

## **An Exploration of Siswati Palatalization as A Morpho-Phonological Process**

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**Abstract:** - *It is the study of palatalization as a phenomena to which the consonants with little or absolutely no palatal features are completely superseded by the consonants with more palatal characteristics. The focus of this process is on causes, place of occurrences and sound changes caused by the speech sounds. The objectives of this study are to highlight morpho-phonological process as a science of speech and sound patterns that are concerned with the linguistic aspects of sounds structure, articulatory and perceptual behaviour. It is the study of the value attached by the hearer to the sounds uttered by the speaker. It deals with the phonetic phenomena from the point of view of their function in the language. The sound processes are classified, described and explained using the phonological rules and domains. The functional approach is adopted to cogently illustrate this specific morpho-phonological process.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Functional approach, Morphological process, Palatalization, Perceptual behaviour and Speech sounds.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Morpho-phonology is the division of the study which studies the influence of sounds on the other and changes caused.

Phonology is the study of the value attached by the hearer to the sound uttered by the speaker. It deals with phonetic phenomena from the point of view of their function in the language. This approach is called phonology by most linguists especially in Europe while in America they call it phonemics. Phonology consist mainly of the changes which sounds undergo when they are placed in juxtaposition. This kind of phonology is nowadays called morpho-phonology (Gussman 2002)

The phonological rules apply within some specific units of the language. They operate within syllables, words, phrases or sentences. The focus is on sound changes that occur from one process to another. (Nathan 2008)

#### **Statement of the problem**

- It is the phonological process which has no distinct and simple causes to justify its occurrences.
- The process of sound changes often looked at without considering the place and the manner of articulation.
- The phonological process such as palatalization, labialization, velarisation and alveolarization are sometimes mixed due to their speech sounds.

### **II. Research methodology**

Phonology is concerned with the linguistic aspects of sound structure, articulatory and perceptual behaviour. Like all sciences, linguistics employ two main approaches in method namely the diatonic and synchronic.

- A diachronic study places the account on the dynamic aspect of language. It gives attention to the growth and development of words and forms, as well as their continual changes.
- A synchronic study is based on the evidence supplied by language at the certain moment, viewed as static.

### **Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are the following:

- To define palatalization as a process for broader understanding of its form.
- To identify the causes and sound changes during the process.
- To explain and interpret the function of palatalization process.

### **Research questions**

The research questions that are essential in explaining the statement of the problem are the following:

- Why is palatalization as a process defined?
- How are the causes and sound changes identified in palatalization?
- To what extent are the palatalization's functions explained and interpreted?

## **III. Discussion**

Phonology is the science of speech sounds and patterns. Each language of the world has its own sound pattern. By sound pattern, we mean the art of the sounds that occur in a given language the permissible arrangement of the sound in words and process for adding, deleting or changing sounds. (Oostendorp 2011)  
Linell (1979:30) says that:

*“Phonology deals with the sound signals of the languages and that does from linguistics rather than a physical point of view.”*

If phonology is language-specific phonetics, it should account for all those rules which have to do with the sound structure of what is regarded as phonological and grammatically correct. (Jenkins 2000)

Phonology has a psychological aspect. Even though phonetics can identify many properties of speech sounds, only certain of these properties play a role in phonology. With appropriate instruments, precise values for the length, loudness and pitch of sounds can be measured. We speak of these values as measurement of absolute length, absolute loudness and absolute pitch. (Kreidler 2001)

Phonology constitutes of a highly organised system of knowledge. The study of phonology provides information to those interested in the psychology of cognition and in epistemology. Each language has its own unique sound system. Individual sound systems may differ from one another in three mains ways:

- In their sound inventories.
- In the sound sequence they permit.
- In their phonology process. (Lorenz 2013)

One goal of phonology is to describe these differences. The information gained from phonology has application in a number of areas, both practical and theoretical. Phonology employs descriptions and classifications to describe a sound systems and explain sound processes. (Trask 2004)

Lass (1984:01) defines phonology as:

*That discipline within linguistics, concerned with the sounds of language.... the function, behaviour and organisation of sounds as linguistic items.*

We cannot study the function of sounds in language without reference to their articulatory or acoustic properties. We cannot study sounds in a vacuum, with no reference to their linguistic function. The examples are the following:

*Inkhabib* is a voiced bilabial explosive.

*Inkhatjana* **tj** (h) is an aspirated alveolar affricate

*Intsambo* (rope) **mb** is a voiced bilabial nasal compound

*Intsanjana* **nj** is a voiced affricate nasal compound

*Liphaphu* **ph** is a voiceless prepalatal fricative

*Luma* **m** is a voiced bilabial nasal

*Lunywa* **nyis** is a voiceless prepalatal nasal

*Licandza* **ndzis** is a voiced alveolar affricate in a nasal compound

*Licanjana* **njis** is a voiced affricate in a nasal compound

## Results/findings

### PALATALIZATION

#### Causes

- (i) The vowel **i** with its equivalent semi-vowel **y** e.g.  
*inkhabi* (ox) > diminutive \**inkhabiana*> \**inkhabyana* > *inkhatjana* (small ox)
- (ii) The vowel **e** with its equivalent semi-vowel **y** e.g.  
*lihlonbe* (shoulder) > \**lihlonbeana*>\**lihlonbyana*> *lihlonjana* (little shoulder)
- (iii) The vowel **u** and its equivalent semi-vowel **w**, e.g.  
*liphaphu*>\**liphaphuana*>\**liphaphwana*> *liphashana* (small lung)
- (iv) The vowel **o** with its equivalent semi-vowel **w**, e.g.  
*Inkhomo* (cow) > diminutive \**inkhomoana*> \* *inkhomwana*\**inkhonyana* (calf)

#### Where palatalization occurs

- (i) with diminutive of nouns, e.g.  
*inkhabi*(ox) > *inkhatjana* (small ox) **b= tj**
- (ii) with the passive of verb stems, e.g.  
*-hlupha* (worry) > *hlushwa* (be worried) **ph=sh**
- (iii) with locatives of noun, e.g.  
*sigubhu* (calabash) > *esigujini* (in the calabash) **bh= j**
- (vi) With a number of class prefixes before a vowel stem, e.g.  
\**bualatjwala* (beer) **ua= tj**

#### Sound changes caused

**b** > **tj**: *inkhabi* (ox) > *inkhatjana* (small ox)

*-loba* (write) > *-lotjwa* (be written)

*ingubo* (blanket) > *engutjeni* (in the blanket)

*tjwala* (bear) < \**buala*, class bu-

**bh** > **j**: *sigubhu* (calabash) < *sigujana* (small calabash)

*-gubha* (hollow out) > *-gujwa* (be hollowed out)

**ph** > **sh**: *imphuphu* (meal) > *imphushana* (a little meal)

-*kipha* (take out) >*khishwa* (be taken out)

*imphuphu* (meal) >*emphushini* (in the meal)

**m** > **ny**:*umlomo* (mouth) >*umlonyana* (a small mouth)

-*luma* (bite) >*lunywa* (be bitten)

**m** > **ny**:*umlomo* (mouth) > *emlonyeni* (in the mouth)

**mp** > **ntj**:*insumpa* (pimple) >*insuntjana* (small pimple)

**other examples are the following;**

*sikhatsi* (time) >*sikhashana* (a little time)

*incwadzi* (letter) >*incwajana* (little letter)

*sitsendze* (heel) >*sitsenjana* (a small heel)

**n** > **ny**:*silwane* (beast) >*silwanyana* (small beast)

#### IV. Conclusion

It is demonstrated that non-palatal sounds are made palatal. It is one of the phonological processes like assimilation, affricatization, labialization and vowel raising. Morphology as the study of forms of words is looked at in relation to the sound changes i.e. phonology. This sound process becomes evident when looked at from the place to the manner of articulation.

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