

snippets

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A hybrid locality constraint on allomorphy: Evidence from Korean

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Korean exhibits a case of suppletion of the verbal root \sqrt{give} . The allomorph /tal/ is subject to two conjoint contexts: (i) the dative argument bears the feature [+author] and (ii) the illocutionary force is imperative. The elsewhere form for \sqrt{give} /cwu/ is an intra-individual variant. Note that /tal/ is blocked when the verb is negated, as shown in (1a). The negator /mal/, whose form is different from /an(i)/ and /mos/ (Chung 2009), is involved in the jussive construction, meaning ‘must not’ or ‘not allowed to’.

- (1) a. (Ne) na-eykey satang-ul **cwu/tal**-Ø-la.
 you.NOM I-DAT candy-ACC give/give-PRS-IMP
 ‘Give me a candy.’
- b. (Ne) na-eykey satang-ul **cwu/*tal**-ci-ma-la.
 you.NOM I-DAT candy-ACC give/give-CI-NEG-IMP
 ‘Do not give me a candy.’

It is intriguing that /tal/ is conditioned by two separate environments: (i) within a phrase [_{VP} DP_{dat} .. \sqrt{give}] and (ii) beyond a phrase [[[[... \sqrt{give}] v] T] C_[IMP]].

These data raise a question about which grammatical restrictions should hold for contextual allomorphy. As far as the context (i) is concerned, /tal/ poses a problem to structural locality, since it is triggered by the dative argument. This argues against the locality constraint proposed by Bobaljik and Harley (2017), which says that suppletion may only be triggered under sisterhood. As the indirect object is in a specifier position, it should not condition the allomorphy of the head X⁰. Instead, Bobaljik’s (2012) original proposal can account for recipient-driven suppletion (see Weisser 2018 for Malayalam), since the local domain is defined as a maximal projection XP.

The context (ii) for /tal/, however, cannot be subject to the structural locality constraint, as the trigger C_[IMP] lies outside of the maximal projection. These data are also not compatible with Moskal and Smith’s (2016) Hyper-contextual rule, which allows the root to be accessible to the T head at most in the structure [[[[... \sqrt{give}] v] T] C_[IMP]. This hints at linear adjacency as a further constraint for suppletion. Merchant (2015)’s Span seems to be a viable option, as it extends the local domain to a contiguous set of heads. Still, it cannot explain the free-variation between two allomorphs (i.e. /tal/ ~ /cwu/ - (1a)). In addition, note that linear adjacency cannot be the sole condition, due to context (i): the direct object intervenes between DP_{dat} and \sqrt{give} .

Hence, our data suggest the need for a hybrid theory of locality (as in Embick’s 2010 Node Adjacency Hypothesis), since both structural and linear locality constraints are required. The maximal projection should be considered as the local domain, so that the root may be conditioned

by the dative argument. Simultaneously, functional heads in the verbal extended projection can trigger root allomorphy if they are linearly adjacent. However, in the string of heads (i.e. $\sqrt{\text{give}} \frown v \frown T \frown C$), the root and C head are not linearly adjacent. Since the intervening v and T heads have phonologically null exponents, they can be cyclically eliminated by the morphological operation PRUNING (Embick 2008), which gives rise to linear adjacency: $\sqrt{\text{give}} \frown v \frown T \frown C \rightarrow \sqrt{\text{give}} \frown C$. Overt items such as negation in (1b) cannot be pruned and destroy the adjacency relation between the root and C head.

Yet, optionality in the competition between the elsewhere and the specific allomorph in (1a) cannot be predicted. Free variation poses a challenge to current frameworks that rely on the Subset Principle, which derives a single output from an input (Halle 2000). This paradoxical problem could be solved by assuming that PRUNING operates optionally. Through the optional application of PRUNING, we can derive free variation by relativizing the local domains for both the suppletive and elsewhere allomorphs. This failure of competition within a grammar may hint at quantitative aspects of rule application akin to those in Nevins and Parrott 2010 and Bobaljik 2012.

These data contribute to the discussion about locality constraints on contextual allomorphy, and broaden our understanding of morphological operations.

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