

Lexical Integrity and Suspended Affixation in Two Types of Denominal Predicates in Korean  
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Central to the debate on the demarcation of morphology and syntax is the position staked out by the Lexicalist Hypothesis, which holds that morphology and syntax are distinct systems which interface with each other in an asymmetric way, where the outputs of morphology are the inputs to syntax and the internal composition of morphologically complex words is opaque to syntactic rules.

Proponents of the Lexical Hypothesis point to a suite of diagnostics collectively known as Lexical Integrity tests (Bresnan and Mchombo 1995) as evidence pointing to the fundamental difference between morphology and syntax. Suspended Affixation is one of the several diagnostics of Lexical Integrity. Much of the earlier debate on the viability of Lexical Integrity in Korean/Japanese inflection has utilized this key diagnostic (Yoon 1994, 1997; Takano 1994, etc.). Possibility of Suspended Affixation, along with violability of other Lexical Integrity diagnostics, has constituted the cornerstone of the argument that the boundary between morphology and syntax is much more transparent than envisaged under the Lexicalist Hypothesis.

A dominant strand of thinking on morphology these days is that morphology and syntax constitute a unified rule system (as in Distributed Morphology). If such a view is correct, we would expect the facts of Lexical Integrity to take center stage again in arguments for or against the viability of the proposed framework. However, it is surprising that Lexical Integrity has not played a significant role in arguments for DM (Lieber and Scalise 2007), especially when we consider the fact that earlier arguments for theories of unified morphosyntax clearly recognized the importance of these facts, recruiting them as evidence in favor of the blurred boundary of morphology and syntax (Baker 1988).

The purpose of this talk is to examine the viability of Lexical Integrity in the derivational morphology of Korean, since much previous work in favor of unified morphosyntax was based on inflectional morphology. There are two types of denominal predicates in Korean, which are distinguished by the fact that the full suite of Lexical Integrity tests is observed in one but not the other class of denominal predicate. After showing that a classic lexicalist approach invoking the affix-clitic distinction does not work, I explore how the behavior of the two classes of denominal predicates can be modeled using the theoretical and empirical machinery of current DM--in particular, the distinction between syntactically inert Roots and Words and different mechanisms for forming complex heads--provides a possible avenue of modeling the distinct properties of two classes of predicates.

While the resources within DM allow us to model the distinct properties of the two classes of denominal predicates, the problem is that DM predicts far more languages should behave like Korean in allowing massive violations of Lexical Integrity for post-syntactically formed complex heads. The challenge for a theory like DM is to come up with a principled reason as to why these straightforward predictions are not borne out.