

Kashmiri and Bhaderwahi: A Phonological Comparison

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Abstract

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is divided into two regions, Kashmir and Jammu. The division makes it the region of diverse ethnicities which vary on the basis of language and culture. These differences make it a divergent region both linguistically and culturally and provides a great scope for researchers to know about linguistic and cultural variations. The present paper aims to study one of the linguistic aspects, that is, phonological comparison of two different languages, Kashmiri and Bhaderwahi. In this paper the researchers have provided the phonological description of both languages and attempted to find the similarities and differences in the sound system of both languages.

Keywords: Kashmiri, Bhaderwahi, Linguistic divergence, Comparative study, Phonology, Vowels and Consonants, Phonological comparison

1. Introduction

1.1 Kashmiri Language

Kashmiri language belongs to Dardic sub-group of Indo-Aryan languages. It is locally called as *Koshur*. The Kashmir language is mostly written in Perso-Arabic and Devanagiri scripts. Earlier it was written in Sharda Script. The Kashmiri language is primarily spoken in Kashmir valley and some areas of Chenab valley of Jammu and Kashmir. The variety of Kashmir language spoken in and around Srinagar city is considered as the standard variety. Kashmir language has a rich folk literature and is used in Mass media and education institutions. Kashmiri language has two regional dialects, Poguli and Kishtawari. It has also three regional varieties that are Maraz (Spoken in southern and south eastern region), Kamraz (Spoken in Northern and North-western regions) and Yamraz (Spoken in central part of the valley). These three variations are quite homogeneous and

mutually intelligible. Kashmiri language has the influence of Persian and Sanskrit languages. Linguistically, Kashmiri language holds a peculiar position as it has some features showing Dardic characteristics and other features are similar to other Indo-Aryan Languages.

1.2. Bhaderwahi Language

Bhaderwahi language belongs to Pahari group of Indo-Aryan languages. It is primarily spoken in the Bhaderwah Tehsil of Doda District in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Doda district has a mixed culture due to its connectivity with Jammu, Kashmir Valley, Himachal Pradesh, and Ladakh. Bhaderwah is a multilingual area with Bhaderwahi being the main language of people. The other languages spoken in Bahderwah area are Kashmiri, Gaddi, Dogri etc. G.A. Grierson (1919) has classified Bhaderwahi as Pahari language that belongs to Indo-Aryan language family. “The word "Pahari" applies to the group of languages spoken in the Sub-Himalayan hills extending from Bhaderwah, north of the Panjab, to the eastern parts of Nepal. To its north and east, various Himalayan Tibeto-Burman languages are spoken. To its west, there are Aryan languages connected with Kashmiri and western Panjabi, and to its south, it has Aryan languages of the Panjab.” (Grierson 1919: IX:IV:2). Bhaderwahi has many common linguistic features with the other dialects of western Pahari group of Jammu region as well as outside it.

2. Methodology

An intensive fieldwork was carried in Srinagar city of Kashmir region and Bhaderwah town of Jammu region for collection of data for Kashmiri and Bhaderwahi phonology. The researchers prepared a questionnaire containing optimal numbers of words and sentences. The data was collected from the native speakers of Kashmiri and Bhaderwahi languages. The informants were chosen from different social backgrounds varied in age and gender. The data was then transcribed and analysed following proper principles and procedures of phonemic analysis.

3. Analysis

Phonology is the study of the sounds in a particular language and it explains the sound system of a particular language and how these sounds are combined to form different words. Every language has its own phonology which comprises its whole sound system explaining in detail the consonants and the vowels of that language. Kashmiri and Bhaderwahi are two different language that belong to two different sub-groups of Indo-Aryan language family. The Phonological description of both the languages and their comparison are discussed below.

3.1. Vowels of Kashmiri Language

Kashmiri language has sixteen vowels both oral and nasal. It has two short and two long central vowels which is particular to Kashmir language and are not found in any other South Asian language.

	Front	Central	Back
High	i, i:	ɨ, ɨ:	u, u:
mid	e, e:	ə, ə:	o, o:
Low		a, a:	ɔ, ɔ:

Table 1: Vowel Chart of Kashmiri Language

3.2. Vowels of Bhaderwahi language

Bhaderwahi has twelve vowels. The oral vowels occur in word initial, medial and final positions while as some nasalized vowels do not occur in all positions. Each vowel has a long counterpart except for ə and i.

	Front	Central	Back
High	i, i:	ɨ	u, u:
Mid	e, e:	ə	o, o:
Low	a, a:

Table 2: Vowel Chart of Bhaderwahi Language

On comparing the vowels of Kashmiri and Bhaderwahi vowels it has been found that the vowels which are present in both languages are i, i:, ɨ, u, u:, e, e:, ə, o, o:, a and a:. Apart from these vowels Kashmiri language has four more vowels that are ɨ:, ə:, ɔ and ɔ: but these vowels are not found in Bhaderwahi language.

In the distribution of vowels, the only difference which can be seen in these languages is that the vowel /ə/ occurs at the initial, medial and final position of the word in Bhaderwahi language e.g.,

- /əmi:r/ ‘rich’
 /puʒə/ ‘pray’
 /nəris/ ‘nurse’

It occurs at the initial and medial position as the word in Kashmiri language, e.g.,

- /ətʃʰ/ ‘eye’
 /gər/ ‘watch’

The occurrence is same for other vowels which are common in both languages.

3.3. Consonants of Kashmiri Language

Kashmiri language has 28 consonants classified into different groups on the basis of manner and place of articulation:

	Bilabial		Alveolar		Retroflex		Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
	VL	VD	VL	VD	VL	VD	VL	VD	VL	VD	VL	VD
Plosives	p	b	t	d	ʈ	ɖ			k	g		
	p ^h		t ^h		ʈ ^h				k ^h			
Affricates			ts				tʃ	dʒ				
			ts ^h				tʃ ^h					
Fricatives			s	z			ʃ				h	

Nasal		m		n						ŋ		
Trill				r								
Lateral				l								
Semi-vowels		w						j				

Table 3: Consonant Chart of Kashmiri Language

3.4. Consonants of Bhaderwahi Language

Bhaderwahi has thirty-four consonant phonemes comprising of sixteen plosives, five affricates, five fricatives, four nasals, two glides, one lateral and one trill.

	Bilabial		labio-dental		Alveolar		Retroflex		Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
	VL	VD	VL	VD	VL	VD	VL	VD	VL	VD	VL	VD	VL	VD
Plosives	p	b			t	d	ʈ	ɖ			k	g		
	p ^h	b ^h			t ^h	d ^h	ʈ ^h	ɖ ^h			k ^h	g ^h		
Affricates					ts				tʃ	dʒ				
					ts ^h				tʃ ^h					
Fricatives				v	s	z			ʃ				h	
Nasal	m					n		ɳ				ŋ		
Trill						r								
Lateral						l								
Semi-vowels		w								j				

Table 4: Consonant Chart of Bhaderwahi Language

On comparing the consonants of both languages, it is found that most of the consonants are common in both languages. The consonants which are common in both languages are p, p^h, b, t, t^h, d, ʈ, ʈ^h, ɖ, k, k^h, g, ts, ts^h, tʃ, tʃ^h, dʒ, s, z, ʃ, h, m, n, ŋ, r, l, w, and j. Bhaderwahi language has aspirated counterpart for voiced plosives b^h, d^h, ɖ^h and g^h as well but these sounds do not occur in Kashmiri language. Bhaderwahi has labial fricative /v/ and nasal retroflex voiced consonant /ɳ/ which are not present in Kashmir language. These sounds and their distribution in Bhaderwahi language are:

/b^h/	(Voiced aspirated bilabial stop)
	/b ^h agnu:/ 'to flow'
	/sib ^h e/ 'all'
/ɖ^h/	(Voiced aspirated retroflex stop)
	/ɖ ^h uk ^h / 'hunger'
	/und ^h on/ 'slope'
	/baɖ ^h / 'head shave'

/d ^h /	(Voiced aspirated dental stop)	
	/d ^h up /	‘sunshine’
	/sid ^h o:/	‘straight’
	/bad ^h /	‘clever’
/g ^h /	(Voiced aspirated velar stop)	
	/g ^h o:d/	‘stone’
	/mag ^h ar/	‘if’
	/ma:g ^h /	‘february’
/ŋ/	(Voiced retroflex nasal)	
	/pa:ŋi:/	‘water’
/v/	(Voiceless labio-dental fricative)	
	/va:di:/	‘valley’
	/tʃ ^h a:vli:/	‘shade’
	/aɖla:v/	‘bachelor’

Table 5: Distribution of Consonants in Bhaderwahi

3.5. Palatalization:

Palatalization is seen in Bhaderwahi, but it is not as distinct as in Kashmiri. In Kashmiri all the non-palatal consonants can be palatalized but in Bhaderwahi hardly some examples of palatalization are found. Palatalization is phonemic in Kashmiri language while it is not phonemic in Bhaderwahi. The examples of palatalization in both languages are given below:

Kashmiri

/kul/	‘tree’	/kiul	‘nail’
/nu:l/	‘mongoose’	/n ^h u:l/	‘blue’
/hət/	‘a piece of wood’	/hət ^h i/	‘throats’
/bon/	‘heap’	/b ^h on/	‘separate’
/tsal/	‘run’	/ts ^h jal/	‘pressure’
/mə:l/	‘appetite’	/mə:l ^h i/	‘fathers’

Bhaderwahi

/bun ^h o: o:t ^h /	‘lower lip’
/sun ^h a:r/	‘goldsmith’
/h ^h e:ɖo:/	‘pale’

3.6. Nasalization

In Bhaderwahi, except for i, e and i vowels, all the vowels have nasal counterpart. Nasalization is not phonemic in Bhaderwahi.

Nasal Vowels	Word	Gloss
ĩ:	/zo:rãjsĩ:/	‘loudly’
ẽ	/bẽjõ:/	‘upper’
ẽ:	/ẽ:k ^h ũ:/	‘tear’
ã	/dãv/	‘village’
ã:	/ã:gan /	‘courtyard’
ũ	/mũᅇa:/	‘coral’
ũ:	/bũ:zal /	‘earthquake’
õ	/tsõvar/	‘yak’
õ:	/õ:ᅇi:/	‘ring’

Table 6: Nasalized Sounds in Bhanderwahi

Nasalization is phonemic in Kashmiri language and all the vowels except for /i/, /ɔ/, /ɔ:/ and /i/ have nasal counterparts.

Nasal Vowels	Word	Gloss
ĩ:	/pĩ:ts/	‘a little’
ẽ	/kẽh/	‘some’
ẽ:	/ᅇ:nk/	‘tank’
ĩ:	/kĩ:nts ^h /	‘youngest’
ũ	/kũz/	‘key’
ũ:	/kũ:n/	‘corner’
õ	/õz/	‘goose’
õ:	/bõ:s/	‘bamboo’
õ	/kõd/	‘thorn’
õ:	/wõ:t/	‘depth’
ã	/kãh/	‘someone’
ã:	/ã:gun/	‘compound’

Table 7: Nasalized Sounds in Kashmiri

3.7. Consonant Clusters

In Bhanderwahi the consonant clusters occur at word initial and final positions only. Examples are given below:

Word initial consonant cluster (CC---)

	Word	Gloss
/dʎ/	/dʎa:/	‘marriage’
/tʎ/	/tʎa:j/	‘three’
/tr/	/ᅇrebi:/	‘twenty-three’
/dᅇ/	/dᅇra:mo:/	‘drama’
/tr/	/ᅇravzar/	‘trouser’
/gr/	/gravund/	‘ground’

Word final consonant Cluster (---CC)

	Word	Gloss
/nts/	/tsunts/	‘beak’
/nt/	/da:nt/	‘bull’
/nd/	/k ^h and/	‘sugar’
/nd/	/pand/	‘mat’
/nt ^h /	/kant ^h /	‘wall’
/mb/	/t ^h u:mb/	‘garlic’
/nts/	/pants/	‘five’
/mb/	/amb/	‘mango’

In Kashmiri also initial and final consonant clusters are found:

Word initial Consonant cluster (CC—)

	Word	Gloss
/tr/	/tre/	‘three’
/dr/	/drog/	‘expensive’
/ṭr/	/ṭrak/	‘truck’
/kr/	/krak ^h /	‘cry’
/k ^h r/	/k ^h ra:v/	‘a wooden footwear’

Word final Consonant cluster (—CC)

	Word	Gloss
/mp/	/lamp/	‘lamp’
/mb/	/amb	‘mango’
/nd/	/dand/	‘teeth’
/nd/	/khand/	‘sugar’

4. Conclusion

Kashmiri and Bhaderwahi belong to Indo-Aryan language family. However, Kashmiri is a Dardic language as some of its features resemble with other languages that belong to Dardic sub-group, and Bhaderwahi belongs to Western Pahari sub-group. In this paper the researchers have given the phonological description of both the languages and highlighted the similarities and differences in phonological features of both the languages. It has been found that Kashmiri language has long counterparts for /i/ and /ə/ vowels which are peculiar to Kashmiri language only. Kashmiri has low back vowel /ɔ/ and its long counterpart /ɔ:/ as well. But these vowels are not found in Bhaderwahi language. Bhaderwahi has aspirated voiced plosives, labial fricative /v/ and nasal retroflex /ŋ/. But these sounds are not present in Kashmiri language. Apart from the phonemic inventory of both the languages the process of Palatalization and Nasalization are found in both the languages. While Palatalization and Nasalization are phonemic in Kashmiri, the same is not found in Bhaderwahi. In both the languages consonant clusters occur at word initial and final positions.

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