

## Territories of Thoughts in Korean Conversation

Category: Discourse/Pragmatics/Sociolinguistics

This paper examines reported thought as an interactional device to cross over the territories of thoughts among interlocutors in interaction. An examination of uses of reported thought in ordinary Korean conversations illustrates that reported thought does not simply function to reflect isolated private thoughts of an individual, but it can also serve as a resource for the speaker to invite others into his/her thoughts and invite him/herself into others' thoughts. Reported thought provides interlocutors with a means of constructing a collaborative stance and establishing intersubjectivity.

Previous studies have paid much attention to reported speech and less on reported thought, and have subsumed reported thought under reported speech (Labov 1972; Coulmas 1986; Holt 1996). Few studies have provided an interactional account of reported thought. A unique study on reported thought in interaction by Hakaana (2007) shows that speakers of English frequently deploy the *I thought (that)* construction as a reported thought framing device, and they use it to construct complaints by presenting silent criticism towards the referent. Building upon this growing body of research on reported thought in talk-in-interaction, this study examines Korean reported thought, which shows variant designs and functions in conversations.

A conversation analysis of 42 cases of reported thought found in 10 telephone conversations and four video recorded face-to-face Korean conversations illustrates that the speaker routinely introduces reported thought by deploying the verb *po-ta* 'to see/observe/consider', as shown in (1)-(4). By introducing the reported thought with the verb *see*, the speaker invites the recipient to see what the speaker has seen and how speaker has viewed the referent or matter. An explicit reported thought framing device, such as *-(ha)ko sayngkak-hata* (Quotative marker + 'think' verb), is not necessarily required or often used for setting the boundaries of reported thought talk. Instead, the interlocutors identify the boundary of reported thought by the way they distinguish direct reported speech with the following cues: marked prosody, interjections, deixis (spatial, referential, temporal), sentence-ending suffixes, gaze, and gestures (Holt 1996; Holt 2000; Sidnell 2006).

- (1) A: *kyay-lul po-myen, WA:: chencay-ka cincca ilen ke-kwuna: a-n-ta-nikka*  
that:kid-ACC see-if wow genius-NOM really like:this thing-UNASSIM know-IMPRF-DC-so  
If one sees the kid, 'WOW::, this is what a genius is like', one will know.

Furthermore, as segments (2) and (3) show, reported thought often occurs in sequences where the current speaker elicits the recipient to co-assess the referent or matter on which the speaker previously experienced or perceived. Although the recipient does not have epistemic access or rights, by thinking out loud the speaker's evaluation, the speaker elicits the recipient's co-assessment. In particular, the speaker's thought in a question format sequentially implicates a response from the recipient, as shown below.

- (2) A: *po-myense kkok ilehkey-kkaci pyelcang-ul cye cwe-ya toy-na:.*  
see-then surely like:this-to:the:extent:of vacation:home-ACC build:for- must-NCOMM  
While **watching** (the television show), (I was thinking) 'Do (they) really need to build a vacation home like this one (for them)?'

- B: *kulenikka.*  
**Right (they don't need to).**

- (3) A: *kuntey ku salam-tul-hanthey kwungkukcekulo kukey coh-keyss-na: ikel pwa-ss-ul ttay-nun*  
 But that people-PL-to ultimately that:NOM good-DCT:RE-NCOMM this:ACC see-  
 PST-RL time-TOP  
 But, (I was thinking) ‘Would that be ultimately good for them?’ considering this.
- B: *na-to pyello-i-n kes kath-ay.*  
 I-also not:particularly-be-RL thing seem:like-IE  
**I don’t think it will be good (for them), either.**

Accordingly, reported thought contributes to establishing intersubjectivity and interpersonal involvement among the interlocutors as the speaker shares his/her view which s/he was not able to verbalize or share with others in the past.

In a different sequential environment, reported thought allows the speaker to carry out interactionally delicate actions, such as imposing one’s view or expressing personal or inappropriate views. Segment (1) shows an example where the speaker subtly imposes his view to other interlocutors regarding a child. Segment (4) illustrates an instance where the speaker (Y) casts his view on a private matter.

- (4) Y: *ku(liko) ttak cikhyepwa-se ssu:: cokos-i hayngtongha-nun kes-i ttolttolha-nci,*  
 and exactly observe-and ah that:thing-NOM behavior-RL thing-NOM smart-whether  
 And, (you should) **observe** (the guy and think), ‘**Ah::, is that one smart?**’

F: [HHhh hhh hhh ((F and W simultaneously laugh.))

W: [hhh hh

F: *WULi emma-ka ha-nun mal-ilang ttokkath-ay.*  
 our mom-NOM say-RL word-with same-IE  
 (Your words) are just like my mom’s words.

By reenacting a reported thought on behalf of F, Y casts his view of what kind of man the recipient (F) should date and how F should make such a judgment.

In sum, the design and use of reported thought in Korean interaction demonstrate that the speaker readily steps into the territories of others’ thoughts and makes his/her thoughts available to others. The interlocutors deploy reported thought to make thoughts visible to one another and to construct collaborative stances or carry out delicate actions.

## References

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