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Identifying an Unknown Language *Jatav* in and around Shahjahanpur Area, Uttar Pradesh, India

Mohd Imran Khan, Ph.D.

Abstract

Identification of any unknown language is not an easy work to do. There are many linguistic and extra linguistic features which need to be considered. One should have some knowledge of these features before going into the field to find out a language, especially a new language or for the identification of an unknown language. This study is an attempt to discuss why one should consider an identified language as a variety of any other language already identified or put it

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under the umbrella of one language which is out there. This paper is an attempt to identify a language which was earlier judged as a variety of the Hindi language. Identified unknown language shows its similarities with *Braj Bhasha*, not with Hindi language. Even though both languages come under the same language family, they are different in many ways.

Introduction

The present study is an attempt to identify an unknown and unnamed language which is spoken in and around Shahjahanpur district that is situated in Uttar Pradesh, India. It also tries to name and place it according to the similarities it has with other languages spoken in and around that place, namely, Shahjahanpur.

1. Mother Tongue Name

UNKNOWN (Given name JATAV) but no one claimed that it is spoken in SHAHJAHANPUR and outside it. They called it Hindi or a variety of Hindi. Some of them also called it as a variety of Khadi Boli.

2. Location of the Mother Tongue

District Shahjahanpur is situated in the South East of Rohilkhand Division, Uttar Pradesh (India). It is established in 1813. Before its creation it was a part of District Bareilly. Geographically, it is situated at 27.35 N Latitude and 79.37 E longitude. Adjoining districts of the Shahjahanpur are Lakhimpur Khiri, Hardoi, Farrukhabad, Bareilly, Budaun & Pilibhit. Geographical Area covered is 4575 Sq. Meter. This is an agriculture-based District of Uttar Pradesh. Ramganga, Garrah & Gomti are the main rivers of the district. Kathana, Jhukma & Mensiare are the

attached rivers of Gomti. Garrah is the main river. Khannaut, Suketa and Kai are the attached rivers of Garrah. Flood affects mostly Jalalabad Tehsil. Major crops of the district are Wheat, Gram, Millet & Potato.

Shahjahanpur city is established by Diler Khan and Bahadar Khan, sons of Dariya Khan, who was a soldier in the army of Mugal Emperor JAHANGEER. Both, Diler Khan and Bahadar Khan were dignitaries in the regime of Shahjahan. Pleased with the services of Dilerkhan, Shahjahan gifted 14 villages with the permission to construct a Fort. Diler Khan developed a fort in "Nainar Khera Village" which was situated on the rivers Garrah and Khannaut. He also established 52 types of Pathan's Caste. Today, most of the mohallas are in the name of these castes.

Like Shahjahanpur City, Tilhar was developed by "RAJPUT - TIRLOK CHANDRA". This is the oldest town of the district. The town supplied "BOWS" to the Military. So, this town was called as "TEER KAMAN NAGAR".

Mangal Khan who was a NAZIM of Hafiz Rehmat Ali Khan Nawab Rohil established a Fort in the village "MANSURPUR" near "TILHAR". He and his family members possessed it up to the first freedom struggle of 1857. Later, British Government occupied it and converted it as Tehsil and Police Station.

3. Demography of the Shahjahanpur

As of 2001 India Census, Shahjahanpur had a population of 297,932 and its total area is 4,573 Sq Meters. Males constitute 55% of the population and females 45%. Shahjahanpur has an average literacy rate of 73%, higher than the national average of 59.5%: male literacy is 81%, and female literacy is 63%.

4. Location of the Mother Tongue

The data have been collected from the area of Shahjahanpur district, named Chaudhera, Uttar Pradesh (India).

5. The People and Their Social Life:

The speakers of this language have settled in this area and are known as Jatav of Chaudhera. These Jatavs of Chaudhera have settled in the region for about 7-8 generations. They essentially live on agriculture and have low socio-economic status. The general literacy rate of the community is low, but now more people are gaining education and literacy just because of new government policies for literacy. The people still prefer marriages by way of negotiation within the community although a few cases of inter-community as well as inter religion marriages have been reported which have been socially accepted because of recent development and hike in literacy rates.

6. The Language Use in the Household and in the Outside of the Home Domain

The household language of the speakers is their mother tongue which they have been using for generations. In the extra home domain, i.e., in the bazaar, in group meetings, within the locality and in the place of work they use their mother tongue. But of course in formal communication or when they talk with the educated in the social domain, Hindi is used. Also they try to use some English words due to the globalization of that language.

7. Multi Lingual Situation of the Speech Region

The literate people of the community and the people who frequently come out of their locality in connection with job and business have attained proficiency to

interact in standard Hindi, besides their mother tongue. They have nativized many English words like *office*, *tempo*, *market*, etc.

8. Informants

The field data has been collected from the 90 informants. Out of these 60 are male informants and 30 are female informants.

9. Linguistic Sketch

9.1 Phonemic Inventory of the Language Spoken by Jatavs of Chaudhera

The phonemes of the language spoken by Jatavs of Chaudhera are broadly divided into vowels and consonants.

Vowels

The segmental vowel phonemes are:

I	U
i:	u:
e	o
E	O
ə	
	a:

Front Vowels

In the language spoken by Jatavs of Chaudhera, four front vowels have been identified.

/I/ is a , high, short, front vowel. It occurs in all the three positions as in

/Is/ 'this' /pIta:/ 'father' /sa:dI/
'marriage'

/i:/ is low high long front vowel. It occurs in all the three positions as shown below

/i:T/ 'brick' /ti:n/ 'three' /pi:/ 'drink'

/e/ is mid long front vowel. It occurs in all the three positions. The examples are given below

/ek/ 'one' /tedz/ 'fast' /čhe/ 'six'

/E/ is low mid, long, front vowel. It occurs in all the three positions. Its occurrence in words is shown below

/Esa/ 'like this' /pEsa/ 'money' /hEi/ 'is'

Central Vowel

There is only one central vowel in the language spoken by **Jatavs of Chaudhera** of Shahjahanpur District.

/ə/ is mid low , short ,central vowel . It occurs in all the three positions, however its occurrence in word final position is very rare. The examples are given below

/əb/ 'now' /kəb/ 'when'

Back Vowel

There are five back vowels in the language spoken by Jatavs. The details are given below:

/U/ is a , high, short, back vowel. It occurs mainly in all the three positions as in

/Us / ‘that’

/dUkh/ ‘agony’

/sa:dhU/ ‘saint’

/u: / is low high long back vowel. It occurs in all the three positions as shown below

/u:T/ ‘camel’

/dhu:p/ ‘sun light’

/tu:/ ‘you’

/o/ is mid long back vowel. It occurs in all the three positions. The examples are given below

/or/ ‘towards’

/mor/ ‘peacock’

/do/ ‘give’

/O:/ is low mid, long, back vowel. It occurs in all the three positions. Its occurrence in words is shown below

/O:r/ ‘and’

/IO:Ro/ ‘boy’

/sO:/ ‘hundred’

/a:/ is a low, long back vowel. It occurs in all the three positions. Its occurrence in words is shown below

/a:m/ ‘mango’

/da:m/ ‘money’

/la:/ ‘bring’

The Nasalized Vowel Phonemes

In the language spoken by the Jatvas of Chaudhera all the ten vowels are nasalized

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ã:

Vowel Sequences

The vowel sequence established with the help of the data available is as follows:

As in

ao ,	‘khao’	“eaten”
aI ,	‘aI’	“came ”
oi:,	‘koi:’	“somebody”
Uo,	‘bUo’	“sow”
a:i	‘pa:i’	“got ”
Ua	‘bUa:’	“maid servant”

Consonants

There are 32 consonant phonemes in the language spoken by the Jatavs of Chaudhera. The phoneme /f/ is marginal and therefore it has not been counted. The consonant phonemes have been established with the help of the limited data available. The details of the consonant phonemes are given in the table below:

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	P b ph bh		t d th dh		T D Th Dh	č dz čh dzh	k g kh gh	

Nasal	M			N			N	
Trill				R				
Flap					R Rh			
Fricative				S				H
Approximant		V				J		
Lateral				l				

/p/ is voiceless, unaspirated, bilabial plosive.

/ph/ is voiceless, aspirated, bilabial plosive.

/b/ is voiced, unaspirated, bilabial plosive.

/bh/ is voiced, aspirated, bilabial plosive.

/t/ is voiceless, unaspirated, dental plosive.

/th/ is voiceless, aspirated, dental plosive.

/d/ is voiced, unaspirated, dental plosive.

/dh/ is voiced, aspirated, dental plosive.

/T/ is voiceless, unaspirated, retroflex plosive.

/Th/ is voiceless, aspirated, retroflex plosive.

/D/ is voiced, unaspirated, retroflex plosive.

/Dh/ is voiced, aspirated, retroflex plosive.

/č/ is voiceless, unaspirated, palatal plosive.

/čh/ is voiceless, aspirated, palatal plosive.

/dz/ is voiced, unaspirated, palatal plosive.

/dzh/ is voiced, unaspirated, palatal plosive.

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/k/ is voiceless, unaspirated, velar plosive.
 /kh/ is voiceless, aspirated, velar plosive.
 /g/ is voiced, unaspirated, velar plosive.
 /gh/ is voiced, aspirated, velar plosive.
 /m/ is voiced, bilabial nasal.
 /n/ is voiced, alveolar nasal.
 /N/ is voiced, velar nasal.
 /r/ is voiced, alveolar trill.
 /R/ is voiced, unaspirated, retroflex flap.
 /Rh/ is voiced, aspirated , retroflex flap.
 /s/ is voiceless, alveolar fricative.
 /h/ is voiced, glottal fricative.
 /l/ is voiced, alveolar lateral.
 /v/ is voiced, labio-dental approximant.
 /j/ is voiced, labio-dental approximant.

Consonants Clusters and Geminations

The Consonant clusters established with the help of the data available are:

Consonant Clusters

	<u>As in</u>	
ll,	‘ləllo’	“boy”
lh,	‘dʊlhino’	“bride”
tr,	‘mitr’	“friend”
dm,	‘a:ɖmi’	“man”
Dk,	‘ləɖkni’	“girl”
hn,	‘behni’	“sister”
db,	‘bidbo’	“widow”

hr,	‘məhru:’	“wife”
ndz,	‘pəndzo’	“foot”
nD,	‘ənDo’	“egg”
rj,	‘məčhərjã’	“fish”
Rj,	‘loməRja’	“fox”
rd,	‘mərd’	“man”
pR,	‘pəpRo’	“lungs”
rv,	dərvadzo’	“door”
gj,	‘bəgja’	“garden”
bdz,	‘səbdzi’	“vegetables”
mk,	‘čəmkɪ:lo’	“shining”
tr,	‘čha:tr’	“student”
hl,	‘pəhlo’	“first”
sr,	‘ti:sro’	“third”
lt,	‘pəlTi’	“vomit”
nt,	‘ənt’	“end”
nk,	‘Unke’	“their”
nd,	‘gəndo’	“dirty”

Gemination

tt,	‘Uttər’	“north”
ss,	‘rəssi’	“rope”
DD,	‘həDDi’	“bone”
ččh,	‘əččho’	“good”
čč,	‘kəččo’	“raw”
kkh,	‘dəkkhin’	“south”

9.2 Syllable Structure

A word may consist of one or more syllable. A syllable is characterized as a sequence of phoneme with one peak. Each syllable in the vowel has the peak. A vowel may be preceded or followed by one or more consonants. The syllable is open when the vowel is the final segment and it is closed when final segment is a consonant.

In the language under study we found the following syllabic structure:

Monosyllabic

CVC	ra:khi
VCV	a:gi

Bisyllabic

CVCV	həba
CVCCV	Bidbo
CVCVC	mərəd
VCCV	a:dmi
CVCCV	Murgo

10. Morphology

It is a usual practice in linguistics to divide the grammar into morphology and syntax.

Noun Morphology

The kinds of suffixes which occur with the stem define the class of stem.

Nouns in the language spoken by Jatavs may thus be defined on the basis of the suffixes with which they occur. In the present study they are distinguished by the two-tier numbers (sg. & pl.) and two-tier genders, i.e., Masculine & Feminine.

- i) **Number** The two-tier numbers sg. is the base while plural has suffixed –e in the Masculine and –yã in the Feminine.

<u>Sg.</u>		<u>Pl.</u>	
kUtta	“dog”	kUtte	“dogs”
məčhəri:	“fish”	məčhərjã	“fishes”
gəija	“cows”	gəijã	“cows”
bəkəri	“goat”	bəkərjã	“goats”
əUrətja	“woman”	əUrətjã	“women”
ləURija	“girl”	ləURijã	“girls”
čirəija	“bird”	čirəijã	“birds”

ii) Genders

Genderisation of the nominals is determined by two separate words.

The examples is are given below:

<u>Masculine Feminine</u>			
kutto	“dog”	kUtja	“bitch”
gəija	“cows”	bæl	“bull”
bəkəro	“hegoat”	bəkərja	“shegoat”
a:dmi	“man”	əurətja	“woman”

ləURa	“boy”	ləURija	“girl”
čirəija	“bird”	čirəijã	“birds
dUlho	“bridegroom”	dUlhin	“bride”
səsUr	“father in law”	sa:s	“mother in law”
sa:ro	“brother in law”	sa:ri	“sister in law”

Genderisation of the nominals is determined, either by -o in the Masculine and –I in the feminine or extensively by two separate words.

The examples are given below:

Masculine Feminine

(i) -o		-I	
ghoRo	‘horse’	ghoRI	‘mare’
kutto	‘dog’	kuttI	‘bitch’
chokaro	‘boy’	chokari	‘girl’
sa:ro	‘brother in law’	sa:ri	‘sister in law’

(ii) By two separate words:

Masculine Feminine

‘Bride groom’	dUlho	‘Bride’	dUlhin
‘Father’	pito	‘Mother’	ma:to
‘Husband’	gho:T	‘Wife’	dza:lə
‘Father in law’	səsUr	‘Mother in law’	sa:s

11. Cases

There are five-tier cases - Nom., Acc., Abl., Gen., and Loc.

Nom.- a:dmi ‘man’, aurət ‘women’, pito ‘father’, dhi:r ‘daughter’, ghər ‘house’

Acc.

a:dmi ko ‘to the man’

aurət ke ‘to the women’

pita ko ‘to the father’

lauRI ke ‘to the daughter’

Abl.

a:dmi se ‘from the man’

aurət se ‘from the woman’

lauRI ‘from the daughter’

Gen.

a:dmi ka ‘of the man’

aurət ki ‘of the woman’

Loc.

ghəre me ‘in the house’

12. Pronouns

The pronouns are of three types

- i) Personal pronoun

ii) Demonstrative pronoun

iii) Interrogative pronoun

Of these, the personal pronouns are categorized by three-tier persons (1st, 2nd & 3rd) and two tier numbers (sg. & pl.) and the demonstrative pronouns by remote and proximate-types with two-tier number (sg. & pl.) systems. The Interrogatives are not distinguished in numbers.

12.1 Personal Pronouns

	<u>Sg.</u>		<u>Pl.</u>	
1 st Person	məi	“I”	həm	“we”
2 nd Person	tum	“you”	tum sare	“you”
3 rd Person	ba	“he/she”	be	“they”

12.2 Demonstratives

	Proximate		Remote	
Sg.	je	“this”	be	“that”
Pl.	je	“these”	bo	“those”

12.3 Interrogatives

kaun	“who”
ka:	“what”
ka:je	“why”
kəhã:ko	“where”
ka:se	“how”

13. Articles

The articles are not found in Jatav language just like Urdu and Hindi.

14. Adjectives of Comparison

The adjectives are semantically classified into qualitative and quantitative types. Grammatically, the qualitative have three degrees of comparison as –Nominative, Comparative and Superlative, but in the given language there are only two types

- i) Nominative &
- ii) Superlative

The examples are as follows:

əčhčho	“good”	bəhUt əčhčho	“best”
u:čo:	“high”	bəhut u:čo:	“highest”
bUro	“bad”	bəhUt bUro	“worst”

15. Verbs

The verbs in Jatav are categorical into three types

- i) Auxiliary types
- ii) Finite types
- iii) Non-finite types

Auxiliary types are distinguished by two-numbers Sg. & Pl. In the present, past and future tense, the finite types of three-tier tenses i.e. present, past and future tense and Non-finite types by Infinitive and two-tier particles, namely, present and past participle.

The following are presented as the conjugation patterns of the different types of verbs:

- i) **Auxiliary-Types**

	Present		Past		Future	
	<u>Sg.</u>	<u>Pl.</u>	<u>Sg.</u>	<u>Pl.</u>	<u>Sg.</u>	<u>Pl.</u>
1 st Per	ao	ao	tho	tho	go	ge
2 nd Per	ao	ao	tho	tho	ge	ge
3 rd Per	ao	ao	tho	tho	go	ge

ii) Finite-Types

Those markers used in the conjugation of the Finite-Types are:

Present tense:	1 st 2 nd & 3 rd Sg	-ao
	1 st 2 nd & 3 rd Pl	-ao
Past tense:	1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd Sg	-tho
	1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd Pl.	-tho
Future tense:	1 st & 3 rd Sg.	-go
	2 nd Sg	-ge
	1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd Pl.	-ge

The conjugational system thus consists of root+ tense-person- number (TPN) terminations.

Below are presented the conjugational formations in different tenses.

Present Tense

- ao 1st sg. mæne kha:ao [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-ao] ‘I eat’.
- ao 2nd sg. tum kha:ao [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-ao] ‘you eat’.
- ao 3rd sg. ba kha:ao [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-ao] ‘he eats’.
- ao 1st Pl. høm kha:ao [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-ao] ‘we eat’.
- ao 2nd Pl. tum lo:g kha:ao [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-ao] ‘you eat’.
- ao 3rd Pl. be kha:ao [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-ao] ‘They eat’.

Past Tense

-tho 1st sg. mæne khao tho [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-tho] ‘I ate’.

-tho 2nd sg. tu khao tho [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-tho] ‘you ate’.

-tho 3rd sg. ba khao tho [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-tho] ‘he/she ate’.

-tho 1st Pl. hømne khao tho [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-tho] ‘We ate’.

-tho 2nd Pl. tum lo:g khao tho [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-tho] ‘You ate’

-tho 3rd Pl. be khao tho [√kha “to eat”+TPN marker-tho] ‘They ate’

Future Tense

-go 1st sg. mæ khaõ go [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-go] ‘I shall eat’

-ge 2nd sg. tum khao ge [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-ge] ‘You will eat’

-go 3rd sg. ba khao go [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-go] ‘He will eat’

-ge 1st Pl. høm khã ge [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-ge] ‘We shall eat’

-ge 2nd Pl. tum khao ge [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-ge] ‘We shall eat’

-ge 3rd Pl. be khã ge [kha “to eat”+TPN marker-ge] ‘We shall eat’

16. Moods

Moods of the three- tier:

Indicative Mood: dze ghər bəDDo ‘This house is big.’

Imperative Mood: dze rUpe us ko de do ‘Give these rupees to him.’

Optative Mood: ba ko ghər dza:n do ‘Let her go home.’

17. Non-finite Types

The non-finite type available in the data of Jatav of Chaudhera is Infinitive.

These are as follows:

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Infinitive -no

eg: pino ‘to drink’, khano ‘to eat’, dekhno ‘to see’

18. The Particles

There are two particles - Affirmative and Negative.

18.1 Affirmative Particle

Example: ha maI ghər dza rəha hū ‘Yes I am going home’

18.2 Negative Particle

Example: to kəũ: dza rəha həI ‘why are you going’

19. Syntax

Syntax is the study of sentence which is divided in noun phrase NP and verb phrase VP. The language spoken by Jatav is a verb final language in this language verb normally occur in the final position of a sentence.

(a) Word Order

The word order is subject, object and verb (SOV). Subject occurs in the initial position of the verb, the object follows the subject but precedes the verb.

The syntax structure of Jatav is similar to the syntax structure of **URDU** and **HINDI** word order system, namely, SOV (subject, object and verb).

Example ba banər həi

NP –ba banər

VP - həi

S= NP+VP

S= ba banər + həi

The change in the word order for the stylistic purposes does not affect the grammaticality of the sentence.

ba həi bIlkUl banər

(b) Types of Sentences

There are 3 types of sentences found in the Jatav language.

Simple

- i) Compound
- ii) Complex

i). Simple Sentence

He speaks slowly.

bo dhi:re bolo hE

ii). Compound Sentence

He liked to catch the snake but it ran away.

Ba ko sa:p pəkərno pəsənd həi lekin ba bha:g niklo

iii). Complex Sentence

She is not only a hard worker but also a good manager.

ba mehəinti ke sa:th əčhčho mənədzər bhi həi.

20. Conclusion

Similarity with Braj:

Gloss	Language of Chaudhera	Braj
‘Horse’	ghoRo	ghoRo
‘go’	gəo	gəo
‘Bad’	buro	buro

On the basis of structural and lexical similarities of this language with Braj and vernacular Hindustani, the mother tongue of **the Chaudhera village of SHAHAJANPUR District** seems to be classifiable as a variety of Hindi according to some linguistics scholars but for others it should not be put under the Hindi language because Braj Bhasha is quite different from Hindi. It is a big debatable matter. These languages Braj and Hindi come under the same Indo-Aryan languages family and they almost have the same sentence structure but it does not mean that Braj Bhasha and Hindi are the same languages. If someone claims that they are same languages just on the basis of same sentence structure and a few lexemes which they share, then what about the other Indo-Aryan Family languages which also have or share the same sentence structure.

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