The phonology of Iranian-Balochi dialects : description and analysis

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Chapter (6)

Concluding Remarks

In this work, the phonological system of three selected Iranian-Balochi dialects (IBDs) namely Mirjaveh Sarhaddi Balochi (MSB), Sarawani Balochi (SB) and Lashari Balochi (LB) have been studied. These three dialects are spoken in the province of Sistan and Baluchestan located in the southeast of Iran.This investigation has considered both descriptive and theoretical approaches, so this study has given precise description and analysis of the phonological system of Iranian-Balochi dialects. The descriptive part has been done in accordance with the principles of descriptive linguistics, and in the theoretical part, the language data has been analyzed in the frame work of OT. As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, the language is not treated from a historical-comparative point of view, nor does it treat sociolinguistic issues of the IBDs community, although the sociolinguistic situation of IBDs is an interesting topic for further investigations, particularly study the language contact and loanwords based on gender, education and, age etc.

This study supports, to a large extent, previous studies on the different Balochi dialects, including Eastern, Western and Southern dialects (see chapter 1). However, there are some important phonological topics which have not been investigated before and the present study has focused on them. These complementary topics are as follows:

- The consonant and vowel inventories suggested in the chapter which deals with the segmental phonology of IBDs are not dissimilar to those presented in the earlier studies, especially studies on the Iranian Balochi dialects done by scholars such as Jahani and Korn (2009) and Korn (2006). However; in the vowel system of SB in the present study, there are two vowels (/ɪ/, /ʊ/) which are not mentioned in the previous studies on Sarawani Balochi dialect such as in Baranzehi (2003) and Okati (2012). Moreover, the distribution of allophonic variations like aspiration stops and affricates, and dorsal nasal have been investigated in the present research and only investigation on vowel nasalization has been done in the previous works like in Baranzehi (2003), Korn (2005), and Okati (2012). In addition, the present study has given special attention to study the distribution of retroflex consonants in Balochi, since the occurrence of these sounds is not frequent cross- linguistically.

- In the Balochi literature, the syllable structure and stress pattern system in Balochihave been described very briefly, with no precise description or analysis (for example Korn 2005, Jahani& Korn 2009), but the present work has given a clear and extensive description and analysis of all suprasegmental aspects of Iranian-Balochi dialects. Furthermore, investigating two types of gemination namely word-final gemination and intervocalic gemination has only been done in this work, while other scholars such as Jahani and Korn (2005) just give brief explanation with some examples, but no discussion on the internal structure of geminate in Balochi has been found in the previous literature.

- Phonological processes in Balochi have been studied by scholars as Korn and Jahani (2009), Korn (2005), but precise and detailed discussion of phonological processes in Iranian Balochi dialects such as local and long distance assimilation, dissimilation, hiatus resolution, final consonant devoicing and final consonant deletion has been restricted to the present work. Discussing the loanword adaptation in IBDs supports the previous work done by Balochi scholars (Korn 2005, Jahani and Korn 2009, for example). Moreover, diphthongization and degemnation are two processes in the loan phonology of IBDs that are introduced in the present study.

- One of the most important contributions of this current study in the research on the phonological system of Balochi is the analysis of the phonological interface between Iranian-Balochi dialects.Study reduplication with fixed segmentism("/m-p/ reduplication") is restricted to the present investigation. Furthermore, finding root-affix asymmetries in Balochi has not been investigated before.

- A further important feature of the present study which may make it unique is the combination of description and analysis in each section. Thus first each phonological topic has been described comprehensivly and then the relevant optimality theoretical analysis has followed each description.

Based on what has been discussed hereto, the author's opinion that almost all relevant topics on the phonological system of Balochi which have not been

studied before, have been investigated comprehensively in the present work, and as such this research has provided a great contribution to the Balochi linguistics literature. The last part of the current chapter is dedicated to finding the microvariation in the phonological system of these three dialects.

Regarding OT as a theory of language variation, (since the very strong hypothesis in classical OT defends the idea that the systematic differences between two languages can only be the result of different rankings of the same constraints (van Oostendorp 2008), I will focus in the present section as the last part of this research on the microvariation among the phonological system of the selected Iranian Balochi dialects. Van Oostendorp (2008) explains that microvariations between language systems which are genetically and typologically close can be represented within OT. Different types of variations are distinguished in van Oostendorp (2008) as follows:

- Intraspeaker variation, i.e. variation within a speaker. This type of variation can be subdivided into :
    - Pragmatic variation, i.e. meaningful variation like formal v. informal speech; fast vs. slow speech; etc.
    - Free variation, i.e. not meaningful variation. Two forms that count as equally optimal internally, and which do not depend on the external factors.
- Interspeaker variations, i.e. two speakers speak differently.
    - Geographical variation, i.e. variation between 'dialects' of the same 'language'
    - Sociolinguistic variation, i.e. variation between men vs. women; young vs. old people; etc.
    - Temporal variation, i.e. language change; people speak differently from their ancestors.

In the present study, I will only investigate the geographical variations in the phonological system of Balochi dialects that have been already studied in the previous five chapters. Working on other variations like sociolinguistics and temporal could be two very interesting topics for further studies.

Van Oostendorp (2008:20) considers three reasons to study geographical variation:

"Individual dialects are interesting in their own right; comparison of closely related systems can shed more light on how one system is organized; and the existence of geographical variation itself poses certain questions."

.In the phonological system of Balochi dialects, we can find the most microvariation in the domain of loanword adaptation more specifically segmental (consonant and vowel) adaptation. As it has been discussed already in chapter four, different Balochi dialects have their own strategies of adapting loanwords. Data 1-3 show the microvariations in Balochi dialects in adapting loanwords:

1)	Non-Balochi words			SB/LB/MB adapted forms	
	a.i	*tæχt*	[tæht]	[tæχt]	'bed'
	a.ii	*χeʃt*	[heʃt]	[χeʃt]	'brick'
	a.iii	*χæjjat*	[hæjɑːt]	[χæjɑːt]	'tailor'

2)	Non-Balochi words			Sarhaddi adapted forms	
	a.i	*miːz*	[miez]	[miəz]	'table'
	a.ii	*niːm*	[niem]	[niəm]	'half'
	a.iii	*diːg*	[dieg]	[diəg]	'pot'
	b.i	*tuːp*	[tuep]	[tuəp]	'ball'
	b.ii	*ʃuːr*	[ʃuer]	[ʃuər]	'salty'
	b.iii	*ruːd*	[rued]	[ruəd]	'river'

3)	Non-Balochi words		Sarawani adapted forms	
	a.i	*diːg*	[dɪg]	'pot'
	a.ii	*diːr*	[dɪr]	'late'
	a.iii	*kiːf*	[kɪp]	bag'
	b.i	*guːr*	[gʊr]	'grave'
	b.ii	*ʃuːr*	[ʃʊr]	'salty'
	b.iii	*duːɣ*	[dʊg]	'soft drink'

The above examples illustrate the variation among IBDs: different Blochi dialects have their own way of adapting loanwords. As example(1) shows Sarawani and Lashari Balochi adapt fricative consonant, namely /χ/ as /h/, while Sarhaddi Balochi speakers mostly pronounce borrowing words with /χ/ as original form.Therefore preserving the original forms of borrowing words in Mirjaveh Sarhaddi Balochi can be seen as the case of a language contact. Sistan and Baluchestan province like other provinces in Iran has Persian as an official language. Balochi, Barahui, Kurdishare also spoken indifferent areas of the province with no official role. Persian has a number of dialects itself, among which is Sistani. Sistani is spoken mostly in the Sistan region in Sistan and

Baluchestan.Geographically speaking, Mirjaveh Sarhaddi is spoken in the area (Mirjaveh) which is located closer to the center of province, which has more Persian speakers. So MSB is highly influenced by Persian.

Moreover, as (2) shows, diphthongization plays an important role in MSB and LB, while in Sarawani Balochi (3bi-biii) vowel laxness is observed.

In the following section, I will attempt to represent the variation presented in the previous examples based on Optimality Theoretic constraints. First consonant adaptation and then vowel adaptation in IBDs will be represented within the framework of OT.

Consideration of consonant adaptation in IBDs based on examples (1) leads us to the constraint rankings (4). As shown in (4a), markedness constraint *[χ] is higher ranked than the faithfulness constraint IDENT-IO [χ], while in (4b) faithfulness constraint (IDENT-IO [χ]) outrankes markedness constraint [χ]. So the optimal candidate for (4a) as it is presented in tableau (5) is not allowed to have [χ] and the winner for second ranking (4b) should be faithful to the input as shown in tableau (6). As a result, reranking the constraints gives us two different outputs for Balochi dialects.

(4) Constraint rankings for uvular fricative /χ/ adaptations in Lashari/Sarawani and Sarhaddi Balochi respectively:

a. *[χ], MAX-C >> IDENT-IO [χ]

b. IDENT- IO [χ] >>>* [χ], MAX-C

(5) Lashari/ SarawaniBalochi production of word *χær*

Input:/χær/	*[χ]	MAX-C	IDENT-IO [χ]
a.☞ hær			*
b. χær	*W		L
c. ær		*W	*

(6) SarhddiBalochi production of word *χær*

Input:/χær/	*[χ]	MAX-C	IDENT-IO [χ]
a.☞ hær			*
b. χær	*W		L
c. ær		*W	*

To represent the vowel adaptation in IBDs (data 2-3), following constrains rankings are required.

(7) Constraint rankings for /iː/and /uː/ in Sarhaddi, Lashari and Sarawani Balochi dialects.

a.i *Diphthong, *[iː] >> IDENT-IO [iː], MAX-μ-IO
a.ii *[iː], MAX-μ-IO >> *Diphthong, IDENT-IO [iː]
a.iii *Diphthong, *[uː] >> IDENT-IO [uː], MAX-μ-IO
a.iv *[uː], MAX-μ-IO >> *Diphthong, IDENT-IO [uː]

As shown in the above rankings, (7a.i-a.iii) deals with the optimal candidates for SarawaniBalochi, since in that dialect we do not observe diphthongization. Rankings (7a.ii-aiv) are relevant for the vowel adaptations in Sarhaddi and Lashari Balochi. Interestingly, by reranking the same constraints, we have optimal outputs in each dialect.

Following tableaux (8-10) represent the above rankings respectively. In all tableaux, the winner candidate is candidate (a), which does not violate any of higher ranked constraints, while other candidates have a fatal violation.

(8) Sawani Balochi production of word *diːg*

Input:/diːg/	*Diphthong	*[iː]	IDENT-IO [iː],	MAX-μ-IO
a.☞ dɪg			*	*
b. diːg		*W	L	L
c. dieg	*W		*	L

(9) Sarhaddi Balochi production of word *diːg*

Input:/ diːg/	*[iː]	MAX-μ-IO	*Diphthong	IDENT-IO[iː]
a.☞ dieg			*	*
b. diːg	*W		L	L
c. dig		*W	L	*

(10) Lashari Balochi production of word *diːg*

Input:/ diːg/	*[iː]	MAX-μ-IO	*Diphthong	IDENT-IO[iː]
a.☞ diəg			*	*
b. diːg	*W		L	L
c. dig		*W	L	*

(9) Sarawani Balochi production of word *guːr*

Input:/guːr/	*Diphthong	*[uː]	MAX-μ-IO	IDENT-IO[uː]
a.☞gʊr			*	*
b. guːr		*W	L	L
c. guer	*W		L	*

(10) Sarhaddi Balochi production of word *guːr*

Input: /*guːr* /	*[uː]	MAX-µ-IO	*Diphthong	IDENT-IO[uː]
a.☞*guer*			*	*
b. *guːr*	*W		L	L
c. *gur*		*W	L	L

(11) Lashari Balochi production of word *guːr*

Input: /*guːr* /	*[uː]	MAX-µ-IO	*Diphthong	IDENT-IO[uː]
a.☞*guər*			*	*
b. *guːr*	*W		L	L
c. *gur*		*W	L	L