

Origins of the Pashto Language and Phases of its Literary Evolution

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ABSTRACT: *The cultural and historical richness of the Pashto language as well as its significance within the context of other languages has been acknowledged across the world. This article explores the contradictions of various historians and philologists in connection with the origin of Pashtos as a main language of South Asia, with special reference to Semitic and Aryan theories, the process of development of its literature, the dialects of the language and its place within the context of the South Asian linguistic reality. This work also explores the evolution of Pashto literature and critically investigates a recently conducted DNA study that negates Pakhtoon's genetic association with Arabs.*

Keywords: *Origin of Pashto, dialectology, Pashto literature.*

1. Introduction

The language of multilingual Afghanistan is Pashto, which is not only both the national and official language of the country along with Dari but also a regional language of Pakistan, spoken in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The importance of the language became obvious at the time of the Afghanistan war. In 2012, according to Ethnologue there were 25, 500 speakers of this language in Afghanistan. Scholars of history and philology hold contradicting opinions concerning the origin of the language. This developed into two different sets of theories; the Aryan and the Semitic.

In regards to the dialects of Pashto, their formation is based on various socio-cultural and economic factors, relations among the different communities and other linguistic and historical dynamics which have been fundamental during the formation stage of Pashto dialects. These factors have given birth to two main dialects of the language: Qandahari, also commonly known as Khattak dialect or Southern dialect, being spoken in the Southern parts of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa and Pakhtoon dominated areas of Baluchistan. Moreover, this parlance represents languages being spoken in the Southern Afghanistan; while the other dialect, named Yousafzai dialect which historians also termed as Peshawari (the dialect from the areas of the north Pakistan i.e. Mardan, Swat, Peshawar etc.), is also spoken in some areas of Afghanistan. The dialects can be differentiated phonetically by the sounds of [kh] and [sh] as well as differences in vowel use.

Ethnologue recognizes various dialects: Northeastern, Eastern Afghan, Southwestern and Ningraharian. Northeastern Pashto can be divided into various sub-dialects such as Kohat (spoken in the Khatak areas), Shinwari, Afridi, Shilmani, Yusufzai (spoken in Peshawar), Shilmani and Mohmand. According to Lewis, Sinmons & Fenning (2013) the lexical similarity level (S.I, in Maldonado 2014) between the Southwestern and Northwestern dialects of Pashto has been estimated to be of 80%.

“Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, accounting for about 42 percent of the population, with Tajiks (27%), Hazaras (9%), Uzbeks (9%), Aimaqs (4%), Turkmen people (3%), Baluch (2%), and other groups (4%) making up the remainder” (Haber et. al, 2012).

1. Historical Genesis of the Pashto Language

Like other languages of the world which referred to a nation, area or a country, the term *Pashto/ Pukhto* has evolved from various stages to the present form. The word *Pashto*, in terms of reference, could be attributed to the Pakhtoon tribe itself. The philologists and historians' theories show contradictions in terms of the origin of the language as documents are not available.

The lingual and historical origin of Pashto language could be traced back to *Pakth* and *Bakht* nations as referred to in Rigveda and Osta respectively. Herodotus, a Greek historian, talked about the *Pakth* nation in 520 B.C. which was residing by that time at the coast of the Indus River (Nath 2002 and Caroe 1958). Most of the contemporary historians had taken inference from these arguments that the terms *Pakth* and *Bakht* later on changed into *Pakht*, *Bakht*, or *Pasht* and their language was termed as *Pakto* and *Bakhto*. Today, philologists and historians have agreed to term it Pakhto / Pashto

Abdul Hai Habibi was a historian of the Pashto language born in 1910 and while investigating the literary traces of Pashto, mentioned about inscribed lexicography by the Iranian King, *Dar Yoush Kabir*, also called Dariush, in 516 B.C. He is supposed to have discovered biography of Pashto poets titled *Pata Khazana* (Hidden Treasure) in 1944, written by the poet Hussain Hotak of the Hotak dynasty in 1729 and translated by Abdul Hai Habibi into Persian and later on published in Kabul, Afghanistan by the Pashto Academy of Afghanistan (Hotak & Habibi 1997). However, this anthology has not been authenticated and has been termed as forgery due to the fact that utilizes letters present in the Pashto alphabet after 1936, when the government of Afghanistan reformed the orthography of Pashto and nominated it as the national language of Afghanistan by royal decree (Campbell 1999). A similar discovery of Abdul Hai Habibi was seven pages of the hand written *Tazkiratul Awlya* by Suleiman Mako.

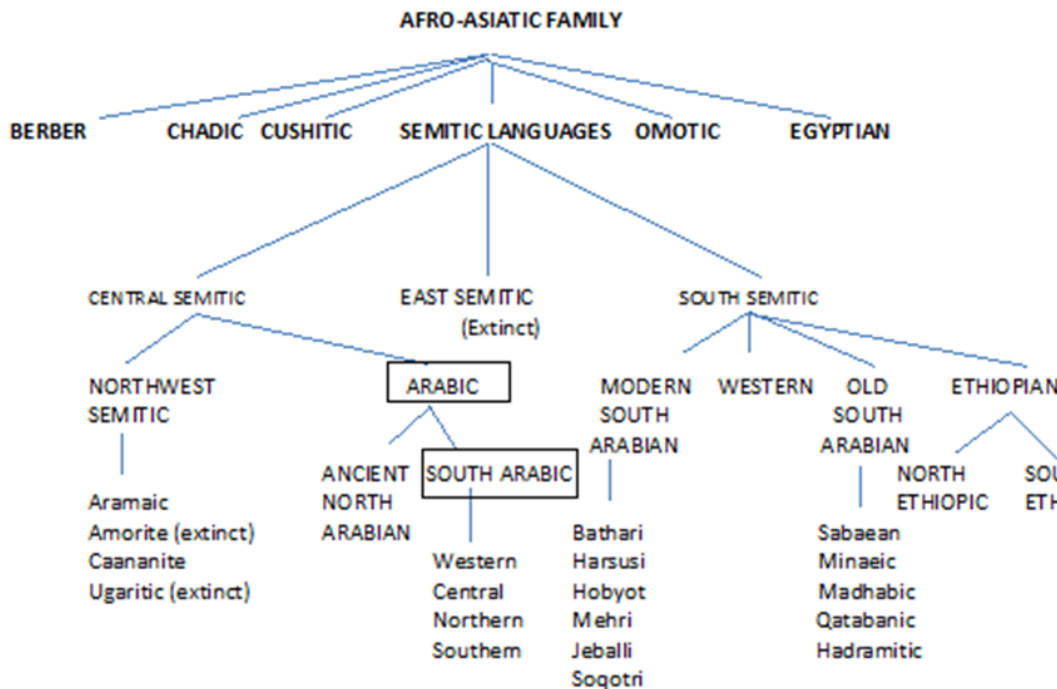
The process of evolution of the Pashto language is not very clear. The main reasons for this are two; there are no documents which can testify to this evolution and the philologists and historians were not on the same page with competing theories and research, supported by arguments and evidence. These theories and research had consequently given birth to

two distinct schools of thought. One group of thought holds that the Pathans are, in fact, the legendary Israel's missing tribe. On the other hand, the second theory holds that the Pathans descend from the Aryans. These concepts have been critically investigated and we will summarize them next.

1.1. The Semitic Theory

A few experts had considered that the Semitic Theory did in fact make sense and classified Pashto to be a language of a Semitic origin. *Makhzan-i-Afghani* written by Nimat Allah al-Harawi described the theory extensively (Hastings 1926). This has been the referent utilized by indigenous, as well as foreign scholars as a base to the theory.

FIGURE NO 1. MODERN AFRO-ASIATIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES.¹



traditions as the language in its initial stages had no formal script.

Niamatullah Herawi had reflected the tradition in his book (*Makhzan-i-Afghani*) which supposedly is the only antique source which addresses the origins of the Pathans (Hastings 1926). This book traces the beginning of the Pashtoons to the Prophet Abraham and Saul. King Saul has been traced to the year 1092 BC in Palestine by Muslim sources and the Hebrew scripture. Nevertheless, it is difficult to trace the line. *Makhzan-i-Afghani* explains that Jeremiah, the son of King Saul, had a son named Afghana, raised by David when King Saul passed away. Afghana seems to have been the Chief Commander of the army of King Solomon. (Caroe 1958).

Keeping in view the factors such as demographics and geography in the early nineteen hundreds not only indigenous scholars but also those of European origin started investigating the origins of the Pathans. From these investigations contradicting literature was born. While some endorsed the Semitic theory, others historians, philologists and scholars propose that the theory is erroneous and in fact the Pathans are descendants of the Aryans. (Burnes 1834), Joseph Pierre Ferrier (Ferrier 1858), Sir William Jones (Teingmouth 1807) and George Moore had endorsed the Semitic views (Moore 1861). Consequently, intellectuals who favored this theory classify Pashto as a Semitic language just like Arabic and Hebrew. Some of these views are based on the similarities in aspect of Jewish and Pashtoons, supposed geographical location of the lost Jewish ten tribes, traditions and cultural resemblances, as well as other unreliable facts such as oral traditions and legends passed on from generation to generation. This theory was criticized on the assumption that Pakhtoons, being a missing tribe of Israel, had even earlier traces in the Rigveda.

This theory, however, faced criticism from historians and philologists. Sir Percy Sykes (1940) while negating, he summarized that this theory, being purely of literary origin, is no more than another instance of the usual Muslim practice of ascribing lineage back to a Prophet or someone alluded to in their scripture, the Quran.

Some peculiarities for the support of the theory relate to common physical features in Pathans, such as the curved noses of many Afghans. Nevertheless, this feature is not exclusive of this race and is present in other as well. In this regard, scholars have argued that the Semitic theory can't stand scientific analysis since features' visual similarities are in fact a non-scientific approach for race determination. Sumerians have been

said to have resemblance with the Aryans although they do not share the same race. Sykes (1940) points out that a similar feature, can be perceived through the portraits of the Koshan King who lived in the first century. Nevertheless, these portraits were neither Semitic nor of Afghan origin. Even as recently as in 2010, publications in the supposed Semitic origin of the Patahans have been found and they keep appearing from time to time.² The topic has also been revived recently by the anthropologist Shalva Weil.³

Some of the historians due to the presence of some Semitic words, expressions and names in Pashto language considered it as a Semitic language. In this regard Khan Roshan Khan, popular historian of Pashto in the twentieth century, dedicated some writings in favour of this theory (*Afghano Ki Nasli Tarikh* 1981), wherein, he considered Pashto and Semitic languages of being organs of one body. Historians also associate Pashto with Semitic and Hebrew languages. Among the reasons for this phenomenon is the emergence of Islam. The Arabic language emerged in the region which consequently mixed words and expressions from Arabic, a Semitic language with that of the Pashto language. Later on, whoever identified these words and expressions in Pashto associated the same with the Semitic family even though these words and expressions had resulted from the direct Arab influence in Pashto speech. In fact, it has been proven that the Semitic theory is based on the oral traditional Israelite story where its chain is historically missing and there is a lack of authentic sources, which makes it baseless and erroneous. The linguists and historians who deny this theory are many for example, in the words of Syyed Bahadur Shah Zafar Kakakhel "There is no solid proof to accept this theory, even in Arabian history or in Islamic history"(Kakakhel 1981). In this day and age, there is agreement among the scholars that Pashto is classified as an Indo-European language from the Indo-Iranian branch.⁴

1.2. The Indo-Aryan Theory

This theory came to the fore with the British arrival at the subcontinent. The British, owing to their political and other ends, took interest in the Pashto language. The historians and philologists, in the light of modern linguistic techniques, investigated that Pashto derived from Sanskrit and can be associated with the Aryan group. Those who accepted this notion classified Pashto as an Indo-European language. The features of the

Pakhtoon's cultural traditions and their values seem to be identical of those of the Aryans (Heath & Zahedi 2011).

Julius Heinrich Klaproth is most probably the first foreign researcher who considered Pashto as an Aryan language, tracing its genetic affiliation and negating the Semitic theory on the assumption that it has no affiliation with the Semitic languages in the context of words, rules and grammar, syntax, etc. and hence, according to him, Pashto purely belongs to the Indo-European languages (Stammerjohann 2009). Bernhard Dorn, associated with the teachings of Semitic and Aryans languages, supported the Aryan theory and refused its affiliation with Hebrew and Chaldaic languages in the context of composition, dictionary and use of grammar. Rather he argued that the Pashto language belongs to Indo-Teutonic group⁵ (Dorn 1847). Bellew states that originally Pashto was a dialect of Sanskrit which assumed its present Indo-Persian form due to long continued contact of Indian tribes with the Persians. Wherefrom, a huge number of words came to be used colloquially, without affecting its original grammatical construction, absorbed into this language and underwent modifications as per circumstances (Bellew 1986).

From a phylogenetic point of view, Masica argues that there is more evidence that Indo-Aryan belongs to the Indo-Iranian group of languages, geographically and also according to the archaic linguistic evidence. This is the reason why he states that "even if the new arguments for an early date for portions of the original Avesta are accepted, the text, as it now stands, dates only from the Sasanian period (third to seventh century AD)" (Masica 1991). He further observed that these texts seem to have been more affected at the time of transmission than those texts which belong to the Rigveda, since the latter seems to be older in age.

Earnest Trumpp (1828 - 1885)⁶ in his work, rejected the association of Pashto with the Western Iranian languages group and asserted that Pashto belongs to the Indo-Aryan languages group (Trumpp 1873). Grierson, while concluding arguments regarding the linguistic affiliation of Pashto, highlighted that the Afghans claim descent from one Afghana, grandson of Saul, the first King of Israel. This assumption, coupled with accidental coincidences in vocabulary, led people to believe that Pashto derived or connected with Hebrew. According to him it had long been admitted that Pashto language belongs to the Aryan stock but for some

time it was in dispute whether it belonged to the Iranian or to the Indian group. The former is further divided into Western and Eastern groups. Like Balochi, Pashto belongs to the Eastern group. Trumpp, in his Pashto Grammar, strongly maintained that the language did not belong to the Iranian family of languages but was a member of the Indo-Aryan family and was closely connected with Sindhi. He added that it was not a true member of the Indian family rather a language with its own autonomy, which had made the initial transition from the Indo-Aryan family of languages to the Iranian and which presented features of the two families and a great influence from the Prakrits. M. Darmesteter (1890) initially accepted this theory but later on proved conclusively that Pashto belongs to the Iranian family of languages and within it to the Eastern branch and that it is derived from Zend or from a dialect closely associated with Zend. According to him, it has borrowed largely and freely from North – Western India, but in its essence, it is an Iranian tongue (Grierson 1927). Keeping in view the geographical survey, Pashto language can be anticipated in between the Iranian and Indian worlds possessing worth-mentioning characteristics of Indian and Iranian languages. Nonetheless, the latter one is more influential (Caroe, 1958). Raverty (1860) also proved that Pashto language derives from Sanskrit.

With modern research, this theory received impetus. Consequently historians and philologists across the border also took interest to investigate about its origin. Professor Abdul Hai Habibi, a renowned and historian and researcher of Pashto language and literature, concluded that Pashto descends from Aryan languages as Arik language was being spoken in the area. Sanskrit is another language of Aryan nations but comparatively Pashto is much closer to it and up to now the original Aryan expressions have survived in Pashto language. Furthermore, he stated that there are words in Pashto that derived from Sanskrit.⁷ Syed Bahadur Shah Zafar Kakakhel, a distinguished researcher, historian and Philologist of Khyber Pakhtonkhwa, who spent more than fifty years investigating Pashto language and writing about Pakhtoons, writes that thousands of years ago, Aryan people used to speak the same language, termed as Arik. Later on, they spread around the world due to which they started speaking different languages with substantial similarities of their original language, i.e., Arik. He argues that Pashto being Aryan language belongs to Indo European Aryan languages (Kakakhel 1981).

From the research of the philologists and historians, it is concluded that the Pashto language does not belong to the Semitic group rather this

language closely relates to Sanskrit, Avesta (Zend) and Persian as well as has received influence from Arabic and due to its structural characteristics this language can be traced back to Aryan languages.

1.3. The Aryan theory of Pashto language evolution

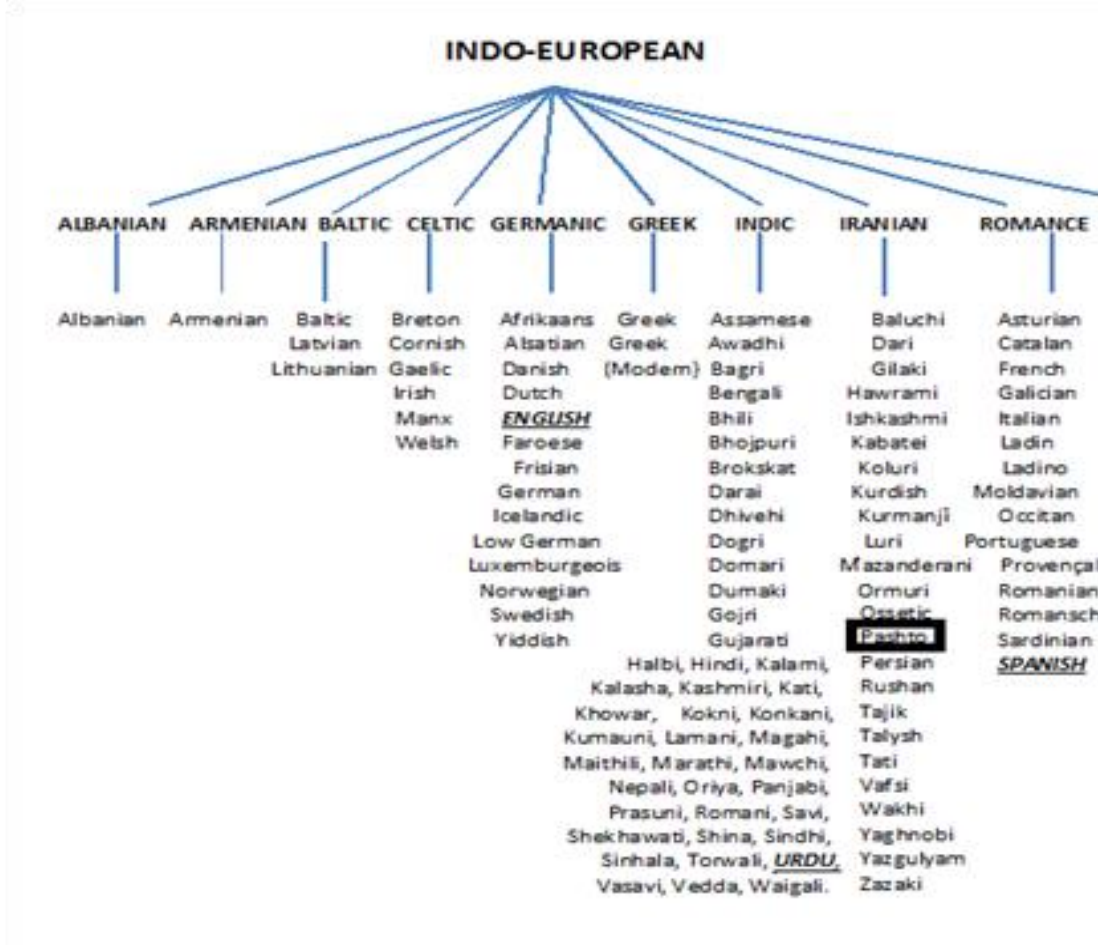
The Aryan theory of Pashto language evolution states that the development of Pashto is based on a succession of developmental periods. Archaic varieties of the language have been found in the Avesta. Masica (1991) dates Avestan to the Sasanian times approximately from the third to the seventh century. Morgenstierne (1927), a Norwegian expert of the Indo-Iranian family, accepts this theory and states that the real origin of Pashto is in Saki.

For Raza (1992), the Pathans belong to a Germanic race while Kakakhel and specially Abdul Hai Habibi (2003) asserted that an Aryan tribe had arrived and started living in the area of Balghan. They had sub-divided into ten tribes due to quarrels amongst each other. The most conspicuous one was that of the Pashtoon, derived from the “Pakht” into “Pakhtoon”. At a later stage, a few of the tribes settled in Iran where Persian was spoken and others settled in Hind, the area where Sanskrit was spoken. According to him Pashto was a Bactrian language.

Similarly, Rajwali Shah Khatak investigated the origin of Aryan. According to him Pashto belongs to the same family of Osta and Sanskrit. Furthermore, on the same lines as Abdul Hai Habibi, he traces back Pashto culture to be approximately 5,000 years old (Shah Khattak 1989). On the other hand, Clyde Winters states that the Aryans did not arrive in India until 1600 B.C. in the context that there is a chance that for the first time the Vedic-Aryans came into contact with the Dravidians in Gujarat (Winters 2012). In this case, the Aryans would have arrived in India 3,600 years ago. The gap among the authors seems to be of approximately 1,400 years. As mentioned before, Abdul Hai Habibi, in his research, finds striking evidences between Pashto and other Aryan languages such as Vedic, Sanskrit and Avesta. Like Darmesteter, Michael Henderson proved that Pashto is in fact an Aryan language according to its linguistic similarities with the languages of this group (Henderson 1970).

And so, the language family, as we know it today, stands like this:

FIGURE 2. PASHTO WITHIN THE INDO-EUROPEAN FAMILY OF LANGUAGES



Source: Maldonado García (2013) Comparación del Léxico Básico del Español, el Inglés y el Urdu

However unclear the origin of Pashto language is and its development can only be partially reconstructed, this language has passed through various phases and its culturally rich patterns are still preserved.

Many scholars agree that the Aryans spoke a language named Arik and Pashto seems to have been derived from it. According to

Muhammad Younus Khan, books have been found at the library of Emperor Mikado from Japan on the topic of Buddhism in Pashto as well as Japanese. As a result Khan (1964) traces the writing patterns of Pashto to two thousand five hundred years back.

Every scholar has presented evidence in support of a particular theory. In one particular case there was a theory which based the origin of the Pathans on the Greek. The British author Sir Olaf Caroe wrote a series of comparative studies titled "*The Pathans*" and Khalil & Iqbal, wrote "*An Analysis of the Different Theories about the Origin of the Pashtoons*". The value of these works cannot be denied. Both of these investigations concluded on the fact that the scientific value of the Aryan hypothesis has a stronger basis.

The work of Caroe and Mohammad Afzal Shah Bokawee (2006), titled as, "*The Pukhtoos*" are invaluable proofs of the origin of the Pathans. James W. Spain authored an important book titled as, "*The Way of the Pathans*", other scholars as well throughout the years have been investigating this subject. The Israelite theory has been denied by various authors. The majority of the scholars, due to the development in linguistics as well as historical investigations, classify Pashto within the North East Aryan branch. Yet, different researchers are still trying to prove scientifically by any means that the origin of the Pathans as well as the Pashto language is somehow related to the lost tribes of Israel and with this view in mind a DNA test was carried out for the purpose of denying the theory with interesting results.

1.4. An inconclusive but deceptive DNA investigation

A DNA investigation by Haber et al. carried out in 2012 has had the repercussions of creating a deep level of misunderstanding. The team collected DNA samples of 8,706 Pathans and aimed to investigate their genetic makeup and contrast the results with available historical data including population transfer due to nomad and migration undertakings.

From the research of the historians and philologists, it is evident how the inhabitants of Afghanistan accepted Islam in the seventh century due to the influential power of the Arab invasions which extended over 200 years; from 642 to 870 A.D. The sample utilized for the investigation

revealed the presence of weaker links and only in one individual the link seems to be stronger. The investigation states:

The Islamic invasion in the 7th century CE left an immense cultural impact on the region, with reports of Arabs settling in Afghanistan and mixing with the local population. However, the genetic signal of this expansion is not clearly evident: some Middle Eastern lineages such as E1b1b1-M35 are present in Afghanistan, but the most prevalent lineage among Arabs (J1-M267) was only found in one Afghan subject. In addition, the three Afghans, who identified their ethnicity as Arabs, had lineages autochthonous to India (Haber M et al. 2012).

According to them, the Arab invasion left almost no genetic signal, at least not in the Y-chromosome, which accounts for slightly less than 1% of the total DNA content in a male cell. This is obviously not the total genetic content, and for this reason the investigation appears to be in contradiction with the available historical data. Nevertheless, it would be important to have in consideration the remaining 99% of the DNA content to be able to make an accurate determination. It is of vital importance to mention at this point that the Arabic tribes (which speak Arabic) seem not to have been considered for this study. The members of the tribes may or not present a level of significant genetic content relevant to the study in question. Nevertheless, the Spanish linguist, Francisco Marcos Marín, states that it is undeniable that languages cannot be linked to genes, since a specific population can change linguistically but not genetically (Marín 1993). His research concludes that population can chose a language due to various reasons (non-binding option); however, genes cannot be chosen.

As a consequence, if the population samples were randomly selected, the statement released after the investigation seems to be in contradiction with historical events. However, the percentage of DNA testing utilized for the investigation may not be significant enough. Furthermore, the Arabic invasion has been well documented and evidenced historically.

1.5. The Pashto Script

The developmental transition of the literature of Pashto includes a phase of adaptation to modern times and as a result it was forced to receive letters from other linguistic systems. Presently, it includes modified forms of Persian alphabets which in turn partly derived from the Arabic

alphabets. The script of Pashto is now Nastaliq as stated by Husain (1962) below in an order of Miangul Abdul Wadud the ruler of Swat in 1926:

I declared Pashto to be the official language of the state and adopted the Urdu script as the style of writing. Special forms and registers were prepared in Pashto for use in offices and courts. Both officials and the public were directed to employ simple, everyday language in all their writings, and express themselves briefly and to the point; especially avoiding lengthy salutations and adulatory phrases. Experience proved that I had decided rightly: Yusufzai Pathans of Swat find it convenient to conduct their personal and official business in Pashto.

The alphabet accounts for forty four letters and four diacritic marks including some unique sounds and letters (ډ, ځ, څ, ښ). Linguists and philologists consider (ښ) as digraph, this is to say, a mixture or rather the combination of two characters “ن” and “د”.

The modern Pashto script exhibits an undeniable Arabic influence and form. Certain archaic coins, pottery and inscriptions dated from various historical periods and locations of the country have revealed that Pashto had been written in various scripts such as *Kharoshti*, a script from the Gandhara culture which used to write Gandhari and Sanskrit languages and Yawana (Hasan 2012).

The modern form of the alphabets was put together through a series of changes and developments during the initial phase of the process. Bayazid Ansari an influential politician and religious leader of Pathan origin who had lived during the second period of the literary evolution of the linguistic system known today as Pashto has been known to pride himself to be the creator of the letters of the alphabet which he had developed through the superimposition of Pashto letters over those of Arabic and as a result developing the new alphabet according to oral traditions (Sierakowska-Dyndo 2014). Similarly, Khoshal Khan Khattak had devised a new Pashto script after substantial amendments but that could only last up to his family because *Mukhzin-ul-Islam* which was taken as a text book, and its script obtained popularity and became deep rooted in society during a short span of time, and the same script remained functional with slight modifications until the recent past (*Pakhto Lik Laar* 1991).

The literature of Pashto, as well as its script, has undergone evolutionary changes mainly put into effect by Pathans like Khatak, Darwaiza and Bayazid, According to Cooper (1989) and Rahman (1995) Pashto Tolane, a Pashto Academy created for the standardization of the language in Kabul in the early nineteen hundreds, contributed to this very task.

2. Literary Development of Pashto

Without any doubt the literary development of Pashto has undergone different phases of evolution and development where the contribution of the indigenous writers is definitely clear in terms of their involvement towards developing the folkloric literature of the language.

Literary works in Pashto started to appear after the Islamic invasion of the Subcontinent. Pashto, in its historical evolution, like all languages has suffered a process of linguistic evolution as well as of its literature. Native as well as foreign authors had written prose, poetry, brief stores, essays, translations and autobiographies in Pashto. Historians have traditionally divided the evolution of Pashto literature into four stages:

2.1. First period of literary evolution (prior 1500 A.D.)

There is not ascertainable information about the initial stage of the evolution of Pashto literature according to Afzal Raza (1992) it is unknown for lack of historical evidence of the same. It seems that, '*Pata Khazana*' of Muhammad Hotik bin Dawod had to some extent offered some information as to the initial development of Pashto literature. In addition, Suleiman Mako had added his contribution to this stage with his Tazkiratul Awlya mentioning works of certain religious scholars and poets and it is supposed to be the oldest form of prose known in Pashto and dates circa 1,216 AD. It was a memoir about saints. The majority of the before mentioned authors were religious scholars native of Afghanistan. At the time Arabic was utilized for the learning of the Islamic knowledge, so whomever wanted to learn religion was forced to learn it. The influence of Persian language is also notable, which in a parallel manner with Arabic had influence over the evolution of the prose and poetry of Pashto.

In, 1986, Bibi Maryam, author of ‘*Da Pakhto Nasar Tarikhi aw Tanqidi Jayeza*’⁸ provided information about the development of the literature of Pashto as well. Other authors like Sadiqullah Rikhtin (1992) had explored this initial phase. However, the one who had explored this stage at length was Afzal Raza (1992) who mentions that the influential closeness of Arabic and Persian provided Pashto literature its special elements. In any case, Amir Kror Suri seems to have been the author who wrote the first poetry piece in Pashto, coming to light in the eighth century (Khalil 2006). As mentioned before, *Pata Khazana* means ‘hidden treasure’, a book discovered in 1944 by Abdul Hai Habibi, even though it is considered forgery by most experts. The book is meant to be a historical and critical analysis of Pashto prose. In spite of the fact that Abdul Hai Habibi talks about Kror’s ancestry, the existence of this character is controversial. Allegedly, his poems were discovered in the said book. *Pata Khazana*.

Going back to our previous argument, and to summarize, the influence of foreign languages, more concretely Persian and Arabic had influenced the writings of the Pashto authors who used the languages as a model for their style and topic selection. Nevertheless, they kept in mind the preservation of the characteristic norms of Pashto.

2.2. Second period of literary evolution (1500 -1650 A.D.)

In the second period of literary evolution and development, the use of foreign languages continued. Bayazid Ansari (1,525- 1,581/1,585)⁹ seems to have been the first author of this time.

He authored ‘*Khair-ul-Bayan*’¹⁰, which is considered to be the first book in Pashto and it is actually written in four languages, i.e., Pashto, Arabic, Persian and Hindi (Tate 1,973). Similarly in 1,600 AD., a book was written in which Arabic and Persian seem to have been utilized, *Sirat-ul-Tauhid*, in Arabic *Maqsudul Mominin* as well as *Halnama* and *Fakhrul Talibin*, the autobiographical works of Bayazid Ansari and various other authors .

Akhun Darwaza (1,533-1,638) used to utilize Pashto to incite his supporters against the movement of Bayazid Ansari, also called Roshania movement. His contribution came with the book ‘*Mukhzin-ul-Islam* as well as others like *Tazkirat-ul Abrar wa’al Ashrar*, *Irshadul Moridin* and *Irshadul Talibin*. This stage could also be called the era of Bayazid and

Darwaiza. Eventually, even though Bayazid had faced strong opposition by the Yusufzai and Akhun Darwaza, he was accepted by a large number of tribesmen.

The most extraordinary accomplishment of that period, if proven, would be the originality of Ansari who seems to have contributed the simple letters of Pashto. Pashto had been an oral language until that point due to factors such as the nomadic idiosyncrasy of the Pathans and the fact that paper was not available. Oral transmission of literary works of poetry was the norm. The poets used to recite and their followers memorized the works by reciting them over and over. Ansari realized that all of the sounds of Pashto could not be represented through the characters of Arabic due to some of them not being utilized in this language. For this reason, he created 13 alphabets to epitomize those sounds which were uncharacteristic. Several of these alphabets covered the phonetic differences between the dialects of Pashto. Since the sounds were completely unique, they are exclusive of the Pashto language. According to Khalil (2006) he utilized Persian and Arabic characters when he wrote and for this reason his writings constitute a blend of the characters of these languages and Pashto.

The contributions of Ansari and Darwaiza were extremely significant at their respective times. Bayazid had written literature in Arabic introducing the cultural norms as well as the civilization to other areas of the country. For this reason Pashto became better known in other regions of the country as well. Pashto was still influenced by Persian and Arabic although people of the area preferred to have knowledge of religion and literature in their native tongues. For this reason, the role of Pashto language was that of intermediary or liaison between the religious teachings and its practical applications in the lives of the natives.

2.3. Third or Golden period of literary evolution- (1650-1900 A.D.)

The Golden Period of literary evolution was extremely prolific and brought many authors to the forefront, enriching the development of the language.

To this period belong authors like Khushal Khan Khattak (1613-1689) also widely known as the father of Pashto literature. His most remarkable work in prose as well as verse covers a multiplicity of topics

such as religion and mysticism, medicine, peace and war, bravery, the arts of hunting and falconry. He compiled as well significant information on the history of the Pakhtoons. It seems that at the beginning Khattak and his elders had offered support for the Mughals although later on circumstances made him struggle for the peace of the Pathans as well as their national integrity. He was one of the most prolific authors in the history of Pashto literature, as he had written more than forty five thousand poems, more than two hundred books as well as ghazals.. The descendants of Khushal Khan Khattak (Ashraf, Afzal and Abdul Qadir Khan) had contributed remarkably in Pashto literature (Mackenzie 1965).

More important authors of the time were Abdur Rahman (1,653-1,711), a popular Sufi poet, also known by the name of Rahman Baba. The anthology, written in Pashto language in its majority) titled *Diwan of Rahman Baba* contains 343 poems. Original manuscripts were found and collected by libraries around the world. The works of Dur Khani, Adam Khan, Kazim Khan Shida, and others were important contributions towards the advancement of the literature in Pashto language. According to Khalil (2006) during this period dictionaries started to be written heightening and supporting prose and verse.

This period of literary evolution and development served the purpose of fortifying Pashto literature. The contribution of the Khattak family was extremely significant as they ensured that the common man developed a political vision and had written in a multiplicity of genre. Furthermore, the poetry of Rahman Baba is still being used as proverbs within the Pashtoon society.

2.4. Fourth and final period of literary evolution- (1900 A.D. - to date).

During this period of literary development and evolution Pashto reached the zenith of its development and became an international language. Due to the advances in technology, Pashto started being used in novels, fictional stories, plays etc.

The writer Rahat Zakheli (1884-1963), a very significant author of the period had contributed to almost every literary prose genre. In 1912, he published *Mah Rukhi*, his first fictional novel followed by a short story published in a newspaper in Afghanistan in 1917, titled *Konda Jeanae*, (the girl at the window) the first of its kind. Furthermore, he wrote about

grammar and history. He was also the author of *Shlidaly Pandai*., One of the first plays ever written in Pashto was *Dree Yateeman* (a story of three orphans) staged in 1927 by the author Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar. The advancement in the field of literature, especially short story, drama and novel were notable.

Through a process of purification during this stage, the language had progressively diminished the use of indigenous slang as well as the influence of the verse on the prose. One of the earlier and pioneer novels of Pashto is *Peghla* (The Damsel) by Hafiz Mohammad Idrees.

During this stage Pashto seems to have been influenced by European literature probably by the advancements in technology and communication. Some of the authors who introduced elements of English literature in Pashto were Sayed Rasool Raza, Fazal Haq Shida and Abdul Rahim Majzoub.

To acknowledge the research of these scholars, some of them published their Ph.D. theses, e.g Iqbal Naseem Khattak, Rajwali Shah Khattak and Muhammad Azam. A few contemporary writers have been contributing to the written religious aspects which also aided Pashto literature and at the same time helped Pakhtoons to understand religious teachings in their native language. Faqir Muhammad Abbas Qadria, an exception in this field whose work is in various sizes from 10 to 1000 pages, has been published in more than 3,000 books.

Similarly, in the political arena, Abdul Ghaffar Khan (also known as Bacha Khan) started a new style in Pashto literature with his patriotic writings for the freedom movement and Pakhtoon nationalism (Shah 2007).

During this stage the status of Pashto was improved by technological advances like radio, television, press, media etc. Novels and plays are a product of this period. English novels and plays have been translated into Pashto and vice-versa. In conclusion, the trends brought about by technology carried with them a new degree of sophistication in Pashto.

To conclude, this stage of literary development brought about sophisticated trends in Pashto. From a political point of view, the war on terror brought Afghanistan and consequently, Pashto to the limelight

making it an international language that inspired interest and many sought to learn.

Pashto is a language with years of tradition, which for centuries had been influenced by Persian and Arabic and literary styles. Furthermore, like any other literature of the world, it based its literary writings on the folklore and realities of the time as Pashtoon identity and recording traditions, socio-cultural values, romance, patriotism, societal norms, the concept of honor and revenge (“badal”) as well as a collective identity which also encompasses all the previous mentioned (“pashtunwali”).

3. Conclusion

The divergent opinions on the origins of the Pashto language have given birth to different theories. The lack of documents makes it all the most difficult to achieve a definite determination as to an accurate time period for the birth of the language. Different scholars make different assumptions. It is clear that the Semitic theory cannot sustain scientific scrutiny and it has been proven that Pashto has definite affinities with Sanskrit and is in fact an Iranian language. The DNA study was not enough to determine that the Islamic invasion had occurred. This was due to the fact that only the Y chromosome had been the object of the investigation. That is to say that less than 1% of the DNA had been analyzed. This percentage is not significant enough to make such determination. This study, in addition, seems not to have considered the four Arabo-phone tribes. In this regard, the fact that the evolution and development of Pashto can be divided into four important and different periods is clearly delimited. The influence of Persian and Arabic could not deter the course of the development and evolution of the language. The oral traditions were of major importance since they were the base of the initial traditions and writings of Pashto. The realities of the times, the folklore, the religion, patriotism and nationalism, all shaped the Pashto literature as well as the oral traditions. The recent political situation of the country brought about great international interest for Afghanistan, the culture and the language. The folklore played a very important role as a topic influencer in the literature throughout the development and evolution of the language.

Notes

1. West Semitic is not represented on this table.
2. Nelson, Dean (11 January, 2010) Taliban may be descended from Jews. The Telegraph. New Delhi.
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/6967224/Taliban-may-be-descended-from-Jews.html>
3. Weil, Shalva (7 September 2011) The Israelite Connections of the Taliban. The International Relations and Security Networks.
<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/DigitalLibrary/Articles/Detail/?id=132724>
4. Ethnologue, <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/pbu>
5. The Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family.
6. A German philologist and missionary to Sindh, Punjab and Peshawar of the then British India before the independence of Pakistan in 1947.
7. Habibi, A.H. Pashto and Former Aryan Languages and the Comparison of Certain Words. Abdul Hai Habibi website;
<http://www.alamahabibi.com/English%20Articles/E-Pashto-and-Former-Aryan-Languages.htm> No date mentioned. Accessed 15-2-2015.
8. A Historical and Critical Analysis of Pashto Prose.
9. The pioneer of Rokhani / Roshania movement also known as Pir Rokhan / Pir Roshan
10. The book is now kept at the University of Tubingen.

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