

Variation in Person, Number & Gender (PNG) Agreement in Azamgarhi and Ballia Dialects of Bhojpuri

Siddhant Kumar

Department of Linguistics
Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalay (A Central University)
Sagar, (M.P.), India
siddhantoliver@gmail.com

Dr. Bablu Ray

Department of Linguistics
Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalay (A Central University)
Sagar, (M.P.), India
babluray@gmail.com

Dr. Arvind Kr. Gautam

Department of Linguistics
Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalay (A Central University)
Sagar, (M.P.), India
akumar@dhsgsu.edu.in

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Abstract

This paper discusses Person, Number, and Gender (PNG) agreement in the dialects of Azamgarhi and Ballia Bhojpuri. Two distinct Bhojpuri dialects belong to Eastern UP. Bhojpuri language is the living language in Uttar Pradesh, West Bihar, Northern Chhattisgarh, and in the lower belt of south Nepal. The language is genetically related to an Indo- Aryan language family. The dialectal variants of Bhojpuri language spoken in these areas can be easily found. The variations in different dialects can be identified at phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic levels. The intra-district variation is the testimony to the fact that Bhojpuri is not homogeneous even in a single district (Dubey, 1996). The objective of the present study is to explore the variations in agreement (particularly related to Person, Number, and Gender as seen) in Bhojpuri dialects of Azamgarhi

and Ballia Bhojpuri. The qualitative and descriptive research methodologies have been used for the present study. Data have been collected from its native speakers. The findings of the research reveal that there are two distinct varieties of the Bhojpuri dialect that differ from each other in terms of agreement patterns, particularly person, number, and gender agreement. The limitation of the study can be seen in terms of analyzing agreement of number, person, and gender only.

Keywords: Agreement, Syntactic Agreement, Bhojpuri Dialects, Indo Aryan Language.

Introduction

The Bhojpuri language is an Indo-Aryan language that is mostly spoken in Bihar, the eastern section of Uttar Pradesh, a portion of northern Chhattisgarh, and the lower belt of south Nepal. Bhojpuri is typically written in the devanagari script, which is also used for other Indian language like Hindi and Sanskrit. However, in some region, the Kaithi script was historically used for writing of Bhojpuri dialects.

This language is mostly spoken the western part of the Magadhan group of the IA language family of India (Tiwari,1960: xxi). Bhojpuri language has been also known as the Bihari language. Bihari implies a single language under which Magadhan, Maithili and Bhojpuri are kept as dialects (Grierson,1898. vol.V,pp.V). In British India, the Bhojpuri dialects were spoken in many cities or district including Champaran, Saran, Gazipur, Azamgarh, and Ballia (John Beames:1868, pp 483-508). Historically, Bhojpuri language has derived from the name “Bhojpur” which belongs to Shahabad district. This district is situated at few miles south of Ganga River and about 60 miles west of Patna district of Bihar. At present, this language is widely spoken as the speakers of this language have migrated to many states of India. While migrating, the mother tongue language is also carried by the migrant population. Thus, there are now many Bhojpuri speakers in the states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Delhi, Assam, West Bengal, and so forth. Bhojpuri language speakers are also found in a Jammu Kashmir of the North India where approximately 8,824 speakers are residing (census:2011). Bhojpuri speakers are also found in the southern Indian in state such as the Kerala. In Kerala, Bhojpuri language speakers are found approximately 1,688 (Census: 2011). In Western India's states and Eastern India's states such as Gujarat and Assam the Bhojpuri speakers are approximately 1,37,956 in Gujarat and 2,78,052 in

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Assam (Census: 2011). The Census data 2011 indicate that Bhojpuri has the second highest number of speakers in India. It ranks just below Hindi and its speakers' strength is higher than any other languages such as Magahi, Chhattisgarhi and Rajasthani. Further, Bhojpuri speakers constitute the largest ethno-linguistic group in Mauritius. This language belongs to Eastern Indo-Aryan language group and speakers are approximately 5,05,79,447 (Census of India Report,2011).

Bhojpuri Dialect and its Classification

Chatterji (1926) has classified the Magadha speeches in three groups namely Western Magadhan group (Bhojpuri), central Magadhan group (Maithili and Magahi) and Eastern Magadhan group (Bengali Assamese and Oryia).

Bhojpuri dialectal varieties and creoles are also spoken in various part of world. This language had been highly influenced by other languages in many parts of the world. Mauritius Bhojpuri includes many creoles and English words. Outside India, it has a sizable diaspora in places like Mauritius, Nepal, Guyana, Suriname, and Fiji. As a language it has spread over an area of almost 45000 square miles. As per Verma (2003), the Bhojpuri dialect in India is pragmatically divided into four distinct regional varieties: Standard Bhojpuri (the southern standard, spoken in Bihar's Saran, Rohtas, in some parts of Champaran, and in Ballia and eastern Ghazipur of Uttar Pradesh); Northern Bhojpuri (found in Deoria, Gorakhpur, Basti and in some parts of Azamgarh, Mirzapur, and Varanasi of Uttar Pradesh); and Nagpuria (spoken in the south of the Son River of Jharkhand's Palamu and Ranchi districts).

Further, Verma (2003) has also identified the 5th variety of this language i.e. 'Tharu', a variety of Bhojpuri that is spoken in Tarai region of Nepal and also in the adjoining area such as the upper strips of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar i.e. from Bahraich to Champaran.

There are two distinct geographical dialects of Bhojpuri, namely Azamgarhi Bhojpuri and Ballia Bhojpuri. Ballia Bhojpuri is generally classified as a variety of Western Bhojpuri and demonstrates notable divergences from more stereotypically "Bihar-centric" Bhojpuri, particularly with respect to its phonological system and certain lexical and morpho-syntactic features (Chatterji, 1926; & Grierson, 1903). As a vernacular variety, it is linguistically distinct from Azamgarhi Bhojpuri. More specifically, Ballia Bhojpuri is characterized by a relatively higher degree of nasalization, a frequent occurrence of retroflex consonants, and a discernible influence

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of Bihari phonetic patterns (Chatterji, 1926; Grierson, 1903). In contrast, Azamgarhi Bhojpuri exhibits comparatively reduced nasalization and displays its own distinct phonological configurations. These differences highlight the internal diversity within Bhojpuri and underscore the role of regional variation in shaping its linguistic structure (Pandharipande, 1997).

The comparison between Azamgarhi Bhojpuri and Ballia Bhojpuri reveals significant variation in the domain of Person–Number–Gender (PNG) agreement, particularly in verbal morphology and auxiliary systems of the language. In line with earlier observations by Grierson (1903) and Chatterji (1926), Bhojpuri as an Indo-Aryan language that exhibits relatively weak gender agreement, with grammatical relations being primarily governed by person and number distinctions, often further nuanced by honorificity. Within this framework, Ballia Bhojpuri, typically classified under standard Bhojpuri, demonstrates a comparatively conservative and morphologically richer agreement system (Tiwari: 1960). In contrast, Azamgarhi Bhojpuri shows a tendency toward morphological leveling, with reduced paradigmatic variation and a preference for the *h-* auxiliary series (e.g., *haī*, *hau*), which marks person and number distinctions in a less differentiated manner (Tiwari: 1960).

From a gender perspective, both dialects exhibit a high degree of neutralization, with minimal or inconsistent marking in verbal agreement, thereby diverging from the more robust gender agreement system found in Standard Hindi (Comrie, 1989). This suggests that gender plays a subordinate role in the agreement hierarchy of Bhojpuri dialects, while person and number remain the primary grammatical categories. Furthermore, these structural differences may also be interpreted in light of sociolinguistic factors. Azamgarhi Bhojpuri, situated in a linguistically transitional and socially heterogeneous region, reflects greater leveling and simplification, possibly due to dialect contact and community interaction across caste and religious groups (Dubey, 1996). In contrast, Ballia Bhojpuri retains more distinct agreement morphology, which may index stronger regional identity and relatively conservative linguistic norms. Thus, the variation in PNG agreement between these two dialects not only highlights internal linguistic diversity but also underscores the role of social and geographical factors in shaping agreement patterns.

Agreement is a phenomenon in natural language in which the form of one word or morpheme carries with the form of another word or phrase in sentence. Agreement phenomena are

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some of grammar and this is essential for creating grammatical and well-formed sentences (Baker, 2008). The generative grammar has explored the principal, Mechanism and Parameters that govern syntactic agreements (Chomsky, 2000).

Selection of Geographical Area

The reason for choosing the Bhojpuri dialects of these two regions is that Azamgarh and Ballia are two prominent districts of Uttar Pradesh. Azamgarh is a bilingual area where Awadhi language is mostly spoken as the first language and Bhojpuri is spoken as the second language. Bhojpuri is usually spoken in the Eastern part of Azamgarh and in the western part of Azamgarh people use mostly Awadhi language. The people of Azamgarh use 37.46% Bhojpuri language (Census: 2011). Ballia is also a very important district in context to Bhojpuri language. Bhojpuri is the mother tongue of that area and people speak Hindi and Urdu, too. According to Grierson, Ballia has standard Bhojpuri and its strength is up to 81.96% of the total speakers.

Previous Works

The research on Bhojpuri has been done extensively, from the perspectives of sociolinguistics, morphology, syntax, phonetics, and phonology. Grierson (1903, Vol. 5, p. 5), stated Bhojpuri as a Bihari language which emerged from Ardha Magadhi, Magadhi, and Maithili. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Tiwari (1960) provided the most influential description of Bhojpuri's origins and development. Other scholars, including Dubey (1996), Mishra (1971), Chatterjee (1926), kumar (2020), Khan & Singh (2020) have also contributed significantly to the studies of Bhojpuri language.

Numerous works have also been done on the topic of agreement. Baker (2008) defines agreement as a fascinating topic because it involves multiple factors, including syntax, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, and real-time processing. Key scholars who have contributed in syntax and agreement include Launey (1991), Benmamoun (2000), Fassi Fehri (1993), Chomsky (2000, 2001), Haspelmath (2004), and Nevins (2007).

The study on variation in speech in Sociolinguistics and dialectology attracted significant attention in the second half of the 20th century. The most prominent study on variation in speech was done by William Labov (1966), who elaborated the social stratification of New York City

speech; his seminal work also includes the Martha's Vineyard study (1963). Other speech variationists include Chambers (1995), Trudgill (1998), Herzog (1968), Gumperz (1958), Chaturvedi, Bright, and Ramanujan (1972), and Hasnain & Mohan (2013).

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The study on dialectal variations in Bhojpuri is a few, therefore this paper tries to explore the variations in PNG agreement between Bhojpuri dialects based on geographical location, especially between Ballia & Azamgarhi Bhojpuri dialects.

Research Methods used in the Study

This paper uses qualitative as well as descriptive methods of research in Linguistics. The data have been collected through questionnaire, observations, and personal interview of the native speakers of the language. The fieldwork for collecting data has been done in the area of Azamgarh and Ballia districts. The past study and old record have been also cross checked and reviewed for gathering data from the secondary sources. Initially, the pilot survey was done with the help of 50 sentences to identify whether the dialectal variations exist or not.

Data Analysis

This section analyzes the data in terms of person, number, & gender agreement. The comparative analysis of two different dialects of Bhojpuri namely Azamgarhi and Balia Bhojpuri has been done to identify the PNG variations by analyzing the present tense affirmative sentences.

Person Agreement

In linguistics, person agreement denotes to the grammatical agreement between a verb and its subject. Grammar classifies person into first person, second person, and third person categories of the pronoun. Person agreement is commonly expressed through verbal inflections, pronouns, or auxiliary markers. As per Comrie (1989) & Dixon (1994), person agreement refers to the grammatical correspondence between subject and verb according to person categories. Here are some instances of how person agreement varies in two distinct geographical Bhojpuri dialects. Consider the following examples taken from present tense:

Examples:

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- 1) həm əsko:l dʒāli (Azamgarhi dialect)
 [1st.P.] [OBJ.] [V. - PRS]
 I go to school.
- 2) həm əsko:l dʒātəni (Ballia dialect)
 [1st.P.] [OBJ.] [V. - PRS]
 I go to School.
- 3) tʊ əsko:l dʒāle/ dʒālə (Azamgarhi dialect)
 [2nd.P.] [OBJ.] [V. - PRS. NON-HON./HON.]
 You go to school.
- 4) tʊ əsko:l dʒātəɽə (Ballia dialect)
 [2nd.P.] [OBJ.] [V.-PRS.]
 You go to school.
- 5) rovāke əsko:l dʒātəni-dʒə (Ballia dialect)
 [2nd. P. HON.] [OBJ.] [V. -PRS. HON]
 You go to school.
- 6) ʊ əsko:l dʒālə (Azamgarhi dialect)
 [3rd.P.] [OBJ.] [V.-PRS]
 He goes to school.
- 7) ʊ əsko:l dʒātā (Ballia dialect)
 [3rd.P.] [OBJ.] [V. -PRS]
 He goes to school.

The above examples, from sentences (1) to (7), represent affirmative constructions in the present tense. In the examples (1) and (2), the first-person pronoun /həm/ in both Azamgarhi as well as in Ballia dialects, remains the same as whereas the verbal agreement differs from each other. In Azamgarhi dialect, the first person pronoun agrees with the verb /dʒāli/ but in Ballia dialect, it agrees with the verb /dʒātəni/ which is different from each other. Similarly, the second-person pronoun /tʊ/ in examples (3) and (4) is also similar in both the dialects, but the verbs differ in each variety such as /dʒāle/ or /dʒālə/ is used in Azamgarhi dialect but /dʒātəɽə/ in Ballia dialect. It is important to note here that in Ballia Bhojpuri, /rovāke/ is frequently as the second-person pronoun for honorific purposes. Moreover, the third-person pronoun /ʊ/, meaning “he,” is similar

in the both dialects but verbs used with them are different as in examples (6) and (7). Thus, the variation in person agreement patterns is clearly observable in both the two different dialects of the same Bhojpuri language.

Number Agreement

The linguistic agreement between sentence elements based on number categories, such as singular and plural, is referred to as number agreement. It frequently occurs between the subject and the verb, although agreement may also appear between nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and determiners in many languages (Comrie: 1989 & Corbett: 2006). Bhojpuri has two categories of number agreement such as singular and plural but variation in the number agreement of Azamgarhi and Ballia Bhojpuri is quietly observable. Some examples of the same are given and discussed below:

Examples:

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 8) | həm
[1st P.SG.]
I go to market. | bādžār
[OBJ.] | đžāilə
[V. -PRS] | (Azamgarhi dialect) |
| 9) | həm
[1st P.SG.]
I go to market. | bādžār
[OBJ.] | đžātəni
[V. -PRS] | (Ballia dialect) |
| 10) | həm-log
[1st P.PL.]
I go to market. | bādžār
[OBJ.] | đžāilə
[V. -PRS] | (Azamgarhi dialect) |
| 11) | həmnike
[1st P.PL.]
I go to market. | bādžār
[OBJ.] | đžātbənidžə
[V. -PRS] | (Ballia dialect) |
| 12) | tə
[2nd P.SG.]
I go to market. | bādžār
[OBJ.] | đžāilə
[V.- PRS] | (Azamgarhi dialect) |
| 13) | tə
[2nd. P.SG.] | bādžār
[OBJ.] | đžātəɽə
[V. -PRS.] | (Ballia dialect) |

You go to market.

- 14) tɔ-log bādʒār dʒāilə (Azamgarhi dialect)
 [2nd P.PL.] [OBJ.] [V.- PRS]
 I go to market.

- 15) tɔhən-log bādʒār dʒātɔrəɖə (Ballia dialect)
 [2nd. P.PL.] [OBJ.] [V.-PRS.]
 You go to market.

- 16) ʊ bādʒār dʒālə (Azamgarhi dialect)
 [3rd. P.] [OBJ.] [V. -PRS]
 He goes to market.

- 17) ʊ bādʒār dʒātā (Ballia dialect)
 [3rd. P.] [OBJ.] [V.- PRS]
 He goes to market.

- 18) ʊ-log bādʒār dʒāne (Azamgarhi dialect)
 [3rd. P.PL] [OBJ.] [V. -PRS]
 They go to market.

- 19) ʊ-log bādʒār dʒātɔrɔn (Ballia dialect)
 [3rd. P.PL.] [OBJ.] [V. -PRS]
 They go to market.

All the above examples from (8) to (19) are in affirmative and in the present tense. Here, the first-person singular pronoun /həm/ is used in both the dialects but the plural of the first-person pronoun differs across these two dialects of the Bhopuri language such as the plural of the first person pronoun /həm-log/ is used in the Azamgarhi dialect, whereas /həmnike/ occurs in the Ballia dialect and the verbal agreement patterns also vary between the dialects. In Azamgarhi dialect, the verb /dʒāilə/, meaning “go,” agrees with the first-person singular pronoun, as well as with the plural pronoun whereas in the Ballia dialect the verb /dʒātəni/ agrees only with the singular pronoun and the verb /dʒātɔrɔn/ is used with the plural pronoun in Ballia variety of Bhojpuri. Thus, the

variation is observed not only in the pronominal forms but also with the verbal agreement patterns across these two dialects.

In the above examples from (12) to (15), it is observed that the second-person singular pronoun /*tʊ*/ is used in both the Azamgarhi and Ballia dialects but they differ in their verbal agreement patterns. In Azamgarhi dialect, the second person singular pronoun /*tʊ*/ agrees with the verb /*ɖʒāilə*/ whereas in the Ballia dialect, the second-person singular pronoun /*tʊ*/ agrees with the verb /*ɖʒātəɾə*/. Furthermore, the second-person plural pronouns also differ across the two dialects and their verbal agreement also differs from each other. The Azamgarhi dialect employs plural form of the second person pronoun as /*tʊ-log*/ while in the Ballia dialect it is /*tʊhən-log*/. These plural pronouns agree with the verbs /*ɖʒāilə*/ and /*ɖʒātbɾəɖʒə*/, respectively in these two different dialects. Thus, variation is completely evident in both the dialects at their use in pronominal forms and their verbal agreement patterns of the second-person plural pronouns.

Similarly, the examples from (16) to (19) illustrate third-person number agreement. The third-person singular pronoun /*ʊ*/, meaning “he,” is identical in both dialects; however, the corresponding verbal forms differ. In the Azamgarhi dialect, the third person singular pronoun /*ʊ*/ agrees with the verb /*ɖʒālə*/, whereas in the Ballia dialect it agrees with /*ɖʒātā*/. The third-person plural pronoun /*ʊ-log*/ is used in both dialects, but its verbal agreement varies. In the Azamgarhi dialect, /*ʊ-log*/ agrees with the verb /*ɖʒāne*/, while in the Ballia dialect it agrees with the verb /*ɖʒātbəɾn*/. Although the third-person singular and plural pronouns remain largely similar across these two dialects yet significant variation is found in their verbal agreement patterns.

Gender Agreement

According to Corbett (1991), gender is a grammatical category that divides nouns into different classes based on agreement patterns on related linguistic elements including verbs, pronouns, and adjectives. Gender connects verbally with person and number in several Indo-Aryan languages, including Hindi. However, as compared to standard Hindi, gender agreement is typically less prevalent in Bhojpuri, and several dialects place greater emphasis on person, number, and honorific distinctions. Some instances of variation in gender agreement identified in Azamgarhi and Ballia dialects are discussed below:

Examples:

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- | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 20) | həm
[1st P.M.] | bādžār
[OBJ.] | džāilə
[V.- PRS.M.marker] | (Azamgarhi dialect) |
| I go to market. | | | | |
| 21) | həm
[1st P.M.] | bādžār
[OBJ.] | džātbəni
[V.- PRS.M.marker] | (Ballia dialect) |
| I go to market. | | | | |
| 22) | həm
[1st P.F.] | bādžār
[OBJ.] | džāilə
[V.- PRS.F.marker] | (Azamgarhi dialect) |
| I go to market. | | | | |
| 23) | həm
[1st P.F.] | bādžār
[OBJ.] | džātbəni
[V.- PRS.F.marker] | (Ballia dialect) |
| I go to market. | | | | |
| 24) | tə
[2nd P.M.] | bādžār
[OBJ.] | džāilə
[V.- PRS.M.marker] | (Azamgarhi dialect) |
| I go to market. | | | | |
| 25) | tə
[2nd. P.M.] | bādžār
[OBJ.] | džātəṛə
[V. -PRS.M.marker] | (Ballia dialect) |
| You go to market. | | | | |
| 26) | tə
[2nd P.F.] | bādžār
[OBJ.] | džāilə
[V. -PRS.F.marker] | (Azamgarhi dialect) |
| I go to market. | | | | |
| 27) | tə
[2nd. P.F.] | bādžār
[OBJ.] | džātbāṛə
[V. -PRS.F.marker] | (Ballia dialect) |
| You go to market. | | | | |
| 28) | u
[3rd.P. M.] | bādžār
[OBJ.] | džālə
[V.- PRS.M.marker] | (Azamgarhi dialect) |
| He goes to market. | | | | |
| 29) | u
[3rd. P.M.] | bādžār
[OBJ.] | džātā
[V. -PRS.M.marker] | (Ballia dialect) |

He goes to market.

- 30) *ʊ* *bāḍzār* *ḍāīlin* (Azamgarhi dialect)
 [3rd. P.F.] [OBJ.] [V.- PRS.F.marker]
 She goes to market.

- 31) *ʊ* *bāḍzār* *ḍāt̪bər̪in* (Ballia dialect)
 [3rd. P.F.] [OBJ.] [V.- PRS.F.marker]
 She goes to market.

In the above examples, from (20) to (31) variation in gender agreement in the both the dialects has been analysed. The examples (20) and (21) show that despite being the first-person singular masculine pronoun /*həm*/ same in both the Azamgarhi and Ballia dialects, there appears a variation in the verbal agreement patterns. In the Azamgarhi dialect, the first-person masculine pronoun /*həm*/ agrees with the verb /*ḍāīlə*/, whereas in the Ballia dialect it agrees with the verb /*ḍāt̪bən̪i*/. Further, the examples (22) and (23) illustrate that the first-person feminine gender /*həm*/ in both Azamgarhi and Ballia dialects also agrees with the verb differently. Moreover, the verb form /*ḍāīlə*/ in Azamgarhi and the verb form /*ḍāt̪bən̪i*/ in Ballia dialects remain the same despite changing the gender of the first person pronoun. Thus, examples from both the dialects show variation in gender agreement despite being the same first-person pronoun /*həm*/ used in both dialects in both genders.

In the above given above examples from (24) to (27) represent gender agreement in the use of 2nd person pronominal with respect to masculine and feminine gender. The pronominal /*tʊ*/ is used in the same form in both masculine and feminine genders in both the dialects. The second person pronoun /*tʊ*/ in masculine gender in Azamgarhi dialect takes the verb form /*ḍāīlə*/ whereas in feminine gender it takes the form /*ḍāīlʊ*/. Similarly, in Ballia dialect, the second person masculine pronoun /*tʊ*/ takes the verb form /*ḍāt̪ər̪ə*/ while in feminine gender the verb form changes and it becomes /*ḍāt̪bār̪ʊ*/. Thus, is quite clear that in the use of the second person pronoun in Azamgarhi as well as in Ballia dialect the pronoun remains the same in both the genders but the verb form changes if change in the gender occurs. In both the dialects, gender agreement at pronominal level is evident.

The examples from (28) to (31) demonstrate third-person gender agreement. The third-person pronoun /ʊ/ is identical in both dialects for both masculine and feminine referents, but variation is observed in the verbal agreement patterns. In the masculine category, /ʊ/ agrees with the verb /dʒālə/ in the Azamgarhi dialect and /dʒātā/ in the Ballia dialect. In the feminine category, the same pronoun agrees with /dʒālin/ in the Azamgarhi dialect and /dʒātbərin/ in the Ballia dialect. These examples indicate that while the pronoun forms remain largely unchanged across gender categories in both dialects, gender distinctions are primarily expressed through verbal agreement markers. Furthermore, the verbal forms employed to mark masculine and feminine gender differ systematically between the Azamgarhi and Ballia dialects, demonstrating dialectal variation in gender agreement patterns.

The interrogative sentences in the examples given below from Azamgarhi and Ballia dialects of Bhojpuri language have been analyzed in terms of agreement in interrogative sentences (in past tense) having honorific markers.

Examples:

- | | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|-----------|---------------|-------------------|
| 32) | ba:bu: dʒi: | kʰa:nəva: | kʰa:ini:? | (Ballia dialect) |
| | [1 st .M, Sg.] | [OBJ] | [V. -PRS. F.] | |
| | Father, have you eaten food? | | | |
| 33) | əmma:dʒi: | kʰənəva: | kʰa:ini: ? | (Ballia) |
| | [1 st .F.Sg] | [OBJ] | [V.-PRS. F.] | |
| | Mother, you have eaten food? | | | |
| 34) | ba:bu:dʒi: | kʰənəva: | kʰəila:? | (Azamgarhi) |
| | [1 st .M.Sg] | [OBJ] | [V. -PRS.M] | |
| | Father, you have eaten food? | | | |
| 35) | əmma:dʒi: | kʰənəva: | kʰa:ilu:? | (Azamgarhi) |
| | [1 st .F.Sg] | [OBJ] | [V. -PRS. F.] | |
| | Mother, you have eaten food? | | | |

From the above-mentioned examples, it can be argued that Ballia dialect doesn't show change in agreement with verbs even when the two distinct nouns such /ba:bu: dʒi/ and /əmma:dʒi:/ are used with honorific marker such as /ji/ which denote 'father' and 'mother' in this dialect. In contrast to this, in Azamgarhi dialect of Bhojpuri, there seems to be variation in agreement markers

when these two nouns are used. The word /ba:bu: dʒi/ agrees with the verb /kʰəila:/ whereas the word /əmma:dʒi:/ agrees with the verb /kʰa:ilu:/. Thus, it appears that these two dialects are distinct in agreement patterns while using interrogative sentences with honorific markers.

Findings and Discussion

The study highlights significant variation in agreement pattern across the selected Bhojpuri dialects, particularly in terms of person, number, gender agreement variations in Ballia (standard Bhojpuri) and Azamgarhi Bhojpuri (Western Bhojpuri) dialects.

- a) The first-person pronoun /həm/, the second-person pronoun /tʊ/, and the third-person pronoun /ʊ/ are similar in both the Azamgarhi and Ballia dialects. However, their corresponding verbal agreement patterns differ across the two dialects. In the Ballia dialect, the pronoun /rovāke/ is frequently used as an honorific second-person form. The analysis reveals that, although the pronoun systems of the two dialects are largely similar, significant variation exists in their verbal agreement patterns. These differences may be attributed to geographical and dialectal influences, with the Azamgarhi dialect showing features of Western Bhojpuri and the Ballia dialect exhibiting characteristics closer to Standard Bhojpuri.
- b) The findings also show that the Azamgarhi and Ballia dialects differ in both first-person plural pronoun forms and verbal agreement patterns. While the singular pronoun /həm/ is common to both the dialects, the variation is evident in plural pronouns and corresponding verb forms, reflecting dialectal differences in number agreement. This dialectal reflection has influenced by geographical differences and language contact.
- c) The findings, further, indicate that gender distinction is observed in the Azamgarhi and Ballia dialects. The same pronouns are used across both the dialects in Ist, IInd & IIIrd Persons, in both the masculine and feminine genders but the gender differences are marked with verbal inflection. The verbal forms used for masculine and feminine referents differ systematically between the two dialects, indicating dialectal variation in gender agreement patterns.

- d) Further, while using interrogative sentences with honorific markers in Ballia, it is evident that despite change in gender there is no change in the verb forms whereas in Azamgarhi Bhojpuri, with the change in gender, the verb changes and reflects the masculine/ feminine gender as per nouns used with honorific marker like /ji/.
- e) Ultimately, the variation is found in the collected data from Ballia and Azamgarhi Bhojpuri. This variation may be due to the geographical distinctions. The findings suggest that the Ballia dialect exhibits features associated with Standard Bhojpuri, whereas the Azamgarhi dialect may show the influence of Awadhi and it appears to be Western Bhojpuri variety.

Conclusion

Bhojpuri language being an Indo-Aryan language is mostly spoken in Bihar and in the eastern section of Uttar Pradesh. However, it is also spoken in some other parts of the country as well as in the foreign country like Mauritius. Due to different geographical regions, the language has several dialectal varieties and the structural variations among different dialectal varieties of Bhojpuri language can be identified. The findings of the present research work reveal that the two different varieties of Bhojpuri namely Azamgarhi and Ballia dialects which are spoken in two different regions, one in UP and the other in Bihar region of the country, reflect dialectal variations. The study of person, number and gender agreement between these two dialects highlights that though same 1st person pronouns are used in both the dialects but they differ in terms of their agreement in both the dialects. It is also identified that second person pronouns in singular number remain same but when they are in plural number they differ in these two dialects and they also differ in agreement markers. Further, I, II, and IIIrd person pronouns in both masculine and feminine gender are same in use in both the dialects but they differ in agreement markers. Thus, from the close observation of the analysis, it may be concluded that although there is similarity in the use of the pronominal across these two dialects yet they exhibit different patterns of agreement at the level of person, number and gender.

The study highlights significant patterns of variation between the two distinct dialects of the Bhojpuri which may be very useful in understanding how the same language varies across

geographical regions. The study limits to the study of only Azamgarhi and Ballia dialects of Bhojpuri and some more dialectal variations at different levels of linguistic analysis can be attained

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