

COMMENTS on Cook

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Professor Cook proposes to treat phonologically irregular morphemes (the so-called *p*-anomalous and *t*-anomalous predicates) like *tep-* ‘be hot’, *ket-* ‘to walk’, etc., not as *tep-* plus a morphological feature stating that the stem final *p* changes to *w* before a vowel (traditional morphological treatment), nor as *tew-* plus an already existent phonological rule, i.e., the unrelease or implosion rule, that changes *w* to *p* in front of a consonant (more recent phonological treatment), but as *tewp-* which is then realized either as *tep-* (by consonant cluster simplification rule) or as *tew-* (via a rule that Prof. Cook fails to mention in his paper). Professor Cook claims that the underlying representation of the form *tewp-* ‘be hot’, *kowp-* ‘be pretty’, etc. is more explanatory than the traditional or more recent treatments because (1) it explains the source of the vowel length in the final vowel of the stems of *p*-irregular predicates, and (2) it explains optional pronunciation of the form [təup-] (i.e., *w* vocalizes to [u]). Prof. Cook’s observation that the final stem vowel of *p*-irregular predicates is long is quite instructive and worth examining further. But whether the source of this long vowel should be represented as *Vw* is another matter that is not altogether so obvious. Even if one grants that in many languages, glides and liquids are often sources of vowel lengthening by assimilating to the adjacent vowel, this fact alone does not warrant specification of a long vowel in Korean as *Vw* or *Vl*. It is true that in Korean we find many examples of *Vu* alternating with a long vowel, e.g., *kaul-kaal* ‘autumn’, *taum-taam* ‘next’, *cheum-cheem* ‘at first’, etc. But no alternation between *Vw* and *VV* is found, cf. *tewi-teei* ‘warmth’, *paywe-paaye* ‘learn’, etc. Representing vowel length with a postvocalic *l* is less convincing. Even in the case of *l*-dropping verbs where the stem-final *l* is deleted before *n*, *p*, and *s* (the so-called *l*-anomalous predicates), the short stem vowel is never compensatorily lengthened, e.g., *phal-ta* ‘to sell’, *pha-ni*, *pha-so*, *phapnita*, etc. As for Prof. Cook’s argument that *w* also serves as the source of *u* (in addition to being the source of the vowel length) in sometimes heard pronunciation of the form [təup-], [koup-], etc., it is not entirely clear if the source of *u* in [təup-], [koup-], etc. is *w*. It seems that an analogical process of either of the following should explain this apparently excrescent *u*:(i) a

historical weakening and eventual deletion of intervocalic *g* where the vowel following *g* is *u*, as in *maygub- > mayrub- > mayuḅ- > mayp-* 'be hot (in taste)', (ii) mistaking *teu-*, *kou-*, etc. as the stems from such forms as *teun* (= *tew + in*), *koun* (= *kow + in*), etc. in analogy with such forms as *payu-n* 'learned', *kkayu-n* 'waken', etc. Furthermore, how shall we treat the final stem vowels of *p*-irregular predicates which are apparently always short, e.g., *chwup-* 'be cold', *alumtap-* 'be beautiful', *selep-* 'be sad', *mwup-* 'to lie down', *wusup-* 'be funny', etc.? what about the verbs whose stem vowel is always long, e.g., *kōp-ta* 'pretty', *kōw-a*, *kōw-un*, etc.? How are these going to be treated? Professor Cook does not raise these questions, nor does he mention how the prevocalic *p* of *wḅ* is to be deleted from *tewḅ-e*, *tewḅ-i*, *kowḅ-ase*, etc. to give *tewe*, *tewi*, *kowase*, etc. (A preconsonantal *p* as in *tewḅ-ta*, *kowḅ-ko*, etc. is deleted by a cluster simplification rule that simplifies triconsonantal clusters in such words as *eps-ta*, 'there is not', *ilk-ta*, 'to read', *palp-ta*, 'to step on', etc. to give *ep-ta*, *ik-ta*, *pap-ta* or *pal-ta* etc.)

In the like manner, Professor Cook proposes *kelt-* as the underlying form of a *t*-irregular predicate *ket-* 'to walk'. Like *w*, *l* is said to be the source of the length in the final stem vowel, and we are told that we get *kele* from *kelt-e* just as we get *sule* from *sulph-e* 'sad'! Professor Cook does not explain why we do not get at all *kelte* à la *sulph-e*, or *kel-ta* (= *ket-ta*) à la *ccal-ta* (from *ccalp-ta*) 'be short', but merely states, interestingly but unconvincingly, that the existence of the syllable-final consonant cluster *lth* as in *halth-* 'to lick' "presupposes" the (abstract) existence of the less marked cluster *lt*.

What Prof. Cook has done amounts to a proposal that when two or more morphophonemic alternants appear on surface, we enumerate both (or all) in the underlying representation. That is, since in *p*-irregular predicates, the stem-final consonant sometimes surfaces as *p* (*tep-ta*) but sometimes as *w* (*tewi*), we should postulate *wḅ* in the underlying form, i.e., *tewḅ-*, and since in *t*-irregular predicates, the stem-final consonant is sometimes realized as *l* (*kele*) but sometimes as *t* (*ket-ko*), we should list both in the underlying form, i.e., *kelt-*. One will then have phonological rules whose function is to choose an appropriate segment in an appropriate environment, and if any of these rules happens to be identical in form to an already existing rule in the language (e.g., cluster simplification), then so much the better. Presumably, this proposal is addressed to only those cases involving phonologically unpredictable but morphologically conditioned alternants. (Otherwise, one would have, for a word like *kkuth* 'the end', and absurd underlying representation /*kkutnthkmch*/ for it is pronounced variously as [*kkit*], [*kkin-na*], [*kkith-e*],

[kki̯k-kkaji], [kkim-man], [kkich-i], etc.) This is a new theory of phonological exceptions. Merits and implicatons of this theory relative to a more traditional one that handles such exceptions via morphological features should be seriously investigated. I refrain from doing so here due to lack of both time and space.

In sum, I have found Professor Cook's paper very interesting and stimulating, and I am certain that his paper will trigger a serious reexamination of irregular predicates in Korean. Already, two such studies have been done. One by Kee-dong Lee ("On the so-called *s*-irregular and *t*-irregular verbs in Korean") should appear in the recent issue of *Working Papers in Linguistics* of the University of Hawaii, and the other by Young-key Kim-Renaud ("'Irregular' verbs in Korean revisited"), in the forthcoming issue of *Language Research*.