

The Optimality Theory Approach to “Partial Prefixed Reduplication” in Persian

Leila Rahmati Nejad¹
Faezeh Arkan²
Tahmineh Heidarpour Bidgoli³

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Abstract

Each language uses different ways to create a new word. One of the ways is “Reduplication process”. It is a productive process in morphology. In this process, it is possible to repeat the whole or partial word (or base) and produce a new word with a different meaning. According to this method, the new part is added to the base which has the main role to determine its form and to repeat the whole or partial base in the left, right, and sometimes middle positions of the base. Also, this process can be divided into “Full/Total” and “Partial” reduplication in Persian. In partial reduplication, a part of the base not only does not possess phonological identity, but it also carries no meaning. It only adds concepts such as intensity, emphasis and categorization to the base meaning which is called “Reduplicant”. The partial reduplication per se is divided into “Prefixed and Suffixed reduplication”. With respect to the new definitions and studies in this field, “partial prefixed reduplication” is classified into three groups in Persian:

1. In the first type, the last phoneme of the base is deleted and the modified form precedes the base, like: (nâ nâz) ناناژ, (gol goli) گل گلی, (dæ dær) ددر
2. In the second type, the base first consonant is reduplicated with the fixed half-syllable before the base, such as: (cæt-o coloft) کت و کلفت, (pæt-o pæhn) ، آل و آجیل (ʔâl-o ʔâdʒil) پت و پهن
3. In the third type, the base first consonant is reduplicated with a fixed part (together with a section which is constantly fixed, for example: (veleng-o vâz/bâz) ولنگ و واز/باز, (ʒælæm ʃurvâ/ʃurbâ) زلم شوروا/شوربا, (zælæm zimbo) زلم زیمبو

After introducing different kinds of reduplication process in Persian, this article studied the partial prefixed reduplication based on the standard version of “Optimality Theory” that is called “Correspondence Theory”. In fact, it aims at investigating this process towards incorporating Persian to the new theory in “Generative Grammar”. So, the main question targeted by the study is:

- Can we describe the “Partial prefixed reduplication process” in Persian based on “Correspondence Theory” (the standard version of Optimality Theory)?

To answer this question, first, we should be familiar with Optimality and Correspondence Theories. Optimality Theory which was first established through intro-

¹ PhD Student of General Linguistics, Islamic Azad University of Qom (Corresponding Author); rahmatinejad_stu@qom-iau.ac.ir

² Assistant Professor, Hazrat-e Masoumeh University; farkan@hmu.ac.ir

³ Visiting Professor, Allameh Tabataba'i University; t.heidarpour@khatam.ac.ir

ducing “over application” by Wilbur (1973) in his studies, was later noticed by researchers through publishing Prince and Smolensky’s (1993, 2004) and McCarthy and Prince’s (1993) articles. McCarthy and Prince (1993a, 2001) investigated prosodic morphology within the framework of Optimality Theory and offered significant issues on morphology, tone, and especially reduplication process. In this theory, all of the fields (including phonology, syntax and morphology) are considered “constraint-based”. These constraints are universal and are common among languages, and various ranking among these constraints in diverse languages on the one hand and their violation on the other hand justify the difference and diversity among those languages. Therefore, each language can violate each constraint; but the ranking of constraints in each language determines which constraints in that language are non-violable and which are violable (Dabir-Moghadam, 2012, pp. 649-656). Also, we have two kinds of constraints in this theory: “Faithfulness constraints” and “Markedness constraints”. In fact, the competition between these two constraints determines the “optimal option”. Markedness constraints cause a kind of change in structures, whereas faithfulness constraints basically prevent numerous changes, such as deletion, insertion or changes in the features of segments. However, the part related to reduplication in morphology is the standard version of this theory termed “Correspondence theory” wherein faithfulness constraints are introduced as correspondence (Kager, 1999, p. 194). In this type of Optimality Theory which was first introduced by McCarthy and Prince (1995, p. 25), the “default” and “total” models are presented. This study has selected the default model to investigate partial prefixed reduplication in Persian. Correspondence Theory claims that the reduplication patterns are formed through the interaction of three constraints:

- a. “Markedness constraints or well-formedness” that code markedness constraints;
- b. “Faithfulness constraints” that guarantee the identity of deep structure and surface structure;
- c. “Identity constraints” (B-R) that guarantee the similarities of the reduplicant and the base.

In fact, this theory, with a different ranking of these three types of constraints, tries to explain the differences and similarities between typology present in the reduplication pattern of the world languages and also tries to explain specific patterns in languages (Kager, 1999, p. 200).

Then, for analyzing the data, we gathered several samples of partial prefixed reduplication in Persian through making use of library method and the use of “Sokhan Dictionary” as well as related sources and divided them into three groups. Based on this classification, the authors derived some samples of the aforementioned reduplications and investigated the words in the form of “optimality tableau” with respect to the ranking of constraints (correspondence and markedness).

Finally, based on the analyses obtained, a specific ranking was gained for each type of partial prefixed reduplication. Therefore, it can be said that the Optimality Theory is useful in justifying one of the diverse types of lexicalization processes, namely partial prefixed reduplication in Persian and universality of this theory. Also, the constraints governing this theory are approved once again.

Keywords: Partial prefixed reduplication, Optimality Theory, Correspondence Theory, Constraint; tableau