

Partial Honorific Agreement in Korean*

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Choi, Incheol. 2004. Partial Honorific Agreement in Korean. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 12(2), 207-225. Korean honorific agreement is pragmatically constrained, requiring the consistency of honorific information between the subject and the head verb. However, the verbal honorific affix *-si* is often optional in non-final conjuncts of verbal coordination constructions. Taking a lexicalist view (HPSG, Pollard & Sag 1994), this paper suggests that the optionality of honorific markers in non-final conjuncts is explained by the sharing of feature structures containing honorific information between two conjuncts.

Key Words: partial honorific agreement, morphology, feature sharing, HPSG

1. Introduction

Korean honorific agreement is pragmatically constrained, requiring the consistency of honorific information between the subject and the head verb.¹⁾ Specifically, the nominal honorific marker *-nim* attached to the subject and verb affix *-si* indicate that the speaker owes honor to the subject's referent, as illustrated in (1a):

* This paper was supported by the Brain Korea 21 Project. I would like to thank Stephen Wechsler, Jong-Bok Kim, and two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments.

1) In addition, for a precise analysis, the social relation between a speaker and listener should be considered. In this paper, to avoid any further complication and focus on the optional honorific marking in verbal coordination, this factor will be ignored. For a fine grained analysis of Korean honorific agreement, see Park (1992).

- (1) a. Kim *sacang-nim-i* ilccik chulkun.ha-si-n-ta.
 -president-Hon-Nom early come.to.office.do-Hon-Prs-Dec
 'President Kim comes to the office early.'
- b. Kim *sacang-i* ilccik chulkun.ha-n-ta.
 -president-Nom early come.to.office.do-Prs-Dec
- c. #Kim *sacang-nim-i* ilccik chulkun.ha-n-ta.²⁾
 -president-Hon-Nom early come.to.office.do-Prs-Dec
- d. #Kim *sacang-i* ilccik chulkun.ha-si-n-ta.
 -president-Nom early come.to.office.do-Hon-Prs-Dec

The absence of *-nim* and *-si* indicates that the speaker does not owe honor to the subject's referent as in (1b). The infelicity of (1c) and (1d) is caused by the inconsistency of the honorific information between the subject and the verb.

However, in the verbal coordinate constructions as in (2), the verbal honorific affix *-si* is omissible in the non-final conjunct and this type of honorific agreement will be called partial honorific agreement:

- (2) Kim *sacang-nim-un* ilccik chulkun.ha-(si)-ko
 -president-Hon-Top early come.to.office.do-Hon-Conj
 ilccik toykun.ha-si-ess-ta.
 early leave.office.do-Hon-Pst-Dec
 'President Kim came to the office early and left early.'

As suggested in Cho and Sells (1994), the sentence in (2) may lead to the conclusion that the non-finite verbs in verbal coordinate constructions are exempt from the honorific agreement. However, examples like (3) contradict this assumption:

2) The violation of the honorific agreement does not make the sentence ungrammatical but infelicitous, as generally assumed.

- (3) #Kim sacang-nim-un ilccik chulkun.ha-ko
 -president-Hon-Top early come.to.office.do-Hon-Conj
 na-nun nuckey chulkun.ha-yess-ta.
 I-Nom late come.to.office.do-Pst-Dec
 'President Kim came to the office early and I did so late.'

In (3) the absence of the affix *-si* in the non-finite verb *chulkun.ha-* 'come to office' makes the sentence infelicitous in contrast with the assumption above. That is, the non-finite verb is not always free from the honorific agreement constraint.

In this paper, I first examine a 'syntactic phrasal affixation approach'. That is, in a syntactic approach, the omission of *-si-* in (2) may be explained by a hypothesis which relates the honorific marker *-si-* to a phrasal affixation analysis (see Yoon 1989). In this paper, by showing that the honorific marker *-si-* cannot be the phrasal affix, I will argue that the syntactic approach cannot appropriately explain the partial honorific agreement. Instead, using a Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG) framework, I propose an analysis in which pragmatics, morphology and syntax interact in the partial distribution of the honorific morpheme *-si* in verbal coordinate constructions. Specifically, I argue that the partial honorific agreement phenomenon is explained by the sharing of feature structures containing honorific information between two conjuncts.

2. Syntactic Phrasal Affixation Analysis?

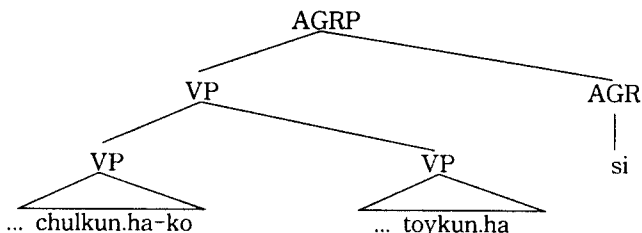
According to Yoon (1989, 1992), tense (e.g. *-ess*: Pst) and mood (e.g. *-ta*: Dec) in Korean should be analyzed as phrasal affixes.

- (4) Coordinate structures in Korean allow certain inflectional affixes to be missing in all but the final conjunct. In such cases, the information borne by the inflectional affixes on the final conjunct takes distributive scope over the unmarked non-final conjuncts.

(Yoon 1992: 833).

Under Yoon's approach, the configurational c-command relation explains the partial occurrence of the inflectional affixes. If the same analysis applies to the verbal honorific affix *-si*, it is then predicted that the first conjunct is under the distributive scope of the *-si* in the final conjunct. For example, the omission of *-si* in (2) can be accounted for by the syntactic construction in (5).

(5)



In the above structure, the honorific affix *-si* has its own projection and takes distributive scope over the unmarked non-final conjunct as a phrasal affix.

Although the phrasal affixation possibility explains the partial honorific agreement in (2), it encounters problems when idiosyncratic verbs such as *cwumusi-* 'sleep(hon)' and *capswusi-* 'eat(hon)' are considered. One of the characteristics of these verbs is that the honorific affix *-si* cannot be separated from its base in any case. For instance, the non-honorific counterparts of these verbs are not forms omitting the honorific affix *-s* but other suppletive forms as shown in (6).

- (6) a. *cwumu-si-ess-ta*: sleep-Hon-Pst-Dec; **cwumu-ess-ta*
 ca-ass-ta: sleep-Pst-Dec; **ca-si-ess-ta*
 b. *capswu-si-ess-ta*: eat-Hon-Pst-Dec; ?*capswu-ess-ta*³⁾

3) Some Korean native speakers seem to allow *capswuessta* 'eat (Hon)'. However, even in that case, the honorific information is maintained.

- mek-ess-ta: eat-Pst-Dec; *mek-usi-ess-ta
 c. tolla.ka-si-ess-ta: die-Hon-Pst-Dec; *tolla.ka-ass-ta
 cwuk-ess-ta: die-Pst-Dec; *cwuk-si-ess-ta

The non-honorific counterparts of *cwumusi-*, *capswusi-*, and *tolakasi-* in (6) are *ca-*, *mek-*, and *cwuk-*, respectively; not *cwumu-*, *capswu-*, or *tolla.ka-*. On the other hand, verb stems such as *ca-*, *mek-* and *cwuk-* are lexically specified with negative honorific information, and hence cannot be *ca-si-*, *mek-si-* or *cwuk-si-*. The *-si* in the verbs in (6), in contrast with the *-si* morpheme in normal verbs, cannot be omitted in the non-final conjuncts of verbal coordinate constructions.

- (7) sensayng-nim-un ilccik cwumu-*(si)-ko
 teacher-Hon-Top early get.up-Hon-Conj
 ilccik ilena-si-n-ta.
 early sleep-Hon-Prs-Dec
 '(my) teacher goes to bed early and gets up early.'

The conjunct word, *cwumusi-ko*, in (7) never omits *-si*. The omission not only results in an infelicitous word, but an ungrammatical one. A similar morphological property is observed in the Korean derivational affix such as passive morpheme *-i*.

- (8) melikalak-i cal-*(i)-ko kak-i-ess-ta.
 hair-Nom cut-*(Pass)-Conj trim-Pass-Pst-Dec
 '(his) hair were cut and trimmed.'

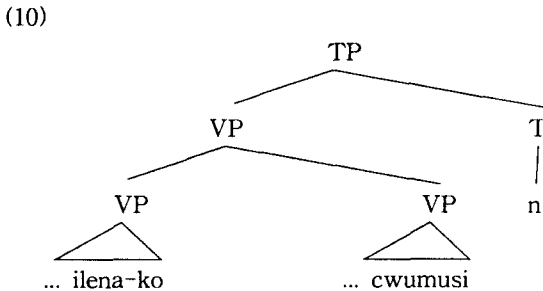
The derivational passive affix *-i* in (8) is obligatory in both of the conjuncts in contrast with the inflectional affix. This provides a hint for the analysis of *cwumusi-*. That is, *-si* in these idiosyncratic honorific words is not likely to be an inflectional affix, which Yoon (1992) treats as a phrasal affix.

Given the evidence above, it is more likely that *-si* in (6) is not an inflectional affix, regardless of whether it is a derivational affix or just

part of a verb root. According to Yoon, only inflectional affixes are qualified as the phrasal affixes. Such a claim may be necessary to block the ungrammatical sentences as in (8) in which the derivational affix is omitted in the non-final conjunct. As a result, if *-si* in (6) is not an inflectional affix, it may not occupy an independent syntactic node such as AGR. However, then, (9) below will be problematic for the phrasal affixation analysis.

- (9) *sensayng-nim-un ilccik ilena-ko ilccik*
 teacher-Hon-Ton early get.up-Conj early
cwumu.si-n-ta
 sleep.hon-Pres-Decl
 '(My) teacher gets up early and goes to bed early'

As we observed already, *-si* in the final conjunct in (9) cannot be a phrasal affix, which gives distributive scope to the first conjunct. That is, the only possible configurational syntactic structure of (9) may be that shown in (10).



Since the *-si* in *cwumusi-* cannot occupy an independent syntactic node, as discussed above, it should be located inside the final conjunct as in (10). Therefore, in a phrasal affixation analysis, it is predicted that the first conjunct cannot omit the honorific affix. However, the example in (9) demonstrates that this prediction is incorrect.

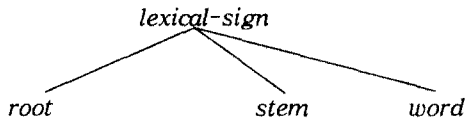
The observation above suggests that the partial distribution of the

honorific affix is not sufficiently explained by a phrasal affixation analysis. In the next section, instead, it will be proposed that the partial honorific agreement phenomenon results from both Korean morphological combination rules and a constructional constraint, which requires the sharing of honorific information between conjuncts.

3. Honorification in Type-hierarchical Approach

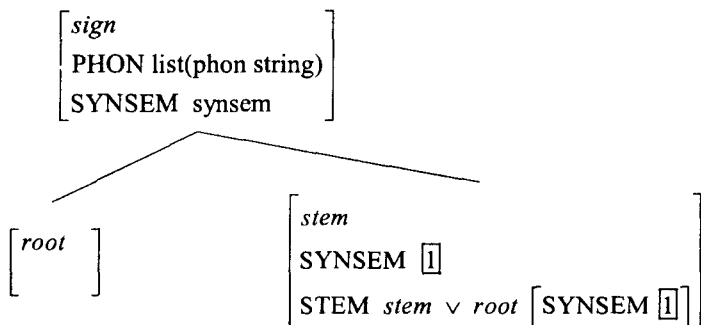
With respect to the Korean verbal inflection system, Kim (1994) suggests that *root* and *stem*, like *word* and *phrase*, are subsorts of *lexical sign* as illustrated in (11) (cf. Pollard and Sag 1994). In this type hierarchy, objects of *root* are basic lexical elements that do not include an inflectional morpheme. Objects of *stem* have word internal structure consisting of a root and inflectional affixes.

(11) Type hierarchy of *lexical-sign*



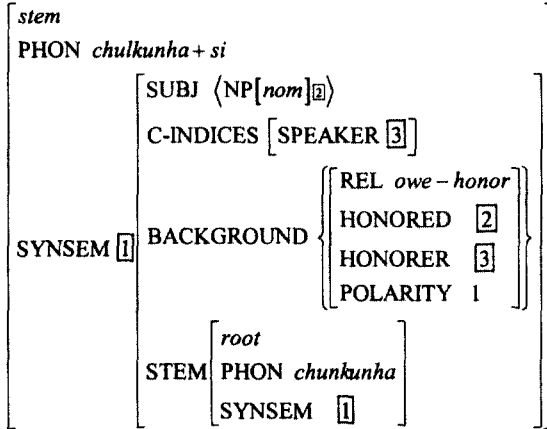
These definitions of *root* and *stem* can be captured by the sort declarations in (12). The feature structure of *sign* in (12) declares that objects of *sign* must have an attribute PHON whose value is the sort *list* and another attribute SYNSEM whose value is the sort *synsem* specifying syntactic and semantic information. The sorts *root* and *stem* are subsorts of *sign*, and they must inherit the feature declaration of *sign*. Objects of the sort *root* are basic morphological units that cannot be analyzed any further.

(12) The feature structure of sign



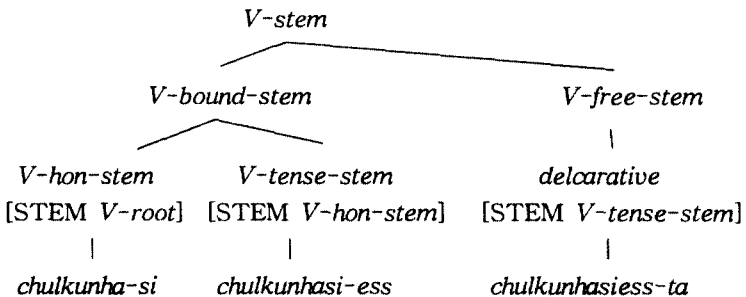
The feature structure of the sort *root* in (12) is declared to inherit every feature declaration from *sign*. Objects of the sort *stem* employ an additional attribute STEM whose value is of the sort *stem* or *root*. If the value of STEM is *stem*, then the feature structure specifies another internal morphological structure. If the value of STEM is *root*, then the feature structure does not specify any more internal morphological structure. One important constraint declared in (12) is that the SYNSEM value of stem is token-identical to that of *root* or internal *stem*. This means that inflectional affixation does not change any semantic or syntactic information of the host *stem* or *root* but encodes the syntactic and semantic information of the resulting form that is not specified in the host *stem* or *root*. For example, a verb *chulkunha-si-ess-ta* 'come-to-office-hon-past-decl' consists of a *root*, *chulkunha*, an honorific affix *-si*, and declarative morpheme *-ta*. Then, following the feature declaration of the *stem*, the verb stem *chulkunha-si* can be analyzed as in (13).

(13) The verb stem *chulkunha-si-* 'come.to.offic-hon-'



In the feature structure of (13), *chulkunha-si* as an object of *stem* shows internal morphological structure by using the feature STEM. STEM, in turn, takes *root* as its value. Then, the internal morphological structure is not analyzed any further because *root* is not equipped with any feature such as STEM. Based on Kim (1994), Korean *V(erb)-stem* can be defined as in (14).

(14) The type hierarchy of *V-stem*



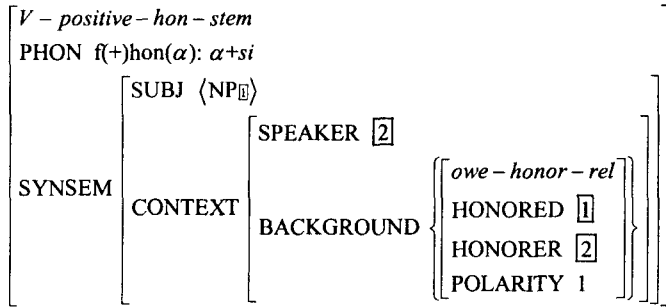
In (14), *V-stem* is partitioned into *V-bound-stem* and *V-free-stem*. An object of *V-bound-stem* cannot be a word without further affixation

whereas an object of *V-free-stem* can.

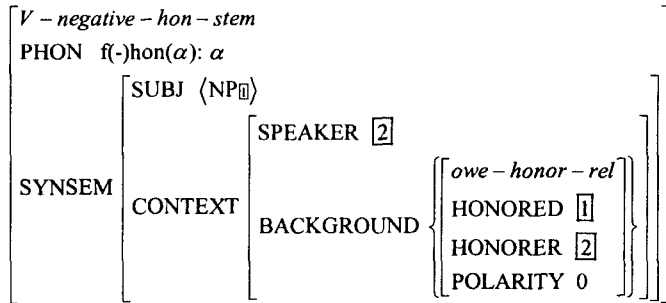
V-bound-stem is further partitioned into *V-hon-stem* and *V-tense-stem*. A constraint on *V-hon-stem* requires that its STEM value be a *V-root* as illustrated in the feature structure of (13).

As observed by Kim (1994), every tense-affixed stem is marked with honorification whether it has a positive or negative honorific value. Thus, a constraint on *V-tense-stem* specifies *V-hon-stem* as its STEM value. In addition, following Kim's sort hierarchy, *V-hon-stem* can be further partitioned into *positive-hon-stem* and *negative-hon-stem* as defined in (15). In (15a), when the PHON value including *-si* encodes *V-positive-hon-stem*, the verb has a BACKGROUND feature in which the owe-honor relation specifies POLARITY 1, indicating that the relation is realized between the honored and the honorer.

(15) a. *V-positive-hon-stem*



b. *V-negative-hon-stem*



On the other hand, when a verb does not have an honorific morpheme, its STEM attribute specifies *negative-hon-stem* as in (15b). Then the owe-honor relation in BACKGROUND of the CONTEXT feature will specify POLARITY 0, indicating that the *owe-honor-relation* is not realized between the honored and the honorer.

As discussed in section 1, the subject should share the information of the background *owe-honor-relation* with the verb. Thus, the feature structure of the subject also specifies an *owe-honor-relation* whose polarity is the same as that of the head verb.

4. Partial Honorification in a Type-hierarchical Approach

4.1. Type-hierarchical Approach and Partial Honorification

The *ko*-affixed conjunct in verbal coordination can omit tense as well as the honorific affix. The omission of inflectional morphemes can be explained by the feature declaration of *ko*-affixed conjunction words as shown in (16).

- (16) *ko*- affixed conjunct word
- $$\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{PHON } f_{-ko}(\alpha): \alpha + ko \\ \text{STEM } \left[\begin{array}{l} V\text{-bound-stem} \vee V\text{-root} \\ \text{PHON } \alpha \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

According to the feature declaration in (16), conjunction affix *-ko* must combine with an object of *V-bound-stem* or *V-root*. However, it cannot combine with an object of *V-free-stem*. Thus **chulkunhasiess-ta-ko* is impossible because *chulkunhasiess-ta* is an object of *V-free-stem*. The STEM value that is either *V-bound-stem* or *V-root* predicts the omission of inflectional morphemes as illustrated in (17).

- (17) a. V-root + *ko*: [chulkunha] + *ko* → partial honorific agreement
 b. V-hon-stem+*ko*: [chulkunha-si]+*ko* → tense omission
 c. V-tense-stem+*ko*: [chulkunhasi-ess]+*ko*

When the STEM value is *V-root*, the *ko*-affixed conjunction word omits an honorific affix and a tense affix, as illustrated in (17a). When the STEM value is *V-hon-stem*, the conjunct omits a tense affix as in (17b). When the STEM value is *V-tense-stem*, the conjunction word is morphologically full-fledged as in (17c). Thus, the constraint in (16) allows the *ko*-affixed conjunct to appear in morphological combinations as in (17).

As noted in Choi (1999), *ko*-affixed verbal coordination exhibits many properties that are distinct from other coordinate constructions. For instance, *ko*-affixed verbal coordinate construction does not belong to a non-headed symmetrical structure but to a headed structure⁴. The Head-Conjunct schema in (18) defines this syntactic property of *ko*-affixed verbal coordination.

(18) Head-Conjunct Schema⁵

$$[] \rightarrow \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{HEAD} \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{P.O.S } \alpha \\ \text{CONJ } \boxed{3} \end{array} \right] \\ \text{VALENCE } \boxed{2} \end{array} \right], \quad \boxed{3} \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{HEAD } \boxed{1} [\text{P.O.S } \alpha] \\ \text{VALENCE } \boxed{2} \end{array} \right]$$

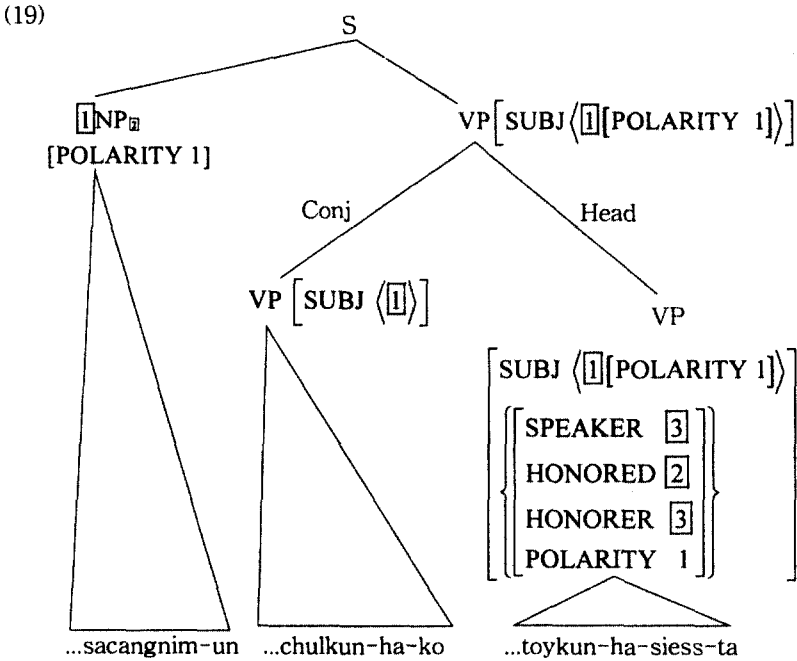
conjunct-daughter head-daughter

Most importantly, according to the Head-Conjunct schema, the two conjuncts in the construction must share their VALENCE feature.

4) Choi (1999) argues for the headed structure analysis of *ko*-affixed verbal coordination based on the evidence: first, the information of category only comes from the final conjunct; second, the partial distribution of the inflectional affixes can be only observed in the *ko*-affixed coordination. See also Cho (1995) for a discussion of this issue.

5) The Head-Conjunct schema in (18) does not require the sharing of CAT or HEAD value between conjuncts in contrast with Coordination Principle in Pollard and Sag (1994). However, the schema in (18) requires that each conjunct share the VALENCE and P.O.S (Part Of Speech: see Kim and Yang 2004) value. The sharing of unsaturated arguments between conjuncts are the inherent characteristics of coordinate constructions across languages. In addition, the conjunct daughter includes the feature CONJ, which specifies the *synsem* value of the head daughter with which the conjunct daughter combines. This additional apparatus enables us to capture the fact that a conjunct daughter combines with a limited kinds of head daughter. For example, *ko*-affixed verbal conjunct always combines with a tense-marked verbal head daughter.

Owing to this schema, the omission of verbal honorific affix *-si* in the conjunct-daughter (e.g. the sentence in (2)) is explained in the tree diagram (19).



The verb in the first conjunct in (19) can have two different morphological structures as in (19). That is, the verb in the first conjunct can be either unmarked with honorification or marked with negative honorification. Suppose conjunction morpheme *-ko* combines with *V-root* as in (19a). According to honorific agreement constraint in (15), a verb should specify the same owe-honor relation as that of its subject.

In (19), however, the first conjunct does not specify any honorific information because it does not subsume *V-hon-stem*. Thus, the first conjunct does not subcategorize for a subject that has any owe-honor relation. The verb in the final conjunct includes the honorific affix *-si*.

Consequently, the POLARITY of the owe-honor relation specified by the verb becomes 1, and the verb requires its subject to have the same owe-honor information. In (19), the two VP conjuncts should have the same subject. Although the first conjunct does not specify any honorific agreement with the subject, the coordinate construction in (19) does not violate any honorific agreement requirement and becomes felicitous. On the other hand, if the conjunct morpheme *-ko* combines with *V-negative-hon-stem* as in (20b), the sentence should be infelicitous because the subject subcategorized by the first conjunct and the subject subcategorized by the final conjunct specify different owe-honor relations.

- (20) a. [chulkunha *V-root*] - ko
 b. [chulkunha *V-negative-hon-stem*] - ko

However, when speakers encounter a coordinate construction as in (19), they do not consider the ungrammatical choice as in (20b), because the grammatical construction in (20a) exists, which has the same surface form as (20b).

One important assumption for the construction in (19) was that the non-final conjunct underspecifies the honorific relation in its BACKGROUND feature. This underspecification is due to a morphological combinatorial property of *ko*-affixed conjunct word. If a verb includes a tense morpheme, it always specifies some honorific relation in its BACKGROUND as declared in the sort hierarchy in (14). This fact is shown in the sentences in (21).

- (21) a. #Kim sacang-nim-un ilccik chulkun.ha-ko
 -president-Hon-Top early come.to.office.do-Conj
 ilccik toykun.ha-yess-ta.
 early leave.office.do-Pst-Decl
 'President Kim came to the office early and left early.'

- b. #Kim sacang-nim-un ilccik chulkun.ha-yess-ko
 -president-Hon-Top early come.to.office.do-Pst-Conj
 ilccik toykun.ha-si-ess-ta
 early leave.office.do-Hon-Pst-decl

In (21a), the verb in the final conjunct does not include any honorific affix though it has a tense morpheme. Since a tense morpheme always combines with a *V-hon-stem*, the verb in the final conjunct in (21a) includes a *V-negative-hon-stem*. However, the subject includes an honorific marker so that it specifies an *owe-honor-relation* whose polarity is 1. This mismatch of CONTEXT information between the subject and the verb explains why the sentence in (21a) is infelicitous. Likewise, the first conjunct in (21b) includes a tense morpheme. Thus it also includes a *V-neg-hon-stem*. According to the Head-Conjunct Schema in (18), each conjunct should have an identical VALENCE feature. However, in (21b) each conjunct specifies a different *owe-honor-relation*. Thus the sentence in (21b) is also infelicitous.

In sum, this proposed analysis explains partial honorific agreement based on the interaction of morphology, syntax and pragmatics without violating the Lexical Integrity Principle.

4.2. Idiosyncratic Honorific Word

In the previous section, it was suggested that honorific encoding occurs in *V-hon-stem* that has an internal morphological structure. However, the existence of idiosyncratic honorific words as in (22) forces the generalization to be revised.

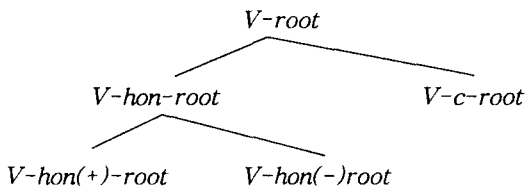
- (22) a. sensayng-nim-un ilccik ilena-ko
 teacher-Hon-Top early get.up-Conj
 ilccik cwumu.si-n-ta
 early sleep-Hon-Prs-Dec
 '(My) teacher gets up early and goes to bed early.

- b. *Sensayng-nim-un ilccik cwumu-ko
 teacher-Hon-Top early get.up-Conj
 ilccik ilena-si-n-ta
 early sleep-Hon-Prs-Dec

The ungrammaticality of (22b) shows that *cwumusi* cannot be separated into *-si* and *cwumu* in contrast with other normal *-si* affixed honorific words. In particular, the fact that *cwumu* without *-si* is not only infelicitous but ungrammatical provides a very important hint for the analysis of *cwumusi*. That is, *cwumusi* is an object of *V-root* and the minimal unit with which a conjunctive particle combines. To account for this observation, it is necessary to revise the sort hierarchy that I suggested in (14).

The first revision is that *root* is divided into *V-hon-root* and *V-c(ommon)-root*. *V-hon-root* is further divided into *V-hon(+)-root* and *V-hon(-)-root*, such that it encodes honorific information into the resulting word. This revision is illustrated in the sort hierarchy in (23). The objects of *V-hon(+)-root* such as *cwumusi* 'sleep(Hon)' and *capswusi* 'eat(Hon)' contain a *CONTEXT* feature in which the *owe-honor-relation* becomes polarity 1. On the other hand, the objects of *V-hon(-)-root* such as *ca-* 'sleep(negative Hon)' and *mek-* 'eat(negative Hon)' contain a *CONTEXT* feature in which the *owe-honor-relation* becomes polarity 0. In addition, the feature declaration of *V-hon-stem* should be revised.

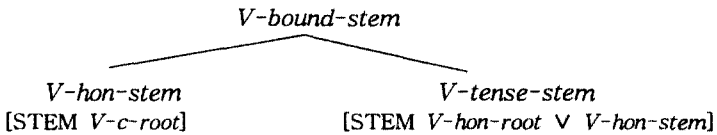
(23)



Otherwise, we cannot block the occurrence of ungrammatical morphological combination such as **cwumusi-si* and **mek-usi*.

According to the No Vacuous Affixation Principle by Marantz (1984), any affixation that results in the overlapping of information is prohibited. Under this approach, the same effect can be drawn from the feature declarations of *V-bound-stem* as shown in (24).

(24)



The STEM value of *V-hon-stem* is *V-c-root*. Because *cwumusi-* and *mek-* belong to *V-hon-root*, they cannot be the STEM values of the objects of *V-hon-stem*. As a result, in this morphological system, ungrammatical combinations such as *cwumusi-si* and *mek-usi-* cannot be generated.

To sum up, the partial honorification in (22a) is explained by the same mechanism as that in (19). However, the honorific information of the verb *cwumusi-* is encoded inside *root*. Since the minimal unit with which the conjunctive particle *ko* combines is *V-root*, *si* in *cwumusi* cannot be omitted in the non-final conjunct in verbal coordination, in contrast with the honorific affix in *V-hon-stem*.

5. Conclusion

In this paper I have shown that the partial distribution of an honorific morpheme can be best analyzed by type-hierarchical morphology. Based on the type hierarchy, the optional occurrence of the honorific morpheme *-si* is due to the morphological combination of *ko*-affixed conjunct words. In addition, the constructional constraint of Head-Conjunct schema explains honorific agreement in the case of the partial distribution of the honorific morpheme *-si*. Finally, idiosyncratic behaviors of the honorific word *cwumusita* 'sleep(Hon)' and the non-honorific word *mekta* 'eat(Hon)' are explained by a dual honorific marking system: feature

specification of *root* and honorific affixation in *V-hon-stem*. Particularly, while based on the interaction of morphology, syntax and pragmatics, this approach maintains the Lexical Integrity Principle: "the syntax neither manipulates nor has access to the internal form of words" (Anderson 1992: 84).

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Received: 10 Máy, 2004

Revised: 2 Jun, 2004

Accepted: 11 Jun, 2004