




Pronunciation of Ghayeni Plural Nouns with a Final Vowel

Bashir Jam¹
Pariya Razmdideh²
Zohreh Sadat Naseri^{3*}

Abstract

In Ghayeni Persian, for nouns ending in vowels /ou/, /ɑ/ and /a/, the plural marker is represented as [au], and in words with vowels /i/, /u/, and /e/, it is pronounced as [u]. These pronunciations confirm that the underlying structure in Ghayeni is /-an/. To explain this, the authors examined the data within Stratal Optimality Theory (SOT) at three levels: stem, word and, post-lexical. The results showed that the phonological processes of pre-nasal raising and hiatus resolution occur at stem level and vowel change and final /n/ deletion take place at word level. Derivations indicated a kind of opacity (bleeding interaction) between pre-nasal raising and the final /n/ deletion. Post-lexical level includes two cases: adding third person singular pronoun /in/ "his/her" and first person plural pronoun /ma/ "we" to the output of the word surface. In this level, the phonological processes as final /n/ deletion and monophthongization are involved. Here another kind of opacity (feeding interaction) between the processes of ezafe vowel deletion and the final /n/ deletion is seen. Therefore, in present study, the opaque interactions in derivations of plural nouns with a final vowel in Ghayeni is analyzed based on SOT. SOT is more efficient than Parallel Optimality Theory (POT) in explaining opaque phonetic changes at morpheme boundaries.

Keywords: Plural noun, Final vowel, Feeding/bleeding opacity, Stratal Optimality Theory, Ghayeni Persian.

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Ghayeni Persian is a common dialect in Ghayen city located in South Khorasan. Plural nouns in this dialect, unlike standard Persian, which are accompanied by

1. Associate Professor of Linguistics, Sharekord University, Shahrekord, Iran.
(b_jam47@yahoo.com)

2. Assistant Professor of linguistics, Vali-e-Asr University of Rafsanjan, Rafsanjan, Iran.
(p.razmdideh@vru.ac.ir)

* 3. Assistant Professor of linguistics, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran.
(Corresponding Author: z.naseri@scu.ac.ir)

the plural morpheme /ha-/ and /an-/, are never closed with /ha-/. In contrast, there is only the plural sign /-an/ in the case of plural words in Ghayeni Persian, which is pronounced as [u] in the case of plural words with a final consonant. So, this research question is, how are the plural nouns with a final vowel pronounced in Ghayeni Persian? The research data showed that the pronunciation of the plural form of nouns end in vowels /ou/, /ɑ/, /a/, /i/, /u/ and /e/ is in two forms: 1) Words with final vowels /ou/, /ɑ/ and /a/ have a phonetic representation of [au]. 2) Words end in /i/, /u/ and /e/ behave like words with a final consonant, i.e., /un/ is added to the end of it, and if the word is not accompanied by a related consonant, the final /n/ of the plural is deleted. The cause of the occurrence of phonetic representations [u] and [au] in nouns ending in consonant and vowel, respectively, is the cases of opaque counterfeeding and counterbleeding interactions. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to investigate the phonetic form of plural nouns with a final vowel based on the theory of SOT.

2. Theoretical Framework

Stratal Optimality Theory is one of the approaches to optimality theory that is made by combining stratal approaches such as morphology and lexical phonology with optimality theory. In SOT, there are different models, the similarity between them is in the variety of layers and there is no limit to the number and type of them. In the optimality approach, there are several layers that are arranged sequentially from input to output. According to Kiparsky, there are three layers in SOT. At the three levels of this approach, the stem first enters the stem level. Inside the stem level, in addition to the stem, a derivative affix or a compound word is added to it. The product of this level enters the word level. At the word level, a second derivative (if any) or inflectional affix is added to the output of the stem level. Finally, at the post-lexical level, which is at the phrase level, the words are combined, and what happens at this level is only the study of phonological and morphological changes.

3. Methodology

The collection of plural words with a final vowel has been done in a documentary and field methods. In the documentary method, different sources were used in Ghayeni Persian and in the field method, 20 Ghayeni informants (10 women and 10 men) aged 60-80 years and most of the illiterate/illiterate were interviewed. Then, a corpus (written and oral) containing 250 words of the final vowel was extracted. The authors wrote them using International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Finally, the differences between the input and output forms of plural words in different contexts were analyzed in the framework of SOT.

4. Result & Discussion

In Ghayeni Persian, the plural suffix /-ha/ is not used and the plural morpheme /-an/ exists only in phonological representation. Unlike the standard Persian, none of the standard plural morphemes of the standard Persian is found in the underlying representation of the plural nouns in this dialect. In Ghayeni, the pronunciation of the plural morpheme in words ending in a vowel was studied and the opaque interactions in the surface structure derivations of plural nouns with a final vowel were examined in the framework of SOT. Findings indicate that in this dialect the final vowel nouns are pronounced as [au] or [u] after the addition of the plural morpheme. In other words, in words ending in the vowels /ou/, /ɑ/ and /a/, the plural is pronounced as [au], and in words ending in the vowels /i/, /u/ and /e/, the plural morpheme has a phonetic representation of [u]. In order to explain this based on SOT, the research data were examined at three levels: stem, word and post-lexical.

In the case of nouns ending in the vowels /ou/, /ɑ/ and /a/, the final /n/ is omitted in the last representation, which causes the pre-nasal raising process to occur in the phonetic representation. The pre-nasal raising process leads to the formation of diphthongs /au/ and /ɑu/ at the intermediate level. But since the diphthong /au/ does not exist in Ghayeni dialect, its first vowel changes to the vowel [a]. In fact, the diphthong [au] can be considered as a sign of the plural morpheme /-an/ in Ghayeni. The post-lexical level was also examined in two cases.

In the case of words ending in /i/, /u/ and /e/, they behave in the same way as words ending in consonant, i.e., the plural /-an/ is added to their end, and if a dependent morpheme is not attached to a word, the final /n/ is deleted after the occurrence of pre-nasal raising process. Besides, since the word ends in a vowel and the plural morpheme begins with a vowel, a glide /j/ is inserted between the two vowels to avoid hiatus.

5. Conclusion & Suggestions

In the present study, we investigated the pronunciation of plural morpheme in words ending in a vowel and the opaque interactions in the surface structure derivations of plural nouns with a final vowel based on SOT. The phonological processes of pre-nasal raising and hiatus resolution occur at the stem level and the processes of vowel change and final /n/ deletion take place at the word level. The surface structure derivation of the data prior to the application of the post-lexical level indicated the counterbleeding opaque interaction between two processes of pre-nasal raising and final /n/ deletion. In post-lexical levels, which were examined in the two cases of adding conjunctive third-person singular possessive pronoun /in/ and first-person plural pronoun /ma/ to the output of the word surface, the phonological processes as resyllabification, ezafe vowel

deletion, final /n/ deletion and monophthongization are involved. At the post-lexical level, the counterfeeding opacity interaction between the processes of ezafe vowel deletion and final /n/ deletion was also observed.

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