

A Phonological and Historical Study of “Awadhi” as a Dialect of “Hindi”

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Abstract—As a dialect of Eastern Hindi, “Awadhi” is very popular language of Uttar- Pradesh. Uttar- Pradesh means Awadh region that is famous for Awadhis. Various types of culture, traditions, creed, fashion, languages, and food make a beautiful India. Being the country of different types of people and languages, it is the greatness of this country that there has not ever occurred any kind of communication breakdown. Indian source of linguistics come from the time of *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. “Sanskrit” is known as the oldest language in India. But in Indian Constitution, “Tamil” is called as the classical language of India and oldest in the list of official languages. There were other scripts also as “Brāhmi script”, “Kharosthi script”, and “Indus Valley script” but with the passage of time all vanished. The present paper is a research on the historical background of “Awadhi”, its origin and the phonological study of the prosodic features of “Awadhi”.

Keywords: Brāhmi Script, Kharosthi Script, Indus Valley Script, Awadhi.

The Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution lists the twenty-two official languages by the Article 344(1) and 351. Apart from this list, there are many other regional languages and dialects in India. After Papua New Guinea (839), India (780) has the world’s second highest number of languages. Awadhi is coined as “Devanagari” or “Eastern Hindi” but the original “Awadhi” is not Hindi. People of nowadays do not speak original “Awadhi”. There are many reasons behind this fact. As the global phenomena, impact of Global English, impact of global culture of fashion, food and etiquette has diminished the originality of this dialect.

The origin of the term “Dialect” comes to be known from the Latin word “Dialectus” and from the Ancient Greek word “Diálekto”. “Dialect” is used in two distinct ways. One usage refers to a variety of a language that is a characteristic of a particular group of the language’s speakers. The other usage of the term is often deployed in the colloquial settings refers to a language that is socially subordinated to a regional or national standard language but genetically not actually.

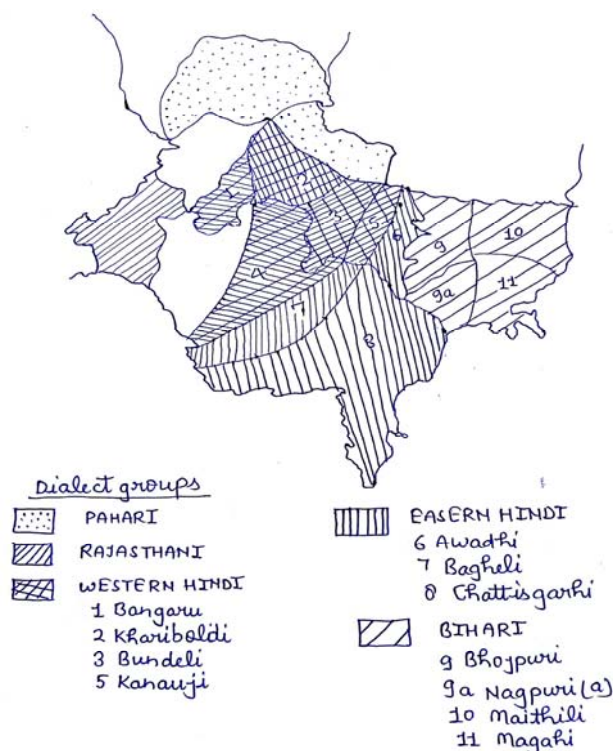
The origin of “Awadhi” comes to be known from ‘Indo-Aryan Language family’. Indo-Aryan languages are spoken in India on a very large scale. Even there are many other families as

‘Tai-Kadai’(Southern China, Northeast India and Southeast Asia), ‘Sino-Tibetan’(East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia), ‘Austroasiatic’(Mainland Southeast Asia, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and southern border of China) and so on. But 75% Indian population speak Indo-Aryan languages. According to *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, “Indo-Aryan speakers form about one-half of all Indo-European speakers and more than half of all Indo-European Languages”.

For distinguishing the ethics of Awadhi, it is necessary to deal with the phonemes and fricatives on the basic features of prosodic.

It is acknowledged through the relevant sources that Awadhi is spoken in Awadh and Terai belt of Nepal. Great poet Tulsidas has also mentioned the name of Awadh in his writings. In the British historical texts, “Awadh” is known as “United Provinces of Agra and Oudh” which is popular as modern Indian state of “Uttar-Pradesh” nowadays. The inhabitants of Awadh are called as ‘Awadhis’, who actually cover the area of Uttar-Pradesh and lowland region in southern Nepal and northern India. “Oudh” must be described at least in three denoted names: “Purbi”, “Kosali” and “Baiswara”. “Purbi” was coined in the sense of Eastern sometimes for “Awadhi” and sometimes for “Bhojapuri”. But it is appropriate to coin “Awadhi” as “Eastern Hindi” for studying comparatively with “Western Hindi”. George Abraham Grierson, who commissioned the **Linguistic Survey of India (LSI)** in 1894, had classified “Awadhi” as “Eastern Hindi”. Awadhi is not only spoken in Hardoi, Kheri, Faizabad but also in Allahabad, Jaunpur, Mirzapur, Fatehpur, Agra and Pratapgarh. “Kosali” described the impact of Kosal kingdom which is unavailable today in the form of relevant sources.

“Baiswara” covers restricted area of “Awadhi”, where “Awadhi” is not as much prevalent as “Baiswara”. The districts as: Unnao, Rae Bareilly, Fatehpur, Lucknow are the portions comprised by “Baiswara”. A figure describing the area of “Awadhi”



Ramcharitamanas (1575 A.D.) and *Hanuman Chalisa* (1575) by Tulsidas, *Padmavat* (1540 A.D.) by Malik Mohammad Jaisi and *Bijak* (1757 A.D.) by Kabir Das are the manuscripts written in “Awadhi” linguistic. Great Sufi poet Malik Mohammad Jaisi has described the separation of lover and beloved through the twelve month description of seasons. The flavour of sweet “Awadhi”, which is knitted in words in the long epic poem *Padmavat*, is inexplicable in words. Any inhabitant of Awadh subdues with heart just listening few lines of *Padmavat*. The prosodic texture of this epic pours the distinguishable phonemes in the ears of readers:

“Saras Jori Kaun Hari , Mari Viyadha Leenh?”

Jhuri Jhuri Peenjar Haun Bhe , Virah Kal Mohin Deenh.”
(Nagamati Viyog Khand, Lines- 8-9, *Padmavat*)

Above lines are very effective extract to describe the relevancy of “Awadhi”. Specially, *Padmavat* of Malik Mohammad Jaisi is more relevant than *Ramcharitamanas* and *Hanumanchalisa*. Because being a Mohammeden , it will not be easy to write an epic in Hindustani dialect and to justify with the phonemes devoid of Sanskrit, especially when “Sanskrit” was very flourished language in Indian society same as “Awadhi”. Still, it cannot be avoided, that there was none beside the uniqueness of Tulsidas. Now, it is impossible to describe the certain ways and reasons of the endangered condition of “Awadhi” but the above literary, holistic manuscripts are enough to utter that at that time, this dialect had pervaded on the vast area of Awadh with firmness.

Comparatively, same thing occurred with the Western dialects. The Latin and French languages of the Western countries are now studied as dialectal languages. These Dialectal Languages are known today as “Old English” or “Anglo-Saxon”. Modern languages as “German”, “Dutch”, “Frisian” and “English” are the developed languages from “Anglo-Saxon”. Even the word ‘England’ probably owes its origin from “Anglo-Saxon”, which is called as “English”. It is also believed that England is originated form of “Angla-land” which was associated with their land Scandinavia. It makes us believed also that Anglo-Saxons being a sea-farming tribes were fond of using the “angle” which led them to name their new land as “Anglo-land” or later “England”.

As there was no any declared strict and definite form of language to write something, it was a kind of freedom in literature to choose and write according to own preference to select any kind of language or dialect. And it was considered honourable to write in dialectal language as like as; it was honour of wisdom to write in “Latin” and “French” during the “Age of Chaucer”. Geoffrey Chaucer and John Milton is widely considered the greatest English poets of the Middle ages, who wrote in “Old English” at that time when Modern English had flourished in the revised, scrutinized and modernized form in the society at its acme.

Thus, having deep study of any dialect, synchronic study of the variations is very important based on diachronic, phonemes and morphology. Where one side “Awadhi” is bounded by “Chhattisgarhi”, which is also another form of “Eastern Hindi” but it is different from “Awadhi”. On the north side, the “Awadhi” is bounded by the Nepal territory. But due to the climatic effect and transition of population from one place to another, Nepalese do not come as much closer as they must be with the prosodic feature of “Awadhi”. While the outsider, outside the Awadh region, get easily connected with “Awadhi” even spending a short span of time in Awadh region. The girls forget their own native dialect after getting married and settled in the Awadh region. It is not as easier with the other dialects as “Bhojapuri” or “Baisawara” etc. as with the “Awadhi”. Comparatively, the difference lies in the sound of languages. “Bhojapuri” seems a language of reprimand and harsh in fricatives while “Awadhi” has an historical relevance, sweetness of culture and softness of literature. Speakers easily feel a kind of soft attachment with the “Awadhi”. The following lines, composed by great poet Tulsidas, are enough to define the softness of “Awadhi”:

“Ek Sumanprad Ek Sumanfal Ek Falae Kewal Lagahin,

Ek Kahahin Kahahin Ap Ek Karahin Kahat Na Bagahin.”(Lankakanda-1, *Ramacharitamanas*)

Saint Kabir Das has also written in Awadhi language. Saint Kabir Das was a social reformer. Belonging to Hindu-Muslim both religions, he was neither Hindu nor Muslim. He believed and showed the path of humanity to the common people. He was very anxious with the bad attitude of society.

Untouchability, discrimination on the basis of upper and lower, on the basis of religion were prevalent in the society. Some provocative lines are extracted here written in Awadhi:

“Kabira Garab Na Keejiye, Kabhu Na Hasiye Koe,

Ajahu Naw Samudra Mein, Na Jane Ka Hoe.”

(KabirKeDohe)

Baburam Saksena has described the area of Awadhi. He describes,

“On the East, “Awadhī” is bounded by “Bhojapuri”. The boundary of the district of Gonda corresponds with the Eastern boundary of the language itself. Then, we move towards the East along the river Ghāghrā right up to Tāndā. A straight line from Tāndā to Jaunpur and thence to Mirzapur will correctly represent the south-eastern boundary of “Awadhī”. Pure Awadhī is spoken right up to a few miles to the west of Mirzapur town. From there the boundary of the Allahabad district on the south-east and the boundary line of the Rewa territory to the east, from the eastern limits of Awadhī. Only in the south-eastern triangle of Mirzapur District (the Sōn-pār tract, see *Linguistic Survey of India*, pp.130-31), is Awadhī spoken more or less mixed up with Bhōjpuri. Further south to Sōnpāri one finds Awadhī bounded by the Surgujā dialect of Chatīsgarhī.” (Page no.5, Lines 7-21, *Evolution of Awadhī*)

In the west, Baburam Saksena points out,

“If we draw a straight line from Gōlā to Nērī (Sītāpur district), it will correctly divide Kanauji from Awadhī. From Nērī, the river Gomati forms the south-western boundary of Awadhī right up to the point where it divides the Hardōi district from Lucknow. From there a line may be drawn to the south-west roughly along the boundary line of the districts of Hardōi and Lucknow, and Unao up to the point where the district of Unao ends. From here, the district of Cawnpore belongs to Western Hindi and the districts of Unao, Fatehpur and Allahabad belong to Awadhī.” (Page no.2, Lines 21-32, *Evolution of Awadhī*).

Thus, in the south, Awadhi is bounded by “Chatisgarhi”, another form of Eastern Hindi and in the north, Awadhi is bounded by the territory of Nepal government.

Apart from the regional criteria of Awadhi, a comparative study of the phonetics and phonology of a language is also very useful to collect the relevant data about the historical sound- changes of a language or dialect. The methodology, that can be applied to explore the diachronic effect of a language, is defined in many types of comparison. Tones and word accents, auxiliary verbs, Morphological inflections and their variations, basic consonant inventory, basic vowel inventory, diphthong formation, allophonic variation, aspiration of consonants, tense markings, intonation at the phrasal level and gerund/participle/infinitive formations are some significant methodologies for collecting the data of

diachronic effect on linguistic. But “Awadhi” shows number of allophonic free variations for the following vowels:

/e:/, o:/ can shorten as the following consonant lengthens. e.g./ek: au/ ~ /e: kau /.

/e:/, o:/ are in free variation with /ja:/, wa:/ e.g., /dja: khau/ ~ /de: khau /.

Thus, according to Diphthong inventory, Awadhi contains the diphthongs as /əi/ (əe), /əu/ (əo), /ai/ (ae), /iʊ/ /ui/ , /eo/, /ai/, /au/. And the consonant inventory variations in Awadhi, /w/ is often replaced by /b/.

According to Baburam Saksena, “The word has no phonetic definition; it is only a morphological identity.”

For studying the linguistics, no advanced technology has developed still today. But in 2006, Appen Technologies used “Speech Corpus Method” to study the morphology of a language diachronically. “Speech Corpus method” of language study is based on the database collection through telephone conversations. The speech data is transcribed both in “Devanagari” and Roman scripts because both the languages relate with the linguistics synchronically and diachronically. After experimenting over the definite speakers of males and females from the fixed number of mobiles and landlines, the consequence which came through the analysis of recorded speech were surprising but not shocking. A number of speakers were actually using the standard form of Hindi. It was not only relevant with “Awadhi” but with all forms of dialect as “Bagheli”, “Bhojapuri”, “Bundeli”, “Haryanavi”, “Kanauji” etc.

In 1967, *Computational Analysis of Present-Day American English* of Henry Kučera and W. Nelson Francis was published. It was the work of the analysis of “Brown Corpus”, a compiled selection of American English, words drawn from a wide variety of sources. Kučera and Francis analysed it and compiled a book combining elements of linguistics, language teaching, psychology, statistics, and sociology. ‘Corpora’ the word is related to Corpus. “Corpus Linguistic” is a study of language, which is done by the “Corpora” (samples) of ‘the real world text’.

Apart from the linguistic method of dialect, Baburam Saksena has given the concept of ‘Assimilation’ in *Evolution of Awadhi*. When one word considerably affects the form of another is called ‘Assimilation’. According to him the enclitic affects the preceding word in way of losing its strength in some cases. But ‘Assimilation’ in Awadhi is harmful as linguistic. The speakers, before going to other word to speak, become attentive to take rest just after the first one. Thus, gradually it influenced phonemes of Awadhi with the passage of time.

Thus, “Hybridization” of culture and language and Globalization has influenced Indian dialects on a large scale. During the Indian colonization, it is found in depth because of the impact of the global language, a language that we know as

English Language in Modern time. Not only Eastern countries languages affected but the Western countries languages also by the Globalization and Hybridization. Effective and serious research study is necessary for exploring the original dialect. Indian Constitution has given preference to twenty two official languages which directs that the Dialectical linguistics are important part of vague and close communication between one ethnic to another, specially for enhancing the erased historical linguistic values.

India is a country of “Multilingualism”, which is its greatness. “Multilingualism” in India, not only presents the unique identity of Indian culture and tradition but it also represents the integrity in diversity. “Multilingualism” is also the ascension of Indian democracy. D. P. Pattanayak says,

“If democracy is to survive we need to give space to the language of every child and it should be the heart of language planning in our country.”

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