

The Reversal of a Diachronic Morpho-syntactic Process because of Language Contact

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The current study shows how different historical processes are being reversed in regional languages of Pakistan because of their contact with the dominant national language Urdu.

Modern Saraiki deletes [h] in loanwords (Arabic loan /*travi:h*/ > Saraiki [*travi:*] 'night prayers'). [h] also undergoes displacement or metathesis in Saraiki (Appendix-b). It is also transparent to nasalization (Appendix-a) and vowel shortening although other fricatives are opaque to these processes. We shall see these processes one by one.

Saraiki deletes glottal stops in Arabic loanwords (Arabic /ʔamir/ > Saraiki [a:mir] 'a name'). If a glottal stop happens to be onset of the second syllable, the nuclei of the two syllables, after deletion of the glottal stop, become adjacent and this triggers vowel shortening (e.g. Arabic /ʔa.ʔiɖ/ > Saraiki [ʔəiɖ~ʔæɖ] 'perhaps'). But such syllable deletion (and resultant vowel shortening) is blocked if a fricative (other than [h]) is the onset of the second syllable, e.g., Arabic /fa.siq/ 'malicious' undergoes no structural change when taken in Saraiki as loanword. However, if [h] is the onset of the second syllable, though it does not delete, but it also does not block vowel shortening (e.g., Arabic /tʰahir/ > Saraiki [tʰəhir] 'sacred'). Saraiki [h] is also transparent to nasal spreading. Nasality spreads from nasals regressively unless it is blocked by an opaque segment. All other fricatives are opaque to nasalization but [h] is a participant in this process (Kula & Syed, 2020). Our argument is that similar processes have also been occurring in the past historically. Some similar processes are identified in the historical development from Old Indo-Aryan (OIA) into modern Saraiki. For example, insertion occurs in OIA words to fill an empty onset position or to compensate for a loss (Appendix-c); deletion occurs in coda position because it is a weak position. Similarly, displacement or metathesis renders [h] as a floating feature. This study argues that similar phonological processes like deletion and movement gave birth to double pronominal suffixation with verbs in Saraiki which occurred in the following stages.

1. mar^ja he meiN us (kū:)
 2. mar^ja him u:kū: (he+meiN > him; us+kū:> u:kū:)
 3. mar^ja himmis (he+meiN+us > himmis; POST POSITION 'kū:' deletes after suffixation)
 4. mar^jemis (mar^ja+himmis> mar^jemis)
- (mar (*hit*)+a (PAST)+hi (HAVE)+meiN (IST PERSON)+is (IIIRD PERSON))

The latest development in this regard is a reversal of this process under the influence of Urdu which itself lacks such pronominal suffixes. For example, the sentence listed in (4) above can be expressed in Urdu as 'meiN ne us ko mara hae' (*I hit have hit him/her*). The syntactic structure of the Urdu sentence is, mara (mar 'hit'+a (PAST)) hae (*have*) meiN (I) ne (to) us (*s/he*) ko (PP).

We demonstrate that Saraiki pronominal suffixation occurred historically in stages reflected in examples (1) through (4). Now-a-days, a reversal of the same process is occurring, and the direction of this development is from (4) through (1). This is happening because of contact between Urdu and Saraiki. Therefore, the variation in the structure of the above sentences is a function of the influence of Urdu on Saraiki. The more a Saraiki speaker is educated (and hence under the influence of Urdu), the more detached pronominal morphemes are from verbs in his speech. Thus, the above four expressions also represent four different sociolects of Saraiki reflecting various levels of influence of Urdu on Saraiki as well four different stages of the latest development.

References

Kula, N. C., & Syed, Nasir, A. (2020). Nasalization in Saraiki. *Radical a Journal of Phonology* 1, 1-58.
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Appendices

a. Nasalization of [h]

Saraiki	Glosses
ũḷḥḷḷḷ	flow
tʰḷḥḷḷḷ	adjustment
kʰḷssḷḷḷ	snatch
dḷssḷḷḷ	tell

b. h-metathesis and displacement in modern Saraiki

Saraiki	Glosses
jaḥ~jʰa	place
ṭraḥ~ṭrʰa	drag
rəḥ.va~rə.vʰa	plant (causative)
ḡaḥ.ḡa~ḡaḥʰa	ornament
rḷḥ.mē~ra.mʰē	a name (oblique case)
miḥ.ṭē~meṭʰē	taunts

c. Insertion (data from Turner (2008/1966))

Sanskrit	Saraiki	Glosses
Kālya	kallʰ	Yesterday
Galla	galʰ	Cheek
kōṭṭa	kotʰa	Fort
kōṭr	kʰotr	Dig
Kōppara	kʰōpa	Skull
gāli	gālʰ	Blame, abuse
Karva	Khabba	Left
Illī	Hill	vulature

d. Deletion

Sanskrit	Saraiki	Glosses
Kōmh	kumā	Wither
Khila	kill	Pimple
Khūha	kʰū	Well
Gārbha	gābā	Calf
gutṭha	gutṭ	Wrist