The Linguistic Structure of the Dogri Proverbs

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Abstract—*The present paper aims at analyzing the linguistic structure of the Dogri proverbs. Dogri is an Indo-Aryan language spoken in the state of Jammu & Kashmir in the Republic of India. Generally, a Dogri proverb is structured as short as of two words, and as long as of six words. The paper will take into account certain linguistic aspects, such as re-duplication in the proverbs; Dogri proverbs with infinitive ending; the use of onomatopoeic words in the Dogri proverbs; non-infinitive endings in the Dogri proverbs; and the use of alliteration and metaphors in the proverbs. Around ten thousand Dogri proverbs have been studied and analyzed during the course of this study. The remainder of this paper is organized into these headings: Introduction to proverb; Introduction to Dogri language; linguistic aspects in Dogri proverbs; data and analysis; conclusion; and scope and limitations.*

Keywords*: Dogri proverbs; re-duplication; infinitive and non-infinitive ending; onomatopoeic words; Indo-Aryan languages.*

Introduction to Proverbs

A proverb is a popular saying, based on a common truth or an experience that is repeated over time. Proverbs find their origin in folklores and folk-narratives. In fact they are the paragon of folk wisdom. Since they originate from oral tradition, they are not recorded in a written form, and are worded in such a way that even a layman can easily memorize them. To make them easy to remember, proverbs often use various linguistic devices, such as alliteration, rhetoric devices, repetition, parallel structures and other. Meider states, "a proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation." The oldest collections of proverbs known so far date from around 2600 – 2550 B.C. and are part of a larger corpora usually labelled as 'wisdom literature' (Kramer 1951). Cohen (1911) and Meider (2004) point out that proverbs enjoyed a great prestige in the ancient world and are still preserved and valued as culturally marked idiomatic archaisms.

The study of proverbs is called paremiology and can be dated back as far as Aristotle. According to Kindstrand (1978) & Russo (1983) "the definition of a proverb has caused scholars from many disciplines much chagrin over the centuries. Many attempts at definition have been made from Aristotle to the present time, ranging from philosophical considerations to cut-and-dried lexicographical definitions" (Meider, 2004, p.1). Linguist N.R. Norrick (1985, p.78) has proposed the following definition for the proverb: "The proverb is a traditional, conversational, didactic genre with general meaning, a potential free conversational turn, preferably with figurative meaning."

In the words of Lord Russell, proverbs are "the wit of one and the wisdom of many". They mirror the culture and the mindsets of the people sharing a common language.

Introduction to the Dogri language

Dogri is a lesser-known Indo-Aryan language, spoken in Jammu region of Jammu and Kashmir and in Northern Punjab and parts of Himachal Pradesh. Etymologically, the word Dogri has been derived from the feminine form of the Duggar tribe, and the people who speak Dogri are called Dogras (Narain, 1965). The mention of Dogri can be first found in the list of Indian languages by Amir Khusro, the famous Urdu and Persian poet (Ram Nath Shastri, 1981). The Rajputs, an Aryan group who were originally known as Gujjars, migrated into India around 7th century AD and settled in the regions of Punjab, Rajasthan, and Gujarat, and eventually merged with the local population. Those Rajputs who settled in the Jammu region became known as Dogras (Grierson 1906:8-12).

Dogri is also classified as one of the pahari languages but only the Dogras who live at higher elevations and speak pahari language are referred to as "pahari people" in contrast to the Dogri speakers near the plains (Masica, 1993, pg. 427). Originally, Dogri was written using the Takri script but is now replaced by Devanagari script. On close observation of its phonology, Dogri can be seen as a language with a strong Sanskrit base.

Dogri language has passed through three stages, the Old Indo-Aryan (Sanskrit), Middle Indo-Aryan (Pali) and finally the Modern Indo-Aryan stage. Some of the phonetic change processes in Dogri are as follows:

Metathesis:

OIA /kitʃəɽ/ > D /tʃikəɽ/ "mud"

OIA /tʃɑku/ > D /kɑtʃʊ/ "knife"

Gemination:

OIA /sukʰɪ/ > D /sʊkkɪ/ "dry"

OIA /ɖilɑ/ > D /tɪllɑ/ "loose"

Nasalization:

OIA /sɔ/ "hundred" > /sɔ̃:/ "oath"

OIA /dʒəg/ "the world" > /dʒə̃g/ "war"

Un-aspirated>Aspirated

OIA /pʌl/ "moment" > /pʰʌl/ "fruit"

OIA /tʃʊp/ "quiet" > /tʃʰʊp/ "hide"

There are ten vowels, thirty one consonantal phonemes and five supra-segmental phonemes in Dogri language. It also includes five nasal phonemes (n, ɲ, ɳ, ŋ and m), three tone phonemes and five voice aspirated stops. The symbols are as follows:

Vowels:

/ɪ/, /ə/, /ʊ/, /i/, /e/, /ɑ/, /o/, /ɛ/, /u/, /ɒ/

Consonants:

/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /ʈ/, /ɖ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /k/, /g/, /pʰ/, /tʰ/, /ʈʰ/, tʃʰ/, /kʰ/, /m/, /n/, /ɳ/, /ŋ/, /r/, /f/,   /v/, /s/, /ʃ/, /x/, /ɣ/, /l/, /w/, /j/.

Linguistic Aspects of Dogri Proverbs

The word order for Dogri is Subject-Object-Verb (SOV). It has its own grammar and its own dictionary. In this paper, Dogri proverbs have been studied by taking into consideration the following linguistic aspects:

Reduplication: Reduplication is a morphological process in which meaning is expressed by repeating the root or the stem or a part of the word.

When the entire word is repeated, it is called full reduplication. For example:

gərəm-gərəm "hot-hot"

sapʰ-sapʰ "clean-clean"

When parts of words are duplicated, particularly a syllable, it is called partial reduplication. For example:

tʃaj-ʃaj, kʰɑnɑ-sʰɑnɑ

Infinitive ending: Infinitives are different verb forms existing in every language. In English, the most common infinitive is 'to'. Verbs in Hindi and Dogri that end with the suffix /nɑ/ are said to have an infinitive ending. Following are some words with an infinitive ending:

bolnɑ "to speak",

pinɑ "to drink",

kərnɑ "to do",

gɪrnɑ "to fall"

Non-infinitive ending: Verbs in Hindi and Dogri that do not end with the suffix /nɑ/ are said to have a non-infinitive ending.

Alliteration: Alliteration is the repetition of the same letter or the same sound at the start of adjacent or closely connected words. It is often used to create an emotional effect and to attract attention. Alliteration helps to "intensify any attitude being signified" (Lanham, 1991). Some examples of alliterations in Hindi are as follows:

məðʊr mʊskɑn məno:hər "sweet smile alluring"

sʊnehrɑ səpnɑ "golden dream"

Metaphor: A metaphor is a figure of speech that describes a person or an object by referring to something which has characteristics similar to that person or object. For example:

bərəf kɪ tʃaðər "sheet of snow"

ɑnkʰɔ: kɑ tɑrɑ "apple of the eye"

Onomatopoeia: The naming of a thing or action with the imitation of the sound associated with it is known as onomatopoeia. The following are onomatopoeic words in Hindi:

pʰʊspʰʊsɑnɑ "to whisper"

bɔ:w-bɔ:w "bark"

Data and Analysis

The proverbs of the Dogri language contour the culture and the day to day practices of the Dogras. They encapsulate their cultural wisdom and give us a general idea of their notion of the reality and the world. The data for the present study are elicited from the book titled "Dogri Muhavara Kosh" edited by Smailpuri (1966) which enlists around six thousand unique proverbs. The proverbs taken up in this paper have been categorized into six categories and have been written in three term label.

'Reduplication' in Dogri proverbs is done to emphasize the key aspects of the proverb and to reflect the uniqueness of the language. Following are the examples of some reduplicative proverbs:

1.टोका टाकी करना

  ʈoka^V   taki^V   kərni^V
  interrupt   talk   to do

  General meaning: "To interrupt someone."

2. अंग अंग जलना

əg̃^N   əg̃^N   dʒəlna^V
part   part   to burn

General meaning: "To feel hurt."

3. शैहदे शैहंदे लंगना
    ʃohde^{ADJ}   ʃoñde^{ADJ}   lə̃gna^V
    silently   silently   walk by

General Meaning: "To tip-toe quietly."

4. इक इक दिन बहरे बहरे गुजरना
    ɪk^{NUM}   ɪk^{NUM}   dɪn^N   bəhre^{ADJ}   bəhre^{ADJ}   da^{PREP}   gʊdʒərna^V
    one   one   day   year   year   of   to pass
General Meaning: "When every day feels like a year."

5. काले काले ढल्ले होने
    kale^{ADJ}   kale^{ADJ}   ɖəlle^N   hone^V
    black   black   blackberry   to be

General Meaning: "To be unfamiliar with a language."

Some of the proverbs are 'alliterative' in nature. They begin with the same sound, making them poetic as well as rhetoric.

1. बाद्धा बधाना
    bada^V   bədana^{ADV}
    talk   increase

General Meaning: "To drag a conversation unnecessarily."

2. मक्खी मारिये जेर कड़नी
    mək^hi^N   marɪje^V   dʒer^N   kəɖni^V
    fly   kill   secundine   to take out

General Meaning: "To be a complete miser."

3. रपेया रमाल देना
    rəpeɪja^N   rəmal^N   dena^V
    money   handkerchief   to give

General Meaning: "To have an engagement ceremony."

4. बड्डा बाबा बनना
    bəɖɖa^{ADJ}   baba^N   bənna^V
    big   wise old man   to become

General Meaning: "To act like an old wise person."

5. जग्गे जहान्ने दा नई रोह ना
    dʒəgge^N   dʒəhanne^N   da^{PREP}   nəĩ^{NEG}   roh^V   na^{NEG}
    world   macrocosm   of   not   live   not

General Meaning: "To lose one's identity."

Most of the Dogri proverbs have verbs with 'infinitive endings' that show the gender as well as the number of the object. Some proverbs with infinitive endings are as follows:

1. त्रिक्खा बोलना
    trɪk^ha^{ADV}   bolna^V
    sharp   to speak

General Meaning: "To give quick answers."

2. कोई ध्याड़ी दा प्रोहना होना
    koi^{DET}   djaɽi^N   da^{PREP}   pərona^N   hona^V
    some   day   of   guest   to be

General Meaning: "To be on one's death bed."

3. पोआड़ा खड़ा करना
    poaɽa^N   k^həɽa^V   kərna^V
    problem   stand   to do

General Meaning: "To create unnecessary problems."

4. बिस्स कड़नी
    bɪs^N   kəɖni^V
    anger   to take out

General Meaning: "To vent out anger on someone."

5. टंडोभाली करनी
    ʈə̃ɖob^hali^V   kərni^V
    watch over   to do

General Meaning: "To keep an eye on something."
There are few Dogri proverbs with 'non infinitive endings'. They are as follows:

1. धोह दैइयै मुंडी बड्डो
    droh^{ADJ}   deɪje^V   mʊnɖi^N   bəɖɖo^V
    trust   give   neck   to cut

General Meaning: "To deceive someone."

2. पुट्ठियाँ छाली मारनियाँ
    pʊʈ^hijã^{ADV}   ʃ^hali^V   marnijã^V
    backwards   jumps   to perform

General Meaning: "To be overjoyed."

3. मत्ता पढ़ानियाँ
    mətta^N   pəɽanɪjã^V
    lessons   to teach

General Meaning: "To give tips."

4. सिरे मत्थे पर
    sɪre^N   mətt^he^N   pər^{PREP}
    head   forehead   on

General Meaning: "To respect someone's decision."

5. खच्चरे आली अड़ी

$k^h \partial \int \int \partial re^N$ ali^{ADV} ∂ri^V

mule   like whim

General Meaning: "To be unreasonably adamant."

Dogri proverbs use 'onomatopoeia' as a device to create a vivid picture of what is being said. The rich sound imagery provides a rhythm to the proverbs and gives a sense of reality to the speaker/listener. Some onomatopoeic proverbs are as follows:

1. थूह थूह होना

θu^V θu^V $hona^V$

General Meaning: "To get defamed."

2. सर सर होई जाना

$s\partial r^{ADJ}$ $s\partial r^{ADJ}$ hoi^V $dzana^V$

General Meaning: "To get goosebumps."

3. सड़ु सड़ु करदे रौहना

$s\partial r\sigma^N$ $s\partial r\sigma^N$ $k\partial rde^V$ $rohna^V$

General Meaning: "To burn in anger all the time."

4. कां कां करदे आई जाना

$k\tilde{a}^N$ $k\tilde{a}^N$ $k\partial rde^V$ ai^V $dzana^V$

General Meaning: "To attack someone collectively."

5. टें टें करना

$t\tilde{e}^N$ $t\tilde{e}^N$ $k\partial rna^V$

General Meaning: "To create noise."

Lastly, some Dogri proverbs are 'metaphoric' in nature as they often say something in order to convey an entirely different meaning, but without any explicit comparison.

1. शेर होना

$\int er^N$ $hona^V$

lion   to be

General Meaning: "To be a lion."

2. हत्थे दी कड़छी होना

$h\partial\theta\tilde{e}^N$ di^{PREP} $k\partial rt\int^h i^N$ $hona^V$

hands   of   tablespoon to be

General Meaning: "To be indispensable."

3. सप्पे दा बच्चा होना

$s\partial ppe^N$ da^{PREP} $b\partial t\int t\int a^N$ $hona^V$

snake   of   child   to be

General Meaning: "To be a wolf in a lamb's skin."

4. सुक्किये लक्कड़ी होई जाना

$s\sigma kkije^{ADJ}$ $l\partial k r i^N$ hoi^V $dzana^V$

dry   wood   to be to go

General Meaning: "To become very thin."

5. कुत्ते दे जीन जीना

$k\sigma tte^N$ de^{PREP} $dzin^N$ $dzina^V$

dog   of   life   live

General Meaning: "To lead a miserable life."

Conclusion

Dogri is the second most spoken language in the Northern region, especially in the states of Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. Dogri has received official recognition very recently and has been regarded as an "independent modern literary language" of India. As of 2003, it has also been hailed as a national language in the Constitution of India. Stalwarts like Dr. Karan Singh, Prof. Ram Nath Shastri, Dino Bhai Pant and others have had a major hand in promoting the language. Development of Dogri Literature and the daily serials broadcasted on All India Radio have tried to bring Dogri into lime light. This rich language, which is the mother tongue of so many speakers, must be further promoted through its cultural songs, literature, riddles and unique proverbs. This paper has tried to analyze Dogri proverbs that efficiently mirror the culture and the beliefs of the Dogri language.

Scope and Limitation

This paper takes into account only a few linguistic aspects such as metaphor, onomatopoeia, reduplication, alliteration, infinitive endings and non-infinitive endings. Many more such aspects may be found in Dogri proverbs if looked closely. Further, a comparative study of the Dogri proverbs may also be done, since the Dogri language is quite similar to the Punjabi language. The proverbs of both the languages may be compared and an analysis may be done to further improve the research.

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