

Non-Tibeto-Burman Features in PaTani

Suhnu R. Sharma
Deccan College, Pune 411 006 INDIA

This paper highlights some of the striking phonological features found in PaTani (a Tibeto-Burman language): retroflex consonants; murmured consonants; and high rising, level and glottalized tones. Elaborate inflectional systems in nouns and verbs and a non-Tibeto-Burman substratum (possibly Indo-Aryan) makes PaTani unique among Tibeto-Burman languages.*

PaTani (Mantsati = Manchati = Patni) is said to belong to the western subgroup of the pronominalized group of the Himalayan branch of Tibeto-Burman (TB) languages [Grierson 1909]. It is spoken in PaTan valley in Lahaul (Himachal Pradesh, India) by 10,000 people. Shafer (1955, 1966) improves a little on Grierson's classification and puts 'Kanauri' and 'Mantsati' together under the Northwestern branch of his West Himalayan Section of the Bodic division. Benedict (1972) groups it under the Kanauri sub-type of the Tibeto-Kanauri nucleus. Other classifications (e.g. Nishida 1970, Egerod 1974, Voegelin 1977) also keep PaTani (under its various names) in the same group as other TB dialects such as Kanauri, Kanashi, Chamba Lahauli, Bunan, Thebor, Rangloi, Tinan, and Gondla. Kanashi is spoken in the isolated village of Malana in Kullu district, and Kanauri is spoken in Kinnaur district (Himachal Pradesh). The rest of the dialects are spoken within Lahaul, adjacent to each other yet with limited contact due to the mountains and heavy snowfall.

On the basis of my data I shall isolate Rangloi, Tinan and Bunan, along with Tod, and put them into a separate subgroup. These dialects are closer to each other, and then closer to Spiti and Ladakhi of the Tibetan group. Here I shall not go into the details of classification and relatedness with other languages but will simply mention that PaTani shares more features with Chamba Lahauli, Kanauri, Kanashi and Gondla, and fewer features with other dialects listed under the same sub-group by all other scholars. The major feature of pronominalization is missing from Bunan, Tinan, Rangloi (in fact Ranglo) and Tod.

The place of PaTani is unique in this group in particular and the the TB family in general. In this paper we shall discuss the non-TB features found in PaTani. Looking at the diversity and complexity of linguistic structures it is possible to imagine that the processes of change, pidginization and creolization have long been at work in the history of many TB languages. The so-called family tree theory needs to be looked at in the light of the new data available. The diversity of features calls us to look at our tools of historical and comparative linguistics with a critical eye. Matisoff's Semantic Field Theory (1978) applied to the body part terminology of TB languages is a major step towards gaining deeper insight into the historical processes of language change and variation of linguistic forms even at the proto-stage of a language. At times one can rely on the concept of 'linguistic areas' and talk of diffusion of features across languages and language

* This paper was originally presented at the 18th International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics, Bangkok 1985.

families (Emeneau 1956). But at times there may be features which developed into new types in the course of the history of languages. One need not always imagine that the features existed in the proto-language or diffused due to contact situations

Features of glottalization of final consonants and complex pronominalization were once ascribed to a Munda substratum in the TB family (Bruske in Grierson 1909). Bauman 1975 (quoted in Hale 1982), however, considers pronominalization as a morphological proto-type and puts it within the proto-TB system. But we may well raise the question: why not consider it a new morphological type? We will not support or refute any particular hypothesis at this stage, but shall simply explore some of the non-TB-like features we have found in PaTani and leave the interpretation of the facts open for future discussion.

About 9% of the PaTani vocabulary (based on a 1000-word list) is of non-TB origin. These words are mostly Indo-Aryan. There are even some forms from non-Indo-Aryan sources, though I have yet to explore them. A few examples will be sufficient to show that one cannot simply label them as mere borrowings.

Body parts:

Tira:	'eye'	TaTu	'throat'
phuka	'body'	gu:Ra	'hand'
kamar	'shoulder'	mucche	'moustache'
ThuRu	'leg'	etc.	

Kinship terms:

kaka:	'brother'	diksa:	'sister's husband'
Ma:ma:	'mother's brother'	bya:	'marriage'

Other words:

dhori	'mist'	nagar	'village'
ros	'anger'	kace	'raw'
bhiti	'wall'	la:me	'long'
dhart	'earth'	phulekpi	'to bloom'
sa:rg	'sky'	socekse	'to think'
bha:r	'weight'	dhya:M	'like this'
buTha	'tree'	Dha:l	'a special greeting'
beja:	'seed'	Dhere	'curbed'

This component of vocabulary has to be treated as a substratum of Indo-Aryan. One can't simply think of diffusion due to long-term contact. Vocabulary related to body parts and other intimate environments cannot be easily borrowed.

It seems plausible to think that the PaTani speakers were once Indo-Aryan speakers. But once they migrated to their present home they were totally cut off from their ancestors and came in contact with TB speakers. After a long time they must have adopted and modified a TB language, along with the Buddhist religion. This is further supported by the fact that there are two low-caste groups (ChaN and Lohar) who continue to live among PaTani people but still speak Indo-Aryan dialects. They did not change their religion either. Now they are bilingual and the use of their first language is limited to within the caste and within the family alone.

Murmured consonants. In the phonemic system of PaTani we have breathy voiced consonants. We prefer to call them murmured consonants since their phonetic nature is different from that of the breathy voiced consonants found in Hindi. These consonants cause the following vowel to be murmured. These murmured consonants are found in word-initial position only. They include the following ten phonemes:

(bh) (dh) (Dh) (jh) (gh)

mh nh

lh rh yh.

The five obstruents /bh dh Dh jh gh/ may be considered separately, since they are found only in non-TB roots. The other five are attested in TB roots as well.

Retroflex consonants. PaTani has /T/, /Th/, /D/, /Dh/, /N/, /R/, /S/. Retroflex affricates are Tr, Thr, Dr. In these series of retroflex affricates one cannot distinguish roots which contain specific consonants in terms of TB roots or non-TB roots. Here one is tempted to think in terms of the 'language area' hypothesis, and to consider these consonants to have been diffused from Dravidian via Indo-Aryan and/or directly from the Indo-Aryan family. But we tend to believe that they may go back to an original Indo-Aryan substratum for which there is still evidence in some TB dialects, especially in PaTani.

Noun declensions are developed for case (nominative/vocative, accusative/dative, agentive, ablative, genitive) and number (singular, dual, plural). The nominative/vocative does not take any suffix but for the other cases suffixes are used along with dual and plural number suffixes. Similar declensions are also available for pronouns.

Verbs are conjugated for present, past, and future tenses in three persons and three numbers (sg. du. pl.). Perfective, imperative, and subjunctive moods have distinct suffixes. Auxiliary verbs are also conjugated for three tenses used in a compound verb. Inflected forms of the auxiliary (as a second member) and uninflected forms of noun or verb (as the first member) may be used in compounds. From the history of TB languages and descriptions available we find that such inflections are rare in the TB family. PaTani has developed a very rich system of inflections. Therefore, we may say that PaTani has developed some new types of structures which are of great interest to typology in general and to the TB family in particular. I think it is not always possible to trace the origin of some features found in languages, and it may be at times futile to try to do so. I intend to explore the history and geography of these features when data on other dialects becomes available. So the present treatment may be considered as the beginning of my explorations into some of the TB dialects spoken in this area. Some sample inflectional paradigms follow:

	NOUN DECLENSION		
	Sg.	kaTu Du.	'child' Pl.
Nominative/Vocative	kaTu	kaTuku	kaTure
Accusative/Dative	kaTubi	kaTukutiN	kaTutiN
Agentive	kaTui	kaTukui	kaTutsi
Ablative	kaTuriNzi	kaTukuriNzi	kaTuNzi
Genitive	kaTu:	kaTukutu	kaTutu

VERB CONJUGATION

lhai 'to do'.

	Sg.	Du.	Pl.
Present			
I p.	lha:tag	lha:tasi	lha:tani
II p.	lha:tan	lha:tasi	lha:tani
III p.	lha:lha:za	lha:toku	lha:tore
Past			
I p.	lha:riga	lha:risi	lha:rini
II p.	lha:rina	lha:risi	lha:rini
III p.	lha:ri	lha:riku	lha:rire
Future			
I p.	lhowog	lhowosi	lhowoni
II p.	lhowon	lhowosi	lhowoni
III p.	lhowoto	lhowoku	lhowore
Perfective mood (past)			
I p.	lha:ttag	lha:ttesi	lha:tteni
II p.	lha:ttan	lha:ttesi	lha:tteni
III p.	lha:tte	lha:tteku	lha:tter
Perfective Mood (present)			
I p.	lha:ttag	lha:tasi	lha:tani
II p.	lha:ttan	lha:tasi	lha:tani
III p.	lha:tta:	lha:ttaku	lha:ttar
Subjunctive mood	lhaga:	lhasia	lha:nia
Imperative	lhon	lha:si	lha:ni

For interrogatives /-a/ is added to the verb after tense, mood and person suffixes.

* * * * *

References

- Bauman, James John. 1975. Pronouns and pronominal morphology in Tibeto-Burman languages (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley). 319 pp. Quoted in Hale 1982.
- Benedict, Paul K. 1972. Sino-Tibetan: a Conspectus. (Contributing ed., James A. Matisoff.) Cambridge University Press.
- Egerod, Søren. 1974. "Sino-Tibetan languages." *Encyclopedia Britannica* 16:796-806.
- Emeneau, M.B. 1956. "India as a linguistic area." *Language* 32: 3-16.
- Grierson, G.A. 1909. Linguistic Survey of India. Vol. III, Tibeto-Burman Family, Part I. Reprinted 1967, Motilal Barnarsidass. Delhi.
- Hale, Austin. 1982. Research in Tibeto-Burman Languages. Mouton & Co. The Hague.
- Matisoff, James A. 1978. Variational Semantics in Tibeto-Burman: the organic approach to linguistic comparison. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.
- Nishida, Tatsuo. 1970. A study of the Tibetan-Chinese vocabulary, "Hsi-fan-kuan I-yu": an introduction to Tibetan linguistics (Kyoto). Quoted in Hale 1982.
- Shafer, Robert. 1955. "Classification of Sino-Tibetan languages." *Word*, II:94-111.
- 1966-1973. Introduction to Sino-Tibetan. 5 Parts. Otto Harrassowitz. Wiesbaden.
- Sharma, S.R. 1982. "Loan words in PaTani: problems and mysteries." *Bulletin of the Deccan College*. Vol. 41, Poona.