

LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY TO BE INDICATED IN KASHMIRI LEXICOGRAPHY — A STUDY

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Understanding of the exact nature of language has fascinated and continues to fascinate ingenious brains from a wide variety of backgrounds. The cogent reason that stimulates the ingenious brains to explore more and more about mankind's faculty of communication through language is that the normal human being acquires the intricate and complex structure and properties of language, accepts the use and understanding of his native speech without awareness, comment, or questioning. The fascination is aroused when one ponders over the intricate and complex order and arrangement of linguistic elements, the historical origins of these elements, the variations of elements within a linguistic community, and the use of these elements for emotional expressions, social interaction, social control and the expression of social identity.

The history of scientific revolution can be traced back to the rise and development of human self awareness in respect of the universe so as to kindle the knowledge about us, our powers, and our place in the world. The question for the discovery of the pattern of hidden mysteries and powers of the universe and us aroused curiosity and puzzlement of the human genius. Language, nature's most powerful endowment bestowed on mankind, had become the prominent analytic subject for a few millennia. Scientific minds were struck by observing the phenomenon of associating meanings with meaningless sequences of sounds, even as they kept observing with curiosity the movements of twinkling of lights in the sky during night or in the patterns in the variety of life on the earth. The contents of knowledge and learning, twinkling of lights in the sky during night or in the patterns in the variety of life on the earth. The contents of knowledge and learning, pervading the society at the particular period of time had been the result of pondering over different subject matters of interest. The logical consequence of knowledge is that at each stage the old concepts are being subjected to constant scrutiny and re-examination and a new repository of knowledge is sought to be created. This has been the basis of the history of knowledge and at each period the corpus of the knowledge and learning is the product of the past and the matrix for future. The depth of various paradigms of language study current at various times has been exhibited by constant intellectual exercise initiated, according to tradition, by ancient Greeks in Europe. Indian linguistic tradition dates back to

sixth Century BC when Panini wrote the first comprehensive grammar of a human language. Panini's *Ashtadhyai* is a masterpiece of phonetic and grammatical rules formulated for the Sanskrit language. One finds no break in the treatment of language study irrespective of time, space and civilization.

Underlying principle of the Linguistic Relativity theory is to discern an influential view of the relationship between language, culture and thought. The concept of culture has been limited in this context to a way of life within which people think, feel and relate to each other in a particular speech community. Culture is an ingrained set of behaviours and moods of perception that assert the way to people to organize and shape their worlds. One of the salient features of culture is that people adhere to cultural relativism. The characteristics of culture being relative instead of universal in nature, is plausible on the basis of various types of cross-cultural studies. These studies have shown that there are indeed characteristics of culture that makes one culture different from another. Goodenough states, " a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and do so in any role that they may accept for any one of themselves ... Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behaviour, or emotions. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their moods of perceiving, relating and otherwise interpreting them."(1964:36) A language form an indispensable part of a culture and a culture form an indispensable part of a language. This enunciates the fact that language and culture are intricately interwoven with each other. Hoijer opines," The interrelation of language and other aspects of culture is so close that no part of the culture of a particular group can be properly studied without reference to the Linguistic symbols in use."(1964:456). Simultaneously, separating the study of linguistic forms from the cultural matrix of its people will lose the paramount understanding of language. The idea of analyzing language with the goal to decipher the cultural traits of the people in a given society has influenced the scholars of the disciplines beyond linguistics particularly anthropology, sociology and psychology. The conceptual framework evolved in this specialized area of language study relates the tools of linguistic research with the tools derived from anthropology, sociology and to some extent psychology. The proponents of this intellectual endeavor, who sketched out the methodology to unravel the deep-rooted relationship between language and other aspects of culture, mostly trace their lineage in Britain, France and America.

Edward Tylor, the British anthropologist, had taken lead in setting up the tradition for describing Language-culture relationship. In his notable work, *Primitive Culture* (1871) Tylor focused his study on the themes concerned with historical and theoretical aspects of language in relation to the nature and development of

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culture. The thesis expounded by Tylor in this discipline had been further elaborated by other British scholars of anthropology or linguistics like Marett, Malinowski, Firth and others. The undercurrent theoretical profundity of British thinkers of this subject matter had remained to find out, "how linguistic forms are influenced by physiological, mental, social and other aspects of cultural elements; what is the real nature of Meaning and Form, and how they correspond; a theory which, in fine, would give us a set of well-founded plastic definitions of grammatical concepts." (Hymes 1964:4) Another principal study that figures in relating language with other aspects of culture draws the genesis in French scholarship. In France, the doctrine of structuralism flourished during the beginning of the 20th century had revolutionized the disciplines like linguistics, sociology and anthropology in their approaches, orientations, practices and goals. Ferdinand de Saussure extended the application of the notions of structuralism to language study. Language used synchronically had been treated as the basic subject matter of linguistic analysis in Saussure's doctrine. Saussure introduced concepts *langue* and *parole* as the concepts of paramount importance of linguistic analysis. *Langue* refers to the language' system shared by community of speakers and *parole* is a concrete act of speaking in actual situations of an individual. This dichotomy envisages the fundamental relevance of language in relation to other aspects of cultural norms pervading in the society. Mauss and others attempted to blur the boundaries between linguistics-anthropology-psychology. Their viewpoint propagates that language and other aspects of culture are primarily seen in terms of cognitive function of human mind. This school opines, "The relation between language and other aspects of culture tends to be seen as one of the congruence between parallel system or products of collective psychology." (ibid:5) The scholars pertained to Britain and France had retained a rich body of literature for posterity in the field to make out the relation between language and culture. The two streams of thought had adopted approximately identical approaches to arrive at a single goal, as Hymes points out, "both views interpret language and culture as modes and facets of a single underlying factor, but in the one [i.e. in Britain] the unity is that of event, in the other [i.e. in France] that of the mind." (Ibid: 6) American culture-based linguistic studies have been ordained and shaped by ingenious contributions of Boas, Kroeber, Sapir, Whorf and others. The theories expounded by Americans in this field of inquiry are ingredients of Swiss thought wherein psychological constraints are found considerably influential in deriving language-culture relationship. Boas, the founding father of American anthropological linguistics, concise in his writings the complimentary dependence of nature (i.e. mental capacity endowed in humans) and nurture (i.e. external conditions of human life) in shaping language, culture and thought of people collectively As quoted by Hymes, "His [Boas's] interpretation of cultural process show a concern to weigh the natural determinants and conditions of human life, on

the one hand, and man's creative achievements within them on the other" (Ibid: 8). American studies in this context relied much on field work among different American-Indian languages like Hopi, Zuni, Eskimio, Navaho etc. Unravelling the genealogical classification of the New World languages, Sapir, Kroeber, Boas and Whorf hold the view that historical lineage of these languages also embody the ways of thought patterns. The Americans claimed the repository of ideas to workout the relationship between language and culture that has been summed up by Wardough in the following way:

"The strongest claim of all [i.e., theories of culture-based linguistic studies] is that the grammatical categories available in a particular language not only help the users of that language to perceive the world in a certain way but also at the same time limit such perceptions. They [grammatical categories] act as blinkers: you perceive only what your language allows you, or predispose you, to perceive. Your language controls your 'world-view'. Speakers of different languages will, therefore, have different world views. ... Languages provide a screen or filter to reality: it determines how speakers perceive and organize the world around them, both the natural world and social world". (1998: 218-19).

The foregoing survey enables one to formulate the view that variation in linguistic forms may signal cultural differences of the speakers. Many grammatical and lexical variations foresee their explanation in the cultural differences among the people. Therefore, accounting of difference of linguistic forms in cultural domain of speakers may subscribe to the comprehensive understanding of languages covering both grammar and lexis.

Words are the prefabs for the architect of language. Most of the linguistic processes that language undergoes are often word centered. Communication transactions are accomplished by words as the speaker or writer carves thoughts or feelings in words and hearer or reader extracts these thoughts or feelings out of these words. Words being the nucleus of the corpus of language nourish the development of language in the following ways:

The borrowing at word level occurs more readily in comparison to other constituent parts of language. This type of linguistic process results into expanding the horizons of communication and enriching literary trends of the language.

Semantic aspects of language are often word based. Words carry different shades of meaning in different contexts. This semantic vitality of language depends on the availability of word resources of the language.

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The cleavage drawn between colloquial and literary forms, formal and informal styles, technical and casual varieties, is grounded in the power of wording. The sharpness in the line of cleavage across these forms demonstrates the treasure of words the languages possess.

Increase in the vocabulary count is seen to be quite effective in expanding the pedagogic culture of the society. Surveys indicate that dominant language communities of the world adopt strategies to assess the vocabulary increase of their language periodically. This 'trend has significant impact towards elaborating the linguistic domains of the language.

The above-mentioned facts encapsulate the fact that words have a centrality in the overall linguistic structure of the language. In the view of this understanding the study of various dimensions of word has been focused for a long so that ultimately a specialized branch of linguistics technically known as lexicography resulted. According to Robins, The spread of literacy and the invention of printing gave rise to the large scale production of dictionaries and grammars of European languages. From their original function as limited glossaries of "difficult words" dictionaries grew in size and shape to the present day comprehension of books registering every word in use in language". (1989:476)

Kashmiri Language, the language spoken by the majority of the population of the state of Jammu and Kashmir which owes the rich literary heritage that dates back to 13th century C.E., is the edifice of diverse linguistic influences. The question to know the genesis of the language has been till date, if not totally ignored, carried out in a rather simplistic way. Grierson (1919) found Dardic features deeply rooted in the linguistic structure of Kashmiri language and that made him proclaim that the Kashmiri language is genetically akin to Dardic group. Akhtar Mohidin attempts to bring Dardic languages close the Dravidian. He observes:

"With the discovery of Burzahom site, a new insight into the past has been provided, and one can attach credibility to the view that the term Dard may be a corrupted form of Dravid, and thus the Dard group of language, to which Kashmiri also belongs, may have to be studied in relation to the Dravidian language of ancient times" (1998:19). The phonetic features shared by Kashmiri and Dravidian language, as given by Akhtar Mohidin, are the free occurrence of change of word initial (i) to (ye glide) or (u) to (v —glide). Examples:

(i) changes to	(y)	Gloss
ila:j	yela:j	'treatment'
ina:m	yena:m	'prize'

izat	yezat	'honor'
ikbalmand	yakba:Imand	'glorious'
[u] changes to	[v]	Gloss
upay	vopay	'solution'
umir	vmir	'age'
umi:d	vomi:d	'hope'

These phonetic features follow the pattern of Dravidian features of changing [m] to [yam]; [n] to [yan].

Stein, Morgenstierne and others place Kashmiri language as descended from Sanskrit. Moreover Kashmir remained the seat of learning for Sanskrit during ancient period. Professor Mohidin Hajani makes the following thought-provoking observations in this context:

"Even though the major part of Sanskrit literature produced by Kashmir is lost in the political upheavals, we are proud to retain as much of the Sanskrit lore as to surpass, at least in quality, the total output of Brahmans in India. The bibliography of our ancestors in Sanskrit especially from seventh to thirteenth Century will require a complete volume... out of twenty classical grammars in Sanskrit, eighteen were composed in Kashmir". (p75:15) Also books on poetic theory in Sanskrit by Kashmiri scholars (8th-12th century C.E.) like Vdbhata, Vamana, Rudvata, Kuntaka, Anandavardhana, Abhinavgupta, Mammata, and Ruyyaka are found in the legends.

Persian entered into the psyche of Kashmiri masses effectively as the language showed its influence in developing revenue technical terms, terminologies for traditional handcraft industry besides diffusion of large scale vocabulary in communicating while handling various domains of social life. In passing, one can say that both Sanskrit and Persian shaped the linguistic and literary trends of Kashmir language.

Following the dialect model of Kashmiri language as chalked out by Grierson (1919), Kashmiri language included the speakers of Kashtiwari, Poguli, Siraji, Rambani and Kohistani as its regional dialects. Grierson opines "Kashmir' has one true dialect —Kashtiwari, spoken in the valley of Kashtiwari". (Ibid: p. 233)

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The lexicographic study of Kashmiri language was launched by Grierson, who compiled the few volumes of "A Dictionary of Kashmiri language" based on the materials left by the late Pandit Iswar Kaul. In 1980 the Academy of Art, Culture and Languages brought out seven volumes of "Kashmiri- Kashmiri Dictionary" edited by S.K. Toshkhani. In the 1979 the same institution published 12 volumes of "Urdu — Kashmiri Farhang". Masoodi (1998) published "Farhang Persian-Kashmiri ". A glance of these dictionaries (especially Kashmiri — Kashmiri Dictionary) makes one realize that these dictionaries have limitations in respect of data and theoretical orientation. The limitation of date in these may adversely affect meeting of present cultural and technological changes. This problem may hamper the process of globalization and may affect information transfer. Dash holds the view:

"Indian language corpora are indispensable resources for beginning any comparative study on the language variation present in the subcontinent. Following same strict sampling procedures, we could generate some comparable corpora, with maximum degree of comparability, for each typologically as well as genealogically related Indian languages. For example, comparable corpora comparing data from both the Bangla and the Hindi language can contain texts having similar genre, sample size, type, time span etc., from each language to enhance synchronic comparisons. Such corpora could be reliable information resources for multidirectional studies of Indian sociolinguistics to observe how language varies according to text, genre, domain, period, region, speaker, writer, context etc., which, in its own turn, will throw new perspectives on Indian life and society" (2003:101).

The application of the claim by Dash to generate corpora for their use for comparisons will be productive for incorporating rigorous information pertaining to regional dialect of the languages as well. The areas like lexicography, language processing and language teaching will benefit more result by adopting the tools of comparison for devising their studies. For relating the language variability with cultural differences will supplement the tools for understanding the nature of language in •a holistic perspective. According to Sapir:

"Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of a particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group — we see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because

the language habits of our community predispose choices of interpretation'. (quoted in Wardough 1998:216)

Whorf further adds "... the world is presented in kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds.. And this means by the linguistic system in our mind" (Ibid:p. 211)

In the light of the doctrines proposed by Sapir, Whorf and others, and within the framework for corpora study as proposed by Dash (2003) the following points needs consideration:

Is their harmony in the worldview and in the thought patterns among people originating from different dialects?

Is lexicography comprehensive while ignoring the relevance of dialect variation and the social value that different lexical items encode within a single speech community?

Is accounting of cultural traits associated with words dispensable in lexicography.

Dialectologists emphasize upon the fact that technological adventures, the globalization and current avenues of communication are some of the features that gave vent to dialectological studies in modern era. The objective of this revivalism is to generate techniques for data bank of languages based on regional dialects and social dialects. The anthropologists relate dialect as a part of the whole speech community and hold the view that accounting the linguistic features and cultural traits of words on the basis of comparison are indispensable to meet current challenges. The notions that words not only are the tangible linguistic entities but also are fundamentally the symbols for the features of the culture extend the scope to explore the properties and meanings of words beyond existing paradigms. The understanding of these views profoundly invigorate the principle to study lexicography within the paradigm of dialectological variation and culture facets. This method seems to be significant for studying Kashmiri lexicography. The following examples will illustrate the view:

The identical lexical units differ in holding social values in the perspective of dialect variation. This tendency is quite common while comparing Kashmiri spoken within valley with Kashtiwari. The following set of words/phrases is part of Kashmiri language but the social value is marked as euphemism in the valley with these linguistic units, leading to communication deviations or social offence if used. In opposition to it, these units form part of casual speech behavior in Kashtiwari dialect.

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Examples:

Lexical Unit	Gloss	
	Kashmiri spoken in Kashmir	Kashmiri spoken in Kashtiwari
pa:vin la:yakh	worth to lay down (Female)	marriageable age (Female)
pitra:th	Malice	Paternal Uncle and his siblings
Rend	bad woman	Widow
Rond	bad man	Widower
boukut	Kid	son or son in law
noutva:n	Enervate	Handicap

The above given examples divulge difference in culture traits reflected in shaping different meanings to identical lexical unit. The lexical units used as the form of casual speech in Kashtiwari are euphemized in the socio-cultural setup of Kashmir Valley and in communication elsewhere. These examples provide the evidence that the speech varieties are of elegant nature in the speech of one regional dialect (i.e. Kashtiwari) which holds opposite character of inelegance in the speech of the rest of the population using same language (i.e. Kashmiri) therefore the accounting of this kind of data is indispensable in establishing lexicography of comprehensive information.

2. The identical lexical units differ in semantic shades. This results in communication gaps.

Examples:

Lexical Unit	Gloss	
	Kashmiri spoken in Kashmir	Kashmiri spoken in Kashtiwari
Ranun	cook rice or vegetable etc	cooking/baking
tha:vun	Close	Open
Yazi	Eunuch	honorific appellative
Mitsrun	to open	to close
za:ph	to be silent	to speak
rikh	Line	certain measure for liquids

3. Identical semantic shades are conveyed by different lexical items:

Examples:		
GLOSS	KASHMIRI	KASHTIWARI
"to stop"	Rukun	ca:gun
"appetite"	Bochi	c+k
"weep"	Vadun	ba:rav
"auxiliary		
verb to be"	Chu	Thu
"tomorrow"	Pagah	Phuphar
"chin"	Hongin	vo:gin

4. Honorific forms marked by particular morpheme suffixed with verbs/pronouns are a pervasive rule in the use of Kashmiri language. The linguistic structuring of this type is a socially recognized device. Its use facilitates interaction congenial with social distance between speaker-listener-context. Deviations within the norms of socially framed scale can be disastrous for the maintenance of social equilibrium among participants. Unlike Kashmiri speakers hailing from the valley; Kashtiwari usage is not prone to this socially determined linguistic strategy. It has been observed that female folk is often left out from the application of honorific forms. The worldview of these speakers is shaped in such a form that violation of social relations is not perceived when non-honorific morpheme dominates the interaction.

5. Grierson derived the following phonetic rule as one of the distinctive feature of Dardic language. Grierson states: "one of the most typical characteristics of modern Dardic language in the frequent hardening of original sonorant letters; so that g becomes k, j becomes ch; d becomes t, d become t and b or v becomes p." This was the universal rule in the days when paisachi prakrit was spoken (Ibid:242). This Phonetic trait is still prevalent in Kashtiwari.

EXAMPLE:

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KASHMIRI	KASHTIWARI	GLOSS
gar	kar	house
bo:y	po:y	brother
byna	pyni	sister
dak	take	push

The feature has not been recorded in Kashmiri — Kashmiri dictionary.

6. The phoneme /h/ is characterized as non-syllabic glottal fricative voiced and functions like consonant /h/ elsewhere; it is not identified in Kashtiwari speech. (This preliminary observation may lead one to assume that Kashtiwari on the basis of loss of /h/ indicates and the affinity with languages belonging to Kafir group and resemblance with Burushuski). The existing dictionaries have lapsed in registering lexical items with loss of phoneme /h/.

The above-stated data have not been pursued in Kashmiri dictionaries published till date. The distinction between euphemism and casual speech habit; assimilating different meanings into identical lexical items; encoding identical meanings through different lexical items; retaining archaic linguistic forms etc are some of the features determined by the speakers of a particular language inhabiting at different geographical locations. The linguistic diversity of this nature sometimes reflects the difference in the worldview of the people in relation to different geographical affinities. This diversity may be due to the consequences of the differences in cognitive process acquired differently by the speakers of the dialects of the same language. Culture interferes in shaping the difference of socio-cultural value of this lexical variables as Tylor states, "culture is that complex whole which include knowledge belief, art, moral, law, customs, and any others capability or habits acquired by man as a member of society." hour. This procedure can be built up in synthesizing the postulation worked out by Sapir, Whorf, Hymes and others.

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