

THEORETICAL VIEWS OF EASTERN LINGUISTS ABOUT ALLOMORPHS

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Annotation: This article explores the development and study of the concept of allomorph in Eastern linguistics. It analyzes how Eastern linguists have defined, classified, and interpreted allomorphs, focusing on phonetic, morphological, and semantic factors influencing their appearance in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, and other Eastern languages. The research also compares the Eastern perspectives on allomorphy with those of Western linguistics, identifying both commonalities and differences. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of morphological structures in Eastern languages and clarifies the theoretical foundations of allomorphy from a diachronic and typological viewpoint.

Keywords: allomorph, variants of a morpheme, apophony, alternation, root morpheme, auxiliary morpheme.

In Eastern linguistics, comprehensive theories and perspectives concerning the notion of allomorphs have been advanced. According to A. Nurmonov, “a morpheme is a socio-psychological entity that, in immediate observation or speech, manifests itself through several variants. The fact that a morpheme appears in multiple forms within the structure of speech accounts for what we call allomorphs, or variants of that morpheme”¹.

Uzbek scholar A. Khojiyev² regards allomorphs as variants of a morpheme, arguing that auxiliary morphemes—which may be substituted for one another in any given construction—constitute the variants of that morpheme. He substantiates this claim with examples from Uzbek, showing the free alternation of the morphemes -day and -dek in expressions such as gulday ~ guldek (“like a flower”).

R. Rasulov concurs that allomorphs are morpheme-variants but rejects the idea that they are freely interchangeable. He defines an allomorph as “a variant of a morpheme that occurs only within the form of a specific lexeme. Each observable morph has a limited scope of applicability, surfacing only in contexts that favor it”³. He illustrates this with pairs such as tonggi ~ tongki (“morning”), kechki ~ kechgi (“evening”), and attributes their distribution to phonetic environment, phonological form, and semantic constraints.

Building on these views, M. Irisqulov⁴ emphasizes that morphemes and morphs are not always in one-to-one correspondence: a single morpheme may be realized by one or several morphs in speech. He demonstrates this in Uzbek with the directional meaning expressed by the suffixes -ga, -ka, and -qa. Irisqulov notes that when one morpheme is manifested through multiple morphs, those morphs are termed its allomorphs. He further defines an allomorph as any morph that, while differing in form, conveys the same meaning and constitutes a single morpheme. As an illustration, he cites the Russian plural suffixes [и], [ы], [а], [я].

¹ Nurmonov A. va b. O‘zbek tilining mazmuniy sintaksisi. T. Fan, 1992

² Hojiyev A. Tilshunoslik terminlarining izohli lug‘ati. T.: 2002. – B. 21.

³ Rasulov R. (2010) General Linguistics. *Umumiy tilshunoslik*. (Tahshkent)

⁴ Iriskulov M. (2009) Introduction to Linguistics. *Tilshunoslikka kirish*. (Tashkent)

A. Abduzuhurov⁵ explains the origin of allomorphs in Uzbek by situating them within affixal morphology. Affixes, which never occur independently but only attach to a root morpheme to express various lexical-grammatical meanings, undergo phonological adjustment depending on the final sound of the stem. Thus, a single morpheme may surface in diverse morphophonological shapes—its allomorphs. For example, the participial morpheme *-gan* acquires the forms *-kan*, *-qan*, *-gan* after stems ending in different phonemes, as in *yozgan* (“written”), *ekkan* (“planted”), *suqqan* (“hit”). Each allomorph differs from the others by exactly one phoneme.

In Korean linguistics⁶, a similar conception holds that the various phonologically conditioned variants of one morpheme are its allomorphs. From this vantage, certain morphemes expressing a single meaning may have two or three variants, and these variants are distributed exclusively—that is, they are complementary but together exhaust the set of possible realizations. For instance, the nominative case marker *이* and the accusative *을* attach to stems ending in a consonant, whereas their allomorphs *가* and *를* attach only to vowel-final stems. Korean morphemes thus divide into *자립형태소* (independent morphemes) and *의존형태소* (dependent morphemes), or leading and auxiliary morphemes, exemplified in:

철수가 밥을 아까 먹었다

Ch’ölsu-ga pap-ül akwa-möğöt’ta. (“Cholsu just ate a meal.”)

Allomorphy also figures prominently in Japanese morphology. Phonological or morphological context may yield different forms of the same morpheme. For instance, the causative suffix has two allomorphs: *-ase* after consonant-final stems (C-stems), as in *nom-ase* (“make drink” from *nom-* “drink”), and *-sase* after vowel-final stems (V-stems), as in *tabe-sase* (“make eat” from *tabe-* “eat”). This choice is explained within Optimality Theory by the constraints ONSET (“every syllable must begin with a consonant”) and NO-CODA (“syllables must not end in a consonant”).

Moreover, when compound formation alters the phonological environment, a morpheme may surface in yet another allomorphic shape. For example:

- 雨 (ame “rain”)
 - 雨傘 (amekasa “rain umbrella”)
 - 雨 傘 (amagasa “rain umbrella,” alternate pronunciation)

Here, the morpheme *ame* “rain” changes to *ama* before a consonant-initial element. Such alternations in Japanese are studied as apophony or alternation phenomena⁷.

In Hindi, numerous affixal allomorphs appear when suffixes adapt to the phonological, morphological, or syntactic context. For example, the adjectival/statative suffixes *-ī* and *-īnā* both occur on words like *sundarī* vs. *sundarīnā* (“beautiful woman”). The choice depends on the final sound of the base and on phonological factors such as stress; thus, *-ī* tends to follow vowel-final stems, while *-īnā* often attaches to consonant-final ones⁸.

Among the Iranian languages, affixation plays a vital role in word formation alongside other derivational processes, continuously expanding the lexicon. In his works on Persian grammar, Iran Kalbasi⁹ terms the minimal meaningful unit a *vāž* (“morph”), its written realization *vāžak* (“morpheme”), and its variants *gunehā-ye vāžak* (“allomorphs”). He divides morphemes into

⁵ Abduzuhur Abduazizov. O‘zbek tili fonologiyasi va morfofonologiyasi. “Universitet” T. 2010. B-122.

⁶ Ким О., Львова И. и Елькин Д. Инновационные приемы, используемые на семинарских занятиях по дисциплине «теоретическая морфология и синтаксис корейского языка». “O‘zbekistonda xorijiy tillar” ilmiy-metodik elektron jurnal. № 2 (10) / 2016.

⁷ Ito, Junko & Mester, Armin. Japanese Morphophonemics: Markedness and Word Structure. MIT Press. 2004.

⁸ Paroma Sanyal, Vyom Sharma, Ankita Prasad. Hindi root allomorphy: Insights from phonological and morphosyntactic theory. De Gruyter Mouton, 2021

⁹ Dr. Iran Kalbasi. (1992) Derivative construction of the word. *Sāxt-e ešṭeyāyi-ye vāže*. (Tegeran)

vāžak-e āzād (“free morphemes”), which can stand alone—e.g., kār “work,” mehr “love”—and vāžak-e moqayyed (“bound morphemes”), which require a host—e.g., mand in kārmand “employee,” bān in mehrbān “kind.”

L. Peysikov¹⁰ provides a detailed typology of Persian allomorphs and defines them as alternants of a lexical morpheme that share a core functional-semantic feature. He sets out the following criteria for allomorphy:

1. Sharing the same meaning and function;
2. Occurring in comparable structures and able to substitute for one another;
3. Each occurring only in its respective environment;
4. Exhibiting a general similarity in form and relative phonetic resemblance.

On this basis, affixal allomorphs may be classified into two types:

1. **Mutually substitutable:** affixal variants that can replace one another in derivation depending on stylistic or phonological considerations. For example, the Persian prefixes bar- and var- in barandāz ~ varandāz (“observer”).
2. **Non-substitutable:** affixal variants that never interchange, often arising through epenthetic processes when two vowels meet, yielding an inserted consonant and thus a distinct allomorph.

Conclusion. The study of allomorphy in Eastern linguistics rests on a broad theoretical foundation forged through analyses of diverse languages and scholarly approaches. In Uzbek, Nurmonov, Khojiyev, Rasulov, and Irisqulov offer differing yet complementary insights into morpheme variation. Across Korean, Japanese, Hindi, and Persian, allomorphs are recognized as contextually determined variants that manifest the interplay of phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax. Phonetic alternations, syllable structure, stress patterns, and stylistic factors all contribute crucially to allomorphic choice, underscoring its significance as a window into the integrated nature of language structure.

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¹⁰ Peysikov L.S. (1973) Essays on word formation of the Persian language. *Ocherki po slovoobrazovaniyu persidskogo yazika*. (Moscow)