
Tracing Some New Dravidian Etymologies in the Birāhōī Language (Jahlāwānī Dialect)

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Abstract:

In this paper, only a sample of the Proto-Dravidian Etymologies compiled by George Starostin, on www.starling.rinet.ru, has been given rather than the whole reconstructed Etymologies. The sample is an effort to add some New Etymologies to the DED (Dravidian Etymological Dictionary). The oral form (spoken) of Brahui has been selected for the study. The data have been collected through informal conversation and observation from Birāhōīs of Jahlāwān. The Birāhōī vocabulary (words) chosen here for comparison are colloquially used in everyday routine life work. The archaic or literary terms have been avoided here.

Keywords: Birāhōī, Dictionary, Proto-Dravidian

Introduction

This paper is an attempt to trace some new Dravidian Etymologies in Birāhōī that have been missed in the Dravidian Etymology Dictionary (DED) compiled by Burrow & Emeneau in 1984. It has been and is a crucial debate that Birāhōī belongs to which Language Family. Different local political people have tried to build a relationship between Birāhōī and the Indo-Aryan Language family, but all their efforts are based on assumptions, myths & politics. In the light of historical linguistic theories, it has been proved that Birāhōī belongs to the Dravidian language family, having Proto-Dravidian terms/items in it. In current work, researchers have worked on etymologies of a few words which are used in daily life by the Birāhōīs of Jahlāwānī.

Dravidian languages

The Dravidian languages are the fifth largest language family of the world which are spoken by around 200 million people. Caldwell (1998) was the first researcher who gave the name Dravidian to the languages spoken in south north and east India like Chennai and Bihar. Further, in the next edition of his book *Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages* Caldwell (1998) also mentioned "Birāhōī" as a Dravidian language far from other Dravidian families located in Balochistan (Pakistan). There are 26 languages in the Dravidian language family. According to Krishnamurti (2003), Dravidian languages are divided into two groups literary and non-literary languages. In addition to that, he divided the Dravidian language family into three main subgroups according to sharing restricted linguistic novelty.

North Dravidian (ND): Kurux, Malto, Birāhōī

Central Dravidian (CDI): Tamil, Malayālam, Iruḷa, Kadagu, Toda, Kota, Badaga, Kannada, Koraga, Tuḷu

Central Dravidian (CDII): Telugu, Gondi, Kui, Menda, Pengo, Kuvi, Konda South Dravidian (SD): Kolami, Naikri, Naiki, Parji, Ollari, (Kondekor), Gadaba. In the light of suppositions of historical linguistic reconstruction, a word is called a Proto-Dravidian (PD) word if any cognate set is found in two of these groups.

Birāhōī

The origin of the name Birāhōī has been debatable for a long time, but the views are all based on myths and fallacies, though the interpretation of Russian indo-linguist M.S. Andronov (2006) is reliable. Hiremath (1984) was the one who showed the first source of the word i.e., “Brahui > Bra+ hu + I, Bra < bada < vada, means 'North' hu < Ku < ko means hill, I < one belongs to Brahui, means one who belongs to the northern hill. This name broadly connotes the sense of "people of the hilly track and their languages". This name is derived from Proto-Dravidian stem. Further, Andronov (2006) agrees with Hiremath (1984) that the name Birāhōī originates from two pure Dravidian words "Vaḷā+Kōī". The first ethnonym (Vaḷā) means "north" & the second one (Kōī) means mountaineer. The other Dravidians were invaded by Aryan invaders and left to the south; thus, remembering their kins by the Name VaḷāKōī. With the passage of time 'v' changed into "b" and the vowel "a" into "i". The Dravidian "k" is found in the form of "h" in Birāhōī language i.e., in kurux ‘tākā = wind’, in malto ‘tāke = wind’, in Birāhōī ‘tahō = wind’, consequently VaḷāKōī → Barākōī → Barāhōī → Birāhōī (Andronov, 1980). Shakir (2015) provides evidence that the word ‘ko’ is taken from old Barāhōī and denies the theory of Rahman (2006) who said that the word ‘ko’ is taken from the Persian language. Shakir (2015) shows the following relationship of the word among different Dravidian languages.

Tamil: *ko*: mountain

Telugu: *Kodu*: a man of a certain hill tribe

Kui: *kui*: the kond tribe or language

In the international conference on Birāhōī language and culture by Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad, (held on 17/1/2015), the most prominent national and international linguists from different areas of the world called Birāhōī as an ancient language of the world. They also have the view that Birāhōī is the mother language of 7000-year-old languages of the Indus civilization. Andronov (1964) in a “Lexicostatistic Analysis of the Chronology of Disintegration of Proto-Dravidian” writes that the inhabitants of Mehrgarh, who founded the

Indus civilization, were Birāhōīs. Krishnamurti (1969) also shares the same view in his "Comparative Dravidian Studies Current Trend in Linguistics" that people of the Indus Valley have Birāhōī language. Today Birāhōī is measured as a parent language of the Dravidian language spoken in Deccan (India). Birāhōī is placed approximately 1,500 kilometres in Pakistan (Balochistan) and some areas of Afghanistan from its closest Dravidian languages.

Birāhōī is L1 of some 4.2 million speakers and approximately 2,000,000 of them are in Balochistan Pakistan, 200,000 speakers are in Afghanistan and 20,000 (Pagani, et al., 2017). There are also speakers of Birāhōī in the former Soviet Union and Emirates (Ethnonologue, 2018). Birāhōī speaking people are habituating in Pakistan (Balochistan), Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and in Emirates. Basher (2013) gives some comparisons between Birāhōī and Dravidian languages in the following table.

Birāhōī compared with Dravidian (Bashir, 2003)

	Birāhōī	Other Dravidian
First 3 numerals	asi '1' iraa '2' musi '3	or (Drav. root) '1' ir - (Drav. root) '2' mur (Drav. rot) '3'
Interrogative element	e.g., ant 'what'	Telugu emi 'why'
Negative	Separate negative conjugation, with -a plus marker of tense	-a general Drav. negative formant
Causative formant	- i f	cf. -vi (Tamil causative formant)
2nd person pronoun	ni 'you (sg.) num 'you (pl.)'	ni (Drav.) 'You (sg.)' cf. num - (OBL in Tamil)
Plural marker	-k	k (Gondi) kaL (Drav.)

Burrow & Emeneau, (1961) find the syntax of Dravidian and Birāhōī as same. Other similarities according to them are Alphabets i.e., *t, n, m, d, l* and also sound modes such as *ī, nī, nā, nanā, numā, kanā, ā, ē, orēk- ēi, ōd-ēi*. Both Birāhōī and Dravidian languages share

prepositions like (o, a, on). The suffix *-k* for making plural forms is the same in Birāhōī and other Dravidian languages for example *Mār* (boy), *Mārk* (Pronounced as *Māk*). Other similarities are words of feminine relations i.e., *Īr* (sister), *Masir*, *Balgu*, *malxuf*. There is a resemblance between Birāhōī and Dravidian languages Tilgo, Milyalam, Tamil, Gota, Malyalam, etc.

Research method

The primary data have been used in this study. The rationale behind selecting primary data is to have the original Brahui words. The data have been collected through informal conversations with the natives and observation. Being native and native-like speakers, researchers met and observed the native Brahui speakers. The elderly people not influenced by any other languages have been chosen for the study. The research data are compared through the reconstructed forms compiled by George Starostin on www.starling.rinet.ru.

Comparison of Birāhōī words with other Proto and other Dravidian languages

Proto-Dravidian: **aD [D] - (?)*, thirst; hunger.

Proto-South Dravidian: **adi-*

Proto-Telugu: **da-pi*

Proto-Kolami-Gadba: **aḍḍ- ~ *and- (-*-nd_-)*

Birāhōī: *Ha'akī* (the one having extrem desire for everything).

And also "*Drōhañr*, *rōhar*", the extreme desire to eat during pregnancy, Increased Appetite During Pregnancy.

... *Drō(?) + hañr/ha'*.

The *-hañr/-ha'* is comparable here.

Proto-Dravidian: **adda- [?]* (Mirror)

Proto-Telugu: **adda-*

Proto-Kolami-Gadba: **adda-*

Proto-Gondi-Kui: **addam*

Birāhōī: *ādēñk* (mirror)

Nevertheless, the origins of the Telugu form are obscure; Burrow & Emeneau (1984) compare Prakrit *addāa-* 'mirror', but the word does not seem to have an IE etymology and may be of Dravidian origin. According to the Nostratic Etymology Hypothesis Present in 4/6, 'branches' is assumed to be a Proto-Dravidian word.

Proto-Dravidian: **bāž-(?)* (Many)

Proto-Gondi-Kui: **bāž- (?)*

Birāhōī: "Bhāz" (many)
 Proto-Dravidian: *cīkaṭ- (darkness)
 Proto-Telugu: *cīkaṭ-
 Proto-Kolami-Gadba: *cīkaḍ
 Proto-Gondi-Kui: *sīkaṭ- (*c-)
 Birāhōī: Sēxā (darkness, shadow)
 Proto-Dravidian: *čaṭ- (sudden; soon)
 Proto-South Dravidian: *čaṭ-
 Proto-Telugu: *caṭṭ-
 Birāhōī: jhaṭ, kart (moment) e.g. *katr /jhaṭ asēṭī barēva* (I will come soon)
 Proto-Dravidian: *gaḍam- (beard, chin)
 Proto-South Dravidian: *gaḍḍ-
 Proto-Telugu: *gaḍḍam-
 Proto-Kolami-Gadba: *gaḍḍam
 Proto-Gondi-Kui: *gaḍem
 Birāhōī: Khādī (chin)
 Proto-Dravidian: *ir-/*er- (to be)
 Proto-South Dravidian: *ir-
 Proto-Telugu: *ir-
 Proto-Kolami-Gadba: *er- (?)
 Birāhōī: ar-iṅg/anniṅg (to be)
 Proto-Dravidian: *kar- (anger, enmity)
 Proto-South Dravidian: *kar_-
 Birāhōī: xar xār (anger, enmity)
 Proto-Dravidian: *guS- (to whisper)
 Proto-South Dravidian: *guC-
 Proto-Telugu: *gus-
 Proto-North Dravidian: *kus-
 Birāhōī: *pus (whisper)
 Proto-Dravidian: *ir-Vc- (to scratch (ground), to comb)
 Proto-Gondi-Kui : *ir-
 Proto-North Dravidian: *ir-c-
 Birāhōī: ir-is (comb)
 Proto-Dravidian: *ir- (food)

Proto-South Dravidian: **Ir-ai*
 Proto-Telugu: **er-a*
 Birāhōī: *ir-ag_h_*
 Proto-Dravidian: **čap-* (to clap hands)
 Proto-South Dravidian: **čap-*
 Proto-Telugu: **capp-*
 Proto-Kolami-Gadba: **čap-*
 Proto-Gondi-Kui: **cap-*
 Birāhōī: *cap* (to clap hands)
 Proto-Dravidian: **Cu[g]* - (shoulder, nape of the neck)
 Proto-South Dravidian: **Cuval-* (?)
 Proto-Gondi-Kui: **suk-* (**c-*)
 Birāhōī: *Cuḡ* (shoulder, nape of the neck)
 Proto-Dravidian: **Coṭ-* (to drop, drop)
 Proto-South Dravidian: **čoṭ-*
 Proto-Telugu: **coṭ-*
 Birāhōī: *cutṭiṅ* (to drop)
 Proto-Dravidian: **cor-* (to flow)
 Proto-South Dravidian: **cōr-*
 Proto-Kolami-Gadba: **cōr-*
 Proto-North Dravidian: **cur-q-*
 Birāhōī: *curr-ing* (to flow)
 Proto-Dravidian: **buzC-* (down, feather hair)
 Proto-South Dravidian: **būzC-*
 Proto-Kolami-Gadba: **būr*
 Proto-Gondi-Kui: **burj-*
 Proto-North Dravidian: **purg*
 Birāhōī: *buśk/put* (hair)
 Proto-Dravidian: **bog-/*posañ-?* (Charcoal)
 Proto-Telugu: **bogg-*
 Proto-Kolami-Gadba: **bog*
 Proto-Gondi-Kui: **bog-*
 Proto-North Dravidian: **posVŋ* (?)
 Birāhōī: *Pōḡ* (Charcoal)

Proto-Dravidian: *áḍḍa- *aḍḍai- (to hinder, obstacle)

Proto-South Dravidian: *aḍḍa- *aḍḍai-

Proto-Telugu: *aḍḍ-

Proto-Kolami-Gadba: *aḍḍam (?)

Proto-Gondi-Kui: *aḍ- (*-ḍḍ-?)

Proto-North Dravidian: *aḍ-

Birāhōī: aḍ (hinder, obstacle)

Proto-Dravidian: *kād- (calf, deer)

Proto-South Dravidian: *kād-

Proto-Kolami-Gadba: *kaḍas

Proto-Gondi-Kui: *kaṭāl-

Proto-North Dravidian: *kaḍ-

Birāhōī: *xar-ās* (collectively cow & ox) and *xar* for ram & *Gaḍḍ* wild sheep.

Conclusion

Above words, with comparison and in the light of reconstruction theory George Starostin on www.starling.rinet.ru, prove that Birāhōī is a proto-Dravidian language. The words which are discussed here are just samples of thousands of words which are Birāhōī words and have proto-Dravidian origins. Words in this small-scale research work are used by Birāhōī laymen who live in the mountains and villages of Jahlāwān. Birāhōī as discussed is isolated from its related languages. Due to this fact, Kirashnamorati (2003), while discussing Dravidian languages, calls Birāhōī as a non-literary language. It needs to be explored to make its grounds as one of the ancient literary languages. Based on the above-mentioned examples and analysis, it can be argued that Brahui is one of the Dravidian languages and it is the only Dravidian language spoken in Balochistan, Pakistan. The above-discussed words show a relationship between the Dravidian languages. There is more data on the topic of etymology which can be used for further research. This research can/might motivate researchers and linguists of Brahui to broadly work on the etymology of the Brahui language. This research opens the gate for researchers to work on other linguistic aspects of Brahui.

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