Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing body of research on the grammatical or discourse functions of left and right peripheries of a sentence or an utterance (Shinzato 2007; Waltereit and Detges 2007; Mulder and Thompson 2008; Mulder, Thompson and Williams 2009; Traugott 2010). Cross-linguistic data indicate that there are distinctive communicative functions which are specific to the left or right peripheries. For instance, studies show that the left periphery (LP) is mainly concerned with discourse organization (e.g. topic shift), whereas the right periphery (RP) indicates a modal function (e.g. speaker’s stance towards the message or the addressee) (Beeching and Detges, this volume).

Previous studies have provided functional linguists with invaluable insights into the functional differences between the two peripheries. Nonetheless, there are some pending issues to be explored. First of all, while periphery typically refers to both left and right edges of an utterance or a sentence, it remains unclear how we define and identify the scope of a periphery (i.e., periphery of what?). Most previous studies defined the periphery on the basis of grammatical units such as sentence, clause, phrase, or argument structure and very few studies have examined the peripheral expressions using a turn unit in natural discourse (for example, see Mulder and Thompson 2008; Kim and Sohn 2011, forthcoming; Haselow 2011).

Second, while previous studies demonstrated functional differences between left and right peripheral expressions in terms of pragmatic meanings, it remains unexplored how speakers use prosodic features to achieve such
different communicative functions at the two peripheries. Communicative functions cannot be achieved through syntax and a lexical choice alone. Prosodic features play a crucial role in identifying the scope of periphery by providing empirical evidence for any prosodic juncture. For example, prosodic features can offer evidence whether discourse markers are intonationally disjunct from the rest of the utterance at LP or RP. While most discourse markers in English occur at LP and are disjunct intonationally, in many Asian languages they often occur at RP and are not always disjunct from the preceding element (e.g. Kim and Sohn 2011, forthcoming; Rhee 2013; Traugott 2013; Sohn, forthcoming). Since discourse markers can occur at LP and/or RP syntactically, when a speaker takes more than one utterance to complete his/her turn and includes a discourse marker at the intersection of the two utterances, it may not be clear whether the discourse marker is at the end of the prior utterance (i.e. RP), or at the beginning of the subsequent utterance (i.e. LP), if prosodic features are not taken into consideration. For instance, consider an example drawn from Korean conversation.

(1) A: paper-lul ppalli mos nay-l kes kath-ayo **kuntey** paper-lul ppalli paper-acc soon not submit-pro nml seem-pol kuntey paper-acc soon nay-myen-un hankwuk tuleka-ki swip-ci anh-canh-ayo² not submit-if-top Korea enter-nml easy-nml not-modal-pol

‘It appears that I may not be able to submit a paper soon **kuntey** if I don’t submit the paper soon, you know, it would be difficult to go to Korea.’

B: kuleh-ki-n ha-ta ku-ci e be so-nml-top do-dec right-comm yeah

‘Yeah, it appears so, right?’

In the above, the discourse marker **kuntey** expresses the meaning of ‘but, however, by the way’, and is permissible at LP and/or at RP. In (1) the question arises as to whether the discourse marker is produced at the end of a current utterance or at the beginning of the next utterance. Here, prosodic features can serve as the key factor in determining which of the two cases is valid.³

Consider another example where **kuntey** is syntactically ambiguous between LP and RP. In (2) **kuntey** appears between two utterances produced by one speaker.

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² The modality suffix -canh- expresses the meaning of ‘you know’ (Sohn 2010).
³ A pitch analysis for this study shows that the **kuntey** in (1) appears at the beginning of the following utterance, that is, it occurs at LP.