

## VOWEL HARMONY IN NATURAL GENERATIVE PHONOLOGY

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According to Hooper (1976, 1977) a central constraint in the theory of natural generative phonology (NGP) is the true generalization condition (TGC) which states that all rules must make true generalizations about surface representations. Thus, according to the TGC, a rule such as

$$(1) V \rightarrow [\alpha \text{ back}] / \left[ \begin{array}{c} V \\ \alpha \text{ back} \end{array} \right] C_0 \text{ ---}$$

is not a possible rule in language L if there are surface representations which contain vowels differing in backness (e.g. tati). Such a rule (if it is a rule at all) must be formulated in NGP as a morphophonological rule (MP-rule) which makes reference to morphological, syntactic, or lexical features.

The purpose of this paper is to consider how vowel harmony rules such as (1) must be (re)formulated in NGP to meet the TGC. It is argued that the analyses required by NGP for vowel harmony in languages such as Turkish, Hungarian, Finnish, and many West African languages (e.g. Igbo) are incorrect and do not reflect the generalizations which speakers of these languages have made. Specifically, it is shown that according to NGP vowel harmony in a language like Turkish or Hungarian must be treated as a non-productive, suppletive alternation. There is, however, strong evidence from language change, from acquisition, and from the treatment of loanwords that vowel harmony in these languages is a productive phonological rule and that the NGP analysis is incorrect. It is concluded that vowel harmony systems provide strong evidence against the TGC and thus against the theory of NGP.

#### References

Hooper, J. (1976) An Introduction to Natural Generative Phonology, New York: Academic Press.

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