Affirmative Response Design to Polar Questions in Korean Political Campaign Debates

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1. Background: The Two Types of Affirmative Responses to Polar Questions in Korean

Table 1. Tokens of *Yey* ‘Yes’ and *Kulehsupnita* ‘Be So’ Type Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Levels</th>
<th><em>Yey</em> ‘Yes’ Type</th>
<th><em>Kulehsupnita</em> ‘Be So’ Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plain</td>
<td>onya</td>
<td>kulehta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate</td>
<td>um, e, ung, eng, u</td>
<td>kulay, ku(leh)ci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blunt</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polite</td>
<td>ey, yey, ney</td>
<td>kulayyo, kulehciyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferential</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>kulehsupnita</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(cf. Sohn, 1999)
1. Background: Previous Studies

Table 2. Summary of Previous Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Yey ‘Yes’ Type</strong></th>
<th><strong>Kulehsupnita ‘Be So’ Type</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syntactic Property</strong></td>
<td>One-morpheme int.</td>
<td>Inflected forms of predicate adj.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type-Conformity</strong></td>
<td>Type-conforming</td>
<td>Non type- conforming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Markedness</strong></td>
<td>Unmarked (88%)</td>
<td>Marked (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(cf. Raymond, 2003; Park, 2008; Yoon. 2010)
2. Specific Research Questions

Q 1: In what sequential contexts do yey ‘yes’ type and kulehsupnita ‘be so’ type responses appear, respectively?

Q 2: What do the findings of Q1 tell us about the differences between these two types of affirmative tokens in affirming the proposition of a polar question?

Q 3: Based on the findings of Q2, for what interactional purposes do the candidates deploy yey ‘yes’ type and kulehsupnita ‘be so’ type responses when responding to a polar question issued by their opponents?
3. Methods: The Data

Six nationally televised 2012 primary debates (totaling 624 minutes) from Korea’s two major political parties, the New Frontier Party (conservative) and the Democratic United Party (centrist-liberal)
3. Methods: The Data

The Overall Structure of the Debates

1. Moderator’s opening remarks
2. Candidates’ opening statements
3. Debate proper: a series of Q-A sessions
4. Candidates’ closing statements
5. Moderator’s closing remarks

28 polar Q-A sequences: *ye y* ‘yes’ type responses or *kulehsupnita* ‘be so’ type responses occurred in solo
3. Methods: The Data

Sequential Character of the Polar Q-A sequences

QR: Polar Question

RT: Answer

QR: Follow-Up Question

or

Comments on RT’s Answer
3. Methods: Analytic Framework

Conversation Analysis (CA) as a framework of analysis

- In analyzing talk-in-interaction, CA pays close attention to its sequential location (cf. Schegloff, 2007)
4. Data Analysis: Yey ‘Yes’ Type Response and its Sequential Context of Occurrence

After Adversarial Q: factual and hostile polar questions that are damaging to candidate’s political image

e.g., → Q: Did you have an affair with Monica Lewinsky?
   A: Yes

e.g., → Q: Do you know Monica Lewinsky?
   A: Yes
   Q: Did you have an affair with her?

 e.g., → Q: Do you know Monica Lewinsky?
   A: Yes
   Q.C: I believe you had an affair with her.
### 4. Data Analysis: *Yey* ‘Yes’ Type Response and its Sequential Context of Occurrence

Table 3

*Adversarialness of Questions and *Yey* ‘Yes’* Type Responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adversarialness of Polar Questions</th>
<th>Number of Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-adversarial</td>
<td>8 (36.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversarial</td>
<td>13 (59.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Clear</td>
<td>1 (4.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Data Analysis: Yey ‘Yes’ Type Response

Excerpt 1 (J: Questioner M: Respondent)

01 J: .hh M-hwupo-kkeyse-nun chwulma-senen-ul ha-si-l ttay:
      M-candidate-SH-TC candidacy-announcement-AC do-SH-RL time
      When you announced your candidacy for presidency for our party,

02 M: yey.
    Yes
    Yes.

03 J: amwulhan siday-ka na-lul pwul-less-ta:, (0.3)
    gloomy times-NM I-AC call-PST-DC

04 J: ilehkey malssumha-sy-ess-sup-ni-kka?
    like this say-SH-PST-AH-IN-Q
    did you say, “I felt called in these gloomy times”?

05 M: yey.
    Yes
    Yes.
J talks about serious difficulties their party faced due to their party’s loss in multiple elections.

J: I’m curious as to how you would respond to the following comments:

In difficult times such as these, after distancing yourself from politics, weren’t you declaring candidacy in an unprepared state, perhaps because you felt the times were calling for you? ......
Excerpt 1 Video  (J: Questioner M: Respondent)
4. Data Analysis: *Kulehsupnita* ‘Be So’ Type Response and its Sequential Context of Occurrence

After Non-Adversarial Q: innocuous or even favorable to their political images (e.g., questions which solicit an answering candidate’s agreement to the views that appeal to the electorate).

e.g., → Q: You’re interested in boosting economy, aren’t you?
   A: I am.
   Q: What economic policies do you have to boost economy?
4. Data Analysis: *Kulehsupnita* ‘Be So’ Type Response and its Sequential Context of Occurrence

Table 4

*Adversarialness of Questions and Kulehsupnita ‘Be So’ Type Responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adversarialness of Questions</th>
<th>Number of Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-adversarial</td>
<td>5 (83.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversarial</td>
<td>1 (16.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Clear</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Data Analysis: *Kulehsupnita* ‘Be So’ Type Response

**Excerpt 2** (M: Questioner, K: Respondent)

01 → M: e i i i: kyengecey micwuhwa:-lul hallye-myen (0.6) uh uhm uhm uhm economic democratization-AC do-if

02 → tto i caypel kayhyek. ikey tto also this conglomerate reform this also

03 → cwungyohan kwacey-ci anh-sup-ni-kka? important task-COMM not-AH-IN-Q?

*To achieve economic democratization,*

*doesn’t the reformation of conglomerates present another important task?*

04 → K: kulehsupnita.

be so

*It does.*
5 M: But presidential candidate P opposes regulations which are necessary for this reformation of conglomerates.

(( M lists many regulations which P opposes))

22 M: If she holds to these positions, could we actually consider her policies compatible with her support for economic democratization?
Excerpt 2 Video  (M: Questioner, K: Respondent)
4. Data Analysis: Differences between *Yey* ‘yes’ type and *Kulehsupnita* ‘Be so’ Type Responses

The degrees of affirmation

1) *Yey* ‘yes’ type response
   - Displays weaker affirmation
   - Type-conforming, unmarked, & default response to polar Q

2) *Kulehsupnita* ‘be so’ type response
   - Displays stronger affirmation/commitment
   - Non type-conforming & marked response to polar Q
4. Data Analysis: Interactional Purpose of Using *Yey* ‘Yes’ and *Kulehsupnita* ‘Be So’ Type Responses.

*Yey* ‘yes’ type and *kulehsupnita* ‘be so’ type responses and the construction of a relatively favorable political image

1) *Yey* ‘yes’ type responses: decrease a responding candidate’s level of participation in the questioner’s project of building the respondent’s negative image.

2) *Kulehsupnita* ‘be so’ type response: contributes to establishing the respondent’s non-damaging or positive image.
5. Summary of Findings

1) Both *yey* ‘yes’ type and *kulehsupnita* ‘be so’ type responses affirm the proposition of a polar question. However, *compared to* *yey* ‘yes’ type response, *kulehsupnita* ‘be so’ type response is stronger.

2) The political candidates tend to use *yey* ‘yes’ type and *kulehsupnita* ‘be so’ type responses in different contexts.
   - Adversarial questions: *yey* ‘yes’ type responses
   - Non-adversarial, favorable questions: *kulehsupnita* ‘be so’ type responses

3) Using the two types of affirmative responses discretely, the political candidates seek to reduce the damaging, negative implications of a polar question, and exploit the non-damaging, positive implications of a polar question for their advantage.
6. Pedagogical Implications

The difference between the two types of affirmative responses can be introduced in Korean language classrooms where affirmative responses to polar questions are covered.

How?

1. Explicit instruction on the different usage of *yey* ‘yes’ type and *kulehsupnita* ‘be so’ type responses.
2. Group activity using authentic discourse data to solidify learners’ understanding of the difference between *yey* ‘yes’ type and *kulehsupnita* ‘be so’ type responses.
6. Pedagogical Implications: Sample Group Activity for Advanced Level Learners

In the debate segment above, Candidate Sohn asks Candidate Jung whether Jung has a great interest in cooperative unions or not. At the time of the debate, the notion of cooperative unions received positive evaluation from both the general public and the economic experts as a way to boost Korea's economy. Between "예" and "그렇습니다," which answer do you think Candidate Sohn chose in answering Candidate Sohn's questions and why? Discuss your answer with your group members.
7. References


10. Appendix : Abbreviations

AC: Accusative particle
AH: Addressee honorific
COMM: Committal suffix
DC: Declarative sentence-type suffix
IN: Indicative mood suffix
INTM: Intention modal suffix
NM: Nominative case particle
POL: Polite speech level suffix, or particle
PST: Past tense and perfect aspect suffix
Q: Question marker
QT: Quotative particle
RL: Relativizer suffix
SH: Subject honorific suffix
TC: Topic-contrast particle
Thank You!