

Discussion questions: Ito & Mester (1999)

Alternative for Homework Assignment #2

- If you have background in Optimality Theory phonology (such as from LING 200 or LING 523), you may choose to complete this alternative to Assignment #2.

Answer the following questions *completely but concisely*, based on the information in the reading (and any other relevant knowledge you might have). Please avoid using direct quotations unless absolutely necessary; you should be able to restate the points made in the reading, using your own words.

- (1) What do I&M mean by *lexical strata* (singular: *stratum*)? What are some of the strata that are traditionally distinguished in the lexicon of Japanese? Are lexical strata synchronically relevant, or are they only relevant for diachronic linguistics?
- (2) What do I&M mean when they refer to *core-periphery relations*? Give one example from the reading.
- (3) What do I&M mean by *impossible nativization*? Give an example.
- (4) On p 18, I&M say:
 “...in (27a-c) *siči* is not just non-optimal in individual competitions, but is a perpetual loser — it is always bettered by some other candidate.”
 Is this output a perpetual loser even if the input is /siči/? Illustrate your answer with a constraint tableau or tableaux as needed. And what are the implications of your answer?
- (5) I&M claim that the impossible nativization facts of Japanese forms like /siti/ support their indexed-constraint model over an alternative, the input prespecification/underspecification model. Summarize their argument and assess its effectiveness: Are you convinced, and why or why not?
- (6) In section 4, I&M argue that a certain type of constraint can be indexed to lexical strata, and another type cannot. What are the two types? *Very briefly*, what is the main point of I&M’s argument in favor of making this claim?
- (7) What is the principle of Ranking Consistency? Why does it seem to be needed — what type of wrong prediction is made without it?
- (8) Sino-Japanese morphemes are never longer than two moras in Japanese (possible shapes include CV, CV:, CVV, CVCV, CVN [N=mora nasal]). Yamato morphemes can be anywhere from one to at least four moras in length (*mu.ra.sa.ki* ‘purple’). Is this difference between SJ and Yamato something we would expect to see, based on I&M’s core-periphery model of the lexicon? Why or why not?