

Morphophonological Alternations in Prefixation and Suffixation in Hazaragi: Evidence for Underspecification

The dissertation focuses on morphophonological alternations in Hazaragi. Hazaragi is an Eastern Iranian language spoken mainly in Central Afghanistan and Southern Pakistan. Hazaragi has complex morphophonological alternations where different prefix vowels surface as *mi-*, *me-*, *mo-*, *mu-* and *m-*. At first glance this looks like a simple case of assimilation, but it is more complex than it seems. We work with the FUL (Featurally Underspecified Lexicon) model (Lahiri and Evers 1991, Lahiri 2000, Lahiri and Reetz 2002, Ghini 2001, Scharinger et al. 2010) and propose an underspecified prefix vowel. FUL incorporates ideas on underspecification and uses monovalent distinctive features. FUL assigns the same place features to vowels and consonants and claims that the aperture node is relevant for the consonants as well. In our analysis, the prefix vowel is an unspecified vowel which needs Tongue Height [HIGH] to surface. Similar morphophonological alternations are observed in the surface suffixation of the *ezafe* construction and the perfective formation. These morphophonological alternations in the suffixations are used as an additional evidence for our analysis of the prefix vowel variation.

This talk presents the chapter in which the morphophonological alternations in the suffixation are analysed with the help of distinctive features assigned to them by the FUL feature matrix. These phonological rules we arrive at are further used in the analysis of the unspecified prefix vowel. As already mentioned, we show that the prefix vowel is underlyingly a high vowel which needs Tongue Height (TH) [HIGH] to surface. This TH assimilates from the following vowel. When the vowel is unable to spread TH [HIGH], the consonant TH is used. The chapter also shows how the Hazaragi data supports the claim of aperture node relevance to consonants.