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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 tudy 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. Hangul correspondents are provided alongside.

(1) toŋ.hɥi 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 altenations.

(2) tʰo.ni 토니 + u.hjʌk 우혁 → tʰon.hjʌk 톤혁
e.rik 에릭 + hje.sʌng 혜성 → rik.sjʌng 릭셩
hjo.ri 효리 + ju.ri 유리 → hjol.jul 횰율

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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'? (20 대 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 경아	→	kjʌŋ 경
sʌn.ho 선호	→	s'ʌn 썬
tɕʌŋ.jʌn 정연	→	tɕ'jʌŋ 쩡
sin.hɥi 신희	→	t'in 띤
sɨŋ.a 승아	→	t' ɨŋ 뜽
min.sʌ 민서, min.a 민아	→	miŋ 밍

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In the second pattern, the first syllable with no coda remains in monosyllabic hypocoristics, as in (4).

(4) po.mi 보미 → p'o 뽀
sʌ.hɥi 서희 → s'ʌ 써
so.hɥi 소희 → s'o 쏘
tɕɛ.hɥi 재희 → tɕ'ɛ 째

Except for one case, *kjʌŋ* for *kjʌŋ.a* in (3), hypocoristics caused by the truncation of the second syllable include segmental alternations. Tensification (*sʌn* of *sʌn.ho* becomes *s'ʌn 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 *tɕʌŋ.jʌn* becomes *tɕ' jʌŋ*), and stopping of a fricative 's' (*sɨŋ* of *sɨŋ.a* becomes *t'ɨŋ*) 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.pʌm 기범 → pʌm 범
sʌŋ.sik 성식 → sik 식
jʌn.tɕu 연주 → tɕ'u 쭈
hje.sʌŋ 혜성, hjo.sʌŋ 효성 → sjʌŋ 셩

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) tɕʰɛ.hak 채학 → hak 학
u.hjʌk 우혁, si.hjʌk 시혁 → hjʌk 혁
sʌŋ.hun 성훈, hjʌŋ.hun 형훈 → hun 훈

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) tɕʰaŋ.min 창민 → min 민
ɥi.jʌl 의열 → jʌl 열
ceng.jun 정윤 → juŋ 융
je.rim 예림, ha.rim 하림 → 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).

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Table 1: Truncation in the Formation of Korean Monosyllabic Hypocoristics

Truncation Type	Feature	Count
Second syllable truncation	Nasal coda in the first syllable	23
	No coda in the first syllable	4
Initial syllable truncation	Obstruent onset in the second syllable	33
	/h/ onset in the second syllable	7
	/m, l, y/ onset in the second syllable	6

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 둔
nu.ri 누리 → nul 눌
tʰɛ.min 태민 → tʰɛm 탬

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 짓
hje.su 혜수 → hjes 혯
su.tɕi 수지 → sutɕ 숮
je.tɕi 예지, je.tɕin 예진 → jetɕ 옛

(10) tɕɛ.hɥi 재희 → tɕɛh 쟿
tɕi.hɥi 지희 → tɕih 짛

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- 앉- 'sit' and ʌntɕ- 얹- '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 믽
jʌn.tɕu 연주 → jʌntɕ 엱

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).

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(12) ta.ɨn 다은 → tan 단
tʰɛ.il 태일 → tʰɛl 탤
sʌ.ɨn 서은 → sʌn 선,
sʌ.jʌŋ 서영 → sʌŋ 성
tɕu.ɨn 주은 → tɕ'un 쭌
hje.ɨn 혜은, hje.in 혜인 → hjen 혠

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) tɕɛ.hjʌn 재현 → tɕɛn 잰
so.hjʌn 소현 → sjon 숀

2.2.3 1st Syllable + Rhyme of 2nd Syllable

To construct monosyllable 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) tɕi.u 지우 → tɕju 쥬
ki.uk 기욱 → k'juk 끅
su.a 수아 → swa 솨
tɕu.an 주안 → tɕwan 좐

(15) tɕi.ho 지호 → tɕjo 죠
tɕi.hwan 지환 → tɕwan 좐
ki.hun 기훈 → k'jun 뀬
tɕu.hɥi 주희 → tɕwi 쥐

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) Merging of the first syllable with the second syllable's rhyme having onset
su.sʌŋ 수성 → swʌŋ 슁

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) a.rɨm 아름 → arm 앎
je.rim 예림 → jerm 옘
tɕʰɛ.rim 채림 → tɕʰɛrm 챎
hje.rim 혜림 → hjerm 혬

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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 → tɕje 제
ka.jʌn 가연 → kjʌn 견
hɥi.jun 희윤 → hjun 휸
tʰɛ.joŋ 태용 → tʰjoŋ 툥
to.wʌn 도원 → twʌn 둰

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 몌
si.hjʌk 시혁 → sjʌk 셕
su.hwan 수환 → s'wan 쏸
tɕu.ho 주호 → tɕ'jo 쬬

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 눅
min.jul 민율 → njul 뉼
ɨn.hje 은혜 → nje 녜
min.jʌŋ 민영, tɕin.jʌŋ 진영, ɨn.jʌŋ 은영 → njʌŋ 녕

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

	Merging Type	Count
The first syllable	+ Onset of the second syllable	41
	+ Coda of the second syllable	29
	+ Rhyme of the second syllable	11
	+ Onset and coda of the second syllable	4
Onset of the first syllable	+ Rhyme of the second syllable	46
Coda of the second syllable	+ Rhyme of the second syllable	7

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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, tɕ/, tensed /p', t', k', s', tɕ'/, and aspirated /pʰ, tʰ, kʰ, tɕʰ /). 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 삔
toŋ.hwan 동환 → tˈoŋ 똥
to.il 도일 → t'ol 똘
kjʌŋ.a 경아 → k'jʌŋ 꺙
tɕin.ku 진구 → k'u 꾸
sʌ.huɨ 서희 → s'ʌ 써
su.pin 수빈 → s'up 쑵
su.tɕin 수진 → tɕ'in 찐
sʌŋ.tɕun 성준 → tɕ'un 쭌

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 징
min.sʌ 민서 → miŋ 밍
ha.ɨn 하은 → haŋ 항
sɨŋ.hun 승훈 → sˈuŋ 쑹
mi.hjʌn 미현 → mjʌŋ 명
jun.tɕi 윤지, tɕʌŋ.jun 정윤 → juŋ 융

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.

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(23) sin.hɥi 신희 → t'in 띤
sɨŋ.hɥi 승희 → t'ɨŋ 뜽
su.pin 수빈 → t'up 뚭
min.su 민수 → t'u 뚜
ɨn.sʌn 은선 → t'ʌn 떤
tɕi.jʌn 지연 → tjʌn 뎐
tɕi.jʌŋ 지영 → tjʌŋ 뎡
su.tɕi 수지 → sut 숟

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 뉸

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

(25) tɕi.hje 지혜 → tɕjeŋ 졩, tɕeŋ 젱

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 /jɛ/ in (26) does not exist in any original name.

(26) min.tɕɛ 민재 → tɕjɛ 쟤
se.jʌŋ 세영 → sjeŋ 솅
sʌŋ.hɥi 성희 → sjʌŋ 셩
tɕʌŋ.jʌn 정연 → tɕjʌŋ 졍
so.hjʌn 소현 → sjon 숀
to.jun 도윤 → tjon 됸
hɥi.su 희수 → sju 슈
tɕu.ɨn 주은 → tɕjun 쥰

3.2.2 Vowel Simplification

The deletion of a glide in on-glide vocalic formations (e.g., /je, wa, ɥi/ 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].[1] In the last two cases, glide formations by merging two vowels additionally occur.

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(27) ɨn.hje 은혜 → (nje 녜 →) ne 네
tɕi.hje 지혜 → (tɕje 졔 →) tɕe 제
tɕi.hwan 지환 → (tɕi+wan 지+완 → tɕi+an 지+안 →) tɕjan 쟌
tɕu.hɥi 주희 → (tɕu+ɥi 주+의 → tɕu.i 주이→) tɕwi 쥐

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 굥
mi.jʌŋ 미영, min.jʌŋ 민영 → (mjʌŋ 명→) mjoŋ 묭

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 갱

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.tʰɛ 강태 → tʰɛ.tʰɛ 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

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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 hyporocistic 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 4: Types of Korean Monosyllabic Hypocoristics

	Base-anchoring		
	Left-Edge (69)	Right-Edge (53)	Both Edges (90)
Monosyllabic	kjʌŋ.a → kjʌŋ (27) ju.na → jun (41)	ki.pʌm → pʌm (46) min.uk → nuk (7)	ta.ɨn → tan (29) tɕi.uŋ → tɕjuŋ (11) a.rɨm → arm (4) ka.jʌn → kjʌn (46)

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, with the rhyme 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.tɕɛ* 권용재 → *kwʌn.tɕɛ* 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

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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, 2), as in (32). Korean monosyllabic hypocoristics exhibit additional phonological changes in addition to all of the alternations seen in Aegyo variants.

(32) Korean Aegyo variants of /mʌk-ʌs'-ʌ/ 'eat-Past-Dec.Informal'

a. Affrication	mʌ.kʌ.tɕ'ʌ 머거쩌
b. Stopping	mʌ.kʌ.t'ʌ 머거떠
c. Palatal glide /j/ insertion	mʌ.kʌ.s'jʌ 머거쎠
d. Vowel rounding	mo.ko.s'o 모고쏘
e. Nasal coda insertion	mʌ.kʌ.s'ʌng 머거썽, mʌ.kʌ.s'ʌm 머거썸

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).[3] 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).

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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 alternation 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, Enforcementfrom March 28, 2017 (Notice No. 2017-13). Ministryof Culture, Sports and Tourism (Korean LanguagePolicy Division), Republic of Korea.

[2] Online source website links: [https://www.facebook.com/all.about.20s/posts/4243331725770864/]; [https://www.facebook.com/all.about.20s/posts/5582039798566710/]; [https://www.facebook.com/datecourse1/posts/2162978410480903/]; [https://www.facebook.com/outcampus/posts/2006401409409164/]; and [https://www.facebook.com/outcampus/posts/4104583082924309/].

[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 (F0) 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 F0 than plain ones (Silva 2006; Kang 2014). More specifically, aspirated sounds have a greater F0 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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