# Discourse functions of Korean 'yes' words

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This study examines discourse functions of Korean 'yes' words from an interactional perspective based on naturally-occurring conversation data. Tokens of *yey, ney, ey, ung, um,* and *e* in Korean are widely recognized as affirmative responses. A close examination of these tokens, however, reveals wide-ranging interactional functions through which speakers express active engagement, share information, negotiate meaning, and maintain discourse coherence. The present study identifies a total of fifteen discourse-pragmatic functions of Korean 'yes' words: (1) affirmative answer, (2) confirmation, (3) acceptance, (4) agreement, (5) answer to summons, (6) acknowledgement, (7) change-of-state, (8) change-of-activity, (9) response solicitation, (10) reinforcement, (11) other initiation of repair, (12) closing of phone call, (13) continuer, (14) proposal to discontinue the on-going action for the sake of a larger course of action, and (15) arguably hesitation marker. This study demonstrates that the interactional approach enables the discovery of varied discourse functions of a type of linguistic items, which may not be readily available in dictionaries or grammar reference guides.

**Keywords:** Korean, Korean yes, discourse marker, discourse functions, interactional approach

## 1. Introduction

In language studies, discourse functions of 'yes' words have received attention in various languages including Indonesian (Wouk 2001), Finnish (Sorjonen 1996), English (Drummond & Hopper 1993; Jefferson 1984; Zimmerman 1993), and Japanese (Angles et al. 2000; Kitagawa 1980). Korean 'yes' tokens *yey, ney, ey, ung, um,* and *e* appear abundantly in natural conversation, and they exhibit varied discourse functions, some of which are comparable to those found in other languages. *Yey, ney, ey, ung, um,* and *e* are commonly recognized as forms of affirma-

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tive answer to a yes/no question in Korean.[1] Among the Korean 'yes' words, *yey* and *ney* are presented as polite forms of affirmative answer in Korean language textbooks (e.g. Cho et al. 2009) and *ung* as a plain or intimate form (e.g. Cho et al. 2012). In addition to *yey, ney*, and *ung*, other variations are also used in oral discourse: *ey* as a polite form and *um* and *e* as plain or intimate forms.[2]

Some previous studies have gone beyond the traditional explanation on Korean 'yes' words as forms of affirmative answer and provided different interactional accounts based on analyzing natural conversational data (Kim 1993; Kim 1999; Kim & Suh 1998). In his conversation analytic study, Kim (1993) examined other-initiated repair sequences (Schegloff et al. 1977) in Korean conversation and found that *yey, ney, ung,* and *e* with a rising intonation are used as other-repair initiators which signal a trouble in hearing or understanding the preceding utterance. In other words, Korean 'yes' words with a rising intonation have an interactional function of raising a problem and thereupon "prompting the speaker of the trouble source turn to actually repair the trouble" (Kim 1993: 3).

In another study investigating confirmation sequences in language proficiency interviews, Kim and Suh (1998) discussed additional interactional usage of *yey, ney*, and *ung* in Korean talk-in-interaction. Their analysis showed that *yey, ney*, and *ung* are used as "a realization marker" (Kim and Suh 1998: 302) to express the speaker's realization, which has a similar function to 'I see' in English. Korean 'yes' tokens are also observed to function as "a receipt maker" (Kim and Suh 1998: 302), which signals the listener's receipt of the preceding utterance made by the primary speaker.

In his 1999 study, Kim found another type of interactional use of *yey, ney* and *ung* that functions similarly to English continuers (Schegloff 1982) such as 'uh huh' that encourage the speaker of the turn in-progress to continue with the ongoing utterance. Focusing on the sequential placement of the continuer type of Korean 'yes' words,[3] Kim's study noted that the listener or the recipient in Korean conversations frequently inserts 'yes' tokens in the middle of the main speaker's turn in progress. In particular, the positions of these 'yes' tokens are where phrasal unit boundaries occur, for example, immediately after "topic, subject, object or other postpositional phrases" within the main speaker's turn (Kim 1999: 430). Based on this finding, he argues that, although the function of these Korean 'yes' tokens is similar to that of English continuers, their positions of occurrences are in contrast to those of English continuers. While English continuers typically

1. See Section 4.1 for examples in our data.

2. See Section 4 for examples of the variations in our data.

3. Kim (1999) calls these 'yes' words as "acknowledgment tokens" (Kim 1999: 427–430). Our study uses the same term in 4.6 but for a different function, not the function of continuers.

occur at a "transition relevance place (TRP)" (Sacks et al. 1974: 705–706) where the speaker's turn is complete, Korean 'yes' tokens frequently occur at phrasal unit boundaries, before the main speaker reaches a TRP.

These prior conversation analytic studies are important in that they reveal the systematic interactional uses of Korean 'yes' words in natural conversation. However, their findings are somewhat limited because they do not focus on the 'yes' words per se. Some of the terminologies in these studies can also be refined based on more detailed distinctions among the interactional functions. For example, Kim (1999: 427) uses the term "acknowledgment tokens" to present Korean 'yes' words as something similar to that of English continuers. However, he uses the same term for two instances of *yey* that occur in sequential contexts different from the continuer type of 'yes' tokens and hence function differently from the continuers. One example is '*ah yey*' translated as "Oh, I see" in his study (Kim 1999: 427). As explained in the study itself, *yey* in this occurrence is "preceded by a change-of-state token (*ah*) (Heritage 1984)" (Kim 1999: 428) and this particular turn position leads it to be translated as 'I see' instead of 'uh huh,' which shows that its function is different from that of continuers.

Motivated by the prior research, the present study attempts to further explicate what has previously been identified and to explore more varieties of discourse functions of Korean 'yes' words. By expanding the scope of the descriptive framework for their usage as interactional resources, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive description of how Korean 'yes' tokens are used in natural conversation. The analysis focuses on the types of interactional functions, the linguistic forms or paralinguistic characteristics of 'yes' words, and the sequential environments in which they are used.

This study attempts to make a contribution to the line of research from the interactional linguistic perspective (see for example, Ford & Wagner 1996; Ochs et al. 1996; Selting & Couper-Kuhlen 2001; Thompson & Couper-Kuhlen 2005). From this perspective, grammar is not a set of rules and regulations in which lexical meanings are readily identifiable in prescribed terms within a fixed range of contexts. The interactional linguistic perspective has been influenced by the discourse-functional approach in which grammar is considered to originate in recurrent patterns in the actual uses of language. Discourse-functional linguists base their research on how grammatical structures are motivated and shaped in discourse (see for example, Du Bois 1987, Givon 1979; Hopper 1979 & 1988; Hopper & Thompson 1980 & 1984). In the interactional approach as well, "the routinized patterns that we call grammar exist because speakers need routinized ways to implement actions" (Thompson & Couper-Kuhlen 2005: 482). Therefore, linguistic structures and patterns of language use should be explained in the specific interactional contexts in which they occur. Much of the interactional linguis-

tic research employs the methodology of Conversation Analysis (CA) in looking empirically at actual instances of language use from natural conversation and investigates how linguistic patterns emerge or arise in situated, context-sensitive ways through interactional processes. Pursuing the line of interactional linguistic research and the CA framework, this study attempts to show how Korean 'yes' words are systematically used for a variety of interactional functions in natural conversation.

## 3. The data

Our data of ordinary conversations in Korean come from three sources: (1) audiotaped phone conversations, (2) videotaped face-to-face conversations, and (3) face-to-face conversations derived from a publicly-available spoken corpus.[4] Three sources of data were used in order to increase the variety of speakers and settings, thereby to achieve a wider coverage of interactional functions of the targeted 'yes' words. The first data source consisted of 17 audiotaped phone conversations occurring in natural interaction involving 17 native speakers of Korean living in Korea aged from their teens to their sixties. The length of phone conversations ranged from 1 minute to 40 minutes, totaling approximately three and a half hours. The videotaped face-to-face conversations were 11 interactions among family members and/or friends occurring in natural settings. These face-to-face interactions involved a total of 37 native speakers of Korean whose ages were from seven to their seventies. The conversations took place in the U.S. and ranged from 55 minutes to 75 minutes, for a total of approximately 13 hours. Both audiotaped and videotaped conversations were transcribed according to the conventions used in CA (cf. Ochs et al. 1996: 461–465). The data from the third source was obtained from the *Sejong* spoken corpus and comprised of five natural face-to-face conversations among 11 native Korean speakers in Korea. These conversations were transcribed by 'the 21st century *Sejong* project organization' in Korea and made available online. The speakers' ages ranged from teens to thirties. Although the transcriptions of the *Sejong* spoken corpus are not as detailed as those found in CA conventions, they provide paralinguistic information such as length of pauses, intonations, and speakers' gestures during the talk. They also provide information about conversational participants and settings.

4. In Section 4 of this study, Examples (2), (4), (6), (14), (16), (17), and (18) are from audiotaped phone conversations. Examples (1), (3), (5), (7), (10), and (11) are from videotaped face-to-face conversations. Examples (8), (9), (12), (13), (19), and (20) are from face-to-face conversations of the *Sejong* spoken corpus.

## 4. Discourse functions of Korean 'yes' tokens

From the analysis of the data, fifteen discourse functions of Korean 'yes' words, which are listed in Table 1, were identified. The aim of the analysis was to describe interactional features of Korean 'yes' tokens and therefore did not include quantification of 'yes' words or frequencies of *yey, ney, ey, ung, um,* and *e* tokens. However, in order to give a general idea of the distribution of Korean 'yes' tokens, we sampled the data by selecting nine sets of conversations and counted the frequency of each interactional function, which is presented in Table 1. The nine sets of conversations consisted of three phone conversations and three face-to-face conversations recorded and transcribed by one of the authors, and three face-to-face conversations derived from the *Sejong* spoken corpus.

**Table 1.** Interactional functions and distribution of Korean 'yes' tokens*

| Functions | Number of 'yes' tokens | *yey* | *ney* | *ey* | *ung* | *um* | *e* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) affirmative answer | 37 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 14 | 5 |
| (2) confirmation | 207 | 10 | 8 | 22 | 47 | 58 | 62 |
| (3) acceptance | 32 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 2 |
| (4) agreement | 60 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 19 | 19 | 12 |
| (5) answer to a summons | 11 | 5 | 1 | 3 | | 1 | 1 |
| (6) acknowledgement | 235 | 11 | 9 | 10 | 49 | 120 | 36 |
| (7) change-of-state | 96 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 54 | 25 |
| (8) change-of-activity | 8 | 5 | 1 | | | 2 | |
| (9) response solicitation | 8 | | | | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| (10) reinforcement | 6 | | | | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| (11) other initiation of repair | 47 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 16 | 14 |
| (12) closing of phone call | 3 | 2 | | | 1 | | |
| (13) continuer | 379 | 8 | 9 | 15 | 152 | 115 | 80 |
| (14) proposal to discontinue | 4 | | | | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| (15) hesitation marker | 32 | | | | 2 | 6 | 24 |
| **Total** | **1165** | **57** | **40** | **75** | **310** | **419** | **264** |

* Two other non-polite 'yes' tokens were found in our data (i.e., *u* and *eng*) which are not included in this table because the numbers of their occurrences were much smaller. They are 12 occurrences of *u* with five functions and two occurrences of *eng* with two functions out of the fifteen listed here.

In what follows, we present and illustrate each discourse function of Korean 'yes' words and sequential environments where they are found in our data.

## 4.1 Affirmative answer to a 'yes/no' question

An affirmative answer is a second pair part of an adjacency pair (Levinson 1983) in which a 'yes/no' question seeks for new information in the following response. Such an affirmative answer can be expected to be the primary function of 'yes' tokens, but it is not the most frequent occurrences in our Korean data, as Table 1 shows. Examples of the polite form *yey* and the plain/intimate form *um* that are used as affirmative answers are demonstrated in Excerpts (1) and (2).

(1) [Beer Gathering] – simplified

```
1     Hyun:  kwaynchanh -ayo?
             okay       -POL
             'Is it okay?'
2 → Koo:     yey.
             'Yes.'
```

(2) [Phone call between Jay and Kay]

```
1     Kay:   soyengi yuchiwen     tani   -ni?
             Name   kindergarten attend -Q?
             'Does Soyengi go to kindergarten?'
2 → Jay:     u:m.
             'Yes.'
```

The choice between polite and plain/intimate speech levels is often explained based on power variables such as age, kinship, gender, social status, and occupational rank, and solidarity variables such as different degrees of intimacy/distance and the formality of situation (Sohn 1999). The examples above display the participants' orientations toward the particular social relationships. Excerpt (1) is a conversation between two male speakers who are having a beer after playing tennis together. Both of them are in their early thirties, and Hyun is one year older than Koo. Their social distance is close enough to be tennis partners and to have a beer together. However, both of them speak in a polite speech level in this example, and thereby claim their relationship not to be extremely intimate. On the other hand, Excerpt (2) is an exchange between two female speakers in their thirties who have been friends since their childhood. The participants display their orientation toward a high degree of intimacy by using a plain speech style ending (*-ni*) in the question and a non-polite 'yes,' *um* in the answer.

A distribution of different 'yes' tokens as affirmative answers is found in a study by Yoon (2010) on the question-response system in Korean conversation. Yoon (2010) identified 87 cases in which polar questions are answered with 'yes' tokens. She found that *ey, um*, and *e* are much more frequently used in natural conversation than *yey, ney*, and *ung* which are presented in Korean language textbooks and dictionaries.

## 4.2 Confirmation

Confirmation questions are different from information-seeking questions in that the speakers of confirmation questions have some grasp of the information inquired about, but need confirmation from the recipients regarding whether their candidate understanding is correct. *Yey, ney, ey, ung, um,* and *e* function as confirming responses to such questions. Yoon (2010) found that requesting confirmation is the most frequently occurring action in Korean questions. Her finding is consistent with the vastly higher frequency of 'yes' tokens as confirmations than that of affirmative answers in our analysis, as seen in Table 1. Excerpt (3) illustrates an example:

(3) [Office lunch] – simplified
((In the prior talk, Jean and Sean talked about pickles, and Sean said that she only likes sweet pickles.))

```
1     Jean:  HAStoku -ey enc    -e   mek -nun ku  sweet relish
             hotdog  -on put.on -and eat -RL  the sweet relish
2            kath -un ke    masiss    -e  ha -keyss -kwun    -yo?
             like -RL thing delicious -TRAN  -MOD   -I.guess -POL
             'Then, for hotdogs, you must like sweet relish?'
3 → Sean:    ney. mac   -ayo.
             yes  right -POL
             'Yes. That's right.'
```

In this exchange, which occurs over lunch, two office mates are talking about pickles. When Sean said she only likes sweet pickles, Jean responds with a confirmation-seeking question in lines 1 and 2. The information sought for in this case is Sean's personal preference, which is a B-event statement (Labov 1972) to be confirmed or disconfirmed only by herself. Sean's response *ney* in line 4 therefore confirms that Jean's conjecture is correct.

'Yes' tokens in Korean function differently from those in English when they are used to confirm or disconfirm negative-polarity questions. That is, 'yes' and 'no' answers in Korean orient toward presuppositions conveyed in the questions, rather than toward the grammatical format of the questions (Yoon 2010). For instance, in Fragment (4), Jay asks Kay if nobody answered the phone. Kay replies with *ung*, a 'yes' token, to confirm the presupposition in the question. The implication is that 'you are right with your assumption that nobody answered the phone.' A Korean 'yes' answer, therefore, is equivalent to English 'yes' when used toward an affirmative 'yes/no' question, but is comparable to English 'no' in response to a negative question.

(4) [Phone call between Jay and Kay]

```
1    Jay:   cenhwa an  pat     -ass -nya?=
            call   not receive -PST  -Q
            'Didn't anyone answer the phone?'=
2 → Kay:    =ung. an  pat     -te -ntey?
             yes  not receive -RT  -CIRCUM
            ='No, no one answered the phone.'
```

## 4.3 Acceptance of offer, suggestion, or request

The next function of Korean 'yes' tokens is to accept an offer, suggestion, or request. Actions such as offers, suggestions, or requests can be accomplished either through a polar question or through an imperative. When these actions, whether in question or imperative formats, are accepted, a 'yes' token in Korean is used. In Excerpt (5), in which a married couple and the husband's sister are having a spaghetti lunch together, the wife offers a meatball to her sister-in-law, saying 'eat this', and the sister-in-law accepts this offer, by saying *u:m* in line 2.

(5) [Family lunch]

```
1    Wif:   *i          -ke          mek-e.
             this       -thing       eat-INT
            *((putting a meatball onto Sis's dish))
            'Eat this.'
2 → Sis:    u:m
            'Oka:y'
```

An example of accepting a request is presented in (6), in which Kay says *yey yey* in response to Kim's request, 'please wait a minute'.

(6) [Phone call between Jay and Kay]
((Kay called her friend, Jay, and Jay's husband, Kim, answered.))

```
1    Kim:   camkkan      -man  kitali -s[ey -yo.]
            for.a.minute -only wait   -HON  -POL
            'Wait just a minute.'
2 → Kay:                              [ y e  ]y: yey::.
                                       'Ye:s  ye:s.'
3    Kim:   °(cenhwa   pat     -e)°
             phonecall receive -INT
            '°(It's for you)°'
```

## 4.4 Agreement

Korean 'yes' tokens are also used to agree with the prior speaker's assessment or an opinion. In Excerpt (7), Jean provides her opinion about a Korean dish, *pwulkoki* ('barbecued beef'), seeking agreement from Sean. A 'yes' token *u:m* in line 3 expresses Sean's agreement. Sean further extends the opinion to a similar

Korean dish, *kalpi*, ('barbecued beef rib'), by which she expresses her strong agreement regarding the desirable flavor of the beef dish.

(7) [Office lunch]

```
1    Jean:  pwulkoki   -kath -un ke    -nun tal   -aya
            Food.Name  -like -RL thing -TC  sweet -must
2           masiss[ ( -canh   -a)]
            delicious -COM.not -INT
            'Things like Pwulkoki are delicious only when they are sweet, right'
3 → Sean:        [     u  :     ]m kalpi       -to   kuleh -kwu.
                       yes          Food.Name  -also be.so -and
                       'Ye:s, so is Kalpi.'
```

Pomerantz (1984) noted that disagreements are often prefaced by agreements through expressions such as 'yes, but,' which delays a dispreferred action, disagreement. Korean 'yes' tokens are used to delay disagreement, too, often followed by a discourse marker *kuntey* or *kulentey* ('but'). The following fragment shows an example:

(8) [Film series]

```
1    A:     eyphisotu mwe  -y  -ess -ci? keki  -se
            episode   what -be -PST  -COM  there -at
2           silphayha -te -ni  ay  -ka.
            fail      -RT  -CONN kid -NM
            'What episode was it? There, his acting was bad and'
3 → B:      ung. kuntey eyphisotu wen -un kyay     -ka silphayha -n
            yes. but    episode   one -TC that.kid -NM fail      -RL
4           key   ani -la  cencheycekulwu silphayhay -ss-ki ttaymey
            thing not -but generally      fail       -PST-because
            'Yeah, but, for episode one, it wasn't that his acting was bad, but because the
            film itself was a failure on the whole, so'
```

While A and B talk about a film series and a popular actor who starred in one of the series, A mentions that the actor did not do a good job and thus the first episode of the series was a failure. B disagrees with A by saying that the failure of the episode should not be attributed to the actor's performance but to the poor quality of the overall film production. In this context, by serving as a preface of a disagreement, the 'yes' token *ung* helps mitigate the force of the speaker's opposition or non-compliance to the prior utterance.

## 4.5 Answer to a summons

Another type of action performed through 'yes' tokens is an answer to a summons. The summons-answer sequence is usually implemented as a pre-sequence in an effort to secure the attention of the recipient before moving on to a main sequence. A 'yes' token answering a summons is a "go-ahead response" for an upcoming "talk-in-the-base-sequence" (Schegloff 2007: 49). In the following

Korean example, the response with a 'yes' token *yey* functions as a go-ahead response, which is followed by a request, the reason for the summons. In (9), the waiter B responds to the customer A's summons with a polite 'yes' token *yey*, upon which A requests more food. The example in (9) presents *yey* with a final falling intonation, but an answer to summons is sometimes found to be issued with a rising intonation as well.

(9) [Restaurant talk]
((At a restaurant, A is calling the waiter B.))

```
1    A:     acessi::
            old.man
            'Si::r (=Excuse me::)'
2 → B:      yey.
            'Yes.'
3    A:     oteyng    com      te   cwu  -sey -yo.
            fish.cake a.little more give -HON  -POL
            'Please give us more fish cake.'
```

## 4.6 Acknowledgement

A Korean 'yes' token is also used as an acknowledgement token. Gardner (2001) notes that acknowledgment tokens inform interlocutors of adequate receipt of the previous utterance. Acknowledgment tokens such as 'okay' in English often occur in third position, which is called a sequence-closing third (Schegloff 2007). Korean 'yes' words as acknowledgment tokens are also frequently observed in third position, which is a sequential context different from those in which the previously analyzed 'yes' words typically occur, namely second position after different types of first pair parts such as questions, offers, requests, assessments, and summonses. Excerpt (10) shows an example of an acknowledgment token in third position after a first pair part is responded by a second pair part.

(10) [Lunch between father and son]
((Father and son talk about refinancing home.))

```
1    Son:    khun nwuna-nun (1.5) ton-i    khe-se:,  (.8) hay -mun
             big  elder.sister-TC money-NM big-because    do  -if
2            com  ituk (.) pw   -ass -ulthey  -ntey.
             some profit   gain -PST  -I.guess -CIRCUM
             'Since the amount of money for Sister's home is big, if she did refinancing, she
             must have saved some.'
3    (2.8)
4    Father: manhi pw   -ass -ci[:.
             much  gain -PST  -COM
             'She did save a lot.'
5 → Son:                        [°u:m.°
                                 'Yea:h.'
```

Excerpt (10) is a conversation between a son and his father, who is visiting the son from another state. The son makes a conjecture in line 1 about his sister's financial saving through refinancing her home. This conjecture invites his father's confirmation because his father and sister live very close to each other, while the son lives far away. His father does confirm the conjecture in his second pair part in line 4, and then a 'yes' token is added in third position, which acknowledges the confirmation and thereupon closes the sequence.

## 4.7 Change-of-state

This section presents another function of 'yes' tokens in third position which corresponds to the use of 'oh' in English as a "change-of-state" marker (Heritage 1984: 299). The change-of-state token indicates that the listener has received the preceding information by undergoing the change in his or her knowledge or awareness from not knowing it to knowing it. Fragment (11) shows an example in which a polite 'yes,' *ey* is used for this function.

(11) [Lunch between father and son]

```
1   Son:    mayhyeng       -un cwungkwuk  -eyse cham cha: (.5) kaci -kwu
            Brother.in.law -TC China      -in   EXC   car       own  -and
2           tany-eyo¿ ani -mun [ ( ) ]
            go.about  not -if
            'By the way, does Brother-in-law moves around by car in China? Or ( )'
3   Father:                    [a:ni:]
                                'No:'
4   (2.2)
5   Son:    taycwung kyothong?
            public   transportation
6           'Public transportation?'
7   (2.2)
8   Father: °kunyang,° (1.5) pesu tha  -kwu tani     -kwu kule  -ci:.
            just             bus  take -and go.about -and do.so -COM
            'He just (1.5) goes about by bus or something.'
9 → Son:    °ey::.°
            'O::h (I see).'
```

The 'yes' token in this excerpt (line 9) is issued as responses to "question-elicited informings" just like 'oh' in English as a change-of-state token (Heritage 1984: 307). The son asks his father an information-seeking question about the transportation his brother-in-law uses in China, which is answered in line 8. The son receipts the answer with a 'yes' token in line 9 and closes the sequence. The way the son issues the 'yes' token is different from that observed in acknowledgment tokens illustrated in the previous section. Whereas the acknowledgment token is produced with a falling intonation, *ey* in Excerpt (11) is produced with more vowel lengthening and a dynamic rising-falling intonation contour. The underlined colon in the transcription marks an upward intonation which is differ-

ent from a regular rising intonation in that the upward inflection begins after the onset of the vowel. Korean 'yes' tokens as change-of-state markers are observed to systematically occur with such an upward inflection with vowel lengthening. This intonation contour displays the speaker's surprise in receipting the new information and plays a role in distinguishing Korean 'yes' tokens as change-of-state markers from those as acknowledgment tokens.[5]

## 4.8 Change-of-activity

While Sections 4.6 and 4.7 present Korean 'yes' tokens in third position which close the sequence, this section provides an analysis of 'yes' tokens observed to have dual function of closing the ongoing sequence and proposing to advance to the next activity in talk. Gardner (2001: 2) notes that 'okay' in English has this function of proposing "a transition to a new activity or a new topic in the talk." Beach, through extensive research on the use of 'okay' (e.g., 1993, 1995a, 1995b), also indicates that "'okay' is employed transitionally" (1995a: 130). Based on several transition-related usages of 'okay,' he addresses its dual character by pointing out that 'okays' are "responsive to prior talk, but also prefigure movements toward next-positioned matters as a pivotal resource" (1995a: 122). Korean 'yes' tokens are observed to have this dual function of 'okay' in English. An example is shown in Fragment (12), a talk between a math tutor and her student. The tutor and the student are working on a complex number '*a* -3*i*' to figure out the real number for '*a*':

(12) [Tutoring session]

```
1     Tutor: kulemyen silswu      -nun mwe  -ya?
             then     real.number -TC  what -INT
             'Then which one is the real number?'
2     Stud:  i.
             two
             'Two.'
3 →   Tutor: um. i,  i   khyelley,                ani kunyang
             yes two two complex.conjugate.number no  just
4            poksoswu       -nun i   mainasu sam   ai -ka toy
             complex.number -TC  two minus   three i  -NM become
5            -keyss -ci?
             -MOD   -COM
             'Yes. Two, two complex conjugate number, no, I mean just the complex number
             will be two minus three i (2-3i), right?
```

5. The acknowledgment token in Excerpt (10) has a lengthened vowel, but the vowel lengthening is not systematic in this function. It is systematic only in the function of change-of-statement tokens. In Excerpt (11), *ey::.* is produced with a final falling intonation indicated with a period (.), but the final falling intonation is not a critical element in the function of change-of-state tokens. Other occurrences of Korean 'yes' as change-of-state markers are observed with or without a final falling intonation.

```
6    Stud:  ney.
            'Yes.'
7 → Tutor: ung. ku   taum -ey, ca   kulem jina -ya osip  chil  pen
            yes  that next -at  well then  Name -VOC fifty seven number
8           pwul  -epwapwa enni   aph   -eyse.
            solve -try     sister front -at
            'Okay. Next, well then, Jina, try to solve number 57 in front of me.'
```

The tutor in line 1 asks the student what the number for '*a*' is, and the student provides an answer in line 2. The tutor acknowledges the answer with the 'yes' token *um* in line 3, and thereupon initiates the next task of finding the number for '*i*' by substituting '*a*' with the number provided as the answer and issuing another question asking for confirmation. Therefore, the 'yes' token in line 3 demonstrates its use as a pivotal resource to acknowledge the student's answer and simultaneously shift to the next activity. In line 6, the student confirms her understanding with *ney* as a second pair part. The tutor's *ung* in line 7 is another change-of-activity token which closes the sequence by acknowledging the student's confirmation, and simultaneously opens another sequence to move on to the next task. The orientation to a transition to the next activity is supported by the following utterance, *ku taum-ey, ca kulem* ('next, well then'), which explicitly signals a shift to the next math problem.

## 4.9 Response solicitation

Another function of 'yes' tokens observed in our data is to reissue the speaker's action particularly in first pair part of an adjacency pair, and thereby solicit a response which the other participant has not provided. The following excerpt shows an example. In line 1, a math tutor A asks B a question about calculation, which is followed by a long pause rather than an answer which is due. Using *ung?* in line 4, the tutor urges her tutee to respond to her question.

(13) [Tutoring session]

```
1    Tutor: ca,  ca   enni   -ka yensan      -i  mwe  -la  kulay
            well well sister -NM calculation -NM what -say
2           -ss  -e   jina -ya?
            -PST  -INT Name -VOC
            'What did I say about calculating, Jina?'
3    (4.2)
4 → Tutor: ung?
            'Huh?'
5    Stud:  pwunswu.
            fraction
            'Fraction.'
6    Tutor: kuchi
            be.so
            'Right'
```

As seen in this segment, a 'yes' token as a solicitation marker typically occurs in a context in which a second pair part of action is delayed with a pause. Another important feature of this practice is that it involves a rising intonation. Such a rising intonation is a crucial part of the function of 'yes' tokens for reissuing the prior action and thereby soliciting a response.

## 4.10 Reinforcement

Another type of Korean 'yes' token is observed at the end of a turn typically with a rising intonation, immediately after a turn is completed. As a continuation of a turn that has just been completed, such a 'yes' token reinforces the action done through the utterance prior to it. An example is illustrated in (14).

(14) [Phone call between Rae and Sung]

```
1     Rae:   na panghak -tonganey:, na cincca michin ke    kath
             I  break   -during     I  really crazy  thing seem
2            -ay. <na phaynphi[k  tul  -ess -e.]
             -INT I   fan.fiction join -PST -INT
             'During the school brea:k, I think I became really crazy.< I joined a fan fiction
             club.'
3     Sung:                    [   ewu   YA   Y]A YA  YA  YA.
                                  EXC   hey  hey hey hey hey
4            [   .h   ya  ] ya ya.
               'Oh my, HEY HEY HEY HEY HEY. .h hey hey hey.'
5     Rae:   [((chuckles))]
6     Sung:  .h kulen ke    -n yaykiha  -l philyo -to
               such  thing -TC tell     -RL need   -even
7  →         eps       -e:. ung?
             not.exist -INT yes
             '.h Such a thing, you don't even have to mention. Okay?'
8     Rae:   ((laugh))
```

In this phone conversation between two high school girls, Rae says in lines 1 and 2 that she joined a fan fiction club online, which she self-deprecatorily describes as a "crazy" action. Sung laughs out loud as a response and further disparages the action by declaring in lines 6 and 7 that such an action is not even worth mentioning. Immediately after this strong opinion statement, she issues *ung?* without a pause, which makes this token incorporated into the same turn as the opinion statement. By adding this 'yes' token in this sequential position with a rising intonation, the speaker expresses her dismissive stance even more strongly. The usage of 'yes' token as a reinforcement marker differs from a solicitation marker, as discussed in 4.9, in terms of its sequential position. A solicitation marker is used to solicit a response when the other speaker is given a chance to respond but is delaying to issue a second pair part. On the other hand, the reinforcement marker is produced as an increment of the ongoing turn before the next speaker takes a turn

to respond. Hence, it is a resource for the current speaker to strengthen the action in-progress before passing the turn to the next speaker.

## 4.11 Other-initiation of repair

'Yes' tokens in Korean are implemented for other-initiation of repair (OIR) (Schegloff 2000). Repair refers to practices dealing with any problems in speaking, hearing, and understanding in talk-in-interaction (Schegloff et al. 1977). OIRs such as *e?, um?, ung?, ey?, yey?*, and *ney?* roughly correspond to 'huh?,' 'pardon?,' or 'excuse me?' in English. Prosody is a key resource for this use, and 'yes' tokens for OIR usually occur with a rising intonation. Regarding their sequential context, Kim (1993) and Yoon (2010) found that they often occur in the turn after a topic-initial turn in which there is a topic shift. Excerpt (15) is a lunch conversation among a married couple and the husband's sister. Prior to this segment of the conversation, the married couple talked about problems with their car and the cost for fixing it. They continue talking about the same topic in lines 1 and 2. In line 4 the sister issues a question about a completely new topic.

(15) [Family lunch]

```
1    Hus:   peceys -i  nemwu thaithuha -nikka:
            budget -NM too   tight     -because
            'Because our budget is too tight'
2    Wif:   um.
            'Yes.'
3    Hus:   .h [( )]
4    sis:      [nem]wu cook -i  an  tway -ss  -eyo?
               too     cook -NM not done -PST  -POL
              'Is it too much uncooked?'
5    (.3)
6 → Wif:    um?
            'Huh?'
7    Sis:   mek-ul man[hay¿
            eat-as.much
            'Is it okay enough to eat¿'
8    Wif:             [kwanchanh -ay.
                       okay       -IE
                        'It is okay.'
```

In this sequential context, the wife issues an OIR with a 'yes' token, *um?* in line 6, through which she displays that she had a problem understanding the sister's question. The sister rephrases her question in line 7. The wife answers in line 8, and thereby the repair sequence is closed.

## 4.12 Closing of phone call

Schegloff and Sacks (1973) observed that 'okay' in English is used as pre-closings in phone conversation, as in the following segment:

(16) [Schegloff and Sacks (1973: 304)]

```
A:  O.K.
B:  O.K.
A:  Bye Bye
B:  Bye
```

They state that the two 'okays' are the participants' collaborative work to refrain from continuing the conversation and hence to move toward subsequent closure. According to Schegloff and Sacks, when the first 'okay' is answered by another, the two utterances together constitute a first exchange of the closing section.

Korean 'yes' tokens are also observed to have a similar function to 'okay' in English phone conversation. Korean 'yes' tokens, however, are used as actual closings at the very end of the phone call whereas English 'okay' is used in pre-closings before an exchange of byes. The following excerpt is from a phone conversation between a married couple in their fifties.

(17) [Phone call between Mia and husband]

```
1    Mia:   cikum eti    -ntey.
            now   where  -CIRCUM
            'Where are you now.'
  ((several lines deleted: Hus's answer about where he is driving now))
2    Mia:   u:ng al    -ass -e.
            yes  know  -PST -INT
            'Yea:h I see.'
     (.)
3 → Hus:    e:.
            'Okay:.'
4 → Mia:    u:ng.
            'Okay:.'
```

Mia asks a question in line 1. Her husband provides an answer in the omitted lines, and Mia closes the sequence by receipting the information in line 2. The husband issues a 'yes' token with a vowel stretch and a falling intonation, and Mia responds in line 4 with another 'yes' token with the same paralinguistic features. This exchange of 'yes' tokens ends the phone conversation, of which the husband's turn opens a sequence of closing the call and Mia's 'yes' functions as the second pair part of the closing sequence.

Excerpt (18) shows a somewhat different sequential organization in the closing sequence. It is a conversation between Mia and her friend Lee. The first 'yes' token in this segment has a pivotal function of acknowledging the other speaker's prior turn and simultaneously beginning the sequence of closing the phone call.

(18) [Phone call between Mia and Lee]

```
1     Mia:   hayethun cikum chwulpalha -lkey -yo.
             anyway   now   depart     -PRM  -POL
             'Anyway I am departing now.'
2 → Lee:     ney::.
             'Okay::.'
3 → Mia:     yey::.
             'Okay::.'
```

Excerpt (19) illustrates another example of a call which ends with a 'yes' when one of the speakers produces more explicit expressions of ending a call.

(19) [Phone call between Jung and Sung]

```
1     Jung:  .h al    -ass -e. annye::ng,
               know  -PST -IE bye
             .h I see. Bye::,'
2 → Sung:    ung. kkunh-e.
             'Okay. Hang up.'
3 → Jung:    u::ng.
             'Okay::.'
```

With *al-ass-e* ('I see') in line 1, Jung closes the sequence up to the moment, and says *annye:ng* ('bye') possibly to open a closing sequence by explicitly saying 'bye.' In line 2, Sung responds with a 'yes' and then produces an imperative utterance which is another explicit expression of asking the other speaker to hang up. This imperative utterance functions as a first pair part of another closing sequence. Jung responds with a 'yes' in line 3, and thereupon the closing of the call is completed. The phone conversations in our data have variations in the organizations of the closing sequences, but all the closing sequences end with a 'yes' token as illustrated in this section.

## 4.13 Continuer

The next type of 'yes' tokens is something similar to a continuer (Schegloff 1982) in English. Continuers such as 'uh-huh' and 'mm-hmm' in English are brief utterances that signal the listener's engagement in the speaker's talk. A continuer expresses the listener's understanding that the primary speaker's talk is not yet complete but still in progress. As mentioned earlier, while English continuers and Korean continuers share a common function in that they both appear to encourage the primary speaker to continue the on-going talk, there is a slight difference between the two in terms of their positions in the discourse. An English continuer is typically placed at or near a transition relevance place (TRP) and used to express the listener's readiness to decline the opportunity to take a substantial turn (Schegloff 1982; Gardner 2001). Korean continuers, however, are often employed

at intra-turn, phrasal unit boundaries (Kim 1999), as shown in the following segment.

(20) [Sightseeing places]
((Speaker A is talking about places worth visiting in Seoul.))

```
1    A:    ani kulen kongwen malkwu ilsan     hoswu kongwen -ina,
           no  such  park    not    City.Name lake          -or
           'No, not that kind of park, but Ilsan Lake Park or'
2 → B:     ung.
           'Uh-huh'
3    A:    yeuito    kongwen koswupwuci yongsan   kacok  kongwen
           Town.Name park    highlands  Town.Name family park
           'Youido Park riverside highlands, Yongsan Family Park'
4 → B:     um.
           'Yeah'
5    A:    mwe: kulen tey   -twu  kwaynchanh -ci.
           well such  place -also okay       -COM
           'We:ll such places are also good.'
```

In line 1, Speaker A begins to list a few nice places to visit in Seoul. Speaker A first names 'Ilsan Lake Park' and then produces *-ina* ('or'), which clearly signals that he is going to name another place. Speaker B's *ung* in line 2 at this moment is an indication that he is listening and waiting for the next part of the utterance. Speaker A names two more places to visit in line 3. This line would possibly have completed A's turn with a falling intonation at the end. However, it is produced without a falling intonation and hence the position is an intra-turn, phrasal unit boundary. B's *um* in line 4 at this position therefore signals his understanding that A's turn is still in progress and his willingness to decline the opportunity to take a substantial turn.

This usage of continuer of Korean 'yes' tokens is found in many other segments in our data, which lends support to the previous claims made by Kim (1999) that, while the function of a continuer in English is to mark one's willingness to pass an opportunity to initiate a full turn, the function of Korean continuers is to encourage the speaker to "continue talking to complete the turn in progress" (Kim 1999: 429).

## 4.14 Proposal to discontinue the on-going action for the sake of a larger course of action

The function presented in this section occurs while the previous speaker's turn is still in progress, similar to the usage of continuer. However, the turn design and the function are different. It typically involves multiple sayings of 'yes' tokens under a single intonation contour, and proposes the other speaker discontinue the on-going action which keeps a larger course of action from being advanced.

According to Stivers (2004: 288), multiple sayings of 'yes' tokens and other expressions in English "function to display that the speaker finds the prior speaker's course of action problematic, typically its perseveration, and proposes that the course of action be halted." We observe this function of multiple sayings of 'yes' tokens in our Korean data as well. In the following excerpt, A is describing an accident that he witnessed. He is saying that a person fell to the ground. In lines 1 through 3, he explains that the road was uneven and rugged. B acknowledges A's explanation in line 4, but A goes on to elaborate on the surface of the road, issuing a noun phrase, 'a pavement with bricks or something like that.' The response to this informing is *ung ung ung* by B in line 6:

(21) [Break-time talk]

```
1     A:    kule  -l key   ani -ntey ku   salam  -i, tolo -ka
            do.so -RL thing not -CONN  that person -NM road -NM
2           ilehkey   phyengphyengha  -n key   ani -la  ilehkey
            like.this flat             -RL thing not -but like.this
3           wulthwungpwulthwungha -canh    -a
            rough                 -COM.not -INT
            'He wouldn't have fallen, but the road was not flat like this, but it was rugged,
            you know.'
4     B:    um
            'Yes'
5     A:    ku pyektol -lo   mantu -n  kulen phocang,
            uh brick   -with make  -RL such  paving
            'Uh, a pavement with bricks or something like that,
6 →   B:    ung ung ung.
            'Yes yes yes.'
7     A:    kulayse etten     pwun   -i  ka -ta    yakkan,  ppikkus
            so      a.certain person -NM go -while a.little slip
8           ssuleci -sy -ess -napwa,
            fall    -HON -PST -seem
            'So it seemed like that person slipped and fell while he was walking,'
9     B:    ung.
            'Yes,'
```

The multiples of the *ung* token in line 6 have the same features as those in English observed by Stivers. They are repetitions of a full unit of talk and they happen immediately in succession. B's utterance here not only shares these features, but also displays a function similar to English multiple sayings. It indicates B's strong recognition of what A is trying to describe. It further indicates B's stance that A's explanation of the surface condition of the road has been unnecessarily overdone and hence it should be properly stopped to continue the description of the accident. A's next turn in line 7 shows his orientation to B's stance conveyed in the multiple saying. A does not complete the utterance projected by the noun phrase in line 5, but advances the description of the accident. As Stivers argues with English cases, a single token of *ung* in line 6 would have had a different function:

It would have been something similar to a continuer (Schegloff 1982) in English which is discussed in the earlier section, and it would have encouraged A to continue his extensive explanation of the surface condition of the road. The multiples of *ung*, as opposed to a single token, convey the sense that B finds A's on-going action problematic and therefore encourages A to move on to the next action, which displays his orientation to the larger course of action. This type of 'yes' tokens commonly appear with a short, terse, and falling contour.

## 4.15 Hesitation marker

Non-polite 'yes' tokens in Korean are observed to be used as interjective signals of hesitation when the speaker has problems formulating a word or an expression. They are comparable to 'uh' and 'um' in English. Prosody is important for this type of 'yes' tokens again. They usually have a flat prosody without a falling or rising intonation. According to Hayashi and Yoon (2006), such hesitation markers are paralinguistic signals and they can appear anywhere during the course of an utterance-in-progress. Excerpt (22) presents an example in which a hesitation marker *e* occurs in the middle of a long turn constructional unit. It is a talk between a housewife and her sister-in-law, and the wife is talking about a strict illness policy of her son's preschool.

(22) [Family lunch]

```
1    Wif:   kwaynchanh  -ko  kulayse, .h ku   taum  -nal ttak
            fine        -and so          that next  -day just
2 →         hakkyo  -lul teylyeka -ss  -teni sensayng -i  °e°
            school  -AC  take     -PST -and  teacher  -NM  uh
3           insang    -ul ttak    cciphwuli -nun ke    -ya. hu
            face.look -AC exactly frown     -RL  thing -be
            'He was fine, and so .h I took him to school the next day, and the teacher °uh°
            just made a frowning face, you know. hu'
4    Sis:   um.
            'Yeah.'
```

It is arguable whether the function of hesitation marker is indeed one of 'yes' tokens. The polite forms of 'yes' tokens are not used for this function. Hesitation markers are usually produced with a flat prosody and occur in the middle of a turn by the same speaker instead of being used to respond to another speaker's talk. We acknowledge that they may be non-lexical interjections rather than a function of 'yes' tokens. This function is included in this study because it is observed in multiple forms of 'yes' tokens, *ung*, *um*, and *e*, although they are all non-polite forms, and because the purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive description of the functions of Korean 'yes' words.

## 5. Discussion

In the preceding analysis, we attempted to demonstrate many uses of Korean 'yes' tokens *yey, ney, ey, ung, um,* and *e* in spoken discourse. These tokens convey a number of functions that are highly interactional and pragmatic in nature. The multifunctionality of Korean 'yes' tokens, however, does not seem to pose challenges for speakers in utilizing them as a particular type of resource or for interlocutors in interpreting their usage. In fact, we observe in our data that conversation participants cooperate with each other in employing them as a variety of interactional devices. They deploy 'yes' tokens to a range of sequential positions with different intonations in order to accomplish various interactional tasks. The wide range of functions that these 'yes' tokens perform are not the kinds of functions that can be designated or identified out of context. In order to understand the various meanings of 'yes' tokens, one has to carefully look at the immediate interactional environment in which a 'yes' token is situated. In what follows, we discuss significant aspects of the interactional environment which contribute to the roles of 'yes' tokens in organizing the on-going talk in particular ways.

First, the sequential environments where a 'yes' token occurs serve as a significant source of its function. In our data, a great number of 'yes' tokens appeared in second-pair part positions of adjacency as responses to the first-pair-part actions. When they occur in second-pair-part positions, they affirmatively answer a yes/no question (4.1), confirm the other speaker's assumption (4.2), accept the given offer, suggestion, or request (4.3), agree with a prior opinion or assessment (4.4), or answer a summons (4.5). Korean 'yes' tokens are also observed in third position. They acknowledge information delivered (4.6), display the receipt of information more actively (4.7), or simultaneously acknowledge the information and signal the initiation of a new activity (4.8). Korean 'yes' tokens are also found as different types of first pair parts: When a first pair part is not responded by the recipient through silence, the first-pair-part action is reissued through a 'yes' token as a solicitation marker (4.9), and when a 'yes' token is added immediately to a first-pair-part with a rising intonation, it reinforces the action (4.10). 'Yes' tokens can occur in another type of first pair part in an embedded repair sequence as other repair initiator (4.11). They also function as either a first pair part or a second pair part of a closing sequence in a phone conversation (4.12). In addition, they are used at phrasal unit boundaries or possible TRPs of extended talk as resources for the other speaker to position themselves as an active recipient of the extended talk (4.13 and 4.14).

Prosodic features also play a role in comprehending discourse functions of 'yes' tokens. In particular, prosody is a key feature to distinguish whether a 'yes' token works as a sequence-initiating action (4.9, 4.10, and 4.11) or an action of

responding to the prior action (4.1 to 4.8). A 'yes' token deployed as a sequence-initiating action, marking response solicitation (4.9), reinforcing the current action (4.10), or initiation repair (4.11), usually carries a rising contour. This rising intonation signals to the listener that some response, repetition, or elaboration needs to be incorporated. When serving as response tokens, a 'yes' token is conveyed generally with a falling intonation, but in some cases it can occur with other intonation contours. For example, when answering a summons, a Korean 'yes' can be produced in varied intonations: in a rising or a falling intonation. More specifically, when a 'yes' token is used to signal the receipt or acknowledgment of the summons, it carries a falling intonation. However, when it is used as a go-ahead signal to the caller, it occurs with a rising contour. In the case of the change-of-state 'yes' token (4.7), its prosody is typically characterized by the elongation of vowel and upward intonation, starting after the onset of the vowel. A vowel stretch is also frequently observed in a 'yes' token used for closing a phone conversation (4.12).

We also noticed functional differences of Korean 'yes' tokens in terms of their directional orientations in discourse. Some 'yes' tokens orient to the prior message (retrospective orientation) whereas some 'yes' tokens point forwards to the upcoming utterance (prospective orientation). For instance, acknowledgement marker (4.6) and continuer (4.13), which both signal the receipt of the prior talk, can be differentiated by their directional orientations in discourse. While continuers focus more on prompting the primary speaker to continue talking, acknowledgment tokens primarily concern informing adequate receipt of the previous utterance. That is, acknowledgement tokens are more retrospective in nature (Gardner 2001), whereas continuers are relatively more prospective in their characteristics. In our data, 'yes' tokens with prospective orientation are continuer (4.13), change-of-activity (4.8), response solicitation (4.9), reinforcement (4.10), other initiation of repair (4.11), and proposal to discontinue the on-going action for a larger course of action (4.14).

Table 2 summarizes the functions of Korean 'yes' tokens that were identified in this study along with their English equivalents. The table also indicates whether or not each of *yey, ney, ey, ung, um* and *e* can perform the presented functions.

**Table 2.** Functions of Korean 'yes' tokens

| Functions | English gloss | Polite tokens *yey/ney/ey* | Non-polite tokens *ung/um/e* |
|---|---|---|---|
| (1) affirmative answer | 'yes' 'that is correct' | O | O |
| (2) confirmation | 'yeah' 'no' 'that is right' | O | O |

**Table 2.** *(continued)*

| Functions | English gloss | Polite tokens *yey/ney/ey* | Non-polite tokens *ung/um/e* |
|---|---|---|---|
| (3) acceptance | 'okay' 'sure' 'all right' | O | O |
| (4) agreement | 'yeah' 'you're right' 'I agree' | O | O |
| (5) answer to a summons | 'yeah' 'yes, go ahead' | O | O |
| (6) acknowledgement | 'yeah' | O | O |
| (7) change-of-state | 'oh' 'oh I see' 'now I understand' | O | O |
| (8) change-of-activity | 'okay' 'all right' 'now' | O | O |
| (9) response solicitation | 'huh?' | O | O |
| (10) reinforcement | 'okay?' 'do you understand me?' | O | O |
| (11) other initiation of repair | 'pardon?' 'huh?' | O | O |
| (12) closing of phone call | 'bye' | O | O |
| (13) continuer | 'uh huh' 'mm-hmm' | O | O |
| (14) proposal to discontinue | 'yeah, I know' 'I know, I know' | O | O |
| (15) hesitation marker | 'uh' 'um' | – | O |

## 6. Closing remarks

This study was set out to investigate the interactional functions of Korean 'yes' tokens. The data of the present study demonstrate that, depending on various discourse contexts in which 'yes' tokens are employed, a wide range of functions and actions are performed. In several previous studies, the discussion of interactional uses of Korean 'yes' tokens appeared in sporadic cases including in the accounts of confirmation sequences (Kim & Suh 1998), other-initiated repair sequences (Kim 1993; Kim & Suh 1998), reactive tokens (Young & Lee 2004), and question-response sequences (Yoon 2010). In the present study, we expanded upon previous analyses of Korean 'yes' tokens to include more varied interactional functions and to elaborate more on the sequential environments where they occur and the paralinguistic features.

In ordinary Korean spoken discourse, 'yes' tokens occur in abundance. The multifunctionality and versatility of these tokens perhaps explain their high frequency in real-life discourse. These tokens are an effective vehicle through which speakers negotiate meaning, share information, express active engagement, maintain discourse coherence and continuity, determine conversational boundaries,

and so on. Our data indicate that all of the functions of 'yes' tokens contribute to collaborative construction of conversation. We do not claim, however, our study presents a complete picture of Korean 'yes' tokens. Future investigations and analyses are warranted for the improvement and refinement of the interactional nature of Korean 'yes' tokens.

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## Appendix. Transcription conventions

(Adapted from Ochs, Schegloff, & Thompson 1996, pp. 461–465)

| | |
|---|---|
| [ | The point at which overlapping talk starts |
| ] | The point at which overlapping talk ends |
| = | If the two lines connected by the equal signs are produced: (1) by the same speaker, the continuous talk is broken up to accommodate the placement of overlapping talk; (2) if they are produced by different speakers, the second follows the first with no discernable silence between them (i.e., "latched" to it). |
| (0.0) | The length of silence in tenths of a second |
| (.) | Micro-pause |
| <u>Wo</u>rd | Some form of stress or emphasis, either by increased loudness or higher pitch |
| Word | Especially loud talk |
| °° | A passage of talk quieter than the surrounding talk |
| ::: | The prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding them |
| . | Falling, or final intonation |
| ? | Rising intonation |
| , | Half-rising intonation |
| ¿ | Rising stronger than a comma but weaker than a question mark |

| | |
|---|---|
| _: | Inflected falling intonation contour |
| : | Inflected rising intonation contour |
| ↑↑ | A passage of talk with higher pitch than the surrounding talk |
| > < | Increase in tempo, as in a rush-through |
| < > | Markedly slow talk |
| < | "Jump-started," i.e., starting with a rush |
| -- | A cut-off or self-interruption (modified to be distinguished from the morpheme boundary marker, -) |
| hhh | Audible outbreath |
| .hh | Audible inbreath |
| (hh) | Laughter within a word |
| (word) | Uncertainty of hearing on the transcriber's part |
| ( ) | Something being said, but no hearing achieved |
| (( )) | Transcriber's remark |

## Abbreviations used in the interlinear gloss

| | |
|---|---|
| AC | Accusative particle |
| ADV | Adverbial |
| CIRCUM | Circumstantial |
| COM | Committal |
| CONN | Connective |
| CORREL | Correlative |
| DC | Declarative suffix |
| EXC | Exclamatory token |
| GN | Genetive particle |
| HON | Honorific |
| INT | Intimate speech level |
| MOD | Modal |
| NM | Nominative particle |
| PAS | Passive suffix |
| POL | Polite speech level |
| PROGR | Progressive suffix |
| PRM | Promissive suffix |
| PST | Past/ perfect aspect suffix |
| Q | Interrogative suffix |
| RL | Relativizer suffix |
| RT | Restrospective suffix |
| TC | Topic-contrast particle |
| TRAN | Transferentive |
| VOC | Vocative particle |

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