

VARIATION IN SRINAGAR VARIETY: A PHONOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Kashmiri language, also called *kə:Sur*, is a native language of Kashmir. Apart from Kashmir this language is also spoken by migrant population in other parts of India and abroad. In the ancient period, Kashmir became an important centre of Sanskrit learning, in the medieval period Persian had a great influence and the modern period indicated the influence of Urdu and English. This has resulted in large scale borrowing from Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu and English into Kashmiri, particularly at the lexical level.

Kashmir valley has been divided into three areas as per the local variations of speech mostly on lexical basis.

- (i) *Kamra:z* - This variety is spoken in the northern and north-western region of Kashmir.
- (ii) *Yamra:z* - It is called the Srinagar variety of Kashmir and is considered as the Standard. It is spoken in central Kashmir.
- (iii) *Mara:z* - It is spoken in the southern and south-western region of Kashmir.

Grierson (1919) mentions two religious dialects of Kashmiri viz. Hindu Kashmiri and Muslim Kashmiri. The main argument in dividing Kashmiri on the basis of religion has been that the users of these two dialects at times use different vocabulary. Kachru (1969) renames these as Sanskritized Kashmiri and Persianized Kashmiri respectively. He brings out the difference by listing certain pronunciation variations, morphological variations and lexical variations. Sanskritized Kashmiri shows more Sanskrit influence and Persianized Kashmiri shows more Persian and Arabic influence.

Languages are continuously changing i.e. the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and other features of language are modified over time. There are two sources of change in language i.e. Internal and External. Internal changes occur within the language itself where as External changes refer to changes introduced from other languages. These sources may cause a ripple effect that ends up altering other aspects of the borrowing language.

There is no single definition of phonological processes. Stampe (1979) describes phonological processes as being 'phonetically motivated', that is, due to articulatory, perceptual or acoustic factors. He further

defines them as 'innate mental operations' that apply in speech to substitute a less difficult class of sounds or sound sequence for one that is more difficult. These processes operate on the child's mental representations' of adult speech, which Stampe sees as being basically equivalent to the adult surface forms, 'minus the predictable phonetic detail'. He makes a distinction between 'processes', which are innate and natural, and 'rules' which are 'imposed by the language' and which have to be learned.

Ingram (1974, 1976) who was more directly responsible for the application of phonological processes in the field of speech-language pathology, referred to 'general simplifying processes' that affect classes of sounds. He discusses three general categories of processes, including 'syllable structure processes', such as cluster reduction e.g. bik for brick, assimilatory processes, such as velar harmony e.g. geik for gate, and substitution processes, such as fronting e.g. tau for cow. Ingram discussed several 'general phonological rules' that operate in normal language acquisition, including weak syllable deletion e.g. nænə for banana, cluster reduction, voicing e.g. bin for pin and assimilation, which are more typically referred to as processes.

The present paper discusses phonological variation in the Srinagar variety (yamra:z) and discusses the different phonological processes involved in variation.

Methodology

The data for this paper was collected from 35 informants who are native speakers of Srinagar Variety of Kashmiri (Yamra:z). The data basically comprised of recordings of casual conversations. These recordings were transcribed and subjected to rigorous phonological analysis.

Analysis

The data which was collected, clearly showed the evidence of phonological variation. This variation was observed to involve different phonological processes. The various types of phonological processes observed in the data include:

Epenthesis

This involves the insertion of vowel within a consonant cluster.

| <i>Basic word</i> | <i>Variation</i> | <i>Gloss</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| drly | dlrly | 'swear by' |
| prazlna:va:n | parzlna:va:n | 'to recognize' |

dryka :kan'

dlrka :kan'

'sister in law'

These examples show that the cluster is broken by the insertion of a vowel. However, this insertion may not be present in isolation but may be accompanied by other changes like deletion of /l/ as in *prazlna:va:n* and /y/ as in *dryka:kan'*.

Cluster Reduction

Here, a consonant is deleted from a cluster.

| <i>Basic word</i> | <i>Variation</i> | <i>Gloss</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| tsra:riSari:f | tse:riSari:f | 'a site of holy shrine' |
| trakur | takur | 'stiff, hard' |
| sron | son | 'deep' |
| traklr | taklr | 'pair of scales' |
| trl:nts | tl:nts | 'ear ring' |
| drup | dup | 'sound of falling' |
| lacikricam | lacikicam | 'to twist the tail' |

In the above examples, variation between words consists of presence and absence of /r/ at the second consonantal position from the beginning, which is present in the basic word and absent in the variation.

Substitution:-The substitution of one sound by another is found to occur at all the three positions within the word:

a. Substitution at the initial position:-

| <i>Basic word</i> | <i>Variation</i> | <i>Gloss</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| ba:dSah | pa:dSah | 'King' |
| wo:nun | mo:nun | 'knitting' |

| | | |
|-------|-------|-------------------|
| kru:r | kyu:r | 'well' |
| brə:r | byə:r | 'cat (fem.sing.)' |

b. Substitution at the medial position:-

| <i>Basic word</i> | <i>Variation</i> | <i>Gloss</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| ju:rɪθ | ju:Dɪθ | 'Connected' |
| avkin' | amikin' | 'that is why' |
| ja:ləɡdu:z | ja:ləkdu:z | 'artsman' |
| kho:vur | kho:fur | 'left' |

c. Substitution at the final position:-

| <i>Basic word</i> | <i>Variation</i> | <i>Gloss</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| dəriya:v | dəriya:b | 'river' |
| rov | rof | 'kashmiri folk dance' |
| bro:ʔh | bro:ʔh | 'in front' |

From the above examples it is clear that except for a few exceptions the phonemes which undergo substitution have the same place of articulation as that of the substituted phonemes. Examples include ba:dSah-pa:dSah, jaləɡdu:z-jaləkdu:z, rov-rof, kho:vur-kho:fur, etc.

Addition

Here a consonant phoneme is inserted in a word.

| <i>Basic word</i> | <i>Variation</i> | <i>Gloss</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| sama:n | samba:n | 'collect' |
| bumsin | bumbsin' | 'earthworm' |

| | | |
|---------|----------|--------------------|
| bum | bumb | 'eye brow' |
| pampo:S | pambpo:S | 'lotus' |
| bo:m | bo:mb | 'sad face or mood' |
| kamar | kambar | 'back' |

The above data indicates that just as in the previous case of substitution, the consonant which is inserted has the same place of articulation as that of the consonant which is adjacent to the added consonant, e.g. *bumsin'-bumbsin'*, *bum-bumb*, *kamar-kambar*, etc. Furthermore, it is also observed that the consonant phoneme which is added is /b/ and the consonant phoneme which is adjacent to it is normally the phoneme /m/.

Elision

Connected speech frequently has fewer segments in it than one might imagine. Both vowels and consonants are elided (deleted) especially in rapid speech. In very fast and casual speech entire syllables can be lost. This process causes variation in the words. All the examples given below show variation due to the deletion of a consonant:

| <i>Basic word</i> | <i>Variation</i> | <i>Gloss</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| bombur | bomur | 'wasp' |
| sangtar | santar | 'orange' |
| kandlSarbat | kanlSarbat | 'a sweetened drink' |
| haNtlmaNI | haNlmaNI | 'all of a sudden' |
| ku:nj | ku:n | 'corner' |
| za:mudOd | za:mudOd | 'curd' |

Metathesis (transposition of segments):- Here the segments are reordered. It is sometimes found in the lexical phonology of languages, though it is not obvious that it is ever observed as an automatic, connected speech process. It frequently occurs in all languages as a type of speech error and is a common feature of child phonology. The following examples show the variation in terms of metathesis.

| <i>Basic word</i> | <i>Variation</i> | <i>Gloss</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| ruva:Nan | ru:Na:van | 'tomato' |
| martsiva:Nan | matsra:Nan | 'pepper' |
| aldlbadal | adllbadal | 'one for the other' |
| imtiha:n | intiha:m | 'examination' |

The above words clearly show that variation is the result of transposition of segments. In a word *martsiva:Nan - matsra:Nan*, elision process also occurs in addition to metathesis. In this word phonemes /t/ and /r/ show transposition and /l/ and /v/ show elision.

The phonological variation in the above data involves the various types of phonological processes in relation to consonants. However variation was also observed in the vowels as shown in the next subsection:

Variation in Vowels:

| <i>Basic word</i> | <i>Variation</i> | <i>Gloss</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| dih | duh | 'smoke' |
| tha:v | thav | 'Keep' |
| k ū:z | kūz | 'key' |
| da:man | da:ma:n | 'flair' |
| pa :ntsah | pantsah | 'fifty' |

| | | |
|------------|----------|--------------|
| krakh | krekh | 'cry' |
| piSui | piSo:l | 'smooth' |
| asma:n | a:sma:n | 'sky' |
| za:mutur | za:mltur | 'son in law' |
| azkal | a:zkal | 'now a days' |
| akh | a:kh | 'one' |
| thape:r | tha:pe:r | 'slap' |
| ba:dan | ba:da:m | 'almonds' |
| mu:sim | mo:sam | 'weather' |
| na:ma:va:r | na:mlvar | 'famous' |

In the above data, it is observed that long vowels are reduced to short vowels and short vowels are lengthened. Furthermore, it is also observed that front vowels are substituted by back vowels and at other places back vowels are substituted by central vowels.

Conclusion

The phonological variation in the Srinagar variety of Kashmiri occurs in the form of Insertion, Deletion, Substitution, Cluster Reduction, etc. All the words in the data are frequently used by people and they seem to be unaware of this variation, or rather we can say that their linguistic repertoire consists of both the variants, however, they choose to use one form only and comprehend both the forms. Variation seems to be restricted to the place of articulation i.e. the sounds which are deleted or substituted have the same place of articulation as that of the adjacent sound. It is also observed that the crux of the variation revolves around making articulation easier, so, one of the consonant cluster members may either be deleted or a vowel inserted within a cluster to make articulation easier.

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