



زانكۆی سه‌لاحه‌دین – ههولیر

Salahaddin University _Erbil

Dissimilation in English and Kurdish

A Graduation Research Project

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Abstract

The present study investigates the phonological process of dissimilation in English and Kurdish , which is the process of making sounds dissimilar due to some different reasons in both languages. The significance of this research is the fact that despite of being an important process in phonology, dissimilation in sounds happens by natives of both languages in daily conversation which shows the importance of the process. The methods that helped in conducting this study was first , finding the fact that the process is totally different in these two languages, several books has been used for clarifying definition of dissimilation with articles and dissertation for finds the types of dissimilation in both languages and observing the pronunciation of words between speakers of different accents in Kurdish. As a result, it has been found that in most of the cases the process of dissimilation in English is different with the process in Kurdish.

This research consists of three sections, section one introduces dissimilation by giving definitions with clear examples and explains the causes of this phenomenon in both English and Kurdish. Section two clarifies the four different types of dissimilation in English language with examples. Also section three aims to explain the different types of dissimilation in Kurdish language by giving examples. Moreover it explains the comparative analysis finding as a result of this process in both these two languages. This research paper ends up with a conclusion of the topic and a list of the references.

Section One

Introducing Dissimilation

1.1. Definition of Dissimilation

Dissimilation is the opposite of assimilation. Instead of making sounds similar to each other, dissimilation changes one sound to be less similar to the nearby sound. Thus, dissimilation tends to reduce the number of shared phonetic features between sounds (Crowley, Bowerman 2010:44). The influence of dissimilation is to make sounds more different from the neighboring sounds. For example the word *diphthong* is pronounced as /dɪfθoŋ/ undergoes dissimilation and became *diphthong* that pronounced as /dɪpθoŋ/, other instances in present-day standard English is deleting of one of two [r] sounds from words like cate(r)pillar, Cante(r)bury, rese(r)voir, terrest(r)ial, southe(r)ner, barbitu(r)ate, gove(r)nor, and su(r)prised.

In Kurdish dissimilation can be defined in the same way of English, a process in which a sound will change into another with different phonemic features. For example Kurdish speakers in Hawler and Koya sometimes realize /l/ as /r/ instead of saying /bale/ they say /bare/ and the realize /b/ as /l/ like the word /bo/ they realize it as /lo/ (Almasi, 2010). Other examples like the word (ئەمرو - Amro) is sometimes pronounced as (ئەورو - Awro).

Dissimilation sometimes occurs on consonants as well as on vowels. It is clear that the vowels of language change over time. This may be due to the emergence of different accents like in Kurdish the vowel (ۆ) was changed to (وو) in the word (روون) while the original word is (روۆن). Some of the researchers say that there are specific types of dissimilation change within a language or cultural group that uses that language. Some forms of this kind of process are known as Low Vowel Dissimilation, or LVD (A. Leverkusen, 2023).

1.2. Causes of Dissimilation

As has been mentioned earlier, dissimilation is the phenomenon in which two sounds in a particular word or phrase cease to resemble each other. There are some reasons behind this process, like language borrowing as words transition from one language to another as Latin word *peregrīnus* that undergoes dissimilation in English and becomes *pilgrim* .

Malamberg (1984:64- 65) states that the production of identical adjacent sounds requires a more nervous concentration and a larger muscular effort than needed or than necessary in the production of dissimilar adjacent sounds. It means that similarity avoidance effects are due to the difficulties associated with processing the sequencing of similar segments. Speakers resort to replacing one of these identical sounds with another to avoid this problem. In other words, speakers tend to reduce the muscle and nerve effort required to produce sound.

One of the views that places the speaker as the main reason for the dissimilarity of similar sequences is that of Bergstrasser (1994:34). He hypothesizes that dissimilation is due to factors of psychology , similar to the causes of tongue slip. It explains that it may make sounds that you do not intend to make. He says that all speakers have a very complex internal system, with a mental image of each sound and an awareness of the movements required to produce it. Therefore, it is hard for a speaker to re-imagine the same movements required for the same sound immediately after uttering the same sound.

Another reason within the perceptual realm is that affects the listener as a starting point is that speakers are not content with simply emphasizing sounds or emphasizing them to get a desired effect. Rather, the speaker may modify (produce) one of two or three consecutive identical sounds, or add one or two

sounds to produce a particular effect for the listener. Fletch (1983:156) ensures that in many cases dissimilation doesn't occur to solve pronunciation problems ; Rather, it is used for exaggeration and other practical reasons. In other words, a speaker may intentionally use dissimilation to emphasize certain words of speech and make them more expressive. Thus, Dissimilation is part of an artistic or poetic process dealing with repetition or doubling of vowels or consonants.

The process of dissimilation in Kurdish happens to make expressing of some words and phrases on tongue easier to utter just like English in some cases ,that's why in Kurdish we only have dissimilation in spoken language not written. Such as changing a voiceless consonant to a voiced consonant or the vice versa without changing the meaning of the word or the phrase like changing (ش) (to (ژ) in the word (پیشمه‌رگه -peshmarga) to (پێژمه‌رگه -pezhmarga). Or sometimes it happens due to having different accents , because Kurdish just like other languages it consists of some different accents. For instance Kurdish speakers in Hawler say (مار-mar) while the original Kurdish word is (مال-mal). It should be observed that these words (مار-mar) or (پێژمه‌رگه-pezhmarga) cannot be used in Kurdish formal writing(Farhadi,2003).

1.3. Dissimilation in The Two Languages Under Study

English has changed since it became a language. Many changes, especially in the structure of phonology of words, both in the course of Old English and in the transition from Old English to Middle English to Modern English, have had far-reaching effects on the English language development. The reason is that language is always developing to be more efficient and smooth by new techniques and easier process(Hickey,1984:279). Dissimilation is the situation in which a nearby sound does not resemble another sound. All sequences of similar sounds are not as liable to dissimilation as others , Liquids /l, r/ , nasals /n, m, ŋ/, and segments that require complex readjustments in the glottis , like aspirated , murmured, and glottalized stops, appear prone to dissimilation(ibid).

In Kurdish language, dissimilation seems to not have similar incentives and effects to that of the English in most of the cases. As has been mentioned before sometimes dissimilation in Kurdish happens due to having different accents. Kurdish speakers in Hawler and Koya sometimes realize /l/ as /r/ , they pronounce (dl) as (dr) and (gur) as (gul). Also Kurdish speakers of Badini accent pronounce (l) sound in some words as clear *L* while Kurdish speakers of Sorani pronounce it as dark *L* as in the word *bale*(Almasi,2010).

Section Two

Types of Dissimilation in English

2.1. Regressive vs. Progressive Dissimilation

This type of dissimilation is about the change in direction. Regressive or “anticipatory” dissimilation refers to the influence of later sound on earlier sound. It is a change that happens from the right to the left and it is more common than the other types of dissimilation which progressive dissimilation. Regressive dissimilation occurs in the English word amphitheatre, very commonly pronounced ampitheatre in which the first /h/ is deleted as a way to dissimilate the /f/ sound with the /θ/ so instead of pronouncing the word as /æmfɪθiətə/, it can be pronounced as /æmpiθiətə/. The influence is regressive because the /θ/ sound influences the preceding /f/ sound. Regressive dissimilation can also be found in English word eksetera /eksetərə/ for etcetera /etsetərə/ which shows the influence of the second /t/ over the first /t/ by changing it to /k/.

Progressive dissimilation which is called lag dissimilation too, refers to the influence of earlier sounds on later sounds. A change that happens from the left to right. It can be found in English word chimney which is dissimilated as chimley. Examples of multiple occurrences of /r/ sound within a word are dissimilated so that the first /r/ may appear as /l/ as in the English word 'pilgrim' which is from the Latin word 'peregrinus'. This means that the word was originally have two /r/s, in English, the first /r/ is changed to /l/ under the influence of the second /r/. And this is distant progressive dissimilation(Campbell,1998:49).

2.2. Adjacent vs. Non-adjacent Dissimilation

This classification deals with the distance between sounds, whether they are adjacent or not adjacent (non-adjacent). Adjacent dissimilation which is called local dissimilation means that there is no distance between the two sounds in question. Non-adjacent Dissimilation (also called distant dissimilation) appears when one sound influences another, even though other segments intervene. In English, adjacent dissimilation can be seen in the non-standard pronunciation *chimley* /tʃimli/ for the standard *chimney* /tʃimni/. This dialect usage shows that both /m/ and /n/ are nasal and therefore more difficult to pronounce than if a lateral /l/ were used instead. Another instance like the word *diphtheria* /difθiəriə/ which have two fricatives /f/+ /θ/ adjacent to each other.

Dissimilation can also occur between non-adjacent sounds, as other sounds intervenes between the sounds , as in the English word *velar* /vi:lə/ (also alveolar, and uvular) which was originally taken from the Latin *velal*. So the second /l/ , which has a vowel sound separating it from the first /l/ , has changed to /r/ so as to making it smoother and easier to hear.

2.3. Manner vs. Place Dissimilation

This classification relates to the degree to which the two sounds in are similar in location and articulation. Changing segments in terms of manner is called manner dissimilation. A clear cross-linguistic observation says that a stop + stop consonant cluster before a vowel is less common than a fricative + stop or a stop + fricative before a vowel . The same is true for postvocalic stop clusters and clusters with two fricatives or two nasals. Examples to explain this can be found in examples of changing two fricatives to stop+ fricative as in diphthong to diphthong, two nasals to nasal + lateral as in the example chimney to chimley(Hickey, 1984:281).

Place dissimilation occurs when the two segments are homorganic so that the sequence is not allowed. A general restriction of place, that happens more than others, is the one that is not allow double occurrence of labials or any two homorganic consonants. Another restriction says that labials and dentals should not come before velars. In English, it is possible to have /kn/, /pl/, /kl/ sequences in Old English but not /tl/ which are both alveolar. There is a plausible explanation for this which is when a sonorant is comes after a homorganic stop the latter cannot be perceived unless there is oral release with the sonorant following immediately (ibid:282).

2.4. Diachronic vs. Synchronic Dissimilation

Diachronic or historical dissimilation happens when words undergo specific changes throughout history. That is, changes within words are revealed over a long period of time. The word purple, it can be found that it is used in medieval English as *purpul* and *purpure* (in medieval French *porpre*) and comes from classical Latin *purpura* with dissimilation of /r/ to /l/. Another instance the word *marble* which comes from the Old French *marbre* and further back comes from the Latin word *marmor*. Latin words in which a derivational suffix *-al* is attached to some of Latin nouns to form adjectives. If the suffix is added to a noun that contained the liquid /l/, the suffix is to be changed to *-ar* (rather than *-al*). The /l/ is changed to the dissimilar /r/. These words came into English as adjectives ending in *-al* or in its dissimilated form *-ar*. It means they become modern English *-al* and *-ar*. Therefore words like: 'orbit, person, culture, electric' form their adjectives by adding the *-al* suffix as 'orbital, personal, cultural, electrical'. Those words that have an /l/ preceding the ending anywhere in the root will be suffixed with *-ar* suffix like in 'single, module, luna' becoming 'singular, modular, lunar'(Denham and Lobeck,2010:80). Other instances like in words 'anecdotal, annual, mental, penal, spiritual, venal' adding the *-al* suffix while words like 'angular, annular, columnar, perpendicular, similar, velar' take the dissimilated *-ar* suffix because of the existing /l/ in the root of the words(ibid).

Synchronic dissimilation is another type of dissimilation that can be found in English. Suitable examples of this kind can be seen in the tongue twisters which consist repeated similar onset consonants(e.g. sit zap zoo sip). The pronunciation of these sounds is more difficult to produce comparing to those that do not consist repeated onsets (e.g. sit shop zoo tip). Tongue twisters consist repetition are analogous to polysyllabic words consist pairs of alike segments, i.e., the input to

dissimilation rules. Therefore, perhaps there will be an additional functional motivation for dissimilation in the obstacles of processing words consisting repeated segments through producing speech. Other instances of making pronunciation easy during dissimilation can be seen in some varieties of English, where there is a fricative dissimilation rule. This applies to sequences /f+θ/ and /s+θ/, changing them to [f+t] and [s+t]. In this example the fricative /θ/ becomes dissimilar to the preceding fricative by becoming a stop. For example, the words fifth /fifθ/ and sixth/siksθ /come to be pronounced as if they were spelled fift /fift/and sikst /sikst/ (Frisch,2004:347).

Section Three

Types of Dissimilation in Kurdish

The process of dissimilation in Kurdish is different from those of English.

3.1.Changing Voiceless Phoneme to Voiced Phoneme and the vice versa.

Changing a voiceless consonant to a voiced consonant like

3.1.1.Changing /ش/ to /ژ/

پاش نوێژ — پاز نیژ
 پێشمەرگه — پێژ مەرگه
 پشدهر — پژدهر

3.1.2.Changing /ئ/ to /د/

In Irbil accent in present tenses /ئ/ becomes /د/

ئهچم — دهچم
 ئهكهوئ — دهكهوئ

3.1.3.Changing /س/ to /ز/

دهست گر — دهزگر
 گه لاس — گهراز

3.1.4.Changing /ئ/ to /ع/

ئاسمان — عاسمان
 ئافهریم — عافهریم

3.1.5.Changing/ت/to /د/

لهگهلت ديم — لهگمرد ديم

سيقهتوره — سيقهدوره

3.1.6.Changing/پ/to/ب/

زوپا — سوپه

دهستی چهپ بی خیره — دهستی چهب بی خیره

3.1.7.Changing /ع/to /ح/

حاجی — عاجی

حهمد — عهمد

Changing a voiced consonant to a voiceless consonant like

3.1.8.Changing /ش/ to /ژ/

روژتان باش — روشتان باش

3.1.9.Changing/غ/ to /ق/

کاغز — قاقز

3.1.10.Changing /ع/to /ح/

عہلی — حہلی

عہنتیکه — حہنتیکه

3.1.11.Changing /ز/to /س/

زوپا — سوپه

زلق — سرق

3.1.12.Changing /ب/ to /پ/

بہیہ کہو — پیکہو

بہئو دا — پئدا

3.1.13.Changing /و/ to /ف/

نہوت — نہفت

مزگہوت — مزگہفت

حہوت — حہفت

(Farhadi,2003)

3.2. Changing a Voiced Phoneme to Another Voiced Phoneme

3.2.1.Changing /ر/ to /ل/

گور — گول

دل — در

3.2.2.Changing /و/ to /م/

نهورو — نهورو

دهم — دهو

3.2.3Changing /ب/ to /م/

موسلمان — بوسرمان

3.2.4.Changing /و/ to /م/

ههتيو — ههتيم

چهتيو — چهتيم

3.2.5.Changing/غ/ to/گ/

جگهه — جگار

3.2.6.Changing/ب/ to/ل/

بو — لو

3.2.7.Changing /ن/ to /م/

فانيله — فاميله

(Farhadi,2003)

3.4. Changing a Voiceless Phoneme to Another Voiceless Phoneme.

3.4.1.Changing/ح/ to /هه/

همزه ——— همزه

حەریر ——— هەریر

3.4.2.Changing /ئ/ to /ها/

ئارد ——— هارد

3.4.3.Changing /غ/to /ق/

کاغەز ——— قاقەز

(Farhadi,2003)

3.5 Comparative Analysis Findings

According to these explanations, it has been found that English and Kurdish languages do not share almost the same causes for dissimilating sounds, except for one of the causes of dissimilation that is in both languages dissimilation sometimes happens to make expressing of some phrases or words easier. In each of these two languages the process of dissimilation is happened due to some other different reasons and they do not share the same types. Unlike the process of dissimilation in English, in Kurdish dissimilation does not use in written language it can be used only in spoken language. Dissimilation is only get by making sounds dissimilar, although other processes have been found to support this phenomenon. Processes like metathesis, deletion and addition. As a result, different methods are used to avoid similar sound structures, the main one is the process of making them dissimilar.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Dissimilation, wherein two sounds in a word become less similar to one another ,or the avoidance of similar sounds in a word is observed. It is the opposite of the process of assimilation in which the sounds assimilate to each other. This process is a sound change process , that is found in almost all languages. In each language, rules maybe different from each other. For instance dissimilation in English is totally different from dissimilation in Kurdish. Each language follows its own rules. The reasons behind the processes can be different too. If English dissimilation is due to borrowing words, most of Kurdish dissimilation is due to different accents and different vocabulary.

The research ends with the finding that there are different reasons for the existence of this phenomenon both in English and Kurdish language , each of them has its own types for this process and there different ways to make sounds dissimilar in English and Kurdish according to some rules.

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