On the locality condition for Korean subject honorific suppletion

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In this study, I argue that **the locality condition for suppletive subject honorification found in Korean predicates is adjacency between** $\sqrt{\text{ and } \text{Agr}_{\text{Subj}}^0[+\text{hon}]}$ (Agr_S⁰ from now on) **in a single complex head.** Applying the framework of the Generalized Reduplication (GenR, Arregi and Nevins 2012; 2018; 2022) to the subject honorification (SH) pattern in Korean auxiliary verb constructions (terminology following Yun 1993), I argue that the locality condition for Korean suppletive SH is the adjacency between the conditioned root and the conditioning $\text{Agr}_{\text{S}}^0[+\text{hon}]$ in a single complex head, contra Choi and Harley's (2019) argument for a non-adjacency-based locality condition on suppletive SH.

Korean SH conveys that the speaker regards the referent of the subject as socially higher than themselves. There are two ways to do this regarding predicates: regular honorification (RegH) and suppletive honorification (SupH). RegH is done by suffixing a predicate with -(u)si, as in (1).

(1) *Cwusang-kkeyse* ku chayk-ul ilk-*(usi)-ess-ta. his.majesty-NOM.HON that book-ACC read-HON_S-PST-DECL 'His majesty read the book.' regular stem *mek*- suffixed by an SH -(u)si, as in (2a). RegH is unacceptable if the root has a SupH stem, as

regular stem *mek*- suffixed by an SH -(u)st, as in (2a). RegH is unacceptable if the root has a SupH stem, as in (2b).

(2) a. *capswusi-ess-ta* eat.HON_S-PST-DECL 'ate (honorific)'

(3) Vocabulary items

b. * *mek-usi-ess-ta* eat-HON_S-PST-DECL 'ate (honorific)' In this research, I assume that the RegH suffix -(u)si realizes $Agr_S^0[+hon]$, as seen in (3e). When Agr_S^0 is c-commanded by an honorified subject NP, Agr_S^0 agrees with its [+hon]. Then, -(u)si is inserted into Agr_S^0 if there is no SupH available for the given root. If the root has a suppletive honorific allomorph, as in (3b), it is inserted into the root, blocking the elsewhere stem (3c). Further, the inserted suppletive stem conditions the allomorphy of Agr_S^0 , as seen in (3d).

a. $\sqrt{\text{READ}} \leftrightarrow ilk$ b. $\sqrt{\text{EAT}} \leftrightarrow capswusi$ - / _ Agrs⁰[+hon] c. $\sqrt{\text{EAT}} \leftrightarrow mek$ d. Agrs⁰[+hon] $\leftrightarrow \varnothing$ / {capswusi-, ...} _ e. Agrs⁰[+hon] $\leftrightarrow -(u)si$ f. Agrs⁰ $\leftrightarrow \varnothing$ Suppletive SH stems Consistent with the vocabulary items in (3), I assume that the locality condition for allomorphy is adjacency within a log (2015); Iou (2024) on Ko

complex head. This treatment is in line with Chung (2009); Kim and Chung (2015); Jou (2024) on Korean SH, and Embick (2010); Merchant (2015) on cross-linguistic root allomorphy, among others.

(4) a. *Cwusang-kkeyse koymwul-eykey mek-hi-si-ess-ta* his.majesty-NOM.HON monster-DAT **eat-**PASS-**HON**_S-PST-DECL 'His majesty was eaten by a monster.'

The evidence for this assumption can be found in passive and causative constructions. For example, SupH is blocked when a

b. * Cwusang-kkeyse koymwul-eykey capswusi-hi-si-ess-ta

his.majesty-NOM.HON monster-DAT **eat.HON**_S-PASS-**HON**_S-PST-DECL SupH is blocked when a passive suffix *-hi* intervenes between \sqrt{EAT} and Agr_S^0 , as seen in (4b). SupH is unacceptable even though the honorified NP *cwusang* 'his majesty' is a licit subject of the predicate. Only the elsewhere form is acceptable in this context, as seen in (4a).

Choi and Harley (2019), however, challenge this view. Using auxiliary verb construction (*po*-construction in their terminology), they argue that the locality condition for SupH is not adjacency. Instead, they claim that a conditioning node can trigger SupH if it c-commands the conditioned root within the same complex head, following Bobaljik's (2012) Root Suppletion Condition.

Auxiliary verb construction is a multiple-verb construction available in Korean (Yun 1993; Choi and Harley 2019). It consists of a lexical main verb followed by a fully inflected auxiliary verb, as seen in (5). When the main verb is not eligible for SupH, SH is marked to the right of the auxiliary verb. Marking SH to the immediate right of the main verb is unacceptable.

However, when the main verb has a SupH allomorph, SupH of the main lexical verb is obligatorily triggered while the RegH suffix -(u)si is still surfaces on the right side of the auxiliary verb, as seen in (6a).

(5) and (6) show us a paradoxical situation: on the one hand, we cannot easily say that Agr_S^0 is to the immediate right of the root of the main verb as we do not observe any RegH suffix there. On the other hand, SupH is still marked on the main verb even though the RegH suffix is not adjacent to the root of the main verb. The fact that SupH on the main verb is obligatory for auxiliary verb constructions led Choi and Harley (2019) to conclude that SupH can be triggered by a non-adjacent conditioning node.

(5) *ilk-(*usi)-e-po-si-ess-ta* read-HON_S-E-see-HON_S-PST-DECL

'tried to read/had an experience of reading'

- (6) a. *capswusi-e-po-si-ess-ta* eat.HON_S-E-see-HON_S-PST-DECL
 'tried to eat/had an experience of eating'
 - b. * mek-(usi)-e-po-si-ess-ta

However, Choi and Harley's (2019) analysis makes a wrong prediction for passive and causative constructions. We observe that SupH is not triggered in these constructions even though, by hypothesis, the root and the RegH -(u)si are in the same complex head. Thus, it seems that the non-adjacency-based analysis accounts fully for the data.

eat-HON_S-E-see-HON_S-PST-DECL The apparent paradoxical situation can be reconciled with the Generalized Reduplication (GenR) framework. Specifically, I argue that the RegH suffix on the auxiliary verb in (6a) is actually base-generated at the position to the immediate right of the main lexical verb. According to the GenR framework, a morpheme can be post-syntactically dislocated from its base-generated position if it violates language-specific morphotactic constraints. The dislocation, or metathesis, is understood as a sequence of post-syntactic processes: a morpheme doubling, and a following morpheme deletion. When there are two morphemes, A and B, of which relative linear order violates a morphotactic constraint in the given language, A and B are doubled, and A in the first copy and B in the second copy are deleted, ultimately achieving the legit order B A, as schematized in (7).

- (7) Metathesis in the GenR formalism $[A > B] \rightarrow ABAB \rightarrow BA$
- (8) a. Morphotactic constraint on Agr_S^0 *[... $Agr_S^0 ... \sqrt{...}$]_{x⁰}
 - b. * [*ilk* -*usi* -*e* -*po* ...]_{C⁰} [read -HON_S -E see ...]

I propose that Korean morphotactics requires Agr_S^0 to linearly follow any root in a single complex head, as shown in (8a). This is why (5) becomes unacceptable when the RegH -(*u*)si immediately follows the main verb, as schematized in (8b). In order to repair the violation, Agr_S^0 is post-syntactically dislocated from its basegenerated position through GenR. Two applications of GenR are -doubling and a morpheme-deletion: one for Agr_S^0 and the dummy

triggered, each consisting of a morpheme-doubling and a morpheme-deletion: one for Agr_S^0 and the dummy suffix -*e* and the other for Agr_S^0 and \sqrt{SEE} . As a result, we get the correct output, as seen in (9e).

- (9) a. Input I: $ilk \llbracket \operatorname{Agr}_{S}^{0} > < -e \rrbracket \sqrt{SEE} \dots$
 - b. Metathesis: *ilk* $Agr_S^0 e Agr_S^0 e \sqrt{SEE}$...
 - c. Input II: $ilk e \llbracket \operatorname{Agr}_{S}^{0} > < \sqrt{SEE} \rrbracket ...$
 - d. Metathesis: $ilk e \operatorname{Agrs}^0 \sqrt{\text{SEE Agrs}^0} \sqrt{\text{SEE }} \dots$
 - e. Vocabulary Insertion: *ilk -e -po -si* ... read -E -see -HONs ...
- (10) a. Input I: *capswusi* $\llbracket \operatorname{Agr}_{S}^{0} > < -e \rrbracket \sqrt{SEE} \dots$
 - b. Metathesis: *capswusi* $Agr_S^0 e Agr_S^0 e \sqrt{SEE}$...
 - c. Input II: *capswusi* $e \llbracket \text{Agr}_{S}^{0} > < \sqrt{\text{SEE}} \rrbracket$...
 - d. Metathesis: *capswusi* $e \operatorname{Agr_S^0} \sqrt{\text{SEE Agr_S^0}} \sqrt{\text{SEE Agr_S^0}} = \dots$
 - e. Vocabulary Insertion:

capswusi -e -po -si ... eat. HON_S -E -see - HON_S ...

The current proposal further explains why we observe obligatory SupH for the main lexical verb despite the absence of a RegH suffix -(u)si on the immediate right side of the root. By the moment of Vocabulary Insertion in the main lexical verb, the root and Agr_S^0 are still adjacent to each other. Thus, the suppletive vocabulary item *capswusi*- is readily inserted into \sqrt{SEE} , blocking the insertion of the elsewhere *mek*-, by (3b). Then, the same metathesis procedure follows. It yields the correct distribution of the morphemes where we have both SupH on the main lexical verb and RegH suffix on the right side of the auxiliary verb, as seen in (10e).

Abbreviations

ACCaccusativeDATdativeDECLdeclarativeHONhonorificNOMnominativePASSpassivePSTpast

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