

Excrescent Nasals in Malayic Dialects of Western Sumatra

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In some of the Malayic dialects of western Sumatra, words ending in a high vowel, *i* or *u*, exhibit a final excrescent velar nasal consonant *ŋ*, for example **nasi* > *nasiŋ* 'cooked rice', **batu* > *batuŋ* 'stone'. This paper explores the occurrence of excrescent nasals in three different dialects, which we claim represent three stages in the development of excrescent nasal insertion from a purely automatic phonetic process marking phrase-final positions to a process that is morphologically and lexically conditioned.

The three dialects considered are (a) the Padang Pasia Sabalah dialect of Minangkabau, spoken in a handful of small fishing villages on the outskirts of the large metropolis of Padang; (b) the Tapan Kota dialect of Tapan, spoken in the eponymous small town in southern coastal Sumatra Barat; and (c) the Binjai dialect of Tapan, spoken in the village of Binjai just outside of Tapan. Data on these three dialects are from naturalistic speech corpora, supplemented with elicitation.

In Padang Pasia Sabalah Minangkabau, excrescent nasals occur infrequently, and are almost entirely limited to phonologically phrase-final positions. Speakers seem to be unaware of their presence; moreover, speakers also produce excrescent nasals when using the local dialect of Indonesian.

In the Tapan Kota dialect of Tapan, excrescent nasals occur with greater frequency, though forms lacking the excrescent nasal are also attested. Excrescent nasals tend to occur more frequently in phonologically phrase-final positions, though plenty of counterexamples are evident. Citation forms of the relevant words typically contain the excrescent nasal, and speakers tend to be unaware that in connected speech the excrescent nasal is sometimes absent.

Finally, in the Binjai dialect of Tapan, the excrescent nasal is always present word-finally, no matter whether the word occurs in phrase-medial or phrase-final position. However, when the word in question is the first term of a compound or of a reduplicated form, the excrescent nasal is optional. Furthermore, when a word which typically contains an excrescent nasal is followed by an associative suffix (roughly the cognate of Malay *-nya*), the nasal is absent. Based on the form of the morphophonemically-variable associative marker, we argue that the vowel-final form of the word is the underlying form, even though the excrescent nasal appears in citation form and in all other word-final contexts.

Thus, the occurrence of excrescent nasals in these three dialects shows how a once purely automatic alternation marking phonologically phrase-final positions may become morphologized and lexicalized. In doing so, it provides a model for the diachronic development of other similar alternations present in Malayic dialects elsewhere in Sumatra, including pre-oralization of word-final nasals and stem gradations. While in many well-documented cases, today's morphology has been said to be yesterday's syntax, in the cases at hand, it would seem more appropriate to conclude that today's morphology is in fact yesterday's phrasal phonology.