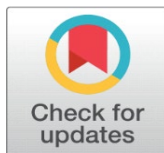
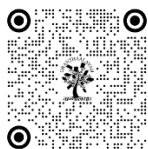


A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WORD ORDER OF KASHMIRI AND SHINA

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ABSTRACT

This paper compares the clause-level word order of two Dardic (Indo-Aryan) varieties spoken in India's Gurez Valley: Kashmiri spoken in Kashmir and Gurezi Shina in Gurez Valley (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir. We report on fieldwork eliciting parallel sentences in each language, categorising them by syntactic (simple, compound, complex) and semantic types (negative, imperative, interrogative, declarative, exclamatory). Our findings show that Gurezi Shina maintains a rigid SOV structure in nearly all contexts. In contrast, Kashmiri exhibits a more flexible, verb-second (V2) pattern with surface SVO or OSV orders in main clauses (as noted by Bhatt). We highlight how Kashmiri's underlying SOV order surfaces differently in subordinate clauses (consistent with Bhatt's observations), while Gurezi Shina consistently places the finite verb clause-finally. These contrasts have implications for typology (rigid vs. flexible OV/VO alignment), linguistic history (Dardic vs. Indo-Aryan features), and processing (different subject placement strategies). Our results confirm that Gurezi Shina aligns with the common SOV typology of Himalayan languages, whereas Kashmiri remains an Indo-Aryan anomaly with Germanic-like V2 behaviour.

Keywords: Gurez Valley, Kashmiri, Gurezi Shina, word order, Dardic languages, SOV, V2



1. INTRODUCTION

The Gurez Valley in northern India (Jammu & Kashmir) is home to two closely interacting languages: Kashmiri (an Indo-Aryan/Dardic language) and Gurezi Shina (a Shina dialect, also classified as Dardic/Indo-Aryan). Gurez lies near the Great Himalayas, and its linguistic diversity reflects the complex historical contacts it has experienced. Kashmiri is spoken widely in the Kashmir Valley and is often classified as an "Eastern Dardic" Indo-Aryan language, historically influenced by Sanskrit and Pahari languages. Gurezi Shina (the local Shina variety) is spoken by a smaller community in Gurez; it shares features with other Shina lects of Gilgit and is classified among the Shina group of Eastern Dardic languages.

Studying word order in these languages is crucial for understanding syntactic typology and language contact. Kashmiri is renowned for its verb-second (V2) pattern (similar to Germanic languages), despite being Indo-Aryan. In contrast, Gurezi Shina is reported as a strict SOV (subject-object-verb) language. By comparing how each language handles various sentence types (declarative, negative, interrogative, etc.), we can gain insights into their grammatical relationships, typological alignment, and mutual influence. This study builds on previous work in syntactic typology (Chomsky's Universal Grammar framework, the Greenbergian typology of word order) and specific descriptions of

Dardic/Indo-Aryan syntax (e.g., Bhatt on Kashmiri, Ahmed on Shina). It aims to deliver a systematic, field-based analysis of sentence structure in these two varieties.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Dardic Classification: The term Dardic was introduced by Grierson (1906) to classify the hill languages of the Hindu Kush (including Kashmiri and Shina) as a third branch of Indo-Iranian. However, modern scholarship regards “Dardic” as a geographic label rather than a coherent genetic group. Grierson’s hypothesis of Dardic as a separate family is now regarded as outdated; scholars like Masica (1991) caution that “Grierson’s tentative classification should not be taken as the last word on the ‘Dardic’ question”. Instead, most Dardic languages (including Kashmiri and Shina) are recognised as Indo-Aryan dialects that retain archaic features of Old Indo-Aryan. For instance, Kashmiri has historically been linked with Shina, and both exhibit archaisms (such as retroflex consonants) typical of Dardic languages. Kachru (1983) and others have observed that Kashmiri’s Dardic traits (e.g., phonology, retention of certain Sanskrit cases) set it apart from neighbouring “Midland” Indo-Aryan languages, while still confirming its Indo-Aryan affiliation. In summary, the literature considers Kashmiri and Gurezi Shina as related Himalayan Indo-Aryan languages (sometimes loosely termed “Dardic”), with Kashmiri being more influenced externally (Sanskritic/Pahari), whereas Shina dialects like Gurezi remain more conservative.

Syntactic Typology: Universal grammar and typological studies (Chomsky 1981, Greenberg 1963) classify languages by basic constituent order. Greenberg’s famous 6-type typology (SVO, SOV, etc.) is widely used, but more recent work (Dryer 2013; Adam & Hözl 2024) suggests splitting word order into separate head-parameter variables (OV vs. VO, SV vs. VS). Indeed, Dryer argues that languages are better described by the relative position of subject-verb and object-verb independently. Consistently, SOV is the single most common dominant order worldwide. It dominates in much of Asia (including India) and correlates with features like postpositions. The literature notes that Indian languages (Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, most Pahari) are typically SOV. However, Kashmiri stands out as an exception: Kashmiri allows verb-second word order. Generative analyses (Bhatt 1995; Hook & Koul 1997) have shown that Kashmiri is underlyingly SOV but surface V2 in finite tensed clauses. This manifests in main clauses as [X V Y Z] where V is in the second position after any fronted element. In subordinate clauses (non-finite or embedded), Kashmiri reverts to SOV. By contrast, Shina languages are uniformly SOV with little fronting (as in other Indo-Aryan and Dardic languages).

Word Order in Kashmiri: Multiple studies have documented Kashmiri’s hybrid word order. Bhatt (1995) and later Hook & Koul (1997) show that verb-second is obligatory in finite tensed clauses, yielding flexibility in the clause-initial constituent (subject, object, adjunct, etc.), but that Kashmiri still has underlying verb-final (SOV) patterns in infinitives, relative clauses, and complementary clauses. For example, Bhatt provides Kashmiri data where embedded clauses lack V2 and show SOV order (subject on left, verb at end). Kashmiri also allows scrambling of objects or adjuncts to clause-initial position, as long as the finite verb occupies the second slot, e.g., in topicalization constructions. This contrasts with typical South Asian SOV languages, where verb-final order is consistently rigid. Indeed, several authors (Koul 2006; Wali & Koul 1987) note that Kashmiri behaves like a verb-second language of Europe (Germanic), a typological rarity in South Asia.

mekhjo baṭə
I(S) ate(V) rice(O)

baṭə khjo me
rice(O) ate(V) I(S)

Word Order in Shina: Gurezi Shina has received less attention, but the available descriptive work agrees that it is a fixed verb-final language. Ahmed’s descriptive grammar (2019) explicitly states that “Gurezi Shina is an SOV language”. A published study on Gurezi syntax confirms that in simple declaratives, the order is strictly Subject–Object–Verb, with auxiliaries appearing after the main verb. Unlike Kashmiri, Shina shows no verb-second movement; the verb (or auxiliary) is typically sentence-final, and questions are formed by in-situ verb with a question particle or by fronting the *wh*-word without disturbing SOV order. Shina also has case-marking and postpositions consistent with OV languages. Overall, prior work suggests Kashmiri is typologically flexible (mixed SOV/V2), whereas Gurezi Shina is a conservative, rigid SOV language. This study aims to document these contrasts across many sentence types.

Shina

mjū:	ba:l	Sokulo	gəu
my	Son(S)	School(O)	Went(V)
My son has went to school			
ru	mjū:	Somū	hū:
He(S)	my	friend (O)	Is(V)
He is my friend			

3. METHODOLOGY

The investigation is based on fieldwork and elicitation in Gurez Valley. Native speakers of Kashmiri and Gurezi Shina were presented with a set of target sentences (in Hindi or English prompts) covering a range of syntactic constructions. The sentences were categorised both syntactically (simple vs. complex vs. compound clauses) and semantically/pragmatically (negative statements, imperatives, yes/no and wh-questions, declaratives, exclamations).

Data Collection: We conducted interviews in which speakers produced translations of each target sentence into their native language. For each category (e.g., simple declarative, yes/no question, imperative), multiple example sentences were elicited. Care was taken to verify speakers' intuitions about natural word order, and to test orders with different constituents fronted (e.g. topic, focus, wh-word).

Sentence Categorization: The collected sentences were sorted into classes: (i) Simple declarative (basic S/O/V constituents), (ii) Compound (coordination of two clauses), (iii) Complex (subordinate or embedded clauses), (iv) Negative (sentences with negation markers), (v) Imperative/Command, (vi) Interrogative (yes/no or wh-questions), (vii) Exclamatory/Emphatic. Within each class, we distinguished cases where the subject, object, or an adjunct/wh-word is clause-initial to test flexibility.

Comparison Approach: We aligned Kashmiri and Gurezi translations of each prompt to compare word order directly. Our analysis tracked the position of the finite verb (or main predicate), subject, object, auxiliary, and any fronted elements. We note whether Kashmiri exhibits its characteristic V2 effect (finite verb in second position after an initial element) and whether Gurezi Shina maintains OV order regardless of fronting. All example data and word orders are based on speaker judgments and consistent with published grammars.

4. ANALYSIS

Below, we summarise the comparative word-order patterns in Kashmiri vs. Gurezi Shina across sentence types. In each case, we highlight whether the sentence has a fixed or flexible order, and how the verb position is determined.

- Simple Declarative Sentences.** In Gurezi Shina, a canonical SOV order is invariable: the subject NP comes first, the object NP (if any) next, and the (finite) verb or auxiliary at the end. For example, a Gurezi sentence corresponds literally to "Ram book read" (SOV). No matter which constituent (e.g., subject or object) is topically fronted, the verb remains final. By contrast, Kashmiri simple declaratives often show verb-second order: one constituent (subject, object, or adverbial) can appear in initial position, but the finite verb invariably follows in second position. For instance, "Ram(subject) book (object) gave to Sham" would in Kashmiri surface as either (Subject) Ram gave book to Sham (object) or (Topic) To Sham gave Ram book, etc., but always with the verb "gave" in second place. In non-focus constructions (subject-initial), Kashmiri appears superficially SVO, but underlyingly is SOV: e.g. "Ram book gave", exactly as in Shina. Thus, simple declaratives reveal Kashmiri's flexibility (surface SVO or OSV driven by V2) versus Shina's rigidity (always SOV).

You put a book on a table

Language	Sentence No.	Sentence	Gloss
Shina	i	/t ^h eɪ kita:b mezuɖgi tʃura:/	you book on table put

	ii	*/t ^h eĩ kita:b t̪ura: mezud̪i/	you book put on table
Kashmiri	iii	/tse t ^h əvət ^h kiṭa:b meizas pet ^h /	you put book table on
	iv	/tse t ^h əvət ^h meizas pet ^h kiṭa:b/	you put table on book

b) He sent a letter to him.

Language	Sentence No.	Sentence (IPA)	Gloss
Shina	i	/reseĩ seset t̪it ^h i: t̪en ^h u:/	he to him letter sent
	ii	*/reseĩ seset t̪en ^h u: t̪it ^h i:/	he to him sent letter
Kashmiri	iii	/t̪əm ^l su:z t̪əmis t̪it ^h j/	he sent him letter
	iv	/t̪əm ^l su:z t̪it ^h j t̪əmis/	he sent letter to him

2) Compound Sentences. These consist of two independent clauses joined by a conjunction. Each clause in Gurezi Shina independently follows the SOV order. Even when coordination allows inversion of clauses (e.g., subordinate clause before main clause), each clause internally remains SOV. In Kashmiri, each finite clause generally obeys the V2 rule independently. If the first clause has an initial element, its verb is second; in the second clause, the pattern repeats. For example, two coordinated statements “He will go” + “they will come” might yield in Kashmiri something like *(Clause1) Gave John the book and (Clause2) Ate Mary the apple; both obey V2. We observe no special constraint tying the two clauses; each applies its own word order rule. Thus, both languages show a clause-level consistency: Shina clauses are SOV, Kashmiri clauses are V2/SVO.

The boy is tall, but the girl is short

Language	No.	Sentence (IPA)	Gloss
Shina	i	/ba:ldəŋu hũ: leikin mulaik ^h uti heĩ/	boy tall is but girl short is
	ii	*/ba:ldəŋu hũ: leikin mulai heĩ k ^h uti/	boy tall is but girl is short
Kashmiri	iii	/lədkə t̪u t ^h oḍ magar ku:r t̪i t̪ ^h ot/	boy is tall but girl is short
	iv	/lədkə nt̪u t ^h oḍ maɣar ku:r t̪ ^h ot t̪i/	boy is tall but girl short is

The grass is green and the cow is grazing

Language	No.	Sentence (IPA)	Gloss
Shina	i	/kəṭf ni:lu hũ: ge ga:v t̪ar heĩ/	grass green is and cow grazing is
	ii	*/kəṭf ni:lu hũ: ge ga:v heĩ t̪ar/	grass green is and cow is grazing
Kashmiri	iii	/kəṭh t̪u sabəz tə ga:v t̪i k ^h eva:n/	grass is green and cow is grazing
	iv	/kəṭh t̪u sabəz tə ga:v k ^h eva:n t̪i/	grass is green and cow grazing is

Complex (Subordinate) Sentences. In subordinate clauses (e.g., relative clauses, conditional clauses, complement clauses), Kashmiri typically loses its V2 restriction. In embedded contexts, the finite verb in Kashmiri moves to clause-final position, yielding an overt SOV sequence (e.g., “[...ki diṛi šām raṛizē] is the book that Sham read”). This aligns with many V2 languages (like German) where only main clauses require V2. We found the same in our data: when sentences are subordinated, Kashmiri speakers place the verb at the end of the subordinate clause, as if underlying SOV. Gurezi Shina, already SOV in main clauses, remains SOV in all subordinate constructions. In sum, complex sentences reinforce Kashmiri’s underlying SOV schema in embedded clauses, whereas Gurezi Shina shows no change.

He is a farmer whose crops were damaged

Language	No.	Transcription	Gloss
Shina (Gurezi)	(i)	/t̪o ik zəmi:nḍa:r hũ: kezseĩ fəsle t̪aba: bili:/	he a farmer is whose crops damaged were

	(ii)	*/ʈo ik hū: zɑmɪ:nɖɑ:r kezseɪ fɑsle bili: tɑbɑ:/	he a is farmer whose crops were damaged
Kashmiri	(iii)	/huʈʰu akʰ zəmɪ:nɖɑ:r jemsundʱ fɑsl ʈɑbɑh gəu/	he is a farmer whose crops damaged were
	(iv)	/huʈʰu akʰ zəmɪ:nɖɑ:r jemsundʱ fɑsl gəu ʈɑbɑh/	he is a farmer whose crops were damaged

The door is open because it is hot outside

Language	No.	Transcription	Gloss
Shina (Gurezi)	(i)	/ɖɑrfɑʈʰe hū: keʈu ɖɑrū: tɑt hū:/	door open is because outside hot is
	(ii)	*/ɖɑrfɑʈʰe hū: keʈu ɖɑrū: hū: tɑt/	door open is because outside is hot
Kashmiri	(iii)	/ɖɑrva:z ʈʰu jal:ai kʰa:zk nʰebrə ʈʰu garm/	door is open because outside is hot
	(iv)	*/ɖɑrva:z ʈʰu jal:ai kʰa:zk nʰebrə garm ʈʰu/	door is open because outside hot is

Negative Sentences. Negation in Gurezi Shina follows the same SOV pattern: the negator typically precedes the verb or is an affix on it, but does not change the overall order (object still precedes verb). For instance, “Ram nay book not-gave” (Ram didn’t give the book) has the verb “gave” final. Kashmiri negation (often the clitic *nī*) can interact with V2: if *nī* is cliticized, it may attach after the first element, sometimes analysed as occupying second position, but the finite verb still tends to appear in second slot overall. Bhatt notes that whether *nī* is treated as part of the verb or as a separate clitic can affect whether the structure looks V2 or still somewhat V-final. In practice, Kashmiri negative declaratives often appear with the object or adverb in first position, *nī* second, and verb third (V3 order). Gurezi Shina does not permit these variations: the negative particle either integrates into the verb or precedes it, but the verb stays last. Thus, negation highlights Kashmiri’s flexibility (allowing noncanonical orders) versus Shina’s fixed OV order.

She cannot eat fast food

Language	No.	Transcription	Gloss
Shina (Gurezi)	(i)	/ses teiz giza: ne kʰa: heɪ/	she fast food not eat can
	(ii)	*/ses teiz giza: ne heɪ kʰa:/	she fast food not can eat
Kashmiri	(iii)	/so hekinə teiz gəza: kʰetʰ/	she cannot fast food eat
	(iv)	*/so hekinə kʰetʰ teiz gəza:/	she cannot eat fast food

She should not complain

Language	No.	Transcription	Gloss
Shina (Gurezi)	(i)	/ses ʈʰika:ʃɑt ne tʰɪon pɑzeɪ/	she complaint not do should
	(ii)	*/ses pɑzeɪ ne tʰɪon ʃika:ʃɑt/	she should not do complaint
Kashmiri	(iii)	/temis pɑzinə ʃika:ʃɑt kɑrənʱ/	she should not complaint do
	(iv)	*/temis pɑzinə kɑrənʱ ʃika:ʃɑt/	she should not do complaint

Imperative Sentences. Imperatives in Gurezi Shina are typically verb-initial (dropping the overt subject), but among the remaining constituents (object, indirect object), the verb still follows them (verb-final in an exhortation with multiple

objects). Kashmiri imperatives also often use verb-first order (common cross-linguistically), but speakers may still prefer putting an object or goal first if topicalized, followed by the verb. For example, a simple command “Give me water!” in Kashmiri can be either “Water give-to-me!” or just “Give water-to-me!” with a dummy imperative prefix. In either case, the finite verb form appears immediately after an initial topic or at the start. Gurezi Shina uses a simple verb form at the end (e.g., “Ram mustu bata-ku.” “Go home”, literally “home to-go”). Thus, imperatives somewhat blur the V2 rule because the subject is null, but Kashmiri still enforces second-position for an overt verb element when there is a fronted adjunct, unlike Shina, which always sets the verb final after any object.

Please pass the paper

Language	No.	Sentence (IPA)	Gloss
Gurezi Shina	i	/meherba:ni: t ^h ei mot pɒtu de/	please you me paper give/pass
	ii	*/meherba:ni: t ^h ei mot de pɒtu/	please you me give/pass paper
Kashmiri	iii	/meharbə:ni: kərit ^h pilna:v ka:kɒz/	please pass paper
	iv	/meharbə:ni: kərit ^h ka:kɒz pilna:v/	please paper pass

Give me a moment to think

Language	No.	Sentence (IPA)	Gloss
Gurezi Shina	i	/mot sɒmɔʒəvi ɔʒu:nɒt t ^h oda wɒkət dei/	me to think some time give
	ii	*/mot sɒmɔʒəvi ɔʒu:nɒt t ^h oda dei wɒkət/	me to think some give time
Kashmiri	iii	/me di suātfnə ba:pat ^h t ^h oda: wɒk ^h ət/	me give think for some time
	iv	/me di suātfnə ba:pat ^h wɒk ^h ət t ^h oda/	me give think for time some

Interrogative Sentences. Two types were distinguished: yes/no questions and wh-questions. In Gurezi Shina yes/no questions are often marked by a question particle or intonation, with basic SOV word order maintained (since wh-words are not required). In Kashmiri, yes/no questions likewise follow V2: a question word or focus can be first, and the finite verb second. Example: “Kitab chu Ram dihyav?” “Did Ram give the book?” Here Kitab (‘book’) is fronted, and the auxiliary chu (‘is/does’) is second. Wh-questions in Kashmiri move the interrogative pronoun or phrase to the front, followed by the verb (again V2). In Gurezi Shina, a wh-word also appears clause-initial, but the verb remains clause-final. For instance, “Who came?” would be “Who came?” in Shina (with verb final form “came”), whereas in Kashmiri it becomes “Who came is?” with an extra auxiliary in second position (reflecting V2). Thus, interrogatives reveal Kashmiri’s obligatory fronting of wh-elements and verb-second placement (akin to Germanic languages) versus Gurezi Shina’s uniform SOV constraint.

Will he eat food?

Language	No.	Transcription	Gloss
Shina (Gurezi)	(i)	/sōs bəi k ^h ja: ɔa:/	will he food eat do
	(ii)	*/sōs ɔa k ^h ja: bəi/	will he do eat food
Kashmiri	(iii)	/k ^h a:h su k ^h eja: batə/	will he eat food
	(iv)	/k ^h a:h batə k ^h eja: su/	will food eat he

b) Where are the keys?

Language	No.	Transcription	Gloss
Shina (Gurezi)	(i)	/tʃai kone heɪ/	keys where are
	(ii)	/tʃai heɪ kone/	keys are where

Kashmiri	(iii)	/küzə kati t̪i/	keys where are
	(iv)	/kati t̪i kūzə/	where are keys

Exclamatory Sentences. Exclamations (exclamative declaratives) patterned like declaratives in both languages. In Gurezi Shina the order is SOV with whatever element is focused or emphasised appearing first (often the subject or object) and the verb at the end. In Kashmiri, emphatic or exclamatory fronting is possible: any constituent can be fronted for emphasis, and the verb remains second. For example, an exclamation starting with a quantifier or wh-word will still show V2. These data are consistent with Kashmiri's general V2 property: even exclamations obey the verb-second constraint, while Gurezi Shina treats them like ordinary SOV sentences.

Hurray! We won the match

Language	No.	Sentence (IPA)	Gloss
Shina	i	/hu: bes mætʃ zeni æs/	Hurray! we match won
	ii	*/hu: zeni æs mætʃ bes/	Hurray! won match we
Kashmiri	iii	/jei asi z̪u:n mætʃ/	Hurray! we won match
	iv	/jei mætʃ z̪u:n asi/	Hurray! match won we

Ouch! My back hurts

Language	No.	Sentence (IPA)	Gloss
Gurezi Shina	i	/ʌi: ɖekʰʌ teɪɖʒ ðɪɖʒ hō:/	Ouch! back hurting is
	ii	*/ʌi: hō: ðɪɖʒ ɖekʰʌ teɪɖʒ/	Ouch! is hurting back
Kashmiri	iii	/və:ɪ kambras t̪em dag/	Ouch! back I-have pain
	iv	/və:ɪ dag t̪em kambras/	Ouch! pain I-have back

Fixed vs Flexible Word Order: In summary, Gurezi Shina exhibits a fixed OV order across all sentence types – nearly every clause is SOV, with no obligatory movement of the verb or subject. Kashmiri shows highly flexible word order due to its V2 constraint: the finite verb is forced into the second position, allowing subjects, objects, or adverbials to surface in first position. Technically, Kashmiri can appear surface SVO in subject-initial cases or OSV when an object is fronted, but underlyingly its base order is SOV. Thus Kashmiri aligns more with “flexible OV” languages with a dominant V2 pattern, whereas Gurezi Shina aligns with the majority of Indo-Aryan languages (rigid SOV).

In sentence 5a(i) and 5b(ii), it is evident that the word order of Gurezi Shina is SOV, and if we try to interchange the position of words, we get an ungrammatical sentence as 5a(ii) and 5b(ii). In sentence 5a(iii) and 5b(iii), it can be seen that the word order exhibited by Kashmiri is SVO. Sentences 5a (iv) and 5b(iv) are ungrammatical. However, 5a(v) exhibits OVS word order, further solidifying the claim that Kashmiri is a V2 language where the verb prefers the second position. In Kashmiri, we say these sentences in day-to-day utterances and are completely grammatical to native speakers.

5. DECLARATIVE

it is evident that the word order of Gurezi Shina is SOV, and if we try to interchange the position of words, we get an ungrammatical sentence as 5a(ii) and 5b(ii). In sentence 5a(iii) and 5b(iii), it can be seen that the word order exhibited by Kashmiri is SVO. Sentences 5a (iv) and 5b(iv) are ungrammatical. However, 5a(v) exhibits OVS word order, further solidifying the claim that Kashmiri is a V2 language where the verb prefers second position. In Kashmiri, we say these sentences in day-to-day utterances and are completely grammatical to native speakers.

Water is essential for life

Language	No.	Sentence (IPA)	Gloss
Gurezi Shina	i	/vɔi ɖʒika:ri zari: hū:/	water for life essential is

ii		*/vəi dʒka:ri hū: zari:/	water for life is essential
Kashmiri	iii	/a:b tʃʰu zindʒi: ba:pat zəru:ri:/	water is life for essential
	iv	*/zaru:ri tʃʰu zindʒi: ba:pat a:b/	essential is life for water
	v	/zindʒi: ba:pat tʃʰu a:b zəru:ri:/	life for is water essential

The water is crystal clear

Language	No.	Sentence (IPA)	Gloss
Gurezi Shina	i	/a:b sa:f gəpa:k hū:/	water clear and clean is
	ii	*/hū: sa:f gəpa:k a:b/	is clear and clean water
Kashmiri	iii	/a:b tʃʰu sa:f təpa:k/	water is clear and clean
	iv	*/pa:k təsa:f tʃʰu a:b/	clean and clear is water

6. DISCUSSION

The comparative results illuminate several theoretical and typological issues. First, the clear-cut difference between Gurezi Shina's rigid SOV order and Kashmiri's V2 flexibility supports a typological distinction: Kashmiri operates under a verb-second parameter, akin to German or Dutch, while Gurezi Shina falls under the prototypical OV (verb-final) parameter. This dovetails with typological universals: OV languages like Shina typically have postpositions and verb-final clauses (consistent with generalizations by Dryer), whereas Kashmiri's mixed pattern challenges a simple binary typology. As Dryer (2013) notes, languages like Kashmiri might be considered "lacking a dominant order" since two orders (SOV and VSO/V2) both occur.

Second, the influence of language contact is evident but asymmetrical. Gurezi Shina has borrowed heavily from Kashmiri lexically, yet it has not adopted Kashmiri's word-order innovations. It remains strictly SOV despite centuries of bilingualism. Kashmiri, on the other hand, shows little evidence of adopting SOV rigidity from Shina; instead, its V2 trait is likely an inherited idiosyncrasy (some suggest it dates back to Proto-Dardic or earlier influences). The contrast thus illustrates that phonological or lexical contact (e.g., shared retroflexes or pitch accent erosion) can be strong between these languages, while syntactic core properties remain resilient.

Third, the cognitive processing of these languages likely differs. Speakers of Gurezi Shina rely on case marking and SOV order to identify roles (as in many Indian languages), whereas Kashmiri speakers rely more on word position (verb second) and auxiliary placement. The necessity in Kashmiri to compute the first phrasal constituent (subject or topicalized object) as a syntactic pivot resembles processing in V2 languages; Gurezi Shina speakers instead consistently expect the verb at the end. Such differences may affect parsing strategies: V2 requires anticipating a verb early in the sentence, whereas verb-final languages allow a delay of the verb until the end. Though not directly tested here, these implications align with typological expectations (VO languages often exhibit more rigid parsing patterns than OV languages).

Lastly, these findings contribute to Dardic typology. Gurezi Shina's SOV pattern is typical of the Shina subgroup of Dardic, reinforcing its classification with other Shina dialects. Kashmiri remains an outlier: we confirm that it cannot be typified simply as another SOV Dardic language, but is better described as an Indo-Aryan language with unusual V2 syntax. Cardona and Jain (2003) explicitly label Kashmiri as Dardic, but our syntactic data suggest its alignment with Shina (as "Eastern Dardic") is only partial – primarily phonological and morphological, not syntactic. These insights echo Masica's (1991) caution that rigid taxonomies should be revised with descriptive evidence.

7. CONCLUSION

In comparing Kashmiri and Gurezi Shina, we observe a striking typological contrast: Kashmiri employs a flexible word order with a strong verb-second requirement in main clauses, while Gurezi Shina maintains a rigid SOV structure in all clause types. Simple declaratives show this most clearly: Shina always uses Subject–Object–Verb, whereas Kashmiri may appear Subject–Verb–Object or Object–Subject–Verb, depending on topicalization, because the verb is always in position two. The rigidity of Shina's order versus Kashmiri's flexibility has been confirmed across complex, negative, and

interrogative constructions. These differences highlight that Kashmiri's grammatical system is unique among South Asian languages (sharing features with Germanic V2) and that contact with Kashmiri has not induced major syntactic change in Gurezi Shina.

Our study thus reinforces the view that Gurezi Shina aligns with the majority SOV pattern of Indo-Aryan/Dardic languages, whereas Kashmiri retains an exceptional V2 system. This contrast has implications for typological classification, historical linguistics, and our understanding of how rigid vs. flexible word order manifests in related languages. Future work could explore the functional motivations (information structure, emphasis) behind Kashmiri's word order choices and any subtle residual effects of Shina in Gurezi syntax, but the present findings provide a clear comparative baseline.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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