Centralization in Language Varieties of Kerman Province

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Abstract
This study has been investigating the centralization process (a kind of lenition) in 15 variants of Kerman province as: Baft, Bardsir, Bam, Jiroft, Rabor, Rafsanjan, south Roudbar, Zarand, Sirjan, Shahrbabak, Kerman, Kahnouj, Golbaf, Gougher and Meymand according to the Generative Phonology. Given the extent of Kerman province and high diversity of its variants, some cities are different in pronunciation of some sounds. Even, some variants (Jirofti, Kahnouji and South Roudbar) are incomprehensible for other informants. Different pronunciation of one single word with a single meaning besides nuance difference in phonology caught the attention of the authors and their similarities and differences were studied and analyzed with regard to the centralization process. Most of the mentioned variants have glossary, poetical works and idioms. Besides, the authors have interviewed informants, two men and two women for each city. Some of the results are as follows: 1- In the variants of Kerman province just innately the short vowels /a, e, o/ change into central and non-round vowel. 2- The short vowels /a, e/ change into central and non-round vowel in the open syllable CV environment. 3- The short vowel /o/ changes to central, non-round vowel after non-grave, non-labial consonant in the content of the open syllable CV.
Keywords: Kerman variants, short vowel, centralization, lenition, syllable.

1. Introduction

Kerman is one of the vastest province in south-east of Iran and according to the latest country subdivisions of the year 1390, it consists of 23 small towns, 64 cities, 58 sectors and 151 villages; therefore, possesses high diversity of variants. Pronunciation of some sounds is different from each other in some cities and even some variants can be found which are somehow incomprehensible for informants of other variants such as Jirofti, Kahnouji and South Roudbar. Different pronunciation of one single word with a single meaning besides nuance difference in phonology have caught the attention of the authors and the similarities and differences of Kerman variants were studied and analyzed in Generative Phonology with regard to the centralization process, a kind of lenition. Lenition process is observed in many variants and accents of Persian language and has its special structure in each of these variants and accents. Lenition has various kinds such as deletion, spirantization, conversion of fricative or stopping consonants to approximant, homogeneity of stopping and nasal consonants, and reduction to a non-glottal consonant. In this study from among the aforesaid issues we are supposed to investigate the centralization process in the variants of Kerman Province like Baft, Bardsir, Bam, Jiroft, Rabor, Rafsanjan, South Roudbar, Zarand, Sirjan, Shahrebabak, Kerman, Kahnouj, Golbaf, Gougher and Meymand according to the Generative Phonology.

2- Literature Review

A large variety of studies have been carried out within the recent years. Most of them are on the basis of terminology and phonological grounds by using different types of approaches. Parmoun (1996) tries to investigate phonological system of Kerman variety in the framework of two dominant theories of the era, i.e. Generative Phonology of Chomsky and Hale (SPE, 1968). This study as trying to present real evidences of phonological system of an active and natural system, in the framework of linear and non-linear dominant in today's phonology, tried to identify different aspects of the phonological system. Bagheri (1997) linguistically investigates Rafsanjani variety by "interview". This collection includes grammatical, phonological and morphological information about this variety. Soltaninezhad (2000) in his thesis investigates phonology and morphology of the two varieties of Bafti and Jirofti as well as the word formation and the sentence structure of them. Abbasnezhad Baniasadi (2002) has investigated and identified phonological features of Bam and compared these features with standard Persian. For accomplishing this aim, the author firstly collected the variety's words, then investigated them and at the end categorized them into inversion and conversion for vowels and consonants. Kambuziya (2003): She mentions about the lenition rule in Persian, for instance fricative consonant /v/ changes into approximant [w]. According to the author, this process happens when the labio-dental fricative /v/ situated after the low front vowel /a/ at the end of the syllable. Also, the aforesaid process itself becomes an input for another rule which transforms the low front vowel /a/ to the mid back vowel [o]. In other

words, the first rule feeds the second one. Of course, when the labio-dental fricative /v/ is placed at the beginning of the syllable or when it is a part of a geminate consonant in a morpheme, lenition process does not apply.

3- Methodology

The research herein follows a descriptive- analytic method and most of the data have been assembled by a field method. In gathering the data, as well as the intuition of one of the authors as a native speaker of Kerman, the recording of thirty hours of informants, including educated and non-educated, men and women, between 18-65 years of age, have been used. In collecting of the data written documents such as books, glossary, poetical work and idioms, article, thesis and dissertation which have been written about the 15 aforesaid dialects are used. As dialects of Kerman Province are cognates of Standard Persian, all are categorized under south-western group of Iranian languages and considered as dialects or varieties of Standard Persian. Therefore, Kerman varieties have alternated with Standard Persian.

Hypothesizing phase starts after these alternates as two hypotheses are presented for defining an infrastructure. In each hypothesis the existing form in Kerman varieties are infrastructural and by exerting a phonemic rule the form in standard Persian is designated and in other hypothesis the infrastructure is standard Persian and the existing form in the varieties of language produced by a phonemic rule. Finally, one of the hypothesis rejected by a violation example and the correct hypothesis presented as a phonemic rule in transformative Generative Phonology.

4. Persian Consonants

Persian consonants comprise 23 which, unlike vowels, can appear at the beginning of a word. Persian plosive consonants include: / b, p, t, d, χ, ⑩, ❶, ✍/. Fricative consonants include: /↗, ❖, s, z, ♠, ☾, ≋, Ξ/. Affricate consonants include: /t♠, dΖ/, liquid: /r/, lateral: /●/, nasals: /m, n/, and glide: /ℯ⫟/.

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Uvular	Glottal
Plosive	b p		t d			c ɟ	❶	✍
Fricative		f v		s.............z	∫ ☾		✠	h
Affricate					ʧ ʤ			
Nasal	m			n				
Trill				r				
Lateral				λ				
Glide						j		

Table 1: Persian Consonants (Kambuziya, 2006)

The Persian language has six vowels. The group of front vowels: / i, e, ☺/ and the group of back vowels: /◆, □, A/. Diachronically, Persian possesses a distinction of length in its underlying vowel inventory, contrasting the long vowels: / i, ◆, A/ with the short ones: /e, □, ☺/ respectively.(Samareh, 1977: 86). There are just two features in Persian vocalic system having phonological function. They include: a) the front and back feature, b) the degree of the height of the tongue. The form or position of the lips isn't considered as a phonological feature, because the form of the lips in articulation of back and front vowels is often rounded and unrounded respectively.
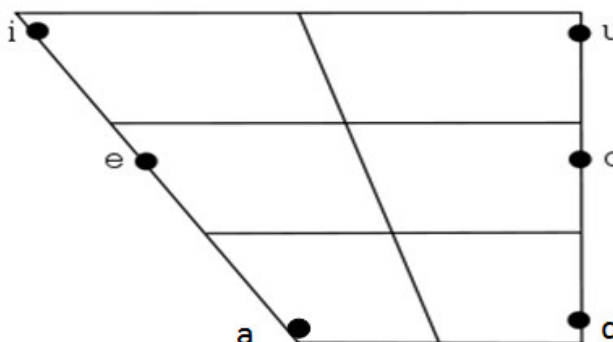

Table 2: Persian Vowels (Kord Zafaranlu Kambuziya, 2006)

	p	b	t	d	c	ɟ	f	v	s	z	ʃ	ʒ	x	q	ɣ	tʃ	dʒ	m	n	l	r	j	h	ʔ
consonant	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
sonorant	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
continuant	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
voice	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
strident	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
nasal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
lateral	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
distributed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
labial	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
affricate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
coronal	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
anterior	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-
uvular	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
dorsal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
high	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
low	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
back	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
round	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 3: Distinctive Features of Kerman Consonants

	i	e	a	u	o	ɑ
back	-	-	-	+	+	+
high	+	-	-	+	-	-
low	-	-	+	-	-	+
long	+	-	-	+	-	+
round	-	-	-	+	+	-
central	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 4: Distinctive Features of Kerman Vowels

5- Lenition

Kenstowicz (1994, 35-36) states: "Sound changes from left to right on the stop-fricative-approximant dimension are known as weakening or lenition while changes from right to left are strengthening or fortition. Postvocalic context is the most typical environment for the change from stop to fricative or spirantization." Trask (1996: 201) defines lenition as: "Any phonological process in which a segment becomes either less strongly occluded or more sonorous. Often the term is extended to various other processes, such as loss of aspiration, shortening of long segments and monophthongization of diphthongs, which represent "weakening" in some intuitive sense". Baerquest (2001, 168) writes: "Stronger consonants incline to situate in a stronger syllable stance, i.e., these consonants prefer to be in the first syllable while weaker phonemes choose weaker stances. In his view, reinforcement process occurs in a strong environment and lenition process in the weak one. It seems that these changes connect to syllable-related environment." Carr (2008, 89-88) writes: "Any process whereby consonants become weaker, in the sense of becoming voiced and/or undergoing a diminution in stricture, such as intervocalic voicing of voiceless sounds, reduction of voiceless fricatives to [h]. Lenition processes are often cited as evidence for the sonority hierarchy." Crystal (2008: 279) says: "A term used in phonology to refer to a weakening in the overall strength of a sound, whether diachronically or synchronically; opposed to fortition. Typically, lenition involves the change from a stop to a fricative, a fricative to an approximant, a voiceless sound to a voiced sound, or a sound being reduced (lenite) to zero." According to Jensen (2004, 65) lenition mostly occurs between two vowels and it can be considered a kind of homogeneity process in which fricative closure homogenizes with the degree of adjacent phone.

6- Centralization

A process containing conversion of other vowels to the central vowels is called centralization wherein the related syllable remains without emphasize (Crystal, 1992: 56). The centralization process of short vowels is one of the unique processes of phonological system of the variants of Kerman province. In the aforesaid variants, among the six vocalized segments of their phonological system, three vowels are included in this process.

Persian vowels can be divided into two categories of long and short according to the length and the phonotactics of the language. The three vowels /a, e, o/ are considered as short and the three /ɑ, i, u/ as long.

Elongation and shortness of Persian vowels can be put under investigation in traditional prosody system of Persian which exactly established on the basis of syllable weight and length. As in one verse, if the place of a syllable with a long vowel changes with a syllable with a short one, then poem's rhyme disturbed; for instance, in the following hemistich:

/sabɑ be tahnijat-e pir-e mej-foɾu♦ (ʔ)ɑmad/

     If a syllable like /bi/ is put instead of a short vowel /be/, the rhyme of the poem will be disturbed; while, another syllables such as /ba, bo/ can be used instead of /be/ without disturbing its rhyme at all.(Samare, 1364: 102). This condition is true in the variants of Kerman province. Kermani vowels are generally shorter than their similar vowels in standard Persian. Secondly, at least in speech of real informants of this variant, two compound vowels of /eɪ, oʊ/ do not exist and instead, initial long part of these vowels, i.e. /e:/ and /o:/ play roles (Parmoun, 1375: 196). In variants of Kerman province, this process acts just as innately short vowels /a, e, o/.

     In the aforesaid variants, three common grammatical morphemes "additional symbol of genitive marker/-e/, connective /v⚥v/, indicator /r⚥/" change to central vowel /ə/ (in Jirofti, Roudbari and Kahnouji variant usually additional genitive marker) additional sign of /e/ which comes in between possessor and possessed and adjective and a qualifier will be omitted. Also in this variant the reference word is usually omitted." These morphemes appear in CV environment and mostly in a form of central vowel [ə], of course the mid back vowel /o/ in Kermani variants after non-grave non-labial consonants change into central one. In Crystal (2003: 211) about grave feature, it is stated that: "grave is one of the features established by Jackobson and Hale in the theory of distinctive features to elucidate the place of production's alternates. Grave phones can be defined in terms of aural and production. Final production is allocated to grave phones in the vocal system. Final production means voice produced in both ends of mouth, i.e. in lips or velum which has back feature. These phones cause aural energy concentration in lower frequencies." Consequently, labial, velar consonants can be considered as grave consonants. Also, in Zarandi variant if [t]، [r] ، [♦] and [j] consonants are at the beginning of syllable, the following vowel /a/ becomes centralized. The reason of this centralization is this fact that syllabic structure of variants of Kerman province in the underlying structure, just accept one consonant as an initial part of a syllable. Of course, negative morpheme (ma) in spite of situating in CV environment, would not be centralized and this is because of this morpheme's special morphological feature. Whereas, the centralization process of /a/ can be operated on this rule for negative morpheme /na/ in spite of stressed vowel /a/.

Some of the examples of centralization in the variants of Kerman province are as follows:

Table 1: conversion of the vowels /a/ and /e/ into central vowel [ə]

Bafti variant	Standard Persian	English meaning	Bafti variant	Standard Persian	English meaning
cərdan	cardan	to do	cəlɑ✿	calɑG	crow
rəhim	rahim	merciful	bərendʒ	berendʒ	rice
pəsəri	pesar-i	a boy	dʒəvidan	dʒavidan	chew
cəmarband	camarband	belt	bəhɑr	bahɑr	spring

Table 2: conversion of the vowels /e/ and /a/ into central vowel [ə]

Underlined form	Bardsiri variant	Standard Persian	English meaning	Underlined form	Bardsiri variant	Standard Persian	English meaning
zeneft	zənəft	✠a♦en	[1]rough		bəre	barre	lamb
medu	mədu[2]	susc	beetle		bə♦in	bene♦in	sit
	səbu	sabu	jug	peperme	pəperme	ɑbnabɑt	candy
	məcidan	macidan	to suck		[3]səbil	sebil	mustache

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1- Specially used about clothes and cloth.
2-This beetle mostly found in kitchen. (Broumand, 1370: 186)
3- Word "mustache" in Bafti variant is pronounced [səʋil].
4- Something which piled on each other in a mess.
5- long garment open in front

Table 3: conversion of the vowels /e/ and /a/ into central vowel [ə]

Bami variant	Standard persian	English meaning	Bami variant	Persian	English meaning
vɑrəsi	bɑrandɑz	looking over	ma:rəce	maᴂrece	juggler
qəvɑ	abɑ	[4]ghaba	nə̃gɑ	ne⑩ɑh	look
ʔessəkɑn	estecɑn	cup	təbɑ	tabɑh	spoiled/destroyed
təlɑmbɑr	talanbɑr	[5]stockpile	cerɑ	cerɑje	hire

Table 4: conversion of the vowel /a/ into central vowel [ə]

Jirofti and Kahnouji variant	Standard Persian	English meaning	Jirofti and Kahnouji variant	Standard Persian	English meaning
nəzic	nazdic	near	pəre◆c	cam	little (very little)
dərip	porbudan	fullness	pərisc	sabr	patience
səndon	san⑩dɑn	gizzard	dəlbaj	kamar	back

Table 5: conversion of the vowels /a/ and /e/ into central vowel [ə]

Rabori variant	Standard Persian	English meaning	Underlined form	Rabori variant	Standard Persian	English Meaning
bərɑ✠onte	bɑrɑdar✠ɑnde	adopted brother		ʔe◆cəl	mo◆cel	difficulty
bənəvis	benevis	[6]write		ᴂəf☆i	af☆i	viper
zəmin	zamin	earth		ᴂəlade	ʤod᪒	seprate
təlɑmbɑr	talanbɑr	stockpile	ʔanzarɑt	ʔanzərɑt	cam	little

Table 6: conversion of the vowels /e/ and /a/ into central vowel [ə]

Rafsanjani variant	Standard Persian	English meaning	Rafsanjani variant	Standard Persian	English meaning
təri◆e	bɑrice	strips	parpəru	parvɑne	butterfly
pi◆tərɑ	pi◆tar	formerly	pəhen	pehen	dung
tʃətari	tʃetori	how	rəmundan	ramɑndan	to cause to run wild
sərəvɑ✠	sarevaGt	on time	cənesc	✠asis	stingy

Table 7: conversion of the vowels /e/ and /a/ into central vowel [ə]

Roudbari variant	Standard Persian	English meaning	Roudbari variant	Standard Persian	English meaning
vasləhat	vaslat	marriage	dərɑ✠t	derɑ✠t	tree
mehrəbon	mehrabɑn	kind	ʔasləha	ʔaslahe	gun
həsrat	hasrat	regret	cəble	Geble	kiblah
fəlfel/pəlpel	felfel	pepper	təvakoh	tavaGo☆	except

1- A person who is in charge of gathering gifts on behalf of bridegroom. (Negini, 1382: 50)

Table 8: conversion of the vowels /o/ and /a/ into central vowel [ə]

Zarandi variant	Standard Persian	English meaning	Underlined form	Zarandi variant	Standard Persian	English meaning
dʒəli	dʒol-hⅧ	rags		zənine	zanɑne	feminine
◆əle	◆ol-ast	it is loose		sərⅧ	sar-hⅧ	heads
rəbɑ	rob-hɑ	tommato sauce	calast	cəlu	catʃale	the bald
motəli	motori	the motor		məzadʒ	mazadʒ	appetite

Table 9: conversion of the vowels /a/, /o/ and /e/ into central vowel [ə]

Sirjani variant	Standard Persian	English meaning	Sirjani variant	Standard Persian	English meaning
harɑrəti	harɑrati	[8]thermal	badəʔe◆cam	bad-e ◆ecam	[7]phart
darə✿e	dɑruGe	sheriff	badə✍aqrab	bad-e aGrab	A kind of wind
qəlif	Gablame	sauce pan	pulpətal	pul-o pale	dough
cəbⅧbə◆ami	cabɑb-e ◆ami	meat kebab	bəre◆te	bere◆te	toasted

Table 10: conversion of the vowels /a/ and /e/ into central vowel [ə]

Shahrebabaki variant	Standard Persian	English meaning	Shahrebabaki variant	Standard Persian	English meaning
mamələ	mo☆amele	transaction	bərat	barɑjat	for you
nardəvun	nardeban	ladder	zəvun	zabɑn	tongue
bəsɑt	basat	means	cəman	camand	hair
tʃərɑ✿	tʃerɑG	lamp	rə◆tan	re◆tan	weave

Table 11: conversion of the vowels /o/, /a/ and /e/ into central vowel [ə]

Kermani variant	Standard Persian	English meaning	Kermani variant	Standard Persian	English meaning
bərɑdar	barɑdar	brother	məsafer	mosafer	passenger
bə✠or	be-✠or	eat	məhalem	mo☆alem	teacher
cərɑvɑt	ceravɑt	tie	fəluni	folani	someone
təvahom	tavahom	illusion	mətəri	motori	the motor
mə⑩ar	ma⑩ar	unless	dovəmi	dovomi	second
◆etor	◆otor	camel	bəla◆o	boland◆o	stand up
təma	tumɑn[9]	toman	ʔardəku	ardacɑn	ardakan

Table 12: conversion of the vowels /e/ and /a/ into central vowel [ə]

Golbaf variant	Standard Persian	English meaning	Golbaf variant	Standard Persian	English meaning
xəreft	✠ereft	stupid	cəli	celid	key
təri◆e	✠acarre	sawdust	dərɑzcə◆idan	derɑzce◆idan	to recline
nalvəci	na☆lbeci	saucer	dəvidan	davidan	to run
✍adəmizɑd	ɑdamizɑd	human	səku	sacine	sakine

1- Swelling a pregnant woman (Moayed Mohseni, 1381: 22)

2- Hot - tempered

3- The word "tumAn/toman" has two pronunciations and the vowel /o/ changes to central vowel [ə].

Table 13: conversion of the vowels /a/ and /e/ into central vowel [ə]

Gougheri variant	Standard Persian	English meaning	Gougheri variant	Standard Persian	English meaning
ʔe♦cəmi	♦ecami	gormand	təvol	tɑval	blister
sərɑbɑlɑi	sarbɑlɑi	uphill	ʔəzijeti	azijati	[10]-
bəjone	bej☆ɑne	deposit	bəlɑl	balɑl	roast corn
dʒəmal	doGolu	twin	dəma✿	damaG	peeved
			hərom	harɑm	unlawful

Table 14: conversion of the vowels /a/ and /e/ into central vowel [ə]

Meymandi variant	Standard Persian	English meaning	Meymandi variant	Standard Persian	English meaning
✵əvar	✵abar	news	⑩əroftan	⑩ereftan	to get
ʔa qəvil	azGabil	such as	cəfan	cafan	shroud
cəsel	cesel	bored	həsɑb	hesɑb	account
dərɛwcerdan	derokardan	to harvest	qafəle	Gafele	caravan

Investigating the aforesaid data expresses a phonological alternation between vowels of /a/ and /e/ of table 2. There are two hypotheses for defining the underlying structure:

First hypothesis: vowels /a/ and /e/ are the underlying structure and a rule is needed for changing them into a central vowel.

Second hypothesis: Central /ə/ vowel is an underlying vowel and there is a rule for changing it to [a] and [e] vowels.

Second hypothesis is rejected because according to "distribution" standard, a segment has the underlying structure which its distribution is completed in all phonological positions. In the variants of Kerman province, /a/ and /e/ vowels are found in all phonological positions like initial, intermediate and final while, in the aforesaid variants, vowel /ə/ is produced not as a phoneme but as phoneme-like or allophone of /a/ and /e/ in words and uninterrupted speech in an open CV syllable and in a few cases in a closed CVC syllable.

The rule for this centralization is shown as follow:

Rule 1:

{a, e} → ə ☞c — cv (c)

$$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{sylabic} \\ - \text{back} \\ - \text{long} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} - \text{low} \\ + \text{central} \\ - \text{round} \end{bmatrix} \quad C \Big/ \text{——— CV (C)}$$

Rule 1 indicates conversion of the vowels /a/ and /e/ into a central and non-round vowel in an open CV environment or sometimes in a CVC closed environment.

Rule 2:

o → ə ☞ c _____
   [- grave,- labial]

$$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{sylabic} \\ + \text{back} \\ - \text{high} \\ - \text{low} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} - \text{low} \\ + \text{central} \\ - \text{round} \end{bmatrix} \Big/ \begin{bmatrix} + \text{consonant} \\ - \text{grave} \\ - \text{labial} \end{bmatrix} \text{———}$$

Rule 2 expresses conversion of short vowel /o/ into a central, non-round [ə] after a non-labial, non-grave consonant in a CV environment.

7- Conclusion

The process of centralization is one of the unique process in the variants of Kerman Province especially Kerman variant. From among 6 vowels /ɑ, i, u, a, e, o/ only short vowels /a, e, o/ are subjected to this process. In the aforesaid variants, three common morphemes "genitive marker /-e/, connective /vΛv/ and indicator /ra/" change into a central vowel [ə]; however, in Jirofti, Roudbari and Kahnouji variants usually an additional genitive marker and also connective preposition which comes between possessor and possessed, and adjective and

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1- A person possessed by the δZin (Naghavi, 1386: 40).

qualifier is omitted. These phonemes in open syllable CV environments and mostly non-stressed appears as a central vowel [ə].The mid back vowel /o/ in Kermani variants manifests after non-labial, no-grave consonants as a central vowel. According to the speech of new generation of informants and real variant of Kermani, it seems that through a gradual trend of "vocal change",the mid back vowel /o/ changes into a central and non-round [ə] after a non-labial, non-grave consonant in a CV environment.

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