

A Short Note on the Darāg Dialect of Kalkot in Dir Kohistan

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Introduction

Geographically Pakistan is situated on one of the main routes running between the East and West and has been a gateway to South Asia for all kinds of influences. Mass migration of invading armies, traders, merchants and missionaries resulted in settlement of many ethnic groups in due passage of time. This is why today people in various parts of the country speak different languages and, due to this fact, Pakistan remained the cradle of different languages and dialects.

The languages spoken in Pakistan can be divided into two main groups: Indo-Aryan and Iranian, both related to the Indo-European language family.

The Indo-Europeans or Aryans, as they are generally called, migrated from Asia Minor about 2500 to 2000 BC because of extreme pressure exerted by tribes moving into Asia Minor from the plains of Asia (Hughes, 1962: 83). Literary evidence shows that after their migration to Persia, these tribes once again split into two groups, Indo-Aryan and Indo-Iranian. In about 1500 BC one of them migrated to South Asia and there it developed into the "Indo-Aryan" group of languages, as gleaned from the Vedic literature (Huges, 1962: 84).

The languages spoken in northern Pakistan are classed together as "Dārdic Languages" and, according to Grierson, this group developed independently after split from Persia before coming of the Indo-Aryan group (Grierson, n.d. 7).

The word Dārd, introduced from outside in the 19th century and hardly used by the local population, primarily describes a geographical area—the mountain tract of northern Pakistan once inhabited by the "Aryans" (Grierson: 1). The Dārdic Group consists of different languages: Indus Kohistāni, Torwāli (spoken in Chail, Swāt Kohistān), Kashmirī, Pashāi, Kalsāhā, Ashkuṇḍ, Wāi, Wāsi-Veri, Bashgāli, Gwār Bati, Gārwi, etc.

Kalkot, a village of high mountains and dense forests, is situated in the Dīr Kohistān about 75 km northeast of Dīr town, in the North-West Frontier Province. The Dīr Kohistān is bounded in the north by District Chitral, in the east by District Swat, in the south and west respectively by Lower Dīr and Chitral Districts. Kalkot, Pathrāk, Biārḥ, Barikot, Thal, Lāmuthai and Komrāt are the villages of Dīr Kohistān. Although the village Pathrāk marks the actual boundary of the Dīr Kohistān, Shringal is the closest town past Dīr where all necessary facilities and provision of life are provided. Close contacts between Kālām, Swat Kohistān, and Dīr ensured by various passes in the mountains, are recorded since remote past.

The Kohistāni, meaning mountainous, people of Dīr live in the northern part of the district, i.e., in the upper reaches of the Valley of Panjkorā, referred to Kohistān river as well by the locals. The Indus, Swat and Dīr Kohistāni languages have different dialects. In the Dīr Kohistāni two dialects "Darāg" and "Bishor" are spoken in the Kalkot village. Of these Darāg is older and more common. An outline of phonological study this dialect is given as follows:

A. PHONETICS REALIZATION RULE

All voiced consonants are more or less devoiced after the glottal stop. This is indicated by a circle below the consonants, for instance [r̥].

i. Consonants Phonemes of Darāg

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Retro-flex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Glottal plosives								
Aspirated voiceless	ph		th			kh		ʔ
Aspirated voiced						gh		
Voiceless	p		t			k	q	
Voiced	b		d ḍ	ḍ		g	G	
Nasal	m		n ṅ	ṅ		ŋ	N	
Fricatives								
Voiceless		f	s	ʃ	ʃ	x		h ɦ
Voiced			z			ɣ		
Approximants								
Lateral			ɸ			j ɰ		
Flaps			r ɽ	ɽ				
Glides		v						
Affricates								
Aspirated								
Voiceless					tʃ			
Voiced					dʒ			

The above chart of the consonants shows that there are eight positions of articulations. The consonants of the bilabial column are articulated with both lips, those of the labiodental column with lower lip and upper front teeth. Those of the alveolar column are articulated with the tip of the tongue at the alveoli, those of the retroflex column with the tip of the tongue at the hard palate. Those of the palatal column involve closeness between the back of the tongue and the hard palate, and those of the velar column closeness between the back of the tongue and the soft palate. The uvular stop is articulated with a closure at the uvular and the glottal consonants involve a stricture in the glottis.

With regard to the types of articulation the consonants are divided into five groups. Oral consonants are articulated with a raised velum, and nasal consonants with a lowered velum. Stops (inclusive the nasal consonants) are articulated with a complete closure somewhere in the articulatory tract, and affricates with a initial closure and a subsequent release of the closure. The fricatives are pronounced with a strong stricture somewhere in the articulatory tract, thereby creating loud turbulence. Finally, the approximants are articulated with little stricture.

B. COMMENTS ON SOME CONSONANTS

The overall picture is that of the sound system of a modern Indo-Aryan language. However there are several consonants which the Darāg language only shares with various other Dārdic languages. For instance, the retroflex [ʃ] and the voiceless lateral fricative. The consonants [q,x,ɣ] are usually limited to borrowings from Pushto, Persian and Arabic. The consonant [z] appears in loan words from Urdu and Pushto. Such as [zan^æɾ] 'animal', [ba:ʔz] 'eagle', [z^ŋgali go] 'yak', [z^ŋgali sandaʔ] 'rhinoceros', etc. The approximant retroflex [ɽ] is also found in the loan words from Pushto, e.g., [tarkāɽ] 'carpenter', [r^bɽiz] 'elastic', etc., while its other variant [ɽ] after glottal stop is found very rarely in the dialect. Aspiration is found only with voiceless stops. In this regard the Darāg dialect resembles other Dārdic languages and dialects like Shiṅa and Punjabi. However,

it does not have aspirated affricates. An original [f] is frequently pronounced as [p] for example [pikar] 'thought' (Arabic, fikr). This is due to an influence from Pushto, because in Kohistāni dialects further in the east an original [f] is typically pronounced as [ph].

i. Stops: Minimal Pairs and Distribution:

[bʌn]	'joint'	vs	[kʌn]	'ear'	vs	[dʌn]	'tooth'
[pos]	'pus'	vs	[dos]	'day'			
[pʰʌp]	'lung'	vs	[pʰæp]	'tube'			
[kʰor]	'left handed person'	vs	[kʰu:r]	'leg'			

	Initial		Final		Medial	
/b/	[bʌn]	'joint'	[dzib]	'tongue'	[sʌbzi]	'vegetable'
/k/	[kʌn]	'ear'	[ʃʌlʌk]	'grasshopper'	[ʃʌka:l]	'skeleton'
/d/	[dʌn]	'tooth'	[odzud]	'body'	[mædaʔ]	'stomach'
/p/	[pos]	'pus'	[kopæʔr]	'skull'	[tʃala:p]	'turban'
/kh/	[kʰu:r]	'leg'	[ʃukʰ]	'dry up'	[tʃu:kʰir]	'sparrow'

Note: /ph/ occurs in the dialect very rarely. While /b/ is found mostly in the loan words from Urdu and Pushto, where it is found as a word final. For example [ʏʌrib] 'poor' and [nʌrob] 'thin' etc.

ii. Labiodentals

The consonant phoneme [f] only appears in the words borrowed from Urdu and Pushto, like: [fikar] 'thought' or [itefa:q] 'accord' etc. Beside this [v] also occurs mostly in loan words from Urdu and Pushto. Such as [vadʌ] 'marriage', [zanʌver] 'animal', [sva:l dʒva:b] 'message' etc. As said above, that some time the phoneme [f] is also replaced by the phoneme [p].

iii. Alveolar Consonants

For plosive voiceless [tʰ] aspirate is noticed. The [z] sound is found mostly in the loan words from Pushto and Urdu. Such as: [zva:ʔn] 'young', [mazdu:r] 'worker', [zʌrgær] 'goldsmith', [zimi:da:r] 'farmer' [zanʌver] 'animal' etc.

The following examples showing the alveolar phoneme contrasting.

[dʌr]	'door'	[dʌn]	'tooth'
[ʏʌm]	'sorrow'	[sam]	'flat'
[dos]	'day'	[to:s]	'head'
[ba:ʔz]	'eagle'	[ba:ʔl]	'hair'

The following distribution shows the Darāg alveolar phonemes within the words.

/l/	[ba:ʔl]	'hair'	[bʌlozi:]	'disagreement'	[loz]	'agreement'
/d/	[dʌr]	'door'	[dæd]	'grandmother'	[mʌlda:r]	'rich'
/t/	[to:s]	'head'	[qati:l]	'murder'	[ni:si:at]	'advice'
/s/	[sam]	'flat'	[osta:z]	'teacher'	[ba:s]	'arguments'
/z/	[ba:ʔz]	'eagle'	[mazdu:r]	'worker'	[zʌrgær]	'goldsmith'

iv. Retroflex

The phonemes [t, d, ʈ, ɖ, ʒ, ɟ] are the retroflex. The sound [ʈ] and [ɖ] are mostly used in loan words from Urdu and Pushto. Such examples are: [kela:ʈi] 'player', [gavandʱi] 'neighbor', [tarka:ʈ] 'carpenter', [rʌbʈiz] 'elastic', [du:b] 'deep' etc.

Distribution of retroflex phoneme contrasting.

[ʂor]	'sixteen'	[tʃor]	'four'
[ɖa:r]	'belly'	[ɖa:g]	'waist'
[laʈ]	'partial'	[loʈ]	'load'
[koʈ]	'cut'	[kom]	'who'

The following chart showing the Darāg retroflex distribution with in the words.

/ʂ/	[ʂor]	'sixteen'	[mu: ʂ]	'mouse'	[mu: ʂær]	'shrew'
/ɖ/	[ɖa:r]	'belly'	[aɖ]	'bone'	[sandʱaʔ]	'buffalo bull'
/ʈ/	[laʈ]	'partial'	[rʌbʈiz]	'elastic'	—	

However the phoneme [ʈ] does not occur as a word initial in the dialect.

/ʈ/	[koʈ]	'cut'	[gaʈa]	'win'	[ʈʌr ʈʌr]	'rattle'
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While [ʈ] and [ɟ] have no pairs so far.

v. Palatal

[ʃ, ʒ, j, tʃ, dʒ] are the palatal phonemes attested in the dialect. The following example shows the palatal contrasting.

[tʃa: tʃ]	'fine'	[tʃa:m]	'iris'
[asu:n]	'tear'	[aʃu:n]	'hail'
[dʒa:ʔl]	'yesterday'	[ba:ʔl]	'hair'

The following example showing the Darāg palatal phonemes distribution within the words.

/tʃ/	[tʃa: tʃ]	'fine'	[botʃ]	'female genital organ'	[ketʃa:l]	'armpit'
/ʃ/	[aʃu:n]	'hail'	[ʃʌka:l]	'skeleton'	[mi:ʔ ʃ]	'man'
/dʒ/	[dʒa:ʔl]	'yesterday'	[a: dʒ]	'today'	[ʃʌndʒü:]	'bedbug'
/j/	[pija:z]	'onion'	[ja:ʔr]	'friend'	—	

However the phoneme /j/ is not attested as a word final.

vi. Velar

The velar phonemes [kh, gh, k, g, ŋ, x, ɣ] are attested in the dialect. Aspiration [kh, gh] is also noticed. The sound [ɣ] is found almost in loan words from Pushto such as [naɣʌrʌz] 'selfishness', [ɣʌm] 'sorrow', [ɣʌri:b] 'poor', [da:ɣI] 'spotted' etc. The following example presents the velar phonemes.

[khu:r]	'leg'	[ku:r]	'foot'
[gær]	'steed'	[gor]	'horse'
[aŋga:r]	'fire'	[aŋgir]	'finger'
[ʏʌm]	'sorrow'	[sam]	'arrange'

vii. Distribution of Darāg Phonemes with in the Words:

/kh/ [khu:r] 'leg' [ʃuk^h] 'dryup' —

While there is no use of /kh/ in the middle of the word so far.

/k/	[ku:r]	'foot'	[ʃʌkʌʃ]	'pond'	[ʃʌlʌk]	'grasshopper'
/g/	[gær]	'steed'	[taluna gija:l]	'paddy field'	[sa:r tʃær bang]	'dawn'
/ŋ/	[aŋga:r]	'fire'	[kogi: ŋ]	'blackbird'	—	

However [ŋ] is not used as a word initial in the dialect.

/ʏ/ [ʏʌm] 'sorrow' [da: ʏl] 'spotted' [naʏʌrʌz] 'selfishness'

viii. Uvular and Glottal

The uvular consonants are [q, G, N]. However [q] is mostly used in loan words from Urdu. For example: [qatil] 'murder', [qɛzi:] 'judge', [bʌqu:f] 'foolish', [qaʔbi:l] 'intelligent', [qa:ʏʌz] 'stationary' etc. Beside this the consonants [ʔ, h, ʁ] are attested here in the glottal area.

The example below shows the uvular and glottal phonemes contrasting.

[bʌqu:f] 'foolish' [bʌqu:l] 'thick'

Beside this the uvular [G, N] occur very rear in the dialect.

[kæʌʔ] 'banana' [kʌʔlæ] 'ornament'
[hasa:] 'dirty' [hasi] 'castrate'

While [ʁ] occurs in a few words of the dialect.

Distribution of uvular and glottal phonemes with in the words is as follows.

/q/ [bʌqu:f] 'foolish' [qɛzi:] 'judge' [itefa:q] 'agree'
/ʔ/ [ba:ʔl] 'hair' [dʒariʔ] 'continue' —

But the glottal stop [ʔ] do not occur as a word initially.

/h/ [hasi] 'castrate' [sulu:h] 'pretty' [nur hatʌ] 'east'

C. DARĀG VOWEL PHONEMES

i. Oral Vowels

	Front	Mid	Back
Close	i, i: , i		u, u: , u
Close-mid	e, e: ,e ɛ æ	ɑ ʌ	o, o: ,o ɔ
Open	a, a: , a		ɑ

ii. Nasal Vowels

Front	Back
ĩ ĩ:	ũ, ũ:
ẽ	õ õ:
æ	
ã ã:	

iii. Vowels in Phonetic Data

In Darāg dialect of Kalkot the following vowel phonemes have more than one allophone.

/i/ is pronounced	/ɪ/	/i:/			
/ĩ/ is pronounced	/ĩ/	/ĩ:/			
/e/ is pronounced	/e/	/e:/	/ɛ/		
/a/ is pronounced	/a/	/ʌ/	/a:/	/ā/	/ā:/
/o/ is pronounced	/o/	/o:/	/ō/	/ō:/	

Conclusion

The author has derived this paper from his M.Phil. research, which was conducted with the aim to project and restore the historic dialect of Kalkot Kohistan, rapidly being superseded by the Pushto language. A diachronic study of the language touched in the research has helped in preserving and documenting the dialect from being lost forever. An effort is also made to trace the history, development and phonological rules of the dialect. This for the first time is introducing an ancient tribe, her dialect and culture to the people in and outside Pakistan.

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