Number and Gender in Kishtwari: A Morphological Study

Sameer Ahmad Kuchay

Department of Linguistics, University of Kashmir, Srinagar—190006 India
Corresponding author: sameerkuchay@gmail.com

Abstract: Although linguistic study of Kashmiri began in the 19th century, no linguistically oriented investigation has been undertaken to study its dialects, particularly Kishtwari. Although Grierson regards it as the only true dialect of Kashmiri, the dialect is still unexplored vis-a-vis modern descriptive framework. The dialect shows significant variations from standard Kashmiri in phonology, morphology and lexicon but linguistic research on these aspects of the dialect is inadequate and fragmentary. In this backdrop the present paper aims to provide a description of the number and gender morphology of Kishtwari.

Keywords: Number; Gender; Kishtwari; Morphological Study

Introduction

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has a rich linguistic diversity with languages like Kashmiri, Dogri, Ladakhi, Punjabi, Balti, Shina, etc., contributing to the linguistic composition of the state. Kashmiri language is primarily spoken in the valley of Kashmir and the neighbouring areas like Kishtwar, Doda, Ramban, etc. The language exhibits regional as well as social variation. The regional dialects of Kashmiri can be broadly classified into two groups: (i). those dialects which are spoken in the valley of Kashmir, and (ii). those which are spoken in the regions outside the valley of Kashmir. Kistwari and Poguli are the two main dialects spoken outside the valley of Kashmir.

Kishtwari is spoken in the valley of Kishtwar lying to the southeast of the valley of Kashmir on upper Chinab. It is bordered on the south by Bhaderwahi, on the west by Chibbali and Punchi and on the east by Tibetan speaking region of Zanskar (Koul, 2005:2). Kishtwari is one of the important regional dialects of Kashmiri. According to Grierson (1919:233), it is the only true dialect of Kashmiri, which shares some features of standard Kashmiri but retains archaic features which have disappeared from the latter.

Methodology

For the present work, intensive fieldwork was carried out to collect data from various areas of Kishtwar. A questionnaire was developed consisting of words and sentences focused on the nouns of Kishtwari. The data was elicited from the informants by direct questioning. The corpus was developed by recording the responses of the native speakers of different age groups and varied educational backgrounds. The researcher made room recordings of the data by using highly sophisticated voice-recorders.

The data was then transcribed and analysed using the morphological methodology of language analysis.

Noun Morphology

Based on the morphological analysis, a brief sketch of the noun morphology of Kishtwari is provided in the following lines which involve the description of number, gender and case of Kishtwari.

Number

Kishtwari has a two-tier number system, i.e., singular and plural. Plurals are formed from singular stems by suffixation, vowel change and palatalisation. A number of forms remain same both in singular and plural. Kishtwari employs different rules for plural formation of masculine and feminine nouns.

The various rules that govern the change of number in Kishtwari are described below:

Formation of Feminine Plurals

A central high short vowel [ɨ] is added to the CVC base structure to obtain its feminine plural form.

Examples

tɔs (sg) → tɔsɨ (pl)	'wall'	
ra:t (sg) → ra:tɨ (pl)	'night'	
mačh (sg) → mačhɨ (pl)	'house fly'	
ga:v (sg) → ga:vɨ (pl)	'cow'	
še:R (sg) → še:Rɨ (pl)	'ladder'	

A central low long vowel [a:] is added to the CVC base structure as a plural marker.

Examples

me:š (sg) → me:ša: (pl)	'buffalo'
ga:D (sg) → ga:Da: (pl)	'fish'
zãg (sg) → zãga: (pl)	'leg'
nas (sg) → nasa: (pl)	'nose'
zev (sg) → zeva: (pl)	'tongue'
raz (sg) → raza: (pl)	'rope'

In the CVC base structures if the vowel is high, [e] is added to the stem and the vowel is lowered. Lowering of vowel takes place as per the following pattern.

$$i \rightarrow e$$
$$u \rightarrow ɔ$$
$$ə \rightarrow a$$

Examples

tshi:lʲ (sg) → tshe:le (pl)   'goat'
ki:R (sg)→ ke:Re(pl)   'watch'
khu:tʲ (sg)→khɔ:te(pl)   'she ass'
mu:lʲ (sg)→mɔle (pl)   'raddish'
lu:Rʲ (sg)→lo:Re(pl)   'stick'
tə:Rʲ (sg)→ta:Re (pl)   'beard'
gərʲ (sg) →gare(pl)   'cocunut'

In the CVCVC structure, the first vowel is lowered and the penultimate vowel is dropped and a plural marking suffix [e] is added to it.

Examples

kukiR (sg)→ kɔkRe (pl)   'hen'
mə:rinʲ (sg)→ma:rne (pl)   'bride'
tshipiR (sg)→tshepRe (pl) 'basket'
gəgiR (sg)→gagRe(pl)   'mice'

A front mid short vowel [e] is added to the CVCVC structure as a plural marking suffix without changing the rest of the sequence.

Examples

və:til (sg)→və:tile (pl)   'cobbler'
bidilʲ (sg)→bidile (pl)   'ant'
kə̃:kij (sg)→ kə̃:kije (pl)   'lizard'
pipilʲ(sg)→pipile (pl)   'chilly'
gabizʲ(sg)→ gabize (pl)   'ewe'

 Formation of Masculine Plurals

In the CVC base structure the vowels [o] and [a] are changed to [ə] and the final consonant is palatalised to obtain the plural form.

Examples

co:k (sg)→cə:kʲ (pl)   'knife'
ma:R (sg)→mə:Rʲ (pl)   'log of wood'
no:R (sg)→nə:Rʲ (pl)   'big pipe'
mo:l (sg)→mə:lʲ (pl)   'father'
tsok (sg)→tsəkʲ (pl)   'bitter'

Final consonant of the CVC structure is palatalised without changing the rest of the sequence.

Examples

kul (sg) → kulʲ (pl)   'tree'
chu:R (sg)→ chu:Rʲ (pl)   'walnut'
tsũ:Th (sg)→ tsũ:Thʲ (pl)   'apple'
kuR (sg)→kuRʲ (pl)   'horse'
koTh(sg)→koThʲ (pl)   'knee'

The final consonant of the CVCVC structure is palatalised for pluralisation. The rest of the sequence remains unchanged.

Examples

tseDul(sg)→tseDulʲ (pl)   'he goat'
biju:R(sg)→biju:Rʲ (pl)   'insect'

A central high short vowel [ɨ] is added to the CCVC base structure as a plural marking affix.

Examples

bro:R (sg)→bro:Rɨ (pl)   'he cat'

The penultimate vowel [u] of CVCVC structure changes to [ɨ] and the final consonant is palatalised.

Examples

gə:muR (sg)→gə:mɨRʲ (pl) 'male sparrow'
kã:dur(sg)→kã:dɨrʲ (pl)   'baker'
gabuD (sg)→gabɨDʲ (pl)   'ram'
bɔkut   (sg)→bɔkɨtʲ(pl)   'boy'

A lot of masculine nouns have the same form in the plural also.

Examples

ma:rə:nʲ (sg/pl)   'bridegroom'
bra:g (sg/pl)   'lion'
tez (sg/pl)   'deer'
šə:lʲ (sg/pl)   'fox'
gɔgal (sg/pl)   'turnip'
ka:v(sg/pl)   'crow'
zami:ndu:z(sg/pl)   'earthworm'

 Gender

Nouns in Kishtwari are divided into two classes on the basis of the gender, i.e., masculine and feminine. Animate objects follow the natural gender, males being masculine and females being feminine. While as the gender of in-animate words is recognized by various word endings. The main gender forming processes in Kishtawari are suffixation, vowel change and suppletion.

 Suffixation

Below are the various suffixes/ markers which are added to the stems of a particular gender.

 Masculine Forming Suffixes

-da:r   karɨz-da:r   'borrower'
         duka:n-da:r   'shopkeeper'
         tha:n-da:r   'inspector'
         The:ke:-da:r   'contractor'
-vo:l   a:nca:r-vo:l   'pickle seller'
         kudʲ-vo:l'horse owner'
         maka:n-vo:l   'house owner'
         re:di-vo:l   'cart puller'

 Feminine Forming Suffixes

-sĩ: kha:r   kha:r -sĩ:'blacksmith's wife'
         tob   tob -sĩ: 'washerwoman'
         pi:r pi:r- sĩ: 'muslim priest's wife'

-ə:nʲ   pənDith pəndith-ə:nʲ
         'pandit woman'
                    DakTar DakTar- ə:nʲ
                    'lady doctor'
                    mastar   mastar- ə:nʲ
                    'lady teacher'
                    gujur   gujur ə:nʲ
                    'gujar woman'

From the above examples it is clear that in Kishtwari, masculine forms (stems) are taken as base and feminine forms are derived from them. Besides suffixation the various phenomenon that govern the change of gender in Kishtwari are discussed below:

Vowel Change

In the CCVC structure, the vowel is raised and the final consonant is palatalized.

Examples

kra:l   'potter'
krə:lʲ   'potter's wife'
bro:R   'he cat'
brə:Rʲ   'she cat'

 Suppletion

Suppletion is the replacement of one stem with another, resulting in an allomorph of a morpheme which has no phonological similarity to the other allomorphs.

Examples

tsi:Rʲ   'male sparrow'   gə:muR 'sparrow'
dã:d   'bull'   ga:v   'cow'
bɔkut   'boy'   ku:Rʲ   'girl'
mo:n   'man'   zana:n   'woman'

References

1. Allen, N. *Morphological Investigation.* Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press, 1978.
2. Aseer, Wali M. *Focus on Jammu and Kashmir.* Jammu: Crescent publications, 2006.
3. Bauer, L. *Introducing Linguistic Morphology.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2003.
4. Bhat, Roopkrishen. *A Descriptive Study of Kashmiri.* Delhi: Amar Prakashan, 1987.
5. Blake, Barry J. *Case.* Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press, 2001.
6. Chambers, J. and P. Trudgill. *Dialectology.* Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press, 1998.
7. Corbett, G. *Gender.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
8. Corbett, G. *Number.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
9. Dhar, Nazir A. *A Sociolinguistic Study of Kamraz Dialect of Kashmiri.* Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Poona (unpublished), 1984.
10. Grierson, G. A. *Linguistic Survey of India.* Vol. VIII, Part-II. Delhi. Low Price Publications, 1919.
11. Koul, Maharaj K. *A Sociolinguistic Study of Kashmiri.* Patiala: Indian Institute of Language Studies, 1986.
12. Koul, Omkar N. and Kashi Wali. *Modern Kashmiri Grammar.* New Delhi: Indian Institute Of Language Studies Delhi, 2009.

10/25/2016