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**Language, Communication and Social Structure: Studying Greeting
Patterns in Gujjars**

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Abstract

Greeting is act of communication in which individuals purposefully make their vicinity known to others, to show regard for, and to propose a kind of relationship or social status (formal or casual) between people or group of peoples interacting with one another. This paper brings forth the greeting manners of Gujjars of Fakir Gujari village. It is an area on the outskirts of Srinagar, which rests in the lap of Mahadev hillock and their colony is spread over 50-60 sq kms. The present paper briefly discusses different types of greetings with varied situations in which a greeter uses various greeting forms appropriate to particular context. The study is based on observation and interviews, attempts the greeting patterns. The objective of this paper is to highlight some interesting inherent linguistic features in day-today social interaction of Gojri Speakers.

Keywords: *Gujjars, Communication, Greetings, Language.*

Introduction

Misra (2003) Greeting is the domain–appropriate behavior which results from a combination of the trio: the domain–appropriate places, the domain-appropriate times (or occasions) and the domain-appropriate persons.

Greeting is an act of communication in which individuals purposefully make their vicinity known to others, to show regard for, and to propose a kind of relationship or social status (formal or casual) between people or group of peoples interacting with one another. Greeting at times is utilized only before a discussion or to greet in passing, for example, on a side walk or trail. While greeting traditions are profoundly culture and situation specific and might change within the culture relying upon the social status and relationship.

Greeting can likewise be depicted as the exchange of expressions, pleasantries or great wishes between two individuals or a group cooperating with the end goal of satisfying social commitments or for the reasons of setting up interpersonal relationship. Now and again, greeting is utilized as a prelude to the making of an appropriate discussion or presenting the topic of talk.

“Malinowski has given the name phatic communion as a technical term to denote the type of socially necessary idle chatter” (Robins 1986).

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Greetings can occur in verbal and [or non-verbal forms, depending upon the situation. If the interlocutors are known to each other than a greeting can start by asking about their health, profession, happiness or food. How one addresses or speaks to a person depends on his or her age and social status. It depends on the type of social relationship between the speaker and the addressee. That is the more equal and intimate the speaker is to him, the more he would call him by name and the less equal and more distant he is to him, the more he would call him with title of address. Thus, two forms of speech are reflected in the society; they are (i) honorific (polite) and (ii) non-honorific (intimate) form of speech. In a society, how one addresses or speaks to a person depends on certain parameters namely, age difference, sex difference, social status and the nature of relationship i.e. intimate-non intimate; formal-informal; kin- non-kin etc.

Greetings in Gojri

Modes of greeting form an important part of speech acts in the day to day communication. There are two types of greetings in Gojri; verbal and non-verbal. Most of the time greeting is incomplete without some kind of non-verbal behavior, implicit or explicit, with the use of verbal mode of greeting. It may be a nod, or a smile, shaking hands, saluting, embracing, or a twinkle in the eye. Verbal greetings are not complete or effective in isolation unless they are accompanied with appropriate gestural expressions. Non-verbal behavior appears as an indispensable part of greeting that is often implied in the expression itself.

Modes of Greeting have a critical place in the investigation of language. In a greeting circumstance, two persons come in contact in a specific ethnic situation, which is portrayed by means for some paralinguistic features like gestures accompanied with certain statements. Modes of greeting shape a vital parts of speech acts in the everyday correspondence. There are two types of greetings in Gojri; verbal and non-verbal. More often greeting is inadequate without some sort of non-verbal conduct, implicit or explicit, with the utilization of verbal modes of greetings. It might be a nod, or a smile, shaking hands, saluting, grasping, or a twinkle in the eye. Verbal greeting are not finished or compelling in segregation unless they are went with proper gestural expressions. Non-verbal conduct shows up as an irreplaceable piece of greeting that is regularly suggested in the expression itself. Verbal greetings are further categorized as formal and informal greetings depending upon the context of the situation, intimacy and relationship between the interlocutors.

Greetings are not merely symbols of adherence to certain norms and rules laid down by rules of etiquettes. They are more than this. They are type of social rituals in which we generally say what the other person expects you to say.

Gujjars have their own formalized greeting expressions or nonverbal gestures like kissing, embracing, saluting with hand, handshake.

Gujjars usually start greeting with '*assalam-u-alaikum*' followed by 'how are you', how is your family, health etc. Following are the greeting expressions in Gojri.

Greeting Expression	Alternate Response
Assalamu-alaikum Peace be with you.	Walaikum Salam And unto you be peace.
[təm bale] How are you?	[bala] Fine.
[tʰara bətʃʌ bale] How are your children?	[a bale] They are fine.
[təm khud theek[[tʰari seht tʰik e] How are you? How is your health?	[ʃökər kʰuda ka tʰik] Thanks to almighty, I am good.
[tʰara mal tʰik e] What about your livestock?	[ʃökər kʰuda ka sab tʰik] All is well by the grace of God.

Table 1.3. Greeting expression in Gojri

And if somebody is not well or some mishap has happened the conversation would be:

Greeting Expression	Alternate Response
[təm tʰik e] [tʰari seht tʰik] How are you?	[mɛ tʰoɽo bɪmar hogio tʰa] I was not well.
[ke huo] What happened?	[mɪnu bökʰar tʰa] I had fever.
[dʌkʰər ko ɽio] Did you see the doctor?	[han dva kʰaŋ lægo] Yes, I was on medication.
[mɪnu pəta nai tʰa] [mɛ ajo hota] I did not know. I would have come.	[tu pəta bʰər nai ajo] You did not come to see me.

Table 1.4. Greeting expression in Gojri

Greeting expressions are not necessarily communication of information. Greeting expression in most of the languages including Gojri consists of a kind of medical diagnosis, an inquiry about once health. This includes, among others, greeting employed for seeking information about the well-being of a person and his/her loved ones, to identify in trying periods, to rejoice with the person in time of success or when good fortune occurs.

The various other types of greetings in Gojri include

- 1) Greeting on festivals like Eid, Navroz, Ramadhan.
- 2) Greeting on special occasions like wedding, child birth, entering a new house etc.
- 3) Greeting while parting of ways or leave taking.
- 4) Greeting the deceased family (condolence).

These greeting are accompanied by the non-verbal gestures like nodding, smiling, embracing and shaking hands etc.

From the point of view of predictability greetings in ‘Gojri’ fall within two broad categories: closed and open .The closed greetings are those which have only fixed response, where the predictability is cent percent.

Interlocutor	Greeting	Fixed Response
Young Male (YM) to Old Male (OM) (Insider)	Assalamu-alikum ‘Peace be with you’	Walaikum assalam ‘And unto you be peace’.
Old Male (OM) to Middle Aged Male (Insider)	[kər mu k ^h ər he] How is everyone at home?	[kər mē t ^h ik he] Everybody is fine.

Table 1.5. Closed Greeting Expressions

Interlocutor	Greeting	Fixed Response
MF (Insider) to (MF) (Outsider)	[id mōbarək] Eid Mubarak.	[k ^h ər mōbarək] Wish the same for you.

Table 1.6. Close Greeting Expressions

On the other hand, the open greetings can have more than one response. They have limited predictability.

Interlocutor	Greeting	Open Response
OM to MM (Insider)	[təm bale] Are you fine?	[a bale] I am fine.
MM to YM (Insider)	[kitmu ajo] Where were you?	[hū buŋə gijo ita dōkan vər] I had gone to the shop.
OF to MM (Insider)	[kə kərat ho] What are you doing?	[hū baɽi p ^h erū o] I am working in the field.

Table 1.7. Open Greeting Expressions

Modes of greetings are deeply correlated with the modes of address. The modes of greetings are used before a conversation as an ice breaker and also before saying goodbye to each other. The greeting forms are mostly used first by the youngsters for elders or by juniors to seniors. The greetee then responds by the use along with the Modes of greetings. The forms of address may either precede or follow the greeting forms.

Modes of Address + Verbal Greeting

[ɖakɽər sab, assalamu-alaikum]

[masɽər dʒi assalamu-alaikum]

Verbal Greetings + Modes of Address

[assalamu-alaikum vəkil sab]

[asalamu-aalaikum dʒɪnab]

Modes of greetings and address are used as opening phrases for conversations too. The opening phrases in Gojri may be of the following type:

[tu kɪʰo dʒavā]

Where are you going?

[ke ʃem aʒo]

What is the time?

[mal dʒaŋal b^heja]

Did you send the cattle for grazing?

Analysis

There are Sociolinguistic factors that account for the type and structuring of Gojri greeting. They include age, sex, context and time. Although there seems to be cultural assumptions of equality and about the character and motivations of participants, nevertheless deference or respect is accorded to whoever deserves it among the Gujjars and this is explicitly reflected in the greeting sequence. The younger person typically initiates greeting whenever the occasion arises. This is a mark of deference to the older person. Context is also a variable that determines who greets first. For instance, if a person enters into a gathering of people, he/she is expected to offer greeting first to the group; the age of the person notwithstanding. In addition, a person who calls on another person's house offers his/her greeting first whether he/she is older or younger. The sex variable does not appear to account for who greets first among Gujjars. It is whoever considers his/her co-participant worth of greetings that he/she offers to greet. However, if the female participant is an older person and the male is younger, it is the male who greets first in deference to the age of the woman. Similarly, if the male participant is an older person and the female is younger, it is the female who greets first. This seems to be the pattern in the villages. Time is another factor that could have been responsible for the length of the greeting system. Persons who are not in a hurry and so have plenty of time to chat may decide to ask each other about the welfare of the kith and kin before proceeding to other matters of concern.

Among Gujjars greeting pattern also varies with who is greeting whom (interlocutor). Apart from the verbal utterances, the use of non-verbal part depends upon the interlocutor, for example, it was observed that a Gujjar male while greeting another Gujjar male shake hands or may sometimes embrace each other. If an old male is greeted by a young male, the old male kisses the forehead of the young and may also embrace him.

When a female greets another female they use verbal gestures, very often followed by non-verbal once. The use of non-verbal's like embracing and kissing was seen in very intimate relationships. It also depends on time that is how frequently they see each other. If they are meeting after a long span of time, then use of non-verbal gestures shows the affection and warmth. Certain norms

are followed by the community people while greeting and addressing each other. If a male greets a female or vice-versa, some social distance is maintained. They restrict to the use of verbal communication only except for the close familial relations like a father-daughter, grandfather-granddaughter, brother-sister and husband-wife.

Conclusion

The paper studied the greeting patterns among Gujjars. Greeting Patterns have their roots in socio cultural context of the society. The analysis of the communicative patterns of Gujjars reveal their acceptable behaviour, social positions, close connections and prestige factors associated. Usually youngsters greet their elders first and it was also seen that sex variable did not appear to account for who greeted first. However the female participants had some restrictions for non-verbal gestures while greeting the males.

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