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SYNTACTIC CONVERGENCE: MARATHI AND DRAVIDIAN

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to examine some syntactic structures in Marathi and show that they share the pattern of the Dravidian syntactic constructions, which are absent in other Indo-Aryan languages, such as Hindi. The paper claims that Marathi syntactic structures, which look like Dravidian, did not result from simple borrowing, but they are a case of conversion. Furthermore, they provide support to the claim that Marathi developed as quasi-Creole from pidginized Prakrit. Both Pidgin and Creole are trade languages. Such a linguistic development would not have been possible without the trade interaction between the two language groups, Maharashtrians (Aryans) and Dravidians. The development of Marathi as quasi Creole indicates the fact that contacts between the two groups, Aryans and Dravidians, occurred at the deeper levels of languages and cultures.*

Key words: *Indo-Aryan, conversion, pidginized Prakrit, quasi-Creole.*

1. Introduction

Marathi is the southern-most Indo-Aryan language, but some of its most striking features resemble those of the neighboring Dravidian languages like Telugu and Kannada. Scholars, such as Bloch (1914) and Southworth (1971) noted many of these influences in the area of phonology and morphology.

This paper examines some syntactic structures in Marathi (relative clauses, passive construction, zero pronouns, etc.) and compares them to Dravidian syntax. This paper claims that these similar structures did not result from simple borrowing, but that they are a case of conversion.

Conversion indicates that Marathi developed as quasi-Creole from pidginized Prakrit through the socio-cultural interaction between the two linguistic groups, Maharashtrians (Aryans) and Dravidians.

2. Syntactic Constructions

2.1. Full Relative Clauses:

Like other Indo-Aryan languages Marathi relative clause construction consists of two clauses containing co-referential NP's. The relative clause may precede or follow the main clause.

(1) Marathi: jo mānus titha ubhā āhe to mājhā bhāu āhe
Hindi: jo ādmī vahā khaṛā hai vah merā bhāi hai
who man there standing is he my brother
"The man who is standing there is my brother".
Telugu: ------

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(2) Marathi: ĵe pustak tu malā dila te maĵha hātāt āhe
Hindhi: ĵo kitāb tūne muĵhe dī vo mere hātme hai
which book you to-me gave that my hands-in
"The book which you gave me is in my hands."
Telugu: ------

2.2. Reduced Relative Clauses:

From the examples in (1) and (2), it is clear that Dravidian languages do not use a full relative clause construction. In these languages the only dominant clause construction is the reduced relative clause construction. In addition to the full relative clause structure, which is similar to other Indo-Aryan languages, such as Hindi, Marathi has reduced relative clauses. We can categorize them in two types: (1) relative clauses without the relativized NP (or without the relative pronoun and NP) and (2) Participial relative clauses. Consider the following example.

(3) Marathi: titha ubhā āhe to maṇus mājhā bhāu āhe
Hindi: * vahā khaṛā hai vo ādmī merā bhāi hai
there standing is that man my brother is
"The man (who is) standing there is my brother."

Marathi, being more inflectional than the Dravidian languages, allows such a deletion since the confusion of reference does not arise due to agreement patterns. In addition to this reduced relative clause construction, Marathi makes use of participial constructions. Basically it makes use of three types of participles, past or perfect, progressive and habitual.

(4) Marathi: [malā pāhilelā] mulgā paḷālā
Telugu: [nānnu tsūsinā] pillādu paripōyādu
Hindi: *[muĵhe dekhā huā] laṛkā bhāgā
me-acc. seen boy ran away
"The boy who saw me ran away." (Rel: Subj.)

(5) Marathi: mī [padlelyā māṇsālā] pāhila
Telugu: nēnu [padina vaṇṇi] tsūsænu
Hindi: *maine [gire huye ādmīko] dekhā
I - inst. Fallen man-acc. saw
"I saw the man who fell." (Rel: Dir. Obj.)

(6) Marathi: [mī pustak dilelā] māṇus
Telugu: [nēnu ami pustakam iccina] ayana
Hindi: *[maine kitāb diyā huā] ādmī
I-inst. book given man
"The man to whom I gave the book." (Rel: Indr. Obj.)

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(7) Marathi: [kāl tina pustak dilelā] māṇus
Telugu: [vadu ninna ami pustakālu iccina] ayana
Hindi: *[kal usne kitāb diyā huā] ādmi
yesterday she-inst. book given man
"The man she gave the book to yesterday."(Rel: IO)

(8) Marathi: [rāmne bolāvlelā] mulgā āt ālā
Telugu: [rāmudu piliccādu] attadini lopāliki waccādu
Hindi: *[rāmkā pukārā huā] laṛkā andar āyā
"The boy called by Ram came in." (Rel: DO)

If we compare the structure of Marathi, Hindi, and Telugu, examples (4), (5), (6), (7) and (8), Marathi resembles the relative clause structure of Telugu, whereas, Hindi does not allow the relativization or modification of subjects, direct objects, and indirect objects by participle phrases.

2.3. Passive Construction

The more topic prominent a language is, the less it uses the passive.

De-Passivization

(9) Marathi: mājhyā kadun te kām kela gela nāhi
me-by the work did went not
"I was not able to do that work." (Capabilitative)

(10) Marathi: diwāḷicā diwši laxmiči pujā keli jāte
diwali of day laxmi's worship did goes
"Laxmi is worshipped on the day of Diwali." (Perspective)

An examination of the Dravidian languages shows that they do not have passive constructions. To quote Caldwell (1956: 463) "The Dravidian verb is entirely destitute of a passive voice, properly so called, nor is there any reason to suppose that it ever had a passive. None of the Dravidian dialects possesses any passive particle or suffix, or any means of expressing passivity by direct inflexional changes...."

The function/usage of the passive is to mark the passivity or indirectness of the action, which is clearly a discourse strategy. But when languages use another strategy for indicating the indirectness of the action, or do not involve the subject by de-emphasizing it, there is no need for those languages to develop the passive.

2.4. Deletion of Co-referential Constituent (Use of Zero-NP Anaphora)

This rule of deleting co-referential constituent is governed by pragmatics or discourse considerations. In noting the application of this phenomenon, Gundel (1980) has made the following generalization:

The more topic-prominent a language, the less restricted its use of Zero-NP Anaphora.

It has been suggested that it is the topic rather than the subject that controls the deletion of co-referential constituent (Li & Thompson 1976, Gundel 1980). The more Zero-pronouns a language has the more

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topic prominent it is. Indo-Aryan languages are more topic prominent than they are subject prominent (Junghare 1981). Dravidian languages are more topic prominent than Indo-Aryan and hence make more use of Zero-pronouns than Indo-Aryan languages. Naturally, Marathi being contiguous to Telugu makes more use of Zero-NP's than Hindi.

(11) Marathi: rām itha āhe. mi tyālā pāhila
Hindi: rām yahā hẽ. maine usko dekhā
ram here is I him saw
Telugu: rāmu ikkada unnādu. nenu (atanni) chusænu
ram here is I 0 saw

"Ram is here. I saw him."

(12) Marathi: [tu] kuṇālā pāhilas? [mi] tyālā pāhila
Hindi: tumne kisko dekhā? maine usko dekhā
you whom saw I him saw
Telugu: 0 evarini chusavu? 0 atanni chusænu

"Q: Who did *you* see? A: *I* saw *him*."

(13) Marathi: [tu] kuṭha cāllis? [mi] deuḷāt cālli
Hindi: tu kahā jā rahī? maĩ mandir jā rahī hũ
you where going (I) temple going am
Telugu: 0 ekkadiki veḷtunnāru? 0 gudiki veḷtunnānu

"Q: Where are *you* going? A: *I* am going to the temple."

2.5. Word Order and Topicalization

The word order both in Indo-Aryan and Dravidian is flexible, which allows any constituent to occur in the sentence initial position and to become topic. There does not seem to be any constraint on what can serve as the topic.

(14) "I bought that book for Ram."

Marathi: mi rāmsāṭhi te pustak ghetla
Hindi: maine rāmkeliye vah kitāb kharidī
Telugu: nēnu rāmudi kōsam ā pustakam konnānu
I ram for that book bought

(15) "For Ram, I bought that book."

Marathi: rāmsāṭhi te pustak ghetla mi
Hindi: ?rāmkeliye vah kitāb kharidī maine
Telugu: rāmudi kōsam ā pustakam konnānu
ram for that book bought I

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(16) "That book, I bought for Ram."

Marathi: te pustak mi rāmsāṭhi ghetla
Hindi: ?vah kitāb maine rāmkeliye kharidī
Telugu: ā pustakam rāmudi kōsam konnānu
that book ram for bought I

2.6. Basicness of Topic Comment Structures and Marking of Definiteness

Word order in Indo-Aryan and Dravidian is, to a large extent, determined by topic-comment relation rather than by grammatical relation. Topic-comment structure seems to prevail in these languages. Post-positional noun phrases seem to occupy the sentence initial position when they are topics; whereas subject noun phrases, when indefinite, occur somewhere else in the sentence. Sentences in (17) illustrate this point.

(17) "There is a book on the table."

Marathi: ṭeblāvar ek pustak āhe
Hindi: ṭebalpar ek kitāb hai
Telugu: ṭēbulu mīda ō pustakam undi table on one book is

(18) "The book is on the table."

Marathi: pustak ṭeblāvar āhe
Hindi: kitāb ṭebalpar hai
Telugu: pustakam ṭēbulu mīda undi

Several grammatical constructions have been examined: full relative clauses, reduced relative clauses, participial relative clauses, passive, deletion of co-referential NP's or the use of Zero-NP anaphora, word-order variation, and topicalization in Marathi, Hindi, and Telugu, a representative of Dravidian language family. The analysis shows that Marathi stands between Hindi and Telugu. There is no doubt that the influence of Dravidian, particularly of Telugu, on Marathi grammar is significant. Generally, due to contact, languages borrow at the levels of phonology, morphology, and lexicon. Marathi seems to have gone further into the level of syntax.

Clearly, Marathi contains two kinds of relative clauses: (1) Full relative clauses which resemble Indo- Aryan structure, comparable to Hindi, another Indo-Aryan language. And (2) Reduced relative clause structure, comparable to Telugu, a Dravidian language. Synchronically, they seem to represent two levels of discourse, formal as opposed to informal, written vs. spoken. Full relative clauses represent Indo-Aryan, and formal speech, whereas, Reduced relative clauses present Dravidian pattern and are more colloquial. Southworth (1971) remarked that the speech of the uneducated (particularly non - Brahmins) and also of women is consistently less Sanskritized, or more

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Dravidianized. Changes in the direction of the Dravidian are often carried through more consistently in non-standard speech. Can the syntactic patterning be explained simply on the basis of the borrowings due to cultural contact?

The Marathi syntactic and semantic patterns cannot be satisfactorily explained by the process of borrowing from Dravidian. These similarities show that the intimate parts of the grammatical structures were relatively secure from outside influence. These structures show non-lexical influence, that is the use of inherited Indo-Aryan morphemes (in most cases) according to completely Dravidian pattern. The process of borrowing involves *primarily* the transfer of lexical items from one language to another, though extensive borrowing may also contribute to structural changes of various kinds.

Some of the structural similarities, such as the patterning of reduced relative clauses and other syntactic processes could be explained by the pidginization process, which is distinct from borrowing in that it involves a sharp break in transmission and the creation of a new code, which serves for communication between two groups which previously had no common language. Pidgins are popularly thought to combine the vocabulary of one language with the grammar of the other. Marathi seems to have the vocabulary of Indo-Aryan and grammar of Dravidian.

3. Implications of Syntactic Similarities with those of Dravidian

In order to explain the grammatical structures of Marathi which are similar to Dravidian, Southworth suggested that Marathi is a quasi-Creole language, meaning it might have developed from a pidgin or pidginized parent language. Southworth states that the present characteristics of Marathi are probably the result of a prolonged process of mutual adaptation between an Aryan language and a local Pidgin-Creole (or more likely, a series of pidgin-Creoles).

Marathi, even in its oldest known form (tenth century A.D.) presents a picture of syntactic and lexical convergence; on lexical grounds, it is Indo-Aryan, and grammatical footings, it is Dravidian. Grammatical and semantic resemblances with Dravidian have been massive.

4. Other Morphological, Semantic and Phonological Resemblances:

(1) *Morphological:* Marathi has developed a whole set of negative auxiliaries on the Dravidian pattern: *karat nāhi* 'doesn't work' *karu nako* 'do not work' (Southworth 1971). It appears that Marathi constructions consist of inherited Indo-Aryan material (including the initial morphemes) but have been modeled on the prevailing Dravidian pattern.

(2) *Semantic*: The most important resemblances between Marathi and Dravidian are found in the realm of semantics; for example, the inclusive and exclusive first person plural pronoun [āpaṇ] 'we' (you and I/we, or just *us*); and absence of copula which identifies one NP with another (for example, mājha nāv rashmī). Also, Marathi shows the development of verbal sequences, called verbal operators such as khāun ṭāk (finish up eating).

(3) *Phonological:* The development of dental affricates, *c*, and *j*, and frequency of retroflex *ṇ* and *ḷ* seem to resemble the phonological features of Telegu and Kannada.

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5. Summary & Conclusion:

The paper has examined some Marathi syntactic structures and compared them with the similar structures in the neighboring languages: Hindi (Indo-Aryan), and Telugu (Dravidian). The syntactic constructions included full and reduced relative clauses, participial clauses, passive constructions, use of Zero pronouns (or deletion of co-referential constituents), word order variation, topic-comment structures, and marking of definiteness. The analyses showed remarkable resemblances between Marathi and Telugu syntactic constructions, which lead us to conclude that such syntactic similarities cannot be attributed to simple borrowings and that they have resulted from the process of conversion.

The complex and elaborate structure of relative clauses in Marathi, particularly the reduced relative clauses which are patterned after Telugu, and which are not so extensively used in other Indo-Aryan languages, seem to provide additional support to Southworth's theory of the creolized nature of Marathi and its origin from a pidginized Prakrit. It is recognized that Marathi was developed around 10th century A.D. from Maharashtri Prakrit which was the language of common folks; Prakrit meaning "naturally evolved." Whereas, Sanskrit "well formed" language was the language of Brahmins and the educated. India has been known for social stratification. In Sanskrit plays, the language of the low classes and women characters was Maharashtri Prakrit. The language of upper classes and men was Sanskrit.

Southworth (1971) claims that pidginized Prakrit resulted as a language of communication between the Dravidian workers and Indo-Aryan employers. Later pidginized Prakrit was adopted as mother tongue by both groups and became Creole from which developed present day Marathi. The adoption of pidginized Prakrit as mother tongue changed its status from pidgin to Creole or quasi-Creole (not fully Creole.)

The following diagram indicates Southworth's analysis about the origin of Marathi.

Marathi: Full Relative Clauses + Relative clauses without relative pronouns + Reduced Relative clauses (participial clauses)

Telugu: (Dravidian) Only reduced or participial clauses

Hindi: Full Relative Clauses + limited reduced relative clauses

Marathi: Two levels:
(1) Formal, Standard (Indo-Aryan)
(2) Informal, Colloquial (Dravidian)

OIA => Prakrit => Maharashtrian (Upper class) Pkt. â¤µ
Creolized Pkt. => Marathi
Prakrit => Maharashtrian Pidgin Pkt â¤´
+
Dravidian
local lg.

Whether Marathi qualifies as a true Creole or not, the study of its grammatical structure and its patterning after Dravidian, which cannot be explained by the process of simple borrowing is surely a case of convergence. It points to the socio-cultural

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interaction between the Dravidians and the Maharashtrians. Initially, the Maharashtrians, as Indo-Aryan, might have been employers and considered themselves to be superior to the Dravidians. But in due course of time, they must have developed neighborly and brotherly economic and socio- cultural relations that helped shape the language of basic Dravidian structure with the lexicon from Indo-Aryan, i.e. Marathi.

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