
An Introduction to Mideaval Literature of Dialects of Hindi

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Like other major languages of the world, Hindi also has several dialects. These dialects are spread over the entire Hindi speaking region usually termed as Hindi Belt and constitute around 295 million native speakers of Hindi (Dialects and Standard Hindi). The region where Hindi is spoken are Indian states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

In the quest to analyze the developments in any language over time, a very important aspect is the manner in which the literature of that language has evolved over time. Literature in linguistics is almost as important as archaeological artifacts are to the study of civilization. It draws a clear picture of how changes in society have been reflected as changes in the language. Hindi literature is no different from any other in this regard. The history of Hindi literature is extremely rich and colorful. In this two-part article, we explore the evolution of Hindi literature from its earliest phases to modern times. The origins of Hindi as a language lie in the ancient Prakrit family of languages, from which most of the languages of the Indian subcontinent have developed. Post vedic Sanskrit is also responsible for a major part of Hindi's modern form. Between 100 BC and 100 CE, Sanskrit gradually began to replace the Prakrit languages in the inscriptions made by the rulers of that period. This was also the period during which Prakrit was being replaced by the Apabhramas as the lingua franca in Northern India. Apabhramsa literally means "not pure" or "corrupt". An early example of the use of Apabhramsas in literature is in Vikramorvashiyam by Kalidasa. From 100 CE to around 1200 CE, the Apabhramsas were the language of literature. Later these Apabhramsas would evolve into modern Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati and so forth. In 933 CE, Devasena wrote the Shrivakachar, which is considered to be the first Hindi book. Around 1283 CE, Amir Khusrau's pahalis and mukaris were some of the earliest writings in a language similar to modern Hindi. Khusrau used the term "Hindavi" in his writings, which may be the origin of the name Hindi. Most of the writings of the Aadikaal in Hindi literature are commentaries in the form of poetry. The works of this period can be divided into three major classes i.e. the Apabhramsa poetry, which is predominantly devotional in nature and comprises of many of the foundational writings of the Jain faith, the Vir Rasa, or Heroic poetry which mainly consists of poems written by court poets in praise of their rulers and finally Miscellaneous poetry which was by the common people. An important work of this time is the Prithviraj Raso, written by Chand Bardai in praise of the Rajput king, Prithviraj Chauhan. The poets of this period avoided eroticism in their works, scorned racial discrimination and concentrated on defining tenets of morality by way of their poetry. The Doha (couplet) style of poetry developed during this time. Depiction of nature is also common in the poetry of this period. Unfortunately, most of the literary works of this period were lost in Muhammad Ghor's campaign, and very little of it remains today. Towards the end of this period, Urdu and Farsi were becoming common in Northern India and they were beginning to have an effect on Hindi as well.

Bhaktikaal of Hindi Literature - The devotional era:-

The Bhaktikaal's origins seem to coincide with the arrival of the Mughals. This was the time when both the Sufi and Bhakti movements were gaining momentum in Islam and Hinduism respectively. Both the Sufi and Bhakti are based on devotional poetry and lyrics. The early works of Bhaktikaal style poetry date back to the times of Amir Khusrau, with his great works in Sufi literature. Other noteworthy poets include Baba Bulley Shah, who lived around the Kasur Punjab area. In the Bhakti movement two main sects evolved, the Nirguna and the Saguna. The Nirguna sect followed the concept of a shapeless, formless, all pervasive God, while the Saguna sect pursued the concept of God having a certain form and were predominantly worshipers of the incarnations of Vishnu. Major poets of the Nirguna sect are Sant Kabir and Guru Nanak, who's doha (couplet), and chaupayi (quartet) style of poetry remains a standard even now. On the Saguna side were stalwarts of Vaishnava poetry like Surdas, Tulsidas and Malik Muhammad Jayasi. Works like the Padmavat and the Ramacharitanamas were written in the Avadhi dialect of Hindi during this period. This was also a

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period of great integration between the Hindu and the Islamic elements of art and literature. A number of Muslim poets have written fantastic verse in praise of the Hindu gods, and vice versa. For example, Aburrahim Khan, the court poet to the Mughal emperor Akbar, was a great devotee of Lord Krishna. The Mughal rulers of this period also encouraged the integration of Hindu and Muslim societies. The Bhaktikaal is known as the Golden Age of Hindi literature on account of the beauty of the concepts portrayed as well as the choice of words used to present them.

Ritikaal of Hindi Literature - The refinement of writing styles:-

The Ritikaal, also known as the Scholastic period of Hindi literature, is marked by the increasing influence of eroticism on language and literary works. The era is also known for the tremendous refinement of procedures in writing and also for the recognition it brought to poetry and prose as an art form. Much of the writing of this period is an extension of the works of the Saguna sect of the Bhaktikaal. However, despite the fact that much of the writing of this period was under the banner of Krishna Bhakti, or devotion to the Lord Krishna, the focus of poetry shifted from devotion and oneness with God towards the more shringaric aspects of Krishna's life. The works of this period often describe, in semi-erotic verse, the flirtatious pranks played by Krishna on the gopis (milkmaids) of Vrindavan, as well as the physical beauty of his consort, Radha. The poets of Ritikaal can be classified into two groups. The Ritibaddha, meaning "bound by procedure" style of poetry was composed on definitional and (Lakshana) and illustrative (Lakshya) themes. These were meant to serve as examples and guidelines for the leading of a moral and correct life. Poets like Chintamani, Keshav, Mati Ram, Deva, Kulpati Misra, and Bhikari Das were leaders of this style. The Ritimukta, meaning "free of procedure" style, consists of free-minded poets like Alam, Ghananand, Bodha and Thakur. They wrote in a spontaneous manner with powerful feelings of love, quite apart from rhetorical poetry. One of the most famous works of this period is the Bihari Satsai, by the poet Bihari, which consists of seven hundred verses.

Mideaval Literature of Major Dialects of Hindi :-

Hindi also has several dialects. These dialects are spread over the entire Hindi speaking region usually termed as Hindi Belt and constitute more than three million native speakers of Hindi (Dialects and Standard Hindi). The region where Hindi is spoken are Indian states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The large number of speakers makes Hindi as the 4th position language in the world as per the largest number of its speakers. Hindi is also spoken in almost entire India as the second language of many Indians and it has influenced other languages of India. Because of such a large number of its native speakers, it is suggested that Hindi must be one of the official language of United Nations. There are many dialect of Hindi which may include major dialects termed as Proper Hindi. Here we are concerned to mideaval period literature of these dialects hence focus only has been made on the same. These major dialects of Hindi are:

Braj Bhasha:-

Braj is associated with Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Central zone, Western Hindi, Unclassified group linguistically.

“ Braj Bhasha”

consists of two terms Braj and Bhasha, Braj means a region where this dialect is spoken and Bhasha is extended form of a dialect spoken by larger people than a dialect. This is a major dialect of Hindi which is spoken in the northwestern part of state of Uttar Pradesh, the eastern part of state of Rajasthan and the southern part of state of Haryana. The speakers of this dialect belong to the region which is historically known as Braj in the Hindu epics of Mahabharata and is considered as the birth place of Hindu God Krishna

It was a prominent dialect before 19th century. This dialect is very important in its contribution to the literature as most of the Hindi literature from the in the medieval period including Bhakti Kal (Bhakti era 1375 to 1700). The famous poets of Hindi like Surdas, Bhai Gurdas and Amir Khusro wrote in Braj Bhasha. There is no mideaval literature of Hindi if we exclude braj mideaval literature. Antarbedi, Antarvedi, Bijbhasha, Braj, Braj Bhakha, Bri, Brij Bhasha, Brijju, Bruj are other names which is used for Braj. We found braj in its three forms, first Central Braj which is mainly spoken in

Mathura region. Second Western braj spoken in Hathras, Aligarh, Bulandshahar, Tappal reason and Third Eastern form which spoken in Etah, Badaun up to mainpuri reason. Braj Bhasha is mainly a rural tongue currently, predominant in the nebulous Braj region centred around Mathura & Agra in Uttar Pradesh and Bharatpur & Dholpur in Rajasthan. It is the redominant language in the central stretch of the Ganges-Yamuna Doab in the Mathura, Agra, Firozabad, Hathras, Etah, Mainpuri, Etawah, Aligarh, Bulandshahr, Noida, Farrukhabad, Kasganj, Badaun districts of Uttar Pradesh. It stretches across the Ganges into the non-Doabi districts of Badaun and Bareilly and goes up to the foothills of Nainital at Udham Singh Nagar in Uttarakhand. Besides Uttar Pradesh, it is spoken in the bordering areas of Rajasthan, mainly in the following districts: Bharatpur and Dhaulpur , as well as parts of Karauli, from where onwards it merges into Rajasthani languages. It is also spoken in the areas of Haryana south of Delhi, mainly in Faridabad district and eastern areas of Gurgaon and Mewat districts. In madhya pradesh it is spoken in the districts of Bhind, Murena, Gwalior, shyopur and shivpuri. It is spoken in several villages of Delhi, specially in Kotla Mubarakpur, Khanpur, and all other villages belongs to Gurjars along with Rajput Thakurs.

Bagheli:-

Bagheli is a dialect of Hindi which is spoken in the Baghelkhand region of central India. The Bagheli speakers are found mainly in six districts of Madhya Pradesh especially Rewa, Satna, Sidhi, Shahdol, Umaria and Anuppur.

Kannauji:-

Kannauji is a dialect of Hindi which is spoken in the parts of tstate of Kannauj in the state of Uttar Pradesh as well as some other parts of the same state. Some consider Kannauji a seperate language of its own which is closely related to Hindi. Kannauji also has its two dialects like Tirhari and Transitional Kanauji , which is between standard Kanauji and Awadhi. In total, it boosts about 6 million native speakers.

Chhattisgarhi:-

Chhattisgarhi is a dialect of Hindi which is also the official language in the Indian state of Chhattisgarh and also spoken in adjacent areas of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Jharkhand. The region of Chhattisgarh is also called Dakshin Kosal in ancient time and so the classical name of Chhattisgarhi is Kosali or Dakshin Kosali with historical significance.

At present there is little literary endeavour in Awadhi, since most speakers have adopted western Hindi or Urdu. Although today it is only considered a dialect of Hindi, before the standardization of Hindi, it was one of the two most important literary dialect of Hindustani (the other being Brij Bhasha). Awadhi has been one of the earliest Indo Aryan languages to be cultivated for literature. The oldest specimen of Awadhi is found in Ukti-vyakti-prakarana of Damodara Pandita who flourished during the first half of the 12th century. He wrote this book to teach awadhi through his mother tongue which was a kind of old Awadhi. The Sufi tradition which became established in India in the 14th century found a series of writers mostly Muslim who took a number of poems of medieval Hindu inspiration and wove them into poems in Awadhi, Maulana Daud was probably the first of them. The manuscripts of these poems in Awadhi are mostly Persian in character due to the Muslim influence existing at that point of time. The Awadhi dialect of Hindi was enriched by a number of Sufi writers who wove some romantic tales of the folklore type into beautiful allegorical plays by way of elucidating the characteristics of Sufi doctrines. Maulana Daud is the author of the oldest work of this type Chandayan. But the greatest writer of this school was Malik Muhammad Jayasi whose poem Padmavat composed between 1520 to 1540 is a detailed Sufi allegorical treatment of the famous story of Rani Padmini of Chittor. The greatest awadhi writer during this period was Gosvami Tulsidas, born in U.P. sometime in 1523. He wrote his masterpiece Ramcharitmanas sometime in 1574 in his native language Awadhi. It narrates the story of Rama and through it propounds the story of the Bhakti Cult. Tulsidas wrote many other devotional works of which Vinaya-Patrika (letters of Prayer) is most well known. Important works in Awadhi are the Candayan of Maulana Da"ud , the Padmavat of Malik Mohammad Jaisi (1540 A.D.), the Ramcharitmanas of Tulsidas (1575 A.D.), Indravati by Nur Muhammad (1757 A.D.). Much of the Hindu literature, including Chhalis

such as Hanuman Chalisa, are written in Avadhi. Much of the North-Indian Hindu literature, including devotional poem such as Hanuman Chalisa, are written in Awadhi. In popular cultur

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