MORPHOPHONEMICS OF WEAK-STEM FORMS IN MODERN CHALDEAN

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the derivation of the surface forms of the weak-stem verb forms in Modern Chaldean. Weak-stem forms are those forms that include the glides /y,w/ among their triconsonantal radicals. The intercalation of vowels in the verb paradigms include /y,w/,and the labile nature of these glides, produce surface forms that are at variance with the corresponding strong-stem paradigms.

O.O INTORDUCTION

Modern-Chaldean is one of the currently spoken, and much changed, dialects of Classical Syriac/Aramaic. There are many such dialects, but the dialect that is the focus of this presentation is the dialect of /mangešı/, a town in the northern part of Iraq.

1.0 DATA AND PROCEDURES.

There is no lexicon for the Modern Chaldean dialect of /mangešı/ that will provide a list of all the weak-stem lexical items. I have depended on lists of words found in several grammars or lexica of other dialects as my data sources. The lexical items that were provided in these sources needed to be phonemically modified to the /mangešı/ sound patterns. These sources provided a representative sample of lexical items in which /w,y/ occur in verbal paradigms.

2.0 STEMS WITH /Y,W/

/w,y/ are contrastive units in this dialect as shown in the examples:
/yarixa/ 'long'   /wariδa/ 'root'
/sya?a/ 'fence'   /swa?a/ 'satisfy'
/gnaya/ 'set'   /gnawa/ 'steal'

3.0 /Y/ IN INITIAL POSITION

The terms INITIAL, MEDIAL, and FINAL positions refer to the first, second and third consonantal segments of the root respectively. The following stems illustrate /y/ in initial positions in roots:
/yrx/ 'long',   /ypy/ 'bake'
/ywl/ 'give',   /ywš/ 'dry'
/yld/ 'give birth'   /ylp/ 'learn'
/yqδ/ 'burn'   /yqr/ 'heavy'
/yrx/ 'length'   /ytw/ 'sit', etc.

In the conjugation of the verbal forms various changes take place that affect the initial /y/ of the stem. An instructive way of observing this process is to compare the strong and the weak paradigms of the verb in a conjugational framework. Only the singular paradigm is given here, since the plural suffixes do not affect the changes in the stem differently from the singular:

3.1 Strong/Weak

/d-r-s/ 'study'   /y-l-p/ 'learn'
/drasa/ 'to study'   /?ilapa/ 'to learn'
1s. /darsın/ 'I study'   /yalpın/ 'I learn'
2s. /darsıt/ 'you study'
    /yalpıt/ 'you learn'
3s. /darıs/ 'he studies'
    /yalıp/ 'he learns'
1s. /drısli/ 'I studied'
    /lıpli/, /?ilıpli/ 'I learned'
2s. /drıslux/ 'you studied'
    /lıplux/, /?ilıplux/ 'you learned'
3s. /drıslı/ 'he studied'
    /lıplı/, /?ilıplı/ 'he learned'
imp.2s. /dros/ 'study'
    /lop/, /?ilop/ 'learn'
imp.2p. /drusu/ 'study'
    /lupu/, /?ilupu/ 'learn'

R1. y-Deletion.
y ---> 0 /# ___ C /ylıpli/ --> /lıpli/
R2. y/w-Syllabification .
y---> i /V___C/ /ylop/ ---> /ilop/
R7. ?-Insertion.
0 ---> ? /# ___ V /ilop/ --> /?ilop/
Both options occur and are acceptable: The glide /y/ is deleted in the initial cluster. The second option is that /y/ is converted to /i/. This necessitates the addition of a glottal stop /?/ before the vowel, since all syllables begin with a consonant, and vowels do not begin syllables in this dialect.

3.2 /Y/ IN MID-POSITION

The following stems illustrate /y/ in mid-position:
/dyš/ 'trample'   /zyd/ 'increase'
/zyp/ 'josstle'   /cyk/ 'stuff'
/cym/ 'close'   /nys/ 'bite'
/dyn/ 'judge'   /xyt/ 'sew'
/lys/ 'chew'

Strong/Weak
/d-r-s/ 'study'   /d-y-n/ 'judge'
/drasa/ 'to study'   /dyana/ 'to judge'
1s. /darsın/ 'I study'
    /denın/ 'I judge'
2s. /darsıt/ 'you study'
    /denıt/ 'you judge'
3s. /darıs/ 'he studies'
    /dayın/ 'he judges'
1s. /drısli/ 'I studied'
    /dınni/ 'I judged'
3s. /darıs/ 'he studies'
    /yalıp/ 'he learns'
1s. /drısli/ 'I studied'
    /lıpli/, /?ilıpli/ 'I learned'
2s. /drıslux/ 'you studied'
    /lıplux/, /?ilıplux/ 'you learned'
3s. /drıslı/ 'he studied'
    /lıplı/, /?ilıplı/ 'he learned'
imp.2s. /dros/ 'study'
    /lop/, /?ilop/ 'learn'
imp.2p. /drusu/ 'study'
    /lupu/, /?ilupu/ 'learn'

2s. /drıslux/ 'you studied'
    /dınnux/ 'you judged'
3s. /drıslı/ 'he studied'
    /dınnı/ 'he judged'
imp.s. /dros/ 'study' /don/ 'judge'
imp.p. /drusu/ 'study' /dunu/, 'judge'

R2. y/w-Syllabification.
y---> i/V___C /daynın/ --> /dainın/
R5. Tense vowel lowering.
i--->e/V___ /dainın/ --> /daenın/
R6. Vowel deletion.
V1V2 ---> V2 /daenın/ --> /denın/

3.3 /Y/ IN FINAL POSITION

The following stems illustrate /y/ in final position:
/bny/ 'build'   /gby/ /beg'
/jhy/ 'tired'   /dry/ 'put '
/ypy/ 'bake'   /hwy/ 'be'
/xzy/ 'see'   /tpy/ 'stick'
/kly/ 'stay'   /cmy/ 'put out'
/kry/ 'shorten'

Strong/Weak
/d-r-s/ 'study'   /k-l-y/ 'stay'
/drasa/ 'to study'   /klaya/ 'to stay'
1s. /darsın/ 'I study'
    /kalın/ 'I stay'
2s. /darsıt/ 'you study'
    /kalıt/ 'you stay'
3s. /darıs/ 'he studies'
    /kalı/ 'he stays'
1s. /drısli/ 'I studied'
    /kleli/ 'I stayed'
2s. /drıslux/ 'you studied'
    /klelux/ 'you stayed'
3s. /drıslı/ 'he studied'
    /klelı/ 'he stayed'
imp.s. /dros/ 'study'
    /kle/ f. 'stay', /kli/ m. 'stay'
imp. p. /drusu/ 'study' /klo/ 'stay'

R3. y-Syllabification before non-low vowel.
y ---> i/___V /kalyın/ --> /kaliın/
R5. Tense vowel lowering.
i---e/V__   /klıili/ --> /klıeli/

R6. Vowel deletion.
V1V2 --> V2 /klɪeli/ --> /kleli/
/kalɪn/ --> /kalɪn/

4.0 /W/ IN INITAL POSITION

The following stems illustrate /w/ in initial position:

/wjb/ 'duty' /wrq/ 'paper'
/wrd/ 'rose' /wrδ/ 'root'

No verbal form beginning with /w/ is available for conjugation.

4.1 /W/ IN MEDIAL POSITION

The following stems illustrate /w/ in medial position:

/hwy/ 'become' /zwn/ 'buy'
/xwr/ 'white' /twr/ 'break'
/?wδ/ 'do' /qwy/ 'hard'
/šwr/ 'jump'

Strong/Weak
/d-r-s/ 'study' /z-w-n/ 'buy'
/drasa/ 'to study' /zwana/ 'to buy'
1s./darsɪn/ 'I study'
/zonɪn/ 'I buy'
2s./darsɪt/ 'you study'
/zonɪt/ 'you buy'
3s./darɪs/ 'he studies'
/zawɪns/ 'he buys'
1s./drɪsli/ 'I studied'
/zwɪnni/ 'I bought'
2s./drɪslux/ 'you studied'
/zwɪnnux/ 'you bought'
3s./drɪslɪ/ 'he studied'
/zwɪnnɪ/ 'he bought'
imp. s./dros/ 'study' /zwon/ 'buy'
imp. p./drusu/ 'study' /zwunu/ 'buy'

R2. y/w-Syllabification.
w---> u/V__C /zawnɪn/--> /zaunɪn/
R5. Tense vowel lowering.
u---> o /V__ /zaunɪn/ --> /zaonɪn/
R6. Vowel deletion.
V1V2 ---> V2 /zaonɪn/ --> /zonɪn/

4.2 /W/ IN FINAL POSITION

The following stems illustrate /w/ in final position:

/ytw/ 'sit' /gnw/ 'steal'

/xrw/ 'spoil' /qrw/ 'near'
/slw/ 'cross'

Strong/Weak
/d-r-s/ 'study' /g-n-w/ 'steal'
/drasa/ 'to study' /gnawa/ 'to steal'
1s. /darsɪn/ 'I study'
/ganwɪn/ 'I steal'
2s. /darsɪt/ 'you study'
/ganwɪt/ 'you steal,'
3s. /darɪs/ 'he studies'
/ganu/ 'he steals'
1s. /drɪsli/ 'I studied'
/gnuli/ 'I stole'
2s. /drɪslux/ 'you studied'
/gnulux/ 'you stole'
3s. /drɪslɪ/ 'he studied'
/gnulɪ/ 'he stole'
imp.s. /dros/ 'study'
/gnu/ 'steal'
imp.p. /drusu/ 'study'
/gnuwu/ 'steal'

R2. y/w-Syllabification.
w---> u/V__C /ganɪw/ --> /ganɪu/
R6. Vowel deletion.
V1V2 ---> V2 /ganɪu/ --> /ganu/

5.O SUMMARAY

The /w,y/ segments change in the sequences of verb paradigms according to specific rules that are determined by the contexts in which these segments occur. There is similarity between the rules rules for the glides but no identity. There are more changes that are operative with the high front glide /y/ than the changes of the back high glide /w/. The discussion of the changes was limited to the verbal paradigm, and may be extended to other lexical paradigms with comparable expectations. There are other contexts in which these changes take place, and are under investigation.

6.O SUMMARY OF RULES:

R1. y-Deletion.
y ---> 0 /#__C
[-syll]
[-cons]   [-syll]
[+high]-->[0] /#__[+cons]
[+tens]
[-back]
[-roun]

R2. y/w-Syllabification.
y/w ---> i / V__C
[-syl, -cons, +high, +tense]
$\|$
$\lor$
[+ syll]
/
[+syll]   [-syll
[-cons] ____ [+cons]

R3. y-Syllabification before non-low vowel.
y ---> i / __V
[-syll]
[-cons]   [+syll]
[+high]--> [+syl] /__[-cons]
[+tens]
[-low]
[-back]
[-roun]

R4. y-Deletion between two non-low vowels.
[-syl -cons +hi +tense -bk -rnd]
$\|$
$\lor$
0
/
[+syll]   [+syll]
[-cons]   [-cons]
[-low] ____ [-low]

R5. Tense vowel lowering.
i --->e /V__
u --->o /V__

[+syll]
[-cons]   [+syll]
[+high] ---> [-high]/[-cons]__
[+tens]

R6. Vowel deletion.
V1V2 ---> V2
[+syll] [+syll]
[-cons] [-cons]
  1   2   ---> 2

R7. ?-Insertion.
0 ---> ? /#__V
[-syll]
[-cons]   [+syll]
0 ---> [-voic] /#__ [-cons]
[-cont]

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