Monosyllabic Affective Hypocoristics of Korean Names: Formation and Segmental Alternation

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Abstract

In this paper, I investigate the formation and phonological alternations of Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics that are used without a vocative marker. Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics are the result of truncation and merging. The study showed that the inclination to keep the second syllable is more pronounced in truncated forms. The most common type of merging is ‘onset of 1st syllable + rhyme of 2nd syllable’. This illustrates the symmetrical base anchoring template, in which the template’s edges are anchored to the base’s right and left edges. The phonological alternations that Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics go through include tensification of obstruents, stopping of plain fricative or affricate, nasal velarization, nasal insertion, vowel rounding, vowel simplification, and palatal glide insertion before a vowel. Consonantal alternations over vocalic alternations seem to be preferred. All of the segmental alternations are present in the Aegyo speech register.

Keywords: hypocoristic, Korea, given name, edge anchoring, sound symbolism, phonology

1. Introduction

As informal alternatives for personal names, nicknames are widely used. A hypocoristic is a nickname that is a single-word form (e.g., Chris for Christine, Abby for Abigail, Dutch for Holland, and Red for a red-haired person). Hypocoristics are limited in length, only being monosyllabic or disyllabic (Kennedy and Zamuner 2006). Hypocoristics can be internally derived from formal personal names (e.g., Chris and Abby) or externally derived (e.g., Dutch and Red) (Kennedy 2015). This study investigates the monosyllabic hypocoristics of Korean given names that are derived internally. Korean personal names are typically three syllables long, with two syllables for given names and one syllable for family names (Kawahara and Lee 2018; Kang 2013; Kim 2005). Most Korean names are Sino-Korean and for those Sino-Korean names, each syllable in a Korean name is a morpheme, which is represented by a Sino-Korean character. Because most Korean given names are disyllabic, their shorter hypocoristic variant is monosyllabic.

Previous studies have focused on Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics in address forms, in combination with a vocative marker -a or –ja (Kawahara and Lee 2018; Wi 2012; Kang 2013; Kim 2005). The vocative hypocoristics are typically used in families or intimate relationships to convey affection and positive feelings to the referee, as well as a degree of familiarity (Kawahara and Lee 2018; Kang 2013; de Klerk and Bosch 1996; Phillips 1990). These vocative hypocoristics are characterized by the lack of phonological change in a chosen single syllable. The structure of the preceding hypocoristics determines the form of a vocative marker. If a hypocoristic ends in a vowel, a vocative marker with a palatal glide –ja is added to avoid a hiatus, as in (1). For the Korean examples in this paper, IPA transcription is used. The syllable boundaries are indicated by a dot.

(1)  

toŋ.hi 동희 → toŋ-a 동아
min.su 민수 → min-a 민아
toŋ.ho 동호 → ho-ja 호야
min.su 민수 → su-ja 수야

Another kind of Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics can be used in isolation without vocative markers. Monosyllabic hypocoristics of this type are frequently seen in nicknames for couples (in other words, ‘coupling’ names). Unlike English coupling names created by blending (e.g., Brangelina = Brad + Angelina), Korean coupling names are created by joining two monosyllabic hypocoristics. As illustrated in (2), this kind of monosyllabic hypocoristics can include formation processes other than choosing a syllable and segmental alternations.

(2)  

toŋ.hi 토니 + u.hjak 우혁 → toŋ.hjak 톤혁
e.rik 예릭 + hj.e.sang 혜성 → rik.sjæŋ 릭성
hjo.ri 효리 + ju.ri 유리 → hjol.jul 홀율
The current study focuses on this kind of Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics. The goal of this study is to investigate how the monosyllabic hypocoristics form and how they alternate segments. It examines a total of 211 Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics for a total of 178 given names. All data is presented in written form. One writing unit in the Korean writing system, Hangul, is a single syllable. Korean is an alphabetic syllabary in which blocks corresponding to syllables are created by combining symbols representing phonemes (Taylor 1980). As a result, every “one-letter moniker” is monosyllabic.

The data for Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics was taken from online sources titled “a one-letter nickname for my friend or lover”, with a focus on Facebook groups aimed at people in their 20s, such as (1) ‘What are people in their 20s doing? (20대 뭐 하지?)’; (2) ‘dating courses’ (데이트코스); and (3) ‘the off-campus world’ (아웃캠퍼스). A few monosyllabic celebrity nicknames that were frequently found on the internet were also added.2

This paper is structured as follows. In section 2, the formation types of monosyllabic hypocoristic are classified. In section 3, the patterns of segmental alternations observed in the monosyllabic hypocoristics are shown. Section 4 addresses the templatic parameters that contribute to the formation process as well as the similarities between the phonological changes in the monosyllabic hypocoristics and Aegyo register. Section 5 concludes.

2. Formation of Korean Monosyllabic Hypocoristics

Two procedures produce Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics that can be utilized alone: truncation and merging. Truncation refers to the entire realization of a single syllable of the target given name, whereas merging comprises parts of both of the target name’s two syllables. This section examines the patterns of truncation and merging in the formation of monosyllabic hypocoristics in Korean.

2.1 Truncation

2.1.1 Second Syllable Truncation

The first syllable of the target’s original given name can be preserved while the second syllable is truncated. The observed pattern can be separated into two main groups, which is a feature of the initial syllable that remains in the truncated hypocoristic forms. In the first pattern, the first syllable of the original name has a nasal coda, as in (3).

(3) kjʌŋ.a 경야 → kjʌŋ 경
san.ho 선호 → s'ʌn 선
tcʌŋ.jʌn 정연 → t's'ʌŋ 정
sin.hiɨ 신희 → t'in 신
sɨŋ.a 승아 → t'ɨŋ 승
mɨn.sʌ 민서, mɨn.a 민아 → mɨŋ 민
In the second pattern, the first syllable with no coda remains in monosyllabic hypocoristics, as in (4).

(4) po.mi 보미  \rightarrow  p'o 뽀
sa.hwi 서휘  \rightarrow  s'ʌ 써
so.hwi 소희  \rightarrow  s'ɔ 쓰
tɕe.hwi 재희  \rightarrow  tɕ'ɛ 채

Except for one case, kjaŋ for kjaŋ.a in (3), hypocoristics caused by the truncation of the second syllable include segmental alternations. Tensification (san of san.ho becomes s'an or po of po.mi becomes p'o), velarization of nasal coda (min of min.a becomes miŋ), insertion of a palatal glide (tɕeŋ of tɕeŋ.jan becomes tɕ'jʌŋ), and stopping of a fricative 's' (siŋ of siŋ.a becomes t'ŋ) are examples of segmental alternations found in (3) and (4). Due to segmental alternations, the hypocoristic forms of second syllable truncation with the same first syllable are frequently different. Because section 3 will describe segmental alternations and provide a complete list of segmental alternations, I will not address types of segmental alternations in the remainder of this section.

2.1.2 Initial Syllable Truncation

The first syllable of the target’s given name can be truncated while the second syllable is maintained. The second syllable, which stays in the truncated hypocoristic forms, is what allows the observed pattern to be divided into three major groups. In the first group, the second syllable of the original name has an obstruent onset consonant, as in (5).

(5) ki.pam 기범  \rightarrow  pam 범
saŋ.sik 성식  \rightarrow  sik 식
jan.tɕu 연주  \rightarrow  tɕ'u 쥬
hje.san 해성, hi.jo san 효성  \rightarrow  sjan 성

In the second group, the onset consonant of the second syllable of the original name is /h/, as in (6). The /h/ sound of Korean is realized very weakly and often sounds like there is no /h/ sound at all (Ku 1999; Shin 2003). For this reason, /h/ is not included in the set of obstruent onsets.

(6) tɕeŋ.hak 채학  \rightarrow  hak 학
u.hjaŋ 우혁, si.hjaŋ 시혁  \rightarrow  hjak 혁
saŋ.hun 성훈, hjang.hun 형훈  \rightarrow  hun 휘

In the third group, the remaining second syllable has a nasal /m/ or approximants /l, j (a palatal glide)/ as an onset consonant, as in (7).

(7) tɕaŋ.min 창민  \rightarrow  min 민
ui.jal 의열  \rightarrow  jal 얼
ceŋ.jun 정윤  \rightarrow  juŋ 용
je.rim 예림, hi.ja rim 하림  \rightarrow  rim 림

2.1.3 Summary of Truncation

Table 1 summarizes the truncation pattern. In the data given, initial syllable truncations were more common than second syllable truncations. In the case of a name that has a nasal coda in the first syllable and also has the obstruent onset in the second syllable, both truncation patterns were found (e.g., min.su becomes miŋ by the second syllable truncation and becomes s'u and t'u by the initial syllable truncation).
Table 1: Truncation in the Formation of Korean Monosyllabic Hypocoristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truncation Type</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second syllable truncation</td>
<td>Nasal coda in the first syllable</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No coda in the first syllable</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial syllable truncation</td>
<td>Obstruent onset in the second syllable</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/h/ onset in the second syllable</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/m, l, y/ onset in the second syllable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Merging

2.2.1 1st Syllable + Onset of 2nd Syllable

The first syllable and the onset consonant of the second syllable of the target given name can be merged into a single syllable. Examples in (8) demonstrate that the merging may take place when the second syllable of the original name has nasal or liquid onsets.

(8) tu.na 두나 → tun 툰
     nu.ri 누리 → nul 놀
     tʰɛ.min 태민 → tʰem 템

In addition, the obstruent or /h/ onset consonant of the second syllable might merge with the first syllable, as in (9) and (10). Since in spoken Korean, /s, tɕ, h/ are realized as [t] in coda position, the written forms of hypocoristics are aids to indicate which onset consonants were in the second syllable of the original name.

(9) ta.pin 다빈 → tap 답
     tɕi.su 지수 → tɕis 짭
     hje.su 혜수 → hjes 혜
     su.tɕi 수지 → sutɕ 숭
     je.tɕi 예지, je.tɕi 예진 → jetc 엥

(10) tɕɛ.hɥ 재희 → tɕɛh 쩜
     tɕi.hɥ 지희 → tɕih 쩜

Most of the names participating in merging have the first syllable open with no coda. Examples in (11) are the two cases where the first syllable is closed. In Korean, the coda cluster /ntɕ/ only appears in inflected forms or compounds based on the verbs antɕ- 안- ‘sit’ and antɕ- 안- ‘put on’. Verbal stems cannot be used by themselves in Korean. Moreover, the coda cluster /ntɕ/ is phonetically realized as [n] due to the absence of a subsequent vowel in (11). This suggests that the written forms of hypocoristics in (11) also serve as indicators of onset consonants of the second syllable in the original name.

(11) min.tɕi 민지 → mintɕ 임
     jan.tɕu 연주 → jantɕ 임

2.2.2 1st Syllable + Coda of 2nd Syllable

The first syllable and a coda consonant of the second syllable of the target’s given name can be merged into monosyllabic hypocoristics. Of the majority of cases of this sort of merging, the second syllable in the original name lacks an onset, as in (12).
Two cases of this merging type have the onset consonant in the first syllable of the original name. The two cases have /h/ onsets, as in (13).

(13)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Name</th>
<th>Hypocoristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>태현</td>
<td>택현</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>소현</td>
<td>소현</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.3 1st Syllable + Rhyme of 2nd Syllable

To construct monosyllabic hypocoristics, the first syllable of the target’s given name can be combined with the rhyme of the second syllable. Onglide vocalic structures are formed as a result of merging two vowels. The majority of these cases have no or /h/ onset in the second syllable, as in (14) and (15).

(14)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Name</th>
<th>Hypocoristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>지우</td>
<td>쟜우</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>기욱</td>
<td>기욱</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>수아</td>
<td>수아</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>주안</td>
<td>주안</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(15)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Name</th>
<th>Hypocoristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>지호</td>
<td>쟜호</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>지환</td>
<td>지환</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>기훈</td>
<td>기훈</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>주희</td>
<td>주희</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although it is uncommon, this form of merging is also possible when the second syllable of the original given name has onset, as in (16).

(16)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Name</th>
<th>Hypocoristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>수성</td>
<td>쇼성</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.4 1st Syllable + Onset and Coda of 2nd Syllable

The first syllable of the original given name can be joined with both the onset and coda consonants of the second syllable to form monosyllabic hypocoristics. All of these merging cases have a liquid onset and a bilabial nasal coda in the second syllable, as in (17). The generated coda cluster rm is pronounced [m], but younger Korean speakers can pronounce both segments of the cluster due to the high impact of English.

(17)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Name</th>
<th>Hypocoristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>아름</td>
<td>어름</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>예림</td>
<td>예림</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>채림</td>
<td>채림</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>헤림</td>
<td>헤림</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2.5 Onset of 1st Syllable + Rhyme of 2nd Syllable

Some monosyllabic hypocoristics are generated by merging the first syllable’s onset consonant with the rhyme of the second syllable of the target given name. In every case in (18), the second syllable of the target’s given name lacks an onset and contains a pre-vocalic glide.

(18) tɕi.je 지예 → tɕe 제
ka.jan 기연 → kjan 견
hui.jun 희운 → hjun 흔
tʰe.jon 태용 → tʰjon 통
to.wan 도원 → twan 훨

When the second syllable has an onset of /h/, the onset of the first syllable can be merged with the rhyme of the second syllable, as shown in (19).

(19) mi.hje 미혜 → mje 메
si.hjak 시혁 → sjak 석
su.hwan 수환 → s’wan 현
tɕu.ho 주호 → tɕ’ho 죽

2.2.6 Coda of 1st Syllable + Rhyme of 2nd Syllable

Monosyllabic hypocoristics can be created by combining the first syllable’s coda consonant with the rhyme of the second syllable of the original name. They all feature a nasal coda in the first syllable of the target’s given name, as in (20).

(20) min.uk 민욱 → nuk 녱
min.jul 민율 → njul 논
in.hje 은혜 → nje 네
min.jʌ 민영, tɕin.jʌ 진영, in.jʌ 은영 → njʌ 냥

2.2.7 Summary of Merging

Table 2 summarizes the merging pattern. In merging to form monosyllabic hypocoristics, the first syllable of the original name frequently remains whole. The most frequent type is the merging of the onset of the first syllable and the rhyme of the second syllable.

**Table 2: Merging in the Formation of Korean Monosyllabic Hypocoristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Merging Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first syllable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Onset of the second syllable</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Coda of the second syllable</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Rhyme of the second syllable</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Onset and coda of the second syllable</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onset of the first syllable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Rhyme of the second syllable</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda of the second syllable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Rhyme of the second syllable</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Segmental Alternation in Korean Monosyllabic Hypocoristics

This section describes the several forms of segmental alternations that occur in Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics. Both truncated and merged monosyllabic hypocoristics can have segmental alternations.

3.1 Consonantal Change

3.1.1 Tensification

Korean has the laryngeal contrasts of obstruent consonants (e.g., plain /p, t, k, s, tc/, tensed /p', t', k', s', tc'/, and aspirated /pʰ, tʰ, kʰ, tcʰ/). There are no tensed consonants in any of the original Korean names in the dataset. However, tensed consonants are frequently observed in Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics. The examples in (21) illustrate that any plain obstruent can be tensified in monosyllabic hypocoristics. The tensed affricate /tɕ'/ is the most frequently observed in the dataset.

(21) po.mi 보미 → p'o 뽀
    je.pin 예빈 → p'in 뻬
    toŋ.hwan 동환 → t'on 동
    to.il 도일 → t'ol 돌
    kjʌŋ.a 경아 → k'jʌŋ 경
    tɕin.ku 진구 → k'u 구
    sa.hi서희 → s'ʌ 쌓
    su.pin 수빈 → s'up 쌓
    su.tɕin 수진 → t'ɕin 찐
    sʌŋ.tɕun 성준 → t'ɕun 찐

3.1.2 Nasal Velarization

In some monosyllabic hypocoristics, the alveolar nasal /n/ in coda position becomes the velar nasal /ŋ/, as in (22). Velar nasal codas are common in Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics (66 out of 211).

(22) mi.tɕin 미진 → tɕiŋ 정
    min.sʌ 민서 → miŋ 명
    ha.in 하은 → haŋ 헉
    siŋ.hun 승훈 → s'ʌŋ 쌓
    mi.hiʌn 미현 → m'ʌŋ 명
    jun.tɕi 윤지, tɕʌŋ.jun 정윤 → juŋ 응

3.1.3 Stopping

In the formation of monosyllabic hypocoristics, the plain fricative /s/ and affricate /tɕ/ in the original name can become alveolar stops /t, t'/, as in (23). In the given dataset, all stopping cases of fricatives undergo tensification.
3.1.4 Nasal Insertion

In monosyllabic hypocoristics, inserted nasal consonants are observed both in onset and coda positions. The only occurrence of nasal onset insertion is presented in (24). A tautosyllabic sequence of /nj/ created by nasal insertion in (24) is not found in any original names.

(24) ju.na 유나 → njun 료

In all cases of nasal coda insertion, the inserted nasal is velar, as in (25).

(25) tɕi.hje 지혜 → tɕeŋ 쯔, tɕeŋ 쯔

3.2 Vocalic Change

3.2.1 Palatal Glide Insertion

The insertion of the palatal glide /j/ before a vowel, as in (26), is the most common vocalic change in monosyllabic hypocoristics. The sequence /je/ in (26) does not exist in any original name.

(26) min.tɕε 민재 → tɕe 재
    se.jαŋ 세영 → sjεŋ 생
    sαŋ.huí 성희 → sjαŋ 생
    tɕαŋ.jαŋ 정연 → tɕαŋ 정
    so.hjαŋ 소현 → sjon 손
    to.jun 도윤 → tjon 돈
    huí.su 희수 → sju 슈
    tɕu.in 주은 → tjun 준

3.2.2 Vowel Simplification

The deletion of a glide in on-glide vocalic formations (e.g., /je, wa, u/ become /e, a, i/) is referred to as vowel simplification here. As shown in (27), monosyllabic hypocoristics demonstrate vowel simplification. The change of /je/ to [e] in the first two cases of (27) is so common that it is described in the Korean Standard Language Regulation’s Part 2, Chapter 2, Paragraph 5-2: /je/ not in ‘je (with no onset), rje’ may also be pronounced as [e]. In the last two cases, glide formations by merging two vowels additionally occur.

(27) sin.huí 신희 → t’iŋ 민
    sιŋ.huí 승희 → t’ŋ 동
    su.pin 수빈 → t’ʌŋ 둘
    min.su 민수 → t’u 두
    in.san 은선 → t’ʌn 민
    tɕi.jαŋ 지연 → tjαŋ 덩
    tɕi.jαŋ 지영 → tjαŋ 덩
    su.tɕ 수지 → sut 슥
3.2.3 Vowel Rounding
The dataset contains monosyllabic hypocoristics in which the original vowels are rounded. The original vowel in each case was the onglide central mid vowel /jʌ/ and the rounded vowel was /jo/, and a velar coda /ŋ/ appear in all of the cases, as in (28).

(28) min.kjʌŋ 미경 → (kjʌŋ 경) kjoŋ 공
mi.jʌŋ 미영, min.jʌŋ 민영 → (mjʌŋ 명) mjoŋ 용

3.2.4 Onglide Vowel Coalescence
Coalescence is a phonological change that occurs in onglide vowel sequences. As in (29), the onglide vocalic construction /jʌ/ becomes /ɛ/. Coalescence is referred to as a form of vowel simplification in Korean (Lee 1954; Lee 2004).

(29) ju.kjʌŋ 유경, tɕu.kjʌŋ 주경 → (kjʌŋ 경) kɛŋ

3.3 Syllabic Change: Reduplication
A syllable is replicated in the dataset just once, as in (30). This example is not monosyllabic in terms of syllable count. However, before reduplication, a single syllable is chosen in the hypocoristics production process.

(30) kaŋ.tɛ 강태 → tɛ.tɛ 태태

3.4 Summary of Phonological Alternation
Table 3 summarizes phonological alternation patterns observed in Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics. Compared to vocalic alternations, consonantal alternations are more frequent. Concurrent consonantal and vocalic alternations are possible, as well as multiple consonantal changes. Most consonantal alternations can be attributed to tensification. Most vocalic alternations result from palatal glide insertion.

| Table 3: Phonological Alternations in Korean Monosyllabic Hypocoristics |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------|
| Type                        | Alternation      | Count |
| Consonantal change          | Tensification    | 58    |
|                             | Nasal velarization| 18    |
|                             | Stopping         | 8     |
|                             | Nasal insertion  | 2     |
| Vocalic change              | Palatal glide insertion | 15    |
|                             | Vowel simplification | 5     |
|                             | Vowel rounding   | 3     |
|                             | Onglide vowel coalescence | 2     |
| Syllabic change             | Reduplication    | 1     |
4. Discussion

4.1 Formation of Korean Monosyllabic Hypocoristics

The creation of hypocoristics varies from language to language and even within a single language. Bat-El (2014, 197–198) summarizes the cross-linguistic parameters in the formation of templatic hypocoristics, as in (31).

(31) Parameters in the formation of templatic hypocoristics
a. The Foot Parameter
   The hypocoristic fits into <a syllabic foot> or <a moratic foot>.
b. The Right-Edge Parameter
   The segment at the right edge of the hypocoristic corresponds to <a segment at the right edge of a suffix> or <a segment of the base>.
c. The Left-Edge Parameter
   The left edge of the hypocoristic anchors with the left edge of <the base> or <the base’s strong foot>.

In this paper, I focus on Korean hypocoristics that fit into a monosyllabic template. In Korean, I found both the right- and left base-anchoring hypocoristics using the identical foot parameter, as shown in table 1. In addition, as shown in table 4’s ‘Both edges’ column, there are hypocoristics whose right and left edges both anchor with the corresponding edges of the base.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monosyllabic</th>
<th>Base-anchoring</th>
<th>Both Edges (90)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Left-Edge (69)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right-Edge (53)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kjaŋ.a</td>
<td>kjaŋ (27)</td>
<td>ta.in → tan (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ju.na</td>
<td>jun (41)</td>
<td>tci.un → tjuŋ (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>min.uk → nuk (7)</td>
<td>a.rim → arm (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kj.aŋ (46)</td>
<td>kaj.an → kjaŋ (46)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number in parentheses following the examples in table 4 represents the number of Korean hypocoristics of the same type. The left-edge base-anchoring monosyllabic hypocoristics are created by the second syllable truncation and the merge of the first syllable and onset of the second syllable. The right-edge base-anchoring monosyllabic hypocoristics are created by the initial syllable truncation and the merge of the coda in the first syllable and the rhyme of the second syllable. The largest proportion of the formation process of the Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics involves anchoring of both edges (90 cases): merging the first syllable with the coda of the second syllable, or with both the onset and the coda of the second syllable; and merging the onset of the first syllable with the rhyme of the second syllable.

In the study of name truncation in Korean, Kang (2013) illustrates that di-syllabic truncated names can keep the initial and final syllables of the original full name while skipping the middle syllable (e.g., kwʌn.jong.te śc 권용재 → kwʌn.te śc 권재). The truncation pattern, according to Kang (2013), is the outcome of a symmetrical anchoring requirement on both sides of the base. In her research of blending in Korean, Kang (2013) also argues for the symmetrical condition on edges. The current study indicates that the symmetrical anchoring requirement is also effective in the formation of Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics.

4.2 Segmental Alternation in Korean Monosyllabic Hypocoristics

Phonological alternations observed in Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics seem to be very complex and diverse at first glance. All of these changes, however, can be explained as phonological strategies employed in Aegyo expressions. Aegyo is the baby-talk register of Korean used by adult speakers to convey affection, positive feelings, and familiarity to the referee or listener when communicating with someone in an intimate
relationship. Hypocoristics for very close friends and lovers, which were the subjects of this study, serve sociolinguistic purposes similar to those of Aegyo.

The purpose of the Korean Aegyo speech register is to use childlike expressions and/or pronunciations to make people sound smaller, adorable, and cute, like children (Ahn 2017; Park 2010). This can be realized with various phonological strategies. Types of segmental alternations in Korean Aegyo variants are provided by Jang (2020a, b), as in (32). Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics exhibit additional phonological changes in addition to all of the alternations seen in Aegyo variants.

   a. Affrication           ma.ka.ts’ʌ 머거 чувство
   b. Stopping             ma.ka.ta 머거
   c. Palatal glide /j/ insertion ma.ka.s’ja 머거 씨
   d. Vowel rounding       mo.ko.s’o 모고쓰
   e. Nasal coda insertion  ma.ka.s’ang 머거방, ma.ka.s’am 머거범

Tensed consonants in Aegyo expressions are commonly described as being produced by a short tongue (like a child’s) and have been linked to cuteness (Jang 2020a, b). Given that the original name has no tensed consonant, this modification is a key feature of producing hypocoristics in Korean. In Korean, tensed sounds are primarily employed in expressions with small, bright, light, and weak meanings, primarily for onomatopoeia (Cho 2006; Kim 1977). According to Shih et al. (2019) and Jang (2020c), Pokémon with Korean names that include more tensed consonants have lower power, height, HP, and speed. In addition, tensification of obstruents is one of the key characteristics of feminine speech style in Korean (Lee and Kim 1992). The current study adds to the body of evidence by demonstrating that tense sounds are associated with soft, light, and warm feelings in familiar and intimate relationships. In this regard, it is suggested that more research into the sound symbolic effect of Korean laryngeal features is required.

In Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics, palatal glide was frequently inserted in front of the vowel to generate an onglide vowel. Prevocalic palatal glide creates an environment of palatalization in Korean. Jang (2020a) points out that the palatal glide can be inserted between any consonant and the following vowel as a strategy of expressive palatalization (Alderete and Kochetov 2017; Kochetov and Alderete 2011). Expressive palatalization can be found in baby-talk registers, diminutive constructions, mimetic vocabulary, and hypocoristics across languages. The current study shows that expressive palatalization happens in the formation of Korean hypocoristics.

In Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics, vowel rounding also occurs. In female Korean speakers’ Aegyo-ful reading tasks, Kim (2020) reports vowel rounding as a phonological alternation. Jang (2020c) discovers a negative association between the number of rounded vowels to syllables and speed, as well as average power of Pokémon. Rounded vowels in monosyllabic hypocoristics can be associated with soft and warm images of intimate relationships.

About 64% of hypocoristic forms (136 out of 211) contain nasal codas including inserted velar nasals. Among nasals, velar ones are the most favored in the coda position of Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics (66 out of 136). Nasal velarization raises the proportion of nasal codas in monosyllabic hypocoristics. Nasal coda insertion is a productive Aegyo strategy. In Kim’s Aegyo-ful reading task, female Korean speakers demonstrate several instances of epenthetic nasal coda that are not present in the provided script (2020). Crosby and Dalola (2022) found that in Aegyo-style dialogues and communicative tasks, romantic couples who speak Seoul Korean make velar nasal coda epenthesis 27.782 times more likely than in neutral speech. This may assist in explaining why some Korean hypocoristics are characterized by nasal insertion or velarization.

Stopping of fricative and affricate in Korean Aegyo variants and monosyllabic hypocoristics can be seen as a method of mimicking a child’s language. Similar to the findings of studies on children in the UK, Australia, and the US (Dodd et al. 2003; Smit et al. 1990), Korean children acquire nasals and stops before affricates, liquids, and fricatives (Lim 1996; Oum 1986). Vowel simplification and syllabic reduplication, which are not mentioned in Jang (2020a) but are found in Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics, are also similar to characteristics of children’s language (Clark & Clark 1977; Gervain & Werker, 2008). Onglide vowel coalescence seen in hypocoristics is also a sort of vowel simplification and fronting that is common in children’s speech (Fish 2015).
5. Conclusion

In this paper, I investigate the observed patterns of formation and phonological alternation of monosyllabic hypocoristics utilized without a vocative marker in Korean. Truncation and merging are two processes that produce Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics that can be used independently. The study shows that in truncated hypocoristics, only one of two syllables in given names is entirely retained. In merged forms, the most common type merges the onset of the first syllable and the rhyme of the second syllable. This illustrates the symmetrical base anchoring template, in which the template’s edges are anchored to the base’s right and left edges. The majority of the Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics formation process involves the anchoring of both edges.

The phonological alternations that Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics go through include tensification of obstruents, stopping of plain fricative or affricate, nasal velarization, nasal insertion, vowel rounding, vowel simplification, onglide vowel coalescence, and palatal glide insertion before a vowel. In the formation of monosyllabic hypocoristics, consonantal alternations are more common than vocalic alternations. All of the segmental alternations seen in Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics are also found in the Aegyo speech register, which serves a similar pragmatic role by using childlike pronunciations to convey affection, positive feelings, and familiarity to someone in an intimate relationship.

The importance of this study lies in the systematic listing of the observed patterns of formation and phonological alteration of previously understudied Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics. There is a drawback, nevertheless, in that using the corpus data alone makes it impossible to properly comprehend the productivity of each formation type and the preference of phonological changes to draw conclusions about the trend. The follow-up study is planned to carry out experiments such as generating nicknames and assessing the naturalness or intimacy of nicknames in order to supplement the current study.

Endnotes

1 This example is taken from the Korean Standard Language Regulation, Enforcement from March 28, 2017 (Notice No. 2017-13), Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (Korean Language Policy Division), Republic of Korea.
3 The Korean tensed consonants’ sound symbolic effect appears to be at odds with the frequency code (Ohala 1994). High-pitched sounds with a high fundamental frequency (Fo) are associated with little, light, and cute connotations, according to the frequency code. In the Korean laryngeal contrast of plain, tensed, and aspirated sounds, both tensed and aspirated sounds have higher Fo than plain ones (Silva 2006; Kang 2014). More specifically, aspirated sounds have a greater Fo than tensed ones, according to Lee (2018). If this is the case, aspirated sounds should have a higher or similar degree of association with little, light, and cute connotations than tensed sounds, according to the frequency code. However, the sound symbolic effects of tensed and aspirated sounds are opposite. Aspirated sounds are primarily utilized in expressions with huge, dark, heavy, and strong meanings (Kim 1977; Cho 2006).

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