

Sonority Dispersion of Two Consonant Clusters in Syllable Boundary Position in Persian¹

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Abstract

This study explores the sonority dispersion between two consonants in syllable boundary in Persian. Sonority restriction in syllable boundary demonstrates a universal tendency in falling sonority of consonants at syllable boundary. In this study, 4202 lexemes consisting of syllable structure of CVC.CVC were subject to analyses which were extracted from Persian Generative Lexicon. From the point of view of sonority, the Persian consonants have been classified in five distinct classes in which the relation of sonority scale in syllable boundary and frequency in lexemes has been investigated. Unmarkedness of a structure

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has direct relation with frequency both diachronically and synchronically, and the results show that falling in sonority in two cluster consonants in the boundary CVC syllables do not act categorically in Persian and do not divide the structures into two wellformed and illformed ones. The frequency of two consonant clusters in lexemes increases with decreasing of the slope of sonority from +4 to -4. Contrary to sonorant consonants which are likely to appear in offset position, non-sonorant consonants have a tendency to appear in onset position in syllable boundary. Using Pointwise Mutual Information demonstrates that co-occurrence tendency in clusters with the falling slope of sonority is not higher than rising equivalent and different sonority based consonant classes appear independently in offset and onset. Based on the above said tendency and the important role of this tendency in the structure of patterns in syllable boundary, it is more justified to describe this phonological phenomenon in the framework of auditory phonetics than describe it with phonological constraints.

Keywords: *syllable contact law, sonority, CVC syllable boundary, two consonant clusters, falling sonority, rising sonority*