

Contrastive Features and Delinking in Oowekyala

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This paper presents an analysis of the North Wakashan language, Oowekyala, within the Contrastive Hierarchy framework of Dresher (2009), and Hall (2007), and the Modified Contrastive Specification framework of Avery & Rice (1989), and Rice & Avery (1993). I present a Contrastive Hierarchy for Oowekyala, and put forward a hypothesis about the nature of feature delinking in this hierarchy. I call this *Structural Delinking*, and it applies to segments in an asymmetric Contrastive Hierarchy undergoing alternations that are structure-preserving: that is, alternations where the output segment is a licit phoneme of the language's inventory. The hypothesis is that in an asymmetric hierarchy, we see a kind of feature delinking that involves the loss of features that are not assigned below the terminal node of the most structure-preserving branch of the Contrastive Hierarchy corresponding to the output segment for a given alternation. In other words, some features are delinked due to their position in the hierarchy. This hypothesis, along with the proposed hierarchy, allows for a straightforward analysis of some typologically unusual alternations, previously analyzed by Howe (2000). For instance, an asymmetrical alternation where both /t/ and /tʰ/ become /ʈ/ follows from the features assigned to these segments by the hierarchy, in a straightforward analysis of [+cont] spreading, as well as the delinking of features in-line with the *Structural Delinking Hypothesis*. The hierarchy presented also accounts generally for processes of spirantization, glottalization, voicing, coronal fricative dissimilation, and rounding in the language.

[240 words]

Selected References

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