GRAMMATICAL GENDER IN GOJRI OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

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ABSTRACT

Gender in language occurs structurally as bound morphemes, sound changes, or as clitics. In Gojri, the gender segregation is observed as morphemic units, and vowel change. Grammatical gender in Gojri is a way of classifying nouns that unpredictably assign them to gender categories that are often not related to their real-world qualities. The present study aims to analyse gender in Gojri and give a comprehensive description of Gojri gender and gender forming processes. The data presented in this study was collected from the native speakers of Gojri by direct interactions using a questionnaire as the tool to fetch primary data. The data was transcribed, analysed using the morphological analysis, Leipzig rules for interlinear glossing, and examined for different suffixes, and vowel changes that form the part of feminine and masculine genders in Gojri.

Keywords: Gojri, Gender, Femininity, Masculinity, Bound Morphemes, Sound Change.

1. Introduction

The topic of grammatical gender has long captivated scholars and linguists throughout history. The phenomenon of categorization, a morphological feature, involves the classification of nouns into different genders, which include masculine, feminine, neuter, or even more complex distinctions. The phenomenon of grammatical gender is not only a captivating subject of inquiry within the field of linguistics, but also provides valuable insights into the complex frameworks of many languages. One of the primary inquiries regarding grammatical gender revolves around the process of assigning nouns to specific genders within a given language. According to Boroditsky's (2001), the allocation of gender to nouns is not a random process, but rather frequently associated with the intrinsic characteristics of the objects being referenced. The grammatical gender works as cognitive

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representation of linguistic categorization of nouns into masculine, feminine and neuter genders. The correlation between grammatical gender and cognitive representation enhances our comprehension of how languages classify the surrounding world.

In addition, Gennari et al., 2012 claims that grammatical gender exerts an impact on language processing and interpretation by speakers. The phenomenon of gender agreement, which entails the requirement for adjectives and verbs to exhibit grammatical agreement with the gender of the noun they modify or accompany, has a notable impact on the efficiency and precision of language comprehension. The aforementioned studies have significant consequences for the process of acquiring language categories and the cognitive mechanisms underlying the production and comprehension of speech.

The inclusion of grammatical gender might also have sociolinguistic ramifications. Languages that employ gendered nouns may exhibit connections between the grammatical gender assigned to nouns and the societal gender roles associated with them. For example, certain languages exhibit gendered distinctions for professions, with occupations being categorised as either masculine or feminine (Hellinger & Bußmann, 2001). Grammatical gender can serve as a reflection and reinforcement of social beliefs on gender roles, thereby establishing its status as a sociocultural phenomenon.

While gendered performances remain available to all, they enforce limitations on the individuals who can embody specific personas without facing negative consequences. At this juncture, gender and sex converge, as society endeavours to harmonize behavioural tendencies with their corresponding biological designations. Sex is a biological categorization that is mostly determined by an organism's reproductive capability, while gender is a social construction that has developed over time. Gender is not an inherent characteristic of an individual; it does not originate from their biological makeup or predisposition towards a specific personality type. Gender is a social construct, and the social order incorporates the gender of any individual or object or even an entity.

2. Gojri: An Introduction

George Abraham Grierson classified Gojri as an Indo-Aryan language and grouped it under Rajasthani group of languages with a resemblance to Mewari dialect (see, (Rahi, 2012; Sharma, 1979). However, Ethnologue records the language as unclassified after Marwari group of Indo-Aryan decedents with three dialectal variations, viz., Dhed Gujari, Eastern Gujari, and western Gujari. It is worth mentioning that Dhed Gujari is an alternate name given to a lesser-known indigenous language called Khandesi which is orally used in North-West parts of Maharashtra, and in South-eastern parts of Gujrat. The alternate spellings for the language name comprise of Gujari, and Gujri (Ethnologue, 2023). As reported by the Census of India, Gojri/ Gujari/ Gujjari is grouped under Hindi with

approximate1.3 million people identifying themselves as the Gojri speakers - includes all the dialectal variations of the language (Census, 2011). Predominantly, Gojri is spoken in northern parts of India, and Pakistan. However, the language is spoken in some parts of Afghanistan also. In India, the language is used by the Gujjar communities of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh while in Pakistan, the language is spoken in the regions of Pak occupied Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

Although, some authors such as Kothari (2014) mention that as early as the 12th century, it was employed as a literary language and was called Gaurjar Apabhramsha (also known as Gurjar Apabhramsha) which was mentioned by the poet Bhoja in 1014 AD. The Apabhramsha group of languages was referred to the languages spoken towards northern parts of India as classified in *vaiyākaraṇāḥ* by ancient Indian Philosopher Patanjali (Kothari, 2014). However, in Indology, the term Apabhramsha is used as an umbrella term (Shapiro & Michael, 2003), therefore, it cannot be claimed that Gojri was specifically called Apabhramsha and thus Gojri is not the modern version of Gurjar language or dialect. In addition to many other regions of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh the language is spoken in Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttaranchal, Punjab, and Gujarat also. The effect of different socializations has rendered Gojri assimilated among different sociolects such as Gojri in Jammu and Kashmir is full of Persio-Arabic, and Turkish vocabulary while as the Gojri spoken in Himachal Pradesh or Rajasthan, the Gojri vocabulary, at large, comprises of words from Sanskrit.

Gojri is a low resource language and is written in two types of scripts viz. Persio-Arabic which is a cursive Abjad script and Devnagri- an Ibugida script; thus Gojri lacks an agreed upon set of writing script. However, it's written literature is available in Persio-Arabic script. A large part of Gujjar population in India has been identified as Gujjar-Bakarwals (Census, 2011). Bakarwals are a nomadic tribe in northern and western parts of India who trace their origin same as Gujjars and hence they speak the same Gojri language. Gujjar-Bakarwals in India is a Muslim tribe using Gojri as their mother-tongue in some specific domains of language use within the group. The Census of India (2011) has recorded the literacy rate of Gujjar-Bakarwals between 32 and 42 percent. The community was granted schedule tribe status in 1993. Gujjar-Bakerwals are the third largest ethnic group after the Kashmiris and the Dogras in Jammu and Kashmir.

In contemporary times, Gojri language exhibits significant variation at regional and social levels. Regional variations are dialects spoken in Pir-Panjal area and in Jammu district and Hazara Gojri dialect which is spoken in Pakistan; these dialects show regional variation in vocabulary as well as in some aspects of grammar. Nonetheless, the grammatical studies of Gojri do not segregate the dialectal variations

3.   Earlier Studies

Rahi (2012) mentions about Gojri history and how the Gojri language has evolved and also writes a comprehensive description of Gojri origin and composition of Gojri speakers in the different areas of Asia. The author is of the view that Gojri has descended from *Apabhramsha* and examines two dialects, viz., Hazara Gojri dialect spoken in Pakistan and the Punchi Gojri, spoken in India. This dialectal variation is, however, not accurate linguistically because of the fact that Gojri in Kashmir division of Jammu and Kashmir is different from Punchi Gojri and has much affinity in morphology and typology with Pahari. Further, the author explores the orthography of Gojri in which the author discusses linguistic and sociolinguistic constraints on standardized orthography for Gojri of south Asia and explains the emergence of *Nastaliq* form of Persio-Arabic script as the script of Gojri (see: Rahi,2012). Nonetheless, the author calls it *Urdu* script which is linguistically an invalid term. It is important to mention, however, that all the written material such as folk and literature of Gojri language in Jammu and Kashmir is written in Persio-Arabic script which is continued as the script of Gojri in contemporary times.

Sharma (2010) writes about Gojri and its relationship with Rajasthani.The author reconsiders the relationship of Mewati and Gojri language and examines some of the shared linguistic features between Gojri and other Indo-Aryan languages and mentions that the geographical contiguity with neighbouring languages influence Gojri for language contact phenomena such as different types of borrowings leading to phonological changes and morphological development. Moreover, the author examines the language contact situations of Gojri and Rajasthani speakers that might have happened at some point of time in history and, therefore, such contact makes it really difficult to distinguish between the native elements and the borrowed ones. Furthermore, the nasalization in Gojri, Rajasthani, and Punjabi are observed behaving the same as other Indo-Aryan languages, such as, nasalization being phonemic in nature. Nevertheless, the observed morphological patterns in Rajasthani and Gojri are distinct thereby making Gojri a distinct language. Bashir and Iram (2016) maintain that the ethnolinguistic study of Gojri is similar to that of Kashmiri and Pahari in Jammu and Kashmir and all the languages are descendants of Indo-Aryan languages.

During the current study it was observed that the literature survey of Gojri language contains in it the descriptive and sociolinguistic studies however, there is only one study i.e. Rahi (2012) which only provides a superficial sketch of the grammar of Gojri and none of the studies explain(s), so far, the process of gender assigning in Gojri language. As already mentioned, Gojri is a gendered language and has distinct gender roles observed as masculine, feminine and neuter for both animate and inanimate entities. In this backdrop, this study explores the gender morphology

of Gojri with the aim that it will add to the linguistic literature of the language.

4. Method

In order to analyse that Gender roles in Gojri, a morphological analysis is carried out in this study. The data was collected as part of random cluster sampling in areas of Rajouri, and Bandipora in Jammu and Kashmir. An intensive fieldwork was carried out to collect the primary data by employing a questionnaire intelligible to the informants. The questionnaire contained a basic sentence list developed by the authors. The answers to the questionnaire were recorded by using SONY – IC Digital PX470 LPCM voice recorder. The data was elicited into parsed components of the sentences. The parsed components were analysed on Field Language Explorer 9.0 for morphological analysis. For morpheme-morpheme glossing of the sentence components, Leipzig rules (2015) were employed.

5. Objective

The main objective of this study is to describe the grammatical and or morphological gender in the Gojri language which provisions for the understanding of gender roles in the language.

6. Data Analysis and Outcome

Across languages of the world, the categorisation of nouns into genders is based on three different methods, viz., morphological, semantic, and lexical categorisations. While the morphological categorisation is based on their form, i.e., form-based criterion, that semantic and lexical are done on the basis of logical meaning and arbitrary convention, respectively. The gender in Gojri is observed occurring as morphological form-based unit. In most of the cases, it is observed to be a bound suffix. Nouns or noun-forms in Gojri contain gender as part of their morphological content, which therefore, provide a noun with specific gender roles. Such a pattern is observed for both animate and inanimate entities in Gojri. The gender of inanimate nouns can be deduced from their respective word ends.

Moreover, the assigning of the gender roles or gender creation mechanisms in Gojri involve vowel alteration apart from suffixation.

a. Suffixation

The assignment of gender to nouns in Gojri is predominantly devoid of semantic basis.It is not predicated on any characteristic (such as animacy or sex) of the entity or individual that the noun signifies. There may exist, to a lesser or greater extent, a correlation between gender and the noun form in such languages such as the suffix with which it ends.Some examples are provided below:

6.1.1 Forming Suffixes Masculine Gender

[-ḍɑɾ]

The suffix [-ḍɑɾ] attached to an inanimate noun turns it into masculine gender, as follows:

Voh	coki-ḍɑɾ		hɑe
he.3SG	station3SG.M.POSS		is

'He is the watchman.'

so-gɪ-j-o		hɑe
shop-3SG.M. POSS		sleep-PRS-PROG-M is

The shopkeeper is sleeping.

thɑn-e-ḍɑɾ	thɑnɑ		mɑ	hɑe
police station-CONJ-3SG.M.POSS	police station		LOC	is

The inspector is at police station.

6.1.2 [- ɑʈo]

The suffix [-ɑʈo] attached to both animate and inanimate nouns create masculine gender. Some examples of such a suffix act as a morpheme and thus does not form a separate lexeme. The following examples illustrate such formation of masculine gender in Gojri:

kəm-aʈo	kəm	vər	ni	gjo
work-3.Mwork-Von-LOC		not-NEGv.pst		

The labourer did not attend his job.

pəɽn-aʈo	kəʈab	paɽ-elgo	hɑe
reader-3.Mbook-Nread-PRSis-AUX			

The reader is reading the book

vo	likh-ən-aʈo	hɑe
he-3.Mwrite-POSS-3.M is-AUX		

He is the writer.

kaɾ-aʈo	kɾajo	mə̃gelǝgo	vi	hɑe
house-3.POSS.Mrentask-3 M.PRSPFVis-AUX				

The Landlord is asking for the rent.

The following table shows the gloss of the lexemes formed by the addition of morpheme [- ɑʈo] at suffix position:

Lexeme	Gloss
bəkri̤aḷo	shepherd
kamaḷo	labour
parnaḷo	student / reader
likhnaḷo	Writer
dinaḷo	Religious
karaḷo	house owner /husband
gədjaḷo	vehicle owner

6.1.3 [-ni]

The creation of feminine gender from the nouns by adding suffix [-ni]is common in Gojri feminine gender formation. The nouns which give rise to such feminine genders are masculine or male nouns or names respectively added with a suffix [-ni]. The social meaning of such feminine nouns thus created is used to describe 'wife' of someone. Hence, the suffix [-ni] is added to animate countable nouns only. Following are some examples:

zamınḍar-ni   kar ɡja vi   hae

landlord-3.Fhouse-N go-PSTPFVis-AUX

The landlord's wife went to home.

məstərde   məstər-ni   mara   kar   aja

teacher-3.MPOSSteacher-3.Four-1.PLhouse-Ncome-V.PST

The teacher's wife came to our home.

kəmar-ni   panda   bnavə

potter-3.F utensils-Nmake-V.PRST

The potter's wife makes utensils.

fıkir   ɡenal   fikir-ni   vi   ajiṱhi

poor-3.Malong-PSTPpoor-3.FPFVcome-V.PST

The poor man came along with his wife.

Lexeme (masculine)	Lexeme (Feminine)	Gloss (Feminine)
zəmrdar	zəmidarni	landlord's wife
sɔ	sɔ ni	beautiful
siː	siːni	lioness
pir	piːrni	muslim priest's wife
kəmar	kəmarni	potter's wife
fikir	fikirni	poor man's wife

6.1.4 [-eni]

Interestingly, Gojri distinguishes the feminine gender by substituting different suffixes. Such suffixes are used to distinguish the profession of feminine gender from being wife of a professional to

being the professional itself. Among examples given above in 6.1.3 [-ni] all the feminine represent females of the males or females of the professionals. However, the suffix[-eni] is substituted to represent the professional females and not just the feminine. Following examples illustrate the difference:

nəi   de   ne-eni   ɑɟɑ   hɑe

barber-3.Mandbarber-3.SG.Fcome-V.PST is-AUX

Barber and lady barber came.

daktərde   daktər-enihəspṭal   gɟ-ɑ

doctor-3.SG.Manddoctor-3.SG.Fhospitalgo-V.PST.PL

The doctor and lady doctor went to hospital.

hun   məstar   hɑvɑ   məstr-eni   hɑe

I-1.SG.Mteaher-SG.Mam-AUX3.SG.Fteacher-SG.F   is-AUX

I am a teacher and she is a teacher(lady).

ṭhaṇḍar   ṭhaṇeḍar-eni   nal   gɟo

inspector.SG.Minspector.SG.Fwith-PSTPgo-v.PST

The inspector went with the lady inspector.

Lexeme (Masculine)	Lexeme (Feminine)	Gloss (Feminie)
cəmar	cəmareni	cobbler
nəi	nəieni	barber
pəndiṭh	pəndiṭheni	priest
daktər	daktəreni	Doctor
məstər	məstəreni	Teacher
ṭhaṇḍar	ṭhaṇḍareni	inspector

Thus, it is evident from the above-mentioned illustrations that, in Gojri, such feminine forms are derived from masculine forms (stem). The suffixation and the subsequent occurrence results in gender transition in one direction such as masculine to feminine. Also, such feminine gender forms are transitioned or created from masculine forms to serve in line with the individual's biological gender and the social meaning i.e. female.

6.2 Vowel Change

One of the prominent Indo-Aryan language features is reflected by the vowel change at the word final position in Gojri nouns. Such a feature is transitioning feature for grammatical gender from masculine to feminine and this process is observed taking place for animate and inanimate objects/entities alike. A masculine noun is changed for the vowel at its word final position to form a feminine noun. However, such a vowel change can be observed as a suffixation or morphemic change as well besides the prominent phonemic change. The vowel

[o] is replaced by *[i]*at the end of the nounand forms a feminine gender in Gojri. The following examples illustrate the process:

koɽ-o koɽ-i   kə   cəralgo   vi   hɑe

horse-Mhorse-Fgrassgraze.V.PRSPFVis-AUX

Horse and mare are grazing.

geḍɾ-oblǝvɑlgo   vi   geḍɾ-i nɑ

boy-Mcall-V.PRSPFV   boy-F is-AUX

The boys call the girl.

bil-o mɑɾ-gj-o   de bill-i   zĩnd-ɪ hɑe

cat-Mdeath-PST-Mandcat-Falive-Fis-AUX

The cat died and the cat(molly) is alive.

bed-ode   bed-i

bull-Mand   bull-F

The bull and the cow.

Lexeme (Masculine)	Lexeme (Feminine)	Gloss (Feminine)
koɽo	koɽi	mare
geḍɾo	geḍɾi	girl
Billo	Billi	cat (molly)
Bedo	Bedi	cow
lɑmo	lɑmi	tall
kut̪o	kut̪i	bitch

Conclusion

The instances of feminine formation or creation in Gojri are the instances of suffixation or phonemic change. The five different occurrences of gender transformation in Gojri, thus can be interpreted as the morphological processes of word formations. Gojri exhibits however, some distinguishing characteristics of feminine formation which is not observed in other Indo-Aryan languages so far. Such examples have been given above in 6.1.3, and 6.1.4 explain the associative feminine formation and true feminine formations. Therefore, such a feature is observed as a distinguished feature of Gojri among Indi-Aryan languages.

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