Synchronic and Diachronic Phonological Processes in Indo-Aryan

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This study highlights similarities between synchronic and diachronic processes providing examples from Indo-Aryan (IA) languages. The paper focuses on examples involving only one phoneme [h/ɦ] in primary or secondary articulation. Many phonological processes initiate in IA because of perceptual weakness of [h/ɦ]. In modern Saraiki, [ɦ] undergoes processes like insertion in the form of secondary articulation (mənna> mənnᶠʰa 'prohibited'), deletion (Arabic *travi:ħ*> Saraiki *travi:* 'night prayers') and displacement and/or metathesis (Appendix-b). [ɦ] is also transparent to nasalization and vowel shortening although other fricatives are opaque to these processes. Saraiki deletes glottal stops and pharyngeal fricatives in words of Arabic origin (Arabic /ʔamir/>Saraiki [a:mir] 'a name'). If a glottal stop or pharyngeal fricative happen to be onset of the second syllable, the nuclei of the two syllables, after deletion of the onset, become adjacent and trigger vowel shortening and/or coalescence (e.g. Arabic /ʃa.ʔiḏ/> Saraiki [ʃəiḏ~ʃæṯ] 'perhaps'). But such syllable deletion resultant vowel shortening is blocked if a fricative other than [h/ɦ] is the onset of the second syllable, e.g. Arabic /fa.siḏ/ 'malicious' undergoes no structural change in Saraiki. However, if [h/ɦ] is the onset of the second syllable, although it does not delete but it also does not block vowel shortening (e.g. Arabic /sahir/>Saraiki[səɦir] 'charmer'). In Saraik,i [ɦ] is transparent to nasal spreading. Nasality spreads from nasals regressively unless it is blocked by an opaque segment. All fricatives (except [ɦ]) are opaque to nasalization but [ɦ] is a participant in this process (Appendix-a).

Similar phonological processes have also been identified in the historical development from Old Indo-Aryan (OIA) into modern day Saraiki. In IA, processes like insertion (Appendix-c), deletion (Appendix-d) and displacement or metathesis also occur due to perceptual weakness of [ɦ/h]. This study provides data to illustrate how opposing phonological processes like insertion-deletion or assimilation (spreading) (e.g. OIA kumbhá>Saraiki *kʰumbᶠʰ* 'Jar') and dissimilation (e.g. OIA *Jhuṭṭha*> Saraiki *Ju:ʈʰa*) have remained equally operative in IA.[1]

A recent development in this regard is detachment of Saraiki suffixes from principal verbs under the influence of Urdu/Hindi and Punjabi. Saraiki has pronominal suffixes attached with words (Shackle, 1976). For example, the Urdu sentence 'meiN ne us ko mara hae' (mara (mar '*hit*'+a (PAST)) hei (*have*) meiN (I) ne (to) us (*s/he*) ko (POST POSITION)) '*I have hit him/her*' is expressed as 'marʲa hei meiN us ku' in Saraiki. But the same idea can also be expressed in the speech of purist Saraiki monolingual speakers in a single word 'marʲemmis' as a result of pronominal suffixation. Such pronominal suffixation in Saraiki had emerged as a result of [ɦ] deletion. We assume that in the past, Saraiki had somewhat similar morpho-syntactic structure as Urdu/Hindi. During the historical development, in Saraiki, [ɦ] deleted in the helping verb 'hei' and the following syllables/words suffixed with the principal verb. First /ɦei meiN us kũ:/ changed into [ɦimmis] deleting the post position /kũ:/ after suffixation and after [ɦ] deletion from [ɦimmis] the remaining part [immis] attached to 'marʲa' giving [marʲemmis]. The whole process occurred in the following sequence; marʲa hei meiN us kũ:> marʲa ɦimmis > marʲemmis.

Now-a-days, under the influence of Urdu, a kind of reversal (detachment of suffixes) is occurring in the mirror-image direction of what has already happened in the past. This change is at different stages in various social strata of Saraiki speakers providing a solid example of rule scattering (Rasammy, 2015). Therefore, the same sentence is expressed in four different ways in modern Saraiki (Appendix-e). The variation in the structure of these expressions in appendix-e is a function of the influence of Urdu/Hindi and Punjabi on Saraiki. The more a Saraiki speaker is under the influence of Urdu/Hindi and Punjabi, the more detached from principal verbs his/her suffixes are. This reversal seems to pose a possible challenge to the life cycle model (LCM) of language change which predicts only uni-directionality in phonological processes (Bermudez-Otero, 2015).

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[1] In this paper, the OIA words have been taken from Turner (2008/1966).

References

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Appendices

a. Nasalization of [h]

Saraiki	Glosses
w̃ ʌ̃ɦ̃ʌ̃ɳ	flow
tʰʌ̃ɦ̃ʌ̞ ɳ	adjustment
kʰʌssʌ̃ ɳ	snatch
ɗʌssʌ̃ ɳ	tell

b. h-metathesis and displacement

Saraiki	Glosses
ʈraɦ~ʈrʰa	drag
rəɦ.ʋa~rə.ʋʰa	plant (causative)
ɗaɦ.ɳa~ɗaɳʰa	ornament
rʌɦ.mẽ ~ra.mʰẽ a name	(oblique case)
miɦ. ɳẽ~meɳʰẽ	taunts

c. Insertion

Sanskrit	Saraiki	Glosses
kālya	kallʰ	yesterday
galla	galʰ	cheek
kōṭṭa	k̄otʰa	fort
kōtr	kʰotr	dig
kōppara	Kʰōpa	skull
gāli	gālʱ	Blame, abuse
karva	khabba	Left

d. Deletion

Sanskrit	Saraiki	Glosses
kōmh	kumā	wither
khila	kill	pimple
khūha	kʰū	well
gārbha	gābā	calf
guṭṭha	guṭṭ	Wrist

e. Sociolectal Variation in Saraiki[2]

1. marʲemis   (marʲa+himmis> marʲemis)
(mar (*hit*)+a (PAST)+hei (HAVE)+meiN (Ist PERSON)+is (IIIRD PERSON))
2. marʲa himmis   (he+meiN+us > himmis; POST POSITION 'kũ:' deletes after suffixation)
3. marʲa him   u:kũ: (he+meiN > him;   us+kũ:> u:kũ:)
4. marʲa   he   meiN   us   kũ:

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[2] The expression in e-1 reflects of the purist Saraiki monolingual speakers of remote rural areas of central Pakistan who are thoroughly free from the influence of other languages but that in e-4 reflects the speech of those Saraiki speakers who are strongly under the influence of other languages like Urdu/Hindi and Punjabi.