

Pragmatic Function of *ye* in Opening and Closing Sequence in Korean Travel Consultations.

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1. Introduction

Ye is one of the frequently used interjections in ordinary Korean conversation.¹ It is equivalent to “yes/yeah” in English. There have been studies to explicate the pragmatic meaning of *ye* based on ordinary conversation (Kim 1989, Lee 1993, Oh 1995, Noh 1991, Choe 1996). These studies show that *ye*'s various meaning is derived from its canonical meaning of positive answering and agreeing. *Ye*'s various illocutionary meaning has been noted in requesting, accepting, confirming, promising (Kim 1989). Oh (1995) has examined multi-functional aspects of Korean interjections with regards to their class, (phonological, semantic and pragmatic) characteristics of Korean interjections. Lee (1993) has studied *ye*'s sequential functions: turn initial *ye* functions as acknowledgment, topicalizer and topic closing. Turn final *ye* emphasizes the assertion. As freestanding, it functions as continuer, indicating turn boundary and self-response.

It has been found that *ye* is used for greeting and leave taking. This is achieved by sound stretch in flat pitch contour at its end (Kim 1989:10-11, Oh 1995:89,137-138). *Ye*'s functions are further refined considering *ye*'s multiple production is related to speaker's social status, psychological state and context in which it occurs (Kim 1989:11).

In general, findings in the data support the previous findings. This study is based on those findings. However, it is rare to find an analysis based on the sequential context, while applying Conversational Analysis methodology. This study examines *ye*'s sequentially situated meaning by describing in depth the opening and closing sequences. In the first section, it demonstrates that the participants negotiate *ye*'s function in relation to its placement, which results in *ye* in the second turn position. Here *ye* is utilised to establish the participants' institutional relationship.

In second, it analyses how participants exploit *ye* in the third turn position to circuitously move into closing section (Kidwell 2000: 33). It further discusses *ye*'s function related to previous findings defining *ye* as “passive reciprocity” (Jefferson 1984:200) and “retrospective and sequence closure relevant (Gardner 1997:135). This study further argues that *ye* is often produced as a response to unmentioned turn-part of the co-participant, which is predicted to occur in the subsequent turns. In relation to this, prosodic features (gaps, sound stretch, and pitch) are also examined.

2. Data

15 cases of Korean travel consultation were audio recorded and transcribed. Data

¹ It is reported that in conversation in hotel reservation utterance including *ye/ne* takes one quarter (1079) of the whole turns (4516). 70 percent of this is used to acknowledge the prior turn (Choe 1996: 12).

were collected from 4 travel agencies: two in Korea and two in Australia. The consultation lasted for 5 minutes to one hour. Average duration of consultation is approximately 20 minutes.

3. Opening sequence (greeting → purpose of visit)

One of the functions of *ye* is to substitute greetings and leave-takings. In the data, Clients (Cs) greet by uttering, *annyeong-ha-se-yo* “Hello?” and Agents (Ags) welcome by uttering, *easeo o-si-psio* “Come on in please.”

Following fragment further shows that *ye* can be used for initiating greeting. Ag is in the middle of consultation with another C. Notice that Ag greets C2 by uttering *ye* (line 6).

Fragment [1] (Booking)

Ag = Agent, C1 = primary Client and C2 = secondary Client

((Ag is in the middle of consultation with another client.))

- 1 C1: >*annyeong -ha -se -yo*<::::.=
well:being do HON POL
“Hello.”
- 2→ Ag: =*ye::=easeo o -si -psio*::::.
yes quickly come HON IMP
“Oh, come on in please.”
- 3 (1)
- 4 C2: *ha-*
- 5 (1.4)
- 6 Ag:→ *ye*:.
yes
“Yes.”
- 7 C2: *annyeong -ha -[se -yo*::::.
well:being do HON POL
“Hello.”
- 8 Ag: *[jamsi jom anjeu -se -yo*[::.=
a:little:time a:bit sit HON POL
“Would you like to take a seat?”

Ag utters *ye* to respond to C1’s greeting (line 2) and to acknowledge C2’s presence (line 6), which leads to C2’s greeting (line 7). Here *ye* is used for greeting response and initiation. This instance shows that sound stretch is applied not only in the closing sequence (Oh 1995: 139 and Kim 1989: 13), but also in the opening. The sound stretch at the end of the first turn is also reciprocated with similar length at the end of the response turn (lines 1-2 and 6-7). This highlights how the stretched intonation with flat pitch contour enhances *ye* to function as greeting expression.

Data show that the initiators of interaction orient to starting off the opening sequence. C prefers to initiate opening by greeting. Subsequently, Ag prefers to acknowledge it by uttering *ye* and further welcome C. This allows C to be in the third turn position to utter their purpose of visit as illustrated in the following opening sequence:

- 1 C: greeting
- 2 Ag: *ye* + welcoming
- 3 C: telling purpose of visit.

This sequence is explained by the “distributional rule”: the caller provides the

first topic of conversation (Schegloff 1968: 354). This implies that C is expected to greet tell her/his purpose of visit following Ag's acknowledging and welcoming turn.

In this way, C can avoid Ag's inquiries for sale purpose. In other words, C takes the first turn position, which allows them to take the third turn to further inquiry (Sacks 1992 (1966): 256-257, 264, and Jefferson 1993:29). This reflects the character of a conversation: a person who asks first reserves the right to talk again. This is termed as "the chaining rule" (Sacks 1992). Thus, C can avoid Ag's possible sales oriented inquiries into C's preferences/wishes etc., which is developed into a sales offer. This may obligate C to respond to purchase or not. Thus, C's greeting is a strategic attempt to strengthen her/his negotiation stance by taking the third turn with her/his discretion. C can obligate Ag to respond in the fourth turn regardless of a type of the third turn (i.e., question/statement).

Data show that Ag disprefers greeting C. Without C's initiation of greeting, Ag acknowledges first and welcomes C in the first turn. Ag within the same turn can inquire into C' purpose of visit, which may lead to C' telling her/his purpose of visit. However, Ag disprefers to do so. The reason for the argument is that Ag may avoid inquiring directly into C's purpose of visit *by uttering* a common expression, *eteoke o-sheot-seumni-kka?* "What have you come for?"

This is demonstrated in the fragment below. In line 3, Ag utters *ye* with relatively short sound stretch. This leads to C's stating purpose of her visit (line 5).

Fragment [2] (US visa)

Ag = Agent, C1 = primary Client and C2 = secondary Client

((C comes into the office, while Ag is in the middle of consultation with another client.))

- 1 Ag: *eoyu. eseo -o -se -yo::*
oh quickly come HON POL
"Oh, come on in please."
- 2 C1: *ye::=*
"yes."
"Yeah."
- 3→ Ag: *=ye:.* ((towards C2))
yes
"Yes."
- 4 (0.5)
- 5 C2: *tiket gaji -reo wa -t -neunde -yo*
ticket take in:order:to come PST CIRM POL
"(I) came to pick up a ticket."

Data show that Ag disprefers inquiring into C' purpose of visiting. Without C introducing the purpose of her/his visit, Ag's concern is to differentiate the type of visitor whether they are related to business or non-business. If business related, it is necessary to know whether it is C's intention to buy the product or to seek information only, while implying the possibility of purchase. If C's intention is to purchase the products then the whole interaction is likely to be a plain transaction of goods and services. Accordingly, negotiation is not expected. Thus, it seems natural that Ag inquires into C's purpose of visit.

However a question is raised at this point with regard to literal meaning of commonly used inquiring expression *per se*: *Eteoke-o-sheot-seubni-kka?*, "What have you come for?" delivers undesirable connotation. It inquires into the reason for

visiting as interpreted “Why have you come (here)?” Somewhere in the data, a Korean version of “How can I help you” in English, *Eoteokedowa-deulil-kkayo?* is found. But this is not yet considered as ritualised expression in service encounters. Thus, Ag prefers to leave the first turn space to C to initiate greeting and tell the purpose of their visit in the third turn following Ag’s second turn.

This is also the way for Ag to proceed into further interaction in a more efficient manner without losing courteous stance, which is derived from *ye*’s canonical meaning of positive answering and agreeing. So, the sequence explained is a balancing effort to maintain “efficiency” and “openness to interaction” preferred by Dutch (Houtkoop-Steenstra 1986 in Hopper 1989:177) and “intimacy” orientedness in Greeks (Sifianou 1989: 538-539).

This sequence demonstrates a high degree of “density” of ‘pre-empting’ (Schegloff 1986:133-138) in a sense that *ye* includes the functions of the summon-answer, recognition-response, greeting and “How are you?” sequences. This is described as “cultural variance” (ibid), which is further interpreted in the data as characteristics of institutional interaction (the opening of a travel consultation).

Ye in opening sequence is uttered so as to establish the participants’ institutional role as buyer and seller. This is based on *ye*’s function to accept not only verbal expressions, but also C’s presence (Oh 1995: 124-125) by acknowledging C’s presence, Ag accepts C as a prospect customer. This changes the status of the participants’ relationship from unknown to temporal acquaintance for accomplishing their interactional goals (Goffman 1967: 34). The affirmative acknowledgement of *ye* is an interactional resource to smoothly enter into social activity. Here, sound stretch with flat intonation conveys affinitive feature (Kim 1989: 11-13) that eases the burden of opening interaction due to high density of sequence.

Thus, C initiates greeting with strategic motivation to establish a social relationship. This reflects a previous finding: Korean speakers disprefer to greet between those unknown. Greeting is a much more common practice between acquaintance (Han 1998: 42). In the data, greeting-greeting sequence is rarely found.

In summary, *ye* is used to substitute greetings. It helps to establish institutional relationship. In this process, it is preferably located in the second turn position by Ag. The participants collaborate to achieve a typical opening sequence (C → Ag → C).

In the next section, the study describes the process of closing sequences in which the participants exploit *ye* in the third turn position in acknowledging sequence.

4. In closing sequence (third turn position²)

This section describes the process of consultation closing, in which *ye* is pervasively used. It also defines another function of *ye* as “prospective response token” that occurs before the co-participants’ response. *Ye*’s function is further examined by considering prosodic features accompanied with *ye* with regards to stretch sound, pitch change.

The participants initiate closing sequence (preclosing implicative), mutually agreeing (preclosing sequence) before they terminate consultation (terminal sequence).³ The participants exploit the third turn position of *ye* to close on-going topic and confirm they have nothing to add to the on-going topic. They also implicitly agree to move into further closing sequence. Through the third turn position, the participants “confirm understanding of one another’s action so that mutual understating

² In data, *ye-ye* pattern is also found but it is not a common sequence in closing.

³ Details of closing sequence are explained in Schegloff & Sacks. 1984 (73). Opening Up Closings.

is thus displayed” (Heritage 1984: 257-259).

In the fragment below, C visits Ag to inquire into information about visa application. After Ag’s offering price (for handling visa application), C further questions in relation to the price offered.

Fragment [3] (VIP – US visa)

Ag = Agent, C = Client

((Topic was about document necessary for passport application. C inquires about the service charge for it.))

- 149 Ag: *bija pi -neun:: jeohi -neun jigeum gu -man*
visa fee TOP we TOP now nine ten:thousand
150 *won bat -go it -geodeun -yo*
Won receive CNN be CIRM POL
“We charge 90,000 Won as a fee for visa application service.”
151 (0.5)
152 C: *il -in -dang -yo?*
one person per POL
“Is it per person?”
153 Ag: *ye.*
yes
“Yes.”
154 (0.3)
155 C: *jeonbu da ha -eseo -yo? =*
all all do CNN POL
“Does it include everything?”
156 Ag: *=ye.*
yes
“Yes.”
157 (1.1)
158 Ag: *aegi -deul -eun yeokwon gat -go gyese -yo?*
baby PL TOP passport have CNN stay (HON) POL
“Do your children have a passport?”

A moment after Ag’s price offer (lines 149-150), C’s decision to accept/refuse the offer is expected. This is Sales Relevant Place (Clark, Drew and Pinch 1994: 440). In the subsequent turns, C develops a chain of question-answer sequence (lines 152-153, 155-156), in which he is positioned in the third turn to continue to ask questions (Sacks 1992). After this, C further delays his decision as indicated by 1.1 second of gap (line 157). Ag orients to C’s delay in decision making by introducing a transitory topic (line 158), by inquiring about whether C’s children have a passport. This is a “topic shading” (Schegloff, & Sacks 1984 (1973): 83) in a sense that the new topic is related but not introduced for its development as indicated by frequent topic shifts.

Several turns later, C initiates a three-turn parts sequence by questioning.

((6 lines omitted. Ag asks whether C’s children have a passport.))

- 165 C: *han- (0.4) han boreum isang geoli -gu -yo:: =*
about about fifteen:days over take CNN POL
“It takes more than a fortnight, doesn’t it?”
166 Ag: *=ye::*
yes
“Yes.”
167 (0.5)

168→ C: ye:::
 yes
 “Yes.”
 169 (0.3)

C in the third turn position (line 168) indicates he has nothing to add to the on-going topic at this moment. This is further proved by the gaps (lines 167, 169). Similar phenomenon is found in the subsequent turns (lines 172, 174) in which the participants confirm each other’s turn.

170 Ag: han dal: jeongdo:: neokneokhi jabeu -si -myun
 one month about plenty take HON if
 171 doe -yo=
 become POL
 “You would have to expect it to take about a month.”
 172 C: =a::: geurae -yo?
 oh so POL
 “Oh I see.”
 173 (.)
 174→ Ag: ye.
 yes
 “Yes.”
 175 (.)
 176 C: ye=al -get -subnida:::
 yes know VOL DCL (HON)
 “Yeah, alright.”
 177 Ag: ye=[gamsa -ha -bnida:::::
 yes thank do DCL
 “Yeah, thank you very much.”
 178 C: [gamsa -ha -bnida:::
 thank do DCL
 “Thank you very much.”

Following a series of the three-turn parts sequence, in line 176, C acknowledges the previous turns in the whole consultation (Oh 1994: 137). C produces initial turn *ye* to initiate preclosing sequence. This is accepted by Ag, who also utters turn initial *ye* (line 177) (Oh 1994: 138 and Kim 1989:10). So, the initiation of closing section of the consultation is achieved by topic shading, which is contrasted to “shutting down” (Schegloff & Sacks 1984 (73): 81) approach in English. It is typically characterised by following sequence:

A: OK?
 B: All right.

This is the first part of closing section (preclosing) and the participants mutually agree to move into terminal sequence (leave-takings) (ibid).

Therefore, through the three-turn parts sequence, the participants are reluctant to terminate voluntarily and provide opportunity for the next speaker to move out of closing (Button 1987: 139). In this fragment, the participants are confirming that C is delaying/refusing his decision. They prepare to proceed to speedy preclosing sequence (lines 176-177) and terminal sequence (lines 177-178) by introducing “transitory topics” (Jefferson 1988: 433) and “reinstating continuous talks” (Maynard 80: 284), which are not elaborated in depth and shifted frequently. Without these transit topics, the Sales Relevant Place is directly connected to a preclosing sequence. To avoid this abrupt closing or prolonged silence which may occur, the participants

repeat the three-turn parts sequence.

Another instance of the participants' orientation to the three-turn parts sequence is displayed below in which *ye* is placed in a series of acknowledgement turns.

Fragment [4] (Booking)

Ag = Agent, C1= primary Client and C2 = secondary client

((C pays for the flight ticket and Ag counts cash received.))

- 488 ? : ()=
489 C2: =ye::.=
 yes
 "Is it OK?"
490 Ag: =ye:=maja -yo=
 yes correct POL
 "Yes, that's correct."
491→C2: =ye=
 yes
 "Yeah."
492→ Ag: =ye::.
 yes
 "Yeah."
493 C2: deot -[j -yo?
 become DCL POL
 "Alright?"
494 Ag: [ne=gomap [-seubnida.
 yes thank DCL (HON)"
 "Yes, thank you very much."
495 C1: [tiket dalae -t -seo -yo?
 ticket request PST CNN POL
 "Have you got the ticket?"

In line 489, C requests Ag's confirmation on the amount of cash paid for the flight ticket. This is performed by uttering *ye*, which invokes Ag's response as she finishes counting. Here the focus is on C's *ye* (line 491) and Ag's *ye* (line 492), which are in the third turn position respectively. This indicates that they are structurally orienting to three turn parts acknowledging sequence. Thus, they stay in conversation without doing any further movement to closing sequence (Jefferson 1986: 173).

Thus, through the three-turn parts sequence the participants mutually understand and confirm (Heritage 1984: 257-259) that they do have nothing to contribute to the on-going topic. However, this is not warrant for moving into further closing sequence.

This phenomenon seems to be due to the nature of the freestanding *ye* that functions as "passive reciprocity" and elicits the co-participant's talk (Jefferson 1984: 200). So, its function is similar to "Mm" in English as a third position recipient token, which is "retrospective and sequence closure relevant" (Gardner 1997:135). This is a contrastive aspect to the turn initial *ye* as topical shifter and higher speakership incipency (Drummond & Hopper 1993: 205).

Due to *ye*'s nature of passive and openness toward following turn, the three-turn parts sequence does not warrant terminal sequence. This requires explicit preclosing sequence, which is offered in requesting question form *deot-j-yo?* "Alright?" (line 493) and confirming (line 494). That is, C further confirms Ag's readiness to enter into further closing sequence. This indicates that participants go through a closing implicate stage through the three turn-parts sequence prior to preclosing sequence. Thus in the closing implicative stage, the participants gradually confirm the timing of

further closing movement until it becomes ripe to initiate further closing movements.

In what follows, the study argues *ye* in turn final or in a freestanding form functions to respond to the co-participant's possible response in advance. It is often repeated with sound stretch and pitch contour incorporated.

5. Anticipatory response.

The instance below indicates *ye* is repeated within the same turn, while each *ye* functions differently according to its location. Cs predict Ag's main clause turn as she produces the subordinate clause "When you decide on your schedule," (lines 191-192).

Fragment [5] (Vancouver)

Ag = Agent, C = Client

((Ag explains the advantages of using the national carrier for return travel to US.))

- 191 Ag: *najunge iljeong -i japi=*
 later itinerary SUB decided
- 192 [=myun::,
 if
 "When you decide on your schedule,"
- 193→ C2: [*ne::=* ˘*ye. °*
 yes yes
 "Yes, yes."
- 194 C1: [*grureo -lkke -yo*
 so DCL POL
 "(We) will do that."
- 195 Ag: [() *yeonlak ju -se -yo=*
 contact give HON POL
 "Please contact (us)."
- 196 C1: =*ye:: ye.*
 yes yes
 "Yes, yes."
- 197 Ag: *ne.*
 yes
 "Yes."

Two *yes* (line 193), *ne::=* ˘*ye. °* become differentiated by their length of sound stretch and pitch contour. The first one is produced in flat intonation with stretch sound, while the second is latched to the first with falling tone. It is considered that the first one acknowledges the previous Ag's turn (lines 191-192) and the last one accepts the immediately following part, which is not yet uttered.

Cs anticipate Ag's subsequent turn part and respond to it positively in advance (lines 193, 194). C2's anticipated *ye* is interpreted by C1's utterance, *grureo-lkke-yo* "(We) will do that." (Line 194), which is a sequentially relevant interpretation because it is overlapped with C2's second *ye*. That is, C1 elaborates the meaning of C2's second *ye*. Accordingly, Ag's anticipated main clause is produced in line 195. Cs produce "anticipatory response"⁴ before Ag completes her turn. Thus, C1 accepts in advance (line 194) Ag's upcoming request (line 195) and confirms in her third turn (line 196). Ag also acknowledges Cs previous turns in her third turn position (line 197). So, they close the on-going topic in an agreeable manner (Schegloff and Sacks

⁴ This is a term borrowed from "anticipatory completion" (Lerner 1993: 53).

1984 (1973): 82), while implying further closing sequence is imminent.

Based on this finding, it is argued that each *ye* in multiple production functions differently according to their location within the turn. The first one acknowledges/responses to preceding turn and the second one does the same function, but to unmentioned turn part of the co-participant.

In the similar manner, stretch sound attached to single *ye* also seems to do the same function. In the following fragment, notice that Ag initiates delayed second pair part of terminal sequence (line 244). It is considered as the second pair part of a terminal sequence initiated by C (line 236).

Fragment [6] (Ticket pick-up)

A = Agent, C = Client

((C has paid for the flight ticket and is about to leave.))

- 236→ C: *ha:ha [annyeonghi -gye -se -yo::.*
well:being stay (HON) HON POL
“See you later.”
- 237 Ag: *[geureom mises (name)-geo -neun inje najung -e*
then Ms (name) thing TOP now later ADV
“Your (ticket) will be prepared later.
(2 lines omitted: Ag mentions that C’s ticket will be prepared next week.))
- 240 C: *wo:: lyoil -nal dani -gu [geumlyoil nal-[ina*
Monday day work and Friday day or
- 241 Ag: *[ae. [ae.*
yeah. yeah.”
“Yeah.” “Yeah.”
- 242 (0.6)
- 243 C: *toyo [il -ina -o l-yeogu -yo*
Saturday or come will POL
“(I) work on Monday so (I) may be able to come on Friday or Saturday.”
- 244 Ag: *[ge:rae -yo::]*
all right
“Alright.”
- 245 (0.5)
- 246→Ag: *ye::::=*
yes
“Bye.”
- 247 C: *=geu jeon -e ije o -jimal -ragu:: tongbo*
that before LOC now come not QUOT notice
- 248 *ga wa -ya deo -nuende*
SUB come should become CIRM
“I’m hoping to receive a call telling me I don’t have to come before (I have to pick up the ticket.”).
(4 lines omitted: C explains that she does not want to leave her young daughter behind when she has to go to Korea.))
- 253 C: *.hh- °(ye)-° [(sugo -ha -se) -yo::.*
toil do HON POL
“See you later (lit= Please keep up the good work,”
- 254→ Ag: *[geur -ae -yo::. ye::=ye.*
so CNN POL yes yes
“Alright.”

In line 241, Ag prompts C’s turn by producing frequent *yes* as continuer (Schegloff 1982:81). This is evidenced by Ag’s early response (line 244), which is overlapped with the last syllable of the first word of C’s turn (line 243).

Ag's intention to end the consultation is further revealed by her *ye:::* (line 246), which is stretched with falling tone at the end of it. Considering its sequential distance from the C's overlapped leave-taking initiation, Ag's *ye* is considered to be reinitiating the terminal sequence. Ag anticipates C's possible second pair part of leave-taking by uttering *ye* with sound stretch. At this point, C does not accept Ag's initiation of the terminal sequence by developing the on-going topic. This leads to another terminal sequence (lines 253-254).

Thus, Ag's *ye:::* (line 246) indicates that she acknowledges in advance C's possible response (leave taking) to it. The outcome is an initiation of a terminal sequence. This argument is based on *ye*'s feature of orienting to acknowledging the co-participants' previous turn. During the duration of sound stretch, the speaker leave turn space to the co-participant to develop a turn.

In line 254, another example of this is found in the sound stretch (:) attached to at the end of *yo* with falling intonation (.). This is reformulated into *ye::=ye.* in which the last *ye.* acknowledges C's possible response which might occur immediately following *ye::=ye.* In this respect, *ye* functions differently from that of Ag's continuers, *ae, ae* "Yeah, yeah" (line 241), which are individually uttered with monotone in a speedy tempo with flat pitch contour.

Other form of prompting the co-participants' turn is displayed in the fragment below. Notice *ye=ye=ye* (line 12).

Fragment [7] (Booking)

Ag = Agent, C = Client

((Ag recommends C2 to take a seat." and returns to consultation with another client)).

10 (17) ((Ag completes consultation with another client.)
 11 Ag: *ne: asiana-lo yeyak -ha -syeo -t [(j -yo)?*
 yes Asiana by reservation do HON PST DCL POL
 "Okay, you have booked a flight with Asiana, right?"
 12→ C: *[ye=ye=ye=*
 yes yes yes
 "Yeah yeah yeah."=
 13 =^o*jeo:°- (name) -yo*
 I (name) POL
 "My name is 000."

Unlike the previous fragment, where *ye* is separately produced as a continuer, here *ye* is produced in three times in a row and latched to one another. It occurs towards the end of Ag's turn. It pre-empts Ag's possible question, "May I have your name?" Thus, when *ye* occurs in a speedy tempo, without sound being stretched at the end of it, its function is mainly to prompt the co-participant's turn.

Individual function of *ye* in multiple productions (*ye::: =ye* or *ye:: =ye*) can function differently according to its location in it. The second *ye* in *ye:: ye* (acknowledgment + sound stretch + anticipatory acknowledgment) pre-empts the co-participant's possible response, while the sound stretch provides turn opportunity to the co-participants to take turn.

The structure of *yes* in multiple productions (mostly in double) is further explained as a turn-in-series (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 722):

1st *ye* : responding (relating to a prior turn)

middle	:	(void)
2 nd ye	:	responding (relating to a succeeding one)

In this respect, *ye*'s function is to link the participants' actions and confirming mutual understanding. This allows the participants to co-operate to terminate interaction.

6. Summary and Conclusions

The study has demonstrated that *ye*'s pragmatic functions vary according to its sequential location: as in turn initial, turn final and entire turn. It also displays that the participants collaborate to achieve smooth entry into the opening and closing of the encounter. *Ye* is used as an alternative expression for greeting and closing sequences. In the opening, *ye* is available only to Ag. Thus it preferably appears in the second turn slot due to C's preference to greet first and maintain inquiring stance in the subsequent turns so that C can avoid Ag's possible sale pitch.

This is further accorded with Ag's preference to open the encounter with efficiency, which results in the shortened opening sequence (greeting → the first topic (C's purpose of visit). This constitutes "type" (Schegloff 1979: 121) of travel consultation or any encounter where negotiation is relevant. This is facilitated by the use of *ye*, which invokes positive circumstantial inference (Oh 1995: 124-125) to convey interactional goals in a harmonious manner. In this way, the participants establish their roles to conduct their interactional goals.

In closing, through *ye* in the three-turn parts sequence, the participants are attentive to each other, while moving to terminal exchange in an implicit and agreeable manner (Jefferson 1993: 29)⁵. In this way, they close the on-going topic. So, moving into further closing sequence becomes relevant. This is due to lack of *ye*'s *capacity* to terminate interaction.

Due to *ye*'s inherent nature of agreeing/accepting is similar to that of "Mm" in English, which shows "passive reciprocity", proposing the co-participant to go on talking (Jefferson 1984: 200). It further implies that the topic is exhausted (Jefferson 1993: 22). Thus, *ye* can be described as 'retrospective and sequence closure relevant' (Gardner 1997:135), while allowing the introduction of a new topic.

This is contrastive feature of *ye* compared to turn initial *ye* which can claim topic change or speakership change. The three-turn parts sequence enables initiation of closing sequence but the termination is subjected to the participants' negotiation. The participants often repeat the three-turn parts sequence or develop explicit preclosing sequence in a question-answer form before they move into terminal sequence.

This study further finds that sound stretch is distinctively observed at the end of greeting and leave-taking sequence. Furthermore, it is reciprocated in terms of its length. *Ye* in multiple production functions differently according to its location. The first *ye* acknowledges the co-participant's previous turn and the last one responds to the co-participant's possible turn to follow. In this sense, the last *ye* in multiple production (mostly in double) functions as "anticipatory response/acknowledgement token". Stretched sound of final single *ye*::: is considered as an alternative form of the "anticipatory acknowledgement token" *ye* in multiple productions. It accommodates the co-participant's possible response by providing opportunity for the co-participant's to introduce further response/acknowledgement (*ye*) or "unmentioned mentionable" (Schegloff 1984 (73): 91). Without the co-participant's possible response at this point,

⁵ Similar phenomenon is found in *ne* "yeah/right?" in Japanese (Tanaka 2000: 1165, 1170)

the participants implicitly agree that the on-going topic is closed. Hence, introduction of a new topic or moving into proceeding stage of interaction is relevant.

Data show that the participants often complete sentence/turns with interjection *ye* attached to the turn final position. The above argument is further proved that turn initial *ye/ne* occurs to indicate topical change. *Ye* in multiple production *ne ne/ye ye* do not occur at turn initial position (Hong & Lee 1998, cited in Lee 1998: 16). Thus, the last *ye* in multiple production orient to responding to the co-participants' upcoming response.

Thus, the pragmatic functions of *ye* vary according to its sequential context. The participants use *ye* as an interactional device to build shared understanding. Therefore, they enter into social relationships and close it in collaborate manner.

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Abbreviations

ADV	Adverb
CIRM	Circumstantial
CNN	Connective
DCL	Declarative
IMP	Imperative
HON	Honorific
OBJ	Objective
PL	Plural
POL	Polite suffix
PST	Past tense
QUOT	Quotation particle
SUB	Subject
TOP	Topic marker

Transcription Glossary

(Developed by G. Jefferson, in Wooffit & Hutchby 1998)

(0.5)	The number in brackets indicates a time gap in tenths of a second
(.)	A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates a pause in the talk of less than two-tenths of a second.
=	The 'equals' sign indicates 'latching' between utterances.
[]	Square brackets between adjacent lines of concurrent speech indicate the onset and end of a spate of overlapping talk.
.hh	A dot before an 'h' indicates speaker in-breath. The more h's, the longer the in-breath.
hh	An 'h' indicates an out=breath. The more h's the longer the breath.
(())	A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity.
-	A dash indicates the sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound.
:	Colons indicate that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound or letter. The more colons the greater the extent of the stretching.
()	Empty parentheses indicates the presence of an unclear fragment on the tape.
(guess)	The words within a single bracket indicate the transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance.
.	A full stop indicates a stopping fall in tone. It does not necessarily indicate the end of a sentence.
,	A comma indicates a 'continuing' intonation.
?	A question mark indicates a rising inflection. It does not necessarily indicate a question.
↓↑	Pointed arrows indicate a marked falling or rising intonational shift.
a:	Less marked falls in pitch can be indicated by using underlining immediately preceding a colon.
◦ ◦	Degree signs are used to indicate that the talk they encompass is spoken noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk.
><	'More than' and 'less than' signs indicate that the talk they encompass was produced noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk.
→	Arrows in the left margin point to specific parts of an extract discussed in the text.