Korean Ideophone Harmony in Optimal Domains Theory

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Cho, Mi-Hui and Shinsook Lee. 1997. Korean Ideophone Harmony in Optimal Domains Theory. *Studies in Phonetics, Phonology and Morphology* 3. 279-294. In this paper we provide a unified account of ideophone harmony in Korean within Optimal Domains Theory. In particular, we show that both high vowel transparency and /u/ variation can be accounted for in a principled way without the problematic underspecification theory; high vowel transparency derives by ranking *[-ATR, +Hi]$_{Noninitial}$ and WSAword over Expression, while /u/ variation results from ranking Expression over *[-ATR, +Hi]$_{Noninitial}$. Further, we show that the feature cooccurrence constraint of *[-ATR, +Hi] is subject to positional sensitivity in Korean ideophone harmony. (Hoseo University and Pukyong National University and Hoseo University)

1. Introduction

Ideophone harmony in Korean, in particular, the high vowel transparency effect has been analyzed by many scholars. For example, Sohn (1987), Lee (1993) analyze high vowel transparency in terms of underspecification theory. In their analyses the feature [+high] is underspecified, and it does not go with the harmonic feature. However, the harmonic feature is always affiliated with a high vowel initially. Moreover, the harmonic feature is sometimes realized on the nonintial high vowel /u/. Thus, none of the analyses have provided a principled account of high vowel transparency and /u/ variation.

In this paper we provide a unified account of both high vowel transparency and /u/ variation in terms of constraint ranking. Specifically, we adopt the Optimal Domains Theory (Cole and Kisseberth 1994; hereafter ODT) and show that transparency results when feature cooccurrence restriction and Wide Scope Alignment (hereafter WSA) are ranked higher than Expression, while /u/ variation

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