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## A NOTE ON BURUSHASKI

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Burushaski is spoken around the Karakorum mountainous range in the regions like Hunza-Nagar and Yasin. This ethnolinguistic area falls in northern Pakistan. The speakers of the Burushaski are called *Burusho* people with the speakers figuring around 80,000 settled in Hunza-Nagar and Yasin. (Driem 2007:240). Linguistically, Burushaski has been termed as language isolate because it does not characterize the genetic relationship with surrounding language families like Indic, Sino-Tibetan etc. Thus, it is believed that it is "of special interest to philologists in that it appears to be completely unrelated to any other language of the area, or for that matter to any other language of the world. It is probably a remnant of some prehistoric language community, all but obliterated by successive Dravidian and Indo-European invasion". <http://www.worldlanguage.com> Ruhlan (1992) has attempted to make some preliminary classification of Burushaski while grouping the language as a separate branch of DanéCaucassio super stock which includes Basque, the North-Caucasian languages, the Yenisian languages, the Sino-Tibetan languages in Eurasia, and the Na-Dané (Atabbaskan) languages in North America. (Grune 1998).

The linguistic repertoire of the people of the Burushaski-speaking region mainly comprises of languages like Khowar, Shina, Urdu and /or English. However, Urdu and English is mostly found among the population of modern generation. Burushaski, in the linguistic environment of this nature, is in the process

of adaptation and assimilation of lexical items and morpho-syntactic properties of non-native languages of the soil like Urdu and or English in their speech habits. (Museley 2007) Regarding its ethnolinguistic vitality, the survival of the language is uncertain as "Herman Berger [1992] predicted that at the present rate of assimilation the language would be fully extinct with several decades." (ibid: 290). Grune follows the opposite view in this context and states, "Burushaski is not an endangered language."(1998:1)

The valley of Kashmir being ethnolinguistically an inordinately complex region has accommodated Burushaski native speakers in its overall linguistic stratification. It has been observed that approximately 300 speakers presently inhabit Srinagar (Kashmir valley) with the peculiar characteristic of maintaining separate indigenous social and linguistic identity over a century. (Munshi 2006).

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Berger (1966) has summed up an account of lexical similarities between Burushaski and Shina in the context of Shina borrowings into Burushaski. The borrowings are further explained in an etymological perspective. The linguistic history of the region proliferates into more complex patchwork as few of the linguistic traits corresponds Burushaski with Kashmiri languages. The following examples probably explain the view.

- I. Bur. biim 'fright, threat, intimidation' < Sh. bi:m < Skt bhima 'fearful, terrific. (Berger 1966:81) < Kash. biim 'fright, threat, fearful, terrific'. This word is common both colloquial speech and literary writing of Kashmiri language.
- II. Bur. Çhur 'knife' < Sh. Çhur < Skt kṣura (ibid:81) < Kash. ChurY 'knife' also Sraak 'knife'.
- III. Bur. Sujo 'pure, sacred, holy' < Sh. Sujo < Skt. Sujara 'well born, noble, fine, beautiful. (ibid:81) < Kash. Suuts 'pure, sacred'.
- IV. Bur. Subas 'what is easy, propitious, favorable < Skt. Vaśya 'subdued, tamed, humbled, dutiful, humble. (ibid: 81). Kash. Suub 'tamed, decorated blessed'

- V. Bur. śan 'awake, aware, care, head, attention' < Sh. śon/sum/ śan < Skt. Śankā 'apprehension', care, fear, suspicion, doubt'. (ibid:82) < Kash. san 'aware, care, attention'.
- VI. Bur. jaaro 'raft of inflated skin < Sh. Jālo < Skt jāloka 'net, waven texture, web' from jjala 'net' (ibid: 83) < Kash. zaal 'net, web, woven texture'.
- VII. Bur. tan, táno, tañeelo 'bastered, base-born' < Sh.? ,Skt. Tanaya 'family, race, offspring, child' (ibid: 84) < Kash. taanl 'rebuke' also taan 'parts'.
- VIII. Bur. guneeco 'understanding' intelligent, complement, reflective' < Sh. guneco 'a regular agent form' of gunoiki 'to think' <Skt. gunayati 'to multiply' (ibid:84) < gun 'qualities, virtuous' and ganmaat ' person with good qualities, skills, virtuous'.
- IX. Bur. thómal, thóman 'smoke of burning juniper twigs inhaled by soothsayers' < old Sh. dhuman < modern Sh. dūum 'smoke' < Skt. dhumayana 'smoking, heat, fever' (ibid: 85) < Kash. tamun 'blackness caused due to smoke of fire' also < Kash. dlh "smoke' also < Kash. daman 'smell caused due to burning of milk at bottom of vessel while boiling' black soot caused due to flame'
- X. Bur. buš 'cat' < modern Sh. bušu 'cat' (ibid: 85) > Kash. biyoor 'cat' but > Kash. biStl ' sound created to make cat to run away in fear, cat usually called by small children'.
- XI. Bur. tisk 'dagger' < Skt. tiksina 'sharp, hot, pungent, acid, iron, any weapon' (ibid: 86) < Kash. Tiklr 'dagger'
- XII. Bur. kóor 'cave in earth, a rock clift' < Shj. koer < Skt. kotare 'the hallow of a tree, cave, cavity' (ibid: 81) < Kash. kyuur 'well, cavity'.
- XIII. Bur. garoono 'bridegroom', garooni 'bridge' < Sh. garōno, garoni < Pali 'gharani 'housewife' from ghara 'house' (ibid: 83) < Kash. ruun 'husband' also < Kash rInY 'wife' garlvool 'householder' and garlvajenY 'wife' is also prevalent in Kash.

The ordinals in Burushaski are formed by the process of suffixation of –um to numerals. This process also involves certain morphophonemic changes in the numeral for their derivation of ordinals. The suffixation –um also occurs in Kashmir for the formation of ordinals. The following table illustrates formation of ordinals from their respective numerals in Burushaski of Yasin and Kashmiri language. Comparison is also shown with Urdu ordinal. This explains how Burushaski ordinals show tendency with Kashmiri in comparison to Urdu/Hindi etc.

Numerals		Ordinals		
Bur.	Kash.	Bur.	Kash.	Urdu
hen	Akh	havel-um	AkYum 'first'	Pehla
altán	zi	alto-um	dAYum 'second'	Duusra
iské	tre	iski-um	treYum 'third'	Teesra
Vailu	tsuur	Valte-um	tsuurYum 'fourth'	chuutha
Cendo	paaNts	Cendi-um	puuNtsYum 'fifth'	Pancva
bisindu	Se	basined-um	SeYum 'sixth'	ChATa
thalo	sAth	Tahle-um	sAtYum 'seventh'	sAAtvaa
altambu	aaTh	altambe-um	uuThYum 'eighth'	Aathva
Huco	nAv	Hunti-um	nAvYum 'ninth'	nAva
torun	dAh	Torun-um	dAhYum 'tenth'	Dahla

Table 1. Formation of ordinals in Burushaski and Kashmiri

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Phoneme /h/ is unstable in Burushaski as Kolmof and Edleman mark, "/h/ is not an independent phoneme [in Burushaski spoken in Hunza-Nagar] but is the only pharyngeal part of the vowel in the beginning of the word." (1970:29). This phonological feature is prevalent in Kashtiwari dialect of Kashmiri language as well

as among most of the language of Dardic affinity. Dhar has observed "This preliminary observation may lead that Kashtiwari on the basis of loss of /h/ proclaims the tendency to Kafir group and resembles to Burushaski. Edlerman while working on phonology and grammar of various Dardic languages noticed that the languages Tirahi, Waigali, Prasun, Ashkund, Kati, etc drop phoneme /h/. In the description of Waigali phonology Edelman states, "the aspirates and /h/ are absent (in Waigali) as in Kafir language" (2000:74).

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Absence of aspirates voiced stops in the phonological inventory of Burushaski makes a sharp cleavage between Burushaski and Indo-Aryan languages. Masica (1991) holds the view that presence of voiced stops aspirates is the inherent feature among Indo-Aryan languages. Burushaski shares this linguistic trait with Kashmiri and its dialects, Shina and its dialects and with other non-Indo-Aryan languages. Due to this feature the presence of the phonological feature like /bh/, /dh/, /Dh/, /gh/ are absent among these language. Hence the isogloss based on this phonological feature will cut the Burushaski language from Indo-Aryan languages.

### Abbreviation

1.	Bur.	Burushaski
2.	Sh.	Shina
3.	Skt.	Sanskrit
4.	Kash.	Kashmiri
5.	<	Correspondence to

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