

Korean *tunci* and English “or” at the Turn-Final Position

Cross-linguistically, connectives develop into turn-final (hereafter TF) particles, and comparable cases are observed (e.g., Kor. *nuntey*, Jap. *kedo*, and Eng. “but” (Mulder & Thompson 2008) expressing contrastive implicature). I compare TF uses of Kor. *tunci* and Eng. “or” and show the original semantics of marking alternatives is recruited for intersubjective works of marking non-imposition (Traugott 2014, (inter)subjectification). I use 3 natural discourse datasets (39 hours) for Eng. and 12 drama series (185 hours) for Kor.; *tunci* can be used in threat and criticism, which are difficult to find in recordings of natural conversation.

In Kor., out of 276 total, 103 tokens of *tunci* are TF uses. Functional distributions of TF *tunci* are: a. Suggestion (43); b. Offer (3) and Request (4); c. Threat (8) and Criticism (21); and d. *kule(si)tunci* “do as you want.”(21). The basic TF function of *tunci* is suggestion, translatable as “you could...” (Yeon & Brown, 2011), which developed from *VP1-tunci VP2-tunci ha-* “Do VP1 or VP2”. To note is that with its sense of optionality and non-imposition, suggestions with *tunci* are not strong or forceful, and hence not suitable for a formal, serious suggestion; see (1).

(1) *wuli-hako ka-tunci* “you could go with us” vs. *wuli-hako ka-ca/ka-(a)* “let’s go with us”

Further extended, speakers utilize the non-imposing sense of TF *tunci* to make light-hearted requests or offers. For instance, a speaker, knowing the low chance of his request being accepted, can package his request non-serious by using *tunci*. Such trivialization signifies that the requester is not invested in it, which is a good face-saving strategy in case of rejection; see (2) where a sick ex-husband makes a request to his ex-wife.

(2) 1=> Ex-husband: 걱정되면 와서 죽이나 끓여 주든지  
 “If you are worried, come and cook porridge for me-tunci.”  
 2 Ex-wife: “Funny. Why are you asking me?”

Similarly, Eng. TF “or” (67 tokens) can perform an interactional function of marking non-imposition. In (3), a child who planned to be Superman expresses his liking for other costumes. Mom’s initial “well” displays hesitation but her question/offer ends with “or” marking her openness to Son’s choice. In (4) also, Brad provides a negative assessment “formalize too much” to Phil’s proposal and mitigates it with “or”, signaling his stance of non-imposition.

(3) 1 Son: I think the clown or the ninja would be good.  
 2 Mom: Well, would you wanna be a clown or a ninja, instead of Superman? Or.  
 (4) 1 Phil: (H) I wanna make it [sound important,  
 2 Brad: [It would formalize it too much? Or],  
 3 Phil: I want... it formalizing it.

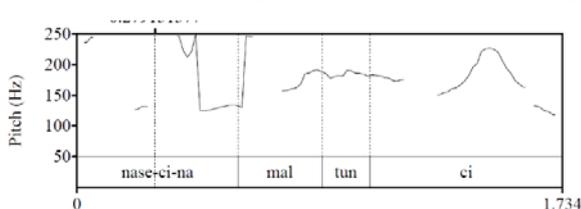
Drake (2015) proposes that TF “or” indexes the speaker’s uncertainty. I suggest it can carry the intersubjective work of marking non-imposition, signaling speaker’s openness.

Lastly, Kor. *tunci* can be used in threats and criticisms.

(5) Threat: *silh-umyen, naka-tunci* “if you don’t like, you can resign.”

(6) Criticism: *kulem, iki-tunci* “then, you could have won.”

These again utilize the non-imposing sense, “you can (choose).” The case of criticism shows *tunci* fully grammaticalized as a TF particle. First, phonetic analysis using Praat (below)



shows speakers often elongate criticizing *tunci* to convey their upset emotion, which is not possible with textual connective *tunci*. Second, while *tunci* does not carry a tense marking as in (6), its tense is construed as past counterfactual “could have...” attesting its independent development.

## References

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