A comparative Study of the Substitution of Uvular Consonants of Arabic Loanwords in Standard Persian and Roudbari Dialect Within the Framework of Optimality Theory[1]

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Extended Abstract

1- Introduction

Many Arabic loanwords have been adapted by Persian and its numerous dialects**.**Some of theseloanwords have uvular consonants including the voiceless stop /q/ and the voiced fricative /ʁ/ both of which were replaced by the single phone [G] in standard Persian. However, as /ʁ/ is a phoneme in the Roudbari Persian dialect it is not replaced by any sound.This research aimed at explaining each of these sound substitution processes within the framework of Optimality Theory (Hereafter OT) put forward by Prince and Smolensky (1993/2004).

2- Methodology

The Roudbari data were collected by one of the researchers by recording the voices of several male and female native speakers. Then the data were analyzed to indentify the phonological processes and contexts in which they

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occurred. The phonological processes that occur in the substitution of uvular consonants of Arabic loanwords in standard Persian and Roudbari dialect were analyzed within the framework of Optimality Theory (Prince & Smolensky, 1993/ 2004). In doing so, the constraints that caused these phonological processes were identified or formalized in case they did not exist in the OT literature.

3- Conclusion

Sound substitution is a process whereby a phoneme in a loanword is replaced by its closest phone in the borrowing language. In OT loanwords are subject to the same universal constraints; however their rankings are subject to the phonology of the borowing language.

   Many Arabic loanwords with uvular consonants including the voiceless stop /q/ and the voiced fricative /P/ have been adapted by Persian and its numerous dialects. Both of these consonants are replaced by a single consonant, the uvular voiced stop [G], in the standard Persian. Unlike the standard accent, /P/ is a phoneme in the Roudbari Persian dialect. Therefore, it is not replaced by any sound. However, neither /q/ nor /G/ exists in the Roudbari dialect phonemic inventory. Hence, /q/ in the syllable onsets of Arabic loanwords is replaced by [k] and [c] in environments preceding [+back] and [-back] vowels respectively. Besides, word- final /q/ is replaced by [c].It presents arguments in favor of constraint rankings which cause the occurances of these processes. Moreover, it comes up with a single inclusive ranking of constraints that is capable of explaining the replacement of Arabic /q/ by [k] and [c] in all the three environments in Roudbari dialect.

Keywords: sound substitution, pronunciation of Arabic loanwords, Persian phonology, Roudbari dialect, optimality theory.