Gojri Language and Its Linguistic Features

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Abstract

This paper gives a brief introduction of Gojri, an Indo-Aryan language encompassing its background and typological features. This language is Gujjar tribe specific language that faced ups and downs in the past. Syntactically, this language shares its features with other Indo-Aryan languages like Urdu, Punjabi, Hindko and Mewati. Although, Gojri is being spoken in some regions of Pakistan and India yet linguistically, it has no extensive account. Gojri is not taught in schools and this study documents its background and typological features in general, and its promotion in the stream of research, in particular.

Key words: Gojri, Linguistic, Features

INTRODUCTION

Rahi (2012) claims that the history of Gojri Language is as old as the history of Gujjars, the native speakers of Gojri. Massica (1993) states that some of them (scholars) are of the opinions that the Gujjars are the descendants of the "Kushan" and "Yuchi" tribes which are considered to be the tribes of Eastern Tartars (USSR) others of the view that they are of an indigenous origin. In the light of recent researchers and

literary, archeological, linguistic and geographical evidence, the Gujjars may be the descendants of the Gurgis (Georgians) who inhabit a territory between the Black sea and the Caspian sea south of the Caucasus Mountains, the Caspian sea south of the Caucasus Mountains now in the Soviet Union. Gujjars came in sub-continent with Aryan tribes who were speaking 'Indik' language. In the sub-continent 'Indik' was known as Sanskrit. Then it became main language of aristocrats. It evolved many other languages of different societies and regions. These languages were known as 'Prankrits' or Indo-Aryan languages. Gojri is one of these 'Prakrits'.

Another view is that Gojri is ancient than Sanskrit. When Gujjars came in India with Aryans they were speaking Gojri. Many historians are of the opinion that Gojri is one of Prakrit languages that were spoken in different regions in India with slight difference of Sanskrit. It shows that Sanskrit did not change completely but it evolved new words of the languages spoken in different regions and this brought a slight change in it. These languages were known as 'Prakrits and then these prakrits were divided into two parts. One of them was 'Eastern shoresani Apbharnish' and second was 'Western shoresani Apbharnish' western shoresani was known as Gojri Apbharnish. Modern researchers are of the view that Gojri is the branch of Indo-Aryan languages. Losey (2002) claims that Sanskrit is the origin of Gojri. When Gujjars migrated from Gojarat because of invasion of Mehmood Ghazanvi, most Gujjar families came into Punjab, Rajistan, Kathiawar, Mewat, Meware, Kaghan, Sawat and from there they came in Kashmir. In 14th and 15th Century Gojri continuously declined because it had lost its official supervision but in spite of all this, some poets continued their exertion to develop Gojri language through their literary works in the shape of poetry

Though Gojri had lost its Government guardianship but at public level, it developed and spread through those who used to migrate from one place to other.

In 1282 A.D Jalal-ud-Din akbar attacked Gujrat and ruined it. Jalbi(1998) states that in his region (Akbar's Region) in Gujarat Gujjars were as in minority as Urdu speakers were in the time of British rulers. In this time Gojri lost its remaining values because Akbar wanted to introduce a new language that played a role of bridge between Persian and other minor languages which were spoken in different regions. His aim was to produce a new language that would be the source of interaction among the people of different races, castes societies and regions and it would have understood by every one. In this respect, he decided to blend Gojri with Persian . When Gujjars resisted, he rushed upon them. He made his mind to take revenge and fought against them where Gujjars were defeated and they left native land. Persian was given the status of official language and Gojri was treated as inferior language. There were some Gojri Scholars and writers but they were not allowed to practice the language. Even they were not respected in the court of the king. This session was the worse time for Gojri. None could give attention to it and preserve it because the lack of leadership. During this time many words of other languages mixed with Gojri like Turkish, Persian and Arabic. Though Akbar was treating this as secondary language, but it was said that he used to listen Gojri songs of Mera Bae from Tann Seen, a famous musician. He did not give prestige to this language. Gojri got a great loss in this reign. In spite of all this, it did not lose its existence and did not vanish from sub continent.

LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHY OF GOJRI

Linguists have considered Gojri language a branch of Indo-Aryan family. European and Asian researchers have given different names to Gojri language e.g. Gojri, Gujri etc. But its real name is Gojri. At present, Gojri language is spoken in most of the areas of Azad Kashmir where as in Pakistan it is spoken in upper Panjab, KPK, and Northern areas. Gujjar tribes speak Gojri at homes and in bazaar whereas they also know other

local languages and they can conversate with other people in Punjabi, Pushto, Urdu, Hindko, Kashmiri, Shina and Kohastani languages.

The birth place of Gojri is Indian Gujrat. The regions of Dili and Saharan pur were the parts of Gujrat but afterwards this language spread to subcontinent Indo-Pak, Kashmir and Afghanistan. Zabih (1999) states that Gujjars' Gojri language was spoken in Gujrat, Dakan, Rajasthan and Ganga Jamna regions of South Asia and from there it reached Punjab, NWFP, Northern areas, Jammu & Kashmir, Hamachal Pardesh and Asaam. A century ago the Gujjars of Punjab were speaking Gojri language but gradually it was changed into Punjabi.

There is another view that the language of these regions was Gojri but when Arabic historians wrote history they wrote the name of this (Gojri) language according to the names of different regions or called it according to regional names e.g.the language that was spoken in Rajasthan called Rajasthani , the language that was spoken in Mewat called Mewati etc. Originally these were not different languages but these were the regional varieties of Gojri which were being spoken in different regions with little difference. It is known fact that these languages resembles Gojri but they are named according to regions. Khajoria (1981) writes that the regions of Gojri speakers starts from Gujrat and Katheyawar and are spread over Mediha Pardesh, Rajasthan, Ganga and Jamna, Punjab, Hamachal Pardesh, mountains and forests of Jammu & Kashmir. Gaharwal, the mountainous regions of UP, Dera Dodan, Chakrota and Trai of Neepal have Gojri speakers and on the other side in Pakistan Gojri is spoken in Hazara, Sawat and Chatral.

DIALECTS AND ORTHOGRAPHY OF GOJRI

Gojri is an ancient language of Indo-Pak. It has numerous dialects in which Burj Bahasha, Dakni, Gujrati, Haryanvi, Rajasthani, Hindi, Mewati, Mewari and Johadpuri are famous.

Muhammad(1998) states that the readers of ancient history of Hind are familiar with this fact that to what extent the migration occurred in Hindustan, perhaps there is no such region where the exchange of population would be done at this broader level. For a long time Dehli has been the center of Gujjar rule and here Gojri language reached its destination. Gradually it reached to other areas. Local people called it Gojri whereas Arabian and Iranian had been remembered it according to its regional names. In fact, in this way Dakni, Dehlwi, Hindi, Rajasthani, Mewati, Mewari, Sindhi and Gujrati are the manifestation or regional names of Gojri language.

It is not known yet that what orthography was used to write Gojri language before the advent of Islam. When after the 17th century A.D. its evaluation stopped it adopted the status of a dialect. Most of the Gujjar tribes migrated from plains and settled in the vallies of Hamaliya. Written literature of Gojri came on the scene in about 1900 A.D. when Gujjars of different religions started creating literature and in this way Gojri evolved Hindi and Gormukhi Orthography along with Urdu and Persian Orthography. Most of the alphabets of Gojri are similar to that of Urdu where as some sounds are different.

TYPOLOGICAL FEATURES OF GOJRI

Gojri shares its features with other Indo-Aryan languages like Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi and Hindko. This section gives an overview of the salient features of word order, case marking, conjugation, declension and morphology in Gojri.

Word Order
Gojri has SOV(subject-object-verb) word order. Gojri is a verb-final language, the verb is the final component of the sentence. However, the rich agreement system makes the word order free.

See examples below:

1) a.	*bashir- ne*	*azhar-na~*	*chithii*	*likhii*
	bashir-ERG	azhar-DAT	letter-NOM.SG.F	write-PST
'Bashir wrote a letter to azhar'				
b.	*bashir- ne*	*chithii*	*azhar-na~*	*likhii*
	basher-ERG	letter-NOM.SG.F	azhar-DAT	write-PST
'Bashir wrote a letter to azhar'				
c.	*Chithii*	*Bashir-ne*	*azhar-na~*	*likhii*
	Letter-NOM.SG.F	bashir-ERG	azhar-DAT	write-PST
'Bashir wrote a letter to azhar'				
d.	*Likhii*	*chithii*	*Basher-ne*	*azhar-na~*
	write-PST	letter-NOM.SG.F	basher-ERG	azhar-DAT
'Bashir wrote a letter to azhar'				

The basic word order is shown in 1(a). The word order of the sentence can be changed according to different pragmatic functions as shown in examples 1 (b-d). The ergative and dative case markers do not change the meaning of the sentence.

Case in Gojri
The case system of Gojri and its syntactic functions are discussed below:

Table 1

Case	Marker	Function
Ergative	-ne	Subject
Nominative	-ø	Subject/object
Accusative	-na/ga	Subject/object
Dative	-na/ga	Subject/object
Instrumental	-naL	Subject/oblique
Genitive	-ga/gi/go	Subject/object
Locative	-wich	Subject/oblique

According to Sharma(1982) and Bukhari et al.(2007) '-ne' is an ergative case marker for singular, plural, male and female. There is no marker for nominative case. The case markers '-na' are for both accusative case marker whereas the current research indicates that '-ga' also functions as accusative and dative case markers in Gojri. Genitive case marker '-ga' is both for plural masculine and feminine cases, '-gi' is for singular feminine case and, '-go' for singular masculine cases. '-wich' is used for locative case in Gojri language. Gojri is a language rich in case system case markers perform different grammatical functions.

See following examples on case marking in Gojri :

2) a.	*us-ne*	*gadri-na*	*Mobile*	*dito*
	He-ERG	girl-DAT	Mobile-NOM.SM	give-PST
'He gave a mobile to the girl.'				
b.	*Rukhsana-gi*	*Kitab*	*baRi*	*hai*
	Rukhsana-GEN	Book-NOM.S.F	big-A	be-PRES.S.F
'Rukhsana has a big book'.				
c.	*Akbar-ne*	*Gadra-ge*	*thapar*	*maryo*
	Akbar-ERG	boy-Acc	slap-NOM	beat-PST
'Akbar slapped the boy'.				
d.	*gadri-ne*	*kacho-naL*	*aam*	*kapyo*
	girl-ERG	knife-INS	mango-NOM	Cut-PST
'Girl cut the mango with a knife'.				
e.	*kaRa-wich*	*paRii*	*hai*	
	Pitcher-LOC	water-NOM	be-PRES	
'There is a water in the pitcher.'				

Conjugation

In Gojri, the verb conjugates to give the different forms of a verb according to number gender and tense .The conjugation of verb shows number, gender and tense at the same time. Gojri verbs are frequently inflected and it comprises a number of

morphemes to indicate number, gender and tense. The verb agrees with gender and number.

Consider following examples:

3) a.	gadro	chithii	Likhe-lago
	Boy-NOM.SG.M	Letter-Nom.F	Write-PRES.SG.M
	'The boy writes a letter'		
b.	gadraa	chithii~	likhe~-lagaa
	Boys.Nom.PL.M	Letter.Nom.F	Write-PRES.SG.M
	'The boys write the letters'.		
c.	gadrii	chithii	likhe-lagii
	girl.Nom.SG.F	Letter.Nom.F	Write-PRES.SG.F
	'The girl writes a letter'		
d.	gadrii~	chithii~	likhe~lagii~
	girl.Nom.PL.F	Letter.Nom.F	Write-PRES.SG.F
	'The girls writes the letters.'		
e.	gadro	chithii	likhe-tho
	Boy-Nom.SG.M	Letter.Nom.F	Write-PST.SG.M
	'The boy wrote a letter'		
f.	gadrii~	chithii~	likhe-thii
	Girls-Nom.SG.F	Letter.Nom.F	Write-PST.SG.F
	'The girls wrote the letters.'		
g.	gadraa	chithii~	likhe-tha
	Boys-Nom.PL.M	Letter.PL.F	Write-PST.PL.M
	'The boys wrote the letters.'		
h.	gadro	chithii	likhe-tho.
	Boy-Nom.SG.M	Letter.SG.F	Write-PST.PL.M
	'The boy wrote a letter.'		
i.	gadro	chithii	likhe-go
	Boy-Nom.SG.M	Letter.SG.F	Write-FRE.SG.M
	'The boy will write a letter'.		
j.	gadraa	chithii~	likhe~-gaa
	Boys-Nom.PL.M	Letter.PL.F	Write-FRE.PL.M

	'The boys will write the letters'.		
k.	*gadrii~*	*chithii~*	*likhe~-gii~*
	Girls-Nom.PL.F	Letter.PL.F	Write-FRE.PL.F
	'The girls will write the letters.'		
l.	*gadrii*	*chithii*	*likhe-gii*
	Boy-Nom.SG.F	Letter.SG.F	Write-FRE.SG.F

The above examples exhibit the phenomenon of conjugation. In examples (3, a) 'gadro' is a singular noun and 'like-lago' is a singular and present form of verb. So singular and present form of verb agrees with the subject in gender, number and tense. In examples (3,b)'gadraa' is a plural subject and 'likhe-lagaa' is also a plural and present form of verb. In this way plural verb agrees with the subject in gender and number. There is an agreement of gender, number and tense in examples (3, c-d) where 'gadrii' is a singular feminine noun and 'gadrii~' is a plural feminine noun.

'Likhe –lagii~' is a plural and present form of verb and 'Likhe~ –lagii' is a singular and present form of verb. In examples (3,e) past tense is shown by the singular 'gadro'. In example (3,f) 'gadrii' is a singular feminine noun and it carries singular form of verb 'likhe-thii' that also shows the past tense. In example (3,g) there is an agreement between plural, feminine past form of verb and plural feminine noun.In example(3,h) 'gadraa is plural masculine noun and it carries plural past and masculine form of verb. The examples (3,i-l) indicate the future and have the singular, masculine, feminine and plural forms of verbs accordingly for singular feminine, plural masculine and plural feminine nouns. So there is agreement of gender, number and tense.

Declension
Gojri nouns and adjectives are inflected to indicate gender and number. Singular masculine adjective qualifies the singular masculine noun and singular feminine adjective qualifies the

singular feminine noun. Plural masculine nouns carry the plural masculine adjectives and plural feminine nouns carry the plural feminine adjectives.The morpheme '-aa' is added with plural masculine noun and adjective and '-o' with singular noun and adjective. Singular feminine noun and adjective are inflected by '-ii' and plural feminine noun and adjective are inflected by '-ii~'. Consider the following examples.

4) a.	*Oh*	*Chango*	*gadro*	*hai*
	He-SG.	Good-SG.A.M	Boy-SG.N.M	be-PRES
'He is a good boy.'				
b.	*weh*	*changaa*	*gadraa*	*hai~*
	They-PL	Good-PL.A.M	Boys.PL.N.M	be-PL.PRES
c.	*wah*	*changii*	*gadrii*	*Hai*
	She-SG	Good-SG.A.F	Girl-SG.N.F	be-PRES
d.	*weh*	*changii~*	*gadrii~*	*hai~*
	They-PL	Good-PL.A.F	Girls-PL.N.F	be-PL. PRES

The above examples (4,a-d) indicate the phenomenon of declension of nouns and adjectives. Both the noun and adjective are inflected for number and gender. In example (4,a) the morpheme '-o' is added with the root morpheme 'chang-' and 'gadr-' to make them singular masculine adjective and noun respectively. Same is the case with example (4,b) where the morpheme '-aa' is attached with the root morpheme to show plural adjective and noun respectively.In examples (4,c-d)the morpheme '-ii' is added with the root morpheme to make singular noun and adjective and morpheme '-ii~' is used for plural feminine adjective and noun.

Morphology
The morphology of Gojri is greatly inflectional. Gojri Morphology is concatenative in nature. Inflectional and derivational morphemes are strung together in a linear order. Nouns and adjectives receive inflection for gender and number .In the same way, verbs receives inflection for person, number

and aspect. However, auxiliary verbs inflected for tense and number. See illustrations below:

1) Singular   **Plural**
a. *gadro* (boy)   *gadraa* (boys)
b. *gadri* (girl)   *gadrii* (girls)
c.*budho* (old man)   *budhaa* (old men)
d. *budhi* (old woman)   *budhii* (old women)
e. *chango* (good)   *changaa* (good)

2) Base	**Progressive/Present**	**Past**	**Future**	**Interrogative**
a. *khaL* (Stand)	*khaLe*	*khaLyo*	*khaLe*	*khaLe*
b. *bais* (sit)	*baise*	*baisyo*	*baise*	*baise*
c. *aa* (come)	*aae*	*aayo*	*aae*	*aae*

In Gojri derivational morphemes are also concatenated to derive new words as in 3-4.

3) Noun+ suffix   =   **Adjective**
a. *mohair (buffalo) -O*   =   *mahaiso* (related to buffalo)
b. *pahaid* (sheep)   -O   =   *Pahaido* (related to sheep)
c. *bahar* (out)   -lo   =   *baharlo* (outsider)
d. *kuuR* (lie)   -ii   =   *kuuRii* (liar)

4) Prefix+ verb   =   **Adjective**
 a. *uN-paR* (Study)   =   *uNpaR* (Uneducated)

CONCLUSION

Gojri is an Indo-Aryan language and its native speakers are Gujjars scattered in different regions of sub-continent. Gojri language shares its linguistic features with its sister languages like Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi and Hindko. Gojri has flexible word order because of its elaborative case system which performs different grammatical functions. Gojri verbs exhibit the agreement with gender, number and tense. In Gojri, nouns and adjectives are also inflected according to gender and number. The morphology is concatenative in nature as the morphemes are strung together in a linear order.

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