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Keywords: Pashto Proverbs, Environmental Wisdom, Arran Stibbe, Wind Patterns, Human-Nature.

Authors:

Rohila Rehman: M.Phil. Scholar, Department of English, FATA University, Darra Adam Khel, FR Kohat, KP, Pakistan.

Muhammad Imran: (Corresponding Author)
Lecturer, Department of English, FATA University Darra Adam Khel FR Kohat, KP, Pakistan.
(Email: Imran@fu.edu.pk)

Wasim Ullah: M.Phil. Scholar, Department of English, FATA University, Darra Adam Khel, FR Kohat, KP, Pakistan.

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Traditional Weather Prediction in Pashto Proverbs: An Ecolinguistic Analysis of Environmental Framing

Rohila Rehman[1] , Muhammad Imran[2] (Corresponding Author), Wasim Ullah[3]

[1] M.Phil. Scholar, Department of English, FATA University, Darra Adam Khel, FR Kohat, KP, Pakistan.
[2] Lecturer, Department of English, FATA University Darra Adam Khel FR Kohat, KP, Pakistan.
(Email: Imran@fu.edu.pk)
[3] M.Phil. Scholar, Department of English, FATA University, Darra Adam Khel, FR Kohat, KP, Pakistan,.

Abstract

This research article examines Pashto proverbs through an eco-linguistic perspective to identify the environmental wisdom embedded in them and understand how applicable they may be in the environmental situation of the modern day. The study follows a qualitative and descriptive approach, the work of Arran Stibbe (2015), which is titled Stories We Live By. Ten Pashto proverbs were intentionally chosen out of credible written materials and oral records. The filtering requirements gave preference to terms associated with weather conditions, seasonal variations, schedule of rainfall, temperature variations, wind patterns and agricultural activities. The results imply that Pashto proverbs hold experience-based environmental wisdom passed on to other generations by human-nature interaction. The proverbs, when combined, foster the culture of environmental moderation, flexibility and custodianship. The application of indigenous systems of knowledge in addition to the modern scientific paradigms may contribute to increasing the level of sustainable environmental education and language preservation.

Keywords: *Pashto Proverbs, Environmental Wisdom, Arran Stibbe, Wind Patterns, Human-Nature.*

Introduction

The weather is a significant concern that has played a vital role in the existence of man especially in the agricultural societies. Before the emergence of meteorology, people used to interpret changes in the environment by relying on systematic observation and experience as well as oral tradition. In these systems, proverbs became one of the most powerful tools of creating and passing such knowledge to the following generations (Finnegan, 2012). Pashto proverbs (متلونه) take the leading role in the cultural and linguistic life of Pashtun society. They are often used in ordinary speech to pass moral lessons, social values and practical advice. There exists a large body of proverbs in Pashto, dealing directly with weather, climate, and farming, which is the result of agricultural roots of the Pashtun community. These proverbs have been used in the past to give farmers advice on how to plant, collect and how to set up against seasonal adversity.

Although they are still used in rural areas, old weather-based proverbs are often seen as outdated in regard to the new scientific forecasting. However, researchers argue that the indigenous knowledge systems are based on empirical testing and years of environmental engagement as opposed to superstition (Ellen et al., 2000). This view prompts a review of Pashto proverbs as important sources of environmental wisdom. The current study is going to examine Pashto proverbs related to weather and agriculture and to assess their relevance to contemporary scientific concepts. The intellectual value of the Pashto oral traditions is emphasized in the research through the ethnolinguistic approach, being added to the overall academic discussion of the systems of indigenous knowledge.

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Problem Statement

Pashto proverbs that carry traditional ecological knowledge are being forgotten in the current academic and environmental discussions. Consequently, the eco-linguistic significance of these proverbs, in particular, weather and agriculture ones, are under-researched, whereas they are of importance to environmental consciousness and sustainable environment.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to provide;

1. To study eco-linguistically Pashto proverbs.
2. To determine the ecological information enshrined on the Pashto language.
3. To see the application of Pashto proverbs to the modern environmental problems.

Literature Review

Proverbs are used as an essential element of an oral narrative and a cultural expression. According to Finnegan (2012), proverbs are brief methods of imparting the wisdom that many individuals share with each other, and they are easy to memorize and sound plausible. Ethnolinguistically, the terms that we use reveal how our people within a group believe and respond to the natural world (Malik, 2016). Research on the environmental literacy of the indigenous population depicts that these communities acquire information on the weather and climate through observation and monitoring during a period (Ellen et al., 2000). According to Roncoli et al. (2009), folk weather ideas tend to be the same as the scientific ideas about climate changes although the former are not measured using formal instruments. Briggs (2013) further says that indigenous knowledge cannot be considered inferior to science but rather an alternative knowledge.

A number of studies have been recently done in South Asia on folk proverbs related to the farming and weather (Hussain, 2018). However, the proverbs of the Pashto have long been regarded as literature and cultural heritage, and not as a source of knowledge about nature and nature (Shah, 2014). The present research should help close this gap by scientifically and ethnolinguistically investigating Pashto weather-related proverbs.

In ethnomethodology, traditional weather prediction encoded in proverbs is extensively addressed, and folk signs and rules-of-thumb passed down locally are regarded as locally based systems of knowledge about predicting rain, cold, winds, or season change (Rudnev, 2011). Empirical studies not confined to South Asia indicate that this kind of proverbial knowledge is not only symbolic: predictions made using proverbs have been quantified into testable assertions against meteorological lists. Indicatively, a Polish weather/temperature proverb study that coded proverbs as harbingers and tested them using long-term station data exhibited a way of isolating rhetorical flourish and statements that acted as environmental predictive heuristics (Pucek et al., 2020). Other literature also puts a folk forecasting in a more practical context, and in particular in agrarian-based contexts where formal forecasts are scarce or less trusted; small-farmer settings demonstrate that local forecasting can coexist but also cocompete or be integrated into daily risk management with scientific meteorology (Leclerc et al., 2015).

In the context of paremiology (studies of proverbs), there is a tendency to treat proverbs as statements of highly condensed cultural "worldview" they are passed along due to their catchiness, ratification by society, and applicability to recurring scenarios (Arewa and Dundes, 1964). Their metaphorical form and rabid transmission across generations are a classic definition of proverbs--that which makes them perfect carriers of environmental memory (Mieder, 2004). This is of particular importance to Pashto mataluna who serve to provide culturally authoritative direction and assessment. The preservation of social norms and ethnolinguistic identity by Pashto is frequently predicted in Pashto proverb scholarship (Khan, 2023), and curated corpora, which are frequently translated and annotated with cultural commentary, can be used to support systematic linguistic analysis (Tair and Edwards, 2009). Nevertheless, Pashto-studies have had a tendency to give more weight to the identity, morality and social order rather than having ecological

knowledge as such, leaving traditional weather prediction as an under-theorized thematic domain in Pashto paremiology.

Weather-predictive proverbs as environmental framing can be analyzed using a solid theory of ecolinguistics. The early work in language ecology describes the field as one of interactions between language and the environment (Haugen, 1972), and the work of ecolinguistics that followed later is characterized by the discourse being a stories that we live by and that can be assessed in terms of ecological impact (Stibbe, 2015/2021). On this perspective, it is possible to study Pashto weather proverbs regarding what they foretell (e.g., rain omens, wind patterns, cloud patterns) but how they describe the relationship between people and land, people and animals, people and seasons, and people and divine power, in terms of metaphor, judgment, and causality. The scholarship of cognitive framing also claims that framing decisions shape environmental meanings and determine which of the above elements of risk, stewardship, inevitability, and reciprocity comes to the fore in mass and ordinary discourse (Lakoff, 2010).

An ecolinguistic literature review therefore points toward three productive analytic priorities for Pashto data: (1) ecological indexing (which species, landscapes, and seasonal cues are mobilized as “signs”); (2) framing patterns (agency, responsibility, and moral evaluation of environmental change); and (3) epistemic stance (how certainty, tradition, and authority are linguistically marked). The key gap is a Pashto-centered, corpus-based account that links proverb form and metaphor to measurable environmental knowledge (as in proverb-accuracy studies) while also interpreting the cultural frames through which Pakhtun communities narrate climate, uncertainty, and adaptation.

Methodology

A qualitative descriptive design is an ideal study design since it is ideal in excavating the linguistic, cultural, and symbolic meanings concealed in the Pashto proverbs. We are not grinding the numbers but we get a profound insight into metaphors, cultural imagery as well as how individuals actually employ these sayings in their daily life (Geertz, 1973). It demonstrates how these proverbs possess the environmental knowledge in the language that people speak on daily basis.

Ten Pashto proverbs that explicitly refer to weather patterns, seasonal changes, change of temperature, rainfall, direction and intensity of wind, and mode of farming constitute the main data. We selected them intentionally among widely known collections of Pashto sayings, and as part of oral traditions which were prevalent among Pashtun communities in the rural areas of the 1800s. The reason why we selected them is that they were culturally authentic, reliable, frequently used and that there is a clear association with environmental events, thus all the proverbs are, in fact, traditional ecological knowledge.

Arran Stibbe (2015) ecolinguistic framework, in particular, the concept of the Stories We Live By is used to direct the analysis. Proverbs are regarded as discursive formations which influence and reflect the relationship that people have with nature. All the sayings are analyzed according to the categories such as framing, evaluation, metaphor, identity, and ecological orientation to identify what values and worldviews are contained in them. This approach demonstrates the way in which the traditional ecological knowledge is perpetuated and transmitted via the language.

The research has certain limitations also. It has only ten proverbs, and it is not comprehensive of all regional variety in regions where the Pashto language is spoken. As well, the variations in the environment and climate could change the extent to which some of the proverbs are factual in practice. However, the study is more about the meaning of these sayings as it is culturally and the ecological narratives that the sayings indicate and not about predictive accuracy.

Data Collection

The main content of the primary data is the ten Pashto proverbs, which are specifically related to weather conditions, the change of seasons, temperature, rainfall, and agriculture. These proverbs were chosen out of well-known Pashto proverb book collections and widely popular oral traditions within 19 th century Pashtun villages. The proverbs used had to be well known and culturally accepted to ensure that they were authentic and reliable.

Data Analysis and Discussion.

In this section, some Pashto proverbs involving weather and agriculture are thematically discussed. The proverbs are provided in Pashto writing and then provided in Romanized transliteration and English version. How these proverbs are relevant to modern day scientific understanding of meteorology and agriculture is then discussed.

Che baran pa wakht washi, hasil pa wakh rashi.

(In good time rain brings in good time harvest.)

The proverb emphasizes on the time of the rain rather than quantity. The conventional farmers knew that the rain had to fall at the most essential growth periods in order to maximize on the produce. In current agricultural knowledge, it is proved that water at germination and flowering has a decisive impact on crop yield (Hussain, 2018). It is based on empirical knowledge acquired over a long period of time.

Tori warayzhi tash las na zi.

Not in vain do the gloomy clouds fade away.

This adage is the simplest weather forecasting through the appearance of clouds. The dark and damp clouds are good predictors of the rain, which is proved by meteorology (Roncoli et al., 2009). The proverb demonstrates knowledge of the practical side of the atmosphere, though it does not use any technical language.

Pasarlai che shi also buzgar zharia.

(And when spring gooth the farmer regrets.)

Sowing is considered the best season in spring. Late planting typically reduces the output or results in the crop failure (Hussain, 2018). The proverb discourages procrastination.

Sarra zhmai, sakht kar ghwari.

(A cold winter requires working.)

The preparation of winter conditions, the construction of food deposits and fuel reserves have always been necessary. According to the anthropological study, agrarian societies have to work more and plan more around the wintertime (Kottak, 2017). The proverb is related to the climate hardship which can be attributed to human responsibility.

Dera garmi, wacha khawre zegoee.

(Excessive heat begets arid soil.)

Increased temperatures boost the rate of evaporation, and this results into soil dehydration and drought (Roncoli et al., 2009). This cause-effect relationship is caught in the proverb.

Baran da Khudai rehmat dai.

(Rain is God's mercy.)

The proverb in religious terms highlights the ecological need of rain. Native wisdom tends to define environmental reality in spiritual terms (Ellen et al., 2000). It stresses the primary role of rain in the maintenance of crop and life.

Badlegi badal badal shi, mausam badal shi.

When the weather changes the wind changes, when the wind changes, the weather changes.

The change in wind pattern is usually an indication of a changing weather pattern. According to modern climate science, one of the major indicators of atmospheric change is wind pattern (Hussain, 2018). The quote emphasizes the importance of paying attention to minor details.

Karwandgar sabar kawai, zamaka hisaab kawai.

(The farmer is patient and surveyor of land.)

Sustainable agriculture requires patience, planning as well as careful assessment. According to Briggs (2013), indigenous systems believe in observation and flexibility. This strategic perspective is contained in the proverb.

Dera yakhni fasal wazhni.

(Extreme cold kills crops.)

The cold weather kills plant tissues and does away with the yields (Roncoli et al., 2009). The adage is a warning to expect dangers in cold.

Yaw kaal na, tso kaalay wogora.

(Not by a year, but look, many.)

This adage underlines the significance of long term data as compared to short term trends. Climate studies are based on long term records as opposed to the seasonal changes (Ellen et al., 2000). It shows Pashtun interest in longitudinal observation.

Summary of Findings

The weather and agricultural Pashto proverbs are the outcome of systematic environmental monitoring, according to the theme analysis. They are utilized as general recommendations for making decisions, despite the fact that they do not produce precise forecasts. They are still useful now because they improve contemporary research by simplifying complicated ecological information.

Pashto proverbs are a type of folklore that encompasses all facets of society, culture, and humanity. As a multifaceted genre that addresses several facets of Pashtun life, its depth and complexity cannot be disputed. Because their region is made up of either mountains or plains encircled by mountains, Pashtuns are an integral part of nature. They are raised in the unadulterated natural environment from birth. Khalil et al. (2023) assert that the Pashto language has a close relationship with the natural world. The majority of Pashtuns dwell among the vegetation and animals in the upper highlands. Pashto is eco-friendly, and its folklore is full with eco-expressions. This is because Pashtuns appreciate living in the lap of nature.

The many moods, temperaments, and voices of nature are also known to Pashtuns. They may predict the future course of the environment by observing the many moods of nature. There are several proverbs in Pashto that discuss the weather, the peculiarities of the various months, the various rivers in Pashtun territory, and traditional knowledge on planting, harvesting, and reaping, among other topics. The fact that there are more proverbs that show an anthropocentric attitude of man toward the natural world does not negate the existence of proverbs in which nature speaks out against the cruel treatment it endures at the hands of man. Lynn White, Jr. (1996, p. 3)

Conclusion

This paper has discussed Pashto proverbs that refer to meteorological and agricultural situations to determine the extent to which they are empirical and scientific. Using a qualitative ethnolinguistic approach, a number of Pashto proverbs were shown to be buried in long-term environmental observation and practical agrarian experience. The results reveal strong associations between the traditional Pashtun meteorological knowledge and modern scientific principles especially when applied in contexts of timing of precipitation, seasonal planning, anemological trends, and temperature extremities. In spite of the fact that the Pashto proverbs are not comparable to the accuracy and forecasting abilities of the contemporary meteorological devices, they can be viewed as useful heuristic principles, instead of rigid forecasting. Their deficiencies are also emphasized by the modern climate change, which has reshaped most of the traditional weather patterns. However, these proverbs have cultural values and intellectual wisdom. The Pashto proverbs are the form of precursory environmental reasoning, and thus it can be concluded that the traditional society had developed advanced cognitions of the natural environment. Valuing and integrating such indigenous knowledge with modern science has the potential to improve academic studies, support sustainable farming, and preserve cultural heritage. The next generation of research can expand this question by incorporating empirical climatological evidence, regional differences, and comparative studies with other local knowledge systems.

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