ATTR-place,= *You know what, When I went to the Ackerman (=students’ center), to the section where they sell clothes, you know, where they sell sweat shirts*

\[2\]

S: *ung*
yes
*I see*
(*Ackerman: a students’ center*)

In the context preceding this segment of talk, the participants talked about some students who repeatedly cheat during tests. In line 1, H brings up a new topic. Here we find *ceki* ‘there’ at a point where the speaker shifts topics disjunctively, and initiates a new story. What the speaker does with

\[6\] *Ce can be interpreted in a hedgy sense especially in the context of starting a conversation or making a request. *Ce* in (9) serves as an attention getter as well, as the English gloss ‘excuse me’ shows.*
ceki is to make rather a disjunctive initiation of the story coherent without the possibility of losing the floor while displaying that he/she is hesitating and trying to locate the topic which is demonstrably beyond the hearer’s sphere of information. The use of ceki along with the nikka-phrase ackerman kanikkanyo ‘when I went to the Ackerman’ helps secure the interlocutors’ attention and guides the hearers into the domain of the speaker’s own experience (cf. Kim & Suh 1994, 1996).

The topic-initiating by the ce-term is also observed in example (8) where celenken celenken ‘that kind of, that kind of’ is employed when the speaker brings up a new topic. Such use of the ce-utterance often triggers an extended talk. This is true of example (10), where the interlocutors are subsequently engaged in an extended talk about shopping at Ackerman Union.

The ce-terms functioning as a preface for some disjunctive action can be viewed as being motivated by a politeness strategy where the speaker provides a kind of bumper before a disjunctive action or an abrupt topic change so that the hearer is ready for the shift and takes a relevant stance as a listener. This feature of ce predisposes it to preface speech acts such as requesting, complaining, and apologizing. The following is another case in point, which shows a context in which the speaker shifts a topic while requesting information:

(11) (S & H)

->1 S: hh. kuliko ceki mwe-ya ku waiver iss -ci -yo?
   hh and there what-COP:IE that waiver exist-COMM-POL
   tuition waiver.. ku non-resident hakkì matal
   tuition waiver that non-resident semester per
   apply ha-nun-ke-yeyo?
   apply do-ATTR-NOLM-COP:POL
   And you know that whatchanacallit waiver? I mean tuition
   waiver. Can non-resident students apply for (the tuition waiver)
   every semester?

In (11), S and H have been talking about the size of S’s department. In line 1, S shifts the topic and asks a question about the tuition waiver which he is going to apply for. This topic is further elaborated in the subsequent talk. What ceki is doing in this context is to serve as a pre-sequence to the speech act of requesting information, which in turn serves as a means of initiating a new topic.
The ce-term in topic-initial position is also found in the context where the speaker is about to perform a speech act, for instance the speech act of complaining, as in (12).

(12) (After Dinner)
1 R: nay-ka cekí mwe-ya (1.0) vacuum cleaner san-da-nikka:: (.)
   I -NOM there what-COP-IE vacuum cleaner buy-QUOTE-REASON
2 ((clearing the throat)) huni appa-ka mos sa-keyha
   Huni dad-NOM not:able buy-CAUS
3 nun -ke iss -ci -yo.
   ATTR-NOML exist-COMM-POL
   There, whatchamacallit, I told him that I'd like to buy a
   vacuum cleaner and, you know what, Hun's dad (my husband)
   did not let me buy one.
4 (2.0)
5 K: cikum uttek- mwe-1 uttekhey ha-sey-yo?
   now how what-ACC how do-HONOR-POL
   How are you doing your cleaning now (without a vacuum cleaner)?

In the context preceding this segment of talk, interlocutors are talking about the gourmet coffee that they are drinking. In line 1, R suddenly initiates a new story, talking about her attempt to purchase a vacuum cleaner, which was turned down by her husband. While cekí is used to preface a new story, the cekí-prefaced utterance turns out to be a complaint made to the speaker’s husband who is present at the scene. This triggers a question by K, which leads to R's response, where she further complains about how inconvenient and inefficient it is to use a broom instead of a vacuum cleaner. Here cekí is employed as a preliminary to undertaking the speech act of complaining while initiating a new story.

The following illustrates a case where ce is used to initiate a new story while serving as a preliminary to performing the act of self-deprecation:

(13) (TA meeting)
1 K: onul anken-un lee sensayngnim-i yollak -i
today agenda-TOP Lee teacher -NOM communication-NOM
2 an -tway -kaciko peylo eps-eyo pyello
   NEG-become-CONN not much not exist:POL not much
   eps-ulketkat-ko
exist-seem-CONN
I was not able to contact Prof. Lee today, so there's not much to talk about. There doesn't seem to be much to talk about.

->3 L: ce-ki  ce-hi pan-un -yo,  cem-cem  cule-yo
         over-there  my  class-TOP-POL,  little-by-little  decrease-POL
4  haksayng  swu -ka -yo:
         student  number-NOM-POL
See, my class, it's getting smaller and smaller.

In this conversation, several TA’s are having a TA meeting. In line 1, K mentions that there is no particular agenda since he has not heard anything from their supervisor. In line 3, L brings up a new topic about how her class size has become smaller and smaller. Here notice that L's ce-ki serves as a preliminary to framing the following utterance as a self-deprecation about the dwindling class size and about her responsibility thereof as well as as a preliminary to initiating a new story.

The preceding discussion has analyzed how ce prefaces some disjunctive actions while filling in for the missing item; ce is employed to negotiate a preliminary ground for undertaking actions such as starting a conversation, initiating a new topic, and performing a negative speech act.

4. Concluding Remarks

The current study has analyzed the interactional use of Korean distal demonstratives, ku and ce in spontaneous oral discourse with special reference to their functions as fillers. An examination of the data shows that each demonstrative reveals distinct interactional patterns; ku as a filler is mainly used to search for a particular word in repair sites, where the hearer's involvement in searching for the referent is actively solicited. In contrast, ce is opted for as a means of recalling relevant information, i.e., particular word or proposition, that is demonstrably located beyond the hearer’s domain of knowledge or experience. The ce-term is also commonly used in contexts where it prefaces some disjunctive actions such as starting a conversation/new turn, or initiating a new topic, or performing certain kinds of speech acts, i.e., negative speech acts. Like the Japanese filler ano (Cook 1993), the filler ce helps the speaker and the addressee to tune into each other before they proceed to subsequent actions. In this sense, ce
serves as a device for adjusting the relationship between interlocutors who do not share similar assumptions. It is also an effective device for tuning in to the addressee before saying something and undertaking some action that may be face-threatening to the audience or evoking a dispreferred response from the addressee. I have found recurrent patterns in my data, where ce is filling in for the missing word or proposition while prefacing and framing some disjunctive actions in such a way that the speaker can convey the utterances smoothly and/or mitigate the face-threatening actions by negotiating a preliminary ground for the subsequent action.

Such use of ce in Korean conversation can be viewed as a politeness strategy in two respects. Firstly, by using the ce-term, the speaker provides a kind of bumper before a disjunctive action, such as an abrupt topic change, so that the hearer is ready for the shift and can assume a relevant stance as a listener. Secondly, ce occurs frequently as a device framing a pre-sequence or a preliminary preceding some speech acts, often negative speech acts that are potentially face-threatening to the interlocutors such as requests, apologies, complaints, disagreement, or self-deprecation.

The findings point to a number of ways in which we can further address issues that were not fully discussed in this paper. First, it will be interesting to compare the distal deictic terms ku and ce with their corresponding forms in other languages from a cross-linguistic perspective. For instance, the findings in this paper suggest that ku and ce behave in a similar way to the English that, the Finnish tuo, the Romani kato and the Japanese are. Further cross-linguistic research would prove highly useful in explicating a functional correspondence observed across languages.

Following the same line of argument, the use of the demonstratives ku and ce in the context of other-initiated repair will be another area of research considering that the use of demonstratives signal to the addressee that the task of referent identification is likely to be somewhat difficult, which motivates the repair sequence in the subsequent context (cf. Auer 1984; Kim & Suh 2000).

Thirdly, another promising area of research would be the analysis of other similar devices such as uhm, ee, mwe, etc. Issues concerning the functions of fillers await further research.

**Appendix: Abbreviations**

<table>
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<td>COND</td>
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CONN Connective COP Copula
HONOR Honorific TRANS Transferentive
IE Informal Ending REASON Reason
NOM Nominative NOML Nominalizer
POL Politeness Marker CAUS Causative
TOP Topic Marker CIRCUM Circumstantial
QUOT Quotative ADD Additive
DUB Dubitative

References


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