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Abstract

The Phonology of Morpheme Realization

Kazutaka Kurisu

This dissertation addresses the question of how various types of morpheme realization are to be coherently explained within the framework of Optimality Theory (Prince and Smolensky 1993). Paying close attention to a-templatic nonconcatenative morphological processes such as subtractive morphology and umlaut, I develop a formal theory dubbed "Realizational Morphology Theory (RMT)".

The most important claim of this dissertation is that a REALIZE MORPHEME (RM) constraint plays a central role in a comprehensive and principled understanding of realizational morphology. In nonconcatenative morphology, its interactions with faithfulness constraints are of crucial importance. A second important proposal is the relativization of faithfulness constraints with respect to morphosyntactic categories. Given these two proposals, I demonstrate that the entire range of a-templatic nonconcatenative morphology is obtained through the ranking RM » Faith.

RMT not only covers morpheme realization in general but also has a number of desirable theoretical consequences. First, various descriptive devices such as zero morphs and floating features can be dispensed with, therefore simplifying the theory of morphology. Second, RMT is restrictive, eliminating unlikely morphological constructions. Especially, RMT eliminates the possibility of two simultaneous stem modifications. This argument is couched in terms of harmonic bounding (Prince and Smolensky 1993:176-178). This restrictiveness plays an important role in a critical evaluation of anti-faithfulness theory (Alderete 1999) since the latter predicts the existence of cases where a single morpheme receives more than one stem change.

The organization of this dissertation is as follows. Chapter 1 is a general introduction, mapping out the overall goals in the context of previous works. Chapter 2 is devoted to the development of RMT. The remaining chapters are devoted to exemplification of RMT and to its further theoretical development. In chapter 3, I discuss morphological truncation. Chapter 4 discusses complementary distribution of nonconcatenative allomorphs, and in chapter 5, I examine constraint interactions resulting in two simultaneous phonological realizations of a single morpheme. Finally, chapter 6 summarizes the main results of this dissertation.

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