



Pronunciation of Ghayeni Plural Nouns with a Final Consonant Within Stratal Optimality Theory

Bashir Jam¹, Zohreh Sadat Naseri²
 Parya Razmdideh³

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1. INTRODUCTION

The most common plural markers in Persian are /-ha/ and /-an/. The former is mostly used in speech and the latter is more common in writing (MacKenzie, 1961, p. 50; Rokhzadi, 2011, p. 128). It has different forms in some Persian dialects influenced by phonetic factors. This research aims at investigating the plural marker in Ghayeni Persian within Stratal Optimality Theory (SOT) (Kiparsky, 1998a, 2000). In SOT, there are (at least) two layers. The order of the constraints between the layers can be different, which predicts the opaque relation between the input and the final output. In SOT, the output of each layer enters the next layer as the input along with the special affixes of that layer (if any), and this process continues until the final output is produced. In Ghayeni Persian, which is spoken in the city of Ghayen in the province of South Khorasan, the suffix /-ha/ is not used at all, and the plural /-an/ is present only in the phonological representation. None of the plural markers of standard Persian are observed in the Pronunciation of Ghayeni plural nouns. If the plural form of a word is expressed alone or the followed word or morpheme begins with a consonant, the consonant /n/ in the plural morpheme is deleted. The plural /n/ is not deleted in some cases. In this study, the phonological behavior of the plural marker is examined in words that end in consonant. The previous researches that have studied the plural marker in Persian have not examined the pronunciation of the plural from this point of view.

The following is the pronunciation of plural words in two words ending in consonant in Ghayeni.

(1) Derivational levels within SOT

Stem level		Word level (a)		Word level (b)
/pesar + an/	→	pesarun	→	[pesaru]

Ranking (1) in SOT explains the occurrence of pre-nasal raising in stem level in Ghayeni Persian:

¹ Associate Professor of English Language at University of Shahrekord, Iran, Shahrekord; bashir.jam@lit.sku.ac.ir

² Assistant Professor of Linguistics at Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Iran, Ahvaz; z.naseri@scu.ac.ir

³ Assistant Professor of Linguistics at Vali-e-Asr University of Rafsanjan, Iran, Rafsanjan (corresponding author); p.razmdideh@vru.ac.ir

(1) * [- high] N >> MAX >> IDENT [height]

Tableau (1) shows the application of pre-nasal raising of the stem in /pesar + an/

Tableau (1): the application of pre-nasal raising in /pesar + an/, stem level

Input:/pesar+an/	*[-high]N	MAX	IDENT[height]
a. pesarun			*
b. pesaru		*!	*
c. pesara		*!	
d. pesaron	*!		*
e. pesaran	*!		

As shown in tableau (1), the candidate (a) has been selected as the optimal candidate by violating the low rank faithfulness constraint IDENT [height]. The candidates (b) and (c), (d) and (e) have violated the constraints MAX and * [- high] N respectively.

After applying the process of pre-nasal raising in /pesar+an/ in stem level, ranking (2) explains the occurrence of /n/ deletion in word level.

(10) * n] >> MAX

Tableau (2) shows the application of /n/ deletion process in /pesarun/ in word level.

Tableau (2): the application of the /n/ deletion process in /pesarun/, word level

Input: /pesarun/	*n]	MAX
a. pesaru		*
b. pesarun	*!	

As shown in tableau (2), candidate (a) has been selected as the optimal candidate by violating the faithfulness constraint MAX.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

To confirm the research hypothesis, first the nouns ending in consonants were collected using library method by referring to Zomordian (1989, 2006) and the field method (interviewing with 30 Ghayeni speakers over the age of 58). Then, from the collected data (spoken and written), a corpus containing the plural form of 200 nouns were extracted. In cases where more data was needed and to confirm the accuracy of the data, one of the authors, as a Ghayeni's speaker, was used. Finally, the internal and external changes of the plural form of nouns in various contexts (the plural form of nouns alone or in combination with another word or morpheme) were analyzed within SOT (Kiparsky, 1998a, 2000).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We argue that pre-nasal raising is one of the common phonological processes in the majority of Persian accents and dialects including the standard accent and Ghayeni through which the low vowel /a/ converts to the high vowel [u] in the environment before nasals. By the application of final /n/ deletion, the context which causes pre-nasal raising disappears in phonetic realization and this phonological opacity is counterbleeding. Parallel OT (POT) cannot analyze this opacity, so we use SOT and rank the constraints for this process. In Ghayeni, if a word ends in CaC, /a/ changes

to [a] due to pluralizing, so the ranking is different from other words. This process is fronting. After the application of fronting and pre-nasal raising in stem level, the process of final /n/ deletion applies in word level. We analyze post lexical level in three models. In the first model, Ezafe along with a noun or an adjective added to the plural noun. In this model, /n/ in plural marker is not deleted in post-lexical level. The interaction of final /n/ deletion and Ezafe deletion is the realization of counterbleeding. In the second model, Ezafe along with third person singular morpheme added to the plural noun. In this model, like the first model, /n/ is not deleted because Ezafe is added to word level (a) in which /n/ is not deleted, not word level (b) in which /n/ is deleted. In the Third model, Ezafe along with third person plural morpheme added to the plural noun. The ranking of this model is the same as the second model.

4. CONCLUSION

We concluded that POT cannot analyze the process of pluralizing in this dialect and SOT do this perfectly, although linguistic economy is not observed. The results of this research can be helpful for different processes in various dialects.

Keywords: Counterbleeding; Ghayeni; Plural Morpheme; Stratal Optimality Theory