

Root suppletion in Hiaki really is suppletion

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Number-sensitive suppletion occurs in 10-15 Hiaki transitive and intransitive verbs, conditioned by the internal argument. Borer (2015) questions whether this pattern should be characterized as part of the grammar, suggesting (with Corbett) that such patterns are lexico-semantic in character—semantic restrictions on almost-synonymous but independent verbs, not forms in a single paradigm. In this talk I show that Hiaki suppletion is conditioned by interpretable, not formal, plural marking. Despite this, I argue that it is nonetheless a formal contrast, i.e. ‘paradigmatic’, on the basis of evidence from idiomatic interpretations, speaker intuitions, historical patterns in the language family, and adjectival reduplication. Expanding the dataset to other Uto-Aztecan languages suggests parallel patterning for reduplication and suppletion in other members of the family as well.

Previous work has shown that canonical phi-feature agreement marking and suppletive alternations are independent from each other, in languages where the difference can be observed, such that suppletive alternations are conditioned by ‘deep’ grammatical relations and phi-feature agreement is conditioned by ‘surface’ relations. I argue that this shows that root suppletion is not triggered by an Agree relation, but rather represents locally conditioned allomorphy at Late Insertion, as proposed by Bobaljik and Harley (forthcoming). This conclusion is supported by the fact that different suppletive allomorphs belong to different stem classes for readjustment rules, as shown in Harley and Tubino-Blanco (2013). Number-conditioned root suppletion thus deserve a treatment distinct from inflectional agreement.