

# Maximize Presupposition! and the Korean demonstrative *ku*

Sadhwi Srinivas, Najoung Kim and Kyle Rawlins  
Department of Cognitive Science, Johns Hopkins University  
sadhwi@jhu.edu, n.kim@jhu.edu, kgr@jhu.edu

## Overview

- We present new data from a fieldwork study regarding the use of *ku*.
- *ku* encodes both exophoric distance measures AND hearer-oldness.
- We provide a unified semantic analysis using *Maximize Presupposition!* (Heim 1991) to explain its full distribution.

## The Korean demonstrative *ku*

Two reported uses of Korean demonstrative *ku* are:

**Exophoric “proximal-to-hearer” uses** (Sohn 1994)

**Context:** Mary is reading a book that’s in her hand. John is standing far away from Mary. He points at the book and says:

- (1) **ku** chayk na-to ilk-ess-nuntey, caymi-ss-tela.  
ku book I-too read-PAST-EXPL fun-PAST-REPORT  
‘I have read **ku** book too, it was fun.’

**Anaphoric uses** (Jiang 2012, Ahn 2017)

- (2) ece etten salam-ul pwa-ss-nuntey, **ku** salam isang-han  
yesterday some person-ACC see-PST ku person weird  
moca-lul ssu-ko iss-ess-e.  
hat-ACC wearing COP-PST  
‘I saw some person yesterday. **ku** person was wearing a weird hat.’

**Recently however, Ahn (2017) has claimed that *ku* does NOT have true exophoric uses, but only anaphoric or hearer-old ones.**

## Fieldwork

- Four Korean native speakers rated utterances with *ku* and other demonstratives *i:/ce* from 1 (“completely odd”) to 5 (“completely natural”).
- We target two main questions:

### (A) Is exophoricity sufficient to license *ku*?

**(A-1) Zoom-in uses:** These uses pick out one among many potential referents.

- (1) ‘I have read **ku** book too, it was fun.’



**(A-2) Zoom-out uses:** These uses bring a new referent to the hearer’s attention.

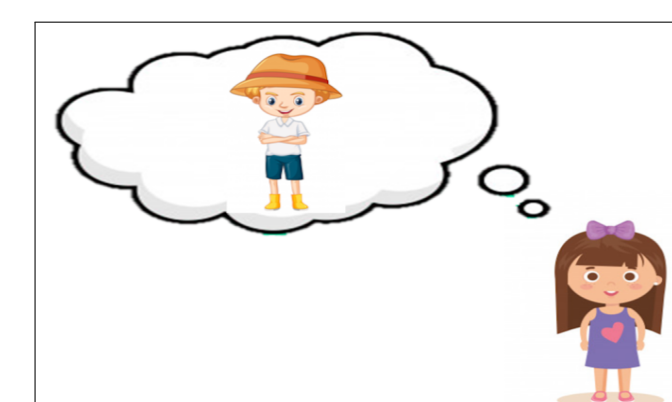
- (1) ‘I have read **ku** book too, it was fun.’



### (B) Is hearer-oldness sufficient to license *ku*?

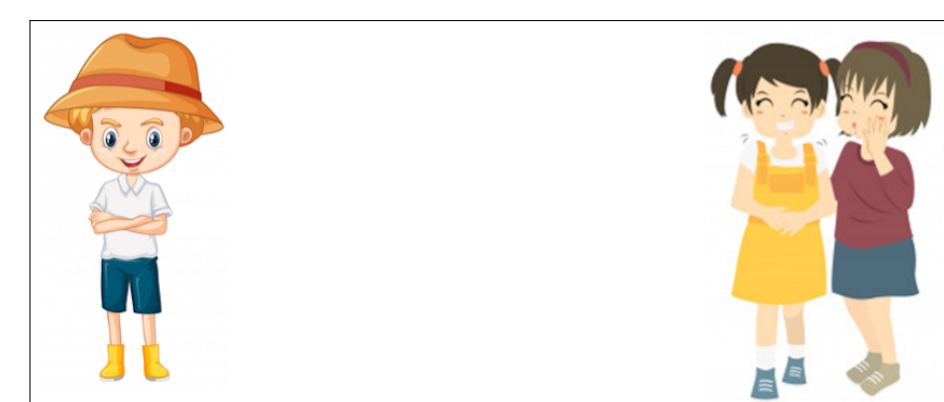
**(B-1)** Anaphoric uses, where the referent is not physically present.

- (2) ‘I saw some person yesterday. **ku** person was wearing a weird hat.’



**(B-2)** When the referent is physically present.

- (3) **#ku** salam isang-han moca-lul ssu-ko  
ku person weird hat-ACC wearing  
iss-e.  
COP-PRES  
‘**ku** person is wearing a weird hat.’



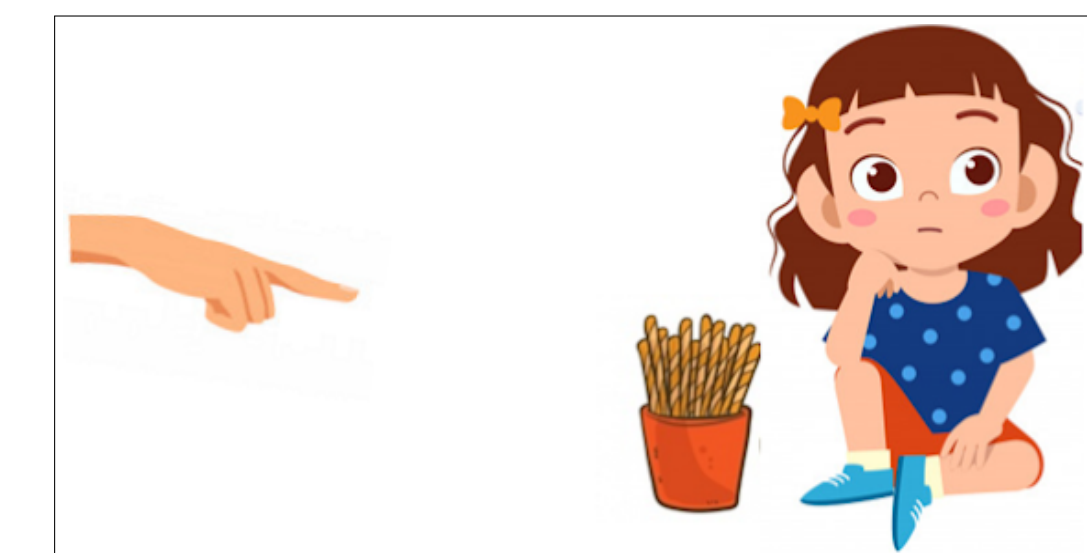
## Results

### (A) Is exophoricity sufficient to license *ku*?

**(A-1) *ku* is felicitous in zoom-in contexts.**

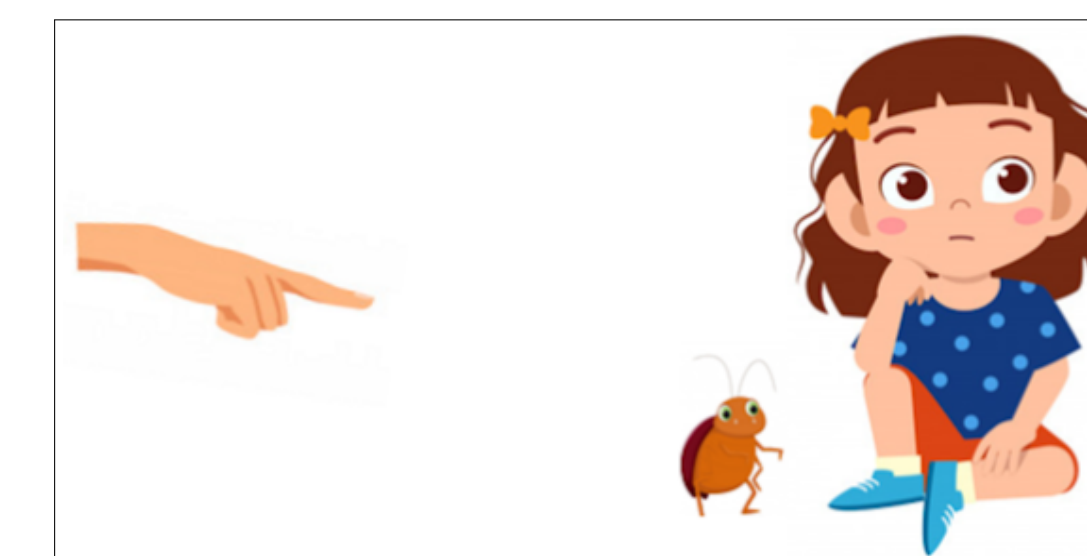
**(A-2) *ku* is felicitous in zoom-out contexts ...as long as the referent is also hearer-old.**

**Context:** There is a snack next to Mary that belongs to her, but she is not attending to it at the moment. John, who is far away from Mary, points to the snack and says:



- (4) **ku** kwaca masiss-e?  
ku snack tasty?  
‘Is **ku** snack good?’

**Context:** There is a cockroach near Mary. John knows she is unaware of its presence, as she would have jumped otherwise. John, who is far away from Mary, points to the cockroach and says:



- (5) ya, **ce/#ku** pakwipela cosim(-hay)!  
VOC. ce/#ku cockroach careful(-do)!  
‘Hey, be careful of **ce/#ku** cockroach!’

### (B) Is hearer-oldness sufficient to license *ku*?

**(B-1) *ku* is felicitous in anaphoric uses (consistent with Ahn 2017).**

**(B-2) *ku* cannot be used for hearer-old referents that are not additionally “hearer-proximal”.**

**Context:** Mary is holding a book. John asks, “Where did you get that book?”. Mary says:



- (6) **i:/#ku** chayk appa-ka cwu-sin ke-ya.  
i:/ku book dad-NOM. give-HON. thing  
‘My dad gave me **i:/#ku** book.’

## Discussion

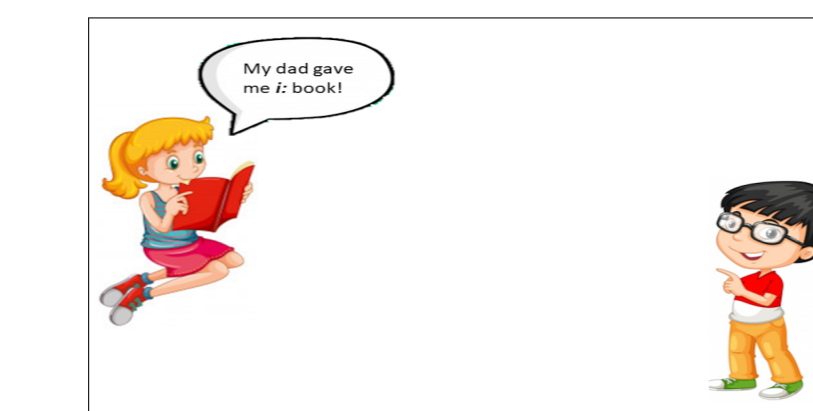
- *ku* does have true exophoric uses (contra Ahn 2017 who claims it is infelicitous in zoom-in and zoom-out contexts). But, these exophoric uses are modulated by hearer-oldness.
- Similarly, *ku* may only refer to hearer-old referents that are physically present in the scene when they fulfill certain distance restrictions.
- Thus, both exophoricity and hearer-oldness play a role in the semantics of *ku*, but they are not independent of each other.
- An ambiguity analysis therefore cannot be motivated.

## Analysis using Maximize Presupposition!

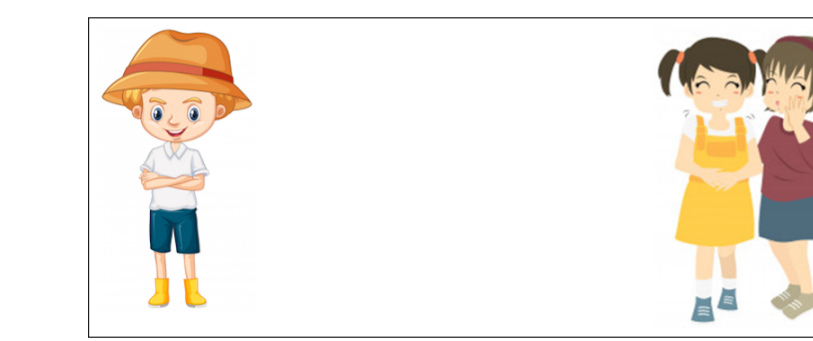
- Each demonstrative *i*, *ku* and *ce* picks out a unique referent, but the referent is determined based on their associated presuppositions.

Lexical item	Presupposition
<i>ce</i>	unique $\wedge$ distant from speaker $\wedge$ distant from hearer
<i>i</i> :	unique $\wedge$ proximal to speaker
<i>ku</i>	unique

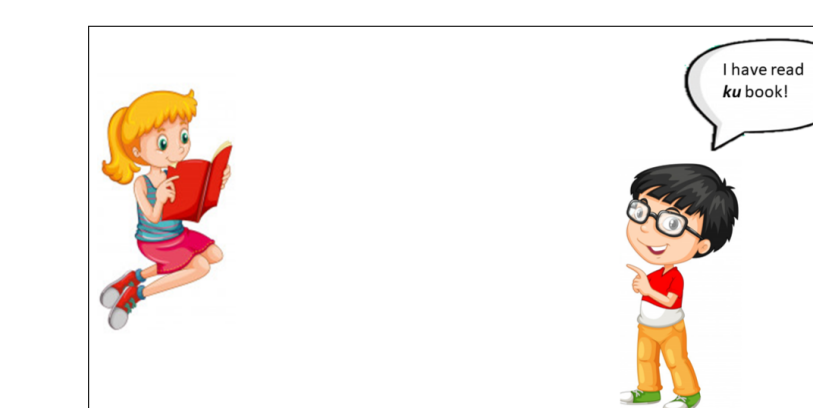
- *Maximize Presupposition!* determines the suitable demonstrative in context.



- + proximal to speaker  
✓ *i*: book ✗ *ce* book  
✗ *ku* book (anti-presuppositional requirement; Lauer 2016)

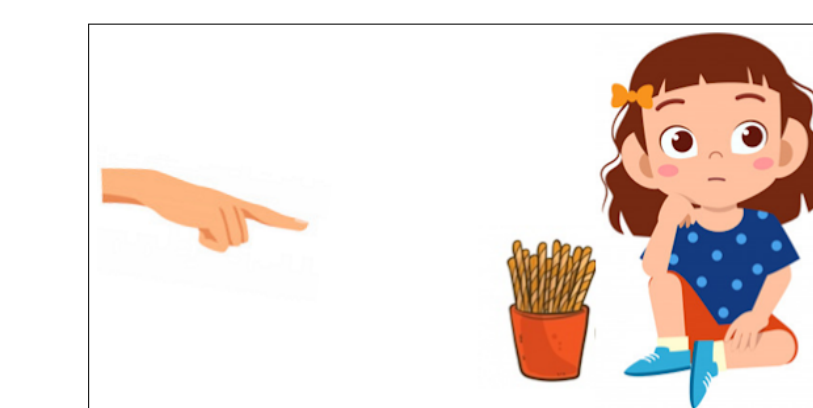


- + distant from speaker  
+ distant from hearer  
✗ *i*: man ✓ *ce* man  
✗ *ku* man (anti-presuppositional requirement)

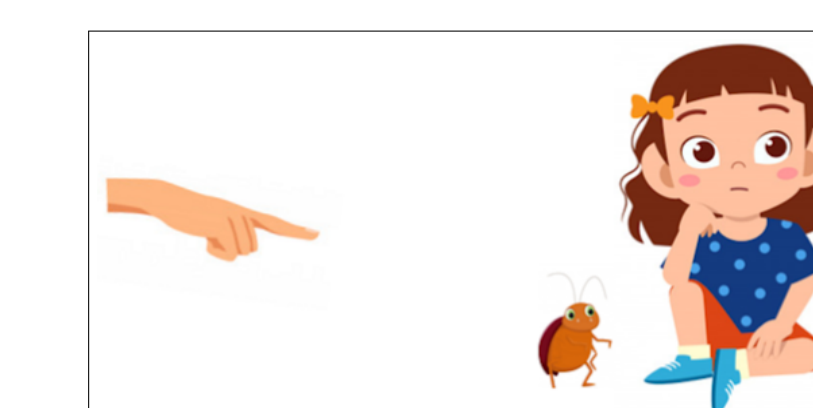


- + distant from speaker  
– distant from hearer  
✗ *i*: book ✗ *ce* book ✓ *ku* book

- Distances may be physical or psychological.



- + distant from speaker  
+ psychologically proximal to hearer (because the snack belongs to them)  
✗ *i*: snack ✗ *ce* snack ✓ *ku* snack



- + distant from speaker  
+ psychologically distant from hearer (imperceptibility/disassociation)  
✗ *i*: cockroach ✓ *ce* cockroach  
✗ *ku* cockroach (anti-presuppositional requirement)

- When the presupposition corresponding to a stronger item is not known to be true or false, either the stronger or weaker item may be used.

- (7) wuli aphathu-ey koyangi-ka han mari sa-nuntey,  
our apt-LOC cat-NOM one-CLS live-EXPL, i:/kid/ku.kid-NOM  
**yay/kyay**-ka mwel hayss-nunci al-a?  
what do-whether know?  
‘There is a cat in my apartment. Do you know what **i:/ku** kid did?’



- ✓ *i*: cat ✗ *ce* cat  
✓ *ku* cat (presuppositional implicature; Lauer 2016)

## Conclusions

- *ku* has anaphoric (hearer-old) AND exophoric uses, but these uses are not independent of one another.
- A unified analysis using MP! can explain the full distribution of *ku*.
- Given MP!’s success in accounting for *ku*, it is a promising way to analyze other complex demonstratives across languages that encode distance, familiarity, and attention.