



Saraz and Sarazi: Grammatical Features

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ABSTRACT

Sarazi is referred to as lingua franca of Saraz region, but as a first language it is primarily associated with the both the communities besides the people speaking Kashmir too. Most Muslims are speakers of Sarazi, Kashmiri; other languages spoken in Saraz are Gojri or Watali. According to Grierson (1919) the word “Siraj”, means ‘Kingdom of Shiva’ which may also be known as any wild, far-off mountainous kingdom who used to rule in Saraz. It has several grammatical features and is having laxical similarities with Bhaderwahi, Bhalesi, Kashmiri and other western pahari dialects.

Keywords: Sarazi, Bhalesi, Doda, Western Pahari, Grierson

Introduction

Majority of the landscape in Doda inhabiting in rural areas is referred to as Saraz. The area of Saraz is having ancient origin. The area lies in the foothills of the middle mountains. During 17th and 18th century several kashmiri population migrated to this place as per some writers. Whereas some writers believe that it was the repression on the part of feudal class that drew people towards Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban (Sumantra Bose). The Saraz is located in Doda alongside the river chenab.

In the northern side of Doda district borders with the erstwhile Anantnag district of the Kashmir region. People often migrated from Kashmir to Saraz area

whenever there were famines in Kashmir. The famines are also responsible for migration of chunk of population from Kashmir to Saraz Doda. Saraz is a linguistic paradise where people used to speak Sarazi. Sarazi has similarity with both the Kashmiri and Western Pahari languages like Bhaderwahi and Padri. Sarazi has several distinct dialects, include Bhagwali, Deswali, and Korarwali. [parihar and Dwivedi 2013]. Saraz is a rurally settled area which include several villages on right bank of Chenab river which includes its district headquarter Doda district. The areas on the left bank of river are geographically located in Bhaderwah area.

Saraz is a large landscape, known for Sarazi dialect spoken here. It includes various villages such as Rajgarh, Ganika, Bhagwah, Dessa, Kashtigarh, Koti, Bhangra, Bijarani, Mahalla, Kulhand, Malwana, Jodhpur, Babor, Jatheli, Bharat and Udayanpur. Vikalp Ashiqehind, linguist trained at University College London. He specializes in the syntax and prosody of human language and is presently engaged in writing a grammar of Sarazi language revealed that Saraz comprises the northern half of Doda and parts of Ramban and Kishtwar districts.

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Dwivedi (2013) records 30 per cent lexical similarity with Bhaderwahi. Kogan (2012) noted that in Swadesh List, Siraji shares 48.4 per cent of the words with Dardic languages and 67.8 per cent of the words with the rest of the Indo-Aryan languages, i.e., Pahari, Punjabi, etc.

In 2001, "Siraji" (Sarazi) has been reported to be the mother tongue of 87,179 people and in 2011 census the number of Siraji (Sarazi) speakers has increased and is spoken by 124,896 speakers. Muslims comprise 51% and Hindus 49% of the total Siraji population. Both the communities speak Sarzi About 90 per cent of the population is rural. The native speakers reported that they are thriving below the poverty line.

Grierson(1919) regarded it as a mixed language. In the north it is in contact with Poguli and Kha dialects of Kashmiri, Bhaderwahi which lies to its south is a form of Western Pahari. In the east its contact is with Kishtwari-A dialect of Kashmiri and on the western side it is in contact with Rambani.

Classification

Grierson (1919) has placed Siraji in the Dardic group as a dialect of Kashmiri. He has also mentioned its similarities with other surrounding languages like Dogri, Western Punjabi (Lhanda) etc. The reason for its alliance with Dardic group, put forward by Grierson (1919), is that Siraji possesses some strong Dardic features which are absent in Western Pahari to which it resembles to a great degree. Since it also resembles western pahari too owing to the similarities with other western Pahari languages like Bhaderwahi. Sarazi uses the cerebral 'n' like Dogri and Western Pahari.

The use of postposition 'no:' as genitive ending is borrowed from Western Punjabi. However, Kaul (1977) and Kogan (2012) opined and recommended that, "Siraji (Sarazi) should be classified as a Western Pahari language. "Siraji (Sarazi) shares the highest per cent of its vocabulary and grammatical features with Bhaderwahi that is a western pahari language.

Grierson (1919) who gave a more detailed sketch of the language in Linguistic Survey of India (1903-1928), classified it as a dialect of Kashmiri admitting that it could equally be classified as a Western Pahari language. Census of India finally follows Grierson's point of view and considered it to be a dialect of Kashmiri.

Bailey (1908) was the first who presented a brief grammatical sketch of Siraji in his book entitled "The Languages of the Northern Himalayas" published by the Royal Asiatic Society, London. Grierson (1919) presented a brief grammatical sketch of Siraji in his "Linguistic Survey of India". Sarazi script is perso- Arabic. The latin script is also used.

Ravi Parihar & Amitabh Vikram Dwivedi in their work "A Grammar of Sarazi revealed Sarazi as minor, unclassified and undocumented language spoken in the Saraz region of Jammu and Kashmir State of the Republic of India. This language falls under the northwestern Pahari zone of Indo-Aryan language family. Typologically, Sarazi is an SOV language (SV if without object), and like many other Indo-Aryan languages.

Ravi Parihar & Amitabh Vikram Dwivedi (2013) concluded that Sarazi has unique features like uses of postpositions; genitives precede the governing noun; auxiliary verb follows the main verb; indirect object precedes the direct object; explicators follow the main verbs; time adverbial precedes place adverbial; relative-correlative construction takes place; modifiers precede nominals; conditional markers are post-verbal.

Grammatical features of Sarazi language

1. According to the Sabba Mushtaq, Siraji has 8 phonemic vowels i.e. /i, u, e, o, a, i, ε, ə/. Each vowel has a long counterpart except for /i, ε, ə/. There are three front vowels /i/, /e/, and /ε/, two back vowels /u/ and /o/ and three central vowels /i/, /ə/, and /a/. In Siraji, there are three high vowels /i/, /i/, and /u/, three mid vowels /e/, /ə/, and /o/ and two lower mid vowels /ε/ and /a/. The rounded vowels in Siraji are /u/, and /o/ and the unrounded vowels are /i, e, a, i, ε, ə/. Vowel length is phonemic in Siraji. All the short and long vowels occur in nasalized form except for /i/ and /ε/. All vowels in Siraji are voiced.
2. Distribution of Sarazi consonants: Sarazi has 37 consonants and each one is labeled with three word positions: word initial (WI), word medial (WM), and word final (WF). Further, some consonants do not show positions at all the three levels, such as [d^h] at the word middle position; [g^h], [tʃ], [d^h], [z^h] and [dʒ^h] at the word final (WF) positions; and [ŋ] and [ɲ] at the word initial (WI) positions. (Ravi Parihar & Amitabh Vikram Dwivedi (2013). According to Sabba Mushtaq, Siraji has thirty three (33) consonants comprising of fifteen (15) plosives, five (5) affricates, five (5) fricatives, three (3) nasals, two (2) glides, one lateral (1) and two trill (2). All the consonants except /ŋ/, /ɽ/ and /f/ occur in word initial position. Consonants /b^h/, /g^h/, /t^h/ and /j/ do not occur in word final positions.
3. Word formation processes found in Siraji like affixation, reduplication, compounding, etc.
4. Siraji nouns are inflected for gender, number and case. Siraji has two way number distinction i.e. singular and plural. Singular is unmarked while as plural is formed from the singular stem by various processes like vowel change, vowel addition, suffixation and zero modification. There are two genders in Siraji- Masculine and Feminine. Masculine forms are usually taken as the basic form. The main gender forming processes in Siraji are: suffixation, vowel change, vowel addition/ deletion and suppletion.
5. Adjectives in Siraji are classified into two groups: Qualitative Adjectives and Quantitative Adjectives. There are three types of adjectival degree found in Siraji: a) Absolute or Minimal degree b) Comparative degree c) Superlative degree Absolute degree in Siraji involves no comparison. Comparative degree in Siraji is expressed by postposition /at^ha:/ 'more' plus adjective. The comparative construction in Siraji is of the following form: [Compared entity + standard of comparison + at^ha: + adj + auxiliary

verb]. Superlative degree in Siraji is expressed by postposition /sa:re at^ha:/ 'most' plus adjective (Sabba).

6. Syntax” gives brief description of the syntactical structures of Siraji. The word order in Siraji is of SOV (subject-object-verb) pattern. The Siraji sentences were classified into three broad types based on structure: a) Simple sentence b)Complex sentence c) Compound sentence.The phrasal sub-divisions found in Siraji: a) Noun Phrase b)Verb Phrase c)Adjectival Phrase d)Postpositional Phrase e) Adverbial Phrase are also discussed.There are two types of clause found in Siraji: a) Main Clause or Independent Clause b) Subordinate or Dependent Clause .Subordinate clause may further be divided into three types: a)Noun Clause b)Adjective Clause c)Adverb Clause. Noun Clause is introduced by complementizer /ki:/ followed by main clause verb. A relative pronoun /su/,/dʒe:/ etc is required to form an adjectival clause in Siraji. Some of the adverbial markers in Siraji are /dʒese:/ 'since', /aɔr / 'unless', /kijū ki:/ 'in order' etc. In Siraji different clauses in a sentence are linked together by two ways: a) Coordination b) Subordination. Coordinating conjunctions- / ta:/ 'and',/ pər/ 'but', /nata:/ 'otherwise',/taji/ 'so', /nati/ 'or' etc. and Subordinate conjunctions like-/agar/ 'If', /sa/ 'who',/ dʒes/ 'whom',/ dʒe:r/ 'where' etc help to link the clauses or phrases together. With respect to meaning Siraji sentences are classified a) Indicativeb)Imperativec) Interrogative d)Potential e) Conditional f)Passive g)Negative.With regard to sentence negation Siraji follows NEG + V word order and indicated by negative particles like /-na/.Passivization, Causativization etc is also discussed. On the basis of the preliminary observation, it has been found that Siraji shares most of the grammatical features with Western Pahari and some of its features with Dardic languages which are listed below: ???
7. Palatalization, the phonemic feature of Kashmiri is not found in Siraji. However, Geminataion, Nasalisation and aspiration are the characteristic features of the language which are also found in other Western Pahari language like Dogri.

Status:

Sarazi is yet to be recognised as a language. Sarazi is a pahari language as classified under the western pahari. There are other languages like Bhalesi, Bhaderwahi and Padri too which comes under the western pahari classification given by the GA Grierson in his linguistic survey of India. The Sarazi is an undocumented language and most of its native speakers has initiated an

indigenous language movement in the Saraz. The organisations like Pahari core committee is engaged in the revival of the script of the Sarazi language along with the other languages. The Native speakers of Sarazi are demanding the scheduled language status.

Demands of Sarazi Native speakers :

Eight issues of Sarazi speaking Population

1. Amendment in J&K Reservation Rules
2. 4 Percent reservation in recruitment and Free admission in Academic and Professional colleges to Sarazi students.
3. Grant of scholarship (Post/Pre-matric) to school going pahari speaking students by J&K Board for the Development of Sarazi - Pahari Speaking People.
4. Construction of hostels for Pahari students of Doda Kishtwar and Ramban by J&K Board for the Development of Sarazi -Pahari Speaking People.
5. Implementation of Pahari Sub-Plan on the pattern of Tribal Sub Plan for Doda Kishtwar and Ramban by J&K Board for the Development Sarazi Speaking People.
6. Promotion of Sarazi Pahari Language, Literature and Culture by J&K Board for the Development of Pahari Speaking People.
7. Creation of separate sections for Bhaderwahi, Sarazi in J&K Academy of Art Culture and Languages
8. Publication of Text books for Sarazi, by The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education.

Organisations/ indigenous language movement of Sarazi

Pahari core committee an indigenous language movement of Doda Kishtwar and Ramban (A group of 6 literary and Cultural organisations) has asked the LG Administration to demarcate and redefine the "Paharies of J&K" as several Pahari Speaking areas are devoid of it. The committee in its report has dealt sternly about the the term Pahari being exclusively used only for the areas of Pir Panjal, Karnah and some slight parts of Kashmir.

Conclusion

Linguistic affinity of Siraji (Sarazi) shows more proximity towards its neighboring languages like Western Punjabi (Lahnda), Dogri, Pothwari and Pahari. Word order typology, presence of voiced aspirate stop consonants, two types of demonstrative pronouns, two types of past tense formation, and absence

of palatalization as a phonemic feature in Siraji indicates to group it among Indo-Aryan family of languages. Kashmiri on the other hand follows SVO word order, shows absence of voiced aspirate stop consonants, three types of demonstrative pronouns, three types of past tense formation and presence of palatalization as phonemic feature. These linguistic features set Siraji apart from Kashmiri and some other Dardic languages. The Sarazi has more lexical similarities with Bhaderwahi and other western pahari chain of erstwhile Doda in Jammu and Kashmir. In brief we can say that Sarazi is a pahari language and comes under the western pahari classification. Sarazi has lexical relations with both Kashmiri (Dardic group) as well as Western Pahari like Bhalesi and Bhaderwahi.

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