

**RastogiBoli: A Sub Dialect of Awadhi**

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**Abstract**

*The language history of India is a diverse one, same as its people and thus come various language families. Indo-Aryan language family, also known as the Indic languages, is among the four major popular languages practiced over the South-Asian region. It comes from the branch of the Indo-Iranian language family, which is a subfamily of the Indo-European language family. Another major one is the Dravidian Family, after which many small language families exist in India. The paper focuses on the development of the Indo-Aryan language family and talks specifically about Awadhi to understand the spread and concentration of this language in different parts of India and how it has been brought forward in this challenging time. The main focus is to throw the light on the present status of RastogiBoli ,a sub dialect of Awadhi.*

**Keywords-** Indo- Arya, Indic, Dravidian, Awadhi and RastogiBoli.

**Introduction**

India has been a diversified region with a vast and rich history, and language holds a special place in that multi-culture history of India. The point of division and sometimes a key to uniting

people was language. It was all a struggle and fought for both ordinary people and different Governments. The four prominent language families that dominate the region are Indo-European, Dravidian, Mon-Khmer, and Sino-Tibetan. The Indo-European family dominates North or central India. In contrast, in the Southern region, Dravidian languages are widespread and popular among the masses. The traces of Sino-Tibetan are evident in the Himalayan region, and the Mon-Khmer language family dominates India's Eastern region.

In the Northern-Indian region, we found the domination of the Indian-European family under which is the Indo-Aryan language family, also known as the Central Indo-Aryan family, in the central part of India. It consists of a group of closely related languages that vary according to geographic region. Historically, it is a continuum of dialects descending from Madhya Prakrit transforming from region to region such as Hindi Belt, Dehlavi (Delhi) in central. Following the Indo-Aryan language can be divided into Old, Middle and Modern group of languages. Hindi belongs to the Modern Indo-Aryan group of languages and can be categorized as the Eastern region Hindi and Western region Hindi (Jaworski, Jassem, & Stroński, 2015).

For the Western Hindi regions, we observe in Uttar Pradesh and the adjacent parts of Haryana and Rajasthan, Braj is the popular dialect. In contrast, the Haryanvi dialect is prominent in Chandigarh, Haryana, and parts of Punjab. Bundeli has spoken in southwestern Uttar Pradesh and west-central Madhya Pradesh for Kanauji, Hindustani in UP, and other parts.

In the Eastern Hindi, Awadhi comes at the top, which dominates the north-central part of Uttar Pradesh. Rastogi Boli can be considered as the sub dialect of Awadhi. It is spoken by the Rastogi community which belongs to the city of Lucknow, especially in the old areas of Lucknow city.

Generally, for north-central Madhya Pradesh and south-eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bagheli is a common language. Central Chhattisgarh we can find Chhattisgarhi spoken.

## **An Overview**

The Indo-European language is categorized in the Indo-Iranian language under which comes the Indo-Aryan, which again is subdivided in the Indo-Aryan Central, which is finally categorized in Awadhi, Bagheli, and Chhattisgarhi, among which Awadhi is the most popular one. Awadh region, presently situated in Uttar Pradesh, is where Awadhi is spoken on a primary basis. The

name of Awadh also has been connected to the mythological and ancient town, Ayodhya, from Ramayana. Awadhi was a major literary language during the 19th Century along with the Braj Bahasa, until being replaced by the Hindustani language.

Awadhi has the same face value as the Hindustani language rhetorically. Awadhi is often regarded as a local language, which is why Hindi is preferred more in school institutions for administrative and official purposes rather than Awadhi and hence the downfall of it in Hindi literature. Awadhi has been known by many names, such as Baiswari after the subregion of Baiswara, after the ancient Kosala Kingdom; it is also known as Kosali and many times dubiously called Purbi of which literal translation is Eastern.

Several aspects come into play as to why Awadhi is separated from the Bihari and other western Hindi such as in Awadhi commonly, we can find nouns both in long and short format whereas in Western Hindi has short forms while Bihari has large and longer formats of a noun, thus Awadhi is more adaptable in nature while accepting nouns. Further, the gender differences are loose in Awadhi in contrast to Western Hindi, where it is highly maintained, whereas, for Bihari, it is attenuated. The accusative-dative and locative postpositions in Awadhi are also different from that of Bhojpuri and Western Hindi. Further Affix is one defining characteristic of Awadhi; also, pronouns varied for both first and the second person (Kulikov, 2017).

Geographically speaking, various districts of Uttar Pradesh, such as Lakhimpur Khiri, Sitapur, Lucknow, etc., have a population dominantly speaking Awadhi. Now other than India, two provinces of Nepal have dominance of Awadhi speaking people, namely Lumbini province and Sudurpaschim province. Other countries outside South Asia include Fiji, where it is referred to as Fiji Hindi, Caribbean nations such as Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Guyana, where it is known as Caribbean Hindustani and used by Indians. Also, Hindustani spoken in South Africa and Mauritius are all inspired by Awadhi (Kogan, 2017).

In the literary world, Awadhi became one of the most preferred languages, and some of the epic poems were written Awadhi dialect. One of the greatest works in Awadhi comes from Tulsidas wrote Ramcharitramanas in Doha-chaupaimatre form, which is also known as Tulsidas Ramayana. Awadhi also played a role in the Bhakti Movement during the medieval period by Bhakti saint-like Kabir, who used Awadhi as a mode to convey his thought among his followers. It also became the favorite language of Eastern Sufis, who composed various songs and stories in

it. In modern India RamaiKaka, Vanshidhar Shukla and Balbhadra Prasad Dikshit. Also, Krishnayan, written by Dwarka Prasad Mishra, is a significant poem.

Despite the rich culture and tradition, including the rich literary nature of Awadhi with many prominent works, it failed to get its due recognition as it has always been classified as Hindi by the Government same fate as that of Bhojpuri. The number of speakers has shown growth over decades while other languages showed a decline. Users of Awadhi have been ridiculed, including that of Bhojpuri, due to poor portrayal by the media and entertainment houses (Jeffers, 1976).

Other than the central Indo-Aryan languages, there are many more classifications of the Indo-Aryan language group. It was believed to represent a direct continuum and languages transition to the neighboring varieties, although this is controversial issue. Many scholars believed that it is not possible to represent the Indo-Aryan group in a tree model but rather can be represented in the wave model. Difficulty also arises in forming the subgroups of the family as there is a lack of clear division among them, further leading to the hullabaloo. Though, the Government has taken many steps to promote Awadhi, the native dialect of Lucknow. This language has played an important role in the history of Lucknow and is still used in the rural areas of the city and by many urban people on streets. Surrounding towns such as Kakori, Daryabad, Fatehpur, etc., have produced several Awadhi poets and litterateurs. But measures taken by Government agencies are not enough. It is a proven fact that languages need support from the community as well as from the administration for their survival. Only top-down management is not sufficient for the development of any language.

### **RastogiBoli : A Case Study**

Rastogi is a surname of Indian Origin. It is believed that this clan belongs to Suryavansh and their name is derived from Rohtas ('Rohit' meaning sun and 'aas' meaning vansha). This clan was the oldest and biggest Kshatriya clan of India. Some historical studies suggest that Rastogis, Rohatgi and Rustagi all three belong to the clan of Raja Harishchandra. They are the worshippers of the Sun. Another view has raised by some scholars that Rastogis are the sub group of 'Vaishya Varna'. Probably this view is based on Nesfield's (1885) theory of the occupational basis of the caste system, as Rastogis are mostly money lenders and business men.

The Rastogi community is scattered in various parts of India, but a large number of people live in different cities of Uttar Pradesh. In most places such as Delhi, Moradabad, Meerut, they speak Hindi and its dialect, but people specifically living in Lucknow have developed a different variety that can be called RastogiBoli, that is linguistically categorizes sub-dialect of the Awadhi. In Lucknow city a large number of Rastogi community members are living in old Lucknow areas mainly in Raja Bazar, Asharfabad, Thakurganj and Chowk. In previous times, say around some seventy years back the whole community use to communicate through this variety at home, in community congregations and in market domains. But gradually the younger speaker shifted towards standard Hindi or Khari boli and presently a very few speakers of older generation use this variety at home and in temples. The author has done her research on the sociolinguistic aspect of RastogiBoli and the results obtained by her are very alarming.

The research shows that the current state of RastogiBoli within their community is almost in cease to be visible situation because only few old people are using this language within their community and in specific domains. The major factors for the shift are both linguistic and non-linguistic. Due to social, economic and educational reasons the younger generation is not maintaining their language and most of them are even unaware of having specific variety of their community language. Hence, attitude towards their own community language is also a major factor leading to language shift and gradual loss.

## **Conclusion**

India has tremendous diversity in terms of language, which further extends to ethnicity. The major language family has a wide variety of differentiation at the grassroots level as language changes from family to family due to differences in the region and its people. The Government of India recognizes the major languages and promotes Hindi as a medium for future prospects. Awadhi is the major dialect of Hindi. Thus, many new dialects and sub dialects came forward at the same time many old languages still continue to exist though their users declined. According to the research done, RastogiBoli is in the process of losing its identity because very few old aged people are maintaining their community language that too in specific domains. Some Middle-aged community members use it if the need arises like when they have to converse with their aged parents or relatives. But the younger generation is totally unaware of this variety. So, in absence of intergenerational transfer the author has found not a single boy or girl who can speak this language yet a few of them can understand the language. If sincere efforts are not

made to preserve this language by the community with the help of the linguist it would be buried forever into anonymity.

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