

## On the sociophonetic status of emphatic verbs in Shizuoka Japanese

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### Abstract

The present paper attempts to characterize two groups of so-called emphatic forms of verbs sporadically found in the Shizuoka dialect of Japanese from a sociophonetic perspective. The specific question to be addressed is what different roles they are playing, given that the two different forms with the same meaning coexist in the same dialect. The discussion of their forms and functions is extended in terms of their relations to the base form. It is discussed that these two emphatic forms are two allomorphs of the same morpheme, and that which of the two is chosen for use over the other is determined by certain sociolinguistic factors. It is concluded that even the base form is involved in this allomorphy when seen from a sociophonetic angle.

### 1. Emphatic verb forms

In Shizuoka dialect, especially that which has been spoken in a few isolated communities deep in the mountains in central Shizuoka, some verbs which denote action are emphasized by adding a prefix of emphasis [çi]. Let us see some examples from [1].

(1)	Base forms	Prefixed emphatic forms
	[naku] 'cry'	[çinnaku]
	[modoru] 'return'	[çimmodoru]
	[jomu] 'read'	[çinjomu]
	[kau] 'buy'	[çikkau]
	[tagiru] 'tear'	[çittagiru]
	[saboru] 'throw away'	[çissaboru]

In fact, this prefix has a floating mora on its end, which assimilates to the initial sound of the base in voicing, surfacing as the first part of the geminate (or partial geminate) of the emphatic verb. In each case, the derived emphatic verb intensifies the action denoted by the base. For example, *çinnaku*, the emphatic form of *naku* 'cry' means 'cry furiously'. This way of emphasis by prefixing is not uncommon across Japanese dialects. However, in this group of verbs, there is a sub-group whose behavior appears to be exceptional. This is a sub-group of verbs whose initial segment is [h] and its allophones [ç] and [φ]. Let us look at this group in detail.

#### 1.1. The two emphatic forms

This sub-group is similar to the other verbs introduced above in that they also have prefixed emphatic forms as in (2).

(2)	Base forms	Prefixed emphatic forms
	[haneru] 'jump'	[çippaneru]
	[hekomu] 'get dented'	[çippekomu]
	[homeru] 'praise'	[çippomeru]

[çirou] 'pick up'	[çippirou]
[φuku] 'blow'	[çippuku]

Note that in Japanese word-initial [h] often alternates with word-medial [p] as in [haku] 'foil' ~ [kimpaku] 'gold foil', [heki] 'wall' ~ [zeppeki] 'cliff' and [ho:] 'cannon' ~ [teppo:] 'gun'. What makes this sub-group unique is that they have another type of emphatic form whose initial segment is [p]. Henceforth, this form is called 'P emphatic form'. Let us observe the examples whose base forms were shown in (2).

(3)	Base forms	P emphatic forms
	[haneru] 'jump'	[paneru]
	[hekomu] 'get dented'	[pekomu]
	[homeru] 'praise'	[pomeru]
	[çirou] 'pick up'	[pirou]
	[φuku] 'blow'	[puku]

This sub-group has been reported and discussed with considerable sensation quite long ago by [2], [3], [4], [5] and others, because, due to the following diachronic phonological change in (4), word-initial [p] is not allowed in Japanese, except in recent loan words and mimetics.

(4)	Historical change which eliminated word-initial [p]
	p > φ > h

The above-mentioned researches suggested that the initial [p] in (4) is an old survival from the past. However, this hypothesis was later denied in light of the fact that the distribution of the word-initial [p] is extremely limited (they only appear in a small number of verbs beginning with [h]), and the fact that the local people assert P emphatic verbs are relatively new forms which appeared recently. If the [p] is not a remnant of the old form, then what should we make of it, given its unique distributional status, and given the fact that in no other dialect in Japan could we find this 'P emphasis'?

#### 1.2. The derivation of P emphatic forms

[6] and [7] postulate the following formation process for P emphatic verbs. First, to denote the meaning of emphasis a prefix for emphasis [çi] was attached to the beginning of the non-emphatic bases. Then the initial [h] of the base changed to [p] in the new word-medial position. As already pointed out, it is quite common in Japanese that word-initial [h] exhibits morphophonemic alternation with word-medial [p] between allomorphs. Then the vowel of the prefix [çi] was devoiced between [ç] and [p]. Note that in this area of Japan, high vowels are vulnerable to devoicing between voiceless obstruents. This produced three consecutive voiceless segments in word-initial position, which is prohibited in Japanese phonotactics. As a result, the prefix [çi] underwent

further lenition and it finally dropped. Presumably, the devoiced [i] dropped first, followed by [ç]. The resultant form is that of P emphatic verbs. To put it in a succinct way, P forms derived from their prefixed counterparts. In the example below (5), [μ] indicates an abstract floating mora.

- (5) The formation of two emphatic verbs  
[çimu]+[haneru] > [çippaneru] > [paneru]

Given the extremely limited distribution and the fact that P emphatic verbs are relatively new forms, this hypothesis seems to work well, so that most present-day researchers agree on this view [8]. In the next section, we will make a detailed examination of P emphatic forms together with prefixed forms to pin down their phonetic and phonological properties.

## 2. Phonetic and phonological characteristics of P forms

When [p] stands exceptionally in word-initial position in loan words or mimetics, the burst is usually weak in Shizuoka Japanese. However, [7] reports that in the case of P emphatic verbs, the burst sounds very strong and the articulation often accompanies "constriction in the larynx" with a glottal stop sporadically observed. [7] reports also that, when asked about their articulation, some speakers say with introspection that they feel something like a silent and pressured [çi] in front of the initial [p]. It should also be pointed out that P verbs have their accent exclusively on the first syllable irrespective of the location of the accent in the base or prefixed forms, which renders an extraordinary prominence to the first syllable. Based upon these points, I posit the underlying representation of P emphatic form as still containing the abstract mora. In case of P emphatic form of [haneru], the underlying form is as in (6).

- (6) Underlying form of P emphatic form of [haneru]  
/μ paneru/

From this underlying representation some phonetic variants of a different kind surface as in (7).

- (7) Possible phonetic variants
1. [ppaneru]
  2. [ʔpaneru]
  3. [p<sup>h</sup>aneru]

In word-internal position, the underlying abstract mora is supposed to surface as the first part of the initial geminate, namely the coda of the first syllable, making its weight heavy; however, word-initial geminates are prohibited in Japanese. Therefore, the first form is not acceptable. However, we often encounter expressions with an initial geminate today, especially in the speech of the younger generation, which may well be referred to as innovative forms. One frequently cited example is [ttaku] ('indeed') whose original form is [mattaku]. Therefore, word-initial geminates are not impossible from an articulatory point of view at least for some people and (7.1) is a possible variant for such speakers.

Alternatively, other forms should surface. In (7.2) [ʔpaneru], the underlying initial abstract mora and the following [p] are phonetically realized as a [p] which has undergone glottal reinforcement. This is the variant which is said to accompany

constriction in the larynx during its articulation, with an audible glottal stop, discussed above. In the third variant [p<sup>h</sup>aneru], the underlying form surfaces with the initial aspirated [p] instead. Although with the second and third variants the underlying form is not realized as a geminate but as a singleton, both [ʔp] and [p<sup>h</sup>] are noticeably *fortis* segments [9], which reflects the speaker's tacit knowledge of the underlying form as being different from the normal singleton /p/.

Finally, in case the speaker "feels a silent and pressured [çi]", [çi] is most likely still there as in (8), though the prefix itself with a devoiced vowel is weakened and ready to be dropped.

- (8) Weakened prefix  
[çippaneru]

Now that the phonetic and phonological characteristics of P forms have been made clear, let us move on to the final part of the problem, wherein we discuss the sociophonetic status of these two emphatic forms, after taking a brief look at how these forms are playing their roles in the communication in Shizuoka Japanese.

## 3. Two emphatic verbs in social interaction

We have discussed the derivation of P verbs from their prefixed counterparts thus far. This could suggest that all the prefixed verbs have changed to the corresponding P verbs by a diachronic phonological change, but this is not the case. Both variants are 'equally' used in the speech community; they coexist in the dialect. Then, a question naturally arises; why do these two forms coexist, having the same meaning notwithstanding? According to [7], these two emphatic verbs are used by speakers in different situations. Let us summarize how they actually are used, which will bring their fundamental properties in full relief.

- (i) P forms are used in a casual situation: in a conversation with someone younger than or close to the speaker. They are seldom observed in a formal situation, especially in a conversation with someone higher in social rank than the speaker;
- (ii) P forms are more frequently used by the older generation;
- (iii) P forms appear in imperative expressions;
- (iv) even in the same situation, some speakers use P forms and others use base forms;
- (v) the same speaker may sometimes use a base form but may use the corresponding P form other times in exactly the same situation.

These are five important facts pertinent to the way the two emphatic verbs are used. The first condition delimits the choice of P verbs only to casual, informal situations. A dialogue with an addressee younger than or close to the addresser tends to be informal. Also important (and related to the casual/formal distinction) is the speaker-hearer relation with respect to social rank or hierarchy. If the speaker is higher in rank, P forms are likely to be chosen. The facts in (ii) and (iii) are specific examples of this. When speakers of the older generation speak to younger people who are also lower in social hierarchy, (direct) imperative expressions are usually used in declaratives or interrogatives, rather than indirect speech act. It is a well-established fact that the more casual the speech, the more weakening and deletion are prone to occur. Conversely, in a formal situation, as for example when the

speaker talks with someone older or remote in relationship or in a higher social position, the prefixed forms is used instead. It is because the speaker pays more attention to his/her speech, which prevents weakening and deletion from taking place.

It is evident from what we have argued that these two emphatic forms appear in mutually exclusive situations. This is a case of complementary distribution. Therefore, the two forms are allomorphs of the same morpheme. It should be stressed here that the choice of one form over the other is not determined by the phonetic environment, but by the actual scene in which the conversation takes place. Thus, they are not phonologically-determined allomorphs; they are situation-oriented allomorphs. This allomorphic relation may well be called sociophonetic allomorphy. Contrary to most cases of phonologically-determined allomorphy, it is impossible to formally decide which one is the 'base form'.

In (iv) above, we see that it depends upon the speaker to decide whether the situation for the conversation is 'emphatic' or 'non-emphatic'. The final point in (v) indicates that even in the speech of one and the same speaker, the same situation may sometimes be conceived of as emphatic or non-emphatic. These points suggest again that the choice between the emphatic form and the base form is not uniformly based upon formal-linguistic principle; rather, it is determined 'psychologically' by the speaker on the basis of surrounding sociological factors. For this reason, the choice between the two types of emphatic forms, and between the emphatic forms and the base form, is vulnerable to many psychological effects which render the choice unstable in any given situation.

#### 4. Conclusions

In this study, we have observed two types of the so-called emphatic verb forms and their original base forms in Shizuoka Japanese. We have discussed their phonetic and phonological forms and functions first from a formal perspective. We have found that, starting from the base, the prefixed form is derived first, and then the P form with weakening/loss of the prefix may follow. From this formal viewpoint, the two emphatic forms are allomorphs in that they have exactly the same meaning of emphasis.

We then examined the problem from a broader perspective and turned our focus on the way these forms are used in actual situations and examined sociolinguistic factors which determine how these three forms are chosen. We have found that the choice between the two emphatic forms relies heavily upon whether the situation is casual or formal and/or whether the speaker is higher or lower in social rank than the hearer. It has also been found that the choice between the emphatic forms and the non-emphatic base form also depends upon socio-psychological factors which make the speaker judge whether the situation is 'emphatic' or 'non-emphatic.' Therefore in one and the same situation, one speaker may use a prefixed form, another speaker may use the corresponding P form, and still another speaker may use the base counterpart. If this is the case, all three forms are allomorphs in a way. We call this relation 'sociophonetic allomorphy'. Overall, the present study has provided an interesting and delicate example of morphological alternations for which sociophonetic as well as formal phonetic/phonological examination is required.

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