

USAGE OF ARABIC ALPHABETS IN BRAHUI ORTHOGRAPHY

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Waheed Razzaq*

ABSTRACT

Arabic is a Semitic language belongs to the Central Semitic languages, most closely related to Hebrew and Aramaic languages. Arabic is one among the most populous languages in the world. It is one among seven languages recognized by the United Nations. Arabic is considered as a single language spoken by as many as 280 million people as their first language. The modern written language known as Modern Standard Arabic or Fusha is derived from the language of the Quran also known as Classical Arabic or Quranic Arabic. The standardized written Arabic or “fusha” is different in some extent and more traditional than all of the spoken dialects known as “hamia” used side-by-side of “fusha”. It is widely used academic purposes including teaching in schools, universities, and used to varying degrees in workplaces. On the other hand Brahui is a member of the North Dravidian languages group of the Dravidian language family. Brahui is the language spoken by Brahuīs, a mainly tribal people, the great majority of whom live in Central Balochistan. Another large group of Brahui speakers live in Sindh Province. Brahuīs also live in the Helmand and Nimruz provinces of Afghanistan and in the province of Sistan-o-Balochistan in southern Iran. A large number of Brahuīs live in the Gulf States, while a few families of Brahuīs living in Mari Province in Turkmenistan still speak Brahui as well. The linguist classified Brahui as a North Dravidian language because of its close relationship with the Kurukh and Malto languages in central India. The other Dravidian languages, Tamil, Telegu, Malyalam, Kunri, and Gondi, are spoken in southern India. Brahui is the only Dravidian Language having a Non Dravidian (Arbic) script.

In this paper short history of Arabic and Brahui languages have been discussed, the main objective of this paper is to describe in detailed the

* Research Officer Balochistan Study Centre, University of Balochistan, Quetta-Pakistan

beginning and evaluation of Brahui orthography and role of Arabic language regarding its evolution.

KEY WORDS

Aramaic, Brahui, Dravidian, Fusha, Hamia, Orthography, Semitic,

INTRODUCTION

Brahui is a North Proto Dravidian language which is spoken about 1300 Miles far from other South Proto Dravidian languages in South India i.e. Tamil, Talgu, Malyalam, etc and Central Proto Dravidian languages in the Central India i.e. Karukh and Malto by about three million people. Brahui is spoken in the central parts of Balochistan, interior Sindh and in the Sistan o Balochistan province of Iran, Helmand and Nimroz provinces of Afghanistan, Gulf States, and also there are few families still speak Brahui in Mari province of Turkmenistan. 'there are about three million people in the world who speak Brahui'(Sabir: 2008: 209-11). Brahui was used only as an oral language until the post-colonial period in Balochistan. There was no tradition of Brahui as a medium of instruction or as a written language. The first printed book on Brahui was written by Christine Lassen, an Englishman, and published in 1839. The first book in Brahui was written by Malik Dad Kalati in 1173 AD in Kalat.

On the other hand Arabic is a member of the Semitic subgroup of the Afro-Asiatic group of languages. The common ancestor for all Semitic languages including Hebrew in the Afro-Asiatic group of languages is called Proto-Semitic. As might be expected, not all Semitic languages have equally preserved the features of their common ancestor language. In this respect, Arabic is unique; it has preserved a large majority of the original Proto-Semitic features. In fact, many linguists consider Arabic the most 'Semitic' of any modern Semitic languages in terms of how completely they preserve features of Proto-Semitic". (Satakari: 1986: 3-4) The members of this family have a recorded history going back thousands of years one of the most extensive continuous archives of documents belonging to any human language group. The Semitic languages eventually took root and flourished in the Mediterranean Basin area, but where the home area of "proto-Semitic" was located is still the object of dispute among scholars. Nowadays many scholars advocate the view that it originated somewhere in East Africa, probably in the area of Somalia/Ethiopia. Interestingly, both these areas are now dominated linguistically by the two youngest members of the Semitic language family: Arabic and Amharic, both of which emerged in the mid-fourth century C.E". (Ibid: 3)

“The Arabic language developed through the early centuries in the Arabian Peninsula in the era immediately preceding the appearance of Islam. Arab poets of the pre-Islamic period had developed a language of amazing richness and flexibility. Their poetry was transmitted and preserved orally. The Arabic language was then, as it is now, easily capable of creating new words and terminology in order to adapt to the demand of new scientific and artistic discoveries. As the new believers in the seventh century spread out from the Peninsula to create a vast empire, first with its capital in Damascus and later in Baghdad, Arabic became the administrative language of vast section of the Mediterranean world. It drew upon Byzantine and Persian terms and its own immense inner resources of vocabulary and grammatical flexibility.” (Jiyad: 2010:01)

ARABIC SCRIPT

When we discuss the Arabic language and its script the Arabic sources tell us that the script had been introduced either from South Arabia region or from Mesopotamia (Iraq). Ibn Al-Nadim, for example, said that the people of Al-Hira, the capital of the Lakhmid dynasty in the Euphrates valley, used a form of Syriac cursive script which had developed into the Arabic alphabet. Versteegh claims that the theory of Syriac origin has now been abandoned by most scholars. It seems much more likely to him that the Arabic alphabet is derived from a type of cursive Nabataean in Petra, Jordan. In the Aramaic script, from which Nabataean writing ultimately derived, there are no ligatures between letters. But in the cursive forms of the Nabataean script most of the features that characterize the Arabic script already appear. Versteegh adds that the elaboration of an Arabic script for texts in Arabic took place as early as the second century CE. This would mean that the development of the Arabic script as it is used in pre-Islamic inscriptions occurred largely independently from the later developments in Nabataean epigraphic script. The most important internal development in Arabic script is the systematic elaboration of connections between letters within the word, and the system of different forms of the letters according to their position within the word. (Ibid: 01)

According to Siibawayh, the Arabic Alphabet is made of 29 letters, including 3 long vowels. He put them in the following order starting with the laryngeal and ending with labial, representing the place of articulation along the vocal tract.

ء، ا، هـ، ع، ح، غ، خ، ك، ق، ض،
ج، ش، ي، ل، ر، ن، ط، د، ت، ص،
ز، س، ظ، ذ، ث، ف، ب، م، و

EVOLUTION OF BRAHUI ORTHOGRAPHY

Brahui has a very short history of writing system. The present day Brahui orthography is based on the Arabic with Persian style Urdu script with only one additional alphabet ٺ or lh. In Brahui still there is no standard writing system or orthography. Brahui has adopted the complete Arabic alphabets including Persian and Urdu alphabets. Arabic loanwords in Brahui are generally spelled in accordance with their spelling in Arabic. (Sabir: 1998:07)

Nowadays Brahui is written in Persian style Urdu script. Famous Muslim religious scholars including Molvi Abdul Karim, Mulana Muhammad Yaqoob Sharodi, Maulana Akhtar Muhammad and Maulana Abdul Aziz of Yali used Pashto style Arabic script for Brahui till near past but during the course of time such writers are decreasing.

According to a prominent scholar of Brahui Dr. Abdul Rehman Brahui that, "In the ancient times Brahui was written in *Heroghalfi* style. There is an opinion that the ancient script of Brahui is that which discovered from the Mohenjo Daro seals. According to Caldwell the script used for the Dravidian languages is derived from the Ashoka's headstones (Katabas). According to Mir Gul Khan Naseer in his book "Koch-o-Baloch" "Two thousand years ago Brahui was written in *Kharoshti* script and then after Islam Arabic and Persian scripts were applied for Brahui" (Brahui: 2012:168) In the known literary history of Brahui name of their Brahui books of 709 AH "Khidmat-i-Din" 810 AH manuscript "Majhool-il-Isma" and 980 AH manuscript "Hamliyat-i-Guhar Baar" have been written in Persian and Arabic scripts. The first available book in Brahui written by Malik Dad Kalati in 1173AH is written in Pashto style Brahui script obtained by the Arabic with some additions for the voices available in Brahui and Pashto but not in Arabic. It is said that Mula Nabo Jan for the first time published this book in Urdu/Persian script in 1916. Here the question arises that why Nabo Jan published this book in Persian script while his other publications are in Arabic script. The Nabo Jan books alongwith others published in the end of nineteenth and beginning of twentieth century from Durkhani school of thought they have continued the /ch/, /gh/ of the Persian while for Indian origin retroflexed voices /t/ /d/ and /r/ they used Malik Dad style Pashto words alongwith Brahui's own voice /lh/ they used ٺ lh. (Sabir: 1994:102)

In the Brahui orthography, the following Arabic letters in Brahui are represented by different sounds as under:-

1. ط / ت / also represents Arabic ط.
2. ه / و / also represents Arabic ح and ه.

3. /س / Also represents Arabic ث, س, and ص.
4. /ز / Also represents Arabic ذ, ز, and ظ.

EVOLUTION OF BRAHUI SCRIPT

The first printed book on Brahui has been written by Molvi Allah Bakhsh who wrote this book in 1886 for teaching of Brahui to the Englishman who learned Brahui in order to project their power onto the people of Balochistan. He adopted Sindhi orthography for Brahui. The earliest manuscripts of a religious book dated 1173 AD, have been written by Mullah Malikdad Kalati a native writer of Brahui in Kalat'. (**Rehman: 2001:45-59**) Script adopted for Malik Dad's book "Tufah tul Ajaib" was Arabic based Pashto script.

'Durkhani Religious School near Dhadar (Balochistan) was the first school in which Brahui was used as medium of instruction. This religious school was established under the management of Muhammad Fazil Durkhani Raisani in about 1880. The pioneer of the Durkhani movement was Maulvi Mohammad Fazil Durkhani (1823-1896) whose village, Durkhan which is about ten kilometers from Dhadhar in Balochistan. The work by this School of thought can be mentioned as a literary and religious movement for spreading religious awareness among the Baloch and Brahui people. There was apprehension among the Baloch religious scholars that Christianity would spread among them. Since the missionaries had translated their holy book Bible in the Brahui languages between 1905 to 1907. Mohammad Fazil and his followers Molvi Abu Bakar, Mullah Nabo Jan, Abdullah Durkhani, Muhammad Umar Dinpuri, Mullah Saleh Muhammad and others wrote Islamic books for the common people in Brahui language. This institution started publishing of books written by local scholars and printed, in Lahore and Dehli'. (**Ibid:45-59**). Script for these books was also the Arabic based Pashto script for Brahui books. In the same period foreign scholars including Sir Denes Bray and others used Roman scripts for Brahui.

Since 1950 there are attempts to preserve Brahui language and its literature and promote it as a literary language and make efforts to employ it in as medium of education in the Brahui speaking areas. Brahui Academy, Brahui Adabi (Literary) Society, Brahui Adabi Sangat, Brahui Arts Academy, Shon Adabi Dewan, Raskoh adabi deewan and many other small literary organizations besides literary activities are publishing Brahui books. Few periodicals prominent among them are Elum Mastung, Talar, Tawar have been/are being published in Brahui for a shorter or longer period of time.

ROMANIZED BRAHUI ALPHABATES OR BRAHUI BASHAGAL

A new development in this regard was made in Quetta during the recent years when the young writers and intellectuals particularly from Department of Brahui, University of Balochistan introduced a Roman-based orthography for Brahui and have been named it as “Brolikva” or “Brahui Roman Likwar”. This new orthography has been developed by members of the Brahui Language Board (Brahui Language Board) mainly by its Secretary and linguist from Brahui Department Dr. Liaqat Ali Sunni and another young linguist Mr. Saeed Lehri from English Department. Weekly and daily newspapers “Talar” (Daiy Talar and Weekly Talar) are the only newspapers which have adopted “Brolikva” script. This Romanized orthography has not been accepted by the other academic and literary circles. Below is the new promoted Bráhuí Báśágal or Brolikva alphabates,

b á p í s y ş v x e z ź ğ f ú m n l g c t t r r f d o đ h j k a i u ŋ l

BRAHUI ORTHOGRAPHIC COMMITTEE

To solve the longstanding orthographic issues of Brahui language, the Brahui Adabi (Literary) Society, Quetta in a broad based Seminar at Press Club Building Quetta on 1st April, 1988 unanimously formed a committee known as “Brahui Likwar (Orthography) Committee” BLC was comprising of the following members representing all regional dialects and Brahui speaking areas in Pakistan:-

1. Mr. Noor Muhammad Parwana Editor weekly Elum Mastung.
2. Dr. Abdul Rehman Brahui linguist
3. Prof. Abdullah Jan Jamaldini.
4. Mr. Pir Muhammad Zuberani.
5. Mulana Abdul Qayyum Johar from Mehar Sindh.
6. Prof. Abul Aziz Mengal.
7. Mr. Abdul Aziz Rahi from Jehlawan-Khuzdar.
8. Dr. Ali Ahmed Shad Brahui from Sindh.
9. Prof. Nadir Qambrani Quetta.
10. Mr. Ghulam Hayder Hasrat President Brahui Academy

11. Prof.Dr. Rasul Bakhsh Raisani Educationist.
12. Mr. Abdul Samad Shaheen Surabi.
13. Qari Abdullah Adil Qalandrani.
14. Mr. Abdul Aziz Bazgiri.
15. Prof. Abdul Razzaq Sabir Secretary of the Committee (**Sabir: 1998:50-51**)

The Committee was assigned the task to solve the orthographic issues of Brahui with in few years. The Committee in its continuous meetings held at Quetta, Mastung, Khuzdar and Faridabad Sindh resolved to approve the already adopted Urdu style Arabic script for Brahui. The committee approved 53 alphabets including 52 alphabets of Urdu and an additional alphabet “lh” to represent the only native Brahui sound.

The BLC in its different meetings from 1st April, 1988 to 28th May, 1990 around two years resolved the following main issue:-

- a- Urdu style Arabic orthography will be the approved orthography of Brahui.
- b- 53 alphabets including 52 Urdu alphabets and one pure Brahui alphabet “ﻝ or lh” were approved.
- c- Language spoken in Mastung, Kalat and surrounding called “Sarawani dialect” will be the academic and standard dialect of Brahui.
- d- It was unanimously decided that in future“ﻝ” will be the conjunction to represent the “and”.
- e- Three type plural rules known as “jamah kaafi” “jamah aaki” and “jamah Ghaaki” were approved.
- f- Brahui has its own Negative Infinitive system but nowadays not commonly used, the committee resolved to use the Negative Infinitives.
- g- The committee in its different meetings made different decisions regarding writing of Brahui pronouns, present continuous, imperatives, use of Arabic sign “humza”, etc. (**Ibid:50**)

Later on the proceedings of the seminar including decisions made during the different meetings of the Orthographic Committee time to time were compiled by Dr. Abdul Razzaq Sabir Secretary of the Committee and published by Brahui Adabi Society, Quetta in 1998.

CONCLUSION

Brahui was used only as an oral language until the post-colonial period in Balochistan. There was no tradition of Brahui as a medium of instruction or as a written language. The first printed book on Brahui was written by Christine Lassen, an Englishman, and published in 1839. The first book in Brahui was written by Malik Dad Kalati in 1173 AD in Kalat.

At the end of nineteenth century, the Madrasa-e-Durkhan, or Durkhani Religious Institution, established in 1880 near the village of Durkhan near Dhadar (Balochistan), was the first institution where Balochi and Brahui were introduced as mediums of instruction. The efforts made by the Madrasa-e-Durkhani were a literary and religious movement to spread religious awareness among the Baloch people through their native languages. According to an estimate, 400 books, including a translation of the Holy Quran in Brahui, were published there. but a standard literary movement started only after the 1950 when some newspapers started publishing in Brahui besides Balochi in Pakistan.

Nowadays Brahui is being written in Arabic based Urdu script and taught at Higher Studies level. Besides degree level Brahui is also being taught at Inter level in the Inter and degree colleges and as an elective subject. In 1990s University of Balochistan established a separate Department of Languages to teach Balochi, Brahui and Pashto languages at Masters Level while in 1994 this department was bifurcated and at present the Department of Brahui is enjoying status of a full fledged Department in the University of Balochistan, Quetta. The main question arises here is that why the Brahui speaking people not used Dewnagari or other scripts used for other Dravidian languages? The simple reply can be that the people used Dewnagari or Brahmi script were the Hindus they were the ancient inhabitants of the area since long they used Dewnagari and Brahmi scripts not Arabic and Persian for their trade and religious preaching purposes. After emergence of Islam in the region the Hindus continued using Dewnagari and Brahmi scripts for their languages i.e Sindhi and siraiki. Till end of 20th century the Hindu traders/shopkeepers and merchants living in the Brahui speaking areas having trade centers and shops mainly in Quetta, Kalat, Khuzdar, Mastung, Nushki, Dhadar, Sibi, Bela and other villages used Dewnagari script for the religious and trade purpose. On the other hand the Brahui speaking people who were their customers but were

not benefited from these scripts. Nowadays the literary creations in Brahui are written in Urdu style Arabic script. All education and academic language is being written in Arabic style. Only one or some time half page in weekly newspaper “TALAR” are written Roman Brahui script. Brahui youths for their day by day SMSs and E.mails use Brahui in Roman script.

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