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Phonological stress in Gilaki

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Abstract
In this Article, we investigated the phonological distribution of stress in Gilaki. To this end, words from four different morpho-syntactic classes were gathered which varied in the location of stress depending on their morphological structure. 14 native speakers of Gilaki read the target words. The words were then phonologically transcribed and the location of stress was determined. An overview of the data suggested that lexical stress in Gilaki is predominantly word-final; however, the presence of some affixes results in the distribution of non-final stressed words in this language. The data were analyzed within the metrical phonology to reach a generalized account of the varied distribution of stress in Gilaki. Thus, we suggested that stress in Gilaki is either assigned at the level of phonological word in which stress is located on the last syllable of the word, or at the level of phonological phrase in which stress is placed the strong syllable of the leftmost phonological word in the phrase.

Keywords: stress, Gilaki, metrical phonology, phonological word, phonological phrase

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction
Gilaki is an Iranian language of northwestern branch which is the language of majority of people in Gilan province and some parts of adjacent provinces such as Mazandaran and Qazvin. From the perspective of phonology, Gilaki includes seven vowels. All these vowels have complete phonological distribution and are used in the segmental string of words regardless of prosodic and syllabic structure. Word stress in Gilaki is dynamic in the sense that it varies to a great extent depending on words' *morpho-syntactic properties*. Stress is located on

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the last syllable when there are no morphological or syntactic affixes attached to words.

In this Article, we investigated the phonological distribution of stress in Gilaki words. To this end, words from four different morpho-syntactic classes were gathered in which stress varied depending on words' morphological structure. 14 native speakers of Gilaki read the target words. The words were then transcribed phonologically, and the location of stress was determined. An overview of the data suggested that lexical stress in Gilaki is predominantly word-final; however, the presence of some affixes results in the distribution of non-final stressed words in this language. The data were analyzed within the Prosodic Phonology to reach a generalized account of the varied distribution of stress in Gilaki. Thus, the hierarchical levels of the Prosodic Phonology were used for this purpose.

2. Theoretical framework

According to Hyman (2014), languages are divided in two classes in terms of prosodic structure; stress system and non-stress system. Languages in which one syllable in a word is more prominent than the others are called stress system and the prominent syllable is called the stressed syllable. In stress languages, pitch accent variation is realized on the stressed syllable. By contrast, in non-stress languages, no syllable is more prominent than any other syllables. Stress is an instrument for marking a syllable which is expected to bear a pitch accent in intonation.

Prosodic phonology is a theoretical model within generative phonology dealing with layers of phonological analysis; that is, layers at which phonological processes and structures are described. In these layers, processes such as devoicing, compensatory lengthening, deletion and stress assignment occur. In the discussion of stress in prosodic phonology, the prominent element in each layer can be marked based on stress assignment rules.

3. Methodology

This study was conducted based on a descriptive-analytic methodology. At first, the research data were collected from library sources such as Gilaki books, dictionaries, poem collections, theses and articles, etc. The data consisted of the morpho-syntactic classes of nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs. Them, the stress behavior of words in different morpho-syntactic classes was observed. The selected words were given to 14 native speakers of Gilaki, to pronounce all living in Rasht. The words were then transcribed phonologically and the location of stress was determined. Then, a comprehensive analysis of phonological stress in Gilaki was proposed based on the layers of prosodic hierarchy in prosodic phonology.

4. Results and discussion

The layers of prosodic hierarchy in prosodic phonology were used to reach a generalized account of the varied distribution of stress in Gilaki. The results indicated that stress in this language follows two general rules. Stress assignment rule at the phonological word level, according to which the final syllable of word is the carrier of stress; and Stress assignment rule at the level of phonological phrase, according to which the strong syllable of the leftmost phonological word carries stress.

The investigation of the data revealed that stress in nouns, adjectives and adverbs in Gilaki is located on the final syllable according to stress assignment rule at the phonological word level. Stress is also final in plural nouns and the comparative and superlative adjectives, because plural morphemes as well as comparative and superlative morphemes absorb word stress.

But the presence of some affixes gives rise to the distribution to non-final stress. For example, enclitics do not receive stress, and thus, stress remains on the final syllable of the stem. This results in words with non-final stress. In fact, enclitics are regarded as independent words. Verb affixes, such as prefixes and negations absorb stress, which leads to the distribution of stress-initial words in Gilaki. Also, in compound verbs, based on stress assignment rule at the level of phonological phrase, stress is located on the strong syllable of the first phonological word on the left side of the phonological phrase. In general, it can be concluded that in words which have enclitics, prefixes and negation as well as in compound verbs, stress follows the stress assignment rule at the level of phonological phrase.

5. Conclusion & Suggestions

In this study, we examined the pattern of phonological stress in the morphological structure of various Gilaki words. The results showed that word stress in Gilaki is located on the final syllable of words as a general phonological rule. But the presence of some affixes in words causes stress to become non-final. For example, enclitics do not receive stress, which means that despite the addition of the enclitics to the construction of a word, the stress remains on the final syllable of the stem. Also, some verb prefixes as well as negations absorb stress, which results in initial stress. We used prosodic phonology to analyze the patterns of stress variation in Gilaki.

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