

# The Meaning and Usage of the Ending Form '-ci' in Modern Korean: A Discourse-Pragmatic Account

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## 1 Introduction

Korean and Japanese have a set of ending forms, which express the speaker's (subjective) attitudes and are mainly common in spoken language. This paper investigates the meaning and usage of one of these ending forms '-ci', using the theory of the Territory of Information (Kamio 1994). The ending form '-ci' has been accounted for in terms of what a speaker knows. This paper, however, claims that the hearer, as well as the speaker, plays an important role in determining the interpretation of '-ci'.

I used as data scenarios of Korean dramas. There are 342 declarative sentences with '-ci' out of 619 examples (620KB).

## 2 Previous studies and the theory of territory of information

### 2.1 Previous studies

Although the ending form '-ci' is allowed to occur with various constructions; declarative, interrogative, imperative and positive sentences, this paper is concerned with '-ci' in declarative sentences only.

In-depth discussion associated with '-ci' can be found in the abundant literature (Y-K. Ko 1974, K-H. Cang 1985, Han Kil 1991, H-S. Lee 1999, S-M. Yun 2000). For instance, comparing '-ci' with other ending forms, Cang (1985) claims that a speaker uses '-ci' when he/she intends to convey that the content of the utterance is not new information for him/her. In H.Lee (1999), it is argued that the discourse-pragmatic function of '-ci' in declarative contexts is that 'the speaker is not asserting the factuality of the conveyed information but rather emphasizing his/her belief' (H.Lee 1999:254).

The paper claims that the hearer as well as the speaker, plays an important role in interpreting the meaning of the ending form '-ci'.

### 2.2 The Framework

The theory of the Territory of Information is primarily concerned with the relationship between the forms of

utterances and the conditions under which they can be used appropriately.

Kamio (1990) argued that the speaker/hearer's territory can be divided as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: The information territory of the speaker and hearer (Kamio 1990:22 partially modified)

		hearer	
		inside	outside
speaker	inside	A	C
	outside	B	D

Kamio (1994) modifies Kamio (1990), and denies the division shown in Table 1. The modified version of Kamio (1990) is illustrated in Figure 1.

speaker	..... .....	0
1	information	
hearer	..... .....	1
	information	

Figure 1. The criteria for territory (Kamio1994:82)

There are two conceptual domains, called the speaker and hearer's territories of information. Each of these domains contains information close to the speaker/hearer, i.e. having the value  $\geq n$ , where  $n$  is a specific value between 1 and 0 (Kamio 1994). Kamio was mainly concerned with the information-pragmatic functions of the sentence-final particle 'ne' in Japanese. His classification is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: The case and utterance forms in Japanese (Kamio1994:86 partially modified)

Case	Definition of case	Utterance form
A	$1 = \text{speaker} > \text{Hearer} = 0$	Direct form
B	$n < S \leq H = 1$	Direct-ne form
C	$n > S < H = 1$	Indirect-ne form
D	$n > S = H$	Indirect form

Table 2 shows that when the information falls into the hearer's territory ( $H=1$ ), a speaker must use sentence-final particle 'ne'.

### 3 Discussion

#### 3.1 The application of the theory

In this section, I apply Kamio's theory to the ending form '-*ci*' in Korean, and examine its range of application with the model in Table 2.

To begin with, I will examine an example of the case  $A(1=\text{speaker}>\text{Hearer}=0)$ .

- (1) A: Ney? Ta tangsin -i keyey -l ettehkey...  
 what? you -NOM he/she -ACC how...

'What? How did you know him/her?'

- B: Ku yeca ttal -i -lakwu achim  
 DET lady daughter -COP -CONJ morning

-ey cenhwa wa -ess -e/\*-ci.  
 -in telephon call -PAST -END

'She called me this morning, and told me that she is the lady's daughter.' ('Emmaya Nwunaya')

The information 'she called B this morning' belongs to the speaker (B)'s territory, but does not belong to the hearer (A)'s territory because the hearer does not know the fact that X called B. In (1) the speaker uses the ending form '-e', but cannot use '-*ci*'.

Another example of case *A* is as follows:

- (2) A: Park cakka, chessalang -i sayngkak -i  
 name writer first love -NOM thought -NOM

na -myen ecce -l ke -ntey? Manna  
 our -CONJ what -ADN thing -END meet

-kilato ha -l ke -nka?  
 -CONJ do -ADN thing -END

'What would you do if you remembered your first love? Would you like to see him?'

- B: Seywel -un ka -ko chwuek -un nam -nunta.  
 time -TOP go -CONJ memory -TOP abide -END

Kuce chwuek -ul kancikha -l ppwun  
 anyway memory -ACC keep -ADN only

-i -ci -yo.  
 -COP -END -POL

'Time goes by, and memory abides in the mind ... Anyway I just want to keep it in my mind.' ('Eccemyen Coha')

In (2) the hearer (A) asked the speaker (B) about her first love, and A does not know what B thinks about this topic. Therefore, the information is in the speaker's territory. Although the situation is similar to (1), '-*ci*' is used in the speaker's utterance.

Next, I illustrate the case *B* ( $n < S \leq H = 1$ ).

- (3) A: Na ttak maykcwu can -ulo twu can  
 I just beer glass -INST two glasses

pakkey an masi -ess -e.  
 only NEG drink -PAST -END

'I just drunk only two glasses of beer.'

- B: Kula -yss -ci. Yangcwu -lang socwu  
 Yes -PAST -END whisky -and Shōchū

-lang phokthancwu mantul -ese maykcwu  
 -and Bakudanshu make -CONJ beer

can twu can!  
 glass two glass

'Yes, you made Bakudanshu from whisky and Shōchū ... You drank only two glasses of beer!' ('Mescin Chinkwutul')

In (3) both the speaker and hearer obtained the information through direct experience because they drank together. In such an example, a given piece of information falls into the speaker's/hearer's territory and the speaker uses '-*ci*'. Cang (1985) points out that the speaker can use '-e' instead of '-*ci*' in this situation. When the speaker uses '-*ci*', the speaker's utterance implies agreement with what the hearer said.

I will consider now Case *C* ( $n > S < H = 1$ ) in which the speaker cannot use '-*ci*' in (4) below.

- (4) a. Ne yokmek -ulyeko caccengha -n kes  
 you speak ill of -CONJ intend -ADN thing

kath -a.  
 same -END

'You seem to compel people to speak ill of you.' ('Ipuuy Motun Kes')

- b. \*Ne yokmek -ulyeko caccengha -n kes  
 you speak ill of -CONJ intend -ADN thing

kath -ci.  
 same -END

In (4) the speaker judges from the hearer's attitude that he/she seems to compel somebody to speak ill of him/her. This utterance does not belong to the speaker's territory because the speaker guesses at the mental attitude of the hearer. On the other hand, the utterance belongs to the hearer's territory, for it reflects his/her intention. If the speaker uses '-*ci*' in this situation, the utterance is ill-formed, as seen in (4a) and (4b).

Finally, I shall explain the usage of '-*ci*' in case *D* ( $n > S = H$ ).

- (5) A: Ilen sik -ulo ha -myen yocum ay  
 these way -INST do -CONJ recently young  
 -tul -i eti pwuth -e iss -keyss  
 -PLU -NOM anywhere stay -CONJ exist -suffix  
 -e?  
 -END

'If she continues to behave in such a way,  
 who will stay in the house?'

- B: Naptw -e. Say salam tuli -l casin  
 leave -END new person gain -ADN faith  
 iss -na po -ci.  
 exist -seem -END

'Leave her alone. She is sure that the new  
 person will come to the house I guess.'  
 ('Eccemyen Coha')

The hearer A and the speaker B infer that a third person is sure that a new person will come to the house. In this case, the information belongs within neither the speaker nor hearer's territory, yet the speaker can use '-ci'.

In (6) the speaker cannot use '-ci' even though the situation is similar to (5).

- (6) A: Kuke -n mwe -yey -yo?  
 That -TOP what -CONN -POL  
 'What is that?'  
 B: ...Nuckey -kkaci toksesil -ey iss -nun  
 ...Late -until library -LOC exist -ADN  
 moyang -i -ya/\*-ci. Senmwul -ina hana  
 figure COP -END present -CONJ one  
 cwu -llyeko.  
 give -CONJ

'It seems that she studies late at the library.  
 So I will give her a present.'  
 ('Mescin Chinkwutul')

In (6) the subject is the third person and this information does not fall into either the speaker's or hearer's territory. The speaker uses one of the ending forms '-ya' but cannot use '-ci'.

Table 3 presents the result of the application of the theory of the Territory of Information to the analysis of the ending form '-ci'.

This table shows that '-ci' is used in the case of A, B, D, but cannot be used in the case C.

Case	Definition of case	Utterance form
A	$1 = \text{speaker} > \text{Hearer} = 0$	-ci/-e(a)
B	$n < S \leq H = 1$	-ci, -e(a)
C	$n > S < H = 1$	-e(a)
D	$n > S = H$	-ci/-e(a)

### 3.2 The usage of '-ci' and the speaker /hearer's information load

In 3.1, I investigated the usage of the ending form '-ci'. In case B, the speaker can use both '-ci' and '-e', whereas in case C the speaker cannot use '-ci'. By contrast, in the case of A and D the choice between '-ci' and '-e' is not free, but determined by factors to be discussed below.

Kamio (1994) points out that n can take the value  $n=0$ . In that case, it is outside the hearer's territory. The definition cannot account for the choice of '-ci' and '-e' in the case of A and D. The reason is that the definition does not take into account the context where the hearer has some or no information.

I will suggest that the speaker can use '-ci', when he/she communicates to the hearer the information which the hearer knows. That is, the information known to the hearer is relevant to the interpretation of '-ci', along with the information known to the speaker. In other words, when the speaker judges that he/she tells the hearer new information for the hearer, he/she cannot use '-ci'.

In (7), we can show that if the hearer communicates new information, the speaker cannot use '-ci'.

- (7) Ku oppa ecey pam -ey -to cenhwa  
 That brother yesterday night -in -too telephon  
 a. wa -ss -ess -e -yo.  
 call -PAST -PAST -END -POL  
 b. \*wa -ss -ess -ci -yo.  
 call -PAST -PAST -END -POL

'The man called you last night, too.' ('Mescin Chinkwutul')

- (8) Tahayngi kyengkwa -ka coh -ase oppa,  
 fortunately progress -NOM good -CONJ brother  
 thoywen te ppallaci -l swuto  
 discharge more soon -possible  
 a. iss -na po -a -yo.  
 exist -seem -END -POL  
 b. \*iss -na po -ci -yo.  
 exist -seem -END -POL

'Fortunately my brother might be able to get  
 out of hospital soon. ('Emmaya Nwunaya')

(7) corresponds to case *A* and (8) corresponds to case *D*. The speaker cannot use '-*ci*' in cases *A* and *D*, because he or she judges that the information is new information ('the man called to you' and 'my brother can leave the hospital soon') for the hearer.

In the next example, it looks as if the speaker used '-*ci*' although he/she judges that the information is new for the hearer.

(9) A: Po -ass -e?  
see -PAST -END

'Did you meet?'

B: Ollaota insaha -yss -*ci*.  
Climb the stairs greet -PAST -END

'On my way, I climbed the stairs, I greeted him/her.' ('Eccemyen Coha')

In (9) we can regard the information (B greeted him/her) as new for the hearer A. The example seems to conflict with the explanation of (7) and (8), but it is natural to assume that the speaker greeted the acquaintance on meeting him/her. Therefore, (9) cannot be regarded as a counter-example to the explanation.

The ending form '-*ci*' cannot be used when the hearer is not familiar with the information, but the speaker can use '-*ci*', even in situations where the speaker merely supposes that the hearer possesses the information.

## 4 Conclusion

In this paper I have examined the ending form '-*ci*' in Korean using the theory of the Territory of Information, which accounts for the pragmatic functions of the sentence-final particle '-*ne*' in Japanese. This paper demonstrates that a speaker cannot use '-*ci*' in the case when the speaker supposes that the hearer does not know the information provided by the sentences '-*ci*' is attached to. This paper also shows that the speaker can use '-*ci*' even if the information is new to the hearer, if the speaker supposes that the hearer can infer the information provided by the sentence modified by '-*ci*'.

It is possible to contrast Korean and Japanese through the application of the theory to ending forms in Korean. The theory of the Territory of Information can provide a framework for the contrastive study of sentence-final particles in Korean and Japanese. This paper treats only '-*ci*', because an account of the other ending forms in Korean requires not only reference to information structure but also to the other factors, e.g. speaker's perception, the speaker's experience, and evidentiality.

## Abbreviations

ADN: Adnominal suffix, COP: Copula, TOP: Topic, LOC: Locative, ACC: Accusative END: Ending form, NOM: Nominative, CONJ: Conjunctive suffix, PAST: Past, INST: Instrumental, PLU: Plural, POL: Polite

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## Data

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