


Pausal Phonology in *Quran*

Mahmood Bijankhan^{1*}  & Sima Avazpour²

Vol. 11, No. 6, Tome 60
pp. 137-166
February & March
2021

Abstract

This paper addresses the pronunciation of the Quranic words in the location of pause, or vaqf. Data descriptive generalization shows that the indefinite morpheme and short high vowels /u/ and /i/, respectively for nominative and genitive cases, delete in the pause location. This results in forming a heavy or ultra-heavy syllable in the pause location via adhesion of mora of omitted syllable onset to the final syllable. For pronunciation of the indefinite masculine words in accusative case, deletion of the indefinite morpheme is compensated by lengthening the low vowel /a/ through spreading the floating mora to the low vowel slot. The reason behind resistance of the low vowel to delete could be its high degree of sonority. For pronunciation of the feminine words, indefinite and case morphemes delete, and then /t/ converts into [h] through omission of the supra-laryngeal features and staying laryngeal node. The main aim of this paper is to formalize the phonological pattern of the Quranic words in the location of Vaqf. Research methodology is of descriptive and explanatory type. Accordingly the Quranic phonological rules prohibits to license presence of the light syllable in the pause location, while to license heavy and ultra-heavy syllables via deletion and compensatory lengthening processes in the pause location.

Keywords: pause, mora, case morpheme, indefinite morpheme

Received: 22 May 2019
Received in revised form: 22 May 2019
Accepted: 2 July 2019

1. Corresponding author, Professor of Linguistics, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran, E-mail: mbjkhan@ut.ac.ir; ORCID: 0000-0002-4175-6854

2. Master of Linguistics, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

1. Introduction

This paper addresses the pronunciation of the Quranic words in the location of pause, or Vaqf. The type of pause does not affect on the nature of phonological patterns. The observed phonological alterations in the pause location depend on the gender, the voice and the case of the noun categories and the weight of the vowels which the words end to.

The main question of this research is that: what kinds of the phonological patterns occur at the pause locations of Quran and how they could be described and reasoned through derivational rules. The hypothesis is that phonological patterns in the pauses are explained through some rules with a definite order in derivational framework.

2. Methodology

The method which has been used to conduct the present research is a structural one in derivational and moraic phonology. So for each word, an underlying representation including the morphemes of the word is considered. Then the surface representation of the words in the pause is resulted using a definite order of contextual rules. The purpose of this paper is to prove that there is no light syllable in the pause location and only heavy and ultra-heavy syllables are allowed.

3. Results

Because no light syllable in the pause is allowed in the pause location, the short vowels at the end of all words are deleted so these words end to a heavy syllable. This deletion process is a pure phonological rule because it is not limited to any morphological or syntactic structure. The derivational rule describing this process is represented in (1):

$$V_{-long} \rightarrow \emptyset / \text{---}]_{\text{pause}}^1$$

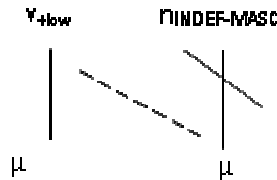
The rest of phonological processes are bound to morphological structure of the words. The first category to be discussed is the indefinite ones. This

1. \emptyset is the sign of vacant phoneme.

category is divided into two groups based on the gender of the words. The first group includes the nominative and genitive cases, and the accusative cases constitute the second group which experience some different processes. the common process among these two groups is the deletion of the indefinite suffix, /n/. This process is represented in the rule (2):

$$n]_{\text{INDEF}} \rightarrow \emptyset / -]_{\text{PAUSE}}$$

In the case of the first group of indefinite nouns, nominative and genitive cases, deletion of the indefinite suffix is followed by deleting the left vowels which are /u/ and /i/ respectively based on the rule (1). The accusative nominal words observe another process. For pronunciation of the indefinite masculine words in accusative case, deletion of the indefinite morpheme is compensated by lengthening the low vowel /a/ through spreading the floating mora to the low vowel slot. The reason behind resistance of the low vowel to delete could be its high degree of sonority. This process is called compensatory lengthening. rule (3) is the moraic representation of this lengthening process and it has been represented in the linear rule (4).



$$1 \quad V_{+low} \quad n_{\text{INDEF-MASC}}]_{\text{PAUSE}} \quad \text{-----} \rightarrow \quad 1+1 \quad \emptyset$$

In moraic phonology a mora is accounted as a unit of lengthening, and all segments of the coda of a syllable occupies a mora. So after that the infinite suffix /n/ is deleted, a moraic position will be vacant and the low vowel is lengthened to fill the empty position of deleted indefinite marker.

The feminine nouns face another process which is called debucalization, whereby the supra-laryngeal features of /t/ are omitted and laryngeal node remains. And the consonant converts to [h]. This process is represented in the rule (5).

$$t]_{\text{FEM}} \text{ -----} \rightarrow h/ \text{ --}]_{\text{PAUSE}}$$

The order based on which the mentioned rules are implemented in the pause locations of Quran is shown in a hasse diagram in figure (1).

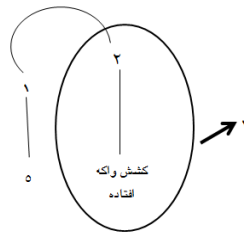


Figure 1: Hasse diagram for phonological rules in the pause location of Quran

4. Conclusion

McCarthy (2011) believes that neither light nor ultra-heavy syllables are allowed in the pause locations of classical Arabic. This is in contrast with the results gained in this research. It has been proven that ultra-heavy syllables are licenced in the pause locations of Quran. For example, the syllabic pattern of CVCC is observed in the pause location in some words such as /fadʒr-ɪ² which surfaces as [fadʒr]. Based on the research done in the present study, the phonological processes observed in the pause location of Quran including deletion and epenthesis are explained through four derivational rules. Addition of a mora in lengthening of low vowels is considered an epenthesis in moraic phonology. Other phonological processes are all a kind of deletion including deletion of the indefinite marker, case markers and oral features of the feminine suffix, /t/ and its conversion into [h]. this is another result gained in this study which is different from the one achieved by McCarthy (20011) according to which the alterations observed in the pause location of classical Arabic include metathesis, deletion, epenthesis and debucalization.