



Sound Deletion in Colloquial Persian

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ABSTRACT

Deletion of ‘t’ sounds and ‘d’ sounds occur when we speak fast. Native speakers do not think about ‘t’ and ‘d’ deletion; they would typically not notice it. Among the differences that distinguish colloquial Persian from the formal variety are the deletion and the assimilation of sounds. In this study, I compare formal Persian with colloquial and present the frequency of occurrence and deletion of sounds in colloquial Persian. Consonants are more likely to be deleted than vowels. Among consonants, the most frequent are the alveolars and their deletion occurs at the end of the syllable, especially in consonant clusters with the same place of articulation: mast > mas (yogurt), çand > çan (several).

Introduction

The deletion of t and d sounds is an aspect of Persian pronunciation that helps native speakers of Persian speak more quickly. It has been hypothesized that sounds which are less perceptible are more likely to be altered than more salient sounds, the rationale being that the loss of information resulting from a change in a sound which is difficult to perceive is not as great as the loss resulting from a change in a more salient sound. Unlike formal standard Persian, colloquial Persian is characterized by deletion and assimilation phenomena. Formal Persian is used in the media (press/TV). On the other hand, colloquial Persian is the everyday



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language which is used for ordinary, informal or familiar conversation. Phonetic studies on Persian are rare. They are mainly based both on the auditory aspect and on analysing written documents which do not actually provide an adequate source of information on pronunciation. Lazard and Provasi, among others, wrote about deletion and the absence of the phoneme in colloquial Persian. According to Pisowicz common words are more affected by deletion than those rarely used. Yet, none of these scholars have conducted any experimental research about the deletion and assimilation phenomena. It studies the deletion of sounds according to the position of the phoneme in the word or in the syllable.

DELETION OF PHONEMES

Here are the main cases of deletion observed in different positions:

1) Deletion of phonemes in medial position

Deletion of phonemes in medial position is very common which we will see in the following examples. It should be mentioned that when deletion at the medial position occurs, the previous syllable lengthen and this lengthening of syllable in this case has the distinguishing feature which is called as **Compensatory lengthening**, as the following Examples:

- Deletion of /ʔ/ at the medial position

lexical	Meaning	Colloquial	
/taʔkid/	‘‘Emphasize’’	[ta.kid]	« تأکید »
/baʔd az/	‘‘After that’’	[ba.daz]	« بعد از »
/taʔin/	‘‘Determine’’	[ta.in]	« تعیین »
/saʔy/	‘‘Attempt’’	[sa.y]	« سعی »
/masʔud/	‘‘Proper Name’’	[ma.sud]	« مسعود »
/ʃorʔat/	‘‘Courage’’	[ʃo.rat]	« جرأت »



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- Deletion of /d/ at the medial position

Lexical	Meaning	colloquial	
/jeddi/	“Serious”	[je.di]	« جدِّي »
/šānzdah/	“Sixteen”	[šunzdah] / [šunza.]	« شانزده »
/nazdik tar/	“Nearr”	[nazzikta.]	« نزدیک تر »
/pānzdah/	“Fifteen”	[punzdah]/[punza.]	« پانزده »

- Deletion of /h/ at the medial position

Lexical	Meaning	Colloquial	
/šāhpur/	“Proper Name”	[šā:pu.(r)]	« شاهپور »
/čahār/	“Four”	[čā.r]	« چهار »
/mixāhi/	“want”	[mixāy]	« مي خواهي »
/tehrān/	“Capital city of Iran”	[te.rān] / [te.run)]/	« تهران »
/tahvil/	“Submit”	[ta.vil]	« تحويل »
/sohbat/	“speak”	[so.bat]	« صحبت »
/tahqiq/	“Research”	[ta.qiq]	« تحقيق »
/fohš/	“Curse”	[fo.š]	« فحش »
/mehdi/	“Proper Name”	[me.di]	« مهدي »
/ahl-e kojā/	Where are you from?	[?a:lekojā]	« اهل کجا؟ »



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The deletion of /h/ is one of the most common deletions both in medial and also final position which in this case the former syllable is lengthened and in general, /h/ is a perceptually weak sound, and it is subject to deletion in many languages.

2. Deletion of phonemes at the end of words or syllables

The deletion of phonemes at the final position is the most common phoneme deletion in colloquial Persian. A- Simplification of consonant clusters having the same place of articulation In general, for the production of phoneme sequences, we try to get a maximum of effect with a minimum of effort. So, some sounds can be assimilated or deleted. In the final position, the deletion of phonemes occurs mainly in the case of consonant clusters that share the same place of articulation. Several examples concern the deletion of /t/ at the end of the syllable preceded by /s/ ([mast]> [mas], yogurt) and /d/ preceded by /n/: ([mikanand]> [mikanan] “they are uprooting”). In the first example, /t/ and /s/ and, in the second /n/ and /d/ have the same place of articulation (both are Alveolar). **Alveolar** formed with the tip of the tongue touching or near the inner ridge of the gums of the upper front teeth, as the English (t), (d), and (s).

More examples of deletion at the final position of the words are presented as follow:

- The deletion of final /ʔ/ /

Lexical	Meaning	Colloquial	
/ʃamʔ/	“Plus”	[ʃa:m]	« جمع »
/ozāʔ/	“Conditions”	[ʔo:zā]	« اوضاع »
/voquʔ/	“occurrence”	[voqu]	« وقوع »
/šoruʔ/	“beginning”	[šoru]	« شروع »
/ta.sriʔ/	“hasten”	[ta.sri]	« تسريع »



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In the deletion of /ʔ/ at the final position also the preceding syllable is lengthened.

- The deletion of final /d/ at the end verbs of 3rd person plural

Lexical	Meaning	Colloquial	
/mi konand/	“To do”	[mikonan]	<< می کنند >>
/bedahand/	“To give”	[beda.n],[bedan]	<< بدهند >>
/raftand/	“went”	[ra.ftan]	<< رفتند >>
/mixorand/	“eat”	[mixoran]	<< می خورند >>

- The Deletion of final /h/

Lexical	Meaning	Colloquial	
/hašt mäh/	“eight month ”	[ha.šmā.]	<< هشت ماه >>
/hefdah/	“Seventeen”	[hevda.]	<< هفده >>
/tavajjoh/	“Attention”	[tajjo.]	<< توجه >>
/negāh/	“Look”	[niḡā] / [negā.]	<< نگاه >>
/tarrāh/	“Designer”	[ta.ra.]	<< طراح >>
/šarh/	“Explanation”	[ša:r]	<< شرح >>



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- Deletion of final /t/

Lexical	Meaning	Colloquial	
/dast/	“Hand”	[da.s]	« دست »
/dust/	“Friend”	[dus.] / [du.s]	« دوست »
/mošt/	“Fist”	[mo.š]	« مُشت »
/dāšt/	“Had”	[dāš.] / [dā.š]	« داشت »

- Deletion of final /r/

One of the most common deletions of phonemes at the final position is the deletion of /r/ at the end of a syllable or a word.

Lexical	Meaning	Colloquial	
/hezār nafar/	“ thousand people”	[hezā:nafa.]	« هزار نفر »
/agar/	“If”	[age]	« اگر »
/zir zamin/	“Underground”	[zizamin]	« زیر زمین »
/sefr/	“Zero”	[se.f.]	« صفر »
/fekr/	“Think”	[fek.]	« فکر »



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- Deletion of /n/ at the final position
 - A) After /ā /, /u/ , /i/

Lexical	Meaning	Colloquial	
/hamin/	“This one”	[hami]	« همین »
/hamān/	“That one”	[hamun] / [hamu]	« همان »
/in/	“This”	[?i]	« این »
/ān/	“That”	[?u]	« آن »
/māmān/	“Mom or mother”	[māmā]/[māmā.(n)]	« مامان »

As you see in the above examples there is no lengthening in the pronunciation of preceding syllable.

- B) After short vowels

Lexical	Meaning	Colloquial	
/jašn	“Celebration”	[ja.š]	« جشن »
/man/	“I”	[ma.] / [ma]	« من »
/nakon/	“Don’t do”	[nako.]	« نکن »

**Sound Deletion in Colloquial Persian by Hamzeh Moradi****Conclusion**

The deletion of phonemes in colloquial Persian is a common process which occurs in the daily conversations. The deletion of phonemes depends on the position of the sound within the word. It should be mentioned that the absence of deleted sounds in colloquial Persian doesn't cause any difficulty in understanding of the sentence.

The deletion of consonants mostly occurs at the end of a word or a syllable. The initial position is more important than the final position, because it has more importance in accessing the lexicon. So, deletion of phonemes in this position is rare in colloquial Persian and almost all the deletion occurs in the medial and the final positions with different frequencies. Because the deletion of sounds in these positions does not cause any difficulties in perception of the words and does not affect the phonological perceptions. This is very important to be mention that these deletions which discussed in this article covers the most commonplace deletions in colloquial Persian which their presence in the written form of Persian language is obligatory and they have to be written.

These results shed light on some universal aspects of deletion based on the articulatory gestures and the principle of minimum effort and also ease of articulation.



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