THE PRIMITIVE TRACES OF THE BHOJPURI LANGUAGE

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Bhojpuri, a Neo Indo-Aryan language originated from Madhyadesha, now parts of Nepal and India, and also spread worldwide, has a long history of origin and evolution. But it has little been known about its primitive traces in contemporary writings. Siddha and Nath saints are said to have started first but little evidently. The Avahattha literature of Damodar, Jyotirishwar and Vidyapati is nearly untouched. Therefore, this paper is an effort to present its primitive traces empirically from different sources in Apabransha and Avahattha literature from Siddhas till Vidyapati. Though it is in brief, it verifies its origin and evolution.

Keywords: Primitive, origin, evolution, Apabhransha, Avahattha.

1. Introduction

Bhojpuri linguists and litterateurs are unanimous about its name from the very capital city of Bhoj dynasty kings during Ramayan writing period. *Ḅoj* 'king or kings of the same dynasty', *pur* 'habitat or capital city' and the suffix *-i* 'an adjectival marker to allocate the language and the people of the place' are the semantics of Bhojpuri. There is also a consensus on its origin with primitive traces from *carya gitʌ* 'Charya songs' of Siddha saints as well as from Nath literature during Apabhransha period. Very slightly though, traces of Bhojpuri in Pandit Damodar's *kosʌli vyakʌrʌn* 'Koshali Grammar' have also been taken into account. But Kavi Shekharacharya Jyotirishwar Thakur and Great Poet Vidyapati Thakur have totally been overlooked from the eyesight of Bhojpuri linguists and litterateurs during Avahattha period. Consequently, literary writings of Jyotirishwar and Vidyapati are maithilized almost unanimously. In this context, these are the queries to be verified:

a. What sorts of traces of the language are obtained in Charya songs of Siddha and Nirgun songs of Nath saints?

b. How are the traces of Bhojpuri in the language obtained in *ukti-byʌkti-prʌkʌraŋ* of Pandit Damodar?

c. What sorts of traces of the language are obtained in *varŋʌrʌtnakʌr* of Kavishekharacharya Jyotirishwar Thakur as well as in creative writings including *kirtilʌta, kirtigatʰa, kirtipʌtaka* and songs of Great Poet Vidyapati Thakur during Avahattha period of the Indo-Aryan languages?

There are three specific objectives of this study:

a. To verify the Bhojpuri traces into Siddha and Nath literature;

b. To confirm the Bhojpuri traces into Pandit Damodar's Koshali grammar; and

c. To validate the Bhojpuri traces into Jyotirishwar's and Vidyapati's literary works.

2. Method of verification

The following activities are adopted within the methods of verification in this endeavour:

2.1 A brief presentation of Bhojpuri grammatical categories

The Indo-Aryan languages have higher intelligibility. So, they are difficult to be highlighted on the basis of basic glossary. In this regard, properties of nouns, pronouns, pronominal adjectives and adverbs along with some copular verbs are presented so that the traces of such word classes and grammatical categories can be verified.

2.2 Description and analysis of the data presented

This is a qualitative research study. Therefore, description and analysis of the traces of word classes and grammatical categories in the texts of the foresaid literature obtained from different sources along with the works on such texts are essential to be compared with those of Bhojpuri.

The texts are mostly available in Devanagari, both in verse and prose, but the vernacular of this paper

is English. So, the data are firstly presented in IPA, followed by morpheme break with lexical and grammatical categories in abbreviated form. At last, the free translation is presented. Besides, the assimilated free translation is also presented if the lines are part of a couplet or quadrant of a verse (See Annex for Devanagari and IPA interface).

3. Word classes and grammatical categories

Nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs are the major word classes whereas pronouns, postpositions, determiners, inter-clausal connectives, quantifiers, numerals and ordinals, auxiliary verbs, interjections, clitics, and particles are the miner word classes as Thakur (2021, pp. 70-114) describes in Bhojpuri. Pronouns, some sorts of adjectives and adverbs, postpositions, determiners, inter-clausal connectives, quantifiers, numerals and ordinals, auxiliary verbs, interjections, clitics, and particles among them play vital roles to determine specific characters of a particular language. Whatever among them found in Apabhransha and Avahattha literary works are described accordingly.

Likewise, Singh (2009, p. 44) compared gender, number, person, case, tense and voice as prominent grammatical categories in Bhojpuri and Hindi. Upadhyay (2010/2066 B.S., pp. 72-113) has compared gender, number, person, honorificity, case, tense, aspect, mood, affirmative-negative markers as grammatical categories between Nepali and Bhojpuri. In this context, Thakur (2021, pp. 70-80, 132-154, 176-202) analyses gender, number, case, tense, aspect, modality, mood, allocutive agreement, voice and honorificity available as grammatical categories in Bhojpuri. These grammatical categories are contextually utilized in this article.

4. The primitive inheritance of Bhojpuri

The primitive inheritance of Bhojpuri can be traced out from Apabhransha and Avahattha period of the evolution of Neo Indo-Aryan languages. The very linguistic evolution period is briefly described as follows:

4.1 Apabhransha period

Apabhransha is named by the contemporary Sanskrit scholars as the language with deviation in not only Sanskrit but in Prakrit also. Whatever

they called it, even sarcastically, the literary creation started in this language since seventh-eighth century A. D. According to Singh (1958, p. 3), the literary creation in this language has not only the traces of Bhojpuri but of Magahi, Bangla and Uria too. Among others, Pt. Har Prasad Shastri claimed such creation as Bangla and Rahul Sankrityayan proposed it as Magahi and Balbhadra Jha claimed it to be Maithili and Uria (Thakur and Ashk, 2023, p. 38). But it is the bare truth that all these languages have been evolved from Apabhransha.

Among the litterateurs of this period, some Buddhist monks and Shaiva saints are prominent. They are popularly known as Siddha and Nath communities, though their creation overlaps their faiths. They are described with the traces of Bhojpuri in their creation as follows:

4.1.1 Siddha monks

According to Bharati (1955, pp. 45-60), the Siddha monks are found to have composed in Apabhransha from seventh-eighth century till eleventh century. The literary compositions of Sarahapa, Shabarapa, Luipa, Darikapa, Dombipa, Kambalambarapa, Kukkuripa, Minapa, Jalandharapa, Kanhapa, Tantipa, Bhadrapa, Mahidharapa, Dhamapa, Gunduripa, Dhendhanapa, Tadakapa, Jayanandipa, Kankanapa, Karnaripa, Binapa, Virupa, Bhusukupa, Shantipa and Tilopa among others contain primitive traces of Bhojpuri (Thakur and Ashk, 2023, p. 38).

Due to limitations of the volume of this paper, the extracts from compositions of very few of the Siddha monks are discussed with reference to Bharati (1955), Bagchi (1956), Singh (1958) and Sen (1977) in this article.[1]

(a) Sarahapa

Sarahapa is thought to be the pioneer Siddha who brought Buddhist sorcery into an organized shape.

(1) a. *ʌm̐e ŋʌ jʌnʌɦu*

    ʌm̐-e   nʌ   jɑn-ɦu

    1PL-DAT NEG know-1PL.PRS

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[1] Thakur and Ashk (2023, pp. 38-50) presents them in detail

ʌcint joi
ʌ-cint   joi
NEG-anxious   REL
'We, who are free of anxiety, don't know'

b. *jamʌ mʌrŋ ḅʌwʌ kʌisʌn*
jamʌ   mʌrʌn   ḅʌwʌ   kʌisʌn
birth   death   existence how
ɦoi
ɦoi
be-3FUT
'how is either of the birth, death and existence.'

c. *jʌiso jamʌ mʌrʌŋ wi tʌiso*
jʌiso   jamʌ   mʌrʌn   ḅi   tʌiso
REL   birth   death   also   COR
'As there is the birth, same is the death.'

d. *jiwʌnte ḅaile nahi wiʃeso*
jiwʌn-te   ɦo-il-e   nɑɦi   biseso
life-LOC   be-3PST-PRF   NEG   special
'The life is not special.'

Assimilating the quadrant:
'We, the anxiety-free saints, do not know any difference between birth, death and existence how they happen. They are equal, so, being alive is not special for us.'

In the instance (1a-d), the adverbs of manner question *kʌisʌn* 'how' and the relative-correlative adverbs of manner *jʌiso … … tʌiso* 'as … … so' are the typical adverbs of Bhojpuri. Besides, the verbs *ɦoi* 'will be' and *ḅaile* 'has become' are the typical verb *ɦo* 'be' with grammatical categories of future tense in third person and present perfect in third person respectively, used in Bhojpuri. Likewise, *nahi* 'no' is in practice of Bhojpuri as a negative particle.

(b) Dombipa

Dombipa (or also Dombhipa) came to be the 4ᵗʰ saint in the Siddha sect. His couplets are found in 'Bhikshabritti'.

(2) a. *waɦʌtu ḍombi waɦlo ḍombi*
waɦ-tu   ḍombi   waɦ-lo   ḍombi
steer-IMP   Dombi   steer-IMP   Dombi
waṭʌt ḅʌil ucʰara
waṭ-ʌt   ɦo-il   ucʰara
way-LOC   be-3PST   evening
'O Dombi, steer the boat on the way this evening.'

b. *sʌdguru pɑʌ-pʌe jaib puŋu*

sʌdguru   pɑʌ-pɛ   ja-ib   punu
teacher   grace-INST go-1FUT again
jinʌura
jinʌura
Jinpur
'With grace of the teacher, we'll certainly reach Jinpur.'

Assimilating the couplet:
'O Dombi! Steer well and row the boat continuously. It has already become evening on the way itself. But with the great grace of the real teacher, we'll certainly reach *Jinpur* 'destinated habitat'.

In the instance (2a-b), *ḅail* 'became' and *jaib* 'will go' are the typical Bhojpuri verbs *ho* 'be' and *ja* 'go' with their grammatical categories of past tense in third person and future tense in first person respectively in Bhojpuri.

(c) Kukkuripa

A Brahmin progeny Kukkuripa was the thirty-fourth Siddha saint as a disciple of Charpatipa. His sixteen books are found in Tanjoor.

(3) a. *jaŋʌ jɔwʌŋʌ mor*
jan-ʌ   jobʌn   mor
know-1PST youth   1REL
ḅʌilesi pūra
ɦo-il-e-si   pura
be-3PST-PRF-ALL   full
'When I came in youth age,'

b. *mūl nikʰʌŋi bap sʌŋɡara*
mul   nikʰʌn-i   bap   sʌ̃ŋar-ʌ
root dig-SEQ   father kill-3PST
'I removed the root by killing father.'

c. *ḅʌŋʌtʰi kukkurīpa e ḅʌw*
ḅʌn-tʰi   kukkuripa   e   ḅʌw
say-3PRS Kukkuripa   3PRX world
tʰira
tʰira
stable
'Kukkuripa says the world is stable.'

d. *jo etʰu bujʌe so*
jo   e-tʰu   buĵ-ɛ   so
REL 3PRX-DET know-3PRS COR
etʰu wīra
e-tʰu   bira
3PRX-DET brave
'The one who understands it is brave.'

Assimilating the quadrant:

'When my youth got perfection, I removed the root by killing my father. Kukkuripa says that the world is stable and the one who understands it is the brave one.'

In the instance (3a-d), *jan* 'know', *ḅʌilesi* 'became', *nikʰʌni* 'by uprooting', *sʌ̊ŋara* 'killed' and *bujɛ* 'understands' are the verbs used in Bhojpuri typically and the grammatical categories of past tense in first person and participial construction respectively are very proper in Bhojpuri. Likewise, *ḅʌnʌthi* 'says' is the verb used by all saints in Apabhransha period with grammatical category of simple present tense in third person still in use while singing. Similarly, *jɔwan* or *jobʌn* 'youth' or 'breast' is the noun frequently used in Bhojpuri contemporarily. Besides, *mor* 'my' or 'mine' is the first person singular relative pronoun typically used in Bhojpuri, especially while composing or singing a verse to denote who composed it.

(d) Bhadepa

Bhadepa is known as a disciple of Kanhapa. Bagchi (1955, p. 115) presents his verse as 35th.

(4) a. *ḅade ḅʌŋʌi ʌḅage*

    ḅade   ḅʌn-ʌi   ʌḅag-e
    Bhade say-3PRS ill-fate-EPH

    lʌila
    leα-ilα
    bring-1PST
    'Bhade says he brought ill-fate.'

  b. *ciʌrαʌ mʌi ʌhar kʌila*

    ciʌ-rαʌ   mʌi ʌhar kʌr-ila
    mind-king 1SG food do-1PST
    'I have eaten up the king-mind.'

Assimilating the couplet:
  'Bhade says, "by ill-fate, I have eaten up the king-mind".'

In the instance (4a-b), *ḅʌnʌi* 'says' has already been discussed earlier. Besides, *ʌḅage* 'by the ill-fate' *ciʌ* or *cit* 'mind' *raʌ* 'king', *ʌhar* 'food' are the nouns in frequent usage in Bhojpuri. Likewise, *lʌila* 'I brought' and *kʌila* 'I did' are the typical Bhojpuri verbs with its grammatical category of future tense in first person used by Bhadepa.

4.1.2 Nath saints

Along with the Siddha monks, Nath saints also commenced literary compositions in Apabhransha. Dwibedi (1950, p. 54) and Kashikeya and Dwibedi (VE 2035, p. 7) have critically analysed the time-period of Nath saints and have come to conclude to allocate the starting point from ninth century. Their compositions clarify a bit more the Bhojpuri characteristics in comparison to the Siddha saints. Machhandranath, Chauranginath, Gorakhnath, Nagarjun, Gopichandra and Bharthari are the prominent among these saints. A few of them are presented here very shortly. Thakur and Ashk (2023, pp. 50-56) can be consulted for detail.

(a) Machhandranath

Nath sect assumes its evolution from Adinath, i.e., Lord Shiva. But it is a mythical concept, not historically proved. Historically, Machhandranath is the prominent teacher. Dwibedi (1950, p. 38) iterates many books are still preserved in Durbar library of Nepal. Though he is presented as Brahmin but his name indicates towards fishery as his ancestral occupation.

(5) a. *jogī soi jãŋi rɛ,*

    jogi soi jʌn-i   re
    saint COR know-SEQ ADD

    jʌgʌtɛ rʌhɛ udas
    jʌgʌt-ɛ   rʌɦ-ɛ udαs
    world-LOC live-3PRS sad
    'The one who is sad is the saint in the world.'

  b. *tʌt nirʌnjʌŋ paiya,*

    tʌt   nirʌnjʌn   pα-iα
    COR unpassionate get-1SG.PST

    yõ kʌhɛ mʌcʰʌndʌr
    yõ   kʌɦ-ɛ   mʌcʰʌndʌr
    as such say-3SG.PRS Machhandar
    natʰ
    natʰ
    Nath
    'Machhandar Nath says he is the unpassionate one.'

Assimilating the couplet:
  'You should know the one who lives sad in the world is a real saint. He has been found unpassionate as Machhandar Nath says.'

In the instance (5a-b), *jogi* 'saint' and *jʌgʌtɛ* 'in the world' are the nouns popularly used with the grammatical categories of subject or object and adjunct used in the verse in Bhojpuri. Likewise, *udas* 'sad' and *nirʌnjʌn* 'unpassionate' are the adjectives frequently used in Bhojpuri. Similarly, *rʌhɛ* 'lives' and *kʌhɛ* 'says' are the verbs with grammatical category of simple present tense in third person frequently used in the verse in Bhojpuri.

(b) Chauranginath

Chauranginath is the successor of Machhandranath. He is the second one in Nath saints. In Tibetan tradition, he is thought to be classmate of Gorakhnath but elsewhere as the teacher of him. But the language used in his poetic compositions precedes Gorakhnath.

(6) a. *pʌrʌmewʌ sʌnmukʰ dekʰīla*
   pʌrʌm-ewʌ   sʌnmukʰ   dekʰ-ila
   supreme-EPH   front   see-1PRS
   ʃrī mʌcʰʌndrʌnath guru dew
   sri   mʌcʰindrʌnatʰ   guru   dew
   H   Machhindranath teacher god
   nʌmʌskar kʌrīla nʌmaila matʰa
   nʌmʌskar   kʌr-ila   nʌma-ila   matʰa
   bid   do-1PRS   bow-1PRS   head
   'I see my supreme honourable teacher Machhandranath in front and bid him bowing on feet.'

   b. *asirbad paila ʌmhe mʌne ḅaila ɦʌrkʰit*
   asirbab   pa-ila   ʌmhe
   blessing   get-1PRS 1SG.DAT
   mʌne ḅaila ɦʌrkʰit
   mʌn-e   ɦo-ila   ɦʌrkʰit
   mind-LOC   be-1prs   glad
   'I get blessings and my mind becomes glad.'

In the instance (6a-b), *sʌnmukʰ* 'in front' and *ɦʌrkʰit* 'glad' are the typical Bhojpuri adverbs of manner. Similarly, *matʰa* 'head' and *asirbad* 'blessing' are the typical Bhojpuri nouns and *mʌne* 'in mind' is the noun with grammatical category of locative case in Bhojpuri. Likewise, *dekʰila* 'I see', *kʌrila* 'I do', *nʌmaila* 'I bow' and *paila* 'I get' are the typical Bhojpuri verbs with the grammatical category of simple present tense used with first person.

(c) Gorakhnath

Gorakhnath is thought to be in existence in then Madhyadesha in the tenth Vikram century. His disciples still worship him both in Nepal and India contemporarily. So, his name is familiar in all Neo Indo-Aryan languages. He is also depicted as spiritual teacher of King Prithvi Narayan, the founder of Shah Dynasty royal regime in Nepal.

But his birthplace is still unknown although Grierson assumes him as inhabitant of western Himalayas.

(7) a. *ʌdekʰi dekʰiba dekʰi*
   ʌ-dekʰ-i   dekʰ-iba   dekʰ-i
   NEG-see-SEQ   see-1FUT   dekʰ-SEQ
   bicariba ʌdisiṭi rakʰiba
   bicar-iba   ʌ-disiṭi   rakʰ-iba
   think-1FUT   NEG-vision   keep-1FUT
   cīya
   ciya
   identity
   'I will see invisible; I will think of it and I will keep the identity as secret.'

   b. *patal kī gʌŋga brʌmʌnḍ*
   patal   ki   gʌŋga   brʌmʌnḍ
   hades   REL   Ganges   head
   cʌp̊aiba, tʌɦã bimʌl bimʌl
   cʌp̊a-iba   tʌɦã   bimʌl   bimʌl
   lift-1FUT   there   clean   clean
   jʌl pīya
   jʌl   pi-ʌ
   water   drink-1PST
   'I will lift the Ganges up to head from hades where I drank the clean water.'

In the instance (7a-b), *dekʰ* 'see' has come with grammatical categories of future tense and participial. Similar is the presence of the verbs *bicar* 'think', *rakʰ* 'keep', *cʌp̊a* 'lift' and *pi* 'drink' in the verse. These are the typical verbs used in Bhojpuri. Besides, *disiṭi* 'vision', *patal* 'hades', *gʌŋga* 'the Ganges', *brʌmʌnḍ* 'head' and *jʌl* 'holy water' are the tatsamas, with typical usage of nouns in Bhojpuri.

(d) Nagarjun

Nagarjun is a common name within both of the sects Mahayani Siddhas and Nath saints. According to Kashikeya and Dwibedi (VE 2035, p. 17), Al-Beruni has also iterated the fact.

(8) a. *daru tɛ dakʰ utpani,*

daru tɛ   dɑkʰ utpʌn-i
wine ABL grape originate-3PST.F
dakʰ kʌthi nʌhĩ jaī
dɑkʰ kʌtʰ-i   nʌhĩ jɑ-i
grape say-SEQ NEG   go-3PRS
'The grapes are originated from wine. Properties of grapes are impossible to describe.'

b. *dakʰ daru jʌb pʌrca ɦʌya,*
   dɑkʰ dɑru jʌb pʌrcɑ   ɦo-ɑ
   grape wine NEG familiar be-3PST
   dakʰ mɛ̃ daru sʌmaī
   dɑkʰ mɛ̃   dɑru sʌmɑ-i
   grape LOC wine enter-3PRS
   'When grapes and wine became familiar to each other, the wine was found entered into grapes.'

Going through instance (8a-b), *daru* 'wine' and *dakʰ* 'grape' are found familiarly used in Bhojpuri. The verbs *utpan* 'be originated', *ja* 'go', *kʌtʰ* 'say', *ɦo* 'be', *sʌma* 'enter' have been used with different grammatical categories of tense and gender, found to have been used in Bhojpuri, especially while composing or singing a verse.

4.2 Avahattha period

The areal features of the Neo Indo-Aryan languages started getting more distinctive during twelfth-fifteenth centuries. This period is marked as Later Apabhransh. But some of the litterateurs including Jyotirishwar and Vidyapati named it separately as Avahattha. Singh (1964a) includes Avahattha up to composition of *kirtilʌta* by Vidyapati, but Jha (2020b, p. 12) iterates Vidyapati's *kirtilʌta, kirtigatha* and *kirtipʌtaka* to have been composed in a mixture of Sanskrit, Prakrit and Avahattha. Dwibedi and Tripathy (1975, p. 79) reveals Avahattha be used first in Addahman's *sʌndeʃ Rasak*. Similarly, going through Singh (1964a, pp. 3-4), Avahattha is found to have been used first in Jyotirishwar's *vʌrɳʌrʌtnakʌr* (1325), and then in *prakrit pɛnglʌm* by Sharangdhar (first quarter of fourteenth century, Agrawal 1959, p. foreword-iv) and then it is used by Vidyapati in his *kirtilʌta*. But the language of Vidyapati's *pʌdawʌli* 'verses' is also proved to be Avahattha, not Maithili. The composition period of these verses is first half of the fifteenth century. Although *ukti-byʌkti-prʌkʌraɳ* (1125) said to have been composed in

primitive Koshali, Dwibedi and Tripathy (1975) calls it Madhyadeshi Avahattha. In this way the Avahattha period is found to be continued up to fifteenth century. Saxena (VE 2014), Singh (1955 and 1964), Agrawal (1962), Nara (1979), Singh (2015) and Jha (2020 a and b) have already shed light on this fact.

Thakur and Ashk (2023, pp. 56-90) has analyzed samples from all those compositions but this paper includes only a few samples from Pt. Damodar's *ukti-byʌkti-prʌkʌraɳ,* Jyotirishwar's *Varnaratnakar* and Vidyapati's *Kirtilata, Kirtigatha, Kirtipataka* and *Padawali.*

4.2.1 Pandit Damodar

Chatterjee (1953, pp. 1-70) has called *ukti-byʌkti-prʌkʌraɳ* a grammar of Koshali and its composition period to be 1125, although Pt. Damodar himself iterates it as a grammar of Apabhransha written in Sanskrit. When we go through in depth, this grammar was composed in Banaras during reign of Gadhwal King of Kanauj Govindchandra (1114-1155). Certainly, Banaras, also called Kashi has the vernacular called Bhojpuri or Banarasi Bhojpuri or Kashika. Besides, Chatterjee (1953, pp. 3-70) presents its linguistic feature that brings it much nearer to Bhojpuri. Thakur and Ashk (2023, pp. 57-66) has analyzed all the grammatical categories. The clause construction of *ukti-byʌkti* is subject-object-verb (SOV), the unmarked pattern of the Indo-Aryan clauses. Some of the instances are presented here:

(9) a. *ãkʰi dekʰ*
      ãkʰ-i   dekʰ
      eye-INS see.3PRS
      'S/he looks with eyes.' (Muni, 1953, p. 6)

   b. *ãkʰi dekʰʌt acʰ*
      ãkʰ-i   dekʰ-ʌt   ɑcʰ
      eye-INS see-IPF   be.3PRS
      '(S/he) is looking with eyes.' (Muni, 1953, p. 6)

   c. *ɓojʌn kʌr*
      ɓojʌn kʌr
      food   do.3PRS
      'S/he has meal.' (Muni, 1953, p. 8)

   d. *dʌrsʌn kʌr*
      dʌrsʌn kʌr
      visit   do.3PRS
      'S/he visits.' (Muni, 1953, p. 8)

e. *jẽwesi*
   jẽw-esi
   eat-3PST
   'S/he had meal.' (Muni, 1953, p. 9)

f. *jẽwihʌ*
   jẽw-ifʌ
   eat-3FUT
   'S/he will have meal.' (Muni, 1953, p. 9)

g. *tʌjihʌ*
   tʌj-ifʌ
   abandon-3FUT
   'S/he will abandon.' (Muni, 1953, p. 9)

h. *ṇai deu puji,*
   ṇa-i   deu   puj-i
   bathe-SEQ   god   worship-SEQ
   bʌmʌnʌŋ danu dei, jẽw
   bʌmʌnʌŋ   dʌnu   de-i   jẽw
   Brahmin   donation give-SEQ eat.3PRS
   'S/he has meal having bathed, worshiped god and offered donation to Brahmin.' (Muni, 1953, p. 11)

i. *bʌhutu pūt ḅʌe*
   bʌfiutu   put   fio-e
   many   son   be-3PST
   'He had many sons.' (Muni, 1953, p. 15)

j. *gaŋ ṇaẽ ḍʌrmu ho,*
   gaŋ   ṇa-ẽ   ḍʌrmu   fio
   Ganges   bathe-INS purity be.3PRS
   papu ja
   pʌpu   jʌ
   sin   go.3PRS
   'Purity is earned and sins disappeared having bathed in the Ganges.' (Muni, 1953, p. 33)

Going through the instances (9a-j) *ach* 'is' is a common copula in grammatical category of simple present tense in agreement with the third person subject. The verb roots are found to be used for present tense in agreement with third person subject. Likewise, *-i* comes to be as sequential participial and instrumental suffix and *-esi* comes to denote past tense in agreement with third person. The nouns, adjectives and verb roots look not different from the ones in contemporary usage of Bhojpuri.

4.2.2 Kavishekharacharya Jyotirishwar

Pt. Jyotirishwar Thakur was one of the courtiers of the Karnat dynasty king, Harisinghdev. He composed *vʌrŋʌrʌtnakʌr* during his king's regime.

It was the Kingdom of Tirahut with its capital city of Simraungadh, now a municipality in the Madhesh state of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. He has, for long, been established as a litterateur of Maithili. But his *vʌrŋʌrʌtnakʌr* has no reliable linguistic feature to support such hypothesis except use of *ach* 'is'. But the use of *ʌcch, acch, acchɛ, ʌcchʌti* 'is' has already been used in the compositions of Siddha monks and Nath saints during Apabhransha period. Even in Avahattha period, Pt. Damodar's *ukti-byʌkti-prʌkʌrʌŋ* has also such usage. Let's observe some extracts from *vʌrŋʌrʌtnakʌr*:

(10) a. *jʌ ̊ŋ̊ʌyugʌlʌk foḅa dekʰi*
        jʌ ̊ŋ̊-yugʌl-ʌk   soḅa   dekʰ-i
        thigh-pair-REL   beauty see-SEQ
        kʌdʌlī vipʌritgʌti kʌili
        kʌdʌli   bipʌrit-gʌti   kʌr-ili
        Rambha   reverse-speed do-3PST.F
        'Having looked at the beauty of pair of thighs, Fairy Rambha reversed her speed.' (Chatterjee and Mishra, 1940, p. 6)

     b. *kulstrī sʌlʌjj ḅeli*
        kul-stri   sʌ-lʌjj   fio-li
        family-lady with-shame be-3PST.F
        'The family-lady got ashamed.' (Chatterjee and Mishra, 1940, p. 15)

In the instance (10a-b), all the words used are familiar in Bhojpuri but the point of attraction is the gender agreement between subject and verb. In both the sentences, the subject *kʌdʌli* 'Fairy Rambha' and verb *kʌili* 'did' have feminine agreement in (10a) and the subject *kulstri* 'family lady' and *ḅeli* 'became' have also the feminine agreement. Such subject-verb gender agreement is the character of Bhojpuri, not of Maithili, what we have found in Avahattha.

Besides, what does Kavi Shekharacharya Pt. Jyotirishwar iterate about the contemporary languages in use of that period? An extract from Chatterjee and Mishra (1940, p. 44) is presented:

(11) *punu kʌisʌn ḅaṭ sʌnskrit pʌrakrit.*
     punu   kʌisʌn   ḅaṭ   sʌnskrit   prʌkrit
     again how   bard   Sanskrit   Prakrit
     ʌvʌhʌṭʰ. pɛfacī. sɔrseni.
     ʌwʌfiʌṭʰ   pɛsaci   sɔrseni
     Avahattha Paishachi Saurseni
     magʌḍī cʰʌfi ḅaṣak

mɑgʌɗi   cʰʌ-ʌɦi   ḇɑsɑ-k
Magadhi   six-CLF   language-REL
tʌtwʌgyʌ. ʃʌkʌrī. ʌḇirī. cʌṇḍalī.
tʌtwʌgyʌ   sʌkʌri   ʌḇiri   cʌnḍali
philosopher Shakari Abhiri Chandali
mawʌlī. drawʌlī. ɔtʌkʌli. bijatīya
mawʌli   drawʌli   ɔtʌkʌli   bijatiya
Mawali   Drawali   Autakali   Vijatiya
satʌɦ upḇạṣak kuʃʌlʌɦ.
sat-ʌɦi   upḇạsɑ-k   kusʌlʌɦi
seven-CLF   dialect-REL   skillful
panini. candrʌ. kʌlap. damodʌr.
panini   candrʌ   kʌlap   damodʌr
Panini   Chandra   Kalap   Damodar
ʌrḍḍ̣aman.maɦendrʌ. maɦeʃ.
ʌrḍʌman   maɦendrʌ   maɦeʃ
Ardhaman   Mahendra   Mahesh
sarswʌt. prʌḇrit ye aṭʰʌo
sarswʌt   prʌḇrit   ye   aṭʰ-ɔ
Sarswat   charged   PRX   eight-EPH
byakʌrʌṇ tak parʌg.
byakʌrʌn   tɑ-k   parʌg
grammar   DST-REL   scholar

'Please look at the bard again how he is. He is a philosopher of the six languages, i.e., Sanskrit, Prakrit, Avahattha, Paishachi, Saurseni and Magadhi as well as skilful in the eight dialects, i.e., Shakari, Abhiri, Chandali, Mawali, Drawali, Autakali and Vijatiya. Besides, he is well-versed in grammars of the eight grammarians, i.e., Panini, Chandra, Kalap, Damodar, Ardhaman, Mahendra, Mahesh and Sarswat.'

In the instance (11) the main point of attention is the names of languages and dialects used in the region those days. There are six languages and seven dialects in which the bard is said to have been philosopher and skilful but none of the names of the Neo Indo-Aryan languages or dialects are included among them. Therefore, to claim Pt. Jyotirishwar Thakur as litterateur of Maithili is totally baseless. Regarding Bhojpuri, the extract is further analysed linguistically.

There is use of the proper nouns in abundance. Only *punu* 'again', *kʌisʌn* 'how', *ḇaṭ* 'bard', *tʌtwʌgyʌ* 'philosopher', *cʰʌ* 'six', *ḇasa* 'language', *sat* 'seven', *upḇasa* 'dialect', *kusʌlʌɦ* 'skilful', *praḇrit* 'charged', *ye* 'these', *aṭʰ* 'eight', *byakʌrʌn* 'grammar', *tak* 'theirs' and *parʌg* 'scholar' are the other nouns, adjectives,

numerals and other word classes, all familiar in contemporary Bhojpuri. Besides, *kʌisʌn* 'how' is the fundamental entity of Bhojpuri.

4.2.3 Great Poet Vidyapati

Vidyapati was born in the courtier family of Karnat dynasty kings, but only after fall of their kingdom of Tirahut having capital in Simraungadh. Simraungadh named after the fort of *simʌl* jungle in the kingdom. Now it is a municipality in the Madhesh state of Nepal. Till date, Vidyapati has been familiar with the title of Maithil Great Poet Cuckoo. His academic career is not only familiar in Tirahut but in the whole world including Nepal and India. But his dates and places of birth and death are still in controversy. Likewise, language of his poetry is also not out of controversy. In fact, he was a famous scholar of Sanskrit and wrote only three epics *kirtilʌta, kirtigatʰa* and *kirtipʌtaka* and some devotional and love songs in his native language though these all creations are being claimed to be in Maithili. But he has himself declared his native language Avahattha:

(12) *desil bʌʌna sʌb jʌn*
       des-il   bɛn-ɑ   sʌb   jʌn
       country-ADJ speech-DEF   all   man
       miṭṭʰa
       miṭʰ-ɑ
       sweet-DEF
       tẽ tʌisʌn jʌmpʌɲo ʌwʌɦʌṭṭʰa
       tẽ   tʌisʌn   jʌmp-ɔ̃   ʌwʌɦʌṭṭʰ-ɑ
       so   as such create-1SG.PST Avahattha-DEF
       'The native speech is sweet enough to all people. So, I composed as such in Avahattha.' (Saxena, VE 2014, p. 6; Singh, 1955, p. 3 and 1964a, p. 3; Agrawala, 1962, p. 15; Jha 2020a, p. 44)

Going through instance (12), it is crystal clear that Vidyapati's native language was Avahattha, not otherwise.

Regarding his devotional and love songs, let's examine some specimens:

(13) *ḇʌnʌ bidyapʌti mor*
       ḇʌn-ʌ   bidyapʌti   mor
       say-3PRS   Vidyapati   1SG.REL
       ḇolanatʰ gʌti
       ḇolanatʰ   gʌti

Lord Shiva   state
dehu ʌb̤ʌy bʌr moɦi,
de-ɦu   ʌ-b̤ʌy   bʌr   mo-ɦi
give-IMP.H   NEG-fear   boon   1SG-DAT
ɦe b̤olanat^h
ɦe   b̤olanat^h
ADD   Lord Shiva
kʌk^hʌn ɦʌrʌb duk^h mor
kʌk^hʌn   ɦʌr-ʌb   duk^h   mor
when   take-2FUT.H   sorrow   1SG.REL
'Vidyapati says, "O Lord Shiva! Please avail
me state of fearlessness. When will you
make me free of sorrow?"'

In the instance (13), these are the last lines of very
popular hymns known as *nʌcari* 'a prayer to Lord
Shiva'. The pronouns *mor* 'my/mine' in relative
case and *moɦi* 'me' in dative case belong to
Bhojpuri, not to Maithili. Let's see the following
lines of Vidyapati's love song as petition to Lord
Rama and Krishna:

(14) *kʌɦã ram ke ḍʌnuṣ bīraje*
kʌɦã   ram   ke   ḍʌnus   biraj-e
where   Rama   REL   bow   be-3PRS
kʌɦã mʌṭuk sīr b̤arī
kʌɦã   mʌṭuk   sir   b̤ari
where   crown   head   heavy
kɔn b̤ag mẽ sīta bīraje
kɔn   b̤ag   mẽ   sita   biraj-e
which   part   LOC   Sita   be-3PRS
kʌɦã raḍa pyarī
kʌɦã   raḍa   pyari
where   Radha   beloved
iɦã ram ke ḍʌnuṣ bīraje
iɦã   ram   ke   ḍʌnus   biraj-e
here   Rama   REL   bow   be-3PRS
uɦã mʌṭuk bʌɽ b̤arī
uɦã   mʌṭuk   bʌɽ   b̤ari
there   crown   more   heavy
bama b̤ag mẽ sīta bīraje
bama   b̤ag   mẽ   sita   biraj-e
left   part   LOC   Sita   be-3PRS
dʌɦina raḍa pyarī
dʌɦina   raḍa   pyari
right   Radha   beloved
'Where is the bow with Lord Rama and
where is his crown heavy on the head?
Which side of him is Sita and where is
Radha, the beloved? Here is the bow of Lord

Rama and there is his heavy crown. Sita is in
the left side of Rama and beloved Radha in
the right.'

Going through instance (14), the question adverb
of place *kʌɦã* 'where' and interrogative pronoun
kɔn 'which' along with the answer *iɦã* 'here' and
uɦã 'there' as well as *bama* 'left' and *dʌɦina* 'right'
all belong to Bhojpuri, not to Maithili. Besides,
there is gender agreement between subject and
verb and between adjective and noun in
Vidyapati's verses:

(15) *kunj b̤ʌwʌn sẽ nikʌsʌli*
kunj   b̤ʌwʌn   sẽ   nikʌs-ʌli
garden   house   ABL   come out-1PST.F
re rokʌl giriḍarī
re   rok-ʌl   giriḍari
ADD   obstruct-3PST   Krishna
sʌŋgʌk sʌk^hi ʌguaili
sʌŋg-ʌk   sʌk^hi   ʌgua-ili
company-REL   lady friend   go ahead-3PST.F
re ɦʌm eksʌri narī
re   ɦʌm   eksʌr-i   nari
ADD   1SG   alone-F   woman
'When I came to garden from house, Lord
Krishna obstructed my way. My lady friends
went ahead and now I'm a lonely woman.'
(Gupt, 1910, p. 64)

In the instance (15) there is agreement between
the lady who utters the lines and the verb she uses
for her *niksʌli* 'I came out (F)' and also between
rokʌl 'obstructed' and *giriḍari* 'Lord Krishna'. As
the lady, though in first person, the suffix *-i* with
niksʌl 'come out (M)' maintains the gender
agreement for a feminine subject. But as Krishna
is masculine, so, the verb also is used but without
feminine marker *-i*. The adjective-noun gender
agreement is also seen between *eksʌri* 'alone' and
nari 'woman'. Hence, *eksʌr* takes suffix *-i* to show
agreement with *nari* 'woman'. This fact of
grammatical category of gender agreement is also
presented in Shrivastava (1992, pp. 92-93). This
is the characteristics of Bhojpuri, not of Maithili.

Let's see another instance from Vidhapati's verses:
(16) *keo de ɦas suḍa sʌm nīk*
keo   de   ɦas   suḍa   sʌm
someone   give   cheer   nectar   equal
nīk

nik
good
jʌisʌn pʌrhõk tʌisʌn bīk

jʌisʌn	pʌrɦõk	tʌisʌn	bik
REL	first sale	COR	day sale

'Whoever can give me nectar like smile, as the day-long sale depends upon the first one?' (Gupt, 1910, p. 67)

In the instance (16), the relative correlative adverb of manner *jʌisʌn ... ... tʌisʌn* 'so and so' stands as a typical Bhojpuri one. It is replaced by *jeɦʌn ... ... teɦʌn* in Maithili.

The instances extracted from Vidyapati verses, either from the folk-tongue or from the collected works, prove linguistically that Vidyapati's all creations are composed in Avahattha, the source language of a number of Neo Indo-Aryan languages. But Vidyapati's Avahattha is the nearest to Bhojpuri. But the question may arise why it happened so. This question can also be answered academically.

(a) Date and place of birth, demise and abode

When Great Poet Vidyapati was born, it is the most ambiguous question and a mystery too. Jha (1972) fixes the birth year of Vidyapati to be 1350. But going through the analysis of the assumptions of different scholars, Jha (1954, p. 52) speculates Vidyapati's span of life between 1352 till 1448 or 1461. It is mentioned as 1352-1448 on different online websites.

There is another controversy about his name. Vidyapati Thakur is a common name of a number of personalities in Tirahut, who have also created poetry. Therefore, it might be hasty to believe whatever creations of Vidyapati have come in front, because they might be suspicious (Jha, 1972, p. 8).This suspicion paves the way for probability of different persons' creations with adding *ḅʌnʌhi bidyapati* 'Vidyapati says' at last. Therefore, the Maithili flavour in Vidyapati's songs might be the consequences.

The birth-place of Vidyapati is almost fixed to be Bisfi, a village in Madhubani District in the Indian State of Bihar. But there is an interesting event with his so-called descendants. They had a copper-plate of donation of the village by

Vidyapati's Patron King Shiva Singh. So, they had been free from paying land revenues. But the British magistrate and linguist, Grierson, rejected its validity because of falsification in the date mentioned in *Faṣlī Era* that came in use only in Emperor Akbar regime, centuries later than the existence of Vidyapati (Grierson, 1899, p. 96).

There is another controversy about his surname. The pioneer of the Vidyapati's dynasty is Vishnu Sharma whose grandson is Karmaditya Tripathy. The two surnames, Sharma and Tripathy, do not match with any Maithil Brahmin's ones. Still, most of the scholars who wrote about Vidyapati spent much more time and space to prove him a Maithil Brahmin, which is doubtful.

If someone talks on Vidyapati and his creations, Simraungadh must not be untouched. It is so because Vidhapati's forefathers were courtiers of the Karnat dynasty kingdom of Tirahut with its capital in Simraungadh.

Vidyapati's Patron King Shiva Singh, though much virtuous, only reigned a quarter to four years. After fall of Tirahut, the Oinawar kings were nothing more than tenant kings of Delhi Sultanate. But having the throne, Shiva Singh stopped paying revenue to the Sultanate. Consequently, he faced a battle with Delhi Sultan. During the battle, it is unknown whether he was killed or he was captivated to Delhi or he escaped towards Nepal. All three possibilities are expressed by different historians. But Dr. Aravinda (1962, p. 50) quotes *kirtipʌtaka* p. 24 by Dr. Umesh Mishra and iterates that Shiva Singh lost his way and was wandering around in jungle of Simraungadh in a very miserable condition. This event clarifies that Vidyapati had directly experienced ill-fate and that the battle also had taken place near Simraungadh. Certainly, the king commanded him to have a refuge somewhere with whoever were alive. So, Vidyapati obeyed and left the battlefield with queens and other courtiers.

But the question is here whether he went to Banauli in Saptari about more than two hundred kilometres east from Simraungadh or to Benauli just five kilometres west from there. The language of his creations does not support his last abode in Saptari Banauli but it supports to be in

Simraungadh Benauli which is now a village in Pachrauta municipality in Bara District in the Madhesh state of Nepal. This historical innovation is essential. That is why, there is much more probability to be last abode of Vidyapati in Simraungadh Benauli, so, his creations do have much more flavour of Bhojpuri.

5. Conclusion

In this study, the primitive traces of Bhojpuri have been searched out first in Siddha and Nath literature during Apabhransha period and found sufficiently. Among the two sects, the Nath literature has clearer traces of the language. During Avahattha period, Bhojpuri traces have been searched out in Pt. Damodar's *ukti-byʌkti-prʌkʌrʌn,* Jyotirishwar's *bʌrnʌrʌtnakʌr* and Great poet Vidyapati's creations and not only lexical entities, but grammatical categories also match with Bhojpuri clearer than with Maithili.The point of departure from Apabhransha starts from seventh-eighth century and Bhojpuri is nearly enriched into its modern areal shape during Avahattha literature of Vidyapati. Therefore, Vidyapati is rarely a great poet of Maithili, rather, he has empirically proved honourable great poet of Bhojpuri in its primitive era, nearly contemporary to Saint Kaveer.

Abbreviations

1	First person
2	Second person
3	Third person
ABL	Ablative
ADD	Addressive
ADJ	Adjectival
ALL	Allocutive
CLF	Cllasifier
COR	Correlative
DAT	Dative
DEF	Definitizer
DET	Determiner
DST	Distant
EPH	Emphatic
F	Feminine
FUT	Future tense
H	Honorific
IMP	Imperative
INS	Instrumental
IPF	Imperfective
LOC	Locative
M	Masculine
MH	Mid-honorific
NEG	Negative
PL	Plural
PRF	Perfect
PRS	Present tense
PRT	Particle
PRX	Proximant
PST	Past tense
REL	Relative
SEQ	Sequential participial
SG	Singular
VE	Vikram Era

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Annex: Devanagari-IPA interface

क	ख	ग	घ	ङ	ड़	च	छ	ज	झ
k	kʰ	g	g̈	ŋ	ŋ̊	c	cʰ	j	j̈

ञ	ट	ठ	ड	ड़	ढ	ढ़	ण	त	थ
ɲ	ʈ	tʰ	ḍ	ɽ	ḍ̈	ʈ̈	ɳ	t	tʰ

द	ध	न	ऩ	प	फ	ब	भ	म	म़
d	ḍ	n	n̩	p	pʰ	b	ḅ	m	m̩

य	र	ऱ	ल	ऴ	व	श	ष	स	ह
y	r	r̩	l	l̩	w	ʃ	ʂ/kʰ	s	ɦ

Vowel and their diacritic symbols

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ
ा	ि	ी	ु	ू	ृ	े	ै	ो	ौ	
ʌ	ɑ	i	ī	u	ū	ri	e	ε	o	ɔ