

Opacity and stem domains: Nominative suffixation in Korean

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Opacity raises interesting theoretical issues in rule-based phonology and recently also in OT. In the GP literature, the effect of opacity was briefly discussed with respect to Polish by Gussmann & Kaye (1993). This effect is observed in cases where the unlicensed status of an empty nucleus is preserved despite the fact that a potential proper governor is available on a next cycle. In a double diminutive form such as /[[[p \emptyset_1 s \emptyset_2]k \emptyset_4] \emptyset_5 k \emptyset_6]/ [pe₁se₃ke₅k] ‘dog-DIM-DIM’, the empty nuclei in bold \emptyset_1 and \emptyset_3 are potentially licensed by the following unlicensed nuclei \emptyset_3 and \emptyset_5 (note that \emptyset_2 and \emptyset_4 are deleted due to reduction), predicting the ill-formed output *[peskek]. The actual phonetic form [pe₁se₃ke₅k], however, indicates that the status of \emptyset_1 and \emptyset_3 as phonetically interpretable is retained. This implies that analytic constructions in diminutive forms in Polish invoke opacity (Kaye 1995).

A similar phenomenon is observed in nominative forms in Korean. Nominative suffixation is different from Polish in that neutralisation adds an extra dimension of analytical complexity. The behaviour of the nominative suffix /i/ is ambiguous: it behaves as non-analytic with respect to the neutralisation process but as analytic in i/zero alternations. The context in which neutralisation takes place is before a domain-final empty nucleus (FEN) (the domain-final licensing parameter is “on”) and only [p, t, k, m, n, ŋ, l] occur in this position. Other segments undergo neutralisation. For instance, the word /k \emptyset_1 r \emptyset_2 s \emptyset_3 / ‘dish’ is realised as [kirit] in isolation. Note that the fricative /s/ becomes [t] before a FEN. The nominative form is [kirisɨ] in which the stem-final /s/ is realised without any segmental change. This indicates that the nominative suffix /i/ is non-analytic, as in /[[k \emptyset_1 r \emptyset_2 si]i]/. Regarding i/zero alternations, however, the non-analytic construction does not account for the unlicensed status of \emptyset_2 . Alternatively, if we were to treat this suffix as analytic, as in /[[[k \emptyset_1 r \emptyset_2 s \emptyset_3]i]i]/, the phonetic form would be *[kiriti].

The paradoxical behaviour of the nominative suffix suggests that a refinement of morphological analyticity (Kaye 1995) is required to account not only for opacity involved in i/zero alternations but also for neutralisation. I will propose a revised analysis, in which a stem domain is postulated: /<k \emptyset_1 r \emptyset_2 s> \emptyset_3 / and /<k \emptyset_1 r \emptyset_2 s> i] (< >: stem domain). Bearing in mind that the interpretation of the bracketing takes place more or less in the same way as in Kaye (1995), phonetic interpretation of empty nuclei applies first within the innermost domain, i.e. the stem domain. Note that this domain is onset-final and so \emptyset_2 does not have a following potential licenser. In isolation, neutralisation applies after bracket erasure and /s/ becomes [t] before \emptyset_3 . In the nominative form, the phonetic interpretation of \emptyset_2 is preserved despite the fact that a potential licenser is available outside the stem domain. The effect of opacity is derived from the Strict Cyclicity Condition (Kean 1974, among others). In this way, the postulation of the stem-domain provides a consistent account of the behaviour of the nominative suffix. Finally, implications of the revised analysis will be discussed, especially with regard to the postulation of the stem domain.

References

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