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Outline of Linguistic Studies of Kashmiri Language

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Abstract

The paper presents an overview of the major linguistic works undertaken on Kashmiri, tracing the development of its systematic study from the nineteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth century. It examines significant contributions to the description and analysis of Kashmiri language in the areas of phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicography, and dialectology. The paper also examines Pandit Ishwar Koul's Kashmiri Shabdamritam, the first comprehensive grammar of Kashmiri, G. A. Grierson's extensive documentation of the language and its dialects in the Linguistic Survey of India. The paper highlights the contributions of scholars such as Bailey and J. R. Firth to the study of Kashmiri phonetics and phonology. By bringing together these foundational works, the paper provides a concise account of the evolution of Kashmiri linguistic scholarship and highlights their significance for subsequent research on the language.

Keywords: Kashmiri Language, Linguistic Survey of Kashmiri, Dardic, Indo-Aryan

1. Introduction

Linguistic studies of Kashmiri, documented in the form of brief notes, articles, monographs, grammatical sketches and dictionaries dates back to 19th Century AD. The first comprehensive grammar of Kashmiri language was written by Pandit Ishwar Koul under the title *Kashmiri Shabdamritam* written in Sanskrit. Pandit Ishwar Koul modelled his work on the principles of Panian Sanskrit grammar Ashtadhyayi. Grierson edited *Kashmiri Shabdamritam* with notes and additions and the work was published under the auspices of the Asiatic society in 1877. Ishwar Koul also tried to write Kashmiri-Sanskrit dictionary but could not complete it. During the earlier period of 20th century, various research studies on Kashmiri language appeared elaborating on the subject matters like phonetics and phonology, morphology and syntax, dictionaries and lexical studies. Bailey's work on Kashmiri phonetics appeared in 1937. J R Firth carried out a tentative analysis of Kashmiri sounds in 1939. Grierson's monumental work *Linguistic Survey of India* was carried out during the end of 19th century and early years of 20th century covering most of the languages spoken in the South Asian

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subcontinent. The work was published in 11 volumes and 19 parts. Volume 8 Part 2 focuses on Kashmiri language and its dialects. Outline account of Grierson's work on Kashmiri language is summed up as under:

1. Grammatical description of Kashmiri language explains patterns of speech sounds, Kashmiri Nouns, Kashmiri Verbs, Primary and secondary suffixes of Kashmiri Language. Grierson, however has neglected significant aspects of Kashmiri syntax and has provided a fragmented sketch of syntax (Kachru 1966).
2. With respect to linguistic classification of Kashmiri language, Grierson proposed that it belongs to the Dard group of Dardic sub-family. Grierson used the term Dardic to group the genetically related languages spoken across the geographical terrain called Dardistan. Dardic languages according to Grierson comprise a separate branch of Indo-Iranian sub-family and fall at an intermediate place between Indo-Aryan and Iranian languages. Grierson provides linguistic evidences in support of his view summed up by Kachru (1966) in his article *Kashmiri and other Dardic Languages* are as under:
   I. Lack of voiced aspirates in Kashmiri (For example: bh, dh, gh)

   II. Kashmiri has SVO word while Indo-Aryan languages have SOV word order. (It is worth to note here that Shina and Kohistani and dialects of Kashmiri like Poguli, Siraji and Rambani have SOV word order. Kishtwari follows SVO word order).

   III. Aspiration of stops in word final position.

   IV. The presence of large number of post-positions in Kashmiri which are peculiar to Pisacha.

   V. The numeral system is typical Paisacha.

   VI. Three-way contrast of demonstrative pronouns.

   VII. Three-fold past tense in Kashmiri.

S.K. Chatterjee (1962) supported Dardic notion of linguistic classification of Kashmiri and other related languages. Chatterjee holds the view that Kashmiri, at least in its basic substratum belongs to the Dardic section of Aryan or Indo-Iranian. Chatterjee believes that Kashmiri, in spite of Dardic substratum became a part of the Sanskritic-cultural world of India. This linguistic and cultural contact of Kashmiri resulted in diffusion of very large Indo-Aryan linguistic elements into Kashmiri with Dardic base. Georg Morgenstierne (1961) assumes that Dardic is simply a convenient term to denote a bundle of aberrant Indo-Aryan hill languages which contain absolutely no features which cannot be derived from the old Indo-Aryan. S. S. Toshkhani (1977) did

not find any strong linguistic validity in Grierson's linguistic classification of Kashmiri language. Toshkhani made the following observation in his research entitled *Kashmiri Language: Roots, Evolution and affinity.*

1. The phonetic features of Kashmiri language can be diachronically traced back to old Indo-Aryan.
2. Etymologically Kashmiri shows strong affinity with Indo-Aryan languages.
3. Kashmiri shows certain syntactic similarities with Sanskrit particularly for negative sentences.

Grierson described the regional dialects and social dialects of Kashmiri language. Kishtwari is marked as the only true regional dialect of Kashmiri spoken in Kishtwar. Siraji, Rambani and Poguli are the miscellaneous transitional dialects. Social dialects as hinted by Grierson are Hindu Kashmiri and Muslim Kashmiri showing Sanskrit influence in the former and Persian influence in the latter.

3. Grierson compiled his four volume Kashmiri-English dictionary and published it in 1932. The dictionary is based on the material from Ishwar Koul's incomplete lexicographic work entitled "Kashmiri-Sanskrit Kosha".

The rise of structural linguistics during the beginning of 20th century in Europe revolutionized linguistics in thought and practice. The theory of structuralism led to the postulation of a body of doctrines related to the understanding of the nature and structure of human language. Unlike other languages spoken in the subcontinent, Kashmiri language did not receive any serious linguistic attention on the basis of modern linguistic trends till 1966 except one published work entitled, "Kashmiri Word Phonology" authored by Ashok R Kelkar and Pran Nath Trisal published in Anthropological Linguistics in 1964.

The modern phase of linguistic studies of Kashmiri language was initiated by Braj B Kachru, trained in modern linguistics at USA. Kachru undertook a project funded by USA to write *A Reference Grammar of Kashmiri Language*. The project was completed in 1972. The reference grammar is a pioneering work that has covered phonetic-phonological-morphological-syntactic aspects of Kashmiri. In the reference grammar, Kachru establishes phonetic inventory of Kashmiri speech sounds, and analyzes parts of speech. The rules for phrase structures and sentences structures hitherto unexplored are discussed in the grammar. The grammar has pedagogical as well as research orientation. Kachru later wrote intensively on various linguistic aspects of Kashmiri language on the topics like Kashmiri and other Dardic

languages, Verb to be in Kashmiri, A Manual of Teaching Kashmiri language besides some topics on applied linguistics. Omkar Nath Koul with inquisitive linguistic brain deliberated on diverse themes of Kashmiri linguistics for a period that spreads approximately half a century. Brief sum up of Koul's linguistic study with reference to Kashmiri language is as under:

1. Worked on the core areas of linguistics that includes various types of grammars like Phrase Structure grammar (1977), Descriptive Grammar (1992) Cognitive Grammar, co-authored by Kashi Wali (1998). Research papers on different themes of Kashmiri syntax adopting modern linguistic techniques have been published in national and international journals. Prof Koul and Peter Edwin Hook, University of Pennsylvania, USA, carried out collaborative research on Kashmiri language. The work is published and readily available.
2. Pioneered the research studies of Kashmiri language in the Interdisciplinary context like sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and language and communication. Syntactic patterns and lexical categories of Kashmiri language indicate deep rootedness in the cultural categories of the people. Prof Koul studied these aspects of Kashmiri language in the framework of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

During the end of 20th century, the linguistic study of Kashmiri language became the focus of inquiry in various academic centers. The thrust areas of research remained core linguistics and interdisciplinary areas. The trained linguist studied Kashmiri phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics within the framework of modern linguistic theories. The interdisciplinary areas studied different aspects of Kashmiri language in the context of sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and applied linguistic models. Major part of this work is documented in the published form today. Apart from this, the linguistic studies of Kashmiri language also flourished in Europe, America and Russia. Russian Academy of Science published grammars of Kashmiri written in Russian language.

Kashmiri language being the subject matter of central importance of Department of Linguistics, University of Kashmir, wide range of programs have been formulated to explore intensively and extensively different aspects of Kashmiri linguistics in tune with modern technology. The brief summary of these programs is as under:

1. Computational Linguistics received due importance as Ph.D scholars with working knowledge of computer sciences undertook

study in this area using Kashmiri language data for their respective studies.

2. Lexicographic studies have been conducted that resulted in developing online dictionaries of Kashmiri vis-à-vis other languages.

3. Machine translation system of Kashmiri vis-à-vis other languages and vice versa has been developed.

4. Dialect Survey of Kashmiri language has been carried out. The survey revisits Grierson's treatment of Kashmiri dialects. The survey comprises three parts. Part 1 is Linguistic Survey of Kashmiri Dialects in the Kashmir Valley. The survey shows significant linguistic cleavage between North Kashmir, South Kashmir and Srinagar. The use of certain linguistic traits specifies the geographical location of the speaker. For example two variables, the progressive marker /an/ in spite of /aːn/ elsewhere and palatalization for the words which are non-palatalized elsewhere are genetically inherent linguistic traits earmarked for speakers of south of Kashmir. Further isoglosses have been drawn between major regions of south Kashmir. The occurrences of round vowels which are not round elsewhere are significant linguistic trait of North Kashmir. Part 2 specifies regional dialects of Kashmiri language spoken outside Kashmir valley. The dialect description in this volume follows Uriel Weinreich's model of Structural dialectology. With regard to phonological variation, the Kashmiri dialects/variants spoken across Pir Panjal present cases where palatalization ceases to exist in many sounds which otherwise are palatalized in Kashmiri of the valley. For example, /kənʲ/ 'stone' is pronounced as /kə̃y/. Similarly, Kashmiri words starting with the dental aspirated affricate [tsʰ] in valley are pronounced by speakers in Banihal, Ramban, Gool, Maho with a dental aspirated affricate [s] which is however different from the dental fricative [s]. The survey volume has used waveform and spectrogram software to show the distinctness of the two sounds in question.

Schmidt and Koul (1984) report that Kishtwari and Poguli both have developed the central vowels peculiar to Kashmiri. One of these central vowels is also found in Brokskat- a variety of Shina. However, this could be just an aerial feature and not genetic (Ramaswami: 1975).

In Kashmiri, the number of vowels posited by Kelkar and Trisal (1964) is fifteen. They have not mentioned the long back rounded vowel [ɔː] because there is a lone example /sɔːd/ 'one and a quarter' for

it in Kashmiri. However, the vowel was frequently perceived in the speech of Poguli and Kishtwari people while a survey was conducted (Ahmad et al: 2011). Some examples are given below.

Poguli

i./gɔ:š/ light

ii./gɔ:l/ shepherd

iii./sɔ:s/ ashes

Kishtwari

i./gɔ:ray/ will tell you
ii./jɔ:n/ good
iii./gɔ:D/ cowshed

The word /sɔ:s/ finds mention in Sheikh ul Alam's poetry as well and it has the same meaning as above (ashes). However, it lacks the inherent roundedness, which may be a deliberate attempt to maintain the rhyming of the poem.

With regard to Poguli, a complete paradigm of personal pronouns is seen which are marked for number, gender and case. The same have been recorded in the part 2 of the survey project that stands published. A few examples are:

i. [ãv]I -nominative, neuter	[asõ:]	our-neuter
ii.[mi] I-ergative, neuter	[tu:n]	your-neuter-sg
iii.[tes] he-dative, masc.	[ti:n]	your-neuter-pl
iv.[su] he-nominative, masc.	[tesõ:]	his-sg
v. [mʲo:n] my-masc	[tesay]	her-sg
vi. [mʲe:n] my-fem		

Kishtwari morphology is linguists' paradise. Apart from *h-lessness* and *devoicing* with the latter also foregrounding the presence of an incipient tone, the copula in Kishtwari presents a curious case. Instead of /chu/ of Kashmiri spoken in the valley, there is a /thu/ which is marked for number and gender as well. Few examples are:

i./unin thu u:n/	There is a dog. (There is a deictic pronoun and not a pleonastic subject)
ii./yi thi akh kita:b/	This is a book.
iii./bɨ thus gevan/	I am singing.
iv./tu kati thukh/	Where are you?

Both these volumes are published by CIIL Mysore. Volume 3 has taken the account of some syntactic features in correlation with regional variation. However. it is yet to be published.

5. Kashmiri language is one of the Indian languages in the language list of C- DAC Pune to develop software in Kashmiri language'

This summary gives a glimpse into Kashmir language research, but is by no means comprehensive. The past two decades have seen significant advancements in core and interdisciplinary areas, leveraging modern technology.

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